



4 Kuwait's Expo pavilion: A display of heritage, vision



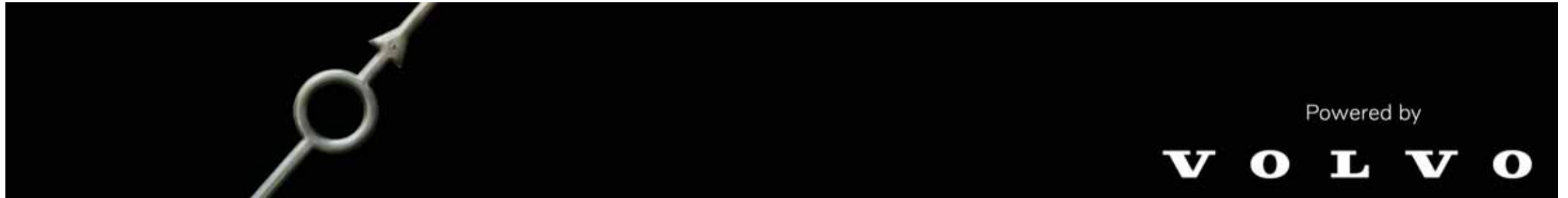
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15 Fury knocks out Wilder to retain WBC crown



MoH launches vaccination campaign across Kuwait

Sydney lockdown ends after 106 days • Malaysia eases travel curbs



KUWAIT: A health worker administers a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination center in this June 1, 2021 file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: The ministry of health announced yesterday the launch of a COVID-19 vaccination campaign across several areas of Kuwait from today. In a press release, the ministry noted that the campaign will commence in Bneid Al-Gar, with plans to cover several areas to provide the service to all age categories. The campaign aims to boost vaccination rates and cover all workers who were not able to get the vaccine for any reason, it noted. The ministry of health has launched several vaccination campaigns to reach all segments of the community.

Health authorities in the country have said more than 70 percent of the population has taken two doses of approved vaccines, thus achieving what is known as "herd immunity". The ministry has opened registrations for a third booster dose, with priority for the elderly, high-risk patients and medical staff. Authorities are also waiting for authorization to start vaccinating children aged 5 to 12.

In other coronavirus-related news, elated Sydneysiders were emerging from almost four months of "blood, sweat and no beers" early today as a long coronavirus lockdown was lifted in Australia's largest city. Sydney's more than five million residents have been subjected to a 106-day lockdown,

designed to limit the march of the highly transmissible Delta variant. With new infections now falling - New South Wales state recorded 477 cases yesterday - and more than 70 percent of over-16s double vaccinated, Sydney was dusting off the cobwebs.

A handful of venues - including some bars and slot machine rooms - planned to open at 12:01 am local time to vaccinated customers. "Be the first to have a cold schooner, and be the first to catch up with friends," said owners of Easts in the city's famed Bondi neighborhood. Hairdressers will be among those businesses throwing open their doors later in the day, although many have been booked out for weeks to come by shaggy-haired customers.

Since June, shops, schools, salons and offices have been closed for non-essential workers and there have been unprecedented restrictions on personal freedom. There were bans on everything from travelling more than five kilometers from home, visiting family, playing squash, browsing in supermarkets to attending funerals.

"Very few countries have taken as stringent or extreme an approach to managing Covid as Australia," Tim Soutphommasane, an academic and

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Iraqis vote with little hope for change

BAGHDAD: Iraqis voted yesterday in a parliamentary election a year early as a concession to an anti-government protest movement but seen as unlikely to deliver major change to the war-scarred country. Many of the 25 million eligible voters were expected to boycott the polls amid deep distrust in a political class widely blamed for graft, unemployment and crumbling public services in oil-rich Iraq. Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi's future hangs in the balance, with few observers

willing to predict who will come out on top after the usual political haggling between factions that follow Iraqi elections.

"This is an opportunity for change," Kadhemi said, casting his ballot in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone. "Get out there and vote, change your reality, for Iraq and for your future." Three hours before polls were due to close at 1500 GMT, voter turnout was estimated at just over 30 percent, electoral commission chief Jalil Adnan said.

Viola von Cramon, who heads a team of EU observers, lamented a "low turnout". The United Nations also sent observers. "Unfortunately we have only seen a very low turnout at this point... This is a clear political signal, and one can only hope that it will be heard by the politicians and by the political elite of Iraq," she said.

Few votes expressed enthusiasm among those who queued in the fifth election since the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted dictator Saddam Hussein with the promise of bringing freedom and democracy. "We want change," said Mohammed, 23, who asked not to have his full name published. "I have a degree in Arabic literature but I clean toilets in a restaurant - it's humiliating." Housewife Jimand Khalil, 37, said she hoped her vote would help "to change the current leaders who are incompetent".

The election was held under tight security in a country where the major parliamentary blocs have armed factions and Islamic State group jihadists have launched deadly suicide attacks this year. Voters were searched twice at polling stations.

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BAGHDAD: Iraqi voters show their inked fingers after casting their ballots at a polling station yesterday. — AFP

'Father of Pak nuclear bomb' AQ Khan dies

ISLAMABAD: Abdul Qadeer Khan, celebrated as the father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program but accused of smuggling technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya, died yesterday at 85. The nuclear scientist, who spent the last years of his life under heavy guard, passed away in the capital Islamabad, where he had recently been hospitalized with COVID-19.

Khan had long been hailed a national hero for transforming Pakistan into the world's first Islamic nuclear weapons power and strengthening its clout against rival and fellow nuclear-armed nation India. But he was declared by the West a dangerous renegade for sharing technology with rogue nuclear states. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan joined a rapidly building chorus voicing grief at the news, lamenting that the country had lost "a national icon".

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Abdul Qadeer Khan

Thousands rally against Tunisia president 'coup'

TUNISIA: At least 6,000 Tunisians rallied yesterday against a presidential power grab in the only democracy to have emerged from the Arab Spring uprisings a decade ago. Despite checkpoints and security screenings of protesters, it was the biggest rally yet against the actions of President Kais Saied, who on July 25 sacked the

prime minister, suspended parliament and granted himself judicial powers, after months of political stalemate. Saied followed up the move last month with measures that effectively allow him to rule by decree.

A police source said the crowd numbered between 6,000 and 8,000 at its peak, all flowing towards Bourguiba Avenue in central Tunis. "The people against the coup d'etat," "Raise your voice, the revolution is not dead," the anti-Saied demonstrators called, waving red-and-white Tunisian flags. "I'm here as a democrat and supporter of Moncef

Continued on Page 2



TUNIS: Tunisians rally against the president along Habib Bourguiba Avenue in the capital yesterday. — AFP

Lebanon electricity back online after army supplies fuel

BEIRUT: Lebanon's electricity grid was back online yesterday after the army supplied fuel to two key power stations that had run out, a minister said, ending almost a day of total blackout. The Deir Ammar and Zahrani plants ground to a halt Saturday, causing the state electricity network to collapse completely for the second time

this month. The Mediterranean country is battling economic turmoil, and the cash-strapped state has in recent months struggled to import enough fuel oil for electricity production.

Most Lebanese saw no major change to their daily lives on Saturday, as the state has been barely providing one to two hours of power a day for months. Energy Minister Walid Fayad said yesterday that the grid was back up and running. "The network is back to normal, as it was before the gasoil ran out at Deir Ammar and Zahrani," he said in a statement, implying production would revert to the previous few hours a day.

He thanked the army for handing over 6,000 kilolitres of gasoil, half of which he said went to

each power station. The state electricity company had said Saturday that a shipment of fuel oil was expected to arrive that evening, and be offloaded at the start of next week. Lebanon has witnessed rolling power cuts across the country since the end of its 1975-1990 civil war, but the economic crisis has made matters drastically worse.

Lebanese who can afford it subscribe to private generators to keep appliances on, but even their owners have started to ration power supplies due to the scarcity of fuel. The international community has long demanded a complete overhaul of Lebanon's loss-making electricity sector, which has cost the government more than \$40 billion since the early 1990s. — AFP

Local

Crown Prince receives top state officials at Bayan Palace

Amir sends condolences to Saudi King



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, and Minister of State for Enhancing Transparency Abdullah Al-Roumi.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, and Minister of State for Enhancing Transparency Abdullah Al-Roumi. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also received Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. In the cable, His Highness expressed sincere condolences and sympathies on the demise of Prince Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud bin Faisal Al-Saud, wishing solace for the royal family. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA

Kuwait, Serbia discuss ties in Belgrade meeting



BELGRADE: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. — KUNA photos



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with his Serbian counterpart Nikola Selakovic.

BELGRADE: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met in Belgrade yesterday with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. The meeting tackled bilateral ties and ways of enhancing them. Kuwait and Serbia will

celebrate in 2023 the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The meeting was held prior to the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement countries on October 11-12 to mark the 60th anniversary of the movement. Meanwhile,

Sheikh Dr Ahmad met with his Serbian counterpart Nikola Selakovic. During the meeting, both sides discussed the Kuwaiti-Serbian relations. Moreover, the two officials discussed subjects of common interest and latest regional and international developments. — KUNA

Kuwait, Iraq foreign ministers meet



BELGRADE: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah meets with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein. — KUNA

BELGRADE: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in the Serbian capital Belgrade.

On the 60th anniversary of the Cold War era bloc's inception, the Kuwaiti and Iraqi foreign ministers discussed bilateral ties and current happenings around the world, said a foreign ministry statement. — KUNA

MoH launches vaccination...

Continued from Page 1

former Australian race discrimination commissioner, told AFP. There will still be limits on mass gatherings and international borders and schools will not fully reopen for a few weeks yet. But otherwise daily life will look more like normal.

For most of the pandemic, Australia successfully suppressed infections through border closures, lockdowns and aggressive testing and tracing. But the Delta variant put paid to any dream of "COVID-zero", at least in the largest cities of Melbourne and Sydney which are now pivoting to "living with COVID". "It's a big day for our state," said New South Wales' recently

appointed conservative premier Dominic Perrottet. After "100 days of blood, sweat and no beers," he said, "you've earned it."

Meanwhile, Malaysia eased domestic and international travel curbs yesterday for those fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, as a fierce outbreak slows and inoculation rates rise. The Southeast Asian nation had faced its worst COVID-19 wave in recent months, prompting authorities to impose a tough nationwide lockdown. But with case numbers falling and the inoculation rollout picking up speed, authorities began lifting curbs, with businesses allowed to reopen and workers slowly returning to offices.

In a televised address yesterday, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced fully inoculated people can move freely within the country, as well as fly overseas without special permission. "According to the ministry of health, the vaccination rate for the adult population... has reached 90 percent," he said. — Agencies

ing heavily as Khan's coffin, draped with a Pakistani flag, was carried through a sea of black umbrellas.

Amid tight security, a massive crowd gathered to bid him farewell, with many making videos and snapping pictures as the coffin was carried into a tent-covered area accommodating Khan's family members, ministers and other top officials. Nearby, thousands of members of the public crammed into an uncovered enclosure, getting soaked as they prayed in the downpour.

Khan was lauded for bringing the nation up to par with India in the atomic field and making its defenses "impregnable". But he found himself in the international crosshairs when he was accused of illegally sharing nuclear technology with Iran, Libya and North Korea.

He confessed in 2004, after the International Atomic Energy Agency - the UN nuclear watchdog - put Pakistani scientists at the center of a global atomic black market. — AFP

Thousands rally against Tunisia...

Continued from Page 1

Marzouki," who served as president between 2011 and 2014 and now lives in Paris, said a man in his 50s as he bought a flag.

Many others identified as supporters of the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party, which was the biggest in the now-suspended parliament. Some complained to AFP about alleged police intimidation to prevent them moving forward. "I'm not your enemy, I've come out of love for Tunisia," a demonstrator with the country's flag in his hand told a policeman.

Helmeted, black-clad riot police were deployed, and demonstrators were forbidden from entering a stretch of Bourguiba Avenue where the interior ministry is located. "The rally is blocked", and

"shame on you", a voice in the crowd called. The size of yesterday's rally exceeded that of an estimated 2,000 who demonstrated against Saied's "coup d'etat" on the same thoroughfare two weeks earlier. Last week however, an estimated 10,000 people rallied nationwide in support of the president, police sources said.

Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring uprisings, with the resignation of the country's dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011. Although Saied's July measures enjoyed significant public support, civil society groups have warned of a drift away from democracy. "We're from a generation who've known torture and haven't had an easy life! We're the ones who elected Saied and we'll be the ones who'll get him out of power," said a man in his 60s among yesterday's crowd, which was mostly gathered in front of the municipal theatre. Saied, elected on an anti-system ticket in late 2019, has said his action seeks to save Tunisia from "imminent peril" and a socio-economic crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP

'Father of Pak nuclear bomb'...

Continued from Page 1

Arrangements were quickly made for a state funeral yesterday afternoon at Islamabad's Faisal Mosque, with all government ministers and armed forces officers asked to attend. Flags were also ordered to fly at half-mast. According to Islamic tradition, burials should take place as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours of death.

Just hours after news of Khan's death broke, an orange mechanical digger was busy clearing a grave as mourners began arriving for the service at the giant mosque - the sixth-largest in the world. It began rain-

Iraqis vote with little hope...

Continued from Page 1

Travel between provinces was banned and restaurants, shopping centers and airports closed.

The vote was marred by technical problems at some stations, including malfunctioning equipment and fingerprint readers, said the prime minister's office and AFP journalists. One soldier was killed and another wounded by "accidental fire" from a fellow soldier at a polling station in Diyala province, east of Baghdad, officials said. Authorities also reported the arrest of 77 suspects for electoral "violations".

Preliminary results of the vote are expected within 24 hours, but the final outcome could take 10 days. The official turnout figure for Iraq's last polls in 2018 was 44.5 percent. A new single-member constituency system for electing Iraq's 329 lawmakers is supposed to boost independents versus the traditional blocs largely centered on religious, ethnic and clan affiliations.

But many analysts believe the change will be limited. "The election will likely result in another fragmented parliament, followed by opaque, corrupt horse-trading," wrote researchers Bilal Wahab and Calvin Wilder in an analysis published by the Washington Institute. "Few expect this election to amount to more than a game of musical chairs, and the (protest) movement's core demands - curbing systemic corruption, creating jobs and holding armed groups accountable - are unlikely to be met." — AFP

Local

Manpower authority responds to Farwaniya workers' strike

Govt employees protest to demand more allowances

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Around 300 workers of a company in Farwaniya governorate went on strike yesterday morning demanding their salaries, which they claimed they haven't received for months. After the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) received a call from Farwaniya police station informing them about the strike, representatives from the labor relations department immediately went to the scene. The inspectors registered a report of the strike, its reasons and the workers' demands.

Aseel Al-Mazyad, Official Spokesperson and PR and Media Manager at PAM, said the workers who went on strike claimed they haven't been paid for more than three months. "The workers also claimed that they paid some financial amounts to renew their visas. PAM's representatives listened to the laborers' complaints, and we are currently working on resolving the matter by following legal and administrative procedures in cooperation with other related institutions," Mazyad said.

Hazard allowance

Elsewhere, a large number of employees of the

Ministry of Electricity and Water held a sit-in at the ministry diwan in response to a call from the ministry employees' forum to demand payment of various allowances. Participants said most of them work in a dangerous environment and deserve to be appreciated. Member of the organizing com-



Study to increase service fees

mittee Mohammad Al-Mashaan said ministry workers feel they are marginalized as ministry and union officials are ignoring their demands. He said they face danger at worksites but receive only KD 35 monthly in hazard allowance.

Meanwhile, organizing committee member Mahmoud Al-Misbah said Environment Public Authority reports confirm the existence of high

levels of pollution at stations and various worksites. Engineer Nour Al-Salem said the protesters are demanding hazard, PC monitor and night shift allowances.

Coordination of the workers' forum Hassan Al-Shimmari said the ministry is delaying approval of employees' rights despite the immense efforts being exerted. He said despite Kuwait having the best standards of water production in the Arab world, their demands are being ignored. This comes while a group of social affairs ministry employees working at family care homes staged a protest at the ministries complex yesterday against a recent decision whereby they are asked to work on weekends in order to be paid overtime shift allowances.

Service increase

The recent developments come at a time in which the government is searching for ways to curb spending and offset state's budget deficit. In this regard, the finance ministry has reportedly written to ministries and their subsidiaries to review fees for services when preparing the 2022-2023 budget and increase them suitably.



Aseel Al-Mazyad

The ministry asked for prioritizing construction projects and contracts and postpone unnecessary items among them, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting sources. Every ministry and government entity were informed about the budget ceiling allocated for them because of current financial situation of the state. They must commit to the

ceiling so that projects are not sent back. The ministry said Oct 14 is the deadline to submit budget proposals.

Acting Finance Ministry Undersecretary Aseel Al-Saad Al-Munaifi said ministries and authorities should send estimations of new appointees who will be needed, and estimate the indemnity amounts for non-Kuwaiti employees and include it in the budget drafts.

KCST participates in top cybersecurity competition

KUWAIT: Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) students will represent Kuwait to participate in the Collegiate Penetration Testing Competition (CPTC) held by Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). RIT University in Dubai, located in the emirate's silicon oasis, will be the hub that holds the competition of the Middle East region. The winning team will have the support to attend the global competition in the RIT main campus, NY, USA.

In order to prepare our students for their future jobs in cybersecurity domain, we need to provide them with hands-on experience in a real-world scenario. As it is not an easy task to provide our students with such an environment, CPTC offers this



opportunity as it uniquely allows participants to practice technical and non-technical skills they have learnt in an environment that resembles a real-world scenario.

CPTC was established in 2014, involving only local universities in New York. In 2016, CPTC has become a US national competition with universities from all over the US clustered in three regions. In 2019, CPTC became international as it included, in

addition to the new fourth region of the US, the UAE as a fifth region. Starting with year 2020, all universities can participate as part of Middle East (ME) region. Moreover, two additional regions, Canada and Europe, have been added. The competition is held in two phases regional and global. For this year, the regional competition will be held on October 23, 2021, while the global event takes place on January 6-9, 2022.

KFH signs partnership agreement with Kuwait Society for Handicapped

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed a partnership agreement, which is the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector, with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH). This is in line with the bank's leadership in social responsibility and its great role in supporting and empowering people with special needs. The partnership undertakes various initiatives, including training a group of students with special needs in various departments in KFH.

KFH spares no effort in supporting the segment of people with special needs by contributing to their education, increasing their knowledge, and guiding them towards appropriate education and rehabilitation through training programs dedicated to them. That includes field visits to KFH branches and departments, and practical experiences to gain them experiences that would represent the first step on a career road and a crossing bridge to success in working life.

KFH is keen to select the appropriate training field for the abilities of students with special needs, taking into account their capabilities and individual differences in proportion to their abilities and inclinations, and to harness all possibilities for the success of this experience through assigning distinguished banking cadres to train the affiliates.

Senior Manager Employee Engagement at KFH Sara Al-Salem said that these initiatives play a major role in enhancing employees' job engagement and loyalty to KFH employees due to its interest in this category, which represents



Sara Al-Salem



Baraa Al-Jenae

an integral part of the community.

Salem explained that one of the most important objectives of KFH's partnership with KSH is to ensure the integration of these people with members of the community and qualify them to obtain training and development, which contributes to offering job opportunities that would provide them with a material income, therefore giving them a degree of psychological and social stability. In addition to the contribution of helping students with special needs to increase their ability to work and produce, and to show the energy of this segment and make it a productive element in the development of society.

She added that KFH supports KSH, which provides integrated care and services, including rehabilitation, psychological, social and educational services, within the framework of its pioneering role in social responsibility.

Deputy Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped Baraa Al-Jenae said: "For 50 years, KSH has been providing integrated health care, educational and rehabilitation services for children with special needs of all



KUWAIT: KSH students during training at KFH branch.

nationalities, free of charge, and currently KSH is providing these services to nearly 500 of our children. We are pleased to cooperate with KFH to train a group of students with special needs in various departments in KFH in pursuit of KSH's goals of providing care, education and innovative support that can enrich and achieve continuous positive change for the lives of the people we serve."

He added that it has been noticed that there are increasing demand factors related to providing job opportunities for people with special needs, hence the idea of joint cooperation with KFH to enhance their training alongside their non-disabled peers, especially for those over the age of eighteen. In addition to integrating people with special needs in all aspects of life through the implementation of partnership agreements related to people with special needs to obtain vocational training, and to provide employment opportunities in various fields in a manner that suits their inclinations and capabilities. Countries benefit from their contribution to the economy and development of the societies in which they live, train and work in order to achieve social justice and independence in life.

Proven track record

KFH has a proven track record of

supporting people with special needs in various sports, cultural and scientific activities. KFH also participates in various conferences and events dedicated to this community segment, focusing on the care required for them and displaying their talents, abilities and skills.

In terms of banking, KFH provides the possibility to benefit from banking products and services for people with special needs and provides all means to ensure their access to banking services without incurring any additional fees or costs, and this includes allocating a special branch for them in each governorate, with adequate parking spaces, wheelchairs and other means necessary for customers with special needs.

KFH also provides at least one ATM in the branch that provides banking services for people with special needs, with easy access, and provides complete privacy for the customer through a glass room that opens with a card, and the use of headphones is available as well. KFH has specialized employees who are proficient in sign language to provide banking services to people with special needs within its keenness to include all segments of society in an optimal manner and in accordance with the highest standards of service quality.

Diagnostic Imaging Center launches new services

KUWAIT: Dr Abdulmohsen Bannakhi, Consultant and Head of the Diagnostic Imaging Center (DIC) at Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, has recently stated that: "DIC is unique in its kind, as it is equipped with the latest advanced equipment in the world and the highest quality standards are set to ensure the best level of care. Dasman Diabetes Institute and DIC obtained the highest level of Accreditation Canada International, the diamond level."

DIC offers quality radiology investigations to all people of Kuwait. It is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, delivering quality output. DIC maintains the highest quality of patient care and performs radiology tests in accordance with accreditation standards to ensure quality and safety.

DIC also actively participates in research by providing dedicated radiological investigations to support various research studies. These research collaborations have been instituted at national and international levels. Our highly experienced team assures excellent quality of procedures and reports through highly experienced and competent staff.

Dr Bannakhi added that DIC, in addition to the above, receives many cases daily from various medical specialties and is not limited to people with diabetes. In addition, DIC accepts most insurance types, including Afiah.

He added that, DIC also provides highly advanced MRI 3T and 1.5T (wide-bore), MRI magnetic examinations with high speed and resolution imaging applications. The center also has the latest high-definition tomography (CT) devices with innovative low-radiation technology performance for full-body imaging and accurate imaging of blood vessels in the body, including evaluation of the coronary arteries.

In addition, the DIC offers ultrasound examinations, and many other services and tests, including Bone Mineral Densitometry (BMD) and body composition. Furthermore, it provides digital x-ray and Orthopantomogram (OPG), in addition to an integrated diagnostic vascular laboratory.

Dasman Diabetes Institute is a non-profit organization that aims at scientific research, therefore, the services provided in DIC are at competitive prices and accessible to everyone. In conclusion, Dr Bannakhi said that DIC has launched a new service to communicate with the public through WhatsApp on the number 65055011, for various patients from different medical specialties to inquire about the services provided and prices, and to book appointments and everything related.



Dr Abdulmohsen Bannakhi

Kuwait Fire Force Chief opens Istiqlal fire station



KUWAIT: Deputizing for Foreign Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Fire Force Chief Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad opened the Al-Istiqlal fire station in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak. Deputy Chief for Firefighting Sector Maj Gen Jamal Nasser was also present. Mikrad said this is the fourth station opened this year in new areas, adding more stations will be opened soon.



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KUWAIT: An eye specialist conducts a check as part of the campaign.

KRCS distributes eyewear to families in need

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced yesterday the distribution of eyewear to families in need. This initiative came on the World Sight Day (WSD) celebrated annually on October 10. KRCS, in cooperation with optics companies, distributed the medical optics to 100 individuals. Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hassawi said, "We should spread awareness in the society on the well-being of our eyes by educating people about sight diseases and means to avoid and cure them," he said. Hassawi offered his thanks to the optical companies that offered their assistance to KRCS in this charitable activity. KRCS is offering many medical services like distributing medicine, dental treatments, children's hearing aid, and other amenities, he affirmed. The World Health Organization (WHO) first celebrated WSD on October 10, 1998. — KUNA

Youth Authority relays pandemic experience in Amman meeting

AMMAN: Kuwait's Youth Public Authority relayed yesterday Kuwaiti youngsters' experience in facing the coronavirus pandemic during the 17th Arab Capitals' Youth Meeting in Amman, Jordan. The meeting was organized by the Jordanian Ministry of Youth with the Arab League under the title 'Arab Youth Forum - Health and Community Environment'. It saw the participation of 14 Arab countries.

The authority's spokesperson Asrar Al-Ansari said that in the closing ceremony the delegations focused on the role of the authority as well as the Kuwaiti youth volunteers in facing the pandemic. Ansari also added that they reviewed the experience of the youth in the health quarries, hospitals, grocery stores and the airport as well as a training them to sterilize mosques with the Kuwaiti municipality. The delegation displayed the authority's work on many projects and various campaigns to spread awareness regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). The 17th Youth Meeting of Arab Capitals lasted a week, during which the participants presented working papers that reviewed the efforts of their countries in the field of environment and community health and formed teams to formulate a number of recommendations and submit them to the Arab League. Among those recommendations are strengthening electronic "digitization" and "automation" projects in the Arab world health sectors and forming an electronic map of natural resources, as well as emphasizing the importance of linking the environmental and health aspects. — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture taken by photographer Christina Monachan (Instagram: @heavenlyhuesbychristy) on October 9, 2021 shows the sunset as seen from the Marina Crescent.

(To have your picture featured in the Kuwait Times' 'Photo of the Day' section, please send your horizontal, high resolution and unedited photos to local@kuwaittimes.com, along with the full name and Instagram account, in addition to a description showing the picture's location and date taken)

Kuwait's Pavilion Expo 2020, extraordinary display of heritage



KUWAIT: Large screens displaying information about Kuwait in the country's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti youth ready to welcome visitors.

DUBAI: Kuwait's pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai is an extraordinary representation of the Kuwaiti culture as it is abound with informative displays and enthralling exhibits. Kuwait chose its pavilion to take place in the sustainability sector and dubbed it 'New Kuwait .. New Opportunities for Sustainability' to reflect its commitment to sustained development and investment to ensuring a safe and prosperous future for its people through its Kuwait 2035 vision. The pavilion's name is reflected in its outer appearance as the architectural design is inspired by Kuwait's vision for sustainability. It also focuses on the native environment by displaying sand dunes and camels.

Spectators are greeted by the sight of the water towers, a Kuwaiti symbol of sustainability and water security. The towers are strategically located in the center of the pavilion and stretching upwards across all levels, to further illustrate Kuwait's deeply-rooted respect for its environment, climate and resources. It also includes a large pearly scroll that reflects sunlight in a representation of Kuwait's investment in solar power.

Kuwait's pavilion employs the use of groundbreaking technology to exhibit information, as it provides spectators with the opportunity to be completely engrossed in the Kuwaiti experience. The pavilion offers experiences that span across all sensory levels in which audiences can revel in local melodies and scenes, and delight in the wonderful taste of Kuwaiti dishes. The pavilion sought to appeal to all sorts of age groups as interactive displays charm the young and the old, being fun and informative. Visitors' hands could be seen waving in front of the interactive displays, smiles broadening across their faces. Visitors could also be delighted with information about the rich Kuwaiti heritage as the Kuwaiti youth present in the pavilion provide explanations of the traditions and historic pieces. The pavilion also introduces visitors to natural life in Kuwait as mummified desert animals could be seen across the exhibit. It also sheds light on Kuwaiti seafaring culture with the presence of Dhow ship and displays of ship building business as well as fishing and diving for pearls.

Kuwait's humanitarian role also makes a significant presence in the pavilion as a large screen carries the picture of late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, dubbed the humanitarian leader and making Kuwait the humanitarian center. Concluding the journey are the pictures of His Highness Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah. Spectators are allocated seats in front of screens where they can view scenes of the humanitarian aid Kuwait provides whether internally or externally, highlighting the role of Kuwait's Red Crescent Society as well as other local institutions and Kuwaiti people who never shy away from extending a helping hand.

The pavilion also highlights Kuwait's role in empowering women and enabling them to participate in various aspects including political, economic, social and athletic. Visitors looking for information about oil in Kuwait will find that the pavilion provides an interesting and educational opportunity. It also includes a riveting display of the democratic parliamentary life in Kuwait. The United Arab Emirates made an astonishing commendable effort and successfully hosted this large-scale international event employing all resources to enable participants and alleviate all setbacks they could be faced with. The opening ceremony was on the first of October and under the motto 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' with an unprecedented participation of 192 countries. The Expo is organizing around 60 exciting activities and daily events with more than 200 food caterers for the duration of 182 days, as the expo is scheduled to be over by March 2022. — KUNA

GCC pavilions cultural ambassadors to the world



Kuwait's pavilion.



UAE's pavilion.



Saudi Arabia's pavilion.



Qatar's pavilion.



Bahrain's pavilion.



Oman's pavilion. — KUNA photos

DUBAI: Gulf countries, through their pavilions at Expo 2020 Dubai, act as cultural ambassadors to the world during this global exhibition that brings people closer together. The GCC pavilions introduced their cultures, heritages and civilizations to those attending this prestigious event. The expo allocated additional special spaces for Gulf countries to highlight their achievements. — KUNA



Migrants in Libya just want to leave

'Run Sara Run': Clamor grows for Duterte daughter presidential bid

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KUNDUZ: Taliban fighters check commuters along a road in Kunduz yesterday. — AFP

US, Taliban in face-to-face talks

Taliban warns US not to 'destabilize' regime

DOHA: The Taliban warned the United States not to "destabilize" the regime on Saturday during their first face-to-face talks since the US withdrawal, as a deadly sectarian bombing raised further questions about their grip on power. As mourners in northern Afghanistan buried their dead from an attack on a Shiite mosque that killed 62, a Taliban delegation told US officials in Doha that any weakening of their government could cause "problems for the people". Scores more worshippers were wounded in Friday's blast in Kunduz, which was claimed by the Islamic State group—who appear to be attempting to further shake Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

"We clearly told them that trying to destabilize the government in Afghanistan is good for no one," the Taliban's foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told the Afghan state news agency Bakhtar after the talks in the Qatari capital. "Good relations with Afghanistan are good for everyone. Nothing should be done to weaken the existing government in Afghanistan which can lead to problems for the people," he said, in a recorded statement translated by AFP. The Taliban are seeking international recognition, as well as assistance to avoid a humanitarian disaster and ease Afghanistan's economic crisis.

A State Department official said the US delegation would press the Taliban to ensure terrorists do not create a base for attacks in the country. It would also pressure Afghanistan's new rulers to form an inclusive government and to respect the rights of women and girls, the official said, stressing the meeting did not indicate Washington recognized Taliban rule. "We remain clear that any legitimacy must be earned through the Taliban's own actions," the official said.

Taliban's bitter rivals As the two-day talks began, Kunduz counted the cost of the bloodiest assault since US forces left the country in August. A gravedigger in the Shiite cemetery overlooking the city told AFP they had handled 62 bodies, and local reports suggested the final toll could be up to 100. The regional branch of IS, known as Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), has repeatedly targeted Shiites in Afghanistan. It is a Sunni Islamist group like the Taliban, but the two

are bitter rivals. IS-K said the attack was carried out by a Uyghur suicide bomber who had "detonated an explosive vest amid a crowd" of Shiite worshippers.

The attack happened during Friday prayers—the most important of the week for Muslims—and residents of the city told AFP that hundreds of worshippers were inside. In a heart-wrenching scene, relatives gathered around the newly-dug graves in Kunduz wailed inconsolably over their loved ones. "We are really hurt by what happened," Zemarai Mubarak Zada, 42, told AFP as he mourned his 17-year-old nephew, who he said had wanted to follow in his footsteps and become a doctor. "He wanted to get married. He wanted to go to university," he said.

The Taliban's efforts to consolidate power have been undermined by a series of deadly IS-K attacks. The Taliban security chief in Kunduz accused the mosque attackers of trying to foment trouble between Shiites and Sunnis. "We assure our Shiite

brothers that in the future, we will provide security for them and that such problems will not happen to them," Mulawi Dost Muhammad said.

The attack was met with broad international condemnation, with UN chief Antonio Guterres calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. Guterres "condemns in the strongest terms today's horrific attack", the third against a religious institution in Afghanistan in a week, his spokesman said. Viewed as heretics by Sunni extremists such as IS, Shiite Muslims have suffered some of Afghanistan's most violent assaults, with rallies bombed, hospitals targeted and commuters ambushed.

Shiites make up about 20 percent of the Afghan population. Many of them are Hazara, an ethnic group that has been persecuted for decades. Michael Kugelman, a South Asia expert at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, told AFP the Taliban would find it difficult to consolidate power unless they tackle terrorism and the growing economic crisis. "If the Taliban, as is likely, is unable to address these concerns, it will struggle to gain domestic legitimacy, and we could see the emergence of a new armed resistance," he said. — AFP



Deadly bombing raised further questions

16 killed in Russian parachutists' crash

MOSCOW: Sixteen people were killed when a plane carrying parachutists crashed in central Russia yesterday, the emergencies ministry said. The L-410 plane carrying 22 people crashed around 9:23 am near the town of Menzelinsk in the republic of Tatarstan, the ministry said on its Telegram channel. "Six people were rescued, 16 were taken out without signs of life," the ministry said. The ministry had earlier said 15 people died and that the aircraft was carrying 23 people.

While the Menzelinsk club organizes skydiving experiences for amateurs it has also hosted championships and training sessions for cosmonauts. Images published by the ministry showed the aircraft broken in half with a severely dented nose. The six survivors were taken to hospital, the local health ministry told the Interfax news agency. Tatarstan head Rustam Minnikhanov, who travelled to the scene, said pilots had reported an engine failure and requested an emergency landing shortly after taking off.

He said the plane tried to avoid a nearby residential area as it approached for landing but "the altitude didn't allow it". The plane hit a parked van with its wing and the aircraft turned over. All the survivors were sitting in the back of the plane, club instructor Oleg Shiporov told TASS news agency. Russian investigators have launched a criminal probe over the violation of safety rules. Today has been declared a day of



MENZELINSK: This handout picture shows wreckage at a site of the L-410 plane crash near the town of Menzelinsk in the Republic of Tatarstan. — AFP

mourning in Tatarstan.

According to Interfax, the plane belonged to the Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Aviation and Navy of Russia, which describes itself as a sports and defense organization. The organization was created in the 1920s and Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man to travel to space in 1961, has trained on its airfields.

The head of the Menzelinsk parachuting club said that it was not to blame for the accident. "We are the best, we are among the top five clubs," Ravil Nurmekhametov told TASS news agency, adding that the club had hosted European and World championships. "Cosmonauts train here," he said. TASS cited a source as saying that the state Cosmonauts

Training Centre has suspended its work with the club pending the investigation. In 2018, two amateur skydivers died while completing a group free-fall jump at the Menzelinsk club after their parachutes got tangled.

The Czech-built L-410 light aircraft was one of the two planes used by the club, according to its website. Two L-410 planes suffered fatal accidents in Russia earlier this year, leaving a total of eight people dead. Russia was notorious for plane accidents but has improved air traffic safety in recent years with major airlines switching from Soviet aircraft to modern jets. But poor maintenance and lax safety standards still lead to frequent accidents in far-flung regions involving light aircraft, with occasional large-scale tragedies. — AFP

Indian minister's son arrested over deaths at farmer protest

NEW DELHI: The son of an Indian minister has been arrested on preliminary charges of murder, police said yesterday, a week after the death of eight people during a farmers' protest sparked national outrage. Ashish Mishra was detained in Uttar Pradesh late Saturday over the incident in the northern state's Lakhimpur Kheri district, where farmers were demonstrating as part of their year-long campaign against contentious agriculture laws.

Farmers claimed that a convoy belonging to Mishra and his father—the junior home affairs minister Ajay Mishra—slammed into protesters, killing four of them. Angry demonstrators then set fire to several cars and four other people, including a driver and a journalist, were killed, according to authorities and local media reports.

Mishra was arrested on grounds of "non-cooperation" and "evasive replies" during an

hours-long interrogation, Deputy Inspector General of Police Upendra Kumar Agrawal told reporters. Mishra will face court today and formal charges have to be filed within 90 days. Mishra and his father have denied the allegations. India's Supreme Court had said Friday that it was "not satisfied" with the police investigation of the case and questioned why the younger Mishra had not yet been arrested.

The incident was the deadliest since farmers started camping on the outskirts of the capital New Delhi in November demanding a repeal of the controversial laws. The agriculture sector, which employs some two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion population, has long been a political minefield. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says the sector is massively inefficient and in need of reform. But farmers fear the changes will leave them at the mercy of big corporations. — AFP

International

Austria foreign minister set to replace embattled Kurz

Kurz steps down as chancellor amid graft claims

VIENNA: Austria's top diplomat Alexander Schallenberg is expected to take over the chancellorship, a day after Sebastian Kurz announced he would step down amid graft claims, capping the spectacular rise of one of Europe's youngest political leaders. The 35-year-old conservative announced late Saturday that he was stepping down as chancellor, bowing to pressure to resign after he was implicated in a corruption scandal.

Saying he wanted to "make space to prevent chaos," Kurz—who has headed two governments over the last four years—has suggested foreign minister Schallenberg to take over the chancellorship. The 52-year-old diplomat was to meet President Alexander Van der Bellen following a meeting with Vice Chancellor Werner Kogler of the Greens. Schallenberg has yet to speak publicly, but Kogler indicated late Saturday that his party would support him to keep the conservative-Greens coalition in government.

Pressure on Kurz to resign, including from the Greens, started after prosecutors on Wednesday raided several locations linked to his People's Party (OeVP). They announced that Kurz and nine other individuals were under investigation over claims that government money was used between 2016 and 2018 in a corrupt deal to ensure positive media coverage. Kurz has denied any wrongdoing, reiterating on Saturday that allegations against him were "false" and that he would seek to clear up the matter while he continues as party leader and as a lawmaker in parliament.

'Shadow chancellor'

The opposition has blasted the continued conser-

vative-Greens coalition given the graft investigation, with Social Democrats (SPÖ) leader Pamela Rendi-Wagner saying even on the back benches Kurz would remain a "shadow chancellor". Commentaries in media yesterday echoed those words, saying it remained to be seen if Schallenberg could step up to lead the country in his own way.

"There is no doubt that he (Kurz) assumes that he will be able to pull the strings from the not-so-subtle background," wrote Hans Rauscher, a columnist for the left-leaning Der Standard, dubbing Kurz "tricky Sebastian". The OeVP-Greens coalition—a first at a

**Kurz denies wrongdoing**

national level—entered office in January 2020 and has already been put under strain several times by the fallout from other corruption scandals and differences over questions such as refugee policy.

In the latest scandal, prosecutors' core allegation is that between 2016 and 2018 finance ministry resources were used to finance "partially manipulated opinion polls that served an exclusively party-political interest". This correlates to the time period in which Kurz, already a government minister, took over the



VIENNA: Austria's Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg arrives to meet Austria's President at Ballhausplatz in Vienna yesterday. — AFP

leadership of the OeVP and later that of the Alpine nation at the helm of a coalition with the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ). Prosecutors allege that payments were made to an unnamed media company—widely understood to be the Oesterreich tabloid, which was also raided on Wednesday—in return for

publishing these surveys. In 2019, Kurz's first coalition with the FPÖ collapsed after his ally became engulfed in a corruption scandal dubbed "Ibzigate". But fresh elections once again saw Kurz's OeVP come out on top, leading him to form a coalition with the Greens from January 2020. — AFP

Last 2 candidates fight it out to face Hungary's Orban

BUDAPEST: A veteran pro-European and a conservative economist face off in a week-long opposition primary in Hungary that started yesterday, with the winner set to challenge Prime Minister Viktor Orban in next year's election. The opposition agreed for the first time to choose just one contender to oppose Orban—as well as single candidates in each constituency to go up against his nationalist Fidesz party—in the vote expected in April next year. After a first round of primaries that saw more than 600,000 people take part, Klara Dobrev of the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) party and economist Peter Marki-Zay are the final candidates battling it out.

The polyglot veteran

Dobrev, 49, of Hungary's largest opposition party won the first round of the primary with 35 percent of the votes but fell short of an outright majority that would have secured the candidacy. An MEP vying to become Hungary's first woman prime minister, Dobrev's supporters highlight her experience as a vice president of the European Parliament since 2019 and in government back home during the 2000s.

She speaks English, German, Russian and Bulgarian—she was born in Sofia and has a Bulgarian father—and describes herself as a social democrat. The pro-EU lawyer and economist told reporters this week that "tears come to my eyes when I compare the difference in political cultures between Hungary and Brussels", where she said she could discuss issues with opponents in a "civilised fashion".

Despite being the most senior Hungarian official in the Brussels assembly, Dobrev says she has never been invited to appear on Hungarian state media outlets, which heavily favor Orban. Polls indicate the mother-of-three's weakness is her husband, former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsany who admitted lying in 2006 during a leaked private speech and has been relentlessly attacked by Orban ever since. Dobrev wants to bin the constitution that was rewritten by Orban soon after he won the 2010 election, saying it mainly serves to cement Orban's power. Parliamentary speaker and Orban ally Laszlo Kover said the idea was "criminal" and would amount to a constitutional "coup".

The conservative outsider

Marki-Zay came third in the first round but persuaded Budapest mayor Gergely Karacsony, the runner-up, to withdraw and endorse him in the run-off. "I believe that Peter Marki-Zay is capable of uniting the opposition," said Karacsony, who had been considered the frontrunner to win the primary.

A win for Marki-Zay would be "Orban's nightmare", according to analyst Robert Laszlo. "Unlike Dobrev, he cannot be easily framed by Orban and Fidesz as a puppet of Ferenc Gyurcsany," Laszlo said. Marki-Zay, 49, grabbed national attention in 2018 by winning a mayoral by-election in his home city of Hodmezovasarhely, a Fidesz stronghold for decades. Marki-Zay, a father of seven and a practising Catholic who lived in the US and Canada for five years, successfully garnered support from across the political spectrum. — AFP

After deadly shooting, migrants in Libya just want to leave

TRIPOLI: After escaping, with hundreds of others, from an overcrowded Libyan detention centre where guards shot dead six migrants, Sudanese refugee Halima Mokhtar Bshara says she just wants to leave the country. "They attacked us, humiliated us, many of us were wounded," said the 27-year-old from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. "We're at the end of our tether."

The Al-Mabani facility in the capital Tripoli was at triple its capacity following police raids against migrants last week, when guards shot six people dead on Friday. The shooting was "related to overcrowding and the terrible, very tense situation," the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said. Some 2,000 migrants and refugees escaped in the chaos, including Bshara and her three children.

On Saturday, the Libyan interior ministry denied any "excessive use of force" against escaping migrants. It said that as "hundreds" of people being held at the detention centre

escaped, "a stampede" occurred during which "an illegal migrant died and others were wounded, including several police officers". A "security operation" following the escape "was handled professionally and without excessive use of force", a statement added.

'Nowhere to go'

Bshara was among hundreds taking part in a sit-in in front of the office of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in Tripoli on Saturday. Dozens of destitute migrants and refugees, including young children, have been sleeping rough in front of the building for days, in the hope of receiving assistance. "We're extremely tired. But we have nowhere to go, we are even being chased off the pavement," Bshara told AFP tearfully.

"For our security, we ask to be evacuated," one banner at the site said. "Libya is not a safe country for refugees," read another. In chaos since its 2011 revolution, Libya has long been a favoured departure point



TRIPOLI: African migrants gather at a makeshift shelter in the capital Tripoli's suburb of Ain Zara. — AFP

for migrants — many from sub-Saharan Africa — fleeing violence and poverty in their own countries and hoping to reach Europe. Hundreds die each year trying to make the dangerous Mediterranean crossing in rickety, overcrowded boats, while NGOs say those waiting to leave are often subject to violence and abuse.

Corruption and violence

Late last week, Libyan authorities raided multiple houses and makeshift shelters in a poor suburb of Tripoli, in

what it said was an anti-drug operation. The UN said the raids, mostly targeting irregular migrants, left at least one person dead, 15 wounded and saw more than 5,000 detained. Doctors without Borders (MSF) decried "violent mass arrests". "There were 39 of us living in the same building" before the raids, Bshara said. At first, she said she and her family evaded authorities by hiding in a well, but they were eventually found and placed in the Al-Mabani detention centre. — AFP

Czech president taken to hospital after elections

PRAGUE: Czech President Milos Zeman was taken to a Prague hospital yesterday, shortly after meeting Prime Minister Andrej Babis following a general election in which the billionaire populist was narrowly defeated by a centre-right alliance. Babis met Zeman, his long-time political ally, a day after his ANO party lost to the Together alliance, which said it was ready to form a majority government with another grouping.

But Zeman had made it clear earlier that he would appoint the head of a party, not an alliance, following the election, suggesting Babis would get the first attempt at negotiating a viable cabinet. "I can't see many reasons why he would do something else," Tomas Lebeda, an analyst at Palacky University in the eastern Czech city of Olomouc, told AFP. After the talks at Zeman's residence outside Prague, the president, who has been grappling with liver problems according to local media and politicians, ended up in Prague's Military University Hospital.

Macron still the favorite but faces mounting risks

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron remains the favorite to win France's next election but six months before the polls he faces the uncomfortable situation of not knowing the identity of his main challenger. As the countdown begins to the first round on April 10 next year the centrist Macron can no longer be sure that the run-off two weeks later will be a repeat of the 2017 duel with far-right leader Marine Le Pen, which he won easily.

Instead, Macron faces a host of uncertainties and a hand of wild cards in a campaign that has already seen startling shifts. Assumptions have been upended

"Yes, I can confirm this information," hospital spokeswoman Jitka Zinke told AFP, adding Zeman's doctor would comment later on. The president cast his ballot in the residence because of poor health, less than a month after he spent eight nights at the military hospital. Zeman's office has been secretive about his illness, giving no details for weeks. The Together alliance of the right-wing Civic Democrats, the centre-right TOP 09 and the centrist Christian Democrats won 27.79 percent of the vote, while Babis's ANO party earned 27.12 percent.

The alliance would have a majority of 108 seats in the 200-seat parliament together with another grouping comprising the anti-establishment Pirate Party and the centrist Mayors and Independents. Together leader Petr Fiala said on Saturday that the two alliances would only talk about a government with each other and ask Zeman to tap him to form the government. "It seems that both democratic coalitions will manage to get a parliamentary majority, which most likely means Babis will have to go," said Otto Eibl, head of the political science department at Masaryk University in Brno.

Named in Pandora Papers

Lebeda said that given Zeman's health problems, "he may reconsider the situation and arrive at a different conclusion, but I wouldn't bet much on that as things



PRAGUE: Czech President Milos Zeman is being transported to the military hospital in Prague yesterday. — AFP

are." The two alliances and ANO will be joined in parliament by the far-right, anti-Muslim Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) movement led by Tokyo-born entrepreneur Tomio Okamura which scored almost 10 percent. Babis currently leads a minority government with the left-wing Social Democrats, which was until recently tacitly backed by the Communist Party that ruled the former totalitarian Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1989. But the Communists were ousted from parliament at the polls for the first time since World War II, failing to meet the five-percent threshold for any party to enter the assembly. — AFP

in the last weeks by the surge of far-right TV pundit Eric Zemmour, dubbed a French version of Donald Trump, who threatens—if he decides to stand—to out-poll Le Pen and split the far-right vote.

The traditional right is not even close to settling on a candidate in a process that has caused internal feuding, with heavyweights like former minister Xavier Bertrand, Paris region chief Valerie Pécresse and ex-Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier in contention. The left have their own troubles, with the campaign of the Socialist mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo yet to find momentum and the Greens hurt by a bitter selection contest that failed to unify pragmatists and radicals. Their ratings are below those of extreme-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon.

'Shaken up'

"What worries Macron is he thought there was going to be a rematch with Le Pen and he is no longer certain of that," said a pro-Macron MP, who asked

not to be named. "It is possible someone could get into the second round with just 15-16 percent of the vote, so we don't know who is going to come out of the hat," added a minister, also requesting anonymity. Current polls project Macron winning the first round with around a quarter of the vote. But if Zemmour fragments the scene further, a score in the high teens may be enough to take a challenger to a run-off.

Pascal Perrineau of Sciences Po university in Paris says the whole political order of the past four years is in the process of being shaken up. "What a change there has been in the last two weeks," he told AFP. Frederic Dabi of opinion pollster Ifop said Le Pen had been "relatively weakened" by the emergence of Zemmour. He said that with such a fragmented offer, the price of a ticket into the second round "falls automatically", recalling how Marine Le Pen's father Jean-Marie shocked the political mainstream by slipping into the second round in 2002 with just 16.8 percent of the vote. — AFP

International

'Run Sara Run': Clamor grows for Duterte daughter presidential bid

Supporters mount pressure on Philippines 'First Daughter'

MANILA: Philippines "First Daughter" Sara Duterte has been in lockstep with her father, following him into law and succeeding him as a city mayor. Now, she's leading the race to replace Rodrigo Duterte as president. So far, the feisty politician, who once punched a court sheriff in front of TV cameras, has rejected calls to seek the country's highest office, insisting she wants to serve another term as Davao city mayor. Supporters have plastered "Run Sara Run" posters and tarpaulins across the archipelago nation, held rallies and posted thousands of messages urging the 43-year-old to change her mind.

In a cryptic Facebook post on Saturday—the day after the deadline for registering as a candidate—Sara thanked her supporters who turned up at the Manila registration site for national positions, including president. "Although I was not at the Sofitel (hotel), you did not lose hope and patience during the wait," she said, hours before her office announced she had tested positive for COVID-19. "For this I offer my heartfelt thanks." The elder Duterte has not named a successor, but indicated recently Sara would run alongside his longtime aide Senator Christopher Go.

While Sara missed Friday's closing date, analysts say she has until November 15 to make a late entry into the presidential race-like her father did in 2015. Sara, known for her quick temper and fondness for big motorbikes, was in first place in the latest Pulse Asia poll of voter preferences for president. She was followed by Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of a former dictator, celebrity mayor Francisco Domagoso and boxing legend Manny

Pacquiao. All except Sara have declared they will run for the top job.

Not a proxy

Sara entered politics in 2007, serving three years as vice mayor while her father was mayor of Davao—the family stronghold on the southern island of Mindanao. They swapped positions for the next three years and she again succeeded him as mayor in 2016 when he won the presidency. Some doubt



A more moderate version of Duterte

Sara's support in the polls will translate into election victory, saying she lacks the charisma and humor of her father—key traits in a country where personality trumps policy. "She's drawing strength because she's the daughter of the president," Pulse Asia research director Ana Maria Tabunda told AFP. Analysts say Sara is not a carbon copy of her father, who surveys show remains almost as popular as when he swept to victory in 2016 on a promise to rid the country of drugs.

She lacks his "folksiness" and that could hurt her



BOAO: In this file photo, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his daughter Sara Duterte arrive for the opening of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2018 in Boao, southern China's Hainan province. Philippines 'First Daughter' Sara Duterte has been in lockstep with her father, following him into law and succeeding him as a city mayor. — AFP

appeal, said political analyst Tony La Vina. "She is more distant and she is not warm," La Vina added. "I suspect her lead will evaporate during the campaign as she will not rise up to the charm of the father." Sara would be a more moderate version of Duterte, who gained infamy for his foul-mouthed tirades and deadly drug war that has killed thousands of people and is now being investigated by the International Criminal Court.

"I don't think Sara Duterte will be a puppet or proxy of her father," said political analyst Richard Heydarian. "She's a very spirited person, she has her own mind, she has her own base, she has her own team and has a very different approach to governance to her father." Sara would "try to strike her own course" on policies, including the anti-narcotics crackdown and relations with superpowers China and the United States, Heydarian added. — AFP

Taiwan 'will not bow to China'

TAIPEI: Taiwan will not bow to pressure by Beijing and will defend its democratic way of life, President Tsai Ing-wen said yesterday, following a spike in incursions by Chinese warplanes into its air defense zone. Self-governed Taiwan's 23 million people live under the constant threat of invasion by authoritarian China, which views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

"The more we achieve, the greater the pressure we face from China," Tsai said in a speech marking Taiwan's National Day, adding: "Nobody can force Taiwan to take the path China has laid out for us." She described Taiwan as "standing on democracy's first line of defense." "We hope for an easing of... relations (with Beijing) and will not act rashly, but there should be absolutely no illusions that the Taiwanese people will bow to pressure," she added. The two sides have been ruled separately since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

Tensions have risen to their highest in decades under Chinese President Xi Jinping, who broke off official communication with Taipei following Tsai's election five years ago and ramped up economic, diplomatic and military pressure. The latest flare-up has been a surge in flights by Chinese fighter jets and nuclear-capable bombers into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ). Some 150 sorties were made into the zone in the days surrounding China's own National Day on 1 October—a record number. Three Chinese planes, including two fighter jets, crossed into the zone yesterday, according to Taiwan's defense ministry.

'Complete reunification'

Xi has made taking Taiwan a key goal of his leadership which he looks set to extend to a third term in 2022. On Saturday, he declared in a speech that "the complete reunification of our country will be and can be realized". He said he favored "peaceful reunification" but his words come after months of increased military threats, including the recent surge in air incursions as well as heavily publicized military drills simulating an invasion of Taiwan. Last year, there were a record 380 sorties. There have already been more than 600 this year.

The ADIZ is not the same as



TAIPEI: Taiwanese soldiers raise flags on military vehicles during a national day parade in front of the Presidential Palace during in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

Taiwan's territorial airspace. It includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defense identification zone and even includes some of the mainland. Tsai, who has won two elections, is loathed by Beijing because she regards Taiwan as an "already independent" country, not part of "one China". But she has also made no move to declare formal independence, something Beijing has long warned would be a "red line" that would trigger an invasion.

She has also made offers for talks

with Beijing that have been rejected. During yesterday's speech, Tsai reiterated her call for Beijing "to engage in dialogue on the basis of parity" and said she supported maintaining the current status quo between the two neighbors. But she warned what happens to Taiwan would have major regional and global repercussions. "Every step we take will influence our world's future direction, and our world's future direction will likewise affect the future of Taiwan itself," she said. — AFP

Pope meets nun released by Mali jihadists

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis yesterday met with Gloria Cecilia Narvaez, a Franciscan nun from Colombia, a day after she was freed by jihadists in Mali after more than four years of captivity, a Vatican spokesman said. Sister Gloria was taken hostage on February 7, 2017 in southern Mali near the border with Burkina Faso where she had been working as a missionary. "This morning, before the celebration of the holy mass to open the bishops' synod, the pope greeted the recently freed Colombian sister Gloria Cecilia Narvaez," Matteo Bruni said in a statement.

Mali's presidency had announced Sister Gloria's release on Saturday, with a statement on the presidential Twitter account paying tribute to her "courage and bravery" along with photos of the nun taken after her release. "I thank the Malian authorities, the president, all the Malian authorities, for all the efforts you've made to liberate me, may God bless you, may God bless Mali," Sister Gloria said in images broadcast on state television showing her with Mali's interim president Colonel Assimi Goita and the archbishop of Bamako Jean Zerbo. "I am very happy, I stayed healthy for five years, thank God," the nun said, smiling and wearing a yellow robe.

Her liberation had been the fruit of "four years and eight months of the combined effort of several intelligence services", the presidency said. In the official statement, Goita assured that "efforts are under way" to secure the release of all those still being held in Mali. Archbishop Zerbo said Sister Gloria was "doing well". "We prayed a lot for her release. I thank the Malian authorities and other good people who made this release possible," the archbishop said. The nun boarded a plane to Rome on Saturday evening.

Saved younger nuns

Sister Gloria, 59, was kidnapped near Koutiala, 400 kilometers east of Bamako. She had worked as a missionary for six years in the parish of Karangasso with three other nuns. According to one of her colleagues, Sister Carmen Isabel Valencia, she offered



This grab from a video provided by the SITE Intelligence Group shows Colombian nun Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti, one of the six hostages held by Al-Qaeda's Mali branch. — AFP

herself in place of two younger nuns the kidnapers were preparing to take. "She is a woman of a very particular human quality, down to earth ... moved by the love of the poor," Sister Carmen said. In Colombia, her brother Edgar Narvaez said he was very emotional after receiving news of her release. "She is in good health, thank God. They sent me pictures and she looks well," he said.

In a letter sent last July by the Red Cross to her brother, Sister Gloria said she was held by "a group of GSIM", the Al-Qaeda-linked Group to Support Islam and Muslims, the largest jihadist alliance in the Sahel. A source close to the negotiations to release her told AFP she had not been ill-treated during her captivity and during that time she had learned the Quran. "The negotiations lasted months, years," said the source, without giving further details. In Colombia, Vice-President Marta Lucia Ramirez—who is also foreign minister—said she was "very happy" at Sister Gloria's release, which she attributed to the work of the government and also stressed the "humanitarian efforts of the French government to contribute to this success". National police director Jorge Luis Vargas said meetings had been held with several European and African ambassadors to try to secure the nun's release. "With Interpol, and with other international organizations, we have always sought to bring those responsible to justice." — AFP

Taliban size up the threat from a tenacious IS-K

ISLAMABAD: The Taliban's efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan have been dogged by a series of bloody attacks by operatives from the Islamic State in Khorasan (IS-K). The latest assault saw a suicide bomber slaughter scores of Shiite Muslims during Friday afternoon prayers in the northern city of Kunduz, in an apparent bid to sow sectarian hatred and make the country ungovernable. It followed a suicide bombing that killed more than 100 Afghans and 13 US soldiers as American troops evacuated in August. AFP takes a look at the two groups and how their rivalry is likely to play out.

Who is IS-K?

The broader Islamic State group was officially founded in late 2014, when Sunni extremists fighting insurgencies in Iraq and Syria swore allegiance to a "caliphate". Supposedly the heartland of a future universal Muslim homeland under the IS black banner, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's group seized a chunk of Iraq and eastern Syria.

This territory was eventually recaptured by US-backed forces, but not before it had inspired spin-offs elsewhere, including in "Khorasan", a region taking in parts of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan. Jean-Luc Marret, of French think tank the Foundation for Strategic Research, describes IS-K as "a conglomeration of former jihadist organizations, including Uyghurs and Uzbeks, and Taliban defectors". IS-K claimed Friday's bombing in Kunduz was carried out by a Uyghur, a member of China's persecuted Muslim minority, underlining the regional nature of the threat.

According to UN estimates, IS-K has between 500 and a few thousand fighters in northern and eastern Afghanistan, including cells under the nose of the Taliban in the capital Kabul. Since 2020, the group has been reputedly led by one "Shahab al-Mujahir", whose nom de guerre suggests he arrived in the region from the Arab world but his origins remain murky. — AFP

News in brief

Five dead in Yemen blast

ADEN: Five people have been killed in a car-bomb attack targeting the governor of Aden, the seat of Yemen's internationally recognized government, security sources said yesterday. Governor Ahmed Lamal and Salem al-Socotri, a government minister, both survived the blast which went off as their convoy passed, the sources said. "A car bomb... on Al-Mualla Street exploded while the convoy of officials... was passing," a Yemeni security source told AFP, adding that the victims were in the convoy. The central government relocated to Aden from the capital Sanaa in 2014, forced out by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who continue to fight Saudi-backed Yemeni government loyalists in a grinding civil war. — AFP

Evacuation of jetliner in NYC

NEW YORK: An airliner was forced to carry out an emergency evacuation after it landed at New York's LaGuardia Airport on Saturday because of an unruly passenger, the airline said. An Embraer E-175 with 78 passengers and four crew members aboard en route to New York from Indianapolis "declared an emergency" toward the end of the flight and landed at LaGuardia without incident, Republic Airways said in a statement. Upon exiting the active runway, the plane stopped on a taxiway and conducted a "precautionary emergency evacuation." The passenger in question was taken into custody. — AFP

Far-right leaders arrested

ROME: Italian police yesterday arrested leaders and other members of far-right party Forza Nuova after a protest in Rome turned violent, with many calling for the group to be banned. Hundreds of people gathered to demonstrate against anti-coronavirus measures in central Rome Saturday, clashing with police and wrecking premises including the headquarters of the CGIL trade union federation. Police deployed water cannon and tear gas to disperse crowds over several hours of unrest. Italian media reported that among 12 people arrested were Roberto Fiore, Forza Nuova's national secretary, and Giuliano Castellino, the movement's chief in Rome. "The people behind the assault on CGIL's headquarters were quickly arrested. They had been stoking tension and violence for too long," said MP Federico Fornaro. — AFP

Gunmen kill 19 traders

KANO: Gunmen from gangs of cattle thieves and kidnapers have opened fire on a market in northwest Nigeria, killing at least 19 people, officials and local residents said yesterday. Northwest and central Nigeria are plagued by criminal gangs of cattle thieves and kidnapers for ransom called bandits, who raid villages, killing and abducting residents as well as looting and burning homes. The gangs have been targeting schools where they abduct students. Officials and local residents said the gunmen Friday raided a market in Uguwan Lalle village in Sabon Birni district of Sokoto state, near the border with Niger. "They attacked the market in the afternoon, killing 19 people," said Aminu Al-Mustapha Gobir, a local lawmaker representing the district in the Sokoto parliament. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2021

Green energy springs from abandoned UK coalmine

Authorities want to harness this green energy source to power a new garden village

SEAHAM, UK: Dawdon coalmine in northeast England was abandoned three decades ago, but is being brought back to life as the unlikely setting for a green energy revolution. The carbon-intensive colliery, near the town of Seaham on the windswept northeast English coast, hauled coal from deep underground until its closure in 1991. Dawdon has long since flooded with water because part of the mine is below sea level, and is heated by geothermal energy.

Authorities now want to capture and harness this valuable and unlimited green energy source to power a new garden village development. "The heat is basically coming from the ground," said Durham County Council official Mark Wilkes, whose portfolio includes climate change.

Water deep inside the mine heats up underground to about 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit). At the colliery's entrance, where thousands of miners once rushed to work, the vast pipes of a treatment plant now suck up the equivalent of a bathtub of warm water every two seconds, which is used to heat up a separate water supply.

In turn, this water circuit is heated via a pump until it reaches 55-60 degrees Celsius.

The plant treats the highly acidic and ferrous water in order to prevent contamination of local beaches and water supplies. Its heat will eventually power local homes, while the treated water is released back into the sea.

Industrial revolution turns green

"We are taking what was from the industrial revolution—and we're using it for the green revolution," Wilkes said. Heat from the water has so far only been used for the heating of the facility.

But in two years' time the local authority will create a new village of 1,500 homes nearby—entirely heated by the plant. "It is an unlimited source of energy: The water is coming through all the time," added Wilkes. "There are costs with the technology, but hopefully this will help to keep the cap on those costs going forward."

This is the first geothermal project on such a large scale in Britain, and Wilkes hopes it could also heat nearby businesses. Britain is heavily dependent on natural gas for electricity generation, although Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who hosts the COP26 climate summit next month in Glasgow, wants to shift all UK energy production to renewable sources by 2035 to help reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The urgency of the move was underlined by a surge in gas prices last week to record heights, stoked by economies reopening after coronavirus shutdowns and fears of spiking demand in the upcoming northern hemisphere winter.

Durham County Council has yet to name the company that will operate and partly finance the Dawdon plant. The geothermal heating will not be cost-free but authorities hope it will be cheaper than using gas.



SEAHAM, UK: Coal dust is washed up on the beach at Seaham Harbor in Seaham, northeast England. —AFP

Pretty low carbon

"The heat pump uses an electrical input," said Charlotte Adams, manager for mine energy at the UK Coal Authority industry body, which oversees old mines. "So it's not carbon-neutral, but it is energy efficient." But as you can imagine, over time the carbon content of electricity is decreasing, as we decarbonize our electricity supply.

"So over time, you're getting close to something which is pretty low carbon." The process is four times more energy efficient than a purely electric heating system, Adams said. The Dawdon green energy project will cost between £12 million and £15 million, funded via government, the plant's future operating company and property fees. — AFP

IMF board to hear from law firm accusing Georgieva of misconduct

WASHINGTON: The IMF executive board will hear from a law firm whose investigators concluded that managing director Kristalina Georgieva manipulated data in favor of China while she held a senior role at the World Bank, a source close to the case said Saturday.

The board said Friday it wanted "more clarifying details" as it assesses whether Georgieva will keep her job and that it will decide on this "very soon." The board has met three times this week—Wednesday, Friday and again Saturday to discuss the fate of the managing director.

Today it will meet with representatives of the law firm WilmerHale, which found that during her time as World Bank CEO, Georgieva was among top officials who pressured staff into changing data to China's benefit in the 2018 edition of its closely watched Doing Business report.

Georgieva, 68, has won the support of France and other European countries, a source close to the affair

told AFP on Friday. However, the United States—a key member of the IMF—has not yet stated its position on this controversy, according to two other sources with knowledge of the situation. Time is of the essence with the IMF and the World Bank to begin their fall meetings today.

'Expedient resolution'

Georgieva, a Bulgarian national and economist by training, spoke to the IMF board on Wednesday. She has repeatedly denied the report's conclusions, and on Thursday released a letter from her attorney to the board objecting to WilmerHale's findings, as well as her 12-page testimony to the 24 board members. "I am pleased that I finally had the opportunity to explain to the IMF Board my role in the Doing Business report and how I respected the integrity of the report," she said, adding that "I look forward to an expeditious resolution of the matter."

The law firm found that Georgieva, along with her associate Simeon Djankov, a former Bulgarian finance minister who created the report, and Jim Yong Kim, then-president of the bank, pressured staff to change the calculation of China's ranking to avoid angering Beijing. The push came while bank leadership was engaged in sensitive negotiations with Beijing over increasing the bank's lending capital. According to the investigation, Beijing complained about its ranking of 78th on the list in 2017, and the next year's report would have shown Beijing dropping even further.



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, International Monetary Funds (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva pauses while speaking about gender equality during the IMF and World Bank Fall Meetings in Washington, DC. —AFP

In the final weeks before the report was released at the end of October 2017, Kim and Georgieva asked staff to look into updating the methodology in regard to China, according to the WilmerHale investigation. Following the accusations, the World Bank scrapped its Doing Business report, which ranked nations based on their investment climate.

Georgieva began her leadership of the IMF on October 1, 2019, replacing Christine Lagarde, who was appointed to the European Central Bank, where she serves as president. Georgieva was the only candidate. —AFP

Reliance buys Norway's REC Solar in new green energy push

MUMBAI: Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani's Reliance conglomerate has bought Norway-based REC Solar from China National Bluestar for \$771 million, the company said yesterday as it aggressively expands into the green energy sector.

The oil-to-telecom giant pledged in June to invest \$10 billion in renewable energy over the next three years—one of several big firms moving into the industry as the South Asian giant pushes to reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels. The Mumbai-headquartered firm said the purchase would open up opportunities in key green energy markets such as the United States, Europe, Australia and Asia.

"It (buying REC Solar) will enable India to become a world leader in green energy transition to overcome the climate crisis," Ambani said in a statement. Ambani added that Reliance hopes to generate 100 gigawatts of renewable energy by the end of the decade—nearly a quarter of the 450GW target set by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. REC, a solar panel manufacturer, has its headquarters in Norway and runs its operations from Singapore, with regional hubs in North America, Europe, Australia, and the Asia-Pacific region.

China National Bluestar is majority-owned by state-run China National Chemical Corporation (ChemChina). Reliance's multi-billion-dollar fortune has been powered by oil and petrochemicals businesses, but the company has diversified into areas including telecoms and retail in recent years in the country of 1.3 billion people. Reliance on Saturday opened India's first 7-Eleven convenience store in Mumbai, as it boosts its retail presence in a sector dominated by family-owned stores, known as "kirana" shops. India is the world's third-biggest carbon emitter and is expected to become the world's most populous country by the middle of the decade. — AFP



MUMBAI: An Air India aircraft is pictured at a terminal of the airport in Mumbai on Saturday as the Indian government has agreed to sell the heavily-indebted Air India to the Tata conglomerate for 180 billion rupees (\$2.4 billion). —AFP

what the airline owes. Under the deal announced Friday, Tata will take on around a quarter of Air India's dues of 615 billion rupees, while the remainder will be transferred to a special-purpose vehicle.

Big bet

Tata Group, one of India's biggest and oldest companies, employs over 800,000 people in 100 countries. Founded in 1868 by Jamssetji Tata, the "Father of Indian industry", Tata owns Jaguar Land Rover, software giant TCS, Tata Steel as well as interests in chemicals, hospitality, consumer goods and communications. Its subsidiaries include 29 listed entities including software giant TCS, Jaguar Land Rover-parent Tata Motors, Tata Steel and others, which have a combined market capitalization of over \$250 billion.

Buying back India's biggest international airline—domestically IndiGo is number one—is part of ambitious plans. Tata owns 51 percent in Indian airline Vistara-Singapore Airlines holds the remaining 49 percent—as well as an 84-percent stake in AirAsia India, all of which Tata will now try to bring together. Air India comes with a fleet of around 120 aircraft in addition to 4,400 domestic and 1,800 international landing and parking slots at domestic airports, and 900 slots at airports overseas. —AFP

No power crunch, says India over blackout fears

NEW DELHI: India has ample coal stocks to meet the demand of its power plants, the government said yesterday, seeking to allay fears of imminent blackouts in New Delhi and other cities. The current fuel stock at coal-powered plants is about 7.2 million tons, sufficient for four days, the ministry of coal said.

Government-owned mining giant Coal India also has a stock of more than 40 million tons which is being supplied to power stations. "Any fear of disruption in power supply is entirely misplaced," the ministry said in a statement.

The clarification came a day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal warned of a looming power crisis in the megacity which is home to over 20 million people. Several regions across India have been hit by supply shortages in recent months, with utility providers resorting to unscheduled power cuts.

India's coal-fired power stations had an average of four days' stock at the end of September, the lowest in years. The shortage in India, the world's second-largest coal-consuming country, follows widespread power outages in China that have shut factories and hit production and global supply chains.

Coal accounts for nearly 70 percent of India's electricity generation and around three-quarters of the fossil fuel is mined domestically. As Asia's third-largest economy rebounds following a coronavirus wave, heavy monsoon rains have flooded coal mines and disrupted transport networks, leading to a sharp rise in prices for coal buyers, including power stations. International coal prices have also soared.

The ministry however sounded upbeat yesterday, saying that despite heavy monsoons and a steep hike in power demand, "domestic supplies have supported power generation in a major way".

"Delhi could face a power crisis," Kejriwal said on Saturday, adding the megacity has been struggling with energy supplies for the past three months. "I am personally keeping a close watch over the situation. We are trying our best to avoid it," Kejriwal said on Twitter.

Kejriwal urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to immediately resolve the crisis, saying any major interruption would affect hospitals and disrupt vaccinations against the coronavirus for Delhi's 20 million people. — AFP

Tata's deal marks end of a lengthy bid to privatize Air India

MUMBAI: Indian giant Tata is buying back Air India, 89 years after founding it as Tata Air and half a century following its nationalization. The 180-billion-rupee (\$2.4-billion) deal marks the end of a lengthy effort to privatize the heavily-indebted flag carrier that according to the government has eaten up 1.1 trillion rupees (\$14.7 billion) in public money since 2009.

The airline was founded in 1932 with the first flight piloted by Tata's eponymous chairman himself JRD Tata, flying mail and passengers in a single-propeller de Havilland Puss Moth from Karachi to Bombay, as the city was known then. Tata Air offered a slice of the high life with Bollywood actresses in its adverts and at one point commissioning Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dali to design its ashtrays.

The airline was nationalized in the 1950s and in the decades that followed the "Maharaja of the Skies" became synonymous with the hopes and ambitions of the newly independent country.

"Welcome back, Air India," Tata's patriarch chairman emeritus Ratan Tata tweeted on Friday, while admitting it "would take considerable effort to rebuild" the company. The airline at one time "gained the reputation of being one of the most prestigious airlines in the world. Tatas will have the opportunity of regaining the image and reputation it enjoyed in earlier years," he said. In the 1990s Air India began to struggle with competition on domestic and international routes from Gulf carriers and no-frills airlines, and the firm started amassing huge losses and debts.

Successive Indian governments tried to privatize the company but its debts and New Delhi's insistence on retaining a stake put off would-be buyers. Finally last year Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, seeking to sell of a raft of state assets, agreed to take bids for the entire company but to retain some of

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

US senators vote to increase debt limit by \$480bn until December 3

US nonfarm payrolls disappoint by a wide margin

KUWAIT: In avoidance of a historical default, US senators voted 50-48 to temporarily increase the nation's debt limit by \$480bn until December 3. The bill was finally approved following weeks of partisan debates, and came less than two weeks before a deadline that would leave the US unable to borrow money or pay off loans for the first time ever. The bill now needs approval by the Democrat-held House of Representatives, and will be sent to President Joe Biden to be signed into law.

For months, Republicans had rejected the Democrats' appeals on raising the debt limit and pointed to the Biden administration's ambitious spending plans. However earlier last week, the Senate's top Republican Mitch McConnell said his party would back the short-term extension even

of the year. Additionally, Biden's top domestic priorities are also in focus with an infrastructure plan worth nearly \$550 billion as well as a much more expansive, \$3.5 trillion effort focused on health, safety net programs and the environment.

Disappointing labor data

The US added fewer jobs than expected in September, complicating a critical decision by the Federal Reserve regarding scaling back monetary support before the end of the year. Nonfarm payrolls added just 194,000 jobs last month versus projections for a 500,000 rise, marking the smallest advance so far this year. The unemployment rate fell to 4.8 percent, though was partly reflecting a decline in labor force participation. Meanwhile, aver-

age hourly earnings advanced 0.6 percent in September, the strongest monthly advance since April, highlighting the attempt of companies to attract workers. Today, there are still 5 million more Americans unemployed compared to pre-pandemic levels. Nonetheless, reopening of schools and the end of expanded federal unemployment benefits should lead to a pickup in hiring in the coming months.

Still, the data risks not satisfying the Fed's criteria of "substantial further progress" for labor market improvement. Following last month's meeting, Fed Chair Jerome Powell noted that "a reasonably good employment report" for September would lead the bank to begin tapering

asset purchases. This led to wide spread expectations of a taper announcement for the next policy meeting in November, however the latest data creates uncertainty in this regard. Powell added that officials broadly support the stimulus program ending in the second half of 2022, however such decisions regarding tapering would not provide a "direct signal" about the timing of future interest rate increases.

According to Statistics Canada, the country added 157,100 jobs in September versus expectations of a 60,000 gain. This sent the unemployment rate lower to 6.9 percent in September from 7.1 percent in August, while the labor force participation rate improved slightly to 65.5 percent from 65.1 percent. The better than expected data reinforces the Bank of Canada's expectations of a strong rebound in the economy after contracting earlier this year due a third wave of COVID induced restrictions. The USD/CAD pair fell sharply on the back of the robust report alongside disappointing US labor data.

Commodities

An unexpected rise in US crude inventories prompted a retreat in oil prices following recent robust gains that sent prices to multi-year highs. According to the US Energy Department, data last week revealed crude inventories rose by 2.3 million barrels last week versus expectations for a dip of 418,000 barrels. This sent Brent crude back down to the \$80 level, still gaining 3.65 percent for the week.

The latest surge in commodity prices sent Brent to a 2018 high of \$83.47 before easing. As of Friday, the global benchmark is up 56 percent year-to-date, adding to inflationary pressures that could slow the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite rising demand for energy alongside pressure by the US and other consumer nations to raise output, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies stuck to their previous

agreement of gradually adding supply to the market. According to the deal reached in July, the groups' decision entails raising production by 400,000 barrels a day in November - a figure representing less than 0.5 percent of world demand. Analysts believe the group has a more cautious view regarding demand even as many believe demand for oil will far outstrip supply in the months ahead.

Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30160.

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1591	1.1527	1.1640	1.1567	1.1375	1.1660	1.1593
GBP	1.3545	1.3530	1.3655	1.3611	1.3410	1.3710	1.3617
JPY	111.03	110.81	112.25	112.22	111.20	114.15	112.16
CHF	0.9307	0.9229	0.9312	0.9271	0.9170	0.9470	0.9253

as many Republicans objected. Pressure was already mounting as Biden called for business leaders to voice their concerns. Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that the US government risked running out of money by October 18 if no deal was reached.

Wall Street rallied modestly on news of the agreement while the dollar ended the week mostly unchanged. Meanwhile, yields on the two-year and 10-year Treasury bonds rose to end the week at 0.3198 percent and 1.6118 percent respectively. Nevertheless, the decision provides only temporary relief as Democrats and Republican lawmakers will still have to tackle the issue once again before the end

of the year. Additionally, Biden's top domestic priorities are also in focus with an infrastructure plan worth nearly \$550 billion as well as a much more expansive, \$3.5 trillion effort focused on health, safety net programs and the environment.

Still, the data risks not satisfying the Fed's criteria of "substantial further progress" for labor market improvement. Following last month's meeting, Fed Chair Jerome Powell noted that "a reasonably good employment report" for September would lead the bank to begin tapering

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma account campaign

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draws on Al-Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign yesterday. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The results of the draws were as follows:

1. Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 went to the winner Mahmoud Abduljaleel Saleh Mohammad
2. Salary account campaign - the prize of up to KD 1,000 went to the winner Amal Abdullah Alhasham

The bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the Bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 400 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan for a period of up to 4 years and up to KD 70,000. Kuwaiti pensioner, along with expatriate customers who transfer their debt to the Bank will receive an instant cash gift of 2 percent from their transferred debt up to KD 1,000.

The bank stated that Al-Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 200, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The bank revealed that Al-Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al-Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time. The bank also reminded that the last day to open new Najma account or to increase the balance to enter the yearly mega draw of KD 1,500,000 is on 31-10-2021.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON
07 OCTOBER 2021

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	30,240	7,478.45	-0.2%	-0.2%	23.6%	326,029,351	105,237,312	16,514	29.1	2.3	75.3%
Main Market	9,910	5,723.74	1.9%	1.9%	25.7%	1,826,786,923	158,906,606	55,600	21.1	3.7	24.7%
All Share	40,150	6,883.51	0.3%	0.3%	24.1%	2,152,816,274	264,143,917	72,114	27.2	2.7	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	23,219	1,574.29	-0.1%	-0.1%	24.7%	130,753,365	59,401,127	6,070	33.2	2.3	57.20%
BASIC MATERIALS	960	1,075.09	-1.2%	-1.2%	19.6%	2,206,307	1,045,972	571	23.8	1.5	2.36%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	586	1,141.26	2.2%	2.2%	52.9%	63,433,296	6,882,555	3,512	9.6	41.3	1.44%
CONSUMER STAPLES	238	779.39	-0.5%	-0.5%	-4.8%	2,422,556	1,406,135	222	16.1	1.6	0.59%
ENERGY	289	1,387.36	0.8%	0.8%	8.6%	66,360,210	2,793,427	1,671	14.0	1.3	0.71%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	3,706	1,338.31	1.5%	1.5%	43.9%	814,382,975	94,329,190	25,898	8.9	1.7	9.13%
HEALTH CARE	394	794.68	-0.2%	-0.2%	-3.9%	32,226	16,410	20	27.4	5.3	0.97%
INDUSTRIALS	4,146	1,170.70	0.3%	0.3%	31.4%	156,023,336	33,788,806	9,148	26.5	1.8	10.21%
INSURANCE	611	1,465.79	1.1%	1.1%	26.8%	37,442,295	2,614,674	1,583	10.7	1.2	1.51%
REAL ESTATE	2,803	1,303.96	1.9%	1.9%	36.9%	698,174,309	52,632,433	19,748	27.6	1.3	6.90%
TECHNOLOGY	10	749.33	4.9%	4.9%	49.1%	301,646	29,761	38	-	0.9	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,374	1,100.26	0.4%	0.4%	-0.2%	175,292,759	7,788,389	3,262	16.0	2.1	8.31%
UTILITIES	259	618.42	-0.8%	-0.8%	-15.2%	5,990,994	1,415,040	371	20.3	4.9	0.64%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
SOKOUK	35	46.8	199,699,137	6,376,185	3,547
PAPCO	70	33.8	19,013	1,251	8
KHOT	112.0	27.3	47,680	4,468	34
EQUIPMENT	55	21.6	21,845,021	1,267,782	1,057
MUNSHAAT	63.0	19.1	3,006,496	184,376	143

Top Losers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFC	54	-9.9	65,132	3,531	35
DALQAN	276	-3.8	679,979	189,892	71
CGC	355.0	-3.8	2,699,635	960,289	367
NINV	191	-3.5	8,767,245	1,698,251	550
THURAYA	94.8	-3.3	55,797	5,053	17

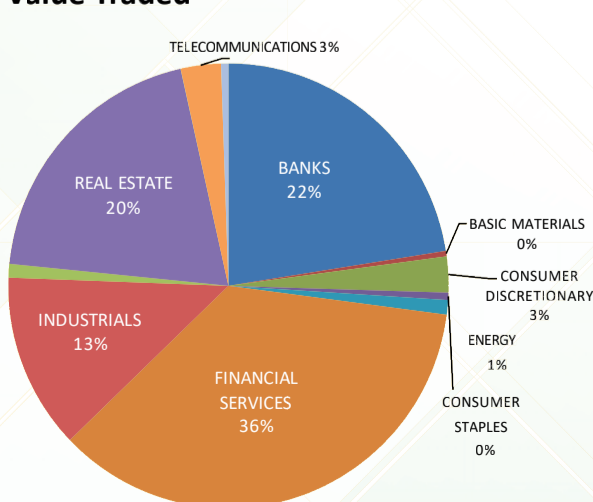
Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
SOKOUK	35	46.8	199,699,137	6,376,185	3,547
AAN	15	8.8	157,609,572	2,378,319	1,464
GFH	67	1.7	96,241,549	6,463,776	2,345
KRE	156	2.6	76,741,756	11,984,548	1,885
ALOLA	91	7.8	65,408,713	5,835,661	1,880

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
NBK	953	0.0	17,828,284	17,019,156	1,223
KFH	820	-0.2	17,985,451	14,754,197	1,860
KRE	156	2.6	76,741,756	11,984,548	1,885
AAYAN	169	2.4	61,232,384	10,298,084	1,089
AGLTY	979	-0.6	8,777,947	8,594,686	1,364

Value Traded



Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value decreased almost less than 1%, while Main market volume and value increased 32% and 11% respectively. This confirms the accumulation of the premier market stocks, while the Main market stocks' prices are increasing which might be explained that some stocks are undervalued.
- All share and Main indexes closed at a new all-time high record, while Premier Index closed below previous week for the second week in row.
- Technically, All Share index registered a new all-time high level closing at 6883 creating support level at 6862 and 6830. Staying above 6850 will lead to 6905 passing the resistance at 6890. Premier index closed at 7478 creating support level at 7460 and 7440. Staying above 7480 will lead to 7590 passing the resistance at 7490. Main index registered a new all-time high level closing at 5723 creating a support level at 5616, 5616, and 5575. Staying above 5675 will lead to 5755.

Business

Gulf Bank hosts its first career fair since pandemic outbreak

Gulf Bank committed to offering employment opportunities to local youth

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank hosted its first career fair since the pandemic. The event, which took place last week in the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) building, came as part of Gulf Bank's commitment to offering employment opportunities to local youth.

Representatives from Gulf Bank's call center, branches and direct sales attended the career fair, which offered various opportunities to local talents, including the chance to join one of Gulf Bank's departments. During the course of the career fair, Gulf Bank's employees met with multiple ambitious young men and women who wished to join the banking

sector. Gulf Bank employees described the nature of work at Gulf Bank, and took applicants through the variety of opportunities available, answering any questions that the applicants had.

Gulf Bank's participation in the virtual career fair is part of its long-term strategic partnership with MGRP, while reflecting the Bank's ongoing commitment to the national development plan, Kuwait Vision 2035 "New

Kuwait." Gulf Bank's efforts are part of the Bank's corporate social responsibility initiatives, encompassing both social and economic sustainability. By working to support and empower Kuwaiti youth on their paths to become the future leaders of the workplace, Gulf Bank is working in line with "New Kuwait," which prioritizes Kuwaitization in the private sector and the development of a more sustainable national economy.

"Our people are the cornerstone of our success at Gulf Bank. That is why we are constantly working on fostering a strong workplace culture, engaging and empowering employees to excel and advance in their careers, while maintaining our position as a preferred employer for employees and job seekers," said Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj. "We prioritize participating in career fairs due to their vital role in expanding our network of employees and championing Kuwaitization in the private sector - all part of our efforts to achieve Kuwait Vision 2035. At Gulf Bank, we are proud to be contributing to a more sustainable national economy through the development of local skills, and are looking forward to spearheading more efforts that will assert our position as the Kuwaiti Bank of the Future."

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank team holds personal interviews

delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to

maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the Bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with the different relevant parties to achieve it.

Burgan Bank reveals winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

- The lucky winners are:
- Nabil Ismail Muraish
 - Mohammad Ali Qabazard
 - Mustafa Abdulhameed Mohammad
 - Hashim Alrifai and Fayhaa Aliyan
 - Salwa Ali Al-Shatti

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

AVEVA: 85% of businesses to increase investment in digital transformation

DUBAI: AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability, reveals that 85 percent of businesses plan to increase their investment in digital transformation over the next three years in order to tackle climate change, embrace automation and unlock the performance benefits of advanced technologies. The findings were drawn from an AVEVA-commissioned survey focused on innovation priorities of senior industry leaders and managers.

AVEVA surveyed over 850 digital transformation experts across industries such as manufacturing including large-scale agribusiness and food and beverage, infrastructure, energy, power and chemical processing. The objective was to understand the different market opportunities, pressures and innovations driving industries to embrace digital operations, using a combination of AI, industrial software and human insight to deliver unprecedented performance.

"Industrial leaders are leveraging advanced analytics and digital innovation to rethink how they design, engineer and operate," says Ravi Gopinath, Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Cloud Officer, AVEVA. "Bringing together rich, timely and accurate industrial data with the scope and scale of the cloud, smart analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) are empowering industrial teams to collaborate better, operate with agility and elevate what they can achieve. This is set to transform how we all live and work."

Digital acceleration

Nine out of ten industrial companies see combining advanced technologies such as the industrial internet of things (IIoT), AI and cloud with their teams' insights, as key to driving better performance in a post-pandemic world. AI and automation are now seen as necessary technologies in order to keep pace with competitors. In China and Germany, more than half (56 percent and 55 percent respectively) have made digital transformation their top priority over the coming year, with investments focused on workforce solutions, cyber security, connected worker strategies and cloud.

Tackling climate change

The pandemic has increased focus on the need for

urgent climate action and the majority of industrial enterprises (90 percent) cite this as a core action area. Nine in ten (89 percent) are committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions across their businesses and to tackling climate change within a five-year time horizon. Indeed, focus on sustainability has become a prerequisite for success in industry, leaders affirmed. Sustainability-led demands will consequently drive innovation across the value chain, 85 percent of companies say. These companies are planning to increase visibility and performance assurance to sustainability related metrics as a result. Germany, Austria and Switzerland lead the global race for environment-linked business innovation: 47 percent in these countries see it as a significant focus, as opposed to 41 percent worldwide.

About 80 percent of industrial companies are focused on meeting or exceeding environmental regulations, while 83 percent say they will prioritize the transition to renewable energy sources. Supporting circularity and recycling within the value chain is important for 83 percent of customers, led by Latin America (44 percent of companies).

"At AVEVA, we are committed to helping our customers unlock the benefits of digital transformation to drive efficiency and sustainability. As the industrial world accelerates, AVEVA's solutions offer a proven pathway to support the shift to net zero while driving profitability and sustainability. Our study shows that Performance Intelligence, which is AVEVA's unique capability to combine data and AI-infused analytics that span the entire industrial lifecycle, is accelerating sustainability for many businesses. The new research reveals that 75 percent of companies believe they are on a journey to realizing Performance Intelligence, while 89 percent state that they are committed to driving sustainability. At AVEVA, we are committed to supporting both of these aspirations, to drive even greater value," Gopinath concluded.

A total of 850 C-suite leaders, business unit heads, executives and senior managers worldwide were interviewed in June 2021 by research house Savanta for the AVEVA survey, titled Approaching The Age of Performance. Respondents were based in Germany, the USA, Canada, the UK, Mexico, Brazil and China.

Huawei offers good product and good after-sales services

KUWAIT: Are the technical specifications of an electronic device the only thing to consider when making a purchase? Although the specifications of any device have a significant impact on the user experience, they are not the only factor to be considered: In recent years, a growing percentage of shoppers started looking into the after-sale service too. As a result and in order to stand out in a fiercely competitive market, many brands are shifting their focus to service optimization as Post-Purchase Customer Experience becomes a priority.

According to Kantar's BrandZ Most Valuable Global Brand Rankings for 2021, Huawei had its name listed again with the brand value increased by 29 percent year-on-year. What is Huawei's secret to consistently ranking high in global brand rankings? Aside from its cutting-edge technology and products, another factor that might be overlooked is Huawei's customer service and especially their after-sale services.

Huawei has been working hard to improve its customer service professionalism and friendliness all along, and has earned a reputation for providing high-quality services with Huawei Care.

Customers expect their needs to be met, and they expect the brand to be customer-centric, that's why Huawei Care provides worry-free quality assurance and helps Huawei users extend the product service life, allowing them to keep their devices for a longer period of time. Huawei Care is now available in Kuwait, which is a fantastic news and customers who purchase Huawei Care through authorized sales channels are eligible for a warranty on their devices.

Huawei Care value-added service can also help users save money on repairs (in some cases, for free), while also ensuring that original parts are used and a quality warranty is provided. Devices will also be repaired by certified technicians at Huawei Customer Service Center.

Huawei care-extended warranty

By extending the warranty on devices, Huawei care-extended warranty can relieve users of the worry of high maintenance costs.

Huawei care-screen protection

We rely on our smartphones for everything. Every now and then, our phone's screen may be damaged. Inadequate repair will result in a poor quality but also might compromise the device's performance. When users purchase Huawei care-screen Protection, the phone's screen will be replaced with the original screen one time for free if it is accidentally damaged (falling, compressing or crashing) as they may send their phone to an authorized service center to have it repaired, and shipping is free both ways.

The service excludes devices that have been soaked, bent, deformed, or handled/disassembled by an unauthorized service provider.

Huawei Care -loss care for FreeBuds

Earbuds are small and easy to use and sometimes they could be misplaced easily: That's why Huawei Care catered a special service if you are concerned about losing or damaging an earbud. When purchasing Huawei loss care for FreeBuds service, users get a new single earbud for half the price once a year if your earbud was lost or damaged, and the new earbud comes with a 90-day warranty.

Huawei has considered a number of scenarios in which a watch could be damaged (accidental colliding, dropping, squeezing or liquid ingress). If your watch is damaged, you only need to pay the service fee (which is not waived on service day) and it will be repaired once with original spare parts (the watch strap not included). Huawei has built a close relationship with its customers over the years, and customers recognize Huawei even more because of that: Its longstanding customer service philosophy has been crystallized into Huawei Care, which represents an update to the brand's mutually beneficial relationship with its customers.

While Previously Huawei focused on repairing any damage that had already been caused, now preventive maintenance has become priority, with the goal of alleviating customer concerns about device repair. Huawei has constantly been growing and evolving, so did its commitment to providing a warm and excellent customer service.



TCS reports steady quarter as India business recovers

MUMBAI: India's largest software exporter Tata Consultancy Services reported nearly 17 percent revenue growth in the third quarter of the year, driven by steady demand and recovery of its India business. The IT giant's net profit of 96.24 billion rupees (\$1.28 billion) for the quarter was 28.75 percent more than same period last year.

Its revenues, driven by strong growth in all its business segments, grew 16.77 percent to 468.67 billion rupees (\$6.24 billion) in the same period. The firm's key banking and financial services segment grew 17 percent to cross \$2 billion revenues in the quarter, con-

tributing 39 percent of its total revenues.

Operating margins remained steady at 25.6 percent year-on-year, compared to 25.5 percent in the previous quarter, despite unfavorable currency conversion rates in the quarter. "The strong and sustained demand environment is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to position ourselves as the preferred growth and transformation partner for our customers," TCS chief executive Rajesh Gopinathan said in a statement.

TCS's India business recovered after a weak June quarter, as its domestic revenues increased 20.1 percent compared to the last year. Its overseas growth was led by North America, which contributes 50 percent of its business, and saw revenue growth of 17.4 percent year-on-year. The revenues from the United Kingdom and Latin America also grew between 15 and 17 percent year-on-year. TCS said it hired 43,000 fresh graduates in the first six months of the financial year, its highest number in the period so far, and it had plans to recruit at least 35,000 more this year.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Handout images courtesy of Netflix show scenes from South Korea's "Squid Game". — AFP photos

SQUID GAME: SOUTH KOREA'S LATEST CULTURAL PHENOMENON

A dystopian vision of a polarized society, Netflix smash hit "Squid Game" blends a tight plot, social allegory and uncompromising violence to create the latest South Korean cultural phenomenon to go global. It features South Korea's most marginalized, including the deeply in debt, a migrant worker and a North Korean defector, competing in traditional children's games for the chance to win 45.6 billion won (\$38 million) in mysterious circumstances. And losing players are killed.



Director Hwang Dong-hyuk (center) directs a scene of "Squid Game".

The juxtaposition of innocent childhood pastimes and terminal consequences - coupled with high production values and sumptuous set design - has proved wildly popular around the world. Within days of its release last month, Netflix's top executive said there was "a very good chance it's going to be our biggest show ever".

It is the latest manifestation of the ever-

growing influence of South Korea's popular culture, epitomized by K-pop sensation BTS and the subtitled Oscar-winning movie "Parasite". Critics say that regardless of its Korean setting, the show's themes and its critique of the ills of capitalism are relevant everywhere - doubly so with the coronavirus pandemic exacerbating global inequalities - and are key to its ubiquitous appeal.

"The growing tendency to prioritize profit over the wellbeing of the individual" is a "phenomenon that we witness in capitalist societies all over the world," Sharon Yoon, a Korean studies professor at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, told AFP.

War and poverty

Netflix in February announced plans to spend \$500 million this year alone on series and films produced in South Korea. "Over the last two years, we've seen the world falling in love with incredible Korean content, made in Korea and watched by the world on Netflix," its co-CEO Ted Sarandos said at the time. "Our commitment towards Korea is strong. We will continue to invest and collaborate with Korean storytellers across a wealth of genres and formats," he added.

South Korea's history is chequered by war, poverty and authoritarian governments, which artists have responded to by exploring power, violence and social issues. That has created a vibrant cultural scene whose different forms have established ever larger foreign audiences over

the decades.

At first K-dramas became hugely popular with Asian television audiences, before South Korean cinema was garlanded with awards at European festivals, K-pop developed huge fan bases around the world, and "Parasite" took Korean-language film mainstream. Auteur Bong Joon-ho's Oscar winner is a vicious satire about the widening



gap between rich and poor, exploring the meaning of modern-day poverty in what is now the world's 12th largest economy.

'Bloody, unfamiliar and abstruse'

"Squid Game" director Hwang Dong-hyuk finished his script a decade ago but failed to attract funding as investors were reluctant and called it "too bloody, unfamiliar and abstruse". The filmmaker's previ-

ous works have dealt with themes including sexual abuse, intercountry adoption and disability, all loosely based on real-life events.

And the television series - his first - makes clear references to several traumatizing collective experiences that have shaped the psyche of today's South Koreans, including the 1997 Asian financial

crisis and the 2009 layoffs at Ssangyong Motor, both of which saw people take their own lives. "South Korea became a very unequal society relatively quickly and recently, during the last two decades," Vladimir Tikhonov, professor of Korean studies at the University of Oslo, told AFP.

Social mobility had become "much less possible" now than before 1997, he said, "and the trauma of deepening inequality... is spilled onto the screens". Netflix offers

the show in both dubbed and subtitled versions in multiple languages, expanding its potential audience.

Brian Hu, a film professor at San Diego State University in the United States, said the fact it was popular in almost 100 countries was evidence it was not made only for Western viewers. "Western audiences have long associated foreign media with



depictions of poverty, and it's become a way of looking down on the backwards rest of the world," he told AFP. "The unique thing about 'Parasite' and 'Squid Game' is that while the works depict poverty and class inequality, they do so in a way that exerts Korea's technical and cinematic modernity." — AFP

Michael Keaton confronts US opioid crisis in 'Dopesick'

Before he became Batman, Michael Keaton made his dramatic film debut in "Clean and Sober," an unflinching look at drug addiction during the United States' 1980s cocaine craze. Three decades later, he is ready to take on a similar theme. Ahead of next year's superhero movie "The Flash" - in which Keaton plays an older version of Batman - he stars in "Dopesick," a television drama about America's newest drug epidemic: the opioid crisis. "I tend to not want to revisit anything," said Keaton. "But this is societal, and has a much larger canvas or a bigger story to tell."

"It shines a light on white-collar America and its guilt," he told a Television Critics Association panel. The series, streaming on Hulu from October 13, is based on Beth Macey's non-fiction book "Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors and the Drug Company that Addicted America." It explores how Purdue Pharma aggressively pushed OxyContin, a highly addictive prescription painkiller blamed for the country's opioid crisis that has caused half a million US overdose deaths since 1999.

Purdue executives last year pleaded guilty to criminal charges that included defrauding federal health agencies by downplaying the addictive nature of the medication, and paying illegal kickbacks to doctors. Macey, a journalist based in Virginia, charted the lost lives of ordinary victims including high school football stars and middle-class moms, in the Appalachian region of the eastern United States seen as the epicenter of the epidemic.

Unlike the early decades of the "war on drugs," which focused on locking up abusers - including crack addicts, often from urban and minority communities - now "70 percent of all overdoses that happened last year were opioids," said co-star Rosario Dawson. "This is affecting people across the nation - across the world." In the television series, Keaton plays a doctor

in a small mining town, and Dawson a government narcotics agent, who each begin to uncover the scale of the burgeoning crisis. Both are amalgams of multiple real-life people interviewed by Macey.

'Expose this'

Kaitlyn Dever ("Booksmart") also stars as a mine worker who injures her back and is prescribed OxyContin. She "is completely unprepared of what is to come in her life, and ends up suffering and going down just a total rabbit hole, and has no control over it," said Dever. That was a common fate for thousands of Americans, who were prescribed incredibly potent opioids for often relatively minor injuries, by doctors receiving bonuses from the big pharmaceutical firms such as Purdue. Once their doctors eventually cut off their prescriptions, and pills were changed to make them harder to abuse, many turned to buying street heroin



US actor Michael Keaton attends the Hulu premiere of "Dopesick" at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) on Oct 4, 2021 in New York City. — AFP

just to stave off horrific withdrawal effects known as "dopesickness."

Ordinary addicts became drug mules, forced to take perilous trips to smuggle narcotics back from cities to their rural communities, and paid by dealers in heroin that only exacerbated their struggles. "If you really look at the exponential damage often done by white-collar crime compared to some kid - I'll say inner city but it could be a kid out in the country selling a bag of weed to maybe help pay his rent... how do you even compare the two?" said Keaton. The 70-year-old actor was born and raised in Pennsylvania, close to the heart of a region where the crisis "infiltrated every class group." — AFP

Nobel-winning writer Gurnah vows to keep talking migration

Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah on Friday pledged to keep speaking out on migration and other hotly-contested issues, branding Brexit "a mistake" and European governments' policies "inhumane". The 72-year-old novelist, whose decades-spanning body of work is rooted in colonialism and immigration, landed literature's top award Thursday for his unflinching portrayal of their effects on the refugee experience.

"I write about these conditions because I want to write about human interactions and... what is it that people go through when they are reconstructing lives," he told reporters at a news conference in London. "I didn't know it was going to happen," he said of scooping the accolade. "You write the best you can, and you hope it will succeed and do well."

But the acclaimed author of 10 novels and several short stories was at pains to point out he would keep speaking candidly on the issues that have shaped his work and world view. "I'm speaking because this is how I would speak... whether I had won the Nobel prize or not. I'm not playing a role, I'm saying what I think."

'I'm from Zanzibar'

Gurnah, the fifth African-born writer to win the literature Nobel, fled to Britain from Zanzibar in late 1967, later acquiring British citizenship. Growing up speaking Swahili, he had also learned English on the Indian Ocean archipelago, which was a British protectorate until unification with Tanzania. Despite going on to write his literature in English, Gurnah retains links with, and an identity shaped by, his homeland that has informed his novels.

"I'm from Zanzibar, there's no confusion in my mind about that," he explained. "My experience of both work as well as living has been here in Britain. But that is not entirely what constitutes your imaginary life or imaginative life. So I don't feel the question of where do you come from is one that answers the question of what your work does."

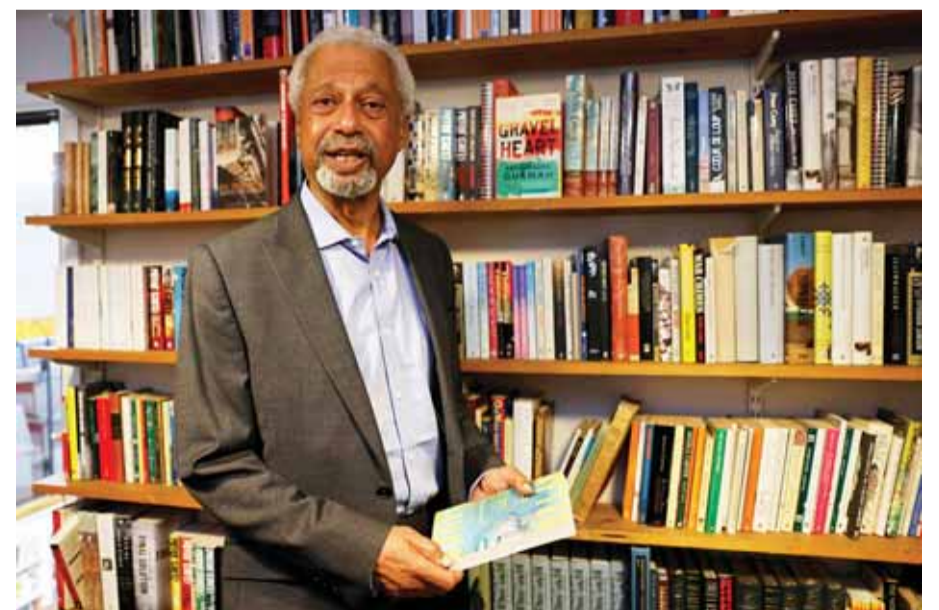
Self-deluding

After more than five decades in the UK, Gurnah argued there is now less blatant racism and greater awareness of the issue, but that the country's institutions remain "just as mean and just as authoritarian as they were". He cited the "Windrush" scandal, which saw immigrants from the Caribbean targeted by the government in recent years despite moving to Britain legally in the 1950s and 1960s, and the hostile treatment of asylum-seekers. "This seems to me to be just

Lack of compassion

The Nobel winner was also unsparing in his criticisms of other European countries' politics, such as Germany, which he argued has not "faced up to its colonial history". His latest book, "Afterlives", chronicles a little boy stolen from his parents by German colonial troops who later returns to his village to find his parents gone and his sister given away.

Gurnah said current European governments' headline reaction to increases in immigration from Africa and the Middle



Zanzibar-born author Abdulrazak Gurnah poses for a photo call prior to attending a press conference, after he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, in London on Oct 8, 2021. — AFP

a continuation of the same ugliness," the writer noted.

Meanwhile, Gurnah said he was "suspicious of the force" behind Britain's withdrawal from the European Union last year, which proponents campaigned for in 2016 partly on the basis of limiting immigration and recapturing "lost freedoms". "Maybe there is something nostalgic in that but there is also perhaps something self-deluding about that," he added. "Quite simply, I think it's a mistake."

East was both heartless and illogical. "In this terrified response - 'who are these people who are coming?' - (there) is a lack of humanity, a lack of compassion. "Also, there is not only no moral but no rational grounds: these people are not coming with nothing, they're coming with youth, energy, potential. "To simply focus on the idea that 'here they are, they're coming to snatch something from our prosperity' is inhumane." — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



In this photo taken on Oct 7, 2021, shows people enjoying dinner at the Chaopraya Antique Cafe, as floodwater from the Chao Phraya River surges into the restaurant in Nonthaburi province north of Bangkok. — AFP



A young customer carries a drink at the Chaopraya Antique Cafe.



An employee serves desserts at the Chaopraya Antique Cafe.

'Candy desk': Sugary secret powering the US Senate

It looks much like the rest of the furniture in the US Senate, but one desk harbors a secret power giving it the unique capacity to unite the deeply-divided chamber - it's full of sugary treats. The "candy desk" - replete with chocolates, sticky lollies and other goodies capable of sweetening even the most laborious voting session - has been legislators' guilty pleasure for more than half a century.

Situated near a busy entrance on the Republican side, this saccharine stockpile requires a storekeeper of sorts to make sure it is always full. During periods of intense negotiation, like the scrummage over spending and debt that has preoccupied senators in recent weeks, it is a responsibility that the nation's legislators take seriously. "I can assure you that the candy desk is now, and will continue to be, well stocked," the current incumbent, Pennsylvania's Pat Toomey, told AFP.

You'll have to take the Republican senator's word for it, as pictures of the mahogany bureau, with its writing box, bookshelves and ventilation grills, are extremely rare thanks to a Senate rule proscribing photography. Senators enjoy oratory - especially their own - and keep unconventional hours. A vote on even the most ostensibly straightforward issue can take all night.

The idea of the candy desk isn't really to keep the legislators well-nourished during these never-ending debates. But with almost a third of senators well into their 70s and beyond, the august body needs all the ambrosia it can get to keep the members perky in the small hours.

Tradition

During Donald Trump's first impeachment trial in 2020, an important procedural priority was the transfer of large boxes of candy through the corridors of power to Toomey's workstation. The senator has been the candy desk's gatekeeper-in-chief since 2015, and it is clear he considers trust bestowed in him to oversee this most sacred of duties a personal honor. "But it is also just the natural order of things that the senator from Pennsylvania would have the candy desk, since we lead America, and the world, in candy-making," he enthuses.

Toomey makes a strong case: some 200 candy-makers including the world-renowned Hershey's operate in the Keystone State, in a sector employing some 10,000 workers. Senators are generally not allowed to accept gifts but there are exceptions, such as for low-value products that are sent from their home states to be handed out free-of-charge.

The tradition began in 1968, when California Republican George Murphy, an accomplished actor and dancer with an eye for a crowd-pleasing gesture, was allocated the desk. Known for his sweet tooth, he would invite colleagues to share the treats he had stashed to get through the long hours of speechmaking. The ritual was kept alive by subsequent custodians, including Republican presidential candidates John McCain of Arizona and Rick Santorum, who sat there during Bill Clinton's impeachment trial.

'Keeping senators awake'

"It's actually a very important part of keeping senators awake during these long hours of testimony," Santorum, another Pennsylvanian, told public radio station NPR last year. Santorum regales colleagues with a lesser-known controversy from Clinton's 1999 acquittal for lying under oath during the Monica Lewinsky scandal - when the 42nd president's legal team complained that they were being denied their rightful access to the candy.

To the wider public it may not have been the most consequential point of order, but Santorum was keenly aware of the injustice, and made a point of ensuring confectionary equity in even this most adversarial of scenarios. To argue that the candy desk is some totem of bipartisan comity might be to sugar-coat the issue, however. — AFP

THAI DINERS WHET THEIR APPETITES AT FLOOD CAFE

A Thai restaurant has taken dining with a water view to the next level - its customers perch precariously on wooden stools as murky brown floodwater laps at their tables. Tropical storm Dianmu and heavy monsoon rains have caused flooding in 33 Thai provinces, inundating more than 300,000 households and claiming nine lives. Riverside areas of Bangkok are bracing for flooding in the coming days and more storms are expected to hit the kingdom next week.



People stand whilst enjoying dinner at the Chaopraya Antique Cafe.

But the crisis has been a boon for the Chaopraya Antique Cafe in Nonthaburi, part of the vast sprawl of Bangkok upriver from the city center. In the afternoons and evenings the restaurant is full of diners munching miang kham, a fiery leaf-



An employee sets a table at the cafe.

wrapped appetizer, giggling and jumping on their seats as boats and rice barges cruise past the Chao Phraya River, sending waves of caramel-colored water towards them.

When flooding began owner Titiporn Jutimanon intended to close the restaurant but soon realized customers did not actually mind being surrounded by water. "The concept has spread by customers' word of mouth," he told AFP, adding footage of the quirky eatery quickly started trending on social media.

Restaurants in Bangkok and other hotspots yoyoed in and out of restrictions on in-house dining this year as a deadly

third wave of coronavirus infections took hold. Thai authorities allowed in-house dining to resume in September, as part of an easing of restrictions as new cases fell to around 10,000 a day, down from a peak of 23,000 in August. An estimated 50,000 restaurants have shut down permanently according to the Thai Restaurant Association, and Titiporn is grateful he can keep his doors open.

"If I have to close down the restaurant again, it wouldn't survive for sure," he said. Operating a flooded restaurant is a lot of hard work, Titiporn noted. "You have to navigate your way through floodwaters while holding the customers' food," he said,

adding staff also have to mop up mud at the end of the day.

The experience has proved popular with young people and families. "The economy is pretty bad these days... I think it's a very good idea. The owner has turned the crisis into an opportunity," customer Neung, 49, said. Health authorities in many countries advise people not to expose themselves to or swim in floodwater. Fecal matter from overflowing sewage, chemicals and industrial waste can cause illness and skin infections can occur from contact with open wounds. — AFP

How Danish gastronomy reached dizzying heights

It's home to the top two eateries in the world and a cornucopia of Michelin stars: Denmark's haute cuisine, non-existent 20 years ago, is making Copenhagen a top destination for gourmands. Noma and its star chef Rene Redzepi, and Geranium headed by Rasmus Kofoed, clinched the top two spots in the 50 Best Restaurant awards recently published by British magazine Restaurant.

"They were nobody 20 years ago when Rene Redzepi started to reinvent the Nordic cuisine, focusing on local, ethical food," says Szilvia Gyimothy, a marketing professor at Copenhagen Business School. "It was quite unique and now he is an agenda-setter." With cold winters and sandy fields battered by winds from the North Sea and Baltic, Denmark is worlds away from the sun-drenched orchards of France, Italy and Spain, whose bountiful crops have served up gastronomic feasts for centuries.

Paradoxically, Denmark's culinary successes have been partly attributed to the country having no gastronomic traditions to speak of, leaving the field wide open to innovation and creativity. There are "many restaurants in the world where the chefs ... rest on their laurels (and) are not so creative. Rene Redzepi and Rasmus Kofoed are never satisfied with what they've achieved," says Bent Christensen, founder of Danish food guide Den Danske Spiseguide.

"It's very special to have two people like that in such a small country," he adds. Christensen attributed the success to a vibrant culinary scene spearheaded by the



Rasmus Kofoed, chef of Danish restaurant Geranium.

two young chefs, as well as the unexpected advantages of Denmark's geographical location. "You're always less than 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the sea, that's fantastic for fish," he gushes. "And it's nice with our climate - you really have four seasons and the vegetables can slowly mature."

Creating refined, delicately flavoured meals, chefs favor local specialties - such as cabbage, which Redzepi has dubbed "the coconut of the North" - honoring the country's environmental mindset. For example, Geranium is currently offering a three-hour "Autumn Universe" sitting featuring Jerusalem artichoke, grilled lobster, sea buckthorn and duck. Noma's summer menu, soon to make way for fall's "game and forest", meanwhile features among other things an awe-inspiring saffron

caramel candle, with a lit wick made from shaved walnut dipped in cardamom essential oil.

'Pushing a social agenda'

Redzepi is a fermentation guru - a technique he uses to make pine cones edible - and fiercely loyal to local products, always inventing new dishes, Gyimothy says. "He is engaged in the debate around food, climate, labor conditions, parity. He has really been using his role to push a strong societal agenda," she says. Shortly after earning its third Michelin star in September - finally, according to food critics - Noma clinched the top spot in the 50 Best Restaurant awards on October 5, elbowing out Mirazur in Menton, France. Redzepi previously held the title four times in the 2010s. But the fantastical dishes do not come cheaply: Noma's set menu costs 2,800 kroner (380 euros, \$435), excluding drinks.

"It is still a very elitist product but it also affects the way average Danes think of their food," says Gyimothy. Danes have become more conscious of buying locally-grown and in-season products, and reducing their climate footprint, she explains. The effect can also be seen on other restaurants. "Danes used to travel around, just to practice (different cooking styles) but now it's upside down, people are coming to Denmark to study," notes Christensen. According to VisitDenmark, which promotes tourism to the country, 38 percent of foreigners who visited Copenhagen in 2019 did so to sample the gastronomy. — AFP



In this photo taken on May 31, 2021, personnel of the world-class Danish restaurant Noma work in the kitchen in Copenhagen. — AFP photos



Rasmus Kofoed, chef of Danish restaurant Geranium.

COCONUTS AND PRAYERS: SOLOMONS PAIR SURVIVE 29 DAYS ADRIFT AT SEA

Lost at sea for 29 days, two Solomon Islanders survived on coconuts, oranges and prayers before being rescued 400 km away off the coast of Papua New Guinea. The two men were travelling between islands in the notoriously unpredictable Solomon Sea, when their seven-meter boat got caught in rough weather a few hours into their journey on September 3.

Livae Nanjikana and Junior Qoloni lost sight of land in the "heavy rain, thick dark clouds and strong winds," Nanjikana told the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation from the PNG district of Pomio on Friday. As the battery in their GPS died and nightfall approached, they switched off their 60-horsepower engine to save fuel. The men spent their first night being battered by wind and rain which drove their boat further out to sea.

For the first nine days, they lived on oranges they had packed for the trip. When those ran out, Nanjikana said they survived on rainwater, coconuts "and our faith in God because we pray day and night." Collecting rainwater in a canvas bag, the pair would power up their engine whenever they came across a floating coconut, racing to pick it up. "After several days, because we prayed, God gave us this thought of constructing a device to sail. So we constructed a mast-like structure using paddles and canvas and set sail following the direction of the wind," Nanjikana said.

The sail sent them towards New Britain island in Papua New Guinea where they saw a fisherman in the distance. Starting the engine for one final push, they motored towards him but ran out of fuel. "It was then that we shouted and continually waved our hands to the fisherman that he saw us and paddled towards us," Nanjikana said. "When he reached us, we asked, where are we now? And he replied, PNG. Ooh, we are now safe." The pair have remained in Pomio while arrangements are being made to return them to the Solomon Islands. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Turkish beekeepers Fehmi Altı, 47, and his father Mustafa Altı, 71, look at their bees in the village of Cökek in Mugla province, southwestern Turkey, on Sept 23, 2021.



Fehmi and Mustafa scrape honeycomb frames to prepare the honey for extraction in their house. — AFP photos

Turkish fires endanger world pine honey supplies

Beekeepers Mustafa Altı and his son Fehmi were kept busy tending to their hives before wildfires tore through a bucolic region of Turkey that makes most of the world's prized pine honey. Now the Altıs and generations of other honey farmers in Turkey's Aegean province of Mugla are scrambling to find additional work and wondering how many decades it might take to get their old lives back on track. "Our means of existence is from beekeeping, but when the forests burned, our source of income fell," said Fehmi, 47, next to his mountainside beehives in the fire-ravaged village of Cökek.

"I do side jobs, I do some tree felling, that way we manage to make do." Nearly 200,000 hectares of forests - more than five times the annual average - were scorched by fires across Turkey this year, turning luscious green coasts popular with tourists into ash. The summer disaster and an accompanying series of deadly floods made the climate - already weighing heavily on the minds of younger voters - a major issue two years before the next scheduled election.

Signalling a political shift, Turkey's parliament this week ended a five-year wait and ratified the Paris Agreement on cutting the greenhouse emissions that are blamed for global warming and abnormal weather events. But the damage has already been done in Mugla, where 80 percent of Turkey's pine honey is produced. Turkey as a whole makes 92 percent of the world's pine honey, meaning supplies of the thick, dark amber may be running low worldwide very soon.

least five or 10 years to get our previous income back". His father Mustafa agrees, urging President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government to expand forested areas and plant young trees.

"There's no fixing a burnt house. Can you fix the dead? No. But new trees might come, a new generation," Mustafa said. For now, though, the beekeepers are counting



Fresh pine honey.

their losses and figuring out what comes next. The president of the Mugla Beekeepers' Association, Veli Turk, expects his region's honey production to plunge by up to 95 percent this year. "There is pretty much no Marmaris honey left," he said. "This honey won't come for another 60 years," he predicted. "It's not just Turkey. This honey would go everywhere in the world. It was a blessing. This is really a huge loss."

'So much loss'

Beekeeper Yasar Karayigit, 45, is thinking of switching to a different type of honey to keep his passion-and sole source of income - alive. "I love beekeeping, but to continue, I'll have to pursue alternatives," Karayigit said, mentioning royal jelly (or "bee milk") and sunflower honey, which involves additional costs. "But if we love the bees, we have to do this," the father-of-three said.

Ismail Atici, head of the Milas district Chamber of Agriculture in Mugla, said the

price of pine honey has doubled from last year, threatening to make the popular breakfast food unaffordable for many Turks. He expects price rises to continue and supplies to become ever more scarce. "We will get to a point where even if you have money, you won't be able to find those medicinal plants and medicinal honey," Atici said. "It's going to be very hard to find 100-per-



Bees hover around the hand of a beekeeper.

cent pine honey," beekeeper Karayigit agreed. "We have had so much loss."

'We must continue'

Looking ahead, the president of the Turkey Beekeepers' Association, Ziya Sahin, suggests selectively introducing the Basra beetle to new areas of Mugla, expanding coverage from the current seven to 25 percent of local pine forests. "If we conduct transplantation of the beetle from one area to another and continue this for two successive years, we can protect the region's dominance in the sector," Sahin said. "There will be a serious drop in honey production if we don't do this," he added, calling this year the "worst" of his 50-year career. Yet despite the pain and the troubled road ahead, the younger Altı has no plans to quit. "This is my father's trade. Because this is passed down from the family, we must continue it," Fehmi said. — AFP

Posing as satire, misinformation spreads online

Hoaxes spread quickly online, be they about celebrities, politicians or anyone else. But falsehoods labelled as satire can slip through the defenses of social media companies, allowing people to peddle fiction as fact, all while making a financial profit. The claims tend to be spectacular: Bill Gates arrested for child trafficking, Tom Hanks executed by the US military, or Pope Francis declaring that a COVID-19 vaccine would be required to enter heaven.

These bogus allegations originated from articles on websites that contain disclaimers that they are satirical. The problem is that many people believe them. In some cases, the claims go viral and are never debunked online, or in the minds of those who have read and shared them.

Claire Wardle, co-founder and executive director of First Draft, a coalition researching online trust and misinformation, said satire and parody tags may be deliberately used to circumvent moderation by social media platforms. "We see bad actors and disinformation agents labeling their content as satire knowing well it is likely to be shared without the satire label," Wardle told AFP.

Platforms face a conundrum because satire has long been considered an important element in political speech, implicitly protected by the US constitution. Using the satire tag can allow someone to avoid being downgraded by Facebook's algorithm, and in some cases, escape the scrutiny of fact-checkers. This has become "a strategic way to make money or sow discord," Wardle said, adding that it can be difficult to separate legitimate satire from content posted by those "who label their information as satire and know it's likely to cause harm."

From fun to politics

During the 2020 US election campaign, the Poynter Institute's fact-checking operation PolitiFact found more than 100 websites publishing political satire out of context, calling it "a common tactic for misinformers who want to make money online". The Gates and Hanks hoaxes originated from "Real Raw News", a site fact-checked several times by AFP, and which has a disclaimer that its content "is for informational and educational and entertainment purposes" and "contains humor, parody, and satire".

Another recent article shared across social media claimed that Walt Disney's body was cryogenically preserved after his death in 1966 and that an effort would be made to revive

him. That story originated from Daily News Reported, which touts itself as "a fabricated satirical newspaper and comedy website".

Social media users often have difficulty separating fact from satire, said R Kelly Garrett, an Ohio State University professor of communications. "If you're not familiar with the news, you see a headline and it sounds like so many other headlines," said Garrett, who has researched the topic. "And the kinds of claims that would have seemed outlandish just a decade ago are becoming more common."

Facebook in April said it would use the satire tag on some pages and posts to help avoid "confusion". Similar instances around the world highlight the problems around satire going viral and being wrongly transformed into purported fact. A claim that French President Emmanuel Macron felt "dirty" after shaking hands with poor people during the 2017 election came from the satirical website Le Gorafi. Ihlaya News, a South African parody website, has been the source of several viral stories fact-checked by AFP, including one saying a student had hacked her university to change her grades.

'Politically charged'

Popular websites such as The Onion in the United States and Canada's The Beaverton have long been recognized for satire and parody. But the conservative-friendly satire site Babylon Bee has tangled with fact-checkers over its articles, including the pope's purported vaccine claim and another that the Islamic State jihadist group had laid down its arms in response to a plea from singer Katy Perry.

As many as 28 percent of Republicans and 14 percent of Democrats believed the admittedly fake stories in the Babylon Bee, Ohio State researchers found in 2019. Then-president Donald Trump retweeted one of its stories in 2020. There was a somewhat lower level of belief in The Onion, with Democrats more likely to accept those false stories as fact.

But Garrett, who led the research, said fact-checking satire may not be an effective way to curb the spread of misinformation. "If you tell people it's been fact-checked it's politically charged," he said. "People think fact checkers have a political agenda. If you tell people it was a joke it's more persuasive." — AFP

Unnamed Myanmar photographer wins Bayeux war reporting prize

The prestigious Bayeux War Correspondents' Awards on Saturday honored work by a range of international journalists including several veteran reporters and-for the first time - an unnamed Myanmar photographer. The jury agreed unanimously to award the photography prize to the Myanmar candidate, its chairman Franco-Iranian correspondent Manoocher Deghati told AFP. The jury wanted to highlight "the conditions in which very young photographers are working" in Myanmar, said Deghati, who himself had to flee Iran in 1985 after receiving death threats. The photographer's work along with several other Myanmar photographers, was on show at Bayeux, the northern French city hosting the prize.

In the written press category, Wolfgang Bauer won for his coverage of the Taleban for Zeit Magazin. It is the second time he has been honored, having won in 2016 for his work in Nigeria. Bosnians Damir Sagolj and Danis Tanovic won in the long-form television as well as the video category for their report for Al Jazeera on the plight of thousands of migrants in northern Bosnia Herzegovina. Margaux Benn was honored in the radio category for her report for Europe 1 on the villages littered with landmines in the area.

Orla Guerin and Goktay Koraltan won the television award for their report for BBC television on the snipers in Yemen targeting children. This report also won the special prize awarded by a jury of high school students. The young reporter's award went to Thomas D'Istria for his report for Le Monde newspaper from Belarus, for which he spent a year undercover. The public jury prize went to Abu Mustafa Ibraheem for his coverage for Reuters of the conflict in Gaza. The winners, who are chosen by a jury of around 40 French and British journalists, receive prizes of between 3,000 and 7,000 euros each. — AFP



A group picture shows winners and jury members during the closing ceremony of the 2021 Bayeux-Calvados Awards for war correspondents on Oct 9, 2021 in Bayeux, northwestern France. — AFP

PANDEMIC SAVIORS, FOOD DELIVERY APPS NOW UNDER FIRE

Meal delivery services became essential during the pandemic, when millions of Americans were under lockdown and restaurants were shut to visitors. But these days the platforms are increasingly finding themselves under fire, with politicians seeking to regulate the industry and restaurateurs accusing the likes of DoorDash, Grubhub and Uber Eats of freeloading. And they are looking for ways to do without them. In just the first nine months of this year, DoorDash has likely filled over 1 billion orders, most of them in the US, where the company is the market leader.

But Mathieu Palombino, founder of the New York-based pizza chain Motorino, calls the boost provided by delivery apps a "big illusion" because more orders don't bring bigger profits to restaurants. "When you receive thirty or forty orders a day, you are happy. But the problem is that it does not translate into profits," Palombino told AFP. Food delivery services can charge restaurants fees of up to 30 percent of the bill for a meal, according to their web sites. To address that problem, in August the New York city council passed a law, capping third-party delivery fees at 15 percent.

"Small businesses should not be pressured into accepting these fees in order to remain viable and competitive," said New York City Councilman Francisco Moya, who initiated the bill. A similar law was passed in San Francisco in June. Food delivery giants have challenged the laws in courts, and some analysts think they have a point. "We believe DoorDash will have a strong legal case against the permanent fee caps," Bank of America said in a research note last month.

DoorDash, Grubhub and Uber Eats argue that the cap is unconstitutional and that restaurants are free to negotiate their commissions with delivery platforms. The

delivery giants also say they have made huge investments during the pandemic that led millions of customers who had never ordered meals online to get started. And DoorDash says that restaurants that used its platform during the pandemic had a survival rate eight times higher than the industry average. The company also says that even before the laws were passed it already offered a 15% fee formula.

Put Palombino, the pizza chain



In this file photo taken on Dec 3, 2020, a Doordash delivery person rides their bike on Church Avenue in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn in New York City. — AFP

founder, is unconvinced. "The problem is that they have become so established that there no longer is a way back," he said. "If you're not on Seamless (one of the most popular delivery services in New York), you no longer exist." As for the 15

percent commission, Palombino said that a successful restaurant can "only hope" for a profit margin of 15 or 20 percent. "So at the end of the day, they take it all."

'The only real solution'

In court, the food delivery platforms have argued that the cap will trigger higher fees for consumers, who have been relatively spared for now. Collin Wallace, managing director of the marketing firm ZeroStorefront and former head of innovation at Grubhub, says that so far it's the restaurants who have had to bend.

"The only way to get this resolved is going to be by the technology platforms, using the same engineering and innovation they used to get their companies to this point," Wallace said. Some businesses are already trying to get around the all-powerful delivery apps by creating their own platforms. One such start-up, ChowNow, helps restaurants launch their own order-taking applications, so as not to have to pay any commissions at all.

Another company, LoCo, creates delivery cooperatives owned by restaurants, where they get to choose their own commissions, often half of what delivery giants charge, said LoCo founder Jon Sewell. Sewell, himself an owner of a restaurant in Iowa, added that this arrangement also allows restaurants to keep their clients' data to themselves. LoCo has launched franchises in Virginia, Nevada, and Nebraska and is looking to expand further. But Sewell admits that the concept is not easy to sell. "It's difficult to get the people convinced that they need to start to work as a collective." But, Sewell added, "to me, that's the only real solution." — AFP

Sports

McTominay gives Scotland dramatic win as England thrash Andorra

Sweden move within one point of Spain in Group B; Serbia tops Group A

PARIS: Scott McTominay scored an injury-time winner as Scotland came from behind to claim a crucial 3-2 victory over the Zionist entity's team in World Cup qualifying on Saturday, while England thrashed Andorra 5-0 to stay on track to reach next year's global showpiece.

Scotland's win takes them four points clear in second place in Group F with three matches remaining as they bid to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1998. Group winners qualify automatically for next year's finals in Qatar, with the runners-up heading into the playoffs.

Scotland trailed twice in the first half at Hampden Park to goals from PSV Eindhoven forward Eran Zahavi and Mu'as Dabbur. John McGinn levelled once, but home striker Lyndon Dykes missed a penalty on the stroke of half-time.



Poland, Albania, Switzerland, Greece, Ukraine, Bosnia win

He made amends before the hour mark with an equalizer, awarded after a VAR review after the referee initially disallowed it for a high boot. A point would have been a decent result for Steve Clarke's men, but the hosts pushed for a winner which arrived in the 94th minute as Manchester United midfielder McTominay bundled in at the back post.

The Scots still hold a slim chance of topping the group, trailing leaders Denmark, who cruised past Moldova 4-0 in Chisinau, by seven points. "We've got a few games left and we have to just remain focused. We wanted a win tonight and we got it," Dykes told Sky Sports.

England score five

England manager Gareth Southgate rested key players including Harry Kane and Raheem Sterling as his second string impressed in a 5-0 thumping of Andorra. Ben Chilwell opened the scoring in the 17th minute, with the goal awarded by VAR after initially being disallowed for offside against Jadon Sancho.

Bukayo Saka made the points safe before half-time and Roma striker Tammy Abraham made the most of a rare start by scoring in the 59th minute. Jack Grealish



GLASGOW: Football supporters hold up a Palestinian flag as a young Scotland fan waves the Saltire in front of it during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Group F qualification football match between Scotland and the Zionist entity's team at Hampden Park in Glasgow on Saturday. — AFP

came off the bench and won a penalty which James Ward-Prowse saw saved, before turning in the rebound.

Grealish rounded off the scoring with a fine individual effort for his first international goal after collecting goalkeeper Sam Johnstone's long kick. "It has been a long time coming and it's about time that I scored because everyone has been saying it to me," Grealish told the BBC. "I think that is 16 games now. It was coming and I'm just delighted that I've got off the mark."

It was a busy night for Kateryna Monzul, the first female official to referee an England match, with five yellow cards as well as the penalty award. England remain four points clear at the top of Group I after second-placed Albania won 1-0 against Hungary in Budapest. Poland are a point further back in third after seeing off San Marino 5-0 and next face Albania in Tirana on Tuesday.

Sweden maintain chase

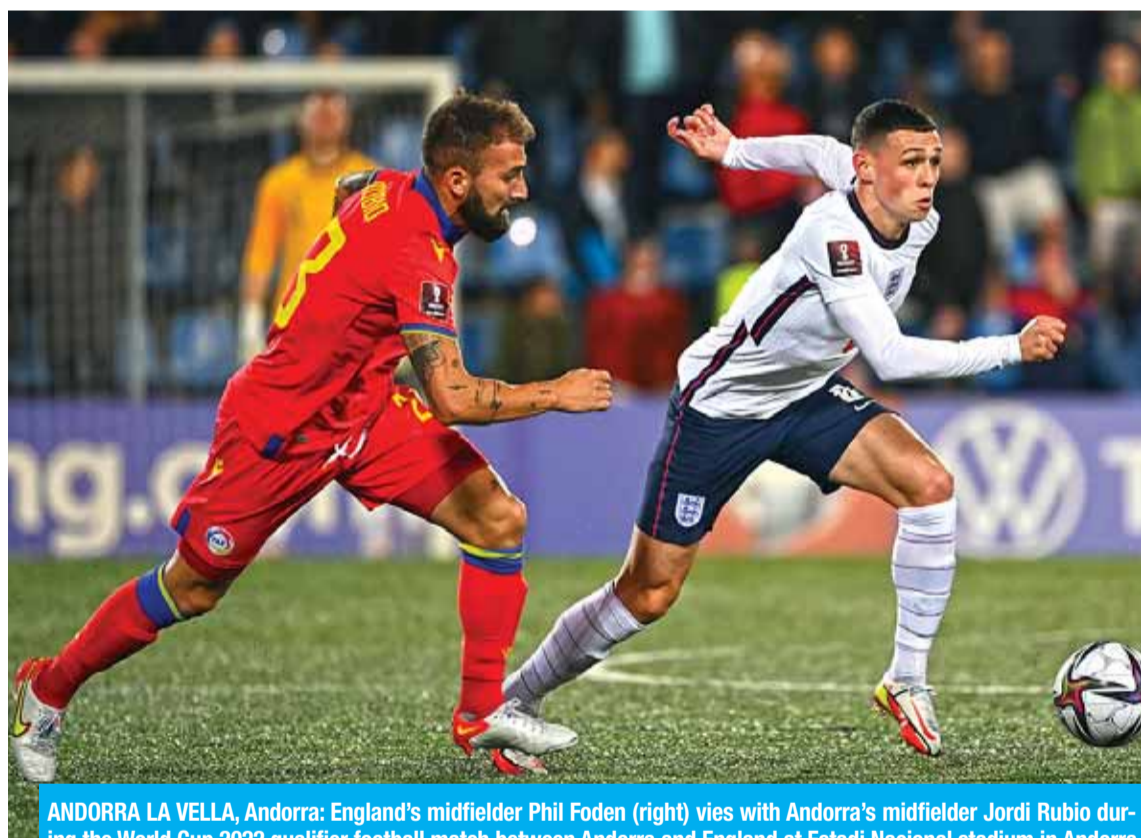
Sweden moved within a point of Group B leaders Spain thanks to a 3-0 win over Kosovo in Solna.

Alexander Isak scored a magnificent goal to cap a brilliant individual display, with Robin Quaison and Emil Forsberg also on the scoresheet.

Sweden also have a game in hand on Spain, who they visit in their final qualifier next month. Greece kept their hopes of pushing into the top two themselves alive as two late goals secured a 2-0 win in Georgia. The Greeks remain unbeaten and are three points behind Sweden and also have a game in hand on Spain.

Switzerland remain close on the coattails of European champions Italy after edging out 10-man Northern Ireland 2-0 in Geneva. The Swiss are three points behind Italy in Group C with a game in hand and lead third-placed Northern Ireland by six points.

Elsewhere, Serbia moved above Portugal to the top of Group A with a 1-0 win over Luxembourg. Ukraine ended a run of five straight draws with a 2-1 victory in Finland to consolidate their grip on second place in Group D. The Euro 2020 quarter-finalists are two points ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who beat Kazakhstan 2-0, and four points behind France. — AFP



Former Man Utd star Pallister fears dementia

LONDON: Former Manchester United defender Gary Pallister fears he is a "prime candidate" to suffer from dementia after revealing he endured "awful migraines" during his playing days. Pallister was a four-time Premier League winner with United during the Alex Ferguson era, but the center-back is concerned about the damage caused by heading the ball during his glittering career. With several members of England's 1966 World Cup winning team diagnosed with dementia in recent years, the issue is becoming a major concern among footballers.

Brain injury specialist Professor Willie Stewart was the leader of a FIELD (Football's influence on lifelong health and dementia) Study in 2019 that found professional players were three and a half times more likely to die of neurodegenerative disease than age-matched members of the general population. Pallister, 56, attended a ground-breaking charity match in Spennymoor last month, played under rules designed to restrict the use of heading.

"I'm probably one of those who have stuck my head in the sand and thought, 'I hope it's not me'. I suffered awful migraines. I've been knocked clean out. I've been on the pitch, woken up and not known where I am," Pallister told the Sunday Telegraph. "You put it all together and you start thinking, 'Crikey, I'm a prime candidate for dementia'. It's not a 100 per cent thing, I'm guessing, but you are thinking, 'If you are a betting man, the odds are that you are probably at some time in your life going to get it.' — AFP

Southgate excited by 'fabulous' Foden

ANDORRA LA VELLA, Andorra: Gareth Southgate said Phil Foden's emergence as an England star is "fabulously exciting" after the Manchester City playmaker stole the spotlight in the 5-0 rout of Andorra.

Foden was England's stand-out performer in the one-sided World Cup qualifier at the Estadi Nacional on Saturday. Ben Chilwell, Bukayo Saka, Tammy Abraham, James Ward-Prowse and Jack Grealish scored the goals as Southgate's side moved a step closer to qualifying for next year's World Cup in Qatar.

Foden's breathtaking range of passing was key to England breaking down the massed Andorra defense. Spraying the ball around from deep in midfield, Foden was compared by television pundit Roy Keane to legendary Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady for the accuracy of his passes.

Foden was involved in Chilwell's goal before playing a fine pass for Saka to score. Southgate was thrilled by the 21-year-old's display, saying Foden is so talented it is hard to quantify just how good he can become in future or where is best position is.

Foden has impressed for City playing in wide attacking roles, in a false nine berth and deeper in midfield. "It is difficult (to predict his best position) because frankly he is one of those players who is effective anywhere across that front line," Southgate said. "If you play him seven, 11, 10, eight. A sort of traditional 4-3-3 midfield with a six, eight, 10, if he was the 10 within that but with the capability to drop lower

and build the play at times like he did tonight."

"Part of that is just as he gets stronger as well and part of that will be the balance of the type of player who plays as the other eight and their qualities," he added. "Look, it's fabulously exciting isn't it? When you are trying to break down a defense as we had tonight, and you've got a player who can see the passes he sees and can execute them in the way that he did. The quality we know. For us it's really interesting, the possibilities with him in terms of his positioning moving forward."

'Big change'

While Foden appears to have the world at his feet, his England team-mate Jadon Sancho has been in a more difficult period. Sancho moved to Manchester United from Borussia Dortmund in the close-season, but has struggled in the Premier League after missing a penalty in England's Euro 2020 final shoot-out loss to Italy.

Southgate recently said Sancho's form this season was not worthy of an international call-up, but he kept faith with the 21-year-old and was rewarded with a more influential effort featuring two assists against Andorra.

"It is important that he got the assist because you've also got to have that productivity and the right pass or the right cross at the end of those passages of play," Southgate said. "We shouldn't be surprised that for a young player to have such a big change in his life, new league, new club, different style of play, different training regime, back living in Manchester, moving house and everything that's involved in that, that's a lot to take in. So it's going to need time but he showed a lot of the qualities that he has (against Andorra) and I know that will come with the club as well." — AFP

Mane among goals as Senegal move closer to winning World Cup group

JOHANNESBURG: Liverpool star Sadio Mane was among the goals as Senegal cruised to a 4-1 win over Namibia on Saturday, and near-certain qualification for the final World Cup elimination round in Africa. Another victory over the Namibians tomorrow will seal first place in Group H for the Senegalese, who are chasing a second successive appearance at the global showpiece.

The convincing matchday 3 triumph in Thies near Dakar lifted Senegal to nine points while Namibia have four, Congo Brazzaville two and Togo one. Namibia must face star-stacked Senegal a second time within four days at neutral Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg because they do not have an international-standard stadium.

Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Idrissa Gueye gave the Teranga Lions an early lead in Senegal that Turkey-based Famara Diedhiou increased before half-time. After Mane claimed his third goal of the qualifying campaign on 55 minutes, Joslin Kamatuka pulled one goal back only for Keita Balde to restore the three-goal gap.

In Casablanca, Ayoub el Kaabi scored in each half as Morocco cantered to a 3-0 Group I win over Guinea-Bissau and, like Senegal, the north Africans can punch a ticket to the final round tomorrow. The Moroccans play

News in brief

Ronaldo scores 181st goal

FARO: Cristiano Ronaldo marked a record 181st international appearance with a goal as Portugal defeated World Cup hosts Qatar 3-0 in a friendly game on Saturday. The Manchester United star surpassed Sergio Ramos, who has played for Spain 180 times, as the most-capped international for a European nation. Ronaldo opened the scoring in the 37th minute with Jose Fonte adding a second three minutes into the second half. RB Leipzig striker Andre Silva completed the scoring in the last minute of the game. Portugal resume their World Cup qualifying campaign on Tuesday when they host Luxembourg. They are currently second in Group A, a point behind Serbia but with a game in hand. — AFP

Neuer back for Germany

BERLIN: Germany captain Manuel Neuer, who missed Friday's game against Romania, will be back for Monday's World Cup qualifier against North Macedonia, according to coach Hansi Flick. "Manu trained normally and has no issue, I'm certain he'll be fine and will be able to play," said Flick. Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen took the place of Neuer in the 2-1 win over Romania in Hamburg. North Macedonia are the only team to have beaten Germany in qualification, winning 2-1 in Duisburg last season, when Joachim Loew was still coach. "They're a team who know how to play football and who haven't yet lost under their new coach" Blagoja Milevski, said Flick. — AFP

'Big Ramy' Mr Olympia

ORLANDO: Egypt's Mamdouh Elssbiay was crowned the 2021 Mr Olympia: one year after winning the championship for the first time in his career. Elssbiay's win came after beating runner-up and 2019 Mr Olympia Brandon Curry of the United States in the finals that took place in Orlando, Florida on Saturday. This marks the second straight win for Elssbiay, also known as 'Big Ramy', of the world's most prestigious bodybuilding championship. — AFP

Brown out with COVID

NEW YORK: Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown is in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19, the NBA club announced. Brown, who tested positive on Friday but remains asymptomatic, was an All-Star last season, when he averaged a career-best 24.6 points as well as 6.0 rebounds, 3.4 assists and 1.2 steals a game. After his campaign was cut short by a torn left wrist ligament last May, Brown underwent surgery and made his return on Monday in the Celtics' pre-season opener, scoring a game-high 25 points in a 98-97 victory over Orlando. — AFP

Crosby back in practice

WASHINGTON: Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby returned to practice with the National Hockey League club on Saturday for the first time since undergoing left wrist surgery on September 8. But the 34-year-old Canadian center was not listed on the roster for a final pre-season game against Columbus and is questionable at best for tomorrow's NHL season opener at reigning Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay. Crosby, a three-time Stanley Cup champion and two-time NHL Most Valuable Player, led the Penguins with 24 goals and 38 assists last season but managed only one goal in Pittsburgh's first-round playoff loss to the New York Islanders. — AFP

Sports

Fury knocks out Wilder to retain WBC crown in heavyweight classic

'Gypsy King' emerges victorious in third bout of bitter rivalry

LAS VEGAS: Tyson Fury retained his WBC heavyweight crown on Saturday with a spectacular 11th-round knockout of Deontay Wilder as their trilogy fight delivered a boxing classic. In an epic battle in front of 15,820 fans at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, both fighters were knocked down on multiple occasions in an enthralling contest full of improbable twists and turns.

Fury looked to have gained the upper hand after flooring Wilder in the third round, only for the 35-year-old from Alabama to respond with two knockdowns that had the English champion clinging on desperately in the fourth. But it was the bigger, heavier Fury — landing the cleaner and more damaging blows — who finished the stronger, and the champion had Wilder down once again in the 10th with a right hook. Wilder responded bravely to that knockdown by wobbling Fury in return. But the brutal energy-sapping nature of the fight, and Fury's relentless physicality, finally took its toll on Wilder in the 11th.

With the American exhausted and on the ropes, Fury landed the decisive combination. A right uppercut scrambled Wilder's senses before Fury crashed a right hook into his opponent's temple that sent the challenger tumbling to the canvas, barely conscious.

"Shots like that end careers," Fury said. "I just hope that he's OK. Because he took a lot of punishment tonight. Don't ever doubt me," Fury added. "When the chips are down I will always deliver. I give him the glory for the victory. He's a tough man — he took some big shots tonight. It was a great fight tonight as well as any trilogy in history."

Multiple knockdowns

Saturday's bout was the third instalment of an acrimonious rivalry between Fury, the trash-talking self-styled "Gypsy King" and Wilder, the heavy-handed knockout specialist regarded as one of the most destructive punchers in the sport.

Fury had scored a seventh-round knockout of

Wilder in their second fight 20 months ago, after the two men shared a controversial draw in their first meeting in Los Angeles in 2018. Both fighters entered the ring on Saturday at their heaviest ever fighting weights, with Fury tipping the scales at 277lbs (125.6 kg) and Wilder at 238lbs.

Wilder's camp said the extra bulk was designed to give their fighter a quick early rounds knockout. But although Wilder started aggressively, working Fury's midsection in the opening two rounds, he was unable to find the precision to hurt the elusive Fury, who by contrast repeatedly scored with his right.

The fight appeared to have swung decisively in Fury's favor in the third, when he landed a left hook and a pair of right uppercuts to put Wilder down. The

“

Don't ever doubt me

”

American finished the round dazed and on the ropes with Fury poised to go in for the kill.

But incredibly Wilder rallied in the fourth round to put Fury on the canvas twice, once with his feared straight right and again with a right hook. This time it was Fury who seemed to be in peril, but the champion was able to clear his head and survive.

Fury then recovered to dominate the middle rounds, repeatedly stunning Wilder who showed remarkable resilience in the face of a sustained onslaught. Yet just when it looked as if the denouement could come at any moment, Wilder summoned another rally in the ninth round, rocking Fury once



LAS VEGAS: Deontay Wilder (right) is knocked out by Tyson Fury in the 11th round during their WBC heavyweight title fight at T-Mobile Arena on Saturday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

again with an enormous right hand.

But momentum shifted back to Fury in the 10th as he opened up with a devastating exchange to put Wilder down. Again the American found reserves of strength to fight back, wobbling Fury near the end of the round as the fans roared their appreciation. Wilder's resistance was broken once and for all in the 11th round though as Fury's devastating final combination settled a gripping battle.

Two warriors

Fury, who improved to 31-0-1 with 22 knockouts, revealed afterwards he had sought to pay his respects to Wilder after the fight, but had been rebuffed. "We fought like two warriors in there," Fury said. "And I

went over to shake his hand and say well done and he was like 'No, I don't respect you'. I was like 'How can you say I've cheated when you know in your heart, you've been beaten fair and square?' Is he a sore loser or what? But I've acted like a gentleman throughout my career and that's all I can do."

Wilder, who was taken to a Las Vegas hospital following the fight as a precaution, did not speak to the press following the bout. However in brief remarks he acknowledged he had struggled to deal with Fury's size. "I did my best, but it wasn't good enough," said Wilder. "I'm not sure what happened. I know that in training he did certain things, and I also knew that he didn't come in at 277 to be a ballet dancer. He came to lean on me, try to rough me up and he succeeded." — AFP

Dodgers overpower Giants 9-2 to level MLB playoff series

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Dodgers offense bounced back Saturday in a 9-2 victory over the San Francisco Giants that saw the reigning World Series champions level their Major League Baseball series.

One day after they were shut out by the Giants in game one of the best-of-five National League division series, the Dodgers responded to give themselves a chance to close out the series in two games in Los Angeles.

Dodgers starting pitcher Julio Urias shut down the Giants — and helped his own cause with a run-batted-in single. Cody Bellinger and AJ Pollock produced two-run doubles as the Dodgers blew open a close game in the sixth inning.

It was a statement in San Francisco for the Dodgers, who notched 106 regular-season games but still had to play a wild card game to earn the right to face the Giants — who won the National League West division with 107 regular-season wins.

"It was a lot," Dodgers outfielder Mookie Betts said of having to beat the St Louis Cardinals in the wild card game then immediately face their NL West rivals. "Emotions ran high through the wild card game, that was a crazy game in itself. Usually you need a little time to reset — we only had a day. But each game, you've got to take it one game at a time," Betts added. "And we were able to pull one out today."

Urias struck out five and walked one over five innings, giving up one run on three hits. He also singled in a run in the second inning to give the Dodgers the lead before Betts drove in another run. San Francisco responded in the bottom half of the inning,



SAN FRANCISCO: The Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate after beating the San Francisco Giants 9-2 in Game 2 of the National League Division Series at Oracle Park on Saturday in San Francisco, California. — AFP

when Urias issued a leadoff walk to Wilmer Flores who would score on a sacrifice fly from Donovan Solano. It remained 2-1 heading into the sixth inning, when Trea Turner doubled to lead off the inning for the Dodgers, and after Justin Turner struck out, Will Smith walked to chase Giants starting pitcher Kevin Gausman after 5 1/3 innings.

The bases were loaded when Bellinger, who struck out in his first two at bats, stepped to the plate and belted a pitch from reliever Dominic Leone into the left center field gap for a two-run double. Pollock followed with another two-run double and the Dodgers were off — out-scoring San Francisco 7-1 over the final four innings. "It's great to win one on the road," Betts said.

'Keep them off balance'

The Atlanta Braves did the same in Milwaukee, where Max Fried pitched six strong innings and

Austin Riley homered in a 3-0 victory over the Brewers that leveled their NL division series at one game apiece. The Brewers brought the tying run to the plate in each of the last three innings, but the Braves bullpen held on to send the best-of-five National League division series back to Atlanta tied at one game apiece.

Fried gave up three hits and struck out nine without surrendering a walk. Willy Adames hit a two-out double off Fried in the sixth, but Fried struck out Eduardo Escobar to end the danger. "It's a really good team over there, so you just want to try to stay on top and keep them off balance," Fried said.

Atlanta took a 2-0 lead in the third inning off The Braves pitcher Brandon Woodruff. Jorge Soler hit a one-out double and scored on Freddie Freeman's single to right. Ozzie Albies drove in Freeman with a double and the Braves made it 3-0 in the sixth when Riley belted a solo homer. — AFP

'Best of era' Fury hailed after Wilder classic

LAS VEGAS: Tyson Fury believes he is the greatest heavyweight of his era after producing a scintillating display to beat Deontay Wilder in a boxing classic on Saturday. The 33-year-old undefeated Englishman recovered from two knockdowns against the hard-hitting Wilder before knocking out the American in the 11th round to retain his WBC crown.

"I know I'm the greatest heavyweight of my era, without doubt. Number one," Fury said following an epic battle at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. "I've fought the most



LAS VEGAS: Tyson Fury celebrates his 11th round knockout win against Deontay Wilder after their WBC heavyweight title fight at T-Mobile Arena on Saturday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

devastating puncher in the history of our sport, not once, not twice, but three times."

At a towering 6ft 9in tall and weighing in at 277lbs, Fury is unarguably one of the biggest heavyweight champions of all time. Icons of the heavyweight division like Muhammad Ali or Joe Frazier would be giving away massive advantages in height and weight in any theoretical match-up with the reigning champion.

Fury was initially reluctant on Saturday to rank his chances against past greats. "I don't like competing with fighters from the past because it's fantasy, not reality," he said. "I can only beat the best of my day. And I've done that. I'm the best fighter in my era."

However, he later could not resist comparing himself favorably to the greatest heavyweights to have graced the division. "There's been so many of them, so many great champions," he said. "Without sounding too clever, I place myself at the top of the pile. I believe I can beat any man in history, any man."

Saturday's thriller meanwhile left many at ringside struggling to think of a better heavyweight contest in boxing history. "Listen, I've been in this business 57 years promoting fights and I truly have to say I have never seen a heavyweight fight as magnificent as this," said Fury's US promoter Bob Arum, who promoted 27 of Muhammad Ali's fights including the 1975 classic "Thrilla in Manila" against Joe Frazier. Frank Warren, Fury's veteran English promoter, said Saturday's bout was "boxing history." "It's the best live heavyweight fight I've seen," Warren said. — AFP

Cuban baseball hit with record number of defections

HAVANA: One player took off from the airport, while another jumped out the window of his hotel room. In all, of the 24 members of Cuba's national baseball team who arrived in Mexico for the under-23 World Cup, only about half came home. This year, a record number of players have defected from the communist-run island nation, where baseball is the national pastime but which is enduring its worst economic crisis in 30 years.

The mass defection is "unprecedented in the history of baseball," Francys Romero, a sports journalist who has written a book on the phenomenon, told AFP. The player who jumped from his hotel room window? He told Romero that he shimmed down a palm tree to get to a waiting getaway car.

Cuban baseball players leaving their homeland is not new — when professional sports were upended in the wake of the revolution led by Fidel Castro, many sought better opportunities abroad. After a smattering of defections during the Cold War, the exodus picked up pace after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Since Rene Arocha left the national

team at the airport in Miami in 1991 for a career in the United States, about two or three players a year have deserted their country. Nine jumped ship in 1996. Those players are consistently treated as disloyal traitors.

Some have left legally — an option that became possible with immigration reform in 2013, but which was starkly curtailed when flights were reduced due to the coronavirus pandemic. A who's who of players who became Major League stars have made the leap, including Orlando and Livan Hernandez, Jose Abreu, Aroldis Chapman, Yasiel Puig and current Tampa Bay Rays standout Randy Arozarena.

'War'

Not only has the number of players seeking a career abroad exploded, but their profiles are different: they are younger and not always destined for Major League stardom, according to Romero. So why are they risking it? "To change their lives. Sports comes after that," he says.

Those who have left have faced criticism on social media, but many Cubans have simply wished them well



HAVANA: Baseball players play with friends at a field in Havana, on October 7, 2021. — AFP

— they are all too aware of how difficult life is in Cuba at the moment, with major shortages of food and medicine.

Earlier this year, when Cuba's national team came to the United States to play Olympic qualifying games, top talent Cesar Prieto, two other players and the team psychologist defected. Cuba, a three-time Olympic champion and 25-time Baseball World Cup winner, failed for the first time ever to qualify for the Summer Games in Tokyo.

For Luis Daniel del Risco, currently the highest-ranking official in the Cuban baseball federation, there is "a

war" under way to "destroy Cuban baseball." He slammed what he called "a harassment campaign" by foreign recruiters, who attend most games that Cuba plays abroad.

"These people have access to the hotels (where the players stay), and many of them come just to contact these young people" with proposals to play elsewhere, he said. Recruiters also call the players and send them messages via WhatsApp, either directly or through their relatives, Del Risco claimed, saying such overtures prevented players from concentrating on the competition at hand. — AFP

Bottas wins Turkish Grand Prix

Verstappen reclaims championship lead, 'Frustrated' Hamilton finishes sixth



ISTANBUL: Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas (center front) drives during the Formula One Grand Prix of Turkey at the Intercity Istanbul Park in Istanbul yesterday. — AFP

ISTANBUL: Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas claimed his first chequered flag of the season to win the Turkish Grand Prix yesterday as Max Verstappen reclaimed the lead in the title race. The Red Bull driver finished second to take a six-point lead in the championship ahead of Bottas' teammate Lewis Hamilton who finished fifth voicing frustration with team strategy.

Sergio Perez, in the other Red Bull, took third with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in fourth. Although the rain eased by the start of the race, the wet conditions prevailed throughout, making the tactics around tires and the timing of pit stops all the more important.

Bottas began from pole, avoiding a tangle between Pierre Gasly and Fernando Alonso on the opening lap, and led until pitting on the 38th lap of the 58-lap race. That gave Leclerc the lead but as his tires faded so did his pace and the Finn soon reclaimed the lead, going on to take his 11th Grand Prix win and his first win since Russia over a year ago.

"It's been a while. Feels good," said Bottas who is leaving Mercedes at the end of the season to join Alfa Romeo. "From my side, probably one of the best races I've had ever. It is not easy to choose the strategy here with these conditions and when to stop and which tire but I'm glad everything went smooth for once for me. When only one drying line,

it doesn't need much to go off. I definitely needed to focus all through the race. A difficult one, but feels like a well-earned victory."

Verstappen, who began the race two points behind Hamilton in the title race, made no attempt to challenge Bottas and focused on a damage limitation exercise, content to ease home second knowing that Hamilton was three places further back.

"It was not easy today," said the Dutchman who took a slender six-point lead in the championship with six races remaining. "The track was very greasy, we had to manage the tires the whole race so couldn't really push. Just seemed Valtteri had a bit more pace, could look after the tires all race. Happy to finish second in these conditions, it's easy to get it wrong so you drop back."

Hamilton frustration

Hamilton was quickest in qualifying but had to start the race in 11th because of a grid penalty incurred for changing his engine. The seven-time champion gained two places on the opening lap before picking his way up to fifth where he was held up by Perez. As the other cars came in to change their tires Hamilton stayed out, moving up to third and looking good for the podium.

Hamilton declined the initial call to come in for fresh tires but finally acceded to the Mercedes team

teams put plenty of commitment into their displays, with some players looking to carve out a place in their national teams.

Giacomo Raspadori, making his fifth Italy appearance, was put through by the impressive Federico Chiesa in the 20th minute but couldn't get his shot away before Timothy Castagne got across to deflect his effort out for a corner. Five minutes later AC Milan midfielder Saelemaekers struck the bar with a first-time curling shot which left Gianluigi Donnarumma rooted to the spot.

However it was Chiesa who was at the center of Italy's attacks and the in-form Juventus forward wasted the best chance of the match just before the break when after collecting Berardi's pin-point long pass he took too long to shoot and allowed Courtois to charge out and make a superb save.

However Barella put Italy in front almost straight after the restart when he met a high clearance from a Belgium corner with a stunning volley that flew into the bottom corner. Batshuayi almost brought the away side level on the hour mark, his powerful shot from a tight angle fizzing past Donnarumma and striking the crossbar, but shortly afterwards Berardi doubled Italy's lead.

Chiesa was clumsily brought down by Castagne and despite protests from the Belgians Berardi squeezed his spot-kick under Courtois. De Bruyne, who entered the field just before Berardi put Italy



Winner Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas celebrates next to second-placed Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen during the podium ceremony after the Formula One Grand Prix of Turkey at the Intercity Istanbul Park in Istanbul yesterday.

instructions, boxing eight laps from the end. It cost Hamilton two places as Perez and Leclerc flew on ahead and the Englishman did not hide his frustration over the radio.

"We shouldn't have come in. Massive graining man. I told you," an angry Hamilton said to his team as he struggled to hold off Pierre Gasly in the

McLaren. A disgruntled Hamilton later pointed out Alpine's Esteban Ocon made it round with one set of tires, intimating that he could have stayed out. "In hindsight, I should either have stayed out or come in much earlier because when you come in with eight laps to go you don't have time to make up the difference." — AFP

Italy beat Belgium to finish third in Nations League

TURIN: Italy claimed third place in the Nations League yesterday after beating Belgium 2-1 to bounce back from their world record unbeaten run being brought to an end. A superb volley from Nicolo Barella just after half-time and Domenico Berardi's 63rd-minute penalty were enough for the Azzurri to see off a Belgium team missing the injured Romelu Lukaku and Eden Hazard to win the third-place playoff.

The European champions, beaten by Spain in their semi-final on Wednesday to lose after going 37 matches without a defeat, played with verve on a gorgeous sunny day at Turin's Allianz Stadium but Belgium's poor luck continued following their last-gasp semi-final defeat to France. Alexis Saelemaekers, who started in place of substitute Kevin de Bruyne, Michy Batshuayi and Yannick Carrasco all struck the woodwork before Charles De Ketelaere scored with four minutes remaining.

Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois may have called yesterday's match "pointless" but the two



TURIN: Giorgio Chiellini (right) celebrates with teammates at the end of the UEFA Nations League third place football match between Italy and Belgium, at the Juventus Stadium, in Turin, yesterday. — AFP

two ahead, spurred Belgium on and laid on the goal which halved the deficit.

The Manchester City playmaker charged onto Courtois' long throw before sliding through De

Ketelaere, who calmly slotted his finish between Donnarumma's legs. However Roberto Martinez's side couldn't find the goal which would have taken the match to extra-time. — AFP