

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961

# Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 18570

RABIA ALAWWAL 23, 1443 AH | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

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## Kuwait braces for rains after scorching summer

SEE PAGES 9 & 10

## Local

## Stolen wallet nightmare



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova

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Having your wallet stolen is a nightmare experience. The effrontery of the thief who stole my wallet shows she is used to stealing and has practice. I was shocked for a couple of days and couldn't believe it wasn't a bad dream. Despite surveillance cameras installed everywhere, people still dare to steal.

Such thefts are not common in Kuwait, although robberies do happen sometimes for more valuable amounts or objects. There was a spate of bicycle thefts last year. There are also cases where thieves have followed people who withdraw large amounts of cash from the bank, then steal the bag or envelope containing the money from their car when they leave the vehicle.

Usually, wallet thefts happen when the victim forgets it somewhere, and the thief usually steals the money and leaves the wallet. But the thief who stole my wallet was not just a person in need of cash -she stole the entire wallet with my bank cards, IDs, membership cards and most importantly, old photos that I cannot replace.

Obtaining replacement documents is the biggest hassle. Debit cards are the easiest, as you can get them the next day. As for credit cards, reissuing them takes a few days to a week, as it happened with me. Not to mention the charges I had to pay, ranging from KD 5 to KD 15 for each card.

With the blessing of the digital age, we can use the Kuwait ID app to identify ourselves instead of the actual ID, but you may still need it in certain cases, such as for activating a service at a local operator. The civil ID is also important if you don't have a smartphone, or it is switched off or not connected to the Internet, especially while travelling.

Of course, the fee for a replacement civil ID is much higher than for renewing it - KD 20. Ditto for the driving license. The process is also lengthy. For reissuing the driving license, you need a report of its loss from the police station first; only then can you apply for it online. For reissuing the civil ID, you don't need a police report; but you have to attend personally at PACI's headquarters to apply for it and sign a statement of loss. It takes 60 days for a new ID to be ready.

Reporting the case at the police station is not quick either. I spent two and a half hours at the station, although I didn't wait at all. I had to go through three investigations. If the investigators were busy, I might have stayed there for four or five hours.

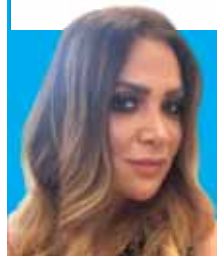
The thief could have taken the cash and left the wallet and I would have felt bad but also relieved. Maybe she needed the money, maybe she was desperate. But to take the entire wallet with all the related cards and documents, especially when everyone here knows how difficult and time consuming they are to replace, that is unforgivable.

### Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A file photo showing a general view of the Green Island in Kuwait City. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Squid games in Kuwait



JUST KIDDIN', SERIOUSLY

By Sahar Moussa

Sahar@kuwaittimes.net

The human instinct to survive is our most powerful driving force. We struggle to find jobs to put food on the table, earn money, make sure our children are well fed and dressed, and pay their school fees and rent. It has become very hard for many people to stay afloat financially, especially after COVID, when many people worldwide lost their lives, jobs and businesses, and were left with nothing but loans and debts.

The Squid Game series talks on Netflix has garnered worldwide attention for its themes of survival and debt. The series is about debt-ridden people who play children's games for a chance to win cash -they are killed if they fail. It criticizes capitalism to its core and shows the true nature of people and the choices they make to survive.

In Kuwait, a majority of people - residents and locals - are in debt, and only a few people are living comfortably. We are in a capitalistic society where the working class is condemned to remain poor and in debt, and as a result, they pass it on to their children. It is like a vicious circle which is hard to break.

Every character in Squid Game represents a person we know and can relate to in real life, even if we do not realize it. The two main characters are trapped in a web of debt. The first is a divorced chauffeur and gambling

addict. He participates in the game to settle his debts and prove he is financially stable enough to get custody of his daughter and help pay for surgery for his ailing mother. The second character is a former head of an investment team at a securities company, who is wanted by the police for stealing money from his clients and racking up massive debts from bad investments.

Look around you - I'm sure there are many people in Kuwait who are engaged in some type of financial risk: investments, cryptocurrency, new businesses and projects. In the blink of an eye, these people lose everything.

The third character enters the game to pay a broker to help her parents cross the border and buy a house for her reunited family to live in. How many expats in Kuwait have worked extremely hard to pay money to visa traffickers to bring their families here?

The fourth character is a migrant worker from Pakistan, who enters the game to provide for his young family after his employer refuses to pay him for months. This character is the character that many can relate to. I personally know two expats who worked hard all their lives, and in the end, their merciless employers did not pay a penny to them and they drowned in debt.

Squid Game is a microcosm of the life we are living in, with all its violence, injustice and capitalism. It deals with everyday characters caught in the quagmire of life, looking for an escape from their worries. It talks about how sometimes we are pushed to the edge and put in a situation where we are obliged to take bad decisions and make sacrifices for the sake of our beloved ones. It depicts an extreme competition, somewhat like the extreme competition of life. It describes our economic struggles as well as the class disparity in our society.

# Kuwait Times

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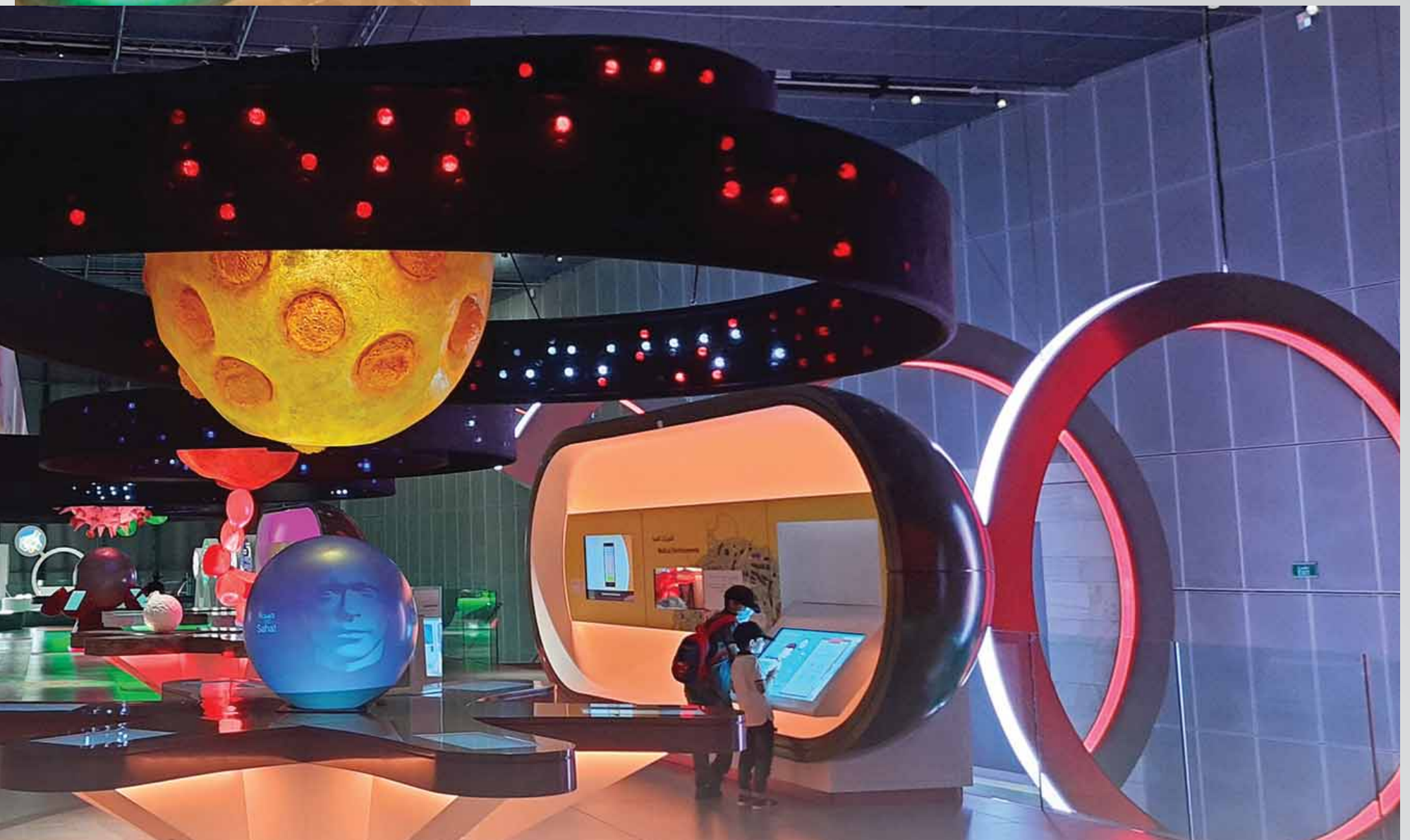
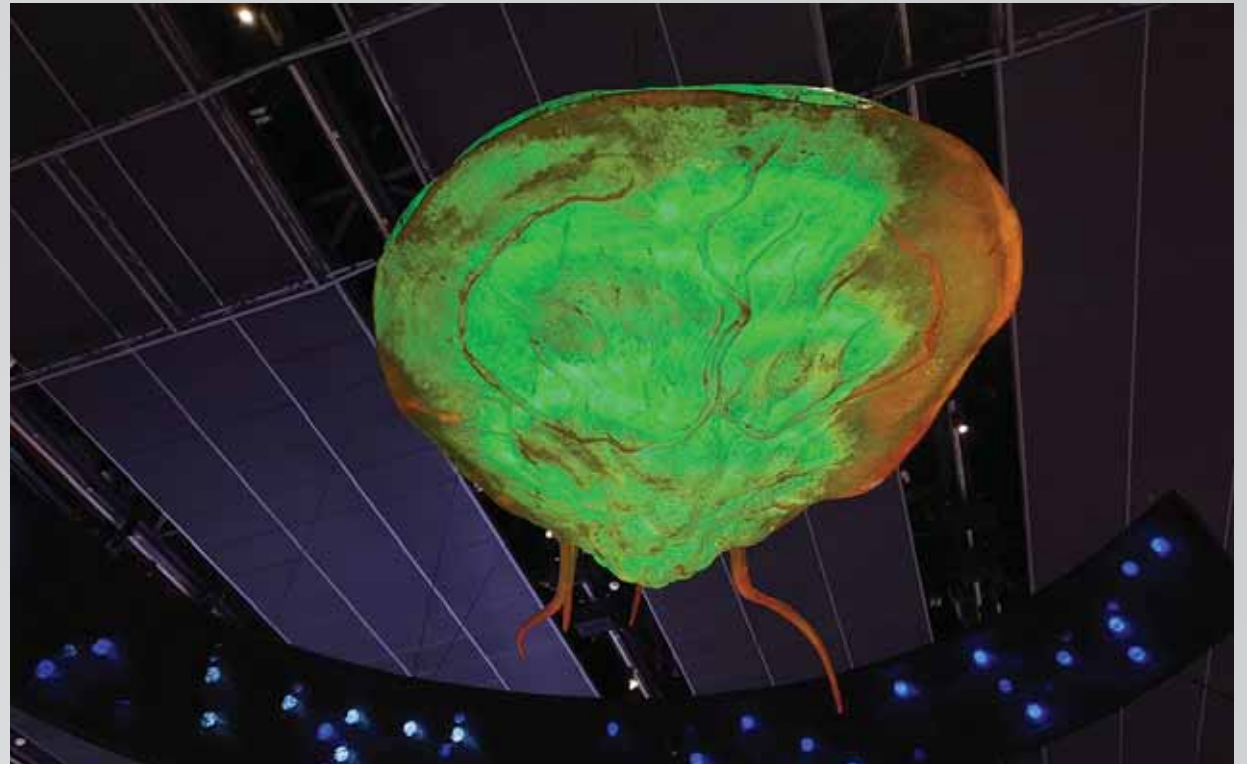
# UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE HUMAN BODY AND MIND

## Exploring **ASCC**

Photos by Shakir Reshamwala

The Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre (ASCC) is the largest museum complex in the world. It comprises of six museums related to natural history, science and technology, Arab and Islamic science and space. The center is home to some 22 world-class galleries, with over 3,000 exhibits.





Exploring **ASCC**



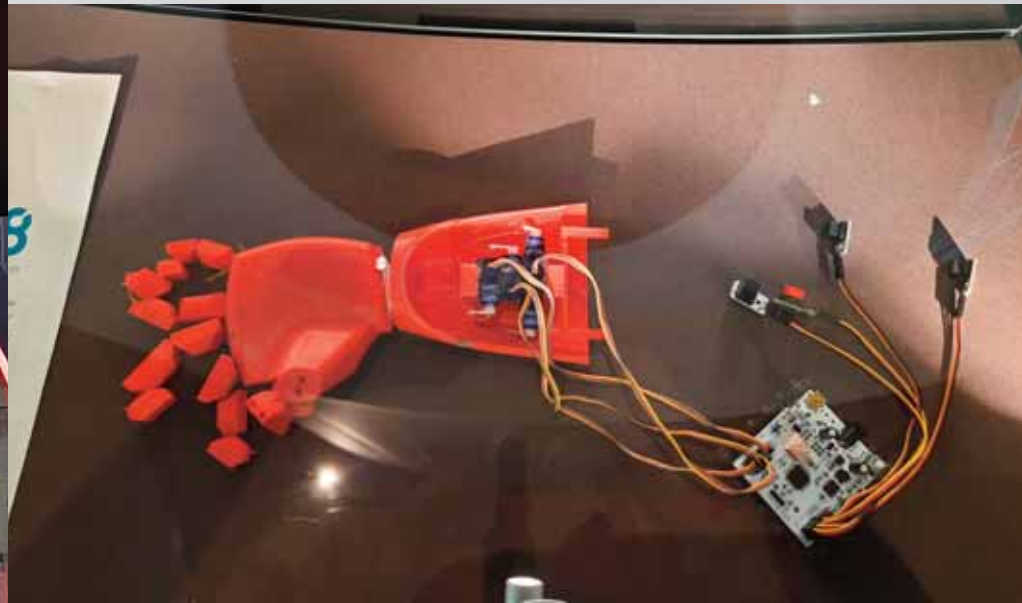
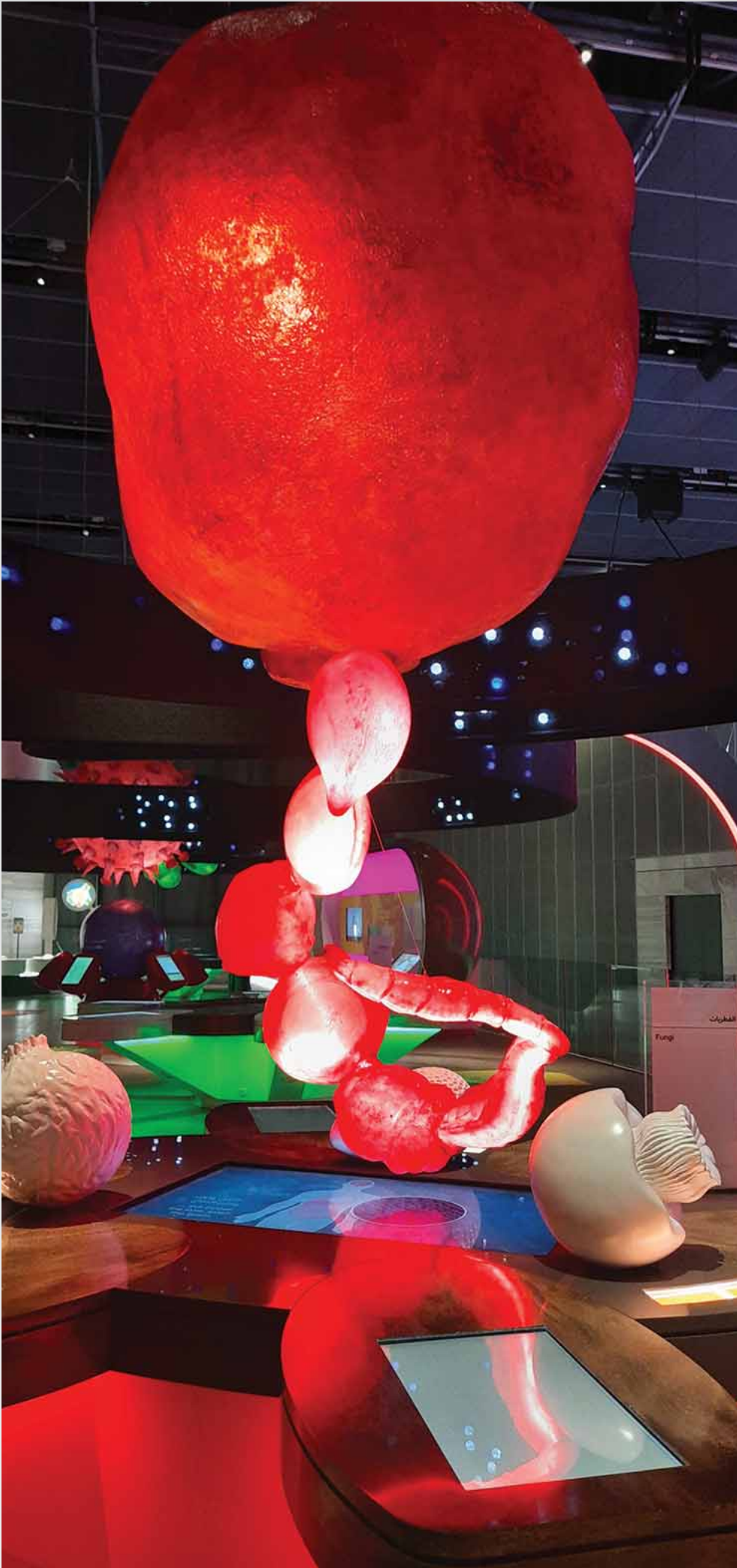
Today we head to the Human Body and Mind museum to learn about the workings and secrets of the body and mind. A series of exhibits explain how the brain and body work in tandem. Kids will love the interactive competitive displays that test their mental and physical strength and skills.

An entire section explains how human bodies are tested when under attack, with super-sized models of microscopic villains including viruses and bacteria, and the body's indefatigable defense mechanisms. Visitors can also view the latest developments in medical technologies and prosthetics.



PHOTO FEATURE







## Local

# Zain supports United Nations campaign to reinforce environmental awareness

## Company lights up headquarters in blue to celebrate UN's International Day

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its support to the United Nations campaign "Youth for Climate Action" that aims at raising public awareness towards the environment and preserving natural resources, in the occasion of United Nations International Day, which coincides with the 24th of October every year, as part of Zain's strategic partnership with the UN.

Zain's support to this campaign falls under the company's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the environment sector, which centers around supporting the various efforts that serve environmental causes. Zain's social message seeks to stress on the importance of preserving natural resources and enrich environmental awareness in the community in which it operates.

The company celebrated the United Nations International Day by lighting up its main headquarters building at Shuwaikh in blue along with the country's many entities from both the public and private sectors. Zain believes in the vital and active role of the private sector in supporting public sector and global organizations like the United Nations.

Through its solid corporate sustainability strategy, Zain exerts more efforts into reducing the environmental footprint of its operations.

Such efforts include preserving natural resources, reducing energy consumption, recycling waste, implementing green solutions regarding water and electricity management, monitoring the company's effects on climate change, and more. As part of its efforts, Zain collects an average of 21,000 to 23,000 plastic bottles every month, and the company collected over 13 tons of paper during 2018 for recycling purposes.

As part of its environmental contributions, Zain is a strategic partner of the Kuwait Dive Team for over 16 years. The company dedicated a brand-new boat to the team, which is utilized to carry out marine preservation projects throughout the upcoming years. The boat is fully equipped with the latest state of the art equipment and is being used for removing wrecked ships and boats from the bottom of the ocean, removing abandoned fishing nets, installing and maintaining environment-friendly anchors, monitoring coral reefs, cleaning shores, islands, and beaches, documenting marine life, and more.

Zain supported an awareness campaign launched by the Environment Public Authority (EPA) that aimed at introducing Kuwait's new environment law. The company also launched #ActivateYourRole, an online awareness campaign on its official social media platforms that aims at



**KUWAIT:** Zain's headquarters lit in blue to celebrate UN's International Day.

raising public awareness towards climate change, sustainability, and preserving natural resources.

The company strategically partnered with Omniya environment project to provide recycling bins for plastic bottles and plastic caps on every floor of Zain's three main headquarters buildings. The initiative aims at encouraging Zain employees to recycle, ultimately raising awareness about the importance of

preserving the environment. Zain is keen on shouldering such initiatives that contribute to preserving Kuwait's environment, as well as encouraging volunteering, recycling, and taking part in social activities within all age groups within the community. The company will spare no efforts to contribute to spreading positive awareness for a better environmental culture in the society.



**DOHA:** Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and his delegation meets with Speaker of Qatari Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Ghanem and several council members. — KUNA

## Kuwait's Speaker holds talks with Qatari counterpart

**DOHA:** Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and his accompanying delegation held yesterday a meeting with Speaker of Qatari Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Ghanem

and several council members. During the meeting, Ghanem congratulated the Qatari speaker on the success of the first legislative elections of the Shura Council. Furthermore, several constitutional and legal topics were discussed between the two delegations. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Secretary of National Assembly Farraz Al-Daihani and observer Osama Al-Shahin as well as MPs Abdullah Al-Turaiji, Nasser Al-Dusari, Mubarak Al-Ajmy, Salman Al-Azmy and Kuwait Ambassador to Qatar Hafiz Al-Ajmy. Meanwhile, the Qatari side was represented by Deputy Speaker Hamdah Al-Sulaiti and several council members. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti minister offers condolences on Korean ex-president's demise

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah visited yesterday the South Korean Embassy in Kuwait to convey His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's condolences on the demise of former Korean President Roh Tae-woo. Sheikh Mohammad also conveyed condolences of His Highness the Crown Prince Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as the people and government of Kuwait. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah writes a note in the book of condolences at the South Korean Embassy yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photo

## Local

# Kuwait braces for rains after scorching summer

## Light to moderate rain expected during the weekend

**KUWAIT:** After a summer of searing heat and record temperatures, Kuwait is bracing for the arrival of the rainy season. Relevant state bodies have been making preparations for weeks, with memories of the 2018 floods still fresh in many people's minds, when the equivalent of around three months of rain fell in one day. The extreme rise in temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns are suggesting that climate change is impacting Kuwait as well, along with the rest of the world.

The United Nations said on Tuesday Asia suffered its hottest year on record in 2020, ahead of the COP26 summit, with extreme weather taking a heavy toll on the continent's development. Asia's warmest year on record saw the mean temperature 1.39 degrees Celsius above the 1981-2010 average. In July, Kuwait registered one of the year's highest temperatures of 53.5 degrees Celsius in the northern Al-Jasra area.

According to Al-Fintas Observatory Director and Meteorologist Adel Saadoun, light to moderate rain is expected today and tomorrow. "It's the prelude to the rainy season. It will be cloudy the whole day with light to moderate southeasterly wind with a speed of 8 to 32 km/h with the probability of scattered rain," he said. "In the night, the skies will be partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 12 to 38 km/h with a chance of scattered light rain and probability of light fog over some areas. The maximum temperature will be 36 degrees Celsius and minimum 24," he added.

Earlier this week, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Kuwait fully supports the efforts of Saudi Arabia and the package of initiatives it has put forward to protect the environment and tackle the challenges of climate change. He affirmed Kuwait's commitments to tackle climate change challenges by signing and ratifying regional and international agreements and protocols and participating in relevant conferences.

Kuwait is at the forefront of countries seeking to achieve human and environmental sustainability and is a supportive partner for regional and international efforts to combat climate change challenges, HH the Crown Prince said. Locally, Kuwait launched its environmental strategy within the (2035 New Kuwait) vision, in addition to legislations concerned with environment protection laws, rationalizing the consumption of natural resources, reducing pollution, preserving the integrity of the environment, rehabilitating its systems, protecting biodiversity and improving the efficiency of waste management, HH Sheikh Mishal added.

In its annual "State of the Climate in Asia" report, the UN's World Meteorological Organization said every part of Asia had been affected. "Extreme weather and climate change impacts across Asia in 2020 caused the loss of life of thousands of people, displaced millions of others and cost hundreds of billions of dollars, while wreaking a heavy toll on infrastructure and



**KUWAIT:** This file photo shows vehicles driving through rain on a highway in Kuwait. The photo is used for illustration purposes only. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

ecosystems," the WMO said. "Sustainable development is threatened, with food and water insecurity, health risks and environmental degradation on the rise."

The report comes days before COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference being held in Glasgow from Sunday to Nov 12. Increased heat and humidity are forecast to lead to an effective loss of outdoor working hours across the continent, with a potential cost of many billions of dollars. "Weather and climate hazards, especially floods, storms, and droughts, had significant impacts in many countries of the region," said

WMO chief Petteri Taalas. "Combined, these impacts take a significant toll on long-term sustainable development."

In 2020, average sea surface temperatures reached record high values in the Indian, Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Sea surface temperatures and ocean warming in and around Asia are increasing more than the global average. They have been warming at more than triple the average in the Arabian sea, and parts of the Arctic Ocean. Arctic sea ice minimum extent (after the summer melt) in 2020 was the second lowest on the satellite record since 1979. — Agencies

## Kuwait Army Chief meets UK's Defense Academy Commander

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah discussed yesterday with Major General Andrew Roe, Chief Executive and Commandant of the Defense Academy of the United Kingdom and accompanying delegation joint military matters. In a statement by Chief of Staff command, Lieutenant General Al-Sabah received the commander and delegation in office, and conversed about topics of common interest, specifically military. Attending the meeting was Head of Military Education Authority Major-General Fahad Al-Turaiji and Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah leadership and joint staff college, Major-General Talab Al-Fulaij as well as British defense attache Group Captain Paul Mulvaney. — KUNA



## Kuwait inflation up 3.20% in May

**KUWAIT:** The consumer prices on annual basis grew by 3.20 percent in May, according to the State of Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau. In a statement to the press, the bureau said that inflation rate also rose 0.34 percent in May on monthly basis, due to increase of prices of some main groups that influence movement of the key indices. The consumer price index (CPI) for food and beverages rose by 11.34 percent in May compared to the same period of 2020, while cigarettes and tobacco stood at 135 point. The clothing group rose 5.93 percent on yearly basis, while rates of housing services stood at 115 percent. Moreover, inflation rate of the furnishing equipment household increased by 4.07 percent. The bureau said the health index stood at 2.09 percent while rates of transport moved up by 4.23 percent. Communication rose by 4.8 percent, recreation and culture by 7.82 percent while education dropped by 15.46 percent. Restaurants and hotels climbed on yearly basis in May by 0.24 percent, while services and miscellaneous goods increased by 4.69 percent. The consumer price index is a tool for measuring price levels either monthly or annually. It is a basic indicator for measuring economic growth or deflation, through which the state can take economic and commercial decisions and formulate financial and monetary policies. — KUNA

## Dead girl's mother allegedly used to abuse her children

**KUWAIT:** The father of the girl whose body was recently found nearly five years after she passed away came forward to police and alleged that the victim's mother used to physically abuse her before the two separated. Kuwait police opened an investigation into the case in which a woman is accused of keeping her daughter's body inside their apartment for five years. The case was first brought to police's attention when a Kuwaiti man told Salmiya police station officers that his mother has kept his sister's body in the bathroom of their apartment for five years, and only skeletal remains are left.

In his statements to the public prosecution, the victim's father said that he and his ex-wife divorced four years ago mainly due to her alleged "harsh treatment" of their children. The suspect would physically abuse their children repeatedly as a way of disciplining them, the man told police according to a report published by Al-Qabas Arabic newspaper yesterday.

The woman reportedly said during investigations that she locked her daughter up to stop her from "going out of the house repeatedly," saying that she failed to report her death when she discovered it out of fear she might be accused of killing her.

Investigations are expected to conclude soon, Al-Qabas reported yesterday quoting sources familiar with the probe, noting that the case would then be sent to the criminal court.



Filipinos flock to cemeteries ahead of All Saints Day closure

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Biden announces \$1.75 trillion US spending plan ahead of Europe trip



BALA MURGHAB, Afghanistan: This picture taken on Oct 15, 2021 shows a child standing on a dry land in Badghis province. — AFP

## World faces growing threat of heatwaves

**LONDON:** From Death Valley to the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent to sub-Saharan Africa, global warming has already made daily life unbearable for millions of people. And if nothing is done to slow climate change, the record temperatures and deadly heatwaves it brings will only get worse, experts warn.

“Climate (change) is sort of steroids for the weather. It’s loading the dice to make these sort of extreme events be more common,” said Zeke Hausfather, a climate expert at the Breakthrough Institute in California. The hottest place in the world is officially Death Valley, California. There too, temperatures are rising. “If you look at the average temperature in Death Valley for a summer month (...) it has gotten much warmer in the last 20 years than it was before,” said Abby Wines, spokesperson for the Death Valley National Park.

This summer, for the second year in a row, the area registered an astonishing 54.4 degrees Celsius. If confirmed by the World Meteorological Organization, it would be the hottest temperature ever

recorded with modern instruments.

### Hottest month ever

According to the US climate agency NOAA, July 2021 was the hottest month ever recorded on Earth. “We are affected a lot by this unbearable heat, and we poor are hit the hardest,” said Kuldeep Kaur, a resident of Sri Ganganagar in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan, bordering Pakistan. Half a world away in western Canada, where a so-called “heat dome” pushed temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius this summer, north Vancouver resident Rosa lamented: “It’s just unbearable. It’s impossible to be out.”

Rising temperatures are a driving force behind more frequent and intense droughts, wildfires, storms, and even floods. And the rising number of heatwaves is devastating for farming and agriculture and potentially fatal for humans.

“A flood is a few deaths, maybe a few dozen. We’re talking about thousands of deaths every time we have a very large extreme heatwave. And we

know that these heatwaves are multiplying,” said climatologist Robert Vautard, head of France’s Pierre-Simon Laplace Institute.

If the world warms by two degrees Celsius, a quarter of the world’s population could face severe heatwaves at least once every five years, according to a draft UN report obtained by AFP ahead of the COP26 climate summit opening October 31 in Glasgow, Scotland.

### Agriculture threatened

For the Bedouins of Saudi Arabia, heat is only too familiar. “I think it’s at least 43 degrees Celsius now, and it’s only 8:30-9:00 am,” said Saudi Bedouin Nayef al-Shammari, adding that it can reach 50 degrees during the day.

“But we’ve got used to it, it’s normal for us, we’re not (...) worried about it.” The family of the 51-year-old and his father Saad, 75, have lived and worked in the Al Nufud Al-Kabir desert raising camels for generations. But as temperatures rise to life-threatening levels their livelihood and culture could soon

be under threat. “Even heat-tolerant animals in the region, for example some camels or goats, will be also affected, agriculture will be also affected, so this extreme heat will affect food production,” said George Zittis of the Cyprus Institute in Nicosia.

### ‘Catastrophic’ consequences

Legend has it that the marshes that straddle the famous Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq were home to the biblical Garden of Eden. They too could soon be at risk. “The temperatures above 50 degrees affect the fish, they affect animals, people and tourism,” said local boat owner Razak Jabbar, who is considering leaving the marshland where he grew up. With deadly heatwaves increasingly a fact of life across the globe, many are pinning hopes on Glasgow. “COP26 this November must mark the turning point. By then we need all countries to commit to achieve net zero emissions by the middle of the century, and to present clear, credible, long-term strategies to get there,” said UN chief Antonio Guterres. — AFP

## International

# Iran agrees to restart nuclear talks as pressure grows

## ‘We agree to start negotiations before the end of November’

**BRUSSELS:** Iran said Wednesday it will resume talks with world powers in November on reviving a nuclear deal after a five-month gap in the face of mounting warnings that international patience was wearing thin. Iran held six rounds of indirect negotiations in Vienna with President Joe Biden’s administration on returning to the 2015 deal, but talks went on hiatus in June as a new hardline government took office in Tehran.

On a visit to Brussels, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri said he saw progress in talks with European Union mediator Enrique Mora, who also went to Tehran earlier this month. “We agree to start negotiations before the end of November. Exact date would be announced in the course of the next week,” Bagheri, who serves as Tehran’s chief negotiator, wrote on Twitter.

He said he “had a very serious and constructive dialogue” with Mora “on the essential elements for successful negotiations.” The accord between Iran and six world powers to find a long-term solution to the crisis over its controversial nuclear programme has been moribund since former US president Donald Trump walked out in May 2018 and imposed sweeping sanctions.

Biden, his successor, has said he is ready to re-enter the agreement so long as Iran also returns to full compliance by rolling back nuclear activities that it undertook in response to Trump’s sanctions. The United States was cautious on Iran’s announcement but said it believed only a “small number of issues” remained outstanding after the sixth round of talks in Vienna.

“We are prepared to return to Vienna, and we believe that it remains possible to quickly reach and implement an understanding on return to mutual full compliance,” a State Department spokesperson said. “As we have also been clear, this window will not remain open forever as Iran continues to take provocative nuclear steps, so we hope that they come to Vienna to negotiate quickly and in good faith.” One additional issue will be access for the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose chief, Rafael Grossi, negotiated only a short-term compromise when he visited Iran on September 12.

### Growing warnings

Iran said it needed time after the election of President Ebrahim Raisi, a hardliner who succeeded the more moderate Hassan Rouhani, who had negotiated the deal with Barack Obama’s administration in hopes of easing Iran’s international isolation.

But the prolonged delay has prompted alarm—even among European powers that criticized Trump for exiting the accord. On a

## Hamas sentences six ‘informants’ to death

**GAZA CITY:** The Islamist movement Hamas that rules the Gaza Strip announced yesterday it had sentenced six Palestinian “informants” to death for collaborating with Zionists.

The Hamas military court said it had issued sentences “against a number of informants, including six death sentences, other sentences varying between life terms and temporary hard labour, and one acquittal.”

Hamas takes a rigid approach to collaborators with Israel, which has put the impoverished enclave under blockade since the Islamists took power in 2007. In 2018 a Hamas military court sentenced six people to death for espionage, including a woman.

The year before, three convicted in the assassination of a



**TEHRAN:** A handout picture provided by the Iranian presidency on October 27, 2021, shows Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (C) visiting the ministry of oil to follow up on latest issues caused in the fuel distribution system. —AFP

visit to Washington earlier in October, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid warned of military action against Iran, his country’s sworn foe. Israel is widely suspected in a sabotage campaign in Iran that has included the killings of nuclear scientists. On Tuesday, Iran blamed cyber attacks for disrupting its civilian fuel distribution network. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he backed diplomacy but also said the United States had “other options” if talks go nowhere.

Speaking Monday after talks with European and Arab allies, the US negotiator on Iran, Rob Malley, said that the Biden administration would always be open to diplomacy but that the accord, formally known as the JCPOA, had a shelf life.

“This is not a chronological clock; it’s a technological clock. At some point, the JCPOA will have been so eroded because Iran would have made advances that cannot be reversed,” Malley told reporters. Malley has disputed criticism that the talks made no progress, saying there was broad understanding on most points in Vienna—where European mediators shuttled between hotels as Iran declined to meet directly with the United States.

Iran says it wants a full lifting of sanctions, but the Biden team

Hamas commander were hanged or shot by a firing squad in public. Hamas said yesterday that collaborators who turn themselves in will face more lenient terms, and said that the “judgements issued have fulfilled all legal procedures.”

Palestinian law requires approval from the Palestinian Authority president for the death penalty, but Hamas in Gaza has carried out a number of executions without permission from President Mahmud Abbas.

Rights groups in Gaza have urged Hamas to reduce its use of the death penalty. Earlier this month the Gaza-based Al Mezan Center for Human Rights called for a moratorium on the death penalty, saying it was “gravely concerned about the incessant issuance of death sentences by the military judiciary” in the enclave. In May, Hamas and Israel fought a devastating 11-day conflict, the worst between the two sides in years.

In that bloody escalation, Jewish strikes on Gaza killed 260 Palestinians, including fighters, according to local authorities. In a rocket fire from the Palestinian territory killed 13 people, including a soldier, according to the police and army. — AFP

says the only ones on the table are those imposed by Trump over Iran’s nuclear work. Trump argued that the JCPOA did not address other concerns with Iran, such as its support for militants that fight US allies Israel and Saudi Arabia, and vowed to bring Tehran to its knees through economic pressure. —AFP

## Iraqis kill 11 in revenge for deadly IS attack

**BAGHDAD:** Residents of an Iraqi village have killed 11 people in retaliation for a deadly attack claimed by the Islamic State group, an Iraqi security official said. The inhabitants of the majority Shiite village of Al-Rashad in the eastern Diyala province killed 11 people on Wednesday in the predominantly Sunni neighbouring hamlet of Nahr al-Imam, the security official who preferred to remain anonymous said.

The assailants accused the residents of Nahr al-Imam of being behind an attack on Al-Rashad the day before in which 15 people were killed, an increase from an initially reported toll of 11. Another 26 people were injured in the Tuesday attack on Al-Rashad, according to the latest figures from security sources.

The Sunni militant IS group — which considers Shiites to be “heretics” — claimed the Al-Rashad attack on Wednesday night. Al-Rashad is known to have many members of security forces among its residents and is populated mostly by members of the Bani Tamim tribe, from which the governor of Diyala hails. The Iraqi Fiqh Council, the authority on Islamic jurisprudence for Sunnis in the country, condemned the “terrorist attack” on Al-Rashad, as well as the “horrific revenge” on Nahr al-Imam.

The IS group took over large swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014, declaring itself a new “caliphate” for Muslims. Iraq declared the defeat of IS in December 2017, but a low-level insurgency has persisted in the country, flaring up at various points. A UN report early this year estimated that around 10,000 IS fighters remained active across Iraq and Syria. — AFP

## International

# Moscow shuts down as Russia sees record virus cases, more deaths

## Retail outlets, restaurants, sporting and entertainment venues closed

**MOSCOW:** Russia reported record numbers of daily coronavirus cases and deaths yesterday as Moscow shut down non-essential services for 11 days to combat the surge in infections. The country hardest-hit in Europe by the pandemic, Russia has struggled with low vaccination rates despite developing several of its own jabs.

Recent weeks have seen daily numbers of cases and deaths hit the highest of the pandemic, with the official government tally yesterday reporting new records of 40,096 infections and 1,159 fatalities. Authorities have shied away from the kind of severe lockdowns imposed in many countries, but have shut down all non-essential services in Moscow from today until November 7.

Retail outlets, restaurants, and sporting and entertainment venues are all closed, along with schools and kindergartens. Only shops selling food, medicine and other essentials are allowed to remain open. President Vladimir Putin's government has been pinning its hopes on homegrown vaccines like the Sputnik V jab, but Russians have proven stubbornly resistant to being inoculated.

As of yesterday, only 32 percent of Russia's population had been fully vaccinated, according to the Gogov website, which tallies COVID-19 data from the regions. Roads in Moscow yesterday were slightly less congested than usual, but the city's sprawling Metro network was as busy as ever, with many passengers not wearing masks. Authorities have not required Russians to stay at home during the non-working period and many were planning to use the days to travel across the country and abroad. The mayor of the Black Sea resort city of Sochi has warned of a huge influx of tourists, and demand in Russia for flights bound for Turkey and Egypt has soared.

On the streets of the capital, some Muscovites said they approved of the restrictions, while others said they did not go far enough. "I think it's important to save someone's life rather than be entertained, especially given that it's not for a long time," Vladimir Chizhov, a 45-year-old programmer, said of the decision to close cinemas, bars and restaurants.

### 'Tougher measures needed'

But Arseny Kubanov, a 35-year-old sound engineer, said restrictions similar to European lockdowns were needed. "Tougher measures should be introduced until everyone is vaccinated, the way it was in Europe," he said. "Otherwise, it is quite meaningless—this will continue wave after wave until everyone is vaccinated anyway." Putin last week ordered a nationwide paid holiday

## German man convicted of spying on parliament for Russians

**BERLIN:** A German man was handed a two-year suspended sentence yesterday for passing on floor plans of parliament buildings to Russian secret services while employed by a security company. The suspect named as Jens F., 56, was found guilty of handing over a CD with more than 300 files of floor plans of buildings used by the German Bundestag to the military attache of the Russian embassy in 2017.

The military attache in post at that time is suspected to have been an employee of Russia's GRU military intelligence service. The suspect meanwhile worked for a security company contracted by the Bundestag. According to media reports, Jens F. was previously an



**MOSCOW:** An elderly couple walk across Red Square amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Moscow yesterday. Russia reported record numbers of daily coronavirus cases and deaths. —AFP

between October 30 and November 7 in a bid to reverse rising infections, and Moscow authorities followed suit by ordering the shutdown of non-essential services in the capital from today.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday that authorities were not yet planning to make jabs mandatory for everyone, despite the rising cases and low vaccination rates. "The figures so far give no cause for optimism," Peskov told reporters. "We will see how the situation develops further."

Russia has recorded nearly 8.4 million coronavirus cases and more than 235,000 deaths, though independent experts say authorities have downplayed the severity of the pandemic. Figures published by statistics agency Rosstat in October paint a darker picture, suggesting that more than 400,000 people have died in the country from the coronavirus. — AFP

officer in a tank division of the East German army and had also worked informally for the feared Stasi secret police. Prosecutors had demanded a sentence of two years and nine months, while the defence had argued he should be acquitted because there was no proof he had transmitted the information to the Russians.

Jens F.'s lawyer Friedrich Humke said prosecutors had built their case purely on his client's past and his activities in the former communist East Germany. The case comes at a time of particularly rocky ties between Berlin and Moscow over a series of espionage cases, as well as the poisoning and jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

In June, German police arrested a Russian scientist working at a university in the southern city of Augsburg, accusing him of spying for Moscow. Germany has also repeatedly accused Russia of cyberattacks on its soil. The most high-profile incident blamed on Russian hackers to date was a cyberattack in 2015 that completely paralysed the computer network of the Bundestag lower house of parliament, forcing the entire institution offline for days while it was fixed. In another case before a German court, a Russian man is on trial over the assassination of a former Chechen commander in a Berlin park, allegedly on Russia's orders. Moscow has denied being behind such actions. — AFP

## Germany's Scholz to join Merkel at G20 talks

**BERLIN:** Olaf Scholz, the German finance minister and likely next chancellor, will join Angela Merkel in her bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome, government sources said yesterday. The joint meetings with leaders, including US President Joe Biden, are intended to send a "special signal" and to show "a great deal of continuity in the G20 process", the sources said.

Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD) narrowly won last month's election in Germany, beating Merkel's conservatives into second place with their worst result since World War II as she prepares to retire after 16 years as chancellor.

The SPD has since been in talks with the Greens and the liberal FDP, who came third and fourth respectively, to form a potential coalition. The parties last week unveiled an accelerated timeline for their coalition talks, saying they aimed to have Scholz installed as chancellor by early December.

The G20 club of the world's 20 most industrialised countries is meeting this weekend in Rome. The format of the planned joint bilateral talks is "historic", the government sources said, signalling a strong vote of confidence in Scholz's chances of becoming the next chancellor. As well as a meeting with Biden, Merkel and Scholz will speak with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the leaders of Argentina, Singapore, India and South Korea. In addition, the two will take part in a high-level meeting with the US, France, Britain and Germany on Iran policy. — AFP

## International

# Biden announces \$1.75 trillion US spending plan ahead of Europe trip

## President to address American people from White House

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden announced yesterday a revised \$1.75 trillion social spending plan that he is confident Democrats will support, ending weeks of wrangling and delivering a political victory hours before he departs for twin summits in Europe.

Biden failed in his original goal of securing a vote in Congress, where Democrats hold a razor-thin majority, before going to Rome for meetings with Pope Francis and G20 leaders, then a UN climate summit in Glasgow.

Instead, his dramatic last-minute intervention will present Democrats with a deal too good to refuse, senior aides believe.

Putting the full prestige of his presidency on the line, Biden will unveil the framework agreement to Democratic leaders, then address the American people from the White House, before heading to the airport to board Air Force One.

The White House said Biden will lay out a compromise outline of legislation pouring \$1.75 trillion into education, childcare, clean energy and other social services.

This is much less than the original \$3.5 trillion price tag Biden and left-leaning Democrats wanted. However, this would still represent a major win a year after Biden, 78, defeated Donald Trump with a promise to heal America's "soul." Weeks of Democratic feuding over both the details and costs have threatened to sink the

bill, along with a second initiative meant to invest an additional \$1.2 trillion in America's crumbling infrastructure.

Biden is now sure he has Congress ready to accept his deal, although the timing of a vote remains up to the Democratic speaker, Nancy Pelosi.

"The president believes this framework will earn the support of all 50 Democratic senators and pass the House," a senior White House official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

### Seeking to make history

An official said the two bills Biden wants will "make historic investments" and that the White House is "confident" in getting Democrats to unite. Biden was set to meet with Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives in private, before returning to the White House for a speech at 11:30 am (1530 GMT). He will depart for Rome shortly after.

Biden will "speak to the American people about the path forward for his economic agenda and the next steps to getting it done," another White House official said.

The Democrats enjoy a rare period of controlling both houses of Congress and the presidency. However, the margins are so tight — with only a one vote advantage in the Senate and a handful in the House — that enacting



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi depart following a meeting with the Democratic caucus at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, yesterday. —AFP

major legislation has proved far harder than supporters hoped.

Biden has been repeatedly frustrated as just two moderate Democrats in the Senate held up his social spending ambitions, while left-leaning Democrats in the House blocked the infrastructure bill.

Responding to criticism that the pending deal has been watered down too far, a White House

official said Biden's framework will still "make historic investments in the United States."

This will be "the most transformative investment in children and caregiving in generations, the largest effort to combat climate change in history, and historic tax cut for tens of millions of middle class families, and the biggest expansion of affordable health care in a decade," an official said. —AFP

## Sudan anti-coup protests defy military, rebuild barricades

KHARTOUM: Protests against Sudan's military coup that has sparked international condemnation entered a fourth day yesterday, as demonstrators rebuilt barricades demolished by security forces during overnight unrest. Seven protesters have been confirmed killed since Monday by morgues in Khartoum and its sister city Omdurman, a health official said, adding that more corpses had since been received, some with wounds caused by "sharp tools".

Top general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan-Sudan's de facto leader since the 2019 ouster of autocrat Omar al-Bashir-on Monday dissolved the fragile government that had been meant to shepherd the country to full civilian rule. The World Bank and the United States have frozen aid and denounced the army's power grab, while the African Union has suspended Sudan's membership over what it labelled the "unconstitutional" takeover.

"Security forces have been trying since yesterday morning to remove all our barricades, firing tear gas and rubber bullets," said protester Hatem Ahmed, from northern Khartoum. "But we go and rebuild them as soon as they leave. We will only remove the barricades when the civilian government is back."

The coup was the latest to have hit the poverty-stricken East African nation, which has experienced only rare democratic interludes since independence in 1956. Shops have remained closed following calls for a civil disobedience campaign and

Sudan's pro-democracy movements ratcheted up calls for "million-strong protests" tomorrow.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who was detained by the military Monday in sweeping arrests of civilian leaders, remains under guard at his home, where he was moved after an international outcry. Other ministers remain under full military arrest.

A joint statement by the United States, European Union, Britain, Norway and other nations emphasised their continued recognition of the "prime minister and his cabinet as the constitutional leaders of the transitional government".

Burhan, a senior general during Bashir's three-decade-long hardline rule, on Wednesday also sacked six Sudanese ambassadors-including to the US, EU, China and France-after they sided with the civilian leaders he ousted.

### Aid frozen

Protesters rallied late into Wednesday night in the capital, said the Sudanese Professionals Association, a union umbrella instrumental in months-long protests that helped oust Bashir in April 2019. Online videos shared by the SPA showed protesters chanting for "civilian rule", calling for mass protests on October 30, and demanding that Burhan be taken to Khartoum's high security Kober prison, where Bashir is incarcerated.

Violence against protesters has mounted in a "vengeful" crackdown by security forces, the SPA said in a statement. On Wednesday, hundreds of protesters were seen throwing rocks at security forces in Khartoum's eastern district of Burri.

The coup has provoked strong international criticism. The World Bank has put its aid on hold, a major blow to a country already in the grip of a dire economic crisis. —AFP

## Norway police say 24 were targeted in bow and arrow attack

STOCKHOLM: Norwegian police said on Wednesday that 24 people were now being treated as victims of a bow and arrow attack earlier this month in which five people were killed. A man rammed through the town of Kongsberg west of Oslo on October 13, firing arrows and attacking people at random in their homes.

Main suspect Espen Andersen Brathen, a Dane living in Kongsberg, was arrested at the scene and is undergoing a psychiatric evaluation, with police believing mental illness is behind the attack. "So far we have 24 victims in the case," police inspector Per Thomas Omholt told a press conference, giving a total figure for the first time.

He said the number included the five killed, three who were injured and 16 others who had been "subjected to different events". "These are typically attempted murders and attempted woundings, mostly those who were shot at with a bow and arrow," he said, stressing that the number could change. Omholt said police were "keeping the door open" on the motive for the attack.

Brathen had previously said on social media he had converted to Islam, leading to speculation it was a jihadist attack. But the investigation had "further weakened" the jihadist hypothesis, Omholt said, adding that it was unclear whether or not he had really converted to Islam. —AFP

## International

# Leaders of France, Australia hold first talks since subs row

## Australia proposes 'Trumpian' voter ID laws

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison by telephone yesterday for the first time since the diplomatic crisis over a scrapped submarine deal last month, the Elysee Palace said.

Macron reiterated that Canberra's decision to cancel a deal for conventional-powered French subs in favour of US nuclear vessels "had broken the relation of trust between our two countries," his office said in a statement.

"It is now up to the Australian government to propose concrete actions that could embody the will of Australian authorities to re-define the bases of our relationship and pursue joint action in the Indo-Pacific region," it said.

Paris was furious after Australia ditched the deal last month, saying it had been given no warning that Australia was instead negotiating a new defence pact with the US and Britain. Australia had signed a contract in 2016 to buy the French subs, a deal worth Aus\$50 billion (31 billion euros, \$36.5 billion) when signed.

France recalled its ambassadors to Australia and the US in protest, with Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian denouncing "a stab in the back". Paris is also insisting on financial compensation.

"Close attention will now be paid regarding the situation for the French companies and their sub-contractors, including Australian firms, impacted by this decision," the Elysee statement said.

Meanwhile, Australia's conservative government yesterday proposed laws requiring voters to prove their identity when casting a ballot, a move slammed by the opposition as an attempt at voter suppression and to mimic the policies of former US president Donald Trump.

Ahead of upcoming national elections due by May next year, the government introduced the "voter integrity" bill to the House

of Representatives, saying it would prevent potential fraud and multiple voting.

The legislation would require voters to show a proof of identity document — such as a photo ID, birth certificate, credit card or bank statement — at polling booths on election day.

Voting is compulsory for Australians aged over-18. Voters simply provide their name and address to a polling station worker before casting their ballot. Opposition leader Anthony Albanese of the centre-left Labor Party said the government was trying to "channel the US far right" by attempting to introduce voter suppression measures before the upcoming election.

"This is a desperate attempt to undermine our strong democracy and deny Australians their basic democratic rights," he told parliament. "The Morrison-Joyce government is trying to bring the politics and tactics of Trump's America into Australian democracy." Prime Minister Scott Morrison defended the legislation, saying it was a "standard practise that is in liberal democracies" around the world.

"It's not an earth-shattering proposal that when you go to the vote that you should be able to say you are who you are and provide some form of identification to support that, that's an important protection for our democracy," he told reporters in Canberra.

According to the Australian Electoral Commission, the independent body that oversees elections, voter fraud is a "vanishingly small" issue in the country. There were no prosecutions for multiple voting arising from the last election, the opposition said.

Voter ID laws are common across western democracies, but efforts by conservatives to introduce them in the United States have sparked controversy, with opponents arguing they discriminate against voters from minority backgrounds by requiring the



**PARIS:** File photo shows French President Emmanuel Macron greets Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the Elysee Palace in Paris. French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison by telephone yesterday for the first time since the diplomatic crisis over a scrapped submarine deal last month. —AFP

purchase of a proof of identity.

Under the Australian government's proposed laws, voters who could not produce an ID would still be allowed to cast a "declaration vote", which involves signing a detailed document asserting their claim to vote in an electorate. But critics say that form is complex and could present difficulties for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. — AFP

## Laos police net 55m meth pills in Asia's biggest drug bust

**BANGKOK:** Laotian police have netted Asia's biggest-ever single seizure of illegal drugs, finding 55 million methamphetamine pills in the back of a beer truck, a United Nations official confirmed yesterday. The 55.6 million meth tablets and 1.5 tonnes of crystal meth seized late Wednesday is a record for a single seizure in the region, UN Office of Drugs and Crime regional representative Jeremy Douglas said.

"It is three times the meth tablets that Laos seized all last year, and close to a third of the crystal meth," Douglas told AFP. Laos has in recent years been a gateway for drug traffickers moving meth shipments out of Myanmar's troubled Shan state. The trend has noticeably accelerated in recent months, exacerbated by February's coup and economic collapse in Myanmar.

Authorities arrested the driver of a Beer Lao truck in Bokeo province, northern Laos, which is part of the so-called Golden Triangle — a notorious drug smuggling zone at the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. Lao Brewery issued a statement denying any involvement. "We are deeply disappointed that our crates have been abused as a cover for illegal activities," the brewery said, adding that the truck in question was not registered with the company. —AFP

## DR Congo's former child soldiers face tough return to civilian life

**GOMA:** Some of the DR Congo's former child soldiers have become traders, hairdressers and tailors, but many struggle to recover a normal life. Dreams of becoming a farmer or teacher run up against tough conditions in a society deeply afflicted by unemployment and poverty. Clement Kahindo, supervisor of a temporary shelter in Goma, capital of North Kivu province, goes through the list of problems.

His facility is managed by an NGO called Cajed, which works for underprivileged young people and currently accommodates around 40 children aged 10 to 17 recently extracted from armed groups. "They are taught how to behave properly, to read and write. They do drawing, basket-making, gardening, the washing up," he told AFP.

What about teaching them a trade? "We do that sometimes, but not so much," Kahindo said. "We lack the funds." But he proudly pointed to the success of a young man who had been given a sewing machine and has since regularly visited with reports of his progress. Another runs a hairdressing salon.

Kahindo said many former child combatants were overwhelmed by the horrors they had witnessed in a part of the country that has been ravaged by violence for more than 25 years. "They have seen killings, some of them have carried out killings themselves, like the teenager who was forced to tie people up and bury them alive," Kahindo said.

The youngest children are "used for spying, cooking, water and firewood," said Faustin Busimba, Cajed's programme officer. "A child who stays for two or three years in an armed group goes to the front." But in eastern DRC's North and South Kivu, as well as Ituri province, the front line and the conflict itself can be volatile. The causes of violence in this troubled region are often complex and overlapping, rooted sometimes in ancient grievances but also overlain with the activities of foreign rebel groups and ethnic militias.

### Voluntary enrolment

In the 1990s, child soldiers known as "kadogos" were numerous in the rebel army of Laurent-Desire Kabila, who overthrew president Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997. According to a task force on children and conflicts led by the child protection section of the UN mission in the country, MONUSCO, and by UNICEF, 13 armed groups still feature on a blacklist for enrolling children. The DRC's post-Mobutu army has been taken off the blacklist.

The number of child soldiers in the DRC is hard to estimate, although the tally runs into the thousands. The causes of their enrolment vary, experts say. Between 3,000 and 5,000 children become combatants each year, according to the MONUSCO estimate, and Cajed says that between five and 10 percent are girls.

Some of the children may be abducted by force, but others join voluntarily, sometimes to escape poverty, take revenge or bask in the supposed prestige that comes with their role, Cajed says. The UN task force counted 2,253 children "separated" from armed groups in 2018, 3,107 in 2019, 2,101 in 2020 and 957 in the first nine months of 2021. Some are recovered after a direct approach by MONUSCO to the commanders of the armed groups, others flee or are released during army operations against the rebel groups. —AFP

## International

# Georgia ruling party, opposition stage rival rallies ahead of polls

## PM Irakli Garibashvili urge voters to back Georgian Dream

**TBILISI:** Georgia's ruling party and the opposition on Wednesday staged rival rallies ahead of local elections with the Caucasus country's primary government critic Mikheil Saakashvili on hunger strike in jail. Second round runoffs on Saturday will see candidates from the majority Georgian Dream party and the opposition United National Movement (UNM) compete for mayoral posts in major cities.

Georgian Dream said it had bussed supporters from across the country for its rally on Freedom square in the capital Tbilisi. The independent Pirveli TV station said state employees had been forced to attend the gathering that drew tens of thousands, according to an AFP estimate.

Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili urged voters to back Georgian Dream tomorrow, calling opposition leader Saakashvili's UNM an "anti-state and anti-national force". UNM later held its own campaign rally in the western city of Zugdidi, where a party leader, Ana Tsitlidze, told several thousand supporters they would "prevail in our struggle for a truly democratic, European Georgia." "Our struggle will not end until Georgia and Mikheil Saakashvili are set free," she said.

### Saakashvili health concerns

Saakashvili, Georgia's president from 2004-2013, was arrested and imprisoned October 1, days after he secretly returned from exile in

Ukraine. In the largest anti-government demonstration in a decade, tens of thousands flooded onto the streets in Tbilisi two weeks later demanding his release.

The flamboyant pro-Western reformer has been on hunger strike for nearly four weeks to protest the ruling he says is politically motivated. Doctors have expressed concerns over the risk of irreversible damage to his health, but Georgia's health ministry has rejected their call to hospitalise Saakashvili.

He is reported to have received blood transfusions in recent days following dips in his vital signs, prompting United States Ambassador Kelly Degan to express concerns Wednesday in televised remarks. Saakashvili on Wednesday refused medical help to protest restrictions on his communications with lawyers.

Prime Minister Garibashvili sparked an uproar recently saying the government had to arrest Saakashvili because he had refused to quit politics. Saakashvili's jailing deepened a political crisis in Georgia stemming from last year's parliamentary elections narrowly won by the ruling party and branded fraudulent by the opposition.

On October 2, Georgian Dream led the local elections' first round in the party lists, while UNM mayoral hopefuls were ahead of ruling party candidates in a number of big cities, where runoffs are to be held. The opposition decried electoral fraud in those polls, while observers from the Or-



**ZUGDIDI, Georgia:** People hold banners and wave flags during a rally in the city of Zugdidi, about 300 km from the capital Tbilisi, yesterday, to demand the release from jail of their ex-president and opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili. —AFP

ganisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the ballot was marred by allegations of "intimidation, vote-buying, pressure on candi-

dates and voters". Critics have accused Georgian Dream of using criminal prosecutions to punish political opponents and journalists. — AFP

## Mexico president turns fire on top university

**MEXICO CITY:** First feminists, then the middle class—now Mexico's largest university is under attack from President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who accuses it of aligning itself with "neoliberals" who plundered the nation. Lopez Obrador has repeatedly criticized the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in recent days, saying the prestigious public institution has "moved to the right" and "gentrified."

The leftist leader, known for his ability to stir public discussion through his daily news conference, is himself a former student of UNAM, where he studied political science between 1973 and 1976. Lopez Obrador alleges that UNAM managers and academics were "co-opted" and failed to criticize the "neoliberal" economic and political establishment for several decades before he took office.

In his view, the university seems disconnected from the country's problems, and its graduates prefer to work for large corporations. "Of course, UNAM moved to the right in the neoliberal period, because they said nothing during the biggest plundering in national history," Lopez Obrador said this week, referring to privatizations in recent decades.

According to Lopez Obrador, this reduced role of the state was accompanied by deep corruption and inequality that sowed the seeds of rampant criminal violence plaguing the country. His attack has caught students and academics at UNAM by surprise. "I don't agree with the president... he shocked me," said 25-

year-old chemical engineering student Miguel Angel Torres, adding that the university offers high-quality programs at low cost. "I know professors who do their best," he said.

### 'Hates the middle class'

UNAM, which has almost 350,000 students, joins other targets of Lopez Obrador's criticism, including politicians, business leaders, environmental defenders, NGOs and others. Condemning skirmishes that broke out during feminist marches, the 67-year-old president said that "conservatives in disguise" were behind the movement.

And after his party's majority in the lower house of Congress was slashed in June's mid-term elections, Lopez Obrador turned his wrath on a middle class he called selfish and unscrupulous. Critics of Lopez Obrador, who enjoys an approval rating exceeding 60 percent and usually labels his opponents as "conservative," denounced his latest broadside.

UNAM "is a middle-class institution and he (Lopez Obrador) hates the middle class," former foreign minister Jorge Castaneda, who was a professor at the university, told AFP. Contrary to what the president says, the UNAM faculties of social sciences are "very left-wing," he added.

Political analyst Carlos Bravo Regidor said that the president is not opening a debate but "launching a provocation" to influence the university's leadership succession. Lopez Obrador toned down his criticism on Wednesday, said that UNAM is a "great university" and that the government respects its autonomy.

Founded in 1910 and given administrative and curriculum autonomy by the government in 1929, UNAM is considered one of the leading universities in Latin America. In response to the criticism, UNAM said in a statement that it had "always been respectful" of diverse ideologies, currents of thought, political positions and opinions of the members of its community. — AFP

## Nigerian religious police arrest man for auctioning self

**KANO:** Islamic religious police in northern Nigeria arrested a man who put himself up for sale to escape biting poverty, a local official said Wednesday. Aliyu Idris, 26, was arrested on Tuesday by the morality police in Kano after pictures emerged on social media showing him holding a placard indicating he was up for auction at 20 million naira (\$49,000).

Kano is one of a dozen predominantly Muslim northern Nigerian states where sharia law is enforced alongside common law. "We arrested him for putting himself up for sale, which is illegal under Islamic law," said Lawal Ibrahim Fagge, a spokesman for the religious police called Hisbah.

"He is in our custody," said Fagge, blaming the young man's "abhorrent action" on poverty and ignorance. Last week Idris, a tailor from neighbouring Kaduna, went around the city last week with the placard inscribed with the sale offer.

Residents posted pictures of him online, turning him into a sensation. The young man told reporters he was "selling" himself out of "excruciating poverty" and that he intended to give half the money to his parents and two million naira to anyone who could facilitate the auction. He had also promised to be a "loyal servant" to his buyer.

"We all know there is grinding poverty in the society, but that does not give anyone the right to put himself up for sale," Fagge said. "The era of slavery is over." Hisbah subjected Idris to a mental evaluation and found him to be sane, Fagge said. — AFP



## International

# ‘Lives under threat’: Plight of migrants sparks Polish solidarity

## We need to choose either death or Poland

**MICHALOWO:** Huddled in a sleeping bag on the forest floor, a Syrian boy cracks a smile as a Polish rights activist walks a stuffed animal up his chest. She turns to his mother, leans in, clasps her hand and asks: “Everything okay?”

The family of four has just spent a week in the cold, wet woods between Belarus and Poland, among thousands of migrants who have tried to cross into the European Union since the summer. Having embarked on the journey to seek treatment for their son with cerebral palsy, mother Ala Massini said they wound up caught between Belarus and Poland. “They (Belarusian soldiers) told us we need to choose either death or Poland,” the 25-year-old said under pine trees near the Polish town of Kleszczele. “We went to the Polish border to seek the help of the army and asked to cross because the children were hungry, sick and cold, but they told us to go back to Syria.”

Stuck between a rock and a hard place, the Massinis got in touch with the Polish activist network Grupa Granica (Border Group), whose contact info has been circulating among the migrants. Volunteers arrived with dry clothes and food, and also provided legal help and served as a monitor when the guards came. “It is very important to show them solidarity, human warmth, that they are not alone,” said Marysia Zlonkiewicz, an activist with Grupa Granica. NGO workers, doctors, politicians and regular citizens are all finding ways to help out. “Lots of people have been reaching out. Many want to come and help search the woods for people needing our support, a warm meal, water, warm clothes,” Zlonkiewicz told AFP.

### Deaths on the border

The group estimates there are hundreds of migrants on the Polish side and thousands on the Belarus border—most of them being sent back and forth “like soccer balls”, said Zlonkiewicz. Migrants say the Belarusian side refuses to let them return to Minsk and fly home, while the Poles refuse to let them cross and make asylum claims, instead pushing them back into Belarus.

Some migrants manage to evade the Polish guards and make it to neighbouring Germany, which has also seen an uptick in border crossings. The EU believes the Belarusian regime is deliberately sending the unprecedented wave of migrants—mainly from the Middle East—across the border in retaliation against EU sanctions.

The Polish government has adopted a hardline approach with pushbacks and a state of emergency that bans journalists and charity workers from the immediate border area. It is also planning a border wall. Several migrants have died trying to cross and border guards have reported incidents in which migrants threw sticks and stones at security forces.

### ‘Humanitarian disaster’

The volunteer group Medycy na granicy (Medics on the Border) has called the situation “dramatic”. Group coordinator Jakub Sieczko said they have found migrants suffering “exposure to the elements, dehydration, malnutrition”.



**KLESZCZELE, Poland:** The Massini family from Syria, father Muhammad (L), mother Alaa (C) and their two sons are seated while awaiting transport in the forest near the east Polish town of Kleszczele. Thousands of migrants, mostly from the Middle East have crossed or tried to cross from Belarus since the summer. — AFP

“In several cases, people’s lives were directly under threat,” Sieczko said. “Unfortunately, the exclusion zone status means we cannot enter even though the area is facing a humanitarian disaster.” Good Samaritans risk fines and arrests by venturing to the border area. A few residents of the restricted zone, who are exempt from the border ban, have also joined the effort.

One resident said it looked “a bit like war”. “In some places there are military posts every 100 metres. These are whole campsites, with tents, fires,” she told AFP. “Some guards are extremely aggressive,” she said, but added that others did not like what was going on.

## EU court fines Poland million euros a day in legal row

**LUXEMBOURG:** The EU’s top court on Wednesday ordered Poland to pay one million euros a day for not suspending a controversial “disciplinary chamber” at the heart of a bitter feud between Warsaw and Brussels. The European Commission requested the fine last month after the Polish authorities failed to comply with an interim judgement from July ordering an immediate halt to the activities of the chamber.

Poland’s Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has yet to deliver on a promise to close down the body that is seen by critics as a way to keep judges in line with government policy. The latest move risks deepening a bitter standoff over judicial independence and the primacy of EU law which some fear has put Poland’s membership of the bloc in question.

“The road of penalties and blackmail against

our country is not the right one,” Polish government spokesman Piotr Muller tweeted. “This is not the model in which the European Union — a union of sovereign states — should operate.”

Poland’s Constitutional Court earlier this month ruled that parts of EU law were incompatible with the Polish constitution in a decision denounced by Brussels. The dispute soured a summit of EU leaders in Brussels last week at which Morawiecki said Poland was “ready for dialogue” but would not “act under the pressure of blackmail”. He later accused the EU of putting a “gun to our head” by threatening sanctions if Warsaw did not comply. Several EU leaders at the summit had insisted Brussels should not release 36 billion euros (\$42 billion) in pandemic recovery money that Poland badly wants while the issue is unresolved.

The bloc’s executive said it was also mulling other options including pushing to suspend some of Warsaw’s voting rights or triggering a new mechanism to withhold funds. The Court’s decision confirms “deep concerns about the risk of serious and irreparable damage to the European Union’s legal order and the rule of law”, said EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders.—AFP

## Greece blames Turkey after migrants drown in Aegean

**ATHENS:** Greece has blamed Turkey for a migrant boat sinking in the Aegean that claimed the lives of four people including two children, noting that Ankara should prevent smugglers from risking peoples’ lives at sea. “Four bodies were retrieved without carrying personal life-jackets. The victims were aged four, 11, 25 and 28 years old according to the coroner’s report,” Migration Minister Notis Mitarachi told a news conference on Wednesday. On Tuesday, Mitarachi tweeted four children died after the accident near the island of Chios in which 22 people were rescued. On Wednesday, he said one to four people were thought to be missing based on the testimony of survivors. Three people were still in hospital, the minister said, adding that the migrants had come from Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea via Turkey.

“The Turkish authorities must do more to prevent exploitation by criminal gangs at source. These journeys should never be allowed to happen,” Mitarachi tweeted on Tuesday. In a statement, the coastguard said the boat had set out from Turkey amid strong winds, and that none of the occupants had been given a life vest by the smugglers.

Merchant Marine Minister Yiannis Plakiotakis said the smugglers had shown “criminal disregard for human life”. The coastguard added that in addition to the adverse weather conditions, the boat was overloaded and as a result, its underside came off. “All those rescued are in good health and were taken to Chios harbour,” it said. In a statement earlier, the coastguard had said 27 people were thought to be inside the boat, according to the survivors.

Coastguard patrol boats, a NATO vessel, nearby ships and fishing boats and two helicopters were participating in the search. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, more than 2,500 people have crossed the Aegean from neighbouring Turkey this year, compared to over 9,700 in 2020.

Over 100 people died or are missing in migrant boat incidents last year, the agency’s data show. Greece blames Turkey for not taking sufficient action to curb smugglers who send out migrants in unsafe boats and dinghies from its shores.—AFP

# Filipinos flock to cemeteries ahead of All Saints' Day closure

## Atmosphere quiet and sombre with relatively few visitors

**MANILA:** Thousands of people flocked to cemeteries in the Catholic-majority Philippines yesterday for their last chance to visit dead loved ones ahead of a government-ordered nationwide closure of graveyards for All Saints' Day. Filipinos usually pour into cemeteries on November 1 for the ancient Christian tradition, many holding family reunions at the gravesites of relatives.

But for the second year in a row, the government has ordered the shuttering of cemeteries for fear the "day of the dead" could turn into a coronavirus superspreader event. An official tally shows more than 60,000 people have poured into the sprawling Manila North Cemetery over the past few days where many poor people live in shanties and the mausoleums.

After passing through a temperature check, relatives placed small bouquets of white flowers and lit candles on tombs—and then left. Hours before the gates were locked yesterday, Eloisa Sebastian visited the grave of her 60-year-old mother, Erly, who died suddenly in April. "We used to run to her whenever we had problems so it's difficult to accept (she's gone)," Sebastian told AFP. "I still cry almost every day, even at work."

Major cemeteries in Manila are usually crowded for All Saints' Day—a tradition dating back centuries to the ancient practice in Rome, which honours all saints and martyrs who died for the faith. But the atmosphere was quiet and sombre yesterday with relatively few visitors.

Flower vendor Bebe Fernandez told AFP her sales have plunged this year. "People have no money because of this pandemic," said Fernandez, whose bouquets cost 35 pesos (70 cents) each. COVID-19 restrictions have devastated the economy and thrown millions out of work during the pandemic, which has seen more than 2.7 million people infected and over 42,000 killed.

In the pet section of the cemetery, Zia Garcia and her mother cleaned the gravestone of their Pomeranian-Shih Tzu mix dog



**MANILA:** A family visits the grave of a relative at a cemetery in Manila yesterday, ahead of a government-ordered nationwide closure of graveyards for All Saints' Day due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP

Queenie, who died in February. Flowers and candles were placed on the plaque engraved with the epitaph "We love you forever". She was "like my sister because I'm an only child", said

Garcia, 23, wearing a mask and face shield. "It's really sad because we grew up together—my best friend and sister does not exist anymore." — AFP

## India vows to take up 'climate justice' combat at COP22

**NEW DELHI:** India will be a fighter for "climate justice" at the upcoming COP26 summit, seeking to make rich nations pay for measures to ease rising temperatures, the country's environment minister said Wednesday. And the world's third biggest source of greenhouse gases is not yet guaranteeing that it will offer new mitigation efforts at the crucial conference which starts Sunday in Glasgow.

India, along with the world's leading gas emitter China, is among dozens of countries still to submit fresh plans for cutting greenhouse gas emissions so they can become net zero—eliminating as much carbon as they produce. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said India would set out what extra efforts it is ready to make "at the appropriate place and the appropriate time."

India, whose Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be at the summit, said controlling carbon should be the COP26 priority over setting target dates to become net zero. "It is how much carbon you are going to put in the atmosphere before reaching net zero that is more important," said R.P. Gupta, the environment ministry's top permanent official.

According to the ministry's figures, each Indian produces about 1.9 tonnes of carbon per year, against 7.1 tonnes for the average European Union citizen, 8.4 tonnes for a Chinese and 18 tonnes for the average American. Yadav said assessing and financing the world's campaign to limit temperature rises will be one of the most crucial tasks at Glasgow.

"India will fill the role of the voice of developing nations," Yadav told a small group of journalists on the eve of his departure for the talks. "India will be a path to a solution with climate justice." The country of 1.3 billion people, and one of the world's fastest growing economies, has long insisted that countries who profited from past industrialisation—Europe and North America—should pay the lion's share of the climate crisis bill.

Yadav noted the concern of poorer nations that richer ones have failed to live up to promises made at earlier climate summits to provide hundreds of billions of dollars in financial aid and technology. India has one of the world's leading solar power programmes, and US climate envoy John Kerry said that the country was "red hot" for solar investment.

But it currently counts on coal for about 70 percent of generated electricity and will have to spend more than \$40 billion to dismantle just 14 percent of its oldest and dirtiest coal power stations, according to the Climate Policy Initiative think tank.

Gupta said that without finance for poorer nations "it becomes extremely difficult to have green development at our own cost." — AFP

## India tests ballistic missile

**NEW DELHI:** India has tested a ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead up to 5,000 kilometres (3,100 miles), the defence ministry said, in what media called a "stern signal" to China as the two remain locked in a border spat. The Agni-5 missile blasted off from Abdul Kalam Island off India's east coast late Wednesday and splashed into the Bay of Bengal.

"The successful test ... is in line with India's stated policy to have 'credible minimum deterrence' that underpins the commitment to 'No First Use' [of nuclear weapons]," a defence ministry statement said. The 17-metre-tall missile has been tested several times before, but not at night, and local media said that the timing was aimed at sending a signal to Beijing.

Tensions with China have been running high since 20 Indian soldiers died in clashes on their disputed Himalayas border in June 2020. The nuclear-armed neighbours have

since reinforced the frontier with tens of thousands of extra troops.

India has deepened defence cooperation with Western countries in recent years, including in the Quad alliance with the United States, Japan and Australia. New Delhi is also a major buyer of Russian military hardware, and ordered Moscow's S-400 missile defence system despite the threat of US sanctions over the \$5.4 billion deal.

The Financial Times reported this month that China had tested a hypersonic missile that circled the Earth at low orbit before descending toward, but missing, its target. Beijing denied the report, insisting it was a routine test of a reusable space vehicle.

Hypersonics are the new frontier in missile technology, because they fly lower and are harder to detect than ballistic missiles, can reach targets more quickly, and are maneuverable. The United States, Russia, China and North Korea have all tested hypersonic missiles and several others are developing the technology—including reportedly India.

According to the Times of India, New Delhi is working on enabling the Agni-5 to carry several nuclear warheads at once so they can split up and hit different targets. — AFP

## International

# Taiwan leader says has 'faith' US will defend island against China attack

## Biden rebuked Beijing over its actions near Taiwan

WASHINGTON: Taiwan's president says she has "faith" the United States would defend the island against a Chinese attack, as Beijing and Washington trade barbs over Taipei's place on the global stage. Tsai Ing-wen also confirmed for the first time that US troops were training Taiwanese forces on the island in an interview with CNN broadcast Wednesday—an initiative first confirmed to AFP by a Pentagon official earlier this month.

The comments from Tsai came after US President Joe Biden rebuked Beijing over its actions near Taiwan at a virtual East Asia summit attended by China's premier. The two world powers had already faced off over Taiwan's involvement with the United Nations, with Washington saying it should be better integrated into the world body for "pragmatic" purposes—and Beijing saying it has no right to join.

The latest statements by Beijing, Washington and Taipei add to an escalation of diplomatic rhetoric and military posturing over the self-governing island of 23 million people. China considers Taiwan—where nationalist forces fled in 1949 after losing a civil war to the communists—to be a province awaiting reunification, by force if necessary.

In the interview with CNN that was conducted on Tuesday, when asked if she was confident that the United States would help defend Taiwan if necessary against China, Tsai replied: "I do have faith." She highlighted the "wide range of cooperation with the US aiming at increasing our defense

capability," including the US military training of Taiwanese forces.

### 'Reduce misunderstanding'

China is regularly setting records with its numerous warplane flights near the island. At the East Asia summit, attended by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Biden said the United States was "deeply concerned by China's coercive and proactive actions... across the Taiwan Strait." Such actions "threaten regional peace and stability," Biden told the closed-door session, according to a recording of his remarks obtained by AFP.

Biden last week told a televised forum that the United States was ready to defend Taiwan from any Chinese invasion. Those comments were quickly walked back by the White House amid warnings from Beijing, continuing a strategy of ambiguity on whether it would intervene militarily if China attacked.

Tsai told CNN that despite China's aggressive posturing, she is willing to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping in order to "reduce misunderstanding" and address the differences in their political systems. "We can sit down and talk about our differences, and try to make arrangements so that we will be able to co-exist peacefully," she said. The United States switched diplomatic recognition in 1979 to Beijing. But the US Congress at the same time approved the Taiwan Relations Act, which obligated



KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan: File photo taken on September 26, 2020 shows Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (C) posing for photographs while visiting a turboprop engine factory at a military base in Kaohsiung. Taiwan's president said yesterday she has "faith" the United States would defend the island against a Chinese attack. —AFP

the supply of weapons to the island for its self-defense. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday reiterated that the United States still rec-

ognized only Beijing, but he emphasized Taiwan's democratic credentials in asking that it be allowed a greater involvement in UN agencies. — AFP

## Three police shot dead at Islamist rally in Pakistan

LAHORE: At least three Pakistani policemen were shot dead and 70 more wounded when supporters of a banned Islamist party opened fire at a rally on Wednesday, the country's interior minister said. The Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) is protesting over the detention of its leader, arrested in April when the group was outlawed by authorities, and is demanding the expulsion of the French ambassador.

The group has been behind major anti-France protests that earlier this year led to the embassy issuing a warning for all French citizens to leave the country. "They opened fire on police with Kalashnikovs... three policemen were martyred," Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad told a press conference, adding that eight of those injured were in a critical condition. The Punjab police chief Rao Sardar Ali Khan said in a separate press conference that four officers died on Wednesday. The TLP in turn accused the police of firing on the crowd, with four of its supporters killed. Police in Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital, have denied using rubber bullets or guns and would not comment on claims that protesters had died.

"We have used no such weapons against them," police spokesman Mazhar Hussain told AFP. Police have said they have used tear gas and batons to control the crowds. The latest demonstration began on Friday in the group's stronghold city of Lahore, from where thousands of people have begun slowly moving towards the capital Islamabad.

Clashes between the two sides left two police officers dead on the first day of protests, while the TLP reported on Saturday that five of its supporters had died. Police have closed off major roads and junctions leading to the capital, around 300 kilometres from the current protest site.

### Militant group

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said Wednesday that Prime Minister Imran Khan and the security services had agreed to treat the TLP as a militant group. The government earlier this week announced a breakthrough in talks with the TLP, but the march resumed on Wednesday.

"We tried our best for the success of the talks but the government is not serious about fulfilling its commitments," TLP spokesman Sajjad Saifi said. "The expulsion of the French ambassador is our main demand." The government has repeatedly said it is not willing to close the French embassy or expel the current acting ambassador. The group's leader Saad Rizvi was arrested in April when violent anti-France protests erupted, leading to the deaths of six police officers. — AFP

## Chinese hypersonic test like a 'Sputnik moment': US general

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon's top general said Wednesday that China's recent test of an earth-circling hypersonic missile was akin to the Soviet Union's stunning launch of the world's first satellite, Sputnik, in 1957, which sparked the superpowers' space race. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confirmed for the first time the Chinese test of a nuclear-capable missile that would be very difficult to defend against.

"What we saw was a very significant event of a test of a hypersonic weapon system. And it is very concerning," Milley told Bloomberg TV. "I don't know if it's quite a Sputnik moment, but I think it's very close to that," he said.

"It's a very significant technological event that occurred... and it has all of our attention." The US Department of Defense had previously declined to confirm the test, first reported by the Financial Times on October 16. The newspaper said the August test launch caught Washington by surprise.

The missile circled the Earth at a low altitude and a velocity of more than five times the speed of sound, although it missed its target by more than 30 kilometers (19 miles), according to the Financial Times. China denied the report, saying it was a routine test of a reusable space vehicle.

Hypersonics are the new frontier in missile technology, because they fly lower and so are harder to detect than ballistic missiles, can reach targets more quickly, and are maneuverable. That makes them more dangerous, particularly if mounted with nuclear warheads.

The United States, Russia, China and North Korea have all tested hypersonics and several others are developing the technology. China in 2019 unveiled a hypersonic medium-range missile, the DF-17, which can travel around 2,000 kilometres and can carry nuclear warheads.

The missile mentioned in the FT story is a different one, with a longer range. It can be launched into orbit before coming back into the atmosphere to hit its target. Asked Wednesday about China's test, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby again declined to confirm it.

But he said that any major advancement in China's military capabilities does "very little to help decrease tensions in the region and beyond." Such advances, he said, are "paired with a foreign and defense policy approach that uses intimidation and coercion of neighboring nations to yield to China's interests." — AFP

Friday Times

# LIFESTYLE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

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**Giorgio Armani  
puts on flamboyant  
show in Dubai**

See Pages 24-26

Italian designer  
Giorgio Armani  
acknowledges the  
audience during One  
Night Only series in  
Dubai on October  
26, 2021.—AFP

## Lifestyle | Features

Trainer Alexandra Hoerand uses a tablet to log endangered species as her Cocker Spaniel Monte sits next to her during a demonstration by German rail operator Deutsche Bahn in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. —AFP photos



## Dogs help German rail firm sniff out protected species

At the side of a railway track on the outskirts of Frankfurt, Cocker Spaniel Monte is enthusiastically sniffing the ground, his long furry ears flopping around his nose. When he finds what he is looking for, he obediently stops, sits and is delighted to receive a treat from his trainer. Monte is one of six dogs being trained by German rail company Deutsche Bahn to identify the presence of protected species in potential construction sites. The dogs “can take us directly to where the animals are” and can work all year round in any weather conditions, says Jens Bergmann, director of infrastructure projects at Deutsche Bahn’s network subsidiary.

dogs, this process can take specialists up to a year. But having them on board reduces the timeframe to less than two months, and is much less invasive.

It also avoids “the unpleasant surprise of finding animals when the machines are already there”, says Kathleen Spittel-Schnell, one of the dog trainers. “This can lead to additional delays in the project or, worse still, to a complete halt in construction,” says Spittel-Schnell, who is also employed by the rail group as a protected species specialist.

### Lizards and snakes

Electric car mogul Elon Musk knows this all too well—last year, Tesla was forced to suspend construction work on its planned factory outside Berlin over concerns about protected lizards and snakes. Deutsche Bahn has already relocated some 12,000 endangered animals since 2010. As part of their training, the dogs are presented with a large metal container with holes in it, a bit like a bottle bank. Behind one of the holes is the scent of an endangered species. Golden Retriever Whisper tickles the holes with his muzzle before plunging his nose into one of them.

Monte is just one year old but already knows what to do if he finds a protected animal: don’t put your paws or your muzzle on it. Just sit and wait for your treat. While dogs have been used as a monitoring technique for decades, “it is only recently that they have garnered serious attention by ecologists from all over the world”, according to a study published in March in the British journal *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*. Dogs are already being used to detect wildlife in the United States, as well as to identify endangered species or items such as ivory passing illegally through customs. — AFP



A Cocker Spaniel named Monte, who is being trained as detection dog to find endangered species, is pictured.

Finya, Fenna, Storm, Eskil, Monte and Whisper use their keen sense of smell to sniff out snakes, toads, bats, lizards and other creatures whose presence could hamper the progress of construction works.” The law requires us to identify the possible presence of protected species,” explains Bergmann. “We then either have to protect them on site or find a new habitat for them.” Without the

## Baldwin shooting: Assistant director admits didn’t fully check gun

The man who handed Alec Baldwin the gun that killed a cinematographer admitted he didn’t fully check it, documents revealed Wednesday, as the sheriff investigating the fatal shooting spoke of “complacency” on the US movie set. Halyna Hutchins died after Baldwin shot her with the Colt .45 he was pointing at a camera for low-budget western “Rust” being filmed in New Mexico. The live round passed through her torso and struck director Joel Souza in the shoulder.

Assistant director Dave Halls told detectives he remembers seeing ammunition in the period weapon before he handed it to Baldwin. Moviemakers sometimes use inert, or dummy, bullets in props. “He advised he should have checked all of them, but didn’t, and couldn’t recall if (armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed) spun the drum” to show him what was inside the gun, an affidavit says.

Halls handed Baldwin the weapon using the phrase “cold gun”—industry lingo for an inert firearm. An investigation into last Thursday’s fatal shooting has recovered 500 rounds of ammunition from the set, Sheriff Adan Mendoza told reporters, adding that detectives believe they were a mix of blanks, dummies and live rounds. Entertainment trade website *The Wrap* reported this week that crew members had been using prop weapons just hours before Hutchins was killed, shooting at tin cans for target practice. “We have recovered what we believe to be possible additional live rounds on set,” Mendoza said.

“We’re going to determine how those got there, why they were there, because they shouldn’t have been there. “I think there was some complacency on this set,” he added. As the film’s armorer, Gutierrez-Reed, 24, would have been responsible for supplying and keeping weapons safe on set, ensuring that they are accounted for at all times and locked away when not in use. She told detectives that on the day of the incident guns were secured while the crew ate lunch, but that ammunition was not, according to the affidavit.

Mendoza told reporters more questions were being asked of the people who “inspected or handled the firearm... before it got to Mr Baldwin.” “We’re going to try to determine exactly how that happened and if they should have known that there was a live round in that firearm.” “Rust” crew members had complained about lax on-set protocols, and a gun was mistakenly fired at least twice on set in the days before Hutchins’ death, multiple US out-

lets have reported.

It emerged this week that Halls had been sacked as assistant director of a previous production because of a gun safety violation that had resulted in a minor injury to a crew member. Santa Fe district attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies said context such as this might affect any eventual decision to prosecute in the “Rust” shooting. “It obviously could play into whether charges get filed or not,” she said. Asked whether Emmy Award-winning Baldwin—who also served as a producer on the movie—could face criminal charges, she said it was not out of the question. “All options are on the table. No one has been ruled out at this point,” she told a press conference.



In this file photo US actor Alec Baldwin attends DreamWorks Animation’s “The Boss Baby: Family Business” premiere at SVA Theatre in New York City. — AFP

Legal experts told AFP that despite there being no doubt that Baldwin, 63, pulled the trigger, he is unlikely to be charged with a crime. “(Baldwin) appears to have reasonably believed that this was not a loaded weapon,” said University of Southern California law professor Gregory Keating. This fact would leave him some way short of being culpable for involuntary manslaughter. More likely, said legal consultant Bryan Sullivan, Baldwin and his fellow producers—there are 12 people credited with variations of this role—are likely to face action for civil damages.

“I anticipate that everybody’s going to be sued,” he said. Baldwin is expected to be named in any lawsuit because of his deep pockets, and because his fame would help draw media coverage, according to Sullivan. “A plaintiff’s lawyer would definitely want to name Alec Baldwin to get the money in there,” he added. — AFP



This file photo shows different packs of raw cow's milk 'Camembert de Normandie' French cheese at the opening day of the 57th International Agriculture Fair at the Porte de Versailles exhibition center in Paris. — AFP photos

## Cheese-loving France reels as mozzarella catches camembert

It's a trend-some would say a threat—that touches a pungent symbol of French culinary pride: Sales of camembert, the Normandy specialty that has long graced cheese platters, are set to be eclipsed by an import, Italian mozzarella. The two are not exactly rivals, the first savored on its own, while the latter is used mainly in salads, pizzas and pasta dishes. But camembert's fading popularity is forcing France to recognize that its cheese tastes and traditions are changing. "Camembert is suffering because it's considered old-fashioned and lower class, while mozza has caught on with young people," said Mike Bija, who runs La Cremiere du 17, a stylish cheese bar in a cool corner of Paris.

Alongside glasses of wine, he offers a traditional raw-milk camembert, but also a milder version made from Italian buffalo milk—what once would have been a heresy. "Camembert is an adventure, it's a demanding, strong-flavored product," said his partner, Sakina Merazga. Sales of the white discs slumped by 11 percent in the five years to 2020, to 48,000 tons a year—the only decline among the top five French cheeses, according to the agriculture ministry. Mozzarella sales meanwhile jumped 62 percent over the period, to nearly 38 thousand tons, and show no sign of slowing. "Mozzarella sales are soon going to surpass those of camembert," the consumer research firm Nielsen wrote in a recent study.

### Modern times

Weighing heavily is the lost tradition of laying out an array of cheeses at the end of every meal, something now reserved for dinner parties or celebrations. "My parents used to eat it after both lunch and dinner," said Emilie Flechard, whose family owns Fromagerie Gillot, France's

largest independent maker of raw-milk camembert, in the village of Saint-Hilaire-de-Briouze. "Myself, I never eat cheese after a meal, except when I invite guests over," she said, as employees ladled curd into molds, a process repeated at strict intervals five times over a day to make each cheese. The shift also reflects changing shopping habits, with most people now buying their cheese in supermarkets that mainly stock mass-market brands.

A quaint neighborhood cheese shop, ageing pricier products in-house, is largely a thing of the past—only three percent of French cheese sales are at specialty shops or market stalls, the ministry says. Families, meanwhile, are getting smaller, and many don't want to buy a whole camembert that will ripen quickly in the fridge once cut open. There are two types of camembert, telling two very different stories.

### Quantity vs quality

The vast majority of camembert is



made with pasteurized milk by dairy giants like Lactalis, the market behemoth with brands such as President. It was one of the first mass-produced, widely accessible French cheeses, and as a result the emblem of France's wine-bread-cheese triptych. But because of its milder if not bland flavor and a texture at times described as chalky or gooey, the French have begun to turn up their noses. "In a way, camembert is like the baguette, which was highly industrialized in the second half of the 20th century, becoming a bland, tasteless bread," said Loic Bienassis, a researcher at the European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food in Tours, France. The decline in sales, part, "is the price of its success," he said.

But demand is brisk for the more flavorsome raw-milk originals made by Gillot and around a dozen other producers under the strict Camembert de Normandie appellation (AOP). Sales of AOP camembert, which requires milk from grass-fed Normande cows, make up less than 10 percent of the overall market, but they are rising fast—over 24 million were sold in 2020, a 20 percent jump over the past six years. Gillot is investing 25 million euros (\$29 million) to upgrade its site to meet demand, and now also sells smaller camemberts targeting today's smaller households. "We believe in a future of more higher-quality products. People are going to eat less, but better," Flechard said. — AFP

In this file photo an employee packs camembert cheeses in an haloir of the cheese factory at the Fromagerie Durand in the Normandy's village of Camembert, northwestern France.

## 'Never seen anything like it': Astronaut on 2021 climate disasters

From his perch 400 kilometers above Earth, French astronaut Thomas Pesquet has had a unique perspective on the climate-fueled natural disasters that have swept the planet over the past six months. Pesquet recently finished up his second mission at the International Space Station, an experience that made him appreciate Earth's fragility like never before. He spoke to AFP ahead of the UN climate summit kicking off on October 31, sharing his hopes and fears for the planet.

### What images strike you the most?

The massive storms, and the forest fires. I have never seen anything like it, incredibly huge fires with plumes of smoke visible from space for days and days. It was striking to think about the energy it gave off and the damage it caused for people unfortunate enough to be in its path. We had never seen so many extremely impressive tropical storms—you could practically see into the eye of the cyclone. They're walls of clouds with phenomenal power, coming more and more often and causing more and more destruction.



French astronaut Thomas Pesquet

### Does the Earth seem fragile?

Yes, absolutely. Seeing the planet from the window of your space craft makes you think. You only have to see it once: you can spend two days in space and just getting that distance, seeing the fragility of the atmosphere, that thin bubble that makes life possible in the vacuum of space, that incredible oasis—it changes your life.

When you see changes over the long term—sometimes you need more than five years to see it—you can't help but feel concerned. That's why I became an ambassador for the (UN's) Food and Agriculture Organization, and an advocate for many environmental causes.

### What worries you the most?

The idea that we might not succeed in reaching an agreement at an international level, and that economic concerns dominate over environmental ones. It's a completely short-sighted approach. Over the long-term, profits are directly threatened by climate change. When you see the Great Barrier Reef not included on the list of endangered sites because of Australian government pressure, you think the priorities are wrong and we're in trouble. The first thing to do is listen to the experts who have dedicated their lives to providing solutions on a local, regional, national and global level. We have to try to put solutions in place. The most urgent task at hand is to decarbonize. You have to prioritize renewables and carbon-free energy. And that takes restrictive measures and international commitments for which countries can be held accountable. That's what COP26 is all about. — AFP

## Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan's son given bail in India drugs case

The son of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan was granted bail yesterday three weeks after being arrested during a cruise ship drugs bust in a case that has gripped India. Aryan Khan, 23, the eldest son of the actor dubbed the "King of Bollywood", was detained in early October alongside 19 others after the Narcotics Control Bureau raided a ship set to sail from Mumbai to Goa. He was given bail yesterday along with two others by the High Court of Bombay on their fourth attempt. He would likely be released today or tomorrow, his lawyer and India's former attorney-general Mukul Rohatgi told reporters.



The case has grabbed headlines across India, dominating front pages and receiving non-stop coverage on news channels. Some have claimed that Khan, a Muslim, is a victim of religious persecution in a country governed by a Hindu-nationalist party. Social media has been flooded with messages of support for the family, with many calling the arrest a witch-hunt. Fans gathered outside the elder Khan's seaside mansion in Mumbai to show solidarity and the family have also received support from several Bollywood A-listers. The officer investigating the case, Sameer Wankhede, is facing an internal probe within the narcotics bureau and another by Mumbai police over allegations of bribery and extortion related to the case. Rohatgi told the court Aryan Khan should be granted bail as no drugs were found in his possession and prosecutors had no proof of any consumption.

The narcotics agency opposed bail, arguing that the investigation revealed an international drug connection and had found drug-related WhatsApp chats on his phone. The high-profile case comes a year after the suicide of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput and the arrest of his ex-girlfriend, actress Rhea Chakraborty, for allegedly buying him drugs. Her arrest sparked a wider probe into drug use in Bollywood, with superstar Deepika Padukone and others hauled in for questioning. Shah Rukh Khan, whose career spans three decades, is arguably Hindi cinema's biggest and most recognisable star of the modern age. — AFP



In this file photo, European bison walk at the Magura Zimbrilor reintroducing area 20 km from Armenis village, Romania. — AFP photos



In this file photo, European bison are released at a reserve in Armenis village, south-western Romania.



In this file photo an European bison is released from a truck.

## Rescued from extinction, bison rediscover Romania mountains

Hoof prints in the mud, tree bark nibbled away: even if the newest residents of Romania's Carpathian mountain forest shy away from visitors, their traces are there for those who know where to look. They are signs of the success of a project to reintroduce bison to this region after a centuries-long absence, key to keeping the hairy giants off lists of critically endangered species.

Bison had all but been driven out of Europe by hunting and the destruction of its habitats, but their reappearance in Romania has brought back a key component of the region's ecosystem. Under gentle autumn sunshine on the edge of a centuries-old wood, young forest warden Matei Miculescu is on the lookout for members of the Carpathian herd. The animals can be hard to spot, having been tempted further into the forest by the abundant vegetation and the possibility of extending their habitat. Miculescu says the animals are thriving in the

forest, in contrast to captivity which "creates the risk of inbreeding" and weakens their chances of survival.

Nowadays, around 6,000 bison, Europe's largest mammal and a distant cousin of the American buffalo, can be found on the continent. Most of them are on the Polish-Belarusian border where efforts to revive the population got underway in the 1950s. Romania welcomed bison back in 2014 in the southwestern Armenis region, more than 200 years after it was last seen there. Born in captivity in other parts of Europe where they had been given names like Kiwi, Bilbo and Mildred they were transferred to Romania in 16 separate stages.

### Cutting human links

Thanks to successful reproduction in the wild, "around 105 bison now live freely in the Tarcu mountains and have settled in well," says Marina Druga, head of the project led jointly by the WWF and Rewilding Europe. "In the past two years, there haven't been any deaths in their ranks," says Druga, explaining that the goal is to get to a population "of 250 individuals in five years' time". The program is well established: first the animals spend several weeks being re-acclimatized to life in the wild and are only then released and left to fend for themselves.

They can currently be found making use of around 8,000 hectares in a protected area which stretches over 59,000 hectares. The southern Carpathians present ideal conditions: "a vast region with a thinly spread human population and no intensive agriculture," says Wanda Olech-Piasecka from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Since 2014 there have been 38 bison calves

born in the area.

"Without them, the project would have no future," says Miculescu, who recognizes each of the creatures by their horns of the color of their fur. But those running the project have resisted giving the calves names. Since they have been born in the wild, all links with humans should be cut, explains Druga.

### Architects of the forest

The WWF says the next step to make the population viable in the long term will be to introduce bison into other parts of the Carpathians and establish a network of populations. Over the long term, the animals need a large habitat in order to avoid conflict over territory with human populations or within their own herds. Along with benefitting the bison themselves, advocates say that this example of "rewilding" is also a boon for the wider ecosystem, bringing benefits for some 600 species from microorganisms to large carnivores.

"They change the landscape and architecture of the forest by stopping the spread of invasive tree species, spreading seeds for hundreds of plants and creating paths smaller animals use to access food," explains Druga. Weaker or sick members of the herd can themselves serve as prey for wolves or bears, who in turn will be less likely to stray into human settlements in search of food, a problem which has grown in recent years in Romania.

Even those who watch them closely have sometimes been surprised by the effects the bison's presence can have. "Birds collect discarded bits of fur to isolate their nests while frogs can use bison hoof prints to jump from one pond to another," says Miculescu. — AFP



In this file photo, a European bison is released from a transport box.

**A**t a hospital in Spain, a doctor holds a test tube under Encarna Oviedo's nose to see if she can smell anything—a full 18 months after she had COVID. “Honey, vanilla, chocolate or cinnamon?” he asks her in the smell unit at the Mutua Terrassa Hospital northwest of Barcelona. “Vanilla?” the 66-year-old replies, her tone unsure. Oviedo is one of an estimated half a million people who lost their sense of smell in Spain after contracting the virus. She caught a mild case of COVID-19 in March 2020 as the virus overtook the country, which soon became one of the hardest hit in Europe.

Doctors are trying to help Oviedo and others to regain the sense through “smell training”, a long and slow process that involves sniffing different odors over a period of months to retrain the brain to recognize different smells. “Loss of sense of smell affects around 70 percent of patients who had COVID,” says Joaquim Mullol who heads up a smell clinic in Barcelona's Hospital Clinic. A quarter of all people who have lost their smell because of COVID do not fully recover it long after falling ill, he added.

#### ‘Everything smelled burnt’

Oviedo is one of around 90 people, mostly “long COVID” patients, who have been treated for loss of smell at the Mutua Terrassa clinic since it opened in February. After a first assessment, they begin a four-month rehabilitation program, which involves a weekly session with a therapist who helps patients to try to identify odors. Oviedo finished the program earlier this year and returns to the smell clinic periodically to see if there has been any improvement. But so far there has been no change.

“I would like to be the way I was before, that I could come home and be able to say how nice my house smells,” she says. She now showers more often since she can't tell if she has body odor. For others who lost their smell after catching the virus, when it comes back, it's not quite right. “I started to find that everything smelled burnt, like my nose was over a deep fryer,” said Cristina Valdivia, who



## On the nose: Spain's COVID recovered fight to regain smell

These photos show Spaniard Cristina Valdivia, 47, affected by smell loss due to COVID-19, uses her smell training test kit in Barcelona.

— AFP photos

got sick in March 2020 and lost her smell completely for three months. After endless anguish and several specialist consultations, she went to the Hospital Clinic where she was diagnosed with parosmia, a distorted perception of smell. It was a common diagnosis for recovering COVID patients, and she was told she would have to undergo therapy to fix her sense of smell.

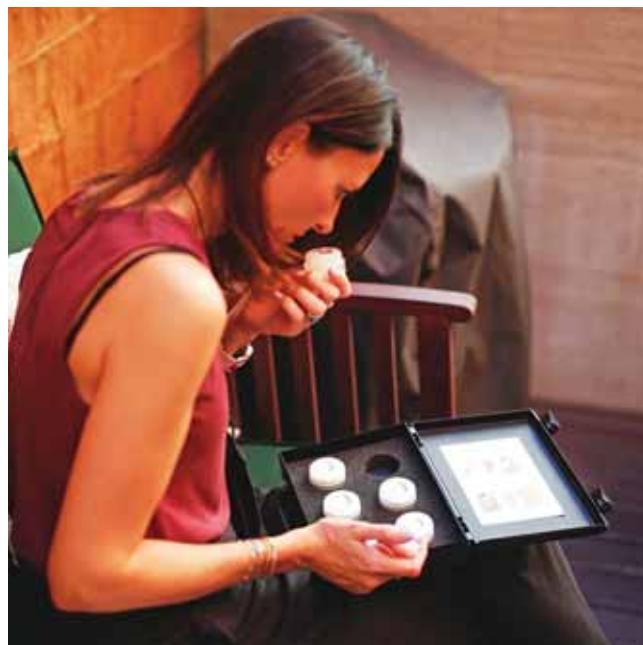
#### Depression, weight loss

Twice a day Valdivia sticks her nose into six

boxes of different odours, taking in their smells to try to regenerate her olfactory connections. She has regained the ability to smell some things such as citrus fruits but others remain elusive. “Coffee is dreadful, it is a mix between gasoline and something that is rotting,” Valdivia, 47, says. Patients say lack of smell complicates their daily lives more than people imagine. Valdivia misses the smell of her son. But odours from others register as vile for her. “If I hug my mother-in-law, my mother, the smell is horrible... it's hard to deal with all of

this,” she says.

Mullol said loss of sense of smell triggers depression and weight loss in some patients. “The nose allows us to smell what we eat, what we drink, to connect with the outside world,” he said. “We detect things that can be dangerous, like gas, spoiled food. When we remove that, the person is cut off from the world.”— AFP







Italian designer Giorgio Armani acknowledges the audience during One Night Only series in Dubai on October 26, 2021. — AFP photos

# Italian designer **Giorgio Armani** puts on a flamboyant show in Dubai

Italian designer Giorgio Armani put on a flamboyant show in Dubai on Tuesday night, with a stellar guest list to match. The well-heeled crowd included US actress Sharon Stone, Italy's 100m Olympic gold medalist Marcell Jacobs, and musician Eric Nam. For the evening's entertainment - besides the bevvvy of

gorgeous gowns that were paraded down the runway - the audience was serenaded by Coldplay front man Chris Martin, who jokingly dedicated a song to "everyone here who owns a skyscraper, even if it's only one skyscraper."



Lifestyle | Fashion

Friday, October 29, 2021



The silver, palm-tree lined runway, which was located at the Armani hotel at the Burj Khalifa, played host to a showcase of Armani's Spring 2022 collection and pieces from the Armani Prive couture line. Menswear also made a strong appearance, with sharp blazers and quirky accessories on show - from liquid velvet workwear to tailored pants perfect for work-to-play needs.

The second portion of the show was dedicated to womenswear - and it was a treat. Crystal embroidery, sparkling sequins and lashings of fringe were on show throughout as the graceful models showed off a collection of full-skirted gowns and ruffles galore. Ahead of Armani's first-ever Middle East showcase, the Italian designer received a UAE golden visa, giving him 10-year residency in recognition of his contribution to the international fashion scene.



Models present creations by Italian designer Giorgio Armani during One Night Only series in Dubai.



Lifestyle | Fashion



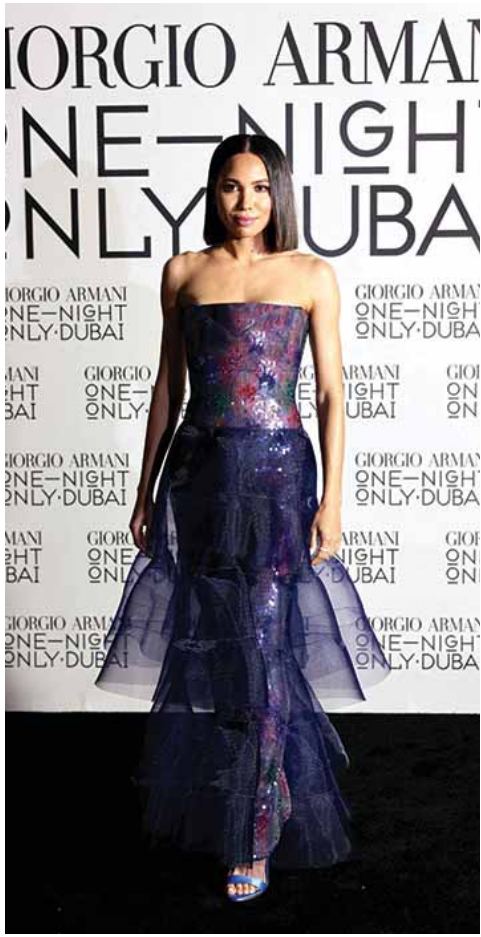
English actor Clive Owen (left) and US actress Sharon Stone pose during the photo call for Giorgio Armani "One Night Only Dubai" fashion show at the Armani Hotel Dubai.

The golden visa scheme began in 2019 and grants 10-year residency in recognition of special contributions to the country. Armani was given the UAE golden visa by Major General Mohamed Ahmed Al-Marri, director general of the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs. The designer opened the Armani Hotel in the Burj Khalifa, which at 160 stories is the world's tallest building, ten-years-ago.

Tuesday night's exclusive fashion show was planned to coincide with Expo 2020 Dubai, while also marking the 10th anniversary of the hotel and the 40th anniversary of the Armani brand, which was launched in 1981. The One Night Only Event was first staged in London in 2006, and has since been reinterpreted in Beijing, New York, Paris and Rome, among other cities. — arabnews



Italian athlete Lamont Marcell Jacobs



US actress Jurnee Smollett



US actor Taylor Zakhar Perez



US singer Eric Nam poses



(From left) Eve Owen, Roberta Armani and Clive Owen pose during the photo call for Giorgio Armani.



Model Ines Vandamme presents a creation made with chocolate by pastry chef Maelig Georgelin and designer Marie Ferrero-Favoriti.



Model Josephine Jobert presents a creation of pastry chef Francois Daubinet, and designers Elsa Muse, Chimene D, Lysandre Garrigue, made with chocolate during the Chocolate Fair (Salon du Chocolat) in Paris on Wednesday. — AFP photos



Model Lea Francois presents a creation made with chocolate by chocolate makers Euskal Gozogileak and la Maison Paries with the designer Edurne Kaperotxipi Urain.

# THE CHOCOLATE FAIR 'SALON DU CHOCOLAT'



A Venezuelan model presents a creation made with chocolate by Federico Jimenez Rivas and designer Pavel Mieses.



French-English journalist and TV host Sandy Heribert presents a creation made with chocolate by pastry chef Hugues Pouget and designer Ricardo Davila.



Model Gennifer Demey presents a creation of Hasnaa et Vincent Ferreira for Hasnaa Chocolats Grands Crus and the creator Jeremie Pujo made with chocolate.



French actress Isabelle Vitari presents a creation made with chocolate by chocolate maker Vincent Guerlais with the designer Angelique Godey.

Kids Page

Word Search

**Birthday Party**

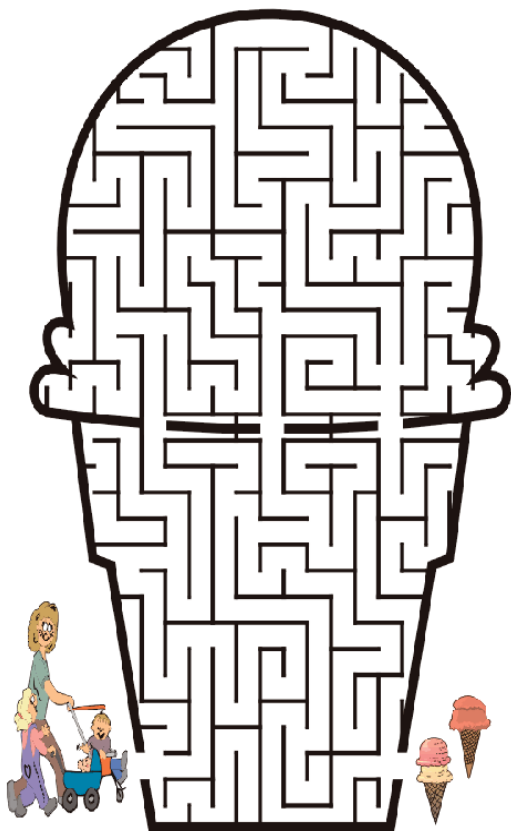
DIRECTIONS: Fill in the puzzle grid with the name of each item following the number and direction indicated. Use the word bank if you get stuck.

BALLOON	GAMES
BOW	GIFT
CAKE	ICE CREAM
CANDLE	MAGIC
CANDY	MUSIC
CHOCOLATE	PARTY HAT
CLOWN	POPCORN
CUPCAKE	PRIZE
FIREWORKS	PUNCH

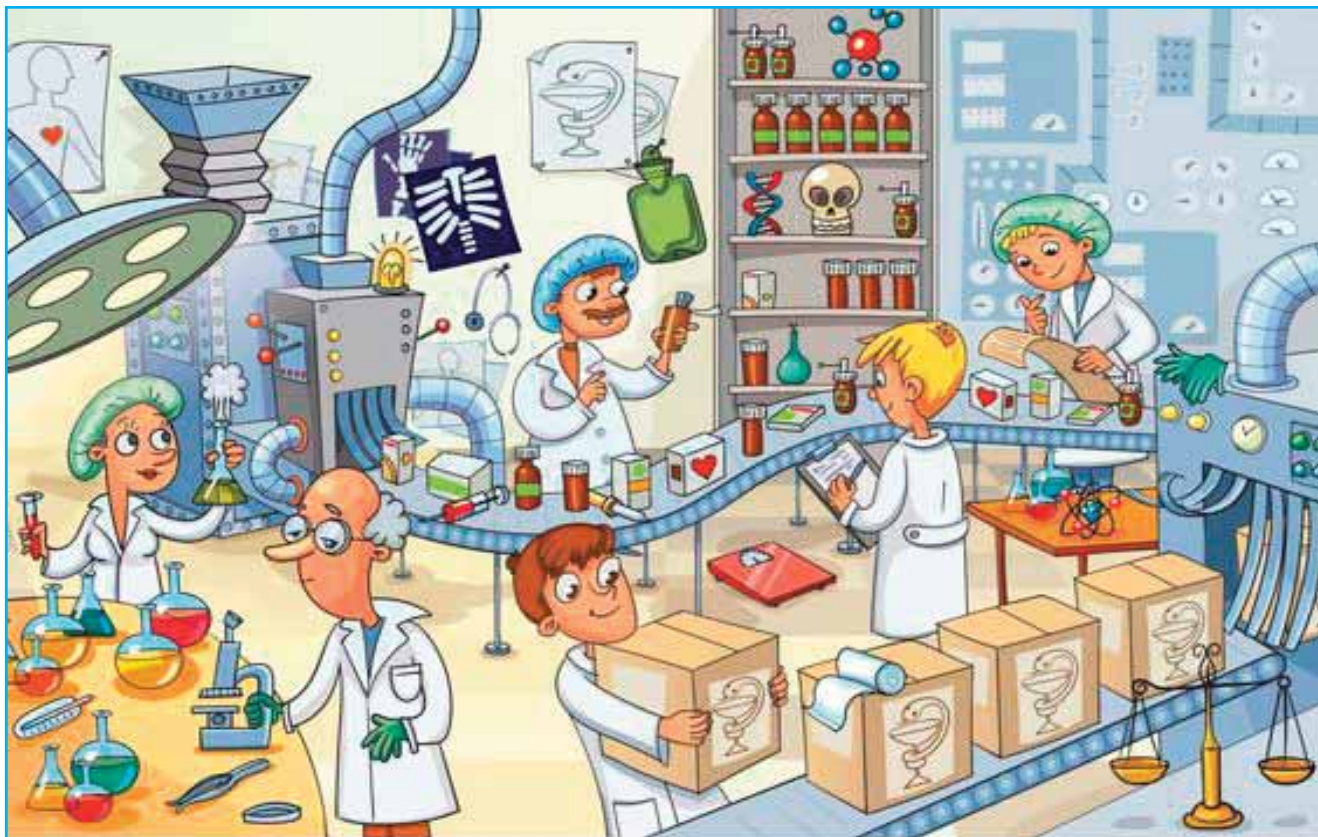
Color It



Kids Mazes



### Find the objects



Find 15 objects in the picture



### Word Scramble

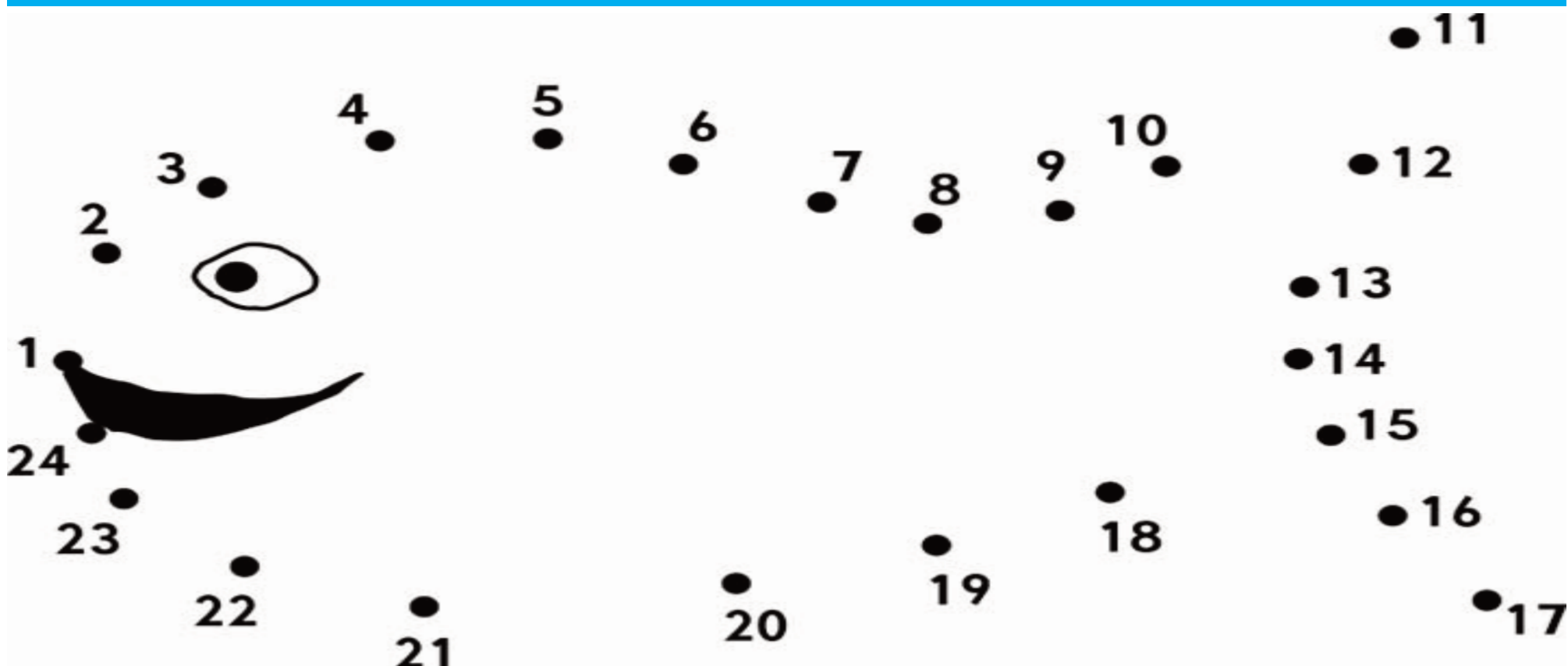
#### Costume Store Word Scramble

The costume store is a mess and Halloween is only a few days away! Can you help to unscramble the costume names so that all of the kids have something to wear on October 31st?

- |          |       |           |       |
|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| TWCIH    | _____ | OWLCN     | _____ |
| OMEZIB   | _____ | PEHRSERUO | _____ |
| WRZDAI   | _____ | OCASCWERR | _____ |
| TOROB    | _____ | TOHSG     | _____ |
| KOTESLEN | _____ | EISNRPSC  | _____ |
| BOCOYW   | _____ | RMNEAIF   | _____ |
| IESRDP   | _____ | IDELV     | _____ |
| UKMNEPP  | _____ | EMIRPVA   | _____ |
| ARYFI    | _____ | ANIJN     | _____ |
| EALGN    | _____ | ARPEIT    | _____ |
| MYMUM    | _____ | EMMIRDA   | _____ |



### Join the dots



# Business

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

**32** Recovery plans still short on renewable energy: IEA



**33** Samsung reports 28% jump in profit despite supply chain woes



**34** ECB stands pat on stimulus amid rising eurozone inflation



## Extreme heat threatens US workers, economy

US loses an estimated \$100bn annually due to heat-related output dips



LAMONT, US: A farmworker picks grapes in the Kern County town of Lamont, California, where record heat has fuelled drought and wildfires. — AFP

**LAMONT, US:** Irma Gomez has worked in California's Central Valley, one of the world's most productive agricultural regions, for nearly a decade—but she has never experienced a year as hot as this one, so hot that a colleague collapsed and died in the fields. "It's worrying," Gomez says. "It could happen to any of us." Rising temperatures are increasingly threatening workers in the United States, endangering their health as well as their performance.

And that has major economic consequences for the entire country, according to two recent studies. The United States already loses an

estimated \$100 billion annually due to heat-related dips in productivity, says a report by the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation's Resilience Center, a Washington DC-based think tank. If no action is taken to curb global warming, losses will reach \$200 billion by 2030 and \$500 billion by 2050, the study says. "When you are slowed down and you need to have a break to have cold drinks and get in the shade, you produce less," says Kathy Baughman McLeod, director of the Resilience Center.

The first impact of such slowdowns is on workers' income. "In many fields like agricul-

ture, workers are paid hourly or paid by the piece," says Kristina Dahl, co-author of a study conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a non-governmental organization specializing in issues such as global warming.

"So if the workers are getting that time out and not being compensated for it, then that has implications for their financial well-being as well." Gomez, 37, said there has been less work this year because of the heat—and it has affected her basic needs, like her ability to pay for housing.

Unable to work eight-hour days, she received \$1,700 a month this summer, \$700

less than the same period last year. For her, the difference is equivalent to a month's rent.

As the heat continues to rise, breaks will only become more frequently necessary, warns the Union of Concerned Scientists. Three million workers in the United States experience at least one working week each year in temperatures above 37.7 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit), where heat puts them at risk. If current weather patterns continue, by the middle of the century, some 18.4 million people will be working more than a week in such extreme conditions—which means more breaks to protect health. — AFP

# PREMIER MARKET WEEKLY TECHNICAL BULLETIN

WEEK ENDED ON 28 OCTOBER 2021

No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance											Valuation Multiples *			
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	955	990	995	951	44	39,436,541	36	3.77%	17.86%	965	995	24.1	2.13	1.9%	1.27
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	240	246	247	238	9	91,979,146	6	2.50%	12.33%	245	248	22.3	1.17	1.9%	1.13
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	224	224	225	222	3	34,740,963	0	0.00%	7.69%	222	226	NM	0.98	0.0%	1.01
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	235	238	238	233	5	7,569,574	5	2.15%	11.74%	236	242	18.8	0.97	2.0%	1.05
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	824	832	834	823	11	23,659,278	9	1.09%	22.90%	825	834	36.3	3.75	1.1%	1.41
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	771	782	783	765	18	3,758,876	12	1.56%	37.68%	781	787	64.2	4.59	0.0%	1.05
204	National Investments	Financial Services	207	220	220	205	15	11,913,702	14	6.80%	62.96%	206	224	7.9	1.02	4.6%	1.24
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	150	147	154	141	13	12,123,902	-2.9	-1.94%	-7.55%	147	153	NM	1.42	3.3%	0.59
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	135	135	140	133	7	48,870,100	0	0.00%	20.54%	134	137	NM	0.82	0.0%	0.98
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	166	180	185	166	19	93,359,572	15	9.09%	65.14%	177	193	34.9	1.32	0.0%	0.97
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	775	787	789	768	21	2,628,312	13	1.68%	19.79%	785	790	19.8	1.85	0.7%	1.11
501	National Industries	Financial Services	247	274	275	247	28	49,395,884	29	11.84%	55.68%	262	281	7.0	1.02	0.0%	1.44
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	853	897	909	853	56	1,325,405	38	4.42%	18.81%	886	914	33.6	1.01	5.6%	0.93
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	916	920	934	910	24	963,017	3	0.33%	43.75%	915	635	26.2	2.16	5.8%	0.72
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	379	379	380	372	8	1,983,250	0	0.00%	12.13%	374	382	30.4	1.00	4.0%	0.75
603	Agility	Industrials	976	1000	1,006	969	37	17,911,441	26	2.67%	47.93%	991	1005	29.1	1.91	0.9%	1.49
605	Zain	Telecommunications	600	596	604	593	11	20,218,948	-4	-0.67%	-1.65%	597	602	13.8	2.23	3.4%	1.36
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,314	3,348	3,365	3,301	64	537,287	34	1.03%	-11.87%	3315	3350	6.1	3.86	11.9%	0.49
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	240	238	241	234	7	10,106,323	-1	-0.42%	10.19%	237	240	NM	0.76	0.0%	0.86
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	291	293	294	289	5	54,137,707	3	1.03%	29.07%	287	293	21.7	2.35	1.2%	1.13
821	Warba Bank	Banking	285	282	288	281	7	17,012,736	-1	-0.35%	19.49%	278	286	16.7	2.24	0.0%	0.99
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	633	628	636	625	11	2,600,535	-7	-1.10%	3.29%	625	633	19.9	1.80	2.8%	0.44
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	376	374	377	370	7	6,174,154	-2	-0.53%	2.19%	371	375	NM	1.56	0.0%	0.48
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	235	235	237	234	3	5,841,227	0	0.00%	-15.16%	233	238	20.3	4.92	5.1%	0.67
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,930	2,010	2,095	1,930	165	1,291,369	72	3.72%	82.73%	1983	2030	14.4	7.67	2.0%	0.76

\* As of end of week closing

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## Business

# Recovery plans still short on renewable energy: IEA

## COP26 summit in Glasgow crucial for long-term viability of the Paris climate deal

**PARIS:** Clean energy remains just a tiny part of the pandemic economic recovery plans despite some improvement, the IEA said yesterday as it warned carbon dioxide emissions were set to rebound.

Investments in clean energy—whether it is renewable production, electric vehicles or efficiency measures—represent only 3 percent of the \$16.9 trillion mobilized globally for recovery plans, the International Energy Agency said. That is an improvement from the 2 percent when the IEA first issued a report on the subject in July.

“Recovery plans globally are still insufficient to put emissions into structural decline,” said the Paris-based agency, which advises governments of industrialized nations on energy policy. Moreover, it warned that “lead times on many recovery measures prevent them from rebounding in the immediate rebound in CO2 emissions, which is set to be the second largest in history.”

Over the longer term, the IEA said that absent significant steps

by nations “global emissions are set to continue to diverge sharply from a path consistent with net zero emissions from the energy sector by 2050.” The IEA’s warning comes just days ahead of a G20 leaders’ summit, as well as the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, which is being billed as crucial for the long-term viability of the Paris climate deal meant to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The agency says some \$470 billion has been earmarked by governments for clean energy projects through 2030, a 20 percent increase from July.

But it noted a growing divide between certain advanced economies (such as the US, France, Japan and Britain) and less wealthy nations where green investments are sorely necessary.

“The shortfall in sustainable recovery spending in emerging and developing economies is a global problem that requires a global solution,” the IEA’s director, Fatih Birol, said in a statement. — AFP



### Large battery with Huawei supercharge

Considering how much of our daily lives are tied to the smartphone, battery life is perhaps one of the most important concerns that users have, if not the most. After all, no matter how powerful or well designed a smartphone is, it is of little use to us when its battery is depleted. The Huawei nova 9 packs a proprietary 4300mAh battery to provide all-day battery life. Furthermore, the trendy flagship camera king supports 66W Huawei supercharge, enabling it to charge much faster. It takes only 15 minutes to charge to 53 percent and 38 minutes to 100 percent.

### Visionary and inspirational user experience

The Huawei nova 9 runs on EMUI 12, which offers a straightforward, smooth, safe and reliable user experience for working, studying, remote communication, gaming, entertainment or video editing. Thanks to the super device features, Huawei has consolidated different menus into the control panel with a simple swipe users can explore the control panel and get quick access to audio playback, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth settings, as well as making it easier to control multiple devices as if they were controlling just one device.

For example, users can tap on the Huawei MatePad icon to activate Smartphone-Tablet Multi-screen Collaboration; tap the Huawei MateBook icon for Smartphone-PC Multi-screen Collaboration or tap the Huawei FreeBuds icon to seamlessly switch their audio output to their Huawei earbuds.

With the distributed file system, the Huawei nova 9 can also function as a wirelessly connected external storage unit for the PC, meaning users can access the files they want more easily than ever before. This means when users are drafting an email on the PC, they can add smartphone files as an attachment or when they see an image they like when browsing the internet on the PC, they can save that image directly to the smartphone. Using the Huawei nova 9, users can also transfer MeeTime calls onto Huawei Vision smart TV and conduct the call by taking advantage of the larger display, camera and speakers. Users may also conveniently share their screen during a video and even mark key places, to bring important insights directly into view. Offering a smart and seamless experience to users, the trusted, innovative and secure AppGallery comes pre-installed on the Huawei nova 9, where users can search for, and download a wide range of high-quality apps.

In short, if you are looking for a new smartphone that truly ticks all the boxes and also that comes at a reasonable price range, then the new trendy flagship camera king Huawei nova 9 is your go-to option right now!

## Why Huawei nova 9 is top trendy flagship and camera king smartphone of this year

By Islam Al-Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** A great smartphone is one that is styled for the ages, equipped with a great camera, has a large battery that charges up swiftly, and if you throw in some cool futuristic features then you have something special. And all of these things are not easy to find in one single phone!

Having said so, Huawei recently launched in Kuwait the all-new Huawei nova 9. Dubbed as “the Trendy Flagship & Camera King”, this latest gem from Huawei comes soaring with a stunning design, a 50MP Super Sensing Camera, a large battery that supports 66W Huawei SuperCharge in addition to next generation super device features which allow you to do more than one thing on multiple devices all at once. Let us take a look at its features closely and you will understand why it is our favourite choice for a smartphone this season!

### Breathtaking design

The Huawei nova 9 is simply an outstanding smartphone and it comes in a new colourway called: Colour No 9, what a cool name that is! Polished with a brand-new Starry Flash AG Glass process, the device is a pleasure to the eyes. Colour No 9 is a mixture of low-saturation blue and purple hues that gives off a hint of mysteriousness. Under different lighting, the colour finish reflects vivid and colourful patterns. Under a spotlight, the whole device shines and sparkles. It reminds users of the subtle moments in their life, which are inspiring and exhilarating.

The Huawei nova 9 inherits the Huawei nova Series’ unique aesthetic and sophisticated design. The Trendy Flagship and Camera king sports a 6.57-inch curved display that can render 1.07 billion colours, and supports up to 120Hz display refresh rate, 300Hz touch sampling rate and the P3 colour gamut to produce smoother and more immersive visuals that are brimming with details. The Huawei nova 9 is sleek with a thickness of only 7.77mm and a weight of approximately 175g only. In terms of industrial



design, colourway is always an important factor for the Huawei nova Series to showcase its uniqueness and commitment. It also comes with a more iconic camera setup that is updated based on Huawei nova 8’s Star Orbit Ring.

### Ultra-vision camera

The Huawei nova 9 comes with an ultra vision AI-Quad Camera system, which includes a 50MP ultra vision Main camera with RYYB colour filter array, an 8MP ultra wide angle camera, a 2MP depth camera and a 4cm macro camera. The upgraded hardware synergies with flagship-class algorithms to empower users capture in high clarity across different scenarios.

Meeting the demand for an excellent vlogging experience, the Huawei nova 9 is fitted with a 32MP high-res selfie camera. Similar to the rear camera, it also supports 4K video capture and AIS (AI image stabilisation) video stabilisation, allowing users to capture high definition footage of themselves as they talk to the camera, as well as the exciting events happening around them.

Thanks to continuous front/rear recording, users can also switch between the front and rear cameras, allowing them to fluidly capture their story within a single video file. Dual-view video recording allows users to showcase their live reaction to events, simultaneously using the front and rear cameras with no editing required or, for when you want to show the big picture and the detail, you can simultaneously capture a close up shot and wide-angle shot at the same time.

## Business

# Samsung reports 28% jump in profit despite supply chain woes

## Pandemic-driven working from home helps tech firms boom

SEOUL: South Korean tech giant Samsung Electronics posted a 28-percent jump in operating profit yesterday despite global supply chain challenges caused by the pandemic. The world's top chipmaker saw its operating profit reach 15.8 trillion won (\$13.5 billion) for the July-September period, it said in a regulatory filing. Its sales rose 10 percent on-year to a record 74 trillion won on the back of strong performance from its memory chip division thanks to sustained global demand.

"Favorable market conditions continued in the memory market" resulting in "robust sales", the company said in a statement. Operating profits generated from its semiconductor business accounted for over 60 percent of the total, illustrating the major role the division plays to the sprawling group.

While the coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc on the world economy, it has helped many tech companies boom. Pandemic-driven working from home has boosted demand for devices powered by Samsung's chips, as well as home appliances such as televisions and washing machines.

Consumer demand for high-end products such as foldable phones is also expected to further boost profits going into the holiday season, said Loo Wee Teck, global head of consumer electronics at Euromonitor. "Its foldable phones will continue to be Samsung's halo product and a profit haven as there is nearly no competition... as we

move into the critical holiday season," he said.

But the firm has acknowledged it would continue to be affected by supply shortages for memory chips, noting "a longer-than-expected component supply issue may need to be monitored". Supply chain problems are hitting economic activity around the world, with companies facing shortages of key commodities, components and shipping capacity. Samsung Electronics is the flagship subsidiary of the giant Samsung group, by far the largest of the family-controlled empires known as chaebols that dominate business in South Korea, the world's 12th largest economy.

The conglomerate's overall turnover is equivalent to one-fifth of gross domestic product. Samsung Electronics shares closed up 0.9 percent. Meanwhile, LG Electronics, South Korea's second-largest appliance firm after Samsung, saw its operating profit shrink by 49.6 percent in the third quarter on-year to 540 billion won. Its shares closed flat.

The earnings report came two days after Lee Jae-yong, the firm's vice-chairman and the de facto leader of the wider-Samsung conglomerate, was convicted of illegally using the anaesthetic propofol and ordered to pay 70 million won in fines. Lee was accused of having repeatedly taken the shots at a plastic surgery clinic in Seoul over several years, an act he said had "occurred due to my shortcomings" but insisted was for "medical purposes". —AFP



SEOUL: A woman walks past an advertisement for the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold3 and Flip3 smartphones at the company's Seocho building in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

## BoJ lowers annual growth estimate on COVID pressures

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan revised down its annual growth forecast yesterday and maintained its ultra-loose monetary policy as the pandemic continues to weigh on the world's third-largest economy. In a quarterly report on prices and the economy, the central bank predicted growth of 3.4 percent for the year to March 2022, down from its previous forecast of 3.8 percent.

"Downward pressure stemming from COVID-19 is likely to remain on service consumption, and exports and production are expected to decelerate temporarily due to supply-side constraints," the report said. "Thereafter, however, with the impact of COVID-19 waning gradually, mainly due to widespread vaccination, the economy is likely to recover." Reflecting this more positive longer-term outlook, the bank revised up its growth forecast for the fiscal year to March 2023 to 2.9 percent from the previous estimate of 2.7 percent.

The BoJ maintained its longstanding target of two-percent inflation, which remains far off despite years of efforts and prices surging globally. Although other central banks are starting to unwind their easing programs, "we continue to expect that the BoJ will stay on hold with easing bias, at least until April 2023 when governor (Haruhiko) Kuroda and two deputy governors are scheduled to end their terms," said UBS economist Masamichi Adachi ahead of yesterday's decision.

As other leading economies worry about inflation risks, Japan has been slower to see prices pick up, with businesses



TOKYO: The Bank of Japan revised down its annual growth forecast yesterday and maintained its ultra-loose monetary policy.

afraid of passing on the increased cost to consumers, Kuroda told reporters.

"Japanese companies are more inclined to absorb rises in material costs by cutting their margins and they try to keep sales prices," he said. "This is because thinking and ways of doing things that arose during deflation have remained."

Compared with other developed economies, Japan's demand has been slow to recover, he said, and Japanese businesses have mostly protected jobs during the pandemic and have been able to increase supply without significant changes to prices or labor cost. Consumer prices should eventually rise, Kuroda said, driven up by corporate earnings and wages once the pandemic's impact softens. —AFP

## Energy costs push Spain's inflation to 29-year high

MADRID: Spanish consumer prices rose at their fastest pace since 1992 in October on the back of higher energy prices, official data showed yesterday. Inflation climbed year on year by 5.5 percent, accelerating from a 4.0 percent increase in September, national statistics institute INE said.

That is its fastest pace in 29 years, since September 1992, when the rate was 5.8 percent. The surge in inflation in the eurozone's fourth-largest economy was due largely to a spike in the price of electricity, and to a lesser extent to higher gas prices, it added.

Bank of Spain governor Pablo Hernandez de Cos warned Monday that higher inflation rates are likely to be seen over the coming months since high energy prices are likely to last through the winter as demand rises due to colder weather. As in other European Union nations, inflation in Spain has risen since the start of the year after consumer prices declined during most of 2020 due to the economic impact of pandemic lockdowns. The European Central Bank (ECB) expects inflation will rise by 2.2 percent in the entire 19-country single currency area this year, above its target of 2.0 percent. It has insisted that the inflation spike is "temporary" in nature, driven by one-off pandemic-related effects that will gradually dissipate over the course of 2022. —AFP

## Business

# ECB stands pat on stimulus amid rising eurozone inflation

## Supply disruptions push up prices and squeeze industrial production

**FRANKFURT:** European Central Bank policymakers shrugged off rising inflation across the eurozone when they met yesterday, with the bank leaving its massive stimulus program unchanged.

While supply disruptions have pushed up prices and squeezed industrial production, the ECB kept its accommodative monetary policy stance as it seeks to nurse the economy back to health from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The bank's 25-member governing council held interest rates at their historic lows, including a negative bank deposit rate that means lenders pay to park excess cash at the central bank. And it decided its massive monthly bond purchases would continue at a "moderately lower" rate than in the second and third quarters in a turbulent period for the eurozone economy.

The 1.85-trillion-euro (\$2.15-trillion) pandemic emergency bond-buying programme (PEPP) is the ECB's main crisis fighting tool, aimed at keeping borrowing costs low to stoke economic growth. Attention will now shift to the press conference of ECB President Christine Lagarde, who faces the difficult task of deciding when to remove stimulus without threatening the recovery or letting inflation run out of control. Analysts expect Lagarde to nod to changing economic circumstances in her statement without prejudging the outcome of the bank's crucial coming policy meeting in December.

### 'All her energy'

Behind the status quo stance, policymakers are split between hawks, who favor tighter monetary policy to stifle inflation, and doves, who want to maintain the bank's expansive policy. In September, prices in the euro area rose 3.4 percent year-on-year, a 13-year high driven by soaring energy costs, and well above the



**FRANKFURT:** European Central Bank's 25-member governing council held interest rates at their historic lows yesterday, including a negative bank deposit rate that means lenders pay to park excess cash at the central bank. —AFP

bank's two-percent inflation target.

Lagarde will have needed "all her energy" to bring the two sides of the argument together, said Carsten Brzeski of ING, and could favor a "neutral" tone in her remarks. The ECB's meeting comes a week before policymakers at the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England gather to discuss possible changes to their own monetary policies.

The Fed has already signaled that it is "getting closer" to winding down its stimulus program, as inflation in the US climbs higher. The Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey, meanwhile,

has stated that the British central bank "will have to act" on inflation, setting off speculation that a rate hike could come as soon as next week. Elsewhere in the European Union, rate-setters have reacted sharply to inflation, with both Polish and Czech central banks making their biggest rate rises in years.

The prospect of the ECB following suit seems distant, not least because "inflationary pressures are less pronounced in the eurozone than in the US", according to Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank. The ECB has insisted that the inflation spike is "temporary" in nature, driven by one-off pandemic-related effects that will gradually dissipate over the course of 2022.

Labor markets in the 19-country euro area were more "sluggish" than the UK and US, meaning it would take longer for wage inflation—an indicator the ECB is watching closely—to become apparent, Schmieding said. While markets have been pricing in a rise somewhere near the end of 2022, there would be "no ECB rate hike before 2024", forecast Frederik Ducrozet, a strategist at Pictet Wealth management. October's ECB meeting was more about "paving the way" for December's promised decision on the ECB's stimulus program, Ducrozet said.

At the last meeting of the ECB's governing council in September, policymakers dialed back the pace of purchases, while deferring decisions on when it might end. Most observers expect the scheme to end in March next year, but ideas are being kicked around as to how the ECB could continue its exceptional support for the economy into the future. A separate pre-pandemic asset-purchasing program, currently running at a pace of around 20 billion euros a month, could be boosted or altered to give the ECB more flexibility. —AFP

## Spain's jobless rate falls as tourism picks up

**MADRID:** Spain's unemployment rate fell in the third quarter as the relaxation of pandemic restrictions allowed a recovery in its key tourism sector, official statistics showed yesterday.

The jobless rate declined to 14.57 percent in the July-September period from 15.26 percent in the previous quarter, national statistics office INE said. The unemployment rate remains above the 13.78 percent rate recorded in the fourth quarter of 2019 before the pandemic hit Spain.

The INE jobless figures are based on surveys, which provide a more reliable indication of unemployment as many people who jobless are not eligible for benefits. The bulk of the new jobs, 377,200, were created in the service sector which is dominated by tourism. The industrial sector added 63,000 jobs while agriculture shed 49,600 posts.

Before the pandemic hit in spring 2020, Spain was the world's second-most popular tourist destination after France, and the sector accounted for around 12 percent of the economy. The Spanish government has said it was hoping to attract around 45 million tourist visits this year, approximately half the figure for 2019. The Spanish economy contracted by 10.8 percent in 2020, one of the worst results among industrialized countries, but it returned to growth in the second quarter this year. The statistics office is set to release gross domestic product data for the third quarter on Friday. — AFP

## Lloyds bank profit more than doubles as economy revives

**LONDON:** British bank Lloyds yesterday announced that its net profit had more than doubled in the third quarter to £1.6 billion (\$2.2 bn), driven by the improved economic outlook. Upgrading its guidance for the whole of the year, the bank said it expected an improved net interest margin as well as to claw back money set aside to deal with the cost of the pandemic.

The bank posted an impairment credit of £84 million in the quarter, compared to a £300 million charge linked to virus fallout in the same reporting period last year. The bank's net income for the quarter increased by 20 percent to £4.1 billion.

Its profit for the first nine months increased almost eight-fold year-on-year to £5.5 billion, as part of a trend seen in the whole of the British banking sector. The bank said in a statement that this was "based upon improvements to the macroeconomic outlook for the UK, combined with robust credit performance", adding that its underlying profit before impairment "continues to recover".

The bank said its average interest-earning banking assets were up, "driven by strong growth" in mortgage sales and the "impact of three quarters of government-backed lending in 2021", as well as "cost discipline" and a rising net interest margin. Lloyds is particularly dependent on the state of the British economy because it is primarily a retail bank offering services to individuals and businesses.

The bank's quarterly results are "again breezing past expectations," said Richard Hunter, an analyst at Interactive Investor.



"Even before the impairment release, the third quarter underlying profit was 27 percent higher than the previous quarter, representing some real progress," he said.

The healthy property market has benefited Lloyds, which saw mortgage sales growth of £2.7 billion in the third quarter. With Lloyds occupying a "dominant position" in this market, "there will almost certainly be more to come," Hunter said. Less positively for the bank, British consumers are "continuing to pay down debt where possible", the analyst added, however, affecting credit card balances, where the margin is higher. The bank's shares rose 1.77 percent in early trading. — AFP

## Sports

# Russian trio eye Olympics at Skate Canada International

**WINNIPEG:** A troika of Russian women hope to bolster their Olympic team credentials this week at Skate Canada International in Vancouver, while three-time world champion Nathan Chen will be looking for redemption. Chen struggled in his 2022 Olympic season debut at Skate America last weekend in Las Vegas where his three-year winning streak ended abruptly. He settled for the bronze medal after misfiring on four of his typically reliable quadruple jumps.

"The more (quads) you put out, the more risky it is. Is it worth it? I don't know. It depends on the day, I guess," Chen said. Whether the US champ can be outscored again at Skate Canada remains a long shot, but just knowing it's not impossible could prove a confidence boost for top contenders including Canada's Keegan Messing and American Jason Brown.

Like Chen, Russian women have owned international podiums in recent years thanks to the unmatched depth of talent in that country. Kamila Valieva, Elizaveta Tuktamysheva and Alena Kostornaia finished 1-2-3 at Finlandia Trophy in Espoo three weeks ago and come into this second of six Grand Prix events with impressive resumes. The youngest of the trio, Valieva, 15, has proven the most successful among the latest batch of phenomenal competitors trained by star-making coach Eteri Tutberidze.

In Finland, the 2020 world junior champion showed three quads in her free skate, garnering the highest score ever awarded for a long program plus a record total score. At 24, Tuktamysheva is the seasoned veteran among Russia's teen prodigies and the only top-flight woman who does not train with Tutberidze in Moscow. The 2015 world champion mastered the triple Axel later in her career to keep herself in the game, and claimed world silver last March.

Kostornaia, 18, also has a triple Axel in her repertoire. Women who could spoil the Russians' Skate Canada podium party include resurgent Japanese Wakaba Higuchi and Americans Alysa Liu and Karen Chen, fourth in the world last year behind three Russians. In pair competition, the spotlight will shine on twice world champions and 2018 Olympic silver medalists Sui Wenjing and Han Cong. The Chinese hope to top off their careers with Olympic gold in Beijing next February. Podium favourites in ice dance include couples from Spain, Italy, Great Britain and Canada.

According to Canadian government COVID-19 protocols, international athletes who are not inoculated with a Canada-accepted vaccine



**LAS VEGAS:** Nathan Chen of the United States competes in the Men's Free Program during the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating - Skate America at Orleans Arena on Oct 23, 2021. — AFP

are subject to a mandatory quarantine and testing on entry to Canada. A Skate Canada spokesperson confirmed there were skaters from Russia and China who didn't meet vaccination requirements and had

to sequester at the host hotel for 72 hours after landing in Vancouver. Competition begins today with short programs for all disciplines. A limited 1,000, fully-vaccinated fans will be in the stands. — AFP

## Badminton plans Asian 'clusters' in revamped calendar

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Badminton's governing body revealed a revamped 2022 calendar yesterday comprising traditional European competitions while Asian tournaments are in "clusters" because of coronavirus disruption. The sport was thrown into disarray by the pandemic and remains badly impacted in Asia, one of its heartlands, due to fresh outbreaks and a cautious approach to re-opening.

Badminton World Federation (BWF) secretary general Thomas Lund said three back-to-back Thai tournaments that took place in January this year - marking the restart of international competition in Asia

- were a successful model for a broader resumption. The body had decided to organize similar "clusters" of tournaments in various countries in an effort to "mitigate the complexity surrounding cross-border travel", he said.

Back-to-back competitions will be played in countries including India, South Korea, Thailand and Japan, with three in China at the end of next year, culminating in the season-ending World Tour Finals in Guangzhou. Tournaments in Europe, where sports have resumed faster than in Asia, take place throughout the year in countries including England, Germany, Spain and Switzerland.

As with many sports, badminton tournaments are now typically conducted in bio-secure bubbles and Lund said it was likely some curbs would remain in 2022. But BWF hopes to "gradually transition to conducting tournaments with fewer COVID-19 restrictions in 2022 as we slowly return to normalcy", he added. The India Open will begin the year on Jan 11. — AFP

## Beach reveals he was 'John Doe' in sex assault probe

**NEW YORK:** Kyle Beach, a Canadian forward and former Chicago Blackhawks prospect, told Canada's TSN on Wednesday he was the unnamed player in a sexual assault probe of the NHL club. Beach revealed he was "John Doe" in an emotional interview a day after Blackhawks general manager Stan Bowman and senior vice president of hockey operations Al MacIsaac left the club. They departed after the results of an investigation into sex assault allegations found the team failed to properly deal with 2010 claims of misconduct against former video coach Brad Aldrich.

"I have many emotions," Beach told TSN. "I cried, I smiled, I laughed, I cried some more. My girlfriend and I, we didn't know how to think. She has been my rock through this process. And I'm fortunate to have her here. I have a great feeling of relief, and vindication. I really felt like there were lies told. And it was

important and special to have the truth come out."

A lawsuit filed in May by Beach as "John Doe" said Aldrich assaulted him and another player in May 2010 but the team took no actions until June so as not to distract from the club's run to a Stanley Cup title, the Blackhawks' first since 1961. Aldrich left the Blackhawks at the end of the 2010 season. Beach had been called up to the Blackhawks during the 2010 playoffs from Chicago's top development club as a practice player, calling it "an extremely special moment" but adding, "Unfortunately, a few weeks later, the memories were shattered and my life was changed forever."

Beach, a 31-year-old left wing, said it was difficult to see Aldrich with the title team after the abuse. "I felt sick, sick to my stomach," Beach said. "Nothing happened. His life was the same as it was the day before. To see him with the team, with the Stanley Cup, it made me feel like nothing, like I didn't exist. "It made me feel like I wasn't important. It made me feel like he was right, and I was wrong." Beach said he kept silent about the abuse so he could continue to pursue his dream of playing in the NHL. "I did what I had to do to survive, to continue to pursue my dream," he said. "So I didn't talk about it." — AFP

## Sports

# Westbrook triple but Lakers rolled by Thunder

**LOS ANGELES:** Russell Westbrook posted the first triple-double of his Los Angeles Lakers career but a late collapse saw the NBA giants crash to an upset 123-115 defeat against the previously winless Oklahoma City Thunder on Wednesday. With LeBron James missing due to an ankle problem, Westbrook helped shoulder the Lakers' offensive burden with Anthony Davis, finishing with 20 points, 13 assists and 14 rebounds at the Paycom Arena in Oklahoma City.

But Westbrook and Davis, who had 30 points, were unable to prevent a superb comeback by the Thunder, who had trailed by as many as 26 points late in the second quarter before rallying after the interval. The Lakers had erupted for 41 points in the first quarter, and looked to be cruising towards victory after taking a 72-56 lead at the break.

Oklahoma City turned the tables in the third quarter, however, outscoring the Lakers 41-23 to take a narrow 97-96 lead into the fourth. Derrick Favors put the Thunder ahead 118-115 on a cutting layup with 31.2 seconds remaining, and the Lakers then missed three straight shots in the closing seconds as Oklahoma City held on for the win. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 26 points while Josh Giddey and Darius Bazley had 18 points apiece.

Westbrook's game ended ignominiously, ejected in the final two seconds after taking exception to Bazley's exuberant running dunk. The Lakers fell to 2-3 after the loss as Oklahoma City improved to 1-4. "It's a disappointing loss," Lak-

ers coach Frank Vogel said. "We took our foot off the gas. After that big first quarter lead, usually you catch yourselves and sustain it, but we weren't able to do that. "Our focus, intensity and effort on the defensive end slipped - but lesson learned. We can't take the foot off the gas against anyone."

Elsewhere Wednesday, Bam Adebayo led a superb all-round offensive display with 24 points as the Miami Heat downed the Brooklyn Nets 106-93 in a heavyweight clash of the Eastern Conference rivals. Adebayo was one of five Heat players to make double digits in a hard-fought duel which saw Miami recover from an eight-point deficit early in third quarter before pulling away in the fourth. Jimmy Butler had 17 points with 14 rebounds and seven assists while P.J. Tucker added 15 points.

Tyler Herro and Dewayne Dedmon each had 14 points. The 2020 NBA Finals runners-up improved to 3-1 with the win, while the Nets fell to 2-3 after the loss. Kevin Durant led the Brooklyn scorers with 25 points while shooting guard Joe Harris had 15. James Harden was restricted to 14 points. In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo erupted for 40 points with 16 rebounds and seven assists but the reigning champion Bucks stumbled to a 113-108 loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

D'Angelo Russell led the Wolves scoring with 29 points, while Anthony Edwards and Karl-Anthony Towns each had 25 points in a game Minnesota led from start-to-finish after piling up 44



**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Russell Westbrook #0 of the Los Angeles Lakers plays defense during the game against Shai Gilgeous-Alexander #2 of the Oklahoma City Thunder on Wednesday at Paycom Center. —AFP

points in the first quarter. "All credit to Minnesota putting 44 on us - it doesn't matter who's playing. There's a lot us to work on," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

In Boston, meanwhile, the Celtics are still

waiting for their first home win of the season after suffering a 116-107 reverse against the Washington Wizards. Montrezl Harrell led the Wizards scorers with 25 points from the bench while Spencer Dinwiddie added 22. — AFP

## Astros rout Braves 7-2 to level World Series

**WASHINGTON:** Houston's Jose Altuve smashed a home run and scored twice to spark the Astros over the Atlanta Braves 7-2 on Wednesday and level the World Series at one victory each. Martin Maldonado added a two-run single for the Astros, who deadlocked Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship final ahead of game three Friday in Atlanta. "It was good to come back and have the game we had as a team," Altuve said. "We're going to go to Atlanta now and take as many as we can there."

The Braves, in their first World Series since 1999, seek their first championship since 1995. They are 5-0 at home this year in the playoffs. The Astros, in their third World Series in five seasons, won the 2017 crown but lost the 2019 title to Washington in seven games. Nice weather allowed the retractable Houston stadium roof to be open for only the eighth time this year.

Altuve snapped a two-game hitless streak, but the 31-year-old Venezuelan slugger said he wasn't worried about individual production, only team triumphs. "Playoff numbers don't matter. You have to stay positive and wait until your time has come," Altuve said. "We're not thinking about average or homers. We're thinking about winning and that's how it is for the entire team."

Houston's Jose Urquidy, a 26-year-old Mexican right-hander, struck out seven Atlanta batters over five innings for the victory. "I was very focused, throwing strikes and attacking the hitter all the time, attacking the strike zone," Urquidy said. "The offense



**HOUSTON:** Ozzie Albies #1 of the Atlanta Braves slides in safely back to first base after a fly out as Yuli Gurriel #10 of the Houston Astros looks on during the eighth inning in Game Two of the World Series at Minute Maid Park on Wednesday. — AFP

was very good. We're in it. We're going to keep fighting." Urquidy had pitched only once in 24 days before the start but showed no signs of rust. "I was trying to compete 100%," he said. "I was paying attention to every single at bat. I was very tight for every pitch. I loved it."

The Astros opened the scoring in the first inning when Altuve

doubled, took third on Michael Brantley's sacrifice fly and scored on Alex Bregman's sacrifice fly. Atlanta's Travis d'Arnaud smashed a solo homer in the second inning to lift the Braves level. But Houston broke open the game with four runs in the second off Braves southpaw starter Max Fried. Kyle Tucker singled, took third on Yuli Gurriel's single and scored on rookie Jose Siri's single.

Maldonado followed with a single to drive in both runners and later scored on a Brantley single for a 5-1 Astros lead. "I got a pitch out over the plate and put the stick on it," Brantley said. "We did a great job of staying in the zone (with swings)." Braves manager Brian Snitker said losing pitcher Fried wasn't so bad in the second despite surrendering four consecutive singles and five in all. "It was kind of a weird inning. It's not like he got pounded around," Snitker said. "It very easily could have been a very different outcome for him, especially in that second inning."

### 'Like a feeding frenzy'

Astros manager Dusty Baker, seeking his first World Series crown as a manager at age 72, was happy with the spurt but wanted more. "It happened fast," Baker said. "It gets to be like a feeding frenzy and everybody wants to get in on it. I was hoping we could score some more." The Braves answered in the fifth inning when Freddie Freeman singled in d'Arnaud from third. Houston responded in the sixth when Yordan Alvarez walked and Carlos Correa singled to chase Fried.

Alvarez took third when Tucker hit into a fielder's choice and he scored on a fielding error by Atlanta second baseman Ozzie Albies, making it 6-2. Altuve blasted his 22nd career playoff homer off the first pitch from Atlanta reliever Drew Smyly in the seventh inning, his fourth first-pitch homer of these playoffs. "I was thinking about just getting a good pitch to hit, just something I could drive," Altuve said. — AFP

## Sports

# Barcelona closing in on Xavi after Koeman sacked as coach



MADRID: Barcelona's Dutch coach Ronald Koeman gestures during the start of the Spanish League football match between Rayo Vallecano de Madrid and FC Barcelona at Vallecas stadium on Wednesday. — AFP

losing to Real Madrid in Sunday's Clasicó at Camp Nou. A poor start to the season has raised the possibility of the team even failing to qualify for next season's Champions League, which would have enormous consequences for the club's already dire financial situation.

### Heavy debt

Koeman spent six years at Barcelona as a player and is considered a club legend after scoring the winning goal in the 1992 European Cup

final against Sampdoria. He was appointed coach by Barça's previous president Josep Maria Bartomeu in August 2020 and enjoyed some success in his first season, winning the Copa del Rey and bringing a disillusioned Lionel Messi back onside.

But a disappointing finish in La Liga and a heavy defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last 16 cast doubt over Koeman's ability to navigate the biggest games, a criticism that was aimed at him again last weekend following the loss to Real Madrid. Laporta was re-elected as president in March and while he allowed Koeman to continue as coach, there was never much trust between the pair.

Laporta told Koeman in the summer he wanted two weeks to look for a replacement for the Dutchman while Koeman reacted badly last month to Laporta suggesting coaches do not have all the power. "He spoke too much," Koeman said. No replacement was found or could be persuaded to take over, perhaps in part because of Barcelona's perilous financial problems.

The club is €1.35 billion in debt and had to watch Messi join PSG in August after failing to renew the Argentine's contract. Other key players like Antoine Griezmann also departed without being adequately replaced as Sergio Aguero and Memphis Depay both arrived on free transfers and Luuk de Jong came from Sevilla on loan. "In

recent years other clubs have strengthened every season and we haven't," said Koeman after his last game in charge against Rayo.

### Honest approach

Youngsters like Pedri, Gavi, Nico Gonzalez, Sergino Dest and Ronald Araujo have all benefited from Koeman's faith, but more established players have suffered a drop in form. Koeman's honest approach was largely accepted and even appreciated last season, but his downbeat assessment of his squad this term was seen by many as counter-productive and not befitting of a Barcelona coach.

There was criticism of Koeman's style of play, which became increasingly direct, while the board were reportedly irritated by his straying from the club's traditions of playing 4-3-3. But results were the key factor, as consecutive 3-0 defeats by Bayern Munich and Benfica in the Champions League were followed by losses against Atletico and Real Madrid in the league.

Laporta said before the international break that Koeman "deserved the benefit of the doubt", moving to end speculation that he would lose his job after the defeat by Atletico earlier this month. But faced with an early exit in the Champions League and the possibility of failing to make the top four in La Liga, Laporta decided to act. — AFP

## Bullish Pak have 'mindset of T20 champions': Coach

DUBAI: Pakistan's interim head coach Saqlain Mushtaq declared that his team have "the mindset of champions" as they play Afghanistan in the Twenty20 World Cup in Dubai today. The 2009 champions thumped archrivals India by 10 wickets in their opening match followed by a nervy five-wicket win over New Zealand, making them well placed for the semi-finals.

"We are playing with the mindset of world champions," Saqlain said yesterday. "The two wins have given us the confidence and belief to achieve that goal." Saqlain replaced Misbah-ul-Haq, who resigned last month, and is bringing his experience as a spin-bowling consultant for England, Bangladesh and New Zealand in the past.

Saqlain said his team needed to be wary of a dangerous Afghanistan. "We know Afghanistan is a very good team but our plans are well-placed and we need to execute those plans as we have done in the first two games," he added. Afghanistan crushed qualifiers Scotland by 130 runs in their first

Group 2 game with off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman taking 5-20 and leggie Rashid Khan 4-9.

Himself a great off-spinner who played 49 Tests and 169 one-day internationals for Pakistan, Saqlain called Afghanistan's spinners "world class". "Rashid and Mujeeb are quality spinners and have been doing well for their team as well as in the private leagues around the world, but we have plans against them," said Saqlain. He praised the unity of his players, saying it has helped them achieve good results. "Our theme is 'together we achieve' and it's not 'I did well' or 'he did well', but it's 'we did well' sort and that has helped us gel well."

Saqlain pointed out that Pakistan have played most of their cricket in recent years in the United Arab Emirates. "These conditions of the UAE are very familiar for my players and we have been playing home international matches and Pakistan Super League games here and that has, and will, help our players." Pakistan will play Namibia on November 2 and Scotland five days later in the Super 12 stage. But looking farther ahead, Saqlain hopes to meet India again at the World Cup - this time in the final. "If India comes in the final, then it would be very good for the International Cricket Council, fans around the world and for world cricket," he said. —AFP

## De Kock sorry for refusing to take knee

DUBAI: South African star Quinton de Kock has apologized for refusing to take the knee in his team's Twenty20 World Cup match and said he would be "happy" to do it. "I would like to start by saying sorry to my teammates, and the fans back home," de Kock said in a statement yesterday. "I never ever wanted to make this a Quinton issue. I understand the importance of standing against racism, and I also understand the responsibility of us as players to set an example. If me taking a knee helps to educate others, and makes the lives of others better, I am more than happy to do so."

De Kock explained he comes from a mixed race family with his half-sisters being colored and his stepmother is black. "For me, Black lives have mattered since I was born. Not just because there was an international movement," said the 28-year-old. De Kock pulled out of Tuesday's match against holders West Indies for "personal reasons", defying orders from Cricket South Africa (CSA) to their players on following the anti-racism gesture.

They acted after pictures emerged from the team's first game against Australia at the weekend where some players knelt and some stood.



Quinton De Kock

Cricket South Africa welcomed the move and said, "The Proteas men's team agreed to align and unify in taking the knee for the remaining fixtures of the World Cup campaign." The board added their stance against racism "is a moral issue, not a political issue".

De Kock, a former national captain, refused to take a knee in South Africa's Test series in the West Indies earlier this year. Temba Bavuma, the national cricket team's first ever black African skipper, said de Kock's decision and the events that followed made it the toughest day of his life. The Proteas though went on to win the match convincingly by eight wickets in Dubai.

They next play Sri Lanka in Sharjah tomorrow and de Kock is expected to be back in the team. "I did not, in any way, mean to disrespect anyone by not playing against West Indies, especially the West Indian team themselves," said de Kock. —AFP

## Sports

# West Ham end Man City's 4-year hold on League Cup

**LONDON:** West Ham ended Manchester City's four-year hold on the League Cup on Wednesday as Liverpool and Tottenham booked their places in the quarter-finals. City's record run in the competition came to an end at the London Stadium as the Hammers emerged 5-3 winners from a penalty shootout after both sides were guilty of missing plenty of chances in a 0-0 draw.

Phil Foden was the only man to miss from the spot as Mark Noble, Jarrod Bowen, Craig Dawson, Aaron Cresswell and Said Benrahma all found the net for David Moyes' men. "Nothing is eternal," said City boss Pep Guardiola. "We fought a lot to win and win and win this competition. "Four times in a row is a fantastic achievement and next season we come back to try and win it again."

Nathan Ake, John Stones, Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling all wasted big opportunities to extend City's 21-game unbeaten run in the competition as the scoreline belied a contest which raged from one end to the other. Foden was thrown on along with Jack Grealish in an attempt to win the game from Guardiola. But the England international pulled City's first penalty wide and stand-in goalkeeper Zack Steffen could not bail his teammate out despite getting a hand to Bowen and Benrahma's strikes.

Liverpool will now fancy their chances of winning the League Cup for the first time in nine years, but had to overcome a poor start to win 2-0 at Preston. The Reds had scored 30 goals in eight previous away games this season, but a much-changed side from Jurgen Klopp failed to hit the heights of Sunday's famous 5-0 win at Manchester United.

"As a team we can play better, but individually I saw a few really nice performances and that's absolutely OK," said Klopp. "It's all about getting through to the next round, that's what we did. That it would be difficult with 11 changes was clear." Preston had by far the better of the first-half as Adrian made a point-blank save from Sean Maguire, Neco Williams cleared off the line and



**TROYES:** Nice's French midfielder Lucas Da Cunha fights for the ball with Marseille's French defender Jordan Amavi during a French L1 football match at De L'Aube Stadium on Wednesday. — AFP



**LONDON:** West Ham United's Algerian midfielder Said Benrahma scores his penalty past Manchester City's US goalkeeper Zack Steffen in the shootout to put West Ham through in the English League Cup round of 16 match at The London Stadium on Wednesday. — AFP

Brad Potts fired over within a matter of seconds.

Liverpool were clinical as they went in front with their first shot on target just after the hour mark as Williams' cross was acrobatically flicked home by Takumi Minamino. Klopp's men then controlled the final half hour and doubled their lead in spectacular fashion when Divock Origi's backheel dinked the ball over Declan Rudd. Tottenham's bid for a first trophy since they last won the League Cup in 2008 remains on course as Nuno Espirito Santo was rewarded for naming a strong side with a 1-0 win at Burnley.

Lucas Moura scored the only goal 22 minutes

## Nice, Marseille draw two months after kick-off

**TROYES:** Nice and Marseille drew 1-1 in French Ligue 1 on Wednesday, two months after the original fixture was abandoned due to crowd trouble. The rescheduled game, played behind closed doors at Troyes, saw Nice take the lead through Amine Gouiri after just six minutes. Dimitri Payet levelled for Marseille just before the half-time interval.

"The draw seems the fairest outcome," said Marseille coach Jorge Sampaoli. "In the first half Nice produced a lot more, but in the second half we had control and we could have scored a sec-

ond goal." However, Nice coach Christophe Galtier said he was disappointed not to have taken all three points. "There is frustration and disappointment for my boys. With our scoring chances, I believe that my players deserved to win," said Galtier.

In the first game between the two sides on August 22, hosts Nice led the Mediterranean derby 1-0 at the Allianz Riviera with 15 minutes left when Payet fell after being struck by a bottle as he went to take a corner. Payet threw a bottle back into the crowd as team-mates came across to remonstrate with home fans behind the goal.

Supporters streamed onto the pitch and a melee ensued involving players, staff, fans and stewards. The match was halted for more than an hour and finally abandoned just before midnight local time after the away side refused to return to the pitch. Nice were eventually docked one point by French league officials. — AFP

## Celtic cut Rangers' lead as Scottish football honors Smith

**GLASGOW:** Rangers paid tribute to legendary former manager Walter Smith on Wednesday as their lead at the top of the Scottish Premiership was cut to two points by a 2-2 draw with Aberdeen. Smith, who won 21 trophies in two spells as Rangers boss, died on Tuesday at the age of 73. A minute's silence was held at all six Scottish Premiership games, a huge banner held up by Rangers fans read: "For deeds done and glories won, thank you Walter."

Once the action got underway, Steven Gerrard's men struggled to cope with the emotive night at Ibrox. Aberdeen had won just once in their last 11 games, but led 2-0 inside 16 minutes as Christian Ramirez and former Celtic captain Scott Brown headed home. Alfredo Morelos quickly halved the home side's deficit, but it took a controversial penalty nine minutes from time, converted by James Tavernier, to preserve Rangers' unbeaten home record in the league stretching back to March 2020.

Celtic took advantage of dropped points for their Glasgow rivals with a 3-1 win at Hibernian to move up to second. The Hoops not won a league game away to Hibs since 2014, but put that rotten record behind them with three goals inside the opening half hour at Easter Road. Anthony Ralston's diving header from David Turnbull's free-kick found the top corner before Cameron Carter-Vickers fired home from a corner. Kyogo Furuhashi then slotted home his 10th goal in 15 games since moving to the Glasgow giants to round off a brilliant team move involving Tom Rogic and Jota. "I thought the first half was probably the best we've played all year," said Celtic manager Ange Postecoglou. "We scored three and could have had another three. It was really pleasing to see, especially here against a good side."

Hibs have now lost four straight games after a bright start to the season, but got a consolation before half-time when Martin Boyle forced the ball over the line from close range. Hearts remain unbeaten after 11 games, but fall to third after a 1-1 draw at St Johnstone. Dundee United also missed the chance to go second as they were held 1-1 by the 10-men of Livingston. Ross County remain bottom, but got their first league win under Malky McKay in emphatic fashion with a 5-0 thrashing of Dundee at Dens Park. — AFP

# 'Collective blackout' as Bayern suffer thrashing at Gladbach

**BERLIN:** Shell-shocked Bayern Munich suffered their heaviest defeat in the German Cup Wednesday when their star-studded team was thrashed 5-0 at Borussia Moenchengladbach. "I'm absolutely shocked. We simply didn't turn up," Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic told ARD. "We let ourselves be outplayed in every situation - a collective blackout."

Full-strength Bayern conceded the first goal after just 71 seconds and were 3-0 down with 21 minutes played as Gladbach made a lightning start. It was the first time for 27 years Bayern have conceded so many goals so early in any competition. Bayern crashed to their heaviest German Cup defeat, eclipsing a 5-1 quarter-final defeat at Cologne in 1972.

Bayern Munich veteran Thomas Mueller apologized to their fans and admitted the 5-0 thrashing was the worst defeat he has experienced during 13 years playing in the famous red shirt. "We were picked apart from A to Z in the first half," the 32-year-old Mueller, who made his Bayern debut in 2008 and is approaching 600 appearances for the Bavarian giants, told ARD. "I don't know if I've ever experienced anything like that before in an FC Bayern shirt. We have to apologize to our fans."

"From time to time, you dream of something like this, but you don't believe it will become reality," Gladbach sports director Max Eberl told

ARD. "That was an awesome performance." French midfielder Kouadio Kone grabbed his first goal for Gladbach with barely a minute gone, then Algerian defender Ramy Bensebaini and Swiss striker Breel Embolo both scored twice. "5-0 against Bayern doesn't come along very often, so we will enjoy this tonight," said Embolo.

This is the second time in consecutive seasons Bayern have been dumped out of the cup in the second round having lost at Holstein Kiel last January after a penalty shoot-out. There were plenty of off-field distractions for Bayern in the build up. Hours before kick-off, France defender Lucas Hernandez heard he will escape being jailed in Spain for violating a restraining order in 2017 after a Madrid court accepted his appeal.

Midfielder Joshua Kimmich has also been the center of fierce debate in Germany, and accused of neglecting his duty as a role model, after revealing he opted against being vaccinated for COVID-19. Bayern head coach Julian Nagelsmann was missing as he remains in isolation at home after testing positive for the coronavirus. Moenchengladbach completely dominated the opening exchanges by converting two of their six shots on goal.

In contrast, Bayern, top of the Bundesliga table while Gladbach are 12th, failed to get a shot on target in the opening 20 minutes. Gladbach



**MOENCHENGLADBACH:** Bayern Munich's German forward Thomas Mueller and Moenchengladbach's Swiss midfielder Denis Zakaria vie for the ball during the German Cup 2nd round football match on Wednesday. — AFP

took an early lead when a sloppy pass by Alphonso Davies near his own area was snapped up by Kone, who traded passes with Embolo and fired home. There was pure delight in the stands at Borussia Park when Bensebaini fired the hosts' second goal past Manuel Neuer on 15 minutes.

A penalty was awarded when Hernandez went in high against Embolo and Bensebaini sent

Neuer the wrong way to make it 3-0 at half-time. This is the second time Bensebaini has terrorized Bayern after the 26-year-old scored both goals in Gladbach's 2-1 home Bundesliga in December 2019. Embolo then compounded Bayern's misery with two rapid-fire goals within six minutes of each other to make it 5-0 after 57 minutes. — AFP

## Real back on top, Falcao rolls back years

**VALLECAS:** Real Madrid returned to the top of La Liga on Wednesday, despite being held to a goalless draw by Osasuna, but Barcelona dropped to ninth after losing 1-0 to Rayo Vallecano, with Radamel Falcao scoring the winner. Karim Benzema struck the bar in the second half at the Santiago Bernabeu but Osasuna could have won it too, with Kike Garcia missing the best chance of the game when he hit the post from five yards.

Madrid jump above Sevilla, Real Betis and Real Sociedad - all four of them with 21 points - on goal difference while Osasuna sit sixth after extending their strong start to the season. "La Liga is very even, there are lots of teams up there. I don't think it's going to take 100 points to win it this season," said Carlo Ancelotti. The 35-year-old Falcao continues to roll back the years at Rayo after scoring his fourth goal in six games for his new club and surely the sweetest, coming against Barca, whom he last scored against in 2013.

Memphis Depay missed a penalty at a bouncing Vallecas as Barca's miserable start to the season under Ronald Koeman took another turn for the worse. After losing the Clasico at home to Real Madrid on Sunday, Barcelona now sit ninth in La Liga, six points off the top and, most concerningly for the board, the gap growing between them and the top four. "It says we're not well," said Koeman. "The team has lost balance in the squad, lost very effective players, which shows. In recent years other clubs have strengthened every season and we haven't, which also shows." Koeman was later sacked. Barca president Joan Laporta was squeezed in amongst the home crowd and cannot have been impressed by another limp display that hardly suggested this team's form is about to improve.



**MADRID:** Players fight for the ball during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Osasuna at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday. — AFP

### Free transfer

Rayo stay above Barca, and only two points off fourth, maintaining their perfect record at home this term with a fifth win out of five. Falcao joined on a free transfer in the summer and after shirts with his name on the back sold out, he has so far lived up to the hype. Only Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have better goals per game ratios in La Liga than Falcao, who replaced Sergio Aguero at Atletico Madrid in 2011, and now faced the Argentinian again.

The last time Aguero and Falcao were on the same pitch together they scored two goals each in a 5-3 win for Manchester City against Monaco, but this was Falcao's night. At 35 years and 220 days, he is the oldest player to score four or more goals in his first six games for the same club in La Liga this century. Sergio Busquets was at fault for the goal, robbed of the ball in midfield and giving Oscar Trejo the opportunity to free Falcao, who looked to have let the moment pass, only to twist past Gerard Pique and finish into the far corner. — AFP

## Lopez strikes late for Sassuolo to shock Juve

**MILAN:** Maxime Lopez stunned Juventus with a 95th minute winner at the Allianz Stadium which earned Sassuolo a 2-1 win on Wednesday to leave their opponents lagging behind in the title race. French midfielder Lopez supplied a beautiful dinked finish after charging through on goal while Juve searched for a winner to condemn Massimiliano Allegri's side to a tough defeat. Juve are now 13 points away from league leaders AC Milan, who squeezed past Torino on Tuesday, and sit seventh after a result which was as disappointing as their performance.

Alessio Dionisi's side, meanwhile, are up to ninth on 14 points, just one behind Juve after their first ever away win over Italian football's 'Old Lady'. "These are the sorts of matches that you can't lose if you know you're not going to win them," said Allegri. "We need to think about how we handle games, you can't concede a goal like that on the counter... Juve never let in goals like today and it needs to never happen again."

Hosts Juve thought they had earned at least a point thanks to Weston McKennie, who headed a 76th minute equalizer after Juve fell behind to Davide Frattesi's strike a minute before the break. Up to Frattesi's opener Juve had huffed and puffed in a similar fashion to recent displays, although Paulo Dybala was unlucky not to open the scoring when he smashed a low drive off the post 37 minutes into his first start in over a month. — AFP





# Barca closing in on Xavi after Koeman sacked as coach

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