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OMAN AIMS TO REDUCE ANNUAL DEFICIT TO 1.7% OF GDP BY 2024
GO TO PAGE 13 BUSINESS

Oman takes measures to stimulate economy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With an aim to stimulate the economy, diversify government revenue sources and reduce dependence on oil earnings, the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020-24 announced by Ministry of Finance has laid down several measures.

Chief among the initiatives planned include taxing those in higher income brackets, providing government support on public services (water and electricity) to a targeted section of society instead of everyone, and visa exemption for citizens of more than a hundred countries. The real estate transaction fees will also be reduced from

the current five to three per cent.

According to the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020-2024, the government seeks to reduce support for public services to some segments of society. 'The total cost of government support for electricity and water services amounts to RO1bn annually. The initiative aims to direct support for public services to some segments of society instead of providing it to all,' the fiscal plan document released by the Ministry of Finance stated.

The ministry added that tax will be imposed on individuals earning higher incomes starting 2022 and that it is currently studying the plan. The expected revenue from this tax will finance a number of social pro-

grammes, services and implement income redistribution programmes.

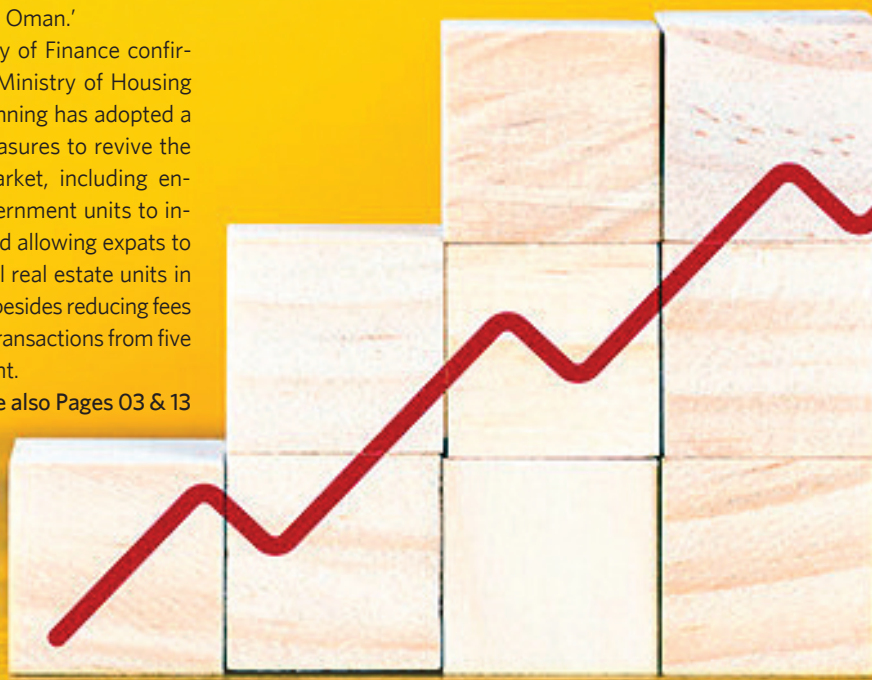
The fiscal plan document also stated that citizens of 100 countries will be exempted from prior visa requirements to enter the sultanate.

'This will support tourism, the national economy and attract foreign tourists to Oman.'

The Ministry of Finance confirmed that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has adopted a number of measures to revive the real estate market, including encouraging government units to invest in land, and allowing expats to own residential real estate units in specific areas, besides reducing fees on real estate transactions from five to three per cent.

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The expected revenue from the income tax will finance a number of social programmes, services and implement income redistribution programmes



Tax for high-income individuals, subsidies for targeted section of society

Visa exemption for citizens of more than hundred countries

Reduction in real estate transaction fee from 5% to 3%

NEWS BRIEFS

SAYYID BADR MEETS WHO REPRESENTATIVE JOHN JABBOUR

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received John Jabbour on Monday, who presented his copy of credentials as representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) appointed to Oman. H E Sayyid Badr welcomed Jabbour, wishing him success in carrying out his duties. He affirmed to the ambassador to continue supporting WHO's efforts, especially in light of the adverse circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Salim bin Suhail al-Mashani, head of International Organizations Department, and others.



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Saeed al Ghafri's life on wheels



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Typhoon Goni batters Philippines

Sayyid Theyazin inaugurates art exhibition on conservation

The 'Coastline – Community and Conservation' exhibition will be open for viewing by appointment at Bait al Baranda till November 5

Hubert Vaz
Muscat

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, inaugurated 'Coastline – Community and Conservation', an exhibition of paintings by Muscat-based British-Portuguese artist Joana Mollet in Bait al Baranda on Monday. The exhibition will be open for public viewing in small groups by prior appointment until November 5 after which it can be viewed as a virtual exhibition.

H H Sayyid Theyazin took keen interest in the exhibits as well as the idea behind each of these which conveyed the urgency to conserve Oman's coastline and instill a sense of care for the environment. He was particularly taken up by the efforts of Zahraa Primary School and British School Muscat students in creating two installations on wadi mats on the theme of conservation, which were put on display alongside Joana's works.

The exhibition, presented in cooperation with H H Sayyid Taimur bin Shabib al Said, managing director of Hud Hud Trav-



(L to R) H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said, Joana Mollet, H H Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib al Said and Malik al Hinai at the opening of 'Coastline – Community and Conservation' in Bait al Baranda on Monday (Muscat Daily)

els, is Bait al Baranda's first virtual exhibition for the public. It brings together several of Joana's paintings not just to celebrate the beauty of Oman's coastline but also to draw attention to the problem of littering on beaches.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration, Joana told Muscat Daily, "H H Sayyid Theyazin was extremely interested in the exhibition, not just about how I made the paintings but also the reasoning behind them. It also gave me pleasure to note that he connected well with some of the paintings. That was exactly the intention behind the exhibition – to make people connect with nature, as only then would your protect it."

"He was particularly impressed by the installations

The exhibition includes two installations on wadi mats created by students of Zahraa Primary School and British School Muscat on the theme of conservation

made by the school students and galvanising young people around this message. After the exhibition concludes, I hope that we can encourage more movement in this direction and make people think twice when they go out in

nature. I also hope we can use the existing tools between the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and perhaps the Environment Society of Oman's (ESO) Green School initiative to create some synergy in getting the message across through schools."

H H Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib al Said, chief patron of ESO, who also attended the opening, said, "I think, the way this exhibition has been approached by involving young people in creating and getting the message of conservation across is absolutely right. They are seeing first hand and learning how to communicate through art, that there is a serious challenge that needs to be met. And as the artist explained, the route is through the children to their elders and their family. Chil-

dren have more passion and energy to initiate change. They are not afraid of change as the world is a blank canvas to them. So, this is a fantastic way to approach it and it really relies now on various channels, like social media, etc to promote the cause."

Asked about the need to focus on conserving the environment also at tourist sites that take an image of Oman across the world, H H Sayyid Tarik said, "It's a critical issue and the solution has to be holistic. You can't just tell people, fine them or only use a stick, with no carrot. We have to find a way for people to benefit from the clean-up of our coastline as a lot of material picked up have a recycle value."

Continued on Page 03
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Dr Saif al Abri

75% passengers had symptoms within 7 days of arrival

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Strict COVID-19 testing rules have been imposed on all passengers to Oman as more than 75 per cent showed symptoms of the disease within a week of arrival. In addition, 810 of 14,302 arriving passengers examined between October 21 and 27 tested positive for COVID-19.

Dr Saif al Abri, director general of Diseases Surveillance and Control in Ministry of Health (MoH), said that three types of isolation have been identified for COVID-19. "Seven days for travelers, ten days for the infected and 14 days for close contacts," he informed. A person who completes seven days of isolation can get a PCR test done at any health institution. "If the result is negative, he/she is allowed to end isolation, remove digital bracelet and register in one of the health institutions."

The Supreme Committee announced on Sunday that a PCR test done not more than 96 of arrival is mandatory for all passengers. "All travelers will be subject to screening in the sultanate, and if it appears that there are differences in the results, whether positive or negative, appropriate measures will be taken," said Dr Abri.

Life on wheels

Saeed al Ghafri has been on an excursion since March, driving through the sultanate documenting its nature, culture and customs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To promote domestic tourism and showcase Oman's unique attractions, Saeed Abdullah al Ghafri, 30, from the wilayat of Ibri, started a trip seven months ago. He is driving through Oman's varied landscapes, sharing his experiences on social media. He's currently stationed in Dalkout, Dhofar.

In 2016, Ghafri resigned from his job as a steward with Oman Air to achieve his lifelong dream of working as a tour guide and camp organiser.

He facilitated trips of tourist groups from several countries in the past. The trips included camping, hiking and swimming in picturesque locations such as Jebel Akhdar, Jebel Shams and Dhofar.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Ghafri, said, "I shot films of the tourist trips and posted them on social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, to which many tourists responded from different parts of the world. Unfortunately, I had to cancel all the reservations of foreign tourists due to COVID-19."

Despite the setback, Ghafri set off on a trip across the sultanate in his van called Bus al Jeeb (The Wonder Bus) to promote tourism in March this year. "The plan is to drive through all the northern governorates of Oman, in

particular. I shoot films of the picturesque places and nature on the way. I am now camping in the wilayat of Dalkout in Dhofar," said Ghafri.

"The trip aims to promote tourism by exploring Oman's pristine coasts and documenting our traditions and customs, addressing the need to preserve the environment."

Talking about his van, he said, "My camper has kitchen utensils, a small oven, a gas cylinder, a small refrigerator, a place to sleep and also a small office. I have installed solar panels on the roof of the van for electricity at night."

He camps from two days to a month at a spot, documenting it through video and photography. "When I camp for a long time, I enjoy hiking, swimming, fishing, climbing mountains, discovering caves and valleys in the area."

Besides the reservation cancellations, he suffered another setback when his photography equipment was damaged. "This trip in the van is expensive. I need financial support from some private or government agencies to complete my trip and promote the sultanate as a tourism destination," Ghafri informed.

His experiences during similar trips abroad, including Austria, Czech, Germany, Italy, London, Malaysia, Poland, Singapore, Switzerland and Thailand are helping him in his current excursion. He counts an earlier drive from Muscat to London in a Land Rover as one of his most memorable.

His current trip too has left him with a few unforgettable experiences. When Bus al Jeeb's wheels sank into sand in a remote place, he was forced to camp at the location for long during which time his supplies ran low. But the situation wasn't without a silver lining - he learnt fishing as he had to fend for himself.

Another situation he's unlikely to forget in a hurry was encountering four wild wolves when he was camping in an isolated location in Dhofar.

No matter what the odds, Ghafri is determined to continue his trip, shooting and filming in the wilayats of the sultanate to document authentic Omani customs and traditions, the diverse and unique landscape and rich natural heritage.

"I hope the concerned authorities provide some services that are needed in tourist places and spread awareness on preserving the Omani environment," he said.

Ghafri's films are available on his YouTube channel called Saeed Enkan.



Taxes to shore up Oman's revenues

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

Omani citizens and residents should brace for new direct and indirect taxes that could be imposed to counter the continued weakness in oil prices to increase government revenues.

Following the earlier announcement of the Value Added Tax (VAT) to be implemented starting April 2021, a plan to tax high earning individuals starting 2022 was introduced on Monday.

According to the report released by the Ministry of Finance as part of Oman's Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020-2024, the structure of income tax is currently being studied.

'The government is actively looking at all sources of revenue in order to plug the gap in the deficit. This includes looking at income tax. The use of personal income tax is a widely used tool to diversify government revenue and is usually directed towards



public services and social programmes. It is used as a tool to redistribute the income within society,' the report said.

'Currently, the government is evaluating the tax and how it can be best implemented. The government will evaluate the tax from all aspects, including societal impact, economic impact and fiscal impacts. The income tax is expected to be implemented in

2022,' the report added.

VAT was introduced via Royal Decree No 121/2020 on October 12, 2020. 'The introduction of VAT will serve as the foundation for the sultanate's revenue-raising framework by introducing a broad-based indirect tax. A socio-economic impact assessment has been carried out by an independent third-party to assess the fiscal, social and eco-

Early VAT implementation planning and strategic VAT governance should allow companies to mitigate the impact of the tax and avail of opportunities to optimise it within their supply chain

JOANNE CLARKE

conomic impact of VAT in Oman,' the report said.

While the income slab that will come under the income tax is yet to be revealed, VAT will be imposed on most goods barring basic foodstuffs, healthcare services and public transport.

In comments to *Muscat Daily*, Joanne Clarke, tax director at Pinsent Masons Middle East, said the implementation of VAT

in Oman will put additional pressure on businesses through increased administrative compliance costs, working capital costs associated with new VAT cash flows and VAT as a real cost.

'Early VAT implementation planning and strategic VAT governance should allow companies to mitigate the impact of the tax and avail of opportunities to optimise it within their supply chain. Caution should be taken to be compliant on a timely basis with the rules, in order to avoid the severe application of penalties, as we have seen in the other Gulf states for non-compliance with the VAT law. Overall, businesses should appreciate that the implementation of VAT will have a positive impact on the Oman economy by diversifying and stabilising revenue for the state,' she added.

According to data released by the Ministry of Finance as part of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020-2024, the government is planning to increase its revenues

through various sources to RO12.1bn and total spending to RO12.6bn by the end of 2024, with the fiscal deficit reaching about RO537mn. According to the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020-2024, the government has made substantial fiscal adjustments since the decline in oil prices in mid-2014.

'Key fiscal reforms over the 2014-2019 period undertaken to support this fiscal consolidation helped in achieving the following: Increasing revenues from non-hydrocarbon sources by 17 per cent primarily driven by the introduction of excise taxes, the expansion of the corporate income tax, and some reforms in government service fees,' the report said.

Income tax is a direct tax that a government levies on the income of its citizens. Income does not only mean money earned in the form of salary, but earnings from property, profits from business and other sources.

@shadadm



Gulf-German forum held online

Muscat - The sultanate took part in the Gulf-German Forum on Strategic Dialogue and Regional Security organised by Secretariat General of GCC Council.

As per a statement, H E Dr Said bin Mohammed bin Ahmed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, delivered a speech virtually on the economic relations and enhancing economic cooperation post COVID-19.

The forum was held under the auspices of Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the German Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The forum, which first began in 2019, aims to enhance the ongoing cooperation between Gulf states and Germany.

Ooredoo connects 598 rural villages with Satellite Home Internet service

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ooredoo Oman has announced the launch of its Satellite Home Internet service, which connects 598 rural villages and communities with the fast speed Internet.

In a statement the company said that the launch is part of the Afaq initiative which has been undertaken in collaboration with

Oman Broadband, Space Communication Technologies, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

'As part of an initiative under the auspices of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Ooredoo and Oman Broadband have collaborated to connect remote regions across Oman with fixed broadband Internet through satellite connectivity,' it said.

Ooredoo will offer 12 month contracts for 250GB Internet packages with speeds up to 6Mbps for a monthly payment of RO15.

Satellite Fixed Internet plans are only available as Shahry (postpaid) plans. If customers reach the threshold before the end of their billing cycle, the speed will reduce to 600 Kbps. There are no 'More Data add-on' options.

'You will receive SMS notifications when the included GBs fixed are fully used. The modem and installation are provided free of charge and if you terminate your contract within the contract period, an ETC will be applied (RO50).'

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority called on the people of the villages listed in the Afaq initiative to apply for the service.

Health Minister receives Russian envoy

Muscat - H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Obaid al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health received on Monday in his office H E Dmitry Dogadkin, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the sultanate. The meeting exchanged cordial conversations and addressed aspects of cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Furthermore, latest developments regarding COVID-19 and international efforts exerted in combating the disease were addressed during the meeting, in addition to reviewing vaccination



(Supplied photo)

manufacturing efforts.

The Russian envoy commended the sultanate's efforts and the progress made in miti-

gating the spread of COVID-19.

A number of senior officials from the Ministry of Health attended the meeting.

JAZEERA AIRWAYS GETS WATER SALUTE



Muscat International Airport received the first flight of Kuwait's Jazeera Airways on Monday. The airline will operate one weekly direct flight between Muscat and Kuwait City (Supplied photo)

Sayyid Theyazin opens exhibition

Continued from Page 01

"If we can show that value to individuals who are (located) on the coastline, then they can actually derive some benefit from it," H H Sayyid Tarik said.

He also backed the need for reducing the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags at supermarkets.

"We need to get this message across to bring about a change in lifestyle, change of habits, and

stop thinking that there's no repercussion to just buying, consuming and throwing away vast amounts of packaging material," he stressed.

Malik al Hinai, director of Bait al Baranda, added, "We were honoured to welcome H H Sayyid Theyazin to Bait al Baranda to inaugurate the virtual exhibition. This is an initiative on the cleaning of our beaches and the awareness that we want to take

to the public. It was befitting to have H H Sayyid Theyazin officiate such an event. We thank all their highnesses and excellencies who attended and I hope people will log on to the website and enjoy this virtual exhibition. This is a first of its kind and I encourage other associations and institutions to adopt such an approach of displaying an exhibition during these tough times of COVID-19."

Auction for Selling of Used Trucks

Sr. No	Aviation Refueller Number	Model
1	AMR 01 Tractor	2000
	AMR 01 Trailer	1999
2	AMR 02 Tractor	2005
	AMR 02 Trailer	2005
3	AMR 03 Bowser	2000
4	AMR 04 Bowser	1972 Refurbished in 1999
5	AMR 05 Bowser	1981 Refurbished in 2001
6	AMR 07 Tractor	2006
	AMR 07 Trailer	2014

Terms & Conditions:

- Bidders can collect the auction form from the procurement department by sending us an email to procurement@almaha.com.om. The form collection deadline will be on **05.11.2020**.
- Bidders who are interested to attend the visit at Muscat International Airport for Trucks inspection must submit the following documents at Al Maha Head office on **08.11.2020** before 01:00 PM.

For Omanis

 - Copy of the ID card both sides
 - One personal photo with red background

For Expats

 - No objection letter stating the reasons of attending the visit
 - Copy of the passport and Visa
 - Copy of the ID card
 - One personal photo with red background
- Vehicles can be inspected on Thursday **12.11.2020** (inspection time will start at 11:00 am).
- The prices to be submitted in a closed envelope on or before **18.11.2020** titled (Auction for selling of used Trucks) without mentioning the participant's details on the envelope.
- Offers must be submitted in the tender box located at the reception area.
- The bidder shall specify each vehicle's details for which is interested to purchase in the proposal.
- The Owner of the Truck/ Trucks shall bear the cost of renewing the Mulkia, Insurance, Repair and transporting the Truck.
- Whoever wins the auction shall pay the full amount to Al Maha Bank Account within 5 days after receiving the acceptance letter from the Procurement Department by presenting the bank deposit slip. The trucks must be removed from MIA within 10 days.
- The company has the right to accept or reject any offer.
- The bidder might be awarded all or some of the above trucks.
- In case two bidders proposed the same highest values, the same bidders will be asked to re-submit their offer for final selection.
- The bidder cannot withdraw the offer submitted after the opening of the bids.

Details of Contact Person:

- Ms. Nihad Al Aisri on 24610289 (Procurement & Contracts Department)
- Mr. Juma Al Saadi on 96242224 (Aviation Department)

Arabian leopard sighted in two new areas

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Office for Conservation of Environment (OCE) in Diwan of Royal Court has revealed the first scientific evidence of the presence of the Arabian leopard in two different locations in the west of the wilayat of Dhalkut, Dhofar governorate.

OCE confirmed the breakthrough study, which indicates the biological diversity of the area, conducted by its specialists this year using a number of modern techniques, including trap cameras. The study also revealed the presence of seven other species of wild mammals inhabiting the region - Arabian wolf, porcupine, lynx, striped hyena, honey badger, mongoose and rock hyrax. The animals are listed as endangered or vulnerable to extinction according to the classification of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Arabian leopard has been classified by IUCN as critically endangered. There are less than 200 big cats in the wild and according to studies conducted in Oman, there are 44 to 58 of



(Supplied photos)

these left in the country.

Field studies carried out by OCE for 23 years have confirmed the presence of the Arabian leopard in the mountains of Dhofar, ranging from Hasik in the east to the wilayat of Dhalkut in the west, in addition to sightings in Najd, north of the

Dhofar Mountains.

The big cats are active mostly at night and the pattern of rosettes on the body is unique in each individual. Called 'qadhr' locally in the Dhofar mountains, camera-trap studies continue to confirm the presence of leopards also in Jebel Samhan in Dhofar.

'The sultanate, represented by the Diwan of Royal Court, is continuing efforts to preserve and protect the Arabian leopard from extinction. These relentless efforts have contributed to the stability of its numbers and preservation of its natural habitat in Dhofar,' stated OCE.



There are less than 200 big cats in the wild and according to studies conducted in Oman, there are 44 to 58 of these left in the country



Pact signed to provide 20 Japanese scholarships

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation has signed an agreement with the Mitsubishi Corporation from Japan.

According to the agreement, Mitsubishi Corporation will finance 20 Japanese scholarships to Omani youth over a pe-



riod of five years (2021-25), with four scholarships each year, intended for postgraduate

students.

The Mitsubishi Corporation programme, which began more than ten years ago, has provided opportunities to 31 students from the sultanate to complete their studies from several prestigious Japanese universities.

The programme was launched as part of company's social responsibility towards the people of the sultanate as well

as to introduce Omani youth to the Japanese community, understand Japanese culture and gain knowledge by obtaining master's and doctoral degrees from Japanese universities.

The ministry also announced that there are a number of scholarships offered by the Malaysian government for Omani students at APU and Swinburne Universities.

Defence Ministry renews sailing award agreement



Muscat - The Ministry of Defence, represented by the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), on Monday signed a renewal agreement of the Sultan Qaboos Sailing Award with Sail Training International.

The signing ceremony was held via video-conferencing on-board of RNOV *Shabab Oman II*. The move comes within the framework of the national roles carried out by the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and other depart-

ments of the Ministry of Defence, and the care and attention enjoyed by SAF from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Supreme Commander.

The agreement was signed by Commodore Salim al Qasmi, senior staff officer at RNO, and Jonathan Cheshire, chairman of Sail Training International.

The Sultan Qaboos Sailing Award is one of the most prestigious awards given in the field of sailing. It is given to the best insti-

tutions, ships or individuals for their services in the field of sailing training. The award was created as per the Royal Directives of the Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said in 2011.

The Ministry of Defence, represented by the RNO, supervises the award, in cooperation with the Sail Training International, a charitable association based in the UK that organises international tall ship regattas. ONA

TENDER
ANNOUNCEMENT

Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C Invites Interested Companies To Participate In The Follwing Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (R.O)
MEDC-15/2020	Inbound/Outbound Outsource Staff For Contact Center	12/11/2020	24/11/2020	Specialized	62

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents online. - Against the amount specified above. Non-Refundable payment - For fees payment procedure and to obtain the tender document, please contact us via e-mail Contract@medcoman.com
Purchase timing	Tender documents can be purchased at the official working time between 08:00 – 13:00 hours
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent using clarification available in the tender documents , one week before bid submission date
Tender Submission	- Tenders should be submitted in a sealed and stamped envelope addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO, marked only with tender number and the subject - Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in clause 20.0 in Prime Document
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C. - Any bid that does not meet the bank guarantee will not be considered
Terms and Conditions	- The name of the bidder, other marks or any reference must not be specified on the envelope - Tenders received after the deadline stated in the Invitation to Tender, including any extension thereof, for any reason whatsoever will not be considered - The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date - MEDC is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization
Bid Placement	The Completed Tender should be deposited in the Tender Box No. 1 in the ground floor of MEDC Head Office building at Airport Heights, before 10 a.m. on the assigned date of tender submission
Email/Tele No.	contract@medcoman.com 24588600 – Ext: 8577 - 8674 - 8726

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Global air traffic fell by 96.8% in June 2020, says IATA

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The COVID-19 health crisis, the biggest disruption in the history of aviation, brought air travel to a standstill as governments ordered lockdowns impacting billions of people – the impact on the industry being tremendous.

According to the global, forecast by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), global air traffic fell by 96.8 per cent in June 2020 compared to June of last year. In the Middle East specifically, passenger traffic reduced by 96 per cent in June compared with almost a 98 per cent demand drop in May.

When countries ease their lockdowns and reopen borders, the main challenge for the air industry will be persuading people to trust that it is safe to fly.

In a survey by IATA, 40 per cent of would-be travellers from the UK, US, Australia, Germany and India said they would wait six months after the virus was under control before flying again. IATA forecasts global passenger numbers will decline by 55 per cent for the remainder of 2020 compared to 2019.

In a survey conducted by the association in June, 58 per cent of travellers across 11 countries indicated they have been avoiding air travel out of which 33 per cent suggested they will avoid air



When countries ease their lockdowns and reopen borders, the main challenge for the air industry will be persuading people to trust that it is safe to fly

travel in the near future as a continued measure to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19.

One thing is certain – flying is going to be different. Just as airport security changed after 9/11, air passengers will face a similar

wave of new procedures to help them stay healthy and safe during their journey.

Aviation marketing consultancy Simplifying says flying will become a highly sanitised experience and many of the changes being rolled out will become the norm. A number of new technologies are already on trial around the world to offer a touchless experience, provide health screening and monitor flows to ensure social distancing in crowded airports.

Social distancing at check-in and boarding areas will become essential, along with checks to ensure passengers are wearing masks, which will be compulsory on board the aircraft. Thermal scanners will be deployed throughout the airport, while counters will be screened off to protect staff. Simplifying estimates that over 70 different areas in the passenger journey will either change or will be introduced from scratch to restore confidence in flying.

All these measures will require a significant overhaul of current airport procedures, creating daunting planning challenges for airport operators. The upturn in activity and the return to economic growth will only be possible if airports find the perfect balance, whilst implementing the new health and social distancing rules, which will cut airport capacity.



Omran's 'Within Oman' extended for 50 more days

Muscat – Omran Group, the executive arm of the sultanate for tourism development, announced the extension of its 'Within Oman' campaign for a period of 50 days.

The campaign will continue to provide its unique offers until December 20. This comes in line with the sultanate's 50th National Day celebrations. The nationwide promotional campaign has added two additional exclusive offers. Those who are born on November 18 will be entitled to a free second night when booking for one night. Secondly, any in-house guest aged 50 will get a complementary lunch for two.

'Within Oman' promotional campaign was curated to encourage domestic tourism by providing special packages and

experiences at the group's diverse hospitality assets across the country. The hotels range from 3 stars to 5 stars with many offers and discounts, which can be availed by citizens and residents alike.

'Within Oman' features three package categories – Relax (RO65), Chill (RO45) and Enjoy (RO25); tailored to suit every holidaymaker. The packages offer free stay for two kids aged below 12, including breakfast and several exclusive offers on a variety of recreational activities that add an enjoyable twist to the staycation experience.

To ensure the safety of employees and visitors, Omran Group applies all the guidelines recommended by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

REGIONAL WEATHER

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	32	22
Doha	32	21
Kuwait City	31	21
Manama	31	22
Riyadh	32	15

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.57am
Sunrise	6.14am
Duhr	11.55am
Asr	3.08pm
Maghrib	5.32pm
Isha	6.44pm

HOTLINES

24-hour pharmacies
Scientific Pharmacy: Qurm 24566601, Ruwi 24702850
Muscat Pharmacy: Ruwi 24702542, Salalah 23291635
Al Hashar Pharmacy: Ruwi 24783334
Hospitals and Clinics
Al Hayat International Hospital, Al Ghubra- 22004000, 94267068 / 97049520 94442000 (Emergency)
Al Raffah Hospital: Muscat - 24618900/1/2/3 Sohar - 26704639/49/50
Apollo Hospital Muscat, Hamriya: 24787766, 24782666, 24787780
Abeer Hospital, Ruwi, Muscat 24770800, 90999335, 90999334 (Emergency)
Starcare Hospital: 24557200 Emergency number: 24558333
Dr Harub's Clinic: 24563217, 2456381, 99254940 (Emergency)
Emirates Medical Center: 24604540
KIMS Oman Hospital: 24760105
Lama Polyclinic: CBD 24799077, 24788881, 24788577, 24707566, 24799655, Al Khuwair 24478817, 24478818, Sohar 26751128
Muscat Eye Laser Centre: 24691414
Muscat Private Hospital: 24583600
Muscat Municipality: 80077222

ANNOUNCEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) announcement the following Auction:

Auction No.	Description	Location/ Inspection	Last Date for Obtaining Auction Documents	Deadline for submission of Offers	Document Price (RO)	Deposit Amount (RO)*
06/2020	Sale of Used IT Equipment	OETC Store (Mawaleh)	12/11/2020	24/11/2020	25/=	100/-

- The interested company should provide Copy of CR Showing activity in the same field
- Interested companies may obtain Documents from Tenders, Procurement and Contracts Department, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC) at Al Mawaleh against the non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Time 8:00 am-12:00 pm.
- Interested Company should deposit 100/- Rial Omani in OETC Bank account and enclose the receipt along with the auction documents. Failing to do so the offer will be rejected.
- The Offers should be submitted in a separate sealed envelope addressed to Chairman of the Tender Committee mentioning Auction Number 6 - Sale of Used IT Equipment on the top of the envelope. No other writing or any reference should be mentioned on the envelope. The offer shall be valid for 90 days from the date of submission.
- The deposit amount will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders after awards announcement and to the successful bidders after receiving full payment and removal of Equipment with in time limit as mentioned below.
- The Winning Bidder shall pay for the value of the Used IT Equipment by transfer to OETC bank account within One Week of the date of notification to him.
- The Winning Bidder is bound to transfer the materials no later than One Week from the date of sale notification and payment. In case of its failure to transfer the Equipment in the period specified the bidder company is not entitled to claim compensation and the bank deposited amount will be forfeited.
- OETC is not responsible for the sold Equipment after the payment and expiration of the deadline for delivery.
- OETC is not bound to sell the entire materials to a single buyer.
- The Winning Bidder shall be responsible for all risks during transfer or reuse of the materials.
- The Auction area shall be cleaned after transfer the materials.
- The Offer should be deposited in the Tender Box (1) of the Tenders, Procurement and Contracts Department at the Company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission.

Company Address:
Muscat - Al Mawaleh
Way No : 2153 – Building No. 4230 Block No: 321 GSM: **99105413**
Web site: **www.omangrid.com**



Oman Electricity Transmission Company S.A.O.C.
P.O. Box 1389, Al Khoudh, PC 132, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2428 3000 | Fax: +968 2230 9046
www.omangrid.com

إعلان مزايمة

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن المزايمة التالية :

رقم المزايمة	الوصف	الموقع	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المزايمة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	ثمن النسخة (ر.)	تأمين دخول المزاد (ر.)
٢٠٢٠/٠٦	بيع أدوات مستعملة تقسيم تقنية المعلومات	مخزن الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء - الموالح	٢٠٢٠/١١/١٢	٢٠٢٠/١١/٢٤	٢٥/ـ	١٠٠/ـ

- على الشركات والمؤسسات الراغبة في الإشتراك في المزايمة إحضار السجل التجاري**
- يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات الاشتراك والحصول على مستندات المزايمة من دائرة المناقصات والمشتريات والعقود بمبنى الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء المكتب الرئيسي بالموالح . مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد أعلاه للنسخة الواحدة - لا ترد - أثناء الدوام الرسمي من الساعة (٨:٠٠) صباحاً وحتى الساعة (١٢:٠٠) ظهراً .
- تُقدم العروض في مظاريف مختومة بالشمع الأحمر معنونة بإسم رئيس لجنة المناقصات ومكتوباً عليها من الخارج رقم وعنوان المزايمة . على ألا يكتب على المخروط إسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه . وأن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء .
- يجب على الشركات والمؤسسات التي ترغب في الإشتراك في هذه المزايمة ، إيداع مبلغ نقدي قدره (١٠٠) ر.ع. مع ضرورة إرفاق نسخة من الإيصال داخل العطاء وكل عطاء لا يستوفي المطلوب لن ينظر فيه .
- سينم إرجاع مبلغ التأمين إلى المتنافسين غير الفائزين بعد الإعلان عن النتيجة وأما الفائزين سيتم إرجاع مبلغ التأمين بعد دفع قيمه المواد وتنظيف ساحة المزاد.
- يلتزم من يرسو عليه البيع بسداد القيمة عبر التحويل البنكي لحساب الشركة خلال اسبوع من تاريخ إخطاره برسو المزاد عليه.
- يلتزم المشتري بنقل المواد التي تم دفع قيمتها في موعد أقصاه اسبوع من تاريخ البيع وسداد قيمة المواد وفي حالة عدم قيامه بنقل المواد حسب الفترة المحددة تتم مصادرتها لصالح الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ولا يحق له المطالبة بالتعويض عنها ويتم مصادرة الضمان.
- الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مسؤولة عن المواد بعد البيع و إنقضاء المهلة المحددة للتسليم.
- الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير ملزمة ببيع كامل المواد لمشتري واحد.
- على المشتري حمل جميع المخاطر المترتبة عن نقل المواد أو إعادة إستخدامها.
- لا يسمح بتفكيك المواد وتقطيعها في الحزن وعلى المشتري تنظيف ساحة المزايمة بعد نقل المواد المباعه.
- يجب وضع العروض في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) لدائرة المناقصات والمشتريات والعقود بمبنى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء الفرع الرئيسي بالموالح قبل الساعة ١١ صباحاً من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات .**

عنوان الشركة: مسقط - الموالح

رقم السكة ٢١٥٣ - مبنى رقم ٤٢٣٠ المربع رقم ٣٢١ هاتف: ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣

Web site: **www.omangrid.com**

الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش . م . ع . م
ص . ب : ١٣٨٩ ، الخوض ، الزمر البريدي : ١٣٢ ، سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : +٩١٨٢٤٢٨٣٠٠٠ / الفاكس : +٩١٨٢٢٣٠٩٠٤١
الموقع الإلكتروني : **www.omangrid.com**



Muscat Municipality and Bank Muscat announce completion of Al Khoudh Park

As part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Blessed Renaissance of Oman, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, and Muscat Municipality celebrated the completion of the Al Khoudh Park project in the wilayat of Seeb.

The opening of the 15,000sqm park which was developed by the bank in line with its efforts in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability, was held in the presence of Eng Isam bin Saud al Zadjali, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, and Sheikh Waleed K al Hashar, chief executive officer, Bank Muscat.

The implementation of this project by the bank serves to further strengthen the public-private sector partnership in Oman. The opening was marked by the unveiling of the commemorative plaque followed by a tour of the various facilities at the park. The park includes children's playgrounds, a multipurpose sports area, toilets, green spaces with multiple trees and bushes and a 1km long well-demarcated walkway and gym equipment for fitness enthusiasts. It is expected that the park will serve children, youth and other different age groups from the local community in their practice of sports, recreational and fitness activities. In particular, young children will be very happy to be able to play in the garden with its numerous facilities.

On this occasion, Eng Zadjali said, "The municipality is moving forward with the implementation of various services and development projects, embodying the principle of community partner-



ship with various government and private agencies. The afforestation and greening at gardens and parks receives a lot of care and attention as it represents a green lung and a clean environment in the city. Importantly, it promotes tourism, leisure and physical activities, and works to enrich social standards among different members of society."

Eng Zadjali said that the opening of this project at the beginning of November coincided with the sultanate's celebrations of the 50th National Day of the Blessed Renaissance, which is an addition to the achievements made during the Renewed Renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Eng Zadjali added, "The project is an initiative that was imple-



mented in cooperation between Muscat Municipality and Bank Muscat as part of a public-private partnership for supporting development projects. This project aims to create an ideal environment for residents and

visitors alike with many leisure and sports activities. High standards and specifications were met during the designing and implementation of this project in order to ensure both quality and sustainability. We extend our

sincere thanks to Bank Muscat for its support for this project and hope that the private sector will continue its initiatives and programmes to support and further strengthen national development projects."

Sheikh Hashar congratulated Muscat Municipality for the successful completion of the Al Khoudh Park project which represents another fine example of cooperation between the two institutions.

He expressed his happiness and pride in the project to celebrate the glorious 50th National Day. He added that the bank's participation in this project was in line with its social responsibility initiatives which has been greatly appreciated and admired by the community for its many successes and achievements.

Sheikh Hashar added that the establishment of the park built further on the bank's Green Sports programme to increase the number of green spaces in the country. He said that increasing of green spaces in the

sultanate is highly necessary to reduce environmental pollution and create suitable spaces to enable both citizens and residents to spend time outside the home for walks, exercise and relaxation. He thanked the project teams of both the institutions for playing an important role in supervising and ensuring the successful completion of the project. It is hoped that the park's facilities can be enjoyed by everyone once the current situation normalises.

As the nation's leading financial institution, Bank Muscat has been a pioneer of sustainability in the sultanate and has worked steadfastly to partner and support the community in different initiatives so as to contribute to overall progress and development. The bank's Tadamun programme has supported around 1,400 Omani social welfare families since its launch by providing them with basic household appliances.

The bank's Green Sports initiative has further strengthened the sports infrastructure across the nation and is contributing to the emergence of young Omani sports talent. The unique Green Sports initiative has supported nearly 40,000 sportspersons from 123 sports teams across the country since its inception. The Little Investor financial awareness programme has seen more than 31,000 children taking part and benefiting from the workshops that were organised in schools across different governorates of the sultanate over the past three years.

The bank's sustainability programmes have been well appreciated by society.

Majid al Futtaim installs smart solutions across malls

Muscat City Centre and Qurm City Centre are the first commercial facilities in Oman to install RASED tracking devices to ensure shopping mall spaces remain virus-free. As COVID-19 positive patients are asked to wear RASED tracking bracelets and self-quarantine, the use of the state-of-the-art technology is the latest precaution taken at Majid al Futtaim's Oman malls to safeguard customers.

Placed at all mall entrances, RASED devices support monitoring and evaluation activities by screening visitors who are not self-quarantining, as instructed by local authorities. The RASED detecting device is powered by similar IoT technology developed by eMushrif that is found in school buses to automatically mark attendance and ensure no child is left on the school bus.

Additionally, all visitors are re-



quired to undergo a temperature check — with the aid of thermal cameras placed at all entrances — before being permitted to the mall. Both Muscat City Centre and Qurm City Centre have also installed hands-free elevator calling devices to reduce surface contact as much as possible.

Husam al Mandhari, director - Shopping Malls - Oman, at Majid al Futtaim Properties, said, "Our customers' safety is of the ut-

most importance. As public retail spaces where the community comes together to spend time with their loved ones or unwind after a long day, our malls are not only expected to entertain shoppers, they are also entrusted with keeping visitors — the community — safe. We take this responsibility very seriously and are constantly assessing the situation to ensure that we are being proactive and effective in our efforts."

These smart safety solutions are joined by the implementation of government-mandated measures, including the compulsory use of face masks, to ensure all customers remain safe and healthy. All malls are also clearly marked with instructional social distancing posters and signage — particularly in and around areas of high footfall, concentrated gathering, and long queues.

Offers at Kalyan Jewellers

Kalyan Jewellers has announced the much-awaited festive season offers with the latest 'Big Discount Sale'. These offers come at a time when festivals like Karva Chauth, Dhanteras and Diwali are around the corner. Customers shopping at Kalyan Jewellers can avail up to 50 per cent off on making charges of gold jewellery and up to 25 per cent off on diamond, uncut and precious jewellery. These offers are valid until November 30.

Additionally, 100 per cent value on exchange of old gold

jewellery has also been announced. It will be a good opportunity for customers to exchange their jewellery to the latest designs available at the stores, this season. Kalyan will be accepting old gold jewellery purchased from any retailer.

As part of the Dhanteras Pre-Book offer, customers can avail gold rate protection against fluctuations, by simply pre-booking the jewellery by paying just 20 per cent advance on the intended purchase value. The advance-booking offer will end by Novem-

ber 13.

T S Kalyanaraman, chairman & managing director, Kalyan Jewellers, said, "Festivals like Dhanteras and Diwali have always been significant. This year, at Kalyan Jewellers we are focused on helping our customers extract maximum value from their purchases, with interesting discounts and offers, while also offering them the choice of exchanging their old jewellery for new. We aim to provide a safe and unmatched retail experience."

Now get your Infiniti serviced in one hour with Express Service

Offering customers a convenient vehicle servicing option, Infiniti Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, is continuing to extend its popular Infiniti Express Service while adhering to all the safety protocols related to COVID-19.

Completed in one-hour, Infiniti Express Service is available for cars which are due for their Periodic Maintenance Service every 10,000km (except the major service). The one-hour time calculation is from the time the customer hands over the key for service to the time the customer gets back the key after service. Infiniti Oman strives to offer an excellent retail and customer service experience to every Infiniti owner. A crucial point of differentiation for the brand amongst competitors is the top level of customer service it delivers.

A senior spokesperson at Infiniti Oman said, "Keeping in mind the safety directives prescribed by the Supreme Committee, we have designed the convenient and easy Infiniti Express Service ensuring the safety of our staff and customers. Infiniti Express Service is intended to deliver expert service, efficiently and quickly. Highly trained two-men team deliver the highest standards of Periodic Maintenance Service (except major services) in record time. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) we follow include preparation before opening of service centre in terms of facility readiness, sanitisation, availability of personal protection and



sanitisation equipment and staff readiness. Our protocol and guidelines guarantee the utmost hygiene, sanitisation, and safety for all. Besides, our staff is trained to make the processes very secure, with highest focus on hygiene and safety."

Infiniti Oman ensures that only genuine Infiniti parts are used, and highly trained technicians will complete the service. The biggest advantage is that customers do not have to wait till evening for their vehicles to be serviced.

There are five hassle free ways to book an Infiniti Express Service appointment.

You can book by logging on to the website www.infiniti-oman.com; send an email to ap-

pointment@sbigh.com; SMS <BOOK> to 99825454; WhatsApp on 97692689 or call on 24529111.

COVID-19 protocol

To ensure safety of its customers and employees, Infiniti Oman is following a thorough safety precaution protocol at its service centre. The standard operating procedure it follows involves the execution of strict safety, sanitization, and physical distancing rules.

Implemented in line with Oman's Supreme Committee advisories on COVID-19, Infiniti Oman's precaution protocol aims to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of its customers and employees as priority.

Among the important safety precautions and protocol being followed at the Infiniti Oman service centre include sanitisation of touch points and fumigation of facilities. While hand sanitisers are kept at customer receptions, thermal checks are done before employees and customers enter the service centre. All staff keep a physical distance of two metres from customers.

Other safety measures include sanitisation of vehicle exterior touch points and protective covers on steering wheel, gear lever and seat. Staff always wear disposable gloves and face masks while handling and checking vehicles. All vehicles are sanitised before the start of work.

Mazda identifies with pioneering women

As a partner for the Oman Women of the Year Awards for the second year in a row, Mazda endeavours to identify with the spirit of excellence found in Oman's people, who in their reflective, celebratory and confident selves set themselves apart in their distinctiveness, the same way Mazda's vehicles do so in theirs.

Mazda's 'You have the drive' campaign focuses on this spirit of achievement and inspires them to reach for the sky, to achieve greatness in whatever they put their hands to, and in the process, continue to set benchmarks in excellence. The Oman Women of the Year Awards recognises the extraordinary contributions and achievements of women who are shaping Oman's social-cultural and economic scenario across 30 different sectors of industry. In line with the awards, Mazda, through their 'You have the drive' campaign, have taken the opportunity to recognise the pioneering spirit of Oman's women and highlight their achievements as well.

Here are a few of their inspiring stories



Nadhira al Harthy
An adventurous and ambitious person by nature, Nadhira became the first Omani woman to summit Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, on May 23, 2019. The day has since been recognised as one where the achievements of Oman's women reached a zenith, thanks to her determination and drive to reach the top. Being an ultra athlete herself, having undertaken the 42km Muscat Marathon twice as well as the 90km Oman UTMB race, Mt Everest was the next on her long list of achievements. She said, "It's good to have a dream and set a difficult goal before oneself. One needs to build up the strength and passion to take on challenges and be successful."



Dr Halima Nasser al Maskari
Oman's first woman surgeon, Dr Halima started her career at a time when the medical infrastructure and facilities were limited and the need for women in the profession was much felt in the sultanate. Having received her training in three different continents, and on completing 23 years of service at Khoula Hospital, Dr Halima's expertise and services are much sought after by female patients in Oman. Besides regularly attending to her patients, Dr Halima also assists in complicated trauma case surgeries and devotes her time to examining women for breast cancer at the Oman Cancer Association. She is an inspiration to Oman's new generation of doctors.



Jokha al Harthi
An Omani writer and academician, Jokha is well known for her Man Booker International Prize winning novel - *Celestial Bodies* (which was translated from the original, *Sayyidat al Qamar*). She has authored many novels and short stories which revolve around Omani folklore and tales of yore. *Sayyidat al Qamar* made history, as the first book by an Omani woman to be translated into English, and the first novel written in Arabic to win the Man Booker International Prize. With a PhD in classical Arabic literature from Edinburgh University, Jokha is a recipient of many literary awards, including the Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature.



Samiya Said Saif al Jabri
A First Sergeant in the Royal Oman Police, Samiya has been working with the ROP for the past 16 years. Samiya started her journey as a policewoman. Climbing the ladder steadily, she graduated to become a Corporal. It was her sheer dedication and will that later saw her promoted to the rank of First Sergeant. Beginning her training in 2002 at the Sultan Qaboos Academy in Nizwa, Samiya has worked in all areas of police work, namely public security, civil status, crime investigation, guard duty and the accident investigation division as well. She said, "A police officer should always know how to protect the privacy of people while conducting their duties."

Epitomising the philosophy of IKIGAI, which is to find one's purpose in life, Mazda's cars are designed for the journey within. Based on this purpose driven thought, Mazda has sought to associate with the ambitious, adventurous and the pioneering spirit of Oman's people to ensure that irrespective of what their background is, their destiny is in their own hands and greatness is there for the taking. Mazda in this regard, has developed a range of

exceptional vehicles that reflects this challenging spirit, and helps drivers to identify with and move on together to the next achievement. A partner that matches the driver's ambitions with every mile, Mazda celebrates people who have achieved remarkable success and shown great strength of purpose and character in their chosen fields and is always ready to encourage and inspire others to live up to their potential as well.

According to Towell Auto Centre (TAC), the sole distributor of Mazda vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, 'With over hundred years of excellence in innovation, it is in the very nature of the Japanese automotive giant to inspire and be inspired by the excellence found in individuals and society as a whole. Mazda, has not only developed vehicles that match the ambitions and aspirations of its drivers, but has also endeavoured to relate to

the women that 'have the drive' by embodying and encouraging their spirit of excellence. 'Mazda and TAC identify with Oman's strong, smart, passionate and determined women who change the status quo on a daily basis by achieving the impossible and breaking the norms persistently. With future ready vehicles, Mazda has ensured its place as the choice of champions. With campaigns like 'You have the drive', Mazda aims to establish

a special bond with its customers by offering products, technologies and services that appeal to them and match their dreams and aspirations every step of the way.' In Oman, TAC is recognised as a trusted name in customer service and a pioneer in the automobile business since 1972. A group company of the W J Towell Group, TAC takes off from the principle of its parent company and ensures the easy availability of high quality

motor products coupled with the highest standard of service to its esteemed customers. To find out more about TAC's showrooms and servicing centres, you can log on to www.mazdaoman.com, or just walk into any one of nine Mazda showrooms situated across the Sultanate of Oman. Now you can also download the revamped Mazda Oman mobile app to get easy access to everything related to Mazda in Oman.

Exciting offer from Korean luxury brand Genesis

Genesis - the finest luxury Korean automotive brand and OTE Group, the exclusive distributor in Oman have recently launched an irresistible promotion, offering exceptional price on Genesis models starting from RO14,900, including registration and insurance, apart from 5 years or 100000km service, 5 years unlimited warranty and roadside assistance. This is indeed the best time to indulge in the finest Korean luxury and surprise and delight your loved ones.

Genesis portfolio offers a range of premium luxury sedans starting from the flagship model G90, mid-size luxury sedan G80, its derivative G80 Sport and G70 sport sedan and strives to make positive difference in the lives of discerning customers, thus becoming an important element of their lifestyle.

As a design-focused brand, Genesis has introduced fascinat-



ing models that embody athletic elegance, heart-stopping design and performance, rivaled only by its first-class experience, Genesis is evolving luxury. With superior innovation and offerings during every phase of ownership, Genesis brand is rapidly changing the luxury car ownership experience for today's modern car buyer.

As the ultimate expression of Genesis' brand DNA, the flagship Luxury Sedan G90 is a full-size sedan featuring unmistakable Genesis design cues, such as its distinctive Quad Lamps, signa-

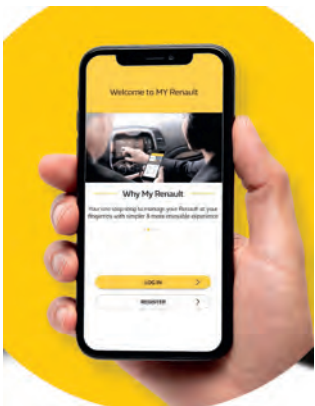
ture Crest Grille and G-Matrix pattern throughout the vehicle, inside and out. The interior design is dominated by a harmonious flow of horizontal surfaces, including a parallel layout built around the air ventilation system and audio controls. Fine new details are found throughout the interior space, including quilted Nappa leather seating and natural wood trim with an exposed grain texture apart from unparalleled occupant protection.

For more details contact OTE Group on 800-50003.

MyRenault App: One-stop solution offering unique brand experience

Enhancing after-sales services for customers, MyRenault App is a one-stop solution with a host of advanced features. Available on Android and iOS platforms, MyRenault App has a perceptive design approach making it enormously user friendly.

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, "Available for download in Oman, MyRenault App makes life easier by putting everything customers need to know about Renault, in one place. The app offers many innovative features along with the functionality. With enhanced features, MyRenault App caters to both sales and after-sales requirements of customers."



He added, "We urge our customers to download the app, available on both Google Play and the App Store, and experience the full breadth of Renault's services that are made convenient for them. From booking services and browsing the wide

range of official accessories and merchandise to accessing vehicle information and handbooks as well as useful articles and videos to maintain their cars, the referral programme is an add-value to an already robust app that puts the customer at the heart of all its features."

He also said, "We are passing through an unprecedented global health crisis due to COVID-19. Employee and customer safety are our top priority and our app supports the guidelines set by the Supreme Committee with regards to social distancing and other safety and health protocols. Customers need not visit our showroom but avail many of our services through our app."



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Al Maha Ceramics SAOG

P.O. Box 482, Postal Code 322, Falaj Al Qabail, Sohar, Oman. Tel: 26752323/22
Fax: 26752177. Email: info@almahaceramics.com, www.almahaceramics.com



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the un-audited results of Al Maha Ceramics SAOG for the first nine months ended 30th September, 2020.

Company's Performance:
Your company has achieved a revenue of RO 6,488,757 for the period compared to the same period last year RO 5,527,751, an increase of 17.38 %.

Net profit after tax for the period is RO 1,025,822 as compared to RO 751,424 in the same period last year, an increase of 36.52% which is mainly due to increase in the sales revenue, effective cost control measures taken at various levels.

Future Outlook:
For a significant part of the year, world economies and all its business constituents have been facing multi-dimensional effects of COVID-19. The pandemic has positioned various emerging risks to all stakeholders. In view of the consistent and continuous pandemic containment measures adopted by various countries, the overall health and economic conditions are stabilizing in a phased manner. Your company has managed its operations with negligible disruption during these turbulent times and continued to cater the requirements of its customers locally and regionally.

Your company complies with all the mandated health and safety measures to ensure a risk-free working environment for its employees and products for its customers. We have a robust risk management mechanism in place to effectively manage the health, business, operational and financial risks.

Your company is actively optimizing potential opportunities for new markets and sustainable growth in the existing markets. There is a constant endeavor to implement cost improvement measures thereby delivering meaningful value to all stakeholders.

Your company is in compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and prioritizes the interests of the national workforce through omization and would continuously strive for their overall development.

Thanks and Appreciation
On behalf of the board, I would like to convey our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and to His Majesty's Government for encouragement and support.

The Board would also like to thank the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Securities market, Bankers and Auditors for their continued support to the company.

The Board would also like to place on record appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the management team and all employees of the company.

I would also like to thank the shareholders of the company for the confidence they have reposed in the Company and its Board.

For Al Maha Ceramics SAOG
Masoud Humaid Malik Al Harthy
Chairman

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30th September 2020

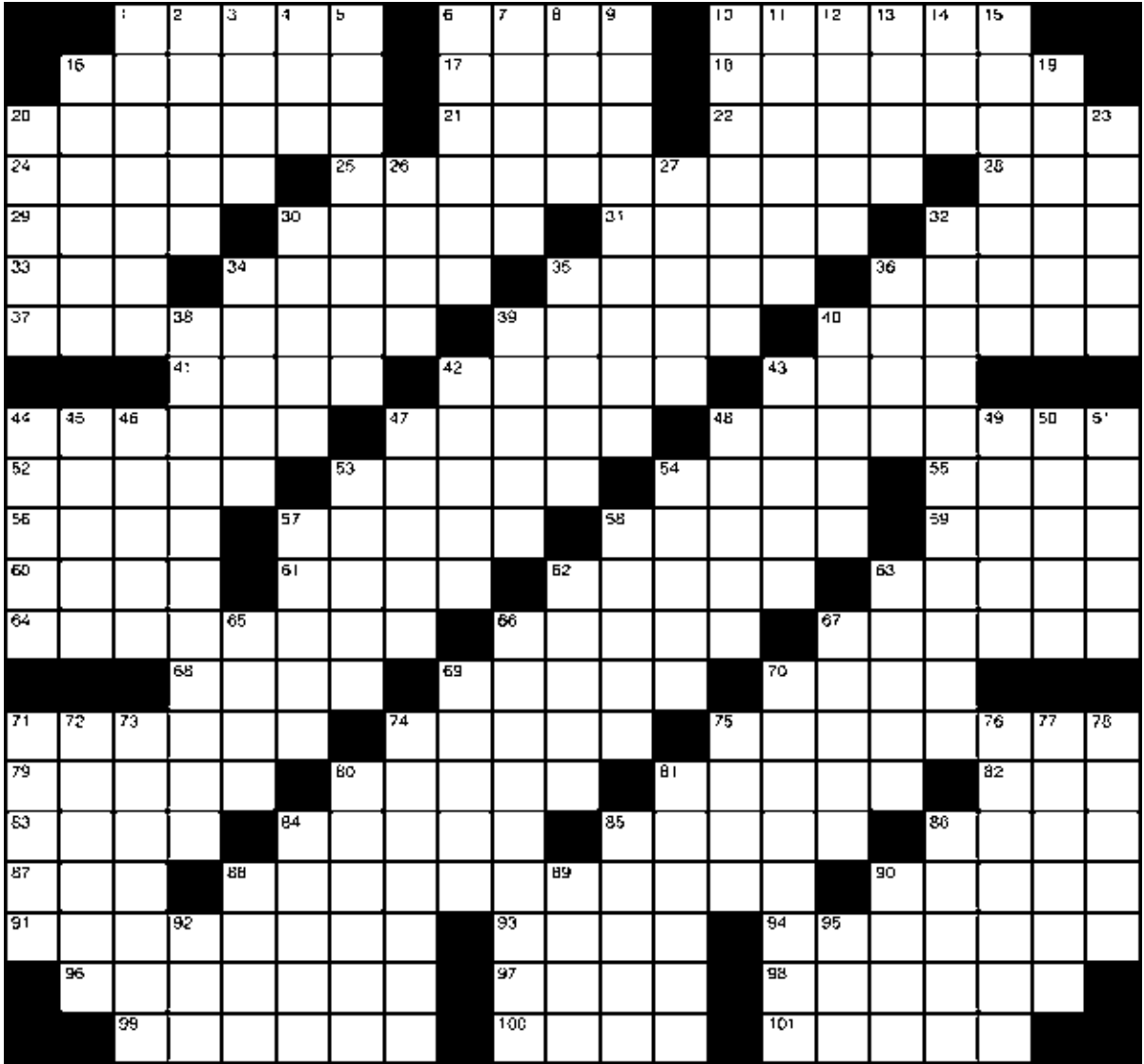
	2020 RO	2019 RO	Audited Dec 2019 RO
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7,086,227	7,819,652	7,647,622
Investment property	225,000	225,000	225,000
Right-of-use asset	454,061	-	491,900
	<u>7,765,288</u>	<u>8,044,652</u>	<u>8,364,522</u>
Current assets			
Inventories	1,701,276	1,825,225	1,892,529
Trade and other receivables	2,803,795	2,241,514	2,195,880
Cash and bank balances	335,071	84,037	350,086
	<u>4,840,142</u>	<u>4,150,776</u>	<u>4,438,495</u>
	<u>12,605,430</u>	<u>12,195,428</u>	<u>12,803,017</u>
TOTAL ASSETS			
EQUITY			
Share capital	5,500,000	5,500,000	5,500,000
Share premium	88,199	88,199	88,199
Statutory reserve	1,697,533	1,596,402	1,697,533
Retained earnings	2,515,716	2,156,137	2,314,894
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>9,801,448</u>	<u>9,340,738</u>	<u>9,600,626</u>
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
End of service benefits	262,331	243,914	252,026
Deferred tax liability	348,950	358,178	348,950
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	385,031	-	416,366
	<u>996,312</u>	<u>602,092</u>	<u>1,017,342</u>
Current liabilities			
Bank borrowings	-	700,000	500,000
Trade and other payables	1,721,863	1,552,598	1,411,142
Current portion of lease liabilities	85,807	-	85,807
Income tax payable	-	-	188,100
	<u>1,807,670</u>	<u>2,252,598</u>	<u>2,185,049</u>
	<u>2,803,982</u>	<u>2,854,690</u>	<u>3,202,391</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>12,605,430</u>	<u>12,195,428</u>	<u>12,803,017</u>
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	<u>12,605,430</u>	<u>12,195,428</u>	<u>12,803,017</u>
Net assets per share	<u>0.178</u>	<u>0.170</u>	<u>0.175</u>

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM INCOME STATEMENT

For the period ended 30 September 2020

	2020 RO	2019 RO
Revenue	6,488,757	5,527,751
Cost of sales	(4,323,558)	(3,817,125)
Gross profit	2,165,199	1,710,626
Administrative and general expenses	(402,330)	(371,719)
Selling and distribution expenses	(566,743)	(481,890)
Other Income / (expenses)	29,671	33,968
Profit from operations	1,225,797	890,985
Net Profit on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	14,732
Finance charges	(18,946)	(21,688)
Profit before tax	1,206,851	884,029
Income tax	(181,029)	(132,605)
Total comprehensive income and net profit for the period	1,025,822	751,424
Basic earnings per share (Annualised)	0.025	0.018

DAILY CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**
1 Leftover item
6 The two of them
10 Socks
16 Protein acid
17 Land expanse
20 Arson fighter
21 Adjacent to
22 Blessed with holy oil
24 Assumed name
25 Presidential New Yorker?
28 New Deal power agcy.
29 Stitch together
30 Stormed
31 Rude wagons
32 Large number
33 Explosive initials
34 Better quality
35 Pith helmet
36 Pick up leftovers
37 Star shaped
39 Cared deeply
40 Fingerprint markings
41 Feels unwell
42 Coniferous growths
43 Versifier
44 Indian warriors
47 Upwardly mobile person
48 First
52 Lemur
53 Stonehenge worshiper
54 Character
55 Culture medium
56 Residents: suffix
57 Respond
58 British tar
59 Indicator
60 Erstwhile caterpillar
61 Solemn promise
62 Spelunker's habitats
63 Sharpens
64 Cause of stress
66 Carried
67 Wedding participants
68 Attila's men
69 French cap
70 Dustin Hoffman's "___ Man"
71 Affirm
74 Printed communication, for short
75 Annoyed
79 Declares openly
80 Shouted
81 Domesticates
82 Definitive period
83 TV staple
84 Chinese weight unit
85 Nimbuses
86 Scheme
87 Printing measures
88 Classic talkshow host
90 Muslim ruler's decree
91 Dependence
93 Mine entrance
94 Lowered in rank
96 Purify by evaporation
97 Fifi's father
98 Obliterated
99 Wood dressers
100 Pay attention to
101 "March of ___"
DOWN
1 Arrange in a series
2 Top echelon
3 Edges
4 Collection
5 Some ornaments
6 Large headline
7 Mountain nymph
8 Blue-green
9 Book type
10 Skirmished
11 Tiny
12 Matter units
13 Small piece
14 Relatives
15 Homesteader
16 Movies of old?
19 Show off
20 Abstinences
23 Early mornings
26 Molding type
27 Records
30 Coins of Iran
32 Casino feature
34 Fruit or house pests
35 Tinted
36 Liquid butter, in India
38 Casino entertainment
39 Restrain
40 Ponderous
42 Bag
43 Tiny openings
44 Dirigible's relative
45 Revolving machine part
46 Mountain crest
47 Carton
48 Renowned
49 Stared at
50 Fry lightly
51 Hank of hair
53 Loved ones
54 Wild cat
57 In-the- ___: theater
58 Elastic material
62 Removed the center
63 Legal papers
65 Sits for a tan
66 Morse code vehicle
67 Foundations
69 Person
70 Ordered back
71 Steadier
72 Made equal
73 Wild plant
74 Tours
75 Mutuel lead-in
76 Empathizes
77 Eaten away
78 Obsolete
80 Ring
81 Trimmed with feathers
84 Ulyanov
85 Burning
86 Poetry's partner
88 ___ Hari
89 ___ fixe
90 Muslim priest
92 Elba, e.g.
95 Silk worm

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Keep a close eye on the relationship stories happening in your world. Mercury's retrograde trek comes to an end, unveiling new information and creating pointed conversations around partnership matters. The morning hours keep you busy, energetic, and primed for self-expression, as the Gemini moon happily pairs off with Mars. Luna's soiree with Neptune has your mind floating.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Your voice is of utmost importance. Watch the words that are bursting at the seams versus those that go unspoken. Mercury ends its retrograde, placing emphasis on educational pursuits. The Gemini moon merges with Mars, giving you a healthy boost of energy towards goal-accomplishment. Later, Luna's nightly rendezvous with Neptune creates blurriness around love.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Keep a close eye for new stories to emerge. Mercury finalises its retrograde phase-ushering in important news, conversations, or revelations around your long-term goals. The Gemini moon stirs your need for close one-on-ones. Luna's link to Mars in the morning provides energy for creative projects, but her nightly square to Luna can stir up unprocessed feelings around family.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Tuesday's skies free up some space for forward movement. Mercury retrograde comes to a close, highlighting your ongoing job story. Look for clues in conversations, revelations, or information that changes the game around. The Gemini moon keeps things moving and shaking with her meet-up to Mars, but her square to Neptune can leave you unsure about goals.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Things are turning on a dime for you. Your ruling planet, Mercury, finalises its retrograde phase. This should help you move forward with endeavours involving your personal talents. The socially active Gemini moon's link to Mars helps you make moves that push your goals forward. But by evening, her soiree with Neptune brings brief confusion to partnership matters.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Pay attention to the shifts happening in your reputation. Mercury retrograde comes to a close, channeling energy towards career matters by means of conversations, connections, or news. The Gemini moon's meet-up with Mars provides ample energy for errands, exercise, and your workflow. But her square with Neptune makes for a mentally blurry evening.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Your ruling planet, Mercury, is on the move! Mercury finalises its retrograde journey, helping you return to a state of forward motion. Important insights and conversations await around creative projects and romantic interests. The moon treks through your sign and hooks up with Mars, helping you pursue your goals. Luna's square to Neptune can create career confusion.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Tuesday's skies pick the cosmic pace up. Mercury puts an end to its retrograde motion, calling attention to any issues you've been wrestling with around your identity. Elsewhere, the playful Gemini moon urges you to self-expand and escape the norm. Luna's link with Mars makes for a productive morning with one-on-ones, but her square to dreamy Neptune in the evening blurs job relations.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
This time of year has you at the top of your career game. Yet you've needed to stop and reassess your trajectory. Mercury retrograde comes to a close, putting your backwards thinking to rest and focalising energy around news in educational or travel. Otherwise, the day has a "play first, work later" attitude, as the Gemini moon links up with energetic Mars.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Pieces of the psychological puzzle you've been working on are beginning to fall into place. Mercury ceases its retrograde motion, emphasising the ongoing changes taking place on the home and family front. It's a busy day behind the scenes for career work, as the active Gemini moon aligns with go-getter Mars. By evening, reality loses its sway, as Luna and Neptune swirl.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You've been embarking on a process of self-discovery. Mercury's retrograde has had you turning yourself inside out to find out what's at your core. Mercury moves direct, creating a moment of awareness of your inner world. Journalling, reflection, and therapy work wonders. The Gemini moon prompts you to look beyond the surface in relationship matters.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
It's a good day to keep a low profile. Mercury's retrograde phrase ends, channeling new information and inviting important conversations around relationship matters. The Gemini moon wants to keep you homebound, but her link to Mars will keep you busy with little projects indoors. The moon squares off with Neptune, blurring lines between your past and present self.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Modern Indo-Aryan languages are based on an ancient language called
a. Hindi
b. Sanskrit
c. Kannada
d. Tamil

2. Malfunctioning of which of the following organs causes jaundice?
a. Stomach
b. Pancreas
c. Liver
d. Kidney

3. Olympic creed and oath was composed by ____ the founder of modern Olympics.
a. Rev Father Didon
b. Baron Pierre de Coubertin
c. Norman Pitchard
d. None of the above

Answers: 1: b 2: c 3: b

KIDS COLOURING

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

7	9			6				4
		2		5				7
		3		4	6	8		
	4	1	5		8			
6								8
			9		6	4	5	
	5	9	4			2		
1			2			7		
2				1			9	5

BOGGLER

T	L	A	N
M	I	L	W
L	S	O	E
B	G	B	U

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

5	6	8	1	9	4	7	2
3	7	4	6	5	2	9	8
9	1	2	7	8	4	6	5
1	5	4	9	3	6	7	2
8	7	6	2	4	1	5	9
2	9	8	7	5	1	6	4
6	8	9	4	2	7	1	5
7	1	3	1	5	6	8	2
4	2	5	1	9	3	8	6

AMAR	GIATRON	STASSIO	DIATIE
LEND	THINAIN	ACTHOS	DISNE
THROG	ONHER	SPHILU	EDORT
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3M N95

1860/1860S



3M N95

8210



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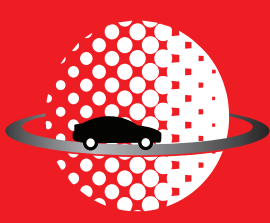
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'WE'RE NOT FINISHED'

Mercedes' team boss Wolff plays down Hamilton's comments on considering retirement



A file photo of Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff (left) and six-time world Formula One champion driver Lewis Hamilton

FORMULA ONE

Imola, Italy - Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff may revise his role as leader of Formula One's record seven-time champions, but he does not believe that his glorious partnership with Lewis Hamilton is set to end.

The Austrian boss made this clear late on Sunday after the six-time champion's record 93rd career victory clinched this season's teams' title - following

comments by Hamilton that suggested he may be considering retirement.

"I think we go together in a way. We have symbiosis and obviously it's important where our heart is and our mindset is for next year," Wolf said.

"But I've said that this is my team. I'm in a very proud corner with Mercedes and I'm not going anywhere.

"My role may change - and

that's something that he's asked me - and I think nothing is ever secure.

"We want to continue this journey. We are not finished. Lewis and I and all the team - we are not finished."

Speaking earlier, after a race in which he came home ahead of his 'Black Arrows' teammate Valtteri Bottas, extending his lead over him in the drivers' title race to 85 points, Hamilton had said there was 'no guarantee' he would be in F1 next year.

Asked about Wolff's desire to put in place a long-term succession plan in readiness for his exit, Hamilton had said: "I don't even know if I'm going to be here next year so it's not really a concern for me at the moment.

"I'm very aware of where he is, mentally, and we share a lot of and carry a lot of the weight together I think.

I don't even know if I'm going to be here next year so it's not really a concern for me at the moment

LEWIS HAMILTON

"I've been here a long, long time. I can definitely understand wanting to pull back a little bit and giving more time to family and those things."

'Opportune moment'

Wolff suggested Hamilton's comments had come 'in the heat of the moment' and he went on to explain why both men had delayed signing new contracts with the team for next season and beyond.

"With Mercedes and I, we are pretty much clear. It's just down to putting pen on the paper at the right moment," Wolff said.

"I was concentrated on bringing these championships home and it always feels not right to spend days with lawyers and M&A [mergers and acquisitions] people when I'm so focused on just what's happening on track.

"I think that this is where Lewis and I are very similar. It just didn't feel the right opportune moment to sit down before those championships were done.

"There will be a moment now, when the drivers' championship is going to be decided, to sit down. And then we have a few months before the first race happens in Australia."

Hamilton is likely to seal his record-equalling seventh drivers' championship triumph at the

Turkish Grand Prix later this month before switching his attention to a possible new contract.

That landmark title, added to his other record achievements, will increase his commercial and professional value at a time when Mercedes, and F1, have expansive plans and a salary cap for drivers is under serious consideration.

Cynics may believe his perplexing comments on Sunday to be part of a mood-changing strategy for any upcoming

contract negotiations - with the sport's ruling bodies, as much as Mercedes, sensitive to the damage his departure would create.

If he were to walk away, it would create havoc in the drivers' market - a possibility Mercedes may not have countenanced seriously - and leave a gaping hole at the top of the bill as the sport's only global superstar.

There are, however, no other active multiple record-beating world champions available.

AFP

Hamilton, Grosjean back Russell after safety car crash

Imola, Italy - Lewis Hamilton and Romain Grosjean messaged their support to George Russell on Monday after his crash behind the safety car in this weekend's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

Russell, 22, was tenth and likely to claim his first point in Formula One and Williams' of the season when he lost control of his car, while weaving and accelerating to warm the tyres, and squirted off into a wall.

He climbed out and sat by the track with his head in his hands before returning to the pits.

The six-time world champion told his fellow-Briton it was 'OK' to make mistakes and to feel the pain', adding he had 'to keep his head up

and keep on pushing'.

Grosjean was compassionate after crashing out of a points position behind a safety car in Azerbaijan two years ago

"Man, I know the feeling," he said

"It will take some time to forget it, but what you do is mega. Keep pushing."

Russell later described the incident as 'the biggest mistake I've ever made in my career'.

Ironically, the Englishman is one of a clutch of highly-rated young drivers tipped to be championship challengers in the future - with Russell, as a Mercedes protege, well-positioned to take a seat in the their factory race outfit.

AFP



George Russell

Mohan's ton in Awtad victory; ARTT, Zawawi Powertech win

LOCAL CRICKET

Nidhin Mohan hit an unbeaten 108 and Siddh Mehta's tidy spell (4-24) powered Awtad International to a 181-run victory of OCT Muscat in an Oman Cricket 50-over-a-side A Division match at Al Amerat on Saturday.

In other A Division matches, ARTT drubbed EY, courtesy an allround performance from former Oman player Zeeshan Siddiqui, and Zawawi Powertech got the better of SARCO in a low-scoring game.

Brief scores: Awtad International 286-7 (Mohan 108 n.o., Mohammed Waqas 51, Vibin Vilayil 47; Rashad Mohammed 3-36, Shaed Ali 3-39) beat OCT

Muscat 105 in 30.4 overs (Rashad 46; Mehta 4-24, Pradeep Kumar 2-17, Nobish Gopi 2-27).

ARTT 266-9 (Mohsin Qureshi 63, Siddiqui 62, Syed Amir Ali 57, Pranav Mehta 52; Sheeraz Akbar 3-31, Zeeshan Raza 2-43, Amir Hussain 2-45) beat EY 209-9 (Sultan Ahmed 76 n.o.; Siddiqui 2-27, Aqil Khan 2-29, Ravindra Sanjaya 2-39).

SARCO 113 all out in 27 overs (Rangajeeva Perera 33; Prabhakaran Kannan 3-17, Ishara Fernando 2-17, Nishad S K 2-19, Suhil Kanagaraj 2-34) lost to Zawawi Powertech 114-7 in 31.3 overs (Nishad 49; Guru Kotian 3-12).



L-R: ARTT's Mehta, Amir Ali, Ali Anwar (team owner), Siddiqui, captain Ahmed Khan and Qureshi after the win

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IPL 2020



QUOTE OF THE DAY

The great thing about IPL is there are so many other games on and so many great bowlers on display so there is a lot to learn from.

Pat Cummins
Kolkata pacer, after his match-winning spell of four for 34 against Rajasthan, on Sunday



TODAY'S MATCH

SHARJAH, 6PM



SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE		
J Philippe	c Shaw b Rabada	12 (17)
D Padikkal	b Nortje	50 (40)
V Kohli	c Stoinis b Ashwin	29 (24)
AB de Villiers	run out	35 (27)
C Morris	c Pant b Nortje	0 (2)
S Dube	c Rahane b Rabada	17 (11)
W Sundar	not out	0 (1)
I Udana	c Iyer b Nortje	4 (2)
S Ahmed	not out	1 (1)
Extras	(b 1, w 3)	4

TOTAL: 152 for seven
Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-82, 3-112, 4-112, 5-145, 6-146, 7-150

Bowling: D Sams 4-0-40-0, R Ashwin 4-0-18-1, A Nortje 4-0-33-3, K Rabada 4-0-30-2, A Patel 4-0-30-0

DELHI CAPITALS		
P Shaw	b Siraj	9 (4)
S Dhawan	c Dube b Ahmed	54 (41)
A Rahane	c Dube b Sundar	60 (46)
S Iyer	c Siraj b Ahmed	7 (9)
R Pant	not out	8 (7)
M Stoinis	not out	10 (15)
Extras	(lb 3, w 3)	6

TOTAL: 154 for four in 19 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-107, 3-130, 4-136

Bowling: C Morris 2-0-19-0, M Siraj 3-0-29-1, W Sundar 4-0-24-1, I Udana 2-0-24-0, Y Chahal 4-0-29-0, S Ahmed 4-0-26-2

picking up three wickets. That enabled the Royal Challengers to sneak into the playoffs even though they couldn't stop the Capitals' victory march.
Cricinfo

Capitals, Bangalore seal playoff spots

Delhi vs Mumbai in Qualifier 1; RCB to meet either Hyderabad or Kolkata in Eliminator

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Half-centuries from Ajinkya Rahane and Shikhar Dhawan ensured the Delhi Capitals finished second on the IPL 2020 points table as they beat the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) by six wickets in Abu Dhabi on Monday. They will now face the table toppers, the Mumbai Indians, in Qualifier 1 in Dubai on Thursday.

While they lost, the Royal Challengers also sealed a playoff spot by taking the game deep enough to ensure their net run rate (NRR) stayed above that of the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), who are currently fourth.

RCB will meet either Sunrisers Hyderabad or Kolkata in the Eliminator on Friday.

After being put in, the Royal Challengers innings never really hit the top gear despite Devdutt Padikkal's half-century and AB de Villiers' 35 off 21 balls towards the end.

Whenever Bangalore tried to break free, they were pegged back by a wicket or two. As a result, they could manage only 152 for seven.

Once Dhawan and Rahane put the Capitals on the victory path, the next number for the Royal Challengers was 17.3.

They needed to stretch the game at least till 17.3 overs to



Delhi Capitals' Shikhar Dhawan (right) celebrates on reaching his fifty as Ajinkya Rahane looks on

ensure their NRR stayed above the Kolkata Knight Riders'.

Despite the dew, the Royal Challengers spinners - Shahbaz Ahmed, Washington Sundar and Yuzvendra Chahal - stepped up and made sure the Capitals reached their target only in 19 overs.

Earlier, the Capitals bowlers

did well to keep Padikkal and Josh Philippe quiet at the start. With just 25 on the board at the end of the fourth over, Philippe tried to loft Kagiso Rabada inside-out but failed to middle it. Prithvi Shaw back-tracked at covers to cling on to the chance, giving Rabada his first wicket in the powerplay this season.

But once the field was spread out, R Ashwin and Axar Patel varied their pace intelligently to strangle the Royal Challengers. Virat Kohli tried to take on Patel. Kohli tried to loft him over long-on but the ball hit the inner half. However, Anrich Nortje lost footing while taking the catch and the ball popped out.

Capitals thwart RCB's attempt to accelerate

With the Royal Challengers on 60 for one after ten overs, Kohli tried to cut loose. He started with driving Rabada over extra cover before clearing long-on against Patel.

But his charge was cut short by someone who had never dismissed him in T20s before today. Ashwin got Kohli out for the first time in 20 innings as he failed to clear deep midwicket.

Padikkal too struggled after his initial burst. From being 21 off 14 balls at the end of the powerplay, he managed only 29 in the next 27 balls. He brought up his fifth half-century of the season - off 40 balls - but fell on the next ball to Nortje.

Chris Morris too departed in the same over. De Villiers and Shivam Dube got a few in their slot and added 33 in 18 balls to ensure Bangalore crossed 150.

Dhawan gets Capitals off to quick start

After fetching two ducks in his last two innings, Dhawan was welcomed with a low full toss from Morris, which the batsman dispatched through covers. Two balls later, Morris overpitched again and Dhawan drove it through covers. In the next over,

Rebuilding Super Kings will be great fun, says Fleming

Dubai, UAE - Chennai Super Kings have had their worst season, failing to qualify for the playoffs for the first time in the 11 years they've been part of the IPL.

When the Super Kings stumbled with the bat and fumbled in the field in the first half of the season, the usually unflappable Stephen Fleming was visibly frustrated. After the Super Kings gave up five wickets inside the powerplay and eventually lost to Mumbai Indians in Sharjah he said that the ageing side had 'run out of juice'.

Fleming has overseen the rebuilding of the Melbourne Stars in the BBL and the building of Rising Pune Supergiant in the IPL, but would the impending transition at Super Kings be his toughest challenge as a T20 coach?

"It's a great challenge," Fleming said at the post-match press conference after the Super Kings finished their season with three successive wins on Sunday.

"It's great fun and there's responsibility around it, but when you get the likes of Ruturaj [Gaikwad] come through and some of the players getting the mix of youth and old..."

Fleming looked back at the past to plan for the future, hoping to establish a strong core like how the team management had done in 2008. MS Dhoni, who was the most expensive buy at that inaugural auction, has also



Chennai Super Kings' coach Stephen Fleming (right) and skipper MS Dhoni. Photo right: Ruturaj Gaikwad

confirmed that he's 'definitely not' retiring before the next IPL.

"We go back to the same team which Mr Srinivasan and CSK picked and how right they got it," Fleming said.

"We're looking to do the same if we can get a decade of consistent cricket from a side, you're doing something right. So, we're tapping into that and yeah there's big responsibility. Teams now and squads are a lot smarter and they really want what they want, so talent is at a premium. But, it's one of the challenges... good and exciting challenges of being involved with an IPL side."

The 23-year-old Gaikwad, who peeled off three fifties in a row, is a 'big candidate' for the Super

We've got too many fans as well relying on us to do well and we have an obligation to do that

STEPHEN FLEMING

Kings going forward. When asked if the team management could've found room for him at the top in the first half of the season, Fleming reckoned that they had actually rushed him into action too early after he had recovered from COVID-19.

After an extended quarantine



period, Gaikwad returned to training on September 21. On the very next day, he made his IPL debut against Rajasthan Royals and bagged a duck at No 5.

Three days later, against the Delhi Capitals, he managed 5 at No 4 before being dropped from the XI.

"No, we couldn't play him earlier, in fact we played him too early," Fleming said. "COVID really knocked him around, we knew how good he was from the time we've had in the last two years; the pre-season [camp] in Chennai was outstanding. One of the disappointments was obviously he got sick and the fact that it hung around for so long, people underestimated what it

does to a player physically and mentally.

"We tried to get him into the game really early on, looking back probably it was too soon, so it wasn't effective. We might have pushed him in too quickly and he wasn't quite ready physically and he got outweighed a little bit - some doubts were cast and just got to work with him in net practice and limited practice matches, but we always had in mind he was going to be a key player."

Fleming was also pleased with how the Super Kings bounced back, after a terrible start, to offer hope for the future.

"We hung tough as a group," he said. "Obviously in the bubble we spent a lot of time together and when things aren't going well in the IPL, it can get a bit toxic. But the players - every one of them - were incredibly committed to what we were trying to do. Some were getting opportunities and some weren't which again is the nature of the IPL. [That] we were finishing on an up is a testament to the players more than anything that they were still committed to respecting the jersey and franchise and finished the tournament well so that we can look back and say 'what if' rather than 'what next'. We've got too many fans as well relying on us to do well and we have an obligation to do that."

Cricinfo



A file photo of Ravi Shastri (right) and Rohit Sharma

Rohit 'in danger' of injuring himself again, says Shastri

Mumbai, India - India's head coach Ravi Shastri has revealed that Rohit Sharma's medical report stated 'he could be in danger of injuring himself again' and advised the batsman not to rush his comeback.

Rohit, who is recovering from a hamstring injury he suffered in the ongoing IPL, was left out of the India squad for the upcoming Australia tour on a day when he was seen hitting the nets for Mumbai Indians, sparking speculation on the status of his fitness. Shastri said the call not to include Rohit in the squad was taken by the selectors after going through his medical report.

"It's being handled by the people in charge of the medical part of it. We don't get involved in that. They have submitted a report to the selectors and they have gone about their business."

"I have no say, neither am I a part of the selection. All I know is the medical report which says he could be in danger of injuring himself again if he is not careful," Shastri told *Times Now*.

Shastri further advised Rohit not to make the same mistake he made during his own playing days. "There is nothing more frustrating for a player than getting injured. Sometimes you know, you want to get out of that room of yours and try and see how quickly you can come back," he said.

The BCCI is currently monitoring Rohit's progress and there is a possibility that he may play for Mumbai later in this IPL.

"What I fear, I have been through that as a cricketer myself. I finished my career in 1991 when I went back to Australia when I shouldn't have. If I had taken a break for three or four months, I could've played five years longer for India."

"So, I speak from experience. It is a similar case. I wanted to go. Doctors told me don't go. It was greed. I was in tremendous form so there was this eagerness to go back. I hope Rohit's case is not that serious and the same with Ishant (Sharma)."

Cricinfo

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP



Juventus' Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring against Spezia during the Serie A match at The Dino Manuzzi Stadium in Cesena on Sunday (AFP)

'CRISTIANO IS BACK'

Portuguese Ronaldo returns from COVID-19 to score a double in Juventus victory

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Milan, Italy - Cristiano Ronaldo came off the bench to score a brace on his return from coronavirus as Juventus got back to winning ways in Serie A with a 4-1 victory against promoted Spezia on Sunday.

The champions ended a run of three consecutive draws to move third in Serie A, four points behind leaders AC Milan, who beat Udinese 2-1 earlier in the day thanks to a spectacular late winner from Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Sassuolo overtook Juventus to reclaim second spot, two points

behind Milan, after a 2-0 win over Napoli, their first ever success at the Stadio San Paolo.

Ronaldo replaced Paulo Dybala in the 56th minute in Cesena with the match level after Tommaso Pobega had cancelled out Alvaro Morata's opener for Juventus. But the Portuguese striker put Juve in front just three minutes later.

Adrien Rabiot grabbed a third on 68 minutes, with Ronaldo scoring a second from the penalty spot with 15 minutes to go for his fifth goal in three league games this season.

"Cristiano is back. This is the important thing," said Ronaldo, who had been furious at missing Juventus' Champions League 0-2 defeat in midweek by Lionel Messi's Barcelona. "I was stopped for a long time even though I had no symptoms and felt good. Today I got back to doing what I like, playing football."

Ronaldo had been COVID-positive for 19 days after a test while on national duty with Portugal, missing four games.

The nine-time defending champions had won their opener against Sampdoria in September, their only league victory on the pitch, before three draws.

Between those matches they were awarded a 3-0 victory after Napoli refused to travel to Turin on October 4 because of coronavirus cases. Before Ronaldo took to the pitch, Juventus had laboured against top-flight newcomers Spezia. Morata netted after quarter of

an hour from Weston McKenzie's cross, but after seeing three goals disallowed for offside against Barca, he had another one ruled out nine minutes later.

But Pobega's deflected shot past Gianluigi Buffon pulled Spezia level after half an hour.

Ronaldo ran onto Morata's through ball before rounding the goalkeeper and tapping home to put Juve back in front.

Rabiot also came off the bench to score, with a foul on Federico Chiesa giving Ronaldo his chance for a second goal on 75 minutes. "In the second half we were well placed on the pitch with the desire to win and Ronaldo gave us a hand," said coach Andrea Pirlo.

Ibrahimovic stunner
AC Milan extended their unbeaten streak as Ibrahimovic scored an acrobatic late winner to seal a win over lowly Udinese. The 39 year old has scored

seven goals in four league games having missed the other two after contracting COVID-19.

"Mine was a beautiful goal but the victory of the team counts more," said Ibrahimovic.

The Swedish star set up Franck Kessie for the opener after 18 minutes before Rodrigo de Paul pulled Udinese level three minutes after the break from the penalty spot, beating Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma on his return from coronavirus.

But Ibrahimovic snatched the three points seven minutes from time, with a stunning bicycle kick past goalkeeper Juan Musso.

Ibrahimovic has now scored in six consecutive Serie A games, to match a record he achieved with Milan in 2012.

OTHER RESULTS:

Torino 3 Lazio 4, Roma 2 Fiorentina 0, Sampdoria 1 Genoa 1. AFP

Arsenal edge past United, Bale send Spurs second

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang condemned Manchester United to fresh misery at Old Trafford as his penalty clinched a 1-0 win for Arsenal, while Gareth Bale was the match winner with his first goal since returning to Tottenham in a 2-1 win over Brighton on Sunday.

Aubameyang ended a five-game goal drought in the league when he stepped up to convert a 69th-minute spot-kick after Paul Pogba fouled Hector Bellerin. The Arsenal captain's first league goal since the opening weekend of the season gave the Gunners their first league win at Old Trafford since 2006.

United have now failed to win any of their four home league games this season, with the three defeats including a humiliating 6-1 rout against Tottenham. It is the Red Devils' worst start to a home league campaign since 1972-73, leaving Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team languishing just six points above the relegation zone in 15th place.

After an encouraging end to last season when they secured a top-four finish, United have had an inconsistent start to the new campaign, with the highs of Champions League wins over Paris Saint-Germain and RB Leipzig cancelled out by a series of poor league performances.

"We weren't at the races. We were too sloppy and too many passes went astray," Solskjaer said. "Home and away form is out the window with no fans in the stadium. You can't look at

that. It doesn't really mean too much. But we need to get points on the board."

Arsenal moved up to ninth, just a point off third. Mikel Arteta's men were deserved winners, having dominated for long periods and hit the bar through Willian in the first half.

"I'm delighted because we played with a lot of courage and big personality," Arteta said.

Bale rescues Spurs

Spurs moved up to second as Bale came off the bench to break Brighton's resolve in a controversial clash at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium.

Harry Kane's early penalty put Jose Mourinho's men in front before the visitors were denied a spot-kick for a pull on Leandro Trossard by Matt Doherty.

Brighton's bright display got the slice of luck they needed to level 11 minutes into the second-half when referee Graham Scott allowed Tariq Lamptey's equaliser to stand after what appeared a clear foul on Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg in the build-up. Bale got Spurs and Scott off the hook, though, when he powered home a header 17 minutes from time.

Everton spurned the chance to go back top of the table on goal difference as they were beaten 1-2 at Newcastle.

Southampton are up to fourth as James Ward-Prowse celebrated his 26th birthday by scoring two fine free-kicks in a 4-3 win against Aston Villa.

AFP



Tottenham Hotspur's Gareth Bale (centre) heads the ball to score a goal against Brighton during their English Premier League match on Sunday

Real Sociedad go back to top of La Liga



David Silva (right) of Real Sociedad celebrates with Mikel Oyarzabal after scoring against Celta Vigo during their Spanish League match on Sunday

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - David Silva scored his first goal for Real Sociedad on Sunday to help them go back to the top of La Liga after a 4-1 win over Celta Vigo.

Silva headed La Real in front at Balaidos for his first goal since he left Manchester City in the summer, and his first in La Liga since he departed Valencia 11 years ago.

Mikel Oyarzabal made it two with his fifth of the season, a tally that also makes him the league's top scorer so far.

Willian Jose then hit the net twice in the second half, either side of Iago Aspas converting a penalty, which gave Celta brief

hope of a comeback. Celta's Jose Fontan was sent off for a second yellow card late on, to cap a disappointing afternoon for the home side, who sit 17th, without a win in six games.

But another impressive victory for Real Sociedad means they have won their last four league games on the bounce, with scorelines of 3-0, 3-0, 4-1 and 4-1.

They return to the top of the table, one point ahead Real Madrid, who had temporarily taken first place after their 4-1 win over Huesca on Saturday.

Atletico Madrid are third, three points off the leaders but with two games in hand.

Valencia, meanwhile, avoided

a fourth straight defeat by drawing 2-2 at home to Getafe but could easily have lost or won the game after a wild finish at Mestalla. Getafe slip to eighth while Valencia stay 13th. Real Betis had earlier beaten Elche 3-1 to climb to seventh. Elche drop to tenth.

OTHER RESULTS:

FRENCH LEAGUE:

Saint-Etienne 0 Montpellier 1, Angers 0 Nice 3, Dijon 0 Lorient 0, Nimes 0, Metz 1, Reims 2 Strasbourg 1, Monaco 4 Bordeaux 0, Lille 1 Lyon 1.

GERMAN LEAGUE:

Freiburg 2 Bayer Leverkusen 4, Hertha Berlin 1 Wolfsburg 1.

AFP





EQUINOR TO GO CO2 NEUTRAL
Norwegian oil giant Equinor said that it aimed to reach 'net-zero' carbon emissions by 2050 but it still plans to increase its oil and gas production in the short term

BUSINESS

MARKET WATCH	
MSM30	3,547.89
BSE Sensex	39,757.58
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
Indian Rs	193.78
Pakistani Rs	416.31
Bangladeshi Taka	220.61
Philippine Peso	125.97
Sri Lankan Rs	479.95

*Rates as on November 02
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

ZTE sees revenue growth in first three quarters
Chinese telecom equipment maker ZTE saw its revenue increase 15.4 per cent year on year in the first three quarters, according to the company's quarterly report.

The firm's revenue totaled 74.13bn yuan (about US\$11bn) in the period, said the report.

Improvements have been seen in its 5G business operations, the company said in the report, adding that as of the end of September, it has signed 55 commercial 5G contracts and carried out 5G cooperation with more than 90 carriers around the globe.

ZTE pledged to leverage its technologies and abilities in key areas including 5G, cloud storage and artificial intelligence to bolster the development of the digital economy while accelerating its digital transformation.

India's October manufacturing PMI sees rise on strong demand
India's manufacturing purchasing managers index (PMI) rose to 58.9 in October from 56.8 in the preceding month on strong demand and production revival since late 2007 though job losses continued, according to a private survey released on Monday.

The robust sales growth led to the rise in index above the 50-level that separated growth from contraction for the third straight month.

"Levels of new orders and output at Indian manufacturers continued to recover from the COVID-19 induced contractions seen earlier in the year," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit that compiled the index.

Meanwhile, the compliance of government guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a further reduction in employment for the seventh consecutive month.

Amazon announces first fulfillment centre in North Dakota
Amazon announced the plan to open its first fulfillment centre in the US state of North Dakota in Fargo.

The site, which is anticipated to launch in 2021, will create 500 full-time jobs.

At the new 1mn square-foot fulfillment centre, employees will pack and ship large customer purchases such as sports equipment, patio furniture, kayaks, bicycles and other household goods.

"Amazon leverages its scale for good and makes investments to support communities. We thank the local and state leaders for their support," said Alicia Boler Davis, Amazon's vice president of global customer fulfillment.

Oman aims to reduce annual deficit to 1.7% of GDP by 2024

► *Medium-Term Fiscal Plan aims to gradually reduce deficit from an estimated RO4.06bn in 2020 to RO537mn in 2024*

► *Medium-Term Fiscal Plan indicates annual deficits may average over RO5bn if no additional measures are taken*

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The twin shock of the coronavirus pandemic and lower oil prices has placed an urgent spotlight on Oman's fiscal situation and the government has developed a Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (2020-2024) with an objective to reduce the deficits and achieve a fiscal balance in the medium term.

The Medium-Term Fiscal Plan, which will be implemented over the 2020-2024 period, projects the fiscal deficit gradually declining from an estimated RO4.06bn (or 15.8 per cent of GDP) in 2020 to RO537mn (or 1.7 per cent of GDP) in 2024, according to a report released by the Ministry of Finance.

Based on an oil price assumption of US\$58 per barrel, Oman's 2020 state budget initially targeted a deficit of RO2.5bn for this year, a reduction of 7.9 per cent from the previous year's deficit. However, the dual shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and sharp decline in oil prices significantly impacted the govern-

ment's revenues and economic activity since the first quarter of this year.

As per the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan report, Oman's average oil price for the year is now expected to decrease at US\$48 per barrel, sharply reducing oil export revenues for the sultanate. The forecasts in the fiscal plan report indicated that the pandemic will lead to a reduction in the government revenues over the medium term, increasing annual deficits to an average of not less than RO5bn if no additional measures are taken.

The sharp drop in oil prices since 2014 has been a major burden on government finances, directly increasing the budget shortfall. Despite the sultanate's fiscal consolidation efforts in the past few years, Oman's yearly state budgets continued to record deficits at an average of RO3.3bn since 2014 and the cumulative deficit reached at RO20bn by the end of 2019.

To finance the deficits the government relied on borrowing, largely from the international market. As a result of increased



Average oil price for the year is expected to drop at US\$48 per barrel against US\$58 per barrel estimated in the 2020 budget

borrowings, the government's total debt increased from RO1.5bn in 2014 (about 5 per cent of GDP) to RO17.6bn in 2019 (60 per cent of GDP), the report showed.

The Medium-Term Fiscal Plan report noted that the deteriorating revenue situation has impacted Oman's perceived credit risk that led global credit rating agencies to downgrade the sul-

tanate's credit rating by several notches during 2020. 'The speed of the recent downgrades highlights the severity of the fiscal downturn, while the continuing negative outlook suggests addi-

tional downgrades are likely over the next 6-12 months without additional fiscal reforms,' it said.

The sultanate's fiscal balance plan seeks to avoid undertaking measures that could have more severe socioeconomic implications and to avoid reducing Oman's attractiveness as an investment destination.

'The implementation of the fiscal consolidation measures and policies included in the plan will result in some temporary socioeconomic impact. However, the plan will help improve the sultanate's financial position and reduce the public debt and improve the overall credit environment in the country,' the report said.

As per the report, the long-term effects of the plan will create a competitive environment for investments and projects that will lead to jobs and greater domestic and international investment. The plan will help to support the objectives of long term economic growth and improve the living standards for the population of the sultanate.

Khazaen Economic City completes 96% of phase 1

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Khazaen Economic City, Oman's newest integrated economic city, has achieved an important milestone of completing 96 per cent of its phase 1 infrastructure development works.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Khazaen said a successful mitigation plan contributed effectively to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and it has proudly reached this key milestone before the targeted deadline.

The development phase is complemented by a supporting infrastructure works that include a 9.2km internal road network along with 200 street lights, a 22km water supply system, 15km of drain channels with a 5,000 cubic metres water tank, and a 3.3km pipeline crossing ducts for future services besides other supported facilities.

This year Khazaen has rolled



out a package of incentives to stimulate further investments despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. These incentives include exemption from rental fees for certain periods and waiver from some administrative fees. Investors and companies interested in investing in Khazaen Economic City still have the opportunity to avail for these benefits until the end of 2020.

The provision of these incentives and facilities also reflects the efforts exerted by Khazaen to support various government efforts to stimulate the national economy, boost the inward in-

vestments and to attract more companies to invest in the city.

Khalid al Balushi, CEO of Khazaen, said, "We are proud to announce the achievement of this outstanding 96 per cent completion of the phase 1 for one of the most ambitious development projects located in the Governorate of South Batinah. With this development, 3.2mn square metres of leasable lands are opened up for various investors looking to benefit from Oman's unique geo-strategic location, friendly investment climate and economic stability for their sustained growth."

OHB provides RO31mn worth of loans

Muscat - Oman Housing Bank (OHB) revealed that the total number of loans supported by the government and approved by it during the first nine months of this year reached 709, with a value of more than RO31.26mn.

Adnan bin Haider bin Darwish, CEO of OHB, assured that the bank continues to play its pioneering role in developing the housing sector in Oman.

He also noted that the bank's management is focusing on enhancing efforts at the current

stage to reduce the borrower's waiting period.

Moreover, the bank is also working on accelerating the pace of housing loans offered to its customers, who wish to own the right housing with the best banking and administrative service fees currently available in the local market. This contributes to the achievement of the government's vision led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik which revolves around providing adequate housing for Omani citi-

zens.

In a breakdown of the loans approved during the first nine months of 2020 according to the banking and administrative services fees on the loan, the bank indicated that the total loans with 1 per cent fee reached 58 loans worth RO2.12mn, while the loans category with a banking and administrative services fees of 2 per cent received the largest percentage of the total number of loans approved reaching 487 loans worth RO21.15mn.



MSM falls 0.13%, volumes down

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) fell 0.13 per cent to close at 3,547.89 points on Monday.

Trading activity deteriorated from the previous session as turnover declined 56.96 per cent to RO487,076 and volumes fell 25.02 per cent to 3.62mn shares.

While Industrial index rose 0.12 per cent, Financial and Services indices fell 0.26 per cent and 0.2 per cent, respectively. The MSM Shariah index closed down by 0.09 per cent at 515.03 points.

Market breadth remained neutral as six companies closed up, while six companies closed down. The rest 25 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

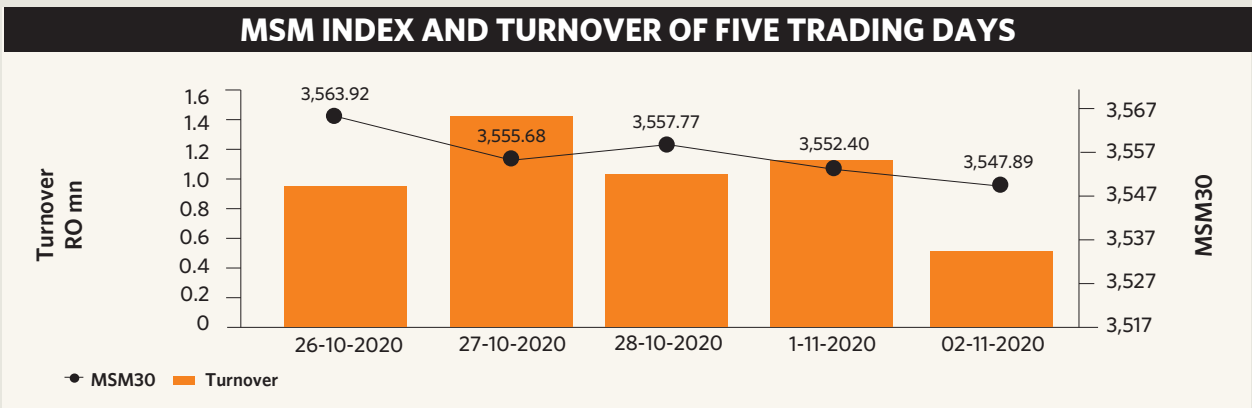
Top gainers were Al Hassan Engineering (14.29 per cent), National Aluminium



Products (3.49 per cent), National Life & General Insurance (2.83 per cent) and Oman Oil Marketing (2.56 per cent).

Top losers were Gulf Investment Serv-

ices (-6.45 per cent), Muscat Finance (-2.56 per cent), Ahli Bank (-1.55 per cent) and Al Omaniya Financial Services (-1.35 per cent).



Shell rebounds into profit in third quarter



London, UK - Anglo-Dutch oil titan Royal Dutch Shell logged third-quarter net profit of US\$489mn, rebounding after a vast coronavirus-driven loss in the prior three months.

Profit after tax for July-September was boosted by steadier oil prices and contrasted with a vast net loss of US\$18.1bn in the second quarter, when Shell was slammed by COVID-19.

Earlier this year, oil prices dropped off a cliff - and even briefly turned negative - as airlines grounded planes worldwide, businesses closed their doors and the world economy tanked into a downturn.

Crude futures also crashed on the back of a vicious price war between key producers Saudi Arabia and Russia.

But in the third quarter, Shell was boosted by a modest recovery in global crude demand and the more stable oil market, having taken a colossal US\$16.8bn charge in April-June.

Crude oil currently stands at just under US\$40 per barrel, still

“Our decisive actions taken earlier in the year have solidified our operational and cash delivery

BEN VAN BEURDEN

below the roughly US\$60 a barrel seen in the third quarter of last year, when the group posted a net profit of US\$5.9bn.

Despite higher prices, the oil market remains depressed by the coronavirus health emergency which has slammed economic growth and savaged the world's appetite for oil.

That has in turn sparked thousands of job losses across the energy sector and beyond.

Shell has already announced that it is seeking to axe up to 9,000 jobs or more than 10 per cent of its global workforce in re-

sponse to fallout from the deadly pandemic.

The company's fierce rival BP, which posted a third quarter net loss of US\$450mn, is in the process of axing about 10,000 jobs or 15 percent of its staff.

“Our decisive actions taken earlier in the year have solidified our operational and cash delivery,” said Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden, who oversees 80,000 staff across more than 70 countries.

“The strength of our performance gives us the confidence to lay out our strategic direction [and] resume dividend growth,” he added.

Shell added that it would increase its shareholder payout by about 4 per cent to 16.65 US cents for the third quarter, and annually thereafter.

The group had stated in September that it was aiming to generate annual savings of between US\$2bn and US\$2.5bn via a massive restructuring drive.

AFP

Nokia doubles profit, pledges ‘to win’ at 5G

Helsinki, Finland - Finnish telecoms equipment maker Nokia more than doubled its profits in the third quarter as its new chief executive promised to do ‘whatever it takes’ to become the 5G market leader.

CEO Pekka Lundmark vowed to beat rivals Ericsson and Huawei in the 5G market.

“In those areas we choose to

compete, we will play to win,” he told reporters. “We will do whatever it takes to lead in 5G and we are ready to invest more.”

Despite a ‘disappointing’ 7 per cent fall in sales, in part due to poor services performance, Nokia posted a €193mn net profit for the three months to September, up from €82mn in

the same period last year.

The operating margin - which measures underlying profit as a proportion of sales - rose to 9.2 per cent from 8.4 per cent a year earlier.

But Nokia downgraded its 2020 outlook, lowering projected earnings per share by two cents to €0.23 in part due to difficulties in the North American

market.

For 2021, operating margin was forecast at between seven and 10 per cent.

“Some of the geopolitical trends are opening up new opportunities,” Lundmark said, adding that progress in 5G product development has been ‘excellent’.

AFP

From hummus to high-tech: Israel CEOs seek ‘friends’, deals in UAE

Dubai, UAE - If you had asked Israeli businessman Yehonatan Ben Hamozeg earlier this year where he'd be pitching his palm tree saving technology in October, there was no chance he would have said the United Arab Emirates.

But after a surprise US-backed normalisation agreement between the UAE and Israel, the entrepreneur found himself doing just that in a Dubai hotel last week.

Ben Hamozeg is the founder and chief executive of Agrint, a company that uses seismic sensors to detect insects that eat - and destroy - palm trees from the inside.

He was one of the 13 business leaders who joined a four-day trip to the UAE organised by Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP), a venture capitalist firm.

Before normalisation, there had been discreet links between the Gulf nation and Israel's flourishing high-tech sector.

But after the deal brokered by US President Donald Trump, those links have come to the surface and are poised to expand.

“We're learning, we're open-



Erel Margalit (front), founder and chairman of Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP), walks with members of Israeli high-tech delegation in Dubai, UAE on October 27 (AFP)

ing our eyes, friendships and personal ties are being formed,” said JVP founder Erel Margalit, who led the Israeli delegation.

He insisted the UAE's potential for Israel's economy is vast, both in terms of direct partnerships in the financial, tech and food sectors, but also as a portal to Arab markets still cut off from the Jewish state.

“Israel can now work with the region rather than being closed to it. For us, it's a huge opportunity,” he said.

“We want to use this breakthrough to start a new chapter in the region.”

With the shroud of secrecy over UAE-Israeli business ties lifted, the delegation, counting several Israeli and foreign reporters, arrived in Dubai by private jet and was welcomed with kosher food and Hebrew signs.

A Palestinian businessman from east Jerusalem, a former Mossad spymaster turned businessman, and a desert crop expert - three men who worked

with the UAE for years - travelled alongside the 13 CEOs, and were key players in setting up the meetings.

Mohamad Mandeel, chief operating officer of Abu Dhabi's Royal Strategic Partners, cited a high-protein chickpea powder made by Israeli firm InnovoPro to illustrate the potential for regional cooperation.

“If I bring a Dutch company and tell them hummus, they'd say - what the hell is this,” Mandeel said using the Arabic word for chickpeas.

While Margalit's delegation was seeking business partners, he stressed that private sector deals were a proven method of solidifying peace among nations.

InnovoPro chief executive Taly Nechushtan, whose product had caught the attention of the Emirati Mandeel, said her powder, which can be used to make foods including ice cream and vegan burgers, was attractive in a world ‘looking for alternatives’.

“We came here to make friends; business will follow,” she said. “We're not worried.”

AFP

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Samsung's net profit jumps after Huawei boost

Seoul, South Korea - Samsung Electronics' net profit jumped by almost half in the third quarter, it reported, as the South Korean giant's mobile and chip businesses were boosted by US sanctions against Chinese rival Huawei.

The world's biggest memory chip maker said profits in July-September climbed 48.8 per cent year-on-year to 9.36tn won (US\$8.3bn), beating expectations according to Bloomberg News.

But the company warned that profits in the current quarter are projected to decline, with chip demand weakening and competition intensifying in the smartphone and consumer electronics market.

The firm is the flagship subsidiary of the giant Samsung Group, by far the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in the world's 12th largest economy, and it is crucial to South Korea's economic health.

The figures come after the burial of late chairman Lee Kun-hee - who turned the firm into a global powerhouse -- and as the coronavirus wreaks havoc with the world economy.

But despite the pandemic hammering many economies, South Korea returned to growth in the third quarter, driven by a better-than-expected exports



performance.

The country is now widely expected to be among the least affected in the OECD group of developed economies in 2020 in terms of economic performance.

Analysts say Samsung's rollout in August of its latest premium smartphones - the Galaxy Note 20 and the Galaxy Z Fold 2 - coupled with strong sales of mid-range phones led the firm's third-quarter performance.

A US ban on foreign companies providing Huawei with US-origin technology, which came into effect on September 15 - cut-

ting off essential supplies of semiconductors and software needed for making smartphones and 5G equipment - also provided a boost.

"Samsung has been quite aggressive in new launches as well as channel strategies, riding on the ongoing anti-China sentiment," Prachir Singh, a senior analyst at market observer Counterpoint, told AFP.

A reduction in marketing costs due to the pandemic was 'also helpful in terms of operating profit' for Samsung, said Sujeong Lim, another analyst at Counter-

point.

The firm's memory business also benefited from the feud after Huawei rushed to stock up on Samsung-made semiconductors before the US restrictions kicked in.

That segment 'posted solid earnings as healthy demand for mobile and PC products led to higher-than-expected shipments, outweighing the impact of lower memory chip prices', the firm said in a statement.

Operating profit rose 58.7 per cent to 12.35tn won. Sales rose 8 per cent to 66.96tn won - a

record for any quarter.

'Significant oversupply'

But the firm's immediate prospects may not be quite so rosy.

Samsung warned its smartphone sales for October-December were expected to decline because of 'subsiding effects from new flagship model launches', while higher marketing spending in the face of intensifying competition 'is also likely to weigh down profit'.

Earlier this year, the firm was

According to analysts, Samsung's rollout in August of its latest premium smartphones - the Galaxy Note 20 and the Galaxy Z Fold 2 - coupled with strong sales of mid-range phones led the company's third quarter performance

dethroned by Huawei from its long-held position as the world's biggest smartphone maker as the Chinese economy recovered from the coronavirus.

Samsung Electronics still leads the global DRAM chip market, with a 43.5 per cent share in April-June according to market researcher TrendForce.

Server DRAM chips enjoyed a boost as the pandemic prompted working from home and online classes - but were now experiencing 'significant oversupply', it said in a report.

"Therefore, contract prices of

server DRAM products continue to descend to new lows', it went on, forecasting a 13-18 per cent drop in the fourth quarter.

Lim at Counterpoint said, "The situation in the semiconductor market including servers market is likely not so good, thus there is a lot of uncertainty. Server demand is also decreasing."

"Also, as the supply for Huawei has been suspended, it may take some time for Samsung to find another client to make up for the lost business," Lim added.

Samsung Electronics' chairman Lee Kun-hee died on October 25, six years after being left bedridden by a heart attack, when his son and heir Lee Jae-yong took over as de facto leader, although officially he has remained vice-chairman.

The family face the prospect of paying billions of dollars in inheritance taxes.

Complicating the firm's succession plans, the son is currently being retried over a sprawling corruption scandal that could see him return to prison.

He is not being held in custody during the proceedings but a guilty verdict could deprive the firm of its top decision-maker.

AFP



London's transport system secures £1.8bn govt bailout

London, UK - London's transport system said on Sunday it has secured a bailout from the government worth nearly £2bn, following weeks of politically-charged wrangling as the coronavirus continues to decimate revenues.

Transport for London (TfL), which runs the British capital's public transport network, said the deal worth £1.8bn would enable it to keep operating services until the end of March 2021.

It comes as England prepares to enter a second national lockdown from Thursday for four weeks, with people ordered to

stay at home except in cases where exemptions apply, such as for work, education or exercise.

TfL said the exact amount of money it will get from the ruling Conservative government would be subject to passenger revenue in the coming months.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan, from the opposition Labour party, had for weeks been opposing raising fares and making other changes in exchange for the funding boost.

He said it was not 'a perfect deal' but that he had succeeded in 'killing off the very worst government proposals'.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps described the agreement as 'fair to taxpayers across the country'.

Last month Prime Minister Boris Johnson claimed TfL was 'effectively bankrupted' before the coronavirus pandemic, and proposals to hike charges were 'entirely the responsibility' of Khan.

The government pumped £1.6bn into the system in May to restore services and help prevent overcrowding as people returned to work when the first national shutdown was eased.

AFP

LVMH, Tiffany finally seal merger

Paris, France - French luxury giant LVMH and US jeweller Tiffany buried the hatchet in their bitter takeover battle, agreeing to lower the price of the merger so that it can finally go ahead.

Tiffany agreed to accept a lower price from LVMH in order to seal a deal that had been closed to collapsing, the French group said in a statement.

'LVMH, the world's leading luxury products group, and Tiffany, the global luxury jeweller, announced that they have concluded an agreement modifying certain terms of their initial agreement to reflect a purchase price of US\$131.50 [per share] in cash and to reduce closing conditionality,' the statement said.

'Other key terms of the merger agreement remain unchanged.'

Previously, the price of the deal had been set at US\$135 per share.

At the revised share price, the value of the deal will be around US\$15.77bn, a decline of about US\$425mn based on Tiffany's share count in US securities documents.

The parent to luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dior and



Moet & Chandon, LVMH announced its plan to acquire Tiffany and its iconic robin's egg blue gift boxes at the end of 2019.

But the French company

walked away from its proposal last month after claiming a series of poor decisions by Tiffany's board since the deal was unveiled late last year.

Tiffany has said there was no

valid basis to call off the deal and lodged a complaint in a Delaware court, while LVMH responded with a counter-claim.

The US court has set a trial date of January 5, 2021, while a judge in Delaware has urged talks between the parties to avoid litigation.

"This balanced agreement with Tiffany's board allows LVMH to work on the Tiffany acquisition with confidence and resume discussions with Tiffany's management on the integration details," said LVMH chief executive Bernard Arnault.

"We are as convinced as ever of the formidable potential of the Tiffany brand and believe that LVMH is the right home for Tiffany and its employees during this exciting next chapter."

Tiffany's board chairman Roger Farah said, "We are very pleased to have reached an agreement with LVMH at an attractive price and to now be able to proceed with the merger. The board concluded it was in the best interests of all of our stakeholders to achieve certainty of closing."

The deal is expected to be closed in January.

AFP

China's central bank injects liquidity

Beijing, China - China's central bank pumped cash into the banking system through open market operations to maintain liquidity Monday.

The People's Bank of China injected 50bn yuan (about US\$7.46bn) into the market through seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 2.2 per cent, according to a statement on its website.

The move was intended to maintain reasonably ample liquidity in the banking system, the People's Bank of



China said.

A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commer-

cial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

Xinhua

VW steers back to profit in third quarter

Frankfurt, Germany - German auto giant Volkswagen (VW) said that, while its business was impacted heavily by the coronavirus pandemic this year, it managed to steer back to profit in the third quarter and still expected to end the year in the black.

'The Volkswagen group's business was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the first nine months of 2020, but recovered noticeably in the third quarter,' Europe's biggest car maker said in a statement.

'This means that the declines in deliveries, sales revenue and profit as of the end of September were significantly more moderate than at the half-year mark.'

VW, whose brands include



Porsche, Audi and Skoda, said that it booked net profit of €2.8bn in the three months to

September, compared with a loss of €1.5bn in the preceding quarter.

On a 12-month basis, third-quarter net profit was down by 31 per cent.

Underlying or operating profit fell by 30 per cent year-on-year to €3.1bn and revenues slipped by 3.4 per cent to €59.4bn in the July-September period.

In terms of unit sales, VW said it sold 2.6mn vehicles worldwide in the third quarter, 1.1 per cent fewer than in the corresponding period a year earlier.

"The clear recovery trend in the third quarter shows how robustly our company is positioned," said finance chief Frank Witter.

"Depending on the future

course of the pandemic, we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to continue to stabilise our business in the remaining months of the year and to put the Volkswagen group on a sustainably firm footing for the future."

Looking ahead to the full year, VW said it expects deliveries to customers to be 'significantly down' on the previous year in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Overall, the Volkswagen group anticipates the operating result for 2020 before and including special items to be severely lower than in previous year, however, in positive territory.'

AFP

Will watch US actions, not poll results: Iran

Iran’s chief justice slams any attempt to tie the country’s economy to who is going to be the US president

Tehran, Iran - Iran’s Foreign Ministry said on Monday it will focus on the ‘actions’ of the new US administration rather than who wins the White House, a day before Americans vote.

“Our position is clear: We do not look at (what happens) tomorrow, we will be watching the approach of the new US administration, whichever party it’s from,” ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

“More than the result of the election, we will pay attention to the actions [of whoever is president],” he added.

Since unilaterally withdrawing from a landmark nuclear deal with Tehran and world powers in 2018, the Republican administration of President Donald Trump has re-imposed - and extended - crippling sanctions on Iran.

Trump’s Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, has said he wants to use the 2015 nuclear accord - a pact hammered out when he was vice president under Barack Obama - as a ‘starting-point for follow-on negotiations’ with Tehran.

Iranian officials have repeatedly said they favour no specific candidate in the race, while also



Former Special Envoy to Iran Brian Hook (fourth from the left) takes a photo of Marine One landing as he waits with other visitors for US President Donald Trump to depart the White House, in Washington, DC, on October 30 (AFP)



Iran has stated that it neither has any interest in interfering in the US election nor does it think interference would benefit anyone

SAEED KHATIBZADEH

calling for a return to the nuclear accord, the lifting of sanctions and compensation for damages caused.

“What is clear is that both

parties have realised the extent of the failure of their policies [regarding Iran],” Khatibzadeh added, referring to the Republican and Democratic parties, and emphasising that the ‘framework for talks’ is the nuclear deal.

Iran’s chief justice Ebrahim Raisi on Monday slammed any attempt to tie ‘the country’s markets and economy to who is going to be the president on the other side of the world’.

“America’s arrogant nature does not change with Republicans or Democrats [being in power],” he was quoted as saying by the judiciary’s news agency Mizan Online. Raisi added that ‘the message of the Iranian people’s fight against the US... is distrust of the US’.

US intelligence last month accused both Iran and Russia of trying to interfere in the 2020 election, charges which Tehran has strongly denied.

Tehran ‘has repeatedly stated that it neither has any interest in interfering in the US election nor does it think interference would be to anyone’s benefit’, Khatibzadeh said, calling US allegations ‘baseless’.

AFP

Tanzanian opposition leader arrested ahead of protest

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - Tanzanian police has arrested the chairman of the main opposition party Chadema as well as other top leaders, ahead of planned protests on Monday against an election the party said was rigged.

Chadema and fellow opposition party ACT-Wazalendo rejected results which saw President John Magufuli win a second term with 84 per cent of results and his ruling party take 97 per cent of seats in parliament.

Chadema chairman Freeman Mbowe had called for country-wide protests from Monday as well as fresh elections.

“We have arrested Mbowe, he is in our hands,” said Dar es Salaam police chief Lazaro Mambosasa, adding six other top members of the party were also under arrest.

“On top of these protests which we banned, they wanted to incite the vandalism of buildings, burn petrol stations, markets and public transport vehicles,” he said.

“Any person implicated in the planning of illegal protests will be arrested and will face justice.”

Chadema’s presidential candidate Tundu Lissu won only 13 per cent of the vote, after de-



This file photo shows Tanzanian opposition leader Freeman Mbowe after his release from prison on March 14 (AFP)

The door is closed for us to challenge the presidential results in court, and that is why we have decided to take this to the people, who have the power

TUNDU LISSU

nouncing widespread fraud and intimidation of the opposition during the election and following years of repression and jailing of government opponents.

Lissu, who returned to Tanzania in July after three years abroad recovering from 16 bullet wounds sustained in an assassi-

nation attempt, said his party’s agents had been kicked out of polling stations and ballot boxes had been stuffed.

The result of presidential elections cannot be contested in Tanzania although the parliamentary outcome can be challenged. “The door is closed for us

to challenge the presidential results in court, and that is why we have decided to take this to the people, who have the power,” Lissu said.

Magufuli was first elected in 2015, and alarm has grown over his slide into autocracy amid a crackdown on the opposition and the media.

In semi-autonomous Zanzibar, which also elects its own president, the opposition’s presidential candidate was arrested twice last week and attempts to protest were quickly and brutally crushed by security forces.

AFP

Two children rescued days after deadly earthquake in Turkey

Bayrakli, Turkey - Rescuers pulled two children from the rubble in a town in western Turkey on Monday, nearly three days after a powerful earthquake hit the Aegean, killing 85 people.

Three year old Elif Perincek was rescued 65 hours after the 7.0-magnitude quake struck Turkey and Greece on Friday, the Turkish emergency authority AFAD said.

Local media showed a video of a little girl wrapped up in a foil blanket quickly taken to safety in the coastal town of Bayrakli - the hardest hit by the disaster - as rescue workers broke into applause.

“I’m so happy, God bless you. I’m reunited with Elif,” her grandmother said, quoted by state broadcaster TRT. “My prayers were answered.”

Elif was the 106th person pulled out alive from collapsed buildings in Bayrakli, which included her mother and three siblings the day before.

But her rescued brother later died, TRT reported.

AFAD also reported the rescue of 14 year old Idil Sirin in Bayrakli, 58 hours after the quake hit, levelling buildings in



Rescuers are at work during the ongoing search operation at the site of a collapsed building, in the city of Izmir on Monday (AFP)

both Turkey and Greece.

But the family’s joy was brief as the lifeless body of Idil’s sister, Ipek, was found, the *Hurriyet* newspaper reported.

“I can’t hear any sounds from my sister, she’s dead,” Idil told rescuers as she was being pulled out, *Hurriyet* said.

Turkey’s toll from the quake is continuing to rise, with Environment Minister Murat Kurum reporting 83 dead.

Nearly 1,000 people were injured, with over 200 still in hospital.

Two teenagers were also killed on their way home from

school on the Greek island of Samos, near the epicentre of the quake.

Racing against time, search and rescue workers are still on a desperate search to try to find people alive in the rubble in Bayrakli.

Thousands of residents, including those whose homes collapsed, spent a third night outside in tents in Bayrakli and nearby Bornova, as many feared the risk of aftershocks.

AFAD said there had been 1,148 aftershocks, including 43 above magnitude four.

AFP

Palm climbers: An ancient profession in Iraq struggles for survival

Jaliha, Iraq - Under the autumn Iraqi sun, Abbas Abbud expertly scrambles up the ragged trunk of the palm tree. His mission? Picking the juicy dates overhead, and keeping this ancient profession alive.

At 48, he is the last of several generations of ‘palm climbers’, the nickname given to the community that has harvested southern Iraq’s date palms for the past 6,000 years.

But decades of back-to-back wars, climate change and little support for farming communities have turned Iraq’s iconic date palms and their harvesters into a rare breed.

“We spend more than ten days on one palm field, but in recent years the numbers of trees

and fields have decreased, affecting our jobs,” says Abbud.

Every year, from October to December, he climbs into a harness, machete in hand, to slash dates from palms up to 23m tall.

Cutting one palm earns him a mere 2,000 Iraqi dinars, or less than two US dollars.

With poverty rates expected to reach 40 per cent this year, Abbud can’t afford to skip the date season in Iraq’s farming heartland of Diwaniyah province.

One of his biggest clients is the Kariz family, which owns some 4,000 palms of different varieties.

“Ever since I can remember, we’ve had vast date fields,” says Herban Kariz (69), the family patriarch.

He strolls through rows of palms, under which workers have placed large stretches of tarp to catch the bouquets of yellow and caramel-coloured dates cut from tree tops.

“We always held reunions for the harvest - it’s been a family tradition since childhood,” he tells AFP.

Under former dictator Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi state purchased dates from farmers at a price higher than the market rates, then packaged, marketed and exported them as far afield as the United States.

The era is remembered as the golden age of Iraq’s date industry.

Today, palms number less than half of the 30mn that dotted



Neglected date palm trees at a farm in the southern Iraqi city of Basra (AFP)

the country just two decades ago, says Mohammed Kashash, the head of Diwaniyah’s farming cooperatives.

He blames the virtually ceaseless armed conflicts in Iraq, a struggling economy and insufficient government support.

“As the state doesn’t support us, production and sales are down,” Kashash tells AFP.

Iraqi farmers say they can no longer compete on the world market, where mass-produced dates from the Gulf packaged as luxury items are sold for around US\$3,500 per tonne.

With local production so low, Iraq is faced with a reality its farmers would have never imagined: Imported dates.

Varieties from the Gulf or Iran

have flooded Iraq’s markets, frustrating local producers and pickers.

“We demand the state establish new processing plants and revive the old ones to package the dates,” Kashash says.

For palm climber Abbud, the important thing is being able to climb, cut and return to the ground safe and sound.

Last year, his father died after falling from a palm tree, but Abbud chose to carry on the family tradition as a cutter, even as the industry falters.

Now, sitting comfortably atop a date tree, he looks out over a golden sun setting over endless Iraqi palms - and perhaps on his inherited livelihood.

AFP

16 dead after Typhoon Goni batters Philippines east coast

Manila, Philippines - The most powerful typhoon to hit the Philippines this year destroyed tens of thousands of homes and killed at least 16 people, officials said on Monday, as communications to the worst-hit areas remained cut off.

Catanduanes Island and nearby Albay province on the most populous island of Luzon bore the brunt of Typhoon Goni which was packing maximum sustained wind speeds of 225km per hour when it slammed into the east coast on Sunday.

Ferocious winds and torrential rain toppled power lines, triggered flooding and sparked landslides that engulfed houses as Goni swept across the southern part of Luzon. It lost intensity as it skirted the sprawling capital of Manila and headed out to the South China Sea.

"We are horrified by the devastation caused by this typhoon in many areas including Catanduanes island and Albay," Philippines Red Cross chief Richard Gordon said in a statement.

"Up to 90 per cent of homes have been badly damaged or destroyed in some areas. This typhoon has smashed into people's lives and livelihoods on top of the relentless physical, emotional and economic toll of COVID-19."

Around 400,000 people fled their homes ahead of the typhoon and most of them remain in evacuation centres as authorities scramble to restore power and telecommunications services in the hardest-hit areas.

Ten deaths were recorded in Albay province, but provincial disaster chief Cedric Daep said without pre-emptive evacuations



Residents clean their homes following flooding after Typhoon Goni, in Batangas City, south of the Philippine capital Manila on Monday (AFP)

'thousands would have died'.

"We have extensive damage to infrastructure and housing," Daep said. "Many people are hungry. They had already suffered from COVID due to the loss of jobs and dislocation. Some don't even have kitchen utensils."

'Severely affected'

Three of the victims were caught in landslides of volcanic ash that police said engulfed numerous houses in two adjacent villages near the active Mayon volcano.

Another three are still missing.

The mayor of Guinobatan, where the villages are located, told local media that around 147 homes had been swamped and some were now uninhabitable.

Goni was ranked as a 'super typhoon' when it made landfall on Catanduanes where at least six people died and authorities estimate most houses and infrastructure were damaged or destroyed.

"We are severely affected here," provincial Governor Joseph Cua said.

Across the areas in Goni's path, more than 20,000 houses were destroyed and around 55,500 partially damaged, Civil Defense said in a statement. Farmland was also damaged.

Clean-up efforts were under way with residents removing sodden furniture and other belongings from their houses as they shovelled out mud and debris after heavy rains inundated towns.

"The flood took only minutes to rise - not hours, but minutes," Alona Espino in Batangas city,

south of Manila, told AFP.

"We never experienced flood raging so fast."

The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons every year, which typically wipe out harvests, homes and infrastructure, keeping millions of people perennially poor.

Its deadliest on record was Super Typhoon Haiyan, which unleashed giant waves on the central city of Tacloban and left more than 7,300 people dead or missing in 2013.

AFP

Eight wounded as gunmen storm Kabul University

Kabul, Afghanistan - At least eight people were wounded when gunmen stormed Kabul University on Monday during an Iranian book fair, firing shots and sending students fleeing, Afghan officials and witnesses said.

"The enemies of Afghanistan, the enemies of education... have entered Kabul University," Tariq Arian, a spokesman for the ministry of interior, told reporters.

"The security forces are in the area trying to control the situation. They are advancing carefully to prevent any harm to the students."

The Taliban said they were not involved, but several education centres have been attacked over the years by extremist groups such as Islamic State (IS).

Hamid Obaidi, a spokesman for the ministry of higher education, said gunfire erupted when government officials were expected to arrive for the opening of the book event. Arian said several people had been rescued from the university campus.

Masooma Jafari, a deputy spokeswoman for the Health Ministry, told AFP that eight people, including students and teachers, had been taken to hospital.

Students spoke of chaos and confusion as gunfire erupted.

"We were studying inside our classrooms when suddenly we heard a burst of gunfire inside the university," said student Fraidoon Ahmadi (23). "Some university students have fled... it is chaotic and students are terrified."

Ahmadi said he and several other students were besieged for more than two hours before being rescued.

"We were very scared and we thought it could be the last day of our lives... boys and girls were shouting, praying and crying for



A man, wounded in the university attack, arrives at Isteqlal Hospital in Kabul on Monday (AFP)

The security forces are in the area trying to control the situation. They are advancing carefully to prevent any harm to the students

TARIQ ARIAN

help," Ahmadi said

"I have no words to express how we survived today's attack by gunmen on our university," he said, adding that there were about 800 students in the social sciences faculty itself where he studied.

Last week at least 24 people, mostly students, were killed in a suicide attack on an educational centre in western Kabul that was claimed by IS.

In 2018 a suicide bomber killed dozens of people, many of them teenagers, in front of Kabul University in an attack also claimed by IS.

AFP

S Korean comedian found dead with her mother

Seoul, South Korea - A prominent South Korean comedian was found dead at her home in Seoul on Monday alongside her mother, multiple reports said.

The bodies of Park Ji-sun (36) and her mother were found by police, Yonhap news agency reported.

Park was reportedly being treated for an unspecified illness and the *Seoul Shinmun* newspaper cited a police officer as saying there were 'no signs of outside intrusion or murder'.

Suicide is a chronic social problem in highly competitive South Korea and the leading cause of death for people aged between ten and 39, according to government data. More than 13,700 people took their own lives last year.

Park was a graduate of the elite Korea University, where she studied education, but charmed audiences with her down-to-earth and self-deprecating humour - often light-heartedly playing the role of a woman repeatedly rejected on a date.

"I am lucky as a comedian that I can use my face to make people laugh," she had said in an interview with the *Hankyoreh* newspaper.

AFP

On edge, US enters final day of campaign

Washington, US - The US presidential campaign enters its final day on Monday with a last-minute scramble for votes by Donald Trump and Joe Biden, drawing to a close an extraordinary race that has put a pandemic-stricken country on edge.

But while campaigning will halt and voters will have their say on Tuesday, many questions remain over how soon a result will be known due to a flood of mail-in ballots and possible legal challenges.

Those factors, along with an unprecedented convergence of social justice protests, coronavirus precautions and President Trump's fear-mongering campaign, have led to apprehension over whether unrest could erupt.

Taking no chances, businesses in some cities have boarded up windows, while across the country the harsh political climate has led to fierce debate, in some cases even dividing families.

As proof of how much Americans have been galvanized - and perhaps frightened by the pandemic - a record of more than 93mn people have cast early ballots, including in-person and mailed votes, according to the nonpartisan US Elections Project.

As the hours count down on Monday and with polls showing him behind, Trump will repeat his marathon performance from the previous day with another set of five rallies in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Biden will also be in Pennsylvania - including for a drive-in rally with pop star Lady Gaga - as well as in Cleveland, Ohio.



Supporters watch as Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden speaks during a drive-in rally in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Sunday (AFP)

In two days, we can put an end to a presidency that has divided this nation. It's time to stand up, take back our democracy

JOE BIDEN

Seeking to energize Democrats and prevent a 2016-like surprise, Barack Obama will appear in Georgia before holding an election eve rally in Miami.

'Talk of the world'

On Sunday, Trump and Biden drove home their closing arguments - and the president said his supporters would again shock

the world.

In Georgia, wearing his familiar red campaign hat, the 74-year-old Republican said, "It's going to be the talk of the world."

Wrapping up a long day, he held a rally that didn't begin until shortly before midnight in Opa-locka, Florida, a crucial state for him which polls show is a tossup.

Crowds there chanted 'fire

Fauci' - referring to the widely respected government infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci, who has drawn White House anger over his outspokenness on the need to do more to rein in COVID-19.

"Don't tell anybody, but let me wait until a little bit after the election," Trump said in response.

Biden set a very different pace, beginning the day attending Mass with his wife Jill at a Catholic church near their home in Wilmington, Delaware.

Afterward, at a drive-in rally in Philadelphia, the 77 year old former vice president said, "In two days, we can put an end to a presidency that has divided this

nation. It's time to stand up, take back our democracy."

Poll warnings

Nationally, polls have consistently put Biden well ahead, and a RealClearPolitics average of surveys had him up 7.2 percentage points on Sunday. But there have been repeated warnings from both camps that the polls could be wrong - like in 2016.

Trump has held an exhausting string of raucous rallies with crowds pressed together, many of them without masks.

Biden has held far fewer rallies with much more caution - usually socially distanced drive-up gatherings - and has taken care

to wear a mask.

That decision has resulted in mockery from Trump, playing down the dangerousness of the virus even though he was hospitalised over it.

The former reality show star and real estate mogul has called for businesses and schools to reopen, talking up signs of an economic recovery though economists say underlying factors are tenuous.

Biden has embraced the criticism and doubled down, repeatedly hammering away at the President's 'almost criminal' handling of the pandemic, saying it had cost tens of thousands of lives. The virus has been resurgent across the country, with more than 230,000 dead since the start of the pandemic.

'Steal this election'

Fears of tensions on election night and afterward were further stoked by a report that Trump could declare victory prematurely.

The Axios news site reported Sunday that Trump has told confidants he would declare victory on Tuesday night if it looks like he's ahead.

Trump called it a 'false report' but repeated his argument that 'I don't think it's fair that we have to wait for a long period of time after the election'.

He has repeatedly claimed, without evidence, that mail-in ballots are open to fraud, warning of 'bedlam' if no clear winner emerges quickly.

Asked about the report, Biden said, "The President is not going to steal this election."

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

New curbs in Europe as exasperation grows

Berlin, Germany - Germany on Monday led a further tightening of coronavirus restrictions in Europe that have triggered anger and frustration across the continent, while the COVID-19 crisis in the United States deepened.

The virus has infected more than 46mn people worldwide, with close to 1.2mn deaths, and the acute outbreaks in Europe and America sparking further alarm about the state of the already devastated global economy.

To curb the spike in Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel has ordered a round of shutdowns from Monday until the end of the month.

Germans will not be confined to their homes, but bars, cafes and restaurants must close, as well as theatres, operas and cinemas.

The sadness was palpable at the renowned Bavarian State Opera House in Munich as it prepared to close.

It is 'a slap', said baritone Michael Nagy, unable to hide his tears.

England prepared for fresh stay-at-home orders, following in the steps of Austria, France and Ireland, with many expressing anxiety about the economic cost of the four-week shutdown due to take effect from Thursday.

Tighter lockdown rules also began on Monday for Belgium, which has the most COVID-19 cases per capita in the world. Portugal, too, has ordered a partial lockdown starting on Wednesday.

And in France, Prime Minister Jean Castex said supermarkets would be barred from selling 'non-essential' items from Tuesday to protect small shopkeepers who have been forced to close.

Spain has already imposed a nighttime curfew, and almost all of its regions have implemented regional border closures to prevent long-distance travel.

The Italian government is expected to announce new restrictions on Monday, according to news reports, with the health minister pushing for a country-wide lockdown.

Anger and protests

The ongoing tightening of virus rules and restrictions has sparked anger in people weary of confinement and the painful economic costs.

That frustration has led to protests in many parts of the world, especially Europe, with



A man passes by a closed cinema with a board displaying 'Without art and culture it's getting quiet', amid the fresh spread of COVID-19, in Stuttgart, southern Germany, on Monday (AFP)

The virus has infected over 46mn people worldwide, with close to 1.2mn deaths, and the acute outbreaks in Europe and America sparking further alarm

some leading to violent skirmishes with police.

Protesters in several Spanish cities clashed with security forces for a second night on Saturday, police said, with vandalism and looting breaking out in some parts.

There has already been vio-

lence in several Italian cities, as well as Czech capital Prague recently.

The unrest over restrictions has not been limited to Europe.

Riots took place in several Argentinian jails on Saturday, as prisoners demanded the resumption of visits during the pandemic.

'A whole lot of hurt'

The health situation is also deteriorating in the United States, which is gearing up for the election showdown between President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden on Tuesday.

It is the worst-affected country in the world with 9.2mn infections and more than 230,000 deaths, and the pandemic has been front and centre during the bitter election campaign. With cases surging again,

experts have warned of more devastation.

Top government scientist Anthony Fauci told the Washington Post in an interview that the US is 'in for a whole lot of hurt'.

In Mexico, parades were cancelled and cemeteries closed on Sunday during the Day of the Dead festival, in which people normally deck their homes, streets and relatives' graves with flowers, candles and colourful skulls.

Many remembered those who have passed in the privacy of their homes, as authorities urged people to avoid gatherings.

Janet Burgos decorated an altar with confetti, fruit and a photograph of her mother Rosa Maria, who died in June aged 64 from suspected COVID-19. AFP

WHO chief in quarantine after contact tests positive

Geneva, Switzerland - The World Health Organization (WHO) chief said late on Sunday that he was self-quarantining after someone he had been in contact with tested positive for COVID-19, but stressed he had no symptoms.

'I have been identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for #COVID19,' Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a tweet. 'I am well and without symptoms but will self-quarantine over the coming days, in line with @WHO protocols, and work from home.'

Tedros has been at the forefront of the United Nations health agency's efforts to battle the pandemic. COVID-19 has claimed nearly 1.2mn lives and infected over 46mn people worldwide since emerging in China late last year.

'Suppress the virus'

Tedros stressed on Twitter that 'it is critically important that we all comply with health guidance'.

"This is how we will break chains of #COVID19 transmission, suppress the virus, and protect health systems."

The 55 year old former Ethiopian minister of health and foreign affairs has for months reiterated that each person has a role to play in halting the spread of the virus.

The WHO urges all individuals to be careful about hand-washing, wearing masks and keeping a distance, while it calls on authorities at various levels to work to find, isolate, test and care for cases, then trace and quarantine their contacts.



WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at a special session on the COVID-19 response, in Geneva on October 5 (AFP)

I have been identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for #COVID19. I am well and without symptoms but will self-quarantine

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

His comments came as there is growing anger and exasperation over new coronavirus curbs as several European nations wound back the clocks to the spring with fresh lockdowns and restrictions aimed at halting galloping infections and deaths.

European governments are desperate to stem the worrying spike in infections.

The continent has registered more than 279,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Geneva, where WHO is headquartered, declared a fresh state of emergency on Sunday and said it would go beyond Swiss national measures and

shut down all bars, restaurants and non-essential shops.

Authorities in the region of some 500,000 people said the new measures were needed due to surging cases - with more than 1,000 positive daily tests in recent days - and also ballooning numbers of COVID-19 patients in Geneva hospitals and emergency care units.

The health situation is also deteriorating in the United States, which under President Donald Trump has become one of the harshest critics of WHO and its leader over the COVID-19 response.

AFP

Britain's Prince William caught virus in April, reports UK media

London, UK - Prince William, second-in-line to the British throne, contracted coronavirus in April but kept his diagnosis secret, media reported on Monday.

The *Sun* newspaper said the Duke of Cambridge (38) was diagnosed shortly after his father, heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, announced he had caught the virus in late March.

But he did not make the diagnosis public 'because he didn't want to alarm the nation', the tabloid said.

The BBC also reported the story, quoting a palace source.

William's Kensington Palace office would not confirm the reports when contacted by AFP but also did not



Prince William during his visit to St Bartholomew's Hospital, in London on October 20 (AFP)

deny they were true. "There were important things going on and I didn't want to worry anyone," the prince was reported to have told a guest at an engagement, adding he was 'determined it should be business as usual'.

Palace doctors treated the

prince, who isolated at the family home in Norfolk, eastern England, where he carried out telephone and video call engagements, said the Sun.

It quoted an unnamed source as saying that 'William was hit pretty hard by the virus - it really knocked him for six'.

"At one stage he was struggling to breathe, so obviously everyone around him was pretty panicked," the source added.

Charles went into self-isolation after announcing on March 25 he had mild symptoms of the virus, which has claimed almost 47,000 lives in Britain.

AFP

Peru's Machu Picchu reopens after eight months of lockdown

Lima, Peru - The Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, the crown jewel of Peru's tourist sites, reopened on Sunday with an ancient ritual after a nearly eight-month lockdown due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

For safety reasons, however, only 675 tourists will be able to access the site per day, just 30 percent of the number of visitors pre-pandemic. Under a fine drizzle and multicolored lights, an Inca ritual was held Sunday evening to thank the gods for the citadel's reopening.

"Today, Machu Picchu opens. It opens with (health and safety) protocols, it opens to say that we are reactivating ourselves but with responsibility and great prudence, because

we see everything happening in the world [with the pandemic]," Foreign Trade and Tourism Minister Rocio Barrios said.

The first train of tourists, along with an AFP team, had arrived on Sunday morning at Machu Picchu Pueblo, the village closest to the citadel, after a 90-minute journey along the Urubamba River from the ancient Inca village of Ollantaytambo.

Opening Machu Picchu to the world shows 'that we Peruvians are resilient', Barrios said.

The number of coronavirus cases has been steadily decreasing in Peru, and tourists will be expected to maintain social distancing.

The coronavirus lockdown



The archaeological site of Machu Picchu during its reopening ceremony, in Peru's Cusco on Sunday (AFP)

has been a body blow to the tens of thousands of people who make their living from the country's tourism industry, especially those in the mountainous Cusco region where the stone citadel is located.

Scores of hotels, restaurants and tourism-related businesses throughout the region went bankrupt by the time a strict mandatory virus lockdown that lasted more than 100 days was lifted in July. Taxi driver Eberth Hanco, who works at the airport of the city of Cusco, the former capital of the Inca empire, was among those affected.

"The situation has been very bad, because Cusco depends on tourism," he told AFP.

Before the pandemic there

were 80 hotels of various types in Ollantaytambo, a town with an imposing Inca stone fortress located at the end of the road from Cusco to Machu Picchu.

"At least half of them have gone bankrupt," said Joaquin Randall, head of the local hotel and restaurant association.

"The formal hotels that pay taxes have been able to access government aid," he said - but not so for the myriad of informal hotels in the area, many of them geared towards backpackers.

Machu Picchu is the most enduring legacy of the Inca empire that ruled a large swathe of western South America for 100 years before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century.

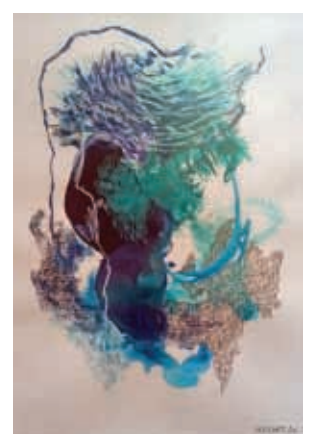
AFP



ART FOR CHANGE OF HEART

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said opens 'Coastline - Community and Conservation,' an exhibition of paintings by Joana Mollet, a British-Portuguese artist in Muscat, at Bait al Baranda. The exhibition draws attention to the problem of beach litter and projects a fervent plea for changing habits and mindsets in a bid to protect the environment. *Masirah* - the painting on the right being signed by H H Sayyid Theyazin - will be auctioned by online bidding, the proceeds of which will go towards the Environment Society of Oman. Here are some of the paintings on display, including the first installation of a wadi mat created with beach litter.

Photos: Syed Fasiuddin





MAKE-UP

FOUNDATION FACTS

Good make-up begins with a good foundation. Foundation is the key beauty product that creates a base upon which you construct your entire make-up look. There is a wide array of foundation products, some differ in texture, others vary in consistency.

It is important to understand the difference between foundation types to find the best match for one's skin and complexion. One should choose the appro-

priate base of make-up that best suits one's skin type. Also, never swatch your foundation on your wrist to test the shade, you will probably end up buying a wrong shade of foundation. Check out these four types of make-up foundation:

Mousse foundation

Mousse foundations are extremely light in weight and considered ideal for beginners who find dealing with other founda-

tions a bit messier. Due to its fluffy texture, this foundation tends to give a matte look and a weightless feel.

Powder foundation

Powder foundation is ideal for those who need to spend a lot of time outdoors and get little time for touch up before meeting people. These are convenient and effortless to apply. Just like compact cakes, these come in a flat box with a

mirror and sponge. Great for those with oily skin.

Stick foundation

Stick foundation comes in a creamy texture and is great to cover blemishes. One can always carry this to parties for fixing under-eye pigmentations, blemishes, and all other types of imperfections quickly by just using fingers. Ideal for those who have combination skin types.

Multipurpose cream-based foundation

Known as blemish balms or a colour correcting creams, these have become popular recently. Cream based foundations provide minimal coverage along with protection against harmful sun rays. They have a light, creamy formula that evens the skin tones and moisturises the upper layer of the face. They work well with a variety of skin types.



Lipstick Tricks

Applying lipstick can be a cakewalk for most ladies, but for some, it is more than a nightmare as someone or the other in the party would end up commenting on how badly it was done. The truth is, this key make-up task is not as easy as it seems – there are right ways of doing it so that they do not get messy as well as stay on long. Here are two tricks to master this skill:

METHOD 1 (Applying lipstick without lip liner)

In case you don't have a lip liner in your make-up box, don't fret because there exists a secret to applying lipstick perfectly, without using a liner.

Step 1: Use your finger

Rub your ring finger into the lip colour of your choice and press this finger directly onto your lips moving along the natural lip line. This way you achieve

precision without a liner.

Step 2: Finish the look

For the interiors of your lips, finish off by applying the colour either directly from your lipstick tube or using a lip brush. This trick also comes handy when you are in a rush.

Let's look at some other simple tricks to help you achieve lipstick that is so on point.

METHOD 2 (For dark lips)

If you have dark, pigmented or discoloured lips, with a few simple hacks, you can still conquer your lip colour. Do not shy away from light colours or sheer pinks because these tricks do work if you just put in some effort.

Step 1: Conceal

The key here is to neutralise pigmented lips using a concealer that exactly matches your skin tone. Where

there's darkness, there's always concealer, so it's not odd to use one for your lips. You will be amazed at the difference it makes.

Step 2: Add some extra coverage

If a little concealer wasn't of much help, you can dot a little more of the product onto your lips till you achieve your desired effect.

Step 3: Line your lip

Use a lip liner that goes with the lipstick colour and carefully line your natural lip line making a cross or an 'X' right under the cupid's bow to enhance the shape of your lips.

Step 4: Layer the lipstick on

Apply your lipstick in layers if required. Use a non-glossy formula for better results. Also, those have a much greater staying power than creamy or glossy lipsticks.