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ISSN 2075-1575



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TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 2021
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OMAN EYE WIN AGAINST BANGLADESH

GO TO **PAGE 16 SPORTS**



HM CONFERS ORDER OF FELICITATION ON FORMER ABEGS DIRECTOR GENERAL

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has conferred the Order of Felicitation on Dr Ali Abdul Khaliq al Qarni, former director general of Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS). The felicitation reflects His Majesty the Sultan's appreciation for the efforts and contributions of Qarni in serving the educational sector in the GCC. The order was handed over by Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tariq al Said when he received Qarni in his office on Monday (ONA)



HM RECEIVES MESSAGE FROM SAUDI KING

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq received a message from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on Monday. The message deals with the fraternal relations and cooperation between the two brotherly countries, in addition to ways of promoting these. The message was conveyed by Prince Faisal Farhan al Saud, Saudi Foreign Minister, when Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received him in Muscat (ONA)

NEWS BRIEFS

JORDAN AVIATION TO OPERATE TWO WEEKLY FLIGHTS TO MUSCAT: CAA Muscat - The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has granted approval to Jordan Aviation to operate two flights per week.

In a statement, the CAA said, 'The authority issued its approval to Jordan Aviation to operate two flights per week from Queen Alia International Airport in Amman to Muscat International Airport, starting from June 25.'

Jordan Aviation is an airline based in Amman. It operates worldwide charter flights, provides wet lease services to major airlines seeking additional capacity and is also an important provider of air transportation for UN peacekeeping forces.



Oman's ICT market seen reaching RO2.2bn by 2024



Airline industry sees long-term business rebound



A 'new day' in Israel after Netanyahu's exit

Coronavirus hits young hard

Over 90% bed occupancy in field hospital despite increased capacity

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The COVID-19 field hospital in Seeb is reeling under pressure with a rush of new cases now appearing in a more critical condition than earlier. Patients under the age of 60 form the majority of inpatients.

The hospital currently has a number of patients with very low oxygen saturation or apparent failure of respiratory system. "These symptoms are now appearing in the first week of infection, while earlier such symptoms appeared in the second week, confirming the virulence of the virus," said Dr Nabil al Lawati, director of the hospital.

According to Dr Lawati, there is a very small percentage of patients who were infected despite two doses of vaccine.

"In those who received one dose, the symptoms are less severe than those who did not receive even a single dose of the vaccine," he said, stressing on the importance of getting the jab but also adhering to precautionary measures.

Due to the spike in cases, the



In those who received one dose, the symptoms are less severe than those who did not receive even a single dose of the vaccine

DR NABIL AL LAWATI

hospital has added 50 beds. "The hospital's capacity has been increased to 150 beds since May 25. We have sufficient medical equipment, but there is a shortage of healthcare staff. If we have more staff, we will raise capacity to 200 beds."

Despite increased capacity, bed occupancy is over 90 per

cent with 124 patients currently admitted. "The hospital continues to receive more than 24 cases on a daily basis."

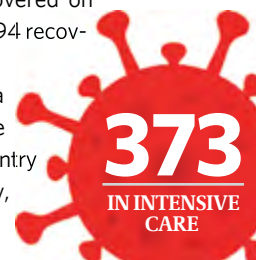
He noted that the longer stay of patients in the hospital is significantly affecting the reception of new cases, even as the High Accreditation Department is full to capacity.

19 deaths in a day

Muscat - As many as 1,806 new cases of COVID-19 were registered on Monday, in addition to 19 related deaths. In a 24-hour period on Monday, 173 patients needed hospitalisation, overwhelming the healthcare system.

The latest figures take the total number of registered cases in Oman to 236,440 and death toll to 2,532, the Ministry of Health stated. It added that 542 cases recovered on Monday, accounting for a total of 211,494 recoveries.

The ministry also informed that a total of 1,196 patients - the highest since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country - were in health institutions on Monday, including 373 in intensive care.



49% citizens unwilling to get jab: Survey

Muscat - The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MoH) conducted a survey in December 15-31, 2020, on vaccine acceptance and awareness. The survey covered 3,000 participants - 67 per cent Omanis and 33 per cent residents.

The study revealed that 51 per cent of Omanis were willing to take the vaccine (57 per cent males and 38 per cent females). Among expatriates, 68 per cent were willing to get vaccinated (69 per cent males and 59 per cent females).

Additionally, 84 per cent of those willing to get vaccinated were willing to take two doses, and 42 per cent would have no worries and recommend their families and friends to do the same. The survey indicated that 88 per cent of society was aware of COVID-19 vaccines (93 per cent Omanis and 79 per cent residents).

It also showed that the level of awareness ranged from average to high (awareness of symptoms and prevention methods - 96 per cent, mode of infection - 95 per cent, and what to do on emergence of symptoms - 95 per cent).

ONA

Integrated digital platform to serve tourism sector launched

Muscat - The brand identity of national travel operator VisitOman.om - the first integrated digital platform that will serve the travel and trade network in the sultanate was launched on Monday. This is in line with the National Tourism Strategy 2040.

The digital platform was launched by Omran Group - the executive arm of the sultanate for tourism development - in co-

operation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT).

The branding presentation ceremony was held at MHT under the patronage of H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

The VisitOman.om national platform for travel and tourism aims to enhance the sultanate's position in the global travel and tourism markets by effectively



creating digital links between Omani travel and tourism service providers and commercial trade partners in the key target

markets. This will stimulate relevant business opportunities through a systemised process that is geared towards achieving direct sales and connecting providers' offers and incentives. This digitally-focused approach will also play a vital role in raising the quality of tourism experience and expenditure in the sultanate, a press release stated.

The platform will feature advanced digital solutions and

technology which will serve to seamlessly connect the entire accredited Omani travel supply chain globally. Providers across aviation, accommodation facilities (hotels), transportation, tourist destinations, various types of tourist experiences, restaurants and other tourism products will be showcased with instant confirmation of bookings.

Presently in the initial stage, registration will be available to

partners in the travel and tourism sector in international markets, as well as local suppliers operating in the sultanate, including Omani tour operators and destination management companies. In addition, the platform will give new local tourism service providers, who have not had the opportunity to expand their business globally, to compete in international markets.

Continued on Page 03

eMushrif closes acquisition deal with Egyptian startup

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Innovator in the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) eMushrif has announced the closing of an acquisition deal with Tareeqi, a Cairo-based startup that developed an application to track transportation.

eMushrif's acquisition in Egypt is in line with its efforts to expand in the North African market. This expansion is also part of eMushrif's plans to attract more talent, as it works towards its mission of integrating IoT in people's everyday lives. The move is also a continuation of eMushrif's regional expansion plans, following its acquisition of MyRoute, a Kuwaiti startup specialising in bus tracking applications, which allowed the Omani company to offer its services in the Kuwaiti market.



Adnan al Shuali, CEO of eMushrif said, "The launch of our operations in Egypt is an opportunity for eMushrif. This bold step unlocks our ability to offer our products to various regional sectors looking for innovation and simplicity in their business processes. This acquisition offers us the proximity we need to the North African markets and an opportunity to attract outstand-

ing technical talent to build a team capable of achieving our strategic goals in technical expansion."

Founders Alfarouk Saleh and Mohamed Monier started Tareeqi back in 2018 to solve a problem that millions of people face daily. Saleh, CEO of Tareeqi, said, "I'm so excited about this deal because eMushrif tries to solve the problems that we are

trying to tackle, which luckily gives us an opportunity to continue working on our main objective of building Tareeqi."

Both companies will try to make bus trips easier for students, parents, school administrators and bus drivers.

"Traditional school bus rides are full of delays and problems, and the hardest thing about them is that they are repeated daily.

Millions of people worldwide face these problems daily, which motivates us to work hard to reach more people and make their lives a little bit easier," Saleh said.

The expansion of eMushrif in Egypt will help the company increase its technical capabilities by building a big tech team in Egypt, which is famous for having strong and experienced technical talent. eMushrif was established in 2016 and has succeeded in applying IoT to develop solutions to monitor the safety of students in school buses.

With the help of these technologies, eMushrif swiftly converted traditional school buses to smart and safe school buses.

With 500,000 IoT wristbands provided, besides a digital pre-travel registration platform, eMushrif has helped more than 2mn users from 150 countries enter the sultanate safely.



361 drowning deaths reported in 2020: CDAA

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has stated that 361 individuals lost their lives due to drowning in Oman in 2020 compared to 369 drowning deaths in 2019.

CDAA said, 'Drowning accidents are considered very painful and occur frequently, normally reported more in beaches where people try to take comfort from hot weather and enjoy beautiful nature. Victims also include children who do not know how to swim.'

The reasons behind drowning deaths are attributed to inability to swim, swimming in undesig-

nated places such as dams, water channels and water-logged areas, random rescue efforts which can result in multiple deaths, leaving children unattended near water bodies, crossing running wadis, disregarding safety instructions and warning signs.

According to CDAA, people should only swim in designated areas where there is provision of safety rings and jackets. 'Ensure that children are out of the pool at the time of leaving; metal ladders and handles should be fitted around swimming pools; and a person who knows how to swim should watch over children while swimming.'

CDAA's emergency hotline - 9999/24343666.

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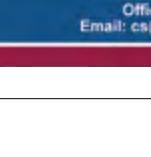
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New cancer centre to receive patients starting July

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre will start receiving patients starting mid-July. The centre is expected to receive 80 per cent of the cancer patients in the sultanate within the next three years.

The centre has been set up on the Royal Orders of the late Sultan Qaboos.

Built on an area of 54,000sqm in Al Khoudh, the centre will have capacity of 300 beds. The centre will include diagnostic, therapeutic and academic departments.

According to Dr Mansour bin Saif al Mandhari, chairman of the Operational Committee of the centre, it is billed to be a leading medical facility for academic and research purposes, besides providing integrated healthcare.

Dr Mandhari informed that



work is almost 95 per cent complete.

"It has a modern design to provide patients comfort, including wide corridors and natural lighting. The centre will have a care unit consisting of 40 treatment chairs for chemotherapy,

four chairs for dialysis, and eight treatment rooms."

The first phase of operations will include outpatient clinics, day care unit, radiology and nuclear medicine unit, internal and external pharmacy, medical and research laboratories, operation

theatres and an endoscopy unit.

The second phase will include opening inpatient departments.

Dr Mandhari added that the centre will support medical education in the sultanate for students in Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, colleges

under the Ministry of Health, and the Omani Council for Medical Specialties.

"It will also provide consulting services to government and private hospitals for treatment and research related to cancer," Dr Mandhari said.



Etimad begins sessions for private sector employees

Muscat - The National Leadership Programme for Middle/Senior Management - Etimad and Takatuf Oman, started providing introductory sessions for the second group of the first batch on Monday.

The four-day sessions are being conducted in Oman Institute for Oil and Gas (instOG). Etimad is a programme that qualifies private sector employees by sharpening their leadership and supervision skills through a special programme designed by international and local centres and institutes specialised in enhancing management skills and training leaders.

This opportunity enriches the



personal and professional aspects for individuals and institutions alike. The individuals will be qualified as leaders, while the institutions reap the benefits of

their national cadres who are qualified for middle and senior management positions.

It is worth noting that nearly 250 participants qualified in the

first group from different private sector institutes. They went through a focused programme on upgrading leadership skills led by international experts.

REGIONAL WEATHER		
	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	40	27
Doha	42	29
Kuwait City	45	31
Manama	43	29
Riyadh	45	28

PRAYER TIMINGS	
Fajr	3.49am
Sunrise	5.19am
Duhr	12.07pm
Asr	3.25pm
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Isha	8.24pm

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Weddings begin amid pandemic as halls reopen

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

With the ban on holding wedding functions due to COVID-19 pandemic being lifted, youths in Oman are once again getting ready to shell out more to tie the knot. In previous months the weddings were low-cost and low-key affairs.

In observance of health precautions, including a ban on gatherings and closure of wedding halls previously, many young men were happy to go for small-scale parties.

Masoud Nizar from Al Khuwayr who got married two months ago when wedding functions were still out of bounds, said, "COVID-19, which may not be a good thing, brought some good news because wedding expenses were less when I got

married. Both my and my wife's families agreed to hold a very simple ceremony without inviting people. It saved me a lot of money."

He said that he had planned a big wedding next year but brought forward it for two reasons - not being sure when the pandemic would end and to take advantage of getting married with less expenses without a wedding function.

"By doing so, I saved at least RO3,000. I had saved some RO5,000 for my big day because both my parents and her parents wanted to have a party but now it is in my account; I will use it to do other important things."

Another recently engaged Omani youth Anwar Jamal from Amerat was hoping to have a small ceremony at home. The announcement to lift the ban of



weddings came as a surprise to him.

"I had not planned for a big wedding but my wife-to-be

wants to have a ceremony in one of the halls. Given that we are now allowed to host up to 300 people, this means I have to shell

out at least RO3,000 more on my wedding," he said.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, weddings in Oman would

I had not planned for a big wedding. Given that we are now allowed to host up to 300 people, this means I have to shell out at least RO3,000 more on my wedding

ANWAR JAMAL

be conducted in the presence of a large crowd of relatives and friends. However, under the current circumstances, the number of those attending is limited.

According to those who got married before the COVID-19 pandemic, such weddings cost

them big amounts.

"Weddings used to cost up to RO10,000. Men used to hold marriages in the halls of mosques attended by a large number of family members, friends and neighbours without limit, but now the attendance is limited to only family members. And for women, wedding halls in hotels were a norm which cost a lot of money. I remember my wedding three years ago cost me around RO10,000," Mohammed al Balushi from Sohar, said.

While wedding halls and other large-scale facilities were allowed to reopen by the Supreme Committee, after being required to close since the start of the pandemic, they can only operate at 30 per cent capacity, or accommodate up to 300 people, whichever is lesser.

@shadadm

Burning of rare trees in Jebel Akhdar ignite sharp reactions on social media

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The repeated burning of rare trees in Jebel Akhdar has evoked a strong reaction among people on social media.

On Sunday, the Environment Authority followed up on a report that an Al Alalan tree was torched in the Khub Hail Mahlab area, adjacent to the Riadh al Jabal Farm affiliated to the Royal Court Affairs in Jebel Akhdar. Specialists from the farm put out the fire.

The authority confirmed that these mishaps happen when individuals and tourists lit fire for cooking near these trees.

"These trees quickly catch fire even by the remnants of cooking and grilling fires," it said.

Said al Busaidi, who posted the video of the burning tree on Twitter, said, "Al Alalan tree is one of the endangered tree species, according to Oman An-



The burning of wild trees was repeated three times last year in the same area. The Environment Authority must take strict measures against violators

ALI YAHYA

imal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre. Unfortunately, we are still witnessing irrespon-

sible behaviour against this tree in Jebel Akhdar. I hope the authorities will find these vandals

and punish them."

Ahmed al Saqri, another Twitterati, said, "I would like to thank all the officials of the Environment Authority, but I hope to put solutions on the ground to achieve the national goal, such as appointing reserve supervisors with the existing staff there, setting up guiding, awareness and educational regulations on the importance of these trees and identifying places for camping, grilling and cooking."

Muneer al Riyam said, "It doesn't take much effort as long as those persons are given permission to fine the violators. Park rangers need to monitor camping to ensure they leave no trace behind."

"I was in the mountain a few days ago and noticed that there were no specific areas for camping. Every visitor pitches a tent and this undoubtedly affects the environment and the perennial plants. I would like authorities to

identify specific places for camping with monitors to ensure that people maintain the cleanliness of the place and do not harm the environment. I suggested also putting up fences around the old trees with regulations to guide tourists that these trees are highly flammable," Abu Hilai, another Twitterati said.

"The burning of wild trees was repeated three times last year in the same area. The Environment Authority is responsible for protecting these trees, and it must take strict measures against violators," Ali Yahya tweeted.

The Environment Authority on Twitter said, "We confirm that these actions are in clear violation of the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Law, and the act is punishable by imprisonment and a fine in accordance with Article 33 of the law for anyone who causes disruption in the nature conservation areas."



Ministry of Heritage signs deal for Jibreen Castle's operation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Trust Investment Integrated Company signed an agreement with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to manage and operate Jibreen Castle in the wilayat of Bahla in Dakhliyah governorate.

The agreement aims to attract more visitors to the site which highlights the nobility of Omani history and its authentic culture.

Dating back to 1670, Jibreen Castle's design and construction were supervised by Al Immam

Bilarab bin Sultan al Yarubi (who was laid to rest on the left side of the castle's main entrance) and was built to resemble the most beautiful palaces of that time. It served as a palace for Immam and his family and a bastion during wartime. It was also a beacon of education for having many study rooms. A large rectangular building consisting of five floors and containing 55 rooms, the castle has a falaj running through its centre. Its architectural details make it an authentic expression of Omani craftsmanship.

Labour ministry offers over 1,000 jobs; 400 from education ministry

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) on Monday announced the availability of 1,003 jobs for Omanis in the government sector.

Open to both male and female applicants, the registration for jobs will continue for eight days, said a ministry statement.

The ministry pointed out that the opportunities are available in different fields - administrative, financial, economic, press and media, literature, English language, human sciences, law, design and engineering.

Nineteen of the jobs will be dedicated to people with disabilities from among holders of BA and BSc and three opportunities for holders of General Education Diploma, the ministry said.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) also confirmed the availability of 400 jobs as part of the job extension programme announced by the MoL.

Majid bin Saeed al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in the Ministry of Education, said that the job openings were announced with the dates of the exams and the stages preceding the ap-

pointments to be revealed later.

In Royal Directives issued on May 25, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik reaffirmed that youth are the inexhaustible wealth of the nation and that youth employment tops national priorities. Though His Majesty the Sultan's orders, it was decided to create more than 32,000 jobs for Omanis in 2021, including 12,000 jobs in the government's civil and military establishments.

Additionally, 2,000 jobs in the government sector will be generated on the basis of temporary contracts.

Integrated digital platform to serve tourism sector

Continued from Page 01

On the occasion of the launch, H E Mahrouqi said, "The launch of the brand identity of the national travel operator VisitOman.om is an important step that aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and the economic diversification plans."

The platform will digitise the local tourism supply chain, in co-operation with our partners, he said, adding that this brand would become a vital factor in supporting the sultanate's vision to increase local and international investments in the tourism infrastructure.

"This platform is in line with

the recovery plan adopted by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism," H E Mahrouqi said, to achieve "our objective to attract 11.7mn tourists, including 5mn international by 2040".

H E Abdulsalam bin Muhammad al Murshidi, president of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said, "We look forward to the role this platform will play in supporting OIA's efforts to empower the private sector to lead the national economy, as well as support the SME sector.

"We will continue to support initiatives by companies under OIA in this regard."

Mohammed bin Salim al Bu-

saidi, chairman of Omran Group, said that the launch of the VisitOman.om platform was an important step for the group to "achieve its vision by investing in the tourism sector's value chain, whilst implementing and activating the tourism strategy that aims to increase the number of inbound tourism to the sultanate from various major regional and international markets".

"This platform will enhance the contribution of local and international partners through various investment and business opportunities and will work to strengthen strategic tourism and commercial partnerships."

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (R.O)
MEDC- 08/2021	Collection of Electricity Bills Through Various Payment Channels For MEDC	01/07/2021	27/07/2021	Specialized	157.500

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5 % VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - For payment procedure and to obtain the tender document, please contact us via e-mail Contract@medcoman.com 24588600 – Ext: 8577 - 8726
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 17,000 OMR 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

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MoH signs pact with Nizwa university to train students



Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Directorate General of Human Development (DGHD), on Monday signed an agreement with the University of Nizwa to train the students of Pharmacy & Nursing

College at the university.

The agreement was signed by Dr Ahmed al Abri, DGHD director general, on behalf of the ministry, and Dr Salim bin Said al Tobi, dean of Pharmacy & Nursing College on behalf of the

university.

The agreement stipulates using the health facilities of the Ministry of Health to train the students of Pharmacy & Nursing College of the University of Nizwa.

As part of the facilitations provided by the MoH for the private higher education institutions, the agreement aims to equip students with the scientific and applied knowledge in their specialisations.

Mawarid conducts virtual meeting on Manafa'a 2021

Muscat - Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre (Mawarid), under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, on Monday organised a virtual meeting for the Manafa'a programme's partners.

The meeting aimed to address questions and provide clarifications on Manafa'a 2021 that will be held in December this year. The teams will be incubated by the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at Sultan Qaboos University to develop their prototypes from July 1 to October 1; those who make it will join the Business Accelerator of Falha Investment Company to establish their own company and get into the market.

The meeting was attended by Dr Thuraya al Sariri, assistant director general for the Nature Conservation, who is also the head of the Technical Committee of 'The National Initiative to Plant Ten Million Trees', Zakariyya al Wahaibi, Incubations and Business Development in charge at the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, and Dr Amaal al Abrawi, CEO of Falha Investment Company.

This year's programme is jointly organised by the Environment Authority. It is implemented within a strategic partnership with the Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer at Sultan Qaboos University and Falha Investment Company, and is sponsored by Petroleum Development Oman and Oman India Fertiliser Company. This year's Manafa'a programme comes under the theme 'The National Initiative to Plant Ten Million Trees'.

On June 6 Mawarid opened



Manafa'a 2021 is implemented within a strategic partnership with the Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer at SQU and Falha Investment Company

registration for the Manafa'a 2021, and the deadline for receiving applications is August 8. Interested candidates can visit www.oapgrc.gov.om to submit their applications.

Manafa'a programme this year aims to support this national environmental initiative, encourage innovative ideas that will contribute towards the embodiment of the initiative on the ground, and maximise its environmental, educational and economic benefits, through attracting biodiversity and genetic resources-based innovative ideas and transforming them into real creative economic projects. These ideas are welcomed from Omanis and residents of Oman

including entrepreneurs, researchers, environmentalists, programmers, creators, marketers, and others.

Areas of Manafa'a programme may include smart agriculture and production systems, applications of artificial intelligence and modern irrigation systems, organic fertiliser products, natural cosmetic products and natural hygiene products, medical and pharmaceutical products, natural products and supplements, clean energy production, pesticide products and organic control, organic cleaning products and natural waste recycling products, organic plastic products and organic paints and compounds.

Higher education ministry organises workshop on Falling Walls Lab Oman competition

Muscat - The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation organised an introductory online workshop on the Falling Walls Lab Oman 2021 competition on Monday.

The Falling Walls Lab competition is open to outstanding scholars, researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs, young professionals and innovators of all disciplines. Participants are given the opportunity to present their solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of the current times in three minutes to a high-calibre jury of experts from



academia and business.

Important factors when it comes to the qualification criteria include the breakthrough factor (how innovative is the proposed idea?), potential impact of the presented work (how relevant is the idea to the disci-

pline and beyond?), and performance (how convincing was the presentation?).

The Falling Walls Lab Oman competition, being organised for the sixth consecutive year in collaboration with the Falling Walls Foundation in Germany, will take

place on September 6. The winner of the competition will participate in the Lab Finale in Berlin, Germany on November 8.

Registration is open until June 30 through <https://fallingwalls.com/lab/apply/oman-online-lab/>

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24 pieces of 500ML Oman Oasis Water 500 Nos.

Offer valid from 16th May 2021 to 15th August 2021. Total of 3 raffle draws will be held at Oasis Water Company, Aziba, Dhow Dates: 16th June 2021, 18th July 2021 and 15th August 2021. Winners will be intimated directly. Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Gifts shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary.

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MUSCAT DAILY



Oman, Norway hold second round of political talks

Muscat - The second round of the political consultations between the sultanate and Norway was held on Monday via video conferencing.

The session was chaired from the Omani side by H E Sheikh Khalifa Ali al Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, while Vebjorn Dysvik, director general of Department for Regional Affairs, chaired the Norwegian side.

The two sides reviewed the

bilateral relations as they stressed their keenness to continue promoting them in various spheres. They also exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues.

The session was attended by H E Yousef Said al Amri, sultanate's non-resident Ambassador to Norway, H E Oyvind Stokke, Norwegian non-resident Ambassador to Oman, and a number of officials in the foreign ministries of the two countries.

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WINNING DESTROYED C.R.No: 1365452

Oman's ICT market seen reaching RO2.2bn by 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Vision 2040's digital transformation will boost the sultanate's information and communication technology (ICT) market to RO2.2bn by 2024 and drive new levels of citizen engagement, according to the global technology giant SAP.

SAP, in collaboration with Oman's integrated energy group OQ, on Monday launched a new whitepaper 'Navigating Oman's Vision 2040 Through SAP's Lens.'

Thanks to nationwide digital transformation, Oman's ICT market will nearly double to RO2.2bn by 2024, up from RO1.2bn in 2019, according to a recent report by leading market research firm GlobalData. It said ICT spending in Oman is estimated to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 11.3 per cent in next four years.

The growth will be driven by e-governance and related supporting framework policies, as well as a rise in e-commerce and ongoing developments in cloud services.

SAP's whitepaper highlights the digital transformation opportunity for the sultanate across five areas: a society of creative individuals, a competitive economy, a sustainable environment, responsible state agencies, and building Smart Cities.

"Oman's government agencies can achieve Oman Vision 2040 goals by digitally transforming into intelligent enterprises that can integrate



Waheed al Hamaid



Ghalib al Maamari

Growth in ICT spending will be driven by e-governance and related supporting framework policies, as well as a rise in e-commerce and ongoing developments in cloud services

back-end operations and center the citizen experience," said Waheed al Hamaid, managing director of SAP Oman.

"Citizen engagement platforms can enhance happiness and trust, reduce costs and security risks, and rapidly deploy and future-proof e-services," he added.

According to SAP, new ways to source, procure, and pay for

goods and services can take government services to the next level.

It said Oman's public and private sectors are ideally-positioned to leverage the recently-launched world's largest business network, the SAP Business Network, which will bring together Ariba Network, SAP Logistics Business Network and SAP Asset Intelligence Network.

"The government could enhance sourcing decisions with spend analysis insights, optimize costs and compliance, and strengthen the financial supply chain by transforming payables into strategic assets," SAP said.

According to GlobalData report, in terms of IT solutions, client computing will account for the largest share (20.3 per cent) of Oman's overall ICT spending in 2024.

The revenue from cloud computing is expected to reach around US\$1bn (approximately

RO385mn) by 2024, accounting for 17.9 per cent of the overall ICT spending.

Oman's energy sector is also expected to witness a significant uptake in ICT investment.

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040's economic growth and job creation goals, OQ, the globally integrated energy company, is seeing strong success on its long-term growth plan. OQ offers a wide range of end-to-end products, services, and solutions in the upstream and downstream.

Central to OQ's growth plan is the digital transformation of its operations in 17 countries around the world under the 'One ERP' roadmap, according to a press statement issued by SAP.

Currently, OQ is running on the SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution, the SAP SuccessFactors human experience management suite, and the SAP Cloud for Customer (C4C) and Commerce Cloud solutions for e-commerce, it said.

"As global energy demand rises, OQ needs full visibility on our operations and employee experiences," said Ghalib al Maamari, leader of information and digital solutions at OQ.

"Thanks to our digital transformation with SAP, we have real-time insights to grow our upstream and downstream markets, elevate talent, and drive innovation. OQ's change management strategy and SAP's industry expertise are ensuring that our digital roadmap has strong time to value," Maamari said.



Omantel and SCT sign deal for satellite services

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Space Communication Technologies Company (SCT) and Omantel have signed an agreement to provide satellite communication to the different verticals in the Omani market.

Omantel will utilize the satellite services using the state-of-the-art technologies on Ka-Band from the SCT's satellite Earth Station located in Omantel's Al Amerat teleport on the Omani satellite payload on Arabsat6A @ 30.5 E.

Omantel will use this service to expand and enhance its reach for mobile network backhauling, in addition to providing connectivity services to their end-customers in different regions across the sultanate, according to a press statement.

As the leading integrated telecom services provider of Oman, Omantel sees this agreement as a push towards digitization that is modernizing traditional ways of governance, education, business, services and administration by offering more efficient technologies and advanced solutions. The agreement will further

consolidate Omantel's position as the market leader as the company will expand and enhance its reach for mobile network backhauling. Omantel will gain satellite bandwidth to complement its terrestrial range coverage, thus expanding the user-base, and bringing them access to the latest innovations through improved connectivity.

This agreement is another collaboration between Omantel and SCT. In 2020, Omantel was selected as SCT's telecom infrastructure service provider and accordingly SCT co-located its main satellite hub in Omantel's teleport in Al Amerat.

Eng Salim al Alawi, executive director of SCT, said, "Signing the agreement with Omantel is an extension of collaboration between the two companies in the field of space telecommunication. Omantel is considered as one of the biggest strategic partners to SCT. As the agreement states, Omantel will be provided with satellite bandwidth for its commercial users to complement their services provided by terrestrial coverage. This will provide Omantel with satellite connectivity to increase the

bandwidth available to the mobile stations in the rural areas."

Eng Salim al Mazrui, general manager - wholesale operations at Omantel said, "Through this partnership with SCT, we will be able to increase the backhauling capacity for various mobile stations located in remote areas. By doing so, we will be able to upgrade the mobile technologies offered in these areas, which in turn, will allow our clients to enjoy enhanced services and better customer experience, which is one of our key priorities. We thank our counterparts in SCT for their efforts in facilitating this agreement."

Omantel and SCT are in the process of deploying the project to reap the mutual benefits in the near future.

Space Communication Technologies LLC was established by the government of Oman with a mission of spearheading the National Satellite Program initiative by building national satellite communications infrastructure and developing required capabilities to serve public and private sectors, coping with their immediate long-term telecommunication needs.

HSBC Oman signs RO5mn facility with SME Development Fund

Our Correspondent
Muscat

HSBC Bank Oman SAOG and the SME Development Fund (SMEF) have signed a collaborative agreement to provide small and medium sized enterprises in Oman with RO5mn in financing.

The agreement was signed by Nasr al Asfoor, head of business banking at HSBC Bank Oman and Salah al Mawali, CEO of SMEF.

This collaboration provides additional support to the SME development initiatives endorsed by the Omani government and will help accelerate the growth of SMEs throughout the sultanate by giving them access to financing at an attractive rate, HSBC Bank Oman said in a press statement. "We are proud of our collaboration with SMEF, and we will continue to work closely with



relevant government authorities and key working groups to ensure that SMEs flourish and contribute to the country's diversification efforts," Asfoor said.

Through its entrepreneurs' development programs and financing schemes, SMEF aims to nurture Omani entrepreneurs and to see some of them grow to be large firms.

"We are happy with the cooperation with HSBC Bank Oman,

which we hope will support the SMEs sector and the entrepreneurs and provide the facilities needed for the sustainability of their projects and enhance the growth of the national economy," Mawali said.

SMEs account for around 15 per cent of Oman's GDP, a figure the Public Authority for the Development of SMEs (Riyada) has forecasted to double in the medium term as opportunities are created.

MoF issues circular on National Register of Government Assets

Muscat - The Ministry of Finance on Monday issued a circular (No 4/2021) on the National Register of Government Assets.

The circular mandates a consultant to devise the 'Register Plan' with the purpose of drafting a 'Government Assets Investment Strategy (GAIS)' aimed to supply the state budget with additional financial resources.

The ministry called upon specialists in different government units concerned to provide all data pertaining to the state-owned assets register.

The ministry also asked government units to nominate one



of their specialists to serve as a point of reference and liaise with the team tasked with undertaking the GAIS project.

The team is required to provide all relevant data and information in time to the Ministry of Finance.

The circular stems from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's Royal endorsement of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (2020-2024), which includes the National Register of Government Assets. ONA

SULTANATE OF OMAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/HQ-74/2021	Extension of Al-Kamil Health Centre in South Al-Sharqia Governorate	24/ June /2021	Before 08 am on Wednesday 14/July/2021	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board in the First Grade	R.O 25,000 Per set
MOH/HQ-75-2021	Supply of Surgical Items (Cardiac)	24/ June /2021	Before 08 am on Wednesday 14/July/2021	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	R.O 27,500 Per set
MOH/HQ-76/2021	Supply of Surgical Consumables Items	24/ June /2021	Before 08 am on Wednesday 21/July/2021	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	R.O 25,000 Per set

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Tenders should be submitted on line on the given website signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee or a certified Cheque issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee before one day of date submission.
- The Original Bank Guarantee should be submitted to the office of Director of Purchase and Tenders one day before the submission date for all Tenders.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via

Telephone: 24166670

Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

MSX index marginally declines

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Monday marginally decreased 0.17 per cent to close at 4,033.78 points. This marginal decline comes after the MSX30 Index witnessed continuous increases since the beginning of June.

While Industrial Index gained 0.8 per cent on Monday, Financial Index and Services Index dropped 0.13 per cent and 0.49 per cent, respectively. MSX Sharia Index rose 0.15 per cent to close at 570.2 points.

Trading activity increased on Monday as volumes rose 62 per cent at 22.14mn securities compared with 13.66mn securities traded on Sunday. Market turnover, however, fell 64 per cent to RO3.53mn compared with RO9.75mn in the previous trading session.

Market breadth at the MSX remained

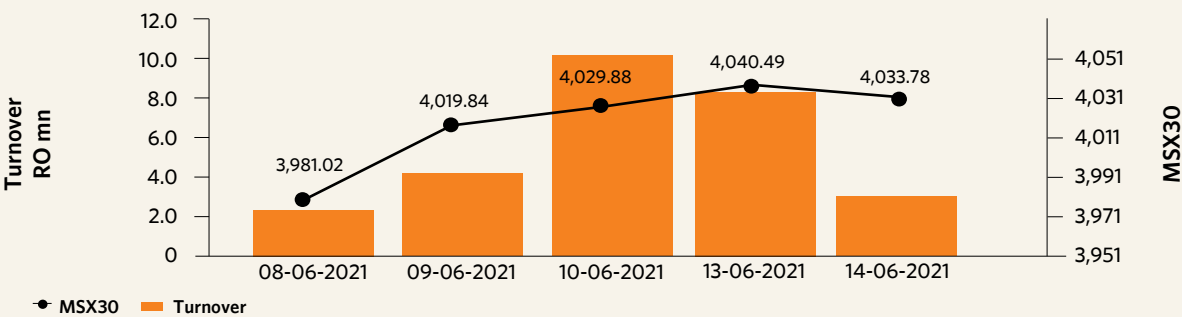


positive with 21 advancing stocks to 15 decliners. As many as 25 traded stocks remained flat for the day.

Top gainers were Galfar Engineering and Contracting (8.22 per cent), Oman & Emirates Investment Holding (6.56 per cent), Oman Oil Marketing (5.13 per

cent), Al Batinah Power (3.85 per cent) and HSBC Bank Oman (3.81 per cent). Top losers were Ahlibank (-4.35 per cent), Al Anwar Investment (-3.81 per cent), Al Omaniya Financial Services (-2.31 per cent) and Phoenix Power (-2.04 per cent).

MSX INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



France to invest €3.8bn in Egypt

Cairo, Egypt - French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire signed agreements with Egypt to invest €3.8bn in the most populous Arab country's public transport and renewable energy sectors.

France will finance Egyptian projects with French companies to the tune of €1.8bn. The first tranche will be for transport giant Alstom to supply 55 underground trains for Cairo Metro's Line 1, for a total of €800mn financed by a loan from the Treasury. The line used by over a million commuters daily has dilapidated carriages that are over three decades old.

Nine other projects are included in the intergovernmental agreement. They will be financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) to the tune of one billion euros between 2021 and 2025. With the billions in financing, Egypt has become "a strategic economic partner of France... It is the top country in terms of loans from the Treasury," said the visiting French minister.

Cooperation has been expanded to cover renewable energy, water purification and



France's Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire speaks to reporters after his meeting with Egyptian prime minister in Cairo on Sunday (AFP)

public transport as well funding for universities and social safety nets, Le Maire told reporters in Cairo on Sunday. Cairo, with a population of over 20mn renowned for its gridlocked roads, suffers from a dire lack of safe and efficient public transport.

The Metro has three lines which are currently being expanded and three other connecting lines are expected to be built.

Egypt has been one of France's biggest arms clients since President Abdel Fattah al Sisi took power in 2014. In May, Egypt purchased 30 Rafale jets worth €3.75bn. In December, French President Emmanuel Macron awarded Sisi the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, the country's highest award, sparking outrage among human rights critics.

AFP

Lebanon currency hits new low

Beirut, Lebanon - Lebanon's currency hit a new low against the dollar on the black market Monday, continuing its freefall in a country gripped by political deadlock, an economic crisis and increasing shortages.

The pound, officially pegged at 1,507 to the US dollar since 1997, was selling for 15,400 to 15,500 to the greenback on the black market, several money changers said.

After hovering around 15,000 to the dollar in mid-March, the unofficial exchange rate dropped to between 12,000 and 13,000 later that month before soaring back up in recent days.

The latest plunge means the pound has lost more than 90 per cent of its value on the informal market since October 2019, in what the World Bank has called one of the worst financial crunches worldwide since the mid-19th century.

Lebanon has been without a fully functioning government for 10 months since the last one stepped down after a deadly port explosion in Beirut



last summer.

Politicians from all sides have failed to agree on a line-up for a new cabinet even as foreign currency cash reserves plummet, causing fuel, electricity and medicine shortages. In recent days, frustrated drivers have waited for hours in long car queues outside petrol stations to fill up their tanks.

Pharmacies went on strike on Friday and Saturday in protest at the central bank allegedly failing to provide them with dollars as a preferable exchange rate so they could continue working.

Electricity cuts have increased in length as the state struggles to secure enough fuel to operate power stations. People earning salaries in Lebanese pounds have seen their purchasing power drastically reduced as they battle to keep up with price hikes.

The country, where more than half the population now live in poverty, is in desperate need of financial aid but the international community has conditioned any such assistance on the formation of a new government to launch sweeping reforms.

AFP

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange lists €1bn bonds issued by Etisalat Group

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) has listed €1bn worth of bonds issued by Emirates Telecommunications Group (Etisalat) in two equal tranches maturing in 2028 and 2033. The bonds were more than six times over-subscribed.

Etisalat Group's €500mn seven-year notes mature on May 17, 2028 and carry a 0.375 per cent coupon, while the 12-year €500mn tranche matures on May 17, 2033 and carries a 0.875 per cent coupon.

The senior unsecured notes were issued under Etisalat's Euro Medium Term Note Programme and are rated AA- by S&P and Aa3 by Moody's. Interest rates will be paid out to bondholders annually on 17th May.

The listing of Etisalat Group's bonds come on the heels of Abu Dhabi Ports' US\$1bn listings on ADX earlier this month.

First Abu Dhabi Bank has acted as a listing agent on Etisalat Group's euro bonds on ADX. By 2021, ADX is expecting a total of more than ten listings and the launch of a derivatives



market is scheduled for the fourth quarter.

Saeed Hamad Obaid al Dhaheeri, CEO of ADX, said, "We welcome the listing of Etisalat Group bonds on the ADX as we strive to create a dynamic debt capital markets ecosystem and expand funding opportunities for businesses in Abu Dhabi and the wider region. The issuance was six times oversubscribed with high demand from both local and international investors, reflecting

growing investor interest in the UAE's telecoms sector."

He said, "Issuers have become increasingly drawn to the ADX because of the investments we have made in products and services over the past year to meet their requirement. This is reflected in the record market capitalisation ADX reached in the first quarter."

Hatem Dowidar, CEO of Etisalat Group, stated, "The latest bond raising exercise has pro-

vided Etisalat Group with an opportunity to diversify our sources of capital while taking advantage of the improved cost of funding and listing on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange improves flexibility and transparency for Etisalat Group and investors in the debt capital markets. We are pleased with the attractive pricing of our bonds and the significant interest from investors across the region and globally. This robust demand demonstrates the financial strength of our business and the confidence bondholders have in the future of the UAE's telecoms industry."

Equity trading on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange has increased notably this year, as the exchange's market capitalisation increased 25 per cent during the first quarter to a record AED936bn. In the first three months of 2021, the total traded value of stocks bought and sold increased five-fold year-on-year to AED107.8bn and the benchmark ADX index advanced 17.2 per cent.

WAM

Airline industry sees long-term business rebound for sector

Paris, France - After flying into the financial turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the airline sector expects passenger traffic to take off despite concerns about the industry's impact on climate change.

In its latest look at trends for the sector, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said it doesn't expect world air traffic to resume to its pre-pandemic level before 2023.

But over 20 years, air traffic should almost double, from 4.5bn passengers in 2019 to 8.5bn in 2039. That is, however, a drop of one billion passengers from IATA's pre-crisis forecast.

Nevertheless that will be good news for aircraft manufacturers, who slowed down production during the crisis as airlines cancelled orders to stay financially afloat.

Airbus has already announced it plans to step up the manufacturing cadence of its best-selling

A320 single-aisle aircraft and should reach a record level already in 2023.

Boeing, for its part, forecasts that airlines will need 43,110 new aircraft through 2039, which will result in a near doubling of the global fleet. Asia alone will account for 40 per cent of that demand. As with the September 11 attacks or the global financial crisis of 2007-2009, "the industry will prove resilient again," Darren Hulst, vice president of marketing at Boeing, said last year.

Marc Ivaldi, research director at the Paris-based School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, noted that only one per cent of the population currently uses air travel.

"With the simple demographic rise and the fact that people become richer there will be rising demand for air travel and thus for aircraft," he told AFP.

If the biggest aircraft fleets are



British Airways jets are seen at Heathrow Airport in west London on Sunday (AFP)

currently in the United States and Europe, the biggest increases are expected in Asia and the Middle East, the consulting firm Oliver Wyman said in a recent study.

'Flight shaming'

Airbus delivered 19 per cent of its

planes to China, more than the United States, and this trend is not expected to change.

In many emerging countries where the middle class is expanding air travel is becoming possible for more and more people.

"Among Asia's emerging na-

tions, one of the greatest aspirational goals is simply the ability to fly internationally," said the Center for Aviation (CAPA).

"It is a sign of social and economic maturity and permits experiences which were unthinkable for their parents."

It noted that these people

were unlikely to share the growing sentiment among some people in the West towards reducing air travel to reduce one's carbon footprint.

"For these new would-be flyers, the whole concept of flight shaming at a grass roots level is grossly alien," said CAPA.

"Consequently, in Asia flight shaming is unlikely to gain much traction," it added.

The 'flight shaming' or 'flygskam' movement took off in Sweden in 2018 to challenge the growing popularity of air travel, which had boomed in Europe thanks to budget airlines that made weekend getaways across the continent affordable to a wider public.

In 2019, air traffic declined by four percent in Sweden - but it hit a record across Europe, according to the air traffic control body Eurocontrol.

EHESS's Ivaldi believes flight shaming will have little long-

term impact.

"Someone who makes one flight per year in a plane, do you really believe that they will say that it is too polluting and give it up?" he said.

But countries like Sweden have begun to reintroduce night trains to give travellers greener options to travel.

France, which is boosting its night trains, is also cutting domestic flights when it is possible to make the journey by train in under two and a half hours.

Ivaldi believes that to be a largely empty gesture as fast trains have already taken most of the market on such routes.

The air sector has pledged to cut its carbon emissions in half by 2050 from their level in 2005.

Airlines have an economic incentive to do so, as adopting more fuel efficient planes reduces operating costs.

AFP

Bank Muscat inaugurates three new Green Sports fields in Sharqiyah

In line with the bank's commitment to community development and promoting Oman as a sporting nation, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, continues to complete new Green Sports Fields across the sultanate. Salim al Shidi, regional manager - South Sharqiyah, Bank Muscat, handed over project completion certificates to three teams in North and South Sharqiyah.

The opening of the Saih al Snadah team in the wilayat of Jalaan Bani Bu Ali of South Sharqiyah was attended by Yahya Saeed al Sunaidi, the team manager.

The bank also inaugurated the Al Waha Team's sports field in the wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid in North Sharqiyah, which was attended by Yousuf Salim al Saadi, the team manager.

The third team to get a new Green Sports Field was Al Qadisiya (Samad al Shan) Team, who was represented by the team manager Mahmood Salim al Haimli. The handover events were done after taking all pre-



cautions and in full compliance with COVID-19 social distancing norms.

On this occasion, Salim al Shidi, regional manager - South Sharqiyah, congratulated all the teams and their members for this achievement. He added that new sports fields add to the green spaces across the country and

are also used by local communities for a number of activities apart from sports. He pointed out how these new facilities is greatly helping improve community bonding and the harnessing of the talents of Omani youth across the country.

The scope of support under the Green Sports programme in-

clude installation of artificial turf or natural grass on sports fields, floodlighting and water-desalination systems.

There is no doubt that it has been greatly contributing to further build Omani sporting talent by creating a pipeline of talented players who can represent the country at all levels in the future.



Bank Muscat's longest running CSR programme will continue to support and serve the community as it implements the bank's vision of "serving you better, every day".

In order to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its launch and to strengthen its commitment to Omani youth, Bank Muscat in-

creased the number of annual beneficiaries to 20 teams from this year onwards, up from 15 per year.

The programme has benefited 143 teams and over 36,900 sportspersons across the country so far.

Currently, 95 teams have received support for installation of

artificial turf or natural grass on their fields, while 40 teams have received support for floodlighting and eight teams for water desalination plants.

The bank has already handed over 111 Green Sports fields to their respective teams till date and more Green Sports fields are at present nearing completion.



Bank Nizwa launches buyout campaign

Aspiring to enrich customers' experience and diversify its service offering, Bank Nizwa, Oman's leading and most trusted Islamic bank, constantly seeks to introduce new and innovative Sharia'a-compliant products that keep pace with the varying needs of the population and fulfill their requirements. In line with the same, Bank Nizwa has launched the buyout campaign that allows customers to transfer their current finance or loan from any other bank or financial institution to Bank Nizwa, at reduced interest rates, hence lowering their EMI amount.

The bank will take over the current loan or finance by covering the dues and refinancing it to the customer as per the principles of Islamic Sharia'a. With this campaign, customers can enjoy a competitive 5 per cent profit rate and reduced monthly instalments along with a plethora of

great benefits offered by the bank, making it an ideal choice for beneficiaries. The introduction of such promotions reflects the bank's strategic approach of providing solutions that cater to community needs, particularly since the cost of living and daily life requirements are spiking up.

Arif Maqbool al Zaabi, assistant general manager Retail Banking, Bank Nizwa, said, "At Bank Nizwa, we direct our efforts toward realising the needs of our clients. The increase of financial strain and daily requirements are usually mentally preoccupying concerns to many people. As such, we are delighted to announce the launch of buyout campaign. Through this innovative and Sharia'a-compliant solution, the bank will refinance home or personal loans and finances that clients obtained from Islamic or conventional banks."

Ooredoo, Nokia begin roll out of FastMile 4G, 5G FWA solution

Ooredoo and Nokia have announced a partnership for the introduction of Nokia's FastMile 4G and 5G fixed wireless access (FWA) solution, offering a better and faster Wi-Fi experience to customers across the sultanate.

Having begun deployment in February, the state-of-the-art service will provide up to 15,000 homes and businesses with superfast and reliable 4G Internet. In addition, 3,000 homes in selected areas will be able to benefit from 5G in coming months.



Noor al Sulaiti, chief executive officer of Ooredoo Oman, said, "Fixed wireless access is a critical

part of our strategy to provide high-speed Internet across Oman. Nokia's solution offers a great 4G and 5G experience, so that more of our customers can enjoy the Internet with us. The service will take connectivity to the next level, supporting the demands of our residential and business customers for superfast and reliable connectivity."

Rima Manna, head of the Middle East Market Unit, Nokia MEA, added, "We are excited to have partnered with Ooredoo

Oman to enable world-class FWA connectivity for its customers, and looking forward to further strengthen our collaboration. Our receivers and gateways are field proven to provide connectivity and best-in-class speed in the toughest of radio conditions which will help Ooredoo serve a larger area.

"The high gain antennas guarantee the most efficient use of radio airtime of any customer premise equipment, saving radio costs."

The Nokia FastMile solution will allow Ooredoo to build profitably on its existing Radio Access Network (RAN) installed base and idle rural spectrum so it can offer fixed wireless broadband to urban, suburban and rural users.

Nokia FastMile includes customer premise equipment with a built-in modem and antenna, a cloud-based controller for point of sales, monitoring and control, and smartphone applications for installation and support.

A'Safwah offers a wide range of natural juices, laban drinks

With the onset of summer and a rise in temperature, the demand for refreshing juices and laban drinks is on the rise. A'Safwah, Oman's oldest integrated dairy company, offers a wide range of natural juices without sugar additives, fresh laban and laban drinks which make for healthy alternatives for this season.

A company spokesperson said, "A'Safwah team, which includes specialised nutritionists, has worked with dedication to provide drinks that give consumers a sense of freshness in every sip. Loaded with vitamins and minerals, it helps to replenish the body with vital nutrients that we tend to lose due to perspiration on a hot, summer day."

Due to a high percentage of vitamin C, natural orange juice was



the first option that A'Safwah decided to put on the market. In addition to its delicious taste, orange juice also helps improve blood circulation and boost immunity. Apple juices have also been a popular choice amongst

consumers. A'Safwah's 100 per cent natural apple juice is naturally sweet and provides a lot of health benefits like promoting heart health, controlling cholesterol levels and helping the body rid itself of toxins.

"Good nutrition is the essence of health, which is why A'Safwah is interested in producing various natural, no added sugar juices such as orange juice and apple juice. We also offer fresh full cream Laban, fresh strawberry flavoured laban and laban drinks that includes two types, plain and jeera, thus providing variety to the consumer and making our products the ideal daily choice. With our extensive experience in market and customers' requirements, we will continue to create nutritious, innovative and healthy products."

A'Safwah encourages consumers to drink fresh laban and laban drinks, which are considered as best summer drinks for different age groups because it contains proteins, carbohy-

drates, vitamins and minerals.

Some studies have shown that laban helps to relax nerves and cool the body. Additionally, because laban has a lot of water content, it helps to overcome dehydration, tiredness and exhaustion caused by the loss of fluids due to perspiration. Drinking fresh laban or laban drinks also enhances the body's ability to maintain good levels of calcium that strengthens the bones as well as teeth.

A'Safwah has seen steady growth through the years and has expanded operations to meet the growing demand for its distinctive and tasty products. It has ensured that it stays committed to its pledge of providing consumers with natural juices, fresh milk and dairy products.

Oman Oasis committed to fostering talents of Omani youth

Oasis Water is essential in every Omani home with many considering Oasis water as the first choice.

Behind this product are Omani youth who supervise its finer details. This is from the beginning of the manufacturing balance processes, passing of the assurance laboratories and quality seals to the supervision of the storage process, loading and delivery to the consumer with complete care.

Today, through this review, we shed light on Omani youth who work at the Oasis factories.

Badr bin Talib al Wardi, deputy director of Receiving



Raw Materials, said, "I started working with Oman Oasis back in 2004 as a loading and unloading



operator. "At that time I had not completed my general education, but

through the continuous efforts of Oasis Water Company, I was able to build my confidence to

learn. This reflected positively in my promotion and the completion of my education, since the

company provided me with several training programmes and courses in the English language, to help me learn and prepare for the future.

He added, "Since I received the position of deputy director of Receiving Raw Materials, I have managed the department and achieved an Omanisation rate of 100 per cent.

"I have also greatly contributed to training, educating, and qualifying Omani youth to perform their job roles efficiently, supporting them as they have proven their capabilities."

He highlighted that a majority of the employees working in the Raw Material Receipt Depart-

ment are young Omanis who have been able to prove themselves and take up positions held previously by expatriates, achieving positive results during the last period.

He said, "I would like to remind all Omanis, who are working either in the private or government sector, the necessity of continuous learning and not to hesitate to learn more of any profession of no matter what kind.

"I would not have reached my position without the support and assistance from the company or from my co-workers, who helped me every step of the way."

Ahlibank upgrades its premium services with launch of Al Nukhba

Ahlibank launched on Monday Al Nukhba Banking, a rebrand of its Premium Banking segment, in a bid to deliver more value-added services to its premium customers and clients. The exclusive brand brings with it enhanced, more personalised services and customised products for the premium segment. It also aims to provide a more personal and convenient banking experience, ensuring that it satisfies the evolving needs and lifestyles of its customers.

"At Ahlibank, we recognise that premium customers need special solutions to manage their accounts. In this context, we work as partners for our customers by offering distinctive and innovative offers that live up to their expectations. We are also aware of the growing need for smart solutions that keep pace with today's premium lifestyles and evolved choices, so we are constantly adopting the latest technologies and strategies to help meet these requirements. This helps us to constantly understand customers' feedback and work towards addressing it, which cements our position as one of



the most preferred bank in Oman," Suhaila al Busaidi, head of Premium Banking, Ahlibank, said.

Muneer al Balushi, AGM, head of Retail Distribution, said, "We are delighted to introduce Al Nukhba Banking to our valued premium customers who would like to enjoy its numerous privileges and benefits.

"This is part of our commitment to truly understand the individual needs of our customers and accordingly enhance our

product and service offerings. Our premium category customers are invited to take advantage of a range of financial and non-financial privileges that suit their banking needs and enhance the value of their wealth."

Opening an account means that customers could conduct their banking transactions in dedicated Al Nukhba service centres, free SMS, Internet and mobile banking services, 24-hour call centre support and a dedicated relationship manager

available at all times.

Customers could also benefit from the free credit and debit cards, complimentary lounge access to more than 750 international airports for credit card holders, personalised concierge service, free travel insurance, purchase protection and extended warranty, discounts and offers from selected premium merchants, special discounted tariffs on bank charges, preferential pricing on deposits and loans and exclusive Wafra Savings

Scheme prizes.

Alongside Ahlibank's commitment to continuously offer new products and services or enhance its existing ones is its ongoing initiatives to invest in improving its digital capabilities and boosting its traditional products and services in order to offer better customer experiences.

"We have earlier launched the Imtiyaz account, which offers enhanced banking services and a package of specially designed offers that cater to modern lifestyles. We also launched My-Choice youth account and Istiqrar account for retirees. We are focusing on catering to niche segments and ensuring that the services and benefits for each account are highly specialised and customised," Balushi added.

Ahlibank has witnessed a remarkable growth over the last few years and has been able to sustain its strong presence in the market.

Its yearly achievements are reflective of its commitment to fulfil the needs of its growing customer base on the back of its vision of being a vibrant and an innovative centre for banking.



Dr Kavitha presents tanjore painting, book to Sri Lankan envoy

Dr Kavitha Ramakrishna presented her Imty Gate tanjore painting to H EOL Ameer Ajwad, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman, and also shared her book called *Tamoghna* about yoga and sun salutations.

Dr Kavitha has been using her expertise in the ancient art form of tanjore paintings to capture Oman's rich heritage through her paintings on the country's national emblem, forts, mosques and jewellery. Her work adorns the walls of many institutions in the sultanate and her work is displayed at Oman's Ministry of Tourism.

Imty village in Sultanate of Oman is celebrated for its archaeological, historical, cultural and heritage significance and has now been turned into a hub for Oman's heritage, art and culture. Art and archaeology admirers will enjoy exploring this village.

Dr Kavitha decided to portray the beautiful Imty gate in the tanjore painting form.

Dr Kavitha is not just a painter but also an author. As an author she has penned about the distinctive appeal of magnificent Oman in a book in Kannada language titled *Na Kanda Muscat* and recently received the honour to work from India's Ministry of AYUSH based on her extensive research for her book *Tamoghna* which touches upon on the history of yogic philosophy, essence of yoga practice and deals specifically with vast benefits of surya

namaskar.

Dr Kavitha who is an expert practitioner of surya namaskar shared her thoughts about the intricacies of sun salutations which is a series of 12 yoga poses done in a continuous flow while synchronising breathing with body movement, with H E Ajwad and Dilini Abeysekara, first secretary, Embassy of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr Kavitha, who holds the record of performing 648 surya namaskars at a stretch, has inspired them to practise the yoga technique everyday.

Dilini said, "COVID-19 has brought attention around the world to many yoga practices that promote and sustain good exercise for mental and physical health. Practices such as surya namaskar or sun salutations have become especially relevant as COVID-19 is a respiratory infection that attacks lungs.

"Hence, along with meticulously practising preventive measures like washing our hands, wearing a mask, and social distancing, we also need to work on practices that can keep the lungs healthy and strong."

Both H E Ajwad and first secretary applauded Dr Kavitha's honorary works in the field of yoga, art and culture.

They also look forward to joining hands with her to create some great art work that will represent the 40th year of diplomatic relationship between Sri Lanka and Oman.

ISC Salalah holds event to mark WED

Indian Social Club (ISC), Salalah celebrated World Environment Day (WED) on June 7 at club premises following COVID-19 protocols in the presence of the chairman ISC Oman, Dr Sathish Nambiar, general secretary ISC Oman Babu Rajendran, administration secretary ISC Oman, Shakeel K M, and management committee members of ISC Salalah.

Rakesh Jha, president of ISC Salalah, welcomed all with an opening speech giving an insight to the importance of that day.

He shared that in the last 18 years he's been organising WED with different organisations, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs continuously. Dr Sandeep Ojha, general secretary, ISC Salalah, made all the spectators aware of the need to take immediate action to save the environment and Mother Earth.

The celebrations came to an end with the plantation of trees, awareness programmes and everyone pledging to take the initiative of saving the environment and doing their bit for a cleaner and greener environment.

Jha also shared that this year's theme is 'Ecosystem Restoration'. Ecosystem restoration can take many forms: Growing trees, greening cities, rewilding gardens, changing diets, cleaning up rivers and coasts. This is the generation that can make peace with nature.

The emergence of COVID-19 has also shown just how disastrous the consequences of ecosystem loss can be. The vice president of ISC Sunny Jacob informed that this World Environment Day will kick off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030).

Al Bustan Palace begins vaccination drive

Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel has announced the commencement of its employee vaccination drive. The resort will be among the first in the sultanate to have a fully vaccinated team, aiming to inoculate over 400 ladies and gentlemen. It's the latest in a number of measures the resort has undertaken to support the government's ongoing health campaign, while ensuring its guests can enjoy exceptional stays with complete comfort and peace of mind.

Nabil bin Abdul Wahab al Zadjali, general manager at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, said, "We are very grateful to the local authorities for their continued hard work and for making the vaccine readily available to the community. The health and well-being of our ladies and gentlemen is always our utmost priority, so that they can work safely and with confi-



dence, while ensuring our guests can continue to enjoy a warm, relaxed, yet refined level of service."

In line with directives from local authorities and ongoing ef-

forts to safeguard public health, Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel continues to implement a variety of elevated practices in keeping with its high standards of cleanliness and luxury service.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the return of international travellers, it is positioned at the forefront of the tourism industry's efforts in welcoming guests back to the sultanate.

MoH marks World Blood Donor Day

The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Department of Blood Banks Services, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) celebrated on Monday the World Blood Donor Day.

The day falls on June 14 each year.

The celebration, which comes this year under the theme 'Give Blood and Keep the World Beating', aimed to give thanks to the blood donors.

On this occasion, H E Dr Ahmed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, praised the role of the community members in making the blood donation campaigns successful.

The Minister of Health thanked all individuals who do-

nate blood for their efforts, calling all citizens and residents to initiate donating blood as the blood services are the key treatment for various diseases in the sultanate and the world countries.

On his part, Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO representative to the sultanate, pointed out that safe blood is critical to save millions of lives every year, whether in normal times or emergencies.

It can help in the proper management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth; children suffering from severe anemia; patients with inherited disorders such as thalassemia; and victims of trauma due to natural or man-made disasters.

The WHO representative to the sultanate added that through the campaign, WHO calls on all countries in the region to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood, and to encourage everyone, especially young people who have not donated blood, to start donating to make access to safe blood a reality for everyone in need, especially during the pandemic.

Moreover, Dr Zainab al Araimi, director of Blood Banks Services, stating that this year's campaign, which comes again during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the essential contribution of blood donations by young people in saving lives and improving the health of their communities.



Give your skin natural glow with Himalaya face masks

Summer skincare woes are probably the most difficult to tackle. Skin irritation, breakouts and skin dullness are common issues and tending to our skin has to become a crucial part of our summer routine. While the blazing heat causes sweaty glands and enlarged pores, air cooled interiors saps the moisture out of our skin only to add to our dehydration worries.

The need of the hour is to give your skin some extra TLC to ensure it is healthy, pampered and glowing at all times. While regular cleansing of the face is a given, there's nothing quite like a rejuvenating face mask to step up your skin care regimen in the summer. The right mask is not just an indulgent treat — it can also tackle key skin concerns and conditions, from dryness and dehydration to large pores and acne. Filled with the goodness of natural ingredients, Himalaya has a range of Face Masks that are perfect for the summer.

Himalaya Mud Mask

This is a mineral-rich mask that absorbs excess oil, clears clogged pores and removes



blackheads and deeply embedded impurities. It firms the skin, helps restore its natural elasticity, improves skin texture, helps minimize wrinkle formation, leaving your skin soft and glowing.

Himalaya Charcoal Mask

It is a unique blend of Activated Charcoal Powder and Green Tea which deeply cleanses pores by removing oil and dirt and at the same time soothes the skin of

any irritations.

Himalaya Neem Mask

This is a purifying mask that helps to regulate excess oil secretion and prevents the recurrence of pimples. The combination of Neem, Turmeric & Fuller's Earth (Multani Mitti), improves skin texture and leaves you with clear, problem-free skin.

Himalaya's range of face masks are available at all leading supermarkets and hypermarkets.

A 'new day' in Israel after Netanyahu's exit

I look forward to working with you to strengthen the ties between our two nations: New PM tells Biden

Jerusalem - Israel awoke on Monday with Jewish nationalist Naftali Bennett at the head of a precarious coalition government that faces stark challenges, after 12 years under rightwing Benjamin Netanyahu.

The watershed moment in Israeli politics saw an ideologically disparate eight-party bloc, ranging from right to left to Arab Islamic conservatives, band together to unseat the bombastic veteran known as Bibi by a wafer-thin margin of 60 votes to 59 in parliament on Sunday.

Within hours Bennett, a tech millionaire and former special forces commander, was stepping into his new role as prime minister, speaking with US President Joe Biden and receiving a briefing from national security advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat.

And later on Monday, the 49 year old's first full day as Israel's leader, he met his one-time ally Netanyahu.

New ministers met with their staff and commemorating the beginning of Israel's 36th government at the country's presidential residence.

In a statement following Bennett's swearing in, Biden said, "I look forward to working with Prime Minister Bennett to strengthen all aspects of the close and enduring relationship between our two nations. Israel has no better friend than the United States."

In response, Bennett tweeted: 'I look forward to working with you to strengthen the ties between our two nations.'

But the potential for strain appeared on the horizon: Biden has encouraged the negotiation of a new nuclear deal with Iran, which Bennett promised in his speech to parliament he would staunchly oppose.

That vow was among the



Outgoing Israeli President Reuven Rivlin (centre) is flanked by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (left) and alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid pose with the new coalition government, at the President's residence in Jerusalem on Monday (AFP)

plans Bennett laid out that could be heard over rancorous jeers and shouts of 'liar' and 'criminal' from the Knesset, where many rightwing legislative members are furious he joined forces with coalition architect Yair Lapid, a centrist.

Bibi in opposition

Lapid, a 57 year old former television presenter, is set to take over the premiership after two years serving as foreign minister - if the fragile coalition manages to hold onto power that long.

After four inconclusive elections in under two years, Bennett said the 'time has come for different leaders, from all parts of the population, to stop, to stop this madness'.

Whether the bloc manages to keep power was an afterthought for many Israelis on Sunday night, with thousands clamour-

It is a morning of hard work to rebuild the ruins. Netanyahu and Bibi-ism were not defeated by the left or by the right, but by sanity, or at least by the yearning for sanity

BEN CASPIT

ing into the streets to celebrate Bibi's demise.

During his record-long tenure, Netanyahu became practically synonymous with Israeli politics, and for some young people the only leader they had known.

"This morning is the dawn of a new day," said Ben Caspit, a Netanyahu biographer, in a column published in the Israeli outlets Ma'ariv and Walla.

"It is a morning of hard, sometimes Sisyphean work, to rebuild the ruins. Netanyahu and Bibi-ism were not defeated by the left

or by the right, but by sanity, or at least by the yearning for sanity," said Caspit.

After meeting his successor on Tuesday, Netanyahu spoke with the leaders of the opposition parties.

"We have a strong opposition" determined 'to bring down this dangerous leftwing government, this scam government that will fall quickly,' Netanyahu said in a statement.

"The only thing that unites them is hatred, rejection and thirst for power," he added.

The hawkish veteran politi-

cian - who is mired in a legal battle involving corruption charges, which he denies but that could see him imprisoned - on Sunday had vowed a return.

Losing the top job leaves Netanyahu more exposed, denying him the chance to push through legislation that could give him immunity.

He had vied in vain to scrape off defectors from the fledgling bloc opposing him.

First test?

On Tuesday Israel's new government could face its first test: A nationalist 'March of the Flags', which had been scrapped a week prior because of its route through flashpoint zones of east Jerusalem, is expected to proceed.

The risk of unrest has been exacerbated as far-right figures denounce restrictions meant to

'Change' ends one of worst periods: Palestinian PM

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories - Benjamin Netanyahu's ousting as prime minister of Israel closes the chapter on one of the 'worst periods' of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said on Monday.

"The departure of the Israeli prime minister after 12 years in power marks the end of one of the worst periods in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Shtayyeh said ahead of the Palestinian Authority's weekly Cabinet meeting.

On Sunday, the Israeli parliament voted in a new government led by rightwing Jewish nationalist Naftali Bennett. His coalition includes rightwing, centre-ground and leftwing parties, as well as the Jewish state's Islamic conservative party.

But Shtayyeh also said he was under no illusions about the new government or its likelihood of advancing a peace agreement with the



Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh

Palestinians.

"We do not see this new government as any less bad than the previous one, and we condemn the announcements of the new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in support of Israeli settlements," the Palestinian Prime Minister said, referring to Israeli construction activity in the occupied West Bank. "The new government has no future if it does not take into consideration the future of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights," Shtayyeh added.

AFP

avoid scuffles in Jerusalem's Old City, with police urging marchers to avoid tense areas.

The Knesset approval of a new government comes at a time of simmering tensions with the Palestinians, and just a month after an 11-day war between Israel and the Hamas fighters who rule the Gaza Strip.

Leaders of the blockaded coastal enclave have said political developments in Israel don't 'change the nature of our relationship'.

"It's still a colonising and occupying power that we must re-

sist," said Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

The West Bank based Palestinian Authority lauded Netanyahu's departure, but lashed out at the new government.

Israel's arch-foe Iran also dismissed the significance of the change of government.

"I don't think that the policy of the occupation regime in Jerusalem will change with the arrival of this person or the departure of that person," said foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh.

AFP



This photo shows Iranian naval staff on the Dena destroyer (Iranian Navy)

Iran's navy takes delivery of two new warships

Tehran, Iran - Iran's navy took delivery on Monday of two new warships in a ceremony broadcast by state television, several days after announcing it dispatched a squadron into the Atlantic Ocean.

"The Defence Ministry has achieved a major task today in supplying two ships to the Islamic Republic of Iran - the destroyer Dena and a minesweeper," Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said in a speech.

The delivery of the two ships came after Iran announced on Thursday that it had 'for the first time' sent a small squadron of ships into the Atlantic Ocean with the goal of 'reinforcing its maritime capabilities'.

According to a statement by the army chief of staff, the Dena 'is an entirely Iranian destroyer' equipped with a 'helicopter landing zone' and a 'range of defence

and attack systems'.

It has the capacity to 'cover long distances' and is equipped to 'destroy all aerial threats', along with underwater threats.

The minesweeper, named Shahin, is over 33 metres in length and is capable of 'detecting and neutralising diverse types of naval mines', the statement said.

The Iranian navy on June 2 lost one of its biggest ships, the Kharg, which sank in the Gulf of Oman, after it was struck by a fire that raged for hours.

The crew was evacuated and the cause remains either unknown or unpublicised.

Iranian naval forces described the Kharg as a 'support (and) training vessel', but military specialists GlobalSecurity.org categorised it as a helicopter carrier and fuel replenishment vessel.

AFP

Bodies of 25 migrants recovered after boat capsizes

Hodeidah, Yemen - The bodies of 25 migrants were recovered off Yemen on Monday after the boat that was carrying them capsized with up to 200 people on board, a provincial official said.

"The boat overturned two days ago and was carrying between 160 and 200 people," said Jalil Ahmed Ali from the Lahij provincial authority, citing information given by Yemeni smugglers. The fate of the other people on board was unclear.

Fishermen in southern Yemen told AFP that they had recovered the 25 bodies, saying the victims appeared to be of African origin - some of the many who try to reach war-torn Yemen before crossing into the wealthy Gulf states.

The fishermen said the bodies were floating in the waters of the Ras al-Ara area in the southern



Migrants often find themselves stranded in Yemen, which is mired in the world's worst humanitarian crisis (AFP)

province of Lahij, overlooking the Bab al-Mandab strait off the coast of Djibouti.

"We found 25 bodies of

Africans who drowned when a boat carrying dozens of them sank off the Yemeni shores," said one of the fishermen.

"We saw the bodies floating in the water ten miles from the shores of Ras al-Ara," added another.

The UN's International Organization for Migration confirmed to AFP that a boat sank in the area but said it was still trying to establish the details of the incident.

Despite the grinding war in impoverished Yemen, migrants continue to travel there in the hopes of finding work in Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich states whose economies depend on millions of foreign labourers.

Migrants often find themselves stranded in Yemen, which is mired in the world's worst humanitarian crisis after six years of conflict.

In recent months, dozens of migrants have died in the Bab al-Mandab strait that separates Djibouti from Yemen, a major route for international trade but also for human trafficking.

AFP

Merkel's working dinner with Macron fixed on Friday

Berlin, Germany - French President Emmanuel Macron will have dinner with Angela Merkel in Berlin on Friday - the first time this year the German chancellor has received a foreign leader in person, her spokeswoman said.

The working dinner at the chancellery will focus on 'European policy issues', government spokeswoman Martina Fietz said on Monday.

Talks will focus on the 'coordination between Germany and France' ahead of an EU summit in Brussels on June 24-25, she said.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) and French President Emmanuel Macron at the G7 summit, in Carbis Bay, Cornwall on Friday (AFP)

The dinner meeting comes after G7 leaders gathered in England at the weekend for their first in-person summit in almost two years.

World leaders were also meeting in Brussels on Monday for the first NATO summit with US President Joe Biden.

Subjects on the agenda included how to deal with China's rise and confronting an emboldened Russia, ahead of a meeting between Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva on Wednesday.

At the EU summit, leaders are due to discuss the COVID-19

pandemic, economic recovery, migration and external relations, including with Turkey and Russia.

At an online Franco-German council of ministers in May, Macron paid tribute to the German chancellor, who is bowing out of politics this year after 16 years in power.

"This last council allows me to say how much the Franco-German relationship owes to your commitment, your willingness to take action, sometimes your patience with us, and your ability to listen," Macron said.

AFP



US President Joe Biden (left) with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the NATO headquarters before the summit, in Brussels on Monday (AFP)

Joe Biden rallies NATO against ‘new challenges’

Brussels, Belgium - US President Joe Biden warned on Monday that NATO must adapt to new challenges posed by China and Russia as he met fellow leaders to renew Washington’s ‘sacred’ bond with its allies.

Arriving at NATO headquarters in Brussels for a summit with his 29 counterparts, Biden stressed that the alliance was ‘critically important’ to US security.

His first visit as president to the summit has been billed as a renewal of bonds after his predecessor Donald Trump called the US commitment into question.

But it is also a moment to renew priorities and strategies for dealing with Moscow and Beijing, novel threats, and NATO’s hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan after years of conflict.

“I think that there is a growing recognition over the last couple of years that we have new challenges,” Biden told NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at bilateral talks ahead of the main summit. “We have Russia that is not acting in a way that is consistent with what we had hoped, as well as China,” he said.

“I want to make it clear: NATO is critically important for US interests in and of itself. If there weren’t one, we’d have to invent it,” he said.

And he stressed once again that Article 5 of the NATO treaty - the obligation of members to defend one another, once called into question by Trump - was a ‘sacred obligation’.

The allies were due to agree a

statement stressing common ground on securing their withdrawal from Afghanistan, joint responses to cyber attacks and the challenge of a rising China.

“We’re not entering a new Cold War and China is not our adversary, not our enemy,” Stoltenberg told reporters as he arrived at NATO headquarters ahead of the leaders.

“But we need to address together, as the alliance, the challenges that the rise of China poses to our security.”

I think that there is a growing recognition that we have new challenges. We have Russia that is not acting in a way that is consistent with what we had hoped, as well as China

JOE BIDEN

Erdogan talks

Looming large at the summit is also the scramble to complete NATO’s hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan after Biden surprised partners by ordering US troops home by September 11.

France’s President Emmanuel Macron met one-on-one with his Turkish counterpart and fellow ally Recep Tayyip Erdogan ahead of the summit, and Biden was due to meet him later.

On the table will be Ankara’s offer to secure Kabul airport after NATO troops leave - but also concerns in other capitals about Turkey’s own aggressive regional policy.

In contrast to Trump, Biden has firmly reasserted American backing for the 72 year old mili-

tary alliance - and his administration has been making a show of consulting more with partners.

“I welcome the fact that we have a president of the United States who is strongly committed to NATO, to North America and Europe, working together in NATO,” Stoltenberg said.

But there remain divisions among the allies on some key issues - including how to deal with China’s rise and how to increase common funding.

Partners are concerned about

Crimea gave renewed purpose to NATO and fellow leaders will be keen to sound Biden out ahead of his Wednesday meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

On China, Biden is picking up from where Trump left off by getting NATO to start paying attention to Beijing and is pushing for the alliance to take a tougher line.

But National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, briefing reporters from Air Force One, played down how big a part this would play in the statement. “The language is not going to be inflammatory,” he said.

Out of Afghanistan

As NATO looks to the future, it is putting one of its most significant chapters behind it by ending two decades of military involvement in Afghanistan.

Allies are patching together plans to try to avert a collapse of Afghan forces when they leave and figuring out how to provide enough security for Western embassies to keep working.

Ankara has offered to secure the airport, but insists it would need American support.

Stoltenberg said that NATO would continue to fund Afghan forces, train them abroad and provide civilian support to the government once the military mission has ended. And he added, “also some NATO allies are now in direct dialogue, including the United States and Turkey and others, on how to make sure that we can maintain an international airport in Kabul.”

AFP

Putin denies Russia waging cyber attacks against US

Washington, US - Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed as ‘farfical’ accusations that Russia was behind cyberattacks against the United States in an interview with NBC broadcast on Monday ahead of his summit with President Joe Biden.

The Russian leader also said he was open to a prison swap with the United States - the fate of prisoners is set to be on the agenda when the two meet in Geneva on Wednesday - and said jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny would ‘not be treated any worse than anybody else’.

Biden will attend the summit after a week of meeting allies from the G7, European Union and NATO, with tensions between Moscow and Washington at their highest in years over a long list of disputes.

Asked if Russia was waging a ‘cyber war’ against the United States, Putin said, “Where is proof? It’s becoming farfical.”

“We have been accused of all kinds of things, election interference, cyberattacks and so on and so forth, and not once, not one time, did they bother to produce any kind of evidence or proof, just unfounded accusations,” he said. Any negotiations over prison-



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a ceremony marking the ‘Day of Russia’ at The Grand Kremlin Palace, in Moscow on Saturday (AFP)

ers would focus for the United States on individuals including former US marine Paul Whelan was jailed for 16 years by Russia for espionage. Whelan has urged Biden to arrange a prisoner exchange and said in a recent interview he was victim of hostage diplomacy.

Another US citizen, Trevor Reed, was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2020 on charges of assaulting Russian police officers while drunk. Moscow

could be eyeing the return of the notorious Russian arms dealer imprisoned by the United States, Viktor Bout, and a contract pilot and alleged drug trafficker, Konstantin Yaroshenko.

When asked about Navalny and accusations of crushing dissent, Putin said, “You are presenting it as dissent and intolerance towards dissent in Russia... we view it completely differently.”

AFP

COVID-19 vaccine more than 90% effective, says Novavax

Washington, US - Novavax’s COVID-19 jab is more than 90 per cent effective, including against coronavirus variants, the vaccine maker said on Monday after a large-scale US study.

The jab ‘demonstrated 100% protection against moderate and severe disease, 90.4% efficacy overall’, the company said in a statement, adding ‘the study enrolled 29,960 participants across 119 sites in the US and Mexico to evaluate efficacy, safety and immunogenicity’.

The Maryland-headquartered company said it intended to apply for regulatory approval by the third quarter of 2021.

After that, it said, it would be on course to make 100mn doses per month by the end of the third quarter and 150mn doses per month by the end of the year.

“Today, Novavax is one step closer to addressing the critical and persistent global public health need for additional COVID-19 vaccines,” said Stanley C Erck, Novavax’s president and chief executive.

“Novavax continues to work with a sense of urgency to com-



Researchers study a respiratory virus at Novavax labs in Maryland (AFP)

plete our regulatory submissions and deliver this vaccine, built on a well understood and proven platform, to a world that is still in great need of vaccines.”

While some rich countries have made progress on vaccinating their populations, there remain concerns that many poorer countries are being left out of the global inoculation drive.

Vaccination rates in the world’s poorest nations are far behind the Group of Seven industrialized powers and other wealthy states - in terms of doses administered so far, the imbalance between the G7 and

the planet’s low-income countries, as defined by the World Bank, is 73 to one.

Unlike some rival jabs, Novavax’s vaccine - formally known as NVX-CoV2373 - does not have to be stored at ultra-low temperatures. The company said it was ‘stored and stable at 2°-8°C, allowing the use of existing vaccine supply chain channels for its distribution’.

In theory at least, this means the shots should be more easily transported and administered in countries with less well developed health infrastructures.

AFP

Myanmar’s junta witnesses begin testifying against Suu Kyi

Naypyidaw, Myanmar - The trial of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi got underway on Monday, more than four months after a military coup, with junta witnesses testifying the Nobel laureate flouted coronavirus restrictions and illegally imported walkie-talkies.

Near daily protests have rocked Myanmar since the generals’ February 1 putsch.

A mass uprising has been met with a brutal military crackdown that has killed more than 850 civilians, according to a local monitoring group.

The junta has brought an eclectic raft of charges against the Nobel laureate, including claims she accepted illegal payments of gold and violated a colonial-era secrecy law.

On Monday the court heard a police force major testify that Suu Kyi broke coronavirus re-

strictions during last year’s elections that her National League for Democracy (NLD) party won in a landslide, her lawyer Min Min Soe told AFP.

Another police major testified on separate charges accusing her of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, she added.

Suu Kyi ‘paid keen attention’ throughout the hearing, another member of her legal team, Khin Maung Zaw said in a statement.

Journalists were barred from proceedings in the special court in the capital Naypyidaw, but an AFP reporter said there was a heavy police presence outside.

Suu Kyi’s lawyers - who have struggled to gain access to their client - have said they expect the trial to wrap up by July 26.

“We are hoping for the best but prepared for the worst,” Khin Maung Zaw told AFP ahead of the hearing. A separate trial is



This file photo released by Myanmar’s Ministry of Information shows detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi (left) and detained president Win Myint during their first court appearance, in Naypyidaw on May 24 (AFP)

scheduled to start on Tuesday over sedition charges she faces alongside ousted president Win Myint and another senior mem-

ber of the NLD. If convicted of all charges, Suu Kyi (75) would face more than a decade in jail.

“It is a show trial motivated

only by political reasons,” Debbie Stothard, Coordinator of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma, said.

“Min Aung Hlaing is determined to lock up Aung San Suu Kyi for the rest of her life. If he could, he would probably charge her under every law available.”

Cloistered icon

Suu Kyi spent more than 15 years under house arrest during the previous junta’s rule before her 2010 release.

Her international reputation diminished following her defence of military-led violence against Myanmar’s marginalised Muslim Rohingya community.

But the coup has returned Suu Kyi to the role of cloistered democracy icon.

On Thursday, she was hit with additional corruption charges over claims she illegally accepted US\$600,000 in cash and around 11 kilos of gold.

Her lawyer Khin Maung Zaw dismissed the new charges -

which could see Suu Kyi hit with another lengthy prison term - as ‘absurd’.

“There is an undeniable political background to keep her out of the scene of the country and to smear her prestige,” he told AFP last week.

“That’s one of the reasons to charge her - to keep her out of the scene.”

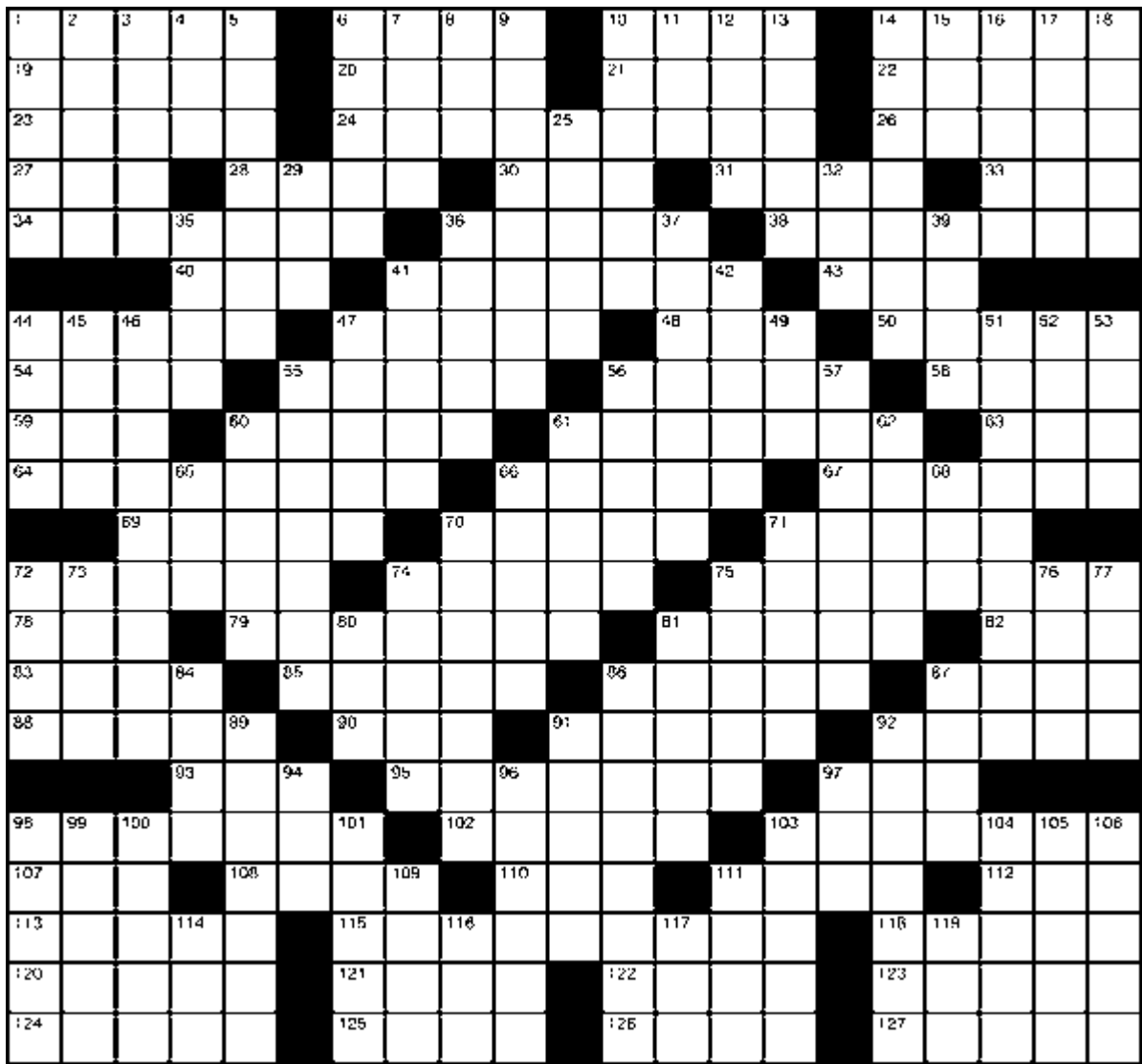
Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing has justified his power grab by citing alleged electoral fraud in the November poll won by Suu Kyi’s NLD.

The junta has previously said it would hold fresh elections within two years, but has also threatened to dissolve the NLD.

It has also responded with force to a growing mass movement against its rule - shooting protesters, targeting journalists and shutting down news outlets.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**

1 Grasp firmly
6 NBC's Baldwin
10 Missile weapon
14 Gog and ____
19 Esteem
20 One of the "Little Women"
21 Asleep
22 Worship
23 Roman official
24 Receding
26 Undershot water wheel
27 Lease
28 Ancient Egyptian city
30 Univ. dorm supervisors
31 Extend over
33 Diminished: abbr.
34 Garlands
36 Less adulterated
38 Latticed bower
40 Pismire
41 Natural abode
43 Siamese isthmus
44 Concerning
47 Quo ____
48 Stanley award
50 Dark complexioned
54 Skating area
55 Truth ____
56 Lower
58 Portico
59 Blackbird
- 60 Large artery
61 Lowered in rank
63 Place to play with rubber ducky
64 Not positive
66 Purple seaweed
67 Civetlike mammals
69 Liturgical headdress: var.
70 Confederate president
71 Mortal
72 Mace-bearer
74 Student
75 Softened
78 Deep groove
79 Most uncanny
81 ____ Marner
82 Artificial language
83 Sister of Ares
85 Stone pillar
86 The first Pope
87 Wicked
88 A lure
90 Son of Gad
91 Sitcom Charlie
92 Greek island
93 Soak flax
95 Military marksmen
97 Unit of energy
98 Alike
102 Broad smiles
103 Interstices
107 Retirement plan, abbr.
108 Bard
- 110 Oklahoma Indian
111 Queen of the Lombards
112 Self
113 Intelligence
115 Furnish with battlements
118 Old Dravidian language
120 Wrath
121 Hindu of low caste
122 Pagan god
123 French school
124 Eyes askance
125 Of the ear
126 Arrived
127 Sand hills

DOWN

1 Lobster's claw
2 Shade of green
3 Comic Renfroe
4 The sun
5 A gift
6 Hillside dugouts
7 Dregs
8 And so forth: abbr.
9 Seraphim
10 Hound dog
11 Kimono sash
12 Bulgarian coins
13 Expert
14 The etiquette Miss
15 Fuss
16 Goat antelope
17 Small antelope
- 18 Machine parts
25 Hindu garments
29 Danish county
32 Sacred vessel
35 Moist
36 City in the Veneto
37 Simple inflorescences
39 Statutes
41 Bret ____
42 Abnormal growth
44 Islands in Galway Bay
45 Ennead
46 Puzzling
47 Pep
49 ____ stop
51 Watchful
52 Put to flight
53 Flaps
55 Evening parties
56 Demon
57 Resembling a tile
60 Mining refuse
61 Ship's crane
62 Townships of Attica
65 Assistance
66 A gradual falling
68 Photographer Goldin
70 Fighting with swords
71 ____ of Troy
72 Engendered
73 European river
- 74 Breakwaters
75 Religious ceremonies
76 Redact
77 Apportion scantily
80 Map route: abbr.
81 Prophets
84 Masses of spores
86 Of a certain disinfectant
87 Therefore
89 Yappers
91 Petty malice
92 Originated
94 Chinese path
96 Lightly sarcastic
97 Bitter vetch
98 A durable fiber
99 Goddess of peace
100 Skin disease
101 The right-hand page
103 Annoint: Arch.
104 Yellow citrus
105 Nimble
106 Flatfishes
109 Allowance for waste
111 Minute particle
114 Varying weight: India
116 Payton's sib
117 Lord Byron's daughter
119 High card

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
For the moment, the universe is asking you to tone it down just a notch. You need some sleep, you need some soft music and low lights, and you need the affectionate attention of someone who'd like nothing better than to share it all with you. Bet you know exactly who to call too. Your next quest is to stock up on provisions like candles, soft music, and whatever else you can dream up.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Someone you've been admiring from afar for a variety of reasons could say or do something now to let you know that the feeling is mutual, and over the next few weeks you'll probably be spending quite a bit of time with them. This may or may not be romantic, but it certainly will be life changing. You have a lot to teach each other. Start now!

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
If someone seems to be hesitating when it comes to telling you something, it could be because they've heard you discuss some extremely personal matters quite openly. It's just your nature to say what's on your mind. Reassure them that while you consider your own life to be an open book, you'll go to your grave with their secrets.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
For the next month or so, you could be more deeply involved with a group of people you've been seeing a lot of lately. These individuals could become increasingly dear to you, and you to them. Chances are good you'll share either a spiritual, artistic, or musical connection. Chances are even better that one of them will appeal to you for a lot more than platonic reasons.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You're about to be made privy to some top-secret information, some extremely sensitive material, to say the least. This may not be a matter of national security, but to the person who's confided in you, it will certainly feel just as important. Keep that in mind if you're tempted to tell 'just one person' about what you've heard.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You're certainly aware of the power of words, if anyone is, but you're about to receive a crash course on just how powerful they can really be. You'll begin to realise just how important each and every word you say is to one person in particular. Take this very seriously. And if you're not interested in them, don't pretend you are, not even if you think it might be fun to flirt a little.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
If something has been bothering you at work recently, don't invest too much time and energy in it. In a matter of weeks, it will all straighten out. You'll begin to see the signs of this happening as of tomorrow, by the way. Let the universe handle the details. For tonight, your mission is to go home, take a bath, and have a nice, quiet evening with someone you care about a great deal.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
The pace of your life is about to slow down for at least the next few weeks. This will be a very pleasant change for you, especially since things may have been more than a bit stressful for you at work lately. The fun starts today when a call, visit, or message from someone inspires you to actually stop for a minute to smell the proverbial flowers along the way.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You've been thinking about making a change for a while now. You haven't mentioned it to anyone, but you've been mulling it over and doing a bit of investigating. It may soon be time to tell the world about what you're planning. If your announcement leaves your dear ones speechless, keep in mind that although you've become used to the idea, they haven't yet had that chance.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Does it feel like Valentine's Day even though it isn't? Like hearts and flowers have disconnected from February 14 and traveled in time to get those lovey-dovey feelings flowing. Hey, it could be worse, especially if you consider the memories you're probably still grinning about from that very occasion. Channel that mood and do something special for your partner.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
If you haven't been taking your vitamins lately, you'd better do it now. A dear one could rope you into a situation that's brimming over with intrigue, mystery, and behind-the-scenes adventure. Does this mean you'll become the next James Bond? Not necessarily. But you'll certainly enjoy your job every bit as much as he does. The perks could even be similar.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You're definitely in the mood for romance. It's time for passion of the most intense kind! And this is definitely a long-term proposition. You want depth, intensity, and a real soul-sharing experience, and you won't stop until you have it. The good news is that if anyone is capable of having it, it's you. Get in touch with the person who can provide you with it.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The name of Pierre Cardin is associated with which of the following fields?
a. Painting
b. Films
c. Pop Music
d. Fashion Designing
2. Who is well known collector of artefacts and curios?
a. Wadeyar
b. Salar Jung
c. Rabindranath Tagore
d. Motilal Nehru
3. Charles Correa has distinguished himself in which of the following fields?
a. Painting
b. Ballet
c. Architecture
d. Western Music

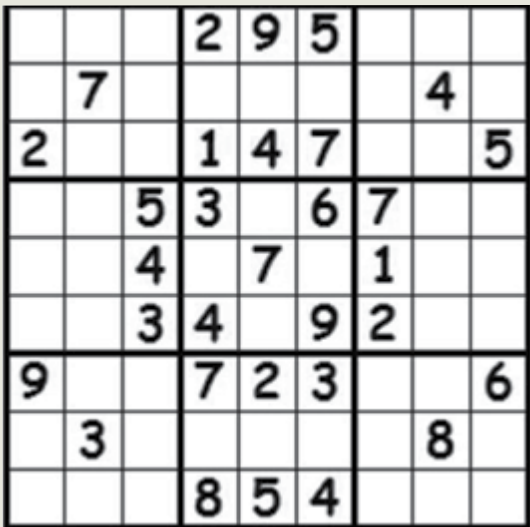
Answers: 1.d 2.c 3.c

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



BOGGLER



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



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (JUNE 14)



WORD BUILDER

You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count





Fulya Ozerkan

A thick, brown, bubbly foam dubbed ‘sea snot’ has covered the shores of the Sea of Marmara, alarming Istanbul residents and threatening marine life.

The naturally occurring mucilage was first documented in Turkey in 2007, when it was also seen in parts of the Aegean Sea near Greece.

But this outbreak is the largest on record, blamed by experts on a combination of pollution and global warming, which speeds up the growth of algae responsible for the slimy sludge.

“Of course it affects our work,” fisherman Mahsum Daga (42) said as the viscous substances lapped rows of surrounding boats.

“You know what it does to shellfish? When they open up, it prevents them from closing up again because it gets in the way. All the sea snails here are dead.”

Istanbul University biology professor Muharrem Balci said when the algae grow out of control in springtime, as they have done this year, they block out the sun and cause oxygen depletion for fish and marine life. The ‘sea snot’ results from a sort of nu-

trient overload for the algae, which feast on warm weather and water pollution that has grown progressively worse in the past 40 years, Balci said.

“This mucilage is now covering the sea surface like a tent canvas,” Balci said. “After a while, this cover collapses to the bottom and covers the (sea floor’s) ecosystem.”

This could poison the sea’s mussels and creatures such as crabs.

“It will smell like a rotten egg unless this process is halted,” he said.

Action plan

Cevahir Efe Akcelik, an environment engineer and secretary general of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, said the foam could cover the sea all summer unless urgent measures are taken.

“Studies show the mucilage is not only on the surface now but also goes 25 to 30 metres (80-100 feet) deep,” he told AFP.

The Sea of Marmara, which stretches along Istanbul’s southern coast from the Bosphorus to the Aegean Sea, is densely populated and home to numerous industrial sites.

Balci said it also absorbs some of the waste that flows into the neighbouring Black Sea from the polluted Danube River that

cuts across eastern Europe.

“This is an extra burden for the Sea of Marmara,” said Balci, calling for a collective action plan for all of the sea’s coastal cities.

Workers are trying to remove the sludge with nets, but their efforts have so far proven largely ineffective.

Balci said a lasting solution requires proper marine supervision, as well as biological and chemical disposal systems for the sea’s cities and industrial zones.

Ali Oztunc, a lawmaker for the main opposition CHP party, urged the government to impose tough penalties on waste disposal facilities that fail to follow the rules.

“The Sea of Marmara is an inland sea but, unfortunately, it is becoming an inland desert because of the wrong environmental policies,” he told AFP.

On Tuesday, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s ruling coalition shot down a CHP proposal to set up a parliamentary committee to investigate the ‘sea snot’.

Oztunc also called on Erdogan’s government to finally approve the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to limit temperature rises by cutting carbon emissions.

“The government should approve the Paris Agreement without delay,” Oztunc said.

AFP

Algae blooms harmful to aquaculture: UN global assessment

Natalie Handel

Potentially lethal marine algae blooms have not increased in number over the last three decades, but pose a serious threat to aquaculture, according to a UN global assessment.

The origins of so-called harmful algae blooms (HABs) - such as the one responsible for the ‘sea snot’ sludge currently affecting Turkey - remain unclear, UN-ESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission said in a report.

They are thought to be a natural process, but nitrogen and phosphorus run-off from agriculture, along with the inadvertent introduction of invasive species, could make them worse.

Climate change is not thought to play a role, according to the unprecedented analysis of nearly 10,000 algae blooms from 1985 to 2018.

A sharp increase in the poisoning of farmed fish and shellfish worldwide had led to speculation that toxic algae blooms were on the rise.

But such incidents stemmed more from an increase in fish farming itself, which grew 16-fold over the 33 year period.

“Overexploitation acts as a natural multiplier of the effects of HABs,” said co-author Adriana Zingone. “This leads to an increase in impacts independent of an actual trend in HABs.”

About five per cent of the world’s 5,000 species of algae can cause blooms that have negative effects on

humans. These range from poisonings due to eating toxic shellfish to outbreaks of off-putting marine mucilage like the one clogging waters off Istanbul.

Also relatively rare but exceedingly costly are deadly incidents in which algal blooms invade fish farms.

In early 2016, a surge in algae in

Chile’s waters choked to death an estimated 40,000 tons of salmon worth US\$800mn, leading to social unrest.

“Wild marine finfish can simply swim away from blooms,” the study explains, ‘but those held captive in intensive aquaculture operations are vulnerable’.

Researchers found about half of the incidents covered by the study involved seafood toxins, with over 80 per cent of those impacting shellfish.

Paralytic shellfish toxins, which account for the largest share of these, led to some 3,800 poisonings over the period of study.

The majority were in the Philippines where the population is heavily dependent on fish farming for its food supply.

The study notes that food safety risk management, including the closure of shellfish harvesting areas, means toxic algae blooms do not always lead to poisonings, and rarely to fatalities.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, the underlying causes of algae blooms are poorly understood.

AFP



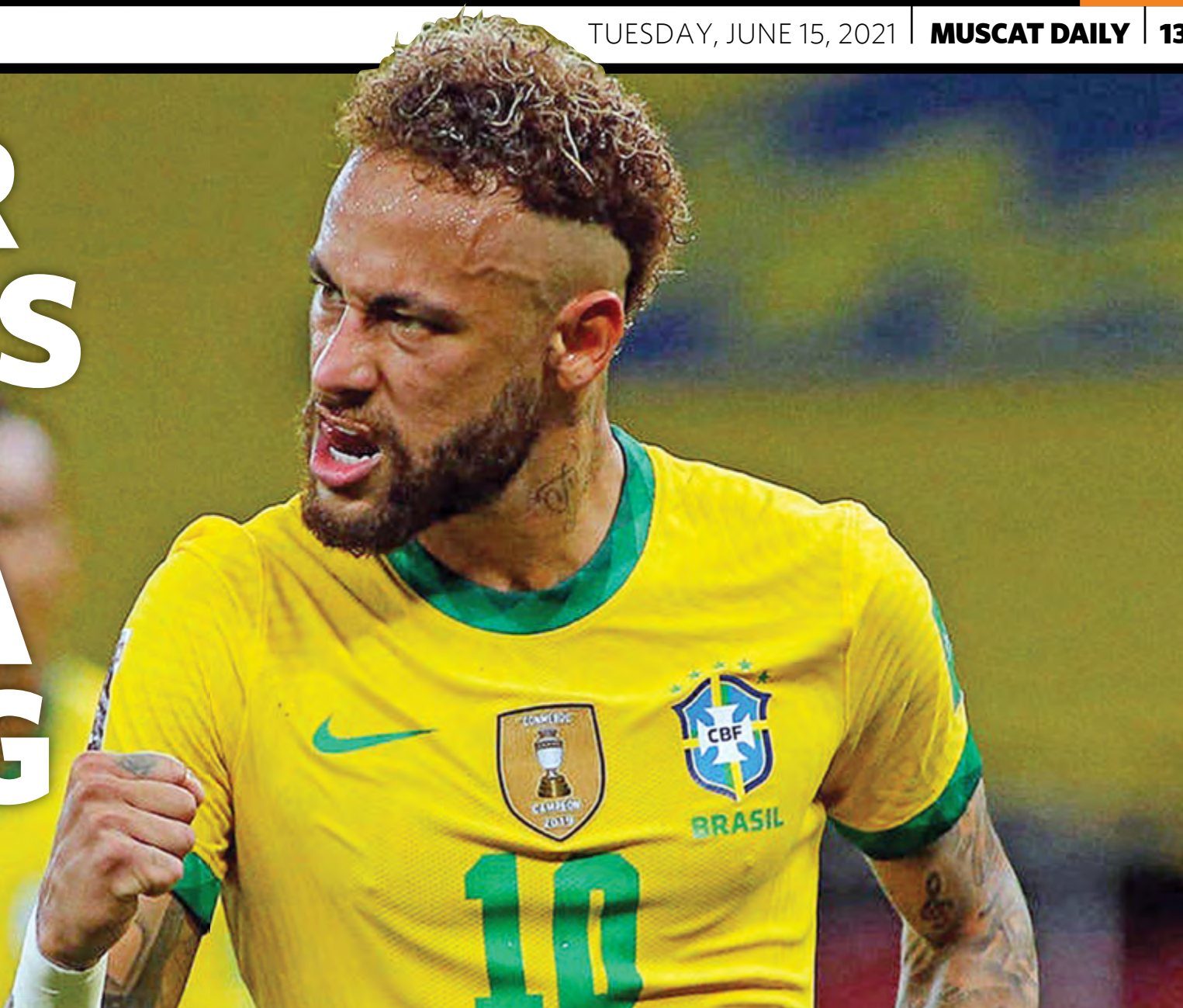
The effects of HABs, which cause sea snot, multiply due to overexploitation

ADRIANA ZINGONE



This aerial view shows pedalos sailing in the Marmara Sea covered with sea snot, in the Darica district of Kocaeli, Turkey, on Saturday (AFP)

NEYMAR STARTS AS HOSTS OFF TO A WINNING START



Brazil cruise to an easy 3-0 win over depleted Venezuela in Copa America opener

Brasilia, Brazil - Star forward Neymar netted a penalty and created a second as hosts Brazil eased to a 3-0 victory over a coronavirus-depleted Venezuela on Sunday in the opening match of the 2021 Copa America.

Centre-back Marquinhos opened the scored midway through the first half and Gabriel Barbosa sealed the Group B win a minute from time.

In a tournament already delayed a year and moved from its original hosts Argentina and Colombia due to the pandemic, it was fitting that the coronavirus should take centre-stage right up to the tournament kick-off.

Played in front of an empty Mane Garrincha stadium in Brasilia due to COVID-19 restrictions, Brazil made light of the continent's minnows, who arrived with a makeshift side missing eight players ruled out after testing positive for coronavirus the day before.

Venezuela called up 15 emergency replacements but could still only name seven out of a possible 12 substitutes due to a lack of available players.

"It's not just being without key players, we didn't have time to prepare better for this team," complained Venezuela's Portuguese coach Jose Peseiro.

The game went ahead and, predictably, reigning champions Brazil were well on top. "The three points are important. We had to start well regardless of our rivals having players out," said Brazil captain Casemiro.

Following a minute's silence to remember COVID-19 victims, Richarlison was denied from close range by Venezuela's goalkeeper Joel Graterol early on before the forward flicked a header wide from a corner.

Centre-back Eder Militao was also off target with a header while Graterol did well to hold a Danilo volley from distance.

Venezuela produced little



going forward but Jose Martinez did have the Brazil defence back-peddalling with a dangerous burst before winning a corner that came to nothing. Brazil took the lead on 23 minutes when Richarlison flicked on a Neymar

corner that deflected into Marquinhos's path inside the six-yard box, allowing the centre-back to bundle home.

Richarlison had a goal ruled out for offside while Neymar incredibly fired wide from 12 yards out as Brazil threatened to put the game to bed before half-time. It was more of the same after the break as substitute Alex Sandro from distance and Richarlison with a header both shot over the bar.

Neymar somehow failed to turn home a cross-cum-shot from Gabriel Jesus from three yards out but on 64 minutes he doubled the lead from the

penalty spot. Yohan Cumana clumsily brought down Danilo in the box and Neymar sent Graterol the wrong way from 12 yards. The hosts took their foot off the gas but Neymar kept probing and was denied a second by Graterol following a mazy run and shot from inside the box.

Neymar then created the third, rounding Graterol before crossing for Gabriel Barbosa to chest home from barely a yard out.

"He's developed the ability to create. Right foot, left foot, he's become an unpredictable player," Brazil coach Tite enthused about Neymar.

Colombia triumph

Edwin Cardona scored the only goal of the game as Colombia held on under second half pressure to begin their Group B campaign with a 1-0 win over Ecuador - who beat them 6-1 the last time the sides met in a World Cup qualifier in November.

Colombia's goal was a thing of beauty with Cardona taking a short free-kick to Juan Cuadrado, who chipped the ball into the box for Miguel Borja to head down into the path of Cardona to volley home. It was initially disallowed for offside but a VAR review overruled.

AFP

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EURO2020



Czech Republic's Patrik Schick (L) celebrates after scoring against hosts Scotland during their Group D match at Hampden Park in Glasgow on Monday (AFP)

SCHICK'S STUNNER

Glasgow, UK - Scotland's long-awaited return to a major international tournament was ruined by Patrik Schick's 'genius' said Czech Republic coach Jaroslav Silhavy after a stunning finish from the Bayer Leverkusen striker sealed a 2-0 win at Hampden on Monday.

Schick's header just before half-time opened the scoring, but it was his stunning strike from just inside the Scotland half after the break that will live in the memory as one of the all-time great European Championship goals.

"We know he is a genius, he knows how to finish and that's why he is there," said Silhavy. "The second goal is something out of this world, we haven't seen a goal like that in a long time."

Schick said he had spotted Scotland goalkeeper David

Marshall off his line earlier in the game and when his chance came to take advantage, produced an inch-perfect effort that curled and dipped just in time from 50m. "The goalkeeper was quite high. I took a look, I saw he was out there, so I slammed it in," said Schick.

After a 23-year wait to qualify for a major tournament, Scotland's hopes of making more history by getting out of the group for the first time now look slim. Steve Clarke's men face England next on Friday at Wembley before hosting World Cup finalists Croatia at Hampden on June 22.

Toothless without Tierney

Scotland's bad day started before kick-off when Arsenal's Kieran Tierney was ruled out by injury. Without him, the home side's three centre-backs were

easily pressed into making mistakes trying to play the ball out from the back. "We've done a lot of work with team shape and Kieran was involved in that," said Clarke.

"With 48 hours to go it does take a lot of changing, Kieran has been an integral part of how we've played."

Without Tierney, there was

GROUP D	
SCOTLAND VS CZECH REPUBLIC	
	
0	2

even more emphasis on captain Andy Robertson to lead Scotland forward. The Liverpool left-back had his side's best chance of the first-half when he was denied by a brilliant save

from Tomas Vaclik.

A cagey game of few chances burst into life after Schick's towering leap put the visitors in front three minutes before half-time.

Scotland were slow to react after initially clearing a corner and Schick rose highest to flick home Vladimir Coufal's cross.

Twice Scotland were inches away from levelling early in the second-half when Jack Hendry's dipping effort came back off the crossbar before Vaclik clawed away a mishit clearance from Tomas Kalas.

"I don't think there was much between the two sides, we were not clinical enough at the right time," added Clarke.

However, the home side were stunned by a moment of brilliance from Schick on 52 minutes as he spotted Marshall off his line from halfway and bent in an incredible shot from

just inside the Scotland half.

Clarke might have to speak to Marshall about his positioning in future games after Schick revealed he knew the Derby keeper had a habit of coming out too far.

"Yeah I saw him (off his line). I checked in the first half when this situation would come. I knew he was staying very high and when the ball came I checked where he was standing," Schick said.

"That was a fairy tale, scoring like this," said Czech midfielder Tomas Soucek.

"The other players can stop trying to score the goal of the tournament because that job has already been done."

Scotland were playing in front of fans at Hampden for the first time since November 2019 with 12,000 in attendance.

AFP

STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
GROUP A								
Italy	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Wales	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Switzerland	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Turkey	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0
GROUP B								
Belgium	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Finland	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Denmark	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
Russia	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0
GROUP C								
Austria	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
Netherlands	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	3
Ukraine	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	0
North Macedonia	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
GROUP D								
Czech Republic	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
England	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Croatia	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
Scotland	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
GROUP E								
Slovakia	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Spain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poland	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0

Ronaldo ready for 'perfect' start in front of a packed house

Budapest, Hungary - Cristiano Ronaldo said on Monday he was looking forward to beginning Euro 2020 in front of a packed Puskas Arena against Hungary as he prepares to lead holders Portugal in their search for a repeat triumph.

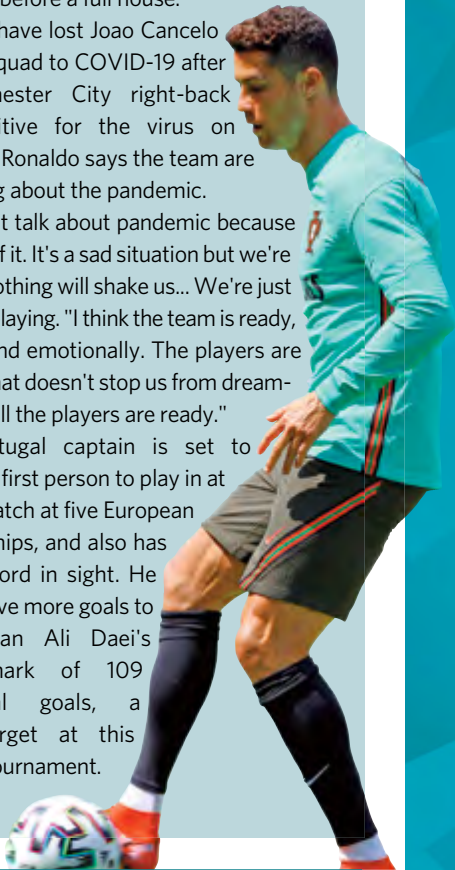
At 36 years old, Ronaldo is set take the field in front of 68,000 fans in the Hungarian capital on Tuesday in a tough Group F alongside Germany and world champions France. "It's perfect. I wish every single venue could host a full house. It's great for viewers and players, but sadly it's not up to us to decide," said Ronaldo. "We know the pandemic has its influence. I wish we could always play before a full house."

Portugal have lost Joao Cancelo from their squad to COVID-19 after the Manchester City right-back tested positive for the virus on Sunday, but Ronaldo says the team are not worrying about the pandemic.

"We don't talk about pandemic because we're tired of it. It's a sad situation but we're focused... Nothing will shake us... We're just focused on playing. I think the team is ready, physically and emotionally. The players are young but that doesn't stop us from dreaming. I know all the players are ready."

The Portugal captain is set to become the first person to play in at least one match at five European Championships, and also has another record in sight. He needs just five more goals to equal Iranian Ali Daei's all-time mark of 109 international goals, a feasible target at this summer's tournament.

AFP



Slovakia's Milan Skriniar celebrates after scoring against Poland in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on Monday (AFP)

Skriniar fires Slovakia to win

Saint Petersburg, Russia - Inter Milan defender Milan Skriniar fired Slovakia to a 2-1 victory over neighbours Poland on Monday in their opening game at Euro 2020 in Saint Petersburg.

An own goal from Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny handed Slovakia the lead on 18 minutes, but Karol Linetty equalised for Poland right at the start of the second half.

Poland were reduced to ten men on the hour when midfielder Grzegorz

Krychowiak picked up a second yellow card, and Slovakia made their advantage count as Skriniar drove in the winner at a corner.

Ma re k Hamsik, who led Slovakia at the 2010 World Cup as well as Euro 2016, earned his record-extending 127th cap for his country.

Slovakia went in front

early as Robert Mak danced past two defenders as he drifted in from the left wing, his low strike taking a slight deflection and smacking the post before bouncing off the grounded Szczesny and tricking over the line. He became the first goalkeeper in Euro history to be credited with an own goal.

Poland levelled 32

seconds after half-time as Linetty finished off a sharp team move with a scruffy shot that rolled into the corner.

Linetty then stabbed a cross straight at Martin Dubravka, but the dismissal of Krychowiak proved costly as Skriniar controlled a corner and coolly tucked home to put Slovakia back on top. Jan Bednarek prodded wide in stoppage time as Poland pressed for an equaliser but in vain.

AFP

GROUP E	
POLAND VS SLOVAKIA	
	
1	2



EURO2020



DUMFRIES GIVES DUTCH DELIGHT

Late header secures dramatic victory for the Netherlands over Ukraine

Amsterdam, Netherlands - Denzel Dumfries scored a dramatic late winner as the Netherlands marked their long-awaited return to a major tournament with a 3-2 victory over Ukraine in a remarkable Euro 2020 game in Amsterdam on Sunday.

Dumfries, the PSV Eindhoven full-back, headed in a cross from substitute Nathan Ake to complete a madcap second half after the home side eased into a two-goal lead and then threw it away.

Captain Georginio Wijnaldum and Wout Weghorst both scored before the hour mark at the Johan Cruyff Arena, only for Andriy Yarmolenko and Roman Yaremchuk to briefly restore parity for Ukraine. Frank de Boer's side got there in the end and the victory provides a major lift to the Netherlands after their first game at a major competition in seven years.

"I thought we were very balanced and dominated the game so we would like to see the same again going forward. We can be proud," insisted De Boer. They will now hope to build on it on Thursday against Austria, who beat North Macedonia earlier in the same Group C.

It was a brilliant game, and a crowd of around 16,000 created an atmosphere fit for the occasion at the home of Ajax, where supporters held up banners with messages of support for Christian Eriksen following the Denmark star's



Netherlands' Denzel Dumfries celebrates after scoring against Ukraine in Amsterdam on Sunday

cardiac arrest on Saturday. Eriksen played for Ajax before moving to Tottenham Hotspur in 2013 and several Dutch players remain close to the midfielder.

Defender Daley Blind played with him in Amsterdam and needed heart surgery himself in 2019 after being diagnosed with myocarditis. He was in tears as he was substituted in the second half.

"Daley was quite emotional because he had some problems with his own heart," De Boer said.

The Netherlands were playing their first game at a major event since coming third at the 2014 World Cup. They had not won a game at a Euro in 13 years, since a 2-0 win over Romania at Euro 2008. The emergence of the likes of Frenkie de Jong and Matthijs de Ligt has given supporters of the Oranje hope for the future.

Those supporters were in fine spirits ahead of the game, bedecked in orange as they filled the bars around the ground, thoughts of the pandemic appearing far away.

New-look Dutch side

Yet Dutch optimism has been tempered by selection problems facing De Boer.

Juventus defender Matthijs de Ligt missed this game as he recovers from a groin injury, while Virgil van Dijk is not at the tournament at all.

De Boer has switched to a 3-5-2 formation and has real stars in Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong and Memphis Depay up front. The system has helped Wijnaldum add a goal-scoring threat from midfield while Dumfries was a constant threat down the right. He should have scored late in the first half with a free header, after

Ukraine goalkeeper Georgiy Bushchan

produced a fine save to keep out a Wijnaldum volley.

The hosts got their reward shortly after the restart when Bushchan turned a dangerous low ball by Dumfries out into the path of Wijnaldum who fired home.

Goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg, at 38 the oldest player ever to represent the Netherlands at a major tournament, had not had much to do but then he was beaten in the 75th minute by a curling strike from Yarmolenko.

Yaremchuk then headed in a Ruslan Malinovskyi free-kick and Ukraine looked set to leave with a draw, but then Dumfries appeared.

AFP

TODAY'S MATCHES

GROUP F



HUNGARY VS PORTUGAL

(8pm)



FRANCE VS GERMANY

(11pm)



(All kick-offs are Oman time)

Mbappe 'affected' by Giroud criticism but keen to move on

Paris, France - Kylian Mbappe admitted he was 'affected' by public comments perceived as criticism from fellow forward Olivier Giroud following a friendly against Bulgaria, but insisted he did not want it to become a distraction for France at Euro 2020.

Tensions surfaced between the two players after Chelsea striker Giroud complained about not receiving the ball often enough during Tuesday's 3-0 win over Bulgaria, in which he scored twice.

"I was a bit affected by that but we're not going to make a big story about it," Mbappe said on Sunday.

"We're here to represent France and the national team represents the most important thing. We have a big competition and these trivial things aren't going to disrupt our preparation."

Mbappe, the leading scorer in French League last season with 27

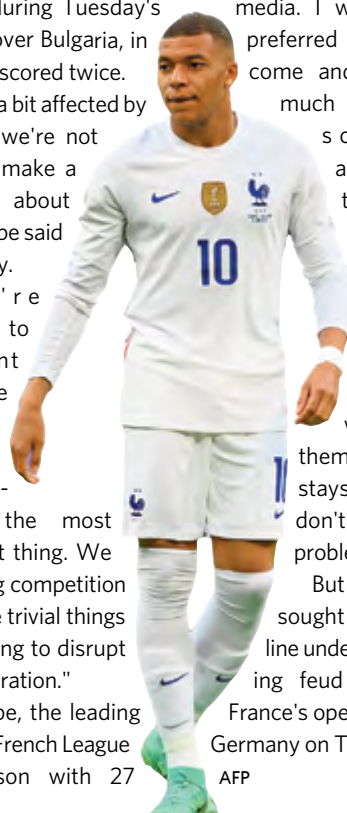
goals, revealed he had wanted to address the matter earlier in the week but was dissuaded from doing so by France coach Didier Deschamps.

The PSG star, claimed it wasn't what Giroud said that bothered him, but the public nature of his remarks. "I saw him in the dressing room, I went to congratulate him on his goals. He didn't say anything to me and then I learned about it in the media. I would have preferred that he come and even be

much more scathing about it. In the dressing room if I have something to say to someone I will tell them and it stays there, I don't have a problem."

But Mbappe sought to draw a line under the brewing feud ahead of France's opener against Germany on Tuesday.

AFP



Danish players criticise decision to resume game

Eriksen in good spirits, remains under observation: Agent

Helsingør, Denmark - Denmark's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and striker Martin Braithwaite on Monday lamented that they had to choose whether to restart the Denmark and Finland Euro 2020 match while they were reeling from Christian Eriksen's mid-game collapse.

"We were put in a position, that I personally feel that we shouldn't have been put in," Schmeichel told Danish media at a press event in Helsingør north of Copenhagen. "We had two options," Schmeichel explained. "Either come back the day after (Sunday) at noon or continue the game."

The Leicester City goalie said he wished someone more senior would've said 'that it wasn't the time to take that decision, and that



Kasper Schmeichel (R) and Simon Kjaer (C) comfort Sabrina Kvist Jensen, partner of Christian Eriksen, after he collapsed on the pitch

we should maybe wait until the day after to decide'.

"What has happened has happened, and hopefully they'll learn from this," Schmeichel said, as he praised what he considered the real 'heroes' of the game, the medics.

Barcelona striker Martin Braithwaite said the players would have 'wanted a third option, because we didn't

want to play', noting that the decision to resume the game was 'not a wish'.

"It was one of the only possibilities we had, and we were told we should make a decision," Braithwaite said.

The comments mark the first time since Eriksen's collapse and cardiac arrest on Saturday that his teammates have spoken to the press.

'In good spirits'

Elsewhere, the agent of Eriksen said the Danish player is in 'good spirits' but anxious to find out the cause of his cardiac arrest.

"We spoke this morning (Sunday). He was joking, and in good spirits, I found him well," Martin Schoots told Italian newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport on Monday. "We all want to find out what happened, him included. The doctors are conducting detailed tests, it'll take time. He will remain in hospital until at least Tuesday."

Meanwhile, Jakob Hoyer, the Danish Football Union's communications director said that Eriksen's condition is still 'stable' and 'good', adding that the player remained in hospital.

AFP

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CONFIDENT OMAN EYE WIN

- Ivankovic’s Red Warriors high on confidence ahead of their clash against Bangladesh
- Oman on the verge of a spot in the final round of the Asian Qualifiers for FIFA World Cup

2022 FIFA WORLD CUP AND 2023 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Branko Ivankovic's Red Warriors will be looking nothing less than a victory on Tuesday when they meet Bangladesh in a Group E second round joint 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers. The match kicks off at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar, at 9.10pm (Oman time).

Oman are high on confidence after their recent performances in Doha, where the Group E matches are being played as part of a bio-secure bubble.

Oman, who are presently second in the group with 15 points, are favourites to get past their rivals, who are at the bottom with just two points.

Hosts and Asian Cup champions Qatar were confirmed as group toppers on June 7 after a narrow 1-0 win over Oman, a match that was marred by poor refereeing decisions. But, Oman bounced back after the loss and secured their second spot in the group after a 2-1 win over Afghanistan on June 11.

India and Afghanistan, have six and five points each respectively and will battle out for a third-place finish, also on Tuesday.

The win against Afghanistan took Oman closer to a spot in the

final round of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup 2022. Success on Tuesday will give them three points, which will be enough for Oman to qualify for the final round as one of the five best runners-up teams among eight groups. Oman have so far five wins from seven games. Both the defeats came at the hands of Qatar.

Following their loss to Qatar, Oman players regrouped and put up a fighting display in their game against Afghanistan with attacking midfielder Abdullah Fawaz's double-strike giving Oman a deserving win.

Ivankovic's Red Warriors have so far showcased a compact display on the pitch and the team has gelled well in Doha.

The performances against both Qatar and Afghanistan have been encouraging with the Croatian manager relying on his young players to deliver.

And the victory against Afghanistan has boosted the players' morale with the confidence high ahead of their final group game as the Red Warriors aim to conclude their second round in style.

Bangladesh will be aiming to bounce back from their 0-2 defeat to India as they too bid to end their campaign with an improved display against a strong Oman team.



Oman players train on the eve of their final Group E second round joint 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Doha, Qatar, on Monday



We would like to conclude our campaign on a winning note and my players are looking for nothing less than picking up the three points

BRANKO IVANKOVIC

Speaking after his men defeated Afghanistan on Friday, Ivankovic said, "The players deserve this win, which has brought joy to all of us and the people back home."

On the eve of the Bangladesh clash, he said, "We would like to conclude our campaign on a winning note and my players are looking for nothing less than picking up the three points."

The coach thanked and

praised Qatar for hosting the qualifiers in a professional and safe manner.

Ivankovic hinted that he may opt for changes in the squad for Tuesday's match.

Addressing a press meet on Monday, Mohsin Jawhar, Oman's midfielder, said that 'they respected Bangladesh as a rival.' He added, "We will go for an all-out attacking game and are confident of a big win."

India need to avoid defeat

India, meanwhile, only need to avoid defeat to confirm third spot with the South Asian side on six points, just one ahead of Afghanistan.

India resumed their Asian qualifying campaign with a 0-1 defeat to Qatar but the Blue Tigers bounced back three days later when they defeated Bangladesh 2-0 with captain Sunil Chhetri scoring a brace in the second half.

Head coach Igor Stimac of Croatia will be counting on that momentum to carry India past Afghanistan, with the teams having settled for a 1-1 draw when they met in November 2019.

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WHAT'S
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A champion’s gesture!

Djokovic gives match-winning racquet to boy ‘with right tactics’

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic said he gave away his French Open winning racquet to a young boy watching courtside for 'giving me the right tactics'.

The world No 1 claimed a 19th Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas.

At the end of the four-hour and 11-minute final, the 34 year old Djokovic handed his racquet to the youngster who was then pictured on TV jumping for joy and in shock at the gesture.

"He was in my ear the entire match basically, especially when I was two sets to love down. He was encouraging me. He was actually giving me tactics, as well," said Djokovic. "He was like, 'Hold your serve, get an easy first ball, then dictate, go to his backhand.' He was coaching me literally.

"I found that very cute, very nice. So I felt like to give the racquet to the best person was him



Djokovic (L) hands over his title-winning racquet to a young fan on Sunday

after the match. That was kind of my gratitude for him sticking with me and supporting me."

Djokovic now has set his sights on the Golden Grand Slam of all four majors and the Olympic title, insisting, "Everything is possible".

The Serb became the first man in the Open era, and only third in history, to claim all four Grand Slam titles on multiple occasions after Don Budge in 1937 and Rod Laver in 1962 and 1969.

On top of that, he also wants the Olympic gold to complete the Golden Grand Slam. "Everything is possible. Definitely in my case I can say that what I've been through in my career, in my life, this journey has been terrific so far," said Djokovic. "I've achieved some things that a lot of people thought it would be not possible for me to achieve. So everything is possible, and I did put myself in a good position to go for the Golden Slam."

The Golden Slam has never been achieved by a man while, in the women's game, only Steffi Graf in 1988 has swept all four majors and Olympic gold in the same year. In Graf's case, Olympic gold came in Seoul. For Djokovic, the chance will come in Tokyo later this summer.

"Obviously his goal and our goal is to win the Olympics and then win the Grand Slam. That would be the absolutely top of this year," said Djokovic's longtime coach Marian Vajda. "But it's still far away from us. We have to still focus on the next one. But overall he's set up for this year. His priority is Wimbledon, Olympics and US Open. I think that says all."

He is already halfway to a calendar Slam having secured a record ninth Australian Open in February. Next up is Wimbledon, for the defending champion.

AFP

‘Learned about grandmother’s death minutes before final’

Paris, France - Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas has revealed that he learned of his grandmother's death just minutes before his French Open final loss to Djokovic on Sunday.

In an Instagram post early on Monday, the 22 year old dedicated his first Grand Slam final to her.

"Five minutes before entering the court my very beloved grandmother lost her battle with life. A wise woman whose faith in life,

and willingness to give and provide can't be compared to any other human being that I have ever met," Tsitsipas wrote of the grandmother on his father's side. "It's important to have more people like her in this world. Because people like her make you come alive. They make you dream."



Every day, all day!