



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik is welcomed by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar, in Doha on Monday



HM'S VISIT SOLIDIFIES BILATERAL RELATIONS

His Majesty exchanges orders, holds a round of talks with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim in Doha

Doha, Qatar- His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was given a rousing welcome on his arrival in Doha on Monday with Qatari Air Defence Force jets escorting the sultanate's Royal Jet as it entered Qatari airspace.

After a short rest at the Reception Hall, His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar, joined a motorcade that took them to the Amiri Diwan. There, His Majesty was accorded an official welcome.

Later, His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Tamim held a round of official talks at the Amiri Diwan and oversaw the signing of six cooperation agreements.

At the outset of the talks, Sheikh Tamim warmly welcomed His Majesty the Sultan and wished him and the accompanying delegation a pleasant stay.

On his turn, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his appreciation to Sheikh Tamim for the warm welcome and hospitality.

During the talks, the two leaders discussed areas of cooperation between their countries and means of promoting these in various spheres to meet the aspirations of their peoples. The session also reviewed other matters of common interest.

The talks were attended by a number of officials from both sides. Afterwards, His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Tamim held a closed-door session.

Earlier on his arrival, the vehicle carrying His Majesty the Sul-



Six pacts inked

Doha, Qatar - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's visit to Doha marked the signing of six cooperation agreements in the fields of military cooperation, avoidance of double taxation, prevention of tax evasion, labour, investment, tourism and transport.

The military cooperation agreement was signed by Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, and Dr Khalid Mohammed al Atiyah, Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs.

The agreement on avoidance of double taxation, and income and capital tax evasion was signed by Sultan Salim al Habsi, Minister of Fi-

nance, and his Qatari counterpart Ali Ahmed al Kuwari.

The two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding in the fields of labour and human resources development, signed by Dr Mahad Said Ba'Owein, Minister of Labour, and his Qatari counterpart Dr Ali Said al Marri.

The agreement in the field of investment was signed by Abdussalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, and Mansoor Ibrahim al Mahmood, CEO of Qatar Investment Authority.

Murshidi and Mahmood also signed agreements on cooperation in the fields of tourism, maritime transport and ports.

tan and Sheikh Tamim was flanked by a cavalcade and a camelcade that had lined both sides of the street to welcome His Majesty.

As soon as the motorcade arrived, Sheikh Tamim escorted His Majesty the Sultan to the dais, where the Royal anthem of Oman and the Qatari national anthem were played. Thereafter, His Majesty the Sultan inspected the honorary guard which saluted him.

His Majesty the Sultan received members of the Qatari welcoming party and exchanged greetings with them, while the Emir of Qatar received the members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty.

The Omani delegation includes Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, and several other ministers.

ONA

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Omani wins gold in world jiu-jitsu championship in Abu Dhabi

Our Correspondent Muscat

Abdullah bin Khamis al Farsi, 29, from the wilayat of Sur in South Sharqiyah, has won gold in the Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship held from November 17 to 19.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has congratulated Farsi for the win.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Farsi said, "The World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship is held annually and attracts the best players."

The 2021 edition saw participation of 2,000 players from 65 countries, including the USA, Italy, France, Spain, Kuwait, Rus-

sia and Korea.

"I won the first place in the 62kg featherweight category. Winning was not easy; the competition was tough," Farsi said. He faced the additional burden of securing financial support as the sport is expensive.

"Reaching the finals required immense concentration and determination," Farsi informed, adding that he prepared for the championship by training daily for four hours.

He is keen to continue representing the sultanate at international meets and raising the Omani flag in different countries.

"I thank everyone who supported me in my training in the past few days in these difficult



Abdullah bin Khamis al Farsi at Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship held from November 17 to 19 (Supplied photo)

times. And I hope to get financial support to continue participating in international events."

Farsi is also eager to establish

an official committee to support the sport in the sultanate. "Oman is the only country that doesn't have a committee or federation

for the sport. Private companies that help us financially will benefit because we will promote them in countries where we go to compete."

Following the championship, Oman was ranked first in Asia and third in the world by the International Jiu-Jitsu Federation in Abu Dhabi.

Describing the sport, Farsi said jiu-jitsu has become popular in the martial arts community. Its philosophy is based on two pillars. The first is the use of mental strength to gain an advantage over opponents. This helps resist strikes. The second pillar is the use of unarmed combat to improve fitness levels, flexibility, self-discipline, focus and compo-

sure. This discipline and focus also helps in setting and achieving targets.

"Jiu-jitsu shares some common roots with other martial arts. India is believed to be the birthplace of the sport. Buddhist monks developed and refined its features. They focused on balance and strength to limit the use of weapons that were used at the time," Farsi informed.

"It then found its way to China and Japan where it attracted a lot of attention, participation and popularity. Japanese jiu-jitsu techniques are known as 'The Gentle Way' and are based on the core values of justice, serenity, honour, self-confidence and respect."



Exchange of orders

Doha, Qatar - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar, exchanged orders at the Amiri Diwan in the Qatari capital, Doha on Monday.

His Majesty the Sultan conferred the Oman Civil Order First Class on Sheikh Tamim. The order is one of the highest Omani orders, which is conferred on kings and presidents whose countries are bound by distinguished relations with the sultanate.

Sheikh Tamim, on his part, presented His Majesty the Sultan with the Sword of the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, reflecting the fraternal ties between the people of Qatar and Oman, and his appreciation of His Majesty the Sultan.

The Sword of the Founder is the highest national decoration, presented to kings, princes and heads of states.



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik visited Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor City, one of the stadiums that will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, on Monday evening (Supplied photos)



MUSCAT DAILY

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Ahmad bin Majid’s manuscript on display at National Museum

Our Correspondent Muscat

The National Museum began a display of the manuscript *Collection of proses in marine sciences* by the Omani navigator Shihab al Din Ahmad bin Majid as Sa’adi, on Monday.

The collection (*Al Safaliyah, Al Mu’allaqiyah and Al Ta’i*) has been made available through a cooperation between the National Museum and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg in the Russian Federation.

The inauguration was held in the Maritime History Hall of the National Museum under the patronage of H E Salim bin Mohammad al Mahrooqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum, in the presence of Prof Dr Irina Fyodorovna Popova, director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St



Petersburg.

Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, secretary general of the National Museum, said, "The presentation of the original manuscript by Shihab al Din Ahmad bin Majid as Sa’adi comes in the context of the existing cooperation between the National Museum and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in the Russian Federation."

This exhibition also coincides with the sultanate’s celebration of Unesco’s inclusion of Ahmed bin Majid in the list of globally in-

fluent personalities.

The manuscript on display is considered one of the oldest in the world, and will be on display to all visitors to the National Museum for a period of three months.

The National Museum also displays Ahmed bin Majid’s manuscript *Book of the Benefits of the Principles and Foundations of Seamanship* loaned from the Al Assad National Library in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On the occasion, Prof Dr Irina said, "In history, the name Ahmad bin Majid is very important. He left a collection of poems that represent his maritime exploits which still exists in the manuscript form that are collected and kept in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg Russia. The poems summarise his navigation in the Indian Ocean, where he taught Europeans a lot in marine navigation."

Omani hiker found dead in Bahla

Our Correspondent Muscat

A citizen was found dead in a mountainous area in the wilyat of Bahla in Dakhliyah governorate, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has stated.

"The body was transferred to hospital by ROP’s Aviation Wing," CDAA added.

The authority has called on citizens and residents to be cautious when hiking.

A hiker should have physical fitness and endurance, said an ROP official.

"Everyone should start small and choose the right trail according to their fitness level. Obtain a map of the area and read reviews of the place and get proper data. Whoever wants to go hiking should go in a group with proper sportswear and gear," the official said.

Meeting discusses PM organ donation system

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is looking to develop a post-mortem (PM) organ donation system to serve greater number of organ failure patients. This was stressed when Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa’eedi, Minister of Health, met World Health Organization experts in organ transplantation on Monday.

During the meeting held in the presence of MoH’s undersecretaries and senior officials, Dr Sa’eedi pointed to the blessings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to establish a National Centre for Organ Transplantation, which will work on developing the National Transplantation Programme.

The meeting touched upon the significance of cooperation with WHO to develop the national programme for organ transplantation, with particular regard to qualified human cadre.

The meeting also stressed the importance of multi-sectorial cooperation for the success of the programme taking into consideration the ministry’s orientation towards developing a post-mortem organ donation system.

Oman's past, present and future showcased at Expo

Shaddad al Musalmey
Dubai

Exhibitions are no longer just a place to display and sell goods but an important platform to present creative solutions for the challenges facing humanity, according to Mohsin Khamis al Balushi, adviser to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Promotion and Commissioner General of Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

Speaking at a reception to celebrate the sultanate's National Day at Oman Pavilion in Expo 2020, Balushi said, "With its theme 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', Expo 2020 Dubai constitutes an important and exceptional platform that allows the global community to collaborate to discover innovative solutions to the three sub-themes that have been identified as major drivers of global development, and the challenges facing humanity to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals announced by the United Nations."

This, he said, is in addition to encouraging creativity, innovation and cooperation in the areas of expo's sub-themes - Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity.

"Oman is a country that aspires to a bright and prosperous future for its people and for all the people of the world and as an active and influential member of the international community, it has achieved successes and achievements in many areas at all local and regional levels," Balushi said. He stated that Oman has the



Omani colleges offer 51 scholarships at Expo

Muscat - The sultanate's private higher education institutions are offering 51 scholarships to visitors to Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai with the aim of enhancing cultural exchange and promoting the country and its educational institutions.

The scholarships are being offered as part of the promotion campaign 'Study in Oman' conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Inno-

vation. The scholarships will be offered to Bachelor's and Master's degree holders who meet the conditions set by the educational institutions.

'The initiative aims to increase the number of international students studying in Oman. International students add economic, social and cultural importance to a country, and the presence of international students is a criterion considered in the ranking of in-

ternational universities,' a press release stated. 'This is in line with Oman Vision 2040, which specifies in one of its indicators the entry of four universities into the QS World University Rankings by 2040.'

Candidates who meet the conditions will be required to fill out an online form for their entry into a monthly draw. The form contains the general conditions which can be viewed in studyinoman.om

Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik," Balushi said.

The sultanate's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai is in keeping with efforts to portray Oman as a unique tourism destination, as well as the country's deep-rooted civilisation and cultural heritage.

The expo is a platform to promote investment opportunities in different sectors in Oman and interaction with the global community. Over the next four months, Omani Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai will host a number of activities, including scholarly, technical, cultural and economic symposia. There will be several week-long events that focus on specialised economic activities, including an Omani products exhibition, a small and medium establishments exposition and an investment week.



Shabab Oman II highlights 'Oman, Renewed Approach'

Our Correspondent
Dubai

Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, presided over an official welcome ceremony held for *Shabab Oman II* at Marina Dubai on Sunday evening to take part in Expo 2020 Dubai.

"We encourage and support Omani youth. *Shabab Oman II* will continue to convey the message of peace and harmony among nations," Sayyid Asaad said.

"Youth will enjoy everlasting memories inspired through these voyages via communication with communities," he added.

Upon arrival of the chief guest at the ceremony site, celebrations began with a joint band of Royal Guard of Oman and Royal Cavalry playing the Royal anthem of Oman and the national anthem of the United Arab Emirates.

The captain of *Shabab Oman II* then invited Sayyid Asaad and senior officials to board the vessel.

We encourage and support Omani youth. Shabab Oman II will continue to convey the message of peace and harmony among nations

SAYYID ASAAD

Sayyid Asaad greeted the vessel's crew and congratulated them for their voyage of the GCC states, as well as for their role in highlighting the noble message of Oman for peace and comradeship through the vessel.

After Sayyid Asaad and the guests were briefed on the vessel's route and the goals achieved, the chief guest toured the ship. The welcome ceremony for the vessel was organised by the Commissioner General of Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

Shabab Oman II anchored in Marina Dubai after visiting several GCC ports as part of its fifth international voyage themed 'Oman, Renewed Approach'.

Big data meet discusses benefits of data, analytics

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Data fuels advanced technology and three important factors contribute to the efficiency of data - velocity, volume and value. These were some of the important takeaways on the first day of a three-day conference on big data, including artificial intelligence, analytics, cloud computing and online security held at Crowne Plaza Muscat on Monday.

Organised by Arabian Research Bureau (ARB/OITE), the event called Big Data and Analytics is being supported by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) and National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), and partnered by Oman Information Technology Society (OITS) and Oman Society of Petroleum Services (OPAL).

About the event, Salim al Ruzaqi, chairman of the board of OITS, said, "We must understand that data is the future of mankind. We'll need data for everything in the future, from automation to AI. It'll reduce cost as well as make work effective. Both private and public sectors must embrace this. However, data should be available to all and be open. Technology without data is dead and is of no use. The importance of data must be realised by one and all and that is why I always advocate open data."

Amr Abdullah Baabood, CEO of (ARB/OITE), said, "We are excited to play our part in Oman's digital future. There are numerous opportunities for investment in technology, in par-



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Data Driven Business Intelligence - **MTCIT**
Data Analytics - **Omantel**
Machine Learning in Data - **PDO**

ticular future tech as a driver of Vision 2040.

"Additionally, there are opportunities for Omani youth to participate in tech-powered human capital development and innovation."

The hybrid conference - face-to-face and online - brings together highly skilled global specialists as speakers and data decision-makers as delegates to discuss the next major trends in big data and analytics as well as the challenges that lie ahead in building an efficient data-driven

organisation.

Delegates will also hear case studies and about experience gained from big data and analytics specialists on the data methods that have the best progress, have the most impact, and have led to improved business decision-making capabilities.

Chief guest Dr Khalifa bin Abdullah al Barwani, CEO of NCSI, inaugurated the event.

The event also recognised companies and ministries which showed exceptional achievement in data development.

Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
8/2021	Operate Call Center	25 /R.O	Companies specialized for call center services operations and customers services	2 December 2021	Before 12 pm 16 December

Companies specialized on call center services operations and customers services may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the Second Floor of the chamber's Headquarters in Ruwi , during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms :
Provide valued CR, OCCI membership and taxation certificate .

Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered .

The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee , OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.

Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the Second floor of OCCI Head office.

OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons.

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 16 December 2021.

For further details, you may call to : 24763739 - 766

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Promising future outlook for SOHAR

Our Correspondent
Sohar

The future outlook for Sohar Port and Freezone (SOHAR) is promising as they continue to grow and attract new business and investors, according to senior officials.

During a media tour of the port and freezone on Monday, SOHAR officials said that the year 2021 has been very successful for the port and freezone, despite the challenging economic environment, with increases in cargo reported every quarter in comparison to the same periods in the previous year.

Mark Geilenkirchen, CEO of Sohar Port, said, "Our outlook for 2021 is promising as we enter the final quarter. SOHAR has attracted new business and investors throughout the year, all the while, successfully navigating the COVID-19 crisis by introducing effective measures to keep employees, tenants and the community safe."

"Looking to the future, we have strategically set our course to capitalize on our location, resources and competitive-edge as well as invest in new technologies to cement Oman's leadership position on the global logistics arena," he said.

SOHAR is playing a vital role



Sohar Port and Freezon is exploring the potential to host a large-scale green hydrogen generation hub powered by solar power plants

in connecting Oman to markets around the world, thus contributing to a stable supply of commodities for the local market while providing local businesses with greater global outreach.

"Once the road to Saudi Arabia opens and as we continue to unlock our downstream revenue streams, we are confident that further growth and development

is in our future," Geilenkirchen noted. Sohar Port is the main gateway for import-export in the sultanate, handling over 70 per cent of the sultanate's imports and over 40 per cent of exported and 80 per cent of re-exported goods.

"The thriving economy, diversity of industry and potential to transit through Oman to Eastern

and Western markets has already made SOHAR an important commodity for international companies. Our expansion plans are set to increase the opportunities even further and enhance our reputation and that of Oman as a trade and manufacturing hub," said Omar Mahmood al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone and deputy CEO of Sohar Port.

"Against this promising backdrop and as economies gradually reawaken and fully resume operations, we expect our overall throughout for 2021 to be the strongest yet," he added.

Given the prevailing global circumstances, the growth in activ-



(From left) Mark Geilenkirchen and Omar al Mahrizi at a media briefing on Monday in Sohar (Muscat Daily)

ity within the port and freezone is very much a positive indicator of the progress SOHAR continues to make in terms of attracting investment and positioning Oman as a major global logistics hub, the officials said.

Green hydrogen hub plan

Sohar Port and Freezon is exploring the potential to host a large-scale green hydrogen generation hub powered by solar power plants. The planned facility will create carbon-free hydrogen from low-cost solar power, stored for use on demand, SOHAR officials informed.

In a white paper released by CEO Mark Geilenkirchen, he outlined how green hydrogen has the potential to decarbonize a range of heavy industries long associated with carbon emissions.

Sohar Port is working in collaboration with the Port of Rotterdam, as well as Hydrogen Rise, and other research institutes worldwide, to identify cost-competitive solutions for the adoption of hydrogen as an alternative to natural gas.

SOHAR has also engaged with leading Italian energy companies including Eni, Saipem, Snam, Magaldi and Ansaldo En-

ergia to explore cooperation between the two countries in the development of green hydrogen and renewable energies.

An agreement with Italian companies will offer Oman access to cutting-edge technology in the field of alternative energy sources already in development in Europe.

Situated at the center of global trade routes between Asia and Europe, and halfway between Dubai and Muscat, SOHAR is one of the largest industrial and logistic projects in the sultanate. It is also one of the fastest-growing ports in the world.

'Private sector on track to become primary driver of economic growth'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A new report by the global research and consultancy firm Oxford Business Group (OBG) and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has explored the sultanate's privatisation drive and expanding role of private sector in Oman's economy.

The Oman Economic Briefing report maps out the sultanate's efforts to put privatisation and diversification at the heart of its strategy for sustainable economic growth.

Commenting before the report's launch, Redha Juma al Saleh, chairman of OCCI, said the private sector had expanded its role in the Omani economy over the years, with investors today not only providing most of the funding for projects, but also assuming more of the risk, rather than being focused solely on the execution stage.

"Together with foreign direct investment (FDI) and privatisation, PPPs (public-private partnerships) will play a key part in enhancing the sultanate's investment landscape," he said. "These shifts will put the private sector on track to become the primary driver of economic growth, in line with the Vision 2040 development strategy."

The report highlights the segments of the economy that have



been identified as ripe for development, such as mining, tourism and logistics, and which, will be key in helping the sultanate achieve its Vision 2040 objectives.

In its coverage of Oman's industrial sector, the report examines the country's bid to boost economic growth outside of Muscat by investing in special economic zones and encouraging the expansion of industrial estates.

The Oman Economic Briefing report puts the coastal city of Duqm, Salalah Free Zone, Sohar Port and Freezone, and Khazaen Economic City under the microscope, highlighting the incen-

tives and advantages they offer and the government's plans for developing them further.

Oman's plan to accelerate development through PPPs is another focus. In this section, the report looks at the sultanate's plans to privatise US\$1.8bn of state assets under the Tanfeeth initiative.

The report contains in-depth interviews with high-profile representatives from both the public and private sectors, in which topical issues are explored, including the sultanate's privatisation plans and the role of new legislation in enhancing its business environment.

Jana Treeck, OBG's manag-

ing director for the Middle East, said that Oman's natural assets and geographic location meant it was well placed to continue pursuing its diversification plans, which were already delivering results before the pandemic.

"While Oman's economy contracted by 6.4 per cent in 2020, we anticipate a steady recovery, led by a return to positive growth of 2.5 per cent this year, according to the IMF," she said. "Looking ahead, Oman has shown prudence in remaining focused on its long-term target of increasing the contribution of non-oil industries to 90 per cent of GDP by 2040."

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website www.mcdcoman.com

 **MUSCAT CITY
DESALINATION
COMPANY SAOG**

Notice and Invitation to attend the Ordinary General Meeting

The Board of Directors of Muscat City Desalination Company S.A.O.G (the Company) has the pleasure to invite all the Shareholders to attend the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of the Company scheduled to be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, 9 December 2021 at Dentons & Co Oman Branch, Salam Square – South, 3rd floor, Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and also through the electronic platform for holding General Meetings, in which you can login through the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCD) (www.mcd.gov.om). Shareholders have the flexibility to attend the OGM in person at the above venue or join remotely through the MCD's website; and in the event the legal quorum was not achieved for the OGM, the second OGM shall be held at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 at the same venue and electronic platform above to discuss the following agenda items:

- To consider and approve the report of the board of directors for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021 and Auditors Report about the Company's audited financial statements for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021.
- To consider and approve the distribution of interim cash dividends of 9.644 baiza per share to the shareholders on the date of the OGM out of the retained earnings of the Company as reflected in the Company's audited financial statements for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021.
- To elect one new member to the Board of Directors to fill the vacancy (from the shareholders and/or non-shareholders). Anyone who wishes to nominate himself/herself for the position must complete the election form, which was made for this purpose and can be obtained from the CMA website and should be in compliance with the Company's Articles of Association and CMA regulations and submit it to the Company at its Head Office Building at least 5 days prior to the OGM date and that is before the end of the working day 4 pm on Sunday, 5 December 2021. No nomination form will be accepted after that date.

As per the Company's Articles of Association, the regulations of the convening of the OGMs through electronic platforms, issued by the Capital Market Authority (CMA), we would like to attract your kind attention to the following:

- Only juristic persons may deputize a natural person to attend the OGM and vote on their behalf through the electronic systems, provided that the deputized natural person has an investor number at Muscat Clearing and Depository Company.
- Electronic Voting on the subject items offered for voting in the agenda starts before a period of not more than 3 days and until the end of the voting process on the Meeting's Day. If the investor's balance of shares increased or decreased, his/her voting will be cancelled and they should vote again on the OGM's date.

For any queries, please contact Malaak Al Balushi on +968 9389 2854 or e-mail at: malaak.albalushi@dentons.com.

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Robots, big data as Gulf countries bet on AI

Dubai, UAE – Robots puttering around Dubai's hi-tech Expo site could be a sign of things to come for the Gulf, where new cities are being built from scratch with artificial intelligence (AI) at their core.

The 5G-enabled Expo, covering an area twice the size of Monaco, will remain as a "city of the future" and tech industry hub, Expo's chief told AFP before its grand opening last month.

But the US\$7bn project, featuring robots that greet visitors and can be used to order food, is not alone in the wealthy Gulf, where petro-dollars are being invested heavily in a post-oil future.

Neighbouring Saudi Arabia is lavishing US\$500bn on NEOM, a brand new, next-generation Red Sea tech centre that will offer ultra-connectivity to its planned population of one million-plus, and is trialling airborne taxis.

AI is also at the heart of other Saudi developments including the Red Sea Project, a new tourist area that will use smart systems to monitor environmental impacts and visitor movements.

Analysts say the Gulf monarchies are willing to bet big on AI, knowing they must move away from their reliance on fossil fuel industries and become more active in tech, tourism and other areas.

"You've got very forward (looking), somewhat risk-loving leadership that sees the need to transform," said Kaveh Vessali, a partner at consultancy firm PwC Middle East. "I think that's just completely the opposite of what I see in the rest of the world."



A robot is pictured during Expo 2020 in Dubai (AFP)

Artificial intelligence courses in Bahrain primary schools, the UAE's plans for automated delivery drones and Dubai's ambition to have 25 per cent of all transport automated by 2030 offer further evidence of the Gulf's tech aspirations.

The Middle East is predicted to receive only two per cent of the estimated US\$15.7tn global AI economy by 2030, according to PwC.

But analysts say the Gulf countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE – are playing the long game, positioning themselves to leapfrog global players.

The annual growth rate of the Middle East AI market is about 20 to 34 per cent, led by the UAE and then Saudi Arabia, PwC said in a report, predicting that more

than 10 per cent of each of the two countries' GDP will come from AI by 2030.

"Governments have the luxury of being more strategic," said Vessali, citing the 20 and 50-year plans which are a hallmark of Gulf governments. "This is unheard of a) in the private sector, and b) in the West," he adds.

Vessali said most AI companies in Gulf states are fully, or at least semi, governmental, with comparatively low pressure to generate short-term returns.

However, the region has a history of investing in companies which did not become particularly profitable, outside a few core industries such as oil and gas, he warned.

While the region might be known as culturally conservative, its AI strategies are better char-

acterised as liberal and aggressive, according to some local players. In 2017, the UAE appointed its first minister of state for artificial intelligence, Omar bin Sultan al Olama, to spearhead the country's AI strategy, launched that same year.

The UAE has said it aims to become one of the leading nations in AI by 2031, creating new economic and business opportunities, and generate up to AED335bn (US\$91bn) in extra growth.

"The region seems to classify being left behind on new technologies as a bigger risk than anything else," said Cesar Lopez, the CEO of Datumcon. "Taking the risk to do what others aren't has attracted and built business," he told AFP.

The data and AI solutions company based in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is using computer vision to scan and identify damaged containers at Jebel Ali port in Dubai, one of the world's busiest, operated by logistics company DP World.

But despite the Gulf's AI investments, the lack of reliable and accessible data sets, which are at the core of these systems, remain a barrier.

"It's going to take a few years to get there because the data isn't mature enough for it yet (in the region)," said Stephen Rawson, an associate at American consulting firm Oliver Wyman.

While Gulf countries have been better at centralising data across different governmental platforms, other leading countries have managed better data sets for longer.

AFP

Ericsson to buy US cloud firm Vonage for \$6.2bn

Stockholm, Sweden - Ericsson said Monday it was acquiring US cloud-based communications provider Vonage, in the Swedish company's biggest acquisition in recent memory as it widens its operations beyond its traditional telecommunications equipment business.

The US\$6.2bn deal is part of Ericsson's strategy to expand its presence in wireless enterprise and broaden its global offerings, the company said. The offer was unanimously approved by Vonage's board of directors, it said.

Ericsson is among the world's biggest telecom equipment makers, battling China's Huawei and Finland's Nokia in fields such as 5G networks.

At 21 dollars per share, the offer represents a 28-per cent premium over Vonage's closing price on the tech-heavy Nasdaq stock exchange on Friday.

Founded in 2001, Vonage offers IP voice telephony and has in recent years developed a cloud-based communications platform.



The company has 120,000 customers, allowing one million developers access to its API interface which accounts for 80 per cent of its annual sales of US\$1.4bn. The company has seen growth of around 20 per cent per year the past three years. Based in New Jersey, Vonage has 2,000 employees in North America, Europe and Asia. Its platform handles 25bn minutes and messages a year, according to its website.

Ericsson said Vonage will continue to operate under its own name as a wholly owned subsidiary.

The market for so-called

"Communication Platform as a Service" (CPaaS), which combines voice, messaging and video, is expected to reach US\$22bn by 2025 with annual growth of 30 per cent, according to Ericsson.

The Swedish group will finance the acquisition with its existing cash resources, which amounted to US\$6.2bn at the end of September. It hopes to finalise the acquisition in the first half of 2022.

Ericsson's shares were down by 3.5 per cent in early morning trading on the Stockholm stock exchange.

AFP



شركة التغليف المحدودة (ش.م.ع.)
Packaging Co Ltd. (SAOG)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we present the Chairman's Report of Packaging Co Ltd (SAOG) for the III quarter ended on 30.09.2021.

The Nine months ended with revenue of RO. 7,007,944/- and net profit of RO.509,971/- (before tax) as against revenue of RO. 6,692,053/- and net profit of RO.499,150/- in the same period of previous year. The profit before depreciation was RO.899,181/- compared to profit of RO.865,559/- before depreciation in the same period of previous year.

The availability of paper is continue to be scarce and prices have reached to such levels which has not been seen before. The non/less availability of paper has impacted production.

We would like to place on record our thanks to all our employees for their dedication and hard work.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all of you for the patience and confidence reposed in the company. We also thank the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Muscat Securities Market for their support.

On behalf of the Board or Directors, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur for his vision and growth oriented policies aimed at bringing about a prosperous national economy.

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Unaudited Balance sheet as at 30th September 2021

	30.09.2021 RO	30.09.2020 RO
Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	6,193,601	5,078,188
Capital Work in Progress		9,500
Available-for-sale investments	-	-
Total non-current assets	6,193,601	5,087,688
Inventories	2,387,305	2,558,648
Trade and other receivables	3,624,903	3,060,345
Insurance Claim Receivables		
Cash and bank balances	8,705	23,833
Total current assets	6,020,913	5,642,826
Total assets	12,214,514	10,730,514
Equity		
Share capital	3,000,000	3,000,000
Share premium	90,811	90,811
Legal reserve	557,640	481,916
General reserve	53,378	53,378
Revaluation Reserve - Land	649,245	649,245
Cash flow hedging		-
Accumulated (losses)/Profit	755,285	572,919
Total equity	5,106,359	4,848,269
Liabilities		
Long Term loan from Banks	885,302	-
Deferred tax liability	260,688	251,763
End of service benefits	125,223	118,466
Total non-current liabilities	1,271,213	370,229
Borrowings	3,546,018	2,361,282
Term loan current portion	157,880	139,402
Loan from a related party	100,000	100,000
Trade and other payables	2,033,044	2,911,332
Total Current Liabilities	5,836,942	5,512,016
Total liabilities	7,108,155	5,882,245
Total equity and liabilities	12,214,514	10,730,514
Net Asset Per share	1.702	1.616

Unaudited Income Statement for the III quarter ended 30th September 2021

	30.09.2021 RO	30.09.2020 RO
Revenue	7,007,944	6,692,053
Cost of goods sold	(5,868,154)	(5,522,577)
Gross profit	1,139,790	1,169,476
Selling and distribution expenses	(292,192)	(328,440)
Administrative and general expenses	(450,208)	(420,603)
Other income	250,643	197,324
Profit from operations	648,033	617,757
Finance costs	(138,062)	(118,607)
Profit before taxation	509,971	499,150
Provision for income tax	(76,495)	-
Net Profit	433,476	499,150
Basic earning per share	0.144	0.166

* Income tax will be provided at the year end

Note: The Complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request them either in Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of the request at the company's address at PO Box No 2818, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman.

UAE, Jordan and Israel collaborate to mitigate climate change

Dubai, UAE – The governments of Jordan, Israel and the United Arab Emirates on Monday signed a landmark declaration of intent to build renewable electricity and water desalination capacity and address the threat posed by climate change on energy and water security in the region.

The signing, that took place at the UAE Leadership Pavilion at Dubai Expo, was witnessed by Dr Sultan bin Ahmed al Jaber, UAE's Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Special Envoy for Climate Change and John Kerry, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate.

The declaration of intent consists of two interdependent and contingent components. One, Prosperity Green, plans for solar photovoltaic plants generating capacity of 600MW to be built in Jordan, with all clean power produced to be exported to Israel.

The second, Prosperity Blue, is

a sustainable water desalination program to be built in Israel to supply Jordan with up to 200mn cubic meters of desalinated water.

Feasibility studies for the project are due to start in 2022.

Commenting on the declaration, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan, UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said, "The United Arab Emirates is pleased to play a role in bringing Israel and Jordan together in an initiative that reinforces both countries' climate security and common interests. This declaration is just one of the positive outcomes of the Abraham Accords that is serving to reinforce regional peace, stability and prosperity, while improving the lives and the future prospects of all the people of the region."

Israel is targeting 30 percent of its energy coming from renewable sources by 2030.

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Ahlibank receives JP Morgan Chase award

Ahlibank has been awarded JP Morgan Chase ‘Elite Quality Recognition Award 2021’ for maintaining an outstanding 99.9 per cent modification-free rate for the Bank’s remittance in US\$. The award was received by Mo-hammed Abdul Qadir al Balushi, AGM - head of Treasury, Ahlibank, at a ceremony held at the bank’s head office.

This prestigious recognition is a validation of Ahlibank’s commitment to ensure absolute accuracy and efficiency while handling electronic fund transactions and commercial payments.

Commenting on winning the award, Balushi, said, “We are honoured and privileged to receive this recognition from JP Morgan Chase Bank. It is an acknowledgement of our constant endeavour to excel; it highlights the innovative measures we adopt to push the envelope when it



comes to serving our clients and associates. Such recognition, from a top banking and financial institution, will further leverage our prospects in the local and re-

gional market and bolster our drive to reach newer success paradigms.”

JP Morgan Chase Bank is a wholly owned subsidiary of JP

Morgan Chase and Company, a global financial services provider that offers investment banking, asset management, treasury and other services.

It has been honouring institutions and corporate entities with quality recognition awards; through its STP initiative award, it recognises correspondent

banks that have achieved operational excellence in electronic fund transfers and commercial payments.

Congratulating Ahlibank on its new achievement, Nawaf Y Humood, executive director, Public Sector Coverage - MENA & Treasury Services, at JP Morgan, stated, “Ahlibank’s 99.9 per cent modification-free rate in dollar denominated fund transfers is a proof of its excellence in electronic transactions.

“At JP Morgan Chase, we maintain uncompromising standards of quality to ensure accuracy in fund transfers, and ahlibank met every criterion and even exceeded the set parameters to qualify for the award. Their expertise in ensuring absolute zero error for remittances is a proof of their commitment to meet global standards of quality.”

Ahlibank has enhanced its electronic fund transfer operations to ensure thorough professionalism in handling financial transactions. Its customer centric approach to every banking operation continues to define its vision and mission.

Innovative products and services have spearheaded its drive to attain digital transformation and establish an enviable platform for customers to enjoy technologically advanced services.

JP Morgan has, since 1997, been presenting awards to recognise operational excellence of high-performing clients and employees and reward their outstanding efforts in achieving the best Straight-Through Processing system.

STP is a mechanism that automates the end-to-end processing of financial transactions.

Dhofar Automotive launches offers in celebration of Oman’s National Day

Dhofar Automotive, the official distributor of Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Fiat, Ram, Alfa Romeo vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, announced the beginning of its 51st National Day celebrations. On this glorious occasion, Dhofar Automotive showrooms welcome their valued customers to take advantage of the valuable offers that were launched at the beginning of November and will continue until December 31.

The offer hosts several incredible benefits on select Jeep models, including the Wrangler Unlimited Sport 4-door, which is available in monthly installments starting from RO218, as well as the Wrangler Sport 2-door, available with monthly installments starting from RO196. In addition, it will also see cash prizes of RO501 for the first 51 customers who purchase any of the models included in the offers during November and December.

Customers will also receive free insurance and registration for the first year, warranty and roadside assistance for five years, a service package for three years/60,000km, 501lt of free fuel alongside other benefits that guarantee a unique owner-



ship experience from Dhofar Automotive.

Hatem el Naggar, general manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, “Dhofar Automotive has always sought to share joyous occasions with its valued

customers and the commemoration of this glorious event holds immense importance to everyone at Dhofar Automotive. We are all proud of the sultanate’s achievements and the milestones attained over the years

and it is our honour to be able to observe Oman’s rich history and heritage on this day.

“Moreover, apart from holding this special occasion, our showrooms will be decorated with the Omani flag. During this

time, we will be presenting incredible offers on our renowned brands and selected models that are favoured by everyone here in Oman.”

The range of distinctive models of the Jeep brand included in the National Day offers include the Wrangler Unlimited Sport 4-door, available through monthly installments starting from RO218, and the Wrangler Sport 2-door available with monthly installments starting from RO196. These models have seen widespread interest and popularity within Oman and are well-known for their superior capabilities and performance in various conditions, surpassing other vehicles in their class.

“The offers and discounts at Dhofar Automotive in celebration of the 51st National Day will be valid until December 31. We invite our valued customers to visit our showrooms and take advantage of the benefits of the offer available on the select Jeep vehicles,” he added.

In the sultanate, Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Fiat, Ram, Alfa Romeo models are available at Dhofar Automotive showrooms with different equipment classes.

La Padella – Italian restaurant opens at Radisson Blu



For an Italian dining experience like no other, visit La Padella, the all-new Italian restaurant at Radisson Blu Hotel, Muscat.

La Padella at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Muscat has opened its doors to foodies all over the capital, boasting an array of immaculate Italian fare on the menu; and graceful archways, marble flooring and soft chandelier lighting bringing classic Italian sophistication to its ambience.

Owing to the vast experience of the chef who specialises in Italian cuisine, guests can choose from a selection of exquisite

classic Italian dishes which can be paired with premium drinks.

“La Padella is set to be the cosmopolitan destination restaurant to serve authentic Italian dishes from starter to the main course in a casual dining setting, catering to millennials, corporate, groups and individual guests,” confirms Petr Dubsky, general manager, Radisson Blu Hotel, Muscat. The restaurant is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 6pm to 11pm. It’s the perfect place to celebrate a special occasion or enjoy a meal with your significant other.



BYPS pledges allegiance to greener planet on National Day

Marking the occasion of the 51st National Day of Oman, Brilliant Youth Private School (BYPS), Al Khoudh, pledged their allegiance to a cleaner and greener planet Earth.

To convey their message of sustainability, the students and the staff of BYPS put their heart and mind to create the Omani national flag from recycled and reused materials.

This project is a perfect example for the people of Oman to ‘reuse the past, recycle the present, save the future’.

The herculean project, involved close to 17,000 reused

bottle caps and roughly 15kg of recycled and shredded paper.

This Omani tricolour measures up to 8m in length and 6m in breadth.

For months, the students and the staff conscientiously saved up used bottle caps at home and school to create this majestic masterpiece.

The parents, faculty and the students are all equally mesmerised by how striking, such a simple idea coupled with the noble principles and incredible teamwork looks.

Determined and hopeful, a

parent of a kindergartener remarks, “This is the most exquisite and eloquent expression of what the future of Oman needs to look like.”

“The recycling habit developed in school can serve to transform our communities, our jobs, our nation towards a sustainable tomorrow. This project ignited the patriotic spirit of our young learners at the same time shaped their young minds towards being responsible global citizens,” Jamila Ashfaque, school principal, was quoted as saying.

Oman American Business Center hosts Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

The Oman American Business Center (OABC) hosted its Annual Thanksgiving Dinner under the stars at the beautiful gardens of the Grand Hyatt Muscat on November 16.

The event kicked off with lively business networking, then remarks from OABC executive director Rebecca Olson, who thanked the OABC’s 175 member companies for their commitment to the mission of OABC. Rebecca then highlighted several positive moments from the past two years of OABC events and programming throughout the pandemic, including the online ‘Doing Business with the US Military’ event, regional LinkedIn networking group for US Chambers of Commerce affiliate members in the GCC, and OABC’s new virtual card created for its members.

The guest of honour, Jay Munir, deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Muscat, then shared about his experience of Thanksgiving, growing up in the United States as well as celebrating around the world as a US diplomat in many different coun-



tries and diverse cultures.

Some of OABC’s member companies sponsored raffles, including Al Maamari Tours, Talabat, the Grand Hyatt Muscat, DusitD2, and Muscat Pharmacy.

“Without making light of what we’ve all experienced, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, it’s good to remember that while there were challenges and completely unexpected moments, months of working from home with kids or pets -- some very sad times for many of us -- there were also some incredibly bright moments

during 2020 and 2021,” Rebecca stated.

“Our team and OABC’s Board of Directors are so looking forward to the next year of service and connection on behalf of each of our members, and we thank every one of you for being a part of it all.”

As the official affiliate of the US Chamber of Commerce in Oman (AmCham Oman), the OABC promotes understanding, partnerships and other matters of mutual economic interest between business communities in

Oman and the United States.

Formed in 2003, the OABC’s mission is to foster the development of commercial activity between Oman and the United States. With over 30 events annually and 175 member companies, OABC is Oman’s most active business council and networking group.

The Oman American Business Center (OABC) is best known for hosting high-level professional networking events and informational sessions for professionals across the sultanate.

Vodafone invests in Oman's marketing future with Ogilvy, Alamah partnership

Vodafone, the leading technology communications company, on Monday signed a partnership with creative communications powerhouse Memac Ogilvy and Muscat-based specialised marketing communications agency Alamah Marketing to bring world-class marketing excellence to Oman. The agreement will see Memac Ogilvy and Alamah Marketing work shoulder to shoulder to launch and build the Vodafone brand in the sultanate while simultaneously advancing the skills of Omanis working in the marketing sector.

The agreement underlines Vodafone's belief in the strength of Oman's network of small and medium sized enterprises (SME), and the telecommunications leaders' commitment to investing in and adding value to the nation.

"Vodafone has a long history of connecting global with local to provide our customers with world-class services that are hyper-relevant to them," commented Bader al Zidi, CEO of



Vodafone Oman. "Our partnership with Alamah Marketing and Memac Ogilvy takes this to new heights as we bring a global mar-

keting leader and an expert local agency together for the good of our brand and the country's communications sector. This

partnership will undoubtedly open doors for Oman's youth to pursue a rewarding career in a thriving industry."

Hashar al Mandhari, Alamah Marketing CEO, commented, "We are proud of our partnership with a global brand as Vodafone

and our contribution to the company's efforts to develop the skills of Omani talent so they can pursue opportunities outside of the sultanate.

"The communications and information technology sector is dynamic, and marketing plays a vital role in understanding and connecting with a culture. As a proud Omani company, Alamah Marketing is perfectly placed to help develop global marketing strategies that remain connected to local roots, backed by our new partner Memac Ogilvy and the expertise they bring."

David Fox, Memac Ogilvy's chief executive officer, MENA, added, "Growing the influence of a major brand such as Vodafone is what we get out of bed for, but this partnership with Vodafone and Alamah Marketing is something special. It is a privilege to apply our expertise not only to help launch a company in a new territory, but also to support the development of young communications talent alongside a local agency partner. We look forward

to seeing both Vodafone and Alamah Marketing flourish in Oman over the years to come."

Cementing Vodafone's commitment to the market and support for society, the Vodafone Academy aims to qualify and employ more than 140 Omanis, placing them on a path to becoming future leaders of the sultanate's communications sector. After the success of the first training programmes in Care and Retail, Vodafone will set up a new training programme in Marketing to equip young local talent with specialist, industry-leading expertise.

Vodafone International is one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world, providing services in 22 countries alongside a network of partnerships reaching 48 countries. In the sultanate, Vodafone has welcomed the Oman Future Telecom Company onto its global partnerships programme, supporting the Omani business with access to specialised services for growth.

Bank Muscat offers discounts

In line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday' and commitment to customer service excellence, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has announced the launch of a special offer for Private Banking, Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking customers under which they can avail of excellent discounts on rentals of Safe Deposit Lockers.



banking trends and customer feedback. The bank's referral scheme for Asalah earlier this year offered guaranteed cash rewards of RO100 to both the refer and the referee for each successful referral. Al Jawhar customers could similarly win RO50 each for successful referrals.

Asalah customers enjoy a range of benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 35 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre (24779999). Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 "Buy 1 Get 1 free" offers in Oman and at international destinations, as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments.

The Al Jawhar Privilege banking experience too opens a world of opportunities for its exclusive clientele. Al Jawhar customers are eligible for a number of exclusive 2-for-1 deals on food, entertainment and shopping that are available through the 'Xperience with the Entertainer' app on their smartphones. They have access to a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO800, the chance to win a fixed salary prize of RO500 every month for a year as well as other exclusive and high value Al Mazyona prizes that are reserved for them in the new 2021 Al Mazyona scheme. Al Jawhar Privilege Banking customers who maintain a minimum balance of RO10,000 in their accounts are eligible to win one of the 20 monthly prizes of RO5,000 each.

Bank Muscat Premier Banking has been continuously launching new offers and benefits for its customers in response to the latest global

Bima portal gives free life insurance for every motor insurance policy

Bima Insurance Platform-bima.om recently celebrated its first anniversary as the Oman's first online insurance portal that provides services of 13 insurance companies in various insurance including motor insurance service, travel insurance, domestic insurance, credit life insurance, etc.

On this festive occasion, Bima Insurance Platform-bima.om offers a free life insurance policy to every customer who insures his/her vehicle at the platform of Bima Insurance Platform-bima.om till the end of the year.

The customer of bima.om, the largest online insurance portal in Oman, also can utilise the advantages of Bima's Golden Package, which includes roadside assistance and coverage for family members of the car's passengers in the event of accidents, whether the insurance is comprehensive or a third party insurance, in addition to the



super-fast reliable service of the insurance renewal electronically through bima.om in few minutes, in order to provide its customer with complete comfort, without bearing the trouble of moving for getting insurance service.

Said bin Salem al Rashidi, CEO

and founder of Bima, expressed his extreme pleasure with the great success that the platform has achieved since its inception until today, and with the great response that Bima has received from its wide base of customers.

Rashidi also expressed his ad-

miration for the spirit of cooperation and teamwork environment enjoyed by Bima's employees, stressing that the Omani youth who work hard until 12 o'clock midnight and on weekends are the main pillar of Bima's great success.

Arwa al Mandhari at Bima insurance platform emphasised that the success of the bima.om in providing (400,000) electronic services since its launch and insured about 5 per cent of the sultanate's private cars in the first year of its inception, is because of the portal's easy insurance procedures and its competitive prices, while the customer can get various insurance services in one place and in few minutes.

Majda al Hosani, the in-charge of customer service at Bima, stated that in a step of emphasising the impressive successes achieved by Bima in serving its customers, a survey conducted by an independent entity shows that the satisfaction rate of Bima customers exceeded 97 per cent with a noticeable increase in reinsurance transactions that completed through bima.om platform.

Nissan Oman announces special offers on all models

To deliver the best possible value with amazing offers and value propositions, Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), has launched a special offer on a range of its models as part of new promotion. The offer includes three years/60,000km periodic maintenance service, free first year insurance, free first year registration and more. The offer, which is available on all models purchased for personal use, will go on till January 9, 2022.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) said, "We are delighted to launch the new scheme which gives customers the opportunity to own Nissan vehicles with a host of special benefits. As a customer-centric brand, we are committed to offer exceptional products complemented with innovative after sales initiatives."

EMI for models

Customers can avail low EMI rate as part of the offer. Starting EMI for Nissan Micra is RO87, Nissan Sunny 1.5lt is RO90, Nissan Sunny 1.6lt is RO106, Nissan



Sentra is RO125, Nissan Altima is RO170, Nissan Maxima is RO253, Nissan Kicks is RO118, Nissan X-Trail is RO183, Nissan X-Terra is RO206, Nissan Pathfinder is RO243, Nissan Patrol Super Safari is RO322, Nissan Patrol is RO376, Nissan Navara is RO159, Nissan Patrol Pickup is RO220, Nissan Urvan is RO156 and Nissan Civilian is RO271. These EMIs are calculated on basis 20 per cent down payment and 3.25 per cent rate of interest for six years loan tenure.

Nissan Kicks

A crossover for the adventurous- Every 2021 Kicks comes with a

standard 1.6lt DOHC 16-valve 4-cylinder engine with Continuous Variable Valve Timing Control System. The engine is rated at 118 horsepower and 155 Newton Meters of torque, and is paired with a smooth, Xtronic transmission powering the front wheels.

The 2021 Kicks interior also has a new stylish and premium feel, new seat colour and door trim design and full center console with an armrest.

Nissan Sentra

Nissan Sentra boasts of several re-engineered product enhancements that have been incorporated after meticulous consumer insights and feedback over the

past few months. The special look Nissan Sentra comes with a totally redesigned V-motion grille that has become almost synonymous with entire Nissan sedan range. The re-engineered model features a rear spoiler, daytime running lights, specially designed chrome package and a sports + badge.

Nissan Sunny

Nissan Sunny is the perfect car for customers looking for a sophisticated driving experience. The car continues to be a popular choice amongst customers in the segment because of its outstanding design, intelligent technology and remarkable

performance. The latest Sunny is an addition to the growing lineup of Nissan's renewed sedan models and features a bold new look, advanced powertrains and technology features.

Nissan X-Trail

Built for real family adventures, Nissan X-Trail is a customer-centric SUV with the latest technologies, yet still has the traditional benefits of a crossover. Its versatility makes it the ideal car for group activities too. Nissan X-Trail delivers an 'Excellent' GSO rated mileage of 15.1km/lt. It obtained under laboratory test conditions conducted by GSO for the 2.5lt SV variant.

Sudan PM Hamdok's own future now lies with the military: Experts

Khartoum, Sudan - When Sudan's top general reinstated the ousted premier in a televised palace ceremony on Sunday, he did not reverse last month's coup d'etat so much as 'whitewash' it, say analysts.

Releasing frail-looking Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok from house arrest may have eased pressure from the international community, but the episode ultimately proved the military's grip on power, they warn.

"The coming Cabinet will be under the threat of a coup every day. They are effectively at the mercy of the military," Magdi al Gizouli, a Sudan expert at the Rift Valley Institute, told AFP.

"It's a complete capitulation of the prime minister and his allies."

Sudan, with a long history of military coups, has undergone a fragile journey toward civilian rule since the 2019 ouster of veteran autocrat Omar al-Bashir following mass popular protests.

A joint military-civilian transition government ruled since then, but the long troubled alliance was shattered on October 25 when General Abdel Fattah al Burhan launched a putsch.

Burhan sparked international condemnation and a wave of mass protests marred by deadly crackdowns when he detained the civilian leaders and placed Hamdok under house arrest.

On Sunday he formally re-



Sudan's top general Abdel Fattah al Burhan (left) and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok hold documents after a deal-signing ceremony to restore the transition to civilian rule in the country, in the capital Khartoum on Sunday (AFP)

versed the power grab, standing beside a haggard-looking Hamdok at the presidential palace in Khartoum. Together they inked a 14-point deal that officially restores the transition to civilian rule, with a pledge of holding elections in 2023.

'Political suicide'

The deal sparked relief from the international community and was welcomed by the United Nations.

The African Union hailed 'an important step towards the return to constitutional order'.

The deal was also greeted by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which have strong ties with the Sudanese military.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweeted that he was 'encouraged' while also calling on 'security forces to refrain from excessive force against peaceful protesters'.

Britain's minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, said she was 'pleased' at Hamdok's return, but warned that the 'military must deliver on their commitment to a genuine partnership with civilians'.

Protesters on Sudan's streets, however, weren't buying it, with many shouting 'no to military power' and demanding the armed forces fully withdraw from government.

Some saw the deal as a betrayal by Hamdok, a former UN economist who has been seen as the civilian guardian of the people power revolution.

At one North Khartoum rally, protesters ripped up the premier's portrait and shouted: 'Hamdok is weak but the streets are powerful'.

The Forces for Freedom and Change (FCC), the main civilian bloc which spearheaded the anti-

Bashir protests, but has now been locked out of the transitional Sovereign Council headed by Burhan, strongly rejected the agreement.

The Sudanese Professionals' Association, an umbrella group of unions that was also instrumental in bringing down Bashir, described the deal as 'political suicide' for Hamdok.

'No guarantee'

John Prendergast, of The Sentry investigative non-profit group, warned about Sunday's event that 'the international community shouldn't be mollified by this single action'.

"Unless the entire edifice of authoritarian kleptocracy begins to be dismantled, Sudan will continue to experience waves of conflict, dictatorship and corruption."

Gizouli said Burhan's apparent about-turn simply 'reflects what the military wanted since day one'. "They were not opposed to a Cabinet headed by Hamdok, but they were opposed to a cabinet that doesn't listen to their injunctions."

"This move simply normalises the coup, this is will be the de facto state of affairs."

Gizouli added: "Hamdok's own future now lies with the military, he will be what they want him to be."

AFP

Probe into BBC staffer death in Nairobi

Nairobi, Kenya - Kenya has launched a murder investigation into the death of a BBC staff member in a Nairobi hotel room, the city's police chief said on Monday.

The body of Kate Mitchell, a British national who worked for BBC Media Action, the broadcaster's international charity, was found on Friday, shortly after an emergency alarm was activated in her room, police said.

Her eighth-floor room's window was broken and the body of a man she had been with earlier was found on the ground outside the hotel. "We are investigating circumstances surrounding these deaths, but so far it is apparent the man jumped (out of) the window after killing her," Nairobi police chief Augustine Thumbi said. "We do not know the motive so far, and these are things the investigators are trying to put together."

In a statement, the BBC said Mitchell worked with the organisation for 14 years, including most recently as a senior project manager in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa.

"We are all shocked and horrified by this terrible news," BBC Media Action CEO Caroline Nurse said. "We send our deepest condolences to her family and her many friends around the world," she added.

AFP

Iran expects IAEA chief's visit to be 'constructive'

Tehran, Iran - Iran said on Monday it hoped a visit by the chief of the UN's atomic watchdog would be 'constructive', just days ahead of the resumption of talks seeking to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

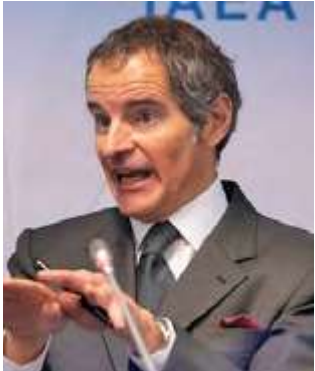
Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was to arrive in Tehran later on Monday.

He was expected to meet Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Atomic Energy Organization chief Mohammad Eslami, who is also one of Iran's vice presidents.

"We hope that Rafael Grossi's visit will be as constructive as the previous ones," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters.

"We have always advised the IAEA to stay on the path of technical cooperation, and to not let certain countries pursue their political orientations on behalf of the IAEA," he added.

On Friday, the IAEA said



IAEA chief Rafael Grossi (AFP)

Tehran had again increased its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, many times in excess of the limit laid down in the 2015 agreement.

Grossi's visit comes as Iran readies for talks with world powers in Vienna on November 29 on saving Tehran's 2015 deal with major powers, that promised it sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

"We will leave for Vienna with a full team and a serious will to

lift the sanctions," Khatibzadeh said.

"The other parties should also try to come to Vienna to reach a practical and comprehensive agreement."

The landmark deal was torpedoed in 2018 by then US president Donald Trump's unilateral decision to withdraw Washington from it and impose a punishing sanctions regime.

Iran has since stepped away from many of its commitments, but the administration of US President Joe Biden has advocated a return to diplomacy to save the agreement.

The remaining parties to the deal - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -- will join the talks while the United States will participate indirectly.

Grossi was last in Tehran on September 12, where he clinched a deal on access to monitoring equipment at Iran's nuclear facilities.

AFP

'Egypt using French military aid to kill civilians'

Paris, France - Egypt has used intelligence supplied by the French military to target and 'kill civilians' suspected of smuggling, according to a report on Sunday by investigative website Disclose, based on leaked documents.

Opposition deputies immediately called for a parliamentary committee to be set up to investigate the affair, while Defence Minister Florence Parly ordered her own investigation.

'Sirli', the name of the mission between the two countries, was designed to provide intelligence on the extremist threat along Egypt's western border with Libya, Disclose said.

"In principle, the mission... consisted of searching the Western Desert to find possible terrorist threats coming from Libya," using a light aircraft designed for surveillance and reconnaissance, it said.

"But very quickly, the (French) members of the team understand that the intelligence supplied to the Egyptians are used to kill civilians suspected of contraband," the website wrote.



France's President Emmanuel Macron (right) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi at the Elysee Palace, in Paris on November 12 (AFP)

French military staff regularly notified their superiors of the abuse of the information, it added. Disclose based its report on hundreds of classified documents on the operation that were leaked to it. According to those documents, the French military was implicated in at least 19 airstrikes against civilians, between 2016 and 2018.

Calls for inquiries

Operation Sirli began in February 2016 during the presidency of

Egyptian, Disclose reported.

Neither the French presidency nor any of the arms of the military responded to an approach from the journalists who carried out the investigation.

Within hours of the story's publication, a statement from France's Defence Ministry confirmed that the two countries had arrangements in the field of intelligence and counter-terrorism.

For security reasons however, they were not prepared to say any more on the matter.

The statement added that Defence Minister Florence Parly had asked for an investigation to be launched into the information revealed by Disclose.

The left-wing opposition France Unbowed party issued a statement calling for a parliamentary inquiry into the allegations.

The party called for Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who served as defence minister during the Hollande presidency, to come before parliament to explain what was going on.

AFP

Robot waiters take Iraq's Mosulites to the future from the war

Mosul, Iraq - From the rubble of Iraq's war-ravaged city of Mosul arises the sight of androids gliding back and forth in a restaurant to serve their amused clientele.

"Welcome", 'We wish you a good time in our restaurant', 'We would be happy to have your opinion on the quality of the service', chime the automated attendants, red eyes blinking out of their shiny blue and white exteriors.

"On television, you see robots and touch-screen tables in the United Arab Emirates, Spain and Japan," said Rami Chkib Abdelrahman, proud owner of the White Fox which opened in June.

"I'm trying to bring these ideas here to Mosul."

The futuristic servers are the result of technology developed in the northern city, erstwhile stronghold of the Islamic State extremist group.

"We saw the concept on social media in more than one restaurant," said Abdelrahman, a dentist by profession.

Voyage to space

Occupied by IS between 2014 and 2017, the northern metropolis of Mosul still bears the scars of war.

But at dinnertime, patrons of the restaurant that is packed every night can escape from the city on a voyage through space.

An astronaut floating across the muralled wall sets the scene and views of Earth and other planets as seen from space give

customers the sense of peering out through the portholes of a spaceship.

The ceilings are speckled with glowing constellations.

But the star attractions remain the two androids, sporting a scarf and black beret, shuttling back and forth across the restaurant on rails to deliver orders.

As they approach, smartphones come out and children promptly line up next to them for a souvenir snapshot.

Time for a selfie

The robots are imported, Abdelrahman explained without giving the source, adding that everything in the restaurant is digital, including the 15 touch-screen tables with built-in menus.

A team from the University of

Mosul's department of mechatronics - integrating several fields of engineering as well as robotics - was in charge of programming and connected a network and server to the restaurant.

Humans have not been completely replaced by machines.

Four young waiters are busy picking up the dishes from the robots' trays and placing them on the tables.

Having dinner with his wife, Bashar Mahmud was won over. He took a selfie, smiling broadly.

"I've travelled abroad and I've never seen anything like this, not in Turkey, Jordan or Saudi Arabia," exclaimed the 50-year-old blacksmith with a salt-and-pepper beard.

AFP



This file photo shows robot waiter carrying empty trays after delivering an order to patrons at the 'White Fox' restaurant in the eastern part of Iraq's northern city of Mosul on November 17 (AFP)

Five killed as vehicle strikes Christmas parade in US

A red SUV broke through barricades at the annual holiday event in Wisconsin injuring 40 others: Police

Washington, US - A vehicle plowed through barricades and into a Christmas parade, killing five people and wounding at least 40 others in the US state of Wisconsin on Sunday, police said.

The red SUV broke through barricades at the annual holiday event, with videos showing the car zoom past spectators right into the heart of the parade - and witnesses saying it sped into a school marching band.

"We can confirm that five people are deceased and 40 are injured. However, these numbers may change as we collect additional information," the Waukesha Police Department said in a statement on their official Facebook page, adding they have a 'person of interest in custody'.

Sandra Peterson, a spokeswoman for the Milwaukee Catholic church, said that 'among the injured are one of our Catholic priests, as well as multiple parishioners and Waukesha Catholic school children'.

One witness, Angela O'Boyle,

whose apartment overlooked the parade in the Milwaukee suburb, told CNN: "All I heard was screaming and then people yelling out their children's names."

Waukesha police chief Dan Thompson had earlier told reporters that officers had recovered the vehicle involved in the attack.

There were no other threats, officials at the press conference said.

A total of 11 adults and 12 children were taken to six area hospitals, Fire Chief Steven Howard told reporters.

During the incident an officer fired at the SUV in an attempt to stop it, authorities added.

Schools will not open Monday and roads will remain closed, Thompson said, while the investigation is continuing.

'Deafening cries'

President Joe Biden has received a briefing on the situation and the White House was closely monitoring the situation in Waukesha,



This screen shot taken from a video shows a red SUV speeding through the holiday parade crowd in Waukesha, Wisconsin, on Sunday (AFP)

an administration official said.

"Our hearts go out to everyone who has been impacted by this terrible incident," they said.

"We have reached out to state and local officials to offer any support and assistance as needed."

While local law enforcement were the primary responders, the FBI said it was also providing assistance.

Angelito Tenorio, running for Wisconsin state treasurer, was at the parade and told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that he

'saw an SUV cross over, just put the pedal to the metal and just zooming full speed along the parade route'.

"And then we heard a loud bang, and just deafening cries and screams from people who are struck by the vehicle," he said.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers said he and his wife were 'praying for Waukesha tonight and all the kids, families, and community members affected by this senseless act'.

Various lawmakers expressed their condolences, including the

state's two senators, with Democrat Tammy Baldwin writing on Twitter that she found the 'horrific violence... just heartbreaking'.

Her Republican counterpart Ron Johnson offered his 'prayers for everyone injured' and 'gratitude for all law enforcement, medical personnel, and community members who are responding'.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers said he and his wife were 'praying for Waukesha tonight and all the kids, families, and community members affected by this senseless act'.

The incident comes after a tumultuous week in the state of Wisconsin following the conclusion of the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse, an American teen acquitted after fatally shooting two men during Black Lives Matter protests against police brutality last year in Kenosha, located just 80km from Waukesha.

The case and verdict has underscored racial tensions across the United States.

AFP



Migrants carry blankets as they are granted to camp at a transport and logistics centre on the Belarusian-Polish border, on Saturday (AFP)

Belarus leader says EU refusing to discuss migrants

Moscow, Russia - Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko said on Monday that the European Union was refusing to discuss the fate of 2,000 migrants wishing to go to Europe and stranded in Belarus.

The West accuses Belarus of bringing in would-be migrants - mostly from the Middle East - and taking them to areas along its borders with EU members Poland and Lithuania with promises of an easy crossing.

Belarus denies the claim, instead criticising the EU for not taking in the migrants.

"I am waiting for the EU to respond on the issue of 2,000 refugees," Lukashenko told officials on Monday, adding that he expected Europe to let the migrants in.

"They said, (German Chancellor Angela) Merkel promised me that they will consider this problem at the level of the European Union. But they are not doing it," he said, quoted by state news agency Belta.

Lukashenko said European officials refused any contact on the subject despite calls from the Belarusian foreign minister.

"We should demand that the Germans take them in," Lukashenko said.

Earlier this month Belarus cleared a makeshift border encampment, sending 2,000 migrants to a nearby logistics centre.

I am waiting for the EU to respond on the issue of 2,000 refugees. They said, (German Chancellor Angela) Merkel promised me that they will consider this problem at the level of the European Union. But they are not doing it.

ALEXANDER LUKASHENKO

Last week Lukashenko and Merkel spoke by phone twice, discussing the migrant crisis and agreeing to maintain contacts.

The migrants, many fleeing war and poverty, have spent thousands to fly into Belarus on tourist visas. Once at the border, they are faced with squalid, freezing conditions.

The West accuses Belarus of engineering the crisis is revenge for sanctions slapped on Lukashenko's regime after its brutal suppression of protests against his rule.

The migrants say they want to get to Germany via Poland and Lukashenko has said that he is ready to send them there by plane if necessary.

AFP

Tunisia intercepts migrants trying to reach Italian coast

Tunis, Tunisia - Tunisian authorities said on Sunday they had intercepted more than 200 migrants trying to reach the Italian coast, in nine separate operations.

"In the context of the fight against irregular immigration, units from the northern, southern and central regions managed to thwart nine (sea crossing) attempts" overnight Saturday to Sunday, national guard spokesman Houssem Eddine Jebabli said.

The interceptions took place both at sea and on the coast, assisting 223 migrants from different African countries, including 111 Tunisians, the national guard said.

Late last month, Tunisia's coastguard said it had thwarted six departure attempts and rescued 125 Europe-bound migrants, 112 of them from sub-Saharan Africa.

Earlier in October, four Tunisians migrants died and 19 others went missing after their

boat capsized off the country's east coast.

Tens of thousands of people seek to enter Europe each year via the central Mediterranean, leaving from Libya and Tunisia and heading most often for Italy. More than 58,800 migrants have managed to reach Italy since the start of the year, most of them by sea, according to the UN refugee agency.

More than 1,300 have died or gone missing while trying to make the Mediterranean cross-

ing, particularly to reach Italy, Spain and Greece.

Tunisia is a key departure point for would-be migrants hoping to attempt the dangerous sea crossing to Europe.

The Italian island of Lampedusa is located just 140km from Tunisia's east coast.

According to the FTDES rights group, the Tunisian coastguard intercepted some 19,500 people attempting to cross the Mediterranean in the first nine months of this year.

It said the trend had accelerated since the establishment in June of a direct line of communication between Rome and Tunis to coordinate efforts against illegal immigration and share information.

Since Tunisia's 2011 revolution, political instability and socio-economic crisis have worsened unemployment, which stands at 18 per cent nationally but at more than 40 per cent among young people.

AFP

Queen attends christenings following health fears

London, UK - Queen Elizabeth II attended the christenings of her latest two great-grandsons on Sunday, her second appearance in less than a week that follows several cancelled engagements over the last month for health reasons.

The 95-year-old monarch was pictured in a lime green jacket and hat seated inside a Range Rover as she came and went from the double royal christening at All Saints Chapel in Windsor, southwest of London.

It comes days after she held a face-to-face audience on Wednesday with Britain's highest-ranking military officer, a first public appearance in weeks following a string of health setbacks.

The Queen did not attend the annual Remembrance Sunday event honouring Britain's war dead the prior weekend, due to a



Queen Elizabeth II at the christening of her great-grandsons on Sunday

'sprained back' - the latest in a string of events she had been forced to miss.

She first pulled out of a planned two-day trip to Northern

Ireland last month, after the palace revealed she had been advised to rest on medical grounds.

But within 24 hours, royal officials were forced to confirm a

newspaper report that she had spent the night at a private hospital in central London after unspecified tests.

Aides insisted the overnight stay was for 'practical reasons' and she had resumed 'light duties', including holding video calls with incoming ambassadors.

But speculation about her health renewed when she withdrew from a planned appearance at the UN climate change summit in Glasgow, Scotland, earlier this month.

Again, it followed 'advice to rest' from doctors. She sent a video message to world leaders, urging them to take collective action to halt runaway global warming.

Her eldest son and heir, Prince Charles (73) attended the event in her absence and is currently representing her on an overseas visit to Jordan and Egypt.

Palace officials have blamed the need for an enforced rest on the Queen's hectic schedule since she returned from her annual summer holiday to her Balmoral estate in northeast Scotland.

She has kept up her public engagements since the death of her husband of 73 years, Prince Philip, in April, including hosting G7 leaders at a summit in Cornwall in June.

Sunday's christenings were of the newly-born son of Mike and Zara Tindall - Princess Anne's daughter - and the son of Princess Eugenie - Prince Andrew's daughter - and her husband Jack Brooksbank.

Immediate members of the royal family and close friends joined together for the private service, according to Buckingham Palace sources.

AFP

Stop airing shows with women actors, order Taliban

Kabul, Afghanistan - Afghanistan's Taliban authorities on Sunday issued a new 'religious guideline' that called on the country's television channels to stop showing dramas and soap operas featuring women actors.

In the first such directive to Afghan media issued by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the Taliban also called on women television journalists to wear Islamic hijabs while presenting their reports.

And the ministry asked the channels not to air films or pro-



grammes in which the Prophet Mohammed or other revered figures are shown.

It called for banning films or programmes that were against Islamic and Afghan values.

"These are not rules but a re-

ligious guideline," ministry spokesman Hakif Mohajir said.

The new directive was widely circulated late Sunday on social media networks.

Despite insisting they will rule more moderately this time

around, the Taliban have already introduced rules for what women can wear at university, and beaten and harassed several Afghan journalists despite promising to uphold press freedoms.

The Taliban's guideline for TV networks comes after two decades of explosive growth for independent Afghan media under the Western-backed governments that ruled the country until August 15, when the Islamists regained power.

Dozens of television channels and radio stations were set up with Western assistance and private investment soon after the

Taliban were toppled in 2001.

During the past 20 years, Afghan television channels offered a wide range of programmes - from an 'American Idol' style singing competition to music videos, along with several Turkish and Indian soap operas.

When the Islamists previously ruled from 1996 to 2001, there was no Afghan media to speak of - they banned television, movies and most other forms of entertainment, deeming it immoral.

People caught watching television faced punishment, including having their set smashed.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Jabbed, cured or dead: Germany's warning

Europe battles surge

Berlin, Germany - Germans faced the stark warning on Monday that they would be either 'vaccinated, cured or dead' from COVID-19 by the end of winter, as Austria took the dramatic step of returning to a partial lockdown.

Belgium and the Netherlands meanwhile condemned the clashes that rocked weekend protests against new anti-COVID-19 measures, meant to contain a surge in infections sweeping parts of the continent.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte slammed three nights of unrest as 'pure violence' by 'idiots', while his Belgian counterpart Alexander de Croo called the violence at a 35,000-strong protest in Brussels 'absolutely unacceptable'.

The anger comes amid growing alarm over about Europe's fourth wave of the pandemic, blamed on a sluggish vaccine uptake in some nations, the contagious Delta variant and the colder weather moving people indoors again.

"Probably by the end of this winter, as is sometimes cynically said, pretty much everyone in Germany will be vaccinated, cured or dead," German Health Minister Jens Spahn said, as he urged more citizens to get the jab.

Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that Germany's current COVID-19 curbs - including barring the unvaccinated from certain public spaces - 'are not enough'.

"We have a highly dramatic situation [as new infections]



People stand in a reportedly 700m long queue in front of the Philharmonic Hall, where a vaccination centre opened amid a surge of infections, in the northern German city of Hamburg on Monday (AFP)

double every 12 days," Merkel told a meeting of leaders of her conservative CDU party, according to participants.

Germany's worst-hit regions have ordered new shutdowns, including the closure of Christmas markets.

'Very confusing'

The restrictions mirror those in neighbouring Austria, which re-entered a partial lockdown, shuttering shops, restaurants and festive markets from Monday - the most drastic restric-

tions seen in Western Europe for months.

Its 8.9mn people are not allowed to leave home with few exceptions such as going to work, shopping for essentials and exercising as virus cases are surging.

The Alpine nation also plans a vaccine mandate from February 1, one of few places in the world to so far to announce such a move.

Austria's schools and kindergartens remain open, though parents have been asked to

keep children at home when possible despite there being no distance learning offered during the three-week lockdown.

One parent, Kathrin Pauser, said she was still dropping off her daughters aged nine and 11, both of whom were recently vaccinated, at school.

"It's a very confusing situation," she told AFP.

Across the border in Slovakia, unvaccinated people were also facing curbs blocking them from entering non-essential stores.



Empty stands at a closed Christmas Market in front of the Cathedral in Salzburg, an Austrian city on the border with Germany, on Monday (AFP)

'Dictatorship'

Tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in European cities at the weekend to protest stricter rules, with anger boiling over in some places.

At least 130 people were arrested in the Netherlands over protests that began in Rotterdam on Friday, sparked by a COVID-19 curfew, and spread to cities across the country. Sev-

eral police officers were injured.

In Brussels on Sunday, officers fired water cannon and tear gas at a protest police said was attended by 35,000, demonstrating against a ban on the unvaccinated from venues such as restaurants and bars.

And in Denmark, around 1,000 demonstrators protested government plans to reinstate a COVID-19 pass for civil servants.

"People want to live," said one of the organisers of the Dutch protests, Joost Eras. "That's why we're here."

A crowd of 40,000 marched through Vienna on Saturday decrying 'dictatorship', while some 6,000 people protested in the city of Linz on Sunday.

French troops headed to Guadeloupe on Sunday after a week of unrest over measures, while Prime Minister Jean Castex was set to convene a meeting in Paris with officials from the French Caribbean island.

Roads were blocked on Sunday after protesters defying a curfew looted and torched shops and pharmacies overnight, when police made 38 arrests and two members of the security forces were injured.

Austria's decision to reimpose a partial lockdown flies in the face of earlier promises that tough virus restrictions would be a thing of the past.

Over the summer, then chancellor Sebastian Kurz had declared the pandemic 'over'.

But plateauing inoculation rates, record case numbers and a rising death toll have forced the government to walk back such bold claims.

AFP

Slovakia introduces restrictions for unvaccinated

Bratislava, Slovakia - Slovakia on Monday introduced restrictions for people unvaccinated against COVID-19, the Health Ministry said, as the central European country battles one of the world's highest coronavirus infection rates.

Unvaccinated people are not allowed to enter stores other than those considered essential, such as grocery stores, drugstores or pharmacies - even with a negative coronavirus test.

"We have resorted to a vigorous lockdown of the unvaccinated, because we



A man undergoes a coronavirus test in Kosice, Slovakia

need to protect them," Prime Minister Eduard Heger said earlier on public broadcaster RTVS.

Heger also said that he would propose to the government mandatory vaccination for senior citizens.

Slovakia has the world's fourth-highest infection rate at 917 new cases per 100,000 inhabitants over the last seven days, after Slovenia, Austria and the neighbouring Czech Republic.

"The high rate is due to many factors, the most important of which is that we have very few people vaccinated," Doctors Trade Union Association chairman Peter Visolajsky said on Monday. "The adopted restrictions are still very weak, and they are not as effective as in the case of the previous variant of the coronavirus," he said.

The expert said that better enforcement of the existing restrictions and 'a more intensive vaccination could reduce the number of infections'.

AFP

Belgian PM slams 'unacceptable' protest violence

Brussels, Belgium - Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander de Croo on Monday denounced an 'absolutely unacceptable' outbreak of violence during a 35,000-strong Brussels street protest against tougher anti-COVID-19 measures.

Three police officers were hurt on Sunday when opponents of tougher vaccine pass rules, imposed to head off a new wave of coronavirus infections, threw stones and set fires in the city centre.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with his



Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo (AFP)

French counterpart Jean Castex, De Croo thanked the police for working to protect public order in a 'very, very difficult period'.

Like several other European countries, Belgium is

experiencing a stark surge in new infections as winter sets in - despite a relatively successful vaccination campaign.

Last week, De Croo's government announced the reimposition of tougher vaccine rules, including mandatory home working for some and mandatory mask-wearing.

Sceptics chanting 'freedom, freedom' marched on Sunday in Brussels, after protests and violence erupted in the neighbouring Netherlands, and violence erupted against police.

"We live in a free country, we can protest, but the way in which some demonstrators behaved had nothing to do with freedom," De Croo complained.

"It had nothing to do with whether vaccination was a good thing or not, this was criminal behaviour."

Some of the protesters were opposed to vaccines, others to compulsory health measures they saw as infringements of personal liberty. Many carried Flemish nationalist flags.

AFP

Protesters demand foreign treatment for Khaleda Zia

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Bangladesh police fired tear gas and around 20 people were injured on Monday as thousands of opposition demonstrators demanded the government allow ailing ex-premier Khaleda Zia to fly abroad for treatment.

Zia (76), arch-rival of current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was admitted to the critical care unit of a Dhaka hospital early this month after her health worsened, one of her doctors said.

She is currently barred by a court from travelling overseas after being convicted on graft charges in 2018.

"She is critically ill and now urgently needs treatment in developed countries such as the United States, Germany and Britain. There is no treatment for her in the region," doctor A Z M Zahid Hossain said.

Organisers said a protest on Monday outside Dhaka's National Press Club drew more than

15,000 activists and supporters of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), but police put the number at around 7,000.

The BNP, which was last in power from 2001 to 2006, also staged demonstrations in dozens of other cities and towns across the country of 169mn people.

In the northern district of Natore 'about 20 people were injured including three journalists' when BNP activists clashed with police who tried to thwart a procession, a police inspector said.

"They (BNP activists) threw rocks at police, who fired tear gas and (rubber bullets) from shotguns to disperse them," he said.

Hossain, who is a vice president of the BNP, said Zia was suffering from liver disease, chronic kidney disease and a heart complaint in addition to her existing conditions of rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes.

Hasina last week appeared to

reject her family and party's pleas for treatment abroad.

"I have done whatever I can for Khaleda Zia. Now the law will decide the next course of action," Hasina told a press briefing.

"Using whatever (authority) is in my hand, I have managed to keep Khaleda Zia at her home (not in jail)," she said.

Zia was sentenced to ten years in prison in February 2018 on graft charges that her party says were politically motivated.

But she was released in March last year as her condition worsened in a jail where she was the only inmate. She has since been barred from flying abroad.

"On February 8, 2018, she walked to the jail without assistance. But when she was released on March 25, 2020, she came out in a wheelchair. Now she can't move or do any normal activity without assistance," Hossain said.

AFP

US, Australia, UK sign nuke sub alliance deal

Sydney, Australia - Australia formally embarked on Monday on a hotly-contested programme to equip its navy with nuclear-powered submarines in a new defence alliance with Britain and the United States.

Defence Minister Peter Dutton joined US and British diplomats in signing an agreement allowing the exchange of sensitive 'naval nuclear propulsion information' between their nations.

It is the first agreement on the technology to be publicly signed since the three countries announced in September the formation of a defence alliance, AUKUS, to confront strategic tensions in the Pacific where China-US rivalry is growing.

The deal will help Australia to complete an 18-month study into the submarine procurement, Dutton said after signing it in Canberra with US Charge d'Affaires Michael Goldman and British High Commissioner (ambassador) Victoria Treadell.

Details of the procurement



Australia's Defence Minister Peter Dutton signs the Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement in presence of the other signatories UK High Commissioner Victoria Treadell (right) and US Charge d'Affaires Michael Goldman (second from the right), at the Parliament House in Canberra on Monday (AFP)

have yet to be decided, including whether Australia will opt for a vessel based on US or British nuclear-powered attack submarines.

"With access to the information this agreement delivers, coupled with the decades of naval nuclear-powered experience our UK and US partners have, Australia will also be posi-

tioned to be responsible and reliable stewards of this technology," Dutton said in a statement.

US President Joe Biden said in a memorandum approving the deal on Friday that it would improve the three countries' 'mutual defence posture'.

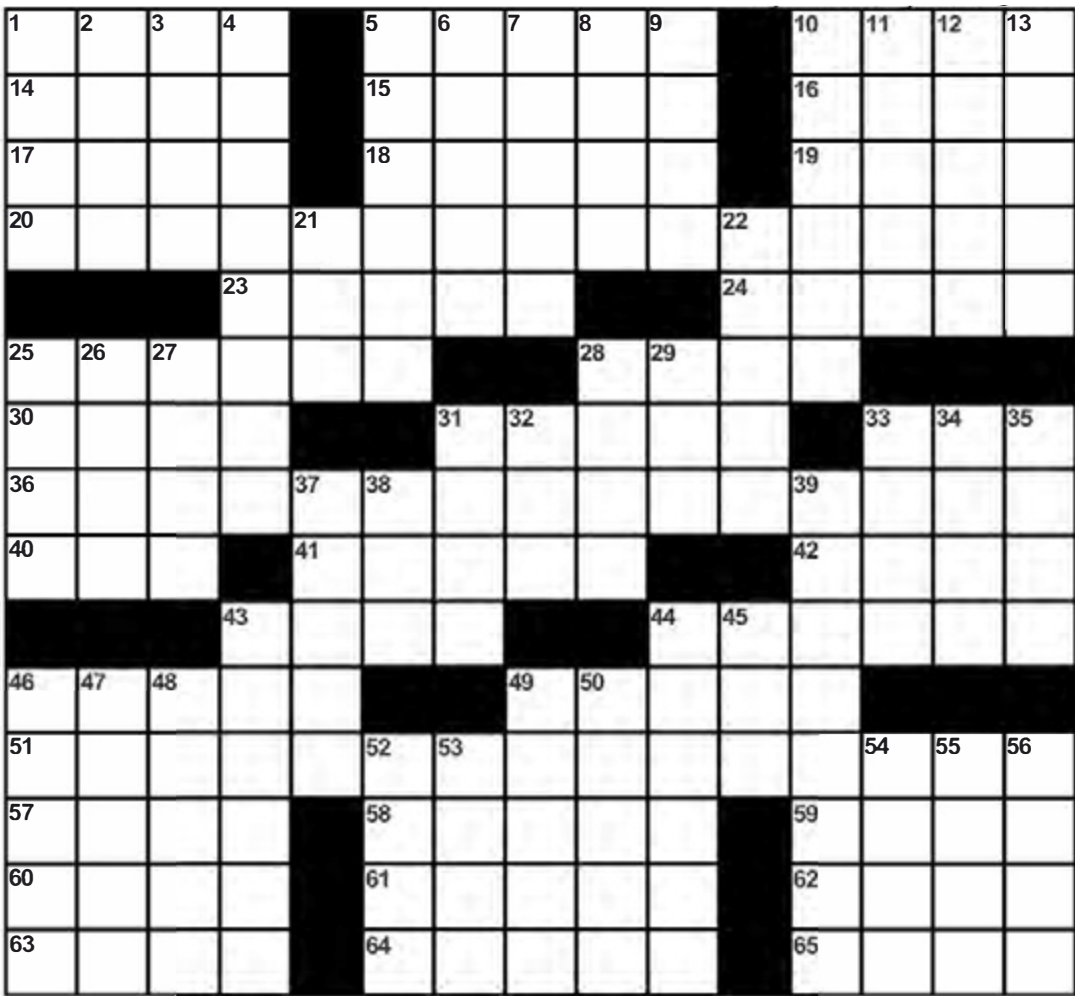
Under the AUKUS deal, Australia would obtain eight state-of-the-art, nuclear-powered but

conventionally armed submarines capable of stealthy, long-range missions. It also provides for sharing cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum and unspecified undersea capabilities.

The agreement has angered China, which describes it as an 'extremely irresponsible' threat to stability in the region.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Quite some distance off

5) Type of cheese

10) Clothes-info locales

14) Longest arm bone

15) Man of fables

16) Son of Isaac and Rebekah

17) Punjab princess

18) Electric-car company

19) Abounding

20) Three things after "space"

23) Loud, in music

24) Food that never decays

25) Historical records

28) Speak indistinctly

30) Naval commando

31) "The 12 Days of Christmas" musician

33) African antelope

36) Two things after "space"

40) Bothered (with "at")

41) Slightly wet

42) Border order?

43) Give a Bronx cheer

44) Substance found in flour

46) Evil nation in the

Bible

49) Pale

51) Three things after "space"

57) Honky-ton piano

58) "Four Quartets" poet T.S.

59) Deli condiment

60) Flip-a-coin test answer

61) Distribute proportionately

62) Affirm positively

63) "Don't overdo it"

64) Borgnine's "From Here to Eternity" role

65) Bird's home

DOWN

1) Mystic enveloper

2) Patriotic symbol

3) "Interview With the Vampire" author

Rice

4) Drops from above

5) Goatlike creatures of myth

6) Least big

7) Bring forth

8) Arias, e.g.

9) Petty clash

10) Product of a good horror film

11) Like much of the world's population

12) Foot-in-mouth incident

13) Full of beef fat

21) Army rank (Abbr.)

22) Make butter

25) On a yacht, perhaps

26) Teller's call

27) Base of the neck

28) Barbecue rod

29) Zodiac lion

31) Two fives, for one

32) Neutral possessive

33) Ganges access

34) "Good going!"

35) Very familiar with

37) End of the Greek alphabet

38) Something fishy

39) One who falls for a star?

43) Professional horse rider

44) Depressed urban area

45) Large pasture

46) Not glossy, as a photo

47) Public square, in ancient Greece

48) Biological subdivision

49) Cocked, as a hat

50) Chases away, as a fly

52) Severely hearing-impaired

53) Jazz legend Fitzgerald

ald

54) Wasps' nest location

55) Some loaves of bread

56) Alphabetize, e.g.



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Part of you wants nothing more than to keep quiet about what you're feeling, especially if it's a touchy subject. But a much more insistent part of you (the rebellious part that wants to challenge the world with the news) just won't have it. You're currently doing internal battle. While neither side has officially won, you know who to bet on, and it's not the side of you that wants to be nice.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You're having a fine old time, and you're not even near ready to call it a day. You're probably running on just a few hours of sleep too, but you'd never know it. You're excited, enthusiastic, and feeling as if you have a solid ten hours of snooze time under your belt. Good for you. Consider it a gift from the universe, and enjoy it in the company of some equally energetic people while it lasts.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You're not quite sure what's gotten into you, but you think you like it. You're still as fun-loving and fond of risks as you ever were, but at the moment you're also looking for a safety net just in case. That's definitely not like you, is it? Maybe there's a certain person in the picture (a co-worker?) or someone you don't want to offend or frighten. Not to worry. Everyone is in the same mood.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You've kept quiet about that attraction you've been feeling for a long time, but it just can't last for much longer. You really need to talk with someone about this, and your best friend or favourite sibling will be only too happy to listen. Better get it off your chest now. And map out a battle plan for when they make their move, because they're about to, and soon too.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

When you have to make an important choice today, you might be tempted to pick what seems to be the easiest or safest option. But you owe it to yourself to do all the work and research necessary to make an informed choice. Don't think only about how your choice will affect tomorrow. Think about how your choice will affect the coming year and the rest of your life. Put your heart and soul into the next decision you make.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It's not like you to talk a lot. You pride yourself on using only as many words as necessary to get your point across. No more and no less. So when your dear ones ask you what's up, don't be offended. They're just wondering who you are and what you've done with their friend. Enjoy it. It's good to keep them guessing. You can blame it on the coffee.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Today, you're going to be able to stay focused in a tricky situation. While other people might not know how to approach things, you'll see the way forward with crystal clarity. Let everyone else know that they should follow your lead if they want to find the answer. Although the outcome is still uncertain, the stars say that you'll easily be able to turn things in a favourable direction if they start to go south.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're set to receive nothing but good news today. Not only is it finally officially time to play, but you're also going to be in a fine mood: romantic, passionate, and just a tad eager to take a risk. Does this mean you'll be ruining your reputation as peacemaker, negotiator, and cooperator extraordinaire? Not at all. Just add world-class lover to that list. Stand back, everyone. Coming through!

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Still operating your mouth without engaging your brain first, especially if your feelings are involved? Try your best to get it under control, but if it doesn't work, don't worry. The entire world could be quite chatty today, not just you. For once, in fact, you'll blend right in. They might even think that you're a bit quiet.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

This astrological forecast is so good it's like having exactly what you ordered from the universe magically come to pass, only better because it doesn't matter where you are or who you're with. It will still show up. You'll feel warm, fuzzy, and happy to be wherever you are, and the feelings will be mutual. Get together with the person you've made plans with and expect it all to go beautifully.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

No one has ever accused you of being lazy, and no one ever will. No one in their right mind, anyway. Those who know and love you have also seen how you get when you're really intent on finishing something. So your willingness to keep on working on that project until it's done, even though everyone else just wants to eat, drink, and be merry, won't surprise them. Any newcomers to your circle could be a bit surprised by you.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You have a certain strongly held opinion, and no amount of contrary evidence or persuasive argument is going to sway you. You are following your own compass. This is wonderful if you're focusing on personal matters and choices, but it isn't so useful if you have to work for a larger cause. Being stubborn can be beneficial, but ignoring facts and committing a group of people to your personal agenda is not.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The headquarter of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are situated at

- a. Vienna
- b. Geneva
- c. Rome
- d. Paris

2. The main crop of Meghalaya is

- a. rice
- b. wheat
- c. barley
- d. sugarcane

3. The major minerals found in Uttar Pradesh are

- a. limestone and dolomite
- b. rock phosphate and dolomite
- c. copper and graphite
- d. None of the above

Answers: 1. a 2. a 3. a

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

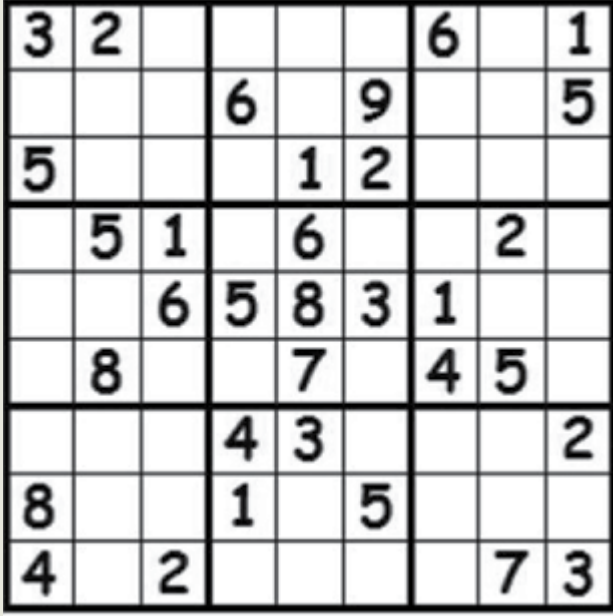


Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. 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

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



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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER





QATAR PAVILION

'THE FUTURE IS NOW'

Qatar's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, created under the theme *'Qatar: The Future is Now'*, reflects the country's pioneering position in leading change

Visitors to Expo 2020 Dubai have taken a fascination for the Qatar Pavilion which has an ultra modern facade and some thrilling experiences within for people of all ages. Designed by renowned Spanish-Swiss architect Santiago Calatrava, the pavilion represents a modern interpretation of the four elements presented in the Coat of Arms of Qatar.

At the opening on October 1, Sultan bin Rashid al Khater, undersecretary of Qatar's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, inaugurated the Qatar Pavilion and welcomed people from around the globe. The opening was attended by General Commissioners from GCC participating countries, besides other dignitaries.

The Qatar Pavilion highlights the country's achievements across various fields, and showcases pioneering projects that are being developed in accordance with Qatar's National Vision 2030, besides spotlighting Qatar as the upcoming host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup – an ideal platform to introduce the esteemed event to be hosted by a country in this part of the world for the first time.

Four elements
Calatrava, represented a modern interpretation of the four elements presented in the Coat of Arms of Qatar in the pavilion, the architectural composition of which draws inspiration from the two crossed and curved swords, encompassing a Dhow and an island with two palm trees that are at the core of the national emblem of the state of Qatar.

In a statement, Khater said the pavilion, themed 'Qatar. The Future is Now', was a distinguished platform for strengthening commercial, industrial, and investment co-operation relations with the various countries participating in the exhibition. He added that Qatar was keen, during its participation in this year's international Expo, to shed light on the development that has been achieved in all fields, especially in terms of national industries, the digital transformation of government services, and various creativity and innovation fields.

After the inauguration ceremony, Khater toured Qatar's pavilion, during which he was briefed on the most prominent pioneering mega projects that have been completed within the framework of the QNV and the preparations for hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, as well as the developmental achievements made by the country

Qatar's pavilion includes two main galleries and exhibition spaces showcasing Qatar's history and culture, using the latest virtual reality technologies. It reflects the sub-themes of the Expo – sustainability, mobility, and opportunities

in various fields.
Nasser bin Mohammed al Muhannadi, General Commissioner of the Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, explained that the country's march towards achieving its national vision QNV 2030 was highlighted, in addition to shedding light on the incentives and investment opportunities provided by the State to implement its economic diversification plans, as per the Qatar Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022.

Two main galleries
Spanning over about 960sqm, with a built-up area of 620sqm, Qatar's pavilion in-

cludes two main galleries and exhibition spaces showcasing Qatar's history and culture, using the latest virtual reality technologies. It reflects a number of sub-themes of Expo 2020 Dubai's main slogan referring to sustainability, mobility, and opportunities, aligning with Qatar's present and future vision and outlook.

Gallery 1 serves as an introductory space and invites visitors to explore the past, present, and future of Qatar through visual arts, sound effects, and music. Guiding visitors toward the main entrance portal, reflection pools flank the pavilion.

Utilising a combination of technologies, from mirror screens and holographic projections to 3D mapping and transparent LED screens, six illusion showcases displaying key themes that represent Qatar's story make use of illusions that bring objects inside the pavilion to life.

Encompassing the sub-themes of Expo 2020 in Opportunity, Mobility, and Sustainability, these key concepts were derived from the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership. These include: heritage, geography and culture; art, science and technology via creative stimuli, communication, transportation and exploration; en-

vironment, urban development, biodiversity, and natural resources; governance and investment in human capital; education, youth employment, and community welfare; industrial transformations, pioneering change and green economy initiatives; innovation and development.

Through its participation in Expo 2020 Dubai, Qatar seeks to consolidate its role as a safe and leading global hub for tourism and business and to highlight national efforts to preserve national resources by investing in sustainable development and environmental protection, in addition to constructing green buildings to support the growth of human capital.

The Qatar Pavilion also reflects Qatar's pioneering position in leading change, in light of its vision and successful experiences in facing and overcoming various challenges and global changes, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to reports, the State aims during its participation in Expo 2020 Dubai to review its efforts to lead and stimulate innovation in the fields of science and technology in a way that supports future sustainable development in Qatar. It also seeks to highlight its initiatives that stimulate creativity by supporting and endorsing artistic and cultural works.



A gold-coloured structure represents palm trees at the pavilion which is a modern interpretation of the four elements presented in the Coat of Arms of Qatar



Neutral colours are used for the pavilion's interiors



Galleries inside the pavilion provide information on Qatar's rich history

Tips FOR HEALTHY WINTER SKIN

Winter can really wreak havoc on your skin, turning it dry, itchy, and irritated. And you know there's no escape from this, year after year. So how about doing something right this year to combat this annual attack to have healthy winter skin? During winter, the things that make winter wonderful, like sitting by a bonfire, enjoying a nice hot shower or indulging in your favourite fries can take a toll on your skin by stripping it of its natural oils. However, there are many simple ways to keep your skin under check all through winter by incorporating some changes in your daily routine.

Use a humidifier

Using a humidifier in your home or office will add moisture to dry winter air which helps keep your skin hydrated. Run a humidifier in the rooms you spend the most time in, including your bedroom and see the difference it has on the texture of your skin.

Lower the thermostat

When it's chilly outside, fight the temptation to increase the heating in your room. Heating arrangements can make the air in your house dry and this, in turn, will take a toll on your skin. So, keep the thermostat setting to a comfortable level so as to maintain healthy skin.

Avoid hot showers

There is nothing more enjoyable than hopping in a hot shower when it's freezing out. But, if you do so every day, you will be actually drying out your skin over a few weeks. Dehydrated skin is not only unpleasant to deal with, it can lead to more serious side effects down the road. So, avoid hot showers and have lukewarm showers instead. It may be tempting to take a long, steamy shower, but your skin will be much better off with quick showers with lukewarm water.

Change your facial skincare routine

During the winter months, choose cream-based cleansers, and apply toners and astringents sparingly.

Many astringents contain alcohol, which can further dry your skin. If your skin gets dry and itchy, stop using products that contain alcohol and fragrances in order to help skin retain its natural oils. At night, use a richer moisturiser on your face.

Moisturise frequently

Maintain healthy skin by moisturising after washing up. It's best to use a cream or ointment in the winter. Lotions are better in warmer, humid climates. Hand-washing is vital, especially during the cold and flu season. Applying a hand cream after each washing can help. Also, wearing waterproof gloves when washing dishes or cleaning around the house is advisable.

Apply sunscreen

Don't think sunscreen is only meant for the summer. On bright winter days, when outdoors, make sure to use a sunscreen to reduce the risk of UV exposure to your skin.

Wear appropriate clothing

Many winter fabrics can aggravate dry winter skin. Use wool and rough clothing over your initial layer of clothing, so as to avoid touching your skin directly. This can cause dry skin to get irritated and itchy. Wear light layers made from soft, breathable materials directly against your skin, and then pull on your heavier, warmer sweaters.

Hair care in winter

Wash dry hair less frequently

To avoid drier hair in winter, avoid frequent hair washing. Natural oils provide a protective layer between the scalp and hair. Bridge the gap between washes – and avoid looking greasy – by using dry shampoo. Also, never leave the house with wet hair in winter. The cold is extremely damaging to damp hair – the hair can even break.

Blow dry gently

Air drying your hair in winter is the best solution, even if it takes longer.

The heat from your hair dryer isn't good for your hair and can cause dry hair to dry out even more. Apply a heat protection product and blow dry using the diffuser on a low heat setting.

Treat hair with hair oil

Hair oils help dry hair to regenerate and gives it new freshness and shine. The oil can be applied directly to wet hair after you rinse out your shampoo or, alternatively, after blow drying. The ends of your hair will benefit from this treatment most of all.



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Pakistan whitewash Bangladesh in T20



Pakistan's Khushdil Shah shakes hand with Bangladesh's Nurul Hasan after the third T20 match, at Sher-e-Bangla stadium in Dhaka on Monday (AFP)

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Moham-mad Nawaz struck a boundary off the last ball as Pakistan over-came late drama to beat Bangladesh by five wickets in Monday's third Twenty20 inter-national for a series whitewash.

The visitors seemed to be coasting in Dhaka after restrict-ing the hosts to 124-7 before Bangladesh skipper Mahmudul-lah Riyad conjured up late excite-

ment in the final over.

With Pakistan needing eight runs for victory, Mahmudullah took two wickets in two balls.

Iftikhar Ahmed struck the fourth ball for a six to deny Mah-mudullah and put victory back within grasp before going out with only one left to bowl.

Nawaz came to the rescue to take Pakistan to 127-5 and break Bangladesh's heart.

Mahmudullah, who finished with 3-10, rued their total earlier with the bat.

"Batters from both teams struggled a bit," Mahmudullah said at the end of the match. "(We) needed to spend some time at the crease to capitalise."

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam was dismissed for 19 while Mo-hammad Rizwan's 51-run part-nership with Haider Ali gave the

tourists an early boost.

Debutant Shahidul Islam bowled Rizwan for 40 to break the stand but Haider took Pak-istan close with 45 off 38 balls before he became Mahmudul-lah's first victim in the final over.

Pakistan bowlers earlier kept any momentum in check after the hosts elected to bat first.

Debutant Shah Nawaz Dahani bowled Najmul Hossain for five

SCOREBOARD		
BANGLADESH		
M Naim	c & b M Wasim	47 (50)
N H Shanto	b S Dahani	5 (5)
S Hossain	c I Ahmed b U Qadir	22 (23)
A Hossain	c M Rizwan b U Qadir	20 (20)
Mahmudullah	c M Wasim b H Rauf	13 (14)
N Hasan	c U Qadir b M Wasim	4 (2)
M Hasan	not out	5 (3)
A Islam	run out	3 (2)
Extras	(b 2, lb 1, w 2)	5
TOTAL	124/7 in 20 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-37, 3-80, 4-111, 5-116, 6-116, 7-124		
Bowling: M Nawaz 1-0-2-0, S Dahani 3-0-24-1, M Wasim 4-0-15-2, H Rauf 4-0-32-1, I Ahmed 4-0-13-0, U Qadir 4-0-35-2		
PAKISTAN		
M Rizwan	b Shohidul Islam	40 (43)
B Azam	c M Naim b A Islam	19 (25)
H Ali	c N H Shanto	
	b Mahmudullah	45 (38)
S Ahmed	c M Naim	
	b Mahmudullah	6 (12)
I Ahmed	c sub (Yasir Ali)	
	b Mahmudullah	6 (2)
K Shah	not out	0 (0)
M Nawaz	not out	4 (1)
Extras	(lb 3, nb 1, w 3)	7
TOTAL:	127/5 in 20 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-83, 3-117, 4-117, 5-123		
Bowling: M Hasan 4-0-19-0, T Ahmed 3-1-0-16-0, N Ahmed 4-0-20-0, S Islam 3-5-0-33-1, A Islam 4-0-26-1, Mahmudullah 1-0-10-3		

in the second over of the innings before Mohammad Wasim and Usman Qadir rattled the hosts.

Wasim claimed 2-15 and Qadir finished with 2-35 playing his first match in the series.

Pakistan won the first two matches by four and eight wick-ets respectively.

Babar credited team spirit for the series whitewash. "The way every individual has performed, credit to the group. There is al-ways scope for improvement."

The visitors will now play two Test matches, starting in Chit-tagong on November 26.

AFF



This file photo shows Mumbai Indians celebrating after winning the IPL

KKR, Mumbai Indians set to become franchise owners in UAE-based T20 Premier League

Dubai - The owners of the Knight Riders franchise, the Mumbai In-dians team and English football club Manchester United - the Glazer family - are set to be an-nounced in the coming days as franchise owners in a new T20 league to be based in the UAE.

The six-team league has been sanctioned by the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) and is look-ing to make a space for itself in the January-February window, although its inaugural edition in 2022 is likely to be played in Feb-ruary-March.

The league - the Premier League T20 - was announced in August this year, though at the time details of who might be in-volved were in a formative stage.

Now, however, according to an official involved in the plan-ning of the league, discussions are in varying - but broadly ad-vanced - stages with the six own-ers. Of those, the official said the Knight Riders owners are 'on-board' while Reliance Industries, who own Mumbai Indians, are carrying out their own final due diligence, though terms and con-ditions have been finalised.

"We just need a formal hand-shake [with Mumbai Indians' owners] to make it final now," the official told ESPNcricinfo.

Other franchise owners in-

clude Capri Global, who bid re-cently but failed for an IPL fran-chise, the Big Bash League's Sydney Sixers, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi, a co-owner of Delhi Capitals.

"With all six, contracts have been exchanged, and advanced discussions in place," the official said. "Financial terms have been finalised. The details are being gone through in most instances,

The Glazer family, owners of Manchester United, are also set to make their first foray into cricket

with lawyers, advisors and so on."

The IPL slant could have been heavier. The Chennai Super Kings owners were involved in the earliest discussions around the league, which began a couple of years ago.

Sundar Raman, a former chief operating officer of the IPL, and currently an advisor with the Super Kings, was also part of the early strategising around the league.

Cricinfo

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Orange Drink

كشاكه وبرتقال

51

العید الوطني العُماني 51

Any time you play India at home, you're going to be the underdogs, says Ross Taylor

New Delhi, India - It's been a 'strange' five months for Ross Taylor. Since hitting the four that made New Zealand Test world champions on June 23, he has not played any cricket.

Now, as he returns from his break to begin New Zealand's next cycle in the World Test Championship, he knows things will likely get harder for them if anything. For one, they will not be flying under the radar but come in as the champions, and they have one of the toughest assignments in world cricket to kick things off: India in India.

"We can say we're world champions now and that's suddenly different, trying to retain it," Taylor said. "It's sort of a harder place to start. We started in Sri Lanka last time and we drew that series. It's going to be a great two years I'm sure."

New Zealand will be touring India, Pakistan and England in the current WTC cycle and will be playing Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and South Africa at home. In the

Ross Taylor is wary of New Zealand's two-fold challenge: Playing India in India, and carrying the weight of coming in as WTC champs



Ross Taylor (left) with Kane Williamson

previous cycle, they started with a drawn series in Sri Lanka but went on to lose 3-0 in Australia. They returned home to win against India, West Indies and Pakistan and became the first side to qualify for the final after Australia's tour of South Africa

was postponed over COVID-19 concerns.

Taylor believes experience will be key in overcoming the chal-lenges of a series in India. "We've gone so many years as under-dogs. But now coming in as champions: I guess the element

of surprise is gone. But any time you play India at home you're going to be the underdogs, whether you're No. 1 in the world or where they sit in international cricket at the time. They are rest-ing a couple of players but they're still a formidable side and know these conditions really well.

"The way we adapt to these conditions is going to be the key going forward. Some of the guys have played many a time here before. We'll be looking forward to hopefully use that experience to make things slightly easier but we know it's going to be tough."

Taylor had mixed feelings about his long break, acknowl-edging how crucial it is to get some game-time ahead of play-ing in Indian conditions. This time around even more so, as New Zealand have had to train without additional net bowlers due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"When you're coming to India you want to play as much cricket as you want and can," Taylor said. "Preparation so far has been

fantastic. [But] it's a little bit dif-ferent having no net bowlers, you know, facing our [own] bowlers as preparation. It's been key. I have been lining up to face spin-ners, they bowl a lot of overs. Normally you [also] get 10-15 overs of net bowlers of spin to practice. It is slightly different but it is what it is and it's an interest-ing challenge both on the field and off it as well."

Taylor has some experience playing Test cricket in the coun-try, having been on tours in 2010, 2012 and 2016, and he has some ideas on how New Zealand can tackle India's bowlers in these conditions.

"Obviously spin plays a major part. The new ball, it can do a bit but it can also be the easiest time to score sometimes. India have world-class spinners and know how to set batters up in these conditions. For us, it's about been able to pick up the lengths as quick as possible and trust the defence," he said.

Cricinfo

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Orange Drink

كشاكه وبرتقال

51

العید الوطني العُماني 51

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Real Madrid thrash Granada to go top



Granada's midfielder Maxime Gonalons (left) fights for the ball with Real Madrid's midfielder Luka Modric during the Spanish League match (AFP)

Real Sociedad draw with Valencia

Madrid, Spain - Vinicius Junior scored his 10th goal of the season as Real Madrid thrashed Granada 4-1 on Sunday to shoot back to the top of La Liga. Marco Asensio and Nacho Fernandez put Madrid two up inside the opening 30 minutes at

Los Carmenes, where Granada briefly made a game of it when Luis Suarez pulled a goal back, only to be blown away in the second half. Vinicius finished off a sumptuous Madrid passing move and was then on the end of a rash challenge from Granada's Monchu, who was sent off with 23 minutes left to play. With the extra man, the lead was never really in doubt and Ferland Mendy made it four to

complete a convincing victory, which sends Madrid above Real Sociedad. Sociedad could only draw 0-0 at home to Valencia and now sit a point behind Real Madrid in second, having played one game more. Carlo Ancelotti can turn his attention to Wednesday's Champions League game away at Sheriff Tiraspol, with qualification to the last 16 not yet secured.

Inter Milan are two points behind in Group D and Sheriff only one point further back. Madrid, though, appear to be hitting their stride after recording their fourth consecutive win and extending their unbeaten run to seven in all competitions. They face second-placed Sevilla next weekend. Vinicius has been key and the Brazilian was on target again versus Granada, making it double figures for goals in a season for

the first time for Madrid. He already has four more than he managed in the entirety of last term. 'Best qualities' With Eden Hazard ill and out of favour, and Gareth Bale injured, the third forward position, alongside Vinicius and Karim Benzema, is one of those up for grabs in Ancelotti's starting line-up. Asensio furthered his claim with a smart goal in the 19th minute as Granada were dispossessed in midfield and Toni Kroos sent Asensio in behind the defence, the 25-year-old holding his finish until the last moment before poking into the far corner. "There's a lot of competition but when he plays, the most important thing is he has played well, he's scored and he's brought his best qualities," said Ancelotti. Nacho made it two six minutes later, diverting in off the crossbar at the near post after a slick short-corner routine between the impressive Kroos and Luka Modric. Vinicius' rougher edges were exposed for Granada's goal as a sloppy touch allowed Suarez space to unleash from range, with a deflection off Nacho giving Thibaut Courtois no chance. But any hopes of a comeback were quickly dashed as Vinicius made it three in the 56th minute and Monchu was sent off in the 67th.

AFP



Inter Milan's midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu celebrates after scoring his team's first goal during the Italian Serie A match against Napoli (AFP)

Inter Milan beat Napoli in thriller to fire title warning shot

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan strengthened their Serie A title defence on Sunday with an enthralling 3-2 win over Napoli which moved them to within four points of the league leaders. Simone Inzaghi's side came back from Piotr Zielinski's powerful early strike to close the gap on both Napoli and AC Milan, who lost 4-3 at Fiorentina on Saturday, in a breathless encounter at the San Siro. Hakan Calhanoglu levelled the scores from the penalty spot midway through the first half. Ivan Perisic's header just before the break and Lautaro Martinez's smart finish after a heart-pounding upfield surge from Joaquin Correa made sure of the points and a three-way title race even more interesting. "It was a very important game for us looking at the league table," said Martinez to DAZN. "We have been playing well but every now and again the result isn't the right one for us, but today the team played with intensity and character." Napoli, who also scored through Dries Mertens with 11 minutes left, lost their unbeaten league record just as Milan did in Florence after Samir Handanovic pulled off a miracle save to deny Mario Rui's header in stoppage time. Mertens then wasted a gilt-edged chance to snatch an unlikely point with seconds remaining when he skied Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa's perfect cross, completely unmarked and at point-blank range. To make matters worse for

Napoli, Luciano Spalletti also had to watch two of his players come off worse in clashes of heads. Star striker Victor Osimhen had to leave the field 10 minutes after the break after he and Milan Skriniar thumped into each other, with Napoli revealing late on Sunday that the Nigeria attacker had suffered 'multiple fractures' of his left cheekbone and eye socket. 'Courageous choices' Goalkeeper David Ospina also collapsed to the ground in worrying fashion after his head whacked into Inter substitute Edin Dzeko's, but both players carried on with their heads bandaged. "I said to my players at half-time that if we play with fear we won't make courageous choices," said Spalletti of his team's overwhelming first-half display. "In the second half we did everything much better... We need to face our objectives with no fear, like we did in the second half." Felix Afena-Gyan made sure that Andriy Shevchenko got off to a losing start in charge of Genoa with the teenage substitute scoring both goals in a 2-0 win for Roma on a soaking night on the Italian Riviera. The 18-year-old Ghanaian slotted home the opener eight minutes from the end in the middle of a downpour at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris and then curled home a stunning long range effort in stoppage time before charging over to celebrate with coach Jose Mourinho.

AFP

Southgate gets new deal after England progress

London, UK - Gareth Southgate has been rewarded with a two-year contract extension after leading England to the final of Euro 2020, the Football Association announced on Monday. Southgate, who also masterminded a run to the semi-finals at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, has transformed his team into serious contenders at major tournaments after years of underachievement. Reports in recent weeks suggested the 51-year-old was set to sign a new deal, which had been due to end after the Qatar World Cup late next year. 'The FA is delighted to confirm Gareth Southgate and (assistant) Steve Holland have signed new contracts through to December 2024,' the FA said in a statement. 'Southgate, who marks five years in charge at the end of this month, has overseen a period of positive progress, guiding England to a FIFA World Cup semi-



The FA is delighted to confirm Gareth Southgate and (assistant) Steve Holland have signed new contracts through to December 2024

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

final and UEFA Nations League third place before securing the best men's performance in 55 years with the UEFA Euro final this summer.' The new deal means the Eng-

land boss will oversee qualification for Euro 2024, which is being held in Germany. "I am delighted that Steve and I have been able to extend our stay in our respective roles," said

the former Middlesbrough boss. "It remains an incredible privilege to lead this team." "We have a great opportunity in front of us and I know they and the fans are all excited about what this squad could achieve in future," he added. Southgate, a former England international defender, took the England reins in 2016 after Sam Allardyce's reign ended after just one match in the wake of a newspaper sting. Months earlier Roy Hodgson's England suffered humiliation at Euro 2016, crashing out at the hands of minnows Iceland in the last 16. Southgate took his young team to the semi-finals at the World Cup in Russia, where they lost 2-1 to Croatia in extra-time. His side, combining exciting attacking talent with a solid defensive base, came agonisingly close to ending their trophy drought at this year's Euro 2020 but lost to Italy on penalties at

Wembley. England booked their place at next year's World Cup in Qatar with a 10-0 hammering of San Marino last week to top their group. Expectations are high that England, whose only major tournament win came at the 1966 World Cup, can mount a strong challenge at the World Cup next year, with a crop of young players who now have invaluable experience under the belts. Their challenge will potentially be complicated by a lack of preparation time. The Premier League announced this month it would pause the season after the weekend of November 12-13, with the World Cup kicking off just over a week later. Most pre-tournament camps would allow time for several warm-up fixtures but the scheduling means Southgate is not expecting to play a friendly before the World Cup.

AFP

Oman team heads for world TT championship in Houston

Muscat - Oman national table tennis team has left for Houston to take part in the World Table Tennis championship scheduled to begin on Tuesday. According to a press statement issued on Monday, Oman's delegation, headed by Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) chairman Abdullah Bamakhalf, headed to the United States on Monday. 'Oman's paddlers Asad al Raisi and Muhannad al Balushi will represent the Sultanate of Oman team at the globe TT event,' the statement said. This is Oman's third succes-

sive presence in this global event, it added. The Omani duo has been chosen to compete in the doubles category after their selection on the basis of improved performances at the 25th Asian Table Tennis Championship which was in Qatar in October. Oman's national TT team made its debut at the ITTF World Table Tennis championship in 2017 in the German city of Dusseldorf. The national team later participated at the championship held in Hungary in 2019. 'Asad and his teammate



Abdullah Bamakhalf

Muhannad will be looking for different show in third participation and registering better results in different fixtures,' the statement

added. Oman's newly appointed head coach, Omid Shamas sharababki, supervised the internal training sessions of the national duo paddlers - Raisi and Balushi. The Iranian coach worked to develop paddler's physical and technical performance during an intensive training in the past few weeks. 'Attendance of the national players in the world championship [which will culminate on November 29] will assist in boosting players world ranking,' it added.



Asad al Raisi



Muhannad al Balushi

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