



TUESDAY, 17 AUGUST 2021
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34°C/28°C

PAVILION AT DUBAI EXPO HANDED OVER TO OMAN
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HM issues Royal Decrees

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has issued four Royal Decrees reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 53/2021 amends some provisions of the Motor Insurance Law, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article 1 introduces the amendments attached (to this decree) to the aforesaid Motor Insurance Law promulgated under Royal Decree No 34/94.

Article 2 cancels all that contradicts the attached amendments or contravenes their provisions.

Article 3 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No 54/2021 implements the GCC Unified Law (System) on Combating Commercial Deception, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.



Article 1 states that the provisions of the GCC Unified Law on Combating Commercial Deception will be implemented, while at the same time consulting the provisions of this decree. **Article 2** stipulates that when implementing the provisions of this attached law (system), the phrases listed below will have the meanings indicated

against each:

The specialised 'Authority' concerned: Consumer Protection Authority.

The 'Minister' concerned: The official tasked with implementing the provisions of the attached law/system (Chairman of the consumer Protection Authority).

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SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES UAE ARMED FORCES CHIEF



H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received in his office at Al Murtafaa Camp on Monday Lt Gen Hamad Mohammed Thani al Rumaithi, Chief of Staff of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, and his accompanying delegation. The two sides reviewed the fraternal relations binding the two countries and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (ONA)

NEWS BRIEFS

INSTITUTIONAL QUARANTINE FOR ALL PASSENGERS FROM IRAQ, IRAN
Muscat - The Supreme Committee tasked with tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has decided to enforce institutional quarantine for all those coming to Oman from Iraq and Iran.

The decision will also be applicable to Omani citizens coming from the two countries, starting from 12 noon on Tuesday, August 17, until further notice.

In a statement, the Supreme Committee said that it has followed the global developments of the pandemic, and reports indicated a serious outbreak of the disease and a sharp rise in the number of infections in some countries, the severity of which is increasing.

Free vaccination for barbers, beauty salon staff and other low-wage earners starts in Muscat

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MoH), has started a nationwide campaign to vaccinate low-wage earning expatriates.

"In every wilayat, respective municipality teams will manage camps for free vaccination of barbers, beauty salon staff and other low-wage earners," an MoH official.

Responding to the announcement, a barber in Wadi Adai said, "Officials came and gave us free vaccination coupons and asked us to go to Sablat Muttrah for vaccination. I am happy that I will get free vaccination."

Muscat Daily met an expatriate couple in Sablat Muttrah who had come for free vaccination.

Gap between doses reduced to six weeks

Muscat - Starting Tuesday, the gap between the first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be cut from ten to six weeks, the Ministry of Health (MoH) announced on Monday.

'From August 17, those who have completed six weeks since the first dose can now register for the second jab,' MoH said.

MoH calls on all those who received the first dose and completed six weeks to register through the Tarassud + app to take the second dose of vaccine.

"A friend told us about the free vaccination drive here and we were lucky to get the coupons on Sunday. So, here we are getting the vaccine."

The General Directorate of Health Services tweeted on Monday, 'The DGHS in Muscat Governorate, in cooperation



(Supplied photo)

Over 2mn vaccinated

As many as 147,792 individuals were vaccinated in Oman in last week taking the total number of vaccinated people to 2,155,932.

'Sixty per cent of the those targeted have been vaccinated. Sixty-three per cent have been

vaccinated with the first dose, and 37 per cent have received both doses,' an MoH statement said.

Meanwhile, MoH has signed an agreement with Omantel and Ooredoo to allow free browsing to register in the Tarassud + app for COVID-19 vaccination ap-

214 new cases, 6 deaths reported

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday reported 214 new cases with six people succumbing to the infection in 24 hours taking the total number of cases registered in the sultanate to 300,408, including 3,999 deaths.

'Twenty-eight patients were admitted to hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of inpatients to 244, including 107 in intensive care units,' the MoH said in a statement.

The total number of recoveries is 288,702, while the recovery rate is 96.1 per cent.

pointments.

'No data will be deducted from the user packages to access the application. This comes within the framework of partnership and cooperation between institutions to reduce the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,' MoH said.

Chaos on first day under Taliban rule

Kabul, Afghanistan - Chaos, confusion and fear marked the first day of Taliban rule in Afghanistan on Monday, with the citizens mobbing the airport in Kabul in utter desperation to leave the war-torn country.

The Afghan capital turned into a cauldron of chaos hours after the fall of Kabul compelling the US troops to fire shots into the air as thousands of Afghans crowded onto the tarmac in the hope of catching any flight out after the Taliban takeover.

Dramatic footage posted on social media showed a scene of chaos on the runway, with civilians frantically clambering up an already overcrowded and buckling set of airstairs.

It was a desperate bid to board a parked passenger plane and escape the city a day after



the government's collapse.

Several countries from around the world operated evacuation flights to ferry their citizens and Afghan employees.

The EU was left desperately trying to find a solution for its Afghan staff facing possible reprisals, and is seeking to convince its 27 member states to offer them visas.

See also **Pages 8 & 9**

Disparity in utility tariffs for expats and nationals raises concerns

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

In line with an ongoing programme to reform electricity and water subsidies in Oman, expatriates in the sultanate have been paying more than citizens for their electricity consumption since January this year.

This has left many asking if such differentiation is fair when in comes to availing essential services. Earlier, both citizens and residents used electricity and water at subsidised rates.

Currently, electricity supply to the residential segment has two separate rates - Citizen Account Tariff that applies to accounts registered in the name of citizens not exceeding two accounts per

DIFFERENT BILLS FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS			
Citizens		Residents	
0-4,000kW/month	12	0-500kW/month	20
4,001 to 6,000kW/month	16	501 to 1,500 kW/month	25
Above 6,001kW/month	27	Above 1,501kW/month	30

citizen, and Resident and Additional Accounts Tariff which applies to accounts registered in the name of residents and additional accounts for citizens with more than the two permissible accounts of the Citizen Account Tariff.

For citizen accounts, a tariff of 12bz has been indicated for electricity consumption from zero to 4,000kW/month, 16bz for consumption from 4,001 to 6,000kW/month, and 27bz for

consumption exceeding 6,001kW/month.

The tariffs of resident and additional accounts are 20bz for consumption of zero to 500kW/month, 25bz for 501 to 1,500kW/month and 30bz for more than 1,501kW/month.

Lateef Shahdad, general manager at Mass International that specialises in the latest technology engineering, said electricity is an essential service and that both nationals and expatriates

should enjoy its benefits in equal terms. "The current economic situation doesn't call for disparity in rates for anyone. The same rates are desired for all," Shahdad said.

Noting that citizens and expatriates are not discriminated along these lines in his native India, he informed that he has lived and worked in many countries.

"I have not witnessed disparity in electricity tariffs between citizens and expatriates anywhere. The best way to charge for electricity is to prioritise rates on the basis of consumption and people of low-income levels are supported irrespective of nationality," Shahdad added.

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Good progress made in economic diversification



Sohar Port reports 14% rise in cargo throughput



S Lanka axes health minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi

Good progress made in economic diversification despite challenges

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit has published the Economic Diversification Report 2020.

The key performance indicators in the report were followed up by the former Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit (ISFU), including projects and initiatives of the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversification 'Tanfeedh', as part of 2016-2020 Ninth Five-year Development Plan.

'This comes to contribute to developing and preparing the targeted economic sectors to cope with the requirements of Oman Vision 2040, and accelerate economic diversification through identifying methodologies that include implementing projects and initiatives, and finding solutions to the challenges they are facing,' the report stated.

The report focuses on nine sectors - manufacturing, tourism, mining, energy, fisheries, business environment, labour market and employment, logistics and information and communication technology.

Most of the sectors faced challenges in 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. In manufacturing, despite these challenges, projects made good progress in 2020 due to huge efforts made by the projects' owners. As a result, the



Omani ports showed excellent performance, efficiency and reliability, as the general cargo handled from January to the end of December 2020 reached around 54mn tonnes

manufacturing dashboard, which contains 23 projects and initiatives, achieved 61 per cent completion rate in 2020. In addition, its contribution to the GDP reached 10.8 per cent last year.

The logistics sector was able

to utilise the sultanate's developed infrastructure.

'Omani ports showed excellent performance, efficiency and reliability, as general cargo handled from January to the end of December 2020 reached around

54mn tonnes, and the number of containers that were handled reached around 5.2mn, with an increase of 5 per cent compared to 2019.'

The tourism sector, like many others, was affected severely by the pandemic. 'Despite challenges faced by the sector, the former Ministry of Tourism, with the assistance of the former Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit, worked hard towards achieving the milestones set for 2020,' stated the report.

Under the labour market and employment sector, ISFU followed up a range of initiatives that serve to enhance the national workforce in compliance with the constantly changing labour market.

This was done by adapting policies and procedures, like recruitment in real estate, facilitation of part-time and temporary work and movement of labour in the private sector, in addition to enhancing recruitment policies in the ministries overseeing the

economic sectors.

The labour reconciliation committees were able to increase the percentage of labour disputes resolved at the ministry to above 60 per cent in 2020. Moreover, Royal Decree No 125/2020 was issued: Simplifying Litigation Procedure law, which sets the condition for case escalation.

Business Environment Sector is one of the most enabling sectors for the national economy. The overall goal of the Business

Environment Team under ISFU was to enhance the investment environment, as well as facilitate the services within the sector.

Like most economic sectors in Oman, fisheries sector was affected as well in 2020.

'However, there were some success stories in 2020 where a number of projects have operated effectively despite the crises. For instance, the first Commercial Abalone Aquaculture Project in Oman was launched in December 2020. Moreover, commercial fishing continued to grow as the fishing fleet of Al Wusta Company maintained its fishing trips rate in 2020.'

In the energy sector, the sultanate seeks to diversify resources, through implementing several alternative energy projects and improving their efficiency. This is for the objective of meeting the increasing need for electricity, in order for the contribution of renewable energy resources to reach a range of about 20 per cent and 35-39 per cent of total power generation in the years 2030 and 2040, respectively.

The mining and information and communication technology sectors have great potential in diversifying the national economy. The wide range of minerals in the country create significant opportunities for investors. Consequently, bringing more investments will help increase the national income, exports, and job opportunities for Omanis.

Malware attacks in Oman increasing; 14mn in only 6 months

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Malware is widespread across the Middle East, accounting for 161mn of attacks, up by 17 per cent when compared to the last year's figure - 138mn, as per a research conducted by Kaspersky.

The growth in each country in the region varies. Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Egypt have seen a large spike in malware attacks, increasing by 67 per cent, 64 per cent, 45 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) show lower increases of 16 per cent and 7 per cent - however increases none the less.

Maher Yamout, senior security researcher for Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Kaspersky, said, "Even though the scourge of malware has always been of concern, the past 12 months have highlighted how hackers are re-focusing their efforts to compromise consumer and corporate systems and gain access to critical data and information. Given the growth in digital transformation since last year and considering the increase in remote working resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, countries of the Middle East have become an attractive target for those looking to exploit a lack of user education or cybersecurity understanding."



Best practices for malware protection

- Install anti-virus software on every device that connects to the Internet
- Only download applications from trusted sites. Even then, always check the app permissions and, if certain things do not make sense, do not install the programme
- Never click on unverified links especially when coming from suspected spam emails, messages, or suspicious-looking websites
- Keep operating systems and applications always updated to the latest versions
- Be wary of using free Wi-Fi at coffee shops, restaurants, etc as hackers can snoop for unprotected devices

Interestingly, in the region, Turkey was the only country that saw a slight decrease of 4.4 per

cent in all malware attacks in H1 2021 when compared to H1 2020. Turkey accounts for around a quarter of malware attacks in the region (44mn), followed by Egypt (42mn), United Arab Emirates (34mn), Oman (14mn), Kuwait (11mn) and Bahrain (5mn).

"Despite the large increases in all malware attacks that we have seen in the Middle Eastern countries we monitor, it is not surprising to also see a slight decrease in some of the larger countries and like in Turkey. We believe that this only emphasises how hackers have become more targeted with their attack strategies, focusing on advanced persistent threat (APT) type attacks aimed to stealing sensitive data. When looking at the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa (META) region, Turkey still places first when it comes to the number of overall malware attacks detected by Kaspersky."

With so many people working remotely and accessing corporate networks from their personal devices, companies must contend with a rapidly expanding attack surface. These devices might not have an adequate level of protection meaning that once they are compromised and an employee logs into the network, hackers can potentially get access to sensitive data and cripple the organisation.

ROYAL CAVALRY'S FATEENAH WINS IN FRANCE



Horses of the Royal Cavalry (RC) achieved good results in France, with mare 'Fateenah' winning the first place in a 1,400m race for pure Arabian horses. The mare 'ZF Al Muzoon' owned by Adil al Mazrouée came second. The colt 'Labib' of RC won silver medal in the Arabian Horse Show championship (colt category). The contest was organised in France by the European Conference of Arab Horse Organisations (ONA)

H E Numani receives UAE Armed Forces chief, outgoing French ambassador

Muscat - H E Gen Sultan Mohammed al Numani, Minister of Royal Office, received in his office on Monday Lt Gen Hamad Mohammed Thani al Rumaithi, Chief of Staff of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces and his delegation.

The meeting reviewed the fraternal relations between the two countries and aspects of existing cooperation in several spheres between them to serve the joint interests. The two sides also exchanged views on issues of common interest.

H E Numani also received H E



Renaud Salins, Ambassador of France to the sultanate, at the end of his tour of duty. The ambassador expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the care extended to him by officials in the sultanate.

On his turn, the Minister of Royal Office thanked the ambassador for his efforts exerted during his duty in the sultanate to enhance the existing bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields. He wished the ambassador continued success.

ONA

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.21am	Duhr	12.11pm	Maghrib	6.38pm
Sunrise	5.43am	Asr	3.37pm	Isha	8.08pm

Pavilion at Dubai Expo handed over to Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate has been officially handed over its pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai following completion of construction work. The expo is scheduled to start on October 1.

Mohsin bin Khamis al Balushi, advisor to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and commissioner general of the sultanate at Expo 2020 Dubai, officially received the national pavilion of Oman on Sunday.

It was handed over by the main contracting company in charge of executing the construction and furnishing works of the pavilion. With this, the Omani pavilion is ready to receive visitors a month-and-a-half before the opening of expo.

Expo 2020 Dubai will continue for six months and end on March 31, 2022.

The handover of the pavilion took place during the visit of Balushi to the headquarters of Expo 2020 Dubai to review the progress of work in preparation of the expo's official opening in October.

The sultanate's pavilion has



(Supplied photo)

Oman's pavilion has a distinct modern design inspired by one of the icons of nature in the sultanate - the frankincense tree. The pavilion is divided into five sections

lets in which more than 2,000 kinds of goods and products from nearly 400 small and medium enterprises, including craftsmen, will be displayed.

The products to be displayed in the expo were selected and developed according to specific criteria in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Social Development, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the support of a number of companies and institutions affiliated with the Oman Investment Authority.

been built and equipped according to the specification of the Commission General of Oman's Pavilion in coordination with the contracting company and organising committee following rescheduling of the event owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Besides delaying the expo for a year, the pandemic obligated

organisers and participants to follow additional precautionary measures during the construction and preparation of the pavilions to ensure the safety of workers, administrative staff and visitors.

Oman's pavilion has a distinct modern design inspired by one of the icons of nature in the sultanate - the frankincense tree.

The pavilion is divided into five sections with content to simulate the life cycle of frankincense.

In general, all country's pavilions in the expo will be based on the three sub-themes - Mobility, Sustainability and Opportunity. Competencies of young Omanis working through the Innovation

Factory Company were engaged in the design, manufacture, equipment and technologies used in the pavilion.

Visitors to the Omani pavilion will be taken on an educational and recreational journey, besides being entertained.

The sultanate's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai will not be

limited to the pavilion. There will be a set of Omani events - scientific, artistic, cultural and economic seminars - over a period of six months.

The sultanate will also participate in a women's pavilion to celebrate Omani Women's Day and a cruise - 'Oman Youth Ship 2'. The pavilion will include out-

Ministry launches children's competition

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has launched a competition called 'Talk to know yourself'.

According to the ministry,

the competition aims to enhance children's self-confidence and nurture charismatic personalities. The ministry informed that children can participate by filming and submitting a video of themselves speaking on either of three topics - 'A

book I like', 'How I see distance education' and 'What Reading means to me.'

Participants must be Omani and between the ages of seven and 12 years. Their three-minute video must include information about themselves

and their speech.

The ministry has announced RO400 for the first place winner, RO300 for the second and RO200 for the third.

Deadline for participation in the competition is August 20, via culture@mcsy.gov.om

Virtual sessions on VAT begins today

Muscat - The Tax Authority will launch on Tuesday a series of virtual sessions on the Value Added Tax (VAT), as part of the awareness campaign themed 'With You, For You'.

The campaign aims to introduce VAT and the mechanism of applying it. It also aims to raise social awareness on the legal regulations for applying the tax in

a manner that maintains the right of the consumer and the merchant.

The sessions will be broadcast every Tuesday through the official channels of the Tax Authority in different social media platforms at 5pm.

The first session will be titled 'Value Added Tax, its Application Mechanism, and Method of

Submitting Tax Declaration'.

The second and third sessions will discuss the mechanism of calculating VAT, invoices and tax records.

The Tax Authority started applying the VAT on July 16; the number of those registered till mid 2021 stood at 17,500 merchants and service performers. ONA

HM issues Royal Decrees

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Employees designated as 'Judicial Inspectors': Employees of the specialised 'Authority' and the ministries of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Health and other departments concerned, in accordance with the laws and Royal Decrees awarding such officials the designation/mission of 'judicial inspection' as regards crimes stated in the attached law/system that are related to their job tasks.

Article 3 states that the provisions of the attached law/system are deemed complementary to the provisions of the Food Se-

curity Law (promulgated under Royal Decree No 84/2008).

Article 4 cancels all that contradicts this decree or the attached law/system or contravenes their provisions.

Article 5 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No 55/2021 ratifies the agreement on establishing the GCC Accreditation Centre and its Annex-1.

Article 1 ratifies the aforesaid agreement and its Annex-1 as per the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree

will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 56/2021 ratifies the agreement between the government of the Sultanate of Oman and the GCC Secretariat General pertaining to the headquarters of the GCC Statistical Centre, signed in Muscat on June 8, 2021.

Article 1 ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

ONA

Disparity in utility tariffs for expats and nationals raises concerns

Continued from Page 01

Describing the sultanate as always being 'kind and magnanimous to expatriates' and being one of the most favoured place for expatriates, he said, "The current COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone severely; all sections of society are affected. Having parity in electricity rates for nationals and expatriates will make a huge difference from every point of view."

Amerat resident Anwar Abdullah from Tanzania said, "What's happening is absolutely sad. I would like expatriates and citizens to be considered the same way. I understand that there should be more privileges for citizens, but I think when it comes to essential services and commodities like electricity and water, there should be no differentiation. Expatriates use the same water and electricity that citizens do."

I understand that there should be more privileges for citizens, but I think when it comes to essential services like electricity and water, there should be no differentiation

ANWAR ABDULLAH

Abdullah can't see the reason for different tariffs for citizens and expats. "I plead to the authorities to do something about this."

Liz Stanley, a Briton who lives at Al Mouj Muscat, said the tariff should be based on income. "So the tariff is the same for everyone regardless of nationality

based on how much income the household generates. This way the lowest paid expatriate workers and Omanis don't suffer," Liz said.

The type of accommodation has also been suggested as a criterion on which electricity tariff is based. According to Deepa Punjabi, a homemaker residing in Ghubra, those living in villas, premium residential complexes and the gated communities can be charged 15-20 per cent more.

"This can bridge the current disparity," she said.

The government started phasing out subsidies from January 2021 as part of an initiative to reorient electricity and water subsidies in line with the Medium-Term Fiscal Balance Plan (2020-2024) that seeks to lay the groundwork for the sultanate's financial sustainability and upgrade the efficiency of government spending.

Unit Rate announcement

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

Description	Last Date to Participate	Date of Submission Request of Participation Letter	Grade	Tender Price (R.O)
Unit Rate Contract for Maintenance & Repair Works for Distribution Substations in Muscat Governorate	16/9/2021	One week obtaining UR document	• Manufacturers and agents • qualified companies of Grade-C DCRP	1,575

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5 % VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - For payment procedure and to obtain the document, please contact us via e-mail Contract@medcoman.com 24588600 – Ext: 8577 - 8726
Purchase timing	document can be purchased at the official working time between 08:00 – 13:00 hours please contact us via e-mail Contract@medcoman.com
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent using clarification available in the tender documents , within 3 days from obtaining UR document
UR Submission	- The contractors should stamp all the unit rate contract pages - The contractors, after reading and accepting the prices, terms and conditions of the contract, shall submit a "Request of Participation Letter" addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO. - A list of proposed staff with their Identity documents and Qualification/ experience documents and CVs shall be submitted as it is one of the main evaluation criteria and non-submission of the same will effect the scoring . - A list of bidder details in manufacturing and repair work /or major maintenance projects similar to our scope shall be submitted as it is one of the main evaluation criteria and non-submission of the same will will effect the scoring . - All the required documents should be submitted only throgh email Contract@medcoman.com
Terms and Conditions	MEDC have the right to close the participation date on or before 16/9/2021 .



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www.medcoman.com

Sohar Port reports 14% rise in cargo throughput

Occupancy at Sohar Freezone increased by 10% in Q2

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Continuing its steady growth to boost Sohar as an international logistics hub, Sohar Port and Freezone on Monday announced encouraging results for the second quarter of 2021.

Sohar Port and Freezone reported that the port's throughput - handling of goods in and out of the sultanate - increased by 14 per cent in the second quarter of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.

Ship-to-Ship (STS) cargo handling at Sohar Port jumped by an impressive 168 per cent in the second quarter, according to a statement issued on Monday.

Meanwhile, the number of handled containers came in at 190,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), in addition to 804 vessel calls, up by 18 per cent from the same period in 2020.

"Although the global economy is beginning to show signs of recovery, there is still a fair amount of uncertainty due to the ongoing pandemic. Given these dynamics, our efforts to refine our business scenarios in order to emerge more resilient and adaptive have shown themselves to be well-placed and projections indicate that we are on course to exceed the amount of cargo that passed through in 2020," Mark Geilenkirchen, chief executive officer of Sohar Port, said in a statement.



"The port's continual growth is a testament to the long-term value that we provide to our clients as we operate safely and efficiently to serve the industrial and economic sectors," Geilenkirchen said.

On the other hand, the land occupancy at Sohar Freezone (first phase) saw a rise of 10 per cent at the end of second quarter, while the freezone registered 503,000 tonnes of exports. The production capacity in Sohar Freezone touched 545,000 tonnes where 45 countries have investments.

With a number of planned projects underway and coming up at the freezone, Sohar Port and Freezone's strategy to position itself as a central logistics hub in the region is well on track.

Omar Mahmood al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone, said, "Sohar Port and Freezone's rise

to prominence has been extremely gratifying but for us it's still only the beginning. In alignment with the port's impressive growth, we continue to make major investments in the freezone, while promoting it, and Oman in general, as a favourable business destination."

"The strategic location and an amenable trade environment presented huge potential for our stakeholders and partners. The vision to become a prosperous global trading hub is coming to fruition," he added.

Sohar's abundance of energy, raw materials and world-class logistics, coupled with generous incentives for local and international partners and the One-Stop-Shop system for all government clearances, provides a significant advantage for business that is sure to attract major players in the industry.

As one of the fastest-growing ports in the world, Sohar Port and Freezone continues to build on its strategic location and enhance its services, positioning itself as a key logistics hub within the region and across the world. Today, after 17 years of operation, Sohar Port serves as the main gateway for import and export in Oman, contributing 2.8 per cent of the country's GDP and almost 26,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities.

A powerful combination of the expertise of both the Port of Rotterdam and the government of Oman, represented by Asyad Group, Sohar Port and Freezone is earmarked as one of the sultanate's mega-projects and is home to logistics, petrochemicals and metal clusters as well as the region's first dedicated agro-terminal.

Bank Muscat to acquire additional stake in SICO

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Bank Muscat is planning to increase its stake in SICO, a Bahrain-based leading regional investment bank, by acquiring an additional 1.38 per cent shareholding.

"We wish to disclose that Bank Muscat has obtained necessary regulatory approvals to acquire a further 1.38 per cent shareholding in SICO via a secondary market purchase," Bank Muscat said in a disclosure submitted to the Muscat Stock Exchange on Monday.

Subsequent to this transaction, Bank Muscat's shareholding



in SICO will be increased to 10.38 per cent. Net worth of SICO as of June 30, 2021 stood at BD66.965mn, Bank Muscat said.

In March 2021, SICO acquired a majority 72.7 per cent stake in Saudi-based Muscat Capital which was then a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank Muscat.

The acquisition took place by way of a share swap. As a result of the transaction, SICO owns 72.7 per cent of Muscat Capital while Bank Muscat owns a 9 per cent shareholding in SICO.

SICO is a leading regional asset manager, broker, market maker and an investment bank.

Insurers record 24,900 motor claims in second quarter

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Insurance companies operating in Oman recorded a sharp year-on-year increase in the number of motor insurance claims during the second quarter of this year.

The statistics released by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) showed a 119 per cent rise in number of traffic accidents at 15,200 in the second quarter of 2021 compared to the same period of 2020 when fewer road accidents were recorded due to strict lockdowns that cut the amount of traffic and accidents.

The CMA data showed a sharp increase in claims of traffic accidents at 24,900 claims, in-



creasing by 121 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2020. Total amount of compensations paid for claims jumped by 189 per cent to RO5.19mn in the second quarter.

In a statement, the CMA emphasised that adherence to safety requirements and traffic

instructions issued by Royal Oman Police are the best means for protection from major accidents and the resultant impact on the lives and properties.

"The insurance service will only mitigate the financial damage not the moral damage," it added.

SEND MONEY TO UAE
TO BANK ACCOUNTS
Corporate and Individual

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MSX declines 0.21%; volumes up

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) decreased by 0.21 per cent to close at 4,011.16 points on Monday.

Trading activity improved from the previous session as turnover jumped by 27.63 per cent to RO2.56mn and volumes increased 20.11 per cent to 12.65mn shares.

While Industrial index rose 0.13 per cent, Financial and Services indices fell 0.21 per cent and 0.49 per cent, respectively. The MSX Shariah index closed up by 0.14 per cent at 591.58 points.

Market breadth remained negative as six firms closed up, while 13 companies closed down. The rest 24 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers were National Aluminium Products Company (5.13 per cent), Oman & Emirates Investment Holding (2.78 per cent), Rasyut Cement (2.3 per cent) and SMN Power (1.61 per cent).

Top losers were Al Suwadi Power (-3.7 per cent), National Finance (-3.57 per cent), Oman Investment & Finance Company (-2.33 per cent) and Al Batinah Power (-1.96 per cent).

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Japan economy rebounds despite virus surge

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's economy grew slightly in the second quarter, recovering from a slowdown at the start of the year despite continuing virus surges and restrictions, data showed on Monday.

The world's third-largest economy contracted at the beginning of the year as a new wave of infections forced the government to impose virus restrictions that slowed consumption.

But despite continued virus worries and restrictions that have lasted most of this year, Japan's economy grew a better-than-expected 0.3 per cent in the three months to June, data from the Cabinet office showed.

That slightly exceeded the expectations of economists surveyed by Bloomberg, who had

forecast just 0.1 per cent quarter-on-quarter growth.

The data released by the Cabinet office also showed a slight upwards revision for the first quarter, when the economy shrank 0.9 per cent, compared with a previous estimate of 1 per cent.

Japan has seen a smaller virus outbreak than many developed economies, with 15,400 deaths despite avoiding harsh lockdowns.

But for much of this year Tokyo and several other regions have been under virus states of emergency, limiting alcohol sales and restaurant and bar opening hours.

Experts have warned the measures are losing their effectiveness, with signs the rules are being increasingly flouted.



A cargo ship arrives at the international cargo terminal at the port of Tokyo on Monday (AFP)

Stefan Angrick, a senior economist at Moody's Analytics covering Japan, said consumption proved surprisingly resilient despite the restrictions.

"The Japanese economy eked out some moderate growth in the second quarter of the year, avoiding a technical recession thanks to a combina-

tion of stronger consumption and business investment," he said.

"Despite the improvement, we expect growth to remain

under pressure in the third quarter as spending and production continue to struggle amidst disruptions from the pandemic."

Japan is also playing catch-up with its vaccine programme, which began much later and more slowly than those in many other developed economies.

The rollout has now picked up speed and around a third of Japanese are now fully vaccinated but infections are at record levels, with nationwide daily cases topping 20,000 in recent days.

The surge in cases, driven by the more contagious Delta variant, has clouded the chances for a strong and fast vaccine-driven recovery.

Analysts said there was still hope on the horizon.

"Output only edged higher in

the second quarter and won't do much better this quarter as the Delta-driven fifth wave holds back consumer spending," wrote Tom Learmouth, of Capital Economics.

"But with the vaccine rollout still moving fast, a strong recovery in the fourth quarter remains on the cards."

He noted that the 0.8 per cent quarter-on-quarter rise in private consumption was stronger than expected and offset most of the fall in the previous quarter.

As throughout the pandemic though, uncertainty remains.

"With severe cases surging, the risks to our forecast that consumer spending will tread water in the third quarter are currently tilted to the downside," Learmouth acknowledged.

AFP

HSBC to buy Axa's Singapore business

Paris, France - HSBC has agreed to buy the Singapore unit of French insurance giant Axa as the British banking group expands its foothold in Asia, the companies announced on Monday.

HSBC makes 90 per cent of its profit in Asia and has said it plans to redouble efforts to seize more of the market in the region.

The bank has agreed to acquire Axa Singapore, the city-state's eighth largest life insurer, for US\$575mn.

"This is an important acquisition that demonstrates our ambition to grow our wealth business across Asia," HSBC chief executive Noel Quinn said in a statement.

"Wealth is one of our highest growth and highest return opportunities, and plays to our strengths as an Asia-centred bank with global reach," Quinn said.

The bank said it plans to merge the operations of HSBC Life Singapore and Axa Singapore once the deal, which is subject to regulatory approval, is completed.

As part of its Asia pivot, HSBC sold its 90 branches in the United States this year and completed a long-running disposal of its unprofitable French retail business.

Singapore is a 'strategically important scale market for HSBC, and a major hub for its ASEAN wealth business', the banking group said, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Axa said it expects the transaction to be completed in the fourth quarter.

The sale is part of Axa's 'simplification journey' in the region, said the French insurer's Asia and Africa chief executive, Gordon Watson.

AFP

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR Q2 2021

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present to you the Unaudited Financial Statement for Al Hassan Engineering Co. SAOG for the six months ending on 30th June 2021.

	H1 - 2021 RO in 000's	H1 - 2020 RO in 000's	% Change
Contract Income	5,528	13,746	(80%)
Other Income	1,530	53	
Total Expense	(8,428)	(13,700)	(38%)
Profit/ (Loss) for the period	(1,371)	99	

Operating Performance

The Company has incurred an operational loss of RO 0.62M for the period ended June 2021 after accounting discounts earned on global settlement of long pending overdue payments to legacy vendors. The Turnover has declined from previous period due to substantial completion of ongoing projects and lack of award of new major projects.

Cash flow:

RO 4.57M has been received in six months ending June 2021 from Clients and judiciously used to support on-going projects and make critical payments.

Settlement of Legacy Vendors:

The Company has managed with significant outstanding values legacy vendors to agree discount to settle as their full and final outstanding payable.

Ongoing Projects: The 6 ongoing projects are progressing as per the plan:

- Liwa Plastics, CCJV: 100% completed and completion certificate received from client. Company is providing commissioning support to CCJV on supply basis.
- Salalah LPG, Petrofac: is 100% completed. Company is providing commissioning support to Petrofac on supply basis.
- Haima West, PDO: is 95 % completed and substantial completion is expected by Q3 2021
- Qarn Alam Cogeneration Power, PDO: Current progress is about 24%. This project is expected to be completed by Q 2 2022.
- L&T CS Pipe and Laying & Earth Work- Currently progress is about 16%. This project is expected to be completed by end of this year.
- Shutdown support to SPMP: This is shutdown support. This project will be completed in Q3 2021.

Outlook

The Company has Carry Forward Turnover of RO 10.2M at end of Q2 2021. The Company's Inflows from the Ongoing Projects are sufficient to take care of the Cash requirements of those projects till completion.

Company continues to bid for new projects and award of new projects remains critical to the survival of the Company.

The Board expresses its gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tank and to his Government, Banks, Clients, Sub Contractors and Suppliers for their ongoing support & understanding. I would like to also thank the management and all the employees for their commitment, loyalty and dedication during this difficult period.

Unaudited Financial Statements for the six months ended 30.06.2021

Amount in RO '000

Particulars	June 2021	June 2020
Balance Sheet As At		
Fixed Assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	3,987	4,561
Retentions Receivable	1,156	2,227
Right-of-use-asset	699	280
	5,842	7,068
Current Assets		
Inventories	415	575
Work In Progress	4,294	5,349
Contract & Other Receivables	6,932	5,815
Due from related party	255	255
Bank Balances & Cash	4,852	3,898
	16,748	15,893
Current liabilities		
Short Term Borrowings	-	-
Current portion of term loans	1,509	20,773
Current portion of lease liabilities	39	14
Accounts & Other Payables	16,800	21,162
Payable to Related Parties	1,255	1,279
Accrued interest on borrowing	3,533	2,244
	23,136	45,472
Long Term Liabilities		
Long Term Loan from Banks	43,486	20,266
Employee Terminal Benefits	2,025	2,266
Lease Liabilities	681	276
	46,192	22,808
Net Assets	(46,738)	(45,319)
Shareholders' Funds		
Share Capital	7,521	7,521
Legal Reserve	1,859	1,854
Retained Earnings / (Accumulated losses)	(64,066)	(62,642)
Subordinated Loan from shareholders	6,700	6,700
Revaluation Reserve	1,248	1,248
Other Reserves	-	-
	(46,738)	(45,319)
Profit & Loss account		
Particulars	H1 - 2021	H1 - 2020
Contract Revenue	5,528	13,746
Contract Costs	(7,030)	(11,073)
Gross Profit / (Loss) before exceptional expenses	(1,502)	2,673
Exceptional Expenses (refer note 1 below)		(661)
Gross Profit / (Loss) after exceptional expenses	(1,502)	2,012
Other Income (refer note 2 below)	1,530	53
General & Administration Expenses	(644)	(755)
Operating Profit / (Loss)	(616)	1,310
Finance Charges	(755)	(1,211)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Period	(1,371)	99

Note :

- Due to operational and logistical difficulties resulting from Covid -19 situation.
- Other income includes RO 1.44 million discounts earned on global settlement of long pending overdue payments to legacy vendors during 2021

The complete unaudited financial statements of the Company are available from the Trading & Listing Dept. of the Muscat Securities Market.

Full accounts may be handed or sent by mail to any stockholder or beneficiary upon his request and in Arabic or English language of his choice within seven days from the date.

The request may be sent to : Al Hassan Engineering Company SAOG, P.O. Box 1948, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman

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Ahlibank sponsors documentary as it supports national projects

Recognised as a leading bank in the sultanate, Ahlibank has gained increasing popularity not only as a bank that offers premium financial services but also as an organisation that has played its part as a responsible corporate citizen.

With ongoing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in place, Ahlibank has demonstrated utmost commitment to contribute towards the social, cultural and environmental progress of the country. In a recent development, Ahlibank has signed an agreement with Oman InFocus to sponsor the first of its kind exploration project, 'Not Discovered Yet', which promotes the wildlife and natural beauty of Oman. The agreement was signed between Najla al Lawati, AGM, head of Private Banking and Wealth Management, Ahlibank, and Maisa Fahad al Hooti, founder and CEO, Oman InFocus.

On the occasion of signing the agreement, Najla said, "Ahlibank is proud of its well-established experience in Corporate Social Responsibility. Community welfare makes up an integral part of our operations. In line with the same, Ahlibank endeavours to support such initiatives that not



only help talented Omani individuals follow their passion but also aids in the country's overall progress."

"The 'Not Discovered Yet' programme is a noble initiative aimed at strengthening Oman's tourism sector and highlight its environmental and tourism features in line with Oman Vision 2040, which in turn supports the country's economic growth and development in many areas. By supporting Omani youth and tar-

geted national projects, we are seeking innovative ways to strengthen cooperation between the bank and the community," she added.

Aligning itself to Oman Vision 2040, this initiative endeavours to promote awareness about Oman's diverse wildlife and abundant natural beauty. It will also highlight the country's efforts towards protecting its environment and wildlife while positioning the country as a top

destination for international travellers, photographers and filmmakers.

The final product of the project will be two documentaries. The first of which will be broadcasted on well-known international channels as a two-part series, featuring the full extent of Oman's Wildlife; including marine, terrestrial and bird-life. The second documentary will showcase the various on-going conservation efforts that are being

implemented by Oman's government and private sectors. By partnering with prestigious channels, publications and other media houses, 'Not Discovered Yet' guarantees an extensive international reach and will put Oman in the spotlight.

"A project of this scale could not be achieved without the support demonstrated by the Omani government and leading institutions like Ahlibank. They have placed immense faith in our capabilities and also mirror our vision, values and passion towards the environment," said Maisa.

"A unique initiative in itself, 'Not Discovered Yet' will help people from all over the world learn more about Oman's heritage and culture, its diverse wildlife and the marine-rich oceans that provide a sanctuary for aquatic life."

Ahlibank's strategic approach highlights its commitment to social responsibility as a very important part of its key activities. The bank is keen on creating a framework that helps in adding value to the community through 'Ahli Cares' initiative and implement programs aimed at enriching the lives of individuals across Oman.



COVID-19 patient brought back to life by Kimshealth Duqm doctors

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been throwing some of the most extreme medical challenges for practitioners, who have been braving complex situations in managing conditions emanating from coronavirus and its mutations.

Song Dong Ming, a 51-year-old Chinese resident, arrived at the COVID-19 field hospital in late June, managed by Kimshealth Duqm. He had tested positive for coronavirus and had developed fever, cough and shortness of breath. His oxygen saturation was low and his condition progressively deteriorated over the next three days. On the fourth day, Ming was shifted to the ICU facility and was provided with intensive treatment over the next two weeks.

The doctors at Kimshealth slowly started to wean off the patient from the ventilator and reduced the time on ventilator and increased the time on non-

breathing mask. With 12 days, Ming was successfully taken off from the ventilator support as he started to maintain adequate oxygen level with O₂ support mask.

At the same time physiotherapy was also started to make him stand first and then to take few steps and later walk around the bed with O₂ support. All the blood parameters, x-ray and ABG showed marked improvement and after 27th day in ICU, Ming was successfully shifted to the inpatient facility.

Then the next task for the team was to reduce the requirement of O₂. The doctors at Kimshealth carefully monitored his vitals, oxygen saturation level and reduced the oxygen support. After two weeks of rigorous titration, monitoring and graded increase of physiotherapy, the continuous oxygen support was stopped and patient was discharged.

ISD commemorates Independence Day of India

Indian School Darsait (ISD) commemorated the 75th Independence Day of India with virtual celebrations on Sunday at 7.30am with patriotic fervour, zest and zeal.

Afroz Ahmad, treasurer, head of Finance & Planning Subcommittee, and head of Staff Welfare & Grievances Subcommittee, School Management Committee was the chief guest on the occasion. Sebastian Chungath, president and other esteemed members of the School Management Committee; Amar Srivastava, principal along with

team ISD, parents, students and a good number of well-wishers of the school attended the celebration.

The event started with a melodious rendition of the National Anthem of India. It was followed by welcome address by the principal who extended a cordial welcome to the chief guest, dignitaries and all invitees.

He recalled the sacrifices of great freedom fighters and those of unsung heroes of the nation and urged everyone to be mindful of placing India first, in their

thoughts, words and actions and to rededicate our lives for the progress of our nation. He implored the future citizens of this great country - the students, to pledge their devotion and contribution in giving back to the society and to their motherland.

Addressing the gathering, the chief guest congratulated everyone on this great occasion.

He said, "India has achieved respect by taking the path of democracy and everyone is a stakeholder and is responsible."

He urged all to uphold unity in diversity, practice virtues and

principles of the nation with service to the motherland as their foremost duty. He concluded by reciting the Indian national pledge - an oath of allegiance to the Republic of India.

Sebastian Chungath, president, School Management Committee, greeted everyone and read out the Honourable President of India, Sri Ram Nath Kovind's message on the eve of Independence Day of India.

The other highlights of this Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav were a patriotic melody, which was a soulful tribute to the great free-

dom fighters and ignited the spirit of love for our motherland.

This was followed by Vande Mataram, a dazzlingly spectacular fusion dance that was an impressive show of the rich and varied culture of India.

An oral presentation of the beautiful journey of remarkable achievements and milestones post-Independence filled every heart with patriotism and pride.

Geeta Chauhan, vice principal, Primary Section proposed the vote of thanks and congratulated team ISD for making the celebration a grand success.

Pre-order Samsung Galaxy Z Fold3 5G at Ooredoo Oman

Ooredoo has announced that the brand-new Samsung Galaxy Z Fold3 5G is now available for pre-order across Oman until Thursday, September 9. As the ultimate device for powering productivity and maximising every moment, the Galaxy Z Fold3 5G is set to re-imagine the smartphone experience, converging power, efficiency, and immersive viewing to offer users with unique new ways to watch, work, play, capture, and connect. Customers who pre-order the device, which is a member of the latest Galaxy Z Series suite, will also get an exclusive gift worth over RO165, including a flip cover with pen, Galaxy Buds Pro and Samsung Care+ covering one year.

Raed Mohamad Dawood, director of Branding, Communications and Corporate Affairs at Ooredoo, said, "In our quest to bring customers the most sought-after devices in the market, we're delighted to be offering Samsung's new uniquely-designed smartphone. Available in three eye-catching colours, we're confident that it will give customers an exciting new technology experience, complemented by our value-added services and awesome network."

"At Samsung, we are privileged to work alongside national operators as we meet our shared objectives of delivering new



value customers and equipping them with the latest advancements in the world of tech," said Osman Albora, senior director - Mobile Division, Samsung Gulf Electronics.

Maximise productivity

Inspired by Samsung's vision to go above and beyond, the Galaxy Z Fold3 enhances performance thanks to the first S Pen integration in the foldable segment, so users can take advantage of fully optimized S Pen features on their foldable screen. Note-taking on-the-go has never been easier as you can write and draw for hours without worry with the newly engineered S Pen. Video calls can also be taken from anywhere with Flex mode, which ensures you never miss a detail by simultaneously capturing notes with

the S Pen - quickly open Samsung Notes with just a double click on the bottom half of the screen to chat and create simultaneously. What's more, you can create streamlined routines to power through your day.

Undisrupted large screen

Now more than ever, immersive viewing experiences are essential for consumers. Therefore, Samsung has ensured users will stay fully engaged through the Galaxy Z Fold3 5G's 7.6-inch Dynamic AMOLED 2X Main Screen. Whether playing video games or watching movies or sports, experiences are elevated through Under display camera technology, which ensures pixels are on top of the camera hole for an increased viewable area and undisrupted viewing and gaming.

Sony Middle East & Africa launches new Bravia XR Next-Gen TVs with gaming mode

Reimagining gaming entertainment in the region, Sony Middle East & Africa has launched the new Bravia XR Next-Gen TV series with dedicated gaming mode. Powered by the company's Bravia XR Cognitive Processor, the TV series offers Sony's signature picture quality and ingenious sound design for an immersive gaming experience.

The Bravia XR A90J, A80J and X90J models offers ultra-smooth transitions between gaming scenes, quick responsiveness and HDMI 2.1 compatibility to deliver responsive gameplay and maximum performance in shooting, sports, and high-performance games with instant on-screen action.

With the new models, gaming enthusiasts can enjoy a vast array of real-world colours and deep contrast that brings out the finest details in all gaming action on screen. The TVs have wide viewing angles, so users can enjoy the same breathtaking scenes from the sides as from the centre. Fast-moving content - such as in sports and action games - looks sharp, bright, and clear.

The launch of the new models comes amidst surging gaming trends worldwide, making it the most profitable form of entertainment. The industry is worth



\$148.8bn globally, while the market in the Middle East and Africa is valued at about \$4.8bn, accounting for just 3 per cent of the worldwide total, according to a study by market research firm Newzoo.

Shintaro Hayatani, head of Marketing, Sony Middle East & Africa, said, "The Middle East is one of the fastest-growing gaming markets in the world, offering a huge opportunity for software designers and equipment manufacturers. Sony's new Bravia XR TV series caters to this burgeoning market, offering ultra-smooth gaming experience with a dedicated game mode and built-in

features aligned to match the future demands of the gaming industry. With its Cognitive Processor XR - a world's first, users can now enjoy a complete immersive gaming experience that thrills and moves you and feels just like the world around us."

The ingenious Cognitive Processor XR in Bravia XR TV, which thinks like a human brain, offers a complete immersion in an experience that thrills and moves users and feels just like the world around them. The TVs use a new processing method that goes beyond conventional Artificial Intelligence and is de-

signed to replicate the ways humans see and hear.

In the sound department, the A80J, A90J and X90J are equipped with the XR Sound Position which offers the reality of sound behind the picture. As the screen is the speaker on this Bravia XR TVs, the sound matches precisely with what's on the screen for a truly immersive experience.

The sound-from-picture reality technology makes the screen the speaker. Moreover, the XR Surround creates surround sound from the sides and vertically to enjoy the gaming experience.

Nizwa Industrial City occupancy stands at 74%

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has embarked on the implementation of vital projects at Nizwa Industrial City, including the 1mn sqm Phase 3 and Phase 4 expansion project and the construction of a second entrance to the industrial city.

Omar Mohammed Muqaibil, director general of Nizwa Industrial City, said that the facility garnered good turnout from local investors wishing to get their projects localised. This interest was helped by the industrial city's floating various investment opportunities, particularly in the commercial services zone and in the industrial city's area.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Muqaibil said that the total volume of investments at the city by mid-2021 stood at RO426mn, constituting a 15 per cent rise over the figure of the corresponding period in 2020. By the end of June 2021, the number of workers there



stood at 5,707, of them 2,568 (45 per cent) were Omanis.

Out of 148 projects at Nizwa Industrial City by mid-2021, 128 have been completed, 10 under construction and 8 were designated lands in the industrial city's over 3mn sqm area, said Muqaibil, noting that this stands for 74 per cent of the total area.

Sanad Service Centre (Masar) was among projects accomplished in the first half of this year. The project offers a number of government services aimed to facilitate investor's obtaining permits, said Muqaibil, adding that important projects businesses include foodstuff industries and sale of building materials, glass, timber and steel.

A number of oil and gas firms operating in the fields of maintenance and related industries are stationed at Nizwa Industrial City, which houses small and medium industries and provides services to factories and workers, he explained.

Huawei CFO's extradition case: Judge 'sceptical'

A Canadian judge appeared sceptical of arguments made by prosecutors, questioning the validity of the case in the United States against Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou, who is facing possible extradition on several charges. Committal hearings in Meng's case are expected to finish soon as two years of legal wrangling come to a close.

The Canadian government's case, as laid out in the record of the case provided by the United States as justification for her arrest and extradition, is that Meng lied to HSBC about Huawei's ownership of an Iran-based subsidiary called Skycom, causing the bank to commit fraud and unknowingly break US sanctions.

Meng's defense lawyers have argued that HSBC was not misled, and was in fact fully aware that Skycom - a business which Reuters reported was breaking US sanction laws against Iran - was a subsidiary of Huawei, rather than a local partner as had been previously stated.

Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes at times ap-



peared skeptical of the validity of the United States' claim.

"Isn't it unusual that one would see a fraud case with no actual harm, many years later, and one in which the alleged victim - a large institution - appears to have numerous people within the institution who had all the facts that are now said to have been misrepresented?"

Holmes asked.

"The law is quite clear about that," Canadian prosecutor Robert Frater responded.

"You yourself said that people within the institution may know, they may even be participants. It doesn't mean there is no fraud."

Holmes then said, "I'm simply suggesting that it may be unusual to have both of those features - no actual loss, and arguably, fairly extensive knowledge within the institution about the true state of affairs."

Meng was arrested at Vancouver International Airport in December 2018 on a US warrant, for allegedly misleading HSBC bank about Huawei's business dealings in Iran and potentially causing it to break US economic sanctions against Tehran.

Hearings are set to wrap up and Holmes will likely issue an order on whether or not to extradite in the autumn, before Canadian Justice Minister David Lametti makes the final call.

Both Holmes' and Lametti's decisions can be appealed, which legal experts say means the case could drag on for years.

Mobile key to bringing customers back

A global survey conducted by Foresight Factory, released in partnership with Snap, has found that 'connected shopping' - where consumers combine a digital experience with being in a physical store - is key to bringing people back to the store, as shoppers say they want to enjoy the benefits of online shopping, in-store.

The findings show that despite many of the challenges facing retail stores across the world, the internet can be a powerful tool in driving people back into shops by giving them - in particular young people - a more engaging and efficient 'connected' experience. Increasingly customers are expecting the benefits of both online and real life across the entire shopping journey - embedding in-store convenience, while also providing enhanced product testing and engagement online.

The report finds that 58 per cent of consumers in the UAE and 54 per cent of Millennials and 58 per cent of Gen Z always use their phone while shopping in stores, while 6 in 10 UAE shoppers would specifically visit a store if it had interactive services that allowed them to try on items virtually. Around 40 per cent of



shoppers say that not being able to see, touch and try out items are the most significant factors that put them off online shopping, highlighting the growing appetite for online product testing and try on.

The report into the future of shopping habits also found:

- E-commerce has dramatically accelerated globally in the last year, with 65 per cent of consumers in the UAE claiming to have shopped on their mobile more since the start of the pandemic
- More than half of UAE shoppers already expect AR to be

available now when they're shopping for items such as clothes, beauty, furniture, luxury and cars

- New technology could reduce the number of online items that are returned annually by up to 51 per cent, with the study estimating that consumers in the UAE spent around AED 1 billion in the last year on clothes they have returned which could potentially be avoided by using AR.
- 63 per cent of UAE shoppers have missed the human interaction that comes with shopping in-store
- One third of consumers said

they were more likely to shop in stores that offered common online features such as instant access to stock information, or a home delivery service

Foresight Factory's comprehensive study - conducted across 12 markets: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, US - highlights that there is a growing expectation that technology has an increasingly strong role to play in 'real life shopping' and that the mobile is at the centre of this shift, allowing consumers to discover and interact with items both at home and in-store.

Meabh Quoirin, co-founder and CEO of Foresight Factory, says, "Consumers are demonstrating a clear desire for the human interaction that comes with in-person shopping, alongside the convenience and engagement of online shopping. 'Connected shopping' should be at the heart of brands' strategies to drive shoppers back into their stores, as our study shows that when brands embrace technologies both in-store and online they could further strengthen and deepen their connections with consumers."

Abu Dhabi's WED Movement explores learning of children through technology

World Early Childhood Development Movement (WED Movement), which was launched recently by Early Childhood Authority (ECA) under the patronage of Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, chairman of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Court and chairman of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA), has revealed its agenda and the strategic focus of the Tech Humanity for Children breakthrough working group.

The first edition of WED Movement will focus on three topics. The first is about tech humanity for children and aims to pave the way towards the 5th industrial revolution, while the second addresses the 21st century lifestyle to encourage a better lifestyle with improved physical and mental health outcomes. The third topic aims at improving emotional well-being and social interaction of children and those around them.

The announcement was made during a session hosted by ECA to highlight the power of technology to promote positive learning and growth of young



children through the pioneering work of a global team of experts in technology, media and child health.

The session was attended by Omar Saif Ghobash, UAE Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs and co-chair of WED Movement Breakthrough Working Groups, and Dr Saeed al Dhaheri, Tech Humanity for Children team member and chairman of Smartworld, UAE's leading systems integrator, and Dr Yousef al Hammadi, ECA executive director, Knowledge & Impact Sector.

Ghobash said, "Technology is a part of our lives and our children are already in the digital space at a very young age. We have a tremendous opportunity to drive change in technology design and media content in ways parents simply can't do themselves that will directly benefit the healthy development of young children."

He also emphasised the importance of strengthening the private sector role in supporting human technology to meet the developmental needs of children

in creating content and programmes.

Dr Saeed al Dhaheri said, "We want to look at technology through a public health lens for what it offers our children as opposed to viewing screens as toxic and guilt parents for allowing their children to use technology. To that end, we are assessing all aspects of technology use in and out of the home as well as interaction of parents and children together with technology. We are committed to using the knowledge and experience of this team to drive innovation that can help our children grow up healthier, smarter and learn to be kinder to each other."

With team members bringing to the group experience from work with such tech and corporate leaders as Google, IKEA, Microsoft, Apple and Intel Labs, the Tech Humanity for Children team is finding solutions to promote positive digital literacy and learning experiences for children. One objective of the group is to find ways to incentivise companies to develop child-centric apps and content.

Etisalat Group appoints new CEO for UAE operations

Etisalat Group announced the appointment of Masood M. Sharif Mahmood as chief executive officer for Etisalat UAE operations. Reporting to Etisalat Group CEO, this new position is part of Etisalat Group's ongoing and agile transformation strategy that targets diversifying and exploring new growth opportunities, accelerating business development in the digital field, expanding geographical presence and maximising operational efficiency.

The appointment also marks the company's relentless efforts to maintain its leading position in digital transformation and continue providing innovative services and solutions to all customers, while investing in UAE nationals and empowering them. Eng Hatem Dowidar, CEO, Etisalat Group, said, "Etisalat is thrilled by the joining of Masood as CEO for Etisalat UAE operations. With his recognised career and strong drive for results, Masood is a true people leader who will focus on growing Etisalat UAE even further through achieving operational efficiency and generating value by organic



growth strategies. In the new normal where smart and digital services dominate the scene, Etisalat backed by one of the most advanced portfolios of smart services and solutions in the region continues to attract and empower UAE's leading talent in the digital field. We wish him great success in his new role at Etisalat, home to the fastest mobile network on earth."

Masood M. Sharif Mahmood, CEO, Etisalat UAE operations, said, "It is a privilege to join Etisalat one of the world's leading telecom groups and ranked the strongest brand across all categories in Middle East and Africa. This exciting appointment repre-

sents a great milestone and a motive to work continuously towards adding value for the services and solutions provided to Etisalat customers, capitalising on our employees' great talent, passion and capabilities, while realising the overall objectives of the company. Inspired by the continuous support and wise leadership of the UAE, Etisalat will continue deploying the latest innovative technologies to enrich the digital experience of customers and communities, bringing the country to the forefront in global ICT ranking."

With over 20 years of experience, Masood has a proven accomplishment record with vast knowledge in telecom and technology. His expertise in both operational and financial industry led to developing high performing teams, establishing a creative work culture, and setting development strategies that elevated business performance. Masood currently serves on the boards of Al Yah Satellite Communications Company (Yahsat), the UAE Space Agency, and Etihad Aviation Group.

Taliban in total control of Afghanistan, panic in Kabul



Afghan people climb atop a plane as they desperately seek to leave Afghanistan after the takeover, at the Kabul airport in Kabul on Monday (AFP)

Kabul, Afghanistan - Victorious Taliban fighters patrolled Kabul on Monday after a stunningly swift end to Afghanistan's 20 year war, as thousands of people mobbed the city's airport trying to flee the group's feared hard-line brand of Islamist rule.

President Ashraf Ghani flew out of the country on Sunday night as the insurgents encircled the capital, capping a military victory that saw them capture all cities in just ten days.

"The Taliban have won with the judgement of their swords and guns, and are now responsible for the honour, property and self-preservation of their countrymen," Ghani said afterwards.

Government forces collapsed without the support of the US military, which invaded in 2001 after the September 11 attacks and toppled the Taliban for its support of Al Qaeda.

But the United States ultimately failed to build a democratic government capable of withstanding the Taliban, despite spending billions of dollars and providing two decades of military support.

After police and other government forces gave up their posts in Kabul on Sunday, Taliban fighters took over checkpoints across the city and

entered the presidential palace.

Militants with rifles slung over their shoulders also walked through the streets of the Green Zone, the formerly heavily fortified district that houses most embassies and international organisations.

The Taliban sought to reassure the international community that Afghans should not fear

'We are afraid'

But there were desperate scenes at Kabul's airport on Monday as people tried to board the few flights available.

"We are afraid to live in this city," a 25 year old ex-soldier told AFP as he stood among huge crowds on the tarmac.

"Since I served in the army, the Taliban would definitely tar-

No fly zone?

Authorities then cancelled all remaining commercial flights, citing the threat of looters.

Airlines are avoiding flights over Afghanistan as the local aviation authority on Monday urged them to reroute after it gave Kabul airspace to the military.

British Airways, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines, Air France and Virgin Atlantic announced they were no longer flying over the country after the Taliban took over Kabul.

The Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority said in a 'notice to airmen' that 'Kabul airspace has been released to the military'.

It advised airlines to reroute as 'any transit through Kabul airspace will be uncontrolled'.

Lufthansa, whose group includes Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings and Swiss, and Air France said they would no longer use Afghan airspace until 'further notice'.

Lufthansa said its group's India-bound flights would suffer delays of up to an hour. The company said the announcement was made to ensure 'flight safety'.

Air France is rerouting flights headed to Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, New Delhi and Singapore.

British Airways said in a brief

statement that it is 'not currently using Afghanistan's airspace'.

Singapore Airlines said it was avoiding the airspace 'in view of the latest development in Afghanistan'.

Virgin Atlantic said its flights to Islamabad, Lahore, Mumbai and New Delhi will avoid Afghan airspace, stressing that 'the health, safety and security of our customers and people always comes first'.

Lufthansa said it was discussing with the German government on how it could contribute to efforts to airlift German citizens and 'local forces'.

France said it would also begin evacuation flights with two military transport planes.

The US government has insisted in recent days that its two decades of war in Afghanistan was a success, defined by quashing the Al Qaeda threat.

President Joe Biden said there was no choice but to withdraw American troops and he would not 'pass this war' onto another president. But Washington was left shocked by the rapid collapse of the Afghan government, and critics have said the United States' reputation as a global power has been badly tarnished.

AFP



After completing a stunningly swift takeover, Taliban fighters stand guard along a roadside near the Zandab Square in Kabul on Monday (AFP)

How did the Taliban take over so quickly?

Kabul, Afghanistan - The Taliban's stunning and rapid takeover of Afghanistan was the result not only of their battlefield strength, but also a sustained push to force surrenders and cut deals.

The insurgents mixed threats and lures with propaganda and psychological warfare as they took city after city - some with barely a shot fired - eventually capturing the capital Kabul.

Why didn't the army put up a fight?

As foreign troops began their final withdrawal in May, Washington and Kabul were confident the Afghan military would put up a strong fight against the Taliban.

With more than 300,000 personnel and multi-billion-dollar equipment more advanced than the Taliban arsenal, Afghan forces were formidable - on paper. In reality, they were plagued by corruption, poor leadership, lack of training and plummeting morale for years. Desertions were common and US government inspectors had long warned that the force was unsustainable.

Afghan forces put up strong resistance this summer in some areas such as Lashkar Gah in the south, but they now faced the Taliban without regular US air strikes and military support.

Faced with the smaller but highly motivated and cohesive enemy, many soldiers and even entire units simply deserted or surrendered, leaving the insurgents to capture city after city.

US withdrawal

The seeds for the collapse were sown last year when Washington signed a deal with the insurgents to withdraw its troops completely.

For the Taliban, it was the beginning of their victory after nearly two decades of war. For

many demoralised Afghans, it was betrayal and abandonment.

They continued to attack government forces but started to combine those with targeted killings of journalists and rights activists, ramping up an environment of fear. They also pushed a narrative of inevitable Taliban victory in their propaganda and psychological operations.

Soldiers and local officials were reportedly bombarded with text messages in some areas, urging them to surrender or co-operate with the Taliban to avoid a worse fate.

Many were offered safe passage if they did not put up a fight, while others were reached through tribal and village elders.

The Taliban had started putting deals and surrender arrangements in place reportedly long before the launch of their blitz in May. The strategy proved immensely effective.

What happened to the anti-Taliban warlords, militias?

With Afghan forces unable to hold off the Taliban advances, many of Afghanistan's famed - and notorious - warlords rallied their militias and promised a black eye to the Taliban if they attacked their cities.

But with confidence plunging in the ability of Afghanistan's government to survive, never mind hold off the insurgents, the writing was also on the wall for the warlords.

Their cities fell without a fight. Warlord Ismail Khan in the western city of Herat was captured by the Taliban as it fell.

Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad Noor in the north fled to Uzbekistan, as their militia members abandoned humvees, weapons and even their uniforms on the road out of Mazar-i-Sharif.

AFP

Afghan women's rights in firing line as Taliban return to power

Hong Kong, China - Aisha Khurram spent a sleepless first night under Taliban rule, the sound of gunfire and evacuation planes puncturing the silence as she reflected on a day that 'shattered our souls and spirits to the core'.

'It was like a doomsday for the entire nation to see everything collapse in (the) blink of an eye,' she told AFP in a series of messages via Twitter on Monday after Taliban fighters swept into Kabul, and her neighbourhood, uncontested.

Khurram, a 22 year old former youth representative to the United Nations, is just months away from graduating from Kabul University.

But she and fellow female students now face an uncertain future.

'The world and Afghan leaders failed the younger generation of Afghanistan in the cruellest

way imaginable,' she said.

'It is a nightmare for educated women who envisioned a brighter future for themselves and generations to come.'

In the weeks leading up to their return to power, the Taliban's leadership have strived to portray a softer image than when they last ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001.

But women struggle to take comfort from such assurances.

'History is repeating itself so quickly'

Under the hardline version of sharia law that the Taliban imposed the last time they controlled the capital, women and girls were mostly denied education or employment.

Full face coverings became mandatory in public and they could not leave home without a male companion.



Aisha Khurram, Afghanistan's youth representative to the UN, during an interview with AFP in Kabul on October 16, 2019 (AFP)

Public floggings and executions, including stoning for adultery, were carried out in city squares and stadiums.

The Taliban's ouster did not spell the end of abuses. Women

often remained marginalised, especially in rural areas.

But over the last two decades, significant progress was made in cities with women filling universities and entering the workforce

in ambitious positions in the media, politics, the judiciary and even the security forces.

In the last 24 hours, prominent women in Kabul have taken to social media to express their pain for both a country and a way of life now that the Taliban are back in control.

'I start my day looking at empty streets of Kabul, horrified (for) its people,' wrote Fawzia Koofi, a rights activist and politician, and Afghanistan's former deputy speaker of parliament.

'History repeats itself so quickly.'

"The fear just sits inside your chest like a black bird," added Muska Dastageer, a lecturer at the American University of Afghanistan, which opened its doors five years after the Taliban were ousted.

"It opens its wings and you can't breathe."

Broken hearts

The Twitter timeline of Rada Akbar, a 33 year old photographer, was littered with broken heart emojis.

'My beloved Afghanistan collapsed before my eyes,' one post read.

Another entry shared a now viral photograph of a man painting over pictures of smiling brides on the front of a hairdresser.

'Erasing women from the public space,' she wrote.

Akbar is known for her striking self-portraits that were both a declaration of her independence and heritage.

An exhibition she held earlier this year was forced online after she faced threats for her work showcasing some of the nation's powerful female figures.

On Monday morning, her fear was palpable.

'I want to become invisible and hide from the world,' read her latest tweet.

Two days before the Taliban took power, the UN refugee agency was already warning that 80 per cent of the nearly a quarter of a million Afghans forced to flee since the end of May are women and children.

Sahraa Karimi, one of Afghanistan's most prominent women filmmakers, said she had no plans to leave.

'I will not abandon my country until the last moment,' she said in a video posted on Twitter, wiping away tears.

'Perhaps, many will think this is foolishness. But foolishness is what was done by those who abused our homeland... Foolishness is what the world showed by turning its back on us,' she added.

AFP

N TAKEOVER

Western nations rush to evacuate staff, locals from Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan - Western nations rushed to evacuate their citizens and local staff from Kabul on Monday after the Taliban's lightning fast takeover of Afghanistan.

As thousands of people mobbed the city's airport trying to flee the group's feared hard-line brand of Islamist rule, the US and 65 other countries issued a joint statement urging the Taliban to allow Afghan and foreign citizens to leave the country.

The EU was left desperately trying to find a solution for its Afghan staff facing possible reprisals, and is seeking to convince its 27 member states to offer them visas.

The US military secured Kabul's airport on Monday as the US, Germany, France and the Netherlands transferred their staff to the site to prepare for evacuation.

Other members of NATO, including Britain, Italy, Denmark and Spain, also announced the imminent evacuation of their staff, as did Sweden.

'Emergency evacuations'

Sweden said Afghans who worked as interpreters or in other support roles would be included among those evacuated, while Finland said it would help its embassy staff and up to 130 Afghans leave the country.

Germany is planning to deploy soldiers to help with the



Members of the British Army, from 16 Air Assault Brigade, disembark from an RAF Voyager aircraft after landing in Kabul, Afghanistan, to assist in evacuating British nationals and entitled persons as part of Operation PITTING on Sunday (AFP)

evacuation of its nationals and Afghans in danger from the Taliban, parliamentary sources told AFP on Monday.

In Paris, the foreign ministry said military reinforcements were being deployed to the United Arab Emirates to help with evacuations through Abu Dhabi.

"We are planning to carry out the first rotation between now and the end of this Monday," Defence Minister Florence Parly said, adding there were several dozen French citi-

zens to be evacuated.

More than 600 Afghans employed in French organisations have already arrived in France with their families, the French government said on Friday.

Britain ordered the deployment of 600 troops to evacuate their nationals on Thursday, as the Taliban overran key regional cities last week.

And on Sunday, the Italian defence minister announced the arrival of its first military plane to begin 'emergency evacuations'.

Warsaw said the government has issued 45 humanitarian visas for Afghans and their families who worked for Poland or the EU in Kabul, while Ireland said it has granted visa waivers to 45 people and has agreed to take up to another 150.

"We'll prioritise people working with human rights organisations, with the media there, women and girls in particular," Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said on Monday.

Madrid is sending two military

transport planes to Dubai for the 'first phase' of the evacuation of its embassy staff and local staff, the defence and foreign ministries said. "Our priority now is to repatriate Spanish citizens as well as Afghan citizens who worked with us and who face a security risk," Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said. Hundreds of the American embassy's employees have already left Afghanistan, a Pentagon official said on Sunday.

AFP

China ready for 'friendly relations' with Taliban

Beijing, China - China is ready to deepen 'friendly and cooperative' relations with Afghanistan, a government spokeswoman said on Monday, after the Taliban seized control of the country.

Beijing has sought to maintain unofficial ties with the Taliban throughout the US' withdrawal from Afghanistan, which spurred an advance by the hardliners across the country that saw them capture the capital Kabul on Sunday.

China shares a rugged 76km border with Afghanistan.

Beijing has long feared Afghanistan could become a

staging point for minority Uyghur separatists in the sensitive border region of Xinjiang.

But a top-level Taliban delegation met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Tianjin last month, promising that Afghanistan would not be used as a base for militants.

In exchange, China offered economic support and investment for Afghanistan's reconstruction. On Monday, China said it 'welcomed' the chance to deepen ties with Afghanistan, a country that has for generations been coveted for its geo-strategic importance by bigger powers.

EU ministers to hold crisis talks on Afghanistan

Brussels, Belgium - EU foreign ministers will hold emergency talks via videolink on Tuesday on the situation in Afghanistan as European nations scramble to evacuate personnel from the country, officials said.

Member states and the EU executive in Brussels are frantically trying to pull their foreign and Afghan staff out of Kabul amid fears of reprisals after the Taliban's takeover.

'Following latest developments in Afghanistan, and after intense contacts with partners in the past days and

hours, I decided to convene an extraordinary VTC (video teleconference) of EU Foreign Ministers tomorrow afternoon for a first assessment,' EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell tweeted. 'Afghanistan stands at a crossroad. Security and wellbeing of its citizens, as well as international security are at play.'

EU officials are pleading with the bloc's 27 capitals to give visas to Afghan workers at the bloc's mission in Kabul and their families, estimated between 500 and 600.

AFP

Taliban takeover is world's failure, says UK minister

London, UK - The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan is a 'failure of the international community', Britain's Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said on Monday, assessing that the West's intervention was a job only half-done.

"All of us know that Afghanistan is not finished. It's an unfinished problem for the world and the world needs to help it," he told BBC television.

The former British Army officer last week said US President Joe Biden's predecessor Donald Trump had secured a 'rotten deal' with the militants that allowed their return.

He maintained the 20 year intervention by US-led forces in Afghanistan 'wasn't a waste, it wasn't for nothing' but accused Western powers of being politically short-sighted.

"If it's a failure, it's a failure of the international community to not realise that you don't fix things overnight," he said.

"I'm afraid when you deal with a country like Afghanistan, that is 1,000 years of history effectively and civil war, you manage its problems and you might have to manage it for 100 years.

"It's not something that you just rock in, rock out and expect something to be fixed."

US former national security advisor H R McMaster meanwhile slammed his country's failure to realise the Taliban would swiftly take control, calling it 'wilful ignorance'.

The retired army lieutenant general told Times Radio it was 'clear that this kind of collapse was going to happen', after the deal brokered by Trump, who



Defence Secretary Ben Wallace

sacked him in 2018.

The deal weakened the Afghan government and security forces and strengthened the Taliban, he said, adding: "We stood idly by and we turned a blind eye. This was utterly predictable."

Foreign policy 'disaster'

Britain last month withdrew the majority of its 750 remaining troops in Afghanistan, but last week announced that 600 soldiers would return to help with repatriation.

Wallace told Sky News 370 embassy staff and British citizens were flown out on Saturday and Sunday, with 782 Afghans scheduled to leave in the next 24 to 36 hours. Officials are aiming to evacuate 1,200 to 1,500 people from Afghanistan a day. The first flight arrived back at a British air force base on Sunday night, his department said.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said Britain would help some 3,000 nationals to leave but questions are being asked why he did not do more to oppose Washington's withdrawal.

AFP

US 'defeat' chance for lasting peace: Iran's Raisi

Tehran, Iran - Iran's new ultra-conservative President Ebrahim Raisi on Monday said that the 'defeat' of the United States in Afghanistan must usher in a durable peace in the neighbouring, war-ravaged country.

'The military defeat and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan should offer an opportunity to restore life, security and lasting peace in that country,' Raisi said, quoted by his office.

The presidency statement came after the Taliban seized control of Kabul, but it did not mention the Taliban nor the fall of the Afghan capital.

Raisi, who made the remarks in a call with outgoing Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, said the Islamic republic wanted good relations with



Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi during a Cabinet meeting in Tehran (AFP)

Afghanistan.

Iran was 'closely monitoring the evolution of events in Afghanistan' and wants good neighbourly ties with it, he said.

Raisi tasked Zarif and Iran's Supreme National Security Council to give him updated reports on the situation in Afghanistan, it added.

Iran shares a 900km border with Afghanistan, and hosts nearly 3.5mn Afghans, according to the UN refugee agency.

In 1998, Taliban troops entered the Iranian consulate in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif, killing several diplomats and an official news agency journalist.

The Taliban later said they had been killed by individuals acting independently, but Tehran held the movement responsible for the deaths, which sparked outrage and nearly triggered an Iranian military intervention in Afghanistan.

Analysts say Tehran is taking a pragmatic stance on the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan.

On Sunday the Iranian for-

eign ministry said it had reduced its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan.

The announcement came shortly after the Taliban reached the outskirts of the Afghan capital.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said a skeleton staff remained at Iran's Kabul Embassy and that employees had been also evacuated from three of out of five diplomatic missions in other Afghan cities.

Zarif meanwhile held on Monday a meeting in Tehran with China's special envoy for Afghanistan Yue Xiaoyong, the Foreign Ministry said.

The talks focused on the situation in Afghanistan, it said.

AFP

Russian Ambassador to meet Taliban today

Moscow, Russia - Russia said its Ambassador to Afghanistan will meet with the Taliban in Kabul on Tuesday and that it will decide on whether to recognise the new government based on its conduct.

Ambassador Dmitry Zhirnov told Russian media meanwhile from Kabul that the Taliban have already established 'public order', have even kept girls schools open and are guarding the Russian embassy.

"Our ambassador is in contact with the Taliban leadership, tomorrow he will meet with the Taliban security coordinator," Foreign Ministry official Zamir Kabulov said in an interview with the Ekho Moskv radio station on Monday.

He said the talks between ambassador Zhirnov and the Taliban would centre on how the group plans to provide secu-



Russian Ambassador Dmitry Zhirnov

ity for the Russian embassy in the Afghan capital.

On Sunday, as the Taliban completed its military takeover of Afghanistan, Kabulov said that Russia had no plans on evacuating its embassy - though on Monday he said that 'part' of

its staff would be 'evacuated'.

Kabulov also said that Moscow will decide on recognising the new Taliban government based 'on the conduct of the new authorities'.

"We will carefully see how responsibly they govern the coun-

try in the near future. And based on the results, the Russian leadership will draw the necessary conclusions,' Kabulov said.

Russia for 'civilised' Afghanistan

In an interview from Kabul with the state-run Rossiya 24 television channel, ambassador Zhirnov said that the Taliban had started to 'settle' in Kabul and had established 'public order'.

"The Taliban is already guarding our embassy," he said. "They reaffirmed once again that not a single hair will fall from the head of Russian diplomats."

Zhirnov said that Russia wants 'for Afghanistan to be civilised, for there not to be terrorism, for there not to be drugs, and for Afghanistan to have good relations with all the countries of the world'.

He said the Taliban has

promised all this and that Moscow 'will hope that' the promises will be 'carried out'.

An early positive sign was that 'girls schools have continued working' in Kabul, he added.

In the 1980s, Moscow fought a disastrous decade-long war in Afghanistan that killed up to two million Afghans, forced seven million more from their homes and led to the deaths of more than 14,000 Soviet troops.

Fighters from the anti-Soviet Mujahideen helped found the Taliban in the early 1990s.

Russia will take part in an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan due later on Tuesday.

The Kremlin has in recent years reached out to the Taliban and hosted its representatives in Moscow several times, most recently last month.

AFP

Four Palestinians killed in clashes with Israel forces at refugee camp

Jenin, Palestinian Territories - Four Palestinians were killed on Monday in clashes with Israeli security forces at Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, where violence has escalated over a wildcat Jewish settlement.

The Israel Border Police, which operates in the West Bank, said its forces came under fire during a search for a Palestinian suspected of involvement in alleged 'terrorist' activities. "Heavy gunfire was opened at a short range by a large number [of people]," said a spokesman for the Israel Border Police.

"The border police force fired back at the terrorists and neutralised them. There were no victims among our ranks," he said.

Deadly clashes have been frequent in Jenin and the flashpoint West Bank town of Beita since May, when dozens of Israeli families arrived and began constructing the wildcat settlement of Eviatar.

The latest lives lost were four Palestinians killed by 'Israeli gunfire', according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

It identified them as Raed Abu Seif (21) and Saleh Ammar (19) as well as Anjad Husseiniyah and Nureddin Jarrar.

The bodies of Abu Seif and Ammar were seen at the Jenin hospital morgue, while the Pales-



The mother (right) of Raed Abu Seif, one of four Palestinians killed in clashes with Israeli security forces earlier in the day, mourns during his funeral in the Jenin refugee camp in the north of the occupied West Bank on Monday (AFP)

tinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces had also taken the bodies of two other Palestinians.

The Israeli side confirmed it was holding the bodies of two Palestinians.

Late morning, a crowd was gathered for the funerals of Abu Seif and Ammar, whose remains were draped in Palestinian flags

and carried through the Jenin camp on makeshift stretchers, AFP journalists reported.

'Heinous crime'

The Palestinian presidency condemned a 'heinous crime' and held the Jewish state 'responsible for the escalation and its repercussions'.

"The continuation of the Israeli policy will lead to an explosion of the situation, increased tensions and instability," presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina warned in a statement.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said two of the Palestinians killed had been living

in Jenin refugee camp, a hot spot during the two Palestinian intifadas, or uprisings, against Israel in 1987-1993 and 2000-2005.

The two others, Abu Seif and Jarrar, were originally from the city of Jenin.

In recent weeks there have been numerous clashes between

Israeli forces and Palestinians in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in Jenin and Beita.

The inhabitants of Beita have held a number of demonstrations in recent weeks against the Israeli occupation and the settlement expansion, triggering violent confrontations.

The clashes with the Israeli security forces have claimed the lives of several Palestinians and left hundreds more injured.

Beita residents have been demonstrating since May against the Eviatar settlement set up nearby without official permission from Israeli authorities.

The settlement was evacuated in early July but Israeli army troops remain stationed there while authorities deliberate on its fate.

If the settlement is approved, its founders will be allowed to take up residence there more permanently.

Beita's residents have vowed to continue their campaign until the army also leaves the outpost.

Israel occupied the West Bank during the 1967 Six-Day War and all Jewish settlements there are considered illegal by most of the international community.

Almost half a million people live in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, alongside 2.8mn Palestinians.

AFP

Six Saudi men held for harassing

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Six Saudi men have been arrested for harassing a woman visiting the capital Riyadh, offences which were only criminalised in recent years, the public prosecutor said on Monday.

"An investigation was opened against six citizens in their twenties concerning an incident in which they gathered around the vehicle of a foreign tourist who they harassed verbally and with gestures," a public prosecution source told the official SPA news agency.

The six accused, who admitted the offences, had been arrested and were being held in custody amid an investigation that is progressing, the source added.

They now face up to ten years imprisonment over the incident, the source said.

Efforts to combat sexual harassment began relatively recently in Saudi Arabia.

In May 2018 the government criminalised sexual harassment with sentences of up to five years imprisonment in cases without aggravating circumstances along with fines of SAR300,000.

Since 2017, the country has sought to soften its austere, conservative image in particular through the promotion of women's rights.

AFP

S Lanka axes health minister Pavithra

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka's President on Monday demoted the Health Minister who publicly endorsed sorcery and magic potions to battle COVID-19, as coronavirus infections and deaths hit record highs.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's office said Pavithra Wanniarachchi's health portfolio had been given to Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella who is also the government spokesman.

Wanniarachchi was in intensive care in January after contracting the virus despite publicly consuming and endorsing a 'magic potion' against COVID-19 made by a sorcerer.

She also poured a pot of 'blessed' water into a river in November after a self-styled godman told her that it would end the pandemic in the island nation of 21mn people.

Sri Lanka's Health Ministry under Wanniarachchi came under intense criticism last week for understating coronavirus infections.

Despite the demotion, she will remain in the Cabinet - the President gave her the less important Transport Ministry.



Pavithra Wanniarachchi

The number of daily virus deaths crossed 150 in the past week, overwhelming crematoriums.

Daily infections crossed 3,000, and with hospitals struggling to cope, even government health workers say the actual number of infections could be three times higher.

The government has so far rejected calls for a lockdown to contain the surge, but last week tightened restrictions.

Wedding and parties have been banned from Tuesday, while state ceremonies and public gatherings are also prohibited until September 1.

Shops, restaurants and offices will have to follow a night curfew from Monday.

AFP

HRW calls for UN probe over disappearances in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Human Rights Watch on Monday called for a United Nations probe into the alleged enforced disappearances of Bangladesh opposition activists, demanding sanctions on the officials found responsible.

The rights watchdog released a report identifying 86 political activists, businessmen and student members of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party who went missing over the past decade.

It said disappearances have become a 'hallmark' of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's rule since 2009, a tool for curtailing free speech and criticism.

"We want the UN and other international experts to launch an independent investigation, because it has become quite clear that the Bangladesh authorities are willing to look away and even provide impunity for these kinds of abuses," Meenakshi Ganguly, HRW's South Asia specialist, told AFP.

HRW called for 'targeted sanctions' on members of the Rapid Action Battalion, an elite police squad accused of carrying out many of the disappearances.

There was no comment on the allegations from the govern-



Farzana Akter (right), wife of Mohammad Parvez Hossain, a Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activist who disappeared in December 2013, sits along with her children, in Dhaka on Saturday (AFP)

ment or the Rapid Action Battalion, which has been accused in the past of rights abuses including extrajudicial killings.

Other rights organisations have said 600 people have been

seized in the past decade, and that those who have been freed are too scared to speak out.

The Odhikar monitor reported 16 suspected enforced disappearances in the first half of 2021.

"These enforced disappearances have created a terrible environment of fear," said Nur Khan Liton, a former chief of Ain o Salish Kendra, a leading Bangladesh rights group.

Senior government officials have in the past denied that security agencies had seized anyone, saying the alleged victims have gone into hiding.

'Why would he be killed?'

In one of the cases listed by HRW, low-level BNP activist Mohammad Parvez Hossain disappeared in December 2013, allegedly abducted with three friends.

"They went out to buy birthday flowers for the son of a party colleague and never returned," said his wife Farzana Akter, who was pregnant at the time.

A few weeks later, Hasina won a general election by a landslide.

Akter, now 30, said police repeatedly refused to discuss her husband's case.

She now relies on her family to help raise her ten year old daughter and eight year old son, who has never seen his father.

"If the government says my husband is in hiding, then why don't they find him?" she said.

"He didn't commit any crime, didn't kill or rob anyone. He was not corrupt. Why would he be killed?"

AFP

Most Algeria forest fires 'under control': Emergency services

Algiers, Algeria - Most of the deadly forest fires that have hit northern Algeria in the past week are 'under control' and no longer endanger residents, the country's emergency services said.

Firefighters were still struggling on Sunday to put out 19 blazes, after over 90 people, including 33 soldiers, were killed in wildfires since August 9.

"Most of these fires have been brought under control and don't represent a danger to residents," said Colonel Farouk Achour, a spokesman for the

civil protection authority.

The authority's efforts focus currently on the 'protection of inhabited areas, notably El Tarf, Bejaia, Jijel and Tizi Ouzou', Achour said.

More than 74 fires had been extinguished in the past 24 hours, he added.

The government has blamed arsonists and a blistering heat-wave for the dozens of blazes, but experts have also criticised authorities for failing to prepare for the annual phenomenon.

Algerian police said on Sunday they had arrested 36 people



An Algerian woman stands amidst the charred debris of her home that was gutted during wildfires in the Ait Daoud area on Friday (AFP)

Firefighters were struggling on Sunday to put out 19 blazes, after over 90 people were killed in wildfires since August 9. Most of these fires have been brought under control

COLONEL FAROUK ACHOUR

including three women after the lynching of a man suspected of having started one of the deadly fires. "A preliminary enquiry... into the homicide, lynching, immolation and mutilation... of Djamel Ben Ismail... led to the arrest of 36 suspects including

three women," police chief Mohamed Chakour told reporters.

Ben Ismail, 38, had 'turned himself in of his own accord' at a police station in the hard-hit Tizi Ouzou region after hearing he was suspected of involvement, he said.

Algeria is Africa's biggest country by surface area, and although much of the interior is desert, the north has over four million hectares of forest, which is hit every summer by fires.

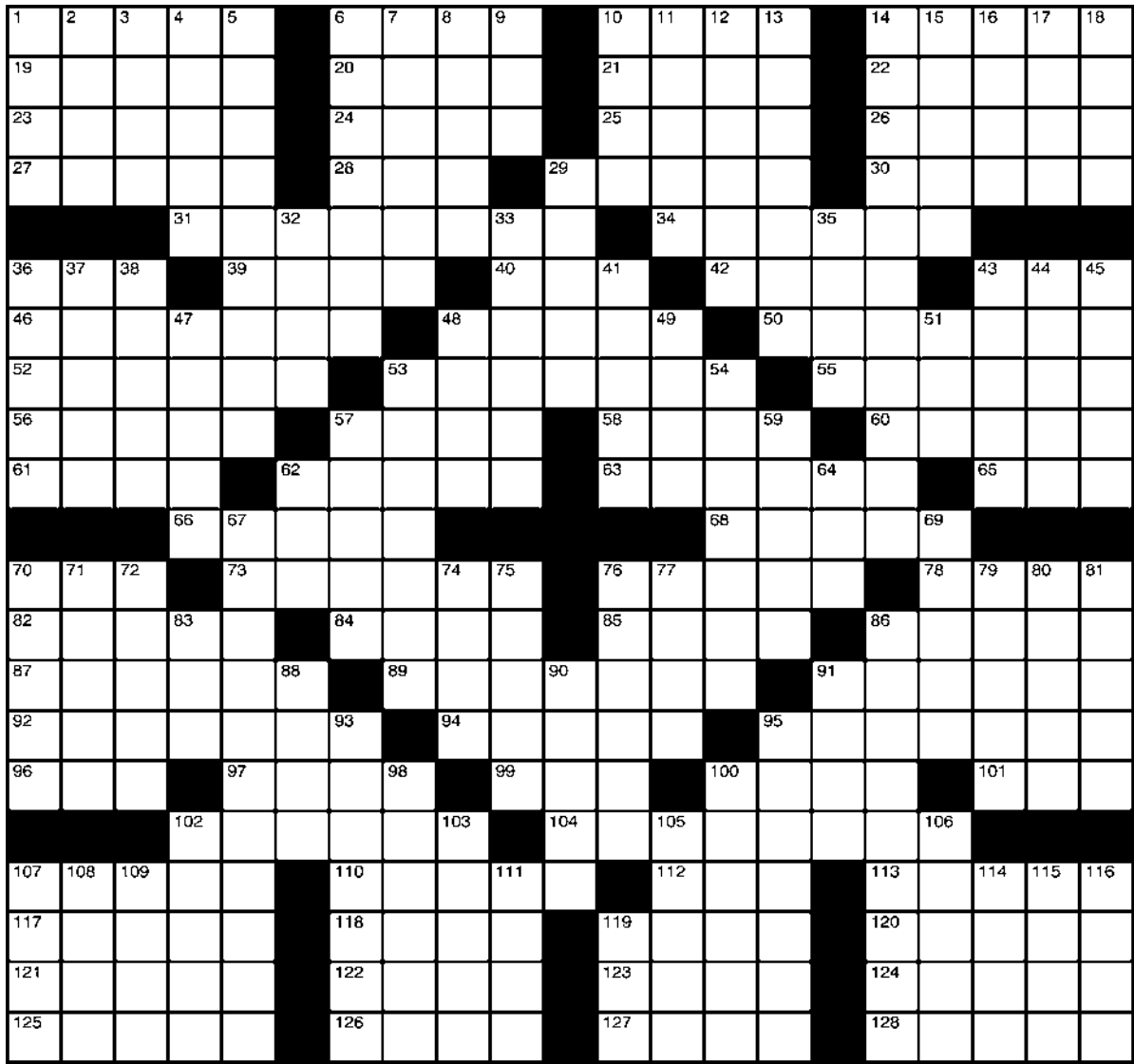
Last year some 44,000 hectares went up in flames.

In neighbouring Morocco, firefighters worked through the night on Sunday and into Monday to bring fires under control amid unfavourable winds.

The fires have destroyed 200 hectares of forest, according to a forestry official.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

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111 White-tailed eagle
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115 Arboretum attraction
116 Arsenio or Monty
119 Dance like Gregory Hines

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

There are a few new people on the scene who would be a great addition to your social life, so why not put something together so everyone can get to know each other better? It's a great time for a party, and chances are very good that new connections will be solidified. People you know all share certain characteristics, which makes adding new folks into the mix pretty easy.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Some of the people around you have a bad attitude about what has been going on, while you have a much brighter outlook. Don't try to change their mind, though. If they can't see the bright side of things, then you certainly won't be able to help them! You need to surround yourself with people who already have an optimistic attitude, not a bunch of naysayers who always love to criticise.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

There won't be too much liveliness or excitement around your group today, so you can't expect to get a lot done unless you can wake everybody up! Get everyone to step out of their usual routine and start thinking outside the box by showing them how you do it -- lead by example and show them how much fun it can be to dissect new challenges..



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

This could be a very unpredictable day for you, where you'll get to take three steps forward -- but then be forced to take two steps backward. The only sure forward-moving thing will be the sweet romance that is slowly building in your life! It's giving you all the encouragement you need to keep thinking positive. Whenever you get stressed, you can just think of that certain someone.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You will be the recipient of a beautiful gift today, although it won't be a material good. Someone will give you the gift of understanding something new. You are developing a deep and meaningful appreciation for the subtle connections between people -- when two strangers can look each other in the eye and immediately understand each other.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're going to have some transportation issues today -- getting to where you need to be when you need to be there will become one of your biggest challenges. Either your car or someone else's car will be suddenly out of play and you could be forced to change your plans and become reliant on others. It's a good thing that you are so flexible.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

The universe is sending you some high energy, and it's just what you have been needed to get started on a project at home! Maybe you want to repaint the kitchen, fix a broken window, or just clean out a closet -- whatever you've been putting off will suddenly seem like the best way to spend your day! This change in outlook will surprise a few people, but they will admire your industrious turn.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Today you are craving substance over style. So if you are trying to start a new relationship, seek out a person to whom you really feel an intellectual connection, not just someone you like flirting with. A physical attraction is important, but you are ready to engage with someone's mind and find out what really makes them tick! If you are already in a relationship, take things to the next level.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You can give your social life the biggest boost by being more adventurous. Connect with someone you normally would not socialise with. Ask your boss to join you for lunch, or find out if your neighbour wants to join you for a cup of coffee. Getting more familiar with unfamiliar people is a great way to stay in tune with what is going on around you.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

As you embark upon a new relationship, it's only natural that a failed relationship from the past should enter your mind. But before you start focusing on all the similarities, look at the contrasts! You can't start letting the past cast a shadow over your present -- you need to stay open. It can be hard to push your fears aside, but you can if you push hard enough and often enough.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Everyone is on the same page as you today, and basically anything you suggest, no matter how outlandish or odd it might seem, will be adopted and accepted. You're in an ideal position to be a leader today, so steer your coworkers or friends toward the right option! While your decisions may be hard to make, try not to let anyone see the struggles you have to go through.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

The best way for you to get the inspiration you are seeking in your work life, love life, or your personal growth is to observe someone who is already living the life you think that you want to live. Ask them questions and take some very detailed notes! Learning more about how they do what they do will give you a useful blueprint to follow. It's time to pick a path to take in life.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Deep blue colour is imparted to glass by the presence of

- a. cupric oxide
- b. nickel oxide
- c. cobalt oxide
- d. iron oxide

2. Glass is made of the mixture of

- a. quartz and mica
- b. sand and silicates
- c. salt and quartz
- d. sand and salt

3. The vast resources of unutilised natural gas can be used in the production of

- a. graphite
- b. Synthetic petroleum
- c. fertilisers
- d. carbide

Answers: 1.c 2.b 3.c

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

BOGGLER

E	O	S	A
A	G	I	R
C	U	S	T
N	T	I	P

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

ATKA	SMART	PHAR	BOCAIS
SHEP	FORAN	TALE	BROTL
PEPPER	TAPE	ORSE	SEAL
ATELLER	CARITE	KEELED	
ALLIPS	CATHRE	ODIANA	
FOISSEY	LATE	OUTSTRI	PA
ASTER	CAPO	CARPET	ONIA
THOR	REONS	LAIRD	ARUIN
ALIG	SAUSE	FOISALS	GLERK
LAKEISLE	HAIRS	VOLLEY	
ANKED	PATTY	TAHOB	
HANDL	EVERS	DELLOW	FAIR
EDGES	NOSE	ORGRAS	HTE
SHOD	PITTS	CLIME	CARP
SER	WINE	ORWOODS	CIANEA
EMBARKED	EAGRE	CURTISY	
OSTER	ENTRITY	MART	
DANCER	PIECE	MODRESBY	
RUNES	REDWHIT	EANDBLUE	
AREN	AGLE	SANTE	AULD
MATT	WORD	HUSSTY	DRIED

DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (AUGUST 16)

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



LIPSTICK CHOICE

JUST FOR HUE



When choosing the right shade of lipstick, the most important consideration should be your own skin tone, not the shade you love. **Is your skin tone warm, cool or neutral?** Get the hue that's just right for you

When you visit your favourite cosmetic store, you'd find hundreds of different lipsticks out there in varying tones and finishes, and finding the best one for yourself can be quite an overwhelming task.

The truth is, many shades will appear to be good for you - the reason why most ladies end up buying umpteen shades of red - but if you are able to rightly identify your own skin tone, it would help in selecting the most appropriate shades for you.

Fashion trends keep changing every season and often make up trends follow suit. However, they say, some things never change and lipstick is one of these. While textures and finishes may differ, using the perfect hues to suit your own skin tone never changes.

Find your skin undertone

One way to find out your skin undertone lies in your own hands. You can check out the veins on the inside of your wrist. "If you have purple or blue-looking veins, you likely have a cool undertone, while warm undertones often have a more greenish tint to them," says Suzy Gerstein, NYC-based celebrity makeup artist. "Neutral undertones usually have a mixture of both and green veins can often indicate an olive undertone."

Whether you're exceptionally pale or have very dark skin, undertones fall into three basic categories - warm, cool, and neutral and each of these has tones within it:

Cool: bluish, red, or pink

Neutral: a mixture of both warm and cool

Warm: golden, peachy, or yellow



Choosing the right shade

When selecting the right shade to suit your undertone, try them out on the inside of your arm, and noticing how the different undertones look against your skin.

For warm tones: If you have warm or yellow undertones or olive skin, look for a shade of lipstick in corresponding warm colours: Orangey-red, brick-red, and terra-cotta will enhance your skin.

For blue or pink tones: The best complement to cool skin tones



with blue or pink undertones is a lipstick that also has cool undertones - blueish and purple shades. Try a bright cherry red that veers more blue than orange; berry shades like cranberry; or a deep plum.

For neutral tones: Neutral undertones work with a wide range of shades. If you have a neutral skin tone or aren't sure what your undertones are, try mauve shades for medium skin, pinky tones for fair skin, and berry shades for darker skin.

Choosing a nude lipstick

If you are not fond of colours, nude shades can serve your purpose of making up without appearing to have done so. However, finding a good nude lipstick can be difficult because the tone and shade can either liven up your natural lip colour or make you look ill.

Nude shades do not necessarily mean those that are similar to your skin colour. It's not about finding a lipstick shade that matches the actual colour of your lips. The real idea is about emphasising their presence in a tone that

looks natural to you.

Find a shade that matches or is one shade darker than your inner lip. Also, tinted balms and glosses add a bit of colour to your lips, working with the lips' natural shade to enhance them.

Choosing a bright lipstick

Bright colours (pink, orange, and red shades) can be easier to

choose than the perfect nude.

But with so many options, it's easier to feel overwhelmed at the makeup counter. If you're totally new to finding a flattering bright, here are some pointers:

Finish changes the effect of a bright lip. A saturated satin or cream finish looks classic, and a matte lip looks very modern. Choose a colour based on your preferences. Cooler tones are often brighter, while warmer tones offer a softer look.

Tips for red lips

For a classic make-up look, red lipstick is the best bet because it is rich, intense and looks good on every skin tone.

For skin with cool pink undertones, bright fire-truck reds look lovely. For warmer yellow under-

tones, deeper reds like brick to crimson go well.

Red lips are attention-grabbing in themselves and don't need an accompaniment of heavy eye makeup.

Once you've decided to wear

red lips, decide on either a juicy, glossy finish or a stark matte one as the rest of your face depends on the finish of your lips.

Precise application is, however, crucial for red lipstick. Ideally, a red lip liner can be helpful.

TENNIS ROUND-UP



Federer to be sidelined 'for many months'

Paris, France - Roger Federer said on Sunday he will undergo further knee surgery and admitted he 'will be out for many months', a decision which casts further doubt on his future in tennis at the age of 40.

"I will be on crutches for many weeks and out of the game for many months," 20-time Grand Slam title winner Federer said in a video posted on his Instagram account. The decision immediately rules him out of the US Open, where he has been champion five times and which starts in two weeks' time.

"I want to give myself a glimmer of hope to return to the tour in some shape or form," added Federer. "I am realistic, don't get me wrong. I know how difficult it is at my age to go through another surgery. I will try it. I want to be healthy, I want to be running around."

Federer, who has played just 13 matches in 2021, underwent two knee surgeries in 2020 when he played only six times. He had already pulled out of the Tokyo Olympics to rest his knee. Federer withdrew from this year's French Open after

reaching the fourth round and was knocked out in the quarterfinals of Wimbledon, a tame 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-0 loss to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.

That defeat was only his 14th at the All England Club in 119 matches, and the first time he had been beaten in the tournament in straight sets since a first-round exit at the hands of Mario Ancic in 2002.

It was also the first time he had lost a set 6-0 at Wimbledon and just the third time at a Slam.

"I've been doing a lot of checks with the doctors on my

knee," he added on Sunday.

"I hurt myself further during the grass-court season and it's just not the way to go forward. "They told me to feel better I'll need surgery. I decided to do it."

'Completely different'

After turning 40 recently, Federer said he was learning to adjust to the fact that recovering from niggles takes two weeks rather than two days.

"It was different before. The questions were simple: what is my place in the ranking? What will my next tournament be?", he

told *Blick* newspaper. Federer captured his most recent major at the 2018 Australian Open. Since then, Novak Djokovic has claimed eight more majors and Rafael Nadal has picked up four.

Both now stand level on 20 Slams with Federer. Should Federer be preparing to bow out after 23 years on tour, he will leave behind a career decorated by 103 titles - only Jimmy Connors with 109 has more - a combined 310 weeks at number one and more than US\$130mn in prize money alone.

AFP

MEDVEDEV IS CHAMP

ATP TORONTO MASTERS

Toronto, Canada - Daniil Medvedev neutralised the attack of American serving giant Reilly Opelka on Sunday, dominating 6-4, 6-3 to win the ATP Toronto Masters.

The world No 2 Russian needed just 87 minutes, limiting his 2.11m opponent to just eight aces and breaking him three times while saving all four break points he faced. Medvedev, aided by 34 unforced errors from Opelka, became the first Russian to win a Canadian trophy since Marat Safin 21 years ago.

The winner was playing a fifth career final at the Masters 1000 level. "When I was starting I could barely have dreamed of a Masters final," he said. Now I've played five of them and won four. "I'm just happy," he added. "I want to achieve more, I want to play better."

Medvedev, who will be the top seed at next week's Cincinnati Masters, the final major tuneup for the US Open that starts August 30, had praise for Opelka, the US No 1 who is ranked 32nd in the world.

"It was a great week for him, he fought to the end," Medvedev said. Playing a first Masters final is never easy. My first was in Canada (Montreal, 2019) and I won just three games," he recalled of a title tilt against Rafael Nadal.

Opelka said he was outplayed from the start by the top seed.

"Daniil played great, as expected. He was flawless. I had

one chance to break early and I don't think that would have changed much.

"It was a little windy and a little bit swirlier out there, so it was really tough to be consistently powerful. Even when I hit some big shots, he countered well. It was very tough to disrupt him at all."

Medvedev said he went into the match with a plan to combat Opelka's big delivery.

"The goal was to get as many balls back as possible, not go for

Now I've played five [Masters] of them and won four. I'm just happy. I want to achieve more

DANIIL MEDVEDEV

crazy shots, make him move and make him doubt," Medvedev said.

"The more balls you put back the more pressure you put on the opponent."

Medvedev, Opelka and their teams took a private plane laid on by organisers in order to reach next week's Cincinnati Masters, 660 kms away, later in the evening.

Medvedev said that if offered the chance, he would not turn down a glass of celebratory champagne in flight.

AFP



Daniil Medvedev celebrates a point against Reilly Opelka during their final match in Toronto



Camila Giorgi of Italy poses with the winner's trophy on Sunday

Giorgi topples Pliskova for Montreal crown

WTA MONTREAL MASTERS

Montreal, Canada - Italian underdog Camila Giorgi upset fourth seed Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 7-5 on Sunday to win the biggest title of her career at the WTA hardcourt event in Montreal.

The world No 71 completed a 2021 hat-trick of victories over the sixth-ranked Czech, who has now lost three finals this season. "I was very emotional inside," Giorgi said. "Of course, I'm not the one that shows a lot. It's just amazing," she added. "I'm very happy for what I did this week."

Wimbledon finalist and Rome runner-up Pliskova had no answer for the inspired shotmaking of Giorgi, who also defeated Pliskova in the first round at Eastbourne and in the third round at the Tokyo Olympics. The Czech had won 12 of her past 14 matches

coming into the final, which lasted almost one and three-quarter hours. But Giorgi's seven aces, and four service breaks, were enough to again overcome Pliskova, who remained impressed with her opponent's top form.

"She played super-solid all week actually, not crazy like she can play sometimes," Pliskova said. "I think she played really well, serving well at the important moments ... she was just a bit better today."

The first Italian winner of the prestigious US Open tuneup now owns three career titles after winning in Linz in 2018 and in the Netherlands three years earlier.

Giorgi is expected to rise into the top 35 in the world rankings for the first time since May, 2019, as a result of her victory.

AFP

CLASSIFIEDS

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Proposals invited for a Muslim boy, 179cms, 27yrs, MBA - Mumbai University, settled in Mumbai. Employed in Oman. Looking for a Muslim girl, employed in Oman, Hindi/Urdu/Tamil speaking, under 25 age with a height of 5.6. Contact : +968-99762681

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A file photo of Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane

Coach Nuno impatient for transfer window to shut as Kane named in squad for Europa Conference League

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Harry Kane is in Tottenham's squad for their Europa Conference League tie this week as manager Nuno Espirito Santo admits he cannot wait for the transfer window to close and end speculation over the striker's future. Manchester City are keen to sign Kane and were reported to have tabled a bid of US\$139mn in June.

Kane - who has three years remaining on his contract - stayed away from Tottenham's 1-0 win over champions City in their Premier League opener on Sunday. However, *The Times*



claims it is expected Kane will remain for one more season due to City's reluctance to meet Spurs' chief Daniel Levy's reported asking price of US\$222mn.

The 28-year-old on Monday

All the managers in the Premier League have the same feeling that I have

NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO, SPURS BOSS

was named in Tottenham's strong 25-man squad for the Europa Conference League playoff against Pacos de Ferreira. "We have our squad, we have our Spurs players," Nuno told the

BBC on Monday. "We have to commit them but we have to know that 31st of August is sometimes not in your hands.

"All the managers in the Premier League have the same feeling that I have - trying to finish the window and settle down."

Nuno said he expected Kane to remain at the north London club, though he added he has enough experience to know Spurs should keep their options open regarding a move for a replacement. "Harry is (training) with us, he worked on Sunday morning and he's getting ready to help the team," he said.

"We don't expect (something to happen before the transfer deadline but) we have to be ready to act if necessary because until the 31st (of August) anything

can happen in football."

Kane has made no secret of his desire to play for a club that can deliver silverware after years of frustration at Tottenham.

Kane's goals and a highly effective partnership with South Korean Son Heung-min have taken Tottenham close to winning trophies. But they lost the 2019 Champions League final to Liverpool and last season's League Cup final against City.

Tottenham - whose last major trophy was the 2008 League Cup - have failed to qualify for Champions League this season after finishing seventh last term.

Kane has scored 221 goals for Tottenham, second only to Jimmy Greaves' 266, the club's all-time scoring record.

AFP



Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois

Courtois extends Real Madrid contract to 2026

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Belgian international goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who had been under contract until 2024, has extended his stay at Real Madrid until June 30, 2026, the Madrid club announced on Monday.

Courtois has been with Real since 2018 when he arrived from Chelsea in a US\$41mn transfer.

Prior to his spell in London, he played for Atletico Madrid between 2011 and 2014 - winning a league title and the Europa League trophy there.

On Saturday, Courtois played his 100th game for Real in La Liga in the 4-1 win at Alaves.

"This is going to be my fourth season at the club of my dreams," the Belgian wrote on his website.

"It is an honour to have the opportunity to play for all these trophies. Personally, I hope to maintain and surpass

the level I reached last season."

He has represented Belgium 89 times in total, including his appearances at Euro 2020 this summer.

"Real Madrid and Thibaut Courtois have agreed on an extension to the player's contract which will see him remain at the club for the next five seasons, up until June 30, 2026," read a club statement.

The 29-year-old has kept 54 clean sheets in 130 appearances for Real Madrid since his arrival in 2018.

In the 2019-20 season he won the Zamora Trophy for the best goalkeeper in La Liga having conceded just 20 goals in 34 games.

Courtois will be eager to help Carlo Ancelotti's side regain the La Liga title this season after rivals Atletico finished two points above them last campaign.

Agencies

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Turmoil leaves Afghanistan's Paralympic athletes unable to compete in Tokyo

Tokyo, Japan - Afghanistan's Paralympic team will not participate in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo next week because they are trapped in the country, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said on Monday.

The Taliban have in recent days capped a military victory that saw them bring a swift end to the 20-year war in the country. Just two Para athletes from Afghanistan were scheduled to compete in the Paralympic Games - taekwondo athletes Zakia Khudadadi and Hossain Rasouli.

Khudadadi, 23, was to be the first woman ever to represent Afghanistan at the Paralympics.

But the IPC confirmed on Monday that with the Taliban takeover, the two athletes would no longer be able to travel to Japan. "Regrettably NPC (National Paralympic Committee)

Afghanistan will no longer participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games," IPC spokesman Craig Spence said.

"Due to the serious ongoing situation in the country, all airports are closed and there is no way for them to travel to Tokyo."

There was no word on whether the IPC had been asked to try to assist team members, or was making efforts to do so. "We hope the team and officials remain safe and well during this difficult time," Spence said.

Just one week ago, the two athletes were profiled on the IPC's website, with the country's chef de mission Arian Sadiqi saying the Games offered a chance to 'deliver the message of coexistence for humanity'.

No fans allowed

Spectators will not be allowed at the Tokyo Paralympic Games



Hossain Rasouli (left) and Zakia Khudadadi of Afghanistan Paralympic team



because of the city's ongoing struggle with coronavirus, organisers have confirmed.

The Japanese government has proposed expanding and extending the country's state of emergency, with the Paralympics beginning on August 24. "We very much regret that this situation has impacted the Paralympic Games," organisers

said in a statement. As well as stadiums, fans were also requested not to attend road events. Organisers confirmed spectators would not be allowed at events in Tokyo, Saitama, Chiba and Shizuoka because of infection rates in those regions.

Schoolchildren will still be allowed to attend at the request of local authorities or school admin-

istrators. Fans were barred from venues in the capital for the Olympics, with events held in some other regions allowed up to 50% capacity.

"We sincerely apologise to all ticket buyers who were looking forward to watching the Games at the venues," the statement continued.

Agencies

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FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Barca take ‘leap into unknown’ with win

Spanish giants edge out Real Sociedad in first game of post-Messi era



Barcelona’s Martin Braithwaite (third from left) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Real Sociedad at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Sunday (AFP)

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Barcelona started life without Lionel Messi by defeating Real Sociedad 4-2 in their La Liga opener at the Camp Nou on Sunday even if fans admitted it felt like ‘a leap into the unknown’.

Captain Gerard Pique gave them a 19th minute lead with his 50th goal for the club.

Martin Braithwaite found the net in first half injury time and in the 59th minute. Sergi Roberto added a fourth in the last minute of the game.

Just over 20,000 fans were in attendance as crowds returned for the first time since the pandemic. However, they had to hold their breath at one stage when Sociedad came back from 3-0 down to get to 3-2 thanks to goals from 20-year-old Julen Lobete in the 82nd minute and a 30-metre free-kick from skipper Mikel Oyarzabal three minutes later.

Six-time *Ballon d’Or* winner Messi called time on his two-decade career at Barcelona last week and moved to Paris

Saint-Germain (PSG). Messi’s memory lingered heavy over the Camp Nou on Sunday despite the removal of a giant photograph of the Argentine superstar from the entrance in the wake of his move to France.

Some banners were in place well before kick-off venting the fans anger towards president Joan Laporta. One read ‘Laporta, Barca is not your business’, while another proclaimed ‘Barca yes, Laporta no!’

“It was a big emotional blow,” said 23-year-old Barca fan Adria

De Lucas. “I was in my room when I saw the news. I started sending messages to all my friends, and no one believed it. It was emotionally hard.”

The supporter added: “It’s a leap into the unknown (without Messi). We will see what happens.”

Inside the Camp Nou, fans made the most of their return after 18 months, chanting ‘Messi! Messi!’

Banners expressed their ‘eternal gratitude’. “The supporters are with us, they want to see

football,” said Pique. “We knew they were going to react that way. We all know what Leo represents, but everything changes and we have to keep going.”

‘Don’t have Messi talent’

“We will be very competitive and we will fight for titles to the end. We will not have his talent, but we have proven that we can all play together.”

La Liga champions Atletico Madrid got their season under-

way with a 2-1 victory at Celta Vigo.

Angel Correa gave Atletico the lead after 23 minutes after being set up by Thomas Lemar.

Correa added a second goal in the 64th minute just five minutes after Iago Aspas had pulled Celta level from the penalty spot.

However, the game was marred by a mass brawl in the closing stages following a foul on Atletico striker Luis Suarez.

Red cards were brandished for Hugo Mallo of Celta and Mario

Hermoso of Atletico.

In Sunday’s late game, Sevilla defeated Rayo Vallecano 3-0 with Moroccan international Youssef En-Nesyri scoring a first-half penalty before new Argentine recruit Erik Lamela grabbed two.

Vallecano played 75 minutes a man short after goalkeeper Luca Zidane, the son of French football legend Zinedine, was red-carded for bringing down Oussama Idrissi in the move which led to the penalty.

AFP



Barcelona president Joan Laporta during a press meet on Monday

Laporta says Barca finances ‘dramatic’ but future bright

SPANISH LEAGUE

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona president Joan Laporta on Monday gave details of the ‘dramatic’ financial problems that persuaded him to release Lionel Messi. “The economic and financial situation of the club is worrying, and the financial situation is dramatic,” Laporta told a press conference at the Camp Nou.

Barcelona, he said, have debts of US\$1.6bn and a wage bill, at US\$726.5mn, that is ‘25 to 30 per cent higher than that of our competitors’. “We are all tightening our belts, in a couple of years the club’s finances will be healthy.”

As for Messi’s departure to PSG, Laporta said that the two sides held ‘negotiations that both parties hoped would be fruitful but didn’t work out. There is a mutual disappoint-

ment’. “I wish him all the best, I like to see him happy, he deserves it. From now on we will be an opponent,” said Laporta.

Barcelona opened their season with a home win over Real Sociedad on Sunday. “It was a very Barca-like reaction,” Laporta said. “All the players are more motivated than ever.”

“Sunday showed that Barcelona fans are hungry for football and to see a team that fights and plays well.”

“A new era is beginning. The short-term prospects are complicated, but in the medium-term they are magnificent,” said Laporta, adding that Barcelona plan to return to developing young players as they did with Messi, who came through the youth system known as ‘La Masia’.

AFP

Bordeaux claim ‘good point’ at Marseille



Bordeaux’s Timothee Pembele (L) and Marseille’s Konrad de la Fuente during their French League match on Sunday

FRENCH LEAGUE

Paris, France - Bordeaux’s Remi Oudin said he was happy after his side came from two goals down to claim a 2-2 draw at Marseille in their French League game on Sunday.

The hosts led at half-time thanks to goals from in-form Dimitri Payet and Turkey winger Cengiz Under before 18-year-old defender Timothee Pembele and substitute Remi Oudin, with a well-worked volley from a corner, scored for the visitors.

“Looking at the game at half-time, we were down 2-0. Then we get the draw. Here, in

Marseille, it’s a good point,” Oudin told broadcaster Prime Video.

“It’s the little details that mean you win or get a draw, like tonight. It’s important,” he added.

Home coach Jorge Sampaoli kept faith in the 11 which started last weekend’s 3-2 win at Montpellier.

The visitors’ Yacine Adli was named on Vladimir Petkovic’s bench due to the 21-year-old attacking midfielder’s expected move to AC Milan.

Under claimed his second goal in as many games after the

half hour mark after Brazilian midfielder Gerson’s cut-back.

Payet added his third of the campaign four minutes before the interval with a sublime effort which started near the half-way line and finished with his low shot into bottom corner.

Petkovic’s men were on level terms by the hour mark after Timothee Pembele, who joined on-loan from Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) last week, and first-half replacement Oudin scored to claim the point before Leo Balerdi was sent off after 89 minutes for the hosts.

AFP

Kalu collapses on pitch

FRENCH LEAGUE

Marseille, France - Bordeaux striker Samuel Kalu collapsed on the pitch in a French League game at Marseille on Sunday where temperatures hit a sweltering 30°C.

The 23-year-old Nigerian international fainted and slumped to the Stade Velodrome surface in the early stages of the match.

Worried teammates gathered around the stricken Kalu and frantically waved their hands to the bench to summon medical help.

After a few heart-stopping moments, Kalu managed to stand up but was substituted and replaced by Remi Oudin.

The incident came just two months after Denmark’s Christian Eriksen suffered cardiac arrest in a Euro 2020 match.

“Kalu’s incident gave us chills. It’s always a bit shocking for spectators and players on the pitch,” said Oudin who went on to score in the 2-2 draw.

“With what happened with Eriksen at the Euros, we think about it. Everyone got a little scared. Fortunately, it ended well.”

“According to the doctors, it’s a simple discomfort but he



Bordeaux’s Samuel Kalu leaves the pitch surrounded by medics during the French League match against Marseille on Sunday

Kalu’s incident gave us chills. It’s always a bit shocking for spectators and players on the pitch. With what happened with Eriksen at the Euros, we think about it

REMI OUDIN, BORDEAUX PLAYER

will certainly be undergoing tests on Monday.”

In June 2019, Kalu was hospitalised after suffering from dehydration while training with Nigeria in the Egyptian heat during the Africa Cup of Nations.

“I was thinking about what

happened during the Euro,” admitted Bordeaux coach Vladimir Petkovic.

“With the medical team, we chose to replace him so as not to take any risks. In these cases, football takes a back seat.”

AFP

Nine clubs involved with ESL retain ECA membership

London, UK - Nine clubs, including six English Premier League (EPL) clubs involved in the failed European Super League (ESL) have been allowed to retain European Club Association (ECA) membership, BBC reported on Monday.

Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham, as well as AC Milan, Inter Milan and Atletico Madrid have re-joined the ECA until 2023 after leaving in April. The ECA said it ends ‘a regrettable and turbulent episode’ for the game.

Barcelona, Real Madrid and Juventus have not been reinstated. The trio are the only clubs among the 12 founding members of the ESL which have not renounced the breakaway competition.

Juventus chief Andrea Agnelli stepped down as chairman of the ECA - the body that represents interests of professional clubs in Europe - and was replaced by PSG president Nasser al Khelaifi after plans for the new league were announced in April.

In July, Juve, Barca and Real said they would continue with their plans, claiming to have successfully argued against any punishment by European football’s governing body, UEFA.

Earlier in the summer, the nine clubs which distanced themselves were handed financial punishments by UEFA.

Agencies

TERRIFIC TRIUMPH



India's Mohammed Siraj (C) celebrates with his teammates after dismissing England's James Anderson to secure a thrilling win on the fifth and final day of the second Test at Lord's in London on Monday. India won by 151 runs (AFP)

India go 1-0 up as England fold for 120 after Shami-Bumrah batting magic leaves hosts chasing 272 for win at Lord's

ENGLAND VS INDIA
SECOND TEST: DAY FIVE

London, UK - India's pacemen starred with both bat and ball on Monday as Virat Kohli's side thrashed England by 151 runs in the second Test at Lord's.

Victory gave India a 1-0 lead in a five-match series after just their third win in 19 Tests at the 'home of cricket' followed a rain-marred draw at Trent Bridge.

England, set 272 to win in a minimum of 60 overs on the last day, were dismissed for 120.

They were in dire straits at one for two after Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami removed openers Rory Burns and Dom Sibley for nought apiece.

Fellow paceman Mohammed Siraj then followed up with four for 32 - a return that saw him end the match by bowling No 11 James Anderson.

Earlier, Shami, with 56 not out, and Bumrah (34 not out) both hit their highest Test scores and shared an unbroken ninth-wicket stand of 89, during India's second innings 298 for eight declared. Bumrah then had Burns out for nought when the left-hander was caught off a leading edge at wide mid-off.

The struggling Sibley followed soon afterwards when he nicked

a superb Shami leg-cutter to wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant.

The recalled Haseeb Hameed, in on a pair, was dropped in the slips on four before his nine off 45 balls ended when lbw to an Ishant Sharma nip-backer, despite a review. New batsman Jonny Bairstow, was out for just two when lbw to Ishant.

Root falls for 33

And England's 67 for four at tea became 67 for five three balls afterwards when England captain Joe Root, who made a superb 180 not out in the first innings, fell for 33 when edged a Bumrah ball that angled in to Kohli at first slip. Jos Buttler was then dropped on two in the slips by Kohli off Bumrah.

But at the other end Siraj struck twice in successive balls to leave England 90 for seven, with Moeen Ali caught by Kohli before Sam Curran completed a king pair when edging to Pant.

New batsman Ollie Robinson, gamely resisted for 35 balls. But Robinson was eventually lbw on review to Bumrah, who finished with fine figures of three for 33.

His exit started collapse that saw England lost their last three wickets all on 120, with Buttler caught behind for 25 before Anderson fell.

India resumed on Monday on 181 for six, a lead of 154. Robinson struck with the new ball to have dangerman Pant caught behind for 22, with India now 194 for seven. England fast bowler Mark Wood, entered the fray late after suffering a shoulder injury when fielding on Sunday. But the express quick was unable to add to his three-wicket haul.

With Shami and Bumrah scoring steadily, Root brought off-spinner Moeen Ali back into the attack. Bumrah, however, was dropped on 22 by first slip Root off Moeen.

Shami went to his second fifty in 53 Tests in stylish fashion, driving successive Moeen deliveries for four and six off to reach the landmark in just 57 balls. This innings surpassed his 51 not out against England at Nottingham's Trent Bridge in 2014. Bumrah also topped his highest Test score for the second time this series after his 28 at Nottingham.

India opener KL Rahul was named player of the match for his first-innings 129.

AFP

SCOREBOARD	
India 1 st Innings 364	
England 1 st Innings 391	
INDIA 2 nd INNINGS	
KL Rahul	c Buttler b Wood 5
Rohit Sharma	c Moeen b Wood 21
C Pujara	c Root b Wood 45
V Kohli	c Buttler b Curran 20
A Rahane	c Buttler b Moeen 61
R Pant	c Buttler b Robinson 22
R Jadeja	b Moeen 3
Ishant Sharma	lbw b Robinson 16
M Shami	not out 56
J Bumrah	not out 34
Extras:	(b 2, lb 12, nb 1) 15
TOTAL:	298-8 decl in 109.3 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-27, 3-55, 4-155, 5-167, 6-175, 7-194, 8-209	
Bowling: J Anderson 25.3-6-53-0, O Robinson 17-6-45-2, M Wood 18-4-51-3, S Curran 18-3-42-1, Moeen Ali 26-1-84-2, J Root 5-0-9-0	
ENGLAND 2 nd INNINGS	
R Burns	c Siraj b Bumrah 0
D Sibley	c Pant b Shami 0
H Hameed	lbw b Ishant Sharma 9
J Root	c Kohli b Bumrah 33
J Bairstow	lbw b Ishant 2
J Buttler	c Pant b Siraj 25
Moeen Ali	c Kohli b Siraj 13
S Curran	c Pant b Siraj 0
O Robinson	lbw b Bumrah 9
M Wood	not out 0
J Anderson	b Siraj 0
Extras:	(b 17, lb 7, nb 4, w 1) 29
TOTAL:	120 in 51.5 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-1, 3-44, 4-67, 5-67, 6-90, 7-90, 8-120, 9-120, 10-120	
Bowling: J Bumrah 15-3-33-3, M Shami 10-5-13-1, R Jadeja 6-3-5-0, M Siraj 10-5-3-32-4, Ishant Sharma 10-3-13-2	

WI pull off a thrilling one-wicket win over Pakistan

WEST INDIES VS PAKISTAN
FIRST TEST: DAY FIVE

Kingston, Jamaica - West Indies scrambled a pulsating one-wicket victory over Pakistan on Sunday as the visitors self-destructed in the final session of the fourth day when on course to take the first Test of the two-match series at Sabina Park.

Defending a modest target of 168 after they were dismissed in the morning session for 103, Shaheen Shah Afridi led the attack with figures of four for 50 in reducing the home side to 114 for seven at tea with only wicketkeeper-batsman Joshua da Silva and the tailenders left.

However, in scenes reminiscent of a similar one-wicket loss in the deciding Test of the 2000 series in Antigua, the Pakistanis lost the discipline in their bowling and composure in the field. Three catches were missed to allow Kemar Roach and last man Jayden Seales to take their team to the target with a last-wicket partnership of 17. Roach, who was dropped twice, hit the

winning runs off Hasan Ali to finish unbeaten on 30.

Ironically, it was Hasan who missed a straightforward catch at deep square-leg off Afridi which allowed Roach to eventually complete the job at the end alongside a jubilant Seales.

Seales was named man of the match for his match haul of eight for 125 which included five for 55 in the second innings.

For the fast bowler, who is less than a month away from his 20th birthday, it was an historic achievement when he mopped up the Pakistan tail with the last three wickets to become the youngest-ever to take five wickets in a Test innings for the West Indies.

"I just decided to take it step by step, run by run," said a relieved Roach minutes after completely what looked an unlikely task when he joined da Silva at the start of play after tea.

'Beauty of Test cricket'
"This is easily the most important innings I have ever played



West Indies' Jayden Seales (L) and Kemar Roach celebrate after their team's win over Pakistan on Sunday (AFP)

and credit to Jayden as well for holding on with me at the end and for his five-wicket haul today because he is someone really special as a young fast bowler."

Pakistan captain Babar Azam did well to hide his disappointment but could not avoid

referencing the obvious costly errors when it mattered most.

"This is the beauty of Test cricket. Our bowlers were really good especially Shaheen and Abbas," said the skipper, omitting to mention the three wickets taken by Hasan in the

push for victory. "Had we taken those catches the result could have been different."

A topsy-turvy day started with Pakistan losing their last five wickets for 35 runs to leave the West Indies with what looked a tricky target.

Notwithstanding Seales' success with the ball, the key wicket of Babar was claimed by Kyle Mayers. The allrounder had little else to cheer on the day before the dramatic victory was achieved as he endured the indignity of a 'pair' with the frailties of the West Indies batting once again exposed either side of a 68-run fourth-wicket partnership between Jermaine Blackwood and Roston Chase.

Blackwood top-scored with 55 and Chase reached 22, his dismissal to Faheem Ashraf in mid-afternoon tilting the balance of the contest once again Pakistan's way. The tourists claimed four wickets in the post-lunch period, three of them taken by Imran Butt at second slip.

Afridi set the West Indies on the back foot at the start of the chase with the wickets of Kieran Powell, captain Kraigg Brathwaite and Nkrumah Bonner, returning in the final session to account for da Silva and break a stubborn partnership with Roach.

AFP

SCOREBOARD	
Pakistan 1 st Innings 217	
West Indies 1 st Innings 253	
PAKISTAN 2 nd INNINGS	
I Butt	lbw b Roach 0
Abid Ali	c Holder b Seales 34
Azhar Ali	b Roach 23
B Azam	c Holder b Mayers 55
F Afridi	c da Silva b Seales 0
M Rizwan	c da Silva b Holder 30
F Ashraf	c Da Silva b Roach 20
Y Shah	c Da Silva b Seales 4
Hasan Ali	c Roach b Seales 28
S S Afridi	lbw b Seales 0
M Abbas	not out 1
Extras:	(b 4, lb 2, nb 2) 8
TOTAL:	203 in 83.4 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-56, 3-65, 4-65, 5-121, 6-168, 7-170, 8-180, 9-192, 10-203	
Bowling: K Roach 19-8-30-3, J Seales 15-4-55-5, K Mayers 15-5-33-1, J Holder 18-6-36-1, J Warrican 7-2-28-0, R Chase 6-2-12-0, K Brathwaite 3-1-3-0	
WEST INDIES 2 nd INNINGS	
K Brathwaite	c Rizwan b Afridi 2
K Powell	lbw b Afridi 4
N Bonner	b Afridi 5
R Chase	c Butt b Ashraf 22
J Blackwood	c Butt b Hasan Ali 55
K Mayers	c Butt b Ashraf 0
J Holder	b Hasan Ali 16
J Da Silva	c Rizwan b Afridi 13
K Roach	not out 30
J Warrican	c Rizwan b Hasan Ali 6
J Seales	not out 2
Extras:	(b 2, lb 10, nb 1) 13
TOTAL:	168 for nine in 56.5 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-15, 3-16, 4-84, 5-92, 6-111, 7-114, 8-142, 9-151	
Bowling: M Abbas 12-5-27-0, S S Afridi 17-4-50-4, Hasan Ali 16-5-5-37-3, F Ashraf 8-1-29-2, Y Shah 3-0-13-0	

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