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Royal Decree promulgates system of University of Technology

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 47/2021 on Wednesday promulgating the System (Bylaw) of University of Technology and Applied Sciences.

Article (1) stipulates that the provisions of the System of University of Technology and Applied Sciences, attached to this decree, be enforced.

Article (2) states that the Chairman of the Council of University of Technology and Applied Sciences will issue the organisational regulations of the university, as well as other regulations and decisions necessary for the application of the system attached. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions will continue to be enforced without prejudice to the provisions of the system attached (to this decree). Article (3) states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its publication.

ONA

► NEWS BRIEFS

HM CONDOLES PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Edgar Chagwa Lungu of the Republic of Zambia on the death of Kenneth Kaunda, former president of Zambia.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere condolences and sympathy to President Lungu, the bereaved family and the friendly Zambia people.

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Long-term residence visas for investors from Sept

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In an effort to attract foreign investment and stimulate the economy, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has launched an Investors Residency Programme (IRP) that will come into effect in September.

Designed to attract high-impact foreign investments, help create jobs and enhance growth, IRP offers two extended residency programmes through real estate and commercial investments on a renewable five- and ten-year basis subject to applicants meeting specific criteria.

In a statement, MoCIIP said the programme is aimed at creating job opportunities and supporting the domestic economy with projects compatible with Oman Vision 2040 goals.

The investments target the economic diversification sectors according to the Tenth Five-year Plan, including industry, tourism, mining, logistics, agriculture, fisheries, education, health, informa-



H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef

IRP is aimed at creating job opportunities and supporting the domestic economy with projects compatible with Oman Vision 2040 goals

tion technology, and those represented in the green and circular economy.

H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, held a meeting with a num-



ber of representatives of concerned authorities on Wednesday to discuss the mechanism to activate IRP, and its controls and conditions. The incentives to be offered to investors were also presented at the meeting.

The announcement prompted positive reactions from both Omanis and expatriates. Khalid al Taie, a self-employed entrepreneur, told Muscat Daily that long-term residency for investors is welcome as it will stimulate the

economy.

"This is a smart move that takes advantage of the desires of investors to stay in Oman due to the quality of life here compared to their countries. This will also help boost employment of na-

tional cadres and increase population density that will stimulate the economy," Taie said.

For Khalfan al Tauqi, business and media consultant who has been following the matter keenly, said, "It is indeed a landmark announcement and I am sure it will further boost Oman's image as an investor-friendly country. It will attract and retain not only investors but also tourists."

According to Tauqi, the announcement has come at the right time when Oman is looking to encourage foreign investment. It will build confidence for investors who want to make Oman their home.

For long-time Oman resident P Chandrasekr, general manager of Jawad Sultan Group, the announcement is a positive development, particularly in the current situation. "Many nations around the world have introduced schemes that were created with a view to lure investors to invest in various sectors. In return, they are offered either long-term residency or citizenship."

Continued on Page 05

HOSPITALS OVERWHELMED

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With record number of hospital and intensive care unit admissions due to COVID-19, health institutions in several parts of the sultanate are under tremendous pressure.

Dr Abdul Rahman al Yamani, a doctor in Sohar Hospital, said the number of patients has increased significantly in ICUs. "Doctors are making a great effort and working hours have increased considerably. We urge all members of society to get vaccinated and follow the precautionary measures to limit the spread of the virus."

Sohar Hospital has announced that it will transfer a few cases requiring surgical procedures to private hospitals.

'Due to rising infections and in the context of the stricter precautionary measures, Sohar Hospital will transfer some surgeries to private health institutions in the governorate under the supervision of the hospital. Referred patients will be contacted and coordinated,' the Directorate General of Health Services in North Batinah Governorate said in a statement.

Buraimi Hospital announced



an occupancy rate of 128 per cent in its COVID-19 ward and 187 per cent in its ICU, where 37 per cent of patients are on ventilators. The hospital has allocated other wards to accommodate the increasing number of COVID-19 patients.

In Muscat, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital had 90 inpatients on Wednesday, although it has a capacity of 55 beds. Stretching its limited resources, the hospital had 44 intensive

care patients even though it has a capacity of 21 ICU beds.

Elsewhere, the Directorate General of Health Services in Dakhliyah Governorate announced suspension of services at the Birkat al Mouz and Tanouf health centres from June 27 until further notice. According to a statement, the closure would facilitate redirecting resources to Nizwa Hospital, which has seen an increase in COVID-19 patients.

Zero deaths in Musandam

Reiterating the fact that benefits of vaccine far outweigh the side effects, Dr Hamed al Kalbani from the Department of Cardiac Surgery, Sorbonne University, Paris, said, "Anyone who wants to know the importance of taking the vaccine should look at Musandam. In the last 12 days, the governorate registered zero COVID-19 related deaths. It has one patient in intensive care and

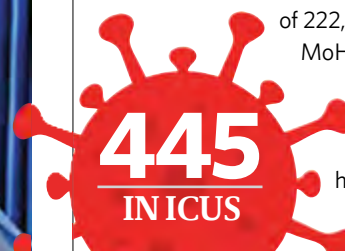
34 deaths, 2,047 cases

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Wednesday reported 34 new deaths and 2,047 new cases of COVID-19. The total number of cases registered in the sultanate has now reached 254,656, including 2,816 deaths.

In a 24-hour period on Wednesday, 203 individuals were admitted to hospitals across the country, taking the total number of inpatients to 1,531, including 445 in intensive care.

The recovery rate has been decreasing and as of Wednesday, it was 87.3 per cent. An MoH statement said 1,094 patients recovered on Wednesday, accounting for a total of 222,344 recoveries.

MoH advises all citizens and residents to continue washing hands with water and soap, avoid touching the face, nose, mouth and eyes, and follow healthy habits when coughing and sneezing.



two in the COVID-19 ward."

Urging all to get vaccinated, Dr Zakaria bin Yahya al Balushi, infectious diseases consultant at The Royal Hospital, said there is urgent need to spread awareness on the benefits. "The vaccine is the only way to return to a safe, normal life. We must stop sending any message that discourages taking the vaccine."

Oxygen devices

With more patients in hospitals

than they can handle, non-profits and charities are providing oxygen concentrators for patients recovering at home.

Ihsaan Association, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Health Services in Muscat, has provided more than 20 oxygen devices to needy families. "The association will provide more oxygen devices for the elderly in the coming days," said Jokha al Farsi, head and founder of Ihsaan Association.

Muscat among cheapest cities in GCC, 108th in the world

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat is the third cheapest city in the GCC, according to Mercer's 2021 Cost of Living City Ranking.

Muscat's ranking has declined 12 places in the rankings over 2020 and is now ranked 108, making it cheaper to live in than it was a year ago. Riyadh is the highest ranked city (29) in

the GCC, meaning it is costliest to live in, followed by Dubai (42), Abu Dhabi (56), Manama (71), Jeddah (94), Kuwait City (115) and Doha (130).

The ranking found Ashgabat the most expensive city for international employees, pushing Hong Kong to second place. Beirut ranked third, climbing 42 positions up the ranking as a result of a severe and extensive economic depression due to es-

calation of several crises - the country's largest financial crisis, COVID-19 and the Port of Beirut explosion in 2020, Mercer said in a statement.

Tokyo and Zurich each dropped one spot from third and fourth respectively to fourth and fifth positions, and Shanghai ranked sixth, up one place from last year. Singapore moved from fifth place to seventh.

Other cities appearing in the

top ten of Mercer's most costly cities for international employees are Geneva (eight), Beijing (nine), and Bern (ten).

The world's least expensive cities for international employees, according to Mercer's survey, are Tbilisi (207), Lusaka (208) and Bishkek, which ranked as the least costly city at 209.

Mercer's widely recognised ranking is one of the world's most comprehensive, and is de-

signed to help multinational companies and governments determine compensation strategies for their expatriate employees. New York City is used as the base city for all comparisons and currency movements are measured against the US dollar.

The figures for Mercer's cost of living and rental accommodation cost comparisons are derived from a survey conducted in March 2021.



(Supplied photo)

be'ah launches #YourSpace Volunteer Employee Program

Muscat - As part of its efforts to encourage and promote the culture of volunteerism among its employees, the Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) announced the launch of 'YourSpace' Volunteer Employee Program which covers all employees of the company across various governorates of the sultanate.

The programme will be implemented over four months with the main objectives of enabling be'ah staff spread their knowledge and experience through community interactions, instilling a culture of volunteerism among employees, improving staff performance, and raising their awareness about the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, also called as Global Goals.

Under the programme, be'ah employees will interact with communities and spread knowledge and share experiences related to environmental conservation for future generations. The programme will also



enable them to participate in various awareness campaigns and initiate the development of new and innovative voluntary campaigns, as well as develop aspects of their personality through interaction with different segments of society. Each of the activities under the 'YourSpace' programme is linked to one or more of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Activities of the programme's first phase include the Hydroponic Initiative, the Women's Empowerment Initiative, the Re-

newable Energy Initiative (Solar) and the Circular Economy Awareness Initiative. The programme is expected to be expanded to cover other initiatives in the coming phases.

Commenting on the launch of the programme, Hafsa Hamoud al Harasia, community awareness programme lead at be'ah, said, "We at be'ah believe in the importance of volunteering and seek to promote the culture of volunteerism among our employees as a key component of their performance and because

they are the cornerstone of implementing the company's vision and strategy.

"The launch of #YourSpace Volunteer Employee Program is a translation of the company's efforts to engage and integrate employees further with the community so that we can contribute effectively to achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals aimed at alleviating poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all the planet's population enjoys peace, Hafsa added.

RACHEL CHEW EXPLORES



I'M **RACHEL CHEW**; LOUD MOUTH, FOODIE AND A GENERAL EMBARRASSMENT WHO YOU CAN FIND ON HI FM WEEKDAYS 4-7PM

The kitchen

With the curfew back in place I thought I would test out my culinary skills and try some Omani favourites. I've recently made lemon mint which was delicious but it made me feel a little sick just looking at the amount of sugar that goes into a drink. This week I decided to make my own shawarma. After a lot of research I found that there are LOTS of variations with different sauces, breads and spices, so I combined a couple of recipes and this is what I came up with.

Now, I know shawarmas aren't the healthiest so I cut all the fat off the chicken, I swapped olive oil for fat free Greek yoghurt so that the chicken wouldn't dry out. I also squeezed half a lemon on my mixture, despite the recipe saying to use Suac instead of lemon I thought both would be best for optimum flavour.

After combining all the spices, yoghurt and chicken together I cut an onion in half and layered the chicken on top of half the onion using a wooden skewer and used the other half as a lid/hat and put in the oven at 200C for half an hour.

I'm not going to lie I finish my show on Hi FM at 7pm so there was no way I was making my own pitta breads. I ummed and ahed about what bread to use as some people use tortillas, pides and some even use paratha, but I went for a flat-

bread/pitta which is what most restaurants serve with their hummus.

After quickly warming my bread on the microwave I layered it with a garlicky sauce; literally consisting of light mayo, garlic powder, fresh garlic gloves and black pepper, yes I may have overdone the garlic but it was banging. If you don't wake up tasting garlic the next day after eating a shawarma have you even eaten one?

Now this is where people kick off as some say add red cabbage, some say pickles, I did both. I also included three chips which was super easy I literally cut up and part boiled a potato, tossed it in corn flour, salt and dry light [which is a healthy cooking oil replacement] and put in the oven for 20 minutes, topped with the juicy chicken and the onion this was a combination from heaven!

Being the Tik Tok obsessed person that I am, I filmed a video and received some mixed reviews one guy said "Rachel!!!! I am Lebanese and I am a chef and what you have done is a crime Lebanese police don't punish for." So, I'm guessing he wasn't happy. I want to make shuwa next, but I don't have a garden so I'm not sure how to do this just yet. Feel free to send my suggestions @RachelBethanyChew on Instagram and Tik Tok.



Being the Tik Tok obsessed person that I am, I filmed a video and received some mixed reviews. I want to make shuwa next, but I don't have a garden so I'm not sure how to do this just yet

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MSX, MCD get seats in global federation of stock exchanges



Muscat - Both Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCD) have won seats at the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges (FEAS).

The two seats were awarded at the 32nd general assembly

meeting of FEAS.

MSX looks forward to developing fruitful cooperations and applying the best international criteria and practices in its long-term quest to expand securities business and benefit from the experience of member states.

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Ministry calls on expats to transfer land to Omanis

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has called on expatriate owners to transfer ownership of land and real estate used for any purpose located in sites where ownership is prohibited to expats.

A statement said, 'Within the framework of the executive procedures of the law prohibiting expatriates from owning land and real estate in some sites, issued by Royal Decree No

28/2018, the ministry calls for the transfer of ownership of all land and real estate used for any purpose to Omanis no later than October 31, 2021.

'The ministry also calls on the owners of land and real estate usufruct contracts for use of any purpose located in prohibited sites to transfer rights to Omanis no later than June 28, 2022.'

The ministry also confirmed that the sites where expats are prohibited from owning land and real estate for any use are



the governorates of Musandam, Buraimi, Dhahirah, Al Wusta and Dhofar (except the wilayat of Salalah); the wilayats of Liwa, Shinas and Masirah; Jebel Akhdar and any other mountainous area of strategic importance; islands; sites close to palaces, security and military authorities as determined by competent authorities; archaeological sites and historical location as determined by competent authorities; and all agricultural lands.

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka receives Madayn delegation

Muscat - Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa received an Omani delegation from Shumookh Investment and Services which is the investment arm of Madayn - the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates of the sultanate, at Temple Trees, the official residence of the prime minister, in Colombo, on Monday.

The Shumookh delegation comprised chief executive officer Eng Musallam Juma al Hadaifi, executive director Abdullah al Bulushi, and legal counsel Robin Mande. Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Sri Lanka H E Al Sheikh Jumah Hamdan al Shehhi, and first secretary Mohammed al Mukhaini of the Omani Embassy in Colombo, also joined the delegation during the meeting.

Prime Minister Rajapaksa and the Omani delegation discussed ways and means to enhance economic cooperation between Sri Lanka and Oman including investment opportunities in particular.

The Omani delegation also met with State Minister of Finance, Capital Markets and State



(Supplied photo)

The visit of the delegation from Madayn to Sri Lanka will open new vistas of economic cooperation between the two countries

H E AMEER AJWAD

Enterprise Reforms Ajith Nivard Cabraal at the Ministry of Finance in Colombo and explored areas for economic collaboration. They also held a series of meetings with officials of different ministries, Central Bank of Sri Lanka and with the chairman of the Board of Investment.

The Sri Lankan Embassy in Muscat jointly with the Embassy of Oman in Colombo organised

the visit to Sri Lanka from Shumookh Investment and Services of Madayn Oman under the investment bubble corridor.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman H E Ameer Ajwad said that the visit of the delegation from the high-profile establishment to Sri Lanka will open new vistas of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Team formed to develop tourist sites in South Sharqiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to develop tourist sites in various governorates of the sultanate, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism held a virtual meeting on Wednesday.

In a statement, the ministry said, 'H E Maitha Saif al Mahrouqi, Undersecretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, held a virtual meeting with Dr Yahya bin Badr bin Malik al Maawali, Governor of South Sharqiyah governorate.'

The meeting was attended by a number of governors, members of the Shura Council, the Municipal Council, and several government agencies related to the governorate.

The meeting discussed the



(Supplied photo)

tourism development plan for the governorate, and briefed the attendees on the tourism development plan for the next phase.

The attendees agreed to form

a joint technical team to implement the plan.

South Sharqiyah includes five wilayats: Sur, Al Kamil W'Al Wafi, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali and Masirah.

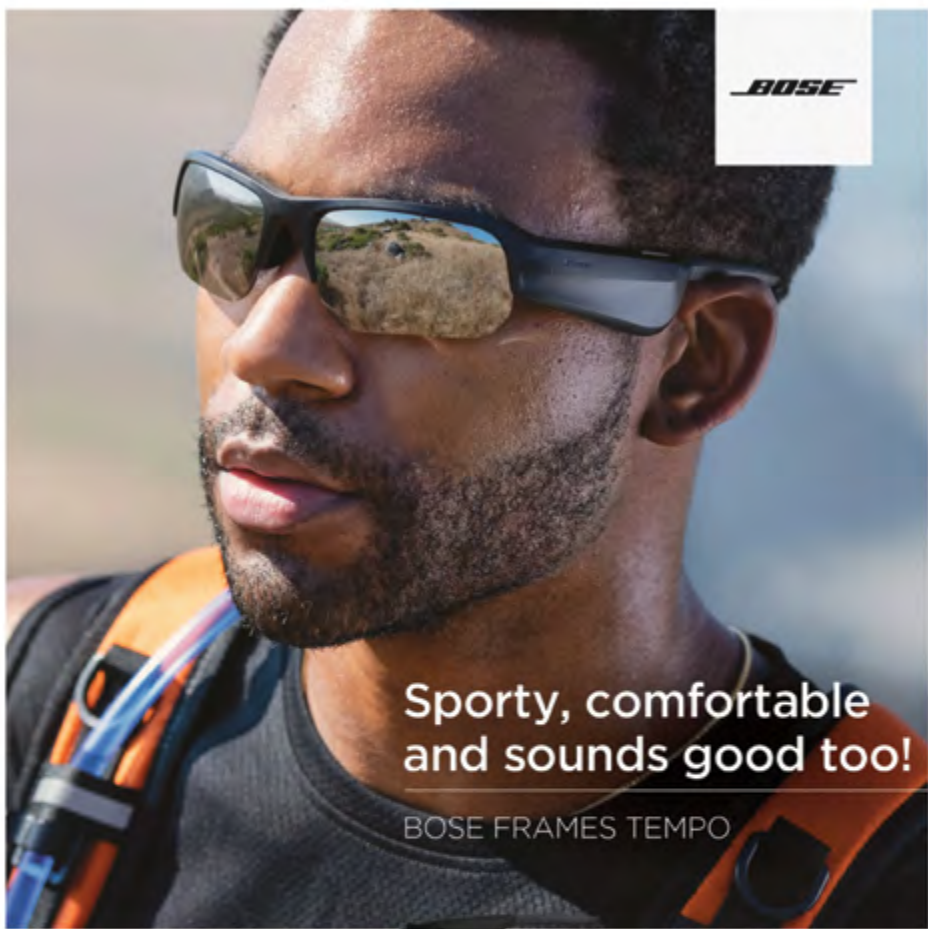
Long-term residence visas for investors from Sept

Continued from Page 01

He described Oman's peacefulness and friendliness as the icing on the cake. "With its strategic location in the Middle East as a gateway to the east and west, the country offers immense potential for growth."

Chandrasekr said the long-term vision of the country under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik consolidates its credibility and attraction as an investment destination. "It has been proven that investor residence schemes from attractive destinations always find takers from around the world. It will be interesting to see how Oman finalises its rules and regulations in this area come September 2021."

According to Surya Myduli, a businessman with an investor's visa in the country, the proposed 10-year visa is a welcome change from the earlier investor's visas given for two years. "This will boost investment plans and prove beneficial for the country in the long run. We will be saved from paper work for ten years. This move means we can be more focused on building our business, which in turn will help build the country," he said.



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Sohar Port signs strategic deal with Brazil's Port of Pecém



Our Correspondent Muscat

Sohar Port and Freezone have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Port of Pecém in Ceará, one of Brazil's top ten major ports.

The agreement will allow the entities to collaboratively advance their global maritime and logistics operations, enacting a number of shared objectives including exploration of joint busi-

ness opportunities, exchange of knowledge and best practices, and developing technologies for green hydrogen and other renewables.

As one of the world's fastest-growing ports, the tie-up reinforces Sohar Port and Freezone's growth strategy while strengthening its position as a key logistics hub in the region and beyond.

"The international partnerships, like the one with the Port

of Pecém, allow us to consolidate expertise that helps us strengthen and expand our world port network and foster economic competitiveness," said Mark Geilenkirchen, chief executive officer of Sohar Port.

He said, "Particularly with Brazil being such a strong player in food exports, Pecém is a welcome addition to our flourishing food cluster.

"At the same time, by showcasing the incredible success

Vale has achieved in Oman over the last 10 years, it will enable us to demonstrate to Brazilian companies the vast opportunities Sohar Port and Freezone has to offer."

Danilo Serpa, CEO of Complex of Pecém said, "Our relationship with the Port of Rotterdam, who has been our partner since 2018, has opened up many new opportunities for us, including our latest with the Sohar Port and Freezone."

"Strategically located on a global trade route connecting Europe and Asia, Sohar presents us with unrivalled connectivity, helping us to tap into the tremendous potential of the region. We look forward to linking both ports and bringing value to our shared customer base," Serpa said.

As the closest Brazilian terminal to both the US and Europe, the Port of Pecém is becoming a main hub for North and Northeast Brazil.

Considered to have the best port and hinterland infrastructure connectivity in the region, it is one of just a few Brazilian terminals capable of handling ultra large container vessels.



OPAZ approves construction with 3D printing in free zones

Muscat - The board of directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) on Wednesday held its second meeting for 2021. The meeting was chaired by H E Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidi, chairman of the OPAZ board of directors, a press release said.

During the meeting, the board discussed the proposal aimed to promote real estate development in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) based on a mechanism that stimulates introducing long-term housing solutions and providing residential properties under long-term contracts. In order to cope with the world's modern construction

techniques, OPAZ board approved the construction by using 3D printing techniques while complying with safety standards. It affirmed promoting the new techniques in the various free zones and in SEZAD in particular.

Different packages of facilities and incentives will be offered for companies that prefer to use the 3D-printed building technology, with an exemption from the leasing fees for a period of five years, OPAZ said.

The meeting touched on the actions taken to attract clean energy projects in Duqm and Sohar, and highlighted what has been accomplished in activating the

services of One-Stop Shop in both Salalah Free Zone and Sohar Free Zone.

Furthermore, the board of directors was briefed about the latest updates regarding the procedures for providing gas for a number of projects in the chemical material sector in Salalah Free Zone, and steel and mining industries in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

The board members were also updated on the procedures implemented for registering a green hydrogen production project company in Duqm, and the programme for installing experimental equipment for the project.

World economy back at pre-pandemic level: Survey

Paris, France - The global economy has surpassed its pre-pandemic peak, data survey firm IHS Markit has said, as the recovery accelerates thanks to vaccination and the end of pandemic-related restrictions. IHS Markit, which conducts monthly surveys of businesses that are highly valued by the market as a leading indicator of economic activity, forecasts that with 6.0 per cent growth this year the global economy will post its biggest expansion in nearly 50 years.

"The global economy has reached an important milestone in the second quarter of 2021, surpassing the pre-pandemic real GDP peak attained in the

fourth quarter of 2019," the firm said in a statement. The second quarter ends at the end of June. The Asia-Pacific region recovered from the pandemic recession at the end of last year thanks to the resilience of China's economy. IHS Markit's economists estimated that US real GDP hit a new peak in May.

The firm estimates that Africa and the Middle East will return to pre-pandemic GDP in the third quarter that begins in July.

Europe and Latin America will complete their recoveries in the final quarter of this year.

"As recovery from the COVID-19 recession is completed, the global economy is

moving into the sweet spot of the current expansion," said IHS Markit's executive director for global economics, Sara Johnson.

"World real GDP growth is picking up from an annual rate of 1.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter in the first quarter to rates of 6-7 per cent over the remainder of 2021," she added.IHS Markit's 2021 global GDP growth forecast is in line with that made by the International Monetary Fund in April.

Investors have become increasingly worried that the rapid recovery inflation may prompt central banks to remove stimulus support and raise interest rates.

AFP

Bitcoin fund launched on Nasdaq Dubai

Dubai, UAE - The Middle East's first Bitcoin fund launched on the Dubai bourse on Wednesday, with Canadian digital asset manager 3iQ Corp seeking to raise around US\$200mn in the offering.

Created in 2008 as an alternative to traditional currencies, Bitcoin is the world's most popular virtual unit, but its price has slumped recently due to fresh moves from China to crackdown on cryptocurrencies.

"3iQ Corp, Canada's largest digital asset investment fund manager... today officially listed The Bitcoin Fund on Nasdaq Dubai, the region's international exchange," the bourse said in a statement.

It said that 'this fund is the



world's first regulated major Bitcoin fund to be listed on the capital markets in the Middle East and North Africa region'.

"Bitcoin trades 24 hours a day around the world, and in Canada we trade around North American market times and Dubai is almost perfectly opposite of

(those) trading hours," 3iQ Corp chief executive Fred Pye told Bloomberg Television.

"We think if the market holds up for the next few months while we get the listing going, we expect to probably be quite far north of US\$200mn."

Bitcoin fell under US\$30,000

on Tuesday for the first time in five months, hit by concerns over China's ongoing crackdown.

The unit had recovered some lost ground by 10:40 GMT on Wednesday, punctuating a rollercoaster month of trading, standing at US\$34,104 a piece.

Chinese mines power nearly 80 per cent of the global trade in cryptocurrencies despite a domestic trading ban since 2017.

But in recent months several provinces have ordered mines to close as Beijing puts the industry under the regulatory microscope.

The 3iQ fund finished up 10.38 per cent at US\$38.30 following Wednesday trading, according to the Nasdaq Dubai website.

AFP

MSX rises on high turnover

Our Correspondent Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Wednesday extended gains rising 0.3 per cent to close at 4,047.58 points.

The gains in main index on Wednesday were supported by all sectoral indices led by Financial Index which rose 0.29 per cent. Industrial Index and Services Index increased 0.22 per cent and 0.23 per cent, respectively.

MSX Sharia Index increased 1.32 per cent to close at 591.48 points.

Trading activity sharply increased on Wednesday as volumes rose 15.5 per cent at 19.23mn securities compared with 16.66mn securities traded on Tuesday. Market turnover surged more than seven times to RO24.62mn compared with RO3.31mn in the previous trading session.

Market breadth at the MSX remained

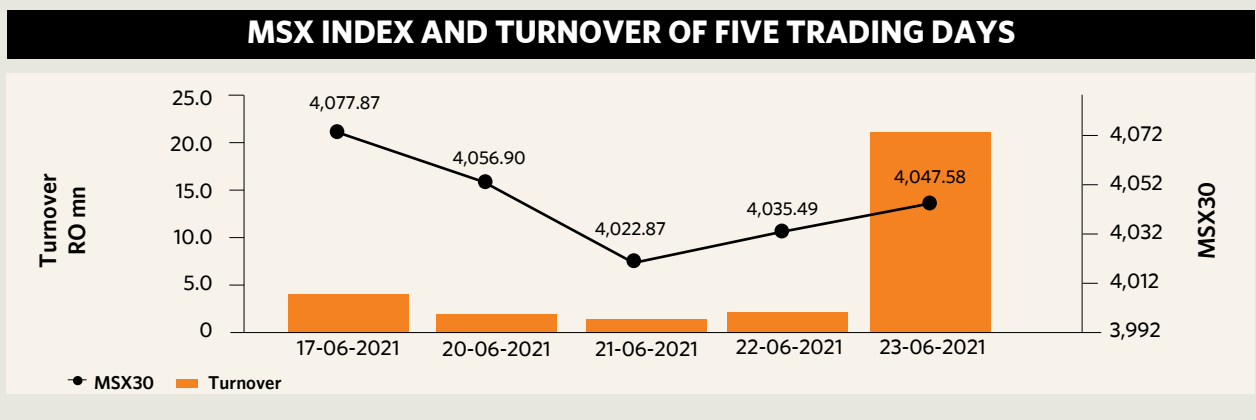


positive with 23 advancing stocks to seven decliners. As many as 28 traded stocks remained flat for the day.

Top gainers were Oman Education and Training Investment (10.0 per cent), Muscat Insurance (9.3 per cent), Vision Insurance (7.69 per cent), Oman Qatar

insurance (3.57 per cent) and Voltamp Energy (3.47 per cent).

Top losers were Dhofar Cattle Feed (-4.26 per cent), Al Jazeera Steel (-1.04 per cent), Renaissance Services (-0.98 per cent) and National Finance (-0.89 per cent).



Eurozone economy booms at fastest rate in 15 years

Brussels, Belgium - Business activity in the eurozone jumped at its fastest rate in 15 years this month, a closely watched survey said on Wednesday, as a re-opened economy unleashed pent-up demand in Europe.

Economic data group IHS Markit said the 'impressive progress' of vaccinations was jumpstarting the single-currency area, fuelled by eased restrictions that are at their lowest since September.

"This brightening prospect of life increasingly returning to normal has pushed confidence to an all-time high, fuelled greater spending and encouraged hiring," said Chris Williamson, chief economist at IHS Markit.

Accordingly, the firm's PMI index - which shows the earliest trends in the manufacturing and service sectors - said activity leapt from 57.1 in May to a booming 59.2 in June, far above the 50-point level that indicates growth.

The data set the scene for major growth in the second and third quarters, closing the chapter on a double-dip recession that came with the second wave lockdowns of last autumn and winter, the firm said.



IHS Markit said the explosive growth was creating its own spillover effects, with supply chains under pressure and prices reflecting the sharp increase in demand.

"The strength of the upturn - both within Europe and globally - means firms are struggling to meet demand, suffering shortages of both raw materials and staff," Williamson said.

Jack Allen-Reynolds, chief European economist at Capital Economics pointed to the demand for labour that "has shot up as large parts of the economy have opened at once, and this was never going to be an easy process." The surge in inflation meanwhile will add to some of the pressure on the European Central Bank to tighten the cheap money taps that are

aimed at spurring spending and investment.

ECB chief Christine Lagarde on June 10 said it was 'too early' to consider winding down pandemic support, even as the economic recovery gathers steam and inflation surges.

"The problem with these surveys is that they measure the number of businesses that indicate higher prices, not the extent of it," said Bert Colijn, senior economist at ING.

"In this reopening phase, that might overstate expectations of the pace of inflation," he said.

Capital Economics also downplayed the impact of inflation, which 'will drop back well below' the ECB's near two per cent target next year, it predicted.

AFP

Al Maha Marketing signs pact with Oman International Hospital

Al Maha Marketing Company signed a memorandum of cooperation with Oman International Hospital (OIH) in Ghubra.

It was signed on behalf of Al Maha Company by Eng Hamed al Maghdari - CEO of the oil company - and by Marcelo Pereira, CEO of OIH.

Eng Maghdari expressed his happiness with this agreement which aims to provide important additional services to Al Maha prepaid card holders, as the card holder will receive 15 per cent discount in a comprehensive healthcare screening and general practitioner consultation.

Oman International Hospital also offers the Membership Bronze Card to 150 e-rial Card holders.

There's a number of additional services that Al Maha prepaid card holders will benefit from by Oman International Hospital.

Eng Maghdari added that Al Maha Oil Products Marketing Company seeks to launch a number of important projects and valuable additional services that will impress and satisfy the



company's customers and provide them with comfort, and which will be announced during the coming weeks.

Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International Hospital, highlighted that "we are pleased with this cooperation and partnership with Al Maha Oil Products Marketing Company and our full readiness to provide

discounts and health care at Oman International Hospital, which is one of the largest private hospitals, which will be officially opened in the coming months.

"The hospital includes local and international medical staff, up to date medical devices and equipment, four operating theatres and 200 beds."

Pereira also added, "We have launched a number of bronze, silver and gold membership health cards, which are characterised by a number of unique services and features for the hospital's patients.

"Thanks to this partnership they will be available at some Al Maha's filling stations - in Muscat and Salalah."

Win RO200 everyday at Oman Avenues Mall

Oman Avenues Mall, the sultanate's iconic destination for shopping, dining and luxury experience has announced a fully integrated QR code based digital 'Eid Bonanza' with an everyday spend and win RO200 offer from June 12 to July 11.

To participate in the draw, visitors must spend RO5 from the participating outlets at Oman Avenues Mall. For enabling a seamless registration process, QR codes have been placed at strategic locations of the mall. The shoppers on their visit to the mall, after shopping, need to scan the QR code using QR code scanners on their smartphones and register themselves by filling in the required details and uploading their shopping receipts on <https://www.omanavenues-mall.om/eidbonanza> to become eligible for the draw that will be held to choose the winner for each day.

Two lucky winners will be entitled to RO100 each worth mall cash voucher during the promotion period. Winners of the draw will be announced on a weekly basis on the mall's social media platforms.

Elaborating about the promotion, Suad al Wahibi, deputy Mall general manager, Oman Avenues Mall said, "It is all about shopping and winning at Oman Avenues Mall. With Eid al Adha fast approaching, we are pleased



to announce this special Eid Bonanza. It gives customers a chance to shop and win before Eid. This is an ideal time to reward our valuable customers and we are happy to create meaningful experience around a festival that is close to people's heart. We are happy to make customer rewards and incentives a key part of our strategy."

Being the sultanate's most prominent leisure destination, Oman Avenues Mall's management feels it is vital to keep adding value to the overall experience for its visitors of the mall to best reflect its magnificence.

Suad added, "Taking into consideration the current pandemic situation, the winner management will be completely devoid of any human interface and the

winners will be picked through online draws. Visitors who shop at Oman Avenues Mall are eligible to participate."

COVID-19 protocols

In line with the guidance of Oman's Supreme Committee, the mall has developed a comprehensive and designated set of protocols to be implemented by shoppers, retailers, employees and all parties related to the mall operations. To safeguard the health and well-being of customers, employees and other visitors, the mall has been equipped with facilities such as state-of-the-art thermal sensor cameras at multiple entry points, dedicated sanitising crew and automated sanitiser dispensers at various locations.

Ooredoo introduces new 4G, 5G FWA gateway from Nokia

Ooredoo and Nokia have announced a partnership for the introduction of Nokia's FastMile 4G and 5G fixed wireless access (FWA) on-premises gateway, which offers an amazing and superfast in-home Wi-Fi experience to customers across the sultanate.

The new state-of-the-art units will provide homes and businesses with a fantastic Internet experience.

Ahmed Abdullah al Abri, chief technology and information officer at Ooredoo Oman, said, "Fixed wireless access is a critical part of our strategy to provide high-speed Internet



Ahmed Abdullah al Abri

across Oman.

"These top-of-the-line wire-

less CPE devices are taking our 4G and 5G experience to the next level."

He added, "Meanwhile, we continue to offer market-leading connectivity, supporting the demands of our residential and business customers for superfast and reliable Internet."

The Nokia FastMile fixed wireless access (FWA) gateway includes customer premises equipment with a built-in modem and antenna.

Together, they provide a powerful end-to-end solution delivering guaranteed sustained rates to Ooredoo Oman fixed wireless subscribers.

Al Mouj Muscat begins roll out of COVID-19 vaccinations for employees

Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's leading lifestyle and leisure destination, has initiated a COVID-19 vaccination programme for all staff as part of a nationwide drive to combat the impact of the pandemic.

All employees plus one family member have been offered a vaccination appointment as part of the roll out, which follows Oman Ministry of Health's recent announcement that it will have achieved 1.5mn vaccinations by the end of June.

Nasser bin Masoud al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, says, "The health and well-being of our staff and our community are our priority and,



as a key private sector employer, we appreciate that the government gave us the opportunity to roll out the vaccinations to support them with their national ef-

fort. The take up amongst our staff has been truly impressive.

"Whilst a return to business as usual is what we would all like to see, we are mindful that a

great deal of caution is still needed and so we will continue to put in place precautionary measures to help ensure the safety of all."

Al Mouj Muscat is home to 6,000 residents and its community has restaurants, cafes, luxury shops, 5-star hotels, a championship golf course and 400-berth marina.

To ensure it delivers on its promise of providing a lifestyle and business environment that is without equal, its teams are hard at work behind the scenes ensuring that Al Mouj Muscat's services and facilities continue to support residents throughout COVID-19 restrictions.

Mustafa Sultan Electronics opens new showroom

Mustafa Sultan Electronics announced the opening of a new showroom 'Smart on'. The showroom officially opened on May 31 and is located in Al Khuwayr service road, Mustafa Sultan Enterprises.

The showroom offers smart home technology with products organised around smart lighting, smart lifestyle and smart security, all easily controlled from a touch screen, mobile device, or keypad.

The opening was inaugurated by Akber, vice chairman, Shabir, chairman and a group of directors, GCEO and general managers.

The event was conducted with in-house employees only due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

With the new 'Smart On' showroom, get hands-on with the most engaging experiences a smart home can offer.

Whether it's one press of a remote that dims down the lights, or a voice command that triggers a cooking scene and closes the shades, you'll get a satisfying taste of what's possible in your own home.

Mustafa Sultan Electronics are smart home professionals, ready to bring a myriad of



orchestrated demonstrations to life.

The showroom is a comprehensive resource for homeowners, architects, builders, contractors, interior designers, lighting designers, remodelers, and commercial end users.

The product application of the 'Smart on' showroom includes: Smart robots for cleaning floor,

swimming pool, glass and lawn, smart robots for curtains, smart control decorative and functional lighting, a huge range of decoration chandeliers, table lamps and stand lamps, selection of switches, selection of UVC air purifiers, smart indoor and outdoor cameras, door sensors, gas alarms, door locks and motion sensors, smart projector for

video streaming and many more.

A visit to the showroom is the best way to explore the possibilities for your space from lighting systems to commercial surveillance.

Smart on brings the perfect setting to immerse yourself and learn about smart technology and automation systems for your home or commercial business.

Renault Oman to cover VAT of customers on service packages

Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles has launched a 'VAT on us' offer on service packages. As part of the offer Renault Oman will cover the value added tax (VAT) their customers are required to pay on service packages purchased until June 30.

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, "We are happy to bear the tax our customers have to pay during 'VAT on us' offer period. Renault offers various service packages that help care for your car and customers can experience peace of mind when you buy service packages."

He added, "Renault service makes driving more enjoyable for an easier life. With the packages, automotive maintenance is no longer a chore. To save time and give greater peace of mind, Renault Oman offers quick and easy service solutions to suit customer needs."

Understanding the importance of car servicing, Renault Oman ensures peace of mind when customers buy service packages. The benefits for those



who buy service packages include priority service, package price lower than paying for every service, protection against price increase. BankMuscat and NBO Credit cardholders can opt for easy payment options of zero per cent interest for 12 instalments.

Renault packages cover servicing, maintenance and labour costs over a specified period of time. For more information on the 'VAT on us' for service packages purchased from until June 30, please contact WhatsApp- 97692689 and Call 80050011.

SBA is largely committed to supporting Renault Oman's growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman.

With a national network of nine showrooms, 16 service centres and 23 spare parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

For more information, visit <https://www.renault.om/>

Omantel sweeps four categories at COMEX excellence awards 2021

Omantel has done it once again – shown the world that it is not without reason that it is Oman’s leading integrated telecom service provider.

Omantel has been named winner in four categories of the COMEX Excellence in Technology Awards 2021 announced at a virtual ceremony in Muscat on June 14. The judging panel declared Omantel winner in the Mobile Application, Big Data, and Telecom categories, and also presented the company with a special jury award that names it ‘Best of Best’ in integrated telecom service solutions. The award measure achievements made by contending companies during the last two years in terms of innovation, customer service, sustainable approaches, vision and strategic manoeuvres that have led to enhanced service delivery.

Talal Said al Mamari, CEO, Omantel, said, “Looking at the investment we have made in terms of service delivery solutions, digital solutions for business continuity and economic recovery besides enhanced product portfolio for all customer categories, we were confident of winning several categories of the COMEX Excellence in Technology Awards 2021. These awards are an acknowledgment that



Omantel is on the right path of Digital Transformation. Omantel is an innovation-centric company and will strive to promote the same culture for national development. Such recognitions encourage us to do better than the best.”

These awards are the latest in a string of recognitions Omantel has received so far this year. In May, Omantel won the Best Digital Transformation Leadership GCC 2021 Award, given by cfi.co recognising the company’s service to the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic by way of accelerating digital technology’s reach to businesses and people in the region.

Omantel’s contention for the

COMEX Excellence in Technology Awards 2021 was based on its achievements made since Oman embraced digital innovation for a better and efficient future in the form of its Digital Transformation Strategy. Omantel, as an integrated telecommunications company with an innovative and advanced ICT services suite, has been successfully carrying the responsibility of digitally channelling economic recovery and growth by reducing the connectivity gap for users, communities, areas and businesses.

In a market that is getting highly competitive with the entry of a third telecom operator, Omantel has maintained its lead-

ership position by always being the first to introduce the latest innovations in network, service and infrastructure.

The rising popularity of the Omantel App due to its convenience and service options made the Company the favourite among contenders in this category. As strict health protocols like lockdowns and physical distancing became a norm early 2020, the Omantel App continued making customers’ access to its services easier, quicker and safer from the comfort of their homes. Omantel App users grew from around 300,000 in early 2020 to 1mn by the end of 2020, attracted by its ease of use and excellent service delivery

through improved user experience, intuitive design and Artificial Intelligence.

The App has become Omantel’s virtual outlet bringing instant access to services like top-ups, bill payments, other than purchase of eSIMs, devices and mobile and home internet plans. The addition of Noor, the AI-powered chatbot to the App, customer engagement levels have grown manifold.

Big Data has come to form the backbone of large industrial and commercial operations as IoT and other smart technologies create massive data volumes. Omantel was the first to launch a highly capable Big Data platform in Oman called TASIL, placing unprecedented real-time analytics in the hands of clients to better serve their respective customers by anticipating their needs and likes. The platform has been playing an important role in Omantel’s vision of building data-rich connected communities.

Omantel successfully rose to the challenges that the COVID-19 has thrown in Oman’s path by making network upgrades, boosting cybersecurity, launching MC1, the world’s first ever carrier-neutral hub in Oman and the 5G roll out which happened in late 2019 with fixed home broadband service.



Ominvest starts vaccination drive for staff, families

Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest) started COVID-19 vaccination for its employees and their families. Eighty per cent of staff members have so far received the first dose of the vaccine. Second doses will be provided in few weeks’ time.

In collaboration with Burjeel Hospital, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was administered at Ominvest’s premises, while adhering to all protocols approved by the Ministry of Health.

“The wellbeing of our staff has always been part of our top priorities. By raising awareness on the importance of vaccination and making it available for our employees and their families, we contribute to the national effort to fight COVID-19. Through vaccination, we also see a glimpse of

hope to regain some normalcy in the near future. We do so while maintaining all needed health and safety measures to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and to serve the needs of our stakeholders with greater efficiency,” said AbdulAziz al Balushi, group CEO, Ominvest.

This initiative by Ominvest is in line with its corporate citizenship, and in support of the government’s efforts to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Since the start of the pandemic, Ominvest has worked diligently to raise health awareness amongst its people and apply all necessary measures at the workplace. Remote work protocols have been in place across Ominvest Group to make sure employees’ safety, work productivity, and business continuity are maintained.



100 young Omani entrepreneurs start idea challenge

AWJ Innovation launched entrepreneurship programme for 100 young Omanis as part of the third phase of the pioneering entrepreneurial development programme in frontier technology (.nxt) exclusively sponsored by Occidental Oman.

This five-week programme aims to invest in the outputs of the .nxt programme until now and will run from June to July. The intensive five-week virtual training camp will develop 100 young Omani entrepreneurs and start-ups. The participants are divided into teams and will work on entrepreneurial ideas and their development towards a marketable feasible commercial project under the guidance of local and global mentors from diverse business backgrounds and sectors.

AWJ Innovation has worked with 1,200 participants since October 2020 who received intensive training in emerging technologies, soft and entrepreneurial skills through two phases. While the first phase introduced participants to emerging technologies, the second phase of the .nxt programme included 700 participants who chose one specialised learning path leading to professional certification as well as 10 intensive technology-related courses delivered via live webinars. The Entrepreneurship bootcamp programme is the final part of the .nxt programme for this year.

Dr Costas Chrysos who

leads on the programme says, “The entrepreneurial bootcamp programme is the culmination of an intensive year for the .nxt participants. We are excited to see that 90 per cent of the final 100 entrepreneurs are female. We have seen a large proportion of women engage in the programme and it’s wonderful to see that they will be taking on the five-week challenge, developing new ideas towards commercialisation.”

The .nxt entrepreneurial bootcamp programme also aims to provide training and enhance employment opportunities, in addition to creating investment opportunities to support marketable pioneering projects and ideas with potential support and investments from Oman Technology Fund (OTF) in the fields of technology and innovation.

Maryam al Amri, founder and CEO of youth vision elaborates, “The milestones of .nxt programme unfolds new horizons for Omani Youth, and Youth Vision is particularly proud to support in delivering the phases of this boot camp and being able to share its expertise into making this program a success, which will lead the participants to form their business team, develop and validate their business ideas with the support of local and international mentors.”

The participants will be informed of the opportunities available for the inputs of the industry and business ecosystem.

Show stopper JAC J7: Happiness is only real when shared

Kalpesh Chandrakant Vasani, working for one of the well-known companies in Oman, is the newest and a very passionate customer of the JAC J7.

His excitement was on the moon while receiving his car especially seeing the happiness of his family. Vasani made the experience of buying the J7 a heart-felt special moment for himself and his family as he and his adorable wife and beautiful children came to Wattayah showroom. Ironically they even matched their clothes with the new JAC J7’s dazzling red and black colour combination. It was a very beautiful moment and it made for a great memory for his family and the JAC Oman team for times to come.

He bought the car in its dual



colour (red/black) variant and was extremely impressed with his gorgeous new purchase. In our conversation he mentioned that the dual colour combination

of red and black was very attractive and eye-catching.

He had seen some other cars in the same segment but none matched the features, design or

finish of the J7. Many people kept stopping him to tell him how beautiful his car is. Since the J7 has come home he experiences on regular basis people stopping him just to tell him how beautiful his car is, that is the J7 for you. It truly is a head turner with its sporty body curves and smart sleek lines. An absolute show stopper from the JAC motors line-up.

Adding on, Vasani said that he liked the spectacular features and that the J7 is very economical as well. The bonus point is that the J7 comes with 5 years/150,000km (whichever comes first) of warranty. He was also quite impressed with the sales personnel in the showroom on how they professionally catered to his requirements and

gave him the best possible service he could ever imagine. He was so satisfied with the overall experience that he made the decision to buy JAC J7 on the same day he saw the car.

He mentioned the light sensors which work very smartly and the AC which cools immediately making it just perfect to beat the heat. Moreover, he said that the car is smart and user friendly. Fascinated by the interior, Vasani is truly enjoying his new ride.

Hence for all those looking for an economical vehicle for themselves and their family added with amazing features and a fabulous design look out for the JAC J7. It is for the people who have the desire to be different and live life to the fullest.

Infiniti Express Service designed to deliver customers expert service in 60 minutes

Guaranteeing quick, convenient, and reliable service, Infiniti Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, offers Infiniti Express Service assuring high quality service at breath-taking speed.

Designed to deliver the expert service while demonstrating the art of efficiency, Infiniti Express Service is completed in one hour or less. Every Infiniti Express Service includes a complimentary multi-point inspection performed by factory-trained technicians and car wash.

Finished within 60 minutes, Infiniti Express Service is available for cars which are due for their Periodic Maintenance Service every 10,000km (except the major service). The one-hour time calculation is from the time the customer hands over the key for service to the time the customer gets back the key after service.

A senior spokesperson at Infiniti Oman said, “Infiniti Express Service is intended to deliver expert service, efficiently and quickly. Highly trained two-men



team deliver the utmost standards of Periodic Maintenance Service (except major services) in record time.”

He added, “Adhering to the safety directives prescribed by the Supreme Committee, Infiniti Express Service ensures the safety of our staff and customers during the Express Service. The standard operating procedures

(SOPs) we follow include preparation before opening of service centre in terms of facility readiness, sanitisation, availability of personal protection and sanitisation equipment and staff readiness. Our protocol and guidelines guarantee the utmost hygiene, sanitization, and safety for all. Besides, our staff is trained to make the processes very se-

cure, with highest focus on hygiene and safety.”

Infiniti Oman strives to offer an excellent retail and customer service experience to every Infiniti owner. A crucial point of differentiation for the brand amongst competitors is the top level of customer service it delivers.

Infiniti Oman ensures that

COVID-19 protocol

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

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Germany sees ‘good chance’ for striking Iran nuclear deal soon

Berlin, Germany - German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Wednesday that he saw a ‘good chance’ of concluding talks on a revival of the Iran nuclear deal soon, after talks with his US counterpart.

“Regarding the negotiations in Vienna, they aren’t easy - that’s been clear in recent weeks,” Maas told a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

“Nevertheless we are moving forward step by step in every round of negotiations and we assume that in the context of the (Iranian) presidential election, there’s a good chance to conclude them in the foreseeable future.”

Maas said there were still ‘several technical questions to resolve’ on the landmark accord.

“In any case we are convinced that it’s worth it to maintain talks over such a long period of time in order to revive the JCPOA in this way.”

The 2015 deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) saw Iran accept



German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (right) and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken address a joint press conference following their talks at the Foreign Ministry in the German capital Berlin on Wednesday (AFP)

curbs on its nuclear activities in return for an easing of sanctions.

But in 2018 then US president Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned the agreement and

ramped up sanctions, prompting Iran to pull back from its own commitments.

Trump’s successor Joe Biden has signalled his readiness to re-

turn to the deal and state parties - also including Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - have been negotiating its revival in Vienna since early April.

Ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi scored 62 per cent of the vote in a presidential election in the Islamic republic last Friday.

We are moving forward step by step in every round of negotiations and we assume that in the context of the presidential election [in Iran], there's a good chance to conclude them in the foreseeable future

HEIKO MAAS

Iran foils sabotage attack on AEOI

Tehran, Iran - Iran foiled a sabotage attack Wednesday on a building belonging to the country’s atomic energy agency, state television said, adding there were no casualties or damage.

“On Wednesday morning, a sabotage operation against one of the (Atomic Energy Organization of Iran) buildings was foiled,” the broadcaster said, adding that the attack ‘did not cause any damage in financial or human terms’.

It gave no further details on the building or the nature of the sabotage that had been averted.

The incident comes as Tehran and world powers attempt to revive a hobbled 2015 agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme in Vienna talks, which an EU negotiator said on Sunday were moving ‘closer to a deal’.

That deal is staunchly opposed by arch-foe Israel, which Iran accused of being behind a ‘small explosion’ that hit its Natanz uranium enrichment plant in April.

Israel neither confirmed nor denied involvement, but public radio said it was a sabotage operation by the Mossad spy agency, citing unnamed intelligence sources.

At the time, Iran’s Foreign Ministry indirectly accused Israel of attempting to scuttle the Vienna nuclear talks.

Wednesday’s sabotage attack also comes two days after Iran said it temporarily shut down its only nuclear power plant at Bushehr on the country’s Gulf coast.

Officials gave conflicting accounts on an apparent regular maintenance operation at the Bushehr plant on Monday.

The Bushehr plant and its 1,000MW reactor, on Iran’s southern coast, were built by Russia and officially handed over in September 2013.

AFP

Iran says US websites seizure unhelpful for nuclear talks

Tehran, Iran - Tehran warned on Wednesday that Washington’s seizure of 33 websites run by Iran-linked media was ‘not constructive’ for ongoing talks on bringing the United States back into a landmark nuclear deal.

The US Justice Department said it had seized 33 Iranian government-controlled media websites, as well as three of the Iraqi group Kataeb Hezbollah, which it said were hosted on US-owned domains in violation of sanctions.

Iran’s state broadcaster accused the US of repressing freedom of expression, while the president’s office questioned the timing of the move as talks on bringing Washington back into



A youth shows on his phone a statement declaring the website of Al-Alam ‘seized by the United Government’, in Tehran on Wednesday (AFP)

the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and major powers are reportedly making headway.

“We are using all international and legal means to... condemn... this mistaken policy of

the United States,” the director of the president’s office, Mahmoud Vaezi, told reporters.

“It appears not constructive when talks for a deal on the nuclear issue are under way.”

The 2015 deal saw Iran accept curbs on its nuclear activities in return for an easing of sanctions, but in 2018 then US president Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned the agreement and ramped up sanctions, prompting Iran to pull back from its own commitments.

Trump’s successor Joe Biden has signalled his readiness to return to the deal and state parties - also including Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -

have been negotiating its revival in Vienna since early April.

EU negotiator Enrique Mora said on Sunday that those involved in the talks were ‘closer’ to saving the Iran nuclear deal but that sticking points remain.

The US action also comes just after Iranians chose ultraconservative cleric Ibrahim Raisi as president in an election the US State Department characterised as neither free nor fair.

Visitors to leading Iranian media sites like Press TV and Al-Alam, the country’s main English and Arabic-language broadcasters, as well as the Al-Masirah TV channel of Yemen’s Huthis, were met with single-page statements

declaring the website ‘has been seized by the United States government’ accompanied by the seals of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Commerce Department. The 33 websites were held by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union, itself controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ Quds Force (IRGC).

Both the IRTVU and IRGC have been placed on the US sanctions blacklist, making it illegal for Americans, US companies, and foreign or non-American companies with US subsidiaries to have business with them or their subsidiaries.

AFP

World powers in push for Libya peace

Berlin, Germany - World powers gathered on Wednesday in Berlin to seek lasting peace in Libya by ensuring the conflict-racked North African country stays firmly on the path towards general elections on December 24.

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah of Libya’s interim government is joining US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as the foreign ministers of France, Turkey and Egypt at the UN-sponsored talks.

Russia’s Sergey Lavrov will be absent, but deputy foreign minister Sergey Vershinin will attend in his place. The efforts to end a decade-long spiral of violence in Libya are the second round held in Berlin, after the first attended by the presidents of Turkey, Russia and France in January 2020, before the pandemic.

Before heading into talks, Blinken renewed demands that all foreign forces leave the war-battered nation.

A ceasefire agreement from October last year ‘has to be fully implemented including by withdrawing all foreign forces’, Blinken told reporters ahead of the opening of the conference.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who is hosting the visit, underlined that ‘for the further stabilisation of the country, it is crucial that elections take



German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (left) looks as Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the UN (right), welcomes Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu for the Second Berlin Conference on peace in Libya, in Berlin on Wednesday (AFP)

place as planned and that foreign fighters and mercenaries really do leave Libya’.

Participants at the 2020 conference had pledged to end to international meddling and for foreign militants or troops to withdraw.

But neither Moscow nor Ankara, both of which have significant forces in the country, have met their promise.

The United Nations has estimated that 20,000 foreign fighters and mercenaries are still on Libya’s territory. And that presence is seen as a threat to the UN-backed transition leading to the elections.

No one’s interest

The oil-rich country descended into chaos after dictator Moammar Gadhafi was toppled and killed in a 2011 NATO-backed uprising, resulting in multiple forces vying for power.

In recent years Libya has been split between two rival administrations backed by foreign forces and countless militias.

In October, after Turkey-backed forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli routed those of eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar, the two camps agreed a ceasefire in Geneva.

The security situation in Libya

has been slowly improving since.

However, the UN recently warned that progress has stalled, notably on a key requisite of the polls - the pullout of all foreign soldiers.

Western leaders have repeatedly called on the foreign fighters to depart.

But Russian mercenaries supporting Haftar’s side in the east of the country are still in place.

Turkey meanwhile has troops in Tripoli, which it argues were sent under a bilateral agreement with the government, implying that they are not affected by a request for foreign troops to leave.

But any withdrawal is also a delicate balancing act, said Germany’s Maas.

“Foreign forces must leave the country in a gradual and uniform manner, so that there won’t be a sudden military imbalance that could be used by one side for a sudden offensive,” Maas told *Die Welt* newspaper.

A diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, stressed the sensitivity of the situation, saying solutions could not be found overnight.

But he also voiced cautious optimism that some progress could be made on Wednesday, because it was in no one’s interest for conflict to break out again.

AFP

Hit squad that killed Khashoggi were trained in US, says report

Washington, US - Four members of the Saudi hit squad that killed US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 had received paramilitary training in the United States that had been approved by the State Department, the *New York Times* reported late on Tuesday.

Khashoggi, a Saudi-born US resident who wrote for *The Washington Post*, was an outspoken critic of the Saudi leadership, with which he had once been close. He was murdered on October 2, 2018 in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by a team of agents sent from Saudi Arabia.

Four of those operatives, *The New York Times* said, had received training from a private American security group, Tier 1 Group, a move first authorised by the administration of former president Barack Obama in 2014.

That training continued at least until the start of Donald Trump’s presidency, the newspaper said.

It cited a document provided to the Trump administration by a top official from the parent company of Tier 1 Group, the private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management, who had applied for a senior post at the Pentagon. In his written testimony, Louis



This file photo shows people with posters of Jamal Khashoggi at a vigil outside the Saudi Arabia consulate, in Istanbul on October 25, 2018 (AFP)

Bremer confirmed that Tier 1 Group did provide training to the Saudi agents, but insisted that the training was ‘protective in nature’ and ‘unrelated to their subsequent heinous acts’.

Bremer said that the four members of the kill team received the training in 2017, and that two of them had already participated in a previous course from October 2014 to January 2015.

The US State Department, contacted by AFP, said it could not comment on this information but called for the ‘responsible use...of American military equipment and training’.

According to a US report released in February, seven members of an elite unit tasked with

protecting Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were part of the hit squad that killed Khashoggi.

The New York Times did not specify whether the four operatives trained in the United States belonged to this unit.

The body of the dissident journalist, dismembered on the spot, has never been found. After denying the assassination, Riyadh claimed the murder had been carried by Saudi agents who acted alone.

After an opaque trial in Saudi Arabia, five Saudis were sentenced to death and three sentenced to prison terms. The death sentences have since been commuted.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Residents banned from leaving as Sydney detects Delta variant



Passengers wearing face masks alight from a metro in Sydney on Wednesday, as residents were largely banned from leaving the city to stop a growing outbreak of the highly contagious Delta variant spreading to other regions (AFP)

Sydney, Australia - Sydneysiders were largely banned from leaving the city on Wednesday as Australian authorities rushed to stop a growing outbreak of the highly contagious Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus from spreading to other regions.

More than 30 people have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since the cluster emerged in the city's Bondi Beach area last week, the latest in a string of

flare-ups that highlight Australia's difficulty in extinguishing outbreaks.

New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced new restrictions that will apply for the next week, including the immediate ban on non-essential travel out of Sydney and limits on social gatherings.

A 'very huge proportion' of Sydney's five million residents are subject to the travel ban,

which applies to seven local government areas where COVID-19 cases have been detected, she said.

Authorities stopped short of ordering the closure of restaurants and bars, but singing and dancing are out, while major events can still go ahead with stadium capacity limited to 50 per cent.

Officials pleaded with Sydney residents to follow the new rules.

"I know from my experience ... there is a degree of tiredness and a degree of apathy about the response to the virus," said NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard.

"But in a sense, this is a new and more dangerous version of the virus and that apathy has to be swept away."

Australia has been among the world's most successful countries in containing COVID-19, with just over 30,000 cases

I know... there is a degree of tiredness and a degree of apathy about the response to the virus. But in a sense, this is a new and more dangerous version of the virus and that apathy has to be swept away.

BRAD HAZZARD

and 910 deaths.

The latest outbreak has been linked to a driver for international flight crews who contracted the Delta variant of the virus, which was first identified in India.

New Zealand authorities also tightened COVID-19 restrictions in Wellington after a Sydney man who visited the capital over the weekend tested positive when he returned home.

The virus has repeatedly escaped Australian hotels used to quarantine returning travellers, and health experts say the outbreaks will continue until large numbers of Australians are vaccinated.

Roughly 6.7mn doses have been administered to date in a population of 25mn, with only a small fraction of those having received both jabs.

AFP



This file photo shows a woman standing in front of a wing sculpture, one of many pieces of visual art at the Glastonbury Festival (AFP)

UK festivals face crisis without support, say MPs

London, UK - Britain's music festivals face a fight for survival without further government support in the pandemic, lawmakers warned on Wednesday, as summer events are cancelled or reduced because of COVID restrictions.

The parliamentary Public Accounts Committee said in a report into government funding for the cultural sector during the pandemic that festivals and freelancers faced 'devastating consequences to their survival'.

MPs praised the allocation of a £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund in July last year.

But they said festivals faced a 'survival threat' unless a government-backed insurance scheme for cancelled events could be set up.

'Festivals are making difficult decisions about whether to risk their survival by going ahead this summer, but the (culture) department has not modelled the cost of underwriting festival indemnity insurance,' the report said.

Dozens of UK festivals have

had to cancel or reduce audience sizes because of ongoing coronavirus restrictions, which the government had planned to lift completely on June 21.

However, surging cases of the Delta variant of the virus first identified in India forced Prime Minister Boris Johnson to push back the date to at least July 19.

In 2021, Britain's Glastonbury Festival, held on a dairy farm in Somerset, southwest England, was forced to cancel for the second year in a row after England entered a third lockdown at the start of the year.

The festival live-streamed a concert to fans in May instead.

In April, the Boomtown festival in Winchester, southern England, announced it would be cancelling after selling out 66,000 tickets for its August dates, citing the lack of a government insurance scheme.

Other music festivals such as Reading-Leeds and the Isle of Wight plan to go ahead this summer.

AFP



This file photo shows Afghan interpreters for the US forces taking part in a demonstration seeking protection, in Kabul on April 30 (AFP)

Afghan translators fleeing the Taliban land in Britain

London, UK - Afghan translators who worked with the British military and fear reprisal attacks from the Taliban have arrived in the UK as part of a relocation scheme, campaigners said on Wednesday.

The Sulha Alliance for Afghan interpreters told AFP the first group of translators landed in Birmingham, central England, on Tuesday evening, adding they expected the arrivals would go into COVID quarantine for 14 days.

The government declined to comment on the reports about the departure of the flight over concerns about the safety of the relocating Afghan translators and their families.

At the end of May, Britain announced it would accelerate plans for the relocation of Afghan staff who worked with the military and their families ahead of a planned withdrawal of US-led NATO forces. Under a relocation scheme for former and current Afghan staff, more than 1,300 workers and their families have been brought to Britain.

More than 3,000 Afghans are

expected to be resettled under the accelerated plans, the government said.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said the government has a 'moral obligation' to relocate staff and to 'recognise the risks they faced in the fight against terrorism and reward their efforts'.

Retired Colonel Simon Digging, the former British attaché in Kabul and now a campaigner for the Sulha Alliance, said the translators would receive four months of support after which he said, 'the real struggle begins'.

Afghan translators and other local staff who worked with Britain and other NATO members such as the United States, Germany and France have clamoured to be relocated for fear of Taliban reprisals.

In the two decades since the US-led invasion, dozens of Afghan translators have been killed or tortured in targeted assaults by the radical group.

Even more have been injured in attacks on foreign troops during patrols in armoured vehicles.

AFP

'Taliban still in control of Tajikistan border crossing'

Kunduz, Afghanistan - The Taliban remain in control of Afghanistan's main crossing with Tajikistan, local officials said on Wednesday, a day after the insurgents seized a vital inland transit hub and sent government forces fleeing into the neighbouring country.

The militants have launched a sweeping offensive across large swathes of northern Afghanistan in recent days, swallowing up a dizzying number of rural districts as US and international forces wind up their withdrawal from

the country.

Tuesday's capture of the border hub of Shir Khan Bandar - along the key trade route to Central Asia - came as the Taliban encircled nearby Kunduz city, sparking fears the provincial capital was on the verge of falling.

"We have reports from our local staff that the Taliban have confiscated all the goods and commodities in the port, and they have destroyed the customs office," said Massoud Wahdat, a spokesman for the Kunduz chamber of commerce and in-

dustries.

A Taliban spokesperson denied that the group's forces had ransacked the facilities.

"We are working to get the port operational again," said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Tajikistan's national security committee confirmed Monday that more than 100 Afghan government forces had crossed the border as they fled the Taliban onslaught.

"The Tajik border guards, guided by the principles of hu-

manism and good neighbourliness, allowed the Afghan military who broke through the state border to freely enter the territory of Tajikistan," said the committee, adding that four Afghan soldiers were injured and one had been killed.

Afghan government forces have vowed to launch a massive offensive to retake lost territory.

However, Kunduz provincial council member Amruddin Wali said it appeared there were no plans at the moment for a government counteroffensive at the

border.

Since early May, the Taliban have launched several major offensives targeting government forces and say they have seized over 80 of the country's 421 districts, although many of their claims are disputed by the government and difficult to independently verify.

The Pentagon said on Monday that it would complete its full withdrawal by September 11, but the pace of the pullout could be slowed given the Taliban's gains.

AFP

UK to regulate streaming giants in media shake-up

London, UK - The British government on Wednesday announced plans to subject online streaming platforms to tighter regulation as part of a wider shake-up of the country's media landscape.

Under the proposals, services such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video would face the same level of regulation as traditional broadcasters including the BBC, ITV and Sky.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said the review would 'level the playing field between broadcasters and video-on-demand services'.

Television channels in Britain must follow a broadcasting code set by regulator the Office of Communications (Ofcom) covering areas such as harmful content and requiring impartiality in news programmes.

But online streaming platforms - with the exception of the BBC's on-demand iPlayer service - face lighter regulation, primarily



Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said a review would 'level the playing field between broadcasters and video-on-demand services' (AFP)

limited to protecting children and preventing content that incites hatred.

Netflix and Apple TV+ are not regulated at all in Britain.

The reforms also aim to increase public service broadcasters' online prominence to ensure their programmes can be found and accessed easily on smart TVs and other devices.

"Technology has transformed broadcasting but the rules protecting viewers and helping our traditional channels compete are from an analogue age," Dowden added.

"The time has come to look at how we can unleash the potential of our public service broadcasters while making sure viewers and listeners consuming

content on new formats are served by a fair and well-functioning system."

Politically motivated

The government also revealed it intends to sell Channel 4, a publicly-owned but commercially-funded television broadcaster that draws 90 per cent of its income from advertising.

Channel 4 launched in 1982 and its remit involves supporting the UK's independent production sector and producing a unique and diverse range of programmes. The UK government said privatisation would enable Channel 4 to diversify its revenue sources, reach international markets and invest in new content and technology to respond to competition from subscription-based streaming services.

It pointed to ITV and Channel 5 as examples of successful public service broadcasters operating under private ownership.

Critics claim the decision is politically motivated as politicians from Britain's ruling Conservative party have accused the broadcaster of bias.

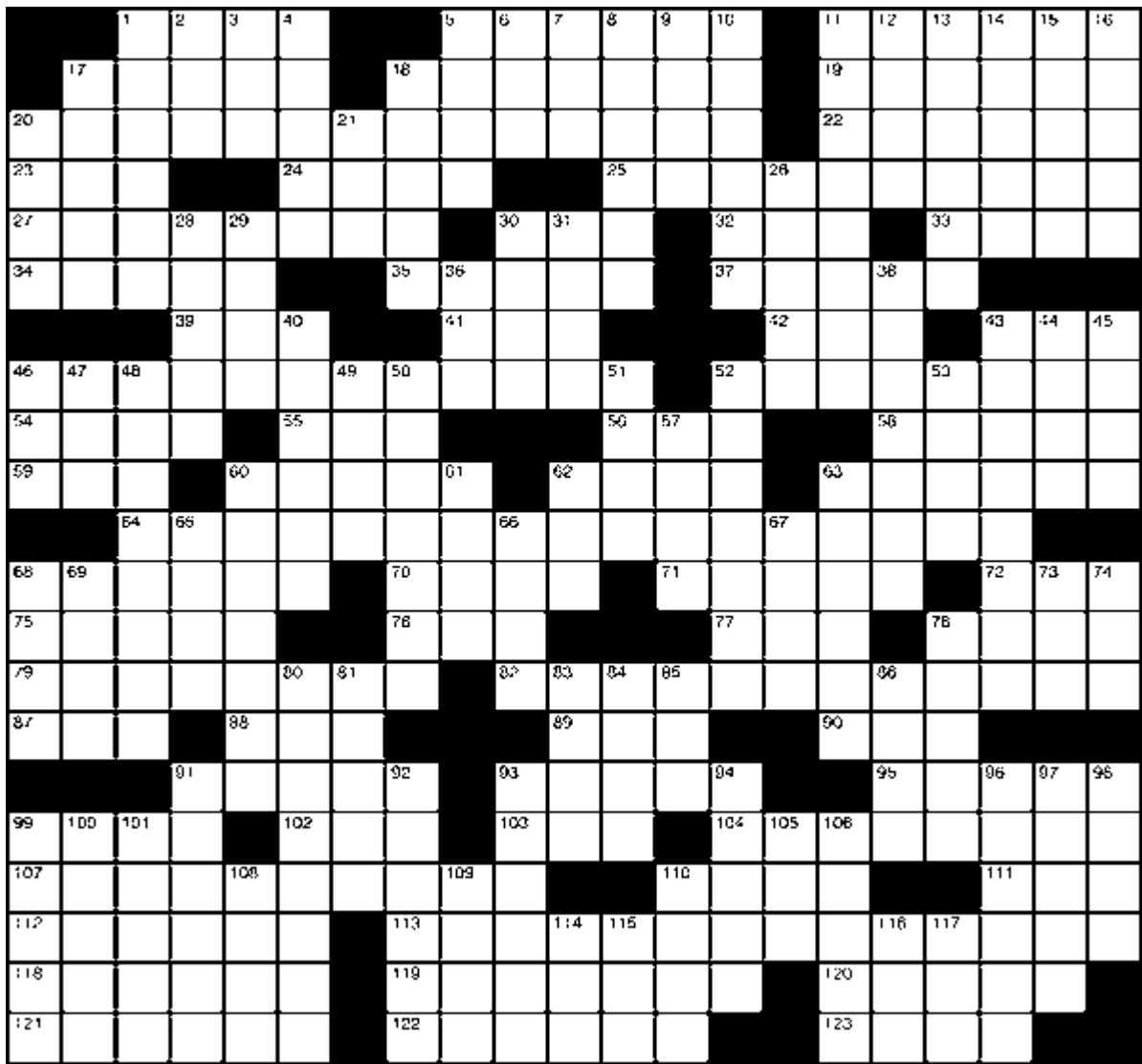
In 2019, Channel 4's head of news and current affairs Dorothy Byrne branded Prime Minister Boris Johnson a 'liar' and a 'coward'. He now rarely gives interviews to the broadcaster, although he relented at the recent G7 summit in Cornwall, where he was grilled - uncomfortably - on his Brexit commitments.

EU leaders 'say you don't keep your word... They think you'll rip up the agreements that you've signed', the Channel4 News interviewers suggested to Johnson.

Johnson's government also has the BBC in its sights, with questions over its compulsory annual licence fee funding model in the face of competition from streaming services.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**

1 ____ Pet: plant grower

5 Any of the Fab Four

11 Bandsman Louis and kin

17 Sound units

18 Pedicurist's target

19 Retract formally

20 Intelligent gent from Manama?

22 Actress Plummer

23 Hawaiian hawks

24 Wolfish inspection

25 Batty fellow from Baghdad?

27 Our "national pastime"

30 Arthur of entertainment

32 Outs partner

33 Once powerful ltrs.

34 Daub

35 Ship area

37 University in Medford, MA

39 Like winter weather

41 Yalie

42 Ski lift

43 Ms. Novak

46 MacTavish patch?

52 Belittle

54 Musical work

55 Between a and u?

56 Amaze

58 Cut wood
- 59 Flying mammal

60 Short notes or letters

62 '99 French Open winner

63 Catchword

64 Swarms of Rio revelers?

70 Sea eagles

71 Gounod opera

72 Org. for orthopedists, e.g.

75 Workout residue

76 Bottom line

77 Mothering, for short

78 Word before flick or deep

79 Shaded walkways

82 Israeli newspaper

87 For shame!

88 Religious inst.

89 Eternity, possibly

90 Hardened

91 Make alterations

93 Tumbler

95 Wildcats

99 Famed German admiral

102 Siouan

103 Timbuktu loc.

104 Hangar site

107 Rum-loving Rom?

110 "It was ____ mistake"

111 Had a date
- 112 Bump ____: goldbricker

113 Sly guy from Lahore?

118 Prepare apples

119 Penitents

120 To ____: without purpose

121 Torn till ragged

122 Mother of Calcutta

123 An aria, always

DOWN

1 Sliding dance step

2 ____ polloi

3 Roadhouse

4 Places of refuge

5 Danish nobelist in physics, 1922

6 Auction ending

7 Data

8 Formosa, today

9 Director

Wertmuller

10 Extract

11 Beseeches, in a way

12 Notes between do and fa

13 Wax-winged youth of myth

14 Supernatural forces in the gods

15 Mind one's P's ____

16 Flight part

17 Golf tournament type: hyph.
- 18 Chinese units of value

20 Babies garb

21 ____ canto

26 Coach Rockne

28 Cockney valentine symbols?

29 Bric-a-____

30 Pants

accoutrement

31 "The Red"

36 Red Rose, e.g.

38 TV closeup

40 Whistling breath

43 Motorcycle maker

44 Residents: suffix

45 Ancient Persian

46 Show sorrow

47 Bks. expert

48 Epidemic

49 ____ Valley, CA

50 Winter wear

51 Abuse

52 Let the air out

53 Astronaut/politican

Jake

57 Homeless one

60 Kind of cat

61 Father

62 Nursing degs.

63 ____ Austrinus: constellation

65 Wander

66 Opposed

67 Respite

68 H.S. student test
- 69 Pointed tools

73 Part of USMA

74 Whichever

78 Lustful woodland god

80 Windshield cleaner

81 Friendship

83 Starter start

84 Laugh loudly

85 Abbreviated reply

86 Act

91 Change TV programming

92 Cartoon of the '60s

93 Mitzi of "South Pacific"

94 Casa suite

96 Pasta topper

97 Revise

98 Pharaoh

99 Robust

100 Leaf section

101 Moon variation

105 Sort

106 Wadi washers

108 Night time

109 Stuff

110 Guam harbor

114 Compass dir.

115 "I do"

116 ____ Canals

117 Part of ITT

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You might be loaded with energy, but that doesn't change the fact that today isn't a great day for making major headway on any projects. With so many facts still unknown, it's just not wise for you to keep moving forward. Put things on pause and wait until things become clearer. Don't make any verbal agreements or big commitments, and definitely don't sign any legal documents!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Today, try to get in touch with a friend who's been going through a rough patch. Even if you can only talk to them for a couple minutes, they'll appreciate your kind words more than you could imagine. Your friendship means so much to them, and right now it's one of the few bright spots in their life. This could feel like pressure sometimes, but it's not.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

At a group event, you're tuned into the big picture more than anyone else, which makes you the go-to person to answer everyone's questions. You kind of love the attention, though. Who knew you were this kind of expert? By being more high level, you get to miss out on all the drama and petty conflicts that get kicked up during the day.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

If you're starting something new today, don't put too much pressure on yourself to hit a home run your first time at bat. It's going to take you some time to get comfortable in this new position, so be realistic about the expectations you're putting on yourself. No one is expecting you to be an expert right away. There is a learning curve, and they know it.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

It's perfectly acceptable to use your charm to get what you want in life, but you need to understand that other people have the right to do the same thing. Watch out for smiling faces today. They're likely smiling for a reason. Luckily, you'll see right through their fawning flattery. You know that they have ulterior motives. This doesn't have to be a showdown, however.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Take a leap. You've done enough deliberating for a lifetime, and at a certain point you just have to get going. Leap and the safety net will be there. Just trust it! Believe in yourself and believe that no matter what happens, you can handle the situation. You've had a lot of your energy focused on getting work done, but the connections you wanted haven't been made..

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Today, you can have fun and lots of responsibilities at the same time! Seems impossible? Not for you and not now! You have the creativity required to make a game out of doing tasks and managing people. Folks won't care what they're doing as long as they're doing it for you. This is a great day for picking teams because everyone is going to want to be on yours.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Your inner social organizer wants to come out to play for a while, so why not let it? Now is a great time for gatherings at your home, coordinating dinner parties out, or just getting a bunch of co-workers together for a fun lunch. You're able to get people to totally relax and reconnect with what is truly important in life. It's time to get things back into balance.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Being popular can feel like a curse, especially when people you don't really like that much want to spend a lot of time with you. Instead of being aloof with these folks, you need to connect with them. It won't be nearly as unpleasant as you fear. And second, the more time they spend with you, the faster they will come to understand that you aren't the person they thought you were.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

It's time to make your home your refuge from the world. Recent issues have been making you feel less comfortable when you're there, but you can change things, and you'll be given a golden opportunity to change them today. The balance between your personal life and your public life has been out of whack for a while, but you have an idea of where to go next.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're going to have a lot of fun asserting yourself today and speaking your mind! You've done your share of being passive and letting other people screw things up, so now you're ready to step up and tell folks how the show should be run! And everyone is going to be eager to hear what you have to say. Making waves suddenly doesn't seem so scary.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your ability to understand other people's motivations is so strong today that it's giving you the power to improve any tense situation. By respecting why other people do what they do and communicating your respect to the rest of the world, you can make a real difference. You can be a peacemaker! It's a great day to be picked as team leader.

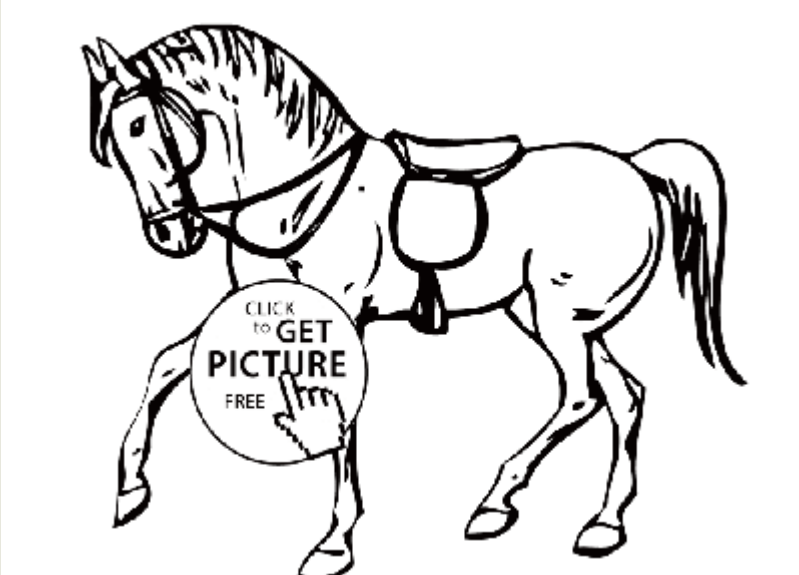


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1. Rectifiers are used to convert**
- a. Direct current to Alternating current
 - b. Alternating current to Direct current
 - c. high voltage to low voltage
 - d. low voltage to high voltage
- 2. Out of the following, which is not emitted by radioactive substance?**
- a. Electrons
 - b. Electromagnetic radiations
 - c. Alpha particles
 - d. Neutrons
- 3. Sound waves in air are**
- a. transverse
 - b. longitudinal
 - c. electromagnetic
 - d. polarised

Answers: 1.b 2.c 3.d

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

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

BOGGLER



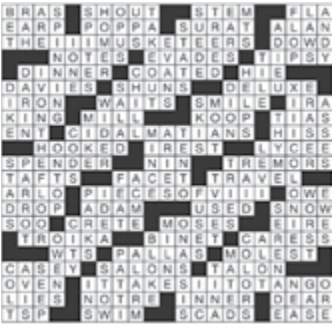
Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters.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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (JUNE 23)



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



TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT

HIP, HIP?
HURRY!

Are you suffering from hip pain for very long? Don't delay your diagnosis, you could need a total replacement surgery. But the good news is that this is one of the most successful surgical procedures wherein the damaged bone and cartilage is removed and replaced with prosthetic components. "The decision to undergo a major surgical procedure like total hip replacement is very personal and is often individualised to suit the needs or physical demands of the patient," says **Dr Biswajit Dutta Baruah**, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, KIMS Oman hospital



DR BISWAJIT DUTTA BARUAH
Consultant orthopaedic surgeon, KIMS Oman Hospital

Prof Learmonth from the British Royal Infirmary, in a paper in the Lancet (a reputed medical journal), hailed total hip replacement as the operation of the century. Outcome studies have shown that a modern hip replacement can improve the patient quality of life more than any other surgical procedure. It is one of the highly successful surgical procedures ever done.

Worldwide more than a million hips are replaced every year. A third of these are done in the USA. The number of hip replacements have risen by 37% in a decade as per reports from the National Health Services (NHS), UK. Increasing numbers have been largely insensitive to macroeconomic conditions. In 90% of the patients, the primary reason for undergoing hip replacement is osteoarthritis or wear and tear of the hip joint. Fracture of the neck of the femur (top portion of the thigh bone), avascular necrosis (disturbed blood supply), dysplasia (deformed hip sockets) and inflammatory arthritis (rheumatoid arthritis and other related conditions) make up for the rest.

Not all patients with arthritis of the hip joints are candidates for surgery. Only those with end-stage arthritis, where joint pain and stiffness is not responding to medical treatment require surgery. At times, activity modification, oral analgesics and physiotherapy can help overcome the pain and disability associated with hip arthritis. Steroid injections into the joint can help tide over severe inflammation. However, this must be discouraged within three months of a planned surgical replacement procedure.

Ideal candidates for surgery

On the other hand the other large group are patients with a fracture of the neck of the femur. A fracture that runs through the top portion of the thigh bone just below the ball that makes up the hip joint is common among elderly patients. If the patient was able to walk independently prior to the fall, mental capacity was intact, and is medically fit for surgery, then the patient is the right candidate for undergoing total hip replacement as per the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), UK.

On the contrary, many surgeons are of the belief that in older patients above 65 years a bipolar hemiarthroplasty - where only the ball of the thigh bone (femur) is replaced - is sufficient to get the patients moving. In elderly patients who are limited to walking inside their homes, this may be appropriate.

With increasing life expectancy and no limitation in locomotor activities, like walking, running or playing recreational games like golf or tennis, most patients are unwilling to compromise with the reduced quality of life associated with either hip osteoarthritis or hemiarthroplasty. In such situations, the surgeon is justified in performing a total hip replacement.

Studies have shown that those who lead an active lifestyle prior to hip surgery have the best outcomes post hip replacement. A few surgeons may exercise caution in performing the surgery in the young and active, arguing that higher levels of activity may lead to early wear and tear of the hip implants bringing forward the date of revision surgery. However, with modern joint replacement implants that come with durable bearing (articulating) surfaces that are resilient to long term wear and fix well to the bony surfaces, this argument doesn't hold any water.

An increasing number of young patients with damaged joint surfaces undergo hip replacement surgeries particularly those with rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis or avascular necrosis of the femoral head. Dramatic gains in quality of life as seen in improvements in their locomotor abilities makes it a worthwhile exercise to undertake in this group of patients.

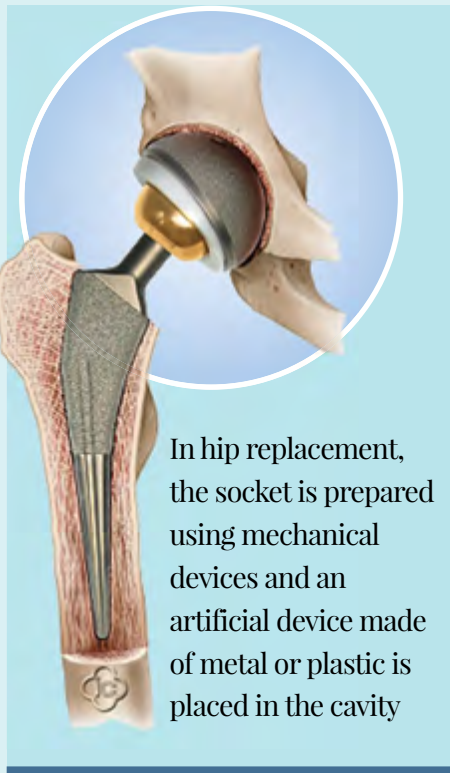
The surgical technique

Hip joint is a ball and socket joint. The top end of the thigh bone forms the ball of the joint and the socket is a deep cavity in an area of the pelvic bone called the acetabulum. In hip replacement, the socket is prepared using mechanical devices and an artificial device made of metal or plastic is placed in the cavity.

On the thigh bone side, the ball is cut out and removed totally. In place of it, a metal device which is triangular in shape at the top and tubular towards the bottom is inserted into the thigh bone. On top of the stem, a smooth polished ball, made of metal or ceramic, is placed. This ball abuts onto the artificial cup making up the hip replacement in-toto. In hemi-replacements, the natural (native) socket and its cartilage surface is left intact and only the ball and the stem

are placed into the thigh bone (femur).

Primarily hip replacements are of two broad categories - those that are affixed to the bone with acrylic cement (cemented replacements) and those that fix to the bone directly (uncemented replacements). Gluck, a German surgeon, was the first to report the use of cement to fix the implants to bone. However, Charnley introduced and popularised the use of bone cement to fix the hip replacement devices.



In hip replacement, the socket is prepared using mechanical devices and an artificial device made of metal or plastic is placed in the cavity

Contrary to what many believe, cement is not a glue that affixes the devices to bone, but it is a filler (grout) and fixation is achieved by mechanical interlock rather than adhesion. Due to the excellent results reported by the various studies, it continues to remain an excellent choice for many surgeons and an equally valid choice for many patients. Cementless devices on the other hand are designed to be stable from the time of insertion and encourage bone

to grow onto its surface, thus firming the stability over time. Once the device has stabilised it would allow normal transmission of mechanical forces across the joint.

To cement or not to

Surgeons who support cementless devices argue that cementless devices have been traditionally used in older patients who may not be candidates for revision surgery and therefore are missed even though they have failed hip replacements while cementless devices have been employed on younger patients who are more likely to turn up for revision surgery. Younger patients are also more active and stress their joints much more than their older counterparts. This is a matter of hot debate among surgeons and the jury is still out on whether one is better than the other.

The interface between the ball and the socket is called the articulating or bearing surface. When Charnley popularised hip replacement in England, he introduced the metal ball against a polyethylene (poly for short) cup. Developments and refinements have also given us other valid options like a ceramic ball in a poly cup, metal ball in a metal cup, and a ceramic ball in a ceramic cup. In the majority of the cemented replacements, the cup is poly and is affixed to bone using bone cement. While in cementless replacements, a metal cup is affixed onto the natural acetabular cup and a poly or ceramic liner is placed inside the cup. Metal on metal bearing surfaces have taken a big hit after several studies reported high metal levels in blood and the formation of inflammatory masses around the hip joint leading to early revisions. However, there are several centers around the world where a specific type of replacement called hip resurfacing (metal on metal bearing surface) is still being performed, and in the hands of those surgeons, the results have been outstanding. This is a valid option in a small subset of patients, especially highly active young male patients.

In summary, modern technology can deliver high-performance hips to accommodate the high expectations of active patients. However, there is an economical cost to it and thereby it is not accessible universally. Recent studies are looking into whether generic replicas of implants whose patents have expired can help bring down the cost of hip replacement making it more affordable to all those who need it.



EURO2020



Wembley to host more than 60,000 fans for semis, final

London, UK - More than 60,000 fans will be allowed to attend the semifinals and final of Euro 2020 at Wembley with attendance increased to 75 per cent of capacity, the British government announced on Tuesday evening.

The matches will see the largest crowds assembled at a sporting event in Britain for more than 15 months, with numbers previously strictly limited due to the coronavirus pandemic.

All ticket holders at Wembley will need to follow a number of strict entry requirements, including having a negative COVID-19 test or proof of full vaccination.

There has been no announcement on the outcome of talks between the government, the Football Association and European football's governing body UEFA over a solution to allow up to 2,500 VIPs to attend the final on July 11 but a deal now appears more likely.

"We have worked extremely closely with UEFA and the FA to ensure rigorous and tight public health measures are in place whilst allowing more fans to see the action live," said culture and sport secretary Oliver Dowden.

"The finals promise to be an unforgettable moment in our national recovery from the pandemic."

UEFA had stressed there were no plans to take the semifinals or final away from Wembley, despite the stumbling block of quarantine-free travel, and president Aleksander Ceferin welcomed the announcement of the increased capacity.



A file photo of fans outside Wembley Stadium in London, UK, ahead of a group game of Euro 2020

'Great news'

"The last 18 months have taught us, both on and off the pitch, how integral fans are to the fabric of the game," said Ceferin.

"This tournament has been a beacon of hope to reassure people that we are returning to a more normal way of life and this is a further step along that road."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's official spokesman earlier gave an upbeat message on the issue of the VIP attendance but declined to confirm whether an agreement had already been reached with UEFA.

"We're looking forward to putting on a

fantastic semifinals and final at Wembley and will do so safely and securely," he said.

The Puskas Arena in Budapest had been floated as a potential alternative should the matches not be able to go ahead in London.

He voiced concerns over the increase in coronavirus infections in Britain. The Delta variant, first detected in India, has fuelled a spike in new cases in Britain and forced the government to delay planned reopenings.

The government has a difficult path to tread, with any decision to ease the rules for UEFA officials and sponsors likely to prove controversial. The ability of British

people to travel on holiday has been restricted by rules enforcing a strict period of self-isolation or quarantine on their return.

Wembley stadium in northwest London is also set to host five knockout games, including both semifinals and the final.

Some of the biggest events in Britain's summer sporting calendar, including Wimbledon and international cricket matches, will also go ahead with greater capacities as part of the latest phase of the government's pilot programme to test the return of large crowds.

AFP

UEFA proud to wear colours of rainbow

Lausanne, Switzerland - UEFA on Wednesday added the rainbow to its logo as it defended its decision to refuse to allow Munich's Allianz Arena to be illuminated in the same colours in protest at anti-LGBTQ laws passed in Hungary.

In a statement European football's governing body said it 'is proud to wear the colours of the rainbow', a symbol for the LGBTQ community, but stood by its decision by saying the city of Munich's request to illuminate the stadium was 'political'.

Germany played Hungary at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday on the final day of Euro 2020 group matches. "The request itself was political, linked to the Hungarian football team's presence in the stadium for this evening's match with Germany," UEFA said.

UEFA said that the rainbow was 'a symbol that embodies our core values, promoting everything that we believe in - a more just and egalitarian society, tolerant of everyone, regardless of their background, belief or gender'.

And it insisted that its decision to turn down Munich's request was not political, saying that 'the rainbow is not a political symbol, but a sign of our firm commitment to a more diverse and inclusive society'.

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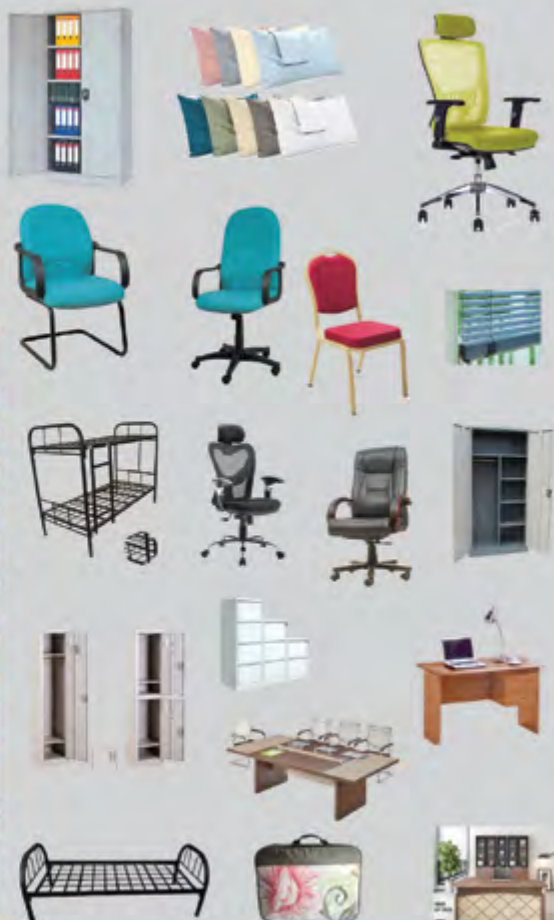


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EURO2020



SENSATIONAL SPAIN



Spain's Ferran Torres (2L) scores his team's fourth goal against Slovakia in Seville, Spain, on Wednesday (AFP)

Seville, Spain - Spain finally have lift-off at Euro 2020 after a 5-0 hammering of Slovakia on Wednesday sent them through as runners-up in Group E, with Croatia their opponents in the last-16 on Monday.

Luis Enrique described his team as a bottle of cava about to be popped and they certainly exploded in Seville, where a scoring frenzy felt cathartic and could yet prove transformative for their chances in the knock-out stages.

After two tension-filled draws against Sweden and Poland, Spain were left scrambling to qualify, with Luis Enrique admitting he would have taken any position in the group as long as it meant going through.

But Spain ran riot at La Cartuja, their early anxiety heightened by Alvaro Morata's missed penalty and then quickly eased by two dreadful mistakes by Slovakia's goalkeeper Martin Dubravka. The first was an own goal that will surely go down as one of the strangest moments of the tournament before another Dubravka error allowed Aymeric Laporte to head in.

With the shackles off, Spain let loose in the second half as Pablo Sarabia, Ferran Torres and another

own goal from Juraj Kucka confirmed an emphatic win, even if Croatia and Luka Modric will provide a much sterner test next week.

Spain monopolised the ball in the first half but for 30 minutes, it was a familiar story of chances missed and frustration growing.

Spain were awarded a penalty as Jakub Hromada went to clear but instead lashed into the leg of Koke.

Morata had deferred the spot-kick



to Moreno against Poland and this time took charge, only to whip the ball at a comfortable height for Dubravka to palm away to his right. It was the fifth consecutive penalty Spain have missed.

Dubravka nightmare

They might have crumbled but instead persevered, even as Sarabia and Pedri both kicked the air before finally Dubravka stepped in to give them a helping hand.

Lubomir Satka's scuffed clearance fell straight to Sarabia, whose dipping shot banged against the top of the crossbar and flew upwards.

Dubravka was under it and as he tried to flick the dropping ball over his own crossbar, he succeeded only in flapping it into his own net.

Spain breathed a sigh of relief and just before half-time they made it two. Dubravka was again at fault, this time edging out only to see Moreno steer the ball away from him in the area and cross it back in. Laporte did brilliantly to loop his header into the top corner. Slovakia threw Michal Duris and Stanislav Lobotka on at half-time but Spain were liberated and within ten minutes, it was three.

This time, it was not a mistake but a slick move that made it, Jordi Alba pulling back to Sarabia, who steered into the corner.

Morata came off when he might have wanted to stay on and his replacement scored almost with his first touch, Torres applying a superb flick to Sarabia's cross to the front post.

It got worse for Slovakia, a scrap in the box resulting in Kucka hacking Pau Torres' header into his own net for a fifth. Spain were briefly top, only for Sweden to snatch a winner.

AFP

Last-gasp winner for Sweden

Saint Petersburg, Russia - Viktor Claesson scored an injury-time winner as Sweden beat Poland 3-2 in Saint Petersburg on Wednesday to clinch top spot in Group E and knock their opponents out of Euro 2020.

Emil Forsberg struck twice, the first coming after just 81 seconds, but Robert Lewandowski's double gave Poland hope of qualifying before Claesson's late goal sent Sweden through as group winners.

Janne Andersson's side, safe in the knowledge they were assured of a place in the next round before kick-off, made a dream start as Forsberg scored for the second game in a row, netting the second-fastest goal in European Championship history. The RB Leipzig attacker collected a loose ball just outside the Poland area after Kamil Glik flattened Alexander Isak, riding a challenge from Kamil Jozwiak before firing into the far corner.

With Poland needing victory to avoid elimination Lewandowski hit the crossbar twice in a matter of seconds, incredibly failing to convert his own rebound from point-blank range after connecting with Piotr Zielinski's corner.

Zielinski forced Robin Olsen into a pair of flying saves with shots from distance either side of half-time, with the Sweden goalkeeper also making a fine stop from Grzegorz



Sweden's Emil Forsberg (L) celebrates after scoring against Poland on Wednesday



Krychowiak's long-range shot.

Juventus winger Dejan Kulusevski came on ten minutes into the second half for his first appearance after testing positive for COVID-19 just before the tournament.

His driving run and pass set up Forsberg to curl in Sweden's second on 59 minutes, but Poland responded to set up a thrilling finish.

Lewandowski halved the deficit with a brilliant solo effort on 61 minutes, bending into the top corner to become his country's all-time leading scorer at the tournament.

Poland had not scored more than once in any of their previous 13 matches at the finals, but Lewandowski took advantage of confusion between Victor Lindelof and Marcus Danielson to equalise six minutes from time.

As Poland desperately pushed for a winner, Sweden snatched all three points right at the death when Kulusevski played in fellow substitute Claesson to slot beyond Wojciech Szczesny.

AFP

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EURO2020



England's Raheem Sterling celebrates after scoring against the Czech Republic (AFP)

England clinch top spot, Croatia reach last-16

London, UK - England clinched first place in Euro 2020 Group D with a 1-0 win against the Czech Republic, while Luka Modric's rocket propelled Croatia into the last-16 as their 3-1 victory over Scotland eliminated their COVID-hit rivals on Tuesday.

Already assured of playing in the last-16, England made certain that the knockout tie will be played in front of their own fans at Wembley thanks to Raheem Sterling's first-half winner against the Czechs.

Scottish heartache

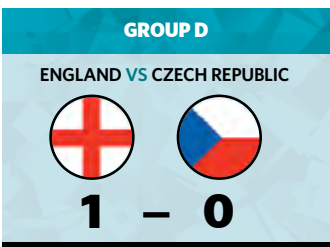
At Wembley, the Czechs also knew they were sure to advance before kick-off, but their first defeat of the tournament left them in third place. Croatia leapfrogged the Czechs into second place with a commanding second-half display in Glasgow featuring one of the goals of the tournament from Real Madrid midfielder Modric.

Scotland's first major tournament since the 1998 World Cup ended in heartache as they failed to meet their target of reaching the knockout stages of an international competition for the first time.

Having started Group D by narrowly beating Croatia 1-0



Croatia's Luka Modric celebrates after scoring against Scotland on Tuesday (AFP)



before being booed off after a drab 0-0 draw against Scotland, England produced a slightly more cohesive display against the Czechs. There remains much for Southgate's men to work on, but England coped efficiently after a disrupted build-up that saw Mason Mount and Ben Chilwell forced into self-isolation after

Scotland's coronavirus woes. Southgate selected Jack Grealish to replace Mount and the Aston Villa midfielder provided a spark as his perfectly-flighted cross to the far post was headed in by Sterling in the 12th minute.

Solid England

Arsenal's 19 year old winger

Bukayo Saka, also given a surprise start by Southgate in place of Phil Foden, added pace and invention to the England attack.

But England couldn't find a killer second as Harry Kane's Euro goal drought extended to three games. England have yet to concede a goal in the tournament, with Harry Maguire returning from ankle ligament damage to partner John Stones in central defence and shutting out the Czechs.

At Hampden Park, Callum McGregor cancelled out Nikola Vlasic's early opener to give Scotland hope heading into half-time.

But Modric showed the class that got him the *Ballon d'Or* in 2018, a stunning strike with the outside of his foot just after the hour mark restoring Croatia's lead.

Ivan Perisic's header rubbed salt into Scottish wounds 13 minutes from full time.

Scotland finished with only one point and they will rue the fact that Chelsea midfielder Billy Gilmour was ruled out of the Croatia game after testing positive for the coronavirus. Without Gilmour, Steve Clarke's team lacked the quality to compete with Croatia.

AFP

SATURDAY'S MATCHES (ROUND-OF-16)

	WALES VS DENMARK (8pm, Oman time)	
	ITALY VS AUSTRIA (11pm, Oman time)	

STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
GROUP A								
Italy	3	3	0	0	7	0	7	9
Wales	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	4
Switzerland	3	1	1	1	4	5	-1	4
Turkey	3	0	0	3	1	8	-7	0
GROUP B								
Belgium	3	3	0	0	7	1	6	9
Denmark	3	1	0	2	5	4	1	3
Finland	3	1	0	2	1	3	-2	3
Russia	3	1	0	2	2	7	-5	3
GROUP C								
Netherlands	3	3	0	0	8	2	6	9
Austria	3	2	0	1	4	3	1	6
Ukraine	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
North Macedonia	3	0	0	3	2	8	-6	0
GROUP D								
England	3	2	1	0	2	0	2	7
Croatia	3	1	1	1	4	3	1	4
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	4
Scotland	3	0	1	2	1	5	-4	1
GROUP E								
Sweden	3	2	1	0	4	2	2	7
Spain	3	1	2	0	6	1	5	5
Slovakia	3	1	0	2	2	7	-5	3
Poland	3	0	1	2	4	6	-2	1
GROUP F								
France	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	4
Germany	2	1	0	1	4	3	1	3
Portugal	2	1	0	1	5	4	1	3
Hungary	2	0	1	1	1	4	-3	1

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NZ CROWNED CHAMPIONS

Taylor and Williamson lead the side to inaugural World Test Championship title after India’s collapse

WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP
FINAL: RESERVE DAY SIX
Southampton, UK - New Zealand enjoyed the greatest triumph in their cricket history as they beat India by eight wickets in the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final at Southampton on Wednesday.

Two years on from their agonising Super Over loss to England in the 50-over World Cup final at Lord’s, the Blackcaps claimed their first major global title. Set a modest target of 139 in 53 overs, New Zealand finished on 140 for two with plenty of time to spare in a match extended into a reserve sixth day

SCOREBOARD		
India 1 st Innings		217
New Zealand 1 st Innings		249
INDIA 2 nd INNINGS		
Rohit Sharma	lbw b Southee	30
S Gill	lbw b Southee	8
C Pujara	c Taylor b Jamieson	15
V Kohli	c Watling b Jamieson	13
A Rahane	c Watling b Boult	15
R Pant	c Nicholls b Boult	41
R Jadeja	c Watling b Wagner	16
R Ashwin	c Taylor b Boult	7
M Shami	c Latham b Southee	13
Ishant Sharma	not out	1
J Bumrah	c Latham b Southee	0
Extras:	(b 1, lb 8, nb 1, w 1)	11
TOTAL:	170 in 73 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-51, 3-71, 4-72, 5-109, 6-142, 7-156, 8-156, 9-170, 10-170		
Bowling: T Southee 19-4-48-4, T Boult 15-2-39-3, K Jamieson 24-10-30-2, N Wagner 15-2-44-1		
NEW ZEALAND 2 nd INNINGS		
T Latham	st Pant b Ashwin	9
D Conway	lbw b Ashwin	19
K Williamson	not out	52
R Taylor	not out	47
Extras:	(lb 11, nb 2)	13
TOTAL:	140 for two in 45.5 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-44		
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 6.2-2-21-0, M Shami 10.5-3-31-0, J Bumrah 10.4-2-35-0, R Ashwin 10-5-17-2, R Jadeja 8-1-25-0		

following two days lost to rain.

Off-spinner R Ashwin reduced New Zealand to 44 for two by removing openers Tom Latham and Devon Conway to the delight of India fans. But New Zealand captain Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor, the team’s most-experienced batsmen, settled any lingering nerves in an unbroken stand of 96.

Williamson was 52 not out following his first-innings 49, with Taylor - who hit the winning boundary - unbeaten on 47.

India’s last hope of turning the tide evaporated when, with New Zealand 55 runs shy of victory at 84 for two, Cheteshwar Pujara dropped a regulation slip catch off the luckless Jasprit Bumrah to relieve Taylor on 26.

Bumrah dropped Williamson shortly before one of the most outstanding batsmen of his era completed an 86-ball fifty, including eight fours. Taylor ended the match in the 46th over when he whipped Mohammed Shami off his pads for four.

“It’s a very special feeling,” said Williamson at the presentation ceremony as he paid tribute to a ‘formidable’ India side.

“It was just great the heart that our team showed to get across the line in what was a brilliant Test. We know we don’t always have the stars - we rely on a few other bits and pieces to try and stay in games and be competitive and I think we saw that in this match.”

Southee strikes

In a match in which bowlers held sway it was New Zealand’s



New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (C) lifts the winner's Mace as he and his teammates celebrate winning the World Test Championship final against India in Southampton, UK, on Wednesday

all-pace attack that did most damage on Wednesday by dismissing India for just 170 in their second innings despite blue skies providing the best batting conditions of the game.

Tim Southee took wickets at both ends of the innings in a return of four for 48 in 19 overs, with longtime new-ball partner Trent Boult striking twice in an over during his three for 39.

And the towering Kyle Jamieson, named player of the match, followed his first-innings five for 31, by snaring India cap-

tain Virat Kohli for the second time in the match during a miserly two for 30 in 24 overs.

"We did really well with the ball in the first innings to pull things back nicely but this morning was the difference, where the Kiwi bowlers really executed their plans to perfection," said Kohli, whose side face England in a five-Test series starting in August.

New Zealand, whose only previous men's title in an ICC tournament was their 2000 Champions Trophy one-day final

win over India, would have confronted an even smaller target had Rishabh Pant not been dropped on five during his innings of 41.

New Zealand entered a final worth US\$1.6mn to the winners, hardened by a recent 1-0 series win in England, whereas India were playing their first Test since March. The reserve day, the first time a Test has gone into a sixth day since the 2005 Super Series in Australia, was deployed in the hope a two-year effort to crown red-ball cricket's first official

world champions would end with an outright winner.

India resumed on 64 for two, with key batsman Kohli adding just five runs to his overnight eight when he again fell to Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate Jamieson, edging to BJ Watling in the wicketkeeper's final match before retirement.

India's 71 for three soon became 72 for four when Pujara edged Jamieson low to a diving Taylor at first slip.

In came Pant, who should have been out soon afterwards

when he edged Jamieson, only for Southee to drop a routine slip chance. He, however, eventually fell when a skied edge off left-armer Boult was brilliantly caught by Henry Nicholls, running back from point.

The match was running New Zealand's way, a point emphasised when tailender Shami was caught by Latham at fly-slip off Southee a ball after Williamson had moved the fielder to the rarely used position.

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