



**WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2021**  
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**CONSOLATION WIN FOR OMAN BEACH SOCCER TEAM**  
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# Getting back to normal

Authorities urge caution to prevent recurrence of spike in cases which may result in restrictions again

Shaddad al Musalmey  
Muscat

With the number of COVID-19 cases significantly dropping and the nationwide vaccination campaign gaining momentum, life in Oman is returning back on track as citizens and expatriates alike try to work and live their lives normally with most restrictions imposed by the Supreme Committee being eased.

While all hope life will return to normal starting September 1, authorities have urged the public to continue wearing masks, maintain social distancing and take all other precautions necessary in order to prevent a recurrence of spike in cases calling for restrictions again.

"The government has been putting a lot of efforts into the vaccination campaign, most importantly with vaccines that are approved worldwide. It would be good to also welcome the people that took unapproved vaccines, but with stricter restrictions, like more PCR tests and mandatory quarantine earlier," said Khalid al Taie, a self-employed entrepreneur.

He urged the government to

## RESTRICTIONS EASED

- **No movement ban**
- **No travel ban**
- **No quarantine for vaccinated people**
- **Simplified PCR test requirements**
- **Restriction-free business operations**



*Though we are still at the mercy of the virus, I am very optimistic about the ability of economy to recover*

MBARAK AL ARAIMI

make the decisions and new rules clear by "translating words into charts and infographics, making it easy for the public to understand so that everyone plans accordingly".

According to P Chandrasekr, general manager of Jawad Sultan Group, the gradual easing of restrictions for commercial activities, including ending a travel ban from 21 countries, will act like

"adrenalin" for trade and commerce activities and the entire country and its people.

"Given the fact that the whole world is beleaguered by the pandemic, the sultanate being no exception, the relaxation measures will definitely result in normal activities and enable greater involvement and people-to-people engagement. But we still have to be vigilant and follow all

health protocols and not drop our guard until the authorities decide something in that direction in the near future," Chandrasekr said.

Oman has made a clear strategy, including making vaccination mandatory. Starting September 1, only vaccinated individuals can travel, enter government offices and institutions, shopping malls, restaurants and

venues hosting cultural, sports and group activities.

Entrepreneur Mbarak Ahmed al Araiimi is confident of the decision to ease restrictions. "Though we are still at the mercy of the virus, I am very optimistic about the ability of economy to recover. But there is need for a gradual approach. While many will take pleasure in the easing of restrictions, it's essential that we con-

tinue to be cautious."

According to the Ministry of Health, the country's effective strategy includes taking precautionary measures and vaccinating the population to protect against COVID-19 and its variants.

"COVID-19 cases are decreasing owing to several reasons, including adherence to precautionary measures and vaccination. The pandemic is not yet over; it is ongoing and its social and economic effects are clearly visible. The Supreme Committee had no choice but to opt for measures like complete closure when cases exceeded several times the capacity of the health-care sector," H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, said recently.

"Making vaccination mandatory is a good move and it is our responsibility to make sure we take the initiative to be vaccinated so that we can enjoy our daily life. I am very hopeful that life will get back to normal," said Mahmoud Zaza, as he awaited his turn for a jab at a private hospital.

Starting September 19, schools too will open indicating a return to normalcy.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### WHO SAYS A WEEK OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES LEFT IN AFGHANISTAN

Cairo, Egypt - The World Health Organization warned on Tuesday that it has enough medical supplies to last it 'one week', following the blistering Taliban takeover of Afghanistan's capital Kabul ten days ago.

"WHO now only has enough supplies in-country to last for one week," said Ahmed al Mandhari, the head of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean region.

"Yesterday, 70 per cent of these supplies were released to health facilities," he added.

Mandhari said that 500 metric tonnes of medicines and supplies stored in Dubai were unable to be delivered due to the chaotic evacuation efforts at Kabul airport.

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Stranded expats celebrate travel ban end starting Sept 1

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Condensate production jumps 28% as oil output drops

## Indian expats bemoan vaccine policy

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Expatriate Indians who are residents of Oman and received the COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin when they were stranded in India owing to the travel ban since April have been in a heightened sense of suspense in the last few days. Many Indians have received the Bharat Biotech-developed vaccine back home and awaited clear guidelines on approved vaccines before they can return to Oman.

Their worst fears came true on Monday following Civil Aviation Authority's announcement lifting the travel restrictions from 21 countries, including India, starting September 1 for those immunised with vaccines approved in Oman. Currently, Covaxin is not approved in the sultanate which will leave thousands of expats stranded in India because of differences in vaccine policies.

Amjad Khan, who works with a restaurant in Muscat, flew to India on an emergency in May and was stranded. In anticipation of resumption of flights, he opted for Covaxin as the gap between two doses is shorter than the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine sold with the brand name of Covishield in India. "Also, it is easily available and everyone recommended it for its better efficacy. But now I've come to know that Oman will not allow people who took Covaxin. This is unfair and discriminatory," Khan claimed.

Covishield and Covaxin have almost the same uptake in India. In June, the Indian government stated that 1.35bn doses of vaccines will become available be-



### MOH APPROVED VACCINES

Pfizer-BioNTech  
 AstraZeneca/Covishield  
 Sputnik  
 Sinovac  
 Sinopharm  
 Moderna  
 Johnson & Johnson

tween August and December, including 500mn doses of Covishield and 400mn doses of Covaxin.

Baboo Joseph recently recruited a person from India who cannot travel to Oman because he is vaccinated with Covaxin. "When it has undergone all formalities and is being used extensively in India, what's the point of the Gulf countries not allowing expats vaccinated with Covaxin?" Joseph asked.

"Indian embassies and Indian Social Clubs in the Gulf should take up the matter with governments and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a solution. There are many working people who have taken Covaxin in the hope of expediting their return. Now instead, Covaxin has jeopardised their return and their jobs."

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## Switzerland, Oman play key role as bridge builders

Bern, Switzerland - Cooperation for peace and stability and recent developments in the Middle East were the focus of talks between H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamood al Busaidi, Oman's Foreign Minister, and Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister, when they met on Monday in the city of Lugano in Ticino.

As part of an official visit to the Middle East in April, Cassis visited Oman, 'which is an important partner for Switzerland in the region, especially in terms of peace and stability', stated a Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs press release.

During talks held on Monday with H E Sayyid Badr, the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs reiterated Switzerland's



H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister, in Lugano, Switzerland, on Monday

land's willingness to support dialogue between countries of the region. "Only through dialogue," explained Cassis, "is it possible to ease tensions and improve security in the Middle East."

"After my visit to Oman last spring, I am glad to welcome H E

Sayyid Badr in my hometown Lugano. Both Switzerland and Oman play a key role as bridge builders. Together, we will work to strengthen peace and stability in the MENA region," tweeted Cassis.

Switzerland and Oman pursue

a neutral foreign policy and are both known for their good offices and role as mediators in conflicts. 'They support efforts to revive the peace process in Yemen and to improve relations among the conflicting states in the region,' stated the Federal Department.

The ministers also discussed potential opportunities for Swiss companies in Oman and furthering the dialogue that begun in the spring on cooperation in the areas of healthcare and vocational education and training for young people.

Technical-level meetings between Swiss and Omani delegations have already been scheduled for the run-up to the World Expo in Dubai from October 2021 to March 2022.

## MASS EXODUS FROM AFGHANISTAN



Afghans walk along fences as they arrive in Pakistan through the Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossing point in Chaman on Tuesday following Taliban's military takeover of Afghanistan (AFP)

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(Supplied photo)

# Khor Kharfout reserve: A biodiversity rich haven

Muscat - The Khor Kharfout Archaeological Reserve between Rakhyut and Dhalkut in the Governorate of Dhofar found a much-needed prominence as a bio-diversity hotspot after a Royal Decree (No. 58/2021) on Monday ordered its establishment.

Running along the coast of the Arabian Sea, the newly designated archaeological reserve is spread over an area of 143.4km<sup>2</sup>, and is affected by the annual monsoon rains (khareef) and subtropical climate.

*The Khor Kharfout Archaeological Reserve, which was established by a Royal Decree on Monday, is located between Rakhyut and Dhalkut in Dhofar governorate*

According to a statement, this unique climatic condition provides rich biodiversity and a habitat for 20 types of mammals, 193 types of birds, 20 types of reptiles, 183 types of plants, in addition to hundreds of types of invertebrates such as insects,

spiders, and others. The area is characterised by mild summers with maximum temperature ranging between 14-34°C, and a relatively short and cold winter with minimum of 14°C.

A mountain range dominates the overall topography of Khar-

fout reserve, notably in the northern slopes of Wadi Saiq in the form of grooves, furrows and steep cliffs. This gives the reserve a unique terrain ranging from mountainous hinterlands of forests and grasslands to a semi-arid land running to the coast.

The northern and northwestern sections of the reserve are bedecked with stones and gravel.

The reserve also boasts of a lagoon overlooking the Arabian Sea characterised by a picturesque watery bay. This provides an exceptional habitat for migratory

birds, and an important destination for hiking and recreation enthusiasts, including bird, turtle and dolphin watching, and fishing.

The reserve is also famous for its vast grazing plains and wild trees in addition to the availability of rich water sources. It is believed that the Khor was used as an ancient port for the export of frankincense. 'There are also a number of evidences and monuments that may tell the historical and cultural role of this area that has not yet been studied,' the statement added.

## MoH launches academic programme on NCD care



Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases under the Directorate General of Primary Healthcare, on Tuesday launched a strategic educational programme named NCD Academy.

It was launched in collaboration with Viatris (a legacy division of Pfizer) and in partnership with the American College of Cardiology (ACC) along with the World Heart Federation and NCD Alliance, the MoH said.

The programme aims to equip primary healthcare workers with comprehensive education on non-communicable disease (NCD) care as they take on a more prominent role in prevention, utilising digital platforms.

The NCD Academy applica-

tion includes a number of interactive courses that have been accredited by the American College of Cardiology and modules on the prevention of NCDs, management and prevention of diabetes, cancer and the effect of COVID-19 on those living with NCDs.

The application also includes modules on the early detection and management of the most common mental disorders.

'It should be noted that the NCD Academy is a first-of-its kind collaboration between major actors in global health. It is available to all healthcare providers in the sultanate who are interested in obtaining the most recent developments on dealing with NCDs and mental illnesses,' the MoH stated.

## National Research Award 2021: Rise in registrations

Muscat - The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) last week closed the registration for the eighth edition of the National Research Award, marking an 11.4 per cent increase in the number of research projects submitted for participation compared to the previous edition.

According to a statement, 243 applications have been submitted this time around.

The National Research Award (NRA) is divided into two categories: Best published research led by a PhD holder or equivalent (senior specialist or higher in the medical field) and Best published research led by a young researcher (a non-PhD holder).

Out of the 243 applications, 143 applications were submitted in the PhD holder or equivalent category, while 100 applications were submitted in the young researcher's category.

The research applications were submitted in accordance to the six research fields of the award in both the PhD and young

*Out of the 243 applications, 143 were submitted in the PhD holder or equivalent category, while 100 were in the young researcher's category*

researcher categories, with 48 applications in the Education and Human Resources field, 21 applications in the Information and Communication Technologies field, 60 applications in the Health and Social Services field, 42 applications in the Cultural, Social, and Basic Sciences field, 22 applications in the Energy and Industry field, and 50 applications in the Environmental and Biological Resources field.

The winners of NRA will be announced in the upcoming Annual Research Forum.

## Indian expats bemoan vaccine policy

Continued from Page 01

Last week, Kuwait announced that its expat residents who have received Chinese and Russian vaccines outside the country - including Sinopharm, Sinovac and Sputnik V, which are not approved by it - can enter the country provided they take an additional dose of one of the four approved vaccines - Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

According to PM Jabir, community welfare secretary of Indian Social Club, the matter can be solved through diplomatic channels. "The Indian government should convince the receiving countries - especially the Gulf governments - that Covaxin is safe," he said.

He informed that the state of Kerala has taken up the matter with the Government of India. "We, as a social group, have also

asked the government. There are many who have been contacting me from India."

In his capacity as director of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs Welfare Board, Jabir has asked "the Kerala government to put more pressure on the central government. Simultaneously, I will also ask the Indian Embassy".

Bheem Reddy, chairman of Emigrants Welfare Forum in Hyderabad, said, "The decision is not right. Whatever the vaccine or even a mix - any COVID-19 vaccine must be allowed."

Allowing flights from India to the Gulf states, he noted, is not in the hands of the Government of India. "Also, India is providing a second dose of vaccine for international travellers within a span of 28 days, while for the general public it is 84 days. The government is trying its best to help its citizens."

## Tax Authority holds virtual awareness session on VAT



**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

The Tax Authority on Tuesday evening held an awareness sessions on value-added tax (VAT), as part of the awareness campaign 'With you and for you' with the aim of introducing VAT and its application mechanism.

The session discussed the mechanism for calculating

VAT, with a good number of attendance.

The session began with a review of a set of tax concepts and an explanation of the scope of imposing value-added tax, which is imposed in accordance with the provisions of the law and its executive regulations on the import and supply of goods or services at every stage of production and distribution.

## Al Wusta gets 1,200 mangrove saplings

Muscat - The Environment Authority (EA) has planted 1,200 mangrove saplings in Al Wusta governorate.

'As part of the efforts made by the Environment Authority to implement the national initiative to plant 10mn trees and rehabilitate khors in the sultanate, the authority planted 1,200 mangrove saplings in Khor Ghawi in the wilayat of Al Jazir in Al

Wusta governorate,' it said.

The mangroves help in maintaining ecological balance, as they preserve beaches from erosion and help as incubating areas for many commercially valuable fish and other marine organisms, in addition to their contribution in storing carbon dioxide, the EA said.

It has already planted around 700,000 saplings in 30 khors.



(Supplied photo)

# Stranded expats celebrate travel ban end starting Sept 1

Shaddad al Musalmay  
Muscat

Following the decision by the Supreme Committee to lift the travel ban on all countries, many residents of Oman who are stranded outside the sultanate shared their excitement over borders opening from September 1. They described the decision as a big relief after being away for months.

On Monday, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) announced the end of the travel ban from Sudan, Brazil, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, India, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Tunisia, Libya, Argentina and Colombia.

Expatriates who *Muscat Daily* spoke with said the decision was much awaited and that they can't wait to return to Oman.

Tanzanian resident Maryam Abdullah has been stranded in Dar es Salaam for close to five months. Her family has been split between Oman and Tanzania since April. "I travelled home to Tanzania to visit my mother five months ago. Oman imposed the travel ban a few days after I landed here. I left my two children with their father and I am desperate to get back home to Muscat. The wait has been too long for me; now I'm counting the days to return," Maryam said.

British national Katherine Hinchcliffe, a secondary teacher of Knowledge Gate International School - Al Hail, flew from the UK to Bahrain because of the 14-day rule. The travel restrictions also



*I left my two children with their father and I am desperate to get back home to Muscat. The wait has been too long for me; now I'm counting the days to return*

MARYAM ABDULLAH

applied to passengers from any other country if they passed through any of the 21 banned countries 14 days prior to the request to enter the sultanate.

"I am in Bahrain patiently waiting to travel to Oman. I am so excited to start teaching on September 5. The school has been fantastic and the communication has calmed my nerves in the midst of the pandemic," she said.

"It has been an eventful and nervous time waiting for the news on the border opening, but I feel relieved that I am reaching before the school opens so that I

can settle down before welcoming the pupils face-to-face. Only a few more days to go!"

Amit Sijaria, a drilling engineer with Petroleum Development Oman, was excited when he set off on annual vacation during the Eid holidays. He was hopeful of travel restrictions easing in August. "But as time passed and no news came in - I was half-heartedly looking at options to return via other countries. I am not comfortable travelling overseas with children during the pandemic."

The announcement on Monday, August 23 - his son's birth-

day - "came like an oasis in the desert". At this point of time, Sijaria said, he couldn't have asked for or prayed for anything better. "I am looking forward to meet a new Oman, free from COVID-19 troubles."

Adnan Rasool, who has been stuck in Pakistan, described the decision to remove his country from the banned list and also do away with mandatory quarantine as a "welcome move".

Rasool has been running his travel ticketing business remotely, but just about managing.

"It was difficult for me. The removal of the mandatory quarantine requirement will certainly help us save a lot of money and time," he said.

According to the new decision, fully vaccinated passengers with a negative PCR test result will be exempted from quarantine. Those without PCR negative certificates can test at Oman airports but must be in quarantine till they get the negative result.

Following CAA's announcement on Monday, Oman resident Bhanu Priya's phone hasn't stopped ringing in Delhi. "My friend called to inform about Oman lifting the ban and we jumped with joy. We will now be able to go back home. We have been waiting for this news for the last four months and finally it's announced. My child was dancing with joy. Thank you Oman!"

Those arriving in Oman are required to present a COVID-19 vaccine certificate containing QR code stating that they have received two doses or a single dose of any vaccine approved in Oman.

@shadadm

## WALK IN INTERVIEW

Urgent requirement for the below positions  
Furniture Carpenter/Checker/Supervisor  
Nationality : Indian, Pakistan, Bangladesh & Nepal

- Age Limit 22 - 35 years
- Should have experience in furniture carpentry works
- Should have 2 -3 years' experience in same field
- Candidates must possess NOC from the existing Sponsor

SALARY - Depends upon experience + Accommodation + Transportation + OT/Incentives

**VENUE**

Date: 27th Aug. (Friday) - **Danube** Home AlKhuwair Showroom  
Building No.197, Way No.3329 Alkhuwair, Muscat  
Contact no : 93211490 - 91369646

## Ministry of Economy discusses work plan

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The Ministry of Economy, represented by the Planning and Quality Assurance Directorate, organised a workshop on Tuesday to develop the ministry's work plan for 2022 in the presence of H E Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Undersecretary of the ministry, and a number of director generals and officials.

According to a statement, the workshop aimed to review the ministry's current plan, the progress made against the pre-set targets, measure the importance of current projects and programmes for the next year in light of recent developments, and work out a more comprehensive vision about the

role of the Ministry of Economy.

The workshop also aimed at discussing the most important current economic developments to ensure that the ministry is carrying out its mandates as set out in Royal Decree No 94/2020.

The workshop also discussed the focus areas and strategic objectives for 2022 to propose initiatives and programmes that address immediate challenges and foresee the future to turn the Omani economy into a diversified and sustainable economy.

'Another workshop will follow to define the programmes and projects in the ministry's work plan for 2022 in order to develop the final plan that will be submitted to the Council of Ministers in October,' the statement added.

## MoH reports 120 COVID-19 cases, 5 deaths

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday reported 120 new cases of COVID-19 with five deaths in 24 hours.

'The total number of cases registered in the sultanate has now reached 301,570, including 4,043 deaths,' the MoH statement said.

Twenty one patients were admitted to hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of inpatients to 169, including 75 in intensive care units, it added.

'The total number of recoveries has increased by 221 to 290,631, while the recovery rate is 96.3 per cent.'



(Supplied photo)

## Fishermen in hot water for netting whale shark

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

A whale shark was found on a beach in Muscat on Tuesday caught by fishermen.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources stated that it has followed up on the incident of a whale shark 'falling into fishermen's nets' in the Governorate of Muscat. 'Whale hunting is a punishable violation in accordance with Article 11 of the Marine Fishing and Living Aquatic Resources Law. The ministry has taken legal measures against the fishermen,' a ministry statement said.

The ministry has called on the fishermen to take steps to preserve whales in Omani

waters.

According to the Environment Society of Oman, whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) are the largest of all fish. They are considered to be 'endangered' under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

The gentle and curious whale shark tops many divers' bucket list and is a boon for the local diving industry during the summer months.

Typically, the season when whale sharks are seen in Omani waters is from July to September, but sometimes sightings are made as early as June.

Whale sharks are often found in the waters around Daymaniyat Islands, Fahal Island and Bandar al Khairan.

## Honey outlets open at MGM, Avenues Mall

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources on Tuesday inaugurated two outlets at Muscat Grand Mall (MGM) and Oman Avenues Mall for selling Omani honey.

Yaqoub bin Jamil al Daroushi, head of the Agricultural Export Promotion Department in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said, "The idea of establishing the outlets comes as an alternative to the

Omani honey market week, which the ministry has been holding for years."

He added that 55 beekeepers from different governorates are present at the two outlets with over eight tonnes of honey being sold there.

The participating beekeepers have been divided into two batches at the two sites to reduce crowding, Daroushi said, adding that all COVID-19 precautionary measures will be followed at the outlets which will be open till August 31.

## SOUTH GHUBRA ROAD NEAR COMPLETION



Muscat Municipality has stated that it completed 85 per cent of the road project linking several streets in the southern Ghubra area of Bausher. The project includes laying a road network in the area with oil and gas lines underneath, transferring existing public services, and constructing a water canal (Supplied photo)

## SQU hybrid power plant to be operational soon

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Global endeavours towards achieving sustainable development and ecological balance necessitate a focus on utilising renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind energy, to produce and store electrical power. This drive is one of the main factors associated with the establishment of a hybrid power plant by the Sustainable Energy Research Centre at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

According to a statement, the station is considered an important project as it seeks to conduct experiments related to energy security and efficiency, while also minimising costs and reducing environmentally harm-



(Supplied photo)

ful emissions.

'The hybrid power plant is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and devices, including a smart micro-grid system, electrochemical hydrogen fuel cells that operate through a methanol fuel reformer, and a deionised water system, in addition to providing cutting-edge laboratories for electrochemical

experimentations and a methanol storage room,' read the statement.

The plant also includes a diesel generator, a wind turbine, and both ground-mounted and rooftop photovoltaic systems, while continuing efforts are being made to ensure the plant has the necessary equipment to achieve its primary objectives.

The Sustainable Energy Research Centre remains at the forefront of research into the generation of electricity through renewable energy sources in place of diesel fuel, especially in rural areas.

Current work at the plant encompasses a project that includes 5kW hydrogen fuel cell equipped with methanol reformer, a 6kW diesel generator, a 5kW rooftop PV system, and 15kWh lithium-ion storage batteries. In addition, the smart energy management system connects the integrated resources to the university's distribution grid or can be operated as an isolated microgrid system that feeds the local loads in the plant. The project generally focuses on using methanol to gen-

erate electricity in an economical and eco-friendly way due to the low levels of harmful emissions.

'Following the conclusion of the first two phases of the plant's construction, efforts have been geared first towards the evaluation of utilising methanol to generate electricity for rural and remote areas. The research team is working to integrate various energy sources to effectively produce electricity through the utilisation of renewable energy resources.'

The construction of the hybrid plant began in 2017 with a research project entitled 'Studying the Performance and Monitoring of Solar Photovoltaic Energy' conducted by a research team led by SQU's Dr Rashid al Abri and Dr Amer Saif al Hinai.

# Oman's condensate production jumps 28% as oil output drops

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

As Oman continues to stick to its OPEC+ commitments on oil production, the sultanate has sharply increased its condensates output in 2021 to a new record in July as condensate production is exempt from the obligations of the OPEC+ agreement.

Total condensates production during the January-July period of 2021 jumped by 28 per cent to 46.598mn barrels compared to 36.405mn barrels recorded in the same period of 2020, according to the Ministry of Energy and Minerals' data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

An OPEC+ agreement in December 2019 allowed non-OPEC oil producers to exclude condensate output from their production quotas, which enabled countries like Russia and Oman to sharply raise their condensate production.

However, the rise in condensate production has come at the expense of Oman's lower crude oil output as the sultanate is committed to comply with oil production limits under the latest OPEC+ agreement.

Oman's crude oil production dropped by 7.4 per cent to 156.181mn barrels in the first seven months of 2021 compared with 168.582mn barrels in the same period of last year, the ministry's data showed.

Daily average oil production marginally decreased 0.6 per cent to 956,500 barrels per day



*Average price at which Oman sold its crude during the first seven months of 2021 was 18.6 per cent higher at US\$57.6 per barrel compared with US\$48.6 per barrel in the same period of 2020*

(bpd) in the January-July period of this year from 962,400 bpd in the first seven months of 2020.

Condensate is a mixture of light liquid hydrocarbons and typically separated out of a natural gas stream at the point of production.

While Oman's focus is on managing the natural decline of its oil production, there is some scope to increase its production capacity through condensates associated with gas projects, and also some heavy oil develop-

ments, S&P Global Platts recently reported.

## Crude exports decline

Oman exported total 163.962mn barrels of crude oil in the first seven months of 2021, a decrease of 3.9 per cent from 170.552mn barrels exported in the corresponding period of last year.

Exports to China, the largest buyer of Oman's crude, fell by 10.7 per cent to 135.043mn bar-

rels in seven months to July 2021 from 151.175mn in the same period of last year. China still attracted more than 82 per cent of the sultanate's oil shipments during the January-July period.

Oman's crude exports to India, by contrast, recorded a robust growth of 165.6 per cent at 16.399mn barrels in the first seven months of this year against 6.174mn barrels in the corresponding period of 2020. Shipments to South Korea and Japan also witnessed a sharp growth this year.

The average price at which Oman sold its crude during the first seven months of 2021 was 18.6 per cent higher at US\$57.6 per barrel compared with US\$48.6 per barrel in the same period of 2020.

# First phase of ACME's hydrogen project to be completed in 2022

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

India's leading clean energy company ACME Group announced that its proposed large-scale green hydrogen and ammonia project in Oman would be developed in phases and the first phase is likely to be commissioned by the end of 2022.

ACME Group and Oman's Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) on Monday signed a land agreement to set up one of the world's largest green ammonia projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

In a press statement, Manoj K Upadhyay, founder and chairman of ACME Group said, "The signing of land reservation agreement will allow us to kick start pre-construction activities. We have hired environmental consultants and owner's engineers Black & Veatch and we plan to



start the construction at Oman project as soon we commission our first green hydrogen and green ammonia plant at Bikaner in India."

"The plant in Oman would be developed in phases and the first phase is likely to be commissioned by end of 2022," he added.

ACME Group said its plant in Duqm will be an integrated facility using 3GWp of solar and 0.5GWp of wind energy to produce 2,400 tonnes per day of green ammonia with an annual production of approximately

0.9mn tonnes.

"This would be the first facility of this scale to be operational by 2022. The facility is being built to export green ammonia to demand centres like Europe and Asia with an investment of approximately US\$3.5bn," the company said in its statement.

ACME Group has built a solar portfolio of 6GWp in India. Of this, the company currently holds a portfolio of 5.25GWp that includes 2.2GWp of operational capacity and another 3.05GWp is under construction. These are spread across 12 states in India.

# CBO issues RO40mn treasury bills

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

A tender of the government treasury bills (issue number 156) was announced by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) this week.

Total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO40mn, for a maturity period of 182 days, from today until February 23, 2022. The average accepted price reached RO99.617 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived

at RO99.615.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.7683 per cent and 0.7713 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with the CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the central bank's treasury bills discounting facility is 0.75 per cent.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance.

These financial instruments

provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through its discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. The government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.

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**MSX extends drop on weak activity**

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) fell 0.1 per cent to close at 3,956.23 points on Tuesday. Trading activity deteriorated from the previous session as turnover declined 75 per cent to RO2.18mn and volumes fell 33.85 per cent to 16.11mn shares.

While Services index rose 0.6 per cent, Financial and Industrial indices fell 0.17 per cent and 0.09 per cent, respectively. The MSX Shariah index closed up by 0.11 per cent at 594.79 points.

Market breadth remained positive as 18 companies closed up, while 8 companies closed down. The rest 17 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers were Muscat Finance (3.33 per cent), Construction Materials Industries & Contracting Co (3.33 per cent), Oman & Emirates Investment Holding (2.9 per cent) and Renaissance Services (2.74 per cent).

Top losers were Muscat Thread Mills (-8.33 per cent), Al Jazeera Steel Products (-4.1 per cent), Muscat City Desalination Co (-2.38 per cent) and Bank Nizwa (-1.04 per cent).

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# Abu Dhabi's Adnoc signs \$1bn deals for major projects

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) announced the signing of framework agreements for concept and front-end engineering design (FEED) services for major projects across its full value chain to support the delivery of its 2030 strategy.

The framework agreements - which were signed with eight top-tier global engineering contractors - have a combined scope worth up to US\$1bn (AED3.67bn) and the potential for 50 per cent of the value to flow back into the UAE's economy under Adnoc's in-country value (ICV) programme, over the agreement term between 2021 and 2026.

The scope of the agreements is based on the forecasted requirement for external project engineering services across the Adnoc Group.

The nature of the agreements underpins Adnoc's smart approach to procurement which is enabling it to drive value and commerciality across its portfolio. By structuring the framework agreements with a group of top-tier contractors instead of procuring smaller individual agreements, Adnoc was able to secure pre-agreed terms and conditions thereby reducing tendering cycle by months, achieve highly competitive rates by leveraging long-term contracts that service its entire portfolio, and establish a group-wide performance management and review process that provides high visibility of contractor performance.

Commenting on the signing of the agreements, Abdulmunim Saif al Kindy, Adnoc People, Technology & Corporate Sup-



port executive director, said, "We are very pleased to engage with the eight top-tier engineering contractors awarded to provide best-in-class engineering expertise on our strategic projects across our full value chain."

"These framework agreements follow a very competitive tender process and the smart nature of the deals will deliver substantial cost savings, optimise project delivery schedules and provide Adnoc with increased flexibility to drive its growth targets and proactively respond to the demands of the fast-evolving energy landscape. In addition,

the agreements offer the potential to create additional skilled employment opportunities for Emiratis and include commitments that contracted services will primarily be carried out in the UAE, ensuring more economic value remains in the country from our contract awards."

Adnoc signed the framework agreements with AMEC International Ltd (part of the Wood Group), Fluor, McDermott, Mott MacDonald, SNC-Lavalin International Arabia Limited - Abu Dhabi (part of the Kentech Group), Technip Energies, Worley, and a joint venture between

Tecnicas Reunidas and NPCC. The agreements will run for five years, with an option for a two-year extension.

The eight contractors have committed to set up and run enhanced training programmes to further develop local expertise and enable knowledge transfer.

As an integral part of its 2030 strategy, Adnoc is optimising its procurement strategy to reflect market dynamics, focusing on long-term contracts with a reduced number of suppliers that provide stable and reliable delivery at highly competitive rates.

# European football giants to take €2bn COVID hit

London, UK - Matchday revenues across the five major European football leagues took a nearly €2bn hit last season after spectators were largely barred from attending matches due to the pandemic, a report by consultancy KPMG said on Tuesday.

The projected revenue losses dwarf the €500mn that clubs in the leagues suffered in the 2019/20 season, when the virus first affected Europe and led to sport being suspended in March 2020, only resuming months later without spectators.

The continent's top five leagues are England's Premier League, Italy's Serie A, Spain's La Liga, Germany's Bundesliga and the French Ligue 1.

"It is expected that clubs in the big 5 leagues will make little-to-no income from this source in 2020/21, potentially losing out on over €2bn of matchday revenues combined," the report said.

For the 2019/20 season the Bundesliga, which has the average highest attendance, was the most impacted (an estimated €157mn drop in revenues) while Ligue 1 suffered the least (€48mn).

The report stated that of five big clubs, Barcelona saw the biggest dip, registering a €39mn contraction in matchday revenues.

The Premier League was the exception amongst the five



Bayern Munich's midfielder Joshua Kimmich (left) and Schalke's midfielder Amine Harit vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match in Munich on September 18, 2020 (AFP)

leagues during the 2020/21 season, as it permitted some fans to attend during parts of the campaign.

The financial impact is also set to continue in the present season.

The Premier League and Ligue 1 are the only ones among the big five leagues to have allowed full capacity stadia this season.

Temporary guidelines are in place for La Liga until August 29, with a re-evaluation of the situation in September, only 40 per cent of stadia capacity set to be used and fans obligated to wear masks, the report noted.

Italy's Serie A currently allows grounds to be half full, with fans required to show a COVID-19 passes proving that they have either been vaccinated against the

virus or recovered from infection, it added.

"Similarly, half of the stadiums can be filled in the German Bundesliga, but only up to the limit of 25,000 fans in total," the report said.

The analysis added this summer's delayed Euro 2020 tournament had laid the groundwork for the return of fans but that it had also had a negative side effect.

"With regard to players' health, UEFA measures were considered rather successful," it stated. "However, there were also loud voices that condemned the tournament for some increases of new corona [virus] cases in the general population." AFP

# German GDP picks up in second quarter

Frankfurt, Germany - Germany's GDP recovered more in the second quarter than first estimated, according to data released on Tuesday, but global supply chain issues continue to weigh on the outlook for Europe's largest economy.

After shrinking in the first quarter, German GDP grew 1.6 per cent between April and June this year, according to the national statistics agency Destatis, up from an initial estimate of 1.5 per cent.

The figure was significantly higher compared with the same period last year - by 9.8 per cent - when coronavirus restrictions shut down large swathes of the economy.

The boost given to the economy by the end of lockdown restrictions has been 'undermined by the negative impact from supply chain frictions', according to ING analyst Carsten Brzeski.

AFP

## ELECTRONIC TENDERS

**The Internal Tenders Committee of the Ministry of Higher Education Research & Innovation announced the following tenders:**

| Tender No. | Tender Name                                  | Company that are entitled to participate                                                                                       | Tender Price | Last Date for purchasing Tender | The deadline for submission of tenders |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 11/2021    | Data Centre Contract for MOHERI Head Quarter | Specialized in providing Same service and registered with the Tender Board with Grade Excellent. First , Second, Third, Fourth | 25/= RO      | 13/09/2021                      | 03/10/2021                             |

The purchasing of the tender documents by E-Tendering system will starting on **Wednesday 25/08 /2021** at 07:30 am. To purchasing, please visit the following link:

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

All companies that are bidding must provide a bank guarantee or a certified cheque from a bank operating in the Sultanate for at least (1%) of the tender value on behalf of His Excellency Dr. / Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee.

Preference will be given to companies' or small and medium enterprises registered with the General Authority for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) that includes the largest proportion of its tender Omanization.

**Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.**

Chairman of tender committee  
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# Ahlibank's programme to prepare individuals to excel in banking

Reflecting its commitment to empowering young people and developing their abilities to enhance their career opportunities in the banking industry, Ahlibank has announced the launch of the seventh edition of its renowned Graduate Development Program (GDP). The programme aims at providing jobs for the aspiring banking professionals in several different disciplines of the industry, after undergoing an intensive training and leadership led coaching that allows them to obtain basic knowledge suitable for a lucrative and rewarding career in Oman's banking industry.

Ever since its inception, Ahlibank has put concerted focus on training and developing human resources as one of the key elements of its operational strategies, and as an important pillar of its growth. The bank believes in effectively contributing to the national agenda as outlined in Oman Vision 2040, of meeting the needs of the labour market, through job creation and skill development of the local population, especially the young national workforce. In line with the same, the Graduate Development Program, an annual initiative, is designed to accelerate the participant's career growth and prepares them to take up leadership roles at the bank.

Speaking on the success of



the programme, Mohammed al Mufargi, AGM-head of Human Resources Ahlibank said, "Creating jobs for Omani youth is a top priority for the bank, and its efforts have been reflected in supporting the government's direction to develop youth skills and benefit from their capabilities by providing a platform to help them grow and prosper faster.

"In line with Oman Vision 2040, which adopts a strategic plan to promote training and operational programs for youth, the bank affirms its commitment to

contributing to the development of young people's skills, encouraging and guiding them towards improving their professional performance for a brighter future. Ahlibank's advanced levels of skill development, and training to meet the modern-day requirements of the banking industry sets a benchmark by not only preparing the young graduates for a banking career but also by giving them a first-hand experiential with full-time job offers."

Launched under the name 'Graduate Development Program', the two-year programme

was first conducted in the year 2015, employing a number of graduates within several of the bank's divisions. The programme is designed to develop the skills of new graduates by combining hands-on training with theoretical training, mentoring programs and allowing participants to join the team when the programme is successfully completed. The program focuses on strengthening leadership and career skills in banking with the support of a group of managers, trainers and experienced people.

After successful completion of

the first year, the bank will distribute graduates across the bank's various departments as part of the on-the-job training initiative, based on their individual abilities, taking into account their educational qualifications and prevailing job requirements. Upon successful completion in the second year, they will be formally appointed to a full-time role at the bank, based on their work requirements and leadership skills.

In keeping with national development objectives, which focus on providing vocational training to citizens, Ahlibank is keen through its youth-oriented initiatives to attract entrepreneurs and creativity, and to qualify them to enrich the labor market with competencies that not only meet the basic requirements of employment, but are able to exceed expectations and contribute effectively in a highly competitive environment

Ahlibank is considered a forerunner in enhancing the capabilities and competencies of Omani youth and the annual Graduate Development Program plays a key role in cementing this position. Its strategic approach confirms its commitment to supporting Oman's efforts to create jobs and its keenness to create a coherent framework that serves the process of national growth and development.



## Radisson Hotel Group thanks MoH healthcare professionals

Radisson Hotels in Muscat have opened their restaurants' doors to the nurses of Ministry of Health (MoH) in gratitude for their round-the-clock efforts to fight COVID-19. Nurses on the frontline attending to COVID-19 patients have been working through the most trying circumstances to save lives and offer care to those affected by the virus.

The initiative, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, is to celebrate the hard work and dedication of nurses.

Maha al Maskari, senior specialised critical care nurse from Risk Management Office in DGPHE-MoH said this dining experience will be welcome relief for the nurses enduring long

hours under challenging circumstances.

"Knowing that there is a nice meal waiting for you at the end of a long shift can make all the difference in the world right now," she said.

"During this crisis, we have seen so many nurses working in the most challenging circumstances, sacrificing their own needs for the greater cause. They truly are frontline heroes," said Panos Panagis, district director of RHG Oman. "We are honoured to extend our hospitality across our Muscat properties - Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel, Muscat; Park Inn by Radisson Muscat to them during this difficult time."

## Ooredoo offers Riyada cardholders 50% off on its B2B services

As part of its ongoing mission to support local businesses, Ooredoo has provided Riyada (Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises) cardholders the opportunity to save 50 per cent on its B2B services. The offer covers Ooredoo Internet Professional (OIP) 12 and 24 month plans and various Shahry Business eezee mobile bundles.

Giving Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) one less thing to worry about, especially as they navigate the challenges of the pandemic, they can benefit from unlimited data starting at just RO34.5 after the Riyada discount for 10 Mbps with OIP. And Shahry Business Packs start from just RO5 after the 50 per cent discount. This amazing offer ensures that SMEs keep their operating costs low without impacting the quality of connectivity and technology they need to drive their growth.

Ooredoo's B2B portfolio pro-



vides innovative communications solutions in line with the needs of big and small businesses alike. Its popular OIP fixed line plans offer a choice of unlimited Internet bundles of different speeds along with voice minutes and international calling discounts.

Meanwhile, Shahry Business eezee provides mobile Internet and a wide range of plans, tailored to meet each company's needs.

Riyada cardholders can visit [ooredoo.om/riyada](http://ooredoo.om/riyada), or call 95011503 to learn more.

## Bank Muscat launches annual Tadamun programme to support social welfare families

In line with its pioneering role in corporate social responsibility Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has launched its annual Tadamun programme in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development.

In 2021, the programme will distribute 790 household appliances to 150 social welfare families across Oman. Earlier this year, the bank also provided laptops and tablets to 1,240 students from low-income families with the aim of supporting the government's efforts to make online education available for all students in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A joint team from the Ministry of Social Development and the bank is at present distributing household appliances to families in the Governorate of Muscat, and will continue in other governorates in the coming weeks. The distribution is being conducted after taking all precau-



tions and in full compliance with COVID-19 social distancing norms so as to maintain the safety and health of everyone.

Talib Saif al Makhmari, manager, Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, said, "Bank Muscat is delighted to continue the ninth edition of this pioneering CSR programme, in close partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and sees

this as an important means of further achievements in social responsibility and sustainability, especially given its great success in the past."

This year's programme is being implemented by the bank in cooperation with specialists from the Ministry of Social Development, who received applications and finalised the list of families entitled for the benefits.

Makhmari thanked the Ministry of Social Development, the volunteers and other participants for their role in ensuring the success of the programme.

Bank Muscat is proud of the success and achievements of its CSR programmes, which draws from the values of leadership and partnership so as to create a positive impact on Omani society.

The Tadamun programme

has benefitted 1,691 families comprising more than 8,000 people since it was first launched in 2013. The bank has over 10 long-term CSR programmes including Green Sports, Little Investor, Jesr al Mustaqbal, and the Al Wathbah SME Academy.

It has also launched a number of development projects in the past including the Misfat al Abriyeen heritage tourism project in the wilayat of Al Hamra in partnership with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and a 15,000sqm public park in Al Khoudh in partnership with Muscat Municipality.

Bank Muscat is well recognised both locally and internationally for its outstanding efforts in CSR and sustainability. In 2020, it was honoured by the Ministry of Social Development for its outstanding role in supporting people with disabilities, and also at the Fourth Oman Forum for Partnership and Social Responsibility.

## Muscat University launches master's degree in renewable energy

As part of its continuous support for renewable development projects in the sultanate, Muscat University announced the launch of new academic programmes, including the Master of Renewable Energy Engineering which is offered for the first time in the sultanate. In addition, a further eight new programmes will be offered in the academic year 2021/2022.

These programmes consist of master's, bachelor's, advanced diplomas, and diplomas in the fields of transportation, logistics, engineering, information technology and business management. All programmes are designed to meet the needs of the Omani labour market. The Faculty of Engineering is offering students the opportunity to study for a diploma, advanced

diploma, or bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and energy engineering. While the faculty of Business and Management provides a diploma, an advanced diploma and bachelor's qualifications in accounting, finance, business administration and marketing.

The university is working towards offering a professional doctorate in business administration in association with a reputable UK university which will be the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman

In this regard, Khalil bin Abdullah al Khonji, chairman of the Board of Directors of Muscat University, said, "From the beginning Muscat University set out to provide a high-quality academic experience for its students aligned with the needs of a global



economy forging pioneering paths in higher education. The founders and members of the Board of Directors worked on strategies to enhance the educational services provided by the university in order to reach a high

level of academic quality and research output.

"The launch of this new suite of programmes reflects the continuous development and modernisation of the sultanate based on the country's develop-

ment plans."

Khonji added, "The various academic programmes offered at Muscat University have received the support of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation being

developed in line with Oman's development plans and leading economic projects. The university periodically revises its academic and research plans to keep pace with international developments in higher education and to meet the needs of the global economy."

Professor Khamis bin Hamad al Yahyai, vice chancellor of Muscat University, commented, "We are very happy with this launch of new programmes and specialisations, some of which are being introduced for the first time in the sultanate. The new programmes came after a thorough study of market needs listening to the aspirations and desires of partners and the business community in line with the objectives of the sultanate's Vision 2040.

"The programmes were designed to meet the needs of a diversified and sustainable economy based on knowledge and innovation in undergraduate and postgraduate studies."

He added, "The new bachelor programmes continue Muscat University's pioneering professional internship for a period of one year which provides a great opportunity for our students to build their professional futures and make them truly desirable in the labour market. Muscat University is also keen to provide an environment that combines innovation and entrepreneurship characterised by quality and professionalism in all its endeavours."

For more information visit the Muscat University website: [www.muscatuniversity.edu.om](http://www.muscatuniversity.edu.om)

# AJIA offers incredible summer deals to ‘Beat the Heat’ with 0% financing

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles LLC (AJIA), the official importer of BMW Group in Oman, has launched a limited time offer to ensure customers ‘Beat the Heat’ with zero per cent interest on financing options this summer. Coinciding with the Hijri New Year, this offer is a token of bliss and generosity, and is valid until September 30. The offer allows customers to purchase the car of their dreams with zero per cent interest over three years financing.

To ensure clients have peace of mind and confidence in their purchasing decision, this exclusive offer includes BMW Service Inclusive for 5 years or 100,000km and BMW Repair Inclusive (BMW Warranty) for 5 years or 200,000km. In addition, car buyers can avail free window tinting from Auto Spa and com-



plementary vehicle registration for the first year.

Rachid Zamani, managing director of Al Jenaibi International Automobiles LLC said, “We are thrilled to be able to offer our customers such unique and fantastic deals and make it easy for them to own one of the world’s best-loved vehicle. We are also confident that our competitive and flexible Beat the Heat finance option will be received well by the Omani market.

“AJIA constantly strives to provide customers with the security and confidence throughout their ownership journey, while maintaining all safety and precautionary measures.”

This offer is valid on all available stock. To benefit from this offer, vehicles should be booked and delivered during the offer period.

## National Finance - Imtidad joins with Dar al Atta’a

With a solid commitment towards helping improve the quality of life of those in need within community, National Finance has once again partnered with Dar al Atta’a under ‘Imtidad’, an independent wing for the company’s CSR and sustainable initiatives.

Dedicated to creating positive, long-term and sustainable impacts in the local community, National Finance has been a key contributor to Dar al Atta’a’s charity programmes, particularly for family welfare, ever since 2018. Under the most recent partnership, National Finance joins hands with Dar al Atta’a in order to support families with low incomes through sustainable initiatives that focus on helping families with limited income.

“We believe that by maintaining a strong culture of sustainability, giving and community service, we will pave the path for a brighter future. Our partnerships with organisations like Dar al Atta’a, enable us to be a part of something bigger, expand our reach and extend the support to those that need it the most,” said



Ali al Mani, acting CEO at National Finance.

Dar al Atta’a chairperson, Hon Maryam al Zadjali said, “National Finance has always shown its unconditional support towards the community and we are delighted to enhance our partnership further this year. We are certain that it will go a long way to positively change the lives of so many beneficiaries. We greatly value the support of companies like National Finance who never hesitate to seize every opportunity to contribute to the growth, prosperity and well-being of the people of the nation.”

National Finance, established

in 1987, has built a reputation as the market leader trusted by thousands of customers across the sultanate. National Finance offers a wide range of products targeting both individual customers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through its 20 branches across the sultanate.

The company has won many accolades, the latest of these being the ‘Most Innovative Retail Finance – Automobile – Oman 2021’ Award by International Finance Awards, and the ‘Best SME Finance Solution 2021’ award by Capital Finance International (CFI.co).

## Pre-orders for Huawei watches, nova 8 from Aug 26

Huawei Consumer Business Group announced the launch of Huawei Watch 3 Series including the elegant looking Huawei 3 and Huawei 3 Pro and sleek beautiful camera phone – the Huawei nova 8, the latest nova family member that empowers people to explore and share.

The Huawei Watch 3 Series bring consumers convenient and smart life experiences that are underpinned by enhanced interaction, independent connectivity and all-scenario interconnectivity. On top of elegant design ID, high-end finishing, ultra-long battery life, health and fitness monitoring features, the Huawei Watch 3 | 3 Pro brings new features such as a high-precision temperature sensor for the first time to support skin temperature detection, handwashing detection and fall detection. The new smartwatches will be stylish smart companion that help users continuously monitor their workout progress and health conditions with science-based solutions no matter where their lives take them.

Huawei Watch 3 Series feature ultra-long battery life, supporting up-to-five-day battery life in smart mode and provides up-



to 21 days in ultra-long battery life mode.

Longer battery life ensures that users can wear it all day, use it continuously, and use it all the time even during sleep. Whether users are wearing it for workouts, meetings, or sleeping, Huawei Watch 3 is always connected and offers support. It is made of an aerospace-grade titanium fused with sapphire glass lens that guarantees durability. The Pro variant is not only aesthetically pleasing, but also capable of withstanding harsh weather conditions and the test of time, offering an incredible level of protection at any given moment.

The Huawei Watch 3 series

comes with a 3D rotating crown with tactile feedback for the first time. With a fine-ripple pattern, it represents the epitome of craftsmanship in a smartwatch, offering high-precision finger movement recognition for the users. The rotating crown lets users zoom in and out of images and slide across the menu options accurately, efficiently, and conveniently.

The watch debuts with a more expansive selection of watch faces and watch straps that provide options for users to personalise their smartwatch. With a wide range of innovative and interesting themes including technology, gaming, DIY and short

videos, the watch faces can be mixed and matched with fluoro-elastomer, nylon, leather, stainless steel and titanium straps to create the perfect accessory to go with any outfit.

The Huawei Watch 3 | 3 Pro is a professional fitness monitoring assistant, offering over 100 workout modes, skin temperature detection with the new high-precision temperature sensor, fall detection and SOS alert. Coupled with health monitoring features such as heart rate, SpO2, sleep and pressure, the smartwatch series’ comprehensive feature set allows users to stay up to date on their health condition.

Thanks to its Super Device capabilities providing a truly intelligent experience across all types of scenarios, Huawei Watch 3 | 3 Pro users can connect directly from the convenience of their smartwatches to several smart applications.

Pre-orders from Huawei website <https://bit.ly/3sFkGAc> will start from August 26 with prices of the watch series starting from RO159.900.

Also starting August 26, the Huawei nova 8 will be available for pre-order from Huawei website for RO184.900.

## Infiniti inspiration: Artist Daniel Wurtzel’s visual poetry takes flight

Daring and forward aren’t so much what Daniel Wurtzel does, but rather who he is.

The New York-based sculptor and artist was selected by Infiniti to celebrate the automaker’s growing lineup of SUVs and crossovers in New York on Aug 17 via a beautiful display of design and art that captures the brand’s essence — daring, forward, and human — called ‘Sine Wave’.

Daniel’s work around the world is highly acclaimed for its motion and grace, capturing an elegance that’s inspired, in part, by his fascination with fluidity and flight.

“I’ve found (flight) to be, for whatever reason, enormously compelling — visually compelling and the physics behind it too,” Daniel says from his studio in New York on a hot summer afternoon before the Aug 17 debut of his work at Oculus Transportation Station. “Motion is really what I’m about. I’ve done a lot of different things. But flight seems to be ... always there.”

More than just the surface-level concept of flight, Daniel’s installations embrace deeper meanings of flying by working



with the way air naturally organises itself. In combination with other materials, it can evoke a hypnotic and more emotional connection with viewers.

“Sculpture is more like poetry than it is like a novel. More like a picture than a movie. You only have a few words to say exactly what you mean to say. So, it needs to be succinct, and it needs to be on target,” Daniel says. But airflow is chaotic by nature, as are most, if not all, natural systems. “The ways that chaos plays out over time cre-

ates a visual poetry that we humans are pre-programmed to recognise as beauty.”

He’s right. There are plenty of references to poetry to be found in Daniel’s work. From the more overt Paper Tornado he created for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics closing ceremony to the flowing, Pas de Deux installation created for the Grand Palais in Paris, the direct and indirect lines to poetry are apparent. There’s an efficiency of movement in his pieces, a sense of awe and wonder.

“What I am trying to do is find order in a fluid ocean of chaos,” he says. There’s poetry in what appears to be pandemonium.

But it’s his connection to the physical world that elevates Daniel’s work beyond its superficial chaos. Trained as an architect, Daniel is also rooted in his art firmly through his analytical mind. Creating an installation begins conceptually but then takes shape in how Daniel works with his medium to present. Manipulating his materials in-flight demands intense coordination between sometimes dozens of fans that create a repeatable aerodynamic system that is also inherently variable. Daniel spends his days refining those processes the way a poet whittles words and phrases, bending language to evoke emotion.

“If you expand the definition of poetry beyond the written word and include poetic things, poetic visuals, poetic experiences, and feelings and all of these things, you could make an argument that driving a really well-made car is a poetic experience,” he says.



## Indian Social Club organises Independence Day celebration

Indian Social Club in association with the Embassy of India organised a virtual mega cultural event on the evening of August 16 to celebrate 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of India. H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Isa al Harthy – Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs was the chief guest for the event.

H E Sheikh Khalifa conveyed his best wishes on the historical occasion, stating, “The Sultanate of Oman and Republic of India have enjoyed close relations, and are linked by geography and history. Our two countries have undergone a huge transformation, but our strong and distinguished friendship has remained constant.”

Chairman of the Indian Social

Club, Dr Sathish Nambiar welcomed the guests and spoke about the challenges the community has had to face due to COVID-19 and how the Indian Social Club has stood by the community and conducted various social welfare programmes, including food distribution to the needy, repatriation flights, blood donation and vaccination drive.

H E Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of India, wished the Indian community in Oman on the joyous occasion of Independence Day and lauded the efforts of the Indian Social Club and community members for standing together and supporting one another during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He also spoke about the

strong bilateral relations between India and Oman.

The occasion is being celebrated as part of the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*. A festival celebrating India’s glorious past and progress in the past 75 years and commemorating and honouring the history of its people and culture as it moves towards becoming a developed and prosperous nation.

Themed Festive Folk, this year’s programme saw ISC and its linguistic wings coming together to present an array of folk dances portraying the diversity of India’s rich culture from across the different states. Suhail Khan, Jt general secretary and entertainment secretary at ISC Oman, proposed the vote of thanks.

# Israeli fire kills Palestinian teen in West Bank clash

Demonstrators in the West Bank are demanding justice since the death of a leading critic of Abbas

Nablus, Palestinian Territories - A 15 year old Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday when clashes erupted after Israeli forces stormed a refugee camp near Nablus in search of a suspect.

The Palestinian health ministry said Imad Khaled Saleh Hashash died after sustaining a gunshot wound to the head in the Balata refugee camp.

The Israeli army said it had conducted an overnight operation in the camp to apprehend 'a suspect'.

'During the mission, live ammunition was fired at troops from rooftops. The troops responded with fire towards the sources of the shooting,' it said in a statement.

According to the army, rioting then broke out, with residents hurling blocks and other objects from rooftops at Israeli soldiers.

'During the riot, a number of soldiers spotted a suspect on a rooftop holding a large object in his hands, attempting to throw it at an (Israeli) soldier standing underneath the building.'

'One of the soldiers responded with live fire and a hit was identified,' the statement added, without commenting di-



Israeli soldiers patrol the village of Salem in the east of Nablus, during a search on the road to the Elon Moreh settlement in the occupied West Bank, on Monday (AFP)

rectly on the teenager's death. Deadly unrest is common in the West Bank, a Palestinian territory Israel has occupied since 1967.

Earlier this month, four Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli security forces in the restive Jenin refugee camp.

## UN, EU flay arrests by Palestinian forces

The UN and the EU expressed concern on Tuesday over a

spate of arrests of activists by Palestinian security forces, as the death of a leading activist in custody sparked persistent protests.

Demonstrators in the Israeli-occupied West Bank have demanded justice since the June death of Nizar Banat - a leading critic of the Palestinian Authority and its 86 year old President Mahmud Abbas - who died in custody after security forces stormed his home in the flash-

point city of Hebron and dragged him away.

The United Nations human rights office said it was 'deeply concerned at continuing pressure on those seeking to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and assembly in Palestine'.

It said the security forces had arrested 23 people in Ramallah on Saturday on the grounds that 'they were holding a public protest', but noted that 21 of

them 'were detained before any protest had even started'.

It said 'more arrests appear to be taking place' targeting 'well-known human rights defenders and political activists', and called for 'the immediate release without charge of these individuals'.

The Palestinian Authority was not immediately available to respond to the criticism.

A statement from the European Union representative in

Jerusalem also condemned the weekend arrests, which it said had come 'against the backdrop of reports of an increase in apparently politically motivated arrests by the Palestinian Authority over the past few months'.

"Violence against peaceful human rights defenders, activists and protesters is unacceptable," the EU said.

Nearly two dozen Palestinian civil society groups issued a

statement on Monday warning of 'a dangerous decline in rights and public freedoms' and holding Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh responsible 'his failure to protect the rights of citizens'.

Opinion polls suggest support for the PA and Abbas remain low. Anger ticked up following Abbas' decision to indefinitely postpone elections scheduled for May and July, which would have been the first Palestinian polls in 15 years.

Abbas said the elections could not go ahead until Israel agreed to allow voting in annexed east Jerusalem, which Palestinians claim as the capital of their future state,

But Palestinian analysts said the president balked when it looked like his secular Fatah movement was heading for defeat. Banat's death appears to have intensified frustration.

A post-mortem found he had been beaten on the head, chest, neck, legs and hands, with less than an hour elapsing between his arrest and his death.

His family has described his death as an 'assassination', and said it would reject the conclusions of an official inquiry. It has called instead for an international investigation.

AFP



Tunisian President Kais Saied (right) receive a letter from Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ramtane Lamamra, in Tunis on Monday (AFP)

## Tunisian President extends suspension of parliament

Tunis, Tunisia - Tunisian President Kais Saied has extended his suspension of parliament 'until further notice', a month after sacking his prime minister and granting himself greater powers in a shock intervention that opponents decried as a coup.

In a statement issued by the presidency late on Monday, Saied also extended an order freezing immunity for lawmakers and said he would address the Tunisian people in the coming days, without providing further details.

Tunisia, hailed as a rare democratic success story in the Middle East and North Africa, has been mired in political crisis since Saied's intervention, which comes as the country struggles with dire economic woes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

On July 25, Saied invoked the constitution to extend his authority, dismissing the head of government Hichem Mechichi and freezing parliament, in what activists have called a 'purge' that has seen opponents, judges and businessmen arrested or banned from travel.

Saied issued 'a presidential decree extending the exceptional measures... regarding the suspension of Parliament and lifting of the parliamentary immunity of its MPs until further notice', the presidency said in the statement.

Saied's intervention, which he said was necessary to prevent the country from collapse, sparked uncertainty for the North African nation.

He has yet to appoint a new

government or reveal a 'roadmap' for his decisions despite repeated demands by political parties.

While the President enjoys widespread popularity in Tunisia, his move has sparked fears in the international community that the cradle of the 2011 Arab Spring is regressing towards authoritarianism. Analysts expect Saied will announce new measures to reassure the Tunisian public as well as the international community about his decisions.

## Popular support

The intervention has faced condemnation from judges and Saied's opponents, in particular Ennahdha party, the largest bloc in parliament.

Several politicians, businessmen and judges, as well as members of parliament - who lost their immunity after Saied suspended the legislature - have said they have been banned from travelling abroad or put under house arrest without warning.

Their claims have sparked a chorus of condemnation, with critics denouncing 'arbitrary' and 'unjustified' measures.

A retired constitutional law professor, Saied has used Article 80 of the constitution adopted in 2014, which allows for exceptional measures if there is an 'imminent danger' to national security, to justify his decision.

"The freedom to travel is a constitutional right which I promise to guarantee," he said last week in response to critics.

AFP

## Violence forces fresh delays to polls in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Ethiopian authorities have postponed polls in around a fifth of the country's constituencies, extending a months-long delay which prevented citizens from voting in a June election due to ethnic violence and logistical problems.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's party won a landslide in the June vote, despite a brutal war in the northern region of Tigray, which was among the areas where elections did not take place.

A second batch of polling in one-fifth of the country's 547 constituencies was scheduled for September 6, but will now take place on September 30, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) announced in a statement late Monday.

The decision followed a meeting with politicians, who told NEBE officials that 'considering the current situation the country is in, it's not appropriate to hold elections currently'.

NEBE said voting will take place on September 30 in the Somali, Harari and Southern re-



Women sell vegetables in the town of Bonga, 100km southwest of the city of Jimma in Ethiopia (AFP)

gions, alongside a separate referendum on proposals to create a new South West region.

But no election date has been set for Tigray, where fighting between Abiy's forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front

(TPLF) has killed thousands of people and pushed hundreds of thousands into famine-like conditions.

Each side has accused the other of preventing aid convoys from reaching those in need as

the violence expands to the neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions.

Abiy's landslide win in June came as the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner saw his global reputation plummet, as Tigray

lurched deeper into a humanitarian crisis.

His Prosperity Party won 410 seats in the federal parliament out of 436 where elections were held, according to results issued by NEBE, while opposition parties and independent candidates won a small number of seats.

The vote was meant to affirm a promised democratic revival in Africa's second-most populous nation, with Abiy vowing a clean break with repression that tarnished past electoral cycles.

But opposition candidates complained of a tilted playing field in some areas, with two prominent opposition parties in Oromia, Ethiopia's largest region, pulling out entirely from the polls, saying their candidates had been arrested and offices vandalised.

NEBE noted that some constituencies experienced 'improper arrests', voter intimidation and 'harassment' of observers and journalists, and said it had recorded several killings in the runup to the vote in Oromia, the most populous region.

AFP

## Month of fighting in Syria's Daraa displaces 38,000: UN



This file photo shows a section of the Daraa al Balad district in Syria - deserted following fighting between government forces and armed opposition groups - in the southern province of Daraa on August 16 (AFP)

latest fighting have made little headway as the government has stepped up its campaign to root out remaining rebel fighters from Daraa al Balad.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that 38,600 internally displaced persons are registered in and around Daraa, with most having fled from Daraa al Balad.

"This includes almost 15,000 women, over 3,200 men and elderly and over 20,400 children," the OCHA said.

It warned of a critical situation in the volatile district, say-

ing that access to goods and services, including food and power, is 'extremely challenging'.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that government forces are restricting the entry of goods into Daraa al Balad, where it says 40,000 people still live.

"They are living under siege with families facing shortages of food, medical services, potable water, power and internet," said the monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria.

The Observatory said that many in Daraa al Balad reject the truce terms being set by the government and its Russian ally.

The pro-government Al-Watan newspaper and the official SANA news agency have accused rebel groups of thwarting ceasefire efforts.

The exact terms of the proposed truce remain unclear.

AFP

# Iran COVID deaths hit yet another high

Tehran, Iran - Iran announced more than 700 deaths from the coronavirus on Tuesday, yet another high for the Islamic republic as it struggles to contain a surge in infections.

The Health Ministry said the virus claimed another 709 lives in the past 24 hours, surpassing the previous daily record of 684 deaths reached on Sunday.

The pandemic has claimed 103,357 lives out of 4,756,394 cases of infection, according to the ministry, whose figures officials have acknowledged understate the real toll.

Iran's new President Ebrahim Raisi said on Saturday that his government would prioritise tackling COVID and accelerating vaccinations.

The Islamic republic was one of the first countries to be hit by the virus after China.

Since announcing its first cases in February 2020, the authorities have refrained from imposing full lockdowns, instead closing public spaces such as schools on a case-by-case basis.

The latest nationwide curbs lasted six days before they were lifted on Sunday, but a ban on travel between provinces by private car remains in place until August 27.

While France and other countries are mulling booster shots



An Iranian health worker inoculates a man at a vaccination centre set up inside the Iran Mall in the capital Tehran, on August 14 (AFP)

over and above the two doses of regular vaccines, Iran recored fewer than 6.5mn of its 83mn people receiving a second vaccine dose as of now.

## France recommends booster jab for 65+

France's health watchdog on Tuesday recommended a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for people aged over 65 or con-

sidered at risk of developing serious forms of the disease.

The advice from the HAS watchdog was for people who had already received two vaccine doses, who will now be offered an mRNA vaccine such as the ones produced by Pfizer or Moderna, which France has ample supply of.

Last month, the French health ministry announced a booster

shot for around five million of the most vulnerable people, including those in retirement homes.

In its statement, the HAS suggested widening the criteria for those eligible for a third shot while adding that the 'priority for the next few weeks is to increase vaccination coverage in particular in the 80+ age group where vaccination coverage remains insufficient (at 79.9 per cent)'.

France is averaging around 20,000 new COVID-19 cases a day, with the return of schools next week after the summer holidays raising concern about a new surge in infections.

The World Health Organization has called for a moratorium on booster shots until at least the end of September in order to address inequalities in global dose distribution.

*Iran recored fewer than 6.5mn of its 83mn people receiving a second vaccine dose as of now*

Israel became one of the first countries to begin administering booster shots at the end of July after a spike in new cases.

However, infections are soaring in the sparsely populated Pacific territory of French Polynesia, with health authorities reporting 54 deaths from the virus over the weekend as the Delta variant spreads among a largely unvaccinated population.

More than 300 people have died from COVID-19 since the pandemic hit the remote archipelago - home to 280,000 inhabitants.

Over half of those deaths have come in the last three weeks. The territory has so far recorded 7,591 infections, though the true figure is likely higher as most asymptomatic people are not being tested.

High rates of diabetes and obesity have made the population more vulnerable.

AFP

## Tennessee floods major disaster, says Biden

Washington, US - President Joe Biden has declared a major disaster in the southern US state of Tennessee and approved federal funding after devastating floods over the weekend left at least 21 dead, the White House said in a statement said Tuesday.

Tennessee was hit on Saturday by what meteorologists called historic storms and flooding, dumping as much as 38cm of rain. Rural roads, state highways, bridges and hundreds of homes were washed out and widespread power outages affected thousands of people.

The move makes federal funding available to people affected in Humphreys County, where the downpour on Saturday broke a 24-hour rainfall record for Tennessee, the National Weather Service said.

Help for residents includes 'grants for temporary housing and home repairs', as well as 'low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses', the White House said.

Scientists say climate change is intensifying the risk of heavy rain around the world.

AFP

# Myanmar junta mulls raising militias against armed groups

Yangon, Myanmar - Myanmar's junta is considering raising village militias to combat opposition to its rule, state media said on Tuesday, as it struggles to assert control more than six months after seizing power.

The country has been in turmoil since Aung San Suu Kyi's government was ousted in a February coup, sparking huge pro-democracy protests and a bloody military crackdown.

Local 'self-defence people's' have sprung up to fight the military, often using hunting rifles or weapons manufactured at makeshift jungle factories.

The groups have added to the volatile mix in Myanmar, where more than 20 ethnic rebel groups were already in various stages of conflict with the military before the coup.

The State Administration Council - as the junta dubs itself - has discussed the 'systematic formation of village people's militia troops', the state-backed *Global New Light of Myanmar* reported on Tuesday.

It also discussed rewards for those informing on anti-junta protesters, and the 'effective hindering' of established insurgent groups on Myanmar's fringes who are providing weapons and training, the paper said.



This file photo shows people walking past makeshift structures along the Myanmar-China border after residents from Pansai, Muse township fled their villages due to fighting between the military and armed groups (AFP)

David Mathieson, an analyst formerly based in the country, told AFP it was unlikely many would voluntarily sign up for any militia, given 'the widespread anger towards the military'.

"But also there must be a Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) dilemma in training and arming people who... may turn the training and arms back on you."

Sporadic fighting continues across the country, with locals in the northwest Sagaing region

accusing the military of using artillery during clashes with one group.

Earlier this month Myanmar's ambassador to the United Nations, who has refused to leave his post after the coup, alerted the world body to a 'reported massacre' of 40 people in Sagaing.

Clashes have largely taken place in rural areas, although in June four protesters and at least two military officers were killed

in a gun battle in the country's second city of Mandalay.

More than 1,000 people have been killed by security forces since the coup, according to a local monitoring group. The military says the toll is much lower.

The army has justified its power grab by alleging massive fraud during 2020 elections won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) in a landslide.

AFP

## Philippines' Duterte to run for vice president, says party

Manila, Philippines - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will run for vice president in next year's elections, his party said on Tuesday, after months of speculation about whether he would seek to stay in power.

Duterte, who was elected to the top job in 2016 and is barred under the constitution from seeking another term, has previously flagged the possibility of contesting the country's second-highest office.

'President Rodrigo Roa Duterte agreed to make the sacrifice and heed the clamour of the people, and accepted the endorsement of the PDP Laban Party for him to run as vice president in the 2022 national elections,' the party said in a statement.

The party is also expected to endorse Duterte's top aide, Senator Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go, to be their presidential candidate.

Duterte has not said publicly yet that he will run, but PDP-Laban president Alfonso Cusi told AFP: "He confirmed he is running for VP in 2022."

The vice president and president are elected separately in the Philippines, with the former assuming the top job if the latter dies, becomes incapacitated, or resigns while in office.

During his term Duterte has



Christopher Lawrence (not in the photo), the top aide of President Rodrigo Duterte (centre) to be the presidential candidate

waged a brutal war against drug users and dealers that rights groups say has killed tens of thousands of people.

International Criminal Court prosecutors are seeking to launch a full-blown investigation into the anti-narcotics crackdown, raising the stakes for next year's elections.

Duterte's daughter, Sara, is widely expected to contest the presidency and, if she were to win, could help protect her father from criminal charges. Recent polls show the Davao city mayor - the same position her father held before he took power - with the most voter support.

Duterte told a meeting of party officials last month that he

was 'seriously thinking of running for vice president'.

But he expressed concern that a political foe could win the presidency, rendering him useless for the next six years.

"The president that will win must be a friend of mine (with) whom I can work with," Duterte said. The deadline for registering as a candidate for next year's elections is October 8. A sitting president has never before made a bid for the vice presidency in the Philippines.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said Duterte would make a televised address later where he is expected to discuss the PDP-Laban announcement.

AFP

# Record daily number of migrants cross Channel to UK

London, UK - A record number of people crossed the Channel from France on a single day last weekend, the UK government said Tuesday as it slammed the 'evil criminal gangs' facilitating migrant crossings.

Britain's Interior Ministry confirmed 828 people were rescued or intercepted on Saturday on 30 separate journeys across one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, typically on dangerously overcrowded small boats.

It noted French authorities had intercepted a further 10 crossing attempts, preventing 193 people from reaching UK

waters or shores, while there had been no confirmed arrivals on Sunday.

Saturday's numbers dramatically surpass a previous daily record of 482 people, set only weeks earlier as migrants take advantage of favourable summer weather.

"These dangerous crossings from safe EU countries are completely unnecessary and we are determined to take down the evil criminal gangs behind them," Dan O'Mahoney, Britain's Clandestine Channel Threat Commander, said.

He noted cross-Channel co-operation had led to the doubling



This file photo shows French Maritime Gendarmes from Boulogne-Sur-Mer, south of the port of Calais, search for migrants at sea trying to cross the Channel on August 12 (AFP)

of police officer numbers on French beaches, preventing more than 10,000 crossing attempts.

The stepped-up border enforcement effort had also secured nearly 300 arrests and 65 prosecutions, O'Mahoney added.

The growing number of journeys are proving increasingly embarrassing for the British government, which has vowed to clamp down on the arrivals and pledged tighter post-Brexit borders.

In July, Home Secretary Priti Patel pledged tens of millions of pounds to France to help it stem

the flow of illegal migration, including funding the doubling of officers patrolling beaches.

Patel has promised to make the Channel route "unviable" and proposed legislation to overhaul asylum rules, imposing stricter jail terms for people smugglers and, controversially, migrants themselves.

She maintains the changes - which have been decried by human rights groups - are long overdue.

O'Mahoney said the planned changes 'will fix the broken asylum system so it can no longer be exploited in this way'.

AFP

TALIBAN

# Urgency to evacuate Afghans builds as deadline ends this month

Kabul, Afghanistan - Efforts to evacuate thousands of people from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan became increasingly urgent on Tuesday, with Spain warning it would have to leave people behind and France saying it had just three days to complete its airlifts.

US-led troops have ramped up operations to get thousands of people out of Kabul, after the Taliban warned they would not allow the United States to extend next week's deadline for a complete withdrawal.

President Joe Biden has said he hopes to stick to the August 31 deadline he set to pull out American forces, but he is facing pressure from European allies and Britain to go beyond the date.

The French government said on Tuesday, if the United States stuck to the deadline, it would have to end evacuations from Kabul's airport on Thursday.

Spain said it would not be able to rescue all Afghans who served Spanish missions.

"It is a very frustrating situation for everyone, because even those who reach Kabul, access to the airport is very complicated," Defence Minister Margarita Robles said.

Britain has said it will lobby at a virtual G7 summit on Tuesday for a longer presence.

About 50,000 foreigners and Afghans have fled the country from Kabul's airport since the Taliban swept into power 10 days ago, according to the US government.

Many Afghans fear a repeat of the brutal interpretation of sharia law that the Taliban implemented when first in power from 1996-2001, or retribution for working with the US-backed government over the past two



Taliban fighters on a vehicle patrol the streets of Kabul as the Taliban enforce some sense of calm in the capital on Monday (AFP)

decades.

"The Taliban are the same as they were 20 years ago," Nilofar Bayat, a women's rights activist and former captain of Afghanistan's wheelchair basketball, said after fleeing and arriving in Spain.

"If you see Afghanistan now, it's all men, there are no women because they don't accept woman as part of society."

### 'Red line'

The Taliban, who ended two decades of war with an astonishingly swift rout of government forces, had been publicly tolerant of the evacuation effort.

But on Monday they described next week's cut-off date as a 'red line'.

"If the US or UK were to seek additional time to continue evacuations - the answer is no... there would be consequences," spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Sky News.

The Taliban achieved their stunning victory thanks to Biden pulling out nearly all American troops from Afghanistan, following through on a deal struck with the Taliban by then-president Donald Trump.

However Biden was forced to redeploy thousands of troops after the fall of Kabul to oversee the airlift.

### Harrowing scenes

The rush to leave Kabul has sparked harrowing scenes and left at least eight people dead.

Some of have been crushed to death and at least one, a youth football player, died after falling off a plane.

The German Defence Ministry said on Monday an Afghan soldier was killed and three others wounded in a firefight with unknown assailants.

Robles, the Spanish defence minister, said the security situation was getting worse.

"The Taliban are becoming more aggressive, there is gunfire, violence is more obvious," she said in an interview with

news radio Cadena Ser.

"The situation is frankly dramatic and besides, with each passing day, it is worse because people are conscious that time is running out."

An intelligence assessment conducted for the United Nations said militants were going door-to-door hunting former government officials and those who worked with US and NATO forces.

In the capital and other cities, the former insurgents have enforced some sense of calm, with their fighters patrolling the streets and manning check-points.

AFP

## France detains Afghan evacuee in Taliban probe

Paris, France - France has detained an Afghan it helped evacuate from the country as part of an investigation into links with the Taliban, the government spokesman said on Tuesday.

The man is believed to be close to another Afghan evacuee who is suspected of working for the Taliban, Gabriel Attal told BFM-TV.

Both had been placed under surveillance on their arrival in France, and the man held was detained for violating the terms of this control

measure.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told France Info radio that he had left an area he was required to stay in for a 'few minutes', insisting there had been no security lapse.

Attal said the main suspect helped in the evacuation of French people from Afghanistan 'at an incredibly tense moment and probably saved lives'. But he had 'links with the Taliban, at some point, and this needs to be specified'.

## Extending evacuations deadline unlikely: UK

London, UK - Britain's Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said on Tuesday it is 'unlikely' evacuations will be extended beyond August 31.

The UK wants the United States to extend the end-of-the-month deadline to complete the Afghan airlifts.

France has also called on Washington to push back the timeline.

But Wallace acknowledged that both US President Joe Biden and Taliban lead-

ers now in power in Kabul had cast serious doubt on evacuations continuing into September.

Britain has continued to evacuate Western citizens and some Afghans from the capital, with Wallace warning the security situation was getting 'more and more dangerous' as August 31 approaches. The defence ministry said 8,458 people have been evacuated by the UK since August 13.

## Confusion over Ukraine jet 'hijacking' in Kabul

Kiev, Ukraine - Ukraine's deputy foreign minister said on Tuesday that one of the country's jets had been hijacked at Kabul airport earlier this month, which was later denied by his own ministry.

Yevgeny Yenin told the independent Hromadske radio station that a Ukrainian plane had been 'hijacked' in Kabul and flown to Iran 'with a group of unknown passen-

gers on board, instead of evacuating Ukrainians'.

Yenin said the incident took place on August 15 and that the plane subsequently returned to Ukraine.

But his comments were then denied by the Foreign Ministry spokesman. "There are no Ukrainian planes hijacked in Kabul or elsewhere," Oleg Nikolenko said. AFP



A file photo of William Burns after being sworn in as the CIA Director by US Vice President Kamala Harris on March 23 this year (AFP)

# CIA chief held secret meeting with Taliban

Washington, US - US Central Intelligence Agency chief William Burns held a secret meeting in Kabul with Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, *The Washington Post* reported on Tuesday.

The Monday meeting, which if confirmed will have been the highest-level encounter between the Islamist group and the Biden administration since the militants' return to power, came as efforts to evacuate thousands of people from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan became increasingly urgent.

Burns is one of US President Joe Biden's most experienced diplomats; while Baradar, who headed the Taliban's political office in Qatar, is one of the top leaders in the regime that has taken power in Kabul.

A spokesperson for the CIA would not confirm the meeting to AFP, saying that the agency 'never discusses the director's travels'.

*The Washington Post*, which cited anonymous US sources for the meeting, did not note the content of the discussions between the Taliban co-founder and the CIA boss.

But it said it was likely they revolved around any delay in the deadline for the United States to finish evacuations at the airport of the Afghan capital, where thousands of Afghans, terrified by the return of the Islamists, are still massed with the hope of fleeing the country.

The newspaper said the meeting took place on Monday. AFP

# US, allies can't evacuate all Afghans by August 31: Germany

Berlin, Germany - Western allies will not be able to fly every Afghan who needs protection out of Kabul before the United States' planned August 31 withdrawal deadline, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Tuesday.

"Even if (the evacuation) goes on until August 31 or even a few days longer, it will not be enough to allow those who we, or the United States, want to fly out," Maas told Bild TV.

Allies must therefore plot out how they can keep getting people out of Afghanistan even if the military operation ends as



A protester holds up a placard during a demonstration in support of the Afghan people close to the Chancellery, in Berlin on Sunday (AFP)

scheduled.

If the August 31 deadline is kept, then the Americans 'will certainly need two days to fly out their own military alone',

said Maas, thereby possibly bringing forward the last day for the civilian evacuation flights.

Germany has so far flown out around 3,800 people from

Afghanistan in an operation described by the defence ministry as highly risky.

But Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has come under heavy fire for failing to evacuate Afghans who worked for its NATO deployment in the country early enough.

On Tuesday, Marcus Grotian, a German army officer heading the relief group Sponsorship Network for Afghan Local Forces, accused the government of using 'bureaucratic tricks' to trim the number of Afghans who should qualify for protection.

Among the hurdles that local

employees of German agencies had to clear was a requirement that they had worked in a German organisation in the last two years to get protection.

While the timeline was later extended for those who worked for the German army or security forces, it kept out others employed by other German agencies. "Local employees are rejected because they worked for the wrong ministry at the wrong time," he said, citing the case of a worker, who made it to Kabul airport but who was turned away by German soldiers. AFP

# Panjshir resistance digs in to defend key valley from Taliban

Panjshir Valley, Afghanistan - Atop a craggy mountain that has withstood foreign invaders for decades, anti-Taliban fighters fire a mounted heavy machine gun into a deep valley.

They are members of the National Resistance Front (NRF) - the most prominent Afghan opposition group to emerge since the Taliban captured Kabul nine days ago.

With militia fighters and former government soldiers in its ranks, the NRF has set up machine gun nests, mortars and surveillance posts fortified with sandbags in anticipation of a Taliban assault on their bastion, the Panjshir Valley.

Its fighters, many of them in military camouflage fatigues, patrol the area in US-made Humvees and technicals -



Personnel of the Afghan resistance movement and anti-Taliban uprising forces patrol a post in Kotal-e Anjuman, in Panjshir on Monday (AFP)

pickup trucks with machine guns mounted on the back.

Many carry assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and walkie-talkies. Some pose on their vehicles with a dramatic background of snow-covered peaks in the valley, which begins around 80km north of Kabul.

"We are going to rub their

faces in the ground," said one fighter at a position in the Panjshir heights, listing past victories against the Taliban.

The strategic valley - populated primarily by ethnic Tajiks - offers natural defence points, with narrow entrances in the shadow of high mountains.

"If Taliban warlords launch an

assault, they will of course face staunch resistance from us," Ahmad Massoud, one of the NRF leaders, said in an op-ed on *The Washington Post* last week.

He is the son of the late guerrilla commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, revered for turning the Panjshir Valley into an anti-Soviet and anti-Taliban bastion.

The defensive preparations are familiar for Panjshir residents who saw Massoud thwart multiple Soviet assaults in the 1980s and Taliban attempts to take the area in the late 1990s.

An NRF spokesman told AFP on the weekend that it is ready to resist any Taliban aggression but wants to negotiate with the Islamists about an inclusive government.

### Taliban siege

The Taliban have also said they want to handle the situation peacefully, but they have bared their teeth by sending hundreds of fighters to the area.

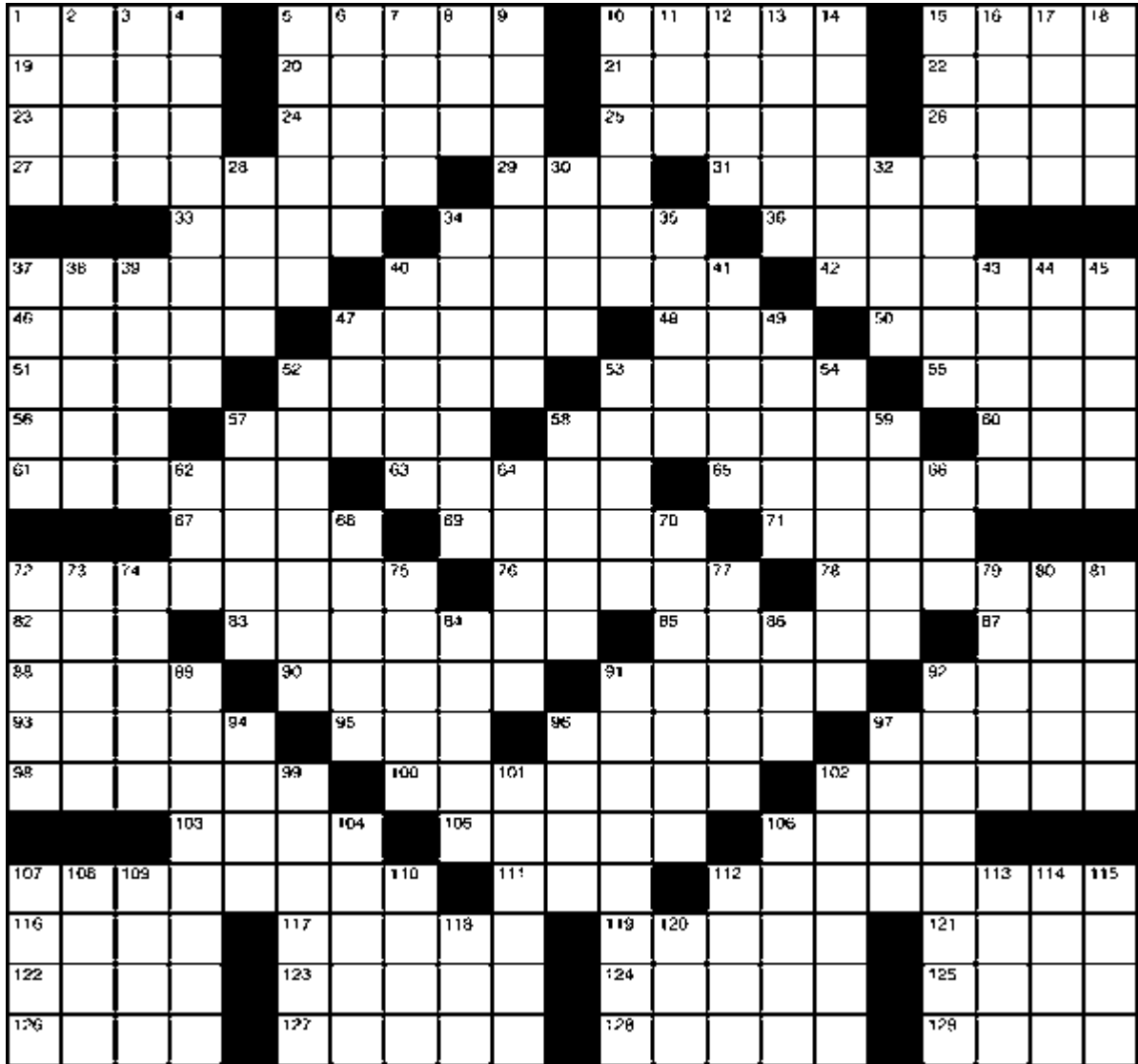
Panjshir was surrounded from three sides, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Monday.

Former vice president Amrullah Saleh, who headed to the valley after the fall of Kabul, said a humanitarian disaster was brewing.

"Talibs aren't allowing food & fuel to get into Andarab valley," he tweeted, referring to an area under Taliban control that abuts Panjshir from the northwest," he said

"Thousands of women & children have fled to mountains." AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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**ACROSS**  
1 Resolute  
5 Wicked Biblical city  
10 "Call Me \_\_\_\_"  
15 "The \_\_\_\_ Happy Fella"  
19 Biblical word of contempt  
20 Nest-building fish  
21 Love, in Roma  
22 East Asia nanny  
23 Like \_\_\_\_ of bricks  
24 Child, to Robert Burns  
25 Nostril  
26 Son of Loki  
27 Large African baboon  
29 Click in Morse code  
31 High-ranking Chinese official  
33 Columnist Barrett  
34 Father, to Caesar  
36 Understands fully  
37 Waxy ointment  
40 Figures of speech  
42 Talked impudently  
46 Call forth  
47 Not for real  
48 Anatomical duct  
50 Optional test answer  
51 Descartes  
52 Tapers off  
53 Dissolves  
55 Yemen's capital  
56 Ultimate goal  
57 Ship's freight  
58 Spanish dances  
60 Star starter?  
61 Horizontal above

ground shoot  
63 Slammin' Sam, of golf  
65 \_\_\_\_ Destiny  
67 Jason's ship  
69 Direct or guide  
71 Virginia of history  
72 Mayanmars city  
76 City on the Rhone  
78 Wobble  
82 Special savings acct.  
83 Wounds or other injuries  
85 Victim of Charlotte Corday  
87 Before before  
88 Weaving machine  
90 Biological partitions  
91 Heavy spiked clubs  
92 Lion's pride  
93 Flaubert's \_\_\_\_  
Bovary, et. al.  
95 Select group  
96 Lengths of coiled yarn  
97 Florist's supply  
98 \_\_\_\_ Maria Rilke  
100 Assistants at a duel  
102 Most delicate  
103 Cloth or kick starter  
105 Deteriorates through disuse  
106 Isinglass  
107 Armed naval vessel  
111 Golf gadget  
112 Beauty salon service

116 Of one's grandparents  
117 Choose  
119 Auctioneer's word  
121 It's before pencil or glass  
122 Puccini heroine  
123 A binding contract  
124 Friendly Scandinavian spirit  
125 Fitzgerald of song  
126 First orchard?  
127 Island near Leyte  
128 Do a tailor's job  
129 Appear to be  
**DOWN**  
1 Ending for mail or candy  
2 Pro \_\_\_\_ L.  
3 Computer-screen image  
4 Magician of comics  
5 TX to LA river  
6 Florida city  
7 \_\_\_\_ Eireann: part of the Irish legislature  
8 Bobby of hockey  
9 Legal writ, commanding: L.  
10 Fireplace shelf  
11 Doctors' org.  
12 It might be coed  
13 Opera features  
14 Feudal lords  
15 Civil War battles site  
16 Bridge star Sharif  
17 Calcutta garb  
18 Not now  
28 Medieval stringed instrument

30 Elevator man  
32 Anagram of fade  
34 Dupes for con men  
35 Boisterous festivity  
37 Roman goddess of agriculture  
38 Happening  
39 Movement of 54  
Down  
40 Tin Pan Alley products  
41 West Coast capital city  
43 List of candidates  
44 Anglo-Saxon laborers  
45 Distributed cards  
47 "Cheers" setting  
49 Fabulous fiddle, for short  
52 Manipulates adroitly  
53 Archetype  
54 Musical compositions  
57 \_\_\_\_ Gables, FL  
58 Max and Buddy  
59 River to the Danube  
62 "A Shropshire \_\_\_\_"  
64 Babylonian hero  
66 Word with parking or rental  
68 Sahara stopping places  
70 Returns to custody  
72 Racehorse sometimes  
73 Bakery byproduct  
74 Ruth's mother-inlaw  
75 Exclamations of

dismay  
77 Drops from the payroll: sl.  
79 Pull one's leg  
80 White-tailed sea eagles  
81 Preserve meat: Scots  
84 Playful swimmer  
86 Legal matter: L.  
89 Pear-shaped stringed instrument  
91 "Criminal Minds" actor Joe  
92 Hand shackles  
94 Feudal servant  
96 Flexible pipe or tube  
97 "Veni, vidi, \_\_\_\_": Caesar  
99 Wheels on spurs  
101 Armed sailing vessel  
102 Nail or print starter  
104 Membranous bract  
106 Minister's home  
107 Role for Lansbury  
108 Greedily eager  
109 Parent-to-be's choice  
110 Quantity of paper  
112 Fine spray  
113 River in Africa  
114 Chest rattle  
115 Yellow Dutch cheese  
118 Civil War initials  
120 Salad dressing base

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your task right now is to be aware of your own potential and figure out ways to achieve it. If you hear the word 'can't,' think of it as a suggestion. Most importantly, set yourself small, realistic goals -- instead of trying to learn Italian in one day, for example, why not sign up for one class instead? That way you won't get discouraged, and your success will be much more probable.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Whether you have a high-stakes interview, a first date or just an evening with the family, you'll want to take the time necessary to make a good impression. You know you have what it takes, and you know the people around you know that, but a little extra effort to remind them won't hurt. So go ahead -- put on your best outfit, prepare yourself for some interesting conversations.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Sit up straight. Speak politely. Chew your food well. Always take a sweater with you. Treat other people as you would like to be treated. So, any of this sound familiar? It's your mom's advice, and, yep, she's right. While it might be tempting to roll your eyes, the stars are giving you pretty much the same practical advice. Here's more: Don't make that face.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Go ahead and go all the way. What's the point of putting in half your effort when you know you're capable of so much more than this? If you have the ability and the stamina to pour into this project or relationship, there's no use in holding back. After all, you get out of this life what you put into it. So in order to get the best, you know exactly what it is that you have to do.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Act fast -- this offer is good for a limited time only! Everything you do right now comes up roses -- think the Midas touch, but multiplied to the nth power. So if there are any big changes you want to implement or some grand plans that need just the right touch to get them going in style, now is the moment. Your wagon is hitched to some pretty high-powered celestial escorts.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

There you go again, doing more and more. Multitasking was made for always-on-the-go types like yourself. You're someone who believes firmly that virtue is its own reward. Your virtue, however, will be rewarded, although you may not see the results of it. That's fine with you, though -- you take so much pleasure in the work that the rewards are almost immaterial.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Details -- pay attention to them. Right now, all your focus needs to be concentrated on the nitty-gritty to make sure the big picture gels just the way it should. If you're feeling a little overwhelmed, go ahead and call in the reinforcements -- friends, a family member, even a coworker with some free time. They can point out anything you might have missed.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Whatever you do, don't lose your cool. If necessary, find the nearest freezer and stick your head in it. At times like these, it's paramount that you manage to keep a sense of perspective and keep your temper on simmer rather than boil. So, yes, someone or something might be pushing it as far as you're concerned, but you don't have to make the situation worse.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

There's an old saying that insanity is repeating the same action and expecting a different result every time. Is there anything in your life that continually doesn't come up the way it should, and yet you keep going through the same motions? It's nice to live in hope, but at this point you may need to examine some of the deeper motivations behind your actions.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

It's funny how much will work out well when you assume that things will be fine, and how things can go terribly wrong when you assume that. Self-fulfilling prophecies can be thwarted when you're aware of exactly how you're setting your plans in motion. This isn't to say that blind optimism is the way to go in this situation -- you should definitely cover your bases while you can.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You've already laid the foundations. Now it's time to start building on that -- and the sky's the limit, especially when you really put your focus and attention on this project. It's also an auspicious time to ask for any help that you might need. As a matter of fact, your communication skills with all people are sharp as a tack right now.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

After all your recent butt-kicking, it's time for you to do something lovely and relaxing. Get outside and go for a nice walk. Take a yoga class. Better yet, go for a gentle swim. Pay attention to your body and give it what it needs today. You'll get back to more empire building and butt-kicking later, but for now it's important that you remember to take a rest.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Tansen Samman has been instituted by the Government of?

- a. Gujarat
- b. Maharashtra
- c. Uttar Pradesh
- d. Madhya Pradesh

2. The only Indian to win the Nobel prize in physics is

- a. Dr J C Bose
- b. Dr C V Raman
- c. Dr Vickram Sarabhai
- d. Dr H J Bhabha

3. Who among the following is a winner of the Indira Gandhi Award for National integration?

- a. Aruna Asaf Ali
- b. Ashok Kumar
- c. Sundarlal Bahuguna
- d. M G K Menon

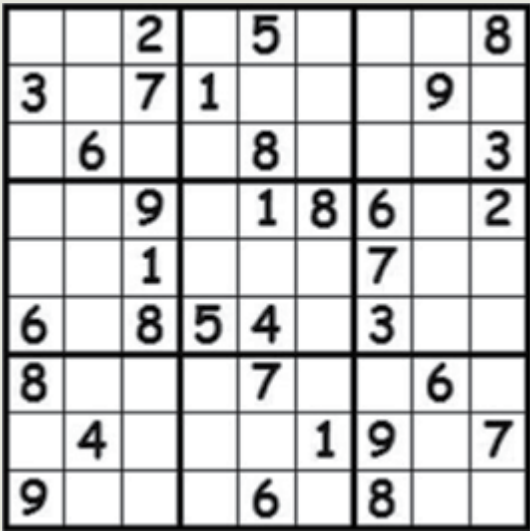
Answers: 1. d 2. b 3. a

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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



BOGGLER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (AUGUST 24)



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



NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSES

# Crush on Crustaceans

Do you have a crush on crustaceans? Do they figure intermittently on your dinner table? Low in calories, rich in lean protein, and loaded with good fats, crustaceans aid weight loss and promote brain and heart health. Rich in minerals like zinc, copper, iron and magnesium, especially selenium – which builds a strong immune system – crustaceans could be your best bet during the time of COVID-19. Consider these recipes for a healthy meal:

## SINGAPORE CHILLI CRAB

### Ingredients

- 1kg crabs – shelled and washed clean
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 1 egg - lightly beaten
- 2tsp cornflour, mixed with 2tbsp water
- Salt, to taste, oil for frying
- ½tsp white pepper powder
- 1 spring onion - chopped

### For the sauce

- 2tsp minced garlic
- 1 onion - finely chopped
- 2tbsp oil

- 1tbsp julienned ginger
- tsp light soy sauce
- 2 red chillies - sliced
- 1 tomato - chopped
- 2tbsp chilli sauce
- 2tbsp tomato ketchup
- ½tsp sesame oil
- 2tsp sugar
- ¼tsp white pepper powder

### Method

Keep the crab bodies full or cut in halves. Heat oil in a deep frying pan over

medium flame, deep fry the crabs until the shells turn bright red and set aside to drain. In a separate frying pan, add 2tbsp of oil. Saute the garlic, ginger, onion, soy sauce and red chillies for a minute. Add the tomatoes, chilli sauce, ketchup, sesame oil and sugar. Stir to mix well and simmer for 1 minute. Sprinkle pepper powder, add the crabs to the pan and mix to coat well. Add the chicken stock and cook for 2 minutes. Add the egg and cornflour mixture and cook until the sauce thickens. Garnish with spring onions. Serve hot with rice.



## CREAMY GARLIC SHRIMP

### Ingredients

- 1tbsp olive oil
- 1tbsp butter
- 500 medium shrimps - tails on
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2tbsp unsalted butter
- 2tsp minced garlic
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1½ cups low fat cream
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2tbsp freshly chopped parsley

### Method

Heat oil a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season shrimp with salt and pepper

and fry in 1tbsp oil for 1-2 minutes on each side, until just cooked through and pink. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Melt the butter in the same skillet. Sauté garlic until fragrant (about 30 seconds). Pour in the chicken broth, allow to reduce to half. Reduce heat to low, add the cream and bring to a gentle simmer, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to your taste. Add the parmesan cheese and allow sauce to gently simmer for a further minute or so, until the cheese melts and sauce thickens. Add the shrimp back into the pan, sprinkle with parsley. Adjust salt and pepper, if needed. Serve over pasta/rice or with steamed vegetables.

## CLASSIC LOBSTER THERMIDOR

### Ingredients

- 2 500g Maine lobsters
- 2tbsp unsalted butter
- 2tbsp minced shallots
- 1tsp minced garlic
- 2tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2tbsp red vinegar
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ¼tsp salt, plus more
- A pinch of white pepper powder
- ½ cup finely grated Parmesan, plus 2tbsp more
- 1tbsp mustard powder
- 1tbsp finely chopped tarragon leaves
- 2tsp finely chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup shredded gruyere cheese

### Method

Boil the lobsters in water, then place in a cold bath. Cut the lobsters in half length-wise with a sharp knife and remove the tail meat. Discard the intestinal tract, the gills, sand sac, and the tomalley (the green substance in the body cavity which serves as the liver). Twist off the claws from the body and gently crack with the back of a heavy knife to remove the meat. Gently pull the front legs from the shell and discard. Chop the tail meat and claw meat into bite sized

pieces and set aside. Preheat the oven to 180° C. Line a baking sheet with aluminium foil and set aside. Place the halved lobster shells on the baking sheet and set aside. Now, melt the butter in a deep skillet over medium heat. Add the shallots and garlic, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the flour and whisk to combine. Cook the flour mixture, stirring constantly to make a light roux - approximately 2 minutes. Add the vinegar and cook for 10 seconds, stirring constantly. Then, slowly add the milk, stirring constantly to combine. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon - 2 to 3 minutes. Slowly add the cream, stirring constantly, until thoroughly combined. Continue cooking while stirring over medium heat for 1 minute. (The mixture will be very thick.) Season with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and stir in the parmesan cheese, mustard, tarragon, and parsley. Fold in the lobster meat. Divide the mixture among the lobster shells and place stuffed side up on a clean bak-

ing sheet. Sprinkle the top of each lobster with the gruyere and broil until the top is golden brown - 5 minutes. Place 1 lobster half on each plate, garnish with additional parsley, and serve immediately.



# OC honours season's best performers

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

In view of the coronavirus pandemic, Oman Cricket (OC) held a simple awards ceremony for the 2020-21 season's top-flight's best performers at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Monday.

Muscat CT skipper Jatinder Singh along with team official Nilesh Parmar received the Premier Division trophy while Al Turki NMC (now renamed as Oman Stallions) was handed the runner-up trophy. Karan Sonavala received on behalf of the team. Kail Khalid of Al Turki NMC and Shakeel Ahmad of IT Works received the best batsman and best bowler awards in the Premier Division.

The awards were handed over by OC board members - Madhu Jesrani (secretary), Kiran Asher (treasurer) and Dilip Mehta (board member) along with Anil Khimji, director of Khimji Ramdas, and Duleep Mendis, OC's chief development officer.

The A Division individual honours went to Arabian Region Travel and Tourism's (ARTT) Zeeshan Siddiqui (best batsman) and Aqil Khan (best bowler). ARTT won the A Division title while SARCO received the runner-up trophy.

OC also awarded Omani performers of the season with OCT Al Hail players dominating the awards. For Omani player representing one team, Khalid Rahim of OCT Al Hail-B was adjudged best batsman while his teammates, Samir Faizu, received the best bowler. The best allrounder award was shared by and Suhaib Abdul Ghani of OCT Al Hail-B and Wwarith al Balushi of OCT Maabala.

In the other category where



Muscat CT skipper Jatinder Singh (third from right) and Nilesh Parmar (third from left) receives the Premier Division winner's trophy from Dilip Mehta



Al Turki NMC's Karan Sonavala (C) with the runner-up medal



Kail Khalid (R) of Al Turki NMC



Shakeel Ahmad (R) of IT Works



ARTT captain Ahmed Khan (L) and team owner Ali Anwar receive the A Division trophy



SARCO representatives with the A Division runner-up medals



Zeeshan Siddiqui (L) and Anil Khimji



Aqil Khan (L) with Anil Khimji



Madhu Jesrani awards Khalid Rahim (R) of OCT Al Hail-B

an Omani played for two teams, Rafiq Mohammed of OCT Al Nahdha and Orient Travels

won the best batsman award. Zubair Ali Akbar (OCT Ruwi/Y Horizon) and Shuaib

Ismail (OCT Ruwi/Maniz Azad) claimed the best bowler and best allrounder awards respectively.

Also awarded were winners of Junior and Senior knockout tournaments. Both the events

were called off and joint winners were declared. Aflag Group and Pitspot were Junior Cup winners

while Orient Travels and Maniz Azad were joint winners in the senior knockout event.

## TENNIS ROUND-UP

# Venus Williams crashes out in opening match

### CHICAGO WOMEN'S OPEN

Los Angeles, US - Former world No 1 Venus Williams crashed out of the WTA Chicago Women's Open on Monday, losing in straight sets to Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei, 2-6, 3-6.

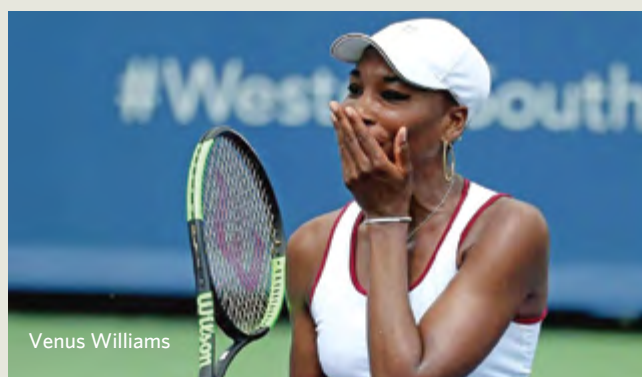
The seven-time Grand Slam winner Venus, who is the oldest

player in the draw at 41, spent just 67 minutes on the court in a one-sided opening round match at the Washington Park tennis facility on Chicago's South Side.

Venus is now just 3-9 on the season and has seen her ranking drop to 147 in the world. Of

those nine losses this season, two have been against the 125<sup>th</sup>-ranked Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

It was one of the biggest wins of the 81<sup>st</sup>-ranked Hsieh's career as she improved to 11-12 on the season. She made it to the quarterfinals of the Australian



Venus Williams

Open earlier this year, losing to Naomi Osaka 6-2, 6-2.

In 2018, she upset world

No 1 Simona Halep in the third round of Wimbledon.

The 35-year-old Hsieh kept

Venus on her back foot with a strong service game and precision cross court and down the line forehands.

She won 71 per cent of her first serve points and had just one double fault, while Venus double faulted five times. Venus, who has 49 career WTA titles, had her serve broken four times and won just 35 per cent of her second serve points.

In other matches on Monday, top seed and Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Elina Svitolina was ahead 2-0 in the deciding

third set when France's Clara Burel retired from their match.

Kristina Mladenovic defeated Zarina Diyas 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), and Czech Tereza Martincova surprised third seed Sorana Cirstea 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

### Other results:

#### Winston-Salem Open

(x denotes seeding):  
Second round: Dominik Koepfer (x16) beat Marco Cecchinato 5-7, 6-4, 6-4; Richard Gasquet (x14) beat Egor Gerasimov 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6).

AFP

## CLASSIFIEDS

### FOR RENT

Accommodation available - 3BHK available in Wadi Kabir and 2BHK in Amerat (Mahaj). Contact 99384640 for further details

### FOR SALE

Nissan Kicks, 2019 full automatic, excellent condition, 4 cylinder, company service, single owner, 24,000km driven, full insurance with UAE. Price RO5,500 Contact: 92948999

## FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories:

**Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)**  
Please email your listing to [dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om) or call 99104346

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FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

# West Ham crush Leicester

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - West Ham extended their perfect start to the season as Michail Antonio became the club's record English Premier League goalscorer with a double in their 4-1 win against ten-man Leicester on Monday.

David Moyes' side took the lead through Pablo Fornals' first half goal at the London Stadium.

Leicester's Ayoze Perez was sent off for a dangerous stamp on Fornals just before half-time.

Said Benrahma bagged West Ham's second after the break before Youri Tielemans got one back for Leicester.

Antonio went into the game tied with Paolo Di Canio on a joint-record 47 goals for West Ham in the Premier League era.

The 31-year-old took sole possession of the record with a brace in the closing stages as West Ham followed up last weekend's 4-2 win at Newcastle with another four-goal blitz.

"I'm really pleased for him. I was disappointed with the way he played in the first half but he did enough to shut the manager up after what I said to him at half-time," Moyes said of Antonio. Despite a quiet summer in the transfer market, West Ham sit top of the table and look capable of emulating last season's sixth-place finish.

The Hammers have won their opening two fixtures of a Premier League campaign for only the second time.

"It's a super night for us. The team played really well. The sending-off changes the game a little bit we did a lot of good things," Moyes said.

"I've challenged the players to find that extra few points that could have been enough to get



West Ham United's Michail Antonio (R) celebrates after scoring against Leicester City during their English Premier League match at The London Stadium, in east London on Monday

us in the Champions League.

"I could be asking far too much but what else am I going to do? Stand here and say we want to avoid relegation!"

West Ham were the only team to beat Leicester twice in the league last season and they maintained that hold over Brendan Rodgers' men as the FA Cup holders slumped to their first defeat of the new campaign.

Moyes, however, was unimpressed with Antonio's celebration. Antonio grabbed a cardboard cut out of himself after his first goal which saw him move on to 48 one ahead of Paulo di Canio's old mark.

The 31-year-old then

performed a waltz with the cut-out, lifted it and kissed it. Antonio's novel celebration fell flat with Scotsman Moyes.

"It's not something I'm keen on," said Moyes.

Antonio - who joined West Ham for US\$9.5mn from Nottingham Forest in 2015 - was so caught up in setting the new record he confused the film that he replicated the scene from.

He said at first it was from the 2001 film *Save The Last Dance* when in fact it was an iconic scene from 1987 hit movie *Dirty Dancing* - starring the late Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey.

"Score the goal, make history, nail the celebration, get the film



AC Milan's Brahim Diaz (L) celebrates after scoring against Sampdoria in Genova, Italy, on Monday

name wrong in the interview. Baby forgive me! #DirtyDancing4Life," he tweeted.

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Diaz gets Milan off the mark

Milan, Italy - AC Milan opened their Serie A campaign on Monday with a 1-0 win at Sampdoria as coach Stefano Pioli fielded a host of new signings including Olivier Giroud.

Giroud, who turns 35 next month, is expected to make a sizeable impact for the Rossoneri alongside the club's other ageing star Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

As the towering Swede recovers from knee surgery, Pioli will hope France's second-highest scorer of all time can make as big an impact as he did at Chelsea.

It was goalkeeper Mike Maignan's long pass that set up the only goal of the game, Davide Calabria then providing the assist with Sampdoria keeper Emil Audero unable to cope with Brahim Diaz's low shot. The Spanish midfielder joined on loan from Real Madrid last season and that has been extended for two more years.

Earlier, former PSG midfielder Thiago Motta had hopes of opening his second stint as a Serie A manager with victory, when Spezia led Cagliari 2-0 with an hour played.

But home side Cagliari were back in it when Joao Pedro scored in the 62<sup>nd</sup> minute, and levelled from the penalty spot four minutes later.

OTHER RESULTS:

SPANISH LEAGUE:

Getafe 0 Sevilla 1, Osasuna 0 Celta Vigo 0.

AFP

ONLY  
PURE  
WATER  
AND  
PERFECT  
TASTE

ONLY  
WHAT'S  
ESSENTIAL

## Foster to coach All Blacks through to World Cup

Wellington, New Zealand - All Blacks coach Ian Foster was reappointed on Tuesday through to the 2023 World Cup, ending months of uncertainty for the three-time champions.

The decision was announced by New Zealand Rugby (NZR) as the All Blacks made hasty preparations to be away for 14 weeks, after a revised schedule was confirmed for the pandemic-hit Rugby Championship with all remaining matches to be played in Queensland, Australia.

Several All Blacks had indicated at the start of the year they wanted certainty around preparations for the next World Cup in France, with Foster's initial two-year contract due to expire after the northern tour at the end of this year.

Speculation about his future heightened last month when NZR oversaw a three-year extension for the successful Scott 'Razor' Robertson to stay in New Zealand with Super Rugby champions Canterbury Crusaders.

Robertson's contract pointedly included an opt-out clause



Ian Foster

to take the All Blacks' job should it become available.

NZR boss Mark Robinson said confirmation that Foster had re-signed meant the coach could now plan for next year and beyond with certainty.

"Ian has faced extraordinary times since he was first appointed, with the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the numerous challenges it has thrown up, and



A file photo of All Blacks players performing their traditional haka

he's shown remarkable composure and resolve to lead incredibly well through it all," Robinson said.

Under Foster, the All Blacks have won the Bledisloe Cup twice as well as last year's Tri-Nations and bledied 13 new All Blacks. "There is no doubt Foz and his team are performing extremely well in trying conditions and we are pleased to send a

strong signal of support to create certainty in our environment and allow the management team and player group to plan for the future," Robinson said.

The All Blacks had a disappointing year in 2020 by their standards with three wins, two losses and a draw from six Tests with Foster in charge.

But their record had improved this year with an unbroken run of

five victories, including back-to-back wins over Australia.

"It's clearly been a challenging couple of years with COVID-19, but I've been hugely proud of the resilience shown by the team," Foster said.

"I'm personally driven to have our team continue to succeed as we build to Rugby World Cup 2023."

AFP

Every day, all day!

# England need batting boost to stop India

ENGLAND VS INDIA  
THIRD TEST

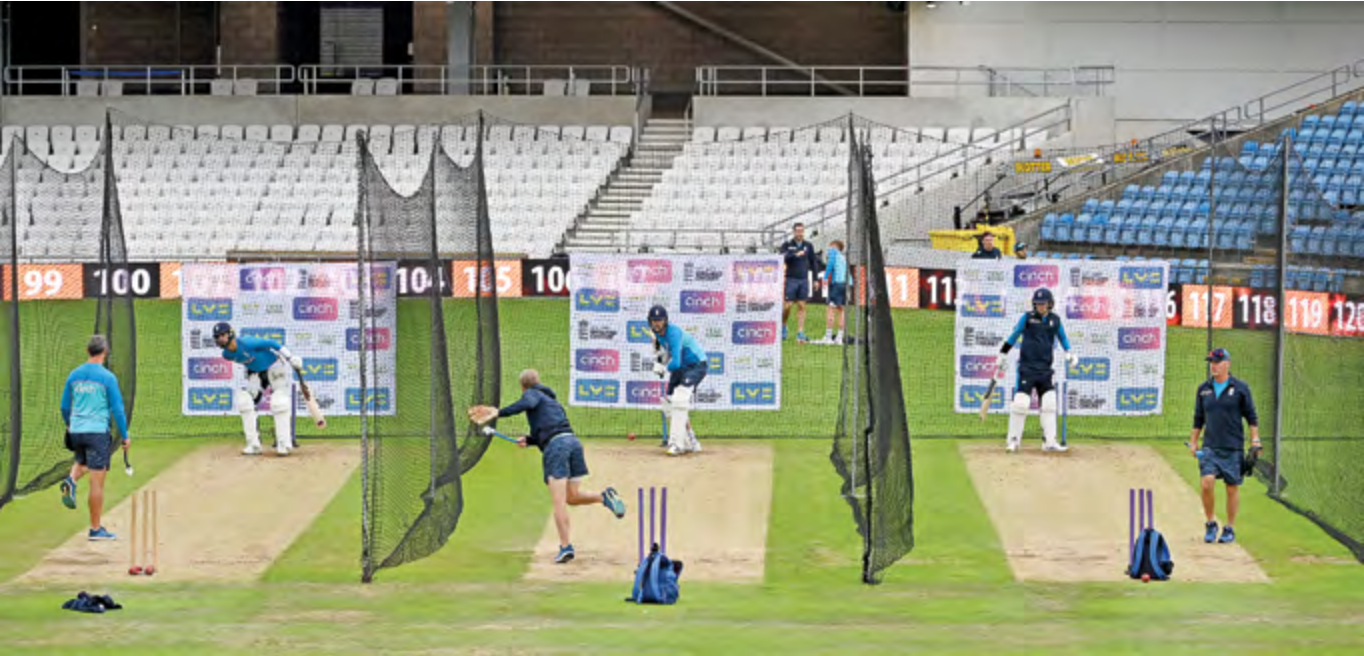
London, UK - There was first the rattle. Followed by chaos. Then, for a little while, only silence. But now a rip-roaring, spine-tingling, expectation-defying Test series is ready to go again. India are clearly in the ascendancy. They've shown skill and strength. They've shown hunger and guile. They've been dominant. They've been relentless.

And now they have a chance at creating lasting history as they take on the hosts in the third Test at Headingley, starting on Wednesday.

Only once has an Indian team left an England tour having won more than a single Test match. Virat Kohli and his men not only have Joe Root and his boys in their sights, but also Kapil's Devils from 1986.

The current state of affairs has as much to do with India's investment in Test cricket as England's deviation from it. Eoin Morgan has turned the one-day team into a demonic entity. The batting line-up alone triggers feelings of being locked inside a haunted house. You're just about catching your breath after getting through one scary meanie and poof, another one is already on you. Joe Root doesn't seem to have the same calibre of resources at his disposal.

Although, having gone 0-1 down, England have promptly called up the No 1 ranked T20 batter in the world with a Test match average of 27. It is clear that their chances in this series



England players bat in the nets during a training session at Headingley ground in Leeds, UK, on the eve of the third Test against India on Tuesday

are tied to finding someone - anyone - who can stand with the captain, who has looked indomitable at the crease, and somehow help him with the whole run-making business.

"There's three massive games to play in the series. It's a lot to play for and we're desperate to bounce back strongly," said Root on the eve of the match.

The buzz

**England:** The biggest debate involving the hosts' XI is a toss-up between Craig Overton - who can bowl a lot of overs and has the advantage of being a pretty decent batter as well - and Saqib Mahmood - who has had an incredible white-ball summer and presents greater wicket-taking threat.

**India:** There is precious little reason for India to tinker with the XI that won at Lord's, what with all of their players injury-free. But the pitch in Leeds is expected to be rather slow and Hanuma Vihari was seen fine-tuning his part-time offbreaks. So there may be a slight chance he gets in at the expense of a pacer.

In the spotlight

**Virat Kohli:** On this tour, the India skipper has experienced the jubilation of winning, the vindication of his tactics and the pride of leading a team that fights until the very last second. The one thing he's yet to savour is the thrill of scoring big-match runs. In 2018, he had the aura of a gladiator and through sheer force of will he made the runs flow.

And while they've not quite stopped, it's been a while since he's played the kind of innings that he is known for; that he's built a career around.

**Joe Root:** He is pretty much the superhero in this line-up. If he ever adds a G to the front of his name and speaks the same three words over and over again, Marvel might even try to sue. But while Groot could trust the Guardians of the Galaxy to help him out when he's in trouble, England's captain has Jonny Bairstow, who is only just coming back in form, Jos Buttler, who has heaps of potential but is yet to translate it into consistent Test-match performance, and Moeen Ali, who has been in and out of the side. Headingley would be

the perfect place for these seniors to stand up and be counted.

Teams (likely)

**England**  
Rory Burns, Haseeb Hameed, Dawid Malan, Joe Root (capt), Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler (wk), Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Ollie Robinson, Craig Overton/Saqib Mahmood, James Anderson

**India**  
KL Rahul, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (capt), Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Hanuma Vihari/Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj.  
Match begins at 2pm, Oman time.  
Cricinfo



Finn Allen

## New Zealand's Allen quarantined in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - New Zealand batsman Finn Allen has tested positive for coronavirus while preparing for a series in Bangladesh, the tourists' national cricket board said on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old, who only made his international debut this year, has been put into quarantine at the team hotel in Dhaka, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said.

Allen was one of two members of the New Zealand squad who had arrived early to prepare for the five Twenty20 games that start September 1.

He had been playing for Birmingham Phoenix in The Hundred tournament in England before arriving in Dhaka on August 22 with Colin de Grandhomme.

Allen is fully vaccinated and passed all pre-departure tests in England. He tested positive 48 hours after arriving in Dhaka, the board said, and is experiencing moderate symptoms.

"It's really unfortunate for Finn," team manager Mike

Sandle told the New Zealand Cricket website.

"He's comfortable at the moment and hopefully he'll recover quickly, test negative and be cleared and approved for discharge as soon as

*He [Finn] is comfortable at the moment and hopefully he'll recover quickly*

MIKE SANDLE, TEAM MANAGER

possible," Sandle added.

No replacement has been announced. The other squad members arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday.

New Zealand and Bangladesh will play their games behind closed doors at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on September 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10.

AFP



A file photo of a match between Afghanistan and Pakistan

## Pakistan-Afghanistan ODI series postponed

Karachi, Pakistan - The first-ever bilateral series between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been postponed until next year over logistic and multiple issues, both boards decided on Tuesday.

"Pakistan has accepted Afghanistan Board's request to postpone next month's ODI series due to players' mental health issues, disruption in flight operations in Kabul and

other issues," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said.

The series - Afghanistan's home series - due to be played in Sri Lankan port city of Hambantota was also hit by increased COVID-19 cases in Sri Lanka where a ten-day lockdown was announced on Saturday.

"There were a lack of broadcast facilities which was also a

hurdle and both the boards will try to reschedule the series in 2022."

The three-match series was part of One-day Super League, a qualification process for the 2023 World Cup (50 overs) to be held in India.

Since the Taliban take over of Afghanistan following the withdrawal of USA and NATO forces and the collapse of the elected

government there was a flight disruption in Kabul.

Afghanistan had also tried to move the series to Pakistan, but even that was not viable which finally prompted the two Boards to postpone the series.

International players have also found it hard to cope with the COVID-19 situation since last year as they have to live under bio-secure bubble conditions,

causing them mental issues. Considering that, Pakistan had decided to rest its key players including skipper Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Hasan Ali for the Afghanistan series.

Afghanistan had last month announced a 17-man squad for the series including their star leg-spinner Rashid Khan.

AFP

# Pakistan in control against Windies

WEST INDIES VS PAKISTAN  
SECOND TEST: DAY FOUR

Kingston, Jamaica- Pakistan threw down the gauntlet to the West Indies on the penultimate day of their two-match Test series on Monday, setting the hosts 329 to win as the visitors chase a series-levelling victory at Sabina Park.

West Indies will start Tuesday's final day at 49 for one, 280 runs away from the target as Pakistan bid to square the series after losing a thriller by one wicket in the first Test at the same venue.

A fourth day's play almost completely dominated by the visitors saw Shaheen Shah Afridi claim Test-best innings figures of six for 51 as the West Indies were routed for 150 in the first innings just after the lunch interval.

Building on a healthy advantage of 152, the Pakistanis threw caution to the wind in racing to 176 for six at better than a run-a-ball through the afternoon, declaring for the second time in the match when captain Babar Azam was dismissed to give their bowlers more than 90 minutes to attack the home



Shaheen Shah Afridi (third from right) of Pakistan celebrates the dismissal of a West Indies batsman during the fourth day of the second Test on Monday

side's top order. However the West Indies opening pair of skipper Kraigg Brathwaite and Kieran Powell were negotiating that potentially tricky period comfortably until Powell was a run out victim of his own carelessness.

It left Brathwaite and Alzarri

Joseph, nightwatchman for the second day in a row, to reach the close.

Resuming at the overnight position of 39 for three in reply to the tourists' first innings effort of 302 for nine declared, the home side lost their last six wickets for 45 runs to be dismissed shortly

after lunch as 21-year-old Afridi reinforced his domination of the Caribbean batsmen to take his wicket tally in the series to 14.

As impressively as Afridi bowled, it was Mohammad Abbas who triggered the pivotal collapse with a three-wicket burst in the last half-hour of the

morning session as the West Indies crashed from 105 for four to 116 for eight.

Abbas took the wickets of topscorer Nkrumah Bonner (37) and Kyle Mayers off successive balls before adding Joshua da Silva in the penultimate over before lunch.

Afridi, who disposed of nightwatchman Joseph swiftly at the start of the day, joined in the midday clatter of wickets by having Jermaine Blackwood taken for 33 by a diving Fawad Alam at gully.

Bonner and Blackwood put on 60 for the fifth wicket.

Their effort could not be sustained though, and having taken the first two wickets of the innings late on the third day, Afridi terminated the bold hitting of Jason Holder and had Kemar Roach taken at mid-on to complete an effective mopping up job in the early afternoon.

Emboldened by their dominant position in starting the second innings with a lead of 152 runs, Abid Ali and Imran Butt cut loose to put on 70 by just the tenth over of the second innings.

Both fell before tea but Pakistan continued to press the accelerator, even promoting Hasan Ali to provide some hefty blows although their efforts were frustrated by negative West Indies tactics which earned Brathwaite a sharp lecture from umpire Joel Wilson.

AFP

| SCOREBOARD                                                                                                                            |                                 |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----|
| Pakistan 1st Innings: 302-9 decl                                                                                                      |                                 |    |
| WEST INDIES 1 <sup>st</sup> INNINGS                                                                                                   |                                 |    |
| K Brathwaite                                                                                                                          | b Afridi                        | 4  |
| K Powell                                                                                                                              | lbw Afridi                      | 5  |
| N Bonner                                                                                                                              | c Rizwan b Abbas                | 37 |
| R Chase                                                                                                                               | b Ashraf                        | 10 |
| A Joseph                                                                                                                              | c Azam b Afridi                 | 4  |
| J Blackwood                                                                                                                           | c Alam b Afridi                 | 33 |
| K Mayers                                                                                                                              | c Rizwan b Abbas                | 0  |
| J Holder                                                                                                                              | c Rizwan b Afridi               | 26 |
| J da Silva                                                                                                                            | lbw Abbas                       | 6  |
| K Roach                                                                                                                               | c Azam b Afridi                 | 8  |
| J Seales                                                                                                                              | not out                         | 0  |
| Extras:                                                                                                                               | (lb 10, nb 6, w 1)              | 17 |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>150 in 51.3 overs</b>        |    |
| <b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-8, 2-9, 3-34, 4-45, 5-105, 6-105, 7-109, 8-116, 9-143, 10-150                                               |                                 |    |
| <b>Bowling:</b> M Abbas 18-6-44-3, S S Afridi 17.3-7-51-6, Hasan Ali 8-1-30-0, F Ashraf 7-4-14-1, Nauman Ali 1-0-1-0                  |                                 |    |
| PAKISTAN 2 <sup>nd</sup> INNINGS                                                                                                      |                                 |    |
| I Butt                                                                                                                                | c Bonner b Mayers               | 37 |
| Abid Ali                                                                                                                              | c sub (Hope) b Joseph           | 29 |
| Azhar Ali                                                                                                                             | c Blackwood b Brathwaite        | 22 |
| B Azam                                                                                                                                | c Bonner b Joseph               | 33 |
| Hasan Ali                                                                                                                             | c da Silva b Holder             | 17 |
| F Ashraf                                                                                                                              | lbw Holder                      | 9  |
| M Rizwan                                                                                                                              | not out                         | 10 |
| Extras:                                                                                                                               | (b 5, lb 6, nb 1, w 7)          | 19 |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>176-6 decl in 27.2 overs</b> |    |
| <b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-70, 2-90, 3-107, 4-145, 5-160, 6-176                                                                        |                                 |    |
| <b>Bowling:</b> K Roach 3-1-11-0, J Seales 3-0-32-0, J Holder 6-0-27-2, A Joseph 4-2-0-24-2, K Mayers 7-0-43-1, K Brathwaite 4-0-28-1 |                                 |    |
| WEST INDIES 2 <sup>nd</sup> INNINGS                                                                                                   |                                 |    |
| K Brathwaite                                                                                                                          | not out                         | 17 |
| K Powell                                                                                                                              | run out                         | 23 |
| A Joseph                                                                                                                              | not out                         | 8  |
| Extras:                                                                                                                               | (lb 1)                          | 1  |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>49-1 in 19 overs</b>         |    |
| <b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-34                                                                                                          |                                 |    |
| <b>Bowling:</b> M Abbas 5-1-18-0, S S Afridi 5-3-5-0, Hasan Ali 5-2-20-0, F Ashraf 4-3-5-0                                            |                                 |    |

# Oman bow out with a win

Talib’s men edge Senegal to conclude their FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup campaign in Moscow

Ashok Purohit  
Muscat

2021 FIFA BEACH SOCCER  
WORLD CUP

After two successive defeats which ended their hopes for a knockout spot, Oman concluded their FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021 campaign on a winning note with a 3-2 victory against Senegal in a Group D match at the Luzhniki Beach Soccer Arena in Moscow on Tuesday.

Talib Hilal-coached Oman was making their fourth World Cup appearance and had impressed in their earlier matches but failed to garner any points.

On Tuesday, with nothing to lose, Oman went all out and were finally rewarded for their efforts against a Senegal side, which had already confirmed their quarterfinal spot ahead of the match.

Oman took the game to Senegal and dominated possession from the kick-off.

Khalid al Oraimi, Salim al Oraimi and Nooh al Zadjali all came close to scoring for Oman in the opening five minutes, while Senegal had Raoul Mendy threatening at the other end.

Senegal, however, suffered a blow when they were left with a man down in the eighth minute following Pape Mar Boye’s dismissal and Oman took advantage from the resultant penalty with Abdullah al Sauti’s cool finish.

Oman maintained their aggressive approach in the second period but it was Senegal who came closest to scoring with Amadou Ba’s effort right after the restart and Ninou Diatta’s free-kick in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute.

Oman did well to contain Senegal’s advances before doubling their lead in the 24<sup>th</sup> minute when Mushel al Araimi set-up Yahya al Araimi to score his first goal of the tournament.



Oman's Nooh al Zadjali goes for an overhead kick during the Group D match of the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup in Moscow, Russia, on Tuesday. Oman won the match 3-2 but failed to advance to the quarterfinal stage

The start of the third period saw a more aggressive Senegal and their persistence finally paid off with Ibrahima Balde’s fine effort in the 25<sup>th</sup> minute.

Oman restored their two-goal advantage in the 33<sup>rd</sup> minute through Salim al Oraimi’s strike off Nooh al Zadjali’s assist.

Senegal responded through Ninou Diatta but it was not enough to rattle Oman as they held on for the win.

Earlier on Sunday, Oman made Uruguay work hard before conceding a 2-4 defeat.

As they did in their opening match defeat to Portugal (3-5) on Friday, Oman produced another valiant performance as they came from 0-2 down to draw level before Uruguay struck in the closing seconds to

walk away winners.

The defeat against Uruguay ended Oman’s hopes of advancing to the quarterfinals.

The win over Senegal was only the third at the global stage for Oman under Talib, who has led Oman to all the four World Cups. In the previous three World Cup appearances, Oman had recorded only two wins.

Their maiden victory was against Costa Rica 7-2 in Portugal 2015 and their second was in Paraguay in 2019 when they beat Nigeria 6-5.

Oman made their debut at the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup in the Italian city of Ravenna in 2011.

Under Talib, who has been the helm of the national beach soccer team since 2008, Oman



Talib Hilal, Oman coach

have won the Asian Beach Games gold in 2008 and also were champions at the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup in 2015.

Oman won silver at the Asian Beach Soccer Cup in 2011, and clinched a bronze medal in 2009 and in 2019.

@ashokmuscat



Oman players acknowledge the support of fans after defeating Senegal in Moscow on Tuesday



Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood in action against Mumbai during their first T20 game on Tuesday

## Oman defeat Mumbai

Skipper Maqsood, Khushi power hosts to two-wicket victory

OMAN VS MUMBAI  
FIRST T20

Muscat - Oman’s preparations for the T20 World Cup is on the right track as the hosts scripted a thrilling two-wicket win over the visiting Mumbai side in the first of the three-match T20 series at the Oman Academy Cricket ground on Tuesday.

Mumbai, considered to be one of the best domestic and decorated cricket teams in India, is on a tour to Oman to play three T20 and four 50-over-a-side games.

The matches are meant to prepare the Oman team, coached by Sri Lanka’s Duleep Mendis, for tougher challenges ahead as they gear up for the World Cricket League Two tri-series in September-October and the T20 World Cup, which begins in Oman on October 17.

On Tuesday, Muhammad Naseem Khushi blasted 39 off just 12 balls, including five sixes, to lead the hosts to win.

Captain Zeeshan Maqsood laid the foundation for Oman’s tricky chase of 132 with a solid 50 off 39 that included four sixes.

Earlier, Mumbai was restricted to 131 for nine with Aakarshit Gomel top-scoring with 33 and Hardik Tamore making 23. Oman’s new ball bowlers - Mohammad Nadeem and Kaleemullah - put Mumbai under pressure by taking early wickets. Maqsood’s spin fetched him two wickets as the hosts didn’t give away much to their opponents.

Chasing 132, Oman was struggling at 88 for five in the 13<sup>th</sup> over but Khushi’s blitz took the team through in the 19<sup>th</sup> over.

Speaking after the game, Maqsood said that ‘the team had

worked hard and was enjoying playing in home conditions’.

“We have had a long summer and boys are in great shape after months of training. Mumbai bowled exceptionally well to put us under pressure but I knew we had the players to take the fight deep and Khushi finished the game in style,” said Maqsood.

The two teams will lock horns in the second T20 on Thursday and the third on Friday. The 50-over matches will be held from August 29-September 3.

**Brief scores:** Mumbai 131-9 (Gomel 33, Tamore 23, Shams Mulani 19; Nadeem 3-23, Maqsood 2-17, Kaleemullah 2-21) lost to Oman 133-8 in 18.3 overs (Maqsood 50, Khushi 39 n.o.; Shashank Attarde 2-23, Mohit Avasthi 2-32, Mulani 2-34).

## Tokyo Paralympics begin with powerful opening ceremony

Tokyo, Japan - The Tokyo Paralympics opened with howling guitars and neon-streaked performers on Tuesday, with athletes ready to defy stereotypes and shatter records despite a year-long pandemic delay.

Japan’s Emperor Naruhito declared the Games open surrounded by banks of vacant seats at the 68,000-capacity Olympic Stadium, with virus rules banning spectators from almost all events.

International Paralympic Committee (IPC) president Andrew Parsons hailed the athletes as ‘beacons of hope’ who had put ‘blood, sweat and tears’ into preparing for the event.

“Many doubted this day would happen, many thought it impossible, but thanks to the efforts of many, the most transformative sports event on Earth is about to begin,” he said.

The pared-down ceremony took place in front of around 800 VIPs and officials, but there was a celebratory mood as 162 teams enjoyed their long-awaited moment in the global spotlight. The ceremony took ‘We Have Wings’ as its concept, creating a mini ‘airport’ on the stadium field.

The segment told the story of a one-winged plane that takes to the skies, ending in a



Fireworks light up the Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony



Oman delegation ahead of the opening ceremony in Tokyo on Tuesday

wild crescendo featuring musicians and dancers with disabilities.

Three Japanese para-athletes - wheelchair tennis player Yui Kamiji, boccia player Shunsuke Uchida, and power-

lifter Karin Morisaki - then combined to light the flame.

A reduced parade of roughly 3,400 Paralympians and team officials entered the stadium, wearing masks but waving and dancing after the disappoint-

ment of the postponement and worries about a potential cancellation. Oman’s flag bearer at the opening ceremony was Mohammed al Mashaykhi. The sultanate is represented by three athletes and accompanying them is Oman Paralympic Committee chairman Mansour al Tauqi.

While Mashaykhi will compete in the men’s shot put - F32 and club throw - F32 at his second Paralympics, Taha al Harrasi will be making his Games debut in the men’s 100m - T36 and long jump - T36. Also making debut at the Paralympics will be Oman’s Iman Taiseer Sarbokh in the women’s shot put - F34.

A volunteer carried Afghanistan’s flag into the stadium as a ‘sign of solidarity’ with athletes from the country, one of 21 nations unable to compete at the Games.

The 13-day Paralympics, with 539 gold medals up for grabs across 22 sports, arrive two weeks after the close of an Olympics that also took place almost entirely behind closed doors over virus fears.

Paralympic chiefs are hoping the mood will shift when the sporting action begins on Wednesday, with over 4,400 athletes itching to get started.

AFP