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MUSCAT DAILY

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30°C/23°C

AL FAISAL CLINCHES SILVER CUP PODIUM ON DEBUT AT SILVERSTONE 500
GO TO **PAGES 12 SPORTS**

ALL DECKED OUT FOR THE BIG DAY

Muscat is ready with lighting arrangements, streamers, the National flags fluttering in the approaching winter air and expectant citizens and residents in anticipation of the celebrations to mark the 50th National Day next week (Muscat Daily)

Pfizer says its COVID-19 vaccine is 90% effective

Paris, France - A vaccine jointly developed by Pfizer and BioNTech was 90 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19 infections in ongoing Phase 3 trials, the companies announced on Monday.

The statement was released as soaring coronavirus cases across the world have forced many millions of people back into lockdown, causing further damage to ravaged economies.

European stock markets and oil prices jumped on the announcement. According to preliminary findings, protection in patients was achieved seven days after the second of two doses, and 28 days after the first.

The companies said they expect to supply up to 50mn vaccine doses globally in 2020, and up to 1.3bn doses in 2021.

"The first set of results from our Phase 3 COVID-19 vaccine trial provides the initial evidence of our vaccine's ability to prevent COVID-19," Pfizer chairman and CEO Albert Bourla said in a statement.

"We are a significant step closer to providing people around the world with a much-needed breakthrough to help bring an end to this global health crisis," he said.

"We are reaching this critical milestone in our vaccine development programme at a time when the world needs it most."

Across much of the globe, COVID-19 infections rates are hitting record highs, with hospital intensive care units filling up and death tolls mounting.

US biotech firm Moderna, several state-run Chinese labs, and a European project led by the Uni-



We are a significant step closer to providing people around the world with a much-needed breakthrough to help bring an end to this global health crisis

ALBERT BOURLA

versity of Oxford and AstraZeneca are also thought to be closing in on potentially viable vaccines.

Two Russian COVID-19 vaccines have been registered for use even before clinical trials were completed, but have not been widely accepted outside of Russia.

The Phase 3 clinical trial - the final stage - of the new vaccine, BNT162b2, began in late July and has enrolled 43,538 participants to date, 90 per cent of whom have received a second dose of the vaccine candidate as of November 8.

Pfizer said it is gathering two months of safety data following the final dose - a requirement of the US Food and Drug Administration - to qualify for Emergency Use Authorisation, which it expects by the third week in November.

"We look forward to sharing additional efficacy and safety data generated from thousands of participants in the coming weeks," Bourla said.

'Watershed moment'

While the Pfizer-BioNTech trial has yet to be peer-reviewed by experts, scientists reacted posi-

tively - if cautiously to the results.

Michael Head, Senior Research Fellow in Global Health, University of Southampton, called it an "excellent result for a first generation vaccine".

Peter Horby, Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Global Health in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, said Pfizer's announcement "feels to me like a watershed moment" in the pandemic.

But others pointed out that there would likely be significant logistical problems in getting the vaccine to everyone, especially

given it must be kept super-cooled and currently requires two doses to bestow immunity.

Eleanor Riley, professor of Immunology and Infectious Disease at the University of Edinburgh, said for example that the Monday's results did not disclose the ages of participants.

"If a vaccine is to reduce severe disease and death, and thus enable the population at large to return to their normal day-to-day lives, it will need to be effective in older and elderly members of our society," she said.

Dozens more candidates

The so-called messenger RNA, or mRNA, vaccine is a new approach to protecting against viral infection. Unlike traditional vaccines, which work by training the body to recognise and kill proteins produced by pathogens, mRNA tricks the patient's immune system to produce viral proteins itself. The proteins are harmless, but sufficient to provoke a robust immune response.

The study also will evaluate the potential for the vaccine candidate to provide protection against COVID-19 in those who have had prior exposure to SARS-CoV-2, as well as vaccine prevention against severe COVID-19 disease.

Pfizer and BioNTech plan to submit data from the full Phase 3 trial for scientific peer-review publication.

As of mid-October, the World Health Organization has identified 42 "candidate vaccines" at the stage of clinical trials, up from 11 in mid-June.

AFP

First app for real estate launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first real estate aggregator app in Oman that will facilitate buying and selling of properties was launched recently. Developed by Mahmood al Mahruqi, the free app is now available on Apple App Store and Google Play (<http://onelink.to/aoqoman>).

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Mahruqi, who is also a member of the Real Estate Development and Construction Committee at Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said "The idea for the app came after I had difficulty getting real estate offers easily in the local market. During my study in Britain, I noticed how the world was transforming digitally, whether for hotel reservations or hailing a taxi. So I thought of an app that serves the real estate market. The app took five years to develop and was launched in mid-October."

Aqarat Oman caters to real estate in the sultanate, aiming to save time and money for buyers and sellers and providing them options. It also aims to revive the brokerage sector that has been affected by the current economic downturn. "It will help buyers find sellers and vice versa and facilitate the technical transformation of the real estate sector in the sultanate," said Mahruqi.

"The app includes a feature to display land or real estate for sale, in addition to area measurements, price, number of rooms and location via Google Map."

The app also allows real estate companies and individuals to create accounts for themselves, access the latest real estate news in the sultanate, and information to communicate with users to inquire about any



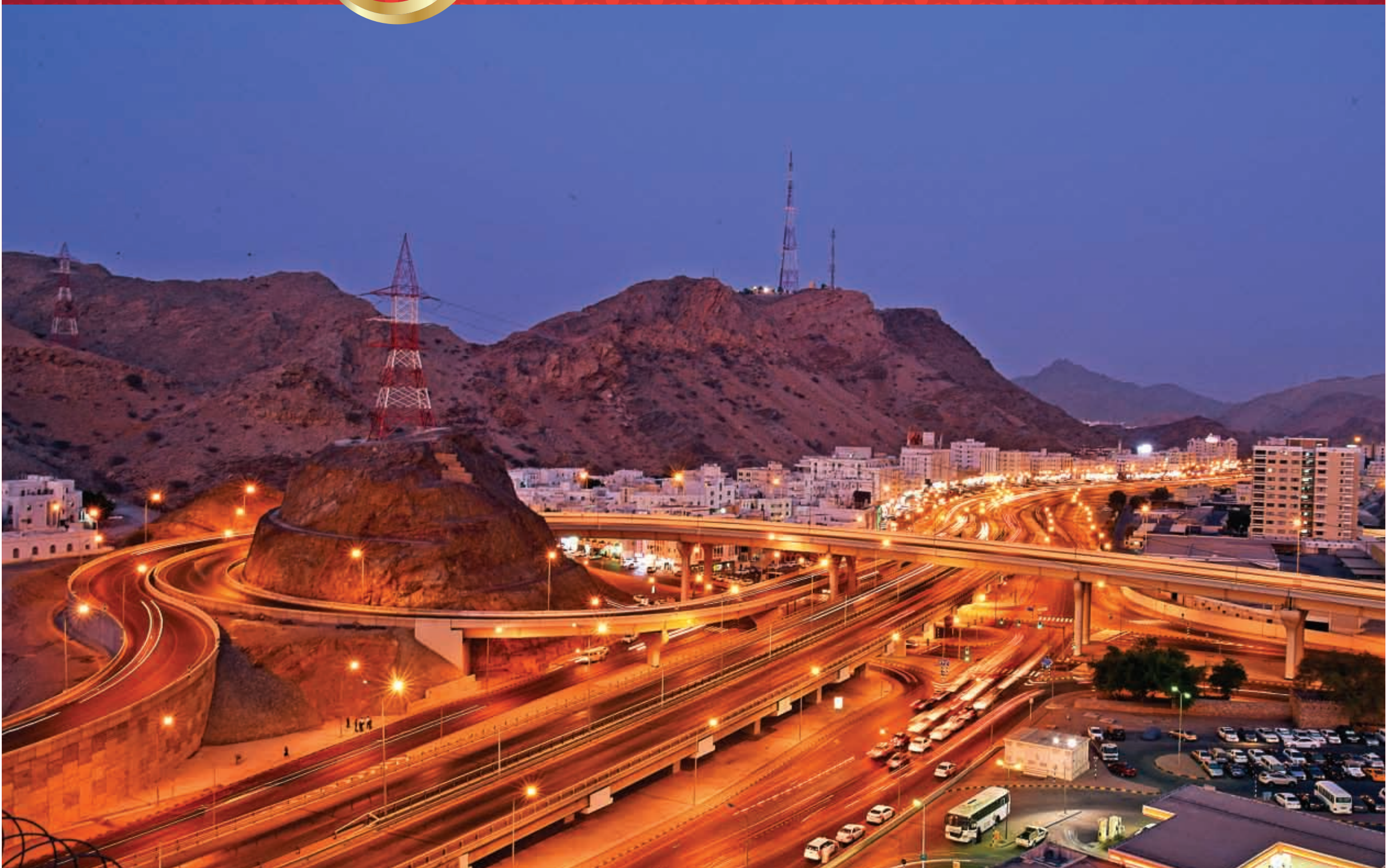
The idea for the app came after I had difficulty getting real estate offers easily in the local market

MAHMOOD
AL MAHRUQI

specific property.

About the challenges he encountered in designing and launching the app, Mahruqi said, "It was not easy to change the traditional attitudes and approach of the real estate sector into an organised electronic process, starting from the real estate broker to the buyer, seller and tenant. Convincing them that an electronic service like Aqarat Oman will help in optimising profits, especially in light of the current crisis, was difficult. We also faced some technical difficulties, but those were easier to solve than the other problems we faced."

Mahruqi hopes for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning's cooperation in operating the app. "We need real estate brokers to join hands with us to enlist their properties and offers on a daily basis. It'll stimulate the real estate market."



NEVER-ENDING ROADS

Sultanate's road network is the lifeline vital for expansion of development and in turn the economic prosperity of the country

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

Crisscrossing the length and breadth of the country, straddling mountains and wadis as well as the vast expanse of its desert heartland, Oman's road network goes everywhere and has grown beyond expectations. Being a lifeline for the movement of goods, services and people, it is vital for expansion of development and in turn the economic prosperity of the country.

In 1970s, there were only 10km of paved and 1,700km of unpaved roads in the country. In just 50 years, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology expanded and modernised all the main and secondary roads to link rural areas with the urban centres of the country.

According to available data, the ministry had supervised works on 15,646km of asphalt roads and approximately 17,135km of secondary roads as of December 2018.

NATIONWIDE NETWORK

In the beginning of 2020, the ministry opened the Sharqiyah Expressway for traffic, a 191km stretch between Bidbid and Al Kamil W'Al Wafi. Designed to the highest international specifications and standards, the expressway includes two tunnels of 2.1km total length. The first tunnel of 650m is located in the village of Nadab in Samayil, while the second tunnel situated in the Al Aqq mountain range runs a length of 1,450m. The project also includes bridges over wadis at a height of 90m.

In 2019, the transport sector saw the completion of major projects, including opening of a 100km stretch of the Adam-Thumrait, Phase 2 of the Adam-Thumrait road dualisation (covering a stretch of 119.7km) and the Snaw-Mahut-Duqm road.

With logistics emerging as one of the key non-oil sectors contributing to the country's

diversification drive, the strategic Batinah Expressway project - a 270km road starting from Muscat Expressway at the Halban interchange running till Khatmat Malaha in Shinas - offers the vital link that connects the rest of the GCC states with the help of bustling ports of Sohar and Duqm.

Batinah Expressway has four 3.75m-wide lanes on either side, 3m external shoulder, 2m internal shoulder, 23 interchanges, 17 flyovers, 12 underpasses and 25 wadi

The ministry had supervised works on 15,646km of asphalt roads and approximately 17,135km of secondary roads as of December 2018

bridges. It is considered one of the national milestones now facilitating fast-track movement of goods and people between Musandam, Buraimi, North and South Batinah and Muscat governorate.

MUSCAT'S ROADS AND FLYOVERS

Muscat Municipality has been a key player in the development of Muscat governorate with significant achievements that stand out and reflect meticulous planning.

Its achievements become even more extraordinary considering its long list of tasks and responsibilities in construction and pavement of roads, supervision of building construction as well as ensuring preservation of Omani structural designs.

One of, but not the only, achievements of Muscat Municipality in the recent past is the completion of flyovers at several roundabouts in Sultan Qaboos Street in Muscat.

To cope with increasing traffic, all the major roundabouts have been supplied with traffic signals to prevent jams and prepare for more tourist activities and projects.

The Muscat airport interchange, designed to the latest engineering standards, is an ideal solution to traffic jams. The project includes construction of a flyover across the Sultan Qaboos Street, to ease traffic between Muscat and Seeb, and link Muscat Expressway.

Another highlight of Muscat's road network is the Amerat-Bausher road project, which links the two wilayats and eases traffic. The picturesque road, running 6km through mountains, has become the most preferred route for motorists.

Additionally, the dual road Amerat-Quriyat 70km project starting from Amerat police station linking the Quriyat-Sur road has made driving from Muscat to Sur now possible in less than 90 minutes. It serves as a convenient and quick alternative to the congestion-prone Bidbid-Sur carriageway.

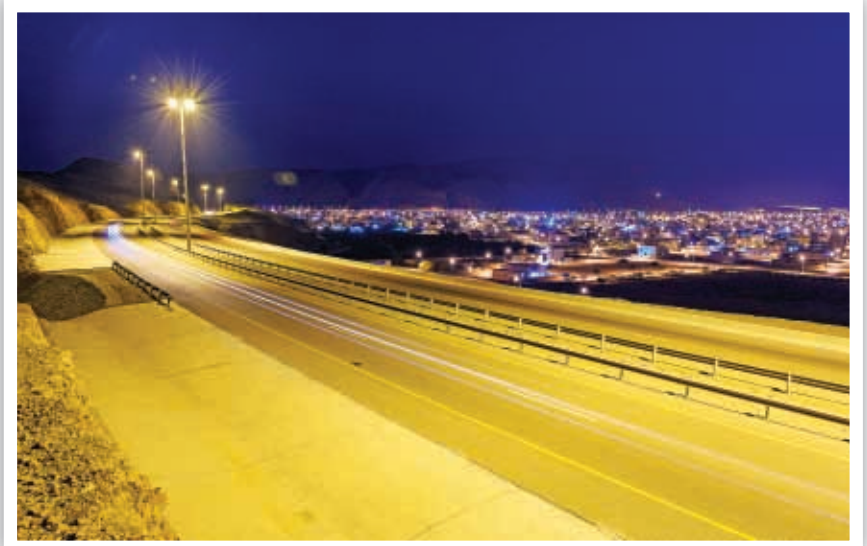
TOURISM IMPROVEMENT

The ever-expanding road network provides access to a number of seldom-visited but potentially important archaeological, ecological and environmental sites along the Quriyat-Sur coastal belt.

Other notable projects of Muscat Municipality include construction of the 7km Bandar Jissah-Yiti road that opened up new areas in Muscat governorate for tourism development. The road enables convenient and speedy access to, among other areas, an integrated tourism resorts project in Yiti.

As part of its beautification drive, Phase II of the Muttrah coastal road, which shows the municipality's keenness to stay in tune with the latest trends in landscaping projects and modernisation of utilities and services, is also a milestone.

@shaddadm



Water bills go through the roof

Customers in a fix as OIFC directs them to Diam office, which urges use of its app

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

Water bills with wrong readings and inflated numbers have left many customers in a fix. According to the subscribers *Muscat Daily* contacted, their latest water bills from Diam are unjustified and unreasonably high. They claim this is a result of wrong meter readings or errors.

For some, their bills are more than RO400 per month. "We had a problem with an inflated bill of RO400. We complained to Diam and they sent their technicians to check the water meter which turned out to be fine. But we are still wondering why the bill is so high. The technician said he will come again to find out more but it is more than three months now. No one has contacted us. Something needs to be done," said Abu Khalid, a Diam service user who resides in Azaiba.

Amerat resident Salim al Tauqi, who moved to his new house a year ago, said his average water bill used to be less than RO10. But his latest bill is for RO520. "Even if the bill is for two months, I am sure my consumption can't be so high to add up to such a big bill. We are only three people in the house," he said, adding that he believes meter reading was not done correctly.

Officials of Oman Investment and Finance (OIFC), the company responsible for bill delivery, told Tauqi that the issue



Diam asked me to file a complaint through their mobile app. I would do that, but the thing is that my water line has been disconnected. I hope they rectify this soon

SALIM AL TAUQI

could only be dealt with at the Diam office.

"I was told that all complaints are now directed to Diam, which is managing the billing system. Diam asked me

to file a complaint through their mobile app. I would do that, but the thing is that my water line has been disconnected. I hope they rectify the problem soon," Tauqi said.

I paid around RO400 in May to change my water meter, but following that, the bill jumped to RO750. Earlier, I used to pay around RO30 per month

FARSI

While officials of both OIFC and Diam acknowledged the problem, they said subscribers need to visit the Diam office for rectification. "There have been a number of complaints about

this issue. People are advised to contact the Diam office with the exact reading of the water meters personally," an OIFC official said.

According to Diam officials,

subscribers need not pay if they think their bills are inflated. They advise filing a complaint in such circumstances.

When *Muscat Daily* visited the Diam office in Bausher, several subscribers were seen trying to file complaints for the same problem. However, a Diam official said, "We only accept complaints through our mobile application. Our technical team will contact subscribers to rectify the problem."

Subscribers claimed registering complaints through the application never works. "I came to the head office but here I was told to register the complaint through the application. I did that earlier but no one ever contacted me until my water line was disconnected. I paid around RO400 in May to change my water meter, but following that, the bill jumped to RO750. Earlier, I used to pay around RO30 per month. I do not know how the bill reached RO750 for four months," said one of the subscribers who wished to be identified only as Farsi.

Several subscribers claimed their problems began when Diam (formerly Public Authority for Electricity and Water) started issuing new water bills.

"This comes in the framework of developing and updating the billing system in order to provide the best services to valued subscribers," Diam said in a public notice earlier.

@shadadm

363 new COVID-19 cases, 9 deaths

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday confirmed 363 new cases of COVID-19, taking the total to 118,503. The number of deaths reported was nine, while there were 287 recoveries in this period.

"The number of recoveries has increased to 108,968, while the number of deaths is 1,310," an MoH statement said. As of Monday, 337 patients were admitted in health institutions with 140 in ICUs.

MoH calls upon all to adhere to isolation procedures by staying in an isolated room with an attached toilet and serving the isolated person from outside the room as instructed. It said that social distancing also helps curb the spread of the virus.

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

CASES FROM NOV 02 TO NOV 09	
Nov 2	418
Nov 3	376
Nov 4	319
Nov 5	320
Nov 6 to Nov 8 (Average - 324)	973
Nov 9	363

CURB COVID-19

STOP THE SPREAD

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS

Embassy NOC mandatory for Sri Lankan maids in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sri Lankan domestic female workers must now submit a 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) issued by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Muscat together with the employment contract to avail the two-year employment visa from an Omani sponsor.

As per the embassy, the measure is an attempt to safeguard the workers and crack-down on irregular migration of female domestic workers to Oman.

The embassy has introduced the new procedure in coordination with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and the Omani authorities concerned.

Speaking about the process, H E Omar Lebbe Ameerajawad, Sri Lankan Ambassador to Oman, said, "We welcome this move as it will safeguard not only the female workers coming



This move will safeguard not only the female workers coming to work for a two-year contract but it will also benefit the Omani sponsors

H E OMAR AMEERAJWAD

to work for a two-year contract but it will also benefit the Omani sponsors. The ladies will be trained in every house-



hold work as well as in basic Arabic."

He added that the NOC will be determined by some factors including two main points: They cannot have children less than five years of age and they must undergo the process of training through the right recruitment agency.

"Unfortunately there are several unscrupulous agencies that

exploit and dupe these women and bring them on visit visas. In many cases it is observed that these women, out of desperation, run from their sponsors' homes. This creates problems for all. This NOC will ensure that such problems do no arise on either side," H E Ameerajawad said.

According to the new procedure, the Directorate General of

Passports and Residence of Royal Oman Police will issue employment visas to the Sri Lankan female domestic workers only if the recruitment agencies or individual sponsors submit the NOC issued by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Muscat together with the employment contract.

The embassy said the NOC is issued free of charge for this purpose. The new procedure of the issuance of the certificate by the embassy came into effect on October 1.

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Muscat has requested all the foreign and local recruitment agencies and individual sponsors who wish to recruit Sri Lankan female domestic workers in the sultanate, to strictly abide by the procedure and to cooperate with the embassy to curb irregular migration and trafficking of Sri Lankan female domestic workers.

EXPLAINED

Will online education weaken the teacher-student relationship?

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a million. *Muscat Daily's* video series 'Explained' analyses current issues and fact checks dubious social media buzz. The series also puts readers' questions to experts in the related fields, who explain their point of view



EXPERT'S VIEW

In this edition, Balqees al Hassani, educator and president of Knowledge Oman, 'Explained' the changing dynamics between teachers and students during the new normal of online education. Balqees is optimistic that this new trend in education will never be a hurdle or affect the relationship that students and teachers share.

EXPLAINED

"I really don't think online education will impact the relationship. Indeed, currently it's the only way they can connect, thanks to technology. Both students and teachers are adapting nicely to the new changes and the bond is getting much stronger.

"Remote learning will help children and their level of responsibility will increase. With time, new ways will evolve which even we as educators now cannot comprehend.

"There will be some challenges for sure, but right now at this crucial juncture, online learning is the only option to deal with the new normal."

SCAN ME



Scan the QR Code to view this 'Explained' video on *Muscat Daily* social media handles

Contracts signed for RO500,000 projects in N Batinah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

OQ company recently signed a number of contracts with local SMEs for the implementation of seven social projects in North Batinah governorate. The contracts are worth RO511,650.

The projects included building social centres, supplying beach cleaning equipment, maintenance of Aldhuwaiqa falaj and the development of a number of public parks in Sohar. These



(Supplied photo)

will be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Office of the Governor of North Batinah.

These projects have been assigned to SMEs through Jusoor Foundation, the non-profit social responsibility arm of Sohar Aluminium, Vale Oman and OQ, that aims to promote the local added value by supporting enterprises that provide social projects related construction, consultation and supply services.



HOTLINES

24-hour pharmacies
Scientific Pharmacy: Qurm 24566601, Ruwi 24702850
Muscat Pharmacy: Ruwi 24702542, Salalah 23291635
Al Hashar Pharmacy: Ruwi 24783334

Hospitals and Clinics
Al Hayat International Hospital, Al Ghubra- 22004000, 94267068 94442000 (Emergency)
Al Raffah Hospital: Muscat - 24618900/1/2/3
Sohar - 26704639/49/50
Apollo Hospital Muscat, Hamriya: 24787766,
Abeer Hospital, Ruwi, Muscat 24770800, 90999335, 90999334 (Emergency)
Starcare Hospital: 24557200
Emergency number: 24558333
Dr Harub's Clinic: 24563217, 99254940
Emirates Medical Center: 24604540
KIMS Oman Hospital: 24760105
Lama Polyclinic: CBD 24799077, 24788881, 24788577, 24707566, 24799655, Al Khuwayr 24478817, 24478818, Sohar 26751128
Muscat Municipality: 80077222

SHOWCASING TRADITION



Under the auspices of the Royal Court Affairs, Oman Post released a new postage stamp showcasing the traditional horse and camel races, known as ardha. The stamps have been launched to mark the inclusion of ardha in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Unesco. Stamps support 3D augmented reality technology (Supplied photo)



OCCI holds meet to boost Khasab port investment



Raed bin Mohammed al Shuhi

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to promote investment, and set up development projects in Khasab port, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Khasab in cooperation with Marafi, last week held a virtual meeting.

Raed bin Mohammed al Shuhi, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Musandam branch of OCCI, and Dr Ahmed



al Abri, CEO of Marafi, participated in the meeting.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Shuhi said, "More than 45 people representing companies and institutions affiliated with the branch wishing to take advantage of the opportunities participated in the meeting. The meeting aimed to explain and clarify the mechanism and terms of contracts for those wishing to obtain the land offered for investment within the

Khasab port.

The meeting reviewed the general plan of the project and the opportunities available in it according to the target sectors, besides reviewing the registration and competition mechanism to obtain these opportunities."

Shuhi informed that the projects aim to attract companies to Khasab port and to create sustainable shipping and diversify opportunities, including manufacturing, refilling, storage, logis-

tics and tourism.

He assured that priority will be given to the businesses affiliated with the Musandam branch of OCCI.

Those wishing to register (at <https://marafi.om/landleaseapply/port-of-khasab>) will be contacted to discuss their requests.

Khasab is one of the most important ports for cruise ships. It received 134,404 tourists on-board 63 cruise ships during the 2018-19 winter season.

Leasing opens for rest area on Quriyat-Sur road

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its strategic role as a catalyst of growth in the tourism sector across Oman, Omran Group developed the first integrated rest area 'Aber' on the Quriyat-Sur highway to serve and enhance domestic tourism.

The project, which has been completed, provides travellers all the essential public services needed and Omran has announced the leasing process of the project's retail outlets.

'Omran Group invites local companies and SMEs to register their interest in leasing a wide array of retail outlets at Aber Integrated Rest Area. The commercial building provides an opportunity for the leasing of approximately 600sqm of retail space,' Omran said.

Omran, the executive arm of the sultanate responsible for delivering the objectives of the 2040 National Tourism Strategy,



(Supplied photo)

said that the location features key facilities with high visibility on the Quriyat-Sur highway.

The retail opportunities cover a wide variety of business activities, including but not limited to cafes and restaurants, car maintenance services, cosmetics and accessories shops, pharmacies, handicrafts and gift stores, camping and adventure gear shops and other tourism-related recreational services and activities.

The site offers opportunities to food truck owners to enhance the visitor experience.

'Interested businesses can send an email to abduhafidh.harthi@omran.om along with a request letter expressing interest, a copy of a valid commercial registration, company profile, experience and achievements and any suggested supporting documents.'

Last date for registration is November 12.

Liwa slaughterhouse expected to be operational by year end

Muscat - The management of Vale Oman, on Monday, made an inspection tour of the Liwa slaughterhouse project that has reached 90 per cent completion stage.

The project, funded by Vale Oman with an investment of RO400,000, is expected to be operational by the end of the year. It will be run by the Office of the Governor of North Batinah and will serve citizens and residents from the wilayat of Liwa and its neighbourhood.

The Liwa slaughterhouse project is one of the sustainable social development initiatives implemented by Jusoor Founda-



(Supplied photo)

tion, the non-profit social responsibility arm of Sohar Aluminium, Vale Oman and OQ.

This project has been established over an area of 1,160sqm, and is equipped with automatic skinning and butchering ma-

chines, male and female waiting areas, storing and cooling areas, a prayer room, as well as a veterinarian's room. An external cattle barn has been made available to ease the accessibility to livestock for slaughterhouse cus-

tomers. All the necessary safety and hygiene measures have been taken into account.

"The project is an example of constructive cooperation and concerted efforts between the private sector and government institutions, which aim to deliver social services and achieve sustainable development," said Saleh bin Abdullah al Musalhi, deputy chief executive officer at Vale Oman.

"The project is deemed to be a translation of Vale's keenness to strengthen partnership with the local community and build a close relationship with stakeholders," Musalhi added.

MoE, PDO sign pact to support students



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education (MoE) signed a cooperation agreement with Petroleum Development

Oman (PDO) to finance 2,931 computers at a cost of more than RO380,000 for students of Grades 7 to 10 in the schools of the company's concession area.

The agreement was signed by

H E Majid bin Said al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in MoE, and Eng Abdul Amir bin Abdul Husain al Ajmi, external affairs and value creation director, PDO.

REGIONAL WEATHER

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	31	22
Doha	31	22
Kuwait City	29	21
Manama	30	22
Riyadh	32	18

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	5am
Sunrise	6.18am
Duhr	11.56am
Asr	3.06pm
Maghrib	5.29pm
Isha	6.41pm

شركة النماء للدواجن ش م ع م A' Namaa Poultry Co. S.A.O.C

Announcement Purchasing or leasing heavy equipment's

A' Namaa Poultry Company SAOC invites all companies dealing in Purchasing or leasing heavy equipment's and interested to participate in the tender for Purchasing or leasing this type of heavy equipment, apply as per the details follows: -

SR	Tenders Details	Tender NO
1	Purchasing or leasing heavy equipment's	ANP/LD/030/2020

- Obtaining the conditions of the tender from the Procurement Committee at the company's headquarters at the following address: Al Nahda Towers 2, Floor 7, Office No. 9, during working hours from 8:30 a.m. to 03:00 p.m., before 19th Nov 2020 for a fee of OMR 500. which is non-refundable for each tender.
- Submitting bids in sealed envelope with the tender numbers and name written on it.
- Attach the offers with the commercial registration details of the applicant.

The last date for receiving Bids is 3rd Dec 2020.

A' Namaa Poultry reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without giving any reasons.

Suppliers will be notified after the screening process according to the company's standards.

In case of any queries or further clarification on the process, please contact Logistics Department (Phone: +968 22504468; Email: info@anamaa.com) during office hours

Disclaimer

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) would like to announce the following amendment for the tender which was announced on 09/11/2020:

Sr. No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Closing Date	Grade	Tender Document's Fees (RO)
1	62/2020	Supply and Installation of INFILL TYPE Gate at Dhofar Store Building.	23/11/2020	22/12/2020	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate	38/=
2	64/2020	Completion of Pending Works for Rerouting Portion of 132 kV Sur - Al Kamil Line	23/11/2020	22/12/2020	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate	94/=

Company Address:
Muscat - Al Mawaleh
Way No: 2153 - Building No. 4230
Web site: www.omangrid.com, E-mail: tenders@omangrid.com
GSM: 99105413

تنويه

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء بأنه تم تعديل المناقصة المذكورة أدناه التي تم الإعلان عنها بتاريخ ٢٠٢٠/١١/٠٩م.

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	ثمن الوثيقة (رغ)
١	٢٠٢٠/١٢	توريد وتركيب بوابة منزلقة أوتوماتيكية من المعدن المقاوم للصدأ بمخازن الشركة في محافظة ظفار.	٢٠٢٠/١١/٢٣	٢٠٢٠/١٢/٢٢	الشركات المحلية العامة في هذا المجال المسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول.	٣٨/ـ
٢	٢٠٢٠/١٤	إكمال الأعمال المتبقية لمشروع تحويل جزء من خط الكابل - صور جهد ١٣٢ كيلو فولت.	٢٠٢٠/١١/٢٣	٢٠٢٠/١٢/٢٢	الشركات المحلية العامة في هذا المجال المسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول.	٩٤/ـ

عنوان الشركة
محافظة مسقط - الموالح
رقم السكة ٢١٥٣ - مبنى رقم ٤٢٣٠
البريد الإلكتروني tenders@omangrid.com موقع الشركة www.omangrid.com
هاتف: ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣

Ministry of Housing opens Real Estate Registry office at Bank Muscat

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Bank Muscat, the leading financial institution in the sultanate, have announced the official opening of a Real Estate Registry office inside the Bank Muscat head office at Airport Heights.

The new office provides a number of documentation services for activities such as buying and selling real estate, mortgages, land received as gifts, partition, inheritance and other real estate transactions. The ministry's one-stop centre on the premises of the bank's head office has already commenced operations and is in line with the

ministry's vision of facilitating ease of real estate transactions by opening more real estate registry offices across the sultanate.

The Bank Muscat head office was chosen on the basis of the existing strong partnership between both institutions, its strategic location and the large number of visitors to the premises. The office will be open on all workdays from 8.30am to 2pm.

On this occasion, Saleem bin Hassan al Balushi, assistant director general, Real Estate Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, said, "The new office at the Bank Muscat's head office will help citizens complete



real-estate transactions and is in line with the public-private partnership. It will directly provide real-estate related services and there is no need to go to the ministry."

He added that the ministry's



approach in opening new real estate registry offices is part of the plan to increase convenience in an innovative manner and meet the needs of both customers and institutions like Bank Muscat, which is one of the leading banks

in providing mortgage and home finance related services among others.

Salim Mohammed al Kaabi, general manager - Credit, Bank Muscat, expressed his happiness with this partnership between the bank and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

He noted that the opening of the new registry office by the ministry is an important step in further strengthening public-private partnership and said that the new office would add further convenience to the bank's customers as well as the general public.

He thanked the minister and

the staff at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for their confidence in the bank's pioneering role in introducing new financial services and enhancing the ease of banking and transactions including housing finance.

Bank Muscat's tailor-made 'Baituna' home finance facilitates purchase and construction of new homes as well as land for residential use. The attractive features of Baituna finance include low interest rates with a maximum loan tenure up to 25 years for customers.

The competitive interest rate is particularly attractive for people looking for the best home fi-

nance deals in the sultanate.

Customers can obtain easy and convenient credit approval across the sultanate at any of the dedicated Baituna Sales Centres at Qurum, Ma'abala, Nizwa, Salalah, Barka, Sur, Saham, Sohar, Ibri, Buraimi and Ibra or at the bank's retail banking branches.

The residential segment assumes importance in light of the growth in population as well as the fact that real estate is a major building block of economic growth.

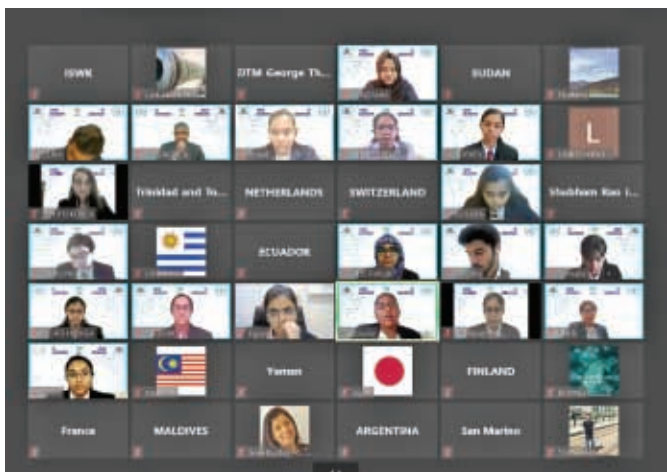
Baituna offers some of the best home financing options in the sultanate.

ISWK holds Virtual UN Model Assembly

Indian School Wadi Kabir (ISWK) called a Model UN Assembly for the sixth consecutive year, on October 24 and 25 to mark the 75th United Nations Day. H E Munu Mahawar, Indian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, was the chief guest.

Also present on the occasion were Anil Khimji, a patron of the school; Kiran Asher, Member of the Educational Cell of the Hindu Mahajan Association; Alkesh Joshi, president of SMC along with its members, principal D N Rao as well as other dignitaries and special invitees.

Inaugurating the event, H E Mahawar lauded the role of such Model Assemblies in preparing the future leaders and statespersons. He said that this was the training ground which would enable them to significantly con-



tribute towards realising UN's objectives of preserving world peace, alleviate poverty, and minimise international conflicts.

Wadi Kabir Model United Nations (WKMUN) assembly is an ongoing initiative by the Department of Social Science, meant to

provide information to the students about the working of the UN as well as provide to them a common platform for expressing their views as representatives of member nations of UN.

Student-delegates from fourteen Indian schools including the

host school participated in the assembly to discuss and debate on - The promotion of sustainable tourism in the 21st century 'From arguments to consensus'.

Five student delegates from every participating school represented a UN member state each, to voice their views on the relevant goals which that member state espoused toward promoting sustainable tourism in the present century.

Anuj Swarup (Second Secretary - Pol, End& Info Embassy of India), was the guest of honour on the second day.

While addressing the student delegates he expressed his appreciation for a forum like WKMUN. He said that such forums were helpful in bringing together the best young minds to collaborate.



Alizz Islamic supports Omani Women's Day celebrations at OMA

Alizz Islamic Bank was the exclusive banking sponsor of the special 'Omani Women's Day' celebration that was organised by Oman Medical Association (OMA).

The event was held at the Holiday Inn Muscat, under the patronage of H H Dr Mona bint Fahad bin Mahmoud al Said, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), in the presence of a number of officials.

The annual Omani Women's Day celebration event aims to recognise the role and effort of Oman's women in shaping the success of the country. A number of exciting activities took place at the celebrations including speeches by inspiring female speakers who pointed out the

continuous participation of Omani women in different fields. Token gifts of appreciation were also presented to the attendants.

It is worth noting that Alizz Islamic Bank rewards its female customers with a monthly draw for the bank's Bushra Prize Savings Account, Oman's first Sharia'a-compliant prize savings account whereby 10 female winners win RO1,000 each every month.

Commenting on the bank's support Murtadha Jawad, AGM - head of Marketing & Corporate Communications at Alizz Islamic Bank said, "We are dedicated to supporting programmes that have a positive impact on the society we operate in. As one of the leading Islamic financial institu-

tions, we are happy to support this special Omani Women's Day celebration. According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information Omani women represent 49 per cent of the total Omani population and at Alizz Islamic Bank we believe in a culture of diversity and inclusion that makes us more effective in serving our customers developing our employees and strengthening our communities.

"We recognise the value that women and men employees' individual differences and perspectives contribute to the success and growth of our organisation. Together we promote an environment that embraces partnership innovation and service for excellence."

JAC T8: Experience you won't forget

After joining hands with JAC Motors in 2008 to bring the legendary reliability of JAC commercial vehicles to Oman, Towell Auto Centre has recently added an exciting range of JAC passenger and light commercial vehicles to their line-up.

Among JAC's exciting new range of vehicles is the power packed T8 pick-up. The JAC T8 Pick-up 2.0lt Turbo enables you to 'Get more done for an unbelievable price' as Towell Auto Centre proudly states. Available in 2WD or 4WD, and in Classic or Luxury configurations, this is a pick-up that presents a powerful, fun-filled performance for off-road enthusiasts, and an excellent business transport solution for those living and working in the sultanate's cities and rural areas.

Known for its affordability, the



JAC T8 comes with features such as Acoustic Hood, Central Locking, Active Steering and ABS (Anti-lock Brake System) among

others. In the T8, owners get the legendary reliability of JAC's commercial range; all wrapped up in rugged good looks. We re-

cently had the pleasure of hearing from a happy customer who purchased a brand new T8.

Taher al Salti, a proud owner of a brand new JAC T8, spoke of his personal experience driving the rugged pick-up, saying, "The T8 comes with rugged and chiseled good looks on the exterior and stylish interiors with the seats, steering wheel and dashboard covered in leather. I found the touchscreen display and the manual air-conditioning controls to be impressive too."

"Apart from its good looks, the T8's engine packs a powerful performance on all types of terrain, including the rugged mountainous areas around Sur and Wadi Bani Jaber which I frequent. I use the T8 on a daily basis, especially for the transport of farm feed and other farming items."

OSN brings array of exclusive content to home screens

OSN subscribers will be on the edge of their seats with what OSN has in store this November. From the premiere of OSN Originals series, the gripping Syrian war drama *No Man's Land* and the roll-on-the-floor laughing foodie series *Yalla Neta'asha*, as well as hit series from Disney+ Originals and HBO, audiences are guaranteed endless entertainment throughout the month of November.

November reveals the latest OSN Original Production *No Man's Land* that dives into the depths of the Syrian war through a multi-dimensional story of family bonds, packed with in-

triguing alliances and conflicts.

The Emmy award winning from HBO, *His Dark Materials* returns in its second season where audiences can teleport to a world of extraordinary fantasy and adventure. Also, the hugely popular medical romantic drama *Grey's Anatomy* is back on OSN exclusively with a new 17th season. The complete boxset of the series is also available for fans to catch up on their favorite episodes from Season 1-16.

The Adult Swim section will premiere on November 12 on OSN offering a block of over 170 episodes packed with edgy contemporary animated comedy



such as *Rick and Morty*, *Robot Chicken* and *The Venture Bros*.

As for the younger viewers, kids can enjoy an endless array of series and movies including *Star Wars Resistance* an exclusive from Disney+ Originals.

OSN is the region's leading entertainment business with the rights to broadcast in 17 countries across the MENA.

The company is owned and operated by Panther Media Group, registered in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and has two shareholders, KIPCO and the Mawarid Group Limited.

OSN has a history of providing

exceptional value for customers with its focus on exclusive and in-demand content, and innovative digital platforms for anywhere, anytime access.

OSN is the exclusive distributor of The Walt Disney Company's new Disney+ Originals in the Middle East region, across both its box and streaming services. OSN's strength is its unbeatable range of exclusive programming and best-in-class entertainment led by its long-term partnerships with studio majors including Disney, HBO, NBC Universal, Fox, Paramount, MGM, and Sony to name a few.

OSN is the home for premium

and nowhere-else content in Arabic, English, Filipino.

OSN broadcasts the latest content at the same minute as in the US, including popular series, blockbuster movies, and the best in kids and lifestyle programming.

In addition, OSN also provides entertainment content for devices such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones via its online and mobile app entertainment platform, offering movies and series on the go. OSN has been at the forefront of digital technology innovation in the Middle East introducing OSN on Demand, the region's first VOD service.

OAB partners with Landmark Group

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently announced the signing of an agreement with the Landmark Group in Oman, which allows its customers to convert their OAB Rewards points into Shukrans. Customers who pay using their credit cards will be able to redeem these points for Shukrans and shop from a wide range popular, homegrown Landmark Group brands, including Centrepont, Home Centre, Max, Shoexpress, Emax and more.

Commenting on this new signing, Rashad al Shaikh, acting head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, "At OAB, we always strive to provide more value-added services to customers by establishing key partnerships with renowned brands. In line with this commitment, we entered into an agreement with the Landmark Group, which represents several diverse range of brands in the sultanate. Our customers can now convert their points received from our OAB Rewards programme into Shukrans, allowing them to receive incredible discounts and shop more."



To convert OAB Rewards points, customers can simply visit <http://www.oabrewards.com/> or log onto the OAB Rewards App and submit a Shukran conversion request. A notification will be sent to confirm the process completion, after which they can redeem Shukrans against purchases at Landmark Retail brand stores. "We chose 'Shukran' as it is one of the most popular retail loyalty programmes in the sultanate and it benefits our customers by allowing them to use their well-earned points at a majority of retail stores across



the country. We are confident that our credit card customers will appreciate this new feature, which offers them more retail store options to spend their points on," Shaikh added. Saikat Mishra, country head, Landmark Group, Oman, said, "We are extremely pleased to partner with Oman Arab Bank, and expanding our offerings to more people in this region. With

a variety of value driven brands under our group's portfolio, we are certain that this partnership will further strengthen our commitment of offering endless possibilities. With Shukran, our aim is always to deliver personalised experiences by providing people the option to choose from a diverse category of brands and establish a lasting connect with them."

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the sultanate. Today, the bank operates a nationwide network of 55 branches and representative offices with over 160 ATMs spread across Oman. OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services for personal banking and corporate banking.

Ooredoo keeps schools connected

As part of its commitment to make the Internet accessible to all, Ooredoo has joined hands with Oman Broadband Company to launch a satellite-based Internet service for schools in rural areas. It is part of a wider initiative led by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), which aims to support distance learning in schools all over the country, connecting even those in the most remote locations.

Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahabi, chief business and wholesale officer at Ooredoo, said, "As the country continues to adapt to new norms, we are working hard to ensure that people are able to stay connected, especially students who are distance learning. Our partnership with Oman Broadband means that Satellite Internet now reaches many schools and homes who previously didn't have access to Internet services. "As part of our value of 'Caring' at Ooredoo, we are helping the Ministry of Education to



make sure the transition to online and distance learning is made smoother for everyone with uninterrupted connection." Designed especially for schools and health organisations, the 10 Mbps Satellite-based Internet plan include unlimited usage and free modem installation at a monthly fee of RO35. Ooredoo has also recently introduced its Satellite Home Internet plan for those living in remote and rural areas. The satellite used extends Ooredoo's service to close to 600 villages across the sultanate.

Zubair SEC's Tajribati session focusses on legal challenges and impact of COVID-19

With an objective to help members navigate the present testing circumstances, Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) organised a virtual 'Tajribati' session on key legal challenges faced by small businesses due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Providing guidance to SMEs and start-ups, Abdulredha al Lawati, partner in Global Advocacy and Legal Counsel, offered licit strategies to face the challenging circumstances. He urged small businesses to take an analytical step-by-step approach, and exercise diligence in following the steps. He offered an overview of the key legal issues which businesses need to consider in their operations. Lawati covered legal topics such as labour law, rent agreements, loans and payment agreement during the session. Lauding Zubair SEC for organ-

ising a session on an important topic, Lawati said, "As small businesses continue to be impacted by the unprecedented effects of COVID-19, legal issues have become a point of concern for most of them. During the session I was happy to share some actionable information to help members navigate these uncertain times and find solutions during an unparalleled crisis. My presentation focused on best practices for managing legal risks." The virtual 'Tajribati' session was attended by members, small business entrepreneurs, and aspiring entrepreneurs. The 'Tajribati' series serves as a unique platform to connect business experts with start-up owners and new entrepreneurs to exchange views, discuss common challenges and share best practices. Ali Shaker, Zubair SEC, said,

"We chose this topic because several of our members wanted to know about the legal matters. Members raised concerns about legal consequences they had faced due to the earlier lockdown and closing of some commercial activities. Many of our members are not sure about their rights. By attending this session, they are now aware of the best practices that can protect them and how they can overcome the situation with the least damages and losses. "The session helped many clear their legal concerns and confusions. The session discussed unprecedented legal challenges that are burdening small businesses as they continue to try to maintain operations during the COVID-19 crisis. We are grateful to Abdulredha al Lawati for helping members identify and mitigate legal risks small businesses face."

Madayn Industrial Academy organises workshop on change management

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn, represented by Madayn Industrial Academy, organised on Monday a workshop on change management and business process reengineering. The workshop comes in line with the efforts made by Madayn in keeping with Oman 2040 Vision, and to integrate change management in Madayn's activities and projects. Moderated by Dr Khamis al Muniri, director general of Madayn Industrial Academy, the workshop aimed at familiarising the participants with the advanced methods adopted in change management and business process reengineering. Dr Muniri emphasised that institutions should adapt to the ongoing rapid changes in order to adopt effective change system in the institution. "Change is one of the key practices that should be implemented in the institutions through getting acquainted with



the changes and developing plans and strategies that ensure steady and streamlined workflow, which would play a role in reducing general risks that may occur." He added, "In order to implement effective change concept within the institutions, constant efforts should be enhanced to improve working conditions through making optimal use of

expertise and work teams to address all obstacles and problems in innovative ways that depend on introducing advanced techniques. These efforts will consequently raise productivity and performance and form an ideal mechanism in the work environment." For an institution to achieve change system without facing obstacles or direct/indirect

damages on the institution, it should take into account the major role played by the 'human factor' in facilitating change, Dr Muniri stressed. "This can be achieved through training and equipping individuals with the new trends in this field that go in line with the strategies adopted by the institution, and encouraging the individuals to introduce new ideas that help in contributing to the advancement and progress of the institution," he said, adding, "It is also important for the top management to have organisational competence and rapid ability to adapt to the surrounding changes." Madayn Industrial Academy was established in 2019 to provide training opportunities for the national cadres to enhance administrative, financial and technical skills, boost their skills and raise their productivity, provide value adding services to the investors in the industrial cities, and provide job opportunities.

Australian university in Dubai launches Master of Business Analytics degree

University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD), the first international university in the UAE and the premier Australian university in the region, announced the launch of its new Master of Business Analytics programme. Designed in consultation with SAS, a global leader in analytics, the degree aims to help outgoing student graduates develop technical, analytical and decision-making skills that are critical in the modern global business environment. According to a study published by ReportLinker, a professional search engine for economic and industry statistics, the size of the global big data analytics market is expected to grow from US\$12.8bn in 2020 to US\$23.5bn by 2025, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13 per cent. The growing focus on digital transformation, as well as the increasing investment and demand for analytics in the current COVID-19 environment, are all expected to



contribute to the uptake of business analytics by organisations of all sizes, especially since remote monitoring and enhanced safety protocols have become a significant part of the new normal. Professor Mohamed Salem, President of UOWD, said, "As organisations globally continue to invest in big data and artificial intelligence initiatives, the role of business analysts will become increasingly crucial. The demand for qualified data scientists, data

engineers, management consultants and quantitative analysts will also surge as they help analyse data, manage financial risk and help businesses make decisions that support their strategic growth." According to a recent study on best jobs by Glassdoor, one of the world's largest job and recruiting sites, data scientists and analysts ranked in the top three preferred careers. The demand for this function worldwide has continued to grow in the last few

years. UOWD's Master of Business Analytics degree is designed to empower professionals to develop critical thinking skills and to apply these to a modern international business environment. Upon graduation, students will be awarded the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) Business Analytics Joint Certificate and/or the Advanced Business Analytics Joint Certificate. From January 2021, students will also be able to attend their classes in person at UOWD's new 'Campus of the Future', where 100 per cent in-class learning will be back in full. On completion of the degree, students will be prepared for career paths ranging from quantitative analysts, hedge fund managers, and management consultants to business analysts. UOWD is committed to making a significant contribution to the local higher education community through equipping its future students with valuable knowledge and insights.

Vivo launches V20 series with innovative selfie capabilities

Vivo released V20 and V20 SE - part of the all-new V20 series. A realisation of vivo's commitment to user-centric design, V20 series offers innovative selfie capabilities that allow users to record and capture the perfect moments in their lives. With cutting-edge camera technology, trendy design, and strong all-around performance, V20 series devices perfectly complement the lifestyles of young, fast-moving, and fashion-savvy consumers. "vivo always innovates with the consumer in mind. Guided by our deep insights into consumer needs, we developed V20 series to provide leading camera technology packed in a sleek, but affordable, device," said Jet Xu, head of Middle East and Africa Business, vivo. "V20 series is ideal for young consumers who like to take regular photos and record life's shiny moments, while the trendy design makes it a perfect accessory for their lifestyles." V20's leading 44MP Eye Aut-



ofocus front camera allows users to unlock a new world of selfie capabilities. V20 SE's 32MP front camera allows users to unlock a new world of selfie capabilities. The device offers a range of interesting stickers and special effects, as well as convenient photo and short video production and shar-

ing, satisfying the consumer need of connecting socially through fun selfie photos and videos. Super Night Mode—supported on both the front camera and the main lens of the 48MP-8MP-2MP rear camera setup—enables users to capture high quality shots at low-light scenarios.

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ACROSS

1 Cod, for one

5 Flat-bottomed boats

10 Before broil or grill

14 Danube tributary

19 "Pictures ____ Exhibition"

20 Bumpkin

21 Musical finale

22 Fence flight

23 Wimsey's Harriet

24 Dickens protagon-
ist

27 Yale student

28 Grating

29 Bread spread

30 Contests

31 Packs up and goes

35 ____ diem

37 Apollo's valley

39 Firth of France

40 List unit

42 Mali's capital

46 Cyd Charisse's husband

51 Novelist Kingsley's novelist son

54 Ascended

55 Gerund ending

56 Dodgers' "Preacher"

57 Exchange

58 Cleaning cloths

59 Girl-watch

61 Bowen and

Browning

64 Consumed

65 Classify anew

67 Indian garment

68 Belgrade native

70 "West Wing" prez

73 Drug buster

77 "No man ____ island"

79 Floating

80 Buddy

81 Medical specialists

85 ____ boy!

87 Incline from the vertical

88 Nimble

89 Tolkien creation

90 Lake Balkhash feeder

91 European peninsula

93 Her heart belonged to Daddy

96 TV "roast" host

98 Coll. course

99 Royal garb

101 Wine: prefix

102 Give access

105 Fam. member

106 Interferes

110 Ski lift

113 Court figure

115 Ancient marketplace

118 NY winter time

119 January 15th

honoree

123 London gallery

124 Exhausted

125 Too bad!

126 "Harry Potter" wizard

127 Region

128 Broadway lights

129 De-ice

130 Billiard ploy

131 Exploited

DOWN

1 ____ in: collapsed

2 "A whale of ____"

3 Stampede starter

4 WSW minus 180

5 Beethoven op.

6 Less refined

7 Gumbo ingredient

8 Volstead Act opponents

9 Losing traction

10 New Deal agcy.

11 Santa's sound

12 Mature

13 Truncated warship

14 Gib. or Luz.

15 "My Blue Heaven" star

16 Moa's cousin

17 "... to tell ____"

18 Prepares flax

25 Moscow negative

26 Automaton, in a sense

32 Vast chasm

33 Musical Auntie

34 A Lady Gaga instrument

36 Sleep stage

38 Hard breather

41 Femme's spouse

43 Asian servant

44 Young butters

45 Full of: suffix

46 Gogol's "____ Bulba"

47 Pontificate

48 River of 42 Across

49 Bathroom finisher

50 Motionless

52 Actress Russell, for short

53 Beverage services

60 Percy or Stewart

61 Heating devices

62 "____ we forget"

63 Outlaw

66 "____ Misbehavin"

69 1977 Yankees manager

70 Spoil

71 ____ Selassie

72 Plural of ens

74 Separately

75 Circle lines

76 Unsullied

78 Appeared

81 Ice-cream thickener

82 Italian notes

83 Svgs. income

84 Recipe direction

86 ____ Semple McPherson

87 "Salome" tenor

88 Hi-fi component

90 Chinese character

92 Pearl Jams's group

94 Madison Ave. worker

95 Cribbage jack

97 "____ an island ..."

100 Highlands hillside

103 Mideast religion

104 Greenland air base site

107 Edward, Norman and jet

108 Cosmetician

Lauder

109 Situation

110 Fed

111 "Dark Knight's" Christian

112 Woody's son

114 Cousin of etc.

116 Neighbor of Kans.

117 Manipulates fraudulently

120 Incumbents

121 FDR successor

122 Equine directive

123 Sigma follower

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES

MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your feelings are taking on a strong tone. Mercury moves forward into sensitive Scorpio, centring your thoughts and communication around sex, intimacy, and vulnerability in committed relationship. Elsewhere, the errand-oriented Virgo moon is caught off guard by an encounter with spaced-out Neptune, making it easy to slip into a dream world and hard to focus on reality.



LEO

JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Tuesday's skies make it challenging to stay rooted in the present, Leo. Messenger Mercury tiptoes into highly-sensitive Scorpio this afternoon, turning your attention towards family dynamics and unspoken issues on the home front. Elsewhere, the work-hungry Virgo moon locks eyes with daydreamy Neptune, making it more appealing to sink into a cuddle puddle as opposed to working.



SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Things are beginning to quiet down. The Virgo moon has you fully focused on career concerns, yet her opposition with Neptune stirs up feelings from the deep around home and family matters. This makes it challenging to stay focused. Solitary contemplation and emotional reflection is prioritised, as Mercury enters Scorpio from now until December 1.



TAURUS

APRIL 20-MAY 20

Save the hard stuff for another day. You're seeking good times (and good times only), as the Virgo moon drifts out to sea with Neptune, making it an ideal day for creative activities or a romantic rendezvous. Mercury moves forward into sensual Scorpio too, centring your thinking and ability to communicate around partnership matters from now through December 1.



VIRGO

AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Your trajectory is beginning to change. Your ruling planet, Mercury, moves forward into emotionally rich Scorpio, helping you express yourself with clarity and depth while also focusing on educational interests. The moon, currently in your sign, spends the day floating out to sea with idyllic Neptune, putting rose-coloured glasses on relationship dynamics.



CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

The grass is always greener somewhere else. This is all thanks to the heady Virgo moon locking eyes with Neptune. Your desire for adventure and escape is strong today, so try to feed your dream world as best you can without disowning reality all together. Mercury moves forward into Scorpio too, channeling your thinking towards goal achievement and networking.



GEMINI

MAY 21-JUNE 21

Mercury is on the move. When the messenger planet changes course, you find that you follow suit. Mercury leaps forward into highly focused Scorpio, helping you devote extra mental energy to your workflow and job scenario. Elsewhere, the Virgo moon calls for a relaxed day at home; her opposition to Neptune can stir up some confused feelings around career matters.



LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Give yourself the break you need. The reflective Virgo moon paddles out to sea with sleepy Neptune, stirring up mixed feelings around productivity and rest. Let yourself lean into meditative practices that help you recharge. Mercury's forward movement into Scorpio gets you thinking and talking about the state of your resources, while also activating your natural talents.



AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Closeness is the key to your comfort. You're longing for meaningful, intimate connections in which you can share the state of your soul without judgement—as the Virgo moon swirls with Neptune. Find an outlet in which you can share your psychological ponderings. Mercury re-enters Scorpio, channeling your thinking and networking power towards career goals.



CANCER

JUNE 22-JULY 22

It's hard to stay focused on the realities at hand. The usually precise Virgo moon finds herself captivated by elusive Neptune's changing tides; this prompts you to take in mixed messages and potentially gloss over important details in conversations. Double-check the information you hear. Meanwhile, Mercury moves forward into Scorpio, prioritising your thinking around love.



SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Don't be a lone wolf. You're seeking a place in community and are craving friendships—all while the Virgo moon dances with Neptune. It's a wonderful day for creative activities too, as there's an added ethereal touch embedded in your techniques. Mercury steps forward into your sign, helping you express yourself clearly and retrace ideas around your newly-formed identity.



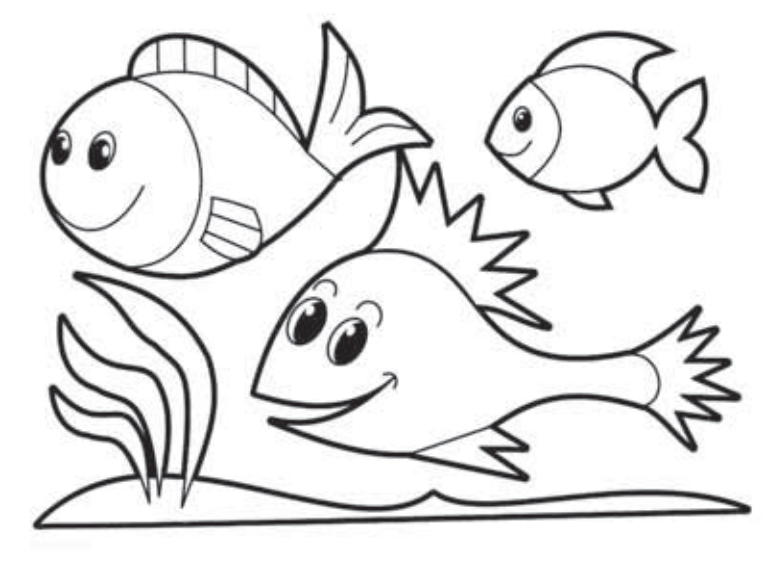
PISCES

FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

It's all too easy for you to lose track of where you start and where others begin. This story around boundaries is emphasised, as the Virgo moon is swept up in Neptune's compassionate gaze. It's a wonderfully romantic and daydreamy day for partnership matters. Mercury enters Scorpio, channeling your energy towards educational pursuits.

Answers: 1: a 2: d 3: b

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

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

BOGGLER

N	T	W	O
O	I	T	G
B	D	G	L
D	H	O	Y

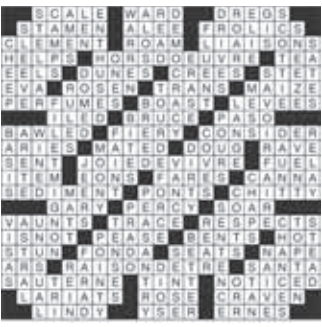
Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters.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

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

DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (NOVEMBER 09)



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



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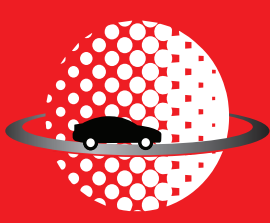
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*conditions apply

SITUATION WANTED

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Contact 94560050

Required a partner for engineering consultancy office.
Contact 95505566

BIRTHDAY WISHES



HARSHAVARDHAN RAJAN
November 10

Dear Harsha,
We wish you a very happy birthday and many more happy returns of the day.
Akka Shruthi, Amma Sujatha, Appa Rajan, Pati Prema and Friend Dr Rao

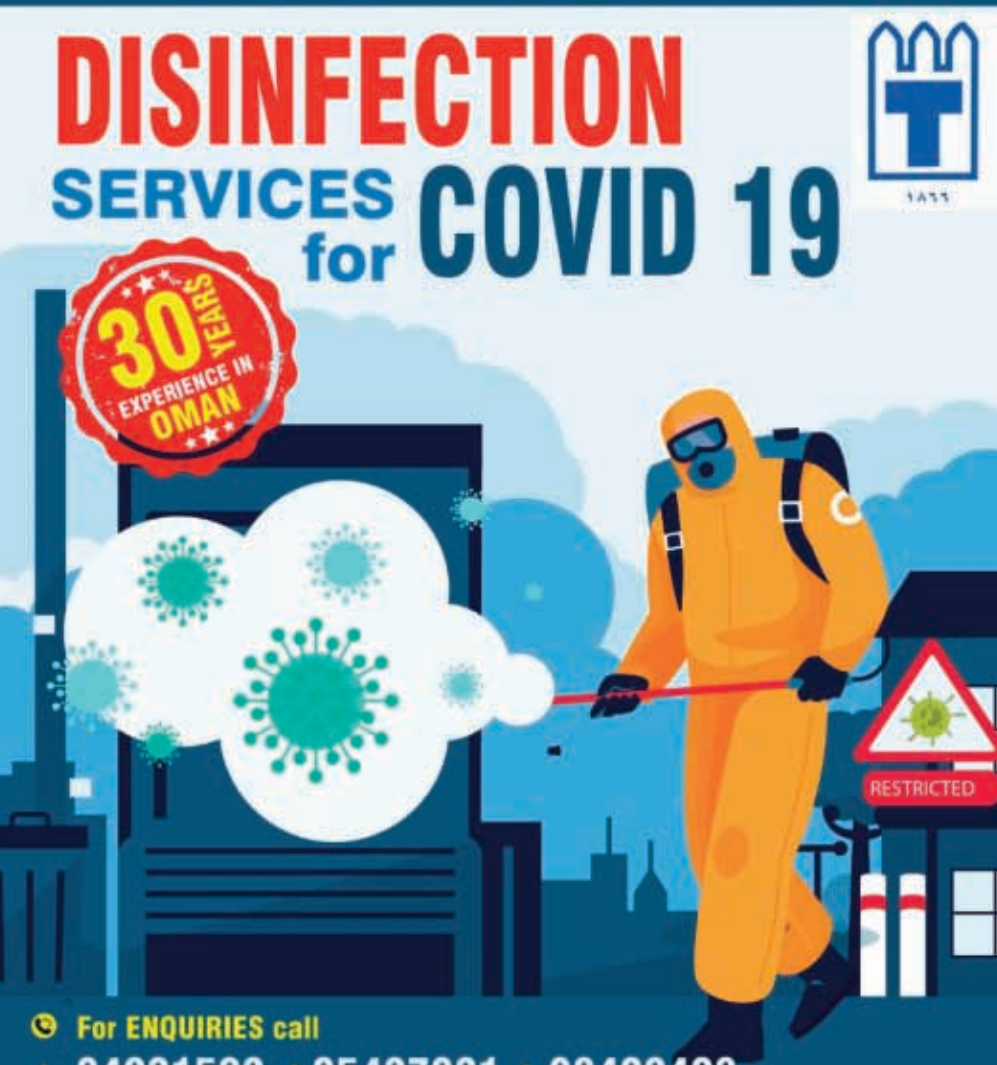
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FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

VALENCIA ROUT REAL



Valencia's Carlos Soler (centre) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Real Madrid at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia on Sunday

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid were thrashed 4-1 at struggling Valencia on Sunday as Carlos Soler scored a hat-trick of penalties to raise further doubts over La Liga's reigning champions.

Madrid took the lead through Karim Benzema but presented Valencia with four gifts at Mestalla, including three spot-kicks and an own-goal scored by Raphael Varane, to fall to another surprise defeat.

"There is no justification, no excuses," said Zinedine Zidane. "It's a bad game and a bad day."

This is the first time Madrid have conceded four goals since letting in five against Barcelona in October 2018 and puts the brakes on their recovery that had

followed a rocky start to the season. After back-to-back losses to Cadiz and Shakhtar Donetsk last month, Zinedine Zidane's side appeared to have turned a corner with wins over Barca, Huesca and Inter Milan.

Yet this result puts the pressure back on ahead of the international break, with Madrid now fourth in the table, four points behind early leaders Real Sociedad. A disappointing night also got worse when Benzema was forced off late on with what looked like a groin injury.

"Everything happened to us," Zidane said.

Valencia, meanwhile, started the day in 17th after enduring a nightmare start to the campaign, on the back of a transfer window

which saw them sell five key players and fail to replace any of them. A stirring victory though pushes Javi Gracia's team up to ninth and may prove a turning point in their season.

There was certainly an element of fortune in Valencia's goals, all of them unusual and some of them bizarre.

But Soler did brilliantly to beat Thibaut Courtois three times, particularly having missed his first attempt, which was retaken after the Belgian came off his line. Madrid were also without Casemiro after the Brazilian tested positive for coronavirus but a heavy loss continues a worrying trend of defensive vulnerability.

Solidity was the key to them

winning the title last season but they are now seven matches without a single clean sheet.

"We have to be strong in defence," said Zidane. "If we have this, we have quality up front to make a difference."

The first half turned on two decisions that went Valencia's way but Madrid could have few complaints. They took the lead when Benzema unleashed from the edge of the area but conceded a penalty when Jose Luis Gaya's cross struck the arm of Lucas Vazquez.

Chaos followed as Soler's penalty was saved by Courtois and then his rebound came back off the post to Yunus Musah, who finished on the half-volley. Replays showed Musah had

entered the box too early but Courtois was also off his line, making his save illegal and handing Soler a retake.

He made no mistake at the second attempt and then Valencia pulled in front when Varane skewed a cross towards his own-goal and got tangled with Courtois while attempting to clear.

The ball was shown to have crossed the line while Valencia were lucky to escape punishment for a tackle on Marcos Asensio by Denis Cheryshev in the build-up.

Madrid had work to do but Valencia started the second half stronger, Lee Kang-In hitting the post before two more penalties were awarded.

Marcelo wrapped his foot around Maxi Gomez in the area before Sergio Ramos tackled Musah and as the ball popped up, Madrid's captain knocked it away with his left hand. Soler stepped up for this third and fourth spot-kicks of the match and scored both to compound the holder's misery.

Real Sociedad regained top spot after winning against a depleted Granada, who could face punishment for fielding fewer than the required number of first-team players. Atletico Madrid are three points behind but have two games in hand.

Celta sack Garcia

Celta Vigo have sacked Oscar Garcia as coach, the club confirmed on Monday after a poor start to the season. Celta drew 1-1 away at Elche on Friday to make it seven matches in a row without a victory.

OTHER RESULTS:

Valladolid 2 Athletic Bilbao 1, Levante 1 Alaves 1. AFP



Arsenal's Spanish manager Mikel Arteta on Sunday (AFP)

Arteta frustrated after Aston Villa trounce Arsenal

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Mikel Arteta admitted Arsenal were unrecognisable from the side that has made plenty of progress in his first year in charge as Aston Villa stormed to a comprehensive 3-0 victory in an English Premier League (EPL) game at the Emirates on Sunday.

Bukayo Saka's own goal and a double from Ollie Watkins took Villa up to sixth, just three points off the top of the table with a game in hand.

Arsenal had beaten Manchester United at Old Trafford for the first time in 14 years last weekend in what appeared to be the latest sign the Gunners are heading in the right direction under Arteta.

But the Spaniard suffered the joint heaviest defeat of his managerial career in a chastening evening for the hosts, who were second best from start to finish.

A second consecutive home defeat for Arsenal sees them slip to 11th, four points off their major target for the season of a top-four finish.

"We performed below our standards and I have to say it's the first time I've seen us play and we weren't a team," said Arteta.

"We lost all the races, the duels and we were sloppy on the ball.

"It is a frustration. It takes a lot to build momentum, to build a way of being, living and performing and when something like that comes up it's a hard one to take."

Dean Smith's side did not look like a team lacking confidence as Arsenal struggled to cope with the movement of Grealish, Barkley and Watkins.

"We're a threat with them in the team. They're all blossoming really well but there's more to come from them," said Smith.

AFP

Ibrahimovic grabs point for Milan



AC Milan's Ibrahimovic celebrates after scoring against Hellas Verona

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Milan, Italy - Zlatan Ibrahimovic missed a penalty before scoring a late equaliser as Serie A leaders AC Milan salvaged a point in a 2-2 Serie A draw against Hellas Verona on Sunday to let rivals Juventus and Inter Milan off the hook after both were held 1-1 in earlier games.

"I'll let Franck Kessie take the next one, that would be better," said Ibrahimovic, who has now missed four of the last six pen-

ties he has taken for AC Milan.

Stefano Pioli's side are top of Serie A with a two-point advantage on second-placed Sassuolo, who were held to a goalless draw against Udinese on Friday.

Champions Juventus drop to fifth, four points behind the leaders after being held by Lazio.

Milan were two goals down in the San Siro after Antonin Barak opened the scoring in the sixth minute and Milan defender Davide Calabria bundled into his

own goal quarter of an hour later.

Ibrahimovic had a chance for the equaliser after 66 minutes, after Verona defender Giangiacomo Magnani's own goal had reduced the deficit for the hosts.

But the 39 year old fired over the crossbar before redeeming himself deep into injury time by heading in his eighth league goal this season. "With so many matches you are not always 100 per cent," said the Swedish striker. "It was important not to lose. Thank goodness there is a break now, so I rest a little."

Milan avoided a first league defeat after their 24-match unbeaten run was ended with a Europa League loss to Lille during the week.

Napoli move third after a Victor Osimhen header sealed a 1-0 win over Bologna.

OTHER RESULTS:

GERMAN LEAGUE
Bayer Leverkusen 4 Borussia Moenchengladbach 3.
FRENCH LEAGUE
Nice 1 Monaco 2, Lyon 2 Saint-Etienne 1. AFP

Ali Akbar's allround display lead OCT Ruwi to big victory

LOCAL CRICKET

Ali Akbar al Balushi's allround display led OCT Ruwi to a 51-run victory against OCT Al Hail-A in a 30-over -a-side Oman Cricket B Division clash at Al Amerat on Friday. And in a C Division T20 game on Friday, Design Group Engineering Consultants posted a two-run win over Al Waad Trading. Also, in D Division T20 matches held on Friday, Rahul Chadha's allround show led Vanderlande's to a 13-run win against Al Jadidi Engineering and Safara International recorded an easy win over Spanio VDD.

BRIEF SCORES:

B Division: OCT Ruwi 187-9 (Ali Akbar 97, Abdul Aziz Qader Baksh 27; Nadhir Ghulam 3-26, Hisham Shafi 2-20) beat OCT Al Hail-A 136 all out in 26.2 overs (Waleed Rahim 29, Faris Said 28; Najeeb Qader Baksh Karim 2-15, Ali Akbar 2-27).

C Division: Design Group 189-6



Rahul Chadha of Vanderlande

(Mohd Althaf 78 n.o., Karthik Rajappa 40; Sujith Kumar 2-30, Shine NV 2-31) beat Al Waad Trading 187-9 (Pradeesh Kumar 63, Suseendran 41; Satham Hussain 3-30, Althaf 2-25).

D Division: Vanderlande 129-7 (Rahul Chadha 62; Shahzad Ahmed 3-22) beat Al Jadidi Engineering 116 all out (Krishnan Dhanesh 30; Chadha 3-15, Mohd Muzaiyen 3-19).

D Division: Spanio VDD 148-6 (Sanjay Dhanjayan 37, Sajith Chenganassery 32; Mohd Shameel 4-30, Amol Dhote 2-32) lost to Safara International 149-5 in 18.5 overs (Sandesh Pusalkar 44, Mohd Ahmed 37; Faisal Majeed 2-24).

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IPL 2020





QUOTE OF THE DAY
The IPL final is huge. The skill level is high. Mumbai are a really good team. We are a young team but we have a lot of talent as well.
Kagiso Rabada
Delhi Capitals bowler, ahead of Tuesday's final against Mumbai Indians

Delhi Capitals look to thwart Mumbai Indians juggernaut

Dubai, UAE - "Football is a simple game; 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans win." You could twist that famous Gary Lineker quote and make it about the IPL. Eight teams play 60 games of 40 overs each and, at the end, the Mumbai Indians win - unless it's an even-number year.

The Mumbai Indians have won every IPL that's taken place in an odd-number year since 2013, but they have failed to make the final in each in-between season. Until now.

It was bound to happen at some point, given the ruthless, relentless T20 machine they have turned themselves into, and IPL 2020 will conclude with the Mumbai Indians looking to win their fifth title, and become the second team - after the Chennai Super Kings in 2010 and 2011 - to win back-to-back titles.

They have been the best team in the competition this year by pretty much any metric you can think of, but it's both the charm and the flaw of a league-cum-playoff competition that the best team won't necessarily get their hands on the trophy.

It's a year of bubbles, and the Delhi Capitals have floated on one that's come close to bursting on a few occasions, but they have evaded the jagged outcrops and reached the final for the first time. They might have lost five of their last seven games, and each of their three meetings with the Mumbai Indians, but all they need now is 40 good overs.



If you looked at the two line-ups at the start of the season, you wouldn't have thought one was significantly better than the other.

But where most of the Mumbai Indians' players have been touched by the gods of form, some of the Capitals' key performers, who have had outstanding seasons in the not-too-distant past, have struggled, and it's caused their line-up to

look unbalanced and disjointed.

The Mumbai Indians have the form, and a formidable amount of title-winning experience. Rohit Sharma has won five IPL titles, Kieron Pollard four, Hardik Pandya three, and Jasprit Bumrah, Krunal Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav two each.

But the Capitals aren't short of match-winners, and the likes of Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer remain the same players they

were at the start of the season even if they have not always looked it. And they will know that past IPL finals have been won by players who have had indifferent seasons. The rest of the tournament is over. Both teams begin anew, knowing they only need 40 good overs. And maybe a Super Over or two.

In the news
Mumbai's Trent Boult bowled

two overs during Qualifier 1 against the Capitals, and had to go off with a groin strain. Boult bowled in the nets on the eve of the final, and his captain sounded hopeful about his chances of playing the final. "Trent looks pretty good," Rohit said. "He's going to have a session today with all of us and we'll see how he goes. He pulled up pretty well in the last few days so fingers crossed, hopefully he plays."

Previous meetings

The Mumbai Indians did the double over the Delhi Capitals in the league phase, winning by five wickets in Abu Dhabi, courtesy quick fifties from Quinton de Kock and Yadav in a chase of 166, and by a comprehensive nine wickets in Dubai following incisive spells from Boult with the new ball and Bumrah through the middle overs, which kept the Capitals to 110 for nine.

TUESDAY'S FINAL
DUBAI, 6PM



MUMBAI INDIANS



DELHI CAPITALS

The record became 3-0 following Qualifier 1, also in Dubai, where Mumbai Indians piled on 200 after being sent in, with vital contributions from de Kock, Yadav, Ishan Kishan and Hardik.

The Capitals then floundered against the pace of Boult and Bumrah once again, slipping to zero for three before a face-saving 65 from Marcus Stoinis narrowed their margin of defeat to 57 runs

Likely teams

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma (capt), Quinton de Kock (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Rahul Chahar, Trent Boult/James Pattinson, Jasprit Bumrah.

Delhi Capitals: Shikhar Dhawan, Marcus Stoinis, Ajinkya Rahane, Shreyas Iyer (capt), Shimron Hetmyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Axar Patel, Praveen Dubey/Harshal Patel, Kagiso Rabada, R Ashwin, Anrich Nortje.

Cricinfo

STATS THAT MATTER



Kagiso Rabada currently wears the Purple Cap with 29 wickets, but **Jasprit Bumrah** is close on his heels with 27.



If he scores 68, **Shikhar Dhawan** will overtake KL Rahul's tally of 670 runs and end the season with the Orange Cap.



Four Mumbai batsmen - **Ishan Kishan** (29), **Hardik Pandya** (25), **Keiron Pollard** (22) and **Quinton de Kock** (21) - have hit at least 20 sixes in IPL 2020. No Delhi player has reached that mark, with Marcus Stoinis (15) the closest.



Marcus Stoinis has scored 352 runs and taken 12 wickets this season. He's one of only 12 allrounders to complete the 350-10 double in an IPL season. Hardik Pandya and Andre Russell did it last year, and Sunil Narine in 2018.

OUTSIDE IPL

Kohli given paternity leave, Rohit added to Test squad

INDIA TOUR OF AUSTRALIA
Mumbai, India - Virat Kohli has been granted paternity leave by the BCCI to return home after the first Test of the Australia tour in Adelaide, scheduled to start on December 17.

In another significant development, Rohit Sharma has been included in the Test squad for the Australia tour, after initially being left out because of a hamstring injury, but won't be a part of the white-ball leg of the tour.

Varun Chakravarthy, the spinner who received a maiden national call-up for India's T20I series in Australia, has been ruled out because of a shoulder injury. Fast bowler T Natarajan has replaced him in the squad.

Kohli and his wife Anushka Sharma are expecting their first child around the new year, which had put a question mark over the availability of the Indian captain for the full Australia tour, which is scheduled to run from November

27 to January 19. The tour will start with three ODIs, followed by three T20Is, with the four-Test Border Gavaskar Trophy played at the end.

The first Test, scheduled from December 17 to 21, will be India's first day-night Test overseas.

In a media release issued on Monday, the BCCI said Kohli would return to India after that match. The Indian board, however, did not specify whether Kohli would return to rejoin the Indian Test squad at a later stage.

In Kohli's absence, Ajinkya Rahane, who has been named vice-captain, is expected to be the interim Test captain.

Rohit to travel to Australia

On Monday the BCCI said Rohit would miss the limited-overs segment of the Australia tour during which he would focus on his rehab ahead of the Test



A file photo of Virat Kohli (left) and Rohit Sharma

series. The decision, the BCCI said, was taken in 'consultation' with Rohit and the selectors.

"In consultation with Mr Sharma, it has been decided to rest him for the ODIs and T20Is in Australia to regain full fitness and he has been included in India's Test squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy."

Although the BCCI release did not mention it, it is expected that Rohit will travel with the rest of

the Indian contingent to Australia immediately after the IPL final on Tuesday. Both India and Australia players from the IPL are expected to board a charter flight to Sydney, where India will start their quarantine but will be allowed to train.

Doubts persist over Saha

The BCCI revealed Wriddhiman Saha actually had hurt ham-

strings in both legs, which could put him in doubt for the Australia Test series. Saha was named along with Rishabh Pant in the Indian Test squad in October.

The BCCI did not indicate any estimated recovery period for Saha, but has not yet ruled him out yet. One positive development for the Indian team management could be the return of Ishant Sharma, who has been undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru since October.

Ishant, who is part of the Capitals in the IPL, had picked an abdominal muscle tear in the early weeks of the tournament this year. Once again, it is unclear whether Ishant is going to travel with the rest of the Indian contingent to Australia this week, or fly separately later.

Samson added to ODI team

Sanju Samson, who was the top

scorer for the Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2020, has been added to the ODI squad, after being named only for the T20Is earlier.

The selectors had not named any back-up to KL Rahul while announcing the original ODI squad, and Samson will now fill

that role. Natarajan, who had a standout IPL 2020 with the Sunrisers Hyderabad, has also earned his maiden call-up for the national team, with the T20I squad, in place of the injured Chakravarthy.

Cricinfo

REVISED SQUADS

T20Is: Virat Kohli (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul (vice-capt, wk), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, T Natarajan.

ODIs: Kohli (capt), Dhawan, Shubman Gill, Rahul (vice-capt, wk), Iyer, Pandey, Hardik

Pandya, Agarwal, Jadeja, Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Bumrah, Shami, Saini, Shardul Thakur, Samson.

Tests: Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vice-capt), Hanuma Vihari, Gill, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Bumrah, Shami, Umesh Yadav, Saini, Kuldeep Yadav, Jadeja, R Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj.



Oman's Al Faisal al Zubair competes in his McLaren 720S GT3 car (left) during the final round of the British GT Championship at the Silverstone circuit in UK on Sunday

A DEBUT TO CHERISH

- ♦ Al Faisal al Zubair and Martin Kodric claim Silver Cup podium on their maiden attempt at Silverstone 500
- ♦ The Omani driver and his Croatian teammate finished fourth overall at the British GT Championship race

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Following ten months of being away from the circuit, the return to the wheel was just as amazing as the result for Oman's talented Al Faisal al Zubair.

It was a debut to cherish for Al Faisal and his Croatian teammate Martin Kodric as they bagged a podium finish in the Silver Cup class and to add icing on the celebratory cake was an impressive overall fourth-place finish in the final race of the 2020 British GT Championship at the blue riband Silverstone 500 in UK on Sunday.

Al Faisal and Kodric were the third entry for 2 Seas Motorsport team in a McLaren 720S GT3 car. The 22 year old Al Faisal, racing in an Al Manar Financial Investments-sponsored No 11 car, displayed no signs of rustiness, despite the long break from the racing, as he and Kodric bounced back after posting modest qualifying times in the two sessions.

Al Faisal, the double Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East champion, made his first race appearance on the tracks since contesting the Hankook



Al Faisal al Zubair in action during the qualifying session at the Silverstone circuit

24Hr Dubai event in January.

Sandy Mitchell and Rob Collard of Barwell Motorsport won their first British GT title after their triumph at the Silverstone 500 on Sunday.

With nearly 30 drivers in the race, which featured some of the best drivers and also included former Formula One champion, Jenson Button, it was a tight competition from the start.

Button, the 2009 F1 champion, in the Jenson Team Rocket RJN McLaren he shared with

Chris Buncombe, finished 14th.

Al Faisal and Kodric's overall P4 and a third-place in the Silver Cup helped 2 Seas Motorsport also finish third in the team's standings after their other two entries - Angus Fender and Dean Macdonald (#9) ended fifth and the duo of Jordan Witt and Jack Mitchell (#10) came 12th.

For 2 Seas Motorsport, a team owned by Isa al Khalifa and Nicholas Cristofaro, it was a successful debut season with two cars in the top-five.

Action packed and challenging race

In a three-hour season final, which was packed with action and incident from lights to flag, Al Faisal and Kodric's impressive run got them the final podium spot in the hotly-contested Silver Cup.

Al Faisal began the race at P11 after the two qualifying sessions saw him and Kodric notching up P5 and P14 in the first and second qualifying sessions.

Starting the race, Al Faisal



It was a great run with Martin at the championship on our debut. I am very happy to have clinched a third place in the Silver Cup class and an overall fourth spot.

AL FAISAL AL ZUBAIR

quickly moved to P8 and then climbed to fourth place before making a pit stop.

A slight delay during the pit stop pushed their advantage back and Kodric had to resume at P15. The Croatian got the team

back to tenth before Al Faisal took over the wheel and reached P6 with an hour to go.

In the final session, Kodric managed a P4 and ensured that the same place at the end of 180 minutes.

'Delighted with success on return'

Speaking after the P4 overall finish, Al Faisal said, "I am delighted with my success on return to the circuit. Thanks to my teammate, we could come up with such a good result in one of the top races at a world-class Silverstone circuit.

"It was a great run with Martin at the championship on our debut. I am very happy to have clinched a third place in the Silver Cup class and an overall fourth spot. It is an achievement that I am proud of, as the race featured much experienced drivers and former champions.

"Overall, it was a tough race, but I will cherish the experience at the Silverstone circuit for long."

The Omani driver added, "Despite the lack of preparations, we were close to an overall third but a mistake during a pit stop cost us dear. However, the team owners are satisfied with the result, which was our primary goal. "I have gained a lot with this participation, not just in confidence, but also in experience. This will stand me in good stead when I begin my new season."

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Guardiola, Klopp unite to fight for five subs in Premier League

Jurgen Klopp (left) and Pep Guardiola

Manchester, UK - Pep Guardiola and Jurgen Klopp united to fight for a U-turn to the English Premier League's three-substitution rule after Manchester City and Liverpool played out a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

A share of the points between the sides that have combined to win the title for the past three seasons leaves Liverpool in third just a point off the top, while City sit five points further back in 11th but with a game in hand.

After a pulsating first 45 minutes, the tempo eased off in the

second with Liverpool suffering an injury blow when Trent Alexander-Arnold was forced off with a calf problem.

Guardiola and Klopp have been outspoken advocates of the use of five substitutes, which was used in the English Premier League (EPL) at the end of last season and is being used in all other major leagues in Europe this season. However, the EPL's top teams lost a vote for it to remain for the 2020-21 season with fears it only serves to benefit the

clubs with bigger squads.

"We speak about how we have to fight again and again about five substitutions," said Guardiola when asked about the subject of his post-match conversation with Klopp.

"All around the world there is five substitutions. Here we believe we are a special league with just three players, we don't protect the players.

"Look at Trent Alexander-Arnold, an international English player, he is injured. That's why it is a disaster.

"With this calendar which comes from a special year before, I will demand, if the people allow my voice, five substitutions have to come back for the players, the managers, everyone to do it. If not, it's difficult to sustain it."

Klopp accused Premier League CEO Richard Masters of a 'lack of leadership' over the matter. "It's not an advantage, it's a necessity," added the Liverpool boss.

AFP

Eto'o unhurt after car crash in Cameroon

London, UK - Former Cameroon captain Samuel Eto'o has escaped uninjured from a car crash on Sunday, according to a BBC report. The 39 year old was travelling between Douala and Bafoussam in Cameroon when the 4x4 he was travelling in was involved in a head-on collision with a bus.

The front end of the 4x4 vehicle was badly damaged but fortunately no-one was injured. A spokesman for Eto'o, Frank Happi, told BBC Sport Africa that the former Barcelona star had no injuries after visiting a hospital for a check-up. Eto'o decided against pressing charges against the driver, who had initially tried absconding from the scene before being apprehended.

Agencies

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PFIZER SURGES ON VACCINE
Pfizer stocks surged 15 per cent on Monday prior to the opening of Wall Street trading after the company announced its vaccine is '90 per cent effective' against COVID-19 infections

BUSINESS

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MARKET WATCH

MSM30	3,547.58
BSE Sensex	42,597.43

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs	192.23
Pakistani Rs	413.86
Bangladeshi Taka	220.37
Philippine Peso	125.39
Sri Lankan Rs	480.14

*Rates as on November 09
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

German exports rise again in Sept as China demand soars

Germany's exports rose for the fifth straight month in September, official data showed on Monday, with China leading recovering demand as many Asian economies put the coronavirus pandemic behind them.

Exports grew 2.3 per cent month-on-month, after a 2.4 per cent rise in August, federal statistics agency Destatis said in seasonally adjusted figures.

Imports fell 0.1 per cent in August.

Germany shipped goods abroad worth €109.8bn and imported goods worth €89bn.

The fifth-straight rise follows a plunge in activity in March and April, when virus lockdowns closed factories and businesses.

Exports in September were still 3.8 per cent down on the same month last year, and 7.7 per cent below the pre-crisis level of February 2020.

Singapore Airlines suffers record loss as virus hits aviation

Singapore Airlines reported a record net loss for its fiscal second quarter as the carrier continued to reel from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on global air travel.

The airline, which has shed thousands of jobs and grounded much of its fleet, said its net loss in July-September totalled Sg\$2.34bn (US\$1.7bn), down from a net profit of Sg\$94.5mn in the same period the year before.

Revenue for the quarter plunged 81.4 per cent to Sg\$783.8mn, the airline said in a statement.

First half net losses totalled Sg\$3.47bn.

'The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to remain patchy, given the new waves of infections around the world and concerns about imported cases,' it said.

Oman's non-oil exports fall as global recession hits demand

Imports fell 20% to RO3.6bn in first half of 2020; re-exports up 6.4%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's non-oil exports plunged nearly 22 per cent in the first six months of 2020, marking the worst drop in many years, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed global demand and caused disruption in international trade.

The total value of Oman's non-oil exports dropped 21.6 per cent to RO1.397bn during the January-June period of this year compared to RO1.783bn worth of shipments recorded in the same period of last year, according to statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

As the COVID-19 pandemic weighed heavily on the Middle East and Asian economies this year, the sultanate's exports to its main trading partners sharply dropped due to the weak demand and supply-chain disruptions caused by the pandemic during the second quarter.

While the sultanate's non-oil exports to Saudi Arabia plunged more than 39 per cent to RO226.2mn in the first six months of 2020, exports to the UAE grew at a lower rate of 4.3



per cent to RO305.1mn this year. Exports to Qatar decreased by 1.3 per cent to RO124.4mn.

Oman's non-oil shipments to India fell more than 15 per cent to RO118.4mn during the first half of 2020 compared with RO139.7mn in the corresponding period of last year. Exports to the United States decreased 1.2 per

cent to RO110.6mn during the January-June period on a year-on-year basis.

The exports to other countries combined decline more than 30 per cent to RO513mn this year compared to RO739.6mn recorded in the first half of 2019.

The export of base-metals and related products, which ac-

count for a major chunk of Oman's non-oil exports, decreased more than 9 per cent to RO408.9mn in the first six months of this year from RO449.8mn worth of shipments in the same period of 2019.

The export of chemical products plunged by 45.4 per cent to RO272.1mn during the January-

June period of 2020 from RO498.6mn recorded for the same period of 2019. The exports of mineral products, however, slightly increased by 1.2 per cent to RO178.9mn this year.

Total re-exports from Oman, however, grew 6.4 per cent in the first six months of 2020 to RO741.2mn compared to

RO696.4mn in the same period of the previous year. Value of re-exports to the UAE rose nearly 18 per cent to RO225.8mn, while re-exports to Qatar grew 22 per cent to RO175mn this year. Re-exports to Iran, however, dropped 65 per cent to RO39mn in the first half of 2020 from RO112.8mn in the same period a year ago.

On the other hand, Oman's total merchandise imports fell more than 20 per cent to RO3.589bn during the January-June period of 2020 compared to RO4.5bn worth of imports recorded in the corresponding period of 2019, the NCSI statistics showed.

The imports from the UAE plunged 21 per cent to RO1.484bn in the first six months of 2020, while imports from Saudi Arabia increased 6.3 per cent to RO183.5mn during the same period.

Oman's imports from China declined 4.6 per cent to RO277.4mn in the first half of 2020 against RO290.7mn in the same period a year ago. Imports from India also dropped nearly 23 per cent to RO172.1mn in the first six months of 2020.

Oil prices surge on virus vaccine progress by Pfizer

London, UK - Oil prices rocketed on Monday on coronavirus vaccine hopes following successful trials.

Already up strongly on Joe Biden's US election win, oil prices accelerated gains after Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said their vaccine was 90 per cent effective in preventing CCOVID-19 infections.

Brent crude surged 8.4 per cent in London to US\$42.77 a barrel, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for December delivery jumped as much as 11.3 per cent to trade at US\$41.33 per barrel in New York.

Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman al Saud said on Monday that the OPEC+ deal on oil output cuts could be tweaked if there is consensus within the expanded



group of crude-producing nations.

In August, ministers of OPEC nations and other major producers stuck to an agreement to lower oil production, underlining that only strict compliance could restore stability to prices sent plummeting by the coronavirus pandemic.

While prices shot up on Monday on coronavirus vaccine

hopes following successful trials by Pfizer and BioNTech, crude consumption is far from pre-confinement levels - which were already relatively low.

"With the consensus of everybody, we could navigate with this agreement and tweak this agreement, subject to what we may see in the future," Prince Abdulaziz told an Abu Dhabi conference.

He was addressing the virtual meeting shortly before the Pfizer announcement.

Under the terms of an agreement struck in April, OPEC and the so-called OPEC+ pledged to cut output by 9.7mn barrels per day (bpd) from May 1 until the end of June. The cuts were then to be gradually eased from July, to 7.7mn bpd until December.

Agencies

MTCIT accredits two IT firms for cloud and hosting services

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) announced on Monday the accreditation of two new companies - Oman Data Park and Data2cloud - within the ministry's Accreditation Program for IT service providers.

The ministry has accredited these two IT service providers for delivering cloud and hosting services, and more service providers are in the accreditation pipeline that will be added to the list soon, MTCIT said in a press statement.

The programme is targeting all IT service providers who are wishing to serve the government administrative units, including critical national infrastructure

companies and government-owned companies.

The Accreditation Program is a comprehensive programme established by MTCIT to assist in boosting the national economy. It aims to standardise and enhance the quality of delivered IT services in the sultanate and to provide job opportunities for Omani start-ups.

National standards with technical and administrative baseline requirements have to be fulfilled by IT service providers in order to be accredited, consequently, that will reflect in elevating the quality of the services delivered in the market, increase the local competition and build the required competencies that meet not only the national demand but also will enable national companies to compete at inter-

national levels. Additionally, this will build more trust to invest in local companies, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology said.

The Accreditation Program was launched at the end of last year and is implemented through several planned phases, at which each phase will cover an additional number of IT services.

The first phase of the programme focuses on service providers who are delivering security assessment and cloud and hosting services.

Oman Data Park was established in 2012 and owns three data centres in Knowledge Oasis Muscat, Wattayah and Duqm, through which it provides hosting services, cloud services, cybersecurity services and virtual data centres.

Stock markets rally on Joe Biden's victory, vaccine hopes

London, UK - World stock markets rallied on Monday as Joe Biden's election win reduced uncertainty and provided hope that the US would finally agree on a stimulus package to prop up the ailing economy.

European stock markets rocketed on Monday on Biden's victory and coronavirus vaccine hopes following successful trials.

Already up strongly on Biden's US election win, markets massively accelerated gains after Pfizer and BioNTech said their vaccine was 90 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19 infections.

London's benchmark FTSE 100 surged 5.5 per cent in mid-

day deals.

In the eurozone, Frankfurt jumped 6 per cent, Paris soared 7.1 per cent, Milan won 6.2 per cent and Madrid 9.4 per cent.

Dow Jones futures were up 5.4 per cent ahead of the Wall Street open.

"Stock markets surged on some extremely positive news from Pfizer and BioNTech," said Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Markets.com.

"The Dow is now seen up 1,300 points (at the official open). Coming on top of the wave of relief from Joe Biden's victory, it's proving a spicy cocktail for stocks."

Dollar gains were held in

check by expectations of a big spending bill and US rates being kept at record lows for the foreseeable future.

The Chinese yuan reached its highest level since June 2018 on easing concerns about relations between Beijing and Washington.

While Democrat Biden has secured enough votes for victory, Republican rival Donald Trump has refused to accept defeat, with legal challenges and recounts looming.

Oanda analyst Craig Erlam said Trump's actions are seen by markets 'as achieving nothing more than delaying the inevitable'.



A pedestrian walks past an electronic board displaying the closing numbers of Nikkei 225 index in Tokyo, Japan on Monday (AFP)

Stocks already began surging last week as it became apparent that Biden was on course for victory and that Republicans would likely hold the Senate, allowing them to rein in any big regulatory or tax policies.

On Monday in Asia, Tokyo's main stocks index soared more than 2 per cent to end at a 29-year high.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore and Seoul all gained more than 1 per cent, while Bangkok rose over 2 per cent.

Traders are now looking to Capitol Hill, hoping for a fresh rescue package for the US economy after lawmakers failed to

hammer out anything ahead of the vote despite months of haggling.

"More fiscal support is likely forthcoming," said Invesco strategist Brian Levitt.

Observers said better-than-expected US jobs data last week could complicate moves to push a bigger spending bill through Congress, with Republicans already suggesting they would rather pass a more targeted package.

The economy added 638,000 jobs last month, far more than analysts estimated, and the unemployment rate fell one percentage point.

AFP

MSM falls 0.13%, volumes surge

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) fell by 0.13 per cent to close at 3,547.58 points on Monday.

Trading activity highly improved from the previous session as turnover jumped by 793.23 per cent to RO3.75mn and volumes surged 406.07 per cent to 12.29mn shares.

While Financial index fell 0.08 per cent, Services index rose 0.27 per cent. Industrial index remained flat for the day. The MSM Shariah index closed down by 0.07 per cent at 515.17 points.

Market breadth remained positive as ten companies closed up, while five companies closed down. The rest 16 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

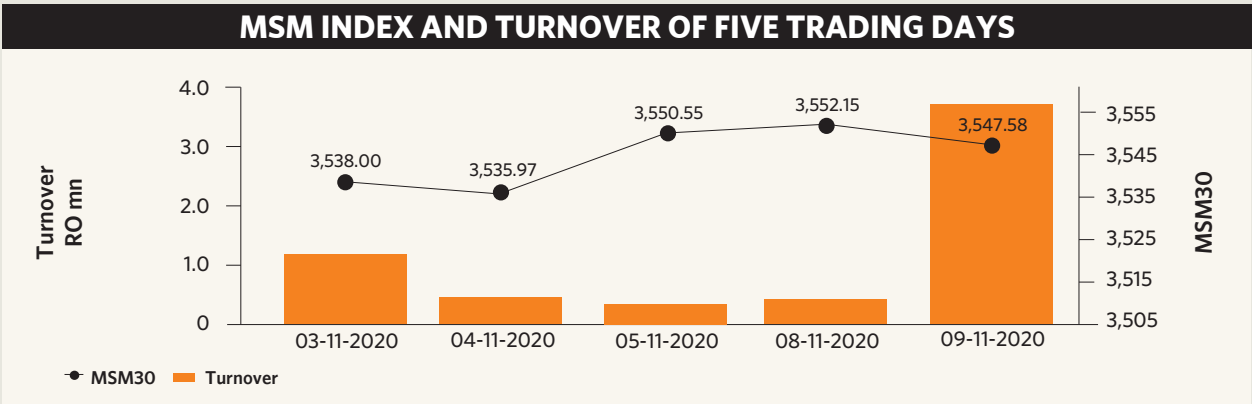
Top gainers were Majan College (4.12



per cent), Al Jazeera Steel Products (2.48 per cent), Oman Arab Bank (2.44 per cent) and Sohar Power (2.27 per cent).

Top losers were Al Anwar Ceramic

Tiles (-2.42 per cent), National Bank of Oman (-1.29 per cent), Bank Muscat (-1.1 per cent) and Bank Nizwa (-1.01 per cent).



Etihad restructures to mid-sized carrier

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Etihad Airways has announced a new organisational structure that will position the Abu Dhabi-based airline's business to deliver on its mandate in the wake of COVID-19 and meet the challenges of the global downturn in aviation head on.

The restructuring sees the airline continuing its transformation into a mid-sized, full-service carrier concentrating on its fleet of widebody aircraft, with a leaner, flatter and scaleable organisational structure that supports organic growth as the world returns to flying.

By embedding the new structure, the airline will strengthen its focus on its core offering of safety, security, service; continue developing its industry-leading health and hygiene programme Etihad Wellness, and prioritise innovation and sustainability, which are essential to the future of the airline.

Tony Douglas, group CEO, Etihad Aviation Group, said, "After our best-ever first quarter performance, none of us could have predicted the challenges that lay ahead in the remainder



of this year. I'm extremely proud of the way my leadership team and the whole Etihad family have navigated the COVID-19 crisis so far, and I must express my gratitude to each member of the team for continually proving our adaptability to the most unexpected of circumstances."

"As a responsible business, we can no longer continue to incrementally adapt to a marketplace that we believe has changed for the foreseeable future. That is why we are taking definitive and decisive action to adjust our business and position ourselves proudly as a mid-sized carrier. The first stage of this is an operational model change that will see us restruc-

ture our senior leadership team and our organisation to allow us to continue delivering on our mandate, ensuring long-term sustainability, and contributing to the growth and prominence of Abu Dhabi."

Robin Kamark, chief commercial officer, has decided to leave the business, and following his departure, the business units within Commercial will be separated and transferred under the leadership of Mohammad al Bulooki, COO, Adam Boukadida, chief financial officer, and Terry Daly, who will assume the role of executive director - guest experience, brand and marketing.
WAM

UAE oil reserves reach 97.8bn barrels

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The UAE's overall crude oil reserves reached 97.8bn barrels in 2019, according to figures released today by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA).

The figures showed that the country's production of crude oil stood at 3.058mn barrels per day (bpd) during the same period.



FCSA also reported that natural gas production in the UAE

reached 109.8bn cubic feet in 2019.

The country's overall refining capacity reached 1.13mn bpd in 2019, including 817,000 bpd at Al Ruwais Refinery and 85,000 at Abu Dhabi Refinery. Jebel Ali and Fujairah refineries processed 140,000 barrels per day and 85,000 barrels per day, respectively.

WAM

Egypt's GDP grows stronger despite pandemic, but so does poverty

Cairo, Egypt - Despite the pandemic and tourism collapse, Egypt is projecting healthy economic growth this year, even as one third of the Arab world's most populous country remains mired in poverty.

Critics question, however, how much of the GDP growth is driven by ostentatious mega-projects, such as a new administrative capital being built in the desert, financed by ballooning debt that will have to be repaid.

The International Monetary Fund in September predicted economic growth of 3.6 per cent for 2020. Although lower than earlier forecasts, this still makes Egypt the only North African economy set to expand this year.

At the same time, almost one third of Egypt's more than 100mn people live below the poverty line, defined as surviving on less than US\$2 a day, according to the most recent data, for 2017-18.

Egypt's government initially predicted 6 per cent GDP growth for the fiscal year 2020, which ran from early July 2019 to the end of June 2020.

Towards the end of that twelve-month period, the novel coronavirus outbreak hit, infecting more than 100,000 people in Egypt since and killing over 6,000 of them, according to official data.

The public health crisis forced lengthy lockdowns and hit the tourism sector of the country famed for its archeological heritage and Red Sea beaches, at the cost of countless livelihoods.

Around 2.7mn jobs were lost in April-June, mainly in retail and wholesale, manufacturing, tourism, transport and construction, pushing official unemploy-



Workers of Egyptian non-governmental organisation Egyptian Food Bank prepare cartons with foodstuffs to distribute to people who lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic crisis in Cairo, Egypt (AFP)

ment to 9.6 per cent, according to World Bank data.

One of the many people left jobless was a hotel worker who gave his name as Gaber (36) from southern Egypt, and who was laid off in April by a Red Sea resort suddenly devoid of holiday-makers.

Gaber told AFP he is hoping desperately to find another job as COVID-19 confinement measures are eased, explaining that "I support my four children, my wife and my mother".

Some economists argue the solid GDP growth is the fruit of tough reforms taken since President Abdel Fattah al Sisi took office in 2014, including austerity measures and a devaluation of the Egyptian pound.

Ahmed al Safti, managing director of the Delta research centre in Cairo, said the currency devaluation by nearly 48 per

Around 2.7mn jobs were lost in April-June, mainly in retail and wholesale, tourism, transport and construction, pushing official unemployment to 9.6 per cent

cent in November 2016 spurred investment and helped improve the balance of payments. The currency devaluation, slashed state subsidies and new taxes qualified Egypt for a three-year US\$12bn IMF loan from 2016.

Sisi's government has touted the tough measures as essential to revitalising an economy that had taken multiple hits since the 2011 popular uprising that top-

pled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak.

Tourism revenues have grown in the years since, and reached a new record of US\$12.6bn in 2018-19. Remittances from Egyptians living abroad also hit a record level, of about US\$28bn in 2019-20.

But the wealth has been distributed unevenly and many are missing out. Official figures show that 32.5 per cent of Egyptians lived below the poverty line in 2017-18, many impacted by the austerity measures.

"The reforms came at a price," said Safti, "But this price would have been far higher if the government had not implemented the reforms."

The coronavirus outbreak further exacerbated the crisis, especially among the 5mn informal sector workers.

AFP

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EU to slap tariffs on US goods over Boeing aid

Brussels, Belgium - The EU said on Monday it is pushing ahead with tariffs against the US as part of the long-running Boeing-Airbus row, despite hope for a trade truce with Joe Biden's election.

The decision is the latest twist in the 16-year trade battle over aircraft subsidies that turned increasingly sour under the protectionist instincts of US President Donald Trump.

Some had suggested Europe might delay the tit-for-tat levies with the victory of Biden, who will replace Trump in January and is seen as more sympathetic to Europe and more of a multilateralist.

"The US has imposed tariffs following the WTO ruling in the Airbus case," said the EU's top trade official, Valdis Dombrovskis ahead of a virtual EU trade ministers meeting.

"Now, we have a WTO ruling also in our Boeing case, allowing us to impose our tariffs and that's what we are doing," EU executive vice president Dombrovskis said.

Instead of hitting the pause button, Dombrovskis urged Washington to pursue a comprehensive deal on aviation subsidies worldwide and to bring the row to a close.

"As it has been stated on numbers of occasions from the EU side, we're ready to suspend or withdraw our tariffs anytime



when the US suspends or withdraws their tariffs," Dombrovskis said.

He spoke before the EU trade ministers were to discuss how Europeans can better face up to challenges from both the US and China.

Reactions in Europe 'have shown that there are great expectations after the election victory of Joe Biden', said German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier, an ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"The hope is that the US will return to multilateral approaches, also in trade," added the minister, whose export pow-

The EU is set to impose tariffs on aircraft made in the US, tractors, sweet potatoes, peanuts, ketchup and Pacific salmon

erhouse Germany was the most exposed to Trump's protectionist onslaught against Europe.

The aviation feud long pre-dates Trump, but Washington

quickly embraced the opportunity to impose US\$7.5bn in tariffs against Europeans after being cleared to do so by the WTO.

Washington imposed punitive tariffs of 25 per cent on iconic EU products such as cheese and olive oil and put a 15 per cent tariff on Airbus planes in March.

According to a list of targets seen by AFP, the EU is expected to impose tariffs on aircraft made in the US, along with tractors, sweet potatoes, peanuts, frozen orange juice, tobacco, ketchup and Pacific salmon.

AFP

Turkish lira rallies after Finance Minister resigns

Istanbul, Turkey - The Turkish lira, one of the world's worst performing currencies, gained around 2.5 per cent against the dollar on Monday after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son-in-law Berat Albayrak stepped down as Finance Minister.

The lira was 8.19 against the dollar at 0800 GMT, after opening the day at around 8.40.

In an unexpected move, Albayrak, Finance Minister since 2018, resigned late Sunday citing health concerns.

"After serving in ministerial posts for nearly five years, I took the decision not to continue my duty [as finance minister] due to health issues," he said in a statement on his official Instagram account.

The post created initial confusion among Turkish officials, and it was not clear if Erdogan will approve his resignation.

It came just a day after Erdogan ousted central bank governor Murat Uysal, who came under sharp criticism for being unable to prevent the lira from losing roughly a third of its value against the dollar this year.

Former finance minister Naci Agbal replaced Uysal, who served in his role for only 16 months.

Turkish media speculated that Albayrak opposed Agbal's appointment.

The central bank's new governor said the bank's primary objective was to achieve and



Turkish Minister of Finance and Treasury, Berat Albayrak (AFP)

maintain price stability.

The central bank 'will decisively use all policy tools in pursuit of its price stability objective', Agbal said in a statement, adding that the current situation would be reviewed ahead of the next monetary policy committee meeting on November 19.

During Albayrak's two years as Finance Minister, Turkey suffered a currency crisis in 2018, before hitting multiple record lows against the dollar this year.

In August, Albayrak drew ire when he downplayed the lira's sharp fall.

"Are you paid in dollars?" he

asked in a live television interview.

"Do you have any business in dollars?" he demanded in comments that went viral on social media at the time.

The 42 year old is married to Erdogan's elder daughter Esra with four children.

Albayrak has frequently accompanied Erdogan on foreign trips and policy meetings with world leaders.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu's resignation earlier this year was not approved by the Turkish President. Soylu remains in his post.

AFP

Central bank sees French GDP down 9-10% in 2020

Paris, France - France's central bank said on Monday it expects economic activity to decline between 9 and 10 per cent this year, a bigger drop than previously forecast due to a new lockdown.

While the new confinement measures will deepen the recession, the Banque de France believes that they will be far less destructive than during the country's first confinement earlier this year.

"Before the second wave, we thought the recession would be a little less than 9 per cent, we think today that for 2020 as a whole it will be between 9 and 10 per cent," Banque de France chief Francois Villeroy de Galhau said on RTL.

The central bank had forecast in September that economic activity, or GDP, would decline by 8.7 per cent this year.

But that was before the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in

France in October, which led the government to impose a second lockdown.

The bank estimated that the new lockdown will cost the nation's economy 12 per cent of GDP compared to a normal week in November.

The Banque de France said economic activity was running 4 per cent below pre-pandemic levels before the new lockdown was imposed at the end of October.

Restaurants, non-food retail and recreation activities are being hit the worst by the new restrictions which shut or tightly restricted their activities.

But the lockdown is somewhat less restrictive than the first with more businesses allowed to operate, and the 12 per cent drop in November activity pales in comparison with 31 per cent registered in April this year.

AFP

Richard Branson's Virgin Hyperloop carries passengers for the first time

Los Angeles, US - The Virgin Hyperloop made its first journey carrying passengers on Sunday, in a test the company claimed represented a major step forward for the 'groundbreaking' technology capable of transporting people at 1,000km an hour.

The Hyperloop is intended to carry passengers in small pods through a vacuum tube, with proponents arguing it could revolutionise high-speed travel.

Virgin says the Hyperloop will be able to reach top speeds of 1,080km an hour - projecting a 45-minute journey from Los Angeles to San Francisco - and will produce no carbon emissions.

But until Sunday the technology, first proposed by eccentric US tech magnate Elon Musk in 2012, had not been tested with people on board.

Two Virgin employees made



Two Virgin employees made the 500m journey in a two-person vehicle in just 15 seconds at a test site

the 500m journey in a two-person vehicle in just 15 seconds at a test site in the Nevada desert.

Passenger Sara Luchian told the BBC she felt the trip was 'exciting' both psychologically

and physically', and reported no discomfort.

Once brought into regular use,

the pods will be able to transport up to 28 people at a time, Virgin says, with larger models for moving goods also in development.

Virgin's Hyperloop has raised more than US\$400mn, largely from company CEO Richard Branson and the logistics company DP World, which is owned by the Dubai government. Virgin is one of a number of companies working to develop the technology.

But while Branson on Sunday hailed the success of the 'groundbreaking' Hyperloop, concerns have dogged developers about just how safe the technology would be.

One researcher at Sweden's Royal Institute of Technology, argued that the high speeds involved could turn the Hyperloop into a 'barf ride'.

AFP

SoftBank's H1 net profit surges more than four-fold to \$18bn

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's SoftBank Group said on Monday its first-half net profit soared 346.7 per cent, sealing a strong recovery after a massive annual loss, as tech stocks rally and the firm sheds assets to shore up its finances.

Net profit for the six months to September came to 1.88tn yen (US\$18bn), up from 421.6bn yen a year earlier, the conglomerate said.

The profit surge was mainly driven by gains on its investments, which topped 2tn yen for the period.

However, it said it would not offer a forecast 'as it is difficult to foresee consolidated results due to numerous uncertain factors'.

SoftBank reported a nearly US\$9bn net loss in the previous full fiscal year, but quickly returned to the black in the

first quarter.

Masahiko Ishino, an analyst at Tokai Tokyo Research Institute, said the firm had displayed 'a steady performance' in line with robust gains in the global equities markets.

Founder Masayoshi Son has transformed the telecoms company into an investment and tech behemoth with stakes in some of Silicon Valley's hottest startups through its US\$100bn Vision Fund.

He has battled opposition to his strategy of pouring money into startups - including troubled office-sharing firm WeWork - which some analysts say are overvalued and lack clear profit models.

Son has insisted that his strategy is sound, and that SoftBank's portfolio is broad enough to weather the storm.

The firm said its SoftBank Vi-



Masayoshi Son

sion Fund saw strong results thanks to recovering stock markets and increases in portfolio firms where 'exits have been decided or have new funding rounds, or [which] are benefiting from the accelerated adoption of digital services during the COVID-19 crisis'.

The results come after SoftBank launched an aggressive plan to sell up to US\$41bn in assets to finance a stock buy-back and reduce its debt.

It has ended up far surpassing that goal, raising US\$56bn, and said plans for the additional money made have 'yet to be determined'.

'Concern for future waves'

'Given the current concern for future waves of COVID-19, SoftBank Group believes it needs to further enhance cash

reserves,' the firm said in a statement.

In September, it announced an agreement to sell British chip designer Arm to US firm NVIDIA for up to US\$40bn, potentially creating a new giant in the industry.

If approved, the deal will be one of the largest acquisitions in the world this year and propel NVIDIA to the forefront of the semiconductor sector.

But the sale faces challenges, including securing approval from regulators in Britain, Europe, the United States and China.

Still, SoftBank 'has a great track-record of somehow taking its sale of assets to the finish line against all odds', said Amir Anzarvadeh, strategist at Asymmetric Advisors, in a note.

Paired with the recent recov-

ery in technology stocks, SoftBank's asset sale strategy appears to be paying off, analysts said.

'Son has walked the talk' by meeting and then exceeding the asset-selling target, Ishino said.

"We are now paying attention to what action he is going to take next, at a time when SoftBank Group is turning into an investment firm," Ishino said about SoftBank.

Son has struggled to interest investors in a second round of the Vision Fund as he deals with the woes of some of his most high-profile investments, notably WeWork.

Once hailed as a dazzling unicorn valued at US\$47bn, the office-sharing startup has suffered a stunning fall from grace.

AFP

BIDEN

BIDEN BEGINS TO MOVE; TRUMP NOT TO CONCEDE

Washington, US - US President-elect Joe Biden took the first steps on Sunday towards moving into the White House in 73 days, as Donald Trump again refused to admit defeat and tried to sow doubt about the election results.

With congratulations pouring in from world leaders and supporters nursing hangovers after a night of celebrations, Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris announced they would receive a joint briefing in Wilmington, Delaware from their transition COVID-19 advisory team.

Biden would then deliver remarks on coronavirus and economic recovery.

They also launched a transition website, BuildBackBetter.com, and a Twitter feed, @Transition46.

Meanwhile, Trump played golf at his course near Washington, the same place where he was on Saturday when news broke that Biden had secured enough Electoral College votes for victory. 'Since when does the Lamestream Media call who our next president will be?' Trump complained in a tweet on Sunday.

Trump, who has no public events scheduled for Monday, plans to file a string of lawsuits in the coming week, according to his lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who said he had 'a lot of evidence' of fraud.

But former president George W Bush said the 'outcome is clear' and added that he had called 'President-elect' Biden and Harris to extend his congratulations.

Bush said in a statement that 'the American people can have confidence that this election was fundamentally fair... We must come together for the sake of our families and neighbours, and for our nation and its future'.

Biden's transition website lists four priorities: COVID-19, economic recovery, racial equity and climate change.

'The team being assembled will meet these challenges on Day One,' it said in a reference to January 20, 2021, when Biden will be sworn in as the 46th president of the United States.

Biden, who turns 78 on November 20, is the oldest person ever elected to the White House. Harris (56), a senator from California, is the first woman, first Black person and first South Asian person to be elected vice president.

Biden plans to name a task force on Monday to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 237,000 people dead in the United States and is surging across the country.

He has also announced plans to rejoin the Paris climate accord and will reportedly issue an executive order on



President Donald Trump returns to the White House from playing golf after Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 election, in Washington, DC on Saturday (AFP)

The first lawsuit will be Pennsylvania. The second will either be Michigan or Georgia. And over the course of the week, we [Donald Trump's team] should get it all pulled together

RUDY GIULIANI

his first day in office reversing Trump's travel ban on mostly Muslim countries.

Biden has vowed to name a Cabinet that reflects the diversity of the country, although he may have trouble gaining approval for more progressive appointees if Republicans retain control of the Senate - an outcome that will depend on two runoff races in Georgia in January.

'Accept the inevitable'

Biden, who after John F Kennedy is just the second Catholic to be elected US president, attended church on Sunday morning in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware.

He also visited the graves of his son, Beau Biden, who died of brain cancer in 2015, and his first wife and daughter, who died in a 1972 car accident.

The Trump campaign has mounted legal challenges to the results in several states, but no evidence has emerged of any widespread irregularities that would affect the results.

Giuliani told the Fox News show *Sunday Morning Futures* that Trump's team would file a lawsuit in Pennsylvania against officials 'for violating civil rights, for conducting an unfair election (and) for violating the law of the state'.

"The first lawsuit will be Pennsylvania. The second will either be Michigan or Georgia. And over the course of the week, we should get it all pulled together," Giuliani said.

First Lady Melania Trump also chipped in on Sunday, tweeting: 'The American people deserve fair elections. Every legal - not illegal - vote should be counted.'

Speaking on CNN's *State of the Union* on Sunday, senior Biden advisor Symone Sanders dismissed the court challenges as 'baseless legal strategies'.

Biden received nearly 74.6mn votes to Trump's 70.4mn nationwide and has a 279-214 lead in the Electoral College that determines the presidency.

Biden also leads in Arizona, which has 11 electoral votes, and Georgia, which has 16. If he wins both, he would finish with 306 electoral votes - the same total won by Trump in 2016 when he upset Hillary Clinton.

Only two Republican senators, Mitt Romney and Lisa Murkowski, have congratulated Biden.

Democratic Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina said the Republican Party has a 'responsibility' to help convince Trump it is time to give up.

Romney, who voted to convict Trump at his impeachment trial, said the President will eventually 'accept the inevitable'.

The Utah senator added that he 'would prefer to see the world watching a more graceful departure, but that's just not in the nature of the man'.

'Do not concede, Mr. President'

Trump ally Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said the 74 year old president should keep fighting.

'We will work with Biden if he wins, but Trump has not lost,' Graham said on Fox News. 'Do not concede, Mr. President. Fight hard.'

In a victory speech on Saturday, Biden promised to unify the bitterly divided nation and reached out to Trump supporters, saying, "They're not our enemies, they're Americans."

"Let's give each other a chance," he said.

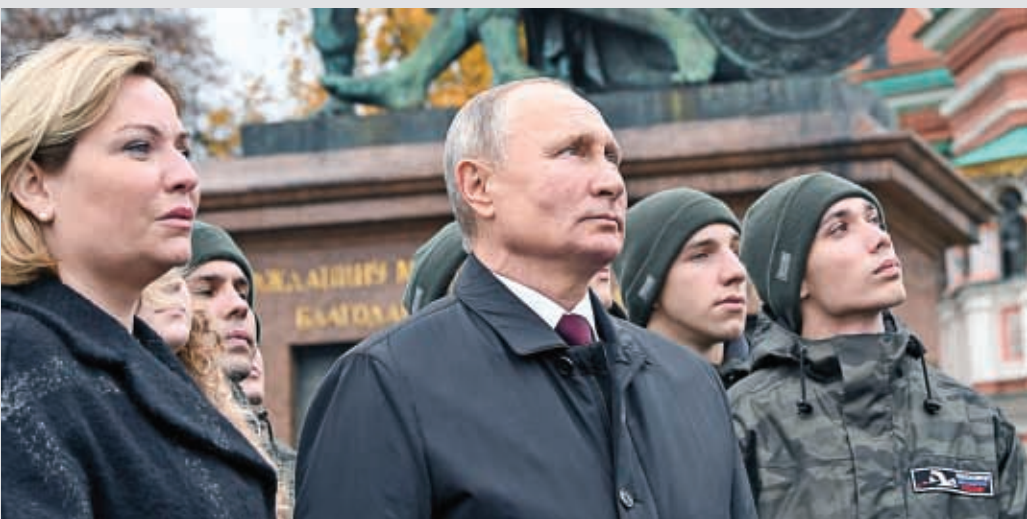
"Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end, here and now."

Financial markets welcomed Biden's victory, with shares up in Tokyo and Hong Kong, and US futures up on Wall Street on Sunday evening.

The leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and other European countries sent congratulations to Biden, along with Australia, Canada, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan and South Korea.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he would wait until all legal challenges are resolved.

AFP



President Vladimir Putin and Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova on Red Square in Moscow on November 4 (AFP)

'Putin awaiting official result to greet winner'

Moscow, Russia - Russian President Vladimir Putin is waiting for official results from the US presidential election before congratulating a winner, the Kremlin said on Monday.

"We consider it correct to wait for the official results to be finalised. I want to remind you that President Putin repeatedly said he will respect the choice of the American people," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Earlier, Russia's elections chief said that voting by mail in the US

presidential election had paved the way for massive voter fraud, echoing rhetoric from the campaign of Trump.

Ella Pamfilova, the head of Russia's elections commission, said she had carefully studied mail-in voting in the United States and found the process vulnerable to fraud. "For me, the conclusion is clear: This anachronism in its American form leaves massive scope for possible falsifications," Pamfilova said.

She cited the possibility of re-

peat voting, the unexplained loss of 'unwanted' ballots, voting among people listed as deceased and a 'ack of systemic control over the whole voting process'.

Trump has refused to concede defeat to US President-elect Joe Biden and tried to sow doubt about the election results - without providing evidence.

Trump in particular focused his criticism on mail-in ballots which surged this year and tilted heavily to Democrats.

AFP

China decline



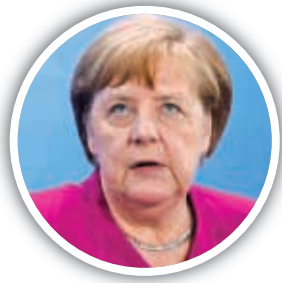
Wang Wenbin

ERA



Changes must come... change in the thought and mentality of US decision-makers, change in words and speech and the type of speech with the world and Iran, and correct actions

SAEED KHATIBZADEH



We Germans and Europeans know that in this partnership in the 21st century we have to take on more responsibility. America is and will remain our closest ally, but it expects more from us.

ANGELA MERKEL

Iraq's pro-Iran factions see smoother sailing with Biden



A woman with a sign reading in Arabic 'we are not warmongers but we will fight if required' and a placard showing the faces of slain leaders of Iran and Iraq, during a demonstration in Baghdad on Saturday (AFP)

Baghdad, Iraq - Iraq's pro-Iran factions have welcomed Joe Biden's election as US President, alarming officials and activists in Baghdad who fear a US-Iran deescalation could empower hardliners in their own country.

Baghdad has long been caught in a tug-of-war for influence between its two main allies Washington and Tehran, made even more tense by outgoing US President Donald Trump's 'maximum pressure' campaign against Iran since 2018.

Iraqi factions supported by Tehran are hoping Biden could roll back Trump's policies, which included bombing hard-line groups and slapping sanctions on pro-Iran figures.

"Trump's era was a very negative one, a period of demolition," said Mohammad

Mohyi, spokesman for Kataeb Hezbollah, a hardline pro-Iran faction in Iraq. "We hope the new administration will resolve this, by ending the crisis and withdrawing its troops," he said.

He slammed Trump for 'the greatest crime' in January: killing Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani and top Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al Muhandis, who had a key role in founding Kataeb Hezbollah, in a drone strike in Baghdad.

Outraged by that targeted attack, Iraq's parliament voted to oust all foreign troops from the country. Trump fired back with threats of crippling sanctions on Iraq.

Many hope there could be change. "Perhaps choosing someone who relies on a policy of coordination could pave the way for cooperation among countries," said Nasr al Sham-

mary, spokesman for the Iran-aligned Harakat al Nujaba.

Khamees al Khanjar, an influential Sunni leader who aligned with Iran in the 2018 elections, agreed.

"Biden's win is a new opportunity with the world, to turn a new page towards stability and dialogue," he said.

Youssef, an Iraqi blogger who preferred not to give his full name, appeared disturbed by those reactions.

"Those politicians, who called the US 'evil' and raised the phrase 'Death to America', congratulated Biden for winning the presidential election - as if an old friend has won," he told AFP.

Factions 'emboldened'

Tensions between Iraq and the US flared earlier this year, as

rocket attacks against the US embassy multiplied.

Mustafa al Kadhemi, who took the reins as prime minister in May, has tried to repair ties and met Trump and top administration officials in Washington in August.

During the visit, Kadhemi also met Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, which his advisers told AFP was a way to 'open the door' in case of a Biden win.

Little is known about Biden's planned foreign policy agenda, although he has a legacy as one of the most senior Democrats to vote in favour of the 2003 Iraq invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

In 2006, he co-authored a controversial op-ed calling for 'three largely autonomous regions' for Iraq's main ethno-sectarian communities: Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds.

He has personal ties with some of Iraq's current leaders, including President Barham Saleh, who, in congratulating Biden on his victory, called him 'a friend and trusted partner'.

Kadhemi congratulated the President-elect too, but some Iraqi officials told AFP there were worries pro-Iran factions could be 'emboldened' by a Biden presidency, spoiling the Prime Minister's plans to rein them in.

Some feared Biden would extend a diplomatic olive branch to Iran, reviving the nuclear deal agreed under former US president Barack Obama - when Biden was vice president. AFP

From 'love' to 'thug': Change in US-N Korea dynamic

Seoul, South Korea - Headline-grabbing summits between the leaders of North Korea and the United States will be off the agenda for some time, analysts say, after US president-elect Joe Biden characterised Kim Jong-un a 'thug', in contrast to Donald Trump's declarations of love.

Trump's bizarre diplomatic engagement with Pyongyang veered from mutual insults and threats of war to 'love letters' and the first ever meeting between a sitting US president and a North Korean leader.

The two mercurial men met twice more after their landmark summit in Singapore in 2018, but with no concrete progress in denuclearisation efforts.

Now Biden's victory heralds a return to more standard diplomatic norms, analysts say, with his administration wanting to see tangible steps towards denuclearisation and progress at a series of working-level negotiations before any made-for-TV summits.

On the campaign trail, Biden said he would not meet with Kim without preconditions and accused Trump of 'emboldening' the North Korean leader.

In the final presidential debate last month, the Democrat denounced Trump for befriendng Kim, likening the North Korean leader to Adolf Hitler.

"He's talked about his good buddy, who's a thug,"



President Donald Trump and North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un shake hands at the Singapore summit (AFP)

Biden said of Kim. "That's like saying we had a good relationship with Hitler before he invaded Europe."

For its part, while Pyongyang's state media has yet to mention the election or the result, it has previously excoriated Biden, with the official Korean Central News Agency calling him a 'rabid dog' that must be 'beaten to death'.

'Slightly peeved'

According to analysts North Korea saw in Trump's unorthodox approach its best chance of securing a deal that would allow it to keep at least some of its nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), both of which are banned under UN Security Council resolutions.

Pyeongyang will be 'slightly peeved by the change in leadership', said former CIA analyst Soo Kim.

"The regime is aware the prospects of a top-level meeting with a US leader are going to be slim now," she added. "We're expecting a more principled, systematic approach to Pyongyang. This likely means less ad hoc interactions and some method to dealing with Kim."

Throughout the process with Trump, Pyongyang has continued to develop and advance its arsenal, displaying an array of new weapons - including a huge new ICBM - at a military parade last month marking the 75th anniversary of its ruling party.

It has carried out dozens of missile launches since the collapse of the second Kim-Trump summit in Hanoi in February 2019, but the North has made sure not to cross the US President's red lines of an ICBM or nuclear test.

Pyeongyang probably held off testing strategic weapons this year 'out of consideration for Trump', said Shin Beom-chul, a researcher at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy.

"North Korea hoped for Trump's re-election," he told AFP.

But Pyongyang has become increasingly frustrated that the vaunted personal relationship between Kim and Trump has not led to an easing of sanctions or other substantive concessions from Washington.

AFP

Lines to acknowledge Biden victory

Beijing, China - China declined on Monday to congratulate Joe Biden as the winner of the US presidential election, saying the outcome of the vote was still to be determined.

Trump's four years in the White House have been marked by a costly trade war and increasingly icy relations with China, with the two powers sparring over areas from blame for the COVID-19 pandemic to Beijing's human rights record.

China - among a handful of major countries including Russia and Mexico that has not congratulated the President-Elect - said on Monday it had 'noticed that Mr. Biden declared he is the winner of the election'.

"Our understanding is that the outcome of the election will be determined in accordance with US laws and procedures," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told press.

AFP

Mexico Foreign Minister says 'huge potential' for US ties

Mexico City, Mexico - Mexico's foreign minister said there was 'huge potential' for US ties, a day after the Mexican leader said it was too soon to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden.

After years of a close relationship with America under Donald Trump, Mexico's leadership must now reshape their ties under his democrat victor.

"We don't want to be imprudent. We don't want to act lightly and we want to respect people's

self-determination and rights," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on Saturday.

But on Sunday his Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard told *El Universo* newspaper: 'What we see coming is a step with a huge potential'.

He added that 'from what I heard from Joe Biden's speech, it is clear that there is going to be a cooperation policy at a global level and with Mexico'.

AFP



This file photo shows President Donald Trump (right) and Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

Suu Kyi's party says it won landslide victory in Myanmar

Yangon, Myanmar - Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) said on Monday it was confident of winning a landslide victory in Myanmar as official results trickled in following the weekend's coronavirus-disrupted election.

Millions lined up for hours to cast their ballots on Sunday - only the second national election since the country emerged from outright military rule in 2011.

Nobel laureate Suu Kyi remains a heroine for many in the Bamar majority heartlands, in spite of a global reputation left in tatters by her handling of the Rohingya crisis and widespread disillusionment in many ethnic minority areas.

NLD supporters celebrated late into the night on Sunday - and hundreds more drove in convoys north of Yangon Monday, wearing red and flying the party's fighting peacock flag.

Party spokesman Myo Nyunt told AFP that information from party agents across the country suggested the NLD had 'won a landslide victory'.

"We won't only win the 322 seats we need to form a government but we expect to break our



Supporters of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party wave flags in front of the party's office in Mandalay on Sunday (AFP)

2015 record of 390."

In 2015, the NLD won a landslide but was forced by the constitution into an uneasy power-sharing agreement with the military, which controls three key ministries and a quarter of parliamentary seats.

The military-aligned USDP opposition, Myanmar's next biggest party, said it was still collecting information and would not comment.

Official confirmation of the overall result is not expected for another few days.

Three dead in shooting at Russian army base

Moscow, Russia - A Russian soldier suspected of killing three servicemen using an axe and a gun at a military base has been detained after a massive manhunt, officials said.

The shooting - the second at a military base in a year - took place at an airfield near the city of Voronezh where activists say army conscripts have been subjected to humiliating hazing.

Investigators said that a 20 year old soldier identified as private Anton Makarov attacked an officer at the Baltimore military airfield near the city of Voronezh at 5:30am.

Voronezh is more than 500km south of Moscow.

"In order to get hold of a service weapon Makarov killed an officer with an axe," the Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said in a statement.

He then started shooting his fellow servicemen, killing two and wounding one, the statement said.

AFP

Armenia says fighting continues for key town Shusha in Karabakh

Yerevan, Armenia - Armenia said on Monday that fighting was continuing for the key town of Shusha in Nagorno-Karabakh, a day after Azerbaijan claimed to have captured it from Armenian separatist forces.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced on Sunday his forces had taken Shusha, known to Armenians as Shushi, a strategically vital town that is the second-largest in the disputed region.

Armenian officials denied the claim and said clashes in the area were ongoing.

'Intensive combat has been waged in the Shushi-Karintak sector,' Armenian Defence Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said on Twitter, referring to a village at the base of cliffs on which the town sits.

'The enemy has retreated, while friendly forces have occupied more favourable lines,' she said.

The capture of Shusha would be a major victory for Azerbaijan six weeks after new fighting erupted over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave that broke away from Azerbaijan's control in the 1990s.

The fortress town lies around 15km from the enclave's largest city Stepanakert and on the main road to Armenia, which backs



People wave Azeri flags as they celebrate the capture of the town of Shusha by Azerbaijan, in Baku on Sunday (AFP)

the separatists.

Fresh fighting broke out in late September between Azerbaijan and the separatists over Karabakh, which declared independence nearly 30 years ago.

That declaration has not been recognised internationally, even by Armenia, and it remains a part of Azerbaijan under international law. The recent fighting has been the worst in decades, with more than 1,000 people reported killed including dozens of civilians and the real death toll believed to be much higher.

Civilian exodus

Armenia on Monday announced the deaths of 44 separatist fighters while Azerbaijan has yet to release details on its military fatalities.

The Caucasus adversaries have each accused the other of targeting civilian areas and the United Nations recently decried indiscriminate attacks that could amount to 'war crimes'.

The clashes have forced thousands to flee their homes leaving the main city in the disputed region, Stepanakert, a town devastat

tated after weeks of shelling.

Aliyev claimed in a tweet on Monday that his forces had captured 23 populated settlements in the disputed territory, declaring 'Karabakh is Azerbaijan!'

The longstanding former Soviet rivals have left three recent ceasefire agreements brokered by the United States, Russia and France in tatters.

The three countries co-chair the 'Minsk Group' that helped broker a truce between the ex-Soviet rivals in 1994 but has failed to mediate a lasting resolution to the long-simmering territorial dispute.

Diplomats appeared to ramp up efforts over the weekend as fighting intensified near Shusha, with Russian President Vladimir Putin speaking Saturday to Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Emmanuel Macron of France.

Turkey is a key ally of Azerbaijan and Erdogan congratulated Baku after its claim of retaking Shusha, calling it 'a sign that the liberation of the rest of the occupied territories is near'.

Turkish involvement would be key to any agreement to halt the fighting and there were reports of a plan to deploy Russian and Turkish peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabakh.

AFP



Pro-democracy lawmakers address a press conference, in Hong Kong on Monday (AFP)

Hong Kong lawmakers threaten mass resignation

Hong Kong, China - Pro-democracy lawmakers in Hong Kong's legislature will resign 'en masse' if Beijing's top law-making committee moves to disqualify four of their colleagues for violating the semi-autonomous city's Basic Law, the convener of the bloc said Monday.

The threat came ahead of a meeting of one of China's top law-making bodies, with Hong Kong media reporting that it was considering disqualifying four of the semi-autonomous city's legislators.

Hong Kong's democracy camp has been under sustained

attack since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law in response to huge and often violent protests last year, including political disqualifications, arrests for social media posts and activists fleeing overseas.

The National People's Congress Standing Committee will consider purging the four for violating their oaths by making quorum calls and filibustering in the chamber, local pro-Beijing media reported on Monday.

"The pro-democratic camp has decided that if NPCSC decides to disqualify lawmakers, all pro-democratic lawmakers will

resign en masse," Wu Chi-wai, head of the Democratic Party told press on Monday. "We have to tell the central government and we have to inform the people of Hong Kong that (what) the central government is trying to do with the people's representatives in Hong Kong is totally ridiculous," Wu said.

The chamber passes Hong Kong's laws, but only half of its seats are directly elected - and a complex appointment system ensures the city's pro-Beijing establishment is all but guaranteed a handsome majority.

AFP

India's environmental court bans firecrackers in pollution-hit cities

New Delhi, India - India's environmental court on Monday ordered a ban on firecrackers during the country's biggest annual festival in cities battling hazarously poor air quality, citing a link between pollution and a coronavirus surge.

The National Green Tribunal said the role of pollution in the COVID-19 crisis meant that the ban was needed ahead of Diwali celebrations on Saturday.

Traditionally, millions of firecrackers are set off during Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Light, but

the practice has been blamed for worsening air pollution - especially in northern India which suffers from serious smog every winter.

The tribunal, whose powers are similar to a regular court, said that pollution caused by fireworks was an 'aggravating risk to lives and health'. It said a general ban in all cities with rising air pollution should last until November 30.

India has the second-highest number of coronavirus infections in the world, and experts have



A firecracker vendor arranges his stock on a display at his shop ahead of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, in Chennai on Monday (AFP)

raised concerns about air pollution worsening the symptoms of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19.

The capital New Delhi and the states of Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra and West Bengal have already halted or restricted the sale and use of firecrackers.

The tribunal said the ban in Delhi must be 'absolute' because of the pollution crisis and rising COVID-19 cases.

State authorities in the rest of the country are considering allowing one-hour windows on

Saturday for setting off firecrackers. Delhi on Sunday reported 7,750 coronavirus cases in a day, a record since the start of the pandemic with hospitals reporting that intensive care beds are running out.

Pollution levels have been at the 'severe' top level on the government index for almost a week.

New Delhi is caught in a perfect pollution storm because of its position in the bowl of a plain, the burning of crop stubble in states around the city, and its dirty industries.

Firecracker makers immediately demanded that the government pay compensation for the ban.

The southern district of Sivakasi, which supplies about 90 per cent of India's firecrackers and employs more than 250,000 people, has been hit particularly hard by restrictions in recent years.

Factory owners say they have already lost 30 per cent of their business this year because of the coronavirus.

AFP

MAKEUP

Then who

If you spend a long time doing your makeup, remember it's also a bad idea to turn in with it on. Spending adequate time on makeup removal is important to maintain healthy facial skin. **A recent issue of Conde Nast's *Glamour* magazine provides key tips for makeup removal as follows:**

TAKE YOUR TIME

When it comes to removing eye makeup in particular, the slower you go, the better. "Let the technology do the work," says dermatologist Ranella Hirsch. "Apply makeup remover and let it sit, and sit some more. Give it a couple minutes, say, while you brush and floss." This will soften mascara, liner, and shadow so it slips off easily and thoroughly once you finally wipe. "If you do this, you won't find smudges under your eyes in the morning anymore," Hirsch says.

SOAP AND WATER WORKS BEST

Makeup wipes can be an excellent initial step in removing makeup - in fact, they're best used to remove makeup before cleansing. But a proper sink session should ideally follow. "Many of us make the mistake of just using wipes and going to bed, but the makeup really is not all off - you still have to wash your face, ladies," says makeup artist Azra Red. "Using water and face wash is what's really going to remove residue and prep your skin for a good night regimen. If you use only wipes and then apply moisturizer, you might push dirt into your pores and wake up with pimples or blackheads."

USE A MAKEUP CLEANSER

"Women tend to use face wash that isn't made to remove makeup," says esthetician Joanna Czech. If you suspect yours falls into this category, you could use a suitable makeup remover or consider switching to a cleansing balm. Most think oil-based products will leave your face cleaner. But the new oil cleansers really can work miracles. "A lot of people don't know that oil dissolves oil," says Czech.

CLEANSE THE EDGES OF YOUR EYELID

If there's one zone that's frequently neglected during makeup removal, it's the elusive edge of your eyelid, where liner and mascara can build up over time—and lead to eye irritation. Especially if you tight-line your eyes with waterproof liquid, you might need to get in there with a more targeted tool and make sure every last speck is gone. Speaking of lashes falling out, you also should never tug stubborn mascara chunks off with your fingers. To coax clumps off without doing harm, make sure you give your remover enough time to penetrate and then press down gently with a flat cotton pad, moving slowly in the direction your lashes grow, to slide the mascara off.

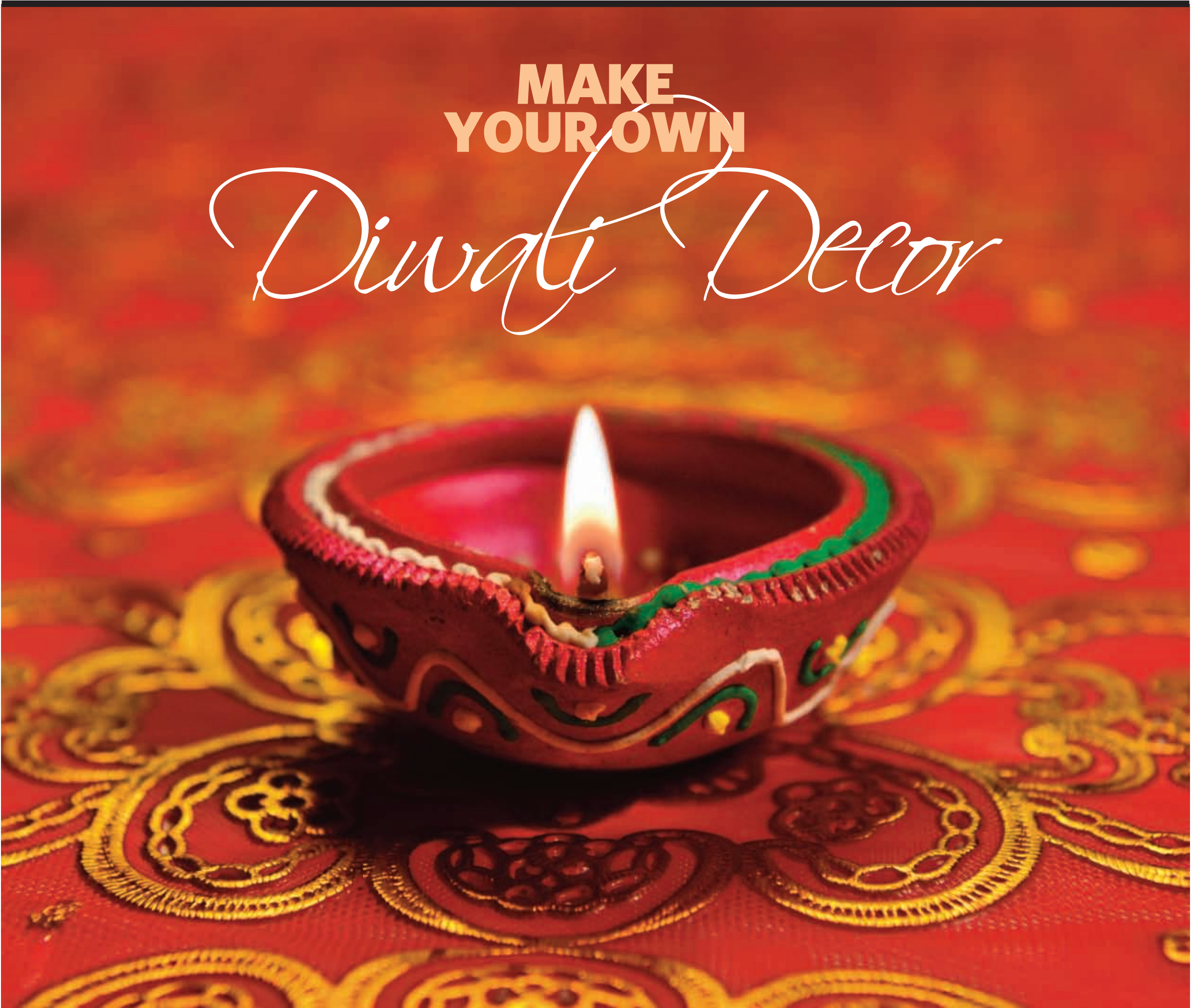
PUSH YOUR HAIR BACK AND CLEANSE YOUR HAIRLINE

When it's past midnight and your pillow beckons, even an easy step like throwing your hair into a pony can feel like too much effort. But not doing so means you're likely stopping a couple inches short of your hairline when washing your face. People often accumulate makeup residue around their hairline, which leads to clogged pores and breakouts.

FOLLOW UP MAKEUP REMOVAL WITH MOISTURE

Even if you don't have dry skin, makeup removal should always be followed up with at least some targeted moisture. Balm up your lips if you've just removed lipstick and dab on eye cream. Removing makeup can dry out the eye area, which is the most sensitive skin on your face. So, you need to keep it soft and hydrated.





MAKE
YOUR OWN

Diwali Decor

Diwali décor can add more life to your celebration if you choose to create it yourself, rather than buy it from the market. This way you can boost your creativity and have your own customised décor rather than putting up what everyone else has on display. It also reflects the real spirit behind the celebration which comes from within oneself. Involve all family members and rev up the celebratory mood at home. **Here are some ideas, though the possibilities are endless:**



1 Decorated tealight candles
Tealight candles have now become synonymous with Diwali décor because of their sheer convenience and being a non-messy alternative to oil in lamps. People place tealights in decorated tumblers as well as traditional diyas instead of using oil with wicks. To make your tealights look trendy by themselves, simply tape decorative gift tape around the sides to give them a fancy look.

2 Candle in a jar
This one is very popular recently. Apart from looking great, they are safer and cannot be easily tampered with by young children. Take any empty household jars or buy a set from the market. Wrap them with laces, ribbons, or yarns, and place your candle and its holder inside. If you want to avoid fabric wraps, simply paint colourful designs on



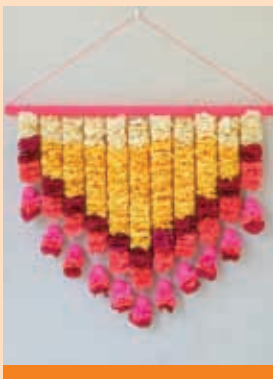
3 Paper bag luminaries
These are great to add a warm ambience in your home. Take brown paper bags and punch holes in them in patterns or fancy shapes. You can use needles or anything suitable to easily create holes in the paper. Place battery operated modern lamps inside instead of candles to avoid fires. Place them as table décor or by the window in a row or in different locations in your balcony, or lawn. Make sure to secure the base of the bag with a weight to avoid it getting blown over by breeze.

4 Hand painted diyas
Diyas bring in the real spirit of Diwali and this can be enhanced if you paint your own diyas with simple designs. Buy plain diyas, and use acrylic



paints to decorate them. You can also use glue and sequins/beads to embellish your diyas instead of painting them. Have your own theme shades everyday or for different rooms and locations in your home.

5 Crepe paper 'Torans'
This is a simple decoration to replace the traditional decoration of a string of mango leaves interspersed with marigold flowers which is usually hung over the doors at houses for Dassera and Diwali. To make it, choose coloured crepe paper of your choice and cut them up in long strips or get readymade crepe paper strips. Using a long thread and needle, thread through the centre of the strip with 2 cm long stitches. Then, hold the open end of the string and slowly push the crepe paper downwards till you get a garland effect of shorter length. Now add more strips to this length and make more



such garlands of varying lengths. Assemble these in a formation on the top strip of an old calendar or use these strung garlands as they are over your doorposts. You can twirl the tissue to look like marigold flowers and add bells or balls at the ends to keep them hanging vertical.

6 Easy-to-do Rangolis
If you are not creatively gifted and want to prepare rangolis without much effort, here is an easy way to make rangolis using 'stencils' that you have at home. Place bangles of different sizes in a pattern of your choice, then fill them with small heaps of coloured powder with a paper cone with a hole at one end or using an empty water bottle. Don't try to straighten the heaps. Instead, use a fork/spatula or the handle end of a spoon to pull the heaps towards the centre of your design to create similar patterns on each. Use your own creativity to enhance the designs.

