



THURSDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2021
www.muscatdaily.com
Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om
To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000

34°C/23°C

ABBA COMEBACK AFTER FOUR DECADES
GO TO **PAGE 12**



SAYYID THEYAZIN INAUGURATES MINISTRY PORTAL

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth and chairman of the Digital Transformation Committee, inaugurated a smart portal of the ministry on Wednesday (ONA)



SAYYID FATIK DELIVERS HM'S MESSAGE TO KING HAMAD

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to King Hamad bin Issa al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain, dealing with bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest. The message was handed over by Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr al Said, Special Envoy of His Majesty the Sultan, when he was received by the Bahraini monarch at Al Sakhr Palace in Manama on Wednesday (ONA)

► NEWS BRIEFS

MAJLIS A'SHURA TO START NEW SESSION ON NOV 7

Muscat - In response to the Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to open the regular session of Council of Oman, the Majlis A'Shura will begin its third annual sitting (2021-2022) of the ninth term (2019-2023) on Sunday, November 7.

Sheikh Ahmed Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary General of Majlis A'Shura, said that the council will launch its sitting in implementation of Article (38) of the Council of Oman Law promulgated under Royal Decree No 7/2021.

Nadabi added that the session will see the re-election of six members who complete the membership of the council. Also, candidacy will be open for the chairmanship of standing committees and posts of deputy heads of the respective committees.

Nadabi explained that the session will also look into the State Budget for the fiscal year 2022, which was transferred to Majlis A'Shura as is the norm.

04



OQ, Marubeni plan H₂ and ammonia project in Salalah

09



Taliban warn of refugees if sanctions continue

Asyad 4th biggest logistics firm in MENA

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Asyad Group, Oman's global integrated logistics service provider, has been ranked the fourth biggest logistics company in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by *Forbes Middle East* magazine for the year 2021.

In a statement, *Forbes* said Asyad Group is a US\$4bn enterprise backed by US\$20bn in government infrastructure spending.

Asyad Group offers integrated services and end-to-end logistics solutions to meet market needs and support Oman's economy. The group comprises three deep ports and three free-zones sup-

ported by Oman's five airports, and a world-class road network. In addition, Asyad Group operates one of the largest dry-docks in the region with a diversified fleet of 60 vessels.

'Asyad Group is a driving force behind Oman's national logistics strategy, which prioritises logistics as a major part of its economic future. Oman hopes the sector can contribute roughly US\$36bn to GDP by 2040, up from US\$2.6bn in 2016, while also creating 300,000 jobs,' *Forbes* said.

It said the MENA region's biggest logistics businesses are ramping up again after a tough period due to the pandemic and



(Supplied photo)

economic slowdown.

When compiling the ranking, *Forbes* considered: Size of the logistics company in terms of as-

sets, revenues, and market value; percentage of trade enabled by the company and therefore its importance to the economy; and

quantity of goods transported or stored.

UAE's DP World - one of the largest operators of ports and cargo terminals in the world - topped *Forbes'* list of ten biggest logistics companies in the MENA region. Over 56,000 people work for DP World across its 181 operations globally.

Egypt's Suez Canal Authority came at second place and Saudi Arabia's Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) ranked third among the ten biggest logistics companies in the MENA region.

Despite a difficult period due to the pandemic, travel and tourism remains a vital sector for the MENA region, *Forbes* said.

'While tourism has always been important for the UAE, Egypt and Jordan, now other GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia and Oman, are looking to attract more visitors. The region's airlines are an important enabler of this industry, connecting the region to the world.'

Logistics companies, *Forbes* said, are also key enablers, moving goods and services across the globe. Many MENA countries are developing their ports infrastructure as they compete for a bigger market share of global trade.

'While the UAE is the market leader, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have also announced large investments in this sector.'

Drones successfully deliver postal and food parcels in Duqm

Duqm - An unmanned aerial vehicle - drone - delivered a basket of food and beverages in Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) this week. The experiment are part of efforts of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) to benefit from the technology of drones to improve services provided in free zones.

USA-based UVL Robotics, which specialises in advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence and drones, carried out two experiments in cooperation with Azim Technology Company, a local firm that provides artificial intelligence services and autonomous systems.

In the first phase of experiments, parcels and postal mail were delivered from the Oman Post office in Duqm to the headquarters of SEZAD. The experi-



(Supplied photo)

ments were successful in delivering items within a few minutes covering an estimated distance of 11km.

In the second phase, a basket of food and beverages was delivered from the 911 Restaurant in Say commercial district to Renaissance Village, a distance of

6km. The experiment succeeded in delivering the food parcel in record time. In both phases, the team employed an electric drone that can fly 25km and carry a payload of up to 5kg.

UVL Robotics also provides infrastructure solutions for delivery services by offering drone landing

stations that can accommodate over 30 parcels to save postal items separately. Being built with the latest technologies in the field, the drones connect to an electronic screen that makes it easier to conduct financial transactions and access product code.

Commenting on the experiments, Issa al Sumri of OPAZ said that this week's experiment was part of a series of experiments which kicked off last month in SEZAD and reflect OPAZ's efforts to encourage the use of artificial intelligence technologies.

Sumri explained that OPAZ has designated a dedicated zone for artificial intelligence and drone experiments in SEZAD, covering an 18sqkm area. All companies and individuals interested in conducting experiments in the zone can register through the OPAZ website.



(Supplied photo)

RO3mn pacts signed to support food security

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To achieve self-sufficiency in food production in the sultanate, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning signed five usufruct contracts worth more than RO3mn on Wednesday with private sector companies.

The agreements were signed by H E Dr Khalfan bin Saeed al Shu'aili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and executive directors of the companies, in the presence of H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

The five agreements aim to stimulate the economy, support Omani exports, attract foreign investment, and develop food se-

curity, a statement said.

The contracts are a result of the Food Security Laboratory, organised recently by MAFWR, supported by the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, and come within the framework of a programme to attract private investments to support Omani exports.

On the occasion, H E Dr Habsi said, "The agreements aim to enhance food security in the sultanate and provide job opportunities. We call on investors of these companies to abide by the implementation plans submitted, including the volume of investment, crop specifications and job opportunities to be created that were agreed upon during the Food Security Laboratory."

Continued on Page 02

India's Covaxin gets emergency use approval for 2-18 olds

Hyderabad, India - The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on COVID-19 in India has granted emergency use approval to locally made vaccine Covaxin by Bharat Biotech for children in the 2-18 years age group.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech completed Phase-2 and

Phase-3 trials of Covaxin on children below 18 years of age in September and submitted the trial data to the Drugs and Comptroller General of India at the start of this month.

'After detailed deliberation, the committee recommended for grant of market authorisation of

the vaccine for the age group of two to 18 years for restricted use in emergency situation,' the subject expert panel said in a statement.

The made-in-India vaccine will be administered in two doses, with a gap of 20 days between the first and second doses.



Love Your Eyes - World Sight Day today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness held on the second Thursday of October to focus global attention on vision impairment, including blindness. This year it takes place on October 14 (today) under the theme 'Love Your Eyes'.

According to data, globally, at least 1bn people have near or distance vision impairment that could be prevented or is yet to be addressed.

"There are many conditions which can cause temporary or permanent blindness, and diabetic retinopathy is a major one," says Dr Mukund R Nayak, senior ophthalmologist at Sagar Polyclinic.

"If someone has diabetes for ten or 15 years, the retina of the eye will get affected. So it is advised to go for a check-up of the

There are many conditions which can cause temporary or permanent blindness. Diabetic retinopathy is a major one. If someone has diabetes for ten or 15 years, the retina of the eye will get affected

DR MUKUND R NAYAK

eyes soon after diabetic diagnosis and do the same every year to prevent partial or full blindness."

Dr Nayak warns that continuously staring at a screen can also lead to eye problems.

"Also, less exposure to sunlight, which gives vitamin D, can lead to the problem increasing



(Muscat Daily)

especially during COVID-19 pandemic as many people are confined to their houses. Also lack of

physical activities could be a reason for eye problems."

According to the World

Health Organization (WHO), vision impairment affects people of all ages, with the majority

being over the age of 50.

"Vision impairment and blindness can have major and long-lasting effects on all aspects of life, including daily personal activities, interacting with the community, school and work opportunities and the ability to access public services," WHO said in a statement.

It added that unoperated cataract and uncorrected refractive error are the leading causes of vision impairment. Other causes such as age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, infectious diseases of the eye, and trauma, however, cannot be ignored and need to be addressed.

Abdulsalam Churigar, optometrist at Al Awas Optical, said there is need for eye check-ups for all those above 40. "Those who wear glasses too need to go for check-ups every six months. This is because the

power of glasses change every now and then and using the wrong power may damage eyes further," he said.

He added that even healthy people but with regular headache need to go for eye check-up. "Also, children need to be monitored, especially those with squinting eyes. Those who struggle to look at the board while at school need to see the ophthalmologist as soon as possible," Churigar said.

Recently at the 74th World Health Assembly, member states adopted two new global targets for eye care by 2030 - a 40 per cent increase in effective coverage of refractive errors and a 30 per cent increase in effective coverage of cataract surgery.

These targets will play a key role in not only increasing global eye care coverage in the future but also in delivering quality services.



Commerce minister meets UK trade minister

Muscat - H E Qais Mohammad al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, met in his office on Wednesday Ranil Jayawardena, UK Minister for International Trade.

The meeting discussed areas of cooperation between the two countries. It also reviewed growth indicators of bilateral trade and means of boosting these, as well as ways to increase the volume of trade exchange

and joint investments.

The two ministers touched on the progress of negotiations on the free trade agreement between the GCC countries and the UK.

The meeting was attended by

H E Dr Saleh Said Masan, the ministry's Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry, H E Bill Murray, UK Ambassador to the sultanate, and a number of officials from both sides.

ONA

'Eastern Mediterranean region lost 300,000 lives'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Eastern Mediterranean region has mobilised more resources for the COVID-19 pandemic response than any other WHO region but has also lost around 300,000 lives to the pandemic with over 16mn cases reported till October 12.

Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, gave the statistics while releasing the 2020 Annual Report on WHO's work in the region during the 68th session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean being held in Egypt.

Dr Mandhari characterised actions taken over the past two years in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of solidarity on a colossal scale.

"Together, we have mobilised more resources for the COVID-19 pandemic response than any other WHO region. We are not out of the woods yet with the pandemic. Our region has already lost almost 300,000 people. The Delta variant is widespread, and we still have a lot to do in rolling out vaccination equitably across all countries. But the main message from this year's Regional Committee is: It is time to start rebuilding better



We are not out of the woods yet with the pandemic

DR AHMED AL MANDHARI

and fairer," he said.

"Thanks to the generosity and solidarity of member states and donors, these efforts generated over US\$350mn - more than any other WHO region. Most (55 per cent) of these funds were raised at country level, 42 per cent at the WHO headquarters level and 3 per cent at the Regional Office. In addition, US\$131mn was added to this amount through transfer from other programmes, bringing the total amount of funds mobilised for the region in 2020 to more than US\$480mn," stated the report.

The first COVID-19 case in

the Eastern Mediterranean Region was reported on January 29, 2020, and within eight weeks all 22 countries and territories had reported cases. By the end of the year, total cases in the region had reached 5mn with 122,181 associated deaths.

Dr Mandhari also described cancer and other noncommunicable diseases that kill millions each year, declining immunisation rates, and severe climate and environmental change as urgent health challenges facing the region.

"Today, I am calling on us all - WHO, member states and partners - to tackle these challenges with the same drive, innovation, ownership and team spirit that we have shown in fighting COVID-19," he said.

Dr Mandhari commended countries of the region for their remarkable resilience, and for the progress made in tackling COVID-19 and other emergencies, often when facing difficult and complex circumstances. He said that "with strong commitment, ways to move forward can always be found".

"We need to use the momentum from the pandemic response to achieve lasting gains in health security and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage."

I wear a mask for your safety...

“

I wear a mask to protect myself and my loved ones around me as we need to fight together to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Providing a safe and clean environment for our guests and colleagues is always a top priority in the hotel as guests safety comes first. Wear a mask and stay safe!

Haifa Al Maskri
Director of Sales,
Radisson Blu Hotel, Sohar.

Do you?

The battle against COVID-19 is getting tough. Let's beat it by our responsible behaviour.

Wear a mask...always!

ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST BY

Sayyid Badr receives DCO official

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Deemah al Yahya, secretary general of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), in his office on Wednesday.

The meeting reviewed means of promoting cooperation between the sultanate and DCO in fields of digital economy.

The meeting was attended by H E Dr Ali Amer al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology in the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and Khalid Hashel al Musalhi, head of the Minister's Office Department at the Foreign Ministry.

Pacts worth more than RO3mn signed to support food security

Continued from Page 01

The agreements include a usufruct contract for poultry farming in the wilayat of Khasab, Musandam governorate, on an area of 9.5 acres with an investment of RO600,000.

A contract for raising livestock in the wilayat of Dhank, Dhahirah governorate, on an area of 95 acres is worth RO1.5mn, and a mango trees plantation project in the wilayat of Barka, South Batinah, on an area of 200 acres is worth RO1.25mn.

The agreements include a

usufruct contract for wheat production in the wilayat of Thumrait, Dhofar governorate, on an area of ten acres worth RO26,000, and a contract for fig trees plantation project in the wilayat of Al Kamel W'Al Wafi, South Sharqiyah governorate, on an area of 101 acres with an investment of RO282,000.

The Food Security Laboratory was held from September 5 to 30 during which MAFWR announced 128 projects worth RO1.3bn. The projects will be implemented in the next five years.

REGIONAL WEATHER			PRAYER TIMINGS	
	Max	Min	Fajr	4.46am
Abu Dhabi	37	25	Sunrise	6.03am
Doha	35	23	Duhr	11.53am
Kuwait City	37	27	Asr	3.13pm
Manama	34	26	Maghrib	5.41pm
Riyadh	37	21	Isha	7.11pm

Expatriates, social workers volunteer for relief efforts



Muscat - When tropical cyclone Shaheen struck the sultanate on October 3, the devastation it caused called for solidarity and voluntary activities to help the affected. This past week, hundreds of volunteers from different social organisations have come together to aid in clean-up and relief efforts in areas and communities left reeling after the cyclone.

Working in collaboration with the Indian Embassy in Muscat, volunteers of organisations including Kairali, Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre, Indian/Islamic Cultural Foundation and Over-

Volunteers of all nationalities worked as one in the service of humanity. Hundreds of Omani youth rolled up their sleeves and helped in clearing the debris left behind

P M JABIR

seas Indian Cultural Congress offered assistance in restoring roads, houses and schools in Suwaiq, Khabourah, Mussanah and Bidayah.

The volunteers distributed breakfast, lunch and dinner packets, bottled water and blankets

among affected families.

Volunteers also helped clean and restore the campus of Indian School Muladha, which was damaged as a result of strong winds and heavy rains in the area.

"Since the morning after the cyclone, hundreds of volunteers

have helped residents of the affected areas in cleaning their homes, shops and public spaces. Volunteers of all nationalities worked as one in the service of humanity. Hundreds of Omani youth rolled up their sleeves and helped in clearing the debris left behind with whatever tools they could lay their hands on. Their services are much appreciated," said P M Jabir, a volunteer and prominent social worker based in Muscat.

According to Jabir, thousands of food and ration kits containing essential items to sustain families for at least a week have

already been distributed, and many more will be handed out in the days to come. "I am happy to serve my community, and thank the main volunteers of the Kairali team, including Ramachandran Kabura, P T Anil Kumar, Sujith and Anil Kuttan from Suwaiq for their support, along with all the organisations and the Indian Embassy."

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a member of Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre working in Bidayah thanked the volunteers for their efforts in the relief and clean-up campaign.

Contributed by Akshaya Pavanje



SQU's 'One Hand' campaign supports Shaheen relief work

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To support the people of the areas affected by cyclone Shaheen, the Centre for Community Service and Continuing Education at Sultan Qaboos University has launched a campaign called 'One Hand'.

Omar al Kahali, an official of the centre, said, "The university launched the One Hand campaign to help those affected by cyclone Shaheen. The campaign includes logistical, psychological and field support, as well as distributing donated items."

According to Kahali, more than 5,000 male and female volunteers - university employees and students - have participated in the campaign so far.

The campaign started on October 9 and will continue until October 19. The centre is providing help in cooperation with the Oman Charitable Organization, Royal Oman Police, municipalities in the affected states, and civil and military sector institutions concerned with dealing with the aftermath of the cyclone, Kahali informed.

"Apart from relief efforts, the campaign is coordinating with the competent authorities to provide psychological support for children to address the trauma they have endured as a result of the cyclone."

Kahali added that its volunteers engage children in educational and recreational activities.

"They also help in clean-up efforts in affected areas, including schools, mosques, and homes, and distribute donated items such as electrical appliances, home furniture, stationery and school supplies, cleaning equipment and sanitary products." One Hand sends more than 180 volunteers to help clear debris from cyclone-stricken sites and provide aid in the wilayats of Khabourah and Suwaiq, working from 11am to 5pm.

"We continue to collect donations and send volunteers until life returns to normal. We use social media to promote the campaign. Anyone who wants to participate as a volunteer or send donations can do so by calling 24143060 or 99605885."

45 per cent increase in fish production in 2020

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's total fish production increased 44.8 per cent in 2020 over 2019 to 840,037 tonnes, according to statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The centre's figures showed that artisanal fishing contributed 94.4 per cent of the total production, accounting for 793,419 tonnes. Artisanal fishing increased 42.9 per cent over 2019.

The coastal fishing production amounted to 4,289 tonnes, while commercial fish production witnessed a significant increase compared to 2019. It accounted for 41,363 tonnes, an increase of 106.2 per cent, while farmed fish increased by 24 per cent compared to 2019. The total production of farmed fish was 1,307 tonnes of kofar in floating cages.

Omani fish exports increased in 2020 to more than 300,000



tonnes - valued at over RO114mn - accounting for a growth of 47.3 per cent.

Aquaculture production accounted for 1,307 tonnes of fish, an increase of 24 per cent compared to 2019.

NCSI figures indicate that 22.2 per cent of Oman's fish exports in 2020 were to Gulf Cooperation Council states, 0.5 per cent to European countries, 10.2

per cent to the USA, and 67.1 per cent to other countries.

The United Arab Emirates topped the list of GCC states importing fish from Oman - 37,952 tonnes, 56.8 per cent - followed by Saudi Arabia (19,169 tonnes, 29.9 per cent), Bahrain (4,447 tonnes, 6.7 per cent), Qatar (3,783 tonnes, 5.7 per cent) and Kuwait (672 tonnes, one per cent).

EA releases rescued striped eagle

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An injured striped eagle found by a citizen was treated by the Environment Authority (EA) in North Batinah governorate and released into the wild, according to Youssef al Nakhili, a specialist at EA.

"The Environment Department in North Batinah governorate released the striped eagle (Bonelli's eagle) into its natural environment after it received treatment and care from the specialists in the authority," Nakhili said.

He added, "Citizen Rashid bin Salem bin Hamad al Rubaie



found the injured bird in his farm in the Hajar Bani Rabia area in the village of al Harima in Khabourah, after the tropical cyclone Shaheen, and handed it over to the authority.

"We found a number of injured birds in cooperation with citizens interested in taking care of wild animals and birds in North Batinah governorate. The necessary healthcare and nutrition were provided to them before releasing these their natural environment."

The Environment Authority has called on citizens and residents to contact it when they find wild animals that need care.

Celebrate this Season with Kalyan

CASH BACK*
UPTO
25%

**PAY JUST 10%
AND AVAIL
GOLD RATE
PROTECTION OFFER***

UPTO 25% CASH BACK* ON MAKING CHARGES FOR GOLD JEWELLERY | UPTO 20% CASH BACK* ON DIAMOND JEWELLERY | UPTO 20% CASH BACK* ON UNCUT & PRECIOUS STONES JEWELLERY

Cashback* will be by way of instantly redeemable vouchers.
The offer on uncut and precious stone jewellery will be only for the stone charges*.

OFFER VALID TILL 30TH NOV 2021

WWW.KALYANJEWELLERS.NET | FOLLOW US ON @ KALYANJEWELLERSMIDDLEEAST

MARKET WATCH	
MSM30	3,964.08
BSE Sensex	60,737.05
FOREX RATES	
(RO1 equals)	
Indian Rs	196.08
Pakistani Rs	444.38
Bangladeshi Taka	222.76
Philippine Peso	131.63
Sri Lankan Rs	522.79

*Rates as on October 13
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Apple cuts iPhone 13 output forecast on chip shortage

Apple is unlikely to meet production goals for its new iPhone before the holidays because of a global electronic chip shortage.

The firm had planned to produce 90mn iPhone 13s before the end of the year, but will have to settle with 80mn as suppliers Broadcom and Texas Instruments cannot meet demand, the Bloomberg News said, citing sources familiar with the matter.

"We estimate that overall demand has been robust globally," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said, highlighting strong demand in China and the United States especially.

"Apple will be running into a 5mn-plus iPhone 13 unit shortage for the holiday season if consumer demand keeps up at this pace," he added.

OQ, Marubeni plan green hydrogen and ammonia project in Salalah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An international consortium comprising Oman's OQ, Marubeni Corporation - a Japanese trading and investment firm, Linde - a leading global industrial gases and engineering company, and UAE's Dubai Transport Co (Dutco) have signed a joint development agreement for the development of a green hydrogen and green ammonia project at Salalah Free Zone.

The Salalah region enjoys rich solar and wind resources supported by a world-class shipping infrastructure at the Port of Salalah; all of which position the region to be a global hub for the production and export of green hydrogen and green ammonia, OQ said in a statement.

The proposed project, named 'SalalahH2', targets the production of up to 1,000 tonnes per day of green ammonia, utilising OQ's existing ammonia plant in Salalah. An electrolysis facility with a capacity of up to 400MW will be constructed to produce green hydrogen.

Approximately 1GW of solar and wind energy, produced either by existing or new facilities,



will be used to power the electrolyser, the statement said.

The consortium is currently conducting studies that will provide the basis for an investment decision. Various offtake streams will be explored and coordinated with the OQ ammonia plant's current offtaker including the co-firing needs of coal fired power plants in Asia, the renewable feedstock needs of fertiliser plants in Europe and the decarbonisation needs of the global shipping industry.

Dr Salim al Huthaili, CEO of alternative energy at OQ said, "OQ

The project, named 'SalalahH2', targets the production of up to 1,000 tonnes per day of green ammonia, utilising OQ's existing ammonia plant in Salalah

is excited to enter into this unique opportunity as the integration of the Salalah cluster between LPG, methanol and ammonia is already bringing great synergies. Integrating green molecules and green hydrogen into the system is a true transition story to pave the path towards

decarbonisation. The potential of low carbon hydrogen production is promising in Oman and this partnership reflects OQ's, and our shareholder OIA's deep commitment towards maximising value and diversifying Oman's economy in line with Vision 2040."

Philippe Peccard, Linde's vice president - clean energy, said, "At Linde we believe that hydrogen and its derivatives will play a key role in reshaping the global energy landscape, and as a leader in the production, processing, storage and distribution of hydrogen, we are proud to be a partner in the SalalahH2 project which we expect to be transformational for the local society."

The SalalahH2 project, as per OQ's statement, is set to create a positive impact on Oman's national economy through the diversification of its energy infrastructure, transformation of its skills base and transfer of new technologies into the region.

Tariq Baker, vice chairman of Dutco Group, said, "Dutco has strategically positioned itself to be part of the hydrogen economy through driving new investments in the value chain of production of green hydrogen and green ammonia. The diversified set of global capabilities of the members of this consortium will greatly contribute to making the SalalahH2 a showcase project that will allow Oman to position itself as a global player in the production and export of green hydrogen and green ammonia."

September 24th to October 3rd 2021

VAT FREE!!

BUY NOW

SPLIT & WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS

* Applicable on CASH purchase for split & window air-conditioners only for above brands.
Company will pay the VAT and not the customer
RUSH, TILL STOCKS LAST..!

MUSCAT
97693496, 96742452

SALALAH
79011363

Available at Authorized Appliances Retailers & Hypermarkets

Special Discount

oman OASIS **sifr**
SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

22.72% DISCOUNT
~~NO 64,700~~ **NO 50 ONLY**

24.24% DISCOUNT
~~NO 26,400~~ **NO 20 ONLY**

- Hot & Cold Dispenser
- 2 Full Bottles
- 15 Refill Coupons
- White Tap Dispenser/ Tap Dispenser/ Manual Water Pump/ Cradle with Tap
- 2 Full Bottles
- 12 Refill Coupons

BUY & WIN 310 PRIZES

Get 1 Raffle Coupon for every RO 20 spent on 5 Gallon Products.

Register your raffle coupon number at www.omanoasis.com/discount2021 to win.

CALL TOLL-FREE 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522

Special discount valid from 20th August 2021 to 19th November 2021. Conditions apply.

C.R.No: 1365452 NM 2021/634/06

Scan QR Code to Register

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories: Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/ Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)
Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346



Ooredoo, Huawei sign deal for talent development

Muscat - Omani Qatari Telecommunications Company (Ooredoo Oman) and Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) solutions, has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to advance the digital talent development.

The partnership, which builds on a long-term relationship between the two companies, intends to increase Ooredoo Oman's internal digital capabilities, particularly as it works to expand its 5G roadmap while ensuring a seamless transition towards new technologies, the company said in a press release.

As part of its mission to build a fully connected and intelligent world, Huawei invests in digital talent development all over the

world, aiming to help contribute to digital empowerment.

Meanwhile, Ooredoo Oman dedicates considerable resources to nurture talented individuals and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in a competitive market and meet the country's evolving communications needs. With a growing number of partnerships and collaborations, it is placing Oman firmly in the global race towards digital innovation.

As Oman's data experience leaders, Ooredoo provides individuals and businesses with cutting edge digital products and services, so that customers can enjoy the Internet. Ooredoo Oman, which is listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange, generated revenues of RO264.9mn in 2020.

oman OASIS

sifr

OMAN'S ONLY SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

5 IN GALLON BOTTLES

Sodium Free Drinking Water

The healthy choice

It is beneficial to limit sodium intake if you have blood pressure, diabetes, heart or kidney disease.

Call Toll-Free 800 71 222 or GSM 9275 5522

www.omanoasis.com
OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOC, P.O.Box: 87, PC: 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman.

C.R. No.: 1365452

MSX rises 0.21%; volumes down

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose 0.21 per cent to close at 3,964.08 points on Wednesday.

Trading activity deteriorated from the previous session as turnover declined 44.17 per cent to RO1.18mn and volumes fell 10.07 per cent to 7.43mn shares.

While Financial index rose 0.18 per cent, Industrial and Services indices fell 0.7 per cent and 0.26 per cent, respectively. The MSX Shariah Index closed down by 0.12 per cent at 578.14 points.

Market breadth remained positive as 11 companies closed up, while ten companies closed down.

The rest 17 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers were Al Omaniya Financial Services (6.36 per cent), Oman and Emirates Investment Holding (4.17 per

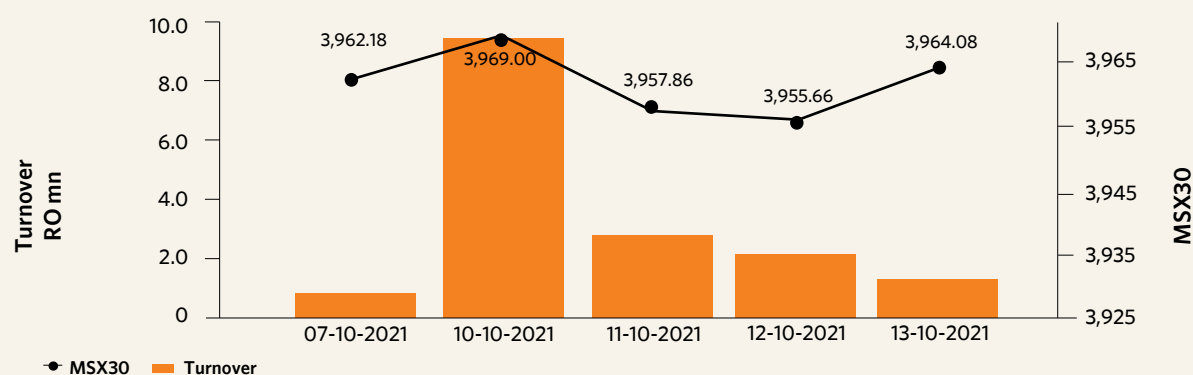


cent), Oman Qatar Insurance (3.93 per cent), National Finance (2.86 per cent) and Phoenix Power (2.17 per cent).

Top losers were Dhofar Generating Company (-9.28 per cent), Oman Cables

Industry (-4.08 per cent), Galfar Engineering & Contracting (-3.57 per cent), Oman Investment and Finance Company (-2.13 per cent) and Al Anwar Investment (-1.79 per cent).

MSX INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



Supply snarls slowing global recovery: IMF

Washington, US - Worldwide supply chain disruptions are driving price increases and draining momentum out of economies recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the IMF warned on Tuesday.

The ongoing hit from the pandemic and the failure to distribute vaccines worldwide is worsening the economic divide and darkening prospects for developing nations, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook.

The global economy is expected to grow 5.9 per cent this year, only slightly lower than projected in July, before slowing to 4.9 per cent in 2022, the report said.

But the overall figures mask large downgrades and ongoing struggles for some countries, including the United States, Germany and Japan that are feeling the impact of supply bottlenecks, IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said.

"This recovery is really quite unique," she said on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Despite a strong return in demand, 'the supply side has not been able to come back as quickly', hampered in part by the



spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19, which has made workers reluctant to return to their jobs.

Those labour shortages are 'feeding into price pressures' in major economies, she said, slowing growth expectations this year.

In low-income developing countries, the outlook 'has darkened considerably due to worsening pandemic dynamics', she said in a blog post on the new forecasts.

The setbacks, which she blamed on the 'great vaccine divide', will impact the restoration of living standards, and a prolonged pandemic downturn 'could reduce global GDP by a cumulative US\$5.3tn over the next five years', she warned.

"The dangerous divergence in economic prospects across countries remains a major concern," Gopinath said.

Advanced economies are expected to regain 'pre-pandemic trend path in 2022 and exceed it by 0.9 per cent in 2024', she said.

However, in emerging market and developing economies, excluding China, output 'is expected to remain 5.5 per cent below the pre-pandemic forecast in 2024'.

Amid the danger of long-term scarring, "The foremost policy priority is therefore to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of the population in every country by end-2021 and 70 per cent by mid-2022," she said.

AFP

Energy prices to retreat by 2022: IMF

Washington, US - Rising energy prices are weighing on households but the recent spike is unlikely to fuel a 1970s-style oil crisis and should retreat early next year, IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said on Tuesday.

Energy prices collapsed last year amid the shutdowns imposed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, but 2021 has brought a sharp rebound in demand as the global economy recovered, Gopinath said in an interview.

In the energy market, a long, cold winter followed by a particularly hot summer led to greater demand and depleted stocks, especially gas reserves in Europe.

"This recovery is really quite unique," she said, speaking on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"We are in a difficult situation where we've seen prices go up very sharply", and the key ques-



Gita Gopinath

tion is whether that will persist, she said.

While energy prices 'will be elevated' for the next couple of months, "We expect that to come back down by the end of the first quarter next year and into the second quarter," she said.

"Once we get past the winter months, we will be in a better place."

Oil prices have soared in recent weeks, jumping to multi-year highs on Monday, with the benchmark WTI crude jumping above US\$80 a barrel for the first time since October 2014 and up 30 per cent since August, which sent major stock markets tumbling.

The increase in energy prices has ramped up fears that overall inflation could tick even higher and hinder the global economic recovery.

Gopinath cautioned that the weather will play a factor, since a very severe winter could lead to broader power outages 'that will have a much bigger effect on the world'.

The worst outcome would be 'an extremely severe winter in the Northern Hemisphere', driving up demand for energy, combined with a failure of producers including the OPEC+ to respond with increased output, which

could feed into headline inflation, she said.

In February 2021, severe weather marked by polar temperatures and snowstorms caused a surge in electricity consumption in the southern United States.

Texas, with a population of nearly 29mn, was unable to meet the explosion in demand, and blackouts affected hundreds of thousands of homes.

However, Gopinath does not expect a crisis like the one seen in the 1970s because the world relies much less on energy relative to the size of the economy.

"It would take a much bigger ratcheting up in gas prices, for instance, to have a kind of a stagflationary event," she said, referring to the economic crisis in the 1970s when inflation spiraled due to high oil prices as growth stalled.

AFP

Putin says Russia ready to increase gas flows

Moscow, Russia - President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that Russia was ready to boost natural gas supplies abroad, after Europe accused Moscow of curbing flows and pushing prices to new records.

Speaking at an energy forum in Moscow, Putin said Russia was ready to meet new orders from buyers for higher volumes.

"If they ask us to increase

more, we are ready to do so," Putin said, adding that Russia is increasing supplies 'as much as our partners are asking us'.

Europe is facing a gas crisis leading up to the coldest season of the year, with a surge in prices and depleting reserves caused by a cold end to last winter.

Some in Europe are blaming Russia for the increase in gas prices, saying Moscow is inten-



Russian President Vladimir Putin

tionally not boosting supplies to pressure Europe for more long-term contracts and for the certification of the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

But Putin on Wednesday blamed 'systemic flaws' in the European energy market and brushed off criticism, saying that 'some try to pass their errors onto others'.

AFP

Less noise. More music.

Launching the new limited edition sand-stone Bose QuietComfort® Earbuds

Better sound begins with better silence. That's why QuietComfort® Earbuds come with the world's most effective noise cancelling and high-fidelity audio, plus StayHear™ Max tips for extra comfort. Get it now in the new sand-stone color, available for a limited time only.



Bose Showroom at Qurum City Centre
Tel: 24470497 / 92311039

CELEBRATE
WORLD PASTA DAY with
OCTOBER 25th 2021

Barilla

Sale & Marketed by
CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC

Shangri-La Muscat invites guests back to fun-filled adventures

Following a period of lockdowns and global restrictions, travel is taking centre stage for many across the globe, as vacations move forward and long awaited for holidays become less of a dream and more of a reality.

Scenically wedged between the mountains and the sea, Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat is back on the bucket-list as Oman reopened its borders on September 1 to vaccinated tourists with an approved vaccine and holding a negative PCR test.

The resort celebrates the occasion with the unveiling of a series of expertly curated experiences, always with well-being top of mind. Whether a memorable family vacation, restorative couple escape or an adrenaline pumping getaway, guests can now rediscover Muscat's abundance of natural treasures, through visiting one of the city's most coveted destinations, the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah.

"When it comes to cities that combine nature and beauty with

history and culture, there are a few places on earth that can compete with Muscat.

"From the shifting sands of the desert to the dramatic mountains, from the waters of the wadis to the glittering sea, Muscat's outdoor nature and diverse landscapes are second to none," says Rene D Egle, area general manager of Shangri-La resorts in Muscat. "However, the city is also steeped in a rich historical and cultural heritage with bustling souqs, historic forts and ancient castles."

Ranked among the safest travel destinations in the world according to The World Travel Risk Map 2021 by the International SOS Consulting, The Sultanate of Oman will seek to have all its population vaccinated by year end. The sultanate's relentless efforts complemented with Shangri-La Cares, the Shangri-La Group's global safety programme, ensure guests staying at the resort can travel with peace of mind and confidently enjoy the moments that matter most.

Family Fun

Shangri-La Bar Al Jissah offers endless ways to connect as a family. Perfectly suited for both land and ocean adventures, the family friendly haven invites guests to enjoy a whole host of Family Fun with plenty of splashing, sliding and rolling in the sand. Dolphin Watching Private Cruise is priced at RO90 (about US\$235) and 'Majlis Dinner by the Beach' experience starts from RO40 (about US\$105) per person.

Couples Escape

Whether guests are celebrating the wonder of new love or marking a relationship milestone, hearts grow fonder while staying at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah.

Designed for privacy and space across 124 acres of lush gardens and a 500m private beach, couples can create a sea of memories with our experiences for two. Scenic mountain views, breath-taking nature and an air of laidback elegance merge together to create an unforget-

table experience in an inherently romantic setting with our "Dine by Design" concept. Couples are also invited to ignite their love with a golden Sunset Cruise, or relax with a spa treatment at Chi, the Spa under the expert care of our therapists.

Private Sunset Cruise is available for RO70 (about US\$182) and "Dine by Design" experience starts from RO70 (about US\$182) per couple.

Adventure Seeker's Paradise

Guests eager to embark on exciting nature-filled adventures can discover the resort's majestic landscape as they get their dose of 'vitamin sea'. Paddle away on a 90-minute Kayak Safari with snorkeling, enjoy a Jet Ski ride with a breath-taking backdrop or immerse yourself into Muscat's pristine waters for an unforgettable Diving Adventure. Jet Ski is priced at RO22 (about US\$57) for 30 minutes and Diving Courses start from RO130 (about US\$338) per person.



Bank Nizwa's HR head Haifa is now assistant general manager



As part of its strategic approach to strengthen its leadership structure, Bank Nizwa remains committed to its vision of harnessing the skills of its top-notch Omani talents. The bank has announced the elevation of Haifa al Lawati to take on new responsibilities as the assistant general manager, chief human resources officer. Haifa is presently Bank Nizwa's head of Human Resources, and will pursue her new role from January 2021.

With over 17 years of experience in the field of human resources management, Haifa has been with Bank Nizwa since its inception and has held the position of head of the Salaries, Wages, Compensation and Benefits Department earlier.

"The bank will continue its march towards excellence and innovation by hiring, retaining, and developing a highly-qualified

and well-versed national workforce. We believe that our people are our greatest assets. Such assets will contribute to the bank's development, strengthen its leadership in the Islamic banking industry and enhance its growth, ultimately achieving the bank's desired objectives locally and internationally. We believe that by recognizing outstanding employee performance and providing them with newer opportunities and higher responsibilities, we are able to move forward with a team which is highly motivated and passionate of their association with Bank Nizwa," said Khalid al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa.

"Haifa al Lawati is a valuable resource for us. Her numerous skills, including leadership, team building, project management, strategic thinking, problem-solving and creativity, negotiation

and decision-making, have brought in great ideas, mentorship and a structured roadmap to the bank's personnel management department," added Kayed.

Haifa has started her career in Petroleum Development Oman, then Occidental Oman. She is holding several important positions including secretary to the Board of Directors at HRC, and member of the Human Resources Committee at Oman Banks Association. Her contribution to Oman's HR industry has brought her several coveted awards, such as, GCC Best Employer Brand Award 2020, GCC HR Leadership Award 2020 and Wowani Most Influential Women award in Islamic Finance 2020 amongst others.

Haifa holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Sultan Qaboos University and an MBA from the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom. In order to enhance her skills, Haifa attended several courses and workshops on human resource, leadership and Islamic Finance, from the University of Houston in the United States of America.

Since its establishment, Bank Nizwa continuously took various initiatives to encourage the growth of its assets as it focused on empowering them.

Meethaq to hold quarterly and women's day draws



Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat, is all set to celebrate the upcoming Hibati savings account quarterly draw in a special event, which will be broadcasted on the bank's social media channels.

Ten high-value cash prizes of RO10,000 each and RO5,000 each will be given away to 20 lucky winners during the quarterly draw. In addition, 30 cash prizes of RO1,000 each will be given away to our lucky female customers in celebration of the Omani Women's Day draw.

Speaking on the occasion, Amor Said al Amri, senior regional manager, Meethaq Branches said, "We are delighted to carry out the upcoming Quarterly Draw and the Omani Women's Day Draw under Meethaq Islamic Banking's flagship Hibati Savings Account. The bank has been constantly updat-

ing the prize scheme taking into account customer feedback from across the sultanate and has increased the total cash prize substantially this year. The 2021 Hibati prize scheme gives more chances for customers to win valuable prizes."

He thanked all customers for their confidence in the scheme and in the various products and services of Meethaq.

Hibati Savings account is based on the unrestricted Mudarabah contract. The cash prizes offered under Hibati's 2021 prize draw scheme are 'Hiba' (gift) from Meethaq to its customers and are paid out of the Mudarib's /shareholders' own sources. The cash prizes are over and above the profit share of Investment Account Holders (IAHs) in the General Mudarabah Pool as per the declared profit sharing weightages.

The 2021 Hibati Saving account has two Grand draws including the upcoming End-of-Year draw. For every RO30,000 in quarterly average balance maintained in the preceding quarter, the customer shall be entitled to one entry to the Grand draw. Four grand prizes of RO50,000 each and one grand prize of RO100,000 will be given away.



Barwani invited as keynote speaker at GITEX Global 2021 in Dubai

Knowledge Oman founder and popular ICT expert, Tariq Hilal al Barwani, is all set to join regional government leaders and senior ICT industry experts at the largest technology exhibition and conference in the Middle East, GITEX Global 2021, to discuss Arab World Technology innovations. GITEX GLOBAL 2021 will take place in the UAE at the Dubai World Trade Center from October 17-21.

Big tech companies, government entities to next generation startups across the globe are expected to attend the event.

"Cybersecurity and privacy protection are baseline requirements to maintain law and order in a digital world, I am excited to be part of conference and look forward to highlight the challenges in cyberspace so as the role of open collaboration between public & private sectors," said Barwani.

Barwani will be delivering a keynote session along other senior ICT leaders on

cybersecurity opportunities, issues and challenges at the 'Huawei Arab Innovation Day' scheduled to be conducted at the GITEX GLOBAL 2021 conference.

The session will highlight the role of open collaboration between organisations for a resilient digital economy.

"Openness, transparency and collaboration in cybersecurity is a key factor for a resilient digital economy," emphasised Barwani.

GITEX GLOBAL 2021 will unite international innovators across the globe in artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud, big data, cybersecurity, blockchain, quantum computing, Fintech and immersive marketing.

The annual event will gather the region's government leaders, academia, industry analysts and regulators under one roof to showcase cutting edge technologies so as engage on comprehensive series of summits and exhibitions from leading tech firms around the world.

Ooredoo supports in Shaheen cyclone recovery efforts

Continuously placing 'family' at the centre of every aspect of its operations, Ooredoo's Goodwill team were on the ground and provided food supplies to local communities in Batinah, one of the most impacted areas due to cyclone Shaheen.

The company also provided unlimited WhatsApp data for three days to residents in Suwaiq, Saham, Khabourah and Mussanah to stay connected with loved ones. Extending support, Ooredoo collaborates with Oman's Charitable Organization and Dar al Atta'a on a campaign to raise funds for people in the affected areas.

Ooredoo technology team was leading a 24/7 special operational room to run the restoration of affected sites due to cyclone Shaheen.

Dr Ahmed Abdullah al Abri, chief technology & information officer said, "All our technology teams were putting special preparations including additional teams, additional power generators and other logistics. The teams are working around the clock to rectify the affected sites to keep our customers connected."

Ooredoo's CEO Noor al Sulaiti visited various areas to assess and check on network outages.



NBO signs pact with ONEIC to enhance digital capabilities

National Bank of Oman (NBO) has signed a Strategic Memorandum of Understanding with Oman National Engineering & Investment CO SAOG (ONEIC) in order to jointly explore technical and financial opportunities.

Under the agreement, the bank will cooperate with ONEIC on a range of shared digital solutions, distribution channels, infrastructure and training courses, with the aim to generate additional revenue streams, create sustainable and scalable partnership models, and reach untapped markets.

Abdullah Zahran al Hinai, chief executive officer of NBO, said, "As part of our efforts to enrich the sultanate's banking industry with the latest technologies and know-how, we are pleased to have joined with



ONEIC. The partnership is a major step in helping us to maximise our digital and technical capabilities, develop our prod-

ucts and services, provide added value to our customers, while adding overall economic value according to Oman's Vision

2040."

Dr Rashid Mohamed al Ghailani, CEO of ONEIC, added, "Our agreement with NBO is a

welcome addition to our growing portfolio of partnerships and a testament to how such partnerships between government institutions and private sector companies can promote innovative thinking and growth within the economy.

"Through it, we look forward to delivering added value to people across the sultanate."

Through a number of partnerships with both public and private entities, NBO is providing integrated banking services with an innovative approach.

With a range of compelling solutions, products and world-class customer service, the bank is helping to support the sultanate's development, while cementing its position as a preferred financial institution.

ISG teacher Pooja Sharma honoured

Teachers Global Award Ceremony was organised by Radio Meri Awaaz on the auspicious occasion of World Teachers Day. Teachers were honoured under their teaching work. Chief guest of this programme was Dr Jeet Ram Bhatt, secretary Hindi Academy, Government of Delhi; Dr Madhuri Ramdhari, deputy secretary general, World Hindi Secretariat, Mauritius, Padma Shri Vijay Kumar Shah from Maharashtra, Dr Jyotirmaya Thakur from United Kingdom and Dr Bhavna Kunwar from Australia too graced the occasion.

The event was conceptualised by Minal Shah Deora from Oman, who is the global coordinator at Radio Meri Aawaz along with Samridhi Choudhari, founder of Radio Meri Aawaz, Smrity Choudhary, founder, Shaikshik Aagaaz under the guidance of Amit Choudhary, CEO, Radio Meri Aawaz.



Twenty-nine teachers were honoured from India, Middle East, East Asia, Africa and Europe. From Oman, Pooja Kaushal Sharma was felicitated by respected guests. Pooja is a teacher.

She is associated with Indian School Ghubra (ISG), for the past 13 years. She has got appreciation and recognition both socially and professionally. Because of her dedication she was presented with Certificate of Recognition (Navin Asher-Kazi Award 2019).

Oman international ELT virtual conference begins

The Oman 21st International ELT Virtual Conference is set to commence on Thursday, October 14 and will run for two days.

The conference aims to create a platform where ELT teachers can come together and discuss the ways they can enhance the quality of their teaching in the different stages of their careers through learning about new and innovative teaching practices and perspectives.

With a total of sixty-one papers and poster presentation as well as workshops, this year's conference covers a wide range of topics under the theme Stepping out of the ELT Comfort Zone: Changes in

Teaching & Learning Cultures, including teaching and learning, assessment and testing, curriculum development, e-learning, and quality management in addition to educational psychology and special needs education.

The first day of the conference will begin with the opening ceremony followed by the plenary speech.

Professor Said Aldhafri, professor of Educational Psychology and the director of Social Observatory at Sultan Qaboos University, is the plenary speaker for this year's conference. He will give a talk on The Psychological Dimensions of Online Learning: The Promising Role of Self-Regu-

lated Learning Models.

Later on Thursday, the featured speaker Professor Hisham al Saghbini, regional head of Assessment Services and Recognition Cambridge Assessment English, will give a talk on Learning Oriented Assessment.

The keynote speaker, Professor Debra Myhill, director of the Centre for Research in Writing at the University of Exeter, will give her talk on Changing ELT Writing Cultures: Building a Reader-Writer Relationship through Metadiscourse on Friday afternoon.

She will follow up her speech with a certified workshop later on the same day.

Bhavalaya holds short story competition

The recently concluded Short Story competition organised by Bhavalaya Art & Culture Foundation, a prominent nonprofit, global platform for promotion of art and culture, had waves of creativity from the participants.

This competition was organised as part of the Online International Creative Writing (OICW) Series.

The Short Story competition in English was the first in the series. Participants from different countries participated with enthusiasm as they share slices of life based on their own experiences and imagination.

Dr J Retnakumar, founder and chairman of The Bhavalaya Art and Culture Foundation, said, "We are pleased to organise this first-of-its-kind event and have participants from all around the world. As the world gets more closer we need to work together



collectively to ensure a better life in material as well as emotional quotients. We need to ensure every young person gets ample opportunity to express their skills and thoughts."

The theme of the competition was Life in the COVID-19 Pandemic Days. The competition was open for the age group 15 to 70 years. With a word limit of 3,500 words and attractive prizes for winners; the event received entries till July 31.

The first prize was bagged by



Jesmal Jalal, for the short story "The School Bus". Jesmal is a science student currently pursuing BS-MS at IISER, Tirupati, India. His debut novel *The Devil's Cage* was published in 2019.

Shivani Sarat won the second position for the short story "A Hope for Braids and Balloons". She is pursuing English honours in Amity University, India. She writes and has published stories and poetry and has trained in creative writing from Oxford University.

The third position went to Sheryn Ta Xiao Xiu for her story titled "Virus Dairies of Diana Ophelia Grant". She is a Form 5 (Class 10) student from Canossian Convent Secondary School, Segamat, Johore, Malaysia.

The volunteer coordinator of the event, Dr Vindhya Sathya Singh said, "It was refreshing to see that many had come forward to participate in spite of the personal inconveniences people had. It gives hope a prominent role in our lives as we deal with the pandemic and its unpredictable nature."

An eminent panel of judges chose the winners from about 40 entries.

The judges were Shaddad al Musalmi, Dr Girija Nair, Dr Rajat Ghosh and Rajan V Kokkuri.

The OICW series will continue to include other aspects of creativity in the future.

'50 Days to Transform 5 Million Lives' campaign begins in the UAE

People across the UAE will carry on the commitment of the UAE's founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, to end neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) with a major fundraising effort.

The '50 Days to Transform 5 Million Lives' campaign will begin on October 14 as the countdown begins to the UAE's 50th anniversary on December 2. The effort is led by The Reach Campaign, an awareness and fundraising initiative which aims to end two NTDs - river blindness and lymphatic filariasis - in partnership with Emirates Red Crescent and some of the UAE's biggest organisations and companies.

All proceeds will benefit the Reaching the Last Mile Fund (RLMF), which offers a proof of concept for the elimination of the two diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hosted by the END Fund - the leading philanthropic vehicle dedicated to ending NTDs - RLMF is a 10-year, \$100mn initiative launched in 2017 by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, with support from several organisations including The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The ELMA Philanthropies.

RLMF delivers preventative treatment for NTDs and focuses on ways to accelerate progress towards elimination - from investing in disease mapping efforts, to supporting advanced lab facilities and cross-border collab-



orations. The 50 day campaign aims to raise funds to support these activities and ultimately help protect at least five million people from river blindness and lymphatic filariasis.

Organisations that will work with Reach to achieve its fundraising goal include strategic partner, Emirates Red Crescent; founding partners, ADNOC, Etihad Airways, Lulu Group International and National Health Insurance Company - Daman; and marketing partners, ADCB

and Rivoli Group, as well as 18 other major organisations.

A series of fundraising initiatives will be announced over the next 50 days and include personal fundraising challenges, employee giving campaigns, culinary and retail promotions, text-to-give campaigns, a global sweepstakes and an auction of once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

River blindness and lymphatic filariasis disproportionately affect the world's poorest people. Over 200mn people globally re-

quire treatment for river blindness, one of the leading causes of preventable blindness, while over 850mn people are at risk of lymphatic filariasis.

Mohamed Ateeq al Falahi, secretary general of Emirates Red Crescent, says, "We are incredibly proud to be supporting the 50 Days to Transform 5 Million Lives campaign in partnership with Reach. This campaign aligns with ERC's values of mobilising human power to support the vulnerable, and as we look to eradicate these preventable diseases, it is crucial for governments, donors, NGOs and the private sector to come together to work toward a more equal future for some of the world's most vulnerable communities."

Nassar al Mubarak, managing director of The Reach Campaign, says, "The UAE has been committed to eliminating these preventable NTDs for over 30 years. In 1990, the UAE's late founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, made a personal donation to The Carter Center's efforts to eradicate the NTD Guinea worm disease and began a decades-long commitment by Abu Dhabi's ruling family to disease eradication, which continues today through the philanthropic commitments of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed. We are incredibly proud to be honouring this commitment by launching the campaign."



Online, on-site Esports racing event launched

Oman's growing community of virtual racing enthusiasts can test themselves against the best talent from across the GCC region when Esports breaks new ground in Dubai next month.

The #NoFilterDxb Esports Tournament 2021 was launched as part of the new-look motor show and lifestyle event being staged by Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from November 24-27.

Taking place at the iconic Dubai Harbour one week ahead of the UAE Golden Jubilee weekend, #NoFilterDxb is perfectly suited to including an international Esports event in an action-packed programme of experiences.

Organised by Pole Position Events Management, the region's first combined online and on-site Esports racing event gives enthusiasts the chance to

qualify through a series of compete-at-home time attacks and multiplayer battles broadcast live on YouTube.

The tournament reaches its climax during a pulsating schedule of on-site finals taking place over the four days of #NoFilterDxb at Dubai Harbour, with a prize fund of AED20,000.

"Enthusiasts from across the GCC region are invited to compete against the best in the UAE, and prove themselves in a highly competitive new Esports racing environment," said Pole Position's managing director, Ryan Trutch.

The event is open to anyone with access to RaceRoom's free-to-play racing simulation on PC.,

Beginning on October 15, three 12-day overlapping rounds of time attacks will send those with the 20 fastest lap times into the live multiplayer rounds on

YouTube, complete with actual commentary and race stewards.

They will be competing virtually on race circuits including the Red Bull Ring in Austria, Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium and Dubai Autodrome. The top 15 racers from each multiplayer round go through to on-site finals staged at a purpose-built race simulator location at Dubai Harbour.

Pole position aims to establish Esport racing centres at locations across the region, and plans a series of high profile race tournaments to help grow a grassroots movement in conjunction with traditional motorsport.

To finance its expansion plans throughout the GCC region, the company recently launched a crowdfunding drive on the Eureka.com investment platform and achieved more than 30 per cent of its target.

More than 100 Houthis killed in Marib

Fighting for Marib has left heavy casualties since the rebels renewed their campaign to seize the city

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - More than 100 Yemeni rebels have been killed south of Marib, the Saudi-led coalition said on Wednesday, reporting a heavy toll for the third straight day in fighting for the strategic city.

The Iran-backed Houthis' latest casualties in the Abdiya district 'exceeded 108', the coalition said, after announcing more than 156 dead on Monday and over 134 on Tuesday.

That brought the unconfirmed toll to about 400 in the area this week as an analyst said the rebels have made significant advances.

The coalition, which relies heavily on air strikes to combat the Shiite Houthis, did not reveal how it arrived at those figures. They could not be independently verified by AFP.

"We have conducted 19 operations targeting [Houthi] members in the past 24 hours in Abdiya, destroying 12 of their military vehicles and their losses exceeded 108 members," the coalition said in a statement carried by state-run Al-Ekhbariya television.

Fighting for Marib, the internationally recognised government's last bastion in oil-rich northern Yemen, has left heavy casualties since the rebels renewed their campaign to seize Marib last month.

The Houthis said they were 'on the edges of the city' in a video statement on Tuesday.



Fighters loyal to Yemen's Houthi rebels stand by banners commemorating slain officers, killed in a reported air strike by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's capital Sanaa on October 9 (AFP)

Adam Baron, a political analyst focused on Yemen and the wider region, said the rebels had made 'significant' territorial

gains. "The advances are quite significant on both a strategic and psychological level - these are areas that were seen as

quite secure just a year or two ago," he said.

Yemen has been devastated by a seven-year war pitting the

rebels against the government supported by a Saudi-led military coalition.

The rebels overran the capital

Sanaa, just 120km to the west of Marib, in 2014, prompting the Saudi-led intervention to prop up the government

We have conducted 19 operations targeting Houthi rebels in the past 24 hours in Abdiya district, destroying 12 of their military vehicles

SAUDI-LED COALITION

the following year.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions have been displaced since then. Many fled to Marib, whose population has ballooned since the war began.

As well as the deaths in Abdiya, six people were killed in a car-bombing on Sunday that targeted the governor of Aden, the government's provisional seat of power. He survived the attack.

Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalek Saeed called the Aden blast an 'escalation' by the rebels.

Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supporting the Houthis with weapons and drones, but Tehran says it only provides political support to the rebels.

The Houthi fighters have also repeatedly targeted Saudi Arabia in cross-border attacks. AFP



Mevlut Cavusoglu (AFP)

Turkey lashes out at US, Russia after Syria attacks

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkey on Wednesday said the United States and Russia bore responsibility for a spate of deadly attacks on its border with Syria, stressing that Ankara reserved the right to self-defence.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned on Monday that Turkey had 'no patience left' with Syrian-based Kurdish fighters it blames for cross-border rocket strikes and attacks against its personnel.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Wednesday accused the US and Russia of failing to adequately police a buffer zone in northern Syria, set up under two agreements in 2019, and aimed at pushing the Kurdish forces away from Turkey.

"Unfortunately, Russia and the United States also bear responsibility for the latest attacks aimed at civilians and the police," Cavusoglu told a televised news conference.

"We will do whatever is needed to cleanse the terrorists from those regions."

Turkey has blamed the reported attacks on Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara views as the Syrian branch of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Turkey's official Anadolu news agency said two special forces officers were killed and two wounded when their armoured personnel carrier was hit by a guided missile fired by the YPG in northern Syria on Sunday.

AFP

Azerbaijan, Iran agree to mend diplomatic ties via 'dialogue'

Baku, Azerbaijan - Azerbaijan said on Wednesday it has agreed with Iran to resolve their diplomatic crisis through dialogue, weeks after ties soured over allegations that Israel's military was active in Azerbaijan.

Iran last month protested against what it said was the presence of its sworn enemy Israel in Azerbaijan and vowed to take any necessary action.

It staged military exercises near its border with Azerbaijan, sparking criticism from officials in Baku, which has denied Iranian claims.

Azerbaijan said on Wednesday its Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov had spoken by phone with Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the pair had agreed to resolve differences through talks.

"The sides noted that recent rhetoric has harmed bilateral relations and that any differences should be settled through dialogue," Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Amir-Abdollahian had stressed the two governments should 'avoid misunderstandings and boost relations'.



A boy waves an Iranian national flag in Imam Hussein square in the capital Tehran on June 19 (AFP)

"Tehran and Baku have enemies and the two governments should not give them the opportunity to disrupt relations," the minister was quoted as saying in Tuesday evening's call.

Israel is a major arms supplier to Azerbaijan, which late last year won a six-week war with neighbour Armenia for control

over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan and Iran have long been at loggerheads over Tehran's backing of Armenia in the decades-long Karabakh conflict. Last year's brief war ended with a Russian-brokered ceasefire that saw Yerevan cede swathes of contested territory,

including a section of Azerbaijan's 700km border with Iran.

The statement on Wednesday from Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said the two sides had agreed it was 'necessary to establish direct dialogue between government agencies of both countries on transit issues'.

AFP

EU envoy to visit Iran amid nuclear talks push

Tehran, Iran - The EU envoy charged with coordinating talks on reviving a troubled nuclear deal between Iran and major powers is to visit Tehran on Thursday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Enrique Mora's visit 'is a follow-up to consultations between the two sides on matters of shared interest, particularly Iran-EU relations, Afghanistan and the nuclear agreement', a ministry statement said.

The deal, which gave Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear programme, has been on life support since 2018, when then US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out and reimposed crippling sanctions.

Mora's trip to Tehran comes amid mounting pressure from EU countries as well as the United States for a swift resumption of talks on Washington's return to the agreement.

"The message to Iran is unequivocal: Return to the negotiating table immediately," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said during a visit to Israel on Sunday.

Tehran has been seeking European guarantees that there will



Enrique Mora

be no repetition of Trump's unilateral withdrawal.

"The European capitals, including Berlin... must give their clear assurance to the Islamic republic that this time, no party will violate the nuclear deal," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday.

US President Joe Biden has signalled a willingness to return to the deal, but his Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned earlier this month that time was running out and the ball was in Iran's court.

Talks in Vienna between Iran and the remaining parties to the agreement - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - have been on hold since a June election in Iran led to a change of president.

AFP

Daily aspirin may harm more than help seniors: US experts

Washington, US - A US government expert panel said it no longer recommends a daily dose of aspirin to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke in people aged 60 and over.

People aged 40-59 who are at a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease but have no history of it, should consult with their doctor and make an individual decision on whether to start taking the medicine.

The statement was a major reversal in the US medical field,

where taking aspirin daily is a widespread practice. The medication thins blood, helping prevent blood clots and reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke.

Since 2016, the Preventive Services Task Force, a government medical expert panel, has recommended a daily dose of aspirin for people in their 50s who have a 10 per cent or greater risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the next ten years.

The panel also said at the



time that for at-risk people in their 60s, the decision to take aspirin should be

an individual one.

But for several years, studies have questioned those recommendations.

On Tuesday, experts said that aspirin's benefits were not enough to offset the increased risk of bleeding, especially in the brain or intestines, in older people.

"Daily aspirin use may help prevent heart attacks and strokes in some people, but it can also cause potentially serious harms, such as internal

bleeding," said Task Force member John Wong. "It's important that people who are 40 to 59 years old and don't have a history of heart disease have a conversation with their clinician to decide together if starting to take aspirin is right for them."

These new recommendations are not yet final. They will be open to public debate until early November. They also do not apply to patients taking aspirin after suffering a stroke or heart attack, the statement said.

An estimated 600,000 Americans suffer a first heart attack, and about 610,000 a first stroke.

Taking aspirin to reduce this risk of heart disease is often a spontaneous decision for many Americans. According to a 2017 study, 23 per cent of adults aged 40 and over who don't have cardiovascular disease took aspirin as a preventive measure, of whom 23 per cent did so without a doctor's recommendation.

AFP



A file photo shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a vegetable greenhouse farm in Jungphyong (AFP)

UN rights report warns of N Korea ‘starvation’

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea's most vulnerable are 'at risk of starvation' with the economy worsening due to a self-imposed coronavirus blockade, and UN sanctions imposed over the country's nuclear programmes should be eased, a UN human rights expert said on Wednesday.

The impoverished nation has been behind a rigid blockade since early last year to protect itself from the pandemic, with the economy suffering and trade with key partner China dwindling to a trickle.

In June, state-run KCTV admitted North Korea was facing a 'food crisis', sounding the alarm in a country with a moribund agricultural sector that has long struggled to feed the population.

The same month, leader Kim Jong Un said the food situation was 'getting tense'.

Ordinary North Koreans are 'struggling on a daily basis... to live a life of dignity', and the worsening humanitarian situation could 'turn into a crisis', Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN special rapporteur on human rights, said in his latest report.

Pyongyang is under multiple sets of international sanctions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which have seen rapid progress under Kim.

Quintana said such restrictions should be eased to protect the country's most vulnerable in the face of a severe food shortage.

"The most vulnerable chil-

Ordinary North Koreans are 'struggling on a daily basis... to live a life of dignity', and the worsening humanitarian situation could 'turn into a crisis'

dren and elderly are at risk of starvation," he said.

"Sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council should be reviewed and eased when necessary to both facilitate humanitarian and lifesaving assistance."

The report comes about three months after the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation said North Korea was facing a food shortage of around 860,000 tonnes this year, and could experience a 'harsh lean period'.

Pyongyang has stayed away from talks on its nuclear programme since the collapse of a second summit between Kim and then US president Donald Trump in Hanoi and has rebuffed South Korean efforts to revive dialogue.

Under President Joe Biden, the United States has repeatedly declared its willingness to meet North Korean representatives, while saying it will seek denuclearisation.

AFP

Taliban warn of refugees if sanctions continue

Kabul, Afghanistan - Afghanistan's new Taliban government has warned US and European envoys that continued attempts to pressure them through sanctions will undermine security and could trigger a wave of economic refugees.

Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told Western diplomats at talks in Doha that 'weakening the Afghan government is not in the interest of anyone because its negative effects will directly affect the world in [the] security sector and economic migration from the country', according to a statement published late Tuesday.

The Taliban overthrew Afghanistan's former US-backed government in August after a two-decade-long conflict, and have declared an Islamic emirate governed under the movement's hardline interpretation of religious law.

But efforts to stabilise the country, still facing attacks from the Taliban's rival, the extremist group the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), have been undermined by international sanctions: Banks are running out of cash and civil servants are going unpaid.

According to the statement from his spokesman, Muttaqi told the Doha meeting, "We urge world countries to end existing sanctions and let banks operate normally so that charity groups,



Dozens of Afghan refugees gather to stage a demonstration outside the United States Consulate in Medan, Indonesia on Tuesday (AFP)

organisations and the government can pay salaries to their staff with their own reserves and international financial assistance."

European nations in particular are concerned that if the Afghan economy collapses, large numbers of migrants will set off for the continent, piling pressure on neighbouring states such as Pakistan and Iran and eventually on EU borders.

Washington and the EU have

said they are ready to back humanitarian initiatives in Afghanistan, but are wary of providing direct support to the Taliban without guarantees it will respect human rights, in particular those of women.

The European Union has pledged €1bn in aid, but European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen stressed that it would be used to help Afghanistan's neighbours or given in 'direct support' to the

Afghan people, bypassing the Taliban government. "We have been clear about our conditions for any engagement with the Afghan authorities, including on the respect of human rights," she said on Tuesday.

The Taliban insist they pose no threat to civilian rights, and have urged government workers including some women to return to their professions, while swearing to defeat IS-K and return Afghanistan to stability.

But girls were not allowed back into high schools when the new term started just under a month ago, and many women have complained of being forced out of professional and public roles like journalism.

Some high school girls' classes have resumed in the northern cities of Kunduz and Mazar-i-Sharif, but in the capital and the Taliban's southern heartland they are still excluded.

AFP

California's fast-moving Alisal Fire burns more than 13,000 acres

Los Angeles, United States - California firefighters scrambled overnight Wednesday to battle a fast-moving blaze that has scorched more than 13,400 acres and prompted evacuation orders since it started on Monday, according to local authorities.

Burning in a dry, scrub-filled canyon about 32km northwest of Santa Barbara, the Alisal Fire is just 5 per cent contained, according to the US Forest Service.

More than 765 firefighters have been assigned to the blaze, the latest in what has already been a devastating wildfire season.

"The main constraint has been heavy winds that have limited safe access to suppress the fire and limited the use of aircraft to engage and support fire suppression," an incident report said.

The cause of the fire, which began near the Alisal Reservoir on Monday afternoon, remains under investigation, the state's



A firefighter hoses down a hot spot while battling the Alisal Fire near Goleta, California on Tuesday (AFP)

fire agency Cal Fire said.

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department issued evacuation orders for a 10-mile stretch between El Capitan Beach State Park and Arroyo Hondo Canyon, while a portion of the iconic Highway 101 was shut down and local

railway lines suspended.

Alisal is the latest fire to burn California, which has been plagued by increasingly large-scale and record-breaking infernos. By late July, the number of acres burned in California was up more than 250 per cent from 2020 - itself the worst year of

wildfires in the state's modern history.

Scientists say human activity, including the unchecked burning of fossil fuels, is warming the planet and changing weather patterns, making wildfires hotter and more destructive.

AFP

Kosovo Serbs, police injured in clashes

Mitrovica, Kosovo - Several Kosovo police officers and ethnic Serb civilians were injured on Wednesday in clashes that erupted during raids targeting smugglers of Serbian-origin goods in Kosovo's tense north, officials and police said.

The violence comes less than two weeks after Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement to end a tense standoff at their border that marked the worst tensions between the two neighbours in a decade.

One ethnic Serb sustained serious gunshot injuries and several others suffered minor injuries, Zlatan Elek, head of a hospital in the ethnically divided town of Mitrovica, told AFP.

Police said six officers were injured in clashes and eight people were arrested.

The raids were conducted in four Kosovo regions, including in Mitrovica, within the 'fight against goods smuggling', police said.

They were carried out at 'various locations such as residential houses, business premises, warehouses', a statement added.

The operation provoked anger among ethnic Serbs, hundreds of whom blocked roads in Mitrovica, a city that is ethnically split with Serbs in the north and Albanians in the south, and nearby Zvecan.

Police used tear gas and stunt grenades to disperse them, according to an AFP correspondent.

In the Serb-controlled north Mitrovica the protesters set on fire two vehicles and hurled stones at police.

One ethnic Serb from Zvecan sustained serious firearm injuries and is undergoing surgery, Elek said. Several other people were admitted to hospital with minor injuries, he added.

AFP

In Berlin, a street art show before it's 'game over' for site



A work featuring a likeness of former US president Donald Trump by the 'Drink and Draw Berlin' art collective is pictured at the 'Game Over' exhibition in Berlin, Germany (AFP)

Berlin, Germany - From an image of Hulk who suddenly leaps over your head to a painting that changes its colours, one Berlin street art exhibition offers visitors a chance to experience paintings in 3D.

Called 'Game Over', the exhibition inspired by videogames is housed in a former casino stretching over 2,000 sqm which is due to be torn down.

Eighty artists are showcasing their work here, with a dedicated app enhancing the experience.

"After all these dry months with the coronavirus and this, yes, dark world, we have finally created a bit of colour, not only in our lives, but hopefully also in the

lives of the visitors and admirers," said Joern Reiners, a member of art group The Dixons and one of the curators of the exhibition.

"We try to bring together the right artists who will continue to develop and evolve creatively and ultimately create completely new layers and processes here."

The Dixons organised a similar pop-up exhibition in 2017, with artists plastering the walls of an old bank with their paintings before the demolition crew moved in.

This time the works stand out against a minimalist background.

But the special app allows visitors to point their phones at the

images to discover what lies beyond the analogue painting.

For painter Gita Kurdpoor, the show 'which we have created here, together, is like a bit of a school trip feeling'.

Berlin is a hub for urban culture and its particularly vibrant street art scene has left its mark on many of the capital's facades.

Tours are organised regularly for visitors to check out the most iconic images.

Most famously, the longest remaining stretch of the Berlin Wall is covered with murals, first painted in 1990 and later restored.

AFP

Italy adopts tough COVID-19 pass regime

Anyone caught in the workplace without a Green Pass risks fines

Rome, Italy - Italy will require all workers to show a coronavirus health pass from Friday, one of the world's toughest anti-COVID-19 regimes that has already sparked riots and which many fear will cause 'chaos'.

More than 85 per cent of Italians over the age of 12 have received at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine, making them eligible for the so-called Green Pass certificate.

But according to various estimates, about 2.5mn of the country's 23mn workers are unvaccinated, and risk being denied access to the workplace after October 15.

"You have no idea of the chaos that we will have in firms," the president of the heavily industrialised northern Veneto region, Luca Zaia, said recently.

Unvaccinated workers can still get a Green Pass by getting tested for coronavirus or with a certificate of recovery, if they contracted the virus within the previous six months.

If they instead opt to qualify through testing, they have to take them at their own expense, and repeat them every 48 hours.

Zaia suggested there was not enough testing capacity to meet



People wave national flags during a protest against the mandatory sanitary pass called 'Green Pass' in the aim to limit the spread of the COVID-19 in central Rome, Italy on October 9 (AFP)

potential demand, raising the prospect of mass absenteeism from work.

"The entrepreneurs I talk to are very worried," he said.

Green passes are already required for teachers and other school workers, and for other activities such as eating indoors in bars and restaurants, or going to

the cinema, museums and football games.

Avoid lockdowns

But they are not popular, at least among a sizeable minority - as shown by last Saturday's riots in Rome, where an anti-pass demonstration degenerated into an assault on the CGIL trade

union building led by the neo-fascist Forza Nuova party.

Anyone caught in the workplace without a Green Pass risks fines ranging from €600 to €1,500.

And those who fail to turn up for work because they don't have one face suspension on no pay - but cannot be fired.

Meanwhile, employers can be fined €400-€1,000 for not checking if their staff comply with the rules.

Prime Minister Mario Draghi opted for compulsory COVID-19 passes last month in a bid to prevent further lockdowns and support Italy's recovery from a record 8.9 per cent

recession last year.

Business lobby Confindustria has been among the staunchest backers of the Green Pass in Italy, one of the European countries hardest hit by coronavirus with more than 130,000 deaths.

The focus is on 'creating workplaces that are as safe as possible... because it is the only

way to ensure public health and economic recovery', Vice President Maurizio Stirpe told the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper.

Trade unions, on the other hand, have been sceptical. They first called for a blanket rule forcing all Italians to get jabbed, arguing that option would have avoided discrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated workers.

Threats from dock workers

But the government has stopped short of that, partly because one of the members of Draghi's left-right coalition government, the nationalist League party of Matteo Salvini, opposed compulsory vaccines.

Once the government ignored the unions' advice, worker representatives successfully requested that unvaccinated employees should be suspended rather than fired.

But the unions failed to secure free COVID-19 tests for workers that they wanted the state or employers to pay for.

So far, only dock workers in Trieste have been offered the possibility of free coronavirus tests, but they are still threatening to block all activities in their port, a major hub in the north-east, from October 15.

Meanwhile, there are concerns violence could break out again next Saturday, when the anti-pass movement is planning further protests and unions are preparing for a big anti-fascist rally in Rome.

AFP

G20 backs fairer vaccine distribution

Milan, Italy - G20 trade ministers on Tuesday promised to work towards a fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines by lifting export restrictions and making the trade system more transparent.

Their final statement, adopted after a meeting in Sorrento, southern Italy, was a sign of the return of multilateralism, said Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio.

"We have to ensure that there is greater circulation of vaccines and that there are production factories in the developing countries," French Trade Minister Franck Riester said.

While more than 6bn vaccine doses have been produced and administered worldwide, only 1.4 per cent of people in poor countries have been fully vaccinated, compared to 58 per cent in rich countries, World Trade Organization (WTO) chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said this month.



Aid workers check a shipment of COVID-19 vaccines sent to Sudan at the airport in Khartoum on October 6 (AFP)

Ahead of the WTO's ministerial conference set for November 30 to December 3 in Geneva, she called on members to agree on a strong response to the pandemic

based on a fairer sharing of the vaccines.

Riester said another issue was getting vaccine-makers to wave intellectual property rights to

allow for production anywhere in the world.

The G20 members also agreed on the need to reform the WTO, something the European

Commission has been insisting on for some time.

It backed the current talks on renegotiating fishing subsidies to ensure the sustainability of stocks.

And they agreed the need for stronger international regulation of industrial subsidies to ensure a level playing field and better trade rules on agriculture.

"Many of us highlighted agricultural subsidies and agricultural market access," the statement said.

While many countries have issued subsidies to industries hit during the pandemic, not all of them have notified the WTO of all the sums paid out.

Di Maio said that the question of subsidies was still creating tensions.

"We are all agreed in saying that the rules of the game have to be same for everyone," he added.

AFP



A general view of the San Ysidro crossing port on the Mexican side of the US-Mexico border in Tijuana, Baja California state on August 20 (AFP)

US to open Canada, Mexico borders to vaccinated travellers

Washington, US - The United States will open its land borders with Mexico and Canada in early November to non-essential travellers who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, a senior White House official announced on Tuesday.

The official said the administration would give the 'precise date very soon' - both for land crossings as well as international air travel, which would be timed to 'go together'.

The US had already announced in September that it would lift bans in November on all vaccinated air passengers who undergo testing and contact tracing.

In an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, US borders were closed in March 2020 to travellers coming from the European Union, Britain and China, with India and Brazil added to the list later. Overland visitors from Mexico and Canada were also banned.

The nearly 19 months of restrictions led to both personal and economic suffering.

The White House source said the land border re-opening would happen in two phases.

Initially, vaccines will be required for 'non-essential' trips -

such as visiting family or tourism - though unvaccinated travellers will still be allowed into the country for 'essential' trips as they have been for the last year and a half.

A second phase beginning in 'early January' 2022 will require all visitors to the US to be fully vaccinated, no matter the reason for their trip.

"This phased approach will provide ample time for essential travellers such as truckers or others to get vaccinated, enabling a smooth transition to the new system," the official said.

The new schedule means the land border restrictions, which are currently set to expire on October 21, would have to be extended one more time before the new rules enter into force, the official indicated.

The senior official pointed to recent recommendations from US health authorities for guidance on which vaccines would allow travellers entry.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last week that all vaccines approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and the WHO would be accepted for entry by air, the official pointed out.

AFP

Indians sell family gold to survive virus cash crunch

Mumbai, India - In Mumbai's jewellery bazaar, Kavita Jogani gingerly places her wedding bangles on the shopkeeper's scales, one of the thousands of Indians parting with their most cherished asset - gold.

It was not an easy decision - Jogani was desperate after her garment business took a severe hit in the past year and a half with multiple coronavirus lockdowns, making it difficult to pay shop bills and the salaries of her 15 employees.

The headline growth numbers suggest Asia's third-largest economy is rebounding from the economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19, but there is no end yet to the financial pain for many Indians.

"I don't have any other option



than selling the gold," said Jogani as she waited nervously for the shop owner to make her an offer.

"I bought these bangles before my wedding 23 years ago," the 45 year old told AFP.

Business closures and job losses pushed more than 230mn Indians into poverty in the past

I don't have any other option than selling the gold. I bought these bangles before my wedding 23 years ago

KAVITA JOGANI

year, according to a study by Azim Premji University, leaving many struggling to pay rent, school fees and hospital bills.

Their difficulties have been compounded in recent weeks by soaring prices for electricity, fuel and other items.

Desperate for cash, many

families and small businesses have been putting up gold jewellery - their last resort - as collateral to secure short-term loans to tide them over.

Banks disbursed 'loans against gold jewellery' worth ₹4.71tn (US\$64bn) in the first eight months of 2021, a whopping 74 per cent jump year-on-year, central bank data showed.

And many of these loans have gone sour with borrowers unable to keep up with repayments, leaving lenders to auction off the gold.

'You start crying'

Indians bought 315.9 tonnes of gold-use jewellery in 2020, almost as much as the Americas, Europe and the Middle East combined, according to the

World Gold Council. Only China bought more.

Indian households are estimated to be sitting on 24,000 tonnes - worth US\$1.5tn - in coins, bars and jewellery.

Kumar Jain (63), whose family has run a shop in Mumbai's historic Zaveri Bazaar for 106 years, says he has never seen so many people coming to sell.

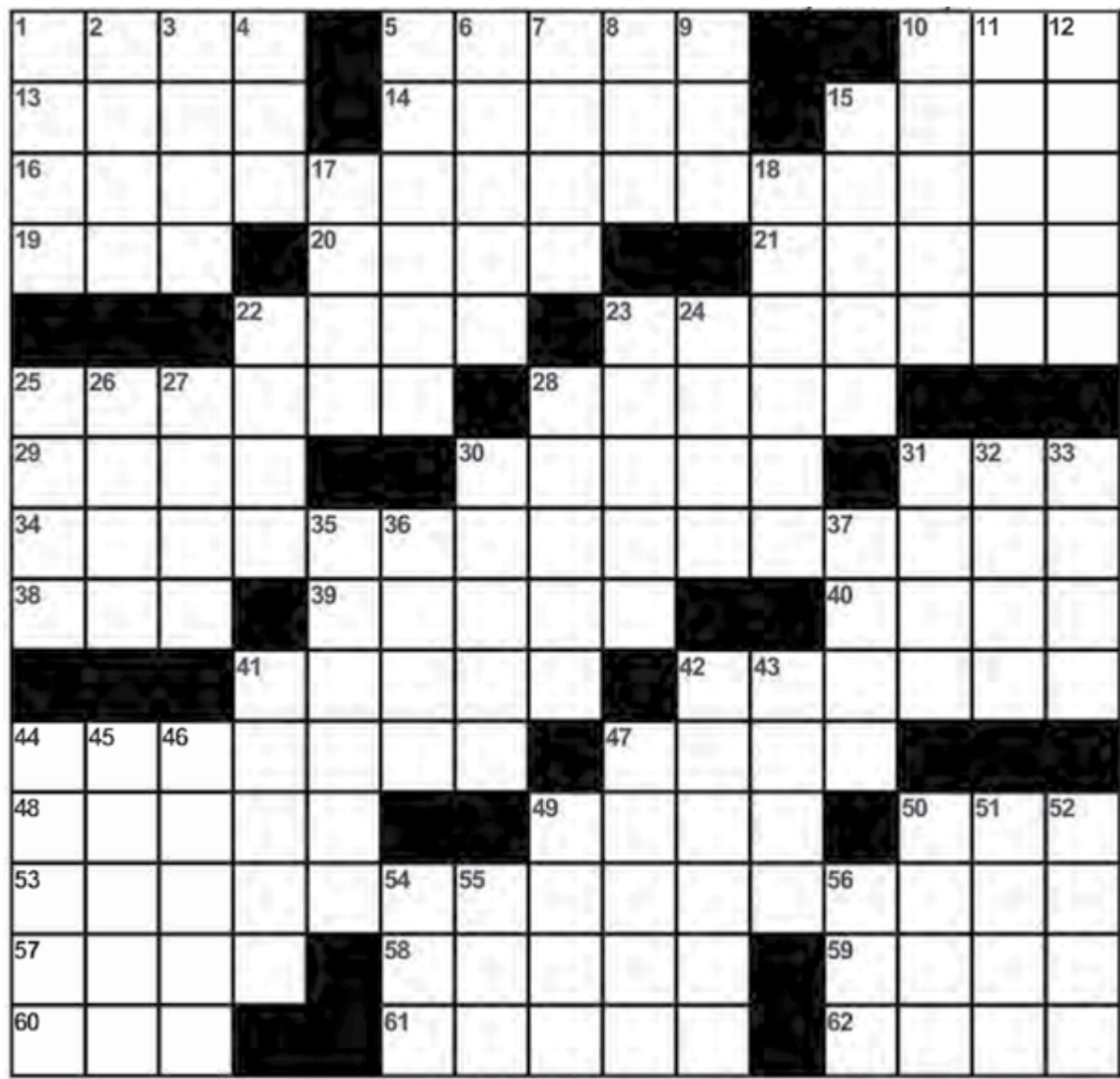
"It wasn't like this before the pandemic," he said.

"The worst part is when they sell their *mangalsutra*," Jain said.

"That necklace is a sign of a married woman. You start crying when she takes off the *mangalsutra* from her neck and says, 'Give me money for this'. That's the worst scenario."

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Word hyphenated with "ran"
- 5) Sudden gush
- 10) Liquid in a trunk
- 13) Within striking distance
- 14) Relieves, as pain
- 15) Pimples, collectively
- 16) What tourists do
- 19) Anger or fury
- 20) Like some futures or cheeks
- 21) Celebrity bit part
- 22) British Conservative
- 23) Three-legged stands
- 25) Ages, as cheese
- 28) Brief period of time
- 29) A god of war
- 30) Showy adornment
- 31) Capturing-of-thoughtwaves skill
- 34) Gives an exaggerated reaction
- 38) They loop the Loop
- 39) Hospital employee
- 40) Appliance with a door
- 41) It can show you the world
- 42) Calculating

- 44) In an abrasive manner
- 47) One of "Wrath" in a "Star Trek" sequel
- 48) Conscious
- 49) Torque wrench, e.g.
- 50) In vitro items
- 53) "I promise you"
- 57) Pilot and flight attendants, collectively
- 58) With hearing organs
- 59) Nevada's second-largest city
- 60) Men and boys
- 61) Orderly grouping
- 62) Cannon's sound

DOWN

- 1) One who hasn't turned pro?
- 2) Jet-set jet
- 3) "For heaven's_!"
- 4) Valuable mine rock
- 5) Spanish gents
- 6) Legendary country singer Cline
- 7) Like a post-eruption landscape
- 8) Ball elevator
- 9) Laser center?
- 10) Schmendrick
- 11) Wanted in on a poker hand
- 12) Mexican currency

- 15) Open-mouthed in shock
- 17) Monopoly board circler, once
- 18) It's formed in mid-drip
- 22) Some wallet bills
- 23) Comanche group
- 24) Mini stream
- 25) _ into the sunset
- 26) Statue that's sacred to some
- 27) Slapstick staples
- 28) Supporting beam
- 30) Quick, sudden attack
- 31) Place for 18-Down
- 32) Alter
- 33) Remain undecided
- 35) "O Canada" is one
- 36) Hardly thrilling
- 37) Having trouble deciding
- 41) In a crooked position
- 42) Rundown
- 43) Time for a marching band
- 44) Be egged no longer?
- 45) Cognizant
- 46) Tends to the

- fall fall
- 47) Divided Asian country
- 49) Unit of pressure
- 50) Common cookie
- 51) Italian wine

- 52) Molecule member
- 54) Thumbs-up vote
- 55) Failed negotiation result
- 56) Sphere

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Relationships go through transitions, and it's not healthy to resist them. You need to stay open to change and understand that just as you grow as a person, they do too. You want the best for your friends and loved ones, so you need to support their experiments and cheer when they need it. If someone's new endeavour is taking up their free time, so be it. Give them freedom.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Reflections can't just be found in mirrors, you know. If you want to catch a glimpse of your true self today, you need to be honest and accept your imperfections. Trying to pretend you are perfect isn't fooling anyone, and it could limit your growth. Put away your ego and you will be able to learn a valuable lesson about your insecurities. Who you are is not predetermined.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Honesty is a powerful force, but it can be used for good or evil. So be judicious about who you tell the cold, hard truth to. Not everyone is capable of handling it. In the afternoon, one glance at the clock could make you feel a bit overwhelmed -- there won't be enough hours left to do what you wanted to do. Instead of trying to cram it all in, try to figure out a backup plan.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

There is no reason for you to keep hiding your light under a bushel -- showing off isn't a crime. If you have done something worth noting, you need to let some people in your life know about it! Too bad if it makes someone feel jealous. If they can't handle the truth, that is their problem, not yours. You can't worry about coming off as egotistical. Let them think what they want to think.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Are you feeling pressured to be social right now when really all you want to do is cuddle up on the couch and watch televisions? Listen to yourself and follow your mood, despite what other people may say. After all, one person's lazy is another person's relaxed. So do not listen to others who are focused on things that just don't matter to you right now.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Do you have a lot to do today? Well, the first thing you need to know is that you will get a lot more accomplished if you just accept things the way they are -- instead of wasting time complaining that they are not what you want them to be. Just deal with the resources you have -- they may not be enough, but you are never going to have everything you need.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's going to be a sunny day in more ways than one, as daylight breaks through the fog of confusion that's been preoccupying you. A short conversation will clue you in to some changes that are happening at work -- a new arrangement will affect you a lot more than you thought. Focus on your health today, and remember that prevention is the most economical way to fight illness.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

It's not wise to exert yourself too much, so slow down. You will be faced with some very tantalising social invitations, but you need to be very picky about which ones you choose to accept. Even a quiet night out could snowball into a foggy morning. You know the usual suspects, so look out for familiar patterns. If a friend who usually walks on the wild side wants you to walk there with them, say 'no.'

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

It's okay to be more vulnerable, especially with the people who show their vulnerabilities to you. Not only is it the best way to make a significant connection with someone, but it is also the best way to relieve your worried mind. Sure, it's never easy to let yourself be emotionally exposed. There is a fine line between protecting yourself from rejection and isolating yourself.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If you're feeling indecisive about accepting an invitation that's just come your way, you can always turn to the people you love for advice and insight. They are tuned into the big picture much more closely than you are -- so find out from them what you should do. Relying on loved ones is important to do from time to time, even when you're working on something personal.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Any endurance-oriented activities you have scheduled early in the day should be pushed back to the afternoon, if possible. Unfortunately, your energy won't be as strong as you'd like it to be until later in the day. It is going to take a few hours for you to get revved up, but once you do, you will be hard to stop! This strength and momentum will carry you into the evening.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Doubting yourself is absolutely normal -- in fact, it's healthy. When you doubt your actions, you apply a healthy skepticism to your decision making and help perfect it. Luckily, today, any doubts you have will be quickly erased. Today will be full of signs and affirmations that you are on the right path -- despite what other jealous people might be telling you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which of the following is in liquid form at room temperature?
- a. Lithium
 - b. Sodium
 - c. Francium
 - d. Cerium
2. Sodium metal is kept under
- a. petrol
 - b. alcohol
 - c. water
 - d. kerosene
3. Which of the following are the ingredients of gun metal?
- a. Iron, Zinc, Titanium
 - b. Iron, tin
 - c. Iron, Brass, Tin
 - d. Copper, Tin

Answers: 1.c 2.d 3.d

BLOCKBUSTERS ARE BACK
WHERE THEY BELONG

Witness the magic of movies the way they were meant to be seen...on the big screen

Venom : Let There Be Carnage

Tom Hardy returns to the big screen as the lethal protector Venom, one of MARVEL's most complex characters. Directed by Andy Serkis, the film also stars Michelle Williams, Naomie Harris and Woody Harrelson.

The Last Duel

Jean de Carrouges is a respected knight known for his bravery. Jacques Le Gris is a squire whose intelligence and eloquence makes him one of the most admired nobles. When Le Gris viciously assaults Carrouges' wife, she steps forward to accuse her attacker.

Maha Samudram

The film's story is set in Visakhapatnam which is about four lives and their roller-coaster romantic ride.

Honsla Rakh

A loveable, rosted, desi, Punjabi young man, who's a single father with a seven year old boy attempts to find love again, find a mom for his son when he crosses paths with his ex who comes back into the city after a seven year gap.

Book your tickets at voxcinemas.com or the VOX app

BOGGLER

S	C	X	A
L	I	D	E
D	E	M	E
E	P	A	H

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER

You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

ABBA ALBUM

COMEBACK
CROONERS

ABBA's round the corner! You heard that right – come November, and a frenzy that took over music lovers four decades ago, will once again unleash the magic and mayhem that the iconic band enjoyed when on stage in their heyday.

Nearly four decades after disbanding and vowing never to get back together, Swedish superstars ABBA recently announced a musical comeback with a new album and a London show featuring their performances captured by digital avatars.

ABBA notched up over 400 million album sales over 50 years despite parting ways in 1982 and resolutely resisting all offers to work together again - until now.

"We have made a new album with ABBA!" the band's Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson announced via a video presentation in London, delivering the news fans have waited decades for. The pop maestros had a string of hits in the 1970s and early 1980s after winning Eurovision in 1974 with 'Waterloo'.

Ulvaeus and Andersson put an end to the suspense, following hints that something was in the pipeline. After the video announcement, both men appeared in person, dressed in black, for a presentation of the forthcoming album.

"The album is in the can now, it's done," said Andersson, describing the group's return to the studio, against the spectacular backdrop of the view from the top of London's ArcelorMittal Orbit tower.

"It's been 40 years, or 39, it was like no time had passed. It was quite amazing," he said. "We've done as good as we could at our age."

The pair looked relaxed and described their reunion as very friendly.

"No imagination could dream up that: to release a new album after 40 years and still be the best of friends", said Ulvaeus. "It's the most fun



thing you can do: to write songs," he added.

Biggest reunion

The album will come out on November 5, the musicians said, with the show expected in May 2022.

The now septuagenarian stars of pop classics such as 'Dancing Queen', 'The Winner Takes It All' and 'Take a Chance on Me', last recorded new music together in the 1980s.

British radio presenter Zoe Ball, hosting the interview, said, "This is huge: yes ABBA are back together officially." She hailed this as "one of the biggest reunions ever".

The presentation came after the group - Anni-Frid Lyngstad, 75, Agnetha Faltskog, 71, Ulvaeus, 76, and Andersson,

No imagination could dream up that: to release a new album after 40 years and still be the best of friends

BJORN ULVAEUS



74 - announced on Twitter last week: "Thank you for waiting, the journey is about to begin."

The Swedish pop icons had announced they were returning to the studio in 2018, saying: "We all four felt that, after some 35 years, it could be fun to join forces again and go into the recording studio."

Two new songs - 'I Still Have Faith in You' and 'Don't Shut Me Down' - were played in London a fortnight ago, featuring the band's characteristic sound.

Acknowledging their age, the musicians said they were not trying to imitate contemporary stars.

"We're not competing with (Canadian rapper) Drake and all those other guys," said Andersson.

We looked ridiculous

The musicians also described the process of being transformed into digital avatars using hologram technology for a new show set to launch in London next year.

They described how they were photographed in leotards to create the avatars for the show called 'ABBA Voyage' which will play at a theatre being built close to the presentation venue in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

"We looked ridiculous," said Andersson, disclosing that the show will feature the group as 'digital characters' in 1979 when they were in their prime. They will look perfectly real, he said.

The show is "technically immensely complicated, the screen, the sound, all the lights", he added.

It will feature 22 songs, mostly the group's classic hits, and last 90 minutes, the musicians said, with tickets going on sale later this month.

The group, which broke up in 1982, long steered clear of a reunion despite their music's enduring popularity, fuelled by a hit compilation album in 1992 - the 'Mamma Mia' musical - and later spin-off films starring Meryl Streep, Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan.

According to Celebrity Net Worth, each member of Abba is worth between \$200-300mn. In 2000, they turned down a \$1bn offer to perform a 100-show world tour.

"They're very independently wealthy, so I don't think it's because of the money," Swedish ABBA expert and author of several books on the group Carl Magnus Palm said of their comeback.

AFP



FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

DELIGHT FOR DENMARK

England are held by Hungary; Ronaldo's hat-trick in Portugal's big victory

2022 FIFA WORLD CUP EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

Paris, France - Denmark became the second team to qualify for the 2022 World Cup finals when they beat Austria by a single goal on Tuesday as England were frustrated by Hungary at Wembley.

Joakim Maehle scored in the 53rd minute to send the Danes to Qatar as they build on their surprise run at Euro 2020 this summer when they reached the semifinals.

"You can only dream about things like this," said Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg. "It's crazy. This is huge for me, it's huge for the team, for Danish football and for Denmark. With the age and quality we have, we will only keep growing."

The Danes join Germany, who qualified on Monday, in the finals. Host nation Qatar qualify automatically. England sputtered as a combative Hungarian side held them to a 1-1 draw. The match was marred by ugly scenes at Wembley as Hungarian supporters clashed with stewards and police.

Gareth Southgate's side fell behind to Roland Sallai's disputed first-half penalty before John Stones stuck out a boot to score the equaliser in the 37th minute from Phil Foden's cross. Harry Kane failed to score in a



Denmark's defender Joakim Maehle (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Austria in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Tuesday (AFP)

qualifier for the first time in 16 games and was substituted as Hungary's resolute defence kept a disjointed England side at bay.

"We did not play at the level we need to, simple as that," said Southgate.

England defender Tyrone Mings called for harsher punishments for racism in football after it emerged the trouble at Wembley had flared after police had moved in to arrest a Hungarian supporter for what police called a "racially aggravated public order offence".

Mings said, "Every time we speak on racial abuse the punishments that follow never seem in line with what has happened. "I sincerely hope that if that is the case, the punishments fall in line with what happened this time."

England will be sure of reaching next year's finals if they take four points from their final quali-



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (L) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Luxembourg on Tuesday

fiers against Albania and San Marino in November.

Ronaldo hat-trick

Poland are second behind England in Group I after a stormy win

in Albania. Play was halted and the teams left the pitch as fans threw bottles after Karol Swiderski scored the winning goal in the 77th minute. The teams later returned to complete the game.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored two penalties in six minutes and completed the tenth international hat-trick of his career in the 87th minute as Portugal thrashed Luxembourg 5-0.

COLLATED RESULTS

GROUP A

Portugal 5 (Ronaldo 8-pen, 13-pen, 87, Fernandes 18, Joao Palhina 69)
Luxembourg 0;
Serbia 3 (Vlahovic 30-pen, 53, Tadic 83-pen) Azerbaijan 1 (Makhmudov 45+2)

GROUP B

Kosovo 1 (Muriqi 45-pen) Georgia 2 (Okri-ashvili 11, Davitashvili 82);
Sweden 2 (Forsberg 59-pen, Isak 69) Greece 0

GROUP C

Bulgaria 2 (Nedeleev 53, 63) Northern Ireland 1 (Washington 35);
Lithuania 0 Switzerland 4 (Embolo 31, 45, Steffen 42, Gavranovic 90+4)

GROUP D

Kazakhstan 0 Finland 2 (Pukki 45, 48);
Ukraine 1 (Yarmolenko 15) Bosnia and Herzegovina 1 (Ahmedhodzic 77)

GROUP F

Denmark 1 (Maehle 53) Austria 0;
Faroe Islands 0 Scotland 1 (Dykes 86);
Israel 2 (Zahavi 28, Dabbur 49) Moldova 1 (Nicolaescu 90+5)

GROUP I

Albania 0 Poland 1 (Swiderski 77);
England 1 (Stones 37) Hungary 1 (Sallai 24-pen);
San Marino 0 Andorra 3 (Pujol 10, Moreno 53, Fernandez 89)

Bruno Fernandes and Joao Palhina were the other scorers in the romp, but Portugal remain a point behind Serbia in Group A after the Serbs beat Azerbaijan 3-1 at home.

Dusan Vlahovic, the 21-year-old Fiorentina player who is starting to attract the interest of Europe's biggest clubs, scored twice and Dusan Tadic hit Serbia's third goal.

Sweden stayed two points ahead of Spain in Group B thanks to a 2-0 win against Greece.

Scotland got a desperately-needed 1-0 win over the Faroe Islands, meaning they need one more victory from their last two games to secure a playoff spot as they seek to reach a World Cup finals for the first time since 1998.

Lyndon Dykes scored for the Scots for the fourth game running, as he connected untidily

with a Nathan Patterson cross to finally break the resistance of the minnows.

Switzerland stayed in contention for Qatar when they eased to a 4-0 win in Lithuania with Breel Embolo scoring twice.

The Swiss are equal with Italy on 14 points in Group C, but second on goal difference.

Ukraine were held to a goalless draw by Bosnia-Herzegovina and lie second in World Cup holders France's Group D, just a point ahead of Finland.

Teemu Pukki scored twice as the Finns beat Kazakhstan 2-0 to become his country's all-time leading international goalscorer with 33 goals, overtaking Jari Litmanen.

France, who won the Nations League on Sunday by beating Spain, will not be in action again until November.
AFP

Senegal, Morocco book final-round places

2022 FIFA WORLD CUP AFRICAN QUALIFIERS

Johannesburg, South Africa - Famara Diedhiou scored a hat-trick for Senegal as they and Morocco won on Tuesday to become the first nations to secure places in the final African World Cup qualifying round.

Turkey-based Diedhiou overshadowed teammate and Liverpool star Sadio Mane with his treble, which earned Senegal a 3-1 away win over Namibia and maintained a 100 per cent Group H record after four rounds.

The first goal from the 28-year-old Alanyaspor forward was cancelled out before half-time by Peter Shalulile, but the Senegalese struck early and late in the second half to ensure maximum points.

Senegal, who beat Namibia 4-1 three days ago, have scored 16 goals in four World Cup qualifiers against the southern

African country. Namibia were forced to stage the fixture in Soweto near Johannesburg because they lack an international-standard stadium.

Togo surprised hosts Congo Brazzaville 2-1 in the same section to rise from last to second, eight points adrift of two-time World Cup qualifiers Senegal.

Substitute Selim Amallah scored twice as Morocco took advantage of playing an away match at home to overwhelm Guinea 4-1 in Rabat.

Ayoub el Kaabi and Sofiane Boufal notched the other Moroccan goals as they chalked up a fourth straight win in Group I, where their rivals have been handicapped by not being able to host qualifiers.

Algeria trounced Niger 4-0 in Niamey to stretch an African record unbeaten run to 31 matches and regain first place in



Senegal's Famara Diedhiou (L) celebrates with his teammate after scoring his third goal against Namibia on Tuesday

Group A from Burkina Faso on goal difference.

Mahrez triggers rout

Manchester City winger Riyad

Mahrez triggered the rout with a goal midway through the first half. Islam Slimani doubled the lead before half-time.

Niger fell four goals behind

within nine minutes of the restart as AC Milan midfielder Ismael Bennacer and Baghdad Bounedjah netted.

South Africa clung to a

COLLATED RESULTS

GROUP A

Niger 0 Algeria 4 (Mahrez 21, Slimani 33, Bennacer 48, Bounedjah 54)

GROUP G

South Africa 1 (Kebede 11-og) Ethiopia 0; Zimbabwe 0 Ghana 1 (Partey 31)

GROUP H

Congo 1 (Mbenza 71) Togo 2 (Placca 26, Denkey 77);

Namibia 1 (Shalulile 27) Senegal 3 (Diedhiou 22, 51, 84)

GROUP I

Guinea 1 (Kane 31) Morocco 4 (El Kaabi 21, Amallah 42, 65, Boufal 89)

Note: Namibia (no international-standard stadium) and Guinea (post-coup security concerns) moved home fixtures to South Africa and Morocco respectively

one-point Group G lead over Ghana after both claimed 1-0 victories, over Ethiopia and Zimbabwe respectively.

The other eight places in the playoffs next March will be decided during the final two matchdays next month.

Algeria, Tunisia, Nigeria, Mali and Egypt look set to progress

while the battles between Ivory Coast and Cameroon and South Africa and Ghana are seem likely to go down to the wire.

A seeded draw will split the ten group table-toppers into five pairings with the winners of the two-leg ties representing Africa at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.
AFP

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

Advertising professional, graphic designer, expat woman with 13 years experience. Job needed full

time/part-time work from home. +968 95759485

Send your request for Birthday/Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories: Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35) Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Grand double for India's Payas

- Saudi Arabia’s Abdulrahman, Uzbekistan’s Alan and Qatar’s Sultan also claim titles
- Girls’ competition at the 2021 WTT Youth Contender Muscat begins from today

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

It was double delight for Indian teenager Payas Jain, who claimed two titles in the U19 and U17 categories at ongoing WTT Youth Contender Muscat being played at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex (SQSC) on Tuesday night.

Payas got the better of Uzbekistan’s Alan Kurman-galiyev in a hard-fought U17 summit clash, winning 3-2 (12-10, 11-7, 6-11, 8-11, 11-5).

The Indian paddler claimed his second crown with a dominating 3-0 win over fellow countrymate Yashansh Malik (11-5, 11-7, 11-9) in the U19 final. Payas had defeated another countrymate, Varun Shanker Balusuri, in the semifinals in a tough five-setter 3-2.

Uzbek paddler Alan made up

Earlier in the semifinals, Sultan had defeated another Qatari, Ahmad Korani 3-1.

The youngest category (U11) witnessed Saudi Arabia’s Abdulrahman al Taher take the top honours with a 3-2 win over Qatar’s Mohammed al Saluati.

Oman challenge fizzles out

Earlier on Tuesday morning, Oman’s Mashal al Shehi, who was the only local paddler to make it to U19 round-of-16 knockout stage, made a tame exit, losing 0-3 to Bangladesh’s Ahmed Mohutasin Ridoy.

Shehi had booked a spot in the last-16 with a 3-1 win over Qatar’s Ahmed Saadawi 3-1.

Another local hope in the knockout stage was Luqman al Farsi in U15 event. However, Luqman al Farsi suffered a 0-3 defeat to Saudi’s Abdulrahi Hadi



A file photo of India's Payas Jain, who claimed the U19 and U17 boys' titles, on Tuesday (www.ittf.com)



Saudi Arabia's Abdulrahman al Taher in action during the U11 final on Tuesday

Earlier on Tuesday, Mashal al Shehi, who was the only Omani player to make it to the U19 round-of-16 knockout stage, made a tame exit, losing 0-3 to Bangladesh’s Ahmed Mohutasin Ridoy

for his disappointment in the U17 final by emerging winner in the U15 title clash. Alan defeated India’s Ankur Bhattacharjee 3-2 (7-11, 13-11, 7-11, 11-4, 11-7) in a thrilling final.

The U13 and U11 categories were dominated by players from the Gulf region with Qatar’s Sultan al Kuwari edging past his countrymate Rawad al Naser 3-2 (6-11, 11-9, 5-11, 11-9, 11-8) for the U13 crown.

3-0 in the last-32 match.

Luqman had also reached the last-32 of the U17 event.

Girls' competition begins today

As many as 29 girls will take part at the ongoing seventh-leg of the WTT Youth Contender Muscat, starting on Thursday.

The participants are from Egypt, India, Iran, Lebanon, Maldives, Pakistan, Uzbekistan,

Syria and the hosts Oman.

The local hopes will be carried by Al Hoor al Jassasi, Noor al Farsi and Retaj al Abri.

Earlier, the Oman trio took part in an ITTF high-performance training camp, which concluded on Tuesday at Sultan Qaboos Sport’s Complex under the supervision of ITTF coach Mohammed Atoum, a former Oman team coach.

Also assisting him in the camp were coaches from India, Uzbekistan, Syria, Maldives and Oman. The camp lasted ten days with morning and evening trainings sessions. The two-day girls competition will be in U13, U15, U17 and U19 categories and conclude on Friday.

[@ashokmuscat](#)



A group photo of paddlers who attended the ten-day ITTF high-performance training camp that concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Tuesday

ONLY
PURE
WATER
AND
PERFECT
TASTE

ONLY
WHAT'S
ESSENTIAL

Zverev slips past Murray; women’s top seeds fall

INDIAN WELLS TENNIS

Indian Wells, US - Alexander Zverev won the clash of the two most recent Olympic gold medalists at the ATP Indian Wells on Tuesday, holding off a fierce challenge from Andy Murray despite an equipment malfunction.

The 24-year-old German advanced to the fourth round, coming from behind in both sets to beat two time Olympic gold medal winner Murray 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) in the combined women's and men's tennis tournament in the California desert.

"I'm happy about the match, how everything went," said Zverev. "I think it was a very entertaining match. It was pretty high level."

Zverev won the Olympic gold medal at the recent Tokyo Games and former world No 1 Murray won gold at both the 2012 London Olympics and in 2016 in Rio.

Third-seeded Zverev moves on to play Gael Monfils of France who rolled over hard-hitting South African Kevin Anderson 7-5, 6-2.



Alexander Zverev plays a forehand shot against Andy Murray on Tuesday

"You got to enjoy what you're doing. You got to enjoy being out on the court. You got to enjoy playing tennis," Zverev said.

"After Wimbledon I really enjoyed every second that I was on court." Murray tossed his racket several times Tuesday after missing easy shots. The

outbursts were in contrast to Zverev, who maintained his concentration in the seventh game of the second set when the laces on his left shoe snapped.

He continued to play with the wobbly shoe but then had to take an extra long break between games so he could swap out the

laces. Murray seized the opportunity for a bathroom break. Zverev then won three of the next five games which set up the tiebreaker.

Zverev went up 3-0 in the second set tiebreaker, but Murray fought back to get to 4-5 before Zverev finished him off at the net.

"I'm disappointed because I obviously want to be winning these matches," Murray said. "I haven't in the last few months. Something needs to change."

In the night match, second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece came from behind to defeat Italian veteran Fabio Fognini 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 to reach the fourth round.

Tsitsipas will next face Australia's Alex De Minaur, who defeated Chile's Cristian Garin in straight sets 6-4, 6-2.

The 23-year-old Tsitsipas was runner-up in the French Open this year becoming the first Greek Grand Slam finalist ever.

In the WTA side of the draw, unseeded Shelby Rogers upset US Open runner-up Leylah Fernandez in a marathon three-setter on a day when more top seeds tumbled out.

Rogers outlasted Canadian teenager Fernandez 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) in two hours and 34 minutes to reach the quarterfinals.

Rogers moves on to play 24th-seeded Jelena Ostapenko, who upset second seed Iga Swiatek of Poland in straight sets.

Swiatek became another top seed casualty, losing in straight sets 6-4, 6-3 to Latvia's Ostapenko in a fourth round match.

Swiatek's ouster comes one day after No. 1 seed Karolina Pliskova and defending champion Bianca Andreescu were bundled out of the tournament in their third round matches.

Canadian Andreescu's elimination means there will be no repeat champion in Indian Wells.

Swiatek's exit, combined with fourth-seeded Elina Svitolina's crushing 6-1, 6-1 defeat to American Jessica Pegula, and No 3 Barbora Krejickova's 6-1, 7-5 loss to Paula Badosa, leaves tenth seeded Angelique Kerber of Germany as the top seed left in the draw.

AFP

Every day, all day!

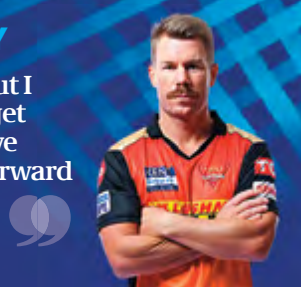
IPL 2021



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Bitter pill to swallow but I don't think I will ever get answers and must move one. It's time to look forward

David Warner
Hyderabad opener on his axing from the squad earlier in the season



EDGE OF SEAT FINISH AS KOLKATA REACH FINAL

QUALIFIER 2

DELHI VS KOLKATA

Sharjah, UAE - They spent a large part of the chase against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday night in cruise control, and then Kolkata Knight Riders hit a wet patch that almost threatened to skid them right off the path and into an abyss.

From 13 runs needed in 25 balls, Knight Riders lost six wickets in 3.5 overs with only seven runs added, and faced an equation where Rahul Tripathi was facing up to R Ashwin needing to score six in the last two balls.

Tripathi had scored six from ten balls till then, missing more than connecting, while Ashwin had given up one run in four balls while nabbing two wickets.

Tripathi had set himself up for a quickish length ball outside off, and threw a season's worth of verve into a flat-batted hit that was carried as much by nervous energy as anything else over the long-off boundary.

Knight Riders' resurgence in the UAE leg of IPL 2021 continued, with their seventh win in nine games.

They are in the final, where Chennai Super Kings await on Friday.

Delhi Capitals had seemed down and all but out of the contest for most of the second innings, but they came alive with a vengeance as Knight Riders panicked with the finish line in sight.

Before the nail-biting finish, Knight Riders set themselves up with a familiar template: the spinners choked the life out of the opposition, and the openers muscled a strong reply.

Varun Chakravathy was the bowling hero, taking two for 26 in four hard-to-read overs, which could have easily been three for less than 26 if he hadn't over-stepped by a millimetre.

While batting, they had the fearless Venkatesh Iyer to thank, the opener's insouciant 55 off 41 and Shubman Gill's 46 setting up a foundation strong enough to withstand the earthquake that came later.

Delhi were made to pay for a costly drop in the fifth over when Kagiso Rabada grassed a caught-and-bowled chance off Iyer, who hit four fours and three sixes in his third fifty in this season's IPL.

Earlier, Delhi struggled for momentum after being put into bat on a slow pitch, losing regular wickets following a brisk opening



Kolkata Knight Riders' Rahul Tripathi (second from right) celebrates with his teammates after hitting the winning runs against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday

stand between Shikhar Dhawan (36) and Prithvi Shaw (18).

Chakravathy and Lockie Ferguson (one for 26) kept the scoring in check and it took a late flourish from Shreyas Iyer (30 not out), who finished the

innings off with a six, to propel

Delhi to a modest 135 for five.

Delhi, last season's runners-up, had been top of the table after the group stage, only to lose two matches in a row in the play-offs to miss out on a finals berth.

Later Kolkata skipper Eoin Morgan said, "It should've been

a lot easier [to win] after the start we got. Venky and Gill set us the platform. We're in the final and we're delighted to get over the line. We would've loved to win convincingly but Capitals are a very good side.

"Six off two, the odds were

probably in favour of the bowling side, but Rahul Tripathi has done superbly well for us.

"It's a nice insight into our team culture - the young guys coming in feel free to express themselves."

Cricinfo

FRIDAY'S FINAL



CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

VS



KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

DUBAI, GPM

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS

P Shaw	lbw b Chakravathy	18 (10)
S Dhawan	c Shakib b Chakravathy	36 (39)
M Stoinis	b Mavi	18 (23)
S Iyer	not out	30 (27)
R Pant	c Tripathi b Ferguson	6 (6)
S Hetmyer	run out	17 (10)
A Patel	not out	4 (4)
Extras:	(lb 1, nb 1, w 4)	6
TOTAL	135 for five in 20 overs	

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-71, 3-83, 4-90, 5-117

Bowling: Shakib al Hasan 4-0-28-0, L Ferguson 4-0-26-1, S Narine 4-0-27-0, V Chakravathy 4-0-26-2, S Mavi 4-0-27-1

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

S Gill	c Pant b Avesh Khan	46 (46)
V Iyer	c sub (S Smith)	
b Rabada		55 (41)
N Rana	c Hetmyer b Nortje	13 (12)
R Tripathi	not out	12 (11)
D Karthik	b Rabada	0 (3)
E Morgan	b Nortje	0 (3)
Shakib al Hasan	lbw b Ashwin	0 (2)
S Narine	c Patel b Ashwin	0 (1)
L Ferguson	not out	0 (0)
Extras:	(lb 1, w 9)	10
TOTAL:	136 for seven in 19.5 overs	

Fall of wickets: 1-96, 2-123, 3-125, 4-126, 5-129, 6-130, 7-130

Bowling: A Nortje 4-0-31-2, R Ashwin 3.5-0-27-2, Avesh Khan 4-0-22-1, Axar Patel 4-0-32-0, K Rabada 4-0-23-2

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP: 3 DAYS TO GO

Thakur replaces Axar in India's World Cup side

Avesh Khan, Umran Malik, Harshal Patel, Lukman Meriwala, Venkatesh Iyer, Karn Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed and K Gowtham to join India's team bubble too

Dubai, UAE - Shardul Thakur has replaced Axar Patel in India's squad for the T20 World Cup 2021. Axar, meanwhile, joins the list of stand-by players for the squad, along with Shreyas Iyer and Deepak Chahar.

The BCCI also said eight players would additionally be joining the team's bubble in Dubai to 'assist Team India in their preparations' for the tournament. These are: Avesh Khan, Umran Malik, Harshal Patel, Lukman Meriwala, Venkatesh Iyer, Karn Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed and K Gowtham.

The T20 World Cup will begin in Muscat on October 17 but will be played primarily in the UAE - where IPL 2021 is also currently in progress.

Thakur has had a good IPL season with Chennai Super Kings, who finished second in the league and the won the first qualifier against Delhi Capitals to reach the final.

He has picked up 13 wickets in the UAE leg of the tournament, joint third in the period. He hasn't had much opportunity to bat, but he was sent up the order at No 4 in the qualifier against Capitals, with a view to utilising his ball-striking capacity. He, however, fell for a first-ball duck.

Thakur could slot into the seam-bowling allrounder role for the Indian team, currently with Hardik Pandya. However, Hardik



Shardul Thakur

didn't bowl during the IPL, and if he's unable to do so in the T20 World Cup too, Thakur could be in line to fill that void.

Axar has also had a good IPL overall and in the UAE leg, being particularly impressive with his economy rate. He has likely been moved to the reserves since Ravindra Jadeja would be the first-choice pick for left-arm fingerspinning allrounder in the team, and Axar provides an almost like-for-like option. Should Jadeja be injured or unavailable, Axar will come into the squad.

Apart from the reserves, the eight players who are going to be part of the Indian team's bubble and help with preparations are mostly pure bowlers.

Venkatesh Iyer is the only one whose primary suit is not bowling, although he could well be an additional cover for the seam-bowling allrounder's spot. Cricinfo

I've no respect for Ambrose: Gayle

Dubai, UAE - Chris Gayle had stern words for Curtly Ambrose after the former West Indies fast bowler said that the batter wouldn't be his automatic pick in the West Indies XI for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Gayle hit back at Ambrose saying he has 'no respect' for the former player and that he is 'finished' with him. "I am speaking about Curtly Ambrose. I am

singing out Curtly Ambrose, one of your own. I highly respected him when I came into the West Indies team," Gayle told *The Island Tea Morning Show*, a radio station in St Kitts, on Tuesday.

"When I just joined the team, I looked up to this man. But I am now speaking from my heart. I don't know what, since he retired, what he had against Chris Gayle. Those negative

things he has been saying within the press, I don't know if he is looking for attention, but he is getting the attention. So I am just giving back the attention which he requires and which he needs.

"I can tell you personally, and you can let him know that Chris Gayle, the Universe Boss, have no respect for Curtly Ambrose whatsoever."

Cricinfo

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE شركة برشوتم كانجي للصرافة

Transfer US Dollar to China for your Trade & Personal Transaction

Commission OMR 3.5/-

99101314, 99849289 91787829

customersupport@pkexchange.net

www.pkexchange.com

GET IT ON Google Play Download on the App Store

f t o i n

SETTLE DOWN IN THE COUNTRY OF YOUR CHOICE

CHOOSE THE BEST M-J GLOBAL OMAN / UAE / QATAR / SRI LANKA

CANADA
Get Permanent Residency of Canada through Express Entry/ Provincial Nominee Program in 6-12 months OR Get Permanent Residency through Owner operated USA within 12 months with minimum investment of CAD 150,000 OR Start your business in British Columbia with minimum CAD 250,000 and get residency in 11 to 13 months.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
USA EB-3 Visa: Direct employment and US Green Card for you and your family. Processing Time 15 months. Occupation in Demand: Caregiver, Janitor, Production Helper, General Laborer.

GERMANY
Germany Business Immigration with minimum Euro 25,000 capital investment in business. Processing time is only 5 months. Resident Visa for entire family. Get Passport on the 5th year.

PORTUGAL
Invest in real estate of minimum Euro 280,000 and get the Portugal Golden Visa in 6 months. Get Portugal Passport in 5 yrs with access to 177 countries visa free travel. Stay requirement only 7 days per year in Portugal. Excellent returns on investment.

HUNGARY
Hungary Business Immigration • Euro 50,000* Minimum Investment • Temporary Resident Visa for entire family • Processing time only 4-5 months • 2yrs Business experience/Senior Management role preferred

CYPRUS
Cyprus: Get your Citizenship in 6 months by investment of Euro 2 million in Real Estate or Get a Permanent Residency in 3 months by investing in Real Estate with investment worth Euro 300,000.

DOMINICA
Dominica Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 100,000* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 120 Countries • Processing time 4-5 months • No need to stay in Dominica

GRENADA
Grenada Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 150,000* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 130 Countries • Processing time 6 months • Tax advantages

TURKEY
Turkey: Get your citizenship in 5 months by investment of USD 250,000 in Real Estate. Smooth and fast processing with excellent returns.

OFFICE NO. 204, 2ND FLOOR, JASMIN COMPLEX, AL HADHA STREET, AL KHUWAIR, MUSCAT.
PH: +968 24478181, +968 9357 1122, +968 7171 98 28, EMAIL: CS@M-JGLOBAL.COM

WWW.M-JGLOBAL.COM

ICC MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP 2021

#HayyaCricket!

The tone and tune of Oman Cricket

OC releases an exhilarating anthem ahead of the T20 World Cup opener in Muscat on October 17

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

*The curtains are finally being raised
So be on the edge of your seat
As #HAYYA CRICKET is here...*

With just three days to go for the opening match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Muscat, there is an air of excitement at the Oman Cricket (OC) headquarters and among the local cricket fans.

There has been a brisk sale of tickets for the six matches to be played at the venue in Al Amerat. Final touches are being given to the venue, which would be the cynosure of all eyes when the opening game between hosts Oman and Papua New Guinea begins on October 17 at 2pm.

A high-profile and star-studded guests' list that includes the top brass of the World Cup hosts BCCI, ICC, and Oman sports are expected to grace the opening ceremony.

With an expected overall TV

viewership of around 3.5bn worldwide for the T20 World Cup, which concludes in the UAE on November 14, the thrilling format of cricket is one of the biggest sports event held ever in Oman.

And to celebrate being the co-host of the T20 World Cup 2021 and leave a lasting legacy in the hearts of the fans across the world, Oman Cricket launched on Wednesday an anthem #HayyaCricket in three languages - Arabic, Hindi and English.

To host and play in the T20 World Cup is an unique honour for an Associate nation like Oman and underlines the growing stature of Oman Cricket.

Welcoming the cricketing world to Oman and showcasing the pride in hosting, the exhilarating anthem spans the length and breadth of the nation.

The tune has already started reverberating through the sultanate and set an exciting tone for the event. Celebrating the multicultural milieu, the anthem is an echo of the emerging passion Omanis and expatriates living in the country hold for the sport and the pride they feel at cementing their position in the cricketing world.

It reflects the joyful welcome of the sultanate that is poised and ready to make its mark by hosting a global showpiece event that unites countries and transcends beliefs, borders and boundaries.

The #HayyaCricket anthem holds bundled emotions in a visually evocative 90 seconds that whips up an unrivalled frenzy across borders, generations, and languages and portrays an unaltered vision for Oman in the world of cricket.

A true homage to Oman,

#HayyaCricket has been released in three languages of its people, an incantation that rouses hearts and the very spirit of the game.

OC chairman Pankaj Khimji said, "With the entire cricket-frenzy world watching, the T20 World Cup 2021 is the ideal moment to unveil a spanking new anthem. #HayyaCricket isn't just any other anthem; it bridges social, cultural, and geographical divides - bringing together the multicultural community in the country for the love of cricket. We unite to chant #HayyaCricket for the biggest cricketing event happening in the history of Oman.

Developed by Mumbai-based Gozoop Group, the anthem translates the crux of moment and the belief that 'Cricket not just a sport; it is a reason to celebrate and bring people together'.

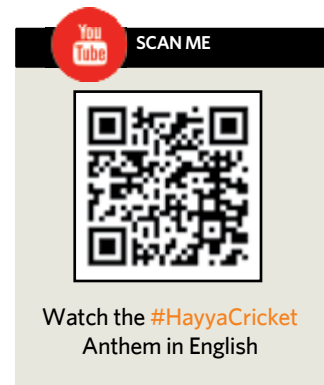
Composed in India, the music is from London and Middle East. The instruments of Tajikistan and Syria with mesmerising vocals from Iran and Pakistan have blended together, accompanied by heartwarming moments shot entirely in Oman.

Ahmed Aftab Naqvi, CEO and co-founder of Gozoop Group,

said, "#HayyaCricket is not just a campaign but an emotion that celebrates the sport and the spirit of the nation. It showcases the giant strides Oman has made in cricket along with the beauty, culture and hospitality of the nation. This will not just bring people to Oman but bring people in Oman closer to each other as they celebrate unforgettable moments with the beautiful lyrics and passionate beats of #HayyaCricket - the anthem for Oman Cricket!"

As the countdown begins for the first ball of the T20 World Cup 2021 in Oman, it is time to dance to the tunes of #HayyaCricket and not miss a beat as the world witnesses the largest cricketing event.

@ashokmuscat



ICC WARM-UP MATCH IN DUBAI

Oman beat Namibia

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Following two successive T20 defeats in warm-up games against Sri Lanka at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground, Oman registered a morale-boosting victory in the first of the two official ICC warm-up T20 games at the ICC Global Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai, UAE, on Tuesday.

Duleep Mendis' Oman beat Namibia by 30 runs ahead of Thursday's final warm-up match against the Netherlands as they prepare for their opening ICC Men's T20 World Cup clash against Papua New Guinea (PNG) in a First Round Group B game on October 17.

Batting first, Oman scored a challenging total of 152 for eight. In-form allrounder Aqib Ilyas, who had slammed a half-century in the second T20 game against Sri Lanka on Saturday, continued his

good form with a 20-ball 30. Skipper Zeeshan Maqsood gave him good company with 28 while Sandeep Goud contributed 19.

Oman then restricted Namibia to 122 for nine with pacer Kaleemullah the wrecker-in-chief as he picked four for 23. Spinners Khawar Ali and Ilyas took two wickets apiece. Merwe Erasmus was Namibia's top-scorer with 30.

After Thursday's warm-up against the Dutch, Oman will return along with their fellow Group B teams - Bangladesh, Scotland and PNG - who are also in the UAE playing warm-up games.

All the four teams will be in a bio-secure bubble at Shangri La's Barr al Jissah from October 15.

The T20 World Cup opener on Sunday begins at 2pm and will be followed by day's second game between Bangladesh and Scotland at 6pm.

A'SAFFA
BRINGS YOU
BROAST
IN 8 MINUTES

PRESENTING THE
ALL NEW THAWAQ A'SAFFA

microwave
8 minutes
ready to eat

ذَوَّاق الصَّفَاء
THAWAQ A'SAFFA
HEAT • EAT • REPEAT

ALSO AVAILABLE: CHICKEN SHUWA OMANI • CHICKEN SHUWA SPICY

RENAULT MASTER

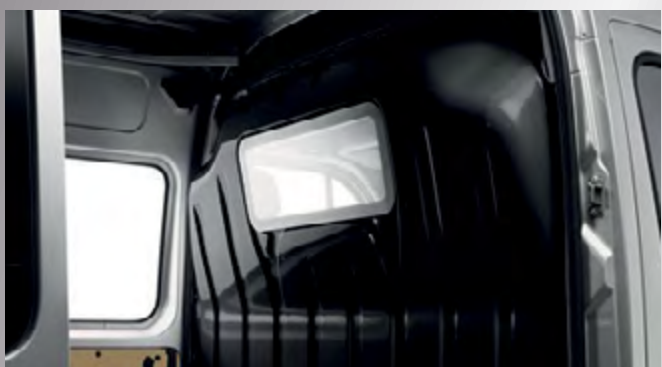
a van that adapts to your needs



2.3L engine, 125 hp, 6 Speed Manual Transmission

EMI starting from
OMR **178***

Renault Master key features:



partition with window



C-shape daytime running lights



right sliding door



cruise control/speed limiter



easy loading



270° rear door opening



driver & passenger airbags



ESP

enquire now

Bahwan International Group  مجموعة باهوان العالمية

Suhail Bahwan Automobiles LLC

  RenaultOman  www.renault.com.om
C.R. No. 1/71955/6

Showrooms • Qurum • Barka • Buraimi • Ibra • Ibri • Mabella • Nizwa • Salalah • Sohar
For Company Enquiries: 96581559 / 96791427 E-mail us at: customerfirst@sbigh.com

*EMI mentioned is for Master Van L1HI-2.3L T1 MY21 and is calculated based on 20% down payment for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approval.

 TOLL FREE
800 50011

