



SUNDAY, 07 NOVEMBER 2021
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WOMEN'S EXHIBITION - EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS
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Budget deficit down by RO1.4bn

REVENUES INCREASED 22.6%

SPENDING DECREASED 0.74%

NET OIL REVENUE ROSE 28.6%

DEFICIT FELL 58%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As Oman starts reaping the benefits of higher oil prices, fiscal reforms and reopening of the pandemic-hit economy, the government has managed to sharply reduce its budget shortfall by more than RO1.4bn in the first nine months of this year against the same period in 2020.

On the back of a sharp rise in oil and tax income, the sultana-

te's budget deficit dropped by 58 per cent to RO1.03bn for the January-September period of 2021 from RO2.448bn recorded in the same period of 2020, the Ministry of Finance said on Thursday.

Oman recorded a 22.6 per cent increase in government revenues in the first nine months of 2021 as oil and gas prices during this period remained higher compared to the same period a year ago. Total revenues rose to RO7.367bn in the January-Sep-

tember against RO6.011bn recorded in the same period of 2020.

'Over the past months, Oman has witnessed some improvement in oil prices that averaged US\$57.4 per barrel at the end of the third quarter, which has raised net oil revenue to RO3.908bn and gas revenue to RO1.422bn,' the Ministry of Finance said in its monthly Fiscal Performance Bulletin.

Net oil revenue rose 28.6 per cent year-on-year while gas rev-

enue surged 38 per cent in the first nine months of 2021, the data showed.

Moreover, the government's current revenues jumped by 45.2 per cent at the end of September 2021, crossing the RO2bn mark as compared to RO1.38bn recorded in the same period in 2020.

Non-tax revenue, the ministry stated, amounted to about RO1.034bn which included RO613.3mn worth of dividends received from various govern-

ment investments. Additionally, tax and fees revenue totalled RO969.9mn for the first nine months of 2021.

By the end of September 2021, total public spending amounted to RO8.397bn, a marginal decrease of 0.74 per cent compared to RO8.460bn over the same period of 2020.

With Oman's improving financial position and positive outlook for economic growth this year, global credit rating agencies re-

cently revised up their outlook on the sultanate's ratings.

S&P Global Ratings upgraded its outlook on Oman to 'positive' from 'stable' as the world's biggest ratings agency now believes that the sultanate's reforms programme and higher oil prices will narrow fiscal deficit and slow the increase in debt.

Moody's also changed the outlook on the government's issuer rating to 'stable' from 'negative'. According to Moody's, the

change in outlook reflects the significant easing of government liquidity and external financing pressures, mainly as a result of the ongoing implementation of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan and higher oil prices.

Last week, H E Dr Said Mohammed Ahmad al Saqri, Minister of Economy, confirmed that economic recovery is taking place "with initial indicators suggesting reassuring and constant improvements in the economy".

► NEWS BRIEFS

HM CONDOLES KUWAITI EMIR

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Nawaf al Ahmed al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, on the death of Sheikh Saud Abdullah Saud al Malik al Sabah.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sympathies, praying to Allah the Almighty to rest the deceased's soul in peace in paradise and grant the family patience.

DAUGHTER, FATHER DROWN IN BIDBID

Muscat - A citizen and his daughter drowned in a pond in a valley in the wilayat of Bidbid, Dakhliyah governorate, on Saturday.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority stated that it responded to a report of drowning in Bidbid, after which the two were taken to a hospital, but were pronounced dead. The authority called on citizens and residents not to swim in wadis to prevent accidents such as drowning.



SAYYID THEYAZIN TO BID FAREWELL TO SHABAB OMAN II

H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will preside over the farewell ceremony of 'Shabab Oman II' on Sunday as it sets sail on its fifth international voyage under the slogan 'Oman - A Renewed Approach'. The ship will visit a number of ports in the GCC states, carrying a message of peace, harmony and friendship from the sultanate to the world, besides participating in Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai



Expat labour market reforms to have positive impact



Manah 1 and 2 solar projects to start operations in 2024



Over 90 killed in Sierra Leone fuel tanker explosion

First Omani electric car to start production in 2023

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Electric cars have revolutionised the automotive industry with all major manufacturers in the world currently focused on delivering electric cars. An Omani startup too is working in earnest and hopeful of producing made-in-Oman electric cars by the end of 2023.

Mays Motors announced its electric car at an event held in Expo 2020 Dubai recently where it signed its first major investment agreement with Oman Technology Fund.

Haider bin Adnan al Zaabi, co-founder of Mays Motors, said, "We are proud of signing the agreement with the Oman Technology Fund to create our first spark in the world. We are marching with a vision to change the automotive sector by creating a car that is distinctive and unique in shape and in concept."

According to Zaabi, the Mays Motors electric car is the begin-



We expect to make about six hundred cars in the first five years

HAIDER AL ZAABI

ning of a new and promising sector in the sultanate.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, he said, "The agreement signing at Dubai Expo announced the Mays car to the world. It was an occasion to kickstart an innovative Omani product built with Omani hands and backed by Omani technical knowhow."

Zaabi claimed experts at Tesla, Maserati, BMW and Porsche have admired the design



of the Mays Motors car. "They said it will achieve great success in the global automotive sector. The two-seater car has a large display with controls for most functions, including activating air conditioner and opening the door. The battery can be charged at home and has a driving range of 500+ km."

The body is made of carbon fibre and the car is "loaded with a lot of technology similar to inter-

national cars such as Lamborghini and Ferrari".

The Mays Motors team is co-operating with experts from all over the world on a prototype to be showcased at Expo 2020 Dubai in February 2022.

Zaabi started work on the idea of an electric car in 2019 and has faced several challenges since. "Making a car with international specifications is not easy. But we are committed to our task and

travelled to other countries to take a closer look at the car manufacturing industry."

Getting approval for the project from the concerned authorities, too, wasn't easy. "It came after several rounds of discussions and explanations behind our project," Zaabi said.

The company has started work in a small factory in Barka. "We will start production at the end of 2023. The first phase will include production of 100 cars. We expect to make about six hundred cars in the first five years."

Zaabi thanked the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Oman Technology Fund and Noor Majan Company for their support.

He hopes the manufacture of Mays Motors cars will contribute to building an integrated system of industries related to the automotive sector in the sultanate, exploiting locally available raw material and creating more than 800 job opportunities for small and medium companies.

Pfizer says COVID-19 pill 89% effective

Washington, United States - Pfizer said on Friday that a clinical trial of its pill to treat COVID-19 has shown it is highly effective, hailing it as a big step towards ending the pandemic. A simple pill to treat the coronavirus at home has been sought since the start of the global health crisis. So far all treatments have been either intravenous or vaccine shots.

Pfizer's is the second anti-COVID-19 pill after that of Merck, which is actually an influenza medicine rebranded to fight the coronavirus. Pfizer's has been created specifically to fight COVID-19.

Pfizer claimed Paxlovid achieved 89 per cent reduction in risk of hospitalisation or death among adult patients with COVID-19 who are at high risk of progressing to severe illness.

The results from the middle-to-late stage clinical trial were so strong that Pfizer will stop recruiting new people for the trial.

Labour market reforms to have positive impact

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

Businessmen have expressed confidence in the expat labour market reforms which they believe are going to have a positive impact on the economy. Scraping the requirement of employer consent - No Objection Certificate (NoC) - before expatriates switch jobs, and the more recent decision by Royal Oman Police (ROP) allowing three-year validity for resident cards are going to enhance the country's stature as an attractive marketplace.

According to International Monetary Fund (IMF), labour market reforms are important to raise competitiveness and foster creation of private sector jobs. 'Adopting more flexible expatriate labour policies, like the recent removal of regulations that require employer consent before expatriates switch employers is a welcome step,' IMF said in its Article IV Consultation Staff Report.

Saleh Ahmed Abdullah al Badi, chairman of Nakheel al Shamal International, observed that many countries are attracting workforce to meet demand following potential of growth post the COVID19 challenges. "For instance, the Gulf states will demand more workforce and special events such as the World Cup in Qatar next year and impending growth in Saudi Arabia are sure to improve scope of growth in Oman, too," he said.

"The region is competing to attract skilled and unskilled workforce and many countries have relaxed their rules to support a sustainable workforce which strikes a balance between market growth and attractiveness for the workforce."

Badi said there is a need to support a sustainable workforce environment with fair bal-



The region is competing to attract skilled and unskilled workforce and many countries have relaxed their rules

SALEH AL BADI

ance with the Omani workforce. "So we support the decision to extend visas to three years, and some specific categories to have even more than three years validity, and elimination of any factor impacting the rate of inflation so that the country remains productive and competitive both in the local and international markets," he said.

The IMF report also stated that more comparable wages and compensation between the private and public sectors will reduce risks of skills mismatch or labour shortages in rapidly

expanding sectors. "Plans to further reduce the wage gap between Omanis and expatriates by increasing fees for hiring expatriates should be implemented with caution to avoid undermining competitiveness. Further improving social protection, notably pension scheme for expatriates, will help attract more talent from abroad," the report stated.

According to Badi, the current oil price rise reflects growth. "Wider facilities are provided in the surrounding countries which attract expat labour creating competition within our region. We will be ready with actions to create an attractive market and build healthy and effective working and social environments. On another hand, we will also ensure we create a balance between Omani and non-Omani workforce. The local workforce is a priority for any economy in the region and the world," he said.

According to the report, Omani authorities and IMF staff agreed on the key aspects of

the labour market reforms, including promoting employment in the private sector as well as adopting more flexible expatriate labour policies.

According to Khalfan al Tauqi, business and media consultant, the country needs to formalise policies for expatriates that don't affect the Omanisation programme.

"The government should engage expatriates and look at ways to benefit from their expertise. We want foreigners to come to Oman for investments so the decisions should be clear enough and encourage them to move freely in order to widen our economy. We have to welcome expatriates with open arms and this will create more business opportunities for both Omanis and expatriates," he said.

With Oman Vision 2040, launched in early 2021, setting the goal for a knowledge-based society, the reforms, if fully implemented, are expected to improve human resources and labour productivity in the country in the medium term.

COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations drop significantly

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's efforts to bring down COVID-19 infection rates and hospital admissions through vaccination seems to be working given the drop in new infections and health institution admissions, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) statistics of the past few months.

In July, there were over 14,441 people sick with COVID-19, compared to only 518 active cases as on Thursday. Similarly, there were more than 700 patients admitted to hospitals then with COVID-19, while only six were reported to be in hospitals as on Thursday.

H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, has stated that the COVID-19 vaccination campaign has played a significant role in bringing down the rate of hospitalisation in the sultanate.

On Thursday, only 11 new cases of COVID-19 were registered and no deaths were reported. This brings the total number of positive cases to 304,329 in Oman.

The total number of COVID-19-related deaths reached 4,112

Vaccination from OCEC shifted to health centres

Muscat - The Ministry of Health has closed its vaccination centre at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), starting inoculation in wilayats at respective health centres from Sunday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, Governorate of Muscat, expats will be given COVID-19 vaccines at Sablat Muttrah (wilayat Muttrah) and the Medical Fitness Examination Centre at Al Sharadi, Seeb, between 8am and 2pm.

Omani nationals can visit Al Jamie Health Centre in the wilayat of Seeb, Al Khuwair North Health Centre in Bausher, Ruwi Health Centre in Muttrah, Muscat Health Centre in Muscat and Amerat Health Centre in Amerat, from 8am to 8pm, and Al Sahel Health Centre in Quriyat from 8am to 2pm.

Appointments can be booked through: moh.gov.om.covid19

and as many as 299,699 have recovered. Out of the total hospitalisations, three are in intensive care units,' an MoH statement said.

Even as over 2.5mn or more than 60 per cent of the target group have been fully vaccinated in Oman, public health authorities have warned against slacking preventive measures.

"We hope that soon everyone will be vaccinated and we will reach the point of herd immunity, which will stop the transmission

of infection and control the disease," Dr Sulaiman al Shereiqi, senior specialist of public health in the Ministry of Health told Muscat Daily.

"But we must bear in mind that such viruses are known to mutate and reappear in new forms hence we still need to be careful," he added.

Recently, the Supreme Committee tasked with dealing with the impact of COVID-19 approved vaccination of five-to-11 year old children starting this month.

Fly Dubai starts two weekly flights to Sohar Airport

Sohar - Sohar Airport has seen return of international flights with Fly Dubai operating two direct flights a week to the city from Dubai.

The airline's first flight landed on Thursday launching the direct line between Sohar and Dubai. The two weekly flights will operate on Thursdays and Saturdays. 'The inauguration of this direct line comes as a result of the continuous efforts to promote air travel in sultanate and to cope with the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic,' Oman Airports stated.

'The return of international flights to Sohar Airport in less than two months since the lifting of the quarantine requirements



and ending the requirement of the PCR test upon arrival in the sultanate for those who have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine reflects the magnitude of efforts made by Oman Airports in the aspects of uplifting the operational scale of Sohar Airport, as well as the importance of the

airport's strategic status,' it added.

It further said that the launch of this new line will greatly serve both countries as it will revive economic and tourist activities in the governorates of North and South Batinah. ONA

SULTANATE OF OMAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Financial Affairs at Ministry Of Health announces to all companies and institutions dealing with (MOH Headquarters) and (Directorates General of Health Services and its affiliated departments at all the Governorates) to submit their invoices to the concerned authorities not later than **15.11.2021**, to settle all their claims before the end of current year 2021 .

New initiatives to support food trucks

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In efforts to support owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development - Riyadh - will organise an event at Tafaet Park in the wilayat of Mirbat, Dhofar governorate.

The ten-day initiative starting November 18 targets owners of food trucks engaged in selling snacks and juice.

"It will help 14 mobile food trucks by creating a marketing outlet, increase sales and also boost tourism activities in Mirbat," a Riyadh official said.

In order to participate, SMEs need to fulfil certain conditions, such as they must be citizens and should supervise the food truck business personally. Owners must also be registered with the authority and priority will be given to full-time entrepreneurs who hold the Entrepreneurship Card of Riyadh.

Participants must also have a valid licence (commercial regis-



ter or home business) and obligation to bear the cost of participation.

The authority informed that the last date for registration is November 8 via the link bit.ly/3nlq9Ex

The authority will hold another event for food trucks in co-operation with the International Tent Pegging Federation for three days from December 2 to 4. The event will be held on the sidelines of the International

Tent Pegging Traditional Championship in the wilayat of Duqm and targets seven food trucks. The last date for registration is November 10.

The authority urged participants to comply with the applicable health conditions at the event.

According to the Riyadh official, Oman will organise the first edition of the annual Gulf Forum for Entrepreneurs from November 8 to 10 at Kempinski Hotel

The authority will hold another event for food trucks in cooperation with the International Tent Pegging Federation for three days from December 2 to 4

Muscat in Al Mouj. The forum targets owners of SMEs, entrepreneurs and entities supporting entrepreneurship.

"The forum aims to encourage SMEs to invest in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, exchange of experiences among owners of SMEs, discuss the challenges they face, identify available financing opportunities and find alternatives," the official said.

Book on 100 inspiring Omani women launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A book on 100 inspiring women from Oman was launched at Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz-Carlton Hotel, on Wednesday. Written by German author Kathleen Nejad, it shares inspiring experiences, thoughts and advice of 100 successful Omani women.

Speaking at the launch, Kathleen said, "The book *100 Inspiring Women* is a collection of stories, anecdotes and life lessons from successful women from various professions. One will not only be inspired but also moved and amazed by the stories these women tell about their personal and professional lives. Readers will learn about the lives of these

strong women and can implement changes in their own lives." She added that the advice and experiences documented in the book can help deal with any crisis in life.

"The book is for women who need to believe in their dreams. We know the challenges of being a woman, of balancing home and office. Readers will

find solutions from the personal accounts of the featured women," she said.

The 268-page book also features photographs of scenic sites in the sultanate, with the objective of raising awareness on tourism in Oman. Plans are currently being worked on to translate the book into other languages to reach a wider audience.



The book is for women who need to believe in their dreams. We know the challenges of being a woman, of balancing home and office

KATHLEEN NEJAD

One of the featured women, Balqees Sulaiman al Hassani, president of the knowledge sharing platform Knowledge Oman and head of well being at Al Sahwa School, a leading private school, said, "I am extremely happy to be featured in this international book. Women empowerment is paramount to the development of a nation."

MHT, Wego partner to promote tourism

Over 550,000 searches from GCC to Oman performed on Wego in Q3

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Wego, the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) have signed an agreement to promote the sultanate's tourism hotspots in the GCC region.

Through the partnership, Wego and Oman aim to drive the conversation around Oman across all the marketing channels and social media platforms and increase visitor footfall in the country.

Over 550,000 searches were performed on Wego's platform in Q3 2021 from the GCC to Oman. Out of these searches, 34 per cent were done from Saudi Arabia, 27 per cent from the UAE, 16 per cent from Kuwait, 14 per cent from Qatar, and ten per cent from Bahrain.

Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, Director General of



Tourism Promotion at MHT, said, "We are glad to partner with Wego. Oman has always been at the forefront of tourism, and this partnership reflects our commitment to continue the positive momentum in the months to come. We are confident that this association will help us promote Oman tourism among the GCC countries, as well as attract more foreign investment to Oman."

Mamoun Hmedan, managing director, MENA and India, said, "We are seeing an increase in the number of searches from the GCC to Oman following the flight

resumptions. We are glad to partner with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for the second time to promote this beautiful gem. Its proximity, ancient culture, green mountains and wadis make it the best escape during the summer period for GCC travellers."

Oman has opened its borders to visitors from the GCC and it recently announced that it is open for people vaccinated against COVID-19.

All travellers to Oman should present a vaccine certificate containing a QR code that states they have received two doses of a vac-

cine that is approved in Oman (Pfizer BioNTech, Oxford AstraZeneca, Covishield AstraZeneca, Sputnik, Covaxin, Sinovac, Moderna and Sinopharm, or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson).

The last dose of the vaccine needs to have been received not less than 14 days before the arrival date.

Travellers should have pre-registration done via <https://covid19.emushrif.om> and upload the vaccine certificate as well as the COVID-19 PCR certificate, both containing QR codes.

SpaceBridge delivers satellite network connecting 2,000 sites

Our Correspondent
Muscat

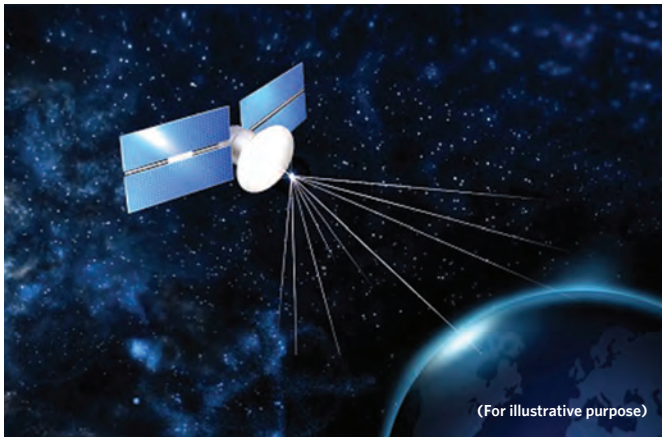
SpaceBridge, a Montreal, Canada, based company developing satellite network equipment, has announced the successful delivery of an HTS Multiple Spot Beam (MSB) and Ka-Band Broadband VSAT Network to Oman's state-run Space Communication Technologies (SCT), the company said.

SpaceBridge Inc is a manufacturer of High Throughput Satellite (HTS)/VHTS Broadband VSAT Satellite Network Platforms connecting close to 2,000 locations globally.

This provides multi-service Internet connectivity over the SpaceBridge WaveSwitch multi-waveform platform.

The network delivers services over Arabsat HTS Ka Satellite enabling communities, enterprises, mobile network operators, maritime, consumers, government and military entities to transmit real-time application data over satellite.

'SpaceBridge network architecture is supporting simultane-



(For illustrative purpose)

ously layer two and layer three. In fact, the network delivered in compliance with Article 44 of the telecommunications regulatory law of Oman. SpaceBridge conducts a transfer of knowledge to the SCT through diligent virtual and in-person training sessions along with in-country managed services, stated a press release.

The network proved its resilience when cyclone Shaheen made landfall in Oman on October 3, stated the company. 'SpaceBridge's VSAT Network remained connected using its WaveSwitch technology. It with-

stood despite the widespread flooding, heavy rains and winds of up to 150km per hour along Oman's northern coast.'

SpaceBridge signed a contract with SCT in June 2020 to supply an HTS MSB Broadband VSAT Network.

SCT was established with a mission of spearheading the National Satellite Programme initiative by building national satellite communications infrastructure and developing required capabilities to serve public and private sectors, coping with their immediate long-term telecommunication needs.



H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi

Sayyid Badr, US envoy discuss Yemen conflict

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Timothy Lenderking, the United States US Special Envoy for Yemen, on Thursday, who was on a visit to the sultanate.

The meeting comes within the context of efforts to pursue regional and international endeavours to end the conflict in Yemen and exchange views and information about related developments.

"We appreciate the constructive role and commitment of the US envoy to Yemen to bring peace and stability there. Our meeting was a good opportunity to follow up on our mutual resolve to support all efforts towards achieving peace and security for the benefit of all," H E Sayyid Badr tweeted.

The meeting was attended by H E Sheikh Khalifa Ali al Harthi, Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Khalid Hashil al Musalhi, Head of the Minister's Office Department, and H E Leslie Tsu, US Ambassador to Oman.

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OPEC+ sticks with modest output boost

London, UK - Major oil producers agreed on Thursday to continue modestly raising output despite pressure from the United States and other big consumer nations to open up the taps much more decisively amid soaring prices.

The 13 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their ten allies reconfirmed a July decision to gradually step up production each month in a brief meeting via videoconference.

The powerful producers led by Saudi Arabia and Russia in the so-called OPEC+ will add 400,000 barrels per day in December, they said.

The decision aimed 'to ensure a stable and a balanced oil market, the efficient and secure supply to consumers', the group said in a statement.

The OPEC+ nations also pledged 'to continue to adopt a proactive and transparent approach which has provided stability to oil markets'.

OPEC+ slashed production steeply last year as the coronavirus pandemic hit markets, but has eased output cuts this year as the global economy slowly recovers.

With prices for the benchmark WTI contract reaching US\$85 last week, the highest since 2014, US President Joe Biden appealed on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome over the weekend to OPEC to pump more.

The White House was disappointed with the OPEC+ decision, warning that the global economic recovery is being im-



The decision aimed to ensure a stable and a balanced oil market, the efficient and secure supply to consumers

periled by a mismatch between supply and demand of oil.

"OPEC+ seems unwilling to use the capacity and power it has now at this critical moment of global recovery for countries around the world," said a National Security Council spokesperson.

The official said Biden has called on his team to 'be prepared to use all tools as needed' to ensure Americans to have access to affordable energy and gasoline at the pump.

That was seen as a pledge to use the US government's oil stockpile to flood the market, which sent prices lower in London and New York.

"There are rumours all around the market about potential coordinated release of Strategic Petroleum Reserves, to combat higher oil prices," said John Kilduff of Again Capital.

Other oil-consuming nations, such as India and Japan, have also called for more output to lower prices.

But Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, who chairs the OPEC group, told reporters after the meeting, "We still believe what we are doing is the right thing."

'Not in any hurry'

Analysts had widely expected the group to stick by its July decision.

"Prices of over US\$80 per

barrel are, of course, another reason why OPEC+ will not be in any hurry to add supply to the market," Caroline Bain of Capital Economics said.

But Angola, Nigeria and other OPEC+ members were already struggling to meet their current production quotas and would lose revenues if prices fell, she added.

Contrary to the normal trend of OPEC countries exceeding their production quotas, in recent months most member states have stuck to them or in some cases even fallen short.

This suggests that the group may not be able to rapidly increase production in the short term despite it having a current theoretical reserve of more than 4mn barrels per day in the ground.

The next OPEC+ meeting is set for December 2.

AFP

Manah 1 and 2 solar projects to start operations in 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate's two new utility-scale solar power projects in the Wilayat of Manah with a combined capacity of 1,000MW are expected to start commercial operations in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Manah 1 and 2 Solar Independent Power Projects (IPPs), according to Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, support the sultanate's direction towards using renewable energy to meet the demand for electricity.

Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP), the sole procurer of the sultanate's power and water capacity, is implementing Manah 1 and 2 solar projects with an estimated investment of RO300mn. The projects are located in the Wilayat of Manah and have a total production capacity of 500MW each.

'The commercial operation of both projects is expected in the



fourth quarter of 2024. Manah 1 and 2 solar projects will contribute in diversifying Oman's energy sources to achieve the target of generating 30 per cent of electricity through renewable sources by 2030,' Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit said in its statement.

The projects in Manah will aim to provide the required energy to meet Oman's increasing demand for electricity. Through these renewable energy projects, Oman aims to reduce dependence on natural gas to generate electricity and provide additional gas to other fields such as man-

ufacturing. Manah 1 and 2 projects, as per Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit's statement, will reduce emission of greenhouse gases by around 680,000 tonnes.

As per the statement, the 500MW capacity Ibri II solar project, the sultanate's first utility-scale renewable energy project which started operations in August, is aiming to supply electricity to over 33,000 houses.

The Ibri II solar project will help Oman reduce 340,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from the country's carbon footprint every year.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange launches derivatives trading

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) has introduced a derivatives market as the exchange rolls out initiatives to develop Abu Dhabi's capital markets and bring its products and services in line with global peers.

With the launch of single equity futures, the new market will give investors and traders

the opportunity to benefit from increased leverage, two-way market exposure, and hedging capabilities.

Trading in the single equity futures of Etisalat, First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), International Holding Company (IHC), Adnoc Distribution and Aldar Properties commenced on Thursday, with more securities

to be added later this year and in 2022.

Index futures will be introduced in the first quarter of 2022, ahead of the expansion into a wider range of derivative products. The derivatives market is using marketplace technology delivered by Nasdaq.

WAM

Omani businessmen visit Suhar Industrial City

Sohar - A business delegation from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (OCCI) branch of South Sharqiyah governorate visited Suhar Industrial City to get acquainted with the available investment opportunities.

Suhar Industrial City comes under the umbrella of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn).

Hamad bin Hamoud al Qasabi, director general of Suhar Industrial City, received the Omani business owners and briefed them on Madayn's mission in attracting industrial investments and providing continued support through regionally and globally competitive strategies, good infrastructure, value adding services, and easy governmental processes.

During the visit, Madayn officials informed the delegation that Suhar Industrial City is divided into seven phases where the occupancy rate in the first four phases has touched 100 per cent, while the occupancy rate of phases 5 and 6 is almost 70 per cent, and the occupancy rate in



phase 7 is about 40 per cent. They added that work is underway in the development of phase 7 of Suhar Industrial City, which will be completed during the first half of next year.

Being implemented on an area of 8.5mn sqm, phase 7 of Suhar Industrial City includes road

works, water and sewage networks, sewage treatment plant, rain drainage channels, water tanks in addition to security requirements.

The businessmen were then introduced to the incentives offered by Madayn to attract local and foreign investments into its

industrial cities across the sultanate. They were also briefed on the objectives of Masar Service Centre in Suhar Industrial City, which was established by Madayn to offer an integrated platform that eases investment procedures for the investors to obtain related approvals, permits

and licenses under one roof and within specific timeframe.

The Omani business delegation also toured Suhar Industrial City and visited Asian Paints Company, Al Ahlia Converting Industries Company, and Modern Sohar Mills (Attaya International Investment).

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US Congress passes President Biden's giant infrastructure bill

Washington, US - Democrats rescued President Joe Biden's faltering domestic agenda on Friday, passing a giant infrastructure package that is one of the pillars of his US\$3tn economic vision after rebel moderates had earlier blocked a vote on his social welfare expansion.

Despite hours of cajoling lawmakers, party leaders had risked seeing Biden's two-pronged legislative strategy collapse as they failed to unite the party's feuding progressive and moderate factions.

But the breakthrough came as lawmakers rubber-stamped the Senate-passed US\$1.2tn infrastructure bill on the House floor by a comfortable 228 votes to 206.

Biden on Saturday hailed congressional passage of his infrastructure plan in remarks at the White House.

"I don't think it's an exaggera-



US President Joe Biden speaks at the White House in Washington, DC on Friday (AFP)

tion to suggest that we took a monumental step forward as a nation," Biden said.

The passage of the infrastructure spending marks a legacy-making achievement for Biden,

amid plunging personal approval ratings and a humiliating upset defeat for his Democratic Party in the Virginia gubernatorial election.

His spokeswoman Jen Psaki

said the success was 'proof that delivering for the American people is worth all the painful sausage making'.

"Clean drinking water for kids, broadband access, electric vehi-

cles, biggest investment in public transit. It's happening. And more to come," she tweeted.

Party leadership in the House of Representatives began the day aiming to rubber-stamp the infrastructure bill, the biggest upgrade of roads, bridges and waterways in decades, after sending an even bigger social welfare deal, worth up to US\$1.85tn, to the upper chamber.

But six moderate Democrats refused to commit to the 'Build Back Better' benefits package, arguing they first needed to see a full accounting of its economic impacts, which won't be available for at least a week.

With a majority of just three votes in the House, Speaker Nancy Pelosi was forced to postpone the vote on the Build Back Better package, which includes major investments in health, education, tackling climate change

and expanding social welfare programmes.

Progressives initially blocked the infrastructure vote amid suspicion that Senate centrists would reject the Build Back Better bill as soon as they got their transport upgrades signed into law.

But Pelosi refused to back down, insisting on the vote before the end of the day and offering an olive branch to the liberals - a procedural vote on the 'rule' to at least get debate started on Build Back Better.

Jaime Harrison, chairman of the Democratic National Committee said, "After four years of failed 'infrastructure weeks' under Trump and Republican control, President Biden delivered on his promise to work across the aisle and shepherd through a historic investment in our nation's infrastructure."

AFP

Moody's revises Saudi outlook to 'stable'

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Moody's updated its credit report for Saudi Arabia affirming its A1 rating for the kingdom and changing the negative outlook in its June 2021 rating to a stable outlook. The agency predicted the Saudi economy will return to positive growth in 2021, and the current account level will return to surplus as the fiscal deficit shrinks in 2021, accompanied by a reduction in the level of debt in the medium term.

Moody's also praised the Saudi Arabia's fiscal policies effectiveness evidenced by policy responses in periods of both low and high oil prices.

The agency expects Saudi Arabia's fiscal deficit for the fiscal year 2021 to decrease to 2.5 per cent from 11.2 per cent during the year 2020, and the expenditures will reduce during this year and next year by around 6 per cent in the year 2021 and another 6 per cent in the year 2022 on the public finances level.

SPA



A woman buys food at a neighbourhood market in Beijing, China (AFP)

Food prices reach highest level in more than a decade: FAO

Rome, Italy - The UN barometer of world food prices has surged to a new peak, reaching its highest level since July 2011, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks the international prices of a basket of food commodities, is up 3.9 per cent from September, rising for a third consecutive month.

Cereal prices overall increased by 3.2 per cent, with wheat rising 5 per cent, due to reduced harvests in major exporting nations, including Canada, Russia and the United States. Prices of all other major cereals also increased.

The vegetable oil index went up 9.6 per cent, hitting an all-time high, and dairy rose by 2.6 points, with increased demand for butter, skimmed milk powder and whole milk powder, as buyers try to replenish low stocks. By contrast, cheese prices remained stable.

For the third consecutive month, the meat index declined, amid reduced purchases of products from China, and a sharp de-

cline in beef from Brazil. Poultry and sheep prices rose.

After six consecutive monthly increases, sugar prices also dropped, by 1.8 per cent, amidst limited global demand and large surpluses for export.

Compared to last year, global cereal production for 2021, is anticipated to increase and reach a new record level, of some 2,793mn tonnes.

World cereal consumption for 2021/22 is heading towards a 1.7 per cent gain, led by an anticipated increase in global food consumption of wheat, rising in tandem with a growing global population.

The production, distribution and consumption of all this food, uses about a third of the world's total energy, according to a new report launched on Thursday on the sidelines of the UN's Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

Feeding the world population is also responsible for about a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, making it a priority in the fight against climate change. WAM

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Company Limited Oman Branch (CPP), as an EPC Contractor, invites companies to participate in the following tender:

Estimated Scope Description	Tender Documents Fee
Slope Protection Civil Work: All participants (tenderer) invited to participant in slope protection civil work, supply & installation of excavation formation preparation, compaction, Geotextile laying, UPVC pipe sleeve installation, concrete ditch, stone pitching /concrete lining /shotcrete, with all auxiliaries as per project specification and drawings of work at Ras Markaz Crude Oil Park Project.	Free

Legal entities, domestic Omani and foreign companies who meet the following minimum qualification criteria are eligible to quote in Tender:

- Priority to Oman local companies, or local agent appointed by foreign companies,
- Capability to submit a performance bond of ten percent of total value.
- Complying with the CPP's project execution schedule.
- ISO 14001 and OHSAS18001 in valid period are mandatory.
- Having direct experience of similar jobs in the last five years.
- Agree to complete the further prequalification undertaken by CPP.

All interested bidders shall submit a written application letter printed on Bidder's letter head signed by the Bidder's authorized Person to cppomaned@cppmde.com, contractcppoman@cppe.ae over a period before **11th November, 2021** stating the following details: Full name of Bidder, phone number, e-mail address, contact person, tender name and tender title. Any application received after **11th November, 2021** shall not be entertained.

The ITB documents will be issued via email by CPP later. The bidders shall bear all cost arising from or incidental to the preparation, clarification, finalization and delivery of their bid proposal.

CPP is not obliged to accept the bid with least prices or any other bids. CPP reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or; any obligations to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground for the CPP's action.

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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.

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Badr Al Samaa Sohar launches latest MRI Scan

Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Sohar, launched an advanced MRI facility (GE Signa Voyager 1.5 T) which is the first of its kind by GE Company in the sultanate.

Sheikh Ahmaed al Ghofaily, Goodwill Ambassador and former member of the State Council was the chief guest, Eng Salim Bin Hamad al Kindi, DG Sohar Municipality, was the guest of honour and Dr Najat Mohammed Issa al Zadjali, director – DGPHE, North Batinah Governorate, was the special guest, a press release said.

The event was also attended by managing directors of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, Abdul Latheef and Dr P A Mohammed, executive directors Firasath Hassan and Moideen Bilal, Sameer P T, CEO, Jacob Oommen, COO, besides other staff.

The newly launched MRI has the best features resulting in precise diagnosis and utmost patient comfort like a wide bore of 70mm for best patient comfort, TDI (Total Digital imaging) for better image clarity and 27% higher signal to noise ratio, and silent scan (reduce scan noise down to 3db above ambient noise).

It also has AIR Recon which enables shorter scan time and higher resolution, motion correction on all anatomies, 3D imaging on all anatomies, ability to scan with metallic implants, advanced Cardiac exams and needle free suite (ability to scan vascular imaging without need of injection). This machine will be a boon for the private healthcare sector of



North Al Batinah region.

Sheikh Ghofaily expressed his gratitude and happiness towards Badr Al Samaa management and staff for providing world class treatment modalities at an affordable cost for the people of North Batinah Governorate. Eng Kindi said since the inception of Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Sohar, the management of Badr Al Samaa Group is not looking back and keeps on adding more advanced facilities. He thanked

Badr Al Samaa for bringing quality healthcare to the North Al Batinah Region.

Dr Najat expressed her satisfaction on this addition and appreciated Badr Al Samaa Group for their long term vision of taking the private healthcare sector of Oman to the next level.

In a joint communiqué, managing directors of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, Dr P A Mohammed and Abdul Latheef said the advanced MRI System is capable of diagnosing many diseases with high clarity and accuracy. This will help the doctors with timely diagnosis and treatment of patients.

“Badr Al Samaa is not stopping here and soon we will introduce Cathlab and the Dialysis Centre at Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Sohar,” they said, adding, “Badr Al Samaa is following its vision of being the most affordable, accessible and available private healthcare brand of Oman.

Bank Muscat wins two digital banking awards

Bank Muscat has won two prestigious awards for digital banking from Global Finance. The awards for Best Consumer Digital Bank (Oman) and Best Corporate/Institutional Digital Bank (Oman) were received by Mohammed Sultan al Habsi, chief representative, UAE Representative Office, Bank Muscat, at the Middle East Digital Bank and Innovators Awards 2021 held recently in Dubai.

The winners were selected based on a number of criteria, including their strategy for attracting and servicing digital customers, success in getting clients to use digital offerings, growth of digital customers, breadth of product offerings, evidence of tangible benefits gained from digital initiatives, and web/mobile site design and functionality, a press release said.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Faqir al Balushi, chief corporate banking officer, Bank Muscat, said, “Bank Muscat is delighted to win these prestigious awards from Global Finance, recognising the innovative digital banking services provided by the bank for its customers. With emphasis on multiple channels and new products that cater to different sectors, the bank is focused on maintaining its leadership in offering cutting-edge products and services, including electronic payment and online services. We would like to thank all our corporate and retail banking customers for their continued patronage and strong confidence in Bank Muscat’s brand.”

He added, “Bank Muscat is in



the process of implementing its digital strategy to offer the latest of the digital financial services and solutions for its individual, corporate, as well as government and public sector customers. The international awards won by the bank recognise its success in providing the best digital banking services to all its customers, in line with latest global and technology trends. We are delighted to keep offering new services, which are especially designed to meet the ever-growing needs of our customers.”

Digitalisation is in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and will further enhance financial inclusion in Oman. The bank’s customers are benefiting immensely from the latest devices, solutions and technological advances made available to them through the implementation of cutting-edge technology. As the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, Bank Muscat has the

largest banking network in Oman with 174 branches and over 800 ATMs, CDMs and other devices. The number of retail customers using digital banking services have increased manifold in recent years to over 1.2 million retail banking customers today. Similarly, digitalisation is helping corporates too speed up transactions, optimise the efficiency of their employees, minimise data-entry related risks in payment processes and improve security. Digitalisation addresses the entire value chain of corporates by providing sophisticated analysis of data sets, real-time insights to ensure transparency and greater control for corporate customers to make better-informed decisions. With state-of-the-art solutions and services like the B2B Connect platform, Bank Muscat’s Corporate Banking offer secures ‘best-in-class’ digital solutions and services.

Ooredoo offers tickets to FIFA Arab Cup 2021 final

Ooredoo is giving over 500 prizes away in its daily, weekly and grand prize raffle draws. All Nojoom members are in for the chance to win gifts ranging from GBs of data and local calling minutes, to luxurious handsets, BelN Ultimate subscriptions, and even a full package trip to attend matches at the FIFA Arab Cup 2021 in Qatar. Automatically entered into the draws, subscribers get more opportunities to win the more they use the programme, a press release said.

With over two million members, Nojoom is just one way Ooredoo is pioneering an outstanding customer experience. The reward system offers un-



matched value, premium recognition and exclusive rewards for customers such as, exclusive deals and discounts from over 100 partners across the Sultanate and a wide range of Ooredoo services.

Maserati Ghibli celebrates 55 years in the running

Maserati is celebrating the 55th anniversary of the Ghibli. On 3 November 1966, the Maserati Ghibli had made its debut on the world stage, at the Ghia stand at the Turin Motor Show.

A new interpretation of the concept of a granturismo car, the two-seater coupé was designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro. The name recalled a wind, a tradition that continues to this day with the Grecale, part of the Trident brand’s new era, a press release said.

The Ghibli is a powerful, warm wind in North Africa that carries with it a great deal of sand; the decision to take its name was no coincidence, given the car’s speed and the ‘warmth’ of its



technical and stylistic specifications. In its presentation of the Ghibli, Maserati proposed a car with a sporty yet unostentatious impression - the engine was newly designed, based on the experi-

ence of the well-known 8-cylinder used in the Mexico. It could deliver an output of 330 hp in the 4,700-cc version, and was followed by an even more powerful 4,900-cc version. To leave more room for style

by lowering the height of the hood, the engine was equipped with a dry sump - a solution used solely in racing, and was mounted on the tubular chassis, very low down. This solution gave the car its typically as-

sertive and slender appearance, one of the cornerstones of its success. The design was entrusted to Ghia, which then had Giorgetto Giugiaro on its creative design team. The most significant design cue - the marker of a decisive change from the Ghibli’s predecessors - was the integration of the volumes: there was no distinction between the car’s body and the passenger compartment; they were neither separate nor overlapping, rather they were joined together as a single surface. The most obvious new stylistic feature was the front: the headlights were retractable and the very slim grille occupied the car’s entire front.

Toureg Trendline, Tiguan R-line available on low EMIs

Premium Motors, the official dealer for Volkswagen has announced a special offer on the brand’s popular models Toureg Trendline and Tiguan R-Line.

An equated monthly instalment of RO199 is available on Tiguan R-Line for seven years with a 25% down payment. Touareg Trendline customers can avail an equated monthly instalment of RO213 for the same terms.

Customers will also receive a free iPad with every purchase of the two models, a press release said

The special offer on Tiguan R-Line and Touareg Trendline (model year 2020) comprises a variety of attractive value propositions, including three-year unlimited warranty mileage, three-year service or 45,000km (whichever comes first), three-year roadside assistance and free registration for the first year and

hassle free trade-in for any vehicle.

Christian Nehme, general manager of Premium Motors Oman, said, “We are delighted to share with our customers amazing offers on Tiguan R-Line and Touareg Trendline.”

Of the Volkswagen Tiguan he said, “Known for its iconic style, the Tiguan comes with rugged charm amplified by its chiselled lines, spacious interior space and easy handling. Volkswagen Tiguan can handle every motor-ing situation with confidence.”

He added, “Touareg is equipped with the connectivity of a new era and a pioneering fusion of assistance, comfort, lighting and infotainment systems, the Touareg points the way to the future.

“The model’s enhanced specifications and technological updates ensures it remains an industry pioneer.”



Mazoon trucks to have renewable energy

Mazoon Dairy Company signed on November 7, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nafath Renewable Energy Company aiming to develop a solar energy system that provides cooling units inside Mazoon trucks with renewable energy and reduces the amount of diesel fuel consumption during sales and distribution operations.

The memorandum, which is the first of its kind in the sultanate, was signed by Ahmed bin Mohammed al Ghafri, chief support officer, on behalf of Mazoon Dairy Company, and by Eng Abdullah bin Nasser al Saidi, CEO of Naftah Renewable Energy.

Al Ghafri stated, "This initiative is one of the success stories to be told with pride. Such initiatives allow small and medium-

sized companies to expand and develop, in addition to building a strong technical reputation in the market", stressing that Mazoon Dairy is the leading dairy company in the sultanate.

"Such initiatives that are concerned with research and development with local small and medium companies will be always at the forefront of the company's priorities and commitments" he asserted.

Abdulaziz bin Abdul Ghan al Zadjali, logistics director at Mazoon Dairy Company, explained that this system will improve fuel efficiency in Mazoon's fleet and increase lifespan and efficiency of the cooling units as well as the vehicle's engine, referring that cooperation with Nafath Renewable Energy Company, will enable us to study and constantly improve the system's efficiency and reliability. He added that the number of trucks that will benefit from this technology is about (170) trucks.

Mazin bin Hilal al Saadi, HSSE manager at Mazoon Dairy Company, explained that this project is part of the company's campaign to reduce its environmental impact by developing renewable, innovative, reliable and sustainable technologies. "We expect fuel consumption to be reduced by 20-30%" he said, adding that this project is one of the results of circular economy initiatives, as Mazoon Dairy is the first company to adopt this approach and has formed a specialised team to achieve these goals.



Oman Air, Qatar Airways announce Reciprocal Loyalty Partnership

Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman, and Qatar Airways, the national airline of the State of Qatar, have signed a reciprocal loyalty partnership where members of Oman Air Sindbad and Qatar Airways Privilege Club can earn loyalty miles for travel on both airlines between Muscat and Doha exclusively, in either direction.

With this partnership, Sindbad members can earn Sindbad miles on Qatar Airways flights on the sector; reciprocally, Privilege Club members can earn Qmiles on Oman Air flights. Members of both loyalty programmes will be able to redeem their miles for flights on either airline between the two cities.

"The strong relationship between Oman Air and Qatar Airways offers a world of exciting travel possibilities and we're delighted that our Sindbad members can now earn and redeem Sindbad miles for travel on Qatar Airways between Muscat and Doha," said Oman Air CEO Eng Abdulaziz al Raisi. "We're equally delighted to welcome



Qatar Airways Privilege Club members on board Oman Air flights on the sector where they can earn and spend Qmiles."

Qatar Airways group chief executive, Akbar al Baker stated, "Qatar Airways is delighted to launch this new partnership with Oman Air, offering valued members flying between Qatar and Oman significant opportunities to earn and spend miles across both airlines. This new loyalty partnership cements our dedication to the Sultanate of Oman, and we will remain committed towards creating more unique opportunities to reward our members, in addition to offering various avenues to use Qmiles with our airline partners".

The reciprocal loyalty pro-

gram partnership follows the strengthening of the relationship between both airlines and builds on the benefits of expanded code-sharing. In December last year, Oman Air and Qatar Airways announced greater cooperation that would allow both airlines to expand commercial operations, boost connectivity and enhance travel options. Code-share expansion will significantly increase the number of destinations available to Oman Air passengers from three to 65 on QA's network across Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe, India, and the ME. Qatar Airways passengers will also benefit from additional connectivity, with the ability to book travel on 6 new destinations.

Ahlibank sustains growth in third quarter despite recession

Corroborating its current market standing and competitiveness, Ahlibank has reported a 10.1% growth in net profit in its preliminary unaudited financial results for the nine-month period ending 30 September.

This growth demonstrates its financial and operational resilience and notable overall performance, despite the global economic recession, a press release said.

The Bank was able to achieve an impressive 18.2% growth in total assets, amounting to RO3,065.2mn. While its operating income increased by 11.9%, reaching RO60.14mn as of end of September, its operating expenses increased by 9.4%. Customer deposits increased by 15%, reaching RO2,041.2mn, compared with the same period in 2020. Net loans, advances and financing grew by 9.5%, reaching RO2,365mn.

Said Abdullah al Hatmi, CEO, Ahlibank, said, "Being resilient, despite the ever-changing financial and economic landscape,



Said Abdullah al Hatmi

has allowed us to strengthen our core banking services and products, while continuously serving our customers and clients by responding to their needs more swiftly and effectively. It has also been a key factor in facilitating the sustainability of our operational activities for further

growth."

"To maintain this exemplary performance - amidst the gradual economic recovery - we will continue to develop our competitive strength by enhancing and expanding our product and service portfolio, boost our digital capabilities and infrastructure with particular focus on upgrading our e-banking service, and widen our branch network alongside the expansion of our headquarters."

He further, said, "As a testament to our commitment to the 'customer-first' approach we uphold, we recently won two awards at the prestigious OER Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2021: 'Excellence in Private Banking' for Ahlibank and 'Excellence in Islamic Retail Banking' for Ahli Islamic."

Complementing its business operations and activities is the bank's heightened commitment to corporate social responsibility, which demonstrates its support to the government's economic development agenda.

The Bank has contributed to the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign, held under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, whereby it was able to provide vaccines to more than 3,000 people, including its staff and their families.

It has also supported the 'Back to School' venture, which aims to provide school supplies to children from low-income families. Further, the Bank has sponsored the 'Not Discovered Yet' filming project, the first exploratory mission that aimed at highlighting Oman's environmental and tourism features.

During the third quarter of this year, the Bank launched the seventh edition of its 'Graduate Development Program' to train, and consequently employ, new graduates for national competency and prepare them for competitive career opportunities in the banking sector. This initiative demonstrates its support and commitment to the Vision Oman 2040 of empowering Omani youth.



Protiviti Oman, Nidaa al Khair join hands for charity

Protiviti Oman, a consulting firm, signed a memorandum of Understanding with Nidaa al Khair, a charity organisation whereby they agreed to jointly work on an initiative of distributing meals to underprivileged families in Oman as well as those impacted by last month's cyclone Shaheen.

On November 6, Protiviti and Nidaa al Khair successfully distributed food staples, and goodie bags to kids as part of its global

initiative - i on hunger - which aims to provide millions of meals globally, a press release said.

"We strongly believe in our role to support the communities we serve, and one of our core values is to have a sustainable social impact.

One of our many initiatives, 'i on hunger' aims to provide underprivileged families access to quality food. We are very thankful to our partner, Nidaa al Khair team, who have been extremely

supportive, passionate and resourceful over the years to help us make a difference. We managed to distribute 220,405 meals, and we hope to increase that number every year as it is incredibly rewarding when you know you are playing your humanitarian part.

We hope, this encourages more corporates to do the same because at the end of the day, we are one community, and we can only be stronger by staying as

one unit." Shatha al Maskiry, managing director, said.

Bashair al Fazari, team member of i on hunger, added, "It is our social and humanitarian responsibility to stand by each other, provide support, and help those in need, in a way that reflects our values and strengthens the ties of cohesion and cooperation in our Omani society. We hope to organise more humanitarian events in the coming years."

Oman Post & Asyad Express showcases future of automation

Oman Post & Asyad Express, member of Asyad Group, participated at Scalex Dubai (Supply Chain and Logistics Excellence) conference as part of Hypermotion Dubai, taking place on the sidelines of the Expo 2020 Dubai.

Sayyid Nasr al Busaidi, general manager, Customer Experience, at Oman Post & Asyad Express, joined policy makers, strategists and industry experts in a panel session titled 'Automation Strategies to Manage Growth in eCommerce Fulfilment', in order to outline the challenges and opportunities within the Middle East's eCommerce, as well as logistics and supply chain sectors, a press release said.

Panelists discussed the latest digitally enhanced technologies that will be driving future automation and sustainability initiatives and efforts. They also focused on how to improve eCommerce performance through automation and robotics. In addition, Sayyid Nasr also shared the Oman Post & Asyad Express model and latest milestones related to the company's recently opened state of the art fulfilment centre in Muscat.

Commenting during the event, Sayyid Nasr said, "We discussed how the eCommerce and logistics industries are trans-



forming when it comes to introducing, implementing and accelerating automation in the marketplace. At the end of the day, the ultimate goal is to guarantee customer satisfaction and meet the evolving customer expectations and requirements.

He added, "Hence, Oman Post & Asyad Express opened its state of the art fulfilment centre earlier this year. The integrated-logistical solutions' facility offers customers storage services, as well as pick, pack and dispatch of online orders for last-mile domestic and international delivery, while integrating the latest technologies and facilities that pro-

vide local and international eRetailers of all sizes, with innovative, fast, and reliable fulfilment and logistics services."

The Scalex conference is part of Hypermotion Dubai, the Middle East edition of the German-initiated industry convext that reimagines the transportation and logistics industries. The conference drew together global disruptors who are re-envisioning travel, moving of goods and services in the near future. It aimed to tear down boundaries between logistics, mobility, infrastructure, and transport, while looking to replace them with integrated, and inter-modal systems.

Despite oil wealth, poverty fuels despair in south Iraq



This file photo shows flare stacks burning off excess gas at the Nahr Bin Omar oilfield in Iraq's southern province of Basra, on October 25 (AFP)

Basra, Iraq - In Iraq's southern province of Basra, the oil flows freely but little of the wealth trickles down to the people, and many struggle to make ends meet.

Sajad (17), who lives in Basra city, says he 'has no future' and no present. Like other young people, he says he just survives, a living emblem of the city's malaises. Basra province produces about 70 per cent of crude oil in Iraq, itself the second biggest exporter in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia.

Yet the province is hit especially hard by many of the problems plaguing Iraq, which is still seeking to recover from years of war and turmoil since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

Unemployment in Basra affects 20 to 25 per cent of the people and almost 30 per cent of youth, estimated Iraqi economist Barik Schuber in the absence of official figures. This compares to a national rate of 13.7 per cent, according to World Bank figures.

In 2021, the Iraqi budget is about 130tn Iraqi dinars, but for Basra it's less than one trillion. It is maybe 0.7 per cent of the total budget, while more than 108tn come from Basra

DORGHAM AL AJWADI

From patchy supplies of water and electricity, to pockmarked roads and toxic pollution caused by extracting hydrocarbons, Basra province and its four million inhabitants are struggling.

But what hits hardest is the despair of the young.

Gathered around their shisha pipes, Sajad and Jawad, both aged 16, are hard pressed to find anything to be optimistic about.

Sajad does not work, while Jawad said he toils for 'eight to 13 hours in a restaurant for 7,000 dinars (US\$4.80) per day'.

"I don't see a future here, I want to go to Baghdad," said Sajad, sitting on the shores of the Shatt al Arab waterway, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

meet.

Some investments have been made, such as a new stadium under construction ahead of the Gulf Cup football tournament due to be held in Basra in January 2023.

But the deputy governor of Basra, Dorgham al Ajwadi, conceded that 'the people are angry'.

He blamed the distant government in Baghdad for the inequitable distribution of the federal budget.

"In 2021, the Iraqi budget is about 130tn Iraqi dinars (US\$89bn approx), but for Basra it's less than one trillion," he said.

"It is maybe 0.7 per cent of the total budget, while more than 108 trillion come from Basra."

Iranian influence

For Basra resident Mortada (27), it's not Baghdad that's to blame but rather the local authorities.

Before the pandemic, he ran an unregistered ice cream shop, he explained.

"Then the authorities shut down the illegal businesses, including mine," he said, requesting that his surname not be published to avoid problems 'with certain people'.

In Iraq's October 10 parliamentary elections, he voted for an independent candidate unaffiliated with the major parties because "I believe he can change things."

Basra was a hotbed of massive protests in mid-2018, a precursor to the near-nationwide protests that rocked the country from October 2019.

Anger erupted in Basra over corruption, poor public services and, above all, the influence of neighbouring Iran, whose local consulate was set ablaze.

AFP



Demonstrators with Tigray flags and posters march on the National Mall in Washington, DC on Thursday, marking the one-year anniversary of the Ethiopian troops deployment in the Tigray region (AFP)

Ethiopian PM urges 'sacrifices' to save country

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Ethiopia must be ready to make 'sacrifices' to 'salvage' the country, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on Saturday, as fighting in the north intensifies between government forces and Tigrayan rebels who threaten to advance on the capital.

Over the fears of a rebel advance on the capital, the US Embassy in Addis Ababa on Friday urged Americans to leave Ethiopia 'as soon as possible'.

In an advisory, the US Embassy warned 'the security environment in Ethiopia is very fluid'. It urged 'citizens who are in Ethiopia to leave the country as soon as possible'.

The warning came after several groups including the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) - locked in a year-long conflict with the government - and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) announced a new alliance.

Prime Minister Ahmed's announcement came a day after nine rebel groups said they would join forces in an alliance built around the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been locked in a year-long war against Abiy's government.

TPLF representative Berhane Gebre-Christos said on Friday the alliance aimed to 'remove the regime', as he signed the nine-party agreement in Washington.

'There are sacrifices to be made, but those sacrifices will salvage Ethiopia,' Abiy tweeted. 'We have seen the tests and obstacles and it made us stronger,' he said, adding: 'We have more allies than the people who turned their backs on us.'

AFP



There are sacrifices to be made, but those sacrifices will salvage Ethiopia... We have more allies than the people who turned their backs on us

ABIY AHMED

'For us, Ethiopians, dying for our sovereignty, unity and identity, is an honour. There is no Ethiopianism without sacrifice,' the government's communication service said on Twitter.

Last weekend, the TPLF said it had taken two strategic cities in the region of Amhara, where its fighters had advanced after retaking their Tigray bastion in June.

It said on Wednesday it had reached the town of Kemissie in Amhara, 325km northeast of the capital.

The TPLF added it was running 'joint operations' with the Oromo Liberation Army, another rebel group which predicted Addis Ababa could fall in a matter of weeks.

The government, which on Tuesday declared a nationwide emergency, has denied any major rebel advance or

threat on the capital, vowing to press on to victory in 'an existential war'.

Abiy's spokeswoman Bileney Seyoum on Friday accused the rebels of spinning 'an alarmist narrative that is creating much tension among different communities, including the international community'.

"This information warfare and this propaganda that they have been propagating is giving a false sense of insecurity," she added.

Security Council

The United Nations Security Council expressed 'deep concern about the expansion and intensification of military clashes', according to a joint statement released after their meeting on Friday in New York.

The council also expressed concern over the humanitarian situation and national stability, and 'reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of Ethiopia'.

The government has dismissed rebel claims of territorial gains, saying on Thursday that the TPLF was 'encircled' and close to defeat.

It is unclear whether the alliance, named the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces, will affect the trajectory of the conflict.

The TPLF and the OLA, which the government officially designated as terrorist groups in May, are well-known, but the other seven members are obscure, said one diplomat following security matters.

AFP

Saudi to get advanced air-to-air missiles

Washington, US - The US State Department announced the approval on Thursday of the sale of US\$650mn worth of air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia to help the country protect itself from drone attacks.

The approval will allow the Saudis to buy up to 280 of the AIM-120C advanced medium-range missiles and related equipment,

replenishing an existing supply of the missiles, the department said.

A State Department spokesperson said the Saudis have already been able to use the missiles to intercept unmanned aircraft that threatened both Saudi and US forces inside the country, mainly from Yemen.

"We've seen an increase in

cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia over the past year," the spokesperson said.

The Saudis are leading a fight against the Houthis rebels in Yemen, who are supported by Iran.

US officials say the Iranians have supplied the Yemenis with drones and drone technology.

The sale comes as President

Joe Biden's administration takes a cautious approach to supporting the Saudis, out of concern over their harsh tactics towards the Houthis as well as human rights violations.

The State Department spokesperson stressed that the missiles cannot be used against ground targets.

AFP

Pompeii archaeologists discover slave room at Roman villa

Rome, Italy - Pompeii archaeologists said on Saturday they have unearthed the remains of a 'slave room' in an exceptionally rare find at a Roman villa destroyed by Mount Vesuvius' eruption nearly 2,000 years ago.

The little room with three beds, a ceramic pot and a wooden chest was discovered during a dig at the Villa di Civita Giuliana, a suburban villa just a few hundred metres from the rest of the ancient city.

An almost intact ornate Roman chariot was discovered here at the start of this year, and archaeologists said on Saturday that the room likely housed slaves charged with maintaining and prepping the chariot.

"This is a window into the pre-

carious reality of people who rarely appear in historical sources, written almost exclusively by men belonging to the elite," said Pompeii's director general Gabriel Zuchtriegel.

The 'unique testimony' into how 'the weakest in the ancient society lived... is certainly one of the most exciting discoveries in my life as an archaeologist', he said in a press release.

Pompeii was buried in ash when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79AD, killing those who hadn't managed to leave the city in time.

'Rare insight'

The 16sqm room was a cross between a bedroom and a store-room: As well as three beds - one



An exceptionally well-preserved room for the slaves who worked in Villa Civita Giuliana in Pompeii, a villa where a ceremonial chariot and a stable with a harnessed horses were earlier unearthed (AFP)

of which was child sized - there were eight amphorae, stashed in

a corner. The wooden chest held metal and fabric objects that

seem to be part of the harnesses of the chariot horses, and a char-

iot shaft was found resting on one of the beds.

The remains of three horses were found in a stable in a dig earlier this year.

"The room grants us a rare insight into the daily reality of slaves, thanks to the exceptional state of preservation of the room," the Pompeii archaeological park said.

Experts had been able to make plaster casts of the beds and other objects in perishable materials which left their imprint in the cinerite - the rock made of volcanic ash - that covered them, it said.

The beds were made of several roughly worked wooden planks, which could be adjusted according to the height of the

person who used them.

The webbed bases of the beds were made of ropes, covered by blankets.

While two were around 1.7 metres long, one measured just 1.4 metres, and may therefore have belonged to a child.

The archaeological park said the three slaves may have been a family.

Archaeologists found several personal objects under the beds, including amphorae for private things, ceramic jugs and what might be a chamber pot.

The room was lit by a small upper window, and there are no traces or wall decorations, just a mark believed to have been left by a lantern hung on a wall.

AFP

Iraqi police clash with protesters

Baghdad, Iraq - An Iraqi protester was killed and more than 100 people injured on Friday as police clashed with demonstrators venting their fury over last month's election result, medical and security sources said.

The political arm of the pro-Iran Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network saw its share of parliamentary seats decline substantially in the election, which the group's supporters have denounced as 'fraud'.

On Friday, hundreds of Hashed supporters rallied in Baghdad near the Green Zone, a high-security district that houses the US Embassy, government buildings and the election commission.

Demonstrators from groups loyal to the Hashed threw projectiles and 'blocked... access to the Green Zone' on three sides, before they were pushed back by police who fired in the air, a security source said, requesting anonymity.

"There were 125 people injured, 27 of them civilians and the rest from the security forces," the Health Ministry said.

Later a security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a protester had been fatally wounded and died in hospital.

Earlier some pro-Iran chan-



Iraqis carry the coffins of two supporters of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network who died a day earlier amid clashes with security forces while protesting in the capital to express rejection of last month's election results, during their funeral in the central holy shrine city of Najaf on Saturday (AFP)

nels on messaging app Telegram said police fired live rounds at protesters.

"Two demonstrators were killed," a leader of the Hezbollah Brigades, one of Hashed's most

powerful factions, told AFP, requesting anonymity.

But the Health Ministry said no live rounds were fired, insisting that most of those wounded suffered minor injuries.

A Hezbollah Brigade source said that after a brief lull, clashes resumed in the evening near the Green Zone, accusing security forces of torching protester tents in the area.

Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi 'ordered a full inquiry into Friday's events', his office said, while President Barham Saleh urged restraint.

The UN mission in Iraq said it

'regrets the escalation of violence and the ensuing injuries in Baghdad today'.

'We call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint, for the right to peaceful protest to be re-

spected and for the demonstrations to remain peaceful.'

The Conquest (Fatah) Alliance, the political arm of the multi-party Hashed, won around 15 of the 329 seats in parliament, according to preliminary results.

In the last parliament it held 48, making it the second-largest bloc.

The big winner this time, with more than 70 seats according to the initial count, was the movement of Moqtada Sadr, a Shiite Muslim preacher who campaigned as a nationalist and critic of Iran.

In a tweet on Friday, Sadr took no side over the clashes, condemning all violence whether from demonstrators or from the security forces.

The security source said that the protesters were mainly drawn from two Hashed factions, the Hezbollah Brigades and Assaib Ahl al-Haq.

The Hezbollah Brigades dubbed last month's election the 'worst' since 2003, when dictator Saddam Hussein was toppled in a US-led invasion.

The Hashed demands the withdrawal from Iraq of remaining US troops, who number about 2,500.

AFP



Richard Ratcliffe, husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe - a British-Iranian held in Iran since 2016, sits outside the Foreign Office with his daughter Gabriella two weeks after beginning a hunger strike, in London on Friday (AFP)

Husband of UK-Iranian held in Iran to continue hunger strike

London, UK - The husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British Iranian held in Iran since 2016, vowed to maintain a hunger strike he started nearly two weeks ago to denounce the 'complacency' of the British government and its failure to secure the release of his wife.

"It's not a stunt. It's not a game, a hunger strike, it's not a light thing," Richard Ratcliffe said on Friday during a vigil held to support his fast, which he started on Sunday, October 24 outside the Foreign Office in London.

"The status quo is unacceptable," he said, on the pavement with their daughter Gabriella in front of a display of candles spelling out 'Free Nazanin', three weeks after Zaghari-Ratcliffe lost

her appeal against a second jail term in Iran.

A project manager for the Thomson Reuters Foundation, Zaghari-Ratcliffe was arrested in 2016 in Tehran during a visit to her family and convicted of plotting to overthrow the Iranian regime - accusations she strenuously denied - and sentenced to five years in prison.

After serving her time, she was sentenced again at the end of April to another year's imprisonment for participating in a rally outside the Iranian Embassy in London in 2009.

In mid-October, she lost her appeal, with her family fearing she will soon return to prison.

He began his new hunger strike, his second since 2018, in

the face of 'complacency running through the government strategy'.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't think their strategy was failing," he said.

Despite the falling temperatures, Ratcliffe said he intended to continue his protest, in particular, because Iran is attending the COP26 climate talks in Scotland.

"I intend on going on into next week, not least because the Iranians are sending a delegation to Glasgow," he said. 'They might be coming down to London as well, and I just think they shouldn't be able to wine and dine and carry on like normal whilst holding British citizens hostage.'

AFP

Over 90 killed in massive fuel tanker blast in Sierra Leone

Freetown, Sierra Leone - A massive fireball sparked by a fuel tanker explosion killed 92 people in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, the West African country's vice president said on Saturday.

Hospitals were treating 88 more people for severe burns, said Vice-President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, who arrived at the scene on Saturday.

According to witnesses, the blast happened on Friday night when a fuel tanker collided with another truck at a petrol station.

The flames then spread, burning people in cars and on roads nearby.

The majority of the victims were street vendors and motorcyclists, many of whom were caught in the blaze while trying to retrieve fuel, according to volunteer worker Jusu Jacka Yorma who was at the scene.



People gather around charred cars in the aftermath of a fuel tanker explosion in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown on Saturday (AFP)

A nurse at a hospital where victims were sent told AFP that many women, men and children had sustained 'serious injuries'.

Contrary to some initial reports, a fuel depot near the accident did not explode, the AFP correspondent added.

Hundreds of people gathered at the scene of the tragedy, many searching for missing relatives under the eye of security forces.

Video footage showed a burnt-out tanker and a truck, and the surrounding area littered with husks of vehicles, some still

smouldering.

"Deeply disturbed by the tragic fires and the horrendous loss of life," President Julius Maada Bio wrote on Twitter.

"My profound sympathies with families who have lost loved ones and those who have been maimed as a result. My government will do everything to support affected families."

The United Nations office in Sierra Leone expressed its 'deepest condolences' to the victims.

'The UN family closely monitors the situation and stands ready to help with the response to the fire,' it said in a statement.

Freetown mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer said she was 'deeply saddened' by the explosion. 'The video and photo footage making rounds on social media are harrowing,' she wrote on Facebook.

AFP

Climate protesters hit Glasgow streets

Glasgow, UK - Thousands of climate protesters braved rain and wind in Glasgow on Saturday to take part in worldwide demonstrations against what campaigners say is a failure of crunch UN talks to act fast enough to tame global warming.

Dozens of events are planned worldwide to demand cuts in fossil fuel use and immediate help for communities already affected by climate change, particularly in poorer countries.

In Glasgow, organisers and police said they ultimately expected up to 50,000 people to parade through the streets of the Scottish city.

Demonstrators began gathering on Saturday morning in a park near the COP26 summit venue, chanting, 'Our world is under attack, stand up fight back!'

"I think a lot of politicians are scared of the power of this movement," said a 22 year old Norwegian protester who gave her name as Jenny.

Delegates from nearly 200 countries are in Glasgow to hammer out how to meet the Paris Agreement goals of limiting tem-



Protesters also gathered in London during a global day of action on climate change on Saturday, during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference, taking place in Glasgow (AFP)

perature rises to between 1.5°C and 2°C.

At the halfway stage of the COP26 negotiations, some countries have upgraded their existing pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while there have been separate deals on phasing out coal, ending foreign fossil fuel funding, and slashing methane.

In Australia on Saturday, protesters in Sydney and Melbourne - some dressed as lumps of coal or Prime Minister Scott Morrison

- echoed that sentiment, calling the talks 'a sham' and their national leader 'an absolute embarrassment'. 'No more blah, blah blah. Real climate action now,' read one sign in Sydney.

South Korean capital Seoul saw roughly 500 take to the streets demanding immediate action.

Jill Bird (66), who had travelled to Glasgow's march from Bristol, was among a group of people dressed in white jumpsuits with 'greenwash busters'

backpacks. She said she wanted to see rich nations live up to their pledge of providing US\$100bn annually to vulnerable nations that 'keeps being promised and promised and promised and doesn't actually materialise'.

Security has been boosted in Glasgow and many city-centre shops closed for Saturday's march, which had a party atmosphere replete with dance troupes, drummers, bagpipers and a singing Darth Vader.

AFP

11 captured after passengers flee emergency landing in Spain

Madrid, Spain - Spanish police had on Saturday rounded up 11 people who fled a plane following an emergency landing that prompted Mallorca to close its airport, in what appeared to be an elaborate scheme by would-be migrants.

At least nine people are believed to be at large after the flight from Morocco to Turkey landed at Palma de Mallorca airport, one of Spain's busiest, on Friday evening.

"So far, 11 people have been

found by the police and civil guard officers," said a spokeswoman for the government delegation on the islands said.

"A passenger apparently suffered a diabetic coma and was taken by ambulance to hospital with a companion," a police statement said on Saturday.

"As the evacuation was taking place, around 20 passengers ran out onto the runway."

Police and civil guard officers immediately began searching for the escapees, paralysing activity

at the airport which only resumed activity at around midnight, Spain's AENA airport authority said.

Meanwhile at the hospital, the allegedly ill passenger was found to be in perfect health and discharged, with police arresting him for 'facilitating illegal immigration'. His companion was nowhere to be found, they said.

According to aircraft tracker FlightRadar24, the plane was an Air Arabia Maroc Airbus A320.

AFP



Police personnel walk with a detained man after a knife attack on a high-speed train in Seubersdorf, Germany on Saturday (AFP)

Three hurt in knife attack on German train

Berlin, Germany - Three people were wounded in a knife attack on a high-speed train in southern Germany on Saturday, local police said, adding a suspect had been arrested.

Officers said the danger was over and a 27 year old man was in custody, with unconfirmed media reports claiming the suspect was of Syrian origin and suffered from psychiatric issues.

The motive for the attack on the passenger train, making its way from Bavaria to the northern city of Hamburg with roughly 300 people on board, was not yet clear.

Local prosecutors are handling the case rather than the federal officials who would deal with suspected terrorism.

The three victims were being treated in hospital, said police in Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz, adding that none had suffered life-threatening injuries.

The ICE high-speed train was halted in the station of Seubersdorf, southeast of Nuremberg, and travel on the line was suspended.

‘This knife attack is horrible,’ Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said on Twitter.

‘I would like to thank everyone, especially the police and the train staff, for their brave action, which prevented something even worse from happening.’

‘The motive for the crime is still unclear and will now be determined.’

AFP

Algeria says will not offer to make up with France

Berlin, Germany - Algeria’s President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said on Saturday he would not make the ‘first move’ towards easing tensions with former colonial power France after critical comments from Paris about his country.



Abdelmadjid Tebboune

The diplomatic spat has been fuelled by a visa row and media reports that President Emmanuel Macron told descendants of fighters in Algeria’s 1954-1962 war of independence that the North African country was ruled by a ‘political-military system’ that had ‘totally re-written’ its history.

“Macron completely pointlessly revived an old conflict,” Tebboune told German magazine *Der Spiegel*. ‘I won’t be the one to make the first move’ to ease tensions, he added.

“No Algerian will accept it if I get in touch with those who insulted us.”

French daily *Le Monde* in early October quoted Macron as saying, “Was there an Algerian nation before French colonisation? That’s the question.”

The comments reflected ‘the

old hatred of colonial masters, and I know that Macron is far from thinking like this’, Tebboune said.

Algeria has recalled its ambassador from Paris and banned French military planes from its airspace over the tensions.

Asked by *Der Spiegel* if the fallout was likely to be resolved any time soon, Tebboune was defiant.

“No, if the French want to go to Mali or Niger now, they will just have to fly for nine hours instead of four,” the Algerian President said, referring to two countries where France has sent troops to help fight militants.

AFP

Colin Powell honoured for ‘dignity’ at funeral

Washington, US - Three American presidents joined in remembering late US secretary of state Colin Powell on Friday, as a polarised Washington came together for the funeral of the four-star general and veteran statesman.

Joe Biden, his predecessors Barack Obama and George W Bush, and former top diplomat Hillary Clinton sat in the front row alongside Powell’s wife, Alma, at the National Cathedral to honour the pathbreaking African American who served four administrations and earned global respect over his long career.

Powell was “a figure who almost transcended time, for his virtues were Homeric: Honesty, dignity, loyalty and an unshakable commitment to his calling and word,” said Madeleine Albright, who preceded Powell as secretary of state.

Biden’s immediate predecessor, Donald Trump - who attacked Powell after his death over his support for the Iraq war - was absent from the ceremony.

The 84 year old retired four-star general died on October 18 from complications from COVID-19.

Powell had been vaccinated for the coronavirus, but had been weakened by cancer and had early signs of Parkinson’s disease.

His son Michael Powell praised him for his commitment to service, especially in the military.

“He loved the troops with all his heart,” Michael Powell said in his address.

“He knew you could not ask your troops to do anything you were unwilling to do yourself.”

A son of Jamaican immigrants, Powell shattered glass ceilings in a career that took him from combat in Vietnam to becoming America’s first Black national security advisor under Ronald Reagan.

He served four presidents and



Members of the military honour guard carry the casket during the funeral service for former secretary of state Colin Powell who died last month at 84 from complications related to COVID-19, at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC on Friday (AFP)



US President Joe Biden speaks with Alma Powell after the funeral service for former Secretary of State Colin Powell at Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC on Friday (AFP)

kept his distance from partisan politics, fending off encouragement to run for president or another office.

From 1989 to 1993, he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon.

In 2001, Bush named him secretary of state, leading to the one dark stain on his otherwise sparkling reputation.

In a February 2003 speech to the UN Security Council on behalf of the Bush administration, he said the US had evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The claim served as the basis of the US invasion of Iraq a month later, but was later proven to have no foundation.

AFP

Four women, including activist, killed in Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan - Four women have been killed in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, a spokesman for Afghanistan’s Taliban government said on Saturday, as local sources identified at least one of the victims as a rights activist.

Two suspects have been arrested after the four bodies were found at a house in the city, Interior Ministry spokesman Qari Sayed Khosti said.

“The arrested people have admitted in initial interrogation that the women were invited to the house by them. Further investigations are under way and the case has been referred to court,”

he said.

Khosti did not identify the victims, but sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that one of the dead was a women’s rights activist and university lecturer, Frozan Safi.

Three sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that they had heard the women received a call that they thought was an invitation to join an evacuation flight and were picked up by a car, only to be found dead later.

“I knew one of those women, Frozan Safi,” a female employee of an international organisation told AFP, on condition of anonymity. “She was also a



Taliban fighters stand guard at the courtyard of the Hazrat-e-Ali shrine or Blue Mosque, in Mazar-i-Sharif on October 30 (AFP)

women’s activist, really well known in the city.”

The source said that three weeks ago she had herself

received a call from someone pretending to offer assistance in her efforts to get to safety abroad.

“He knew all information about me, asked me to send my documents, wanted me to fill a questionnaire, pretending to be an official of my office in charge of giving info to the US for my evacuation,” she said.

After becoming suspicious she blocked the caller, and is now living in fear. She was shocked when she heard about the killings.

“I was already scared,” she said. “My mental health is not good nowadays. I am always afraid that someone might come to my door, take me somewhere and shoot me.”

AFP

At least 8 dead after crush at Travis Scott’s Texas music festival

Los Angeles, US - A crush caused by a crowd surge killed at least eight people and wounded several others at rap star Travis Scott’s Astroworld music festival in Texas on Friday night, authorities said.

Officials said the crush began as ‘the crowd began to compress towards the front of the stage’ around 9pm when Scott was performing. There were around 50,000 people in the audience at Houston’s NRG Park.

“That caused some panic and

it started causing some injuries, people began to fall out, become unconscious and it created additional panic,” Houston fire chief Samuel Pena said at a press conference.

“We had at least eight confirmed fatalities tonight and scores of individuals that were injured,” he said, adding the cause of death could not be confirmed until after medical exams were completed.

Pena said a total of 17 people were rushed to hospital with 11 of



A file photo of 2019 Travis Scott’s Astroworld Festival at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas (AFP)

them in ‘cardiac arrest’.

Scott was on stage when the incident occurred and stopped his act on several occasions when he saw fans in distress near the stage, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Survivors described chaotic scenes of people squeezed up against one another and many struggling to breathe, the *Chronicle* reported.

“We were hanging on to each other to avoid getting separated,” one survivor said. “If you

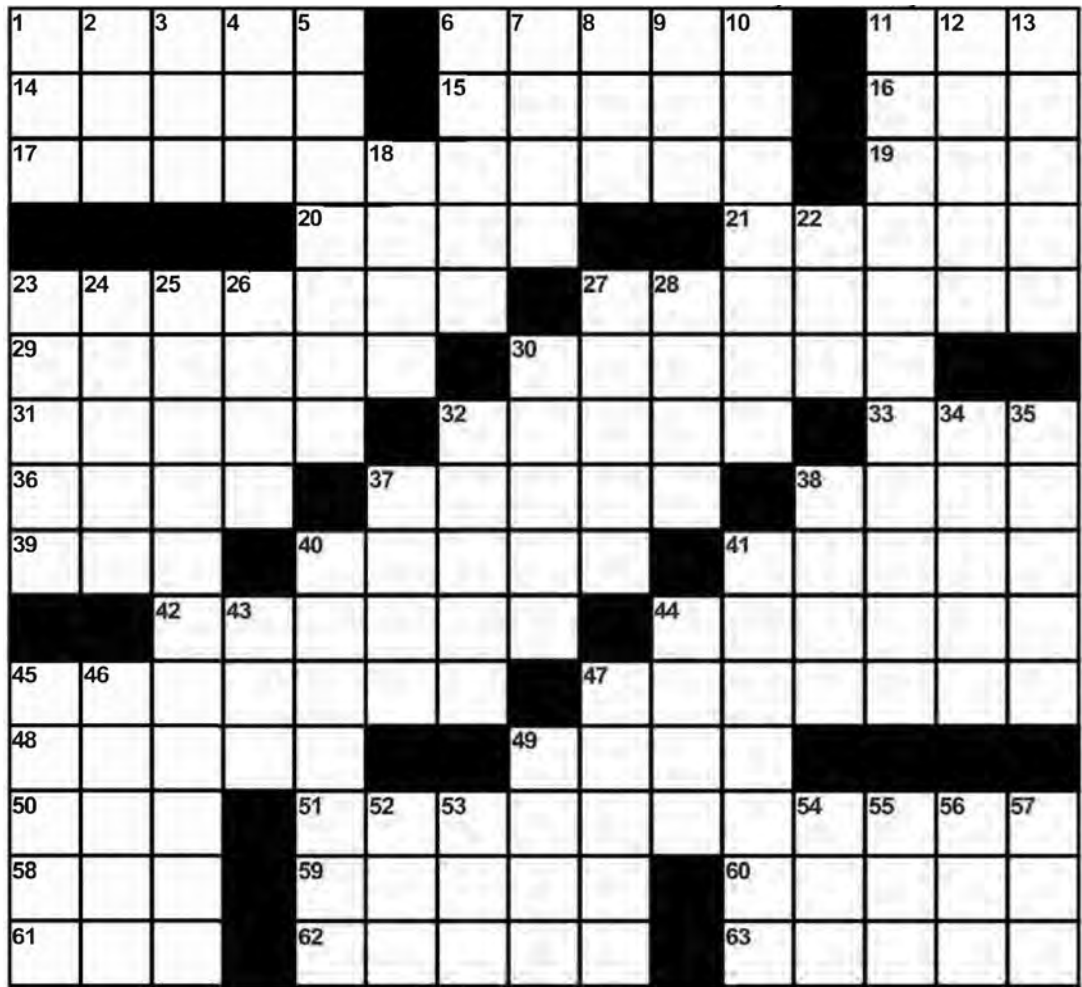
let go, you could easily drift apart.”

One concert-goer quoted in the paper described carrying a man who had fallen to safety over barricades in the arena and watching paramedics perform CPR.

Senior Harris County official Lina Hidalgo said it was ‘an extremely tragic night’. “Our hearts are broken, people go to these events to have a good time, to make memories,” she added.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD

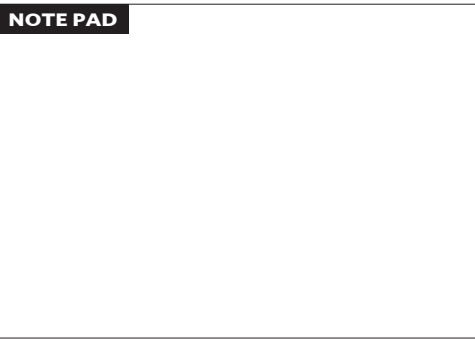


ACROSS
1) Guy hiding in children's books
6) Helps in a criminal activity
11) Jeweler's item
14) "Up the creek," is one
15) Amend an atlas
16) Genetically coded stuff, for short
17) Fox and Lloyd went back
19) Dinghy driver
20) Arcing shots
21) Sound from a hen-house
23) Guts and other innards
27) Agents' needs
29) Form in the mind
30) Did some house work?
31) Darlings
32) Informative, informally
33) Bride's title
36) Gets something down
37) Musical qualities
PAST BEHAVIOR
38) Look good on
39) There's no fool like this kind

40) Cut off, as relations
41) '70s dance hall
42) Lumberyard cutter
44) Cosmetic application
45) Ghostly entities
4 7) Alfa Romeo alternative
48) Make more exciting (with "up")
49) Jazz combo, often short
50) "By the time I count to three" follower
51) The parolee was back ...
58) As to
59) Phobias
60) Break in two
61) Driving-exam curve shape
62) Womb resident
63) Aden's land
DOWN
1) One skilled at repair-tee
2) Fuss, to Shakespeare
3) Set fire to
4) "How stupid of me!"
5) Western and Spanish dishes
6) Caribbean resort island
7) "All... are off!"
8) Bird that can't take flight

9) Cigarette ingredient
10) State in detail
11) The elevator provided back ...
12) Make it so, legally
13) "On your_, get set ..."
18) "Watch out!"
22) Superhero creator Stan
23) Part of DVD
24) Having no drawbacks
25) The ones making you slow down are back ...
26) Big- ticket items
27) Crouch in fear
28) L's meaning, sometimes
30) Extend, as a subscription
32) Spectacular stars
34) Xerox competitor
35) Bit of gravel
37) Class evaluation
38) Watches the kids
40) "The Jeffersons" was one
41) "The Wizard of Oz" character
43) "Asp" or "vamp" attachment
44) Hi's wife, in comics
45) Mountain feature
46) Maine flora
47) Use a steam iron

49) Drive-_
52) Wedding announcement word
53) Tit-for-_
54) "Norma_" (1979 movie)
55) Scary cinematic street
56) Time immediately preceding
57) "Speed" of many bikes



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
When you treat a conflict like a puzzle, you put yourself in a powerful position. Ask for the information you need to help solve this riddle, and you'll be the one who stays in control. The other person in this situation isn't nearly as quick as you at connecting all the dots, so don't worry that they'll come to a solution before you do. It's time to step up and be more conscious about what you have to say in order to get what you want.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
A recent chat with a dear one has left you wearing a big ol' smile, and from all indications, it's going to keep you smiling for a while. You've earned the right to be happy. The past couple of months have been "interesting," one might say, but you managed to keep your chin up, stay chipper, and even help get others out of the moods they were in. Now enjoy your heavenly rewards.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Your enthusiasm certainly isn't waning. You've been thinking of getting to know a whole new group of people for some time now. You've met them, and you were absolutely right. All you have to do now is show up, smile, and work your way in. They want you there, so it won't be tough. Oh, and think about getting them together with the old gang. It's going to be good.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
You're still trying to figure out what to do about the current situation, but your emotions seem to be drowning out your thoughts. Not to worry. Every now and then it's only fair to give your kindler, gentler side control of the steering wheel. It's now officially time to do so. Relax, and let the universe lead you. That means no obsessing, which could be far easier said than done.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Ready to go over your finances? Good. Of course, you may have ulterior motives for making those lists and checking them twice. Isn't there something you've been drooling over? Bet there is. Bet you can find it for a better price too (if anyone can). Take a friend along for the ride. That way, when you find it for a steal, you'll have a witness.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
If ever there was a time that's perfect for you to figure out a plan for letting someone down gently, this is it. After all, planning is your specialty. Your first and best rule will be to do no harm (to either of you) even if that's much easier said than done. In other words, don't let them goad, manipulate, or persuade you into staying longer than you should. If you're done, you're done.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
No one's ever had to remind you that fun often comes from unexpected circumstances. So even though the day seems quiet, you have one eye open for a coincidence that will take you right to your next adventure. Of course, you know that there's really no such thing as coincidences (it's all about the universe arranging for you to meet someone or get somewhere), but others might not. Educate them gently.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Your emotions are right there on your face, for all the world to see, and the best part is that they're all good emotions. You're happy and pleased with yourself over recent relationship developments, and you know the feelings are mutual. What could be better? Well, you could lavish some adoring attention on the person responsible for all this good stuff. That could make things even better, right?



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You don't have to sit there any longer. You've been waiting long enough. It's time for someone to tell you exactly what they think of you and in no uncertain terms. The good news is that the two of you already agree on almost everything from politics to ice cream flavors. Now all you have to do is find a way to pry this one little thing out of them. It won't be too tough.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
You've been playing this part for what seems like forever: your family's honorary peacemaker, mediator, and hostage negotiator. You've talked a family member off the symbolic ledge more than once, and you've always known that the chances were excellent that it would happen again. Well, guess what? It's time to break out your crisis kit. The good news is that this time it will go a lot more smoothly.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
That feeling you've had recently? That this might not be the very best moment to let the world know about you two? As usual, you're right. And while it might not be easy to continue keeping quiet, you should do everything you can to convince the other person concerned that it's your best bet. You know the expression about how anything good is worth waiting for? Sit tight.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You believe that you've spent far too long on this project, waiting for someone to come around to your way of thinking. You also believe that given enough time, you could convince anyone of anything, and that includes this stubborn soul. You're right on both counts. If you hadn't been quite so eager to change minds, you probably could have pulled this project off alone. As it is, you needed help because you got distracted.

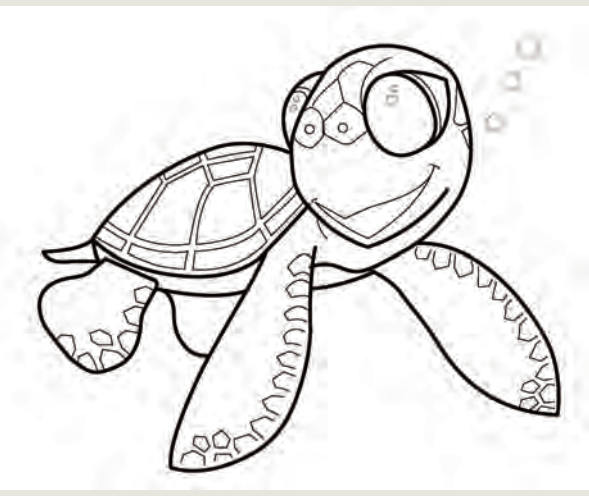
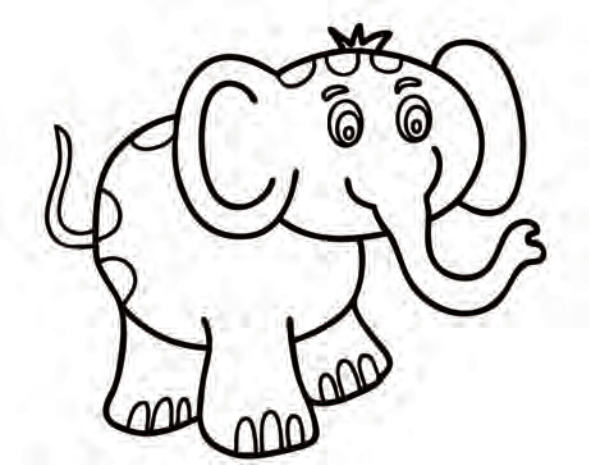


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- The date of operation of first open heart surgery in India was
 - July 6, 1959
 - August 12, 1991
 - June 20, 1990
 - January 11, 1985
- The first Indian to be awarded the Oscar for lifetime achievements in Cinema in 1992 was
 - Satyajit Ray
 - Bhanu Athaiya
 - Dilip Kumar
 - Amitabh Bachchan
- The element of an electric stove made
 - copper
 - invar
 - magnalium
 - nicrome

Answers: 1. a 2. a 3. d

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	E	D	I
G	A	D	I
B	N	M	N
O	Y	O	D

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

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

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

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



(From left) Dr Najlaa al Saadi, Dalia al Bassami, Dr Zahra Akbari, Haneen al Moosawi, and Naila al Mamari

A unique art exhibition by five Omani women artists was held at Fikra art gallery to mark Omani Women's Day last week. Through meaningful frames, the artists highlighted a host of feminine attributes that have evolved over the years without losing their innate dynamism



Hubert Vaz

The walls of Fikra art gallery last week had a gender bias – they exhibited beauty, elegance, versatility, perseverance and a string of other virtues that abide in femininity. Every wall reached out to the viewer with a familiar aspect about women, showcasing with a good measure of complexity the ease with which they sashay through life's challenges - with nerves of steel hidden within a garb of grace.

Dr Zahra Akbari, the curator of the exhibition, who believes that the word 'feminine' itself refers to a doctrine, said, "Mankind has developed through ages and certain aspects of femininity has remained intact. evolved over the years but its roots remain dynamic and steady in society."

A researcher in Sociology and Anthropology and an exponent of Modern Art, Dr Zahra said, "This exhibition is a presentation of five ladies whose art is not only revealed in their artworks but they also share a common feature - Women matter! This co-operation with four Omani artists has been enlightening and promising for a new movement in the horizon of Oman's Modern Art. We give birth to humans, bring them up, educate them and share our entity with them. When women feel safe and healthy, the whole society flourishes. In particular, women in the Middle East need attention, and as an artist and sociologist, I always focus on them. The

exhibition inspired many ladies to present their passion for art and revive their own interpretation of things around them in life."

Dr Zahra Akbari's works in this exhibition include three pieces of mixed media with the theme of feminine presentation of Omani motifs and essence, as well as a video art presented for the first time in Oman. This video art, called 'A Woman Reveals a Woman' is an exquisite display of the divine essence of women in a worldly sense of audio and vision. In



an artistic cooperation with Payam Khakbaz, Dr Zahra bridges the traditional and modern symbolic features of Omani women with a combination of motherly chanting whispers to the children, henna designs, and the 'hijab' as strong female icons.

Naila al Mamari, a senior artist, said, "My paintings in this exhibition belonged to the symbolic expressive school and expressed the Omani identity through three basic elements - Omani characters (people) - Omani kumma (Omani cap) and the seas and marine environment (fish, water, coral reefs). I emphasised through it, the importance of the Omani heritage and the marine environment, and the extent of their association with the Omani fine artist, with different formations and modern techniques."

Haneen al Moosawi, whose work was a combination of geometric shapes and lines (which goes back to being raised in a diverse artistic environment as her Dad works as an urban planner and her Mom is an artist), said, "I have a very calm and quiet personality. I found art to express my emotions freely, and I find it therapeutic as it helps me live in the moment. I would describe my artwork between Geometric Abstraction and Minimalism, and mostly use paper cut, sketching, and digital materials. Her artworks have focused on dyeing textile art, like Batik combine with Arabic calligraphy using various colours.

Dr Najlaa al Saadi, assistant professor, Sultan Qaboos University, Art Education department, explained that her artworks in the exhibition were inspired by real photos that her friends shared with her. The Collection stands for the deep beauty and meaningfulness of accessories, faces and gestures of



This exhibition is a presentation of five ladies whose art is not only revealed in their artworks but they also share a common feature - Women matter!

DR ZAHRA AKBARI

Omani ladies.

"A friend of mine showed me her late mother's picture and the way she stared at the camera with her beautiful dress and the veil moved me," says Dr Najlaa, adding, "The actual textile which is used in this work is merged with the acrylic paint on the mosque's altar, so that it maintains the harmony, movement of shades, and the scarcity of a feminine gaze."

Dalia Mohammed al Bassami, an Omani Photographer, explained one of her works - Proud Elegance, saying, "She represents an Omani lady who hugged me in the mosque. We know her, even covered under layers and shades of colours, even though she is forgotten over the years. The fast current of events faded her face out, but her memory has remained subtle."

She added, a little philosophically, "She has made a whole generation of progressive girls and boys. She has made you, she has made me. May be she is you, may be she is me." Dalia has also presented a collage of 4 photos of a folk dancer blending with curves and melodies.

Oman sailors excel at Mussanah Race Week

Sailors competing during the Mussanah Race Week

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman sailors picked three of the four gold medals at stake in the Mussanah Race Week (MRW), which concluded at the Barcelo Mussanah Resort on Friday.

The 11th edition of the MRW featured a total of 50 sailors from four countries in Optimist, ICLA 4, ICLA 6 and para sailing classes.

Oman's Ilyas al Fadhli took the top honours in the Optimist class after 11 rounds, edging fellow countrymates – Abdullatif al Qasmi and Tameem al Balushi.

In the ICLA 4 class, Othman Abdulkareem from the UAE clinched the gold ahead of Omani duo of Mohammed al Qasmi (runner-up) and Nibras al Owaisi (bronze).

Oman's Al Motasim al Farsi won the gold in the ICLA 6 class ahead of his teammates, Abdulmalik al Hinai and Ali al Saadi.

The MRW also witnessed for the first time a para sailing competition with the Oman crew of Adil al Siyabi and Ahmed al Shukaili bouncing back from an early disqualification to win the gold.

The crew of Ali al Ghassani and Ahmed al Harrasi came second while Hassan al Lawati and Zahar al Atabi took the third place. All the four participating teams were from Oman with the other crew comprising Muayed al Sheryani and Sultan al Wahaibi.

Later, H E Sayyid Ibrahim al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Musandam,



Para sailing podium winners with guests during the conclusion ceremony at Barcelo Mussanah Resort on Friday

presented the awards in the presence of Oman Sail CEO Khamis al Jabri.

Speaking after the successful conclusion of the regatta, Shaima al Asmi, MRW project manager, said, "This was a fantastic return for Mussanah Race Week. To

have 50 young sailors competing at such a high level, we are sure that the future of sailing is looking bright."

She added, "The introduction of para sailing and the SailFree team has been overwhelmingly successful. We are so proud of

our para sailors and look forward to seeing them develop."

Oman Sail is a strong supporter of World Sailing's 'Back the Bid' campaign to reinstate para sailing to the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles, US.



Ilyas (C) with Abdullatif and Tameem on the podium along with the guests

A busy winter season of sailing continues at the venue as the 2021 Asian 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 Championships began on Friday. A fleet of 50 people, which includes some of Asia's top sailors, including KC Ganapathy of India, Molly Highfield of

Hong Kong, Dylan Whitcraft of Thailand and a strong team of Omani sailors, will look to gain vital experience ahead of the worlds, also at the same venue from November 16-21, while competing for the title of Asian honours.

Yalla Shabab down ARTT

Our Correspondent Muscat

LOCAL CRICKET

Gustav Burger and Khalid Kail slammed half-centuries while Mohammad Nadeem and Sanuth Ebrahim picked three wickets apiece as Yalla Shabab powered to a four-wicket win against ARTT in an Oman Cricket Premier Division (50-over-a-side) match at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Amerat on Friday.

Put to bat first, ARTT put up a challenging total of 211 in the stipulated overs for the loss of nine wickets. Inzamam-ul-Haq and Ghazanfar Iqbal hit half-centuries with Inzamam departing for 89. Ghazanfar made 58.

Yalla Shabab reached the



L-R: Mohammad Nadeem, Sanuth Ebrahim, Gustav Burger, Khalid Kail

victory target in 42 overs with Kail slamming 80 off 85 balls and Burger making a solid 59.

Brief scores:

ARTT 211-9 in 50 overs (Inzamam 89, Ghazanfar 58; Nadeem 3-30, Ebrahim 3-42) lost to Yalla Shabab 216-6 in 42

overs (Kail 80, Burger 59; Mohammed Imran Latif 2-18).

A Division (50-over-a-side):

Orient Travels 266 all out in 46.5 overs (Darwish Ellickal 57) beat E&Y 124 all out in 24.4 overs (Rana Zeeshan 26).

China to play Oman in Sharjah

FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Muscat - China's upcoming FIFA World Cup Asian Zone final round Group B Qualifiers against Oman and Australia will take place in Sharjah, the UAE, the Chinese Football Association (CFA) confirmed recently.

Oman, under coach Branko Ivankovic, left for the UAE on Wednesday for a short camp ahead of the China match on November 11.

The CFA had hoped that the two home fixtures for their team could be held in a Chinese city, but their plans eventually fell short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "After negotiations with all related parties and the confirmation of the AFC, China will play against Oman and Australia on November 11 and 16 respec-

tively in Sharjah," said the CFA.

"The Chinese team will depart for Sharjah on November 7."

Li Tie's side had trained in Sharjah for nearly one month before beating Vietnam 3-2 there on October 7, its first win in the final round.

China, drawn into Group B of with Australia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Vietnam, ranks fifth in the group with only three points after four games.

Oman are currently third in the standings with six points, the same as Japan. Saudi Arabia are on top with 12 points with four wins and Australia at second with nine points. The top two from the group qualify automatically for the World Cup while the third-place finishers enter a series of playoffs.



Oman players train during a camp in Dubai, UAE, on Friday, ahead of their forthcoming Group B final round qualifying match against China

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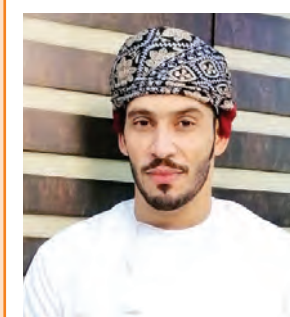
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WEDDING WISHES



ISSA AL JAHWARI

The family of Issa al Jahwari conveys a heartfelt congratulations to him on his wedding. Wishing the couple a very happy life blessed with joy and mutual understanding.

Friends & family of
Issa al Jahwari

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

City outclass Man Utd; Burnley hold Chelsea

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
London, UK - Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is under renewed pressure after Manchester United were outclassed 2-0 by Manchester City on Saturday while Burnley ended Chelsea's winning streak in the English Premier League.

Eric Bailly's own goal and Bernardo Silva's strike on the stroke of half-time proved the difference at Old Trafford but there was a huge gulf in quality between the teams in the early kick-off.

Struggling Burnley scored a late goal to earn a 1-1 draw against Premier League leaders Chelsea while Norwich lifted themselves off the bottom of the table by beating Brentford 2-1 for their first league win of the season.

Two weeks after their embarrassing 5-0 humiliation at the hands of Liverpool, United were again palpably second best on home turf. Only a string of stunning saves from goalkeeper David de Gea prevented Solskjaer's men from another humbling in a match in which they could just muster a single shot on target.

United have won just one of their past six Premier League games, giving Solskjaer - and club bosses - plenty to ponder during the international break.

But despite the string of poor results, Solskjaer said he did not feel he was on borrowed time at the club, who last won silverware in 2017. "I have good communication all the time with the club and that's very up front and honest about the situation," Solskjaer told Sky Sports.

"I work for Man United and I want the best for Man United and of course as long as I'm here I want to do what I can to improve this."

City deservedly took the lead in just the seventh minute when Bailly sliced Joao Cancelo's cross into his own net.

Spanish goalkeeper De Gea almost single-handedly kept the score at 1-0 but was at fault for



Manchester City players celebrate after a goal against Manchester United at Old Trafford, Manchester, on Saturday (AFP)

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Spanish goalkeeper De Gea almost single-handedly kept the score at 1-0 but was at fault for

City's second when Silva stretched a leg to meet Cancelo's cross and the United stopper allowed the ball to squirm into his own net.

Chelsea draw
Wasteful Chelsea were frustrated as Matej Vydra's late equaliser ended the European champions' four-match winning run. Chelsea led through Kai Havertz's first-half header and were 11 minutes away from moving

five points clear at the top before Vydra stunned Stamford Bridge into silence.

"Of course I'm disappointed," said Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel. "If we played this game 100 times, we'd win 99 times. Today we didn't win it.

The Blues are three points clear of second-placed City. Liverpool can move within one point of Chelsea if they beat West Ham on Sunday.

Elsewhere, first-half goals by

Mathias Normann and Teemu Pukki earned Norwich their first win of the season.

Wilfried Zaha and Conor Gallagher scored for Crystal Palace, who ended Wolves' recent fine run by winning 2-0.

OTHER RESULTS
SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP
Aberdeen 0 Motherwell 2, Hearts 5 Dundee Utd 2, St Johnstone 0 St Mirren 0. AFP



Barca welcome Xavi with collapse at Celta Vigo

SPANISH LEAGUE
Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona threw away a three-goal half-time lead on the day Xavi Hernandez was appointed coach as Celta Vigo scored in the 96th minute to complete a stunning comeback in La Liga on Saturday.

Another deflating result for Barca was made worse by another injury for Ansu Fati, who gave his team an early lead and then had go off with a hamstring problem.

Goals from Sergio Busquets and Memphis Depay had Barcelona 3-0 in front after 34 minutes but Celta came back, Iago Aspas scoring twice either side of one from Nolito to seal a 3-3 draw.

Aspas' equaliser, with a brilliant shot from the edge of the area, came with 95 minutes and 34 seconds on the clock and left the Barcelona players crumpled on the floor.

It is now Xavi's job to pick them up, with the team's new coach watching from Barcelona, where he had landed around three hours before kick-off.

The 41-year-old had flown from Doha following confirmation of his sensational return to the club in the early hours of Saturday morning.

Barcelona's chaotic defending and inability to manage a game when they looked in charge, will have come as little surprise to Xavi but Fati's hamstring injury will be a concern, especially with a crunch Champions League game against Benfica to come on November 23, shortly after the international break.

Fati's absence for any length of time would be a blow for Barca, and also for Spain, who will be without the 19-year-old for World Cup qualifiers against Greece and Sweden next week.

Xavi left Camp Nou to play for Qatari club Al Sadd in 2015, after making 767 appearances for Barcelona, with eight La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues among his 25 trophies. "It's time to come home. Welcome, Xavi," Barca tweeted in the early hours of Saturday morning, as Spain slept. AFP

ONLY
PURE
WATER

AND
PERFECT
TASTE

ONLY
WHAT'S
ESSENTIAL

Verstappen dominates



Max Verstappen drives during the Mexico GP practice session on Friday

FORMULA ONE
MEXICO GRAND PRIX
Mexico City, Mexico - Max Verstappen dominated practice at the Mexico Grand Prix on Friday, ending the session over a half a second ahead of world champion and title rival Lewis Hamilton.

The Dutch Red Bull driver, who has a 12-point lead over Hamilton in the championship with five races left, clocked a blistering 1min 17.301sec.

That was 0.424sec ahead of Valtteri Bottas and 0.509sec faster than Hamilton in the

second Mercedes. Red Bull's Sergio Perez, racing in front of his home fans at the spectacular Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, was fourth at 0.570sec behind his teammate.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, 1.017sec back from two-time Mexico GP winner Verstappen, filled out the top five.

"It was a solid session for us," Red Bull boss Christian Horner told Sky Sports. "Both drivers are starting to find a setup that they're liking, the short runs and long runs look reasonable." AFP

Djokovic fulfils dream in breaking Sampras' record

PARIS MASTERS
Paris, France - Novak Djokovic gained some consolation in missing out on a Grand Slam sweep this year by being crowned season-ending world No 1 for a record seventh time on Saturday.

The 34-year-old Serbian had previously jointly held the record with Pete Sampras but took sole possession when he beat Poland's Hubert Hurkacz 3-6, 6-0, 7-6 (7/5) to reach the Paris Masters final.

Djokovic had taken a seven-week break after his dreams of a Grand Slam sweep were dashed by Daniil Medvedev in the US Open final in September.

However, the 20-time Grand Slam champion said on Friday the main reason for him returning this week was to seal the number one spot and break the record.

A beaming Djokovic said it was mission achieved. "It is a dream for me as Pete was my idol when I was a young boy,"



Novak Djokovic celebrates his win over Hubert Hurkacz on Saturday

said Djokovic. "To arrive at this moment is not just my achievement but my team's, it is wonderful to be in this position. "I am m very proud to finish No 1 and what a match to do it in! It was so tight right to the last point but I am a very happy man now obviously."

Earlier on Friday, Medvedev battled past French qualifier Hugo Gaston 7-6 (9/7), 6-4 to reach the Paris Master semifinals.

Djokovic had eased into the last-four earlier on Friday,

beating American Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-3.

Medvedev's semifinal will be a repeat of last year's final. He plays Olympic champion Alexander Zverev who disposed of Norway's sixth-seeded Casper Ruud 7-5, 6-4.

Hurkacz became the eighth and final player to qualify for the ATP Finals after seeing off a stern challenge from Australian journeyman James Duckworth 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5. AFP

Every day, all day!

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

Overall it's been a disappointing campaign. It's the end of a generation, we have some guys who have done good things for T20 cricket in our team and around the world

Kieron Pollard

West Indies captain, after his team's defeat to Australia, on Saturday



ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2021

EASY FOR AUSTRALIA

Warner and Hazlewood spoil Bravo's farewell with a convincing victory over West Indies



David Warner plays a shot during his unbeaten knock of 89 against West Indies on Saturday (AFP)

GROUP ONE**AUSTRALIA VS WEST INDIES**

Abu Dhabi, UAE - As the sun set on the T20 empire of West Indies, a team full of T20 greats, one all-time great in the rival, David Warner, played a memorable knock to make a potentially tricky target look easy.

West Indies, already eliminated from the tournament, could now be asked to play the first round of the next World Cup to reach the Super 12s stage; only the top-eight teams on November 15 will get automatic entry into the Super 12s.

It was a wistful day with Dwayne Bravo definitely and Chris Gayle possibly playing their last match for West Indies. It was also a reminder of passing time that Australia's bowlers kept getting the better of them. Josh Hazlewood led with three wickets with almost Test-match-like bowling.

It took hard work from Kieron Pollard and Andre Russell to take West Indies to 157.

Warner responded with his highest World Cup score, 89 not out off 56 balls, while Mitchell Marsh lent an impressive hand with the bat to go with his tight bowling, scoring his first World Cup half-century. That they finished it off in the 17th over took their net run rate (NRR) up to 1.216. In a late match, despite South Africa defeating England by ten runs, Australia still took the second spot in Group One on better NRR and a place in semis.

Brief fearless start

West Indies with nothing to lose can be a scary proposition. Evin



Dwayne Bravo played his last T20

Lewis and Gayle gave them a taste of it, taking 19 runs in Hazlewood's first over. A trademark six over long-on, never mind a short-of-a-length slower ball, off Pat Cummins followed, but Gayle ended up playing on the next ball.

In the next over, Hazlewood made a comeback as he bashed a good length, drawing a slice to cover from Nicholas Pooran, and then dislodging the top of off, going past Roston Chase's defence. Three wickets lost for five runs, and West Indies were now forced to rebuild at 35 for three in the fourth over.

Middle-overs choke

With two left-hand batters in the middle, Glenn Maxwell got an over in before Marsh and Adam Zampa applied the choke hold. With the fourth-wicket partnership reading 35 off 35 and time running out, Lewis had to take his risks, and the Zampa wrong'un was ready to collect the wicket in the tenth over.

Hazlewood then came back in the 13th to bowl a mean bouncer at Shimron Hetmyer's armpit,

who just couldn't get out of the day, making it 91 for five.

Pollard, Russell fight

Australia were spot on with their plans and execution against the West Indies batters, giving nothing away to Bravo, but Pollard and Russell showed flashes of what made them T20 greats. Pollard ended with 44 off 31, and Russell finished the innings with successive sixes, his first of the tournament, which gave them 48 off the last four overs, and some hope.

Hosein stifles openers

That hope looked like it might amount to something, as Akeal Hosein tied Australia up with his arm balls, getting Aaron Finch out bowled in his second over. His figures at the end of his two overs read 2-0-7-1.

At the other end, though, Warner kept attacking, hitting Chase and Jason Holder in the powerplay. When he finally managed to get the better of Hosein in the sixth over, Australia were well on their way at 53 for one in eight overs.

Marsh supports

Once the powerplay ended, Australia needed runs to flow from each end, and Marsh did it for them. He began with a reverse-sweep off Hayden Walsh Jr, who had a great series against Australia a few months back, and then added a six down the ground off Hosein. Once Marsh took six, four and four off Russell in the tenth over, Australia needed just a run a ball.

A jovial end

The last two complete overs of the match went to Bravo and Gayle.

Warner switch-hit Bravo for four before pulling him for six. Gayle then bowled with his hat and sunglasses on, indulging in banter with Warner.

With possibly his last ball in international cricket, Gayle had Marsh caught at mid-off. He followed the returning Marsh and jumped on him for a hug from behind to celebrate the wicket. There were smiles and grins all around to mark much-celebrated careers.

Cricinfo

SCOREBOARD		
WEST INDIES		
C Gayle	b Cummins	15 (9)
E Lewis	c Smith b Zampa	29 (26)
N Pooran	c Marsh	
	b Hazlewood	4 (4)
R Chase	b Hazlewood	0 (2)
S Hetmyer	c Wade b Hazlewood	27 (28)
K Pollard	c Maxwell b Starc	44 (35)
D Bravo	c Warner	
	b Hazlewood	10 (22)
A Russell	not out	18 (7)
J Holder	not out	1 (1)
Extras:	(lb 6, w 3)	9
TOTAL:	157 for seven in 20 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-35, 3-35, 4-70, 5-91, 6-126, 7-143		
Bowling: M Starc 4-0-33-1, J Hazlewood 4-0-39-4, P Cummins 4-0-37-1, G Maxwell 1-0-6-0, M Marsh 3-0-16-0, A Zampa 4-0-20-1		
AUSTRALIA		
D Warner	not out	89 (56)
A Finch	b Hosein	9 (11)
M Marsh	c Holder b Gayle	53 (32)
G Maxwell	not out	0 (0)
Extras:	(lb 3, nb 1, w 6)	10
TOTAL:	161 for two in 16.2 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-157		
Bowling: A Hosein 4-0-29-1, R Chase 1.2-0-17-0, J Holder 2-0-26-0, D Bravo 4-0-36-0, H Walsh 2-0-18-0, A Russell 2-0-25-0, C Gayle 1-0-7-1		

Gayle: I want to play one more World Cup, but they won't let me

Abu Dhabi, UAE - West Indies superstar Chris Gayle effectively called time on his international career on Saturday when he admitted, "I'd love to play one more World Cup. But I don't think they will allow me."

The 42-year-old self-styled 'Universe Boss' and his West Indies team lost by eight wickets to Australia at the T20 World Cup. Dwayne Bravo, 38, confirmed he was finished with international cricket, but Gayle was still not ready to join his fellow former captain in quitting.

"It's been a phenomenal career. I didn't announce any retirement but they actually give me one game in Jamaica to go in front of my home crowd, then I can say 'hey guys, thank you so much.' Let's see," said Gayle who made his debut in the format in 2006. "If not, I'll announce it and then I'll be joining DJ Bravo in the backend and say thanks to each and everyone but I can't say that as yet."

On Saturday, Gayle was applauded on and off the pitch after clubbing two sixes in his brief stay at the wicket where he made a nine-ball 15. He raised his bat to the crowd, was embraced by all of his teammates and then delighted fans by signing countless items and shirts.

AFP

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Very happy, topping the group, we know how hard it is to get through. Finals are all about going and expressing yourselves, enjoying them, so we're going to do that

Eoin Morgan
England captain, after his team's loss, on Saturday



ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2021

BITTERSWEET WIN

South Africa exit despite winning by ten runs; England, Australia secure spot in semifinals



South Africa players celebrate a dismissal of England batsman during their Group One match in the T20 World Cup in Sharjah, UAE, on Saturday (AFP)



South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen plays a shot during his unbeaten knock of 94 against England in Sharjah on Saturday (AFP)

GROUP ONE
ENGLAND VS SOUTH AFRICA
Sharjah, UAE - Rassie van der Dussen smashed an unbeaten 94 as South Africa beat England by ten runs but failed to qualify for the semifinals of the ICC T20 World Cup on Saturday.

Group One toppers England and Australia, who beat West Indies in the first match of the day, advanced to the semifinals from the six-team group.

South Africa posted 189 for two after Van der Dussen smashed six sixes in his 60-ball knock but needed to limit England to 131 or fewer to edge out Australia on net run-rate.

England, who topped the group when they passed 109,

finished on 179 for eight after a hat-trick by Kagiso Rabada in the final over. It was England's first loss in five matches.

Pakistan are already through to the semifinals from Group Two with India, New Zealand and Afghanistan fighting for the last spot.

"The win was important, but a bittersweet ending for us," said South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma after his side finished on eight points, the same as England and Australia.

"Tough to bring net run-rate into effect in our last game, especially against a side like England."

Van der Dussen and Aiden Markram, who hit 52 off 25 balls, put on an unbeaten attacking

partnership of 103 for the third wicket to give their team a challenging total. England elected to field first and Moeen Ali struck early when he bowled Reeza Hendricks for two.

Quinton de Kock and Van der Dussen rebuilt the innings with their second-wicket stand of 71.

Adil Rashid broke the stand as he sent back De Kock out for 34 with his leg-spin.

But Van der Dussen stood firm and mixed the right dose of caution and aggression to reach his half-century in 37 balls.

He then combined with Markram to take the assault to the bowlers. The pair attacked Chris Woakes in his fourth over - the 16th of the innings, hitting

three sixes between them to add 21 runs. Markram reached his fifty off 24 balls with a six off Chris Jordan. He hit two fours and four sixes.

In reply, England started well with Jason Roy and Jos Buttler hitting boundaries in the first four overs. But Roy suffered a calf injury issue while taking a run and had to be helped off the field. "Jason Roy going down doesn't help, but we thought we were right in it throughout. Every game tests us in different ways," said England captain Eoin Morgan.

South Africa seized the opportunity and Anrich Nortje send back Buttler, for 26, in the next over. Then Tabraiz Shamsi trapped Jonny Bairstow lbw for

one. Moeen, who struck 37 off 27 balls, and Dawid Malan hit back in a partnership of 51 but Shamsi once again put the brakes. Moeen hit Shamsi for a towering six but got out next ball attempting another big one which instead went straight into the hands of David Miller.

Malan kept up the attack with Liam Livingstone, who hit Rabada for three straight sixes, to keep the chase on track despite losing his partner in the next over.

But Livingstone fell for 28 and South African bowlers took charge. Rabada sent back Chris Woakes, skipper Eoin Morgan and Chris Jordan for the tournament's third hat-trick.

AFP

GROUP ONE					
TEAM	P	W	L	PTS	NRR
ENG	5	4	1	8	+2.464
AUS	5	4	1	8	+1.216
SA	5	4	1	8	+0.739
SL	5	2	3	4	-0.269
WI	5	1	4	2	-1.641
BAN	5	0	5	0	-2.383

GROUP TWO					
TEAM	P	W	L	PTS	NRR
PAK	4	4	0	8	+1.065
NZ	4	3	1	6	+1.277
IND	4	2	2	4	+1.619
AFG	4	2	2	4	+1.481
NAM	4	1	3	2	-1.851
SCO	4	0	4	0	-3.494

AUS: Australia, BAN: Bangladesh, ENG: England, SL: Sri Lanka, SA: South Africa, WI: West Indies, AFG: Afghanistan, IND: India, NAM: Namibia, NZ: New Zealand, PAK: Pakistan, SCO: Scotland

P: Played, W: Won, L: Lost, PTS: Points, NRR: Net Run Rate

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA

R Hendricks

b Moeen Ali

2 (11)

Q de Kock

c Roy b Rashid

34 (27)

R van der Dussen

not out

94 (100)

A Markram

not out

52 (25)

Extras:

(b 1, lb 3, w 3)

7

TOTAL:

189 for two in 20 overs

Fall of wickets:

1-15, 2-86

Bowling:

Moeen Ali 4-0-27-1, C Woakes 4-0-43-0, A Rashid 4-0-32-1, C Jordan 4-0-36-0, M Wood 4-0-47-0

ENGLAND

J Roy

retired hurt

20 (15)

J Buttler

c Bavuma b Nortje

26 (15)

Moeen Ali

c Miller b Shamsi

37 (27)

J Bairstow

lbw b Shamsi

1 (1)

D Malan

c Rabada

b Pretorius

33 (26)

L Livingstone

c Miller b Pretorius

28 (17)

E Morgan

c Maharaj b Rabada

17 (12)

C Woakes

c Nortje b Rabada

7 (1)

C Jordan

c Miller b Rabada

0 (1)

A Rashid

not out

2 (2)

M Wood

not out

1 (1)

Extras:

(lb 2, nb 2, w 3)

7

TOTAL:

179 for eight in 20 overs

Fall of wickets:

1-58, 2-59, 3-110, 4-145, 5-165, 6-176, 7-176, 8-176

Bowling:

K Maharaj 3-0-23-0, A Nortje 4-0-34-1, K Rabada 4-0-48-3, T Shamsi 4-0-24-2, A Markram 2-0-18-0, D Pretorius 3-0-30-2

TODAY'S MATCHES

GROUP TWO



AFGHANISTAN VS NEW ZEALAND

Abu Dhabi (UAE), 2pm

GROUP TWO



PAKISTAN VS SCOTLAND

Sharjah (UAE), 6pm



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