



Wear a mask... always!

ISSN 2075-1575



@muscat_daily
@muscatdaily
@muscatdailyonline
@Muscat Daily



WEDNESDAY, 30 JUNE 2021
www.muscatdaily.com
Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om
To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000



45°C/34°C

JUMA ALL SET TO BE NEW OHA CHIEF

GO TO PAGE 16 SPORTS

JAB FOR 18+ FROM JULY 4

Strategic plan in place for vaccination programme in all governorates in accordance with preventive measures

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A call to expedite vaccination for everyone has been heeded by the Ministry of Health (MoH) as it announced on Tuesday the expansion of target groups to include everyone over 18 years in the National Immunisation Campaign against COVID-19.

Immunisation of the new target group will start on Sunday. A statement issued by MoH said, 'The ministry calls on the target group in all governorates to book appointments through the Tarassud + app or through <http://covid19.moh.gov.om> before heading to the approved government centres for immunisation in order to ensure a safe and accessible process for all.'

The ministry confirmed that 854,274 individuals have been vaccinated against COVID-19 since the beginning of the National Immunisation Campaign in December 2020. 'With this, 24 per cent of the target population has been vaccinated. Of the total, 643,744 have got the first dose, comprising 75 per cent of the people immunised, while 210,530 have taken both doses.'

In an interview with Oman TV on Tuesday, H E Dr Ahmed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, said, 'Unfortunately, gatherings continue and the number of COVID-19 patients is increasing.

Vaccination is not the only solution; it is one of the solutions.

"The whole world is suffering from this pandemic. I appeal to all to adhere to the precautionary measures to protect themselves and their families. I urge people to avoid social gatherings, such as weddings and funerals, to support the health sector. If the community does not adhere to the precautionary measures, the number of cases will increase."

H E Dr Sa'eedi informed that the ministry had less than 180 intensive care unit beds, "but with COVID-19, there are more than 500 patients in ICUs. There are other patients, too, who need in-

**OVER 850,000 VACCINATED;
210,530 RECEIVED TWO DOSES**

tensive care, such as road accident victims".

Citizens welcomed the decision to include the 18+ age group in the immunisation campaign on social media. Abu Walaa said the decision was necessary to protect all segments of society.

Among the flurry of activity on Twitter was citizen Ahmed's comment describing it as the "correct step to open immunisation to everyone, while spreading awareness among those hesitating to get vaccinated".

Active cases - 30,000 mark breached

Muscat - The number of active COVID-19 cases has crossed 30,000 amid a mounting challenge to control the spread of the disease that has killed 3,056 in Oman. The Ministry of Health (MoH) reported 2,234 new cases on Tuesday - one of the highest single-day case counts.

Forty-three people died on Tuesday, making it the second highest single-day death toll.

According to MoH data, there are 30,193 active cases of COVID-19 currently in Oman. Of the total number of registered cases so far - 266,536 - 233,287 individuals have recovered, while 3,056 lost their lives to the virus.

The number of admissions in hospitals and ICUs is also increasing significantly. As of Tuesday, there were 1,613 inpatients, including 525 in ICUs, following 181 new hospitalisations in a 24-hour period.



Al Rahma Association has donated oxygenators to needy families for treatment of COVID-19 at home (Supplied photo)

RO100,000 initiative launched to relieve pressure on hospitals

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a move to relieve pressure on hospitals and to help COVID-19 patients, Al Rahma Association, has launched an initiative called Shida Wa Tazool.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, an official of Al Rahma Association said, "The initiative aims to show solidarity with the community, support the efforts of the Supreme Committee in limiting the spread of COVID-19, spread positivity among frontline workers and save the lives of people infected with the virus."

The initiative is looking to raise RO100,000 to purchase oxygen concentrators. The association delivers the devices to hospitals to be given to patients in non-critical condition to help them complete treatment in their homes.

"The devices given to families who are unable to purchase

these will reduce pressure on hospitals," the association official added.

Al Rahma has already presented RO56,000 for the purchase of oxygenators for the COVID-19 department at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, and donated ten more to Sohar Hospital. It has also donated 100 shrouds to Al Khoud Cemetery.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, the association has launched more than 12 initiatives to support needy families and alleviate its impact on them."

The association is currently working to provide support to other healthcare institutions. "Anyone can donate to support the association. We also accept new oxygenators as donation, besides money to buy these devices which cost approximately RO300. The association receives any sum of money, even RO1."

The association can be reached at 9747222.

Sohar Hospital to add 30 COVID-19 beds

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The expansion of Sohar Hospital is nearing completion and it is expected to receive COVID-19 patients soon.

The first phase of expansion is being carried out to increase capacity by 30 beds for COVID-19 patients to relieve pressure on hospital facilities.

H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, visited Sohar Hospital on Tuesday to review progress of the work and the efforts exerted by healthcare workers to tackle the pandemic.

During the visit, the minister met several doctors and medical cadres working in vaccination centres and heard their suggestions to improve services pro-



H E Dr Ahmed al Sa'eedi on his visit to Sohar Hospital

vided in the hospital.

H E Dr Sa'eedi also met administrative staff of the hospital and praised their efforts in dealing with the pandemic, while expressing his concern about the current spike in infections that has exhausted healthcare workers.

The minister also urged personnel involved in the expansion work to accelerate the project.



05
OPEC+ expected to move to cool overheating oil market



13
Adawi to be flag-bearer at Tokyo Olympics

Speak in one voice against terrorism: Oman at UN meet on terror

New York, US - The sultanate has reaffirmed that terrorism affects many areas of the world and that it is a global phenomenon not inherently associated with any particular religion, belief, country or people.

This was stated in a speech by H E Dr Mohammed Awad al Hassan, Oman's permanent representative to the UN, at its second high-level conference held in New York on combating terrorism on Monday.

H E Dr Hassan added that terrorism is a global problem that requires global solutions. "Terrorism threatens the secu-

urity and stability of whole countries and its remedy lies in global solutions."

Oman called upon the international community to act unitedly, apply one criterion and speak in one voice against terrorism, avoiding double standards.

In the speech, the sultanate called for a reversal of the current stereotypical image based on prejudices and racism. It noted that these misconceptions lead to spreading negativities that are no less damaging and evil as racism, like hatred of Islam (Islamophobia), hatred of



Muslims and hatred of disciples of other religions and foreigners. "Religion has nothing to do with terrorism and terrorists represent themselves and their extremist views. No one should be carried away by extremist slo-

Religion has nothing to do with terrorism and terrorists represent themselves and their extremist views. No one should be carried away by extremist slogans promoted by some

H E DR MOHAMMED AWAD AL HASSAN

gans promoted by some," said H E Dr Hassan said in his speech.

The sultanate also called for respect of religions, sanctities and symbols of all peoples. It explained that freedom of expression does not warrant harming,

humiliating or despising others.

H E Dr Hassan pointed out that ignorance, poverty, suppression, racism, hatred and foreign occupation are all instigators of extremism and terrorism. The establishment of

justice and the propagation of social awareness are means of protection and security that need to be supported and financed by the international community through tangible steps and programmes.

He pointed out that no strategy to control terrorism could succeed unless it is based on solid foundations of respect for international law and human rights, and liberty of individuals and societies. The speech also stressed the need to secure the rights of women, children and all other segments of society.

ONA

Appeal to bolster health services to tackle pandemic



(Photo for illustrative purpose)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Hilal bin Hamad al Sarimi, chairman of the Health and Environmental Committee of Majlis A'Shura, has issued a statement on the current surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths and the urgent need to contain the situation.

Calling for setting up field hospitals in all governorates, Sarimi said, "It is necessary to provide all facilities for patients to receive treatment in every governorate and all retired healthcare workers and students of medical colleges can contribute to this national work."

He stressed on expediting the National Immunisation Campaign and said, "Provide vaccina-



Provide vaccination for all age groups within a month from now, irrespective of job, gender, age or any other criterion. We must seek the assistance of friendly and brotherly countries in providing vaccines

HILAL BIN HAMAD AL SARIMI

tion for all age groups within a month at the most from now, irrespective of job, gender, age or any other criterion. We must seek the assistance of friendly and brotherly countries in providing vaccines wherever possible."

Highlighting the need for testing centres across the sultanate for free examination and early detection of COVID-19 infection, he said, "It is not possible to control mutant strains except by targeting the source and testing these at an early stage. The pri-

vate sector can contribute to this through free examination or nominal test fee not exceeding ROS for citizens or residents."

He also called for the formation of a committee to evaluate the healthcare provided to COVID-19 patients and emergency services in hospitals. "The committee's main task should be to identify any shortcomings that led to the increase in the number of COVID-19 deaths. The committee must submit its report within two weeks to the Supreme

Committee to decide the course of action in the next stage."

With reference to the financial impact of the pandemic on people, he said bank installments must be postponed for a period of six months for those affected by the current state of the economy. "We call on all sectors to stop collecting fees and taxes from small and medium enterprises for a period of not less than a year, and look into ways of supporting and facilitating SMEs," Sarimi said.

Muscat airport welcomes first Jordan Aviation flight

Muscat - Muscat International Airport welcomed the first flight of Jordan Aviation arriving from Queen Alia International Airport on Tuesday with a traditional water cannon salute.

The flight received a warm welcome from Oman Airports officials. Jordan Aviation will operate two weekly flights between the capitals Muscat and Amman on Monday and Friday.

"This comes as a culmination of Oman Airports' efforts to attract new airlines to airports in the sultanate to reinforce direct international air traffic between the sultanate and the world, and the constant support provided for these efforts by the relevant authorities in the sultanate," Oman Airports said in a statement.

Additionally, the operation of these flights from Jordan to Muscat International Airport comes at a time of increasing demand for travel between the two countries, it said. "The new airline will



(Supplied photo)

also serve trade operations and the movement of businessmen, students and tourists of both countries."

Muscat International Airport recently obtained the Airport Council International (ACI) Airport Health Accreditation, the first airport in the Middle East to achieve this international classification. This accreditation was adopted by ACI to regulate health standards in the world's airports due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

This accreditation is proof of

the precautionary measures applied in Muscat International Airport being consistent with the best-certified international standards and as an indicator of health and safety applications and procedures according to the highest international standards.

Jordan Aviation adheres to all general safety procedures, especially concerning the epidemiological situation of COVID-19. It has vaccinated all working staff in order to maintain the health and safety of staff and passengers and ensure the safety of all.

OMAN'S ENVOY TO BURUNDI PRESENTS CREDENTIALS



Maj Gen Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, received at the presidential headquarters in Gitega Ali Abdullah al Mahrrouqi, who presented his credentials as the sultanate's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi. The ambassador conveyed greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and best wishes of good health and wellbeing to President Ndayishimiye, and further progress and prosperity to the friendly people of Burundi. On his part, President Ndayishimiye asked the ambassador to convey his greetings to His Majesty the Sultan, and his best wishes to the Omani people (ONA)

Oman, FAO to develop fisheries resources

Muscat - In cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources organised a workshop on a plan to develop and manage surface fishing resources on Monday.

The workshop, held via video-conferencing, was aimed at laying the foundation stone of the National Plan for Developing Surface Fisheries Harvesting Areas. The workshop was opened by H E Dr Saud Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The participants studied the outcome of a report on assessing mackerel commercial fishing in the Arabian Sea during the period 2019-2021.

They discussed an opportunity to study views and proposals, as well as the best practices and technologies of surface fish harvesting. The objectives of the plan were drafted, including the size and type of the desired fishing fleet.

ONA

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An announcement banning passengers from Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates entering Sri Lanka has come as bad news for expatriates of the island country residing in the sultanate.

The Tourism Ministry of Sri Lanka stated on Tuesday that passengers with a travel history in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the past two weeks will not be permitted to enter the country from July 1.

According to official sources, the decision was taken for two reasons - a surge in COVID-19

cases in the GCC countries and quarantine facilities being filled to capacity in Sri Lanka. The ban is dated till July 13 by which time the number of cases is expected to decrease enabling the Sri Lanka government to review the situation.

Roy Lasantha, president of Sri Lankan Community Social Club, said, "The situation is very challenging. There are people who made flight reservations but can't travel now." Lasantha noted that the announcement is particularly distressing for those Sri Lankan expats who had booked flights to return for good, some of who dispatched their cargo prior to their departure.

"As a club, we are currently more focused on dealing with COVID-19 patients, arranging vaccination and ICU beds. Ten Sri Lankans died of COVID-19 in Oman in the last seven days. The situation back home, too, is bad."

A Muscat-based Sri Lankan businessman said, "A couple of colleagues who were supposed to fly back home have had to reschedule their travel plans following the announcement."

Sri Lankan government rules permit only vaccinated passengers with a valid PCR test who must be under observation for one day. Non-vaccinated passengers must undergo mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine.

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE شركة برشوتم كانجي للصرافة

SEND MONEY TO UAE TO BANK ACCOUNTS

Corporate and Individual

99101314, 99849289 customersupport@pkexchange.net
www.pkexchange.com pkexch @pkexchange1

You love natural Swiss Muesli for your little ones. So do we.

Distributed by: **CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC**
Please contact +968 22060236/237

We live for Muesli. **familia**

Breast cancer menace in Oman: Early detection only way to reduce its danger

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

Cancer, which is often described as a tumultuous journey that starts at diagnosis, makes some people feel that their life is on hold. However, this feeling can be avoided by early detection and proper care, especially if related to breast cancer.

A study conducted by specialists in the sultanate shows that 33 per cent of women who suffer from breast cancer report late (usually after the disease has entered the third or fourth stage), despite the fact that they were aware that their chances of recovery depend on early diagnosis.

The study, conducted at The Royal Hospital's Centre for Breast Cancer Tumour Treatment, as well as the Cancer Treatment Unit at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, observed that breast cancer is the type of cancer that is most common in the sultanate and that it comprises 12.8 per cent of all cancer cases and 21.2 per cent of cancers afflicting women.



We need to embrace the concept of cancer prevention and control for all cancers by believing that regular examination gives early diagnosis and cure

SHAIKH SAUD
AL RAWAHI

In a chat with *Muscat Daily*, Shaikh Saud al Rawahi, advisor and vice president of Oman Cancer Association (OCA), said cancer patients and survivors need



(File photo)

to be treated like any other people. However, he said it may not be that simple as the reality is often more emotionally and physically complex; but he urged people to never give up the fight.

Rawahi, who lost his wife to the disease, said, earlier cancer was a word feared by many and often seen as terminal. "But with time and because of awareness now, it is important to remember

that more people can survive cancer than die from it. Education and awareness are important. We know cancer is tough and treatment can be tougher, but we have to keep up the fight," he said.

Narrating what he went through while helping his wife fight cancer, Rawahi said, "After my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, we had to fight it. I took her to the US where her

breasts were removed, then to India for further follow-ups, which was also done in Oman. She lived for a few years but unfortunately she passed away. But during all the time, I treated her like a normal person to not make her feel sad all the time."

To further boost awareness on cancer in Oman, especially breast cancer, OCA has two mobile mammography units that

conduct free-of-cost screening for breast cancer across the country. "These units are free for all nationalities who are above 40," Rawahi said.

"The mobile mammography Unit of OCA has been on the trial for the awareness campaign programme offering free mammograms to women over the age of 40 years. Those who are positive will be fast-tracked for treatment immediately," he added.

"In addition to the mobile mammography Unit, we have Dar al Hanan - Home Away From Home - for children with cancers, palliative care services, patients advocacy and specific awareness programmes for the community all around Oman," Rawahi said.

"We need to embrace the concept of cancer prevention and control for all cancers by believing that regular examination gives early diagnosis and cure.

"To defeat cancer, prevention and control is our goal. The association visits all 11 governorates of the sultanate to raise awareness about the deadly disease,

and educate people about how early prevention plays a major role in fighting cancer," Rawahi said.

OCA, which has won many accolades, was supposed to hold a memorable and historically landmark event for Oman - hosting the UICC World Cancer Leaders Summit and the World Cancer Congress, but the COVID-19 pandemic hampered the event.

On the pandemic situation, Rawahi said, "We have to learn to live with it. My three daughters and my brothers and their wives contracted the virus. We need to take extra care about our behaviours. I am totally against those people who hold social events during this time. We have to learn to live without such activities."

He said that cancer patients are advised to avoid crowded places, be cautious when they attend hospital for visits and treatments and have no contact with friends and relatives with COVID-19 symptoms.

@shadadm

Korea confers diplomatic award on former Omani envoy

Muscat - On behalf of Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, H E Kim Chang-kyu, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the sultanate, conferred on June 28, the Order of Diplomatic Service Merit, Gwanghwa Medal on Mohammed bin Salim al Harthy, former Ambassador of the sultanate to the Republic of Korea.

Retired Ambassador Harthy served more than a decade in Seoul, from December 2009 to December 2019. He was elected chairman of the Korea-Arab Society (KAS) in 2016 and served two consecutive terms until 2019. Also, Harthy was the dean of Diplomatic Corps in Korea from 2016 to 2019.

Against this backdrop, the Gwanghwa Medal was presented to Harthy in recognition of and appreciation for his outstanding and meritorious services rendered towards the promotion of friendly relations between the Republic of Korea and the Sultanate of Oman.

During the awarding ceremony, H E Kim praised the unprecedented role of Harthy in widening the scope of the cooperative partnership between the two countries. In return, Harthy reiterated the importance of the bilateral relations and expressed



(Supplied photo)

Retired Ambassador Mohammed bin Salim al Harthy served more than a decade in Seoul, from December 2009 to December 2019

his appreciation for the Korean government in supporting his services in Korea.

The awarding ceremony was held in the premises of the Korean Embassy and was attended by family members of Harthy as well as senior officials of the For-

eign Ministry of the sultanate, including Humaid bin Ali al Maani, chief of Global Department, H E Zakaria bin Hamad al Saadi, Ambassador of the sultanate to Korea, and also Protocol Department's representative.

MoSD launches electronic library

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed bin Awad al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, inaugurated an 'electronic library' in the official website of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), on Tuesday.

The library displays several titles of books, studies, reports, research papers, theses and short films prepared by the ministry



H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar

during the past and current years. The library aims to save effort and time for researchers

to access these studies and research.

The library also aims to keep pace with the requirements of the times and new generations to spread knowledge and culture.

The library includes the ministry's first digital content search engine, which facilitates the process of accessing information in a manner consistent with international standards by organising content in the digital environment.

ROP NEWS

ROP arrests fraudster posing as bank employee

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police (ROP) on Tuesday arrested an expatriate on charges of fraud and for allegedly posing as a bank employee.

"The criminal method was that the victim transferred a sum of money through one of the exchange houses, after which he received a phone call from the exchange employee, pretending that he was an employee of the bank he was dealing with," the Economic Crimes Control Department of ROP said.

According to ROP, the suspect asked him to update the bank card to facilitate his transfer of funds abroad and to give him the OTP number that he received via text message at that mo-



ment, which enabled the accused to debit large sums of money from the victim's account.

ROP cautioned the public against falling prey to such scams, and to be careful of calls asking for personal details.

Oman takes part in 23rd AGFUND meeting

Muscat - The sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, took part in the 23rd meeting of the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND) on Tuesday.

Held via video conferencing, the sultanate was represented in the meeting by Mohammed Ahmed al Mahrouqi, director general of Planning and Studies in the ministry. The participants approved the minutes of the 22nd meeting, besides reviewing the achievements made during the first half of 2021.

ONA

The globally respected English test

IDP IELTS Oman 2021 test dates

June	July	August	September
Sat 05	Thu 01	Sat 07	Sat 04
Sat 12	Sat 10	Thu 12	Sat 11
Thu 17	Sat 17	Sat 21	Thu 16
Sat 19	Sat 24	Sat 28	Sat 25

October	November	December
Sat 09	Sat 06	Thu 02
Thu 14	Thu 11	Sat 04
Sat 23	Sat 20	Sat 11
Sat 30	Sat 27	Sat 18

• IELTS (AC) • IELTS (GT) • UKVI (AC)

Book your IELTS test now:
www.idpielts.me
www.ielts.idp.com/oman
+968 24 091 800
ielts.oman@idp.com

Computer-delivered IELTS test schedule 7 days a week

For more information, visit: www.idpielts.me/oncomputer

SalamAir to fly to Sarajevo from July 12



Muscat - Spreading its wings to Western Europe, sultanate's fastest-growing value-for-money airline, SalamAir, has announced direct flights from Muscat to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sarajevo is one of the world's emerging tourist destinations with an 'East meets West' modern culture and is also designated as a Unesco Creative City.

With the launch of direct services to Sarajevo, SalamAir has introduced its fourth summer destination for 2021 giving its passengers from the sultanate an additional choice apart from its three other summer destinations announced as Istanbul, Trabzon, and Shiraz.

From July 12, the new link will



initially operate once a week to Sarajevo on Monday, departing Muscat at 4.15pm local time and arriving in Sarajevo at 8.25pm local time. The return flight will depart Sarajevo at 9.10pm local time and arrive in Muscat at 5.10am local time.

Capt Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, said, "We are extremely happy to announce Sarajevo as our fourth summer destination and to have added our first Western European des-

With visa-free entry for Omani and other GCC nationals, I believe Sarajevo as our other three summer destinations Istanbul, Trabzon, and Shiraz will be extremely appealing for travel

CAPT MOHAMED AHMED

tinuation to our network.

"We are constantly listening to our passengers and providing them with the best and safest travel options," he added.

"With visa-free entry for Omani and other GCC nationals, plus with no quarantine requirements, I believe Sarajevo as our other three summer destinations Istanbul, Trabzon and Shiraz will be extremely appealing for travel," the SalamAir chief said.

"Passengers' safety remains

our utmost priority and as an airline, we are taking all precautions and our operations are subject to strict adherence to the instructions issued by the Civil Aviation Authority and other COVID-19 related guidelines issued by the local and foreign authorities," Capt Ahmed said.

SalamAir currently operates six brand new Airbus A320Neo aircraft making it the first Omani carrier to utilise the highly rated single-aisle aircraft.

British School principal recognised as HPL fellow

Muscat - Kai Vacher, principal of British School Muscat, was recognised as an 'HPL fellow' on June 29 by Professor Deborah Eyre, founder and chair of High Performance Learning.

HPL Fellow status recognises Vacher's sustained advocacy and commitment to the High Performance Learning (HPL) philosophy and framework and celebrates the exceptional contribution he has made to leadership in a global context, the school said.

'High Performance Learning develops the essential skills, values, attitudes and attributes needed to reach success, both in school and beyond. Students learn how to succeed through the use of a consistent educational language that is shared be-



Kai Vacher

tween students and teachers; it enables students to think flexibly and creatively while developing the capability to self-regulate when things don't go to plan. This provides students with life-long skills to be high performing learners.'

Professor Deborah said, "As an ambassador for High Per-

formance Learning, Kai has led by example and set the highest expectations for what education can be, resulting in his school successfully achieving HPL World Class School status."

Vacher said, "I am honoured to receive such recognition from Professor Deborah Eyre, a global leader in education research and thinking. I look forward to continuing to work with Professor Eyre to systematise and optimise the impact of HPL within my school and to showcase my work with other HPL principals to demonstrate a re-imagined version of educational excellence. We are confident that together we can transform the educational landscape and ensure that high performance becomes the educational norm for all children."

Pact signed to raise awareness on intellectual property among students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education and the Omani Society for Intellectual Property signed a memorandum of cooperation on Tuesday to raise awareness on intellectual property among school students, and provide free consultations to those wishing to register their innovations and ideas.

The memorandum was signed by H E Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary for education in the Ministry of Education, and Dr Abdulwahab bin Nasser al Mandhari, vice chairman of the Omani Society for Intellectual Property's Board of Directors.



Dr Mia bint Saeed al Azaria, director of the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiad, said, "This agreement will enhance the ministry's role in raising awareness on intellectual property rights, by benefiting

from local community institutions in providing expertise and advice related to intellectual property for students, and organising joint events with the aim of serving innovators among school students."

oman OASIS
BALANCED DRINKING WATER

WIN GOLD

Total 1061 PRIZES!

- Buy Oman Oasis 1.5L or 500ML Carton
- Scratch the coupon to find your unique code
- Register the code at www.omanoasis.com/wingold

22 Carat 100 GM Gold Bar 1 No.	22 Carat 50 GM Gold Bar 2 Nos.
22 Carat 25 GM Gold Bar 8 Nos.	22 Carat 4 GM Gold Coin 250 Nos.

Shopping Voucher worth RO 10 300 Nos.

24 pieces of 500ML Oman Oasis Water 500 Nos.

Offer valid from 16th May 2021 to 15th August 2021. Total of 3 raffle draws will be held at Oasis Water Company, Aziba. Draw Dates: 16th June 2021, 18th July 2021 and 15th August 2021. Winners will be intimated directly. Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Gifts shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary.

OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOC
PO Box 87, Rusayl 124, Sultanate of Oman.
www.omanoasis.com

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

Scan QR Code to Register

CR No: 1365452 RM No: 06/493/2021

Our WhatsApp number has changed

Get your latest news update on WhatsApp

91953774

Save this number to your contact list.
Send 'start' to receive news update



MUSCAT DAILY

Sports ministry to organise youth photo competition

Muscat - The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth will organise a youth photography competition for the 16-21 age category.

The competition comes in preparation for the 40th International Biennial Contest of Photography, scheduled to be organised by the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) in Belgium this year.

The ministry has invited the targeted segment to participate in the competition, which aims to encourage young photographers and



sharpen their skills in photography to qualify them for international participation in youth competitions around the world.
ONA

REGIONAL WEATHER			PRAYER TIMINGS	
	Max	Min		
Abu Dhabi	41	29	Fajr	5.53am
Doha	44	30	Sunrise	5.23am
Kuwait City	46	32	Duhr	12.10pm
Manama	43	30	Asr	3.28pm
Riyadh	45	29	Maghrib	6.57pm
			Isha	8.27pm

sifr
SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

Eid Offer

BUY & WIN 310 Prizes

Get 1 Raffle Coupon for every RO 20 spent. Buy from any of the offers (RO 50 or RO 20) or buy a coupon book worth minimum of RO 20.

10 NOS. 22 CARAT 8 GMS GOLD COIN	20 NOS. 22 CARAT 4 GMS GOLD COIN
200 NOS. 10 SIFR 5 GALLON WATER COUPONS	80 NOS. LULU GIFT VOUCHERS WORTH RO 10

Offer valid from 1st May 2021 to 31st July 2021. Total of 3 raffle draws will be held at Oasis Water Company, Aziba. Draw Dates: 1st June 2021, 1st July 2021 and 2nd August 2021. Winners will be intimated directly. Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Gifts shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary.

oman OASIS
BALANCED DRINKING WATER

CR No: 1365452 RM No: 06/493/2021

Register your raffle coupon number at www.omanoasis.com/eid2021 to win.

Oasis Water Co. SAOC
PO Box 87, Rusayl 124, Sultanate of Oman.
www.omanoasis.com

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

OPEC+ expected to move to cool overheating oil market

London, UK – The OPEC+ group of oil-producing countries will meet on Thursday and are expected to agree to boost production in August in order to meet demand and dampen recent price rises.

While improvement in demand drove the group's most recent rises in production, now price levels will also be a guiding force behind the club's decisions.

After demand dropped when the coronavirus pandemic broke out last year and crude prices briefly turned negative, the club led by Saudi Arabia and Russia imposed sharp production cuts in order to raise prices.

The 13 members of OPEC and their 10 allies in the OPEC+ grouping were rewarded by seeing prices for the two contracts of reference, Brent and WTI, recover to around US\$75 per barrel, levels not seen since October 2018.

However that strategy has worked almost too well and the group is currently following a policy of cautiously turning the taps back on.

'Rising pressures'

While on the face of it buoyant prices are a boon for producers – and some of them will be pushing to increase output to cash in – there are also risks.

Russia is expected to favour increasing output, as it has done



at several recent OPEC+ meetings.

"Moscow may be more inclined to support a production increase in order to ensure a higher market share while limiting the risk of rising non-OPEC production," according to Ole Hansen from Saxobank.

"Pressure will likely not only come from within the group, but there will also be growing calls from key consumers to cool the market down, as countries come out of the other side of COVID-19 lockdowns," says Warren Patterson of ING bank.

India is a notable example. The world's third-largest con-

sumer of crude has been hit by a vicious coronavirus wave in recent months and has urged OPEC+ 'to phase out crude output cuts to temper rising inflationary pressures', noted Stephen Brennock from PVM.

"If prices remain this high, this will eat into consumers' disposable incomes and potentially choke economic growth, which, over time, will weigh on crude prices," explained Fawad Razaqada of Thinkmarkets.

The OPEC+ states have left themselves some room for manoeuvre as they are currently still planning to leave 5.8mn barrels per day (bpd) of crude in the

ground over the month of July that they could easily extract and sell.

Most investors are currently expecting a modest rise of some 500,000 bpd over the month of August. But OPEC+ always has the capacity to surprise.

The outlook for crude demand has been steadily improving in recent months.

In its last report in mid-June, the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecast that global demand would outstrip pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2022.

As ever in recent months, the OPEC will have to pay attention to diplomatic developments relating to one of its members in particular – Iran.

If current negotiations at a US return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are successful, the country may be able to resume exporting oil at levels prior to 2018, when former US President Donald Trump dramatically withdrew from the deal and imposed sanctions.

However, this would be unlikely to affect the market until later in the year and there are plenty of other factors at play.

Since December the OPEC+ countries have been meeting every month in order to calibrate their strategy as closely as possible to the latest developments.

AFP

MoCIIP grants powers to OPAZ in Invest Easy portal

Muscat – The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) on Tuesday signed a technical cooperation programme.

The programme was signed by H E Dr Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry at MoCIIP, and Eng Ahmed Hassan al Dheeb, deputy chairman of OPAZ.

According to the cooperation programme, the powers of all electronic services, provided by MoCIIP via the Invest Easy portal, will be granted to the One-Stop Shop in the special economic zones and free zones.

This cooperation programme aims to facilitate and simplify the procedures for investors to obtain all the approvals, permits and licenses necessary for their investment projects from the



One-Stop Shop and within a specific period of time. It also serves in forming a system of integrated services for investors to create added values and a business environment that attracts investments in the sultanate.

The programme intends to raise the standard of services provided to investors by fast-tracking and simplifying procedures and consolidating relations with the relevant partners.

The cooperation programme

between MoCIIP and OPAZ is in line with efforts accorded to develop the national economy, provide an attractive environment for investments, grant the necessary licenses to engage in various economic activities, create a sustainable environment and build continuous cooperation. Accordingly, this supports achieving the objectives of digital transformation, the government's directives and Oman Vision 2040.

ONA

Lebanon hikes fuel prices by 30% to shore up forex reserves

Beirut, Lebanon – Lebanon hiked fuel prices by more than 30 per cent Tuesday as it reduced subsidies that have eaten away at the central bank's foreign currency reserves (forex) amid a painful economic crisis.

Petrol and diesel prices went up sharply, according to a revised price list published by the official National News Agency (NNA), in a week when a steep currency devaluation sparked angry street protests.

The sharp fuel price rises came as Lebanon, a small country of six million people, grapples with an economic crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the world's worst since the mid-19th century.

The Lebanese pound – which has been pegged to the dollar at 1,507 since 1997 – sold for more than 17,000 to the greenback on



Scooter motorists queue for fuel outside a petrol station in Beirut (AFP)

the black market this week, a record low.

The price of 20 litres of 95-octane petrol shot up nearly 16,000 Lebanese pounds (US\$10.6 at the official rate) to reach 61,000 pounds (US\$40.6), according to NNA.

The price of the same amount of 98-octane petrol climbed by 16,300 pounds (US\$10.8) to reach nearly 63,000 pounds (US\$42).

Meanwhile, the price of diesel

reached 46,100 pounds (US\$30.7), up from 33,300 pounds (US\$22.2).

The new prices came after weeks of long queues at petrol stations that had started rationing gasoline and diesel fuel amid shortages.

Fuel importers blamed the crisis on a delay by the central bank in opening credit lines to fund fuel imports due to depletion of foreign currency reserves.

AFP

Indonesia's PJB looking to expand in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A leading Indonesian power company PT Pembangunan Jawa Bali (PJB) is seeking opportunities to expand its operations in Oman and the Middle East markets.

The Indonesian embassy in Muscat on Monday hosted a virtual meeting with PJB to present investment potential in Oman's

energy sector, especially in electricity. This meeting was a follow-up to the Indonesia-Oman Business Forum webinar organised by the Indonesian embassy on June 17, according to a press statement issued by the embassy. In his remarks during the webinar, Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals H E Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhi invited Indonesian companies to

invest in the sultanate's energy sector.

'As part of its global vision, PJB is seeking the opportunity to expand its business overseas, including in the Middle East. PJB is keen to share its expertise, especially in operation and maintenance of the power generation plants,' the Indonesian embassy's statement said.

Indonesia's ambassador to

Oman Mohamad Irzan Djohan convinced PJB's president Gong Matua Hasibuan about the support and readiness of the Indonesian embassy in Muscat to help the company to achieve its vision in Oman. With the sultanate's growing economy and rising power demand, Oman's power transmission and distribution infrastructure is expected to witness significant growth.

TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) Announce the following Tender:

Sr.No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Closing Date	Grade	Tender Document's Fees (Including VAT) (RO)
1	32/2021 (Extended)	Supply and Installation of IT Infrastructure Monitoring Solution with 3 Years AMC	05/07/2021	13/07/2021	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate.	39.380

Participation:	Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity of sending a valid Tender Board certificate in the same required field.
Buying the Tender:	The documents required for the purchase of the tender are sent by e-mail to the Tenders, Procurement and Contracts Department, to ensure the authenticity of the documents before purchasing the tender through the official working days of the hour from 8.00 am - 01.00 pm.
Fees:	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document.(Payment Through Bank Transfer)
The deadline for clarification:	Before (21) Days from closing date.
Submission:	Each bid should be submitted in a separate sealed envelope addressed to The Chairman of tender committee mentioning Tender Number and Name on the top of the envelope.
Terms and conditions:	- No other writing or any reference thereto should be mentioned on the envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from closing date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from closing date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). - Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted. - OETC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offers.
Offer:	The complete bid documents should be deposited in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address:	Muscat - Al Mawaleh Road No: 2153 - Building No. 423 O Block No: 321 - Contact Details: 91777378
Email Website:	tenders@omangrid.com www.omangrid.com

إعلان طرح مناقصات

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن طرح المناقصة التالية :

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	لن الوثيقة (شامل ضريبة القيمة المضافة) (دع)
١	٢٠٢١/٣٢ (تجديد)	توريد وتركيب نظام مراقبة البنية التحتية لتكنولوجيا المعلومات مع عقد صيانة لمدة ثلاث سنوات	٢٠٢١/٠٧/٠٥	٢٠٢١/٠٧/١٣	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال المسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول.	٣٩/٣٨٠

الاشتراك	يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات المتخصصة الحصول على مستندات المناقصة مع ضرورة إرسال شهادة مجلس المناقصات سارية المفعول وفي نفس المجال المطلوب.
طريقة الشراء	يتم إرسال المستندات المطلوبة لشراء المناقصة عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني إلى دائرة المناقصات والمشتريات والعقود . وذلك لتأكيد من صحة المستندات قبل شراء المناقصة وذلك من خلال أيام العمل الرسمية من الساعة ٨:٠٠ ص - ١:٠٠ م .
الرسوم	مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد أعلاه للنسخة الواحدة - لا ترد . (الدفع عن طريق التحويل البنكي)
آخر موعد للإستفسارات	قبل (٢١) يوم من تاريخ آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات
تقديم العروض	تقدم العروض في مغلفات مغلقة ومعونة بإسم رئيس لجنة المناقصات مع تحديد رقم وعنوان المناقصة فقط.
الشروط و الضمانات	- عدم تحديد اسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه على المغلف. - أن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوما من تاريخ تقديم العطاء. - إرفاق تأميناً في صورة ضمان مصرفي من أحد البنوك العاملة في البلاد قدره (١٪) من قيمة العطاء ساري لمدة (٩٠) يوما من تاريخ تقديم العطاء . ومعنونا بإسم الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء . - كل عطاء لا يستوفي التأمين المطلوب لن ينظر فيه . - الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مقيدة بقبول أقل العروض أو أي عطاء آخر.
العرض المقدم	يجب وضع العروض في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) بمبنى الشركة قبل الساعة ١١ صباحاً من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات .
عنوان الشركة	عنوان الشركة: محافظة مسقط - الموالج رقم السكة ٢١٥٣ - مبنى رقم ٤٢٣ - تفاصيل التواصل - ٩١٧٧٧٣٧٨
البريد الإلكتروني	tenders@omangrid.com
الموقع الإلكتروني	www.omangrid.com



Oman Electricity Transmission Company S.A.O.C.
P.O. Box 1389, Al Khoudh, PC 132, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2428 3000 | Fax: +968 2230 9046
www.omangrid.com



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش. م. ع. م
ص. ب : ١٣٨٩. الخوض الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢. سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : +٩٦٨٢٤٣٨٠٠٠ / الفاكس : +٩٦٨٢٣٠٩٠٤٦
الموقع الإلكتروني : **www.omangrid.com**



MSX closes flat; volumes rise

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Tuesday remained almost flat closing at 4,058.08 points compared with 4,057.50 points on Monday.

The marginal gain in main index on Tuesday was supported by Financial Index and Services Index which rose by 0.33 per cent and 0.27 per cent, respectively. Industrial Index, however, dropped 0.30 per cent for the day. MSX Sharia Index increased 0.41 per cent to close at 593.20 points.

Trading activity increased on Tuesday as volumes rose 17.8 per cent at 40.68mn securities compared with 34.52mn securities traded on Monday. Market turnover increased by 20 per cent to RO4.9mn compared with RO4.09mn in the previous trading session.

Market breadth at the MSX remained



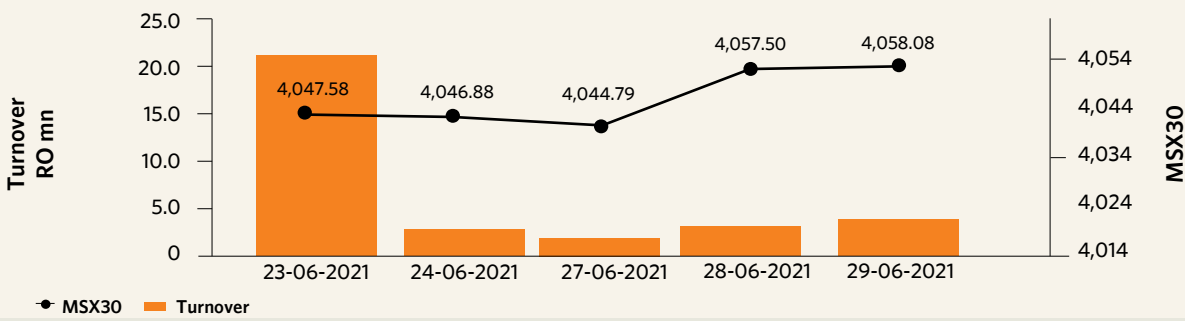
positive with 24 advancing stocks to 11 decliners. As many as 28 traded stocks remained flat for the day.

Top gainers were Dhofar Insurance (9.38 per cent), Oman Aluminium Production (8.13 per cent), Vision Insurance (6.98 per cent), Arabia Falcon Insurance

(6.9 per cent) and Shell Oman Marketing (4.44 per cent).

Top losers were Gulf International Chemicals (-3.57 per cent), Voltamp Energy (-3.29 per cent), Dhofar Generating (-1.5 per cent) and Al Anwar Ceramic (-1.27 per cent).

MSX INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



Global spending in mobile apps and games surges to new high: Survey

San Francisco, US - App revenue from mobile phone users around the world climbed to new heights in the first half of this year, nearly reaching US\$65bn, market tracker Sensor Tower said Monday.

Apple and Google saw their respective mobile app shops thrive as the Silicon Valley giants remained under fire for the power they wield at their respective marketplaces.

Preliminary figures from Sensor Tower indicate that US\$64.9bn was spent across the App Store and Google Play in the first six months of this year in a 25 per cent jump from the same period in 2020.

Sensor Tower projected that US\$41.5bn would be spent at Apple's App Store during the first half of this year on subscriptions and apps, including in-app purchases such as virtual items for game characters.

Google Play was expected to generate a total of US\$23.4bn in revenue by the end of June.

Video-snippet sharing sensation TikTok was the top grossing



non-game mobile app, with users spending more than US\$920mn in an increase of 74 per cent from the first six months of last year, according to Sensor Tower.

Google-owned video streaming platform YouTube was the second biggest non-game revenue generator, with users spending some US\$565mn there, the market tracker estimated.

Globally, spending in mobile games hit US\$44.7bn in the first half of this year, up nearly 18 per cent from the same period in 2020, according to Sensor Tower.

'While consumer spending in mobile games is growing at a slower clip than last year, this doesn't indicate a downturn for the industry but rather a normalization after the surge in interest during the extraordinary circum-

stances of the COVID-19 pandemic,' Sensor Tower said in a post.

Chinese internet titan Tencent had the top grossing mobile game, Honor of Kings, which generated more than US\$1.5bn in the first half of this year, according to the market tracker.

The survey shows the growing importance of the so-called 'app economy' and comes amid criticism over the tight control of the two large marketplaces by Apple and Google.

The Sensor Tower figures were released as a federal court mulls evidence presented during a trial in which Epic Games is trying to break Apple's tight grip on its App Store, and potentially disrupt the entire mobile ecosystem.

Epic, maker of the popular Fortnite video game, is seeking to force Apple to open up the App Store to third parties seeking to circumvent Apple's procedures payment systems and its commission as high as 30 per cent in the process.

AFF

United Airlines unveils huge jet order in bet on travel recovery

New York, US - United Airlines announced Tuesday a huge new plane order with Boeing and Airbus in the biggest bet thus far by a major carrier on a travel industry recovery from COVID-19.

The US carrier plans to acquire 270 new planes consisting of 200 Boeing aircraft and 70 Airbus jets. The order would be valued at US\$35.4bn based on the listed price of the jets, although airlines often end up paying much less than the list price.

United executives described the order - the biggest in the airline's history - as a landmark moment symbolizing the radically improved outlook for travel due to coronavirus vaccines.

Still, United and other major airlines are expected to report another quarterly loss for the April-June period when they release their earnings reports in July, reflecting the continued drag of a travel crisis that has devastated travel revenue for more than a year.

United's business travel volumes are still down 60 per cent, with international travel off even more, said United chief executive Scott Kirby.

"We're not back to 100 per cent," Kirby said on a conference call with reporters in which he outlined how the company leaders had strategized on its needs early in the pandemic.

"Because we accurately mapped out the trajectory of the crisis in March and April of last year, it's really allowed us to be prepared and make the right short- and long-term decisions," he said.

Company officials were not



asked about the so-called Delta virus variant - which is spreading rapidly in many parts of the world - during the hour-long conference call, but the announcement illustrates broad confidence in the industry's prospects even as the pandemic evolves.

The biggest component of the order will be 150 of Boeing's new 737 MAX 10, which is still undergoing tests in a process closely monitored by US regulators. The announcement is a victory for Boeing's jet, which was grounded for 20 months following two deadly crashes.

The other two components are 50 Boeing 737 MAX 8 and 70 Airbus A321neo.

All three models are narrow-body jets, making them well-suited for domestic and shorter-distance trips that have been among the first to see passenger numbers recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are truly humbled by United Airlines' confidence in the people of Boeing and the airplanes we design and build every day," said Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial

Airplanes.

"Such a significant order from a great airline like United underscores that the A321neo offers unmatched capabilities, operating economics, and passenger friendliness," said Christian Scherer, Airbus chief commercial officer. Both the Airbus model and the next-generation 737 MAX are bigger than earlier versions of the same aircraft, a feature especially beneficial for increasing capacity in New York, San Francisco and other markets where adding more flights is difficult or impossible, United officials said.

United officials made clear during the conference call that they have seen very recent signs of an acceleration in business travel bookings, with firms eager to resume client visits as they see their competitors returning to the skies.

Executives also said they were bullish about international travel, speaking of the summer of 2022 as being a 'record breaker' as US consumers make up for lost opportunities during the pandemic to visit Europe and Asia.

AFF

Big US banks reward shareholders

New York, US - Some of the United States' biggest banks have announced that they would pay tens of billions of dollars to shareholders in dividend increases and stock buybacks after getting the go-ahead from the US Federal Reserve.

The Fed lifted some Covid-era restrictions on banks last week as they proved able to successfully weather changing economic circumstances.

In response, investment bank Morgan Stanley decided to double the amount it pays per share from the third quarter onward, and announced a share buyback

program of up to US\$12bn by the end of June 2022.

"Morgan Stanley has accumulated significant excess capital over the past several years and now has one of the largest capital buffers in the industry," CEO James Gorman said in a statement Monday. The largest US bank in terms of assets, JP-Morgan Chase, has said it plans to raise its dividends by a more modest 11 per cent.

And Bank of America, which announced a US\$25bn buyback program in March, said it would increase its dividends by 17 per cent, while investment giant

Goldman Sachs said it would increase dividends by a heftier 60 per cent. Citigroup said it would leave dividends unchanged for now. The Fed banned the country's largest banks from engaging in share buyback programs and had capped shareholder dividend payouts during the coronavirus pandemic, saying they needed to conserve capital during the crisis.

Begun at the start of the pandemic, the measure was originally only supposed to last until December 2020, but was extended until March 31 and then again until the end of this month.

AFF

Facebook surpasses \$1tn market value for the first time

Washington, US - A US judge on Monday dismissed the blockbuster antitrust action against Facebook filed last year by federal and state regulators, helping lift the value of the social media giant above US\$1tn for the first time.

Judge James Boasberg of the US District Court of Washington, DC dismissed the cases filed in December by the Federal Trade Commission and more than 40 states, which could have rolled back Facebook's acquisition of Instagram and the messaging platform WhatsApp.

The federal lawsuit 'failed to plead enough facts to plausibly establish a necessary element... that Facebook has monopoly power in the market for personal social networking services,' the judge said in a 53-page opinion, while allowing authorities the opportunity to refile the case.

In lawsuits filed in December

that were consolidated in federal court, US and state officials called for the divestment of Instagram and WhatsApp, arguing that Facebook had acted to 'entrench and maintain its monopoly to deny consumers the benefits of competition.'

The judge issued a separate opinion dismissing the case by the states, saying attorneys general had waited too long to bring the case for the acquisition of Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014.

The judge said the FTC complaint 'says almost nothing concrete on the key question of how much power Facebook actually had... it is almost as if the agency expects the court to simply nod to the conventional wisdom that Facebook is a monopolist.'

The federal agency based its case on a 'vague' assertion that Facebook controlled more than 60 per cent of the social net-



working market, but the FTC 'does not even allege what it is measuring.'

Boasberg wrote that 'the market at issue here is unusual in a number of ways, including that

the products therein are not sold for a price... the court is thus unable to understand exactly what the agency's '60 per cent-plus' figure is even referring to, let alone able to infer the underlying

facts that might substantiate it.'

Still he ruled that 'this defect could conceivably be overcome by re-pleading,' allowing the federal agency the possibility of re-filing the action.

Facebook shares surged after the decision, lifting the company's market valuation above US\$1tn for the first time.

'We compete fairly'

In a statement, the company said, 'We are pleased that today's decisions recognize the defects in the government complaints filed against Facebook. We compete fairly every day to earn people's time and attention and will continue to deliver great products for the people and businesses that use our services.'

The ruling comes a week after a US congressional panel advanced legislation that would lead to a sweeping overhaul of antitrust laws and give more power to regulators to break up large tech firms, specifically aiming at Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple.

The actions come amid growing concerns on the power of

major tech firms, which have increasingly dominated key economic sectors and have seen steady growth during the pandemic.

Critics of Facebook said the rulings highlight the need to revise antitrust laws for the internet age.

"This is a setback - not the end - in the FTC's fight against dominant Big Tech monopolies like Facebook," said Charlotte Slaiman of the consumer group Public Knowledge.

"The FTC should continue this important work, as the judge has indicated the agency can still file a new complaint if it can address these concerns. At the same time, Congress' ongoing work to pass new laws and rules to address the power of Big Tech, as well as broader antitrust reforms, is now especially important and urgent."

AFF

Sohar International extends vaccination drive to family members of its employees

Complimenting the extensive efforts of our esteemed government and playing its corporate social role within the community, Sohar International concluded the first phase of its COVID-19 vaccination drive for employees extending the vaccination to staff first grade family members.

Not only will this significant initiative play a positive role in the overall community increasing the percentage of citizens being vaccinated, but it also plays a vital role in ensuring that our people and staff have a safer environment to work in.

Highlighting the importance of this initiative, Ahmed al Musalmi, chief executive officer of Sohar International, said, "We appreciate the significant efforts of the government in minimising the pandemic spread in the sultanate. As a socially responsible financial institution, it is necessary and a national duty to extend our support to the community and our staff.

"Our employees are our most valuable asset and we understand that it's important for them

to feel safe not just for themselves, but also for their family members.

"This underlines our extensive efforts towards also providing vaccination to family of every individual in the Sohar International team. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have stayed committed to the cause of the community in which we operate by adopting precautionary measures within our premises to ensure our services are delivered uninterrupted to our valued customers, while safeguarding the health and well-being of our employees, stakeholders, and the nation at large.

"This continues to remain our priority during challenging times, and we are sure that as a bank, and as a country, we will emerge stronger post pandemic."

The first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive took place at the bank's headquarters located in the Waterfront Building in Shatti al Qurm, Muscat. The two-day agenda witnessed a large number of attendance from



staff located within the region alongside their spouses. The first phase of the vaccina-

tion drive has also begun to accommodate staff and their spouse located in the various re-

gions of the sultanate in collaboration with Badr al Samaa branches spread across the

country. In its endeavour to make a difference, Sohar International has also extended this vaccination drive to include staff first degree relatives in a bid to ensure further safety of the community we are part of and serve.

Commenting on the internal vaccination drive, Mahira Saleh al Raisi, chief human resource officer at Sohar International said, "The health and safety of employees is of utmost priority at Sohar International as they are the key drivers of success for the Bank. We aim at providing a safe working environment for our employees as they are the most valuable assets in driving the bank's growth strategy.

"Nurturing our employees and offering them with a seamless and motivating environment is an integral part of our strategy, mainly during the current challenging times.

"The bank has taken this great stride to provide the required comfort to its team members as part of their wellbeing, thus ensuring they are motivated to deliver on the bank's promise."

Sohar International continues to play a meaningful role in nurturing a sustainable society, by ensuring the supply of basic necessities to severely impacted sections.

In support of its customers and the community at large, the bank has committed up to RO1.5mn to relieve affected customers from their personal loans, which was received very positively from the customers as well as the society.

Furthermore, in collaboration with Ministry of Labour, Sohar International announced its commitment in providing 200 Omanis a stepping-stone into the professional world by enrolling them into a two-year Training and Development programme.

The programme will entail extensive on-the-job experience, along with an attractive monthly pay.

Committed to dispose its social responsibility with diligence and for this purpose, the bank understands the importance of being human especially in such market conditions.

Easy, flexible bill payment solutions from Khedmah

Oman Investments and Finance Company's pioneering payment solution provider - Khedmah - aspires to enrich user experience by providing hassle-free and flexible services that are not only for individuals, but for corporates too. This comes as part of the company's constant efforts to diversify the scope of its services and target various segments of the community.

Through its website, Khedmah provides a dedicated platform known as 'Corporate Relations and Recovery Cell' that delivers customised services to corporate clients. These services include paying and tracking electricity, water, telecommunication and internet bills from different service providers, such as, Awasr, Omantel and Ooredoo. Corporate clients can also recharge their phone, electricity prepaid meter and pay the dues of Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI).

The unified billing platform on the website allows customers to create a unique account that has all their account numbers of electricity, water, telecommunications, Internet and PASI on it. The aim of the portal is to facilitate tracking multiple bills in a billing cycle, knowing the outstanding balance and process all payments with a push of a button, at no additional costs.

Furthermore, the corporate cell ensures timely delivery of bills through E-bill service that facilitates receipt of bills automatically in the Corporate Customer's designated email account. It also provides easier payment options such as bank transfer into OIFC's designated bank accounts, Khedmah branches, Khedmah phone app, website and kiosks. Khedmah also arranges for the collection of payments from the company door step with a POS machine in case if they wish to pay using a debit/credit card.

In order to easily track payment, the portal provides prompt reflection of payments



through OIFC's online cashiering system. Additionally, customers can avail other services such as bill copies, statement of accounts & other related details by facsimile or by e-mail whenever needed.

Commenting in this service, Mohamed Saif al Toqi, Sr. manager Telecom Recovery, said, "At Khedmah, we direct our efforts towards keeping pace with the latest requirements of the market and clients' aspirations. During the past period, we have observed that the corporate sector has an increased need for an easy online platform through which they can manage and pay electricity, water, telecommunications and Internet. We decided to capitalise on this opportunity to fulfil the requirements of this segment.

"Hence, we have a dedicated team that communicates with companies wishing to benefit from these services and facilitate the process of paying their bills. Today, this team serves tens of thousands of companies in various regions across the sultanate. We receive positive feedback on the ease, flexibility and cost savings of this service for companies. OIFC is currently working toward enhancing this experience to provide more value-add for companies by accelerating the current procedures and making them more

flexible and with additional payment options for beneficiaries."

"Our vision at OIFC is based on adopting digital transformation and achieving sustainability in operations. We encourage establishments and individuals to utilise a plethora of services from our e-channels such as Khedmah app and website. These efforts come in line with Oman Vision 2040 that seeks to achieve digital transformation and create an economy based on knowledge and innovation," he further stated.

OIFC is a leading Investment and Services Company and specialises in billing, collection and debt factoring for electricity, water and telecom services in the Sultanate of Oman.

The company's various branches and e-payment channels allow customers to easily pay their electricity, water and telecommunications bills, recharge phone, electricity prepaid meter bills as well as making payment to the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI). Through its various branches across the sultanate, the company also provides customer support related to these services.

Customers can download Khedmah phone app from Google Play on Android, and App Store on IOS.

Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort vaccinates all of its staff

Anantara al Jabal al Akhdar Resort has vaccinated its team members against COVID-19, in line with its promise to ensure employee health and wellbeing, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Badr al Samaa Hospital.

The COVID-19 vaccination was delivered to team members at the resort this week, making Anantara the first hotel in Jebel Akhdar to have 100 per cent of all eligible team members vaccinated.

The resort has also reinforced health and hygiene measures under Anantara's brand-wide 'Stay with Peace of Mind' programme. A dedicated Guest Guardian is responsible for overseeing health and safety standards by ensuring a series of rigid guidelines are met and surpassed at all times.

"The health and wellbeing of our guests and team members is our top priority. We have implemented the 'Stay with Peace of Mind' programme to ensure precautionary measures to combat the pandemic are met, and have carefully followed the rules and guidelines implemented by the Ministry of Heritage and



Tourism and the Supreme Committee since the reopening of the resort last year," said Rami Farhat, acting general manager of Anantara al Jabal al Akhdar Resort. To celebrate, the resort is offering savings of up to 40 per cent on best available rate on rooms and villas to vaccinated guests for stays until August 15.

Guests will need to book in advance and present their vaccination certificate upon check-in to avail the offer. Terms and conditions apply.

For more information or reservations, call +968 2521 8000, visit jabal-akhdar.anantara.com or email aljabalalakhdar@anantara.com



Double the data for just RO2 with Ooredoo

New to Ooredoo? We have a treat for you! Ooredoo Shababiah prepaid Welcome Packs now include double the data for just RO2. Users can get their hands on an Ooredoo Shababiah Smart SIM, plus choose from either 2GB of data, including 1GB of open data valid for 10 days and 1GB of bonus data valid for 24 hours, or RO2 of recharge credit, valid for 30 days.

With a variety of plans tailored to each customers' pocket and digital needs, the Shababiah Smart SIM unlocks a world of benefits making it easier to stay connected for longer. It really is the perfect mix of flexibility, great value, simplicity and most of all, convenience.

Alshaya Group celebrates the launch of 100 eCommerce sites and apps

As customers in the Middle East become increasingly digital-first, Alshaya Group this week celebrated the 'go live' of its 100th online trading site and app across the MENA region with the launch of new apps for American Eagle + Aerie in Egypt and Qatar. Recognised as one of the leading retailers of international brands in the region, Alshaya has massively accelerated its digital roll-out over the last year as it responds to a permanent shift in customer shopping habits. Today Alshaya has the largest eCommerce footprint in the region complementing its portfolio of thousands of stores, cafes, restaurants and leisure destinations.

Alshaya customers can now find more and more of their favourite brands online in mar-



kets across the GCC, as well as in Egypt; brands including American Eagle, BBW, Boots, Foot Locker, H&M, Mothercare, Muji, Pottery Barn, West Elm and Victoria's Secret. Further sites and

apps are in the pipeline. Details of all live sites can be found in the Customer Zone on www.alshaya.com.

Commenting on the pace of Alshaya's digital transformation, Paul Morris, chief digital officer, Alshaya Group, said, "Customers, particularly the under-30 mobile-first generation, have embraced new ways to shop. We have worked hard to meet their needs by bringing their favourite brands to their fingertips through a rapidly growing number of sites and apps. It's clear when we look at performance that we are delivering what customers want - some of our sites are already accounting for over 30 per cent of total brand sales.

"As we continue to grow our digital footprint across MENA we are focused on offering

choice and making the shopping experience as effortless as possible, regardless of whether customers want to shop in store, online, or a mixture of both. It has been really exciting to deliver this change in recent months, thanks to the amazing teamwork of Alshaya colleagues."

Alshaya's digital expansion responds to an overall shift to online shopping across the region, which has been turbocharged in the last 12 months as customers looked for new ways to shop their favourite brands during COVID-19 lockdown. Data varies, but overall digital retail purchases in MENA have increased by over 35 per cent compared to a year ago, with consumers in KSA, Egypt and the UAE leading the charge.

Oman Sail unveils 11th edition of Sailing Arabia - The Tour 2021

Oman Sail has unveiled the details of the 11th edition of Sailing Arabia - The Tour, kicking off from November 24 - December 5. Since its very first edition in 2011, the race has grown in stature to become a premier annual race and a favourite winter destination for professional and amateur sailors around the globe.

Showcasing the unique coastline and beauty of Oman, the route will take participating teams to unique destinations in Oman starting from Mussanah to Sur and back to Muscat for the finale, with coastal raids and in-port races at each stop. Each team will be competing in an identical DIAM24 trimaran, ensuring each race is a tough test of the teamwork, tactics and the endurance of each crew.

Saleh al Jabri, project manager and acting head of Sailing Events & Commercial at Oman Sail, said, "We are really pleased to be able to organise yet another exciting edition of Sailing Arabia - The Tour in 2021. The event has become a sought-after and anticipated fixture in the calendar over the past decade and a high calibre event for talented Omani sailors and a strong international contingent to test themselves in warm winter weather."

He added, "Every year, the event has enhanced Oman's reputation as a world-class host,



blessed with perfect sailing conditions and welcoming people. This year will be no different and our deep-rooted maritime traditions will be evident at each stop as the exciting, fast-paced racing captures the imagination of spectators and allows the crew

to experience authentic Omani hospitality."

The Tour will be run in full adherence to the official COVID-19 safety protocols. More information about the event on how to register are available on the official website <https://sailingarabiathetour.com/>.

Full schedule:
Nov 23 - Opening Ceremony, Mussanah
Nov 24-26 - Coastal Raid and in-port race, Mussanah
Nov 27-29 - Coastal Raid and in-port race, Sur
Dec 1-2 - Coastal Raid and in-port race, Marina Bandar al Rowdha
Dec 3-4 - Coastal Raid and in-port race, Al Mouj Muscat
Dec 5 - Closing Ceremony and Prizegiving, Al Mouj Muscat



Bank Muscat recognised by Forbes Middle East

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has been ranked by Forbes Middle East amongst its 'Top 50 Banks in the Middle East' in 2021.

The accolade was announced after Forbes Middle East gathered data from listed stock exchanges across the region including market value, sales, assets and profits and used it to evaluate the region's top banks. The Forbes report said that as of June 6, 2021, the 'Top 50 Banks in the Middle East' had a total value of US \$513.6bn and assets worth \$2.5tn.

In its report, Forbes pointed out the important role being played by banks in supporting economies in the post-pandemic situation by using a number of measures like 'postponing loan payments, restructuring debt and lending to key sectors'.

Bank Muscat is the first bank in the list from amongst all the banks in the sultanate. This recognition is a further validation of the bank's leadership position in Oman, which is the result of its customer-centric banking and

pioneering sustainability initiatives along with the adoption of global best practices in the bank's pursuit of overall excellence.

Earlier in June 2021, Bank Muscat was recognised as one of the 'Top 100 Companies in the Middle East' by Forbes. The bank has won other similar awards too in the recent past including the Best Bank in Oman award from prestigious international publications like Global Finance, Euromoney, The Banker and EMEA Finance. It has also been ranked as the Safest Bank in Oman by Global Finance in its rankings of the Safest Banks in 112 countries worldwide.

Bank Muscat has further sharpened its focus on customer-centricity, safety, sustainability and readiness for the future, whilst maintaining its market leadership in the country. It is keenly following the trends that will shape the financial services sector in the future, and moving decisively to prepare for future developments in an age of rapid global economic and technological changes.

Omantel's embraced Edlal initiative on entrepreneurship enters fifth year

As Oman entered 2021 with a refurbished set of policies on economic development of which manpower building is a key goal, the Edlal programme on entrepreneurship, co-founded by Omantel, assumes even greater significance as a tool providing the much-needed resources towards meetings these objectives.

Omantel is the strategic co-founder of Edlal initiative along with Point and Rudha and since the programme's inception in 2017, it has been providing leading technology and financial support.

The Edlal initiative on entrepreneurship has been building and strengthening Oman's manpower foundations through free high-quality online, certified, video and interactive training courses designed to cover the future skills required by the national and international job market, with Omantel as the digital enabler. Through its website www.edlal.org and its app, the

initiative has been targeting students, jobseekers, employees and entrepreneurs.

Edlal has gained immense popularity since it was launched as the number of beneficiaries has grown to reach more than 250,000, un-



derscoring the digital programme's success. Omantel and founders of this programme are confident that users' numbers will see a good increase this year as well with the initiative spanning the entire calendar year, from January 1, until

December 31, 2021.

By integrating high-quality educational development programs with creative visual arts delivered through a uniquely accessible platform, Edlal is indirectly contributing towards Oman's Vision 2040. Targeted at learners in the 13-40 years age group, the training opportunities offered on Edlal are accessible, flexible, and economical.

The brainchild of Qais al Toubi and Haitham al Toubi in 2017, Edlal's philosophies are centered on 'technopreneurship', skills development and youth empowerment.

Laila Mohammed al Wohaibi, manager of CSR at Omantel, said, "In each of its CSR initiatives, Omantel looks for opportunities to push Oman's shift towards a knowledge-based and digital economy, which is one of the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, a document which also incorporates the UN Sustainable Development Goals in local and global contexts."

Madayn launches campaign to limit spread of coronavirus in workplace

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn has launched 'For Your Safety' awareness campaign to curb the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in its industrial cities, Knowledge Oasis Muscat and Al Mazunah Free Zone. The campaign targets the workforce in the industrial units based in the industrial cities, specifically those operating in food and water sectors; the commercial activities related to public health in the industrial cities; and the administrative buildings of the companies based in the Knowledge Oasis Muscat.

The campaign aims at disseminating awareness on the importance of receiving vaccination to reduce infection in the work environment, spreading extensive awareness on the precautionary measures to achieve a safe and healthy workplace, and training the workforce in the industrial units to develop preventive plans and practices against coronavirus disease. The campaign also highlights the significance of correcting the wrong practices of the workforce with the objective of reaching zero vi-



olations while continuing to conduct PCR tests.

Through a series of field visits to the various industrial cities of Madayn and the Knowledge Oasis Muscat, Madayn's officials of health, safety, security and environment shall provide the industrial units with the preventive measures and awareness guidelines to reduce and limit the spread of infection with coronavirus at the work environment.

Over the past years, Madayn has qualified a group of its em-

ployees on the basics of inspection and occupational safety in the industrial cities in various fields such as food safety, investor services, field work procedures, and health, safety and environment.

Madayn aims at achieving a safe working environment in its industrial cities taking into account the volume of investments and the diversity of economic industries. Madayn also gives utmost attention to spreading awareness on the occupational

diseases and finding solutions to reduce their occurrence, in addition to applying the best global health practices and developing strategies to protect individual and properties with the aim of achieving zero infections, injuries, and accidents in the workplace.

Since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, Madayn officials are making significant efforts to spread awareness on workplace safety and healthy practices among the workers.

Infiniti Courtesy Vehicles create convenience for service customers

Conceived to provide seamless mobility during car service, Infiniti Courtesy Vehicle (ICV) from Infiniti Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles has been offering customers convenience while adhering to all the safety protocols related to COVID-19.

The objective of the exclusive concept titled Infiniti Courtesy Vehicle (ICV) is to offer convenience for service customers and provide existing customers with the opportunity to experience other/ new models with latest technology.

A senior spokesperson at In-

finiti Oman said, "The courtesy vehicles offered as part of the programme will be free of charge to our customers. ICVs are dedicated units kept only for offering them as replacement vehicles to service customers. All customers/jobs are eligible for ICV except for internal, B&P and waiting customers for quick services. We are happy to offer customers with easy mobility during car service and provide a chance to try our newer Infiniti models."

He added, "Our protocol and

guidelines guarantee the utmost hygiene, sanitisation, and safety for

all. Besides, our staff is trained to make the processes very secure, with highest focus on hygiene and safety."

This service is based on availability of the ICV cars during the time of car service. Terms and conditions apply.

Infiniti Oman strives to offer an excellent retail and customer service experience to every Infiniti owner. A crucial point of differentiation for the Brand

amongst competitors is the top level of customer service it delivers.

To ensure safety of its customers and employees, Infiniti Oman is following a thorough safety precaution protocol at its service centre. The standard operating procedure it follows involves the execution of strict safety, sanitisation and physical distancing rules.

Implemented in line with Oman's Supreme Committee advisories on COVID-19, Infiniti Oman's precaution protocol aims to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of its customers and

employees as priority.

The important safety precautions and protocol being followed at the Infiniti Oman service centre include sanitisation of touch points and fumigation of facilities. While hand sanitisers are kept at customer receptions, thermal checks are done before employees and customers enter the service centre.

All staff keep a physical distance of two metres from customers. Other safety measures include sanitisation of vehicle exterior touch points and protective covers on steering wheel, gear lever and seat.



Wounded Syrians in camp fear closure of vital aid corridor

Azaz, Syria - In a camp in north-west Syria, Mohamad al Abdullah relies on UN aid to treat a spinal injury that could have paralysed him had it not been for cross-border aid.

But that life-saving assistance is now threatened by a Russian veto.

With Moscow threatening to shut the region's last crossing from Turkey at a UN Security Council vote in the coming days, the 17 year old and millions like him risk losing a vital conduit for medical and food supplies.

"All my medicine comes from abroad through the crossing," Mohammad told AFP from his tent in the opposition-held Syrian town of Azaz.

He still has pieces of shrapnel lodged in his back and ribs from a 2014 car bomb blast that wounded his spine, killed his father and prompted him to flee Deir Ezzor in Syria's east to seek refuge in the northwest.

"If (the shrapnel) moved only a millimetre, I would be paralysed. That's what the doctors told me," he said.

"If the crossing closes, I will sit idly in this tent, unable to move, because if it wasn't for my medicine, I wouldn't be able to stand up from the pain."

The painkillers he desperately



Displaced Syrian Mohamad al Abdullah with his family members at a camp near the town of Azaz in the rebel-controlled northern countryside of Syria's Aleppo province, on June 22 (AFP)

needs reach Azaz via the opposition-controlled Bab al-Hawa crossing on the Turkish border, the only entry point for UN assistance into Syria's beleaguered northwest.

But the resolution authorising such deliveries expires on July 10 - by which time the Security Council must have voted on its renewal.

Damascus ally Moscow says the UN mandate on the border violates Syria's sovereignty, and wants to close Bab al-Hawa when the current provision ex-

pires, re-routing aid through regime-controlled territory.

The UN has warned that blocking aid via the crossing could cause a 'humanitarian catastrophe'.

'Medical crisis'

More than three million people live in the Idlib region in Syria's northwest, much of which is controlled by extremists and allied rebels.

Around 2.4mn people there need humanitarian aid, according to the UN.

There is currently no agreement between the UN and Damascus to authorise UN aid deliveries to the northwest from inside Syria.

Aid groups have repeatedly accused Damascus of hindering humanitarian assistance to areas outside its control.

'The Syrian authorities have a long history of diverting and obstructing humanitarian aid,' Amnesty International said in a statement.

It warned against a 'medical crisis' in the northwest similar to the one currently gripping north-eastern Syria after the closure of another checkpoint there under Russian pressure last year.

Ireland and Norway, non-permanent members of the Security Council, presented a draft resolution ON Friday aiming to keep Bab al-Hawa open for one year.

Permanent members the United States, France and Britain had also wanted to reopen the nearby Bab al-Salam crossing with Turkey, which was shut last year, diplomats have said.

The International Rescue Committee has pushed for Bab al-Salam to be reopened, arguing that 'one crossing alone has proved insufficient to meet the scale of needs'.

AFP



Emirati Minister of State Ahmed al Sayegh (right) meets with Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid upon arrival in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday (AFP)

Lapid in UAE on first official visit by an Israeli minister

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Israel's top diplomat Yair Lapid visited the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday on the first official trip by a minister from the Jewish state after the two regional powerhouse economies normalised ties last year.

Lapid landed at Abu Dhabi airport, later tweeting: 'Making history: Proud to represent the State of Israel on its first official visit to the United Arab Emirates. Thanks for the warm welcome.'

Alongside the tweet, he posted an image of himself disembarking the plane to a welcome from a small delegation led by an Emirati diplomat to minimal fanfare.

Israeli ministers have previously visited the UAE, but newly appointed Lapid is the most senior Israeli to make the trip, and the first to travel on an official mission.

The head of mission at the

Jewish state's Embassy in the UAE tweeted: '30 years as a diplomat, but to see the blue and white (Israeli colours) here at the Abu Dhabi airport, whilst waiting for the minister of foreign affairs to land - is exciting!'

Since their US-brokered normalisation agreement was announced in August last year, Israel and the UAE have signed a raft of deals ranging from tourism to aviation and financial services.

During his visit, Lapid will inaugurate the Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi as well as a consulate in Dubai.

Lapid's trip comes nearly a year after the nations moved to normalise ties, and follows a string of visits by Israeli officials that were planned then scrapped over issues including the COVID pandemic and diplomatic scuffles.

AFP

Indian police probe Twitter over map

New Delhi, India - Indian police have filed preliminary charges against senior Twitter officials over an inaccurate map of the country, an official said on Tuesday, in the latest escalation between the US firm and New Delhi.

Uttar Pradesh state police said the criminal case was filed against two Twitter India officials late on Monday following a complaint from the local head of a nationalist group that the US firm's website showed the disputed Kashmir region as an independent country.

The map was already taken down from Twitter's 'Tweep Life' career section after an uproar by social media users on Monday against the micro-blogging site.

A police official told AFP that Twitter's India head Manish Maheshwari and another senior employee were being investigated for breaching India's IT laws and

causing public mischief.

"This act has hurt the sentiments of Indians, including me," Praveen Bhati from Bajrang Dal, a rightwing Hindu group, said in his complaint. Twitter has been locked for several months in an acrimonious row with New Delhi over new rules for social media companies operating in India.

The regulations require firms to remove and identify the 'first originator' of posts deemed to undermine India's sovereignty, state security or public order.

Last week, India's IT minister had his Twitter account briefly locked after he posted a video containing music that breached US copyright law.

Ravi Shankar Prasad called the move a 'gross violation' and said it showed how his 'calling out the high handedness and arbitrary actions of Twitter... clearly ruffled its feathers'.

AFP

Israeli settlers agree to leave flashpoint West Bank

Jerusalem - Jewish settlers agreed on Monday to leave a new outpost in the occupied West Bank that has stirred weeks of Palestinian protests following a deal with Israel's government, officials said.

Under the agreement, confirmed by settler leaders and the interior ministry, the settlers will leave the Eviatar outpost within days but their mobile homes will remain and Israeli troops will establish a base in the area.

According to a statement from regional settler leader Yossi Dagan, the Defence Ministry has agreed to study land claims to assess the prospect of a future recognised settlement.

Dagan said the agreement had been approved by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Defence Minister Benny Gantz and Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked.

Shaked's office confirmed the deal, but spokespersons for Bennett and Gantz were not immediately available to comment.

About 50 Jewish families



Israeli settlers and supporters in the newly-established wildcat outpost of Eviatar look as Palestinian protestors flash laser beams towards them from the nearby Beita village, in the occupied West Bank on Monday (AFP)

moved to Eviatar last month, erecting huts, tents and caravans - in defiance of international and Israeli law - on land near Nablus in the occupied West Bank, which Palestinians claim for a future state.

Eviatar settler Tzvi Succot, a leader in the outpost community, said he supported the agreement because he believed it would ultimately lead to a permanent

Jewish community.

"The most important thing for us is that the buildings stay here, that a Jewish presence remains on this hill," Succot told AFP.

Palestinians protest

Palestinians in the nearby community of Beita have responded with night-time protests, flashing horns, burning tyres and shining laser beams to keep the settlers

awake.

Those protests continued on Monday when they directed green light beams towards Jewish settler homes and hoisted Palestinian flags.

Moussa Hamayel, the deputy head of the Beita municipality, told AFP that the Palestinian community had 'completely rejected' the purported compromise.

Israeli troops have killed four Palestinians including a teenager in unrest sparked by the protests.

Eviatar is named after a settler fatally stabbed near Beita in 2013.

Israeli authorities had evacuated an earlier version of the outpost.

But Israeli families returned in May after a Palestinian man shot dead a student nearby.

Gantz ordered the settlement removed, but Benjamin Netanyahu - who served 12 unbroken years as prime minister before he was unseated on June 13 - froze the decision.

Bennett, who ousted Netanyahu by joining a broad coalition including leftwingers and an Arab party, is the former head of the Yesha Council, a settlers' lobbying group.

All Jewish settlements in the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967, are considered illegal by most of the international community.

AFP

Iraqi fighters mourn comrades killed by US on Syria border

Baghdad, Iraq - Thousands of members of Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary alliance gathered in Baghdad on Tuesday to mourn comrades killed in American airstrikes along the Syrian border.

The US raids early on Monday sparked an exchange of fire between pro-Iranian militias and the US-led coalition in eastern Syria, as well as fears of a new US-Iran escalation amid faltering efforts to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

With chants of 'death to America' and 'vengeance for the martyrs', they massed in Freedom Square near the capital's high-security Green Zone - site of the US Embassy.

Security forces were deployed in large numbers, sealing the Green Zone after a string of recent incursions by armed groups backed by Washington's arch-enemy Tehran.

Several high-ranking Hashed

commanders took part in the symbolic funeral, including its top commander Faleh al Fayyadh and Hadi al Ameri, head of one of its main factions, the Badr Organisation.

The mourners, accompanied by vehicles full of gunmen, wore black and held up signs reading: 'Attacks on the Hashed must speed up the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.'

Others carried pictures of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and Hashed second-in-command Abu Mahdi al Muhandis, who were killed in a US drone strike near Baghdad airport last year.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said seven fighters had been killed and at least six more wounded in the strikes on both sides of the Iraqi-Syrian border.

The Hashed, most of whose commanders are backed by Tehran and which has become



Members of Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi forces march in a symbolic funeral parade, in Baghdad on Tuesday (AFP)

the main power broker in Baghdad, said four of its fighters were killed in the Qaim region near the

border.

The fighters were stationed there to prevent extremists infil-

trating Iraq, the group said, denying they had taken part in any attacks against US interests or

The US airstrikes on pro-Iran fighters sent a 'strong message' not to keep attacking US forces in Iraq

ANTHONY BLINKEN

personnel and warning they had 'the legal right to respond... and hold the perpetrators accountable on Iraqi soil'.

The Pentagon said the strikes targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one in Iraq, all near the common border, used by militias engaged in drone attacks against US interests in Iraq.

US forces were subsequently 'attacked by multiple rockets' in eastern Syria, but there were no casualties and personnel 'con-

ducted counter-battery artillery fire at rocket launching positions', coalition spokesman Wayne Marotto said on Twitter.

American forces in Iraq, where 2,500 American troops are deployed as part of an international coalition to fight the extremist Islamic State group, have been targeted in more than 40 attacks this year.

Monday's strikes were the second such deadly raid on pro-Iran targets since US President Joe Biden took office.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that the US airstrikes on pro-Iran fighters in Iraq and Syria sent a 'strong message' not to keep attacking US forces in Iraq.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadheri condemned the strikes as an 'unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty and Iraqi national security' and warned against any escalation.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

G20 leaders urge greater global cooperation to fight COVID crisis

Matera, Italy - G20 ministers led by the United States said on Tuesday that the coronavirus pandemic showed the need for greater global cooperation, as African nations sought help to develop their medical infrastructure.

In a sharp reversal from the previous US administration, Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasised the need for multilateral institutions as foreign ministers from the Group of 20 major economies met in the ancient Italian city of Matera.

"Multilateral cooperation will be key to our collective ability to stop this global health crisis," said Blinken, winding down a week-long trip to Europe.

"That's also true for the work we must do to strengthen global health security moving forward so we can detect, prevent and respond better to future health emergencies."

Blinken pointed to US contributions to COVAX, the UN-backed initiative that aims to vaccinate low-income countries, including President Joe Biden's promise to provide 500mn Pfizer doses.

Italian Foreign Minister Luigi



The G20 foreign and development ministers begin their meeting in Matera, in the region of Basilicata, in southern Italy on Tuesday (AFP)

Di Maio, the host of the talks, said that the pandemic, which has hit his country particularly hard, exposed global vulnerabilities.

"Multi-lateralism and cooperation are fundamental in responding to global challenges," he said.

Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula of the Democratic Republic of Congo, participating as part of an Italian push to involve African nations in G20 talks, warned that coronavirus was far from over in his continent and called for urgent measures.

In addition to immediate aid,

he called for the G20 to back the capacity of developing countries to produce vaccines themselves and to help launch a continent-wide agency that will encourage scientific cooperation.

The G20 must help 'concretely and in detail so we move beyond speeches to urgent ac-

tion on the ground', he said.

Such cooperation 'will help African countries counter the shock of COVID and revive their economies for the greater good of the international community', he said.

The talks will prepare for a G20 leaders' meeting in October

The G20 must help concretely. Such cooperation will help African countries counter the shock of COVID and revive their economies for the greater good of the international community

CHRISTOPHE LUTUNDULA

in Rome that is expected to see the first summit between US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping amid soaring tensions between the world's two largest economies.

With China participating virtually in Matera, Tuesday's conference was focused more on general themes but marked a major US shift following the defeat of former president Donald Trump, who belittled international institutions as part of his 'America First' philosophy.

AFP

Murderers cremate victim as COVID casualty

Lucknow, India - Five gang members in India wore full protective gear to cremate a man they had murdered, pretending he died from COVID-19, police said on Tuesday.

The victim was invited to a party by the men, whom he owed ₹4mn (US\$54,000), and suffocated, according to police.

The gang wore full PPE and cremated the body at a facility in the northern city of Agra, registering the dead man under a false name, local police chief Muniraj G said. 'To avoid being caught... they wore PPE kit and used a body bag to pack and transport the body to the cremation ground,' he tweeted. 'All the five accused have confessed to their crime.'

A tip-off from an informant led to the arrest of one of the men, police said.

AFP



A medical staff inoculates a homeless man during a mobile vaccination drive conducted at Vashi in India's Navi Mumbai on Monday (AFP)

World passes three billion vaccine mark

TOP THREE COUNTRIES

In numbers

- CHINA - 1.2bn
- INDIA - 329mn
- US - 324mn

In terms of coverage

- UAE - 153 doses per 100
- SAUDI ARABIA - 124 doses per 100
- ISRAEL - 124 doses per 100

Paris, France - More than three billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been given across the world, according to an AFP tally on Tuesday from official sources.

The pace of vaccination has so quickened that while it took 20 weeks to give the first billion, it only took four to give the last one thousand million.

Some four of ten of the jabs have been given in China (1.2bn), with India (329mn) and the United States (324mn) also in the top three.

But it is a trio of Middle Eastern countries that leads the way in terms of coverage (when you exclude countries with populations of less than one million), with the United Arab Emirates having given 153 doses per 100 people, ahead of Bahrain and Israel on 124.

The three have nearly fully vaccinated 60 per cent of their inhabitants.

Following them are Chile (118 doses per 100 people), the United Kingdom (113), Mongolia (111), Uruguay (110), Hungary (107), Qatar (107) and the

US (98). These countries have fully vaccinated around half of their populations (between 46 and 54 per cent).

The European Union has given 357mn shots to half of its population, with some 32 per cent of the population having been fully covered.

Its smallest member Malta has completely covered seven out of ten of its people; its biggest countries, Germany, France, Italy and Spain are hovering around a third fully vaccinated.

But globally the vaccination drive is still hugely unequal even if most poor countries have begun to vaccinate thanks to the Covax sharing scheme run by the World Health Organization, Gavi and the Cepi coalition. While the world's poorest countries have only been able to give one dose per 100 people, the richest have given one per 79 people.

And five countries have yet to start their campaigns - Tanzania, Burundi, Eritrea, Haiti and North Korea.

AFP

Over 10mn Australians in coronavirus lockdown

Brisbane, Australia - More than 10mn Australians have been ordered into lockdown as coronavirus cases spread across the country, and Brisbane on Tuesday became the fourth major city to issue stay-at-home orders.

The three-day snap lockdown for Brisbane, starting on Tuesday evening, comes on top of similar measures imposed in Sydney, Perth and Darwin in recent days.

"These are tough decisions," Queensland state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said, after Australia recorded 23 virus cases in 24 hours.

"We are having lockdowns in major cities because the overseas arrivals are bringing the virus here."

Australia has been broadly successful in eliminating local transmission through a mix of border closures, mandatory hotel quarantine for overseas ar-



People in vehicles wait in a queue at a drive-through COVID-19 testing station in Perth on Tuesday (AFP)

rivals and snap lockdowns.

But it is now battling flare-ups of the highly contagious Delta variant - which first emerged in India - as public anger grows at the slow pace of vaccinations.

Less than five per cent of adults are believed to have received both vaccine doses.

Brisbane resident Nicola Hungerford (57) said she ex-

pected lockdowns to keep happening 'until the government gets their bloody act together' on the vaccine rollout.

"It's gobsmacking and they're just irresponsible. It shows how little respect they have for people," she told AFP.

As well as Brisbane, surrounding coastal regions and the small northern city of Townsville

are also subject to the latest order, after an unvaccinated hospital worker spent up to ten days travelling around Queensland while infectious.

On Tuesday morning, Perth residents woke to a four-day snap lockdown after a local cluster grew to three cases.

Shubh Singh, manager of Punjab Sweets & Curry House, backed the decision even though he expected his Perth business to lose about 50 per cent of revenue during the shutdown.

"But the measures are necessary to ensure it doesn't linger for months, because a lengthy lockdown would be disastrous," he said. "It is eerie though seeing these streets so quiet."

The largest outbreak is in Sydney, where 150 people have tested positive for COVID-19 since mid-June, with the city's residents now under stay-at-home orders for two weeks.

A small cluster linked to an outbreak gold mine sent Darwin into lockdown after exposure sites were found for the first time in the northern city, which is home to a large Indigenous population feared to be more vulnerable to COVID-19.

The announcements come during school holidays for large parts of the country and are expected to cause a wave of travel cancellations, with unaffected states warning people not to visit impacted areas.

In all locked-down areas, people are generally required to stay at home except for essential work, exercise, to buy groceries or for medical reasons.

Masks are mandatory across swathes of the country.

Australia has recorded a total of over 30,000 cases and 910 deaths in a population of about 25mn since the pandemic began.

AFP

US sending Bangladesh 2.5mn doses: White House

Washington, US - The United States began shipping 2.5mn doses of Moderna's COVID vaccine to Bangladesh on Tuesday, a White House official told AFP, as the South Asian country confronted a wave of new infections.

"Thanks to the US commitment to playing a leading role in ending the pandemic everywhere, 2.5mn doses of the Moderna vaccine will begin to ship to Bangladesh," said the official.

Illustrating the urgency, delivery is expected to be completed this week.

Bangladesh, which neighbours India, began a severe lockdown on Monday in response to spiraling infections from the Delta variant. People are restricted to their homes, with offices closed, traffic shut down and the security forces enforcing compliance.

The South Asian country of around 170mn people recorded nearly 6,000 cases last Friday. Authorities say that districts



This file photo shows a health worker inoculating a man with a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine at a hospital in Dhaka on June 22 (AFP)

near the Indian border are suffering especially badly, with hospitals in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi overwhelmed.

Bangladesh 'has a 55 per cent week-over-week increase in cases, driven largely by the Delta variant', a White House official said, explaining how the country made it onto the urgent list.

President Joe Biden has declared the United States the world's vaccine 'arsenal' in the

war on COVID-19.

The role reflects US pharmaceutical power but also Biden's emphasis on restoring Washington's leadership around the world after the tempestuous and often chaotic years under Donald Trump.

US officials deny they are competing in 'vaccine diplomacy' with authoritarian China and Russia, which have used nationally produced vaccines to fill

the supply vacuum in less-developed regions during the pandemic.

No 'strings attached'

Like many other countries, Bangladesh has desperately sought more vaccines and has not been picky about where they come from.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque said in May that the country wants to buy 50mn doses from China's Sinopharm.

It also wants to buy five million Sputnik doses, Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen said after meeting the Russian ambassador this month.

The White House pointedly said that its vaccine shipments - mostly made through the World Health Organization's Covax programme - come free in all senses.

"We are sharing these doses not to secure favours or extract concessions. Our vaccines do not come with strings attached.

We are doing this with the singular objective of saving lives," the official said.

The Biden administration has committed to donating US\$2bn to Covax and also purchasing 500mn Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines for the African Union and 92 poorer countries. At the recent G7 summit in Britain, US partners agreed to donate another 500mn doses.

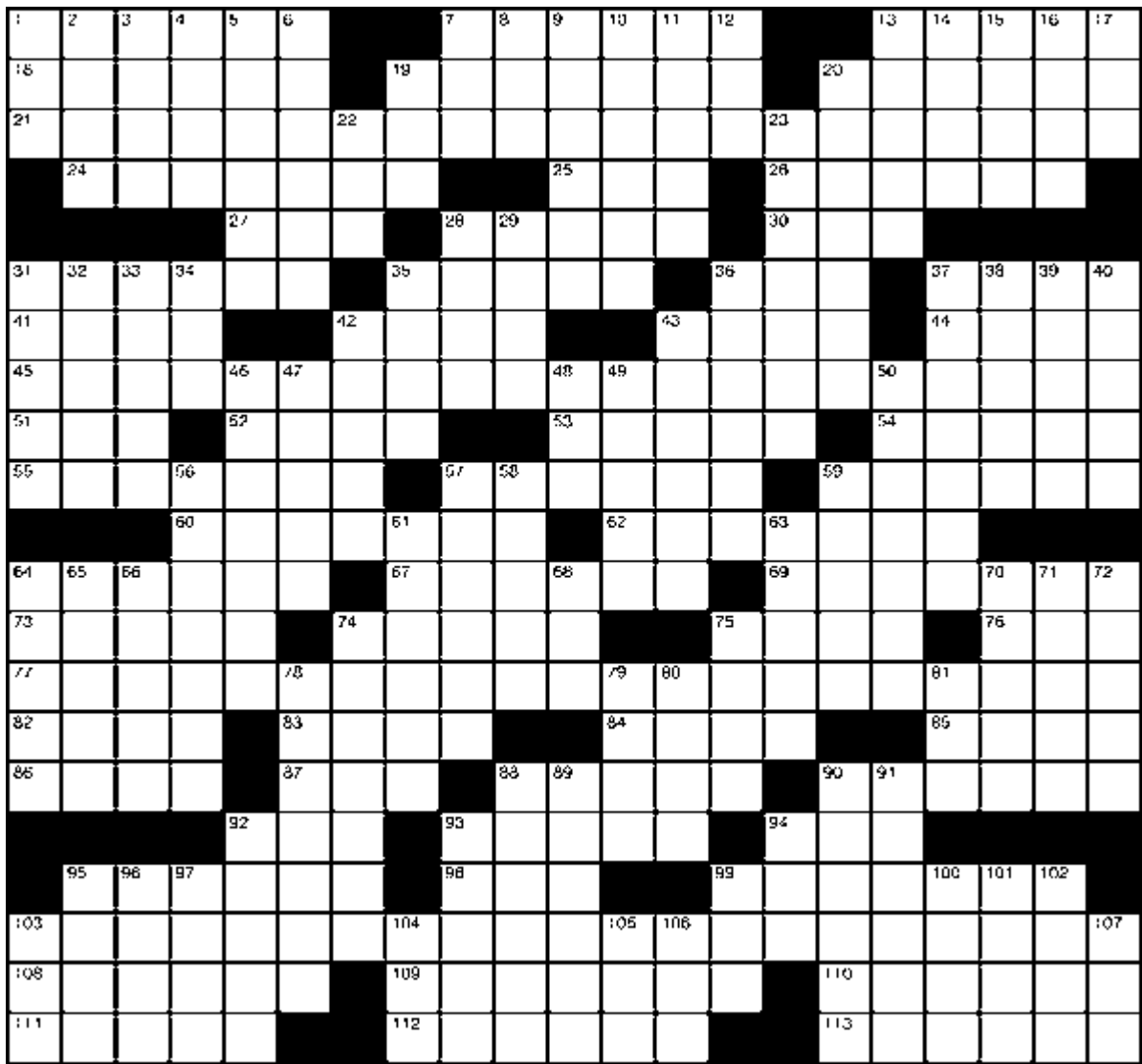
"Putting an end to this pandemic requires eliminating it around the world," the White House official said. "This is a unique moment in history and it requires American leadership."

Additionally, some 80mn doses from the US supply are earmarked for foreign allocation by the end of June.

Two million doses of the Pfizer vaccine are now being shipped to Peru and 1.5mn Moderna doses to Pakistan, the White House said earlier on Monday.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All rights reserved

ACROSS

- 1 East Indian sailor
7 Echo
13 Shirley, of "Goldfinger"
18 Audrey, in "Love in the Afternoon"
19 Librarian's request
20 Conjure
21 Start of a Valentine verse
24 Jewish school
25 ___ mouse
26 Seventh from the sun
27 Yoko
28 Mall unit
30 Wee bit
31 Weeds wearers
35 Give a buzz
36 Arti or parti ending
37 Secretary
41 Burden
42 Make tea, e.g.
43 Cartoonist Silverstein
44 Needle case
45 More of verse
51 Explosive inits.
52 Askew
53 Gray and Moran
54 Throw out
55 Heckled

- 57 Attacking with a spray
59 Bronzed from the sun
60 Communications satellite
62 Most astute
64 Leave high and dry
67 Stamen part
69 Meantime
73 Poe's middle name
74 ___ Detoo, of "Star Wars"
75 Take the lead
76 Way preceeder
77 More of verse
82 Brubeck or Garroway
83 Harem rooms
84 "No sweat!"
85 Gilpin, of "Frasier"
86 Flanders stream
87 1st state
88 Yoga posture
90 Daisy type
92 Admiral's ser.
93 Actress Verdugo
94 R.R. stop
95 Death: Ger.
98 Twice VI
99 O'Hare, for one
103 End of verse
108 UN agency
109 "The Bald So-

- prano" playwright
110 ___ oneself: be aloof
111 Aromatic wood
112 International actress Landi
113 Piaf's "La Vie ___"
DOWN
1 Varnish substance
2 Like ___ of sunshine
3 Math ratio
4 Bounders
5 Haphazardly
6 Sticky stuff
7 Shred
8 Building wing
9 "___ Place"
10 Whole
11 Severe
12 Trillion: comb. form
13 Inward: anat.
14 Stratford's river
15 Bean curd
16 Trappist cheeses
17 Clear, as profit
19 Wee, to Burns
20 1948 Arab-___ War
22 Nobelism ___ Andric
23 Tiny treats for squirrels

- 28 Mets arena, 1964-2008
29 Suburban area
31 Value
32 "Comin' ___ Wing and. . ."
33 Powders lightly
34 Chemical suffix
35 Quarry
36 Mutate, evolve, etc.
37 International accord
38 Wharton's Frome
39 Urbane
40 Bounced a check
42 Canaries or chats
43 Black eye, sl.
46 City ESE of Naples
47 Resided
48 12th month
49 Three-wheeler
50 India's prime minister, 1964-66
56 Soft-shell clam
57 Praying ___
58 Trump's "The ___ the Deal"
59 Midmorning hr.
61 Of a foot bone
63 ___-gritty
64 Warbucks, to Annie
65 Kazan and Lamb

- 66 Spartacus, notably
68 ___ polloi
70 Actor's quests
71 Unmoving
72 Radio, television, etc.
74 Book additions
75 Slugger Sammy
78 Dozes a bit
79 Signify
80 Dad's mother
81 Resort baths
88 ___ generis: of another kind
89 Trawler's nets
90 Pet lovingly
91 Occur
92 Say
93 Praise highly
94 Terse letter-opener
95 Thoroughly cooked
96 Novelist Bagnold
97 Cape near Lisbon
99 Fuss
100 Frankfurt's river
101 Take back, for short
102 Makes lace
103 Title at Versailles
104 Lace up
105 CIA forerunner
106 Sony rival
107 Stag's mate

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Moving forward too far too fast is a dangerous thing, so beware. You wouldn't want to go so quickly that you miss out on a remarkable quiet moment. Today, you will have to perform a delicate balance between pursuing your goals and standing still long enough to enjoy the fruits of all your labours. Someone needs you to slow down long enough to give them some attention.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Today, seek a slower pace for your life. It will enable you to have much more fulfilling face-to-face communications. E-mails are efficient and convenient, but the best way to get across a message is still to talk it out in person. Misunderstandings are easier to clear up when you're looking in someone's eyes as you explain yourself. A close family member needs your help today.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Whatever you do, whether it's running errands, working, studying, or exercising, try to add some romance. Even if you're already in a relationship or aren't in the mood to begin a new one anytime soon, that's no excuse not to enjoy the charms and beauty of all the people you encounter. Flirting is harmless, and it always puts a smile on people's faces.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Before you plunk down any money on that fabulous new gadget, car, or meal, double-check your bank account and then double-check your credit card statements. You might not have as much money at your disposal as you think, and it is not a good idea to get any deeper into the hole than you are right now. Take a break from unnecessary spending for the next few days.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
An exciting, vibrant energy is coming into your world today. Look for new people (or a new side to one of your current friends) to inject your life with new levels of risk. These folks have been taking big gambles lately, and they've been paying off big time. If this success serves as an inspiration to you, start taking a few risks yourself today and see what happens.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Distractions abound, so it could be a bit of a struggle to keep your eye on the ball. The good news is that before the end of the day you could get a sneak preview of what things will be like when you have finished this project. You're due for some major recognition. Are there possible financial rewards as well? Let your people know that socialising is not in the cards right now.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You should push your not-so hidden agenda a little bit more forcefully than you normally would today. A little extra effort will take you a long way right now. This is a prime day for you, and you are poised to get exactly what you want as long as you show the universe that you want it. Visualise your life on this improved level and soon your vision could come true.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Sometimes it's tough to know how much information you should share and how much you should keep to yourself. But other people's secrets are just that: other people's. Those are definitely off limits today and every day. If a piece of information of a more ambiguous classification falls into your lap today, take heed. This juicy gossip is much more powerful if you share it, so feel free!

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
There are many changes happening right now, although you might not be sure why they're happening. This is a strong period of growth and understanding in your life. New facts should start leading you to revise your conclusions about someone's recent behaviour, and an apology might be in order. Now is the time to act on what you think you should do, not a time to be paralysed.

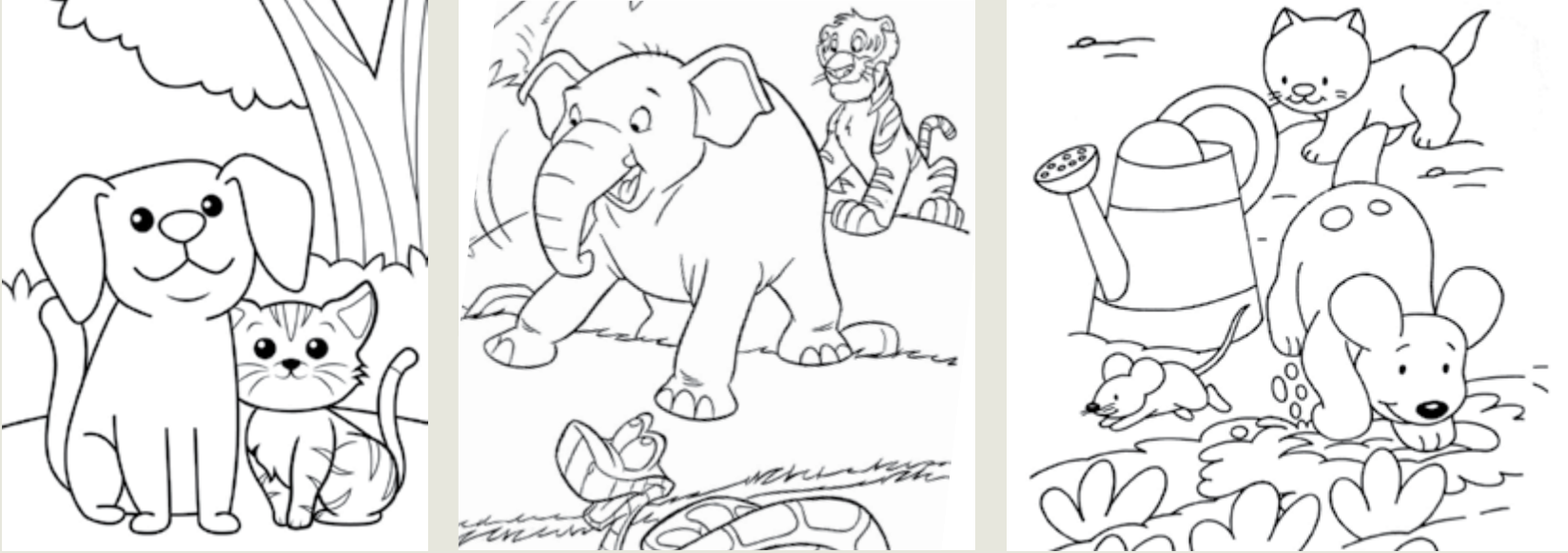
CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Inspiration could flood you today. Enjoy having your curiosity tickled and excited. You're extremely open to new ideas right now, so why not try a few new things? If you're shopping for a new outfit, try a look that you wouldn't normally go for. If you're planning a meal, pick out some exotic ingredients. If you're searching for a place for a date, skip the standard locales.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Someone will make an innocent suggestion today that may ruffle your feathers a bit too much, but they don't really mean to hurt your feelings. They are just trying to help. This extra sensitivity on the part of your ego is probably due to some past harsh criticism from an entirely different source, so try not to blame someone for the crimes of someone else.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Despite the fact that you've been running around, all your projects are humming along nicely, and your relationships are doing quite well. Spinning plates is your specialty today, when a few more items will get added to your list. The great part is you're already in 'the zone'. A few more projects won't make much difference to you, but they will make quite an impression.


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE
1. What invention caused many deaths while testing it?
a. Dynamite
b. Ladders
c. Race cars
d. Parachute
2. Who invented gunpowder?
a. G. Ferdinand Von Zeppelin
b. Sir Frank Whittle
c. Roger Bacon
d. Leo H Baekeland
3. Until Victorian times, chocolate was thought of as a drink. When did the first chocolate bar appear?
a. 1828
b. 1831
c. 1825
d. There is no sure date
Answers: 1.d 2.c 3.b

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

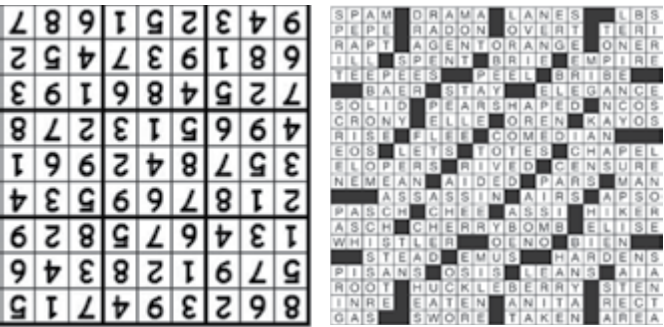
BOGGLER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (JUNE 29)



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



IMMUNITY BUILDERS

GO TUNA



MEDITERRANEAN TUNA SALAD

Ingredients

- For the dressing**
- ¼ cup red vinegar
 - 2tbsp Dijon mustard
 - 1tsp dried oregano
 - 1 clove garlic - minced
 - ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 3tbsp lemon juice + ½tsp lemon zest
 - 1tbsp honey
 - Fine sea salt and pepper, to taste

- For the salad**
- 1 cup orzo pasta - measured when dry
 - 200g tuna – steamed and flaked
 - 1 cup roasted and diced red bell peppers
 - ½ cup chopped olives
 - 2tbsp chopped parsley
 - 1 red onion – chopped
 - 1 cup chopped cucumber
 - ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Method

To make the dressing, add all the

dressing ingredients to a mason jar and season (to taste) with fine sea salt and pepper, to suit taste. Seal the jar and shake vigorously to combine. Store in the fridge while preparing the rest of the salad.

Then cook the orzo pasta as per directions, after salting water. Drain pasta, rinse under cold water, let cool, and allow to dry. Transfer to a large bowl and toss with 2-3tbsp of the dressing.

Meanwhile, prep the rest of the ingredients - flake the tuna with a fork and add to the drained pasta. Add the diced bell peppers, olives, parsley, onion, and cucumber. Add all the ingredients to the bowl with the pasta and tuna. Add in the feta cheese and toss well. Drizzle the dressing on the salad and reserve a little for adding later on, if needed. Gently toss the salad and enjoy immediately.

Note: Dress the salad only before serving – this salad does not store well, once dressed.

When you visit the fish market or the fresh fish counter in a supermarket, does the sight of huge chunks of bloody, red meat tuna put you off, or do they stir up the gastronmist in you? Available often for just about RO1.8/kg, this meaty fish, caught off Oman's shores, contain a large amount of myoglobin, a red pigment that also gives it a savoury, meaty flavour. Rich in Omega-3 fatty acids which lower the risk for heart disease and cancer, and support brain health, tuna is also high in vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B12 which is necessary to form red blood cells, vitamin D which supports mineral absorption, plus magnesium, phosphorus and potassium – all crucial for building immunity in the time of the pandemic. So, if you haven't taken a liking for this chef's delight yet, may be, it's time to 'go tuna' this weekend.

PAN SEARED TUNA

Ingredients

For the balsamic reduction

- 6tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 clove garlic - halved

For the tuna

- 500g tuna fillets
- 1½ kosher salt
- 1tsp coarsely ground coriander seeds
- ½tsp chilli flakes
- ¼tsp cayenne pepper
- 1½tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 2tsp sesame seeds (optional)
- 2tbsp vegetable oil
- Lemon wedges - for garnish

Method

First, make the balsamic reduction - place the balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, and garlic in a small saucepan over medium-low heat and simmer until the mixture reduces by half. Turn off the heat and reserve. The reduction will thicken slightly as it cools. Now, slice the tuna into 4 rectangular steaks of equal size. In a small bowl, combine the salt, coriander, paprika, and cayenne pepper. Lay the tuna steaks out on a plate and sprinkle the spice mixture evenly on all sides. Evenly coat the tuna steaks with the freshly ground black pepper (and sesame seeds, if using it) and gently press it in so that it adheres to the surface. Place a thick-bottomed frying pan or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. When you see small wisps of smoke, add the tuna steaks to the pan and sear them for about 1 minute per side or until the desired doneness is reached. Remove and place them on a cutting board. For presentation, cut each steak diagonally into 4 to 5 slices and fan on a plate. Serve with a small amount of sauce drizzled alongside. You may also garnish with lemon wedges and onion rings.

MALDIVIAN TUNA CURRY

Ingredients

- 500g tuna steak – cut to chunks
- 1tbsp coconut oil
- 3 garlic cloves - minced
- 2 cardamom pods - seeds only
- 1tbsp minced ginger
- 10 curry leaves, 1 onion - sliced
- 2 green chillies – slit
- 2tsp red chilli powder
- ½tsp ground fennel seeds
- ½tsp ground cumin
- ½tsp ground turmeric
- 2tbsp tomato paste
- 1 can (400ml) coconut milk
- 1 stick of cinnamon
- Sea salt, pepper, to taste
- Fresh coriander - to garnish

Method

Lightly salt the fish chunks and set aside.

In a large saucepan, warm the coconut oil over medium heat, add in the garlic, cardamom, ginger, curry leaves and chillies, and sauté until fragrant. Add the onion and cook until softened, then add the rest of the spices (fennel, cumin, turmeric and chilli powder). After a minute, they will become aromatic. At this point, transfer everything into a food processor and blend to a coarse paste. Return the paste back to the pan over a medium heat, add tomato paste and the coconut milk, reserving 2tbsp for drizzling at the end. Add the cinnamon stick, salt and pepper to taste, and bring to a simmer. Add the fish pieces and cook for about 5 minutes, till they become tender. Drizzle over the reserved coconut milk, garnish with chopped coriander leaves, and serve with steamed rice.



SPICY TUNA CUTLETS

Ingredients

- 200g tuna steak - steamed
- 4tbsp oil
- 1 onion - minced
- 2 green chillies – minced
- 1tsp minced ginger
- 1tsp minced garlic
- ½tsp red chilli powder
- ¼tsp turmeric powder
- 2tsp coriander powder
- 1tsp garam masala



- 1 medium sized potato
- 1 egg
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- Oil for frying
- Salt, to taste

Method

Boil the potato, mash it and keep it ready. Heat oil in a pan and add chopped onion. Saute it till it becomes soft, Add ginger, garlic, and green chillies, and saute for a minute. Add all spice powders and saute for a minute. Break up the steamed fish to flakes and add to the seasoning. Saute for 5-6 minutes, remove and cool. Add the mashed potato, mix well, and form small oval cutlets. Dip each cutlet in flour, then in beaten egg, and roll in bread crumbs. Do this with all cutlets and place in freezer for an hour. When ready to eat, heat oil for deep frying, and fry the cutlets straight from the freezer (without thawing) till golden brown. You may also brush them with oil and air fry them. Serve piping hot with tomato ketchup or any favourite dip.



Adawi to be flag-bearer at Tokyo Olympics

Weightlifter Khanjari to make his Olympic debut after late inclusion

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's 22 year old swimmer Issa al Adawi, who will be making his Olympic debut, has been named the sultanate's flag-bearer at the Tokyo Olympics by the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) on Tuesday.

The OOC announced the sultanate's delegation for the 32nd Olympic Games, which will be held from July 23-August 8 in Tokyo, Japan.

As reported earlier by *Muscat Daily*, OOC had been handed three invitation cards for its athletes - Adawi, sprinter Barakat al Harthi and shooter Hamed al Khatri. However, in a late and encouraging development, the OOC confirmed that a fourth athlete also received an invitation card - weightlifter Amer al Khanjari.

Khanjari will be the second athlete to make his debut at the Olympics along with Adawi. Both Barakat and Khatri had represented Oman earlier at the Games. Khanjari will compete in the 81kg class and will be joined by his coach Mazen al Badri.

Adawi, who has been training at the Chukyo University in Tokyo for the past three years, will compete in the 100m freestyle race and will be accompanied by his coach Aiman al Kulaibi. Barakat, an Asian Games bronze-medallist, will compete in the 100m race and will travel with his coach, Mohammed al Hooti.



Issa al Adawi



Hamed al Khatri



Amer al Khanjari



Our goal remains that our athletes achieve new records, and we have great confidence in our players. We had hoped for a larger representation. However, none of our national teams qualified

SAYYID KHALID AL BUSAIDI, OOC CHAIRMAN

Khatri, who was Oman's flag-bearer at the Rio Olympics, will participate in the 50m rifle three positions event. Sultan al Rashidi will be the shooting coach and will be joined by team administrator Sulaiman al Hinai.

The official delegation will be led by OOC chairman Sayyid

Khalid al Busaidi and will include OOC secretary general Taha al Kishry and Oman's chef-de-mission Kazim al Balushi.

In a press statement, Busaidi said, "Our goal remains that our athletes achieve new records,

and we have great confidence in our players. We had hoped for a

larger representation. However, none of our national teams qualified for Olympic Games, which leads us to plan a long-term strategy for participation at the top-most level."

Noticeably, this is also the first time since 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, that Oman will not



Barakat al Harthi



Taha al Kishry

be sending any female athlete.

Oman's first woman Olympian was sprinter Buthaina al Yaquobi, at the Beijing Games.

Sprinters Shnoona al Habsi (2012), Mazoon al Alawi (2016) and shooter Wadha al Balushi (2016) were the other Omani women at the Olympics.



Messi at the double as Argentina win

Cuiabá, Brazil - Lionel Messi celebrated his record 148th international cap with two goals as Argentina trounced Bolivia 4-1 to clinch top spot in Copa America Group A on Monday.

Messi - who had equalled Javier Mascherano's Argentinian caps record of 147 last week - marked his 148th appearance in style, setting up the opening goal before bagging a brace of his own. The victory at Cuiabá's Arena Pantanal stadium sees Argentina advance to a quarterfinal on Saturday against Ecuador, the fourth-placed finishers from Group B.

Bolivia, who had already been eliminated were outclassed from the outset by Argentina.

The Argentines almost took the lead after three minutes, only for Bolivia goalkeeper Carlos Lampe to pull off a remarkable double save from Sergio Aguero and Angel Correa in quick succession. But Argentina did not have to wait long for the breakthrough, when Messi's chipped pass released Papu Gomez who volleyed past Lampe to make it 1-0 after six minutes.

Argentina doubled their lead on 33 minutes when Gomez was brought down in the area by Bolivia's Diego Bejarano. Messi converted the penalty to put

Argentina in control. Bolivia got their first shot on goal shortly afterwards, Jeyson Chura's long-range effort forcing Argentina goalie Franco Armani into a save.

But Argentina reasserted their dominance and it was Messi who made it 3-0, latching on to a lofted pass from new Barcelona teammate Aguero and lobbing a finish over the advancing Lampe.

Bolivia pulled a goal back in the 60th minute with a cleverly worked move, Chura's deft back heel releasing Leonel Justiniano down the right flank who crossed for Erwin Saavedra to score.

Argentina responded swiftly though, substitute Lautaro Martinez tapping in from close range in the 65th minute just two minutes after coming on for Aguero.

In Monday's other Group A game, Uruguay clinched second place in the table after downing Paraguay 1-0 in Rio de Janeiro. Edinson Cavani's first half spot kick proved decisive for La Celeste, sending Uruguay into a quarterfinal against Colombia on Saturday.

Paraguay finished third and will now play Peru on Friday. Chile, who finished fourth in Group A, face a daunting task against hosts Brazil on Friday.

AFP



CLASSIFIEDS

AL AZOON UNITED PROJECTS

FOR ALL TYPE OF MAINTENANCE

PAINTING WALL PAPER, WALL DESIGN, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING TAIL FIXING, SAILING, A/C REPAIRING, DECOR.

CONTACT: AMIR ALI 96609857

www.alazonunited.com



WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684

Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325

www.orbit-oman.com

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



MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES

I am looking for a suitable girl under 32 age with 5.6 Height (BED), muslim/ Cristain religion to marry , I am 38 with fitness, currently employed with good salary and family visa is permitted, currently residing in Muscat oman but originally from Nanded settled in Hyderabad, details call me discussed over WhatsApp and phone 0096879021843



For Genuine Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Yoga, Panchakarma, Massage, Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty therapy & Post Delivery care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair service road, near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

EDUCATION FURNITURE

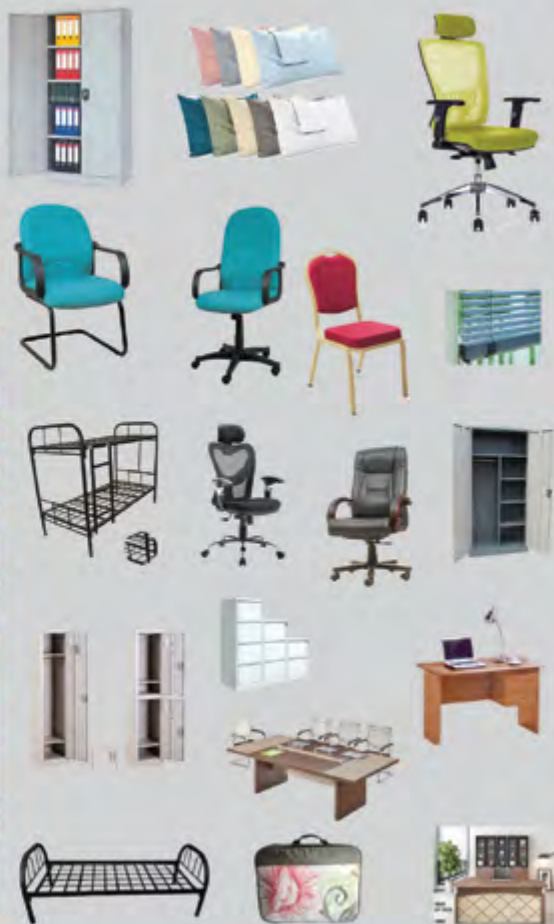


uniQue
CITY TRADING

OUTDOOR SHADES



LABOUR CAMP FURNITURE



Contact: 9611 5353 / 9611 5252 Email: mybusinessoman@gmail.com



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



EURO2020

QUARTERFINALS FRIDAY



SWITZERLAND VS SPAIN
(8pm, Oman time)



BELGIUM VS ITALY
(11pm, Oman time)



England's forward Raheem Sterling (left) celebrates after scoring his team's first goal against Germany at Wembley Stadium in London on Tuesday. Photo right: England striker and captain Harry Kane is ecstatic after scoring on Tuesday (AFP)

ENGLAND END GERMANY JINX

London, UK - Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane fired England into the Euro 2020 quarterfinals as they sealed a 2-0 win against Germany that ended decades of hurt at the hands of their bitter rivals on Tuesday.

Sterling struck with 15 minutes left in a tense last-16 tie at Wembley before Kane clinched England's first knockout stage victory over Germany since 1966.

In the 55 years since England beat the Germans in the World Cup final, the Three Lions had endured a painful litany of defeats against *Die Mannschaft* when the stakes were highest.

England were eliminated from the 1970, 1990 and 2010 World Cups by Germany, who also beat them in the Euro 96 semifinals at Wembley. But Gareth Southgate's side have finally exorcised the ghosts of Paul Gascoigne's tears and their own manager's

penalty miss 25 years ago.

England produced a gritty display capped by clinical finishes from Sterling, who now has three goals in the tournament, and Kane - who finally bagged his first of the competition.

England, yet to concede a goal in the tournament, head to Rome on Saturday for a quarterfinal against the winners of Tuesday's other last-16 tie between Sweden and Ukraine.

Chasing a first major international trophy since 1966, England's side of the draw looks wide open, with a potential semifinal against Denmark or the Czech Republic unlikely to strike fear into their hearts.

It was only England's second knockout stage win in the history of the European Championship and their first victory over Germany at Wembley since 1975.

For Germany manager Joachim

Sterling and Kane find target while Werner and Mueller miss sitters at Wembley

Loew, it was an agonising end to his reign as he prepares to step down after the tournament.

Always keen to deflect attention, Southgate will have relished his moment of redemption, especially since his decision to switch to a three-man defence to match up with the German formation paid off. With the vast majority of the 40,000 crowd supporting England, the players walked out to a wall of sound that included a hostile reception for the German national anthem.



Knockout blow

England needed a tone-setting moment to ease their visible anxiety early on and Sterling provided it as he drove forward for a 25-yard blast that forced a fine save from Manuel Neuer.

With Harry Maguire winning a series of thunderous headers and tackles and Bukayo Saka probing intelligently on the right flank, England gradually took control.

However, Germany almost snatched the lead as Kai Havertz played an inch-perfect pass to

Timo Werner inside the England area.

But Werner endured a dismal first season in front of goal for Chelsea and once again he was unable to produce a precise finish as he shot straight at Jordan Pickford.

A misplaced pass from Thomas Mueller sent Sterling scampering through the Germany defence on the stroke of half-time.

Yet when the ball ran to Kane, he was too slow to apply the finishing touch as he rounded Neuer and Mats Hummels' tackle snuffed out the danger.

Havertz's blistering half-volley forced a superb tip over from Pickford soon after the interval.

It was Saka who made way when Southgate made his first change, sending on Jack Grealish in a game-defining moment. Grealish's presence immediately brought more energy to England

and in the 75th minute they finally delivered the knockout blow.

Grealish worked the ball wide to Luke Shaw and his low cross reached Sterling, who pounced with a clinical close-range finish to send Wembley into ecstasy.

Mueller should have equalised when Havertz's pass sent him clean through, but the Bayern Munich star rolled his shot wide and fell to the turf in dismay.

Kane made Mueller pay in the 86th minute as he finished off a lethal England counter-attack with a diving header past Neuer from Grealish's cross.

During the first day of England's Euro camp at St George's Park, Southgate showed his squad a motivational video featuring some of the team's greatest victories.

Now they have added their own chapter to the list of England's finest moments.

AFP

Dutch coach de Boer resigns after exit

The Hague, Netherlands - Dutch coach Frank de Boer stepped down on Tuesday after the Netherlands' dismal Euro 2020 last-16 elimination by the Czech Republic.

De Boer's decision comes as speculation mounted over his future as manager of the Oranje following the team's 2-0 loss in Budapest on Sunday evening.

"I have decided not to continue as national coach. The target has not been achieved, that is clear," de

Boer, 51, said in a statement released by the Dutch football federation KNVB.

De Boer said when he was appointed in 2020 it was an 'honour' but he was also 'aware of the pressure that would come upon me from the moment I was appointed'.

"That pressure is only increasing now, and that is not a healthy situation for me, nor for the squad in the run-up to such an important game for Dutch football on its

way to World Cup qualification."

The KNVB said in any case, de Boer's contract stipulated that the team should reach at least the quarterfinals, adding 'the contract will not be renewed'.

"It has been decided that both parties will separate," the KNVB added, speaking from its headquarters in Zeist near the central city of Utrecht.

De Boer's short tenure at the helm of the once mighty Dutch

football team, which won the European Championship in 1988 but has struggled in recent years, also means that he will not be in charge for the World Cup qualifier against Norway on September 1.

"Despite Frank's hard work the team did not reach the quarterfinals. We hoped for a better Euro and the choice of Frank turned out differently than we hoped," KNVB director Nico-Jan Hoogma said.

AFP



Netherlands' coach Frank de Boer during the game against Czech Republic



EURO2020

QUARTERFINALS SATURDAY



**CZECH REPUBLIC VS
DENMARK**
(8pm, Oman time)



**ENGLAND VS WINNER OF
SWEDEN/UKRAINE**
(11pm, Oman time)

SWISS DELIGHT

**Mbappe misses penalty as world
champions France knocked out**



Switzerland's goalkeeper Yann Sommer reacts after saving a shot by France's Kylian Mbappe in the penalty shootout at the National Arena in Bucharest on Monday (AFP)

Bucharest, Romania - Switzerland defeated world champions France 5-4 on penalties in the last-16 of Euro 2020 on Monday as Kylian Mbappe missed the decisive spot-kick in the shootout following a thrilling 3-3 draw in Bucharest.

Mario Gavranovic equalised in the 90th minute as Switzerland came from two goals down before Yann Sommer saved Mbappe's penalty to book Switzerland a quarterfinal clash against Spain.

"It was an incredible evening. I am so proud of the team," said goalkeeper Sommer. "At 3-1

nobody believed in us anymore, but before the match we said we'll fight until the end whatever happens."

Haris Seferovic had given Vladimir Petkovic's Switzerland a shock lead on 15 minutes but Ricardo Rodriguez's spot-kick was brilliantly saved by Hugo Lloris early in the second half.

Karim Benzema, recalled to the France squad for the tournament after a five-and-a-half-year international exile, then struck a quick-fire double to put the Euro 2016 finalists back on track.

Paul Pogba's sensational curling effort made it 3-1, but Switzerland forced extra time as Seferovic grabbed his second of the game before Gavranovic levelled in the final minute.

Switzerland converted all five of their penalties before Sommer dived to his right to turn away Mbappe's kick, as the Swiss won a major tournament knockout tie for first time in 83 years.

"The two goals came very quickly after the missed penalty. For normal players it's almost impossible to come back from, but today we were a great team and everyone gave it everything," said Petkovic.

Lloris conceded France paid the price for failing to hold on to their two-goal lead. "It's painful, even more so after a penalty shootout where it

becomes a lottery," said Lloris.

"The only regret we can have is that at 3-1 we need to manage the match better. We've been able to close it out in the past few years."

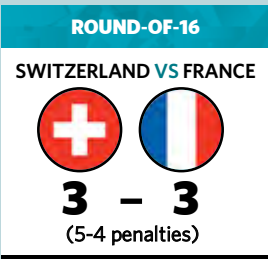
"The Swiss got back into it at 3-2 and the goal in the last minute of normal time really hurt us," he added.

An ailing Benzema was withdrawn at the start of extra-time for Olivier Giroud, moments before Sommer tipped over superbly to deny Pavard. Pogba released Mbappe with a piercing pass through the Swiss defence but the

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) forward sliced wide, with Sommer flying to his right to grasp Giroud's header before his penalty heroics, which came at the expense of the star of France's World Cup triumph in 2018.

France had not lost a competitive match since a qualifier against Turkey in June 2019, but finished on the losing side in their first shootout since the 2006 World Cup final against Italy.

"We need time to get over this disappointment," said Lloris. AFP



Very difficult to move on from this, says Mbappe

Bucharest, Romania - Euro 2020 was supposed to be the next step on Kylian Mbappe's path to greatness and France's golden chance to become world and European champions, only for their campaign to end with a painful failure in a penalty shoot-out.

Questions will be asked in France of why a team boasting a plethora of attacking talent were unable to beat Hungary and Switzerland, with coach Didier Deschamps' tactics, Mbappe's lack of goals and a shaky defence sure to be under the microscope.

"It's very difficult to move on from this," Mbappe said on social media. "There's an immense sadness after this elimination."

But France and Mbappe will have to quickly forget their defeat and ensure the mistakes which cost them in Bucharest are not repeated at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. The pre-tournament favourites at Euro 2020 can



Kylian Mbappe reacts after missing the final penalty on Monday

claim they were still unbeaten, barring penalties, and their World Cup title defence is just 17 months away.

Mbappe burst onto the international scene in Russia in 2018, scoring four goals and becoming the first teenager to net in the World Cup final since Pele 60 years earlier. But he endured a frustrating Euros, starting with a disallowed goal and ending with Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer's save from

what proved to be France's last kick.

"I'm sorry for the penalty. I wanted to help the team but I failed," said the 22 year old. "It will be difficult to find sleep tonight but unfortunately those are the risks of this sport that I love so much."

Despite going four games without a goal, Mbappe was a threat throughout the tournament, only to be let down by his finishing, usually so deadly.

A failure to stay onside

denied him a brilliant individual goal in the opening 1-0 group phase win over Germany, before he missed two big chances in extra time against the Swiss.

Still hobbling after pulling up following a poor left-footed shot wide, the PSG star then saw his spot-kick saved. But Deschamps, whose contract runs until the end of the World Cup, was quick to defend his young striker. "A lot was expected of Kylian," he said. "Even though he didn't score, he often played a decisive role."

"He took the responsibility to take the last penalty and no-one is angry at him."

"In the changing room, no one was more to blame than anyone else. Kylian has taken responsibility, he feels guilty but he shouldn't."

"If we were less solid, it is due to many things and many of them are hard to put your finger on," Deschamps insisted.

AFP

YORK
INSTALL CONFIDENCE

HIGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY
HIGH POWER SAVING

USA TECHNOLOGY

R-410A REFRIGERANT

ANTIBACTERIAL
KOUKIN FILTER

POWERFUL
COMPRESSOR

T-FLOW WAVE
BLADE FAN

UNIFORM AIR
DISTRIBUTION

جنيتكو
Genetco
GENERAL ELECTRIC & TRADING CO. L.L.C.

50
YEARS OF SUCCESS

C.R. No. 1009680
MUSCAT
97693496, 96742452
Available at
Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

SALALAH
79011363



A file photo of Marwan Juma (left) and Talib al Wahaibi

Juma all set to be new OHA chief

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Marwan bin Juma al Juma is all set to be the new Oman Hockey Association (OHA) chairman after he was the only candidate left in fray for the post of chairman as nominations closed for the forthcoming OHA elections (2021-2024) on Tuesday.

Juma, the chairman of Ahli-Sidab club, will succeed Talib al Wahaibi, who was the helm for the past five years.

Wahaibi's tenure was marked by spotlight on Oman hockey across Asia and world with Oman hosting the Asian Champions Trophy (2018), the Asian Hockey Federation Congress (2017) and the recent successful bid of the inaugural FIH Hockey5s World Cup in January 2024.

Incidentally, Wahaibi was also the nominee of Ahl-Sidab Club when he was elected as OHA chairman in 2016. Both Wahaibi and Juma are representatives of Ahli-Sidab, a club which boast of a glorious

history in hockey. The club are current holders of the coveted HM's Cup title and have won a record 12 times in the tournament's 50-year history.

Congratulatory messages poured in for Juma on the social media on Tuesday after it emerged that he was the only candidate left in fray for the OHA chairmanship.

The elections are scheduled to be held on August 10. Among the first to congratulate Juma were Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) chairman Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidi and OOC board member Saada al Ismaili. A large section of hockey fraternity have welcomed his victory.

On Tuesday, the OHA released the final list of candidates following the closing of nominations. There are three in fray for vice-president post, three for secretary, two for treasurer post, three women for a woman board member post and five in race for four seats of board membership.

@ashokmuscat

T20 WORLD CUP TO BEGIN ON OCT 17



Oman Cricket (OC) chairman Pankaj Khimji (2L) and board members at the OC headquarters on Tuesday to celebrate ICC's confirmation of Oman being named T20 World Cup co-hosts with the UAE

ICC confirms the event will be staged in the UAE and Oman

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday confirmed that the T20 World Cup 2021 will be staged in the UAE and Oman from October 17-November 14 due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation in India.

The BCCI will remain the hosts of the event, which will now be held in Dubai International Stadium, the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the

Sharjah Stadium, and the Oman Cricket Academy Ground. As reported earlier by *Muscat Daily*, the 16-team World Cup will be co-hosted by the UAE and Oman.

On Tuesday, the ICC confirmed that the eight-team first round (Qualifiers) will be split across two groups of four each. The two groups will be split between one of the venues in the UAE and Oman.

The Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Amerat near Muscat will be the venue of one group and it will include hosts Oman. The other teams in the group are Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Ireland. The ICC is expected to finalise the schedule soon.

The other four teams in the preliminary round are Bangladesh, Netherlands, Scotland and Namibia.

The top two from each group

will progress to the Super 12s, joining the top-eight ranked T20I teams.

The Super 12s phase will comprise 30 matches. In the main round, teams will be split across two groups of six each, and will be played at three venues in the UAE - Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. This will be followed by three playoff games - the two semifinals and the final.

On Tuesday, Oman Cricket (OC) chief Pankaj Khimji, secretary Madhu Jesrani, board members and chief development officer Duleep Mendis cut a ceremonial cake to celebrate ICC's announcement at the OC headquarters in Amerat.

Pankaj said, "It is indeed a great moment for Oman Cricket to be selected as a venue of the forthcoming T20 World Cup. We shall leave no stone unturned to

exceed the requirements of BCCI and ICC. Oman will certainly extend a very warm welcome to all the teams, officials and media in October."

Later, Pankaj told *Muscat Daily* that BCCI and ICC delegations are expected to make a visit to Muscat in the coming days and attempts will be made to convince them to award more first round games to Oman.

In a press statement, Geoff Allardice, ICC's acting CEO, said that the global body was 'incredibly disappointed' that the World Cup would not be staged in India. "Our priority is to deliver the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 safely, in full and in its current window."

"The decision gives us the certainty we need to stage the event in a country that is a proven international host of

multi-team events in a bio-secure environment," he added.

The BCCI had already moved the suspended Indian Premier League (IPL) to the UAE in September-October after the T20 tournament was halted on May 4 due to a number of players and team officials being infected with COVID-19.

BCCI chief Sourav Ganguly said, "The BCCI is looking forward to hosting the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 tournament in UAE and Oman. We would have been happier hosting it in India but considering the uncertainty due to the COVID-19 situation and the importance of a world championship, the BCCI will now continue to host this tournament in UAE and Oman. The BCCI is looking forward to creating a spectacle."

@ashokmuscat

ONLY
PURE
WATER
AND
PERFECT
TASTE



ONLY
WHAT'S
ESSENTIAL



Omani

Federer survives huge scare

London, UK - Roger Federer survived a huge scare to reach the Wimbledon second round on Tuesday when French opponent Adrian Mannarino was forced to retire injured at the start of the fifth set.

Eight-time champion Federer was level at 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 3-6, 6-2 when Mannarino called it quits after just one point in the decider. The Frenchman, celebrating his 33rd birthday, suffered a bad fall in the seventh game of the fourth set. Despite taking treatment from the trainer, he was hardly able to move and grimacing in pain had to retire.

Just five weeks shy of his 40th birthday, Federer faces either Richard Gasquet or Yuichi Sugita for a place in the last-32.

Earlier, Australia's Ashleigh Barty overcame a mid-match wobble to reach the second round as rain once again halted play on the outside courts on Tuesday. Barty came through 6-1, 6-7 (1/7), 6-1 against Carla Suarez Navarro in a match filled with emotion on Centre Court, whose roof ensured the match



Roger Federer (L) talks to Adrian Mannarino after the latter slipped on the grass during their match. Mannarino later withdrew due to injury

could be finished.

However, 18 first round matches were pushed back to Wednesday with men's doubles matches cut to best-of-three sets in the first two rounds.

Barty's Spanish opponent made sure her 11th and final appearance at The Championships went the distance just months after returning from a winning fight against cancer.

Barty is bidding to add the senior singles Wimbledon title to her 2011 junior crown on the 50th anniversary of her fellow indigenous Australian's Evonne Goolagong Cawley's first title.

Venus Williams had some worrying moments in her match against Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania. However, the five-time Wimbledon singles champion, playing in her 90th Grand Slam, eventually came through 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

Australian men's No 1 Alex de Minaur lost in four sets to Sebastian Korda, two days after the victor's sister Nelly won her first golf major. Korda hit ten aces and 44 winners to defeat De Minaur 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/5). France's Benoit Paire did not escape the ire of the match umpire in his 6-3, 6-4, 6-0 defeat by Diego Schwartzman. He received a warning from the umpire for not trying as two sets down overnight he lost the third 6-0 in just 15 minutes.

AFP



Mark Cavendish

Cavendish wins first Tour stage in five years

Fougères, France - Mark Cavendish broke down and wept after sprinting to his first Tour de France stage victory in five years on Tuesday, taking his tally of wins to 31 on the world's greatest bike race. Deceuninck's Cavendish looked good early on in the fourth stage when he won the intermediate sprint, his maximum 70-point gain on the day handing him the green jersey awarded to sprint points leader.

Shortly after the start of the 150km flat run from Redon to Fougères the entire peloton came to a stop for a brief period, before setting off again, to protest road safety after a series of falls the day before.

AFP

Every day, all day!

