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SAYYID BADR, TURKISH FM HOLD MEETING

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, held a virtual meeting with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu on the sidelines of the 76th meetings of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

During the meeting, H E Sayyid Badr and Cavusoglu stressed the need to upgrade bilateral coordination to keep pace with the two countries' growing economic and investment cooperation.

They also exchanged views on key regional and international developments, including climate challenges, efforts for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the UN agenda for sustainable development.

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Qataris prepare for first Shura Council polls

Shura discusses parents' woes

Complaints received were related to lack of preparedness of schools to receive students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Majlis A'Shura's Education Committee has received a number of complaints from parents about the start of the new academic year 2021/2022.

Most complaints were related to the lack of preparedness of some schools to receive students and the increase in number of students in afternoon schools. Some parents also reported a shortage in school buses.

The committee discussed the Ministry of Education's delay in

printing textbooks and a shortage of teachers which is adding to the workload of existing teaching staff as they are forced to take more classes.

The committee also discussed the presence of male expatriate workers of cleaning companies during instructional hours at girls' schools, pointing out the need to find a mechanism to regulate this aspect.

Talking about the problems, Abu Abdullah al Abri, a parent, said, "My son, who studies in Grade 3, has not received his books so far. Also, it is surprising



(Image for illustrative purpose)

that my son now goes to school every alternate week, with no on-line classes when he is at home." Elaborating further, Abri said

that his son goes to school for one week and is home the next with a few worksheets given as homework. "I request the author-

ities to have one week on-campus alternating with one week online classes."

Abu Muhammad al Balushi,

Oman 55th in Digital Quality of Life Index

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman ranks 55th in the world in the 2021 Digital Quality of Life Index. The sultanate does remarkably well in broadband speed growth (15th), mobile affordability (19th) and online services index (24th), while it lags behind in Internet affordability (74th) and e-security (74th).

The third annual edition of Digital Quality of Life Index (DQL) ranks 110 countries, covering 90 per cent of the global population.

The DQL study is conducted by the cybersecurity company Surfshark and evaluates countries based on a set of five fundamental digital wellbeing pillars: Internet affordability, Internet quality, e-infrastructure, e-security and e-governance. Underpinning these pillars are 14 indicators that are interrelated and work together to provide a measure of overall digital quality of life.

In the GCC, Qatar leads with a global rank of 33rd, followed by Bahrain 39th, UAE 42nd and Saudi Arabia 50th. Kuwait is not part of the Index.

Oman also shows good results in Internet quality (ranked 39th), e-governance (38th) and e-infrastructure (48th). The



Oman's Internet quality is around ten per cent better than the global average and it ranks 15th in broadband speed growth, surpassing the UAE and the US

study found that Oman lacks in Internet affordability (74th rank) when compared with the world. In the GCC, UAE (34th), Bahrain (52nd) and Qatar (65th) do slightly better, while Saudi Arabia (82nd) is placed last in Internet affordability.

Moreover, the Internet has become even less affordable since 2020. People in Oman have to work six hours to afford the cheapest broadband Internet package, one hour and 27 min-

utes more than in 2020.

Nevertheless, Oman's Internet quality is around ten per cent better than the global average and it ranks 15th in broadband speed growth, surpassing the UAE, Saudi Arabia and even the US. Oman's e-governance is also slightly better than the global average and its online services make it to the top 25 worldwide.

"Digital opportunities have proved to be more important than ever during the COVID-19

crisis, stressing the importance for every country to ensure fully remote operational capacities for their economies," said Vytautas Kaziukonis, CEO of Surfshark.

"That is why, for the third year in a row, we continue the Digital Quality of Life research, which provides a robust global outlook on how countries excel digitally. The index sets the basis for meaningful discussions about how digital advancement impacts a country's prosperity and where improvements can be made."

In an all-around picture, six out of ten countries holding the highest scores are located in Europe, following last year's trend. Denmark ranks first in DQL for the second year in a row and is closely followed by South Korea. Finland ranks third, while Israel and the US round out the top five. The bottom five countries are Ethiopia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Guatemala and Angola.

Regionally, the US stands out as a country with the highest digital quality of life in the Americas, while South Korea takes the leading position in Asia. Among countries in Africa, people in South Africa enjoy the highest quality of digital lives whereas Australia leads in Oceania, outperforming New Zealand in various digital areas.

MoCIIP to launch Investors Residence Programme

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In efforts to boost the economy and attract foreign investment, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) will launch an Investors Residency Programme (IRP) on Wednesday.

The programme grants residency to investors in Oman. The residency will be for a period of five to ten years, subject to renewal, while adhering to the procedures and controls regulating the programme. According to MoCIIP, the programme is well planned and takes into account security, legal, social and economic aspects.

The ministry stated that IRP aims to attract and promote qualitative investments that will contribute to the growth of domestic products and the national economy, localisation of industries, transfer of advanced technologies, promotion of economic diversification sectors and creation of job opportunities.

IRP targets several sectors, including industry, tourism, mining, education, health, information technology, logistics, agriculture, fisheries, and green and circular economy.



According to H E Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Undersecretary in Ministry of Economy, IRP complements the government's efforts to diversify the economy and achieve higher growth rates.

Applications for the programme will be submitted via the Investment Services Centre of MoCIIP through an electronic system that links all the concerned authorities, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Royal Oman Police and Oman Vision 2040's Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Unauthorised meteorological activities to attract fine, jail term

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has issued a warning against engaging in meteorological activities without obtaining approval of the competent authority. Violators are liable to imprisonment of up to three years, and fined between RO15,000 and RO50,000.

The authority clarified that meteorological activities comprise of all the competencies of the Directorate General of Meteorology, such as providing and marketing meteorological services, providing early warning services from multiple risks, monitoring weather conditions and preparing reports and warnings.

Meteorological activities include performing weather forecasting and analysis using

Violators are liable to imprisonment of up to three years, and fined between RO15,000 and RO50,000

products ranging from remote sensing models to digital weather forecasting models, collecting and analysing weather statistical data, and conducting research on weather and climate.

The authority stated that these activities include cooperation and coordination with the World Meteorological Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and other relevant organisations to keep

pace with the latest standards and proposed practices to track general weather conditions and aviation.

Additionally, these activities include managing meteorological projects and maintaining meteorological devices and systems, managing the meteorological services budget, and overseeing the billing of meteorological services.

CAA pointed out that Article 30 of the Civil Aviation Law prohibits the practice of civil aviation activities, air navigation and meteorology services without the approval of the competent authority.

"Whoever violates this article will be punished with imprisonment for a period not less than one year and not exceeding three years, and a fine of not less than RO15,000 and not more than RO50,000," the authority stated.

INDIAN NAVY CHIEF TOURS SHABAB OMAN II



Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of Indian Naval Staff, toured *Shabab Oman Ship II* of the Royal Navy of Oman on Tuesday. The official was received on board the ship by Rear Admiral Saif Nasser al Rahbi, RNO Commander. During the tour, members of the Indian naval delegation met the commander and crew of *Shabab Oman Ship II* and got acquainted with the ship's role, its achievements, community activities and international voyages (ONA)

‘Harmony, tolerance lead to better and lasting results’

Muscat - Oman has reiterated its continued cooperation with the UN Secretary General and all member states with the primary aim of achieving the UN's noble goals, notably establishing and consolidating international peace and security.

This was stated in the sultanate's speech delivered by Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, before the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

The sultanate, under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, has affirmed its continuous commitment to the main fundamentals and principles of its foreign policy.

Oman's foreign policy advocates good neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, respect for international laws and charters, support for cooperation among countries and the enhancement of opportunities for internal dialogue, said Sayyid Badr in the speech.

The sultanate also stressed its conviction in the need to resolve differences in a spirit of harmony and tolerance that has always been the mainstay of the country's human civilisation. Oman believes that harmony and tolerance lead to better and more lasting results than could be achieved by conflict and strife.

Dealing with the pandemic

Sayyid Badr also highlighted the efforts exerted by the sultanate while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that crises and challenges are also opportunities for nations to test their readiness and enhance their capabilities. "Despite the great challenges and hurdles posed to our daily lives by COVID-19, the pandemic did not discourage us, neither did it weaken our resolve to confront it or address its impacts and repercussions.

"In Oman, the availability of vaccines has had a significant positive effect in strengthening our drive to address the pandemic. This consolidated our hope to control the pandemic and experience a gradual return to normal life," he said.

"Through preventive measures and by conducting the National Immunisation Campaign - covering all targeted age-groups - my country has been able to curb the spread of the pandemic and cut down the number of infections, deaths and cases of hospitalisation. This helped us resume all economic, commercial and social activities and lift travel restrictions, while at the same time adhering to preventive and precautionary measures.

"As we continue our efforts to tackle the pandemic, we call upon the international community to strengthen cooperation and solidarity. We also urge vaccine producing and donor states to do their best to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines to all countries and peoples, especially those in less developed regions suffering sharp shortage of medical facilities and capabilities. The aim is to sustain international cooperation and societal interdependence and to ensure decent life for people everywhere.

"We take this opportunity to offer a word of sincere appreciation and admiration to those in charge of health systems, especially frontline teams in all countries of the world. We value the tremendous efforts and great sacrifices made by international organisations for the sake of all humanity."

Interconnected world

Sayyid Badr stressed on the fact that we live in an interconnected world and sharing common interests and destiny. "We are pleased with what pleases the world and regret what is harmful to it. Therefore, we strive with all our energies and capabilities to contribute to the advancement of peace at all regional and international levels. We are committed to our position of clar-

Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, delivers speech at the 76th Session of UN General Assembly



ity, frankness and objectivity. We are also firm in our adherence to our values and principles. We uphold a balanced and constructive approach in dealing with all issues.

"From this standpoint, my country supported and welcomed positive developments that resulted from the AI Ula summit held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We appreciate the success of reconciliation efforts led by the State of Kuwait.

"We also affirm our support for the fair cause of the Palestinian people and their legitimate demands for independence from Israel. We support the Palestinian people's right to establish their own independent state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the international law, relevant Security Council Resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative."

Yemen and Afghanistan

On the Yemeni crisis, Sayyid Badr said Oman will persist in its efforts and continue to work with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UN envoy, the United States envoy for Yemen and the Yemeni parties concerned. This is with the aim of ending the war by reaching a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire respected by all sides, as well as full resumption of humanitarian efforts to provide the needs of the brethren in Yemen, especially medicine, healthcare, food, fuel and housing.

"We add our voice to all who believe in the need to reach a comprehensive political settlement to the crisis in Yemen in a manner that restores to its people security, stability and normal life, while at the same time safeguarding the security and interests of the countries of the region.

"In the meantime, we hope that the Vienna

We strive with all our energies and capabilities to contribute to the advancement of peace at all regional and international levels... We are also firm in our adherence to our values and principles. We uphold a balanced and constructive approach in dealing with all issues

SAYYID BADR AL BUSAIDI

talks over Iran's nuclear programme will lead to results that achieve the desired consensus among all parties because we strongly believe that this will be in the interest of the region and the entire world. "Like the rest of world countries, we have followed up the recent developments in Afghanistan. Here, we would like to express hope that all Afghan parties would work towards reconciliation and advance the interests of the Afghan people and their aspiration for security, stability, economic and social development as well as measures to establish positive relations with neighbouring countries and the international community."

International threats

Sayyid Badr stated that Oman condemns all forms and manifestations of terrorism and supports all efforts and strategies aimed to eradicate this negative phenomenon which contradicts religious and human values, clashes with civilised ethics and threatens global security and stability.

"The sultanate also calls for eliminating threats to international maritime trade. It urges full adherence to treaties, agreements and the international law to ensure freedom of navigation in a manner that secures the flow of trade between countries and enhances opportunities for economic growth. We appeal to all member states to fulfil their commitments made under relevant treaties and disarmament agreements, in particular treaties on denuclearisation and removal of weapons of mass destruction in order to secure global stability."

Sustainable Development Goals 2030

He stated that Oman has sought to translate its

international commitment towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG 2030) by integrating three components - economic, social and environmental - as well as the goals of the sultanate's development strategies and plans. "We view this as a major pillar of Oman Vision 2040 and its executive plans.

"We are fully aware that the road to sustainable development remains a long and difficult one and that, to meet our obligations, we have to depend on our ability to face challenges, and this requires solid international and regional co-operation. "Towards this end, we recognise that renewed commitment to social justice serves as the real foundation for work at both levels of national and international policy. Here, we welcome and support investment and economic diversification programmes, which constitute key priorities of development plans in the sultanate. This will contribute to maximising benefits and imparting opportunities to our partners and society."

Climate change

Like other countries of the world, Sayyid Badr noted, Oman attaches great attention to the risks posed by climate change. These are hazards that affect environmental, agricultural, economic and infrastructure systems. To counter climate change and limit its increasing negative effects, Oman has implemented the draft National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change, which includes reports on the expected impacts on development sectors and sets out plans for appropriate adaptation.

"My country has recently submitted the second Nationally Determined Contributions Report on reducing greenhouse gas emissions as part of its commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The world has been witnessing new transformations brought about by scientific and technological progress, which makes it incumbent upon us all, once again, to emphasise the importance of strengthening global partnership in order to maximise the benefits to be gained from advanced technologies. It is also necessary to keep pace with technological progress within the context of SDG and to confront the challenges of the modern age, a byproduct of which is the threat to the climate."

Role of youth, women

Further in his speech, he said there is no doubt that women have a great role to play, alongside men, in building a social fabric that ensures the proper upbringing of young people upon whom the hopes of nations rest. "You are well aware that young people are the hope of the present and the mainstay of the future and countries rely upon their young generations for development. Therefore, it is essential for governments to place youth on top their priorities, and to provide everything that would advance young people's capabilities. I emphasise my country's commitment to enabling women and youth to acquire knowledge and all possible capabilities, and to ensure their active participation in the process of construction, development, innovation and prosperity.

"In conclusion, we observe that the international community faces pressing issues that must be addressed with international cooperation to attain the goals of stability, harmony and prosperity as aspired by humanity. Hence, we believe that consolidating the true concept of partnership and common destiny among all peoples and societies is the most appropriate means to achieve these goals and enhance the esteemed status that the United Nations aspires for and seeks to sustain."

ONA





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Rainfall increased by 9.2% in 2020: NCSI

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Average rainfall in the sultanate increased by 9.2 per cent in 2020, recording precipitation of 103mm compared to 94.3mm in 2019, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The centre's statistics indicate that January recorded the highest average rainfall in the sultanate in 2020 at 33.6mm, while December recorded the lowest - 0.5mm. In a single month, Dhofar governorate recorded the highest amount of rainfall - 197.4mm in May 2020.

'The average maximum temperature in the sultanate in 2020 was 28.70°C, while the average minimum temperature was 27.50°C. North Batinah governorate recorded the highest average monthly temperature in the sultanate at 37.10°C in June 2020,' NCSI said.

The maximum average humidity in the sultanate in 2020 was 71.3 per cent compared to 87 per cent in the previous year.

Dhofar governorate recorded the highest average humidity in the sultanate with 78.8 per cent in July 2020.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources established 14 rainwater harvesting stations to enhance precipitation and increase the level of underground water.

The ministry said it is working to enhance the underground water table and preserve water resources from waste and depletion.

It is also continuing water exploration and working on finding new water resources to meet the increasing needs of drinking water and other uses.

The ministry added that it continues to improve evaluation mechanisms for water resources, monitoring the water situation and water use data, and strengthening hydrometric monitoring systems.

Meanwhile, 169 dams have been registered in Oman till 2020, according to NCSI. These include 115 surface storage dams, 51 underground recharge dams, and three protection dams.

PDO signs 11 agreements for social investment initiatives

Muscat - Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) entered into 11 memorandums of collaboration (MoCs) on Tuesday confirming its sustainable development commitments.

A signing ceremony was held under the patronage of H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed bin Awad al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, at the PDO Knowledge World in Muscat.

PDO stated that it has committed to support a host of new initiatives to benefit communities across the sultanate.

The initiatives include commitments in the key areas of health, safety and environment, community infrastructure development as well as youth and women empowerment, all of which are fully aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a PDO statement said.

To support the provision of providing the best health services to citizens residing within the company's concession area, PDO is funding the purchase of a new mini dialysis unit for Al Mazyona Hospital. The project will ease the suffering of patients who would otherwise have had to travel 280km to Salalah for treatment.

Other health, safety and the environment pledges include PDO's support to people with disabilities and genetic diseases. As part of this, the company said it is 'backing five non-governmental organisations by providing assistive devices for people with mobility disabilities to the Association for the Welfare of Handicapped Children and the Oman Association for the Disabled in Ibri and Sohar'.

PDO will also fund awareness



We are committed to meeting pressing community needs through the provision of important facilities and services to support in areas such as health and employment

STEVE PHIMISTER

and therapy programmes to be provided by the Oman Down Syndrome Association and Oman Hereditary Blood Disorders Association. PDO said providing job opportunities to enable Omani youth to earn a decent living is one of its main priorities. In line with that, PDO is funding the establishment of four kiosks to create 15 job opportunities for recovered drug addicts with the Amanah Waqf Funds Management Company.

'PDO will also sponsor the establishment of five agricultural

reserves which will be used to train people with low income on growing seasonal agriculture products to be sold in different outlets creating an extra income, which is fully aligned with the government's efforts in achieving the no poverty goal of the UN SDGs.' They will be supervised by Dar al Atta'a association.

The company will also support the distribution of 116 laptops manufactured by an Omani SME for low-income students.

PDO managing director Steve Phimister said, "PDO continues

to develop its social investment programme to support the communities in which we work, making every effort to provide the necessities for a decent life for all segments of the community.

"Our commitment and support are targeted at meeting pressing community needs through the provision of important facilities and services to support in areas such as health and employment. We will only succeed if the communities in which we operate succeed, and these programmes will no doubt empower citizens and contribute to the sustainable development of Omani communities."

Another agreement signed at the event aims to establish a multi-purpose centre for the Omani Women's Association and Al Wafa Centre for Rehabilitation for the Directorate of So-

cial Development in Shaleem.

To support the company's efforts in reducing carbon emissions and raising public awareness in this field, PDO is launching the Dheyaa Solar Project, which will include installing solar panels on the roofs of public buildings in both North and South Ghubra in the wilayat of Al Jaser.

The MoCs confirming these commitments were signed by Phimister and external affairs and value creation director Eng Abdul-Amir al Ajmi and senior government officials including H E Dr Laila, H E Dr Fatima Al Ajmi, Undersecretary for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs - Ministry of Health, H H Sayyida Hujaija bint Jaifar al Said, chairperson of the Association for the Welfare of the Handicapped, and Hamed bin Sultan al Busaidi, wali of Al Jaser.



90% of Masirah fishermen's village complete: Ministry

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has completed 90 per cent of construction work of a fishermen's village in the wilayat of Masirah in South Sharqiyah governorate.

The village is being built on an area of 4,537sqm to support the fisheries sector. The ministry has stated that it aims to establish

special villages for fishermen to enable jobseekers in coastal areas to work in the sector, which in turn will enhance the sector's contribution to the national economy.

"The ministry has allocated land close to the coast to establish villages for fishermen with all facilities for a conducive and safe environment for those engaged in the sector in various governorates," said a ministry official.

"Construction work at the

Masirah fishermen's village is expected to be completed in October," the official informed.

"It is one of the pilot projects for fishermen and will include all facilities and services, accommodating at least 50 fishermen in the first stage."

The ministry recently announced the completion of a fishermen's village in Al Wusta which is currently benefitting over 200 fishermen in the governorate.

Oman hosts cybersecurity drill for Arab countries, OIC members

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), represented by Oman National Computer Emergency Readiness Team (OCERT), organised the ninth cybersecurity drill for the Arab countries and member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), on Tuesday.

The drill, themed 'Enhancing Cybersecurity Readiness', saw participation of over 20 countries. The annual drill keeps pace with the latest developments in the field of cybersecurity, cyberattacks and malware. The drill this year focused on simulating various cybersecurity incidents, and ways to address such risks.



The drill aimed to unify cooperation in the field of cybersecurity in the Arab region and strengthen the role of the International Telecommunication Union in building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technology in the Arab and regional countries. It also aimed to raise aware-

ness of the mechanisms and procedures used to deal with various electronic risks and threats.

The drill each year targets the national cybersecurity centres in Arab countries and the member states of the OIC.

OCERT was chosen for the fourth time in a row to host the exercise as it chairs the Board of

Directors of OIC-CERT.

Oman foiled a staggering 14bn cyberattacks over the course of 2019, MTCIT revealed in its 2019 Annual Report.

In addition to uncovering and tackling 332 cybersecurity incidents in 2019, Oman thwarted 1,371,110,344 malicious attempts against government networks.

In 2019, Oman CERT discovered and handled 483,794 attempted service attacks, 152,480 web attacks, 152 malware attacks, 89,505 mobile attacks and 2,099,498 phishing attacks. The ministry said it always supports the security of government entities by providing network protection, information systems security, responding to cyberattacks, and threats related to government information security and providing security to the cyberspace in Oman.

2,326 COVID-19 active cases in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

More than 97.9 per cent of COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from hospitals across the country, the Ministry of Health said on Tuesday.

There are 2,326 active

COVID-19 active cases in Oman.

As of Tuesday, as many as 297,252 COVID-19 patients have recovered since the outbreak.

For the past months, the rate of daily recovery from the virus has been good.

So far, Oman has reported 303,705 COVID-19 cases and

4,095 related deaths.

Thirty-two new COVID-19 cases were reported on Tuesday while no new deaths were recorded, Ministry of Health said in a statement.

'The total number of patients admitted in hospitals is 36, including 20 in intensive care units,' the statement added.

SHEIKH KHALIFA MEETS US OFFICIAL



H E Sheikh Khalifa Ali al Harthi, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs in Foreign Ministry, met at the ministry's premises on Tuesday with Anna Morris, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs at the Department of the Treasury. During the meeting, they explored aspects of cooperation between the two friendly countries, and means to develop it in the financial and economic fields. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Humaid Ali al Ma'ani, head of the Global Affairs Department in Foreign Ministry, H E Leslie M Tsou, US Ambassador to the sultanate, and a number of officials from both sides (ONA)

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	3,952.13
BSE Sensex	59,667.60

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)	
Indian Rs	192.52
Pakistani Rs	440.38
Bangladeshi Taka	222.46
Philippine Peso	132.63
Sri Lankan Rs	518.82

*Rates as on September 28
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

TikTok says it has over 1bn users

TikTok said on Monday it now has more than 1bn active users, just four years after the hugely popular video-sharing app was launched by Chinese group ByteDance.

Already popular before the coronavirus pandemic - mainly due to its viral choreography set to pop songs - TikTok received a major boost amid lockdowns, school closures and telecommuting.

The video platform has gained more than 300mn users since July 2020, the last time the company had reported user numbers.

Initially built on the principle of 15-second videos, the platform raised the time limit to three minutes in early July to attract a wider audience and compete with YouTube.

Brent crude price surges above \$80 per barrel

Hong Kong, China - The price of Brent crude oil jumped on Tuesday above US\$80 per barrel for the first time in almost three years on expectations for surging demand and concerns about supplies as the world slowly emerges from the pandemic crisis.

With the rollout of vaccines and easing of lockdowns this year, bets on demand for the black gold have surged, while an energy crunch in the northern hemisphere has sent natural gas prices to a seven-year high leading to a spillover into the oil market.

At the same time crude stockpiles have shrunk, while increases in output by OPEC and other major producers including Russia have been unable to temper the rally in the commodity.

Brent crude climbed 0.9 per cent in morning Asian trade to US\$80.24, its highest level since October 2018. West Texas Intermediate gained 0.9 per cent to US\$76.07 per barrel.

"It looks like the oil rally has still got some legs," John Driscoll, at JTD Energy Services, said, adding, "I just don't see any evidence yet that the rally has topped out."



Oman crude tops \$77 a barrel

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With global oil prices rising for the fourth week in a row, Oman crude oil future also continued its upward trend on Tuesday.

Oman crude price at the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) jumped 1.6 per cent on Tuesday and closed at US\$77.37 per barrel. The current price of Oman crude is at its highest level since October 2018.

The average price of Oman crude (for September delivery) has stabilised at US\$72.73 per barrel, which is US\$1.07 higher than August delivery price.

With sharp increases in global crude prices this year, the average price of Oman crude during the first eight months of 2021 surged by nearly 48 per cent compared to the average price recorded in 2020.

The sultanate achieved an average price of US\$67.9 per barrel for its oil shipments during the January-August period of this year against the average price of US\$46 recorded in 2020, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The advance comes even as the global economic recovery shows signs of slowing owing to supply chain issues and concerns about the Delta COVID-19 variant that is leading to a spike in infections in several countries.

Prices have rocketed from the dark days of early last year, when lockdowns around the world hammered demand and saw the price of Brent sink to as low as US\$16 and WTI drop into negative territory.

AFP

MDO's Liwa quarry project to begin operations in Oct

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Minerals Development Oman (MDO) on Tuesday said that the commercial operations at its Gabbro quarry project in Wilayat of Liwa will commence in October with a production capacity of 2.4mn tonnes.

Since obtaining the exploration licence, the company has conducted a geological and economic feasibility study that revealed a recoverable amount of about 211mn tonnes of gabbro in a mine life of about 50 years, covering an area of 2.2 sqkm.

Based on the feasibility study, Ahjaar Mining Company was established in 2019 to operate the project in partnership with As-sarain Group and Al Fajar Al

Alamia Company.

Purchase agreements were also signed for 2.4mn tonnes of gabbro. The company has ambitious plans to increase the production to reach 5mn tonnes in the next phase.

This is the first mining license that MDO obtained in January 2019. Gabbro is witnessing an increased demand by a number of Gulf and regional markets, due to its rapid importance to the construction sector.

MDO was established with a clear strategic vision to invest in the mining sector in the sultanate and to increase its contribution to the growth of the economic and social sectors by creating job opportunities and building local capacities and competencies.



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Qatar Airways gets \$3bn state aid after huge losses

Doha, Qatar - Qatar Airways said on Monday it received US\$3bn in state aid to weather the coronavirus travel downturn and to offset losses it blamed on the cost of grounding aircraft.

The airline reported an overall loss of US\$4.1bn for the year to March 31, double the figure for the same period the year before.

Without the cost of grounding its Airbus A380 and A330 aircraft, Qatar Airways reported an underlying operating loss for the year of US\$228.3mn compared with US\$310mn the previous year.

The Gulf carrier did report a slight uptick in overall earnings and a 4.6 per cent increase in the amount of cargo carried in the last 12-month period.

Qatar is among several governments that have stepped into support their national carriers through the coronavirus shutdown, which has pummelled global travel and the aviation industry.

In September 2020 the airline reported it had received US\$2bn in state aid after its annual losses exceeded 50 per cent of share capital.

"We adapted our entire commercial operation to respond to ever-evolving travel restrictions and never stopped flying," Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar al

Baker said in a statement, calling the last 12-month period 'difficult'.

"While our organisation did not receive any subsidies in the form of salary support or grants, (the Qatari government) did provide an equity injection of QR11bn (US\$3bn) to support the business's continuity."

Monday's results are the first full year numbers since the United Arab Emirates, a key market for the Gulf carrier, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, ended a boycott of Qatar in place since June 2017.

They had accused Doha of links to extremist groups and being too close to Iran, Riyadh's regional arch-rival - charges Qatar denied - closing their airspace, borders and markets to Doha until a deal was struck in January.

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The ultimate resettlement solutions provider

Oman's best immigration consultant, M-J Global is now open in Dubai



Syed Mustafa Hussaini, Co-Founder and Managing Director, M-J Global



Ajay Kuriakose Jacobs, Co-Founder and Managing Director M-J Global

M-J Global is a known name for people in Oman and Sri Lanka when it comes to quality immigration procedures at low cost. Now, in efforts to expand operations, it has opened a branch in Dubai.

M-J Global is an immigration service company having operations in Oman, Sri Lanka and, now, Dubai, specialising in all kinds of visas for its clients that include, Permanent Resident Visas, Citizenship by Investment, Study Visas and Visit Visas. With years of experience, it has an exceptional list of successful clients. M-J Global is well poised to deliver authentic and quality immigration services. It deals in services for Canada, Germany, Portugal, UK, USA, Greece, Norway, Moldova, Cyprus, Malta, Spain, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

M-J Global runs on the principles of honesty, transparency and integrity and because of this it has a well-documented success rate.

The goal of M-J Global is to make applying for a permanent resident visa to the country of choice as easy as possible for its clients. This begins with a professional immigration evaluation by its team of experts.

Here, founders of M-J Global, **Syed Mustafa Hussaini and Ajay Kuriakose Jacobs** – a member of the Investment Migration Council who is popularly known as 'Immigration Guru' – talk about the future plans of the company and current developments in the world of immigration.

Q. Congratulations on the opening of your new branch in Dubai! How do you feel?

A. Thank you so much. Well, the love of the people has been great and the team's hard work definitely shows. This is another big milestone that M-J Global has achieved.

Q. What are M-J Global's future plans?

A. M-J Global has been an ambitious venture from the beginning. There were many who made fun of us and discouraged our business. Today, the success we have seen through sheer hard work keeps all those negativities at bay. The milestones that the company has achieved so far are evidence in themselves. Qatar is our next target and we are hopeful of opening a branch there before the end of 2021.

Q. What can we expect from M-J Global?

A. You can expect everything we stand for as a company. Honest counselling, proper guidance, and a detailed profile evaluation. As you know, we are proud to have customers around the globe. The pandemic has only made the global reach even better in our case. We are currently re-designing our website that will enable anyone from any part of the world to avail our services without any third party intervention.

Q. What are the services M-J Global provide?

A. The three major categories of services M-J Global focuses on are:

1. Study Visa: This service is structured for all those ambitious learners to fuel their passion with a better educational qualification that enables them to pursue their dreams on the global platform. We are currently offering a portfolio of world-class colleges and universities from Canada, USA, UK and Australia for Diploma, Bachelor's, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's degree programs. The courses in Canada are well sought after due to its post-study work permit facility that allows students to work in Canada after they complete their studies. This opens the pathway to their permanent residency in Canada.

2. Skilled Migration: This service includes the federal skilled worker program of Canada where the candidate can choose from the traditional Express Entry, Provincial Nominee Program or the new Atlantic Immigration Program. The applicant enrolls into the program based on a de-

finied set of eligibility criteria that includes Age, Work Experience, Language Proficiency and Education. Under Express Entry, the minimum eligibility criteria is to have at least 67 points out of 100 in order to get into the Express Entry pool which is further evaluated out of 600 points based on the cumulative ranking system.

3. Business/Investment based Immigration: This is a very elaborate portfolio where we deal in more than 25 countries, including Canada, USA, UK, Germany, Norway, Finland, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Grenada, Dominica and Vanuatu. This segment is further categorised into:

- **Residency by Investment:** This is a concept introduced by various countries where the applicant can start a business or do a real estate investment. Due to this activity, the primary applicant and the family gets residency of that country. In such programs, citizenship can be applied in the fifth year upon satisfying some basic criteria. For example, Portugal requires a stay of seven days per year, while Germany requires an entry once in six months.
- **Citizenship by Investment:** This is a program where the primary applicant and the family get direct access to citizenship by way of government donation or real estate investment. Countries that offer these programs are Dominica, Grenada, Vanuatu, Turkey, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda.

Q. You have launched the USA EB-3 program in Oman, Dubai and Sri Lanka. What is this program?

A. It isn't a recently launched program. We have been offering it for many years but the program has just started becoming more popular in recent times. Yes, it is a very successful program where the applicant and the family get a direct Green Card for USA. Every fiscal year (October 1 to September 30), approximately 140,000 employment-based immigrant visas are made available to qualified applicants under the provisions of USA immigration law. Employment based immigrant visas are divided into five preference categories. Certain spouses and children may accompany or follow-to-join employment-based immigrants. A direct Green Card can be obtained through EB-3 visa. A Green Card, officially known as a permanent resident card, is a legal document which allows you to live and work permanently in the USA. It is issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Q. So how does one get a USA Green Card?

A. The USA EB-3 Visa is an employment based visa which allows you and your family to accompany you and get Green Cards. The '3' in EB-3 refers to the third preference category of EB Visas. This visa requires a sponsoring employer and is not a 'self-petition' category visa. A limited number of EB-3 visas are issued every year. Out of total 140,000 immigrant visas issued for the employment category, 28.6% are allocated for EB-3. After the quota has been reached for the year, the rest of the applications are put on hold for next year.

EB-3 allows three different types of workers who qualify for the visa. The three sub-categories are:

- **Skilled Workers:** Completion of at least two years of job experience or training.
- **Professionals:** Proof of higher educational degree or equivalent to a Bachelor's degree.
- **Unskilled Workers:** Requires at least two years of work experience or training.

Benefits of USA EB-3 Visa

- Allows foreign workers to live in the US permanently and work.
- Allows you to travel freely within and outside the USA as well as shift and live in a different state in the USA.
- The main benefit of this visa is after a year, the job position and the employer can be switched

as the primary condition of the visa is to work only 1 year with the employer who has provided the job.

Eligibility requirements to travel under USA EB-3 Visa:

- Valid and permanent job offer from a US employer
- Qualified to meet the job description in terms of education level and job experience

Q. In 2021, you have become a household name in the country owing to Canada's Owner Operated LMIA program. Guess you have many happy families?

A. It is humbling to witness the happiness of so many families. The program is called Owner Operated LMIA – Labour Market Impact Assessment. This is a program through which applicants get additional 50 to 200 points to their CRS (Comprehensive Ranking System) score in the express entry pool system.

Express entry needs 67 points to be eligible for application. The points are awarded based on age, education, work experience, IELTS etc. After this the profile is submitted and it goes into the express entry pool where the primary points are converted as per the CRS Grid and marked out of 600 points. Majority of the profiles score in the range of 280 to 400 points. Currently, the ITA – or invitation to apply – comes at 465 and above which makes it impossible for the other profiles to get invited. Through the LMIA scheme, we get additional 200 points added to the CRS making the candidate easily ready for ITA.

The 50 or 200 points are given based on any of the following activities:

- 1 Buy 51% share of a company that is already running (approx. CAD 120,000 of investment). It's a passive investment.
- 2 Buy 100% share of a running company ranging from CAD 80,000 and upwards and get involved in day-to-day operations. This is an active investment.
- 3 OR show a business concept with a minimum investment plan of CAD 100,000.

By doing any of the above activities, the LMIA officer will award 50 or 200 points. By default, you get a work permit upon an LMIA approval, which is the biggest advantage of this program.

In the event that one gets 50 points instead of 200, the applicant will get the filing done under provincial program where they will be awarded additional 600 points and get the invitation. The only rule is that you will need to reside in that particular province for two years.

Whether it is Plan A or Plan B, the Owner Operated LMIA program will help you and your family in migrating to Canada.

Q. Could you tell us more about the European Business immigration programs?

A. Under the European Business Immigration programs, we deal in Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Norway and Finland. These programs are known for their simplicity and fast processing time. More than the immigration aspect of it, the program is precious for those people who want to expand their existing business to a European country. One of the main advantages of this program is support from the government to those starting businesses in these countries.

The program requires a person to go and start a business in any of these countries with a minimum capital investment ranging from Euro 15,000 to Euro 50,000, and based on this proposal, the primary applicant and the family gets a resident visa of the country valid for 2-3 years (depending on the country). The processing time of these programs is between 3-5 months. As for the stay criteria, you are required to only make an entry once in six months with the full family to the respective country. The documentation process is straightforward, and you are not re-

quired to give any language examination to get the resident visa. However, being a European country, as per European Union protocol, the primary applicant and the family are supposed to clear the language examination on the fifth year before applying for citizenship. This again is supported by the government and the test can be done after 2-3 months of government supported training.

The advantages of these countries are mainly focused on the families wherein they have access to excellent medical facilities, cost effective, superior European education system and powerful passport. Passport can be applied on the fifth year after completing local language examination.

Q. Is there any way for people who are doing business to migrate to Canada without IELTS exam?

A. This is a frequently asked question and YES we do have a fabulous program called the Intra Company Transfer program (ICT). The Canada Intra Company Transfer Work Permit, sometimes called Canada ICT Visa, is suitable for key workers and owners of multinational corporations who can be transferred to work in the affiliated Canadian company, either start-up or established one.

There are many advantages of intra company transfer to Canada, as compared to applying for a regular work permit. In addition to transferring expertise of key staff to the Canadian affiliate, getting ICT Work Permit is facilitated. It does not require an LMIA, qualifies for two-week processing time under the Global Skills Strategy, as well as experience gained on ICT Work Permit can be used to facilitate immigration to Canada after one year of working for the Canadian affiliate.

Canadian and foreign enterprises must be legal entities that have a parent, subsidiary, branch or affiliate business relationship. Both Canadian and foreign companies must be, or will be doing business. Doing business regularly means, systematically, and continuously providing goods and/or services by a parent, branch, subsidiary or affiliate in Canada and foreign countries, as the case may be. It does not include the mere presence of an agent or office in Canada. For instance, a company with no employees which exists in name only and is established for the sole purpose of facilitating the entry of intra-company transferees would not qualify. Evidence of the fact that a company is actively doing business such as annual reports (for public companies), articles of incorporation, profit/loss statements, partnership agreements, license to do business, business tax returns and registration with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency as an employer, may be useful. Both the Canadian and the foreign branches of the company must be doing business for the intended stay in Canada of the intra-company transfers.

Upon issuance of the Work Permit, the applicant can apply for permanent residence of Canada under Canada Experience Class.

Q. Why study in Canada?

A. There are many reasons why more than 400,000 international students choose to live and study in Canada each year.

Here are just a few:

- **Qualifications from Canadian study programs are highly respected around the world**

Canada has high academic standards. This will ensure that you will be earning a high-quality education experience. It will provide introductions and open many doors to an excellent future and career advancement. A Canadian degree, diploma or certificate is highly respected around the world and often recognised as equivalent to programs in the United States and countries in the Commonwealth.

- **Studying in Canada is affordable**

The quality of education and the standard of living in Canada are amongst the highest in the

world. Yet best of all, tuition fees for international students are lower in Canada than in many other countries such as the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. For these reasons, a study in Canada project is the preferred choice for students attending post-secondary education at college or university levels.

- **Canada is known as a multicultural society**

With so many of the world's ethnic groups fully represented in Canada, everyone can feel at home in Canada. Its rich cultural heritage provides the widest choices of ethnic food and recreational activities.

- **Canada provides numerous safe and secure communities to live and study**

Canada continues to rank among the highest in United Nations surveys. It has three cities (Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto) counted among the world's most livable, according to the Economist's annual surveys. As a Canadian temporary resident and while you study in the country, you can enjoy many of the same rights, freedoms and privileges that protect all Canadians. This is the hallmark of what makes Canada such a stable and peaceful society.

- **Canada offers world-class language education opportunities**

Canada is a bilingual country with English and French as the official languages. And it is a global leader in language education and training. Here you will find many world-class language education options that will help improve your proficiency and ability in either of our official languages. For many, language courses are also important to support an eventual immigration project (Canada permanent residence) which requires high proficiency in English or French.

- **Canadian schools offer an exciting campus lifestyle**

Campus lifestyle is an important consideration for many international students and Canada does not disappoint. Campuses across the country feature the latest in technology with wireless hotspots throughout enabling a rich experience featuring online interactive learning experience. Campus facilities often include Olympic standard sports facilities, concert halls, student-managed government, radio, newspapers and on campus businesses within an expansive infrastructure. Canadian universities and colleges typically feature the best mix of academic and leisure lifestyle in an environment that facilitates immeasurable opportunities to meet students from a varied international student microcosm.

- **Canadian institutions are innovative and offer an abundance of research opportunities**

Canada's many universities and colleges are leaders in research – one of the hallmarks of a Canadian post-secondary education experience. With a study in Canada experience, you can become a part of this important part of the Canada study landscape. In Canada, government and industry often collaborate together to support a myriad of research projects in the medical sciences, computer technology, telecommunications, agricultural sciences and environmental sciences.

- **Canadian government policy offers many immigration programs for permanent residence after a period of study in Canada**

Current government policy caters to a growing pool of international students with strong ties to Canada, including Canadian study credentials and Canada based work experience. Qualified students on a study permit are encouraged to apply for Canadian permanent residence under various federal or provincial immigration programs without ever having to leave Canada.

Q. Any special message for Muscat Daily readers?

A. Keep loving us, keep supporting us and keep encouraging us to bring the best to the market. We are always there as your ultimate resettlement solutions provider. As always, choose the best, choose M-J Global.

Al Mouj Muscat's contribution to growth celebrated on World Tourism Day

The United Nation's World Tourism Day on September 27 this year championed the social and economic benefits of tourism, with Oman's Al Mouj Muscat a shining example as a sector leader.

Tourism is a key pillar of the sultanate's drive towards sustainable and diversified economic growth in line with Oman Vision 2040. As part of its strategy, in 2006 the Oman government established Al Mouj Muscat as the country's first Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC), working in partnership with leading developer Majid Al Futtaim.

With the aim of becoming the country's premier leisure and lifestyle destination, today the multi award-winning Al Mouj boasts annual footfall of over 3.9mn people who visit for holidays, discovery, culture and high-profile events.

As well as the draw of its pristine oceanfront setting, Al Mouj Muscat has invested in creating tourism assets that have global appeal including Al Mouj Golf, Al



Mouj Marina and The Walk.

At the 400-berth Al Mouj Marina, 17 independent tour operators hosted close to 1,900 sea tours annually, a figure set to grow when pandemic travel restrictions ease, Oman's excep-

tional marine life will ensure small and medium sized enterprises can continue to grow and meet demand for unique ocean adventures.

The global popularity of golf is another area where Al Mouj

Muscat has capitalised on opportunity.

The 2020 Oman Open took place last year at Al Mouj Golf, the third year it has hosted the event, and the stunning ocean-side course gaining global cover-

age. This sector is extremely lucrative, with golf travel typically combined with cultural and touring excursions.

Visitor numbers are further boosted by world-class events sponsored by and held at Al

Mouj Muscat.

The Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is in its sixth year of sponsorship and now attracts over 10,000 runners from over 100 countries, once more raising Oman's profile and promoting it as a prime travel and sports tourism destination among international audiences.

The hospitality industry is also flourishing within Al Mouj Muscat. Several international hotel brands such as Kempinski Muscat and Mysk Al Mouj by Shaza are currently operating providing a total of 580 rooms.

This number is soon to drastically increase with new properties in the pipeline, such as St Regis Al Mouj Muscat and Rotana Al Mouj Muscat, which will soon bring the total to 1,250 rooms.

"Oman Vision 2040 sets out the ambition for our country to become a top-of-mind destination for vacations, culture and discovery as well as high-profile events," explains Al Mouj Muscat's CEO Nasser bin Masoud al Sheibani.

He added, "We know that local, regional and international tourists create significant in-country spend, which in turn boosts employment, creates a destination of opportunity for local and international investment and fosters an environment where independent businesses can grow.

"It is why we have worked tirelessly to create a tourism ecosystem which balances the need of the local economy, the environment and Oman's long-term goals.

"World Tourism Day recognises the important contribution the sector can make around the globe and I am proud to say that Al Mouj Muscat is a dynamic and diverse community where people, families and businesses large and small thrive.

"In this year, as in every year, we will continue to champion tourism and enterprise and actively continue working towards the realisation of Oman's 2040 Vision by making a significant contribution to the nation's economic diversification."

Ooredoo signs three-year contract with Huawei

Ooredoo, one of the largest communications service providers in the sultanate, and Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) solutions, have announced the signing of a three-year contract for CT and telecoms managed services, starting from January 1, 2022.

The contract, which extends a five-year relationship between the two parties, will see Huawei provide operations and maintenance as well as network performance management services for Ooredoo, as it continues to harness the latest digital technologies and position itself as a market leader.

"Our industry is changing faster than ever before, and by working with industry leaders like Huawei we are making sure we stay ahead of the curve. Our



partnership, which began in 2012, will focus on optimising our digital operations using state-of-the-art artificial intelligence and machine learning-based technologies and tools," said Dr Ahmed Abdullah al Abri, chief technology and information Officer at Ooredoo.

"As we continue to accelerate our digital transformation and supporting the sultanate's Vision

2040, we look forward to launching even more innovative services to enrich our customers' digital lives."

Robin (Chen Bing) - Oman Huawei GM, added, "Huawei and Ooredoo have had the privilege to work together for many years.

"This further collaborative step is an important milestone for both parties, marking the phase in the transformation into more automated and intelligent operations."

Ooredoo's aim has always been to provide its users with next-generation technologies that enhance their online experience. By continuing to invest in the latest infrastructure and with a growing number of partnerships and collaborations, it is placing Oman firmly in the global race towards digital innovation.

Majan Electricity effects tariff changes

As part of new governmental direction came earlier to apply the declared changes on the tariff slabs for the citizen accounts on residential category, and accordingly to recalculate the bills of May and June as has issued before this course Majan Electricity had proceeded with new requirements to take place immediately with backdate impact from month of May.

The new band level for the existing tariff slab had expand to be started from 0 to 4000 KWH, at a rate of 12bz, while the second slab starts from 4001 to 6000 KWH, at a rate of 16bz and, the third slab starts from 6000+ KWH, at a rate of 27bz. As this change helped customers to remain much in the first band which result reduction in their monthly bill amount

Moreover, the company has published a summary notice to the subscribers, that included



some clarifications on the adjusted outstanding amounts from the bills of May, June and

July 2021.

Since receiving the July bill, subscribers would have been

able to view the bill and all of its details.

This notification has been sent only once and, in the months to come the bill will be issued regularly.

Worth mentioning that Majan Electricity has shown its support to its subscribers by offering them to choose an instalment option to pay their outstanding bills.

The company also continues emphasising to its clients the importance of updating their current information via any of the available channels, that include the company's website, Sanad offices, or any of the Customer Service outlets.

Subscribers updating their information ensures they will be billed on the correct tariff and, guarantees them receiving the electronic bill and any company sent notifications, Majan Electricity said.

Khimji's House of Travel expo ticket reseller

Khimji's House of Travel has been appointed as an Authorised Ticket Reseller of Expo 2020 Dubai within Oman.

Cashio Vettom, general manager of Khimji's House of Travel, said, "The timing is perfect. The airports and land borders have opened up, offering the opportunity to travel to Dubai and experience one of the largest and most spectacular cultural gatherings in the world. As an Authorised Ticket Reseller, we are now able to service our clients and facilitate access to Expo tickets in a quick, seamless manner. We have made the distribution process easy through the travel agent network in Oman and our team has been trained to cater to questions regarding the available logistics and possibilities during this period."

Kailash Nagdev, senior vice president, Sales & Analytics, Expo 2020 Dubai, said, "The sheer scale of what's on offer at Expo 2020 is incredible, including the diverse entertainment programme that will ensure there is something for everyone, of all ages, nationalities and interests - from musical concerts and dance shows to theatrical performances, sports and more.



"We are delighted to be working with Khimji's House of Travel to offer an unmissable celebration of human ingenuity, unrivalled cultural experiences, the world's best entertainment and once-in-a-lifetime experiences to every visitor."

From October 1, 2021 to

March 31, 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai will gather more than 200 participants - including 192 countries, as well as multilateral organisations, businesses and educational establishments - for a visually striking and emotionally inspiring 182 days. The mega-event invites everyone to

join the making of a new world, as visitors reconnect through a six-month celebration of creativity, innovation, human progress and culture.

Expo tickets can be obtained from the Khimji's House of Travel or your nearest preferred travel agent.

Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort celebrates fifth anniversary

Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort will celebrate its fifth anniversary. Since its opening, the five-star luxury resort has maintained the highest service standards, building a worldwide reputation for excellence and winning numerous awards.

In 2016, Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort opened its doors for the first time on the spectacular peaks of Jebel Akhdar in the Hajar Mountain range, inviting guests to immerse themselves in the unique culture of the Omani mountainside. Since that time, Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort has welcomed over 175,000 guests and hosted countless memorable events.

The resort has captured global media attention, featuring in a full episode of BBC's *Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby*, the only hotel in the GCC and one of two in the Middle East to do so. The resort was also highlighted in an episode of BBC's *Top Gear* as the final destination for a race from Dubai.

Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort has received international acclaim and awards, ranking among Condé Nast Traveler's

Gold List 2020, Condé Nast's Readers' Choice Awards and TripAdvisor 2021 Travelers' Choice Awards to name just a few.

In the areas of environmental, social, and cultural conservation, the resort has been fulfilling its commitment to ethical and environmentally friendly practices which has been integral to its business model, programmes and projects. The resort was crowned Leading Green Resort in the World Travel Awards 2019, and was the first hotel in Oman to be Green Growth 2050-certified in 2017.

"We are incredibly proud of

our resort, of the unique guest experience we provide in such a stunning setting," says Rami Farhat, acting general manager of Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort.

"In only five short years, we have been privileged to host so many world travellers and exclusive events, and we now invite our loyal guests to celebrate with us with our anniversary offer."

To celebrate five years of success, the resort is offering savings to all guests staying during the month of October. Five vouchers will be presented during check-in, with complimentary beverages and dining credit.



Over RO300,000 to be won in Ahlibank's prize draws

Committed to its promise of helping people achieve their dreams with more prize draws for more customer segments, Ahlibank will celebrate the winners of its third quarterly draws in the beginning of October 2021. Stirring excitement amongst its customers, the bank is all geared up to reward prizes totaling more than RO300,000, wherein one winner will walk away with the grand 'Salary for Life' prize of RO250,000 (RO1,000 monthly for 250 months). The event will be streamed live on the bank's official social media pages.

Expressing his joy on the success of the Wafra scheme and its role in changing the winners' lives, Muneer al Balushi - AGM- head of Retail Distribution, Ahlibank said, "The Wafra prize scheme has witnessed huge popularity since its launch and this has encouraged the bank to continue its efforts to create new products that encompass a wider customer base. The draws help the winning customers in ensuring financial stability and secure their future and that of their families. Ahlibank will continue to look for new opportunities that add value to customers and stakeholders through prize schemes, innovative banking products and superior customer service."

"We always encourage a savings culture among our customers, and this has been reflected in the increased win-



ning opportunities and prizes offered under Wafra 2021 scheme. The prize program is part of our long-term strategy that aims to promote financial inclusion among citizens, and an opportunity to further contribute to the sultanate's economic and social development objectives," he further explained. In addition to the 'Salary for Life' prize draw, the bank will also announce the winner of the quarterly prize for Al Nukhba and exclusive accounts worth RO25,000, and the winner of the quarterly draw of Imtiyaz accounts, where the bank will present a prize of RO5,000. Encouraging the habit of saving, the bank will also conduct special quarterly draws for those

who maintain an average quarterly balance of at least RO5,000 in their accounts. Five lucky winners will be rewarded with cash prizes of RO25,000 (RO5,000 per winner). In addition, the bank will announce two winners in the monthly salary transfer draws where each winner will receive a prize of RO1,000. Ensuring that everyone stands a chance to win, it will reward five young winners a total prize of RO1,500 in the monthly draws that will be conducted under its 'MyChoice' category while five other winners in the children's category will win a total prize of RO1,000. Apart from these, a weekly draw is held for all branches, rewarding 20 winners with prizes worth

RO500 each. Along with that, the bank provides RO500 to the winner of the weekly prize from Al Nukhba and exclusive accounts, and a prize of RO500 to the winner of the weekly prize from Imtiyaz segment. Most recently, Ahlibank announced the winners of its second quarterly draws under the Wafra prize scheme with cash prizes totaling more than RO300,000. Mohammed Salim from Avenues Mall branch won the grand 'Salary for Life' prize of RO250,000. The event was held at Ahlibank's new branch in Al-Rustaq, in the presence of Al-Rustaq officials, and was streamed live on the bank's official social media pages.



Win special silver coin by using Asalah, Al Jawhar card

In line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday' and commitment to 'Recognition, Rewards and Solutions', Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has announced a new promotional offer for cardholders having Asalah Signature Credit Cards and Al Jawhar Platinum Credit Cards. The special offer will be available for a two month period till from October 1 to November 30, and offers all customers who spends a minimum of RO100, a chance to win limited edition commemorative silver coins. For every additional RO100 spent using the credit card, the customer will get another chance to win a prize. As many as 58 prizes will be given away to Asalah cardholders with a similar number of prizes being also reserved for Al Jawhar cardholders. Speaking about the new promotion, Abdulnasser al Raisi, deputy general manager - Premier Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "We have been witnessing a

rapid shift to digital payments over the last two years, and Bank Muscat Premier Banking is pleased to launch this exciting campaign to further popularise e-payments. "We hope that all our Asalah and Al Jawhar credit cardholders will take part in this promotion and get multiple chances to win exciting prizes." Bank Muscat Asalah Visa Signature Credit Cards offer some of the most exclusive shopping, dining out or traveling offers and benefits for the bank's customers. They offer 1 per cent cashback on all purchases, toll-free global concierge services, multi-trip travel insurance, great discounts at merchants and restaurants, airport lounge access to over 1,000 lounges worldwide and a 'pick and drop' chauffeur service to Muscat International Airport. With higher cash withdrawal limits, the card is designed with a customer's lifestyle in mind and comes with great benefits for traveling, shopping and dining. It

is secure, feature-packed and welcome at millions of establishments worldwide. Designed around unique lifestyle and banking requirements, Al Jawhar is a first-of-its-kind privilege banking service in Oman. Al Jawhar customers can also download and activate the new app xperience with the Entertainer from the App Store or Play Store to enjoy a number of exclusive 2-for-1 deals on food, entertainment and shopping as well as travel discounts Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cardholders can access 25 premium lounges around the world in addition to lounges at Muscat. The complimentary Dragon Pass facilitates airport dining offers at more than 200 restaurants globally. They will be delighted with the 1 per cent cashback on their purchases. They can also make high-value purchases from the outlets of participating merchants and pay for these purchases in 12 monthly instalments at 0 per cent interest.

OTE strengthens its digital presence, launches online store

Celebrating a new milestone in its digital transformation journey, OTE Group - one of Oman's most prestigious business houses - is extending into electronic commerce to widen its reach and sell the popular brands it distributes directly to its customers. OTE has now launched an online marketplace to complement its extensive countrywide network of brick-and-mortar stores that display its reputable brands. The user-friendly online

store, initially showcasing three of OTE's most popular electronics brands - LG, Bosch and Hisense - has been conceptualised and designed to provide a seamless shopping experience for customers. Users can navigate otestore.com from the comfort of their desktops or via their smartphone browsers. Optimised for convenience, otestore.com makes it possible for visitors to obtain a 360-degree overview of each product, along with model features, special offers, warranty details, and

so on. Search and filtering options, add-to-cart and wish-list features, make for a convenient and relaxed online browsing experience. Thus, from the safety and convenience of their respective comfort zones, customers can check out the latest innovations from LG, Bosch and Hisense - world-leading electronics brands that are exclusively distributed in the sultanate by OTE Group. A sought-after name in home electronics, LG is best known for its market-leading OLED TVs, home appliances and air conditioners. Bosch, positioned as a high-end German luxury brand, is acclaimed for its modern, energy-efficient household appliances.



Danube Home announces Garden Collection

Just in time for winters, Danube Home, the leader in home furnishing and home improvement industry, is inviting everyone to live a little bigger outdoors, to weave a little piece of heaven in the urban jungle, with the launch of its new Garden Collection in stores in the UAE, Oman, and Bahrain and online. With over 2,500 outdoor furnishings, themed furniture pieces, and garden accessories - Danube Home is the ultimate winter weather destination for your front-yard, back-yard, terrace, and balcony needs. Whether you wish to cover your outdoor space with emerald-green, silky, fine grass dotted with geometrically aligned pebbles, in the midst of which squats a fountain elegantly squirting water into a basin, while a golden lamp accentuates your themed



outdoor furniture, where in the winter-time you can share a hearty laughter with your loved ones, Danube Home gives you a luxurious opportunity to reconnect with nature through its "My Style, My Way" garden collection.

Artistically incorporating the vision for simplicity, sophistication, and functionality of design into this year's Garden Collection, customers are offered an eclectic choice of popular colour pallets, hard & soft top gazebos, quirky & fun kids play items, out-

door furniture, BBQ sets, camping equipment, décor pieces & fountains, grass carpets, and everything that can elevate any outdoor space into a family retreat. Speaking on the occasion, Adel Sajjan, managing director Danube Group, commented, "With special attention paid to aesthetically combining comfort, craft, and functionality, Danube Home's My Style My Way themed Garden collection stands a cut above the rest because it offers our valued customers a bewildering array of choices, exceptional value, great comfort, and functionality without compromising on style. With winter arriving soon, Danube Home's My Garden Collection ensures that your outdoors could be the most emphatic statement of self-expression."

Six Senses Ziggy Bay in Musandam to reopen its doors on October 15

One of the region's most loved getaways, Six Senses Ziggy Bay has announced that it will be reopening its doors on October 15, with guests arriving at the resort via a truly spectacular adventure that crosses picture-perfect wadis, ancient Omani settlements and explores cultural wonders. With the checkpoint in the nearby town of Dibba currently still closed for tourists, the resort will temporarily be bringing guests through the northern border of Khasab. A six-hour journey from Dubai, guests will drive to the Al Dhara border, where the resort 4x4 vehicles will be waiting to take them on a once in the lifetime three-hour off-road journey that's not for the faint-hearted. All guests must receive a negative PCR test within 72 hours of arrival at the border, and as soon as the Dibba checkpoint reopens, the resort will revert to their usual method of transfer



with or without an arrival by paraglider. For larger families and groups, the resort has recently refurbished it's four and three-bedroom beachfront villas: The Reserve and Retreats, with new furnishings sourced from the region for a modern take on the rustic design of the resort. A resort built upon sustain-

ability, for environmentally conscious travelers, the resort has also launched an industry-leading carbon-neutral rate, pledging to donate \$10 per room night to wind turbine projects in Turkey to completely offset the amount of carbon produced during their stay at the resort. Andrew Spearman, general manager, said, "We are all

thrilled to be able to welcome guests back to the resort. "It's been a long eighteen months where we've been unable to see and share guests' smiles, laughter, and sense of wonder when they visit us, and so we can't wait to get back to what we do best, providing memories that will last a lifetime."

Mazoon Electricity issues May, June, July recalculated bills

In line with government's orientation to amend approved tariff categories for a citizen's account for the residential category, Mazoon Electricity Company, the leading electricity provider in Oman issued recalculated bills for the months of May, June and July as per the new categories last week. Mazoon Electricity Company also issued a regular bill for July 2021 which included all details as per the new tariff updates issued by Authority for Public Services Regulation. The July bill is currently available in the standard format on mobile apps ONEIC Bill&Pay and OIFC Khedmah. The company offered installment service for bills due for the months of May, June, and July 2021 by contacting the Contact Centre. In case the customer has already paid the dues for May and June, the amounts paid will be deducted and that will appear in the total dues field of the July bill.



Mazoon Electricity issued a notification with a summary of total consumption of May, June, and July 2021 in addition to a detailed bill for July. With the intention to spread awareness about

the newly announced category, all updates are published on the Mazoon Electricity's social media accounts and dedicated staff respond to all customer queries.

Red carpet and prayers as Qataris prepare for 1st Shura Council polls

Al Wakrah, Qatar - The modest crowd listens respectfully as TV actor Saeed al Burshaid gives his first stump speech ahead of Qatar's inaugural legislative polls, an unprecedented exercise in democracy in the resource-rich monarchy.

Burshaid gesticulates passionately as he builds to a crescendo in a nondescript and largely undecorated sports hall south of Doha, watched by a few dozen people sipping tea served by waiters.

"It's our job to let them (voters) know, and to educate the people," enthuses Burshaid, a minor celebrity in the Gulf who also previously ran Qatar TV's drama department.

The October 2 election is for 30 members of the 45-strong Shura Council, a body with limited powers that was previously appointed by the emir as an advisory chamber.

While it is a rare nod to democracy in the autocratic region, observers say this is no turning point for Qatar, and point out that it comes with heightened scrutiny on the country ahead of next year's World Cup.

Burshaid's laminated manifesto pledges action on both workers' and women's rights, issues for which the 2022 World Cup hosts have been criticised.

But instead of calling for a new government or an overhaul of official policy, Burshaid cautiously praises the country's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani and his 2030 development plan.

"The system - we want to make it more open, and also to discuss modern issues," says Burshaid, who is wearing an immaculate white thobe and was



Saeed al Burshaid (left), a candidate for Qatar's inaugural Shura Council election, at a campaign rally in Al Wakrah on September 19 (AFP)

ushered into the hall on a thick red carpet.

The Shura will be allowed to propose legislation, approve the budget and recall ministers. But the all-powerful emir will wield a veto.

After a pre-event break for prayers, the speech by Burshaid, a candidate for the 14th district, goes ahead uninterrupted, with neither of his two rivals present.

'Right person'

Campaigning in the Arabian desert nation has been subdued for much of the 14-day period allotted for drumming up support.

The candidates are mostly

men, with just 28 women among the 284 hopefuls running for the 30 available council seats. The remaining 15 seats will be appointed by the emir.

Male voters at Burshaid's segregated campaign event, who greet each other with customary kisses on the head, outnumber women five to one.

Analysts say the influence of the Shura is likely to be limited, and expect many voters to cast ballots for family members.

"I don't think it portends great things for Qatar in terms of domestic legislation or reform," said Michael Stephens, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Re-

search Institute.

Diplomatic sources suggest families and tribes have already conducted internal ballots to determine who will be elected for their constituencies.

Candidates will have to stand in electoral divisions linked to where their family or tribe was based in the 1930s, using data compiled by the then-British authorities.

Voter Nasser al Kuwari said he hoped people would not simply opt for those 'closest to (their) family or friends'.

"I hope that we choose the right person in the right place," he told AFP.

Georgetown University Qatar politics lecturer Danyel Reiche suggested the polls 'are a step towards democracy that might not have happened without the upcoming World Cup' and its international spotlight.

'Have their say'

The streets of Qatar's towns have been speckled with billboards adorned with beaming candidates sporting Qataris' ubiquitous national dress.

But beyond town hall meetings and posters, the country's introduction to democracy has been limited, with no change of government possible and politi-

The polls are a step towards democracy. It remains to be seen whether the elections become more inclusive by giving all Qatari citizens right to vote and whether the Shura Council will get more powers

DANYEL REICHE



cal parties outlawed.

"Now the government sees it's time to have a democratic system... we are the second country in the Gulf after Kuwait. Now is the time for people to have their say," said one voter in his 60s who declined to be named.

"We will go through a learning curve."

Debate has also swirled in Qatar over the disenfranchisement of some members of the Al-Murrah tribe who make up as much as 60 per cent of Qatari citizens.

The constitution states only descendants of Qataris present in the country in 1930 are eligible to run or vote, meaning some Al-Murrah are barred, their ancestors having been outside Qatar at that time.

"It remains to be seen whether the elections become more inclusive by giving a vote to all Qatari citizens and whether the Shura Council will get more powers," said Reiche.

AFP

Measures to ensure democracy: Tunisia FM

United Nations - Recent emergency measures strengthening the powers of Tunisian President Kais Saied were aimed at ensuring 'an authentic and peaceful democracy' in the country, its Foreign Minister told world leaders on Monday.

Saied on July 25 sacked prime minister Hichem Mechichi, suspended parliament and granted himself judicial powers. On Wednesday, he followed up the move by announcing 'exceptional measures' that allow him to rule by decree.

Some 2,000 Tunisians rallied in Tunis at the weekend to protest the steps.

"In Tunisia, we started a capacity-building enterprise based on the hope of an authentic and peaceful democracy," Othman Jerandi said on the last day of the annual high-level UN General Assembly meeting.

The moves 'responded to the will of the Tunisian people' and were about protecting 'their rights, their freedoms', he added.

Jerandi said Saied took the 'exceptional measures' to put the country 'back on track to respect the principles of democracy'.

The President made his power grab after months of political stalemate and amid mounting economic and social turmoil aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Large crowds cheered his move all over the country at the time, but the mood was hostile at the smaller demonstration in Tunis on Sunday.

AFP

Iran's nuclear program has crossed all red lines: Israel PM tells UN General Assembly

United Nations - Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said on Monday Iran had breached all the 'red lines' aimed at curbing its nuclear weapons program, but that Israel 'will not allow' Tehran to get the bomb.

In his first address to the United Nations General Assembly, Bennett claimed the Islamic republic had in recent years taken 'a major leap forward' in its nuclear production capacity and ability to enrich weapons-grade uranium.

"Iran's nuclear weapon program is at a critical point, all red lines have been crossed," said Bennett, who took office in June.

"There are those in the world who seem to see Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons as an inevitable reality, as a done deal, or they have just become tired of hearing about it," the 49 year old premier told the world body.

"Israel doesn't have that privilege. We cannot tire. We will not tire. Israel will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon."

Iran responded rapidly, saying Bennet 'played the victim and desperately tried to portray the Israeli regime as innocent'.

Israel 'desperately attempts to portray Iran's conventional weapon capabilities or its exclusively peaceful nuclear program, which is under the most robust verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as a challenge to regional stability', Payman Ghadirkhomi, the second secretary for Iran's UN mission, told the assembly.

"This is but a hypocritical move to distract attention from the real danger posed to regional



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett addresses the UN General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City on Monday (AFP)

peace and security by this regime, particularly its nuclear-weapon arsenals and clandestine and unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities."

Ghadirkhomi also slammed Israel for 'hampering' the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as well as for its activities in the Palestinian territories.

Iran, which says its nuclear program is for civilian purposes, said on Friday that it expected talks to resume soon on reviving a 2015 landmark agreement scaling back its program in exchange for sanctions relief.

The agreement started to fall apart in 2018 when the US withdrew from it and reinstated sanctions. Iran in turn again started to

ramp up its nuclear activities.

After Netanyahu

Bennett's predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu, who was in power from 2009 until June, was among the world's fiercest critics of the accord, regularly condemning it at international forums and cheering former US president Donald Trump's decision to withdraw.

Bennett, a foreign policy hawk who heads Israel's ideologically disparate, eight-party coalition government, also opposes the Iran nuclear deal, but did not mention it in his UN address.

In a rare interview with a foreign media outlet, Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz told Foreign Policy magazine this month

that the Jewish state was not necessarily opposed to US efforts to re-enter a negotiated agreement with Iran.

"The current US approach of putting the Iran nuclear program back in a box, I'd accept that," Gantz told the magazine, in what was perceived by some Israeli experts as a policy shift.

But Gantz made clear that Israel would expect a 'viable US-led plan B' to be in place should talks fail.

The Israeli Prime Minister has not publicly expressed openness to a revived Iran deal but has criticised Netanyahu over what he termed 'the gap' between the former leader's rhetoric on Iran and reality.

He told the UN that Iran has enriched 'uranium to the level of 60 per cent, which is one step short of weapons-grade material - and they're getting away with it'.

The United States and European Union on Monday also urged Iran to allow inspectors access to a nuclear site, while Tehran argued the facility was exempt from a recent agreement with the UN watchdog.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it had been denied 'indispensable' access to the TESA Karaj centrifuge component manufacturing workshop near Tehran, contrary to a September 12 agreement with Iran.

Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi, rejected the charge, saying the IAEA statement 'isn't accurate and goes beyond the agreed terms'.

AFP



An aerial view shows Syrian children holding a paper roll with their drawings and messages on the International Day of Peace at a camp for internally displaced people, in the town of Maarrat Misrin in Idlib province (AFP)

Syria water crisis spurs spike in disease: MSF

Beyrouth, Lebanon - Limited access to clean water in northern Syria is causing a rise in illnesses and undermining the battle against COVID-19, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Tuesday.

The medical aid group blamed the 'acute water crisis' in recent months on a decrease in funding for water, sanitation and hygiene operations as well as the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure during a decade of civil war.

"We are regularly confronted with the health impact of poor water quality, which often brings waterborne diseases and other health issues into the camps, such as diarrhoea, hepatitis, impetigo, scabies and many others," MSF's Ibrahim Mughlaj said.

The crisis is most acute in northwestern Syria, the country's last major rebel stronghold,

where more than three million people live in squalid conditions.

Water and sanitation aid operations are funded at only a third of last year's levels, the MSF said, adding that much less water was being trucked in.

"In July 2021, our teams noticed rising diarrhoea cases in more than 30 camps in Idlib governorate and also detected frequent scabies cases," it added.

"Since the beginning of the year, 28 per cent of the total consultations in an MSF-supported hospital in Idlib governorate were reported as acute watery diarrhoea cases."

The water crisis has also made it more difficult to contain the pandemic, with infections surging in the northwest, Mughlaj said. The situation is also dire in northeastern Syria, largely controlled by an autonomous Kurdish administration.

The region struggles to access safe water because of repeated sustained disruptions from the Alok water station, which is under the control of Turkish authorities, the MSF said.

The problem is compounded by a severe reduction in the volume of water flowing in the Euphrates river, which is the region's most significant source.

An MSF-supported primary healthcare centre in the city of Raqa reported that the number of diarrhoea cases in May 2021 was 50 per cent higher than the previous year, the group said.

The medical charity said it was trying to ease the crisis but said its means were limited.

'People's health is at risk, and they cannot survive if they don't even have access to the basics', MSF field coordinator Benjamin Mutiso was quoted as saying.

AFP

North Korea test-fires 'missile' into sea

Nobody can deny the right to self-defence for the DPRK (North Korea): Pyongyang's envoy tells the UN

Seoul, South Korea - Nuclear-armed North Korea fired a presumed short-range missile into the sea on Tuesday, the South's military said, as Pyongyang's UN Ambassador insisted it had an undeniable right to test its weapons.

The projectile was fired from the northern province of Jagang into waters off the east coast, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Japanese defence ministry spokesman told AFP it 'appears to be a ballistic missile'.

Less than an hour later, Pyongyang's United Nations Ambassador Kim Song told the UN General Assembly in New York: "Nobody can deny the right to self-defence for the DPRK [North Korea's official name]."

It was the latest in a series of mixed messages from Pyongyang, coming days after leader Kim Jong Un's influential sister Kim Yo Jong, a key advisor to her brother, dangled the prospect of an inter-Korean summit.

But she insisted that 'impartiality' and mutual respect would be required, calling for South Korea to 'stop spouting an impudent remark'.

She condemned 'double standards' South Korean and US criticism of the North's military developments, while the allies build up their own capacities.

Washington condemned the latest launch, with the State Department calling it a threat to



People watch a television news broadcast showing file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul on Tuesday (AFP)

We are just building up our national defence in order to defend ourselves and reliably safeguard the security and peace of the country

KIM SONG

North Korea's neighbours and the international community, and a 'violation of multiple UN

Security Council Resolutions'.

In recent days, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has

only months left in office, reiterated at the UN General Assembly his longstanding calls for a formal declaration of an end to the Korean War.

The North invaded the South in 1950 and hostilities ceased three years later with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, leaving them technically still in a state of conflict.

Pyongyang is under multiple

sets of international sanctions over its banned programmes to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

In his own General Assembly speech, Ambassador Kim Song said North Korea had a right to 'develop, test, manufacture and possess' weapons systems equivalent to those of the South and its US ally.

"We are just building up our

national defence in order to defend ourselves and reliably safeguard the security and peace of the country," he said.

'Heinous human rights abuser'

Pyongyang has already carried out several missile launches this month, one involving long-range cruise missiles and another that the South Korean military said was of short-range ballistic missiles.

Seoul also successfully test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) for the first time, making it one of a handful of nations with the advanced technology.

On Tuesday, it launched its third SLBM submarine as it spends billions to strengthen its military capabilities.

Talks between Pyongyang and Washington have been largely at a standstill since a 2019 summit in Hanoi between leader Kim and then-president Donald Trump collapsed over sanctions relief and what North Korea would be willing to give up in return.

The North has since then repeatedly excoriated the South and its president Moon, and blown up a liaison office on its side of the border that Seoul had built.

After an emergency meeting, the South's National Security Committee issued a statement on Tuesday saying it 'expressed regret for the launch at a time when political stability on the

Korean Peninsula is very critical'.

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, told AFP: "It looks like North Korea wants to see how genuine Seoul is when it comes to its willingness to improve inter-Korean ties - and to officially end the Korean War."

"Pyongyang will monitor and study Moon's reaction after today's launch and decide on what they want to do on things such as restoring the inter-Korean hotline."

Washington stations around 28,500 troops in South Korea to defend it against its neighbour and protect US interests in northeast Asia.

The administration of US President Joe Biden has repeatedly said that it is willing to meet North Korean officials anywhere, at any time, without preconditions, in its efforts to seek denuclearisation.

But the North has not shown any willingness to give up its arsenal, which it says it needs to defend itself against a US invasion.

On Monday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency carried an article calling the United States 'the most heinous human rights abuser in the world' for its sanctions policies on various countries.

The North was also due to open a session of its rubber-stamp parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, on Tuesday. AFP



Afghan girls attend a class in a school in Kandahar on Sunday (AFP)

We'll temporarily adopt monarchy constitution, with caveats: Taliban

Kabul, Afghanistan - The Taliban said on Tuesday they will temporarily adopt a 1964 constitution that granted women the right to vote but eliminate any elements they disagree with.

The Taliban's acting justice minister issued a statement saying the Islamists planned to introduce a constitution used during Afghanistan's short-lived golden age of democracy, but only briefly and with amendments.

"The Islamic Emirate will adopt the constitution of the former King Mohammad Zahir Shah's time for a temporary period," Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Sharade said.

But anything in the text found to conflict with Sharia'a and the principles of the Islamic Emirate would be discarded, he added.

Nearly six decades ago, before the world's superpowers intervened in the country, Afghanistan enjoyed a brief period of constitutional monarchy during the reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah.

The king ratified the constitution a year after coming to power in 1963, ushering in nearly a decade of parliamentary democ-

racy before he was overthrown in 1973.

The 1964 constitution, which gave women the right to vote for the first time and opened the doors for their increased participation in politics, would appear an awkward fit with the Taliban's headline views.

The group, which swept to power in mid-August, has vowed a softer and more inclusive approach than during their brutal 1996 to 2001 rule, when women were largely excluded from public life, including work and education.

But when they presented their caretaker government earlier this month, all the top positions went to hardliners and no women were included.

After suffering through the Soviet occupation in the 1980s, followed by civil war and then harsh Taliban rule, Afghanistan once again adopted a constitution in the aftermath of the US-led 2001 invasion.

But it opted not to restore the old monarchy, approving instead a fresh text in 2004 that envisaged a presidency and enshrined equal rights for women.

AFP

Swiss court reopens probe into Iran leader's killing

Geneva, Switzerland - A Swiss investigation into the 1990 killing of Iranian opposition figure Kazem Rajavi must reopen, after a court ordered genocide and crimes against humanity charges added to the probe.

Prosecutors in the Vaud canton had wanted to close the case on the April 24, 1990 killing of Rajavi outside Geneva, as it had passed the 30-year statute of limitations.

But 'the killing in question may have been committed in relation to intended genocide or perpetration of crimes against humanity', the Federal Criminal Court said in a judgment issued on September 23 and seen by AFP



A file photo of Kazem Rajavi, who was killed in 1990 near Geneva

late on Monday.

"Given that there is no statute of limitations on these acts... it is therefore appropriate for the federal prosecutor to take over the

case," the court added.

Kazem was the brother of Massoud Rajavi, once the leader of the People's Mujahideen, the main armed opposition group in-

side Iran.

He was the Swiss representative of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), the organisation's public face, at the time he was shot in his car in a village near Geneva.

A total of 14 Iranians are suspected of involvement in the killing, mostly diplomats who left Switzerland soon afterwards, but also former information minister Ali Fallahian.

The execution 'had already been decided on and ordered by Fallahian in 1982 or 1983', the court said based on already-gathered evidence.

What's more, 'assassinations were carried out between 1987

and 1993 in Hamburg, Vienna, Geneva, London, Dubai and Paris' against Iranian opposition members, it added.

Germany and Argentina also issued international arrest warrants for Fallahian, on suspicion of organising a bombing against an Israeli association in Buenos Aires.

Another of Kazem's brothers, Saleh Rajavi, was the one to urge the court to add the genocide and crimes against humanity charges to the probe.

Kazem Rajavi was shot soon after a 1988 mass killing of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran, he pointed out.

AFP

Bangkok on alert as 70,000 homes flooded; six people killed as storm lashes Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand - Thai authorities on Tuesday rushed to protect parts of Bangkok from floodwaters that have already inundated 70,000 homes and killed six people in the country's northern and central provinces.

Tropical storm Dianmu has caused flooding in 30 provinces, with the kingdom's central region the worst hit, the Thai Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said.

The level of the Chao Phraya River - which snakes through Bangkok after winding almost 400km from the north - is steadily rising as authorities release water from dams further upstream.

Soldiers on Tuesday set up barriers and sandbags to protect ancient archaeological ruins and landmarks as well as neighbourhoods in the old royal capital Ayutthaya, some 60km north of Bangkok. There are hopes Bangkok can avoid a repeat of the catastrophic 2011 monsoon season, when it experienced its



A resident wades through floodwaters outside her home, in the central province of Ayutthaya on Tuesday (AFP)

worst flooding in decades - a fifth of the city was underwater and more than 500 people died.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration says it is closely monitoring the Chao Phraya's

water level and has water pumps and sandbags ready.

"We will give people a warning if there is a sign the water level is rising and if there is a risk of flash floods," Bangkok gover-

nor Aswin Kwanmuang said on Tuesday.

Bangkok officials have begun piling sandbags outside banks and other businesses near a canal in Thonglor - a shopping

district and residential area popular with expats.

Once dubbed the 'Venice of the East', the capital is built on former marshland and rests about 1.5 metres above sea level.

In the past, farmland and rice paddies in low-lying areas absorbed flood water, but the city's expansion has seen much converted into real estate.

The city's flood prevention masterplan, involving underground reservoirs and tunnels, has not been fully built because of problems acquiring land, local media reported.

Over the weekend, emergency teams staged dramatic rescues evacuating villagers from rooftops in parts of Chaiyaphum province, about four hours northeast of the capital.

A TikTok user filmed a dramatic dog rescue in Lopburi province, as onlookers lowered a shirtless man into the raging torrent to fish out a paddling black pooch on Monday afternoon.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Japan PM announces end to virus state of emergency

Tokyo, Japan - A coronavirus state of emergency targeting nightlife in Tokyo and other Japanese regions will end this week, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said on Tuesday, as cases nosedive nationwide.

The emergency measures, which largely limit alcohol sales, restaurant opening hours and crowd sizes at large events, have been in place for much of the year, including during the Olympics.

They are due to expire at the end of September, and Suga said there would be no extension due to Japan's improving virus situation.

"Thanks to everyone's hard work, the number of daily new infections, which was above 25,000 in mid-August, has come down to 1,128 people as of yesterday," he said at a ministerial meeting.

"Hospital bed occupancy rates in all regions have come down below 50 per cent. The number of severely sick people peaked in early September and continues to fall," he added.

Nineteen regions, including greater Tokyo, economic hubs Osaka and Aichi, and tourist hotspots Kyoto and Okinawa are currently under the emergency that ends Friday.

Even after the measure expires, Suga recommended that bars and restaurants close at 9.00pm. But many are already flouting the rules, saying that virus financial support from the government is not enough to stay afloat.

Japan has been hit less se-



Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (left) and President of the Japan Community Healthcare Organization Shigeru Omi take part in a press conference at the Prime Minister's official residence, in Tokyo on Tuesday (AFP)

verely by the pandemic than many other countries, recording around 17,500 deaths among its population of 125mn, and the government has never imposed strict stay-at-home orders.

But hospitals have come under strain from several sharp spikes in cases, with the latest wave driven by the more contagious Delta variant.

The nation's vaccine programme got off to a slow start

but has picked up speed, with 58 percent of the population now fully inoculated, more than the United States.

Suga's approval ratings have taken a battering since he took office in September 2020, and he is stepping down after just a year as prime minister.

His unpopularity partly stems from the government's pandemic response, with on-off emergency measures and other

restrictions in place throughout his term.

A ruling party leadership vote will be held on Wednesday to choose his successor, who will contest general elections in October or November.

On Tuesday, Suga said whoever replaces him would have plenty to keep them busy.

"I believe Japan stands at a crucial moment," he said.

"There is a falling birth rate

and a greying population. The security environment is rapidly changing. The new coronavirus has illuminated Japan's lag in digitalisation," the Japanese Prime Minister said.

"The next prime minister should be one who exercises their power... it's important that the person is able to do their best under many different conditions," he said.

AFP

Philippine govt approves jabs for 12-year-old kids

Manila, Philippines - The Philippines has approved COVID-19 jabs for children as young as 12, an aide to President Rodrigo Duterte said on Tuesday, as the country battles surging infections fuelled by the hyper-contagious Delta variant.

Duterte's government has been skewered over the glacial rollout of vaccines, with just over a quarter of the adult population fully vaccinated nearly seven months after the first doses were delivered.

The daily case rate has soared, often exceeding 20,000, with hospitals struggling to handle the influx of patients as vaccine supplies dribble into the country.

Inoculating children is seen as a key step towards reopening schools in the Philippines, which is one of the few countries in the world to have kept them shut since the start of the pandemic.

The government recently announced plans for a pilot reopening of 120 primary and high schools, but few details have been released.

Kids will be allowed to receive the jabs from next month, presidential spokesman Harry Roque told reporters, as the vaccination drive is widened to include all adults not previously prioritised for shots.

The Philippines' food and drug regulator recently approved the Pfizer and Moderna jabs for kids aged 12 and above.

The move follows other countries such as Britain, the United States and Australia in approving specific jabs for adolescents.

If everybody does not comply with the vaccines... then the police must go in and intervene so that you cannot be a danger to society

RODRIGO DUTERTE

The World Health Organization is still conducting trials on vaccinations for children and has only recommended that adolescents at high risk of contracting COVID-19 receive Pfizer shots.

Although children are considered less at risk of severe COVID-19, there are concerns that the highly contagious Delta variant could lead to more serious cases.

The government has previously set a target of vaccinating 70 per cent of adults by the end of the year. In the national capital region more than 72 per cent are fully protected, Roque said.

The country has recorded 2.5mn infections, including over 37,000 deaths, since March 2020.

In a pre-recorded speech broadcast on Tuesday, Duterte said people refusing vaccines could be forced by police to get inoculated.

"If everybody does not comply with the vaccines... then the police must go in and intervene in your private life so that you cannot be a danger to society," he said.

AFP



People hold lighted candles during a vigil for the 28 year old teacher, Sabina Nessa, who was found dead in a park in southeast London (AFP)

Delivery driver charged with UK teacher's murder

London, UK - A 36 year old delivery driver appeared in court in Britain on Tuesday, charged with the murder of a young primary school teacher whose death sparked renewed calls to improve women's safety.

Sabina Nessa's death, like that of 33 year old Sarah Everard in March, put pressure on the government to do more to protect women and girls in public spaces.

Koci Selamaj, who is of Albanian origin, was arrested on Sunday in connection with the killing of Nessa (28) and charged on Monday evening.

Nessa's body was found in southeast London on September 18. She disappeared after walking through a park to meet a friend the previous day.

Selamaj appeared in court in northwest London and followed proceedings via an Albanian interpreter.

His lawyer indicated he would plead not guilty. The case was adjourned and Selamaj was remanded in custody until another hearing at the Central Criminal Court Thursday.

Hundreds of people attended a vigil in memory of Nessa last Friday, as her death prompted fresh calls to protect women in Britain.

Everard was killed as she was walking home in south London in March. A former Metropolitan Police officer has since admitted her kidnap, rape and murder.

He is due to be sentenced this week.

AFP

Germany's Laschet faces calls to resign over poll loss

Berlin, Germany - Pressure was mounting on Tuesday on Armin Laschet to quit after his conservatives lost to the Social Democrats in Germany's election, further complicating his bid to form the next government after the disastrous vote.

Laschet's CDU-CSU conservative alliance brought home its worst election result in post-war Germany of 24.1 per cent, behind Olaf Scholz's SPD on 25.7 per cent.

But Laschet, the conservative bloc's hope to succeed veteran Chancellor Angela Merkel, has insisted his party will still try to build a governing coalition and is ready for talks with the Greens and the liberal FDP for a possible partnership.

Though he admitted he could 'not be satisfied with this result', Laschet also claimed 'no party' - not even the Social Democrats - could claim a mandate to govern from Sunday's vote outcome.

But calls are growing louder for Laschet to admit defeat and resign, even from within his own party.

"You have lost. Please have some insight. Avert further damage to the #CDU and resign," Ellen Demuth, a CDU member of the Rhineland-Palatinate state parliament, wrote on Twitter.

"We lost the election. Full stop," said Tilman Kuban, the head of the CDU's youth wing.

Marcus Muendlein, the chairman of the party's youth wing in the state of Saxony, called for 'a true new beginning' which he said could 'only be successful if our leader and candidate for chancellor, Armin Laschet... resigns'.

A stormy session is expected later when the newly elected



The leader of Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party and candidate for Chancellor Armin Laschet arrives for a CDU leadership meeting at the party's headquarters in Berlin on Monday (AFP)

MPs of the CDU and Bavarian allies CSU sit down together for the first time since the vote.

Heavyweights dethroned

Elected as head of the CDU in January, Laschet was for some time the clear favourite to succeed Angela Merkel when she bows out of politics after Sunday's election.

But his party's ratings began to slide as he committed a series of gaffes, including being caught on camera laughing in the background during a solemn tribute

to flood victims.

Sunday's result is the first time the CDU and CSU, a dominant force in German politics since World War II, have scored under 30 per cent in a general election.

The vote also saw a number of CDU heavyweights lose their direct mandates, including Economy Minister Peter Altmaier, Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer and Agriculture Minister Julia Klöckner.

Merkel's former constituency on Germany's Baltic Sea coast,

which she had held since 1990, went to an unknown from the SPD.

Official figures showed former CDU voters abandoning the party in droves, mostly in favour of the SPD and the Greens. But the party also lost ground to the far-right AfD in the former East Germany.

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier called the performance a 'crushing defeat' for the CDU, admitting the party had 'lost many swing voters'.

Michael Kretschmer, the state premier of Saxony, told the MDR

broadcaster on Monday that he saw no clear mandate for the CDU to try to form a government.

'Strong message from voters'

"I see a strong message from voters, who have made it clear that the (CDU-CSU) is not the first choice this time," he said.

In a survey for the Funke media group on Monday, 70 per cent of respondents said they thought Laschet should resign. Even among CDU supporters, the figure was 51 per cent.

And in another post-election poll for Der Spiegel magazine, 63 per cent said they thought Scholz should be Germany's next chancellor, with only 24 per cent backing Laschet.

Bernd Althusmann, the leader of the CDU in Lower Saxony, suggested the party should 'humbly and respectfully accept the will of the voters', while Hesse state premier Volker Bouffier stated plainly: "We have no claim to be in government."

However, with a reputation for digging his heels in, Laschet has shown before that he does not give up easily - such as when he beat Markus Soeder, the head of the CSU, to be named the conservative bloc's chancellor candidate.

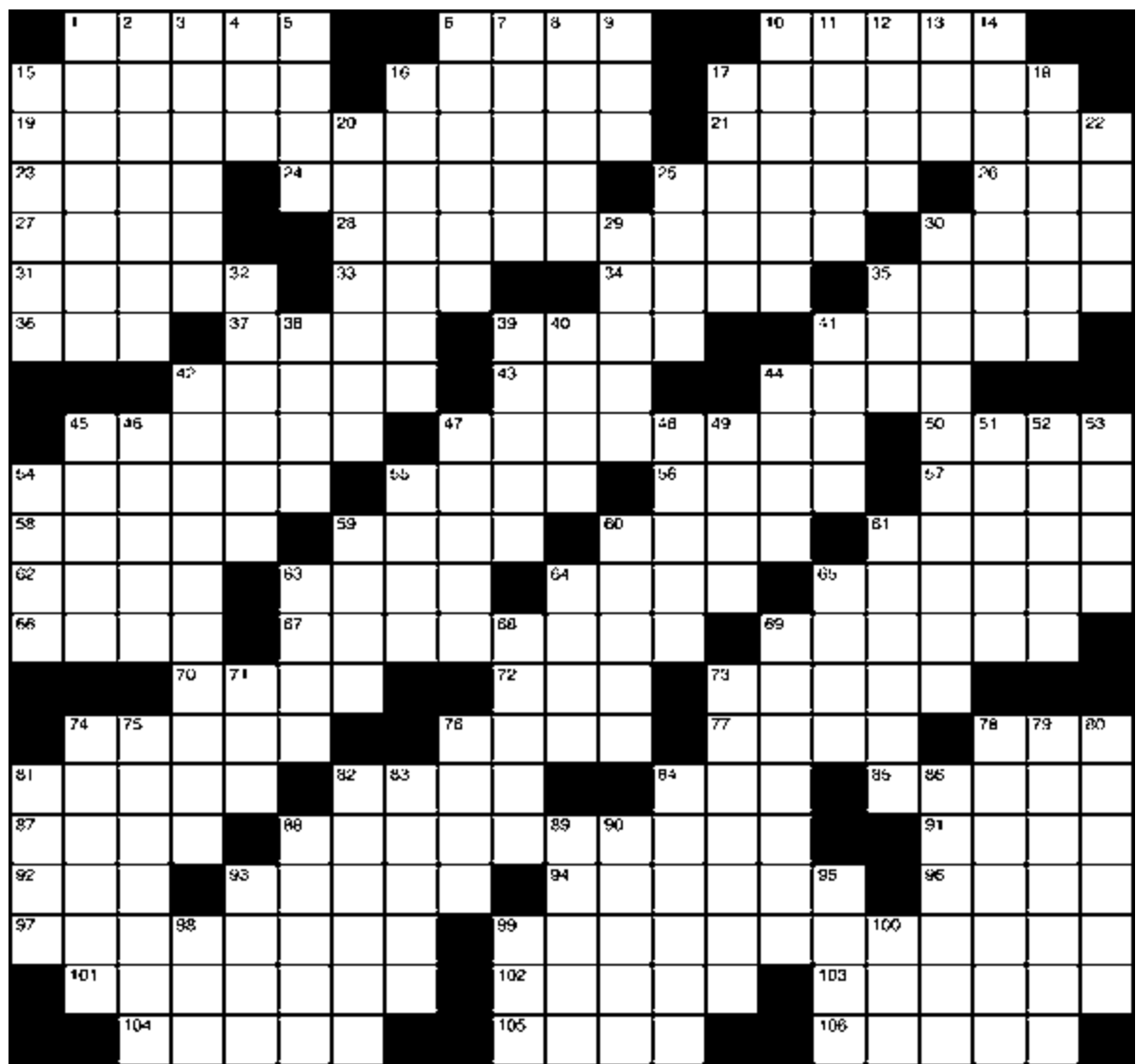
After a drawn-out and bruising battle, Laschet came through to secure the nomination.

Der Spiegel magazine has noted his ability to "sit out" his opponents, wearing them down.

Asked in a TV interview before the election if he thought he was often underestimated, Laschet replied that 'many have certainly miscalculated'.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**

1 Barges

6 Had on

10 A Gabor

15 Artist's workplace

16 Home-run king

17 Choice at the butcher's

19 Best Supporting Actor, 1961

21 Best Supporting Actor, 1963

23 Building additions

24 Dons

25 Wernher von ____

26 Chairman ____

27 Ginger ____

28 Best Actress, 1936 and 1939

30 Freshen: with up

31 Jeweler's measure

33 Bow letters on the New Jersey

34 Over, in Ulm

35 Edison's park

36 Older than jrs.

37 Moss or Gary

39 Strong smelling

41 Nuts

42 Nursery furniture

43 Estuary

44 Oscar's '09 Winslet

45 One's true ____

47 Best Supporting Actor, 1970

50 Goes bad

54 Tropical birds

55 Shirt or pony

56 Very in Versailles

57 Priceless?

58 Bradley and Epps

59 Calculating

60 Can be Great

61 Laughing

62 TV bandleader

63 Woody's son

64 Goofs

65 Chili beans

66 Metal refuse

67 Best Supporting Actor, 1973

69 Food purveyor

70 "There ought to be ____"

72 Dr.'s grp.

73 ____ and nail

74 "Forever ____"

76 Trolley

77 Word in an ultimatum

78 Round thing

81 ____ of laughter

82 Row

84 Diminutive suffix

85 Scuba ____

87 Heraldic border

88 Best Actor, 1982

91 Grandson, in

Portugal

92 Service station purchase

93 Jeans fabric

94 Doles

96 Solo for Luciano

97 Best Supporting Actress, 1976

99 Best Actress, 1959

101 Works toward

102 Falls in flakes

103 Spitting ____

104 Like a judge?

105 Beach colors

106 Diana's Dodi
- DOWN**

1 ____ Awards

2 Knife dealers

3 Black Sea port

4 We, in Berlin

5 Consummé, for one

6 Middles

7 Believe it ____!

8 Former TV exec

____ Arledge

9 Letter container: abbr.

10 Parachutist's milieu

11 Photographer

Diane ____

12 Campbell

13 Man's best friend

14 Discomfort

15 Utters

16 Swears

17 Tennis opening

18 Almost

20 Bedroom communities

22 ____ Ono

25 ____-doll pajamas

29 Store window denizen

30 Best Actor, 1977

32 Pitches

35 Bath or welcome

38 Pretensions

39 Happily

40 Jason's boat

41 Catches

42 Best Actor, 1935

44 ____cap

45 Dromedary

46 City in Northern, FL

47 Author of "Dead Souls"

48 Eared seal

49 Vases

51 Preach

52 ____ sax

53 Stage scenes

54 Does the lawn

55 Beyond the ____

59 Boast

60 "I ____ of Jeannie"

61 Stampeded

63 Open

64 Ms. Bombeck

65 Golf club employees

68 TV host ____

Moore

69 Biblical big man

71 Bandleader ____

Brown

73 Connecting tissues

74 Condor nests

75 Blunt hammers

76 Semester

78 Surplus

79 In bed for the night

80 Norfolk, England, waterways

81 Accumulate

82 Certain bill

83 Parts of a monogram: abbr.

84 Spouse's family

86 Sort of

88 ____ ho!

89 Flora's kin

90 Actress Nancy ____

93 Jot

95 Type of sword

98 12 dozen: abbr.

99 Sigh at O'Hare

100 Singer ____

Sumac

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your need to reorganise your finances, but make sure to take a few key precautions. Your interest in fiscal health is great, but it's not smart to tackle too many cost-cutting measures at the same time. The shock of austerity can't help you stick to your budget in the long-term. A lucky windfall drops in your lap just when you need it the most, giving you just the boost you need to make it last.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your energy is acting like a carnival barker now, exhorting one and all to step right up and check out the magnificence that is you! Thanks to their amazing performance, expect job prospects to multiply, enticing you to choose a sweet option right away. Now is not the time to up and quit your job -- or even decide to pull up the roots and move to a new town.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

A roadblock may appear in the form of a sudden impulse to gobble down a pile of salty junk food, blow off big deadlines to play video games or chase after some hottie who is plainly bad for you. Stamp out those self-destructive urges as soon as you spot them! The biggest obstacle may be just noticing that they exist, rather than mindlessly obeying them.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Enjoy all of life's pleasures, from the greatest to the smallest. It's important that you're open-minded when appreciating the best things in life, whether you're walking barefoot in the park or living large in a stretch limo. Try to remain fully present in your body and embody each action -- that should keep you more aware of what's going on, but also better able to enjoy your time on earth.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You need to get rid of any unrealistic goals -- and while you're at it, give that perfectionism a rest! They're nothing but ballast that keeps you down and prevent you from seeing real possibilities. It's past time for a change in attitude if you're looking externally for missing pieces to make you feel complete. Success is all about understanding exactly how much you've actually accomplished.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Everything smooths out when you just relax and trust in the universe. It's difficult to believe, but you don't actually have the last word on how things turn out -- this time. That ought to be welcome news, since it means you can actually live your life instead of trying to steer it. That should release a pile of stress, but also improve your willingness to try new things.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Take time for yourself by putting your life on hold. Walk around the park, stare at the sky and otherwise refresh your senses with the parts of life that really matter. Sunlight and open space are vital for you now. The peace can help you ponder everything that's going on in your life. Once you feel centred, you're better able to take on the challenges that come later.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're so sweet-natured that others may make accidentally underestimate you. You shake all that up, though, when you turn one of your outrageous ideas into a firm reality. Now is a great time to marshal your forces and try setting up new partnerships, especially those who complement your strengths. This new endeavour should be a tremendous success.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Your freedom means everything to you, so you've set up your work or home life in such a way that you can come and go when you like. Sometimes, though, your lack of roots leaves you feeling a little lonely. Try to be more of a team player. Jumping into a group situation of some kind means you lose a bit of independence, but you pick up plenty of creative input.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your energy powers up all the way, and now you feel like you can do anything. You look (and feel) fantastic, and this amazing, dynamic energy helps you in every aspect of your life. That could mean grabbing a sweet work assignment, kick-starting your love life or inaugurating a new schedule that liberates you to explore those personal creative projects. You're a dynamo, so get busy!

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Resisting all efforts to change, no matter what, may feel somewhat cool at first, but it becomes increasingly unworkable for you, especially if you let your temper flare up as well. Why not decide to try serenity when everyone around you starts flinging mud? It should all pay off for you at work as you power past big obstacles and find new options.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Extravagance is everything for you now, and you're the best when it comes to living large and having fun. Your energy is stimulating your pleasure centres, but this influence could leave you feeling buyer's regret -- and maybe a creeping fear about your credit rating! Avoid the shopping district, because draining your bank account isn't worth the brief pleasure you get.

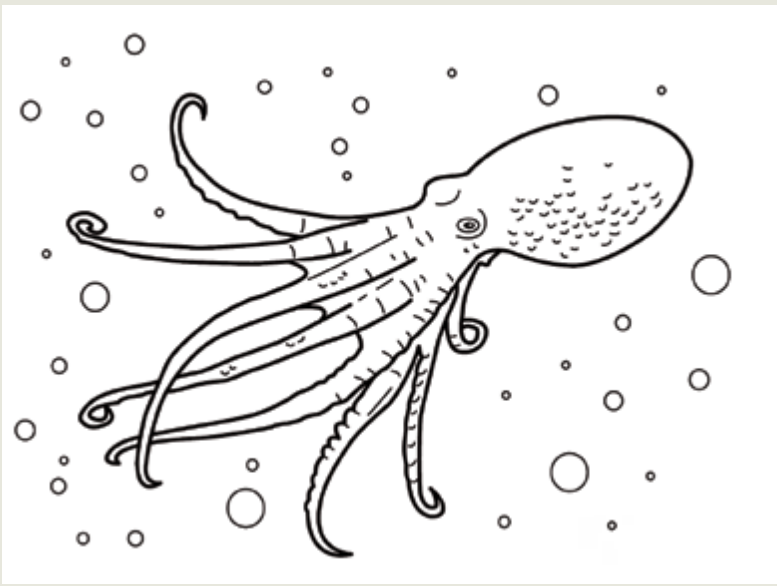
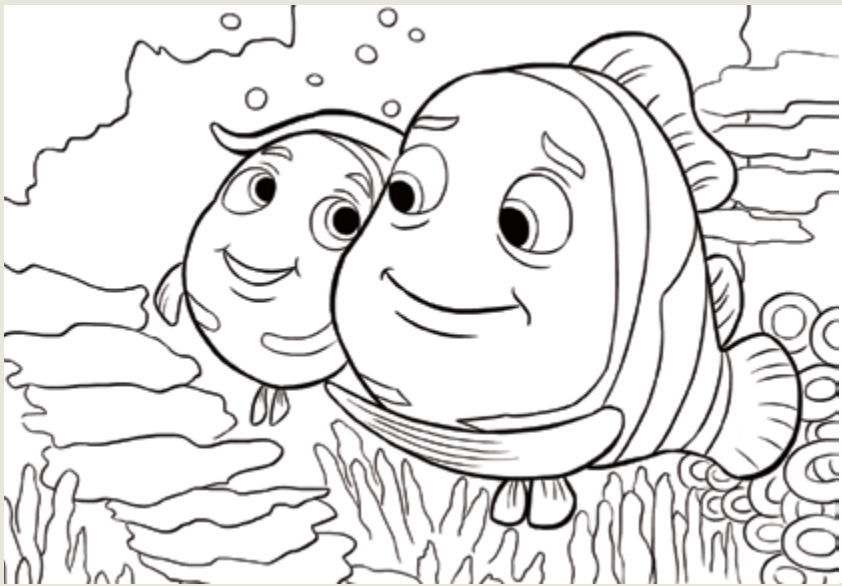


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1. The film Salaam Bombay was directed by**
- a. Shyam Benegal
 - b. Mira Nair
 - c. Aparna Sen
 - d. Mrinal Sen
- 2. Alice in Wonderland the famous TV serial is based on a book written by**
- a. Father Discoste
 - b. Thomas Hardy
 - c. Charles Dickens
 - d. Lewis Carroll
- 3. The owner of Star TV is**
- a. Rupert Murdoch
 - b. Tata Group
 - c. Richard Attenborough
 - d. George Lucas

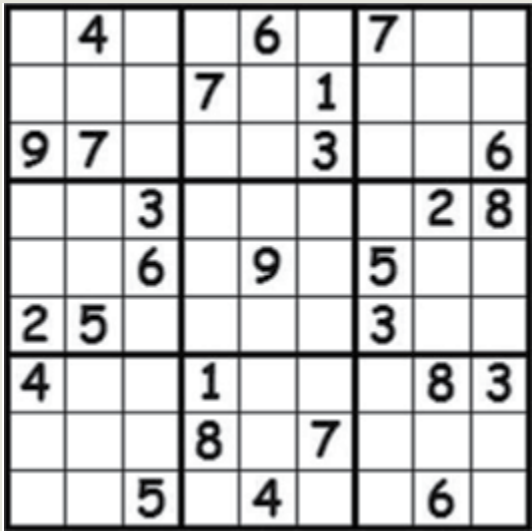
Answers: 1.b 2.d 3.a

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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



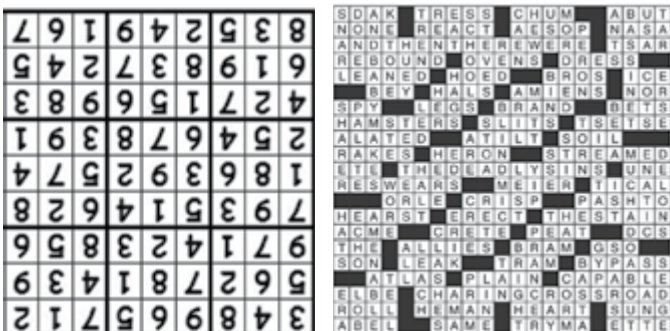
BOGGLER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (SEPTEMBER 28)

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



SUMPTUOUS

Salads

LIGHT LUNCH

When you want to have a light lunch but simply cannot do without proteins, why not combine your veggies with proteins while staying away from carbs? Hearty salads can let you have the best of both worlds. Check out some samples:



GRILLED SHRIMP SALAD

- Ingredients
- For the shrimp
- 500g shrimp - peeled and deveined
- 2tbsp chopped parsley
- 2 cloves fresh garlic - minced
- 1tbsp lemon zest
- 3tbsp olive oil,
- ½ tsp salt
- For the salad
- 3 hearts of romaine - sliced down the center with end intact
- 2 ears of corn - husked
- 2 bell peppers – any colour
- 1 cucumber - diced
- 1 large avocado - diced
- 2 cups halved grape tomatoes
- For the dressing
- 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2tbsp white vinegar
- 1-2tbsp honey
- ¼ cup olive oil

Method

Shrimp: Add the parsley, garlic, lemon zest, olive oil and salt in a bowl. Add the shrimp and stir to combine. Let it marinate for 10-15 minutes while you chop all the veggies and prepare the dressing. Place 4-6 shrimp on wooden skewers before grilling.

Vinaigrette: Whisk together the mustard, vinegar, and 1tbsp of honey with a pinch of salt. Continue whisking as you stream in the olive oil. Taste and adjust with 1tbsp of honey, if you prefer it sweeter.

Grilling: Preheat the grill and spray with cooking spray, if desired. Grill time will vary for the ingredients, so start with corn. Spray the corn with cooking spray, season with a pinch of salt and roast, turning every 4-5 minutes for about 15-18 minutes total. Add the whole bell pepper next and grill for 1 minute or longer if you'd like it to char a bit. Add the shrimp skewers near the end of cooking time, they'll take about 2-3 minutes per side. Spray the romaine hearts with cooking spray and sprinkle with a tiny pinch of salt - grill for about 2-3 minutes on each side.

Assemble: Add the chopped cucumbers, avocados, and tomatoes to a large salad bowl. Remove the stem from the romaine hearts and chop. Chop the corn kernels off the cob. Dice the bell pepper. Add all the ingredients to the bowl and toss with the dressing. Serve immediately.



EGG SALAD

- Ingredients
- 6 eggs
- ¼ cup red onion - minced
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2tbsp parsley - finely diced
- 2tbsp chives - finely diced
- 1tsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Method
- Boil the eggs for 12-15 minutes, transfer to an ice water bath for a few minutes to stop the cooking process and cool. Peel and chop up the hard boiled eggs to desired chunks. Then add the eggs, red onion, chives, parsley, mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, and lemon juice to a bowl and stir all ingredients together. Season with salt and pepper and serve in a bowl, in a sandwich, or in a wrap.

CHICKEN SALAD

- Ingredients
- 800g boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 cup red grapes - quartered
- 2 stalk celery - diced
- 3 spring onions – chopped, green and white parts
- 2tbsp chopped parsley
- 1tbsp chopped tarragon
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Method
- Season the chicken with salt and poach it in a pot of boiling water. Remove and set aside to cool. Then chill in the fridge for 30 minutes and chop up into 1-2cm pieces. Dice the celery, green onion, grapes, parsley and tarragon. Add all ingredients to a mixing bowl along with the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Mix everything together until it's well combined. Let it chill in the fridge until you're ready to serve. It can be spread between slices of bread and eaten as a sandwich or all by itself in a bowl.



TUNA SALAD

- Ingredients
- 2 150g cans of tuna (solid)
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 stalk of celery - diced
- 2tbsp diced red onion
- 1-2tbsp chopped parsley, chives and other herbs
- ½tbsp Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Method
- Drain the liquid from the tuna cans and roughly chop up. Then, add the tuna, mayonnaise, diced celery, diced red onion, herbs, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper to a mixing bowl. Stir all of the ingredients together until well combined. Enjoy the tuna salad plain out of a bowl, wrapped up in lettuce, or in a sandwich.

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

England World Cup winner Hunt dies

London, UK - England World Cup winner and Liverpool's record league goalscorer Roger Hunt has died at the age of 83, the English Premier League (EPL) club announced on Tuesday.

Hunt, who played in the 1966 World Cup final against West Germany, which England won 4-2, scored an unrivalled 244 league goals for the Reds.

"We are mourning the passing of legendary former player Roger Hunt," the club said in a statement posted on their official Twitter account.

"The thoughts of everybody at Liverpool Football Club are with Roger's family and friends at this sad and difficult time. Rest in peace, Sir Roger Hunt 1938 - 2021."

Hunt joined Liverpool, then a tier-two team, as a 20-year-old in 1958 and played his last game for the club in 1969.

The forward's overall Reds record of 285 goals was broken by Ian Rush in 1992 but nobody has scored more league goals for the club.

Hunt won two English top-flight titles and the FA Cup under manager Bill Shankly.

He scored three goals in six appearances for Alf Ramsey's England team during the 1966 World Cup on home soil and 18 goals in 34 caps overall for his country.

Current Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said, "It's really sad news and our thoughts and our love go to his family."

"Unfortunately, it feels too frequent in this moment we are saying farewell to these giants of our club."

"Roger Hunt comes second to no one in his importance in the history of Liverpool FC, that much is clear."

Former Liverpool striker John Aldridge paid tribute to Hunt, writing on Twitter: "I'm absolutely gutted to hear of the passing away of one, if not THE BEST Lfc strikers SIR ROGER HUNT."

"What a striker and a true Gentleman, I had the great pleasure of being with him on many occasions. RIP My Nu 1 Legend and Hero."

Robbie Fowler, sixth in Liverpool's all-time record goalscorers list, tweeted: "Rest in peace, Sir Roger Hunt."

AFP



A file photo of England and Liverpool striker Roger Hunt



UEFA drops case against Barca, Real, Juve over European Super League

Lausanne, Switzerland - UEFA says that it is dropping its disciplinary case against Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus over their involvement in the controversial European Super League (ESL), to comply with a ruling from a Madrid court.

European football's governing body said late Monday that 'the proceedings (are) null and void, as if the proceedings had never been opened'.

It is the latest chapter in an affair that sent shockwaves through football. The three heavyweight clubs were among 12 'founders' who caused uproar in April with their proposal for the elite breakaway league.

The nine others quickly backed down when fans and other clubs reacted with fury to the initiative, but Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus have refused to buckle.

UEFA, which had been pursuing the three clubs over what it called a potential violation of UEFA's legal framework, also said that it 'will not request payment' from the other nine clubs including English sides Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur.

The English Premier League clubs had agreed to pay a combined US\$29.8mn as a gesture of 'goodwill' over the affair. The other three clubs among the 12 were Atletico Madrid, AC Milan and Inter Milan.

Experts say that the notion of a Super League is by no means dead in the water and Barcelona president Joan Laporta recently warned that the Super League was 'still alive'.

UEFA on Monday signalled its intention to continue fighting its corner.

AFP

Maupay rescues Brighton against Palace

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Neal Maupay snatched a last-gasp equaliser as Brighton rescued a dramatic 1-1 draw against arch-rivals Crystal Palace on Monday. Trailing to Wilfried Zaha's first half penalty, Brighton avoided defeat in the most remarkable fashion.

With just seconds left at Selhurst Park, French striker Maupay punished a poor clearance from Palace keeper Vicente Guaita to leave the hosts

stunned. Brighton have been this season's surprise package and a victory in south London would have taken them into first place in the top-tier for the first time in their 120-year history.

While Graham Potter's side were unable to achieve that lofty aim, stealing a point in the derby clash was sufficient consolation.

They sit sixth in the table, just one point behind leaders Liverpool.

Born in the 1970s as a result of

a spat between then Palace boss Terry Venables and his Brighton counterpart Alan Mullery, the Eagles and the Seagulls have an unusually bitter rivalry for two clubs located 45 miles apart.

Their meetings have been dubbed 'El Gatwicko' in a reference to the Gatwick Airport located between Selhurst Park and Brighton.

It was cruel on Palace boss Patrick Vieira, whose side dominated for long periods but have

just one win from their first six league games.

Palace who took the lead in first half stoppage-time when Conor Gallagher's bold surge into the area was halted by a crude block from Leandro Trossard. Zaha sent Robert Sanchez the wrong way with his penalty to make it eight career goals against Brighton for the Ivory Coast forward.

Brighton escaped in the final minute of stoppage-time.

Guaita's poor goal-kick was seized on by Pascal Gross and he lofted a pass beyond the out-of-position Palace defence towards Maupay, who sprinted to the edge of the area and guided a fine finish over the Palace keeper.

OTHER RESULTS

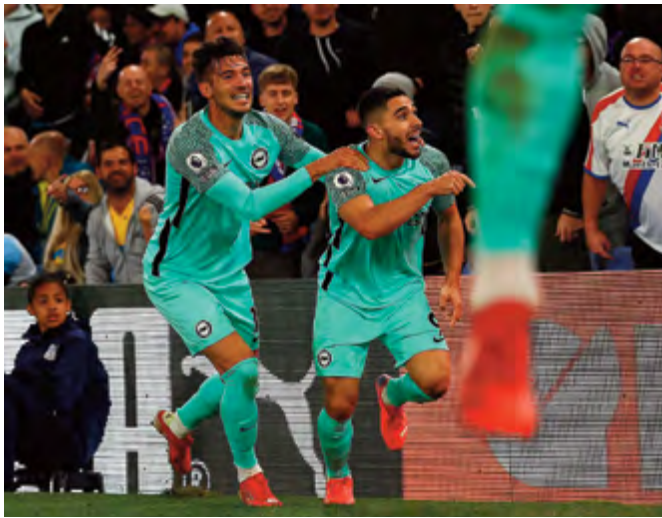
ITALIAN LEAGUE

Venezia 1 Torino 1.

SPANISH LEAGUE

Celta Vigo 1 Granada 0.

AFP



Brighton's Neal Maupay (R) celebrates after scoring against Crystal Palace

Messi headlines Argentina squad for World Cup qualifiers

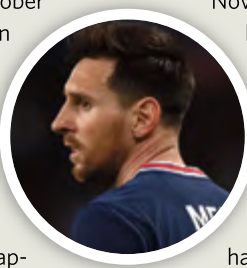
Buenos Aires, Argentina - Lionel Messi headlines the Argentina squad for three South American World Cup qualifiers in October and November 21 and December 18. Three Premier League players - Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and Tottenham pair Giovani Lo Celso and Cristian Romero - are in the Argentina squad even though the country is on Britain's coronavirus travel red list.

Argentina, with 18 points, are second in the standings behind Brazil, who have

amassed 24 points in eight matches. The 2022 World Cup will feature 32 teams and is to be held in Qatar between November 21 and December 18.

Three Premier League players - Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and Tottenham pair Giovani Lo Celso and Cristian Romero - are in the Argentina squad even though the country is on Britain's coronavirus travel red list.

AFP



Bale ruled out of Wales qualifiers with injury



A file photo of Gareth Bale

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

London, UK - Gareth Bale has been ruled out of World Cup qualifiers against the Czech Republic and Estonia next month with a 'significant hamstring tear', Wales boss Robert Page said on Tuesday.

The Welsh captain has not played since the goalless draw against Estonia on September 8 after being injured on his return to Real Madrid.

The absence of the 32-year-old for October's double-header deals a serious blow to Wales' qualification hopes for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Page is confident Bale will be fit for November's closing two World Cup qualifiers against

Belarus and Belgium but said, "You grade hamstring injuries from one to four and his is nearer the four. So it's quite a significant hamstring tear. We've been in close contact with him to see how it's progressing but this camp has come too soon for him."

"Originally it might have been progressing into November's camp, that's the significance of the injury."

"Thankfully he's recovering better than anticipated. We're pretty certain we'll have him for November."

Bale's eight-year stay in Spain has been dogged by injury and his regular absences in recent seasons have not gone down well with Real supporters.

"Gareth is a very special player and we know he will be missed," said Page.

"But we can't cry about it. We've got to get on with it and look at it in a positive frame of mind."

Juventus midfielder Aaron Ramsey, who missed this month's qualifiers, is named in a 28-man squad for the Czech Republic clash in Prague on October 8 and the trip to Estonia three days later.

The 30-year-old could take over the captaincy.

Wales are third in their World Cup qualifying group, level on points with the Czechs but nine points behind leaders Belgium.

AFP

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Australia's match vs Oman in Doha

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

AFC ASIAN QUALIFIERS ROAD TO QATAR

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Tuesday confirmed that Qatar's capital Doha will serve as the neutral venue for Australia for the upcoming AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to Qatar Group B match against Oman on October 7.

The Group B home game for Australia was initially planned to be played in Sydney but with COVID-19 travel restrictions in place Down Under, the match was unlikely to be held there.

Football Australia was in close touch with the Australian government to host the match at Bankwest Stadium in Sydney but a plan to work through the nation's COVID-19 restrictions couldn't materialise. The Australian football authorities were trying to get a 'travel bubble' organised in for Socceroos and Oman players, with the measures designed to avoid two weeks of quarantine for combatants on their arrival in Australia.

Oman will now play the Socceroos at Doha's Khalifa International Stadium with the kick-off at 10.30pm (Oman time).

Asian heavyweights Australia, who are currently Group B



Oman's Khalid al Hajri (C) in action against Nepal in Doha on Sunday

leaders after registering successive victories in September's opening round of matches, as well as Iraq, who have registered a point in Group A, will both continue to play their home matches at a neutral venue, according to AFC on Tuesday.

Oman, coached by Croatia's Branko Ivankovic, are currently camping in Qatar and had played an international friendly against Nepal as part of the preparations for the Australia match at the Qatar University ground on Sunday. The Red Warriors posted a thumping 7-2 win over

the minnows and the large victory margin sure to serve as a morale-booster ahead of the tougher task against Australia.

After the clash against the Socceroos, Oman will host Vietnam at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex (SQSC) on October 12.

Against Nepal, Fahmi Said gave Oman the lead nine minutes into the match before Mohsin Jawhar doubled the advantage at the half-hour mark, with Nepal pulling a goal back five minutes before the break.

Oman were at their best in the

second half with Jawhar scoring his second in the 46th minute and Mohsin al Ghassani making it 4-1 three minutes later.

Abdulaziz al Miqbali scored a brace in the 60th and 65th minutes to erase the disappointment of missing a sitter against Saudi Arabia in the qualifier earlier this month. Jameel al Yahmadi made it 7-1 in the 76th minute with Nepal scoring a consolation six minutes from time.

Earlier this month, Oman lost to Saudi Arabia 0-1 at the SQSC in a hard-fought match. The match against the Saudis was the first competitive match for Oman at home since October 2019 and saw a 10,000-strong crowd attend the game.

The Red Warriors had begun the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to Qatar campaign on a rousing note as they stunned Asian No 1 side and former Asian champions Japan 1-0 in Osaka. It was the first-ever win for Oman over Japan with the two sides having met eight times in the qualifiers over the past 16 years with Oman losing six and drawing two.

Oman are third in the Group B table with three points, the same as Japan. Australia top the table with six points, the same as Saudi Arabia, but the former have better goal-difference.

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Berrington, Sole shine as Scotland beat Oman

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

ICC WORLD CRICKET LEAGUE 2

Scotland notched up their second successive victory in the ongoing ICC World Cricket League (WCL) 2 tri-series on Tuesday with an 18-run win over hosts Oman at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground.

Having defeated Papua New Guinea (PNG) in their opening match on Saturday, Scotland, made good use of the pitch first against the hosts to put up a score of 273 for six, courtesy a brilliant 97 by Richie Berrington and skipper Kyle Coetzer's 60.

Duleep Mendis' boys overcame a middle-order slump to take the fight to the opposition camp with a rearguard action from Sandeep Goud, who hit an unbeaten half-century (54).

Despite the defeat, Oman lead the WCL 2 standings with 24 points from 16 games while the USA is second with 14 points from equal number of games. Scotland is a point behind at third after ten games.

Oman had begun this tri-series with a thumping 110-run win over PNG on Sunday.

Among the positives, despite the loss, for Oman on Tuesday would be the spirited fightback by the lower-order marshalled admirably by Goud with able support from Naseem Khushi (27) and Kaleemullah (20).

In the chase, Oman lost opener Kashyap Prajapati



Scotland's Richie Berrington in action during his knock of 97 against Oman



Berrington (L) receives player of the match award from Oman Cricket chairman Pankaj Khimji

without a run on board but Aqib Ilyas (33) and Jatinder Singh (65-ball 64) shared a 102-run stand in 21 overs. However, both departed at 102 in a space of five balls. Early dismissals of Suraj Kumar, skipper Zeeshan Maqsood and Ayaan Khan took the wind out of Oman's sails as they failed to capitalise on Jatinder and Ilyas' partnership. By the 32nd over Oman were struggling at 145 for six. Khawar Ali's run-out (155 for seven) left Goud and Khushi to chase down 119 for victory in the final 12 overs.

Both took up the challenge

and were involved in a 54-run partnership that ended when Khushi was caught by Berrington off Chris Sole, who picked three for 79. Kaleemullah struck two sixes and one four in his 20 to raise victory hopes with but was hit-wicket to leave Oman needing 31 from 12. They ended up at 255 for nine with Goud's unbeaten knock comprising three boundaries and four sixes.

Earlier, Scotland got off to a solid start as they scored 107 for two in 23 overs. Berrington was unlucky to miss his century as he was run out on the penultimate ball of the Scotland innings on 97, which included five fours and five sixes.

On Wednesday, Scotland meet PNG in a day-night match.

BRIEF SCORES:

Scotland 273-6 in 50 overs (Berrington 97, Coetzer 60, Dylan Budge 32 n.o.; Maqsood 1-56, Kaleemullah 1-35, Ayaan 1-37, Khawar 1-49) beat Oman 255-9 in 50 overs (Jatinder 64, Goud 54 n.o.; Sole 3-79).

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The elected women board members and officials at the sports ministry

The first meeting of all-women sports administrators was held on Tuesday

Elected women board members confident of bringing in change

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

On Tuesday, for the first time the newly-elected board members of the various sports associations, Oman Committee for Women Sports (OCWS) members and women sports department officials met at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY).

Following the meeting, the participants exuded confidence, hope and a bright future for women sports in Oman. They were unanimous in committing to put in their full-fledged efforts to bring in a change in women

sports in the country.

The meeting, chaired by Sayyida Sanaa al Busaidi, OCWS chairwoman, was organised by the sports ministry's women's sports department and was attended by six of the seven elected board members along with woman board member of the Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA).

Attending the meeting were Saada al Ismaili (OCWS vice-chairwoman), Hon Lujaina Mohsin Haider (Oman Football Association), Abeer al Zadjali (Oman Handball Association), Khoulal Rawahi (Oman Athletics Association), Madiha al

Suleimani (Oman Swimming Association), Saada al Azri (Oman Volleyball Association), Hiba al Naabi (Oman Basketball Association), Maryam al Hosni, member of the OCWS and Maryam al Alawi (OTTA).

Saada al Ismaili gave a presentation and spoke about the challenges faced by women in sports in the sultanate.

The participants thanked H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, for issuing a decision earlier this year making it mandatory for sports associations under the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) to have an

elected woman board member.

Hon Lujaina, who had been the president of Sidab Club nearly two decades ago, said 'she was happy to serve women sports in Oman'. 'My victory in the OFA elections also brings a lot of responsibilities. I promise to make a difference in women sports in Oman with focus on women's football,' she said.

All the participants admitted that there were lot of challenges to develop women sports but having a voice in the respective sports associations will definitely spur the growth of women sports movement in the country.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

I think we were ten short, not much. We want to give 100% and if it doesn't go our way we will learn and move on

Rishabh Pant
Delhi skipper, after his team's loss to Kolkata, on Tuesday



KKR STARS: NARINE, RANA

DELHI VS KOLKATA

Sharjah, UAE - In replacing the injured Andre Russell with a fast bowler rather than an allrounder, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) were placing a lot of faith in Sunil Narine to balance their side. He no longer opens their batting, and before this game had scored 4, 6, 0, 0 and 0* in his only outings with the bat this season. Narine repaid that faith with an influential allround display that led the Knight Riders to their third win in four games in the UAE leg of IPL 2021.

On a tricky, two-paced pitch in Sharjah, Delhi Capitals only managed 127 after being sent in, with Narine looking un-hittable while finishing with two for 18 in his four overs.

The chase was a stop-start affair, and there were moments when it seemed like the game could go either way, not least when Narine walked in with the Knight Riders needing 32 off 32 with five wickets in hand.

Chancing his arm and riding his luck, Narine clattered 21 off ten balls, quickly reinforcing the smallness of the target.

The game wasn't quite done yet, as Narine and then Tim Southee fell with Kolkata at the doorstep of victory, necessitating an injured Lockie Ferguson to come out to bat.

But Narine's hitting ensured the anxiety was kept to a minimum: Nitish Rana's winning slash to the third man boundary came with ten balls left to play.

Dhawan and only

Knight Riders went all-pace in the powerplay, and Shikhar Dhawan used the pace on offer from Sandeep Warrier and Southee to pick up five fours in 16 balls but hit Ferguson straight to cover point to fall for 24 off 20.

The strangle

From the sixth over to the 11th, it was all about Kolkata's mystery spinners – Varun Chakravarthy and Narine. The Capitals' batters struggled to take the initiative against both. Only 17 came off the first four overs of spin, with Narine picking up his first wicket, sneaking an off-break between bat and pad of Shreyas Iyer.

Steven Smith picked up a pair of fours off the first ball of Chakravarthy's third over and then swept Narine to beat deep backward square leg in the next over, to move to 35 off 27.

These were vital hits, with Rishabh Pant struggling for timing at the other end, but just when it seemed like Smith had gained a measure of the conditions, he played on to Ferguson. With that, Capitals were 77 for three in 12.2 overs.

Capitals fizzle out

The wicket of Smith came in Ferguson's second over. It also turned out to be his last, with a hamstring injury forcing him off the field. The selection of Southee for Russell came in handy at this juncture, as did the versatility of Venkatesh Iyer, who



sent down four overs of medium-pace. He also picked up two key wickets of Shimron Hetmyer and Axar Patel. In between, Narine took his second wicket, trapping Lalit Yadav lbw.

The Capitals innings ground to a halt, their last nine overs bringing them just 54 runs for the loss of nine wickets. And for the second time this season, they got through an entire innings without hitting a six.

Early momentum

Venkatesh followed up his impressive bowling spell with two fours in the first over of the chase, off Anrich Nortje, before falling to Lalit Yadav's off-spin in the fifth over. His opening partner Shubman Gill also delivered crucial early hits, stepping out in the second over to hit Axar Patel back over his head for the first six of the match, and then clearing long-on when he went after

R Ashwin in the seventh over.

By this time the Knight Riders had also lost Rahul Tripathi. When Rana, who came in at No 4, he swept Ashwin to the backward square leg boundary at the end of the ninth over and KKR needed 66 from 66.

The wobble

Capitals held Kagiso Rabada back until the 11th over, and he began with five straight dots to

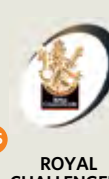
SCOREBOARD		
DELHI CAPITALS		
S Smith	b Ferguson	39(34)
S Dhawan	c Iyer b Ferguson	24(20)
S Iyer	b Narine	1 (5)
R Pant	run out	39(36)
S Hetmyer	c Southee b Iyer	4 (5)
L Yadav	lbw b Narine	0 (3)
Axar Patel	c Ferguson b Iyer	0 (5)
R Ashwin	c Rana b Southee	9 (8)
K Rabada	not out	0 (1)
Avesh Khan	run out	5 (3)
Extras	(lb 2, w 4)	6
TOTAL 127 for nine in 20 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-40, 3-77, 4-88, 5-89, 6-92, 7-120, 8-122, 9-127		
Bowling: S Warrier 2-0-15-0, T Southee 4-0-29-1, L Ferguson 2-0-10-2, V Chakravarthy 4-0-24-0, S Narine 4-0-18-2, V Iyer 4-0-29-2		
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS		
S Gill	c Iyer b Rabada	30(33)
V Iyer	b Yadav	14 (15)
R Tripathi	c Smith b Avesh Khan	9 (5)
N Rana	not out	36(27)
E Morgan	c Yadav b Ashwin	0 (2)
D Karthik	b Avesh Khan	12 (14)
S Narine	c Patel b Nortje	21 (10)
T Southee	b Avesh Khan	3 (5)
L Ferguson	not out	0 (1)
Extras	(b 1, lb 1, nb 1, w 2)	5
TOTAL: 130 for seven in 18.2 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-43, 3-67, 4-67, 5-96, 6-122, 7-126		
Bowling: A Nortje 2.2-0-15-1, Axar Patel 3-0-13-0, R Ashwin 4-0-24-1, L Yadav 3-0-35-1, Avesh Khan 3-0-13-3, K Rabada 3-1-28-1		

TODAY'S MATCH



RAJASTHAN ROYALS

VS



ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

DUBAI, 6PM

POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
CSK	10	8	2	0	16	+1.069
DC	11	8	3	0	16	+0.562
RCB	10	6	4	0	12	-0.359
KKR	11	5	6	0	10	+0.363
MI	11	5	6	0	10	-0.453
PBKS	11	4	7	0	8	-0.288
RR	10	4	6	0	8	-0.369
SRH	10	2	8	0	4	-0.501

P: Played, **W:** Won, **L:** Lost, **NR:** No Result, **PTS:** Points, **NRR:** Net Run-Rate

CSK: Chennai Super Kings
RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore
DC: Delhi Capitals
KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders
PBKS: Kings XI Punjab
MI: Mumbai Indians
RR: Rajasthan Royals
SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

OUTSIDE IPL

Inzamam discharged from hospital after suffering heart attack

Lahore, Pakistan - Inzamam-ul-Haq, the former Pakistan captain and one of their all-time batting greats, has been discharged from the hospital on Tuesday after suffering a heart attack in Lahore. Inzamam underwent a successful angioplasty on Monday evening.

Inzamam, who shot to global prominence during Pakistan's World Cup winning 1992 campaign, had been complaining about chest pain over the last three days. Initial testing cleared him but tests on Monday revealed he had suffered a heart attack and had to be rushed for surgery.

According to his agent, Inzamam was stable but under observation.

Cricinfo

Mumbai triumph in tight contest

MUMBAI VS PUNJAB

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Not for the first time this season, Punjab Kings paid the price for losing their nerve at the death.

After failing to score any boundaries in the final four overs to stutter to 135 for six, their own death bowlers leaked a combination of four fours and three sixes to the power-hitting pair of Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard from the 17th to 19th, rendering the last over unnecessary as a 15-minute sequence turned a tense chase into an easy six-wicket win for Mumbai Indians on Tuesday.

Hardik made Kings pay for giving him an extra life on seven in the 14th over when Harpreet Brar spilled a relatively straightforward chance above his head trying to intercept a cut at backward point off Arshdeep Singh.

With momentum swinging ever so slightly to Kings after the fall of Saurabh Tiwary in the 16th for 45 to leave Indians needing 40 off the last four overs, Hardik stole it back by flicking



Hardik Pandya (R) and Kieron Pollard greet each other after Mumbai's win

Mohammed Shami for four and six over the leg side in the 17th.

Pollard that drove a pair of misfired yorkers from Arshdeep over the off side for four and six in the 18th before a trio of boundaries from Hardik off Shami clinched the match one over later as the winning runs were spilled once again over the

rope at long-on by Deepak Hooda.

Earlier, Mumbai pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah and Pollard took two wickets each to help restrict Punjab to 135 despite Aiden Markram's 42.

Pollard took his wicket total to 300 in T20 format after sending back Punjab skipper KL Rahul.

SCOREBOARD		
PUNJAB KINGS		
KL Rahul	c Bumrah b Pollard	21 (22)
M Singh	lbw b K Pandya	15 (14)
C Gayle	c H Pandya b Pollard	1 (4)
A Markram	b Chahar	42(29)
N Pooran	lbw b Bumrah	2 (3)
D Hooda	c Pollard b Bumrah	28(26)
H Brar	not out	14 (19)
N Ellis	not out	6 (4)
Extras	(b 1, lb 2, nb 1, w 2)	6
TOTAL 135 for six in 20 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-39, 3-41, 4-48, 5-109, 6-123		
Bowling: K Pandya 4-0-24-1, T Boult 3-0-30-0, J Bumrah 4-0-24-2, N Coulter-Nile 4-0-19-0, K Pollard 1-0-8-2, R Chahar 4-0-27-1		
MUMBAI INDIANS		
Rohit Sharma	c M Singh b Bishnoi	8 (10)
Q de Kock	b Shami	27 (29)
S Yadav	b Bishnoi	0 (1)
S Tiwary	c Rahul b Ellis	45(37)
H Pandya	not out	40(30)
K Pollard	not out	15 (7)
Extras	(lb 2, nb 1, w 2)	5
TOTAL: 137 for four in 19 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-16, 3-61, 4-92		
Bowling: A Markram 3-0-18-0, M Shami 4-0-42-1, Arshdeep Singh 4-0-29-0, R Bishnoi 4-0-25-2, Nathan Ellis 3-0-12-1, H Brar 1-0-11-0		

The West Indies allrounder became the first player in T20 history with 10,000 runs and 300 wickets.

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The winners...



CATEGORY: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Darwish (FRSA)

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Darwish is a multi-faceted individual who believes deeply in giving back to the community, a person who assiduously works for the welfare and well-being of underprivileged persons, and serves as an example and inspiration to all.

In her official position as the chairperson of the Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial & Consumer Solutions (ITICS) cluster at Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD) - she presides with poise and elan over a highly complex and hugely varied group of businesses. With the strength of the legacy inherited from her father, late Mohsin Haider Darwish, and guided by his philosophy of 'people first', she brings a humane dimension in managing a large business.

Honourable Lujaina was recently elected as Woman Board Member in the Oman Football Association, a keen move to boost women's football in Oman. Earlier, she had been elected to the country's consultative council - Majlis A' Shuraa and holds the distinction of having been elected twice to this honorary position from the Wilayat of Muscat. In 2015, she had been appointed member of the State Council and is presently a member of the esteemed council.

A committed contributor to the social, cultural and business landscape of Oman, she currently holds various important positions such as, Honorary President of Oman-China Friendship Association; Omani-Indian Friendship Association; Oman - Turkey Friendship Association, and many other organisations. She has recently received the prestigious fellowship from The Royal Society of Arts, London, and has been consistently ranked over the past many years in the Forbes Annual listing of Most Powerful Businesswoman in the Middle East.

At local and regional levels, Honourable Lujaina has functioned previously as a member of various important organisations such as the Arab International Women's Forum, the Board of the Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Board of The Omani Center for Investment Promotion & Export Development (Ithraa-Oman). She fully embraces the notion of the workforce being the driving force of any organisation and considers her staff the greatest strength of MHD. "Reward and success are a direct function of your determination and hard work," she says.

CATEGORY: ENTREPRENEUR

Dr Rauhiya Rashid al Khaifi

Rauhiya Rashid al Khaifi, a medical graduate from Sultan Qaboos University in 1999, worked as a medical doctor at Armed Forces Hospital for 15 years before deciding to change her career onto a new path as an entrepreneur. She founded Latafa, a cosmetics brand that sells only natural and organic cosmetics.

Disclosing that she had leadership skills right from childhood, Rauhiya says, "I was the kind of person who is creative and would like to always be unique, and not imitate others. Being full of new ideas helped me to take over leadership among my peers."

She succeeded in a short time in transforming her company from an extremely small entity to almost a medium size business within two years. From an online business it turned into a company with four branches, a wholesale division distributing to ten Carrefour branches, and a proper online store.

From 10 Latafa branded products in 2017 to more than 130 products in 2019, the company grew from strength to strength, and in February 2021, it opened a Latafa branch in Kuwait. It is also the only brand in Oman that is certified by Cosmos Organic, an international certification body based in France.

As an entrepreneur, Rauhiya excelled in different aspects of business, marketing, graphics design, and strategic planning, and now looks forward to being a lecturer and a well-known international business coach in the near future.

"I don't think there are specific qualities that makes a person successful except for a whole spectrum of qualities, attitudes, assertiveness, and determination driven by passion. As for myself, I believe I am gifted with creativity, broad imagination, and leadership skills," Rauhiya said, adding that she enjoys learning different skills.

She asserts that it is the passion and the assertiveness to reach her vision, a strong belief in her own abilities and the zeal to overcome challenges which kept her on a successful path. And her strongest support on that journey has been her husband Mohammed Salim al Busaidi who is also her greatest motivator and mentor.



CATEGORY: ENVIRONMENT

Suhaila Nasser al Kindi

Suhaila Nasser al Kindi, former head of Tenders & Contracts in be'ah, has always been passionate about the environment and in spreading awareness to preserve Oman's natural beauty.

Member of the Oman Environment Association, Suhaila, with her sound project management skills, has participated in many awareness campaigns through be'ah as well as in social welfare drives, such as clean-up campaigns within the community as part of her own social responsibility.

"My biggest achievement was in 2020 - walking from Muscat to Dhofar, a distance of 890km in 30 days to spread awareness on the importance of preserving our environment. The message I carried was - Preserve our beautiful Oman'. This initiative was sponsored by be'ah and was very successful as the message reached wide segments of society," says Suhaila.

She has also organised similar walks, like a 100km walk with a group of ladies from Ras al Jinz to Al Ashkara, for spreading environmental awareness and sending a clear message to all women in Oman that everyone has a social responsibility to keep the environment clean. Other initiatives include those for safe driving and the importance of using seat belts and child seats.

"My plans for 2021/2022 include focusing on how to enhance self-esteem, motivation, and success for Omani women," discloses Suhaila, who believes that success begins from home with the responsibility to first build a successful family.

Persistent, adventurous, and with a never-say-die attitude, Suhaila never shies away from challenges but always stays positive and enjoys whatever she does.

With great support from her family and inspiration from her parents, Suhaila pledges to continue spreading awareness on conserving the environment and inspiring women to engage themselves in whatever activity they love to do.



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