

MUSCAT DAILY

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35°C/25°C

COVID-19 TAKES A TOLL ON GCC PROJECTS
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HM THE SULTAN VISITS DHOFAR

His Majesty the Sultan grants audience to sheikhs of wilayats in the Governorate of Dhofar at Al Hisn Hall for direct dialogue

Salalah - In amplification of constant contact between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and citizens all over the benign land of Oman, His Majesty the Sultan conferred with some sheikhs of wilayats of the Governorate of Dhofar at Al Hisn Hall in Al Shati quarter of the wilayat of Salalah on Tuesday.

In an ambient atmosphere of direct dialogue between the leader and his loyal people, His Majesty Sultan Haitham gave his directives on all that leads to bounty, prosperity and progress in this dear homeland.

The meeting reflects His Majesty the Sultan's keenness to engage with citizens in order to have a close look at their needs and sense the requirements of their respective wilayats. It was an opportunity to listen to their views and proposals about ways to improve development services and enhance the role of government departments tasked with extending these services to different parts of the country within the context of comprehensive and sustainable development plans.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said, Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth, Sayyid Bal'arab bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Nasr bin Hamoud al Kindi, Secretary General of the Royal Court Affairs, Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, Deputy Governor of Dhofar and Walis of the wilayats in Dhofar.

ONA



The meeting at Al Hisn Hall in Al Shati quarter of Salalah reflects His Majesty the Sultan's keenness to engage with citizens in order to understand the needs and requirements in the wilayats



FACE MASKS EVERYWHERE

Despite campaigns to raise awareness on the need to discard used masks and gloves safely, beaches and car parks across Muscat are littered with these items



Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

With face masks now a legal requirement in public spaces in Oman, thousands will be needed each month. However, without better disposal practices, an environmental disaster is looming as a result of the improper disposal of face masks and gloves.

Since the Supreme Committee made it mandatory for people to wear masks in public places, used face protection covers and gloves have been seen casually tossed away by careless people.

According to the Ministry of Health (MoH), this is not only a major health risk for sanitation workers and rag pickers but also for people out in the streets.

"Now is the need more than ever before to raise the collective awareness of the masses on the dangers of throwing waste on the ground, including gloves and masks that may be contaminated by the virus. We are worried and frightened because of such behaviour," Janaab Sayyid Hudhaim Fuad al Said - Health, Safety and Environment Specialist at MoH - told *Muscat Daily*.

He said that throwing used gloves on the ground or streets can be a major health risk especially to those cleaning the streets. "This irresponsible habit may lead to the increase in infections. This is a terrible epidemic that spreads like wildfire," Sayyid Hudhaim said.

"This is why we have to be careful in many ways, including the proper disposal of this type of waste. People who are cleaning the streets will be at risk of getting the disease because of the carelessness of a few who



We have seen people throwing their gloves and mask in the car park before getting into their vehicle. This is extreme selfishness. It's as if they are throwing their illness without care and without the slightest responsibility. This has to stop

JANAAB SAYYID
HUDHAIM FUAD AL SAID

throw contaminated masks on the road," he added.

Sayyid Hudhaim also requested people to stop carelessly throwing used gloves.

"There is always a suitable place for such waste. Gloves and masks thrown on the ground are a health hazard and an 'emerging' cause of COVID-19 transmission. My message to the people is to dispose masks

and gloves in a bin to avoid any health risk to others," he said.

"We have seen people throwing their gloves and mask in the car park before getting into their vehicle. This is extreme selfishness. It's as if they are throwing their illness without care and without the slightest responsibility. This has to stop."

According to citizens and residents, car parks and beaches across Muscat are seen littered with masks and gloves despite awareness campaigns conducted through different mediums about the hazards of disposing these improperly, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"I have been seeing discarded masks and gloves on the streets and in public places. Even though there are bins everywhere, there are still many people who simply throw the used masks anyhow. They forget such items are a health risk to the community. People should be educated to stop this practice," said Amrat resident Saeed al Tauqi, an engineer.

"I have noticed that some people lack the proper understanding of how these face masks and gloves should be handled," said taxi driver Adnan Rashid. "Some of my passengers leave them in my taxi, which is just not right. I only see them in the car after I reach home."

Rashid has also seen instances of people tossing masks out of car windows and littering outside garbage bins.

"We need to consider the cleaners who pick them up."

@shadadm

MASKS MANDATORY

RO
100

The fine for not wearing masks in Oman was raised to RO100 from RO20 as per a decision mentioned in the official gazette. According to the Supreme Committee decision, a fine will be imposed for not wearing masks in public places - all commercial and industrial activities, public and private workplaces, in transportation and other places.



MUNICIPALITY LITTERING FINE

- RO1,000 fine for littering
- The fine will be doubled for offenders who are caught littering more than once



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NO ADDED SUGAR

MoH nurse succumbs to virus

Blessy Sam was earlier deputed in the COVID-19 ward at Royal Hospital

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health has announced the first death of a public sector health worker due to COVID-19. Blessy Sam passed away at the ICU of The Royal Hospital on Monday. The 37 year old nurse from India was well known in the community and among her colleagues at Sinaw Hospital as a positive and vibrant individual.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Blessy's colleague Dr Badriya al Sharji said, "She was very experienced and very friendly. She had been deputed to work at Royal Hospital in the COVID-19 ward. She returned to Sinaw Hospital after the assignment had ended, but she fell ill with the coronavirus."

Blessy was transferred to Sur Hospital for treatment, but as



Blessy Sam

her condition deteriorated, she was rushed to The Royal Hospital where she breathed her last.

Offering her condolences to the family, Dr Badriya said, "Blessy was a brave nurse fighting COVID-19."

PM Jabir, community welfare secretary of Indian Social Club, said, "It is very unfortunate that we lost one of our brightest

nurses in Oman. During this pandemic, we have seen how health workers have tirelessly devoted themselves for the health and safety of our lives. They are the real-life heroes. The Oman government did its best to save Blessy but she passed away." Jabir noted that Blessy was very popular in the community.

Hailing from Adoor in the southern Indian state of Kerala, Blessy had been in Oman for more than ten years and was an active community member.

Blessy is survived by her husband Sam George and two children, Kevin and Kasiya, who are students of Indian School Wadi Kabir.

"It is distressing to note that we have lost yet another person to COVID-19. Even more so, considering Blessy was a young mother and a frontline health-

Blessy was transferred to Sur Hospital for treatment, but as her condition deteriorated, she was rushed to The Royal Hospital where she breathed her last

care worker," said Dr Baby Sam Saamuel, chairman of Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman.

"Heartfelt condolences to her family here in Oman and India. This loss also reminds us of the countless sacrifices being

made by healthcare workers to ensure our safety. It is our duty to honour these by complying with all safety guidelines," Saamuel said.

In a statement, Ministry of Health said, 'This is the first death among health workers in Oman due to the pandemic. The deceased was a true hero and a role model of hard, sincere work.'

'His Excellency the Minister of Health, their Excellencies, as well as the ministry's personnel and all health workers in Oman express their heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased, may Allah grant them the strength to bare her loss.'

On April 17, Dr Rajendran Nair who worked in the private sector and earned the name 'Common man's doctor' succumbed to COVID-19.



(Supplied photo)

H E Dr Sa'eedi, envoy discuss procuring vaccine from India

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and India are discussing plans to procure COVID-19 vaccines for the sultanate once it is ready.

A few Indian companies are in advanced stages of testing the vaccine, and Oman has shown interest in accessing these once the efficacy has been evaluated.

H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, received H E Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of India to the sultanate, on Monday in his office. The meeting addressed the current status of vaccine production and expected release by

manufacturers in the near future.

The minister discussed with the ambassador the possibility of considering the sultanate to be one of the countries to receive the vaccine after evaluating efficacy and safety in clinical trials.

The meeting exchanged cordial conversations and discussed means of cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Furthermore, the epidemiological situation of the current pandemic was highlighted during the meeting. The global efforts exerted in combating the disease and aspects of cooperation between the two sides in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic were also underlined.

PACDA HONOURS BOY FOR RESCUING HIS FAMILY



Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulances (PACDA) stated that the brigadier general from the Directorate General of Civil Defence has honoured nine year old Al Moatasem Ahmed Saleh al Shaqsi for his heroics in rescuing his family from a fire in their home in the wilayat of Bahla in the Governorate of Dakhliyah. *Muscat Daily* reported the incident on September 10, 2020

Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature postponed

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science has announced that the ninth edition of the Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature has been postponed until further notice due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The award is the most prominent cultural event in Oman and enjoys wide interest and participation both locally and internationally.

The annual award is alterna-

tively given to Omanis and Arabs. The award has become a valuable indicator of the cultural, artistic and literary scene at the local and Arab level.

The award deals with various cultural works and writings in the field of humanities and social knowledge in general such as language, history, heritage, philosophy, translation works, intellect studies, etc. It also deals with various forms of music, fine arts, sculpture, photography, and literary works like poetry, novel, short story, literary criticism and drama production.

REGIONAL WEATHER

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	41	26
Doha	38	28
Kuwait City	39	29
Manama	38	29
Riyadh	41	24

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.38am
Sunrise	5.54am
Duhr	12.07pm
Asr	3.33pm
Maghrib	6.15pm
Isha	7.25pm



Tender Announcement

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tenders:

Tender no.	Description	Tender Fee (Non refundable)	Tender Purchase deadline	Clarification deadline	Tender Submission Date
PDEN/2020/09/06	Modifications of MOD Mabella Filling Station in Wilayat Seeb in Muscat Governorate	40.000 OMR	23.09.2020	28.09.2020	04.10.2020
Bank Name & Account Number		Bank Muscat (0319005687760012)			

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tenders:** Interested, specialized companies and establishments registered under grade 3 and above (in C.R) with minimum of 3 years' experience in the same field. Bidders can collect the tender document from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to procurement@almaha.com.om. The tender may be collected on any working days between 08:00 AM – 03:00 PM.
- Bank Guarantee:** The bidder should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value, with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG.
- Offer Submission:** Tender bids should be submitted in two separate sealed envelopes (Financial and Technical), addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelopes containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 02:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.
- For any enquiry email us at (procurement@almaha.com.om) or by calling 24610289/24610282/24610355

INVITATION TO TENDER

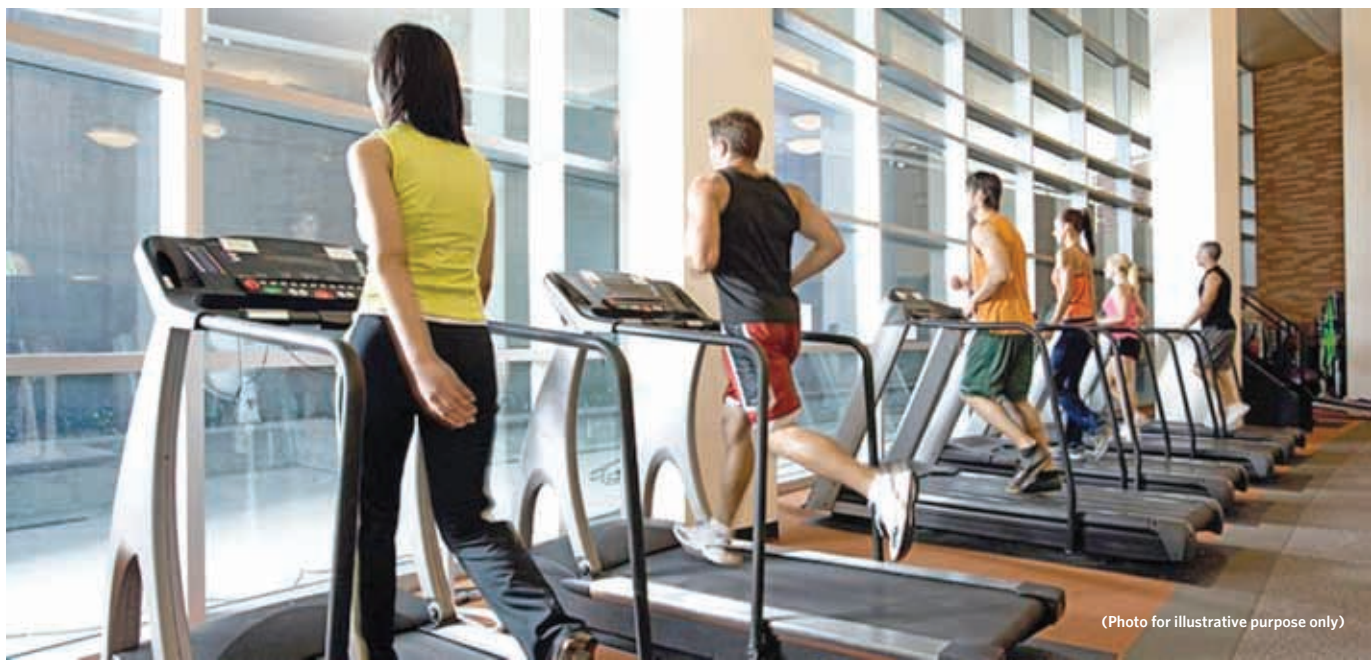


Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Suppliers/Contractors for the following tender:

Tender No. : RFP 20-011
Tender Title : Provision of Sewage Tanker Services
Scope : The Contractor shall provide sewage and waste waters removal services including all management, supervision, personnel, equipment, transportation, small tools, consumable items, spare-parts, PPC, PPE and any safety equipment complying to Sohar Aluminium Company LLC's (SA's) EHS standards; and each and every item of costs and expenses necessary for execution of scope of work as and when required by SA.

Tender No. : 2020-ENG-SOW-0033
Tender Title : Canteen Renovation
Scope : Study, design and renovation of Canteen Area involving change to existing interior décor, civil & MEP related works along with Civil defence/ROP approval as per SA scope.

Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com
 For list of active tenders visit: <https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing>



(Photo for illustrative purpose only)

Gyms open but people prefer home workouts

Odd workout hours, health guidelines don’t go well with gymming

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Yoga, beach runs and rope extension are some forms of exercise that people are opting for instead of visiting gyms.

Gyms reopened on August 26 with several health guidelines in place. However, these regulations have deterred fitness enthusiasts.

Understandably, fear of the virus is also keeping people at home.

Khalid Harthy, a banker, said, “I go to a popular gym in Muscat but now with the new regulations, several do’s and don’ts have been introduced. Also members are given designated time. Most of us want the

evening slot but it is next to impossible. They cannot accommodate more people. Hence, I have decided to do my workouts at home. I also go to the beach

I was anxiously waiting for the gyms to reopen but now with some odd timings and just one hour given to each one, I simply cannot complete my workouts

AVISHEK SINGH

for my freehand exercises and running.”

The closure for several months necessitated some maintenance and renovation work and some gyms in hotels are yet to open. New regulations

call for additional measures of safety.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a gym instructor said, “Our gym is taking time

because of renovations; it was left without any maintenance for so many months. Our members are requesting us to open soon. But we need some more time.”

For weight trainers, the most

popular form of exercise at home has been extension ropes. The ropes use the body weight as a form of training which works perfectly for triceps, biceps, upper body, lower body and helps in full workouts.

Avishek Singh, a regular gym visitor, said, “I was anxiously waiting for the gyms to reopen but now with some odd timings and just one hour given to each one, I simply cannot complete my workouts.”

He said he now prefers his home workouts.

“I prefer some small weight lifts with barbells and using my extension rope. I can do most of the exercises with these. For warmups and cardio, I do power-yogas,” Singh said.

‘Embezzlement by public servant grave offence’

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Public Prosecution in Oman has warned public servants that any kind of embezzlement or misappropriation of funds committed by a government employee is a grave and punishable offence that can result in a jail sentence of up to ten years, besides fines.

‘Embezzlement by a public servant - of whatever is under his possession or management in terms of public or private money or equivalents - is an offence punishable by imprisonment for five years and a fine equivalent of

Civil service is a national duty and a grave responsibility...

the embezzled amount. If the embezzlement is committed through forgery or the use of a forged document, the jail term could reach ten years. Under all circumstances, the offending public servant will be barred from holding public office indefinitely,’ the Public Prosecution has stated.

‘Civil service is a national duty and a grave responsibility that demands from its holders to relentlessly protect state money, preserve the country’s capabilities and serve national interests and the community,’ the Public Prosecution statement added.

With regard to misappropriation, the Public Prosecution further stated, ‘Misappropriation of public money by a public servant or facilitating the same to a third party is an offence punishable by imprisonment for five years and a fine equivalent to the misappropriated amount in addition to removal from office and denial from holding office indefinitely.’



438 new COVID-19 cases, 7 deaths

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday confirmed 438 new cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), taking the total to 90,660. The number of deaths reported on Tuesday was seven.

‘The number of recoveries has increased to 84,113 while the number of deaths has reached 797,’ an MoH statement said. As of Tuesday, a total of 488 patients were admitted in health institutions while 184 patients are currently in ICU.

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

Sewage cleaners suffocate to death in North Batinah

Muscat - Two people were found dead in a septic tank in a house in Sohar, according to the Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulances (PACDA).

The authority said, ‘PACDA’s team in the North Batinah governorate pulled two people out of a

septic tank, which they had entered to clean in a house in the wilayat of Sohar, and found them dead.’

PACDA has called on homeowners and workers to ensure safety measures when dealing with septic tanks and sewage.



CURB COVID-19

MAINTAIN

STRICT

SOCIAL

DISTANCING

STAY HEALTHY STAY SAFE

ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST

an apex media

مبادرة INITIATIVE

القيمة للعلم

Mobile subscriptions fall, Internet uptake rises

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With the exodus of expatriates during the COVID-19 pandemic, the total number of mobile subscribers fell by 8.7 per cent to 6.05mn at the end of July 2020, compared to the same period of 2019.

However, the increased uptake of Internet has led to fixed Internet subscriptions, excluding active mobile broadband subscriptions, rise by 7.8 per cent in the sultanate to touch 490,676 at the end of July 2020 vis-à-vis 2019.

Of these, fixed broadband In-



ternet connections, which have more than 256 kilobytes speed, rose 7.9 per cent to 488,650 at the end of July 2020, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of active mobile broadband subscribers rose 13 per cent to 4.89mn at the end of July 2020 compared to 2019 and total fixed telephone lines rose by 0.4 per cent to 582,051.

According to the NCSI report, the number of voice-over-Internet protocol (VoIP) lines surged by 12.6 per cent to 219,825.

Further, analogue fixed connections fell by 7.1 per cent to

303,762 at the end of July 2020 from 307,102 subscribers in June 2020. Public payphone connections remained unchanged at 6,801, whereas ISDN channels rose by 2.5 per cent to 50,193.

The total number of mobile subscribers fell 8.7 per cent to 6.05mn at the end of July 2020. Out of these, postpaid mobile connections increased by 14.2 per cent to 852,255, and pre-paid mobile connections fell 11.6 per cent to 5.20mn at the end of July 2020.

Also, the number of subscribers of resellers rose by 9.6 per cent to 990,968 at the end of July 2020 vis-à-vis July 2019.

Livestock vaccination launched in S Sharqiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To protect livestock from diseases and speed up investigation and determine the places of infection, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resource has launched an immunisation project for livestock in a number of wilayats in South Sharqiyah governorate.

The project is on in places like Al Kamil W'Al Wafi, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. Ali bin Salem al Hashemi, director of the Agricultural Development Department in Al Kamil W'Al Wafi, said that the livestock immunisation project is an important one.

"The project aims to immunise livestock, reduce infection rates and prevent common diseases between humans and animals," he said.

The vaccination programme



began on September 6 and will continue until the end of April 2021. It will include all the targeted villages in the wilayats.

Hashemi also indicated that this year, the programme will include a counselling team to educate livestock breeders about the importance of vaccination and the sanitary conditions for the shelter and

healthcare for animals.

He added, "The vaccination plan for this year includes an electronic registration of livestock breeders that includes all information about them for follow-up and continuous communication with them."

The record also helps to speed up investigation and determine the places of infection.

Migratory grey heron saved in Ibri

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) has announced that a grey heron was found in one of the water basins under the management of Daleel Petroleum in the wilayat of Ibri.

The Environment Authority said, 'Thanks to the employees of Daleel Oil Company in the area of Masruq in the wilayat of Ibri for saving the grey heron, which was found in one of the water basins associated with the company's oil project.'

The bird was handed over to the Environment Department in Dhahirah governorate to take



care of its health condition so that it could continue its migration, the authority added.

The grey heron is one of the migratory birds that visits the sultanate in the month of Sep-

tember for food and rest, said EA

The grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) is a long-legged predatory wading bird of the heron family, Ardeidae, native throughout temperate Europe and Asia and also parts of Africa. It is resident in much of its range, but some populations from the more northern parts migrate southwards in autumn.

A bird of wetland areas, it can be seen around lakes, rivers, ponds, marshes and on the sea coast. It feeds mostly on aquatic creatures which it catches after standing stationary beside or in the water or stalking its prey. Standing up to 1m tall, adults weigh from 1 to 2kg.



UAE authorises emergency use of vaccine for health workers

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The UAE announced authorising the emergency use of COVID-19 vaccine for health workers on the front-line of the battle against the pandemic.

During the UAE's COVID-19 media briefing, Abdulrahman bin Mohammed al Owais, UAE's Minister of Health and Prevention, said making the vaccine available for frontliners was part of the country's measures to protect health workers in close contact with COVID-19 patients and ensure their safety.

The UAE is currently conducting Phase III clinical trial of COVID-19 inactivated vaccine. Results from the final stages of the third phase confirmed that the vaccine is safe and effective, resulting in a strong generation of COVID-19 antibodies.

Owais stressed that the emergency use of the vaccine is fully aligned with the regulations and laws that allow a faster review of licensing procedures.



Abdulrahman al Owais

"The studies related to the safety of vaccination are conducted under the strict supervision of medical teams. Health authorities are following procedures to control the quality, safety and efficacy of the vaccine," said Owais.

The vaccine was tested with the help of 31,000 volunteers from 125 nationalities. Volunteers have displayed minor side effects, expected as a result of any vaccine, including headaches, fatigue and slight pain in the injection area. The UAE health authorities confirmed that 1,000 volunteers

with history of chronic illness haven't experienced any complications after taking the vaccine.

The initial successful results of the vaccine mark the UAE's positive steps in the vaccine development process. The vaccine is provided optionally to health workers in direct contact with COVID-19 patients. The UAE's vaccine trials are part of the extensive measures that the UAE has taken to contribute to the global collective efforts to curb the COVID-19 pandemic that has posed the greatest public health emergency in modern history.

So far, the UAE has conducted over 8mn tests. The vaccine was evaluated based on approval qualification criteria for emergency use, in accordance with the declaration of the global health authorities surrounding an emergency, the availability of scientific evidence on the effectiveness of the product and the benefits outweighing the risks.

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

We are deeply saddened
by the untimely loss of our dear colleague,



Puneet Pruthi
1972 - 2020

He passed away on the early morning of Tuesday, 15th September 2020. In this time of grief, we pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul and offer our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Mona Gaur Pruthi and his daughters, Krita Pruthi and Daakshi Pruthi. May the Almighty grant his bereaved family the strength to bear the irreparable loss.

From all of us at



Oman Post strengthens SME competitiveness with IPEX service

Trade facilitation for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is a topic that Oman Post, an Asyad member company, is taking on by leveraging its infrastructure and host of tailored postal and logistics services, building a marketplace that is conducive to sale and distribution of products for these businesses. The company has recently launched the International Premium Express Mail (IPEX), a new premium international document and parcel shipping service.

Considered as engines of growth for Oman, SMEs currently constitute over 90 per cent of businesses in the sultanate. Meeting the evolving needs of today's e-commerce customers is a key focus for Oman Post now and moving forward. With IPEX, Oman Post customers can ship internationally to over 220 destinations. Door-to-door deliveries to major GCC cities can be completed within 24-hours, while other GCC locations can be reached within 48-72 hours.

Abdulmalik al Balushi, chief executive officer of Oman Post said, "Enabling e-commerce is particularly important for small businesses, who can access new customers via Oman Post's domestic and international delivery network. We want to support them in delivering their products to their customers conveniently and efficiently. Our services including parcel delivery, express



mail, and the recently launched IPEX service offer peace of mind as we handle the entire process, from pick-up and packaging to transportation towards the final destination of the products and customs procedures in case of international shipments."

Noora al Dhuhoori, owner of Vogue Lane, a multi designer boutique based in Jawharat Al-

shatti Complex said, "In a competitive market, we always have to be on top of our game in order to stand out. As a business owner, we have been working hand-in-hand with Oman Post and I have been impressed by the convenience and the customer experience they have offered and continue to provide through their IPEX service to en-

sure delivery of our products to KSA, Bahrain and Sudan within 72 hours.

"Through this partnership, we've managed to ensure convenient deliveries for both our TAQASEEM brand, along with a number of brands within our boutique."

Oman Post continues to elevate its services' performance by

several measures with on-time delivery of parcels growing 229 per cent between 2018 and 2019.

Focusing on the business-to-consumer eCommerce market, the company has been working closely with Omani SMEs to grow their businesses and confront challenges of traditional brick-and-mortar shops.



Alizz Islamic Bank launches special cards

To mark the Sultanate of Oman's 50th National Day, Alizz Islamic Bank has introduced special limited edition credit and debit cards.

The cards have been embossed with the official logo created to commemorate the 50th National Day, which will be celebrated on November 18. The issuance of the cards comes as part of a multi-faceted 50th National Day campaign launched by Alizz Islamic Bank to celebrate the special day.

Customers who wish to replace their cards are required to go to their nearest Alizz Islamic Bank branch and request to replace their card and the card will be issued instantly, with terms and conditions to be applied.

Alizz Islamic Bank utilizes the three-dimensional security system '3D Secure' on both the debit card and credits. 3D Secure is an authentication payment system that uses a One-Time-PIN (OTP) to authenticate the cardholder's purchase.

This system allows Alizz Islamic Bank customers to shop online securely with their debit cards and credit cards with an added layer of protection on their

online transactions.

Moreover, all Alizz Islamic Bank debit and credit cards feature a 'contactless payment' option, which is safe for consumers to purchase products or services through the use of radio frequency identification technology (RFID) or near-field communication technology (NFC).

All Alizz Islamic Bank credit cards are based on the Islamic concept of 'Qard Hasan' which is adopted by numerous leading Islamic banks all over the world and applied to all credit card products.

A customer can pay the amount shown in the credit card statement of account at the end of the month or settle it in form of deferred installments according to minimum payment option. Alizz Islamic Bank's customers can also enjoy the benefits and facilities provided by the Titanium, Platinum and World credit cards which comply with the principles of Islamic Sharia'a and offer a wide range of benefits and rewards to customers.

The cards offer premium features and privileges that provide cardholders with a range of lifestyle experiences.



Rado: Essential elements of versatile style

"We need colour to live. It's an element as necessary as water and fire." So said legendary architect and colour theorist Le Corbusier. The Rado Golden Horse Automatic combines all three of these essential elements for an enduring piece that is guaranteed to stand the test of time.

The green dial is like a cool, refreshing pond or the dew on the grass in a garden on an autumn morning. The fire is represented by the bezel in polished plasma high-tech ceramic. Made by treating finished high-tech ceramic pieces in a special oven where a plasma column heats to 20,000°C, this pioneering process creates super scratch-resistant pieces with a warm metallic glow that will never fade.

It's a contrast to the cool look and feel of the stainless steel case. It's a two-tone colour combination that is typically Rado.

The Golden Horse Automatic was inspired by the very first collection presented under the Rado

name in 1957. It was an early demonstration of our leadership in presenting watches as personal style statements and, more than 60 years later is a demonstration in versatility. Thanks to our Easy Clip system, the three-link stainless steel bracelet can be changed quickly and easily with no need for tools.

Combining the three elements Le Corbusier identified as essential to life and the three elements - design, materials and technology - that are signature Rado, the Golden Horse Automatic combines the past, present and future of Rado. You can feel it! Rado is known as the Master of Materials for the way it has revolutionised traditional watchmaking, leading the industry by introducing high-tech ceramic, ultra-light high-tech ceramic, colourful high-tech ceramic and Ceramos to its design-led collections.

Rado has always been a pioneer and leader, setting the standard and raising the bar.

Renault Megane impresses with its daring expressive design, assertive style

Combining striking good looks and head-turning performance, Renault Megane, the vibrant and chic saloon, is appreciated for its daring expressive design and assertive style. Acclaimed for its performance credentials, Renault Megane is extolled for its best-level low fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions.

Its energetic lines and substantial proportions add to its increasing popularity with car aficionados in Oman. Recognised worldwide for its performance excellence and looks, head turner Renault Megane has a style of its own, which is both lively and elegant.

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) said, "Megane presents a high-class driving experience, thanks to its technologies, design, and roominess. Renault Megane, which is available in 2.0lt engine configuration along with 1.6lt variant, is a popular car and much-loved car in the sultanate."

Aesthetic appeal

Renault's designers have drawn upon their acclaimed expertise to seamlessly incorporate 503dm³ VDA of boot storage capacity without compromising the vehicle's aesthetic appeal. Its generous dimensions (4.63m long and 1.81m wide, with a record wheelbase in its class of 2.71m) underscore its status-enhancing credentials and provide additional room for occupants. Its sleek profile is the result of

painstaking work on the proportion of glass to metal (one-third/two-thirds), as well as its low height (1.44m) and ground clearance (13cm).

Fitted as standard either across the range or in the higher-end versions, chrome detailing (grille, side mouldings, door window strips, door handles and exhaust tailpipes) point to the model's quality and reinforce its status-enhancing appeal. Its 1.57m front and rear track - the widest in its class - and its range of wheel sizes up to 18 inches imbue it with a striking stance. Its broad, sculpted shoulders express its sportier style.

Megane is available in a choice of nine exterior colours. Its eight metallic options include Pearl White, Mercury, Mink Brown, Cosmos Blue, Cornet Grey, Flame Red, Starry Black, Dune Beige. It is one non-metallic finish: Glacier White.

Special attributes

The Megane shares many styling features with its larger sibling Renault Talisman, including its lighting signature which is visible night and day.

The front C-shaped lighting signature features LED 3D-effect light guides. Available as option on the top version of the Megane are full LED (LED Pure Vision technology) head lights. The rear LED lights form a unique horizontal 3D-effect signature featuring Edge Light technology. The slender brush stroke-like lines emit a deep red light.

Oozes 'cockpit' feeling

The carefully appointed 'cockpit'-feel cabin exudes an unmistakable 'cockpit'-feel thanks to sculpted, enveloping seats and features such as a configurable colour 7-inch TFT data display, or a portrait-format 8.7-inch multimedia tablet, R-LINK 2 which supports Apple carplay and Android Auto.

Furthermore, the positioning of all the vehicle's technological features has been thought through to facilitate their everyday use.

Travelling comfort is further enhanced by the careful attention that has been paid to the interior finish, to the quality of the soft-to-the-touch materials, which are within easy reach of the driver and passengers: Materials found in Renault's higher-end models, Plush foam-backed covering selected for the dashboard, upper door panels, door inserts and armrests, Satin-effect chrome instrument, air vent and centre console surrounds, Full-grain Nappa leather-trimmed steering wheel, available on the top trim level.

The precision-designed seats promise and provide class-leading comfort and support thanks notably to the use of dual-density foam. The frames are the same as those employed for Koleos and Talisman. Leather seats available as option on the top version offer massage function for the driver plus electrically-adjustable lumbar support.

The cabin offers a generous level of space for the driver and passengers alike: Shoulder and elbow room are amongst the best in the class (1,441mm shoulder room in the front and 1,377mm in the rear, with 1,492mm elbow room in the front and 1,413mm in the rear). 216mm knee room in the rear. The angle of the rear-seat back (27 degrees) optimises head room for taller passengers and improves postural comfort.

Innovative technology

The Megane is based upon the Renault-Nissan Alliance's CMF-C/D modular architecture which it shares with other high-end Renault models, including the Talisman and the Koleos. The Megane comes with a wide range of features more commonly associated with the next segment up and unique in the segment. A configurable 7-inch TFT colour screen instrument display and the R-LINK 2 multimedia tablet available in two formats.



Amouage debuts collection

Marking the birth of a new era in the company's history, Amouage has revealed its Renaissance Collection. Narrating a key chapter in the brand's odyssey to paradise, the collection features four alluring fragrances, Enclave, Crimson Rocks, Ashore and Meander, each depicting Amouage's romantic interpretation of encountering pure joy.

Drawing inspiration from its home country, the Sultanate of Oman, these sophisticated blends of exquisitely contrasting scents are a liberating force of imagination created by internationally renowned perfumers including Domitille Michalon-Bertier (Crimson Rocks), Mackenzie Reilly (Ashore and Meander) and Julien Rasquinet (Enclave).

"Amouage is renowned for creating some of the most finely crafted perfumes in the world for over three decades. Continuing to build on this legacy, I want to take the brand on a quest. One that will see us explore new frontiers and discover new facets of the House," said Renaud Salmon, Amouage chief experience officer.

"I chose to debut this epic fragrance odyssey with Renaissance, the rebirth where we translate what it means to experience pure joy, unbound by perception." The Renaissance Collection arouses a surging emotion of inner connectivity drawn from the sultanate's breathtaking nature, evoking its picturesque contours, colours and essence. The unique experiential aesthetic of the fragrances is further accentuated by beautifully coloured translucent bottles and artistic boxes, presenting their owners with a work of art.

As the last sun rays bid farewell to the fjords of Musandam, Enclave sophisticatedly portrays the freshness trapped inside a rich, earthy warm hideaway where land meets the sea. Blue and green notes of Spearmint and Cardamom Oils transcend the fragrance stages, giving it a freshness that lasts forever, while the pleasantly surprising Amber, Labdanum, Cin-



namon Oil and Saffiano together with earthy Vetiver capture the surrounding hot mountains at that precise moment in time.

Crimson Rocks conjures the majesty of Al Hajar mountains in all their glory at dusk. Standing tall at the top, one is engulfed by a sweet sense of peace. For this fragrance, Amouage brought to life an intense Rose, one that is resilient to withstand extreme weather yet gentle, welcoming and just like the mountains it calls home, rooted to stand the test of time. Texturing the Rose are red notes of Cinnamon and an earthy Jujube Honey Accord which along with Oakwood and Cedarwood paint the Al Hajar mountains in deep crimson hues.

On the coast of Ras al Jinz, mid-summer, when the sun is in the middle of the sky, Ashore, depicts a mirage of the senses. As one's eyes are saturated with light, a surreal brightness blends

all that is around them, leaving only the wind that carries the scent of spices from the East. This intoxicatingly white floral fragrance of Jasmine, Ambergris and Sandalwood offers an olfactory interpretation of the union of the sun, the sand and waves while the Cardamom and Turmeric recall the scent of spices from India.

Meander explores the exhilarating feeling of happiness in a land of fog, lush green mountains and running streams. Drawing inspiration from the sultanate's southernmost governorate during the monsoon (khareef) season, Amouage creatively translated the surreal fog using Frankincense and smoky Vetiver, the rich greens with Cypriol and Jonquille, while its caramel-coloured mud is brought to life with earthy Sandalwood, Carrot Heart and Orris root notes.

A manifestation of

Amouage's creative transformation, the Renaissance Collection experience is a culmination of the brand's passion for the art of fine fragrance making. The Renaissance Collection is available in all Amouage boutiques and distributors worldwide starting September 15 and can be purchased online at www.amouage.com.

Quotes by Perfumers: Enclave

"When I created Enclave, my idea was to capture the very special light of the sun setting on the fjords of Musandam. This moment, completely out of time, conveys opposite feelings that I have extrapolated with contrasting ingredients. I chose to express the deep freshness of the fjords with Spearmint and Cardamom Oils, which refresh the cliffs on which the sun has beaten down all day long. I imagined the feeling of that incredible

heat with notes of AmberX-treme, Labdanum Resinoid and Cinnamon Oil, enriched with Rose Absolute and Saffiano, while earthy notes of Vetiver and Patchouli evoke hot lands and stones." - Julien Rasquinet

Crimson Rocks

"While creating this fragrance, I was inspired by the crimson colour of the Rock Rose of Al Hajar and the shade of its mountains illuminated by the last rays of the April sun. I used two different and innovative Rose extractions, allowing their majestic scents to unveil directly in the top note and then reveal other facets in the heart of the composition.

It is textured with Cinnamon Essential, which 'smells red' in my mind, but also with a surprising Jujube Honey Accord, recalling the speciality of the region. Finally, I built a potent dry down

with the heady, addictive notes of Oakwood, enhanced with Vetiver and Red Cedarwood." - Domitille Michalon-Bertier

Ashore

"Creating Ashore took me on a dream-like journey through the olfactory landscape of Oman's eastern shores. I drifted off under the blinding sun on the coast of Ras al Jinz, intoxicated by the scent of Jasmine Sambac, piercing through the sky as an extremely bright solar accord. I was enveloped by the sun's surreal luminosity, beating down on the infinite white sand beaches, and captured the salty mineral notes of Ambergris to evoke the waves breaking on the shore. India is just a few miles away and notes of Cardamom and Turmeric recall the scent of spices the wind carries along with the Jasmine, a whisper to wake up." - Mackenzie Reilly

Meander

"Salalah holds one of the most precious gems of the fragrance world. The finest quality of Frankincense is harvested from the Boswellia trees growing in the rich soil in the middle of the desert. I chose to paint a contradiction between lush green vegetal notes and warm dry desert dust: fog and smoke; real and unreal. Two different qualities of Olibanum, an oil and a resinoid, lend the precious incense signature the fragrance carries throughout its development. This character is enhanced with rich, earthy notes of Carrot Heart and Orris root, deep smoky Cypriol, and Vetiver from the island of Java. Sensuous creamy Sandalwood wraps these powerful notes with a gentle sophistication and a touch of Jonquille evokes the unexpected lush nature of the land." - Mackenzie Reilly.

Infiniti and the infinite road: Vision behind logo

Infiniti logo symbolises the name of the brand and much more. Many believe the Infiniti logo is designed to look like Mount Fuji, the largest mountain in Japan - paying homage to the marque's Japanese heritage - while others see it as a lemniscate, the mathematical symbol for infinity.

However, the famous symbol is tied closely to the ethos and foundation of a luxury brand built to challenge convention, value human connections, and focus on the endless possibilities of the road ahead.

A senior spokesperson at Infiniti Oman, said, "The metallic oval of the Infiniti symbol features two dynamic lines converging in the centre, symbolising elegance, the 'infinite road' and the vanishing point of a straight road over the horizon. The horizon is sentimental as the brand aspires to new horizons in the automotive industry. Together with its customers, employees and retailers, Infiniti looks to

travel the open road towards infinity."

In addition, the brand's name plays a crucial part in its philosophy. In 1989, when Infiniti was founded and introduced with the Q45, the architects of the marque saw symmetry in the four 'I's of the company's name, fitting its artistic vision and commitment to dramatic design. However, the four 'I's go beyond symmetry, reflecting the brand's essence and where it is heading, while keeping all 'I's on the future.

SBA is largely committed to supporting Infiniti Oman's growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a na-

tional network of more than 40 showrooms, service centers and parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

Infiniti Motor Company Ltd is headquartered in Hong Kong with representations in 50 markets around the world.

The Infiniti brand was launched in 1989. Its range of premium automobiles is currently built in manufacturing facilities in Japan, the United States, United Kingdom and China. Infiniti design studios are located in Atsugi-Shi near Yoko-

hama, London, San Diego and Beijing.

Infiniti is in the middle of a major product offensive. The brand has been widely acclaimed for its daring design and innovative driver-assistance technologies. From the 2016 season, Infiniti is a technical partner of the Renault Sport Formula One team, contributing its expertise in hybrid performance.

More information about Infiniti and its industry leading technologies can be found at www.infiniti.com. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and see all our latest videos on YouTube.



VC checks preparations of university colleges

The vice chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, accompanied by a team of specialists, visited the University Colleges in Rustaq and Musannah in order to check on the their preparations for the new academic year 2020/21.

This comes from the university's desire to providing a suitable educational environment and setting up principles, regulations, plans and programmes for the blended learning.

During the visit, the vice chancellor was briefed on the activities and achievements of the academic faculty including preparing programmes and transforming theoretical courses to a digital interactive educational material that facilitates distance learning through different tools and multimedia. These electronic applications support

following up students and making sure that they are getting the lectures based on the fixed timetable. Students also can get access to reliable open educational resources to gain the required knowledge and skills.

In terms of the practical and applied courses, the university has developed the Health Protocol in order to clarify the regulations to be followed to maintain health and safety of students while carrying on their practical studies. Accordingly, students attending the practical courses are allocated into small groups based on a timetable with specific time, place and number of students.

The vice chancellor instructed the responsible staff at the University Colleges in Rustaq and Musannah to supervise the implementation of the protocol in

order to ensure health and safety of the university key stakeholders: students, academic faculty and staff.

The staff reassured that the educational environment in the University Colleges is fully prepared for the next academic year whether in online mode through streaming lectures or by regular attendance while considering safety measures. In addition to ensuring that students are gaining the required skills, the vice chancellor emphasised the importance of contacting different industrial and productive sectors in order to find on-job-training opportunities for all students without any exception. He also added that training should be a compulsory requirement for graduation in all three levels: Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelors.



DAILY CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1 Oprah's studio

6 Old hat

11 They're elementary

15 "___ homo"

19 The briny

20 Tapestry

21 Percolate

22 Spring event

23 Sperry's 1915 bright idea

25 Bell's 1876 bellringer

27 Mexican favorite

28 Bullfighter

30 Road machine

31 Refrain

33 Limit

35 Wife of Esau

38 Something for the soup

41 Inveigle

42 IRS man

45 Got back to

47 In Rome, hour

48 Since 1858, kitchen standby

50 Beaver hats

51 Fabulous magician

53 Shipmates, e.g.

54 Show scorn

55 Vessel

56 Qualm

57 Intimate

60 Facial expression:

Sp.

62 Actor Dullea

63 Weaken

66 Famous role for 9 Down

67 Finno-Ugric

69 6 ___ River Vu

70 Sleek

72 Painter El ___

75 Oom Paul

77 Pathetic fallacy

79 Seem

81 ___ di Capri

86 Land

87 Expedites

88 Confident

90 Mälzel's 1816 timebeater

92 ___ de deux

93 Went wandering

94 42nd and 43rd

95 In Paris, to laugh

96 Loss first syllable

98 Confusion

99 Show of mercy

101 Lasagna

103 Mitigate

106 Got up

109 Cap flap

113 Bunsen's 1855 hot idea

115 Home entertainment in 1863

117 Vissi d'___

118 Elevator man

119 More peculiar

120 Great Turkish statesman

121 Dundee girl

122 English seashore feature

123 Crying

124 Transplant

DOWN

1 Entertainer

2 Zoological suffix

3 Twenty quires

4 Blanchard's 1785 boon for aviation

5 Husband of ma tante

6 Girl of song

7 More hackneyed

8 Jason's ship

9 Actor Bert

10 Mountain resort

11 John Jacob ___

12 Quilting ___

13 Centigrade thermometer inventor

14 New scientific instrument, 1859

15 Actor Hawke

16 Cleave

17 Gibstaff

18 Urn

24 Stove

26 Peacock, sometimes

29 NFL men

32 Froth

34 Philosopher Watts

35 Curved lines

36 Author Koontz

37 South African fox

39 Wanderer

40 Worth or Ryan

42 Wilderness lover

43 Main event

44 Family of actor Ed

46 Type of compass?

48 Bog

49 Dawdle in Dundee

52 ___ it: run

55 Hoedown feature

56 Hart

58 Franklin's 1752 stroke of brilliance

59 Nectar-eating parrot

61 Disparage

63 Cooks

64 Ornamental band

65 Lark-like birds

68 Vital part of 14 Down

71 Co. agent's degree?

73 Promontory

74 "When I ___ my lips"

75 Malaysian state

76 Lesser civet

78 "Civil Disobedience" author

80 Hot soup or stew

82 Bushnell's turtle of 1776

83 Shield ornament

84 Sediment

85 Augments

87 River duck

88 117 Across, for one

89 Fresh one

91 Site of

96 MDs' org.

97 Bavarian city on the Rhine

99 Oils

100 Nightingale

102 Amazon mammal

103 "___ in Calico"

104 Songstress

Baseilles

105 Concorde

107 "Ye ___ Tearoom"

108 Actress

Thompson

110 Site of Vientiane

111 Writer Rice

112 Act sulky

114 "___ Heldenleben"

116 Nominal suffix

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YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES

MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You're driven to get back to business this morning. The moon moves through duty-first Virgo, energising your need to get back in your body and back to your workflow. Tackle things early if you can, for by early evening it will be hard to focus.

TAURUS

APRIL 20-MAY 20

Nearly all Taurus folk come equipped with a sense of artistic refinement. Today's skies work to activate your creative side and allow you a chance to relax into something that brings you joy as the moon treks through detail-oriented Virgo.

GEMINI

MAY 21-JUNE 21

Geminis are guided by the wiry, quick-footed messenger planet, Mercury. Today's cosmic landscape witnesses Mercury getting into some tricky mental territory, as it squares off to the planet of abundance, Jupiter. Check your joint investments.

CANCER

JUNE 22-JULY 22

Important conversations await your engagement today. The moon wanders through precise Virgo, increasing your need for important exchanges in the environment. Luna's tango with sleepy Neptune can easily make for mixed messages.

LEO

JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You've got the drive to take care of what you need to do today. The hardworking Virgo moon compels you to handle any task with precision and follow through, but her evening opposition to spaced out Neptune can make it hard to stay planted in reality.

VIRGO

AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

As a Virgo, it's natural for you to find yourself thinking small. In fact, you're built to naturally synthesise all the minute details of life. Today's skies push you to expand your horizons, as your ruling planet, Mercury, squares off to expansive Jupiter.

LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Be easy on yourself. The moon spends the day deep in her tired waning phase, wandering through reflective Virgo. It's an ideal day to take restorative action and work to recharge yourself—especially come evening when the moon opposes Neptune.

SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You tend to find yourself naturally skeptical of optimistic thinking. Yet, today's skies have you thinking larger than life, as mentally-powered Mercury spends the day paired up with big-thinking Jupiter. This helps you mull over education and travel plans.

SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Sagittarians naturally view the world from a big-picture perspective. Today's skies increase this tendency to leap before you look by tenfold—to the point where you should double-check your shared investments and career moves.

CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Capricorns instinctively know they have great things to accomplish. Today's cosmic landscape works to fill your sails with a hopeful wind, as Mercury dances with dream-big Jupiter. Do embrace that optimism but know it's easy to overdo it.

AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Your mental world is busy juggling inspired ideas that uplift and support your direction today. Messenger Mercury unlocks a variety of important concepts with optimistic Jupiter today, but it's easy to agree to more than you can handle with friends.

PISCES

FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

All eyes are on your relationships. The moon saunters through your opposite sign of Virgo, enhancing your needs in and experience of partnership. Luna's evening tango with spacey Neptune creates blurred lines and a romantic atmosphere.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1: Epsom (England) is the place associated with?

a) Horse racing

b) Polo

c) Shooting

d) Snooker

2: First human heart transplant operation conducted by Dr Christiana Barnard on Louis Washkansky, was conducted in?

a) 1967

b) 1968

c) 1958

d) 1922

3: Galileo was an Italian astronomer who?

a) developed the telescope

b) discovered four satellites of Jupiter

c) discovered that the movement of pendulum produces a regular time measurement

d) All of the above

Answers: 1: a 2: a 3: d

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

		6					8	
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BOGGLER

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A	P	I	E

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

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

DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (SEPTEMBER 15)

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

MEDICAL SUPPLY SERVICES for Home, Hospital, Clinic, School, College, Ministry, Club, Company/Factory



For any information please
Contact us by phone call & WhatsApp

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92989109 97700963

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NOTICE



We Would like to inform that **MR. DEBASH SAHU** of Accounts Department is no longer part of our organisation. Any claims with reference to him please contact us within three days of this notice, The Company will not be responsible after mentioned time period.

Alauddin Restaurant LLC - Tel: 22378994

SITUATION VACANT

PART-TIME ACCOUNTANT

Tech-start up and a media company in Oman is looking for a qualified part-time accountant (preferably CA/ACCA) – to work from home with 2 to 3 years of experience. Currently the company has operations in Oman and UAE; expanding to other GCC countries in the next one to two years.

Please forward your latest CVs to
topupvagosales@gmail.com

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with your resident card copy
(It's free of cost)

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BIRTHDAY WISHES



HIMANSHUBHAI
September 16

Happy birthday Himanshubhai. Wishing you a great year ahead and that you be as youthful and energetic as you are always
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BIRTHDAY WISHES



DEEPA PUNJABI
September 16

We both are so lucky to have a mother like you. You are our best friend. Happiest of birthdays to you Mom. With lots of love: Davina & Jharnav Harish Danani



NITIN AWASTHI
September 16

So lucky to have you as a friend. Hope your birthday is as special as you are. Happy birthday dear Nitin. With best wishes from Harish Danani and family

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Andrey Rublev of Russia in action against Argentine qualifier Facundo Bagnis on day two of the Italian Open at Foro Italico in Rome, Italy, on Tuesday (AFP)

Rublev advances with ease; Kerber falls at first hurdle

Rome, Italy - Former world No 1 Angelique Kerber fell to a straight sets defeat to Czech Katerina Siniakova on Tuesday as Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev eased through to the second round of the Italian Open men's clay-court tournament.

Three-time Grand Slam winner Kerber, seeded 15th, crashed out 6-3, 6-1 in 68 minutes. The Rome tournament is a warm-up for the French Open on September 27.

Elsewhere Czech 12th seed Marketa Vondrousova, last year's Roland Garros runner-up, dropped a set before seeing off Japan's Misaki Doi 6-1, 4-6, 6-4.

In the men's event, US Open quarterfinalist Rublev, eased past Argentine qualifier Facundo Bagnis 6-4, 6-4 and next meets Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.

Rublev, who hit 25 winners for his 20th match win of the season.

Australian John Millman recovered from 2-4 down in the second set to overcome lucky loser Joao Sousa 7-5, 7-6 (7-2) and next meets Argentine Diego Schwartzman.

Nishikori finds feet on clay with win

Japan's Kei Nishikori got his first win in a year at the Italian Open on Monday with former Rome semifinalists Grigor Dimitrov and Marin Cilic also easing into the second round.

Nishikori needed six match points to get past Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-4, 7-6 (7-3) in two hours behind closed doors at the Foro Italico for his first win since reaching the 2019 US Open third round.

"It's been a long time since the US Open last year," said the 30 year old, who reached three Grand Slam quarterfinals in 2019

before undergoing elbow surgery. "I still don't have confidence but little by little I'm getting better."

Nishikori will next meet either three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka, or Italian qualifier Lorenzo Musetti, as he builds his fitness towards the French Open later this month.

The Japanese player skipped the US hard court tour, opting to warm up on clay at Kitzbuehel, Austria last week.

"It sucks missing Grand Slam, big tournaments, but this year is going to be a little bit strange anyways," he said.

"I wanted to come back for the US Open and Cincinnati, but I felt like I wasn't ready for playing five sets, so I chose to play last week in Austria.

"I'm not rushing myself to be 100%. For me, I think this year is going to be one by one, one

match at a time. I think slowly I'm getting recovered. It will take some time, but I'm happy to be here in Rome.

"Today was much better than last match last week. I would say twice better."

Earlier, 15th seed Dimitrov, a 2014 Rome semifinalist, saw off Italian wild card Gianluca Mager 7-5, 6-1. Bulgarian Dimitrov pulled ahead from 5-5 in the first set to win seven straight games.

Cilic, who lost to Alexander Zverev in the Rome semifinals two years ago, battled past Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 6-7 (4-7), 6-2, 6-4 for a second round meeting with sixth seed David Goffin.

France's Benoit Paire, who was removed from the US Open after testing positive for COVID-19, lost his opener 6-2, 6-1 to Italian teen Jannik Sinner.

US Open quarterfinalist Borna

Coric eased past 14th seed Cristian Garin 6-4, 6-4, while Frenchman Ugo Humbert defeated two-time Grand Slam finalist Kevin Anderson 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) in his Rome debut.

Mertens off to a flying start

In the women's tournament, US Open quarterfinalist Elise Mertens showed no problems switching from hard court to clay with the 11th seed disposing of Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei 6-3, 6-1.

Italian wildcard Jasmine Paolini eased past Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova 6-2, 6-3 to earn a second round clash with top seed Simona Halep of Romania.

Second seed Karolina Pliskova opens her title defence against fellow Czech Barbora Strycova who strolled past Russian Veronika Kudrmetova 6-3, 6-3.

AFP

Badminton's Thomas and Uber Cup postponed

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Badminton's showpiece Thomas and Uber Cup was postponed on Tuesday after a string of countries withdrew over coronavirus fears, officials said, in a major blow to the sport's restart.

The men's and women's world team championships had been set to take place in Aarhus, Denmark, next month, and would have been the first international tournament since the pandemic halted badminton in March. But the Badminton World Federation (BWF) said it had taken the 'tough decision' to delay the event as the pull-outs meant they were not able to deliver a high enough level of competition.

No new dates were announced for the tournament, which has now been postponed three times, but the BWF said it wouldn't take place before 2021.

"These are exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in and while a return to international badminton remains a priority for the BWF, the health and safety of the entire badminton community is of utmost importance," a BWF statement said.

"It has been realised that we are not in a position to deliver the level of competition reasonably expected by fans and all stakeholders," it added.

A further delay to the tournament, which had been

scheduled to take place in Aarhus from October 3-11, had started to look inevitable in recent days after some of Asia's top talent withdrew.

Indonesia, who are 13-time Thomas Cup champions, as well as Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and Australia had all decided to skip the event. Leading Indian player Saina Nehwal, who had been due to play in the women's Uber Cup, had questioned whether pushing ahead was a good idea, while Malaysia had also called for a postponement.

Packed 2021 calendar

The delay is a major setback to efforts to resume international competition, as it was the biggest event left on the calendar this year after the Olympics were postponed. It also means that players face a packed calendar next year, potentially with four major tournaments.

If the Thomas and Uber Cup goes ahead in 2021, it could take place in the same year as the Olympics, the world championships and the Sudirman Cup, which is for mixed teams.

Two other tournaments had been due to take place in Denmark in October. The first of these, the Denmark Open, will proceed as planned, but the second - the Denmark Masters - is cancelled, the BWF said.

AFP



A file photo of Indian woman shuttler P V Sindhu in action

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Bledisloe Tests set after NZ relax quarantine protocols



A file photo of New Zealand and Australia teams in action during a Bledisloe Cup Test

Wellington, New Zealand - New Zealand Rugby (NZR) confirmed the All Blacks will host Australia for two Bledisloe Cup Tests next month after officials relaxed COVID-19 quarantine rules to ensure the series went ahead.

NZR said the Bledisloe Tests

would take place in Wellington on Sunday, October 11, and at Eden Park, Auckland, on October 18.

"We're delighted to lock in the dates and venues for the two home matches against Australia and look forward to seeing the

Bledisloe Cup go on the line next month," NZR chief Mark Robinson said.

Wallabies coach Dave Rennie had raised concerns that rules preventing his squad training together while undergoing two weeks' quaran-

tine in New Zealand would leave them under-prepared for a clash against the All Blacks.

But NZR said health authorities had agreed to amend the rules so the full squad could train together four days into the quarantine period.

"This has been a complex and challenging puzzle to solve and we're grateful that both rugby organisations, together with our government, have come together to get these matches across the line," Robinson said.

Earlier, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said 'everyone's pulling out all stops to make it work'.

Rugby Australia (RA) praised the New Zealand government for being flexible. "Dave and the team are incredibly excited about the prospect of playing in New Zealand," interim RA chief executive Rob Clarke said.

"Thank you to New Zealand Rugby and the New Zealand Government for the flexibility and support over the last week, to find a mutually agreeable solution," Clarke added.

AFP



Chelsea's defender Kurt Zouma (right) scores the third goal against Brighton and Hove Albion during their English Premier League match at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, UK, on Monday (AFP)

Chelsea, Wolves off to winning starts

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Brighton, United Kingdom - believes Chelsea are already showing the benefits of his US\$257mn spending spree as they kicked off their English Premier League (EPL) campaign with a 3-1 win at Brighton while Wolverhampton Wanderers showed no signs of fatigue as they kicked off their campaign with a 2-0 win against Sheffield United on Monday.

Blues boss Lampard has splashed out on a host of new signings and the early returns on his lavish investment were promising. Germany striker Timo Werner, a US\$68mn recruit from Leipzig, won the penalty that Jorginho converted to put Chelsea ahead.

Kai Havertz, who made a US\$90mn switch from Bayer Leverkusen, wasn't quite so impactful, but Lampard will be confident there are better days to come from the young forward.

"Timo's speed to win the penalty showed he is sharp and he was a threat all night. He is very mobile and I liked his performance," Lampard said.

"With Kai we saw a lot as well. To get these minutes will only be good and both of them will be huge players for this club."

Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga was guilty of another mistake when Leandro Trossard equalised for Brighton.

But Reece James' superb strike put Chelsea back in front

before Kurt Zouma's deflected effort sealed the points.

It was an encouraging result for Lampard, who has accepted he is under pressure to deliver a title challenge after spending more than any other club so far in the summer transfer window.

"I think to expect everything to click on day one is very difficult. But what they did do was show a bit of determination," Lampard said.

@I really liked the work ethic and the discipline of the team. We've been together as a team for four days after the international break. We had a lot of quarantines before that and new signings.

"We might have dropped points in this game last season. I'm not getting excited by that on day one, but it had a little bit of determination and resilience about it I thought."

Chelsea finished 33 points behind champions Liverpool in fourth last season before a FA Cup final loss to Arsenal, but they are primed to improve if Lampard can gel his new signings.

Lampard's other expensive recruits, former Ajax playmaker Hakim Ziyech and ex-Leicester left-back Ben Chilwell, were both sidelined by injuries, while Thiago Silva wasn't available as he returns to training following his free transfer from PSG.

The historians among Chelsea's fanbase will have



Wolves' striker Raul Jimenez (centre) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Sheffield on Monday

noted this was the third time they have started an EPL campaign with a Monday win, with the Blues going on to win the title on the previous occasions in 2014-15 and 2016-17.

The only frustration for Lampard was Kepa's howler. Insisting he has not written off Kepa yet, Lampard said: "I am happy with Kepa, I saw confidence in him, he is here, he is our keeper and I am happy with him."

Classy Werner

Werner was Chelsea's central striker while Havertz lined up on the right flank in the three-man

Timo's speed to win the penalty showed he is sharp and he was a threat all night. He is very mobile and I liked his performance

FRANK LAMPARD, CHELSEA MANAGER

attack. It was Werner who showed all his class as Chelsea took the lead in the 23rd minute.

Brighton midfielder Steven Alzate surrendered possession with a wayward pass and Jorginho fed Werner, who raced through on goal and was brought down by Mat Ryan as he rounded the Albion keeper.

Jorginho stepped up to take

the penalty and Chelsea's captain sent Ryan the wrong way with his trademark hop before shooting. Brighton equalised in the 54th minute when Trossard's 20-yard shot slipped under Kepa's weak attempted save.

Kepa's blunder wasn't fatal for Chelsea as James restored their lead just 100 seconds later with

a stunning 30-yard blast. Chelsea sealed the points in the 66th minute when Zouma met James' corner with a volley that took a heavy deflection of Adam Webster to wrong-foot Ryan.

Wolves' fast start

Just 34 days after losing to Sevilla in their final game of the coronavirus-delayed 2019-20 season, Nuno Espirito Santo's side looked fresher than expected as they made a blistering start at Bramall Lane. Raul Jimenez and Romain Saiss put Wolves two goals up after just six minutes and the visitors were in control the rest of the way despite their shorter than usual close season.

"This was the first match after a quick turnaround. I'm very pleased," Nuno said.

"The character, the ways they worked, the resilience at the end.

"It's been an amazing three seasons. We can create something really special. We have to stay humble."

There were just three minutes on the clock when Daniel Podence skipped past John Lundstram on the left flank and whipped his cross to Jimenez, who intelligently peeled away from his marker to guide a sublime half-volley into the roof of the net.

Ramsdale was unable to stop Wolves doubling their lead in the sixth minute when Saiss met an

outswinging corner with a thumping header that looped over the Blades keeper.

In his 100th game in all competitions for Wolves, the prolific Jimenez was proving impossible to contain and he was close to his 32nd EPL goal when he curled just over.

GERMAN CUP Bellingham scores on Dortmund bow

Berlin, Germany - Seventeen year old Jude Bellingham scored on his debut for Borussia Dortmund in a 5-0 victory over third division Duisburg in the first round of the German Cup on Monday.

Bellingham, who joined from Birmingham City in July, needed just 30 minutes to open his Dortmund account as he doubled the German League (Bundesliga) team's lead after a penalty from Jadon Sancho. Thorgan Hazard blasted in a free-kick to make it 3-0 when Duisburg defender Dominic Volkmer was sent off for bringing down Erling Haaland.

England U21 international Bellingham was withdrawn at half-time before fellow teenager Gio Reyna added a fourth for Dortmund from another set-piece. Club captain Marco Reus made his first appearance since February following injury, netting within seconds of his introduction on the hour to cap the rout.

AFP

I acted like a fool, says Neymar

Paris Saint-Germain star striker regrets Marseille red card

Paris, France - Paris Saint-Germain's striker Neymar said he 'acted like a fool' following his red card against Marseille but called on football officials to do more to combat discrimination after accusing Spanish defender Alvaro Gonzalez of racism.

The Brazil forward was one of five players sent off after a mass brawl at the end of PSG's 0-1 loss in French League (Ligue 1) on Sunday, and later claimed Gonzalez had called him a 'monkey' in a series of furious tweets.

PSG have stood by the world's most expensive player, saying the club 'strongly supports' him, but Neymar conceded he would accept his punishment which is expected to be revealed by the French league's disciplinary commission on Wednesday.

"Yesterday I revolted. I was punished with red because I



PSG's Neymar (right) argues with Marseille's Dimitri Payet during the match at the Parc de Princes stadium in Paris on Sunday

wanted to hit someone who offended me," Neymar said in a lengthy Instagram post on Monday. "I thought I could not leave without doing something because I realised that those in charge would not do anything, did not notice or ignored the fact."

Neymar was dismissed for slapping Gonzalez on the back

of the head, with teammates Layvin Kurzawa and Leandro Paredes also sent off, as well as Marseille's Dario Benedetto and Jordan Amavi.

"In our sport, aggressions, insults, swearing are part of the game, of the dispute. You can't be affectionate. I understand this guy partly, all is part of the game, but racism and intoler-

ance are unacceptable," Neymar continued. "Should I have ignored it? I don't know yet... Today, with a cool head, I say yes, but in due course, my companions and I asked the referees for help and we were ignored.

"I accept my punishment because I should have followed the path of clean football. I hope, on the other hand, that the offender will also be punished. Racism exists. It exists, but we have to stop it. No more. Enough!"

"The guy was a fool. I also acted like a fool for letting me get involved in that," he added.

Marseille defend Gonzalez

PSG have lost their opening two games of the season for the first time since 1984-85, and face another spell without Neymar whose first two seasons in France were marred by injuries.

They host Metz on Metz on Wednesday in what was originally scheduled to be their Ligue 1 season opener.

Meanwhile, Marseille issued a statement of their own defending Gonzalez. He denied racism and accused Neymar of being a bad loser.

"Alvaro Gonzalez is not racist. He has shown us that by his daily behaviour since joining the club, as his teammates have already testified," the statement read.

The league's disciplinary commission, which will decide the punishments, could investigate Neymar's accusations against Gonzalez, who Marseille claim was spat on by Angel Di Maria.

Marseille pledged to 'fully cooperate' with any investigation and said the club would remain at the disposal of the commission.

AFP





MESSI TOPS FOOTBALL RICH LIST

Paris, France - Lionel Messi may have had to stay put at Barcelona but the Argentine legend did succeed in joining one new club this year - the one reserved for sporting billionaires, according to *Forbes* magazine.

The Argentine striker's career earnings of over US\$1bn places the six-time *Ballon d'Or* winner in a group of mega-wealthy sports figures containing just Tiger Woods, Floyd Mayweather and his great rival on the pitch, Cristiano Ronaldo.

Forbes said that in 2020 Messi was the best paid footballer in the world with an income of US\$126mn from his Barca salary (US\$92mn for the 2020-2021 season) and US\$34mn from sponsors and other sources.

The 33 year old knocked Juventus forward Ronaldo (US\$117mn) off the top of the football salary chart with Paris Saint-Germain's Neymar (US\$96mn) in third place. But football fans have a new object of fascination in Kylian Mbappe, the PSG striker who lands in fourth place with US\$42mn.

Three English Premier League players - Mohamed Salah, Paul Pogba and David de Gea - made the top-ten, as did Real Madrid and Wales forward Gareth Bale.

Forbes' top-ten earning players made a combined US\$570mn this season, a jump of 11 per cent despite the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic to European leagues and the global economy.

Michael Jordan is also in the billionaire's club but the basketball legend's fortune has largely come after retirement through his longstanding contract with Nike and acquisition of NBA franchise Charlotte Hornets.

Messi remains at Barca this season after conceding defeat in his attempt to leave without triggering his US\$829mn release.

He argued that a clause in his contract stating that a buyout fee would need to be met for him to join another club was no longer active and that he could leave on a free transfer - a situation that would have allowed him to command astronomical wages from the likes of Manchester City. Messi is in the final year of his contract, so he could leave for free next summer. By staying with the Catalan club, Messi is in line for an US\$83mn loyalty bonus so it is likely he will continue to top the money charts.

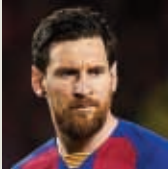
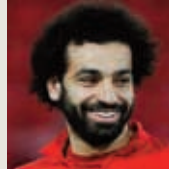
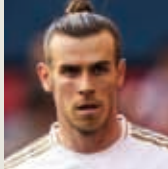
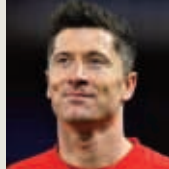
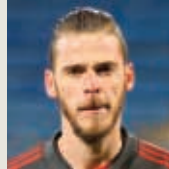
'Could never imagine Messi in another shirt'

Elsewhere, Barcelona's new signing Miralem Pjanic said at his unveiling on Tuesday he could never imagine Messi playing for another club.

"I could never see Messi playing in another shirt," said Pjanic, whose move from Juventus was confirmed in June. "For me it was impossible and I always thought everything would eventually work out.

"My hope was to play with him. I met Messi two or three days ago but I haven't yet been able to train or play with him. I have been lucky enough to play with players like Cristiano Ronaldo and (Francesco) Totti but I want to enjoy playing with this whole team."

AFF

TOP-TEN				
Forbes list of highest-earning footballers				
				
US\$126MN Lionel Messi (Barcelona and Argentina)	US\$117MN Cristiano Ronaldo (Juventus and Portugal)	US\$96MN Neymar (PSG and Brazil)	US\$42MN Kylian Mbappe (PSG and France)	US\$37MN Mohamed Salah (Liverpool and Egypt)
				
US\$34MN Paul Pogba (Manchester United and France)	US\$33MN Antoine Griezmann (Barcelona and France)	US\$29MN Gareth Bale (Real Madrid and Wales)	US\$28MN Robert Lewandowski (Bayern Munich and Poland)	US\$27MN David de Gea (Manchester United and Spain)



Germany's Lennard Kamna rides during the 16th stage of the 107th edition of the Tour de France on Tuesday

Roglic maintains overall lead, Kamna clinches stage 16

TOUR DE FRANCE

Villard-de-Lans, France - Primož Roglic maintained the overall lead in the Tour de France on Tuesday as Bora's German allrounder Lennard Kamna won the medium mountain stage 16.

Kamna came good after a long range breakaway, defeating Ineos rider Richard Carapaz of Ecuador over the final kilometres after the pair had been part of a rare large escape group.

The victory was just reward for the 24 year old who was piped to the line on the Puy Mary mountain last week. It was his first Tour de France stage

win, and Bora's first of this Tour. Swiss Sebastien Reichenbach took third place.

"I'm feeling great," said Kamna. "It's an absolutely awesome day for me now. "It was a fight from the beginning on and I knew I had to make it to the finish alone. When I saw Carapaz upping the speed I thought, 'now is the moment to go' - and I just went all in to the end.

"It's a big, big, big relief for the team and for me. I can almost not imagine it. The step I made this year is huge and I'm so pleased to win."

Fifteen minutes further down

the mountain the yellow jersey group ascended together with only Tadej Pogacar trying to upset Roglic and his Jumbo teammates. Colombia's Miguel Angel Lopez powered past them all over the final 200m but was followed closely over the line with no change at the top except for Nairo Quintana losing a little time.

Roglic leads Pogacar by 40 seconds with five stages remaining. Rigoberto Uran is third at 1min 35sec, while Lopez and Britain Adam Yates round out the top five.

AFF

Arsenal captain Aubameyang signs new three-year contract

London, UK - Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang ended speculation over his Arsenal future on Tuesday as the Gunners captain signed a new three-year contract with the FA Cup holders.

Aubameyang's contract saga had dragged on since last season amid speculation he wanted to join a club in the Champions League.

The Gabon forward revealed he had committed his future to Arsenal in a live Instagram stream at the Emirates Stadium.

"Arsenal fans, finally as you know I just signed the thing," Aubameyang said.

Arsenal confirmed the news themselves on their website in a statement that said: "Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has signed a new three-year contract with us!"

After scoring the goals that fired Arsenal to last season's surprise FA Cup semifinal and final victories over Manchester City and Chelsea respectively, Aubameyang had refused to confirm if he wanted to stay at the north London club.



At one stage last term, he admitted he faced a big decision over his future, fuelling reports that he was ready to leave amid interest from PSG and Barcelona.

But Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta remained confident Aubameyang was happy at the

club and wanted to stay.

Over 100,000 people were watching the announcement via the official Arsenal Instagram account, with Aubameyang adding: "I signed the thing because I want to become an Arsenal legend, maybe leave a legacy, it is the time to work a lot.

"For sure, I will give my best, as always, so yes, I have just signed the thing. Hopefully you are happy and I can't wait to see you in this beautiful stadium again."

Aubameyang was joined on the call by former Arsenal striker Ian Wright and his current teammate Alexandre Lacazette, who praised his decision to sign the contract.

Aubameyang moved to Arsenal from Borussia Dortmund in January 2018 and has scored 72 goals across 111 games in all competitions, including one in Saturday's 3-0 victory at Fulham on the opening day of the new season.

Acknowledging the significance of keeping Aubameyang, Arteta said: "It was important for Pierre-Emerick to stay with us.

"He's a superb player with an incredible mentality. Being the player to have taken the least amount of time to reach 50 goals with this club tells you everything you need to know about him and his way of working."

AFF



AMAZON OPENS LUXURY STORES

Amazon unveiled plans for a new online luxury shopping experience that will connect consumers and high-end brands. The first partner for the online 'Luxury Stores' is Oscar de la Renta

BUSINESS

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MARKET WATCH

MSM30	3,677.77
BSE Sensex	39,044.35

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs	191.45
Pakistani Rs	432.96
Bangladeshi Taka	220.68
Philippine Peso	125.87
Sri Lankan Rs	479.73

*Rates as on September 15
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Macron defends 5G

France will move forward with its planned deployment of 5G telecom networks despite detractors who would prefer 'the Amish model' and 'going back to the oil lamp', President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday.

"France is the country of innovation... We are going to put to rest all false ideas," Macron told entrepreneurs at a gathering of French tech startups at the Elysee Palace.

"I hear a lot of voices being raised to explain to us that the complexity of contemporary problems should be addressed by going back to the oil lamp. I don't believe that the Amish model can solve the challenges of contemporary ecology," Macron joked, referring to the American community which is suspicious of technology.

COVID-19 takes toll on GCC projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

After many months of lockdowns and closing of the economic activities worldwide, the project activity in the GCC has significantly slowed due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

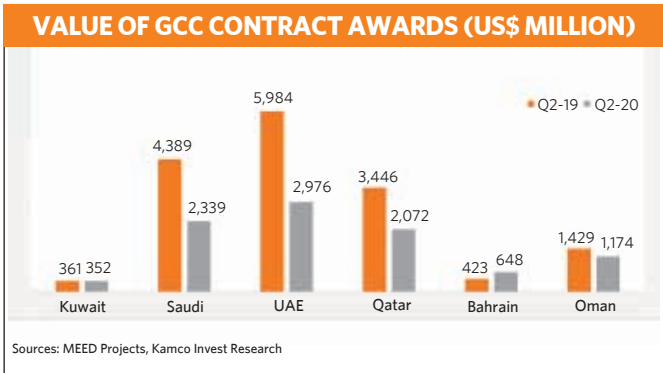
The GCC countries in recent months have witnessed the impact of the lockdowns on economic growth and the record decline in oil revenues, which has drastically reduced the project activity in the region.

The total value of construction contracts awarded in the GCC during the second quarter of 2020 fell by 40 per cent to US\$9.5bn from US\$16.2bn in the second quarter of 2019, according to Kuwait-based Kamco Invest which published the data from MEED Projects in a report. The report said that the sharp decline in the value of awarded contracts was mainly due to the disruption of the coronavirus outbreak and the steep decline of oil prices.

The UAE, the region's largest project market, recorded the biggest fall of 50 per cent in the value of contracts awarded in the



Photograph for illustrative purpose only



second quarter. The value of contracts awarded in the UAE dropped to US\$3bn from US\$6bn in the second quarter of last year.

Saudi Arabia recorded a 46.7 per cent decline in the value of contracts awarded in the second quarter at US\$2.3bn.

Similarly, Qatar's value of projects awarded in the second

quarter fell by 39.9 per cent to US\$2.1bn.

Oman, according to the Kamco Invest report, recorded around 18 per cent drop in the total value of projects awarded in the second quarter of this year. The sultanate's total value of projects awarded in the second quarter of 2020 stood at US\$1.2bn as compared to US\$1.4bn in the second quarter

of 2019.

'Oman's government has taken extraordinary measures to support the economy against the COVID-19 pandemic and the fall in oil prices, including a 10 per cent cut in the sultanate's state expenditures,' the report said.

The report said that Oman's energy and utility sectors are the two main sectors which are expected to be the hardest hit by the pandemic. 'However, the Omani government announced that one of its flagship projects, the US\$9bn Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries is expected to be completed on schedule in 2021 despite the COVID-19 pandemic,' the report noted.

As per the Kamco Invest report, MEED Projects estimated the current amount of contracts out on bid in Oman to be over US\$20bn, although some of these contracts viability does not look good because of the COVID-19 disruption. On the other hand, certain big projects such as the US\$400mn solar power (500 MW Ibri II) project have progressed despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the report added.

Oman's SAI takes part in INTOSAI meeting

Muscat - The State Audit Institution (SAI) took part in the steering committee meeting for the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions' (INTOSAI) Capacity Building Committee (CBC).

The meeting was convened on Tuesday through video conference with the participation of the member state audit institutions, according to a press release issued by the sultanate's SAI.

A number of topics were discussed during the virtual meeting, relevant to the committee's work, such as; a report pre-



sented by CBC chair, outcomes of CBC June 2020 thematic webinars, as well as revision

of SAI Performance Measurement Framework (SAI PMF), reports relevant to PMF govern-

ance, global implementation of the PMF and the SAI PMF Independent Advisory Group report.

The meeting also discussed and reviewed the report of the INTOSAI's strategic planning process in addition to the report of the goal chair collaboration of one of the INTOSAI cross-cutting priorities.

It is worth noting that Oman's SAI is chairing the Capacity Building Committee of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) for the period 2020-2023.

Zubair SEC members show resilience to virus challenges

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Despite COVID-19 having a strong effect on the SMEs market, several members of Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) have turned the challenges thrown by the pandemic into opportunities.

While many of them concurred that the pandemic has cast a shadow over the SME sector in Oman, many spirited entrepreneurs said their passion for their businesses has inspired them to look for new opportunities by utilising the resources they have.

The member SMEs expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the support and guidance rendered by Zubair SEC advisors who offered solutions and responses to foster resilience. Specialists at Zubair SEC helped by focusing on special measures to enable business continuity and assist members in preparing the grounds for recovery while looking for new opportunities.

While the COVID-19 pandemic affected our usual income sources, it made us look for new income opportunities

ALI AL RASHDI

Ali Shaker, advisor - business development and strategic partnerships at Zubair SEC, said, "It cannot be denied that the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed extensive impacts, putting many small businesses at difficulty. The degree of impact has been low to high in some cases. It was heartening to see many of our members rise to the occasion and look for new windows of growth. In this challenging time, we were pleased to have offered and suggested solutions to help our members not lose hope but facilitate their

working situation. They were open to resources and tools provided to help them navigate the pandemic shock."

Adel Hubeishi, a senior advisor at Zubair SEC, said, "It is true that COVID-19 has hit SMEs across the globe. We are happy to state that along with our members we are implementing strategies to minimise the negative impacts and strengthen their resilience. We are delighted that our members are identifying and commercialising new market trends."

Ali Said Abdullah al Rashdi, owner of Muaawana, and member of Zubair SEC's Direct Support Programme, said, "While the COVID-19 affected our usual income sources it made us look for new income opportunities. As a company, we specialise in providing high-quality facility maintenance services for buildings and houses and we are normally dependent on long-term contracts. Working with a proactive approach, we are known for our prompt response."

CBO participates in Arab central banks meeting

Muscat - The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) participated in the virtual meeting of the 44th regular session of the Council of Arab Central Banks and Monetary Authorities' Governors. The meeting was organised by the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

The meeting was chaired from the sultanate's side by H E Taher bin Salim al Amri,



H E Taher bin Salim al Amri

executive president of the CBO.

The Council discussed the economic, financial and monetary implications of COVID-19 pandemic, and options related to policies and tools for the post-crisis period. The Arab central bankers also discussed the applications of modern financial technologies and the future of banking services and

products.

The Council also reviewed the development of the member states' efforts in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, the importance of enhancing financial inclusion and the impact of climate change implications on the financial system and stability.

ONA

Has global oil demand hit the peak? BP says it is possible

London, UK - Global oil demand might have already peaked and will likely not stop falling for the next 30 years, hit by virus fallout and moves towards greener energy, Britain's BP predicted on Monday.

At the same time, the oil cartel OPEC has revised its forecast for global demand lower this year and next for essentially the same reasons.

London-listed oil giant BP, which is seeking to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, has issued three new forecast scenarios - under which the industry would embrace green energy to varying degrees - in its Energy Outlook 2020 report.

Under BP's two most opti-

mistic scenarios, oil demand has already passed its peak and may never recover from the long-lasting coronavirus-induced collapse.

However, if the industry's transition to greener energy continues at the current sluggish pace, then oil demand will peak in the coming years, according to BP.

The company did predict however that the transport sector would experience sliding demand under all three scenarios, as the pandemic curtails travel and consumers increasingly switch to electric vehicles.

Yet gas is set to remain in demand, particularly as developing nations seek to switch away



Bernard Looney

from high-polluting coal.

"Three features are common across those scenarios and they

form a set of core beliefs as to how energy demand is likely to change over the next three

decades," BP chief executive Bernard Looney said in the outlook document.

"Renewable energy will play an increasingly important role in meeting the world's growing energy needs," he said.

"Customers will continue to redefine mobility and convenience, underpinned by the mobility revolution that is already underway combining electric vehicles, shared mobility and autonomy," Looney said.

"Oil and gas - while remaining needed for decades - will be increasingly challenged as society shifts away from its reliance on fossil fuels," he further said.

BP had last month set out plans for a greener future for the

company, whose finances and reputation were severely damaged by the Deepwater Horizon oil rig disaster in 2010.

The group, which wants to achieve net-zero carbon emissions in the next 30 years, last week entered the offshore wind market in a US\$1.1bn US tie-up with Norwegian peer Equinor.

OPEC cuts demand forecast

In a separate development in the global oil sector on Monday, OPEC's monthly forecast for oil demand was revised down due to weaker economic activity in several Asian countries because of the pandemic, it said.

Risks remain elevated and

skewed to the downside, particularly in relation to the development of COVID-19 infection cases and potential vaccines,' the oil cartel noted.

OPEC cut its August estimate by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd), which means it now expects global demand to fall by 9.5mn bpd to 90.2mn bpd this year.

'So far, oil demand in India, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines [has] performed far poorer than initially expected,' the report said. A similar cut was applied to OPEC's forecast for 2021, though the cartel nonetheless sees demand growing next year by 6.6mn bpd to 96.9mn. AFP

China retail sales return to growth, economic recovery continues



People walk outside a shopping mall in Beijing, China on Tuesday (AFP)

Beijing, China - Chinese retail sales rose in August for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic struck, data showed on Tuesday, as officials try to kickstart the crucial domestic consumer sector to fuel recovery in the world's number-two economy.

Spending had previously remained sluggish despite China bringing the virus largely under control, with shoppers still cautious owing to global uncertainty - but economists believe the latest data suggests recovery is on a firmer footing.

The key indicator of consumer sentiment rose 0.5 per cent on-year last month. A poll of analysts by Bloomberg News had forecast no growth.

Beijing has ramped up initia-

tives such as shopping festivals and voucher campaigns to spur consumer spending.

The latest reading is an improvement on the 1.1 per cent drop seen in July and much better than the 20.5 per cent plunge suffered in January-February when millions of people were put into lockdown to prevent the virus from spreading.

With external demand expected to remain weak as China's major trading partners struggle to contain the disease, China has redoubled efforts to encourage its exporters to target its vast local market instead.

Oxford Economics economist Louis Kuijs said the economic recovery was 'on a reasonably firm footing now... with solid investment growth, gradually recover-

ing consumption momentum and resilient exports'.

Industrial output, which has recovered more quickly than retail, strengthened further, rising 5.6 per cent, which also beat forecasts and improved on July's 4.8 per cent increase.

Julian Evans-Pritchard from Capital Economics said that with fiscal spending set to be ramped up and a revival in consumer confidence, China's economy was on track to return to its pre-virus growth rate before the end of the year.

On Tuesday, National Bureau of Statistics spokesman Fu Linghui told reporters that China's economy had a 'sustained steady recovery'.

But he cautioned that with 'mounting uncertainties' interna-

tionally and 'pronounced domestic structural problems, there remains huge pressure to keep employment and businesses stable, and to safeguard people's livelihood'.

The urban unemployment rate, a cause for concern given China's large number of fresh graduates, inched down to 5.6 per cent.

Analysts have warned that the real level of unemployment is likely higher than official numbers suggest, with smaller businesses hit hard by the virus fallout. Despite the stronger data in August, Nomura chief China economist Lu Ting cautioned that rising US-China tensions could hit exports and manufacturing investment.

AFP

British MPs back Brexit bill despite EU anger



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks as he opens the debate into the Government's proposed Internal Markets Bill, in the House of Commons in London on Monday (AFP)

London, UK - British lawmakers on Monday backed a new bill that would override parts of the Brexit treaty struck with the European Union (EU) last year, despite outrage in Brussels and alarm at home over such an overt breach of international law.

MPs in the House of Commons gave their initial approval to the UK Internal Market Bill by 340 votes to 263, clearing the way for four days of detailed scrutiny of the text this week and next.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson earlier argued the legislation was a 'safety net' against what he claimed were EU threats to impose tariffs on UK internal trade and even stop food going from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland.

But EU leaders have dismissed this as 'spin' and warned Johnson to uphold commitments he himself made in the Brexit treaty last year - demanding he withdraw the offending parts of the new bill by the end of September.

The row threatens to disrupt already tough post-Brexit trade negotiations, fuelling growing fears of failure that would see more than four decades of EU-UK integration come to a crashing halt at the end of this year.

The legislation also sparked angry debate in London, reminiscent of the years of bitter political battles that followed the 2016 shock referendum vote to leave the EU.

Several of Johnson's own Conservative MPs expressed alarm about breaking international law, with ex-finance minister Sajid Javid and former attorney general Geoffrey Cox among those saying beforehand that they would not back the bill as it stood. Every living former prime minister - Conservatives John Major, David Cameron and Theresa May and Labour's Tony

Blair and Gordon Brown - also warned of the risk to Britain's global reputation.

Divide our own land

Britain left the EU in January but remains bound by the rules of the 27-member bloc until a transition period ends on December 31.

Johnson says the UK Internal Market Bill will ensure 'unfettered access' for trade after that within the UK's four nations - Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

But the legislation would see London unilaterally regulate UK trade and state aid within Northern Ireland - in violation of the Brexit treaty, that demands Brussels have a say.

Northern Ireland will uniquely remain subject to some EU rules after Brexit to ensure a free-flowing border with the Republic of Ireland - a crucial part of the 1998 peace accords that ended decades of sectarian violence.

But Johnson claimed the EU was ready to go to 'extreme and unreasonable lengths' and to use these arrangements to 'exert leverage' in the trade negotiations.

He acknowledged some personal 'unease' at giving ministers

powers to override the Brexit treaty but said they would not be needed if a trade deal was agreed as hoped with Brussels.

"What we cannot do now is tolerate a situation where our EU counterparts seriously believe that they have the power to break up our country," he said.

"That illusion must be decently despatched."

The UK parliament spent years arguing over how to leave the EU - much of it arguing over arrangements for Northern Ireland - and delayed its exit date three times. Johnson temporarily halted the deadlock by sealing a divorce deal with Brussels late last year, which he used to win a thumping 80-seat victory in a December general election.

Downing Street last week claimed the Brexit deal was agreed 'at pace' and the problems with the aspects of the treaty regarding Northern Ireland were unforeseen.

But opposition Labour spokesman Ed Miliband ridiculed this suggestion, saying, "Either he wasn't straight with the country about the deal in the first place or he didn't understand it."

"This is his deal. It's his mess. It's his failure," he added.

AFP



Fiat Chrysler and PSA tweak merger terms due to virus

New York, US - Fiat Chrysler (FCA) and Peugeot Citroen (PSA) announced on Monday they'd modified the terms of their mega-merger in light of business disruptions caused by COVID-19.

FCA agreed to lower the exceptional dividend to be distributed to its shareholders to €2.9bn compared to €5.5bn previously, while PSA will distribute its 46 per cent stake in French automotive equipment maker Faurecia to all shareholder of the new company, rather than to its shareholders alone as agreed to previously.

The decision was made to 'take into account the impact on liquidity the COVID-19 health crisis has had on the automotive industry', the companies said in a joint press release, while 'preserving the original balance of the merger' which should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2021.

They were approved 'unanimously' by the boards of direc-

tors of both companies 'with the strong support of their reference shareholders', FCA and PSA said.

The tie-up will create Stellantis, set to be the world's fourth-largest automaker in terms of volume, and number three in terms of sales.

The combined company unites brands such as Peugeot, Citroen, Fiat, Chrysler, Jeep, Alfa Romeo and Maserati into a global giant, each of which will continue under its own marque.

But doubts have been raised in recent months about the equilibrium of the merger, which was advertised from the outset as a marriage of equals.

The two companies announced in May they'd waive a dividend payment of €1.1bn, planned as part of the merger, due to the coronavirus downturn.

The exceptional dividend that FCA was to distribute to its shareholders along with the distribution of Faurecia's shares were also issues of concern.

AFP

COVID-19 restrictions threaten Asia economic recovery in 2021: ADB

Manila, Philippines - Coronavirus-ravaged economies across the Asia Pacific will make a 'swoosh-shaped' recovery next year, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecast on Tuesday, but it warned that further restrictions to combat the contagion could derail the region's return to growth.

Developing Asia - stretching from the Cook Islands in the Pacific to Kazakhstan in Central Asia - is expected to contract in 2020 for the first time in nearly six decades, throwing tens of millions of people into poverty, the Philippines-based lender said.

The 0.7 per cent shrink in gross domestic product compares with the bank's previous estimate in June for 0.1 per cent growth and will mark 'the first regional GDP contraction since the early 1960s', it said.

'The downturn is across the board, with almost three-fourths of regional economies projected to contract - the largest such share in the past six decades,' the bank said in the latest update to its outlook.

While the vast region is expected to bounce back next year, with GDP projected to grow 6.8 per cent, it will be 'substantially smaller' than forecast before COVID-19 struck.

'Thus, the regional recovery will be L-shaped or swoosh-shaped rather than V-shaped,' the bank said, noting a prolonged



A vendor waits for customers at a wholesale market in the old quarters of New Delhi, India on Tuesday (AFP)

pandemic was the main threat to the outlook.

The bank warned that reimposing tough virus restrictions could hamper the recovery and even trigger 'financial turmoil'.

"While economies in developing Asia remain resilient, continued policy support is needed to underpin recovery," ADB chief economist Yasuyuki Sawada said.

Policy support packages announced to the end of August

had reached a total of US\$3.6tn - about 15 per cent of regional GDP, the bank said.

China, where the virus first emerged late last year before morphing into a pandemic that has infected more than 29mn people worldwide, was one of the few economies to buck the downward trend in the region.

After successfully beating back the disease, the world's second largest economy is forecast to grow 1.8 per cent this year

and 7.7 per cent in 2021, the bank said.

In contrast, India, which is one of the hardest hit countries in the world with over 4.8mn infections despite lengthy lockdowns, is expected to shrivel by 9 per cent in 2020 before expanding by 8 per cent next year.

'The path and speed of economic recovery in regional economies will depend on many different factors, the most important of which is ability to control

and contain the pandemic,' the ADB said.

As regional economies contract this year the number of poor people will likely rise by at least 78mn, reversing a reduction in poverty over the past three to four years, according to the report.

Inflation however is expected to remain 'muted' owing to depressed demand and lower oil prices, it said.

AFP



Iranian naval ships sail during the last day of a military exercise in the Gulf, near the strategic Strait of Hormuz in southern Iran, on September 12 (AFP)

Iran warns against strategic mistake after Trump threat

Tehran, Iran - Iran warned the US on Tuesday against making a 'strategic mistake' after President Donald Trump threatened Tehran over reports it planned to avenge the killing of top general Qasem Soleimani.

"We hope that they do not make a new strategic mistake and certainly in the case of any strategic mistake, they will witness Iran's decisive response," government spokesman Ali Rabiei told a televised news conference.

A US media report, quoting unnamed officials, said that an alleged Iranian plot to assassinate the US Ambassador to South Africa was planned before the US presidential election in November.

"Any attack by Iran, in any form, against the United States will be met with an attack on Iran that will be 1,000 times greater in magnitude!" Trump wrote on

We hope that they do not make a new strategic mistake and certainly in the case of any strategic mistake, they will witness Iran's decisive response

ALI RABIEI

He warned that reacting to

such reports would 'achieve nothing but disruption to the region and to world calm' and advised Trump to 'refrain from fresh adventurism... for the sake of winning a new term as president'.

On Monday, the Foreign Ministry denied the report of an assassination plot as 'baseless' and part of 'repetitive and rotten methods to create an anti-Iranian atmosphere'.

Relations between Washington and Tehran have been tense ever since the Islamic revolution of 1979. They have deteriorated sharply since Trump unilaterally pulled out of a landmark interna-

tional nuclear deal with Iran in May 2018 and reimposed crippling sanctions.

The Iranian navy said last week that it drove off US aircraft that flew close to an area where naval exercises were underway near the sensitive Strait of Hormuz.

The military said three US aircraft were detected by air defences. One of them was a US RQ-4 drone, the same model as one shot down by Iran in June last year after allegedly violating Iranian airspace - a claim the US has denied.

AFP

AFP

Saudi Arabia rebuked at UN over abuses, Khashoggi death



Hatice Cengiz, the fiancée of slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi (AFP)

Geneva, Switzerland - Dozens of nations condemned Saudi Arabia before the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday over serious rights violations, and demanded accountability for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In a relatively rare rebuke of the oil-rich kingdom before the UN's top rights body, Denmark's ambassador Carsten Staur read a statement on behalf of 29 states demanding justice for Khashoggi.

In the third joint statement to the council targeting Riyadh since the 2018 killing, the mainly European countries renewed a call for 'transparency and holding all those responsible accountable'.

The Saudi journalist - who wrote opinion pieces for *The Washington Post* - was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018 to handle marriage paperwork.

Within minutes, the one-time royal insider turned critic was strangled and his body dismembered, according to Turkish and US officials.

A Saudi court this month handed lengthy jail terms to eight unnamed defendants and overturned five death sentences, in a ruling harshly condemned by Khashoggi's fiancée and UN

rights expert Agnes Callamard, the special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings.

Callamard, who like the CIA had previously linked Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the killing, decried that top officials who allegedly ordered his death had walked free.

Torture, detention, disappearances

Tuesday's statement, which was hailed by several human rights groups, also highlighted a wide range of other serious rights violations in Saudi Arabia.

"We remain deeply concerned by reports of torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and detainees being denied access to essential medical treatment and contact with their families," it said.

Staur said the countries welcomed recent reforms such as restricting flogging and the death penalty against minors, but stressed that journalists, activists and others still face persecution, detention and intimidation.

And while welcoming 'recent positive steps in women's rights' in Saudi Arabia, he said the group of countries remained 'deeply concerned about the persisting discrimination' towards women and girls.

Saudi Arabia has detained and put on trial a dozen women activists who long campaigned for the right to drive, which was finally granted in the kingdom two years ago.

Some of the activists allege they were tortured and sexually harassed by interrogators.

Staur highlighted that at least five women's human rights defenders arrested in 2018 remain in detention.

AFP

Firefighters put out new blaze in Lebanon capital

Beirut, Lebanon - Firefighters in Lebanon's capital said on Tuesday they put out a fire at a building under construction, in what was the third blaze to hit the city since a massive explosion at the port.

The building, located about 1.5km away from the city's port in central Beirut, was designed by the renowned late British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid.

Footage shared on social media showed black clouds of smoke billowing off of bright red flames that climbed up the side of the curvaceous building with latticed covering.

AFP reporters at the scene saw firefighters use a crane to aim water hoses at its smouldering facade.

"What was on fire was the insulation that separates the outside from the inside [of the building]," a civil defence officer told AFP. "We were able in the fastest time possible to control [the blaze]," he said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire.

The August 4 explosion at the port, one of the world's largest non-nuclear blasts ever, killed 190 people, wounded thousands and ravaged building windows and doors in large parts of the city.

It was followed by a small fire on Tuesday last week at the port and another huge fire on Thursday at a port warehouse where food aid was stored.

Both the explosion and port



Lebanese firefighters douse the flames of a blaze that engulfed a landmark building, in central Beirut on Tuesday (AFP)

fires have revived popular outrage against a political class accused of being inept, corrupt and unable to ensure public safety.

Preliminary government findings said sparks from a power saw could have caused Thursday's blaze, echoing a theory that welding was also behind the August 4 explosion.

On Tuesday, local social media users speculated the cause of the new fire could also be welding.

Theatre director Yahya Jaber on Facebook expressed alarm at what he described as 'Beirut's pre-imagined, pre-designed and pre-welded assassination'.

AFP

Hundreds of migrants housed in new Lesbos camp after fire

Athens, Greece - Roughly 800 of the thousands of asylum-seekers who fled a fire that destroyed Europe's biggest migrant camp have been housed at a temporary site on the island of Lesbos, Greece's Migration Ministry said.

Among them, 21 have tested positive for coronavirus, the ministry said late on Monday.

Thousands of people had been left wandering aimlessly since a blaze ripped through the overcrowded Moria camp on September 8.

The fire forced its 12,000 former occupants to sleep rough in abandoned buildings, on roadsides and even rooftops.

Officials have been hastily erecting a new camp of white tents near the eastern port-village of Panagioda as exhaustion, hunger and fear set in among the migrants.

Many have refused to enter the new camp, fearing they would be unable to leave once inside. Others are reluctantly



A migrant man receives treatment at the Doctors Without Borders (MSF) clinic near a new makeshift camp in Lesbos on Tuesday (AFP)

making their way to the site in the searing heat.

But some 800 of them are now housed in the temporary centre, the ministry said.

"There's nothing in the camp, no shower, no mattresses," Malik, an Algerian migrant, told AFP by phone from inside the

camp where he now lives with his wife and five children.

"There is only one meal per day, and they give us a carton with six bottles of water," said the French teacher.

Many migrants also fear the animosity of Lesbos residents.

There have been frequent in-

cidents between the asylum seekers and locals, including those from the far-right, since last year.

Kostas Mountzouris, governor of the North Aegean region covering Lesbos and one of the most ardent opponents of the new camp, called on local businesses to protest on Tuesday and seek 'the removal of migrants from the island'.

On Monday, the government renewed its accusation that a group of migrants deliberately destroyed the Moria camp.

"The camp was burnt by refugees and migrants who wanted to blackmail the government in order to be rapidly transferred from the island [to the continent]," government spokesman Stelios Petsas told reporters in Athens.

Officials had previously said the fire was started by migrants who faced isolation after testing positive for coronavirus.

AFP

Syria drone strike kills Tunisian extremist

Beirut, Lebanon - A drone strike believed to have been carried out by the United States in north-western Syria killed a prominent Tunisian extremist, a monitor said on Tuesday.

The strike conducted on Monday in the rebel-held province of Idlib killed Sayyaf al Tunisi, said the Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights. "The drone targeted the vehicle of the Hurras al Deen leader in Idlib, killing him," said Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman.

Hurras al Deen is a relatively small but powerful armed group led by Al Qaeda loyalists.

It is a rival of Hayat Tahrir al Sham, an alliance of Islamist fac-

tions dominated by former members of Al Qaeda's ex-Syria affiliate Jabhat al Nusra - although the two groups cooperate at times.

Sayyaf al Tunisi was former Nusra leader who was sidelined over his alleged responsibility for the 2015 massacre of 20 Druze villagers in Idlib Province.

There was no immediate confirmation of the strike from the United States, nor the coalition it leads in the region to fight against the Islamic State group.

Rami Abdel Rahman said Tunisi's car was targeted by a so-called 'Ninja' R9X missile, a modified Hellfire.

AFP

More peace deals in the Gulf: Trump

Israeli PM, the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the UAE arrived at the White House to sign historic accords



L-R: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan and Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif al Zayani applaud as US President Donald Trump speaks before the signing of the Abraham Accords where the countries of Bahrain and the UAE recognise Israel, on the South Lawn of the White House, Washington, DC, on Tuesday (AFP)

Washington, US - US President Donald Trump on Tuesday hailed a 'new dawn' for the Middle East as Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain sealed a landmark US-brokered accord on normalising relations.

"After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East," Trump told hundreds of attendees gathered for a White House signing ceremony.

"We're here this afternoon to change the course of history," Trump said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, invited to ink the accords along with the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the UAE, joined Trump in calling it a

The accords mark dawn of a new Middle East. We'll have at least five or six countries coming along very quickly, we're already talking to them.

DONALD TRUMP

historic turning point.

"This day is a pivot of history, it heralds a new dawn of peace," Netanyahu told the ceremony - the first time Arab nations have established relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

As Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office, ahead of a signing ceremony with both Arab

states, he said, "We're very far down the road with about five countries, five additional countries."

Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the UAE arrived on Tuesday at the White House to sign historic accords normalising ties between the Jewish and Arab states.

"The accords mark dawn of a new Middle East," Trump said,

adding, "We'll have at least five or six countries coming along very quickly, we're already talking to them."

Trump met in turn with the Israeli leader, UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan and Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif al Zayani, before the signing ceremony for the US-brokered peace deal.

'HISTORIC day for PEACE in the Middle East,' tweeted Trump, trumpeting the imminent completion of 'landmark deals that no one thought was possible'.

'MORE countries to follow!' wrote the US leader, who hopes the peace deal will boost his re-election chances in November.

For the Mideast, the deals

dubbed the Abraham Accords mark a distinct shift in a decades-old status quo where Arab countries have tried to maintain unity against Israel over its treatment of the stateless Palestinians.

Hopes deal brings de-escalation: UAE

The UAE hopes the accord to normalise ties with Israel signed on Tuesday will ease tensions that have proved 'disastrous' for the region, an Emirati official said.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, held a virtual media conference ahead of the signing ceremony in Washington, where Bahrain and

'Boorish' Trump worthy of Nobel: Norwegian MP

Oslo, Norway - The Norwegian MP who last week nominated Donald Trump for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize said on Tuesday the US President may come across as 'boorish and arrogant' but insisted he was a 'worthy' candidate.

Christian Tybring-Gjedde, a member of parliament for Norway's anti-immigration populist party, made waves on September 10 when he announced he had nominated Trump for the prestigious prize. He cited the 'unique and historic' agreement Trump helped broker normalising relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), he told AFP.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee welcomes all the names submitted in the hundreds every year, as long as they are sent in by January 31 for the year in question and are submitted by those eligible to nominate, meaning members of parliament and government from around the world, former laureates, and



Christian Tybring-Gjedde

some university professors.

The initiative by Tybring-Gjedde, who is controversial in Norway, made headlines around the world, less than two months ahead of the US presidential election on November 3. Running for a second term, Trump revelled in the nomination and sent a flurry of tweets celebrating it.

"There is little doubt that Trump often comes across as boorish and arrogant," he wrote. "My nomination is based on the results obtained in the name of world peace, reconciliation, and the withdrawal of military troops."

AFP

Trump dismisses climate concerns as he visits fire-ravaged western US

McClellan Park, US - US President Donald Trump suggested global warming will reverse itself and dismissed climate change as a cause of the ferocious fires engulfing the west of the United States.

As the focus of the US election campaign switched to the deadly blazes, Democratic challenger Joe Biden slammed the incumbent as a 'climate arsonist' and said America would not be safe from the ravages of a warming planet unless it elects 'a president who respects science'.

Infernos across California, Oregon and Washington state have burned more than 2mn hectares this year, killed dozens of people and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes.

Whole towns have been ruined by the blazes, which have pumped out tonnes of noxious fumes that have hung in the air for days, blocking out the sun and making breathing difficult.

But Trump, in Sacramento on the third day of a re-election campaign swing, pushed back against state officials arguing that a heating climate underlies the ever-stronger fires.

"It will start getting cooler. You just watch," Trump said, offering no evidence for the theory.

"I wish science agreed with you," responded Wade Crowfoot, the head of the California Natural Resources Agency.



US President Donald Trump speaks during a briefing on wildfires with local and federal fire and emergency officials at Sacramento McClellan Airport, in McClellan Park, California on Monday (AFP)

"I don't think science knows, actually," Trump said.

Reputable scientists around the world are almost unanimous in their belief that the world is getting warmer because of human activity.

This man-made climate change amplifies droughts, which dry out regions, creating ideal conditions for wildfires to spread out-of-control and inflict unprecedented damage.

Trump also repeated his argument that wildfires are caused by poor maintenance of forest areas, making them more com-

bustible.

"There has to be strong forest management," he said.

"With regard to the forests, when trees fall down after a short period of time, about 18 months, they become very dry. They become really like a match stick," he added. "They just explode."

Biden, speaking at his own campaign event on the opposite coast, said Trump's re-election would be catastrophic for the environment.

"If you give a climate arsonist four more years in the White House, why would anyone be

surprised if we have more of America ablaze?" Biden said, savaging Trump for failing to 'take responsibility' for the ongoing wildfire crisis.

"We need a president who respects science, who understands that the damage from climate change is already here."

California Governor Gavin Newsom, who has argued that the fires are driven mostly by global warming, acknowledged as he met with Trump that better forest management was needed.

AFP

Spain's right rattled by suspected spying case

Madrid, Spain - Spain's conservative opposition party is engulfed in a scandal involving allegations an informant was paid out of state coffers to spy on a party bigwig in a case that could taint a former prime minister.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said he hopes the courts will 'shed light' on the case which is 'very worrying' and 'belongs to a dark age' for Spain.

The affair has dominated headlines in Spain since public prosecutors last week declassified a 52-page document about the investigation into the case, dubbed 'Operation Kitchen' because the code name of the alleged informant was 'the cook'.

The informant worked as a driver for the former treasurer of the Popular Party (PP), Luis Barcenas, who in May 2018 was sentenced to 33 years in jail for his role in a kickbacks scheme which financed the party known as the Gurtel case.

The ruling led to the ouster of PP prime minister Mariano Rajoy in a confidence vote in parliament several days later.

Public prosecutors allege the driver received €2,000 per month, as well as the promise of a job in the police force, in exchange for obtaining information regarding where 'Barcenas and his wife hide compromising docu-



Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez speaks at a press conference (AFP)

uments' about the PP and its senior leaders, according to a copy of the report seen by AFP.

The probe into 'Operation Kitchen' is one of several which have been opened based on searches carried out following the arrest of Jose Manuel Villarejo, a former police commissioner who for years secretly recorded conversations with top political and economic figures to be able to smear them.

Prosecutors are looking into 'numerous and conclusive' evidence of former interior minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz's role in the affair, as well as that of former defence minister Maria Dolores de Cospedal who is 'affected by suspected compro-

mising documents'.

Fernandez Diaz said he knew nothing about the alleged spying while Dolores de Cospedal has so far remained silent.

Both were ministers under Rajoy, who is also mentioned in the prosecutor's report.

A transcript of a conversation between Villarejo and Barcenas's driver included in the report suggests the former PP treasurer had compromising documents regarding the ex-premier.

Investigating magistrates have the cooperation of former secretary of state for security Francisco Martinez Vazquez who has been indicted as part of the investigation into 'Operation Kitchen'.

In an interview published on Sunday in top-selling daily newspaper *El Pais*, he said he wants to 'tell the judge everything' he knows about 'Operation Kitchen'.

Prosecutors say Vazquez has already provided investigators with messages he exchanged with his former boss Fernandez Diaz which show that the former interior minister was aware of the operation.

'My biggest mistake at the ministry was to be loyal to miserable people like Jorge (Fernandez Diaz), Rajoy or Cospedal,' he said in a message.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UK warned virus test shortages harming national health system

London, UK - Healthcare services are being jeopardised by lack of access to coronavirus testing, hospital bosses in England warned on Tuesday.

NHS Providers, which represents the heads of hospital trusts in the state-run National Health Service, said there were 'current capacity problems with the testing regime'.

Its chief executive Chris Hopson said the government should prioritise health workers, as shortages of tests had caused a slew of staff absences in major cities.

Patients were also struggling to get tests, compounding delays within the NHS that have worsened since the outbreak began.

"We have now got cases where patients who should have got treated, we can't treat them because they can't get access to a test," he told Sky News television in an interview.

"So, for them that's a real problem."

Hopson spoke after LBC radio reported on Monday that no coronavirus tests were available in any of the ten worst hotspots in England.

The revelation followed weekend reports of a backlog of 185,000 swab tests, and that the system was so stretched samples were being sent to labs in Italy and Germany.

The UK government has blamed surging demand for the situation and promised increased capacity while urging people only to get tested if they are showing symptoms.

Interior Minister Priti Patel denied claims of acute shortages in England's hotspots, say-



A nurse holds a placard as she takes part in a demonstration calling for a pay rise for NHS nursing staff, in London on Saturday (AFP)

ing mobile testing units were boosting capacity in areas under local lockdowns.

"Clearly there is much more work that needs to be undertaken with Public Health England and the actual public health bodies in those particular local areas," she told BBC radio on Tuesday.

Britain, which has been the worst-hit country in Europe registering nearly 42,000 deaths, has seen a resurgence in the virus in recent weeks.

The country recorded more than 3,000 new cases on three consecutive days over the weekend, for the first time since May.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson had pledged to have a 'world-beating' testing and tracing operation in place by June.

But alongside the faltering testing regime, the tracing system is still failing to reach the re-

Clearly there is much more work that needs to be undertaken with Public Health England

PRITI PATEL

quired number of people to work effectively.

Meanwhile, a much-touted smartphone app to help trace people is yet to launch in England. Scotland, which runs health from the devolved administration in Edinburgh, launched an app last week using technology developed by Apple and Google.

AFP



Union Solidarity and Development Party members work in their office, in Yangon, the largest city of Myanmar on September 9 (AFP)

Calls grow for Myanmar poll delay as virus cases spike

Yangon, Myanmar - Opposition parties in Myanmar are calling for November's election to be postponed as the country scrambles to control a coronavirus surge.

New infections are doubling every week - albeit from a relatively low base - and hospitals in the biggest city, Yangon, are overwhelmed in a nation with one of the world's poorest healthcare systems.

The sharp jump comes as Myanmar prepares to hold national elections on November 8, with leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) widely expected to be returned to power.

But calls are growing for the polls to be delayed.

The head of the military-aligned opposition Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), Than Htay, told AFP he was 'very concerned' about holding the vote during the pandemic.

"The government should not sacrifice the people... If it's not suitable to hold the election, postpone it!"

In a Facebook post, the People's Pioneer Party also urged a delay to allow the vote to be held 'fairly and without chaos'.

Local media say at least three other parties are echoing

the call. So far, commercial hub Yangon, capital Naypyidaw and conflict-stricken Rakhine state are all under lockdown, while domestic flights and long-distance bus routes have ceased.

Neighbours China and Thailand are boosting security on shared borders to try to stymie any spread of the outbreak.

The NLD could not be reached for comment.

The Southeast Asian nation of some 55mn had weathered the epidemic relatively well until late August, with case numbers under 400 and just six deaths.

But in under four weeks infections have steadily spread, jumping to 3,299 cases and 32 deaths by Tuesday.

The virus hotspots are Yangon, a teeming metropolis of over 7mn, and northwestern Rakhine state, where fighting between the military and armed rebels has forced some 150,000 from their homes.

Officials are scrambling to provide extra health facilities in Yangon, creating two tented hospitals with hundreds of extra beds. Several members of Suu Kyi's office have tested positive, but the government confirmed Tuesday the leader was in 'good health'.

AFP

Canada's Trudeau worried about uptick in virus cases

Ottawa, Canada - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau warned on Monday that Canada was 'not out of the woods' with the coronavirus, urging citizens to be vigilant amid an uptick in virus cases nationwide.

The country recorded more than 1,300 cases over the weekend - a level not seen since early summer.

On Monday, Quebec and Ontario provinces, the most populous in Canada and the hardest-hit by the pandemic, confirmed nearly 600 cases.

"One of the things we're seeing is, with numbers rising across the country, we are not out of the woods," Trudeau said.

He said the resumption of classes and the reopening of the

Canadian economy, meaning more people are back to work, had led to an increase in case numbers. "The last thing anyone wants is to go into this fall in a lockdown similar to this spring. And the way we can prevent that is by remaining vigilant," Trudeau said, reiterating the importance of wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford sounded a warning, saying: "Let me be crystal clear every option is on the table, we will take every step necessary including further shutdowns."

On Saturday, Quebec became the first Canadian province to fine people for refusing to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces. The fines

run from CAN\$400-6,000.

That did not prevent a crowd of several thousand people from protesting against mask wearing in Montreal on Saturday.

As of Monday, Canada had registered more than 137,000 coronavirus cases since mid-March. Over 9,200 people have died as a result of COVID-19.

AFP

Facebook India chief skips hate speech hearing

New Delhi, India - Facebook India's chief failed to appear on Tuesday before a panel probing allegations that the social media giant failed to take action against hate speech, the committee's head said.

India is the US-based company and its messaging service WhatsApp's biggest market in terms of users, and the firm is under pressure worldwide over the policing of hate speech.

Last week, a Delhi Assembly panel on peace and harmony had summoned Ajit Mohan, managing director of Facebook India, to determine if the social networking site deliberately ignored instances of hate speech on its social media platform.

The panel - headed by lawmaker Raghav Chadha with the Aam Aadmi Party governing the Indian capital - also said the firm should be probed over its 'al-



Facebook has over 328mn users in India, its largest audience globally (AFP)

leged role and complicity' in the sectarian Delhi riots in February which killed over 50 people, most of them minority Muslims.

But on Tuesday Mohan failed to appear, Chadha said.

"The failure of Facebook to appear before the committee shows that it is trying to hide its role in the Delhi riots," Chadha told reporters.

"Fresh summons will be is-

sued to it in line with principles of natural justice."

A lawyer for Facebook said the summons was 'untenable' as the matter was being heard separately by a parliamentary committee, a Delhi government source told AFP.

Facebook India was not immediately available for comment on Tuesday.

AFP

HK activists in court over banned vigil

Hong Kong, China - Hong Kong activists denounced Beijing and called for democracy in a courtroom on Tuesday as two dozen high profile campaigners appeared over a banned vigil to mark the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

Tens of thousands of Hong Kongers defied a ban on rallies on June 4 to mark the anniversary of Beijing's deadly suppression of students pushing for democracy.

The annual vigil has been held in Hong Kong for the last three decades and usually attracts huge crowds, but this year's gathering was banned for the first time with authorities citing coronavirus measures - even though local transmission had largely been halted.

The group of defendants at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts represents a broad section of the pro-democracy movement, from 72 year old media mogul Jimmy Lai to younger campaigners such as 23 year old



Pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai (centre) arrives at the West Kowloon court, in Hong Kong on Tuesday (AFP)

Joshua Wong. The 26 accused are charged with either participating in or inciting others to take part in an unlawful assembly. The incitement charge carries up to five years in jail.

Each defendant at the procedural hearing was asked if they understood the charges they face, and many used the opportunity to voice their views.

"I understand," 64 year old Leung Kwok-hung, known as 'Long Hair', said.

"The ruthless regime cannot run away from the crime of a massacre. End one party rule."

Figo Chan (24) said, "I understand. Shame on political suppression. Free all political prisoners." The court heard two of the defendants - Nathan Law

and Sunny Cheung - were not present because they have fled Hong Kong.

Earlier, supporters gathered outside court to shout slogans and display banners defending their right to hold a Tiananmen vigil. 'It's not a crime to mourn June 4,' one poster read, while another said, 'Oppose political prosecutions, Protest political suppression.'

Veteran activist Lee Cheuk-yan (63) told the crowd over a loudspeaker: "We must reiterate that mourning June 4 is not a crime."

The vigil, traditionally held in Victoria Park, has taken on particular significance in recent years as the semi-autonomous city chafes under Beijing's increasingly authoritarian rule.

Lee added: "Suppression suffered by activists on June 4, 1989, is very similar to what Hong Kong people suffered in the past year."

AFP

TOP 5 IMMUNE BOOSTING FOODS

The food choices you make can help you feel more energised and focused, but what some people may not realise is they also have a profound impact on your immune system. Incorporating certain foods into your diet can boost your immunity and help you feel your best. Consider these five foods into your diet to support your immune system:



Spinach

Not only is spinach packed with vitamin C, it's also rich with antioxidants and beta carotene that act as an anti-inflammatory and help protect against sickness. It is best to mix it up, sometimes eating spinach raw and sometimes lightly cooked since some nutrients are higher in the raw version and some are higher when lightly cooked.



Bell peppers

A colourful addition to your plate, bell peppers are rich in vitamin C. In fact, the vegetable has two to three times more vitamin C than an orange. Vitamin C is crucial for immune health because it increases the white blood cells that fight off infection. For the most of vitamin C, it's best to eat them raw or just lightly cooked.



Eggs

Eggs (particularly the yolk) contain vitamin D, which is a nutrient the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) notes can help the immune system resist viruses and bacteria. Eggs contain protein, folate, lutein and omega-3s, which play key roles in immune health. Make them part of your daily intake to boost your immunity levels.



Turmeric

Curcumin gives turmeric its signature yellow colour and is responsible for its immunity benefits. A natural anti-inflammatory, curcumin has been shown to enhance immune cell activity and improve antibody responses. Though it is mostly used in curries, turmeric is also delicious in smoothies, soups or sprinkled on cooked vegetables or eggs.



Yogurt

Yogurt contains probiotics to support a healthy gut, where many of the immune cells are found. Yogurt is also a good source of zinc, a mineral that helps to make white blood cells to fight infections and control inflammation. Choose yogurt without extra added sugar and consider pairing it with antioxidant-rich fruits like berries.

KITCHEN TIPS & TRICKS

- Soak pasta before cooking so that it's done in 60 seconds
- Add baking soda to caramelise onions 2 times faster
- To soften butter much faster, just cut it into pieces
- Parmesan or other hard cheeses grate better at room temperature
- Ginger can be peeled well using a spoon instead of a knife

Spice Diary: Star Anise

Star anise is a spice made from the fruit of the Chinese evergreen tree *Illicium verum*. It's aptly named for the star-shaped pods from which the spice seeds are harvested and has a flavour that is reminiscent of licorice. Star anise is famed not only for its distinct flavour and culinary applications but also for its medicinal benefits. It is used like bay leaves in Vietnamese and Chinese cuisine, especially in

soups, stews, and braises. It pairs well in savoury recipes with citrus, poultry, and beef, adding a contrasting sweet licorice-like flavour to dishes. Ground star anise is more potent and can be added in small quantities to dishes and baked goods. Sipped as a tea, it aids digestion and reduces bloating, besides fighting free radicals responsible for aging and diabetes.



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LETS GO DUTCH

Dutch cuisine is non complicated, prepared with few ingredients like vegetables, meat, poultry, and fish, and just a dash of spice. They say, Dutch cuisine is based on five principles that proclaim the Dutch culinary identity – culture, health, nature, quality and value.

While in Amsterdam, you don't have to worry about what to eat as restaurants serve varied cuisines. But if you must experience the country, you must try Dutch food which has a pleasant variety, from pizzas and pancakes to soups and stews. Here are a few popular Dutch dishes:

BITTERBALLEN (Fried meat balls)

INGREDIENTS

500g ground beef, 3tbsp butter, 3tbsp all-purpose flour
1/2 cup beef broth, 1/4 cup minced parsley, 1/4tsp salt
1/4tsp ground nutmeg, 1/8tsp pepper, 2 cups bread crumbs
2 large eggs, 1tsp milk, 1tsp canola oil, oil for deep frying
Ground mustard, for serving

Method

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in flour until smooth. Gradually add broth and bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 1 minute or until thickened. Carefully add the beef and parsley; cook and stir for 2-5 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Stir in the salt, nutmeg and pepper. Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate for 3-4 hours.
Now, place bread crumbs in a shallow bowl. Whisk eggs, milk, and canola oil in another bowl and keep it next to it. Drop spoonfuls of the meat mixture into bread crumbs and shape into small balls. Dip the meatballs, one by one, in the egg mixture, then roll in the crumbs again to coat well and set aside in refrigerator for 30-60 minutes. Heat oil for deep frying and fry the balls in batches till golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Serve hot with mustard sauce.



MOSTERDSOEP (Mustard soup)

INGREDIENTS

1 clove of garlic, 2 onions, 1tbsp butter, 3½ cups water, 1 cup cream
1 vegetable bouillon cube, 1 leek, 3tbsp coarse grain mustard
1tbsp cornstarch, 1 multigrain baguette (to serve)

METHOD

Finely peel and chop the onions and garlic. Melt the butter in a soup pan and sauté the onion and garlic for 3 minutes. Pour in the water and the cooking cream and add the vegetable bouillon cube. Bring this to a boil and let it boil for a while. Cut the leek in half and clean out the sand. Then cut it in thin slices. Add the leek and the mustard and stir. Let it boil for about four more minutes on low fire. Add the cornstarch with a splash of water in a small bowl, pour it in the soup to thicken it, and stir. Add a pinch of salt and pepper to your taste. Serve the soup garnished with favourite toppings (like bits of fried meat) with slices of a baguette.



HACHEE (beef and onion stew)

INGREDIENTS

2 cups beef/chicken stock
1tbsp vinegar, 500gm beef - cut to chunks
2tbsp cornflour, 2 big onions - finely sliced
1/4 cup flour, 3 bay leaves, 5 cloves, 1 pinch pepper
1/4 cup butter/margarine, 1tsp Worcestershire sauce

METHOD

Heat the butter in a pot and fry the onions until caramelised. Add the flour and mix well to form a creamy roux. Add the stock slowly, stirring all the time. Add bay leaves and cloves and simmer for 5 minutes with lid on. Now, add the vinegar and meat and simmer for an hour. Then, mix the cornflour with a little water and add to the stew to thicken the sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring continually. Add pepper and Worcestershire sauce and turn off flame. Serve with mashed potatoes.

