



P12

SWEET DOUBLE FOR UNSEEDED KREJCIKOVA



P19

RIZ AHMED LEADS BID TO CHANGE WAY MUSLIMS SEEN IN FILMS



P15

AIRLINE INDUSTRY SEES LONG-TERM REBOUND



4,415 CASES

46 DEATHS IN 3 DAYS

12% OF THE POPULATION VACCINATED



1,180 INPATIENTS



435,090 PEOPLE VACCINATED



374 IN ICUS

ZAINAB AL NASSRI @zainabalnasseri

Oman has reported 4,415 new confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 46 deaths in the last three days.

This is the highest number since the start of the pandemic in two years. The total number of cases registered in the Sultanate has reached 234,634, including 2,513 deaths. Around 153 people were admitted to hospitals across the country in 24 hours, bringing the total number of inpatients to 1,180, including 374 in intensive care units.

Emergency Management Centre confirmed that most government hospitals had exceeded their capacity to reach 157 per cent of the total capacity, like Nizwa and Suhar hospitals, while others are catching up as cases continue to surge.

Meanwhile, the Sultanate has stepped up the national campaign for immunisation against Covid-19 in all governorates across the country.

As many as 435,090 people have been vaccinated against Covid-19, since the start of National Immunisation Plan in December 2020 till Saturday



The only way to return to normal life is to take the vaccine, not to pay attention to rumours related to safety and efficiency of vaccines, and adhere to preventive measures

DR REDHA AL LAWATI
An Internist

(12 per cent of the Sultanate's population).

The percentage of those who took the first dose of vaccine stands at 61 per cent, while 39 per cent took both

TURN TO P2

OMAN, FRANCE SIGN DEFENCE MOU



The Sultanate and the French Republic on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the field of military cooperation between the two friendly countries. The MoU aims to regulate aspects of military cooperation between the Sultanate and France in a way that enhances the existing cooperation relations and serves the joint interest. The MoU was signed at the Ministry of Defence's headquarters in Muaskar Al Murtafaa Camp by Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Zaabi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence and Renaud Salins, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Sultanate. – ONA

MUSCAT

STEPS TO COMBAT HIDDEN TRADE

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion will on Tuesday release the first package of incentives to ease business practice for commercial companies whose owners wish to clear commercial registers within a period of one year or merge them within 6 months. The move aims to streamline the process of status adjustment for those establishments and encourage young people and owners of multiple commercial registers to clear or merge their businesses. The overall aim is to eliminate the phenomenon of multiplicity of commercial registers, regulate the status of the market, improve business climate, allow competition and remove inactive registers from the package of incentives and fee exemptions. DETAILS ON P13



PATEK PHILIPPE
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TWENTY~4

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MUSCAT - 22009991

Minister receives Saudi ambassador

MUSCAT: General Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, received in his office on Sunday Abdullah Saud al Anzi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, appointed to the Sultanate.

Gen Al Numani welcomed the ambassador, who expressed his thanks and appreciation for the Sultanate's efforts in the region. He underscored the strong relations binding Oman and the KSA.

The meeting touched on several topics of common interest and the current developments



in the region. It also discussed cooperation in respect to regional means of enhancing the joint and international issues. — ONA

Al Hazm aerial exercise kicks off

MUSCAT: The aerial exercise Al Hazm carried out by the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo), kicked off at Al Musannah Air Base, on Sunday.

The Sultan of Oman's Parachute of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) and Sultan's Special Force provide support to the exercise activities.

The drill includes multiple training and simulation fields that suit the roles of the participating forces and the tasks carried out by various types of aircrafts in accordance with the exercise plan



and the desired national roles.

The exercise aims to sustain combat effectiveness and readiness of Rafo personnel and provide training on the modern aircrafts and the electronic military equipment and programmes which were introduced to Rafo as part of the continued modernisation strategy with a

view of achieving the operational targets undertaken by Rafo in protecting the Sultanate's airspace.

The exercise also aims to activate the concept of joint aerial operations and leverage the standard of operational coordination in the joint aerial action between the units of Sultan's Armed Forces. — ONA

Oman participates in Arab League meeting

CAIRO: The Sultanate took part in the Arab League Council meeting on Sunday, at the level of permanent representatives, in preparation for the emergency ministerial meeting, due to be held Doha.

The Sultanate was represented by Abdullah bin Nassir al Rahbi, Sultanate's Ambassador to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League. Al Rahbi said that the meeting discussed the arrangements for Doha meeting which is crucial due to the rapid developments at the Arab and international arenas.

He added that the Arab ministers will discuss a range of topics to reach positive outcomes that serve the Arab solidarity.

ARAB MEDIA COMMITTEE MEETING

The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Information, participated in the Arab Permanent Media Committee convened in preparation for the Arab Information Ministers Council's meetings in Cairo on Sunday.

The Sultanate was represented at the meeting by Ali bin Khalfan al Jabri, Information Under-Secretary for Information at the Ministry of Information.

Al Jabri underscored the significance of the meeting after recent developments in the Palestinian issue. In a press statement here, Al Jabri spoke about a proposal to add all that relates to the Palestinian issue (including human and land aspects) to the agenda of the Arab Permanent Media Committee and the Arab Media Action Plan abroad. Other issues of concerned discussed by the Committee included 'child content', 'Arab child media' and ways to unifying and enable Arab media efforts to have strong presence in the international arena, said Al Jabri. Al Jabri called for the compilation of the Arab content through the Arab League and meetings of the Arab Information Ministers Council's meetings. — ONA

Drive-thru vaccination in Muscat



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Directorate-General OF Health Services in Muscat Governorate, initiated a drive-thru vaccination campaign for the targeted groups who are eligible for the second dose and the government employees, at the Oman Automobile Association, on Sunday. The ministry said that the targeted groups will be updated on a weekly basis.

Dr Thamra bint Said al Ghafriyah, Acting Director-General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate, said

the drive-thru vaccination campaign aims to provide convenience for those taking the vaccine as well as reduce time and effort and pressure in the morning vaccination centres.

The service will be available between 4 pm and 9 pm from Sunday to Thursday, the official added, commending the efforts made by the health workers, Oman Automobile Association, Al Raffah Hospital, the Directorate-General of Medical Services at the Diwan of Royal Court, the Royal Court Affairs and the volunteers. — ONA

'Delta' variant detected in Oman

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health announced that it has monitored laboratory spread of the Indian, British and South African mutated strains of coronavirus. This version - or mutation - was first spotted in India last October. The majority of new coronavirus cases in

the UK are the so-called Indian variant - named the Delta variant by the World Health Organization. Transmission rates for this strain is anywhere between 30 and 100 per cent higher than of the Kent or Alpha variant, the WHO said.

Delta variant is spreading magnificently in more than 60 countries around the world, according to the WHO.

Covid-19: Alarming increase in hospital admissions

FROM PAGE 1

Dr Redha bin Issa al Lawati, an Internist at the Covid-19 field hospital, noted that some people are being carried away by rumours about the safety and efficacy of vaccines against the coronavirus and even about the disease itself. This has led to their non-compliance to the precautionary measures and then spread the infection to themselves and

their families, friends and society.

"The only way to return to normal life is to take the vaccine, not pay attention to rumours related to safety and efficiency of vaccines, and adhere to preventive measures. With the increase in the number of vaccinators, the cases of infections will decrease, which would contribute to a decrease in the number of inpatients in hospitals and intensive

care units, as well as a fall in deaths," he clarified.

AWARENESS

At this point, community awareness remains an essential element in responding to the health plans made by the Ministry of Health and other agencies to achieve the best levels of health safety for citizens and residents on this land to confront the pandemic.

Tender

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) announces the following Tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last date of Buying	Date of Submission	Type of Work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
5/2021/PEIE/HQ-5	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES WORKS AT MAHAS INDUSTRIAL CITY, KHASAB, MUSANDAM, SULTANATE OF OMAN	28-06-2021	22-07-2021	Construction	Excellent	3000

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted on line on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to The Chairman of Tender Committee mentioned in above tenders.

1. **Tender Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.

2. **eTendering System Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@ita.gov.om and +968 24166670, 24166609.

Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

No Document can be accepted as Manual except Original Tender Bond. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system and original needs to be deposited before Bid Opening.

Madayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other Offer and has the right to cancel these tenders and the tenderers have no right to claim for any compensations.

@madaynoman

madayn.om

مدائن
madayn

OMAN DATES PRODUCTION & PACKAGING Co. (S.A.O.C)

ANNOUNCING AN AUCTION

Oman Company for Dates Production and Packaging (SAOC) announces the launch of an auction of the Bussor crop for the 2020 season, The companies and individuals who wish to bid to purchase the available quantity must bring their offer in a sealed envelope to the company's head office from 14/06/2021 to 20/06/2021. The envelopes will be opened on Monday 21/06/2021, and the proposed prices in Tons are shown in Table below.

Crop Quantity Available

Bussor type	Price / riyals per ton	Available weight approx./ton
No 2	450	5
No 3	145	183

Company location:
Muscat, Ghala, Al Nahda Towers No. 2, 8th Floor, Office No. 6.

For contact and inquiries: 93994197



Model fishermen village coming up in Masirah

MUSCAT: The fishermen villages which are being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the governorates, are among the infrastructure projects which aim to encourage Omani fishermen to preserve their occupation by providing them with the basic requirements in an effort to raise the fisheries sector's contribution to the GDP and generate job opportunities for the national youth.

The fishermen village project in Masirah Island is one of the model villages of fishermen. With complete services and facilities, the fishermen village has a capacity to accommodate nearly 50 fishing boats made of permanent materials with funding from the Ministry of



Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The project aims to localise fishermen from other coastal governorates to work in Masirah and reduce violations committed by unauthorised expat fishermen.

Yousif bin Hamad al Nahdi, Director of the fishermen village

project in Masirah, said the project is aimed at providing infrastructure such as the residential buildings, health facilities, ice-maker units and refrigerated warehouses. The project is also aimed at attracting Omani fishermen, creating a model fishermen village with

complete facilities and services, increasing the economic output of national fishermen by raising the quality of fisheries and providing a database of the quantity and quality of the catch.

In a statement to Oman New Agency (ONA), Al Nahdi said that the project will be set up on a 34,000 sq metre area. The first phase of the project involves 5 residential units for fishermen complete with services and facilities. He added that the second phase will be rolled out to the private sector and includes 4 residential units, an ice factory, maintenance workshops for the fishing boats, a fuel station and commercial stores. He noted that the implementation rate of the first phase has reached 80 per cent. — ONA

Oman welcomes Saudi decision to limit Haj

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

The Sultanate on Sunday welcomed the decision taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to restrict the annual Haj pilgrimage to its own citizens and residents for the second year amid fears of Covid-19.

The Sultanate expresses its appreciation for the efforts made by the Kingdom in serving and safeguarding the pilgrims.

On Saturday, the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah announced that the Haj rituals for this season would be limited only to 60,000 citizens and residents inside the Kingdom



with the condition that they receive a Covid-19 vaccine. The decision has been taken in light of the ongoing pandemic.

In a statement, the ministry also stressed the need to be free of

chronic diseases, should be in the 18-65 age group and vaccinated against Covid-19.

Last year, the Saudi's authorities announced strict controls for a "limited pilgrimage" to those from within the country, and in numbers that did not exceed 10,000 at the time. In the previous years, it had exceeded two million from inside and outside the country.

The statement stressed that the authorities were keen to provide all the necessary facilities to perform the Haj and Umrah and provided their services during the past ten years to more than 150 million pilgrims.

Summer in full gear, temperature to touch 50°C

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@LAKSHMIOMAN

Dhofar is in the monsoon mood, while the desert and open areas of the Sultanate might touch 50 degree Celsius on Monday and Tuesday.

Monsoon indications are confirmed as Dhofar experiences clear to partly cloudy skies along the coastal area of the governorate and adjoining mountains with an intermittent drizzle with the Arabian Sea churning out four-meter high waves.

The waves are expected to be moderate along the Musandam Governorate coast with a maximum wave height of 2.0 metres and slight along the rest of the Sultanate coasts with a maximum wave height of 1.0 metre.

The temperature is expected to be high in the adjoining areas of the Al Hajar Mountains, desert and the open areas experiencing dryness and hot weather in general.

"Mainly Al Wusta is going to experience hotter weather. Qarn Alam touched 49 degrees Celsius but Monday and Tuesday, it is expected to touch 50 degrees Celsius in the open areas as well," she said. According to the Met

Office official, the increase in temperature is due to the activity of northwest winds starting on Sunday and is expected to continue till Tuesday. This may cause dust to rise in the desert and open areas.

Mainly clear skies and rise in the temperature over the rest of the Sultanate are expected with the chance of convective cloud development and isolated rain over adjoining areas towards afternoon, explained the weather forecaster at Oman Met Office of Civil Aviation Authority.

There is a chance of the late night to early morning low-level clouds along parts of the Arabian Sea coasts.

Along the coastal area of Oman, sea winds will be northeasterly light to moderate during the day and southwesterly fresh along the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea, while over the rest of the Sultanate, it will be northerly to northwesterly light to moderate.

The Met Office has also warned about strong winds and hail during thundershowers, reduced horizontal visibility during thundershowers and fog patches, and well flash floods are expected over mountain areas.



Salalah hotels looking for ways to fix hospitality gaps

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

The hospitality sector is not yet clear which way to go even though the Khareef season is knocking Salalah. The pandemic has hit the industry so hard that the operators are waiting to see some silver lining that can sustain them.

Some hoteliers are pinning hopes on vaccination, while others are hopeful of domestic tourism to open in the current situation and scorching heat that the country is witnessing.

"Let it start even with domestic tourists," said most of the hospitality managers.

Mehmet Tunç Müstecaplıoğlu, Area General Manager, Marina Town, Salalah, expressed full faith in the system and said, "It all depends on the country's stand on the Covid-19 situation. We believe Omani authorities are



doing everything they can and more to ensure they can review all economies, including ours."

He, however, said that the pandemic has forced the hospitality sector to think out of the box, prepare for any scenario and be ready to welcome guests even with shorter notice than before.

"The same applies to Khareef. It's a season that brings joy to the locals and the surrounding

population. We take pride in welcoming travellers in Salalah."

Commenting on the pandemic challenges that his hotels – Salalah Rotana, Fanar Hotel and Residences, Juweira boutique hotel – are facing, Müstecaplıoğlu said, "Our challenges in Oman are not drastically different from the rest of the world. With the current rate of vaccinations in Oman and our source markets in Europe, we are confident that we are moving

in the right direction. We have learnt in the last one year that the situation may evolve differently at any time with short notice."

He, however, assured that the facilities were ready for everything and anytime to operate.

Manuel Levonian, General Manager of Crowne Plaza Salalah Resort, has hopes from this year's Khareef due to the vaccination campaign going on a full scale in the country.

"Khareef this year is expected to bring back better tourist traffic to Salalah. The city is ready to offer relief to people facing scorching heat in the North of Oman."

He assured the best possible health and hygiene to guests and colleagues to ensure that all guests stay in a safe and secure atmosphere while enjoying their stay activities at the resort.

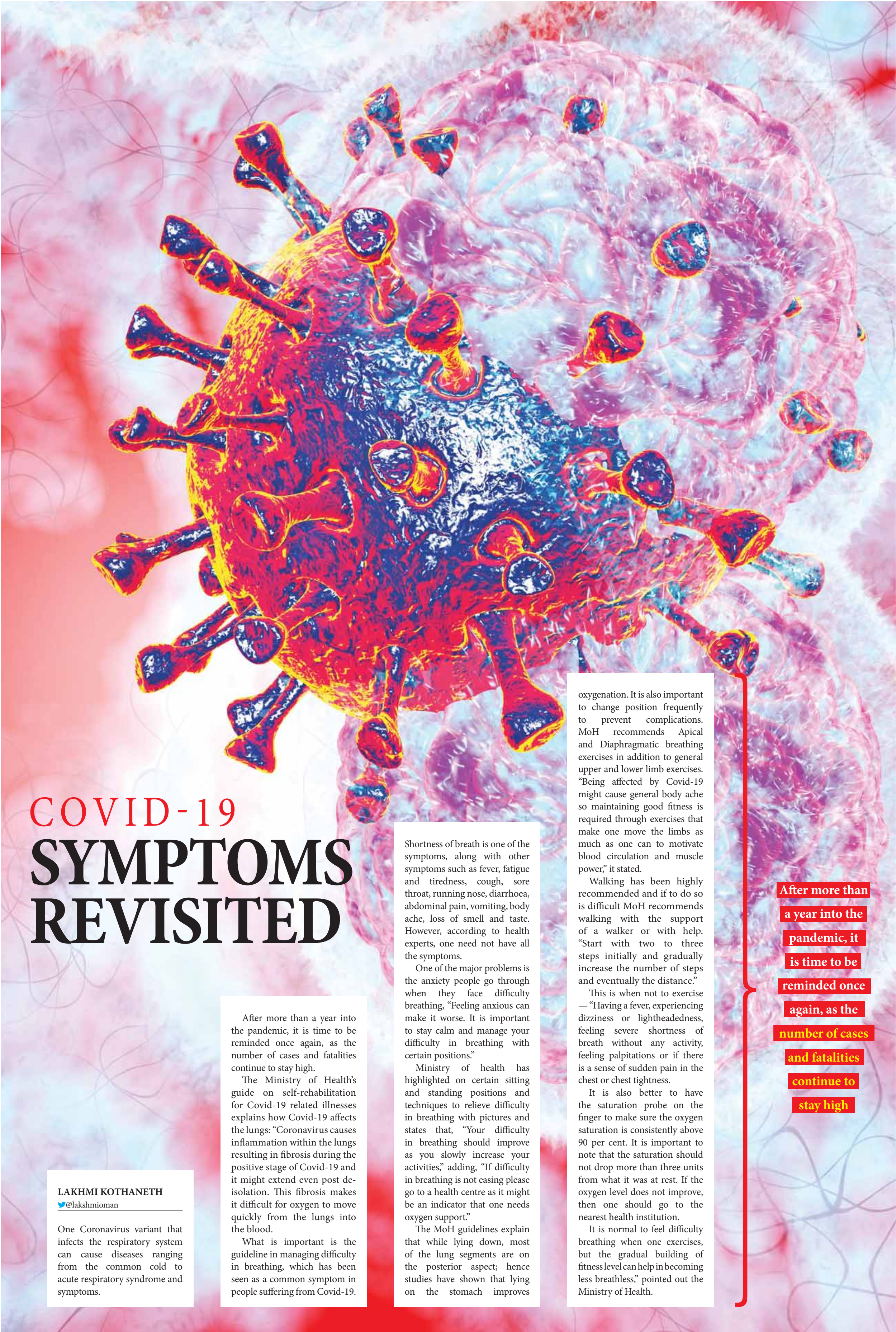
"We should ensure that everyone follows the instructions

of the Supreme Committee on Covid-19 with absolute diligence and adherence to the hygiene practices. That will help us to overcome these tough times whilst enjoying the beauty of Salalah in Khareef," he said.

He hinted at lucrative packages for Khareef and called upon prospective guests to avail of them, as they have been drafted to attract visitors in the current situation.

Ahmed Massoud, General Manager, Hilton Salalah Resort, called for some direction to boost the economy and opening of the tourism sector gradually.

"Some bold decision needs to be taken for Khareef season as all the stakeholders should come together and take a collective call to boost the sector," he said and added that there should not be any compromise on precautions, health and safety measures.



COVID-19 SYMPTOMS REVISITED

LAKHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

One Coronavirus variant that infects the respiratory system can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndrome and symptoms.

After more than a year into the pandemic, it is time to be reminded once again, as the number of cases and fatalities continue to stay high.

The Ministry of Health's guide on self-rehabilitation for Covid-19 related illnesses explains how Covid-19 affects the lungs: "Coronavirus causes inflammation within the lungs resulting in fibrosis during the positive stage of Covid-19 and it might extend even post de-isolation. This fibrosis makes it difficult for oxygen to move quickly from the lungs into the blood.

What is important is the guideline in managing difficulty in breathing, which has been seen as a common symptom in people suffering from Covid-19.

Shortness of breath is one of the symptoms, along with other symptoms such as fever, fatigue and tiredness, cough, sore throat, running nose, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting, body ache, loss of smell and taste. However, according to health experts, one need not have all the symptoms.

One of the major problems is the anxiety people go through when they face difficulty breathing, "Feeling anxious can make it worse. It is important to stay calm and manage your difficulty in breathing with certain positions."

Ministry of health has highlighted on certain sitting and standing positions and techniques to relieve difficulty in breathing with pictures and states that, "Your difficulty in breathing should improve as you slowly increase your activities," adding, "If difficulty in breathing is not easing please go to a health centre as it might be an indicator that one needs oxygen support."

The MoH guidelines explain that while lying down, most of the lung segments are on the posterior aspect; hence studies have shown that lying on the stomach improves

oxygenation. It is also important to change position frequently to prevent complications. MoH recommends Apical and Diaphragmatic breathing exercises in addition to general upper and lower limb exercises. "Being affected by Covid-19 might cause general body ache so maintaining good fitness is required through exercises that make one move the limbs as much as one can to motivate blood circulation and muscle power," it stated.

Walking has been highly recommended and if to do so is difficult MoH recommends walking with the support of a walker or with help. "Start with two to three steps initially and gradually increase the number of steps and eventually the distance."

This is when not to exercise — "Having a fever, experiencing dizziness or lightheadedness, feeling severe shortness of breath without any activity, feeling palpitations or if there is a sense of sudden pain in the chest or chest tightness.

It is also better to have the saturation probe on the finger to make sure the oxygen saturation is consistently above 90 per cent. It is important to note that the saturation should not drop more than three units from what it was at rest. If the oxygen level does not improve, then one should go to the nearest health institution.

It is normal to feel difficulty breathing when one exercises, but the gradual building of fitness level can help in becoming less breathless," pointed out the Ministry of Health.

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UTAS-Nizwa webinar promotes enhanced IT, cyber awareness

RAY PETERSEN
NIZWA, JUNE 13

Salim al Sueili of UTAS-Nizwa confirmed that in a continuation of the ongoing UTAS-Nizwa SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WEBINARS 2021, The Department of Information Technology conducted a Virtual Research Forum on “Computing Research in Time of Pandemic — CRiToP 2021”, to explore emerging research and current trends.



Dr Ahmed al Shahri, Dean, UTAS-Nizwa

Dr Ahmed al Shahri, Dean, UTAS-Nizwa, heartily welcomed speakers, guests and participants, their ideas and contributions to the webinar, as did Dr Duhai al Shukaili, the Webinar Chairman.

Dr Nasser al Zeidi from Sultan Qaboos University spoke of the necessity of workload migration supporting Time-Critical Fog Applications, and the importance of functionality of devices with computational intelligence and integration over networks, that lead to smart devices with consequential impact on the future of smart cities, and security systems.

Dr Haitham al Hajri, a Cyber Security Specialist, discussed the Impact of Pandemic on Digital Societies highlighting the rise of smart cybercrimes associated with the pandemic. He also mentioned the importance of the research and development during the pandemic.

Dr Issa bin Nasser al Ghatrifi highlighted the necessity of decision-making abilities, planning, transition, readiness on security, and training requirements for implementation.

Maha al Anquodi highlighted the use of online learning and the increasing number of students in online education and explained course capabilities and their correlation with student's performance using text-mining, similarity measurement, patterns and other prediction models and methods, and Dr Rolando M Lontok Jr presented on efficacy of portable laboratories in implementing immersive virtual reality as a teaching-learning model. CRiToP 2021, in summary, highlighted the necessity of research, reducing impact, and adding further benefits to stakeholders during the pandemic. UTAS-Nizwa webinars will continue with its fourth event on June 16 by the English Language Centre.

Omantel successfully tests enhanced 5G

Testing the 5G implemented in association with Ericsson has demonstrated great network capabilities for 5G

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

Omantel has successfully tested the 5G High Band at its headquarters in Madinat al Irfan under the supervision of TRA. The 5G test using the mmWave, which successfully concluded recently in association with Ericsson, demonstrated enhanced network capabilities with mmWave bandwidth more than multiple times higher than existing 5G speed.

The trial demonstrated Omantel's ability to deliver multi-gigabit speeds to end-user with eight cell carrier aggregation functionalities using Ericsson's state-of-the-art Street macro mm Wave solution and advanced 5G software features. The trial used a carrier bandwidth of 800MHz at 26GHz.

Omantel successful 5G test paves the way for enhanced 5G capabilities for consumers and businesses across the Sultanate. The next step may see 5G greatly enhances user experience at mobile broadband hotspots when using the fixed and mobile internet especially in crowded spaces such as during festivals and events. The technology will also enable low-latency industry applications like Augmented Reality (AR), its applications, robots and other future technologies.

Dr Ali al Hashmi General Manager of Networks at Omantel said, “mmWave 5G technology is a cornerstone of upcoming 5G



networks, allowing for faster data speeds and much higher bandwidth than ever before. The success of 5G test with Ericsson paves the way for many more applications as 5G has opened up possibilities of newer, smarter solutions in every area of daily life and business. Omantel is happy to have partnered with Ericsson for this and look forward to exciting new applications as Oman Vision 2040 opens a new chapter in Oman's ICT landscape.”

Abdullah al Balushi, Country Manager of Ericsson Oman, says: “5G is ready to transform industries and society. Omantel will enjoy a boost in capacity and multi-gigabit speeds over-the-air with fixed wireless access. Ericsson's millimeter wave technology supports Omantel in achieving record-breaking peak data rates and massive 5G capacity paving the way to enable Oman Vision 2040.”

The last few years have seen Omantel emerge as the leader in 5G network capabilities. Several live field

trials, followed by the introduction of Massive MIMO technology in some governorates of Oman to bring high-speed cross-network data transmission for its subscribers laid the groundwork for the official launch of fixed wireless 5G services in Oman in late 2019, followed by 5G for mobile in 2021.

The field experiments, first conducted in November 2017 at the Omantel headquarters, focused on testing the technology's capabilities on the ground in terms of readiness, speed and response. Based on the success of these live trials, which were also conducted in economically strategic areas like Duqm and Sohar, Omantel eventually went ahead with offering the power of this technology to its subscribers.

The results of these trials underscored Omantel 5G network's reliability and the benefits it will add to the Fourth Industrial Revolution through technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things.

TMTA, NHI Oman sign MoU

MUSCAT: The Trident Manor Training Academy (TMTA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Hospitality Institute of Oman (NHI).



Robert MacLean

TMTA will collaborate with NHI in the creation, development and delivery of a wide range of security, risk, and crisis management programmes for the hospitality and other sectors based in the Sultanate and who are seeking effective measures to protect their assets. Some of these programmes included CPD accredited are Situational Awareness Programmes, Security Induction Programme, Train the Trainer Programme, Supervisor Development Programme, Personal safety and Security Workshop — Lone workers, Emergency Response Driving Programme (RoSPA approved) and VIP Defensive Driving Programme.

TMTA is an independent academy with staff having decades of experience in the delivery of risk, security and crisis management programmes to global clients, across multiple sectors. Its training programmes have been delivered to more than 3,000 attendees. Andy Davis, Managing Director, TMTA, says: “I am extremely pleased to collaborate with the NHI as it represents an important step in helping Oman based businesses protect their assets, be they tangible (customers, colleagues or venues) or intangible (reputation, brand).”

Robert MacLean, Principal, NHI, says, “We are keen in developing and maintaining professional standards and ethical guidelines for the performance of protection-related services. For this reason, we look forward to collaborating with TMTA in order to benefit all our students, and for sharing industry best practices and expanded outreach and experiences.”

The NHI is the leading provider of quality vocational training for the hospitality, catering and travel industries in the Gulf region. Located in Muscat, NHI operates with the clear intent of providing the most comprehensive and professional training possible.



Andy Davis

Mwasalat ferries over 210,000 passengers

MASIRAH: The Mwasalat Ferries service between the Wilayat of Masirah and Shannah Port contributes in facilitating the transportation of tourists and citizens. It also boosts the economic activities and services.

Through its ferry service, Mwasalat has transported passengers, cargo and vehicles to and from Masirah since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic till the end of the first quarter of 2021. During the aforesaid period, Mwasalat transported more than 210,000 passengers and 65,000 vehicles and trucks through which

more than 9,100 tonnes of cargo were transported.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic on public transportation services in the Sultanate, Mwasalat was keen on sustaining its operations on the Shannah-Masirah route, and in operating more than 2,800 trips.

Mwasalat affirms that it provides its services in a safe and healthy environment by adhering to precautionary measures as per the requirements issued by departments concerned in tackling the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. — ONA



Oman takes part in food safety meeting



MUSCAT: The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources participated in the 5th meeting of the GCC Preparatory

Committee on Food Safety and Quality on Sunday.

The Sultanate was represented in the virtual meeting by Dr Ahmed bin Nasser

al Bakri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The meeting discussed several topics on food safety and quality. — ONA



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

TENDERS NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders :-

Tender No.	Description	Tender Documents Price (R.O)	Class	Last Date for Collection of Documents	Last Date for Submission of Documents
191/2021/MAFWR/HQ-22	Rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings belonging to the General Directorate of Agriculture Wealth and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate	25/-	Third	Sunday 27-06-2021	Monday 19-07-2021
193/2021/MAFWR/HQ-23	Rehabilitation and maintenance of villas in the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources in the Governorate of South Al Batinah	25/-	Third	Monday 28-06-2021	Monday 19-07-2021
508/2020/MAF/HQ-50 (Retender)	The Development of the fishermen marina in Khor Al Hajar (Ras Al Hadd)	25/-	Excellent	Monday 28-06-2021	Monday 19-07-2021

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+968 24166670** or etenderhd@ita.gov.om
- Note: Bid Submission will be online only. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
 Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

No nuclear deal this week, says Iran negotiator

VIENNA: Iran's chief negotiator at international talks on its nuclear programme said late on Saturday he did not think they could conclude this week, ahead of the country's June 18 presidential election.

Russia's representative at the talks made a similar point after emerging from talks in the Austrian capital Vienna, saying a few more weeks were required to finalise the existing text, according to a statement on Twitter. "Personally, I don't think that we can manage to reach a conclusion this week," Iran's Abbas Aragchi told the Iranian state broadcaster after the sixth round of talks resumed in Vienna.

Iranians will vote on June 18 to elect a successor to President Hassan Rouhani, who has served the maximum two consecutive four-year terms allowed by the constitution.

Several analysts have already said it was unlikely any deal would be concluded before the election was over.

Representatives from Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and Iran are meeting in Vienna to bring the US back to the Iran nuclear deal and Tehran back into compliance with it.

The 2015 landmark accord has



Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, leaves a meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in Vienna. — Reuters

been hanging by a thread since US President Donald Trump took the United States out of the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions. That led Tehran to step up its nuclear activities, long curtailed by the deal.

US President Joe Biden has indicated a willingness to rejoin the agreement once it is sure Iran is willing to respect its commitments.

Negotiators from the US are taking part indirectly in the EU-chaired discussions in Vienna.

Reuters reports that the sixth

Several analysts have already said it was unlikely any deal would be concluded before the Iranian election was over

round of talks began as usual with a meeting of remaining parties to the deal — Iran, Russia, China, France, Britain, Germany and the European Union — in the basement of a luxury hotel.

The US delegation to the talks, known as the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is based in a hotel



The ambassador of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, Wang Qun, talks to the media after a meeting in Vienna. — Reuters

across the street as Iran refuses face-to-face meetings.

The talks' chief coordinator, EU foreign policy official Enrique Mora, who is leading the shuttle diplomacy between Iran and the United States, has said he expects a deal in this round of talks. Other envoys, however, are more cautious, saying many difficult

issues are yet to be resolved.

"We are making progress but the negotiations are intense and a number of issues (remain), including on how steps are to be implemented," an EU spokesman said in a statement to reporters, adding that the aim was "to find ways to get very close to a final agreement in the coming days."

The top Iranian negotiator, Abbas Aragchi, suggested it was unlikely the talks would conclude before Iran's presidential election on Friday.

"I don't think we will be able to reach a final conclusion in Vienna this week," Iranian state media quoted Araqchi as saying.

The deal, or JCPOA, imposed strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities designed to extend the time Tehran would need to obtain enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, if it chose to, to at least a year from two to three months.

Iran denies ever pursuing nuclear weapons, saying its aims are solely peaceful.

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the deal in 2018 and reimposed economic sanctions lifted by the deal. Iran responded by breaching many of those limits, producing more enriched uranium than allowed and enriching to higher purity levels, recently to near weapons grade.

"Playing for time is in no one's interest," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who is not at the talks, said urging all sides to show flexibility and pragmatism. China's top envoy said the main sticking point was US sanctions. "Our message to them (the United States) is that they should stop shilly-shallying by moving decisively to sanction-lifting," China's ambassador to the UN nuclear watchdog, Wang Qun, told reporters. — AFP/Reuters

Post and present trauma time bomb hangs over coastal city of Gaza

GAZA CITY: Her eyes glued to a cellphone photo of her sister and four children killed in an Israeli strike on Gaza, Ola lets out the painful words: "I was hoping we'd find them alive." The Gaza City resident in her 30s wipes away tears as she stands before a psychologist from a local organisation.

Ola is one of many Gazans who lost family members during 11 days of Israeli bombardment last month when the local health ministry says 66 Palestinian children and teenagers were killed. From May 10 to May 21, the Israeli army pummelled the Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire by activists of Hamas which rules the coastal enclave that is home to two million people.

One of the strikes devastated the Al Rimal district of Gaza City and demolished the building where Abeer, Ola's sister, lived with her family. Ten hours after the raid, rescue teams miraculously pulled Abeer's husband, Riad, and their eight-year-old daughter, Suzy,



Palestinian boys walk past the destroyed Al Shuruq tower in Gaza City's Al Rimal neighbourhood during the recent confrontations between Hamas and Israel. — AFP

from the rubble.

But Abeer and the couple's four other kids did not survive. "I can't stop thinking about my sister and her children, who might have been alive for hours under the ruins," said Ola Ashkantana, who turned down the offer of anti-anxiety medication.

"I'm in shock. Now I'm afraid of losing my own children." In the next room, Riad holds Suzy on

his knees, as Hassan al Khawaja, a Gazan doctor specialising in mental health, encourages him to try psychotherapy.

"I'm suffocating. I've even thought of going to live alongside them in the cemetery," said Riad, whose family says has hardly spoken since the war tore his loved ones away. "I'm traumatised. How will my feelings and thoughts ever change? I will never again be who

I was before."

Ola and Riad are not alone. The latest Gaza war, the fourth since 2008 in the Israeli-besieged territory, saw some 1,000 apartments, offices and businesses destroyed. But the few psychiatrists and psychologists in the enclave know that rebuilding will have to go far beyond physical reconstruction.

"It's not the first time that we have a war in Gaza," said Khawaja, who says much of the population suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. "We have to work on multiple traumas."

"I expect a PTSD crisis in the coming months," he said, explaining that with each new trauma and war, many Gazans faces relapses and acute stress disorder, with symptoms including shock and denial. If such stress is not addressed quickly, it can progress into PTSD — meaning the work of mental health care teams is vital in the coming months to prevent an explosion of cases. — AFP

Algerian parliamentary poll results expected soon

ALGIERS: The results of an Algerian parliamentary election in which fewer than a third of voters took part will be announced within a few days, the head of the voting authority said late on Saturday.

The ruling establishment has tried to use elections along with a crackdown on dissent as a way to end two years of political unrest, with Algeria facing a looming economic crisis.

Supporters of the 'Hirak' mass protest movement said it showed the system lacked legitimacy. Two prominent journalists, Khaled Drareni and Ihsane El Kadi, and the opposition figure Karim Tabbou, were detained last week but released on Saturday.

Politicians said the turnout of 30.2 per cent, the lowest ever officially recorded for a parliamentary election in Algeria, was "acceptable".

"The election took place in good conditions. Voters were able to vote and choose the most suitable candidates to serve Algeria," said election authority head Mohamed Chorfi on



Algerian elections staff count ballots for parliamentary elections at a polling station in Bouchaoui on the western outskirts of Algiers. — AFP

television.

The protests erupted in 2019 and unseated veteran President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, continuing weekly until the global pandemic struck a year later. After a year-long pause, they resumed in February but police mostly quashed them last month.

Many Algerians believe real power rests with the military and security establishments who have dominated politics for decades, rather than with elected politicians. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BEIRUT

Lebanon currency drops to new low

Lebanon's currency crashed past a milestone reaching a new low against the dollar, as the country's financial meltdown and political deadlock linger. Market dealers said the Lebanese pound was trading at around 15,150 to the dollar, losing around 90 per cent of what it was worth in late 2019, when Lebanon's economic and financial crisis erupted.

Lebanon is in the throes of a deep economic meltdown that is threatening its stability. The World Bank has called it one



of the deepest depressions of modern history. The last time the pound hit a low of 15,000 in March protesters took to the streets across Lebanon for over a week, blocking roads by burning tyres. — Reuters

TUNIS

Clashes after Tunisia demo against police violence

Youths clashed with officers again, hours after a demonstration in the Tunisian capital, Tunis, to protest police violence following the latest death of a man arrested by police. In the working-class district of Sidi Hassine, several dozen young people threw projectiles, including fireworks, at police near the station, a reporter witnessed.

The district has been rocked by angry protests since Tuesday, when the man died after being arrested by police on suspicion of dealing drugs, according to local



media. His family has accused the police of having beaten him to death and the authorities have opened an investigation, but the interior ministry denied that he had died from ill-treatment following his arrest. — AFP

BEIRUT

IRC denounces deadly attack on Syria hospital

The International Rescue Committee condemned the shelling the previous day on the Syrian city of Afrin that put a hospital out of service and killed civilians and medical staff. Saturday's attack on the rebel-held northern town killed at least 21 people, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

"We utterly condemn this deadly attack on Al Shifaa Hospital, one of the largest medical facilities in northern



Syria," said IRC's Syria director Wolfgang Gressmann. "This is the 11th attack on health care that has been recorded so far this year, and brings the total number of verified attacks on health care since January 2019 to 124." — AFP

In brief

■ COLOMBO



LANKA SEEKS \$40M IN DAMAGES OVER SHIP FIRE

Sri Lanka is seeking \$40 million in damages from the operator of a ship that left massive pollution when it caught fire off the country's west coast, officials said. Ports and shipping minister Rohitha Abeygunawardena said an interim claim had been lodged with X-Press Feeders, which controls the Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl. The vessel has been submerged in seas off Colombo since June 2 after burning for almost two weeks and releasing tonnes of plastic raw materials that swamped local beaches. Sri Lankan environmentalists have called it the "worst marine disaster" in the country's history.

■ MANILA



PHILIPPINE TROOPS KILL 4 SUSPECTED MILITANTS

Four suspected militants were killed on Sunday in a shootout with government troops in the southern Philippines, the military said. One of the slain militants was a leader of the notorious Abu Sayyaf terrorist group, identified as Injam Yadah, said Major General William Gonzales, commander of a military anti-terrorism task force. Troops were serving an arrest warrant against Yadah in his house in Jolo town in Sulu province, 1,000 kilometres south of Manila, when the suspects opened fire at them, triggering a firefight. "We've long been on the hunt for Yadah, he has a reputation of being extremely violent — beheading captured innocent civilians and security forces alike," Gonzales said. — dpa

■ JAKARTA



RARE JAVAN RHINO CALVES CAUGHT IN INDONESIAN JUNGLE

Two rare Javan rhino calves were caught on camera in March in an Indonesian national park on the western tip of the island of Java, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry said. In a statement, the ministry said it was the first sighting of the calves of the endangered species that were born this year on the Ujung Kulon National Park peninsula. The camera trap first caught sight of a female rhino calf, whose mother is a rhino named Ambu, in mid-March. This calf is Ambu's second, following the first one that she gave birth to in 2017. The second calf spotted in the video was a male calf estimated to be about 1 year old. He was also spotted in March with his mother, Palasari. — dpa

INDIA HOLDS VACCINATION DRIVE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AHMEDABAD: Authorities in an Indian city have organised a special drive-through vaccination camp for disabled people in a bid to address low vaccination rates, especially among more vulnerable members of society. Organisers of the weekend campaign in Ahmedabad, the biggest city in Gujarat state, aim to vaccinate 500 disabled people, who often struggle to book slots and get access to vaccination centres. People taking advantage of the offer queued up at the centre in vehicles, wheelchairs, and on customised mopeds for their free Covid-19 vaccine shots. "The vaccination process is now more convenient," said Mahendra Chudasma, a 45-year-old man who is visually impaired.



Unique Foundation volunteers assist a physically challenged man during a vaccination drive against the coronavirus at Medica North Bengal cancer hospital some 15 Km from Siliguri. — AFP

"It's a very nice feeling." Despite being a major producer of coronavirus vaccines, India faces a huge task in inoculating its 1.3 billion people, partly due to the logistical difficulties of reaching remote areas and also scepticism about the shots. People with disabilities often face additional problems of being unable to reach vaccination sites due to a lack of transport or no ramps at the centres for easy access, said Bhushan Punani, general secretary of the Blind People's Association in Ahmedabad, one of the organisers of the campaign. Some people have struggled to use a government-mandated smartphone app required to register for shots, he added. — Reuters

Gas blast in China kills 12, rescue operation on



BEIJING: At least 12 people were killed and nearly 140 others injured when a gas line exploded in a residential compound in central China's Hubei province on Sunday, local officials said. Rescue workers are uncertain how many people may still be trapped under the debris, according to a statement from the disaster management bureau in the city of Shiyan. Videos shot by witnesses and verified by Beijing News show several buildings reduced to rubble and rescuers carrying shocked survivors on stretchers. The blast ripped through a vegetable market that was filled with shoppers and people eating breakfast, an eyewitness told state-run Global Times. "I heard a loud bang and immediately ducked under the table, thinking it was an earthquake," a man who owns a small restaurant near the explosion site told the newspaper. State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of buildings with charred walls and shattered

Several survivors told local media that the gas pipeline had fallen into disrepair after the factory was moved last year

windows. Rescuers were seen lifting large slabs to pull out those trapped underneath. The blast occurred in a two-story building that earlier housed a vehicle frame manufacturer. Several survivors told local media that the gas pipeline had fallen into disrepair after the factory was moved last year. "In March, workers from the gas company came and asked whether I got a smell of gas," one survivor who runs a stall in the market told local website Health Times. "After asking around people they just left." The explosion took place at about 6:30 am local time and an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the blast, the statement said.

Around 900 residents in the area have been evacuated as surrounding buildings may have been damaged by the blast, the city government said. About 2,000 rescue workers have been deployed on the site. Images verified by Health Times show a firefighter who was also injured and a fire truck damaged by a second, smaller blast. The severely injured were airlifted to bigger hospitals. Long lines of volunteers were seen outside blood banks as local hospitals put out a call for donors. The Ministry of Emergency Management has also sent a team to assist with the rescue operation. In a rare move, Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a statement urging local officials to "learn profound lessons from the incident" and double down on efforts to prevent such incidents. "All regions and relevant departments must draw lessons from one another... investigate various safety hazards and prevent major emergencies," he said. — AFP

South Korea to exempt some people vaccinated overseas from quarantine

SEOUL: South Korea will exempt some travellers who have received their Covid-19 vaccine shots overseas from its mandatory two-week quarantine starting July 1, health authorities said on Sunday. As of May 5, the quarantine exemption was only applicable to people fully vaccinated in South Korea.

The new policy will apply only to certain people, such as citizens and foreign residents, as well as those coming to visit family, or for the purpose of business, academics or the public interest, said Son Young-rae, an official with the Central Disaster Management Headquarters. Exempt travellers will need to fill out an application, and still need to be tested before and after arriving in South Korea. Some travellers from countries with major outbreaks or variants will not be allowed to skip the quarantine, he added. South Korea reported 452 more cases as of midnight on Saturday, bringing total infections to 147,874, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said.



Exempt travellers will need to fill out an application and still need to be tested before and after arriving in South Korea. — AFP File Photo

The death toll in the country stands at 1,985. Meanwhile, more than 11.8 million people — 23 per cent of the country's population — have received at least one dose of a vaccine, according to the KDCA. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-Yong reaffirmed a commitment between their countries and Japan to work closely toward the "denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula," the State Department said. — Reuters

■ BORIS, MOON HOLD TALKS



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and South Korea's President Moon Jae-in take part in a bilateral meeting at the G7 summit in Carbis bay, Cornwall. — AFP

Cambodia deploys rat recruits to sniff out landmines

PREAH VIHEAR: Cambodia has deployed its next generation of rat recruits to sniff out landmines as part of efforts to boost de-mining operations in a country plagued for decades by unexploded ordinance (UXO). Twenty African giant pouched rats were recently imported from Tanzania and have undergone intense training. "They are all easy to work with and they don't care about who their handlers are," said handler So Malen, during an exercise



Magawa, the recently retired mine detection rat, plays with its previous handler So Malen at the APOPO Visitor Centre in Siem Reap, Cambodia. — Reuters

on Friday for seven recruits in Preah Vihear province, bordering Thailand. "Any one of us can be their handler and most importantly, they don't bite." Scarred by decades of civil war, Cambodia is one of the world's most heavily landmined countries, with more than 1,000 sq km of land still contaminated. It has among the highest number of amputees per capita, with more than 40,000 people

losing limbs to explosives. The new rat batch replaces a recently retired group that includes Magawa, who found 71 landmines and 28 UXO during his five-year career, according to APOPO, an international organisation that specialises in detecting landmines and tuberculosis. Magawa received a gold medal last year from Britain's People's Dispensary for Sick Animals for "lifesaving bravery and devotion to duty". — Reuters

Swiss snub synthetic pesticide ban plan

GENEVA: Switzerland on Sunday rejected proposals that would have made it the first European country to ban synthetic pesticides following a divisive campaign that shattered the idyllic image of peaceful Swiss Alpine pastures.

Voters heeded the government's advice and rejected the two publically-proposed initiatives that would have changed the landscape for Swiss farming.

A double majority of voters and cantons is required to push through popular initiatives and with results declared so far in 22 of the 23 full cantons, a majority in 21 have said no to the plans. The percentage of votes against the proposals was running at 62 per cent.

Meanwhile controversial sweeping new police powers to combat terrorism seem set to pass — despite warnings from the United Nations and Amnesty International — with around 57 per cent of the votes so far approving the new laws.

Under Switzerland's direct democracy system, referendums and popular votes occur every few months at national, regional and local levels.

Any idea from the public can be put to a national vote as long as it gathers 100,000 signatures from the 8.6 million population.

So-called popular initiatives need a double majority to pass.

Meanwhile, 50,000 signatures are needed to trigger a referendum on new laws agreed by parliament. They need a simple majority of votes to pass. No major country



A woman throws an envelope into a box to cast vote in a series of referendums in front of a ballot station at the Stadthaus administration building in Zurich. — Reuters

has so far banned man-made pesticides. Bhutan announced in 2012 that it wanted to become the first nation in the world to turn its home-grown food and farmers 100 per cent organic.

Switzerland's national vote on two anti-pesticide proposals was the culmination of a campaign marked by heated arguments.

Arsonists torched a trailer in the western Vaud canton displaying "No" banners, while "Yes"-backing farmers said they had been the victims of insults, threats and intimidation.

The first popular initiative, entitled "For a Switzerland free

The agricultural initiatives would make raw materials much more expensive, warns the food industry

from synthetic pesticides", called for a domestic ban within 10 years, and the outlawing of imported foodstuffs produced using such pesticides.

Under the second initiative, "For clean drinking water and healthy food", only farms that do not use pesticides and use antibiotics only to treat sick animals would be

eligible for government subsidies.

The amount of liquid manure being used on fields, and thereby potentially entering the water system, would also be limited.

The Swiss government called for a double "No" vote, arguing that the proposals would undermine national food sovereignty.

The new anti-terror laws extend police powers to prevent future attacks, allowing them to take preventative action more easily when faced with a "potential terrorist".

If police believe someone over the age of 12 is contemplating violent actions, the law allows them

to conduct greater surveillance, limit their movements and oblige them to face questioning.

And with a court order, they can also place anyone over the age of 15 under house arrest for up to nine months. The wealthy nation has not seen the large-scale attacks witnessed in its European neighbours, though the authorities insist the threat level is high.

Nils Melzer, the UN special rapporteur on torture, said the government had "clearly misled the Swiss people" as to who the law could be applied to and their likely effectiveness.

"Switzerland will now have the world's most unprofessional, ineffective and dangerous anti-terrorism law — a major embarrassment for Switzerland as a modern democracy," said the expert, who does not speak for the UN but reports his findings to the global body.

Amnesty Switzerland's campaign director Patrick Walder said: "Switzerland is giving itself an imprecise definition of terrorism which opens the door to arbitrary police action."

Some 59 per cent of the votes in so far have backed a Covid-19 law that will extend government emergency powers to fight the pandemic and mitigate its consequences on society and the economy.

The laws regulate financial aid granted to individuals and businesses, including compensation for loss of income, and support for cultural organisations. — AFP

N Ireland political crisis looms again



Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party Edwin Poots and Paul Givan arrive at Government Buildings in Dublin. — Reuters

BELFAST: Irish Republican party Sinn Fein has accused the leader of the pro-British Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Edwin Poots, of acting in "bad faith" over Irish language legislation, a major sticking point in Northern Irish politics.

Sinn Fein said that the nominations of a first minister and deputy first minister at the regional parliament in Stormont this week have to be accompanied by the progression of Irish language legislation.

Sinn Fein's conclusion that they "do not believe" Poots will deliver on the Irish Language Act could spark a political crisis at Stormont.

When the DUP's Arlene Foster formally resigns as first minister on Monday, deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill of Sinn Fein is automatically removed from her post as well — as the joint office can only function if both positions are filled. — dpa

G7 vows action on Covid vaccines and climate change

CARBIS BAY: G7 leaders on Sunday vowed to start delivering one billion doses of Covid vaccines and to step up action on climate change, in a summit call to arms by a revived democratic alliance that also confronted China and Russia.

In a final communique issued at their first physical summit in nearly two years, the leaders of the elite club largely hewed to US President Joe Biden's push to regain the West's cohesion after the tumultuous era of his predecessor Donald Trump.

"We will harness the power of democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights to answer the biggest questions and overcome the greatest challenges," the leaders said.

But the pledge on vaccines for poorer nations fell drastically short of the 11 billion doses that

campaigners say are needed to end a pandemic that has claimed nearly four million lives and wrecked economies around the globe.

"I'm afraid there will be smiles (at the G7) but they are not solutions," former British prime minister Gordon Brown told Sky News, calling the summit "an unforgivable moral failure".

"Millions of people will go unvaccinated and thousands of people I'm afraid will die," said Brown, who helped coordinate international responses to the world's last major economic shock in 2008.

Likewise, the G7's pledges to deliver more aid for countries at the sharp end of climate change, and to phase out fossil fuel investments, were decried as too little, too late ahead of a UN summit in November.

"The G7 have failed to set us



US President Joe Biden and France's President Emmanuel Macron attend a plenary session at the G7 summit in Carbis Bay, Cornwall. — AFP

up for a successful COP26 as trust is sorely lacking between rich and developing countries,"

said Greenpeace International executive director Jennifer Morgan.

"We need authentic leadership and that means treating the pandemic and the climate crisis for what they are: an interconnected inequality emergency," she said.

Nevertheless, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the summit's host, said the G7 wanted to "drive a global Green Industrial Revolution to transform the way we live".

"There is a direct relationship between reducing emissions, restoring nature, creating jobs and ensuring long-term economic growth," he said. Johnson also touted a G7 pledge to get 40 million more girls into schools over the next five years, as part of the post-pandemic reconstruction. A White House official agreed the three-day gathering in Cornwall, southwest England, had been an "unusually substantive and productive G7".

Angela Merkel, attending her

last G7 as German chancellor, said Biden had brought "new momentum" to efforts to tackle the world's problems.

India and South Africa, who took part in the G7 talks as guests, had pressed for the gathering to waive intellectual property rights on Western vaccines. But Britain and Germany were notable holdouts on that.

Campaigners also complained the G7 had failed to flesh out how it will pay for a newly agreed "Nature Compact" — to protect 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans from despoliation by 2030.

The leaders committed to nearly halve their carbon emissions by 2030, relative to 2010, and to phase out the use of "unabated coal" — fuel whose emissions have not gone through any filtering — "as soon as possible".

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

MOSCOW

Russia's new Covid cases rise to highest since Feb

Russia on Sunday reported 14,723 new Covid-19 cases, including 7,704 in Moscow, the largest one-day national caseload since February 13. The number of new infections in Moscow was the most reported in one day since December 24. The city's mayor told residents on Saturday to stay off work this coming week to curb the spread of the virus. The coronavirus task force said on Sunday that 357 people had died of coronavirus-related causes nationwide, taking the death toll



to 126,430. The federal statistics agency has kept a separate toll and has said that Russia recorded about 270,000 deaths related to Covid-19 between April 2020 and April 2021. — Reuters

FRANKFURT

Germany's Laschet vows to raise military spending

Germany must increase military spending and take on a greater share of military burdens within Nato, the conservative candidate to succeed Angela Merkel as chancellor said in a newspaper interview. Heads of state within the 30-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato) will meet in Brussels on Monday and discuss the path to follow against challenges such as China, Russia and cyber threats.

Laschet (pictured), backed by Merkel's conservatives to run for



chancellor at the September 26 election, said he would ensure that Germany, Europe's largest economy, meets the alliance's spending target of 2 per cent of gross domestic product. — AFP

PARIS

Oil slick off Corsica appears to be moving away

An enormous oil slick off the coast of Corsica had authorities on edge over the weekend, but they were able to give a cautious all-clear for the island on Sunday as the pollution appeared to be moving away, according to broadcaster FranceInfo.

The roughly 35-kilometre-long oil slick was first discovered off Corsica's eastern coast on Friday. "Our teams were able to recover three to four tonnes of oil yesterday and will continue working today," said the



spokesperson of the responsible prefecture, Christine Ribbe.

Access to some beaches around the Aleria area had been banned as a precaution due to the spill. — dpa

Israel ‘change’ coalition poised for vote to end Netanyahu era

MAGGY DONALDSON

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday faced the likely end of his 12-year rule as a parliament vote loomed in which a fragile “change” coalition hoped to oust him and form a new government.

Beloved as “King Bibi” by his right-wing supporters and condemned as the “crime minister” by his critics, the hawkish Netanyahu has long been the dominant and increasingly divisive, figure in Israeli politics.

If the fragile eight-party alliance wins a razor-thin majority in the 120-seat Knesset, Netanyahu, 71, will be replaced as premier by his one-time ally Naftali Bennett, a right-wing Jewish nationalist and former tech millionaire. In a speech to the Knesset, interrupted by raucous boos, Bennett promised the new government, a motley coalition of ideologically divergent parties, would “represents all of Israel”. He also vowed it would keep Israel safe.

The diverse anti-Netanyahu bloc was cobbled together by the secular centrist Yair Lapid, a former TV presenter and includes right-wing and

IF THE FRAGILE ALLIANCE WINS A RAZOR-THIN MAJORITY IN THE 120-SEAT KNESSET, NETANYAHU, WILL BE REPLACED AS PREMIER BY HIS ONE-TIME ALLY NAFTALI BENNETT

left-wing groups as well as Arab-Israeli lawmakers. The upcoming crunch vote will either end Netanyahu’s record time in office or, in case of a last-minute upset, return Israel to a stalemate likely to trigger a fifth general election.

“A morning of change”, promised a Sunday tweet by Lapid, who would serve as foreign minister under the coalition deal before taking over the premiership in 2023, provided the wobbly alliance survives that long.

Netanyahu meanwhile tweeted a photo of himself with a message to supporters that said: “Love you, thanks!”

Netanyahu, who is battling corruption charges in an ongoing trial he dismisses as a conspiracy, has been the dominant Israeli politician of his generation, having also served a previous three-year term in the 1990s.

Thousands of protesters rallied outside his official residence late on Saturday, waving “Bye Bibi” signs and celebrating what they hope will be his departure from office.

“I am almost crying”, said one protester, Ofir Robinski, outside the prime minister’s residence. “We fought

peacefully for this, and the day has come.”

The anti-Netanyahu bloc spans the political spectrum, including three right-wing, two centrist and two left-wing parties, along with an Arab party.

The improbable alliance emerged two weeks after an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas, and following inter-communal violence in Israeli cities with significant Arab populations.

“We will work together, out of partnership and national responsibility — and I believe we will succeed”, Bennett, a former defence minister under Netanyahu, said last Friday, vowing to “end two and a half years of political crisis”.

Netanyahu, who long ago earned a reputation as Israel’s ultimate political survivor, has meanwhile tried to peel off defectors that would deprive the nascent coalition of its wafer-thin legislative majority.

He has accused Bennett of “fraud” for siding with rivals, and angry rallies by the premier’s Likud party supporters have resulted in security being bolstered for some lawmakers. — AFP

LIMITED IMPACT

G7’s vaccine plan counts some past pledges

CARL O’DONNELL AND ALLISON MARTELL

A G7 plan to donate one billion Covid-19 vaccine doses to poorer countries will have limited impact because it includes some previous pledges, but it still offers a small lifeline to a global vaccine buying system, some experts said.

Leaders from the Group of Seven major economies announced the move on Friday. A US initiative announced on Thursday to donate 500 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech SE vaccine is part of the G7 pledge.

Many of the promised doses will flow through Covax, a global vaccine buying system backed by the World Health Organization and Gavi, the vaccine alliance. The pledge does not represent entirely new resources, and the donation is far short of the 5 billion to 6 billion shots needed by poorer nations. Moreover, the plan does not address distribution gaps that could make it difficult to deliver doses.

But experts said it is still a much-needed boost to Covax, which has so far only distributed 83 million shots worldwide. Covax has struggled to secure deliveries as wealthy nations reserve enough shots to vaccinate their

populations several times over.

“It’s going to rescue Covax from its pretty dire predicament right now, so it’s a very significant step”, said Stephen Morrison, the Director of the Global Health Policy Center at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think-

STEPHEN MORRISON
A think-tank

tank. The United Kingdom’s 100 million dose pledge is “entirely new” according to a spokesperson. But the European Union’s 100 million dose commitment was promised during a summit in May, and the US commitment partially replaces earlier promises to fund Covax directly.

The United States has already donated \$2 billion to Covax, according to a White House official. In February, the Biden administration pledged \$2 billion more. But that second \$2 billion will now fund the purchase of the Pfizer doses, along with \$1.5 billion in additional funds, according to the official.

Even if the shots are acquired and shipped, they risk overwhelming developing countries’ limited distribution infrastructure, especially if many are delivered together late this year.

The World Bank extended a \$12 billion line of credit for developing countries to build out vaccine distribution infrastructure, but governments have drawn down only about \$3 billion. “The low-income countries are wary of increasing their debt profile, that is the reality”, said Edwin Ikhuoria, Executive Director for the ONE Campaign, a nonprofit focused on poverty and public health.

Others argue that wealthy countries should find a way to ship doses more quickly, especially as some near expiry in countries with high vaccination rates, including those made by Johnson & Johnson Inc.

“When you just see the graph of the increase of vaccination coverage in wealthy countries and the accelerated pace at which that has been happening, and then when you look at the pace in developing countries, it’s just so stark”, said Kate Elder, senior vaccines policy adviser at Médecins Sans Frontières. “Doses are needed now.” — Reuters

CRISIS MULTIPLIER

With Trump gone, Nato wages war on climate threat

ROBIN EMMOTT AND SABINE SIEBOLD

If the US military were a nation state, it would be the world’s 47th largest emitter of planet-warming greenhouse gases, a 2019 study found. Though the British universities of Lancaster and Durham took account only of emissions from fuel usage in their study, it pointed to the huge impact that armed forces across the globe are having on the earth’s climate.

Facing a battle against global warming, Nato has for the first time made it a central focus of planning and strategy.

Leaders of the Western military alliance are set on Monday to agree on a climate action plan to make their armed forces carbon-neutral by 2050, and to adapt to threats posed by global warming.

Nato diplomats say efforts to focus on climate change were stymied during Donald Trump’s US presidency. He called climate change a “hoax” and pulled the United States out of the international Paris Agreement to fight climate change.

Trump also expressed a lack of trust in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and in 2018 threatened to withdraw the United States from the alliance formed in 1949 to contain a Soviet military threat.

Now, with US President Joe Biden prioritising climate action, the diplomats said Nato was able to act on concerns that climate change is a threat both to transatlantic security and to alliance personnel.

“This is a defining challenge of our



A protester demonstrates against the Nato leaders summit in Brussels, Belgium, on Sunday. – Reuters

FACING A BATTLE AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING, NATO HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME MADE IT A CENTRAL FOCUS OF PLANNING AND STRATEGY

time, and we must be an organisation that leads on it”, a senior European Nato diplomat said.

Nato member states’ militaries have long been aware that climate change will have huge security implications, expected to include increased migration, flooding at coastal Nato bases and a larger Russian presence in the Arctic as sea ice melts. But, to reduce their own climate-warming emissions from fossil fuel use, the member states require reform at the centre of the alliance because Nato sets fuel standards across the organisation.

By committing to eliminate its net CO2 emissions by 2050, Nato’s action plan would align the organisation with the pathway to deliver the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Meeting that goal will mean reducing military emissions that are often exempted from countries’ carbon emissions targets — no mean feat for the US Department of Defence, the world’s single largest consumer of petroleum, according to research in 2019 by Neta Crawford at Boston University. — Reuters

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Djokovic makes history with 19th Grand Slam title

Serbian becomes the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice

PARIS: Novak Djokovic claimed a 19th Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in a gripping French Open final on Sunday.

The world number one triumphed 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 over the Greek 22-year-old who was playing in his first Slam final.

Djokovic is now just one major away from equalling the all-time record of 20, jointly held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

It was a second French Open crown for Djokovic after his 2016 victory and adds to his nine Australian Opens, five

Wimbledon titles and three at the US Open.

The 34-year-old is the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Slams on multiple occasions and just the third in history.

He is also the first man ever to win a Slam title by twice coming back from two sets down in same the tournament.

Djokovic now has 84 career titles in total while Sunday's win pushed him to the brink of \$150 million in prize money.

"It was an electric atmosphere," said Djokovic after the four-hour 11-minute final.

"It's a dream. It's difficult to win the title against a great player. It was a difficult three days physically and mentally."

Djokovic had also spent more than four hours on court on Friday to knock out defending champion Rafael Nadal.

Tsitsipas survived a nervy opening service game, having to save two break points.

Djokovic, by contrast, didn't concede a point in his first three service games.

But suddenly he faced a set point in the 10th game courtesy of an ugly shank but saved it after a 26-shot rally.

Fired up by a time violation, Djokovic broke for the first time for a 6-5 lead but was unable to serve out the opener as a series of razor-sharp returns put Tsitsipas back on level terms.

In a dramatic tiebreaker, Tsitsipas saw a 4/0 and 5/2 lead

“

It's a dream. It's difficult to win the title against a great player. It was a difficult three days physically and mentally

NOVAK DJOKOVIC
World No 1

disappear.

He had to save a set point before claiming the opener after 70 minutes when Djokovic fired a forehand wide.

Dropping the opening set at this year's Roland Garros was familiar territory for Djokovic.

He had to recover from two sets down to beat Lorenzo Musetti in the last 16 and lost the opener against Nadal on Friday.

Tsitsipas, 12 years the world number one's junior, broke again in the first game of the second set as the 2016 champion looked increasingly weary in the 30-degree afternoon heat.

The Greek edged ahead 5-2 and pocketed the second set with his eighth ace of the contest.

But the top seed wasn't

finished, breaking in the fourth game of the third set to cut the deficit.

Tsitsipas then called the trainer to treat a back problem which also gave him the opportunity to change the clay-covered shirt he'd worn since a first set tumble.

Thirty minutes later, it was two sets apiece after Djokovic secured a double break.

As the shadows swept across Court Philippe Chatrier, Tsitsipas' mood also darkened as he slipped 3-1 down in the decider.

As the clock ticked past four hours, he fought off two more break points in the seventh game but Djokovic was not to be denied his latest slice of history taking the glory on his second championship point. — AFP

New Zealand thrash England to seal series

VICTORY GAVE NEW ZEALAND JUST A THIRD WIN IN 18 TEST SERIES IN ENGLAND



New Zealand's Tom Latham and teammates celebrate winning the Test series against England. – Reuters

SCOREBOARD

England 1st Innings	303
New Zealand 1st Innings	388
England 2nd Innings	
R Burns c Latham b Henry	0
D Sibley c Mitchell b Henry	8
Z Crawley lbw Henry	17
J Root c Blundell b Patel	11
O Pope lbw Wagner	23
D Lawrence c Blundell b Wagner	0
J Bracey b Patel	8
O Stone c Blundell b Wagner	15
M Wood c Blundell b Wagner	29
S Broad b Boulton	1
J Anderson not out	0
Extras (b5, lb4, nb1)	10
Total (all out, 41.1 overs, 179 mins)	122
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-17, 3-30, 4-58, 5-58, 6-71, 7-76, 8-120, 9-121	
Bowling: Henry 12-2-36-3, Boulton 10.1-2-34-2, Wagner 10.1-18-3, Patel 9-4-25-2	
New Zealand 2nd Innings	
T Latham not out	23
D Conway c Bracey b Broad	3
W Young b Stone	8
R Taylor not out	0
Extras (b4, nb2, w1)	7
Total (2 wks, 10.5 overs, 51 mins)	41
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-33	
Bowling: Anderson 5-1-11-0, Broad 4-1-13-1, Stone 1-0-5-1, Wood 0.5-0-8-0	

BIRMINGHAM, United Kingdom: New Zealand overpowered England by eight wickets in the second Test at Edgbaston on Sunday as they sealed a 1-0 series win with more than a day to spare.

Set a target of just 38 after England tail-ender Olly Stone was out to the very first ball of the fourth day, the Blackcaps finished on 41-2.

Tom Latham, captaining the team in place of the injured Kane Williamson, hit the winning boundary to be 23 not out after the first Test of a two-match series at Lord's last week ended in a draw.

Victory gave New Zealand just a third win in 18 Test series in England, and a first this century after their 1986 and 1999 triumphs. And it means they will head

into next week's inaugural World Test Championship final against India at Southampton in confident mood.

"It's great to get an extra day of rest before India but we'll celebrate as well — we've not won here since 1999 so it's important to celebrate those achievements," said Latham at the presentation ceremony.

By contrast, this was England's first series loss at home since a 2014 defeat by Sri Lanka.

'MASSIVELY UNDER-PERFORMED'

"It hasn't been our best week, has it?" England captain Joe Root told BBC Radio after his side came into this match missing Ollie Robinson, with the Sussex seamer suspended after a promising on-field Test debut at Lord's for historic racist



New Zealand's Ajaz Patel celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of England's Joe Root. – Reuters

and sexist Twitter posts.

"I think we've massively under-performed. Credit to New Zealand, they have outperformed

us throughout the game."

A lively crowd at a sun-drenched Edgbaston roared James Anderson, making an England

record 162nd Test appearance, onto the field when the No 11 walked out to bat with Stone and again when he opened the bowling.

But it was long-standing new-ball partner Stuart Broad who took the first New Zealand wicket to fall on Sunday when he had Blackcaps player of the series Devon Conway caught behind for three.

New Zealand were in sight of victory when Will Young was bowled by Olly Stone.

Latham then ended the match courtesy of a four down to third man off fast bowler Mark Wood as New Zealand reached their target in 10.5 overs, with only 52 minutes play on Sunday needed to wrap up the match.

England resumed on the brink of defeat at 122-9 in their second innings, a lead of just 37 runs, after

slumping to 76-7 on Saturday.

Stone then fell for his overnight 15 when caught behind off left-arm quick Trent Boult.

Matt Henry, one of an extraordinary six changes to the New Zealand side that played at Lord's, took the first three wickets to fall in a return of 3-36, with Neil Wagner following up with 3-1

Such is the Blackcaps' strength in depth, however, that either bowler could be replaced by the rested Tim Southee in the WTC final. Henry was named player of the match following overall figures of 6-114. "It's pretty easy to get motivated to play for your country," said fast bowler Henry. "We've had a strong squad for a while and every time you get the opportunity you want to do your best." — AFP

Moore heads in to snatch point for Wales against Swiss

BAKU: Striker Kieffer Moore headed in an equaliser from one of Wales' few chances as the surprise 2016 semi-finalists snatched a 1-1 draw against wasteful Switzerland in their European Championship Group A clash at the Baku Olympic Stadium on Saturday.

Moore, who had a first half opportunity saved by Swiss goalkeeper Yann Sommer, guided the ball into the net on 74 minutes from a Joe Morrell delivery as he ghosted into space left by the static Swiss defence.

"It's great personally, we would have liked to win but we will take a draw to put us in a good position," Moore said. "It's never good going a goal down but to get one back and see the game out is a big positive for us."

Man of the match Breel Embolo had terrorised the Welsh defence and put Switzerland ahead when he showed impressive strength to out-muscle defender Connor Roberts from a corner shortly after halftime.

Not even the introduction of Mario Gavranovic, who put the ball in the net late in the game but had it ruled offside following a VAR review — the first such ruling at the competition — could turn the game back in the Swiss' favour.

They may blame themselves for not killing off the game earlier,



Wales' midfielder Kieffer Moore celebrates after scoring the equaliser. – AFP

having squandered several golden chances through Haris Seferovic in the first half and Embolo after the break.

Defender Fabian Schaer had tried to beat keeper Danny Ward with a cheeky flick before Seferovic's 27th minute curled shot sailed just over the bar.

The forward squandered two more chances before halftime as the Swiss notched 11 attempts to Wales' two in the first half.

What his teammates failed to achieve with finesse in the first half, Embolo did with sheer power and speed in the 49th minute, heading in from a corner for a deserved lead after his powerful run and shot was saved by Ward seconds earlier.

Two more, almost identical Embolo bursts saw him close to scoring again, including with a 65th-minute curled shot before the Welsh hit back.

With captain Gareth Bale well-marked throughout, they gradually upped the pressure in search of an equaliser as the Swiss eased off and conceded some ground, allowing Moore to find the space to beat Sommer with a rapid glancing header.

Italy lead the group after their impressive 3-0 victory over Turkey in the tournament opener on Friday and will host the Swiss in Rome in their second game on Wednesday. Wales stay in the Azerbaijan capital to face the Turks on the same day. — Reuters

No explanation yet for Eriksen's collapse: Doctor

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's team doctor said on Sunday there was still "no explanation" for why midfielder Christian Eriksen collapsed during his country's opening Euro 2020 game against Finland.

"There's no explanation so far," team doctor Morten Boesen told a press conference, adding that all tests done so far on the player, who is still in hospital, have come back fine. "That is also one of the reasons that he is still in the hospital," the physician said.

The Inter Milan star suddenly collapsed in the 43rd minute of Denmark's Group B game against Finland on Saturday, laying motionless as medical personnel administered CPR.

He laid on the field for about 15 minutes before being carried off the pitch and rushed to hospital.

The game was temporarily suspended awaiting updates on Eriksen's health, but resumed later in the evening after reports filtered through that the player was in a stable condition and awake. It ended in a 1-0 win for debutants Finland. Players in the Danish team were given the option to continue the game or postpone it, but on Sunday head coach Kasper Hjulmand said he regretted the decision.



Denmark's Christian Eriksen during the match. – Reuters

"I honestly don't think that we should have been on the pitch again," Hjulmand told reporters.

Hjulmand added that Eriksen had told him he wished for the team to carry on playing in the tournament. "Christian wishes that we should continue playing, so we will do that. We want to play for Christian," Hjulmand said.

'NO HINT OF PROBLEM'

In Milan, Inter Milan's team doctor said Eriksen showed no hint of any underlying health condition.

"We had a bad time, not just me, but the whole family of our club," Piero Volpi told *Gazzetta*

Dello Sport. "In the next few days he will be subjected to in-depth examinations.

"The important thing is that he is well, but there had never been any episode that even remotely hinted at a problem when he was at Tottenham nor at Inter. In Italy there are very strict controls."

Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta said Eriksen had sent a message on the team chat reassuring them: "I'm fine, I hope to be back soon."

"He never had Covid and he has never been vaccinated, we don't want to be intrusive because it's right for the player to be calm."

— AFP



Krejčíková pays tribute to former mentor Novotná

PARIS: French Open champion Barbora Krejčíková was at Jana Novotná's bedside as the 1998 Wimbledon champion lay terminally ill and it was fitting that the Czech's first thoughts were for her former mentor before lifting the Suzanne Lenglen Cup on Saturday.

The world number 33 beat Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who is ranked one place higher, 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 to claim her maiden singles Grand Slam title at Roland Garros.

Speaking of Novotná, who died in 2017 aged 49, Krejčíková said: "We just had a really special bond and when I found out that she was sick and when... like later on I found out it's not going to end up really well... I just felt at the end of her life I have to be there. I just have to really support her.

"Even when I knew it was going to be really bad, I wasn't really handling the situation well. My parents just were telling me not to go, because they've seen how it's actually ruining me. But I just felt like I have to go and I have to support her.

"I just felt that if I'm going to go through this process and I'm going to just help her and support her, it's going to give me a lot of strength. Then I'm going to appreciate a lot of things more," the 25-year-old added.

Novotná took Krejčíková under her wing in 2014 and while the youngster "never tried to imitate" her, the 2018 French Open and Wimbledon doubles champion drew inspiration from her mentor.

"I also think that she was also happy that I was there. That's why she's looking after me right now," added Krejčíková, who had never got past the second round in a singles Grand Slam before. "That's actually why I have this many Grand Slams, because she's just from somewhere above looking after me. She wants me to win. She knows what it means to me, and I know what it would mean to her." — Reuters



Sweet double for unseeded Krejčíková

PARIS: Czech Barbora Krejčíková said she was going to enjoy a rare glass of champagne on Sunday after completing a singles-doubles title sweep at the French Open by taking the women's doubles trophy with compatriot Katerina Siniakova.

Krejčíková became the first player to win both the women's singles and doubles title in Paris since Frenchwoman Mary Pierce completed the feat in 2000 after the Czech duo beat Iga Swiatek and Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-4 6-2.

The 25-year-old Krejčíková, who will climb to 15th in singles following her maiden Grand Slam singles title on Saturday, will return as the world number one doubles player when the rankings are updated on Monday.

"I think we are going to have a dinner together this evening," she told reporters.

"We will have a little bit glass of champagne. I already said I don't really drink but I think it's



Czech Republic's Barbora Krejčíková (R) and Katerina Siniakova celebrate with The Simonne Mathieu Cup after winning their women's doubles final against Bethanie Mattek-Sands of the US and Poland's Iga Swiatek, in Paris. — AFP

a time to actually celebrate it. I think we are going to really enjoy.

"The rest, I just want to go back home. I just really have to relax. I have to spend some time with my family. After that just start to work again."

Less than 24 hours after picking up her first singles major title, Krejčíková returned to

Court Philippe Chatrier but it was not easy.

"Like yesterday so many emotions and everything. I didn't really sleep well. I woke up in the morning and I felt really tired. I can actually say that out loud right now, I'm having some pains in my leg," she said.

"I'm really happy that it went

French Open	
Champions	
Women's singles	
2021 - Barbora Krejčíková (CZE)	
2020 - I. Swiatek (POL)	
2019 - A. Barty (AUS)	
2018 - S. Halep (ROM)	
2017 - J. Ostapenko (LAT)	
2016 - G. Muguruza (ESP)	
2015 - S. Williams (USA)	
2014 - M. Sharapova (RUS)	
2013 - S. Williams	
2012 - M. Sharapova	AFP

this way. I actually went really relaxed today when I went on court. I was just trying to really support my partner and also just try to cheer her up a little bit."

Swiatek, the 2020 singles champion, and Mattek-Sands were playing only their third tournament together and found the going tough against

Siniakova's nimble movement and skilful netplay and Krejčíková's strong performance from the baseline.

The second-seeded Czech pair, who also won the Roland Garros title in 2018, quickly jumped to a 5-1 lead and though Swiatek and Mattek-Sands fought back to 5-4 they could not stop Krejčíková from serving out for the set.

On a windy day under the Parisian sun, Siniakova had continued trouble with her serve and the Czech duo had a total of eight double faults in the match.

But the pair, who also won the 2018 Wimbledon doubles title, overcame their serving trouble with their experience and excellent coordination.

The number two seeds lost serve once in the second set but broke their opponents three times and sealed the win when Siniakova hit a backhand winner on their second matchpoint.

— Reuters

14 players named for Oman beach soccer camps

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

The head coach of Oman's beach soccer national team, Talib Hilal, named on Sunday a list of 14 players who will take part in the forthcoming domestic and overseas camp to Dubai, UAE.

The seven-day internal camp will begin from June 19 to 27 at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex and it will be followed by an overseas camp in Dubai city from June 19 to 27. Both preparatory camps are part of the team's actual preparation for the global assignment at Fifa Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021.

The finals are set to be held from August 19 to 29.

Coach Talib Hilal's men will take part in an international friendly tournament during the second external camp in Dubai. The long-serving coach and his assistant coaching staff aim to utilise the friendly matches for match exposure ahead of the world championship.

Also, the international preparatory event will act as an official test for the players to assess their readiness for the upcoming tough encounters.

This is the second overseas training camp for the beach soccer national team after



the one-week Morocco camp which was held last month. The Morocco camp featured two vital friendly games against Morocco team. The Sultanate's team had suffered a 5-2 loss in the first

preparatory game while they registered a 3-1 win in the second friendly game. Abdullah al Souti scored two goals and Khalid al Orami netted the opening goal for Oman.

As the showpiece beach soccer event is approaching, the technical coaching staff of the Sultanate team is focusing on developing the players technical skills and fitness. The preparatory plan will feature many training sessions besides friendly matches against tough international teams to shape the players for the global beach soccer event.

The Sultanate's beach soccer team had participated in Beach Soccer World Cup in Ravenna city in Italy in 2011 and in Portugal in 2015. The third participation of the team was at the Beach Soccer World Cup in Paraguay in December 2019.

The Oman team had registered a crucial win against Nigeria. The national team had suffered two losses against Portugal and Brazil.

The players list was the same for the last overseas camp in Morocco except Amjad al Hamdani and Shareef al Balushi who are absent in the new list.

Oman beach soccer probables:

Yahya al Orami, Mundher al Orami, Jalal al Sinani, Khalid al Orami and Eid al Farsi, Mashal al Orami, Abdullah al Souti, Noun al Zadjali, Younis al Oaisi, Ahmed al Mashrafi, Hamood al Touqi, Rashid al Badi, Said al Farsi and Salim al Orami.



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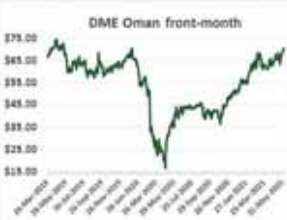
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TOTAL NATIONAL DAY PRIZES OMR 55,000	TOTAL PRIZES FOR LADIES OMR 11,000	TOTAL MEGA PRIZES OMR 112,000

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Oman crude oil benchmark rallies 300% since pandemic collapse



DEMAND RECOVERY: Middle East benchmarks trading above \$70/barrel for the first time in two years

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](#)

The Sultanate’s crude oil benchmark — Oman Crude Futures Contract — has registered a growth of over 300 per cent in trading on the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) since the onset of the global pandemic that sent the benchmark plunging to around \$17 per barrel in April 2020.

On Friday, the Oman Crude Futures Contract (DME Oman) climbed to \$71.37 per barrel (for August 2021 delivery) in trading on the DME — the highest it has ever risen since the start of the pandemic.

“DME Oman is up by around 30 per cent since the end of January when prices were below \$55/barrel,” said the Dubai-based commodities exchange in its latest analytical report issued on Sunday.

“DME July futures contract expired at \$68.03/ barrel on May 31, nearly \$3/barrel up from the June-contract expiry in April,” it further noted. Buoyed by growing optimism over global economic recovery and the aggressive vaccine roll-out, prices of crude benchmarks, including the Oman Crude Futures Contract, have been trading above \$70 per barrel since the start of this month — for the first time in over two years, according to the report.

In 2007, the Sultanate became the first producer in the Middle East to sell all of its crude output against a futures contract using the Dubai Mercantile Exchange as its principal platform.

It led the way for other regional producers Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai, among others, to use DME Oman futures in their Official Selling Price (OSP) formulas.

Pact signed for design of new central fruits & vegetables market in Khazaen

NEW MILESTONE: F&M Middle East Company wins contract for detailed design of Phase 1 of landmark project

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

In continuation of the recently signed agreement with Muscat Municipality to transfer the existing wholesale market for fruits and vegetables from Mawaleh to Khazaen, Khazaen Economic City has recently announced awarding the consultancy contract for detailed design works for the first phase of the new market to F&M Middle East Company, a leading international consulting firm in the field of civil and architectural design and project management.

The agreement was signed by Eng Salim bin Suleiman al Thuhli, CEO of Khazaen Economic City, and Eng Hazim Abdul Kareem, GM of F&M Middle East Company.

The first phase of the project includes detail designs for the infrastructure of roads, water networks, sewage networks, lighting, protection systems, engineering design for all supporting facilities for the new market.

These include cold and dry stores, main wholesales halls, truck sales area, shaded areas for sorting and sale of onions and potatoes, agricultural inspection areas, office



spaces for operating companies, forklifts servicing, electrical charging stations, vegetables and fruit sorting yards, customs inspection for vegetables and fruits, laboratory for testing agricultural samples under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and multiple gates for entry of trucks.

Eng Salim al Thuhli, CEO, Khazaen, commented, “We are glad to sign this milestone agreement which will pave the way for shifting the wholesale activities from the existing Mawaleh Central Fruits and Vegetable Market to Khazaen.

In addition, the new market will provide the requirements for existing

traders and local farmers with various outlets and state-of-the-art supporting facilities.”

He added, “We expect the designing works will take four months toward completion, tendering and construction to build the new market to commence during early Q1 2022 with a targeted completion period of 24 months.”

Eng Hazim Abdulkareem, GM of F&M Middle East company said, “We truly thank Khazaen Economic City for the trust and we are glad to be part of this large national project. This agreement was preceded by F&M implementation of the overall concept master planning for Khazaen Central Fruits &Vegetables Market.

The new market will provide the requirements for existing traders and local farmers with various outlets and state-of-the-art supporting facilities

ENG SALIM
AL THUHLI
CEO, Khazaen

transporting of food products.

Easy connectivity with ports such as Suwaiq Port, Sohar Port and Khazaen’s own inland dry port, will contribute largely to the success of the new market, which is being seen as an important building block of a fully integrated city for food industries covering manufacturing, packaging and processing.

The new market is certain to attract more foreign direct investment, which will further enhance Oman’s position as a hub for manufacturing and distribution of food products across the region and the world, aided by the Sultanate’s strategic position and its robust logistics infrastructure in general and Khazaen in particular.

Oman unveils measures to combat hidden trade

KEY MOVE: MoCIIP invites business owners to regularise, liquidate or merge their dormant commercial registries with effect from June 15, 2021

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) will shortly launch measures aimed at enabling local business owners to either regularize or liquidate inactive or dormant businesses that serve as a cover for the so-called ‘hidden trade’ phenomenon prevalent in the Sultanate.

Starting from tomorrow, June 15, 2021, the Ministry will make available a package of facilities to enable owners of commercial companies to either cancel/ liquidate the commercial registries (CR) of businesses that are dormant.

Such enterprises can either be



liquidated for a year or merged for a period of 6 months, the Ministry stated.

“The new procedures aim at supporting the companies to correct their legal status, encouraging owners of multiple commercial registries (CR) to liquidate or the merge their businesses, thus enhancing the government’s efforts to combat the phenomenon of the hidden trade, improving the business environment, maintaining market competitiveness, and supporting small and medium enterprises development plans,” said the Ministry.

“They aim to enable

entrepreneurs to cancel old inactive commercial registries through a package of facilities and fee exemptions.”

The hidden trade phenomenon, according to the Ministry, contributes to a number of negative economic and social consequences. It compromises the efficacy of general and microeconomic policies, disrupts the labour market and Omanisation policies, and contributes to unfair competition that impacts the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The number of new commercial registries recorded from January

The hidden trade phenomenon compromises the efficacy of general and micro economic policies, disrupts the labour market and Omanisation policies, and contributes to unfair competition that impacts the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

1 to June 10, 2021, totalled 8,447. Fees for liquidation will be limited to RO 50, the Ministry said, noting that all relevant government penalties and fines will be waived as well.

The liquidation request can be submitted electronically through the “Invest Easy” electronic portal or through Sanad Service Centers.

Applications should include a notice announcing the commencement of the liquidation process, duly approved by the owner,

along with a copy of the minutes of the shareholders/partners meeting. Further, in accordance with the Commercial Companies Law issued by Royal Decree 18/2019, applicants can request for the completion of liquidation procedures after six months from the date of the announcement in the Official Gazette. As for procedures for merging commercial registries, all such requests can be submitted electronically through the “Invest Easy” portal or via Sanad Service Centers, along with a copy of the merger announcement published in a local newspaper.

In accordance with the Commercial Companies Law, the applicant shall wait for 30 days before the approval is granted.

Transfer of ownership of the commercial registry from one owner to another, as well as the transfer of the residency of expatriate labour to the holder of the new registry or partner, can be completed against payment of 200 per commercial registry regardless of the number of expat labour. The previous fee was RO 316.

How the smartphone market has evolved

It is always fascinating to me to look back down memory lane and notice how the smartphone market has evolved in just a little less than 15 years.

It was 2007 when my friend Gabriele called me on my Nokia phone one evening and told me: “Have you seen Steve Jobs’ announcement? The world has changed forever!”

I remember that I was on the way to a business meeting and on the spot I did not pay too much attention to his claim. Frankly, even in the weeks to come, after watching a replay of the iconic moment, I was not particularly impressed.

With hindsight, I simply did not understand the magnitude of the change introduced by such a product as an ecosystem catalyst. I was not alone in such misjudgment.

Former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer outright laughed at the idea that people could buy an iPhone, manifesting perhaps

the worst prediction made in modern history. Apple managed to play alone in the smartphone space for nearly two years before the first signs of competition approached.

During that period, the line between smartphones and non-smartphones was rather thin. Many might have forgotten that the first iPhone shipped without the possibility to perform a simple copy and paste.

At the same time, Nokia non-smartphones were quite advanced for the amount of features packed in.

In 2009, in fact, the Finnish giant was taking close to 40 per cent of all mobile phones market, while Apple went from zero to 15 per cent in less than 20 months.

At that point, RIM (Research in Motion) which was known for the iconic Blackberry was still holding on to 20 per cent of the market, while Samsung was just getting started, at around 3 per cent.

Fast forward 2 years and the



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

BY Q1 2021, SAMSUNG AND APPLE ARE RELATIVELY STABLE AT 22 PER CENT AND 16 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, WHILE XIAOMI, OPPO AND VIVO EMERGED AS SOME OF THE TOP BRANDS IN TERMS OF SALES, WITH 14 PER CENT, 11 PER CENT AND 10 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY

Korean manufacturer jumped close to 23 per cent of all phones, hitting severely the sales figures of both Nokia and RIM, respectively reduced to 13.6 per cent and 9.6 per cent.

HTC also grew considerably, holding a 10 per cent market share. By the end of 2012, Nokia was marginalized to irrelevance, while Blackberry phones were only 4 per cent of those in circulation.

HTC lost ground to new players like Sony, Huawei, Lenovo and LG, while Samsung consolidated the spot as top manufacturer, with nearly 1 device in 3 being made in Korea.

Apple was cruising at 14 per cent.

In late 2014, Samsung was reduced to 20 per cent and Apple, through a clever differentiation of products offering, climbed to a new high of nearly 20 per cent, thus challenging the spot of the market leader.

Meanwhile, a myriad of other players grew their presence in

the industry, with 46 per cent of all phones being produced by non-top manufacturers.

Without a doubt, China’s economy the fast growth contributed to bringing more and more manufacturers among the top players in the industry.

By Q1 2021, Samsung and Apple are relatively stable at 22 per cent and 16 per cent respectively, while Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo emerged as some of the top brands in terms of sales, with 14 per cent, 11 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Huawei faced a severe and unexpected market loss when Google banned their operating system Android on Huawei devices.

Today, the real market dominant is in fact Google, not for its marginal amount of phones produced, but for powering with Android 4 out of 5 devices in the world.

[The columnist is a member of the International Press Association]

NBO safety deposit boxes offer peace of mind 24/7



MUSCAT: An ideal solution for keeping life’s most valuable items, National Bank of Oman (NBO)’s safety deposit boxes combine state-of-the-art security and unparalleled convenience 24/7.

Available at its Head Office in Azaiba, this month the bank is offering up to 60 per cent off of its annual rates, exclusively for its Mazaya and Sadara customers. NBO Account-holders can now obtain a safe deposit box for as little as RO 75, while new customers can avail one from just RO 50, with a limited number of boxes available.

Available in medium and large sizes, the safety deposit boxes offer the ultimate protection through a combination of card access, PIN and biometric authentication.

Accessible around the clock, 365 days a year, and conveniently located at the bank’s headquarters in Azaiba, the boxes also offer a joint ownership option, making them perfect for families.

Committed to providing an enhanced and seamless banking experience, NBO continues to bring compelling and innovative financial solutions closer to its customer base across the Sultanate.

Alizz Islamic provides vaccines for employees and their families

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, started its vaccination campaign for the bank employees and their families against coronavirus. This comes as part of the bank’s mission to provide a healthy environment for employees and provide everything that would ensure their safety and the safety of their families.

Ahead of the campaign, a lot of health awareness drive was made internally about the importance of taking the vaccine and following the necessary precautionary measures.

Speaking on this occasion, Mohammed al Balushi, DGM – Chief Human Resources Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank said, “The safety of our staff, as well as the safety of their families, is our highest priority. Our precautionary actions demonstrate a firm commitment



to deploying appropriate resources to help maintain a healthy environment for both.”

Alizz Islamic Bank is continuously monitoring the ever-changing circumstances surrounding the coronavirus, and all Alizz Islamic Bank branches have been fully briefed on essential preparatory and prevention measures. These ranges from hygiene measures, including increased cleaning and sanitizing frequency, as well as guidelines on how to handle suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 in cooperation with the local authorities.

CMA to support knowledge transfer to Omani students

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) signed on Sunday a Letter of Cooperation with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences at Ibra to support the exchange of scientific and practical experience in the fields of capital markets, insurance and investment in stock exchanges. The move comes within the CMA’s endeavours to develop the capital markets and insurance industry in Oman through cooperation with educational institutions.

The CMA aims to enhance the skills of students and employees in the fields of capital markets, insurance and investment in stock exchanges beside enhancing the education, learning, practical training and organising joint



events to benefit from the joint research and cooperation in higher education through assisting the educational process with resources and enhanced ideas in the relevant fields.

The Authority attaches great importance to the cooperation

with the educational institutions, as they are a productive environment for research that would contribute to the advancement of the CMA’s work in the legislative and regulatory fields to enhance the knowledge of the staff.

Relaxation of restrictions triggers strong rebound in ME

POSITIVE TRENDS: Overall, GCC GDP will grow by 2.1 per cent this year, after the 5 per cent contraction seen in 2020.

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 13

The latest Economic Insight report for the Middle East, compiled by Oxford Economics, has found that business confidence in the region has strengthened in recent months as coronavirus restrictions eased and vaccination rollouts progressed.

However, while there are positive signs for recovery in the second half of this year and beyond, economies still remain far from their pre-pandemic levels.

According to the report commissioned by ICAEW, the Middle East’s regional GDP will grow by 2.4 per cent this year, a similar rate to the region’s average growth trajectory in the last decade,

and an improvement from the 4.4 per cent it shrank by in 2020.

Oil production cuts are weighing on output, and new Covid-19 outbreaks have forced tighter lockdown measures in recent weeks, disrupting the recovery process.

However, strong Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) readings indicate growth accelerating in the coming months, boosted by rapid vaccine rollouts in several countries that will help domestic activity move back towards normality.

The region’s economies are in a good position to capitalise on the surge of travel demand when the rest of the world opens up. Preparation for various regional events, such as Expo 2020 in Dubai and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, an easing of regional tensions and spending by the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) will also support growth.

Overall, GCC GDP will grow by 2.1 per cent this year, after the 5 per cent contraction seen in 2020. Although global Covid-19 cases



are still high and new outbreaks are being reported daily, the pandemic looks to be under control in China, Europe and the US.

And with the summer tourist season approaching, oil demand is increasing. This, alongside ongoing supply reductions from OPEC+ producers, has stabilised the oil price at above \$65 per barrel (pb), and \$64.4pb for Brent crude in 2021, up from \$62.

However, given the continuously fragile demand outlook and plentiful scope for stronger supply growth, the upside for oil prices will remain limited through 2022 and 2023 and the report forecasts Brent to average \$61pb during that period.

Michael Armstrong, FCA and ICAEW Regional Director for the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA), said: “The outlook for

most Middle Eastern economies looks positive this quarter, but keeping coronavirus levels low will be essential to ensure economies can return to growth.

Governments across the region must keep developing sectors and industries that foster innovation, and continue implementing reforms to diversify economies and accelerate them into the post-Covid era.”

Given the high reliance on the oil sector for growth, and countries’ vulnerability to rising temperatures, climate change is also an increasingly important issue in the GCC region and is receiving a sharper focus in diversification plans in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Saudi Arabia’s Green Initiative, for instance, aims to cut CO2 emissions in the Middle East by 60 per cent by 2030 and begin generating half of the country’s electricity from renewables.

With many sectors, including much of industry and even travel

and tourism, relatively oil-intensive, the authorities recognise they can’t continue business as usual as they will be exposed to international policies to tackle climate change such as carbon taxation and border carbon adjustments.

Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor and Chief Economist at Oxford Economics, said: “The rise in the oil price has boosted revenue prospects for GCC producers, which derive 40-90 per cent of total fiscal income from oil.

Higher oil revenue gives governments more scope to support post-pandemic recoveries without undermining efforts aimed at improving medium-term fiscal sustainability.

“Climate change is a big risk to the economy and society. Without a significantly expanded mitigation effort, the MENA region, which already suffers from climate-related issues like water scarcity, is likely to have major economic consequences that could have pronounced economic impacts by 2050.”

Airline industry sees long-term rebound for sector

PARIS: After flying into the financial turbulence of the Covid pandemic, the airline sector expects passenger traffic to take off despite concerns about the industry's impact on climate change. In its latest look at trends for the sector, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said it doesn't expect world air traffic to resume to its pre-pandemic level before 2023.

But over 20 years, air traffic should almost double, from 4.5 billion passengers in 2019 to 8.5 billion in 2039.

That is, however, a drop of one billion passengers from IATA's pre-crisis forecast. Nevertheless that will be good news for aircraft manufacturers, who slowed down production during the crisis as airlines cancelled orders to stay financially afloat. Airbus has already announced it plans to step up the manufacturing cadence of its best-selling A320 single-aisle aircraft and should reach a record level already in 2023.

Boeing, for its part, forecasts that airlines will need 43,110 new aircraft through 2039, which will



Passenger planes parked on a runway are seen at the Arturo Merino Benitez International Airport, in Santiago, Chile. — Reuters

result in a near doubling of the global fleet. Asia alone will account for 40 per cent of that demand.

As with the September 11 attacks or the global financial crisis of 2007-2009, "the industry will prove resilient again," Darren Hulst, vice-president of marketing

at Boeing, said last year.

Marc Ivaldi, research director at the Paris-based School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, noted that only one per cent of the population currently uses air travel.

"With the simple demographic

rise and the fact that people become richer there will be rising demand for air travel and thus for aircraft," he said.

If the biggest aircraft fleets are currently in the United States and Europe, the biggest increases are expected in Asia and the Middle

Among Asia's emerging nations, one of the greatest aspirational goals is simply the ability to fly internationally

CENTRE FOR AVIATION

East, the consulting firm Oliver Wyman said in a recent study. Airbus delivered 19 per cent of its planes to China, more than the United States, and this trend is not expected to change.

In many emerging countries where the middle class is expanding air travel is becoming possible for more and more people. "Among Asia's emerging nations, one of the greatest aspirational goals is simply the ability to fly internationally," said the Centre for Aviation (CAPA).

"It is a sign of social and

economic maturity and permits experiences which were unthinkable for their parents."

It noted that these people were unlikely to share the growing sentiment among some people in the West towards reducing air travel to reduce one's carbon footprint.

"For these new would-be flyers, the whole concept of 'flight shaming' at a grass roots level is grossly alien," said CAPA.

"Consequently, in Asia flight shaming is unlikely to gain much traction," it added.

The "flight shaming" or "flygskam" movement took off in Sweden in 2018 to challenge the growing popularity of air travel, which had boomed in Europe thanks to budget airlines that made weekend getaways across the continent affordable to a wider public.

In 2019, air traffic declined by four per cent in Sweden — but it hit a record across Europe, according to the air traffic control body Eurocontrol. EHESS's Ivaldi believes flight shaming will have little long-term impact. — AFP

Rare earth metals at the heart of China's rivalry with US, Europe

NEW YORK: What if China were to cut off the United States and Europe from access to rare minerals that are essential to electric vehicles, wind turbines and drones?

At a time of frequent geopolitical friction among those three powers, Washington and Brussels want to avoid this scenario by investing in the market for 17 minerals with unique properties that today are largely extracted and refined in China.

"The expected exponential growth in demand for minerals that are linked to clean energy is putting more pressure on US and Europe to take a closer look at where the vulnerabilities are and the concrete steps these governments can take," said Jane Nakano, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

In 2019, the United States imported 80 per cent of its rare earth minerals from China, the US Geological Survey says.

The European Union gets 98 per cent of its supply from China, the European



Front-end loaders are seen at a rare earth mineral mining site in China. — AFP

Commission said last year. Amid the transition to green energy in which rare earth minerals are sure to play a role, China's market dominance is enough to sound an alarm in western capitals.

Rare earth minerals with names like neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium are crucial to the manufacture of magnets used in industries of the future like wind turbines and electric cars.

And they are already present

Amid the transition to green energy in which rare earth minerals are sure to play a role, China's market dominance is enough to sound an alarm in western capitals.

in consumer goods such as smartphones, computer screens

and telescopic lenses.

Others have more traditional uses, like cerium for glass polishing and lanthanum for car catalysts or optical lenses.

This week the US Senate passed a law aimed at improving American competitiveness that includes provisions to improve critical minerals supply chains, following a similar executive order issued by President Joe Biden in February.

Washington aims to boost production and processing of rare earths and lithium, another key mineral component, while "working with allies and partners to increase sustainable global supply and reduce reliance on geopolitical competitors," Deputy Director of the National Economic Council Sameera Fazili said on Tuesday.

The best hope for boosting American production can be found at the Mountain Pass mine in California. Once one of the major players in the sector, the mine suffered as China rose and ate up its market share, aided by Beijing's heavy government subsidies. — AFP

Indonesia plans to extend tax breaks on two-wheel drive cars

JAKARTA: Indonesia aims to extend a luxury tax break on the sale of sedans and two-wheel drive cars with engine power of less than 1,500 cc to August to support its pandemic-hit automotive industry, the industry ministry said on Sunday.

The tax was fully removed in March and was supposed to be re-imposed at 50 per cent from June. The 50 per cent discount will now apply from August to December.

Industry Minister Agus Gumiwang Kartasasmita said

the extension of the lifting of the tax was aimed at revitalising demand for a industry "that has consistently contributed significantly to the national economy".

A spokesperson at the Finance Ministry said the plan was being discussed. Car sales in Southeast Asia's largest economy grew after the tax break was introduced in March after months of sluggish sales due to the pandemic but have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. — Reuters



A car salesman is seen inside a car showroom in Jakarta, Indonesia. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

WASHINGTON

Exxon losing veteran oil traders

Exxon Mobil Corp has lost two veteran crude oil traders from its US energy trading group and a third is leaving its British unit, according to people familiar with the matter, in a continued exodus of top talent from the oil major.

Exxon last year reversed course on an expansion of its oil and petroleum products trading as fuel demand tumbled during the pandemic.

The company suffered a \$22.4 billion loss in 2020, leading to deep job and cost cuts across the



business. Veteran oil traders Michael Paradise and Adam Buller, both of whom joined Exxon in 2019 after lengthy careers elsewhere, resigned last week, the people said. — Reuters

BERLIN

Amazon raises minimum pay in Germany

Amazon will guarantee an entry-level wage at its German warehouses of 12 euros (\$15) an hour, the company said on Friday in the face of a long-running battle with a top labour union.

Germany is Amazon's biggest market after the United States, and the Verdi union has been organising strikes at Amazon in the country since 2013 to protest low pay and poor conditions.

The pay increase is effective from July and compares with entry-level pay as low as



11.30 euros per hour for some locations, though pay exceeded 12 euros in other locations.

Amazon's wages exceed Germany's current minimum wage of 9.50 euros per hour. — Reuters

NEW YORK

Firms urged to ditch Libor rate benchmarks

US financial regulators urged market participants to accelerate their efforts to detach financial products from Libor interest rate benchmarks, while casting doubt on new benchmarks built to compete with their preferred replacement.

Federal Reserve Vice Chair Randal Quarles (pictured) emphasised there is "no path forward" for Libor, which is being scrapped after numerous banks were fined for manipulating it, and that firms have no reason



to delay moving derivatives and other market contracts to the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate.

"The deniers and laggards are engaging in magical thinking," Quarles said. — Reuters

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of Capital Reduction

In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **AL HILAL GENERAL GLOBAL (LLC)**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1219180**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials **250,000.000 to 100,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

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A HISTORY OF MODERN ART
BY H. HARVARD ARNASON

It traces the trends and influences in painting, sculpture, photography and architecture from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

BERLINALE SUMMER SPECIAL' FILM FESTIVAL



SPECTATORS LISTEN as Hungarian film director Benedek 'Bence' Fliegau (2R) speaks during the premiere of the film 'Forest - I See You Everywhere' (Rengeteg - mindenhol latlak) as part of the 'Berlinale Summer Special' film festival at the open air cinema (Freiluftkino) in front of the Old National Gallery (Alte Nationalgalerie) on Museum Island in Berlin on June 12, 2021. Due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Berlinale Summer Special will be a purely outdoor event with mandatory testing for all spectators, taking place from June 9 to 20 at 16 outdoor venues. — **AFP**

ROLLING STONES IMMERSIVE "UNZIPPED" EXHIBITION



Women visit the Rolling Stones immersive exhibition "Unzipped" at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille on June 9, 2021. The Rolling Stones' UNZIPPED travelling exhibition begins its tour around the world in the Netherlands and after it moves on from there. Visitors will see everything from replicas of the Stones' Chelsea flat Edith Grove to original works of art by Andy Warhol, Alexander McQueen, Prada, Dior and Martin Scorsese. The collection also includes guitars, costumes, posters, album covers, and personal diaries, some on loan from the Stones personal collections. — **AFP**



Al Awija harvests around 20 tonnes of wheat and red sugar

The production of wheat and red sugar in Al Awija farms in the Wilayat of Manah in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah for the current season has reached 200 tons.

Muhammad al Bahlani, Director of the Department of Agricultural Wealth and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Manah, said that Al Awija in the Wilayat of Manah is one of the fertile agricultural areas whose green spaces contribute to securing the food sector and supplying local markets with agricultural crops.

He added that the Department of Agricultural Wealth and Water Resources provides services and guidance to farmers, and provides wheat harvesting machines, in addition to distributing seeds and combatting diseases that affect plants.

He indicated that the areas that farmers reclaimed and cultivated in Al Awija amounted to about 160 acres, in which agricultural crops varied. The wheat and red sugar crop were the most important crops of production in Al Awija farms. Its production is approximately 17 tonnes.

He stressed that the department endeavours to increase diversity in the cultivation of crops in Al Awija, because it is one of the villages distinguished by land fertility. He also said that modern they've introduced irrigation system to rationalise water consumption.



LOCAL TRENDS

The Humble Acacia: A resolute metaphor for the Sultanate

Story by Ray Petersen
Photos by Lena Petersen



THE OMANI 'treeline' is far from common, but the staunch Acacia, vancellia tortillis, or the Umbrella Thorn Acacia, adorns almost every sunrise, sunset, and landscape portrait, taken or painted, within the Sultanate. The Acacia was romanticised by Nadeem Aslam, writing "He led her back to the house, the perfume from the Acacia clinging to her. The djinn was supposed to live in the scent of the Acacia blossom, making themselves visible only to the young.." investing a mystique in that craggy tree, best seen stark against the sun or moon.

The Acacia is a real survivor! Common to much of North Africa and the Middle East, it survives drought due to its remarkably long and aggressive taproots, which reach deep below the ground to find water. Those same root structures and sturdy trunks also enable them to survive high winds, intense sunlight and heat, devastating floods, and the tree is also, quite amazingly, fire-resistant while still rooted, with regrowth occurring almost immediately after bushfires. Even when the entire tree, above the ground, is cut off, or burnt to the ground, the subterranean root structure enables regrowth. Mature Acacias are also frost resistant, making them a tree for all seasons.

Here in Oman, in Wadi Muaiden at the foot of Jabal Akhdhar, are some incredible examples of the remarkably resilient survival qualities of the Acacia. With its significant rain catchment



in the mighty Jabal, flooding in the wadi comes hard and fast, flashing down off the peaks to thunder across the old Highway 15 ford, across to the dam near Karsha, and onwards to the hinterland. The erosion caused by the flash floods is apparent in the images provided, as these Acacias have withstood thousands, even millions of tons of pressure, and the erosion of much of the terrain around them, sustained and held together by their amazing root structures, to see another day, or more.

Myrmecologists, involved in the study, and science of ants are greatly intrigued by the symbiotic relationship between some species of ants and the Acacia. They point to the ubiquitous presence of ants living within the thorn and branch structure of the tree as having a cool environment, while in return, the ants defend the tree by stinging most animals that venture to graze upon their soft young thorns and branches. The ants also discourage other inhabitants from residence, thus offering further protection. Giraffes and camels, having greater height, are wider, though limited grazers of the canopy leaves.

But the Acacia has another, incredibly unique defence system. When the canopy is grazed, a poisonous, foul-tasting alkaloid substance is released from the thorns, rendering the leaves inedible, but not only that. The resultant chemical leaks into the environment and 'warns' the other Acacias nearby. They then activate their toxic release, and the unpalatable trees are then safe from heavy grazing. Goats and camels do however, graze on the seed pods, lichen, moss, and windblown tree growths. A gnarly, knotted, difficult wood to work with, it was a staple for use during biblical times for furniture, and keepsakes, and is believed to be used in the construction of the Hebrew tabernacle of the old faith.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who had such a way with words "A great Acacia with its slender trunk and overpoise of multitudinous leaves, in which a hundred fields might spill their dew and intense verdure, yet find room enough, stood reconciling all the place with green."



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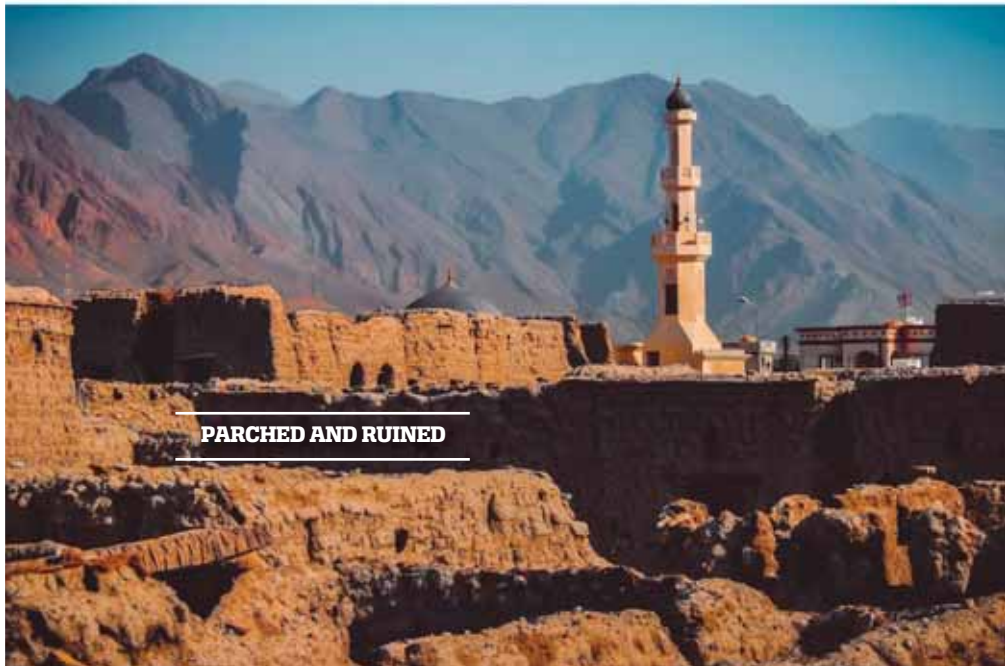
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FASHION



Mick Jagger jackets on sale in L'Wren Scott designs auction

JACKETS WORN by rocker Mick Jagger and dresses donned by actresses Nicole Kidman and Sarah Jessica Parker are going under the hammer as part of a sale of outfits from late fashion designer L'Wren Scott's archives.

Auction house Christie's is putting up 55 lots designed by Scott, who died from suicide in 2014 at age 49.

Scott, who was Jagger's girlfriend at the time of her death, was known for her sleek, intricately detailed dresses.

"She was so completely elegant and glamorous and she had this feeling that everything should be as it was during the old Hollywood period. Everything was just luxury and romance", Caitlin Yates, head of sale at Christie's London, told Reuters.

"All the materials she used were the finest materials... everything was hand done, she was very detail orientated."

The online sale, which runs until July 1, is the first time a collection from Scott's archives has come to the market, Yates said.

"It was Mick Jagger who decided to bring this to the market in celebration of L'Wren Scott", she added.

Among items on sale are two jackets Scott and Jagger collaborated on for the Rolling Stones' frontman.

One is a sequined and embroidered oak leaf "glamouflage" jacket Jagger wore to perform at Glastonbury music festival in 2013. The other is adorned with beaded and sequined butterflies the singer wore to the Stones' "50 & Counting" tour concert at London's Hyde Park in 2013.

Both have a price estimate of £20,000 to £30,000 (\$28,254 to \$42,381).

A selection of frocks are being sold, including a black and gold sequined gown Kidman wore at the Oscars in 2013, which is expected to fetch £1,500 to £2,500. A 1940s style black dress embroidered with pink sequins and worn by Madonna has a price estimate of £500 to £800.

Proceeds from the sale will go towards the L'Wren Scott scholarship, set up by Jagger in 2015, at London art school Central St Martins.

"L'Wren was a talented and passionate designer with a keen eye for detail", Jagger said in a statement. "Everyone who wore her dresses was at the centre of her designs." — **Reuters**

ENTERTAINMENT

British actor Riz Ahmed leads bid to change way Muslims seen in movies



BRITISH ACTOR Riz Ahmed on Thursday launched an effort to improve the way Muslims are depicted in movies after a study showed that they are barely seen and shown in a negative light when they do appear.

Ahmed, the "Sound of Metal" star and the first Muslim to get a best actor Oscar nomination, said the Blueprint for Muslim Inclusion would include funding and mentoring for Muslim story tellers in the early stages of their careers.

"The representation of Muslims on screen feeds the policies that get enacted, the people that get killed, the countries that get invaded", Ahmed said in a statement.

"The data doesn't lie. This study shows us the scale of the problem in popular film, and its cost is measured in lost potential and lost lives", he added.

Titled "Missing and Maligned", the study by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative found that less than 10pc of top-grossing films released from 2017-2019 from the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand featured at least one speaking Muslim character.

When they did, they were shown as outsiders, or threatening, or subservient, the study showed. About one-third of Muslim characters were perpetrators of violence and more than half were targets of violence.

"Muslims live all over the world, but film audiences only see a narrow portrait of this community, rather than viewing Muslims as they are: Business owners, friends and neighbours whose presence is part of modern life", said Al-Baabb Khan, one of the report's authors.

Ahmed, 38, who was born in London to Pakistani parents, said that offering funding would be game changing in getting more Muslim actors, writer and producers into the movie and TV business.

"Had I not received a scholarship and also a private donation, I wouldn't have been able to attend drama school", he said.

The \$25,000 fellowships for young Muslim artists will be decided by an advisory committee that includes actors Mahershala Ali and Ramy Youssef and comedian Hasan Minhaj. — **Reuters**

ART

Mona Lisa up for auction? Not quite



RAYMOND HEKKING spent decades trying to convince the world that the Mona Lisa painting he bought from a French antique shop in 1953 was the real thing and the one in the Louvre Museum was a fake.

Now Christie's auction house has put the 'Hekking Mona Lisa' up for sale, hoping the story of his campaign to realise his dream will help compensate for the fact it is a copy.

"It looks like the Mona Lisa but the quality of the execution is not Leonardo da Vinci", Christie's International Director of Old Master Painting Pierre Etienne said.

"Unfortunately on that point the dream is a bit over."

Hekking's argument was that the original painting was never returned after an early 20th century theft, ending up in the shop in the village of Magagnosc in his native Provence while the gallery in the French capital was duped by a copy.

Numerous newspaper cuttings testify to his badgering of the media and a Pathe newsreel item from the 1960s shows US journalists turning up to inspect the copy when the actual Mona Lisa was loaned to the United States.

The painting was done by an unknown artist in the early 17th century, around 100 years after the original by the Italian Renaissance master entered the royal collection of Francois I, Christie's said. It has a guide price of 200,000-300,000 euros and the online auction ends on June 18. — **Reuters**



Springs come in abundance in the village of Al Ayn

By Staff Reporter

What's in a name? For Al Ayn Village located in the Wilayat of Samayil, it's the abundance of water that feeds the wadis and make it a stunning village of lush gardens and green fields.

Strategically located on the main road leading to the wilayats of Al Dakhiliyah, Al Ayn is one of the villages making up Wadi Bani Rawaha. Its rich heritage, green orchards and beautiful nature make it a tourist magnet for people in and outside of wilayat. The wadis of Al Asi and Al Misqah also meet at the same stream making this location the site of one of the most active wadis in the wilayat.

Shaikh Hamad al Rawahi (**inset photo**) said: "The village is named after Al Ayn water spring, which irrigates most of the village's farms. It was called that way since the time of Imam Mohammad bin Abdullah al Khalili, the village of "Hamamt". After the emergence of the water spring in the village, it was changed to Al Ayn village."

He added, "The source of the flow of the spring is Wadi Al Asi, one of the wadis of Wadi Bani Rawaha in the Wilayat of Samayil."

Shaikh Al Rawahi said that in the past, the village was irrigated by Al Olayani Falaj, but it was destroyed by the Persian commander Muhammad Noor along with the rest of the Aflaj of the wilayat. The people of the village were not able to restore it, so they invented the water spring, to which the name of the village was attributed.

Today, the water of the spring is collected in a large water basin to irrigate the village farms and to be used to fill Falaj Al Ghalimi, which was reconstructed and repaired with the help of the concerned authorities in the government in 1984.

Shaikh Al Rawahi explained that among the wells that help Al Ayn irrigate the village's farms is

the "Bilarab" well, the "Al Saqeera and Al Kabeera" well and other old wells in which the village farms are irrigated.

Al A'ali Farm is also one of the beautiful farms, located to the southeast of the village. In the middle of the farm, Wadi Al Masaqah flows.

Wheat, corn and legumes are cultivated on the farm, and these crops are irrigated from the low-flowing Falaj that passes through the farm. Few farmers used other water sources to regrow these crops.

Shaikh Al Rawahi said that the wadis in the village of Al Ayn has many springs and they also come with different names. For example, on the south side of the village, there is Wadi Al Misqah, which comes from the village of Al Magbariya and Wadi Al Asi, which comes from the village of Al Afiya and Wadi Al Ghoub and all these wadis meet in Al Ayn then flows to al Janah village, where they meet with Wadi Rajm to constitute one huge wadi called Wadi Samayil. This big wadi goes through many wilayats like Fanja in Bidbid, that flow into the dam of Wadi Al Khoudh.

Tourists come to the village to visit its famous and beautiful attractions, most notably the Al Ayn stream, Al Alia Mosque, ancient houses, towers and other celebrated heritage for which the village is famous.

The people of the village practice agriculture, and their most important crops are palm trees, citrus fruits, onions, garlic, animal fodder, and the manufacture of all kinds of palm fronds. The women in the village sew all kinds of women's clothing, the Omani Kumma and children's clothing.

The village has also enjoyed many developmental achievements like education services, a health centre, electricity, water, telecommunications, urban development and the paving of internal roads.

