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MUSCAT DAILY

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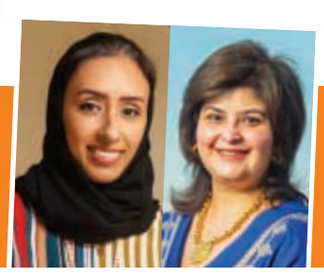
OWYA 2020 WINNERS - RAJWA AL OJAILI & KANAN KHIMJI

GO TO PAGES 09 & 16



HM ISSUES TWO ROYAL DECREES

Value Added Tax Law to be implemented by April 2021

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued two Royal Decrees on Monday as follows:

Royal Decree No 120/2020 amends some provisions of the Penal Procedure Law.

Article 1: The text of the second paragraph of Article 221 of the aforementioned Penal Procedure Law will be replaced by the following text:

'However, it is not permissible for the Criminal Court to issue a death sentence except by consensus, and before issuing the judgment it must send the papers to a committee formed by order of His Majesty the Sultan, headed by the sultanate's Grand Mufti or his assistant, and the membership of two experienced persons nominated by the head of the committee to express an opinion from the legal point of view.

'If its opinion does not reach the court within 60 days following receipt of the papers, the court will rule on the case, and if unanimity is not reached, the death penalty will be replaced by life imprisonment.'

Continued on Page 03

Bye bye plastic bags

More than 20,000 environment-friendly shopping bags to be given out as countdown to Jan 1 deadline begins

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A countdown to a ban on use of single-use plastic bags has begun as Oman prepares to end the scourge of plastic bags with the prohibition coming into force from January 1, 2021. The Environment Authority (EA) is stepping up awareness on the issue with more than 20,000 environment-friendly shopping bags to be distributed across Oman this year.

As part of its efforts to spread awareness on the environment, the Environment Society of Oman, in cooperation with Oman Flour Mills (OFMI), has distributed 4,000 reusable shopping bags in shops across Muscat.

The initiative comes as a step to help Oman prepare to eliminate plastic shopping bags by the January 1, 2021-deadline which was issued by EA following a decision on March 9.

The authority has also informed that violators of the decision will be liable to pay a fine of no less than RO100 and no more than RO2,000. The fine will double in the case of a repeat violation, it stated.

"The decision is part of the authority's plan to protect Oman's environment and wildlife from pollution and waste. It came after a series of studies and workshops conducted by us in cooperation with the concerned government and private agencies," said an official at EA.

He affirmed that the authority will take appropriate measures to ensure the commitment of companies and commercial institutions in the implementation of the decision.

He added that plastic bags have a harmful impact on the environment as they don't decompose for hundreds of years. "This year, we will distribute more than 20,000 environment-friendly shopping bags in schools, universities and shops to spread awareness. We have cooperated with Orpic, ESO and other bodies to organise awareness campaigns. We urge people to use environment-friendly bags."

YOUR SAY

NOW ON WHATSAPP

Share your comment in not more than 50 words along with your full name, profession and front facing photo before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp

Send us on WhatsApp 71509370

WELCOME ABOARD...

After months of travel restrictions, do you think it is now safe to fly? What precautionary measures would you take while travelling?

Hamood Saleem al Dhawi
Head of transportation

It'll take some time before travelling becomes normal. Even with precautionary measures in place in Oman at airports and on flights, I don't think it is a good idea to travel for tourism. Travel only in unavoidable situations like work or medical treatment. If travel is unavoidable, then there's nothing more helpful than wearing a mask, washing hands regularly and social distancing.

Saud Salim Sufian
Businessman

Travel is safe only when precautionary measures are in place. Even without COVID-19, care is always needed. No one should travel when feeling sick for your own safety and others' too.

Jayento Sarkkar
Private sector employee

As long as you take the necessary precautions, closer-to-home vacations in relatively uncrowded spots are fairly low risk. But keep in mind the mandated travel restrictions and precautionary prerequisites which could be a challenge if not acquainted with beforehand. Don't travel if you are sick or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Reema Bhatia
Teacher

It's heartening to hear that air travel is inching back to normal but staying safe remains a big concern because the cases are still surging. Staying at home is the safest way to protect yourself and others. But in case you are in an urgency to fly, please take the necessary precautions. Many airlines have also suggested contactless boarding by installing apps in your phone.

Mahendra A Rao
Accountant

Flying still isn't safe as travelling increases our chances of getting and spreading the virus, but in case of emergencies and work commitments, we are left with no other options. Basic tips to follow in case of flying include wearing a mask to keep our mouth and nose covered in public, washing hands or sanitising hands frequently and avoiding contact with unknown people.

Saif Said al Saadi
Logistics officer

Yes, it will be safe to travel if airports and aircraft are well sanitised and all precautionary measures are taken so that you don't get infected. Follow the rules and SOP of the destination of your travel.

Anand Jaysinh Toprani
Investor

No, it is still not safe to travel abroad. We may be safe here in Oman but who knows about the destination of your travel? In case of travel, it's best to always use masks, gloves, face shield and sanitiser to protect yourself. Also, you should drink hot water and turmeric with hot milk to protect yourself.

Frank D'Souza
Former EMT First Aid/HSE Instructor

Being handicapped, I wouldn't travel at all in these conditions. I would travel only if all is clear to travel in and out of the country with all safety procedures in place. Not otherwise.

Muthumari Pandian
Housewife

With flights canceled due to COVID-19, many were unable to return to Muscat. Resuming aviation services is a good opportunity for those people to return to Oman. We should strictly follow safety precautions like wearing masks and social distancing during travel to make it a safe journey.

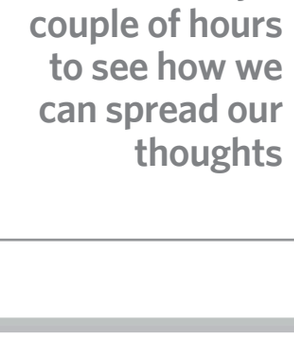
NEXT ON YOUR SAY

Are you hopeful that the night curfew that is currently in effect will curb the spread of COVID-19?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to **muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om** Log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue

OPINION

SALEH MIRI, MUSCAT DAILY COLUMNIST, IS AN ARCHITECT WHO CAME TO OMAN IN THE EARLY 1980S



> If we want to change the opinion of people, we can also express our views in various social media. It takes only a couple of hours to see how we can spread our thoughts

The arrival of the novel coronavirus has made us realise that everything that we believed was correct is not true. A virus shook the whole planet. Despite the tremendous advances in technology, we still do not know where we are going. There are specialists who contradict each other daily on TV programmes, not to mention politicians who have become experts in all medical issues. The world does not know where it is going.

The reality of the matter, however, is slightly different. Our world has changed and we did not realise it. Technological discoveries have taken over our minds. Through robots and telephones, those who created these technologies know where we are, what we say, what we like or dislike, and very little room is left for our freedom. Even when we think that we have choices, they are monitored in advance. The speed at which these changes are happening is mind-blowing, moving from fast to faster.

Meanwhile, we are observing these changes and not getting involved. The smart guys who are creating these new technologies are getting richer and the rest of the world has no choice other than to observe and be defenceless. Pharmaceutical companies are competing to create a vaccine, not because they want to save us, but to make huge amounts of money.

But is this the attitude we have to have or can we react differently?

Politicians are using these new technologies to reinforce their support, to influence public opinion, to divulge secrets, to force us to abide by them,

A NEW WORLD

etc. Tobacco companies advertise that cigarettes do not harm us, and do everything so people continue to buy tobacco. They are using and abusing these technologies and we follow them on WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and all social media platforms.

But why are we not using these apps to our advantage? If you want to know the market reaction to a product, before you launch it, you can get an accurate feedback from potential clients and ensure the viability of your project. The future is in our hands, not in the hands of those who run the world presently.

If we want to change the opinion of people, we can also express our views in various social media. It takes only a couple of hours to see how we can spread our thoughts. Maybe not on the scale with which the owners of these technologies use it, but if we, as the people of the world, by working together can bring changes then we will tell the technologies what to do, and not the other way around.

We should teach our very young children all about robotics, artificial intelligence, etc, so that they can design their future use of these technologies and not be used by them.

The politicians who we initially selected to represent us gradually turn around to tell us what we should do to enforce what is good for them.

If we do not change things and realise that we survive by co-operating with each other, then the world will collapse and there will be no planet Earth anymore. In the absence of a quick reaction, we and our planet will disappear. Let us not lose this opportunity and start a new and better world.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of *Muscat Daily* or Apex Press & Publishing

Flights continue; ROP permits some activities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Airports has stated that flight services will continue without any disruptions during the 8pm to 5am night curfew currently in effect till October 24.

In a statement, Oman Airports said, 'Passengers heading to and from the airport during curfew hours must carry a copy of their flight ticket to avoid fines. Also, individuals driving them or picking up passengers must carry a printed copy of the confirmed flight ticket.'

Meanwhile, Mwasalat has suspended its Muscat-Salalah service until further notice in the wake of the night movement ban.

'The first day of the curfew in all states of the sultanate witnessed commitment from citizens and residents. ROP is present at various locations in all governorates to prevent family and social gatherings of all kinds throughout the day, and to prevent movement from 8pm to 5am,' the Royal Oman Police said in a statement.

The sultanate has activated control points during the period to stop any kind of movement between governorates and prevent unauthorised crossings, in addition to closing and monitoring beaches around the clock.

However, the ROP also stated that during the night curfew it will allow one escort to accompany truck drivers besides allowing fishermen's activities, for which they must coordinate with the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources for permits.

REGIONAL WEATHER

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	35	23
Doha	34	25
Kuwait City	36	23
Manama	33	25
Riyadh	33	16

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.48am
Sunrise	6.03am
Duhr	11.58am
Asr	3.19pm
Maghrib	5.48pm
Isha	6.58pm

Curfew: Night-time businesses feel the pinch

Our Correspondent
Muscat

(Supplied photo)

The strict night curfew, now in place as a measure to check the spread of COVID-19 in the sultanate, has evoked mixed reactions from people. While some have welcomed the move, several said they feel the pinch because of the restrictions.

Businesses like restaurants and fitness clubs are thought to be the most affected as a result of the night curfew.

Many restaurants in Ruwi and Ghubra do brisk business during evenings when bachelors as well as families come to dine.

Babu Aslam, a chef in a newly opened grill shop in Ruwi, said the business had only recently started after restrictions on certain activities were lifted.

"We are known for our kebabs and tikkas back in Mumbai, so we decided to start here. Things were gradually picking up here. This night curfew is a setback for people like us," Aslam said.

While saying it takes time, manpower and money to start a business, he said he understood the situation.

"We have to abide by the law because lives are more important."

Most restaurants in the city usually get customers only after 7pm, when people meet friends for chit-chat and coffee after office. Coffee and shawarma shops get the maximum customers during this time.

Having to close their shops by 7pm (in view of the 8pm curfew) means they lose out a big chunk of their business.

Fawad K, who runs a coffee shop in Ruwi, said although his shop is open in the morning his main business starts after 7pm.

"I usually employ some extra boys to assist me in my business. It is true that for several hours, my shop as well as others are very crowded. And it's our business time."

But Fawad welcomed the move.

"Though people wear masks, they hardly follow social distancing. So I welcome the move for the next few weeks and hope we will have better business soon."

Even though the lockdown starts from 8pm, people make it a point to close businesses by 7pm. As there is a rush to head back home, not many customers are seen in coffee shops and restaurants even at 7pm.

Sajid, who runs a jewellery shop in Muttrah with his brother, is disappointed with the latest announcement.

After months of lockdown, they restarted the shop in Muttrah souq and business was slowly returning.

"In the souq, life starts after 5pm. People love to spend some time in the shops selling antiques and small coffee shops here. Ladies like to spend time trying on the jewellery."

He said it's difficult to do business in a rush.

"There are customers who come from places like Seeb and Mawaleh. But now with this deadline, no one will be coming. People cannot shop in a hurry. I hope they find a vaccine for this virus soon as it has already impacted our livelihood."

Gyms and fitness clubs are also affected due to the night-time curfew.

An instructor in a fitness club in Ghala said, "Before, we used to run our classes from 7pm to 9pm but now with the lockdown, we have to conduct them earlier. It is tough as most of my students are working and they have to finish their work and immediately come here. That will be tough for them. At the same time, they also need to finish here and rush home fast."

He said that after the previous lockdown, the number of students has slowly dropped.

"And now with this night curfew, I will lose more students."

(Supplied photo)

Hospital for women, children in Sohar by 2022

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sohar will gets its first specialised hospital for women and children by 2022. An agreement was signed to finance and establish the hospital between Oman Investment Corporation, Oman Development Bank, Ahli Bank and Dawood Contracting on Monday.

The 60-bed hospital is part of the two-hospital project that the Oman Investment Corporation (OIC) had announced earlier under its Aman Health Care Services initiative.

OIC, an Omani private equity investment company, had earlier this year announced the successful fundraising (of RO20mn) of its first private equity investment vehicle - Aman Health Care Services.

Aman Health Care will also set up another hospital for women and children in Muscat, with a capacity of 70 beds.

These hospitals aim to provide high-quality medical services for women and children with a family-friendly environment, and modern and advanced infrastructure with the provision of qualified and experienced staff and doctors.

The project is the first platform for local and regional investors in healthcare. Oman is a pioneer in supporting private healthcare services

KALAT AL BALUSHI

Kalat bin Ghuloom al Balushi, chairman of the Board of Directors of Aman Health Care and CEO of OIC, expressed his pride in completing the first phase of the public offering. He said, "The project is the first platform for local and regional investors in the field of healthcare. The sultanate is a pioneer in supporting private healthcare services."

Royal Opera House launches patriotic song

Muscat - Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) has announced the production of a new patriotic song, titled 'Great and Glorious', released to coincide with its anniversary on October 12.

'Great and Glorious' pays tribute to the renewed renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The piece is written by the Omani poet Ibrahim al Salmi, set to music composed by Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidi, conducted and orchestrated by Amir Abdul Majeed, and performed by emerging talent Fahd al Balushi.

Marking Balushi's debut official engagement and first collaboration with the composer and conductor, the release has been hailed as a stellar production. Balushi began developing his singing talent by pursuing a challenging repertoire, following a career journey inspired by two significant voices in modern Arab music - Sabah Fakhri and Lotfi Bouchnak.

Sayyid Busaidi said, "His voice is rare and unique. He has a wide range at multiple levels that allows him to sing the most difficult songs and connect with any melody, no matter how difficult it is. I was very happy to discover his voice and am very optimistic about his future. I would like to thank the Royal Opera House Muscat for being the producer of this patriotic piece."

Recorded in a studio in Egypt, 'Great and Glorious' is directed by Nasser al Ruqishi of Alquds Art Production Company.

Customs seize over 20,000 bottles of alcohol, foil heroin smuggling attempt

Muscat – The sultanate's customs department has seized over 20,000 bottles of alcoholic beverages and 1.765kg of heroin in separate cases.

ROP's Directorate General of Customs said its Department of Investigation and Risk Assessment raided a site for expatriate workers in North Batinah governorate and seized more than 20,000 bottles of alcoholic beverages.

'The Directorate General of Customs also foiled an attempt to smuggle 1.765kg of heroin hidden inside a mail package containing vehicle spare parts,' it said.

HM issues two Royal Decrees

Continued from Page 01

Article 2: This decree will be published in the official gazette and enforced from the day following its publication date.

Royal Decree No 121/2020 issues the Value Added Tax Law

Article 1: Enacts the attached Value Added Tax Law.

Article 2: The head of the Tax Authority will issue the executive regulations of the law within six months from the date of its implementation. He will also issue the necessary decisions to implement its provisions.

Article 3: Anything that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions will be repealed.

Article 4: This decree will be published in the official gazette and enforced 180 days following the date of its publication.

685 new COVID-19 cases, 8 deaths

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday confirmed 685 new cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), taking the total to 106,575. The number of deaths reported during the same time was eight. The number of recoveries has increased to 93,222 while the number of deaths has reached 1,046.

Taageer Finance recognised as the 'Best Non-Banking Finance Company' for 2019

Taageer Finance SAOG was recognised as the Best Non-Banking Finance Company by OER (Oman Economic Review) for the year 2019.

The award ceremony was held in the ballroom of Sheraton Oman Hotel on October 6 during the New Age Banking Summit.

The award was received by the CEO Shahin Mohammed Ahmed al Balushi from Tahir Salim al Amri, executive president, Central Bank of Oman.

Sheikh Salim bin Mustahil al Mashani was the host with Oman Banks Association as the supporting body.

The function was attended by over 100 top business leaders, CEOs and senior government officials.

Taageer Finance has focused on supporting small and medium businesses by providing superior customer service, diversifying the portfolio for better risk management, automating processes for improved customer experience, strengthening the recovery mechanism and interacting regularly with customers facing financial difficulties to come up with solutions to solve their issues, said CEO Shahin Mohammed Ahmed Balushi.

Balushi explains that during the current year, Taageer's main focus was to support the government in stabilising the economy by facilitating SME portfolio and ensuring that the affected businesses and individuals sail through difficult times.

Taageer has also taken several initiatives to provide an improved digital experience to its customers with emphasis on customer security and convenience.

Bank Muscat, Omran pact to digitise business operations

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has signed an agreement with Omran Group, the executive arm of the sultanate for tourism development, to provide a number of advanced digital solutions that are integrated in the group's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

The agreement aims to enhance the collaboration between Bank Muscat and Omran Group through offering state-of-the-art technology to enable customer service excellence. Bank Muscat's highly secure B2B Connect solution will seamlessly integrate with Omran Group's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to provide an automated, two-way data transfer service for high volume online payments leading to greater operational efficiencies

Tariq Atiq, DGM - Transaction & Public Sector Banking, said, "Bank Muscat has collaborated with Omran Group to introduce state-of-the-art technology to digitise its operations for greater efficiency in services delivery. The growing shift to digital brings a number of benefits including efficiency, cost reduction, accountability, speed and scalability. Going ahead, we expect more organisations to take advantage of the high degree of automation and security that is made possible by the B2B Connect solution."

Hussain Noor al Bulushi, senior VP – Shared Services at Omran Group, said, "We are proud to partner with Bank Muscat to use its cutting-edge B2B Connect solution. Omran Group has been constantly embracing digitalisation through the deployment of advanced technical solutions as part of our corporate sustainability to greatly improve our operational efficiencies, streamline processes and look into contemporary methods of reducing overall operational cost wherever possible through the utilisation of latest technologies. We are confident that these solutions will ease our business mechanisms and create a high-quality, safe and efficient business environment."

The niche B2B Connect solution is an advanced version of online banking targeted mainly at large corporates. With the B2B Connect solution, corporates can carry out payment approvals in their ERP and the information can flow to the bank for processing. Through this solution, institutions can build an efficient and robust payment and reconciliation system.

The bank's corporate online banking platform serves as a key solution for corporate payments. With the integration of corporate enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems with the online banking platform, a complete digitalisation process is now in place for corporate payables as well as reconciliation.

Bank Muscat also offers corporates other tailor-made solutions such as the Direct Debit solution and Remote Deposit Capture (RDC), which allow corporate customers to smoothly transition towards efficient technology-focused processes.

As the leading bank in the sultanate, Bank Muscat is committed to building ever stronger partnerships with its customers as it improves customer experience by offering banking solutions adapted in tune with the changing customer needs and use of technology for efficient and seamless experience.

Knowledge Oman to hold webinar on Women's Day

In commemorating Omani Women's Day on October 17, Knowledge Oman will be hosting a special webinar aimed at empowering women to build resilience and overcome obstacles in their life towards reaching their full potential.

The webinar, 'Transforming challenges into Positive Change and Opportunities', will host international motivational speaker Dina Bseisu, moderated by Omani public speaking educator, Nabila al Barwani. The event, to be broadcast over Knowledge Oman webinar platforms, is free to attend for any woman.

Dina is a Palestine born mother of two who has achieved academically and professionally as a recipient of a Magna Cum Laude on the Dean's Honour List from Georgetown University and the managing director of Deutsche Bank in Switzerland.

She has committed to using her own successful experiences and the story of how she overcame challenges and hindrances to inspire and enhance the lives of other women at a community level. She is the founder and president of the Challenge to Change (www.challenge-tochange.me) organisation, a Swiss non-profit organisation aimed at addressing mental wellness for women in the Middle East.

In addition to being a community which women can reach out to, the platform strives to develop women holistically and equip them with skills to take control of their lives and make an optimal difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

The webinar will be moderated and coordinated by Nabila, a public speaking educator, passionate about helping people share their thoughts and making their voices their ultimate superpower. Nabila runs public speaking and presenting workshops that help students and professionals speak with authenticity and is also a human resources manager in the health sector with over 15 years experience in dealing with people from different walks of life.

Nabila currently leads the Knowledge Oman Talks project which gathers speakers who share the same hunger for knowledge sharing under one roof.

The webinar will be broadcast on Saturday, October 17, from 7.30-8.30pm and is available for viewing across all Knowledge Oman webinar platforms.

Women from all walks of life are encouraged to register for the webinar via www.knowledgeoman.com/register

MG Festival gets more exciting!

In the light of the amazing response received during the course of the ongoing MG Festival, Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD), the exclusive distributor of MG Motor, announced that its entire 2020 line-up of MGs, will now be available starting from RO2,999 only! For limited stock and time.

Customers interested in buying any of the MG models: the MG 5, MG RX8, MG 6, MG RX5, MG ZS, and MG HS by October 31, can also receive benefits such as free registration; insurance; 30,000kms/2 years' service; 200,000km/6 years' manufacturer's warranty; and AAA road-side assistance.

"Achieving customer satisfaction through unbeatable offers and services is a top priority at MHD Automotive. Our latest MG Festival is our way of ensuring our customers are satisfied and are getting the value they desire with the MG car they desire," said Muhammad Faisal Nawaz, marketing manager – MG Oman.

"Our MG cars are available from just RO2,999, and we will be giving people the opportunity to join the MG family or even upgrade their existing MGs. We have already witnessed a tremendous response to the festival and look forward to seeing even more customers come to be a part of the MG family."

MG Motor Oman has introduced a brand-new e-commerce platform to help enhance its MG customers' purchase experience from the comfort and safety of their home.

This e-commerce platform https://mg-om.com/buy-online/ allows customers to select vehicles from the available stock, reserve the MG model they desire, conduct online payments and schedule home delivery of their purchased car.

The company also has a robust sanitisation drive in place that continues in all MG showrooms and service centres, adding stricter sanitisation protocols for new vehicle deliveries (PDI) and all vehicles received by MG service centres, with the customer's safety remaining number one priority.

To arrange a test drive, or, if you require more details on the MG Festival, please visit our MG Motor showroom, or call 71557334; wherein a team of qualified sales consultants will be able to assist and provide you with more information.

Rawahi hopeful of good display in Cyprus Rally

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Oman's ace rally driver Abdullah al Rawahi returns to action when he along with his co-driver Ata al Hamoud of Jordan will compete in the Cyprus Rally, the fourth round of the 2020 Middle East Rally Championship (MERC).

Following the cancellation of the previous two rounds – Qatar International Rally (April 9-11) and Jordan Rally (September 24-26), the Cyprus Rally will only be the second MERC rally to be held and will be held from October 16-18.

The fifth and final round of the MERC will be the Rally of Lebanon from November 13-15.

The opening round of the MERC was held in Muscat when Rally Oman was staged from February 6-8 and Rawahi surprised one and all with his speed and rallying skills to take second spot on his debut in R5 class.

Defending champion Nasser Saleh al Attiyah won the Rally Oman, which returned to MERC calendar for the first time since 2015. The 23 year old Rawahi has been in irresistible form at the start of the year before coronavirus halted rallying competitions in March.

Prior to the halt, Rawahi had won the first round of Jordan National Rally in his Subaru Impreza. Though the Jordan rally was not part of the MERC calendar, Rawahi's victory underlined his growing credentials as one of the talented drivers in the region.

> *It is not going to be an easy rally, given that it is being held after a gap of more than six months. I have tried to be positive, both physically and mentally*
>
> ABDULLAH AL RAWAHI

Going into the Cyprus Rally, Rawahi is second behind legendary Nasser Saleh al Attiyah and sounded optimistic of delivering a 'good show'.

Rawahi had participated in the same event last year but was forced to retire due to technical glitch in the car.

Veteran Nasser Saleh will be once again favourite to claim the top honours but Rawahi 'promised to give his best'.

"It is not going to be an easy rally, given that it is being held after a gap of more than six months. I have tried to be positive, both physically and mentally, during these months through regular training, watching rallying videos and reading," said Rawahi.

"The cancellation of Qatar and Jordan rallies certainly were a dampener but given the COVID-19 pandemic concerns, it was the best thing to do," he added.

The Cyprus Rally has an impressive history, having begun in 1970. Nasser Saleh al Attiyah is the most successful driver with six title wins.

@ashokmuscat

QUICK RUN

Rain-man Petrucci wins French MotoGP at Le Mans

Danilo Petrucci sprang an 'unbelievable' surprise to hold off rookie Alex Marquez and win the rain-hit French MotoGP at Le Mans on Sunday. Home favourite Fabio Quartararo, supported by 5,000 fans allowed in to the Bugatti circuit under strict COVID-19 protocols, held onto the championship lead despite struggling from pole to take ninth. Petrucci, riding for Ducati, won for only the second time from 146 MotoGPs. The 29 year old was the seventh different winner of the nine races staged so far in this coronavirus-disrupted campaign. Quartararo, the 21 year old Yamaha-SRT rider can take comfort from extending his lead by two points to ten in the world title battle over Joan Mir, who came in 11th. With five races remaining Quartararo leads the championship on 115 points, with Mir on 110 and Dovizioso on 107.

Sordo claims top honours again in Sardinia

Dani Sordo won the Rally of Sardinia in Alghero, Italy, for the second straight year on Sunday holding off fellow Hyundai driver Thierry Neuville. After a three-day battle along the sandy and gravel roads of the Mediterranean island, Spaniard Sordo pipped Belgian's Neuville by just 5.1sec with France's former six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier only one second further behind for Toyota. Ogier's Welsh teammate Elfyn Evans finished fourth, over a minute behind Sordo, to hold the world championship lead after six of eight rounds. Four drivers are still in the running for the world title with two races remaining in Belgium and Italy. Evans has a 14-point lead on Ogier and 24 on Neuville, who moves up to third with defending champion Ott Tanak fourth overall.

AFP

Portugal, Italy stay on top as England down Belgium

NATIONS LEAGUE

Paris, France - Portugal and Italy kept hold of first place in their UEFA Nations League groups on Sunday with goalless draws against France and Poland on a night of little drama, while England saw off Belgium to take the initiative in their pool.

There was not much to talk about at the Stade de France as a star-studded line up of players including Cristiano Ronaldo, Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann failed to muster much of a spectacle in the League A, Group 3 match.

The 1,000 fans gathered in the cavernous stadium just outside Paris to watch France host the reigning European champions were treated to just four shots on target.

Both sides are on seven points, four ahead of Croatia, whose 2-1 home win over Sweden earlier on Sunday was the group's more entertaining match, with a calamitous late lapse from Pontus Jansson allowing the 2018 World Cup finalists to snatch the points in a soaking Zagreb. Sweden are stuck on no points.

Portugal's Joao Felix (left) kicks the ball next to teammate Danilo during the match against France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris, on Sunday (AFP)

Italy settle for point

Italy stretched their unbeaten streak to 18 matches and held onto top spot in League A, Group 1 with their stalemate in Gdansk.

New Juventus signing Federico Chiesa missed the chance to win the match for the dominant 'Azzurri' from close range in the 11th minute. Roberto Mancini's side are one point ahead of the Netherlands, who also drew 0-0 with Bosnia and Herzegovina, ahead of their meeting on Wednesday.

England manager Gareth Southgate said his side showed what they were made of after coming from behind to beat Belgium 2-1 and move top of League A, Group 2 earlier on Sunday.

The Three Lions are on seven points, one ahead of the world's top-ranked side after Marcus Rashford's spot-kick and Mason Mount's deflected winner 25 minutes from time cancelled out Romelu Lukaku's early penalty.

"We are not going to face a more difficult game defensively," said Southgate.

"That is the beauty of the Nations League, you get games against this level of opponent.

Denmark are three points behind England in third after their simple 3-0 win over bottom side Iceland.

In League B, Erling Braut Haaland showed what the rescheduled Euro 2020 would be missing after he slammed home a hat-trick to help Norway to a 4-0 thrashing of Romania.

Haaland struck in the 13th, 64th and 74th minutes as Norway moved level on six points with group leaders Austria, 1-0 winners at Northern Ireland.

Norway were knocked out of the Euros playoffs by Serbia on Thursday.

OTHER RESULTS:

League B: Group 2: Israel 1 Czech Republic 2, Scotland 1 Slovakia 0; **Group 3:** Serbia 0 Hungary 1, Russia 1 Turkey 1; **Group 4:** Finland 2 Bulgaria 0, Republic of Ireland 0 Wales 0.

League C: Group 2: Estonia 3 North Macedonia 3, Armenia 2 Georgia 2; **Group 3:** Kosovo 0 Slovenia 1, Greece 2 Moldova 0; **Group 4:** Lithuania 2 Belarus 2, Kazakhstan 0 Albania 0.

AFP

Los Angeles Lakers players celebrate after winning the 17th NBA title in Orlando, Florida, on Sunday (AFP)

Lakers capture 17th NBA title

Orlando, US - The Los Angeles Lakers, fueled by superstar LeBron James's triple-double, dominated the Miami Heat 106-93 on Sunday to win a record-equalling 17th NBA championship but their first in a decade.

James added another chapter to an epic career, delivering 28 points, 14 rebounds and ten assists as he captured his fourth NBA title with a third team. He earned NBA Finals Most Valuable Player (MVP) honours for a fourth time, and said the accomplishment had a special flavour with the Lakers.

"This is a historic franchise and to be a part of this is something that I'll be able to talk about and my grandkids and kids will be able to talk about - their pawpaw played for the Los Angeles Lakers," James said.

"It's like playing for the Yankees and winning or playing for the Cowboys and winning a Super Bowl, or the Patriots. It's like playing for the Red Sox."

James said the magnitude of what he was trying to accomplish with the Lakers kept his mind focused in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

"To be able to win with a historical franchise is something that, no matter if your mind wavers away, you can always remember what you're doing it for," said James, who arrived in Los Angeles in 2018.

Anthony Davis, playing in his first title series after years of frustration in New Orleans, added 19 points and 15 rebounds as the Lakers completed a 4-2 triumph more than eight months after the helicopter crash that killed team legend Kobe Bryant, who had led the Lakers to their last title in 2010.

The series capped not only an emotional season for the Lakers with the loss of Bryant but a season of upheaval for the NBA as players grappled with the coronavirus pandemic and the demands for social and racial justice sweeping across the US.

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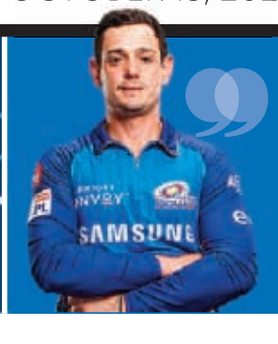
INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE IPL 2020



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Enjoyed the win. Just keeping it simple worked for me. I have been batting well in the nets. I wasn't too stressed.

Quinton de Kock
Mumbai opener, after winning the man of the match award against Delhi on Sunday

Allround Mumbai ease their way past Delhi

Suryakumar Yadav of Mumbai Indians in action during his knock of 53 against Delhi Capitals in Abu Dhabi on Sunday

Abu Dhabi, UAE - A top of the table clash between the Mumbai Indians and the Delhi Capitals stretched to the last over, but it wasn't quite the nail-biting thriller that had been expected on Sunday.

Mumbai eased past the Capitals by five wickets, riding on excellent bowling and proactive half-centuries by Quinton de Kock and Suryakumar Yadav. Both de Kock and Yadav made 53 and though each fell somewhat against the run of play, the Capitals did not have enough to defend.

Mumbai hauled in the target in 19.4 overs to swap places with the Capitals on the points table.

De Kock was already motoring by the time Yadav faced his first ball. He opened up in fourth over, against R Ashwin - who had a favourable match-up against de Kock coming into the game - with a six and a four. Yadav ensured there was no sagging of momentum when de Kock eventually did fall to Ashwin.

Yadav himself was caught off Kagiso Rabada with five overs left, but by then he had brought the equation down to almost a run a ball. The depth in Mumbai's batting meant that despite two further wickets, they were always in control of the chase.

The Mumbai bowlers' excellence had given their batsmen a relatively easy chase. They tied down the Capitals right through their innings. Shikhar Dhawan batted through the innings for the Capitals, but made only 69 off 52. The Capitals were also hurt by the absence of two key batsmen. Rishabh Pant was injured, which meant they had to bring in Alex Carey to don the gloves, and Carey's entry meant Shimron Hetmyer had to sit out too. Ajinkya Rahane got his first game of IPL 2020 as a result.

Dhawan-Iyer stand

Prithvi Shaw chipped Trent Boult to cover in the first over and Rahane's start to IPL 2020 didn't go too well - he was trapped lbw by Krunal Pandya for a run-a-ball 15. Shreyas Iyer joined Dhawan at 24 for two in the fifth over.

While their initial tactics seemed to be to knock the ball around without taking risks, they did punish errors in line and length so that the run rate didn't stagnate. That worked up to a point, but where Capitals felt the pinch was that neither of the set batsmen could accelerate in the second half. They still ended up putting on a good stand of 85 in 10.2 overs.

When Iyer was out, they were 109 for three in 14.4 overs and it looked like a good finish could happen with the in-form Marcus Stoinis walking in. He did hit a couple during his stay, he was run out in a mix up with Dhawan, which seriously impacted the Capitals' ability to finish big.

Krunal, Bumrah star

Left-arm spinner Krunal was brought on as early as the fifth over, despite there being a left-hander in Dhawan at the crease and only two fielders allowed outside the circle. The confidence invested in Pandya was not misplaced, with Rahane out to his second ball. Pandya stuck to stump to stump lines, accurately targeting a back of length spot across his four overs.

His spin-bowling partner Rahul Chahar shared the middle overs with Krunal and also gave nothing away, dangling the ball out of the hitting arcs of both batsmen.

While he didn't pick up a wicket, Jasprit Bumrah was on point with his bowling in the manner Mumbai have come to expect almost as a matter of course. When Carey came in after Stoinis was out, Bumrah bowled every ball to him from around the wicket, an angle that the wicketkeeper-batsman hasn't had success against much when facing pacers.

Between them, the three bowled 12 overs for 79 runs, an economy rate of 6.58. While the Capitals did manage to pick up more runs against the other bowlers, it was not enough to offset the strangulation that Bumrah, Pandya and Chahar had wrought.

De Kock, Yadav tee off

If there was an attack in the tournament capable of defending 162 against a batting line-up like Mumbai's, it was the Capitals. But unlike the Delhi batsmen, de Kock and Yadav didn't let the rival bowlers settle into rhythms quickly, or at all.

De Kock lifted Ashwin straight and then swept him square to start things off, and then took down Anrich Nortje with a couple of audacious sixes in the last over of the powerplay.

One of the features of their batting was how seamlessly the baton passed from de Kock to Yadav. While de Kock was at the crease, he had the majority of the strike and made the majority of the runs too. He kept finding the boundary regularly, moving around in his crease to create angles.

When a nicely flighted ball from Ashwin had de Kock miscuing, Yadav had faced only 11 balls. But he ensured the middle overs weren't going to be controlled by the spin duo of Ashwin and Axar Patel. He used his wrists to whip Ashwin into the legside regularly, and swept Patel with authority.

In the 15th over, with Rabada brought back to conjure a wicket, Yadav started with 4, 2, 6 to swing the balance of the match decisively. He was out on the last ball of that over but, by then, Mumbai were in safe territory.

Cricinfo

Mumbai's Krunal Pandya celebrates the wicket of Delhi's Ajinkya Rahane

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS		
P Shaw	c K Pandya b Boult	4 (3)
S Dhawan	not out	69 (52)
A Rahane	lbw b K Pandya	15 (15)
S Iyer	c Boult b K Pandya	42 (33)
M Stoinis	run out	13 (8)
A Carey	not out	14 (9)
Extras	(w 5)	5
TOTAL: 162 for four		

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-24, 3-109, 4-130
Bowling: T Boult 4-0-36-1, J Pattinson 3-0-37-0, J Bumrah 4-0-26-0, K Pandya 4-0-26-2, K Pollard 1-0-10-0, R Chahar 4-0-27-0

MUMBAI INDIANS		
Rohit Sharma	c Rabada b A Patel	5 (12)
Q de Kock	c Shaw b Ashwin	53 (36)
S Yadav	c Iyer b Rabada	53 (32)
I Kishan	c A Patel b Rabada	28 (15)
H Pandya	c Carey b Stoinis	0 (2)
K Pollard	not out	11 (14)
K Pandya	not out	12 (7)
Extras	(w 4)	4
TOTAL: 166 for five		

Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-77, 3-130, 4-130, 5-152
Bowling: K Rabada 4-0-28-2, A Nortje 4-0-28-0, A Patel 3-0-24-1, R Ashwin 4-0-35-1, H Patel 2-0-20-0, M Stoinis 2.4-0-31-1

TODAY'S MATCH

DUBAI, 6PM

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
MI	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
DC	7	5	2	0	10	+1.038
KKR	6	4	2	0	8	+0.017
RCB	6	4	2	0	8	-0.820
SRH	7	3	4	0	6	+0.153
RR	7	3	4	0	6	-0.872
CSK	7	2	5	0	4	-0.588
KXIP	7	1	6	0	2	-0.381

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

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

Sunil Narine of Kolkata Knight Riders

KKR and Narine 'surprised' after being placed on warning list

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Kolkata Knight Riders have expressed 'surprise' about their premier off-spinner Sunil Narine being reported for suspect action in the match against Kings XI Punjab on October 10. Narine was placed on a 'warning list' by the IPL, which said the off-spinner would be 'suspended' in case he were to be reported again this tournament.

According to the Knight Riders, even Narine was surprised at being reported because there were 'no concerns' expressed by any match officials in the five previous games prior to the Kings XI match.

"This [Narine being reported for suspect action] came as a surprise to the franchise and Mr Narine, considering he has played over 115 games in the IPL since 2012 and as many as 68 games since 2015, when he was last reported during the IPL season for a suspect action before being subsequently cleared completely by SRASSC, an ICC accredited facility," the franchise said in a media statement on Monday. "Furthermore, he was playing his sixth game this season, with no concerns expressed formally or informally by the match officials so far."

The IPL said Narine's suspect action was reported by the on-field umpires Chris Gaffeney and Ulhas Gandhe. However, the IPL did not specify which type of delivery/deliveries Narine was reported for.

Narine, the most successful bowler for the Knight Riders in IPL, was one of the two players retained by the franchise in 2018 along with Andre Russell. So far this IPL, while his batting returns have diminished, Narine has been instrumental with the ball, particularly in the death overs.

Narine played the winning hand in the two-run victory against Kings XI by defending 14 in the final over on October 10.

The Knight Riders, however, remain optimistic about resolving the issue soon.

"We are respectful of the process that the IPL has put in place to have his action reviewed, and are working closely with the IPL in this matter. We are hopeful that there would be an appropriate resolution quickly. We appreciate the cooperation being extended by the IPL in expediting this matter."

Cricinfo

Pant sidelined 'for a week'

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Rishabh Pant will miss a week of IPL 2020 because of the hamstring injury he picked up during the Delhi Capitals' game against the Rajasthan Royals on October 9.

"I spoke to the doctor and he said he is going to be resting for a week," the Capitals' captain, Shreyas Iyer, told host broadcaster Star after the side's loss to the Mumbai Indians. "Hope he comes back strongly after this break."

Pant was seen limping towards the end of the Royals' innings, when he took Varun Aaron's catch to seal a win for his side. He has been the second-highest run-getter for the Capitals this season so far, having scored 176 runs in six innings at an average of 35.20 and a strike rate of 133.33.

Pant's absence means Shimron Hetmyer may also miss the Capitals' upcoming games as the only other wicketkeeping option they have is Australia's Alex Carey. With Marcus Stoinis, Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje almost certainties for three overseas spots, Hetmyer is most likely the one to make way for Carey, just like he did on Sunday against the Mumbai Indians.

On the positive side for the Capitals, they have five wins from seven games and currently sit second on the points table, tied with the Mumbai on points.

Cricinfo

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LUCKY 13 IN PARIS FOR NADAL

Spanish great equals Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles

Paris, France - Rafael Nadal demolished Novak Djokovic 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 to win his 13th French Open on Sunday and equal the all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles held by Roger Federer who hailed the victory as 'one of sport's greatest achievements'.

For world No 1 Djokovic, the defeat ended his hopes of an 18th Slam and of becoming the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four majors twice.

Nadal, 34, claimed his 100th match win at Roland Garros against just two defeats since his 2005 debut.

The Spaniard, the oldest champion in Paris since Andres Gimeno in 1972, claimed the title without dropping a set.

He finished the one-sided affair with just 14 unforced errors to his opponent's 52.

"Congrats to Novak for another great tournament. Sorry for today. We've played plenty of times together - one day one wins, another the other," said Nadal.

"After all the things I have been through in my career with injuries, I could not have done it without my family."

Nadal said he wasn't even thinking about matching Federer's record.

"It's been a very tough year. Winning here means everything to me so it's not about equalling Roger on 20, for me today it's just a Roland Garros victory," said Nadal who had skipped the US Open due to the global health crisis and was playing just his second tournament since February.

"Roland Garros means everything to me. I spent most of the most important moments of my tennis career here.

"Just playing here is a true inspiration. The love story I have with this court and city is unbelievable."

For Djokovic, it was just his second loss of 2020 following his default at the US Open.

'King of clay'

"Today, Rafa showed why you are the king of clay. I was out-played by a better player."

Nadal also used his victory speech to thank organisers for staging the tournament, pushed back from its traditional May-June slot due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I want to send a message to everyone around the world. We are facing one of the worst moments that we remember in this world, fighting against this virus. Keep going, stay positive.

"We will get through this and we will beat the virus soon."

Federer was quick to hail Nadal, his long-time rival and close friend.

"I have always had the utmost respect for my friend Rafa as a person and a champion," tweeted Federer, who sat out the tournament to recover from knee surgery.

"As my greatest rival over many years, I believe we have pushed each other to become better players.

"It is a true honour for me to congratulate Rafa on his 20th Grand Slam victory," said the Swiss star.

"It is especially amazing that he has won Roland Garros an incredible 13 times which is one of the greatest achievements in sport. I hope the 20 is just another step on the continuing journey for both of us."

> *It's been a very tough year. Winning here means everything to me so it's not about equalling Roger [Federer] on 20, for me today it's just a Roland Garros victory*
>
> RAFAEL NADAL

Federer won his 20th and most recent Grand Slam title at the 2018 Australian Open and despite having already turned 39, the Swiss star still intends to return to action in 2021.

"I think he's happy when I'm winning and I'm happy when he's doing the things well," said Nadal.

"It means a lot the positive relationship that we have together because we have been going through a great rivalry for a very, very long time."

The 56th meeting between the world's top two players on Sunday started under the roof of Court Philippe Chatrier, intensifying the echo of a crowd limited to 1,000 due to the pandemic.

Conventional wisdom suggested that would favour Djokovic but nobody told Nadal who broke three times in the 45-minute opening set.

The Spaniard hit ten winners and just two unforced errors.

Djokovic's error count was 13 with the out-of-sorts Serb even squandering three break points of his own in the fourth game.

More worrying for the world No 1 - Nadal improved to 111-0 when winning the first set of best-of-five matches on clay in his career.

It was the first opening set 'bagel' in a Roland Garros final since 2004 when Gaston Gaudio recovered to defeat Argentine compatriot Guillermo Coria in five sets.

Djokovic finally got on the board with a service hold in the first game of the second set but Nadal maintained his relentless push, going to a double break for 4-1 as even the Serb's usual deft touches on the drop shot deserted him.

Nadal wrapped up a two-set lead with his unforced error count at just six to Djokovic's 30.

Nadal broke for the sixth time for a 3-2 lead in the third before Djokovic suddenly restored his reputation as the sport's best returner by carving out his first break of the afternoon for 3-3.

However, there was to be no miracle recovery as a double fault handed Nadal a 6-5 lead and he took the title with an ace.

AFP

Leading men's Grand Slam title winners

20	ROGER FEDERER
20	RAFAEL NADAL
17	NOVAK DJOKOVIC
14	PETE SAMPRAS
12	ROY EMERSON
11	ROD LAVER, BJORN BORG
10	BILL TILDEN

RECENT FRENCH OPEN MEN'S CHAMPIONS

RAFAEL NADAL (2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011

NOVAK DJOKOVIC (2016)

STAN WAWRINKA (2015)

Greatest lessons learned, says Djokovic

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic said the 'greatest of defeats' in his career had taught him more than anything else as he suffered a straight-sets loss to Rafael Nadal in the French Open final on Sunday.

"Defeats like this are never really enjoyable, but in the greatest of defeats you learn the greatest lessons as a tennis player, but as a person as well," said Djokovic. "I don't have much to say but that I was completely overplayed by Rafa, by the better player on the court," said Djokovic, now 17-10 in major finals.

"Certainly I could have played better, especially in the first two sets. But, you know, just he did surprise me with the way he was playing. The quality of tennis he was producing, the level, I mean, he's phenomenal. He played a perfect match."

"He keeps going. No holding him back it seems like. It's amazing. I mean, I admire all his achievements, I mean, especially the one here," gushed Djokovic. "It's stunning score and results and records that he's got on this court. I mean, he lost two times in his entire career.

"Winning 13 times, yeah, there's not much you can say. All the superlatives you can use, he deserves them."

> *The quality of tennis he was producing, the level, I mean, he's phenomenal. He played a perfect match*
>
> NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Light rainfall before the start of the final led to the closing of the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier, handing what appeared to be an advantage to Djokovic.

"I was also thinking that these conditions are more favourable to me," said the world No 1, whose only previous loss in 2020 was his default at the US Open. "I was feeling great throughout the tournament playing, playing great tennis, winning in Rome, being very confident about my game. But, yeah, I mean, Rafa has proven everybody wrong. That's why he's a great champion. He just played a fantastic match today."

AFP

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BA CEO CRUZ STEPS DOWN

British Airways said that its CEO Alex Cruz is stepping down 'with immediate effect'. Parent group IAG added in a statement that Cruz will be replaced by its Aer Lingus boss Sean Doyle

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*Rates as on October 12
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

No deal on global digital tax this year

The 137 nations trying to hammer out a new global standard for taxing multinational tech firms will not secure a deal by the end of this year as hoped, the OECD acknowledged on Monday.

"The glass is half full: the package is nearly ready but there is still no political accord," said Pascal Saint-Amans, head of tax policy at the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

But the OECD does expect to finalise a 'digital tax' proposal 'sometime in 2021', Saint-Amans added, although he acknowledged persistent US resistance to the plan.

Talks have been labouring on for the past two years on how to ensure that tech giants pay a fair share of taxes in the countries where they operate, even if their headquarters are elsewhere.

BP starts gas production from Ghazeer ahead of schedule

Our Correspondent
Muscat

BP, in partnership with OQ, Petronas and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, on Monday announced that the production has begun from its Block 61 Phase 2 (Ghazeer gas field), 33 months after the development was approved.

Ghazeer project, which was initially expected to come into production in 2021, has been delivered four months ahead of the schedule. The first phase of development of Block 61 (Khazzan) was brought online in September 2017.

In a press statement, Bernard Looney, BP's chief executive, said, "The start-up of Ghazeer is an important milestone in our strategic partnership with Oman, delivering critical national infrastructure for the sultanate. We appreciate the collaborative support we have received from the government of Oman and our partners in delivering this significant start-up safely and ahead of schedule, particularly as Oman prepares to celebrate its 50th National Day."

H E Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhi, Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals, said, "I am delighted to see BP bringing the Ghazeer gas field online. It's an important project for Oman and we are extremely proud of it. The gas from Ghazeer will contribute towards Oman's 2040 Vision in terms of providing additional energy to local industries as well as diversifying the economy."

The central processing facility at Ghazeer gas field in Block 61 (BP)

This project has been delivered with capital discipline four months early, wells are being drilled in record times and, importantly, safety performance has been excellent

BERNARD LOONEY

The total production capacity from Block 61, comprising both Khazzan and Ghazeer, is expected to rise to 1.5bn cubic feet of gas per day and more than 65,000 barrels a day of associated condensate. With an estimated 10.5tn cubic feet of recoverable gas resources, Block 61 has the capacity to deliver approximately 35 per cent of Oman's total gas demand.

"When we introduced our plans to reinvent BP, we were clear that to deliver them, we have to perform as we transform. There are few better examples of how we are doing just that than Ghazeer. This project has been delivered with capital discipline four months early, wells are being drilled in record times and, importantly, safety performance has been excellent. It exemplifies what a strong and resilient hydrocarbons business looks like – a core part of our strategy," Looney said.

Adopting experience from BP's onshore operations in the US, Ghazeer's wells were tested and completed using the 'green completions' concept, the company said in its statement.

Historically, hydrocarbons produced during well testing for new completions would be flared. In green completions, the hydrocarbons are routed to the production facility instead, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Since adopting this approach in 2019, as much as 201,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions were saved – equivalent to removing 44,000 cars from the road for a year, BP said.

BP said it prioritises in-country value throughout its projects and operations. During the development of Ghazeer, BP has worked closely with local vendors to develop their capabilities and help them be competitive both in Oman and globally, resulting in a number of contracts and technical scopes moving from international to local Omani contractors.

'As this important first gas milestone (from Ghazeer) is achieved, Omanisation in BP Oman reached over 80 per cent. Omani-registered companies were also used for over 85 per cent of all project spend,' BP said.

BP holds a 60 per cent ownership in Block 61, while Makarim Gas Development Limited (a subsidiary of OQ) owns 30 per cent and PC Oman Ventures Limited (a subsidiary of Petronas) holds 10 per cent interest in the block.

OMAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020

Category: Communications

And the winner is...

Rajwa al Ojaili

Rajwa al Ojaili is the deputy managing director of TRACCS Oman. A 12-year veteran, she has acquired extensive experience in designing and implementing multi-media and multi-channel communications programmes, in addition to event management. She co-leads the daily operations of TRACCS Oman while co-managing and mentoring a team of over 20 people.

With a deep understanding of and appreciation for local cultural sensibilities, Rajwa has a strong command of communications best practices in an ever-evolving industry, having worked with some of the world's most reputable companies.

Today, she plays an instrumental role in the firm's continued success and serves a diverse range of clients across a number of industries including corporate, automotive, luxury, telecom, hospitality and energy. She is also responsible for identifying and exploring business development opportunities and generating new revenue streams.

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Saudi Arabia's NCB buys Samba in $15bn merger

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia's National Commercial Bank (NCB) said it will purchase rival lender Samba in a deal valued at around US$15bn to create what would be the kingdom's largest bank.

The deal underscores a push by financial lenders to consolidate as the kingdom grapples with the twin shocks of a coronavirus-led economic slowdown and low crude oil prices.

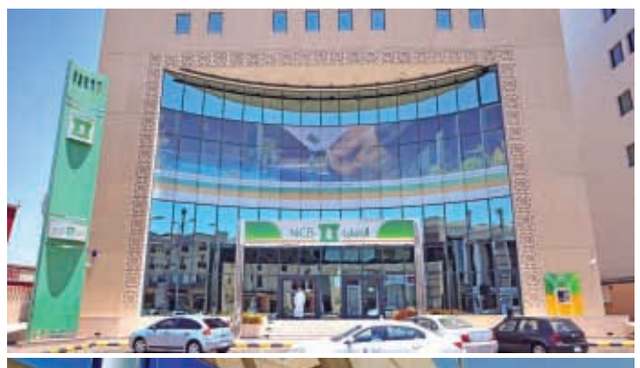
'The National Commercial Bank and Samba financial group today announced that they have entered into a binding agreement to merge,' the banks said in a joint statement.

'If approved by shareholders and regulators, the merger will bring together two highly complementary banks to create Saudi Arabia's largest bank.'

The deal is valued at about SAR55.7bn (US$14.9bn), the statement said.

The merged entity will have more than US$223bn in assets, it added, making it the kingdom's biggest lender.

The banks said the deal was aligned with de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030, an ambitious plan to diversify the kingdom's oil reliant economy.



If approved by shareholders and regulators, the merger will bring together two highly complementary banks to create Saudi Arabia's largest bank

"Saudi Arabia is undergoing a historic transformation with Vision 2030," NCB's chairman Saeed Mohammed al Ghamdi was quoted as saying in the statement.

"Our ambition is to create a national champion that can facilitate the transformation."

The statement said the new bank will support the kingdom's 'landmark deals and mega projects', which are aimed at diversifying the economy.

The world's top crude exporter says it plans to slash government spending by more than seven percent next year as the budget deficit is expected to widen to 12 per cent of gross domestic product in 2020.

But simultaneously, the government is awarding multi-billion- dollar contracts for planned mega projects including NEOM, a US$500bn futuristic megacity in the kingdom's northwest.

'A combination of lower oil prices, deteriorating economic conditions and fierce competition among banks is driving a new wave of mergers and acquisitions in Saudi Arabia and across the wider Gulf region,' the ratings agency Moody's said last month.

AFP

Americans Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson win Nobel Economics Prize

Stockholm, Sweden - US economists Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson won the Nobel Economics Prize on Monday for work on commercial auctions, including for goods and services difficult to sell in traditional ways such as radio frequencies, the Nobel Committee said.

The duo was honoured 'for improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats', the jury said.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences noted that the discoveries by Milgrom (72) and Wilson (83) 'have benefitted sellers, buyers and taxpayers around the world', it said in a statement.

The winners will share the prize sum of 10mn Swedish kronor (about US$1.1mn).

Last year the honour went to French-American Esther Duflo, Indian-born Abhijit Banerjee of the US, and American Michael Kremer for their experimental work on alleviating poverty.

Even if it might be the most prestigious prize an economist can hope to receive, the economics prize has not reached the same status as those originally chosen by Alfred Nobel in his will, which included medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace. It was instead created through a donation from the Swedish central bank and detractors have thus dubbed it 'a false Nobel'.

A screen shows pictures of US economists Paul Milgrom (left) and Robert Wilson during the announcement of the winners of the '2020 Nobel Econonmics Prize at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Sweden on Monday (AFP)

The prize closes the 2020 Nobel season which so far has seen the peace prize awarded to the UN's World Food Programme. Women have been more prevalent than usual this year, with American poet Louise Gluck winning the literature prize. And Frenchwoman Emmanuelle Charpentier and American Jennifer Doudna became the first all-female duo to win a scientific Nobel on Wednesday, clinching the chemistry award for their discovery of the CRISPR-Cas9 DNA snipping 'scissors'.

Winners would normally receive their Nobel from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, but the pandemic means it has been replaced by a televised ceremony.

AFP

Key Libya oil field to go online

Tripoli, Libya - Libya's state oil firm gave the green light for production to resume at a major oil field, as the UN announced 'face-to-face' talks between the country's rivals.

Following the end of a blockade that was imposed in February, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) lifted force majeure on Al-Sharara, a field in Oubari region and instructed the operators Akakus to resume production.

The NOC said that it had struck an agreement with armed groups at the site to lift any obstacles and to ensure the safety of staff and operations.

Al-Sharara normally produces 315,000 barrels per day of Libya's overall output.

AFP

Why is ECB eyeing a 'digital euro'?

Berlin, Germany - The European Central Bank (ECB) on Monday launched a public consultation and start experiments to help it decide whether to create a 'digital euro' for the 19-nation currency club.

The move comes as the pandemic accelerates a shift away from cash, and as policymakers nervously eye the rise of private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin.

Here's an explainer of what a 'digital euro' would mean for the region's citizens.

What is a digital euro?

A digital, or virtual, euro would be an electronic version of euro notes and coins, it would be legal tender and guaranteed by the ECB.

It would also for the first time allow individuals to have deposits directly with the ECB. This could be safer than with commercial banks, which could go bust, or than holding cash that could be stolen or lost.

And like cash, money could be stored outside of the banking system, such as in a 'digital wallet'.

It would allow citizens and firms to make their daily payments 'in a fast, easy and secure way', the ECB said as it published a report on virtual money in October.

A digital euro would 'complement cash, not replace it', the ECB stressed.

Issuing and transferring digital euros could be done using the distributed ledger technology known as blockchain on which cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin rely.

Why now?

The COVID-19 pandemic has boosted electronic payments as customers avoid notes and coins over fears they might spread the coronavirus.

A digital, or virtual, euro would be an electronic version of euro notes and coins, it would be legal tender and guaranteed by the European Central Bank

Even in Germany, where cash is said to be king, consumers are this year expected to spend more money by card than in cash for the first time, according to a recent Euromonitor International report.

Like other central banks around the world, the ECB is also wary of falling behind virtual money issued by foreign private players like Bitcoin and Facebook's yet-to-be-launched Libra.

If people in the eurozone were to switch en masse to virtual currencies that operate outside the ECB's reach it could hamper the effectiveness of its monetary policy measures.

Facebook's plan to create the Libra, 'has accelerated central banks' thinking' on the subject, Pictet Wealth Management economist Frederik Ducrozet told AFP.

What are the risks?

People might avoid traditional accounts in favour of going digital, weakening retail banks in the euro area.

The risk would be higher in times of crisis, when savers might be tempted to flee to the safety of a 'digital euro' and trigger a run on traditional banks.

To avoid this, the ECB might propose to limit the number of digital euros that each citizen could own or exchange.

Concerns about privacy and making sure the 'digital euro' can't be used for money laundering will also be part of the ECB's thinking as it weighs the pros and cons in the months ahead.

Who else is doing it?

The Chinese central bank started trials with digital currency in four cities in April, and the Bank of France has started experiments as well.

On Friday, the Bank of Japan said it would step up research into the topic.

The Bank for International Settlements, a network of central banks, in January announced the creation of a working group dedicated to the issue.

When can I spend mine?

The central bank aims to decide around mid-2021 whether or not to launch the project, it said.

But don't expect a digital euro in your electronic wallet soon.

It will take 'between 18 months and three or four years' to see the initiative come to life, a source close to the project told AFP.

AFP

Turkey to send ship at centre of row to east Mediterranean again

Ankara, Turkey - Turkey announced plans late on Sunday to send the research ship at the centre of an energy rights row with Greece to the eastern Mediterranean again, a move likely to reignite tensions with Athens.

The Turkish navy said the *Oruc Reis* vessel would carry out activities in the region, including the south of the Greek island of Kastellorizo, from Monday until October 22 in a message sent to the maritime alert system NAVTEX.

Turkey and Greece were locked in a row over gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean in August, which saw the two NATO neighbours stage rival air and navy drills in strategic waters between Cyprus and the Greek island of Crete.

Greece claims rights over the waters around Kastellorizo but Turkey rejects this, insisting it has greater claims to the eastern Mediterranean because it has a longer coastline.

Ankara first deployed the *Oruc Reis* seismic research vessel and warships to disputed waters on August 10 and extended the mission, ignoring repeated calls to stop by Athens and the European Union.

The *Oruc Reis* was earlier deployed on August 10 to a region believed to be rich in natural gas and contested by both Turkey and Greece (AFP)

The vessel will be joined in the latest 'seismic survey' mission by two other ships called Ataman and Cengiz Han, according to the NAVTEX message. The *Oruc Reis* was pulled back to shore last month from waters claimed by Greece in what many hoped was a sign Ankara and Athens could resolve the crisis through talks.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the time said the withdrawal was to give diplomacy a chance. But Turkish officials also insisted the ship was only undergoing planned maintenance and would return to the eastern Mediterranean to continue its work.

Yet hope was further raised after Turkey and Greece agreed to exploratory talks last month after diplomatic efforts led by Germany to defuse the crisis.

The talks had been stalled since 2016 and the expectation was for their resumption in Istanbul but no exact date was ever given.

The Turkish and Greek foreign ministers also met last week on the sidelines of a security forum in Slovakia's capital Bratislava in the highest-level talks since tensions began.

The EU at a summit earlier this month threatened to slap sanctions on Turkey if Ankara failed to stop what the bloc says is illegal drilling and energy exploration activities in waters claimed by Cyprus and Greece.

Turkey described the threat as 'unconstructive' but its latest move will cause further strains in Ankara's relationship with Brussels.

The German Foreign Minister is expected to visit Ankara on Wednesday, according to Turkish state TRT broadcaster, where the eastern Mediterranean will be high on the agenda.

AFP

Greece slams Turkish decision to redeploy ship

Athens, Greece - Greece on Monday condemned as a 'direct threat to regional peace' Turkey's decision to send back to the eastern Mediterranean the research ship at the centre of tensions over energy rights.

The move which comes as Athens and Ankara are trying to set a date for talks to defuse the row between the two NATO neighbours.

The Turkish navy on Sunday said the *Oruc Reis* vessel would carry out activities in the region, including the south of the Greek island of Kastellorizo, from Monday until October 22 in a message sent to the maritime alert system NAVTEX.

Greece's Foreign Ministry said the move was a 'direct threat to regional peace and security'.

Turkey was 'unreliable' and 'does not sincerely desire dialogue', it said in a statement.

It added that Ankara was 'the foremost factor of instability' in the region 'from Libya to the Aegean and Cyprus, Syria, Iraq and now Nagorno-Karabakh'.

"I'm not looking for a fight, nobody should," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a Monday interview with Greek daily *Ta Nea* that was conducted before Turkey announced its move.

AFP

Tajik leader Rakhmon wins with over 90% of votes

Dushanbe, Tajikistan - Tajikistan's leader Emomali Rakhmon was cruising to victory with over 90 per cent of the vote on Monday following a presidential election in which he faced only token opposition.

The Central Electoral Commission said that 90.9 per cent of voters in Sunday's poll had cast their ballot for the strongman who will secure a fresh seven-year term, according to preliminary results.

Turnout was over 85 per cent, according to the Central Electoral Commission.

The win will allow Rakhmon to pass three decades in power and overtake Kazakhstan's recently retired Nursultan Nazarbayev as the former Soviet Union's longest-ruling leader.

While disputed ballots in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and fellow former Soviet republic Belarus have triggered massive upheaval, similar developments appear unlikely in Tajikistan.

But Rakhmon and his government face unprecedented challenges after the weakest economy of all Soviet successor states joined others in being battered by the ongoing pandemic.

A woman casts her ballot into a mobile ballot box at her house during Tajikistan's presidential election, in Dushanbe on Sunday (AFP)

Over a million Tajiks are believed to work abroad, mostly in Russia.

Alex Kochkarov, a country risk research analyst at IHS Markit in London said remittances sent home dropped 'by 15–25 per cent year on year in the first half, according to differing reports'.

"If a large number of Tajik worker migrants would come back to Tajikistan from Russia where many have lost jobs in this year's crisis, it will increase domestic instability – both politically and economically," said Kochkarov, whose company predicts a 6.5 per cent contraction of the economy this year.

The bleak economic outlook also raises questions about how the government will be able to service external debt, equating to more than a third of GDP, with China a leading debt-holder.

But voters in the capital Dushanbe overwhelmingly said they intended to vote for Rakhmon, with many citing the importance of peace and stability more than two decades after the conclusion of a bitter civil war.

Safar Mallayev (66) was voting for Rakhmon because of his 'enormous experience'.

AFP

New clashes breach Karabakh ceasefire

Stepanakert, Azerbaijan - Armenian and Azerbaijani forces were engaged in new clashes overnight and Monday morning, AFP correspondents said, as the two sides accused each other of violating a Russian-brokered ceasefire over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

An AFP correspondent in the Azerbaijani town of Barda not far from the front line heard thumping echoes of shelling on Monday morning.

In Karabakh's main city of Stepanakert, an AFP photographer heard the sounds of shelling from the direction of the town of Hadrut.

The worst fighting in almost three decades erupted last month over Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway region of Azerbaijan controlled by Armenians since a 1990s war but which is not recognised by any state.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry accused Armenian forces of not complying with a ceasefire agreement negotiated in marathon talks in Moscow last week overseen by Russia.

"Armenian armed forces, which did not comply with the humanitarian truce, repeatedly tried to attack the positions of the Azerbaijan army," the ministry said. It said it had destroyed a 'large number of enemy forces' as well as one T-72 tank and three Grad multiple rocket launchers.

People march from Pan Pacific Park to the Consulate General of Turkey, during a protest in support of Armenia and Karabakh amid the dispute with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, in Los Angeles on Sunday (AFP)

Armenian Defence Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said for her part that Azerbaijan was 'now intensively shelling the southern front'.

Armenia claimed that 'the adversary suffered great losses of manpower and military equipment' but did not provide further details.

After 11 hours of talks between the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Moscow, the arch enemies agreed early on Saturday to a humanitarian ceasefire. But the truce has not held.

Both sides have exchanged accusations of intensive shelling of civilian areas and escalating two weeks of fierce clashes.

The 1990s war - which ended with a 1994 ceasefire that did not present a long-term solution to the conflict - resulted in the deaths of some 30,000 people.

Nearly 500 people including more than 60 civilians, have been killed in the latest fighting since last month, according to a tally based on tolls given by both sides.

AFP

Opposition conservatives take lead in Lithuania election

Vilnius, Lithuania - Opposition conservatives took a strong lead in round one of Lithuania's parliamentary election, results showed on Monday, but they are expected to face lengthy coalition talks after an October 25 run-off.

Handling of the coronavirus pandemic and bridging economic disparities were key rallying points for candidates in Sunday's election in the Baltic eurozone state of 2.8mn people.

The results from 99 per cent of voting districts showed the conservative Homeland Union–Lithuanian Christian Democrats winning 24.7 per cent of the vote, followed by the ruling centre-left Farmers and Greens Union with 17.6 per cent. Four parties are expected to enter parliament and no coalition deal is likely to be sealed before the run-off.

Former finance minister Ingrida Simonyte, the 45 year old conservative candidate for prime minister, said she was ready to forge a cross-party coalition deal on education and healthcare reform, policies that have made her popular among the urban young.

Incumbent Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis is intent on building another centre-left coalition after round two.

He secured the vote of 77 year old Vilnius pensioner Antanina Oruzova who praised Skvernelis' record on 'taking care of those who are worse-off'. "I hope they will further increase pensions, maybe child benefits, maybe minimum salary," she said after giving a vote for the Farmers and Greens Union.

Lithuania's President Gitanas Nauseda (right) and his wife Diana Nausediene arrive to cast their votes during the parliamentary elections, at a polling station in Vilnius on Sunday (AFP)

All major parties share a pro-EU and NATO platform, and back Vilnius' drive to rally support within the EU for neighbouring Belarus' opposition after a disputed presidential election there.

Despite a recent record surge in cases, Lithuania's coronavirus related-deaths are well below the EU average while finance ministry forecasts suggest the economy will contract just 1.5 per cent this year, among the best outlooks in the eurozone.

Drive-in voting was made available for the first time as part of pandemic safety measures. Masks and social distancing were mandatory in polling stations where voters also had to bring their own pens.

Seventy members of Lithuania's 141-seat parliament are elected by proportional representation from party lists in round one. The remaining 71 will be chosen in single-member constituency races in two weeks' time. Initial results showed the conservatives claimed 23 seats compared to 16 won by the Farmers and Greens Union and nine for the populist Labour party.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Claiming immunity, President Trump hits the election trail again

Washington, US - US President Donald Trump is all set to launch a campaign marathon, holding rallies in three key swing states over the next few days as his White House race against surging rival Joe Biden enters its critical final weeks.

The Republican leader will hold a rally in Florida, followed by Pennsylvania and Iowa - states all crucial to clinching a victory on November 3.

Trump will likely try to galvanise his electoral base by touting his nominee for Supreme Court justice, Amy Coney Barrett.

The Republican-controlled Senate will begin hearings for the 48 year old judge, whose confirmation - of which there is little doubt - will shift the nation's highest court firmly to the right for generations.

Trump's doctors gave him the all-clear on Saturday to return to the campaign trail after he was ruled no longer a coronavirus transmission risk, and on Sunday he said while calling in to a campaign event that he tested 'totally negative'.

But he has yet to be declared virus-free, and his immunity claim is unproven.

"It looks like I'm immune for, I don't know, maybe a long time and maybe a short time, it could be a lifetime, nobody really knows, but I'm immune," Trump told the Fox News show *Sunday Morning Futures*.

"The word 'immunity' means something, having really a protective glow."

"So now you have a president who doesn't have to hide in a basement like his opponent," Trump added - in a jab at Democratic challenger Biden, who has taken a far more cautious approach to campaigning during the pandemic.

Supporters of US President Donald Trump hold signs and wave flags as they march through Beverly Hills, California, on Saturday (AFP)

> *It looks like I'm immune for, maybe a long time and maybe a short time, it could be a lifetime... So now you have a president who doesn't have to hide in a basement*
>
> **DONALD TRUMP**

But it is not yet clear to what degree contracting COVID-19 confers immunity, with early studies suggesting a few months while newer ones have indicated it could last longer.

Twitter on Sunday hid a tweet from Trump in which he claimed he was immune, saying the post violated its rules about misleading and potentially harmful misinformation.

The tweet was still visible once users clicked through the warning.

Trailing in polls

Trump (74) was treated with an experimental antibody cocktail made by Regeneron that may give immunity for just a few months when taken as a treatment rather than as a vaccine.

"In some cases, vaccines can last for decades. (But) if you get it in the form of natural immunity, that isn't known yet," Regeneron CEO Leonard Schleifer told CBS's 'Face the Nation' on Sunday. "If you get it in our vial, if you will, that's probably going to last you for months."

Badly trailing Biden with just weeks until the November 3 vote, Trump has been counting the days until he can hit the trail again. During his phone interview on Fox News, Trump suggested that his White House rival could himself be sick.

"If you look at Joe, he was coughing yesterday horribly and grabbing his mask, as he's coughing," Trump said.

"And I don't know what that was all about, and it didn't get much press."

'Never endorsed a candidate'

The Biden campaign has been publishing daily coronavirus tests for their 77 year old candidate since Trump tested positive on October 1 - landing him in a military hospital for three nights and derailing his campaign. There has been less transparency surrounding Trump's own state of health, with his medical team repeatedly refusing to say when he last tested negative for the virus. That has fueled suspicion that he may not have been tested for several days prior to his diagnosis.

COVID-19 has killed more than 214,000 people in the United States, but the President has urged Americans not to fear the virus.

A re-election ad that lauds Trump's handling of the outbreak was criticised by top government scientist Anthony Fauci, who said a clip was edited to make him seem to endorse the President's response to the pandemic.

'In my nearly five decades of public service, I have never publicly endorsed any political candidate,' Fauci, the longtime director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, said in a statement sent to AFP.

Trump defended the clip, and his handling of the pandemic, and rebutted the doctor's criticism. 'They are indeed Dr. Fauci's own words. We have done a 'phenomenal' job, according to certain governors', the President wrote in a tweet.

Biden has slammed Trump's coronavirus response, on Sunday tweeting: 'In January, I said President Trump was the worst possible leader to deal with a public health crisis. And everything we've been through in the months since has proven that to be true.'

Barack Obama's former vice-president is currently close to ten points ahead in national polls with a solid lead in some key battleground states.

AFP

A woman gets down from an overpass bridge outside a shopping mall, in Beijing on Sunday (AFP)

China to test entire city in 'five days' after six cases

Beijing, China - China aims to test more than nine million residents of the port city of Qingdao within five days following a minor coronavirus outbreak, health officials said on Monday, the first mass testing in months.

The country where the virus first emerged has largely controlled its outbreak, cutting a stark contrast to many parts of the world still afflicted by rolling lockdowns and high case numbers. On Sunday, six cases were confirmed in Qingdao - a northeastern city of 9.4mn - originating in a hospital, the Qingdao municipal health commission said in a statement on Monday.

Five districts will be tested 'within three days' and the whole city 'within five days', the statement said.

However, officials did not give a precise figure on how many people would be tested.

China has extensive, quick test capabilities and the health commission said over 140,000 employees of 'medical institutions, newly admitted patients and personnel' have already been tested in Qingdao since the cases were confirmed.

In June, large areas of the capital Beijing were subject to mass tests after the city of more than 20mn detected virus cases linked to a food market.

China has bounced back since the virus emerged late last year and forced widespread lockdowns that hammered the second-largest economy.

Hundreds of millions travelled across China for the 'Golden Week' holiday last week as the country edges back to growth, while rapid tests and swift lockdowns have tamped down secondary waves of the virus.

China is also desperate to be first to conjure up a coronavirus vaccine, with several companies in final-stage trials.

Though unproven, China has reportedly administered vaccines to hundreds of thousands of key workers and soldiers.

AFP

Anti-microbe drug successful, claim Hong Kong scientists

Hong Kong, China - An affordable anti-microbial drug used to treat stomach ulcers and bacterial infections has shown promise in combatting the coronavirus in animals, scientists in Hong Kong announced on Monday.

Researchers set out to explore whether metallodrugs - compounds containing metal that are more commonly used against bacteria - might also have anti-viral properties that could fight the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

Using Syrian hamsters as tests subjects, they found that one of the drugs, ranitidine bismuth citrate (RBC), was 'a potent anti-SARS-CoV-2 agent'.

"RBC is able to lower the viral load in the lung of the infected hamster by tenfold," Hong Kong University researcher Runming Wang told reporters on Monday as the team presented their study.

"Our findings demonstrate that RBC is a potential anti-viral agent for COVID-19."

The coronavirus has killed more than a million people since it first emerged in China last December and then spread across the globe.

As scientists scramble to find a vaccine, they have also been scouring readily available drugs that might alleviate symptoms caused by the COVID-19 disease or help the body fight infection.

L-R: Dr Runming Wang and Professor Hongzhe Sun of the Department of Chemistry with Dr Shuofeng Yuan and Dr Jasper F W Chan of the Department of Microbiology, Hong Kong University

Remdesivir, a broad-spectrum antiviral drug, and dexamethasone, a type of corticosteroid, have both been identified as having some success against the virus. Both were used by doctors to treat US President Donald Trump after he contracted COVID-19.

But they have drawbacks.

Remdesivir is expensive and there is a global shortage while dexamethasone has immunosuppression effects that are risky for all but the most ill patients. Other drug cocktails have shown liver damage can be a risk.

The Hong Kong scientists said RBC was a commonly available drug used against stomach ulcers with a safe and comprehensive pharmacological profile.

"It's been used for decades so it's pretty safe," Wang said.

They added that their research, which has been published in the journal Nature Microbiology, suggested other metallodrugs might also have success against the virus and should be further explored.

AFP

India China hold talks to reduce border tensions

New Delhi, India - The Indian and Chinese army representatives on Monday met in Chushul Valley in India's Ladakh to defuse the tension along the border, where about 50,000 troops from both sides are in a standoff since April-May this year.

According to the Indian Army sources, the seventh round of corps commander-level talks between the two countries were held at 12.00 noon in Chushul in Eastern Ladakh, part of a region administered by India as a union territory in the larger Kashmir region in the country's north.

The Indian side was represented by the outgoing 14 Corps Chief Lt Gen Harinder Singh and his successor Lt Gen P G K Menon, India's news agency ANI reported.

Twenty Indian and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed in June during a deadly clash in Ladakh, which shares a disputed boundary with China's restive Xinjiang and Tibet regions.

The two nuclear-armed countries have since rushed tens of thousands of additional troops and weapons to the area, and have been locked in a tense stand-off for months.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that after Pakistan, 'China is also causing dispute at the border with India as if it was part of a mission'.

An Indian army vehicle moves towards the Tibet border at Chamoli district in the northern state of Uttarakhand on Friday (ANI)

"India is demanding a discussion on all the friction points between the two sides and complete disengagement and de-escalation by the Chinese Army from there," Indian government officials said.

On Friday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged closer ties with India as he warned of China's growing might on its doorstep, amid a flurry of diplomacy between the world's two largest democracies.

"They absolutely need the United States to be their ally and partner in this fight," Pompeo said of his four-way meetings earlier last week in Tokyo with his counterparts from India, Japan and Australia.

"The Chinese have now begun to amass huge forces against India in the north," Pompeo said. "The world has awakened. The tide's begun to turn. And the United States under President Trump's leadership has now built out a coalition that will push back against the threat," he said.

ANI+Agencies

Indian nationals kidnapped in Libya released

Tunis, Tunisia - The seven Indian nationals kidnapped in Libya last month have been released, the Indian Ambassador to Tunisia said on Sunday.

The seven men hailing from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, were kidnapped from Asshwerif in Libya on September 14.

Indian Ambassador to Tunisia Puneet Roy Kundal confirmed the news of their release, ANI news agency reported.

India does not have an embassy in Libya and the Indian mission in Tunisia looks after the welfare of Indians in Libya.

On Thursday, India had confirmed the kidnapping of seven of its nationals in Libya and that it was working to free them.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson had said that the kidnapped workers are safe and the Indian mission in Tunisia is in touch with the Libyan government for efforts to free them.

India's Ambassador to Tunisia Puneet Roy Kundal (right) on Sunday confirmed the release of the Indians

"Our Embassy in Tunisia, which handles matters relating to the welfare of Indian nationals in Libya, has reached out to the Libyan government authorities concerned, as also the international organisations present there, to seek their help in rescuing the Indian nationals. The employer has been contacted by the kidnappers and shown photographs as proof that the Indian nationals were safe and keeping well," MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said.

In September 2015, an advisory had been issued for Indian nationals to avoid travelling to Libya in view of the security situation there. Later, in May 2016, the government imposed a complete travel ban irrespective of the purpose in view of the much-deteriorated security situation.

ANI

Canadian detained in China 'relieved' by virtual visit

Montreal, Canada - One of the two Canadians that Ottawa says are held arbitrarily in China was 'relieved' to get outside news via a virtual diplomatic visit and remains determined to come home, his wife said on Sunday.

Canada announced on Saturday its first contact since January with Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who have been in jail in China for nearly two years.

After months of 'extreme isolation, Michael was greatly relieved to receive news from the outside world' and of his family, Kovrig's wife Vina Nadjibulla said.

"We are extremely proud that despite his long confinement, Michael's spirit, determination and even his sense of humour remain unbroken," she said, adding that her husband was shocked to learn about the scale of the coronavirus pandemic.

Canada's Ambassador to China Dominic Barton obtained 'virtual consular access' to Spavor on Friday and Kovrig on Saturday, the Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

A protester in Vancouver takes part in a rally calling for the release of Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig (in the placard) (AFP)

Former diplomat Kovrig and consultant Spavor have been imprisoned in China since December 10, 2018. They were charged with espionage last June.

Western governments see this detention as retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Chinese telecoms giant Huawei in Canada.

Meng was arrested on a US warrant in December 2018 during a stopover in Vancouver. She is charged with bank fraud related to violations of US sanctions against Iran, and has been fighting extradition ever since.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Saturday he had spoken with Donald Trump and thanked the US President for Washington's continued support of efforts to free the two Canadians.

AFP

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C Re- Invites Interested Companies To Participate In The Follwing Re-Tender:

RE-Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (R.O)
MEDC-RE 08/2020	Supply & Installation of new (355 nos.) ACs for Primary Stations in Muscat Governorate	20/10/2020	03/11/2020	Specialized	50

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -	
Participation	• Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents online. • Against the amount specified above. Non-Refundable payment • For fees payment procedure and to obtain the tender document, please contact us via e-mail **Contract@medcoman.com**
Purchase timing	Tender documents can be purchased at the official working time between 08:00 – 13:00 hours
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent using clarification avilable in the tender documents , one week before bid submission date
Tender Submission	• Tenders should be submitted in a sealed and stamped envelope addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO. marked only with tender number and the subject • Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in clause 20.0 in Prime Document
Guarantee	• The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C. • Any bid that does not meet the bank guarantee will not be considered
Terms and Conditions	• The name of the bidder, other marks or any reference must not be specified on the envelope • Tenders received after the deadline stated in the Invitation to Tender, including any extension thereof, for any reason whatsoever will not be considered • The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission • If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date • MEDC is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders. • Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization
Bid Placement	The Completed Tender should be deposited in the Tender Box No. 1 in the ground floor of MEDC Head Office building at Airport Heights, before 10 a.m. on the assigned date of tender submission
Email/Tele No.	contract@medcoman.com **24588600 – Ext: 8577 - 8674 - 8726**

80070008
www.medcoman.com

شركة مسقط لتوزيع الكهرباء
Muscat Electricity Distribution Company
إحدى شركات مجموعة نماء
Member of Nama Group

Muscat Electricity Distribution Co.S.A.O.C
PO Box 1239 , PC 131 - Al Hamryah / Sultanate of Oman
Contact Center : 80070008 / Tel : 24588600
info@medcoman.com / www.medcoman.com

medc.muscat medc_oman medc_oman medctube

Disclaimer

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) would like to announce the following amendment for the tender which was announced on 12/10/2020:

Sr.No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Closing Date	Grade	Tender Document's Fees (RO)
1	61/2020	Providing, Installing and Configuring a monitoring solution for AD, DNS, DHCP, SQL & Group policy with three years AMC.	19/10/2020	27/10/2020	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate	38/=

Company Address:
Muscat - Al Mawaleh
Way No: 2153 – Building No. 4230
Website: www.omangrid.com Email: tenders@omangrid.com GSM: 91777378

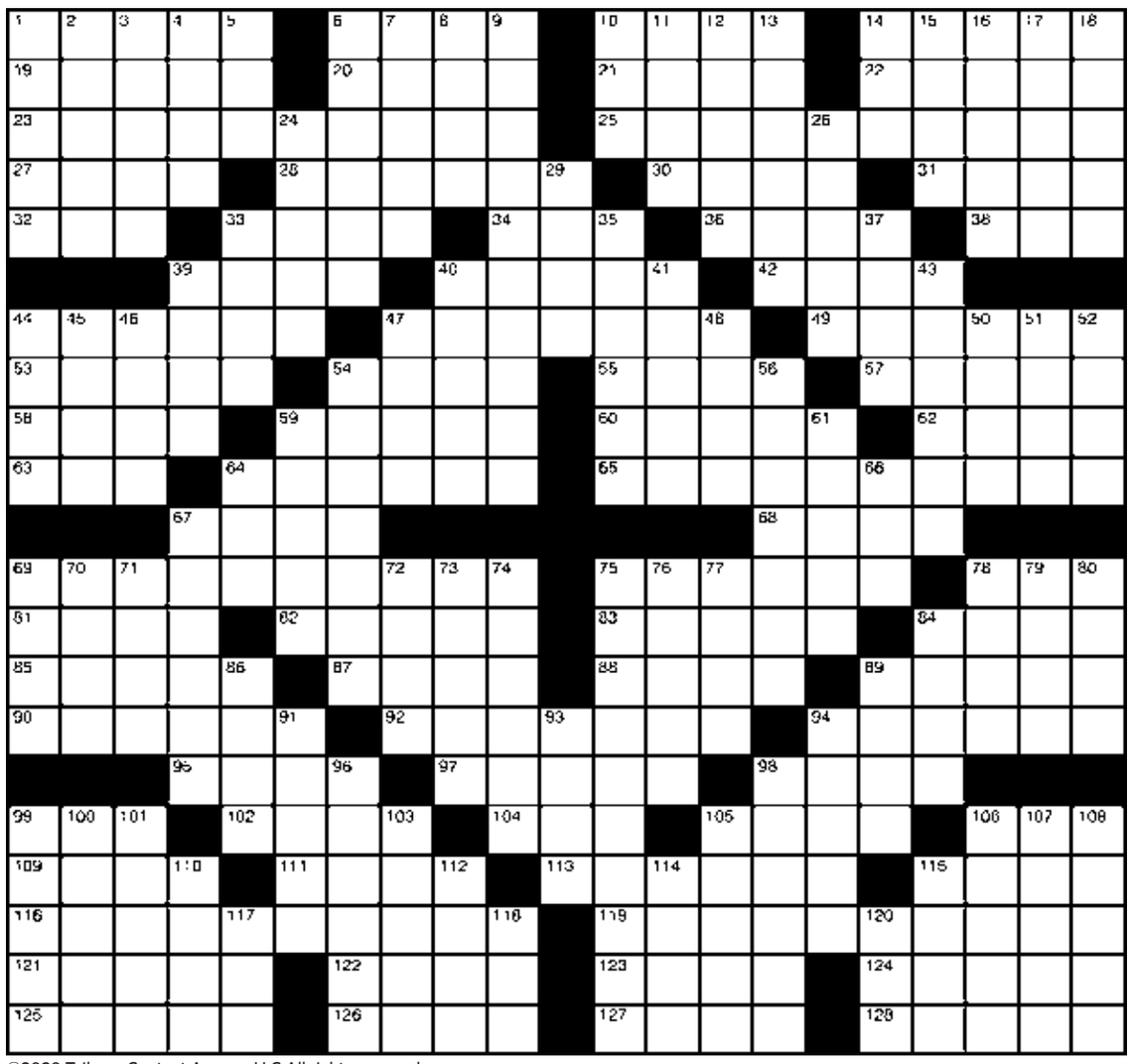
تـــنـــويـه

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء بأنه تم تعديل المناقصة المذكورة ادناه التي تم الإعلان عنها بتاريخ 12/10/2020م.

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	ثمن الوثيقة (ر.ع)
١	٢٠٢٠/٦١	توريد وتركيب وضبط نظام لمراقبة السجل النشط . إدارة النطاقات . تكوين المضيف الحيوي. مزودات قواعد البيانات ونظام إدارة السياسات مع عقد الصيانه السنويه لمدة ثلاث سنوات.	٢٠٢٠/١٠/١٩	٢٠٢٠/١٠/٢٧	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال المسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول .	٣٨/=

عنوان الشركة
محافظة مسقط - الموالح
رقم السكة ٢١٥٣ـ مبنى رقم ٤٣٠
البريد اللكتروني tenders@omangrid.com . موقع الشركة www.omangrid.com
هاتف: ٩١٧٧٧٣٧٨

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

1 Cut-and-___
6 Cicatrix
10 Nimbus
14 Plant of mint family
19 Utopian
20 Sharpen
21 On the apex
22 Expunge
23 Traduce
25 Hateful
27 Garb of a Scotch Highlander
28 "The ___": 2011 Oscar
30 Chapter of the Koran
31 Winter vehicle
32 Jrs.' dads
33 Sacred vessels
34 Poetic contraction
36 Auction
38 S-shaped curve
39 March date
40 ___IX
42 Weights of India
44 One of the Three Musketeers
47 Laments
49 Arranged beforehand
53 French revolutionist
54 Frog genus
55 Marbles
57 To frighten
58 Ancient country
59 Venetian navigator
60 Babylonian hero
62 One of the Bears
63 Salt
64 Venerate
65 Theological schools
67 Mohammedan magistrate
68 A rodent
69 Newt
75 To withdraw
78 Place to rest
81 English school
82 Female ruff
83 Gruel of maize meal
84 Spanish measure of length
85 Flower part
87 Ooze
88 Presses for payment
89 Gods of Teutonic pantheon
90 Three-legged stand
92 Act as chairman
94 Purpose
95 Always
97 Lake bordering California
98 Without: comb. form
99 Chum
102 Cry of Bacchanals
104 Harbor boat
105 Chopping tools
106 Elvis Costello tune
109 Medicinal plant
111 Taylor Swift tune
113 Surgical saw
115 Portico
116 Dissension
119 Loudspeakers
121 Concerning
122 ___ homo
123 Tuna-type sandwich
124 Goddess of peace
125 Pinnacle of glacier ice
126 Japanese beer
127 Grafton and Miller
128 Hereditary factors

DOWN

1 Chooses
2 Robin ___
3 Vends
4 Tense
5 Shade tree
6 Evades
7 Winter wears
8 Against
9 Appraise again
10 Possessed
11 Western's actor Roscoe
12 Yoga position
13 Musical dramas
14 Wager
15 Macaws
16 Valuable fur
17 Aits
18 English cathedral city
24 Nostrils
26 Dried orchid tubers
29 Puente or Jackson
33 Mine entrance
35 Writing tablets
37 Blunders
39 Mohammedan priest
40 General trend
41 Growing out
43 Safe
44 Wine vessels
45 ___ avis
46 Russian inland sea
47 Infant
48 Floated
50 Hindu garment
51 Scottish-Gaelic
52 Afternoon parties
54 Waterworm gullies
56 Snuffles
59 Fragrant wood
61 Positive pole
64 Male sheep
66 Beverage
67 Party tidbit
69 Irish clan
70 Biblical name
71 French author Pierre
72 Profound
73 Turn inside out
74 Iterate
75 Certain messages
76 Musical study
77 Geometric solid
78 Foundation
79 Ireland
80 Flit
84 Interdiction
86 Deep affection
89 Pismires
91 River in Scotland
93 Close
94 Ancient tribe of Britons
96 Paths
98 Elevates in rank
99 Rodents
100 Unaccompanied
101 Antisocial person
103 Common heath
105 Pome fruit
106 Dutch painter
107 Lena ___
108 Comforts
110 Sicilian volcano
112 Short-legged stocking
114 Australian bird
115 Father
117 And so forth: abbr.
118 Born
120 Pear-shaped fruit

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Tuesday's skies are particularly action-packed for you. Your ruling planet, Mars, finds itself locked into a heated opposition with the clarity-giving sun, illuminating any latent stresses that have been building around your narrative of "me vs we" in your relationship. Meanwhile, Mercury turns retrograde in sharp Scorpio, stirring up further food for thought around intimacy and partnership.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
You've been encountering some unusual ghosts behind closed doors. Today's skies shine a bright flashlight onto that dusty mental dungeon you've been exploring, as the sun and Mars lock into an awareness-oriented pact. This helps you face your own demons around self-assertion and purpose. Mercury turns retrograde too, digging up unfinished relationship stories now.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Friendships have been a hotbed of activity for you. Today's opposition of Mars and the illuminating sun shines a harsh light onto this story, testing the stability of your social network and highlighting your personal creative contributions. Meanwhile, your ruling planet, Mercury, turns retrograde in Scorpio. This takes you on a reflective exploration of your work/life balance..

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Your relationship to your career has become increasingly important. Tuesday's skies highlight any stress that's been pushed under the rug around your career advancement publicly and the emotional foundations you maintain privately. Mercury initiates its retrograde phase in emotionally rich Scorpio, helping you retrace your steps around creative projects.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Tuesday's skies are bound to be a little uncomfortable. The sun and aggressive Mars launch a war with one another, prompting you to explore any underlying frustrations that have been building around thwarted educational pursuits, travel plans, and the vision for your future. Meanwhile, Mercury goes retrograde in sharp Scorpio, illuminating dormant issues around family and home life.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You've been taking the deep dive into intimacy. Today's skies fully illuminate this ongoing story, as the clarity bringing sun stares down fuelled up Mars, fanning tensions for review between your personal resources and the ones you share with another. Your ruling planet, Mercury, turns retrograde and helps you retrace your steps around educational pursuits.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Libras are programmed to enmesh themselves in romantic partnerships. Yet, recently that story has become intensified, as Mars retrograde has propelled you into a search for a deeper understanding of the art of compromise. This is about finding connections worthy of your time. Mercury turns retrograde in Scorpio, helping you revisit old talents now through November 3.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
It's all too easy to get riled up and lose your temper. Your ruling planet, Mars, locks eyes with the illuminating sun this afternoon, intensifying any dormant stresses that you've been collecting around your work/life balance. You're not likely to take to authoritative commands today! Mercury begins its retrograde phase in your sign, taking you on a backwards journey.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You've been working harder than ever to make your dreams become a reality. Today's skies highlight the creative frustrations and goal stressors you've had to face to get to where you are. This is all as the clarifying sun and assertive Mars duke it out. Elsewhere, messenger Mercury turns retrograde in depth-probing Scorpio, helping you review any self-sabotaging thinking patterns.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
It's unusual for you to pour so much energy into your home. Yet, that's exactly what's concerned you in recent months. Today's skies illuminate this narrative and flesh out any hidden tensions waiting to be acknowledged around your environment and the career you patiently pine for. Mercury begins its retrograde in Scorpio, encouraging you to revisit forgotten goals.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You tend to naturally display a cool, calm, and collected exterior. That relaxed facade is likely to be challenged, as the sun and Mars fall into an opposition with each other—highlighting any unspoken resentments or frustrations you've been withholding from expression in your environment. Mercury begins its retrograde in Scorpio now, helping you revisit your relationship.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Pisceans don't typically find themselves caught up in the material world, but the last few months have really tested your stress levels over earning money. Today's skies highlight this ongoing struggle around your earning power and ability to maintain financial stability as the clarifying sun and hotheaded Mars lock into a fierce stare down.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

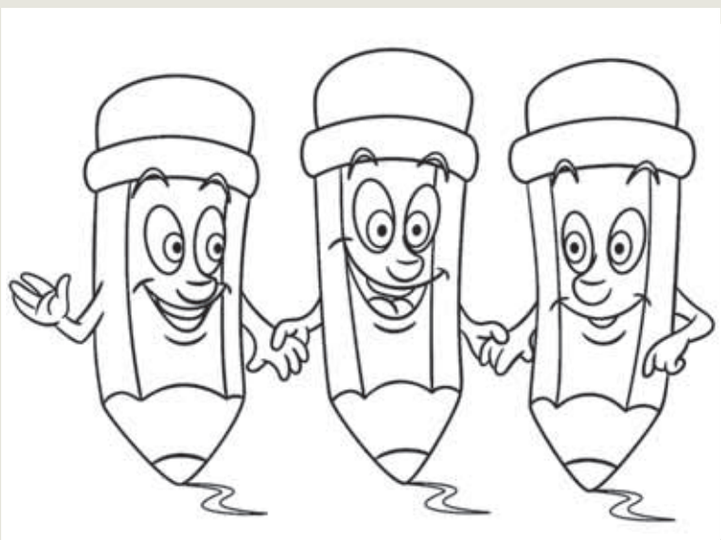
1. India's first atomic reactor was
a. Zerlina
b. Dhruva
c. Apsara
d. Kamini

2. India's first ocean wave's energy project was launched in is
a. 1981
b. 1991
c. 1995
d. 2000

3. In a normal human body, the total number of red blood cells is
a. 15 trillion
b. 20 trillion
c. 25 trillion
d. 30 trillion

Answers: 1: c 2: b 3: d

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

BOGGLER

Y	E	E	E
E	I	R	D
F	I	S	J
B	D	A	M

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (OCTOBER 12)

WORD BUILDER

You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SKIN CARE

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SKIN-CARE

It's that time of year again - the new school year will begin soon but this year is like no other. Whether you've headed back into the classroom or you're continuing to learn remotely, this year presents new challenges for everyone. Amid all these changes, it's easy to get so busy that you don't take good care of yourself. The result? When you're over-stressed, it shows on your skin.

Why not start the school year off right by establishing good self-care habits? When you're in the middle of midterms or working on a giant project, you'll thank yourself for setting up a routine that keeps you looking and feeling your best, inside and out. Follow these tips to start a self-care routine to help you be your best self:

Rest up

Sleep is often the first thing to go when deadlines are looming, but don't start the semester skimping on your beauty rest. Set a reasonable time to go to bed everyday and a wake-up time which you will stick to - even on weekends - as much as you can.

Being sleep deprived not only leads to dark circles under your eyes, but it also makes it hard to focus on your studies. Late night? Let yourself take a short power nap in the afternoon if you need one.

Start clean

A refreshing way to start your morning is through your skincare routine. Exfoliating scrubs invigorate skin and cleanses deep down into your pores, working to dissolve dirt and oil while exfoliating surface skin. This gentle scrub can be used daily, and along with its cooling sensation, will leave your skin looking and feeling revitalised.

Give yourself time to de-stress

Whether it's first thing in the morning, midday or later in the evening, allow yourself at least 15 minutes every day to do whatever helps you feel centered and relaxed:

- Yoga
- Meditation
- Listening to music
- Taking a short walk outside

Make this break a regular part of your day. You'll find yourself looking forward to it, and your skin will show fewer signs of stress and worry.

Pack self-care essentials

Wherever you spend your day, make sure you have what you need for you and your skin to look and feel good. What should be on your list?

- Water bottle to stay hydrated
- Quick snack, like trail mix or energy bar
- Sunscreen for any time spent outdoors
- Tissues and hand-sanitiser

Then, to help your skin stay fresh, stash a pack of oil absorbing sheets in your backpack or purse. They soak up excess oil and shine from your face without smudging your makeup or leaving residue on your skin. These silky smooth sheets can be used around your nose, forehead and other oily areas of your face. They even change colour so you can see them working.

Feed your skin

Colourful fruits and veggies contain vitamins that are good for your skin: A, C, D, E and K. Think berries, apricots, tomatoes, carrots and leafy greens. Healthy fats from food like avocados, salmon and other fatty fish, nuts, and seeds also help give your skin that healthy glow.

If you don't get enough of these foods every day, look for multivitamin supplements to boost your vitamin intake.

Have some fun

Allow yourself time to do something fun each week. Exploring hobbies, doing exercise you enjoy, getting out in nature - whatever makes you smile, de-stress and feel happy will also help you look great.

Back-to-school time doesn't have to mean locking yourself inside with your books 24/7. Being a well-rounded person helps you focus better when you need to, and makes the hard work easier to handle. The upside - when you feel good, your skin will look good, too.

(BPT)

QUICK TIPS FOR TEENAGERS

Acne, blackheads, and oily skin top the list of teen skin complaints. Hormonal surges lead to enlargement of the oil glands, making teen skin oily and creating large pores and blackheads. But by following some key tips, you can keep your skin healthy and glowing. First things first – it is crucial to know your skin type:

Normal skin

Normal skin usually has a soft texture and is smooth. It doesn't have any blemishes and patches. The pores are tight, and the skin surface feels neither greasy nor dry.

Oily skin

Oily skin looks shiny and has acne, pimple, blackheads, and whiteheads. The pores are open, and the skin has an excess of sebum on it. During teenage, the hormone levels fluctuate, which might make things worse for oily skinned teens.

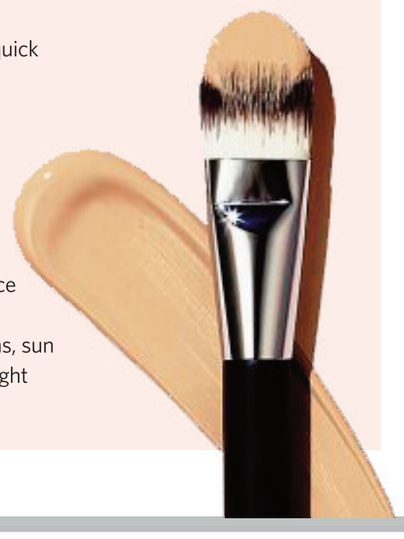
Dry skin

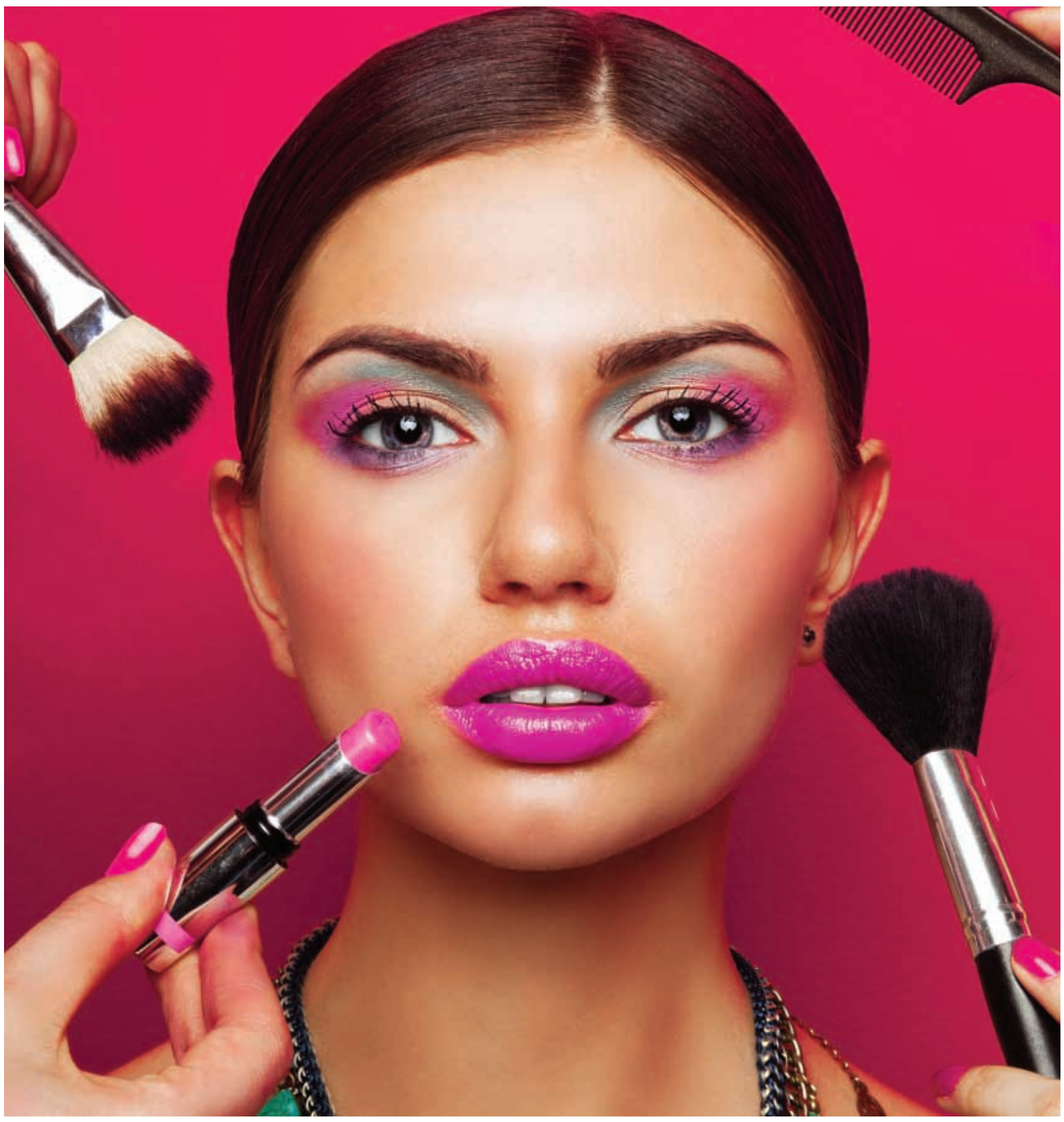
Dry skin is flaky, not-so-smooth to touch, dull, and itchy. It has invisible pores, and the outer layer of the skin keeps shedding abnormally. Dry skin needs external moisturisation to stay smooth.

WHAT TO DO

Whatever your skin type, here are some quick tips to keep your skin healthy:

- Wash your face regularly
- Moisturise your face and limbs
- Don't use powders on face
- Stay away from scrubs
- Use make-up sparingly
- Avoid popping pimples
- Exfoliate once a week
- Use lip balms, sun block and night creams





LIGHT UP YOUR LIPS

Lipstick has been the most popular form of makeup for ladies and girls around the world, including the Middle East where the choicest of shades and brands from the West are available everywhere. Most women can do without the other 'frills' of make up but cannot avoid painting their lips when dressing up. However, to achieve the perfect pout and make sure it stays, one needs to do it right. Follow these 5 steps to create perfect lips:

What you need

A nourishing lip balm, lip base, lip liner, lip compact, and your favourite lipstick.

STEP 1

Prep your lips

It is important to moisten and exfoliate your lips before you paint them. You can do this with a soft, damp toothbrush and hydrate your lips by applying a nourishing lip balm to make them soft, supple and healthy.

STEP 2

Apply a base

It is crucial for your lipstick to have a base, so that it does not sink into your lips. Choose a concealer shade that matches your lip colour and dab a little on with a flat brush. Apply some compact over this to seal the base. It also helps your lip colour to stay on longer.

STEP 3

Use a lip liner

To define your natural lip line and prevent your lipstick from getting messy, use a good lip liner to define or reshape the contours of your lips. Trace over your natural lip line from one end to the other with a liner that compliments your skin tone. To make the cupid's bow more prominent, create an 'X' shape on your upper lip, just below the cupid's bow.

STEP 4

Apply your lipstick

Choose your lipstick, take some onto a lip brush and apply it evenly all over your lips. Ensure that you apply it within the corners of your lined lips. Apply an additional coat to intensify the desired shade. If you have dry lips, you may not want to use matte lipsticks since they tend to dry your lips even more.

STEP 5

Add definition

Use a small concealer blush to work on the edges of your lips to correct the shape. To give your lips a more pouty look, add a subtle hint of lip gloss.

OMAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020

Category: Corporate Development

And the winner is...

Kanan Khimji

Kanan Khimji, director, Khimji Ramdas, is an inspirational leader who introduced new initiatives to strengthen the successful legacy of the KR group and helped foster its sustainable development objectives. At the helm of the Consumer Products Cluster of the group since 2014, she has spearheaded campaigns to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty and eventually drive more revenues over time.

Kanan has been consistently engaging with global brands for representation in Oman, in order to enhance job opportunities for nationals. She also launched new programmes to empower the staff and encourage them to grow professionally within the company, and most importantly, she has championed equal opportunities and inclusiveness at the workplace, keeping in mind the large women workforce within Khimji Ramdas.

A strong believer of sustainability and driven by the group's commitment to support economic growth and sustainable development, Kanan works closely with local entrepreneurs within the retail ecosystem to empower them and help them grow and sustain their businesses.

HEADLINE PARTNER

PERFUMES & COSMETICS
Beauty • Scentsation • You

ASSOCIATE PARTNER

mazda
YOU HAVE THE DRIVE