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GLORIOUS YEARS

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OWYA 2020 WINNERS - DR MAHA MUBARAK SALEH AL KHADURI & K P SHOBHA
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First made-in-Oman laptop launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first computer designed and manufactured in Oman by AI Onsor Company was launched on Monday. Now available to buy, the launch by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), was held at Knowledge Oasis Muscat.

The event was attended by H E Eng Said bin Hamoud bin Said al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, a number of senior officials from the public sector, AI Onsor staff who worked on the laptop project and officials of supporting companies.

The laptop was designed and manufactured by a team of young and talented Omanis with the support of the SAS Centre for Entrepreneurship at MTCIT. The design of the laptop is in line with the latest technologies, light weight and equipped with features such as ID card reader, the possibility of converting it into a touch-enabled tablet and the op-



The basic edition of the laptop comes with a high-quality FHD touchscreen that can be folded 360° to be used as a tablet. Prices range from RO90 to RO300

tion to add a mobile (nano SIM) card to connect to the Internet via a 3G or 4G network. Additionally, it has a smart fingerprint reader.

The laptops come with the latest 10th generation Intel processor and specs of variants are based on the speed of the processor with different options of storage memory and random

access memory. The processor options are Intel Celeron, Intel Pentium, Intel Core i3, Intel Core i5 and Intel Core i7. The basic edition of the laptop comes with a high-quality FHD touchscreen that can be folded 360° to be used as a tablet. Prices range from RO90 to RO300.

On the sidelines of the launch,

an investment agreement was signed between Oman ICT Group, responsible for driving the ICT sector, and AI Onsor, to invest in the latter and enhance the current production line with new technologies, including robotics. The group will cover capital and operational costs, while a large part of the company's shares will be owned by its founders. The agreement was signed by Eng Said al Mandhari, CEO of Oman ICT Group, and Eng Muaadh al Hinai, one of the founders of AI Onsor.

On the occasion, H E Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology at MTCIT, said the ministry is committed to encourage and support Omani companies specialised in communications and information technology to move forward towards innovation and development in various fields, which in turn can contribute to the transfer of technology in the sultanate.

Continued on Page 03

Husband has no right on wife's wealth: Public Prosecution

Muscat - The Public Prosecution has clarified that a husband has no 'right' over his wife's wealth without her consent.

In a statement, the Public Prosecution said, 'The finan-

cial liability of the wife is separate and her wealth is protected under Paragraph 4 of Article 37 of the Personal Status Law.'

It added, 'The law on the rights of the wife over her hus-

band states that the latter cannot interfere with her private wealth. She has the right to freely dispose of it.'

This allows wives to gift, sell or dispose of her wealth as she chooses.

Oman joins blood donation in honour of late emir of Kuwait

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman will be joining a three-day international blood donation campaign organised by a group in Kuwait to honour the country's late emir Sheikh Sabah al Ahmed al Jaber al Sabah.

Kuwait's Green Hands Environmental Team is organising the event and the Blood Bank in Bausher has pitched in with volunteer teams to conduct donation drives to be held in three wilayats on October 21, 24 and 30.

People in Oman can donate blood at the Blood Bank in Bausher on October 21 from 2pm to 6pm. The second event will be held in the wilayat of Sur on October 24 and the third in the wilayat of Bahla on October 30.



Abd al Malik al Kharousi

People in Oman can donate blood at the Blood Bank in Bausher on October 21, in the wilayat of Sur on October 24 and wilayat of Bahla on October 30

The campaign is called 'Our blood is one, Sabah al Ahmed in our hearts'.

The campaign began in Kuwait on October 18, according to Abd al Malik al Kharousi, a member of a volunteer team in Oman. "The campaign will be held in over 20 countries including Egypt, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar and the UAE," he said.

Kharousi said people should take advantage of the opportunity to donate blood and boost supplies in the sultanate.

"At these camps, we'll adhere to all the health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19."

Kharousi said the volunteer teams in Oman hope to continue organising drives and spread the culture of donating blood among members of the community.

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Oman, Nepal sign visa exemption agreement

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Nepal signed an agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, special, service and official passports at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday.

H E Sarmila P Dhakal, Ambassador of Nepal to Oman, and H E Mohammed bin Nasser al Wahabi, Undersecretary for Administration and Financial Affairs in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sultanate, signed the agreement for their respective governments.

H E Sarmila and H E Wahabi congratulated each other for achieving one more milestone in the diplomatic ties between the two countries in permitting easier movement of officials. They also discussed issues of mutual bilateral interest, including tourism and investment promotion between the two countries.



City bus service in Salalah from Nov 1

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Mwasalat has announced that it has postponed the resumption of bus services within the city of Salalah until November 1.

Following approval from the Supreme Committee dealing with COVID-19, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology had earlier decided to resume public transport services within Salalah from October 18. But now, the



national transport company has postponed it further to November 1.

The ministry had approved resumption of intercity services from September 27 and within Muscat city from October 4.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and for the safety of staff and passengers, the ministry has put in place precautionary measures. These include sterilisation of buses before and after each trip, temperature check of passengers, wearing masks at all times while riding the buses and providing hand sanitisers onboard.

REGIONAL WEATHER

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	34	21
Doha	34	23
Kuwait City	35	22
Manama	33	23
Riyadh	32	15

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.51am
Sunrise	6.06am
Duhr	11.57am
Asr	3.15pm
Maghrib	5.42pm
Isha	6.53pm

Spike in COVID-19 cases continues, 641 reported

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The night curfew has not had the desired effect as is evident from the number of COVID-19 infections reported since its imposition on October 11. Contrary to the expectation of a substantial drop in numbers, novel coronavirus infections are increasing in the country.

On Monday, the Ministry of Health (MoH) confirmed 641 new cases, taking the total to 110,594. The number of deaths reported during the same period was 13. Despite the night curfew, the number of cases in the last few days has continued to be over 500.

The number of those who re-



CASES FROM OCT 12 TO 19

Oct 12	685
Oct 13	638
Oct 14	563
Oct 15	520
Oct 16 to 18 (Average - 552)	1,657
Oct 19	641

covered also increased by 776 on Monday. The total number of recoveries has increased to 96,400, while the number of deaths has reached 1,114,' an MoH statement said. As of Monday, a total of 504 patients were admitted in health institutions, including 201 in ICUs.

MoH has called upon all to adhere to the isolation procedures by staying in a separate room with an attached toilet and serving the isolated person from outside the room as instructed. It said that social distancing also helps curb the spread of the virus.

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

GEN NU'AMANI RECEIVES BRITISH MINISTER



H E Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office, received in his office on Monday James Cleverly, British Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was held within the framework of the sultanate's interest in the current issues at the regional and international arenas (ONA)

CURB COVID-19

FOR YOUR SAKE
FOR OUR SAKE
FOR OMAN'S SAKE...

DO THE RIGHT THING

WEAR MASKS, AVOID CROWDED/
CLOSED PLACES.

REGULARLY WASH/SANITISE
HANDS.

- H E Dr Ahmed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health



Ministry signs agreement with Microsoft for digital transformation of education

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education (MoE) signed a cooperation agreement with Microsoft for digital transformation of education. Through the agreement, MoE aims to keep pace with the new system of blended learning in the educational process.

The agreement was signed by H E Majid bin Saeed bin Suleiman al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in MoE, and Sheikh Saif Hilal al Hosni, country manager of Microsoft, Bahrain and Oman.

H E Bahri said the agreement is a result of continuous cooperation between the ministry and Microsoft.

"As per the agreement, Microsoft will provide training to teachers in the sultanate, which will enhance their skills and technological capabilities," he said.



"The agreement aims to provide tools and competitions that contribute significantly to enhancing the digital transformation of the ministry and meet the needs of all groups of the ministry's employees and develop its sustainable development.

He added, "We will continue our efforts in support of the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to create a high-quality educational system in accordance with national and international

We will continue our efforts in support of the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to create a high-quality educational system in accordance with national and international standards

SHEIKH SAIF HILAL AL HOSNI

digital transformation plans," H E Bahri added.

Sheikh Hosni said Microsoft is proud to support innovations to enable the education process and raise the foundations of the educational system in addition to creating inspiring and comprehensive experiences that keep pace with the requirements of standards to ensure building local capabilities with dynamic skills that are competitive locally and internationally."

Sheikh Hosni said the agreement, valid for five years, will help the ministry keep pace with the new era of digital learning, and it is part of previous strategic agreements with MoE.

'No link between SCD and COVID-19'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

There is not much threat to patients with sickle cell disease (SCD) due to COVID-19 with two people (in their 40s) in all having lost their lives in Oman in the last few months. SCD patients are in no particular risk now compared to other times.

This was revealed at the first-ever Sickle Cell Disease Media Event held in a virtual conference organised by Novartis on Monday. At the event, ten experts from the Gulf region presented insights and analysis of SCD.

Salam Salim al Kindi, professor and consultant haematologist at the Department of Haematology, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University, said that though it is not clear whether SCD and COVID-19 have any direct or indirect links, it has been observed in Oman that the mortality rate of people with SCD has reduced in the last few months.

"There have been two deaths in Oman. I think the reasons are that people are forced to stay indoors and hence there is less exhaustion for SCD patients. There is more home food and less exposure to outdoors," he said.

He added that there are almost 8,000 patients with SCD in Oman.

"It is sad that the life expectancy of people reduces due to SCD. There are about 120 to 150 patients every year."

SCD is one of the most common chronic blood disorders in the world.

Globally, around 300,000 babies are born with the disease annually, while 300mn people carry the trait.

The Gulf region has a high prevalence rate of SCD with more cases found in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain.

Dr Thuraya al Hosni, president of Oman Hereditary Blood Disorder Association, said, "The pain of Sickle Cell Disease is indescribable; it is like having a hammer knocking your bones the hardest you can with increasing frequency. It is a very terrible pain. For a woman though, this pain is only 20 per cent of labour pain."

She said people grappling with SCD also face social stigma.

"They need painkillers like morphine, which they find difficult to get as people think seeking these drugs is a sin."

Dr Thuraya said SCD impacts every part of the body, including bones and eyes.

"We need a holistic approach to resolve the issue. Many young people are losing their lives and we need to take the right steps to tackle SCD as well as the social stigma attached to it."



Oman-India commerce ministers hold key meeting



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The ninth session of Oman-India Joint Commission was held virtually on Monday. It was co-chaired by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Oman, and Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry in India.

During the meeting, ways of cooperation between the two countries were discussed in several areas, including space and civil aviation, renewable energy, food security, health sector and information technology.

H E Munu Mahawar, Indian Ambassador to Oman, who was part of the meeting, tweeted, "A very warm and productive meeting, reflective of the close, friendly and vibrant ties."

"A thorough review of India-Oman economic partnership was undertaken and decisions reached towards further enhancing cooperation in key areas," stated the Indian mission in Oman.

It is worth noting that the sultanate is witnessing remarkable economic cooperation with the India, stated the ministry.

Oman recorded a growth of 0.69 per cent in exports to India in 2019, while the volume of trade exchange between the sultanate and India amounted to more than RO5.93bn. Indian exports to the sultanate increased by 33 per cent in 2019.

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322 infiltrators arrested, 136 taken in for robbery: ROP

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police (ROP) arrested 322 infiltrators of different nationalities for entering the country illegally during the third quarter of this year (July-September).

It also arrested 136 people who committed 127 crimes related to theft in various governorates of the sultanate in September.

According to statistics issued by the Department of Anti-infiltration of the ROP, 108 infiltrators of different nationalities were arrested last week in a



Lt Col Abdulaziz al Jabri

number of governorates.

The ROP also deported five others.

Lt Col Abdulaziz al Jabri, director of operations at the Coast Guard Police Command, said



that the department undertakes operations to confront situations that occur in the Omani territorial sea.

This has been possible through development of moni-

First made-in-Oman laptop launched

Continued from Page 01

"The ministry is also working on plans to promote free and open source software technologies by providing advanced training for young people in these technologies to enable them to produce programmes and solutions to benefit the local market, as well as push them to expand to external markets," Shidhani added.

On the occasion, Talal bin Saeed al Maamari, CEO of Omantel, which supported Al Onsor in its laptop project, said, "One of the main pillars of Omantel's strategy is to invest in young talent, empowering them to unlock their potential by adopting their ideas and activities"

TALAL AL MAAMARI

One of the main pillars of Omantel's strategy is to invest in young talent, empowering them to unlock their potential by adopting their ideas and activities

be supported and encouraged, one that we should stand by in the local market as a competitive national product of high quality. This device must be our first choice as individuals and institutions. The specialists and the technical companies backing Al Onsor have proved that the device is of high reliable quality."

infiltrators," he said.

He added, "Coast Guard Police boats deal with intruders according to the correct procedures that limit the spread of the coronavirus, and coordinate with those concerned with the Ministry of Health to allocate specialised medical cadre to deal with the infiltrators while bringing them to the relevant centres for medical examination."

Lt Col Jabri said ROP appreciates the efforts and cooperation of citizens and residents in reporting movement of suspicious boats and people on Oman's coasts.

Bank Muscat rewards 50 winners with RO100,000 in Women's Day draw

In line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday', Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, rewarded 50 women customers with a total of RO100,000 at a special Al Mazyona prize draw to celebrate the Omani Women's Day.

The lucky winners won RO2,000 each during the draw, which was held at the bank's head office. The draw and the celebrations at the bank were held in the presence of Ilham Murtadha al Hamaid, deputy general manager - Large Corporates, Bank Muscat, and livestreamed over the bank's social media channels on Twitter and Instagram.

A presentation on the achievements of Omani women was also made during the prize draw, where women employees of the bank spoke about the many successes of Omani women across all fields. With Bank Muscat keenly focused on providing a professional work environment based on fair and equal opportunities to its employees, today as much as 48 per cent of the bank's employees are women.

Speaking about the importance of the special draw, Ilham said, "We congratulate all women on the occasion of the Omani Women's Day. The bank is very happy to reward 50 lucky winners on this special occasion as we celebrate their achievements in the Renaissance of Oman and encourage them to



realise their professional dreams and aspirations.

"By achieving their full potential, Omani women are contributing greatly to economic progress and development of the sultanate. We are very happy to showcase the fine achievements of Omani women on this very special day."

All women customers who maintained an average monthly balance of RO1,000 were entered into the special draw.

Customers can win more by

saving more since their chances of winning goes up proportionally with higher deposit balances and the longer they save with the bank. This flexible scheme makes regular saving an easy habit to practice and is available for all customers of Bank Muscat, which has the largest network of branches in Oman.

Keeping in mind the unique needs of women account holders, Bank Muscat offers them the highly customised Zeinah suite of products and services. Zeinah

ensures privacy and a relaxed atmosphere for women customers at different Bank Muscat branches across the sultanate.

The unique products available for women include the Zeinah Debit card, tailored merchant discounts and a health and beauty finance scheme.

The 2020 Al Mazyona scheme with the biggest prize total money in Oman of RO11mn is designed to transform the lives of prudent savers and covers different customer segments.

Radisson Blu Sohar gets new general manager

Known for its wonderful combination of ageless heritage and modern life, Oman is a country of contrasts. Famous for its amazing natural beauty, every region has a range of mountains that surround villages, beaches, islands and wadis. Regardless of its natural beauty, the sultanate's unique charm and hospitality is deeply rooted in the Omani people as well as their long-standing traditions and culture.

With this in mind Radisson Hotel Group announced the appointment of Salah Hamdan Mohammed al Mamari as general manager of Radisson Blu Hotel, Sohar. He joined the hotel in 2014 as Rooms Division manager, before being promoted to executive assistant manager in 2018.

Recognised for being amongst the world's most hospitable people, Mamari has been a perfect example for Oman's well-deserved reputation. His immense



potential to rise above the expected paved the way for him, allowing him to grow and take on new responsibilities. Exceeding guest expectations and treating guests as he would like to be treated, are at the heart of Mamari's service philosophy.

Born in Sohar, Mamari kicked off his career in 2004 when he joined the InterContinental Muscat. His ambition and drive was soon rewarded and Mamari was offered a position as duty manager at the Crowne Plaza, Mus-

cat. A few years later he rejoined the InterContinental Muscat, where he headed up several managerial positions both in the Front Office and Rooms Division department. In line with Oman's Vision 2040, Radisson Hotel Group's aim is to become the go-to hotelier for local guests and business travelers whilst empowering the Omani working population simultaneously.

Mamari's promotion reinforces Radisson Hotel Group's commitment to nurture and shape careers of talented Omanis in the industry.

Panos Panagis, general manager of Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel, and district director of Radisson Hotel Group, Oman, said, "We aim to empower the younger generation and support them with their dreams while encouraging them to be part of such a diverse and exciting industry."

Balkees to talk about success of Knowledge Oman at summit

Knowledge Oman president, Balkees al Hassani, is all set to share about the "secrets of Knowledge Oman success" as a keynote speaker at the impactful global event, the Positivity Summit 2020, scheduled to be broadcasted over a webinar on two consecutive days on October 23 and 24.

The Positivity Summit is an event conducted in the United States since 2018, gathering speakers from all over the world under one platform to share secrets, tips, and unique stories that bring societies forward.

This year, the positivity summit will focus on ideas and presentations that will help to build positivity during and post COVID-19 under the theme, "Coming Together".

"Our theme this year is on



coming together and Knowledge Oman is a unique case that meets our event agenda. We look forward to hosting Balkees and learn about the secrets in a form of practical learning that led Knowledge Oman to form, run and lead a platform that is impacting the lives of people positively," said Cornell Thomas, founder of Positivity Summit.

Balkees has been part of Knowledge Oman for four years.

She has recently been appointed as the president of the platform, and has since engaged in multimedia platforms locally and abroad to carry forward the positive impact of the award-winning platform.

"I am honoured to be selected to represent the whole Knowledge Oman family at an international event, sharing all our secrets as a case study for others to learn, replicate and impact society in a positive way," said Balkees.

Since 2008, Knowledge Oman has managed to launch society initiatives in the form of seminars, workshops, programmes, and activities along with 35 partners locally and internationally attracting over 80,000 registrations and 700 volunteers across the years.

Team ARTT launches kits

Team ARTT (Arabian Region Travel and Tourism), launched their match kits in the presence of Ajay Pandey (OmanTech), Mohd Laibu (OmanTech), Idris Solanki (S M Homes) and Noushad Ismail (Al Mardhouf Shopping) at the Oman Cricket Turf Grounds.

Due to the coronavirus concerns and to implement social distancing, very few people attended the function and the rest were hosted online.

Madhu Jesrani, Duleep Mendis (CDO Oman Cricket), Ali Anwar (ARTT), Nilesh Mehta (Muscat Pharmacy), Anil Khimji (Khimji Ramdas), Kiran Asher (Al Ansari Group of Companies), Raju Appanapalli (Appetite Restaurant), Sunil Kumar (Oman Oasis), Mangaldas Kamat (KR Paints) and Mazin al Wahibi (Body Master Gym) sent their



best wishes to the entire team and it's management on this occasion.

Pranav Mehta emphasised the reasons for the changes in the kit from the last season.

"We had a few negative factors in our team last year, we have got rid of them and made a fresh new start. Hence we have orange at the bottom, which indicates a sunrise (new beginning). The red indicates the

positive and attacking style of game play which we want to represent.

"The navy blue colour signifies trust, loyalty, wisdom and confidence."

Team ARTT will be playing their first match against Earnst and Young on October 30.

Last year as well, both these teams played the first match, where Team ARTT came out triumphant in a one-sided affair.

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BankDhofar honours women through Women's Day draw

Marking the Omani Women's Day, which is celebrated on October 17 of every year, BankDhofar conducted Omani Women's Day Draw with a total prize amount of RO5,000. The draw which was conducted with the attendance of Siham Ahmed al Harthy, chairman of Dar al Ofuq Group, saw five lucky winners take home RO1,000 each.

Commenting on the draw, Dr Tariq Taha, chief retail banking officer at BankDhofar, said,

"Omani Women's Day is one of the important occasions which is celebrated every year to recognise the roles played by the women in various sectors. To honour women for their immense contributions, we have dedicated a special prize for women as part of our Savings Account Scheme 2020."

During the draw event, BankDhofar applied the preventive measures including social distancing and adhering to wear-

ing face mask for the attendees to avoid the widespread of COVID-19.

With a total of nearly RO2mn, the scheme is valid till December 2020. As per the prize draw scheme, BankDhofar customers who save a minimum of RO100 in their accounts are eligible to enter the draws and get the chance to win in the guaranteed branch wise draws including the monthly prize draws for all customers worth RO1,000 (each/

branch wise), and the monthly minor prize draws worth RO250 each/ branch wise.

In addition to that, this year's Savings Account Scheme includes Monthly prize draws worth RO5,000 for 2 winners each, and Youth Prizes worth RO1,000 for 2 winners each.

BankDhofar will continue celebrating occasions with customers through rewarding them for saving.

The bank conducts Omani

Women's Day prize draw, where 5 lucky winners take home RO1,000 each, and National Day prize draw where 5 customers will get the chance to win RO10,000 each.

As for Al Riadah customers, one customer will win in the monthly draw a prize worth RO25,000, and grand prize draw worth RO250,000 for 2 winners each. To learn more check out BankDhofar pages on social media.

Leading Omani law firm AMJ scoops major accolades

Oman's largest and leading independent law firm, Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co (AMJ), won the prestigious 'Oman Law Firm of the Year' award at the International Financial Law Review (IFLR) Middle East Awards on October 14. This accolade brings AMJ's tally of IFLR's 'National Law Firm of the Year' awards to an impressive and unrivalled 12 times in Oman.

The annual IFLR Awards brings together leading global and regional corporate law firms to celebrate the most outstanding legal deals that have taken place in the region in the past 12 months. The awards recognise the best law firms in each jurisdiction based on the innovation and the complexity of deals completed. AMJ was also shortlisted by the IFLR alongside the GCC's top, global law firms for number of significant deals.

In addition to the 'National Law Firm of the Year' award, AMJ has won the "Offshore Law Firm of the Year" award at the Islamic Finance News Awards 2020 for its work on a number of innovative transactions. The IFN judging panel highlighted the "ground-breaking" and "innovative" work undertaken by AMJ which "certainly is a model for many other countries".

AMJ's founder and managing partner, Mansoor Jamal Malik commenting on the awards said, "We are delighted with our con-

tinuing success at the IFLR and IFN awards in recognition of our teams' achievement. In an increasingly competitive market for legal services, these independent research-based awards are an important benchmark of performance. They also highlight the resilience of the Omani market in terms of the quality of transactions and projects being undertaken in the country particularly given the tough market conditions of the past few years."

Senior partner, Dr Said Hilal al Busaidy added, "We are all proud that IFLR and IFN have once again recognised the stellar effort of the teams and their dedication to serving the business and legal needs of our clients. It proves that the firm's policy of investing in the recruitment of experienced international lawyers and the ongoing development of our first rate Omani lawyers, creates a degree of in-country value that is unique among law firms in Oman."

AMJ is a top-tier, globally-rated, independent, commercial law firm and the largest in Oman.

In 2020, the firm celebrated 40 years of existence, and involvement in most, 'first of a kind' deals and landmark projects that have taken place in Oman and the region. Its resident team of lawyers includes many of Oman's most senior and experienced practitioners, recognised as leaders in their fields.

Kaizen Medical to offer free consultation services

Based on the Royal Directives of Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's stipulated Oman Vision 2040, which aims to empower the private sector and support it to match global competitive standards, Kaizen Medical Management company announced the launch of an initiative that includes all healthcare providers from clinics and hospitals in the sultanate, by providing its services in the field of evaluation and the application of quality and international accreditation, totally free of charge.

The company through this initiative aims to support the sector, to promote it in order to be able to compete at the GCC level and the region as a whole.

The chairman of the Board of



Directors of the company, Dr Salim bin Said al Wahaibi said, "This step will not be phased, but rather a permanent service that we will endeavour for Kaizen to provide to healthcare workers in the private sector for free. It is our conviction that real development in this sector requires the initiators and continuous development of services. During our

many years of work in this field, we were able to enumerate a list of the obstacles facing health service providers, at the top of which is the issue of quality and international accreditation, which requires a great effort to implement and allocate a budget for its development. This is why our initiative was to cooperate with health facilities operating in the private sector and to reduce the financial burden by providing these services free of charge."

Bassem al Mubarak, chief operating officer in Kaizen Medical Management, said, "The medical sector in the sultanate is entering a new phase that takes health services to an advanced level. Therefore, the application of quality is the only way for the sector to advance."

BAIC X35 crossover available on low EMI

Gulf Great Sands LLC, the exclusive importer of BAIC in Oman, is offering a low EMI on X35 crossover, an amalgamation of style, comfort and technology. Customers can avail an EMI rate of RO66 on BAIC X35 crossover for six years loan tenure (terms and conditions apply).

Extending a blend of superior ride and assertive design, the 1.5lt engine powered crossover BAIC X35 has been innovatively engineered.

A Gulf Great Sands LLC spokesperson said, "We are glad to offer low EMI on BAIC X35 Crossover which offers 'more for less'. The incredible crossover has an inspiring charisma and is ideal for all automotive enthusiasts. The BAIC X35 comfort has styling, with enhanced SUV exterior appeal, sunroof, front and rear parking sensors, rear-view camera as standard. The 1.5lt engine powered X35 has an ag-

gressive wide body SUV exterior styling, class leading space, high fuel economy, newest technology features and safety is standard therefore meant for everyone in the family."

BAIC X35 has Illuminating remarkable styling cues; it offers excellent fuel economy of 15.7 per litre (as per GSO standards) along with confidence enhancing driving experience. A perfect choice for the youth and small

families in Oman, BAIC X35 crossover is about responsive performance and value for money.

Its stylish exterior features include sunroof, height adjustable headlight and long wheelbase of 2560mm. The vehicle's smart interior boasts of steering mounted switches for Cruise control, Audio, Blue tooth, ample Boot Space, Seven-inch screen with Rear View Camera, Piano

finish multimedia control button, front Driver and Passenger airbags, Front and Rear parking sensor, ABS + EBD + ESP (Bosch 9.1 ESP) and Tyre Pressure Monitoring System. The Comfort Grade variant of BAIC X35 is available at Gulf Great Sands LLC showroom at Wattayah.

One of China's top three auto groups, BAIC boasts of 60-years of engineering expertise. The company, which was established in 1958, has eight major production bases and a cumulative output of 12mn cars. Part of the Bahwan International Group Holding Company (BIGH), Gulf Great Sands LLC (GGG) is an exclusive distributor of BAIC and many other reputed international automotive brands in Oman.

Gulf Great Sands has a state-of-the-art service centre in Ghalala, Muscat spread over more than 2,900 sqm to provide after-sales services to customers.



Fuel-efficient Nissan Altima offers outstanding driving

Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), has announced low EMI on Nissan Altima which offers an outstanding drive, enhanced handling, fuel efficiency and thoughtful technology solutions. Customers can now avail an exceptionally low EMI rate of RO159 on Nissan Altima and RO180 on Nissan Altima 2.0lt Turbo (terms and conditions apply). EMIs are calculated based on 3.2 per cent rate of Interest, 20 per cent down payment, six-year loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals.

Nissan Altima's state-of-the-art engineering offers those who drive it an effortless power while furthering remarkable fuel economy. Nissan Altima is also cherished by owners in Oman for its classy design, fuel economy, driving performance, technology and comfortability. Its good looks, striking exterior, colour range, spaciousness and fashion-

able interior have brought the car a lifetime of fans. Its powerful high-performance engine and a range of other options adds to its appeal.

A senior spokesperson for Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) said, "We are delighted to offer low EMI on Nissan Altima which is a premium mid-size sedan like no other. Nissan Altima has advanced safety features for those seeking a more focused driving experience. Owners vouch that with its advanced technology and in-built design, Nissan Altima is a pleasure to drive."

The Nissan Altima 2.0lt Turbo, which has a new standard of design, driving enjoyment and technology has been creating waves within the mid-size sedan segment since its launch. The sedan's advanced VC-Turbo engine - the

company's first production-ready variable compression ratio engine - is one of the most advanced internal combustion engines ever created. Similarly, Nissan Altima 2.5lt features expressive styling, an uplifting interior, two powertrains, and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility features.

The Nissan Altima 2.0 has the world's first variable compression turbo engine. The engine is so

smart that it anticipates what the driver wants. The Altima's shape-shifting VC-turbo engine lets the driver enjoy a lot. Nissan Altima 2.5lt unlocks the pure joy of driving through its innovative latest technology and Nissan Intelligent Mobility feature that responds to the world around

in real time.

Powered by an innovative 248 horsepower, 2.0lt, turbocharged variable compression, four-cylinder engine, Nissan Altima continuously adjusts its compression ratio to optimise power and efficiency. Whether its turbocharged power that

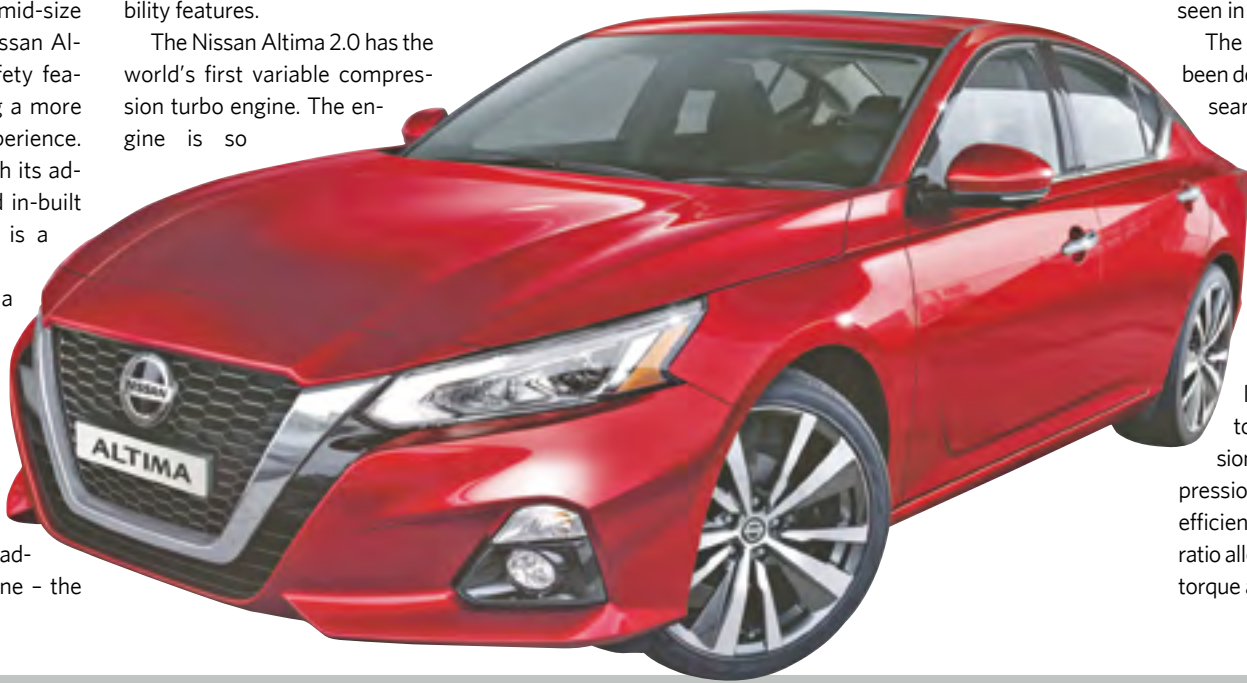
pushes you back in your seat or efficiency that sips fuel, even in city streets, Altima's shape-shifting VC-Turbo engine gives you the best of both worlds. The sedan is a complete technological package - it over delivers on the basics, boasts features and innovative technologies never seen in its class.

The VC-Turbo engine has been developed after years of research and consumer feedback. It seamlessly changes its compression ratio between 8:1 (for high performance) and 14:1 (for high efficiency) - with an advanced multi-link system continuously raising or lowering the pistons' reach to transform the compression ratio. While a high compression ratio gives greater efficiency, a low compression ratio allows for greater power and torque and avoids knocking.

Nissan Altima also comes standard with a traditional 2.5lt, four-cylinder engine. The 2.5lt inline 4-cylinder, which is standard on all Altima grades, utilises more than 80 per cent or redesigned parts. Nissan Altima 2.0lt Turbo delivers 248 horsepower and has dimensions of 4900x1852x1447mm (LxWxH). It has a CVT transmission, a Wheelbase of 2825mm and Fuel Tank capacity of 61lt.

Creating a new standard of design, driving enjoyment and technology within the mid-size sedan segment, Nissan Altima features expressive styling, an uplifting interior, two powertrains, and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility features.

Among the Nissan Altima's many features, perhaps the one that stands out most is its 'class above' appeal, which is apparent at first look and first touch of both the exterior and interior executions.



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QUOTE OF THE DAY
I don't know what to say, I'll probably have to bite my tongue a little bit. I'm quite disappointed with the result
David Warner
Sunrisers captain, after the team's defeat in the Super Over to Kolkata, on Sunday

ROYALS POST BIG VICTORY

Buttler, spinners excel as Rajasthan rout Chennai by seven wickets to keep playoff hopes alive

Abu Dhabi, UAE - After Rajasthan Royals' leg-spinners - Shreyas Gopal and Rahul Tewatia - pinned down Chennai Super Kings to 125 for five, Jos Buttler knocked them over to the bottom of the points table with a powerful 70 off 48 balls on Monday.

Rajasthan Royals climbed to fifth place, boosting their chances of making the playoffs.

Earlier in the evening, Gopal and Tewatia didn't concede a single boundary and bowled 23 dots between them.

All up, the Super Kings batsmen faced 51 dots and never got going in any shape or form.

Their seamers Deepak Chahar and Josh Hazlewood, though, got swing going and dismissed the Royals' top three within five overs.

Steven Smith particularly struggled in the early exchanges, but Buttler showed his range, finishing the chase with seven wickets and 15 balls to spare, thereby improving their net run-rate as well.

Chennai's sleepwalk
Jofra Archer ambled in, hit speeds north of 145kph, and regularly beat pinch-hitting opener Sam Curran's outside

Jos the Boss
While the Super Kings got only 13 fours, Buttler alone hit nine. While his captain Smith was barely striking at 75, Buttler

nearly doubled that strike rate.

He got cracking with a reverse-sweep over point off Jadeja's first over.

Neither Jadeja nor Piyush Chawla, who was introduced into the attack, only in the 13th over, found as much grip and turn as the Royals' spinners had done.

Having seen off testing spells from Chahar and Hazlewood, Buttler laid into Shardul Thakur and Chawla, taking them for 48 off 27 balls.

Buttler raised his fifty off 37 balls by depositing Chawla's wrong'un for six and then rushed the Royals home.

Buttler, who was named the man-of-the-match, later said: "We let a couple of games slip so it's nice to win tonight. I tried to come out with a bit of intensity with my batting, something I felt I didn't have last match.

"I felt more comfortable at the crease. It was a nice feeling. In T20 cricket you can kick yourself for bad form because you never play too many balls, but you have to trust yourself."

On batting at No 5 position, he said: "If we win it's good. Nah, I'm happy to bat wherever the team needs me."

Cricinfo



Jos Buttler

70*

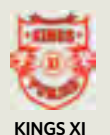
48 BALLS



Shreyas Gopal (left) celebrates with Rajasthan skipper Steven Smith after dismissing Chennai's Sam Curran

TODAY'S MATCH

DUBAI, 6PM



KINGS XI PUNJAB

VS



DELHI CAPITALS

POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
DC	9	7	2	0	14	+0.921
MI	9	6	3	0	12	+1.201
RCB	9	6	3	0	12	-0.096
KKR	9	5	4	0	10	-0.607
RR	10	4	6	0	8	-0.591
SRH	9	3	6	0	6	+0.008
KKIP	9	3	6	0	6	-0.262
CSK	10	3	7	0	6	-0.463

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
KKIP: Kings XI Punjab
MI: Mumbai Indians
RR: Rajasthan Royals
SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

S Curran	c Buttler b Gopal	22 (25)
F du Plessis	c Buttler b Archer	10 (9)
S Watson	c Tewatia b Tyagi	8 (3)
A Rayudu	c Samson b Tewatia	13 (19)
MS Dhoni	run out	28 (28)
R Jadeja	not out	35 (20)
K Jadhav	not out	4 (7)
Extras	(b 1, lb 2, nb 1, w 1)	5

TOTAL: 125 for five

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-26, 3-53, 4-56, 5-107

Bowling: J Archer 4-0-20-1, A Rajpoot 1-0-8-0, K Tyagi 4-0-35-1, B Stokes 3-0-27-0, S Gopal 4-0-14-1, R Tewatia 4-0-18-1

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

B Stokes	b Chahar	19 (11)
R Uthappa	c Dhoni b Hazlewood	4 (9)
S Samson	c Dhoni b Chahar	0 (3)
S Smith	not out	26 (34)
J Buttler	not out	70 (48)
Extras	(lb 6, w 1)	7

TOTAL: 126 for three in 17.3 overs

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-28, 3-28

Bowling: D Chahar 4-1-18-2, J Hazlewood 4-0-19-1, R Jadeja 1.3-0-11-0, S Thakur 4-0-34-0, S Curran 1-0-6-0, P Chawla 3-0-32-0

Shami 'believed' in nailing yorkers

Dubai, UAE - Five runs to defend in the Super Over for the Kings XI Punjab against the Mumbai Indians on Sunday. Mohammed Shami has seen his India teammate Jasprit Bumrah deliver a masterclass to deny big runs to Nicholas Pooran and KL Rahul. Now, he has to do it himself. The Kings XI are on the edge, a loss could well mean curtains to their season.

At the top of his mark, Shami knew he just had to bowl yorkers - and he nailed them perfectly - as pitching it just an inch away would mean Rohit Sharma and Quinton de Kock probably sending the ball to the fence.

"It's very difficult," Shami told IPLT20.com after T20 cricket's first-ever twin Super Over bash.

"Generally we get to defend 15-17 runs, so back of the mind the thought is, 'I believe in myself, I can do this'. But when the margin of error is very minimal [while defending five], then you start thinking what's the best you can do.

"I always believe in my yorkers, I'm not sure what people



think. Every ball as I was walking back to my run-up, the thought was that the previous yorker has landed well. This one will also go well. I just repeated the same."

Then, having forced the game into another one-over shootout, the Kings XI decided to designate Chris Jordan with the ball.

The England fast bowler, signed mainly for his death

bowling, ensured that the his side required just 12 runs to get the two points they needed to stay alive, despite facing up against Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya.

And that was also down to Mayank Agarwal leaping high at the boundary to save four runs off a Pollard hit by throwing the ball back onto the field of play before himself landing outside

the ropes. But his night wasn't over just yet.

With both Rahul and Pooran being dismissed in the previous Super Over, they needed two new batsmen to come in. Out came Chris Gayle and Agarwal.

The Indian opener has been in-form - second on the list of highest run-getters after Rahul - while striking at close to 160.

Gayle, meanwhile, was only in his second game of the season. Surely, you'd think Agarwal would take strike? He thought the same too, until Gayle decided to take matter in his own hands.

"I wasn't nervous, I was a bit more angry and upset that we got ourselves into this position," Gayle later said with a laugh.

"It's a game of cricket; these things happen. Even with us going to bat, I was upset with you (Agarwal) when you asked, 'Who is going to face the first ball?' (laughs). I'm like, 'Mayank, you really asked that question?' I was like 'Come on, don't ask me that, I'm going to hit a sixer first ball.'"

Gayle walked the talk,

depositing a juicy full toss from Trent Boult over long-on, before taking a single next ball. This left the Kings XI needing five off four.

Agarwal's rapid knock of 89, in his side's first game this season, wasn't enough to win the Kings XI the game in regulation time.

On that day, against the Delhi Capitals, he had holed out with the Kings XI needing one off two balls and then saw them lose the Super Over. The result flashed in front of him again, and he was determined to do it differently this time.

"One-hundred per cent, that Capitals game came to mind," Agarwal said. "Chris told me, 'Watch the ball, the rest of it will be fine'. That was on my mind. I just knew I had to hit. It wasn't like I thought we'll calculate, take a couple here and there. I just had to it, and it's amazing to be part of history."

Eventually, Agarwal sent a full toss over midwicket for four over to ensure no more drama was required for the day.

Cricinfo





Ahmad al Harthy in action during race two of International GT Open at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium on Sunday

Ahmad and Canning finish P6 in Pro-Am, overall tenth in race 2

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The joy of making a dream debut for the Oman Racing by TF Sport duo of Ahmad al Harthy and Tom Canning was short-lived.

A day after clinching Pro-Am win and finishing third overall in the first race of the fifth round of the International GT Open at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium, Ahmad and Canning ended a disappointing sixth in their class and tenth overall on Sunday.

Driving No 97 Aston Martin Vantage GT3, Ahmad was held-up during his stint at the start and to make their race further challenging was the 'ten-second success penalty' they received in pit stop following their spectacular result on Saturday.

Ahmad began Sunday's 60-minute race fifth in Pro-Am and ninth overall and was soon pushed back by a place. He then spent the half hour stuck behind Brendan Iribe of Optimum Motorsport McLaren.

"Race two was always going to be much more difficult for us as we received the success penalty for our race one exploits," Ahmad said later on Sunday.

The 39 year old Omani added: "After getting stuck behind the McLaren soon after the start, there was nothing I could do as I wanted to avoid taking any big risks.

"We were at the Spa to gain experience and we showed in the first race on Saturday what we are capable of. It's been a very posi-

tive weekend with a Pro-Am win and a double podium finish. It has been a fantastic experience."

Ahmad contested the qualifying session for race two and prior to a mid-session red flag stoppage he was third in Pro-Am and sixth overall.

After the resumption, the Omani improved his time with a best lap of 2m16.511 seconds on the penultimate tour but ended the session fifth in Pro-Am and ninth overall.

During the race, Ahmad trailed almost ten seconds by the end of lap four. As the first half an hour approached, Ahmad pitted to hand over the Aston Martin to Canning at the end of lap 11. After serving an extra-long stop due to the 'success penalty', he joined the race with around 32 minutes remaining.

With less than 25 minutes left

in the race, Canning was tenth overall and sixth in Pro-Am and the Briton driver ensured no further slip-up to end the weekend with a total of 11 points (ten for race one and one for the second race).

Nick Moss-Joe Osborne (Optimum Motorsport McLaren) won the Pro-Am race while Valentin Pierburg-Nicholas Foster in Mercedes AMG GT3 2020 came second.

Mercedes AMG GT3 2016 duo of Patryk Krupinski-Christian Killen rounded off the Pro-Am podium. Miguel Ramos and Henrique Chaves won the main race at the wheel of the McLaren 720S of Teo Martin Motorsport. Salih Yoluc and Charlie Eastwood (TF Sport Aston Martin) took second ahead of the Team Lazarus Bentley of Yannick Mettler-Fabrizio Crestani.

We were at the Spa to gain experience and we showed in the first race on Saturday what we are capable of. It's been a very positive weekend with a Pro-Am win and a double podium finish

AHMAD AL HARTHY



Ahmad al Harthy

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Barkley nets winner as Villa extend perfect start in EPL



Aston Villa's Ross Barkley (left) celebrates after scoring against Leicester City at King Power Stadium in Leicester, UK, on Sunday (AFP)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Aston Villa extended their perfect start in the English Premier League (EPL) with a dramatic 1-0 win at Leicester on Sunday.

At the King Power Stadium, Villa left it until the 90th minute to seal their fourth successive victory. Ross Barkley, on loan from Chelsea, took John McGinn's pass and fired home from the edge of the area.

Just months after avoiding relegation on the final day of last season, Villa move up to second place. They thrashed champions Liverpool 7-2 before the international break and now sit three points behind leaders Everton.

Villa have won their opening four games of a league season for the first time since 1930-31 and boss Dean Smith said: "It is a really good start. To come here and get the win, this is a really good team. "There are a lot of tired legs but they are getting into the season slowly but surely. We will savour what we are doing at the moment."

ITALIAN LEAGUE Dzeko lifts five-goal Roma

Milan, Italy - Roma staged a 5-2 comeback against promoted Benevento in Rome on Sunday.

Bosnian forward Dzeko scored twice as the capital side earned back-to-back wins despite an early scare after Gianluca Caprari put Benevento ahead after five minutes.

Former Chelsea forward Pedro got his first goal in the Sta-

dio Olimpico off a Lorenzo Pellegrini cross after half an hour with Dzeko adding another, four minutes later. A Jordan Veretout penalty, a second Dzeko goal after 76 minutes, and an impressive solo run from Carles Perez before the whistle sealed victory.

"We always had control of the game, with little danger," insisted Roma coach Paulo Fonseca.

"Now we have a lot of games in a short space of time and need to manage our energy, but I'm confident," he added of next week's Europa League action and league trip to AC Milan.

"The result is deceiving," said Benevento coach Filippo Inzaghi. "For a newly promoted team, playing such a match is a great satisfaction."

In Udine, Uruguayan forward Ignacio Pusetto's late winner earned a first win this season for Udinese, 3-2 over coronavirus-hit Parma, missing seven players.

FRENCH LEAGUE Lille thrash nine-man Lens

Paris, France - Lille grabbed top spot in Ligue 1 on Sunday by thrashing newly-promoted Lens 4-0 in France's northern derby as the ill-disciplined visitors had two players sent off.

Lens had a chance to go top in France for the first time in 16 years but their defensive frailties were ruthlessly exposed by Lille who move two points ahead of defending champions Paris Saint-Germain.

Burak Yilmaz's low shot put the home side ahead in the echo-

ing, empty Stade Metropole after 11 minutes.

Lens hung on till the second half when Jonathan Bamba scored Lille's second before first Jonathan Gradi and then substitute Clement Michelin were shown red cards as Lens fell apart.

Jonathan Ikone and Yusuf Yazici completed the job for Lille.

"Tonight was a perfect match," said Lille striker Luiz Araujo.

"This start to the season is the result of the hard work we do every day. We are very serious and ready to do a great job but we haven't won anything yet.

"We have to keep our feet on the ground and stay focused on the next game."

SPANISH LEAGUE

Real Sociedad go top with rout of Betis

Madrid, Spain - Real Sociedad continued La Liga's unpre-

dictable start to the season by going top of the table on Sunday, after a 3-0 win away at Real Betis.

Villarreal had temporarily claimed first place earlier in the day by beating Valencia 2-1 at la Ceramica but Real Sociedad's impressive victory put them ahead on goal difference.

They are the sixth different team to lead La Liga after six rounds of fixtures so far.

Real Sociedad took advantage as Portu and Adnan Januzaj scored goals either side of Mikel Oyarzabal converting a penalty to consign Betis to a third defeat in four games under their new coach Manuel Pellegrini. They drop to sixth.

OTHER RESULTS:

Sunday: Alaves 0 Elche 2, Huesca 2 Valladolid 2.

GERMAN LEAGUE

Sunday: Schalke 1 Union Berlin 1. AFP



Real Sociedad's Adnan Januzaj (centre) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against Real Betis in Seville, on Sunday (AFP)

Pakistan rest Amir, Sarfaraz and Malik for Zimbabwe series

Karachi, Pakistan - Pakistan on Monday opted to rest senior players Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Amir and Sarfaraz Ahmed for their limited-over series at home against lowly ranked Zimbabwe starting later this month.

Head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq said it was a 'strategic decision' to allow younger players a chance to feature in upcoming matches.

The two sides will play three one-day internationals (ODIs)

and three Twenty20 games, with the 22-man squad also allowing for new players to try out in the shortest format.

"We are trying some new players in Twenty20s but not in the ODIs because they lead towards automatic qualification for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and are more important," Misbah said in a press conference in Lahore.

The ODIs - starting in Rawalpindi on October 30 - are part of the ODI League from

where the top seven out of 13 teams will qualify for the 2023 World Cup. Zimbabwe, who rank as low as 14th in ODIs and 11th in T20Is, arrive in Islamabad on Tuesday and quarantine for a week before they start practising. The remaining ODIs will also be played in Rawalpindi on November 1 and 3. The three T20Is are in Lahore on November 7, 8 and 10.

Rookie batsman Abdullah Shafique, who turns 21 next month, has earned a maiden

call while 19 year old keeper Rohail Nazir also earned a call.

Squad: Babar Azam (captain), Abdullah Shafiq, Abid Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Haider Ali, Haris Sohail, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Rizwan, Rohail Nazir, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Usman Qadir, Zafar Gohar, Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Musa Khan, Shaheen Shah, Wahab Riaz.

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ALIBABA BUYS SUNART
China's e-commerce giant Alibaba has bought a controlling US\$3.6bn stake in SunArt which runs hundreds of hypermarkets on the mainland for French shopping giant Auchan

BUSINESS

CBO celebrates rising women participation in banking sector

Female bankers account for 40% of banking workforce in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) celebrated the women participation and empowerment in the sultanate's banking sector on the occasion of Omani Women's Day which was celebrated across the country on October 17.

Speaking on the occasion, Jumaima Ali al Balushi, manager - communications and corporate relations department at the CBO, said that Oman's central bank is one of the organisations in the country which has been at the forefront in according equal attention and opportunity to female staff.

In a statement posted on the CBO's website on Monday, Jumaima said that about 40 per cent of the banking sector workforce (including CBO, commercial banks, specialized banks and Islamic banks) happen to be women employees. The strength of woman employees in the CBO as a standalone entity has exceeded 34 per cent of the total workforce in the organisation.

Rania Issa al Zadjali, senior



banking development analyst at the CBO, said that as many as 4,528 Omani women are working in the commercial and specialized banks which is 41 per cent of the banking sector's total workforce.

The total number of Omani women working in the Islamic banks and Islamic banking windows currently stand at 469 or 33 per cent of the total workforce, she said.

Rania said that Omani women have assumed these positions through their hard work and ded-

ication and are occupying distinct roles across various disciplines in the banking sector. She also noted that the CBO's role in enforcing Omanisation in the banking sector has led to an increased percentage of Omanisation rates exceeding 94 per cent in commercial and specialized banks and 91 per cent in Islamic banks and windows.

Referring to the sultanate's celebration of Omani Women's Day this year, Jumaima said that this year's celebration was unique as many women excelling

in different disciplines were honored and felicitated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

She explained that Omani women have always received their fair share of attention, care and empowerment in the CBO and accordingly were chosen for various leadership positions in the central bank. "Some of the striking examples in this regard are the appointments of vice president of technical services, vice president of investment and market operations and vice pres-

ident of internal auditing in recent times. All these positions were occupied by woman staff members in the organisation," she said, adding that these were in addition to several other critical managerial, leadership and professional positions being held by women.

Jumaima also noted that the CBO through its various training initiatives, including several professional and specialized training programs and skill enhancement programs, has contributed effectively in the professional and personal empowerment of the female staff.

Echoing similar views, Rania said the sultanate has witnessed the surging empowerment of Omani women in the banking sector, thanks to the various initiatives and directives from the CBO.

The Central Bank of Oman in its statement said that the central bank is keen and committed to encourage, support and empower Omani women on par with Omani men, thereby enabling them to occupy various leadership positions in the banking sector.

IMF calls for 'urgent action' in virus-hit MENA region

Dubai, UAE - The International Monetary Fund on Monday urged Middle East and North African countries to accelerate reforms and diversification efforts as the energy-rich region faces unprecedented challenges due to the coronavirus and low oil prices.

In its latest regional economic outlook report, the International Monetary Fund projected the economies of the MENA region to shrink by 5 per cent this year compared with a July estimate that they would contract by 5.7 per cent.

The region - which includes all Arab countries and Iran - was expected to suffer its worst economic performance since 1978 when it was convulsed with unrest and shrank by 4.7 per cent, according to the World Bank data.

"We should look at what is happening today as a call for action, and also as an opportunity to stimulate the transformation of the economy and create more opportunities, especially for the youth," Jihad Azour, the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia director, told AFP.

"We expect that both growth and unemployment to be affected this year, and overall this crisis could bring growth down



by 5 per cent as well as also unemployment could go up by five percent."

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate among youths in the energy-rich region sits at 26.6 per cent, the World Bank data shows.

Since March, countries of the region, many of them heavily dependent on oil revenues, have resorted to sweeping lockdowns and curfews to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, disrupting local economies.

"We are at an important moment where there are hopes that (a) vaccine could accelerate the recovery, but also there are challenges with the risk of a second wave of the coronavirus," said International Monetary Fund's Middle East and Central Asia director .
AFP



Category: Healthcare

And the winner is...

Dr Maha Mubarak Saleh al Khaduri

Dr Maha al Khaduri, who enjoys a second term as assistant dean for Training and Community Services, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Squ, has been skilled in providing a specialised infertility service with country-wide referrals at SquH and Fakhri Fertility Clinic for Assisted Reproductive Technology, IVF and Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis.

"My passion is helping couples to have a child," says Dr Maha who is the focal consultant for fertility preservation for Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant patients at SquH. As the first Omani senior consultant in this speciality at SquH, she has contributed to developing and advancing clinical services, especially in endoscopic surgery and infertility, and performs major gynecological surgeries, including advanced minimally invasive surgeries.

Dr Maha, who provides consultancy services as technical expert for promotion, review of other health institutions' services, and medico-legal cases, has served on 45 different committees and chaired 12 of these, including committees and societies in MoH and OMSB, giving expert inputs on women's health in Oman.

An eloquent speaker of international recognition in her field, Dr Maha has often been an invited speaker and chaired sessions in local and international conferences. She has been active in research as an academic and also been awarded His Majesty's grant, besides an internal grant at Squ.



MSM drops 0.4%; volumes rise

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) dropped 0.39 per cent to close at 3,588.56 points on Monday. The decline in the main index was due to the weak performance of financial sector stocks.

While Financial index fell more than 1 per cent, Industrial and Services indices recorded gains of 0.28 per cent and 0.61 per cent, respectively. MSM Sharia index marginally increased by 0.06 per cent and closed at 519.06 points.

Trading activity improved on Monday compared to the previous session. The market turnover jumped 122 per cent to RO1.76mn on Monday against RO795,000 recorded on Sunday. The total trading volumes increased more than 31 per cent to 7.7mn shares com-

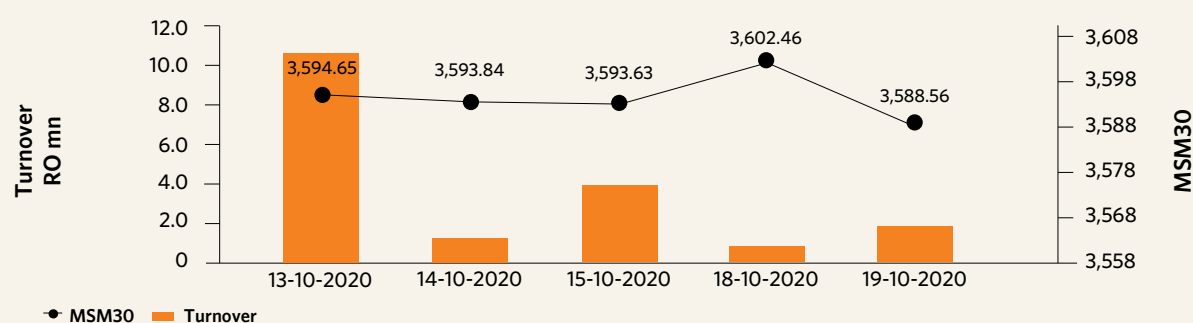


pared to 5.8mn on Sunday.

Top gainers on Monday were Al Jazeera Steel Products (4.13 per cent), Sembcorp Salalah (3.81 per cent), Al Jazeera Services (2.65 per cent) and Galfar Engineering and Contracting (2.5 per cent).

Top losers were Dhofar Cattle Feed (-9.5 per cent), Gulf Investment Services Holding (-9.3 per cent), Muscat City Desalination (-8.0 per cent) and Sohar International Bank (-4.2 per cent).

MSM INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



Lulu and ADQ join hands for \$1bn expansion in Egypt

Abu Dhabi, UAE - ADQ, the Abu Dhabi-based one of the largest holding companies in the Middle East, has entered into a non-binding agreement with Lulu International Holdings, paving the way for up to US\$1bn investment supporting Lulu's expansion in Egypt.

The agreement was signed by Mohamed Hassan al Suwaidi, chief executive officer of ADQ, and Yusuff Ali MA, chairman of Lulu Group, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported on Sunday.

Under the terms of the agreement, ADQ and Lulu International will work to collectively develop up to 30 hypermarkets and 100 express minimarket stores as well as state-of-the-art logistics hubs, distribution and fulfillment centers to strengthen the retailer's e-commerce business across Egypt. It is estimated that this expansion will create up to 12,000 jobs, fostering economic and social growth



The agreement was signed by Yusuff Ali MA (left), chairman of Lulu Group, and Mohamed Hassan al Suwaidi, chief executive of ADQ (WAM)

throughout the country.

Suwaidi said, "Our agreement with Lulu International Holdings reflects our wider commitment to investing in Egypt, following the announcement of our joint investment platform with the Sovereign Fund of Egypt late last year."

He said, "The phased roll-out of multiple retail stores would provide significant socio-economic benefits to local communities across the country, as well as bolster the quality and range of products available to Egyptian

consumers."

Yusuff Ali said, "Egypt is a very important growth market for us, and we see great potential for our future business there. Our agreement with ADQ will better position us to continue our rapid expansion of our operations across Egypt. I take this opportunity to thank the leadership of Abu Dhabi and ADQ for their support to expand Lulu's operations in Egypt which will immensely benefit the country and its citizens."

WAM

UK 'hopeful' for post-Brexit trade deal

London, UK - Britain still wants to reach a post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union despite the current deadlock, a senior government minister insisted ahead of fresh talks Monday.

The UK had imposed a deadline of last week's EU summit for a deal, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he was ready to walk away and prepare for a no-

deal exit after five decades of EU membership.

However, senior minister Michael Gove said on Sunday he was still hopeful there would be an agreement, telling TV interviewers the door remained 'ajar' if the EU would change its position.

The two sides disagree on the rules for fair competition, how these rules will be policed and

how much access EU fishing fleets will get to UK waters.

Britain wants to reassert sovereignty over its waters and have no EU legal oversight over the deal - insisting it wants a simple trade deal of the kind the EU signed with Canada.

But the European Union says Britain's situation is completely different to that of Canada.

AFP

China's economic recovery speeds up in Q3 on consumer spending

Beijing, China - China's economy powered ahead in the third quarter, data showed Monday, building on a strong recovery from the painful coronavirus lockdowns, while the country's crucial army of consumers picked up their spending last month as they grow more confident.

However, the expansion fell short of forecasts and officials warned of uncertainty as the disease continues to ravage other key markets, with the National Bureau of Statistics saying 'the international environment is still complicated'.

Having essentially shut down major cities around the country to fight the virus, China's economy saw an unprecedented contraction in the first three months of the year but with new infection rates being brought under control it has seen a strong recovery over the past six months.

That has put it on track to be the only major economy likely to expand this year, the International Monetary Fund said.

The 4.9 per cent growth in July-September followed a 3.2 per cent rate in the previous three months, and is close to pre-pandemic levels.

The reading was helped by a forecast-beating 3.3 per cent jump in retail sales last month, suggesting China's army of consumers are returning to shops and restaurants, and travelling again.

Industrial output also beat expectations, jumping 6.9 per cent on-year in September.

China's communist leadership has hailed its handling of the virus, giving experimental vaccines to hundreds of thousands of people as it seeks to reframe



A woman wearing a face mask walks out the Auchan supermarket in Beijing on Monday (AFP)

The 4.9 per cent growth in July-September followed a 3.2 per cent rate in the previous three months, and is close to pre-pandemic levels

the pandemic's origin story.

But long-term fears over jobs and a potential virus rebound in China are weighing on consumer sentiment, despite government attempts to reignite domestic demand.

"China built its quick recovery via stringent lockdowns, massive testing, population tracking and fiscal stimulus," Nomura chief China economist Lu Ting said.

Other factors such as export growth and a surge in demand after massive floods in the summer also boosted activity in September, he added.

"But China is not absolutely free from the risk of a second wave of COVID-19, pent-up demand will likely lose some

steam... and rising US-China tensions could dent China's exports and manufacturing investment," Ting said.

OCBC Bank's head of Greater China research Tommy Xie told AFP that retail figures showed a positive trend, suggesting 'rising interest in big ticket items', with car sales a key driver of the spending rebound.

"But it will take some time for us to access how sustainable this domestic demand is," he cautioned, citing that tourism revenues from domestic trips were still down by about 30 per cent on-year in the early-October Golden Week period.

"That will also be particularly important for the upcoming

growth, given China is now promoting a strategy where domestic demand becomes increasingly important," he said, referring to China's push to make consumers the key driver of economic growth.

NBS spokeswoman Liu Aihua said Monday that although China's economy has continued its steady recovery, the global picture is murky 'with considerable instabilities and uncertainties'. She highlighted 'great pressure' in forestalling virus cases from abroad and preventing a virus resurgence at home. In September, China's urban unemployment rate dipped further to 5.4 per cent.

AFP

Iran will sell more arms than buy after embargo lifted, says official

Tehran, Iran - Iran on Monday said it is more inclined to sell weapons rather than buy them, after it announced the end of a longstanding UN conventional arms embargo.

Tehran said the ban imposed more than a decade ago was lifted 'automatically' as of Sunday, based on the terms of a 2015 landmark nuclear deal with world powers, from which the Islamic republic's arch-enemy the United States has withdrawn.

"Before being a buyer in the arms market, Iran has the ability to supply [other countries]," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters.

"Of course, Iran is not like the United States, whose president seeks to sell deadly weapons to slaughter the Yemeni people," he added, referring to US weapons purchased by Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition in Yemen - fighting Huthi rebels backed by Tehran.

The lifting of the embargo allows Iran to buy and sell military equipment including tanks, armoured vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters and heavy artillery.

According to Khatibzadeh, Iran will 'act responsibly' and sell weapons to other countries 'based on its own calculations'.



This file photo shows Iranians visiting a weaponry and military equipment exhibition in the capital Tehran on February 2, 2019 (AFP)

The embargo on the sale of arms to Iran was due to start expiring progressively from October 18, under the terms of the UN resolution that enshrined the 2015 nuclear deal.

However, Washington has argued that arms sales to Iran

would still violate UN resolutions, and has threatened sanctions on anyone involved in such deals.

President Donald Trump withdrew his country from the nuclear deal and unilaterally begun reimposing economic

sanctions on Iran in 2018.

Iran's Defence Minister Amir Hatami told state television on Sunday that his country relies primarily on its own military capabilities. He said that the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s taught Tehran the 'importance of self-reliance',

and led it to 'produce 90 per cent of our defence needs locally'.

'A number of countries' have contacted Iran on potential arms trade, he added, but emphasised that 'our sales will be much more expansive (than purchases)'.
AFP

China rails at US after sanctions threat

Beijing, China - China on Monday accused the United States of 'peddling arms' and 'interfering' in other countries' affairs after Washington threatened sanctions against any nation taking advantage of the end of a UN ban to sell weapons to Iran.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned against anyone supplying arms to the Islamic republic after Tehran said a longstanding UN embargo against such deals had expired.

China's Foreign Ministry on Monday said Pompeo's remarks were 'utterly unjustifiable'.

"It is the US that peddles arms and ammunition everywhere, uses military trade to serve geopolitical interests, and even openly interferes in the internal affairs of other countries," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

Asked if China would now sell arms to Iran, Zhao did not directly address the issue but said Beijing would 'handle military trade in accordance with



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said arms sales to Iran would result in sanctions (AFP)

its military export policy and its international obligations'.

The embargo on the sale of conventional arms to Iran was due to begin expiring progressively from October 18 under terms of the UN resolution that confirmed the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

Tehran, which can now purchase weapons from Russia, China and elsewhere, has hailed the expiration as a diplomatic victory over its arch enemy the United States, which had tried to maintain an indefinite freeze on arms sales.

AFP



Newly-elected Turkish Cypriot President Ersin Tatar (centre) celebrates with supporters after winning the presidential election on Sunday (AFP)

Turkish Cypriots elect Erdogan's candidate Tatar

Nicosia, Cyprus - Turkish Cypriots in breakaway northern Cyprus on Sunday narrowly elected rightwing nationalist Ersin Tatar, backed by Ankara, in a run-off poll, at a time of heightened tensions in the eastern Mediterranean.

Tatar (60) clinched his surprise victory in a second round of presidential elections, winning 51.7 per cent of the vote, official results showed.

He edged out incumbent Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci (72), a supporter of reunification with the Greek Cypriot south of the divided island, leaving attempts to relaunch long-stalled UN-brokered talks hanging in the balance.

Tatar is an advocate of a two-state solution and held the post of premier in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognised only by Ankara.

He controversially received the open backing of Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the election campaign.

In a victory speech to hundreds of cheering and Turkish flag-waving supporters, Tatar thanked Turkey's head of state and said, "We deserve our sovereignty - we are the voice of Turkish Cypriots."

"We are fighting to exist within the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, therefore our neighbours in the south and the world community should respect our fight for freedom."

There was no immediate official reaction from the Greek Cypriot government or ruling party in the south of the island, which is an European Union member state, although opposition parties were quick to lament the outcome.

Erdogan was swift to celebrate the victory, which followed a high 67 per cent turnout at the polls. 'I congratulate Ersin Tatar who has been elected president... Turkey will continue to provide all types of efforts to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriot people,' he wrote on Twitter.

In a telephone call the same night, Erdogan said he was confident the two leaders would maintain close cooperation in all areas, 'starting with the hydrocarbon linked activities in the eastern Mediterranean', his office said.

Under Erdogan, Turkey has become an increasingly assertive regional power that is now engaged in a bitter dispute with Greece and Cyprus over oil and gas reserves in eastern Mediterranean waters.

AFP

US envoy slams Afghan bloodshed after blast

Kabul, Afghanistan - A top US envoy slammed Afghanistan's 'distressingly high' levels of bloodshed on Monday after a car bombing at a police headquarters killed at least 16 people and wounded scores more.

The latest remarks by veteran diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated a withdrawal deal with the Taliban in February, come as spiralling violence across Afghanistan imperils ongoing peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban.

'Continued high levels of violence can threaten the peace process and the agreement and the core understanding that there is no military solution,' Khalilzad said on Twitter.

'Violence today remains distressingly high in spite of the recent reaffirmation of the need for substantial reduction.'



Iran's President Hassan Rouhani (right) meets with the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan Abdullah Abdullah in the capital Tehran on Monday (AFP)

On Sunday, a car bomb near the police headquarters in the western province of Ghor left 16 people dead and 154 wounded, local hospital head Mohammad Omar Lalzad said on Monday.

Five children, nine women and 26 members of the security

forces were among the wounded.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban.

In the country's southern province of Helmand, thousands of families have been forced to flee their homes in recent days as

fierce fighting erupted between the Taliban and government forces.

The violence continues even though Khalilzad last week claimed the Taliban had assured US forces they would reduce attacks and casualties.

US influence over Afghanistan's battlegrounds is on the wane, with the Pentagon looking to withdraw all its remaining troops by next May.

President Donald Trump has said US forces should return even sooner, raising questions about Washington's insistence that its withdrawal from Afghanistan after 19 years of war is really 'conditions-based'.

The Taliban have been quick to exploit the apparent lack of resolve, and began to push for fresh military gains as soon as they signed the withdrawal deal with the US.

"The belief that says violence must escalate to win concessions at the negotiating table is very risky. Such an approach can undermine the peace process and repeats past miscalculations by Afghan leaders," Khalilzad said.

AFP

New fighting over Karabakh despite ceasefire

Stepanakert, Azerbaijan - A new ceasefire agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan to halt fighting over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh was again failing to hold on Monday as both sides accused each other of fresh attacks.

The truce, backed by international mediators to put a stop to three weeks of fighting that has left hundreds dead, was supposed to have come into force at midnight on Sunday but both sides immediately accused each other of violating the deal.

The Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan is controlled by Armenians, backed by Yerevan, who declared independence as the Soviet Union fell.

But it has never been recognised by any other state, including Armenia, while Azerbaijan has always made clear its desire to regain control in one of the most combustible conflicts left after the fall of the USSR.

The Azerbaijani Defence Min-



A man assesses the damage to his home that came under attack during fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, in the city of Terter on Sunday (AFP)

istry said on Monday that Armenian armed forces had shelled areas in four districts inside the country overnight.

Meanwhile, the local authorities in Karabakh said Azerbaijani artillery fire continued overnight, with the Karabakh army taking 'proportionate actions' in response.

However Nagorno-Karabakh's main city Stepanakert was quiet overnight.

The ceasefire was the second agreed after a previous truce thrashed out in Moscow earlier this month never showed any sign of seriously holding.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accused Armenian forces of 'blatantly' violating the ceasefire, including firing on residential areas, and said there were dead and wounded.

Writing on Twitter, he said Azerbaijani forces had taken control of 13 more Armenian-held settlements.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly

claimed military success in the current fighting by taking control of areas both within Karabakh and other Azerbaijani territory that had been held by Armenian forces.

But analysts say Azerbaijan is unlikely to be able to retake control of Karabakh through military means alone, while the seemingly irreconcilable positions on both sides makes a diplomatic solution elusive.

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Sunday called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to 'fully abide' by the new ceasefire, his spokesman said. The new deal was announced after one of the conflict's deadliest attacks on civilians so far on Saturday, when a missile hit a residential area of Azerbaijan's second city Ganja, killing 13 people including children.

The clashes over Karabakh that erupted on September 27 have left more than 700 dead.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

New restrictions in Europe as global cases pass 40mn

Brussels, Belgium - The number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide passed 40mn on Monday, as fresh measures to combat the spread of the virus came into effect in several European countries.

Belgium imposes a nationwide overnight curfew from Monday and Switzerland has made wearing face masks compulsory in indoor public spaces, the latest measures by European governments to fight a powerful second coronavirus wave.

The latest surge in cases sent the total registered worldwide past 40mn at 0715 GMT on Monday, according to an AFP tally based on official sources. More than half the caseload is in the three hardest-hit countries: The United States, India and Brazil.

In Europe, more than 250,000 people have died, but the deepening crisis there stands in contrast to Australia, where the second-biggest city has begun easing a lockdown that kept millions of people largely confined to their homes for months.

Cafés and restaurants across Belgium were shuttered for four weeks as the country tackled its own infection spike, part of a continent-wide surge that has seen a 44-per cent increase in cases across Europe in the past week. Some businesses have protested despite authorities warning the country was in the middle of an exponential increase in cases.

"We don't feel considered, and it hurts my heart," said Angelo Bussi, a restaurant manager in Brussels. "Everyone is in pain. It's horrible."

'Second wave is here'

Switzerland was largely spared when the coronavirus emerged in China late last year and swept the world.

But infections have doubled in the wealthy Alpine nation in the last seven days, prompting new restrictions including compulsory masks-wearing in public spaces indoors and limits on



Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte addresses a press conference to present new measures to tackle the spread of COVID-19, at Palazzo Chigi in Rome on Sunday (AFP)

public gatherings.

"The second wave is here, earlier and stronger than we expected, but we are prepared," Health Minister Alain Berset told journalists.

The canton of Bern also banned ban public events of more than a thousand people, which will hit professional football and hockey matches.

France on the weekend im-

posed its own overnight curfew in nine cities including Paris, affecting 20mn people, after announcing a record 32,400 new infections on Saturday.

And Italy announced fresh curbs on Sunday night in response to its own snowballing second wave of contagion, after enduring Europe's first major outbreak earlier this year.

"We cannot waste time,"

said Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, flagging bans on amateur team sports and earlier closures for bars and restaurants.

The new measures were intended to avoid harsher measures that could 'seriously endanger' continental Europe's third-largest economy, already reeling from a two-month nationwide lockdown only lifted in May.

'We have to try to live normally'

An even longer lockdown began coming to an end in Australia on Monday, where the five million inhabitants of Melbourne were allowed to leave their homes for more than two hours a day for the first time since July.

Residents dashed back to reopened salons and golf courses that had been closed for more than 100 days, though restaurants and most other retail businesses will remain shut until November at the earliest as the authorities monitor case numbers. "I'm not doing what is popular, I am doing what is safe, because we don't want to be back here again," said Daniel Andrews, the premier of Victoria state of which Melbourne is the capital.

Israel has also lifted restrictions that banned people from travelling more than a kilometre from their homes as well as closing kindergartens, beaches

In Europe, over 250,000 people have died, but the deepening crisis there stands in contrast to Australia, where the second-biggest city has begun easing a lockdown that kept millions of people largely confined

and national parks.

Saudi Arabia eased more of its own virus restrictions when it allowed worshippers to re-enter the Grand Mosque in Mecca for prayers on Sunday for the first time since March.

The Grand Mosque in Mecca will be sterilised before and after each group of worshippers, authorities said.

AFP



A file photo of Saeb Erekat, the Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and chief Palestinian negotiator (AFP)

Palestinian official Saeb Erekat critical

Jerusalem - Long-time chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat was in 'critical' condition and in a medically induced coma on Monday, said the Israeli hospital in Jerusalem treating him for coronavirus complications.

The Palestine Liberation Organization said on Sunday that Erekat had been admitted to Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital's coronavirus intensive care unit due to 'chronic health problems in the respiratory system'.

The 65 year old had tested positive for COVID-19 on October 9, the PLO said.

Erekat had 'arrived in serious condition' and was receiving oxygen, the hospital said on Sunday, adding that his condition was 'serious' but 'stable'.

On Monday morning, Hadassah said that after a 'quiet night', his condition 'deteriorated and is now defined critical and due to respiratory distress, he is anaesthetised and ventilated'.

Erekat, who lives in the bibli-

cal town of Jericho in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, underwent lung-transplant surgery in the United States in 2017.

"Mr Erekat is a challenge to treat for coronavirus since he had lung transplants, he is immunosuppressed, and has another bacterial infection in addition to coronavirus," Hadassah said on Monday. Hadassah said it was 'in contact with international medical authorities regarding the treatment policy of this complex patient'.

The Jerusalem-born Erekat serves as the PLO's secretary-general and in remains Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas' inner circle.

He has been a key figure in Palestinian politics for decades, often serving as a main interlocutor for foreign envoys and the international media.

He has consistently voiced support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

AFP

Poland to use stadium as hospital

Warsaw, Poland - Poland's national stadium will double as a field hospital for Warsaw, a senior government official said on Monday, as a spike in coronavirus cases has strained health care facilities to the breaking point.

The decision came days after the government asked Poles to 'stay home' and 'work remotely' if possible as it announced a raft of restrictions to stem infections.

Built for the UEFA Euro 2012

football championships, the 60,000-seat stadium has conference rooms under its stands able to accommodate patients.

"About 500 beds will be installed in the stadium to receive people requiring hospitalisation," government spokesman Piotr Muller told the commercial Polsatnews channel.

The new facility, that will have around 50 intensive care beds, will be ready to accept patients by the end of the week.

AFP

Tower of London ravens re-adapt to life after lockdown

London, UK - Chris Skaife has one of the most important jobs in Britain. As Yeoman Warder Ravenmaster at the Tower of London, he is responsible for the country's most famous birds.

According to legend firmly rooted in Britain's collective imagination, if all the ravens were to leave the Tower, the kingdom would collapse and the country be plunged into chaos.

Coronavirus lockdown restrictions saw tourist attractions across the country close their doors, including the imposing 1,000 year old royal fortress on the banks of the River Thames.

That left Skaife with an unprecedented challenge of how to entertain the celebrated avian residents, who suddenly found themselves with no one to play with - or rob food from.

It also raised fears the birds - known as the guardians of the Tower - would fly away to try to find tasty morsels elsewhere, and worse still, risk the legend coming to pass.

There are eight ravens in captivity in the Tower of London: Merlina, Poppy, Erin, Ju-



This file photo shows a visitor waiting to enter Tower of London, in central London on October 12 (AFP)

bilee, Rocky, Harris, Gripp and George.

A royal decree, purportedly issued in the 17th century, stated there must be six on site at any one time but Skaife said

he keeps two as 'spares', 'just in case'.

They are free to roam the grounds but to prevent them from flying too far, their wings are trimmed back slightly.

Back in March when lockdown began, Skaife - who is in his 50s and a retired staff sergeant and former drum major in the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment - was furloughed.

But he still came to work to look after his majestic feathered charges, rotating feeding and caring duties with his three assistants.

"During that period of time,

the ravens didn't actually see anybody," he told AFP.

"There were slight changes that I noticed. For instance, I had to keep them occupied without the public being there (and) there were less things for them to do."

"So I gave them enrichment toys that would help them enjoy their day."

With no people around, he put balloons, ladders and even mirrors in their cages to keep them entertained, and hid food around the Tower grounds for them to find.

Breakfast time involves Skaife, in the distinctive black and red uniform of the 'Beefeaters', distributing a meal of chicks and mice, which the ravens cheerfully devour.

Skaife's favourite is Merlina, he reveals with a smile.

She has become an internet favourite from his frequent posts and videos of her on his Instagram and Twitter accounts, which have more than 120,000 followers.

Once feeding time is over, he opens the cages on the south

lawn to allow them to stretch their wings.

The Tower reopened its doors on July 10 but the pandemic has had a devastating effect on visitor numbers.

Some 60,000 people visited the Tower every week in October 2019 but it is now only 6,000, according to Historic Royal Palaces, which manages the site.

During the three-month national lockdown, Skaife said the ravens were given more freedom to explore other parts of the Tower.

But to be doubly sure they didn't fly off completely, their wings were clipped back further.

The birds are now kept in their cages more often to make sure they eat enough, as there are slim pickings from the Tower's rubbish bins because of the reduced footfall.

"I don't particularly like doing it," said Skaife.

He says the ravens may be kept in cages but the Tower is their real home.

AFP

Taiwan-India ties growing closer amid Chinese aggression, censorship: Report

Washington, US - Taiwan and India do not have formal diplomatic ties but their citizens have bonded over a shared feeling of being targets of Chinese aggression and censorship, reported *The Diplomat*.

As China and India are engaged in border stand-off, netizens displayed support for their counterparts in Taiwan and Hong Kong, bringing along *masala chai* to become an adjacent member of the online pro-democracy 'Milk Tea Alliance'.

Ahead of Taiwan National Day, the Chinese Embassy in India sent guidelines to Indian media on how to refer to Taiwan. The move backfired and led to outrage in both India and Taiwan.

China in recent years has also increased military drills around Taiwan, with almost 40 Chinese warplanes crossing the median line between the mainland and Taiwan on September 18-19 - one of several sorties the island's President Tsai Ing-wen called a 'threat of force'.

'It looks like communist China is hoping to march into the sub-continent by imposing censor-



This file photo shows Taiwanese celebrating with their national flag during an electioneering campaign, in Taipei on June 1, 2019 (AFP)

ship,' Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu tweeted on October 7. 'Taiwan's Indian friends will have one reply: GET LOST!'

The Chinese demand did, in fact, spur a flurry of op-eds and news coverage of Taiwan's National Day and the state of Taiwan-India ties, in both countries.

In India, #TaiwanNationalDay trended on Twitter throughout the day on October 10 as Internet users, along with journalists and politicians, sent well wishes to Taiwan. Y Satya Kumar, national secretary of ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tweeted: 'Greetings to my Taiwanese brothers and sisters on #Taiwan-NationalDay. India stands in solidarity with the courage, strength and resolve that you people have displayed in your struggle against colonialism and oppression by the imperial power!'

Indian Twitter users followed Taiwanese accounts, including that of President Tsai Ing-wen, en masse. Tsai thanked her new followers on Tuesday by tweeting several photos from her trip to India in 2012.

ANI

Chinese envoys assaulted official in Fiji: Taiwan

Taipei, Taiwan - Taiwan on Monday accused two Chinese diplomats of gatecrashing a hotel function hosted by its de facto embassy in Fiji and assaulting an employee.

Taipei's Foreign Ministry said its trade office - the equivalent of an embassy - was hosting a party in the Fijian capital Suva on October 8 to celebrate Taiwan's National Day.

Two Chinese Embassy workers in Fiji gatecrashed the gathering and began taking pictures of guests, the statement said.

When the pair were asked to leave, they assaulted an official, putting him in hospital.

"We strongly condemn the actions by the Chinese Embassy in Fiji staff for seriously violating the rule of law and civilised code of conduct," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou said on Monday.

Taiwan's representative office has submitted evidence to Fiji's Foreign Ministry and local police as well as lodged a protest with the Chinese Embassy, Ou added.

A Fiji police spokeswoman said an investigation into the Taiwanese function at the Grand



Taiwan was hosting a party at the Grand Pacific Hotel in the Fijian capital Suva on October 8 to celebrate the National Day, when two Chinese Embassy workers gatecrashed and assaulted an official landing him in hospital

Pacific Hotel was ongoing and its officers were working with Fiji's foreign affairs ministry.

She declined to provide further details and Fiji's Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

There was no immediate comment from Beijing.

In its statement Taipei said the Chinese diplomats were taken away by the police and

'falsely claimed' that they had been attacked.

Taiwan said the alleged assault was the first ever physical confrontation between members of Beijing and Taipei's diplomatic missions. Wang Ting-yu, a lawmaker from Taiwan's ruling party who sits on the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, said he was 'appalled and outraged' by the assault.

Beijing has become increas-

ingly hostile towards Taiwan under President Xi Jinping.

Since the 2016 election of Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, it has ramped up diplomatic and military pressure. Tsai hails from a party that sees Taiwan as a de facto sovereign nation and not part of 'one China'.

Over the last four years Beijing has successfully poached seven of Taiwan's diplomatic allies, leaving only 15 countries in the world that officially recognise the island.

Most are small countries in Latin America and the Pacific.

Fiji has long been a staunch China ally and was the first Pacific island nation to forge diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1975. China has also kept Taiwan locked out of major international bodies such as the World Health Organization, while pressuring companies and airlines to list the island as part of the mainland.

Over the last two years Chinese diplomats have also become more assertive at using Western social media platforms and news outlets to defend Beijing's policies.

AFP

India detains Chinese soldier on disputed border

Srinagar, India - India said on Monday that it had detained a Chinese soldier who strayed across the disputed frontier where the two countries are engaged in a months-long standoff after a series of clashes.

The People's Liberation Army corporal was 'apprehended' in the high altitude freezing desert area of Ladakh after crossing into Indian-controlled territory along their poorly demarcated border, an Indian army statement said.

Both sides have poured tens of thousands of troops into the border zone since fighting a pitched battle in June in which 20 Indian troops and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers were killed.

India named the Chinese soldier who 'strayed' as Corporal Wang Ya Long and said he had been given medical treatment against the extreme climate.

India said the PLA had already made an approach and the cor-

poral would be returned 'as per established protocols'.

Several rounds of talks have failed to significantly ease tensions and the neighbours - who blame each other for the standoff - are now digging in for a harsh winter at 4,200m in a region where temperatures regularly fall below minus 30°C.

The Indian Army's top officials are holding a four-day meeting next week to review the ongoing conflict with China along the Himalayan border.

The Army Commanders' Conference from October 26 will also look into the proposals to reform the 1.3mn strong force, the Indian Army officials told ANI news agency. "The ongoing situation at the China border, operations in Jammu and Kashmir and a number of proposals on the reforms to be carried out in the force are expected to be discussed during the conference," army officials said.

AFP/ANI

Thai PM recalls parliament as protesters step up pressure

Bangkok, Thailand - Thailand's embattled Prime Minister called on Monday for a special session of parliament as protesters planned more rallies to demand his resignation, the release of jailed activists, and reforms to the monarchy.

Tens of thousands of mostly young protesters have taken to the streets in the past week in defiance of an emergency decree banning gatherings of more than four people.

Police said around 20,000 people protested across the capital on Sunday, although activists and local media estimated much bigger crowds.

As they prepared to rally again on Monday, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said parliament - currently in recess - would be recalled to discuss how to reduce tensions.

"We support opening an extraordinary session to solve this

conflict," he told reporters, warning protesters not to break the law. "I request protesters rally peacefully. The government has already compromised to some degree," he said.

The largely leaderless movement is calling for the resignation of Prayut - a former army chief and mastermind of a 2014 coup - as well as the re-writing of the military-drafted constitution they say rigged last year's election in his favour.

Most controversially, protesters are also making unprecedented demands to reform the powerful and ultra-wealthy monarchy.

They want the abolition of a draconian defamation law that shields King Maha Vajiralongkorn from criticism, greater transparency of royal finances, and for the monarch to stay out of politics.

The movement appeared to



Pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong holds a placard in solidarity with the ongoing pro-democracy protests in Thailand, outside the office building where the Thai consulate is located in Hong Kong on Monday (AFP)

be gaining traction across the country with smaller protests taking place Sunday from Phuket in the south to Khon Kaen in the northeast.

It has gained momentum since July, but sharply escalated last week after a group of protesters surrounded a royal motorcade and flashed three-fingered 'democracy salutes' - borrowed from the *Hunger Games* movies - at Queen Suthida.

Two activists now face charges under a rarely used law banning 'violence against the queen' and face a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted.

Confrontations escalated further on Friday when riot police used water cannon and other strong-arm tactics, provoking widespread outrage.

Prayut warned on Monday the government needed to protect the monarchy.

"This is the duty of all Thais,"

he told reporters.

Apart from arrests by police, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society said it had flagged more than 325,000 messages on social media platforms that violated the Computer Crimes Act, which critics say is used to muzzle dissent.

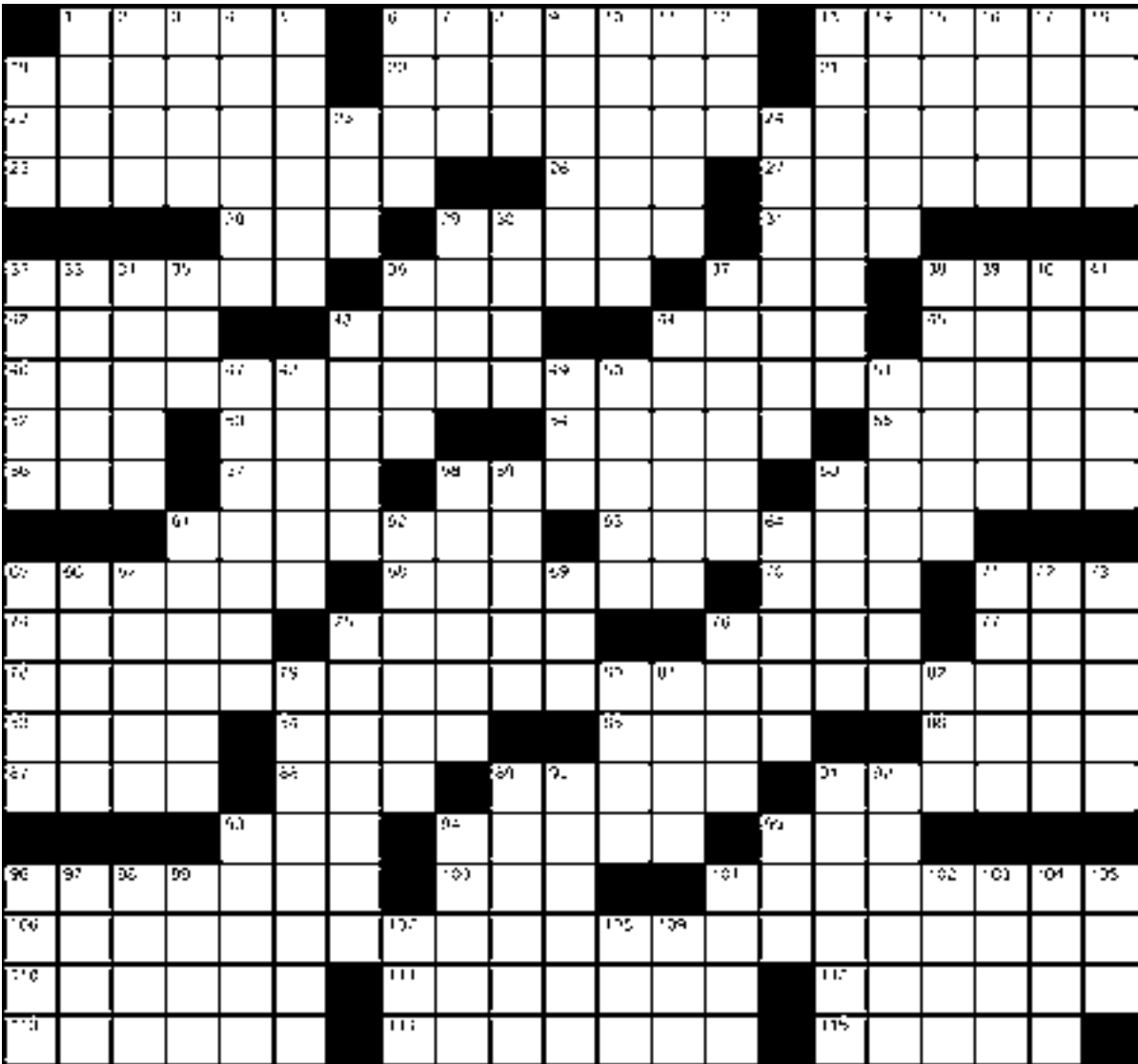
Police also warned local media outlets that their coverage of the protests would be examined for possible illegal content.

By midday, #SaveFreePress was the latest hashtag trending on Thai Twitter, one of several platforms being used by tech-savvy protesters to coordinate their activity.

They have also copied many tactics employed by Hong Kong protesters during months of frequently violent clashes there last year, including using improvised protective clothing in case of confrontations with riot police.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 1 Ascend
6 Pets
13 Popular patio robe
19 Tosca
20 Put into motion
21 Kay Thompson's Plaza girl
22 Start of a verse for September
25 Open to suggestion
26 Thai language
27 Wail
28 Verbal "gift"
29 "Golden Boy" playwright
31 Cow's chew
32 Chopped off
36 Midwest terminal
37 Zilch
38 "CSI's" George
42 Yearn
43 Jeune
44 Parlor piece
45 "Major Barbara's" creator
46 More of verse
52 Lamprey
53 Crucial March date
54 Radio sign
55 Like an otary
56 B'way hit sign
57 Cru product

DOWN

- 58 Caper
60 Uncover
61 Dustin Hoffman hit: 1982
63 Magician trick
65 Mend one's ways
68 Is
70 ___ glance
71 Sass
74 Hypothetical particle
75 Fishing net
76 Amorous Don
77 Coach Parseghian
78 More of verse
83 Songbird Brickell
84 Potter's medium
85 Ride to hounds
86 Descartes
87 Tear apart
88 ___ are you?
89 Kind of naked
91 Horse color
93 Valued bauble
94 "Pretty Little ___"
95 Protective coat
96 Sleeve opening
100 Intruder in the dust?
101 James Joyce's "___'s Wake"
106 End of verse
110 Grammy winner Krauss
111 Windflower
112 "___ of Honey":

- 1961 film
113 Lone Star State citizens
114 Part of AMA
115 ShriII barks
1 A New England bake
2 Earring site
3 Mashie or niblick
4 Sahara illusion
5 "___ Leroy Brown": song
6 Mystery author Kellerman
7 Sept. follower
8 Last degree
9 Insult avenger
10 Woolly
11 Guiding beliefs
12 Red or Dead
13 Peripatetic phone
14 Voiced
15 Good for the stew pot
16 "___ yellow ribbon . . ."
17 "___ of phrases learnt . . .": Swift
18 State bird of Hawaii
19 Ala. neighbor
23 Vestment
24 Satan himself
29 Buckeye State
30 Arp's art

- movement
32 Famed prison warden
33 Paint pigment
34 Sleuth Vance
35 ___ person: each
36 Table scraps
37 Take heed of
38 Give the slip
39 "Holding out for ___"
40 "Great" dogs
41 Sorenstam or Skarsgard
43 Concerning
44 Escargots
47 Leghorn, Italian style
48 Regional dialect
49 Court
50 Sea arm
51 Navigator's instrument
58 Stable state
59 Marie Antoinette, for one
60 ___ home: dine in
61 Leaned on the horn
62 Teeterboard
64 Boast about
65 Indy 500 entrant
66 Radiate
67 Make room for
69 Sun. talk
71 By and by

- 72 Papas from Greece
73 Jury body
75 Biblical dancer's namesakes
76 Unwanted email
79 Flying formations
80 Sear
81 Cather's "One of ___"
82 Hockey's Bobby
89 Transgressed
90 Japanese straw mat
91 Brunch day
92 Richly decorated
93 Boarded
94 "Mule Train" singer Frankie
95 Five-spot
96 Rat- ___: knocking sound
97 Upset
98 Nero's 2009
99 "For ___ jolly good fellow . . ."
101 Furnace feed
102 Equal, in Arles
103 Inhale sharply
104 River isles
105 Nearly no.
107 Country's Tillis
108 Sinbad's avian transport
109 "___ clear day

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Big career questions loom over you, as you ponder which path you need to journey down in order to foster further growth. Today's Sagittarius moon has you exploring the big picture view of your life, as you begin to make sense of the changes before you, but her square to Venus and dreamy Neptune can create an emotional divide between current obligations and future outcomes.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your identity has been undergoing some major shifts past month. You've had to make adjustments around your responsibilities on the work front in order to create space for your creative life to exist as well. Today's skies highlight this ongoing need for self-expression, as the Sagittarius moon pairs off with artistic Venus. This helps you focus on the activities that bring you joy.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

So many breakthroughs, big and small, have been happening for you. Don't discount the successes you've had so far on your path! The moon spends the day wandering through your sign, heightening your emotional responses and turning attention to your health and vitality. Luna's encounters with Neptune and Venus place minor stresses on concerns with privacy.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Life is asking you to grow in ways you never pictured possible. For the first time in a while, you've been able to ease back into a calm, faithful feeling towards your path. Today's skies ask you to take a relaxed approach to relationships. The moon treks through Sagittarius and squares off to Venus and Neptune, encouraging you to take a deep dive into matters of the heart.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You're desperately in need of some rest and relaxation. You've worked yourself to the bone and have been experiencing so many changes around your aspirations that you may have neglected the fact that you need to slow down and reassess. Tuesday's skies create a relaxed environment for you to slip into, as the Sagittarius moon tangoes with Venus and Neptune.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You need ample time alone to plan and process your next moves. Today's skies are an ideal time to pull away from social contact in order to sync back up with your own needs. Try to prioritise your need for rest and relaxation over the feeling that you need to be productive, as the thoughtful Sagittarius moon interacts with lazy Venus and dreamy Neptune.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're naturally drawn to exploring the art of relationship. The Twins associated with your sign point to your instinctive understanding and craving for duality. Today's skies have all eyes on your intimate dealings with others, as the moon wanders through Sagittarius. Luna's square to lover Venus and Neptune summons you towards taking an approach towards deeper bonding.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You've been privately processing many internal, emotionally charged changes. Your closest friends may not even realise all that's going on behind the scenes for you! Today's skies encourage you to reach out and share your voice in order to get any pent-up feelings off your chest. Luna's dance with Venus and Neptune can make you more emotional than usual.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You often vacillate between spending time with likeminded people and pulling away for periods of solitude. Today's skies encourage you to strive for connection, as the Sagittarius moon reaches out to sweet Venus and Neptune. It's easy to get in your head and worry about finances or debts you're dealing with, but venting your worries to friends helps everything melt away.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

So much of your energy this year has been devoted to figuring out a proper work/life balance. In order for you to be fully effective in your work, and be more present in your time off, you've had to bargain with your overactive brain. This story around organising your overly cluttered mental world is highlighted today, as the Sagittarius moon dances with Venus and spaced out Neptune.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You've been taking on so many new responsibilities on the job front. All the energy you've devoted to your work is sure to pay off, as you've been tirelessly learning new things. Concerns over your finances in proportion to the amount of effort you're putting into your work is likely to weave their way into your thinking, as the Sagittarius moon encounters spendthrift Venus.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Don't be shy, Pisces. This is a time of the month where you need to hunt down your goals and apply yourself to those ambitions. It's easy to get caught up in the ongoing relationship narrative you've been contending with, as the thoughtful Sagittarius moon gets mixed up with dreamy Neptune and bond-building Venus. But try to stay focused on the task at hand.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Hundred year war was fought between
- a. France and England
b. Greek and Persian forces
c. Civil war in England
d. None of the above
2. In which of the following pairs, the two substances forming the pair are chemically most dissimilar?
- a. Sugar and paper
b. Butter and paraffin wax
c. Chalk and marble
d. Charcoal and diamond
3. India's Integrated Missiles Development Programme was started in
- a. 1979-80
b. 1980-81
c. 1981-82
d. 1982-83

Answers: 1. a 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

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

BOGGLER

A	O	E	O
T	O	S	U
O	B	N	L
Y	R	B	S

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

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

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



COVER UP

Face masks for men come of age

Hubert Vaz

Are you too shy to wear a face mask that matches your business attire or be seen sporting a face mask that complements the colour of your T-shirt? The fact is, face masks are no longer a fashion statement for women alone, as men, too, have started wearing face masks to suit their calling of each day.

So, you see men wearing coloured, yet sombre, face masks in boardrooms as well as fancy, printed face masks while shopping in hypermarkets. You also see men wearing an array of sporty face masks, some branded with logos of sports gear, as they go by on their morning jog or evening stroll.

These cloth face masks are found to be more skin-friendly and appealing to

people than the regular medical masks, and what's more, they are cost effective. A whole range of branded face masks, created by garment manufacturers as well as reputed houses of sport gear, are now available, either in stores or through online shopping channels like Amazon for prices ranging from US\$8 to over US\$50. This also indicates that face masks are here to stay and wearing them would be a welcome option even after the pandemic recedes.

Freddy Hines, a professional at National Hospitality Institute says, "People know that masks have become the new normal, at least for now. I think, the general feeling is that of following a rule. On the contrary, the reason should be awareness and the safety of others around." He, however, asserts that

though some look on face masks as a fashion accessory, he considers them as an essential safety measure.

Asked whether institutions should introduce their own signature masks, Hines reiterated, "The main reason for wearing a mask and distancing oneself socially is to prevent the risk of contracting the virus as some people around could be asymptomatic. Branding masks may look good, as long as they prevent aerosols from travelling far enough to get someone potentially infected. The bottom line is: wear your mask, practice social distancing ethically and wash your hands regularly."

Othman al Mandhari, CEO of Inno Tech which produces face shields in Oman, added, "Wearing face masks has become the new normal. While some

people are against this, I do believe in complete freedom for men and women to choose their face masks, as long as they follow the requirements of the Ministry of Health."

Oman's ace sprinter, Barakat al Harthy, who is preparing for the Olympics, that got postponed to next year, in all earnestness, however admits that he is most comfortable with cloth masks and wears a range of different sporty masks while outdoors for different errands or for meeting up with friends. He, however, admits that wearing masks is not a healthy option while exercising or running.

There are others like Abdullah al Jailani, a professional guide and adventurer (of Omani Nomads fame) who says, "I would encourage people to wear

whichever type of face masks they prefer as long as they do wear them while in public or in small family gatherings. You can still see many people who don't wear masks in public, which is scary."

On the other hand, Majunath Pai, another long-time Indian expatriate, said he hasn't come across men wearing matching face masks to suit their attire though a few ladies can be seen doing so.

And if you take former model Sami al Zadjali's word for it, face masks have now become an essential fashion accessory for both, men and women. The choices vary though the function remains same, he says, adding, "I choose my masks carefully. It should have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. Also, the size is very important, it should well cover the mouth and nose."

Tips for wearing face masks



Formal attire

Colours like grey, black, navy blue, go well with business suits/blazers while toned down shades of black, brown, blue, maroon also go well with buttoned down office shirts. You may also suitably match the colour/print of your neck-tie or cap/hat with your face mask. Boardrooms now see a good display of this.



Casual attire

Bring on all the unisex funky prints as you select your face mask for a stroll on the beach or a drive downtown for a shopping spree. Get whacky, be cool, wear your attitude. After all, you can also partially conceal your true self behind each mask. In this regard, preference by male and females seem to converge.



Solemn attire

If you wish to visit a place of worship or attend a religious ceremony, including a funeral, avoid wearing face masks that appear loud. For such places, black, white, grey are best suited. The same is applicable also for a visit to a hospital/clinic, if you are not the patient, though medical masks are a better choice.



At home

If you expect to be visited by friends or relatives, make sure that social distancing gets priority. Secondly, it is advisable to wear medical masks when meeting people who do not live with you at your own home, including visiting electricians/handyman who might drop in to fix technical snags.



Tool of expression

"As masks have become a part of our everyday lives, they have become a tool of expression, as well. That's why, it is being used beyond its role as a medical necessity. I have more than 12 masks - with different colours/designs - which I wear to suit my outfit."

Sami al Zadjali

Branded options

If you're keenly into fashion and face masks are an important part of your daily attire, you might want to procure some branded masks through online purchase channels or through friends coming in from other countries where these are available.

- Adidas has created 'face covers' with soft, breathable fabric that's comfort-

able, washable and reusable. This cover is not medically graded but can help prevent the spread of viruses and germs through droplet transmission, it states with each 3-pack set.- Nike has created a range of sporty products which include running hood masks - a convertible foldover design made with Dri-Fit technology and run-

ning wraps, a convertible design made from polyester and spandex to wick sweat away.- Levi's has a re-usable bandana print reversible face mask available as a pack of 3 (black, blue and red), made from 100% cotton.
- Weddingstar has a range of washable cloth face masks, besides 'adjustable

protective fabric face covers' that are dust resistant and fitted with filter pockets, in a range of fancy and formal designs.- The Dapper Rocker's face masks are made from fabrics used for bow ties and ascots. Each mask features a slot for a filter and is tied on. (Made in The Bronx, NY, USA)

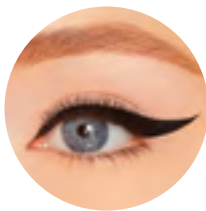
- Hause of Gedler uses an antibacterial neoprene (that feels like lycra) for their face mask. They also have their signature branding on the mask. (Made in Miami, FL, USA)
- The face mask by Lisa Von Tang, is made from 100% Egyptian cotton/up-cycled natural linen (with a slot for the filter). It is made in Singapore.



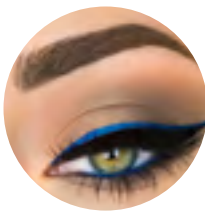
EYE FOR AN EYELINER

Using eyeliner by oneself is an art. And many ladies have mastered this art for themselves. After all, if you can never be satisfied by the job done by your beautician or an obliging friend, the best option is to do it yourself. Being dexterous with the brush is the key to good application of eyeliner. More so, having a really steady hand combined with a creative bent of mind.

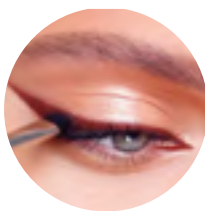
CHOICE OF SHADES



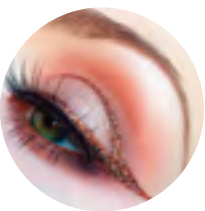
The shade not just reflects your personality and mood, it also conveys the impression you want to make. Black creates a striking and bold effect.



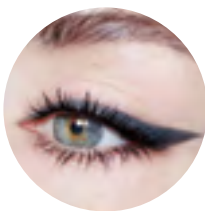
Navy blue, turquoise or shades of green gives off a trendy vibe. You may use this for a party or for a fun event to announce your presence.



Brown is not the choice of many as it leaves behind a smoky effect. Use this colour when you want to match a dress for a special evening.



You may also use glitter in combination with your favourite shade for a glamorous look. Also, if you have small eyes, use a white lower line.



Grey, on the other hand, has a softer and brighter effect. It is preferred by those who do not want to make a bold effect, yet highlight eyes.



1

Basics

First know the basics about products available in the market. There are three basic types of liner – pencil, gel and liquid. You might want to use a branded product, and stick to it, since you don't want to harm your eyes with cheaper options.

Pencil eyeliner is easy to apply but often doesn't spread as smoothly or thickly as gel or liquid liners. Gel liners glide on easily and are available in a little bottle with a brush. Liquid liners are used for their precision and usually come in a tube with a small brush. These take some time to dry after application.

2

Eyeliner brushes

The neatness of eyeliner application also depends on the type of headers or brushes used for the application of gel or liquid eyeliner. Eyeliner brushes are slim with a sparse tip that is useful to draw fine lines. Flat liner brushes are best for lining the lower lash-line and closely lining the top lash-line while angled liner brushes are the most versatile and good not only for eyeliner but also for filling in eyebrows.

3

Be steady

Everyone struggles with being shaky as you approach the eye for application of liner. However, you can solve this very easily – sit down at your dressing table, place your elbow on a steady surface, rest the little finger of the applicator hand on your cheek to stabilise your hand and gently begin the application in one quick, even stride.

With pencil, you can create progressive dashes from corner to corner while with liquid you can place a series of dots and then connect them, if you cannot do it in one smooth stroke.

4

Expert tip

Never pull the skin on the side of your eye, with the other hand, while applying liner, it can distort the final result. If you mess up, clean up the line with a make-up remover soaked cotton swab. However, minor smudges can be cleverly covered up with a dab of primer/concealer or clear lip gloss.



Category: Health Services



And the winner is...

K P Shobha

K P Shobha, group general manager of Apollo Hospital Muscat, is a seasoned administrative professional associated with Apollo Group of Hospitals for more than 27 years. In her role as the group general manager, she has been responsible for the overall management of Apollo Hospital Muscat.

Over the past few decades, her vast experience has enabled her to be an integral force to reckon within the healthcare sector. Her core areas have been operational excellence, enhanced customer satisfaction, strategic leadership and planning, business expansion, and service improvement, wherein she has demonstrated clear strategic vision and sound operational discipline.

She has not only been instrumental in developing and expanding the Apollo Hospital brand across Oman but her passion for excellence and dedication towards the patients has also been exceptional. This has led brand Apollo to be one of the most sought after healthcare services providers within the Sultanate of Oman.

Apart from successfully heading operations of Apollo Hospital Muscat, Shobha has been profoundly involved with the Management of IMC Sugar Clinic and the newly opened Apollo Healthcare Center at Ghala which has been successfully catering to citizens from all walks of life in Oman.

Shobha's mantra has always been 'Customer is King' and she dedicates all her efforts towards maintaining a social responsibility in society to provide a healthy future for people in Oman.

