



WEDNESDAY, 31 MARCH 2021
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GO TO PAGE 14 SPORTS



Oman steps up mediation in Yemen

Muscat - At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Oman is exerting efforts in close coordination with Saudi Arabia, the UN and the US envoys to Yemen, and the Yemeni parties concerned to hammer out a comprehensive political solution to the ongoing crisis.

Oman hopes that these contacts will achieve the desired results shortly to help restore in Yemen peace, security and stability and safeguard the security and interests of the region's countries.

The US Department of State on Tuesday made a statement on His Majesty the Sultan's support.

'The United States thanks His Majesty Sultan Haitham and our partners in the Foreign Ministry of Oman for their support.'

HM receives call from Saudi crown prince

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq received a phone call from Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday.

During the call, they reviewed the 'Green Middle East' initiative announced by the crown prince, which aims to plant 50bn trees in partnership with the countries of the region. It will be the largest afforestation programme in the world and contribute to preserving the environment and sustaining renewable sources.

COVID-19 infections, deaths surge

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With the number of COVID-19 cases increasing, authorities have said the challenges that the pandemic poses have become greater owing to the unprecedented pressure on health agendas worldwide. On Tuesday, Oman reported 1,173 new cases, after months of recording fewer than 1,000 cases per day. The number of active cases had also risen to 14,658.

Following the new cases, the Ministry of Health said in a statement that the total now is 158,056. 'The number of deaths now stands at 1,669 after seven deaths were reported on Tuesday. The number of recoveries is 143,398.'

The number of hospital admissions is also increasing. As of Tuesday, a total of 507 patients were admitted in health

NEW CASES

1,173

ACTIVE CASES

14,658

TOTAL DEATHS

1,669

institutions, including 154 in intensive care. Eighty-eight COVID-19 patients were admitted in the last 24 hours.

Speaking at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development on Tuesday, H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, said the COVID-19 pandemic has put healthcare systems all over the world in crises. "However, past year's

events have demonstrated that the world is truly interconnected and no country can face these alone," he said.

H E Dr Sa'eedi added that the pandemic exposed disparities both within countries and between countries. Health systems globally and in the region face an array of challenges because of the growing number of cases as well as the disruption of non-COVID-19 services. The pandemic has challenged capacities and demonstrated the importance of prioritising a coordinated response at national, regional and international levels.

Continued on Page 02



Talks with Korea for vaccines

Muscat - Oman is in talks with Korean authorities to obtain AstraZeneca vaccine from the country. H E Dr Ahmed Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, received on Tuesday in his office H E Kim Chang Kyu, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the sultanate.

H E Dr Sa'eedi discussed with H E Kim means of procur-

ing supplies of AstraZeneca vaccine from Korean manufacturing facilities to the sultanate.

The meeting exchanged cordial conversations and addressed aspects of cooperation between the two friendly countries in the field of health. Developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic were addressed during the meeting.

APSR to employ 800 jobseekers in electricity sector, raise Omanisation



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Min-

istry of Labour, Nama Holding Company and licensed companies in the electricity sector, is launching a programme to Omanise some jobs in subcontractor companies that work on permanent contracts with state-

owned companies.

A statement issued by APSR said, 'The programme aims to provide opportunities to train and employ 800 young Omanis for various technical positions, which will contribute to raising the cur-

rent Omanisation rate from 47 per cent to nearly 90 per cent.

'This initiative comes as part of APSR's strategy to implement Oman Vision 2040 by developing and enabling Omanis to take up jobs in the electricity sector.'



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MoH launches 10th Five-Year Plan (2021-25)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday launched its Tenth Five-Year Plan along with a set of strategic plans for the health sector during a virtual meeting held under the auspices of H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, in the presence other dignitaries including Unicef and the World Health Organization representatives.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan for

Health Development (2021-25) and the Health Sector Strategic Plans allow for far-reaching development and planning in Oman's health system, said a ministry statement.

'Health is a national priority in Oman Vision 2040,' the ministry said, highlighting that priority in the vision statement was given to 'more comprehensive services aiming at achieving health for all, and better care and quality by collaborating with other health sectors and stakeholders'.

Keeping in view the global

The tenth health development plan has been based on Oman Vision 2040, the Health Vision 2050, and the sustainable development goals

agreement towards achieving universal health coverage and the results and recommendations of the evaluation of the Ninth Five-Year Health Plan (2016-20), the tenth health development plan has been based on Oman Vision 2040, the Health Vision 2050, and the sustainable development goals

(SDGs), in addition to the World Health Organization's work programme, the Political Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, as well as the Declaration on UHC 2030, it added.

The implementation of the lat-

est development plan of the ministry will be 'supported by its organisational structure and the commitment of the directorate generals to obtain the best indicators locally and globally to contribute to the advancement of health services in the sultanate', the MoH statement added.

The ministry believes that with the availability of an operational budget that may ensure funding of innovations and research in the health sector, and with the systematic utilisation of its resources, 'the engagement of

partners in all sectors would definitely contribute to the success of this plan'.

The plan consists of five strategic objectives. Key priority initiatives and expected results will be carried out by the ministry, including the central directorates and directorates in the governorates, according to the levels of implementation. It is empowered by qualified national competencies to provide high quality services, an advanced information system, and sophisticated systems and devices, the

ministry said.

Training and meetings regarding the development of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for health development and strategic programmes at the central level and at the level of operational plans for the governorates were carried out virtually given the exceptional situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The virtual event was attended by Director Generals of Health Services as well senior officials from the Ministry of Economy.

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MUSCAT DAILY



Oman Air resumes Saudi flights

Muscat - The national carrier Oman Air will resume flights to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on April 1, operating four flights per week. Flights to Dammam resumed on March 28, also operating four flights per week.

Oman Air will maintain its comprehensive safety programme at every stage of the journey to ensure that guests fly confidently, a press release stated.

Masks are required when guests are on board the aircraft and in Oman's airports. 'Distancing is maintained while guests board and exit the aircraft, which are carefully cleaned after each flight and at the end of every day. Cabin crew all wear a full set of personal protective equipment, meal service has been modified to further ensure safety, and a number of other measures have been implemented to ensure that the airline's guests and crew are safe at all times,' the airline said. Saudi Arabia's General Au-



thority of Civil Aviation had announced earlier this month in a circular that international flights will resume on May 17 after they were suspended due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The authority confirmed the date in a statement it sent out to local airports, that all international flights and airports will resume regular operations in May instead of March 31, as earlier announced in January.

The authority said it may continue suspending travel to specific countries where the pandemic situation remains bad.

Passengers who are planning to travel to Muscat should visit the Civil Aviation Authority website - caa.gov.om - to ensure they are prepared to comply with requirements to enter the sultanate.

Passengers travelling to Saudi Arabia should ensure they are aware of official requirements to enter or transit through the country. While people departing from Oman should also ensure that they are aware of all pre-departure requirements and requirements during their flights, which are provided at omanair.com

Infections, deaths surge

Continued from Page 01

H E Dr Sa'eedi noted that the lockdowns that were enforced undoubtedly increased behavioural risks such as physical inactivity and unhealthy diets.

Additionally, the pandemic has a significant burden on mental health and well-being of health workers as well the population.

According to the minister, it is time to give due attention to mental health services and ensure continuity of care in this critical domain.

Calling upon all to adhere to the precautionary measures and practise social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus, MoH advised all citizens and residents to continue washing hands with water and soap, avoid touching the face, nose, mouth and eyes, and follow healthy habits when coughing and sneezing.

IBE Name: Alizz Islamic Bank S.A.O.C Minimum Disclosure Requirements in the year-end Financial statements

Income Statement for the period ended 31 December, 2020		FORM NO CBO/MDR/3	
		RO 000'	
Details	Note	Current Year	Previous Year
1 - Net Income from Islamic Financing (a-b)			
(a) Profit from Islamic Financing		37,268	33,746
Less: (b) Expenses of Islamic financing		-	-
2 - Net Income from Sukuk and Interbank (a-b)			
(a) Profit from Sukuk & Interbank		2,424	2,020
Less: (b) Expenses of Sukuk & Interbank		(87)	(189)
3 - Return on unrestricted investment accounts (a-b)			
(a) Gross Return on Unrestricted Investment Accounts		(2,111)	(2,345)
Less: (b) Bank Share as Mudarib		958	1,019
4 - Return on wakala deposits		(20,457)	(17,865)
5 - Dividend income		7	59
6 - Net Fee & commissions income (a-b)			
a) Fee & commissions income		2,156	2,093
Less: b) Fee & commissions expenses		(38)	(64)
7 - Net Foreign Exchange income (a-b)			
a) Income		359	487
Less : b) expense		-	-
8 - Unrealized gain (loss) on equity type instrument carried at fair value through statement of income		-	-
9 - Gain (loss) on equity type instrument carried at fair value through equity		116	58
10 - Net income from other investment			
a) Income from other Investments		-	-
Less: b) Expense		-	-
11 - Income From Subsidiaries	7	-	-
a)		-	-
b)		-	-
12 - Income From Associate companies	7	-	-
a)		-	-
b)		-	-
13 - Income from other licensed activities			
a)		-	-
b)		-	-
14 - Other Income			
a)		-	-
b)		-	-
c)		-	-
Total Operating Income		20,594	19,019
Staff Expenses		(11,157)	(9,418)
General & Administrative expenses	12	(7,023)	(6,409)
Depreciation and Amortization expenses		(1,053)	(1,033)
Other expenses			
a)		-	-
b)		-	-
c)		-	-
Total Operating Expense		(19,233)	(16,860)
Net operating Income/ Loss (Income/ Loss on ordinary activities before ECL)		1,361	2,159
ECL written off		-	-
ECL written back		-	-
Cash Recoveries		-	-
Expected Credit Losses charged			
a) ECL against Financing		(9,020)	(11,672)
b) ECL against Placements		21	(20)
c) ECL against Investments		(399)	-
d) ECL against Other Assets		-	-
e) Others (Off Balancesheet)		446	(422)
Net Expected Credit Losses charged during the period		(8,952)	(12,114)
Profit/ (Loss) for the period before tax		(7,591)	(9,955)
Income tax		-	-
Net profit/ (Loss) for the period		(7,591)	(9,955)
Other Comprehensive Income for the year			
- Movement in fair value of other comprehensive income / available for sale investment for the year		(82)	38
- Effect of currency translation for the year		-	-
- Any other comprehensive income for the year (please specify)		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		(7,673)	(9,917)



Assets as of 31 December, 2020		FORM NO CBO/MDR/5	
		RO 000'	
		Current Year	Previous Year
Assets			
1 - Cash		8,727	6,081
2 - Balances with Central Bank of Oman		38,096	69,620
3 - Capital Deposit with Central Bank		500	500
4 - Cash and Balances with Other Banks & Financial Institutions		1,788	3,020
5 - Due from H.O, Branches, Principal shareholders & Affiliates abroad		-	-
6 - Due from Financial Institutions (Placements)		19,999	3,059
7 - Total Islamic Financing		708,555	574,109
Receivables under Murabaha, Salam & Istisna		96,069	95,974
Ijarah Financing		251,729	252,211
Musharaka & Diminishing Musharaka		235,676	118,520
Wakala Bil Istithmar		123,129	105,291
Other Financing		1,952	2,113
8 - Investments		63,518	46,510
9 - Investment in Properties		-	-
10 - Fixed Assets and Intangibles		3,571	3,708
11 - Other Assets		20,921	12,226
Total Assets		865,675	718,833
* Applicable to domestic licensees			

Liabilities as of 31 December, 2020		FORM NO CBO/MDR/5	
		RO 000'	
		Current Year	Previous Year
Liabilities			
1 - Current and margin accounts		85,134	29,055
2 - Due to H.O , Branches, Principal shareholders & affiliates abroad		20,000	-
3 - Due to Financial Institutions		3,850	3,850
4 - Other liabilities		16,647	13,380
Wakala Based Deposits		452,265	446,757
Unrestricted investment accounts			
1 - Investment accounts		187,150	155,613
2 - Profit Equalization Reserve		-	-
3 - Investment Risk Reserve		-	-
Shareholders' Equity			
1 - Share Capital * / Assigned Capital #		139,500	100,000
2 - Legal Reserve* / Deposit with CBO #		491	491
3 - Share premium		-	-
4 - Fair Value Reserve		(45)	38
5 - Other Reserves		-	-
6 - Retained Earnings		(39,317)	(30,350)
Total Liabilities, Unrestricted investment account & shareholders equity		865,675	718,833
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Meeting discusses investments in nature reserves



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Omran held a meeting to discuss investment opportunities in nature reserves.

The meeting was attended by H E Aseela Salem al Samsami, Undersecretary for Investment in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, H E Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Omari, Chairman of Environment Authority, and Hashil bin Obaid al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran.

The meeting discussed guidelines for investing in nature reserves, and implementing sustainability in all environmental, economic and social works. The meeting also discussed protecting biological and physical diversity of reserves, encouraging specialised research, and stimulating the local economy.

According to the Environment



Authority, the meeting presented investment opportunities in some nature reserves such as Jebel Akhdar, Al Seel Nature Park and Khor Taqah.

The Al Saleel National Park is a wildlife reserve in Sharqiyah. The park extends over an area of 220sqkm and is predominantly covered by forests of acacia trees. It is home to a number of rare species such as the Arab gazelle, the Omani wild cat and other animals which have made this environment their home, in-

cluding the red fox and the Egyptian eagle.

Jebel Akhdar, situated 2,000m above sea level in a unique location, is an important tourist destination during the winter season.

Meanwhile, as many as 359,225 people visited Oman's nature reserves in 2019, compared to 305,405 at the end of 2018, marking an increase of 15 per cent, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Oman taking part in Arab Forum for Sustainable Development

Muscat - The sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Health, is taking part in the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD), which began on Tuesday. Oman's delegation is headed by the Minister of Health H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi.

As per a statement, the three-day forum, themed 'Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda post-COVID-19', reviews and addresses the progress towards implementing and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.

H E Dr Sa'eedi delivered a speech where he pointed out that despite significant progress made in the region in key indicators such as maternal and under-five infant mortality, the region



continues to face challenges in the increasing number of non-communicable diseases and the resulting economic threats and burden to societies.

He explained that in several Arab countries this challenge is compounded by humanitarian crisis and political instabilities, resulting in lack of access to healthcare, shortage of medica-

tions, famine and displacement of populations. Such factors when put together hindered the progress towards reaching common goals.

The health minister stressed that with COVID-19, the challenges have become even greater, as the pandemic presents an unprecedented emergency that has taken a toll on

health agendas worldwide.

"We remain convinced that a coordinated approach at the international, regional and national levels is vital to achieving the 2030 agenda and proposing innovative solutions for the development of inclusive public health policies is fundamental to advance and reach those goals," he said.

Omifco to provide vet clinics in South Sharqiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources on Tuesday signed an agreement with Oman India Fertiliser Company (Omifco) to finance four mobile veterinary clinics and procurement of vet equipment in South Sharqiyah.

This comes within the efforts of the ministry to support livestock growth as well to increase and maintain their production capacity and health.

The agreement includes providing treatment and services to



livestock breeders in the wilayats of Al Kamil W'Al Wafi, Jalaan Bani Bu Hassan and Jalaan Bani

Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah.

The agreement was signed by H E Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al

Bakri, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Said Talib Said al Maawali, board member of Omifco.

Ali bin Salem al Hashimi, director of Agricultural Development in the wilayat of Al Kamil W'Al Wafi, said, "These mobile clinics will contribute to the delivery of advisory services to livestock breeders in various villages, and enhance the income level of breeders."

He added, "The agreement includes providing veterinary equipment and computers for mobile veterinary clinics."

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Over 50,000 SMEs registered this year till February

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The total number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) registered with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development till the end of February this year stood at 50,585, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and information (NCSI).

Muscat governorate registered 16,997 SMEs at the end of February 2021, an increase of 16 per cent compared to the same period in 2020.

Among all the governorates, Muscat topped the list with the maximum number of registrations - 16 per cent - followed by North Batinah with 15.6 per cent, Dakhliyah with 15.1 per cent and Dhofar with 15 per cent.



In numbers, Muscat was followed by North Batinah with 7,975 SMEs, Dakhliyah with 6,354, Dhofar with 4,204, South Batinah with 3,832 and North Sharqiyah with 3,387.

This was followed by South Sharqiyah with 2,992 SMEs, Dhahirah with 2,900, and Buraimi with 1,081.

All together 660 SMEs were registered in Al Wusta and 185 in Musandam - the lowest among all the governorates - till the end of February this year.

REGIONAL WEATHER

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Doha	31	19
Kuwait City	29	21
Manama	29	21
Riyadh	35	21

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Duqm Port says it's ready to help ships stuck near Suez

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Port of Duqm is ready to help container and cargo ships stuck on the Red Sea side of the Suez Canal due to the grounding of megaship *MV Ever Given*, according to Port of Duqm Company (PDC).

PDC, on its official Twitter handle, said 'Port of Duqm is ready to mitigate the challenging situation being faced by the shipping operators who have their ships stuck on the Red Sea side of the Suez Canal, due to the grounding of the *Evergreen* vessel in the key transitway connecting the East and West trade route.'

The *MV Ever Given* was refloated and shipping traffic in the Suez Canal resumed on Monday evening, sparking relief almost a week after the huge container ship got stuck during a sand-storm and blocked a major artery for global trade.

The Suez Canal Authority cautioned, however, that it will take more than three days to



clear the traffic jams of ships that were stuck at the northern and southern ends of the canal.

PDC said Port of Duqm is ready to provide storage options, transshipment and bunkering solutions for containers, RORO units and any vessel types looking for a new safe haven in the Middle East.

'These ships [stuck on the Red Sea side of Suez], mostly carrying shipments bound for Europe,

North Africa and US east coast, can explore the options of off-loading their containers or their cargo at the Port of Duqm for temporary storage and later on, through the deployment of specific relief ships of varying sizes, decide to clear these backlogs for final delivery to the destination points,' PDC said.

By doing so, PDC said, the major take away for the shipping operators would be a lesser

disturbance to the service rotation of the round voyage so that ships on the East-West long-haul services can get back to their proforma schedule as quickly as possible.

With the excellent nautical access and marine services including bunkering, five terminals (multipurpose, RORO, container, navy and dry-bulk), a dry-dock capability within the port, the Port of Duqm is a deep draft port

of 18m which can handle mega-ships upto 20,000 TEU capacity, PDC noted. 'Today, the port is equipped with enough handling equipment such as harbour cranes, reach stackers etc. to operate independently 24/7.'

Strategically located at the mouth of the Arabian Sea lying closer to the major East-West shipping trade lanes, the Port of Duqm is well-linked to other major seaports in the region such as Jebel Ali in the UAE, via a multipurpose weekly feeder service of Oman Shipping Company.

The container berth at the Port of Duqm measuring approximately 1200m, out of a total quay length of 2,200m, has a storage yard capacity designed to hold over 1.2mn TEUs, PDC explained.

On Tuesday, Port of Duqm Company announced that all its operations are now moved to Duqm and will be run from its main headquarters in Duqm, starting from April 4, 2021.

See also page 06

OPEC+ to meet to navigate oil market volatility

London, UK - The OPEC+ grouping of oil producers will hold its third ministerial summit of the year via videoconference on Thursday to discuss output cuts in the face of fresh price volatility.

"The expectation is that the group will hold production steady also in May given current physical oil market weakness," according to Bjarne Schieldrop, analyst at SEB.

However, he added that "Russia and Kazakhstan are likely to lift production yet another notch and the group in total is probably fine with that."

Today, the OPEC+ group will hold preliminary discussions in the form of its Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), which is tasked with overseeing implementation of agreements.

The OPEC cartel's largest producer is Saudi Arabia but the OPEC+ grouping also includes Russia, which produces even more crude oil.

Under its current agreement the OPEC+ group is enforcing a drastic output cut, meaning 7mn barrels that could be shipped to markets every day are being left in the ground.

The aim has been to avoid oversupplying a market suffering from a collapse in demand due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Without the production cuts, limited storage capacity could be saturated and the danger of a fall in prices - currently hovering around US\$60 per barrel - is real.

Indeed, the two benchmark contracts, American WTI and Europe's Brent, have undergone a drastic price correction in recent weeks and have been subjected to fresh price instability over the last few days, a sign of serious market tension.



At the beginning of the year the arrival of effective coronavirus vaccines had led to hopes that widespread lockdowns, and with them the collapse in demand that has been a nightmare for the cartel, might soon be over.

But then came the third wave surge in Europe and the spread of the virus in key crude consumer markets such as India and Brazil.

"Oil demand trends are not only pressured by renewed lockdowns on the [European] continent but also chaos with its vaccination programme," said Stephen Brennock, analyst at PVM.

Despite different opinions on how to manage fallout from the crisis, OPEC+ has been able to unite around a very cautious policy of slow increase in capacity based on 'prudence', a watchword of Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman.

To help smaller producers, Saudi Arabia agreed to reduce its own output by an extra million barrels per day (bpd) in February, March and April.

However this cut 'was never going to last forever and traders are now getting increasingly worried that the kingdom will not hold on to it for much longer', says Louise Dickson of Rystad.

AFP

HSBC hosts Sustainable Finance Summit for corporates

Our Correspondent
Muscat

HSBC Bank Oman hosted a Sustainable Finance Summit for Omani corporates on Tuesday.

The summit focused on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in Oman and the opportunities to accelerate the efforts to build a healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable future for the country.

Hosted by Melika Betley, CEO

of HSBC Oman, the event was attended by a number of HSBC's corporate clients from Oman. Delegates heard from a broad range of thought leaders in the sustainability space from HSBC, OQ Group, Sohar Port and Muscat Livestock Company, who gave insights into translating climate ambition to on-the-ground thematic actions, and stressed the importance of transitioning to a low carbon economy.

"We at HSBC aim to play a



Melika Betley

leading role in helping our customers achieve their sustainability and ESG goals. The impact of climate change is real and we have set out an ambitious plan to unlock climate solutions that can support our customers in their energy transition and on their journey towards net zero emission," Melika said in a press statement.

HSBC globally has set out ambitious targets as part of a new climate strategy, which include:

Reducing financed emissions from its portfolio of customers to net zero by 2050 or sooner, mobilising between US\$750bn to US\$1tn in green financing and capital for customers by 2030, and achieving net zero emissions in HSBC's own operations and supply chain by 2030 or sooner.

At the beginning of this year, HSBC announced the formation of a Sustainable and Transition Finance Team in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey.

AUCTION ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) announcement the following Auction:

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02/2021	Sale of Used IT Equipment	OETC Store (Mawaleh)	12/04/2021	27/04/2021	25/=	100/-

- The interested company should provide Copy of CR Showing activity in the same field
- Interested companies may obtain Documents from Tenders, Procurement and Contracts Department, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC) at Al Mawaleh against the non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document and deposit 25 RO to OETC account after getting approval.
- Interested Company should deposit 100/- Rial Omani in OETC Bank account and enclose the receipt along with the auction documents. Failing to do so the offer will be rejected.
- The Offers should be submitted in a separate sealed envelope addressed to Chairman of the Tender Committee mentioning Auction Number 02/2021 - Sale of Used IT Equipment on the top of the envelope. No other writing or any reference should be mentioned on the envelope. The offer shall be valid for 90 days from the date of submission.
- The deposit amount will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders after awards announcement and to the successful bidders after receiving full payment and removal of Equipment with in time limit as mentioned below.
- The Winning Bidder shall pay for the value of the Used IT Equipment by transfer to OETC bank account within One Week of the date of notification to him.
- The Winning Bidder is bound to transfer the materials no later than **One Week** from the date of sale notification and payment. In case of its failure to transfer the Equipment in the period specified the bidder company is not entitled to claim compensation and the bank deposited amount will be forfeited.
- OETC is not responsible for the sold Equipment after the payment and expiration of the deadline for delivery.
- OETC is not bound to sell the entire materials to a single buyer.
- The Winning Bidder shall be responsible for all risks during transfer or reuse of the materials.
- The Auction area shall be cleaned after transfer the materials.
- The Offer should be deposited in the Tender Box (1) of the Tenders, Procurement and Contracts Department at the Company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission.

Company Address: Muscat - Al Mawaleh
Way No : 2153 - Building No. 4230 Block No: 321 GSM: 99105413
Web site: www.omangrid.com



Oman Electricity Transmission Company s.a.o.c.
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تقدم بـ ثقة
Moving Forward
with Confidence



إعلان مزايمة

تعلم الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن طرح المزايمة التالية :

رقم المزايمة	الوصف	الموقع	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المزايمة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	ثمن النسخة (ر.ع)	تأمين دخول المزاد (ر.ع)
٢٠٢١/٠٢	بيع مواد خردة اجهزة تكنولوجيا المعلومات	مخزن الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء - الموالج	٢٠٢١/٠٤/١٢ م	٢٠٢١/٠٤/٢٧ م	٢٥/=	١٠٠/=

- على الشركات والمؤسسات الراغبة في الاشتراك في المزايمة إرسال السجل التجاري
- يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات الاشتراك والحصول على مستندات المزايمة من دائرة المناقصات والمشتريات والعقود بمبنى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء المكاتب الرئيسي بالموالج . مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد اعلاه للنسخة الواحدة - لا ترد - عن طريق الإيداع البنكي .
- تقدم العروض في مظاريه مخطومة بالشمع الأحمر معنونة بإسم رئيس لجنة المناقصات ومكتوباً عليها من الخارج رقم وعنوان المزايمة . على ألا يكتب على المظروف إسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه . وأن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء .
- يجب على الشركات والمؤسسات التي ترغب في الاشتراك في هذه المزايمة . إيداع مبلغ نقدي قدره (١٠٠) ر.ع، مع ضرورة إرفاق نسخه من الإيضاح داخل العطاء وكل عطاء لا يستوفي المطلوب لن ينظر فيه .
- سيتم إرجاع مبلغ التأمين إلى المتنافسين غير الفائزين بعد الإعلان عن النتيجة وأما الفائزين سيتم إرجاع مبلغ التأمين بعد دفع قيمه المواد وتنظيف ساحة المزاد.
- يلتزم من يرسو عليه البيع بسداد القيمة عبر التحويل البنكي لحساب الشركة خلال اسبوع من تاريخ إخطاره برسو المزاد عليه.
- يلتزم المشتري بنقل المواد التي تم دفع قيمتها في موعد أقصاه اسبوع من تاريخ البيع وسداد قيمة المواد وفي حالة عدم قيامه بنقل المواد حسب الفترة المحددة تتم مصادرتها لصالح الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ولا يحق له المطالبة بالتعويض عنها ويتم مصادرة الضمان.
- الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مسؤولة عن المواد بعد البيع و إنتضاء المهلة المحددة للتسليم.
- الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير ملزمة ببيع كامل المواد لمشتري واحد.
- على المشتري تحمل جميع المخاطر المترتبة عن نقل المواد أو إعادة إستخدامها.
- لا يسمح بتفكيك المواد وتنظيفها في الخزن وعلى المشتري تنظيف ساحة المزايمة بعد نقل المواد للمباةة.
- يجب وضع العروض في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) لدائرة المناقصات والمشتريات والعقود بمبنى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء الفرع الرئيسي بالموالج قبل الساعة ١١ صباحاً من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات .

عنوان الشركة: مسقط - الموالج

رقم المسكة ٢١٥٣ - ميني رقم ٤٢٣٠ - المربع رقم ٣٢١ هاتف: ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣

Web site: www.omangrid.com



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش . م . ع . م
ص . ب : ١٣٨٩ , الخوض الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢ , سلطنة عمان
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Egypt's Sisi promises investment to avoid Suez Canal closure repeat

Ismailia, Egypt - Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi promised on Tuesday that his country would buy equipment to avoid any repetition of the past week's closure of the Suez Canal as he visited Ismailia, en route to the vital trade artery.

The promise came a day after the refloating of the giant container vessel *MV Ever Given*, which hit the eastern bank of the narrow shipping lane last Tuesday and became wedged diagonally across its span for nearly a week.

"We will acquire all the necessary equipment for the canal", to avoid similar incidents, Sisi declared during his visit to Ismailia, home to the Suez Canal Authority (SCA).

Egyptian authorities have presented the freeing of the megaship on Monday as a vindication of the country's engineering and salvage capabilities.

Sisi claimed 'success' in the operation after the stern was freed, several hours before the bow of the ship was finally dislodged.

Traffic on the canal, a conduit for over 10 per cent of world trade, began moving again on Monday evening, after tailbacks totalling 425 ships built up to the north and south.

On Tuesday morning, maritime tracking sites showed ships exceeding 200,000 tonnes - a similar size to the *Ever Given* - navigating the narrow waterway.



A man waves the Egyptian flag after Panama-flagged *MV Ever Given* container ship was fully dislodged from the banks of the Suez on Monday (AFP)

But many more cargo ships were seen waiting at its two entrances, in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.



We will acquire all the necessary equipment for the canal, to avoid similar incidents

ABDEL FATTAH AL SISI

The canal authority says it will take over three days for the tailbacks to clear.

Maritime data company Lloyd's List said the blockage had held up an estimated US\$9.6bn

worth of cargo each day between Asia and Europe.

Egypt lost between US\$12mn and US\$15mn in revenues for

how to avoid a repeat.

Professor Jean-Marie Miossec, a maritime transport expert at France's Paul-Valery University in Montpellier, said it would 'be prudent... to only authorise [passage] by small and medium sized ships at night-time', restricting oil tankers and other very large ships to daylight hours. The canal authority has been quick to rule out widening the canal.

SCA chief Osama Rabie told reporters the cost would be 'very significant' and prohibitive.

Egypt spent more than US\$8bn dollars on widening a segment and creating a second lane on one stretch in 2014-15.

The giant Panamanian-flagged vessel operated by Taiwanese Evergreen Marine Corporation was stranded after running aground on the east bank of the waterway in a sand-storm.

Helped by tugboats, it has been shifted out of the path of other ships, and was anchored late Monday ahead of an investigation.

The clearance operation required more than ten tugs, as well as dredgers.

'Between 180 and 200 people worked tirelessly 24 hours a day' on site, an SCA official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Ahmed Abbas, a Suez canal employee, shared live footage from the scene on his Facebook account as the ship was refloated, exclaiming:

"The vessel is finally out! Well done to the SCA boys!," he said. Up to '2,000 workers' provided 'outside services', the employee added.

'The determining factor is that we dug deeper under the bow of the ship and widened to form a pool of water below' at a depth of about 12m, he revealed.

Elsewhere, salvage teams dug up to 18m.

The crisis forced shipping firms to choose between waiting or rerouting vessels around the southern tip of Africa, which adds 9,000km and more than a week of travel to the trip between Asia and Europe.

AFP



BioNTech raises vaccine output goal to 2.5bn

Frankfurt, Germany - German firm BioNTech said on Tuesday it was on track to manufacture 2.5bn doses of its COVID-19 vaccine this year with US partner Pfizer, 25 per cent more than expected.

The firm said the boost would allow it to 'address increased demand' as countries around the world race to contain new, more contagious virus variants.

The higher output was driven by the recent launch of a new production site in the German city of Marburg, which is now one of the world's largest mRNA vaccine manufacturing plants, it said.

The plant will eventually produce up to 1bn COVID jabs a year, once fully operational.

The first batches from Marburg will be delivered in the second half of April, the statement said. Over the first half of 2021 alone, BioNTech expects it to churn out 250mn doses.

The vaccine is also being produced at a Pfizer plant in Belgium and at three sites in the United States.

BioNTech said improved efficiency and new cooperation agreements with outside part-

ners had also helped lift its vaccine target, as had the regulatory nod allowing vaccinators to extract six instead of just five doses from a single BioNTech/Pfizer vial.

The BioNTech/Pfizer shot is based on novel mRNA technology and was the first COVID-19 vaccine to be approved in the West late last year.

BioNTech said it had delivered more than 200mn doses to 'more than 65 countries and regions' by March 23. Two doses are required for optimal protection.

Recent studies have shown that the jab is not only highly effective in protecting against COVID, it also provides protection against transmission of the virus.

"We are already seeing the first signs of vaccine associated reduction of COVID-19 cases and mortality in multiple countries," said BioNTech CEO and co-founder Ugur Sahin.

"We will continue to focus on innovating in the COVID-19 field by advancing new formulations and addressing vaccine variants," he added.

AFP

Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi to invest \$10bn in EVs

Beijing, China - Smartphone maker Xiaomi on Tuesday became the latest Chinese company to enter the burgeoning electric vehicle (EV) industry in the world's largest car market, as it announced a US\$10bn investment over the next decade.

The company, which is already among the biggest smartphone makers in the world, said in a filing to the Hong Kong stock exchange that it will set up a subsidiary for its smart electric vehicle business, with a 10bn yuan (US\$1.52bn) initial phase of investment.

Sales of new energy vehicles are expected to make up half of overall new vehicle sales in China by 2035, according to a roadmap an industry group re-



leased last year. Global carmakers are pegging hopes on an increasingly electric future, with China at the forefront as a customer base and manufacturing hub.

On Tuesday, Xiaomi said its chief executive officer Lei Jun will also serve as head of the new electric vehicle business.

The firm is the latest Chinese company to make a foray into smart mobility, with search engine company Baidu announcing in January it had entered a partnership with auto manufacturer Zhejiang Geely Holding Group to produce intelligent electric vehicles.

Already, Chinese brands have seen a surge in interest from investors, with XPeng and Li Auto both going public in the US last year.

Established international players in the auto industry including Volkswagen and BMW have also made commitments to their electric future, with all-electric models to be produced in China.

AFP

Dubai to establish one of world's largest energy-from-waste projects

Dubai, UAE - Dubai Holding has partnered with Dabul Holding, ITOCHU Corporation, Hitachi Zosen Inova, BESIX Group and Tech Group to develop one of the world's largest energy-from-waste (EFW) facility.

The consortium of leading international companies will build and operate the AED4bn project under a 35-year concession period with Dubai Municipality. This landmark public-private partnership represents one of the most significant renewable energy investments in the United Arab Emirates.

The Dubai Centre for Waste Processing, located in the Warsan area, will treat 5,666 tonnes of municipal solid waste



produced by Dubai per day. A total of 1,900,000 tonnes of waste per year will be converted into renewable energy. The approximate 200MW of electricity generated will be fed into the local grid as clean energy. The facility will have the capacity to process up to 45 per cent of

Dubai's current municipal waste generation, in turn significantly minimising the volume of municipal waste in landfills.

In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the facility will contribute to reaching the goals set by Dubai Municipality in min-

imising the volume of municipal waste in landfills and developing alternative energy sources as well as contribute to sustainable and ecologically friendly waste management in the Emirate and the targets outlined in the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050.

The Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and the Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, had given the start signal for implementing the project in line with international environmental standards and with a capacity of about one thousand trucks per day. Foundational works on the project are proceeding at pace.

WAM

One virus, one stuck container ship spark global trade rethink

Paris, France - A virus visible through only the most powerful microscopes and a huge container ship stuck in the Suez canal visible from space highlight how fragile the 'just-in-time' global trade system can be.

Businesses no longer hold large stocks of materials and parts at great expense, instead they rely on regular and even daily shipments of what they need.

Japanese auto giant Toyota developed the just-in-time logistics system to cut supply chain costs and the model has been universally adopted.

But it has a potentially key weakness - it only needs one link to break and the whole supply chain quickly comes to a halt. As demonstrated by the stranding of the massive *Ever Given* container ship in the Suez Canal which blocked one of the

world's most important shipping channels for a week until it was freed on Monday.

The passage provides a shortcut for everything from oil to manufactured goods and livestock to travel between Asia and Europe, and any deal creates headaches for retailers and suppliers around the world.

Diverting ships around southern Africa added around eight days to deliveries.

"It again shows the fragility of this very complex, long supply chain," said Ian Goldin, professor at Oxford University.

"It is not that we have things from all over the world, it's that they arrive the day that you need it," Goldin said.

'Black swan events'

The coronavirus pandemic had already forced companies to think about their supply chains given the massive disruption



A container ship navigates Egypt's Suez Canal on Tuesday, a day after the *Ever Given* cargo vessel was dislodged from its banks (AFP)

caused, especially early last year.

Auto production has been disrupted across the world due to a shortage of semiconductors, which have been in hot demand as the pandemic fuelled

demand for crucial microchips used in consumer electronics.

A fire this month at a factory of Japanese chip manufacturer Renesas has threatened to worsen the shortage, with the company saying on Tuesday

that it could take three to four months to restore full capacity.

Resilience is now the watchword, having more than one supplier and then closer to home base so as to minimise the impact of lockdowns and re-

strictions imposed to curb the virus.

Stephen Innes, chief global markets strategist at Axi, said supply chain 'black swan events' - exceptional incidents - like the Suez Canal bottleneck are 'likely to diminish over time'. A 'fourth industrial revolution' driven by technology 'is expected to make local production efficient and do away with inefficient and costly supply chains', Innes said.

Governments have learnt the lesson from early shortages of medical equipment whose manufacture had been moved almost entirely offshore, mostly to China and Asia to take advantage of cheaper labour there.

The price to be paid however when the crisis broke outweighed any such savings, sparking a political backlash as hospitals scrambled for protective clothing and basic equip-

ment, and the public demanded action.

Against this backdrop, governments and businesses alike are bringing production back home where it may be more expensive but at least is more secure.

"How much just-in-time do you want to be?," Soren Skou, head of giant Danish shipping line Maersk, told the *Financial Times* in an interview on Monday.

"It's great when it works but when it doesn't, you lose sales [and] there's no just-in-time cost savings that can outweigh the negative of losing sales," Skou said.

The way the pandemic has evolved is likely to put additional pressure on global transport links as house-bound, locked-down consumers drive an explosion in online demand.

AFP

OAB announces winners of Hasaad Savings Scheme

Oman Arab Bank announced the results of the first draw of its Hasaad Savings Scheme for 2021. Some 101 customers won prizes of RO500 each, alongside five winners of RO1,000 each from the salary transfer segment. As for Elite account holders, two customers won RO10,000 each from the Barka and Qurm branches.

Commenting on the launch of the new scheme, Rashad al Shaikh, head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, “We are delighted to see a huge number of our customers continue to save, especially given the prevalent conditions. This way, they can ensure that they have a form of finance to rely on, for themselves and their families. As always, we strive to reward them for their efforts towards saving with an array of exciting benefits every month and giving them a greater chance of winning by having them save more.”

The Hasaad Savings Scheme 2021 will see 101 lucky winners each month from the 54 branches winning RO500 each, as well as five winners of RO1,000 each, from those who transfer their salaries to Oman



Arab Bank. This is in addition to a Big Prize draw which will see two winners of RO10,000 each, every quarter.

The Elite Draws will see two winners every month of RO10,000 each. This is replaced by an Elite grand prize draw conducted every three months with one lucky winner of RO25,000.

“I congratulate all the winners of the February Hasaad Savings Draw and wish the rest of our

valued customers the best of luck for the rest of the upcoming draws, which will take place over 2021.

“I would like to encourage them to continue saving so that we can enable them to build a savings culture for their own benefit and a better future.”

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the sultanate.

Today, the bank operates a nationwide network of 54 branches and representative offices with 160 ATMs spread across Oman.

OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services through its OAB Online App. Customers can now digitally open an account and benefit from several other services, directly from the convenience of their mobile phones.

NBO appoints new head of asset management

National Bank of Oman (NBO) has announced the appointment of Abdullah al Jabri as its new head of Asset Quality Management.

Jabri’s career spans for over 30 years, where he held many leadership positions in various government agencies, and board memberships in government, finance, human resources, information technology, and other more.

Bringing his wealth of knowledge and experience to his new role at the bank, he is anticipated to drive the strategy across the total company’s asset portfolio.

Abdullah al Hinai, chief executive officer at National Bank of Oman, said, “We warmly welcome Abdullah to his new role at the bank, where we look forward to benefitting from his impressive track record.

“We have one of the most experienced Asset Management Units in Oman, and are confident that his mix of perspective, skills and expertise make him the ideal candidate to control the bank’s asset quality.”

Prior to joining the National Bank of Oman, Jabri held a number of senior positions in sectors related to law, information technology, human resources and more.



He has also been part of a number of committees including Board Member and head of Governance and Audit Committee for the Oman Technology Fund (OTF), Board Member and Member of Governance and Audit Committee for the ROP Pension Trust Fund, and Board Member and head of the HR and Finance Committee at Al Sahwa School.

Jabri’s educational attainments include an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Loughborough University, UK, as

well as a Bachelors degree in Law from the Beirut Arab University, Lebanon.

NBO, the first local commercial bank in the Sultanate of Oman, was founded in 1973 and is today one of the leading banks in Oman.

The bank serves its customers in Oman through 60 branches, more than 180 ATM/ FFM/ CCDMs as well as two branches in UAE. The bank is committed to community improvement through its corporate citizenship programmes.

OBA holds its Annual General Meeting

Oman Banks Association (OBA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday. The meeting was held through an electronic platform and was presided over by Abdul Hakeem Omar al Ojaili, chairman of the Oman Banks Association Board of Directors.

The meeting was attended by a number of senior executives of banks operating in the sultanate. At the meeting, the Oman Banks Association presented to its members 2020 achievements, 2021 plan, 2020 audited financial statements, 2021 budget, and the appointment of external auditors, along with their fees, for the new financial year.

Oman Banks Association is a non-profit professional association created to represent the banking sector, to promote Omani banking activities, coordinate with the regulators on matters of policy and strategy, and to support banking excellence in Oman.

Big response for Injaz Oman Student Company Programme contest

The ninth edition of the Student Company Programme’s competition has moved to an advanced stage and participating students are now in the process of writing the report and finalising its designs.

The Zubair Corporation (Z-Corp) had recently signed a sponsorship agreement with Injaz Oman to support the ninth edition of the Student Company Programme.

While the number of student companies participating this year reached 90, in all around 950 students are participating in the competition from different governorates and regions of the sultanate in the programme. Injaz Oman’s Student Company Programme aims to enable university students and private colleges to establish real projects after receiving qualification and training from a group of qualified experts in the field of entrepreneurship during the period of their participation in the programme.

Khula al Harthy, CEO of Injaz Oman, said, “The first stage of the competition was to receive applications for participation in the competition. The turnout has been really great, and we are overwhelmed by the response.



Following the application process, the student companies sent their proposals. We contacted each team separately and discussed the ideas giving them suggestions and recommendations to make a success of the proposals.

“After this stage, the participating teams were filtered to 80. Subsequently the companies worked on the idea by visiting the institutions interested in their area of specialties to develop the concept further and work on the prototype, and thereby prove the

quality of their products.”

She added, “During the competition period, several Kaif workshops were held to enrich students’ knowledge on how to choose and develop an idea, how to market this idea, how to obtain patents, and how medium and small enterprises operate.”

The participating teams have now passed the idea, team building and modifications phase. They have also conducted modifications to their idea and tested it on the ground and worked on the initial product after obtaining

necessary permits.

Presently the students are working on writing the report, which will be submitted to Injaz Oman on April 3.

The Student Company Programme’s falls within Z-Corp and Injaz Oman’s strategies to support education, training and entrepreneurship.

Injaz Oman works with students between the ages of 5-24 years through implementing programmes in middle schools, high schools, vocational colleges, and universities. Their various pro-

grammes help prepare students for future success in Oman’s private sector based on three core pillars including entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy.

Ibrahim al Salmi, communication general manager, Z-Corp said, “We are happy with the progress the competition has achieved. As a private sector organisation Z-Corp is delighted to be working in partnership with Injaz Oman and support the Omani youth to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Injaz Oman’s Student Company Programme complements Z-Corp’s social responsibility strategy in championing education, training, and inspiring entrepreneurship.”

The Student Company Programme will encourage young aspiring students and create a platform for innovative talent across the country. It will inspire students to craft their own experiences which will empower them to develop an innovative mindset. We are pleased that one of the objectives of the programme is to create innovators and potential job creators of the country.”

Through Student Company Programme, Injaz Oman strives to educate young people about

entrepreneurship and motivate them to consider it as a career option. This will encourage them to actively participate in the Sultanate’s business sphere. The support from a private sector organisation like Zubair Corporation means a lot to Injaz Oman since this programme helps young people gain awareness about the intricacies and rewards entrepreneurship and business in today’s world.

Student Company Programme offers a unique learning experience for students, helping them to establish their own companies and engage in entrepreneurship. The programme offers a learning experience that enables and enhances many skills, which complement and enrich the students’ performance in their academic education.

Student Company Programme is one of Injaz Oman’s successful initiatives. Through it, it has discovered and highlighted the talents and capabilities of Omani youth. By participating in this programme, students from diverse academic backgrounds learn about real-life business procedures and functions, the challenges and benefits of entrepreneurship.

Badr al Samaa holds webinar to mark International Women’s Day, Mother’s Day

To mark International Women’s Day and Mother’s Day Badr al Samaa Group of Hospitals organised a special webinar, ‘Women of Tomorrow’, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by women. The motivation behind this was to uphold women’s achievements, raise empowerment and focus greater attention to women’s wellbeing.

Dr Amira Raidan, head - Mental Health, Non-Communicable Diseases Department, Ministry of Health was the chief guest, and Dr Yasmin al Bulushi, project manager for ‘Eitmad’, National Leadership Project, Ministry of Labour, was guest of honour in this event. The event was attended by managing directors, senior management, doctors and staff of Badr al Samaa and people of the sultanate, especially women.

In his welcome address, Sameer P T, group CEO said private healthcare sector of Oman has brought great reforms to empower women and more than 70 per cent of workforces in private healthcare sector are females. He said women are leading in many areas like diagnostics and critical care, quality accreditations, administration, etc. He said in Badr al Samaa we continually empower women for their better tomorrow.

Dr P A Mohammed, managing director, said in fight against COVID-19 female staff has been shoulder to shoulder with men and their selfless efforts should be acknowledged and appreciated.

He also said that anyone will be amazed to know that at Badr al Samaa Group of Hospitals more than 60 per cent of the workforce are females.



Dr Amira Raidan appreciated the initiative of Badr al Samaa to acknowledge women for their exemplary work.

She urged all ladies to have a

good work-life balance and focus on their well-being which will ultimately result in the well-being and progress of our societies and country at large.

She appreciated healthcare sector works for their great effort during this pandemic.

Dr Yasmin al Bulushi said women are born leaders which is

evident by their priceless contributions in family and at work.

Women by birth have winning combination of traits like assertiveness, persuasiveness, risk taking ability, emotionally connected, good communication skills, decision making abilities and hard work.

She said women have proven again and again that they are capable to do anything which should inspire more and more women to come forward and explore their true potential.

Dr Heba Tolba, specialist gastroenterologist and hepatologist, Badr al Samaa Hospital, Al Khoudh presented a health talk on irritable bowel syndrome and PCOS.

She said diet, exercise and certain lifestyle modifications help in dealing with these situations but before this one should have thorough evaluation with

gastroenterologist.

Asif Shah, head Branding and Communication, who was also the host of event, said it is appreciating to see how a woman fight the stereotypes in today’s world and how she courageously and fearlessly face the challenges and rise successfully and become an inspiration for everyone. He also presented the special health screening packages which Badr al Samaa Group of Hospitals launched to mark International Women’s Day and Mother’s Day.

K O Devassy, chief marketing officer, presented the vote of thanks and appreciated all the panelists for their motivational and inspiring words on women empowerment. He said Badr al Samaa always acknowledges the exemplary contributions of women and will organise more such events.

MG announces ‘Festival of Winning’ Ramadan promotion



MG Motor, from the house of Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD), has announced a special promotion – Festival of Winning that is designed to make the advent of Ramadan, even more attractive.

Underscoring its commitment to customers, MG’s Festival of Winning extends an incredible value proposition that encompasses buying any of MG’s stunning 2021 models; and getting a Scratch and Win card that enables one to win a galore of amazing prizes!

Prizes include Huawei mobile phone bundles, RO100 fuel cards, up to 200,000km service

packages, and the brilliant opportunity to win one’s car back! What’s better is that this also includes free registration, insurance, manufacturer’s warranty and VKool window tinting.

Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD’s Automotive, Construction Equipment & Renewable Energy (ACERE) division said, “We aim to come up with something special for our valued customers every Ramadan. As part of this year’s ‘Festival of Winning’, we are extending attractive benefits for our customers; and would like to underline that Ramadan is the best time to buy an MG as one

can benefit immensely from the Festival of Winning.”

MG Motor has built up its reputation through innovative technology, and a broad product line-up. In Oman, people have increasingly opted for MG models because they come with class-leading features, great performance, ideally suited to the sultanate’s weather conditions and offer great value for money.

Every customer purchasing an MG can be assured of the brand’s top class after-sales service, which guarantees the advantage of trained experts. Customers can expect consistency and support during after

sales service, which ascertains MG’s performance in the years to come.

MHD is largely committed to supporting MG’s growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of showrooms and service centres, MHD has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

Having state-of-art showrooms and service centres in Ibri, Sur, Salalah, Sohar and Muscat, MG Motor Oman also has an e-

commerce platform that help enhance its customers’ purchase experience from the comfort and safety of their homes. The platform <https://mg-om.com/buy-online/> allows customers to select vehicles from the available stock, to reserve vehicles, to conduct online payments and to schedule home delivery of cars. Additionally, customers can also book home test drives.

To arrange a test drive, or, if customers require more details, they can visit an MG Motor showroom, or call 71557334; wherein an experienced team of sales consultants will provide assistance and more information.



TiE Women competition focuses on empowering business leaders

The Dubai chapter of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) has officially launched the second edition of TiE Women, a global initiative dedicated to helping women across the globe reach their full potential by empowering them with the necessary support to build their leadership skills and grow their businesses.

Shameema Parveen, program co-chair for TiE Women, TiE Dubai commented, “Even though startups by women founders actually perform better over time, generating 10 per cent more in cumulative revenue over a five-year period and 78 per cent revenue for every dollar of funding compared to 31 per cent of male-founded startups, the gender in-

vestment gap is a reality. Companies with women founders have received only about 2 per cent of all venture capital invested. We at TiE Women address such gaps by providing a platform for women entrepreneurs with access funding, investors, mentors, learning and networking.”

Anastasiya Golovatenko, program Co-chair for TiE Women, TiE Dubai commented, “Today, there are 114 per cent more women entrepreneurs than there were 20 years ago. Terms like “momtrepreneur” and “women empowerment” are helping cultivate the right image and motivation needed by young women and mothers.”

Bahrain real estate deals valued at \$ 1.9bn

The real estate market in Bahrain is gaining pace despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, with a series of major projects and initiatives driving sector growth. The rebound of Bahrain’s real estate sector fuelled a 14 per cent and 20 per cent rise in real estate deals in the third and fourth quarter of 2020 respectively, with the total value of real estate transactions in Bahrain reaching US\$1.9bn in 2020.

Bahrain’s National Real Estate plan for 2021-2024 is set to further increase the sector’s contribution to the national economy as part of continued economic diversification efforts. The plan includes five initiatives and 17 projects, including laws and regulations, long-term plans and operational initiatives for developing the real estate sector.

Mixed-use major real estate projects in the Kingdom set to exceed US\$12bn which includes Eagle Hills Marassi al Bahrain, Diyar al Muharraaq, Dilmunia and Bahrain Bay, which are creating



prosperity through attractive and unique real estate destinations. Bahrain is a multidimensional marketplace that enables investment in a diverse range of properties that focus on addressing the growing consumer demand in Bahrain and the region for integrated communities that offer opportunities for the live, work, play lifestyle.

Ali al Mudaifa, executive director - Investment Origination at Bahrain Economic Development Board said, “Bahrain’s bounce back in the real estate sector is testament to the kingdom’s dedication towards economic growth.”

GM AMEO announces leadership team appointments

General Motors Africa and Middle East (GM AMEO) has announced two new leaders to the business to continue delivering on GM’s regional growth strategy and vision, as Mohammed Al Fayyad is appointed to a global GM role.

Effective April 1, 2021, Rohan Fernandes will assume the role of director of Customer Care and Aftersales at GM AMEO. Fernandes brings a wealth of experience to the role with more than 20 years’ experience in a variety of fields including marine, HVAC and oil and gas, in international markets as well as local. Having joined the AMEO team in 2016, responsible for regional portfolios and programs, as well as business development.

In his new role, Fernandes has a clear mandate to grow the bottom-line and ensure GM’s customer-centric and ambidextrous vision, including advancements in mobility, is embedded across all aftersales touchpoints.

Fernandes replaces Mohammed Al Fayyad, who has been appointed general director,



Aftersales – ACDelco, and will relocate to Detroit, USA.

Commenting on Fernandes’ appointment, Luay al Shurafa, president and managing director GM AMEO said, “I have worked closely with Rohan over the past five years and know he brings a proven-track record of maximising business results, along with great leadership skills to his new role.

“As we introduce innovative technologies and business models to the market, our Customer Care and Aftersales team will be instrumental in driving the financial performance of our business, along with ensuring our cus-



tomers are at the heart of our operations. I am confident we are set up for success under Rohan’s leadership.

“I also want to thank Mohammed al Fayyad for his outstanding contribution to our Africa and Middle East business over many years, and wish him all the best in his future global role with GM.

“Fayyad has held various roles across our AMEO business over the years and has been a key figure in driving our success and his leadership has been instrumental across the region.”

Furthermore, as GM MEO advances its two-pronged strat-



egy, growing its core business while pioneering future mobility, Communications is a critical tool in the business’ arsenal.

Sean Poppitt has been appointed director of Communications, GM AMEO, responsible for strategizing and executing all internal and external communications across the business and GM’s brands, including Cadillac, Chevrolet, GMC and OnStar.

In this role, Poppitt joins the GM AMEO Leadership Team and the GM International Communications Leadership Team, ensuring synergy between all facets of the business as well as with GM global headquarters to

deliver impactful campaigns that will resonate across the region.

Prior to joining GM AMEO, Poppitt held the position of director of Marketing, Communications and Customer Experience for GM Southeast Asia, and before this held various senior communications positions at GM Holden in Australia.

With 15 years’ experience across media and communications, Poppitt brings a fresh perspective, backed by deep brand insight, to the Middle East.

Congratulating Poppitt on the role, Shurafa said, “Sean is a seasoned marketing and communications professional within the GM business and beyond, and we are delighted to welcome him to the team.

“The transfer of talent across markets has a proven track record of bringing fresh perspectives, backed by deep insight of our brand, and I am confident that Sean will elevate our brand and business regionally and continue to deliver outstanding results across Africa and the Middle East.”

شركة زجاج مجان ش.م.ع.م.
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NOTICE FOR ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of MAJAN GLASS (the “Company”) has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the General Meeting, which will be held at 03:00 PM on 15/04/2021, via the electronic platform to hold general meetings, which can be assessed, through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the Ordinary General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Ordinary General Meeting shall be held at 03:00 PM on 22/04/2021, to discuss the following agenda:

Ordinary Agendas:

- To elect members of the Board of Directors to fill the four (4) vacant seats therein. Any person who wishes to be nominated for the membership of the Board of Directors of the Company is required to fill in the director’s nomination form prepared for this purpose and submit it to the Company at least five (5) days before the Ordinary General Meeting, no later than COB on Thursday, April 8, 2021. The candidate must satisfy the prescribed requirements for the Company’s board membership.

According to the Company’s Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the Capital Market Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDCC.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the Shareholder’s shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be cancelled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information, please contact on telephone No. 98082098 or email: fc@majanglass.com

CHAIRMAN

LEGAL ADVISOR

EXTERNAL AUDITOR

AFC and NEOM announce four-year global sponsorship rights deal

NEOM has become a Global Partner of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) from 2021-2024.

The agreement encompasses major AFC national team competitions, including but not limited to the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to Qatar Final Round featuring the Continent’s top-12 football nations, and Asia’s flagship national team competition – the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 – which is set to take place in China PR, as well as the AFC Women’s Asian Cup India 2022 and the AFC U23 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2022.

In addition, NEOM will be a strong supporter of the AFC Champions League and AFC Cup globally.

NEOM is a project of global significance currently under development in Saudi Arabia, focussed on creating a new model for sustainable living and accelerating human progress. With an ambition to become a global centre for sport, its partnership with the AFC will provide NEOM



with a long-term platform to grow its profile on the world stage, develop a culture of active lifestyles within its own communities, and leverage its investment in technology, innovation, performance and sustainability to benefit football across the whole of Asia.

The partnership was secured by the AFC’s commercial partner Football Marketing Asia (FMA) who will manage the rights delivery and work closely with NEOM and the AFC on launching a range of activation campaigns in the coming months, initially with a digital focus and over time also presenting opportunities for fans

to experience NEOM in person.

Dato’ Windsor John, the AFC general secretary, said, “The AFC is delighted to welcome NEOM to the fast expanding AFC family of global partners, which once again reinforces the undeniable stature and prestige of the AFC’s brand and its competitions.

“NEOM’s partnership with AFC not only underscores the attractive and engaging platform the AFC provides through its many world-class competitions but also emphasises the profound and lasting impact Asia’s number one sport can have on strengthening communities.

“We look forward to creating

and sharing historic moments with NEOM and realising our common ambitions.”

Nadhmi al Nasr, CEO of NEOM said, “NEOM is extremely excited about its ambitious partnership with the AFC. Football is by far Saudi Arabia’s favourite sport. It holds a special place in the hearts of our people and therefore provides a unique opportunity to inspire and enable NEOM’s citizens to lead active lifestyles, as we move towards our goal of having the most physically active population on the planet.

“We regard and value the AFC as a progressive and innovative partner who is committed to taking football in Asia to greater heights. This reflects NEOM’s own ambition to become a globally recognised centre of sporting excellence, to provide a world class environment for the brightest minds and best talent to excel, and to contribute to the growth and economic prosperity of the kingdom.”

Migrants in Lesbos are ‘suffocating’

Lesbos, Greece - On a windswept hill overlooking the Aegean Sea, thousands of asylum seekers huddling in tents on the island of Lesbos are glad to see the end of winter.

“The nights are very, very cold, and it’s very difficult with a five-month baby,” Abdelkader Ali, a 25 year old Syrian, tells AFP inside the camp of Mavrovouni.

Designed to be temporary after a fire destroyed the island’s previous permanent facility of Moria, Mavrovouni has been home to over 6,000 people since September.

On a rare media tour organised during a visit to the island on Monday by EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson, asylum seekers shout out to reporters that they are tired of incarceration.

“It’s a prison, we cannot do anything,” says Jawad, a 34 year old Afghan who had hoped to speak to Johansson.

“Free us. You must free us,” chant a dozen women from Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo near a camp gate, under the watchful eye of Greek police.

‘We are suffocating’

“We want to go to school, we want to build a family,” says one of the women who has been on the island since 2019 and has seen no progress in her asylum claim.

“We are suffocating here,” she yells as police escort the journalists out of the camp and



African migrant women shout ‘freedom’ inside the new refugee camp of Kara Tepe in Mytilene, on Lesbos, on Monday (AFP)

shut the gate.

The European Union has allocated €276mn (US\$325mn approx) for the construction of new camps on Lesbos and four other Aegean islands - Chios, Samos,

Kos and Leros - where nearly 14,000 migrants are hosted.

“It’s of the utmost importance that we don’t leave people in tents for another winter,” Johansson said on Monday at a

news conference with Greek Migration Minister Notis Mitarachi.

Work on a new permanent Lesbos camp is expected to start in the summer, Mitarachi said, without giving a completion date.

“We will not allow for a difficult winter ahead,” the minister vowed.

He said Greek authorities had overcome a ‘big challenge’ in housing asylum seekers left

homeless overnight by the burning of Moria, who at the time numbered over 10,000.

“Most of the work for flood prevention has been almost completed. Now electricity is

coming in, hot water is there,” Mitarachi said.

He insisted that the temporary camp, a former army target range, is ‘much more decent, clean and safe than Moria ever was’.

“There is a check when people come in, you cannot bring knives into the camp, you cannot bring alcohol,” Mitarachi said.

Camp residents acknowledge that security has improved with some 300 Greek police now present, but a host of other problems remain.

“The only thing that is good here in this new camp is the security,” says Raed Alobeed (45), also from Syria.

“In the old Moria camp... the violence (came in) high levels. We got victims, we got stabbing people, thieves, mafia, selling drugs.”

Bakari, a young migrant from Mali, says he hasn’t washed in three days for lack of hot water, contradicting the minister.

“We live like pigs,” adds Jojo, a Congolese asylum seeker who stresses that the police only intervene to break up fights.

Compounding the sense of imprisonment, the migrants are only allowed to travel to the nearest town for groceries a couple of times per week, because of coronavirus concerns.

“We make do with what they give us, two meals a day,” says Jacques, another Congolese migrant.

AFP

Three women polio workers shot dead in Afghanistan

Jalalabad, Afghanistan - Gunmen killed three Afghan women involved in a nationwide polio immunisation programme on Tuesday, officials said, a day after authorities launched a new drive against the crippling disease.

The three women were killed in two separate attacks in the restive eastern city of Jalalabad, officials said.

“They were all on duty going from house to house to vaccinate children,” supervisor Wahidullah, who like many Afghans uses only one name, told AFP.

An official at the Nangarhar governor’s office confirmed the incidents.

A relative of one of the victims told AFP his niece had joined the immunisation programme to earn some money for her family.

“Gunmen shot her dead this morning when she was on duty giving vaccines to children,” said Haji Maqbool.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Health said the vaccination drive had been temporarily suspended in Nangarhar.

Polio has been eradicated across the world apart from Afghanistan and Pakistan, where distrust of vaccines is rife.

Officials say the Taliban won’t allow door-to-door campaigns in areas it controls.

The Taliban and religious leaders often tell communities that vaccines are a Western conspiracy aimed at sterilising Muslim children, and they also suspect immunisation drives are used for spying on militant activities.

AFP

Israel for first time reopens Taba border since pandemic

Jerusalem - Israel on Tuesday reopened the Taba border post with Egypt that had been closed throughout the pandemic, allowing limited numbers to cross to the Sinai peninsula for Passover holidays.

The move was the latest step towards normalcy for Israel, which has fully vaccinated more than half of its roughly 9.3mn residents against coronavirus, the world’s fastest per capita pace.

From Tuesday through April 12, 300 Israelis will be allowed through Taba on the Red Sea each day.

To cross, individuals must be inoculated or have recovered from COVID-19.

A negative laboratory test is also required in both directions.

Egypt’s Sinai peninsula is a popular vacation spot for Is-



The Taba crossing on the Israeli-Egyptian border

raelis, especially during the Passover break which began over the weekend, but the pandemic has forced Taba’s closure since March 2020.

Israel’s successful vaccination rollout has been making gains against the virus.

The number of serious coronavirus cases, which stood at 800 at the end of last month, has fallen to 467, according to the Health Ministry.

AFP

Myanmar crackdown death toll passes 500

Yangon, Myanmar - The death toll in the Myanmar military’s crackdown on protesters has passed 500, as armed rebel groups on Tuesday threatened the junta with retaliation if the bloodshed does not stop.

World powers have ramped up their condemnation of the military’s campaign against the anti-coup movement that is demanding the restoration of the elected government and the release of junta leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Washington suspended a trade pact with Myanmar and UN chief Antonio Guterres called for a united global front to pressure the junta after more than 100 protesters were killed in a bloody weekend.

Adding to that pressure campaign, a trio of ethnic rebel groups on Tuesday condemned the crackdown and threatened to fight alongside protesters unless the military reined in its violence.

Daily rallies across Myanmar by unarmed demonstrators have been met with tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said it had confirmed a total of 510 civilian deaths but warned the true toll was probably signif-



Thai doctors attend to injured Myanmar refugees, who arrived in Thailand after crossing Salween River following Myanmar military bombings in Karen state, at Sop Moei Hospital in Mae Hong Son province on Tuesday (AFP)

icantly higher. On Tuesday, protesters in Yangon emptied rubbish bags in the streets as part of the latest action, while in the town of Muse in Shan state a 35 year old protester was shot dead.

Rebel warning

Three of the country’s myriad armed ethnic insurgent groups - the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army

and the Arakan Army (AA) - issued a joint statement threatening retaliation. ‘If they do not stop, and continue to kill the people, we will cooperate with the protesters and fight back,’ the statement said.

If such groups take up arms, Debbie Stothard at the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) warned that the situation could degenerate into civil war.

Two dozen ethnic minority rebellions have flared in Myanmar since independence from British colonial rule in 1948, fighting over autonomy, ethnic identity, drugs and natural resources.

The military has sought to cut deals with some armed groups and earlier this month took the AA off the list of terrorist organisations.

But over the weekend it launched airstrikes in eastern

Karen state - the first such strikes in 20 years - targeting the Fifth Brigade of the Karen National Union (KNU) after the group seized a military base.

An estimated 3,000 people fled through the jungle to seek safety across the border in Thailand, according to local groups.

Hsa Moo, a Karen human rights activist, told AFP that the Thai authorities had pushed the people back and accused them of blocking UN refugee officials from the area.

Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha insisted that there was ‘no influx’ of refugees and that the kingdom’s authorities had not ‘scared them off with guns or sticks’.

Thai police said they had intercepted ten parcels containing 112 grenades and 6,000 rounds of ammunition in northern Chiang Rai province that had been destined for Myanmar’s notorious border town Tachileik.

UN Secretary-General Guterres said the crackdown was ‘absolutely unacceptable’ and urged the Myanmar authorities to undertake a ‘serious democratic transition’. The UN Security Council will meet on Wednesday to discuss the situation.

AFP

Stranded in Turkey, professor seeks return to France

Istanbul, Turkey - Acquitted of terror charges after a stint in jail, a Turkish professor of a French university remains stranded in Istanbul, stripped of his passport and subjected to an opaque probe.

Tuna Altinel’s colleagues view the 55 year old as another victim of a crackdown against academia and Kurdish causes that gathered force after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan survived a coup bid in 2016.

The professor of mathematical logic and set theory at Lyon’s Claude Bernard University agrees.



Turkish mathematician Tuna Altinel, in Istanbul on March 24 (AFP)

“I am a hostage of the Turkish state,” Altinel told AFP at his Istanbul home.

The professor’s plight gained added attention as a diplomatic feud played out in the past year

between Paris and Ankara.

Altinel’s personal nightmare began in May 2019, shortly after he arrived for a holiday in Turkey.

Instead of returning well-rested to Lyon, the French city where he has taught and lived for 25 years, Altinel discovered that he was suspected of ‘membership in a terrorist organisation’.

He was detained and tried for disseminating ‘terrorist propaganda’ while acting as an interpreter at a pro-Kurdish meeting in France earlier that year.

Released in July 2019 and acquitted in January 2020, Altinel has since learned that he is the

subject of a new Turkish investigation of which he knows little about.

That probe appears to have served as justification for the government’s refusal to return his travel documents.

Altinel first popped up on officials’ radar in 2016, when he joined nearly 2,000 academics in signing a petition demanding an end of Turkish military operations in the predominantly Kurdish southeast. Outlawed Kurdish militants have been waging an insurgency in the mountainous region for decades.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Germany announces tougher border checks ahead of Easter



German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer leaves after a news conference to talk about border controls in order to limit the spread of COVID-19, in the country's capital Berlin on Tuesday (AFP)

Berlin, Germany - Germany on Tuesday said it would step up random controls at its land borders to ensure people are carrying a negative coronavirus test upon arrival, amid concern that Easter holiday trips could worsen the country's third COVID wave.

Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said he has asked Germany's federal police to 'intensify' the checks for the next 'eight to 14 days'.

"Regardless where you're arriving from, from Poland, France, or Denmark, everyone

should expect to be checked, especially with regard to producing a negative test," Seehofer said.

The checks would occur in a 30km zone on German territory after vehicles have already crossed from neighbouring nations, Seehofer said, meaning nobody will be sent back if they don't comply.

But police can impose fines on anyone who fails to show a negative test or did not complete an online registration form before entry.

Anyone coming from a 'high-

risk' area such as France must also quarantine upon arrival.

The only systematic border checks, where each car is stopped and can be denied entry, are taking place at Germany's frontier with the hard-hit Czech Republic.

Seehofer announced that the strict checks would be extended for another 14 days given the Czech Republic's high infection rate and the prevalence of virus variants.

But Germany will no longer systematically stop each vehicle coming from Austria's Tyrol re-

Vietnam flight attendant given suspended jail term

Hanoi, Vietnam - A Vietnam Airlines flight attendant was handed a two-year suspended jail term for spreading the coronavirus, Vietnamese state media said on Tuesday.

Duong Tan Hau broke his two-week home quarantine requirement and met 46 people after working on a repatriation flight from Japan in November, the country's official government website said.

The 29 year old was convicted of 'spreading dangerously infectious diseases' in a court in southern Ho Chi Minh City on Tuesday, according to the metropolis' official mouthpiece, *Phap Luat Thanh Pho Ho Chi Minh*.

The communist nation has

used extensive contact tracing and mandatory mass quarantines to keep virus numbers low. It has recorded only around 2,600 infections and 35 deaths among its population of 98mn.

Hau broke quarantine rules a week after arriving home, and a COVID-19 test showed he was positive for the virus several days after.

Before the test, he had met friends and took part in a contest at a Ho Chi Minh City university, media reports said. He spread the virus to three people, according to the city mouthpiece, adding that 'the livelihoods of over 2,000 city residents were affected'.

AFP

gion, he added, saying the pandemic situation in Tyrol 'has significantly improved'.

Also from Tuesday, anyone arriving in Germany by plane must show a negative test before boarding, regardless of whether they are coming from a risk area or not.

The tougher measures come as Germany struggles to slow a rise in coronavirus infections, fuelled by new, more contagious virus strains with experts warning that the vaccination pace remains too slow to break a third wave of the pandemic.

AFP



From right: Prime Minister Mario Draghi and his wife Maria Cappello wait for their turns for vaccination, in Rome on Tuesday (AFP)

Italy to impose quarantine on EU arrivals: Ministry

Rome, Italy - Italy will impose a five-day quarantine on travellers arriving from other EU countries, both residents and foreigners, a Health Ministry source said on Tuesday.

Health Minister Roberto Speranza is all set to approve a new rule, the source said, although it was not immediately clear when it would come into effect nor how long it would last.

Much of Italy remains under tight coronavirus restrictions as it battles a deadly third wave of infections, with the whole country facing a lockdown over the three-day Easter weekend starting on Saturday.

The new measure will require anyone arriving from another EU country to show a negative coronavirus test before departing for Italy and a second after five days of self-isolation.

The only exceptions are for reasons of 'proven necessity and urgency', the ministry source told AFP.

A quarantine is already in place for visitors from numerous non-EU countries, while non-residents arriving from some other nations are prohibited from entry.

However, the new regulation appears designed as much for foreigners as for Italians seeking an overseas break, after the government confirmed that current restrictions on movement did not include trips to the airport.

"I can't leave my municipality, but I can fly off to the Canary Islands - it's absurd," Bernabo Bocca, head of the federation of Italian hoteliers, told the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper on Monday.

Italy was the first European country to face the full force of the pandemic and has officially recorded more than 108,000 deaths from COVID-19 so far.

This includes 417 deaths reported in the 24 hours to Monday evening.

PM Draghi, wife get AstraZeneca jab

Prime Minister Mario Draghi was on Tuesday vaccinated against the coronavirus with the AstraZeneca jab, his office said, in an announcement intended to show support for the vaccine.

The 73-year-old and his wife Maria Cappello were vaccinated at a centre at Rome's central Termini station, a spokesman said.

Italy had kept the use of the AstraZeneca/Oxford jabs suspended for several days earlier this month following fears of a link to blot clots, before the European Medicines Agency gave the all-clear. The World Health Organization has also said the AstraZeneca vaccine is safe to use.

Draghi, who took office last month, has promised to ramp up the number of vaccinations in Italy, which was the first European country to face the full force of the pandemic and is currently battling a deadly third wave.

Much of the country remains under tight restrictions although schools and nurseries reopened in the Lazio region surrounding Rome on Tuesday, two weeks after being shuttered, after it was reclassified from a 'red zone' to a lower-risk 'orange zone'.

"It's great to have them back but I don't know what the point was. We've just lost two weeks of school," said one teacher in northern Rome, who asked not to be named.

The whole country will be put under a 'red zone' lockdown over the long Easter weekend starting on Saturday in a bid to limit the number of new cases of COVID-19.

More than 108,000 people have died of the coronavirus so far in Italy, according to the official health ministry toll, including 417 reported in the 24 hours to Monday evening.

AFP

German city Tuebingen reopens despite surge

Tuebingen, Germany - Germany may be battling a third wave of the pandemic but life feels almost normal in the city of Tuebingen, where anyone with a negative COVID test can enjoy a day of shopping, culture or outdoor dining.

As debate rages nationwide about whether tougher measures are needed to slow surging infections, the historic university city near Stuttgart has chosen a different tack by offering free coronavirus testing centres that hand out 'day passes' to those whose results come back negative.

The passes then allow access to what is currently one of Germany's most vibrant city centres.

"Customers' eyes light up when they come in, it's finally a bit of normality again," said Sandra Pauli, who was allowed to reopen her home decor shop some two weeks ago.

"Everyone is very happy."

The usual rules on mask wearing and physical distancing



Medical doctor Lisa Federle holds a 'Tagesticket' ('day pass') COVID-19 rapid test certificate in a café, in Germany's Tuebingen (AFP)

still apply, said Pauli, who believes the rapid testing scheme 'is the only way to live with the coronavirus' while keeping high street stores afloat and welcoming people back into theatres and museums.

The rest of Germany is closely watching the Tuebingen model, and a string of cities and towns are planning similar experiments.

Not without controversy

The central city of Weimar has already opened shops and museums to those carrying a negative test.

The small state of Saarland is going even further and wants to end its shutdown on April 6, using a combination of rapid antigen tests and hygiene precautions to open up cinemas,

gyms and outdoor restaurants.

But the trend is not without controversy at a time when scientists are warning that new, more contagious virus variants could see Germany's caseload explode in the coming weeks.

Among the loudest critics is Chancellor Angela Merkel, who in a rare live television interview on Sunday urged regional leaders to stick to agreed COVID curbs. "I don't know that testing and shopping is the right response to what is happening right now," she said, noting that even in Tuebingen the rate of infection was climbing despite the thousands of tests.

Merkel and the premiers of Germany's 16 federal states agreed in early March to pull the 'emergency brake' and impose renewed restrictions if a region hit more than 100 new infections per 100,000 people over a seven-day period - as in currently the case across most of the country. But many regional leaders were reluctant to revert to harsher shutdowns.

Limits on tourists

Outside Tuebingen's picturesque city hall, on a square lined by colourful half-timbered buildings, people have been queuing since the early morning to have their nostrils swabbed at one of several testing sites in the city.

Almost 50,000 tests have been carried out over a two-week period, according to doctor Lisa Federle, one of the driving forces behind the project, which is being monitored by the University of Tuebingen.

"We have enough tests," said Federle, adding that 'we have to do something because people no longer accept' the restrictions.

"I think it's significantly safer to meet outside after you've been tested, than meeting people in your home," she told AFP.

Tuebingen mayor Boris Palmer, of the left-leaning Green party, said the project had given hope to business owners who were feeling increasingly desperate.

AFP

China approves radical overhaul of Hong Kong's political system

Beijing, China - Chinese leaders endorsed a sweeping overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system on Tuesday, creating powers to vet anyone standing for public office and slashing the number of directly elected politicians.

The new measures, which bypassed Hong Kong's legislature and were imposed directly by Beijing, are the latest move aimed at quashing the city's democracy movement after huge protests.

President Xi Jinping signed the new law after it was unanimously approved by China's top decision-making body.

One of the most dramatic changes is the introduction of a committee that will vet anyone hoping to enter Hong Kong politics for their patriotism.

The body will include background checks by Hong Kong's new national security apparatus and its decisions cannot be legally challenged.

"The National Security Committee and the National Security Police will provide reports on every single candidate to assist the vetting by the qualification review committee," Tam Yiu-chung, Hong Kong's sole delegate on China's rubber-stamp parliament, told AFP.

When Hong Kongers are allowed to vote in limited local elections, they tend to do so overwhelmingly for pro-democracy candidates, something that has rattled authoritarian Beijing.

Under the new measures, Hong Kong's legislature will be expanded from 70 to 90 seats.



L-R: Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs; Chief Executive Carrie Lam and Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Roy Tang before a press conference at the government headquarters, in Hong Kong on Tuesday (AFP)

But only 20 of those seats will now be directly elected, down from 35. That brings direct representation down from half to less than a quarter of seats.

The majority - 40 seats - will be chosen by a reliably pro-Beijing committee. The remaining 30 will be chosen by 'functional constituencies' - bodies repre-

senting certain industries and special interest groups that have also been historically loyal to Beijing.

The measures were welcomed by Hong Kong's pro-Beijing government, which will no longer have to face a noisy and disruptive pro-democracy opposition in the legislature.

"The excessive politicisation in society and the internal rift that has torn Hong Kong apart can be effectively mitigated," said chief executive Carrie Lam.

The next legislative elections under the new system would be held in December, she added.

"Hong Kong's institutions of political power and governance must always be firmly in the hands of those who love the motherland and Hong Kong,"

added the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, which formulates Beijing's policies for the financial hub.

Opposition figures and some analysts took a less rosy view, describing the new measures as a clear move to ensure any remaining opposition to Beijing's rule is stamped out.

"This whole new system is really degrading and very oppressive," Emily Lau, a former pro-democracy lawmaker said.

Lau questioned whether Hong Kongers would want to take part in future elections and warned that political unrest could explode again. "If you have so many people who are very unhappy inside, all you need is a little trigger and that would spark a lot of people," she added.

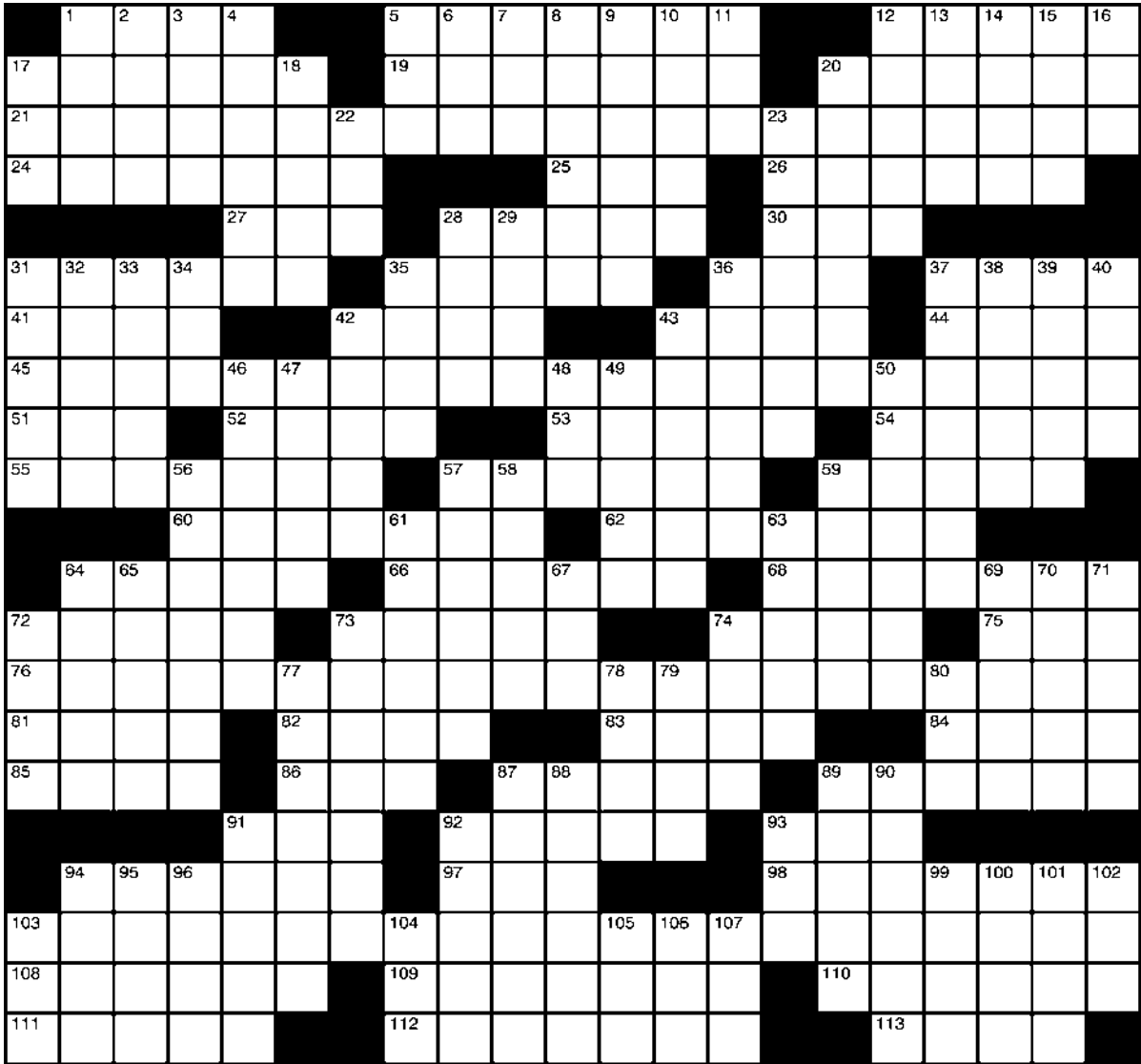
Chong Ja Ian, an associate professor on politics from the National University of Singapore, said the new measures 'seem to run against the spirit of having, free, fair and competitive elections, limiting popular participation in the political process'.

"Certainly, giving a police force the power to oversee who can stand for elections is not seen in systems usually deemed democratic in a meaningful sense," he told AFP.

China's leaders have acted decisively to dismantle Hong Kong's limited democratic pillars after massive protests in 2019, imposing a national security law that has been weaponised against the financial hub's democracy movement.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 1 Bristle
- 5 Half gable
- 12 Conform
- 17 Gender bias
- 19 Most heroic
- 20 Lack of vigor
- 21 Start of patriotic verse
- 24 Electrode type
- 25 Controlled substance grp.
- 26 Graham or Raye
- 27 Elevator cage
- 28 Smudge
- 30 Wood thickness
- 31 Testy, in Tiverton
- 35 Combination of musical notes
- 36 Help with the dishes
- 37 Scheme
- 41 Observe
- 42 Thialand formerly
- 43 Ruby and Sandra
- 44 Compiegne's river
- 45 More of verse
- 51 Edge
- 52 Netman Nastase
- 53 Merry Windsor women
- 54 British ____
- 55 Explorer who named Louisiana
- 57 Perlman's forte
- 59 " ____ Green

Tomatoes"

- 60 Embraced
- 62 Vouch for
- 64 Homer King Roger
- 66 Melodic
- 68 Fervent
- 72 Eucharist plate
- 73 Previous
- 74 Bridge position
- 75 Miss Piggy's "Me"?"
- 76 More of verse
- 81 Rect. divider
- 82 Godiva's title
- 83 Sea eagle
- 84 Ripened
- 85 Ms accompani-ment, usually
- 86 Glacial
- 87 Vocalist Krall
- 89 Wacky
- 91 Half of CDII
- 92 Bean or horse
- 93 From ____ Z
- 94 Saw eye to eye
- 97 Immature newt
- 98 For a house guest?
- 103 End of verse
- 108 Cowardly
- 109 J. R. Ewing's hat
- 110 Ustinov's autobiography
- 111 Netherland
- 112 Small crown

113 Rubik of the cube

- craze
- DOWN**
- 1 "And ____ fine seam . . ."
- 2 Ramp sign
- 3 Singer Hinojosa
- 4 " ____ to the System": Caine film
- 5 ____ Dhabi: Arab sheikdom
- 6 Radio's Glass
- 7 On the ____: fleeing
- 8 Tax or draft dodger
- 9 Peruse again
- 10 Hammerstein
- 11 Last degree
- 12 ____ birds game
- 13 Obligation
- 14 Shanghai servant
- 15 ____ colada: rum drink
- 16 Small amount
- 17 Urge Fido to attack
- 18 Eleanor Roosevelt's column
- 20 Data digester
- 22 " ____ the ramparts . . ."
- 23 Bedazzle
- 28 Pahlavi, for one

29 N.Y.C. museum

- 31 Tangle
- 32 Waterwheel
- 33 Mighty mites
- 34 ____ room: rumpus area
- 35 Quote
- 36 Rely (on)
- 37 Pretty verses
- 38 Hosiery material
- 39 Inquired
- 40 French marshal and family
- 42 Piggeries
- 43 John Water's star
- 46 "The ____ Fields": 1984 shocker
- 47 Erstwhile Hellas
- 48 Number for tea, tunelessly
- 49 Gets one's goat
- 50 Hair
- 56 Farmer's property
- 57 Validate
- 58 Dostoyevsky's Prince Myshkin
- 59 Next year's soph
- 61 Satirical imitation
- 63 Mount the soapbox
- 64 Soprano's crime group
- 65 Rand's shrugger
- 67 ____ pro nobis
- 69 Photo ____
- 70 " . . . ____ thing

under the sun.":

- Eccl. 1:9
- 71 Light-headed
- 72 Hippies' homes
- 73 Domingo
- 74 Sicilian resort
- 77 " ____ Wonderland"
- 78 Word for Felix Unger
- 79 Florence's river
- 80 Deface
- 87 Be at variance
- 88 Entirely
- 89 Put up with
- 90 Demitasse beverage
- 91 Only dwarf planet
- 92 Popular Italian sauce
- 93 Shade of blonde
- 94 N Indian city
- 95 Joyous
- 96 Politico Karl
- 99 Slightly open
- 100 Torch
- 101 Ticklish toy
- 102 Henna
- 103 Hausfrau's cry
- 104 L.A. campus
- 105 Svc. branch
- 106 Caviar
- 107 Warning initials

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Today, you should put 'good conversation' at the top of your priority list. But in order to make it happen, you have to be ready to take things to a deeper level than you usually do with people. Small talk is for small minds, and since you certainly aren't one of those, why not prove it? Instead of asking about someone's weekend, ask them how they feel about, say, international politics.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your gut instincts won't be able to help you figure out your money issues. You need to review your budget with your head, not with your heart. In order to get serious about your savings, you have to assess what you have and what you want to have, so get out a calculator. You might think that one or two slips here and there don't matter too much, but they can add up.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Are you finding it difficult to go along with what the authority figures in your life are telling you to do? There's a little too much 'do as I say not as I do' going on here, and you're smart enough to see it. This is a tricky predicament because if you go against the rules, you could face some serious consequences. Just go along with things, but make note of your hesitation.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Right now you can't exactly count on your gut instincts. Your emotions are going to be rapidly fluctuating, and what you feel one minute won't necessarily be what you feel in another ten minutes. It's much wiser for you to stick to the facts. Hold off on making any big decisions for another day, when your head is clearer and your feelings are more certain.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

A new relationship is going along swimmingly, and you want to keep it going that way. To do so, slow down. You need to be going slowly enough with your communication to be able to hear the small details of what the other person is talking about. They're leaving you clues here and there that will come in handy when you really want to impress them later.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

If you've been debating the pros and cons of buying a big-ticket item, today is a good day to get to the bottom of it. Do some research and find out the facts. It will only take a short time to find out where to get the best price and when. A little extra legwork now could save you a lot of money. It isn't wise to do anything hastily. Don't accept any invitation too quickly.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

If you attend to the details and errands of your day mindlessly, you could be cheating yourself out of a very pleasant experience. You're used to thinking that these types of tasks are things to get out of the way so that you can move on to more fun and relaxing ones. But why? Going to the grocery store can be relaxing if you use your creativity. Pretend you're in a grocery store in another country.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Someone who is very perceptive could be targeting you. They're going to know what's on your mind before you even know yourself! If you've been working through some issues or trying to make some tough decisions, this is the person you should talk to. Their grasp of this situation is firmer than yours, and they can objective about it, which is something you definitely can't be right now.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

There's going to be some disagreement among the ranks today, but so what? If you're on one side of an issue and everyone else seems to be on the other, it's not going to be a problem. They may have a different agenda than you, but all the people on your team or in your social circle can still get what they want. Just try not to get too paranoid about things. Mind your own business.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

This isn't a good day for collaboration or team activities, because your ability to just do what you're told and not ask questions won't be strong. You need to know what's going on, and you aren't going to be happy just going along with the crowd. This is a good day for any kind of solo endeavour, especially one that involves a lot of research or reading. Your mind is thirsty for input.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Someone is trying to find out all your secrets right now, but don't worry. They want to use this confidential information for good, not evil! It's time for you to let your guard down a little more with a person you're growing closer to. Let them in on what you really want out of life. Share your biggest worries and your hopes with them, because they want to help you.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

If you're itching for a change in your romantic relationship, take heart. Things could start to transition today if they're meant to. And if growth or progress between you two isn't meant to be, then you'll know it soon enough and be able to move on to greener pastures. If you aren't in a relationship right now, today you could start to notice tensions growing in other relationships.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. When cream is separated from milk

- a. the density of milk increases
- b. the density of milk decreases
- c. the density of milk remains unchanged
- d. it becomes more viscous

2. When did US astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin E Aldrin land on the moon?

- a. July 21, 1969
- b. July 21, 1970
- c. July 21, 1963
- d. July 21, 1972

3. What is the SI unit of temperature?

- a. Kelvin
- b. Celsius
- c. Centigrade
- d. Fahrenheit

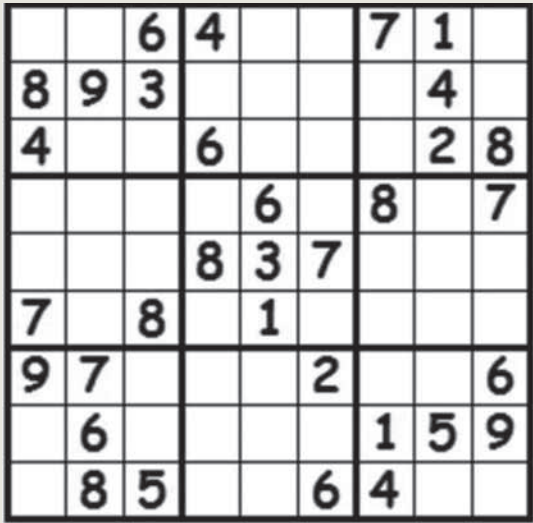
Answers: 1: a, 2: a, 3: a

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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



BOGGLER



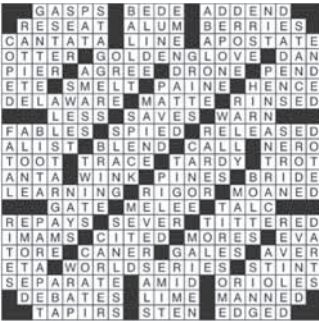
Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters.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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (MARCH 30)



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



WATERMELON DELIGHTS

GIVE ME RED

As the summer begins to pick up, it's time to gear up from within with cooling stuff that helps one maintain a good level of hydration. And what better way to do this than to feast on nature's bountiful fruit - watermelon - which is meant to cool your summers in a way nothing else can. When you head to the market, make sure to get watermelon to make your lunches and dinners more colourful. In fact, besides being a favourite ingredient in summer salads and smoothies, watermelon can also serve as a wonderful snack (minus any guilt) at any time of the day. And you never really can have enough of it.

When selecting a watermelon, make sure to get a nice, juicy, sweet, as well as absolutely red one. There's really nothing worse than an unripe, flavourless watermelon that can ruin not just your recipe but also your mood. Look for a lighter patch on the watermelon, which is the spot where the watermelon rested in the field - called a field spot. If the field spot is white, the fruit will not be fully ripe. If it is yellow, it's definitely ripe. Grab that one! Also, the melon should feel very heavy, which means there's a lot of juice inside.

Never bring home a melon with pinkish flesh, it will never be sweet. On the other hand, you might also find another version of watermelon with yellow flesh - it should be golden yellow to be really sweet.

Here are two unique recipes to enjoy watermelon :



Grilled Watermelon

Ingredients

- 1 small seedless watermelon
- 3tbsp sugar
- ½tsp kosher salt
- ½tsp chat powder or red chilli powder
- ½tsp lime zest

Method

Cut the watermelon into quarters and then into 2cm thick wedges. Sprinkle slices on both sides with sugar, salt, and chat powder/chilli powder. Preheat a grill (gas or charcoal) to 250°. Place the watermelon slices on oiled grates and grill, uncovered, until grill marks appear on the slices. Remove and garnish with lemon zest or any other desired toppings (chopped parsley/crushed, toasted peanuts).



Watermelon Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cups watermelon cubes
- 1 cucumber - sliced
- ½ cup crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese
- 1tbsp chopped coriander
- 2tsp lemon juice
- ½tsp crushed black pepper
- A pinch of salt

Method

Remove seeds (as far as possible) from the watermelon cubes. Slice cucumber and combine with watermelon cubes in a large bowl or salad tray. Top with crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese cubes. Sprinkle crushed black pepper, lemon juice, chopped coriander and salt. Chill for 15 minutes before serving.

CLASSIFIEDS

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OPERA BRUNCH AT THE CHEDI

SEAFOOD AND SONGS

Hubert Vaz

There's a whiff of the ocean, a vast array of delectable seafood on display (some waiting to be tossed into a live station), majestic chandeliers hanging over comfortable seating around socially-distanced tables, and to boot it all, powerful renditions from a versatile opera singer – the Opera Brunch at The Chedi on Saturdays is nothing short of a seafood soiree, except that the celebration begins at noon!

When you walk in for the Opera Brunch you would, indeed, notice many beckoning counters and live stations with chefs waiting to delight diners with their sheer mastery with the wok. With a merry mix of Asian, Arabic and continental cuisine, all intended to transport guests to another realm where flavour finds favour with

every palate, this brunch, however, is a sure hit with seafood lovers. So, if you are a meat lover, it might be the right occasion for a change of heart, to discover how well the ocean can provide a culinary dream cruise wherein every bite seems like marine magic.

The F & B staff at the restaurant disclosed that the Saturday brunch was intentionally kept different from the Friday brunch to offer guests a unique experience. While the cuisine comprises mainly seafood, it also gives diners an opportunity to savour fresh seafood, caught off the shores of Oman and prepared with special recipes in live stations, so as to appeal to varied tastes. From lobsters and jumbo prawns to king fish, tuna, trevaly, hamour, and a selection of mussels, the seafood prepared and served at this brunch is to die for.

The Opera Brunch is marked by the presence of a visiting opera singer – Anna – who entertain diners with her powerful

repertoire of arias that grow on you as you enjoy your meal. There is also a local band to fill in between her sessions which, somehow, have a positive bearing on one's appetite and compels one to



make a dash for the food counters, again and again.

There is a sumptuous Sushi bar with a whole range of pick-me-up portions, besides a wonderful salad counter wherein individual portions of a variety of salads are laid out, with unique combinations of papaya, lettuce, steamed lobster, shrimps, baby octopus, tuna, etc. You can also visit a pasta station and customise your own portion of seafood pasta or select a lobster of your choice and hand it to the chefs at a live seafood station to prepare it to suit your own taste.

The dessert section, too, has a wide variety of individual portions of popular desserts from fruit salads and pastries to mousses, cheesecakes, and crème brulees. You can also find popular local desserts like Umm Ali on display.

There are no rules for this brunch. You

can begin with a salad or a sushi or settle for an assortment of grilled stuff to get your juices flowing. There is much to choose from and plenty of time to savour what suits you best.

Seafood buffs can customise their main course from fish/lobsters/shrimps and accompany it with a side of pasta. For the tradition bound, there is also a section that serves rice, breads and curries. While children can take delight in spring rolls, dimsums, pastas and grilled items.

As you spend a good 2-3 hours, enjoying conversation, music, and good food, you would realise that the Saturday brunch at The Chedi has more punch to it than most traditional Friday brunches in town.

Unfortunately, this euphoria is going to be short-lived for the time being as, after a couple of weeks, there will be a break for this brunch during Ramadan. The Opera Brunch will, however, resume after Eid to provide diners in Muscat an experience to cherish.



Photo by Syed Fasiuddin

WI, Sri Lanka share honours on first day

WEST INDIES VS SRI LANKA SECOND TEST: DAY ONE

North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda - Kraigg Brathwaite battled through the day for an unbeaten 99 as the West Indies reached a respectable 287 for seven at stumps on the opening day of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Monday.

Personifying patience and perseverance in a manner so typical of the right-handed opening batsman, Brathwaite did all he could to defy a bowling attack in which senior seamer Suranga Lakmal again led the line.

Put in on a pitch which offered some assistance to the seam bowlers, Brathwaite's gritty defiance was necessary after Lakmal had claimed the early honours for the visitors with two early wickets and added the scalp of the struggling Jermaine Blackwood in the afternoon session to end the day with three for 71 from 20 overs.

With opening partner John Campbell gone along with first Test century-maker Nkrumah Bonner within the space of a few deliveries to Lakmal in the first hour, West Indies captain Brathwaite was content to let the attacking Kyle Mayers have his way in a third-wicket partnership of 71. The left-hander riding his

luck to 49 only to fall in the first over of the afternoon to Vishwa Fernando.

Dhananjaya de Silva, fellow spinner Lasith Embuldeniya and Sri Lanka's other seamer, Dushmantha Chameera, took a wicket each to then have the West Indies languishing at 222 for seven in the final session of the day.

However Brathwaite found another resolute partner in Rahkeem Cornwall, the burly off-spinner enhancing his claims to becoming a genuine allrounder with an unbeaten 43 in a partnership which has realised 65 runs so far for the eighth wicket. Brathwaite's innings has spanned six-and-a-half hours in which he faced 239 balls and struck 11 fours.

AFP

SCOREBOARD		
WEST INDIES 1 ST INNINGS		
K Brathwaite	not out	99
J Campbell	c Dickwella b Lakmal	5
N Bonner	b Lakmal	0
K Mayers	c Dickwella b Fernando	49
J Blackwood	c Dickwella b Lakmal	18
J Holder	c Thirimanne b de Silva	30
J de Silva	c Dickwella b Chameera	1
A Joseph	lbw Embuldeniya	29
R Cornwall	not out	43
Extras:	(lb 6, nb 7)	13
TOTAL:	287 for seven in 86 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-15, 3-86, 4-120, 5-171, 6-185, 7-222		
Bowling: S Lakmal 20-8-71-3, V Fernando 22-4-59-1, L Embuldeniya 21-4-79-1, D Chameera 16-3-56-1, D de Silva 7-3-16-1.		



West Indies' Kraigg Brathwaite celebrates after reaching his half-century

HAT-TRICK HERO

With the latest club championship title at Ras al Hamra Golf Club, Azaan al Rumhy completed a rare treble in one season

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Azaan al Rumhy's domination in the domestic clubs' golf circuit this season was underlined when he clinched the title at the Ras al Hamra Golf Club recently.

The victory at Ras al Hamra got the 37 year old Oman's No 1 golfer his third club championship honours this season (2020-21), having earlier pocketed titles at the Al Mouj Club Championship and the Ghala Golf Club Championship.

Azaan's treble is yet another feather in the cap of one of the best Omani golfers in recent times. The latest title at Ras al Hamra makes him the only Omani golfer in recent times to have won three club championships in a single season. The feat was possible this season as the club tournaments were held on different weekends.

Azaan stormed to victory at Ras al Hamra Golf Club by seven shots as he carded a two-day score of 150 (77 and 73).

Edwin Nast was runner-up with 157 while Darsh Pawani came third on countback after scoring 157.

Former national team player talented Rashad al Harthy took the fourth spot with 158.

The club championship at the Ras al Hamra is the oldest in the country, having begun in 1971.

It was also the third Ras al Hamra title for Azaan, who is also the leading national team player. His previous triumphs came in 2002 and 2006.

A delighted Azaan was 'proud to have won it again, 19 years after my first title at the club'.

Speaking to Muscat Daily, he



A proud Azaan al Rumhy with the three club championship trophies he won this season

said, "It is always nice to win trophies. Frankly, it has been a great season as I won the Al Mouj Club Championship in November last year, followed by my title at the Ghala Golf Club championship in December.

"The Ras al Hamra event brings the curtains down on the 2020-21 season and to finish the season on a winning note is a great feeling."

Prior to Azaan, Hussain Dad was the other Omani who had won the Ras al Hamra club crown three times.

Azaan said that in the past, dates of the club championships would often clash with each

other leaving him with no choice than to opt for his favourite club - Ghala Golf Club - where he won a record nine times.

"Among the three club titles this season, I would rate my win at Ghala by nine shots as the sweetest as we had a strong and a large field including national team players," he said.

Looking ahead, Azaan said, "It is unfortunate that the coronavirus pandemic has caused the postponement of the GCC Golf Championships twice.

"It was initially scheduled to be held in December last year but was rescheduled to March. However, in view of the current

pandemic situation, it has been postponed again until end of the year.

"I am happy to say that we now have a strong national team after the joining of Faiz Mohammed Faiz. Along with players like Ahmed al Wahaibi, Badr al Amri and Ahmed al Balushi, we are a much competitive group."

With regional competitions on hold and domestic season over, Azaan, for now, wants to enjoy the rare distinction of club championships' hat-trick by working hard on his game as he seeks more trophies next season.

@ashokmuscat

QUICK RUN



Mohazin Moosa

Orient Travels to meet Maniz Azad in title clash

Orient Travels/Gitacs will meet Maniz Azad International in the final of Oman Cricket Senior T20 knockout tournament while the Junior T20 knockout summit clash will see Aflag Group take on Pitstop on April 2. In the senior semifinals, Orient Travels beat Douglas OHI by 75 runs while Maniz Azad reached final after receiving a walkover from Al Hail CT-A.

BRIEF SCORES

Orient Travels/Gitacs 199-8 (Adil Khan 80, Gurvir Singh 47; Abdul tournament while the Junior T20 knockout summit clash will see Aflag Group take on Pitstop on April 2. In the senior semifinals, Orient Travels beat Douglas OHI by 75 runs while Maniz Azad reached final after receiving a walkover from Al Hail CT-A.

JUNIOR KNOCKOUT SEMIS

Israr Ghala 171 in 19.3 overs (Mohammed Sagheer 43, Mohammed Abubakar 39; Mohammed Arif Khattak 3-27, Arnold Lewis 2-22, Junaid Iqbal 2-23) **lost to Aflag Group 173-5 in 19.4 overs** (Farrukh Jamal 34, Haris Alam 31).

Vanderlande 151-8 (Barathwaj Vinayagam 63, Sebastian Cyril 31; Valiyapee Fasil 3-26, Aneesh Chaziyyottil 2-35) **lost to Pitstop 152-6 in 19.4 overs** (Mohazin Moosa 40, Wajid Ali 32; Rahul Chadha 2-30).

'Proud' Agüero to leave Man City

Argentina striker Sergio Agüero said on Monday he was 'proud' of his time at Manchester City after announcing his departure when his contract runs out this July. Agüero joined City from Atletico Madrid in 2011 and has 257 goals in 384 games since, making him their record goal-scorer. He scored the dramatic winning goal as they edged local rivals Manchester United to the 2012 Premier League. "When a cycle comes to an end, many sensations arise," he posted on social media.

Archer injury due to fish tank mishap

England paceman Jofra Archer has had successful surgery to remove a piece of glass that became lodged in a finger when he smashed a fish tank while trying to clean it. The 25 year old played two Tests and all five Twenty20s during England's recent tour of India but was ruled out of the ODI series because of a problem with his right elbow. AFP



NZ's Glenn Phillips hit a half-century against Bangladesh on Tuesday

NZ seal T20I series

NZ VS BANGLADESH SECOND T20I

Napier, New Zealand - New Zealand downed Bangladesh by 28 runs in a rain-affected second T20I in Napier on Tuesday to secure the three-match series and complete a home sweep against all comers.

New Zealand made 173 for five off 17.5 overs after losing the toss and batting, before the weather ended their innings prematurely. As a result, Bangladesh's run chase was set at 170 from 16 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern formula.

There were bizarre scenes as Bangladesh began their innings without a clear target being set,

then officials halted play after 1.5 overs while they worked out the sums. The tourists made 142 for seven before the required run rate proved too much and their innings petered out.

The result means the Black Caps have won all seven of their home series this season, an unbroken run of success on New Zealand soil that extends to nine if results against India last year are included.

BRIEF SCORES

New Zealand 173-5 in 17.5 overs (G Phillips 58 n.o., L Mitchell 34 n.o.) **beat Bangladesh 142-7 in 16 overs** (M Naim 38, S Sarkar 51).

AFP

Mbulu stars for Malawi

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

Johannesburg, South Africa - Richard Mbulu scored after 16 minutes to give Malawi a 1-0 Group B victory over Uganda on Monday, and qualification for the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations. In another group match, fellow qualifiers Burkina Faso beat South Sudan 1-0 in Ouagadougou.

Joint leading Premier League scorer Mohamed Salah of Liverpool scored twice as Egypt netted four times in ten minutes during the first half to hammer the Comoros 4-0 in Cairo and top Group G. Kenya claimed a first win in the same section with goals from Hassan Abdallah and

Masoud Juma, off a penalty, delivering a 2-1 win in Togo.

Captain Riyad Mahrez scored as Group H table-toppers Algeria finished with a 5-0 rout of Botswana in Blida, which stretched an unbeaten record in competitive and friendly matches to 24.

Zimbabwe, the other qualifiers from the section, fell 0-2 to neighbours Zambia in Harare.

Both Group D qualifiers lost with Gabon beaten 0-2 by Angola in Luanda and the Gambia going down 1-0 to the Democratic Republic of Congo in Kinshasa.

AFP



Malawi's Richard Mbulu (left) in action against Uganda on Monday

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'WE HAVE A STRONG BID'

- OHA chairman Talib al Wahaibi hopeful of winning the 2023 FIH Hockey5s World Cup bid on May 21
- Former stars Dawood al Raisi, Tarmah al Ajmi and Abdul Hussain al Lawati named bid ambassadors

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

A national initiative. A dream and confident bid. A chance to showcase Oman's rich hockey history to the world. These were the few of the comments made by Oman Hockey Association (OHA) chairman Talib al Wahaibi on Tuesday as he unveiled details of the sultanate's ambitious bid for the hosting of the FIH Hockey5s World Cup in 2023.

Speaking to mediapersons at a packed press conference on Tuesday, Wahaibi said, "This is a national bid of Oman. We have worked hard to prepare a very strong file in close coordination with Omran and Oman Sail. The effort is to put Oman hockey on the world sporting map.

"The idea to host the World Cup came in my mind a few years ago. We then hosted the Asian Champions Trophy and got two of the biggest hockey giants - India and Pakistan - play here in 2018.

"The success gave me the belief and during the FIH Congress last year, the proposal to host the inaugural edition of the Hockey5s World Cup was made. I then started the work and sought the approval of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

"Following the nod from the ministry, we got in touch with Omran, who directed us to Oman Sail, which has in the past



A file photo of a hockey5s match being played during the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina



L-R: Dawood al Raisi, Tarmah al Ajmi, Talib al Wahaibi and Abdul Hussain al Lawati on Tuesday

bid to host world championships. Their [Oman Sail] success in hosting and preparing successful bids in the past has made our bid strong. The safety factor of Oman and the tourism potential will add to the profile of our bid."

Besides Oman, there are two more Asian nations and countries from Europe and Africa in fray to host the first edition.

The decision to award the rights will be taken at the forthcoming FIH meeting in New Delhi, India, on May 21.

As reported by Muscat Daily recently, the bid will also pave the way for the construction of a new stadium next to the existing



Talib al Wahaibi (left) speaks at a press meet on Tuesday as OHA general secretary Khamis al Rahbi looks on

venue at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Assim al Saqri, head of communications at Oman Sail,

said that the 'past successful bids of Oman Sail has set a template' and is hopeful that 'Oman will win the rights to

host the Hockey5s World Cup'.

Ambassadors named
On this occasion, Wahaibi

announced that the chairman of Oman's bid will be H E Rashad al Hinai, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and revealed the names of Oman's bid ambassadors.

They are former OHA chairman and national team player Dawood al Raisi, former Oman international Abdul Hussain al Lawati and former Oman star Tarmah Hussain al Ajmi.

All the three were presented jerseys by the OHA chief. "The trio have served Oman hockey with pride and deserve to be our bid ambassadors," said Wahaibi.

The OHA chief said that plans are in place to have

hockey5s league in the sultanate and the aim is 'to target the youngsters and popularise it at the grassroots level'. "We have had a few annual hockey5s event in the past but we are now geared up to have a league."

"Hopefully, if we win the bid, then we can launch major plans to strengthen this format further. The staging of the Hockey5s World Cup will be a jewel in the crown of the region as this is the inaugural edition. To have it in the region with 32 teams, 16 men and 16 women, will not only be a moment of pride but also spur economic and tourism activity."

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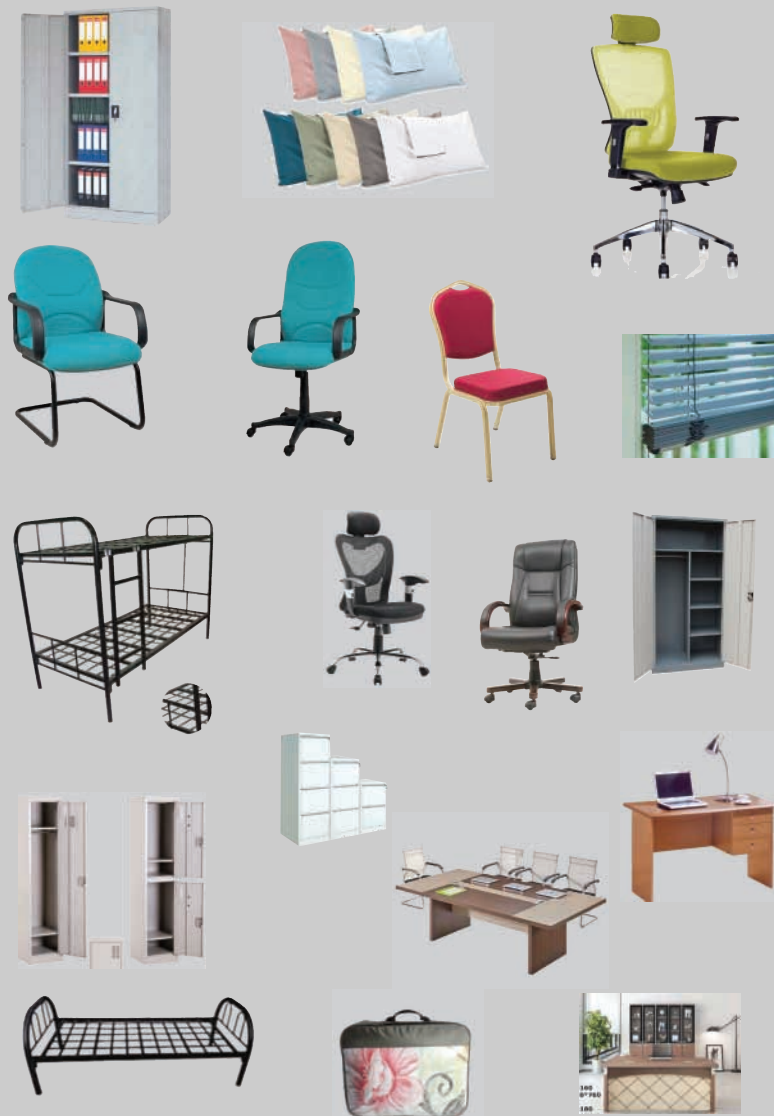
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