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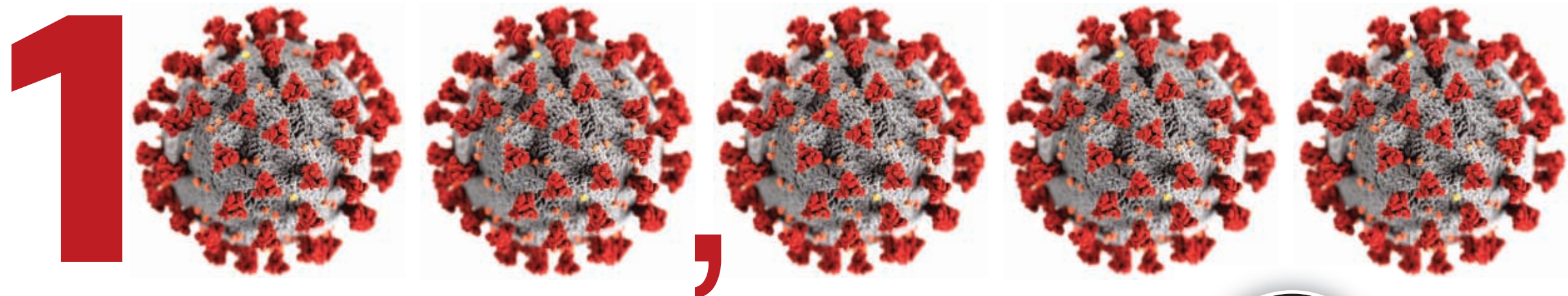
MONDAY, 05 OCTOBER 2020

20 PAGE ISSUE
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35°C/27°C

HONOURABLE LADY, THE SPOUSE OF HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK, AND HER ACCOMPANYING DELEGATION RETURNED FROM KUWAIT ON SUNDAY EVENING AFTER OFFERING CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATH OF EMIR SHEIKH SABAH AL JABER AL SABAH.



With 2,685 COVID-19 infections in the last five days, sultanate crosses 100,000 mark

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

As COVID-19 claimed 42 more lives besides infecting 2,685 people in the last five days, the number of confirmed cases across Oman on Sunday surged past the 100,000 mark. The tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases now stands at 101,270.

The death toll rose to 977 following the 42 deaths, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH), which renewed its call for caution, including wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing.

'COVID-19 deaths is not just numbers. Losing anyone is very painful. MoH advises all citizens and residents to continue to

avoid group activities and gatherings, wear masks, maintain physical distancing as well as other measures,' MoH said.

From September 1 to 8, the average number of daily cases was 200, which jumped to over 300 on September 9 and 10, and further higher to over 400 cases a day from September 11 to 15. Since then, the daily infection count has remained over 500 cases. The number of active cases has gone up again to 9,997.

'On Sunday, the number of recoveries reached 90,296, while a total of 560 patients were admitted in health institutions, besides 210 patients currently in ICU,' the MoH statement said.

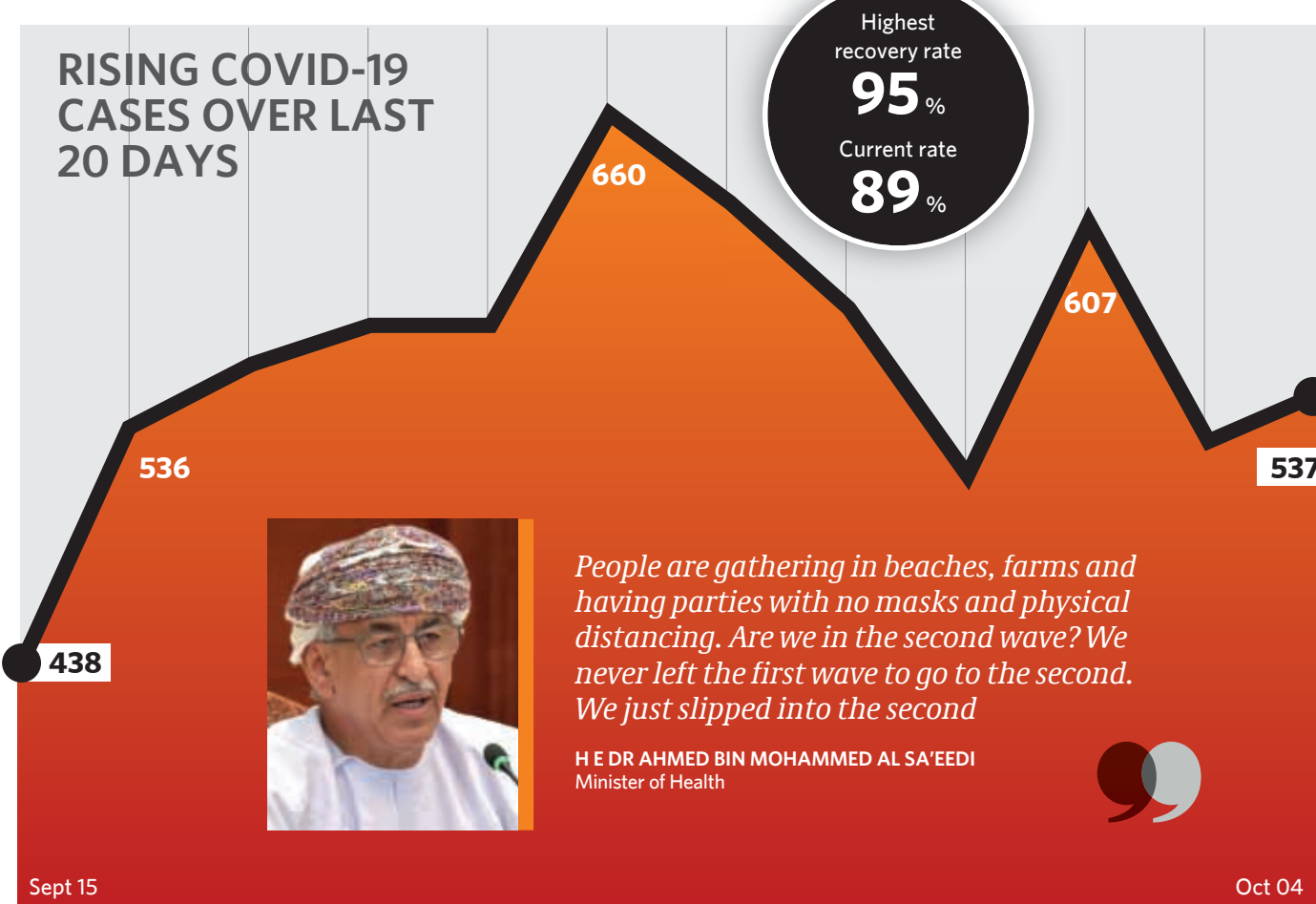
H E Dr Ahmed bin Mo-

ammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health and member of the Supreme Committee, recently said Oman has 'slipped' into the second wave as a result of people not doing what they can to prevent the spread of the virus.

"We understand that all of us are tired and frustrated and bored with COVID-19. We are saddened and worried also that after we reached the peak in the second week of July and the cases started to come down, suddenly over the past weeks cases have gone up again and we know the reasons. People are gathering in beaches, farms and having parties with no masks and physical distancing. Are we in the second wave? We never left the first wave to go to the second. We just slipped into the second," the minister said.

Continued on page03

RIISING COVID-19 CASES OVER LAST 20 DAYS



People are gathering in beaches, farms and having parties with no masks and physical distancing. Are we in the second wave? We never left the first wave to go to the second. We just slipped into the second

H E DR AHMED BIN MOHAMMED AL SA'EEDI
Minister of Health



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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

SENIOR CITIZENS IN OMAN IN GOOD HANDS

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

With 2020 marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) and the 30th International Day of Older Persons, policies and programme must be introduced to raise awareness on the special needs of elderly people considering the higher risks faced by the older demographic during the outbreak of pandemics such as COVID-19.

The International Day of Older Persons was observed on October 1. On December 14, 1990, the UN General Assembly voted to establish October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons as recorded in Resolution 45/106. The day was observed for the first time on October 1, 1991.

Even as the UN calls for recognising older persons' contributions to their own health and the multiple roles they play in the preparedness and response phases of current and future pandemics is important, senior citizens in Oman say they are thankful that they are in good hands.

According to the UN, the 20th edition of the day will also promote the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030) and bring together UN experts, civil society, government and health professionals to discuss the five objectives of the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health while noting the progress and challenges in their realisation.

As far as the care senior citizens get in Oman, the government has left no stone unturned to make sure they are well taken care of. "Age is just a number. I may be 75 years old but by the grace of Allah, I am able to do many things on my own. The good

care we receive from the government and the healthcare is amazing. We get all the necessary monthly check-ups we require and the service is great. That is why I am well and active," said Shamsa Hamad, 75.

As stated by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of World Health Organization, "By implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries can ensure that every human being regardless of age will have an opportunity to fulfill their potential in dignity and equality."

Majid al Suleimany, 72, said, "One thing I have been able to do now with time is to enjoy Allah's gifts to mankind - the water, the milk, the fruits and juices of different tastes, the various vegetables, etc. To see and play with our grandchildren - they are great blessings to us!

"My brother-in-law Bader tells me, 'Majid, if you can wake up in the morning, walk to and help yourself in the toilet, take a bath on your own, and can dress yourself on your own, have breakfast and meals on your own without being assisted, then say thanks to Allah, because there are many at our age in the 70s and even younger who cannot do these things on their own. They have to be assisted. Some are comatose, helpless in bed. Some have lost their vision and senses. Or just helpless in solitude.'"

As time goes on, one becomes immune to all the bad news around.

"There is COVID-19, wars and fights all around us, but you put this all away from you whilst you enjoy like a child reborn the old comedies, cartoons and shows! There are lots and lots of things to be happy for!" Suleimany said.

@shaddad



One thing I have been able to do now with time is to enjoy Allah's gifts to mankind... To see and play with our grandchildren - they are great blessings to us

MAJID AL
SULEIMANY, 72



Age is just a number. I may be 75 years old but by the grace of Allah, I am able to do many things on my own

SHAMSA
HAMAD, 75

Virtual forum to support the elderly

Elderly constitute 6% of total population: NCSI

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To commemorate the 30th International Day of Older Persons observed on October 1, Ihsaan Association, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development, will hold a virtual forum on October 11 at 7.30pm.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Jokha Mohammed Khamis al Farsi, head and founder of Ihsaan Association, said, "The virtual forum titled - Let's Take Care of Them - aims to spread awareness among community members to take care of the elderly. The forum will have speakers presenting working papers that'll urge the youth to take care of the elderly and treat them well."

This year, the association celebrated the day by distributing gifts among 50 elderly people.

"We received more than 1,350 families during the months of August and September at the headquarters of the association. We acquainted them with the services of the association and raised awareness on valuing our elderly," Jokha said.

The association has four ambulances, she informed. "We provide ambulance services to help the elderly and the disabled reach hospitals for routine check-ups and other healthcare needs. We have provided 120 elderly persons access to hospitals in Muscat in August and September 2020."



(Supplied photos)



We provide medical aid for the elderly at low prices, including prosthetic limbs for individuals with limited income

JOKHA MOHAMMED KHAMIS AL FARSI

All safety measures like sterilising the ambulances daily are undertaken to avoid the spread of the coronavirus. "We also provide foster families for older people who have no children or relatives to care of them," Jokha said.

The association holds seminars for community members - including schools and Omani women's associations - and presents talks on

the needs and assistance needed by the elderly.

"We provide medical aid for the elderly at low prices, including prosthetic limbs for individuals with limited income. We will continue our awareness campaign to include all the wilayats. We hope to get financial support from private companies in our efforts to transport the elderly to hospitals," Jokha said.

Omani photographer wins top prize for creating awareness on COVID-19

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani shutterbug Marwa al Yarubi's photograph 'A Mask' has won second place in an international competition organised by the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) on the theme 'We stay home'.

The competition was launched online in May and the results were declared on September 26.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Marwa said, "I started photography in 2015. I love to photograph people's faces. I participated in the FIAP competition and won second place.

"Around 1,881 photographers participated in the competition which saw more than 5,000 pictures from 90 countries. Only ten contestants qualified for the finals."

She added that the competi-



My winning photo expresses the current situation of the pandemic, and the people's keenness to wear the mask, urging people to follow methods of preventing the virus

MARWA AL YARUBI

tion aimed to encourage people and photographers to stay at home and practise their hobbies

from home to protect themselves and their communities from COVID-19.

"My winning photo expresses the current situation of the pandemic, and the people's keenness to wear the mask, urging people to follow methods of preventing the virus. The picture was taken at home using external lights, in black and white."

Marwa said her photo 'A Mask' won several international prizes - a gold medal from Morocco, and silver and bronze medals in the Tour Circit 2020 competition in Serbia.

Marwa conveyed her thanks to the Oman Photographic Association at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for its encouragement and the opportunity to participate in international photography competitions.

"I hope to hold a personal exhibition of photography soon and display my works."

COVID-19 cases cross 100,000 mark

Continued from Page 01

According to Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, regional director of World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is now a part of our daily lives. "It is affecting the way we work, learn, communicate and manage our relationships. While people are eager to return to their normal lives, the reality is that the situation is not getting any better," he said.

"New cases globally and in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are increasing. More than 1mn people have died globally, including more than 60,000 in our region. These are not just numbers - they are people whose lives have been tragically taken, leaving loved ones behind struggling to cope with their loss."

Dr Mandhari said COVID-19 has shown that the world is underprepared to respond. "Today, the pandemic is far from over. Intense transmission is still ongoing in many countries, and most people remain susceptible. As we work with countries and partners to contain transmission, we are also racing to find a vaccine, which is the fastest and safest way to achieve the level of immunity we need to protect people and end the pandemic."

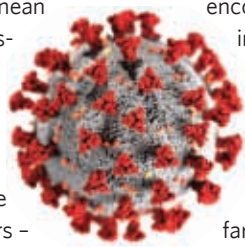
COVID-19 vaccine

Currently, there are 191 COVID-19 vaccine candidates under development. Forty of these are in human clinical evaluation, among which ten have reached Phase 3 trials.

"Seven countries in our region are actively participating in Phase 3 of vaccine trials, including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. We encourage other countries in the region to actively participate in Phase 3 of vaccine trial for COVID-19," Dr Mandhari said.

He informed that so far, 156 countries have signed up to the COVAX Facility representing 64 per cent of the world's population.

"A further 38 countries are in talks to join, so we expect this number to grow. This is a huge vote of confidence in the facility. A vast majority of countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are joining the COVAX Facility, with 11 as self-financing countries and the other 11 under GAVI's advanced market commitment (AMC) which will provide financial support to eligible countries to purchase the vaccine, based on their economic status," he said.



Quarantine procedures upset travellers to India

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Confusion and worry linger among Indian expatriates who want to fly back for vacation or emergencies with the opening of airports.

Airports in Oman re-opened on October 1. However what concerns most travellers is the rule of quarantine.

The websites of some airports in India as well as media sources say that a mandatory quarantine of 14 days is a must for travellers to India, including NRIs.

Many feel that the rule is excessive as being stuck in a room without meeting relatives or doing other works makes no

sense. And hence many, who wanted to go as soon as the airports opened, have now decided to stay put.

An official from Oman Air said, "Quarantine rules are de-

Thasleem Khan, a businessman said, "I wanted to visit my mother in Tamil Nadu in November but if there is any sort of institutional quarantine I need to re-consider my travel."

I wanted to visit my mother in Tamil Nadu in November but if there is any sort of institutional quarantine I need to re-consider my travel

THASLEEM KHAN

pendent on the port of destination that people are flying to. So in that case one needs to find out from the local airports about the rules not only for quarantine but also for PCR tests."

Pritam Kumar from Bihar said being quarantined for 14 days will not help his busy schedule which includes visits to the bank and also taking a cousin for medical treatment.

"My vacation was in May and that got delayed due to the virus; now when the airports have re-opened it is said that we need to be in quarantine for 14 days. This is ridiculous as I am going for 16 days. I understand the situation but I feel that a medical certificate would have been enough."

It may also be noted that the Vande Bharat Mission continues for repatriation of Indian nationals from various countries.

However, from Oman all the passenger flights to India will operate under the Air Bubble agreement and there is no need for Indian nationals to register with the Indian Embassy. All the designated airlines from India and Oman can operate flights

under the agreement. Some of the airlines have announced flights to Oman.

This is a temporary arrangement valid until November 30.

The national air carriers of both sides (Oman Air and Air India) will operate two weekly scheduled flights between Muscat International Airport and 11 destinations in India.

Anuj Swarup, second secretary at the Embassy of India in Oman, said, "Under the Air Bubble all designated airlines from both the countries can operate flights. Passengers are required to undergo quarantine in India and strictly follow the Ministry of Home Affairs' Standard Operating Protocol dated August 22."

MWASALAT RESUMES SERVICE IN MUSCAT, STARTS PLYING TO SALALAH TODAY



Mwasalat announced that it will resume its Muscat-Salalah service on Monday, October 5. The national transport company also resumed its Muscat city service on Sunday. Said Ghailani, a Muscat resident, said, "I rode on a Mwasalat bus from one of the malls to my home. Bus seating capacity has been reduced by approximately 20 per cent to provide for social distancing. The trip was short and quick."

(Supplied photo)

REGIONAL WEATHER	PRAYER TIMINGS	
	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	37	25
Doha	37	27
Kuwait City	37	27
Manama	36	27
Riyadh	39	21

PRAYER TIMINGS	
Fajr	4.45am
Sunrise	6.00am
Duhr	12.00pm
Asr	3.23pm
Maghrib	5.55pm
Isha	7.05pm

YOUR SAY

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TEMPTATION DETERRENT

Starting October 1, Oman levied a 50 per cent tax on sweetened beverages. How significant is this move? Do you think it will lead to people having healthier lifestyles?

Ambika Padmanabhan
Academic Coordinator

Consumption of sweetened beverages has a ripple effect - excessive caloric intake, obesity and associated adverse health effects like increased rates of Type 2 diabetes. Taxation on sugary drinks is an effective intervention as it will be a deterrent in the purchase and finally consumption patterns. This may encourage people to make healthy lifestyle changes.



Usha Shivashankar
Homemaker

The introduction of the tax on sweetened beverages is a wonderful move considering its objective to control consumption of sweetened beverages and soft drinks. The government is also spending huge amounts of money to raise awareness to choose healthier lifestyles and prevent diabetes.



Muna Basheer
Private sector employee

I expect the tax on sweetened beverages to have an impact on consumption. It will be a deterrent for people suffering from obesity and diabetes and improve nutrition. It can also reduce healthcare costs and increase returns from investment in health services.



Syed Lateef Ahmed
Physiotherapist

This is a good start, but I don't think this is the only way to be healthy. The increase in price will not bring about healthier lifestyles until and unless the government educates citizens and residents about the harmful effects of junk and fast foods and initiates awareness campaigns to show the importance of physical exercise and proper diet on health, quality of life and longevity.



Zakariya al Sadi
Ministry of Labour

It's a good step. Children love sweetened beverages and parents can't refuse their children's demands. Also, some sweetened beverage, like Tang, are a part of every Ramadan meal.



Jayatee Choudhury
Student

People are more health-conscious these days, avoiding items that are harmful to health. The 50 per cent tax will be a significant deterrent. But the will to lead a healthy lifestyle should come from the individual's own resolve rather than being compelled by any other factors.



Saji Uthuppan
Lecturer

Being fit as a fiddle, mentally and physically, is highly significant in the present scenario. The public will re-think when they want to buy sweetened beverages. It has been proved that diabetic patients are affected by COVID-19. It's a fact that young people rarely think of their diet and health when on a night out or chilling at home. Taxing sweetened beverages is a good move by the government which could be an eye opener.



Marsha Raghunath
Student

Since sweetened beverages are one of the most unhealthy foods to consume, a tax on it would surely encourage people to reduce their consumption and thereby improve health. But there is still a long list of junk food available. Further, the tax might only discourage the lower socio-economic group who are price sensitive. However, on the whole, I think this is a good move to encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles.



G Navaneetha Krishnan
Pharmacist

The 50 per cent tax on sweetened beverage is a significant move. I appreciate the efforts of the government in this regard. Almost 14 per cent of the population in Oman is diabetic. This move will not only raise awareness but also help minimise diabetes cases. Moreover, the next generation will learn the importance of not consuming sugary drinks.



? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

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

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

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24782666, 24787780
Abeer Hospital, Ruwi, Muscat
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90999334 (Emergency)
Starcare Hospital: 24557200
Emergency number: 24558333
Dr Harub's Clinic:
24563217, 2456381,
99254940 (Emergency)
Emirates Medical Center:
24604540
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Muscat Eye Laser Centre:
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Oman Air flies to two Pakistani cities



Oman Air provides complimentary COVID-19 coverage

Muscat - Oman Air stated that it is providing its guests complimentary COVID-19 coverage which will cover expenses incurred for medical treatment or quarantine related to the virus.

'The coverage, which is effective for travel from October 1, 2020, until March 31, 2021, is provided to all guests who purchase tickets on omanair.com, through the airline's Call Centre, at Oman Air's offices or through travel agents after October 1, 2020,' the airline stated.

'Coverage begins on the day Oman Air returns to scheduled services, with flights connecting Muscat with 18 cities in 12 countries.'

Details about this complimentary COVID-19 coverage programme are available at omanair.com.

'The free coverage, for guests of all ages, is part of the airline's expansive efforts to ensure that its guests are safe at all times and fly confidently.'

Oman Air will maintain its comprehensive safety programme throughout all stages of the journey, it further added.

Muscat - Oman Air returned to scheduled services on October 1 with services to 18 cities in 12 countries. These include two flights per week connecting Muscat with the Pakistani cities of Islamabad and Lahore.

As per a statement, flights to and from Islamabad depart and arrive on Sundays and Thursdays. Flights to and from Lahore depart and arrive on Sundays and Fridays. Oman Air stated that it will maintain its comprehensive safety programme throughout all stages of the journey to ensure that its guests fly confidently.

'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 steps have been taken to ensure that the airline's guests and crew are safe at all times.'

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

Those departing from Oman should also ensure that they are aware of all pre-departure requirements and requirements during their flight, which are provided at omanair.com.

'Guests travelling to Pakistan should ensure that they are aware of official requirements to enter the country.'

NDC commences eighth academic year

Muscat - The National Defence College (NDC) celebrated the commencement of the eighth batch on Sunday under the patronage of Maj Gen Salim bin Musallam Qattan, NDC commandant, marking the start of the college's eighth academic year.

During the ceremony, a documentary film was screened about the college, its role in preparing strategy leaders and the batch's curricula, in addition to samples of theoretical and practical studies and visits related to the batch's programme.

This batch comes within the framework of preparing and qualifying strategy leaders (military and civilian) with the aim of providing them with the knowledge and skills that enable them to assume high-profile strategic positions.

The eighth batch includes a number of high-ranking officers from the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), Royal Oman Police (ROP), Royal Court Affairs and other military and security units, in addition to a number of civil institutions.

The event was attended by members of the NDC military and civilians teaching staff, a number of college employees and participants of the batch.



MoH signs agreement to provide PCR tests at airports

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH), Oman Airports and Supply International Company recently signed an agreement to provide PCR tests at the border entry points for travellers entering the sultanate.

The agreement was signed by MoH's Undersecretary for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs, the CEO Oman Airports and the CEO of Supply International Company.

The signing was held in the presence of CEO of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) along with a number of officials from the MoH, CAA, Royal Oman Police, Oman Airports and Supply International Company.

MoH has signed a contract with Medical Mushrif Company in order to register travellers entering the sultanate in Tarrasud+, as well as to provide digital bracelets for them.

A medical lab has been provided at Muscat International Airport to accelerate the PCR results. The lab is connected with Tarrasud + application in order to follow up the travellers through Mushrif that is responsible for tracking the person's movement under quarantine, as well as medical scout that is responsible for communication with the quarantined person through artificial intelligence.

Another lab will be provided at the Salalah International Airport. According to the requirements set by the MoH and CAA, a mandatory PCR test at the expense of the traveller is required when entering the sultanate. The PCR tests need to be pre-booked on the Tarassud+ mobile application, which should be downloaded before or on arriving at the airport.

The application serves to gather all relevant passenger details and gives the users secure and easy access to pay for their PCR tests online, with the price per test set at RO25.

If the test findings are negative, passengers staying less than seven days will continue their stay in the sultanate, while passengers staying more than seven days are required to wear a wristband and follow a 14-day quarantine. If the test result is positive, the passenger will have to abide by self-isolation restrictions.

Oman welcomes Sudan Peace Accord

Muscat - The sultanate has welcomed the Peace Accord signed between the Sudanese Transitional Government and the Revolutionary Front under the patronage of the Republic of South Sudan's government in the city of Juba on October 3.

The sultanate was represented at the accord signing ceremony by H E Ali bin Sulaiman al Darmaki, Ambassador of the sultanate to the Republic of Sudan.

Sudan's government and rebel groups on Saturday signed a landmark peace deal aimed at ending decades of war in which hundreds of thousands have died.

Cheers rang out as one by one, representatives from the transitional government, in power since longtime ruler Omar al Bashir was ousted in a pro-democracy uprising.

"For us today, it is a historic day... this will stop the war... we are very committed to the implementation of all the protocols agreed upon," said the head of Sudan's transitional sovereign council General Abdel Fattah al Burhan.

"This agreement will help Sudan transform smoothly to a state of justice, citizenship, freedom and democracy."

Both Burhan and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, as well as the European Union and United Nations, called on two powerful holdout rebel groups to join the peace process.

"We are waiting for you to achieve a comprehensive peace in Sudan," said Hamdok.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres hailed the deal as a "milestone on the road to achieve sustainable peace" in a recorded video message. "Now it is critical that this agreement translates into tangible improvements in peoples' lives."

Milestone on the road to achieve sustainable peace. Now it is critical that this agreement translates into tangible improvements in peoples' lives

ANTONIO GUTERRES

Ministry to produce 300,000 fruit seedlings to boost agri sector

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to produce seedlings of various fruit trees that can contribute to the economy and increase the GDP, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has launched a project to produce more than 300,000 seedlings of five kinds.

An official at the ministry said the Agricultural and Fisheries Development Fund finances a number of projects aimed at upgrading the agricultural and fisheries sectors in the sultanate and increasing their contribution to the GDP.

"The fund supports this project to produce fruit seedling varieties. The project aims to produce more than 300,000 seedlings of five types of profit-making fruit crops - citrus, mango, banana, papaya and coconut." He added that as part of the project, an electronic platform will be set up to follow up on production, distribute seedlings, raise the efficiency and train supervisors of nurseries.

"The project will include the production of more than 181,000 citrus seedlings. At present, the focus is on producing Omani lemon seedlings and importing other seed producing citrus varieties from reliable international sources," he said.

These varieties include lemons, oranges and tangerines. Agricultural research has proven their suitability for local conditions.

"The project will also include the production of about 70,000 mango seedlings during the three seasons, in addition to cultivating more varieties of local and Indian mangoes and imported varieties from Brazil and Australia in Sohar Agricultural Research Station and increasing the cultivation of these varieties by farmers in various governorates."

The official added, "The project will also include the production of 45,000 banana seedlings of high quality, and the production of 2,400 coconut seedlings within three years. The focus will be on the varieties of coconut which as per agricultural research in Dhofar have proven their high productivity."



(Supplied photo)

Suhail Bahwan Automobiles launches General Tires

Suhail Bahwan Automobiles unveiled the General Tire range in Oman. General Tire, with a reputation for producing some of the world’s best off-road and on-road tyres, and a history stretching back over 100 years, has now arrived on Oman’s motoring scene. Renowned for its ‘Anywhere is possible’ slogan, the brand has been introduced to the sultanate in partnership with Suhail Bahwan Automobiles LLC and offers a totally new range of safe, reliable and high value tires for car owners in Oman.

Founded in 1915, and now owned by premium tyre and automotive technology company Continental, General Tire operates worldwide and manufactures a wide range of tyres for passenger cars, trucks and industrial applications. With its rich American heritage, the brand is best known for its robust and durable high-performance SUV and 4x4 tyres.

Karel Kucera, managing director, Continental Middle East, said, “General Tire has been waiting for the right moment to introduce the brand to Oman, and this partnership with Suhail Bahwan Automobiles represents exactly such an opportunity. We can now offer Omani motorists a range of tyres designed to provide them with total confidence as well as an enjoyable and safe driving experience in varied weather conditions.”

Keeping in line with its business growth objective, Suhail Bahwan Automobiles partnered with Continental Group to launch General Tires in Oman. Commenting on the occasion Sheikh Ahmed Bahwan, chairman, Bahwan International Group (BIG) said, “We are delighted to enter into this partnership with General Tire, a brand by Continental. Continental’s General Tires are world famous for their superior quality, heritage and performance. This range is surely going to complement the ever-increasing portfolio of automotive products and services



that BIG is offering to its discerning customers.”

General Tire - A brand by Continental
General Tires are headquartered in Fort Mill, South Carolina, USA and has a long history of evolution spanning over 100 years since its foundation in 1915. From early on, the company has produced tires for all types of motor vehicles.

Based on the brand’s American Heritage, General Tire has proven its ability to compete in the ever-changing tire industry with manufacturing and technological advancements for more

than 100 years. With manufacturing bases spread across Europe (Germany, France, Portugal, Romania, Czech Republic) and USA, General Tire continues the long tradition of being the customers’ choice when it comes to Quality, Value and Performance. The brand is driven by its core values - Performance, Reliability & American Heritage.

Today, General Tire has a large and interesting choice of patterns and sizes. Its range includes tough, durable and ultra-high-performance tyres for Passenger Cars, Light Vans, SUVs and Off-road 4x4 to meet customers’ needs.

Continental Group acquired General Tire in 1987. Today, General Tire delivers car, truck, and industrial tires to customers all around the world. It also equips 4x4 vehicles with special tires.

Continental develops pioneering technologies and services for sustainable and connected mobility of people and their goods. Founded in 1871, the technology company offers safe, efficient, intelligent and affordable solutions for vehicles, machines, traffic and transportation.

In 2019, Continental generated sales of €44.5bn and currently employs about 240,000

people in 59 countries and markets.

General Tire range in Oman

SBA introduced two patterns of General tyres which are made in Europe and USA – Altimax and Grabber.

Altimax comes in four patterns Altimax One, Altimax One S, Altimax Comfort and Altimax Sport that primarily caters Passenger and Luxury car segment. General Altimax’s new Passenger Summer line provides a reliable performance for everyday driving with outstanding grip in dry and wet conditions and significantly improved thread life.

Grabber offers four patterns Grabber GT, Grabber HTS-60, Grabber AT-3 and Grabber X-3 which are asymmetric state-of-the-art pattern design for fast and powerful SUVs/4x4 vehicles. General Grabber keeps the very good performance of the Grabber HP/UHP and offers improved performance in safety, handling and comfort. Grabber tyres are the tough highway terrain all-season tires that provides the perfect synergy of comfort, durability and performance for light trucks, SUVs and crossovers.

Both the patterns Altimax and Grabber comes with the RTM (Replacement Tire Monitor) technology that provides the user with a warning when the tire is worn and has to be replaced. Also The VAI (Visual Alignment Indicator) technology allows the user to check wheel misalignment to avoid irregular wear of the tires.

Suhail Bahwan Automobiles LLC (SBA) is a flagship company of the Bahwan International Group and one of the top automobile distributors in the Sultanate of Oman.

Employing over 1,500 people throughout the country, SBA, over the years has emerged as one of the most reliable and one-stop source for all automobile needs.

Great response for Hibati prize draws; RO1mn to be given away

Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat, has been seeing an excellent response from customers in Oman for its Sharia’a compliant Hibati Savings prize account. The exciting prize scheme, which was launched by the bank in line with its vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’ and commitment to partnership in promoting a healthy savings habit in Oman, has been growing from strength to strength by helping customers realise their aspirations.

Hibati Savings account is based on the unrestricted Mudarabah contract. The cash prizes offered under Hibati’s 2020 prize draw scheme are ‘Hiba’ (gift) from Meethaq to its customers and are paid out of Mudarib’s (shareholders’) own sources. The cash prizes are in

addition to the profit share of Investment Account Holders (IAHs) in the General Mudarabah Pool as per the declared profit sharing weightages.

With prizes including 100 weekly prizes of RO 100 each and 10 monthly prizes of RO1,000 each, the Hibati prize draws offer one of the biggest Sharia’a-compliant prize scheme in Oman. Special prizes to be given away during the year include 10 prizes of RO1,000 each for the Omani Women’s Day. Mega prizes to the Hafawa segment are given away quarterly. These include 6 prizes of RO5,000 each given away to customers and 5 prizes of RO10,000 each every quarter. A massive total of over RO1mn will be given away to 5,424 winners in 2020.

OTC to organise 6th edition of ‘Women in Tourism’ forum



growing participation of women in the tourism and hospitality sectors in the sultanate.

Highlighting the importance of the forum, Sariya Nasser al Ismaili, acting director of Marketing at OTC said, “Due to the current situation caused by the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which requires everyone to adhere to measures of social distancing, we have decided to conduct this forum virtually. In this way, we can create a channel for open interaction and discuss the new local and regional developments in the tourism and hospitality sectors, which have been created as a result of the pandemic. We aim to shed light on the pivotal role of Omani women in the tourism industry.”

Oman Tourism College (OTC) is preparing to organise the sixth edition of its annual forum ‘Women in Tourism’, which will be held on Monday, October 19 at 10.30am through Microsoft Teams.

The launch of this forum coincides with the sultanate’s celebration of Omani Women’s Day, which falls on October 17 every year and commemorates the

Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 coupé brings next generation of performance

The new Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 4Matic+ Coupé (combined fuel consumption: 9.3lt/100km; combined CO₂ emissions: 212 g/km) uniquely combines sporty elegance and powerful performance with good off-road capabilities. Impressive agility is guaranteed by the 320 kW (435 hp) 3.0lt six-cylinder in-line engine with 48 volt technology, fully variable AMG Performance 4Matic+ all-wheel drive, the AMG Speedshift TCT 9G 9-speed automatic transmission and the 60mm shorter wheelbase compared with the SUV variant.

The enhanced driving dynamics also come by virtue of the AMG-specific drive programs and the AMG Ride Control + air suspension with stabilising, electro-mechanical AMG Active Ride Control. The AMG-specific radiator grille visually accentuates the Coupé’s membership of the AMG model family. In addition, the performance Coupé offers all the advantages of a Mercedes SUV: ample space for passengers and luggage, extensive safety features and superior traction on damp or sandy surfaces.

“We’ve been waiting to offer our Oman customers the new GLE 53 4Matic+ Coupé with its standout AMG features,” said Scott Shears, general manager of Passengers Cars at Mercedes-Benz Oman.

“Every Mercedes-AMG vehicle



is built with craftsmanship and engineering expertise that delivers state-of-the-art driving performance and the latest from our next generation of SUVs doesn’t disappoint. Offering the classic favourites, such as the statement radiator grille and sleek body contouring, the coupé is powered by a strong six-cylinder in-line engine with sophisticated suspension technology. It’s clearly been designed to outperform on the roads and customers

will be able to hear see and feel that performance.”

Expressive, muscular and dynamic

The design idiom of the exterior is the embodiment of hallmark AMG Driving Performance. Membership of the AMG model family is obvious at first glance thanks to the AMG-specific radiator grille. The stylish and striking coupé silhouette makes for a self-assured appearance, with

design lines that convey the passion for performance. This is also confirmed by the prominent powerdome surmounting the bonnet. Elegant details such as the Mercedes star in a double ring, the slim headlamps and the striking “A-wing” in the front apron accentuate the sharper all-round design.

The AMG front apron has model-specific features such as sporty outer air inlets, each with two side louvers in silver chrome,

and black flics. Like the louvers of the air inlets and the trim on the A-wing, the front splitter is in silver chrome.

The AMG side skirts and the spoiler lip on the boot lid are painted in the vehicle colour. The flared wheel arches allow space for the large wheels – 20-inch light-alloy wheels with AMG lettering are fitted as standard. A choice of six other wheel variants from 20 to 22 inches is available on request.

Progressive elegance and robust ambience

The look and feel typical of the brand also continue in the high-quality interior. Characteristic colour highlights such as red contrasting topstitching on the upholstery and red seat belts ensure a thoroughly sporty ambience with a dynamic and exclusive touch. The AMG seats in black Artico man-made leather / Dinamica microfibre provide optimum lateral support

and have an AMG-specific pattern layout with ‘AMG’ badges in the front backrests.

AMG-specific interior features and controls lend a typical AMG atmosphere to the cockpit and support the sporty, precise handling. The latest generation, three-spoke AMG steering wheel with aluminium shift paddles impresses with its optimum driver-oriented ergonomics. Alongside the AMG brushed stainless steel sports pedals with rubber studs, door sill panels and black floor mats with ‘AMG’ lettering accentuate the sporty look.

A host of leather upholstery variants and a wide range of high-quality interior trim elements are available for further individualisation of the interior. AMG trim elements in carbon fibre lend a particularly sporty touch to the interior.

The AMG RIDE Control + air suspension newly developed in Affalterbach provides a driving experience characterised by both long-distance comfort and great agility, neutral cornering behaviour and maximum traction.

One new feature makes a decisive contribution to the AMG-specific setup for high driving dynamics: the active roll stabilisation system AMG Active Ride Control with two independently operating, electro-mechanical actuators at the front and rear axle.



V for Victory – The 15-year story of Cadillac’s performance brand

In just over 15 short years of existence, the Cadillac V-Series has altered how the world views American performance cars. The brand shattered stereotypes and delivered unprecedented dynamics, luxury and incredible value for money, going head to head with firmly established European rivals. It was a bold move, but one that paid off.

The first V-Series vehicle, the Cadillac CTS-V sedan, was launched in 2004. Powered by the GM LS engine V8, with a six-speed Tremec manual transmission from the C5-generation Corvette Z06, the CTS-V delivered the practicality of a refined, family sedan and yet offered blistering performance.

However, it was not merely a case of strapping on a sports car V8 to a sedan and hoping for the best – the depth of engineering in

the CTS-V made it one of the most agile performance cars on the market and garnered critical acclaim. Cadillac knew it was onto something big.

The second car to join Cadillac’s rarefied lineup was the stunning and luxurious XLR-V hard-top convertible. Its forward-looking angular design was head-turning; it sat low and wide, giving it a dynamic road presence. The exceptional styling was matched by equally evocative performance. Under the hood of the XLR-V was a supercharged Northstar Series engine developing 443 horsepower and a substantial 561 Nm of torque, making it one of the most powerful American cars in its class at the time.

Just two years since its founding, a third V-Series vehicle was introduced. This time it was the larger STS-V sedan. The STS-V

was propelled by the XLR-V’s supercharged 4.4lt V8, but with a bump of 26 horsepower and an additional 34 Nm of torque. It was also the first V-Series car to offer a driver-adjustable gearbox and bigger Brembo performance brakes for greater stopping power. However, despite its dynamic credentials, the STS-V did not compromise on hallmark Cadillac qualities of refinement and comfort. The STS-V offered the best of both.

By 2009 it was apparent that Cadillac’s V-Series had become a firm favorite with the enthusiasts and the second generation was launched with an all-new CTS-V. Unsurprisingly, the 2009 CTS-V took the market by storm. Featuring an evolution of Cadillac’s ‘Art and Science’ design language, the second-gen CTS-V was a striking reimagining of its predecessor. It

was arguably the most influential V car with its ground-breaking performance and superb design. Equipped with 6.2lt V8 developing 556 horsepower and a prodigious 747 Nm of torque, the CTS-V took on and beat its European rivals on their home turf. The CTS-V blitzed the legendary Nurburgring in 7:59.32, making it the fastest four-door sedan to go around the 20-plus kilometer track in Germany at the time. It was an extraordinary feat - Cadillac V-Series had the world’s attention. Predictably, and given the success of the giant-killing new CTS-V, Cadillac subsequently introduced two other body styles on popular demand, namely a wagon and a coupe version, which proved equally popular.

The current, third generation of V-Series saw the launch of the

all-new ATS-V, a compact premium performance sedan that despite a smaller V6 engine out-gunned its main European competitors – and by quite a margin - with 464 horsepower. With its nimble handling and outright straight-line pace, the ATS-V received rave reviews around the world. The flagship of the range, however, continues to be the CTS-V, which, in its latest iteration churns out 640 horsepower and a gargantuan 850Nm of torque.

Recognising customer demand for greater choice, Cadillac then launched its VSport sub-brand, which was available on the top-trim XTS sedan making 410 horsepower. Later, the CTS was also available in VSport guise, albeit with power bumped up to 420. Cadillac has recently expanded its V-Series lineup fur-

ther, but with a new performance philosophy of downsizing. Using its latest turbocharging technology to deliver exciting performance, while cutting down on weight and fuel consumption, Cadillac revealed the 2019 CT6-V earlier this year. And now, the latest additions to range, the CT4-V and CT5-V, are poised to shake up the segment.

Built on Cadillac’s award-winning rear-wheel-drive Alpha architecture, the new V-Series models are designed to deliver the ultimate blend of performance, presence and road-going refinement. Available in RWD or AWD, both share the latest standard V-Series performance technologies, including Magnetic Ride Control 4.0, which is tuned specifically for V models to enhance comfort without sacrificing performance-oriented re-

sponsiveness.

The CT5-V packs a 3.0lt Twin Turbo V6 engine delivering 355 horsepower, while the CT4-V is propelled by a 2.7lt Turbo engine making a Cadillac-estimated 320 horsepower, with a near perfect 50/50 weight distribution for exceptional balance and control. Crucially, they represent the renewed identity of V-Series vehicles, ones that do not compromise on efficiency for performance, or comfort for handling.

From the XLR-V that shook up the segment with its remarkable looks and performance to the record-breaking CTS-V, Cadillac’s V-Series cars have firmly established themselves in the upper echelons of American performance. And going by the lean and mean new duo of CT4-V and CT5-V, it’s safe to say that the story has just begun.



Bangladesh Social Club holds blood donation

The Central Blood Bank of Oman organised a Blood Camp which was held in Bangladesh Social Club - Oman. Ambassador H E Mohammed Golam Sarwar inaugurated the event via virtual call.

The event started at 9am and ended by 1pm.

A larger number was gathered to donate blood but due to lack of time, many couldn’t participate in the blood donation. Around 70 people were able to donate blood.

The government and the people of Oman are very generous towards the Bangladeshi ethnicity in helping us grow our community with great value.

Because of the immense support received from the government, Bangladesh community has become one of the largest communities in Oman.

Sirajul Hoque, the honourable president of the Social Club, appreciated all volunteers and expressed his gratitude.

Huawei Heart Study cited by European Society of Cardiology



The 2020 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) guidelines for the diagnosis and management of atrial fibrillation – published during the annual premier event on cardiovascular medicine, ESC Congress 2020 – cited Huawei Heart Study in recognition of the effectiveness of Huawei’s wearables in detecting atrial fibrillation (AF). The ESC guidelines integrate new scientific findings and evidence with the goal of assisting healthcare professionals in proposing the best recommendations for AF management.

Huawei Heart Study is a Huawei Research study conducted by Huawei and 301 Hospital in China. It looks into the application of smart wearable

technology in cardiovascular disease management, leveraging Huawei and 301 Hospital expertise in their respective fields. Findings from the on-going study have been presented in numerous global healthcare conferences and respected medical journals, including the Journal of American College of Cardiology and European Heart Journal in April and May 2020 respectively.

As cited in the 2020 ESC guidelines, in the Huawei Heart Study, 187,912 individuals used Huawei’s wearable products. Of these participants, 0.23 per cent received a “suspected AF” notification and among those who followed up, 87 per cent were confirmed as having AF, demon-

strating the effectiveness of the solution in identifying patients with the disorder. Furthermore, 95.1 per cent of the diagnosed users were referred to the AFA platform for AF management services.

Huawei offers heart rate monitoring and a list of health tracking features with its smart wearable products, ranging from Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro and Huawei Watch FIT to Huawei Band 4 Series and beyond. Huawei, via Huawei Research, and 301 Hospital will continue working together to conduct health research and explore new ways of integrating technology that enables better access to remote healthcare.

Watch, listen, play with Ooredoo’s new service

Maximise me-time with Ooredoo’s new entertainment services, now available on the app. Available to all prepaid and postpaid mobile customers, users can subscribe to a host of their favourite apps including Zee5, Yupp TV, Game Box, Anghami plus, and much more, all in one handy place. What’s more, new subscribers will also get to enjoy a free trial of the service. So unlock a world of movies, music and games. It’s all part of Ooredoo’s aim to provide an awesome digital experience.

Feras bin Abdullah al Shaikh, director of Branding and Communications at Ooredoo said, “Through our award-winning app we are committed to offering a tailored and reward-driven experience that caters to our customers growing digital needs. Our new service makes it easier than ever to manage all entertainment subscriptions in one place, so that they can be enjoyed at home or on-the-go, in a few clicks.”

Designed to cater to all kinds of communication requirements,



the free, user-friendly app can fulfil them with ease. Order prepaid and postpaid SIM cards, manage plans, pay bills, recharge, and buy add-ons. Users can even pay and recharge for other Ooredoo numbers. Making it even better, the app also facilitates data transfer, local and international credit transfers, updating ID cards and tracking account details for Nojoom, raise and track issues and complaints, and check device health.

Customers simply need to login to the Ooredoo app to check out ‘entertainment services’, and a world of other products and benefits.

DAILY CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1 Popular U.S. stamp

5 Hebrew letters: var.

10 Rappers' digs

14 Suckers

19 Landed

20 Cabbage, cake or theater

21 Comply

22 Spanish month

23 Motor mouths?

25 Wimbledon gala?

27 Moose and Barklay

28 Sample

30 Candy founder H.B.

31 ___ a one

32 "Carol" director

33 Borg

35 Water collectors

38 Oman obeisance

40 Quondam

44 Class-A

45 Shopping stop for the building boss?

47 Org. devoted to the arts

48 Friend in need

49 Hemingway nickname

50 Santa Monica site

51 Comic Sandler

52 Step up RPMs

53 Military graffiti?

57 George Lucas' "___ Wars"

58 Squelch

60 First minor prophet

61 Pleated frills

62 Capacious

63 Philanthropist

64 Electrician

65 Contend against

67 A Charlie Chan player

68 Most elevated

70 With no animation

71 Sowing and reaping?

73 Jack of clubs

75 Memorable times

76 Murray and West

77 Gymnastic lows

78 Shape to fit

79 Eastern holiday

80 Harlem

81 Globetrotter?

84 First-seen asteroid

85 Crystal gazer

87 Power source

88 Buddhist treatise

89 Overjoy

91 Orchestral voice

92 Essence

93 Issei's child

95 Get ___ out of: provoke

97 Wall support

101 Sprite binoculars?

103 Kitchenware worshippers?

105 Praying figure

106 Habit

107 Rubbed the wrong way

108 ERA, for one

109 Oater deputies

110 "___ It Be Me"

111 Young mayfly

112 Second digits

DOWN

1 Final

2 Salonikan's flask

3 Candidate

4 Time out of mind

5 Fall bloomers

6 Texan Hagman

7 Green or Mendez

8 Beau Brummell

9 Cardiologist's concern

10 1945 summit site

11 Aid's partner

12 Star in Cygnus

13 Sub. word

14 Nickname for Utah

15 Straight

16 Pod pellets

17 Perry's Gardner

18 Impresario Hurok

24 Photographer

Arbus

26 Shirt shaper

29 Month before

Nisan

32 Spanish snacks

34 Maher's stock-in-trade

35 Wall Street beast

36 Pis ___: last resort

37 Flatware often

38 Bolsters: abbr.

39 Cartographer

41 Big casino spender?

42 Has in mind

43 Soprano Emma

45 Impertinent

46 Actress/singer

Wilson

49 Villon couplet

51 "Virginia Woolf" playwright

53 Verbose

54 "The Big ___"

55 Peregrinated

56 Val d'___

57 Sagan and Hubbell

59 Office groups

61 Breaks with

63 ___ town: does a job

64 "Big Poison" of baseball

65 "Golden Boy" author

66 Blender product

67 Level

68 Principle

69 Candle

71 Gounod opera

72 Expressed a preference

74 Isolated plateau

76 Variegated decoration

78 Middle-of-theroader

80 Actress Holm

81 Sotomayer or Alito

82 Autonne preceders

83 Undercover play?

84 Social category

86 Bow fresheners

88 Shared earnings

90 Lit. signature

92 ___ percha

93 Pianist Peter

94 Cleo's handmaiden

96 1996 Tony musical

97 ___ B'rith

98 Punta del ___

99 Baseball great

Musial

100 Heathrow arrivals, for short

101 Bubbly stuff

102 Night flyer

104 Military macaw

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES

MARCH 21-APRIL 19

So many changes have been underway with your approach to your career. Today's skies give you the boost you've been waiting for in order to push some of your new goals ahead. The moon treks through Taurus, aligning with transformative Pluto and slow-and-steady Saturn on her path, helping provide you with enough stamina and drive to accomplish anything on your to-do list.



LEO

JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Finding your work and pursuing it fearlessly has been a mission you've embraced in recent years. Today's cosmic landscape illuminates this ongoing story, as the steady Taurus moon aligns with Saturn and transformative Pluto. It's an ideal day to direct your energy towards your workflow and career development, as you have added stamina and drive to see things through.



SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Learning to believe in yourself has been a lifelong focus of yours, but the last few years have really put your faith in your abilities to the test. Today's skies highlight this ongoing narrative of the application of your talents, as the hardworking Taurus moon syncs up with disciplined Saturn and transformative Pluto, helping you seamlessly tackle the present workload in your path.



TAURUS

APRIL 20-MAY 20

The beliefs you maintain about life have been hungry for reevaluation. Thus, you've kept busy exploring your world through travel, education, or other methods. Today's skies emphasise this story and deepen your desire for mental development and routine-breaking activities, as the moon marches through your sign and aligns with Saturn and Pluto.



VIRGO

AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Virgos are always striving to better themselves in some capacity. You've found yourself absorbing major life lessons around your creative vision; this is all as you learn to trust your capabilities and lean into a calling. This narrative is highlighted today, as the Taurus moon aligns with Saturn and Pluto, helping to provide ample energy for artistic outlets and creative projects.



CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

The universe has been working you hard. So much has changed around your experience of identity and individuality that you may not even recognise the person you once were. This story around self-expression is further explored today, as the sweet Taurus moon aligns with Saturn and Pluto, helping imbue your personal creative projects with dashes of flair.



GEMINI

MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your intimate life has been holding you accountable with sharing your true feelings. Today's skies highlight this ongoing narrative around relationships, as the moon saunters through Taurus. It's an ideal day to put important conversations on the table with a partner or potential love interest, as your desire for straightforward forms of intimacy is strong. Honour your craving for privacy.



LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You've been peeling back the layers of your past to get deeper into your current scenario. Today's skies create space to explore and work on healing ancient feelings and hurts that you've developed around relationships. The moon moves through Taurus and aligns with Saturn and Pluto on her path, helping you express yourself to another on an intimate, honest level.



AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

The cosmos is preparing to create a whole new identity for you in the coming times. Yet, before you're clear to move into that new headspace, you're required to let certain self-sabotaging behaviours fall to the wayside. That narrative is deepened today, as the Taurus moon aligns with Saturn and emotionally healing Pluto. This helps you explore your experiences around home.



CANCER

JUNE 22-JULY 22

The art of the one-on-one has become increasingly important to you in recent years. In friendship, business, and in love, you've been learning to let your guard down and let other people into your world. Today's skies highlight this story, as the Taurus moon aligns with responsible Saturn and emotionally healing Pluto, helping you build deep and lasting connections.



SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

So much of your world is dictated by your perceptions. It's been important for you to debunk the personal myths you've created about how the world works, in order to refresh and inspire your thinking. Today's skies illuminate the progress of this story, as the moon treks through Taurus and aligns with Saturn and Pluto, helping you explore partnership dynamics in a new light.



PISCES

FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Pisceans are the designated dreamers of the zodiac. It's not an easy job, but it comes to you naturally. Today's skies highlight the current relationship you have with your long-term goals, as the realistic Taurus moon unites with Saturn and Pluto. Which of your dreams is worth seeing through to the end? Spend some time exploring and expressing your inner world today.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. For galvanising iron which of the following metals is used?

a. Aluminium

b. Copper

c. Lead

d. Zinc

2. For purifying drinking water alum is used?

a. for coagulation of mud particles

b. to kill bacteria

c. to remove salts

d. to remove gases

3. Hockey was introduced in the Asian Games in?

a. 1958 in Tokyo

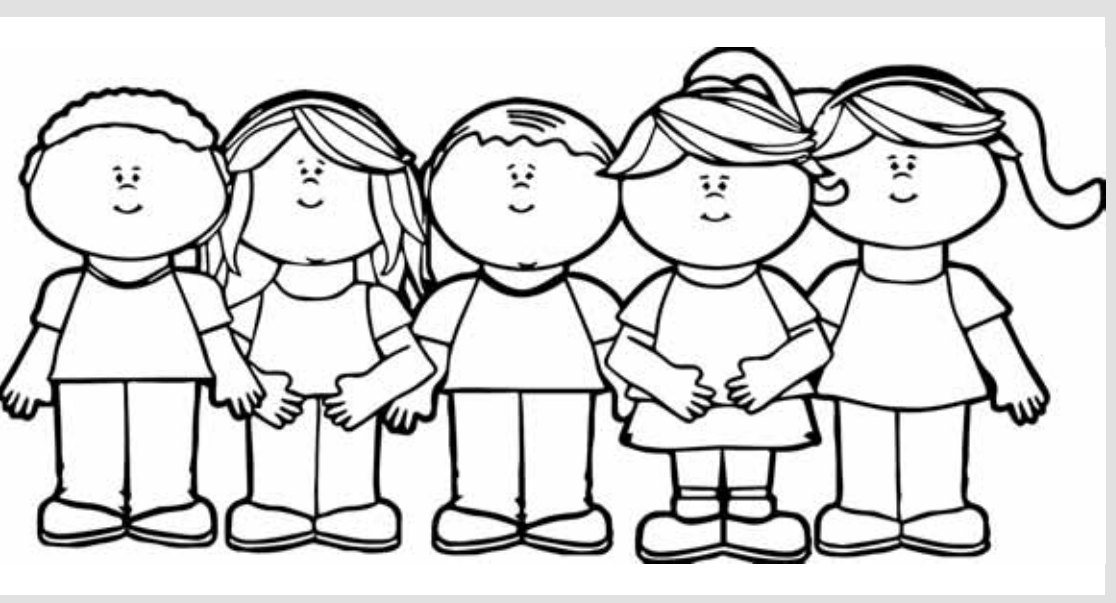
b. 1962 in Jakarta

c. 1966 in Bangkok

d. 1970 in Bangkok

Answers: 1. d, 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

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

BOGGLER

N	C	L	S
P	S	U	S
K	E	P	A
O	G	H	A

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

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



WORD BUILDER

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

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



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



For any information please
Contact us by phone call & WhatsApp

DR. KUMAR RAKESH
92989109 97700963

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Opposite Al Nahada Hospital, Muscat, Oman

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uniQue
CITY TRADING

CAMP FURNITURE



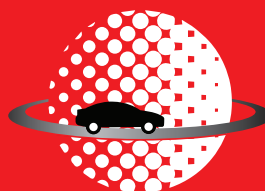
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Ethiopia's Shura Kitata (left) beats Kenya's Vincent Kipchumba (right) and Ethiopia's Sisay Lemma at the finish of the elite men's race of the London Marathon on Sunday (AFP)

KITATA WINS LONDON MARATHON, KOSGEI DEFENDS WOMEN'S TITLE

World record holder and four-time men's race winner Kipchoge finishes eighth

London, UK - It proved 13th time unlucky as world record holder Eliud Kipchoge fluffed his lines at the London Marathon on Sunday, won in a thrilling sprint finish by Ethiopian Shura Kitata.

Kenya's Brigid Kosgei, who holds the women's world record, defended her title. The coronavirus-hit marathon, limited to elite runners and with no crowds, was the first Kipchoge hasn't won since finishing second in Berlin in 2013 - he had won all 11 others he raced in, including the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Dropped at the 38km mark of the 42.2km race, Kipchoge could only watch from a distance as Kitata outpaced Kenyan Vincent Kipchumba in the final strait to win in 2hr 05min 41sec. Ethiopian Sisay Lemma took third.

Four-time winner Kipchoge, who set the world record of 2:01.39 in Berlin in 2018, eventually finished eighth. "I am really disappointed," the 35 year old told BBC. "I had a problem

with my right ear after it blocked and then I really cramped and had problems with my hip.

"It was cold but I don't blame the conditions."

Originally due to be run in April, the London Marathon was rescheduled to October because of the coronavirus pandemic that has seen many top track and field events either cancelled or postponed, most notably the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Rather than the usual mazy run through the streets of the British capital, the course was made up of 19 1.5-mile loops around St James Park, with the iconic Buckingham Palace framing the finish line.

The men's race had been touted as a showdown between Kenyan legend Kipchoge and Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele, arguably the best track athlete in the world. But Bekele pulled out Friday with a calf injury, taking the gloss of what would have been a battle for the ages.

Instead, Kipchoge seemed to



Kenya's Brigid Kosgei runs to the finish line to win the women's race of the 2020 London Marathon in central London on Sunday (AFP)

have missed the hot pace he is used to, meaning a lead pack of eight runners unusually remained in the running late into the race, held in cold, rainy conditions. Having to negotiate the curves of the looped course, the pace fell well below the personal bests of the leading peloton. Fireworks were promised at the end,

and so it proved. The podium finishers came into the final kilometre three abreast.

Lemma was dropped as Kipchumba surged, but Kitata somehow found a last drop of energy to reel the Kenyan in and keep his nose in front to win by a second in a dramatic finish.

"Kenenisa Bekele was helping

me for this race and he advised me how to run. I trained for the same course, I am very happy to win the race," Kitata, who finished second in the 2018 London and New York Marathons, told BBC.

There was some joy for Kenya, however, as Brigid Kosgei retained the women's title, producing a brilliant solo run to claim a fourth career win in the event. Kosgei clocked 2hr 18min 58sec, crossing the line ahead of American Sara Hall, who timed a personal best of 2:22.01.

Kenya's world champion Ruth Chepngetich rounded out the podium, just 4sec adrift of Hall.

Kosgei, the women's world record holder in the marathon and also twice a winner of the Chicago Marathon, cut loose from Chepngetich on the 18-mile mark and kept her rhythm as she lapped many backmarkers en route to the finish line. "The weather is not good. So we struggled," Kosgei told BBC.

AFP

Lak penalty save sends Persepolis into ACL final

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Doha, Qatar - Hamed Lak produced a diving save off Maicon Rocque as Persepolis beat Al Nassr 5-3 on penalties to reach the final of the Asian Champions League (ACL) for the second time in three years on Saturday.

Both teams had played out a tense 1-1 draw after 120 minutes of action forcing the match into the tie-breaker at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium. Persepolis will play the winner of the East Zone semifinals. The tournament's matches in the East are yet to be announced.

The Iranians emerged as the top team in Asia's West Zone as they scored off all their five penalties, while Saudi giants Al Nassr watched in agony from the sidelines as their Brazilian defender Rocque's shot, his team's fourth, was saved by Lak, leaping to his right.

A few hours before the match Persepolis were dealt a blow when the Asian Football Confederation banned their star striker Issa Alekasir for six months for a 'discriminatory gesture' while celebrating his goal against Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

In addition to the ban, the 30 year old, who scored four times in his side's last three matches in Doha and was chiefly instrumental to their progress to the semis, was also fined US\$10,000 for his slant-eyed gesture, considered a serious racial offence.

"The Asian Football

Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has banned Issa Alekasir, of Persepolis FC, from taking part in any kind of football-related activity for six months for violating Article 58.1 of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code (2019 Edition)," the AFC said

in a statement. "The ban will take effect immediately," the continental body added

Al Nassr, who were hoping to reach the final for the first time, couldn't make the most of Alekasir's absence or the fact that Persepolis had lost Ehsan Pehlevan just before half-time after he received his second yellow card.

The Saudis were first to score though, Abderrazzak Hamdallah foxing goalkeeper Lak with a 'Panenka' goal in the 36th minute following Bashar Resan's foul on Khalid al Ghannam.

But Persepolis needed only six minute to draw level, Abdi Mehdi producing an excellent header past Al Nassr goalkeeper Brad Jones off a cross from Resan.

Luck came to Lak's rescue immediately after the break as Hamdallah produced a brilliant free-kick only for the ball to thud into the crossbar after the goalkeeper was thoroughly beaten.

Both teams had their share of chances before Lak came up with his decisive save in the shootout to put his team against a team from Asia's East, who are yet to be determined.

AFP



Persepolis' players celebrate their win against Saudi's Al Nassr at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on Saturday



Oman teams named for three online chess events

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Chess Committee announced the teams for the forthcoming three regional and international online events on Saturday.

Oman players are scheduled to compete in the Arab Individual Chess Championship, World School Chess Championship and Asian Online National Chess Cup.

The selection of players into the national teams have been based on the recent performances and the latest results of the players at domestic and regional online events.

A total of 11 boys and girls have been selected for the World School Chess Championship.

The girls' team comprises Rawan al Balushi, Ghaidaa al Saidi, Zeina al Hinai, Maryam al Balushi and Manar al Dhuli while the boys' team includes

Abdulrahman al Zadjali, Anas al Daroushi, Hamood al Busaidi, Mohammed al Rashdi, Ahmed al Rahbi and Suhaib al Rubaie.

The national team for the Asian Online National Chess Cup and Arab Individual Chess Championship comprises Salim al Amri, Ameen al Ansi, Mohammed al Amr, Hamood al Busaidi and Abdulrahman al Zadjali while the women's team include Anaat al Essaei, Wafia al Ghafri, Afraa al Balushi,

Kamila al Ghafri and Rawan al Balushi.

Amri had claimed the senior title in the National Individual Online Chess Championship after he had garnered 6.5 points as overall total while Ansi had claimed the runner-up position with six points.

In the women's category, Anaat was the junior champion at the same championship, while Afra finished second and Alanood stood third.

Basheer al Qudaimi, head coach of the national teams, said that 'training is continuing through online lessons' for the selected players.

He said that the selected players are now comfortable with the online tournaments rules and regulations and have prepared well for the events. "We hope for some good results at these online championships from our players," said Qudaimi.



Anaat al Essaei



Salim al Amri



Abdulrahman al Zadjali



IPL 2020

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I love this game and hate it too. It's something that you need to understand as a player.

Virat Kohli,
RCB skipper, after hitting an unbeaten 72
against Rajasthan, on Saturday

Mumbai canter to victory

Sunrisers suffocate under opposition's bowling weight and Quinton de Kock's fifty

Sharjah, UAE - There is life in the graveyard. Mumbai Indians conquered Sharjah and Sunrisers Hyderabad with a typically freakish bowling performance on Sunday.

Trent Boult's quality with the new ball (2-28) continues to translate into early wickets - and this time he was good in the death too.

James Pattinson (2-29) is more than making up for the loss of Lasith Malinga. And Krunal Pandya - having thumped 20 runs off the final four balls of the innings to get the total up to 208 - afforded only 35 in return, even on such a tiny ground, to keep the pressure on the opposition.

Mumbai gave away no easy runs. They were ruthless about letting a partnership develop. They were worthy winners.

The match-up

Usually, when Sunrisers need early wickets, they just toss the ball to Bhuvneshwar Kumar. But with him injured, they had to find another way to contain a very strong Mumbai line-up.

So in came Sandeep Sharma, a man with the skill to move the ball, which has perhaps contributed to his excellent head-to-head against Rohit Sharma. Before today, it read 29 runs in 33 balls and two dismissals.

Now it's 35 runs, 38 balls and three dismissals, as Rohit went chasing after a wide ball and nicked off. That wicket went a long way to keeping Mumbai to 48 for two, the lowest powerplay score this IPL in Sharjah.

The QdKO

There were signs that the pitch, unbelievably, offered the bowlers some grip.

Not good news for batsmen who love hitting through the line. And for a while, Quinton de Kock



Quinton de Kock of Mumbai Indians plays a shot during his 39-ball knock of 67 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Sharjah on Sunday

(67) tried to find creative solutions to this problem, attempting scoops and reverse sweeps and, well, failing to find runs. He was 25 off 20 in the eighth over. And then, like light at the end of the tunnel, came a half-volley and he launched it down the ground for six.

This is where de Kock lives. A place where he can muscle cricket balls all day long. Once he got back in touch with his power game, making his 11th IPL fifty was just a matter of time.

Mouth-watering finish

Sunrisers tried to save Rashid Khan's overs against Mumbai's biggest hitters because they haven't been able to hit him. Kieron Pollard's IPL strike-rate against the ace leg-spinner is 76 and Hardik Pandya's is only 57.

But they realised the more immediate threat was de Kock and so Rashid was brought back in the 14th over and one of his googlies did the trick. Mumbai were 134 for three. Rashid's final over went for only two runs as

Pollard and Pandya both chose to play him out. Then it happened.

Pandya began hitting short balls for sixes with a vertical bat. Pollard cleared the long-off boundary with a chip. Manish Pandey took a diving catch that will adorn IPL highlight reels for a long time.

T Natarajan bowled like a dream in the most trying conditions, his yorkers negating Mumbai's two biggest hitters. It was bare-knuckle cricket, neither team willing to give any quarter.

But then came the final over - Siddharth Kaul hit the blockhole and made a mess of Hardik's stumps, so in walked his brother Krunal and promptly dispatched the bowler for 6, 4, 4, 6.

The superstar

It's no exaggeration to say Sunrisers' batting relies mainly on one man. A huge part of that is because of how naturally he is able to adapt to that pressure. David Warner is not in prime form. A result of lockdown, per-

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS		
Rohit Sharma	c Bairstow b S Sharma	6 (5)
Q de Kock	c & b Rashid Khan	67 (39)
S Yadav	c Natarajan b Kaul	27 (18)
I Kishan	c Pandey b S Sharma	31 (23)
H Pandya	b Kaul	28 (19)
K Pollard	not out	25 (13)
K Pandya	not out	20 (4)
Extras	(lb 1, nb 1, w 2)	4
TOTAL: 208 for five		

Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-48, 3-126, 4-147, 5-188
Bowling: S Sharma 4-0-41-2, T Natarajan 4-0-29-0, S Kaul 4-0-64-2, A Samad 2-0-27-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-22-1, K Williamson 2-0-24-0

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD		
D Warner	c Kishan b Pattinson	60 (44)
J Bairstow	c H Pandya b Boult	25 (15)
M Pandey	c Pollard b Pattinson	30 (19)
K Williamson	c de Kock b Boult	3 (3)
P Garg	c Chahar b K Pandya	8 (7)
A Sharma	b Bumrah	10 (13)
A Samad	c Sharma b Bumrah	20 (19)
Rashid Khan	not out	3 (7)
S Sharma	not out	0 (1)
Extras	(lb 5, w 10)	15
TOTAL: 174 for seven		

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-94, 3-116, 4-130, 5-142, 6-168, 7-172
Bowling: T Boult 4-0-28-2, J Pattinson 4-0-29-2, K Pandya 4-0-35-1, J Bumrah 4-0-41-2, K Pollard 3-0-20-0, R Chahar 1-0-16-0

haps. But he still runs like a demon between the wickets. He still doesn't throw his wicket away. He still wants to fight.

And that was on display here as he fought his way to a half-century. At the start, when he wasn't in nick, he did his best not to eat up deliveries. Later, as he became more like his usual self, he was able to do amazing things, like cut Jasprit Bumrah's first two balls to the point boundary. He got to 50 off 34 balls but the other end couldn't be as careful as him, as determined as him and so the Sunrisers chase faltered.

Quality counts

Jonny Bairstow loves pace on the ball, so Boult took it off, watched him lose his shape and then his wicket. Kane Williamson is the same way. Cue another Boult slower ball and bragging rights



TODAY'S MATCH

DUBAI, 6PM



POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
MI	5	3	2	0	6	+1.214
DC	4	3	1	0	6	+0.588
RCB	4	3	1	0	6	-0.954
KKR	4	2	2	0	4	-0.121
RR	4	2	2	0	4	-0.317
CSK	5	2	3	0	4	-0.342
SRH	5	2	3	0	4	-0.417
KKXIP	5	1	4	0	2	+0.178

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

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

for life. Pandey was caught in the deep going for a six against the newly-brought back Pattinson when it was very clear Mumbai were looking for a wicket.

Krunal was so ferociously switched on that after nailing a wide yorker against Warner and keeping it to just a dot, he punched the air as if that itself was victory. Boult, again, though he has a reputation of leaking runs in the death, was so precise with his yorkers that he gave away only four runs in the 18th over. Two balls later, there was a wicket. There was always a wicket.

Cricinfo

IPL player reports corrupt approach

Dubai, UAE - A player competing in IPL 2020 has 'reported a corrupt approach', putting the BCCI's anti-corruption unit (ACU) on a high alert.

The current edition of the IPL is being held in the UAE in a biosecure environment, which has significantly reduced the chance for persons with dubious credentials approaching the player directly. The threat though still remains by and large due to the online network of corruptors.

The BCCI ACU chief Ajit Singh, who is leading an eight-man team in the UAE, confirmed the development to PTI. "We are tracking him. It will take some time," Singh, the former DGP of Rajasthan, said when asked if the alleged corruptor has been nabbed.

As per anti-corruption protocols, the name of the player or franchise is not revealed for confidentiality purposes. With players and support staff staying in a bio-bubble, unlike other years, the ACU is concentrating more on the possible online

corrupt approaches. Most of the players are on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter where unknown people masquerading as fans try to befriend them.

A senior BCCI official said all the players, whether overseas or Indian, have attended multiple anti-corruption classes.

"The best part is that the player who was approached immediately sensed that something is fishy. He had a suspicion and he immediately shared his concerns with the ACU. Every player, even those who have come from the Under-19 are well aware of each and every anti-corruption protocols," the BCCI official, privy to the development, told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The BCCI has tied up with UK-based company Sportradar, which offers 'integrity services' to prevent betting and other corrupt practices during the upcoming IPL through its Fraud Detection Services.

Cricinfo

Watson, du Plessis seal big win for Chennai



Shane Watson

83*

53 BALLS

Faf du Plessis

87*

53 BALLS

Dubai, UAE - After losing three matches in a row, the Chennai Super Kings finally ditched their go-slow at the top and maximised the powerplay, dragging themselves off the bottom of the points table with a ten-wicket shellacking of the Kings XI Punjab on Sunday.

Faf du Plessis and Shane Watson reeled off an unbroken 181 together for the first wicket -

the highest partnership ever for the Super Kings - to hand the Kings XI their fourth defeat. It was also the second-highest target chased down in the IPL without losing a wicket.

Du Plessis, in particular, wasn't fluent in the early exchanges, but he chanced his arm and kept clearing the infield.

In the last over of the powerplay, du Plessis flitted around the

crease and carted Chris Jordan for four fours in five balls, seemingly ruining the bowler's 32nd birthday. After managing 4, 33, 14, 1 in his first four innings this season, Watson, too, dashed out of the blocks rolling out his vintage slog-sweeps and lofts down the ground.

He was the first to raise his half-century, off 31 balls, before du Plessis brought up his

own landmark off 33 balls.

The pair then cranked up the tempo further and toyed with a Kings XI side that had drafted in Jordan to beef up their bowling attack in place of New Zealand allrounder Jimmy Neesham.

The Kings XI had started strongly, too, earlier in the evening, with captain KL Rahul and Mayank Agarwal putting together their third fifty-plus

opening stand in five innings.

Rahul cut out all risks and was on 46 off 44 balls at the start of the 15th over; the Kings XI were 114 for two at that point.

However, the big acceleration didn't quite come to pass as Shardul Thakur had Rahul edging behind for 63 off 52 balls with a slower yorker.

Thakur had also dismissed the big-hitting Nicholas Pooran in the same over - the 18th - to help limit the Kings XI to 178 for four.

Cricinfo

SCOREBOARD

KINGS XI PUNJAB		
KL Rahul	c Dhoni b Thakur	63 (52)
M Agarwal	c Curran b Chawla	26 (19)
M Singh	c Rayudu b Jadeja	27 (16)
N Pooran	c Jadeja b Thakur	33 (17)
G Maxwell	not out	11 (7)
S Khan	not out	14 (1)
Extras	(lb 1, w 3)	4
TOTAL: 178 for four		

Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-94, 3-152, 4-152

Bowling: D Chahar 3-0-17-0, S Curran 3-0-31-0, S Thakur 4-0-39-2, D Bravo 4-0-38-0, R Jadeja 4-0-30-1, P Chawla 2-0-22-1

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS		
S Watson	not out	83 (53)
F du Plessis	not out	87 (53)
Extras	(w 11)	11
TOTAL: 181 in 17.4 overs		

Bowling: S Cottrell 3-0-30-0, M Shami 3-4-0-35-0, H Brar 4-0-41-0, C Jordan 3-0-42-0, R Bishnoi 4-0-33-0

STUNNING TEENS

- ◆ Top-seeded Simona Halep ousted by Iga Swiatek; Jannik Sinner upsets sixth-seeded Alexander Zverev
- ◆ 12-time champion Nadal breezes into 14th Roland Garros quarters; Thiem survives a huge scare



Poland's Iga Swiatek returns a shot to Simona Halep of Romania during their match in Paris on Sunday

Paris, France - Teenagers Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek sent shockwaves through Roland Garros on Sunday, reaching their maiden Grand Slam quarterfinals, as 12-time champion Rafael Nadal breezed into the last-eight for the 14th time.

Italy's Sinner, 19 and ranked 75, defeated sixth seed Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to become the youngest men's Grand Slam quarterfinalist since Novak Djokovic in Paris in 2006.

His reward is a clash with Nadal who defeated American qualifier Sebastian Korda 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 to stay comfortably on course for a record-equalling 20th Grand Slam crown.

It was Nadal's 97th win at the tournament against just two defeats since his title-winning debut in 2005.

World No 54 Swiatek, also 19, shocked top seed and title favourite Simona Halep 6-1, 6-2.

In a tournament turned upside down by the coronavirus, which meant a four-month delay and with a crowd capacity of just 1,000 a day, it was fitting that further shock wins were delivered by qualifiers. Italy's Martina Trevisan, ranked at 159, and 131st-ranked Nadia Podoroska of Argentina, also made the quarterfinals with wins over fifth seed Kiki Bertens and Barbora Krejickova respectively.

Sinner is first player to reach the last-eight on his Roland Garros debut since Nadal lifted the trophy in 2005.

"Today was very tough knowing that it's going to be a long match but in the end I'm very happy about my performance," said Sinner after his defeat of US Open runner-up Zverev.

Swiatek fired 30 winners past 2018 champion Halep who failed to carve out a single break point. "I am surprised I could do this," admitted Swiatek after ending the 17-match winning streak of Halep, the overwhelming favourite in the absence of 2019 champion Ashleigh Barty and US Open winner Naomi Osaka and



Italy's Jannik Sinner celebrates after winning against Germany's Alexander Zverev during their men's singles fourth round match on Sunday (AFP)

following the injury-enforced withdrawal of Serena Williams.

It was a stunning turnaround for the Pole who won just one game against the Romanian at the same stage in Paris last year, swept off court in just 45 minutes.

Halep, who had arrived in Paris with claycourt titles from Prague and Rome, admitted: "She played really well, it was her match today."

"I will have a chocolate and be better tomorrow."



Swiatek will face Trevisan for a place in the semifinals after the 26 year old registered a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Bertens. Trevisan and Podoroska are the first qualifiers to make the last eight since Yaroslava Shvedova in 2012.

'Living a dream'

"I'm living in a dream," said the Italian who saved two match points in her third round win over Greek 20th seed Maria Sakkari.

Podoroska, also making her main draw debut, defeated Krejickova 2-6, 6-2, 6-3 and will next face third seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

The 23 year old Podoroska, who was ranked at 255 at the start of the season, has now won 42 matches across all tours in 2020 despite the truncated season. She will bid to emulate compatriot Paola Suarez who made the semifinals in Paris in 2004.

Svitolina reached the quarter-finals for the third time with a 6-1, 6-3 win over France's Caroline Garcia.

Sunday's shocks mean that

only four seeds remain in the women's draw - Svitolina, fourth-seeded Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova, seeded at seven, and Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, the 30th seed.

Nadal will be playing in his 42nd Grand Slam quarterfinal when he faces Sinner. Korda, the world No 213 and son of 1998 Australian Open champion and 1992 Roland Garros runner-up Petr Korda, never recovered from slipping quickly to a 5-0 deficit in

the first set. "It was a good performance and I am happy with that," said Nadal.

And in a late game, third seed Dominic Thiem survived a huge scare to reach the quarters for a fifth straight year on Sunday, battling to a 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 3-6, 6-3 win over French wildcard Hugo Gaston, the world No 239.

Thiem faces 12th seed Diego Schwartzman in the quarterfinals after the Argentine defeated Italy's Lorenzo Sonego 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 in the fourth round.

AFP

Djokovic calls for line judges to be replaced by technology

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic, who was famously defaulted at the US Open after he accidentally hit a ball which felled a line judge, on Saturday demanded that the officials be replaced by machines.

"With all respect for the tradition and the culture we have in this sport, when it comes to people present on the court during a match, including line

umpires, I really don't see a reason why every single tournament in this world, in this technological advanced era, would not have what we had during Cincinnati/New York tournament," he said.

On Saturday, Djokovic demolished Colombian lucky loser Daniel Galan to reach the last-16 in Paris for a record-equalling 11th successive year.

Djokovic swept past 153rd-ranked Galan 6-0, 6-3, 6-2 with his most challenging moment coming when he helped groundstaff lay more clay on the surface of Court Philippe Chatrier after rain had made it treacherous.

For the 2016 champion, who is chasing an 18th Grand Slam title, it was a 71st win in Paris.

AFP

Tottenham hit Man United for six

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

London, UK - Jose Mourinho humiliated his former club Manchester United as Tottenham swept to a stunning 6-1 win at Old Trafford, while Arsenal moved into the English Premier League's top-four with a 2-1 victory against Sheffield United on Sunday.

Tottenham boss Mourinho was sacked by United in 2018 after a turbulent reign, but it was his successor Ole Gunnar Solskjaer who was left red faced after a shambolic display from the hosts.

Despite taking the lead through Bruno Fernandes' second minute penalty, United collapsed as they conceded four goals in the first half of a league match for the first time since 1957.

Tanguy Ndombele equalised in the fourth minute after dismal defending from Harry Maguire and South Korea forward Son Heung-min made it two from Harry Kane's seventh minute quick free-kick.

United were reduced to ten men when Anthony Martial was



Tottenham Hotspur's striker Son Heung-Min scores his team's fourth goal against Manchester United on Sunday

harshly sent off in the 28th minute for his reaction to a push from Erik Lamela. That opened the floodgates as United surrendered, with Kane grabbing Tottenham's third in the 31st minute after stealing Eric Bailly's weak pass. United were in disarray and Serge Aurier crossed for Son's close-range finish in the 37th minute.

Aurier drilled home in the 51st

minute and Kane made it six with a 79th minute penalty. It was just the third time United had conceded six goals in the English Premier League (EPL) era started in 1992. Solskjaer's team have lost their first two home games for the first time since 1986 and sit just two places above the relegation zone after their heaviest home defeat since Manchester City beat them 6-1 in 2011.

Saka shines

Arsenal have taken nine points from their opening four games as they look to return to Champions League football for the first time in five years next season.

But the Gunners were fortunate to take all three points at the Emirates as they had an early escape when David Luiz escaped a red card for a pull on Oli Burke.

Mikel Arteta's men got going

after the break and a fine team move opened the scoring on the hour mark when Bukayo Saka headed home Hector Bellerin's cross at the far post. Bellerin was the provider again moments later as Nicolas Pepe drove forward to curl the ball in off the far post.

David McGoldrick halved the deficit seven minutes from time with the Blades first league goal of the season, but they remain without a point.

Leicester rocked

Leicester's perfect start came to a shuddering halt with a 3-0 defeat at home to West Ham, just a week after the Foxes thrashed Manchester City 5-2.

Goals from Michail Antonio, Pablo Fornals and Jarrod Bowen gave the visitors a full deserved three points.

At St Mary's, Southampton won their second successive game by seeing off lowly West Brom 2-0.

Wolves beat Fulham 1-0 at Molineux as Pedro Neto's 56th minute goal clinched their second league win of the season.

AFP



Real Madrid's Karim Benzema celebrates a goal against Levante on Sunday

Easy win for Real Madrid

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid moved to the top of La Liga on Sunday as Vinicius Junior and Karim Benzama both scored in a 2-0 win over Levante.

Vinicius, who had proved decisive in Madrid's win over Real Valladolid on Wednesday, looked set to see off Levante as well, before Benzema notched his first goal of the season late on.

Madrid have now recorded three clean sheets from their four opening games.

Other results:

Osasuna 2 Celta Vigo 0, Alaves 1 Athletic Bilbao 0.

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Atalanta cruise, Inter held

Milan, Italy - Papu Gomez extended his scoring streak to give high-flying Atalanta a third consecutive win 5-2 against Cagliari on Sunday as title rivals Inter Milan were stalled 1-1 in a bad-tempered game against Lazio in Rome where both teams finished a man down.

Other results:

Benevento 1 Bologna 0, Parma 1 Hellas Verona 0.

Scottish Premiership:

St Johnstone 0 Celtic 2, Rangers 2 Ross County 0.

AFP



WALMART SELLS ASDA
US retail giant Walmart has agreed to sell its British supermarket chain Asda to billionaire Issa brothers and a private equity group for £6.8bn

BUSINESS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2020 | **MUSCAT DAILY** | 13

Oman's economic diversification applauded by Hong Kong TDC

‘Oman showed strong commitment to trade liberalisation through WTO membership’

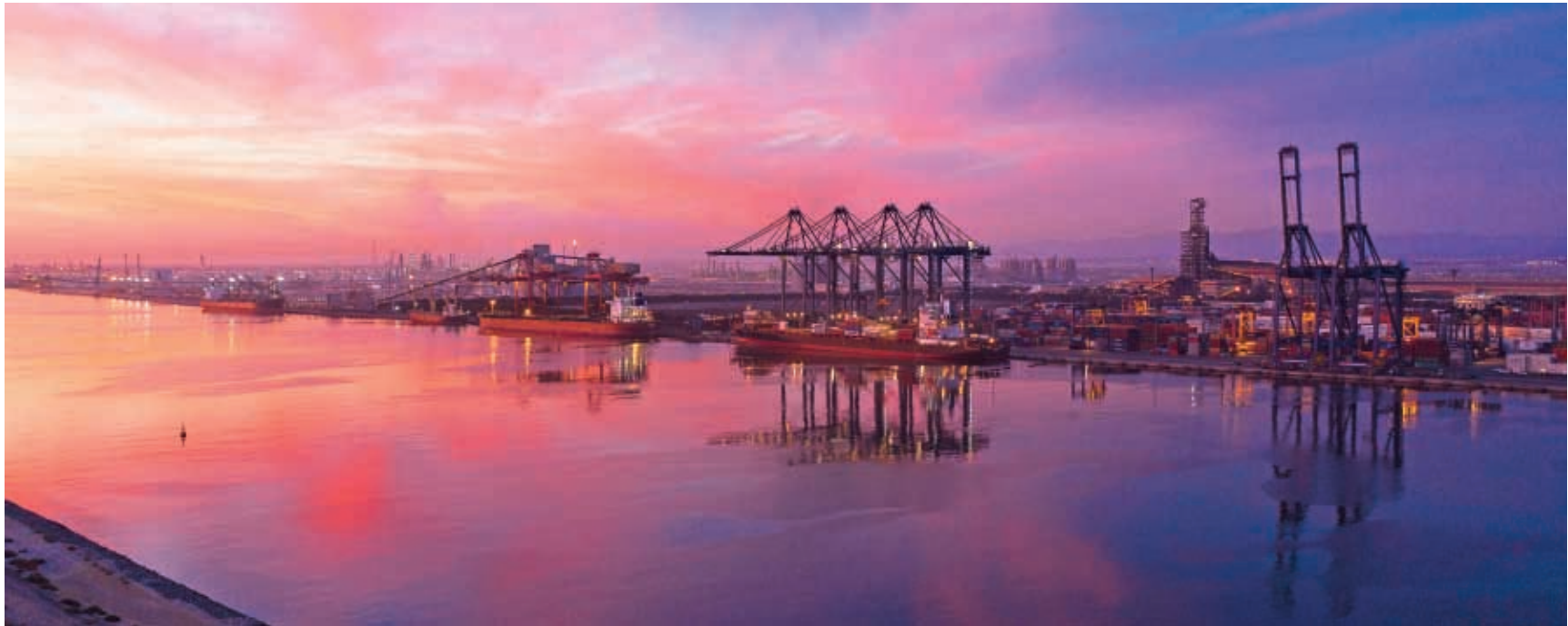
Our Correspondent
Muscat

A new report published by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) has affirmed that Oman is executing a successful model of economic diversification, notably the country's trade liberalisation in goods and services.

The report pointed out that the sultanate pursued an active plan of development that focuses on diversification, manufacturing and privatisation with the purpose of reducing the contribution of the oil sector to the GDP to 9 per cent.

The Hong Kong TDC, as per an Oman News Agency report, noted that the tourism and hydrocarbon industries have become the main components of the Omani government's economic diversification strategy. It added that the sultanate showed strong commitment to trade liberalisation through its membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in addition to a number of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

The Hong Kong institution



According to Hong Kong TDC, the investment in infrastructure development continues to pour into economic zones in Salalah, Duqm, Sohar and Al Mazyouna

further said that the Omani government took initiatives to modernise the economy, noting that the increased government spending and foreign direct investment led to the development of a broad range of non-oil industries in the sultanate.

The report explained that the sultanate's special economic zones, particularly in Duqm,

focus on incentivising economic transformation by combining organisational incentives and strategic geographical location outside the Strait of Hormuz.

The investment in infrastructure development continues to pour into economic zones in Salalah, Duqm, Sohar and Al Mazyouna, Hong Kong TDC said, adding that this goes in line

with Oman's development plans aimed at limiting the economy's reliance on the oil and gas sector.

The report noted that since 2017 the sultanate attracted a variety of mega investment projects, most of them focused on export-oriented industrial operations in the special economic zones.

The Hong Kong TDC recognised that no banking restrictions are imposed on foreign investment transactions or financial transfers in Oman. It added that, in terms of portfolio investment, no restrictions are imposed on the flow of capital or profits and that foreign investors are permitted to invest in Muscat Securities Market as long as they

do that through a licenced broker.

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council is a statutory body to promote, assist and develop Hong Kong's trade. With 50 offices globally, including 13 in Mainland China, the Hong Kong TDC promotes Hong Kong as a two-way global investment and business hub.

Muscat Gases sells entire 30% stake in UIGC



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Gases Company is selling its entire 30 per cent stake in United Industrial Gases Company (UIGC) to Mohsin Haider Darwish Investment LLC.

In an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) on Wednesday, Muscat Gases Company's shareholders approved the sale of the company's entire 30 per cent shareholding in United Industrial Gases Company to Mohsin Haider Darwish Investment LLC for an amount of RO2.05mn, according to a disclosure submitted to the Muscat Securities Market.

Muscat Gases Company's EGM on Wednesday also approved the cancellation of the resolution of the previous EGM (held on July 9) to sell the company's 30 per cent shareholding in United Industrial Gases, at an amount of RO2.05mn, to Air Product Leasing BV.

Oil exploration up in the air as prices dive due to virus

London, UK - The coronavirus pandemic that has slammed oil demand and prices is forcing energy majors to tighten their belts on exploration, even if finding new deposits remain essential to their existence.

While the sector is increasingly diversifying into greener energies such as electricity and wind power, its core business remains oil and gas.

"Questions abound over whether it is still profitable to look for oil given subdued demand growth prospects and a low-price environment," Stephen Brennock, analyst at oil brokers PVM, told AFP.

"The answer seems not, judging by the recent spate of massive hydrocarbon asset writedowns."

"Set against this backdrop, I don't expect a rebound in drilling in the medium-term."

"Instead, oil majors will be forced to beef up their green energy portfolios in order to survive," Brennock said.

Compared to pre-virus plans, the energy sector has slashed exploration projects in UK North Sea waters by 70 per cent and by 30 per cent off the coast of Norway, according to research group Westwood.

US oil giant ExxonMobil has cut its total exploration plans by 30 per cent, or an investment reduction of US\$10bn.

European rivals ENI, BP and Equinor have carried out similar moves, which have in turn hurt subcontractors including French oil services group CGG, which expects revenue to slump 40 per cent this year.

In the United States, more than 30 oil exploration and production companies have this



An aerial view shows five platforms over the Johan Sverdrup oil field in the North Sea, some 140km west of the town of Stavanger, Norway (AFP)

More than 30 US oil exploration firms have this year filed for bankruptcy

year filed for bankruptcy, according to Texan law firm Haynes & Boone.

If oil prices remain stuck around the current US\$40 per barrel level, a further 150 such companies could be lost by 2022, estimates research group Rystad Energy.

"Drilling programmes will be hampered in the near-term, in particular in US shale areas but also elsewhere, because of immediate cost-cutting measures," said JBC Energy analyst Raphaela Hein.

"In the past, we have seen that massive capital expenditure cuts to majors' budgets did not really impact their future production."

"As such, we think that they

will continue to look for new fields - maybe to a slightly lesser extent... and keep production within their long-term plans."

"Of course this will contribute to ensuring their survival," she added.

Hein however said that Arctic projects appeared to be 'economically unviable'.

This despite the vast area forecast to have 13 per cent of the world's oil reserves and 30 per cent of its undiscovered natural gas.

In July, Russia's Gazprom Neft and Anglo-Dutch giant Shell announced a partnership to explore in the Arctic.

While oil prices rebounded strongly after briefly turning negative in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, the world's main oil contracts Brent North Sea and West Texas Intermediate have failed to build on those gains - and last week fell heavily to under US\$40.

"Markets right now do not believe there is a future for oil," said SEB analyst Bjarne Schieldrop.

AFP

SAI deputy chairman participates in GCC Audit Bureaus meeting

Muscat - H E Ahmed bin Salim bin Rashid al Rujeibi, deputy chairman of the sultanate's State Audit Institution (SAI) for audit on state administrative apparatus, participated in the 21st meeting of the deputy chairmen of the GCC Audit and Accounting Bureaus.

The meeting, which was held through video conference from the headquarters of the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh on Sunday, was convened with the participation of member SAIs, assistant secretary general for legislative and legal affairs along with SAI specialists.

At the onset of the meeting, the participants expressed their most sincere condolences to their brotherly country Kuwait, its leadership, people and Arab and Islamic nations for the late ruler Sheikh Sabah al Ahmad al Sabah.



During the meeting, a number of topics listed on the agenda were discussed. Among the main topics were a report on follow up on the resolutions issued by the 16th meeting of the chairmen of SAIs which was held last year in Muscat as well as discussing the proposal for raising awareness and knowledge

on the practice of auditing sustainable development goals (SDGs).

In addition, the joint comprehensive audit was discussed along with reviewing proposed topics for the 5th GCC Competition for Research and Studies in the Field of Auditing and Accounting.

The meeting was concluded by perusing minutes of the 28th meeting of the training and development committee, reviewing recommendations and views contained therein and preparing the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the chairmen of SAIs, which is expected to be held on October 20.

NBO and State Street host virtual conference to discuss global market trends, forecasts

Muscat - National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently hosted an online conference with State Street Global Advisors (SSGA) entitled Global Markets - Outlook for 2020 and Beyond.

Led by Altaf Amirali Kassam, SSGA's head of investment strategy and research for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), the event discussed the current market scenario, trends and forecasts from around the world, part of a series the bank is delivering to support knowledge sharing and financial empowerment.

Yaseen Hassan al Lawati, head of investment banking division at NBO, said, "We are delighted to be spearheading these online events, which show that, even with restrictions in travel and in-person meetings, we will continue to gather the industry's most influential minds and provide valuable information while looking to the future of banking. This is part of our commitment to promoting the development of the industry and empowering our clients on their financial decisions, no

matter the circumstances."

The conference discussed several key topics including earnings expectations, valuations, macro-economic scenario and forecasts, coverage on the relative attractiveness of different asset classes, and ESG focused investments.

A Chartered Financial Analyst and published researcher, Kassam is responsible for developing thought leadership and executing custom projects for clients across EMEA in the fields of asset allocation and portfolio

construction, as well as working with global portfolio managers and strategists to develop multi-asset investment solutions.

NBO has organised a line-up of similar events on a wide range of topics from post-COVID-19 economies to bond markets and real estate, aiming to support its clients' financial lives. Through such initiatives, the bank aims to promote knowledge dissemination throughout the industry and contribute to the continued development of the sultanate's economy.

MSM falls 0.54% on weak activity

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) fell 0.54 per cent to close at 3,595.11 points on Sunday.

Trading activity deteriorated from the previous session as turnover declined 50.06 per cent to RO488,192 and volumes fell 47.63 per cent to 3.51mn shares.

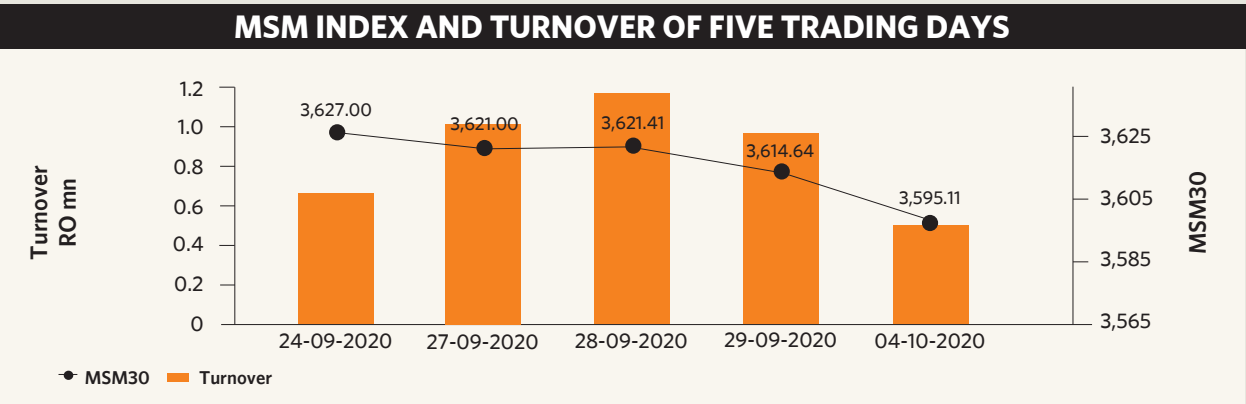
While Industrial index rose 0.04 per cent, Financial and Services indices fell 0.53 per cent and 0.17 per cent, respectively. The MSM Shariah index closed down by 0.2 per cent at 513.66 points.

Market breadth remained negative as four companies closed up, while 15 companies closed down. The rest 12 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

The four gainers were Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles (2.44 per cent), Al Jazeera



Services (2.34 per cent), Phoenix Power (1.85 per cent) and Al Maha Petroleum (1.8 per cent).
Top losers were Arabia Falcon Insurance (-6.52 per cent), Muscat Finance (-4.26 per cent), National Aluminium Products (-3.26 per cent) and Sembcorp Salalah (-2.75 per cent).



Nearly half of firms in UK see sales drop in Q3

London, UK - Nearly half of firms in Britain reported a decrease in domestic sales in the third quarter of 2020 despite much of the business reopening, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) has said in a latest survey.

Among 6,410 firms surveyed by the BCC, 46 per cent of them recorded a decline in domestic sales in the third quarter, down from 73 per cent in the previous quarter, suggesting a continuing feeble performance amid the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, said the BCC's Quarterly Economic Survey.

"Our latest survey indicates that underlying economic conditions remained exceptionally weak in the third quarter," said Suren Thiru, head of economics at the BCC.

Thiru said although the declines of activity slowed as businesses gradually reopened, they remained 'well short of pre-pandemic levels with little sign of a swift V-shaped recovery'.

In terms of the cash flow, 45 per cent of firms saw a deterioration in the third quarter, with

34 per cent reporting no change.

Meanwhile, some 37 per cent of respondents demonstrated decreased investment in plant, machinery and equipment, 'highlighting longer-term concerns for the economy as many businesses look to downsize', it said.

"Our findings clearly demonstrate that business conditions remain fragile in the face of uncertainty, with the prospect of a difficult winter to come," said Adam Marshall, director general of the BCC.

The businesses voiced concerns toward the prospect

months ahead as the government imposed stricter lockdown restrictions in a bid to contain the resurgence of the pandemic.

"While the government's Winter Economy Plan may provide a short-term boost, with restrictions tightening and the economic scarring already caused by the pandemic starting to crystallise, the resulting gains in economic output are likely to fade over the coming months," Thiru added.

Xinhua

Shuaa Capital launches three new Sharia'a compliant funds

Dubai, UAE - The UAE-based Shuaa Capital has launched three Sharia'a-compliant funds and already secured US\$75mn of commitments.

The Shuaa High Yield Sukuk Fund, Nujoom Aggressive Fund and Nujoom Balanced Fund - the first Sharia'a-compliant funds within an ICC umbrella to launch in the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) - are breaking ground as part of Shuaa's fund platform rolled out in ADGM, the company said in a statement.

The funds platform is expected to be the largest of its kind to be domiciled in ADGM. The funds, and Shuaa's fund platform within ADGM, are established and managed by Shuaa GMC Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary, which is regulated by the ADGM Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA).

The Shuaa High Yield Sukuk Fund will invest in a diversified portfolio of sukuk instruments, including high yield sukuk, Sharia'a-compliant fixed income investments and other collective investment funds approved by the Sharia'a advisors. The Nujoom Aggressive Fund and the Nujoom Balanced Fund will invest in a global portfolio of Sharia'a-compliant equities, fixed income investments and money market instruments.

With the three funds, Shuaa's aim is to serve institutional clients and its partners in the insurance industry. The funds, which are available to qualified institutional investors only, are offered through Allfunds Bank platform, the world's largest fund distribution network, and will widen the choices available to insurance and pension institutional investors with a long-term investment horizon.



Jassim Alseddiqui

The funds, which are available to qualified institutional investors only, are offered through Allfunds Bank platform

Under the ICC framework, each fund has its own segregated assets, and distinct investment strategies and mandates. Consequently, the assets of each fund will be invested for the shareholders of the corresponding fund and the assets of a specific fund are solely accountable for the liabilities, commitments and obligations of that

fund.
Jassim Alseddiqui, CEO of Shuaa Capital, said, "The number of Sharia'a funds available to investors is yet to match the growing demand for Islamic finance products across the world. This is because not enough fund managers offer options in the much sought after Sharia'a space, and even the funds available either have small assets under management or are close ended. As a result, the choice of strategies remains limited."

"Our pioneering funds, which are the first Sharia'a-compliant funds to launch under an ICC umbrella in the Abu Dhabi Global Market, are designed to give insurance and pension institutional investors more options while also supporting the Islamic investment industry," he added.
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Nokia reaches 100 5G deals milestone

Espoo, Finland - Nokia on Sunday announced that it has signed 17 new 5G commercial deals in the third quarter. With these wins, the company now has 100 commercial 5G deals with individual customers and a total of 160 commercial 5G engagements, including paid trials, according to a press release.

Nokia is present in all 5G early adopter markets, with deals with the top four US CSPs and the top three in both Japan and Korea. Just last week, Nokia signed a

new 5G deal with BT in the UK and a renewed 5G deal with Elisa in Finland.

Tommi Uitto, president of mobile networks at Nokia, said, "We are thrilled to have passed this 5G milestone. We know we still have work to do and that the market remains highly competitive. But, we are moving fast - and these wins make it clear that our progress is being validated by customers. We appreciate their support and are committed to delivering for them."

UBGCCF Inception Date*		17-Nov-09
NAV Date		Oct 1, 2020
NAV (OMR)		0.986
Adjusted NAV** (OMR)		1.300
Cash Dividend paid since inception (OMR)		0.03
Unit Dividend paid since inception		28%
YTD Performance		(2.80)%
Performance since inception		35.4%
* First NAV was issued on 4th March 2010		
** Adjusted for cash and bonus dividends		
For more information please contact:		
Tel: 60968 24 949 031/030, Email: ubhargoccfund@u-capital.net		

Boeing to consolidate US 787 Dreamliner production

New York, US - Boeing will consolidate manufacturing of the 787 Dreamliner plane to one plant in the US, ending production of the wide-body jet in Washington state, the company announced recently.

The move follows earlier announcements by Boeing that it would slash production of the jets to six per month in 2021 from 14 due to weak demand for airline travel because of the coronavirus.

The US aviation giant has not announced staffing cuts as a result of change, but made clear production for several models would continue in Washington.

The company needs to 'look at every opportunity to adapt, preserve our liquidity and be more competitive in a very different commercial market', Stan Deal, head of Boeing's commercial plane division, said in an email to staff.

"To ensure we can be effective in a market that will be smaller in



A Boeing 787 Dreamliner lands near the company's factory in Everett, Washington, US on September 30 (AFP)

the near-term, and one that will have different demands from our customers long-term, we made a decision earlier this morning to consolidate 787 production in South Carolina after months of detailed and thorough study.'

Boeing said it had not yet determined how the shift would affect staffing in Everett, Washington and North Charleston, South Carolina.

About 900 employees work on the 787 at the Everett site, which as a whole has 30,000

workers - although the current number is lower because some staff is working from home.

Headcount in South Carolina at the start of 2020 was 6,869, a Boeing spokeswoman said.

Boeing began manufacturing the 787 in Everett in 2007 before starting production in South Carolina in 2019. Only the South Carolina plant is equipped to build the current Dreamliner models, which are bigger than the initial versions, the firm said.
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Trump and Biden outline visions for US economy

Washington, US - One US presidential candidate wants to raise taxes, the other lower them. One will pursue an ongoing trade war, the other may throttle back tensions. And neither will get much done without Congress's approval.

The proposed economic policies of President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden offer starkly different views of the world's largest economy and its global role, ahead of the tense November 3 election.

Biden's agenda is aimed at poorer Americans and includes a number of policies that would mark a sharp departure from Trump's time in office, while building on the policies of Barack Obama, whom he served as vice president.

Trump, by comparison, has offered what analysts complain are few details on his plan, other than a vow to bring back the comparatively good economy and the record low employment Americans experienced until March, when the coronavirus pandemic ended that.

"I would categorise the Biden plan as really being about an expansion of existing social programs," said John Ricco, a senior analyst at the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Wharton Budget



US President Donald Trump (left) and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden speak during the first presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio, US on September 29 (AFP)

Model.

"In contrast, the Trump plan, to the extent that such a plan exists, is... sort of taking the same themes that the administration pursued in the last four years."

The extent to which either candidate can get what they want will depend on which party controls Congress, which is currently split between the Republican-controlled Senate and the Democrat-controlled House.

With polls showing the former vice president ahead and many key Senate races leaning toward the Democrats, analysts

are cautiously warming to the possibilities offered by a Biden victory - assuming Democrats win the Senate.

"Democratic control of the House, Senate and White House would produce the largest changes in policy, but if Republicans retain the Senate or White House, we expect limited new federal policies, fiscal or otherwise," JP Morgan said in a note.

The race upended

Biden's economic platform has centred on the slogan of 'build back better', with promises of

creating jobs via infrastructure and clean-energy improvements funded by US\$4.1tn in taxes over the next decade, most of it levied on big business and the rich.

Trump has vowed to restore what he calls 'the greatest economy in history', the period from his 2017 inauguration up until March; after a decade of economic expansion, unemployment was at a 50-year low.

Polls have shown voters thus far siding with Biden as the United States grapples with the world's worst coronavirus outbreak. Then on Friday the race

was upended when Trump reported he had contracted the virus.

The two men's platforms appear aimed at benefiting different sectors of the economy, said Mark Zandi and Bernard Yaros, economists at Moody's Analytics.

Biden's platform is targeted at the poor and middle class, whose 'tax bill will remain roughly the same as it is today, but they are significant beneficiaries of increased government spending on education, healthcare, housing, a plethora of other social programmes and a larger economy', Zandi and Yaros wrote.

A Trump presidency would likely see the extension of tax cuts passed by Congress in 2017, and 'the benefits largely go to higher-income households and businesses, while government spending is scaled back on healthcare and a range of social programmes', they wrote.

If the Democrats manage to take Congress and the White House, Moody's predicts that full employment, as seen before the pandemic, could return as soon as the second quarter of 2022. If Republicans get the same control, full employment would be restored only in early 2024.

AFP

China leads global 5G sales in Q2: Report



Beijing, China - China was the largest contributor to global 5G sales in the second quarter of 2020, with 72 per cent of global 5G handset revenues coming from China, according to a report from market research firm Counterpoint.

Most of this was driven by a push from Huawei, according to the report.

The average smartphone sale price in China increased 12 per cent year-on-year and the country contributed over 34 per cent of global smartphone revenues in the second quarter.

The report said that was because all other major economies were still suffering from the severe impact of COVID-19, and China was already on the path to recovery.

Huawei (including Honor), driven by the Chinese market, reported its highest-ever

China contributed over 34 per cent of global smartphone revenues in the second quarter of this year

global revenue share at 20 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, according to the Counterpoint report.

'This was the first time that Huawei surpassed Samsung both in terms of shipments as well as revenue,' the report read.

It attributed Huawei's stellar performance to the company's continued push in China, the first country to recover from COVID-19 pandemic.

Xinhua

Eurozone inflation falls into negative territory

Brussels, Belgium - Eurozone inflation fell deeper into negative territory in September, official data revealed, amid plummeting demand due to the coronavirus crisis.

The EU's Eurostat data agency said inflation fell to -0.3 per cent last month, a drop from -0.2 per cent in August and way off the official target of just under 2 per cent.

The descent into deflationary territory will put pressure on the European Central Bank (ECB) to draw up further stimulus measures, already at €1.35tn, and should encourage governments to spend more.

Policymakers worry about falling prices as they can encourage consumers to hold off making purchases in hopes they fall further, which can lead to a spiral of dropping economic activity, employment and prices.

Over the longer term, the ECB sees inflation averaging just 1.3 per cent in 2022, still far below



its target, which has triggered calls for reform.

ECB chief Christine Lagarde said recently that the eurozone should have an inflation goal 'that the public can easily understand' and is calculated in a way that better reflects people's everyday lives.

Inflation in the 19-nation eurozone has stayed stubbornly low for years despite unprecedented economic stimulus from the ECB.

AFP

Johnson says UK 'can prosper mightily' without post-Brexit trade agreement

London, UK - UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday that Britain 'can prosper mightily' without a post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union (EU), the day after agreeing to extend stalled talks with Brussels.

Johnson, who accepted prolonged negotiations in a video-call on Saturday with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, told the BBC he believed a deal is 'there to be done' before Britain leaves the bloc's regulatory regime in 2021.

But he cautioned the EU needed to understand that his government is 'utterly serious about needing to control our own laws and our own regulations', including its fisheries policy.

Britain formally left the bloc in January but remains bound by most of its rules until the end of the year under the terms of its Brexit divorce.

The current 11-month transi-



In a handout picture released by the BBC shows Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson appearing on the BBC political programme The Andrew Marr Show in London, UK on Sunday (AFP)

tion phase was intended to allow the two sides to agree their future trading relationship after nearly five decades of economic and political integration.

However, nine scheduled

The two leaders, who last held Brexit talks in June, asked their negotiators to 'work intensively in order to try to bridge those gaps'.

But fears are growing of travel and trade chaos if progress is not made and a so-called no-deal Brexit ensues.

"I don't want the Australian, WTO (World Trade Organisation)-type outcome particularly, but we can more than live with it," Johnson said of the scenario.

"I think that we can prosper mightily under those circumstances," he said.

Entrenched positions

London and Brussels had pinpointed a European summit on October 15 as the latest an agreement could be reached for it to be ratified in time to take effect by 2021.

Reports suggest the talks could now continue for the rest

of October, but British officials are stressing the need for clarity on whether a deal is feasible by the summit.

Neither side appears ready to make a big shift in their entrenched positions.

Johnson - a key figure in the lengthy and divisive process to take Britain out of the bloc - said Sunday he hoped the EU would 'agree to the deal that we've set out'.

Following his call with von der Leyen, an EU source told AFP the bloc was waiting for London 'to really start negotiating on the big issues'.

Britain and Europe have so far found no way to overcome fundamental disagreements over how to assign future fishing rights in UK waters and how to maintain a level playing field in business and state subsidy regulations.

AFP

UK expats count Brexit impact as banks shut accounts

London, UK - For Roger Morton and his wife living in France - and many other UK expats across the European Union (EU) - Brexit is causing the closure of their British banking services.

Morton (78), a retired photographer, laments a letter from Barclaycard, informing him that their credit account will no longer be accessible, as Britain prepares for the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31.

"It was a surprise and something draconian," he told AFP of the letter, which he says comes on top of 'an already stressful time' amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Their current account with Barclays, where they have banked for about 40 years, is not

affected.

One of the first direct consequences of Brexit, the move by UK lenders to shut expat services is said to affect tens of thousands of people across Europe.

From January 1 following the end of the transition period, UK banks will be deprived of their 'passporting' rights that have allowed them to offer services across the European Union.

To continue exercising these rights, they must have a legal entity in the countries of operation.

"This will obviously incur additional costs so banks will need to make decisions about which markets are likely to be cost-effective and profitable for them," said Sarah Hall, professor of economic geography at the Univer-



sity of Nottingham, central England. "This would mean that they choose to operate in some EU countries but not others," she told AFP.

For major UK bank Lloyds, the choice has been made. It is closing 13,000 accounts belonging to British expats spread across six EU countries - Germany, Ireland,

Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovakia.

Banks are advising customers on their next steps.

Coutts, the bank of British

monarch Queen Elizabeth II, has set up a dedicated team after warning its expat clients in July.

Expat newspapers, such as *The Connexion in France*, informs readers of their options such as changing banks so for example they can continue to receive UK state pensions.

HSBC and Santander have decided against closing accounts.

"HSBC has a legal entity in France and is planning on using that to service UK expats in France," added professor Hall.

Concerned that other banks are not taking the same measures, British parliament's Treasury Committee made up of cross-party lawmakers has written to the UK's financial regulator for clarification.

"Many British expats in the EU are being told that their UK bank accounts will be terminated at the end of the year," said Mel Stride, an MP in the ruling Conservative party headed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

"It's vital that they're given sufficient warning so that they have time to make alternative arrangements," added Stride, who chairs the committee.

The issue of passporting is meanwhile not part of the post-Brexit trade deal that the UK and EU are struggling to agree.

"I still think it likely that there will be a narrow trade deal but it is likely that this will not go far in easing services trade more generally," Hall said.

AFP

US, Iran officials meet Sheikh Nawaf in Kuwait

Kuwait City, Kuwait - Top officials from the US and Iran on Sunday visited Kuwait to meet with the new Emir, Sheikh Nawaf al Ahmad al Sabah, who was sworn in last week.

Sheikh Nawaf succeeded his half-brother, Sheikh Sabah al Ahmad al Sabah, a giant of Gulf diplomacy who died at the age of 91.

In the region, Sheikh Sabah cultivated a role as a go-between and mediator, a status illustrated by Sunday's visitors who included senior officials from arch-rivals Washington and Tehran.

US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper conveyed his condolences over the loss of the late leader in a meeting with the new Emir, who also expressed concern over the health of US President Donald Trump.

Sheikh Nawaf said he was glad that Trump, who has been hospitalised after being diagnosed with coronavirus, was 'recovering and well'.

Esper thanked him for his 'expression of concern'.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif met separately with the new Emir and his Kuwaiti counterpart to pay his respects. Zarif 'congratulated them on the election of the new Emir of Kuwait and stressed the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran', the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Ahmad Nasser al Sabah (left) welcomes the US Defence Secretary Mark Esper at the Amiri Terminal of the Kuwait International Airport, in the capital on Sunday (AFP)

also visited to express his condolences, the Dubai Media Office said in a tweet.

Kuwait and the United States are close allies, bound by a defence agreement that expires in 2022, but the Gulf state also balances relations with regional powers Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The US alliance was sealed with the Gulf War in 1991, during which a US-led coalition expelled Saddam Hussein's Iraqi troops from Kuwait after seven months of occupation.

Before arriving in Kuwait on Sunday, Esper spent the night in

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif met the new Emir and stressed the support of Iran

IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY

Qatar, another US ally in the oil-rich Gulf, where he discussed 'the importance of the strong defence partnership' between the two countries.

Kuwait has also acted as a mediator in a diplomatic divide between Qatar and its Gulf neighbours, after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in 2017 imposed a blockade on Doha.

AFP



An elderly woman sits at a camp for Yemenis displaced by conflict in the northern Hajjah province on September 30 (AFP)

Yemenis return after 'mercy flight' to Jordan

Sanaa, Yemen - Yemenis who were airlifted to Jordan to undergo treatment for critical illnesses earlier this year were brought home on Sunday on a flight into the rebel-held capital Sanaa, the United Nations said.

Thirty-one men, women and children in dire need of medical care were flown out in February along with their companions.

'A UN flight carrying civilian Yemenis & their companions just landed in #Sanaa,' the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a tweet, without saying how many had returned.

'Thanks to the UN medical air bridge, the patients received treatment in #Jordan for different chronic conditions for which they could not be treated inside #Yemen.'

The UN organised two evacuation flights to Amman in February, the first carrying seven children and the second with 24 other patients.

"Nine patients and their com-

panions arrived in Sanaa on board the UN chartered plane," Dr Motahar Darouiche, head of the airlift on the side of the Huthi rebels who control Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, told reporters.

He said ten Yemeni patients were still in Jordan.

"Five will return on Monday and the other five after the repatriation procedures are completed," he added.

He did not specify where the remaining patients were.

Darouiche called for the reopening of Sanaa airport to commercial flights to 'alleviate the suffering of thousands of patients who need treatment abroad'.

The military coalition led by Saudi Arabia, which backs Yemen's internationally recognised government, imposes an air blockade on the Huthis, which has resulted in the closure of Sanaa airport to commercial flights since 2016.

AFP

Russian man on trial over Berlin killing

Berlin, Germany - A Russian man goes on trial on Wednesday accused of assassinating a former Chechen commander in a Berlin park on Moscow's orders, a case that has cast a pall over ties between Russia and Germany.

Vadim K, also known as Vadim S, stands accused of gunning down a Georgian national identified by German authorities as 40 year old Tornike K, in Kleiner Tiergarten park on August 23 last year.

German prosecutors, who do not release the full names of suspects ahead of criminal trials, have said the contract killing was carried out at the behest of Russia, prompting Berlin to expel two Russian diplomats.

Moscow has denied the allegations.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said in May that the killing 'disrupts a cooperation of trust' between Berlin and Moscow and some analysts have suggested the murder has led to a change in her approach towards Russia.

The German leader has always stressed the importance of keeping dialogue open with her Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, but she has sharpened her tone in recent months.

The trial comes at a time of European anger with Russia over the poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who is receiving treatment in the German capital.

Germany has said that tests it carried out found that the 44 year old was poisoned with the Soviet-era deadly nerve agent Novichok. France and Sweden have corroborated the finding, which activists say puts responsibility for the murder attempt squarely on Moscow.

AFP

France and Italy step up rescue efforts after floods

Saint-Martin-Vesubie, France - French and Italian rescue services stepped up their search efforts on Sunday after floods cut off several villages near the two countries' border, causing widespread damage and killing two people in Italy.

Eight people remained unaccounted for on the French side of the border after storms, torrential rain and flash floods battered the area, washing away roads and houses, cutting off entire villages and triggering landslips.

Breil-sur-Roya, a French village close to the Italian border, was a scene of devastation with houses buried in mud and turned-over cars stuck in the riverbed, an AFP journalist said.

Rescue efforts were concentrated on the Roya valley where around 1,000 firefighters backed by helicopters and the army resumed their search for survivors,



A house destroyed by the floods of the Vesubie river in Roquebilliere, southeastern France, on Saturday (AFP)

while giving assistance to people whose homes were destroyed or inaccessible.

Storm Alex barreled into France's west coast on Thursday bringing powerful winds and rain across the country before moving into northern Italy.

"What we are going through is extraordinary," the prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes region said Bernard Gonzalez after as much as 60cm of rain fell over 24 hours in the worst-affected areas.

France has declared the region a natural disaster zone.

Saint-Martin-Vesubie, a French village home to 1,400 north of Nice, was cut off by road.

A bedraggled group of tourists and residents - including a woman who had lost her house - gathered in the village's local square to be airlifted to safety, an AFPTV journalist said after reaching the site on foot.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex inspected the damage by helicopter on Saturday and said his government had triggered its emergency plan for handling natural disasters.

He feared the number of people missing could rise after dozens of cars, as well as several houses, were swept away in apocalyptic scenes.

Local authorities gave shelter to some 200 people overnight, while food and thousands of bottles of water were being airlifted into remote villages cut off by the storms.

Gonzalez called on the families of the missing people not to give up hope.

"Just because their loved ones haven't been able to get in touch doesn't mean that they have been taken by the storm," he said.

AFP

New Caledonia rejects independence from France

Noumea, France - The French South Pacific territory of New Caledonia narrowly rejected independence in a referendum on Sunday, the archipelago's high commission said after a partial count of the votes.

The vote rejecting a break-away from France after almost 170 years fell to 53.3 per cent, according to 70 per cent of ballots counted, down from 56.7 per cent in a previous referendum two years ago, it said.

Turnout was much higher than last time, reflecting enthusiasm of voters who had formed long queues to cast their ballots.

Sunday's referendum was part of a carefully negotiated decolonisation plan agreed in 1998 which ended a deadly conflict between the mostly pro-independence indigenous Kanak population and the descendants



Kanak independence supporters wave flags of the Socialist Kanak National Liberation Front after the referendum on independence on the French South Pacific territory of New Caledonia, in Noumea on Sunday (AFP)

of European settlers.

That violence culminated in a bloody, drawn-out hostage crisis in 1988 that saw 19 separatists

killed, along with six police and special forces personnel.

Another referendum can be held by 2022 so long as the poll

is requested by at least a third of the local legislature.

Most political observers had forecast a win for the no-vote as

well as a narrower margin.

The prospect of a tight race brought voters out in droves, patiently awaiting their turns at polling stations. Turnout was estimated at 85.5 per cent.

"I waited 45 minutes. It's very important for me to vote," said retiree Germaine Le Demezet in the capital Noumea.

"I have children and grandchildren here, the future needs to be clear and we need to know what's going to happen to us."

New Caledonia has taken strict measures to keep coronavirus out of the territory, and with case numbers low, the referendum took place without masks and other measures.

New Caledonia, situated between Australia and Fiji and sometimes called 'The Pebble', was seized by France in 1853 and is home to 270,000 people.

The economy's mainstays are the production of metals, especially nickel of which New Caledonia is a major global producer, as well as tourism and financial support from mainland France.

The French government, from more than 16,000km away, subsidises the territory with around €1.5bn every year, the equivalent of more than 15 per cent of New Caledonia's gross domestic product.

A special authorisation allowing the French national flag to be used in campaign spots angered the pro-independence Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), which accused Paris of taking sides against independence. The last former colonies to gain independence from France were Djibouti in 1977 and Vanuatu in 1980.

AFP

Armenia-Azerbaijan fighting rages as cities come under fire

Stepanakert, Azerbaijan - Armenian and Azerbaijani forces exchanged rocket fire as fighting intensified over Nagorno-Karabakh on Sunday, with the breakaway region's capital and Azerbaijan's second-largest city bombarded.

Yerevan said Nagorno-Karabakh's main city Stepanakert, which has been under artillery fire since Friday, was hit again on Sunday and AFP journalists said there were regular explosions and smoke rising in parts of the city.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said Ganja, a city of more than 330,000 in western Azerbaijan, was also 'under fire' while separatist forces claimed to have destroyed an airbase there.

The two sides accused each other of targeting civilian areas, as the conflict appeared to be widening a week after heavy fighting broke out in the decades-old dispute over Karabakh.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have resisted international calls for a ceasefire and clashes have intensified in recent days, with both sides claiming victories on the front and saying they are inflicting heavy losses.

Sirens were sounding and explosions were heard at regular intervals in Stepanakert, where residents were taking shelter including several families in the basement of a church.

Armenia's Foreign Ministry said Stepanakert and the town of



Emergencies personnel work in a damaged area of the city of Ganja following a reportedly Armenian rocket strike on Sunday (AFP)

Martakert were under rocket attack and accused Azerbaijani forces of 'the deliberate targeting of the civilian population'.

It said the air force was also involved. Drones could be heard flying over Stepanakert.

Azerbaijan said Ganja was under fire, including from areas outside of Karabakh.

"Armenian forces struck Ganja with rockets from Armenian territory," said Hikmet Hagiye, an advisor to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

He said Armenian forces had

also used heavy artillery and rockets against the towns of Terter and Goradiz in Azerbaijan.

Karabakh's separatist forces said they had targeted and destroyed an airbase in Ganja, while the region's leader, Arayik Harutyunyan, warned that it would now consider 'military facilities in Azerbaijan's big cities' as legitimate targets.

'I call on the residents of these cities to immediately leave,' Harutyunyan said in a post on Facebook.

Azerbaijan claims to have

made gains in Karabakh in recent days, with its Defence Ministry saying that 14 settlements have been taken as well as a strategically important plateau.

In an address to the country on Saturday, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Armenians were facing a 'decisive moment' and called for the nation to come together.

Armenia on Saturday announced the deaths of 51 more separatist fighters, taking the number of reported fatalities on both sides above 240, including

more than 30 civilians.

Russia, the United States and France - whose leaders co-chair a mediation group that has failed to bring about a political resolution to the conflict - have called for an immediate halt to the fighting.

Armenia has said it is 'ready to engage' with mediators but Azerbaijan - which considers Karabakh under Armenian occupation - has said Armenian forces must fully withdraw before a ceasefire can be brokered. Karabakh's declaration of in-

dependence from Azerbaijan during the collapse of the Soviet Union sparked a war in the early 1990s that claimed 30,000 lives.

Talks to resolve the conflict have made little progress since a 1994 ceasefire agreement.

The breakaway province is not acknowledged as independent by any country - including Armenia - and Karabakh said Saturday that international recognition was 'the only way towards peace and security in the region'.

AFP

QUICK RUNS

Hackers steal Swiss varsity salaries

As yet unidentified hackers have managed to steal employee salary payments at several Swiss universities, officials said on Sunday. "According to our information, several top schools in Switzerland have been affected," Martina Weiss, director general of the rectors group of Switzerland's public universities, told AFP. The hackers used information obtained by phishing - tricking a person into passing on their personal details - for their attacks on at least three universities, including the University of Basel. According to the *SonntagsZeitung* newspaper, they accessed the universities' payment systems and changed the instructions on salary transfers, stealing a six-figure sum. The University of Zurich managed to fend off the hackers after employees recognised their modus operandi, *SonntagsZeitung* reported.

Vote-buying charge hits Kyrgyzstan poll

Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary election got underway on Sunday with observers and smaller parties warning that vote buying could spoil a rare competitive election in former Soviet Central Asia. President Sooronbai Jeenbekov will be hoping for a cooperative parliament as he plans for life after his term ends in 2023, knowing that his own predecessor and former protege Almazbek Atambayev is currently languishing in jail. Many observers are fearing massive ballot fraud by well-resourced parties. Svetlana Lavrova, a resident of the capital Bishkek, told AFP that she watched citizens arrive by minibus at a polling station where they were greeted and handed pieces of paper. Observers have warned that what Lavrova called 'bussing' could indicate a coordinated vote-buying effort on the part of pro-government parties.

Cambodia clears US-funded facility

Cambodia has razed to the ground a US-funded defence facility on its southern coast, the deputy prime minister confirmed on Sunday, the latest move in the ongoing controversial expansion of a strategically crucial naval base being developed with Chinese aid. The *Wall Street Journal* reported last year on a secret draft deal allowing China to dock warships at the Ream naval base near the kingdom's coastal city of Sihanoukville. Satellite images released by the Center for Strategic and International Studies showed a US-funded facility on Ream's naval base had been demolished, raising questions 'about rumoured Chinese access', said the Washington-based thinktank.

Federal authorities to take over Indian gangrape case



Police personnel interact with relatives of the alleged gangrape victim killed by four men, in Bool Garhi in Uttar Pradesh state on Saturday (AFP)

New Delhi, India - India's federal investigators will take over the probe into the alleged gangrape and murder of a teenaged woman that has sparked nationwide outrage and days of protests.

The 19 year old woman from the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh was attacked in mid-September and died on Tuesday, in the latest case highlighting India's epidemic of sexual violence.

Five senior police officers have already been suspended over the investigation amid criticism of law enforcement's actions - including the cremation of the woman's body in the middle of the night against the wishes of her family.

The Chief Minister of the state - India's most populous with 200mn people - announced the decision to transfer the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation late on Saturday.

'We are committed to giving the strictest punishment to the people responsible for this incident,' Yogi Adityanath, who is from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), wrote on Twitter.

The police has arrested four men on the charges of gangrape and murder.

Local authorities had barricaded the village after the cremation to block opposition politicians and media from meeting the victim's family.

The decision was reversed on Saturday after widespread criticism.

The involvement of leaders of the opposition Congress party, Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi, in several demonstrations has sparked accusations from the BJP that they were politicising the issue.

The young woman's death comes months after four men were hanged for the 2012 gangrape and murder of a student on a bus in New Delhi, in a case that shook the nation.

An average of nearly 90 rapes were reported in India every day last year, according to data by the National Crime Records Bureau, but large numbers are thought to go unreported. AFP



This file photo shows Vorayuth Yoovidhya (left), grandson of the Red Bull founder the Late Chaleo Yoovidhya, during a police investigation after an accident with his car (right) in Bangkok (AFP)

Interpol 'red notice' for Thai Red Bull heir over hit-and-run

Bangkok, Thailand - Interpol has issued a 'red notice' to arrest the fugitive Thai heir to the Red Bull billions for his role in a fatal hit-and-run, police said on Sunday.

The move by the international police organisation is the latest in the years-long saga surrounding Vorayuth 'Boss' Yoovidhya who crashed his Ferrari in 2012, killing a police officer.

The charges against Vorayuth, who is the grandson of Red Bull's co-founder, were dropped in July - sparking public outrage from Thais who saw it as an example of impunity enjoyed by the kingdom's elite.

It spurred probes by various government agencies, including the Attorney General's Office which last month announced fresh charges against Vorayuth of reckless driving causing death and cocaine use.

National Police spokesman Colonel Krissana Pattanacharoen confirmed on Sunday a red notice - Interpol's most urgent alert - was issued earlier this week.

"After we received the confirmation, we then passed our request to 194 member countries asking for assistance from them," he said. "We have to do whatever it takes to... ultimately

bring him back to the country because it is a serious crime."

A red notice for Vorayuth had not been published on the Interpol website as of Sunday afternoon. The fugitive heir fled the country in 2017 on a private jet.

After charges against him were dropped in July, a probe conducted by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's office concluded the entire investigation had been 'compromised'.

Protesters have carried cardboard cut-outs of Red Bull's logo to symbolise their anger at the military-aligned government. AFP

Akshay Kumar acknowledges Bollywood's drug 'problem'

New Delhi, India - Bollywood megastar Akshay Kumar acknowledged on Saturday a drug problem within India's film industry, following a growing narcotics probe surrounding the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Movie-obsessed India has been gripped by the saga around the death of Rajput, who was

found dead in June in his Mumbai apartment, with police saying he took his own life.

The investigation into the 34 year old's death has expanded into a massive drugs probe, with his former girlfriend, actress Rhea Chakraborty, arrested last month for allegedly buying cannabis for him.

Indian media has also joined

calls for a wider investigation into the multibillion-dollar film industry's so-called 'drugs mafia'.

In an almost four-minute video posted on his Twitter account on Saturday, Kumar called on the industry's fervent fans not to tar everyone in Bollywood with the same brush.

"With a hand on my heart, how can I lie and say that this



Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar after a movie shoot on Friday (AFP)

(narcotics and drugs) problem doesn't exist in our industry," Kumar (53) said in Hindi in a video watched more than 2.5mn times.

"It exists in our profession the same way problems exist in every other profession. But to say that everyone in every profession is involved in all its problems would be wrong."

Several high-profile actresses including 34 year old superstar Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh have been hauled in for questioning.

Wider national interest in the Bollywood case peaked last month after TV channel Times-Now broadcast sections of WhatsApp conversation about

procuring hash, alleging that the two people chatting were Padukone and her manager.

Rajput's family, meanwhile, has disputed reports the actor suffered from depression and have also accused Chakraborty of stealing his money and harassing him. Chakraborty has denied any wrongdoing. AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

'Much better' Trump 'not yet out of the woods': WH doctor

Washington, US - US President Donald Trump posted a video Saturday from the hospital where he is battling COVID-19, saying he was improving and would be 'back soon' - but acknowledged that the crucial coming days would be 'the real test'.

"I came here, wasn't feeling so well. I feel much better now," Trump (74) said from his business suite at the Walter Reed military medical centre near Washington.

"We're working hard to get me all the way back... I think I'll be back soon and I look forward to finishing up the campaign the way it was started."

Appearing relaxed in an open-collar shirt and blue suit jacket, Trump acknowledged there was uncertainty about the course of the disease, which can hit recovering patients hard with no warning.

"I'm starting to feel good. You don't know over the next period of a few days, I guess that's the real test, so we'll be seeing what happens over those next couple of days."

Trump's wife also tested positive but he said her symptoms were not as bad as his own.

"Melania is really handling it



Supporters of US President Donald Trump rally outside Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, in Bethesda, Maryland on Saturday night (AFP)

very nicely. As you've probably read, she's slightly younger than me, just a little tiny bit," he joked about the 50 year old first lady.

Late on Saturday, White House (WH) doctor Sean Conley said Trump was 'not yet out of the woods', but that the medical team is 'cautiously opti-

mistic'. White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said Trump's condition had them worried on Friday, but that he had since improved.

"Yesterday morning, we were real concerned... he had a fever and his blood oxygen level had dropped rapidly," Meadows told

Fox News late on Saturday.

Meadows said there was never a risk Trump would have to hand over power to Vice President Mike Pence, after a day of conflicting reports and confusion over the leader's actual fitness.

"He's made unbelievable im-

provements from yesterday morning, when I know a number of us, the doctor and I, were very concerned," Meadows said.

His comments echoed remarks by Conley, who said Trump had 'made substantial progress since diagnosis', and remained 'fever-free and off

supplemental oxygen'.

Trump had completed a second dose of therapeutic drug remdesivir and had spent 'most of the afternoon conducting business', Conley added.

Conley was evasive when asked earlier whether the President had received supplementary oxygen at any point since falling ill, only confirming that he hadn't received any at the hospital or on Thursday - the day of his positive test.

Several US media outlets said Trump was on oxygen at the White House on Friday before being admitted to Walter Reed.

Conley added to the confusion by suggesting that Trump had been diagnosed on Wednesday - not on Thursday, per the official account - but he later said he had misspoken.

Soon after Trump arrived at the hospital, Conley said in a memo the President was starting a course of remdesivir and had received an eight-gram dose of an experimental antibody cocktail.

Neither Trump's doctors nor the White House explained why the President was taking unproven drugs if his progress was satisfactory.

AFP

Global death toll 1,034,396

Paris, France - The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,034,396 people since it emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT on Sunday.

At least 34,989,300 cases of coronavirus have been recorded. Of these, at least 24,127,400 are now considered recovered.

The tallies, using data collected by AFP from national authorities and information from the World Health Organization (WHO), probably reflect only a fraction of the real number of infections.

Many countries are testing only symptomatic or the most serious cases.

On Saturday, 4,862 new deaths and 309,093 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were India with 940, followed by United States on 689 and Brazil 599.

The US is the worst-hit country with 209,399 deaths from 7,383,244 cases. At least 2,873,369 people have been declared recovered. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 145,987 deaths.

AFP

Iceland tightens restrictions after spike in virus cases

Reykjavik, Iceland - Iceland, up to now one of the countries to have fared better against the coronavirus, has announced a tightening of restrictions after a spike in new cases since the middle of last month.

The Health Ministry said late on Saturday that starting from Monday, most sports facilities, bars and discotheques will be closed while gatherings will be limited to a maximum 20 people. Supermarkets will be allowed up to 100 customers while swimming pools must operate at only 50 per cent of capacity.

These restrictions will last two to three weeks, the min-

istry said.

'In recent days, the number of new cases on a daily basis has been relatively steady at 30 to 40 so it is clear that current measures have not been enough to adequately control the epidemic,' chief epidemiologist Thorolfur Gudnason said in a statement to the ministry.

Iceland's health authorities have adopted targeted measures - for example discotheques in the capital Reykjavik re-opened only last Monday after a ten-day shutdown - combined with general hygiene rules and social distancing in a bid to control the virus.

AFP

Bahrain prince in season's first Himalayan summit

Kathmandu, Nepal - A team of climbers including a Bahrain prince has completed the first summit of a Nepal Himalayan peak this season after being given permission despite a coronavirus ban on tourist arrivals.

The group, which includes members of the Bahrain Royal Guard and three Britons, climbed the 6,119m Lobuche, expedition organiser Seven Summits Treks told AFP.

It was not revealed if all 18 members of the team reached the summit, a precursor to them next tackling the 8,163m Manaslu, the world's eighth-highest mountain.

Tourists and climbers are officially barred from the country until mid-October.

The team arrived in Nepal in mid-September and quarantined in the capital Kathmandu



The Bahrain Royal Guard mountaineering team including a Bahrain prince poses with a Bahrain's flag (left) and the Bahrain Royal Guard's flag (centre) on Mount Lobuche East on Sunday (AFP)

for a week before heading to Everest base camp and on to Lobuche.

More than 50 Sherpas are part of the expedition, but the identity of the royal climber was not disclosed.

The group plans to climb Everest next year.

Nepal closed its borders in March and grounded international flights just ahead of the busy spring climbing season, devastating the local tourism sector.

The country of 28mn people has recorded an average of 1,300 daily infections since August, for a total of more than 86,000 cases and 535 deaths.

Limited international flights resumed last month, but only for citizens and foreign diplomats.

AFP

Washington, heart of US power, frozen by pandemic

Washington, US - Behind the giant bay windows of the World Bank, security guards remain at their posts, but idle. Outside, the sidewalks of Washington DC are largely empty.

The bank is open, ready to host but its twice annual meetings with international financial institutions. But the meetings are all virtual these days.

Next door, at the HQ2 building of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a sign says 'temporarily closed'. It has been hanging there for six months.

With just a month to go before the presidential election, Washington, the hub of American politics, is still in the social and economic deep freeze it was plunged into by the COVID-19 outbreak that began six months ago.

The 12,000 people due to take part in upcoming meets at the World Bank and IMF will not stroll the sidewalks of the

spruced-up city centre, which before the pandemic had been touted as example of the regeneration of US downtowns.

Instead, they will be sitting at home, in front of their laptops.

As well as its political activities, the city had billed itself in the past two decades as a hub for international conventions and conferences.

"[Before the pandemic,] we were experiencing record attendance and visitation to Washington, not only with congresses and meetings, but of course, also with the leisure market... and the international markets," said Elliott Ferguson, director of Destination DC.

And that activity all stoked the local economy. "We were on pace to do well over 25mn visitors to the city, over 42 large congresses," he said.

Now the city is expecting some 11mn visitors.

For sure, some of the trendier



The doors of the IMF headquarters building are closed, in Washington, DC, on Thursday (AFP)

districts of the city have bounced back to life. Restaurants have opened up outdoor terraces and rooftop dining and have started to fill up in the late summer, thanks to local clientele.

But in the downtown area,

not far from the White House, the fast food restaurants of K Street - the central artery where busy lobbyists and lawyers used to grab lunch - have not reopened and struggle to attract local business.

That is because the thousands of government and institutional workers - including the 9,000 of the World Bank, excluding its consultants - are all working from home until the end of the year.

The white-collar workers who filled the offices of the nerve centre of US and international politics have overwhelmingly chosen to carry on with remote work.

And they have the backing of Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser, who has implemented one of the strictest regimes of restrictions in the country to keep the virus death toll down to 629 deaths and more than 12,250 infections.

As a result, by the end of July the economic activity of the city center was just 12 per cent of what it had been the year before, with 95 per cent of employees working from home, according to Downtown DC Business Improvement District. Hotel occupancy was at just eight per cent in June, down from 74 per cent in February.

An employee of the pharmacy chain CVS, just a few

yards from the IMF building, said the branch was probably doomed if the big institutions do not open up their doors again soon.

Handing out at best 200 prescriptions per week instead of more than 1,000 before the pandemic, and with its opening hours tailored to those of the neighbouring institutions, the employee said the store would be lucky to hang on for six months.

"I'm afraid CVS will have to close this location if they don't come back to work downtown," the worker said.

Despite the gloomy mood, Gregory O'Dell, head of the Walter E Washington Convention Center, the mainstay of the city's conferences, hopes there will be better days ahead.

The Center, which receives some 1.5mn people each year, reopened two weeks ago.

AFP

TRAVEL SMART

Is it safe to travel during a pandemic? Check out the odds



According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), traveling safely during a global pandemic comes down to two basic factors - avoiding close contact with strangers and strictly following a few common-sense precautions.

With much of the United States slowly easing travel restrictions, research from the US Travel Association reveals that 71% of Americans miss travel and are eager to travel again. Still, most surveyed said they would approach future travel with vigilance and they rate cleanliness and hygiene as more important than ever.

So, what should the travel-anxious consider as they begin to enjoy the great wide open once more? The first thing is, how would you get to your destination. The experts at New York Presbyterian Hospital say traveling by car is safest, but if air, train or bus travel are necessary, health experts recommend taking a direct route to your destination.

Then, the next question is - where will you stay? It's imperative, especially now, to understand and trust the vital cleaning

It's imperative, especially now, to understand and trust the vital cleaning protocols a facility follows before, during and after your arrival, say hospitality experts

protocols a facility follows before, during and after your arrival, say hospitality experts who recommend that prospective guests should check whether the place of stay follows strict cleaning schedules for the rooms, besides all other indoor/outdoor facilities, and high-touch spaces like front desks and lobbies.

Other lodging considerations:

- Will you have a private kitchen and dining area, or will you need to eat out at restaurants each day?
- Can you do laundry easily and safely, if needed?
- Do your accommodations provide complimentary face coverings, sanitising wipes and hand sanitisers?

Lastly, one must carefully consider activities. The safest options are ones you can do outdoors, like bike rides, hikes and visits to open-air attractions like botanical gardens. If you opt for indoor activities, check to make sure the establishment limits crowds, enforces mask-wearing and cleans often.

Also consider:

- Travel during weekdays and avoid holiday travel. Off-peak times mean less crowded rest stops and airports.
- Pack snacks and drinks. Having snacks on hand will help you avoid standing in line with strangers at food counters.
- Go contactless whenever possible. Whether it's checking in digitally, paying by credit card over the phone or opting for an e-signature, take advantage of any opportunity to avoid direct contact with others.
- Wear a mask when in public. Face coverings are now mandatory in most countries and international hotels.
- Stock up on hand sanitiser and use it whenever you can't wash your hands with soap and water.
- Though you've heard it a million times, remember to stay at least six feet away from others. It's one of the most surefire ways to slow the spread of coronavirus.

(BPT)

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Sodium Free
Drinking
Water



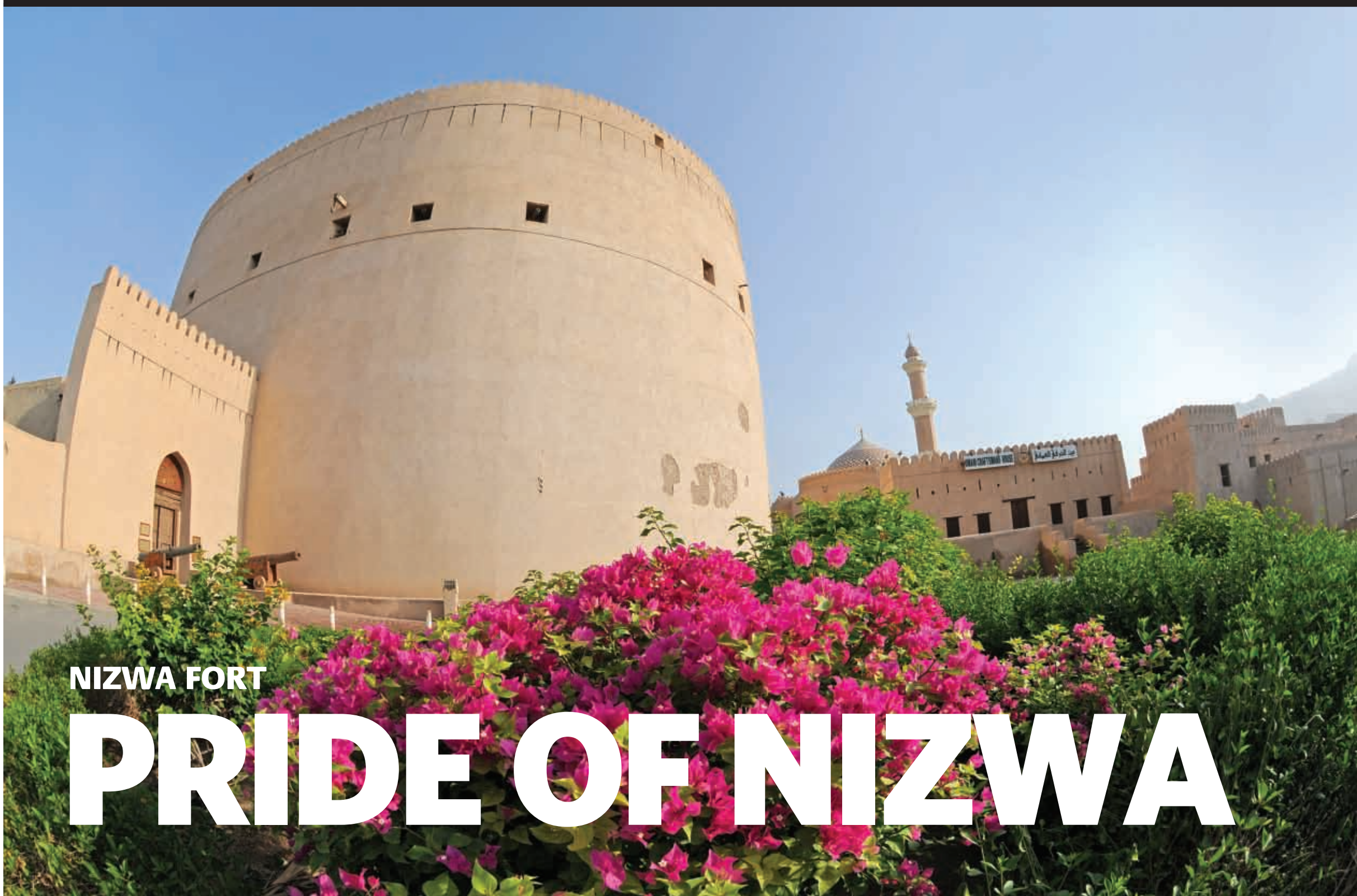
The healthy choice

It is beneficial to limit sodium intake if you have blood pressure, diabetes, heart or kidney disease.



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NIZWA FORT

PRIDE OF NIZWA



Hubert Vaz

If you have been in Oman for many years and have not yet visited the Nizwa Fort, which is less than a couple of hours drive from Muscat, you might have to do some serious introspection. The 9th century Nizwa Fort is not just the cynosure of tourists but also the pride of Nizwa and worth visiting as a day trip.

For adults as well as children, the fort presents interesting facets of a bygone era apart from a stunning view of the landscape and food for thought once you come face to face with its intriguing interiors and artefacts on display. Being there instantly transports one to the interesting past of the sultanate.

Once within the premises of this imposing fort, it is quite easy to understand why it is one of the most visited monuments in Oman. The central tower of the fort – 45m in diameter and 34m tall – is said to be the

largest round tower in Arabia. This monument is actually a combination of a castle and a fort, and while the 'Nizwa Castle', was built in the 9th century, the fort section was added in the 17th century.

The fort and castle are linked by means of intricate corridors and nearby is the popular Nizwa Souq, famous for traditional artefacts. For the benefit of visitors, the fort and castle have adequate signage in Arabic and English to guide and enlighten people.

What's most unique about Nizwa Fort is its circular shape, unlike all other forts in Oman. There are other unique aspects, too, like its extremely thick walls, many wells inside, the excellent defence system within and the secret mechanisms for trapping intruders.

It's worth climbing the 60 steps to the platform of the tower, to each of the viewpoints, from where you can see an expansive oasis of date palms and the Hajar Mountains.

Key features

- ◆ The Fort was built in the early part of the 17th century by Imam Sultan bin Saif al Yarubi and it took approximately 12 years to complete.
- ◆ The castle was built in the 9th century and later renewed in 1624 with many new facets.
- ◆ It contained rooms for the Imam, his family, his guests and the royal guards. These rooms are now decorated and used to display artefacts.
- ◆ The fort has seven wells and multiple openings for stationing the fighters defending the fort.
- ◆ On display are a kitchen, a coffee-making room and a date store, besides ancient jewellery and frankincense.
- ◆ Also on display, is a set of traditional face masks worn by ladies of yore, which reminds one of the masks currently worn by people during the pandemic.



“I think, every part of Nizwa Castle has an important aspect of defence created within its structure, with a reserved place for the ruler or the person managing the affairs. I am particularly impressed by the huge central tower which serves as the focal point of all defence activities, as the very goal of a fort is to defend its residents. This section demonstrates the preparedness and planning behind every move.

Ahmed al Busaidi
Adventurer-researcher,
resident of Nizwa

“The best feature of Nizwa Fort is its circular shape which makes it strikingly unique when compared with other forts in Oman, whether Bahla Fort, Rustaq Fort, Al Hazm Castle or Muttrah Fort and Jalali-Mirani forts in Muscat, all of which are rectangular in shape. The other most striking feature is the fact that it is located in the heart of Nizwa city, close to the Nizwa Souq, where people come together everyday.

Dr Abdullah al Ghafri,
Professor, Nizwa University