



Plan for future emergencies: HM

Directs all sectors of State to coordinate and devise a system of advanced mobilisation to address impact of future emergencies

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Barakah Palace on Tuesday.

At the outset, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed the process of domestic development and commended the earnest efforts exerted by all de-

partments of the State at all levels.

His Majesty the Sultan heard a briefing about action taken to address the aftermath of the recent tropical condition. He appreciated Omani society's display of values of solidarity, benevolence and collaboration in enhancing the efforts of State departments.

His Majesty the Sultan affirmed that he is following up on the measures taken to handle the situation. He gave his Royal directives to all sectors of the State to coordinate and devise a system of advanced mobilisation to address the impact of future emergencies, if any. This, His Majesty said, requires drafting strategic plans for the management of crises, bearing in mind future developments and the availability of all resources for the protection of the population against the direct impact of cyclones.

The system also re-

quires activating the preparedness of all sectors and relief centres, revising the distribution and design of residential units and infrastructure projects, as well as expanding drainage networks.

His Majesty the Sultan underscored the role of youth in the development process, noting that youth constitute the present and future of nations. In this context, His Majesty laid emphasis on the significance of mechanisms and channels of communication capable of portraying the efforts made to answer the needs of development in all sectors.

His Majesty stressed the importance of listening to the youth and responding to their aspirations. For this purpose, His Majesty the Sultan instructed governors, in cooperation with the departments concerned, to hold regular meetings with the youth, to take up issues of concern to them and listen to their views in a manner that enables them to perform the role expected of them in promoting the march of nation building.

Continued on Page 02



Services returning to normal in North and South Batinah



Madayn, Solar Wadi to build 100MW solar project in Sohar

Citizens hail establishment of disaster fund

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The establishment of the National Fund for Emergencies to tackle the aftermath of cyclone Shaheen and similar natural disasters in the future by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has been hailed by people.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Ali al Shayadi, a citizen whose home was damaged by the cyclone in the wilayat of Suwaiq, said, "We are very happy with the announcement of the fund. It will ease the burden on citizens whose homes were damaged in the Batinah region."

Thanking His Majesty the Sultan for his quick response, Shayadi said the fund will be a safety net against disasters in the future.

According to economist Khalafan al Touqi, the decision was taken after much deliberation and is an important step as His Majesty the Sultan is keen on



(Supplied photo)

The fund will assist government agencies and speed up their disaster response

NASSER AL HOSNI

speeding up the relief and recovery efforts following Shaheen and 'God forbid, any in the future'.

"Oman has recently been exposed to many storms and weather disturbances, so this decision will keep us prepared for any disaster that may occur in the future."

Businessman Nasser al Hosni too hailed establishment of the fund as it will 'alleviate the burden of citizens'.

"The emergency fund will assist government agencies and speed up their response in dealing with any disaster in the future."

"I also hope citizens themselves be prepared for any natural disaster. Unfortunately, many people do not insure their homes. We must take advantage of the many insurance companies that we have in Oman and their offers in order to protect our property," Hosni said.

Thanking His Majesty the Sultan for establishing the fund, Hamad al Ghafri from Khabourah said cyclone Shaheen united Omanis from every part of the sultanate who volunteered to support their brothers in the face of adversity.

Mohammed al Balushi, another citizen, pointed out that His Majesty the Sultan has issued many decisions that 'support the homeland and citizens' since he assumed power on January 11, 2020.

"Establishing the fund is an important step because it can be used for several purposes, including insurance against disasters," Balushi said.

Prophet's Birthday holiday on Oct 19

Muscat - On the occasion of Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) birthday, it has been decided that 12 Rabee al Awwal 1443 AH, corresponding to Tuesday, October 19, 2021, will be an official holiday for employees of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities and establishments of the private sector.

The Ministry of Labour has stated that employers at private sector establishments may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday - if deemed necessary - provided they compensate the workers for the holiday.

ONA



Royal directive to devise plan to address impact of future emergencies

Continued from Page 01

Within the framework of His Majesty's keenness to follow up on employment initiatives endorsed by the government and the progress made in the National Employment Programme, His Majesty the Sultan underlined the need to combine the efforts of all institutions of the State to accomplish this mission.

His Majesty the Sultan stressed the need to forge sustainable solutions and programmes so that the Council of Ministers can follow up on the

Draft strategic plans for management of crises, bearing in mind future developments

Governors to hold regular meetings with youth to take up their issues of concern

Need to combine all efforts to follow up on national employment initiatives

All sectors to cooperate in maintaining fiscal stability, upholding the pace of development

employment initiatives and address the issue, first things first.

His Majesty pointed out that the State Budget 2022 is aligned with the goals of the tenth Five-Year Plan, the first step in Oman Vision 2040. The plan, His Majesty said, seeks to achieve a set of developmental, economic and social goals, notably maintaining

fiscal balance, boosting economic growth and encouraging investment, besides empowering the private sector to activate economic diversification sectors. To

meet this objective, His Majesty exhorted all State sectors to co-operate in maintaining fiscal stability and upholding the pace of development at all levels.

His Majesty urged all departments concerned to join hands to develop a uniform system for the realisation of Oman Vision 2040's objectives, while at the same time cooperating with Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit so that it can perform its tasks in a proper manner.

His Majesty gave directives to pursue the progress made in this track and to provide adequate support to government departments to meet the targets of Oman Vision 2040 in all sectors

and to address the challenges of the respective units and departments.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty touched on various matters of significance to the sultanate and its citizens. He also gave directives to all institutions of the State to establish suitable grounds to upgrade performance in all sectors.

His Majesty the Sultan wished all departments success in serving the common good of the nation and its people.

ONA

MoH launches virtual clinic for primary healthcare

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday launched a virtual clinic project for primary healthcare. It came within the partnership for the Healthy Cities initiative supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, and in partnership with the Directorate General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate and World Health Organization office in Oman.

The launch was held under the patronage of HE Dr Fatima Mohammed al Ajmi, MoH's Undersecretary for administrative, financial, and planning affairs, at the ministry's headquarters.

The idea of the virtual clinic came about following the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 where the service of tele-health consultations was introduced in March 2020 as a means for communicating with patients and delivering health services. In the same year in October, health institutions dedicated telephone lines for service delivery.

Usage of spatial modelling for COVID-19 cases prediction explored

Muscat - A new study by a team of Omani researchers has proved that real-time Geographical Information Systems (GIS) can be used in COVID-19 monitoring and management in Oman.

GIS can be used to map out the virus hotspot occurrences against multiple parameters, including the demographics, environment, geography and past incidents, to understand the origin of the outbreaks, spread patterns, and intensity, which in turn supports the implementation of control, preventive and surveillance measures for the COVID-19 pandemic, stated the study.

Titled 'Spatiotemporal patterns of the spread and effects of the emerging COVID-19 in Oman and 21 cities in the Middle East using spatial modelling remote sensing techniques', the study is among many innovative research projects of the COVID-19 Research Programme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

Led by principal investigator Dr Khalifa al Kindi, assistant professor of the Unesco Chair on

Aflaj Studies at the University of Nizwa, along with a group of researchers from Sultan Qaboos University and University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Nizwa, the study explores the development of the GIS models and their relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Kindi and his team aimed

health sentinel observations, predicting COVID-19 hotspots monitoring the disease origins and its contagion movements, and developing multi-factor correlations with COVID-19 based on environmental, demographic and socioeconomic data.

Through the advancements in

ical, and deep learning models to assess the current situation and validate and predict the spatial evolution of the pandemic in the short run.

Dr Kindi stated that the research showed various geospatial implications in planning a healthy human nation that can be used to enhance surveillance

Dr Kindi pointed out that although their approach was mainly based on spatial data, it extends further to employ state-of-the-art geospatial, mathematical and deep learning models to assess the current situation

GIS, spatial modelling and data mining techniques, Dr Kindi and his team managed to obtain a valuable detailed assessment of Oman's primary spatial COVID-19 hotspots by modelling a wide range of physical and socioeconomic variables.

Dr Kindi pointed out that although their approach was mainly based on spatial data, it extends further to employ state-of-the-art geospatial, mathemat-



Mohammed al Kindi

Three-day film festival to begin on November 28

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first-ever Al Roya Film Festival organised by the Oman Film and Theatre Society (OSFT) will begin on November 28. The event is open to all filmmakers, aged between ten and 21, and of every nationality, and will be held for three days at the OSFT premises.

Speaking about the event, Mohammed al Kindi, noted director and script-writer, said, "This will be the first of its kind film festival after the pandemic and we look forward to some of the best compelling stories from young filmmakers of the country. We welcome everyone to submit their films, short film, documentary or animation."

Other than the movie competition, the three days will also witness lectures, workshops and discussions on movies from filmmakers, academicians and intellectuals. There will also be a speech about the importance of the film industry in the sultanate in addition to an honouring event for some of the pioneers of cinematic work in Oman.

Movies will be shown on November 29. A workshop for participants and those interested in film-making will be held on November 30 followed by previewing the other participating movies, and a closing ceremony on the same day where winners will be announced.

The event will be chaired by Hatem al Tai, president, who is also a filmmaker, Qassem al Sulaimi as technical director and Kindi, technical advisor.

Some of the other members of the jury include Dr Salma Youssef Mohamed Kamel (Egypt), Dr Muhammad Bilal, Dr Malak Dahmouni (Morocco) and Dr Leila Barhouma (Tunisia).

Industrial Innovation Centre gives RO2mn to startups

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Industrial Innovation Centre (IIC) is leading efforts to support startups and providing investment in promising sectors to promote local companies and their products.

IIC's annual report shows that the centre supported startup companies in the sultanate with an amount of RO2,085,057 from 2017 to 2020.

This comes as part of the efforts exerted by IIC to enhance innovation in industrial activities, add high value to natural resources in the sultanate and promote self-sufficiency of locally made products.

The IIC report, established as an outcome of the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversity (Tanfeedh), showed that the centre has provided 72

investment opportunities for several promising industrial sectors, such as fisheries, marble, food and beverages, mining and technologies. The IIC achieved this by creating and financing economically viable industrial products, as well as qualifying the national cadres who develop such products.

The report indicated that IIC developed 20 startups operating in the industrial sector. It also pointed out that such companies have registered their brands at the Intellectual Property Department in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The report demonstrated that IIC sought to create an appropriate ecosystem for Omani innovators and national cadres through its finance, technical support, guidance and advice. It also indicated that the centre



(Supplied photo)

strived to enhance the competitiveness of Omani factories, improve their operational efficiency and qualify human resources who are the main pillar and sustainable component for leading national innovation.

The report revealed that IIC fi-

nanced and enabled 43 factories and companies to produce innovative technologies and services. The centre prepared 70 detailed economic feasibility studies to measure the potential revenue and promising investment opportunities.

It also reflected that IIC contributed to the provision of 41 training programmes, offered its services to 660 entities and entered into partnerships with 43 governmental agencies, private sector companies and academic institutions.

The report disclosed that the centre prepared and carried out four important programmes; the first of which was the human resources development programme. Designed to prepare industrial innovation specialists, this programme contributed to qualifying about 400 innovators, entrepreneurs and jobseekers, as part of IIC's efforts to cement national innovation competencies in the industrial sector. The other programmes included the startup innovation programme, which contributed to the establishment of startup companies, in addition to the industrial innovation programme.

The report illustrated that IIC has made significant achievements during the past four years by carrying out 128 technology transfer operations along with the companies benefiting from its services.

REGIONAL WEATHER		
	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	39	25
Doha	35	26
Kuwait City	35	25
Manama	34	25
Riyadh	36	21

PRAYER TIMINGS	
Fajr	4.45am
Sunrise	6.03am
Duhr	11.53am
Asr	3.13pm
Maghrib	5.42pm
Isha	7.12pm

Oman on right track to tackle disasters

Our Correspondent
Muscat

October 13 is observed as International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, and in Oman, the day has special significance considering the country is currently recovering from the devastation left behind by cyclone Shaheen.

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction is observed every year with the aim of promoting a global culture of risk awareness and disaster reduction. 'The day celebrates how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in the risks that they face,' a statement

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

from the United Nations said.

In Oman, some roads are still waterlogged and houses inundated after tropical cyclone Shaheen lashed the country on October 3, leaving a trail of destruction to infrastructure in Batinah. This prompted the government to form an engineering committee to redesign roads to withstand storms.

According to the UN, good disaster risk governance can be measured by the number of lives saved, reduced number of disaster-affected people, and reduced economic losses. The COVID-19 pandemic and the recent cyclone indicate that there is need for a clear vision, plans and competent empowered institutions to act on scientific evidence for the benefit of the public.

The government of Oman is seen moving in the right direction



The government of Oman is seen moving in the right direction with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issuing a decision to set up a Ministerial Committee to assess damages caused by Shaheen

with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issuing a decision to set up a Ministerial Committee to assess damage to homes and property caused by cyclone Shaheen. His Majesty the Sultan has also directed the establishment of an emergency fund to tackle natural disasters. The decisions

came as his follow-up in the aftermath of Shaheen in several parts of the country.

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction was started in 1989 after a call by the UN General Assembly for a day to promote a global culture of risk awareness and disaster reduc-

tion. In 2015, at the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, the international community was reminded that disasters hit hardest at the local level with the potential to cause loss of life and great social and economic upheaval. Sendai suffered a devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2011 in which 20,000 people lost their lives.

In the context of healthcare and the ongoing pandemic, as a personal gesture to support the efforts in combating COVID-19, His Majesty the Sultan donated RO10mn to a fund established to

tackle the virus crisis. Praising the sultanate's response to the COVID-19 crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that Omani authorities acted promptly to address the health and economic effects of the pandemic.

'Oman moved rapidly and decisively to contain the COVID-19 crisis. Containment measures and health support to the population have limited the cases and fatalities. The authorities' cautious approach towards reopening has helped contain new cases since early 2021,' the IMF said in its statement of the 2021 Article IV Mission to Oman.



National Search and Rescue Team plays major role

Muscat - The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has said that the National Search and Rescue Team played a major role in reporting incidents in the aftermath of tropical cyclone Shaheen. It addressed many reports of missing persons and uprooted trees that blocked roads and hampered traffic. The team participated in the distribution of supplies to citizens and residents in affected areas as well.

The CDAA set up a camp in the wilayat of Suwaiq to facilitate the mission of the National Search and Rescue Team in the Governorate of North Batinah. From its provision centre there, the team coordinated the efforts of various teams that responded to emergency reports. The centre comprised a variety of human resources, specialised teams and equipment to han-

dle emergency calls and humanitarian cases.

The CDAA pointed out that the National Search and Rescue Team operates in accordance with a clear-cut mechanism in addressing consequences of climatic conditions, notably by categorising affected areas to facilitate the delivery of emergency services.

A CDAA statement said that the National Search and Rescue Team has received international accreditation from the International Search and Rescue Group. 'The national team is specialised in operations covering urban, mountainous and aquatic environments. Its groups of engineers, technicians and physicians command top skills and physicians command top skills and mobile search utilities including K9 sniffer dogs, drones and other search and rescue equipment.'

ONA

Services returning to normal in Batinah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In the ongoing relief and recovery efforts to restore normalcy in the cyclone-hit areas of Batinah, government agencies have restored almost all electricity and water services.

"Restoration of electricity services in mountainous villages of Wadi al Hawasna is 99 per cent, and work is continuing in Wadi Bani Omar to restore supply completely in the next few hours," said Dr Mansoor Talib al Hinai, chairman of Public Services Regulatory Authority.

He added that in governorate of South Batinah, 99 per cent of electricity services have been restored, while in North Batinah, 95 per cent services have been restored.

The National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) confirmed that in South Batinah, 99 per cent of basic



services for electricity, water, fuel, roads, waste management and telecommunications, and 100 per cent telecommunications have been restored.

'Teams worked 168 hours to bring services back to normal.'

In North Batinah, 99 per cent water and fuel services, 95 per cent electricity supply and asphalt roads, 85 per cent for gravel roads, 65 per cent in

waste management and 100 per cent telecommunications are back to normal.

Electric generators

The Ministry of Defence stated that Royal Air Force of Oman has transferred electric generators to North Batinah to speed up the restoration of services in accordance to a plan of the Military Committee for Emergency Man-

agement in coordination with two subcommittees.

Clean-up operations

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority has announced that it is continuing to remove uprooted trees from roads in the areas affected by the cyclone in Batinah.

Muscat Municipality too is carrying out clean-up operations and waste disposal from homes in North Batinah.

158 in one shelter

A total of 158 cyclone-stricken people continue to avail facilities of a shelter in the wilayat of Khabourah, according to an official in the Ministry of Social Development's Relief and Shelter Sector.

He added that the shelter centre will transfer these individuals to apartments equipped with all facilities in the next two days.

Free vaccination for expats begins

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced that AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19 is now available for expatriate workers, with a prior appointment.

'Pre-registration in the Tarasud App is required to obtain appointment. People without appointment will not be vaccinated,' MoH said.

21 new cases

The ministry reported 21 new COVID-19 cases and one related death on Tuesday, taking the total number of positive cases to 303,999 in Oman.



RO11mn pact signed to boost sewage and treated water networks in Seeb

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC) has signed an agreement at a cost of more than RO11mn to boost sewage and treated water networks in the wilayat of Seeb and Airport

Heights in Muscat governorate.

The project is expected to be completed within 24 months, OWWSC said.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Qais al Zakwani, CEO of OWWSC, by Eng Omar bin Khalfan al Wahaibi, chairman of the Board of Directors of OWWSC, CEO of Nama Group

and the manager of Hassan Allam Contracting Company, the executing company.

'The project will connect 87 government, residential and commercial facilities to receive more than 21,000m³ of sewage per day, and supply 63 facilities with more than 24,000m³ of treated water per day,' it stated.

مدائن

madayn

Tender Announcement

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

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last date of buying	Date of submission	Type of work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
12/2021/PEIE /HQ-12	DESIGN AND BUILD OF MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKING IN KNOWLEDGE OASIS MUSCAT	26-10-2021	21-11-2021	Construction	Excellent	3000

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

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.
- eTendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om and +968 24402200 Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

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

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

@madaynoman

madayn.om

in

Twitter

f

YouTube

Instagram

MARKET WATCH

MSM30	3,955.66
BSE Sensex	60,284.31

FOREX RATES
(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs	195.99
Pakistani Rs	444.77
Bangladeshi Taka	222.39
Philippine Peso	132.03
Sri Lankan Rs	520.74

*Rates as on October 12
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Germany unveils world's first self-driving train

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn and industrial group Siemens on Monday unveiled the world's first automated, driverless train in the city of Hamburg, billing it as more punctual and energy efficient than traditional trains.

Four such trains will join the northern city's S-Bahn rapid urban rail network and start carrying passengers from December, using the existing rail infrastructure.

Other cities like Paris have driverless metros while airports often have automated monorail trains playing terminals, but those run on exclusive single tracks while the Hamburg train will be sharing tracks with other regular trains.

Madayn and Solar Wadi to build 100MW solar project in Sohar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), Mubadrah (the investment arm of Madayn) and independent renewable energy company Solar Wadi have signed an agreement to establish a large scale solar photovoltaic (PV) farm in Sohar.

The companies will construct a 100MW solar PV farm in Sohar Industrial City to be operational by next year, according to a statement issued by Madayn.

The project is part of the overall strategy of Madayn in providing a significant portion of energy needs of its tenants from a sustainable renewable energy source, in line with Oman Vision 2040's sustainability goals.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Musallam bin Mohammed al Shehri, head of operations sector at Madayn; Mustafa al Lawati, CEO of Mubadrah; and Yazan Faouri, CEO of Solar Wadi.

The agreement forms part of the larger overall Madayn Renewable Energy Project initiative which is being undertaken to transform the way the electricity needs of all industrial cities and free zones under Madayn umbrella are being met in order to have a significant portion being powered by renewable solar energy during the day.

Lawati said, "This agreement comes along the lines of the efforts undertaken by Madayn in moving towards more sustainable energy sources and helping to reduce the carbon footprint of the industrial sector in Oman, as set out in Vision 2040, the gateway to Oman becoming a developed nation under the guidance of



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik."

He added that the ultimate aim is to provide all Madayn tenants with a saving on their electricity cost while attracting investors to invest into the development of the solar park.

"We are keen to invest alongside Solar Wadi, the main developer for the initiative, into providing sustainable solutions and services that are aimed at allowing all tenants at Sohar Industrial City to take advantage of the many environmental, sustainable and economic benefits from such projects with no investment, guarantees or major involvement being required from the tenant's side," Lawati added.

Faouri said, "The aim of this initiative and collaboration is to enable us to work together in our combined efforts to deliver a sustainable, ecological, more economical, and socially conscious power solution for all tenants at Sohar Industrial City from a renewable energy source."

Solar Wadi targets RO300mn investment for plants across Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Solar Wadi – one of the first independent Omani power companies that invests in, builds and operates renewable energy power plants – is targeting a number of investments worth around RO300mn to develop solar power plants across Oman.

The company plans to develop a combined capacity of circa 1GW of solar PV energy plants across the sultanate, according to Yazan Faouri, CEO of Solar Wadi.

On Tuesday, Solar Wadi, Madayn and Mubadrah signed an agreement to build a 100MW solar PV farm in Sohar Industrial City to be operational by next year.

"This project represents a strategic investment for Solar Wadi and is only the first in a number of investments planned for the Omani market which is targeted as a total investment of RO300mn in developing a combined capacity of circa 1GW of solar PV energy plants across the sultanate," Faouri said in a statement.

The investments, Faouri said, will be made mainly in Madayn Renewable Energy Project initiative over all the industrial cities and free zones under Madayn umbrella, along with a significant number of other solar plants being developed for the wider private sector companies and governmental entities.

Madayn and its partners plan to role out the Madayn Renewable Energy Project initiative across all industrial cities and free zones in the coming couple of years.

Saudi targets \$100bn yearly in foreign investment



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia seeks to attract foreign investment of more than US\$100bn annually under a National Investment Strategy announced on Monday as part of efforts to diversify the oil-dependent economy.

The strategy is expected to raise annual foreign direct investment flows to SAR388bn (US\$103bn) and increase annual domestic investment to SAR1.7tn by 2030, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said after Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, launched the initiative.

SPA said it will be 'a key enabler' of his Vision 2030 plan, announced in 2016 to diversify the economy of the world's biggest oil exporter.

"Today, the kingdom embarks on a new investment era to empower Saudi and international private-sector investors with more and better opportunities," SPA quoted Prince Mohammed as saying.

"The NIS will draw up comprehensive investment plans for sectors, including manufacturing, renewable energy, transport and logistics, tourism, digital infrastructure, and health care," he added.

Among its measures the strategy is to establish special economic zones with competitive regulations and incentives, transfer strategic supply chains to the kingdom, and develop new financing solutions for the private sector to promote capital formation, according to SPA.

AFP

BEST

AIR CONDITIONERS

BEST COOLING

BEST ENERGY EFFICIENCY!

ROTARY SERIES - BSTS18CNE2 | BSTS24CNE2

RECIPROCATING SERIES
BSTS18GPE2 | BSTS24GPE2 | BSTS30GPE2

4 way swing
Better Air Flow

6 in 1 Filter
Healthy Air

Low Noise
Peaceful Sleep

Gold Fin
Anti Rust

HEAVY DUTY
COMPRESSOR

R-410A
REFRIGERANT

Genetco

GENERAL ELECTRIC & TRADING COLLG

50
YEARS OF SUCCESS

MUSCAT
97693496, 96742452

SALALAH
79011363

Available at
Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

Special Discount

22.72% DISCOUNT
NO 64,700 **50 ONLY**

24.24% DISCOUNT
NO 26,400 **20 ONLY**

BUY & WIN 310 PRIZES

- Hot & Cold Dispenser
- 2 Full Bottles
- 15 Refill Coupons

- White Tap Dispenser/ Tap Dispenser/ Manual Water Pump/ Cradle with Tap
- 2 Full Bottles
- 12 Refill Coupons

Get 1 Raffle Coupon for every RO 20 spent on 5 Gallon Products.

Register your raffle coupon number at www.omanoasis.com/discount2021 to win.

CALL TOLL-FREE 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522

Special discount valid from 20th August 2021 to 19th November 2021. Conditions apply.

CR No: 1365452 MM 2021/53406

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories: Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/ Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)

Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

oman OASIS

sifr

OMAN'S ONLY SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

5 IN GALLON BOTTLES

Sodium Free Drinking Water

The healthy choice

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

Call Toll-Free **800 71 222** or GSM **9275 5522**

omanOasis **omanOasisOfficial** **omanOasisWater** www.omanoasis.com

OASIS WATER COMPANY SADC, P.O.Box: 87, PC: 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman.

CR No.: 1365452

MSX inches down on low volumes

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) was marginally down by 0.06 per cent to close at 3,955.66 points on Tuesday.

Trading activity deteriorated from the previous session as turnover declined 18.98 per cent to RO2.12mn and volumes fell 51.98 per cent to 8.26mn shares.

While Financial index rose 0.14 per cent, Industrial and Services indices fell 0.49 per cent and 0.18 per cent, respectively. The MSX Shariah Index closed up by 0.2 per cent at 578.85 points.

Market breadth remained negative as eight companies closed up, while ten companies closed down. The rest 19 traded

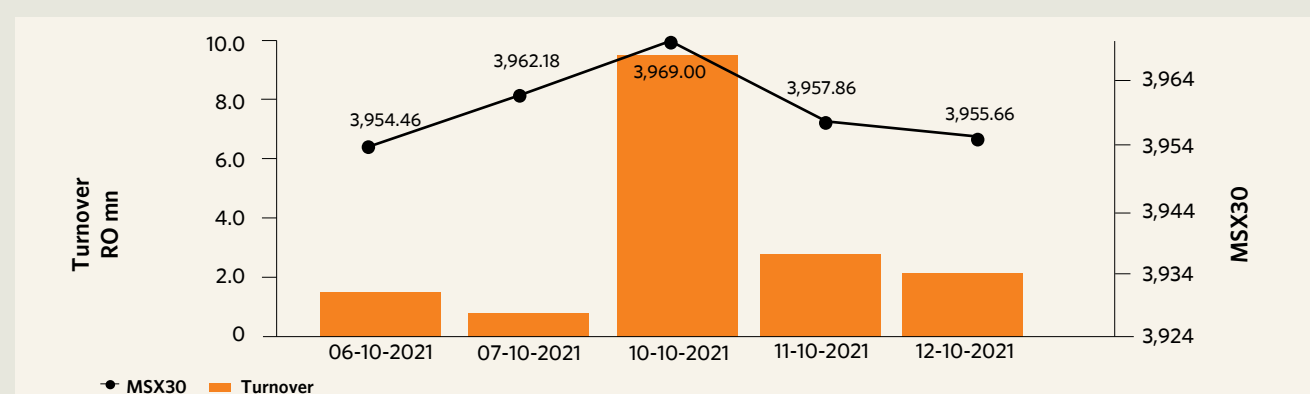


stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers were Shell Oman (2.17 per cent), Al Maha Ceramics (1.89 per cent), Bank Muscat (1.17 per cent), Oman Fisheries (1.35 per cent) and Al Jazeera Services (1.06 per cent). Top losers were

Dhofar Generating Company (-9.35 per cent), National Aluminium Products Company (-8.27 per cent), National Life & General Insurance (-4.47 per cent), Al Jazeera Steel Products (-3.33 per cent) and Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles (-2.69 per cent).

MSX INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



Energy giant Qatar Petroleum rebrands as QatarEnergy

Doha, Qatar - Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al Kaabi on Monday announced that Qatar Petroleum has changed its name to QatarEnergy.

With a news logo and brand identity, QatarEnergy will continue to deliver the cleaner energy that the world needs, and to play its role as an active global partner in the search for better solutions in the ongoing energy transition, Qatar News Agency reported.

This follows a history evolution that saw Qatar Petroleum Company (QPC) transform into Qatar General Petroleum Corporation, then becoming Qatar Petroleum (QP) twenty years ago, and QatarEnergy (QE) today.

In making the announcement, Kaabi, who is also the president and CEO of QatarEnergy, provided an overview of the historic milestones that have driven the company's transformation, including first oil discovery in 1938, the discovery of the world's biggest non-associated gas field in 1971, and eventually becoming a global LNG leader.

"We are moving full steam ahead to develop the North Field



Saad bin Sherida al Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and CEO of QatarEnergy speaks at the new brand identity launch event

by building state-of-the-art LNG trains that would take our leadership position further with a production capacity of 126mn tonnes per annum by 2027. Not only that, but we are making sure that we protect our environment by keeping our carbon footprint at a minimum. This is why we are utilising sophisticated carbon sequestration methods to capture and sequester 9mn tonnes of CO₂ per annum by the end of this decade," the minister said.

Kaabi further said, "Natural gas is our core business, and we are conducting that in the most responsible way. Natural gas is

also part of the solution in the ongoing energy transition and that it will be a requirement for sustaining the development of the world for at least a few decades."

"Becoming QatarEnergy reflects our understanding of the global changes and our response to the need to protect our planet and environment. Not only will our LNG projects bring additional cleaner energy to customers across the globe, but we will continue our heightened commitment to our central role in the global energy transition," he said. QNA

Macron announces new €30bn plan to re-industrialise France

Paris, France - President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday announced a plan worth €30bn to re-industrialise France, saying the country should reclaim its crown as a global leader in innovation.

Speaking at the Elysee Palace six months before a presidential election and one month ahead of a UN climate summit, Macron said France had taken key decisions '15-20 years later than some of our European neighbours' and now needed 'to become a nation of innovation and research again'.

The spending was to address 'a kind of growth deficit' for France brought on by insufficient investment in the past, he told an audience of company leaders and university students.

France, he said, needed to return to 'a virtuous cycle' which consisted of 'innovating, producing and exporting and in that way finance our social model' as part of a new 'France 2030' plan.

Over the next decade, France would aim to become a global leader in green hydrogen, which companies and governments are



French President Emmanuel Macron (AFP)

increasingly putting at the centre of efforts to de-carbonise economic sectors that rely most on fossil fuels for their energy needs.

Macron singled out steel production, cement and the chemical sector, as well as truck, bus, rail and air transport.

He said that following the pandemic, 'which put us face to face with our vulnerabilities', France had to work towards French and European productive autonomy. France also needed to invest heavily in medical research, Macron said. After the global COVID outbreak, French

pharma giants were unable to come up with a vaccine.

The aim was now for France to develop 'at least 20' biotech drugs against cancers, as well as against emerging and chronic illnesses, including those associated with ageing, Macron said.

"We need to concentrate all our efforts on this objective," he said.

A French presidential official, who asked not to be named, said Macron had laid out the plan in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis 'which showed our vulnerability and our dependence on foreign

countries in some key sectors but also the importance of innovation which can change everything'.

French officials believe that France needs to act rapidly to close the gap and not surrender more ground to emerging powers, notably China.

French carmakers, which Macron said had suffered 'cruelly' over the past 30 years, should redirect their efforts towards cleaner vehicles, with a target of putting 2mn electric or hybrid cars on the roads.

Macron said France would also invest €1bn by 2030 in 'disruptive innovation' to produce atomic power, notably by designing small-size nuclear reactors with improved nuclear waste management.

Disruptive innovation was also needed in agriculture, where €2bn would be earmarked for new technologies, he said, especially in robotics.

France should start 'a new revolution' in food production which should be 'healthy, sustainable and traceable'.

AFP

Georgieva keeps IMF post

Washington, US - Kristalina Georgieva was secured in her job at the helm of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday, after the Washington-based crisis lender's board reaffirmed its confidence in the scandal-hit Bulgarian economist.

Georgieva's role at the institution was called into question after the September 16 publication of the findings of an investigation carried out at the request of the ethics committee of the World Bank, where Georgieva had previously held a senior role.

The investigation by law firm WilmerHale concluded that Georgieva had manipulated data in favour of China while at the global body, which she has denied.

Drawn out uncertainty over whether Georgieva would keep her job ended Monday when the IMF board said it 'reaffirms its full confidence in the managing director's leadership and ability to continue to effectively carry out her duties'.

'The executive board considered that the information presented in the course of its review did not conclusively demonstrate that the managing director played an improper role regarding the Doing Business 2018 Report when she was CEO of the

World Bank,' its statement read.

The board added it would 'meet to consider possible additional steps to ensure the strength of institutional safeguards'.

WilmerHale's controversial findings centre on the drafting of the 2018 and 2020 editions

table and give a press conference on Wednesday.

The storm at the top of the fund could pull focus from topics nominally at the top of the agenda, such as threats to global economic growth and helping countries bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Georgieva welcomed the IMF board's statement, reiterating that the allegations were 'unfounded'.

"This has obviously been a difficult episode for me personally," said the 68 year old, who took the helm of the IMF in October 2019 after Christine Lagarde departed to lead the European Central Bank.

"I want to express my unyielding support for the independence and integrity of institutions such as the World Bank and IMF; and my respect for all those committed to protecting the values on which these organizations are founded," she said in a statement.

While France, Britain and other European countries expressed their support for Georgieva, the United States has been more reluctant to keep her in post.

It was only at the end of nearly four weeks of discussions that Washington agreed to retain Georgieva.

AFP



Kristalina Georgieva

of the World Bank report that ranks countries according to their ease of doing business.

The push came while bank leadership was engaged in sensitive negotiations with Beijing over increasing the bank's lending capital.

'Difficult episode'

Uncertainty over Georgieva's future threatened to overshadow the IMF and World Bank fall meetings that kicked off on Monday, with Georgieva due to speak during a round-

Natural gas demand rising in Arab region

Kuwait City, Kuwait - The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) said on Monday that demand for natural gas in the wider Arab region is rising at its 'fastest' pace, with a steady annual growth rate of 4.8 per cent.

Demand for gas in the region eclipses global demand by more than twofold, the second highest in the world in terms of growth, second only to the Asia-Pacific, the Kuwait-based group said amid virtual talks hosted by *Petroleum Economist* journal over

LNG output in the region.

Power generation in the region forms 52 per cent of total consumption, with the region's energy transition plans heavily reliant on LNG import projects, chief among them Arab states' forays into LNG terminal construction, added the bloc.

It espoused the merits of LNG output expansion in improving energy efficiency by up to 39 per cent as part of efforts to reduce dependence on oil and petroleum products.

WAM



CELEBRATE
WORLD PASTA DAY with
OCTOBER 25th 2021



Sale & Marketed by




NBO partners with MoL to offer life skills course

National Bank of Oman (NBO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to provide a supplementary course for graduates of the national leadership development programme, Etimad. Utilising the bank's Academy of Excellence and in cooperation with non-profit foundation Outward Bound Oman (OMO), it's part of a wider move to upskill and empower Omanis in the private sector.

The agreement was signed by H E Sayyid Salim Musallam al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Human Resources Development in the Ministry of Labour, and Abdullah bin Zahran al Hinai, chief executive officer of NBO.

H E Sayyid Busaidi said, "Our priorities include facilitating training programmes that are compatible with Oman Vision 2040, that meet the needs of the private sector, and build local



competencies. The contribution of the private sector, represented by NBO, is highly valuable in this

regard, helping us to promote dynamic capabilities and skills that enable Oman's labour mar-

ket to compete locally and globally, while keeping pace with demographic, economic, know-

edge and technical changes."

Hinai commented, "Enhancing integration between NBO

and the government, this agreement will combine the bank's experiences in the field of human

resource development and Outward Bound Oman's proven track record in building the capacity and employability of Oman's youth. This is a unique opportunity for the participants to hone their leadership skills, team spirit, problem solving, decision-making and creativity, while overall contributing to achieving the comprehensive sustainable development goals of the sultanate."

Firmly believing in the role of the private sector in empowering young Omanis to take their place as future business leaders, NBO is part of a number of initiatives that support the government's vision for economic development. As well as selecting staff members to participate in Etimad, it has also signed a long-term partnership with Outward Bound Oman that will see 900 young people develop their personal skills.

Ominvest team meets with SMEs taking part in Expo 2020 Dubai

In line with its support to Omani Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and innovators participating at Expo 2020 Dubai, a team from Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest), the leading investment holding group in Oman, met with Omani SME owners and entrepreneurs at its premises this week.

The visiting entrepreneurs are amongst a group selected by the General Commission of the sultanate at Expo 2020 to showcase their products and innovations at the Omani Pavilion. The group was accompanied by general manager of Oman Trading Platform (Taiseer), Nada Bassam, who manages the SMEs participation at Expo 2020 Dubai.

Some members of the executive management at Ominvest met with the SMEs group in an engaging session at Ominvest's offices. Anwar al Jabri, group president - Investment Banking at Ominvest and CEO of Jabreen Capital, shared insight on the importance of mobility, resilience, and dedication in taking one's business forward. He led an engaging discussion with the attendees on how to face market challenges and identify the right opportunities for growth, while



sharing some inspiring stories.

Dr Shamsa al Sheibani, vice president - Economic Research at Ominvest, gave a brief about the group and its portfolio companies; she also shed light on practical tips for entrepreneurs and SME owners to achieve growth and sustainability for their businesses.

Lina Hussein, vice president - Corporate Communications briefed the audience on Ominvest's purpose and values, the group's social impact initiatives, and the ongoing collaboration between Ominvest and the General Commission of the sultanate at Expo 2020.

As per its Strategic Partner-

ship agreement with the General Commission, which was signed in April this year, Ominvest has been extending support to Omani SMEs within the framework of Al Luban Initiative. In addition, Ominvest has been working closely with the organisers on a special initiative to help identify and showcase innovative Omani products through various platforms and opportunities inside and outside the Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 in Dubai.

Commenting on this visit, Jabri said, "It's been a pleasure receiving such a promising group of Omani SME owners and innovators at our premises today. Building bridges between SMEs

and large organisations is essential, especially during the difficult times SMEs have been facing since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were very interesting products showcased by the group today; we would be happy to consider some of them for our corporate gifts and other collaboration opportunities."

He added, "We strongly believe in the important role of SMEs in the wellbeing of the economy; as such, our support to the Omani pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai has been linked to this important segment - SMEs and innovators. Showcasing their products at expo is a very important opportunity for them."

OAB's Leen receives Oman Woman of the Year Award

Leen al Atassi, head of Innovation at Oman Arab Bank (OAB), recently won the prestigious 'Oman Woman of the Year Award 2021' in the category of Innovation and Technology. The 'Oman Woman of the Year Award' awards, founded by Apex Media in 2017, recognise and honour the outstanding achievements of women who have made a difference in fields as diverse as technology, education, medicine, law, philanthropy, and sports, to name a few.

The award recipients all represent excellence, dynamism and diversity regardless of the field. Each of these women has a remarkable story to tell, whether it is beating the odds or finding new ways to set themselves apart in a male-dominated industry.

On winning the award, Leen stated, "I am honoured and humbled to receive this recognition and to be standing alongside talented women who are highly accomplished in their respective fields. This achievement would have not been possible without the support and contributions of my team and colleagues, the management of OAB, and my family. I look forward to continue to support innovation efforts within the banking industry and



across related ecosystems in line with Oman's 2040 vision."

With a career span of over 15 years in finance and banking, Leen al Atassi has supported the acceleration of OAB's Innovation agenda by introducing various platforms and initiatives that enable and promote innovation within the bank and the community such as the annual Innovation Hub hackathons, the innovation university roadshows across Oman, the inception of the first-of-its-kind Innovation Lab in Oman and the OAB Online Learning Hub.

This approach has not only encouraged the youth to think outside the box but has also stimulated great minds to come together to develop ideas and build working solutions that would support the growth of the industry..

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the sultanate. Today, the bank operates a nationwide network of 53 branches and representative offices with 160 ATMs spread across Oman.

Ahli Islamic opens new branch in Ibri

Continuing its strategic network expansion across the sultanate, Oman's premier Islamic banking institution, Ahli Islamic has opened a new branch in the wilayat of Ibri, Dhahirah governorate.

Over the last few years, Ahli Islamic has been on a consistent, strategic roadmap of growing its presence in the market for closer customer interface, ease of engagement and to offer enhanced Sharia'a-compliant banking services to a larger customer base.

Speaking on the occasion, Yousuf al Rawahi, deputy general manager and head of Ahli Islamic, said, "At Ahli Islamic, we believe in the importance of continuing to innovate in products and enhance the level of banking services provided to our customers, to make these more comfortable and accessible to our retail and corporate customers. Our growing branch network enables us to do so, and not only helps to expand our customer base, but also reaffirm ex-



isting client relationships. The new branch in Ibri reflects the bank's commitment to grow while adding value to the country and its people."

Ahli Islamic has been recognised as one of the fastest growing branch networks in Oman, providing an extensive portfolio of Sharia'a-compliant banking solutions that are compatible with the different banking needs of customers.

Ahli Islamic's new branch in Ibri is characterised by its innovative design and advanced infrastructure, like other branches of the bank, in addition to having well-trained team of banking professionals.

Mercedes-Benz Oman announces its latest line-up of Certified Pre-Owned cars

Representing the pinnacle of luxury and high performance, Mercedes-Benz Oman has announced its latest line-up of Certified Pre-Owned cars.

With something for everyone, the all-star range includes the nimble and athletic A 250 Sedan (model year 2020), starting at just RO16,270 incl. VAT, the intelligent and economical C 300 e (model year 2020), starting at RO19,420 incl. VAT, the ever-elegant E 200 (model year 2020), starting at just RO20,470 incl. VAT, and the inimitable GLC 300 4MATIC (model year 2021), starting at just RO26,245 incl. VAT.

Customers can get behind the wheel of their favourite model and enjoy luxurious interiors, innovative technology and an all-round great driving experience, with prices valid until December 31.

"At Mercedes-Benz Oman, we want every single customer to have the vehicle they deserve



and that suits their needs. Each car is examined inside and out followed by a road test by one of our certified and highly-trained technicians. So, whatever car they choose, they know they are getting the best quality, in addition to our signature customer service," said Shaun Michael, chief executive officer at Mercedes-Benz Oman.

Customers are invited to explore an A 250 Sedan (26,721km) in Jupiter Red with ARTICO Man-Made Leather/ Dinamica microfiber in Black as well as a C 300 e (10,032km) in Polar White with ARTICO Man-Made Leather in Saddle Brown/Black.

For those looking for 'The' executive car, an E 200 (12,941km)

is available in Designo Hyacinth Red with ARTICO Man-Made Leather in Macchiato Beige/Black. A GLC 300 4MATIC (8,628km) in Graphite Grey Metallic with ARTICO Man-Made Leather in Cranberry Red/Black is also available for those searching for a luxury SUV.

All mechanical and electrical components of the Certified Pre-

Owned vehicles go through a stringent 150-point inspection, including engine checks, fluids and on-road evaluation.

Furthermore, customers will benefit from unlimited-mileage warranty for one year that can be extended for up to two additional years, as well as 24hrs roadside assistance (selected vehicles only) and a full services history.

Muriya's Hawana Salalah to get over 10,000 European tourists

With Oman re-opening its borders to vaccinated travellers without prior approval, Muriya's Hawana Salalah, Oman's largest integrated tourism complex is welcoming European travellers for the winter season in the Governorate of Dhofar.

With a surge of interest among domestic, regional, and international markets for the concept of resort living, Hawana Salalah is collaborating with international tour operators to promote Dhofar as the most popular vacation destination in the region. Hawana Salalah is expected to welcome more than 10,000 tourists by end of 2021 as more international travellers flock to the region's only tropical getaway.

"Since its inception, Muriya has been constantly working diligently to contribute to the growth of the tourism sector in Oman in line with the government's diversification strategy. We have been hard at work for years with tour operators to attract direct flights from European cities to Salalah to help increase the flow of tourists to the entire area, but the unprecedented circumstances that the world went through in the past two years has put a hold on international travel," said Ossama Aboulalam, CEO of Muriya.



"With Oman easing travel restrictions to enable more seamless travel to the sultanate, we are witnessing more demand from European markets to travel to Salalah as well as other international destinations and that is good news for everyone in the tourism and hospitality industry."

Hawana Salalah offers tourists, visitors, and home buyers a unique destination that is a celebration of Dhofar's rich heritage, legendary culture, and enchanting spirit. Brimming with life all year-round and the winter season is no

exception, Hawana Salalah boasts a picturesque 170-berth marina, surrounded by a variety of hospitality establishments including the 577-room Fanar Hotel & Residences, the 87-room Juweira Boutique Hotel and the beachfront 19-hut, Souly Lodge.

Another key hotel in the destination is the 422-room Salalah Rotana Resort, which will reopen in December 2021. In addition, Hawana Salalah creates a vibrant atmosphere for guests to enjoy a wide range of restaurants, shops and leisure facilities. The

Hawana Aquapark, open on weekends, is a major aquatic attraction for local and international visitors featuring 65,600sqm of pure adventure and fun as well as a food court.

The low-density and ever evolving destination is complemented by a number of freehold real estate projects offering flexible payment plans for people looking to make a home or for investment including the communities of Forest Island, Hawana Lagoons, Laguna Gardens, Marina Bay, and Signature Villas.

Joining this thriving destination is the Laguna Gardens – Azure project, which was launched in September 2021, where exclusive living meets a resort lifestyle full of discovery. Designed as a celebration of the finer things in life, the new project features private gardens and swimming pools overlooking the lagoon and it includes one-bedroom twin villas, as well as two- and three-bedroom stand-alone villas, with brilliantly designed spacious living spaces, vast gardens with unparalleled views across the lagoons.

OOC campaign to support cyclone victims

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), will organise a voluntary campaign entitled Sports Brings Us Together to help those affected by the exceptional climatic conditions in North Batinah governorate and to contribute in removing dust from neighbourhoods and streets as a result of the damage caused by the cyclone.

This campaign comes in solidarity and cooperation with the citizens and residents who have been affected by the exceptional climatic conditions that the sultanate faced during the past days in the wilayats of

North and South Batinah, and within the framework of the efforts undertaken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and various institutions. In this regard, OOC believes in the noble values on which sport is based in societies.

A number of board members, staff, sport federations, sports committees, athletes and those interested in sports will participate in the campaign. All individuals, citizens or residents wishing to participate, can register in the campaign to lend a helping hand and contribute in providing all kinds of support to those affected.

Bank Muscat wins 3 awards from Asian Banking and Finance

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been awarded three prestigious accolades by Asian Banking and Finance. The awards include Innovative Deal of the Year (Oman), Mergers and Acquisitions Deal of the Year (Oman) and Corporate & Investment Bank of the Year (Oman). The awards are a tribute to the innovative funding solutions delivered by the investment banking team of the bank to its clients on a consistent basis across market cycles.

The bank is a market leader in financial advisory and fundraising solutions encompassing corporate finance, project finance, debt capital markets, debt refinancing and restructurings, IPOs, structured financings, quasi-equity financings, private placements, as well as mergers and acquisitions in the sultanate. Its team comprises some of the most experienced investment bankers in Oman having a wide experience across sectors and geographies. The bank prides itself in its intricate understanding of complex financing requirements of its clients, offering unmatched financial expertise and guidance, innovative funding solutions and a wide array of services for various customer needs.

Speaking about the unique achievement, Saleh Nasser al Habsi, deputy general man-



ager, Investment Banking, said, "Bank Muscat is delighted to win these three prestigious awards from Asian Banking and Finance, which recognises the innovative funding solutions and consistent delivery of financial advisory and fundraising mandates by the bank. As the preferred "go-to" deal maker and financial advisor for many prestigious clients including the Government of Oman and large corporate entities, we are privileged and are focused on further improving upon the high standards of professionalism achieved by the bank and deliver customised and executable solutions for our customers' unique needs."

Bank Muscat has the largest banking network in Oman and enjoys a 35 per cent market share in Oman, with assets over US\$32bn. The bank has an extensive network of correspondent banking relationships across the world, which is instrumental in channelising trade business and raising funds on favorable financing terms from lenders in the GCC, Europe, USA, Asia and Africa.

Ooredoo named Oman's 'Best Telecom Company 2021'

A testament to its role as an industry-leader, Ooredoo has been named the Best Telecommunications Company Oman 2021 at the World Business Outlook Awards.

Based on a number of criteria including industry mastery, ac-

complishments, and strategies for success, it's the latest in a string of acknowledgements Ooredoo has received this year, including most recently the Most Socially Responsible Telecom Company - Oman at the 2021 International Finance Awards, and

Best Telecom Company and Best Employee Experience at the Global Business Review Magazine 2021.

Guided by its vision to enrich peoples' digital lives, Ooredoo's mission is to leverage the power of communications to stimulate

growth and social development, to support Oman's Vision 2040 and accelerate the road to being a fully digital economy.

It continues to provide an enhanced experience for both the Ooredoo family and its customers across the sultanate, positioning

itself as one of Oman's most recognised and admired companies and a cornerstone of the community. It continues to stay ahead of the curve by introducing new ways to hone and improve communications and cater to the needs of an ever-evolving market.

Badr Al Samaa holds webinar on World Heart Day

Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, on the occasion of World Heart Day, organised a heart awareness webinar.

Dr Mazin bin Jawad al Khabouri, director general - DGPHE, Ministry of Health, was the chief guest of the event and Dr Kadhim Jaffer Sulaiman, senior consultant cardiologist, National Heart Centre, MoH, DG-Specialised Medical Care, MoH and immediate past president Oman & Gulf Heart Association was the guest of honour.

Dr Benny Panakkal, senior consultant interventional cardiologist, group medical director, Badr Al Samaa, was the keynote speaker. The event was attended by the managing director of Badr Al Samaa, Dr P A Mohammed, executive director Firasath Hassan and senior management of



Badr Al Samaa, doctors, and general public.

Dr Suman O S, specialist cardiologist, presented the welcome note and welcomed all the panelists and attendees.

Dr Mohammed said, "This year's World Heart Day theme inspires us to provide equal op-

portunities and facilities for every heart patient and communities. It tells us the importance of preventive heart care."

He added, "We at Badr Al Samaa understand this responsibility better. Through our wide network of hospitals and medical centres, we are reaching to larger

population with quality and affordable healthcare services. I urge to everyone to take a pledge on this World Heart Day to adopt heart healthy practices: good diet, exercises, quitting bad habits and regular heart screening.

Dr Khabouri said that this event shows the importance

Badr Al Samaa Group of hospitals places on continuous medical development and raising awareness on cardio-vascular diseases. He said Badr Al Samaa being the largest private healthcare provides has widest network and have cardiology services in almost all centres. He appreciated Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals for its efforts in preventive heart care and inspired to take more steps towards this direction.

Dr Kadhim Jaffer Sulaiman said re-admission rates in cardiology are on the higher side. He said most cardiac diseases are preventable, raising awareness and regular preventive screening will help decrease the burden of cardiac diseases. Adapting heart healthy routines are not difficult and everything is possible.

How Mazda won the greatest motorsport event

Thirty years ago, at 4pm on Sunday June 23, 1991, as Johnny Herbert flew down the Mulsanne Straight in his orange Mazda 787B, he received crackly news over the team radio.

Herbert and his Mazdaspeed teammates—Mazda's motorsports subsidiary—had won the brutal 24 Hours of Le Mans, endurance racing's most famous event.

It was an enormously popular and historic victory. No other rotary-powered car had ever won the race before, and Mazda was the first Japanese manufacturer to win the event.

On the 30th anniversary of this famous victory.

The belief in their engine, unmatched by any other auto competitors, proved to be the most testing decision for the race ever!

Only one year ahead of Mazda's 100th anniversary, this year marked the 30th anniversary of the big win.

Mazda's heart-pumping victory in the non-stop 24 hours Le Mans, speaks for itself. The brand was crowned as the first Japanese auto manufacturer to own the 59th Le Mans.

Let's jump back to the adrenaline-rushing journey of winning Le Mans from the start of the longest lap to the end of the most cherished lap.

How it happened

Mazda's engine made its way to Le Mans for the first time in 1970.

Things took a change for the better in 1983 for Mazda when Takayoshi Ohashi's Mazda auto Tokyo team became the subordinate of Mazda and was re-named as Mazdaspeed.

The 1990 race, however, had an end result of Mazda's 767B finishing 20th.

Known for its 'never stop challenging' moto, Mazda took this as an opportunity to go back to the drawing board, learn, improve and make a timely comeback!

Mazda 787B was born with

the original version of the engine being a 13B with a displacement of 554ccx2 rotors. Mazda upgraded the power output of the 13J by more than 10 per cent.

1990, Mazda continued refining the intake system, the ignition and introduced a control system that made the use of fuel more efficient. The power output of the four-rotor RE engine pumped up to 700PS. 787B became faster and lighter with just 830kgs.

Numbered 55, it finished 362 laps on the 13.6km long Circuit de la Sarthe, approximately 4,923km.

Volker Weidler, Germany, Johnny Herbert, UK and Bertrand



Gachot, France - These track leaders were at the helm of driving the 787B assigned to different laps. To know more about Mazda's victory at Le Mans, visit https://mazdastories.com/en_us/innovate/how-mazda-won-24-hours-of-le-mans/

Never stop challenging

Racing is in Mazda's DNA and it never stops chasing perfection. Le Mans was the representation of having the drive in yourself under any circumstance and being driven over any limits. This is what our current models represent and this is what our future models will embody.

Pro-Iran groups denounce Iraq election

‘This is the biggest scam and rip-off the Iraqi people have been subjected to in modern history’

Baghdad, Iraq - Two days after Iraq's legislative election, pro-Iranian Shiite Muslim parties and armed groups on Tuesday denounced early poll results as 'manipulation' and a 'scam'.

Sunday's parliamentary election - the fifth in the war-scarred country since the 2003 US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein - was marked by a record low turnout of 41 per cent.

Parties representing Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority have dominated Iraqi politics since the aftermath of the invasion, but early results from Sunday's vote deepened a rift between powerful factions within that camp.

According to preliminary results from the electoral commission, the biggest winner was the movement of Shiite cleric and political maverick Moqtada al Sadr, which increased its lead to 73 of the assembly's 329 seats.

This boosts the leverage in choosing Iraq's next prime minister and Cabinet for Sadr, a one-time leader of a militia that fought against US troops who has recently adopted a more nationalistic and anti-Iran rhetoric.

Losses were booked by pro-Iranian Shiite parties with links to the armed groups that make up the paramilitary network known as Hashed al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilisation Forces.

The Fatah (Conquest) Al-



Supporters of Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada al Sadr celebrate in Baghdad's Tahrir square on Monday following the announcement of parliamentary elections' results (AFP)

liance, previously the second largest bloc in parliament, suffered a sharp decline from 48 to only about a dozen seats, ac-

cording to observers and results compiled by AFP.

"We will appeal against the results and we reject them," said

a joint statement by several of the Shiite parties, including the Fatah Alliance.

"We will take all available

measures to prevent the manipulation of votes," added the statement also signed by the party of former prime minister

Haider al Abadi, who served from 2014 to 2018.

The head of the EU observer mission, Viola von Cramon, said

the vote had been 'calm and orderly' and that 'there was nothing technically wrong with the majority of polling stations observed'.

Results from some polling stations were still being counted, nearly 48 hours after voting ended.

One of Hashed's most powerful factions, the Hezbollah Brigades, rejected the election as 'the biggest scam and rip-off the Iraqi people have been subjected to in modern history'.

"The Hashed al-Shaabi brothers are the main targets," its spokesman Abu Ali al Askari charged.

The Hashed was formed in 2014 and went on to play a major role in the defeat of the Islamic State group, which had expanded its self-declared 'caliphate' centred in Syria and taken over a third of Iraq.

The Hashed has since been integrated into Iraq's state security apparatus, and many lawmakers linked to it were elected to parliament in 2018.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi brought forward the vote from 2022 to appease a youth-led protest movement that erupted two years ago against graft, unemployment, crumbling public services and Iranian influence in politics.

AFP



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (AFP)

Iran on agenda in Israeli PM's visit to Putin

Jerusalem - Israel's Prime Minister will fly to Sochi in Russia next week to meet President Vladimir Putin for talks including on Iran's nuclear programme, Naftali Bennett's office said on Tuesday.

Moscow is one of the signatories to a 2015 deal that saw sanctions relief for Iran in exchange for limits to its nuclear capability.

"The two will discuss a series of diplomatic, security and economic issues involving both countries, as well as important regional matters, primarily Iran's nuclear programme," Bennett's office said.

Former US president Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018 and reimposed harsh sanctions, leading Tehran to gradually roll back its commitments under the agreement.

Bennett told the United Nations General Assembly last month that Israel 'will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon'.

Tehran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes.

The UK, China, France and Germany are also parties to the 2015 agreement. After US President Joe Biden took office

The two leaders will discuss diplomatic, security and economic issues as well as Iran's nuclear programme

talks began in Vienna in April to revive the deal but they have been suspended since June when Iran elected ultra-conservative Ebrahim Raisi as president.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in Moscow last week, during talks with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, that he expects discussions to start again in Austria soon.

Lavrov said the negotiations 'should be resumed as soon as possible' and called on Washington to return to its obligations under the accord.

This will be Bennett's first official visit to Russia since taking office in June, after his predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu's 12 straight years as prime minister.

AFP

Fifteen migrants drown off Libyan coast, says UNHCR

Tripoli, Libya - Fifteen migrants drowned after two boats capsized off Libya in the latest 'tragic loss of life' on the perilous sea route to Europe, the UN refugee agency said late Monday.

"Bodies of 15 persons recovered as two boats arrived at Tripoli Naval Base this evening," UNHCR Libya tweeted.

"The passengers had set off from Zwara and Alkhoms the night before," it added.

The agency said 177 survivors were receiving aid and medical attention from the UNHCR and its partners.

It tweeted images showing survivors arriving at the base, huddled under blankets.

The incident is the latest in a series of shipwrecks and deaths off the coast of the North African country.

Libya is a major point of departure for desperate migrants seeking to reach Europe, many of



African migrants gather at a makeshift shelter in the Libyan capital Tripoli's suburb of Ain Zara on Monday (AFP)

them from sub-Saharan African countries.

Tens of thousands board unseaworthy boats every year in attempts to reach Italian shores 300km away.

At least 1,010 migrants died at sea en route to Europe between the start of the year and the end of August, up from 398 during the same period last year, according to figures published by the International Organization

for Migration.

The latest deaths come days after six migrants were shot dead at an overcrowded detention facility in Tripoli following mass arrests targeting migrants.

Doctors without Borders said 5,000 migrants and refugees had been swept up in 'violent mass arrests' and detained in squalid conditions.

AFP

World's oldest white rhino dies in Italian zoo aged 54

Rome, Italy - Toby, the world's oldest white rhino, has died at the age of 54 in a zoo in northern Italy, a spokeswoman for the establishment said on Tuesday.

'Nonno Toby' (Grandpa Toby) passed away on October 6, Elisa Livia Pennacchioni of the Parco Natura Viva, a zoo near the northern city of Verona, told AFP.

"He collapsed on the floor on the way back to his nighttime shelter, and after about half an hour, his heart stopped," she said.

Toby will be embalmed and put on display at the Muse science museum in Trento, where he will join Blanco, a white lion from the zoo who died five years ago, Pennacchioni said.

White rhinos normally live up to 40 years when held in captivity, and up to 30 years in the wild, she said.

Toby's death, which follows the passing of his female partner Sugar in 2012, leaves the Parco



Toby, the world's oldest white rhino is pictured at the zoo (AFP)

Natura Viva with one remaining white rhino: Benno, aged 39.

Toby was a southern white rhino - only one of five rhino species that are not considered endangered, with an estimated population of around 18,000, according to the WWF.

However, there are only two examples left of the northern white rhino subspecies who live in Kenya, which are watched round-the-clock by armed guards.

AFP

Beirut blast investigator pauses probe again

Beirut, Lebanon - The Lebanon judge leading the investigation into last year's huge Beirut port blast was forced to suspend its work on Tuesday after what human rights groups have condemned as an attempt by politicians to evade justice.

It is the second time Bitar has had to suspend the investigation in the face of lawsuits filed by former ministers he had summoned on suspicion of negligence, and comes amid growing calls from top officials, including Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah, for him to be replaced.

Bitar's predecessor, Fadi Sawan, was forced to suspend his probe for the same reason before he was finally removed in February in a move widely condemned as political interference.

Human rights groups and relatives of blast victims fear that the latest suspension is a prelude to Bitar's removal, which would further derail the official inquiry



A dusk aerial view of the devastated port area of Beirut in darkness during a power outage on Monday (AFP)

into the country's worst peacetime tragedy.

Speaking to AFP on Tuesday, a court official said Bitar had been forced to pause the probe pending a ruling by the Court of Cassation on a lawsuit filed by former ministers Ghazi Zeaiter and Ali Hasan Khalil, both of whom Bitar had summoned for interrogation this week.

Shortly before he was notified of the latest lawsuit, Bitar had is-

sued an arrest warrant against Khalil, a former finance minister and member of the Hezbollah-allied Amal movement led by parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a court official said.

The warrant was issued after Khalil failed to show up for questioning on Tuesday, with his attorney appearing in his place to request more time to mount a defence, the court official added.

The arrest warrant is the sec-

ond to be issued by Bitar after one last month against former public works and transport minister Youssef Fenianos, who also failed to attend a hearing.

Bitar was also scheduled to question Zeaiter, a former public works minister, and former interior minister Nohad Machnouk within the next 24 hours before the suspension came into force.

The investigator was hoping to complete a series of interroga-

tions before parliament begins its session on October 19, after which several suspects will benefit from parliamentary immunity.

"The course of action taken by the politicians in the Beirut blast case is becoming a parody of itself," said Aya Majzoub of Human Rights Watch.

"The accused politicians are case shopping, filing all the complaints they can think of to suspend the investigation, in every court available to them, hoping that something sticks," she said.

"It is a ludicrous attempt to evade justice."

The August 4, 2020 explosion at Beirut port killed more than 200 people, wounded thousands more and destroyed swathes of the capital.

The Lebanese investigation into the tragedy has yet to identify a single culprit.

AFP

EU pledges €1bn Afghan aid package

Rome, Italy - G20 leaders gathered on Tuesday for a virtual summit focused on addressing the looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, with the EU kicking off proceedings by announcing a €1bn aid package.

US President Joe Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among those dialling in to the meeting hosted by Italy, although Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin sent representatives.

As the talks started, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen announced an aid package to help 'avert a major humanitarian and socio-economic collapse' in Afghanistan.

The money adds €250mn to a €300mn sum previously announced by the EU for urgent humanitarian needs, with the remainder going to Afghanistan's neighbouring countries taking in Afghans fleeing the Taliban, a statement said.

It stressed that the EU funds are 'direct support' for Afghans and would be channelled to international organisations working on the ground, not to the Taliban's interim government which Brussels does not recognise.

EU development aid - different from humanitarian aid - remains frozen.

After a previous G7 meeting on Afghanistan following the August takeover by the Taliban, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi had been pushing for a broader discussion involving other world powers.



Foreign diplomats and Taliban delegation hold joint face-to-face talks in Qatar's capital Doha on Tuesday as Afghanistan faces a major socio-economic collapse (AFP)

The G20 includes the United States, EU, China, Turkey, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia among others.

Tuesday's conference came as the Taliban held their first face-to-face talks with a joint EU-US delegation in Qatar, as the hardline Islamists continue their diplomatic for international support.

EU spokeswoman Nabila Massrali said the meeting would 'allow the US and European side to address issues' including free passage for people wanting to leave, access for humanitarian aid, respect for the rights of

women and preventing Afghanistan becoming a haven for 'terrorist' groups.

"This is an informal exchange at technical level. It does not constitute recognition of the 'interim government'," she said.

The Taliban badly need assistance as Afghanistan's economy is in a parlous state with international aid cut off, food prices rising and unemployment spiking.

The regime, still yet to be recognised as a legitimate government by any other country, is also facing a security threat from the Islamic State-Khorasan

The Taliban badly need assistance as Afghanistan's economy is in a parlous state with international aid cut off and food prices rising

(IS-K) group, who have launched a series of deadly attacks.

"We want positive relationships with the whole world," the Taliban's acting Foreign Minister

Amir Khan Muttaqi said at an earlier event in Qatar.

"We believe in balanced international relations. We believe such a balanced relationship can save Afghanistan from instability," said Muttaqi, who led the Taliban delegation on Saturday for the first in-person talks with US officials since the American pullout.

Afghanistan's boys were allowed to return to secondary schools three weeks ago, but girls have been told to stay at home along with women teachers in much of the country, though they can attend

primary school.

Asked about the exclusion of girls, Muttaqi said schools had been closed because of COVID-19 - a threat he said had lessened.

"COVID-19... has been controlled and incidences are very few, and with the reduction of that risk, opening of schools has already started and every day it is increasing," he said.

Muttaqi also insisted there was no discrimination against the Shiite community and claimed that IS-K was being tamed.

"Whatever preparations they

had made have been neutralised 98 per cent," he said.

IS-K claimed a bombing of a Shiite mosque that killed more than 60 people on Friday, the deadliest attack since the US pullout.

Underlining the shaky security situation, the US and Britain warned their citizens on Monday to avoid hotels in Afghanistan.

Spain was to organise a second evacuation flight for Afghans on Tuesday after flying 84 from Pakistan to a base near Madrid on Monday.

AFP

North Korea's Kim Jong Un blames US for tensions

Seoul, South Korea - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has blamed the United States for tensions on the peninsula and accused the South of hypocrisy, state media reported on Tuesday, as he opened an exhibition showcasing his nuclear-armed country's weapons.

The 'wrong judgment and acts' of the US meant instability could not be resolved, he said in an address to the 'Self-Defence 2021' display, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

Pyongyang is under multiple international sanctions over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, which have made rapid progress under Kim.

In 2017, it tested missiles that can reach the whole of the continental United States and carried out its most powerful nuclear explosion to date. Pyongyang says it needs its arsenal to protect itself against a US invasion.

Analysts say North Korea is seeking to normalise its status as a nuclear power.

The Biden administration has repeatedly stated that it has no hostile intent towards Pyongyang, but Kim said, "Its behaviours provide us with no reason why we should believe in them."

"I wonder if there is any person or state who believes in its claim," he added according to KCNA, "And, if any, I am curious to know who they are."

But he insisted that North Korea's weapons were for self-defence and not aimed at any particular country.

Pictures carried by state



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks during the opening ceremony of the 'Self-Defence-2021' exhibition in Pyongyang on Monday (AFP)

media showed Kim at the exhibition in front of the gigantic intercontinental ballistic missile revealed at a night-time military parade last year.

He was also shown sitting smoking with senior officials and officers, with huge photo portraits of the leader in military uniform hung in the exhibition hall.

His address came after North Korea in recent weeks tested a long-range cruise missile, a train-launched weapon, and what it said was a hypersonic warhead.

In 2018, Kim became the first North Korean leader ever to meet a sitting US president at a Singapore summit.

But the talks process has been largely at a standstill since a second meeting in Hanoi the following year collapsed over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in return.

Last week, Pyongyang and Seoul reconnected their cross-border hotline in a sign of thawing ties, with only a few months left in office for South Korea's pro-engagement President Moon Jae-in.

But Kim accused Seoul of 'avaricious ambition' and a 'double-dealing, illogical and brigandish' attitude.

AFP

Five suspected militants killed as violence escalates in Kashmir

Srinagar, India - Government forces killed five suspected rebels in India-administered Kashmir, police said on Tuesday, a day after militants shot dead five soldiers.

It comes as the restive territory - contested by nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan - is hit by a string of civilian shootings, with seven killed last week in attacks claimed by anti-India militant group The Resistance Front (TRF).

Police said the five men were killed in two separate incidents in the southern Shopian area of the Muslim-majority region.

Three of those killed were members of the TRF, police alleged, saying one of them was responsible for the death of a street hawker last week.

Kashmir's top army officer, Lt Gen Devendra Pratap Pandey,



An Indian paramilitary trooper stands guard in Srinagar on Tuesday (AFP)

said the military operations were not connected to the civilian killings.

"I would not like to connect these operations with any of the events that took place in Srinagar or elsewhere," Pandey said.

It comes after five soldiers were killed on Monday in a

mountain pass near the Line of Control (LoC) dividing the area from Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

It was the deadliest attack on military forces in the area since a 2013 ceasefire along the LoC was renewed in February.

Two suspected rebels also

died in separate incidents on Monday, with one of them blamed by police for killing a taxi driver last week - allegations disputed by his family.

Tensions have soared after Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government revoked Kashmir's semi-autonomy in August 2019.

Nearly 200 people, including 157 soldiers and rebels, have been killed in the violence in Kashmir this year so far, according to an AFP tally.

At least 29 civilians - including workers from pro-India political parties - have been shot dead in the past ten months, authorities said.

The latest civilian killings have been condemned in Kashmir and across the country, including by politicians from all sides.

AFP

Russia warns of 'new aggravations' in US ties

Moscow, Russia - Russia on Tuesday warned that ties with the United States faced the threat of 'new aggravations', as talks with visiting US official Victoria Nuland ended with no breakthrough.

The discussions held behind closed doors saw Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov and US officials led by Nuland discuss a long-running row over embassy staffing limits, among other issues.

Consular services at the US Embassy in Moscow have been severely hindered after Russia banned the mission from employing local staff as part of tit-for-tat sanctions.

Ryabkov said the talks had been 'useful' but stressed that the officials had failed to make progress on the functioning of



Victoria Nuland leaves the Russian Foreign Ministry headquarters after a meeting in Russian capital Moscow on Tuesday (AFP)

missions, including visas and rotation of personnel.

He warned that a lack of progress on core disagreements raised the possibility of new areas of conflict.

"There is very little progress

when it comes to the substantive part of the problems that exist," news agency Interfax quoted Ryabkov as saying. "There is a risk of new aggravations."

"Americans are not heeding our logic or our demands," state

news agency RIA Novosti quoted Ryabkov as saying.

In a statement later on Tuesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow did not want to escalate tensions but warned Washington against further pursuing 'confrontational' policies.

"We propose the removal of all restrictions that have been introduced on both sides over the past few years," the statement added.

The two sides are embroiled in many disagreements, including over the conflict in Ukraine - which Ryabkov said was not discussed.

Nuland arrived on Monday for a three-day visit that will include talks with President Vladimir Putin's foreign policy advisor Yuri Ushakov, the Kremlin said.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UK govt botched initial COVID-19 response: MPs



Britain has been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, with nearly 138,000 COVID-19 deaths - one of the highest tolls in Europe - since March last year (AFP)

London, UK - A British parliamentary report published on Tuesday said that the government's delay in locking down society when COVID-19 hit last year had cost lives and was 'one of the most important public health failures' in the country's history.

In a damning assessment, a cross-party group of MPs found that official pandemic planning was too focused on influenza and had failed to learn the lessons from prior outbreaks of SARS, MERS and Ebola.

The 151-page study, published by two parliamentary watchdog committees after months of hearings, comes ahead of an independent public inquiry into the government's coronavirus handling due to begin next year.

Britain has been hit hard by the crisis, with nearly 138,000 COVID-19 deaths - one of the highest tolls in Europe - since March last year, raising questions about why it has fared worse than many other nations.

The MPs said the government had waited too long to push through lockdown measures in early 2020.

Leading advisors had pushed a 'deliberate policy' to take a 'gradual' and incremental

LONDON CANCELS NEW YEAR FIREWORKS DUE TO PANDEMIC

London, UK - London's New Year's Eve fireworks show along the River Thames has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to concerns over COVID-19, city authorities said Tuesday.

"Due to the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our world-famous New Year's Eve display will not be held on the banks of the Thames this year," Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's office said in a statement.

The city is considering a number of "exciting options" to replace it, a spokesman added, promising that "London will be welcoming the new year in a spectacular way".

Dramatic firework displays around the London Eye observation wheel on the south bank of the Thames typically draw huge crowds from Britain and around the world.

Last year's even was cancelled due to the pandemic, although the city did lay on some unannounced fireworks along the river as well as a light show involving drones.

The Sun reported that an event including live music is set to be held in Trafalgar Square from midnight to 1:00 am, although online documents say organisers have limited numbers to under 10,000.

AFP

Decisions on lockdowns and social distancing during the early weeks of the pandemic, rank as one of the most important public health failures the UK has ever experienced

BRITISH MPS' REPORT

approach' to interventions such as social distancing, isolation and lockdowns, said the report.

That approach had been proved 'wrong' and led to a higher death toll, the lawmakers said, adding that the failure to test elderly people discharged

from hospitals into care homes early on also led to deaths.

"Decisions on lockdowns and social distancing during the early weeks of the pandemic - and the advice that led to them - rank as one of the most important public health failures the United Kingdom has ever experienced," they wrote.

Government planning for a pandemic was too 'narrowly

experienced," they wrote.

There was a 'policy approach of fatalism about the prospects for COVID-19 in the community', which contributed to the failures.

'Groupthink'

Britain had also been too slow to introduce the isolation of infected people, and mistakenly implemented 'light-touch border controls' only on countries with high COVID-19 rates when most cases were coming from France and Spain.

Government planning for a pandemic was too 'narrowly

and inflexibly based on a flu model', while ministers and scientific advisors were accused of 'groupthink' by some experts, according to the report.

Conservative MP Jeremy Hunt, a former health secretary who chairs one of the report committees, said the government had also failed to absorb the early experience of South Korea and Taiwan, which were quick to introduce mass test and trace systems.

East Asian countries with direct experience of SARS and MERS responded best in the first half of the pandemic, Hunt told BBC radio.

"We were always running to catch up," he said likening the response to a football match 'with two very different halves', pointing to the rapid launch of a successful mass vaccination campaign against COVID-19 pandemic in December.

The panel took evidence from a range of figures, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial former chief advisor Dominic Cummings, who assailed his ex-boss's handling of the crisis.

Johnson has also faced criticism over his refusal to start the public inquiry sooner.

AFP



Cape Town-based Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines is working on a messenger RNA jab based on the Moderna formula

Africa sets sights on innovative mRNA jab to help meet vaccine gap

Cape Town, South Africa - South African biotech consortium is working on a messenger RNA jab based on the Moderna formula in a ground-breaking drive to end Africa's life-threatening lack of COVID vaccines.

Cape Town-based Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines is leading a pilot project, backed by the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) and the COVAX initiative, which seeks to tweak Moderna's revolutionary drug.

The goal is an mRNA vaccine that suits poorer countries in hot climates.

It would be a tough, resilient vaccine that would not need to be stored all the time at ultra-cold temperatures - a hefty requirement in places where power cuts are a problem.

Africa is the least vaccinated continent in the world.

More than ten months after the world's first COVID-19 shot was administered and nearly two years into the pandemic itself, barely 5 per cent of eligible Africans have been fully immunised.

The problem has exposed Africa's huge dependence on imported vaccines and its tech weakness compared with Europe, China and the United States.

"The bitter lesson we've learnt throughout this pandemic is how Africa was almost 100-per cent dependent' on vaccines produced outside the continent, Richard Mihigo, the WHO's vaccination coordinator in Africa, told AFP.

The goal is an mRNA vaccine that would not need to be stored all the time at ultra-cold temperatures

Research and development at a US\$8.7mn facility started three months ago, and talks are underway Moderna for a licensing agreement to use the basic formula.

Tests within a year?

Twenty-two scientists are working on the huge challenges.

The idea is to have a 'super efficient and safe (vaccine that) ... will have a different stability and more suitable to be distributed at a temperature which is feasible for Africa', said Afrigen's managing director, Petro Terreblanche.

"It will be developed for maximum protection of the variants that is relevant for the territories where variants are rapidly surfacing," she added.

"What we are looking for is to have a second-generation vaccine," said Martin Friede of the WHO's Initiative for Vaccine Research. "We have to start with a Moderna look-alike and be as close to Moderna as we can get," he said.

"It's not a copy of Moderna." AFP

When global warming stops, seas will still rise for centuries to come

Paris, France - Even if humanity beats the odds and caps global warming at 1.5°C above preindustrial levels, seas will rise for centuries to come and swamp cities currently home to half-a-billion people, researchers warned on Tuesday.

In a world that heats up another half-degree above that benchmark, an additional 200mn of today's urban dwellers would regularly find themselves knee-deep in sea water and more vulnerable to devastating storm surges, they reported in Environmental Research Letters.

Worst hit in any scenario will be Asia, which accounts for nine of the ten mega-cities at highest risk.

Land home to more than half

the populations of Bangladesh and Vietnam fall below the long-term high tide line, even in a 2°C world.

Built-up areas in China, India and Indonesia would also face devastation.

Most projections for sea level rise and the threat it poses to shoreline cities run to the end of the century and range from half-a-metre to less than twice that, depending how quickly carbon pollution is reduced.

But oceans will continue to swell for hundreds of years beyond 2100 - fed by melting ice sheets, heat trapped in the ocean and the dynamics of warming water - no matter how aggressively greenhouse gas emissions are drawn down, the findings show.



In this file photo houses and apartments are seen under the sea level in northern Jakarta, Indonesia (AFP)

Not 'if' but 'when'

"Roughly 5 per cent of the world's population today live on land below where the high tide level is expected to rise based

on carbon dioxide that human activity has already added to the atmosphere," lead author Ben Strauss, CEO and chief scientist of Climate Central, told AFP.

Today's concentration of CO₂ - which lingers for hundreds of years - is 50 per cent higher than in 1800, and Earth's average surface temperature has al-

ready risen 1.1°C.

That's enough to eventually push up sea levels nearly 2m, whether it takes two centuries or ten, Strauss said.

The 1.5°C warming limit enshrined in the Paris Agreement that nations will try to keep in play at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow next month translates into nearly 3m over the long haul.

Unless engineers figure out how to quickly remove massive amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere, that amount of sea level rise is not a matter of 'if' but 'when', according to the study.

These are the optimistic scenarios.

"The headline finding for me is the stark difference between a 1.5°C world after sharp pollution

cuts versus a world after 3°C or 4°C of warming," Strauss said.

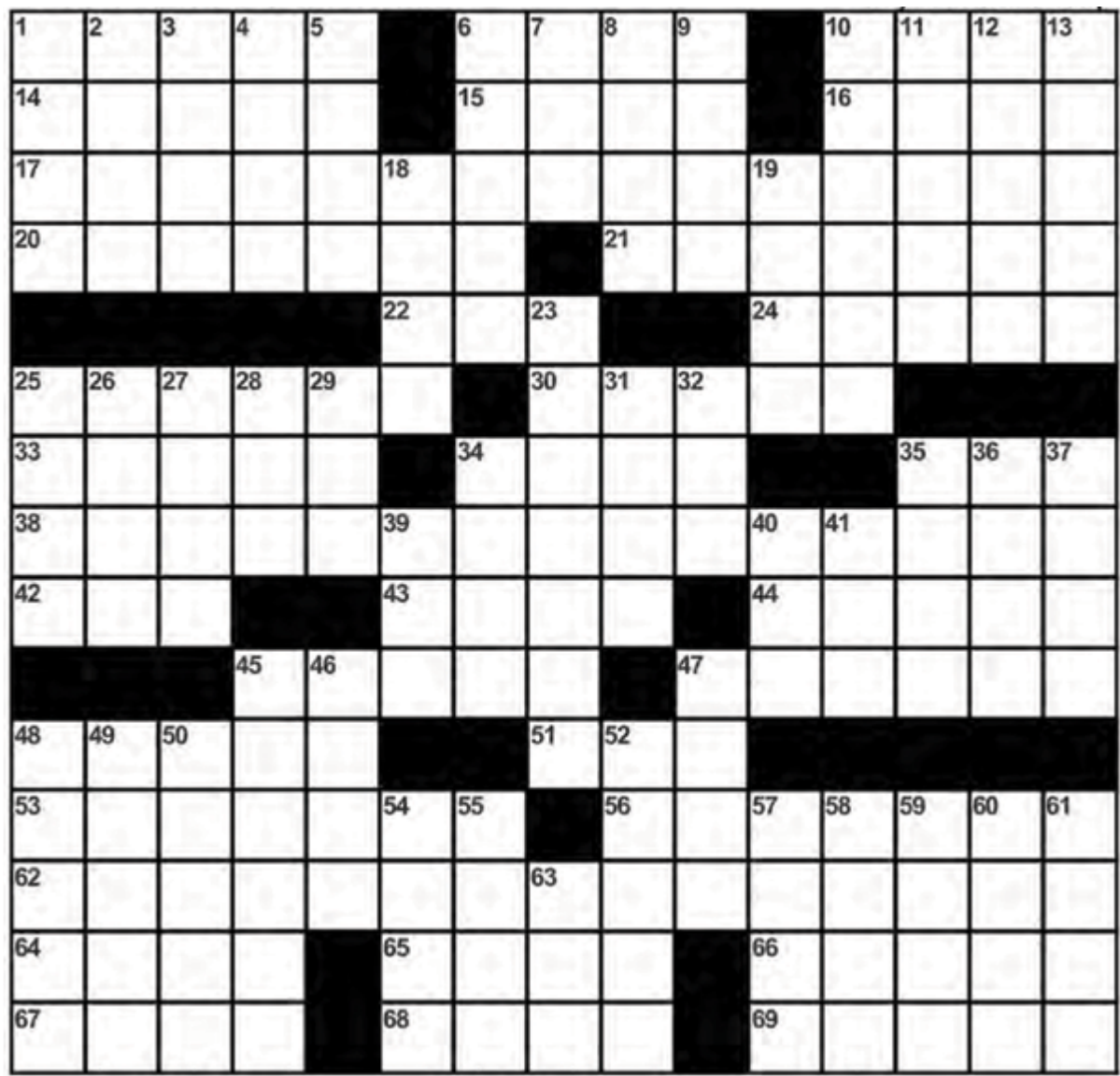
"At Glasgow and for the rest of this decade, we have the chance to help or to betray a hundred generations to come."

National carbon-cutting pledges under the 2015 Paris treaty would, if honoured, still see Earth warm 2.7°C by 2100. If efforts to reign in greenhouse gases falter, temperatures could rise 4°C or more above mid-19th century levels.

This much warming would add six to nine metres to global oceans over the long haul, and force cities currently home to nearly a billion people to either mount massive defences against future sea level rise or rebuild on higher ground.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Made public 42) _ provencale

6) "Candida" playwright 43) Brief moments, in brief

10) Handheld organizers 44) West who married a (Abbr.) Kardashian

14) "In bad company," to 45) "On the contrary!"

Bierce 47) Friendly Islands native

15) Like petting zoo animals 48) Searcher for the Golden

16) Letter before kappa Fleece

17) HDL, familiarly 51) First baseman in a comedy

20) Time in a recording studio routine

21) Marathoner's asset 53) Going wild

22) _ center (games room) 56) Short operatic piece

24) Checked out, as before a 62) Drizella and Anastasia, to heist Cinderella

25) Chocolate-coated goodie 64) Gin fizz

flavorer

30) Torch's misdeed

65) Leave out

33) Be of service 66) Map within a map

34) Home to most of Turkey 67) Festival setup

35) " _ Hate Me" (Spike Lee 68) Wal-low in dejection (movie) 69) Tattoo-moving tool

38) Gang-infested area, perhaps

DOWN

1) Umps man them

2) Skin lotion additive

3) Outback bounders, for short

4) Some gridiron players

5) Prefix with "bel" or "meter"

6) Fourteen pounds, in England

7) Rogue computer in "2001"

8) Iowa State city

9) Greeley's direction

10) "Simple Simon" vendor

11) Day of "Pillow Talk"

12) Make amends

13) All-you-can-eat

fare, maybe

18) Chile's Cape_

19) Tex-Mex munchie

23) Reliable source of profit

25) Rummy cake

26) Race track shape

27) Zilch

28) Place for recyclables

29) Soccer stadium cheer

31) BBQ fare

32)_ Paulo, Brazil

34) Gets grayer

35) iTunes selection

36) Georgetown athlete

37) Barbara who played a genie

39) Follower's suffix

40) Original "King Kong" studio

41)_ Solo of "Star Wars"

45) "Maybe later"

46) Vending machine input

47) Spelling of "Beverly Hills, 90210"

48) Tilter's combat

49) What a protractor measures

50) Place for a tan

52) Waste maker, in a proverb

54) Place for a proton

55) San _ (Italian resort)

57) Terrorist group, as Obama calls it

58) Sicilian spewer

59) Miss Trueheart of

"Dick Tracy"

60) Pre-Christmas buy

61) Sagan's specialty (Abbr.)

63) Apple seed

NOTE PAD

ENTER ZITI LIFT
MORSE IRAN ARLO
BLUEBLOODSUCKER
ETS INN PRESET
RESIGN RUNS
DECIDERS TAM
CLEAN NEST COPE
REDHEAD MISTRESS
EGGO LOON AIDES
WOE BLOSSOMS
DOER PEPPED
STEELY BRA AVA
YELLOWTAILGATER
NASHAWLS POINT
CLAY YOKE SLOTH

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Expect a few ego clashes to slow down your progress -- and be grateful that time is not a big concern of yours right now. A drama is coming, but it will be a very entertaining one for you -- because you're not going to be a part of it. You get to sit on the sidelines, enjoying the game that other people are playing. It won't be too bloody, but it will be full of low blows.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You have only just started on your latest endeavour, so if you're getting frustrated about your lack of progress, don't you dare give up! Keep digging today and you could uncover the whole beautiful thing beneath the surface. Perseverance is important today. You need to prove to yourself and to others that you don't quit when the going gets tough -- you just get going!

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It will feel like you are living out one of your most unusual dreams, when odd coincidences and funny twists of fate greet you at every new corner. So keep going around those corners! The more you move around today, the more excitement you'll get to experience! This is a great day for calling on friends or clients, visiting loved ones, or running errands.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

In theory, it should not matter what other people think of you. But in practice, you may have to take on a certain role today in order to impress one or two important people. You need them on your side in order to accomplish what you need to accomplish. This is not a question of compromising who you are -- you should never do that. Play along to get along just this once.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

When someone says something that confuses you today, don't just reject their comments and walk away. The viewpoints that don't make sense to you are the ones you should try to listen to all the more -- they are the ones that have the most to teach you. Start a conversation with someone you disagree with, and you'll find out what makes them tick.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your recent bold behaviour has gotten you noticed by a couple people -- and they are the people you want to get on your good side. The good news is that they are loving your brashness. So keep it up! Step out of your comfort zone and wield your power more forcefully. If there has ever been a time to throw your weight around, this is it.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You have strong confidence in your ideas today, so why not take the bull by the horns and put things into motion? You need to stop waiting for that person or that money and just do what you can by yourself with what you have. When you're in phases like this, when you have an insightful intelligence and tonnes of energy to go with it, you can't let anything slow you down.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

There's some money going out and if you don't know where it's going, you had better find out. Check through recent billing statements, because there's a chance that you have overlooked something. And while you're at it, look for areas in your life where you can trim back -- and not just monetarily. Make an effort to catch up with someone outside of your main circle of friends.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You may be starting to be more ambivalent about the future, especially in terms of your career. These unexpected feelings about ambition or advancement might seem like a bad omen, but they are just part of a natural growth process you're going through. You cannot always be driven and goal-oriented. You need to just walk down the path of life checking out the view.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If any financial matters look too good to be true today, you had better look again! Don't let yourself be pressured by the suits in the room. This is your money we're talking about here, and you can't let it go without knowing exactly what's going to happen next. There is a lot of uncertainty in the air, so over the next few days you need to be careful about business deals in general.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You underestimate your appeal to others. You have a powerful magnetic effect on many people, and today, you might pull some very insecure people toward you. They are looking at you as someone who can tell them the answers. Be careful that you do not promise them too much. Even though you might think you can help them, their lives are not yours to manage.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You might be in a more relaxed and passive mode right now, but that doesn't mean you should let yourself be treated like a doormat by anyone -- for any reason. If you feel like you're being taken advantage of today, stand up for yourself! Do not worry that you will come off as too aggressive if you push back when someone pushes you.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The most important ore of aluminium is

a. galena

b. calamine

c. calcite

d. bauxite

2. Most soluble in water is

a. camphor

b. sulphur

c. common salt

d. sugar

3. Which of the following was to be discovered first in the chromospheres of the sun?

a. Krypton

b. Xenon

c. Neon

d. Helium

Answers: 1.D 2.C 3.D

KIDS COLOURING

BOGGLER

E	Y	U	I
S	E	D	L
T	F	R	X
F	L	A	I

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

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

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

WORD BUILDER

A R

E B Z

I R

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

RISING FLAVOURS



SLICE OF OMAN

Omani Chef Nader al Aisari has been delighting diners from around the world at Rising Flavours, a three-storey dining hall at Dubai's Expo 2020 which showcases the culinary heritage of the GCC countries

Hubert Vaz

Piping hot Meat Mishkak with rocket salad, aromatic Omani Shuwa with Qabooli rice, delectable Mini Camel-meat Shawarma, delicious Omani Lobster Sliders, steaming hot Harees...could you ask for more when tucking into the gastronomical delights that scream 'Oman' all the way!

If Dubai's six-month-long Expo 2020 (which opened on October 1) is a shopping, trade and cultural extravaganza like never before on planet Earth, it also is an opportunity for the earthy culinary wonders, stemming from the scorching sands of Arabia, to be showcased to fine diners from the seven continents. And present at this much-touted bonanza in the Gulf is a super chef from Oman - Nader al Aisari - who is at the Rising Flavours restaurant with a few camels up his culinary sleeve.

Nader, a rather unsung culinary hero of Oman who had been one of 15 Arab contestants on Top Chef Middle East (an Arabic adaptation of the popular culinary tele-series) in 2016, hails from Ibra and is son of an aeronautical engineer. Despite having a degree in Human Resources and done a few stints in corporate giants, Nader, however, always had his heart and soul in food.

Owner and senior head chef of Tanzanite, his very own fine-dining restaurant where traditional Arab dishes are served with a modern twist, chef Nader is always on the lookout to propagate Omani cuisine. He said his participation in the Dubai Expo is purely for one cause - to get people acquainted with genuine Omani cuisine.

Confirming that he was not part of the Omani pavilion, Nader said, "I'm on my own, handpicked and selected as a self-made entrepreneur and chef. My menu comprises elevated comfort food with an Omani twist. They are my secret recipes."

Nader will be camping in Dubai over the six-month period of the Expo and will be hosting three special nights called the Chef's Table wherein only elite diners will be invited. He is there with his Demi chef from Oman and hopes to make the most of the expo to give his exclusive food the much needed international exposure.

"This is, indeed, a learning experience and I am thoroughly enjoying it," says Nader who also strongly supports the Omani belief that 'food brings people together'. In this mission of letting food connect cultures, Chef Nader will be frequently featured at Rising Flavours where he is raring to go with his secret recipes of Omani food.

The Expo is a time for foodies and gourmands to rejoice, savour gastronomic delights and fuel their appetite for culture with a culinary extravaganza with award-winning chefs and never seen before dining concepts across over 200 eateries. It provides non-stop openings of the world's greatest food concepts and visitors can try everything, including local cuisine, authentic street food and fine dining experiences.

An Expo release says, "Expo's curated concepts, pavilions and outlets include the best food and drinks the world has to offer. Expo 2020 Dubai is a stage for the globe's hottest chefs, with a stellar cast featuring the most

talked-about restaurants and busiest bars. Cleanse your palette and join us to eat your way around the world."

The Rising Flavours Food Hall is inspired by the countries of the GCC, shining a light on the region's cultures and unique take on international cuisines. The three-storey dining hall highlights the range and creativity of the Gulf region's vibrant and ever-evolving food scene and celebrates the talent born or nurtured in the GCC.

Each chef-led pod represents 9 countries, with rotating guest chefs and live cooking shows led by eminent names. Conceived by industry figureheads from the region, the ground floor is home to a regularly rotating line-up of culinary pods, featuring chefs and restaurants that demonstrate the gastronomic

variety of each GCC country, including concepts from the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. (Location: Jubilee, Food Hall 1)





ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2021



The squad

Zeeshan Maqsood (c), Aqib Ilyas, Jatinder Singh, Khawar Ali, Mohammad Nadeem, Ayaan Khan, Suraj Kumar, Sandeep Goud, Nester Dhamba, Kaleemullah, Bilal Khan, Naseem Khushi, Sufyan Mehmood, Fayyaz Butt, Khurram Khan.

OMAN'S FIXTURES

  **OCTOBER 17 - Sunday (2pm)**
vs Papua New Guinea

  **OCTOBER 19 - Tuesday (6pm)**
vs Bangladesh

  **OCTOBER 21 - Thursday (6pm)**
vs Scotland

OMAN AT T20 WORLD CUP

Best finish: First Round (2016)

Oman caused the first upset of the 2016 tournament, chasing down a target of 155 against Ireland with two wickets in hand and two balls to spare. Despite the early kickstart to their campaign they failed to reach the next stage as rain prevented a match against the Netherlands before they were brought undone by Bangladesh, losing by 54 runs (DLS).

LOOK OUT FOR

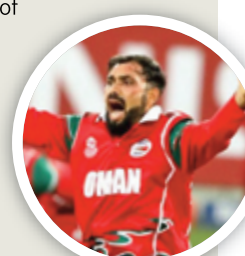
Jatinder Singh

Oman's highest run-scorer at the 2019 Qualifier, Jatinder struck 267 runs at a strike rate of 134.17, averaging 38.28, and top-scoring in three of his team's innings in the successful campaign. Jatinder compiled a vital 67 in the win over Hong Kong to qualify. Heading into the tournament in ominous white ball form via WCL 2, he has the potential to peel off big scores and do it in a hurry. His knock of 107 off 62 balls against Nepal in their recent ODI game underlined his credentials, with a potential seventh six in the innings only denied by an outstanding catch on the rope by Nepal's Rohit Paudel. Likely to pair with the more circumspect Khawar Ali at the top of the order, Jatinder has an eye other players dream of, and will have licence from captain Zeeshan Maqsood to go all-out in attack.



Bilal Khan

Needing to make early inroads with the ball, the performances of left-arm quick Bilal Khan will go a long way towards a Super 12 berth for his country. Taking the most wickets at the 2019 Qualifier (18) and only going wicketless twice in his nine matches, Bilal has a knack of claiming a wicket in his first over, with a run-up and action that perhaps belies the pace he can generate. At the tournament, Bilal joined an 11-strong list of men's players to take four-wicket hauls in consecutive matches, with efforts of four for 19 and four for 23 against Namibia and Hong Kong respectively, also on consecutive days. Famous in the Associate world for his ability to bowl yorkers almost at will, Bilal also has a knack of swinging the white ball into the right-hander, or angle smartly away. Khan has grown a reputation for being one of the hardest workers off the field, with a regimented fitness regime delivering results between the 22 yards.



BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP

From dirt grounds to the lush-green Oman Cricket Academy Ground, cricket in Oman has travelled a long way. As Oman Cricket gets ready to host the T20 World Cup opener on October 17, along with first round games, the national team is also keen to make a mark at the global showpiece event

Muscat - Once upon a time in Oman, cricket was mainly played by visiting navy crew on dirt grounds. On October 17, it will host the opening match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021, where the country's impressive cricket outfit will look to make waves.

Ahead of the tournament opener at the lush-green and spruced up Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Al Amerat on the outskirts of Muscat, here is a look at the rise of cricket in Oman, and in turn Oman's rise in cricket.

Suffice to say, cricket in the country has seen transformative change. And much of that change stems from the dreams of Late Kanaksi Khimji.

The founding chairman of the Oman Cricket (OC) in 1979, Kanaksi was the forefather of the sport in his country, and in turn,

the national team we see turning out today. Overseeing every cricketing development in the country, Kanaksi was presented the ICC Lifetime Service Award in 2011. Kanaksi sadly passed away in February, but not before Oman Cricket Ground Academy was approved as an ICC Test venue.

Kanaksi's son Pankaj Khimji, a long term member of the Oman Cricket (OC), has stepped up to take the reins. Given the responsibility of co-hosting this year's T20 World Cup, Oman will be the epicentre of cricket this month alongside the UAE.

And the jewel in the nation's cricket crown will take glowing centre stage, with the academy facility hosting Group B matches

in the first round. A total of six matches will be played in Oman from October 17-21.

Oman's responsibility to co-host the tournament is a testament to their backroom professionalism, though it's their quality on the field that makes them worthy World Cup combatants.

The national team has seen a meteoric rise comparable only with Afghanistan. From ICC Affiliate membership in 2000 and Associate Membership in 2014, Oman were playing in Division Five of the ICC World Cricket League as recently as 2016.

Miraculously, that year they qualified to play in the T20 World Cup in India, where they won their first match on tourna-

ment debut against Ireland. They have continued to take strides since, getting ODI status in 2019.

Oman return for the second time in a row to the T20 World Cup stage five years on from their tournament debut, primed by high-pressure Associate international cricket.

The final team to book their ticket for the tournament at the 2019 Qualifier, the men in red were not consistent through the campaign but held their nerve at a tense business end. Finishing second in their group, Oman, coached by Sri Lankan great Duleep Mendis took on Namibia in the semifinal playoff of the Qualifier but fell short.

With only the top-six at the Qualifier going through to the T20 World Cup, Oman found themselves in a sudden-death playoff against Hong Kong and came up clutch, winning by 12 runs in a defence of 134.

For keen observers of the emerging game, Oman's yo-yoing form at the Qualifier was nothing new. Capable of beating almost anyone at their best, consistency has been hard to find, particularly in the shortest for-

BIG MATCH

October 21: vs Scotland

Beaten by the Scots at the Qualifier in 2019, Oman's re-match with them at the World Cup on home soil is the last game of Group B, and will most likely decide who progresses to the Super 12 phase of the tournament. A match promising high scores, the result could come down to which bowling attack can keep their cool at the death.

mat. Since attaining T20I status in 2015, Oman have lost 19 of their 36 international matches, with the triumph of two wins over Ireland contrasted by a shock home defeat to Qatar in February 2020.

To make it far in this T20 World Cup they'll need to find the key to consistency. Given the surprise of home ground advantage, maybe, just maybe, they can.

(www.icc-cricket.com)

T20 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN
4 DAYS TO GO

CLASSIFIEDS

ACCOMODATION WANTED

US expat needs RO150/month apartment in Mawaleh. Preference bath tub, parking required, avoid residence with filth, disrepair, vermin, old fixtures & air cons, Please contact on oneislandgirl@gmail.com

SITUATION WANTED

Advertising professional, graphic designer, expat woman with 13 years experience. Job needed full time/part-time work from home. +968 95759485

Indian male, 20 years old. Part qualified ACCA. Valid driving licence. Looking for suitable roles. Phone: 96102932

CAR WANTED

Vehicle wanted, US expat wants used 4X4 vehicle RO800-1000, well-maintained, functioning vehicle with right documents. Please contact on oneislandgirl@gmail.com

BIRTHDAY WISHES

BAIRI SRIVALLI
October 13

Many happy returns of the day Bairi.
Best wishes from Raju, Akshaya and Burra Venu



WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com



SITUATION VACANT

Require a well-qualified and an experienced
“General Manager” for a prestigious Farm Estate.

Job requirements are:

- Looking after the day-to-day operations of the Estate.
- Manage independently the complete complex with all its amenities like the high-class housing complex, swimming pools, gymnasium, gardens with large lawns, poultry, etc.
- Must have the technical knowledge to supervise the maintenance & repairs of estate buildings, handle mechanical and electrical related issues of machinery and equipment.
- Knowledge of maintaining the Gardens and Orchards.
- Fluent in English, have attention to detail, numerical aptitude, and ability to work under pressure and strong leadership skills.

Any other personal abilities will be an added advantage. Role carries an excellent salary, allowance, full family status, housing, vehicle, annual leave with tickets for self and family, medical insurance for self and family as per Oman Labor law.

Kindly send your CV with a recent photo to:
farmgeneralmanager@gmail.com



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Definitely [one of the greatest T20 performances]. When you perform, and the team comes out winning... I am prepared to be out first ball

Sunil Narine
Kolkata allrounder, after his excellent display in the team's win over Bangalore, on Monday





(L-R) Delhi Capitals' Anrich Nortje, Shreyas Iyer and Axar Patel



Kolkata Knight Riders' Shakib al Hasan (L) and captain Eoin Morgan after their win on Monday

Form concerns for Delhi against resurgent Kolkata

QUALIFIER 2
DELHI VS KOLKATA
Sharjah, UAE - Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have been on a fairytale ride since the UAE leg of the tournament began.

Their top-order batters have scored consistently at a brisk pace and their spinners have stifled oppositions on sluggish tracks.

Even though Eoin Morgan hasn't struck form with the bat, he has led Knight Riders to six wins in the last eight matches. Now they are in Qualifier 2, one step away from the final.

Meanwhile, Delhi Capitals

have been the most consistent IPL side in recent years - they are the only ones to qualify for the playoffs in each of the last three seasons.

The key to their success has been identifying their best XI early and changing it only when forced to do so.

This season, Capitals topped the league stage despite missing Marcus Stoinis for five games. But after their defeat to Chennai Super Kings in Qualifier 1, cracks seem to have emerged in their line-up.

Suddenly, in the absence of Stoinis, their balance looks com-

prised, while R Ashwin's bowling form is giving them headaches. Can they regroup quickly on Wednesday and make it to their second successive final?

The chasing teams have won five out of seven games in Sharjah so far this season.

Moreover, four of Capitals' five losses this season have come when batting first, while Knight Riders have won on all five occasions they have chased during the UAE leg of the tournament. So it will not be a surprise if both teams are keen to bowl first.

The buzz
Kolkata Knight Riders: The West Indian is still recovering from his hamstring injury. According to West Indies coach Phil Simmons, Russell has been batting in the Knight Riders nets and is 'running at a certain level'. But given the slow nature of the Sharjah surface, Knight Riders could continue with Shakib al Hasan even if Russell regains full fitness in the next 24 hours.

Delhi Capitals: Skipper Rishabh Pant had hoped for Stoinis to be fit for Qualifier 1. That didn't happen but Capitals will be

keeping a close eye on him. If available, Stoinis will replace Tom Curran in the side.

Likely teams
Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (capt & wk), Shimron Hetmyer, Marcus Stoinis/Tom Curran, Axar Patel, R Ashwin, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Avesh Khan.

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill, Venkatesh Iyer, Rahul Tripathi, Nitish Rana, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Eoin Morgan (capt), Shakib al Hasan, Sunil

TODAY'S MATCH

QUALIFIER TWO



DELHI CAPITALS **V.S.** **KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS**

SHARJAH, 6PM

Narine, Lockie Ferguson, Varun Chakravarthy, Shivam Mavi.
Cricinfo

Maxwell and Christian slam online trolls after RCB's exit

Dubai, UAE- Australia's Glenn Maxwell and Dan Christian on Tuesday slammed online abusers following their side's unceremonious exit from the IPL.

Maxwell and Christian are a part of the star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore - captained by India's captain Virat Kohli - which crashed out on Monday after losing to the Kolkata Knight Riders.

"Some of the garbage that has been flowing on social media is absolutely disgusting!," Maxwell tweeted, calling the online abusers 'horrible people' and their behaviour 'unacceptable'.

"We are human beings who are giving our best each and every day.

"Try being a decent person maybe instead of spreading abuse," he added as he thanked the team's 'REAL fans' for their support.

Fans took to social media to vent their anger soon after the game, even targeting Christian's pregnant partner on her Instagram page.

"I didn't have a great game tonight, but that's sport. However please leave her out of it," he posted on Instagram.

AFP

'I've given my 120% to this franchise every year'

Dubai, UAE - Virat Kohli's IPL captaincy stint with Royal Challengers Bangalore, spanning 11 seasons, 2011 to 2021, came to an end on Monday with his team bowing out of IPL 2021 in the eliminator.

While he might have endured as many losses as victories in his time in charge (140 games, 64 wins, 69 losses, three ties, four no-results), through the ups and downs, Kohli said, he had given his all to the franchise as a leader, and tried to create an environment that let players express themselves.

"I've tried my best to create a culture here where youngsters could come in and play expressive cricket, play with belief. It's something I've tried to do at the Indian team level as well," Kohli told host broadcaster Star Sports after the four-wicket defeat.

"All I can say is that I've given my best. I don't know how the response has been to that, but I can vouch for the fact that I've given my 120% to this franchise every year, leading the team.

"And as I said, I will continue



Royal Challengers Bangalore's Virat Kohli during the UAE leg of the 2021 IPL on Monday

to give that effort on the field as a player from now on. It's a great time to regroup, restructure the franchise for the next three years, and bring in people who can take this culture and this franchise to the next level, moving forward."

Kohli said that he will continue to play for only Royal Challengers

I've tried my best to create a culture here where youngsters could come in and play expressive cricket, play with belief. It's something I've tried to do at the Indian team level as well

VIRAT KOHLI

in the IPL. "As I said, I don't see myself playing anywhere else. To me loyalty matters more than other things which, from the worldly point of view, seem more important. This franchise has believed in me and my commitment is to this franchise till the last day I play the IPL."

While Bangalore finished fourth in IPL 2021, still looking for their first title win, they had a largely successful season. They had nine wins in 14 games in the league stage, and only missed out on a top-two finish to Chennai Super Kings on net run rate.

Kohli's best result with Royal Challengers was in 2016, when he led them to the final. They had also reached the final in 2011, but Daniel Vettori was the regular captain that season, with Kohli standing in three league games. They finished third in 2015, and also went out in the eliminator last season. In 2012-2014 and 2017-2019, they did not make the playoffs, finishing bottom of the league twice in that latter period.

Cricinfo

ONLY PURE WATER AND PERFECT TASTE



ONLY WHAT'S ESSENTIAL



Every day, all day!





Oman's Salah al Yahyai (C) is congratulated by his teammates after scoring against Vietnam during their third round FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Tuesday (twitter: OFA)

OMAN PREVAIL IN SCRAPPY VICTORY OVER VIETNAM

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Oman coach Branko Ivankovic will be happy to see his boys pick vital three points after defeating Vietnam 3-1 for their second win in Group B of the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to Qatar at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Tuesday. However, the experienced Croatian will be a tad disappointed with his players' overall performance after the scrappy win, given that the Red Warriors had put up much-improved display in the previous three games.

Oman went into the match after suffering two successive defeats, though they began their campaign with a stunning 1-0 win against hosts Japan.



Branko Ivankovic

The home side started brightly and were rewarded for their early attacking forays with a penalty at the quarter-hour mark when Ho Tan Tai brought down defender Ali al Busaidi inside the box.

Oman's Mohsin Jawhar stepped up to take the spot-kick but skied his shot high over the cross far to the disappointment of the large crowd at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Oman Football Association

(OFA) had permitted 50% attendance for the game and the local fans turned up in good numbers to cheer their side.

Ho Tan Tai and Busaidi were again in the heart of the action as the Vietnamese midfielder dispossessed the Omani defender deep inside the latter's half, then fired an effort that was parried by goalkeeper Faiz al Rusheidi but only as far as Nguyen Tien Linh who slammed home Vietnam's opener in the 39th minute.

The visitors' joy lasted just seven minutes as Issam al Subhi, the hero of Japan's victory, pounced on a loose ball inside the Vietnam penalty box, sending a spectacular bicycle kick into the back of the net to bring Oman level in added time of the first half.

The hosts picked up right where they left off after the restart, taking the lead four minutes into the second half. Jawhar made amends for his penalty miss and did so in style curling straight from the corner kick into the roof of the net.

Coach Ivankovic's men cemented their win just after the hour mark as Do Duy Manh apprehended Jamal al Yahmadi inside the penalty area and Salah



Oman's Mohsin Jawhar (L) celebrates with his teammates after scoring against Vietnam on Tuesday

al Yahyai slotted home Oman's third of the night. The win means Oman overtake Japan into third place, with both sides having picked up six points, but Oman hold the advantage of their win in Japan as well as more goals scored. Oman next travel to China for November 11 game.

In a late game in Group B, Saudi Arabia tightened their grip at the top with a 3-2 win over China at home.

(Inputs from www.the-afc.com)

@ashokmuscat



Oman's Issam al Subhi after scoring the equaliser against Vietnam

Japan halt Australia streak; Son scores again for S Korea

2022 FIFA WORLD CUP
ASIAN QUALIFIERS

Saitama, Japan - Under-fire Japan manager Hajime Moriyasu urged his team to build on the dramatic 2-1 win over Australia on Tuesday that jolted their flatlining World Cup qualifying campaign into life.

Japan went into the crunch home match having lost two of their opening three games in Group B, but took three crucial points thanks to an 85th-minute own goal from Australia's Aziz Behich.

Japan win ended the visitors' record of 11 straight victories in one World Cup qualifying campaign.

There was stalemate meanwhile at the top of Asian qualifying Group A, with Tottenham Hotspur star Son Heung-min scoring for the second game in a row for South Korea before they conceded with 14 minutes left in a 1-1 draw in Iran.

Embattled Japan boss Moriyasu said, "We kept fighting until the end and never gave up - we are determined to get to the World Cup

and we showed that tonight. "It was a great win but we still have a lot of tough games to come. We have to make sure we use this win and build on it."

Japanese media had speculated that Moriyasu could lose his job with anything less than a win over in-form Australia, and the manager made a special point of applauding fans behind the goal after the final whistle in Saitama.

"I wanted to thank the fans for their support - they gave the players courage," he said.

"It was a very difficult game, but the fact that the players kept going to the end was down to the support they got from the crowd."

Japan went into the game knowing that anything less than a win would put them in serious danger of missing out on the World Cup for the first time since 1994.

OTHER RESULTS:

Group A

UAE 2 Iraq 2
Syria 2 Lebanon 3
AFP



A'SAFFA
BRINGS YOU
BROAST
IN 8 MINUTES

PRESENTING THE
ALL NEW THAWAQ A'SAFFA



microwave

8 minutes



ready to eat

ذَوَاق الصفاء
THAWAQ A'SAFFA

HEAT • EAT • REPEAT

ALSO AVAILABLE: CHICKEN SHUWA OMANI • CHICKEN SHUWA SPICY



HEAT & SERVE

Sheer Driving **Pleasure**



READY FOR EVERY OCCASION
WITH 0% INTEREST.

Celebrate the Hijri New Year with BMW's generous offer. Start fresh with 0% Interest and enjoy the following benefits:

- 0% Interest on 3 Years Financing*
- BMW Service Inclusive for 5 years/100,000 kms**
- BMW Warranty for 5 years/200,000 kms**
- Free Window Tinting from AutoSpa
- 1st Year Free Registration

* Terms and Conditions apply.

** Whichever comes first.

Offer valid on stock cars: Vehicles must be purchased & delivered during the offer period.

Offer valid from August 23rd till September 30th 2021

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles

Phone 9617 8383, 9617 9393 or toll-free 800 50008

www.bmw-oman.com