

P11

KOHLI HITS FORM IN BANGALORE'S BIG WIN



P15

OIL EXPLORATION UP IN THE AIR AS PRICES DIVE



P17

HARAR JUGOL, A FORTIFIED HISTORIC TOWN IN BEAUTIFUL ETHIOPIA



OMAN

HM greetings to Portugal

LISBON: President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa received at the presidential palace Shaikh Dr Ghazi bin Said al Rawas, Sultanate's accredited Ambassador to France, who presented his credentials as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the Portuguese Republic. During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the President and the Portuguese people.

DETAILS ON P2

Ministry set to receive investors

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion announced that it will begin receiving investors at its investor services halls at the main ministry premises and the affiliated directorates and departments in the governorates, starting from Tuesday (October 6), based on the decision of the Supreme Committee tasked with handling the COVID-19 pandemic. The ministry said that it is going to take a number of precautionary measures to ensure the safety of employees and investors.

DETAILS ON P3

INSIDE



INDIA AIMS TO REACH 500M WITH VACCINE BY MID-2021



RARE BOLIVIA ELECTION STAND-OFF FIZZLES AS VOTE NEARS

WEATHER TODAY

MUSCAT MAX: 39°C MIN: 27°C

SALALAH MAX: 31°C MIN: 23°C

NIZWA MAX: 38°C MIN: 24°C

SUNRISE 06.00 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR: 04:45

DHUHR: 12:00

ASR: 15:23

MAGHRIB: 17:55

ISHA: 19:05



DIVERSIFICATION POLICIES SUCCESSFULL

The Sultanate is executing a successful model of economic diversification, notably the country's trade liberalisation in goods and services. A report published by Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) pointed out that the Sultanate has pursued an active plan of development which focuses on diversification, manufacturing and privatisation. It also noted that tourism and hydrocarbon industries have become the main components of the government's economic diversification strategy.

DETAILS ON P13

LACK OF COMPLIANCE TO HEALTH NORMS LED TO RISE IN COVID-19 CASES

VINOD NAIR @vinot_nair

The total confirmed COVID-19 cases in Oman crossed the 100,000-mark on Sunday — 224 days and nearly seven months after the first two cases were reported on February 24.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Sunday announced 2,685 new cases, bringing the total confirmed cases to 101,270.

With Oman signing contract with an international company to conduct tests in the Sultanate, an increase in the number of examinations and subsequently more cases are expected in the coming days.

Speaking at a press conference recently, Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health, said while the return of employees to work and opening of commercial activities led to the spread of the virus, the main reason has been lack of compliance

SULTANATE CROSSES 100,000 MARK

‘I wanted to be part of the solution’

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH @laskshmioman

The world is waiting for a vaccine against COVID-19 as many companies are racing against time to come out with suitable shots. Human volunteers are essential for the trial. The Observer spoke to Revati Nirmal Sanzagiri from the Indian state of Goa who volunteered for the vaccine trial in India. When the COVID-19

challenge came about and the search for a vaccine, Revati knew it was important to join in the efforts.

“When I heard a human trial was starting on a vaccine that is being developed in India and that they needed volunteers, I wanted to help. I wanted to be part of the solution. It should not be that our participation would become an obstacle to the wonderful work that is being done by the scientists. I was also fortunate to have the full support of my family in this step,” said Revati.

Revati and her husband Nirmal Mangesh Sanzagiri had been in Oman for many years (from 2001 to 2015) but are now settled back in Goa.

DETAILS ON P4

with precautionary measures, especially social distancing.

As per the official statistics, the

total confirmed cases crossed the double digits on March 3, the three-digit mark on March 26, the 500-

mark on April 11, and the 1,000-mark on April 16. There are currently 9,122 active cases in the country as of October 4, while the number of COVID-19 related deaths is 977.

He added: “Deaths not just among the elderly or those with chronic diseases, we have lost people in the age group 15-17.”

A total of 723 Omani succumbed to the virus in Oman, of which the group 70-79 saw maximum of 217 deaths followed by the age group 60-69 (192), 80+ (124), 50-59 (84), 40-49 (54), 30-39 (36), 20-29 (13) and under 20 (3).

Among 254 expatriates deaths reported in Oman, the vulnerable group has been the age group 40-49 with 73 deaths followed by 50-59 (66) and 60-69 (53). Six expats in the age group 20-29 lost lives during this period, compared to 13 Omanis in the same category.

Honourable Lady offers condolences in Kuwait

The Honourable Lady, Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, and her delegation, comprising womenfolk from the Royal Family, next of kin and other Omani women of official high ranking status, returned home after a short visit to Kuwait to offer condolences and sympathies to ladies of the Kuwaiti Ruling Family and the brotherly people of Kuwait on the demise of the forgiven, by the will of the Almighty Allah, the late Emir of Kuwait Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabir al Sabah. — ONA

Trump improving, could be discharged today

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has “continued to improve” as he is treated for COVID-19, his doctors said on Sunday, revealing he could be discharged as early as Monday.

His medical team said his oxygen levels had dropped twice briefly in recent days and he is being treated with steroids, but they gave an upbeat assessment of the 74-year-old president's health and outlook.

“Since we spoke last, the president has continued to improve. As with any illness, there are frequent ups and downs over the course,” said Trump's physician Sean Conley.

Conley said the president was flown to Walter Reed military medical centre last Friday after a “rapid progression” of his illness, with his oxygen levels dropping worryingly low. He received supplementary oxygen at the White House before being admitted.

SEE ALSO P8



Antarctic Peninsula at warmest in decades: Study

SANTIAGO: The year 2020 is the hottest in the Antarctic Peninsula in the past three decades, a study by the University of Santiago de Chile found.

Between January and August, temperatures reached between 2 and 3 degrees Celsius on the peninsula, which is the northernmost part of mainland Antarctica, according to researchers at the Chilean Air Force's Frei Base on King George Island.

Those temperatures are “more than 2 degrees Celsius over typical

values,” climatologist Raul Cordero said in a statement released by the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH).

“In the far northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, the average maximum temperature so far this year has been above 0 degrees. This had not happened for 31 years,” Cordero added.

He called that fact “alarming,” since it could indicate that the rapid rate of ocean warming observed in the area at the end of the 20th century



is resuming.

The high Southern Hemisphere winter temperatures are in contrast, however, with those registered between August and September, which reached -16.8 degrees Celsius, the lowest since 1970.

The Antarctic Peninsula is the northernmost part of Antarctica, where there are scientific and military bases from several countries, including Argentina, Chile and Britain. — AFP



OMAN **عُضَائِد** DAILY

Observer

INVESTMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL CITIES HIT
RO 6.6 BN IN 2019

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) is working towards developing Madayn Vision-2040 to be along the lines of Oman Vision 2040, said Hasan bin Marhoon al Marhoon, Director- General of Planning and Business Developmadayn. **DETAILS ON P13**

Editor-in-chief : Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili

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SPORT

AL HARTHY CELEBRATES LANCPAIN

Pro-Am Blancpain endurance star receives champions trophy Pro-Ams champions trophy. > **12**



BUSINESS

ECB’S LAGARDE SHIFTS TO LAGARDE

Euro zone governments must euro zone governments must keep spending heavily pandemi. > **13**



FEATURES

CELEBRATING ONE OF SOUTH ASIA’S

They come either fried or steamed with dipping sauce like chutney or They come either. > **17**



OMAN

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BRIEF BITES INSIDE

BANGKOK

THAI KING STRIPS ‘DISLOYAL’ ROYAL CONSORT OF ALL TITLES: PALACE

Thailand’s King Maha Vajiralongkorn has stripped his 34-year-old consort of all titles for “disloyalty” and apparent “ambition” tmonths after she was bestowed with the honoumandon” to match the was d with the honoumandon” to the Queen’s position.

RETURNS



BANGKOK

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RETURNS

PRAYER TIMINGS

MUSCAT: Max 40°C : Min 28°C | SALALAH: Max 40°C : Min 28°C | NIZWA: Max 40°C : Min 28°C

PRAYER TIMINGS

SUNRISE: 04:37 | FAJR: 04:37 | DHUHR: 12:08 | ASR: 15:35 | MAGHRIB: 18:18 | ISHA: 19:29





LACK OF EXERCISE KEY REASON FOR EARLY DEATH



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 4

Lack of exercise is the fourth main reason for early death worldwide. It is also responsible for the alarming rise of non-communicable diseases. Tobacco, physical inactivity, unhealthy food habits and alcohol abuse are responsible for 60 per cent of deaths in the world, according to Dr Huda bint Khalfan al Siabi, Director of Community Health Initiative, Ministry of Health.

Al Siabi pointed out that about 31 per cent of populations do not exercise sufficiently and face serious health problems. She made these comments as part of an online

event to mark Oman Physical Activity Day themed “join us today, make it a habit every day” online. The day, which falls on October 2, was celebrated jointly by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY).

A number of senior officials from MoH, MoCSY and World Health Organization (WHO) along with athletes, citizens and residents have participated in the online event.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the event included several awareness activities and programmes that have been organised and broadcasted them

via various social media channels. The celebration began with a speech delivered by Dr Lamia Mahmoud, Public Health Specialist at the WHO Office in the Sultanate. It also included a recorded address of the Director-General of Sports Affairs at MoCSY, Khalifa al Issai, who spoke about the importance of physical activity.

Moreover, the celebration highlighted several related issues such as mountain hiking, cycling, karate, people with special needs and physical activity, supportive environment for physical activity and others.

Following the instructions of the Supreme Committee on COVID-19,

a hashtag (Oman Physical Activity Day) has been activated calling everyone to participate and send their own videos, furthermore, a sport event will be broadcasted on the social media channels including participations from various governorates across the Sultanate. In addition, an online forum on physical activity and COVID-19 will be held next Tuesday at 10:00 am. The forum will be available for the public and discuss several issues like physical activity is a valuable tool to control the infection and maintain the public health, as well as enhancing mental health during practicing physical activity amid COVID-19.

Following the instructions of the Supreme Committee on COVID-19, a hashtag (Oman Physical Activity Day) has been activated calling everyone to participate and send their own videos, furthermore, a sport event will be broadcasted on the social media channels including participations from various governorates across the Sultanate. In addition, an online forum on physical activity and COVID-19 will be held next Tuesday at 10:00 am.

Envoy to Portugal presents credentials

LISBON: The President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa received at the presidential palace Shaikh Dr Ghazi bin Said al Bahr al Rawas, the Sultanate’s Ambassador accredited to France who presented his credentials as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the Portuguese Republic. During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the president and the Portuguese people. The Portuguese president



asked the ambassador to convey his greetings and best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik wishing the ambassador success in his duties.

— ONA

Ambassador to Syria presents copy of credentials

DAMASCUS: Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign and Expatriates Minister, Walid al Muallim on Sunday received copies of credentials of Turki bin Mahmood al Busaidy as ambassador appointed to Syria.

During the reception the minister expressed Syria’s appreciation for the Omani foreign policy wishing the ambassador success in his duties

and hoping that the relations between the two brotherly countries will see more progress and development.

The Sultanate’s ambassador expressed his thanks for the warm welcome and the support and facilitation provided by the Syrian government to enhance cooperation and joint interests of the two brotherly countries.

— ONA



Quacks taint legacy of traditional medicine

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

People rely on traditional medicine as it is effective and affordable but quacks claiming to cure COVID-19 are threatening its very existence and credibility.

More than 80 per cent of the people in developing countries rely on herbal and other traditional medicines for their primary healthcare, according to *Oman Medical Journal*. The use of herbal medicine is very common in the Arab world including Oman and their consumption is increasing at a rapid pace worldwide due to the wide spread belief that these preparations are natural and therefore, safe, which is not true, the journal said in a study.

In Oman, herbal remedies are considered as over the counter (OTC) drugs and thus are easily available through pharmacies in different dosage forms such as tablets, capsules, syrups, extracts etc. Self-medication of herbal medicines is very much prevalent among populations due to the irrational claims or advertisements by manufacturers through different mass media. Patients use herbal medicines either alone or in combination with other conventional medicines without informing the treating physician, which may lead to serious clinical implications.



The Ministry of Health (MoH) recently warned against fake herbal medicine after it noticed increasing cases of trading illicit formulations through social media.

In a study *Oman Medical Journal* found that cough preparations (Thyme or ivy leaves extract) were the most widely dispensed drugs, followed by rejuvenators and vitalisers and slimming agents.

“These health and herbal medicines and formulations are being backed by bogus claims that they are natural and do not cause any health hazards. This is contrary to the clauses and provisions of the Regulating

The Ministry of Health (MoH) recently warned against fake herbal medicine after it noticed increasing cases of trading illicit formulations through social media

the Profession of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Establishments Law issued by the Royal Decree No 35/2015,” a senior health expert at the ministry said.

“Oman’s traditional herbal medicines and related products are sometimes used without any proper knowledge of their side effects. I advise all to be cautious whilst using such home remedies, some may work but overuse could be a source of serious side effects,” said Dr Abood al Sawafi, Vice Chancellor, University of Buraimi.

To prevent wrong use of traditional medicine which could result in health hazards and to promote traditional herbal medicine, the Diwan of Royal Court established a clinic of traditional medicine under its supervision with experienced herbalists and many Omanis and expats have benefited

from its remedial properties.

“Historically, the curative and palliative effects of some herbs, minerals, and animal parts are well acknowledged among the rural or tribal populations and this information is typically passed on from one generation to another in the community. Hence, it is important for the government to take urgent steps to introduce the use of traditional medicine to supplement primary healthcare,” says Doctor Mahmoud al Rahbi, Head of Emergency Medicine at Al Nahdha Hospital.

According to the ministry, herbal medicines promoted through social media contain chemicals despite being labelled as natural. “This is considered commercial fraud and exposes the promoter of these products to legal liability,” the statement added.

“Therefore, the Ministry of Health urges all citizens and residents not to use these products, and always purchase medications from the licensed sources and according to the medical instructions in order to ensure the health and safety of all,” the MoH said.

Experts further added that deforestation poses a threat to endangered medicinal plants. If they are not conserved it will be lost to the future generations.

45,706 SMEs till August

MUSCAT: The total number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority till August this year stood at 45,706, which is an increase by 12.4 per cent compared to the same period of 2019, according to the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and information (NCSI).

Among the governorates, Muscat topped the list with 33 per cent followed by North Al Batinah with 16 per cent, Al Dakhiliyah with 13 per cent and Dhofar with eight per cent and the rest of governorates 30 per cent.

15,321 SMEs were registered in Muscat at the end of August followed by North Al Batinah with 7,229, Al Dakhiliyah 5,797, Dhofar 3,825, South Al Batinah 3,390, North Al Sharqiyah 3,096, Al Dhahirah 2,689, South Al Sharqiyah 2,660, and Al Buraimi 974.

Al Wusta had 549 SMEs registered and Musandam had 176 SMEs registered, which was the lowest among governorates registered. The total number of SMEs registered in July 2020 was 45,094, while the number of SMEs in June 2020 was 44,448. — ONA

Pact to provide COVID-19 test at borders

Ministry of Health, Oman Airports and Supply International Company sign agreement



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health (MoH), Oman Airports and Supply International Company have signed recently an agreement to provide the PCR test at the border entry points for the travellers entering the Sultanate.

The agreement was signed by the MoH Under-Secretary for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs, CEO of Oman Airports and the CEO of Supply International Company.

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

It is worth mentioning that MOH has

signed a contract with Medical Mushrif Company in order to register the travellers entering the Sultanate in Tarrasud+ as well as to install the digital bracelets for the travels.

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

Another lab will be provided also at the Salalah International Airport. — ONA

FOR SALE

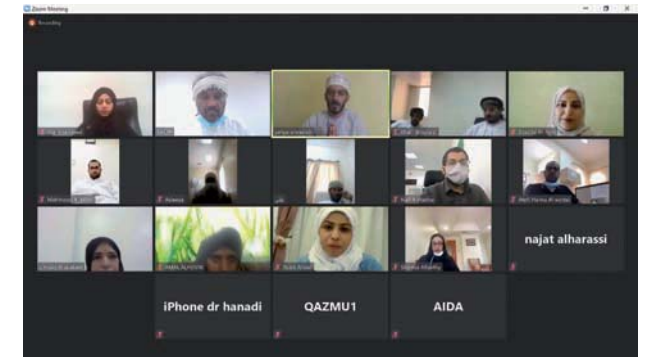
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✉ Kamaljeetk666@gmail.com

Sign language course for health workers kicks off



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 4

The Ministry of Health's Non-Communicable Diseases Department with the support of Oman LNG Development Foundation, launched training in sign language for the health workers at the primary healthcare institutions. A specific number of health workers from each governorate have been targeted to train their colleagues in sign language in the future.

The course aims to groom Omani sign language specialists in the health institutions to help those with hearing impairment and to ensure the equal rights and duties in accordance with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities signed by the Sultanate.

Dr Shada al Raisi, Director of Non-Communicable Diseases, welcomed the participants and stressed on the importance of breaking down the barriers between persons with hearing impairment and health workers.

This multi-level course with the five sign-language communication skills curriculum is approved by the Ministry of Labour for sign language translators to be reliable in clarifying information and all related to persons with hearing impairment.

Conducted by Community Training Institute, the course includes learning in local, Arabic and foreign sign-languages along with the mechanisms of translation carried by qualified and adopted experts in sign-language translation, as well as a number of trainers with hearing impairment. The three-month training course started this week will last till the last week of December and will be followed by a number of courses.

Ministry to receive investors from tomorrow

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion announced that it will begin receiving investors at its investor services halls at the main ministry premises and the affiliated directorates and departments in the governorates, starting from Tuesday October 6, based on the decision of the Supreme Committee tasked with handling the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ministry said that it is going to take a number of precautionary measures to ensure the safety of employees and investors.

A total of 62,073 procedures were accomplished via the ministry's Invest Easy portal from January 1 to September 28. This includes commercial register transactions such as the opening and renewal of commercial registers, updating information, application

for certificate of origin, among others. Investors may also have their procedures processed through the services providing centres (Sanad offices and lawyers offices).

The ministry encourages investors to complete their procedures via its online services in order to save effort and ensure speedy accomplishment of the procedures. The Invest Easy portal provides 89 e-service that are available all day everyday.

NDC's eighth academic year begins



MUSCAT: The National Defense College (NDC) celebrated the inauguration of the 8th batch, under the auspices of Maj. Gen Salim bin Musallam Qattan, NDC Commandant, on Sunday.

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

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

The 8th batch include a number of high-ranking officers from the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), the Royal Oman Police (RPO), Royal Court Affairs, and other military and security units, in addition to a number of government civil institutions.

The event was attended by members of the NDC military and civilians teaching staff, a number of college's employees, and participants of the 8th batch. — ONA

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#Living_with_COVID19



‘I wanted to be part of the solution’

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@laskshmioman

The world is waiting for a vaccine against COVID-19 as many companies are racing against time to come out with suitable shots. Human volunteers are essential to the trial. The *Observer* spoke to Revati Nirmal Sanzagiri from the Indian state of Goa who volunteered for the vaccine trial in India. When the COVID-19 challenge came about and the search for a vaccine came about, Revati knew it was important to join in the efforts.

“When I heard a human trial was starting on a vaccine that is being developed in India and that they needed volunteers, I wanted to help. I wanted to be part of the solution. It should not be that our participation would become an obstacle to the wonderful work that is being done by the scientists. I was also fortunate to have the full support of my family in this step,” said Revati.

Revati and her husband Nirmal Mangesh Sanzagiri had been in Oman for many years (from 2001 to 2015) but are now settled back in Goa.

According to her husband Revati has always been in the forefront for social causes so he was not surprised when she wanted to volunteer for human trials.

“She decided to be a volunteer as soon as she came to know about the requirement. On my part I wanted to know the actual process and the risks involved just to make sure she is safe. So during the first session, we met the doctors and understood the procedures and the precautions that are taken. I am proud of her that she is doing this from a sense of duty to the society,” explained Nirmal.

“When my mother first told me that she is going to take this step I felt a bit weird as we are going through a pandemic. At the initial stages I was worried wondering what if it goes a bit wrong and she gets infected by COVID-19. But I went through the precautions they were taking and the fact that she will be tested before all put me at ease. Of course I am proud of her because in times like these we need people to come forward as volunteers for the vaccine trials. It is a brave move but it is working out quite well,” said her son



Nishad. For human trials there are some eligibility criteria for the volunteers. “A first criterion is the individual has to be COVID-19 negative. Generally you have to be healthy with all parameters generally under control. Tests of blood, urine, blood pressure, oxygen level monitoring are taken. We have to sign an agreement that one is undergoing trials voluntarily. The good thing about the agreement is that you can opt out at any stage without giving reasons,” she explained.

So far she has gone through injections. Each injection of dose is given after an interval of three to four weeks.

“During the dosages we have to monitor if there is any change in the body temperature, or if there is anything else out of the ordinary. Also I know during this period of trials I cannot be sure that I am safe from COVID-19. I have to take the same precautions as everybody else such as staying home, wearing a mask, hand sanitising and maintaining distance etc.

One thing that has helped me during this period is breathing exercises and Yoga practice that I started at the beginning of the lockdown. I would recommend this for everyone during the beginning of the lockdown. Stay home, stay safe and take care,” Revati said.



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REVATI NIRMAL
SANZAGIRI
Volunteer of
COVID-19 vaccine trial



Recall Campaign for KIA Carnival (VQ) - 3.5 (Lambda E/G) Delivery Pipe Replacement



Date of Campaign : 5/10/2020
Recall Segment : Safety
Product Description : Fuel Delivery Pipe

Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle production range	VIN Range	No. of affected Vehicles
KIA	CARNIVAL (VQ)	08th Mar'2010 10th Apr'2014	KNAMG8172B6365929 KNAMG8179F6594131	29

Description of defect:

This bulletin is issued to provide the procedure to replace a delivery pipe as the VQ 3.5 Lambda engine may cause deformation of the delivery pipe in Carnival (VQ) on all affected vehicles.

Procedure:

Verify affected vehicles as per VIN and replace a delivery pipe as per new procedure..

For more information:

Customers, who own Carnival (VQ) models, may please contact M/s. Reliable International Automotive LLC for details / booking appointment etc from 5/10/2020 onwards for installations.

Contact Details:

Toll free No. 80073222 on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) between 08.30 to 17.30hrs.

C.R. 1707183

REVIEW OF CLINIC IN PORT OF DUQM



DUQM: The Special Economic Zone of Duqm hosted specialists from the Ministry of Health to check the readiness of the health clinic at the customs area of Duqm Port. Officials from the Special Economic Zone of Duqm and the Ministry of Health visited the premises.



Boris Johnson visits the Conway Heathrow Asphalt & Recycling Plant construction site in London. - Reuters

Johnson says UK 'can prosper mightily' under no-deal Brexit

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday that Britain "can prosper mightily" without a post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union, the day after agreeing to extend stalled talks with Brussels.

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

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

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

The current 11-month transition phase was intended to allow the two sides to agree their future trading relationship after nearly five decades of economic and political integration.

However, nine scheduled rounds of negotiations ended Friday with both parties saying significant obstacles to an agreement remain, prompting Johnson and von der Leyen's intervention.

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

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

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

the scenario.

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

ENTRENCHED POSITIONS

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

Reports suggest the talks could now continue for the rest of October, but British officials are stressing the need for clarity on whether a deal is feasible by the summit.

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

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

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

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who meets the bloc's chief negotiator Michel Barnier on Monday, said Friday she believed a deal was still possible, though warned the coming days were crucial.

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

Meanwhile the atmosphere has been soured by London taking steps to overturn parts of the divorce agreement struck last year, prompting Brussels to launch legal action this week.

— AFP

Paris braces for maximum coronavirus alert level

PARIS: Paris was preparing on Sunday to be placed under maximum coronavirus alert as alarming COVID-19 infection numbers appeared to leave the French government little choice but to tighten restrictions in and around the capital.

Paris's trademark cafes are threatened with complete closure as early as Monday after Health Minister Olivier Veran announced that only improved COVID-19 infection rates could prevent such a step.

If recent trends were confirmed "we'll have no choice", he warned on Thursday, saying new restrictions would mean "no more family gatherings, no more evenings out, and a total closure of cafes."

But a reprieve looks unlikely after France reported a 16,972 new coronavirus cases on Saturday alone, the highest daily number since the country began widespread testing.

Figures from the regional health agency ARS show new coronavirus cases remaining above 250 per 100,000 people in Paris, a threshold triggering the maximum alert protocol which has already hit the southern cities Aix-en-Provence and Marseille and their surroundings, as well as the French overseas territory of Guadeloupe.

"There is no justification for denial," said the ARS director for the Paris region, Aurelien Rousseau, on Sunday. "The numbers are what they are, and they are weighing heavily," he tweeted.

Interior minister Gerald Darmanin acknowledged that the looming closure of cafes would be "tough" for everyone concerned.

"We are French, we love to eat, to live and smile," he told broadcasters LCI and Europe 1 on Sunday. — AFP



Extension Awareness

Further to the National Museum's advertisement of Tenders no. (2/2020) and (3/2020) dated by 27th September 2020 CE, and regarding to the State of Mourning in the Sultanate for three days from Wednesday, 30th September 2020 CE, the deadlines for collecting Tender documents and Bids submission have been extended as following:

No	Tender No	Deadline for collecting tender documents	Closing date for submission of tender documents
1	2/2020	8/10/2020	22/10/2020
2	3/2020	8/10/2020	22/10/2020

Notes:

- Any inquiries must be raised before the deadline for the submission of tender documents.
- Any tender bond which doesn't meet the requirements of Tender Bond will not be considered.
- The National Museum reserves the right to accept/ reject any offer and cancel the Tender inquiry altogether.

Tens of thousands march in Minsk

MINKS: Belarusian police on Sunday used water cannon to disperse protesters in the capital Minsk as tens of thousands marched to demand the release of political prisoners.

Demonstrators took to the streets despite warnings they could face prison and dedicated their latest march — which came after Brussels and Washington introduced sanctions against some Belarusian officials — to the plight of dozens of political prisoners.

Ahead of the march, the government sought to complicate media coverage of opposition rallies against Alexander Lukashenko's government, withdrawing the accreditation of all foreign journalists.

On Sunday, Internet and cell phone services were disrupted.

But pictures and videos posted on social media showed huge crowds gathering in Minsk and protesters marching towards a detention centre, with some carrying portraits of victims of police abuse.

Other protesters waved red-and-white opposition flags and beat drums.

"Set them free!" demonstrators chanted after they reached the jail on Okrestin Street.

The opposition movement calling for an end to strongman Lukashenko's rule has kept up a series of large-scale demonstrations since his controversial election win



Police use a water cannon to disperse demonstrators in Minsk. — Reuters

on August 9, with 100,000 people or more taking to the streets every Sunday.

After the march had begun in the centre of the capital, police confirmed they had moved in on the protest, which like others was considered an illegal gathering.

Interior ministry spokeswoman Olga Chemodanova said that water cannon had been used in Minsk and that there had been detentions, but provided no further details.

A protester, Yakov Baranovsky, said police blasted him and another demonstrators with water cannon, forcing them to

seek shelter. "Everything has been done to make people disperse," the 51-year-old engineer said.

Belarusians this week received official text messages saying they could face criminal responsibility for taking part in "unsanctioned" rallies.

"Do not make a mistake!" the interior ministry said.

Ahead of the rally, the Nexta Live opposition Telegram channel, which has coordinated protesters and has more than two million subscribers, urged Belarusians to march towards the Minsk jail in support of political prisoners.

— AFP

150 detained at Berlin demonstrations

BERLIN: Some 150 people were detained at German Unity Day demonstrations in Berlin this weekend, most of them during a right-wing extremist march in the city's north east, police said on Sunday.

The demonstration by the right-wing extremist party Der III Weg (The Third Way) took place in the Berlin district of Hohenschönhausen, with a 1,500-strong counter demonstration resulting in clashes and arrests.

Criminal investigations on suspicion of disturbing the peace, resisting arrest and property damage were under way, police said.

"In a few cases stones and bottles were thrown in the direction of the security forces," a police spokesman said.

Of the 2,700 police officers deployed across the city, 36 were injured at a series of German Unity Day-related demonstrations.

The demonstrations were held by activists from across the political spectrum, as well as those protesting coronavirus measures imposed by the government.

— dpa



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Holding invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below;

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	TIME & LAST DATE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION	TENDER FEE (OMR)
EHC/2020/09	ADVERTISEMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES CONTRACT	15-Oct-2020	25-Oct-2020	100/-

- Bids shall be submitted in a single envelope and sealed with red wax addressed to the "Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee", and must write on the envelope the tender name & number.
- 3 separate envelopes shall be included inside the single sealed envelope, and each of these 3 envelopes must be marked with a tenderer name & tender no. as per the below:
 - Commercial Proposal
 - Technical Proposal
 - Bid Bond
- Bids should be dropped in the tender box at the Nama Holding reception before 12.00 pm time of the Sultanate on Sunday 25-Oct-2020.
- Each bid should be accompanied with a temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers, addressed to the "Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee at Nama Holding". Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered.
- NH is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid
- Registration of the bidders to be done through the company website (www.nama.om/tenders).
- Interested party to deposit Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) on: Account Name: Electricity Holding Company, Bank Muscat: 0423-010776440-018 Corporate Branch (Bidder name and Tender Number to be clearly mentioned). Tender Documents will be received by email.
- Send the deposit slip to: Yasmeen.allawati@holding.nama.om
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 pm.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



Nama Holding
In Beach One Building, 3rd Floor (Units 305 & 307), Shatti Al Qurum
P.O. Box 850, Post Code 116, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone Number: +968 24559200 / 277
E-Mail: Yasmeen.allawati@holding.nama.om



Pilgrims return to Mecca as Saudi eases restrictions

MECCA: Mecca slowly stirred from a seven-month hibernation on Sunday as pilgrims trickled in after Saudi authorities partially lifted a coronavirus ban on performing Umrah — a pilgrimage to Islam’s two holiest sites that is undertaken at any time of year.

Millions of Muslims from around the world usually descend on Saudi Arabia for the Umrah and Haj Islamic pilgrimages. The two share common rites, but the Haj, held once a year, is the main lengthier ritual that is a once-in-a-lifetime duty for Muslims.

Saudi Arabia, which held a largely symbolic Haj earlier this year limited to domestic worshippers, has allowed citizens and residents to start performing Umrah as of Sunday at 30 per cent capacity, or 6,000 pilgrims a day. It will open for Muslims from abroad starting November 1.

Last year the Gulf state drew 19 million Umrah visitors.

“All of Mecca is happy today, it’s like the end of a jail term. We have missed the spiritual feeling of pilgrims roaming the city,” said Yasser al Zahrani, who became a full time Uber driver after losing his construction job during a three-month national lockdown imposed in March.

“It was a nightmare ... there was barely any work to cover my bills,” he said.

Before the pandemic, more than 1,300 hotels and hundreds of stores buzzed around the clock to cater to pilgrims visiting the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Now many are closed, the windows of some gathering dust.

At midnight, tens of registered pilgrims wearing face masks prepared to enter the Grand Mosque in small groups.

“This year has been heavy and full of tragedies. I am praying for



Muslims, keeping a safe social distance, perform Umrah at the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca on Sunday. — Reuters

God’s forgiveness for all mankind,” said Eman, a Pakistani national who resides in Saudi Arabia, accompanied by her daughter.

As pilgrims circled the Kaaba officials made sure they kept a safe distance apart.

Worshippers are no longer allowed to touch the Kaaba, draped in black cloth adorned with Arabic calligraphy in gold.

Some enjoyed a respite from the usual crowding. “This is the easiest Umrah I have ever made,” said a Saudi who identified himself as Abu Fahad.

NEW REALITY

Pilgrimage is the backbone of a plan to expand tourism under Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Salman’s drive to diversify the economy of the world’s top oil exporter. It aimed to boost Umrah visitors to 15 million by 2020, a plan disrupted by coronavirus, and to 30 million by 2030.

Religious pilgrimage generates \$12 billion in revenues from worshippers’ lodging, transport, gifts, food and fees, according to official data.

Saudi Arabia hosted a drastically reduced Haj in late July for the first time in modern history, with a few thousand domestic pilgrims instead of the usual white-clad sea of some 3 million Muslims.

Near the Grand Mosque, hotels at high-rise towers were mostly empty and shopping malls closed hours

before the resumption of Umrah. Dozens of stores and restaurants were shut.

Economists have estimated Mecca’s hotel sector may lose at least 40 per cent of pilgrimage-driven income this year.

Five hotel workers, who declined to be identified, said they were put on unpaid leave during the lockdown and said hundreds of others in the hospitality sector were laid off.

“We forgot what it feels like to actually interact with people, everything was online over the past months,” a supermarket employee, who declined to be named, said as he restocked empty shelves. — Reuters

Yemenis return home after undergoing treatment: UN



A UN flight carrying civilian Yemenis lands in Sanaa. — AFP

SANAA: Yemenis who were airlifted to Jordan to undergo treatment for critical illnesses earlier this year were brought home on Sunday on a flight, the United Nations said.

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

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

“Thanks to the UN medical air bridge, the patients received treatment in #Jordan for different chronic conditions for which they could not be treated inside #Yemen.” The UN organised two evacuation flights to Amman in February, the first carrying seven children and the second with 24 other patients.

“Nine patients and their companions arrived in Sanaa on board the UN chartered plane,” Dr Motahar Darouiche, head of the airlift on the side of the rebels, told reporters.

He said 10 Yemeni patients were still in Jordan.

“Five will return on Monday and the other five after the repatriation procedures are completed,” he added. He did not specify where the remaining patients were.

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

Last November the coalition said it was prepared to allow medical evacuations from the airport as a confidence-building measure to support UN peace efforts.

The return of the medical flight comes shortly after the warring sides in Yemen’s long conflict agreed to exchange 1,081 prisoners, after talks in Switzerland.

The release of the loyalists and insurgents — if it materialises — would mark the first large-scale handover since the war erupted in 2014.

The agreement was a modest step forward amid efforts to end he six-year conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, and led to what the UN describes as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. — AFP

■ TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!



Syrian artist Aziz Asmar paints a mural depicting US President Donald Trump fighting with the coronavirus, after it was announced that Trump and his wife have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, in the war-torn city of Idlib. As fears grow of an impending coronavirus outbreak in the country, artists are painting murals to raise public awareness about the virus. — AFP

Libyan prof mends cars, sells dates to make ends meet

MISRATA: When he is not teaching Arabic at Misrata University, professor Omar Mesbah al Maghreby manages a car repair workshop in the garage of his home in northern Libya and spends his afternoons selling dates at a food market. After nine years of civil war, ordinary Libyans are learning to cope with fuel and electricity shortages and a funding crunch that means salaries are delayed by weeks or more. The country is rich in oil, but exports have been blocked for months by the fighting.

“My daily life is basically a series of hardships,” Maghreby, 48, said. “You’re forced to seek out daily basic supplies such as bread, water, gas fuel and have to deal with power cuts as well.”

Maghreby, with a greying beard and wearing a cream shirt, was at work in the garage with one of his sons, surrounded by electrical cables and tools.



Omar Mesbah al Maghreby works with his son in a workshop at his home to make a living in Misrata. — Reuters

Libya is split between warring rivals in the west, where Misrata is located, and the east and south. The internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) have been deadlocked since June when the GNA repelled a 14-month LNA assault on the capital

Tripoli. The LNA has retained its hold on most of Libya’s oil facilities and had blockaded exports since January.

However, last month Haftar announced an end to the blockade and some exports have resumed, allowing revenue to start flowing to state institutions again. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

KUWAIT

New emir meets senior US and Iranian officials

Kuwait’s new Emir Shaikh Nawaf al Ahmad al Sabah on Sunday met senior US, Iranian and Gulf officials who separately paid respects over the death of the Gulf Arab state’s former ruler.

Shaikh Nawaf assumed power after the death last Tuesday of his brother, Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad. The late emir balanced ties between larger neighbours and kept a strong relationship with the United States, which led a coalition that ended Iraq’s 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait. “He will be remembered as a



great man and a special friend to the United States,” US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said in comments tweeted by the US Embassy during his visit. — AFP

TEHRAN

Restrictive coronavirus measures reimposed

Iran has reimposed measures in Tehran province to contain the novel coronavirus, state TV reported, shutting public spaces and cancelling events days after confirming another record number of cases. The measures went into force on Saturday and were set to last a week, the broadcaster said, citing an order by the Tehran governor’s office.

Under the restrictions, universities and education centres, mosques, cinemas, museums, wedding halls, beauty salons, gyms, cafes, zoos and swimming pools

would be closed, state TV reported.

“Cultural and social events and conferences” were cancelled and Friday prayers would not be held, it added.

The Islamic republic confirmed a record 3,825 COVID-19 cases on Thursday, surpassing the previous high reported on September 22.

The restrictions are largely the same as those taken early in the pandemic in Iran, which stopped short of imposing a full lockdown, despite facing the Middle East’s deadliest outbreak. — AFP

TUNIS

Work hours to be reduced, gatherings banned

Tunisian authorities will ban all gatherings and reduce working hours for employees in the public sector in order to stop the rapid spread of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi said.

The decision was taken amid strong fears that hospitals in the North African nation will be unable to cope with a high number of patients because of the shortage of intensive-care beds. The total number of coronavirus cases has jumped to more than 20,000 compared with roughly 1,000 cases



before the country’s borders were reopened on June 27.

— Reuters

In brief

■ KABUL

OVER 500 CIVILIANS
KILLED SINCE
START OF YEAR

At least 533 civilians were killed across embattled Afghanistan in the first six months of this year, the country's Independent Human Rights Commission said in a report on Sunday. Based on the report, 945 others were wounded in what the organisation described as "systematic assassinations and targeted killings."

The organisation said that between February and September, 122 civilians were killed and 72 others were wounded in targeted attacks in southern Kandahar. The report comes as a car bomb the day before left 14 people dead and 42 wounded — most of them civilians — in eastern Nangahar province. — dpa

■ HONIARA

SOLOMON ISLANDS
LOSE COVID-19-FREE
STATUS

The Solomon Islands announced they have lost the battle to stay free of the coronavirus, leaving just nine small, remote territories that have not reported a single case.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare told the Pacific island nation in a televised address that a student who recently arrived from the Philippines on a repatriation flight carrying 96 passengers had returned a positive test.

"It pains me to say that we have lost our COVID-19-free status despite our collective effort to prevent the pandemic from entering our country," Sogavare said.

He urged the population of 600,000 in the archipelago to remain calm and said contact tracing and other measures to prevent the spread of the virus had been activated and there was no need for a lockdown.

— AFP

■ MANILA

DRIVE-THROUGH
BLESSINGS FOR PETS

Coronavirus-wary animal owners in the Philippines had their pets blessed via a drive-through ceremony on Sunday to mark World Animal Day and the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

From a safe distance inside their owners' cars, cats, dogs, and birds were sprinkled with holy water by a Catholic priest in Manila, as the nation's coronavirus cases continued to surge.

The Philippines has recorded a total of 322,497 coronavirus infections, the highest in Southeast Asia.

Organisers and participants said this year's unusual way of blessing pets for World Animal Day, celebrated worldwide to recognise animal rights and welfare, ensured social distancing.

"We have to adapt to the new normal and the pandemic should never stop us from paying tribute to the furry animals that we have," said Ritchie Pascual, one of the event organisers.

— Reuters

Cambodia razes US-built naval facility

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia has razed a US-funded defence facility on its southern coast, the deputy prime minister confirmed on Sunday, the latest move in the ongoing controversial expansion of a strategically crucial naval base being developed with Chinese aid.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last year on a secret draft deal allowing China to dock warships at the Ream naval base near the kingdom's coastal city of Sihanoukville.

But Cambodia — awash in recent years with Chinese investments — has strenuously denied the report, although strongman premier Hun Sen has said aid from Beijing will fund the naval base's development.

Satellite images released by the Center for Strategic and International Studies this week showed a US-funded facility on Ream's naval base had been demolished, raising questions "about rumoured Chinese access," said the Washington-based think-tank.

But Tea Banh, Cambodia's deputy prime minister and defence minister,



Cambodian navy personnel walk on a jetty at the Ream naval base during a media tour. — AFP

dismissed concerns on Sunday.

"We relocated the facility to a new spot. We cannot keep it anymore and the building is already old," he said, confirming that it was knocked down

last month.

The Tactical Headquarters of the National Committee for Maritime Security was inaugurated in 2012. It will be "far better" in its new

location, Tea Banh said, adding that Cambodia used "only a small assistance" from the US for the now-demolished building.

The new facility is currently under

construction about 30 kilometres north of Ream.

The Ream base has generated scrutiny for its strategic location in the Gulf of Thailand, which would provide ready access to the fiercely contested South China Sea — a key global shipping route.

Beijing claims the majority of the resource-rich sea, vying with six other countries.

Hun Sen has repeatedly insisted Cambodia's constitution forbids any foreign military base within its borders.

Analysts say the wily premier is deeply attuned to the potential for an anti-China backlash from the public — especially in Sihanoukville, where businesses and casinos are largely now Chinese-owned.

One of the world's longest-serving leaders, Hun Sen has in recent years tilted away from the US due to Washington's criticism of his government's alleged abuses.

On Saturday night, he issued a public letter wishing US President Donald Trump a "speedy recovery" from the coronavirus. — AFP

'KHETI BACHAO YATRA'



Indian National Congress Party leader Rahul Gandhi, Punjab chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh (R) and Congress Punjab president Sunil Jakhar (C) participate in a protest rally against the recent passing of agriculture reform bills in the parliament, at a village near Badhni Kalan, about 20 Km from Moga on Sunday. — AFP

Myanmar
volunteers under
strain as coronavirus
toll grows

YANGON: As Myanmar's coronavirus infections soar, the work never seems to stop for volunteers who have stepped in to help carry those suspected of symptoms to quarantine centres or hospitals.

"The situation is not good. Our ambulances and crews can't even get a break," said Kyi Myint, 66, who leads a volunteer group in Yankin township,

one of the worst hit in Myanmar's main city, Yangon.

Myanmar's thousands of volunteers are a crucial element of the COVID-19 response in a country with one of the world's weakest health systems.

Myanmar appeared to have avoided the worst of the pandemic with only seven deaths a month ago — but a surge of infections has sent now the death toll to 371 from more than 16,500 cases. According to Reuters data, Myanmar's death toll has doubled in 7.8 days — faster than any other country recording more than five deaths. More than 45,000 people, including COVID-19 patients, those yet to be tested, their close contacts and returning migrant workers, are being housed in buildings

from schools and monasteries to government offices and tower blocks.

Most of those are run by volunteers, who generally get no compensation. They are given whatever protection equipment is available and sometimes food and a place to stay. "Without the volunteers, I don't think we could have survived," said Aye, a recovered patient who did not want to give her full name for fear of being identified.

The health ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the outbreak and the role of the volunteers. "I usually get one or two hours sleep," said volunteer Zar Ni, who marked his 29th birthday by working on Thursday. — Reuters

India seeks up to 500
million Covid vaccine
doses by July 2021

NEW DELHI: India hopes to receive up to 500 million doses of coronavirus vaccine by July to inoculate about 250 million people, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Sunday, as infections in the world's second-worst affected country continue to surge.

India's has recorded some 6.55 million infections, with 75,829 in the past 24 hours, while COVID-19-related deaths have totalled 101,782, health ministry data showed.

"There is a high-level expert body going into all aspects of vaccines," Vardhan wrote on Twitter. "Our rough estimate and the target would be to receive and utilise 400 to 500 million doses covering (200 million-250 million) people by July 2021." Serum Institute of India and private companies have been teaming up with organisations from the Bill

& Melinda Gates Foundation to US drug developer Novavax Inc in a scramble to secure vaccines for the country of 1.3 billion people.

India has set up committees to look into various aspects of the vaccine supply chain, including availability timelines for various vaccines, while obtaining commitments from manufacturers to ensure the maximum doses are available, Vardhan said.

He said the federal government is committed to taking all measures to ensure "fair and equitable" distribution of vaccines once they are ready. The South Asian nation, second only to the United States in caseload, has scope for higher infections as a large chunk of the population remains unexposed to the virus, a survey showed on Tuesday.

— Reuters



Migrants who returned from their hometown wait in line to be tested for COVID-19 during a rapid antigen testing campaign at a railway station on the outskirts of Mumbai. — Reuters

High-profile team season's first to scale Himalayan summit

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

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

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

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

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



Nepali children cross a bridge on their way back home from school that reopened after six months of closure in Nepal. — AFP

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

More than 50 Sherpas are part of the expedition.

The group plans to climb Everest

next year.

Nepal closed its borders in March and grounded international flights just ahead of the busy spring climbing season, devastating the local tourism sector. Limited international flights resumed last month, but only for citizens and foreign diplomats.

PM'S ADVISERS TEST POSITIVE

On Sunday, three advisers to Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli said had tested positive for COVID-19, which has claimed the lives of 528 people in the country.

Oli's press, political and foreign affairs advisers told Reuters they had been infected and were isolating themselves. An assistant working for Oli also tested positive, they added. Oli has previously tested negative,

but had yet to take a test after his associates tested positive, press adviser Surya Thapa said.

"The prime minister has been exercising extreme caution while meeting with people," Thapa said. Oli's personal physician had earlier tested positive and is isolating herself, Thapa said, adding that more than two dozen security personnel at Oli's official residence have also tested positive.

Nepal's COVID-19 cases rose by 2,120 to 84,570 on Saturday, the country's health ministry said. Neighbouring India's coronavirus death toll passed 100,000 on Saturday, making it the third country to reach that milestone, after the United States and Brazil, and its epidemic shows no sign of abating. — dpa/Reuters

Pope appeals for ‘a better kind of politics’

ROME: Pope Francis called for a global change of heart on Sunday as he denounced the “myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism” gaining traction in today’s politics.

The message was part of a new encyclical - a flagship papal teaching document - called “Fratelli Tutti” (All Brothers), focused on social justice.

Speaking of a “certain regression” in global affairs, Francis wrote, “Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise.”

“A global community of fraternity based on the practice of social

friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good,” he said.

The global coronavirus pandemic should inspire a rethink of global priorities, the 83-year-old leader of the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics suggested.

“Once this health crisis passes, our worst response would be to plunge even more deeply into feverish consumerism and new forms of egotistic self-preservation,” he said.

Francis lamented that “today, in many countries, hyperbole, extremism and polarisation have become political tools,” and blamed social media for contributing to

falling standards of public debate.

The pope, a self-declared computer illiterate, deplored how “social aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices.”

“Things that until a few years ago could not be said by anyone without risking the loss of universal respect can now be said with impunity, and in the crudest of terms, even by some political figures,” he added.

Francis invited politicians to worry less about opinion polls and “slick marketing techniques primarily aimed at discrediting others,” and more about global injustices.

For example, he proposed to

redirect military expenditures into “a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries”.

In his encyclical, the pope renewed his critique of today’s “throwaway culture,” which he sees as marginalising the weakest and overly focused on consumerism, profit-seeking and selfishness.

Francis, the son of Italian immigrants to Argentina and an established champion of the rights of migrants and refugees, also strongly condemned closed-border policies.

He said “each country also belongs to the foreigner, in as much as a territory’s goods must not be denied to a needy person coming from elsewhere.” — dpa



The front page of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano* shows Pope Francis with his latest encyclical titled “Fratelli Tutti” (Brothers All) at the Vatican. — Reuters



A pile of vehicles on a street in Breil-sur-Roya — AFP

France, Italy step up rescue efforts after deadly storm

SAINT-MARTIN-VESUBIE: French and Italian rescue services stepped up their search efforts on Sunday after floods cut off several villages in the mountainous border regions, causing widespread damage and killing three people.

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

In Breil-sur-Roya, a French village close to the Italian border, houses were buried in mud and turned-over cars stuck in the riverbed.

Rescue efforts were concentrated on the Roya valley where roughly 1,000 firefighters, backed by helicopters and the army resumed their search for survivors and helped people whose homes were destroyed or inaccessible.

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

“What we are going through is extraordinary,” said Bernard Gonzalez, prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes region, after as much as 60 centimetres of rain fell in 24

hours in the worst-affected areas.

Italy confirmed two people died on Saturday, a volunteer firefighter on a rescue operation and a man whose car was washed away. France suffered its first fatality on Sunday, a shepherd whose body was pulled from a river near the border.

France has declared the region a natural disaster zone.

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

A bedraggled group of tourists and residents gathered in the village square to be airlifted to safety.

“My three-storey house, it’s in the river,” said villager Sandra Dzidt, 62, who had to flee the floods dressed only in her nightgown. “All I have left is a tiny piece of wall and a door.”

Across the region, emergency crews were handing out food and airlifting thousands of bottles of water into remote villages cut off by the storms.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex inspected the damage by helicopter on Saturday, saying he feared the number of people missing could rise after dozens of cars and several houses were swept away in apocalyptic scenes. — AFP

Trump thanks supporters, says his ‘real test’ lies ahead

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump tweeted thanks to his supporters on Sunday from the hospital where he is being treated for COVID-19, after a series of contradictory messages from the White House caused widespread confusion about his health.

Trump, who was taken to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Friday, released a four-minute video on Saturday in which he said the “real test” of his condition will come over the next few days.

“Over the next period of a few days, I guess that’s the real test, so we’ll be seeing what happens over those next couple of days,” Trump said into the camera, looking tired and wearing a jacket and open-necked shirt.

Trump’s illness has upended the campaign ahead of the November presidential election and cast a spotlight on the president’s handling of the pandemic. The Republican president is trailing Democratic rival Joe Biden in opinion polls.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll published on Sunday found that Biden had opened a 10 point lead over Trump nationally, slightly wider than it has been for the past two months. Some 65% of Americans said Trump likely would not have been infected had he taken the virus more seriously — a view that half of registered Republicans polled supported. Some 55% said they did not believe Trump had been telling the truth about the virus.

Trump’s campaign vowed that Vice President Mike Pence, who would assume the presidency if Trump were unable to carry out his duties, would have an “aggressive” campaign schedule this week, as would Trump’s three oldest children.

“We can’t stay in our basement or shut down the economy indefinitely.



People hold pro-Trump rally in New York City. — Reuters

We have to take it head-on,” Trump campaign senior adviser Jason Miller said on ABC’s “This Week” on Sunday.

Trump has repeatedly played down the threat of the pandemic, even as it has killed more than 208,000 Americans and hammered the US economy.

In an early morning tweet on Sunday, Trump said “Thank you so much!” - referring to supporters who gathered on Saturday night outside the Walter Reed hospital waving Trump 2020 flags.

CAMPAIGN RESHAPED

With Trump off the campaign trail

indefinitely, his campaign announced “Operation MAGA,” based on his slogan “Make America Great Again,” which will see high-profile allies including Pence and Trump’s elder sons, Donald Jr and Eric, take over in-person campaigning this week.

Pence, who tested negative on Friday, is scheduled to debate Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris on Wednesday.

Biden, who largely avoided direct criticism of Trump during a campaign trip to Michigan on Friday, took a more aggressive tone on Saturday while speaking to a transit workers’ union, even as he

wished the president well.

“I’m in a little bit of a spot here, because I don’t want to be attacking the president and the first lady now,” Biden said, adding he hoped Trump and his wife Melania, who also has the illness, make a full recovery.

But he quickly turned to Trump’s response to the pandemic, calling it “unconscionable” and blasting Trump’s comment in an interview this summer that “it is what it is” when asked about the death toll.

Biden, who tested negative on Friday, told reporters he would next be tested on Sunday. His campaign will begin releasing the results of each test, a spokesman said. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

LONDON

Minister vows asylum system overhaul

British interior minister Priti Patel accused migrants crossing the Channel on boats of “shopping around” to claim asylum, as she vowed on Sunday to overhaul the UK’s response to the arrivals.

Delivering the keynote address on the second day of the ruling Conservatives’ annual party conference, Patel pledged to introduce legislation next year “to fix this broken system”. She said asylum-seekers travelling through Europe before reaching Britain on small vessels showed the current system was “neither firm nor fair”. “Shopping



around for where they claim asylum. Making that final and extremely dangerous Channel crossing to the United Kingdom, while lining the pockets of despicable international criminal gangs,” Patel said. — AFP

BISHKEK

Pro-presidential parties win Kyrgyz vote

Parties close to Kyrgyzstan’s pro-Russian President Sooronbai Jeenbekov appeared set Sunday to form a government following parliamentary elections overshadowed by vote-buying accusations.

Results based on 95 per cent of ballots cast showed the Birimdik party of Jeenbekov’s younger brother Asylbek Jeenbekov and the Mekenim Kyrgyzstan party associated with the powerful Matraimov family — a presumed ally of the president — each getting roughly 24 per cent of the vote.

A third pro-presidential party,

the Kyrgyzstan Party, scored nine per cent of the vote according to the preliminary count, while a nationalist party Butun Kyrgyzstan just edged past the seven per cent threshold required for entry, according to Central Electoral Commission data.

Another nationalist party, Mekenchil, looked set to miss out narrowly with 6.9 per cent, leaving four parties in the parliament.

Kyrgyzstan has seen two presidents overthrown in revolutions since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, but has enjoyed relative stability since 2010. — AFP

NOUMEA

New Caledonia rejects independence

The South Pacific territory of New Caledonia chose to remain French on Sunday, narrowly rejecting independence in a tightly-fought referendum marked by a high turnout.

The vote rejecting a breakaway from France after almost 170 years came in at 53.26 per cent, according to final results, down from 56.7 per cent in a referendum two years ago.

French President Emmanuel Macron — who had said previously that “France would be less beautiful without New Caledonia” — on Sunday said he was grateful to the



archipelago’s voters.

“I welcome this sign of confidence in the republic with a profound sense of gratitude,” Macron said from his office. — AFP

Back to school, a risky gamble for all

The fight with coronavirus is not yet over as the world is experiencing a second wave of the virus. Unfortunately, its aggressive impact has hit different walks of life including social, economic, health and religious. Governments and individuals have been involved in this battle for long with countless efforts being made to combat the spread of the virus. However, the game doesn't seem to be over soon!

With the second wave kicking off, the number of infections would gradually be increasing all over the world. Some countries have already experienced a surprising number of infections again. So pity and shocking what is happening indeed; the loss caused by this pandemic is extremely huge. Nations have no other choice but to fight back and spare no effort to protect its people, wealth and health. Certainly, the game is so tough, but it requires more patience and caution from governments, societies and individuals alike.

Unluckily, the gradual return of life to normalcy with the opening up of most of the business activities could have possibly fired back with the



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CLOSING SCHOOLS FROM MARCH THIS YEAR WAS A WISE DECISION TAKEN TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS

second wave of the pandemic. Likewise, carelessness of some people could have been one of the reasons for the rapid increase in infections. The non-compliance of people and businesses with the decisions of the Supreme Committee and precautionary health measures is another reason behind the spread of the virus. How dare they put others' life at risk?!

As back to school season is round the corner, the scenario becomes even more complicated and challenging. Sending children to school is becoming a risky gamble for all, parents, government, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. Closing schools from March this year was a good decision taken to control and stop the spread of the virus at that peak time. The call came at the right time for the right purpose and saved hundreds of thousands of students and families too.

Probably, the impact of the pandemic was not expected at the beginning to last longer, so it could affect education system more than what it has done so far! It is such a real frustrating challenge indeed! Risking children and youth of the nation would never be an option at all

for any country. No matter how safe the schools are, full time classes will not be a preferred choice and are not supported by the society. Sacrificing the life and health of children is never comparable with being an educated person or having a better education opportunity.

The Ministry of Education announced the initial approach to reopen schools in November with a learning system mixed between the in-class and at home learning process. However, I believe the ministry is keeping in mind other alternatives for the worst case scenario with the emergence of pandemic's second wave.

In contrast, parents and the society are not fully with the ministry's decisions to have students back to classrooms. Parents are relating this to the experience in other countries which have reopened schools and had to close them again. The high rate of infections among school children has pushed governments in those countries to close the schools. Hence, parents are debating whether to send their children to schools or not. Most of them prefer home schooling for their children instead of putting them at the risk of catching the virus.

SCARY NUMBERS

As cold weather arrives, US sees record rise in COVID-19 cases

LISA SHUMAKER

Nine US states have reported record increases in COVID-19 cases over the last seven days, mostly in the upper Midwest and West where chilly weather is forcing more activities indoors.

On Saturday alone, four states — Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin — saw record increases in new cases and nationally nearly 49,000 new infections were reported, the highest for a Saturday in seven weeks, according to a Reuters analysis.

Kansas, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wyoming also set new records for cases last week. Daytime highs in many of these states are now in the 10 Celsius.

Health experts have long warned that colder temperatures driving people inside could promote the spread of the virus. Montana has reported record numbers of new cases for three out of the last four days and also has a record number of COVID-19 patients in its hospitals.

Wisconsin has set records for new cases two out of the last three days and also reported record hospitalisations on Saturday. On average 22 per cent of tests are coming back positive, one of the highest rates in the country. Wisconsin's Democratic governor mandated masks on August 1 but Republican lawmakers are backing a lawsuit challenging the requirement. North Dakota and South Dakota and Wisconsin have the highest new cases per capita in the country.

Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson is one of several prominent Republicans who have tested positive for coronavirus since President Donald Trump announced he had contracted the virus. Because of the surge in cases in the Midwest, nursing homes and assisted-living facilities operated by Aspirus in northern Wisconsin and Michigan are barring most visitors as they did earlier this year.

Bellin Health, which runs a hospital in Green Bay, Wisconsin, said last week its emergency department has been past capacity at times and doctors had to place patients in beds in the hallways.

The United States is reporting 42,600 new cases and 700 deaths on average each day, compared with 35,000 cases and 800 deaths in mid-September.

Deaths are a lagging indicator and tend to rise several weeks after cases increase. Kentucky is the first Southern state to report a record increase in cases in several weeks.

Governor Andy Beshear said last week was the highest number of cases the state has seen since the pandemic started. State health experts have not pinpointed the reason for the rise but point to fatigue with COVID-19 precautions and students returning to schools and colleges.

Over the last two weeks, Kentucky has reported nearly 11,000 new cases and has seen hospitalisations of COVID-19 patients rise by 20 per cent. — Reuters

Wisconsin have the highest new cases per capita in the country.

TEPID EVENT

Rare Bolivia election standoff fizzles as re-run vote nears

DANIEL RAMOS

Bolivia's presidential candidates faced off late on Saturday in the first all-party campaign debate in almost two decades, but analysts chided the runners as having forgotten how to hold a proper discourse after a tepid event.

The landlocked Andean nation is headed for elections on October 18, a re-run of a fraught vote last year that sparked deadly protests and led to the resignation of leader Evo Morales.

The leftist did not participate in election debates since 2002. In a televised debate focused on the country's economic future, the seven presidential candidates largely stuck to laying out their policy platforms, with few clashes or exchanges between the runner, despite a background of political tensions.

"We are not used to debating," one analyst wrote in local media in response to the event.

"A debate must have a confrontation on a specific issue... It ended in a boring way with each of the candidates just repeating their script."

Gonzalo Chávez, another political analyst, said the fact Morales had eschewed debates while in power between 2006-2019 had weakened the space for political discourse.

"There was great expectation of a tough debate, but there was no such thing," Chávez said. Bolivia's 7 million



Presidential candidate Luis Fernando Camacho of Creemos Party shakes hands with supporters during his presidential campaign in La Paz. — Reuters

THE COUNTRY IS HEADED FOR ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 18, A RE-RUN OF FROUGHT VOTE

voters will go the polls in a fortnight, with the ballot overshadowed by a tough economic outlook and the coronavirus pandemic, which has hit the country hard.

The candidate for Morales' socialist MAS party, Luis Arce, currently leads polls ahead of centrist Carlos

Mesa, though forecasts indicate there would need to be a second-round run-off between the pair. Morales himself is living in Argentina. There is another debate planned for Sunday night, though the candidate for MAS is not yet confirmed to attend.

— Reuters



Sergio Garcia

Garcia, Davis, Poston share lead

WASHINGTON: No-look Sergio Garcia and Australian Cameron Davis, who opened with five birdies, shared the lead with American JT Poston after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Sanderson Farms Championship.

Davis fired a US PGA career-low 63, nine-under par, while Garcia had a bogey-free 66 and Poston shot 69 to stand level on 14-under 202 after 54 holes at the Country Club of Jackson in Mississippi.

Garcia, seeking his first US PGA win since capturing the 2017 Masters, made six birdies and praised his new putting method of shutting his eyes while striking putts.

"It's quite simple," the 40-year-old Spaniard said. "What I'm looking for is to keep my stroke as smooth as possible. The less things I have in my head, or my eyes, the better.

"When I do it, I have a smooth stroke and I make a lot of good putts. When I don't, it's not quite as good."

Garcia, who has won three times on the European Tour since capturing the green jacket but is ranked a modest 51st in the world, sank an eight-foot birdie

putt at the second hole.

He closed the front nine with back-to-back birdies from 12 and 15 feet and added tap-in birdies at the par-5 11th and par-4 12th.

Garcia also birdied the 15th, blasting from a bunker to three feet and sinking the putt.

"It's mainly trying to be consistent and go with it. Just trust it," Garcia said. "We want to make every single putt we look at, or don't look at in this case, but we don't do that... If I can leave the course feeling I gave it my best chance that's all I can do."

Davis was one off the course record as the 25-year-old from Sydney chases his first US PGA title.

DAVIS IN THE GROOVE

"I was in the groove," Davis said. "I just felt like I had a very good idea of where the ball was going today."

For much of the round, it was going in the hole for the world number 208.

His first three birdie putts were all from inside six feet and his next two were from between eight and nine feet.

"Rolling the ball well," Davis said. "I was able to hit it close and do that hole after hole after hole."

His bogey-free round also featured a 17-foot birdie putt at the eighth, a nine-footer for par at the par-3 13th and an eagle from just inside 10 feet at the par-5 14th.

At 15, Davis drove into a greenside bunker, blasted out inches from the cup and tapped in for birdie before closing with three pars.

"It was one of those days where you forget where you are at," Davis said. "I had a very good day hitting the ball."

Poston chases his second career US PGA victory after last year's Wyndham Championship, where he became the first tour player since 1974 to win a title without a bogey.

He sank a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 third, added another from nine feet at the eighth and followed a bogey at 10 with a tap-in birdie at the par-5 11th.

Poston made back-to-back birdie putts from 13 feet at the par-5 14th and five feet at the 15th to seize the lead alone at 15-under.

But Poston made a bogey at 16 after

finding a greenside bunker to fall back into the lead pack, then sank a 13-foot par putt at 18 to stay there.

Norway's Kristoffer Ventura and American Brandt Snedeker shared fourth on 203, one stroke adrift. — AFP

PGA Tour Sanderson Farms Championship scores
(USA unless noted, par-72):
202 — Cameron Davis (AUS) 66-73-63, Sergio Garcia (ESP) 68-68-66, JT Poston 66-67-69
203 — Brandt Snedeker 70-66-67, Kristoffer Ventura (NOR) 67-68-68
204 — Aaron Wise 68-69-67, Denny McCarthy 68-67-69, Keegan Bradley 66-65-73
205 — Tyler McCumber 70-69-66, Charley Hoffman 64-69-72
206 — Rory Sabbatini (SVK) 72-68-66, Corey Connors (CAN) 67-70-69, MJ Daffue 65-69-72
207 — Wesley Bryan 72-69-66, Maverick McNealy 69-71-67, CT Pan (TPE) 70-69-68, Scott Stallings 67-72-68, Matthew NeSmith 68-71-68, Chase Seiffert 70-68-69, Sebastian Munoz (COL) 64-73-70, Peter Malnati 70-67-70
208 — Doug Ghim 71-70-67, Henrik Norlander (SWE) 69-70-69, Kevin Chappell 64-72-72

Eagle lifts Reid to LPGA lead in New Jersey



NEW YORK: Mel Reid fired an eagle and three birdies in a five-under par 66 on Saturday to seize a one-shot lead going into the final round of the LPGA ShopRite Classic.

England's Reid, who was one off the pace heading into the round, had 15-under par total at the Seaview resort in Galloway New Jersey, and was one in front of Americans Jennifer Song and Jennifer Kupcho, who both shot 65.

It's the second straight event that Reid, a six-time winner on the Ladies European Tour, has held the 54-hole lead in search of a first LPGA Tour title.

She was two-up through three rounds in Portland but finished tied for fifth in a tournament won by compatriot Georgia Hall in a play-off.

"Another great opportunity this week to get it done," Reid said. "Tomorrow I'm going to take my time a little bit more, and hopefully it will make a bit of a difference."

Reid put herself in position again with a quick start at Seaview, where she birdied the first and third.

She was on the green in two at the par-five ninth and two-putted for birdie and a birdie at the 10th put her alone atop the leaderboard.

"I knew it was always in me to do this," Reid said. "I wasn't sure how to get there. It has just taken me a lot more years than I expected it to."

Kupcho and Song both birdied the par-five 18th to close the gap. Kupcho's four-foot birdie attempt wobbled a bit but dropped in the right side as she capped a bogey-free round.

The 23-year-old had drained a dazzling birdie putt at the 13th, her effort from the tier above the pin breaking wide and curling back towards the hole, finally dropping in the back side of the cup.

"It was just curling and it just back-doored in," Kupcho said.

Another great opportunity this week to get it done

MEL REID,
England golfer

Song also played without a bogey, grabbing three birdies on each side for her share of second.

With her lead down to one as she arrived at 18, Reid missed the fairway and her approach from the rough flew high and through the green, leaving her a tough downhill chip. She left a birdie putt short but still walked off with a slender advantage.

Overnight leader Nasa Hataoka of Japan was alone in fourth after a one-under par 70 for 201.

Hataoka was even for the day after two bogeys and two birdies through 16 holes. She missed the green at the par-three 17th but produced a great par-saving putt and gave herself a closing boost with a birdie from a bunker at the last. — AFP

LPGA ShopRite Classic scores
Third round (par 71, USA unless noted):
198 — Mel Reid (ENG) 68-64-66
199 — Jennifer Song 65-69-65, Jennifer Kupcho 69-65-65
201 — Nasa Hataoka (JPN) 64-67-70
202 — Kelly Tan (MAS) 68-69-65, Ryann O'Toole 64-71-67
203 — Brooke Henderson (CAN) 68-70-65
204 — Lin Xiyu (CHN) 70-69-65, Brittany Altomare 66-71-67, Ally McDonald 69-67-68, Anne van Dam (NED) 67-68-69, Georgia Hall (ENG) 67-67-70, Lee Mi-hyang (KOR) 63-69-72
205 — Jodi Ewart Shadoff (ENG) 68-69-68, Moriya Jutanugarn (THA) 67-70-68, Katherine Kirk (AUS) 66-69-70
206 — Megan Khang 69-70-67, Nelly Korda 68-70-68, Sophia Popov (GER) 69-68-69, Christina Kim 69-65-72, Amy Olson 67-66-73

SHORT TAKES

LONDON

Jimenez signs new Wolves contract

Wolves striker Raul Jimenez ended speculation over his future by signing a four-year contract extension on Saturday.

Mexico international Jimenez has scored 46 times in 106 appearances for Wolves, including two in three Premier League games this term.

That prolific form had seen Jimenez linked with Manchester United and Juventus as the transfer deadline approaches next week.

The 29-year-old initially joined on loan from Benfica in June 2018, with Wolves exercising the option to sign him on a permanent deal the following year.

"I am delighted to be here and to be at this great club. Since I was



a little boy, I just wanted to play, I wanted to enjoy it, live it, and that's why I am here for," Jimenez told Wolves' website. — AFP

LONDON

Southgate regrets criticism of Keegan, Eriksson

England boss Gareth Southgate says he should have kept his "mouth shut" instead of criticising his predecessors Kevin Keegan and Sven-Goran Eriksson, having now understood the rigours of the national team job he took up in 2016.

In a book he co-authored with former player Andy Woodman, Southgate was critical of both managers' tactics and style. But he has changed his tone having been on the receiving end of criticism after recent results. "The first thing to say is that when you start to manage, you realise that as a player you shouldn't write autobiographies in that way because you don't really



know the complexities of the job," Southgate said. "Although I enjoyed the book... I look back and regret criticising people who I shouldn't have criticised. I should have kept my mouth shut."

England play Wales in a friendly on Thursday followed by Nations League fixtures against Belgium (October 11) and Denmark (October 14). — Reuters

LONDON

Players 'terrified' of new handball rule

Tottenham Hotspur's Eric Dier has said the new handball law has made things more difficult for defenders who now second guess themselves before going in for a challenge in the box. Dier's handball last weekend — when he rose to challenge in the air with Newcastle's Andy Carroll who headed the ball, at close range, against the raised arm of the Spurs player — has raised questions about what constitutes a handball offence.

The Premier League wants to change the handball law and is in talks with rule-making body IFAB after players and managers across teams stood united in their scathing criticism of how referees interpreted the new rule. "You're terrified in



and around the box with the new rule," Dier said. "You don't feel free to act, to try to play in a normal way. Sometimes it's difficult because it's something that can come back to bite you and is still an opinion."

— Reuters

IPL LAUNCHES PROBE AFTER CORRUPT MOVE

The IPL has launched an investigation after one of the players in this year’s tournament in the UAE reported being approached for possible corruption, the league’s integrity chief said on Sunday. “Yes a player has reported an approach. We are looking into it. No further details can be given at present,” Ajit Singh said.



NZ’S BATES SUFFER INJURY BLOW

New Zealand’s women’s cricket team hopes of winning back the Rose Bowl from Australia for the first time this century have suffered a blow with top-order batswoman Suzie Bates ruled out of the final two ODIs with a shoulder injury. Bates, 33, hurt her shoulder on Saturday while fielding at Allan Border Field in Brisbane in the first ODI.

KOHLI HITS FORM IN BANGALORE’S BIG WIN



SCOREBOARD

Rajasthan Royals
J Buttler c Devdutt b Navdeep22
S Smith b I Udana5
Sanju c&b Chahal4
R Uthappa c I Udana b Chahal17
Mahipal L c Devdutt b Chahal47
Riyen Parag c A Finch b Udana16
Rahul Tewatia not out24
Jofra Archer not out16
Extras (0b 1lb 1nb Open 1w)3
Total (20 overs) 154-6
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-31, 3-31, 4-70, 5-105, 6-114
Bowling: Isuru Udana 4-0-41-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-20-0, Navdeep Saini 4-1-37-1, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-24-3, Adam Zampa 3-0-27-0, Shivam Dube 1-0-4-0

Royal Challengers Bangalore
Devdutt b J Archer63
Aaron Finch lbw Shreyas8
Virat Kohli not out72
AB de Villiers not out12
Extras (1b 0lb 0nb Open 2w)3
Total (19.1 overs) 158-2
Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-124
Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-18-1, Jaydev Unadkat 3-0-31-0, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-27-1, Tom Curran 3.1-0-40-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-28-0, Riyan Parag 1-0-13-0

DUBAI: Skipper Virat Kohli hit form with his first half-century of this Indian Premier League season as he led Royal Challengers Bangalore to a comfortable win over Rajasthan Royals on Saturday. Kohli, who came into the match with scores of 14, one and three, remained unbeaten on 72 as Bangalore chased down a target of 155 to win by eight wickets in Abu Dhabi. He put on a key second-wicket partnership of 99 with in-form opener Devdutt Padikkal, who made 63 - his third IPL fifty in four matches for last years wooden spooners. Kohli, 31, started cautiously before finding his touch to smash seven fours and two sixes in his 53-ball stay in this year's first afternoon game of the Twenty20 tournament.

The players had to deal with temperatures that hit 34 celsius. “Virat Kohli’s fitness is second to none. And the way he controlled that innings in the chase was great to see,” Bangalore’s head coach Simon Katich told reporters. “The way we see it, we don’t look at Virat being out of form at all. We thought he looked magnificent in the first game, unfortunately he holed out, and then missed out a couple of times and that can happen. “But what helped was that he got us over the line in the super over to finish the game against Mumbai Indians (on Monday). It was only a matter of time before he gets runs in the middle.” Bangalore lost Aaron Finch — trapped lbw off Shreyas Gopal for eight — but the left-handed Padikkal and Kohli made sure their

team recorded their third win. Padikkal was bowled by Royals’ England paceman Jofra Archer. South African veteran AB de Villiers hit the winning boundary as Bangalore won in 19.1 overs. “It’s a different feeling (batting with Kohli), I’ve watched him from home so much since I was young and to bat with him is an unreal feeling,” said the 20-year-old Padikkal. “I was getting tired, cramping up, but he pushed me. He said I need to see the team through. That’s how he bats and he was conveying that to me too.” Kohli’s knock took him past 5,500 IPL runs to extend his lead at the top of the scoring chart in the absence of second-placed Suresh Raina (Chennai Super Kings) who pulled out of the tournament in the

United Arab Emirates. Earlier, leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal returned impressive bowling figures of 3-24 from his four overs to restrict Steve-Smith’s Royals to 154 for six while batting first. In the second game of the day, Delhi Capitals outplayed Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs after posting a mammoth 228 for four at the short-boundary Sharjah cricket ground. Skipper Shreyas Iyer hit an unbeaten 38-ball 88 before England’s limited-overs captain import Eoin Morgan gave Delhi a scare with his 44 off 18 deliveries for Kolkata. South African quick Anrich Nortje claimed three wickets including the prized scalp of Morgan to help Delhi take top spot in the eight-team table.

— AFP



West Ham United's Jarrod Bowen scores their third goal against Leicester City at King Power Stadium, Leicester. — Reuters

West Ham spoil Leicester start, Arsenal triumph

LONDON: Arsenal moved into the Premier League top four as two goals in three minutes saw off Sheffield United 2-1, while Leicester's perfect start came to a shuddering halt with a 3-0 defeat at home to West Ham. Liverpool can now leapfrog Leicester to move joint top of the table alongside Merseyside rivals Everton if they win at Aston Villa later on Sunday, while Jose Mourinho takes his Tottenham team to Old Trafford hoping to exact revenge on Manchester United for his sacking nearly two years ago. Arsenal have taken nine points from their opening four games as they look to return to Champions League football for the first time in five years next season. But the Gunners were fortunate to take all three points at the Emirates as they had an early escape when David Luiz escaped a red card for a pull on Oli Burke. Mikel Arteta's men got going after the break and a fine team move opened the scoring on the hour mark when Bukayo Saka headed home Hector Bellerin's cross at the far post. Bellerin was the provider again moments later as Nicolas Pepe drove forward to curl the ball in off the far post. David McGoldrick halved the deficit seven minutes from time with the Blades first league goal of the season, but they remain without a point. Moyes working well from home Arsenal are now level on points with Leicester as the Foxes suffered a huge fall from grace just a week on from thrashing Manchester

City 5-2. West Ham manager David Moyes was again taking charge from home after testing positive for coronavirus. But just as in a 4-0 win over Wolves last weekend, the Hammers did not miss his presence as goals from Michail Antonio, Pablo Fornals and Jarrod Bowen gave the visitors a full deserved three points. “I’m feeling generally fine but I have had some mild symptoms so we are taking it day by day and following the advice of the medical experts,” Moyes told West Ham’s website. Antonio’s presence was too much for Leicester to handle and he opened the scoring with a header at the far post from Aaron Cresswell’s pin-point cross. West Ham doubled their lead in style nine minutes before half-time when Fornals cushioned Cresswell’s long punt perfectly into his path before slotting past Kasper Schmeichel for his first goal since February. Leicester failed to muster a single shot on target and with seven minutes left, Bowen slotted home from Fornals’ pass. At St Mary’s, Southampton won their second successive game by seeing off lowly West Brom 2-0. Wolves bounced back from their thrashing at West Ham as Pedro Neto’s clean strike into the bottom corner was enough to beat Fulham 1-0 at Molineux. — AFP

EPL RESULTS ON SUNDAY:
Leicester 0 West Ham 3 (Antonio 14, Fornals 34, Bowen 83)
Southampton 2 (Djenepo 41, Romeu 69) West Brom 0
Arsenal 2 (Saka 61, Pepe 64) Sheffield United 1 (McGoldrick 83)
Wolves 1 (Neto 56) Fulham 0

LAK PENALTY SAVE SENDS PERSEPOLIS INTO ACL FINAL

DOHA: Hamed Lak produced a diving save off Maicon Rocque as Persepolis beat Al Nassr 5-3 on penalties to reach the final of the Asian Champions League for the second time in three years on Saturday. Both teams had played out a tense 1-1 draw after 120 minutes of action forcing the match into the tie-breaker at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium. But it was the Iranians who emerged as the top team in Asia’s west zone as they scored off all their five penalties, while Saudi giants Al Nassr watched in agony from the sidelines as their Brazilian defender Rocque’s shot, his team’s fourth, was saved by Lak, leaping to his right. A few hours before the match Persepolis were dealt a blow when the Asian Football Confederation

banned their star striker Issa Alekasir for six months for a “discriminatory gesture” while celebrating his goal against Uzbekistan’s Pakhtakor in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. In addition to the ban, the 30-year-old, who scored four times in his side’s last three matches in Doha and was chiefly instrumental to their progress to the semis, was also fined \$10,000 for his slant-eyed gesture, considered a serious racial offence. “The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has banned Issa Alekasir, of Persepolis FC, from taking part in any kind of football-related activity for six months for violating Article 58.1 of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code (2019 Edition),” the AFC said in a



Persepolis’ players celebrate their win during the AFC Champions League semifinal against Saudi’s Al Nassr in Doha. — AFP

statement. “The ban will take effect immediately,” the continental body added. Article 58.1 states “anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, skin colour, gender, disability, language, age, physical appearance, religion, political opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation, or ethnic, national, or social origin has committed an offence.” On Saturday, however, Al Nassr, who were hoping to reach the final for the first time, couldn’t make the most of Alekasir’s absence or the fact that Persepolis had lost Ehsan Pehlevan just before half-time after he received his second yellow card.

The Saudis were first to score though, Abderrazzak Hamdallah foxing goalkeeper Lak with a ‘Panenka’ goal in the 36th minute following Bashar Resan’s foul on Khalid al-Ghannam. But Persepolis needed only six minute to draw level, Abdi Mehdi producing an excellent header past Al Nassr goalkeeper Brad Jones off a cross from Resan. Luck came to Lak’s rescue immediately after the break as Hamdallah produced a brilliant free-kick only for the ball to thud into the crossbar after the goalkeeper was thoroughly beaten. Both teams had their share of chances before Lak came up with his decisive save in the shootout to put his team against a team from Asia’s east, who are yet to be determined.

— AFP

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Ethiopia's Shura Kitata wins the elite men's race at the London Marathon on Sunday. – Reuters

Kitata, Kosgei take London Marathon honours

WORLD RECORD HOLDER KIPCHOGE CRACKS BY FINISHING EIGHTH

LONDON: It proved 13th time unlucky as world record holder Eliud Kipchoge fluffed his lines at Sunday's London marathon, won in a thrilling sprint finish by Ethiopian Shura Kitata.

The coronavirus-hit marathon, limited to elite runners and with no crowds, was the first Kipchoge hasn't won since finishing second in Berlin in 2013 — he had won all 11 others he raced in, including the 2016 Rio Olympics.

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

Kipchoge, who set the world record of 2:01.39 in Berlin in 2018, eventually finished eighth.

"I am really disappointed," the 35-year-old told BBC. "I had a

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

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

Kipchoge added: "The last 15km I felt it. I felt well in the start. Absolutely there are more marathons in me and I will come back again."

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

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

The men's race had been touted as a showdown between Kenyan legend Kipchoge and Ethiopia's Kenenisa



Kenya's Brigid Kosgei celebrates as she wins the elite women's race of the London Marathon. – Reuters

Bekele, arguably the best track athlete in the world. But Bekele pulled out on Friday with a calf injury, taking the gloss of what would have been a battle for the ages.

GROUPING PROMISES FIREWORKS

Instead, Kipchoge seemed to have missed the hot pace he is used to, meaning a lead pack of eight runners

unusually remained in the running late into the race, held in cold, rainy conditions.

Having to negotiate the curves of the looped course, the pace fell well below the personal bests of the leading peloton. Fireworks were promised at the end, and so it proved.

The podium finishers came into the final kilometre three abreast.

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

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

There was some joy for Kenya,

however, as Brigid Kosgei retained the women's title, producing a brilliant solo run to claim a fourth career win in the event.

Kosgei clocked 2hr 18min 58sec, crossing the line ahead of American Sara Hall, who timed a personal best of 2:22.01.

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

Kosgei, the women's world record holder in the marathon and also twice a winner of the Chicago Marathon, cut loose from Chepngetich on the 18-mile mark and kept her rhythm as she lapped many backmarkers en route to the finish line.

"The weather is not good. So we struggled," Kosgei told BBC.

"It's wonderful to race. We have not prepared well due to the pandemic. I struggled up to the moment I finished." — AFP

Teenage dreams for Sinner and Swiatek; Nadal through

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

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

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

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

World number 54 Swiatek, also 19, shocked top seed and title favourite Simona Halep 6-1, 6-2.

In a tournament turned upside down by the coronavirus, which meant a four-month delay and with



Italy's Jannik Sinner plays a return shot to Germany's Alexander Zverev during the fourth round of the French Open 2020 at the Roland Garros in Paris. – AFP

a crowd capacity of just 1,000 a day, it was fitting that further shock wins were delivered by qualifiers.

Italy's Martina Trevisan, ranked at 159, and 131st-ranked Nadia Podoroska of Argentina, also made the quarterfinals with wins over fifth seed

Kiki Bertens and Barbora Krejickova respectively.

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

"Today was very tough knowing that it's going to be a long match but



Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates after winning against Romania's Simona Halep during their fourth round match at the Roland Garros. – AFP

in the end I'm very happy about my performance," said Sinner after his defeat of US Open runner-up Zverev.

Swiatek fired 30 winners past 2018 champion Halep who failed to carve out a single break point.

"I am surprised I could do this,"

admitted Swiatek after ending the 17-match winning streak of Halep.

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

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

Swiatek will face Trevisan in the quarterfinal after the 26-year-old beat Bertens 6-4, 6-4. — AFP

FRENCH OPEN RESULTS

MEN (FOURTH ROUND)

Jannik Sinner (ITA) bt Alexander Zverev (GER) x6 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3; Rafael Nadal (ESP) x2 bt Sebastian Korda (USA) 6-1, 6-1, 6-2

WOMEN (FOURTH ROUND)

Iga Swiatek (POL) bt Simona Halep (ROU) x1 6-1, 6-2; Martina Trevisan (ITA) bt Kiki Bertens (NED) x5 6-4, 6-4; Elina Svitolina (UKR) x3 bt Caroline Garcia (FRA) 6-1, 6-3; Nadia Podoroska (ARG) bt Barbora Krejickova (CZE) 2-6, 6-2, 6-3



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New minimum wage policy bodes well for Omani job growth

POSITIVE IMPACT: The new policy scraps the longstanding system of tiered wage structures linked to educational qualifications, while retaining the overall minimum wage at RO 325 per month.

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](https://twitter.com/conradprabhu)

Oman's revamped Minimum Wage policy, which does away with the tiered structure of base salaries linked to educational qualifications, has the potential to spur job growth targeted at Omanis, place a greater premium on experience and skills development, and incentivise businesses to invest in local talent, according to a well-known Omani economist.

Dr Abdullah al Bahrani (pictured) applauded the government's recent decision to roll back its longstanding policy linking minimum wages for Omanis with their educational qualifications.

The reversal of the policy, he said, is a "good thing" for Omani job-seekers and employers alike, and will have a net positive impact on the overall economy. Under the old policy, which was rescinded vide a circular issued by the Ministry of Labour last month, the minimum wage was RO 325 per month for Omani



high school graduates, RO 425 for college diploma holders and RO 600 for degree holders.

The new policy scraps these wage bands, while retaining the overall minimum wage at RO 325 per month. Presenting on the topic in his weekly 'Coffee with Dr A' series on his YouTube channel, Muscat-based Dr Abdullah said the new measure has the potential to open up more employment opportunities for young Omanis.

"By definition, the minimum wage is the minimum wage that an employer can offer you for a job.

This does not mean that it is the wage you will be offered, but



the minimum wage you can earn. You and your employer can agree on a wage that is at, or above, the minimum wage," he explained.

In his talk, Dr Abdullah warned that multiple minimum wage tiers or high minimum wage reduce the market's ability to match job-seekers with available jobs, which he referred to as 'frictional unemployment.

"It's a situation where jobs and

job seekers exist but cannot match due to some friction, which in this example is the 'minimum wage'."

To make his point, the economist cited the example of 'Ahmed', a job-seeker with a recent university degree.

"Under the old policy, the minimum wage Ahmed would receive is RO 600 per month conditional on meeting the employer's criteria. Ahmed interviews for the job, but the employer feels his skills qualify him for a salary of RO 550.

Ahmed is willing to accept, but under the old model, the two sides will not be able to match, although both are willing to.

In the old model, Ahmed

would not have a job, but in the new model, Ahmed would earn RO 550."

This flexibility would allow job-seekers like Ahmed to earn a wage under the new policy as opposed to a zero wage under the old policy, he noted. "The longer Ahmed is unemployed the more difficult it is for him to find a job.

The longer he is unemployed, the more likely his skills will depreciate. By eliminating the minimum wage, it will facilitate connecting Oman's youth with job opportunities as quickly as possible. It will allow firms to take on Omani employees it wouldn't have in the past," Dr Abdullah stressed.

In this regard, he underlined the need for policymakers and other stakeholders to make it possible for local talent to match with the needs of local employers.

Failure to do so, he warned, would invite "long-term consequences" for the economy, notably in the form of "business flight" where companies may choose not to operate any longer in Oman because of wage issues.

"Oman needs private industry now more than ever.

We also need to develop our experience and skillsets in the labour market. The change in the minimum wage policy increases the likelihood that this happens," he added.

Facebook, Twitter, Google CEOs will testify before US Senate committee

WASHINGTON: The chief executives of Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet-owned Google have agreed to voluntarily testify at a hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee on October 28 about a key law protecting Internet companies.

Facebook and Twitter confirmed that their CEOs, Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey, respectively, will appear, while a source said that Google's Sundar Pichai will appear. That came a day after the committee unanimously voted to approve a plan to subpoena the three CEOs to appear before the panel.

Twitter's Dorsey tweeted on Friday that the hearing "must be constructive & focused on what matters most to the American people: how we work together to protect elections."

Calls for reform of section 230 have been intensifying, but there is little chance of approval by Congress this year

The CEOs are to appear virtually. In addition to discussions on reforming the law called Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which protects Internet companies from liability over content posted by users, the hearing will bring up issues about consumer privacy and media consolidation.

Republican President Donald Trump has made holding tech companies accountable for allegedly stifling conservative voices a theme of his administration.

As a result, calls for a reform of Section 230 have been intensifying ahead of the November 3 elections, but there is little chance of approval by Congress this year. — Reuters

Sultanate's trade liberalisation policies hailed

MUSCAT: Oman's liberalisation of trade in goods and services is a successful example of the country's economic diversification strategy, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) said in a recent report

The report pointed out that the Sultanate pursued an active plan of development that focuses on diversification, manufacturing and privatisation with the purpose of reducing the contribution of the oil sector to the Gross Domestic

Product to 9 per cent.

It noted that tourism and downstream value-adding hydrocarbon industries have become the main components of the government's economic diversification strategy.

The HKTDC report added that the Sultanate showed strong commitment to trade liberalisation through its membership of the World Trade Organisation, in addition to a number of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

The Omani government took initiatives to modernise the economy, said the Hong Kong institution, noting that increased government spending and direct foreign investment lead to the development of a broad range of non-oil industries.

The report explained that special economic zones in the Sultanate, particularly in Duqm, focus on incentivising economic transformation by combining organisational incentives and its

strategic geographical location outside the politically fraught Strait of Hormuz.

Investment in infrastructure continues to pour into economic zones in Salalah, Duqm, Suhar and Al Mazyouna, said the report, adding that this goes in line with domestic development plans (aimed at limiting GDP reliance on the oil and gas sector).

The report noted that since 2017 the Sultanate attracted a variety of mega investment projects, most of

them focusing on export-oriented industrial operations located in special economic zones.

No banking restrictions are imposed on foreign investment transactions or financial transfers, it said, adding in terms of portfolio investment, no restrictions are imposed on the flow of capital or profits while foreign investors are permitted to invest in Muscat Securities Market as long as they do that through a licensed broker.

— ONA

BANKING

MONTE DEI PASCHI SHAREHOLDERS APPROVE BAD LOAN CLEAN-UP

Shareholders in Monte dei Paschi di Siena approved a bad loan clean-up plan aimed at easing the sale of the state-owned bank to a healthier rival. Italy has worked for two years on the plan, which gained approval from the ECB in September and must be completed by December 1. < Reuters

AVIATION

AIRBUS EXECUTIVE SAYS AVIATION OUTLOOK WORSE THAN EXPECTED

The outlook for the aviation industry has deteriorated again due to rising coronavirus infections and renewed travel restrictions. With air travel at a fraction of normal levels due to restrictions and travellers' fears related to the pandemic, airlines have slowed deliveries of new aircraft. < Reuters

ENERGY

US OIL REFINERS LOOK TO LEAPFROG CANADIANS IN MAKING RENEWABLE DIESEL

US oil refineries are moving aggressively to produce renewable diesel, partly to cash in on Canada's greener fuel standard before Canadian refiners modify their own plants. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government intends to present its Clean Fuel Standard this year. < Reuters

■ EXPANSION

Inflation narrative tripped up as Trump gets virus

OLE S HANSEN

Commodities traded lower for a second week as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cloud the global economic outlook and with that the demand projections for several growth-dependent commodities from crude oil to copper. News on Friday that President Trump and the first lady had both tested positive helped strengthen some of the moves that had already started earlier in the week.

President Trump's positive result initially sent stocks lower while gold and the US dollar rallied. It will likely sharpen already intense attention on the President's handling of the pandemic as he campaigns for re-election against Joe Biden, who leads in national polls. For now, the market has taken the view that the latest development may further weaken Trump's chances of re-election, a development that is being treated as potentially dollar negative, hence the Greenback's limited positive reaction to the news.

Precious metals continued to recover following the latest correction which, given the relative length it travelled to the downside, did not manage to change the continued positive



outlook for the sector in the coming months. Silver and platinum, which got slammed hard on the way down, came top as they played catch-up.

The grain sector came second after ending the third quarter up 12.3 per cent, its best in more than five years. The latest pop came after US Department of Agriculture stockpiles data showed corn, soy and wheat inventories all trailing the average estimates from analysts. Heavy buying of soy and corn by China,

as it rebuilds its massive hog herd after the African Swine Fever outbreak, was a major driver. In addition, lower US yield estimates and dry weather in parts of South America could mean that the sector, after years of oversupply, will begin to tighten.

It was a strong quarter for agriculture commodities in general with the sector finishing up close to 12 per cent with gains seen across all three sub sectors of grains, softs and livestock. With the strong finish for the grains

sector, there are now expectations that a lower US production due to adverse weather in August and increased worries about a La Niña event will continue to support the sector over the coming months.

With these developments in mind, the inflationary transition from commodities into the wider economy has received some attention in recent weeks. However, if realised it would represent the worst kind of inflation as it will hurt consumers, especially in emerging market

economies that can least afford it. However, countering these deflation concerns were developments across growth-dependent commodities such as energy and industrial metals where crude oil and copper traded lower in response to weakening fundamentals.

Crude oil extended its decline due to continued worries about the pace of the recovery in global fuel demand together with increased focus on Opec and its ability to keep production down. This comes after Libya's oil industry, all but shut down since January because of civil war, began to recover, potentially leading to rapid output growth over the coming months.

The demand side, meanwhile, remains troubled by the continued rise in COVID-19 cases leading to renewed lockdowns. With the timing of a widely available vaccine still uncertain, the captains of the three biggest independent oil trading houses don't see a meaningful recovery in global oil demand for at least another 18 months. Having found resistance at \$42.60/b, Brent crude turned lower and broke below recently established support to touch the lowest level since June. *[The writer is Head of Commodity Strategy at Saxo Bank]*

Reliance says GIC, TPG to invest about \$1 billion in retail arm



The logo of Reliance Industries is pictured in a stall at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show at Gandhinagar, in this file photo. — Reuters

NEW DELHI: Indian oil-to-telecoms conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd said on Saturday Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC and global private equity firm TPG Capital invested a combined 73.50 billion rupees (about \$1 billion) in its retail unit.

Reliance, controlled by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, has secured more than \$2 billion in investments from global investors, including KKR & Co, Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala and Silver Lake Partners, in Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd over the past few months.

GIC will invest 55.12 billion rupees for a 1.22 per cent stake, while TPG Capital Management will invest 18.38 billion rupees to own a 0.41 per cent equity stake in the retail arm, the company said.

The investments in Reliance Retail values the company at a pre-money equity value of 4.285 trillion rupees (\$58.47 billion), Reliance said.

This is TPG Capital's second investment in Reliance. In June, the firm invested \$598 million in Reliance's digital unit Jio Platforms. Mumbai-headquartered Reliance has approached investors in Jio Platforms about buying stakes in its retail arm.

Reliance, already India's biggest retailer with roughly 12,000 stores, forged a \$3.38 billion deal in August to acquire rival Future Group's retail business.

The conglomerate is also expanding its so-called new commerce venture, which ties neighborhood stores to Reliance for online deliveries of groceries, apparel and electronics in a space currently dominated by Walmart Inc's Flipkart and Amazon.com Inc's Indian arm. — Reuters

■ 'HYDRA' SCHEME

Monte dei Paschi shareholders approve bad loan clean-up



The logo of Monte dei Paschi di Siena is seen in a bank branch entrance in Rome. — Reuters

MILAN: Shareholders in Monte dei Paschi di Siena approved on Sunday a long-awaited bad loan clean-up plan aimed at easing the sale of the state-owned bank to a healthier rival.

Italy has worked for two years on the plan, which gained final approval from the European Central Bank in September and must be completed by December 1. Rome bailed out Monte dei Paschi in 2017, acquiring a 68 per cent stake for 5.4 billion euros (\$6.3 billion).

To meet conditions agreed at the time with European Union competition authorities, it must cut that stake before the bank approves 2021 earnings.

The 'Hydra' scheme approved on Sunday at an extraordinary shareholders' meeting will lower Monte dei Paschi's impaired loans

Rome bailed out Monte dei Paschi in 2017, acquiring a 68 per cent stake for

5.4 billion euros (\$6.3 billion)

to 4.3 per cent of total lending, below UniCredit's 4.8 per cent, currently the best level among larger commercial banks.

The move was designed to facilitate a merger, but the Treasury is struggling to find buyers for the loss-making bank, people familiar with the matter have said.

Under the 'Hydra' scheme Monte dei Paschi will transfer 8.1 billion euros in impaired loans to

state-owned bad loan manager AMCO, together with other assets and liabilities including 1.1 billion euros in capital.

The deal, which includes a 3.2 billion euro bridge loan by banks UBS and JPMorgan, allowed Monte dei Paschi to shed the loans without incurring losses.

However, the ECB has demanded the bank replenishes its capital buffers, a condition the Treasury had hoped to fulfil by finding a buyer by the end of the year. Clinching such a deal, however, will require more time as incentives to lure potential buyers will have to be negotiated, sources have said.

The ruling 5-Star Movement has been calling for the state to hold onto MPS and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is yet to sign a decree needed to complete

Airbus COO says aviation outlook worse than expected

BERLIN: The outlook for the aviation industry has deteriorated again due to rising coronavirus infections and renewed travel restrictions, Airbus chief operating officer Michael Schoellhorn was quoted as saying on Saturday.

With air travel at a fraction of normal levels due to restrictions and travellers' fears related to the pandemic, airlines have slowed deliveries of new aircraft.

Airbus has said it needs to shed 15,000 posts worldwide. In an interview with the Handelsblatt business daily, Schoellhorn said the situation in early autumn was worse than the company had expected in the summer, adding that the planned 15,000 job cuts would be the minimum.

As some Airbus factories were already underutilized before the pandemic, labour unions now fear that the management could decide to shut down entire locations. At least for Germany, Schoellhorn ruled out such



Michael Schoellhorn attends a press conference at Airbus headquarters in Blagnac, near Toulouse, France. — Reuters

a move.

"In terms of substance, I do not see any German locations at risk at the moment," he said. Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury said last month the planemaker would do its best to cut costs without resorting to compulsory redundancies, but it could not guarantee they won't happen.

In a letter to staff in September, Faury warned that Airbus may have to carry out compulsory layoffs after air travel failed to recover from the pandemic as quickly as anticipated. — Reuters

B R I E F B I T E S

■ MUSCAT

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year comprehensive insurance. The campaign that began on October 4, 2020 will last until December 2, 2020. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details, please).

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CHEVRON NIGERIA TO CUT 25 PER CENT OF STAFF

The Nigerian unit of oil major Chevron plans to cut its local workforce by 25 per cent to reduce costs, it said on Saturday, due to weak demand for oil in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The company, which operates a joint venture with Nigeria's state-owned NNPC, said it needed to make the adjustments to remain competitive in light of the prevailing business climate. > Reuters



TESLA TO BUY GERMAN BATTERY ASSEMBLY MAKER

Tesla Inc has agreed to acquire German ATW Automation, a supplier assembling battery modules and packs for the auto industry, a source said. ATW was on the brink of liquidation due to a slump in orders, German media reported. ATS on September 25 announced that certain assets and employees at one of its Germany-based units would be sold and transferred to a third party. > Reuters

Oil exploration up in the air as prices dive

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

LONDON: The coronavirus pandemic that has slammed oil demand and prices is forcing energy majors to tighten their belts on exploration, even if finding new deposits remain essential to their existence. While the sector is increasingly diversifying into greener energies such as electricity and wind power, its core business remains oil and gas. "Questions abound over whether it is still profitable to look for oil given subdued demand growth prospects and a low-price environment," Stephen Brennock, analyst at oil brokers PVM, said. "The answer seems not, judging by the recent spate of massive hydrocarbon asset writedowns. "Set against this backdrop, I don't expect a rebound in drilling in the medium-term. "Instead, oil majors will be forced to beef up their green energy portfolios in order to survive," Brennock said. Compared to pre-virus plans, the energy sector has slashed exploration projects in UK North



Equinor's gas processing and CO2 removal platform is pictured in Sleipner off Stavanger, Norway. – Reuters

Sea waters by 70 per cent and by 30 per cent off the coast of Norway, according to research group Westwood. US oil giant ExxonMobil has cut its total exploration plans by 30 per cent, or an investment reduction of \$10 billion. European rivals ENI, BP and Equinor have carried out similar

moves, which have in turn hurt subcontractors including French oil services group CGG, which expects revenue to slump 40 per cent this year. In the United States, more than 30 oil exploration and production companies have this year filed for bankruptcy, according to Texan law firm Haynes & Boone.

If oil prices remain stuck around the current \$40 per barrel level, a further 150 such companies could be lost by 2022, estimates research group Rystad Energy. "Drilling programmes will be hampered in the near-term, in particular in US shale areas but also elsewhere, because of immediate cost-cutting measures," said JBC

Energy analyst Raphaela Hein. "In the past, we have seen that massive capital expenditure cuts to majors' budgets did not really impact their future production. "As such, we think that they will continue to look for new fields — maybe to a slightly lesser extent and keep production within their long-term plans.

"Of course this will contribute to ensuring their survival," she added. Hein however said that Arctic projects appeared to be "economically unviable". This despite the vast area forecast to have 13 per cent of the world's oil reserves and 30 per cent of its undiscovered natural gas. In July, Russia's Gazprom Neft and Anglo-Dutch giant Shell announced a partnership to explore in the Arctic. While oil prices rebounded strongly after briefly turning negative in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, the world's main oil contracts Brent North Sea and West Texas Intermediate have failed to build on those gains — and last week fell heavily to under \$40. "Markets right now do not believe there is a future for oil," said SEB analyst Bjarne Schieldrop. "For how long we'll have reduced drilling depends on the oil price," he added. Even so, the administration of US President Donald Trump in August approved oil and gas drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, angering environmentalists in the process. While the oil price crisis is making the realisation of such projects unlikely, "political will may still trump" that, said Hein of JBC energy. — AFP

Christine Lagarde has a real rates problem

LONDON: European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde is running to stand still. Her policy rate is at a record low. But the weakness of inflation means that the real rate, which is adjusted for changes in prices, is actually rising. This may buoy the euro — the last thing that Lagarde needs. Euro zone consumer prices fell an estimated 0.3 per cent in September from a year ago, an even bigger drop than the 0.2 per cent decline reported for August, data from the European Union statistics office showed on Friday. Special factors including a cut in value-added tax in Germany and lower energy costs played a role. But coronavirus-damaged economies are unlikely to generate much inflation for some time. The euro zone is not the only place where low inflation is automatically pushing up real policy rates. But the phenomenon is most marked on Lagarde's turf. It means US real rates are well below euro zone ones, even though the ECB — unlike the Federal Reserve — has lowered its key policy rates below zero. The upshot may be a rising euro, since exchange rates are supposed to track differences in inflation-adjusted interest rates over time. A lot of other factors can upend textbook theory. But Lagarde will have to work harder to encourage inflation if the euro appreciates, since a stronger single currency



A long-lasting 5% rise in a trade-weighted index of the euro's value could lower inflation by 0.5 to 0.8 percentage points after one year

makes imported goods cheaper. Depending on the causes, a long-lasting 5 per cent rise in a trade-weighted index of the euro's value could lower inflation by 0.5 to 0.8 percentage points after one year, according to a European Commission document. The commission said the single currency had appreciated by around 7.5 per cent on this basis between February and August. The ECB does not fixate on the euro's exchange rate or try to manage it. But it does take into account the impact that its swings may have on inflation, which it aims to keep close to but below 2 per cent. — Reuters

■ NICHE MARKET

US oil refiners look to leapfrog Canadians in making renewable diesel

WINNIPEG: US oil refineries are moving aggressively to produce renewable diesel, partly to cash in on Canada's greener fuel standard before Canadian refiners modify their own plants. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government intends to present its Clean Fuel Standard this year, aiming to cut 30 million tonnes of emissions by 2030. Renewable diesel, made by processing spent cooking oil, canola oil or animal fats, can be used in high concentrations or without blending in conventional diesel engines. So far, Canadian companies have been slow in preparing to make the fuel, with only three projects publicly announced, said Ian Thomson, president of the Advanced Biofuels Canada industry group. At least five US refiners have announced plans to produce renewable diesel or said they are considering it, including Phillips 66 and HollyFrontier Corp. "This is Canada's to lose," Thomson said. "If Canada's refiners want to get left out of the game, they will dig their heels in and oppose the standard. Meanwhile, the Americans will build." Renewable diesel is a niche market, making up just 0.5 per cent of the 430-billion gallon per year global diesel market, according to investment bank Morgan Stanley. Greenhouse gas emissions from renewable diesel and traditional biodiesel are typically 50 per cent to 80 per cent lower than conventional diesel. US states such as Colorado and Washington are moving toward such standards and along with Canada's fuel standard, a sufficient market is developing, said HollyFrontier executive Tom Creery, on the company's second-quarter earnings call. Suncor Energy Inc, Canada's second-biggest



Parkland Corp's refinery, which includes production of renewable diesel, is seen in an undated aerial photograph in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. – Reuters

If Canada's refiners want to get left out of the game, they will dig their heels in and oppose the standard. Meanwhile, the Americans will build

IAN THOMSON President, Advanced Biofuels Canada

oil producer, has been considering a renewable diesel plant in Montreal, but the pandemic slowed its progress, said Chief Sustainability Officer Martha Hall Findlay. Canadian refiners face longer regulatory

delays than competitors in the United States, setting them at a disadvantage, she said. "The timelines would force investment in facilities outside Canada because of the sheer fact that we can't build them that fast," Hall Findlay said. "That seems a little backward." New supply could far overshoot demand if all announced projects are built, Morgan Stanley said. Parkland Fuel Corp is producing renewable diesel and renewable gasoline in its Burnaby, British Columbia refinery, and is considering expanding capacity, said Senior Vice-President Ryan Krogmeier. "There's a tremendous opportunity for Canada to harness its natural resources," he said. "The market for renewable fuels is really taking off." — Reuters



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Harar Jugol, a fortified historic town in beautiful Ethiopia

The city of Harar is located on a hilltop in the eastern extension of the Ethiopian Highlands, about five hundred kilometres from the capital Addis Ababa. The population includes the local Hareri (Adere), who speak a Semitic language and have literature written in Arabic script, as well as the Amhara, Oromo, and Somalis.

Writings show that in the 7th century AD immigrants from Hadramawt in southern Arabia were the first settlers of Harar. Yahyá Nasrallāh's Fath Madinat Harar, an unpublished history of the city in the 13th century, records the accounts of the qadi Abadir Umar Ar-Rida, a well-documented patron saint of Islam who has spread the religion throughout Ethiopia and Somalia along with several other religious leaders settled in Harar after he migrated from southern Arabian Hijaz Province in 1216 (612 AH). Harar was later made the new capital of the Muslim Adal Sultanate in 1520 by the Sultan Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad.

Ideally situated between the Ethiopian highlands to the west and the shores of the Gulf of Aden to the east, Harar became a crossroad for trade and culture between Africa, India and the Middle East as well as a gateway for the spread of Islam into the Horn of Africa. The city evolved into a centre of Islamic scholarship and culture and eventually was considered a sort of capital city of Islamic



Ideally situated between the Ethiopian highlands to the west and the shores of the Gulf of Aden to the east, Harar became a crossroad for trade and culture between Africa, India and the Middle East as well as a gateway for the spread of Islam into the Horn of Africa

northeast Africa.

Most notably, Harar city is known for its Jugol wall and the walled gates that are believed to be built somewhere between the 13th and 16th century. This thick, 5 m high and 3.5 km long Jugol wall was built as a defensive response to the people of the city in the medieval times. The old town is surrounded by this fascinating wall with five famous gates scattered in all four corners-Showa Gate, Buda

Gate Sanga Gate, Erer Gate and Fallana Gate, each providing five pathways into five different quarters of the city, as well as Harar Gate, also known as Duke's Gate after Ras Makonnen, the first duke of Harar (later Emperor Haile Selassie), who added it in 1889.

The Jugol wall surrounding the sacred city numbers 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century and 102 shrines. Harar is often

referred to as the fourth-holiest city in Islam and known in Arabic as Madeenat-ul-Awliya (the City of Saints).

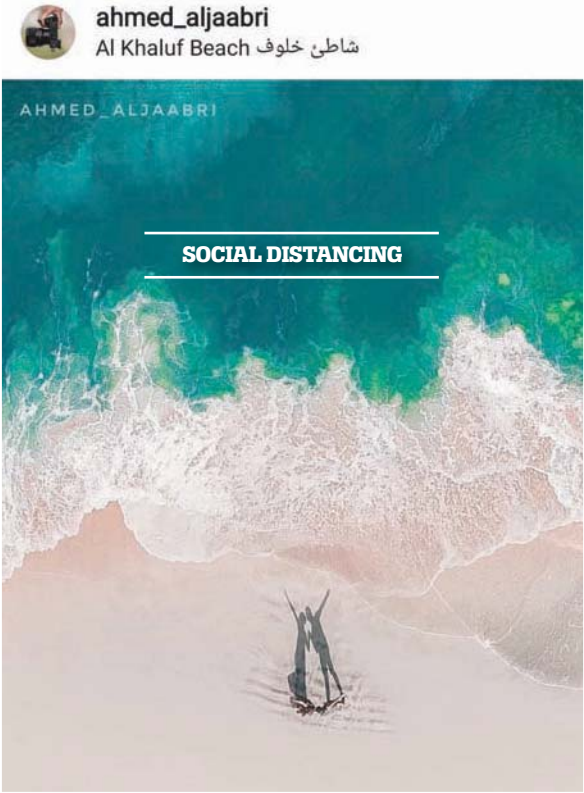
This fortified historic town of Harar, the Harar Jugol, was listed as a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2006. The Unesco hails the city as a "rare example of a relatively well-preserved historic town that has retained its traditions, urban fabric, and rich Harari Muslim cultural heritage to the present time".

If there is any other thing Harar is famous for in addition to its history and architecture is the presence of the spotted hyenas roaming around the outskirts of the city. For centuries, people in Harar have lived side by side with hyenas - one of the world's deadliest land predators, and feeding them every year on the Day of Ashura. According to written records and local folklore, people started to feed hyenas as a way to lure them from attacking humans and eating their livestock.

Harar is also famous for its special variety of coffee beans, particularly known as Harar Coffee, which is known for its distinctive aroma and flavour.

When in Harar, it's easy to feel lost, both geographically and in time. The people of Harar known for their warm hospitality and friendliness have a reputation of having a laid back lifestyle with a strong sense of sociability. They say "Harar is a place where you start a conversation with a stranger and end up in their friend's house for an afternoon session".

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



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On 10th birthday, Instagram no longer an escape from reality



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Artful photos of sunsets and ice cream are being challenged by more activist content on Instagram as it turns 10 years old in a time of social justice protests, climate crisis, and the pandemic. Founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, the app had one billion users two years and has grown fast since then, after first capturing the public's attention with its image filters, and easy photo editing and sharing tools. But playful pictures, once a hallmark of Instagram, are increasingly seen as off-key when people are "losing jobs, being sick, isolated and depressed, then on top of that the BLM (Black Lives Matter) protests and everything going on with the US election," reasoned Rebecca Davis. In 2016 she created 'Rallyandrise', an account devoted to helping people engage politically. "Not that there's no time and place for pretty photos, but maybe people are trying to find a balance," she said. The number of people subscribing to the New York resident's account has more than doubled to 24,000 in recent months. In May, protests erupted across the US after a video was shared across social media of handcuffed Black man George Floyd dying while a police officer knelt on his neck for more than five minutes in Minneapolis.

Simultaneously, the pandemic had people hunkering down inside and spending more time than ever before online. Overshadowing it all was the contentious presidential election in November. "People were desperate for advice and guidance in doing something," Davis said. Online petitions, fund-raising and organising became the norm and Instagram was prime terrain for the trend. **'INSTA' SPOTLIGHT** Former US presidential contender Hillary Clinton and celebrity Kourtney Kardashian among several public figures who have used Instagram to spotlight racial issues by handing over their accounts to prominent African-Americans for 24 hours. "Instagram is our highest, most effective platform when it comes to getting users to follow through on action links," said American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) social media manager Emily Patterson, referring to getting people to click through to sign petitions, organise protests, or contact members of Congress. "It has the audience we're trying to reach." Instagram's Stories feature lets users present collections of images, such as a day spent protesting. And the app also ramped up its array of sharing tools. For political movements, Instagram has a coveted audience of young adults, from

Founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, the app had one billion users two years and has grown fast since then, after first capturing the public's attention with its image filters, and easy photo editing and sharing tools

teenagers to people in their 30s, connecting with friends and peers. "On Facebook it's not just chosen friends and communities, it's also your parents, roommates, ex-partners — a broad collection of everyone someone's ever known," Patterson said. "So people don't get into that platform on something deeply important to them." And Instagram is where people are spending a lot of time, which makes it ripe for activism. The results are proven, according to Patterson. The ACLU got complaints from US lawyers about "how much they hated people com-

ing at them from social media" about separating immigrant children from their parents at the Mexico border, "and it mostly came from Instagram," Patterson said. **PHOTOS FUEL OUTRAGE** Teenage Swedish climate crisis activist Greta Thunberg rallied young people around the world using Instagram. Environmental activism is well suited for the image-focused app, moving people to action with heart-breaking pictures such as koala bears burnt in Australian fires. Immunologist Dr Noc, 27, said that few people go to Instagram for education, so you have to surprise them with knowledge. "People prefer bite size bits of information with captions, that are easy to digest and also are entertaining," said Noc, who uses his account to explain Covid-19 and the pandemic. Looking to the future, Noc has actually found his growth more explosive on video-snippet sharing app TikTok — he suspects his success is down to fewer people posting there about immunology. He spends hours making videos for his 200,000 TikTok followers and reposts the clips on Instagram, where he has a smaller following. In the fast-moving tech world, Instagram marks its 10th birthday with its new political edge now under threat from the younger upstart — **AFP**

FASHION



Paris finally bows to Coco Chanel's flawed greatness

SHE WAS THE greatest style icon of 20th century, whose designs still shape what we wear. Yet the Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel who emerges from the first exhibition ever dedicated to her work in Paris will come as a shock to fans of her brand's bling. The creator of the little black dress, tweed suits, two-tone shoes and quilted handbags that are synonymous with French elegance was a very different animal to Karl "the Kaiser" Lagerfeld, who turned her label into a \$100 billion business. While the flamboyant German impresario had a magpie eye for street fashion, the Coco Chanel presented at the new show at the city's fashion museum, the Palais Galliera, was a futurist visionary of almost spartan refinement. Many of the dresses she designed and wore a century ago are so startlingly modern they could grace the catwalk now. The cliché is that Chanel freed women from the tyranny of Victorian corsetry, borrowing liberally from men's wardrobes to do so. But for the curators of "Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto", that was only the tip of the iceberg. **STYLE REVOLUTION** Chanel created so much of modern style's DNA that her radicalism has been hiding in plain sight, said the museum's director Miren Arzalluz. "Even for us it was a surprise how much even we didn't really know her

work in depth," she said. "Her style is so timeless and present in our lives... and so ingrained in our collective memory that no one thought it necessary to do a retrospective, because we all thought we knew it." From her striped "marinière" sailor top in 1916, to making black the colour of cool, letting women move freely in their clothes and being the first to see the potential of sportswear, her influence is utterly pervasive, Arzalluz argued. Her Chanel No. 5 perfume, sold in simple square bottles with utilitarian black and ivory labels, was minimalist before minimalism was even a thing. "And her Chanel suits of the 1950s and 1960s were the uniform of modern women," she added. But it is the breathtaking elegance of her cut and silhouettes which will come as the biggest surprise for those raised on Lagerfeld's showy 36-year reign. What is also striking, Arzalluz insisted, was how Chanel stuck to her revolutionary guns despite the arrival of Christian Dior's New Look after World War II, with its return to wasp-waist corseted looks. "There's a coherence in her style from the beginning to end," Arzalluz said, in a span that goes from 1912 to her death in 1971. That this is not shouted from the rooftops more often is partly because of what Chanel did during the war, and her subsequent flight to Switzerland after the liberation. —**AFP**



■ HUMAN INTEREST

Celebrating old age and what we can do to support the elderly

BY KABEER YOUSUF

Can a smile, a pat on the back or a casual touch make a difference in anyone's life? Can holding someone's hands tight, being present for someone at times he or she is badly in need of, do wonders?

This is especially true in the cases and lives of the elders.

While growing old can pose many challenges especially in terms of strength and health, it's usually the interaction, care and loving touch that help them have happier days in an otherwise shrinking old age.

The Sultanate of Oman observed the 'UN International Day for the Elderly' on October 1 – a day that commemorates the presence of elder people in our lives. The theme for 2019 was "The Journey to Age Equality".

"The UN International Day for the Elderly is an opportunity to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society

and raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges of ageing in today's world," said Safia Mohammed al Omairey, Director of Elderly Affairs Department at the Ministry of Social Development.

Oman has 145,450 elderly people comprising of 75,265 females and 70,194 males. Their population is expected to grow at a rate of 9 per cent by 2040, thanks to advanced medical care and better living standards.

Life for the elderly can be relaxing and empowering for some, but empty, scary and isolating for many, according to geriatric experts. Al Masna Health Centre as part of the International Day for the Elderly, honoured many elderly persons by distributing a set of gifts and offering a venue to talk to people from different walks of life.

It also created awareness of the special health needs of the elderly and their contributions to their society, drawing attention to this age group that contributed to the development of society and its ability to continue its contribution, while

focusing on preventive and curative care for the elderly, especially in light of the present pandemic.

"The International Day for the Elderly this year

"The UN International Day for the Elderly is an opportunity to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society and raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges of ageing in today's world,"

SAFIA MOHAMMED AL OMAIREY
Director of Elderly Affairs Department at the Ministry of Social Development

2020 coincides with the celebration of the World Day for Patient Safety under the slogan "The safety of health workers is a priority for patient safety". The continuation

of communication with elderly patients in the community was made by using Telemedicine, and caregivers were trained on how to care for the elderly at home, especially caring for handicapped patients and those with clinical wounds", Fatima al Balushi from the Elderly Care and Community Health Clinic said.

The needs of the elders vary from the need for proper communication to healthy relationships and the presence of family. Their requirements include healthcare, food and nutrition, physical activity, community and social events, financial security, independence so that they don't feel like a burden to their family, retain their self-esteem, and some comfort, respect, dignity and compassion.

"In the present materialistic era, where career, fame, money and materials are more important than people and relationships, many do not have time for their parents and elders," said Dr Rajyashree Narayanankutty, Specialist Surgeon.

She feels that the way we use things, we use them when we need their

presence and services and ignore them when they are old or obsolete.

"It is only the humans who do this, in all God's creation. The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person."

Oman has a dedicated department under the ministry, a home to offer elders the company that they need, and more than anything else, programmes and projects to support them.

The Social Welfare Home in Rustaq, the home to take care of the elderly, has 45 residents with 10 women and 35 men. Built by Suhail Bahwan Charitable Foundation in 2015, this home provides care for elderly people who are without any relatives.

However, many challenges are facing elderly care, according to Safia.

Main challenges are among the social change like migration from the countryside to the cities where the elderly remain in rural areas; the lack of an adequate law to protect the elderly so far and the lack of institutional daycare centres to care for and entertain the elderly.

features



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Celebrating old age and what we can do to support the elderly

Oman has 145,450 elderly people comprising of 75,265 females and 70,194 males. Their population is expected to grow at a rate of 9 per cent by 2040. For these elderly, what exactly can we do to make them live happier comfortable lives?... **P19**

DAILY PICKS

TRAVEL TALES



HARAR JUGOL, A FORTIFIED HISTORIC TOWN IN BEAUTIFUL ETHIOPIA

The city of Harar is located on a hilltop in the eastern extension of the Ethiopian Highlands, about five hundred kilometres from the capital Addis Ababa... Story on **Page 17**

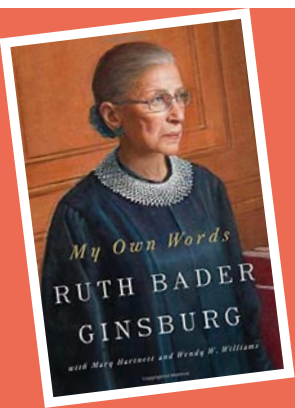
ONLINE TREND



ON 10TH BIRTHDAY, INSTAGRAM NO LONGER AN ESCAPE FROM REALITY

Artful photos of sunsets and ice cream are being challenged by more activist content on Instagram as it turns 10 years old in a time of social justice protests, climate crisis, and the pandemic... Story on **Page 18**

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FASHION



PARIS FINALLY BOWS TO COCO CHANEL'S FLAWED GREATNESS

She was the greatest style icon of 20th century, whose designs still shape what we wear... Story on **Page 18**

CELEBRATE



WORLD TEACHERS DAY ARCHITECTURE DAY

Today is both the day to celebrate the significant contributions made by teachers to society and the beauty and order brought by the great minds of architects. To celebrate today, say thanks to your favourite teacher and make sure to take a snap of your favourite building in Oman.