



GET THE RIGHT GEL

USE GOOD QUALITY ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITISERS TO FIGHT COVID-19

SAMUEL KUTTY

MUSCAT: Even as coronavirus is spreading its tentacles across the Sultanate, there is no letup in products that do not conform to specified standards flooding the market.

While cautioning consumers against purchase of substandard sanitisers that are making rounds in the market, a senior official at the Public Authority for Consumer Protection (PACP) said, “buying

these products create more harm than good”.

The official was referring to the ban on a number of sanitisers that did not meet the standards specified by the authorities.

“There are specific ingredients to be used in sanitisers. Consumers should stick to tried and tested products for their own safety. If a product is found to have non-conformity to the standards, the authorities should be alerted”, he said.

TURN TO P5



Japanese app scopes out choice tuna cuts

TOKYO: If you've ever bought supermarket sushi, you may know the taste trauma that hit Kazuhiro Shimura one night. But “disappointing” tuna sparked an idea: He'd develop an artificial intelligence (AI) system to make sure your sashimi is always delicious.

Shimura, a director at advertising firm Dentsu Group's Future Creative Center, came up with the concept for “Tuna Scope” AI as he chewed his raw dish while watching a television show on fish merchants who spend a decade mastering the skill of selecting high-quality tuna for sushi restaurants.

Using a deep learning algorithm to crunch through grading data from merchants, Tuna Scope has now evolved into a smartphone app. Clients can download and use it anywhere, creating “a unified grading standard” for an industry that relies on local know-how, said Shimura, who is working with Japanese trading company Sojitz Corp to promote his technology.

“That means people can be sure they are getting delicious tuna”, Shimura told Reuters at fish merchant Misaki Megumi Suisan, which ships AI-certified tuna overseas. — Reuters

LIFE



CHOROMODORIS TINCTORIA (COMMONLY KNOWN AS PAINTED CHROMODORIS)



DIVEMASTERS MICHEAL FROM ITALY AND ANZHELIKA, UKRAINE



DURBAN DANCING SHRIMP

LIJU CHERIAN

The Sultanate's coral reefs are in the peak of glory after three months of human pause thanks to lockdown.

Extra Divers Qantab is abuzz as divers return to find plenty of Dendrodoris Krusensternii, Chorodoris Tinctoria, Durban Dancing Shrimp, Green collar Goby and marine creatures.

Yazid El Shaari, a Libyan underwater photographer, is grateful to Extra Divers Qantab (EDQ) for an invite to be on the first boat trip marking the end of lockdown.

The trip was split into two groups to clean fishing nets from two coral reefs and Yazid went with Mirko Matto, captain from Extra Divers Mirbat.

Yazid says he was thankful for the health procedures put in place to ensure a safe diving experience.

Damiano Fillisi, Area Manager of Extra Divers Worldwide, Oman, says guest safety is their top concern, and diving after COVID-19 crisis will most



GREEN COLLAR GOBY

likely never be the same. "We have had to adjust many of our daily operating procedures to best suit the needs of those around us. Sanitisation of equipment and the health and safety of guests is as high a priority for us as protecting our environment."

Tamsyn Nicholson, EDQ dive instructor, says they are still adapting to the new needs of the diving world after the pandemic. The diving has definitely improved in the coastal town of Bandar Khayran.

"Although water temperatures are slowly dropping again and visibility changes a lot, there is a lot more marine life on the dive sites which makes for more exciting dives as you never quite know where to look."

A Spanish diver admits that it is amazing to be outdoors and refreshed in this heat. "I cannot wait for my next dive as after months of staying at home were happy I could go diving again."

Another diver from Russia feels that diving after lockdown comes with a lot of adapting. "However it is exciting to see some reefs are still teeming with life even though nets have been laid across them. The team at Extra Divers is working to remove the nets with the help of the Ministry of Environment."

Their instructors are also excited to continue educating divers of all experience levels as all courses are still available for bookings. However, until further communications, they are only able to accommodate groups of guests who are from the same households.

PHOTOS BY DAMIANO FILLISI

DIVE TO A RIOT OF COLOURS



COVID-19 AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRAIN FUTURE DOCTORS

SAMUEL KUTTY

MUSCAT: As the challenges from the coronavirus outbreak continue, the prime focus now is providing maximum healthcare for patients and communities.

At the same time, experts say there are lessons from the pandemic that need to be recorded, reviewed and included in the medical educational curricula.

"The challenges that the world facing today should be linked to medical education and develop the curricula in line with the developments and lessons from the current pandemic," said Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Attending a webinar organised by the Oman Medical Specialty Board, he said that not much is known regarding the long-lasting impact of COVID-19 on medical education, and, "it is therefore necessary to record and study the full impact from the pandemic". According to him, the COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted medical education and, as a result, it requires intense and prompt action from medical educators in the implementation of e-learning, which will



undoubtedly have a significant impact on the environment in which future medical students learn.

E-learning platforms are now increasingly utilised by medical schools around the world and comprise adaptive tutorials, audiovisual clips and virtual models.

"The need to prepare future physicians has never been as focused as it is now in the setting of a global emergency. The profound effects of coronavirus disease may forever change how future physicians are educated," Dr Al Mandhari said.

He insisted that there is an urgent need to include medical education in pre-university curricula and during university studies, "to ensure awareness and promote community health as there is a gap between medical education in educational institutions and clinical practices in health institutions". The WHO official said that there are many challenges facing the health system due to the pandemic, including the decline in providing health services that are not directly related to the virus but due to other reasons. The community's fear of visiting health institutions to receive treatment, and the lack of preparedness of the health system at the beginning of the pandemic added to the challenges, he said.

According to him, some religious practices and societal customs in the region contributed to the increase in the spread of the pandemic, saying, "we must prepare physicians and health practitioners with scientific knowledge in this field so that they are ready to face them if they occur in the future".

OMAN DAILY

عمان Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team

Mohd Al Rashdi : Head Office	99841230	m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com
Ali Al Maashari : Head Office	99639264	wadialmeeh@yahoo.com
Bakhit Al Shihri : Salalah Office	92998577	bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com
Abdullah Al Abri : Nizwa Office	99429094	nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om
Musalam Al Saidi : Suhar Office	99429192	sohardaily@outlook.com

A GRIPPING MOVIE FOR FOOTBALL FANS



RASHA AL RAISI

IN SPRING OF 2014, I went to Dubai with my parents for a short holiday. While having lunch with my mother in a café in Deira City Centre that faces the escalator, I saw a middle-aged short stout man coming up accompanied by two other younger men.

He looked like an Arab and a familiar one too. I stared at him while munching my tuna sandwich trying to figure out who he was. His shifty gaze confirmed my suspicion that he was familiar to being in the spotlight. Was he the Egyptian actor Mahmood El Jundi? Impossible! He looked taller and slimmer on screen! Could he be a supporting actor that I can't recall his name? Noticing that no one was really paying him any heed, the short man put his sunglasses on and quickened his pace as if someone was chasing him while covering half of his face and looking around him (obviously seeking attention!). I was astonished by the so-called-for-move as I was still racking my brain for a name when someone suddenly shouted "Maradona!"

I could see instant relief on his face as he was finally recognised. He stood steps away from us, posing for pictures with young passers-by before moving away with his company. I learned later that he was shooting a football reality

show called the Victorious where he gets to pick junior Arab players based on their talents. These memories of my funny encounter with Maradona flooded back while watching a documentary called: "Diego Maradona" directed by British film-maker Asif Kapadia. I was never a Maradona fan.

The image I had of him was built on what I read in the English tabloids: a former drug addict with marital and weight issues, who either looked bored or was nodding off while attending different football matches at the World Cup. But watching the documentary made me form a new image of a more humane Maradona who was – like many other international sport figures – a victim of too much publicity that led to substance abuse.

The movie starts with the emerging star of Maradona from the slums of Argentina at the age of fifteen to his short stay in Barcelona team before moving to Napoli where his career flourished and ended dramatically between 1984 and 1991. Kapadia uses 500 hours of never-before-seen archival footage that was shot by Maradona's first agent Jorge Cyterszpiller. The footage was stashed for thirty years in a trunk in Maradona's ex-wife house in Buenos

Aires before being used by the director. It covers all aspects of Maradona's life in Napoli: his personal life including family and children, his training, different football matches played and parties that he'd attended.

Kapadia only uses the voice of the interviewees to deliver the story along with different footage, as if not to distract the viewers from the main focus of the movie: Maradona. He also relies heavily on Maradona's facial expressions to paint a picture of different emotional states at certain points of his career to match the narrative. Maradona was considered Napoli's own paladin and his pictures were placed in churches after securing their two Italian league titles in 86-87 and 89-90, the first ever in their history. He also led his home team to win the World Cup title in 1986, the year of the infamous Mano de Dios goal in England's net. But how did he change from being the Golden Boy to the most controversial football player of our time? Kapadia answers these questions and many more in an insightful, well-paced, gripping movie that is made for football fans.

The author is a certified skills trainer and the author of The World According to Bahja. rashabooks@yahoo.com

Teaching children responsibility

The price of greatness is responsibility — WINSTON CHURCHILL

Character strength and values a child learns are the critical skills that teach children about life and how to navigate it. One such character strength is responsibility. Responsibility is being accountable for one's actions and to know and follow the rules. Responsible citizens treat others fairly, are trustworthy, honour their commitments and are environmentally aware. Responsibility infuses itself into all aspects of our lives. Responsibility, when inculcated in children, teaches them to take responsibility for their actions. It teaches them to care for everything that belongs to them and those that belong to others. Highly responsible people volunteer to work for the



MASSRAT
SHAIKH

common good. They take charge of any situation that requires taking charge of. They usually look for opportunities for what they can do for their community.

How do we teach children responsibility?

- Children learn through modelling. The best way to teach responsibility to children is to practice it ourselves.
- Start teaching responsibility at a young age. The older the children

get, the harder it is for them to learn it.

- Invite children to help you in housework. Even if it takes longer for them to finish a task, but they will learn about teamwork and a valuable life lesson.
- Teach children to respect other people's opinions and items.
- Encourage them to show positive character even when no one is watching.
- Teach them to own up mistakes and avoid making excuses for their actions.
- Encourage them to do what needs to be done without having to be reminded.
- Look for opportunities for them to be involved in community work.

- Assign children chores and encourage them to get those done.
- Encourage children to clean up their own mess. Learning to take care of their things helps children to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions.
- Teaching children about responsibility is not easy. It can take years and lots of practice, but by trying, we stand a better chance of raising a responsible future adult.

Being responsible is an enormous privilege; it is what marks anyone a fully grown human
– **BARACK OBAMA**

The author is an educational psychologist based in Muscat

GET THE RIGHT GEL

FROM PAGE 1

Six sanitisers — New NB, Blue Drop, Rojanet (Red Fruit), MCL professional, Handy and Glow – were banned from the market by PACP as they did not meet the required specifications and were found to be not effective against the novel coronavirus.

“Consumers are urged to check the product labels for relevant information including, but not limited to, country of manufacture, name and address of the company placing the product in the market, manufacturing or expiry date and instruction for use”, it said.

According to consumer protection law, violators of the regulations can be punished with an administrative fine of no less than RO 50, and not more than RO 1,000 and the penalty is doubled in the event of Repeat the violation.

In the event that this violation continues, an

administrative fine of RO 50 is imposed for each day of the violation with the total not exceeding RO 2,000.

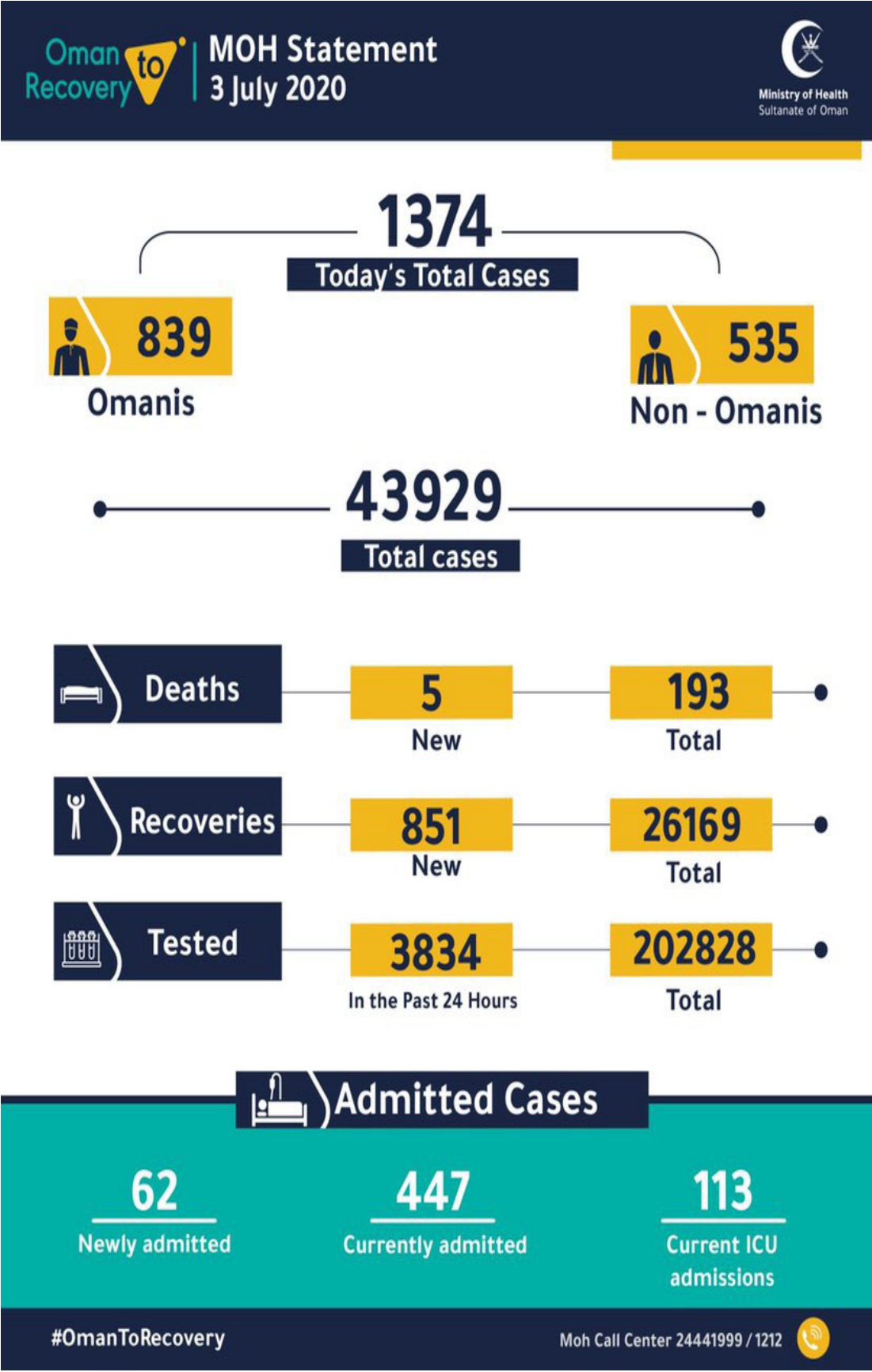
Hand sanitiser is a liquid or gel generally used to destroy infectious germs on the hands.

The WHO advises that everyone uses it to prevent the spread of coronavirus. It also highly encourages hand washing with water and soap.

A normal hand sanitiser contains up to 70 per cent alcohol and kills 99.9 per cent germs. However, counterfeit sanitisers produced by unregistered companies contain less alcohol though labels read otherwise. There are two types of hand sanitisers; alcohol-based and non-alcohol based.

However, for novel coronavirus, non-alcohol based hand sanitisers won't be of much help.

While calling upon suppliers and manufacturers not to take advantage of the situation by neither making compromise with the quality nor tampering with the price, PACP said it “will keep strict vigil on the market”.



CINEMA

THE BATTLE FOR BOLLYWOOD

VIRUS, STREAMING APPS SPARK FEARS FOR CINEMAS

A Bollywood actor's face tattooed on his arm, Sandeep Bacche's devotion shocks few in India where stars enjoy semi-divine status. But even here the hallowed silver screen may be losing its shine to streaming services and pandemic fears.

"Whenever things get better and theatres begin operations, I will watch three movies a day for sure just as a way to celebrate," said the Mumbai rickshaw driver, who is recovering from the virus himself.

But others may not join the party.

With cinemas shut for months due to a coronavirus lockdown, and little prospect they will reopen soon, frustrated Bollywood producers have turned to the likes of Amazon, Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar to release films online.

Gulabo Sitabo, starring Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, premiered on Amazon Prime last month. Other Hindi movies have followed a similar route, as have the huge Telugu-, Tamil- and Malayalam-language film industries.

This has sparked fury from cinema operators.

INOX Leisure Ltd, India's second-largest multiplex operator, warned producers of possible "retributive measures".

"Movie stars are not made on the small screen but on the silver screen," Siddharth Jain, INOX Executive Director, said. But, noting the financial might of the competition, he said: "No business model in the world can compete with

AFFORDABLE ENTERTAINMENT India has the world's most prolific film industry, churning out nearly 1,800 releases in 2018. Stars are worshipped like deities, with fans building temples and making pilgrimages to their

too cold. But with more than half of India's population under 30, and many of them consuming entertainment on mobile phones, the likes of Netflix were starting to make inroads even before the coronavirus.



free money and Netflix is nothing but free money." Shoojit Sircar, who directed Gulabo Sitabo, said that "a digital release was a tough decision" but financial constraints pushed him to do it. "A lot of technicians are dependent on me," Sircar said. "Cinema magic cannot be replaced by TV, iPad or laptop experience. But I needed to move on."

homes. Going to the cinema also remains a hugely popular and affordable pursuit, with 75 rupees (\$1) buying three hours of entertainment in an air-conditioned movie theatre. Some of the higher-end multiplex cinemas have menus that include biryani being delivered to your recliner, and blankets to snuggle under if the air conditioning is

Hotstar, the market leader now owned by Disney, boasted 300 million active monthly users in 2018 - offering some content for free and other shows only to subscribers. The shutdown has only accelerated the shift. For years Mumbai-based teacher Nigel D'Souza, 27, was one of the holdouts, preferring to watch films in cinemas. — AFP

England scraps quarantine for 50 countries — but not US

LONDON: Travellers from more than 50 countries including France, Italy and Spain -- but not the United States -- can stop self-isolating on arrival in England from July 10, the UK government said on Friday. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will each announce their own separate rules depending on how they work in England.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the change, which reverses a two-week quarantine policy imposed in June, would lead to the “re-opening of the nation”. Shapps told the BBC that a full list of “50-plus” countries would be published later on Friday.

Under the new rules, a traffic-light system -- red, amber and green -- would be used for different countries depending on their prevalence of the coronavirus.

Travellers from the green and amber countries will no longer have to self-isolate on arrival.

The amber countries will have reciprocal arrangements in place with England, while the green countries are deemed to be safer than



Passengers arrive at Heathrow Airport in London. – Reuters file photo

England, such as New Zealand.

The amber countries include France, Italy and Spain, which are among the most popular summer holiday destinations for Britons.

But the United States and Greece, another popular travel destination, will be designated with a red light, which requires 14 days of self-isolation.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's father Stanley created a UK media scandal this week by flying to his Greek holiday home via Bulgaria to

avoid the restrictions.

Johnson refused to comment on the trip when asked about it during a radio interview on Friday.

“I really think you ought to raise that with him,” Johnson said of his father. “I am not going to get into the details of family conversation.”

AIRLINES CHEER

The government had hoped to introduce the system across all four UK nations, but a political row has left England going it alone.

“Today marks the next step

PM: BEHAVE YOURSELVES

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday urged Britons to act responsibly when pubs reopen this weekend and not to blow the collective effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The latest phase in a gradual reopening of the British economy on Saturday will see pubs in England open for the first time since mid-March, as well as restaurants, museums, hotels and other businesses. – Reuters

in carefully reopening our great nation,” said Shapps.

“Whether you are a holidaymaker ready to travel abroad or a business eager to open your doors again, this is good news for British people and great news for British businesses.” People arriving in England would still have to fill out a locator form, he added. — AFP

THAILAND’S AIRPORT OFFERS RAPID TEST



SAMUT PRAKAN: Thailand's main international airport unveiled rapid coronavirus tests on Friday for some overseas arrivals after a three-month ban on foreign visitors was partially lifted this month. All foreigners, except those with work

permits, have been barred since March, but after more than five weeks with no recorded community transmission of the virus, Thailand is allowing in some groups of foreigners. Business travellers, diplomats and government guests staying for less than 14 days are considered “fast track travellers” who will be swab tested for the disease at Suvarnabhumi airport to ensure they are infection-free before entry. — Reuters

CHINA NAMES HEAD OF SECURITY OFFICE IN HK

BEIJING: Beijing has appointed an official who became prominent during a clampdown on protests in a Chinese village as director of its new national security office in Hong Kong, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

Zheng Yanxiong, 56, most recently served as the secretary-general of the Communist Party committee of Guangdong province, an economic powerhouse bordering Hong Kong. He is among a host of officials appointed by Beijing in recent months as it tightens control over the former British colony. — Reuters

19 MEMBERS OF ONE FAMILY KILLED

ISLAMABAD: At least 19 pilgrims from a single Sikh family were killed in Pakistan on Friday when a train rammed into their bus at an unmanned railway crossing, officials said.

The accident occurred in the town of Sheikhpura in the central province of Punjab, local police chief Mohamed Akram said.

Nearly a dozen people were injured and are being treated at hospitals, Akram added. — dpa

WORLD

France gets new premier as Macron charts ‘new course’

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday named a senior bureaucrat to replace Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, whose government resigned after a poor local election showing for the ruling party.

The new premier, Jean Castex, officially a member of the right-wing opposition but in charge of overseeing the country's progressive emergence from coronavirus lockdown, is taking over as Philippe leaves the post after three years, the Elysee Palace announced.

Macron has said he will set a “new course” for the government as the country grapples with the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

A wider cabinet reshuffle could now come later in the day.

Speculation that Philippe was on the way out mounted this week after Macron's centrist party was routed in municipal elections last Sunday and Greens took control of several major cities.



President Emmanuel Macron with Jean Castex (L) during the inauguration of a new handball stadium in Creteil, on the outskirts of Paris on January 9, 2019. — **AFP file photo**

Philippe, a right-wing politician who never joined Macron's Republic on the Move party, easily won his bid to become mayor of Le Havre.

Yet while Macron was widely expected to seek to boost his socialist credentials with a leftist premier, Castex is from the rightist Republicans party.

While Philippe's approval ratings have surged over

his handling of the coronavirus crisis, those of Macron, who has pursued ambitious economic reforms since coming to office in 2017, have fallen.

In an interview with regional newspapers published late on Thursday, Macron said France must prepare for a “very difficult” economic crisis, “so we have to chart a new course.”

“I see this based on an

economic, social, environmental and cultural reconstruction,” he said. “Behind this, there will be a new team.”

Serving Macron from the start of his presidency, Philippe has pushing through a series of controversial overhauls that sparked massive strikes as well as the fierce “yellow vest” anti-government revolt. — **AFP**

US reports 55,000 COVID-19 cases in single day, hits global record

WASHINGTON: The United States reported more than 55,000 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, a new daily global record for the coronavirus pandemic, as infections rose in a majority of states.

A surge in coronavirus cases over the past week has put President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis under the microscope and led several governors to halt plans to reopen their states after strict lockdowns.

The daily US tally stood at 55,274 late on Thursday, topping the previous sin-



A doctor swabs for coronavirus in Denver, Colorado. — **Reuters**

gle-day record of 54,771 set by Brazil on June 19.

Coronavirus cases are rising in 37 out of 50 US states including Florida, which confirmed more than 10,000 new cases on Thursday. That marked

the state's largest daily spike so far and a level that exceeded single-day tallies from any European country at the height of the outbreak there.

California, another epicentre, saw positive tests climb 37 per cent with hospitalisations up 56 per cent over the past two weeks.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican who has previously resisted calls to make face masks mandatory, on Thursday ordered them to be worn in all counties with over 20 coronavirus cases.

— **Reuters**



A woman holds a small bottle labelled with a 'Vaccine COVID-19' sticker and a medical syringe in this illustration. — Reuters

Health experts cast doubt on India’s timeline for COVID vaccine

DEVJYOT GHOSHAL & SACHIN RAVIKUMAR

The chief of India's top clinical research agency said in a leaked letter circulated on Friday it envisaged launching a novel coronavirus vaccine by August 15, prompting scepticism from some health experts who questioned the short timeline.

Dozens of vaccine candidates are at various stages of development around the world to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

One, from India's Bharat Biotech and being developed with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), was this week approved for Phase I and Phase II clinical trials.

"It is envisaged to launch the vaccine for public health use latest by August 15, 2020, after completion of all clinical trials,"

ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said in the letter, dated July 2 and addressed to institutions involved in the trials.

Phase I and Phase II trials typically test the safety of a drug before it enters Phase III trials that test its efficacy.

Each phase can last months, if not years, and although regulators globally have been fast-tracking trials on medicines and vaccines to treat the novel coronavirus, the timeline envisaged in the letter would be unprecedented.

"To my knowledge, such an accelerated development pathway has not been done EVER for any kind of vaccine, even for the ones being tried out in other countries," Anant Bhan, a doctor and public health researcher, said on Twitter.

— Reuters

French court rejects fresh probe of plane downing

BENJAMIN LEGENDRE

French appeals judges on Friday threw out a bid to reopen an investigation into the 1994 assassination of Rwanda's president which sparked a 100-day genocide that killed 800,000 people.

While families of those who died when Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was shot down vowed to pursue their quest for justice, Rwanda dismissed the French process as a "complete farce".

The decades-long legal battle has poisoned relations between the two countries.

Habyarimana's widow Agathe and relatives of the French crew of the downed plane said they will seek to challenge Friday's decision before France's highest court.

The appeals court in Paris had been asked to revisit a 2018 decision to throw out a probe against nine members and former members of incumbent Rwandan President Paul Kagame's entourage.

After six months of deliberations, it handed down a 64-page judgment on Friday confirming that decision.

A plane carrying Habyarimana, from Rwanda's Hutu majority, was shot down in Kigali on April 6, 1994, shattering a fragile peace process and triggering a killing spree targeting mainly members of the Tutsi ethnic minority, but also moderate Hutus.

HABYARIMANA'S WIDOW AGATHE AND RELATIVES OF THE FRENCH CREW OF THE DOWNED PLANE SAID THEY WILL SEEK TO CHALLENGE FRIDAY'S DECISION BEFORE FRANCE'S HIGHEST COURT

The plane was struck by at least one missile as it came in to land at Kigali, also killing Burundi's president Cyprien Ntaryamira, another Hutu, on board.

A probe was opened in France in 1998 at the request of families of the French crew.

The investigation initially focused on allies of Kagame, a Tutsi who led the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebel movement that came to power in 1994 after defeating the genocidal Hutu regime.

Kagame, who became Rwanda's president in 2000, broke diplomatic ties with Paris between 2006 and 2009 after France issued arrest warrants for his allies.

— AFP



Main Prizes/ per branch

Weekly Prizes	Monthly Prizes	Quarterly Welcome Prizes	Quarterly Mobile Banking Prizes	Quarterly Loyalty Prizes
100 OMR For 3 winners (per branch)	1,000 OMR for 1 winner/ branch twice	500 OMR for 1 winner (per branch each quarter)	500 OMR for 1 winner (per branch each quarter)	500 OMR for 1 winner (per branch each quarter)

For more information: www.maisarah-oman.com/Default/MaisarahPrizeAccount.aspx

#WinningIsEasier

with Maisarah Prize Account!



ميسرة
MAISARAH
للخدمات المصرفية الإسلامية
Islamic Banking Services

Terms & conditions apply

[f /MaisarahOman](#)
[t @MaisarahOman](#)
[@ /Maisarah.Islami](#)

www.maisarah-oman.com
[2477 5777](tel:24775777)

making life easy
Islamic banking services

Oman's construction sector to benefit from new steel capacity

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT: Oman's construction and infrastructure sector — a thriving industry albeit until the start of the coronavirus pandemic — is fuelling the growth of investments in new reinforced steel bar (rebar) manufacturing capacity, particularly in the south of the Sultanate.

At Raysut Industrial City — an industrial park administered by state-owned Madayn — construction work is progressing on the new steel plant of Raysut Steel Industries LLC promoted by Muscat Steel Group. At full capacity, the mill will produce 360,000 tonnes of high-yield strength rebars for the construction sector.

The Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit (ISFU), a special agency of the Omani government tasked with fast-tracking approvals for projects and initiatives of national economic significance, is assisting Muscat Steel Group in securing its requirements of natural gas as fuel for the project. An agreement to this effect is being finalised between the Ministry of Oil and Gas and Madayn, the authority responsible for providing utilities for industrial tenants within its parks.

Just across from the industrial city, construction work is advancing on a large-scale metallurgical plant in Salalah Free Zone, adjoining Port of Salalah.

National Steel Company, backed by a Saudi corporation, is investing \$500 million in an integrated steel complex that will produce around 25,000 tonnes per year of steel structures,



60,000 tonnes per year of prefab metal structures, 2 million sq metres per year of sandwich paneling for industrial structures, and 10,000 tonnes per year of industrial floors. Roughly two-thirds of this output is destined for overseas markets.

Meanwhile, another similar project that has benefited from ISFU's high-level facilitation has now come into operation. Moon Iron & Steel Company SAOC (MISCO), a 1.2 million tonnes per annum capacity steel complex located in Madayn's industry city in Suhar, recently entered the "production phase" with a focus on steel billets and rebars, said ISFU in a post.

“MISCO will be one of the leading steel plants in Oman to produce billets and rebar utilising the technology from SMS Group — a reputed global leader in steel mill technology and processing plants. It will also be one of the few regional steel producers supplying a wide range of products in Oman and across export markets in the GCC and Africa”, ISFU stated in its recently published 2019 Annual Report.

As with the Raysut project, ISFU sought to use its good offices in securing gas supplies for the MISCO project. Pending the arrival of gas, the plant has been adapted to make use of LPG.

NEW INVESTMENTS:

New rebar plant
launches in Suhar, while
construction makes
headway on a pair of
steel projects in Salalah

Majan College
University College
كلية مجان
كلية جامعية

MAJAN COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE) SAOG

BOARD REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED 31 May, 2020

Respected Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Majan College (University College) SAOG, I am pleased to present this report on Majan's financial performance and the accompanying un-audited interim condensed financial statements for the nine month period ended 31 May 2020.

Financial Performance

Majan financial performance was affected in the core business due to increasing competition and impact of change in entry criteria of postgraduate students. However, that was counter balanced through controlling the expenses. In comparison to the same period in previous financial year, total income has decreased by 9% to be OMR 4.64 Million mainly from decrease in new and returning postgraduate students. Total expenses have decreased by 10% to be OMR 3.33 Million mainly from the decline in postgraduate fees income and corresponding reduction in affiliation fees in addition to agreed reduction in affiliation fees rate with the academic partner for the postgraduate programmes. Tax expense has decreased by 14% to be OMR 0.19 Million mainly because of decrease in net profit before tax offset against decrease in prior years tax. Consequently, overall net profit after tax has decreased by 6% to be OMR 1.11 Million. Earning per share has decreased from 13 Baiza per share to 12 Baiza per share.

Appreciation

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to his Majesty Haitham bin Tariq for his unlimited support and guidance to higher education. Our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Higher Education for its support to the private higher education sector. This resulted in tremendous growth in the sector. It is our intention that Majan College (University College) SAOG continues to support to achieve the vision of his Majesty by continuously improving and enriching the standards of its academic programmes and its resources.

**Dr. Aly Darwish Hagi Aly
Al Shamali
Chairman**

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Category	(1) SEP 19 - MAY 20 OMR	(2) SEP 18 - MAY 19 OMR	(3) MAR 20- MAY 20 OMR	(4) MAR 19 - MAY 19 OMR
Income				
Fee Income	4,219,076	4,741,542	1,198,787	1,431,919
Other Income	127,540	122,088	20,323	41,063
Available for sale investment income				
Investment deposit Income	297,562	260,764	95,430	105,241
Total Income	4,644,178	5,124,394	1,314,540	1,578,223
Expenses				
Salaries & related cost	-1,953,196	-1,999,904	-608,051	-655,683
Administrative & general expenses	-1,178,078	-1,477,730	-319,120	-311,896
Expected credit losses	-24,224	-43,930	-15,999	-3,591
Depreciation	-178,116	-187,871	-58,667	-63,701
Foreign Exchange	3,723	-101	27	-4
Total expenses	-3,329,891	-3,709,536	-1,001,810	-1,034,875
Net profit before tax	1,314,287	1,414,858	312,730	543,348
Taxation	-199,386	-232,551	-49,345	-87,667
Total comprehensive income	1,114,901	1,182,307	263,385	455,681
Basic earning per share	0.012	0.013	0.003	0.005

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Category	(1) 31ST MAY 2020 OMR	(2) 31ST MAY 2019 OMR	(3) 31ST AUGUST 2019 OMR
Assets			
Non-current assets			
Property and equipment	4,123,071	3,953,514	3,999,015
Deferred tax asset	92,962	85,341	86,818
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income			
Total non-current asset	4,216,033	4,038,855	4,085,833
Current assets			
Receivables & prepayments	2,320,542	2,143,373	2,173,660
Cash & bank balance	4,346,739	5,849,705	6,432,583
Investments at amortised cost	4,249,044	3,499,213	3,499,213
Total current assets	10,916,325	11,492,291	12,105,456
Total assets	15,132,358	15,531,146	16,191,289
Equity			
Share capital	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
Legal reserve	1,285,179	1,118,231	1,173,689
Retained earning	1,379,280	1,181,748	375,870
Proposed Dividend			1,305,000
Fair value reserve			
Total Equity	11,664,459	11,299,979	11,854,559
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Deferred government grant			
Employees end of service benefit	685,014	660,505	639,718
Students security deposits	400,155	410,505	390,955
Deferred tax liability			
Total non-current liabilities	1,085,169	1,071,010	1,030,673
Current Liabilities			
Payables & accruals	2,176,358	2,936,213	2,889,895
Dividends Payable			
Tax payable	666	78	92,239
Provision for tax	205,706	223,866	323,923
Total current liabilities	2,382,730	3,160,157	3,306,057
Total liabilities	3,467,899	4,231,167	4,336,730
Total Equity & Liabilities	15,132,358	15,531,146	16,191,289
Net assets value per share	0.130	0.126	0.132

Gold bulls risk delayed gratification in Q3

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the global economy will become increasingly apparent during the third quarter. While the Q2 was mostly about putting out fires and preventing a total collapse of the global economy, the repair work now begins in earnest. Since April, the economic impact of months of lockdowns had been painted over by a massive rally in global stock markets. However, support from the Fed (wall of liquidity), TINA (there is no alternative) and FOMO (fear of missing out) has started to show cracks.

The belief that we can and will return to normal within a few quarters will most likely turn out to be wrong, not least considering the often-embarrassing shortfalls in key supplies some rich countries experienced during the early stages of the pandemic. As our CIO Steen Jacobsen writes in the intro, we fear that COVID-19 may speed up the deglobalisation process that started with the US-China trade war, while also signalling the death of free markets as the primary driver of economies.

It is with these developments in mind that we take a look at what may lie in store for key commodities during the coming months. This period is likely to see low to negative growth, rising levels of debt and eventually rising inflation driven by the growing cost of national self-sufficiency.

Gold remains the only key commodity to show a positive return so far in 2020. Following April's rollercoaster ride it has settled into a range around \$1700/oz. Gold's ability to frustrate, then eventually reward, the patient investor is likely to be on full display



OLE S HANSEN

during the third quarter. Multiple positive tailwinds are currently being offset by what we believe will be a short-lived decline in inflation.

The lack of momentum since April and the disinflationary environment currently playing out have driven a 55 per cent reduction in bullish gold futures bets since the early 2020 peak. A positive change in the fundamental or technical outlook are likely to force traders off the fence and back into the market. This development could also see gold break higher.

Silver's record cheapness to gold helped drive a strong recovery in late Q2. Our bullish outlook for gold will take silver higher. But given its often-volatile behavior, and the current growth outlook, we think silver may struggle to recover more ground versus gold. The gold-silver

ratio, a key measure of relative strength, may in a best possible scenario reach 95 ounces of silver to one ounce of gold. A major second wave of the pandemic, however, may see it weaken back towards 110 — reflecting a 10 per cent underperformance from current levels.

HG Copper's recent recovery to pre-pandemic levels will challenge the metal's ability to reach higher ground in Q3. A recovery in Chinese demand combined with supply disruptions at mines in South America were the triggers that finally forced speculators back into long positions following the break above \$2.50/lb. The risk of a second wave — especially in the US and China, the world's two biggest consumers — may force a rethink and we see no further upside during the coming quarter.

The outlook for crude

oil demand remains challenged by the not-yet-under-control Covid-19 pandemic. While OPEC+ have made a gigantic effort to support the global market through record production cuts and high compliance, the potential for crude oil to reclaim further ground will be limited during the second half of 2020.

A second wave will not generate a repeated demand shock similar to the one witnessed during April. Most countries will instead opt to keep as much of their economy open as possible, given that the economic fallout would be even worse. The collapse back in April, however, still highlights oil's ability to overshoot. While we expect the price of Brent to recover back to a \$50 to \$60/b range in late 2020 or early 2021, the short-term outlook points toward consolidation, with the price potentially spending most of the third quarter within a \$35/b to \$45/b range.

(The writer is Head of Commodity Strategy at Saxo Bank)

BUSINESS

India's services activity stayed in deep contraction

BENGALURU: India's crippled services industry, the lifeblood of economic growth and jobs, contracted sharply in June as an extended lockdown imposed to stop the spread of the coronavirus stalled business activity, a private sector survey showed.

Although the pace of decline moderated from May — the Nikkei/IHS Markit Services Purchasing Managers' Index jumped to 33.7 in June from May's 12.6 — it remained a long way from the 50-mark separating growth from contraction.

June was the fourth straight month the index was sub-50, the longest such stretch since a ten-month run to April 2014.

"India's service sector continued to struggle in June as the country's coronavirus crisis worsened", Joe Hayes, an economist at IHS Markit, said in a release.

"Simply put, the country is gripped in an unprecedented economic downturn which is certainly going to spill over into the second



A waiter serves coffee to customers inside an Indian coffee house in Kolkata. — Reuters

half of this year unless the infection rate can be brought under control".

The lockdown of 1.3 billion people, which started on March 25, has been extended in some areas until the end of July as India now has over 600,000 coronavirus cases, fewer than only the United States, Brazil and Russia.

Although improved from May, sub-indexes showed domestic and foreign demand continued to decline sharply leading firms to cut jobs for the fourth straight month in June.

And with forward looking indicators giving little hope for an imminent turnaround, firms were at their most pessimistic about the

year ahead since the survey began in December 2005.

A composite PMI, which includes manufacturing and services, also pointed to a deep contraction in Asia's third-largest economy, which a Reuters poll said shrank 5.2 per cent last quarter. It registered at 37.8, up from May's 14.8.

— Reuters

Japan's GPIF posts record loss of \$165 bn as virus hits stocks

TOKYO: Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF), the world's largest pension fund, on Friday reported a record quarterly loss of 17.71 trillion yen (\$164.74 billion) in January-March after global stock markets plunged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GPIF posted a negative return of 10.71 per cent on its overall assets during the three months, compared with a 4.61 per cent gain in the previous quarter, it said in a statement.

The mammoth-size fund, which managed 150.6 trillion yen of assets by end-March, is closely watched by global financial markets.



A man wearing protective face mask stands in front of a stock quotation board outside a brokerage in Tokyo. — Reuters

The quarterly loss, the biggest since GPIF started managing its assets on the market in 2001, poses a potential challenge to the new President Masataka Miyazono who took the helm in April as market uncertainty looms.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei average fell 18 per cent during the quarter, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 24 per cent.

The GPIF in April raised its allocation target for foreign bonds to 25 per cent

from 15 per cent and lowered domestic bonds allocation to 25 per cent from 35 per cent. Its portfolio is evenly split at 25 per cent each across domestic and foreign stocks and domestic and foreign bonds.

The fund had 23.87 per cent of its portfolio in Japanese bonds as of end-March, compared with 36.15 per cent in September 2016 when the Bank of Japan launched its policy of pinning 10-year government bond yields around 0 per cent. Its foreign bond holdings accounted for 23.42 per cent of its portfolio. The fund allocated 22.87 per cent to domestic stocks and 23.9% to foreign stocks. — Reuters

PANDEMIC COSTS AFRICA TRAVEL, TOURISM ALMOST \$55 BN



Workers disinfect the cabin of an Ethiopian Airlines' aircraft at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. — Reuters

AKAR: African countries have lost almost \$55 billion in travel and tourism revenues in three months due to the coronavirus pandemic, the African Union (AU) commissioner for infrastructure and energy said.

Amani Abou-Zeid told a news conference the economic impact of lockdowns and border closures to curb the spread of the virus would be severe, with the continent's air industry hit particularly hard.

She said tourism and travel represented almost 10 per cent of the gross domestic product of Africa.

"We have 24 million African families whose livelihood is linked to travel and tourism", Abou-Zeid said, adding the downturn had come in a year when Africa was expected to see an increase in travel and air transport.

"The blow is very hard, between the economic losses and the job losses", Abou-Zeid said. African airlines have seen a 95 per cent drop in revenues, or about \$8 billion, along with other losses such as the deterioration of assets, she said.

"Some airlines in the continent will not make it post-COVID-19", she said, adding the blow came

Tourism and travel represented almost 10 per cent of the gross domestic product of Africa

at a time when some airlines were in the early stages of development, while others, such as South African Airways, were in difficulties even before the pandemic.

Abou-Zeid said more resistant carriers such as Ethiopian Airlines were using the opportunity to acquire smaller struggling companies, but the outbreak had put a halt to the AU's plan for a single African air transport market.

Prosper Zo'o Minto'o, regional director for the International Civil Aviation Organization, told the news conference that African airlines would need an estimated \$20 billion to resume operations.

Ivory Coast's national airline Air Cote d'Ivoire, which restarted domestic flights on Friday, said it had received 14 billion CFA francs (\$24 million) from the government to keep it afloat.

— Reuters

US factory orders rebound in May



A worker is seen building an aircraft engine at Honeywell Aerospace in Phoenix, Arizona. — Reuters

WASHINGTON: New orders for US-made goods rebounded in May, suggesting a turnaround in manufacturing, though business spending will likely contract again in the second quarter amid cheaper crude oil as the COVID-19 pandemic depressed global growth.

The Commerce Department said on Thursday factory orders increased 8.0 per cent after falling 13.5 per cent in April. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast factory orders increasing 8.9 per cent in May.

Factory orders dropped 10.3 per cent year-on-year in May. Manufacturing, which accounts for 11 per cent of US economic activity, appears to be regaining its footing, but a resurgence in coronavirus cases amid the reopening of businesses threatens the budding recovery.

The Institute for Supply Management reported on Wednesday that its measure of national factory activity jumped to a 14-month high in June.

Unfilled orders at factories nudged up 0.1 per cent in May after falling 1.5 per cent in April. Inventories at factories rose 0.2 per cent, while shipments of manufactured goods increased 3.1 per cent.

Transportation equipment orders soared 82.0 per cent in May after tumbling 48.9 per cent in the prior month. Orders for motor vehicles and parts gained 28.3 per cent. Machinery orders rose 0.5 per cent. Orders for electrical equipment, appliances and components increased 1.0 per cent.

The government also reported that orders for non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft, which are seen as a measure of business spending plans on equipment, rose 1.6 per cent in May instead of increasing 2.3 per cent as reported last month.

Shipments of core capital goods, which are used to calculate business equipment spending in the GDP report, increased 1.5 per cent in May, instead of rising 1.8 per cent as previously reported. Economists expect business spending to contract in the second quarter, the fifth straight quarterly decline. — Reuters

‘AMERICAN GAUFF CAN IMPROVE THE WORLD’

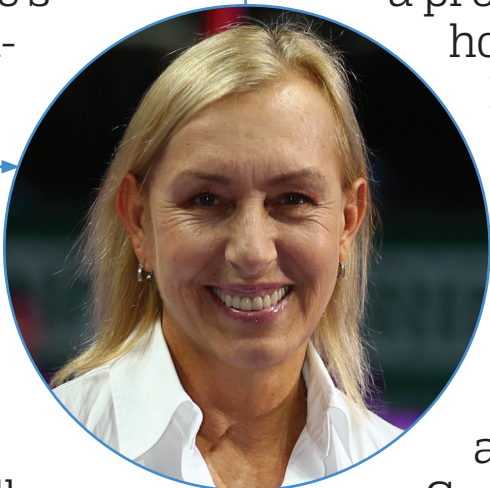


NEW YORK: American tennis player Coco Gauff can improve the world, 18-time Grand Slam champion Martina Navratilova has said, lauding the teenage tennis prodigy for her role in the Black Lives Matter protests against racial injustice.

Gauff, 16, released a video on social media protesting killings of African-Americans in the United States amid wide-spread outrage across the country following the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man in police custody in Minneapolis.

“She is just so poised on and off the court, she was really brought up with great qualities and it shows how she plays and it shows how she’s active now politically,” **Navratilova** told BBC Radio.

“I smile so much when I see the reach she already has now, and she will have in the future. She’s one of those people that can change the world for the better, and she seems to want to do that.” The death of Floyd



sparked worldwide protests against racism and calls for reforms of US law enforcement. Last month, Gauff appeared at a protest in her hometown of Delray Beach, Florida.

Naomi Osaka, the world’s highest paid sportswoman, and 23-times Grand Slam winner, Serena Williams, also made themselves heard regarding racial injustice.

Navratilova said it was vital for sports stars to speak out.

“Sports has always been at the forefront of social change and it can be that again, with Black Lives Matter and equality for all,” the 63-year-old said.

Navratilova also felt the tennis suspension due to COVID-19 will not help the 38-year-old Williams, who is chasing Margaret Court’s all-time record of 24 Grand Slams.

“She’s getting older. Time is not her friend at the moment,” Navratilova said. “She’s not going to play better than she did 10 years ago but if she plays as well as she did five years ago, then she’ll be okay.” — **Reuters**

‘SPORTS MEDICINE CENTRE REGISTERS 85 PER CENT CASES FROM FOOTBALL’

ADIL AL BALUSHI

MUSCAT: The Sports Medicine Centre (SMC) which is run by the Ministry of Sports Affairs had registered 85 per cent of injuries from football in the previous years. According to Dr Salim al Ghilani (pictured), the Director of the Sports Medicine Centre in Muscat, football ranked as the top sport that produced injuries for the players in the Sultanate as more than 80 players from national team and clubs received the rehabilitation treatment from the centre.

“The centre provides a range of medical services for Omanis and Non-Omanis in the national sports teams, clubs, ROP, military teams and other government entity sport teams. The services can include different types of related sports injuries as well as necessary medical rehabilitation for the athletes. Foot and ankle are the top injuries of the athletes in the Sultanate. We have noticed that the occurrence of these injuries to the players is due to lack of warming up, stretching and proper training prior to the commencement of the match or game. Our crucial advice to all the athletes is the importance of having these warming up sessions before any tough training. Players who have suffered knee injuries should stop doing any sports training during the injury period until full recovery and they should take the final approval from the doctor before resuming the sports activities again”, he added.

Commenting on the



upcoming period of resuming the sporting activities due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Salim affirmed that all the associations and committees should follow the medical protocol which is approved by the International federations with full compliance to the internal regulations of the Ministry of Health.

SMC have many branches and units in

different sports complexes in the Sultanate. “The daily average of the injured who are visiting the centre is 63 athletes in Muscat unit. More than 80 players from the national football team get treatment from the centre. The SMC is supporting all the sporting events that is held in Muscat through providing an assistance medical team for the emergency medical cases”, he concluded.



Dr Salim stated that the centre can provide qualified medical teams for the national teams in their abroad participation. “We have committed team members who can support all the sporting teams in case of any medical assistance. Moreover, all the national athletes receive full medical treatment prior to taking part at regional and international events. Also, the centre has some advanced equipment and machines for arthroscopy and joints”

DR SALIM AL GHILANI,
DIRECTOR, SPORTS
MEDICINE CENTRE

SPORTS

BARCELONA: Barcelona captain Lionel Messi has called off negotiations over renewing his contract with the club and is ready to leave the Catalans when his current deal expires in 2021, according to a report by Spanish radio station Cadena Ser on Friday.

The report said Messi and his father Jorge had begun discussing renewing his last deal with the club, which was signed in 2017, but that he no longer wishes to stay at the Camp Nou.

The report added that Messi is angry about leaked media reports that appeared to make him seem responsible for events at the club, such as the January sacking of coach Ernesto Valverde, and that he is frustrated about the squad's lack of quality.

The Argentine's representatives and Barcelona did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Messi, who turned 33 last month, scored his 700th career goal on Tuesday against Atletico Madrid, but the milestone strike ended in disappointment as Barca drew the game 2-2 in the latest blow to their bid to retain the Spanish title.

Barca trail Real Madrid by four points in the title race with five games remaining after Real beat Getafe 1-0 on Thursday.

Previously known for his shy personality off the pitch, Messi has become more vocal in his criticism of the club in the last year. — **Reuters**



MESSI UNWILLING TO RENEW BARCELONA CONTRACT