

PURSHOTTAM KANU
EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتام
كانو للتحويل



SEND MONEY TO USA
SAME DAY CREDIT
SWIFTLY - SECURELY - SMARTLY

99101314, 99849289

customersupport@pkexchange.net

www.pkexchange.com | pkexch | @pkexchange1

OMAN'S
1
EXCHANGE

DOWNLOAD OUR APP TODAY!

Google Play

App Store



201000387405

P10

HAITHAM SOOMAR CLINCHES FIRST ROUND OF OMAN RALLY



P15

DUQM REFINERY SET FOR Q1 2023 COMPLETION



P20

OFFERING 300 YEARS OF HISTORY AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



MUSCAT

OMAN PAVILION RECEIVES 250,000 VISITORS

The Oman Pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai has received over 250,000 visitors since the start of the event on October 1.

The Omani delegation has been hosting special events to mark the occasions, such as Women's Day or Youth Day.

On October 26, a quartet ensemble of four female Omani musicians, each playing a different instrument, presented three 30-minute performances of traditional Arabic music.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has made elaborate efforts to promote the Sultanate of Oman as a prime destination for tourism.

"It is equally important that the expo should be able to bring tangible benefits to the country both in the short and long-term through some deals or agreements", a source said.

SEE P5

SHABAB OMAN II TO SET SAIL IN NOVEMBER



The Royal Navy of Oman Vessel *Shabab Oman II* will set sail on November 7, 2021 on its fifth international voyage themed, "Oman, A Renewed Approach". During its voyage, the ship will visit a number of ports of the GCC countries and will also take part in Oman Pavilion – Expo 2020 Dubai.

87 % of target group jabbed against Covid-19

SAMUEL KUTTY
[@samkuttvyp](#)

The Sultanate of Oman vaccinated 87 per cent of the target group to combat the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

According to figures released by the Ministry of Health, the total number of vaccinated people whether with one or two doses reached 3,071,161 of whom 94 per cent include Omanis.

The ministry released the figures following a report that one million people are yet to be vaccinated in the Sultanate.

As a clarification to the report, the ministry said, "The number of people vaccinated in the Sultanate of Oman has reached a high rate. The ministry monitored what was announced by a local radio about the presence of one million people who did not receive the vaccine."

The number of vaccinated with two doses reached 2,673,961, of whom 87 per cent are nationals.

At the same time, the Ministry of Health is expected to announce the target segments who are to be administered a third dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

The Supreme Committee at the weekend endorsed that a target group comprising the vulnerable segments in the society could be given a third dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

READ IN

OPINION P9

Living with a killer in our midst
RAY PETERSEN

Climate credibility depends on policies of governments
JEAN PISANI-FERRY

INSIDE



MODI INVITES POPE FRANCIS TO INDIA P7



G20 LEADERS SEEK CONSENSUS ON CLIMATE, ECONOMY P8

Roads to be restored in 12-24 months

SUHAIL AL NAHDI
MUSCAT, Oct 30

Efforts are in full swing to restore infrastructure damaged by cyclone Shaheen in North and South Al Batinah governorates. Besides, tenders have been awarded for the rehabilitation of roads, which will be completed in 12 to 24 months.

Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shamaki, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport, said, following directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to speed up the restoration of the affected infrastructure, the ministry, in cooperation

with other public and private institutions, activated the emergency and response plan to reopen roads that were affected by 100 per cent.

Shaheen damaged Al Batinah road, Wadi Bani Omar road, Wadi Al Hawasna road, Suhar-Yanqul road, Wadi Shafan road, Wadi Al Jahawir road, Wadi A Sarmi road, Wadi Al Qunoot road, in addition to some roads in Al Dhahirah Governorate, where the scale of the damages varied on the main and secondary roads in the layers of asphalt, the main layers, viaducts and bridges, leading to a complete interruption of the traffic movement on those roads for varying periods, he said.

TURN TO P5

Leaders to talk climate, economy and vaccines

ROME: The heads of the world's 20 biggest economies kicked off two days of talks on Saturday where they were set to acknowledge the existential threat of climate change, but stop short of radical new commitments to tame global warming.

A draft communique seen by Reuters shows major countries are only likely to slightly toughen their pledges

on climate action, while failing to set tough new targets that activists say are vital to prevent environmental catastrophe.

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi greeted leaders from an array of countries, including US President Joe Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for the first face-to-face G20 summit in two years as the Covid-19 pandemic starts to ebb.

SEE ALSO P8

Complete reopening of schools in November

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

Schools in the Sultanate of Oman will fully open in November after the Supreme Committee to tackle Covid-19 allowed 100 per cent physical attendance in schools for classes 5 to 11, vaccination of children aged 5 to 12 years and approving booster doses for high risk groups. The decision follows after the Sultanate of Oman tamped down Covid-19 cases, fatalities and 87 per cent vaccination of target groups.

Parents in the Sultanate of Oman have been reluctant to send children to school as those under 12 years are yet to get any kind of a Covid safety shield. But they can feel safe after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Friday said that the benefits of



Vaccination of children aged 5 to 12 years to begin soon.

vaccinating children between five and 11 years with the Pfizer vaccine outweigh other health risks.

"We have seen that the new variants do not spare children, and that is one of the reasons for the reluctance of some parents to start

offline cases. With students aged 12 and above already vaccinated, it will not take time to vaccinate this new target group", said Fatma H, mother of a Grade 2 student, who feels prolonged online classes are doing no good to students.

TURN TO P5

CHARTERS A BOOST FOR TOURISM



Omani folk musicians welcome tourists from Poland in Salalah on Friday. Revival of charter operations on Salalah sector is the sign of the revival of international tourism in the Sultanate of Oman after almost two years of shutdown due to Covid-19 pandemic.

REPORT ON P2



Mada'yn's world-class business cities offer investors a variety of attractive
Reserve your space now
For more information
24170700

mada'yn.om
@mada'ynoman





REVIVAL OF TOURISM SEEN AS CHARTERS ARRIVE IN SALALAH

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Revival of charter operations on the Salalah sector is the sign of revival of international tourism in the Sultanate of Oman after almost two years of shutdown due to Covid-19 pandemic.

With the movement of tourists, the Governorate of Dhofar is expecting a positive winter tourism season which will continue till the end of April.

Marwan al Ghassani, Director of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, called it revival of international tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, even as only one charter flight per week has been scheduled till now.

“If the situation remains normal as it is now, we may expect an increase in flights from December till the end of the season. We are expecting an increase in number of flights that may go up to three per week,” he said.

He said the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism was making continuous efforts to attract charter flights in coordination with tourism partners.

The season started with flights from Slovakia on October 16 when the first lot of 174 tourists arrived at Salalah Airport. Since then, one charter has been coming daily either from Slovakia or the Czech Republic. On Friday, the arrival of a charter from Poland with 250 tourists marked the country’s first



charter of the season.

“The places of tourism attraction like Taqah, Mirbat, the archaeological sites registered in the World Heritage List (Al Baleed, Samharam, Al Shasr),

With the movement of tourists, the Governorate of Dhofar is expecting a positive winter tourism season which will continue till the end of April

the Museum of the Land of Frankincense and the historical forts in Taqah, Mirbat and Sadah, are ready to receive tourists,” said Al Ghassani. All Covid prevention protocols are in place keeping in mind the safety of tourists and the people of the country, he added.

Charters from Poland and France were the charters last seen in Salalah during the pre-



pandemic days in February 2020. Pre-pandemic, Salalah had been receiving regular charters from Poland, France, Germany, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Italy.

Oman set for air traffic rebound

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samuelkuttyp

Aided by strong tourism potential and ease in travel restrictions, the Sultanate of Oman is all set to rebuild its air traffic over the coming months.

Supporting the facts are arrivals of flights from European countries and the increase in the number of inbound passengers since September 2021.

The total number of inbound visitors, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information, reached 83,000 in September 2021, which is 12 times compared to the corresponding month in 2020.

Visitors from the Gulf region formed the highest 62.4 per cent, with 52,025 visitors during the month.

Oman Airports Chief Commercial Officer Samer al Nabhan expressed optimism of a rebound thanks to Oman's attractiveness as a major tourist destination.

“The easing of travel restrictions will help to accelerate traffic numbers,” he told Routesonline, adding, “the tourism industry was thriving before the crisis, and we are confident that airlines will return to our market now that we are ready to welcome them back.”

On Friday, Salalah Airport

The easing of travel restrictions will help to accelerate traffic numbers
SAMER AL NABHAN
Oman Airports
Chief Commercial Officer

received the first direct flights from Poland, carrying more than 250 tourists, as part of the winter tourism season in Dhofar, which will continue until the end of next April.

According to Marwan bin Abdul Hakim al Ghassani, Director of the Promotion Department at the General Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in the Governorate of Dhofar, a rebound in tourism movement was a priority of the ministry.

“The ministry is making continuous efforts to attract charter flights in coordination with both domestic and foreign tourism partners. A comprehensive plan is being chalked out tide over the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic,” he said while

welcoming the tourists from Poland.

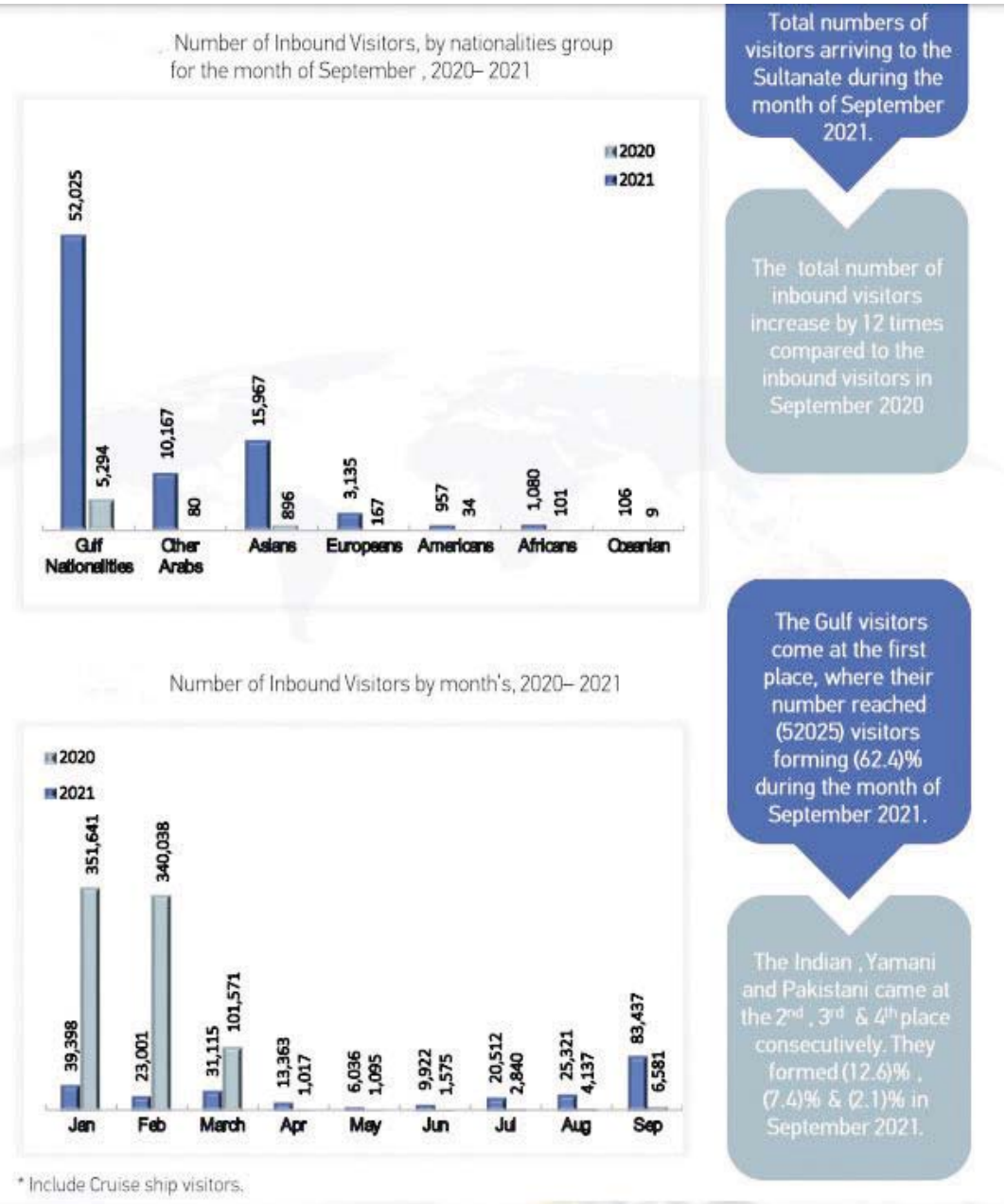
During the winter tourism season, tourist groups from Germany, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and other European countries form the majority of the visitors.

At the same time, the total number of guests in three- to five-star hotels in Oman amounted to 934,255 by the end of September, compared to 604,940 guests during the same period in 2020, an increase of 37.9 per cent.

European guests amounted to 29,732, guests of North and South America stood at 13,259, guests from the GCC States amounted to 13,452, from Oceania amounted to 3,916, from African countries amounted to 2,868 and other countries' guests amounted to 20,933 by the end of September 2021.

On October 24, Air France started its services to Muscat from Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG). The route operates three times per week using Boeing 787-9s.

SalamAir in July launched flights from Muscat to Istanbul and Trabzon in Turkey, as well as a seasonal route to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Jordan Aviation began operating to Oman's capital from Amman in Jordan.



Anglo-Omani Society holds annual lunch, reviews ties

MUSCAT: The Anglo-Omani Society held its annual lunch under the auspices of Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Hinai, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom, in the presence of James Cleverly, UK Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa.

Addressing the event, the ambassador pointed to the firm comprehensive friendship agreement and bilateral trade between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

He also spoke about the impact of the Covid-19



pandemic in the world and the Oman Vision 2040.

James Cleverly said that

he was impressed by the developmental projects in the Sultanate of Oman and

the projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the Oman Vision 2040. He praised the efforts exerted by the Sultanate of Oman in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic over the past months, affirming that the results of recent visits to the Sultanate of Oman reflect the commitment of both countries to continuing their fruitful relations.

The Anglo-Omani Society continued its activities over the past two years despite the difficulties caused by Covid and hosted several virtual events including exhibitions and seminars. — ONA

Labour Ministry conducts tests for job-seekers



SALALAH: The Ministry of Labour conducted tests for job-seekers contending for job vacancies in the public sector in Dhofar Governorate, at the University of Technology and Applied

Sciences, Salalah.

The ministry invited 719 applicants contending for 28 job vacancies at different government departments, to undergo required tests. The ministry said

that tests will be completed during the coming period.

Tests were also conducted for job-seekers to fill another 37 vacancies in the public sector recently. — ONA

Cases of autism to touch 27,300 by 2030

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

The number of autistic children in the Sultanate of Oman is projected to hit 27,300 between 2020 to 2030, according to a study conducted by experts in this field based on available scientific evidence.

Statistics show that the number of diagnosed cases increased by 15 folds (14.5) over 8 years, from 113 cases to 1,705 cases between 2011 and 2019.

In 2011, the prevalence was 14 diagnosed cases per 100,000 children, and it raised to 203 diagnosed cases per 100,000 children of late.

"These projections are conservative, and the actual number of cases could have been much higher than the reported," according to Dr Yahya al Farsi, MD Professor, Family Medicine and Public Health, SQU.

He adds that the increase in prevalence is not explained entirely. However, the underlying factors are genetic, followed by some environmental factors.

Autism spectrum disorder now affects 1 in 68 children.

STATISTICS SHOW THAT THE NUMBER OF DIAGNOSED CASES INCREASED BY 15 FOLDS (14.5) OVER 8 YEARS, FROM 113 CASES TO 1,705 CASES BETWEEN 2011 AND 2019

Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with ASD. Autism spectrum disorder is one of the fastest-growing developmental disorders in the United States. ASD is more common than childhood cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined.

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterised by social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech, and nonverbal communication challenges. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 54 children in the United States today.

COMMON SIGNS

According to Dr Yahya, children show some symptoms as they get autistic. For example, there is a delay in language acquisition, unusual

and repetitive behaviours such as tapping ears, closing doors and repeating words.

"Similarly, they show a delay in movement skills acquiring cognitive or learning skills and they often become hyperactive, impulsive, and/or show inattentive behaviour. They also have sicknesses like epilepsy or seizure disorder."

They may also show unusual eating and sleeping habits and gastrointestinal issues such as constipation, besides showing unusual mood or emotional reactions. If they show any of these signs, don't delay any further but take them to the doctor.

PREVALENCE

National and international research showed autism is more common among boys than girls, with a ratio of 3:1 or 4:1. In 2011 and 2019, it was shown that boys with autism were about three times higher than among girls

(22pc vs 78pc). The highest autism prevalence was among children under 5 years old, then 10-14 years old.

In the Sultanate of Oman, the average prevalence rate per governorate was 15 cases per 10,000 children, and the highest prevalence was reported in Muscat, followed by Al Sharqiyah, Al Dakhiliyah and then Al Batinah governorate. However, governorates like Dhofar, Al Dhahirah, Al Buraimi, Al Wusta, and Musandam report lower than average rates of prevalence.

COST OF CARE

The average total cost (direct and indirect) constitute 41 per cent of family income. On average, the direct cost of care of a child with autism include 15 per cent of family income.

The indirect cost due to opportunity loss such as losing a job or extra expenses such as hiring a domestic worker constitutes 26 per cent of family income.

"Of the total cost, the direct cost constituted for 37 per cent while the indirect cost constituted for 63 per cent," adds Dr Al Farsi.



Roads in cyclone-hit areas to be restored in 12-24 months

FROM P1

Given the importance of the damaged roads, quick packages were assigned to repair with several companies submitted their offers and evaluation. The first package of road rehabilitation works was awarded to Galfar Engineering and Contracting which will be entrusted with repairing the damages on the Al Batinah road and the construction of a number of new viaducts in Bidiya area in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq, as well as the construction of a new 300-metre valley bridge and the construction

of a number of viaducts in addition to restoring installing and operating damaged street lighting, the official said.

The second package of the repair and rehabilitation works was assigned to Strabag Oman and Al Sarooj which will undertake road maintenance works in Wadi Bani Omar, Wadi Al Hawasna, Wadi Al Jahawir, Wadi Al Sarmi and Wadi Shafan, Al Shamaki said adding that the second package involves dealing with all damages on roads and the restoration of the pre-Shaheen condition as well as some improvements on some roads.



COMMERCIAL SUPPORT EXECUTIVE

A leading medical equipment distributor in Oman is looking for a commercial support executive. The Candidate should be in the age group of 30 to 35 years with the following requirements:

- Should have a minimum experience of 4 to 5 years in Managing Commercial Department of a distribution company. Exposure to Oracle ERP system would be an advantage.
- Should be a graduate.
- Should have good communication/writing skill in English Language.

Salary will be commensurate with the qualification & experience and the preference will be given to Omani Nationals.

Interested candidates may forward their CV along with recent passport size photograph to: **o2mhealth@gmail.com**

FOR A DIGITAL ECONOMY

2040



SAMUEL KUTTY
[@samkuttyp](#)

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040's economic growth and job creation goals, digital transformation plays a key role as it supports the strategic and vital sectors in the Sultanate of Oman.

The ambitious national programme for the digital economy includes a set of main pillars and medium and long-term goals based on the national directions of the Vision, with a view to achieving them through a set of executive programmes.

The Council of Ministers has already approved the National Programme for the Sultanate of Oman's digital economy, through which the country will be able to achieve several goals that will contribute to building and developing a prosperous digital economy that responds to the requirements of the future.

It will greatly impact the national economy as it is one of the essential requirements of modern lifestyles, facilitating services and procedures for beneficiaries in different fields.

Digital transformation reduces cost, saves efforts and improves operational efficiency as well as the quality of services provided and simplifies them to offer new innovative services that will enhance customer satisfaction.

In addition, it facilitates the connections between the different government and private entities to ensure data quality, provide a reliable and coherent source of information, and help decision-makers monitor performance, improve the quality of services and set new goals and strategies.

Says Eng Said bin Hamoud bin Said al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, "The adoption of the National Digital Economy Programme enhances digital transformation in the economic and government sectors, and the level of digital services, as well as enriching the citizen's experience through proactive and integrated digital services".

The programme is a strategic direction and reference. Nationally, to ensure harmony, coordination and integration between the components of the digital

The national programme for the digital economy is a strategic direction and reference. It will ensure harmony, coordination and integration between the components of the digital economy in the Sultanate of Oman and will be a framework for related operational plans and programmes

economy in the Sultanate of Oman and a framework for related operational plans and programmes.

Digital transformation is necessary for all government and private entities that consider the importance of the ongoing development of their administrative role, services provided and the delivery of these services to the beneficiaries.

It is not just concerned with applying technology in an institution. It is rather a comprehensive programme that affects the internal workflow of the services to the targeted audience in an easier and faster manner.

Digital transformation as a term can be defined as the employment of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the government and private entities and authorities to develop the entity's performance and services, improve operational efficiency and increase productivity.

This will serve the workflow in the institution across the different departments and its interaction with the targeted audience and customers. It will also develop the services provided and facilitate its

access in a way that saves time and effort.

Oman Vision 2040 digital transformation is expected to boost the Sultanate's ICT market to RO 2.2 billion (\$5.6 billion) by 2024, and drive new levels of citizen engagement.

The Sultanate of Oman's national digital programme includes three supportive pillars to achieve national goals. While the first of them will accelerate government's digital transformation, the second will work to strengthen the digital society and the third will focus on enabling business digitisation in economic and strategic sectors.

According to Al Maawali, the programme will focus on a range of opportunities available in the digital economy in the Sultanate of Oman, which revolves around data centre services, cloud services and cybersecurity services.

In addition, it will enable the use of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies such as artificial intelligence in the economic and strategic sectors, developing digital content and attracting foreign technical investments to the Sultanate of Oman.



Over 250,000 visit Oman Pavilion at Dubai expo

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The frankincense-themed Oman Pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai has received over 250,000 visitors since the start of the event on October 1.

The Omani delegation has been hosting special events to mark the occasions, such as Women's Day or Youth Day.

On October 26, a quartet ensemble of four female Omani musicians, each playing a different instrument, presented three 30-minute performances of traditional Arabic music.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion have made elaborate efforts to promote the Sultanate of Oman as a prime destination for tourism.

"It is equally important that the expo should be able to bring tangible benefits to the country both in the short and long term through some deals or agreements," a source associated

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion have made elaborate efforts to promote the Sultanate of Oman as a prime destination for tourism

with the expo and the pavilion said.

The first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, which welcomed over 400,00 visitors in the first ten days, is expected to cross the one million mark in the coming days.

"Expo 2020 Dubai's opening week has undoubtedly been a success. The numbers we are seeing are very encouraging and demonstrate the global desire for people to reconnect with each

other and to imagine a better future," the official sources said.

The figures exclude representatives, delegations, guests of international participants, partners, other stakeholders and Expo staff.

Expo 2020 Dubai runs until March 31, 2022, with 200 pavilions in total for visitors to explore as well as the attractions at each location. There are multiple daily events, with panel discussions and cultural performances.

Expo 2020's Urban and Rural Development Week explores resilient and sustainable habitats.

The Week will focus on how population growth continues to challenge the world's existing cities and communities.

By 2050, more than 70 per cent of the world's population is forecast to live in cities, with three billion estimated to dwell in informal settlements. Urban and Rural Development Week will explore our communities as building blocks of prosperity and how we can make our future habitats sustainable.

Digital contest in search of 'Golden Talent' launched

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 30

Sayyid Khalid bin Hamed al Busaidy has launched a 9-week digital competition in search of 'The Golden Talent'. The competition aims to showcase the most talented and artistic individuals in Oman while also providing a platform for more unusual talents.

Held in collaboration with Nissan Oman, Purshottam Kanji Exchange, iddesignoman.com and Al Wisal FM, the digital competition aims to bring together hundreds of like-minded individuals.

The open category includes all talents which means participants can showcase any talent — from singing, baking, poetry to football freestyle. The options are endless.

Speaking about the first-time competition, Sayyid Khalid said: "Music and the arts have been a life-long passion of mine and last year, during the month of Ramadhan, I asked my Instagram followers to join me live and showcase their

talents, since everyone was at home due to the pandemic. There was immense interest and I was so impressed with the level of talent that I hosted it every night for the full month. I hosted the same set-up again earlier this year and, after seeing how much interest and talent there was for a second time, I wanted to formalise the competition and take it to the next level with a microsite for applying online, a judging criteria, sponsors and prize money. It is my hope in the future to make this a regional competition."

There are 5 stages to the competition. To enter, potential contestants sign up online via a custom-built website and upload their audition showcasing their talents in the format of video (1 minute or less). The application phase closes on November 16. Sayyid Khalid will then conduct stage two which is the pre-selection of favourite contestants. Those participants who advance to stage 3 enter a live social media knockout where they demonstrate their talents for the public

watching and Sayyid Khalid. The public can get involved through voting for their favourite talent via SMS (70 per cent weighted by the public and 30 per cent by Sayyid Khalid).

Qualifiers will move onto stage 4 where they submit a second performance (within the same discipline). Top performers will then be selected to perform at the final to compete to see who is 'The Golden Talent'.

Sayyid Khalid will keep contestants updated on the process through his social media platforms and Al Wisal platforms which boasts a combined audience of over 1.5 million followers.

An amount of RO 5,000 will be awarded for the first prize, RO 3,000 for second prize and RO 2,000 for the third prize. Winners will donate 10 per cent of cash prize to a local charity of their choice.

To participate, visit: Arabic website – sayyidkhalid.com/goldentalent; English website – sayyidkhalid.com/goldentalent-eng.

TALENTED PERSONS HONoured



The valedictory function of the GCC edition of the Ammar Award for the gifted differently abled persons was held in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Ruwa al Fazariyah, an Omani girl with mobility impairment, was honoured for excelling in fine arts. Twelve talented differently abled persons from the Sultanate of Oman have qualified for the final leg of the competition.

Complete reopening of schools in November

FROM PI

The Supreme Committee, however, warned that there had been reports of the rapid rise in new infections in some countries.

Despite the stability of the situation in the Sultanate of Oman, it is important for individuals to follow Covid-19 protocol. The committee expressed its concern over violations like going to public places without vaccination, not wearing face masks and not following social distancing while attending weddings, parties and funerals.

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY Advertisement No. (47/2021)

Specialized Companies in the field of tender shown below and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/21/067	2021/MM/QS-24	Construction of Parking and Pedestrian Walkway in Bousher (Jal) (E- Tender)	Rial 25	20/11/2021	09/12/2021	First
PRE/21/086	2021/MM/QS-25	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Construction of Internal Roads at AL Seeb, Bousher and Muttrah	Rial 60	20/11/2021	09/12/2021	First
PRE/21/087	2021/MM/QS-26	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Construction of Internal Roads at AL Amerat and Quriyat	Rial 40	20/11/2021	09/12/2021	First
PRE/21/090	2021/MM/QS-27	Supply of Decorative Pole with LED Luminaire	Rial 25	20/11/2021	09/12/2021	Excellent

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Original Tender Bond envelope should be sealed with red wax and entitled to His Excellency/ Head of Intrnal Tender Committee and to be placed in the Tender Box at Muscat Municipality HQ, Third Floor, before **10:00 am** as per the date Mentioned in the above table. All envelopes are to be clearly marked with the name of the Tender being presented and no other marks.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

Electronic Tender (s)

Majan Electricity Co. (SAOC) Announces the Following E-Tender

Tender NO	Description	Grade	Last date for buying	Submission date	Tender price including()5% VAT .R.O
101/2021 Recall-1	Supply of different types of Ring Main Unit such as (OLU and RMU set) for Majan Stores.	Specialist	08-11-2021	16/11/2021	26/=
125/2021	EXTENSION OF POWER SUPPLY TO THE AGRICULTURE POLT'S AT THE VARIOUS LOCATION IN AL-KHABOURAH, SAHAM, SOHAR, LIWA & SHINAS (NORTH AL-BATINAH GOVERNORATE).	C	08/11/2021	23/11/2021	26 /=
126/2021	EXTENSION OF POWER SUPPLY TO THE AGRICULTURE POLT'S AT THE VARIOUS LOCATION (DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE).	C	08/11/2021	23/11/2021	26 /=
127/2021	EXTENSION OF POWER SUPPLY TO THE AGRICULTURE POLT'S AT THE VARIOUS LOCATION (AL-BURAIMI GOVERNORATE).	C	08/11/2021	23/11/2021	26 /=

Interested Firm having relevant experience in the similar nature of services and registered with Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for electrical work, may register and obtain the tender documents from **E-Tendering Site** <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against online payment of non-refundable fees mentioned above for each tender.

The Tenderers should enclose a copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any registered bank in the Sultanate of Oman for a value of (1%) of the submitted bid value valid for a period of (90) days from the date of Submission, and addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee. The original Bid Bond to be delivered in sealed envelope, and the tender number and title of project only are to be mentioned on the envelopes. The place of submission the original bond would be at MJEC Contracts & tenders office at MJEC building in AL Sawari Center in Sohar or at MJEC Contracts & tenders office at Muscat in Al Mubailah- opposite to the industrial Area beside to Bank Suhar, before 10 A.M. according to the assigned date of submission of the tender. Any Submission of original tender bond after the time and date mentioned in the advertisement will not be accepted and tenderer offer will be rejected.

The Completed signed and sealed commercial and technical offer with all tender documents should be submitted and uploaded online into the above mentioned E-Tendering website. The Hard copies of the tender document are not accepted.

For more information please contact Tel no.:24051501- 26944266

For any technical assistance please contact

Helpdesk: +968-24402200.

E-mail: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products & and have a High level percentage of Omanization.

The Company is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders.

"EXTRAVAGANCE IN CONSUMPTION WITH ELECTRICITY WE PROGRESS PLEASE AVOID"



Majan Electricity Company S.A.O.C

P.O Box 286, Sohar

PC 311, Sultanate of Oman

Tel: +968 2694 4444 | Fax: +968 2694 4222

Information@majanco.nama.om | www.majanco.co.om

Thousands stage nationwide protests against Sudan coup

KHARTOUM: Sudan’s Central Doctors Committee said on Saturday two protesters were shot dead by troops in the capital Khartoum’s twin city of Omdurman. The report of deaths came as hundreds of thousands of people marched in Khartoum in protest against this week’s military coup, calling for a restoration of civilian rule.

People carried Sudanese flags and chanted “Military rule can’t be praised” and “This country is ours, and our government is civilian” as they marched in neighbourhoods across the capital.

Protesters also took to the streets in cities in central, eastern and northern Sudan.

Thousands of Sudanese have already demonstrated this week against the ousting of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok’s cabinet on Monday by General

Abdel Fattah al Burhan in a takeover that led Western states to freeze hundreds of millions in aid.

In central Khartoum on Saturday there was a heavy military deployment of armed troops that included the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Security forces had blocked roads leading to the defence ministry complex and the airport, as well as most of the bridges connecting Khartoum with its twin cities of Omdurman and Khartoum North.

At least 11 protesters have been killed in clashes with security forces this week and opponents fear a full-blown crackdown. In local neighbourhoods, protest groups blocked roads overnight with stones, bricks, tree branches and plastic pipes to try to keep the security forces out. — **Agencies**



■ ATATURK REMEMBERED



Performers pose with Turkish national flags on the front steps of Anitkabir, the mausoleum of modern Turkey’s founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, during a ceremony marking the 98th Anniversary of the Republic on Friday in Ankara. — **AFP**

Saudi, Kuwait expel Lebanon envoys over Yemen

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait gave Lebanon’s ambassador 48 hours to leave the emirate on Saturday, a day after Saudi Arabia made a similar move over a minister’s comments about its war in Yemen.

The diplomatic row, which has also seen Bahrain expel Lebanon’s envoy, has dealt another blow to Lebanon, already in the midst of crippling political and economic crises.

“Kuwait... asks Lebanese envoy to leave country in 48 hours,” Kuwait’s foreign ministry said on Saturday in a brief statement carried by state news agency KUNA.

The statement added that Kuwait’s top diplomat to Beirut was also being recalled.

The failure of the Government of the Lebanese Republic to take the necessary measures to deter the continuous and increasing smuggling operations of the scourge of drugs to Kuwait and the rest of the GCC

FOREIGN MINISTRY
Kuwait

The dispute intensified on Friday after the broadcast this week of an interview in which Lebanon’s Information Minister George Kordahi criticised the war in Yemen.

In his remarks — recorded in August but aired on Monday — Kordahi called the seven-year war in the Arabian Peninsula country “futile” and said it was “time for it to end”.

Kordahi said Yemen’s Ansar Allah were “defending themselves... against an external aggression”, adding that “homes, villages, funerals and weddings were being bombed” by a Saudi-led coalition.

The Ansar Allah are backed by Iran, which also wields significant

influence in Lebanon, due to its strong backing of Hezbollah.

Kuwait’s foreign ministry said the expulsion and recall was based on the “failure” of the Lebanese government to “address the unacceptable and reprehensible statements against the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the rest” of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Kuwait’s decision was also based on “the failure of the Government of the Lebanese Republic to take the necessary measures to deter the continuous and increasing smuggling operations of the scourge of drugs to Kuwait and the rest of the GCC,” the ministry added. — **AFP**

Gaza fish restaurants thrive far from the foodie trail

GAZA CITY: The Gaza Strip might be off-limits for foreign foodies but the coastal Palestinian enclave is brimming with seafood restaurants, many owned by one local family whose culinary hook is their matriarch’s spicy fish tajine.

Munir Abu Hasira arrives at the Gaza port’s fish market at daybreak, but holds back as traders snatch up sardines and other fish caught during the night.

He is angling for more discerning catches like grouper, sea bream and large shrimp, which can go for around 70 shekels (\$22) a kilo — a small fortune in the impoverished enclave, under

Israeli blockade since 2007.

“It’s expensive because of the economic situation, but we buy the fish to supply restaurants and to export” to the occupied West Bank, he says, as workers pile fresh fish into a van.

For decades, the Abu Hasira family were fishermen, but since opening their first restaurant in the 1970s, they have gradually traded their fishing kit for chef’s tools.

Gaza fishermen say they struggle to eke out a living, snared by Israeli restrictions on the enclave’s fishing zone and on importing equipment into the enclave, from boat motors to sonar devices for finding shoals.



Munir Abu Hasira shows a plate of fried fish dumplings prepared at Roma fish restaurant owned by the Abu Hasira family, before being served to customers, in Gaza City. — **AFP**

Problems like overfishing and pollution blight the local industry.

Some 4,200 tonnes of fish and seafood were netted from Gaza’s waters last year, according to the Israeli authorities. Just 300 tonnes were exported to the West Bank.

Sitting on a chair in a Gaza courtyard, Eid Abu Hasira, in his 80s, said he was the last of the family’s fishermen.

“I sold everything in 2013,” said the head of the family, sporting a white moustache and wearing a traditional robe and headdress.

“Today, we are in the fish trade, and have 13 Abu Hasira restaurants,” he said, clutching

Muslim prayer beads as he leaned on a wooden cane.

One of his ancestors was a prominent Jewish Moroccan rabbi, who died during a trip to Egypt in the 19th century.

A descendent in Egypt had a vision that “they had to go to Gaza”, Eid Abu Hasira said.

“So we came here. My grandfather chose to live off the sea,” he said, adding that a Jewish branch of the family lives in Israel, while those in Gaza are Muslim. As a young boy, his mother would cook up a seafood tajine that has become the Abu Hasira family chain’s signature dish. — **AFP**

AMMAN

Jordan warns it will expel unvaccinated expats

Jordan warned on Saturday that it will start deporting any foreign workers who have not received two jabs of a Covid-19 vaccine by mid-December.

“Strict measures will be taken against expatriate workers who have not received two doses of Covid vaccine, starting from December 15,” said an interior ministry statement published by the official news agency Petra.

It said the measures would include “the expulsion of those who are not vaccinated”.



Tens of thousands of Egyptians, Filipinos and other nationalities work in the kingdom, which has opened centres dedicated to the free vaccination of Jordanians and foreigners.

DAMASCUS

Israel missile wounds two soldiers near Damascus

An Israeli missile strike wounded two Syrian soldiers near Damascus on Saturday, the official SANA news agency reported after explosions were heard in the Syrian capital.

“The Israeli enemy fired a salvo of surface-to-surface missiles from northern occupied Palestine targeting positions near Damascus,” SANA said, quoting an unnamed military official.

“Our anti-aircraft defences were activated and were able to hit some of the enemy missiles,”



the source said, adding that the attack wounded two soldiers and caused damage.

AFP correspondents in Damascus heard multiple explosions at around midday.

ATHENS

Greece rescues cargo ship with 400 migrants

Greece mounted a rescue operation on Friday for a Turkish-flagged cargo ship carrying about 400 migrants after it sent out a distress signal off the island of Crete, the coast guard said.

The Greek coast guard quoted passengers as saying the vessel had sailed from Turkey, calling it “one of the largest search and rescue operations carried out in the eastern Mediterranean.”

“The ship is now sailing in international waters. Greece’s



Shipping Ministry has asked Turkey to accept the vessel’s return to Turkey,” a migration ministry official said, declining to be named. — **Reuters**

In brief

■ ISLAMABAD

TALIBAN FORCES OPEN FIRE ON WEDDING PARTY FOR PLAYING MUSIC

At least two people were killed and several others wounded when Taliban fighters opened fire on participants of a wedding party for playing music, sources said on Saturday.

The incident took place in Surkh Rod district in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan late on Friday.

A local elder who asked not to be named said that initially the Taliban had authorised the villagers to play music. But later some of their forces raided the party, killing at least two and injuring 10. At least two fatalities and six wounded people were admitted to one local hospital, according to a hospital source.

Provincial Taliban spokesman Hanif Nangarhari confirmed the incident took place but blamed “unknown gunmen.”

The Taliban completely banned music while they ruled the country between 1996 and 2001, viewing it as sinful and against religious teachings.

ROME: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked Pope Francis to visit India, a significant opening towards the head of the Catholic Church who has long sought an official invitation to the country. Modi, 71, invited Francis during a meeting at the Vatican on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome.

“Had a very warm meeting with Pope Francis. I had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues with him and also invited him to visit India,” Modi said on Twitter after the talks.

The pope, 84, has been on record saying that he wants to visit India. The Vatican had even drafted a schedule for a papal trip several years ago, according to religious news website Crux.

“Thank you very much for your visit. I’m happy, I’m very happy,” a smiling Francis said as he grasped Modi’s hand at the end of the visit, according to footage released by the Vatican.

Modi replied: “I would like to see you in India.”

Francis, leader of the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics, is hoping to push the defence of religious freedom in



Pope Francis meets with Prime Minister Modi at the Vatican on Saturday. – Reuters

Had a very warm meeting with Pope Francis. I had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues with him and also invited him to visit India

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

the world’s second most populous country. Activists say that religious minorities in India have faced increased levels of discrimination and violence since Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 2014.

The last papal visit to India was made by Pope John Paul II in 1999.

Saturday’s Vatican visit was Francis and Modi’s first meeting. A senior official in the prime minister’s office said the “very warm” talks — scheduled to last 20 minutes — went on for nearly an hour. In an unusually short

note, the Vatican described it as “a brief conversation” in which “the cordial relations between the Holy See and India were discussed”.

Modi’s office said the leaders discussed “fighting climate change and removing poverty”. There was no mention of the red-button issue of religious freedom.

MOON’S PLEA

South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday made a fresh attempt to have Pope Francis visit North Korea, at a meeting at the Vatican where the two leaders discussed peace efforts, Yonhap said.

Moon gave Francis one of 136 crosses created with barbed wire from a fence in the demilitarised zone (DMZ), the division across the peninsula for the past 68 years.

He said that if the pope were to visit North Korea “when an opportunity arises,” such a trip would provide “momentum for peace,” presidential spokesperson Park Kyung-mee told the South Korean news agency.

Francis replied he was willing to go if he received a letter of invitation from Pyongyang, it added. — AFP

China cracks down over ‘serious’ Covid outbreak



People wait in line to receive Covid-19 vaccination booster shots along a street in Beijing on Saturday. – AFP

BEIJING: Beijing introduced new Covid-19 curbs on Saturday to stamp out a “serious” outbreak as the Chinese capital maintains its strict zero-tolerance policy, with less than 100 days before it hosts the Winter Olympics.

China’s leading epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan said on Saturday that authorities could contain a nationwide outbreak within a month — but also warned the “pandemic cannot be eradicated within a short period of time”.

The outbreak has hit at least 14 of China’s provinces and millions have been tested in the past week.

The situation is “serious and complex” and the epidemic “is still developing rapidly”, Mi Feng, spokesperson for the National Health Commission, told a press conference on Saturday.

In Beijing, authorities ordered all cinemas closed until November 14 in the capital’s Xicheng district, which lies west of Tiananmen Square and is home to over a million people.

China announced 59 locally transmitted virus cases on Saturday — the highest since mid-September — including two cases in Beijing linked to a tourist group infected in the north of the country.

While the number is low compared to daily case counts in other countries, authorities are pushing Beijing to contain the virus ahead of the Games, which begin on February 4.

The city — which hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008 — will become the first to host both events.

The new centre of the outbreak is 650 kilometres from Beijing, in the city of Erenhot, on the border with Mongolia.

Some six million Chinese people in cities where the virus has been detected are now under travel restrictions. — AFP



P.O. Box: 147, Jawharat A' Shatti, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24073800, Fax: 24698496, Website: www.soharpower.com

Unaudited condensed financial statements 30 September 2021

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sohar Power Company SAOG (“Sohar Power” or the “Company”), I am pleased to present you with the Quarterly Directors’ Report of the Company for the period ended 30 September 2021, corresponding to the fifteenth year of operations of the Company.

Health & Safety

The Third Quarter of year 2021 has seen excellent Health and Safety performance for Sohar Power. There were no Lost Time Accidents (LTA), accumulating to 3,167 days without LTA at the end of September 2021. The Health and Safety of our employees, contractors, and visitors remains the utmost priority for the Company and its operator Sohar Operations & Maintenance Company LLC (“SOMC”).

In addition, the global challenge continued in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic that required Sohar Power, its contractors and stakeholders to activate their Business Continuity and aspects of Disaster Recovery plans. The Company and its Operator remain vigilant, promoting social distancing, and ensuring that all protection measures are in place going forward. All staff have been vaccinated against the virus.

Operations & Maintenance

The plant achieved 99.84% reliability for power and 99.34% for water. Forced outages amounted to 0.16% for the power plant and 0.66% for the water plant in the reporting period.

The demand for power and water continued to below due to the entrance of new water plant in the port area and overcapacity in the Oman electricity grid. The plant was in standby mode and under preservation most of the time; accordingly, the load factors of the plant in the reporting period reached 1.4% for power (2.5% in 2020) and 1.3% for water (1.3% in 2020) mainly due to performing the Annual Performance Test which was conducted in Feb’21.

An aggregate of 55 GWh net power and 0.5 million m3 potable water was delivered to the electricity and water grids respectively during the period.

Maintenance activities were performed by SOMC and its sub-contractors, in accordance with Original Equipment Manufacturers’ recommendations, while applying the best standards and practices for health & safety and maintenance of the industry. All gas turbines underwent regular annual maintenance during the Winter Period; there were no Major Inspections undertaken during the Winter Period.

Financial Performance

The Board of Directors would like to announce that the Company has ended the period with a net loss of RO (3.069) million compared to a net profit of RO 1.570 million in the same period 2020.

The decrease in profit in 2021 is mainly due to the partial impairment of power plant which is offset by lower finance cost and better fuel margin compared to 2020.

The revenues for the period 2021 amount to RO 20.9 million against RO 21.2 million for the same period 2020. This mainly due to lower load factor of the plant (low power and water demand). As per the PWPA agreement with the off-taker, the variation of the Load Factor has no impact on the company profitability as the mainstream of the profit is generated from the available capacity and reliability of the plant, (load factor is a pass-through item under the PWPA (and financially neutral to the Company).

The direct costs have decreased from RO 5.9 million in 2020 to RO 5.6 million in 2021, mainly due to the decrease in gas consumption as a result of lower load factor.

The reduction in finance costs by RO 0.9 million in 2021 in comparison to 2020 is associated with debt repayments during the year.

Long term loans were repaid, and swaps were settled on their due dates. The hedging deficit on the Company’s swap agreements at the close of business on 30 September 2021, was RO 1.3 million, in comparison with valuations as of 31 December 2020 of RO 3.3 million. As per IAS 39, hedging deficit is calculated on each balance sheet date, and it represents a notional loss, which the Company may incur if it opts to terminate the swap agreements on this date. However, under the terms of Financing Agreements, the Company is not permitted to terminate its swap agreements and, as such, the loss is notional.

Under its Financing Agreements entered into with its lenders, Sohar Power is subject to a cash sweep mechanism which started on 30 September 2015 and will last until the full repayment of the long-

term loans. The cash sweep mechanism prevents the distribution of dividends to shareholders since all the available cash is devoted to the repayment of the loans. This mechanism is common in financing agreements throughout the region and helps to provide a competitive tariff for an off-taker such as OPWP at the time of the bid. As previously disclosed, the pay-out of dividends ended in 2016, and there will be no more dividend distributions to shareholders unless the debt of the Company is refinanced, and the cash sweep is successfully removed. The Company has explored and continues to explore opportunities to refinance its project finance debt.

The share price decreased slightly to 0.044 during the year compared to RO 0.045 at the end of 31 December 2020.

Outlook

Looking ahead, the Company expects to maintain high reliability even though the delivered power and water level is expected to be at a same level seen in 2020, while undertaking periodic maintenance activities, in a safe working environment for its employees, contractors and visitors.

The Company engaged as well in the second phase of ‘2022 Power Procurement process’ launched by OPWP RFP on 16th October 2019. The Company has submitted its offers on 29th April 2020 as per the processes of the RFP. After long awaited decision on the tender 2022 status, OPWP has issued a notice (already disclosed to the Muscat Stock Exchange on October 24th 2021) to the tenderers informing the annulment of the Power 2022 Procurement Process. OPWP stated that the drop in oil prices coupled with the repercussions of the pandemic have negatively impacted the demand growth of the electricity in the country which resulted in no requirement for any new power capacity to be procured under the Power 2022 Procurement Process.

Based on the above decision by OPWP, the Company may operate in the Spot Market currently under the last stages of trial run period and which is expected to go live before the end of this year, according to OPWP. Revenues will not be contracted in the Omani Spot Market; it will be subject to the overall supply and demand in the Market. The Company has appointed an independent consultant to conduct a study to assess the company forecasted revenue should the plant operates in the spot market. Although the 7 Years Statement (2020-2026) has not been published by OPWP, based on reasonable assumptions with respect to the future demand growth and the existing overcapacity in the system, it is very unlikely that the Company will be able to secure a source of revenues under the current design of the Spot Market.

The energy transition is accelerating in Oman, caused by the continuous drop in prices for renewable energy such as photovoltaics and wind. This is likely to impact the competitiveness of existing conventional thermal plants and might substantially reduce their value beyond the term of their current P(W)PAs.

The Company will also engage with different stakeholders to assess the feasibility of the potential bilateral contracts for its plant, executive regulation to allow the Company to enter into this type of agreement is still awaited from the authorities.

The Company will continue the discussion with the off-taker and the authority regarding the issuance of the bilateral contract framework. The Company has reassessed the impairment of the plant which resulted in an impairment loss of OMR 6.6 million that is recorded in Q3 2021 unaudited financial statement. The Company will continue reassessing the impairment of the plant based on the future development and record the necessary adjustment should the outcome of all the options mentioned above do not support business continuity.

In case of none of the above options is feasible or viable, restructuring the outstanding debt after the current term of PWPA will be very challenging as well.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank our valued shareholders for their continued support, trust, and confidence. I would also like to thank all the personnel associated with the operation and maintenance of the plant in Sohar and the staff of the Company for their loyalty, dedication and commitment.

I would also like to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued guidance, support and encouragement to the private sector.

Luciano Guffanti
Chairman of the Board

Unaudited condensed statement of financial position as at 30 September 2021

	30 Sept 2021 RO'000	31 Dec 2020 RO'000	30 Sept 2021 USD'000	31 Dec 2020 USD'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	66,362	81,821	172,370	212,523
Right-of-use assets	113	226	294	586
Total non-current assets	66,475	82,047	172,664	213,109
Current assets				
Inventories	869	793	2,257	2,060
Trade and other receivables	3,878	2,655	10,071	6,897
Bank balances	3,250	6,270	8,442	16,286
Total current assets	7,997	9,718	20,770	25,243
Total assets	74,472	91,765	193,434	238,352
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	22,101	22,101	57,405	57,405
Legal reserve	4,373	4,373	11,358	11,358
Accumulated Losses	(10,215)	(7,146)	(26,532)	(18,559)
Shareholders' equity	16,259	19,328	42,231	50,204
Hedging deficit - net of tax	(555)	(2,296)	(1,442)	(5,964)
Total capital and reserves	15,704	17,032	40,789	44,240
Non-current liabilities				
Hedging deficit	1,241	3,290	3,223	8,545
Non-current portion of long-term loans	35,000	46,628	90,910	121,112
Provision for decommissioning costs	1,899	1,800	4,932	4,675
Non-current Portion of Lease Liability	257	75	668	195
Deferred tax liability	6,372	8,048	16,551	20,905
Total non-current liabilities	44,769	59,841	116,284	155,432
Current liabilities				
Current portion of long-term loans	9,450	9,232	24,545	23,979
Current Portion of Lease Liability	-	162	-	421
Current Portion of deferred revenue	478	1,881	1,242	4,886
Trade and other payables	2,482	2,016	6,447	5,236
Amount due to a related party	436	288	1,132	748
Provision for taxation	1,153	1,313	2,995	3,410
Total current liabilities	13,999	14,892	36,361	38,680
Total equity and liabilities	74,472	91,765	193,434	238,352
Net assets per share	0.074	0.087	0.191	0.226

Unaudited condensed statement of profit or loss for the period ended 30 September 2021

	30 Sept 2021 RO'000	30 Sept 2020 RO'000	30 Sept 2021 USD'000	30 Sept 2020 USD'000
Revenue	20,897	21,224	54,278	55,127
Cost of revenue	(21,179)	(14,716)	(55,011)	(38,224)
Gross profit	(282)	6,508	(733)	16,903
	289	223	751	579
Other income	7	6,731	18	17,482
Expenses				
General and administrative expenses	(605)	(954)	(1,570)	(2,477)
Finance costs	(3,013)	(3,958)	(7,827)	(10,280)
	(3,618)	(4,912)	(9,397)	(12,757)
Profit/(loss) before tax for the period	(3,611)	1,819	(9,397)	4,725
Income tax expense	542	(249)	1,408	(647)
Net profit/(loss) after tax for the period	(3,069)	1,570	(7,971)	4,078
Basic and diluted earnings per share	(0.014)	0.007	(0.036)	0.018

Unaudited condensed statement of profit or loss for the period ended 30 September 2021

	30 Sept 2021 RO'000	30 Sept 2020 RO'000	30 Sept 2021 USD'000	30 Sept 2020 USD'000
Net profit/(loss) after tax for the period	(3,069)	1,570	(7,971)	4,078
Other comprehensive income:				
Items that may be reclassified into profit and loss				
Fair value gains on interest rate swaps	1,741	155	4,527	402
Related taxation	-	-	-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the period	1,741	155	4,527	402
Total comprehensive income for the period	(1,328)	1,725	(3,444)	4,480

Note: The complete accounts either in English or Arabic will be sent to any shareholder by mail within 7 days of receipt.

G20 LEADERS SEEK CONSENSUS ON CLIMATE, ECONOMY

ROME: The heads of the world's 20 biggest economies kicked off two days of talks on Saturday where they were set to acknowledge the existential threat of climate change, but stop short of radical new commitments to tame global warming.

A draft communique seen by Reuters shows major countries are only likely to slightly toughen previous pledges on climate action, while failing to set tough new targets that activists say are vital to prevent environmental catastrophe.

However, more progress was made on other fronts, with the leaders endorsing a minimum tax agreement that all countries can collect from corporations from 2023 — a landmark deal aimed at stopping big business from parking profits in tax havens.

Leaders were also expected to back plans to vaccinate 70 per cent of the world's population against Covid-19 by mid-2022 and create a task force to fight future pandemics.

"From the pandemic, to climate change, to fair and equitable taxation, going it alone is simply not an option", Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi told the start of the meeting being held in a glass and steel conference centre, known as "The Cloud".

The G20 bloc, which includes Brazil, China, India, Germany and the United States, accounts for more than 80 per cent of the world's gross domestic product, 60 per cent of its population and an estimated 80 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Many of the G20 leaders, including US President Joe Biden, will fly straight to Glasgow for the start on Monday of the United



Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi (front) stands with world leaders as they gather for the official family photograph on day one of the G20 Summit at the convention center of La Nuvola, Rome. — AFP



A demonstrator protests during the G20 summit in Rome, Italy, October 30, 2021. — Reuters

Nation's climate summit known as COP26, which is seen as crucial to addressing the threat of rising temperatures.

Hopes of making major progress in Rome were dimmed by the decision of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir

Putin to stay at home and only follow events via video.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged the G20 and COP26 talks would be difficult, but warned that without courageous action, world civilisation could collapse as swiftly as the ancient Roman empire, ushering in a new Dark Age.

"It's going to be very, very tough to get the agreement we need", he told reporters early on Saturday.

The draft of the final communique said G20 countries will step up their efforts to limit global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius — the level scientists have said is necessary to avoid disastrous new climate patterns.

The document also acknowledges that current

G20 leaders meet face-to-face after Covid pandemic as Chinese, Russian presidents follow via video link

national plans on how to curb harmful emissions will have to be strengthened, but offered little detail on how this should be done.

Additionally, the leaders are set to pledge to halt financing of overseas coal-fired power generation by the end of this year, and to "do our utmost" to stop building new coal power plants before the end of the 2030s.

While the climate debate will dominate in Rome, much of the first day of talks were given over to discussing the Covid-19 health crisis and economic recovery.

Fears over rising energy prices and stretched supply chains will be addressed, while Biden was expected to urge G20 energy producers with spare capacity to boost production, notably Russia and Saudi Arabia, to ensure a stronger global economic recovery, a senior US administration official said.

The US president was later due to hold talks with the leaders of Britain, Germany and France on Iran's nuclear ambitions — just one of numerous meetings being held on the sidelines as the G20 chiefs catch up on in-person diplomacy.

"It is great to see all of you here, after a difficult few years for the global community", Draghi said.

Rome has been put on high security alert from the weekend, with up to 6,000 police and about 500 soldiers deployed to maintain order. — Reuters

Pressure mounts as Dutch govt coalition talks drag on



Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte. — Reuters

THE HAGUE: Pressure is mounting on Dutch political leaders to put together a coalition government, which after 226 days on Friday became the longest formation talks on record in the Netherlands.

Experts say even the position of long-time Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte was by no means certain, even if he is still the most likely candidate to lead the country again after 11 years in power. But seven months after Dutch voters went to the polls it was very much back to square one, with a future coalition government most likely resembling the one that stepped down in January over a childcare scandal.

Rutte's third cabinet resigned in mid-January after news that thousands of Dutch parents were wrongly accused by Dutch authorities of fraudulently claiming child allowance.

Yet, Rutte's cabinet stayed on in a caretaker capacity to handle urgent day-to-day business — including dealing with the fight against the coronavirus.

But now "pressure is high to form a new cabinet soon", said Ruud Koole, political science professor at Leiden University.

Far from being punished by voters in March over the childcare scandal, Rutte's centre-right VVD party won 34 seats in the 150-seat Lower House of Parliament.

The progressive-left party of Sigrid Kaag, who then served as foreign minister, won 24 in second place.

The stage seemed set for a VVD-D66 coalition, but the question remained which other parties were needed to form a 76-seat majority. Rutte, 54, too, seemed set once again to take the helm of his fourth cabinet, despite dodging the childcare and a series of other political scandals, earning him the nickname of the "Teflon Prime Minister". — AFP

South Africa's Tutu casts early ballot in local poll

CAPE TOWN: South Africa's veteran anti-apartheid icon Desmond Tutu appeared before journalists on Saturday for the third time in 2021 to cast an early vote for local elections next week.

The Nobel peace laureate, who recently turned 90, voted alongside his wife Leah in their Cape Town home.

The couple appeared healthy and in good spirits as they briefly paused for the media outside their front door, flanked by electoral commission agents.

Tutu stood with a walking stick in slippers and a tracksuit, while

Leah, 88, used a pulpit frame.

Ordained at the age of 30 and appointed archbishop in 1986, Tutu lobbied for international sanctions against white-minority rule, and later for human rights on a global scale.

As a black South African, he was denied the right to vote until the country's first democratic election in 1994, which saw Nelson Mandela come to power.

After Mandela's election, Tutu headed a commission investigating human rights violations perpetrated under apartheid.

He has openly confronted



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with his wife Leah, waves after they cast special ballots ahead of the November 1 local government elections in Cape Town. — Reuters

homophobia in the Anglican Church, generous cabinet salaries and state-led corruption.

Fondly known as "the Arch", he retired in 2010 and rarely appears or speaks in public. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1997 and has undergone repeated treatment. Tutu was last seen in public on his 90th birthday on October 7 attending a special church service in Cape Town.

He had previously appeared in May for Covid-19 vaccinations with his wife. The couple have cast their ballots for elections that will take place on November 1. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

VIENNA

Austrian diplomat suspected over document leak

A senior Austrian diplomat, sacked earlier this month, is suspected of leaking confidential documents linked to the 2018 Novichok poisoning of a former Russian double agent in England, Austrian media reported.

Johannes Peterlik was removed as Austrian ambassador to Indonesia in mid-October and a "judicial procedure" was opened against him, the Austrian foreign ministry said.

But newspapers *Die Presse*



and *Der Standard* said he is suspected of giving classified documents in 2018 to a former Austrian secret agent accused of spying for Russia, citing a court document.

WASHINGTON

Nasa, SpaceX delay ISS mission due to bad weather

Nasa and SpaceX have delayed a mission sending four astronauts to the International Space Station to avoid "a large storm system", the agency. The astronauts of 'Crew-3' were due to launch aboard a Crew Dragon spacecraft named "Endurance" fixed atop a Falcon 9 rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Sunday.

But they will instead aim to launch on Wednesday, which "would have Crew-3 arriving at the space station later the same



day about 11 pm, Nasa said in a statement. They will then carry out "a short handover with the astronauts that flew to the station as part of the agency's SpaceX Crew-2 mission", it added.

ROME

Queen Elizabeth is 'on very good form': British PM

Queen Elizabeth II is in good spirits, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson stressed on Saturday after doctors advised the 95-year-old monarch to rest for at least a fortnight. "I spoke to Her Majesty and she's on very good form", Johnson told UK broadcaster Channel 4 in Rome, where he is attending a weekend G20 summit.

The Queen, who recently spent a night in hospital for "preliminary examinations", is following medical advice to



recuperate for at least the next two weeks, Buckingham Palace said on Friday.

She has cancelled her appearance at the COP26 UN climate conference in Glasgow.

Dutch-based radio ‘gives Sudanese a voice’

CHARLOTTE VAN OUWERKERK
AND JAN HENNOP

Twice a day a catchy jingle comes on air, carrying the voice of democracy to more than two million Sudanese listeners in the restive northeast African country, hit this week by a military coup.

“Radio Dabanga, Radio Dabanga, Radio Dabangaaaaa!” a male voice sings as the station starts its broadcast — not from Sudan’s capital Khartoum, but from the heart of Amsterdam.

Then, the soothing voice of 60-year-old veteran journalist Ibrahim Jadelkarim welcomes listeners to the station’s latest edition of local political, economic and social news.

For most Sudanese tuning in, the exiled Radio Dabanga is their only independent link to the outside world — even more so now after Monday’s military coup derailed the nation’s fragile transition to democracy.

Jadelkarim is no stranger to oppression: he fled Sudan in 1989 after now-former ruler Omar al Bashir grabbed power in a military coup.

Bashir, who ran the country with an iron fist, was deposed by the Sudanese military in April 2019 and mass protests eventually led to the formation of a fragile government in February.

But on Monday, General Abdel Fattah al Burhan — Sudan’s de facto leader since Bashir’s ousting — went on air to make plain his power grab in a state television address.

At least eight protesters have been killed and some 170 people have been wounded as people — angry at Burhan’s move to dissolve the civilian-led government and arrest its leaders — took to the streets.

Security forces and demonstrators clashed again on Thursday, as US President Joe Biden joined an international chorus of condemnation against the takeover. Radio Dabanga found a home in the Netherlands in 2008 as the conflict raged in the southwest Darfur region.

It has since expanded to cover the whole of the vast country and today some 10 journalists work at the station, which for security reasons doesn’t give out its exact address in Amsterdam. — AFP

“
The situation is severe, it’s a militant coup. Normal people, civilians are shot in the streets, tortured and jailed

IBRAHIM
JADELKARIM
Radio Dabanga



CLIMATE PROTEST
Ocean Rebellion activist Rob Higgs protests against bottom trawling during a demonstration ahead of the COP26 summit, in Glasgow on Saturday.
– Reuters

Living with a killer in our midst



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

THE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC FRONT COULD BE INDICATIVE OF OUR WAY OF LIFE, OUR ENTIRE SOCIAL STRUCTURE, WHATEVER OUR CULTURE, NEVER BEING THE SAME AGAIN... EVER!

I hate to be a portent of doom and gloom, but the most recent developments on the global pandemic front could be indicative of our way of life, our entire social structure, whatever our culture, never being the same again... ever!

Russia acted quickly against Covid-19, controversially rushing through the research, testing, and production of the Sputnik vaccine during 2020 while much of the world hoped the virus would simply “go away,” and while the testing process certainly attracted criticism from the research sector. The vaccine was the first to be registered, globally, and by the middle of this year it had been approved in 67 countries including the highly populated India, the Philippines, and Brazil.

Russia’s problem has been in achieving sufficient levels of vaccination to achieve effective levels of herd immunity, which, like it or not, appears to be a prerequisite for a nation, indeed all nations, to ‘live’ with Covid-19. At last count, Russia had managed to achieve 49 million doses of vaccine administered, however this accounts for less than a third of the total population. They simply did not have a healthcare infrastructure capable of managing a more efficient rollout.

The count touched 40,000 new cases and 1,159 fatalities last Wednesday alone.

Critics of the government are becoming emboldened and blaming the ruling party for keeping the population in ignorance, to maintain control, and hiding behind the “philosophies of fear that have ruled the nation since Lenin,” according to critics.

At the other end of the scale, New Zealand locked the gates and basically threw away the key for 18 months, letting very few people in, with government managed quarantine being a lottery with few winners of which I have personal experience.

Thousand’s login, each day, to ‘win’ a Managed Isolation and Quarantine spot for two weeks locked in a hotel, for ‘only’ \$3,100 per person. However, ships and seamen entering the ports, and ineffective overseas screening, particularly in South Asia, have proven to be chinks in the armour of the policy necessitating a change in policy.

Now, the emphasis is on achieving a 90 per cent national vaccination rate, to reach a sustainable herd immunity level, but this plan has come under severe threat from the Libertarians, who feel their choices and freedoms are being eradicated, and ethnic groups who are, irrationally it seems, professing a fear of, and cultural taboos towards modern medicines. My opinion is that mobile

phones were probably a greater threat to both groups... but there you go. This tiny nation has achieved most of its goals, with only one fatality in the last year, but their struggles simply illustrate how intractable we humans can be.

Worse than either scenario however is news from the United Kingdom and Europe healthcare professionals of the high number of infected cases returning for hospitalisation subsequent to their earlier treatments, as they are presenting 6-12 months later with respiratory issues, many with clots.

These are probably not life-threatening if treated promptly, but can be painful and distressing. Their treatment is also very much a ‘hands-on’ issue, meaning that resources and health professionals not only must put in extended ‘professional-to-patient’ hours, but it is distressing even for them, seeing the pain and the fear in their patients’ eyes.

“It’s quite exhausting, as you feel every wheeze, cough, and rack,” said one after a seven-hour stint with a patient. “She will recover, but goodness, it must feel like every breath is your last.”

Our lives are changing again, and now we must find the best way to live with this killer in our midst... What is it about mankind’s plans that makes it so easy for the deities to laugh at us?

Climate credibility depends on policies of governments



JEAN PISANI-FERRY
The author is a French economist and public policy expert

On October 25, the electric-vehicle producer Tesla’s market capitalisation reached \$1 trillion — more than the combined value of the next ten global car manufacturers. Even after discounting for exuberance, this is a strong indicator of how the threat of climate change is triggering a transformation of capitalism. To be sure, polluters still abound, and greenwashing is pervasive. But it would be a mistake to dismiss the changeover under way.

Governments, however, are not on track to deliver on their promise in the 2015 Paris climate agreement to limit global warming to “well below” 2° Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels. According to the International Energy Agency, meeting the national pledges made

so far within the framework of the Paris accord would lead to an increase in global temperature of 2.1°C. Moreover, actual policies fall short of even these insufficient pledges: under the IEA’s “stated policies scenario,” global warming would reach 2.6°C.

Add to this the fact that — as the Energy Transitions Commission has documented — most governments have committed to achieving net-zero emissions only by 2050 or 2060, and plan to postpone major mitigation efforts until after 2030, and the emerging picture is one of massive credibility failure.

The root of the problem is well known. The Paris agreement was based on the realistic judgment that governments could not agree

on a precisely defined allocation of climate-change mitigation efforts. This conclusion had emerged from the collapse of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (which involved such an allocation but left out emerging economies, including China) and the failure of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (where an attempt to muster a global Kyoto-type agreement ended in dispute).

So, the world tried a different approach: experts would assess the climate efforts needed, governments would formulate pledges, and civil society would scrutinise them. No one expected the initial pledges to be sufficient. But the hope was that peer pressure, the weight of public opinion, and relentless warnings

by the scientific community would gradually put policies on the right track.

Economists were sceptical. Christian Gollier and Jean Tirole of the Toulouse School of Economics warned early on that the strategy was “doomed to fail.” And William Nordhaus of Yale University showed that voluntary climate coalitions are vulnerable to free-riding and prone to instability.

The Paris accord encouraged investors and managers to ponder the risk of being left with stranded assets or an obsolete business model. Mark Carney, then-governor of the Bank of England, added that regulators would hold financial institutions accountable for hidden climate risks. Such considerations generated private-

sector momentum towards decarbonisation.

But green capitalism can prosper only if governments eventually keep their climate promises. Most investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient buildings, or zero-emission vehicles require carbon pricing, tight regulation, or both. Forward-looking investors may well bet on the eventual enactment of such measures, but only up to a point, and not without consequences.

The lack of climate-policy credibility partly reflects domestic political considerations, because governments simultaneously promise a green future and the continuation of the status quo.

Copyright — Project Syndicate @2021



Haitham Soomar clinches first round of Oman Rally

NINE DRIVERS FINISHED OUT OF 15 AND SIX RETIRED DUE TO DIFFERENT REASONS

MUSCAT: Young rally driver Haitham bin Khalid Soomar on Mitsubishi Evo 7 with codriver Wail al Shibani won the first round of Oman Rally championship after finishing six special stages at Al Misfah and Saal town at total time of one hour and eight minutes and fifty-nine seconds.

Meanwhile, Faisal al Rashidi on Subaru Impreza N 12 with Navigator Waleed al Rashidi got the top second place with a difference of just one second behind Haitham Soomar.

The third place was won by the legend Nizar al Shanfari on Can Am with his co- driver from UAE Ali Mirza. Hamed al Qasmini on Evo 8 reached fourth at the end of the rally and Mohamad al Shanfari on Yamaha Polaris finished fifth. The German driver Azar Pey on Can Am ended the rally in sixth position.

Abdullah al Zubair on Nissan Patrol and Issam al Kharusi on Quad and Musab Soomar on Kia Rio are the three remaining drivers who finished the rally on Friday.

Due to some technical and other issues, six drivers left the rally early, where some of them had left in the late stages, Abdullah al Rawahi after holding the first



stage at top of the list in Al Misfah with fastest time, left the rally in the second stage at Saal after he had a small accident which forced him to leave the rally early after he was one of the contenders to win the rally.

And the same has happened with Jarrah al Toqi where he left the rally due to technical issue.

Rally driver Zakriya al Aufi

been forced to leave the rally also after a broken suspension, and another driver been forced to leave the rally due to broken wheel where Zakria al Almri left the rally at stage 5.

After finishing all the six stages, brigadier retired Salim Ali al Maskari, chairman, board of directors Oman Automobile Association distributed the

winning trophies at Al Misfah, where the rally ceremony was held, and he appreciated the participants and the efforts of all the drivers and the organisers to join this rally and make it happen after a long stop due to Covid pandemic and he stated that all the precautions has been taken for the consideration for this pandemic during the rally on going time and



“
Happy to win this title for the first time in my life and thanks goes to all for their support and specially my mechanics

HAITHAM BIN KHALID SOOMAR
First round winner

he is thankful for all.

Haitham Soomar said “Happy to win this title for the first time in my life and thanks goes to all for their support and specially my mechanics.”

Meanwhile, Faisal al Rashidi appreciated the support of sponsors Al Madina Takaful and Oil field inspection services and wished all the success for his colleagues next time.

The next round of Oman rally championship will be held in coming December during Oman International rally and round four is expected to be organised in Duqm at the same month.



England's Jos Buttler hits a four. – Reuters

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, OCT 30

England produced a thoroughly professional effort to crush Australia by eight wickets and confirm their place in the semifinal of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 in Dubai on Saturday.

Jos Buttler hammered 71 off just 32 balls with five sixes and as many boundaries and the English bowlers Chris Jordan (3/17), Chris Woakes (2/23) and Tymal Mills (2/45) all contributed in the huge victory.

The victory ensured that

England are at the top of the table with six points and Australia remain second placed with four points.

ENGLAND START IN STYLE
England began their chase in marauding fashion as Jason Roy and Jos Buttler tore apart the Australian bowlers in the powerplay.

Buttler was the more aggressive of the two as he smashed three sixes and two boundaries reaching 39 off just 19 balls and Roy blasting a six and a four for 22 off 18 balls.

England were cruising at top

speed at 66/0 after six overs and going at a run rate of 11.

Just when it looked as if everything was going England's way, Adam Zampa had Roy lbw for 22 as Australia looked to chip away.

However, Buttler and new batsman Dawid Malan keep things going at a frenetic pace for England.

AUSSIIES STUTTER
Earlier, Australia had the worst possible start to the game as they lost four wickets in the first 37 balls of the match.

Chris Woakes did some early damage picking up the wickets of the dangerous David Warner and Glenn Maxwell. Chris Jordan sent Steve Smith back to the pavilion while Adil Rashid got the back of Marcus Stoinis.

At 21/4, Australia had a huge amount of work to do and England had their tails up in the clash between the old foes.

Matthew Wade and skipper Aaron Finch shared a 30-run partnership after which Liam Livingstone struck to claim Wade through a catch by Jason Roy.

It was then the turn of Finch

and Ashton Agar to take Australia forward. And the two did exactly that and upped the ante as well.

Agar slammed two sixes while Finch chipped in with a few boundaries to improve his strike rate and keep the scoreboard ticking at a healthy pace.

After a 47-run partnership, Agar was out holing out to Livingstone at deep midwicket off a Tymal Mills delivery.

New man on strike, Pat Cummins counter-attacked amazingly with two sublime sixes off the first two balls he faced off Mills.

Chris Jordan had other plans though as he got two wickets from the first two balls of the 19th over. Jordan got Finch, who was caught at long off by Jonny Bairstow, and Cummins who was castled with a pin-point yorker.

Adam Zampa was run out off the fourth ball of the 20th over and Mitchell Starc blasted a six over the fine leg boundary off the fifth.

Finally, Starc was caught behind by wicket-keeper Jos Buttler in the last ball as Australia were all out for 125 in 20 overs setting England 126 to win.



South Africa's David Miller plays a shot. – AFP

Miller, Rabada pull off thrilling chase despite Hasaranga's hat-trick

SHARJAH: David Miller and Kagiso Rabada combined to propel South Africa to a thrilling victory as they edged Sri Lanka by four wickets despite a hat-trick by Wanindu Hasaranga in the T20 World Cup on Saturday.

With South Africa needing 15 off the final over, Miller smashed two sixes and Rabada struck the winning boundary as South Africa reached their target of 143 with one ball to spare in Sharjah.

Miller finished with 23 off 13 balls while Rabada made 13 off seven to carry their team home after Hasaranga took the third hat-trick in tournament history.

Hasaranga's figures of 3-20 were not enough for Sri Lanka who made 142 in their innings.

His triple strike was spread over

SCOREBOARD	
SRI LANKA P Nissanka c Nortje b Pretorius..... 72 K Perera b Nortje..... 7 C Asalanka (run out)..... 21 B Rajapaksa c and b Shamsi..... 0 A Fernando c and b Shamsi..... 3 W Hasaranga de Silva c Markram b Shamsi..... 4 D Shanaka c Rabada b Pretorius..... 11 C Karunaratne c van der Dussen b Pretorius..... 5 D Chameera b Nortje..... 3 M Theekshana (not out)..... 7 L Kumara (run out)..... 0 Extras (LB-7, W-2)..... 9 Total (all out, 20 overs)..... 142 Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-61, 3-62, 4-77, 5-91, 6-110, 7-131, 8-131, 9-142 Bowling: Markram 2-0-8-0, Rabada 3-0-32-0, Nortje 4-0-27-2, Maharaj 4-0-34-0, Shamsi 4-0-	17-3, Pretorius 3-0-17-3 South Africa Q de Kock c and b Chameera..... 12 R Hendricks lbw Chameera..... 11 R van der Dussen (run out)..... 16 T Bavuma c Nissanka b de Silva..... 46 A Markram b de Silva..... 19 D Miller (not out)..... 23 K Rabada (not out)..... 13 Extras (LB-3, NB-1, W-2)..... 6 Total (For 6 wks, 19.5 overs)..... 146 Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-26, 3-49, 3-49, 4-96, 5-112, 6-112 Bowling: Chameera 4-0-27-2, Theekshana 4-0-31-0, Kumara 3-5-0-35-0, Karunaratne 3-0-23-0, Hasaranga 4-0-20-3, Shanaka 1-0-7-0

the final ball of his third over and first two of his fourth and pushed South Africa to a precarious 112-6 with his second victim, skipper Temba Bavuma, out for 46.

The left-handed pair of Miller and Rabada then smashed 34 runs between them to give South Africa their second straight win in the Super 12 stage.

Sri Lankan fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera had struck twice in his second over to sent back the South African openers including de Kock caught and bowled for 12.

Bavuma stood firm to put on key partnerships including a 47-run fourth-wicket stand with Aiden Markram to raise hopes of a successful chase. Markram made 19 before attempting an extravagant off drive against Hasaranga off the last ball of the 15th over, but missed the ball that crashed into the stumps. Hasaranga came back strongly in the 18th over to get Bavuma and Pretorius off the first two balls before Miller and Rabada robbed Sri Lanka, who have two losses from three Super games, of a win. — AFP

Ahli Sidab clinch men’s Epee category title at OFC

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 30

Ahli Sidab represented by fencer Al Harith al Harthy emerged champions of the inaugural edition of Oman Fencing Championship while Al Bashaer club represented by Ghazal al Fulaiti lifted Foil’s competition category title for girls.

The fencer from Ahli Sidab club edged Ahmed Kaskas (Al Nahdha) 15/14 in a thriller on Saturday at the indoor hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in the finale of the championship to claim their first crown.

Al Bashaer Club’s Ghazal al Fulaiti managed to clinch the girls’ title for Foil after beating fencer Salma al Dughaisi from Salalah Club 15/9 in a tough encounter.

For Men’s Epee category competition, Al Harith al Harthy defeated Asad al Maskari (Masirah) in the semifinals in a tough clash ended 15-5 ahead of beating Al Mutasim al Maskari from Qurayat 15-4 in the quarterfinal.

In the last 16, he managed to win against Omar al Rajhi (Al Bashaer) 15-0 in an easy match.

At the girls’ Foil competition category, Ghazal impressed the crowd as she defeated Salalah’s Salma al Dughaisi 15-9 in a thrilling final. She secured her spot in the final after beating Taif al Habsi (Ahli Sidab) 15-10 in semis ahead of edging Misan al Adawi (Al Nahdha) 15-1 in the quarterfinal. Ghazal advanced to the quarterfinal directly through the draw system. Oman Fencing Championship witnessed the participation of 40 fencers — representing eight clubs including: Muscat, Oman, Al Nahdha, Qurayyat, Ahli Sidab, Salalah, Al Bashaer and Masirah. The championship was organised by the Oman Fencing Committee (OFC).

Qais bin Mohammed bin Moosa al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion was the chief guest of



the event. He delivered the awards and trophies to the top winners during the final ceremony in presence of top dignitaries, clubs chairmen and fencers’ parents.

Khalid bin Said al Shuaibi, OFC President, said post the ceremony that Oman Fencing Championship is the inaugural

historic championship for fencing in the Sultanate of Oman.

“Eight clubs and forty fencers took part in the first edition of the championship. This reflects the tight relationship between the committee and the clubs, and we are looking forward for more upcoming events and

championships that will assist to spread the sports in the Sultanate of Oman. The fencers had two years only to train since the inception of the committee and introduction of the sport in he Sultanate of Oman and despite the pandemic and against all odds they showed top technical performance during the

championship”, he said.

The President of OFC affirmed that many forthcoming fencing events and championships will take place soon. “There are many championships planned to be organised soon beside other events abroad that the national team will take part in”, he added.

Khalid al Shuaibi ended his statement with a dedicated thanks to the chief guest for presiding over the closing ceremony. “A special thanks to all the organisers, coaches, umpires and the media for marking the success of the inaugural edition of Oman Fencing Championship”, he concluded.

Alcaraz in Vienna semifinal, Sinner eyes ATP finale

VIENNA: Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz held his nerve in the final-set tie-break to beat Matteo Berrettini 6-1 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/5) in the quarterfinals of the ATP event in Vienna on Friday.

He will next face Alexander Zverev, the German second seed who beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to avenge a fourth-round loss to the Canadian at Wimbledon this year.

In the day’s third quarter-final, American qualifier Frances Tiafoe, who knocked out top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas on Thursday, continued his run with a 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) victory over Argentine eighth seed Diego Schwartzmann.

Italy’s seventh seed Jannik Sinner then defeated Casper Ruud, the fourth-seeded Norwegian 7-5, 6-1, to boost his chances of making the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin.

Sinner will face Tiafoe for a place in the final.

The 18-year-old Alcaraz easily took the first set, lost the second on a tie-break before sealing victory over the Wimbledon finalist on his third match point in the third-set tie-break.

Alcaraz is the fifth-youngest semifinalist in an ATP 500 event. The record is held by Zverev, who reached the last four in Hamburg in 2014 aged 17

Alcaraz broke the Italian’s first two service games of the match and cruised to the first set in 29 minutes.

The second set went with serve, although Berrettini saved two break points in the fifth game before taking the tie-break comfortably.

Alcaraz broke the Italian in the fourth game of the final set and led 4-1 but Berrettini broke back to love in the seventh game.

After Alcaraz raced to a 6-3 lead in the tie break, Berrettini held his serve on the first two before the Spaniard sealed victory on his own serve to reach his first ATP 500 semifinal.

“This is one of my best performances on tour so far”, Alcaraz said.

“I am really happy for that and it was amazing. I just tried to play

aggressively all the time. In the tough moments it was important to be able to do that.”

He will face Zverev whose match against Auger-Aliassime contained a break in each set.

The German broke in the third game of the first set and the sixth game of the decider and was dominant on his own serve except for the seventh game of the second set when the Canadian broke to 30.

“I did make it difficult for myself once again, that needs to stop happening”, Zverev said. “One easy mistake and the second set went away.”

Alcaraz is the fifth-youngest semifinalist in an ATP 500 event. The record is held by Zverev, who reached the last four in Hamburg in 2014 aged 17.

“He has improved a lot”, said Zverev. “He has made big steps forward and is a great player, so I am looking forward to that match.”

The Spaniard reached 38 in the world in September after progressing to the last eight at the US Open — the youngest men’s quarter-finalist in that Grand Slam tournament in 58 years. — AFP



Germany’s Zverev (L) and Spain, Carlos Alcaraz (R) react after the men’s singles semifinal match of the Erste Bank Open. — AFP

business



OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om
follow us: @oman_biz



**For the first time in the Sultanate,
BankDhofar introduces the PaySticker**

Now you do not have to worry about forgetting your debit card. Place the sticker on your mobile phone and use it to pay by tapping your mobile phone on the POS machine.*

*The maximum payment via the PaySticker is OMR 40 per transaction, OMR 100 per day.

For more information
<https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/PaySticker.aspx>



بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

Terms & conditions apply

the best bank for you 24781111 www.bankdhofar.com



DUQM SEZ READY FOR AI, 3D PRINTING INVESTMENTS

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

The Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Duqm is being prepped for investments related to artificial intelligence (AI) as well as 3D printing projects, a senior official announced on Saturday.

Eng Saleh bin Rashid al Hashmi, Director-General of Planning and Engineering Affairs and Head of the Modern Building and 3D Printing Techniques Team at SEZAD, said the zone can provide a suitable and attractive environment for experimenting such technologies offered by the corporates specialised in modern building techniques.

Successful technologies can then be promoted within and outside the Sultanate, he noted.

“The Zone welcomes the initiatives of local and international private sector companies and research institutions to expand their services and activities and develop their business in SEZAD. Accordingly,

investors will be stimulated to use modern technologies that serve reducing the building cost and duration of projects as well as providing environment-friendly buildings,” Al Hashmi commented.

He said the Modern Building and 3D Printing Techniques Team in SEZAD provides the support to the specialised companies and those interested in real estate development and construction using 3D printing techniques. The team could be approached via WhatsApp 0096871144433 or e-mail Planning.Group@duqm.gov.om.

In mid-June, the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) approved the use of modern building techniques, including 3D printing in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and other free zones.

As well, packages of facilities and incentives will be provided to companies that use 3D printing in construction, including exemption from rental fees for up to five years.

Publicly traded banks post higher profits



MUSCAT: The net profit of the eight banks listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange jumped to a total of RO 271.2 million for the first nine months of this year, up from RO 216.1 million for the corresponding period of 2020. – ONA

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT Q3 2021

On behalf of the Board of Directors of National Bank of Oman SAOG, I am pleased to present the third quarter 2021 Report for the period ended 30th September, 2021.

Oman's Economy & Banking Sector

Under the framework of the 2040 Vision, the Sultanate kicked-off 2021 by continuing to drive diversification of the economy with the aim to increase investment in the financial services, tourism, and port activity sectors. According to outlook of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Oman's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 7.4% in 2022 against 1.8% in 2021. It also forecasts that non-oil gross domestic product will grow by 1.5% this year and could improve to 4% by 2026 if fiscal measures continue to be successfully implemented.

As for Oman's banking and financial services sector, the liquidity and prudential measures introduced by the authorities mitigated the adverse effects of the pandemic on the banking system. Banks continue to make profits despite higher provisioning. Stress tests confirm the resilience of the banking sector to credit and market risks. Banks have limited exposure to derivatives and the majority of the off-balance sheet exposures are conventional and relatively secure. Finally, interest rate risks are within an acceptable range.

Well-Fortified

Net Interest income (NII) for the first nine months of 2021 was OMR 67.8 million, a marginal drop of 0.1% compared to corresponding period last year, primarily because of margin compression.

Fee Income for the first nine months of 2021 was OMR 24.2 million compared to OMR 20.3 million, a strong growth of 19.6%, due to good performance across various fee lines.

Total Income grew by a healthy 4.4%, year on year.

Operating expenses for the nine months of 2021 was RO 46.4 million, compared to RO 48.0 million for the corresponding period in 2020, a decrease of 3.3%, despite the continuing investments made for growth. The reduction year on year is due to various efficiency initiatives undertaken across the bank.

Operating Profit, as a result, grew strongly 13.6%, year on year.

Net Impairment for the first nine months of 2021 was RO 17.8 million, compared to RO 20.0 million for the corresponding period last year, a decrease of 10.9%. The reduction is on account of conservative provisioning approach undertaken at the start of the pandemic.

As a result of the above, net profit for the first nine month was OMR 23.5 million, a strong growth of 39.4% over corresponding period last year.

Gross loans and advances as at 30th September 2021 are at OMR 3.18 billion, showing growth of 4.3% over last year. Customer deposits correspondingly are at OMR 2.75 billion, with a growth of 6.7%. The bank continues to maintain a very healthy CASA mix. The bank's core equity and total capital Adequacy Ratio stands at 11.3% and 15.4% respectively and is considered healthy, given the economic circumstances.

Key Updates

Continuing to cater to the ever-evolving needs of the affluent segment, we launched our new wealth management portal, available through the bank's mobile app. As the first service of its kind available in the market, the portal offers a range of useful features for Sadara and Mazaya customers, enabling them to view their portfolio, buy and sell mutual funds, buy single-fund SIPs, review and renew risk profiles, and open an investment account. It's the latest upgrade for NBO's award-winning app, as it continues to find ways to make the banking experience seamless, accessible, and altogether more enjoyable.

To further offer elevated digital financial services, we have launched the Sultanate's first multi-purpose banking kiosk. Serving customers 24/7, the self-service machine enables customers to fulfil a range of tasks from making payments to instantly printing out debit cards and Badeel prepaid cards for customers and non-customers.

Payment Acquiring performed exceptionally well this quarter, whereby it strengthened our market position despite the difficult economic situation. By offering various physical and virtual platforms such as POS, Kiosk and E-Commerce Payment Gateway Services, we are contributing to the advancement of the nation's vision in digital transformation. Visa Global issued a report that indicated that NBO recorded a Year-on-Year (YOY) growth of 77% in active merchant count compared to market benchmark which is at 65% over last 12 months. The attrition is 9.37% compared to market benchmark which is at 17% over last 12 months. Our active merchant base is ahead compared to Market and Peer Share Index. The business is well positioned to attain market leadership and contribute to the overall growth and revenue targets.

In NBO's latest AI Kaniz Event, 178 customers won including salary transfer draw and more. We gave away a total of OMR 175,500 in cash prizes as we aim to give out OMR 3.251 million by the end of the year. Another exclusive offer for our customers, NBO has partnered with Oman Air Holidays to offer cardholders an exclusive 10% discount on packages and services. We signed a strategic partnership with Alfaradan Hotels and Resorts to provide financial facilities for buyers interested in purchasing a property within The Residences at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat. To facilitate the loan applications, the sales team from NBO were present at the sales office of Al Fardan and provided a special offer for Sadara customers. Our sales team was also present at Suhail Bahwan Automobiles and various car dealerships to support customers in car sales processing loan applications. We have set up remittance counters at various Embassies and construction companies to meet our customer needs.

On the public sector front, we were selected by the Oman Tax Authority as its exclusive banking partner. Under the agreement, the bank will manage the strategic account for VAT, which was introduced in May to add revenue to the government's GDP as per the goals of Oman's 2040 Vision.

Corporate Banking reported impressive growth on assets, liabilities, and total income YOY. During the third quarter, key transactions were consummated and included supporting Energy Development Oman, an over-arching sovereign owned entity, to unlock growth in oil and gas sector. A structured hedge transaction for a large corporate entity also helped the bank to cover the interest rate risks while improving on the overall returns.

Global Transaction Banking added many clients on the digital channel in the first 9 months of the year (+10% YOY) and executed more than 2.5 million transactions including salary processing using its digital channel for private and government institutions. Trade transactions value witnessed notable growth and the trade asset size has been stable compared to same period of last year.

Our People, Our Strength

With people being the heart of our operations, we conducted the first of its kind career development program, where a third of our work force was assessed based on technical skillset, potential and development needs. As a result, a select number of participants will be provided with growth opportunities to develop themselves further.

In-line with our commitment in putting our employees at the heart of our business, we re-introduced 'KANZUNA' draw, an internal cash prize draw for our employees who maintain their deposits at the bank, each winning a cash prize of OMR 1,000. In its latest efforts to support the country's fight against COVID-19, NBO vaccinated 100% of its employees. We were among the first private institutions to introduce its vaccine rollout in June 2021, safeguarding the health and safety of employees and customers.

We have continued to introduce changes in the Bank's organizational structure, appointing young Omanis in leading positions, while also providing staff with more career opportunities and ways to improve efficiency and performance.

Excellence Rewarded

Marking the latest milestone in our innovation leadership journey, we have recently been given the prestigious award for 'Excellence in Digital Transformation' from Oman Economic Review. Additionally, Sherifa Al Maskari, our Head of Brand, was named Apex's Woman of the Year in the Marketing category and Jamila Rangaswamy, Relationship Manager at Sadara Wealth Management, was named 'Female Private Banker of the Year in the Middle East' by the Digital Banker's Global Private Banking Innovation Awards 2021. The bank was also recognized at this event, winning the Highly Acclaimed: Outstanding Wealth Management Offering for Affluent Clients Award.

Enriching Our Community

As a major financial institution, we consider the impacts that our business has on society. We strive to contribute to sustainable economic growth, enhance our own business resiliency and longevity, and deliver positive impact for key stakeholders including customers, employees, shareholders and communities.

In a key community initiative, the NBO Innovation Incubator has officially begun. Thirty young graduates, who were chosen from over 1,500 applicants, have now started their journey through the three-month long programme, which is part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, in collaboration with the SME Development Authority, Oman Academy for SMEs, and Paradigm Consulting. Coached by 15 of the bank's specially-trained employees, the young men and women will go head-to-head to design their own FinTech start-up. Only three will emerge as winners, and have the opportunity to pitch their ideas to potential investors.

Supporting the Government's efforts to combat the pandemic, the bank donated over OMR 1.5 million to purchase critical and life-saving equipment and supplies for the most strained hospitals across the country. Furthermore, the bank donated vaccines to Ministry of Health for the purchase of vaccines.

Appreciation

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our customers, shareholders, directors, executive management, and all staff of NBO for their support and efforts in implementing the Bank's strategy and in achieving its goals and objectives. We would also like to express our appreciation to our regulators, the Central Bank of Oman, the Central Bank of the UAE and the Capital Market Authority for their constant support and dedicated efforts to develop Oman's financial industry, especially the banking sector.

We pay tribute to His Majesty, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, for his visionary leadership and under whose wise guidance Oman steadfastly continues on towards sustainable economic and social development.

Above all, stay safe and healthy.

Amal Suhail Bahwan
Chairperson

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 30 September 2021 (unaudited)				
	30/09/2021	30/09/2020	Audited 31/12/2020	
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
ASSETS				
Cash and balances with Central Banks	213,927	175,925	192,457	
Due from banks and other money market placements (net)	97,954	94,159	94,716	
Loans, advances and Islamic financing assets (net)	3,032,579	2,903,285	2,887,862	
Financial investments	455,944	356,133	342,203	
Property and equipment	60,843	63,523	62,568	
Other assets	56,113	51,619	52,845	
TOTAL ASSETS	3,917,360	3,644,644	3,632,651	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Due to banks and other money market deposits	330,672	260,051	288,723	
Customers' deposits and unrestricted investment accounts	2,749,879	2,577,393	2,527,179	
Euro medium term notes	192,500	192,500	192,500	
Other liabilities	80,213	74,060	84,448	
Taxation	11,909	9,245	9,568	
Total Liabilities	3,365,173	3,113,249	3,102,418	
Equity				
Share capital	162,595	162,595	162,595	
Share premium	34,465	34,465	34,465	
Legal reserve	54,198	54,198	54,198	
Other reserves	4,218	1,392	1,564	
Retained earnings	181,211	163,245	161,911	
Total equity attributable to the shareholders of the bank	436,687	415,895	414,733	
Tier 1 perpetual bond	115,500	115,500	115,500	
Total Equity	552,187	531,395	530,233	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	3,917,360	3,644,644	3,632,651	

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the period ended 30 September 2021 (unaudited)				
	Nine months ended 30 September	2020 RO'000	2021 RO'000	2020 RO'000
Interest income	123,531	122,286	41,855	40,587
Interest expense	(59,013)	(57,384)	(20,337)	(18,817)
NET INTEREST INCOME	64,518	64,902	21,518	21,770
Income from Islamic financing and investment activities	7,279	6,568	2,464	2,200
Unrestricted investment account holders' share of profit	(3,999)	(3,581)	(1,218)	(1,267)
NET INCOME FROM ISLAMIC FINANCING AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES	3,280	2,987	1,246	933
NET INTEREST INCOME AND NET INCOME FROM ISLAMIC FINANCING AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES	67,798	67,889	22,764	22,703
Other operating income	24,241	20,276	6,957	6,029
OPERATING INCOME	92,039	88,165	29,721	28,732
Staff costs	(28,090)	(28,949)	(8,564)	(9,568)
Other operating expenses	(13,689)	(14,106)	(4,763)	(4,430)
Depreciation	(4,643)	(4,942)	(1,499)	(1,696)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	(46,422)	(47,997)	(14,826)	(15,694)
PROFIT FROM OPERATIONS BEFORE IMPAIRMENT LOSSES AND TAX	45,617	40,168	14,895	13,038
TOTAL IMPAIRMENT LOSSES ON FINANCIAL ASSETS (NET)	(17,830)	(20,011)	(5,589)	(10,643)
PROFIT BEFORE TAX	27,787	20,157	9,306	2,395
Taxation	(4,283)	(3,300)	(1,449)	(563)
PROFIT FOR THE PERIOD	23,504	16,857	7,857	1,832
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS)				
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Equity investments at FVOCI – net change in fair value	2,435	(5,265)	(701)	386
Tax effect of equity investments at FVOCI – net change in fair value	(294)	501	(62)	(108)
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Debt instruments at FVOCI – net change in fair value	100	(418)	(51)	(56)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS) FOR THE PERIOD	2,241	(5,182)	(814)	222
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	25,745	11,675	7,043	2,054
Earnings per share:				
Basic and diluted, earnings for the period attributable to equity holders	0.012	0.008	0.005	0.001



Oman banks well-provisioned for bad loans, says CBO report

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

Conventional and Islamic banks in the Sultanate of Oman are adequately-provisioned to tackle risks stemming from non-performing loans (NPLs) — a concern exacerbated by the economic downturn and the pandemic, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has stressed.

The apex bank noted in its latest Financial Stability report that, despite the overall challenging economic environment, the risks to asset quality of commercial banks remained largely well-contained with low NPLs and adequate provisions. However, it cautioned that the moratorium on loan repayments allowed by CBO since March 2020 has “somewhat obscured the visibility of problem loans”.

At the end of 2020, the stock of gross NPLs (Stage 3 loans since the implementation of IFRS 9 in 2018) amounted to RO 1.111 billion (2019: RO 890 million) or 4.2 per cent (2019: 3.5 per cent) of the banks’ gross loans.

The asset quality of the Islamic

banking financing portfolio also remained strong with a non-performance financing (NPF) ratio of 1.9 per cent at the end of December 2020, which is among the lowest in the region, it pointed out.

Net NPLs of the banking sector amounted to RO 406 million or 1.6 per cent of the net loans at the end of 2020. “This reflects that the existing loan portfolio of banks is well covered against expected credit losses through adequate provisions with the coverage ratio (Stage 3 provisions to NPLs) of 63.4 per cent (102 per cent including Stage 1 & 2 provisions),” it stated.

Measures taken by CBO, such as deferment of loan installments and putting off changes in risk classifications for the borrowers availing deferments, have increased the resilience of the borrowers to the pandemic-led deterioration in operating conditions. To avert the worsening of a looming downturn, such regulatory measures were imperative to support viable borrowers facing a temporary liquidity crunch.

“Considering that the pandemic

may have a long-lasting impact on some borrowers affecting their viability, once these relaxations expire the NPL portfolio may grow from the current levels. This underscores the need to carefully monitor the developments in the credit portfolios of banks in the period ahead,” the apex bank stated.

Stage 2 and restructured loans signal looming difficulties in borrowers’ ability to pay their debt on time. In addition, a large volume of Stage 2 loans and a rising portfolio of restructured loans underscore the risk of deterioration in the asset quality indicators, as adverse business conditions may push these fragile loans down to the impaired category.

The total restructured loans in 2020 rose to RO 1.144 billion (2019: RO 970 million; 2018 RO 564 million). Moreover, the restructured loans classified as performing loans were RO 919 million or 3.5 per cent of gross loans. At the end of 2020, Stage 2 loans amounted to RO 5.4 billion (2019: RO 5.2 billion), forming 20.2 per cent of the banks’ credit portfolio.

Pandemic-induced involuntary savings boost household deposits: CBO

KEY TREND: Household deposits increased 14.8 per cent in 2020 as lockdowns and other restrictions inhibited spending

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

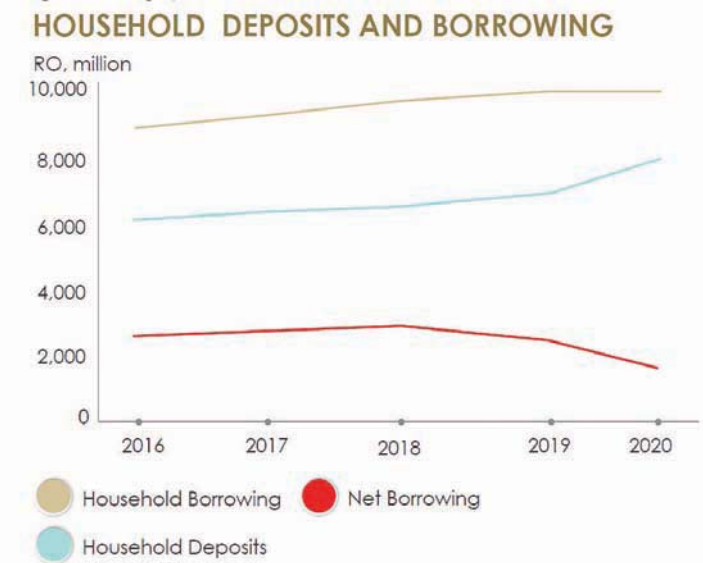
Household deposits climbed, for the first time in nearly five years, by 14.8 per cent to well over RO 7 billion in 2020, buoyed by an uptick in savings as most people were locked down amid the pandemic mitigation measures that were in place for much of the year.

According to the newly released 2021 Financial Stability Report of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), household deposits increased by 14.8 per cent “due to involuntary savings induced by mobility restrictions and precautionary savings triggered by the pandemic-led uncertainties about earnings and employment”.

Lending to households typically forms about 39 per cent of the total lending portfolio of commercial banks. Credit to households grew steadily over the past few years from RO 7.3 billion in 2015 to over RO 10.3 billion in 2019 (41 per cent increase during the five-year period), according to the CBO report. However, during 2020, the debt owed by households effectively remained flat (2020 growth: 0.24 per cent).

“This modest growth in lending to households reflects weaker demand, changing risk appetite of the banks for longer tenor loans, and stringent non-price credit terms,” the apex bank noted.

Consequently, net borrowings (loans minus deposits) of



Pandemic affected the income of some households. However, at the aggregate level, household savings have increased during 2020

households declined by 39.3 per cent from RO 2.8 billion in 2019 to RO 1.7 billion at the end of 2020, it said.

Household indebtedness relative to nonoil GDP (2020: 56.5 per cent; 2019: 50.3 per cent) has risen during the past few years as the household credit grew at a faster pace than non-oil GDP. During 2020, the increase in this ratio was primarily driven by a large decline in nominal non-oil GDP, the report said.

It acknowledged that the pandemic has affected the income of some households. However, at the aggregate level, household savings have increased during 2020. This suggests that the economic fallout of pandemic has a dissimilar impact on different segments. “On average, the pensioners and higher-income households appear to have been

less affected, with higher saving rates during the pandemic. In contrast, proportionally more low-income households appear to have witnessed a deterioration in their incomes and balance sheets. This introduces new fault lines for the vulnerable households whose income has been compromised,” the report pointed out, noting that supportive measures from the government and CBO have helped the more affected borrowers stay afloat. Nevertheless, prudential regulatory norms and prudent underwriting standards of banks have ensured that lending to households remained concentrated among borrowers with better credit profiles, according to the Financial Stability report.

As a result, the historically low non-performing loan (NPL) ratio for the household lending portfolio in Oman indicates a high level of credit quality.

In addition, the policy responses of the government and CBO during the pandemic have provided significant support to household balance sheets and income. Moreover, any possible credit losses are adequately covered by provisions, it noted.

2022 Genesis G70, GV70 earn top safety pick+ Awards

MUSCAT: The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) announced that the new 2022 Genesis G70 sport sedan built after June 2021 and the first-ever 2022 Genesis GV70 SUV have been designated as TOP SAFETY PICK+ (TSP+) for 2021.

With these designations, these models complete the Genesis lineup sweep of top honours, joining the GV80 SUV, G80 executive sedan, and G90 flagship sedan. This marks the third year in a row that the entire Genesis lineup of eligible vehicles has earned top honours along with G80 and G90 having received Top Safety Pick+ designations in 2019, 2020, and 2021. GV80 received its designation earlier this year following its recent entry into the lineup.

“At Genesis, safety is our top priority as we strive to put the customer at the core of everything we do,” said José Muñoz, President & CEO of Genesis Motor North America.

“With these Top Safety Pick+ designations from IIHS, we are pleased that G70 and GV70 join our award-winning line-up of vehicles that provide customers with the latest safety and driver assistance technologies.”

All Genesis models are



equipped with a comprehensive suite of state-of-the-art driver assistance and safety technologies including Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist with Pedestrian Detection, Lane Keeping Assist, Blind-Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist and more. Each vehicle in the Genesis line-up offers sure-footed handling thanks to the rigid chassis construction that ensures firm stability even under the most challenging driving conditions.

“These IIHS TSP+ awards for G70 and GV70 round-out our vehicle lineup and add to our four earlier TSP+ designations from earlier this year, demonstrating the exceptional safety performance and design of our vehicles,” said Brian Latouf, Chief Safety Officer of Genesis Motor North America.

“With their innovative safety

technologies, including their front centre airbag and advanced high strength steel, we are pleased that G70 and GV70 have performed well in the IIHS tests.”

The 2022 Genesis G70 and GV70 are equipped with the latest in safety and driver assistance technologies, including:

- 8 standard airbags, including some of the only front centre airbags on the market, further protecting front cabin occupants in the event of a collision
- Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist with Junction Crossing and Turning, mitigating the risk of impacts when turning or crossing through an intersection
- Blind-Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist, helping reduce the chance of potential impact with a moving vehicle, upon departing a parallel parking spot.



تجارة عمان
Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry would like to announce the following public tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (Irrevocable)	Specialized Companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender Submission
6/2021	Providing Cleaning and Gardening Services and Pest Control for OCCI Headquarter in Ruwi - for year 2021 & 2022	25 -/- R.O	Specialized Companies for Cleaning and Gardening Services and Pest Control	11 November 2021	Before 12 pm 25 November
7/2021	Supply Janitors (Kitchen boys) and hospitality service for OCCI Headquarter in Ruwi - for year 2021 & 2022	25 -/- R.O	Companies Specialized for Supplying Kitchen Boys & Providing Hospitality Service	11 November 2021	Before 12 pm 25 November

Companies specialized on above activities may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the Second Floor of the chamber's Headquarters in Ruwi, during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:
Provide valued CR, OCCI membership, taxation certificate.

Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of **Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered.

The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee, OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.

Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the Second floor of OCCI Head office. OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons.

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 25/11/2021.

For further details, you may call to : Main Branch 24763803 / 725.



chamber_oman



OCCI... The voice of the privet sector

Climate action strategy to be a national priority: Oman

SPOTLIGHT ON COP26 SUMMIT, GLASGOW: OCT 31 - NOV 12

KEY FEATURE: Spanning the 2020-2040 timeframe, the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation seeks to position the country on a trajectory of 'low-emission, climate-resilient growth'

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

As the Sultanate of Oman makes common cause with the international community in tackling the urgent and potentially catastrophic threats posed by climate change — the central theme of the COP26 Summit opening in the Scottish city of Glasgow today, October 31 — the Sultanate of Oman's delegation to the landmark event will reaffirm the country's commitment to prioritising climate action as a national developmental goal.

That commitment is enshrined in the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, adopted by the Sultanate of Oman Government in October 2019.

Spanning the 2020-2040 timeframe, the strategy seeks to position the country on a trajectory of "low-emission, climate-resilient growth". At the same time, it will seek to harness opportunities to drive employment generation, support climate risk management of vulnerable communities and sustainably steward the nation's scarce natural resources.

"The development of a comprehensive strategy is a fundamental step in moving forward in the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Paris Agreement of COP-21. To implement the strategy, collective action among stakeholders within the Sultanate of Oman will be essential, as well, partnerships with the international community to facilitate the flow of technical and financial resources for undertaking the vision embedded in the strategy", said government stressed in its submissions to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those submissions paved the way for the adoption of the Sultanate of Oman's 2nd Nationally



The Sultanate of Oman's technical delegation comprising officials of the Civil Aviation Authority, Environment Authority and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, attending preparatory meetings ahead of the COP26 Summit, due to open in Glasgow today.
PICTURE: CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Determined Contributions (NDC), enshrining the country's updated commitment to goals set out under the Paris Agreement.

Importantly, the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation underscores the need to build "resilience to climate change" given the Sultanate of Oman's vulnerability to adverse impacts, such as rising temperatures and sea levels, and the risks posed by increasingly frequent and fierce tropical cyclones.

"Understanding land use, climate, water resources and agriculture/fisheries are essential context for identifying, designing and implementing preparedness/response measures to reduce the vulnerability of communities, resources, and systems", officials stressed.

The Climate Change Strategy centres on three key pillars: (i) Climate Science (which seeks to assess historical climate trends and projections of future climate change in the Sultanate of Oman), (ii) Vulnerability and Adaption (focusing on strategies to support climate change adaption in five

key sectors — water resources; marine biodiversity and fisheries; agriculture, urban areas, tourism & infrastructure; and public health; and (iii) Greenhouse gas mitigation (focusing on strategies contributing to a low-emission development trajectory).

Rising global temperatures, unless urgently reined in, could potentially have disastrous consequences for the Sultanate of Oman. In the best case scenario (encapsulated under Representative Concentration Pathway RCP 2.6 — one of many scenarios projected by UN climate specialists), maximum temperatures are anticipated to rise by at least 2°C along southern coastal areas of the country.

But in the worst case scenario (envisioned in RCP 8.5), maximum temperatures could soar by 4°C above historical levels, with consequences for populations and economic activities across the Interior and Northern parts of the country, including Musandam.

In addition to reductions in annual rainfall, climate changes will also result in dramatic impacts to surface and groundwater

resources, with knock-on effects for agriculture, livestock, fishing and even public health. Flash flooding in the wake of unseasonal storms will also pose a more frequent challenge.

An integral part of the Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation Strategy is a commitment to controlling greenhouse gas emissions growth by advocating for a low carbon economy, promoting renewable energy projects, adopting new technologies and driving cost-effective energy efficiency.

The Sultanate of Oman's 2nd Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), approved in July this year, affirms a goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission growth by 7 per cent compared to the business-as-usual scenario. While concrete national initiatives and programmes will contribute about 4 percentage points of this reduction, the balance 3 percentage points can be achieved only by funding assistance in the form of international climate finance agreed under the Paris Accord, the country has stressed.



MSX WEEKLY REVIEW



MSX closes higher, supported by Financial Index

The MSX30 Index ended the week higher by 1.95 per cent. All sub-indices ended lower except the Financial Index that closed up by 1.92 per cent on weekly basis.

During the week, some power companies announced that they have received notification from Oman Power & Water Procurement Company (OPWP) that their Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) will not be extended.

Further, the Spot Market for electricity will go live before this year-end. The companies that made the announcement were: SMN Power, Sohar Power and Al Kamil Power.

Additionally, Al Kamil Power also announced results of its feasibility study for participating in the Spot Market whereby it is not feasible for the company to participate in the said market. The company will be adjusting its property, plant and equipment assets for disclosure as at end-Sept accordingly.

Within the power sector, Dhofar Generating Company also updated on its Cash Sweep Activation that became applicable from October 28, 2021 onwards.

The Cash Sweep Mechanism requires that 95 per cent of the free cash flows, after accounting for the operating costs and debt service payments, shall be paid to the lenders towards prepayment of the balloon repayment of the loan. The company cited various reasons including the country's credit rating and other issues prevalent in the local power sector for the international banks' refusal to provide the required Backstop DSRA LC to disapply the Cash Sweep Mechanism.

The company said that the project lenders have also rejected the LC from local banks as these banks don't meet the required credit rating under the financing arrangements. As a result, the company was not able to arrange an acceptable Backstop DSRA LC on or before the extended Cash Sweep Start Date.

Hence, the Cash Sweep Mechanism will kick-in

from October 28, 2021 which will impact the ability of the Company to make future dividend distributions until the balloon amount is fully prepaid. The stock did not react to the news while its price has been falling since start of the year and is down about 54 per cent on year-to-date (YTD) basis.

Saudi EXIM Bank announced the signing of a deal with Omani banks to boost cooperation with three major banks to boost financing ties and exchange expertise.

The MoUs were signed with the National Bank of Oman, Bank Muscat and Sohar International Bank. The banks also discussed cooperation in extending credit financing and securing financing guarantees for Saudi exporters' Omani clients. The banks agreed to develop training programmes in financial trade, risk analysis and loan management.

During the week, Galfar Engineering & Contracting SAOG announced that it has received an award of a project for RO 9m from the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for the rehabilitation of cyclone-damaged Al Batinah Highway.

A key project was launched last week as part of the China-Oman Industrial Complex in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Duqm.

Duqm Hongtong Piping LLC, set up with an initial investment of \$6 million, will begin production of Reinforced Polyethylene Pipes (RPP) with an eye on domestic, regional and international markets.

The proposed One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) project, first unveiled in 2018, will be implemented by the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a key forum established in 2015 against the backdrop of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris.

The Sultanate of Oman is among scores of countries globally that have approved ratified the framework agreement behind the ISA's mandate.

(Courtesy: U-Capital)

Duqm refinery set for Q1 2023 completion

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

Construction work on the Duqm refinery project of OQ8 has reached the 87 per cent mark and is due to be completed during the first quarter of 2023.

According to Eng Yousef bin Mohammed al Jahdami (pictured), General Manager of the OQ8 Refinery Project, around 477,450 cubic metres have gone into the construction of the project, along with 70,788 tonnes of structural steel. A workforce of around 18,000 workers,



distributed across a number of contractors, is currently employed at site.

A mega refinery scheme, Duqm Refinery is a joint venture between OQ of the Sultanate of Oman

and Q8 (Kuwait International Petroleum Company), owned by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

The joint venture aims to build a world-class refinery using proven technology to provide high-quality products that are in line with international safety standards and efficiency levels.

The design of the refinery, which has a capacity 230,000 barrels per day, is based on the Hydrogen Cracking Unit (HCR) and the Delayed Coker Unit (DCU). The Refinery has the capability to process all types of oil. Upon operation, the Refinery will produce liquefied petroleum gas, naphtha, jet fuel, diesel, sulphur and coke.

(With inputs from ONA)

UK refuses to rule out trade action in French fishing row

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Saturday he could not rule out triggering trade dispute action against France next week in a post-Brexit row over fishing that has further strained relations and could ultimately disrupt the flow of goods.

Johnson, who is hosting the UN climate summit next week, again said he did not want the spat over fish to derail a meeting of the world's 20 biggest economies, seen as a stepping stone to secure more commitments for COP26 in Glasgow.

After an earlier British-hosted G7 meeting became overshadowed by a disagreement with the European Union over post-Brexit problems with the movement of sausages and other goods to Northern Ireland, Johnson was keen to defuse the row.

“If there is a breach of the treaty or we think there is a breach of the treaty then we will do what is necessary to protect British interests,” Johnson told Sky News in the Colosseum in Rome, where he is attending a G20 meeting.

Asked if he would rule out triggering dispute resolution measures in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) next week, Johnson said: “No of course not, I don't rule that out.”

“But what I think everybody wants to see (is) cooperation between the European allies and Emmanuel Macron and I share a common perspective which is that climate change is a disaster for humanity.”

Relations with France have become increasingly strained since Britain voted to leave the EU in 2016, with London's security pact with the United States and Australia doing little to build trust with Paris. French President Macron has questioned Britain's “credibility”.

Fishing, which dogged Brexit talks for years, while not economically crucial to either country, holds huge political importance to both, and the row, if not resolved, could trigger the beginning of dispute measures in the Brexit trade deal.

— Reuters

If there is a breach of the treaty or we think there is a breach of the treaty then we will do what is necessary to protect British interests

BORIS JOHNSON
British Prime Minister



RISING OIL PRICES

Oil tankers drop off crude oil to be refined into gas at the Marathon Oil Refinery in Salt Lake City, Utah. Prices for gasoline rose 3.9 per cent in September 2021, while overall energy prices are more than 36 per cent higher than September 2020, without seasonal adjustment, the Labour Department reported in October.

— AFP

Is ESG just the latest buzzword?



STEFANO VIRGILI
The writer is a member of the International Press Association

IN THE MEDIA, ESG HAS BECOME A HOT BUZZWORD

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a framework that has become increasingly popular in the business world. While for decades we had Profit as the only indicator for the success of a venture, in the recent years the voice of those demanding for more accountability on other fields became louder.

Some pushed for more corporate accountability with regards to the impact on the environment. Others demanded fair treatment of the employees and other stake holders. Lastly, more and more analysts requested higher scrutiny of the organisational practices. The result is the ESG framework, a methodology applied to business valuation that — in some cases — can predict sudden drop in share price of a listed company.

The field is relatively new, so the predictability has been mostly proven by reverse engineering. First, a case of sudden drop was taken under analysis. Then, backtracking a few years, ESG score was applied to the company. The conclusion was that in some cases ESG was a good predictor of sudden drop in share price.

The reason why I keep repeating the word sudden, is because ESG does not

predict the performance of a business from a Profit standpoint. Or at least there is no evidence of such predictability. What ESG can help to spot are malpractices that manifest in scandals or crisis, and in turn to an overnight massive drop in share price.

An example is the social media Facebook (which the holding company is now called Meta). When in December 2015, *The Guardian* released the highly publicised article about the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook share price plummeted by 9.5 per cent over a month.

Had the ESG — and especially the G part of the equation — been kept in account and utilised as a predictability factor, perhaps the leak of data could have been prevented, so could the share price drop.

In terms of investment, portfolio managers offer products designed around ESG metrics, offering investors the opportunity of putting their money where their heart is. Generally, are investors with strong feelings about social and environmental issues that are keen to invest in such a type of portfolio. Often sacrificing on short terms gains but seeing the ESG framework as a sort of insurance against sudden drops due to scandals or media

crisis. In the media, ESG has become a hot buzzword. According to PR newswire, there were 284 press releases about ESG in June 2021 in Asia-Pacific. A drastic soar from the mere 11 in February. Of all the ESG related press releases issued in 2021, 1 in 4 was in the Energy Industry. Business Technology came in second with 12.9 per cent and Industrial Automation 3rd, with 9.4 per cent. Interestingly, the 4th place was taken by Health, Medical and Biotech at 8.2 per cent. Overall, across all industries there has been a shift to the type of media communication that corporations are portraying about their operations.

In terms of topics, Climate Change took the spotlight, with 57 per cent of all ESG related press releases. Runner up was Renewable Energy, with 22 per cent of all mentions. This shows that the trending topic is the E in ESG: Environmental. In fact, G — Governance — is a topic that has been discussed for decades, and perhaps more mature than E and S. In the next column we will discuss more about ESG implementation. **(To be continued)**

(The writer is a member of the International Press Association)

Green SMEs: Catalysing Oman's sustainable growth



SAFAA ADNAN AL AZRI
safaaadnan96@gmail.com

The writer is a Muscat-based energy professional specialising in energy systems

As various sectors of the national economy align themselves with the strategic objectives of the Sultanate of Oman's 2040 Vision, a stronger commitment to a green economy based on sustainable practices is now becoming evident.

Sustainable development, defined as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, has a significant role in the region. In particular, green Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have shown to achieve positive financial and environmental impacts on the country's overall development.

For the most part, the Sultanate of Oman's energy transition is presently driven primarily by major players. The country's first commercial solar plant, developed by Shams Al Dhahirah Generating Company, is set to be operational before the end of this year. The 500 MW solar utility, known as the Ibri II Independent Power Project (IPP),

is reputedly the “largest commercial PV plant in the Middle East” with bifacial solar technology suited to desert climate conditions.

In addition, the planned alternative production of green hydrogen using renewable energy is creating momentum towards a low carbon future. Organisations such as OQ have outlined plans for a 25 GW project to produce 1.8m tonnes/year of Green Hydrogen and 10m tonnes/year of Green Ammonia by 2026. Despite renewable energy projects being incentivised by large organisations, green start-ups that focus on addressing environmental issues are a beneficial approach compared to conventional business practices. Specifically, “Green Entrepreneurs” are differentiated from traditional business owners where the innovation of a product or idea is solely directed towards a sustainable economy.

Initiatives are now available that enable SMEs to play a key role in the renewable energy shift. For example, the Authority for Public Services

Regulation (APSR) has launched the Yaseer and Sahim residential programmes that effectively open the way for SMEs to capitalise on opportunities to offer small-scale solar solutions to organisations, businesses and residential building. End-users benefit by being able to generate clean energy and export surplus power back to the grid.

Additionally, renewable energy generation on a residential scale is fostered through financial schemes such as Green Finance offered by Bank Muscat to support the uptake of rooftop solar. The scheme provides loans ranging from RO 1,000 to RO 25,000 at competitive interest rates subject to a maximum debt burden ratio of 50 per cent, allowing households to shift to eco-friendly and cost-effective means of electricity generation.

Oman is also seeing a new wave of ‘green entrepreneurship’ being spawned by the transition to a sustainable energy future, Talal Hassan, a pioneering Omani entrepreneur, established a start-up

44.01 that uses renewable energy to capture greenhouse gases that are then stored in rocks to eliminate its consequential effects on the atmosphere. The company focuses on decarbonisation through a natural mineralisation process making use of Oman's geological formations to mitigate climate change effects.

Firas al Abduwani, CEO and founder of Hussam Technology Company (HTC), emphasises the vital contribution of SMEs, particularly when directed towards sustainable development. HTC, an ICT solutions provider, undertook the “Solar into Schools” project created by Shell to install and promote solar photovoltaics in public schools. Al Abduwani highlights the importance of SMEs as a fundamental factor in the country's progress. Lamentably, however, SMEs currently registered companies in the electricity sector are minimal, and accounting for only 6 per cent of the total.

A notable initiative led by Yousef

al Harthy from Amana Waqf Funds Management Company is the Green Mosque programme, which seeks to convert mosques into energy-efficient buildings. Solar photovoltaics with a generating capacity of 10 kW were installed for the first time at the Hassan bin Thabit Mosque, reducing power consumption by 40 per cent. The first phase of the unique initiative is under way, aiming to continue creating social and environmental returns in the community.

Green SMEs are a key contributor in solving the region's environmental and social issues. Therefore, promoting green entrepreneurship is an important factor for the region's economic and sustainable growth to align with the country's 2040 Vision.

Business incubators can further support the Omani entrepreneurial movement to be directed towards green start-ups by developing talent and innovation, as well as fostering a suitable environment for green entrepreneurs.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

Tally
POWER OF SIMPLICITY

TALLY FOR VAT

For Tally Sales, Services or Customization

Contact: TallyGuru +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@rtsgroup.com
Roudh Lotas Group LLC

TallyPrime

<http://www.rltsgroup.com/tally-accounting-software/>

SUNDAY OCTOBER 31, 2021 RABEE AL AWWAL 24, 1443 AH

OMAN DAILY
Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Tally is now available on the **Cloud**

Ask for FREE Demo

Think TALLY
Call 977 TALLY (977 82559)

TallyPrime

TSO, Tally Solutions for Oman, by Infinity Thoughts LLC : 977 TALLY (977 82559) * sales@tallysolutionsoman.com * www.TallySolutionsOman.com

SIT. VACANT

A SALESPERSON in the field of aluminium UPVC with a driving licence and related experience is required. Please contact: 99446446.

ELECTRICAL Engineer, 8 years experience, Mega projects, Operation and maintenance, O&G, project management Contact: 97778314

BUYING

AL Awsad Modern llc, electronic and furniture used. 99834373.

FOR RENT

Industrial land in Rusayl 5,000 Sqm ready for construction. The price per square metre is one and a half riyals. RO 1.5 per sq metre. Contact: 91698880.

AN apartment in Al Ghubra, overlooking the sea, two rooms, a hall, and parking, RO 375. Contact: 99370300.

1 BHK AND 2 BHK Good Location opposite Radison Blue Reasonable price. Contact: 98403020/ 95124789/ 99339942

SIT. WANTED

WELL EXPERIENCED Senior Accountant with experience in Oman & India, seeks Senior Level Post. NOC available. Please Contact: 78581435.

ACCOUNTANT/ Senior Accountant M. Com with Diploma in Computer Application with 18 years Experience in FCC countries, Ready to join immediately (Visa status (visit Visa) Please Contact: 79046649

MECHANICAL engineer, 21, Indian male currently in Oman looking to work at any engineering field. Contact 96511338. Email: rkdhanush11@gmail.com

PROJECT Management professional PMP® - Senior Mechanical Engineer. 18 years' experience in oil gas field - agile, predictive & hybrid (especially pressure vessels, horizontal & vertical tanks, pipe lines, silos, structures, bridges, special type equipment installation etc) Contact: 94330012

RESEARCH & Administrative Assistant, Recruiter and Co-Ordinator, M.Sc. in Sustainable Development with 12 plus years of experience, Female, Indian, looking for employment. Contact: 98260708

INDIAN male, Master degree in HR and Finance with 5+ years of experience in Oman as HR Asst with valid Omani driving license. Looking for a job, currently on visit visa Contact: 93835905 Email: Chris_alwin@yahoo.com

INDIAN, Female B.Tech (Information Technology) with 2+ years of experience in Oman as Co-ordinator and Marketing with valid Omani driving license. Looking for a job, currently on visit visa. Contact: 71198240 Email: jc.clarrinda@gmail.com

INDIAN male, 24, B.E. computer science, masters in

GIS from UK. Seeking

placement in GIS field.

Having Oman driving

licence. Contact:

99738614.

SMART Indian, excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17 years Oman experience in Airport, Hospital, Media EPC seeks Admin/ Hr/ Project coordinator/ Operations. 99283938.

EXPERIENCED Indian with BBA and Commerce graduate, looking for suitable openings in Sales and Marketing. Well versed in English, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu. Possess valid Oman driving licence. Contact GSM 95236249, E: shairazshkh80@gmail.com

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary with Stenography/Oman driving license and 20years experience in Muscat available with NOC for immediate joining. CTC 79256679

SALES/Marketing/ retail executive BMS in Marketing. 6 years experience. Contact 93920174. Rehankadri91@hotmail.com

SALES/Marketing/ retail executive BMS in Marketing. 6 years experience. Contact 93920174. Rehankadri91@hotmail.com

THREE years experienced in administration / sales and marketing seeking placement. Omani D/L, and NOC available. Gsm- 98270993

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Bikar Engineering (LLC)**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1286061**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from **RO 100,000.000 to 20,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

FOR SALE

3BHK flat for sale in Al Khoud Commercial Road with an allocated parking space. Call: 99411330.

FOR sale in SFZ, near port — 4-storey factory for Guar Gum powder, total 3,7000 square metres, warehouse 1,700 Square metres, with or without machines. Write to guargulf@gmail.com or call +968 94615439 (www.gulfguargum.com)

WE supply quantities of excellent mountainous soil in Bausher (suitable for compaction and filling) 99242445, 99327939.

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

- Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
- Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. ☎972494490.

EURO CHOICE FOODS L.L.C
(Importers of Frozen, Chilled, Fresh & Dry Food Products)

Food Service ♦
Catering Supply ♦
Ship Chandling ♦
Re-export ♦
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables ♦
Fresh & Chilled Meat and Chicken ♦
Dairy Product & Grocery Items ♦

Tel: +968 24435211 / 24435177
foodservice@eurochoicefoodsllc.com
www.eurochoicefoodsllc.com

M M T CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE

MUSCAT: 95605353, 95605454
BARKA: 95893242, 93743308
SOHAR: 96773031, 95347988
FALAJ: 94002341, 95136067
SALALAH: 94575905, 97858656
DUQUM: 97218831, 94002341

ROAD, SEA & AIR TRANSPORT WORLD WIDE

GTC Building, Near Badr Al Sama Hospital, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: mmtcargo@yahoo.com
Customer Care: 96773031 / 97695454

Sea Cargo **800 Bz/Kg** Express Cargo to Kerala 5 to 7 days*

VIGAS CARGO
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR

Transportation, Packing & Cargo Services

♦ CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA WORLD WIDE
♦ DOOR TO DOOR DELIVERY IN INDIA, INDONESIA & UK
♦ PROFESSIONAL PACKERS & MOVERS
♦ MUSCAT - DUBAI - MUSCAT REGULAR TRANSPORT

H.O. Ruwi 99851366 92495068

Ghubrah : 93571703
Falaj : 93571704
Store : 93571823
Misfa : 98119561 : 93260956

vigas.cargo@yahoo.com

AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR & SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

ALL OVER INDIA EXPRESS DELIVERY

Online Tracking

TOLL FREE NUMBER **80066766**

24/7 FREE PICK UP

Service Available

www.alnamanicargo.com

INDIA | BANGLADESH | INDONESIA | PHILIPPINES | SRI LANKA | ETHIOPIA | ALL GCC SERVICE AVAILABLE

☎ 95587410, 99785420, 99638698, 98523831
22 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE IN OMAN
HQ: RUWI - HAMRIYA, GHALA, AL AMRAT, SEEB, SOHAR

SHOP FOR SALE
WITH OR WITHOUT MATERIAL

Contact: **99417536 92532403**

SOLOMON

GCCA VAT / TAX

GULF CENTER CONSULTANCY & AUDIT

- Vat Registrations
- Quarterly VAT Return filing
- Taxation Services
- Book Keeping & Accounting

97239696, 95850405
kumar@gccaoman.com
www.gccaglobal.com

Al Eman Dental Clinic

Flat 22, Floor 2
Abu Zaki Trading Building
Opp. Al Nahda Hospital
Sultan Qaboos Street

Our Mission: To preserve your teeth and smile for a lifetime

ZEN POLYNE

"TARPAULIN WAREHOUSE IN OMAN"
INDIAN BRAND BEST QUALITY LDPE TARPAULINE
CROSS LAMINATED MULTI-LAYER TARPAULIN

FEATURES OF ZEN-POLYNE

- U.V. STABILIZED
- 100% WATER PROOF
- LIGHT WEIGHT
- THERMO - WELDED JOINTS.
- FLEXIBLE & CUSTOMISED SIZES.
- STRONGEST TARPAULIN EVER
- SUPERIOR DART IMPACT STRENGTH

RAVIRA

Please Contact: OMAN : +968 9329 1473 / 7937 1865
UAE : +971 5639 58616
Mail Id: raviramaterials@gmail.com Web: www.raviraintl.com

Labor Accommodation Services

We Offer Standard Accommodation Services to Labor & Junior Staff (Capacity to accommodate 1200 Labors). Accommodations near Rusayl Industrial Area next to National Gas Facility.

- Newly build, clean and municipality approved accommodation
- Easy access and customized accommodation facility
- Spacious and ventilated rooms
- 24hrs Security and Monitoring
- Optional paid food & Laundry Facilities etc.

Shaksy
Engineering Services

Kindly Contact:
Mr Hamza – 93200365
Mr Praveen 93201534

SITUATION VACANT

Require a well-qualified and an experienced **"General Manager"** for a prestigious Farm Estate.

Job requirements are:

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

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

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crococaraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

GCL GALAXY CARGO LOGISTICS

WORLD WIDE AIR & SEA CARGO SERVICES

Location: Rex Road, Behind Modern Oman Bakery
GSM : +968 99635330 / 93569551
Email : gcloman@hotmail.com
Website : gcloman.com

Airport to Airport
Port to Port
Door to Door
FCL Services
LCL Services
Consolidation
GCC Road Transport
Professional Packing
Moving Local & International

RENT A CAR

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/ monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp
<your name> to
96473232

Required for Reputed Organization
ODOO SOFTWARE (SPECIALIST) ENGINEER

Qualifications
Master or Bachelor of Computer Application (MCA or BCA)

Software Skills

- Languages: Python, PHP
- Odo Version: Version 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14
- Operating Systems: Windows 7, 8, 10, Ubuntu 12.04, 13.10, 16, 18.04 LTS
- Database: PostgreSQL, MySQL
- Web Technologies: JavaScript, HTML, CSS, XML, JQuery, JSON

Work Experience on Odo ERP Software

- 1) 4-5 years Experience on Odo ERP Software Development and Implementation.
- 2) Design, Development, Customization and Testing of Odo, Addons, Projects, Products and Interfaces.
- 3) Interaction with users and providing Training with Odo modules functionality.
- 4) Reviewing Odo application codes and providing support to group members.
- 5) Ability to write maintainable application codes effectively and efficiently.

Kindly email CV to: oceanint@omantel.net.om

SIT. WANTED

AUTOCAD/REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

A LEGAL translation office needs **Marketers**. Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

1. AC maintenance and servicing. 2. Fridge, washing machine and dish washer repairing. 3. Painting and cleaning services. 4. Electrical, plumbing and carpentry work 97014234, 99447257, 24290686.

ORIENT Trading llc, Shampooing, sofa, carpet, floor polishing. Old house repairing. 99834373.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

AL KHOORY EQUIPMENT EST.
P.O.Box 545, P.C. 117, Al Wadi Al Kabir Area, Sultanate of Oman

Official distributor of **Schneider Electric**

Stockist & Wholesaler of Low Voltage Switchgear Products and a One Stop Solution for all Switchgear Products and Assembly

Schneider Electric Levato electric DAB WEG Franklin Electric alfanar

Tel: +968 24832474, +968 79474556
E-mail: alkhoory@omantel.net.om • www.alkhooryoman.com

features

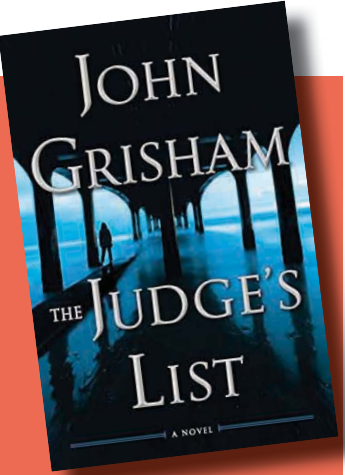


Offering 300 years of history and sustainable tourism

Named after the Al Abri tribe, Misfat Al Abriyeen, with its lush gardens and thriving agricultural community, is currently seeing a massive sustainable development thanks to the consistent influx of both local and foreign tourists and the recognition of different relevant authorities to its potential as a tourist destination... **P20**

HERITAGE

READ



THE JUDGE'S LIST
BY JOHN GRISHAM

The second book in the Whistler series. Investigator Lacy Stoltz goes after a serial killer and closes in on a sitting judge.

Scottish university hands over looted Benin Bronze to Nigeria

THE BENIN BRONZE, one of thousands looted by British troops in 1897, will be handed over to a Nigerian delegation by Scotland's university on Thursday, making it the third European institution in two days to return cultural artefacts to their African homelands.

The sculpture depicts an Oba, or king, of the once powerful Kingdom of Benin, located in what is now Nigeria. The bronzes stolen from its royal court are one of Africa's most significant heritage

objects, and they are most often found in Europe.

The bronze head was purchased by the University of Aberdeen at an auction in 1957. Following a recent review of its provenance, which revealed it was one of the looted items, the university approached the Nigerian authorities to offer to give it over.

"The Benin Bronzes have become significant symbols of injustice over the last 40 years,"

said Professor George Boyne, principal and vice-chancellor of the university, in a statement before he handed over control of responsibility to the university.

"It would not have been right to have retained an item of such great cultural value that was acquired in such reprehensible circumstances," he added.

The present Oba of Benin, Ewuare II, said the bronzes were "imbued with the spirit of the people from whom they were taken", adding that he hopes the Scottish university's "noble act" will inspire other institutions to follow suit.

On Wednesday, a Cambridge University college returned another Benin Bronze to Nigeria, while the Quai Branly museum handed over 26 artefacts stolen in 1892 to the Republic of Benin, which is based in France and borders Nigeria.

The handovers are the clearest sign yet of a rising tide towards the return of artefacts taken away from Africa by Europeans



during the colonial period. Germany has agreed to return Benin Bronzes held in its museums next year.

The returns are likely to put additional strain on the British Museum in London, which holds the most extensive and significant collection of Benin Bronzes. — **Reuters**

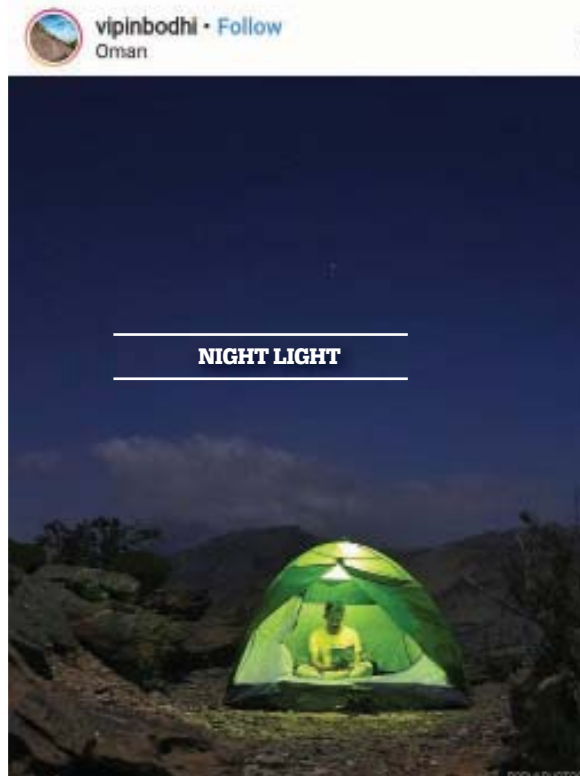


find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
SUNDAY | OCTOBER 31 | 2021

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE
We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

New York exhibition celebrates David Bowie's 75th birth anniversary



A POP-UP SHOP and exhibition in New York celebrates the 75th anniversary of David Bowie's birth.

Located in the Manhattan district of SoHo, where the British singer lived, the multimedia experience titled "Bowie 75" will be available free of charge until January. January 8, Bowie's birthday, will be marked.

"This is intended to celebrate David for David and his fans," Lawrence Peria, producer of Bowie 75, said in an interview.

An exhibition of all of Bowie's deaths in 2016 includes a gift shop exhibit of Bowie-embroidered themed T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, posters, books and other tools.

Also noteworthy is the series of multimedia displays aimed at bringing icons back to life. Bowie can hear on topics such as the public interpretation of the telephone message artwork that can be heard on the replica of the K2 UK phone booth on the album cover of The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust.

Another immersive experience allows visitors to listen to Bowie in a 360-degree sound space.

Fans can also write a digital message at a station called "Ground Control to Major Tom," hinting at the lyrics of Bowie's masterpiece "Space Odyssey."

"David Bowie saved my life and the lives of many people. He made me love life because he is my favourite person and my favourite artist," said New York singer-songwriter Alessandra Mendes. "This is great."

An additional "Bowie 75" pop-up shop and exhibition is also available in Bowie's other major London haunts. — **Reuters**

COMMUNITY

Goût de France brings the best of French cuisine to Oman on Nov 2 to 12



ON THE INITIATIVE of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the famous French Chef Alain Ducasse, Goût de/Good France 2021 is once again celebrating French gastronomy through a series of events organised to support the entire sector.

By bringing together nearly 350,000 people all around the world to enjoy thousands of French-style dinners, Goût de/Good France proudly shares the values of French gastronomy.

This year, gastronomy will be celebrated as a historic symbol of the French art of living and excellence. This new edition has appointed the two-Michelin-star chef Christophe Hay as this year's ambassador. He was recently named "Chef of the Year 2021" by the Gault & Millau restaurant guide in recognition of his commitment to local, sustainable and inclusive gastronomy.

Following the unprecedented health crisis which dominated 2020 and forced food industry stakeholders to constantly reinvent themselves for several months, now is a time for resilience, an eagerly-awaited time for renaissance to celebrate together the new face of gastronomy.



This sixth edition is marked by the tenth anniversary of the Gastronomic Meal of the French on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

A new highlight for 2021, Goût de/Good France is back in the Sultanate of Oman and all around the world to help the profession in its sustainable transition and support chefs in their new role as ambassadors for more eco-friendly gastronomy, both from a human standpoint as well as regarding health, the environment and taste education.

A celebration of the best of the food sector, the event in the Sultanate Oman will have the honour of showcasing French food throughout the country. Patronised and coordinated by the French Embassy, this new edition will mobilise chefs from all over the country to prepare and serve "French-style" meals from November 2 to 12 in restaurants participating and at the Residence of the French Ambassador, Véronique Aulagnon. The event aims to promote the French culinary heritage at international level, both in terms of its uniqueness and its diversity.

The events organised in the Sultanate of Oman from November 2 to 12 will provide an experience of local, sustainable and eco-friendly art of living in France, drawing on all its history and resources. With local produce, producers, a friendly atmosphere, a sharing mentality, ethical restaurants, knowledge-sharing and taste education, 2021 will be seen as a "renaissance" for food.

The gastronomical events will involve many prominent actors of the tourism and food industry in Oman and the visitor will have the pleasure to taste and appreciate French cuisine at his best. The whole agenda of the events will be published on the French Embassy's Facebook page.

COLUMN



Rasha Al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

Sharah, The Miraculous Kitten

THREE MONTHS AGO, on my way home driving on the 18th of November Street, I stopped at the traffic lights. While waiting for the red lights to go green, I turned my head to the pavement on my left that separates the two roads and noticed a tiny black kitten.

The kitten had her legs splayed, as if her back was broken, and wasn't moving. Instinctively, I switched on the hazard warning lights and within seconds, I managed to get off the car, grab the kitten and put her on the passenger seat before the lights turn green.

The kitten crawled under the seat using her forearms which confirmed my doubts that she might have a broken back and needed to be put down. It was Thursday already and there were no appointments available in the clinic till Saturday.

I decided to keep her in the guest's bathroom (or what Sham the helper called: the cat's hospital). Reaching home, it took some time to pull her out from under the passenger's seat. The kitten was wild and hasn't been in contact with humans before. There was still some movement in her legs as if skidding and her tail was tucked between them.

I prepared a litter box for her and left it along with some water and dry food, deciding to check on her later. I called her Sharah, a colloquial Arabic word for traffic light where I exactly found her. She was one and a half months old with a special feature: black whiskers with a lone white one.

While checking on her in the afternoon, Sharah was hiding under the shelves and hissing. She had used her dry food as a litter box and left the latter clean. It took her two days to realise which of the two to consume and which to use as a toilet.

When Saturday came, the vet announced that her weird gait was due to being wedged in a narrow space and managing to pull herself out. Her back was fine and all she needed was some time to heal.

Sharah proved to be very difficult to tame. I tried the usual tricks to domesticate her but nothing worked. She kept hissing and hiding whenever she saw me.

However, things changed when she had to share her space with another 3 kitten siblings with a condition known as fading kitten syndrome; kittens got sick and died for an unknown reason. Only one of the siblings - Najah - managed to survive after therapy and a fattening diet that consisted of rice and chicken skin.

He and Sharah became friends, and that was the first time she allowed me to pet her. After almost a month of being locked up, I decided that both kittens were ready to be released into Kitzania.

Najah adapted within hours while Sharah panicked and went straightaway to hide under Mom's car. Fortunately, being surrounded by unfamiliar cats made Sharah perceive me as her only friend and allow me to pick her up and move her closer to food. I then started carrying her in the crook of my arm like a fancy bag, while walking around the garden to check on the Kitzanians.

Sharah enjoyed the experience thoroughly and felt as if she was on a magic carpet ride; watching everyone from above and flipping upside-down for a more interesting view. Now that she has grown in size, my arm gets tired from carrying her, but I do it anyway. She'd finally blended in and made few friends. Welcome to Kitzania miraculous Sharah! It's good to have you here!

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



Offering 300 years of history and sustainable tourism

BY RUMPA MITRA

Misfat Al Abriyeen is probably one of the very few heritage villages that keeps winning as the best tourist destination in Oman without compromising tradition and lifestyle yet sustainably growing to provide a better life and future for the next generation.

With 300 years of history of human settlement and located 1,000 metres above sea level, Misfat Al Abriyeen is an authentic "living" village carved from the mountain with most of the dwellings made from mud located at the foothills of the Al Hajar mountain in Al Hamra.

Named after the Al Abri tribe, Misfat, with its lush gardens and thriving agricultural community is currently seeing a massive sustainable development thanks to the consistent influx of both local and foreign tourists and the recognition of different relevant authorities to its potential as a tourist destination.

I visited Misfat 10 years ago and on that visit, I remembered the mud houses and the ancient village itself were in different forms of disarray. Tourism wise, there was no clear direction about progress and in fact, many of the original inhabitants had already moved away to nearby locations putting the whole village on the verge of dying and abandonment.

Visiting it recently, after a smooth ride in its paved road snaking through one of Al Hamra's gorgeous mountains, I was surprised to see the village evolved perfecting the balance between the preservation of the traditional way of life but infusing it with enough modern comfort to attract visitors.

Sitting down with local and young entrepreneur Abdul Rahim bin Hamed al Abri, I would come to understand that the development is something that everyone wanted with the villagers and authorities working hand in hand to bring progress that both protect and showcase the best of what the village can offer.

"The village committee is working hand in hand with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Ministry of

Labour and Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning along with one of the leading private banks of Oman (Bank Muscat) to streamline tourism in this village", said Abdul Rahim.

Also operating Rogan cafe, one of the two thriving coffee shops in the village, Abdul Rahim said that "the traditional mud houses turned into guest houses and modern-looking coffee shops are helping the village to attract local and international tourists."

"The flow of visitors and effective tourism creates a positive impact on the villagers' lives. These visits help provide direct or indirect income opportunities", he added.

Abdul Rahim explained that many of the villagers are involved in traditional arts and crafts and honey-making businesses. The visits allow the villagers to showcase their small scale businesses. Some of the youth of the village also take the opportunity to become tour guides to visitors offering an intimate look into their traditional way of life.

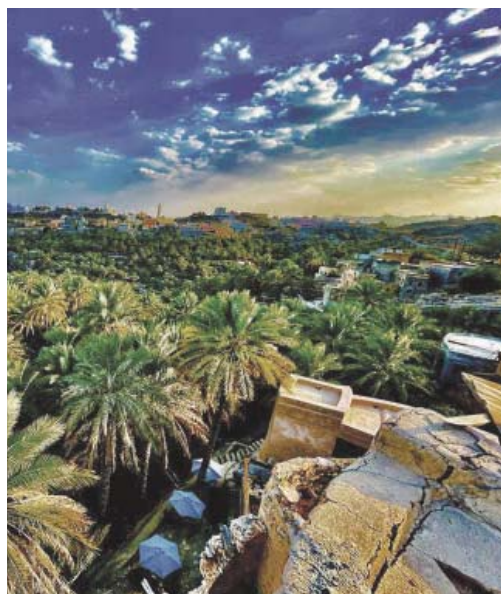
Abdul Rahim is thankful that while the village is being infused with modern comfort, the villagers are still able to maintain their traditional way of life — one of the big points why it's a destination most attractive to foreign visitors.

Asked whether the influx of tourists is disruptive to the villagers' way of life, Abdul Rahim said that "the villagers had always been welcoming to everyone."

He shared, "while there is a constant flow of visitors, the increase in tourism has not clashed with their daily lives."

Abdul Rahim pointed out that if it was not for the new lease on life and the aid of development, the village would eventually have been abandoned to rot.

"The village remains alive today because of the new opportunities made available by these developments. Before, people had been leaving as there were fewer opportunities. People were only reliant on agriculture. But with the sustainable tourism initiative, the villagers can continue living the place of their ancestors but at the same time, generating decent income that help them provide a good future for them and their families", he said.



KEY FACTS TO REMEMBER:

LOCATION
Misfat Al Abriyeen is around 200 km from Muscat located in the Al Hamra. From Al Hamra, it's a smooth 30-minute drive scaling the mountain road that even a saloon car can easily navigate. There are no dedicated parking lots but cars can be parked on the side of the roads. On weekends, finding a parking spot can be a challenge.

THE STAY
Traditional guesthouses can be booked online or by calling. It is a must to make a reservation first as they get filled easy. An overnight stay ranges between RO 20-40 including meals. It is highly suggested to book accommodations with meals.

COFFEE WITH A VIEW
Two of the new coffee shops right in the middle of the village had recently become popular. They offer an amazing view and Instagrammable - ambience. They also offer a good array of light snacks, bread and different types of coffee. There are other coffee shops too located by the village entrance but none of them offers a full-course meal. Some small shops sell pots, honey, wooden carvings and trinkets for souvenirs.

HIKING SPOTS
The village and the nearby mountains offer good hiking spots. The most popular one is W9C which starts from the village and will take you through narrow alleys reach leading to the falaj and then towards the heart of the farms. This trek is easy and well-marked which can be done with family and kids. W9 is another popular marked trail that can be done in 5-6 hrs time. If planning to do this, I suggest going with some experienced hikers or villagers who can serve as guides.

DOS AND DONTs
The villagers are very welcoming. Make sure to give them their privacy. Observe proper and modest dressing (no exposed ankles or shoulders). While it's definitely okay to take photos of the village and nature, always ask for permission first if you're going to take photos of the villagers. Don't pluck fruits or crops without asking for permission.

MISCELLANEOUS
Situated on top of the mountain, Misfat can be cold in the winter (between November to February). It is a pocket-friendly destination without any entrance fee. Al Hamra, Wadi Tanuf and Bahla Fort are great options that can be explored on the way to the village.