



**TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2021**  
**www.muscatdaily.com**  
Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om  
To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000



26°C/20°C

**LOVE FOR ART AND ANIMALS**  
GO TO **PAGE 13** FEATURES

## NEWS BRIEFS

### OMAN TO FACE IRAQ TODAY IN FIFA ARAB CUP

Muscat - Oman will play Iraq on Tuesday in the first ever FIFA Arab Cup. The game will kick off in Doha, Qatar, at 5pm (Oman time) in Al Janoub Stadium.

At a press conference on Tuesday, coach Branko Ivankovic said, "Our goal is to achieve positive results, and I expect our players to perform well in the championship."

The competition is seen as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup, which will take place in Qatar in a year's time. It will pit the 16 best teams in the Arab world against each other. The final will be held on Dec 18.



Oman's underwater treasures showcased in book



Ominvest to issue RO52mn worth of perpetual sukuk

# Significant jump in annual employment

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The sultanate has witnessed a phenomenal jump in annual employment of citizens. Over 35,000 Omanis have been employed this year. From 5,000-6,000 jobs annually earlier, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) has been successful in creating 35,344 positions in public and private sectors till September 2021.

"The employment opportunities this year are equivalent to those created in six to seven years," said H E Dr Mahad bin Said bin Ali Ba'owain, Minister of Labour.

He informed that around 90,000 citizens sat for recruitment tests for the first time this year, while the number of aspirants who received job security grants was 9,500.

In an interview with Oman TV, H E Dr Ba'owain said that about 16,000 citizens submitted applications for the latest jobs in November. There were close to 20,000 replacement opportunities in sectors affiliated to the civil services, a good number of which have been replaced this year. "There still are about 13,000 opportunities open as these require training for a longer period due to the specialisation of these jobs," he said.

He informed that in the recent past, MoL negotiated with several establishments to prevent



Ministry of Labour conducted tests for residents of Buraimi governorate to fill a number of positions in government institutions on November 26 (ONA)

*The employment opportunities this year are equivalent to those created in six to seven years*

H E DR MAHAD ALI BA'OWAIN

layoffs. "As a result, around 45,000 Omani workers employed at different establishments were able to keep their jobs."

About reforms, he said that the Social Protection System, Labour Law, and the Public Service Law are expected to be com-

pleted next year.

On the issue of higher fees to recruit expatriate workers, H E Dr Ba'owain said it is one of the most important measures to liberalise the market and that employers have the option of employing Omani or expatriates.

He stressed that recruitment fees have not been raised for all categories of workers, only in specific professions with high salaries. "Whoever can pay a high salary can also pay the fees that will be used to train and qualify Omani jobseekers."

On a unified Gulf work permit, H E Dr Ba'owain said, "There is no need for a unified Gulf work permit because the people of the Gulf countries treat each other as citizens without discrimination."

# Oman bans flights; WHO works to study Omicron

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Oman joined other countries in suspending air travel from seven African countries amidst fears of a new variant of COVID-19 virus called Omicron by World Health Organization.

According to a Supreme Committee statement, a travel ban from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique came into effect starting November 28, which is part of Oman's keenness to prevent the spread of the new variant.

"The ban includes passengers from any other country if they have passed through any of these seven countries in the 14 days preceding the request to enter the sultanate," the statement said.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has stated that Omani citizens, diplomats, health workers and their families as well as citizens of the said countries who have valid residence in Oman are excluded from the decision.

"All those excluded from the decision, including Omani citizens, are subject to a COVID-19 PCR test upon arrival and mandatory quarantine with another PCR test on the sixth day," the CAA stated.

On Monday, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tweeted that the organisation is working with scientists around the world to better understand key aspects of the Omicron variant and its impact.

Considering Omicron is desig-

## New variant major concern for the region: Dr Mandhari



Muscat - Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, has stated that the emergence of the new COVID-19 virus Variant of Concern, Omicron, is a major reason for worry for inhabitants of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean region just as it is across the world.

The variant has not been officially announced in the 22 countries and territories of the region, "but we all know that it is just a matter of time before the first case is reported", Dr Mandhari said.

"With the approaching winter, temperatures are dropping across the region, leading people to congregate in closed spaces. Combined with still low rates of adherence to preventative measures such as mask use and physical distancing, WHO is extremely concerned that increasing cases and deaths may be reported over the coming weeks. Unvaccinated people are most at risk of severe and complicated infection, hospitalisation and death," he said.

nated a Variant of Concern, there are several measures WHO recommends countries to undertake, including enhancing surveillance and sequencing of cases, sharing genome sequences on publicly available databases, such as GISAID, reporting initial cases or clusters to WHO, and performing field investigations and laboratory assessments to better understand if Omicron has different transmission or disease characteristics, or if it impacts effectiveness of vaccines.

WHO said countries should continue to implement effective public health measures to reduce COVID-19 circulation overall, using a risk analysis and science-based approach. "It is vitally im-

portant that inequities in access to COVID-19 vaccines are urgently addressed to ensure that vulnerable groups everywhere, including health workers and older persons, receive their first and second doses, alongside equitable access to treatment and diagnostics," the WHO stated.

As for the recommended actions for people, WHO said the most effective steps individuals can take to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to keep a physical distance of at least 1m from others, wear a well-fitting mask, open windows to improve ventilation, avoid poorly ventilated or crowded spaces, keep hands clean, cough or sneeze into a bent elbow or tissue, and get vaccinated when it's their turn.

# DRIVE THE THRILL

**SERVICE\*\***

**2 YEARS / 20,000 KMS**  
(whichever is earlier)

**5 YEARS / 50,000 KMS**  
(whichever is earlier on LC 200)

**8 YEARS / 80,000 KMS**  
(whichever is earlier on Corolla 1.8 HEV)

**INSURANCE\***

**1 Year**

OR CASH GIFT IN LIEU OF INSURANCE FROM RO 125 UP TO RO 450

**WALK-IN & WIN**

**4 NOS iPhone 13**

**Branches:** Muscat - 24579050, Seeb Al Mawelah - 24550013, Mabela - 24269400, Barka - 26887504, Rustaq - 26876199, Ibra - 25571457, Sinaw - 25524203, Nizwa - 25213015, Buraimi - 25660124, Sohar - 26858500, Sur - 25541375, BB Ali - 25553692, Salalah - 23217303, Ibbi - 25687100

Campaign Period: Up to 30th December 2021. Benefits are applicable for all purchases except Government Organizations & Ministries. \*Cash gift in lieu of insurance\* Cash Gift is given in Lieu of Insurance only as applicable for respective models. In case customer chooses Insurance (as applicable), he/she will not be eligible for "Cash gift in lieu of insurance" offer. Cash Gift in lieu of Insurance can also be used as part of down payment. \*\*Comprehensive 1 Year Insurance (Oman only, excluding diesel grades) on 1911M / 1911P: Camry 3.5 & Camry HEV, 2011M / 1911P: Yaris HB, Yaris HB HEV, Camry 2.5, Camry HEV, Supra, Avarza, Fortuner & Hilux 4x2. 2011M / 20 PLT: Yaris HB, Yaris HB HEV, Camry 2.5, Camry HEV, C-HR, Fortuner, Hilux 4x2 & Hilux 4x4. 2211M / 21 PLT: Camry 2.5, Fortuner, Hilux 4x2 & Hilux 4x4. Insurance benefit under the campaign would be given upto the extent applicable for Private vehicles only. Additional premium as per Insurance norms will have to be paid by the RAC, Taxi & Driving School Company. \*\*2 Years / 20,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 2 services at 10,000 Kms service interval for Petrol models based on normal operating conditions (Excluding DSL grades) on all Toyota models excluding Corolla 1.8 HEV, Avalon (excluding 2111M / 20 PLT), Supra, Fortuner, Highlander HEV, LC WGN, Hiace, Granvia and Coaster. \*\*5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 10,000 kms service interval for Petrol models based on normal operating conditions (Excluding DSL grades) on models upto 2111M LC WGN (LC200) 4.0L & 5.7L. \*\*8 Years / 80,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 8 services at 10,000 Kms service interval for Petrol models based on normal operating conditions on all models of 20 YM Corolla 1.8 HEV models. 3 Walk-in & Win Raffle: Raffle of 4 units of iPhone 13 128 GB. All individual prospects who walk-in for an enquiry of any Toyota vehicle in any Toyota Showroom in the Sultanate within the campaign period are eligible for the raffle. Raffle will be conducted at Toyota showroom Wataway, as per the following dates 15.11.2021, 30.11.2021, 15.12.2021 and 02.01.2022. Vehicles may include dealer-installed items. For further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota showroom. Pictures and colours shown above are for illustrative purposes only.

SAUD BAHWAN Group  
SAUD BAHWAN Automotive LLC  
ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED C.R NO:1703412

Facebook.com/toyotaooman  
@toyotaoomanofficial  
YouTube.com/toyotaooman  
www.toyotaooman.com

# It's time for Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards 2021

Get set to choose the best



Tridwip K Das  
Muscat

A book in the making for seven years featuring 160 marine species found in Oman's seas was published earlier this month. Written and photographed by Paul Flandinette and Michel Claereboudt, a book signing ceremony was held with H H Sayyida Tania al Said, president of Environment Society of Oman, on November 11.

Through 295 photographs spread over 240 pages printed on sustainably sourced paper using water based inks and varnishes, *Secret Seas – Discover Oman's unique underwater world* "illustrates rather than documents" the sultanate's rich and diverse marine life. The Omran Group is strategic partner in the project.

The book involved extensive underwater photography, starting from Musandam and Khasab up north to the Damaniyat Islands, Muscat and Masirah right down to the Hallaniyat Islands, Mirbat and Salalah in the southern tip of the country.

Flandinette, who led the project, is director of special projects at Brand Infiniti – a Muscat-based media company. A finalist of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition held by the Natural History Museum in London, one of his photographs had the distinction of being presented in a Smithsonian Museum show on the planet's oceans in Washington DC.

"Earlier a diver, now a photographer who dives", when the idea of the book began taking shape, Flandinette realised the book needed "scientific rigour". "I'd read about Michel (Claereboudt) and asked him to join me in writing the book. I don't think anyone has the knowledge of underwater Oman like he has," Flandinette said of his co-author.

Associate professor in the department of Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University, Claereboudt is an internationally acclaimed expert on corals and Echinoderms - sea urchins, sea cucumbers, starfish etc. He has researched the ecology and biology of corals and other reef invertebrates in Omani waters since 1997.

Both Flandinette and Claereboudt have dived in other parts of the world, and what stands out for them about the diving experience in Oman is the number of fish seen here.

"The numbers to me are unbelievable. You needn't go to the Red Sea or Bali. We have it all around us

# Oman's underwater treasures showcased

‘SECRET SEAS – DISCOVER OMAN’S UNIQUE UNDERWATER WORLD’ IS A CELEBRATION OF THE SULTANATE’S RICH AND DIVERSE MARINE ENVIRONMENT



L-R: Paul Flandinette, H H Sayyida Tania al Said and Michel Claereboudt at a book signing ceremony held recently (Supplied photos)



Nudibranchs are often both seldom seen and unusually beautiful

It is my hope that ‘Secret Seas – Discover Oman’s unique underwater world’ will inspire people to learn more about the captivating world under the surface of our seas

H H SAYYIDA TANIA AL SAID

Another is dedicated to 'Underwater photography'. "On land, a photographer tries to stay still to take a sharp image. In underwater photography everything is in constant motion, the subject, the water and the photographer. These can make for quite big challenges. In addition, you have very limited time underwater to capture your image. Most species present their own specific challenges to photography whether that's because of their tiny size, like little shrimps, their speed or simply because they swim away from the camera," Flandinette said.

Owing to the nature of fish and the environmental constraints involved in underwater photography, of 200-300 photographs taken in a dive, often only two or three might be useable.

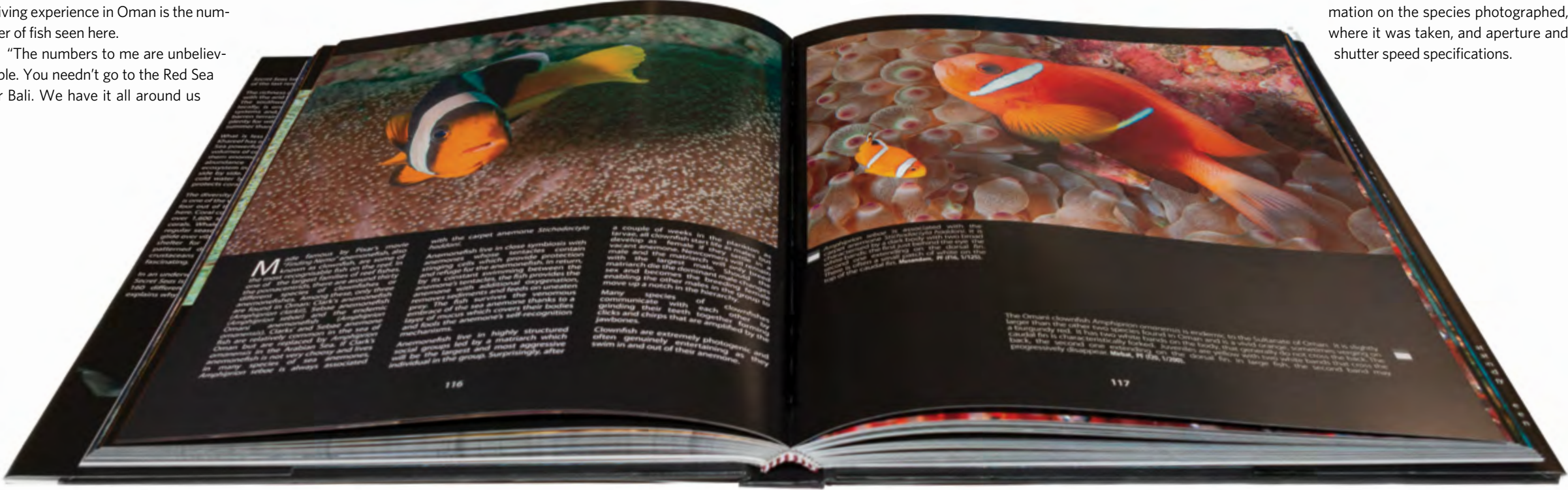
About the rare marine species seen in the book, Claereboudt said, "Sharks are nowadays among the rarest large fish encountered by divers in Oman. Common 20 or 30 years ago, overfishing of these slow reproducing species has reduced their population to such extremes that it is indeed very rare to be able to observe or even see a

here all the time. You just need to put your nose underwater," Claereboudt informed.

*Secret Seas* is divided into chapters dedicated to different groups and families of marine wildlife, including parrotfish; cephalopods; scorpionfish, lionfish and stonefish; sea turtles; and sharks and rays. A chapter titled 'The reef' showcases organisms that live in coral reefs.

'Blue waters' shows fish pho-

tographed in settings described by the chapter title. 'Blue waters occur when phytoplankton lack nutrients to feed on and zooplankton sink to deeper waters. During these periods, often just before the summer, the large pelagic inhabitants become more visible. While blue waters are good for wide angle underwater photography, they are in effect watery deserts with little nutrients,' the chapter explains.



## Low pressure to bring rains in northern Oman

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

A low-pressure trough began to form on Monday disturbing the weather condition in the northern parts of Oman. The inclement weather due to the low pressure is expected to continue till Wednesday, according to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

On Monday, the weather was cloudy with occasional thunder-showers witnessed in the governorates of Musandam, North Batinah, South Batinah, Muscat and South Sharqiyah, in addition to the Hajar Mountains and adjacent areas.

'There is continuation of intensification and activity of clouds over Musandam governorate and on the coasts along the Sea of Oman (North and South Batinah and Muscat) with



(Syed Fasiuddin/Muscat Daily)

chances of rain later,' the Directorate General of Meteorology stated on Monday

Additionally, a weather report issued by CAA based on an analysis by the National Multi

Hazard Early Warning Centre also indicated a trough of low pressure affecting the sultanate from Monday to Wednesday.

'The weather will be cloudy with chances of rain, occasional

thundershowers, wind, hail and flash floods. Sea conditions will be moderate along most of the sultanate's coasts with waves of up to 2m,' CAA stated.

Younis al Shezawi, a meteor-

ologist at the Civil Aviation Authority, said that the actual impact of the low pressure began on Monday morning on Musandam.

"The weather disturbance will impact the governorates of Dakhliyah, South Sharqiyah, Muscat and the Hajar mountains on Tuesday, further extending to Wednesday, with isolated rainfall in the range of 30mm and 70mm," he said

On Wednesday, the skies over the northern governorates will be mostly cloudy with chances of rain, occasional thundershowers, fresh winds and hail, and clear over the rest of the sultanate. Low-level clouds or fog patches are predicted over parts of Buraimi, Dhahirah, South Sharqiyah, Al Wusta governorates and the coast along the Sea of Oman.

## Shrimp fishing season ends today: MAFWR

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The shrimp fishing season will end on Tuesday, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

The ministry called on all fishermen, traders, companies, hotels and restaurants involved in buying, selling and exporting shrimp to register their stocks following the end of the season.

The ministry warned against the trade and export of unregistered shrimp after the end of the season.

The ministry also warned against the fishing of shrimp during the fertilisation period which begins in December and concludes at the end of August the following year.



Meanwhile, on November 21, the ministry confirmed that the fisheries control team in Dhofar arrested two violators for catching abalone outside the fishing season. 'The catch and the diving equipment were confiscated, and legal measures were taken against them,' said MAFWR.

# Over 4mn cyber threats detected and blocked

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Trend Micro solutions has detected and blocked over 2mn (2,158,295) email threats, prevented over 1.8mn (1,875,671) malicious URL victim attacks, and over 16,980 URL hosts in Oman. In addition, 333,459 malware attacks were identified and stopped.

In its Midyear Security Roundup for H1 2021, Trend Micro Incorporated, a global leader in cybersecurity solutions that shares insights on the evolved threat landscape in the first half of the year and provides strategic guidance for leaders to protect their organisations in the digital economy, stated that globally it blocked 40.9bn email threats, malicious files, and malicious URLs for customers in H1 2021, with a 47 per cent year-on-year increase.

Ransomware remained the standout threat in the first half of the year as cybercriminals continued to target big-name victims. They used Advanced Persistent Threat tools and tech-



*Cybersecurity has become an integral part of the boardroom discussions today, and has emerged as an important component of the growth strategy for any business*

ASSAD ARABI

niques to steal and encrypt victims' data. The banking industry was disproportionately affected,

experiencing a 1,318 per cent year-on-year increase in ransomware attacks in the first half of 2021.

The report also shows that home networks in Oman were a major attraction for cybercriminals looking to pivot to corporate systems, devices and networks. Trend Micro's Smart Home Network (SHN) solutions blocked 10,917 SHN inbound and outbound attacks combined, preventing 566,627 such SHN events for hackers to target or control home devices from executing malware, obtaining sensitive information, intercepting

communications, or launching external attacks.

"Cybersecurity has become an integral part of the boardroom discussions today, and has emerged as an important component of the growth strategy for any business," said Assad Arabi, managing director, Trend Micro Gulf Cluster. The Trend Micro mid-year-round up report shares insights on the evolved threat posture and highlights the need for enterprises to re-look at their cybersecurity strategy to strengthen their stance against the evolving threat landscape. The report provides necessary guidance for chief information security officers to take appropriate measures to develop a digitally secured environment for their businesses to thrive in the country."

Trend Micro has been collaborating with the public and private sectors to raise awareness and resolve gaps to enable secure digital transformation journeys for organisations in Oman. The company is at the forefront in introducing new security solutions for businesses.

# Sur resident cycles 2,000km to spread obesity awareness

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Sur resident Nasser bin Hilal Rashid al Muhajiri, 25, recently cycled over 2,000km to spread awareness on the dangers of obesity and encourage people to take up sports to stay healthy.

Muhajiri said he began his trip in Dhofar on October 26 and covered wilayats such as Mirbat, Sadah, Hasik, Shaleem and Halaniyat Islands, Duqm, Mahut, Sur, Bausher, Quriyat, Saham and Shinas before ending in Khasab on November 18.

Muhajiri began his cycling tours in 2010 and till date has completed four such long trips on his bike. "However, this tour was the longest," he said.

"My tour aimed to spread awareness on the dangers of obesity and spread the culture of cycling in society. I used to cycle from 8am to 5pm, travelling 80-100km a day. I visited popular sites like old markets to meet as many people as possible and spread the message."

Talking of obesity, he said that the latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Health show that 65 per cent of Oman's population suffers from obesity.

Elaborating on his past trips, he said, "Prior to the current trip, I had gone on three tours in 2018, 2019 and 2020."

Talking about challenges dur-



*My tour aimed to spread awareness on the dangers of obesity and spread the culture of cycling in society*

NASSER AL MUHAJIRI

ing his trips, Muhajiri said that the biggest test of his endurance comes from strong winds that makes cycling very difficult. Get-

ting enough money for such trips is another challenge.

"Such trips need financial support. I hope corporates take interest in spreading awareness on health issues and sponsor such trips.

"I plan to have more such tours to promote domestic tourism and create awareness on beach cleanliness. I hope such tours raise awareness on social issues. I urge Omani youths to take part in such voluntary campaigns for the betterment of society," Muhajiri said.

# New platform to support national innovation system

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

With an aim to support innovation, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation is getting ready to set up a unified digital platform.

The platform for databases will be established within the framework of the national innovation system, the ministry said. 'It aims to overcome challenges faced by the innovation sector, provide quick and smart services for innovative activities in all governorates of the sultanate, and accelerate the transformation of innovative ideas into economic and social value that can enter the market.'

The ministry said it will also launch an initiative to establish a national platform to take care of all innovative activities in an integrated manner. The platform aims to provide quick and smart services to the beneficiaries - students, innovators and job-seekers.

## National Research Award

The ministry will announce the National Research Award on December 15 during the annual meeting of researchers.



The award aims to encourage researchers to conduct high quality and relevant research in areas of national interest.

The ministry also announced the opening of the door for Omani researchers to participate in the 71st Lindau Nobel Laureate meeting. The next session in the field of chemistry will be held

from June 26 to July 1, 2022 in Lindau, Germany.

The ministry affirmed that the meeting is a great opportunity for three Omani researchers to interact with about 40 world-class Nobel Prize laureates. In addition, the event will attract about 600 young researchers from more than 80 countries.

# CPA bans mosquito repellent

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has banned the Par Par brand of mosquito repellent in Oman for lack of conformity with approved specifications.

In a statement, CPA said, 'Sulayem Ali Sulayem al Hakmani, Consumer Protection Authority chairman, issued a decision (No 308/2021) regarding prohibition of mosquito killer device Par Par based upon the authority's regulation issued by a Royal Decree (No 53/2011) and the Consumer Protection Law issued by a Royal Decree (No 96/2014).'

The first article of the decision bans Par Par, which is made in China, for lack of conformity with approved standards. The second article states that available stocks of the product should be withdrawn from the sultanate's markets.

The third article states imposition of a fine of at least RO50 to RO1,000 in case of violation of the decision. The penalty can be doubled in case of repetition. In case of the violation continues, a fine of RO50 will be imposed for each day of violation to a maximum of RO2,000.

# Muscat International Book Fair from Feb 23

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The 26th edition of Muscat International Book Fair will be held from February 23 to March 5, 2022.

The announcement was made by H E Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harassi, Minister of Information

and chairman of the Main Committee of the book fair, on Monday.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, H E Dr Harassi said that the event will be held in accordance with all the precautionary measures set by the Supreme Committee to deal with COVID-19. The fair was cancelled in

2020 due to the ongoing pandemic.

According to organisers, Muscat International Book Fair has grown rapidly since its launch in 1992. 'Its growth has contributed to a cultural movement in the sultanate. The fair is an important cultural, intellectual and literary forum.'

# OFA hosts talk on '180 days of VAT in Oman'

Muscat - Oman France Amitié (OFA) - Omani French Friendship Association - hosted a discussion on the implementation of Value-Added Tax in Oman on November 24. Presented by Aabha Lekhak, partner in KPMG Lower Gulf's tax team, it was held at InterContinental Muscat. The discussion covered various aspects of the VAT taxation policy in the sultanate, targeting businesses and financial entities involved with its execution.

Aabha addressed an audience of 20 professionals from various organisations on how VAT has been implemented in Oman, the key concepts that help understand the subject better, technical developments since its implementation in April 2021, procedural reliefs that have been extended by tax authorities since



Aabha Lekhak

then, penalties for noncompliance and more.

"The decree law that gave the framework on how VAT operates in Oman ties back into a larger GCC framework agreement that all member states signed in 2016 when they agreed to implement VAT in phases. The UAE and Saudi Arabia im-

plemented it on January 1, 2018, followed by Bahrain in 2019. The last country to have implemented it is Oman, on April 16 this year, in a phased manner. In the GCC, Kuwait and Qatar are yet to implement it," Aabha informed.

Aabha illustrated the concepts with her own experiences in dealing with different business clients, and spoke about further steps business owners and individuals can take into consideration for clients affected by the implementation of VAT in the country. "Registrations for VAT are still a work in progress, as Oman decided to opt for a phased implementation, which makes businesses with higher values of supply eligible for registration, while smaller businesses will follow in due course,"

she said.

Aabha stressed on the importance of data completion and transparency on the part of businesses in filing tax returns. "Compliance is key. Failure to notify tax authorities in time over incorrect documents, deliberately not registering for tax obligations, and preventing the authority from carrying out their functions will invite penalties," she said.

OFA is a non-profit organisation registered with Foreign Ministry and supported by the French Embassy in Oman. It aims at strengthening bilateral relations between Omani and French business and social communities active in the sultanate by conducting various activities, events and workshops.

(Contributed by Akshaya Pavanje)

## What it feels like selling on Sindbaad Business!

Trade online and expand beyond borders. Sell your products in bulk and connect with other businesses across the MENA region on **b2b.esindbaad.com**. Let us take care of integration, enquiries, banking channels, logistics, marketing and much more. Call **71183469** and get up to 80% discount on subscription. Offer valid until the end of December.

# Ominvest to issue R052mn worth of perpetual sukuk

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The shareholders of Oman International Development & Investment Company (Ominvest) recently approved the issuance of perpetual sukuk worth R052mn by the company.

'In its extraordinary general meeting held on November 17, 2021, Ominvest obtained its shareholders' approval to issue Unsecured Subordinated Perpetual Sukuk Al Mudaraba Certificates worth R052mn,' Ominvest said in a press statement.

The sukuk will be issued by Ominvest and exchanged for shares (treasury shares) held by Jabreen International Development Company, a fully-owned subsidiary of Ominvest.

After the exchange transaction is completed, the treasury shares will be cancelled by Ominvest. The issuance of the sukuk



and the exchange transaction are 'in-principal' approved by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) and are subject to final regulatory approvals, the company said.

The sukuk will be in exchange of 139,406,903 treasury shares, which represent 17.26 per cent of Ominvest's equity capital. Ominvest plans to acquire the treasury

shares at 373bz per share from Jabreen, which is at a significant premium to the current market price.

Subject to the regulatory approvals, the sukuk will be listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), bolstering market activity by bringing additional liquidity and a new investor-base.

Alizz Islamic Bank and Ubhar

Capital are joint issue managers and advisors on the proposed issuance of the sukuk. Jabreen will subsequently sell the sukuk to other investors in Oman and the GCC to generate new long-term funding for Ominvest Group to further grow and diversify the investment portfolios.

The sukuk have been approved as Sharia'a-compliant by

Alizz Islamic Bank's supervisory Sharia'a board, thereby providing a unique investment opportunity to Islamic banks, Islamic institutions and other investors seeking Sharia'a-compliant investment solutions.

Commenting on the proposed transaction, AbdulAziz al Balushi, group chief executive officer at Ominvest, said, "The issuance of the perpetual sukuk will enable Ominvest to further optimise its capital structure, channel the funds to make new long-term investments and enhance return on capital. It will create value for Ominvest stakeholders through improved earnings, stronger liquidity and better return ratios. In line with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the sukuk will be classified as an equity in Ominvest's balance-sheet, making the company's financial position stronger."



## Bank Nizwa plans to explore merger with Sohar International

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Bank Nizwa has welcomed Sohar International Bank's intention to explore the opportunity for a merger between the two banks.

Last week Sohar International expressed its intention to initiate merger discussions with Bank Nizwa. Sohar International Bank sent a letter of intent to the board of directors of Bank Nizwa, proposing a merger between two entities.

"The board of directors at Bank Nizwa welcomes this intention and is open to explore opportunities of a merger between

two banks," Khalid al Kayed, chief executive officer of Bank Nizwa, said in a disclosure to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

He said that the shareholders of Bank Nizwa will be kept informed with all updates in this regard. The bank shall comply with applicable rules and regulations of the sultanate in this direction.

"Bank Nizwa assures its stakeholders that their supreme interests will be taken into consideration in any decision, and that the bank will continue to provide paramount Islamic services, in conformity with Sharia'a rules and standards," Kayed said.

## TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Company Limited Oman Branch (CPP), as an EPC Contractor, invites companies to participate in the following tender:

| Estimated Scope Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Tender Documents Fee |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Drainage Construction Work</b> , detailed work description:<br><b>1. Drainage:</b> Different types of Storm Water Drainage Channel with or without of grating, security/storm water ditch. The construction activities including excavation, filling, PCC, RCC, concrete protection, water stops, backfilling and etc. | Free                 |

Legal entities, domestic Omani and foreign companies who meet the following minimum qualification criteria are eligible to quote in Tender:

- Priority to Oman local companies, or local agent appointed by foreign companies,
- Capability to submit a performance bond of ten percent of total value.
- Complying with the CPP's project execution schedule.
- ISO 14001 and OHSAS18001 in valid period are mandatory.
- Having direct experience of similar jobs in the last five years.
- Agree to complete the further prequalification undertaken by CPP.

All interested bidders shall submit a written application letter printed on Bidder's letter head signed by the Bidder's authorized Person to [cppomaned@cppmde.com](mailto:cppomaned@cppmde.com) over a period before **6th December, 2021** stating the following details: Full name of Bidder, phone number, e-mail address, contact person, tender name and tender title. Any application received after **6th December, 2021** shall not be entertained. The ITB documents will be issued via email by CPP later. The bidders shall bear all cost arising from or incidental to the preparation, clarification, finalization and delivery of their bid proposal.

CPP is not obliged to accept the bid with least prices or any other bids. CPP reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or; any obligations to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground for the CPP's action.

Turn off the world.  
Tune in to pure sound.

Launching  
**Bose QuietComfort 45 Headphones**

The original noise cancelling headphones are back! Clear away the noisy distractions of the world. Get deeper into your music, your work, or whatever you want to focus on. That's the power of QuietComfort 45 headphones. Proprietary technology, ultimate comfort and pure sound. Get yours today!

**Bose Showroom at Qurum City Centre**  
Tel: 24470497 / 92311039

Also Available at Lulu Hypermarkets, Emax, Sharaf DG, Extra, MI Stores, Virgin Megastores, Buildex & Muscat Duty Free.

## Oil prices rebound from Omicron rout

London, UK - Global oil prices rebounded on Monday from a pre-weekend slump that was sparked by fears over Omicron - a new variant of COVID-19.

Stock markets in Frankfurt, London and Paris also advanced, having tumbled on Friday by around 4 per cent on worries of a major hit to the global economy.

"The panic has passed for now," OANDA analyst Craig Erlam said. "There were no overly concerning developments over the weekend and so investors are testing the water again - but sentiment will remain fragile."

Oil rallied, with WTI, the US benchmark crude contract, briefly gaining more than five per cent, as investors mulled Omicron's threat to energy demand. Brent crude gained 4.1 per cent at US\$75.72 per barrel on Monday.

Both global oil contracts shed more than 10 per cent in value on Friday.

Asian bourses, however, fell further on lingering uncertainty over the new virus strain.

"The anxiety attack on financial markets shows signs of alleviating, as investors pause for breath and spot signs of optimism while scientists race to establish the severity of the new variant," said Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Susannah Streeter.

Equities around the world went into freefall on Friday on news of the heavily mutated variant.

Omicron has compounded an already jittery mood on trading floors caused by surging inflation and central banks starting to roll back their ultra-loose monetary policies to prevent prices from running out of control.

AFP

**FREE  
CLASSIFIED  
LISTING**

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories:  
**Situations Wanted/Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)**  
Please email your listing to [dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om) or call 99104346

CONVENIENT ALL IN 1 DECORATING SPRINKLES TO...

Inspire the taste buds

Distributed by  
**CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC**

Please contact +968 22060236/237

# Pandemic to cost global tourism \$2tn in 2021: UN

Madrid, Spain - The coronavirus pandemic will cost the global tourism sector US\$2tn in lost revenue in 2021, the UN's tourism body said on Monday, calling the sector's recovery 'fragile' and 'slow'.

The forecast from the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) comes as Europe is grappling with a surge in infections and as a new heavily mutated COVID-19 variant, dubbed Omicron, spreads across the globe.

International tourist arrivals will this year remain 70-75 per cent below the 1.5bn arrivals recorded in 2019 before the pandemic hit, a similar decline as in 2020, according to the body.

The global tourism sector already lost US\$2tn in revenues last year due to the pandemic, according to the UNWTO, making it one of sectors hit hardest by the health crisis.

While the UN body charged with promoting tourism does not have an estimate for how the sector will perform next year, its medium-term outlook is not encouraging.

'Despite the recent improvements, uneven vaccination rates around the world and new COVID-19 strains' such as the Delta variant and Omicron 'could impact the already slow and fragile recovery', it said in a statement.

## 'Unpredictable situation'

The introduction of fresh virus restrictions and lockdowns in several nations in recent weeks shows how 'it's a very unpredictable situation', UNWTO head Zurab Pololikashvili said.



A group of tourists wearing masks stand in front of the Grand Theatre in Bordeaux, southern France on Saturday (AFP)

dictable situation', UNWTO head Zurab Pololikashvili said.

"It's a historical crisis in the tourism industry but again tourism has the power to recover quite fast," he added ahead of the start of the WTO's annual general assembly in Madrid on Tuesday. "I really hope that 2022 will be much better than 2021."

While international tourism has taken a hit from the outbreak of disease in the past, the coronavirus is unprecedented in its geographical spread.

In addition to virus-related travel restrictions, the sector is also grappling with the economic

strain caused by the pandemic, the spike in oils prices and the disruption of supply chains, the UNWTO said.

Pololikashvili urged nations to harmonise their virus protocols and restrictions because tourists 'are confused and they don't know how to travel'.

International tourist arrivals 'rebounded' during the summer season in the Northern Hemisphere thanks to increased travel confidence, rapid vaccination and the easing of entry restrictions in many nations, the UNWTO said.

'Despite the improvement in the third quarter, the pace of recovery remains uneven across world regions due to varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates and traveller confidence,' it added.

Arrivals in some islands in the Caribbean and South Asia, and well as some destinations in southern Europe, came close to, or sometimes exceeded pre-pandemic levels in the third quarter.

Other countries however hardly saw any tourists at all, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, where arrivals were down 95 per cent compared to 2019 as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel.

## Closed border

A total of 46 destinations - 21 per cent of all destinations worldwide - currently have their borders completely closed to tourists, according to the UNWTO.

A further 55 have their borders partially closed to foreign visitors, while just four nations have lifted all virus-related restrictions - Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Mexico.

Before the pandemic, the tourism sector accounted for about 10 per cent of the world's gross domestic product and jobs. AFP



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AFP)

# Erdogan doubles down on low rates despite lira fall

Ankara, Turkey - Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed 'no compromise' on low interest rates in comments published by Turkish media on Monday, despite a currency crisis.

The embattled Turkish lira crashed last week and has continued to lose value against the dollar after a series of rate cuts by the central bank in spite of rampant inflation.

Erdogan ordered on Saturday the State Supervisory Council, an auditing body under the president's direct authority, to investigate currency manipulation claims.

"I have never advocated, do not advocate and will never advocate for increasing interest rates," Erdogan told Turkish journalists on board his plane returning from a trip to Turkmenistan at the weekend.

"Even if others who think differently appear, Tayyip Erdogan has the same position. I will absolutely not compromise on this issue," he said, quoted by NTV broadcaster.

Erdogan strongly opposes high interest rates and goes against orthodox economic

thinking to claim they cause high inflation. He railed against the 'interest rate lobby' which seeks to push Turkey to adopt higher rates, insisting inflation would fall before elections in 2023.

Under heavy pressure from the President who has sacked three governors since July 2019, the central bank has cut the main interest rate every month since September.

The rate is 15 per cent, down from 19 per cent before the first rate cut on September 23.

But inflation has remained stubbornly in the double digits for the past two years.

The annual rate was at nearly 20 per cent in October and there are fears the figure will be much higher for November when that month's data is published.

The lira has lost 42 per cent in value against the greenback since the start of 2021, crashing to 13 to the dollar last Tuesday.

The lira's weakness has persisted, with the currency losing over three per cent to reach 12.7 to the dollar at around 1200 GMT on Monday after Erdogan's comments were published. AFP

# WTO conference postponed due to new COVID variant

Geneva, Switzerland - World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference, the global trade body's biggest gathering in four years, was postponed at the last minute on Friday due to the new Omicron COVID-19 variant.

The WTO hoped the four-day gathering in Geneva would breathe new life into the crippled organisation, which has been stuck for years trying to make progress on resolving issues like fishery subsidies.

New director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was also hoping, against the odds, to make progress towards a deal on lifting COVID vaccine patents, proving the WTO had a relevant role to play in combating the pandemic.

But the conference was postponed four days before it was due to start, hours after Omicron was declared a variant of concern by the World Health Organization.

"This has not been an easy

recommendation to make," Okonjo-Iweala said.

"But as director-general, my priority is the health and safety of all MC12 participants - ministers, delegates and civil society. It is better to err on the side of caution."

WTO General Council chair Dacio Castillo called an emergency meeting of all 164 member states to tell them about the Omicron situation, including travel restrictions and quarantine requirements.

The members unanimously supported the postponement call. Okonjo-Iweala said the travel constraints would have prevented many ministers from reaching Geneva, rendering equal participation impossible.

The WTO intends to reconvene 'as soon as possible when conditions allow', said Castillo. The conference normally takes place every two years.

AFP

**NO.1 WATER BRAND**

**OMAN'S MOST TRUSTED**

**FREE DELIVERY TO HOMES AND OFFICES**

**TOLL-FREE: 800 71 222**

**INVITATION TO ATTEND THE EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

**Dear Investors,**

The Management body of United GCC Fund is pleased to invite the unit holders to attend the fund's Extra Ordinary general meeting, which is scheduled to be held at 3:00 pm on Sunday 19/12 2021, in United Securities head office premises in Ghalia, if the quorum not satisfied, a second Extra Ordinary general meeting will be held on Monday, 20/12/2021, at the same time and place to discuss the following agenda:

- To discuss and approve the amendment of Para (3) of article (14) of the Fund's Article of Association.

Pursuant to the Articles of Association of the fund, any unit holder has the right to appoint a proxy in writing to attend and vote on decisions taken on his behalf. The proxy must carry the authorized proxy card attached with the notice to attend the general meeting. If the unit holder is a natural person, he is required to attach with the proxy card, a copy of ID for adults, passport for females and minors who don't have an ID card and resident cards or passports for expatriates. If the unit holder is a juristic person, the proxy card shall be signed by an authorized signatory and sealed with the company's seal and submitted together with a copy of the commercial registration certificate and authorized signatories' form

Shareholders are requested to come at least half an hour before meeting time.

For any further queries regarding the Extra Ordinary General Meeting, kindly contact: Mr Ashishkumar Prajapati on phone No- +968 99038993

Regards

Chairman of The Management body      Auditors      Legal Advisor

**SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER**

*The healthy choice*

Call Toll-Free 800 71 222 or GSM 9275 5522

f OmanOasis    @ OmanOasisOfficial    O OmanOasisWater    www.omanoasis.com

C.R. No.: 1365452

# Bank Nizwa hosts VIP delegation from AIFC

Oman's pioneering and most trusted Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa hosted key dignitaries from Kazakhstan as part of a VIP delegation from Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC). The delegates toured Oman under the auspices of Central Bank of Oman, to discuss collaborative opportunities between the two countries with respect to Islamic finance.

Members of the AIFC leadership team, including chief investment officer, AIFC; deputy CEO of the AIFC Business Connect; deputy head of the AIFC Islamic Finance & Business Hub; along with key team members were a part of the high-level delegation, that exchanged views on further development of bilateral cooperation in the industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Khaled al Kayed, chief executive officer, Bank Nizwa, said, "AIFC is the first platform in the region to provide businesses with systemic access to Islamic finance, a rapidly growing and promising



investment segment. I would like to thank the entire team of AIFC for their visit, which served the purpose of sharing knowledge and views on the immense possibilities for growth and development of Islamic finance in the two countries.

"Such visits are a great way for Bank Nizwa to strengthen its position in the market as a trusted financial partner in Is-

lamic banking. We take pride in being the first Islamic bank in Oman, and in successfully paving the way for Sharia'a compliant banking to further grow in the sultanate."

With the popularity of Islamic banking on the rise, Bank Nizwa has been leading the way for change with innovative Islamic financing products, focus on customer service and a collaborative approach to supporting local businesses. Adopting the necessary foresight to remain abreast in the market while aligning itself to Oman's Vision 2040, Bank Nizwa has also devised its 2025 strategy for growth.

Kazakhstan plans to develop Islamic finance industry in order to create alternative sources of financing for state and municipal projects, as well as for private ones. For this purpose, a special regulatory and legal regime has been set up in the AIFC that is consistent with international best practices and standards. AIFC's Islamic finance industry includes a range of participants, including Islamic banks, asset management companies, investment funds, takaful and retakaful companies and other Islamic financial organisations, as well as leading international Islamic financial institutions.

Islamic finance is the fastest-growing segment of the global banking industry, with more than 300 banks offering Sharia'a-compliant products and services. In Oman, Bank Nizwa is a significant contributor to the growth of this segment.

"Bank Nizwa is committed to supporting the government in attaining its Vision 2040. In the past year, our efforts in this direction have been much appreciated and we will continue to do our best to enhance the banking experience with innovative Islamic finance products, whether it is for corporate customers, SMEs or government clients. We will also take all efforts to ensure the Islamic banking sector continues to grow steadily," added Kayed.

## Bose introduces QuietComfort 45 headphones

Today, Bose introduces the new QuietComfort 45 headphones, replacing the legendary QuietComfort 35 II with improved noise cancellation for instant quiet anywhere, new Aware Mode to let the world back in, better voice isolation for easier conversations, and 24-hour battery life on a single charge.

The QuietComfort 45 maintain the hallmarks of their predecessor with amazing audio performance, all-day comfort and stability, super-simple controls, rock-solid connectivity, and an update to the iconic design that made QCs one of the most recognizable wearables ever. The QuietComfort 45 headphones will be available for RO139+ VAT at Bose Store Qurm City Centre, Lulu Hypermarkets, Emax, Sharaf DG, Extra, MI Stores, Virgin Megastores, Buildex and Muscat Duty Free.

"QuietComfort headphones are legendary for a reason," said Mehul Trivedi, category director, Bose wearable audio. "What started as a product for travelling became a product that makes every day better and easier for millions of people all over the world. Our customers have told us for years that it's the balance of benefits that make



a QuietComfort so different and indispensable. They've always been a great example of excellence where it matters most. And the QC45s are no different."

**Two modes**

The QuietComfort 45 headphones feature just two settings, both achieved using a new active noise cancellation system and new electronics package. In Quiet Mode, microphones inside and outside the earcups combine with a proprietary digital chip to sense, measure, and respond to more unwanted sounds in mid-range frequencies — those typically found in commuter trains, busy office spaces, and cafés.

The now famous "whoosh" associated with Bose noise-cancelling technology happens in a fraction of a millisecond to tune out entirely, or enjoy music, podcasts, or movies with lifelike clarity, detail, and no distractions. In Aware Mode, QC45 headphones switch to full transparency, where everything is heard again — just as naturally, clearly, and quickly — without ever taking them off.

For phone calls and commands, QC45 owners can share their noise cancellation.

## Badr Al Samaa Sohar launches senior citizens card

Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Sohar is committed to providing quality healthcare with affordable prices to every strata of the community. On the occasion of National Day and its first anniversary, the Senior Citizens Privilege Card for the senior citizens of Batinah region was launched.

Badr Al Samaa believes that the senior citizens need special care and money should not be a concern while availing quality healthcare services. Senior citizens will be given free consultation for one month in all specialities and 50 per cent discount on consultation for super specialities. After completing one month of this offer, there will be a 50 per cent discount on consultation for all specialities including super specialities.



Also they will be able to avail 25 per cent discount on in-patient services except medicines, consumables and implants. The registration desk for this offer will start from December 1.

This Senior Citizens Privilege Card was launched in a special event organised on the occasion of the first year anniversary. Sheikh Ahmaed al Ghofaily, Goodwill Ambassador and Former Member of State Council was the chief guest; Eng Salim bin Hamad al Kindi, DG Sohar Municipality was the guest of honour, and Dr Najat Mohammed Issa al Zadjali, director

operating officer Jacob Oommen, branch head Manoj Kumar, medical director Dr Azhar Iqbal, head Branding & Communication Asif Shah and many eminent dignitaries, doctors, nurses, administrative staff of Badr Al Samaa Group.

This gesture will go a long way in making quality healthcare more accessible and affordable for senior citizens.

Sheikh Ghofaily lauded Badr Al Samaa for undertaking initiatives for the benefit of the community. Eng Kindi said Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Sohar is always at the forefront of delivering many services under its corporate social responsibility and this Senior Citizens Privilege Card is one important thing in that way.

## Sailing event transforms Seeb corniche into a celebration of sport



The Oman Sailing Festival wrapped up at the Seeb corniche, Sur al Hadid, after transforming the area into a celebration of sport for two days. Filled with light and colour, the corniche bustled with national pride on November 26-27 as the community celebrated the National Day festivities, while 730 people took the opportunity to try sailing and windsurfing and take part in a beach clean-up nearby.

Ali al Shuhaimi, centre manager of Al Mouj Sailing School and project manager of the Oman Sailing Festival, said, "Organised by Oman Sail, the Oman Sailing Festival has been a huge success so far, gaining momentum with each stop. Our latest

event, along the stunning Seeb corniche, was a great reminder of the affinity the local area has with the sea. Huge crowds, lots of enthusiasm and a willingness to try sailing and windsurfing is really promising for the future of the sport in this area.

"We are also delighted to see so many residents and visitors keen to take responsibility and clear up the beach areas so that everyone can enjoy clear sands and clean seas."

The next stop for the Oman Sailing Festival is Sur, a city steeped in maritime heritage, from December 3-4 at Khor al Bath. After that, the festival moves to Barceló Mussanah Resort from December 11-18 and Hawana Salalah from January 6-8, 2022 before wrapping up in Duqm from January 11-15, 2022.

Oman Sail is hosting the 2021 ILCA 6 World Championships at Barceló Mussanah Resort, which runs from November 29 until December 6. A fleet of 160 male and female sailors from around the world is expected, including some of the top ranked sailors in the world.

At the same time, Oman Sail's own Sailing Arabia - The Tour

continued after a successful opening leg in Mussanah from November 24-27 and in Sur from November 27-29 where the fleet battled it out for the lead during a coastal raid and in-port race. The third leg is at Marina Bandar Al Rowdha from December 1-2 with the final set for Muscat from December 3-5.

The winter season has been an incredibly busy period for sailing across the nation and the eighth and final event of the year is perhaps the most anticipated. The prestigious 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the Youth Sailing World Championships gets underway on December 11 in Mussanah and will be the first time the event has been held in Asia.

## Renault Master appreciated for functional space, handy features, low running cost

A blend of functional space, pliable interior, handy features and low running costs, makes Renault Master the most favoured vehicle in Oman. Upholding the local market ideally, the model combines great value for money with high levels of driver and passenger comfort.

Offering dynamic look, space, comfort, and efficient performance, Renault Master has been designed to be the perfect working companion for individuals working in different sectors. Renault Master is also available in variants including L4H3, L1H1, L2H2.

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, "The energetic performance of the Renault Master makes it one of the

best in the market. It has a capacity of 2,299cc, power 92Kw (125Hp), four cylinders, 16 valves, Euro 3 and transmission of rear wheel drive and gearbox of 6 MT. Thanks to its undeniable practicality, robustness and versatility, the LCV line-up has generated a high demand."

Suleiman al Yahyai who calls Renault Master a "great partner", says, "With greater loading and towing capabilities, the Renault Master is a wonderful companion to transport significant loads over regular and soft ground."

Saif al Jahwari likes that Master Van is fitted with a rear-view camera so you can reverse with confidence whether you are loading, parking, or manoeuvring tight spaces. He says, "The model continues to offer busi-



nesses and trades remarkable flexibility. It sets the bar very high and is powerful, economical and safe. Its engines and myriad innovations are designed to make life easier for the owners every day."

Amar al Salim welcomes that Master Van provides loads of space and ability and suits delivery needs competently. He says, "class-leading safety technology and a feature-packed cabin has

made Renault Master a favourite among customers."

Hamood al Rashdi venerates Renault Master's comfort features such as electric front window (driver & passenger), electric mirrors, C-shaped DRL, rear glazed doors with 270° opening and heated rear window, floor anchorage points and side anchorage points in the load area. He adds, "It delivers superior driving pleasure, performance and fuel efficiency. With its bold style, its vertical front end, master asserts its robust and modern design. Its new dashboard, vast range of equipment and driver assistance systems help make your daily life easier."

Ahmed al Balushi believes The Master Van sets a new benchmark for practicality with style.

He says, "Its exterior features include new front grille, new bumpers, and front wings which is very impressive."

**Great companion**

Renault Master has a bench with storage on the centre back seat and rotating tablet, full steel bulkhead (without window), ESP, C shape daytime running lights, rear steel doors with 270° opening, right sliding door, electric mirrors and electric front window (driver & passenger).

Its loading benefits includes greater permissible rear axle load, available in L4 Panel van with the biggest load length. Its traction and grip benefits include better traction with heavy loads, on a steep slope and on soft ground to limit the risk of getting stuck.

# Omantel bags Voice of Customer, Best Change Management awards

Omantel has been maintaining its position as the most preferred telecom service provider in the sultanate, a credit that goes to the company's loyal customers who have trusted the company and its service delivery over the decades. Omantel has been offering the best customer experience (CEX), going beyond just the latest ICT services, superior connectivity, and best internet speed. The company deployed several measures to achieve high CEX goals it set for itself in the past two years mainly.

These are based on two pillars – the Omantel Voice of Customer platform (VOC) and Best Change Management. With continued focus on these two areas since the start of the pandemic, Omantel has been recognised for delivering the Best Change Management and Voice of Customer programme in the entire Middle East and received the two awards in the Customer Experience Live Show Middle East event held in Dubai.

Talal Said al Mamari, CEO, Omantel, who led the charge to make the CEX function part of the boardroom discussion said, "At Omantel, customer experience remains top priority. Every technological advancement in our services bouquet can be a success only if we understand what customers want.

"We are proud to receive these two awards which is a regional recognition of the dedi-



cated efforts of Omantel family. The year 2020 marked a sudden shift in customer demand. Our operations, when it comes to the contact centre as well as the Service Operation Centre, had to be moved to virtual platforms. And that happened in less than 48 hours. It was also very important for us to understand customer experience expectations during the pandemic. The teams measured and understood the Voice of Customer to ensure that we were aligned with their expectations."

He added, "The future of customer engagement and experience is about building digital experiences and Omantel leads from the front in this area too."

Omantel continued listening to its valued customers through various channels on the VOC platform and relied on metrics to act on it and re-evaluate the change outcomes in all aspects, be it people, processes, systems or services. Despite the sudden shift in customer demand, Omantel remained the only telecom to raise its customer experience which was personalized and digitally immersive throughout the customers' journey.

In 2020, with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, Internet traffic grew exponentially due to distance working, learning and entertainment. Omantel, the country's leading integrated telecom service provider, was flexi-

ble and agile in understanding evolving customer needs. Delivering on these needs was based on customer experience mind set and our experience listening platforms.

Technology-driven CEX requires investment as well as a personalised approach. Omantel's leaders and implementing a CEX strategy that leverages VOC analytics and market intelligence using AI and voice biometrics for its well-designed and articulate customer experiences, keeping it friendly, helpful and simple.

CEX reformed within the organisation to focus on a very clear north star – to reliably deliver a personalised omnichannel

and seamless CEX, as an enduring commitment to customers. Customer experience is not just a department at Omantel, but an important pillar of the company's culture and second nature of every Omantel family member.

Omantel is the sultanate's first and leading integrated telecommunications services provider, enabling the digital society to flourish, allowing new ways of doing business and delivering a world of information, news and entertainment.

While striving to ensure optimum customer satisfaction, Omantel plays a key social role to provide the required support and subsidy to all sectors of the Omani society.

# Meethaq celebrates 51st National Day with Hibati draw

Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat recently conducted a special draw coinciding with the sultanate's 51st National Day celebrations. The special draw gave away a total of RO51,000 to the winners, with each winner walking away with RO1,000 each. Meethaq takes great pride in celebrating national events and occasions to keep up with the dreams and aspirations of its customers across the sultanate.

On the occasion, Amor Said al Amri, senior regional manager, Meethaq Branches said, "We are greatly honoured to extend our sincere appreciation and greetings to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the occasion of the glorious 51st National Day. The bank is delighted to reward 51 customers with special prizes to celebrate this grand occasion. We invite all our valued customers to continue saving more in their Hibati accounts and get more opportunities to win exciting prizes in the upcoming Hibati prize grand draws."

The Hibati Savings account is based on the unrestricted Mudarabah contract. The cash prizes offered under Hibati's 2021 prize draw scheme are 'Hiba' (gift) from Meethaq to its customers and are paid out of the Mudarib's /shareholders' own sources. The cash prizes are over and above the profit share



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

Customers with Hibati Savings Accounts enjoy the largest number of benefits in Oman, which include competitive Mudarabah indicative profit rates, attractive cash prizes through draws, Visa Debit Card, no minimum balance charges and digital banking facilities.

Meethaq customers may use online banking or its mobile banking application to perform their financial transactions 24/7 with convenience and ease. Customers can use Meethaq's range of e-channels to perform their daily banking transactions, which include payment of utility bills online, accessing of account balance, viewing statements, transfer of funds to their own accounts or other account holders within Meethaq, etc.

# Embassy joins in celebrations of the Italian Cuisine Week

Under the theme 'Tradition and perspectives of Italian cuisine: awareness and enhancement of food sustainability', the Embassy of Italy in Muscat has joined the world in celebrating the sixth edition of The Italian Cuisine Week in the World from November 24 to December 4. The Italian Cuisine Week in the World, an initiative promoted each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims at promoting the cultural, social and environmental dimension of gastronomy.

"The Italian Cuisine Week in the World is an opportunity not only to promote the rich Mediterranean culinary experience outside Italy, but also represents unique opportunities to reflect on how respecting biodiversity can benefit the whole food supply chain," said H E Federica Favi, Ambassador of Italy in Muscat.

"For the second year, the world is still living in difficult times due to the pandemic, and so the week will be a great



chance for everyone to have a taste of Italy."

The highlight of this year's edition will be 'The Incensum' exhibition that will be officially opened to the public from December 2 until March 2021 at the National Museum. It is inspired by the deep meaning of incense, combining precious collections from Italy with the magnificent Omani finds of millenary tradition in the Land of Frankincense Gallery, highlighting the continuity over the centuries of relations between the two countries and those

touched by the ancient caravan routes that guaranteed the trade of the exquisite resin and aromatic spices for Western cuisine.

The exhibition is organised by the Per Fumum Association with the support of the Embassy of Italy in Muscat. H E Federica said, "The Incensum Exhibition will shed light on the connection between the pleasure of the senses and the aroma of incense, with the scents of Italian cuisine, appreciated all over the world, thus ideally reuniting with the themes of Expo 2020 where the Omani pavilion, with the frankincense tree, dialogues with the ideal of beauty illustrated in the Italian pavilion."

The Embassy of Italy in Muscat collaborated with some of the best Italian representatives in the Food and Beverage Sector in Oman, such as Aroma Restaurant, Caffe Vero & Caffe Vero House, Chado Tea Lounge, Fresco, Tomato at the Intercontinental Hotel Muscat, Tuscany at the Grand Hyatt Muscat, Al Marsa Gourmet, Carrefour and GET ITA.

# Sabre and Visit Oman sign strategic partnership to deliver travel experiences

Sabre Corporation (NASDAQ: SABR), the leading software and technology company that powers the global travel industry, has announced a new strategic technology partnership with Visit Oman, the sultanate of Oman online travel-trade gateway that connects the country with international destinations.

The agreement will enable Visit Oman to leverage Sabre's world-class technology solutions to further its vision to be Oman's extensive travel booking gateway that connects the global travel-trade to unlimited discovery in Oman.

Furthermore, it will enhance Visit Oman's stated mission to build strong, strategic, and commercial partnerships in all key source regions, and with Omani suppliers, to deliver one connected booking platform that is designed to enable the unlimited Omani traveler experience.

Speaking about the partnership agreement, Shabib al Mamari, managing director - Visit Oman, explained, "This exciting



new agreement with Sabre as Visit Oman's strategic technology partner is a highly beneficial addition to our operations. Sabre enjoys a world-wide reputation as a leader in delivering advanced software and innovative technology solutions to the global travel industry.

"The partnership paves the way for Visit Oman to further advance its objective to increase high-quality inbound traffic into the country. Essentially, the agreement represents a win-win for all parties involved, but most importantly for Visit Oman, it will serve to help further boost the Omani travel and tourism

sector over the short and long term."

As part of Oman Tourism Vision 2040, and with the goal of growing its presence in the international aviation and tourism sector, Visit Oman will use Sabre's marketplace to promote and sell Oman travel services and personalised travel packages from local travel providers to international markets.

Furthermore, Visit Oman will deploy Sabre's API to deliver intelligent and consultative services to travellers, create compelling shopping and booking experiences and provide an enhanced level of customer

service.

"We are proud to be working with Visit Oman to help them design this travel gateway that will shape the tourism experience in the sultanate," said John Mathew, Oman country manager, Sabre Travel Network Middle East.

"We will leverage best-in-class products and technologies to help them achieve their goals and create compelling shopping and booking experiences through a seamless, fully digital process to deliver a personalised travel experience to customers and suppliers that meets global standards."

# Oman Oil Marketing's latest OptimoSwift service centre opens at SQU

Continuing to provide a delightful experience for its customers, Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) celebrated the launch of a brand new OptimoSwift service centre at its Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) service station.

During the opening event, members of the public were treated to a vintage car motor show courtesy of Classic Car Group Oman. The new flagship centre offers a wide range of mechanical and electrical services including oil change, wheel alignment and balancing, air conditioning and battery service, nano-ceramic coating as well as a state-of-the-art car wash,



'Swift Wash', all delivered by highly trained technicians.

"As the latest addition to our

SQU MEGA station, the OptimoSwift service centre complements our one-stop shop

experience, which aims to create destinations of convenience for motorists that go 'beyond the

pump,'" said Mohamed bin Awadh al Shanfari, marketing and digital senior manager at

Oman Oil Marketing Company.

"Catered towards SQU students, staff and residents of Al Khoudh area, customers are guaranteed fast and high-quality service without any prior appointments. Courtesy of our expert crews, their vehicle will receive all the best care possible to proceed on their way safely and confidently."

Once fully completed, the MEGA service station at SQU will be OOMCO's largest fully integrated service hub. The 10,000m² project includes a fuel service station, coffeeshops, convenience store, a shopping complex with global brands, a gym, a children's play area, a

pharmacy, a nursery, ATMs and a business centre for students.

Adding to this, the OptimoSwift service centre is OOMCO's fourth in Oman, with other centres located at stations in Ruwi, Qurum and Al Ansab. OOMCO has also established more than 20 LubExpress centres all across Oman and is expanding rapidly. The launch is part OOMCO's commitment to provide more and better services while becoming among the most customer-centric marketer both locally and within GCC countries. OOMCO aims to create an unparalleled chain of service hubs which provide access to integrated products and services.

# Iran nuclear talks resume, Tehran plans to salvage deal

Vienna, Austria - International talks on Iran's nuclear programme restarted on Monday after a five-month hiatus with Tehran 'determined' to reach a deal as analysts warn of major obstacles to any speedy resumption of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran paused the negotiations in June after the election of an ultraconservative new president, Ebrahim Raisi. Diplomats at the time had said they were 'close' to an agreement.

Iran ignored appeals from Western countries to restart the talks for several months, all the while strengthening the capabilities of its nuclear programme. In August, Raisi said Iran was again open to talks.

The talks started just after 3pm (1400 GMT) in the Palais Coburg hotel where the 2015 agreement - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - was clinched.

Along with Iran, diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia are attending.

The United States is taking part in the talks indirectly.

On Monday, Iran said it had 'a firm determination to reach an agreement and is looking forward to fruitful talks'.

"If the other side shows the same willingness, we will be on the right track to reach an agreement," said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Said Khatibzadeh.

Last week, US Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley said Tehran's attitude 'doesn't augur well for the talks'.

"If they start getting too close, too close for comfort, then of course we will not be prepared to sit idly," Malley told the US National Public Radio.

The EU, which is chairing the talks, said on Monday it was 'crucial to pick up from where we left it last June, and that all sides work swiftly and constructively to bring the JCPOA back on track as soon as possible'.



Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani arrives for the JCPOA meeting, in Vienna on Monday (AFP)

## 'Precarious situation'

The JCPOA offered a lifting of some of the array of economic sanctions Iran had been under in return for strict curbs on its nuclear programme.

But the deal started to unravel in 2018 when then-US president Donald Trump pulled out and began reinstating sanctions on Iran.

Ordinary Iranians are hoping the talks may lead to some of

started enriching uranium to unprecedented levels and has also restricted the activities of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN watchdog charged with monitoring Iran's nuclear facilities.

IAEA director general Rafael Grossi said 'no progress' was made on issues he raised during a visit to Tehran last week, which had hoped to address differ-

ences between the agency and Iran.

"Iran is acting like the United States is going to blink first but... pressure is a double-edged sword" which could kill any prospect of the 2015 deal being restored, Davenport added.

"If there are gaps in the IAEA's monitoring, it will drive the speculation that Iran has engaged in illicit activity, that it has a covert programme, whether there's evidence to that or not," Davenport said, which could in turn 'undermine the prospects for sustaining the deal'.

Britain will work 'flat out' and keep 'all options on the table' in order to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, Foreign Minister Liz Truss vowed on Monday.

Truss met her Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid for talks in London on Monday, where he will

also meet with Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Truss made the comments in a press briefing shortly after signing a 'memorandum of understanding' aimed at creating stronger collaboration between the two nations on cyber-security, defence and trade.

She said Britain would 'work flat out to prevent the Iranian regime from gaining nuclear weapons'.

"We are absolutely determined to prevent Iran from securing a nuclear weapon," she added.

Truss said that Britain "wants those [nuclear] talks to work, but if they don't work, all options are on the table".

But Lapid accused Tehran of trying to get sanctions lifted.

"They will play for time, earn billions from the removal of sanctions, continue to deceive the world, and covertly advance their nuclear programme," he said.

"This is what they have done in the past and it is what they will do this time as well."

"The world must prevent this, and it can prevent this," he added, calling for 'tighter sanctions (and) tighter supervision'. Israel's Prime Minister charged that Iran was re-entering talks to seek sanctions relief in exchange for 'almost nothing', insisting Tehran should 'not be rewarded'.

"Despite Iran's violations and undermining of the nuclear inspections, Iran will be arriving at the negotiation table in Vienna, and there are those who think they deserve to have their sanctions removed and hundreds of billions of dollars poured right into their rotten regime," Naftali Bennett said.

"They're wrong," said the Israeli premier. "Such a murderous regime should not be rewarded," Bennett said, urging Israel's allies 'to not give into Iran's nuclear blackmail'.

AFP



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) shakes hands with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed at the Presidential Complex in Ankara on Wednesday (AFP)

## Turkey to seek Egypt, Israel thaw after UAE talks

Ankara, Turkey - Turkey will take steps to improve relations with Egypt and Israel similar to those taken with the UAE, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in comments published by Turkish media on Monday.

Ties between Turkey and the UAE were strained over regional issues, but Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed's visit to Ankara last week thawed relations as the countries sealed multi-billion-dollar investments.

"Just as a step was taken between us and the United Arab Emirates, we will take similar steps with the others," Erdogan told Turkish reporters on board his plane returning from a trip to Turkmenistan at the weekend, NTV broadcaster reported.

He suggested Turkish ambassadors could be sent back to Egypt and Israel and said he was planning a return visit to the UAE in February.

"Now when we have made our decision, we will of course be in a position to appoint ambassadors within a defined schedule," Erdogan said, without offering a timeline.

Turkey and Egypt broke off

relations after the 2013 overthrow of ex-Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who was supported by Erdogan.

They expelled their respective ambassadors and downgraded their relations in 2013.

In 2018, Turkey ordered out Israel's ambassador over the killing of protestors along the Gaza Strip border.

Turkey sought a rapprochement with Egypt earlier this year despite supporting opposing sides in the conflict in Libya.

In March, Ankara said it had established its first diplomatic contacts with Cairo since 2013, while the Turkish Foreign Minister in April heralded a 'new era' in ties with Egypt.

The two countries held talks again in September as efforts continued towards normalising their relations without significant progress.

The UAE's first high-level visit to Turkey since 2012 last Wednesday led to the announcement of a US\$10bn fund for investments in Turkey, a day after the Turkish lira crashed amid a turbulent period for the economy.

AFP

## Israel okays immigration for thousands of Ethiopians

Jerusalem - Israel's government on Sunday approved the immigration of 3,000 Ethiopians whose relatives in the Jewish state have demanded their rescue from the conflict-stricken country.

A statement from Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said Cabinet unanimously agreed to allow 3,000 Ethiopians who have first-degree relatives in Israel to enter the country 'immediately'.

It identified those with 'first-degree relatives' as having a parent, child or sibling in Israel.

"Those eligible for immigration will be allowed to bring with them their spouses, minor children, and unmarried adult children."

"Additionally, a person whose parents came to Israel and died here, will also be allowed to immigrate," it added.

Immigration Minister Pnina Tamano-Shata, the first Ethiopian Jewish woman elected to Israel's parliament, hailed the move.

"This is an important decision for the Ethiopian community in Israel and their families," she said.

"Finally, parents, children, siblings and orphans will be reunited with their families after decades of waiting."



A member of Israel's Ethiopian community holds photos of loved ones, demanding their rescue in Jerusalem on November 14 (AFP)

The move comes as a year of fighting in Ethiopia between Tigray rebels and government forces has left hundreds of thousands in famine-like conditions.

Earlier this month, hundreds demonstrated in Jerusalem to demand action from the government, with protesters chanting 'rescue them'.

The Ethiopians who have been approved for immigration are members of the Falash Mura, descendants of Ethiopian Jews who converted to Christianity - many under duress - in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Known as Falashas, they are not recognised as Jews by Israel's Orthodox rabbinical authorities, but claim the right to

immigrate under family reunification rules.

In October last year, the Israeli government approved immigration plans for 2,000 Ethiopians after faced extended delays.

In 2015, the government approved about 9,000 claimants but then rescinded the decision the following year, citing budgetary constraints.

Israeli religious authorities were slow to recognise the Ethiopians as Jews.

It was only in 1984, and then in 1991, that the Jewish state organised massive air lifts for around 80,000 Ethiopians, many of whom ended up living in the occupied West Bank.

AFP

## 'Cold will kill us': Families fleeing Yemen's 7-year brutal civil war face desert winter

Marib, Yemen - Forced to flee fighting in Yemen's brutal war, Ali Yehya Hayba and his family find themselves crammed into a desert tent with dozens of others, fearing the onset of winter.

Hayba, his wife and their seven children escaped to the Al-Sumya camp east of Marib city, the government's last northern stronghold, after clashes escalated nearby.

The family, displaced for the second time in the seven-year civil war, have nothing but two blankets to keep them warm during the cold nights.

"It is part of the Empty Quarter desert. There are no humanitarian services, no schools, no hospitals or any other services," Hayba (39), said.

Al-Sumya, with its clusters of makeshift tents, has witnessed an influx of displaced people, with hundreds arriving in a month, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The camp, with scant resources, bears testament to a conflict that has forced millions from their homes, creating what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

"We have been displaced two or three times now," said Ali Abdullah, another of the camp's residents. "We have not received



Ali Yehya Hayba and his children stay at the al-Sumya camp for internally displaced persons east of Marib city, Yemen, on Wednesday (AFP)

blankets or mattresses, and the cold is going to kill us."

The Hayba family share a tent with six other families, with only two bales of straw for around 35 people to sleep on.

"We suffer from a lot of issues here," he said. "We can't put up a curtain for privacy, and we don't even have the capability to set up a proper bathroom... Every three or four children share one blanket."

### 'They have nothing'

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels began a big push to seize the strategic city of Marib in February and, after a lull in fighting, they renewed their campaign in September.

Despite aerial bombardment

from the Saudi-led coalition, the Houthis claim to be tightening their grip around Marib, with fighting raging to the north, west and south of the city.

IOM spokeswoman Angela Wells said about 60 families were sheltering at Al-Sumya until this month, when an estimated 1,200 fleeing households arrived.

She said the IOM had started to offer services at the camp, including emergency relief items, trucking in water and building latrines and water tanks.

But concerns are growing as winter advances.

"With the winter months approaching, we worry that many do not have the clothing, blankets and other basic items they

will need to stay safe and warm - especially those living in makeshift shelters that are not equipped to protect people from the elements," Wells said.

Marib city had between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants before the war but its population ballooned to hundreds of thousands as Yemenis fled frontline cities for its relative stability.

But with about 139 camps for the displaced in the province, according to the government, hosting around 2.2mn people, many displaced civilians are in the line of fire once again.

More than 45,000 people have been displaced by the fierce fighting in Marib province in the past two months, the IOM has said.

On Sunday, the UN children's agency said it was supporting more than 7,500 people in the camp by providing clean water, hygiene kits and portable toilets.

Ali al Habbash, supervisor of the Al-Sumya camp, said people are still arriving.

"There was no other shelter, so we hosted them in this camp with other families, and they've crammed on top of each other," he said.

"Still, there is no proper shelter, no place to sleep, not enough blankets... they have nothing."

AFP

# French minister urges UK to open legal route for asylum seekers

Paris, France - French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin urged Britain on Monday to open a legal route for asylum seekers in order to prevent people risking their lives by taking small boats across the Channel to England.

'Great Britain needs to open up a legal immigration route' because 'at the moment anyone who wants to ask for asylum has no other choice but to cross the Channel', Darmanin said in an interview with the RMC/BFM media group.

French officials have already suggested that British immigration officials process asylum requests in northern France from migrants camped out around the major ports on France's coast.

Darmanin convened fellow ministers responsible for immigration from Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium on Sunday for talks about the Channel migrant crisis, four days after an unprecedented accident saw 27 people drown in the busy sea lane.

They met without Britain which was excluded after a row last week between British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Darmanin again blamed Britain for the presence of thou-



A migrant carries her children after being rescued while crossing the English Channel at a beach in Dungeness, England, on Wednesday (AFP)

sands of migrants in northern France, alleging that more relaxed labour practices on the other side of the Channel were creating a 'pull effect' tempting migrants across in hope of finding work.

The four countries agreed to 'strengthen our operational co-

operation' in fighting the gangs who organise boats and life jackets for groups of migrants to head over the narrow but treacherous sea lane separating France and England.

EU border agency Frontex would deploy a surveillance plane 'day and night to help the

French, Dutch and Belgian police', Darmanin announced.

Many migrants around Calais also say they want to travel to the UK because they speak some English already, or have family and friends in the country.

Around 26,000 people have sailed from France to England

this year, leading to severe pressure on the UK government which had vowed to reduce migration after pushing through Britain's departure from the EU.

Johnson has suggested sending police and border agents to patrol alongside their French counterparts on the beaches of

*At the moment anyone who wants to ask for asylum has no other choice but to cross the Channel*

GERALD DARMANIN

northern France - something rejected by Paris in the past as an infringement on sovereignty.

More controversially, he proposed sending back all migrants who land in England, a move which Johnson claimed would save 'thousands of lives by fundamentally breaking the business model of the criminal gangs'. France received 80,000 asylum requests in 2020 compared with 27,000 in the UK.

Investigations into last Wednesday's accident continue, with French police giving no details officially about the circumstances or the identities of the victims. A total of 17 men, seven women and three minors died, with migrants living along the coast telling AFP that the deceased were mostly Iraqis, Iranians and Afghans.

AFP

## Taliban asks EU for help

Brussels, Belgium - The Taliban asked for help in keeping Afghanistan's airports running in weekend talks with EU officials that also raised 'grave concern' about the humanitarian situation in their country, according to an EU statement late Sunday.

Both sides sent senior officials to the Qatari capital Doha for the talks, which happened just ahead of two weeks of negotiations between the US and the Taliban due to start in Doha.

The EU's European External Action Service (EEAS) said in its statement that 'the dialogue does not imply recognition by the EU of the interim [Taliban] government but is part of EU's operational engagement, in the interest of the EU and the Afghan people'.

The Taliban delegation was led by Interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, accompanied by the interim ministers for education and health, the acting central bank governor, and officials from the foreign, finance and interior ministries and the intelligence directorate.

The EU side was headed by the EU special envoy for Afghanistan Tomas Niklasson, with officials from the EEAS and the European Commission's service handling humanitarian aid, international partnerships, and migration.

The EU statement said the Taliban vowed to stick by its promise of 'amnesty' for Afghans who had worked against it during the two decades of Western-oriented rule up to the hasty exit and evacuation by the US and its allies in August.

The Taliban side also committed to allowing Afghans and foreigners to leave if they wish so, but 'requested assistance for maintaining operations of airports' so that could happen.

AFP



Farmers light candles as they pay tribute to farmers who lost their lives in protests against the agricultural reform laws in Amritsar on Friday (AFP)

## India parliament votes to scrap farm reform laws

New Delhi, India - India's parliament voted on Monday to scrap agricultural reform laws that sparked a year of huge protests by farmers, after a surprise U-turn by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Thousands of farmers have been camped out on the outskirts of the capital New Delhi since last year - one of the biggest challenges to Modi's Hindu nationalist government since he came to power in 2014.

The rallies became a lightning rod for discontent in a country where two-thirds of the 1.3bn population rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

In its first meeting for the winter session, both houses of India's parliament rushed through a bill to scrap the laws, after Modi's shock decision to reverse course earlier this month.

But farmers' unions have vowed to keep up the fight against the government until they secure further concessions from the government.

"First major victory of the farmers' movement today, while other important demands are still pending," said Samyukta Kisan Morcha, a coalition of farmers' groups, in a statement.

They are seeking minimum prices for crops and compensa-

*First major victory of the farmers' movement today, while other important demands are still pending*

SAMYUKTA KISAN MORCHA

tion for the families of hundreds of farmers they said died during the protests, among other demands.

"I don't think this government has any sympathy for farmers," Vishavjot Mann, who joined a weekend rally for agricultural workers in Mumbai, told AFP.

"The government have just announced that they will repeal the laws, not because they think that they were wrong but because they understand that these protests will hamper their election results," she added.

Modi's reversal came ahead of important elections for his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in states such as Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, both home to huge numbers of farmers.

AFP

## Sri Lanka kitchens blow up amid gas crisis

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka is investigating a sharp rise in kitchen explosions caused by cooking gas that have reportedly killed at least one person and wounded dozens of others, parliament heard on Monday.

The island is in the grip of an economic crisis with serious shortages of fossil fuels and other essential goods because of depleted foreign currency reserves.

Opposition lawmakers have blamed increased concentrations of propane in liquified petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders used for cooking, relative to the more expensive butane.

The government is now probing LPG supplies after a dozen



Sri Lanka has reported a dozen blasts linked to kitchen stoves (AFP)

blasts linked to kitchen stoves, Consumer Affairs Minister Lasantha Alagiyawanna told parliament.

"During a short space of time there has been a very sharp in-

crease in gas accidents," he said. "We don't want to have 10 to 15 homes blowing up daily, so I have ordered an investigation."

An official in Sri Lanka's consumer affairs agency, who asked

not to be named, told AFP that higher concentrations of propane were increasing pressure on LPG cylinders, causing leaks that led to explosive fires.

State-run gas agency Litro has denied changing the proportion of butane and propane in domestic gas cylinders, instead blaming poorly maintained stoves and faulty pipes.

Local media reports said a 19 year old woman was killed after a gas cylinder leaked and exploded in Sri Lanka's east last week. Police have denied the death was due to a gas leak.

Consumers have faced serious LPG shortages in recent months.

AFP

## 'I want a bone': Mexico's search for 95,000 missing

Matamoros, Mexico - A mother pleaded desperately with a soldier for a chance to find the remains of her son, one of more than 95,000 people whose disappearances haunt violence-plagued Mexico.

"I just want a bone to lay to rest beside my husband," she said.

The woman, whose son disappeared a year ago, begged to be allowed into a former cornfield in the northeastern state of Tamaulipas where half a ton of human remains have been found since 2017.

"Answer me! Do you have children?" said the mother, in her 50s, but she received no response from the soldiers.

The site, La Bartolina, is located a few kilometers from Matamoros, a city on the border with the United States beset by violence linked to drug trafficking and other organised crime.

It is considered an 'extermination camp' by the National Search Commission, the official body that coordinates the hunt for Mexico's missing.

Access to the site is forbidden even for victims' relatives, who often accuse the authorities of ineffectiveness and so undertake



A woman shows a poster with the portrait of her missing son at a property called 'La Bartolina' in the border city of Matamoros, Tamaulipas state, Mexico on August 23 (AFP)

their own searches.

The mother, who did not want to be named due to concerns for her safety, has no proof that her son's remains are at La Bartolina.

But she decided to go there after learning that other relatives would be visiting.

More than 11,800 people are registered as missing in Tamaulipas, which sits on a drug smuggling corridor. Along with the western state of Jalisco, it has seen the largest number of dis-

appearances in Mexico.

Countrywide, 95,121 people have gone missing, according to official figures released on Friday during a visit by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

During the ten days the UN team spent in Mexico, 100 people disappeared, the committee said. It denounced what it called the ineffectiveness of the authorities, arbitrary decisions by the courts and a general culture of 'impunity'.

People began to vanish during the Mexican authorities' so-called dirty war against the revolutionary movements of the 1960s-1980s.

But it was after then-president Felipe Calderon launched a military offensive against the drug cartels in 2006 that the number of people missing - and murdered - began to soar. Since then, the country of 126mn people has recorded 300,000 murders, including more than 36,000 in

2020 alone - an average of nearly 100 every day.

"Organised crime remains one of the main causes of disappearances," said Laura Atuesta, an expert at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics.

Relatives of the disappeared 'continue to face a system that does not give them an answer', National Search Commission head Karla Quintana told AFP.

In La Bartolina, Maria Isela Valdez, who leads a group of relatives of missing persons, railed against the security forces blocking the mothers from entering the site.

"Why weren't the National Guard, the army and the navy here when people were taken, tortured, massacred, burned and buried?" Valdez (58) demanded.

Together with her 38 year old daughter Delia Quiroa she was looking for her son Roberto, who was abducted in the nearby city of Reynosa in 2014.

In Mexico, 98 per cent of crimes go unpunished and thousands of unidentified bodies linger in morgues because the justice system is overwhelmed, Quintana said.

AFP

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# Omicron variant requires 'urgent action': G7

If another surge of COVID-19 takes place driven by Omicron, consequences may be severe: WHO

Berlin, Germany - The new COVID variant Omicron is highly transmissible and requires 'urgent action', G7 health ministers said on Monday, praising South Africa's 'exemplary work' for both detecting the strain and alerting others to it.

'The global community is faced with the threat of a new, at a first evaluation, highly transmissible variant of COVID-19, which requires urgent action,' the health ministers said in a statement following an emergency meeting.

Underlining the 'strategic relevance of ensuring access to vaccines', they pledged to hold to their donation commitments, as well as to provide support to research and development.

At the same time, they will tackle 'vaccine misinformation', something that has in parts of the world led to resistance against inoculation.

A new meeting will be held in December, they said, committing to work closely together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and international partners to share information on Omicron.

Scientists in South Africa said they had last week detected the new variant with at least 10 mutations, compared with three for Beta or two for Delta - the strain that hit the global recovery and sent millions worldwide back into lockdown.

The Omicron discovery has sparked a frenzy of travel restrictions across the world.

A growing list of countries have already imposed travel curbs on southern Africa, including key travel hub Qatar, the United States, Britain, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Netherlands.

## Australia halts border reopening

Australia on Monday halted a plan to relax border restrictions imposed last year to fight the COVID pandemic.

Australia, which has already confirmed five cases of Omi-



International travellers wearing personal protective equipment arrive at Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport on Monday as Australia records its first cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 (AFP)

cron, was set to relax restrictions on skilled workers and students from Wednesday in a boon to industries suffering labour shortages under one of the world's toughest border regimes. But Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a two-week delay on the plan to allow Australia to gather information on the new variant, following announcements from Japan and Israel of bans on foreign travellers.

A Madrid hospital said on Monday it had detected Spain's first case of the Omicron strain. 'The microbiology service of the Gregorio Marañon Hospital in Madrid announces the first confirmation of the Omicron variant in Spain,' the hospital tweeted.

The WHO said the overall risk from Omicron was 'very

high' and warned that any major surge would put pressure on health systems and cause more deaths.

Many governments, particularly in western Europe, are already struggling with rapid rises in cases and have reintroduced mandatory mask-wearing, social-distancing measures, curfews or lockdowns - leaving high street businesses fearing another grim Christmas.

The first confirmed case of the Omicron variant was in South Africa on November 9, with infections spreading rapidly in the country - although no deaths have yet been reported, according to the WHO.

It warned however that 'if another major surge of COVID-19 takes place driven by Omicron, consequences may be severe'.

Scientists in South Africa flagged the new strain last Thursday, prompting several European countries to quickly ban flights from the region.

That irritated South African officials who said they were being 'punished' for identifying a strain that has now been detected everywhere from the Netherlands to the UK, Canada to Hong Kong.

The WHO's Africa branch said barring travellers from the continent 'attacks global solidarity', and Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera accused Western countries of 'Afrophobia'.

Underlining the difficulties of containing the spread, Austria and Scotland, which both have flight bans in place from several African countries, confirmed

their first cases of Omicron on Monday. Nevertheless, Japan joined a growing list of countries reimposing tough border controls, barring all new foreign arrivals. The Philippines also said it would temporarily suspend plans to allow in fully vaccinated tourists.

It remains unclear how infectious Omicron is and how resistant it could be to vaccines.

The WHO's latest technical update called it a 'highly divergent variant with a high number of mutations', warning that some of these mutations might be associated with easier transmission and may have the potential to dodge protections including vaccination - though this is yet to be demonstrated.

AFP

## Pfizer working on vaccine targeting new variant

New York, US - Pfizer has already started working on a version of its COVID-19 vaccine specifically targeting the Omicron variant in case the current inoculation is not effective against the new strain, the US drugmaker's CEO Albert Bourla said on Monday.

Bourla told CNBC that his company on Friday began testing the current vaccine against the Omicron variant.

"I don't think the result will be the vaccines don't protect," Bourla said. But the testing could show that existing shots 'protect less', which means 'that we need to create a new vaccine', Bourla said.

"Friday we made our first DNA template, which is the first possible inflection of the development process of a new vaccine," he said.

Bourla likened the situation

to the scenario earlier this year when Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech developed a vaccine in 95 days when there were concerns the previous formula would not work against Delta, though that version ultimately was not used.

The current vaccine is 'very effective' against Delta, he said, adding that the firms expect to be able to produce 4bn vaccine doses in 2022.

Bourla said he was also 'very confident' that Pfizer's recently unveiled antiviral pill would work as a treatment for infections caused by the mutations, including Omicron.

Among newly-infected, high risk patients treated within three days of the onset of symptoms, Pfizer's pill has been shown to cut hospitalisation or death by 90 per cent.

AFP

## Russia says developing Sputnik Omicron booster

Moscow, Russia - The backers of the Russian COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V said on Monday that the jab is effective against the new Omicron coronavirus variant but they were also developing an adapted booster.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which supported the vaccine's development by the state-run Gamaleya Center, said that the centre 'has already begun developing the new version of Sputnik vaccine adapted to Omicron'.

'In an unlikely case such modification is needed, the new Sputnik Omicron version can be ready for mass-scale production in 45 days,' RDIF said in a statement.

'Several hundred million Sputnik Omicron boosters can be provided to international markets already by February 20, 2022 with over 3bn doses available in 2022.'

The promise comes after the US pharmaceutical company Moderna said on Friday that it will develop a booster shot against the highly mutated strain of the coronavirus.

Last week RDIF said Sputnik V provides longer immunity against the coronavirus than Western jabs using messenger RNA (mRNA) technology. It added that the Sputnik vaccine is 80 per cent effective against the coronavirus between six and eight months after the second dose.

AFP

## S Africa could top 10,000 daily cases this week

Johannesburg, South Africa - The newly-discovered Omicron variant is likely to fuel a surge in South Africa's coronavirus cases that could see daily infections treble this week, a top epidemiologist warned on Monday.

Health monitors reported over 2,800 new infections on Sunday, up from a daily average of 500 in the previous week and 275 the week before.

"We can expect that higher transmissibility is likely and so we are going to get more cases quickly," Dr Salim Abdool Karim said at an online Health Ministry press briefing.

"I am expecting we will top over 10,000 cases by the end of the week per day [and] see pressure on hospitals within the next two, three weeks."

South African scientists announced the new highly-mutated variant on Thursday, blaming it for a sudden rise in infections in Africa's worst-hit nation.

Hospital admissions more than doubled over the past month in Gauteng, South Africa's most populous province and the epicentre of the new outbreak, according to official figures.

The province has entered a



A healthcare worker conducts a PCR COVID-19 test on a traveller at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on Saturday (AFP)

fourth infection wave that is expected to spread to the rest of the country by the end of the year, health officials said.

South Africa has recorded 2.9mn cases and 89,797 deaths, although these figures, proportionate to its population, are still significantly lower than other heavily affected countries, especially in Europe.

Health Minister Joe Phaahla said there was 'absolutely no need to panic'.

"We have been here before," he said, referring to the Beta

variant identified in South Africa last December.

UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said on Monday he was 'deeply concerned' as countries around the world imposed travel restrictions on southern Africa. "The people of Africa cannot be blamed for the immorally low level of vaccinations available in Africa - and they should not be penalised for identifying and sharing crucial science and health information with the world," he said.

AFP

## British govt extends coronavirus booster programme to all adults

London, UK - All adults in Britain will now be eligible for a third COVID jab, the government said on Monday, as concern mounted about the spread of the new Omicron variant.

The move, backed by a scientific advisory body and Health Secretary Sajid Javid, comes as ministers scramble to react swiftly to the new variant, which was first detected in South Africa.

Until now, only adults in the UK aged 40 and above were eligible for a booster dose six months after their last.

But that timeframe will now be halved to three months, alongside the programme's expansion to all over-18s, with priority given to older people.

"These measures will protect more people, more quickly and make us better protected as a nation," Javid told MPs.

He noted it was 'a huge step up' for Britain's vaccination scheme, which was launched last December, almost doubling the number of people eligible for a booster.

"In this race between the vaccines and the virus, the new variant may have given the virus extra legs," Javid said.

"So our strategy is to buy ourselves time, and to strengthen



Passengers, many wearing face coverings to combat the spread of COVID-19, walk along a platform as they travel on the London underground in central London on Sunday (AFP)

our defences."

Britain-- badly hit by the pandemic with nearly 145,000 deaths and stubbornly high daily infection rates - is one of several countries to have announced cases of the new variant on their soil.

Six cases of the new strain were detected in Scotland on Monday, two of them in the largest city of Glasgow.

Five others were confirmed in England, Javid told parliament, noting he expected 'cases to rise

over the coming days'.

Since the Omicron variant was identified and named last week, the UK government - which has responsibility for health policy in England only - has slapped a travel ban on ten southern African countries, including South Africa.

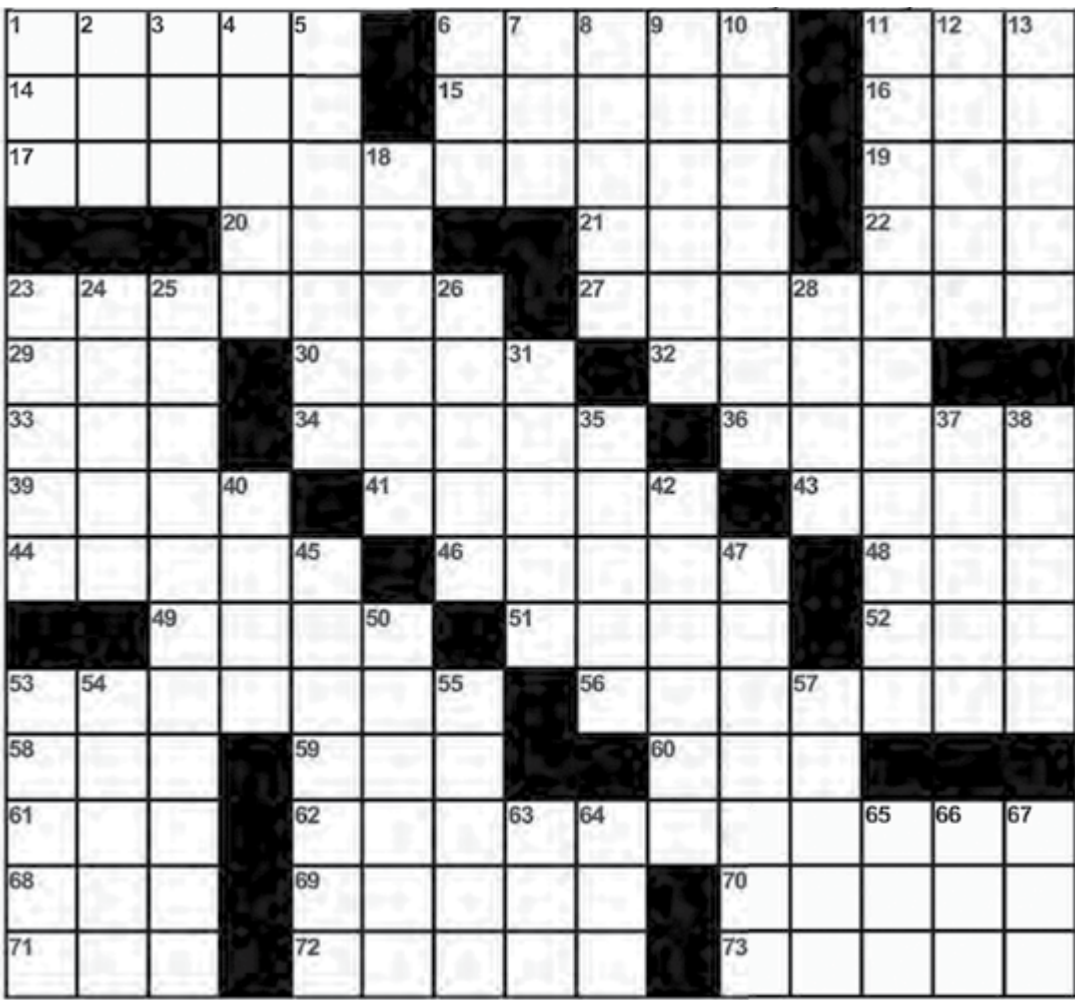
It has also reintroduced compulsory testing for travellers, and mandatory mask-wearing in shops and public transport in England, as well as self-isolation for contact cases.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which advises UK health departments on immunisation, approved expanding the rollout of the booster jabs of Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech.

At a briefing announcing the changes, it said second vaccine doses would also now be offered to children aged 12 to 15 while severely immuno-compromised people should be given a fourth shot as a booster.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Use one's reflexes
- 6) One from Cedar Rapids
- 11) Cheesecake leg
- 14) Tidal flood
- 15) Recto's opposite
- 16) Pi-sigma connection
- 17) Elite military unit
- 19) Underwater electric-ity source
- 20) Mai follower
- 21) Filbert or cashew
- 22) What to do after being served
- 23) Pressing importance
- 27) Maroons
- 29) Neither's go-with
- 30) Bar mitzvah honoree
- 32) Modern Old World money
- 33) It can be behind the eight ball
- 34) Spread out, as fin-gers
- 36) Brainy club
- 39) Brings into play
- 41) Certain moles
- 43) Makes a drink last
- 44) Camping shelters
- 46) It comes from the

hip

- 48) Meal crumb
- 49) \_ Christian Ander-sen
- 51) Main actor
- 52) Prefix with "con"
- 53) Old Japanese mili-tary leaders
- 56) Less abundant
- 58) Cross-shaped Greek character
- 59) Ben Carson's grp.
- 60) Compact subma-chine gun
- 61) Roll-\_ (some deodor-ants)
- 62) Oft-stuffed veggie
- 63) Cause of grief
- 69) Exit
- 70) Out of practice
- 71) Bra's relative
- 72) Was at fault
- 73) Kitchen rack item

DOWN

- 1) Avg., in sizes
- 2) Hammer and anvil lo-cale
- 3) Time of one's exis-tence
- 4) Minotaur's home
- 5) Flat people?

- 6) "\_ Gotta Be Me"
- 7) Above, to a poet
- 8) Small brown birds
- 9) Clever
- 10) Quack remedy
- 11) Envious veggies?
- 12) Like the frontrunner
- 13) Drops feathers
- 18) Mounds of arms
- 23) Like some director's editions
- 24) Awaken
- 25) They offer controlled growing conditions
- 26) Sounds from a pound
- 28) Trojan War figure
- 31) Finger features
- 35) Butler-turned-poet?
- 37) Indulgent outing
- 38) Millionaire on the Titanic
- 40) Pre-wedding party
- 42) Acquire quickly
- 45) Get close and cozy
- 47) Hungry sheep
- 50) One who is loud at night
- 53) Uses the cargo hold
- 54) Vietnamese city

- 55) Weapon with a pointy head
- 57) Destroy a contract, in a way
- 63) Dec. 24, e.g.

- 64) "The Simpsons" neighbor Flanders
- 65) Letters on a tire
- 66) List ending, often
- 67) Kind of whiskey

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

While your tendency is to be all things to all people, make it a point to please yourself at this moment. You're centered, balanced, and a tangible force of love. Others are attracted to your inner harmony. Allow your grace to carry you through the day. Flirt, but only with the ones who really catch your eye. Visit friends, but only the ones who please you the most. You can make friends and influence people with a wave of your hand.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Everyone loves you right now and wants to bask in your glow. People are eager to vote for you or ask you out on a date. For the moment, the world revolves around you. You even impress yourself as several of your pet projects come to fruition. Try to capitalise on your success as much as possible and you'll reap the rewards for weeks to come. If only every day was this easy!



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You can expect to attract some interesting attention right now. Someone nearby is definitely drawn to you. Make sure you're interested too before switching the light from red to green. Some unexpected circumstances bring about other delightful surprises, so stay on your toes. Avoid giving mixed signals that could result in a big misunderstanding. Above all, don't say yes when you mean no.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's just a flesh wound, but it still may sting just a bit. Apply a few bandages and hope for the best. Certain circumstances might be out of your control, but at least you know that things will heal quickly and not leave a scar. Count on your inner resources to get through the day. Spend a little time and money on pampering yourself, but be sure to keep one foot in reality. Call up an old friend tonight and share your thoughts.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You could find yourself on an emotional roller coaster today. Your gut pushes you toward unusual or unpredictable behaviour. It's not a bad thing to act on your instincts, just a modus operandi to which you may be unaccustomed. Work on getting your feelings in check before you subject your friends and family members to these sudden changes.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Try to keep petty drama and other unwanted intrusions out of the way as much as possible. Now is a good time to pay attention to your inner workings for a while. If you're feeling frustrated about something, do whatever is necessary to cleanse yourself of that negative energy. Tonight, make sure you give something (or someone) your best shot. The gesture will mean a lot.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your physical health depends on your emotional health, and vice versa. More than ever, you're aware of yourself as an integrated system of separate parts. Two obvious game plans emerge from this point. The first is to keep your attitude positive whatever happens. The second is to live comfortably in your body. If you're not already an expert at doing these things, you could easily become one.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Just when you were about to give up, you see a tiny ray of sunshine peeking through the clouds. Somebody makes your day by offering an unsolicited and life-changing opinion. You are suddenly curious about everything and everyone. Outsiders have authority in areas where established leaders dare not go. Consider taking up the profession of reporter or journalist. This could be the scoop of your life.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You get a welcome breather from the nonstop action today. You don't know whether you're coming or going, but that's not the least of it. You see the best and worst sides of the people in your life, adding to your confusion about what to do. Following an impulse saves the day, although a more confusing issue remains obscured. It might be best to avoid making any major decisions until this fog lifts.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

The issues aren't laid out in black and white. You might have the urge to be impulsive. Wait it out. Weigh all factors with care before making a big decision. Wanting to do something is a powerful motivation, but it isn't the only justification. Patience is the key to a successful outcome. Tonight, a family member provides some much-needed perspective. Don't be afraid to get a second opinion before making the final choice.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

How do you deal with someone with an inappropriately sized ego? This is a good time to take a thorough inventory of your inner resources. Sometimes the best thing to do is laugh it off. If that proves impossible, try polite confrontation. If it's just too massive a roadblock, you might have to think about falling back or possibly retreating. Don't worry. By tomorrow, that beastly ego should shrink back to a manageable size.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Nobody notices when you make a dramatic entrance, which is frustrating if you need to garner a certain someone's attention. Use this opportunity to rewrite that scene and replay it again. It's sure to go over much better the second time around. Once your inner diva has gotten enough applause, pamper yourself. Get a professional massage or indulge in your favourite food.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The headquarter of the International Court of Justice (UNO) are located at

- a. Hague (Netherlands)
- b. Addis Ababa
- c. Bangkok
- d. New York, USA

2. The headquarter of European Court of Justice (ECJ) are situated at

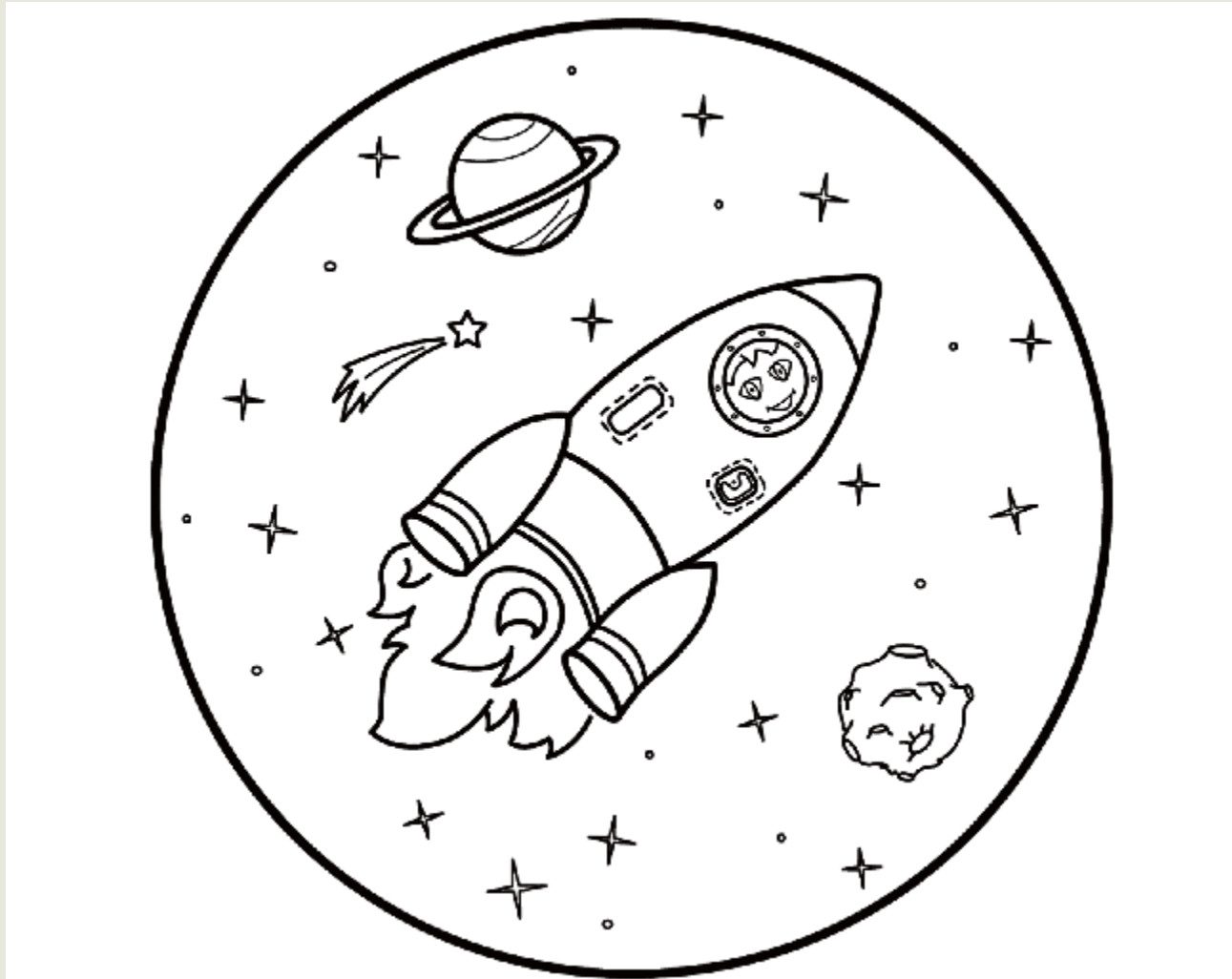
- a. Luxembourg
- b. Paris
- c. Strasbourg (France)
- d. San Jose, Costa Rica

3. The host of first Olympics in 1896 was

- a. Athens, Greece
- b. Paris, France
- c. London, Great Britain
- d. Los Angeles, USA

Answers: 1. a 2. a 3. a

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

|   |   |    |   |
|---|---|----|---|
| F | T | H  | M |
| G | E | Qu | M |
| E | A | D  | E |
| U | S | I  | A |

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

**Solution** 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

**LEVEL EASY:** Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

NEW ART GALLERY



Dr Nasser Palangi (left) presents a painting to H H Sayyida Huriah Assad al Said at the inauguration. On extreme right is Sarah Ahmed Farid al Aulaqi

# ART VENTURE

Hubert Vaz

The lobby of the Grand Hyatt Muscat had a festive atmosphere last Friday evening as a new initiative to open an art gallery amid the glittering ambience of this five-star hotel took shape. The work of a talented group of Omani and expatriate artists adorned the walls of the gallery in this inaugural venture which was a pointer to many interesting art events in the near future.

The new gallery, called Cure8 Art Gallery, was inaugurated by H H Sayyida Huriah Assad al Said in the presence of a select group of dignitaries, members of the Royal Family and the artists who participated in the inaugural group exhibition, reflecting an interesting theme – Methods of creative imagination.

The works on display were the outcome of an extensive training programme which the participating artists underwent over the past two years at the National Museum of Oman as well as via online sessions during the months of lockdown in Oman. The artists spent long hours training under Dr Nasser Palangi, an Australian-Iranian artist and art teacher, who teaches art at the Scientific College of Design in Muscat, who taught them the art of creative imagination to develop exclusive pieces that are dis-

played at this exhibition.

The participating artists are a mixed group of artists at different levels in their artistic careers, including Al Zahara Hussain, Abeer al Moosawi, Afra Talal al Said, Boushra Khalfan al Shabibi, Elizabeth Davis, Iman al Maskari, Mirna Youssef, Maya Youssef, Munira al Zadjali, Raya Saleh al Maskari, Sahwa Mustahail al Mashani, Sara Abdulraeza Madan and Shalini Gupta Kumar.

“When we started out this training programme, we had a much larger participation. However, due to many reasons over the past two years because of the pandemic and the restrictions, many artists had to opt out midway. However, the final group which continued till the end have really shown great talent and explored their own creativity and imagination in a beautiful way, which you will see in the exhibition,” Dr Palangi said, expressing satisfaction that all the participating artists were able to explore varied sides to their inherent talent and find new ways of expression with creative imagination.

### Three powers

He further explained that every artist needs to examine and develop three powers within themselves to be able to create meaningful art. The first is called 'khayal' (in Arabic), meaning imagination, the second is 'waham' or illusion and the third is 'ilham' or inspiration.

“All these powers are different and present in every individual but some activate

A new gallery – Cure8 Art Gallery – opened in Grand Hyatt Muscat signalling the beginning of many new initiatives for artists in Oman

these powers, some do not. The goal of my training programme is to activate these powers in artists,” Dr Palangi said, adding that he spent nearly 30 years researching, experimenting, teaching and developing this programme with the help of Persian and other international resources, besides insights from psychology, philosophy and allied subjects.

“For this programme in Oman, we started with elements from the National Museum to make identical artworks related to Oman’s culture. We used identical patterns, motives and colours of Omani heritage to practise this method which is a manifestation of this movement,” Dr Palangi disclosed adding that the outcome of his programme with international students is to create identical, contemporary visual arts in 2D, 3D and 4D, though the exhibition in Oman includes only 2D artworks.

### Collaboration is key

Sarah Ahmed Farid al Aulaqi, director of Cure8, when asked whether there was need for one more art gallery when there were already many in Muscat, said, “You can never have enough galleries and platforms for exhibiting creativity. I started this gallery three years ago in another location with the aim of fostering local talent, in art and music, and getting to know each others’ talents. We cannot thrive as a nation if we are not connected as people. So, the core of Cure8 is collaboration among artists.”

She further disclosed that this new

gallery would focus on hosting more events and initiatives which would encourage and foster collaboration and education of artists so that they could develop their individual skills, learn from each other, and move forward towards collective goals for art in Oman.

There are also plans to set up an Art Club wherein artists can meet regularly and discuss common matters and work towards new ventures. The gallery will also be introducing for the first time in Oman QR codes for artworks which can be scanned for details about each artist, the artwork, and the price.

Farideh Zariv, an Australian-Iranian artist and curator of the first group exhibition, said, “This exhibition was very attractive and unique for me. For almost three years, I have been following Dr Palangi’s teaching of the ‘method of creative imagination’ and how to activate people’s minds and imaginations and transfer them from objective to subjective designs. This exhibition showcases the work of 13 Omani and international artists, who are students of Dr Palangi, and which is the outcome of this course.

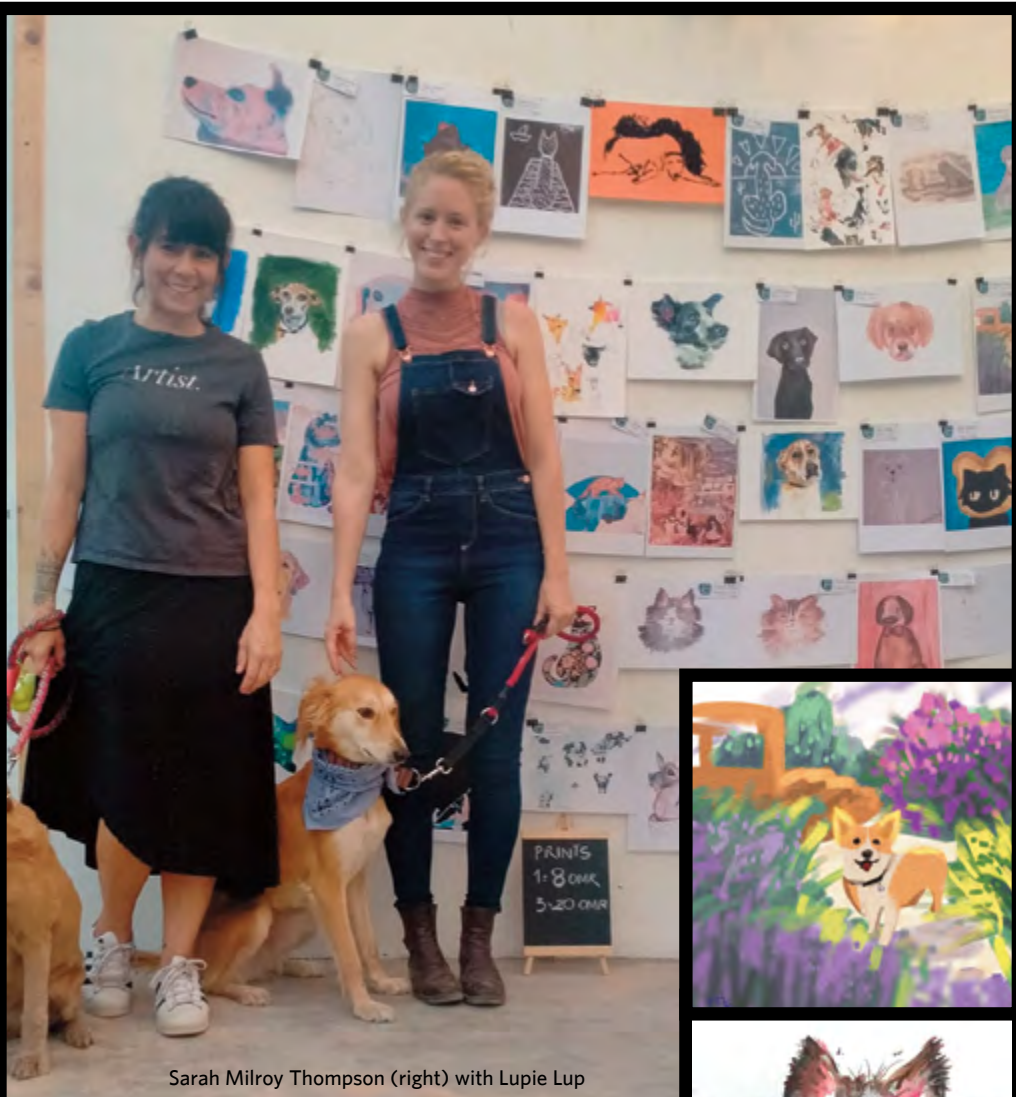
“Among all the works they had prepared, three are published in a book. We have chosen beautiful colours for our gallery to suit the artworks on display and there are plans to host many more group and solo exhibitions in coming months, besides organising art conferences and seminars about why and how art is collectable and commendable.”



# LOVE FOR ART AND ANIMALS

ART FAIR

STRAY TAILS



Sarah Milroy Thompson (right) with Lupie Lup



Sarah Milroy Thompson, a Scottish artist in Oman, recently took up a unique initiative to hold an interesting sculpture and art exhibition, titled Stray Tails, featuring work by professional artists, children and adults to raise awareness and funds for the stray animals of Oman. The three-day exhibition was held in a restaurant in Qurum, between November 18 and 20.

"We created Stray Tails out of a shared passion for art and animals. We teach children arts and crafts anyway and wanted to steer it towards the theme of animals. Then, to enable the kids to be part of exhibitions but also know they are helping and contributing towards a cause in need, we decided on creating exhibits," said Sarah who was assisted by an artist friend Lupie Lup in this venture.

**We created Stray Tails out of a shared passion for art and animals. We teach children arts and crafts anyway and wanted to steer it towards the theme of animals**

SARAH MILROY THOMPSON

A freelance art teacher, Sarah secured donations of art supplies from parents, and other people in Muscat who took keen interest in her initiative, besides friends visiting her art studio to participate in several animal themed art workshops. The proceeds of sale at the exhibition has been pledged for the welfare of hapless pets in Oman, using the advice of Omani Paws and Muscat Dog Adoption, she said.

"We bonded over our passions for art and animals and created an Art Collective where the main objective is to put animals in the spotlight. Over the past few months, we had worked individually with groups of children, both in schools and in the community, towards creating and producing animal inspired artworks," she said, adding, "We also reached out to local professional artists to seek donated work for this cause."

Sarah plans to continue organising similar art initiatives to continue her goal of art education and animal education with help from the community. Aware that funding might be her only issue, she hopes to continue this initiative as she considers it her passion.



## Affordable Art Fair on Dec 2-3

If you appreciate and love art but cannot afford to buy art because of the exorbitant price tags attached to varied artworks displayed in different exhibitions, this is your chance to bag some good deals without burning a hole in your pocket.

Oman Affordable Art Fair is round the corner and exclusive pieces of art belonging to varied genres will be on display for art lovers and collectors to bring home their favourite artworks. The art fair will be held at Al Bahja Hall, next to Jungle Restaurant, in Qurum, on December 2 and 3 and all artworks displayed for sale will be sold for less than RO150.

Oman's Art Fair organisation comprises a team of experienced and qualified art professionals that have joined forces and are organising contemporary art exhibitions in Oman. The art fair creates a great opportunity for art galleries to exhibit their artworks to hundreds of local visitors, disclosed Radhika Hamalai, an accomplished artist and key organiser of the art fair.

"Muscat is a great place to showcase your art" she says calling on all art lovers to patronise the art fair, the previous edition of which was a big success two years ago.

Entry to the art fair, held between 10am and 7pm on both days, is free. A large turnout is expected for the event, though all precautionary measures for COVID-19 will be followed to ensure the safety of all visitors.

The artworks featured in the Art Fair belong to well known artists in Oman, including the likes of Madny al Bakry, Tahira Fida Hussain, Radhika Hamalai, Farah Asqul, Tarini Agawal, Debjani Bhardwaj, Rebecca Nigrinis, Elizabeth Davis, and Kostis Grivakis, as well as some from Shah Nagardas Manji, Artist Collective, Cure8 Art Gallery, Al Ghalay Art and Design, Scientific College of Design and other organisations.



## CLASSIFIEDS

**السوق الحرة**  
**ممسقط**  
**DUTY FREE**

**USED/OLD EQUIPMENT FOR SALE**

On-Board Terminals, Chargers, CCTV Cameras, Accessories, Chairs, Landline phones, POS Machines, POS Printers, Printers, Projectors, UPS, Switches and Laptops are available for sale in "as is where is basis".

Mr. Khalid Al Balushi: +968-93801251  
Mr. Saleh Al Balushi: +968-98037464

Sunday 21 November to Thursday 3 December 2021 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)

Muscat Duty free Warehouse, Rusayl Industrial Estate, Way No.4D, Building No.131

The items can be inspected at our premises with prior appointment

## JOB OPPORTUNITY ACCOUNT ASSISTANT

(For a large business conglomerate - Location: Muscat, Oman) Only for Omani Nationals Age: 25-35yrs. No. of Vacancies: 1. Salary: (depending on experience & qualifications)

ACCA / CA / CMA / CPA / Graduate / Diploma any of this qualification with at least 5 years of experience. Candidate should have the capability to manage payable Accounting keeping in mind minimum working capital and constraints in Liquidity. Independently managing Payable Function and Cash Flow, Petty Cash Management, Timely managing Supplier Payments and other Inter Company Payments and all other payments, Timely Booking of Invoices, GRN Costing and booking of Bank Payments, etc., Timely Reconciliation of Suppliers as well as Banks. Month End Closing Activities of Payable Accounting to ensure timely submission of MIS. Ready to take more responsibilities during Budget, Month End Activities and Audits to meet time line. Candidate should be able to oversee and bring about the functioning of Accounts, Finance and Store activities of a large size trading organisation to ensure company needs are met and interests safeguarded.

Please send your CV to:  
[job.opportunity1947@gmail.com](mailto:job.opportunity1947@gmail.com)

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](http://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

**أوربت ORBIT**  
Car Rental & Lease

**FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING**

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories:  
**Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)**  
Please email your listing to [dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om) or call 99104346

**BIRTHDAY WISHES**

**SABRA**  
30th November

Many happy returns of the day, Happy Birthday to my dear lovely wife Sabra,  
From Sarwar

Send your request for Birthday/Anniversary wishes to [wish@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:wish@apexmedia.co.om) with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)



Sailors preparing ahead of the championship



# Oman Sail kicks off 2021 ILCA 6 Radial World Championship

Muscat - Oman Sail welcomed International Laser Class Association (ILCA) Radial sailors from around the world for the 2021 ILCA 6 World Championship which began on Monday and will run through to December 6 at the Barceló Mussanah Resort.

Racing takes place every day before the fleet splits and the medals are decided in a final race between the top contenders. Both the men's and women's

competitions will run concurrently with competitors enjoying a day of practice before the championships officially start.

The event features several of the world's top ten female sailors in the class, including 2020 Olympians, world number two and 2018 World Champion, Emma Plasschaert of Belgium and world number four, Elena Vorobeva of Croatia. Agata Barwinska (6) of Poland, Maxime

Jonker (8) of the Netherlands, Vasileia Karachaliou (9) from Greece, and Marie Barrue (10) from France will also be taking part.

The Men's race will include four of Oman's best ILCA 6 sailors who will all be looking for a strong showing on home waters. Abdulmalik al Hlnai, Al-moutasim al Farsi and Ali al Sadi have impressed on the circuit over the past 12 months and

earned their place at the World Championships.

Hamed al Yahmadi, the event project manager at Oman Sail, said, "This is another great opportunity for Oman Sail to host the very best sailors from around the world. The fleet is incredibly strong and we are looking forward to an excellent week of sailing. Winter has been a very busy time for Oman Sail and Musanah in particular with so many

World and Asian Championships coming to our shores and we are delighted to once again show our ability as a world class host, formidable sailing nation and an emerging tourist destination."

Originally slated to be held in Houston, USA, the event faced cancellation until Oman was selected as replacement hosts in July 2021 to ensure the championships could still take place.

SETTLE DOWN IN THE COUNTRY OF YOUR CHOICE

CHOOSE THE BEST M-J GLOBAL OMAN / UAE / QATAR / SRI LANKA

M-J GLOBAL Ultimate Investment Solutions

CANADA

Get Permanent Residency of Canada through Express Entry/ Provincial Nominee Program in 4-12 months OR Get Permanent Residency through Owner operated LMIA within 12 months with minimum investment of CAD 150,000 OR Start your business in British Columbia with minimum CAD 250,000 and get residency in 11 to 13 months.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

USA EB-3 Visa: Direct employment and US Green Card for you and your family. Processing time 15 months. Occupation in Demand: Carpenter, Janitor, Production Helper, General Laborer

GERMANY

Germany Business Immigration with minimum Euro 25,000 capital investment in business. Processing time is only 3 months. Resident Visa for entire family. Get Passport on the 3th year.

PORTUGAL

Invest in real estate of minimum Euro 280,000 and get the Portugal Golden Visa in 6 months. Get Portugal Passport in 5 yrs with access to 177 countries visa free travel. Stay requirement only 7 days per year in Portugal. Excellent returns on investment

HUNGARY

Hungary Business Immigration • Euro 50,000\* Minimum Investment • Temporary Resident Visa for entire family • Processing time only 4-5 months • 2yrs Business experience/Senior Management role preferred

CYPRUS

Cyprus: Get your Citizenship in 6 months by investment of Euro 2 million in Real Estate or Get a Permanent Residency in 3 months by investing in Real Estate with investment worth Euro 300,000

DOMINICA

Dominica Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 100,000\* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 120 Countries • Processing time 4-5 months • No need to stay in Dominica

GRENADA

Grenada Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 150,000\* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 130 Countries • Processing time 4-5 months • Tax advantages

TURKEY

Turkey: Get your citizenship in 5 months by investment of USD 250,000 in Real Estate. Smooth and Fast processing with excellent returns.

OFFICE NO. 204, 2ND FLOOR, JASMINE COMPLEX, AL HADIDIA STREET, AL KHUWAIR, MUSCAT. P.O. BOX 24476383, +968 9357 1122, +968 7771 99 28. EMAIL: CS@M-JGLOBAL.COM

WWW.M-JGLOBAL.COM



## Team France continues good form after day one in Sur

**SAILING ARABIA - THE TOUR 2021**

Muscat - The first day of leg two of this year's Sailing Arabia - The Tour ended with Team France still in the lead as the gap to DB Schenker in second grew to a single point. Oman Sail remain in third with Oman Investment Authority in fourth, Barceló Musanah Resort fifth and Nastro Rosa of Italy in sixth.

Racing featured a longer coastal raid along the shoreline, which Team France won ahead of DB Schenker and Nastro Rosa, and then two short stadium races. Team France and Oman Sail traded wins, each claiming victory in one and relegating the other team to second place. As well as a one-point gap at the top, Oman Sail has opened up a three point advantage over fourth place as the fleet began to separate.

Ali al Balushi, Bowman on the Barceló Musanah Resort team, said, "Today was a great day of sailing, very challenging with some ups and downs for our



DB Schenker Team

team but we came back in the coastal raid, finishing fourth. Afterwards we had two inshore races, finishing fourth and sixth, last, which was a bit frustrating. There are still two more stages, and we will try to improve as a team, make good decisions and we're confident the results will come in the end."

Solune Robert, helmsman from Team France, said, "Today we had three races, and all three went very well for our team. There was a tight battle and some contact with the other

boats which was a very nice feeling, a reminder that the competition is fierce. There are some very strong teams this year. We finished first and second in the in-port races and are very happy with our performance. Sur is a very beautiful place to sail, the winds move a lot in direction and strength here, which is a challenge but we are very happy to be here to race."

Sailing Arabia - The Tour 2021 is run in full adherence to the government of Oman's latest COVID-19 safety protocols.



# Ravindra rallies Kiwis for draw in fading light

**INDIA VS NZ FIRST TEST**  
Kanpur, India - Debutant Rachin Ravindra worked with New Zealand's lower order to pull off a dramatic draw against India after they ended day five on 165-9 while chasing 284 in the first Test on Monday.

New Zealand faltered after overnight batsman Tom Latham (52) and later skipper Kane Williamson (24) departed, but still denied India a win after a tense final session in Kanpur.

Left-handed Ravindra, a Wellington-born all-rounder of Indian origin who made 18, put on key partnerships including an eighth-wicket stand off 46 deliveries with Kyle Jamieson.

He then held fort for 52 balls with Ajaz Patel before the umpires ended play due to bad light.

Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin shared seven wickets between them to hurt New Zealand in their chase but the 22-year-old Ravindra, who went wicketless with his left-arm spin, made the match that ebbed and flowed his own.

"It has been touch and go around this time throughout the game," said Williamson, who led New Zealand to the inaugural world Test championship title in June after beating India in the final. "Terrific game overall. All three results were still at play. We showed a lot of heart to bat through the day. Some fantastic experiences for Rachin, Ajaz and (William) Somerville."

The Kiwis slipped to 138-7 in the 79<sup>th</sup> over when Ravindra brought back the fight, with Jamieson for company.

The left-handed Latham and nightwatchman Somerville denied India a wicket in the first session as the two put on 76 runs for the second wicket.

Somerville, who joined Latham after Will Young fell to



Umpires speak with India's players as light fades on the fifth and final day of the first Test cricket match between India and New Zealand at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur on Monday (AFP)



Ashwin in the final session on Sunday, scored 36 off 110 balls but departed soon after lunch off fast bowler Umesh Yadav.

Latham, who made 95 in New Zealand's first innings total of 296, moved from his overnight

two to another half-century but fell to Ashwin's off spin.

The wicket took Ashwin past veteran Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh's tally of 417 wickets. Former spinner Anil Kumble leads the Indian wicket-takers

list with 619, followed by Kapil Dev with 434.

Jadeja struck at the stroke of tea to send back Ross Taylor for two and got Williamson's prized scalp for 24.

Debutant Shreyas Iyer stood out for India with his 105 and 65 in India's 345 and 237-4 declared. Iyer was named man of the match for his batting heroics after India won the toss and elected to bat first on a pitch that stayed low and slow.

"I am really happy for Shreyas. He had to wait a long time for his Test debut. He batted really well," said Rahane.

"The way he works, his record in first class cricket is really good."

AFP

| SCOREBOARD                                                                                                    |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| INDIA V NEW ZEALAND                                                                                           |             |
| India 1st innings:                                                                                            | 345 all out |
| New Zealand 1st innings:                                                                                      | 296 all out |
| India 2nd innings:                                                                                            | 234-7 dec   |
| New Zealand 2nd innings:                                                                                      |             |
| T Latham b Ashwin                                                                                             | 52          |
| W Young lbw b Ashwin                                                                                          | 2           |
| W Somerville c Gill b Yadav                                                                                   | 36          |
| K Williamson lbw b Jadeja                                                                                     | 24          |
| R Taylor lbw b Jadeja                                                                                         | 2           |
| H Nicholls lbw b Patel                                                                                        | 1           |
| T Blundell b Ashwin                                                                                           | 2           |
| R Ravindra not out                                                                                            | 18          |
| K Jamieson lbw b Jadeja                                                                                       | 5           |
| T Southee lbw b Jadeja                                                                                        | 4           |
| A Patel not out                                                                                               | 2           |
| Extras: (b12, lb1, nb4)                                                                                       | 17          |
| TOTAL: (9 wickets, 98 overs)                                                                                  | 165         |
| Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-79, 3-118, 4-125, 5-126, 6-128, 7-138, 8-147, 9-155                                   |             |
| Bowling: Ashwin 30-12-35-3, Patel 21-12-23-1, Yadav 12-2-34-1, Sharma 7-1-20-0 (nb2), Jadeja 28-10-40-4 (nb2) |             |
| Toss: India                                                                                                   |             |
| Result: First Test ends in draw                                                                               |             |
| Series: Two-match series level at 0-0                                                                         |             |



Pakistan's Abid Ali (L) and Abdullah Shafique run between the wickets on the fourth day of their first Test cricket match against Bangladesh (AFP)

## Openers put Pakistan in sight of victory

**FIRST TEST VS BANGLADESH**  
**BRIEF SCORES:**  
**Bangladesh** 330 & 157 (Das 59; Shaheen 5-32)  
**Pakistan** 286 & 109-0 (Ali 56 n.o, Shafique 53 n.o)

once they lost Mushfiquur Rahim in the first over of the day, before Liton, who struck a hundred in the first innings, hauled the hosts back to respectability with 59 off 89 balls.

Chittagong, Bangladesh - Openers Abid Ali and Abdullah Shafique each hit unbeaten fifties to put Pakistan in a commanding position in the first Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong on Monday.

Afridi trapped Liton leg-before and then had Abu Jayed out for a duck to complete his fourth five-wicket Test haul. Off-spinner Sajid Khan, who finished with 3-33, wrapped things up by dispatching Taijul Islam.

Set a target of 202, the visitors reached 109-0 at stumps on the fourth day and need only 93 runs on the final day.

The hosts had got off to a positive start with Mushfiquur hitting a boundary off the first ball of the morning, bowled by Hasan Ali.

Ali was 56 not out at the end of play, adding to his first-innings score of 133, while debutant Shafique finished unbeaten on 53.

But two balls later he left a delivery that darted back in and departed for 16 after Hasan uprooted his off-stump.

"In Test cricket, a fourth day is very crucial," said Shafique.

Liton joined overnight batsman Yasir Ali to prevent further collapse. Just when they looked ready to prosper, Afridi's low bouncer hit the helmet of Yasir, who retired hurt after making 36.

"Our plan today was to restrict them for the lowest total possible so that we can easily chase it down. This is what we were trying and we were successful."

"We were really good in the first two days. Most of day three was good, but we didn't bat well in the last session yesterday," said Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo. "It put us under big pressure. It was disappointing to see."

Fast bowler Shaheen Afridi earlier claimed 5-32 to help Pakistan bowl out Bangladesh for 157 runs in their second innings despite wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das making a fighting fifty.

Bangladesh have failed to defeat Pakistan in any of their 10 previous encounters.

Resuming on 39-4, Bangladesh looked down and out

AFP

## Sri Lanka make solid start

**BRIEF SCORES:**  
**Sri Lanka** 113-1 (Nissanka 61 n.o, Karunaratne 42) vs **West Indies**

Galle, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka's openers started strong against the West Indies after rain stopped play until after tea in the second Test at Galle on Monday.

Match officials extended play after the hosts won the toss but stopped half an hour early with bad light after just 34.4 overs.

Pathum Nissanka outscored skipper Dimuth Karunaratne to reach his third Test fifty with a boundary driving Jason Holder straight down the ground. He was unbeaten on 61 in 109 deliveries with four fours and a six.

Karunaratne was dismissed for 42 when he offered a return catch to Roston Chase, missing out on equalling the world record for most successive Test half-centuries.

The West Indies exhausted two reviews, first challenging a decision after a leg-before shout against Nissanka off Holder.

They then argued for a caught behind with Oshada Fernando yet to score, but that too was unsuccessful.

The wicket is already offering assistance to spin bowlers and the track is expected to further deteriorate as the game progresses.

AFP

PURSHOTTAM KANJI  
EXCHANGE



شركة برشوتم  
كانجي للصرافة





Transfer US Dollar to  
**China**  
for your  
Trade & Personal Transaction

Commission  
OMR 3.5/-



99101314, 99849289 91787829  
customersupport@pkexchange.net  
www.pkexchange.com

GET IT ON  
Google Play

Download on the  
App Store



FREE  
CLASSIFIED  
LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories:  
Situations Wanted/Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)  
Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

JBL

HORIZON2  
Bluetooth clock radio speaker



STREAM YOUR  
FAVORITE MUSIC

Bluetooth

Two USB ports to  
charge your  
devices

Ambient Light



جيتكو  
Genetco



50  
YEARS OF  
SUCCESS

MUSCAT  
97693496, 96742452  
Available at  
Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

C.R. No. 1009680  
SALALAH  
79011363

# BRANDS THAT VALUE THEIR CONSUMERS ALWAYS ENJOY THE LIMELIGHT!

## It's time for Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards 2021

Get set to choose the best



an apex  
media

حدث  
EVENT

ألقمة  
للإعلام

More power to your brand

2021  
OMAN'S  
MOST TRUSTED  
BRAND AWARDS

## SPORTS

16 | TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2021

### RUSSIA KNOCK HOLDERS SPAIN OUT



Russia's Andrey Rublev reacts during his Davis Cup tennis tournament match against Spain's Feliciano Lopez in Madrid on Sunday (AFP)

## Manchester United appoint Ralf Rangnick as interim boss

London, United Kingdom - Manchester United announced on Monday they had appointed Ralf Rangnick as interim manager until the end of the season following the sacking of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

The 63-year-old German joins from Lokomotiv Moscow, where he was manager of sports and development.

At the end of the season Rangnick, whose appointment is subject to work visa requirements, will take on a consultancy role at Old Trafford for a further two years.

He takes over from first-team coach Michael Carrick, who has been in caretaker charge for two games since Solskjaer was sacked just over a week ago following a terrible run of results for the 20-time English champions.

"He was our number one candidate for interim manager, reflecting the invaluable leadership and technical skills he will bring from almost four decades of experience in management and coaching," said United football director John Murtough.

The former RB Leipzig boss said he was excited to be joining United and focused on making it a successful season for the struggling club.

"The squad is full of talent and has a great balance of youth and experience," he said. "All my efforts for the next six months will be on helping these players fulfil their potential, both individually and, most importantly, as a team.

"Beyond that, I look forward to

supporting the club's longer-term goals on a consultancy basis."

United are eighth in the Premier League table after a 1-1 draw with leaders Chelsea on Sunday, five points off the top four. First-team coach Carrick -- who has overseen a Champions League win over Villarreal and the draw at Stamford Bridge, where he



*The squad is full of talent and has a great balance of youth and experience*

RALF RANGNICK

dropped Cristiano Ronaldo -- will remain in caretaker charge until Rangnick's work visa is finalised.

Rangnick could take charge of United for the first time against Arsenal on Thursday if his work permit issues are sorted out.

AFP

## Club World Cup to be held in UAE in February

Lausanne, Switzerland - The FIFA Club World Cup, initially set to be held in Japan in December, will now be held in the United Arab Emirates in February, world football's governing body announced Monday.

The Club World Cup will run from February 3-12, featuring eight matches between the champions of the six continental confederations along with the top team in the host nation.

The competition draw was to be held in Zurich later Monday.

Teams include Champions League winners Chelsea, Copa Libertadores champions Palmeiras of Brazil, Mexican club Monterrey and Al Ahly of Egypt.

Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia, Emirati club Al Jazira and

Auckland complete the lineup.

Japan pulled out as host because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Club World Cup is usually played in December, but this is the second successive year in which it has been delayed -- the 2020 edition in Qatar was played in February this year.

Bayern Munich won the most recent edition of the Club World Cup, which has been held in the UAE on four previous occasions, most recently in 2018 when Real Madrid were the winners.

A lucrative, revamped 24-team Club World Cup, including eight sides from Europe, was due to be played in China this year before the pandemic put that project on hold.

AFP

# TIME FOR A RIDE ON THE WILD SIDE



Starting from  
**RO 196** per month

## JEEP® WRANGLER SPORT 2-DOOR – BOREDOM'S BIGGEST ENEMY

**FREE** 3YRS / 60,000KMS SERVICE | **FREE** FIRST YEAR INSURANCE  
**FREE** FIRST YEAR REGISTRATION | **FREE** FUEL WORTH 501 LITRES  
**5YRS** WARRANTY | **5YRS** ROADSIDE ASSIST

**BOOK NOW**

Vehicle image shown is for illustrative purposes only and accessories shown might not be part of the standard model. ©2021 FCA US LLC. All Rights Reserved. Jeep® is a registered trademark of FCA US LLC. Offer valid from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

**Jeep**  
THERE'S ONLY ONE