

Oman calls for dialogue over Lebanon

The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its great sorrow over the worsening of relations between some Arab countries and the Lebanese Republic. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, the Sultanate of Oman called on all parties to exercise restraint and avoid escalation. The Sultanate of Oman also called on them to address disputes through dialogue and understanding in a manner that preserves the Arab countries' supreme interests of security, stability and cooperation based on mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs. — ONA



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DHOFAR BEAT AL RUSTAQ, AL NASR CONSOLIDATE TOP SPOT



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GCC PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY LEADERS AFFIRM COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE TARGETS



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CHEESE-LOVING FRANCE REELS AS MOZZARELLA CATCHES CAMEMBERT



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO ALGERIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, well-being and a long life to President Tebboune. His Majesty the Sultan also prayed to the Almighty Allah for the return of this and similar occasions on President Tebboune while the Algerian people realise more aspirations of progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM GREETES LEADER OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Dr Rodney Errey Lawrence Williams, Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to Dr Rodney and the friendly people of his country further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM issues Royal Orders to distribute date palm and fruit tree saplings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave orders to distribute saplings of date palms and sprouts of fruit trees and other plants to farmers in the wilayats that sustained damage during the recent tropical cyclone Shaheen.

The mission will be undertaken by Royal Gardens and Farms at the Royal Court Affairs, which will distribute the plants through the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The Royal orders, which coincide with the Sultanate of Oman's celebration of the Tree Day, reflect His Majesty the Sultan's concern for farmers. They are a symbolic Royal gesture intended to keep up agricultural production and enhance the Food Security System in the country.

The Royal orders reaffirm His Majesty the Sultan's attention to the agricultural sector, which constitutes a basic pillar of the national economy.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, marked the Tree Day which falls on October 31 each year, at the premises of A'Sharqiyah University, on Sunday.

The celebration aims to encourage the community to preserve and increase trees and also to raise awareness of the importance of the tree for humans and animals and its role in the environment in terms of vitality and aesthetics. It also aims to emphasise the role of trees in curbing desert encroachment and reducing global warming. — ONA



OMAN AND SYRIA REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS



His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, on Sunday received Dr Hassan al Ghabbash, Health Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, who is currently visiting the Sultanate. HH Sayyid Fahd welcomed Dr Al Ghabbash, who conveyed the greetings of President Bashar al Assad of Syria to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The meeting touched on bilateral relations between the two countries.

DETAILS ON P2
PHOTO BY MOHAMED AL RASHDI

AMPLE FOREX RESERVES UPKEEP RIAL'S FIXED PEG

SAMUEL KUTTY
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The foreign exchange reserves in the Sultanate of Oman remained adequate, supporting the stability of the Omani rial's

fixed peg to the US dollar. Based on international standard metrics, foreign reserves held by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) remained adequate in 2020 and the first half of 2021, the apex bank said in a report.

They provide sufficient external buffers for the fixed exchange rate regime and provide suitable coverage of imports, the central bank said in its 2021 Financial Stability Report.

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BIDEN CAN ISSUE 'EXECUTIVE ORDER' ON NUCLEAR PACT

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GEORGIA OPPOSITION DECRIES ELECTION FRAUD

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G20 backs key climate target as UN talks open

ROME: G20 leaders on Sunday committed to the key goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, but campaigners slammed a "lack of ambition" as make-or-break UN climate talks opened in Glasgow.

Following a two-day meeting in Rome, the Group of 20 major economies agreed that keeping that goal — which had initially been raised in the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement — would require "meaningful and effective actions", according to the final summit statement.



We're proud of these results but we must remember that it's only the start

MARIO DRAGHI
Italian Prime Minister

CARBON EMISSIONS

The leaders, whose nations between them emit nearly 80 per cent of carbon emissions, also promised action on coal, but failed to set a clear target on another key goal, to reach "net zero" emissions.

"We're proud of these results but we must remember that it's only the start", said Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, host of

the talks.

Earlier, the COP26 climate talks opened in Scotland with a warning by summit president Alok Sharma that they were the "last, best hope" to keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

As an accelerating onslaught of extreme weather events underscores the devastating impacts of burning fossil fuels, he said: "If we act now and we act together we can protect our precious planet." SEE ALSO P8

National Museum restores Romanian, Byzantine era coins

MUSCAT: Within the framework of mutual cooperation between the National Museum and the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic, the conservation team at the National Museum recently finished a project of conserving and restoring 100 antique pieces of Roman and Byzantine bronze

coins bearing inscriptions and pictures of emperors in those periods.

The coins were loaned to the National Museum from the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic, according to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in Muscat in 2019.



The National Museum is the first museum in the Sultanate of Oman which includes modern conservation and preservation facilities managed by highly-qualified Omani specialists.

Bronze coins, some of them dating back to the Roman period, illustrate the centre of observation images of Roman emperors, as

they were engraved on the bronze coins of that period. These show a personal bust inscription of one of the Roman emperors, on top of which is a radial crown symbolising the sun, or a wreath of paper Laurel encircles his head.

The central inscription frames a Latin phrase that mentions the name of the emperor.

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Oman, UK seek to bolster defence ties



HH Sayyid Shihab receives Gen Sir Nicholas Carter.



Royal Office Minister with the UK Chief of Defence Staff.

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received at his office in Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Sunday Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, British Chief of the Defence Staff.

They reviewed the relations between the two countries and discussed several matters of common interest. They also explored spheres of the existing military cooperation between the defence ministries of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, as well as means of strengthening them to serve the joint interests of the two countries.

Also on Sunday, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, received at his office Gen Sir Nicholas Carter.

Gen Al Numani affirmed the deep, historical relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the UK and the progress they witnessed in various spheres, which reflects the attention accorded by

of two countries' leaderships.

Gen Sir Nicholas thanked the Sultanate of Oman for its regional and international role.

The two sides also reviewed a spectrum of topics of joint interest.

The meeting was attended by Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the delegation accompanying the guest.

Separately, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi received Gen Sir Nicholas Carter at Muaskar Al Murtafaa.

They discussed several matters of common interest and reviewed the strong military cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the UK, as well as means of enhancing them.

The meeting was attended by SAF senior officers, the Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Muscat and the accompanying delegation. — ONA

Relations with Syria reviewed

The meeting dealt with the Sultanate of Oman-Syria relations and means of consolidating bilateral cooperation, notably in areas of healthcare and curative services

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, on Sunday received Dr Hassan al Ghabbash, Health Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

HH Sayyid Fahd welcomed Al Ghabbash, who conveyed the greetings of President Bashar al Assad of Syrian Arab Republic to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The meeting touched on bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Syria. HH Sayyid Fahd expressed his best wishes to the Syrian leadership and wished the Syrian people further progress and prosperity.

Al Ghabbash spoke about current developments in the regional arena and efforts to handle them in a manner that realises the interests of all.

The meeting dealt with Sultanate of Oman-Syria relations and means of consolidating bilateral cooperation, notably in areas of healthcare and curative services. It discussed ways of imparting the Omani experience in combating coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic at the level of the public health service system.

The two sides also discussed current regional and international developments.

Al Ghabbash expressed the Syrian Arab Republic's appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman's stands that he described as supportive of all brethren.

The Syrian minister commended Omani government's efforts to provide proper healthcare for citizens and residents. He hailed the advanced level of curative services in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Ghabbash also commended the talks he held with his Omani counterpart, saying that the positive outcome of the talks will help promote cooperation between the two countries.



— PHOTO BY MOHAMED AL RASHDI



The meeting was attended by Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health and Dr Bassam al Khatib, Syrian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi also received in his office Dr Hassan Mohammed al Ghabbash. The visit aimed at reviewing the best practices and leading experiences in the Sultanate of Oman in the fields of emergency operation centres, public health response and the Sultanate of Oman's measures of preparedness and response during Covid-19, in addition to the strategies developed to contain the pandemic within the framework of public healthcare system.

The meeting discussed matters of common interest in various healthcare

areas between the two brotherly countries and reviewed the achievements made. The meeting was attended by Dr Fatima bint Mohammed al Ajmiyah, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Administrative, Financial, and Planning Affairs, the Syrian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman and the delegation accompanying the guest. An official session of talks was held between Dr Al Saeedi and Dr Hassan al Ghabbash. The session reviewed the practical aspects of public health emergency operations centre in the Sultanate of Oman, priorities and capacities of public health laboratories within the pandemic context. The session also laid emphasis on tackling some aspects related to the social determinants of health. It also shed light on the health cities project. — ONA

Muscat receives first Wizz Air flight

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
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Aviation activity is picking up at the Muscat International Airport and the projections indicate more operations in the coming months.

The Muscat International Airport on Sunday received the first Wizz Air Abu Dhabi flight. The airline has plans to have three weekly flights to Muscat on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Initially, in the Sultanate of Oman, the flights would operate between Muscat and Abu Dhabi, while the airline also has plans to commence two weekly flights to Salalah.

"The routes to Salalah will be operated two times per week on Wednesdays and Saturdays," a statement issued by Wizz Air a couple of months ago said.

With ease in travel restrictions globally, the airline is in an expansion mode in terms of operations.

The ultra-low fare routes between Abu Dhabi and Salalah and Muscat will provide additional and affordable travel options for business and leisure travellers.

A statement from the airline said it would operate on Sarajevo (Bosnia and



Herzegovina), Odesa (Ukraine), Muscat, Almaty (Kazakhstan), Sohag (Egypt), Baku (Azerbaijan) and Kutaisi (Georgia).

"With the recent introduction of eased travel guidelines as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Wizz Air Abu Dhabi will be ramping up its operations further in the coming months by adding additional frequencies to Alexandria (Egypt), Belgrade (Serbia), Kyiv (Ukraine) and Tirana (Albania). The airline plans to add

another aircraft to its existing three aircraft by the start of the new calendar year," the statement said.

Additionally, Wizz Air Hungary announced it would move its flights destined to the United Arab Emirates to Abu Dhabi as of April 2022. The airline will commence shortly with operating its already announced flights to Dubai from Catania (Italy), Katowice (Poland) and Cluj-Napoca (Romania).

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Greening in focus as Sultanate marks Tree Day

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

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The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources celebrated Tree Day, which falls on October 31. A ceremony was organised at A'Sharqiyah University in the Wilayat of Ibra.

Several trees were planted by the patron of the ceremony and the audience members at the university campus.

The celebration aimed to encourage the community to preserve and cultivate trees as it can aid in diversifying income sources, contributing towards sustainability while boosting food security.

The ministry organised the celebration at the headquarters of the A'Sharqiyah University under the auspices of Shaikh Ali bin Ahmed al Shamsi, the Governor of North Al Sharqiyah. Senior officials, farmers, researchers and agriculture enthusiasts were present on the occasion.

In his speech, Engineer Salem bin Saud al Kindi, Director General of Agricultural Wealth and Water Resources, said that ministry organised this ceremony in cooperation with the A'Sharqiyah University to encourage the community to preserve trees and increase agriculture output.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources organised the celebration at the headquarters of the A'Sharqiyah University under the auspices of Shaikh Ali bin Ahmed al Shamsi, the Governor of North Al Sharqiyah

The official said, "Man relies on trees for food, medicine, wealth, construction material, and in many requirements of daily life. Trees produce oxygen and store carbon dioxide. Trees are the means to stabilise soil and prevent floods. In addition, they provide shelter for many animals and birds that live in the wild and help reduce pollution levels, reduce the temperature in summer etc."

Everyone seeks the shade of a tree. Trees are affected by climate change and natural disasters in the world, as well as human intervention through cutting down forests, fires and urban development, which have contributed significantly to the degradation of the green areas on earth.

According to the official, it



is necessary to stop and review regulations and legislation to protect trees and find comprehensive programmes to expand green areas to preserve ecological balance.

The ministry is implementing a comprehensive package of policies and strategies to achieve the optimal utilisation of agricultural and aquatic resources and linking them to production systems that help achieve economic development according to the Vision 2040. The ministry is also prioritising management and

implementation of investment plans and projects in coordination with the private sector and other partners by updating production programmes — agricultural operations, manufacturing, marketing and preservation of agricultural lands, where the growth rate in the agricultural sector has reached about 6 per cent.

According to a statement, the ministry, through these programmes, aims to diversify income sources and contribute

towards boosting food security where it expects total agricultural production for 2021 to reach 3.7 million tonnes and create job opportunities to ensure social stability.

Regarding water resources, the official said, the ministry also maintains the dams in accordance with the available facilities by implementing optimal water use, usage of irrigation systems, and the study of the utilisation of triple-treated sewage water, water utilisation, cultivation of crops

and salt-tolerant trees to allow the expansion of agriculture.

On the priority list is date palm planting, and according to the national strategy of the date palm trees, its guidance and research programmes. The number of palm trees in the Sultanate has reached 9 million, which represent 24 per cent of the space planted and 77 per cent.

The investments in fruit trees have been to promote food security by planting 100 acres of fig trees in the South Al Sharqiyah. About 121,000 different fruit seedlings were prepared from the agricultural research station for agricultural field programmes. Development and research programmes were developed in the fields of prevention, vegetable production, soil and water programmes, and removal of harmful trees and immunisation and treatment programmes.

On the other hand, the Fellowship Fund is organising a community initiative titled "Together to Re-Green" targeting home gardens and some small farms affected by Cyclone Shaheen in the wilayats of Al Khabourah, Al Musannah and Saham, where various seedlings of fruit bearing and decorative trees will be planted and distributed.

Ample forex reserves upkeep rial's fixed peg

FROM P1

"As an oil-exporting economy with a pegged exchange rate regime, it is critical for Sultanate of Oman to hold adequate forex reserves to safeguard the stability of the peg", points out the report.

Price stability, says the report, continues to be one of the strengths of the economy, as the stable peg to the dollar continues to serve as a credible nominal anchor that supports price stability and minimises the risk of inflationary pressures.

The central bank maintained the forex reserves sufficiency in relation to rial cash balances, supporting the stability of the peg.

According to the report, over

the past five years, on average, the values of gross forex reserves were 2.1 times reserve money and 4.0 times currency in circulation, while the net forex reserves were 1.7 times reserve money and 3.4 times currency in circulation, respectively.

During the first half of 2021, with strong support from external borrowing by the government, the reserves strongly rebounded to exceed its 2019 values, recording their highest values since 2017. In June 2021, the gross reserves reached RO 6.74 billion, 5.1 per cent higher than its December 2019 value of RO 5.77 billion.

It is notable that despite fluctuating oil revenues and

persistent current account deficits, the foreign reserves maintained relative stability over the past few years. The year-end values of the net forex reserves remained around 20 per cent of GDP, ranging from 17 to 25 per cent, over the last decade.

"The fixed peg of rial to the dollar serves as a credible nominal anchor that supports price stability by eliminating the exchange rate component of imported inflation, which is a major determinant of inflation", the report points out.

It limits excessive changes in domestic inflation through transmitting prevailing monetary conditions in the US to the Sultanate of Oman. Higher US

inflation, especially in normal times where price stability is given the utmost priority, triggers a rise in the Fed's policy rate, raising US interest rates and curtailing inflationary pressures.

"In the absence of bottlenecks in local markets and/or domestic policy shocks, this would keep Sultanate of Oman's inflation in line with inflation levels in the US and Sultanate of Oman's major trading partners", the report adds.

Over the past five years, Sultanate of Oman's average inflation remained well below the world average and the average in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs), and even lower than the average in the US.

RNO commander inspects naval exercise



AL MUSANNAH: Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), on Sunday inspected the Omani-British joint naval exercise Al Qirsh Al Abyadh (white shark) currently being conducted by the RNO with the participation of vessels from the UK Royal Navy and continues till November 2 at the naval zone in Al Batinah.

The commander of the Royal Navy of Oman was briefed about the activities of the naval exercise and the various military methods utilised in the exercise as well as the tasks and duties assigned to the exercise.

NEW BATCH OF RECRUITS JOINS ROP



MUSCAT: A new batch of citizens has joined the Institute of Police Recruits at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences on Sunday after passing evaluation tests, interviews and medical

fitness examinations, to join the Royal Oman Police (ROP).

The new batch comprises holders of the general education diploma (GED) and holders of post-GED qualifications

in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, chemical engineering, human resources management, telecommunications and IT technology, among others.

The ROP in coordination with the Ministry of Labour continues to conduct evaluation procedures for national job-seekers who are willing to join the police services.

— ONA

MAYOR OF ROTTERDAM RECEIVED



MUSCAT: Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, received at his office here on Sunday Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam. The two sides explored means of boosting relations of cooperation at all spheres between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. — ONA

National Museum restores coins of Romanian and Byzantine eras

FROM P1

The back of the bronze coins illustrates multiple inscriptions and images that reflect the environment of the city, in which the coins were minted during that time, such as trees and animals, or chariots, horses, temples and deities, such as the goddess (Tika). She is the protector deity of the city and was usually engraved wearing a crown in the form of the city wall.

The name of the Mint house was usually engraved below the central inscription.

The other group of coins dated to the Byzantine period, bearing in the centre of the obverse busts of Byzantine emperors either alone or with their sons. The frames of the central inscription mentioning the name of the emperor. As for the back of these coins, most of them carry the letter M or X, which is



an expression of the weight of the coin's value. In addition to drawing a small cross. The name of the Mint house was usually engraved below the central inscription.

By studying the coins and by their weight and the purity of the minted metal, it is possible to know the economic situation of the countries in those periods. Also, the political and religious situations can be indicated through pictures and

writings engraved on the coins.

Coins are one of the sources for figuring out the history of countries, as they carry the economic, political, and perhaps social and religious history of any country.

The conservation and preservation team at the National Museum took over conserving and preserving the coins. After examination, it became clear that coins had reached their physical

condition to the stage of deep oxidation due to moisture, which led to a thick layer of rust and dust on the surface.

The National Museum is the flagship cultural institution, showcasing the Sultanate of Oman's cultural heritage from the earliest evidence of human settlement in the Omani Peninsula to present day through which we look forward to our promising future. — ONA

READY FOR WINTER TOURISM?

ZAINAB AL NASSRI

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Tourist landmarks in the Sultanate of Oman attract a large number of domestic and international visitors from Europe and the Arab Gulf states every winter season because winter here is mild, bright and sunny.

After closure due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic for about two years, the country has started receiving international flights from different countries thanks to the stability in the epidemiological situation. The latest health indicators suggest a few cases and the situation under control.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Health (MoH) reported 50 new cases in 3 days, while no deaths were recorded during the period.

Winter tourism in the country starts in October and continues till May. It generates a great return on the tourism sector directly and other sectors indirectly. Overall, tourism boosts the local economy through direct tourist flights coming from around the world to the country's airports. Therefore, this sector provides an added economic value to the country and harmonises with the desired revitalisation goals of the economic and commercial movement.

RECOVERY PLAN

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism had developed a comprehensive recovery plan to face the repercussions of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, which included stimulating and enabling international tourism by attracting charter flights in cooperation and coordination with tourism partners.

The plan included intensifying promotional efforts for the governorates in general and the Governorate of Dhofar in particular as an ideal tourist destination throughout the year. During the winter season, the governorate annually receives tourist groups from Germany, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and other European countries, according to Marwan bin Abdulhakim al Ghassani, Director of Tourism Promotion Department.

The Sultanate of Oman has many distinct tourism potentials because of the rich biodiversity of the plains, mountains, uplands and coasts, giving it a bright, warm sun in winter in the valleys and metropolises. Additionally, deserts and coastal areas have the elements of desert safari and water sports on the pristine beaches, for which the country is known globally.

ACTIVITIES

What activities can a winter tourist do in the Sultanate of Oman?

A visitor to the country can practise different activities in the winter season. For hikers, it has mountains with variety; there are places for

The Sultanate of Oman has started receiving international flights from different countries thanks to the stability in the epidemiological situation, raising hopes of tourist arrivals. Winter tourism in the country starts in October and continues till May

walking and trekking between the valleys or swimming in pools of water between the mountains, such as Wadi Bani Khalid.

Al Sharqiyah is a place for those who like kayaking. Living there amid golden sands is a fulfilment in itself. Others may enjoy touring around the hot springs like Ain Al Kasfah or Ain Al Thawarah . It is better if a tourist carries with him trip tools, including camping tools, cooking and lighting kits, in case he does not prefer staying in a hotel.

“Many representatives of tourism companies or tour guides bring tourists from ships anchored at the port via buses to the Muttrah market for the purpose of getting to know the Omani heritage products. They buy many of these goods and carry them with them when they return to their countries. Foreign tourists mostly go for Omani daggers, swords and silver made locally, especially the old ones,” says one of the vendors in the Muttrah souq.





INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL PROFICIENCY SYSTEM

Education ministry holds training programme

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 31

The Ministry of Education conducted a training programme on the individual performance measurement and institutional proficiency system, entitled: 'Building individual plans according to the OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) methodology at the ministry's headquarters recently.

The training programme targeted the sub-team for the implementation of the individual performance measurement system and institutional proficiency in a number of Directorates-General at the ministry's general office, such as the Directorate-General of Financial Affairs, The Specialised Institute for Vocational Training for Teachers and the Directorate-General of Special Education and Continuing Education.

The programme witnessed a remarkable interaction from the participants, through purposeful discussion and active participation, which contributes to building conscious thought about this system, at the ministry's general office.

The implementation of this programme comes from the premise of preparing for the implementation of the system of



measuring individual performance and institutional proficiency in the ministry. Therefore, the ministry continues the comprehensive awareness-raising operations of the system for all directorates, departments and divisions, through the implementation of a number of training programmes for team members nominated from all directorates in the ministry.

This programme is dedicated to being an awareness programme on the theoretical frameworks

of the new system for measuring individual performance and institutional proficiency through the OKRs methodology.

On the implementation of this training programme, Saleh al Amiri, Head of the Coordination and Follow-up Department at the Directorate-General of Financial Affairs and a member of the organising team for this training programme, said: "This project is one of the enablers of Oman's Vision 2040. The ministry

is committed to continuing holding programmes and supportive meetings to educate employees about the importance of this project, which aims to enhance productivity, improve performance, pay attention to the human resource, and link employee's job performance with objectives of the institution."

The training programme included the presentation of two papers. Badriya al Ramadhani, an educational researcher at



the Specialised Institute for Vocational Training for Teachers, presented the first paper, in which she addressed the theoretical framework of the individual performance measurement system and institutional competence. Samia al Wahaibi, Director of System Application at the Institute of Public Administration, presented the second paper, which was on 'How to build an individual plan according to the OKRs methodology'.

The participants valued the efforts made to raise awareness about the system. The team also recommended to the trainees to impart knowledge about the system to their divisions and to send a report on the awareness-raising process, in order to ensure the readiness of the workers when implementing the system and enabling them to fill out the performance report related to the employee's individual plans in the relevant record.



Sultanate of Oman

The Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary

Tender Announcement

The Administrative Affairs Council of the Judiciary announces its desire to submit the following tender:

Tender No	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Vendor Grade	Tender Document Fee
10/2021	Unified Communications Project	09/11/2021	06/12/2021	Excellent & First & Second	RO. 25/-

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Bidders should submit their offers electronically via the aforementioned site and attach to each bid an electronic copy of the provisional insurance in the form of a bank guarantee or a certified check from one of the banks operating in the country at a rate of (1%) of the bid value and is valid for a period of (90) days from the date of submission. The offers are meant in the name of the Chairman of the Internal Committee for Tenders in the Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary, And based on the Tender Board Circular No. (07/2020), we confirm that the necessity of uploading the soft copy of the bid bond when submitting the tender in a support system while preserving the original bid bond without the need to hand it over to the board until the council is asked to hand over the original one.

1- For inquiries and clarifications on the tender:

Submit inquiries related to the project electronically through the website of the electronic tender system (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).

2- For inquiries and clarifications on the electronic bidding system:

Submit inquiries regarding technical support for the electronic bidding system via e-mail and the phone number shown below:

Phone: +968 24166670
Email: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Ministry's dates expo concludes

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources concluded the first edition of the Omani dates expo.

The event was organised by the ministry's Department of Agribusiness Promotion, in cooperation with Palm Development Oman company and Oman Avenues Mall from October 22 to 31. As many as 40 farmers, date producers and owners of date production processing units from all governorates took part in the event. The outlets provided an ideal platform for date producers to showcase date products and derivatives employing creative and modern marketing methods.

— ONA

الشركة المتحدة للتمويل ش.م.ع.و
United Finance Company SAOGBoard of Directors' Report for the period ended 30th September 2021
Report on material events covering the interim financials

Overview

We continue to be optimistic on the outlook of our Country based on the economic reform programs undertaken by our Government and the effect of higher oil prices relative to 2020 that will narrow the deficits and slow the increase in net government debt over the next few years. Adding to that, the real GDP is expected to grow by 1.7% pa in 2021 and accelerate to 3.1% pa on average in 2022-2023, as oil and gas production ramps up. The rating agencies have also recently revised the outlook on our country to positive from stable. The rollout of the vaccination program by the government has lifted the economy and has allowed normalcy to return to some extent. Of course, we have seen new waves emerge in other countries and we need to be cautious and careful while being positive at the same time. The business environment is improving and we are realigning our business as demand for loans slowly picks up. Our retail business has picked up and despite supply disruptions, we have had one of our best quarters in new retail business since the pandemic started. To continue supporting the economic recovery efforts (Economic Stimulus Plan), the Government has extended the period for availing the concessions to borrowers up to December 2021 for deferment of loan instalments but have also cautioned that there will be no further extensions.

In line with the above, we continue to ensure that the company's interests are taken care of and at the same time, our customers' interests are not compromised. The market continued to witness improving liquidity and due to our strong relationships with our lenders, we have managed to increase the bank lines available to us and improve our net interest income. While the long delays in settlement of contractual dues to sub-contractors is improving, some gaps still remain. We are closely monitoring the portfolio quality with regular follow-up. The recent harsh weather conditions have caused much suffering to our citizens and residents in the Batinah region, and we have made a contribution to help them get their life back to normal.

Performance highlights

The Company has earned Installment Finance Income of RO 5.1 million for the period ended September 2021 as compared to RO 5.5 million for the same period in the previous year. The Company recorded a net profit of RO 601K for YTD Q3 2021 as against RO 637K for the corresponding period last year. The Net Debtors portfolio stood at RO 78.5 million as at 30th September 2021 as against RO 85.31 million as at 31st December 2020. We have seen improving demand in Retail loans and we expect to be back on track by Q4 2021. We continue to be prudent in line with our lending policy.

Provisioning position

The company has been conservative and provided RO 972K as additional provision in 2021. This provision includes General Provision of RO 408K (in addition to RO 265K already provided in 2020) in line with Central Bank of Oman guidance. This General Provision is not due to any adverse event but towards deferred loan accounts, and the aim is to be prudent in anticipation of any future delinquencies once the deferment period allowed by the Central Bank gets over. The total provision and reserve interest maintained by the company as on September 2021 is RO 19.094 million (in line with IFRS and regulatory guidelines). In addition, the Company also maintains a special reserve of RO 2.37 million to guard against unforeseen delinquencies. We continue to maintain one of the highest provisions against non-performing loans amongst F.LCs.

Funding

Funding is an important part of our business and we have two sources of funding, other than our capital – bank facilities and deposits from companies. Traditionally we have had an excellent relationship with all our bankers and we continue to do so. Two banks have recently reviewed and increased our lines to support our growth plans into 2022. We continue to seek corporate deposits from companies and pension funds and offer attractive rates for the same. The market has adequate liquidity now and the management is working actively to reduce the overall cost of borrowing for the company.

Future Outlook

We see the coming few months as a time of opportunity and revival. The Oil prices are expected to remain high through 2022, and this will allow our government to reduce its deficits and implement its long-term objectives of Vision 2040. The successful planning to overcome the challenges of the pandemic have ensured that the economy is getting back on track, new job opportunities are being created for our youth and the Government is continuing its efforts to promote foreign investment with a number of incentives to stimulate business in Oman. All this augurs well for our company as we strive to support the financial needs of individuals and companies at this turnaround time. We are embracing the changes in the way business will be done in the future to offer the best-in-class products and services to our customers.

Acknowledgement:

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to express our highest gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Taik Al Said and respectfully acknowledge his vision and leadership, which has helped our beloved country to overcome the challenges of the past few months.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Manpower, Royal Oman Police and other Regulatory Authorities and thank them for their support and guidance. I also take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to our bankers, shareholders, dealers and valued customers for their unstinting support.

I would also like to place on record my appreciation of the Management and our dedicated staff for their individual and collective efforts over the past few challenging months, and wish them all the very best for the rest of the year.

Mohamed Abdulla Mohamed Al Khonji
Chairman

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	30 Sep 2021 RO	30 Sep 2020 RO
ASSETS		
Property and equipment	2,342,217	2,406,906
Deferred tax asset	16,923	13,898
Deposit with the Central Bank of Oman	250,000	250,000
Investment securities	554,150	554,150
Installment finance prepaids	78,508,771	86,612,349
Other receivables and prepaid expenses	247,267	111,633
Cash and cash balance	526,862	2,808,211
Total assets	82,446,190	92,757,147
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	34,914,441	34,914,441
Share premium reserve	528,402	528,402
Legal reserve	4,960,572	4,822,835
Special reserve	2,368,989	2,368,989
Foreign currency reserve	294,514	294,514
Impairment Reserve	1,911,736	1,921,465
Retained earnings	1,035,061	422,502
Total Equity	46,013,715	45,273,148
Liabilities		
Borrowings	27,670,166	37,809,242
Corporate deposits	4,000,000	6,000,000
Creditors and other payables	4,654,405	3,616,019
Taxation	107,904	58,738
Total liabilities	36,432,475	47,483,999
Total equity and liabilities	82,446,190	92,757,147
Net assets per share	0.132	0.130

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	30 SEP 2021 RO	30 SEP 2020 RO
Installment finance income	5,164,293	5,555,399
Interest expense	(1,520,194)	(1,951,193)
Net installment finance income	3,644,099	3,604,206
Other income	309,297	374,103
Operating expenses	(2,156,591)	(2,242,226)
Depreciation	(71,728)	(75,192)
Profit before tax and provision for impairment	1,725,077	1,660,891
Impairment on installment finance debtors - net	(972,518)	(911,707)
Profit before tax	752,559	749,184
Income tax expense	(151,227)	(112,378)
Profit and total comprehensive income for the period	601,332	636,806
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.002	0.002

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of such request addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer, United Finance Co. SAOG
P O Box 3652, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24577300 Fax 24561557, E-mail: ufc@ufcoman.com, Website: www.ufcoman.com



"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tenders:

Tender Number	T-26-2021	Tender Number	T-17-2021
Tender Name	Provision of Cleaning Services to MWASALAT Vehicles in Muscat	Tender Name	Modification Work for MWASALAT Workshop Offices and Store Extension in Al Authiba
Project Summary	Within the framework of this tender, MWASALAT would like to have a qualified contractor to provide Cleaning Services required for Vehicles in Muscat for 2 years	Project Summary	Within the framework of this tender, MWASALAT would like to have a qualified and competent contractor for the provision of modification works in Authiba workshop in accordance to the terms and conditions stipulated in the tender documents.
Tender Fee	OMR 100/-	Tender Fee	OMR 25/- for Non-SMEs Free for SMEs
Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field	Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field
Start date for tender document distribution	Monday 01 November 2021	Last date for tender document distribution	Monday 08 November 2021
Last date for submission		Last date for submission	Monday 22 November 2021

The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.

Tenders are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email.

All Tenderers shall submit with their offers a Tender Bond in the amount of not less than one percent (1%) of the Tender Value, valid for (90) days from the date of Tender Submission obtained from a locally registered Bank, drawn in favor of The Chairman of Procurement Committee, Oman National Transport Company SAOC "MWASALAT". Any bid without tender bond will be rejected.

The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.

Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head-quarter Oman National Transport Company SAOC (MWASALAT) at Ghala, Muscat, Jabel Shams Building 5th floor). Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat"
Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 24121500/24121555
P.O.Box: 911, Al Khwair, PC: 135, Sultanate of Oman

For more information
please send to:
tenders@mwasalat.om

G20 SUMMIT URGES IRAN TO RESUME COMPLIANCE WITH N-DEAL

Biden can issue ‘executive order’ on nuclear pact: Iran

TEHRAN: Iran’s foreign minister said on Sunday that if the United States was serious about rejoining Tehran’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, President Joe Biden could just issue an “executive order”, the state-owned Iran newspaper reported.

The accord, under which Iran curtailed nuclear work seen as a risk of developing nuclear weapons in exchange for a lifting of global sanctions, unravelled in 2018 after then-president Donald Trump withdrew the United States, prompting Tehran to breach limits on uranium enrichment set by the pact.

At the G20 summit in Rome on Saturday, leaders of the United States, Germany, France and

Britain urged Iran to resume compliance with the deal in order to “avoid a dangerous escalation”, saying they wanted a negotiated solution.

“It is enough for Biden to issue an executive order tomorrow and they (US) announce they are rejoining the pact from the point where his predecessor left the deal,” Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian told the Iran daily.

“If there is a serious will in Washington to return to the deal, there is no need for all these negotiations at all.”

Tehran has said its nuclear steps since Trump abandoned the accord, saying it was flawed to Iran’s advantage, are reversible



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian speaks during the multilateral conference on Afghanistan, in Tehran. – AFP

“if Washington lifts sanctions in a verifiable process”.

Talks between Iran and world powers meant to salvage the deal, which started in April, are slated to resume at the end of November, the Islamic Republic’s top nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday. The talks have been on hold since the election of Ebrahim Raisi as Iran’s president in June.

Concerned about Iran now enriching uranium close to bomb-grade level of fissile purity, Western powers have repeatedly urged Tehran to resume talks, saying the diplomatic window would not stay open forever.

“Washington wants to continue a large part of the sanctions imposed by Trump on Iran. This is unacceptable for Iran,” Amir Abdollahian said. Iran denies any intention to develop nuclear bombs.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday Washington was “absolutely in lockstep” with Britain, Germany and France on getting Iran back into the deal, but it is not clear if Tehran was willing to rejoin the talks in a “meaningful way”.

Holding up progress towards restoring the deal are sharp US-Iranian disagreements over which steps need to be taken and when. Key issues include what nuclear limits Tehran will accept and what sanctions Washington will remove.

— Reuters

Istanbul gets new opera house on the 98th anniversary of republic

ISTANBUL: A new opera house opened on Istanbul’s iconic Taksim square on Friday, in celebration of the 98th anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish republic.

In addition to the 2,500-seat opera house, the Ataturk Cultural Centre — named after the republic’s founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk — also houses a cinema, libraries, cafes and restaurants. It was built to replace an older structure that was demolished in 2018. With its glass facade, the new building recalls the architecture of the previous centre. The spherical auditorium is dark red and is made up of 15,000 handmade ceramic tiles, according to Anadolu state news agency. These can be seen from the outside through the facade.

The new building was designed by architect Murat Tabanlıoglu, the son of the architect Hayati Tabanlıoglu who designed the previous structure. The centre, known as AKM, was originally built in 1969 as the Istanbul Culture Palace to represent a modern and secular Turkey. The centre was later renovated and reopened in 1977 after a fire in 1970.

However, performances stalled in 2008 and the building fell into disuse. The foundations for the new building were laid in February 2019. The building also became a symbol of the Gezi protests as it is located right next to Istanbul’s Gezi Park.

The centre was occupied by



“terrorist groups,” Erdogan said of the Gezi events during his speech at Friday’s opening. The president believes Gezi was part of what he views as an international plot to topple him.

The building is owned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The design of the new building, in the old iconic republican style, came as a surprise to many. It is located at one end of Taksim Square, across from a new mosque

The new building was designed by architect Murat Tabanlıoglu, the son of the architect Hayati Tabanlıoglu who designed the previous structure. The centre, known as AKM, was originally built in 1969

that Erdogan opened in May.

Art lovers now look forward to future programmes and many wonder whether the work of artists critical of the government will feature there too.

Among the first performances is a concert by the London Philharmonic Orchestra that is scheduled to take place on Sunday. The programme features a slew of other performances from Turkey and abroad. — dpa

Biden and Erdogan pledge to improve US-Turkey ties



US President Joe Biden and Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan pose for a photo as they attend a bilateral meeting, on the sidelines of the G20 leaders' summit in Rome, Italy, on Sunday. – Reuters

ROME: US President Joe Biden and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged on Sunday to improve bilateral ties following a particularly tense period between Washington and Ankara.

Meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome, the two leaders “had a very constructive conversation” in which Biden “made clear his desire to have constructive relations with Turkey and to find an effective way to manage our disagreements,” a senior US administration official said.

According to the Turkish presidency, “the meeting took place in a positive atmosphere”, and the presidents “expressed their joint commitment to further strengthening Turkey-US relations and agreed to establish a joint mechanism to that effect.”

They also “stressed the importance of the Nato alliance,” the Turkish presidency said.

Turkey’s 2019 purchase of a Russian S-400 air defence system has been an irritant on ties, prompting Washington to block Ankara’s plans to buy about 100 next-generation US F-35 planes.

Erdogan has insisted on compensation, saying Washington could pay back at least part of the \$1.4 billion advance payment Turkey made for the F-35s through the delivery of older-generation F-16 fighter jets.

In addition, Erdogan earlier this month threatened to expel a slew of Western ambassadors, including from the United States, over their support for a jailed Turkish activist.

According to the White House, Biden used the meeting to also raise the issue of human rights, and discuss a “full range of foreign policy topics,” including Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean, the South Caucasus region — and climate change.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

RIYADH

Alliance says 218 fighters killed near Marib

The military coalition in Yemen said on Sunday that more than 218 Ansar Allah fighters were killed in air strikes around Marib city, the internationally recognised government’s last northern bastion. The Ansar Allah rarely comment on losses, and AFP could not independently verify the toll.

“Twenty-four military vehicles were destroyed and more than 218” fighters were killed in strikes in the past 72 hours in two districts,



according to the official Saudi Press Agency, which has since October 11 issued near-daily reports of bombing around Marib, capital of the oil-rich province of the same name.

BAGHDAD

3 rockets hit near Baghdad Green Zone

Three rockets on Sunday hit a Baghdad neighbourhood near the high-security Green Zone where the US Embassy is located without causing any casualties, an Iraqi security official said.

“Three Katyusha rockets fell in the Mansur district of Baghdad,” the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

The rockets struck near a Red Crescent hospital, a bank and the district’s water management department, the source added.

The so far unclaimed attack,



the first to target the Green Zone since two rockets fired on July 29, comes as authorities conduct a recount of votes cast in an October 10 parliamentary election.

BEIRUT

Lebanon’s cleric calls on authorities to defuse crisis

Lebanese Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al Rai called on the authorities on Sunday to take a “decisive step” to defuse a crisis with Gulf Arab states over critical comments made by Information Minister George Kordahi.

Rai, who made the plea to President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Najib Mikati in his Sunday sermon, did not suggest any specific measure. Kordahi says he made his comments before becoming a minister and so far resisted calls



to resign.

Meanwhile, Lebanon’s president said he wants the best relations with Saudi Arabia, looking to heal a rift with the kingdom.

In brief

■ HONG KONG



HONG KONG DOUBLES DOWN ON VIRUS ISOLATION

Hong Kong's decision to descend deeper into international coronavirus isolation as rivals reopen is causing consternation among managers at multinationals who see no end to a zero-Covid strategy imposed by the leadership.

The southern Chinese business hub has kept the coronavirus at bay thanks to some of the world's strictest quarantine rules with most arrivals undergoing 14 to 21 days of hotel confinement.

Competitors such as London, New York, Tokyo and Singapore have begun to live with the disease with face-to-face meetings, conferences and executive travel slowly returning.

■ KARACHI



PAKISTANI GROUP CALLS OFF PROTEST MARCH

A hardline Pakistani group called off a protest march to the capital Islamabad on Sunday after reaching a deal with the government, ending two weeks of clashes that left at least seven policemen dead and scores injured on both sides.

The Tehrik-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) began the march calling for the release of jailed leader Saad Rizvi.

"An agreement for peace and betterment has been reached," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who represented the government in negotiations with the TLP, told a news conference.

■ KABUL



TALIBAN SUPREME LEADER MAKES FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada addressed supporters in the southern city of Kandahar, officials announced on Sunday, his first public appearance since taking control of the group in 2016.

Akhundzada has been the spiritual chief of the movement since 2016 but has remained a reclusive figure, even after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan. His low profile has fed speculation about his role in the new Taliban government, formed after the group took control of Kabul in mid-August — and even rumours of his death.



Japan's Prime Minister and ruling Liberal Democratic Party leader Fumio Kishida gestures as he puts rosettes by successful general election candidates' names on a board at the party headquarters in Tokyo on Sunday. — AFP

Japan's Kishida set to keep control but his party battered

Coalition projected to win 239 to 288 seats in lower house

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's ruling coalition was projected to stay in power in Sunday's election, but his party suffered steep losses, potentially weakening him just weeks into the job of leading the world's No 3 economy.

It was too close to call whether Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) would maintain its majority in the powerful lower house of parliament, according to exit polls by public broadcaster NHK, but Kishida's coalition with partner Komeito was forecast to maintain control.

The coalition was projected to win 239 to 288 seats in the lower house, more than the 233 needed for a majority, NHK said. The LDP was expected to win between 212 to 255 seats.

"If the projections are correct, then Kishida should be able to continue to govern, or start to govern, but maybe there'll be a

bit of a question mark over his leadership in view of the Upper House election next year," said Koichi Nakano, a professor at Tokyo's Sophia University.

The vote was a test for Kishida, who called the election soon after taking the top post early this month, and for his LDP, which has been in government except for brief spells since its formation in 1955.

But the party has been battered by its perceived mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic. Kishida, who has struggled to shake off an image that he lacks charisma, has failed to excite voters with policies to help poorer people, while securing a big boost in military spending and taking a harder line on China.

One of the most high-profile LDP defeats was a former economy minister and the leader of one of the party's factions, Nobuteru Ishihara, who lost to an

opposition candidate in a western Tokyo district.

The Osaka-based Japan Innovation Party led by popular politicians from the city's government, was projected to more than treble its pre-election haul, putting it on track to surpass LDP partner Komeito as the third force in the lower house.

"The coalition itself won't fall apart and the government will remain," said Airo Hino, a professor at Tokyo's Waseda University. "But even given this, the number of seats they have is definitely decreasing and this could make managing parliament difficult."

Kishida's publicly stated goal had been for the coalition to keep a majority, at least 233 seats, of the 465 in the lower house. Before the election, the coalition had a two-thirds majority of 305, with the LDP holding 276.

Investors and political watchers have been focussed on whether the LDP could keep its majority as a single party. Losing that would weaken Kishida's power base in the factional LDP, making it more reliant on the Komeito. — Reuters

Man arrested after knife, fire attack on Tokyo train

TOKYO: A man was arrested after attempted murder after a knife and fire attack on a train in Tokyo on Sunday, Japanese media said, with at least 10 people reportedly injured and one in a serious condition.

A video clip published by public broadcaster NHK showed panicked passengers running down the train as smoke filled the carriage, with flames also visible. Another video posted on Twitter showed people climbing through windows to escape the Keio Line train at a station.

The line operator said services had been partially suspended after "an incident involving injuries" took place just before 8 pm near Kokuryo in the Japanese capital's western suburbs.

Media outlets including NHK said the alleged perpetrator in his 20s attacked people with a knife and started a fire on the train. The method was unclear but reports also said the man had spread a liquid around the train carriage.

Kyodo News said 15 people had been injured in the attack, with NHK reporting at least 10 were hurt with a man in his 60s in serious condition.

"First I thought it was something like a Halloween event. But I rushed away as a man carrying a long knife came in. I was very fortunate not to be injured," a man in his 20s who was on the train told NHK.

Local police officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Violent crime is rare in Japan, but in August nine people were wounded, one of them seriously, in a stabbing attack on a commuter train in Tokyo, with the suspect later handing himself in after fleeing the scene.

In a separate attack in August, two people suffered burns in an acid attack at a Tokyo subway station.

Japan has strict gun laws, but there are occasional violent crimes involving other weapons.

In 2019, a man killed two people including a schoolgirl and wounded more than a dozen in a rampage that targeted children as they waited for a bus. And in 2018, a man was arrested in central Japan after stabbing one person to death and injuring two others aboard a bullet train.

— AFP



People escape through windows of a Tokyo train line following a knife, arson and acid attack, in Tokyo on Sunday. — Reuters

Women show the way as India pushes 'eco-miracle' seaweed

RAMESHWARAM, INDIA: Draped in a colourful saree and shirt, Lakshmi Murgesan dives into the azure waters off India's southern coast to collect seaweed, which is being hailed by scientists as a miracle crop that absorbs more carbon dioxide than trees.

India is the world's third largest carbon polluter, behind China and the US, and has yet to set a target date for its emissions to reach net zero. But authorities are looking into how seaweed farming could help reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, reverse ocean acidification and improve the marine environment, as well as providing a sustainable livelihood for marginalised coastal communities.

"I am doing this for my children... It requires a lot of hard work, but I am able to earn good

"I am doing this for my children... It requires a lot of hard work, but I am able to earn good profits from about four months of work"

LAKSHMI MURGESAN

profits from about four months of work," said Murgesan, who makes Rs 20,000 (\$265) each month farming the fibrous macroalgae.

"I would not have been able to educate my children but after doing this, I could send my children to college," she added, smiling as she emerged from the waters in Rameswaram, in the southern

state of Tamil Nadu. M Ganesan, a government marine scientist, said seaweed provides a possible way forward as coastal habitats and wetlands absorb five times more carbon than terrestrial forests.

"It is a miracle crop in many ways, it is eco-friendly, it doesn't use land or fresh water. It absorbs carbon dioxide dissolved in water during photosyntheses and oxygenates the entire marine ecosystem," Ganesan said.

India, which has an 8,000-kilometre coastline, is now aiming to boost production from the current 30,000 tonnes to more than one million tonnes each year by 2025. Globally, seaweed production was worth around \$12 billion in 2019 and is expected to grow to \$26 billion by 2025, with China and Indonesia having 80 per cent of the market share. — AFP



A woman displays wild seaweed after harvesting from the waters off the coast of Rameswaram in India's Tamil Nadu state. — AFP

G20 AGREES ON 1.5 DEGREES CLIMATE CHANGE TARGET



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visit the Trevi fountain in central Rome on the sidelines of the G20 of World Leaders Summit. — AFP

ROME: G20 leaders agreed Sunday on the need to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius but fell short of a hoped-for pledge on reaching net zero emissions, according to a draft communique seen by AFP.

The group of 20 major economies emit nearly 80 per cent of carbon emissions, and are under pressure to go bold on climate to give a much-needed boost to crucial UN climate talks starting in Glasgow on Sunday.

According to the draft, which sources said would be the final one, the G20 reaffirm their support for the 2015 Paris Agreement goal of keeping “the global average temperature increase well below

Melting glacier named after Glasgow

LONDON: British scientists have named a rapidly melting glacier in Antarctica after Glasgow, the Scottish city hosting this year’s COP26 global climate conference, in an effort to call attention to global warming, London announced on Sunday.

Several other nameless glaciers were likewise christened after cities which have hosted important climate summits — including Geneva, site of the first international climate conference in 1979, and Berlin, which hosted the first Conference of Parties (COP), in 1995.

“By naming this glittering giant of nature after the city where next week humankind will gather to fight for the future of the planet, we have a stark reminder of what we are working to preserve”, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in the statement.

He said he hoped for a “spirit of responsibility and ambition” to keep alive the target of limiting global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

“We know that, if we continue on the current emissions path, we’re heading for 2.7 degrees of warming (by the end of the century)”, scientist Heather Selley, who monitors the glaciers via satellites, told the BBC. — dpa

2 degrees and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels”.

In addition, they state that “keeping 1.5 degrees within reach will require meaningful and effective actions and commitment by all countries.”

This will “require taking into account different approaches, through the development of clear national pathways that align long-term ambition with short- and medium-term goals, and with international cooperation and support”.

Experts say meeting the target means slashing global emissions nearly in half by 2030 and to “net-zero” by 2050. — AFP

Georgia oppn decries fraud as ruling party wins

TBILISI: Georgia’s ruling party on Sunday claimed victory in local election runoffs, but the opposition headed by jailed ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili — on hunger strike for a month — rejected official results as fraudulent.

The runoffs took place during a political crisis with Saakashvili, a Western darling who was Georgia’s president from 2004-2013, jailed earlier this month after returning from exile in secret, days ahead of the first round.

The pro-Western reformer has been on hunger strike to protest against his imprisonment, which he says is politically motivated, and the United States has voiced concern over his condition.

On Sunday, the central election commission said the ruling Georgian Dream party won narrowly in all but one municipality where candidates had faced a challenge by Saakashvili’s



Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze addresses supporters after the polls close in the second round of the municipal elections in Tbilisi. — Reuters

United National Movement (UNM).

“I congratulate everyone with our victory in the second round, we won in all municipalities”, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said in televised remarks.

But the opposition said it would not recognise the results, with UNM chairman and Tbilisi

mayoral hopeful Nika Melia accusing Georgian Dream of “stealing elections”.

“Elections are no more in this country”, he said. “Compatriots, you who share the values of European democracy, prepare for an uncompromising struggle”, Melia added.

“The struggle will be difficult

but will not end until there is a possibility of holding free and fair elections in this country.”

After the first round on October 2, Georgian Dream led the local elections in party lists, while UNM mayoral hopefuls were ahead in a number of big cities.

At the time, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the ballot was marred by allegations of “intimidation, vote-buying, pressure on candidates and voters”.

The US Embassy expressed “doubts about the overall fairness” of the vote, while the Council of Europe rights watchdog said the ballot was “a lost opportunity for local democracy in Georgia.”

The protracted political crisis in the ex-Soviet country stems from last year’s parliamentary elections narrowly won by the ruling party and also branded fraudulent by the opposition. — AFP

Listen to the earth and the poor, pope urges leaders

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis on Sunday urged world leaders attending the COP26 UN climate change summit to hear “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”.

Francis, who has made protection of the environment a cornerstone of his pontificate, said at his blessing in St Peter’s Square that he hoped the meeting in Glasgow would provide “efficient responses and offer concrete hope to future generations”.

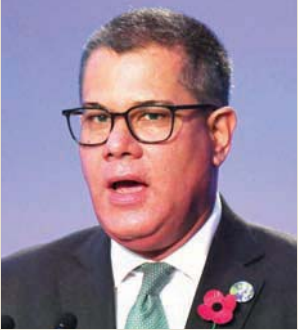
It was the second time in three days that the pope appealed to participants to come away with action and not mere words from the climate summit, which is starting on Sunday.

On Friday he told BBC radio the meeting was taking place at a crucial time because the Covid-19 pandemic, the environmental crisis and food supply problems were together brewing up a “perfect storm” that risked rupturing society.

He underscored those concerns on Sunday by urging the crowd to visit an exhibition in St Peter’s Square on his 2015 encyclical “Laudato Si” (Praised Be) on the environment by a photographer from Bangladesh. Scientists say that country will be one of the most affected by sea level rises. The 84-year-old pope had said several times that he hoped to attend COP26, but the Vatican announced on October 8 that its delegation would be headed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin. It gave no explanation.

Climate summit ‘last, best hope’ to meet target: COP26 president

GLASGOW: The president of the COP26 climate summit called on countries to work together to avert the most devastating impacts of global warming as he opened the meeting on Sunday. The Glasgow gathering, which runs to November 12, will be the “last, best hope to keep 1.5C in reach”, said Alok Sharma (pictured), referring to the temperature aspiration of the landmark Paris deal.



Sharma said the impacts of climate change were already being felt across the world in the form of “floods, cyclones, wildfires and record temperatures”.

“We know that our shared planet is changing for the worse”, he said at the opening ceremony, adding that climate change had not paused for the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the meeting to be delayed by one year. “If we act now and we act together we can protect our precious planet”, he said.

Experts warn that only transformative action in the next ten years will help stave off far more devastating impacts.

COP26 inherits its central goal from the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, which saw countries agree to cap global warming at “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and 1.5°C if possible.

That deal left many of crucial details to be worked out, however, while emissions reductions remain woefully insufficient to avert devastating global warming.

Last week a UN report said even the latest, most ambitious carbon cutting commitments would still lead to “catastrophic” warming of 2.7°C. But nations continue to subsidise fossil fuels, while the Covid-19 pandemic has piled on the economic pressure.

UN climate chief Patricia Espinosa told the Glasgow opening ceremony that nations must turn away from business as usual or accept that, “we are investing in our own extinction”.

— AFP/Reuters

ROME

UK, French leaders declare truce in fishing row

The French and British leaders agreed on Sunday to defuse days of sniping over post-Brexit fishing rights, according to Paris, potentially averting a full-blown trade war that would embroil the entire EU. President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Boris Johnson met for about 25 minutes on the margins of a G20 summit in Rome, aides said, a day after Johnson complained to EU chief Ursula von der Leyen that French threats to trigger reprisals over the row were “completely



unjustified”.

They agreed to work on “practical and operational measures” to resolve the dispute in the coming days, Macron’s office said. — AFP

ATHENS

Migrants from Turkish ship disembark in Greece

Nearly 400 migrants disembarked from a Turkish-flagged cargo ship that Greece allowed to dock on its territory despite charges that Turkey had violated a migrant deal.

The ship had sent a distress signal on Friday after its engines failed in international waters off Crete, according to Greek authorities who allowed it to dock at the southeastern Aegean island of Kos early on Sunday.

The Greek Coastguard said



the migrants were transported to a reception center on the island while health ministry experts put them in quarantine and tested them for the coronavirus. — AFP

MADRID

Man gored to death at Spanish bull-running fest

A man bled to death from his injuries after he was gored at a bull-running festival in eastern Spain, authorities said. It was the first such fatality in the country since such events resumed after Covid-19 curbs were relaxed during the summer. The 55-year-old man, who has not been named, was repeatedly attacked by the bull at the festival in Onda, the town’s council said.

Other participants tried to entice the animal away but their efforts failed. The man died later



on Saturday in hospital in the nearby town of Villareal after haemorrhaging blood from a wound in his left thigh that perforated his artery, emergency services said. — Reuters

Why is India so wary of net zero?

SUNRITA SEN AND SIDDHARTHA KUMAR

As the third biggest emitter of greenhouse gases globally — or the fourth if you take the European Union as one bloc — India is under pressure to commit to a timeline on when it expects its emissions to peak and then abate.

But officials have indicated that the government will not be making a commitment to net zero emissions, but will instead focus on raising its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to cut emissions, which are a key part of the Paris agreement on climate change.

As a rapidly developing economy attempting to pull millions out of poverty, some experts say that India cannot afford to slow down its growth process which at the moment is heavily dependent on fossil fuels as its energy source.

Just getting electricity to over 240 million households over the past 15 years has been a major achievement for India, says Ajay Shankar of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

“The challenge now for India is to combine fast economic growth with a rapid energy transition away from the use of fossil fuels altogether,” he said. Currently, about 60 per cent of India’s energy comes from coal. The share of non-fossil sources in India’s installed capacity of electricity is at 38 per cent including renewables like solar and wind energy that form just 26 per cent of the mix.

The challenge now for India is to combine fast economic growth with a rapid energy transition away from the use of fossil fuels altogether

AJAY SHANKAR
The Energy and Resources Institute

ZERO EMISSIONS

Indian officials point out that the country is well on the way to meeting its current non-fossil fuel target and is likely to upgrade its NDCs soon. But when it comes to “net zero emissions” — defined as when man-made emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere are balanced by man-made removal of greenhouse gases over a specified period — Indian policymakers face a dilemma.

Unlike in developed or the wealthier countries where energy and emission demands have peaked, in developing countries like India it may simply not be feasible to meet growing demand and at the same time provide energy access through renewable energy.

This would mean leapfrogging fossil fuels to use renewables for an as yet unspecified energy demand. — dpa



COLOURFUL LAMPS

A street vendor dyes earthen lamps to be sold as a decorative item ahead of Diwali (festival of lights) at a market in New Delhi, India, on Sunday.
— AFP

Youth are nation’s blessing...



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
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YOUTH SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THEIR ROLE THEY HAVE TO PLAY IN NATION-BUILDING MARCH

Designating a dedicated day for Omani youth on October 26 is a noble gesture. Hence, commemorating the day annually mirrors the government’s interest to stress on the significance of youth in the Sultanate of Oman. That is why the day is being observed with full pride and honour of all Omani youth who are sparing no effort to contribute in building their nation. In all walks of life, they have proved their responsibility to take part along with the government in the decision-making process and build the country.

Omani youth, with all the different achievements and milestones they have accomplished in different spheres, they have demonstrated their outstanding excellence to the whole world. There are hundreds of commendable examples of youth who recorded regional and international victories on various occasions. They have been presenting the incomparable capabilities of Omani youth in sports, cultural, political, social, and many other fields. Thanks to the government for empowering youth and believing in them as great ambassadors and future leaders of the nation.

As a matter of fact, the youth are in need of more opportunities, so that they can play their role and share their valuable contributions to the country. The authorities concerned with youth need to widen the scope to provide more

opportunities where Omani youth can be involved and empowered. I believe there should be a dedicated group of youth experts, serving as consultants who could be contacted by any government or private entity when necessary. This will undoubtedly make youth to shoulder more responsibility and be more accountable. Always having youth onboard is an advantage and a rewarding experience.

Today, youth marks the powerful weapon of any nation. Everyone knows that youth is an asset of a nation because they are the building blocks of a country. It is a reality that the progress of a county is in the hands of its youth. The stronger the youth, the more developed a country will be. Therefore, countries which utilise their youth sufficiently in the right direction are more developed. The ability, spark and brightness of the minds of youth act as a torch carrier for a nation.

On top of this, youth are the real backbone to strengthen a nation. For that reason, youth should get proper and complete education and take part in welfare activities for the betterment of a country, and to eradicate illiteracy in the country. If youth understand their responsibilities, many problems may disappear within a day. Moreover, it is the accountability of youth to identify the value of time because every moment is very precious. Their ideas can show the country a new path towards

prosperity and innovations reflected in their skills and talents in different fields.

Moreover, youth have the ability to try out things and learn from their mistakes. It has been said that “a wise person learns from his mistakes”. If truth to be told, youth are effective change-makers if given appropriate rights to participate. Discussing global issues, such as healthcare, poverty, human rights and inequalities strengthens youth abilities, shapes their views, and eventually affects their attitudes and thoughts. The processes of engagement and meaningful talks equip youth with better problem-solving skills, which will ultimately help them become effective leaders.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik affirmed the importance of according youth high attention, saying, “Youth are the wealth of a nation, its inexhaustible resource and the arms that build it. They are its present and future. We will always listen to them, and sense their needs, interests and aspirations, which will definitely be accorded the attention that they deserve”.

A key necessity is that youth should be made aware of their power and the role they have to play in nation-building march. Accordingly, their zeal and enthusiasm must be properly channelised to help the nation prosper and flourish.

The test of pandemic preparedness



JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO

The author is a former president of the European Commission (2004-14) and prime minister of Portugal (2002-04), is Chair of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

The Covid-19 pandemic has instilled many harsh lessons. But the most important is that infectious-disease outbreaks pose a risk not just to public health but also to global security. Like nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and climate change, Covid-19 has shown that pandemics can rapidly undermine social stability and economic well-being.

This point may seem obvious now. But before the Covid-19 crisis, infectious disease barely registered on the global security agenda. If efforts to change that by establishing new funding and monitoring mechanisms for pandemic preparedness are to succeed, half measures won’t cut it. To avoid a repeat of history, our preparations must reflect the true extent of the challenge. We

must recognise that pandemics now represent one of the biggest — and most likely — threats to global security.

Preventing future pandemics will require not only the same level of investment as other global security threats, on which trillions are spent routinely, but also an entirely different way of thinking about global security. The pandemic represents a new form of globalised crisis, one that is both caused and exacerbated by the modern world’s interconnectedness.

The Spanish influenza pandemic a century ago was not this kind of crisis. Back then, most people across the globe lived in less dense rural settings, and international travel was much slower and undertaken by only a

small fraction of the population. But we saw something similar in 2008-09, when economies fell like dominoes. That was the first globalised crisis of this century, and we are now coming to grips with what will be the century’s defining crisis: climate change.

The common denominator in each case is that the crisis demands solutions that no individual government can provide on its own. An infectious disease cannot be fought with traditional security countermeasures such as economic sanctions, bilateral diplomacy, deterrence, or military posturing. Rather, it calls for scientific collaboration, resilient health systems, and long-term investments in global health networks. Shows of force and unilateral acts of

national self-preservation are useless. Global collaboration, strategic multilateralism, and transnational compassion are the only way out of this kind of disaster.

Judging by the current global distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, we have yet to muster the necessary response. The coronavirus is still winning, and a lack of global coordination is the principal reason why. Instead of finding ways to work together towards common solutions in the face of an unprecedented crisis, key governments are still putting their national interest first, at the expense of the global response we need.

The global solution to the vaccine distribution problem is the Covid-19 Vaccine Global

Access (COVAX) facility established last year. By ensuring equitable access to vaccines for people in the poorest countries, Covax is not only saving millions of lives and protecting hundreds of millions more; it is also offering the best path to recovery. Even from a strictly economic standpoint, Covax is far more cost-effective than any form of fiscal or monetary stimulus.

There are now more than 1.5 billion vaccine doses being produced each month — an astounding feat less than a year after the first vaccine was approved, and just 18 months into the pandemic. It is predicted that a total of more than 12 billion doses will have been produced by the end of this year.

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sport



Dhofar beat Al Rustaq, Al Nasr consolidate top spot

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 31

Dhofar defeated Al Rustaq 4-0 on Sunday night at Al Saada Sports Complex in the fourth week of 2021/2022 Omantel League.

The triumph meant moving of Salalah giants to second place at ten points while Al Rustaq remained on four points. Yazeed al Mashani, Khalid al Hajri, Qasim Said and Faisal al Qasmi netted Dhofar goals.

Al Ittihad and Saham hope to taste their first win in this season dashed as both teams ended their match in a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

At Sohar Sports Complex, the

draw remained the same for both teams in the table bottom with two points after completion of the fourth week of 2021/2022 Omantel League.

Younis al Mushaifri put Al Ittihad team ahead while Wajdi al Lamaki equalised for Saham.

The other game between Al Musannah and Bahla finished also at 1-1 draw. At Al Rustaq Sports Complex, Adeir Wali scored for Bahla while Sameh al Hasani equalised for Al Musannah. The draw kept both teams in the middle table with seven points for each team.

In the other early games of week four played on Saturday, League

leaders, Al Nasr, strengthened its grip at the top as they defeated the hosts Al Suwaiq 2-1 at Al Rustaq Sports Complex.

The triumph marked the fourth successive victory for Salalah's representative team to strengthen in the top by 12 points. Al Nasr's Hamed al Habsi gave his team the lead while Oman former national football player Said al Ruzaqi netted the winner.

Welmerson struck the consolation goal for the hosts. The win raised Al Nasr's tally to 12 points in the first place while north Batinah team remained in their previous four points.

Al Suwaiq board decided to

The triumph meant moving of Salalah giants to second place at ten points while AL Rustaq remained on four points. Yazeed al Mashani, Khalid al Hajri, Qasim Said and Faisal al Qasmi netted Dhofar goals

end the contract with the Austrian coach Mladen Posavec after three weeks from the league start. Coach Qasim al Mujaini led the team against Al Nasr's fixture.

Seeb was held to a goalless draw by Nizwa at the latter's home in Nizwa Sports Complex. Muscat based team strikers could not manage to penetrate the strong defence of the hosts to score any goals. With the draw, Nizwa snatched a point and reached their second point in the league while Seeb were at eight points.

Al Nahdha returned to the winning ways after Seeb's defeat in the previous week. Juma Saeed's team-mates beat Sohar 4-1 at the

Al Buraimi Sports Complex.

The match was dominated by the hosts in both halves. Bernard scored the opening goal for Al Nahdha in the 36th minute and Juma Saeed netted the second goal from penalty in the 51st minute.

Sami al Hasani increased the margin for Al Buraimi team as he struck third goal. Sohar's Hassan al Ajmi reduced the gap as he scored the consolation goal but Ali Dhai raised the margin to four as he scored fourth goal which ended the match by 4-1.

The win took Al Nahdha to nine points while Sohar suffered the second defeat in the league and freezed at four points.

New Zealand knock out insipid India



New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (L) greets his teammate Trent Boult after he took the wicket of India's Hardik Pandya. – AFP



New Zealand's Ish Sodhi bowls during the ICC T20 World Cup match against India. – AFP

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, OCT 31

New Zealand outplayed an insipid Indian team by eight wickets to virtually knock them out of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 and keep their own hopes of qualifying for the semifinals intact in their Group II match, in Dubai on Sunday.

India were done in by a horrid batting display from their superstars as they could muster only 110/7 in 20 overs.

The Kiwis chased down the target without a flutter as they cruised home in the 15th over with

eight wickets intact and ensuring they won with a healthy run rate.

India are almost out of the competition with this defeat and can only qualify with various permutations and combinations in the group.

NZ BATTING SOLID

New Zealand began well and reached 24 in 3.4 overs when they lost Martin Guptill to Jasprit Bumrah. However, with such a low total, it was always going to be an uphill task for India to stop the Kiwis.

Daryl Mitchell got a move on

INDIA WERE DONE IN BY A HORRID BATTING DISPLAY FROM THEIR SUPERSTARS AS THEY COULD MUSTER ONLY 110/7 IN 20 OVERS

in the sixth over when he smashed Ravindra Jadeja for a six and two boundaries. He consolidated his innings further at a 150-plus strike rate.

New Zealand were cruising at 94/1 after 12 overs and on track for a crushing win.

Mitchell was finally out to Bumrah caught at long on by KL Rahul for 49 but by then New Zealand had the match well within their grasp.

BATTING HORROR SHOW

India had got off to a disastrous start losing the wicket of Ishan

Kishan, KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma before the end of the eighth over.

Ishan falling to Trent Boult after attempting to score a six over square leg while Rahul was caught at deep square leg off Tim Southee's bowling.

After Rohit had a life when he was dropped early, it felt he was going to play a big innings but he holed out to Martin Guptill at long on off Ish Sodhi's bowling.

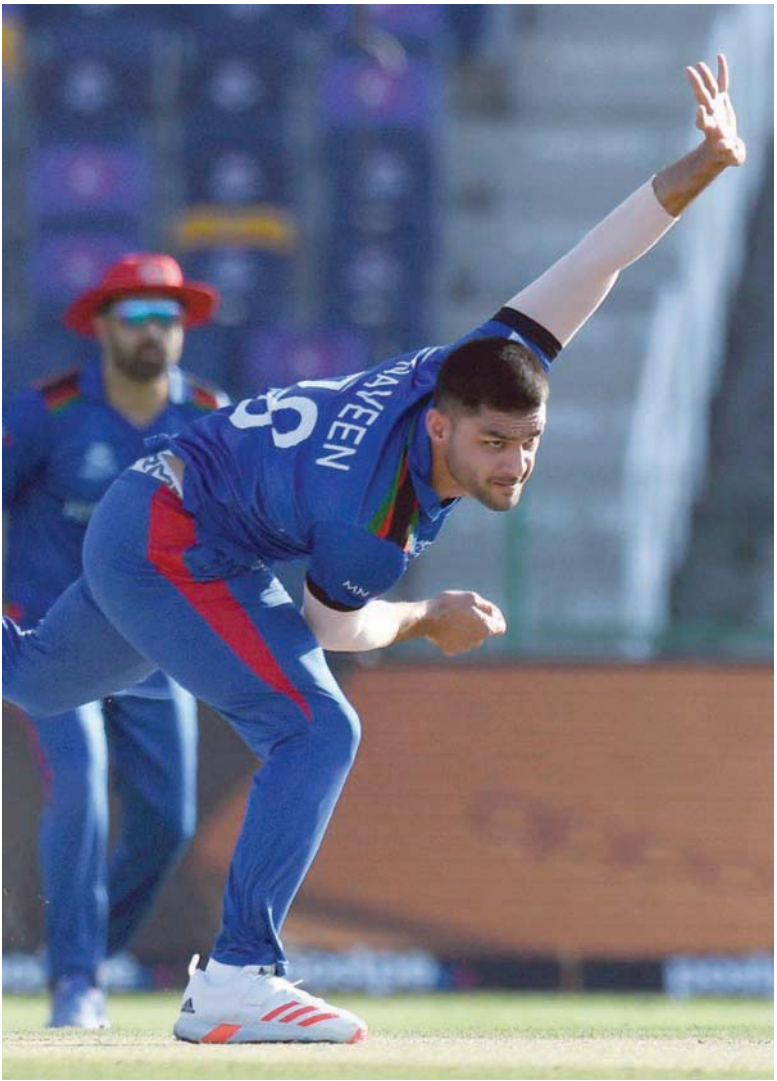
Kohli didn't last long either as he fell on the first ball after the drinks break to Sodhi, after a catch went to long on to Boult.

India were staring at a total disintegration at that stage.

Things went further downhill when Rishabh Pant was castled by Adam Milne in the 15th over as India lost half their side for just 70 runs.

Thereafter, India struggled to keep themselves afloat and were able to cross 100 primarily because of a few lusty hits by Ravindra Jadeja towards the end of the innings.

110/7 is what they managed after 20 overs and New Zealand definitely fancied their chances at that stage.



Afghanistan's Naveen-ul-Haq bowls during the match. – AFP

Afghanistan say farewell to Asghar with victory over Namibia

ABU DHABI: Afghanistan bid an emotional farewell to former captain Asghar Afghan by beating Namibia by 62 runs in the T20 World Cup in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

Asghar scored 31 as Afghanistan batted first and made 160-5.

Afghanistan's seamers then took eight wickets as they restricted Namibia to 98-9.

Hamid Hassan, making his first T20 international appearance in five years, and Naveen-ul-Haq both took three wickets.

Naveen was named player of the match but presented his award to Asghar.

"He was the best captain Afghanistan has produced," he said. "I want to dedicate this man of the match in his last match."

SCOREBOARD	
AFGHANISTAN	
H Zazai c van Lingen b Smit	33
M Shahzad c Scholtz b Trumpelmann	45
R Gurbaz lbw Loftie-Eaton	4
A Afghan c van Lingen b Trumpelmann	31
N Zadran lbw Loftie-Eaton	7
M Nabi (not out)	32
G Naib (not out)	1
Extras (LB-1, W-6)	7
Total (For 5 wks, 20 overs)	160
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-68, 3-89, 4-113, 5-148	
Bowling: Trumpelmann 4-0-34-2, Smit 3-0-22-1, Wiese 4-0-33-0, Frylinck 3-0-34-0, Loftie-Eaton 4-0-21-2, Scholtz 1-0-8-0, Erasmus 1-0-7-0	
NAMIBIA	
C Williams c sub b Naveen-ul-Haq	1
M van Lingen c H Hassan b Naveen-ul-Haq	11
JN Loftie-Eaton b G Naib	14
G Erasmus b H Hassan	12
Z Green b Rashid	1
D Wiese b H Hassan	26
JJ Smit c M Shahzad b H Hassan	0
J Frylinck c M Nabi b Naveen-ul-Haq	6
P Ya France c & b G Naib	3
R Trumpelmann (not out)	12
B Scholtz (not out)	6
Extras (LB-2, W-4)	6
Total (For 9 wks, 20 overs)	98
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-16, 3-29, 4-36, 5-56, 6-56, 7-69, 8-77, 9-80	
Bowling: Naveen 4-0-26-3, Mohammad Nabi 2-0-17-0, H Hassan 4-0-9-3, G Naib 4-1-19-2, K Janat 2-0-11-0, R Khan 4-0-14-1	

"We will miss him a lot."

Speaking after the first innings, an emotional Asghar discussed his decision to retire mid-tournament in an on-field interview saying he

had made the choice after Friday's loss to regional rivals Pakistan.

"From the last match we were hurt too much and that is why I decided to leave the stage," he said.

"It's very difficult to explain, but I had to retire." "I wanted to give a chance to the youngsters," he said.

Asghar skippered Afghanistan over all three formats of cricket. He played six Tests, 114 one-day internationals and this was his 75th Twenty20 international in a career spread over 12 years. The current captain Mohammad Nabi said after the game that he had not been able to change Asghar's mind.

"He had already decided," said Nabi. "Last night Asghar told me that tomorrow it might be my last game," said Nabi.

"It's his decision. He has played for 16 years, captained for six, seven years, and has won a lot of games for Afghanistan. He has won the most games for a captain in the world." — AFP



Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo scores their first goal.
– Reuters

MAN UNITED

BOUNCE BACK WITH WIN OVER SPURS

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, OCT 31

After the humiliating defeat against their fiercest rivals, Liverpool, last week, Manchester United lifted their performance with a thumping 3-0 victory against Tottenham Hotspur.

It lifted the pressure on their beleaguered Manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who said: “The old men led from the front. It was the oldest team I’ve picked for United and it was time for it.” Two of the goals came from 36-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo and Edinson Cavani, 34.

Solskjaer went on to say: “We were excellent, the experience came through. I’ve been here three years as manager and Tuesday’s training performance by Edinson is the best anyone has put into

a training session here. He and Cristiano led the line all week in training. The two of them helped change the mood and the performance.”

He added: “The work rate and the quality they put in is second to none. They are fit lads and really experienced. Experience shone through. The boys were brilliant, they took everything on board. It’s about us improving as a group.”

Tottenham were poor, they looked an ordinary team and the two men up front, Harry Kane and Son Heung-Min were off form. Son did miss a glorious chance to score in the 23rd minute from a couple of yards but shot over.

The first half of the game was dull until six minutes before the end when Ronaldo put his side in the lead.

Bruno Fernandes lifted the ball to him

“We were excellent, the experience came through. I’ve been here three years as manager and Tuesday’s training performance by Edinson is the best anyone has put into a training session here. He and Cristiano led the line all week in training. The two of them helped change the mood and the performance

OLE GUNNER SOLSKJAER
Manchester United Manager

from 10 yards outside the box and the Portuguese beat his marker Ben Davies to hit a brilliant right foot volley across Hugo Lloris and inside the far post.

It was a livelier second half, three minutes into it, Ronaldo found the net with a superb shot but was ruled off side. The visitors, however, extended their lead in the 64th minute with Ronaldo again in the action. He received a pass from Fernandes and with a clever flick he went past Oliver Skipp to put a perfect pass into Cavani’s path who after just one touch beat the onrushing goalkeeper to calmly place the ball in the net.

The latter part of the second half saw much pressure from Spurs but United’s defence stayed firm. The game was put beyond the London side four minutes before time with substitute Marcus

Rashford side-footing a shot past Lloris after fellow substitute Nemanja Matic had passed to him behind the Tottenham defence.

Spurs Manager, Nuno Espirito Santo, admitted his team is struggling. He said: “We’re not on the right track. The fans suffer when you’re not performing well. They have showed they are not happy. We keep on trying. We didn’t play good. Man United were stronger than us. We allowed counter attacks.”

He added: “They were organised, with three centre-halves and that’s difficult. We could not do it, we were not able to find combinations. It was a bit better in the second half but the finish wasn’t there. Bad performance. We’re trying to find solutions, working on the training ground, there’s no other way.”

Hamed heads to America to tackle the Oregon Trail Rally

MUSCAT: Omani rally driver Hamed al Wahaibi continues his return to international rallying competition by tackling a leading rally in the United States of America.

Fresh from taking a well-earned finish on his comeback trail at the recent Cyprus Rally, the 53-year-old now heads for the Oregon Trail in the north-west of the USA on November 5-7.

Al Wahaibi arrived in Oregon at the weekend with his long-time New Zealand co-driver Tony Sircombe to prepare for the event. He will carry out two days of testing today (Monday) and tomorrow (Tuesday) and then take part in reconnaissance of the special stages on Wednesday and Thursday.

Scrutineering, a parade of drivers at the Portland International Raceway and the starting ceremony are all scheduled for Friday (November 5) and precede two days of competitive action on Saturday and Sunday along the scenic Colombia Gorge and through the nearby Mount Hood farmlands.

Al Wahaibi has entered in the National RC2 category in a Ford Fiesta R5 being run on the event by the experienced McKenna Motorsport.

“I am quite excited to do this event”, said Al Wahaibi. “I have a soft spot for the United States from a scenery point of view and I am looking forward to this rally on



the west coast. I guess it’s going to be rainy and muddy and quite a challenge.

“I am looking forward to that. It’s quite a long time since I drove in wet conditions. It’s a exciting time and a new car for me to try.”

Sircombe said: “It will be great to be back rallying in the US and particularly the Oregon Trail Rally. This has a reputation of being an excellent event. Rumour has it that this event could be a WRC candidate rally next year, so it will be good to get some experience this time around. I spent many

years doing the US Rally Championship but only ever competed in the Oregon Trail Rally once — in 1984.

“Quite understandably, I don’t remember much about the rally though I know it wasn’t in The Dalles area back then. From the maps I have seen and some videos, it runs mostly through open farmland on fast, flowing roads. This will be quite a contrast to our last event in Cyprus, which was hot, rocky and super twisty. McKenna Motorsport are very experienced in the US, so we can be

“I have a soft spot for the United States from a scenery point of view and I am looking forward to this rally on the west coast. I guess it’s going to be rainy and muddy and quite a challenge

HAMED AL WAHAIBI
Omani rally driver

confident that the car will be the least of our concerns.”

The 25th Oregon Trail Rally is the last event in the 2021 American Rally Association schedule and the final round of the ARA National and West Regional Championships.

It is based at the Portland International Raceway on Friday and then moves to Golendale in Washington State on Saturday and on to Dufur in Oregon on Sunday.

Al Wahaibi will line up alongside many of America’s leading rally drivers, including WRC legend and stunt driver Ken Block, legend Travis Pastrana and drivers such as Dave Wallingford, Brandon Semenuk and John Coyne in a provisional 74-car field.

ISC-Modern Exchange Badminton Championship 2021

MUSCAT: Indian Social Club in association with Modern Exchange Company will be conducting Badminton open Championship 2021 at their premises. The tournament, will be played at the ISC multipurpose hall as full day event from November 5. Apart from Indian players, this year will see participation from players from Iran, Philippines, Pakistan, UK and the Sultanate of Oman.

In the Men’s category, there will be open events in Singles and Doubles in addition to the events restricted to members only. The open events will see young talented players from across the Sultanate of Oman. Similarly, Women’s category will also have an open events both in Singles and Doubles.

In addition to the above, there will be Veterans, Mixed doubles, Boys and Girls events. According to organisers, shuttlers are making their mark on ISC courts and this has led to a surge of interest in the sport, taking it from just a game played during holidays to a serious sport at a competitive level. Registration is open and the last date of entry will be on 1st November 2021. Players are requested to contact Indian Social club at 24701347 or visit www.iscoman.com for more details.

business



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16 per cent growth in value of fish landings

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 31

The value of fish landings climbed 16.1 per cent to RO 243.787 million during the first eight months of this year, up from RO 210,250

million for the corresponding period of 2020. In quantity terms, the landings totalled 542,722 tonnes this year, representing an increase of 21.4 per cent from the tally of 446,985 tonnes for the same period of 2020.

According to National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), landings in Al Wusta Governorate totalled 214,220 tonnes, followed by North and South Al Sharqiyah (166,497 tonnes), Dhofar (47,527 tonnes)

North and South Al Batinah (46,669 tonnes), Musandam (29,270 tonnes), and Muscat (18,150 tonnes). Pelagic species caught by artisanal fishermen totalled 299,373 tonnes during the Jan–Aug 2021 period, compared

to 242,944 tonnes during the same period in 2020, representing an increase of 23.2 per cent. The catch of large surface fish increased 16.6 per cent to 121,786 tonnes this year, up from 104,489 tonnes last year. (With inputs from ONA)

Robot-run smart device project to launch in Oman in Q1 2022



INNOVATIVE SHOWCASE: High-tech plant coming up in Rusayl Industrial City, is the first of its kind in the Middle East

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](#)



A high-tech plant dedicated to the manufacture of smart metering devices, based on Internet of Things (IoT) technology, is gearing up for launch at Rusayl Industrial City, Muscat, in the Sultanate of Oman. The project — billed as a showcase of the country’s innovative capability in advanced technologies — is being set up by the National Energy Center (NEC), a semi-government enterprise that counts a number of key public sector entities as its shareholders. Investors in NEC include Shumookh Investment & Services (the investment arm of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates — Madayn) and a number of government, defence and security pension funds. According to a senior representative of the Muscat-based enterprise, the plant will add a ‘smart manufacturing’ component to NEC’s growing portfolio of smart solutions, encompassing electricity, water, gas, lighting, environment and civic waste.

Laila al Hadhrami (pictured), Smart Cities Development Manager — National Energy Center, said the plant, currently under construction with an investment of around RO 4 million, will manufacture IoT-based smart meters under the ‘Ectron’ brand for the energy, water and gas service sectors. Speaking at a conference on ‘Digital Transformation’, organised by UMS Events recently, Laila said the factory — the first of its kind in the Middle East — will involve robots in the manufacture of high-tech sensors incorporated into the devices. In addition, a team of 25 Omani ‘champions’ is being trained at overseas facilities to operate the plant when it comes into operation by around the first quarter of 2022, she stated. Also as part of the project, NEC is developing around 1,750 of warehousing capacity at Rusayl Industrial City to accommodate more than 150,000 smart meters, Laila noted.

Importantly, the project will pave the way for the localisation of a product that has been widely deployed across the Sultanate of Oman in recent years, albeit, on the basis of imports. NEC, a pioneer in the field of smart metering solutions in the country, is credited with initiatives that have contributed to the installation of more than 300,000 smart meters, primarily in the electricity sector. The company has also expanded in presence in the Gulf region. Significantly, the IoT smart device manufacturing project has its genesis in the ICT Lab organised by authorities in early 2019 to jumpstart the growth of a thriving value-creating and employment generating ICT industry in the Sultanate of Oman. Lab participants stressed the need for local manufacturing capacity to meet the burgeoning requirement for smart water and electricity meters to enhance efficient energy consumption, curtail leakage and waste, and eliminate metering and billing errors. NEC was seen as ideally positioned to develop the project given its unrivalled experience in enabling the rollout of automated meter reading services in partnership with various utilities in the country. (Picture for illustration only)

الشركة الوطنية العمانية للهندسة والاستثمار (ش.م.ع.ع)
Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. (S.A.O.G)

Company Report
3rd Quarter of 2021 ended on 30/09/2021.
The company has posted consolidated Profit after Tax of RO 769 k for the nine months period ended 30 Sep 2021 versus RO 563 k for Q3 2020.
Although profit during current period has improved as compared to previous period, but there are factors on the cost front which has impacted the performance of the company and creating stress on the profit margins:
1. Due to travel ban, staff movement was affected, many contractual positions could not be fulfilled resulting in lower revenue, the travel ban has been lifted now, and things are expected to improve in coming period.
2. VAT implementation has seen additional working capital requirement.
3. Change in Visa cost has increased for expat staff, including staff which are under labor category, this is a major cost impact.
4. The interest rates in the market continues to be an area of concern. We appeal to the concerned authorities to adopt necessary measure in order to reduce the interest rate to acceptable levels to ensure stability of the market
5. Release of invoices by Ministries and major clients continue to get delayed. Despite escalations, the delay continues to be a challenge and continue to impact the margins. Management is taking up the required measures to ensure collection of ONEIC outstanding.
6. Management in in touch with all its customers and keeping them updated with respect to force majeure challenges.
7. Due to AER decision, to reissue the bills, and due to authorities' decision, to not to do disconnection of default customers in utility section, the collection during the quarter was badly impacted.
The above issues are temporary in nature, your company is taking strong measures to overcome these issues, we are confident of overcoming these challenges.
The company is in process of diversifying, in line to this:
1. ONEIC managed to complete business integrations with multiple major customers, resulting in good turnover and successful diversification towards new business streams.
2. ONEIC collection services for Sanad Offices were successfully tested, ONEIC is awaiting a go ahead to go live for collection services.
3. ONEIC mobile POS machines are doing well, and giving access to ONEIC to do collection activities, where earlier it could not be collected.
4. ONEIC branches are now providing post offices services to its customers.
5. ONEIC has entered into agreement with Omantel to provide Omantel services from ONEIC branches.
6. ONEIC has developed smart Kiosk machines which are capable to handle multiple complex transactions, including dispensing of sim, cards etc. ONEIC is under discussion with multiple clients for KIOSK business.
7. The company is focusing on collection business, including factoring collection, due to covid impact and decision by authorities, in between, collection comes under stress. ONEIC is confident that with the opening of collection activities now, things are expected to improve in coming period.
8. The company has participated in multiple BOO & other new tenders and favorable results are expected in coming periods. Khasab desalination plant, which is part of Musandam Water project, now is in operation.
9. CBO issue to ONEIC initial approval to create electronic wallet as payment service provider (PSP). This shall open new gates for electronic payment and collection.
Your company is taking major steps to safeguard interest of all our shareholders and improve, to sustain positive growth, which shall play a remarkable role in companies' future profits.

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2021

	Parent Company		Group
	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited
	30 th Sep	30 th Sep	30 th Sep
	2021	2020	2021
	R.O.	R.O.	R.O.
Revenue	45,288,760	38,974,655	45,491,484
Other Income	902,489	617,928	909,209
Total Revenue	46,191,249	39,592,583	46,400,693
Staff cost	(13,957,635)	(17,440,998)	(14,053,923)
Operating cost	(27,387,758)	(17,906,917)	(27,415,017)
General and administrative expenses	(559,998)	(598,458)	(585,869)
Provision for expected credit losses	(294,521)	(5,553)	(294,521)
Depreciation	(1,360,084)	(1,221,566)	(1,360,380)
Finance Cost - Net	(1,820,594)	(1,772,968)	(1,820,594)
Profit before Tax	810,659	646,123	870,389
Income tax expense	(100,650)	(82,732)	(100,650)
Profit after tax	710,009	563,391	769,739
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.0055	0.0043	0.0057

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2021

	Parent Company		Group
	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited
	30 th Sep	31 st Dec	30 th Sep
	2021	2020	2021
	R.O.	R.O.	R.O.
ASSETS			
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	16,246,071	17,348,789	16,247,793
Investment properties	6,984,563	7,151,963	6,984,563
Financial asset carried at fair value through other comprehensive income	1,162,037	1,251,195	1,162,037
Investment in subsidiary	300,000	300,000	-
Goodwill	-	-	150,000
Deferred tax assets	1,063,798	951,423	1,063,798
Long term receivables	11,202,371	5,717,020	11,202,371
Retention on contracts	56,132	-	56,132
Total non-current assets	37,014,972	32,720,390	36,866,694
Current assets:			
Inventories	1,097,633	823,809	1,097,633
Trade and other receivables	92,634,455	85,506,624	92,630,399
Cash and bank balances	4,593,705	4,261,121	4,690,243
Total current assets	98,325,793	90,591,554	98,418,275
Total assets	135,340,765	123,311,944	135,284,969
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity:			
Share capital	13,000,000	12,000,000	13,000,000
Share premium	2,002,469	2,002,469	2,002,469
Legal reserve	3,039,222	2,968,221	3,058,657
General reserve	300,000	300,000	300,000
Fair value reserve	1,053,290	1,142,448	1,053,290
Revaluation reserve	2,940,596	2,981,614	2,940,596
Retained earnings	2,750,071	3,062,806	2,694,866
Equity attributable to owners of the Parent Company	25,085,648	24,457,558	25,049,878
Non controlling interest	-	-	108,258
Total equity and liabilities	25,085,648	24,457,558	25,158,136
Non-current liabilities			
End of service benefits	1,852,632	2,045,497	1,857,461
Bank borrowings	19,189,347	12,030,877	19,189,347
Deferred tax liability	543,232	550,472	543,232
Total non-current liabilities	21,585,211	14,626,846	21,590,040
Current liabilities:			
Bank borrowings	36,397,972	42,035,392	36,397,972
Trade and other payables	52,034,128	42,128,317	51,901,015
VAT payable	24,782	-	24,782
Provision for tax	213,024	63,831	213,024
Total current liabilities	88,669,906	84,227,540	88,536,793
Total liabilities	110,255,117	98,854,386	110,126,833
Total equity and liabilities	135,340,765	123,311,944	135,284,969
Net assets per share	0.193	0.204	0.193

Note:
1. Details of Accounts are available with MSM
2. The complete Accounts will be sent by mail to any Shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.”
O.N.E.I.C. P.O. Box - 1393, P.C. 112, Ruwi Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24396201, Fax 24396499, Website: www.oneic.com.om, Email: oneic@oneic.com.om

www.oneic.com.om



Whopping cash prizes for NBO’s Sept Al Kanz Savings Scheme

MUSCAT: Marking another milestone in its efforts to instill a culture of saving, National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently held its September Al Kanz Savings Scheme draw, with RO 157,500 given to 178 lucky winners.

As well as the monthly Sadara and Mazaya draws, which handed out three prizes of RO 25,000 and four prizes of RO 10,000 respectively, the bank also held its special Women’s draw, giving RO 1,000 to six winners; the Youth draw, giving RO 100 to 115

winners; and the Salary Transfer draw, with RO 500 earmarked for 50 winners.

With only two months left until the end-of-year mega draw, there is still plenty of time to start saving and be in for the chance to win up to RO 250,000.

Tariq Atiq, Chief Retail and Digital Banking Officer at NBO, said, “Our yearly draw scheme has become a mainstay of our Al Kanz Savings account, and the highlight of our efforts to encourage savings amongst our

customers. As well as a range of useful features and benefits, the account offers the chance to win a variety of cash prizes every single month. As we come towards National Day and the end of the year, the draw gets even more exciting and we look forward to making even more of our customers’ lives better by helping them secure their finances for the future.”

With prizes ranging from RO 100 to RO 250,000, the Al Kanz Savings Scheme continues

to be one of the most highly anticipated banking events of the year. Customers are eligible to win by maintaining an average minimum balance of RO 100 in their Al Kanz Savings account. Every RO 100 provides an extra chance in the draw, so the more money kept in the account, the more the chance of winning.

Meanwhile, customers simply have to transfer their salary to NBO to be in for the chance of winning in the Salary Transfer draw.

Meethaq Hibati gives away RO 30,000 to winners of Omani Women’s Day draw

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat continued to show its commitment to celebrate special events of national importance by conducting a special Hibati prize draw on the occasion of Omani Women’s Day (OWD). Thirty cash prizes of RO 1,000 each were given away to lucky female customers on the occasion of the Omani Women’s Day draw.

Amor bin Said al Amri, Senior Regional Manager, Meethaq Branches said: “Omani women have proven their abilities and leadership skills and Meethaq would like to congratulate all women on this very happy occasion. To add further excitement and showcase our appreciation on this important day, Meethaq is happy to reward 30 women customers from across

the Sultanate for their excellent contribution to the society. We also thank all our customers for choosing Meethaq Islamic Banking as their preferred banking choice.”

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. Hibati benefits include attractive and exciting cash prizes through draws, Visa debit card, no minimum balance charges with a history of profit



payout on monthly basis and state of the art eBanking facilities.

The 2021 Hibati Saving account includes many special draws including the upcoming 51st National Day Draw and the End-of-Year draw. All customers who maintain a minimum balance of RO 100 will be automatically entered into the special National Day draw, which will reward 51

lucky winners with RO 1,000 each.

Meanwhile, customers who maintain quarterly average balance of RO 30,000 in the preceding quarter, will be entered into the prize draws for the End-of-Year draw. Four grand prizes of RO 50,000 each and one grand prize of RO 100,000 will be given away during the End-of-Year draw.

Meethaq will give away prizes worth RO 1.5 million to a record number of 5,331 winners in 2021. Launched in 2018, Hibati has been instrumental in improving awareness for Islamic Banking in Oman. It must be noted that every Meethaq product goes through the process of Sharia compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board, and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman.

Honour for Buraimi varsity senior staff

MUSCAT: Dr Syed Faraz Hasan, Director of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Buraimi, has been awarded Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), United Kingdom. This fellowship is an internationally recognised acknowledgement of Dr Hasan’s teaching expertise in tertiary education environments.

Says Dr Hasan, “Working on HEA fellowship has given me an opportunity to reflect on my teaching methodology and benefit from published literature in this area.”

Awardees of HEA fellowship are required to meet specific criteria of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), which involves thorough understanding of teaching pedagogies, engagement



in continued professional development.

Dr Abood al Sawafi, Vice Chancellor, University of Buraimi, has expressed delight that Dr Hasan has joined the growing network of HEA fellows that stretches across the globe and has affirmed the extreme desire of UoB management to have more HEA fellowships among the University academics.

Beaconhouse students take part in walkathon



MUSCAT: Beaconhouse students from Al Khuwair school participated in a walkathon on Thursday to raise awareness for breast cancer during ‘Pink October’. This is the second initiative in a week that students have participated since last week members of the UNICEF school group raised money by organising a bake sale.

Secondary students and staff completed the walkathon, in the vicinity of the campus, and the enthusiasm was infectious.

Students and staff, dressed in different shades of pink, were flagged off by the school leaders and the Royal Oman Police guided the participants safely along the walk. Badr Al Samaa provided the ambulance for the walkers.

Muna al Aufer from the Oman Cancer Association was present to support the event and also received proceeds from the bake sale.

Pocari Sweat, Al Saleh, and Muscat Pharmacy were the other sponsors.

Enjoy fun family times in the luxurious Lincoln Navigator

MUSCAT: The Lincoln Navigator luxury SUV offers some of the finest experiences for families looking forward to memorable journeys. Due to its sheer size and keen attention to inspiring interior detailing, the Navigator stands out from the rest when it comes to large SUV luxury.

The Navigator is powered by a twin-turbo V6 engine producing 450 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed transmission. Navigator’s lighter, high-strength aluminium-alloy body helps create a more refined ride.

While on the move, the Navigator is also easy to adjust to changing conditions. With the turn of a dial, the driver can adapt the Navigator to changing road or weather,

and enjoy a smooth, confident ride.

Additional available technology includes: Trailer Backup Assist, which automatically steers the vehicle to turn a trailer the desired amount — meaning less time required to perform the task; Navigator is expected to deliver more towing capability than any other premium full-size SUV; 360-degree camera and enhanced park assist, which reduce stress from parallel and perpendicular parking. The system integrates views from four cameras to create an overhead image so the driver can see all around the vehicle; Adaptive cruise control, which automatically slows Navigator in stop-and-go traffic — resuming speed



when traffic allows.

The Navigator is designed to be intuitive and easy to use. A 12-inch configurable instrument cluster allows drivers to choose the

information they want displayed. An available Head-Up Display can show selected information on the windshield instead of the instrument cluster. This helps drivers keep

their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel. It does not fade in the sunlight and is visible even with polarised lenses.

The interior layout is clean and uncluttered, with a simple, soothing ambience. At night, interior ambient lights sequentially illuminate each of the SUV’s three rows. During the day, a panoramic roof fills the cabin with natural light. Inside, spaciousness comes in all three rows, including storage in each to keep the cabin clean and organised.

An available rear-seat entertainment system allows passengers to stream content wirelessly with an Android device to one of the 10-inch adjustable screens mounted on the rear of the front seats.

Occupants can enjoy available Revel Ultima audio with 20 speakers that work in concert with Navigator’s interior design and acoustics. Standard SYNC 3 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls.

Second-row passengers have their own audio and climate control, while third-row seats feature power recline capability.

In the Sultanate of Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co LLC. Log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests.

GCC petrochemical industry leaders affirm commitment to climate targets

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:
GPCA releases 2020 Responsible Care Performance Metrics Report, announces new Process Safety Network at Riyadh conference

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 31

Arabian Gulf chemical industry leaders reiterated their commitment to advancing sustainability, developing nature-positive solutions and contributing to climate action at the 4th Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) Responsible Care Conference, taking place in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh.

In line with the event's theme 'Seizing the 'new normal' opportunities through

Responsible Care', senior industry leaders, government officials, esteemed dignitaries and stakeholders from global organisations attended the high-profile event to demonstrate their support towards sustainable industry performance, which contributes to mitigating climate impact and positions the Arabian Gulf region as an important player in efforts to achieve climate targets.

Delivering the opening address at the conference on day one, Yousef al Benyan, Vice Chairman and CEO, SABIC and Chairman, GPCA, praised the role of GPCA and its achievements over the past 15 years. "Today, it is leading a new phase of transformation, moving towards maximizing the returns of our industry, advancing its developmental and social impact, and raising its standards to achieve sustainability goals."

At a time when the chemical industry is on the way to playing

an even bigger role in the future of global communities, it is imperative that companies in this field focus all the more on safety and commit to producing even greater outcomes in Responsible Care. "This includes adopting new technologies, identifying the challenges we face, and embracing effective sustainable methodologies, through which we create value in everything we do", he added.

Petrochemical firms in the Sultanate of Oman owned and operated by OO, the country's integrated energy group, as well as Omifco and Oman Methanol Company, are members of GPCA.

Over the next three days leaders at the GPCA Responsible Care Conference will discuss important issues, the opportunities and challenges to deliver on the region's sustainability commitments, coinciding with the inauguration of the 26th UN Climate Change



Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, UK on Sunday.

The whole world will watch closely as the parties are expected to urge the public and private sector to do their part to turn the tide on climate change and take concrete actions to put a zero-carbon world within reach. Prior to the meeting, ministers called on nations to meet the \$100 bn per year climate finance goal.

This is against the backdrop of

Saudi Arabia launching a Middle East Green Initiative on Monday last week which aims to secure 39 billion riyals (\$10.4 billion) as part of efforts to reduce regional carbon emissions.

In related news, GPCA at the conference today released the 2020 edition of its Performance Metrics Report 'Rising to the New Normal Challenges and Opportunities', which provides an annual review of the environmental, health, safety and

security (EHS&S) performance of GPCA member companies. Despite a 54 per cent increase in chemicals production, non-hazardous disposal at GPCA member companies dropped by 50 per cent, when compared to the seven-year average from 2013 to 2019. Wastewater discharges too registered a substantial decrease against the same period (2013 to 2019), with a drop of 76 per cent, while non-hazardous waste dropped by 27 per cent in 2020 from the year before.

In an effort to drive continuous sustainability improvements across the chemical industry in the region, Dr Abdulwahab al Sadoun, Secretary General, GPCA, utilised the conference as a platform to announce exclusively to delegates the launch of the Gulf Process Safety Network, the first of its kind professional group in the region representing the chemical and petrochemical industry in the six GCC states.

How Apple is gaining smartphone customers during a chip shortage

CALIFORNIA: Apple Inc is eating into its rivals' smartphone market share as the iPhone maker navigates through a global chip crunch better than other mobile phone makers, according to data providers.

Higher iPhone shipments helped Apple gain at least 3 per cent market share in global smartphones in the third quarter, even as overall shipments shrunk by about 6% due to the chip shortage, according to data from market research firms Counterpoint, IDC and Canalys.

Given how closely tech companies guard smartphone sales data, the shipment figures are the best indication of who customers prefer.

"We are expecting another massive quarter for Apple and our expectation is they'll take a similar 20 per cent shipment share in calendar year Q4", Counterpoint analyst Tarun Pathak said.

Apple has weathered the supply crunch better than many other companies due to its massive purchasing power and long-term supply agreements with chip vendors even though iPhone 13 production hit a snag due to factory closures in Asia and high demand in the second half of the year.

"Shortages are worst at the low-end, so Apple is less exposed than many of its competitors because it



skews heavily towards premium", Ben Stanton, analyst at Canalys, said.

The shipments of pricier phones drove revenue to a record \$100 billion in the third quarter, according to Counterpoint.

The Cupertino, California-based company's supply prowess was displayed in China where it posted a staggering 83 per cent annual sales growth last quarter, remaining one of top choices for big spenders in the world's second-largest economy. read more Apple increased shipments in the third quarter, while market leader Samsung Electronics and rival Xiaomi Corp saw a drop as customers were lured by the price cuts to the iPhone 12 series and the faster processor and bigger camera in the latest iPhone 13 devices.

— Reuters

Saudi Aramco Q3 profits soar

RIYADH: Saudi Aramco's earnings rose 158 per cent year-on-year in the third quarter on higher oil prices and volumes sold as the global economy recovered, it said on Sunday.

Aramco's profits surge comes as world leaders prepare for the UN's COP26 climate summit starting in Glasgow later on Sunday, a key meeting in the battle against global warming.

Aramco's net income was \$30.4 billion in the third quarter, up from \$11.8 billion in Q3 last year, with

free cash flow more than doubling to \$28.7 billion. Shareholders will receive \$18.8 billion in dividends.

The profits are the biggest since Aramco listed on the Saudi stock exchange in December 2019, before suffering a 44.4 per cent slump in 2020.

"The increase in net income was primarily the result of higher crude oil prices and volumes sold", the Saudi oil giant said in its earnings statement.

— AFP



MUSCAT INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG
Post Box 72, Postal Code: 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 22364400 - Fax: 22364500

UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2021

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,
After Compliments,
I am pleased to present on behalf of the Board of Directors of Muscat Insurance Company (SAOG) Interim Report on the Company's activities and the un-audited financial statements for the nine months ended 30th September 2021.
General Overview of the Business Environment:
The overall business environment for 2021 in the Sultanate has been impacted by the global pandemic, with the Insurance Industry continuing to grow on back of Non-motor and health insurance, though market conditions remained highly competitive. MIC like its marketplace competitors is facing an exceptional situation as well as the whole world is in a dilemma of the spread of the pandemic of Coronavirus (COVID - 19). The Board of Directors has advised management and the staff to adhere with Supreme Committee decisions. Vaccines have been given to all employees of the company to ensure protection from infection and to ensure the business of the company is not disrupted. Our operational resilience has been strong with the safety and health of our staff and customers as primary concern as well as continuation of essential customer services made available.
The investment sector remained bearish on the back of COVID -19 and continuing closure of many sectors. Despite the slight improvement in the oil sector which reflected into the performance of both the local & global markets. Pursuant to the prospectus, the oil prices are expected to recover comparatively during 2021. This matter encourages the focus on the profitable sectors.
The Gross Premiums decreased by 22% to OMR 11.677 Million from OMR 15.061 Million in 2020. On the General insurance side, the gross written premium was OMR 9.311 Million as compared to OMR 11.330 Million for the same period last year primarily as a result of lower volumes in Motor premiums written by 27.55% comparatively due to a highly competitive market impacted by the spread of the pandemic of Coronavirus (COVID- 19).
On the Life & Medical insurance side gross written premium was OMR 2.367 Million as compared to OMR 3.732 Million for the same period last year.
Our underwriting results decreased to OMR 1.556 Million from OMR 1.899 Million for the same period last year, a decrease of 18%.
The company has put in place the infrastructure in terms of the diversify the business portfolio and facilities in terms of new products expansion for the profitable growth and this will continue during the remaining period with our focus on profitability and provision of the best insurance products. Accordingly, Although General and Administrative Expenses increased by 3% to OMR 2.022 Million compared to OMR 1.966 Million for the same period in 2020, Overheads are under control and the increase is mainly due to provisions.
Investments
Investment income for the period increased by 167% from OMR 387k to OMR 1.036 Million, this huge variance is mainly due to unrealized losses on local equity in the previous period. Realized investment income decreased by 27% from OMR 1.121 Million to OMR 845k, while unrealized gains increased from a loss of OMR 733K to gains of OMR 191K compared to the same period in 2020.
Corporate Governance
The Company continues to implement the code of Corporate Governance as required by the Laws and Regulations of the Capital Market Authority and other regulatory authorities. The Company maintains a high standard of compliance and best practice as required by the Code of Corporate Governance and the Company's Corporate Governance policies.
Human Resources
The company adopts the encouragement of national cadres and sustains its survival in all areas of the company's activities. The company provides internal training to meet the needs of Omani employees, motivate and increase the participation of employees in various activities at the head office and branch network. The Board of Directors is keen to encourage the national cadres. I am honoured to inform the shareholders that the Omanization rate in 19 branches of the company is 100%. This is in addition to the company's commitment to work together with the Capital Market Authority and the Ministry of Manpower to implement the guidelines of Omanization in Insurance Sector.
Internal Control Systems
The Company, through its Audit Committee reviews the adequacy, effectiveness, and compliances of the internal control procedures. Further, Internal auditors and external auditors submit their reports with their observations and recommendations for enhancement of the existing internal control systems. Management reviews those recommendations and takes all necessary steps for continuous improvement.
Acknowledgement
The Board of Directors conveys its thanks to our Customers, Reinsurers, Bankers and Shareholders for their continued and ongoing support.
The Board of Directors especially appreciates the continued support and determined efforts made by the Management and Staff of the Company.
On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to express our most humble gratitude and loyalty to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimour Al Said vision and support for private enterprise in the Sultanate of Oman and pray to the Almighty to shower His everlasting blessing on His Majesty for his good health and long life to allow him to continue to lead us on an enlightened path to future prosperity and development for Oman and its people.
For and on behalf of the Board of Directors,

Ranjit Singh
Chairman

Statement of financial position

	30 September 2021 Unaudited RO	30 September 2020 Unaudited RO	31 December 2020 Audited RO
ASSETS			
Bank balances and cash	936,905	2,199,758	2,302,054
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	3,226,688	3,038,392	3,035,798
Premium and insurance receivables	3,430,186	5,671,025	3,061,600
Available-for-sale investments	660,826	556,816	660,826
Other receivables and prepayments	1,238,889	787,650	885,074
Reinsurance contracts	13,294,963	15,220,533	13,809,091
Deposits	9,155,000	9,905,000	9,155,000
Investments held to maturity	2,257,961	2,268,461	2,265,836
Deferred tax asset	334,832	365,382	334,832
Right-of-use asset	53,925	29,663	70,078
Investment properties	9,185,183	9,660,612	9,421,278
Property and equipment	1,208,643	1,327,223	1,307,338
Intangible assets	90,575	82,554	81,771
Total assets	45,074,576	51,113,069	46,390,576
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	4,687,400	4,879,549	4,308,331
Reinsurance payable	3,907,282	6,464,343	4,683,627
Lease liabilities	44,560	—	49,969
Provision for taxation	173,322	161,833	181,212
Insurance contracts	19,393,558	23,343,733	20,446,586
Total liabilities	28,206,122	34,849,458	29,669,725
EQUITY			
Capital and reserves			
Share capital	11,025,046	11,025,046	11,025,046
Legal reserve	3,458,419	3,409,534	3,443,659
Capital reserve	25,207	25,207	25,207
Contingency reserve	3,125,636	2,810,963	2,854,658
Fair value reserve	331,419	215,431	331,419
Accumulated losses	(1,097,273)	(1,222,570)	(959,138)
Total equity	16,868,454	16,263,611	16,720,851
Total equity and liabilities	45,074,576	51,113,069	46,390,576
Net assets per share	1.530	1.475	1.517

Statement of comprehensive income

	30 September 2021 3 months Unaudited RO	30 September 2020 3 months Unaudited RO	30 September 2021 9 months Unaudited RO	30 September 2020 9 months Unaudited RO
INCOME				
Gross premiums written	1,815,553	4,008,310	11,677,996	15,061,955
Underwriting results	232,797	603,516	1,626,719	2,041,710
Investment income – net	81,408	357,939	1,036,105	387,442
	314,205	961,455	2,662,824	2,429,152
EXPENSES				
General and administration	684,880	742,095	2,301,505	2,250,911
Other operating expenses	92,188	38,131	202,216	102,848
	777,068	780,226	2,503,721	2,353,759
Profit / (loss) before taxation	(462,863)	181,229	159,103	75,393
Taxation	41,643	(11,481)	(11,500)	(64,106)
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period	(421,220)	169,748	147,603	11,287
Basic earnings / (loss) per share	(0.038)	0.015	0.013	0.001

Move over Apple, Microsoft now the world’s most valuable company

Apple Inc lost its crown as the world’s most valuable public company to Microsoft Corp last week, as the iPhone maker’s shares fell about 2 per cent.

Apple took a \$6 billion hit to its sales during the fiscal fourth quarter due to persistent global supply chain problems, leading to a miss on Wall Street expectations. Top boss Tim Cook said the impact will be even worse in the current holiday sales quarter.

“Compared to less hardware focused FAANG peers, Apple is also a lot more exposed to supply chain disruption,” said Sophie Lund-Yates, equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Apple’s shares dropped 1.8 per cent to end the session at \$149.80, giving the company a market capitalisation of \$2.48 trillion. By contrast, shares of Windows software maker Microsoft rose 2.2 per cent to a record high of \$331.62, ending the session with a market capitalisation of \$2.49 trillion.

Apple, which has repurchased \$421.7 billion worth of shares over the years, had announced a massive \$90 billion share buyback in April. As a result, the outstanding stock pool keeps shrinking, and the company ended its fiscal fourth quarter with 16.4 billion shares.

Microsoft’s stock has surged 49 per cent this year, with pandemic-induced demand for its cloud-based services driving sales. Shares of Apple have climbed 13 per cent so far this year.

Apple’s stock market value overtook Microsoft’s in 2010 as the iPhone made it the world’s premier consumer technology company. The companies have taken turns as Wall Street’s most valuable business in recent years, with Apple holding the title since mid-2020.

Analysts say Apple has managed the supply chain issue well, but with Cook warning of more pressure, the door is open to a hit to its performance as the holiday season kicks in.

In contrast, Microsoft on Tuesday forecast a strong end to the calendar year. But it also warned that supply-chain woes will continue to dog key units, such as those producing its Surface laptops and Xbox gaming consoles.

Microsoft didn’t get a look-in when Facebook, Apple, Amazon.com, Netflix and Alphabet’s Google were lumped together in an acronym to describe the highest-flying tech firms.

— Reuters



INFLATION PUNISHES THE POOR

A worker unloads cooking gas cylinders for residents to buy at a fair price amid high energy prices caused by inflation, as part of an initiative organised by the Federation of Oil Workers (FUP), in Vila Vintem slum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

— Reuters

A progressive monetary policy is the only alternative



YANIS VAROUFAKIS The author is a former finance minister of Greece, is leader of the MeRA25 party

TORN BETWEEN INFLATIONARY JITTERS AND FEAR OF DEFLATION, CENTRAL BANKERS IN THE MAJOR ADVANCED ECONOMIES ARE TAKING A POTENTIALLY COSTLY WAIT-AND-SEE APPROACH

As the coronavirus pandemic recedes in the advanced economies, their central banks increasingly resemble the proverbial ass who, equally hungry and thirsty, succumbs to both hunger and thirst because it could not choose between hay and water.

Torn between inflationary jitters and fear of deflation, policymakers are taking a potentially costly wait-and-see approach. Only a progressive rethink of their tools and aims can help them play a socially useful post-pandemic role.

Central bankers once had a single policy lever: interest rates. Push down to revitalise a flagging economy; push up to rein in inflation (often at the expense of triggering a recession). Timing these moves, and deciding by how much to move the lever, was never easy, but at least there was only one move to make: push the lever up or down. Today, central bankers’ work is twice as complicated, because, since 2009, they have had two levers to manipulate.

Following the 2008 global financial crisis, a second lever became necessary, because the original one got jammed: Even though it had been pushed down as far as possible, driving interest rates to zero and often forcing them into negative territory, the economy continued to stagnate. Taking a page from the Bank of Japan, major central banks (led by the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England) created a second lever, known as quantitative easing (QE).

Pushing it up created money to purchase paper assets from commercial banks in the hope that the banks would inject the new money directly into the real economy. If inflation appeared, all they need do was push down on the lever and taper the asset purchases.

That was the theory. Now that inflation is in the air, central banks are nervous. Should they tighten policy?

If they don’t, they can expect the ignominy suffered by their 1970s predecessors, who allowed inflation to become embedded in the price-wage dynamic. But if they follow their instincts and shift their two levers, tapering QE and modestly raising interest rates, they run the risk of triggering two crises at once: A jobs bonfire, as increasing interest rates reduce aggregate demand and dampen investment, and a financial crash, as markets and corporations, addicted to free QE money and over-extended, panic at the prospect of withdrawal. The 2013 “taper tantrum,” which occurred after the Fed merely suggested that it would rein in QE, would pale in comparison.

Central banks are terrified of this scenario because it would render both their levers useless. Though interest rates would have risen, there would still be little room to reduce them. And politically prohibitive amounts of QE would be necessary to reflate submerged financial markets. So, policymakers sit on their hands, emulating

the hapless ass who could not work out which of its two needs was weightier.

But, by presupposing that the two levers must be moved sequentially and in tandem, central banks’ conundrum assumes a past that need not be repeated. Historically, sure, the second lever, QE, was invented only after the first, interest rates, had stopped working. But why should we assume that with inflation rising again, the sequence must now be reversed by eliminating QE first and then raising interest rates? Why can’t the two levers be moved simultaneously and in the same direction, implying a two-prong monetary policy that hikes interest rates and QE (albeit a different form)?

Interest rates should indeed be raised. Lest we forget, even in times of zero official interest rates, the bottom 50 per cent of the income distribution are ineligible for cheap credit and end up borrowing at usurious rates via payday loans, credit cards, and unsecured private loans. It is only the rich that benefit from ultra-low interest rates. As for governments, while low official interest rates allow them to roll over their debt cheaply, their fiscal constraints seem impossible to loosen, so much so that public investment is constantly lacking. For these two reasons, 13 years of ultra-low interest rates have contributed to massive inequality.

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What’s in the global tax reform agreed by the G20?



BRIGITTE HAGEMANN AFP Correspondent

ABOUT 100 MNCs REPORTING ANNUAL TURNOVER OF MORE THAN €20 BILLION WILL SEE PART OF THEIR TAXES REDISTRIBUTED TO COUNTRIES WHERE THEY ACTUALLY OPERATE

After years of negotiations, G20 leaders have endorsed an historic deal aimed at ending tax havens, although some developing countries complain it still falls short.

Some 136 countries representing more than 90 per cent of global GDP have signed the OECD-brokered deal to more fairly tax multinational companies and enact a minimum tax on global corporations of 15 per cent.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen hailed the “historic” green-light by leaders of the world’s major economies, which was also confirmed by sources close to the G20 summit in Rome ahead of a final statement.

The tax reform, first proposed in 2017 and given a boost through the support of US President Joe Biden, is due to come into effect in 2023. But this date will almost

certainly slip, as each country must translate the global deal into national legislation — with Biden facing some of the toughest domestic opposition.

“It is very likely that the implementation of the deal will be delayed,” Giuliano Noci, professor of strategy at Milan’s Polytechnic business school, said.

“The devil is in the detail — all aspects of its implementation must be resolved and it must be approved by national parliaments.”

The first pillar of the reform, which involves taxing companies where they made their profits, not just where they are headquartered, has run into fierce opposition in the US Congress.

It targets above all Internet giants such as Google parent Alphabet, Amazon, Facebook and Apple, experts in basing themselves in low-tax countries — which allows

them to pay derisory levels of tax in relation to their huge profits.

“If the US were to withdraw from the deal, it would be doomed to failure,” added Noci.

Noci expects Congress to give the green light, however, saying the “attitude towards the digital giants has changed dramatically in recent years”.

The OECD says a 15 per cent global minimum corporate tax rate could add \$150 billion annually to global tax revenues.

About 100 multinationals reporting annual turnover of more than €20 billion will see part of their taxes redistributed to countries where they actually operate.

But this, and the 15 per cent minimum tax rate, have been criticised as insufficient by many developing countries.

Not least because the average

global tax rate is currently a higher 22 per cent, itself well below the average of 50 per cent in 1985.

Argentina is pressing for a tax rate of 21 per cent, or even 25 per cent, because “tax evasion by multinationals is one of the most toxic aspects of globalisation”, according to its economy minister, Martin Guzman.

Argentina eventually joined the agreement, but Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are still holding out.

“The agreement was negotiated with developing countries and reflects a large part of what they wanted, but it is true that it is a compromise,” Pascal Saint-Amans, the head of tax policy at the OECD and one of the architects of the reform, said.

Under the final version of the reform, smaller countries will benefit from a portion of the

redistributed tax of companies with an annual turnover of €250,000 a year. For richer countries, the threshold is €1 million.

However, the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT), which comprises renowned economists such as Joseph Stiglitz and Thomas Piketty, has been scathing.

In an open letter to G20 leaders earlier this month, they said the reforms had “been watered down in such a way that it will overwhelmingly benefit rich countries”.

Negotiators “made concessions to sign up three tax havens like Ireland, Estonia and Hungary, but they didn’t listen to developing countries”, the head of the commission’s secretariat, Tommaso Faccio, said.

— AFP

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features



Taking a peek at the sketches of 30 artists

Thirty artists were given a small-sized sketchbook and requested to fill its pages with people, places, animals and things using their own tools and chosen mediums. These sketches will become the front and centre of an art exhibition inspired by a childhood game and showcase some of the most intimate works of art of the country's creative industry... **P20**

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An oral history of the reality TV franchise "The Real Housewives."

Rare, ancient Maya canoe found in Mexico's Yucatan

A WOODEN CANOE used by the ancient Maya and believed to be over 1,000 years old has turned up in southern Mexico, officials said on Friday, part of archaeological work accompanying the construction of a major new tourist train.

The extremely rare canoe was found almost completely intact, submerged in a fresh-water pool known as a cenote, thousands of which dot Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, near the ruins of Chichen Itza, once a major Maya city

DISCOVERY

featuring elaborately carved temples and towering pyramids.

Measuring a little over 5 feet (1.6 metres) in length and 2-1/2 feet (80 cm) wide, the canoe was possibly used to transport water from the cenote or deposit ritual offerings, according to a statement from Mexican antiquities institute INAH.

The institute described the extraordinary find as "the first complete canoe like this in the Maya area", adding that experts from Paris' Sorbonne University will help with an analysis of the well-preserved wood to pin-point its age and type.

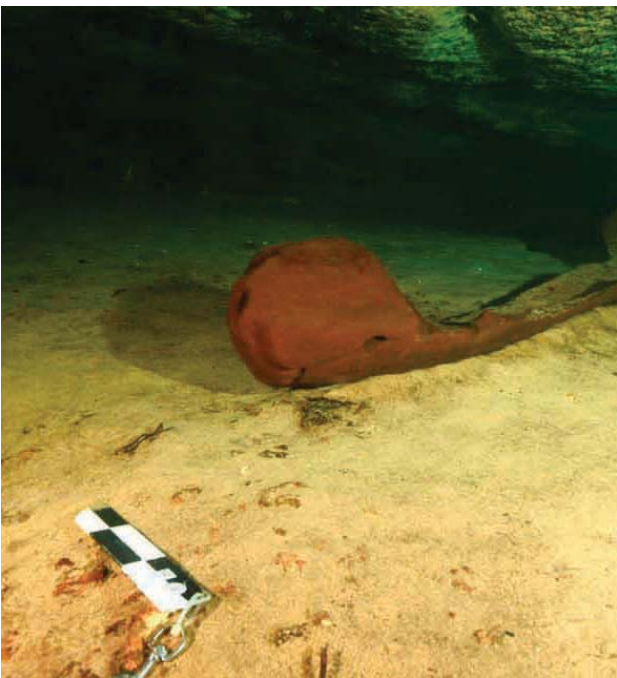
A three-dimensional model of the canoe will also be commissioned, the statement added, to facilitate further study and allow for replicas to be made.

The canoe is tentatively

dated to between 830-950 AD, near the end of the Maya civilisation's classical zenith, when dozens of cities across present-day southern Mexico and Central America thrived amid major human achievements in math, writing and art.

It was found while workers building a tourist rail project championed by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador were inspecting the area surrounding the cenote which is near a section of the project that will connect with Cancun, Mexico's top beach resort.

Lopez Obrador has pitched the so-called Maya Train as tourist-friendly infrastructure that will help alleviate poverty in Mexico's poorer southern states, while critics argue it risks damaging the region's delicate ecosystems. — **Reuters**





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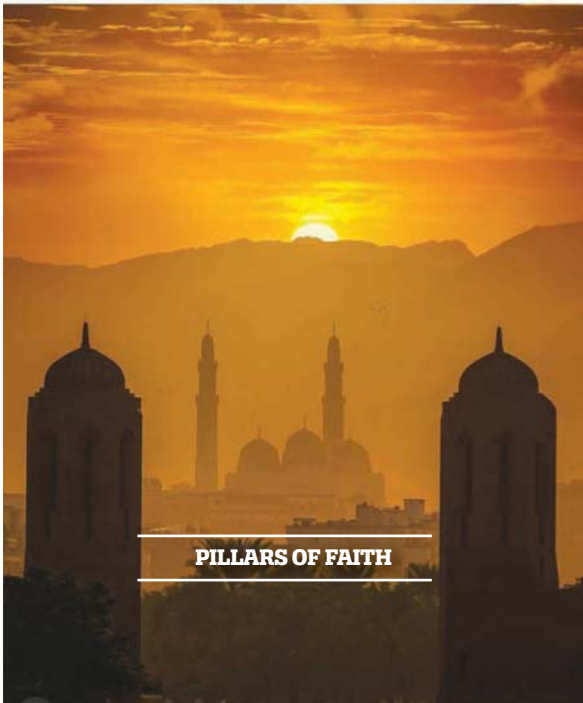
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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Taylor Swift, Obama lead tributes in star-studded Rock Hall of Fame ceremony



TAYLOR SWIFT SERENADED Carole King, former US President Barack Obama praised rapper JAY-Z, and Paul McCartney paid tribute to the Foo Fighters on Saturday at a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame ceremony that also honoured Tina Turner and The Go Go's.

Obama videoed 23-time Grammy winner JAY-Z "the embodiment of the American dream" for his rise from a poor New York neighbourhood to a billionaire songwriter, record executive and businessman.

JAY-Z, 51, seemed overwhelmed by the tributes, including one from comedian Dave Chappelle.

"That is a lot. I'm trying to make myself cry in front of all those white people!" he joked. "Growing up, we didn't think we could be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. We were told that hip-hop was all the rage."

Swift opened the show with a pop version of "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," while Jennifer Hudson sang "A Natural Woman" in honour of singer-songwriter King, 79, who led the audience in a sing-along of her hit song "You've Got a Friend."

"I can't remember a time when I didn't know Carole King's music," Swift said, calling her 1971 "Tapestry" album "a turning point for people in the world with feelings."

The Cleveland, Ohio ceremony was packed with A-listers, including Dr Dre, Eminem, Jennifer Lopez, Lionel Richie and Keith Urban.

Christina Aguilera led a medley of Turner's greatest hits.

The "Simply the Best" singer, who now lives quietly in Switzerland, was unable to attend on Saturday's ceremony, but thanked via video.

"If they're still giving me awards at 81, I must be doing something right," Turner said.

Turner first received the honour in 1991 with her former husband Ike Turner, but on Saturday she was celebrated for her even bigger solo career in the 1980s and 1990s.

King and Dave Grohl were also twice honourees. King was previously inducted with her songwriting partner Gerry Goffin, while Foo Fighters frontman Grohl was a member of the grunge band Nirvana that was inducted in 2014.

McCartney said he and Grohl were both "regular, crazy" kids who had somehow fallen into rock and roll music.

Female 1980s rock band The Go-Gos, rapper LL Cool J, German electronic pioneers Kraftwerk, and the late Billy Preston were also inducted.

American multi-instrumentalist Todd Rundgren, 73, did not show up for his own inaugural ceremony. Rundgren had said he wouldn't attend because he didn't see music as a competition.

The awards recognise artists who have worked in the music industry for more than 25 years. They are selected based on ballots sent to more than 1,200 artists, historians and members of the music industry by the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The public has also voted.

The 2021 ceremony will air on HBO cable on November 20. — Reuters

GASTRONOMY



Cheese-loving France reels as mozzarella catches camembert

IT'S A TREND — some would say a threat — that touches a pungent symbol of French culinary pride: Sales of camembert, the Normandy speciality that has long graced cheese platters, are set to be eclipsed by an import, Italian mozzarella.

The two are not exactly rivals, the first savoured on its own, while the latter is used mainly in salads, pizzas and pasta dishes.

But camembert's fading popularity is forcing France to recognise that its cheese tastes and traditions are changing.

"Camembert is suffering because it's considered old-fashioned and lower class, while mozza has caught on with young people," said Mike Bija, who runs La Cremerie du 17, a stylish cheese bar in a cool corner of Paris.

Alongside glasses of wine, he offers a traditional raw-milk camembert, but also a milder version made from Italian buffalo milk — what once would have been a heresy.

"Camembert is an adventure, it's a demanding, strong-flavoured product," said his partner, Sakina Merazga.

Sales of the white discs slumped by 11 per cent in the five years to 2020, to 48,000 tonnes a year — the only decline among the top five French cheeses, according to the agriculture ministry.

Mozzarella sales meanwhile jumped 62 per cent over the period, to nearly 38 thousand tonnes, and show no sign of slowing.

"Mozzarella sales are soon going to surpass those of camembert," the consumer research firm Nielsen wrote in a recent study.

MODERN TIMES

Weighing heavily is the lost tradition of laying out an array of cheeses at the end of every meal, something now reserved for dinner parties or celebrations.

"My parents used to eat it after both lunch and dinner," said



Emilie Flechard, whose family owns Fromagerie Gillot, France's largest independent maker of raw-milk camembert, in the village of Saint-Hilaire-de-Briouze.

"Myself, I never eat cheese after a meal, except when I invite guests over," she said, as employees ladled curd into molds, a process repeated at strict intervals five times over a day to make each cheese.

The shift also reflects changing shopping habits, with most people now buying their cheese in supermarkets that mainly stock mass-market brands.

A quaint neighbourhood cheese shop, ageing pricier products in-house, is largely a thing of the past — only three per cent of French cheese sales are at speciality shops or market stalls, the ministry says.

Families, meanwhile, are getting smaller, and many don't want to buy a whole camembert that will ripen quickly in the fridge once cut open.

There are two types of camembert, telling two very different stories.

QUANTITY VS QUALITY

The vast majority of camembert is made with pasteurised milk by dairy giants like Lactalis, the market behemoth with brands such as President.

It was one of the first mass-produced, widely accessible French cheeses, and as a result

the emblem of France's wine-bread-cheese triptych.

But because of its milder if not bland flavour and a texture at times described as chalky or gooey, the French have begun to turn up their noses.

"In a way, camembert is like the baguette, which was highly industrialised in the second half of the 20th century, becoming a bland, tasteless bread," said Loic Bienassis, a researcher at the European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food in Tours, France.

The decline in sales, part, "is the price of its success," he said.

But demand is brisk for the more flavoursome raw-milk originals made by Gillot and around a dozen other producers under the strict Camembert de Normandie appellation (AOP).

Sales of AOP camembert, which requires milk from grass-fed Normande cows, make up less than 10 per cent of the overall market, but they are rising fast — over 24 million were sold in 2020, a 20 per cent jump over the past six years.

Gillot is investing 25 million euros (\$29 million) to upgrade its site to meet demand, and now also sells smaller camemberts targeting today's smaller households.

"We believe in a future of more higher-quality products. People are going to eat less, but better," Flechard said. — AFP

AROUND OMAN IN 3RD GEAR



Rachael MacIver
Instagram: @rachael_maciver

The adventure of a blonde and a very old car

"THIS SEEMS LIKE a great place to camp", Mrs J agreed, looking out of the car window "it's high up, it's lovely cool and green. Perfect for camping".

Or so we thought.

We were on our way back from Dhofar's famed baobab tree forest and had brought all our camping gears, hastily squeezed into the rented Yaris. With our otherwise reliable Pajero still in the workshop undergoing open-heart surgery, we had decided to test our rental car and leave our cosy hotel room in Salalah. Fresh air and at one with nature — just what we needed.

Mrs J was scanning the area for the perfect camping site while we cruised along. "Yikes, not near that thing", she grimaced and pointed to a large bloated dead cow left by the side of the road, no doubt meant for the sanitation truck to collect at some point. She shivered in disgust as we passed the cow carcass. "Oh look, at the dog trying to get a chunk of the cow", she squealed. I caught a glimpse of a scruffy looking animal with large pointy ears trying its hardest to pull one of the hind legs off the dead cow. Quite a task for this skinny-legged dog. We drove on in silence for another few long seconds, taking in what we had just witnessed. Then, looking at each other in horror and almost in unison we cried "That wasn't a dog, was it? What was that? It can't have been..."

Surely we hadn't just watched a real-life wolf trying to tear a leg of a dead cow? Were there even wolves in the Sultanate of Oman?

I gently eased the Yaris into reverse, and slowly, slowly inched back towards the crime scene. He was still there. There was no doubt about it; this was no dog. The poor animal, normally very shy and elusive, was probably starving and therefore prepared to take the risk of being seen, for the chance of a big meal. He pulled at the leg and managed to drag the carcass a meter or so away from the roadside.

Turning the car engine off so as not to startle the animal, I slowly reached

for my camera on the backseat. Out of the corner of his eye, the wolf noticed us. Mrs J locked her passenger door. "He might be a wolf, but I'm pretty sure he can't open doors", I whispered and rolled my eyes. "I'm taking no chances", Mrs J whispered back "think of Little Red Riding Hood. Did you ever wonder how the wolf got into Grandma's cottage in the first place???"

By now the wolf was getting wary of us and torn between his hunger and his urge to flee. His survival instinct won, and he trotted off tentatively looking over his shoulder to make sure we weren't following. Annoyed with myself for not getting a photo, we were about to set off again, when a movement caught my eye. And there, on the other side of the road, was another wolf - this one with its cub. Without thinking I threw open the door and raced towards them with my camera.

I guess one of the reasons wolves have survived man for so long, is that they can run a lot faster. I didn't stand a chance. By the time I had clambered up the embankment and focused my camera, the little wolf family was nothing but dots against the horizon.

Back in the car, the adrenalin rush caught up with me and I started to shake. "I can't believe I ran with wolves". "That sounds like a title of a movie", Mrs J laughed "with Kevin Costner perhaps".

If we had done our homework, we would have realised that Arabic wolves (Canis lupus arabs) could indeed be found in Dhofar and especially in the area we were driving through. Packs of up to 12 wolves had been photographed by wildlife camera traps in the Wadi Atayr area and locals reported how wolves would at times kill young of both goats, cows and even camels. Being scavengers, they would also eat roadkill or dead livestock, like in the case we had just witnessed.

We sat for a while in silence. "So, back to the hotel in Salalah?" Mrs J turned and looked at all the camping gear. "You bet", she nodded.



Taking a peek at the sketches of 30 artists

BY TITASH CHAKRABORTY

Name Place Animal Thing, a game most of us grew up playing has now been transformed by 30 artists into their renditions of what this game means to them. Currently showcasing at Fikra Tourism & Culture in Muscat, Name Place Animal Thing is a unique exhibition celebrating artists' sketchbooks.

30 artists were given a small-sized sketchbook and requested to fill its pages with people, places, animals and things, using their own tools and chosen mediums. The artists were asked to channel their sketchbooks as a

way of thinking, as a critical tool, as a means of observation, communication or representation. The exploration of ideas and preparatory study in sketchbooks is central to most artists' studio practice. This exhibition celebrates the fundamental practice of sketch booking.

While some of the artists have based their sketchbooks on observational drawings or photographs, others have mined non-existent, imagined landscapes. Other's have something linear to narrate, several others have used their sketchbooks as a method to document and observe what is hidden within the cervices of their subconscious minds.

REEM AL SHAIKH,
POSTCARDS FROM MUSCAT
MEDIUM: Digital Photographic Prints on Fine Art Paper
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Born in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman, Reem al Shaikh is an abstract fine art photographer whose work discusses identity, societal traditions and the varying human condition.
IG: @reemalshaikhphotography

MAYS AL MOOSAWI,
JUST ANOTHER SKETCHBOOK
MEDIUM: Collage, Acrylic Paints, Inks
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Mays al Moosawi is a 27-year-old visual artist from Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman. Her focus on the female figure as her signature subject matter stems from Mays' view of the society she was raised in.
IG: @maysalmoosawi

DR SHALINI GUPTA KUMAR, HOME QUARANTINE – My Story
MEDIUM: Pen & Ink, Watercolours
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Shalini completed her doctorate in Economics from Agra University. She is a versatile, self-taught artist based in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman.
IG: @shalart_61

ANJALI BABU, KERALA
MEDIUM: Oil paints on canvas paper
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Anjali Babu is a versatile artist and painter hailing from India. Her work includes highly realistic portraits of men, women, landscapes, figurative themes and abstracts that radiate positive energy in any setting.
IG: @anjali_babu_

ELIZABETH DAVIS,
KIKI GOES TO CORNICHE
MEDIUM: Pen & Ink, Watercolours, Papercut
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Painting has been a childhood passion nurtured by a wonderful art teacher in school. As a self-taught artist in the acrylic medium, I have now ventured into Impressionism and Semi Abstract art.
IG: @elizabeth.davis.1986

MOHAMMED AL ATTAR (MIMOON), A JOURNEY OF BEARDED SOULS
MEDIUM: Mixed Media
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Mohammed draws in different styles, pencil sketches are a form of joy to him. While watercolours are the favourite medium of his soul, he has found a universe in digital art that he inhabits and drawing with a pen is where his emotions speak.
IG: @mimoon_art

AHAD AL KINDI, I AM NAME
MEDIUM: Digital photograph printed on zinc photo paper
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Fahad al Kindi was born in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman. In the last three years, Fahad's interest extended to semiotics, visual language, metaphor and the autobiographic nature of art which is reflected in some of his more recent works.
IG: @f_kindi



BHAVNA MAINI, GAME OF BONES
MEDIUM: Pen & ink, collage, colour pencils, papercut, oil pastels
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Bhavna's style is simple, aesthetic, contemporary and the focus is on sketching, drawing, collage work etc. Her style has been continuously evolving as she feels that experimentation is an integral part of experiencing art and exploring its endless possibilities.
IG: @bhavnamanil

ANEESHA BS, AMSTERDAM
MEDIUM: Graphite, Charcoal, Watercolours, Acrylic paints
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Aneesha BS is an artist who is constantly experimenting and exploring new techniques and mediums.
IG: @anishadilip

HANEEN AL MOOSAWI, MINIMALISM-ISH
MEDIUM: Pen & ink, collage, colour pencils, papercut, oil pastels
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Her work has a combination of geometric shapes and lines, which goes back to being raised in a diverse artistic environment since her father works as an urban planner and her mother is an artist.
IG: @haneenalmoosawi

SARA THOMPSON, AL SARROJ
MEDIUM: Acrylic paints, watercolours, pen, pencils, crayons and pastels
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Sarah Thompson grew up in the North East of Scotland into an artistic &

musical family, that nurtured her talent from a young age. She sees the beauty in many things that may go unnoticed and loves to highlight intricate details.
IG: @sarah_thompson_artist

DAVINA DE BEER, ENCANTADA
MEDIUM: Acrylic paints, coloured pens, ink, glue, pamphlets
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Davina is a visual artist from South Africa, but has lived and worked in Oman in the Middle East for thirteen years before relocating to Spain in August 2021. Her work deals with memory, identity, and the relationship between identity and place/space.
IG: @davina_artist

MONA RATHOD, WONDERS OF THE WORLD
MEDIUM: Papercut outs, watercolours
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Mona Rathod teaches art to underprivileged children. She loves to transfer her knowledge to her students and always dreams of establishing an art studio that would be beneficial to upcoming youth and disabled artists.
IG: @rmonarathod4

KAWTHAR AL HARTHI, DEEP EXCAVATION
MEDIUM: Paper collage, pen and ink, graphite pencil
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Kawthar al Harthi, is a visual artist who graduated from Sultan Qaboos University with a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education. She is

currently employed as an art teacher for secondary school students.
IG: @kawther_alharthy

TARINI AGARWAL, MEMORIES OF THE SEA
MEDIUM: Paper collage, printing, image transferring, papercut, acrylic paints
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: She likes to explore abstract relationships between objects, people and landscape. She is drawn to the emotional responses within any given situation. Her work hovers between abstraction and expressionism.
IG: @tariniagarwal

IMAN BALUSHI, PECULIAR REALMS
MEDIUM: Watercolours and coloured pencils
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Iman al Balushi is an aspiring Omani artist. Through her art, she would like to achieve a true representation of where she comes from & what she feels. She believes that it is crucial to shine a light on the creation of imaginative, mind-bending art, rather than merely focusing on conventional art forms.

FARAH ASQUL, TIME AND SPACE
MEDIUM: Watercolours, inks, paper collage
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Farah Asqul is an Omani mixed media artist whose work is reminiscent of

expressionism and ranges between painting, collage and installation.
IG: @farah_asqul_art

MARJAN HABIBIAN, DAYDREAMS
MEDIUM: Monoprint and ink drawings
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Marjan Habibian was born in Tehran, Iran. Her experience developed from using abstract expressionism to include figurative elements in her work.
IG: @habibianmarjan

HARINI REDDY, ALL THINGS RECTANGLE
MEDIUM: Mixed Media
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Harini Kumar started her career as an illustrator and graphic designer. She works with a variety of mediums such as Oils, Acrylics & Charcoal and is a contemporary artist with a semi-abstract expressionistic style, with the use of vivid colours and dynamic brushstrokes.
IG: @harini.kumar

ANETTA SZABO, LIFE-LIKE VAPOR
MEDIUM: Graphite pencil, tracing paper
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Anetta is a Hungarian designer and artist. She gained experience in graphic design, interior design, jewellery design, sculpting, typography and teaching arts and creative thinking.
IG: @anetta_szabo

PRAGYA BHATNAGAR, A TALE OF LOVE AND HATRED
MEDIUM: Watercolours, pen and ink, paper cutouts
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: From creating realistic work with a lot of design elements in the beginning, Pragma is currently treading on the path of impressionism, as part of her ongoing journey of artistic exploration.
IG: @pragyabhatnagar

RAWAN AL MAHROUQI, UNTITLED STORIES
MEDIUM: Charcoal, ink
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Rawan al Mahrouqi is a multidisciplinary contemporary artist from the Sultanate of Oman whose work focuses on the female experience in the Arabian Gulf. The artist is the founder of Makan Studios a first of its kind local art school that offers a community for the arts in Muscat.
IG: @rawan757

KHURSHED RAJA, TRAVEL
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Khurshed is a visual artist and a graphic designer. Her mixed media works and assemblages are known for the unconventional use of materials and are layered with texture, symbolism and references to the Sultanate of Oman's culture and heritage.
IG: @art.khursheed

ABDULRAHIM AL KENDI, 2021
MEDIUM: Ink pen, marker pen, graphite pencils
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Abdulrahim

al Kendi is a self-taught experimental/conceptual artist who uses satirical art to express his non-conformist perspectives.
IG: @aboodeen

BASHAIR AL BALUSHI, LAND OF WORDS
MEDIUM: Black & white ink, watercolour, coffee, gouache colours, gold leaf & cardboard
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Bashair al Balushi is an interior designer, furniture designer, photographer & visual artist. Bashair is the owner & the manager of the department of innovation & design in Design Skills Studio.
IG: @bashair_albalushi

BASHAYER AL NAAIMI, EXERPTS FROM LIFE
MEDIUM: Ink and graphite
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Bashayer al Naaimi is a multimedia artist, illustrator and graphic designer. She graduated as an architectural engineer from Sultan Qaboos University.
IG: @otulbluto

DEBJANI BHARDWAJ, LATE-NIGHT THOUGHTS
MEDIUM: Pen & ink, watercolours
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Debjani is a papercut and ceramic artist. Her work deals with narratives and storytelling inspired by myths, legends and personal histories. She is the co-founder of Rock Paper Scissors for art mentorship, art education and product design.
IG: @debjanibhardwaj

RADHIKA HAMLAI, WHAT ARE DREAMS MADE OF
MEDIUM: Pen, inks, watercolours, charcoal on kozo paper
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Radhika has participated in 10 solo exhibitions and over 50 group exhibitions in a career spanning 20 years. She launched the highly successful annual event, Oman Affordable Art Fair in 2018, to provide a platform for local and international artists to showcase interesting, budget-friendly artworks.
IG: @radhikah

LAITH KHALIFA, #LAITH'S_EYE: DISSECTING THE SCENE
MEDIUM: Ink, graphite pencil, watercolours, and paper collage
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Laith bin Khalifa al Shiyadi is navigating his way into the arts scene in Oman as an emerging artist. He is currently pursuing a degree in Urban Planning and Architecture at the German University of Technology, Muscat.
IG: @laith.khalifa

"A sketchbook is akin to a personal diary and I am grateful to each of the participating artists in this exhibition for allowing us to take a look at what they have been thinking." — Debjani Bhardwaj

For more information about the exhibition and future events, follow @fikra_muscat and the artists to know more about their work. The prints from the sketchbooks of all the artists are priced at RO 30. The sketchbooks are not for sale unless mentioned otherwise.