

HM SENDS CABLE TO N KOREA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Kim Jong-un, First Secretary of the Workers' Party, First Chairman of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army on the occasion of the 72nd Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic. His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes to President Kim and his country's friendly people. **-ONA**



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HM SENDS CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT OF TAJIKISTAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Emomali Rahmon of the Republic of Tajikistan on his country's national day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Rahmon and the friendly Tajik people further progress. **-ONA**



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A4

SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS RENAMED

HM issues Royal Decree on National Day celebrations

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik yesterday issued a Royal Decree, No. 116/2020, amending some provisions of Royal Decree No. 6/2020 on the Supreme Committee for National Day Celebrations.

Article (1) replaces the name of the "Supreme Committee for National Day Celebrations", quoted in the above-mentioned Royal

Decree No. 6/2020, with the name "Secretariat General of National Celebrations (SGNC)".

Article (2) adds a new article to Royal Decree No. 6/2020 reading as follows:

Article (4bis): In the Secretariat General of National Celebrations, an Executive Committee shall be formed, with the SGNC Secretary-General as Chairman and with

membership of two representatives whose grades shall be not less than "Ministry Under-Secretary", or similar status, from the departments named below:

Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers,

Royal Oman Police.

The Executive Committee shall also have a representative of COSAF and the Royal Protocols.

Article (3) cancels all that contravenes this decree or contradicts with its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. **-ONA**

HEALTH TECH PROVIDES DATA ON VARIOUS BODY FUNCTIONS

- RESPIRATORY RATE
- HEART RATE & OXYGEN LEVELS
- SLEEP TIME AND SLEEP CYCLES
- CALORIES BURNED
- DISTANCES COVERED

COVID-19: USING TECHNOLOGY TO KEEP A TAB ON OUR HEALTH

New age health tech tools have been helpful during the pandemic but doctors remind that these technologies are yet to come of age

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The COVID-19 pandemic has seen many people taking better care of their lives, so as to avoid the possibility of infection from the disease.

Keen on monitoring their diets, and ensuring they exercise enough, more and more people

are wearing gadgets and installing apps that help them keep track of their health.

Faster

As a result of this, doctors in Oman say the data generated from these devices help them diagnose their patients' ailments faster, but have advised that while they do provide

an outline of a person's health, it is important to not rely on these gadgets alone.

Dr Zaid Al Hinai, a consultant paediatrician in infectious diseases at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital said, "Tools such as smart watches are adding more and more medical and health-related capabilities. But the field is still in its early days and needs to develop further. Some smart watches can provide data such as ECG readings and might help people who have conditions like irregular heartbeats, because it can provide indications of changes in a person's heart rate.

"Such technology used to be previously available only within medical facilities," he added. "This represents a big opportunity to detect

disease faster, but also presents its own set of challenges. Perhaps doctors will become overwhelmed by all patients who want them to review their ECGs."

New standard

An increasing number of tools to monitor various aspects of a person's health, such as heart rate, oxygen level, blood sugar, body temperature and breathing rate now come as standard in many of the technologies used to monitor one's health.

The tech itself is also available in many forms. While smartwatches from companies such as Fitbit and Apple have been in the market for some time, rings that help people keep their health in check are also

fast gaining popularity.

Products from Oura and Motiv can track a person's sleep to help them make the most of it, in addition to providing insights into a person's heart rate, respiration, body temperature, and calories burned, among other parameters. To help athletes get the best out of their hectic schedules, the US National Basketball Association recently bought 2,000 Oura smart rings.

Vendors of such tech in Oman say they have seen a spike in sales of such devices, with people keen to take extra precautions for their health during the pandemic.

"Sales of our other items have been slow, but we have seen a sharp increase in sales of three items," said a manager at a retail outlet

in Oman. "The first is computers, because of the increase in online classes and communication, the second is personal care items such as trimmers, because all the barbers and salons were closed until recently, and the third is what we called health technology items.

"This includes items like the smartwatch, as well as gadgets that help you monitor your blood pressure, sugar levels, and other activities, because right now, people are becoming far more health conscious.

"They're looking to improve their health so that they reduce their chances of falling sick, as that could lead to complications that could lead to infection from COVID-19." **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Cargo facility boost

1 A pact between Oman Aviation Group and DHL gives a new impetus to Oman's cargo sector. **>A3**

WORLD Indian actress held

2 Indian actress Rhea Chakraborty has been arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). **>A6**

SPORTS 3 Grand Slam moms

3 Serena, Victoria Azarenka, and Tsvetana Pironkova are first trio of mothers in same Grand Slam. **>A8**

RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS

COVID safety protocols laid for staff at airports

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Safety protocols to protect staff dealing with passengers and cargo at airports in Oman have been issued, a senior official of Oman Aviation Group has said.

Mustafa Al Hinai, the group CEO of the company, added that all companies operating at the airport should follow these procedures, to limit the spread of COVID-19 among passengers, ground staff and air crews.

"The aviation sector is among the most well-regulated sectors, either locally or internationally, under the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the local Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)," he said.

"They have their own mandates in terms of how to estab-

lish safety and security protocols within airports, and under such circumstances, there are also national regulations set by the Ministry of Health.

"As of now, Oman's airports and airlines in the country - not just Oman Air and SalamAir, but all airlines flying here - have to follow security protocols that ensure that Oman's operations in terms of aviation is sustainable, and that there is no impact in terms of inbound travel to the country," added Al Hinai.

The group CEO added that his company would make sure these protocols are followed at the airports. "The custodian of these protocols is the Civil Aviation Authority, but we too are mandated towards those codes, which form our code of ethics towards running these safety measures. The group



company is mature in terms of adopting those regulations.

"I would like to also remind everyone that the Ministry of Health plays a big part in this regulation, because protocols during the pandemic are managed by a national health system, and we are mandated to maintain those types of measures," he added.

In this context, Moustafa Osman, the country manager for DHL Oman, shed light on the measures adopted to protect workers in airport cargo terminals.

"We have fever checks for all of the staff who come to work in the morning, and anyone who has a temperature of 37.4 degrees or more is asked to undergo further checks," he said. "To be safe, we conduct these additional checks in a separate area." **>A2**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:09pm
Asr.....	3:37pm
Maghrib.....	6:22pm
Isha.....	7:33pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:35am

Special Prizes

Umrah Prizes March 2,000 OMR each for 6 winners	Ramdan Prizes May 2,000 OMR each for 6 winners	Khareef Season Prizes July 2,000 OMR each for 6 winners	National Day Prizes November 2,000 OMR each for 6 winners
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(The six winners for the above prizes are 3 from priority banking customers, 2 from affluent and 1 from standard customers)

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Guidelines for going to gym

To protect people from COVID-19 infection, the Muscat Municipality has issued a statement for their safety at Gym



PRECAUTIONS: The managers should routinely clean and disinfect all areas, shared electronic equipment, machinery and tools with 70 per cent alcohol based disinfectant.

exceed 50 per cent of its capacity. While the equipment should be placed at a distance of 2 metres from each other to follow the social distancing norms, the managers should routinely clean and disinfect all areas, shared electronic equipment, machinery and tools with 70 per cent alcohol based disinfectant. In addition, restrooms, locker, changing rooms should also be disinfected. Those wanting to use any equipment must wait in a queue before and after its use while maintaining physical distance for the layout and activities. Restriction on using gym whirl-

pools, swimming pools, saunas, etc will continue. Moreover, those visiting the place should take some precautions: Before entering any facility and during an exercise, one should wear face mask but while doing aerobics, the mask can be put around the neck for conformable breathing. Visitors should bring their own towel and wipe off sweat before it falls on the surface. They have to wear and disinfect special sports gloves before and after using equipment while maintaining two metres distance and avoid unnecessary chat during an exercise.

PHONE CALL

Sayyid Fahd reaffirms support for Palestinian cause

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, on Tuesday received a phone call from Dr. Mohammed Shtayyeh, Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, dealing with developments in the region and their repercussions. Dr. Shtayyeh commended the Sultanate's permanent stands on the Palestinian issue. Sayyid Fahd pointed out that the Sultanate's constant stance aligns with Arab solidarity and ensuing initiatives to reach fair and lasting solutions that end the existing conflict in that region to pave the way for reconstruction that is greatly needed by present



His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said.

and future generations. Dr. Shtayyeh conveyed the greetings of the Palestinian leadership to His Majesty the Sultan and its best wishes of success to His Majesty. The Palestinian leadership also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. Sayyid Fahd asked the Palestinian Prime Minister to convey the sincere wishes of the Sultanate to President Mahmud Abbas Abu Mazin of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, along with wishes of peace and stability for the brotherly people of Palestine. -ONA

MEETING

Deputy Emir of Kuwait receives credentials of Oman's ambassador

KUWAIT: Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, Deputy Emir and Crown Prince of Kuwait received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday credentials of Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al Kharousi as extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador of the Sultanate to Kuwait. During the meeting, the ambas-

sador asked the Deputy Emir to convey greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik along with his best wishes of speedy recovery to Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait. He also conveyed greetings of His Majesty the Sultan to the

Deputy Emir and Crown Prince of Kuwait, wishing the government of Kuwait further progress and growth. On his turn, the Deputy Emir of Kuwait expressed his pride of the strong relations between the two countries. -ONA

APP

WHO encourages use of digital tools to help COVID sufferers

Users of these tools also say they are a worthwhile investment. "Right now, I am cautious about going to hospitals because a lot of people who are COVID positive might be present there, and I want to safeguard myself and my family," said Hamdoon, an Omani national. "I have an app on my phone that helps me monitor my health and take action accordingly. Geeta, an Indian housewife added: "We have a small child at home, and at a time like this, we cannot risk falling sick. These gadgets might not provide us the whole picture, but at least they help us take action accordingly." Like Oman, which developed Tarassud app to monitor the

spread of COVID-19 and generate awareness on good practices for people to follow, other countries such as Australia (COVID-Safe), Canada (COVID Alert), Czechia (eRouska), Denmark (smittestop), France (ROBERT), India (Aarogya Setu), Italy (COVID Community Alert), Jordan (AMAN), Spain (Radar COVID), the UK (NHS COVID-19), and the US (PathCheck) have also introduced similar mobile applications. As part of its response to the spread of the coronavirus, the World Health Organization encouraged the use of digital tools to help COVID sufferers and workers, as it would provide ways for them to monitor their health and accord-

ingly take action, or seek medical assistance, where possible. The WHO itself uses an app to upload and monitor incidents of COVID-19. Called Go.Data, the app was developed in collaboration with the Global Outbreak and Response Network, a team of technical and public health institutions, laboratories, non-governmental organisations and other bodies that collaborate to fight epidemics in countries. "In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many digital tools have been developed to assist with contact tracing and case identification," said WHO, as part of its guidelines over how these needed to be designed so they could help people. These tools include out-

break response, proximity tracing, and symptom tracking tools, which can be combined into one instrument or used as stand-alone tools." "Although several countries and areas have deployed digital tools for their COVID-19 response, there is currently limited evidence to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of these tools," they said. "As such, digital tools should not be considered as 'single solutions' for contact tracing, but rather as complementary tools." They added: "Additionally, the implementation of digital technologies in contact tracing carries the potential to do harm through privacy breaches, provision of incorrect medical advice based on self-reported symptoms, and the systematic

exclusion of some members of society who cannot access such technologies. It is therefore important to have sufficient regulatory oversight of digital tools for contact tracing." Zaid Al Hinai said in this context: "With the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors have been turning more and more to these technologies to facilitate what is referred to as telemedicine. With this, there is no need for the patient to always come to the clinic, which could increase the risk of exposure to the virus. "Perhaps the most impressive application of this technology is in the treatment of diabetes," he added. "Patients can wear a device that constantly monitors their blood sugar and sends the data to the doctor's of-

fice. The doctors can use this to find out when the readings are good and when they are bad, and can advise the patient accordingly, on how to monitor his diet and medication. "With regards to infectious diseases, my speciality, it is not as useful, because the data it provides about the patient is still too limited to make a diagnosis," he said. "These apps have been used to help diagnose the infection using artificial intelligence, but this has not yet proven to be very accurate. Additionally, the apps have been used to trace the contacts of infected persons. But experts believe the technology is not strong enough yet to replace well-trained human contact tracers."

INVITATION TO TENDER

Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Suppliers/Contractors for the following tender:

Tender No.	: 2020-ENG-SOW-0022
Tender Title	: 54 Ton Crane Insulation Improvements
Scope	: Engineering, design, supply, removal, installation, Pre-operation testing and commissioning of electrical & mechanical components, including real time insulation monitoring system for 54 Ton Crane insulation improvements used in pot change out as per Sohar Aluminium scope.

Tender No.	: RFP 20/018
Tender Title	: Selling of ABF Refractory Bricks for Recycling
Scope	: The Contractor shall provide a specialized service on how to recycle the ABF refractory bricks and advice to Sohar Aluminium on the recycling flow process. The contractor shall be expert and having required MECA permit and other relevant permit which proven its capability to recycle refractory bricks. This service shell includes selling and recycling of Anode Baking Furnace (ABF) Refractory Bricks only.

Tender No.	: RFP 20/019
Tender Title	: Reduction & Carbon Tools Repair
Scope	: The Contractor shall provide fabrication of Sohar Aluminium's Consumable Tools as per given Specifications, Drawing, Sketch or Sample. Repair of Sohar Aluminium's Consumable Tools as per given Specifications, Drawing, Sketch or Sample.

Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com
For list of active tenders visit: <https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing>

SAFETY MEASURES



All staff inside offices must wear masks and gloves

"Because we now have all of our staff back at work, we have had to rearrange our offices inside the airport, so that we can maintain social distancing and avoid unnecessary contact," added Osman. "All of the staff inside our offices also have to wear personal protective equipment such as

masks and gloves, and undergo light sanitisation before they enter the building. **Loading and unloading** "Of course, we also have different checks for staff who are out in the field, whether they are loading and unloading cargo from the airplanes, or delivering them to our

customers," he went on to say. "They have to undergo sanitisation, the vans in which they deliver these goods also have to be sanitised, and sometimes, depending on the cargo, we have to sanitise that as well. While these goods are delivered, our delivery team have to maintain social distancing."





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The Public Authority for Water(diam) invites the following Tender:

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	LAST DATE OF BUYING	DATE OF SUBMISSION	TENDER PRICE R.O	THE Notes
PAW/HO/GDO 32/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS, DESALINATION PLANTS AND PUMPING STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT AL-DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 33/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS, DESALINATION PLANTS AND PUMPING STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT AL-WUSTA GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	2775/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 34/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM)AT WILAYAT BOUSHER, MUSCAT GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	2075/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 35/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT BURAIMI GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	2000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 36/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM)AT DAKHLIYAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	2860/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 37/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND PUMPING STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	1340/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 38/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT WILAYAT MUTTRAH, AMERAT AND QURIYAT, MUSCAT GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 39/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT NORTH BATINAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 40/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT WILAYAT SEEB, MUSCAT GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	1790/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 41/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS, DESALINATION PLANTS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT SHARQIYAH NORTH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	2330/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 42/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT SOUTH SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 43/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSMISSION PIPELINES, WELLS, TANKER FILLING STATIONS AND BOOSTER PUMP STATIONS OF PAW (DIAM) AT SOUTH BATINAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 44/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUMPING STATIONS, RESERVOIRS AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEMS AND BUILDINGS AT DAKHLIYAH, BATINAH SOUTH, BATINAH NORTH AND BURAIMI GOVERNORATES	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 45/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUMPING STATIONS, RESERVOIRS AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEMS AND BUILDINGS AT MUSCAT, SHARQIYAH SOUTH & SHARQIYAH NORTH GOVERNORATES	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 46/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL WATER QUALITY ASSET IN ALDAKHILIA AND BATINAH SOUTH	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	140/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 47/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL WATER QUALITY ASSET IN BATINAH NORTH AND ALBURAIMI	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	80/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 48/2020	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL WATER QUALITY ASSET IN MUSCAT, SHARQIYAH NORTH, SHARQIYAH SOUTH	28/09/2020	19/10/2020	365/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 49/2020	BUILD, OWN AND OPERATE WATER DESALINATION PLANTS AT SHARQIYAH SOUTH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	1000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 50/2020	BUILD, OWN AND OPERATE A WATER DESALINATION PLANT WITH REVERSE OSMOSIS TECHNOLOGY AT AL-GHUBRAH	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	3000/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 51/2020	BUILD, OWN AND OPERATE WATER DESALINATION PLANTS AT DHAKHLIYAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	1065/=	Company registered as Excellent in Tender board and (C) grade with PAW.
PAW/HO/GDO 52/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT MUSCAT GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	270/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 53/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT DAHIRA GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	140/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 54/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT DHAKHLIYA GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	105/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 55/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT SHARQUIYAH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	330/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 56/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT BATINAH NORTH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	150/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 57/2020	MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR SCADA, AUTOMATION, CCTV, TFS & TELECOM SYSTEM AT BATINAH SOUTH GOVERNORATE	28/09/2020	26/10/2020	285/=	_____
PAW/HO/HSED 58/2020	FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR THE REMOVAL, TRANSPORTATION AND SAFE DISPOSAL OF CHLORINE GAS CYLINDER FROM PAW SITES.	28/09/2020	12/10/2020	75/=	_____
PAW/HO/ICT 59/2020	UPGRADE, IMPLEMENT AND CONFIGURE THE NEXT GEN OF PERIMETER FIREWALL	28/09/2020	12/10/2020	40/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 60/2020	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF DI FLANGED PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE PN16 WITH STRAINER	28/09/2020	12/10/2020	50/=	_____
PAW/HO/GDO 61/2020	FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF SINGLE AIR VALVES PN16 AND 25 FOR PAW MAIN WAREHOUSE	28/09/2020	12/10/2020	25/=	_____

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board, may obtain Tender documents from the Purchase, Tenders and Contracts Department new office in the Al-Ghubra Street, Bowsheer (next to the panorama mall) against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. The Tenders may be collected on any working days between 08:30am – 12:00pm hours.

Tenders should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chairman of the Tender Committee and marked with Tender Number and the subject. No other marks or any reference thereto should be printed outside the envelopes.

The Tenderer should enclose a Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value and addressed to the Chairman of the Tender Committee.

The completed Tenders should be delivered to the Tender Section, new office in the Al-Ghubra Street, Bowsheer (next to the panorama mall) on or before 10 A.M. on the assigned date for submission of the Tender. Tenders submitted after the above-mentioned date and time shall not be considered.

Preference shall be given to the Companies or Institutions, which comprise the required percentage of Omanization and possible purchase of Omani National Products.

*Tenderer should provide Tender Board registration certificate & CR documents & Visa Card for Payment.

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Muscat airport cargo facilities get a big boost

Under the Oman Aviation Group-DHL agreement, the latter will open a new cargo collection and sorting facility at Muscat International Airport

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's efforts to expand its cargo, transportation and logistics sectors have been provided new impetus, following the signing of an agreement between Oman Aviation Group and international logistics company DHL. Under the agreement, DHL will open a new cargo collection and sorting facility at Muscat International Airport. In the making for the last two years, the deal is in keeping with the country's national objectives under Vision 2040. "The National Aviation Strategy, launched in 2020, identified the potential to grow market share in our established markets, including the GCC, and expand to new secondary markets in Asia, Africa and Europe," explained Mustafa Al Hinaï, the group CEO for Oman Aviation Group.



PARTNERSHIP: This is the second international partnership in air logistics signed by Oman Aviation Group, said Group CEO Mustafa Al Hinaï. Photo-Supplied

"The group is moving ahead with a number of partnerships, we are already in the final phase of deciding on a number of agreements, either with local companies that work on last-mile delivery, as well as with other freight forwarders and aggregators. "This is the second international partnership we have signed in air logistics: we have previously signed with SATS from Singapore, which is currently managing our ground handling," he added. "I must thank DHL for their patience with us, because for us there was a lot of involvement, in terms of how to launch an international partnership at Muscat International Airport." According to Moustafa Osman, the country manager for DHL Oman, the setting up of the facility in Oman will complement the company's existing infrastructure in Bahrain, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. "We will have three or four flights a week to start with, and we will see more and more DHL

planes landing at Muscat International Airport, which is in line with the targets we have agreed upon and set together, which is to see 730,000 tonnes of cargo passing through the country by 2030," he explained. "In line with Oman 2040, we are pleased to take part with the group's effort as a partner," added Osman. Providing this investment in Oman is a big part of our plans. It provides huge potential for growth and development. Oman has a great geographical location, a good political status, and we have received excellent support from everyone involved in Oman. With purchases through e-commerce outlets increasing steadily over the years, and significantly more rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, Osman noted that a strong logistics network is required to reduce shipping and delivery times to customers, for many of whom these goods are considered vital.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Yetti project on track for completion next year



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Two luxury hotels – one five star and another 4 star - a yacht pier, an integrated residential quarter with educational, health and entertainment services are coming up at Yetti. Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, went on a field visit of the Yetti tourism project being carried out by Yetti Tourism

Development company. During the visit, Sayyid Saud was briefed about the progress of work on the project, which is expected to be completed in 2021. **World class** The project is designed to be a replica of some global cities using clean and alternative energy in keeping with world-class standards of environment protection and local natural resource use.



89,945 REACH

Times of Oman

Oman Air said it is prepared to resume the sche



TIMESOFOMAN.COM

Covid-19: Oman Air ready to resume

Oman Air said it is prepared to resume the sche



Oman Air ready to resume scheduled flights

A news story on Oman Air gathered 10,907 post clicks and 89,945 reach on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

5,900 VIEWS



Maghrib Minute wrapup video



The Maghrib Minute wrapup video received 5,900 views and reached 22,200 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

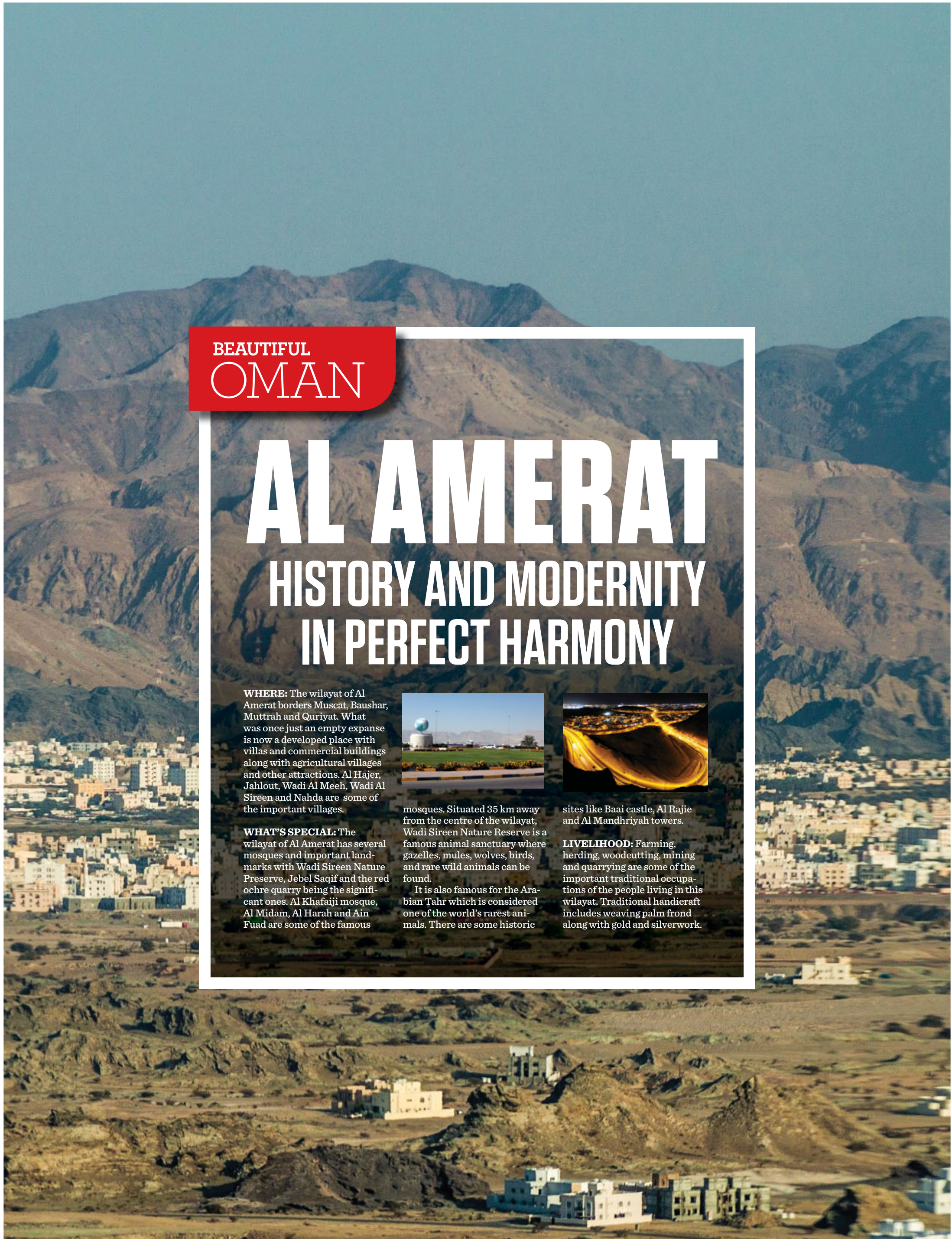
3,131 VIEWS



Tourism to resume with precautions



The Maghrib Minute video got 3,131 views and 204 likes on Instagram.



BEAUTIFUL
OMAN

AL AMERAT

HISTORY AND MODERNITY IN PERFECT HARMONY

WHERE: The wilayat of Al Amerat borders Muscat, Baushar, Muttrah and Quriyat. What was once just an empty expanse is now a developed place with villas and commercial buildings along with agricultural villages and other attractions. Al Hajer, Jahlout, Wadi Al Meeh, Wadi Al Sireen and Nahda are some of the important villages.



mosques. Situated 35 km away from the centre of the wilayat, Wadi Sireen Nature Reserve is a famous animal sanctuary where gazelles, mules, wolves, birds, and rare wild animals can be found.

It is also famous for the Arabian Tahr which is considered one of the world's rarest animals. There are some historic



sites like Baai castle, Al Rajie and Al Mandhriyah towers.

LIVELIHOOD: Farming, herding, woodcutting, mining and quarrying are some of the important traditional occupations of the people living in this wilayat. Traditional handieraft includes weaving palm frond along with gold and silverwork.



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India's COVID-19 cases per million population among lowest in world

The number of cases per million population in Brazil and US is six times that of India

NEW DELHI: The number of COVID-19 cases per million population in the country stands at 3,102 and it is among the lowest in the world, said Union Health Ministry on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said the number of COVID-19 cases per million population in Brazil and US is 6 times that of India.

"The cases per million population stands at 3,527 for the world. It is 4,945 for Mexico, 7,063 for Russia, 19,549 for the US and 19,514 for Brazil. The number of COVID-19 cases per million population in the country stands at 3,102 and it is among the lowest in the world," he said.

Bhushan said that Case Fatality Rate is continuously de-



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: Tests per million population was 26,016 on August 24 and it is 36,703 now.

clining. "It was 2.15 per cent in the first week of August. It now stands at 1.70 per cent compared to the global average of 3.04 per cent," he said.

"In India, 53 deaths per million population have been recorded. The number of deaths per million population is 500 to 600

in countries with which we are compared. Doctors, paramedics, hospital support staff have a great contribution in this," he added.

Tests per million population is continuously increasing, Bhushan said. "Tests per million population was 26,016 on August 24

and it is 36,703 now. More than 5 crore tests have been conducted so far. In the last week, more than 10 lakh tests were conducted daily. On September 3 and 4 we have tested over 11 lakh samples," he said. Since COVID-19 recoveries are increasing, the gap between active and recovered cases is also

increasing, Bhushan said.

"As of now, the number of active cases is 8,83,697 whereas the number of recovered cases is 33,23,950. The number of recovered patients is more than 33 lakh with the highest single-day recovery of 73,642 in the last 24 hours. -ANI



CIVIL CIRCULATION

Second batch of Sputnik V vaccine being produced

MOSCOW: The second batch of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19 for civil circulation is already being produced by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, and the Federal Service for Surveillance in Healthcare (Rosdravnadzor) will maintain control over the treatment, the head of the institute told Sputnik on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, the Russian Health Ministry said that the first batch of the vaccine was released into civil circulation. "The second batch is already being produced, it is going through Rosdravnadzor's control. Rosdravnadzor controls every batch," Alexander Gintsburg said. In August, Russia became the first country in the world to register a vaccine against COVID-19. -ANI

TRAGIC

Several dead in Pakistan marble mine collapse

ISLAMABAD: A collapse at a marble mine in a remote area of Pakistan has killed at least 19 people, with rescuers scrambling to retrieve more bodies from the rubble, officials said on Tuesday.

Boulders of white marble came crashing down on workers on Monday evening in the mountainous Mohmand district in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, near the border with Afghanistan. The marble buried people and blocked the entrance to the mine, trapping people inside for several hours, local police said.

Between 40 and 50 people were at the site at the time of the collapse, and 20 miners are still missing. The cause of the collapse is still unknown, but there was speculation among local residents that explosives were detonated to extract the marble, triggering a rockslide.

The actual number of fatalities was unclear because some families took bodies of loved ones directly to their homes



from the site, Sameen Shinwari, a doctor at the nearby Ghlanai District Headquarters Hospital, told Reuters.

Cellular signals and other communication facilities are unreliable in large parts of Mohmand district, including the area where the mine is located.

Deadly incidents are not uncommon in Pakistani mines,

which are notorious for hazardous working conditions and poor safety standards. In February, at least 10 workers were killed in a rockslide at a marble quarry in the northwestern district of Buner, and 30 workers were killed in explosions at two coal mines near the southwestern city of Quetta in 2018. -dw

Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation

Electronic Tenders

The Internal Tenders Committee of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation announces the tendering of the tender shown in the following table:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Company that are entitled to participate	Tender Price	Last Date for purchasing Tender	The deadline for submission of tenders
16 /2020	Annual Maintenance Contract for Non-Comprehensive of CCTV, Access Contract & Intrusion Alarm system for Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation	Specialized in providing Same service and registered with the Tender Board with Grade: 'Excellent and First	(25/= R.O) Twenty-five Omani Rial Only	27/09/2020	17/10/2020

The purchasing of the tender documents, please visit the following link:
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>

All companies that are bidding must provide a bank guarantee or a certified cheque from a bank operating in the Sultanate for at least (1%) of the tender value on behalf of Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee.

Preference will be given to companies' or small and medium enterprises registered with the General Authority for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) that includes the largest proportion of its tender Omanization.

Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

Chairman of tender committee
Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation



FORCED DEPORTATION

Belarus protest leader Kolesnikova detained at Ukraine border



MINSK: Belarusian opposition figure Maria Kolesnikova was held in Belarus on Tuesday after resisting a forced deportation to Ukraine, according to officials in Kyiv.

Kolesnikova disappeared in Minsk on Monday after she was seen being bundled into a minibus. Two of her aides were also seized, the opposition Coordination Council said. They were press secretary, Anton Rodnenkov, and executive secretary, Ivan Kravtsov. Early Tuesday, the trio were driven to the Ukrainian border, where authorities told them to cross into Ukraine. Her aides went to Ukraine, but Kolesnikova remained in the custody of Belarusian authorities.

Anton Bychovsky, spokesman for Belarus' Border Guard Committee, confirmed that Kolesnikova is still in Belarus. Ukrainian officials also confirmed that Kravtsov and Rodnenkov had

crossed the border, and that Kolesnikova had resisted. Ukraine's Deputy Interior Minister Anton Gerashchenko said on Facebook that Kolesnikova had successfully prevented a "forcible expulsion from her native country."

"This was not a voluntary departure," Gerashchenko wrote.

He also said that Kolesnikova "took actions" to prevent her departure from Belarus. The Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported that she tore up her passport at the border so that Ukrainian border officials would not be able to let her through.

"Maria Kolesnikova was not able to be deported from Belarus as this brave woman took steps to prevent herself from being moved across the border. She remained on the territory of the republic of Belarus. Alexander Lukashenko is personally responsible for her life and health," said Gerashchenko. -dw

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WIKILEAKS FOUNDER

Extradition hearing against Julian Assange opens in London

LONDON: An extradition hearing opened at the Old Bailey courthouse in London against WikiLeaks founder, Australian Julian Assange.

Assange, aged 49, who spent almost seven years holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, faces an 18-count indictment from the U.S. authorities accusing him of recruiting hackers to steal military secrets.

Assange, who sat behind a glass security screen at the back of the court, was formally rearrested on a new U.S. indictment which updated and broadened previous charges, brought mostly under the U.S. Espionage Act.

Assange told district judge Vanessa Baraitser he did not consent to be extradited, paving the way for a lengthy legal battle in London's most famous courthouse.

The indictment says Assange and WikiLeaks repeatedly sought, obtained, and disseminated information that the U.S. classified due to the serious risk that unauthorised disclosure could harm the national security.

A 200-page submission by Assange's barrister Edward Fitzgerald asserted that the prosecution was being pursued for ulterior political motives and not in good

faith. Fitzgerald said in the submission: "The request seeks extradition for what is a classic 'political offence'. Extradition for a political offence is expressly prohibited by article 4(1) of the Anglo-U.S. extradition treaty. Therefore, it constitutes an abuse of this court's process to require this court to extradite on the basis of the Anglo-U.S. treaty in breach of the treaty's express provisions." **xinhua**

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Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
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Biden must apologise for spreading ‘anti-vaccine’ rhetoric, says Trump

Trump said the United States has experienced the lowest case fatality rate than any major country in the world

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday (local time) slammed his Democratic Counterpart, Joe Biden, saying that he and Vice President nominee Kamala Harris “must apologise” for the “reckless anti-vaccine rhetoric.”

“Biden is a stupid person--you know that,” Trump told reporters at the White House, here. “The United States has experienced the lowest case fatality rate than any major country in the world and we are an absolute leader in every way. Under my leadership, we would produce a vaccine in record time. Biden and his ‘very liberal’ running mate -- the most liberal person in Congress -- would destroy this economy. (They) should apologise for spreading the anti-vaccine rhetoric that they are talking about right now,” Trump continued.

He added, “It undermines science. What’s happening is all of a

sudden you have this incredible vaccine and because of that fake rhetoric -- it’s political rhetoric... because they now see that we

have done an incredible job and in speed, like nobody has seen before. They will say anything-it is so dangerous for our country.”

These remarks come after the California Senator said that she doesn’t trust Trump over the vaccine availability.

“I will say that I would not trust Donald Trump and it would have to be a credible source of information that talks about the efficacy

The US continues to be the worst-affected country from the pandemic with 6,298,235 COVID-19 cases and 189,140 deaths, as per the latest update by Johns Hopkins University

and the reliability of whatever he’s talking about. I would not take his word,” CNN reported quoting Harris.

Trump further went on the attack and said that his counterpart wants to “surrender the country to the virus”.

“Biden’s plan for the ‘ChinaVirus’ is to shut down the entire US economy. He is going totally rely upon somebody to walk up and say, ‘Yes sir, it is time to shut it down.’ He’d be laying off 1000s of workers. Biden wants to surrender our country to the virus,” he added.

The US continues to be the worst-affected country from the pandemic with 6,298,235 COVID-19 cases and 189,140 deaths, as per the latest update by Johns Hopkins University. **ANI**

DRUG CASE

NCB arrests Rhea Chakraborty in drug case linked with Sushant Singh Rajput’s death



MUMBAI: Actor Rhea Chakraborty was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Tuesday in a drug case linked with Sushant Singh Rajput death case.

“Actor Rhea Chakraborty arrested by Narcotics Control Bureau in Mumbai,” said KPS Malhotra, Deputy Director, NCB. She is the ninth person arrested in the ongoing case by the NCB.

Earlier in the day, Chakraborty reached NCB office in Mumbai for the third consecutive day for interrogation.

Her brother Showik Chakraborty and her associate Samuel Miranda have also been arrested in the same case. Both of them have been sent to the NCB custody till September 9.

Chakraborty had earlier filed a complaint before Mumbai Police requesting that a First Information Report (FIR) be reg-

istered against Sushant Singh Rajput's sister, Priyanka Singh, Dr Tarun Kumar of RML Hospital, Delhi and others under IPC, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and the Telemedicine Practice Guidelines.

In her complaint to the Senior Inspector of Police, Bandra Police Station, Chakraborty stated that Priyanka Singh had sent Rajput a prescription by Dr Tarun Kumar and he “appears to have prescribed medication controlled under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 to Sushant without any consultation as mandated by law.”

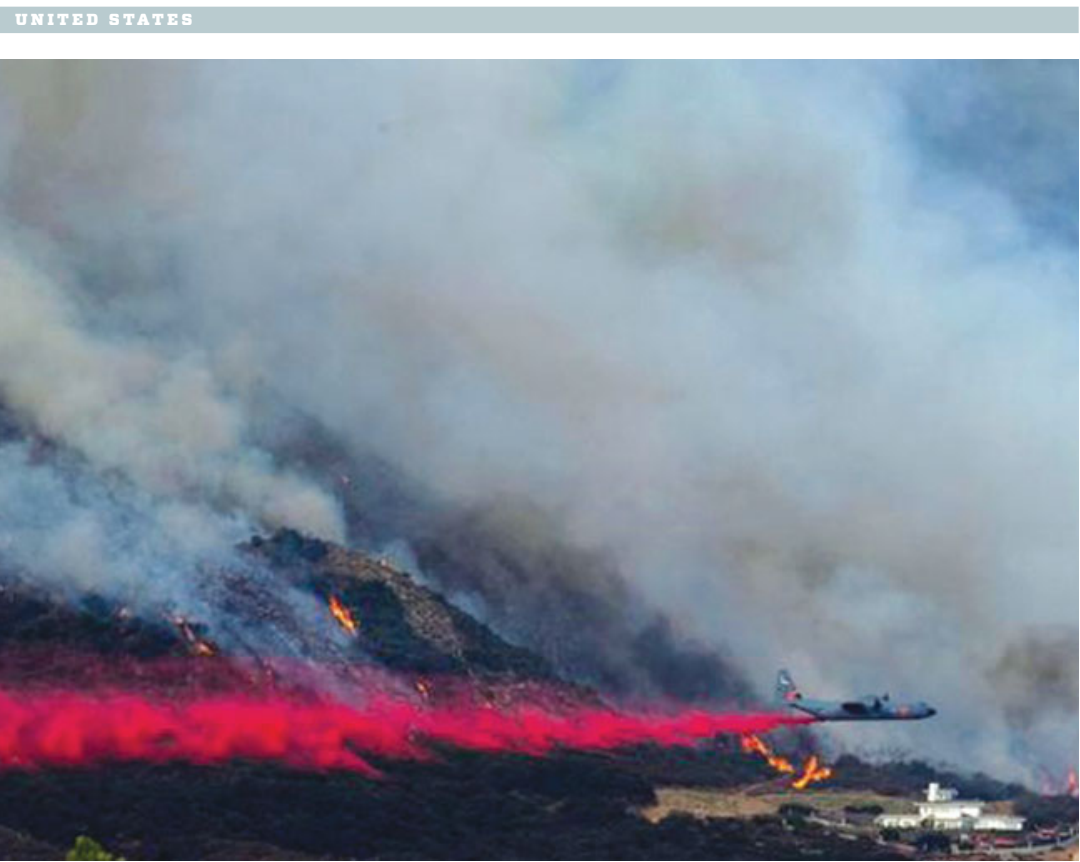
The case filed on the complaint of actor Rhea Chakraborty had been transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as per the orders by the Supreme Court, according to the Mumbai

Police on Tuesday.

“As per the complaint of Rhea Chakraborty, a case had been registered at Bandra police station under sections of IPC, and NDPS Act. In line with the orders by the Supreme Court of India, the case has been transferred to the CBI for further investigation,” Mumbai Police spokesperson, N Ambika said.

The CBI has registered an FIR against Chakraborty and others in connection with the actor's death.

The Enforcement Directorate had on July 31 registered an Enforcement Case Information Report in the late actor's death case after an FIR was filed by Rajput's father KK Singh against Rhea Chakraborty in Bihar on July 28. Rajput was found dead at his Mumbai residence on June 14. **ANI**



UNITED STATES

Over 2 million acres of land destroyed in California wildfires

CALIFORNIA: The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or “Cal Fire,” said that over 2 million acres of land had been burned by wildfires this year, a state record. The fires had destroyed over 3,300 structures and killed 8 people.

A spokeswoman for Cal Fire told a news agency that the record was set early, with the most dangerous part of the year ahead.

“It’s a little unnerving because September and October are historically our worst months for fires,” Lynne Tolmachoff of Cal Fire told a news agency. “It’s usually hot, and the fuels really dry out. And we see more of our wind events.”

The last time California saw such massive damage was in 2018, when fires affected 1.96 million acres of land.

Cal Fire said that as of Monday morning, 14,100 firefighters were fighting 23 major fires across California. The western state of the US has had 900 wildfires since August 15, caused mainly by lightning strikes.

Heat wave exacerbating matters

Large parts of California are in the midst of prolonged hot temperatures, with Fresno topping Monday's charts with highs of 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). The heat had driven up power use in the state.

Pacific Gas & Electric, the state's largest utility serving customers in Central and Northern California, warned that it might cut power

starting Tuesday because of the increased danger from fires.

On Sunday, California's Governor, Gavin Newsom, declared a state of emergency in five counties.

The wildfire in Fresno county has burned around 79,000 acres of land and is yet to be contained.

The Fresno fire led to 200 people being airlifted away from the Sierra National Forest on Sunday. The wildfires have also destroyed 10,000 acres of the Cleveland National Forest.

Meanwhile, the fire in San Bernardino county was caused by a pyrotechnic device.

A couple caused the fire when they set off a large coloured firework to reveal the gender of their baby — the second case of its kind within a month. **ANI**



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117,335
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123,151
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Data Sources Readership: IPSOS NRS 2017, Web reach: Effective Measure/Narrative, Google Analytics January 2020; Social media numbers verified online as of January 2020; *Whatsapp subscribers x 4 pass-on rate

SPORTS

She’s done nothing wrong, says Novak Djokovic as line judge faces criticism

Djokovic exited the US Open in the most unexpected fashion on Monday after he was defaulted as the ball he struck had hit the line judge in the throat

NEW YORK: After being hit on the neck accidentally by Novak Djokovic which led to the player's exit from US Open, the line judge was subjected to a lot of criticism by the Serbian player's fans. However, the World No.1 has come out to extend support to the official and said "She's done nothing wrong at all".

Djokovic exited the US Open in the most unexpected fashion on Monday after he was defaulted as the ball he struck had hit the line judge in the throat. While the shot



US OPEN: After being hit on the neck accidentally by Novak Djokovic which led to the player's exit from US Open, the line judge was subjected to a lot of criticism by the Serbian player's fans.

wasn't intentional, the official was down for a while. Soon after the decision, Djokovic's fans started criticizing the official on social media. "The woman was obvi-

ously exaggerating," a user commented on US Open's Twitter post regarding the decision. "Djokovic broke a rule (yes, unintentional) so he had to be de-

faulted and fined.. however, that lady overreacting deserves an award," another user wrote. Extending support to the official, Djokovic wrote: "Dear

#NoleFam thank you for your positive messages... Please also remember the linesperson that was hit by the ball last night needs our community's support

too. She's done nothing wrong at all. I ask you to stay especially supportive and caring to her during this time." "From these moments, we grow stronger and we rise above. Sharing love with everyone. Europe here I come," the player wrote in another tweet. While Djokovic didn't attend the post-match interaction, he did take to social media to apologise after the incident. "This whole situation has left me really sad and empty," Djokovic had written. "I checked on the lines person and the tournament told me that thank God she is feeling ok. I'm extremely sorry to have caused her such stress. So unintended. So wrong. I'm not disclosing her name to respect her privacy. As for the disqualification, I need to go back within and work on my disappointment and turn this all into a lesson for my growth and evolution as a player and human being," he added. "I apologise to the @usopen tournament and everyone associated for my behavior. I'm very grateful to my team and family for being my rock support, and my fans for always being there with me. Thank you and I'm so sorry," Djokovic further said. -ANI

WOMEN POWER



‘Mother of Grand Slams’, three moms into quarters of Grand Slam history

NEW YORK: Serena Williams, Victoria Azarenka, and Tsvetana Pironkova on Tuesday scripted history by becoming the first trio of mothers ever to reach the quarterfinals of the same Grand Slam. Williams, Azarenka, and Pironkova have each booked their spots in the quarterfinals of the ongoing US Open. "For the first time in Grand Slam history, three moms are into the quarterfinal. 1. Serena Williams 2. Victoria Azarenka 3. Tsvetana Pironkova," US Open tweeted. In another tweet, US Open wrote: "dare we say this is the... mother of Grand Slams?"

There were nine mothers in the draw when the tournament got underway on August 31. Williams on Monday cruised into the quarter-finals of the US Open after securing a win over Maria Sakkari. She had registered a 6-3, 6-7(6), 6-3 victory over No.15 seed to advance in the competition. It took Serena two hours 29 minutes to secure a last-eight matchup against fellow mom, Pironkova. Also, this was Williams' 100th win on Arthur Ashe and a 53rd Grand Slam quarter. Pironkova, playing in her first

WTA event in over three years, had defeated Alize Cornet to progress in the tournament. Azarenka completed the history-making trio with a fourth-round win over Karolina Muchova. Only three moms have ever won a Slam in the Open era: Kim Clijsters, Evonne Goolagong and Margaret Court. If any one of them manages to win this year's US Open title, she will get her name added into the list. Williams, who is 38 years old, is the oldest among the aforementioned quarterfinalists. Azarenka and Pironkova are 31 and 32 years old respectively. -ANI

FOOTBALL

Mbappe tests positive for coronavirus, to miss France-Croatia match



PARIS: France striker Kylian Mbappe has tested positive for COVID-19 and will miss Tuesday's UEFA Nations League match against Croatia, the French Football Federation (FFF) said on Monday. The PSG forward, who is asymptomatic as reported by RMC Sports, has left the national team squad and begun his home quarantine. Mbappe scored for Les Bleus in their 1-0 win over Sweden on Saturday, but will now be absent for Tuesday's clash against Croatia at Stade de France, which is a rematch of the 2018 FIFA World Cup final. Mbappe is the seventh PSG player to test positive for COVID-19. The Ligue 1 champions last

The PSG forward, who is asymptomatic as reported by RMC Sports, has left the national team squad and begun his home quarantine

week reported six confirmed cases, whom French media L'Equipe said are Neymar, Mauro Icardi, Marquinhos, Angel Di Maria, Leandro Paredes and Keylor Navas. All six had holidayed on the Spanish island of Ibiza after the Champions League final against Bayern Mu-

nich on August 23. Mbappe, like the other six, will also be missing PSG's opening two 2020/21 Ligue 1 games against Lens on Thursday and Marseille three days later. PSG's sporting director Leonardo has hit out at the FFF for the manner in which he discovered that Mbappe had tested positive. The Brazilian claimed that no one had informed PSG of their player having contracted COVID-19. "I find it completely unacceptable that we learn from the press that one of our players is positive," he said to RMC, "They released a statement and sent the player home but no one from the Federation has communicated this to us. No one has contacted us." Xinhua

CRICKET

England and Australia in shootout for No. 1 spot in final T20I

LONDON: England have already sealed a series win, but both sides will be gunning for victory in the third and final T20I, with the winner poised to claim the top spot in the ICC Rankings. Jos Buttler lit up the second T20I with an unbeaten 77*, but England will have to manage without him in the final game of the series. Despite having secured an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series, the hosts still have plenty to play for. A win will send them to the top of the MRF Tyres ICC T20I Team Rankings, having begun the series in second place behind Australia. Australia, meanwhile, will be seeking their first win of the tour



as a way to build momentum heading into the ODI series, as well as to hold on to the No.1 spot they claimed back in May. Questions remain in the middle order for both sides, with the majority of England's runs in the last match coming from the top three in the form of Buttler and Dawid Malan – although Moeen Ali helped finish off the game with an unbeaten cameo. Australia's middle-order has also struggled to make the most of their starts. England will be forced to make at least one change, with Sam Billings likely to come into the side at No.6 to replace Buttler and Tom Banton moving up the order to fill the vacancy at the top.

Australia may well stick with an unchanged side, though they do have options should they want to give some experience to youngsters such as Riley Meredith or Josh Philippe. **Remember the last time** After early wicket, Australia recovered enough to post a competitive-looking total of 157/7 thanks to contributions from Aaron Finch (40), Marcus Stoinis (35), Glenn Maxwell (26), Ashton Agar (23) and Pat Cummins (13* from 5). Buttler and Malan kept England on track with an 87-run partnership before a couple of late wickets threatened to derail the chase. -ICC

OMAN OIL PRICE DECREASES

The price of Oman oil has decreased with prices for delivery by November 2020 reaching \$40.81, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil declined 76 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$41.57. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSM index closed at 3,701.19 points, down 0.14 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.19 per cent at 519.99 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 2.46 per cent was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 4.44 per cent, was the top loser.

Pact signed to support role of SMEs for achieving food security in Oman

Food and Agriculture Organisation and Zubair Small Enterprises Centre signed the Memorandum of Understanding

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An agreement has been signed for strengthening the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in achieving food security in Oman.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) – a social impact initiative by The Zubair Corporation - have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The pact will formalise their collaboration to promote sustainable food system and contribute to the improvement of food and nutrition security in the Sultanate. This partnership serves as an example of multi-stakeholder efforts towards meeting the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



COLLABORATION: FAO and Zubair SEC realise the need for a more integrated approach to promoting sustainable food systems in Oman and the significant role SMEs can play across the value chain. - Supplied picture

The MoU was signed by Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman and Al Zubair Muhammad Al Zubair, Vice Chairman of Zubair Corporation with the attendance management representatives from both sides.

FAO and Zubair SEC realise the need for a more integrated approach to promoting sustainable food systems in Oman and the significant role SMEs can play across the value chain. The agreement encompasses various areas of collaboration that would capitalise on the shared knowledge and expertise both FAO and Zubair SEC hold to facilitate opportunities for SMEs in food systems. The areas include strengthening SMEs capacities in entrepreneurship, management and financial skills to contribute to the achievement of food and nutrition security; fostering and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues in relevant areas, and improving knowledge in food security related issues in the framework of Sustainable Development.

Supporting SMEs

Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman said: “SMEs and farmer-based organisations are key actors and agents of change to the sustainable transformation of food systems along the value chain. They are one of the central stakeholders along the food value chain in the Sultanate. Partnering with Zubair SEC is critical due to their proven track record in supporting SMEs. I commend their important contribution to the development of the SMEs ecosystem and very much look forward to expanding our collaborative efforts.”

She added, “SMEs related to the

food and agriculture sector as well as farmer-based organisations require interventions to take advantage of market opportunities triggered by sustainable food systems. It is equally imperative that these interventions be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and viable.”

Sustainable development

Highlighting the importance of the agreement, Al Zubair Muhammad Al Zubair, Vice Chairman of Zubair Corporation said, “Our strategic approach has always been aligned with the national agenda for sustainable development in the Sultanate. At Zubair SEC we direct our efforts in a way that creates positive scalable social and economic in our country, and food security is by far a key part of such objectives.”

He added, “We are proud of the trust that a global organisation such as FAO has put in Zubair SEC to collaborate in what we believe are much-needed projects that aim at strengthening the role of SMEs in achieving food security in the Sultanate. We share many common Sustainable Development Goals and we highly appreciate this collaboration and hope this collaboration would be an opening for many more opportunities in the future.”

FAO and Zubair SEC have collaborated in the past couple of years intending to strengthen the role of SMEs in sustainable food systems in Oman. SMEs contribute to social and economic transformations through innovations in agriculture, fisheries, healthcare, education and environment. Successful joint initiatives include as-

sessments, capacity development programmes, and dialogue platforms and initiatives.

Ali Shaker, Adviser – Business Development & Strategic Partnerships at Zubair SEC said, “The most recent collaboration with FAO, the Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chain Assessment (NSVCA) project, focused on current constraints and opportunities along the value chain for selected safe and nutritious food commodities. This project will provide farmer-based organisations and SMEs access to updated knowledge and data to operate in line with current research and national priorities, in addition to a number of key proposed interventions that would enhance SME’s opportunities across the value chain.”

He added, “Farmer based organisations and SMEs along the value chain also play a key role in influencing demand and supply through the production, packaging, selling and marketing of food. We believe that the project will help food and agriculture-related SMEs to better target customers through a more comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem in which they operate.

Both parties intend to conclude this agreement to develop their cooperation to achieve their common objectives while strengthening the capacities of SMEs, to enable them to succeed and grow sustainably, and contribute to developing the agricultural sector.

RESEARCH STUDY

Major energy firms lag in green shift

BRUSSELS: Only 10 per cent of global energy utility companies are expanding their renewable energy capacity at a faster rate than their gas or coal-fired capacity. That is the main finding of a study by Galina Alova from the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at the University of Oxford.

The study, published in the research journal *Nature Energy*, found that of the 3,000 utilities studied most remain predominantly invested in fossil fuels. And of that prioritising renewable energy growth, 60 per cent had not halted the expansion of their fossil fuel portfolios.

The companies with the slowest transition tended to be the larger ones and from outside Europe, Alova told DW. “The renewables-prioritising cohort of utilities that I identified comprises companies that are overall larger and own a larger market share in the countries where they operate, compared to the other companies,” she says.

“The key issue is that the majority of these companies continue in parallel to expand their fossil fuel-based capacity, although they do so at a slower rate,” she adds.

The research highlights a gap between what is needed to tackle the climate crisis and “the actions being taken by the utility sector,” she adds. These companies face the risk of carbon lock-in, given that a third of their fossil fuel capacity has been added in the last 10 years, so is here to stay for decades. “Unless it is retired early, it will render significant shares of their portfolios stranded,” Alova says.

“Although there have been a few high-profile examples of individual electric utilities investing in renewables, this study shows that overall, the sector is making the transition to clean energy slowly or not at all,” she adds.

Alova believes inertia in the electricity industry is one key reason for the slow transition.

The matter of gas

The report found that 10 per cent of utilities favoured growth in gas-fired power plants, dominated by the US utilities exploiting the country’s shale gas reserves, followed by Russia and Germany.

“Renewables and natural gas often go hand in hand,” Alova says, adding that companies often choose both in parallel. “So, it might be just in media reports we are getting this image of investing



RESEARCH JOURNAL: The study, published in the research journal Nature Energy, found that of the 3,000 utilities studied most remain predominantly invested in fossil fuels. - DW

in renewables, but less coverage on continued investment in gas.”

It might also be the case that gas is viewed as a transition fuel, relatively less carbon-emitting and providing load-balancing services to intermittent renewables generation, Alova says.

“Yes, sure, utilities did hinder the transition, especially like Galina makes clear, in misunderstanding the future of gas,” Dave Jones, senior electricity analyst for independent climate think tank Ember, tells DW. Utilities have a mindset to build big centralised power plants, so to replace a coal power plant with a gas power plant, he says. “Fortunately, most of the gas hype across the world is now dying down, as wind and solar now provide cheaper options for generating electricity,” Jones says.

Movement taking place

Over a fifth of Europe’s energy was generated by solar panels and wind turbines in the first half of 2020. Denmark came out on top, generating 64 per cent of its energy from these renewable sources, followed by Ireland (49 per cent) and Germany (42 per cent), according to a report by Ember.

In a half-year review released in July by Ember, renewables exceeded fossil fuel generation for the

first time, producing 40 per cent of the EU’s power, with fossil fuels contributing 34 per cent. However, globally only a tenth of all energy was generated by these sources during the first half of 2020.

Last year saw the use of coal to generate electricity around the world fall by a record 3 per cent. In part due to COVID-19, coal generation in the first half of 2020 again broke records with a drop of 8.3 per cent. In the EU, the drop was higher, as coal energy generation fell by nearly a third.

With many projects delayed by the pandemic, the global capacity to produce electricity from renewable sources is predicted to drop by up to 13 per cent overall this year according to the International Energy Agency.

Slowly getting there?

Utilities have been slow to understand how quickly wind and solar would drop in price, and also how quickly governments would want to move away from coal. “Many utilities have been caught off guard by the speed of the transition, and have suffered financially ever since,” says Jones.

The world this year has got one-tenth of its electricity from wind and solar, double from the 5 per cent in 2015, and that increase has

led to a fall in market share of coal generation, Jones adds.

Valentina Kretzschmar from consultancy Wood Mackenzie says BP’s recently announced strategy has created a new industry benchmark. BP plans to increase investment in its low-emission businesses, including renewable energy, by tenfold in the next decade to \$5 billion (€4.5 billion) a year, while cutting back oil and gas production by 40 per cent.

In July, Royal Dutch Shell won a deal to build a wind farm off the coast of the Netherlands, while France’s Total agreed to make several large investments in solar power in Spain and a wind farm off Scotland. Total also bought an electric and natural gas utility in Spain. Shell says it will delay new fields in the Gulf of Mexico and the North Sea.

US giants like Exxon Mobil and Chevron have been slower than their European counterparts to commit to climate goals.

“I have seen a substantial shift between companies in the fossil fuel clusters toward renewables,” Alova says. “This signals that the companies that have been growing fossil fuel portfolios in the earlier periods might be switching to renewables more recently.” - DW

FORECAST FOR FY21

India’s fiscal deficit revised to 8.2% from 7.2%: Fitch Solutions

SINGAPORE: Fitch Solutions has revised its fiscal deficit forecast for India to 8.2 per cent from 7.2 per cent earlier due to quicker divergence in expenditures and non-debt receipts which saw the deficit exceed the full-year target in only four months.

Accordingly, including the state deficit, the total government deficit forecast for FY21 is 11.8 per cent of GDP. “Our revision is due to a higher than previously anticipated willingness of the government to spend amid weak revenue collection,” it said.

“We expect the government to maintain its spending expansion through increased government securities issuances that will be absorbed by the banking sector under an increased statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) threshold up to March 31, which allows more funds to be invested in these securities.”

The Reserve Bank of India’s announcement that SLR for banks will be raised to 22 per cent of net demand and time liabilities up to March 31 from 18 per cent at present indicate the government will seek to ramp up its borrowing through bond issuances over the coming months with local banks being the bulk of the lenders.

“We maintain our FY21 central government revenue forecast at minus 18.4 per cent,” said Fitch Solutions. Revenue collection over the first four months of FY21 suffered a major hit as a result of a slump in economic activity in light of the nationwide Covid-19 induced lockdown from March 25 to May 31.

“However, we expect a gradual recovery in the economy over the coming months to support improvement in revenue collection.”

Gross tax revenue

Non-debt receipts over the first four months of FY21 amounted to Rs 2.3 lakh crore, a 42 per cent year-on-year decline over FY20. The centre’s gross tax revenue also suffered, falling by 29.6 per cent over the first four months of FY21 to Rs 3.8 lakh crore from Rs 5.4 lakh crore in FY20.

Among indirect taxes, Centre Goods and Services Tax fell by 34 per cent over the period to Rs

The Reserve Bank of India’s announcement that statutory liquidity ratio for banks will be raised to 22 per cent of net demand and time liabilities up to March 31 from 18 per cent

92,900 crore while a slump in the trade as a result of lockdown restrictions also saw custom duties fall by 54 per cent to Rs 23,700 crore over the period.

However, a sharp increase in central excise duty on petrol and diesel from Rs 22.09 per litre and Rs 18.83 per litre respectively on March 14 to Rs 32.98 per litre for both categories by May 6, supported a 23.7 per cent rise in excise duties to Rs 67,900 crore over the period.

For direct taxes, corporate taxes recorded a fall of 39.2 per cent to Rs 53,700 crore and income taxes fell by 29.1 per cent to Rs 91,200 crore.

Fitch Solutions said it has revised its FY21 central government expenditure forecasts to 12.7 per cent over FY20 revised estimates from 6.5 per cent previously, putting in line with the FY21 Union Budget projections.

This is on the back of the Centre’s commitment to maintaining spending despite a wide revenue shortfall with spending maintained by additional market borrowing.

Over the first four months of FY21, total expenditures reached 34.7 per cent of FY21 budget estimates which suggests a consistent approach towards the disbursement schedule of funds as opposed to front-loading despite the ongoing economic crisis, said Fitch Solutions. - ANI

MARKET

MSM index ends lower

The top gainer was Al Maha Ceramics which closed higher by 2.46% while top loser was Oman Fisheries which closed lower by 4.44%

MUSCAT: The MSM index closed at 3,701.19 points, down 0.14 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.19 per cent at 519.99 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 2.46 per cent was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 4.44 per cent, was the top loser. Bank Nizwa was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded and also was the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 497 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.2 million, with more than 73 million shares changing hands. Out of 36 traded stocks, 4 advanced, 13 declined and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR176,000 while local investors were net buyers for OMR141,000 followed by GCC & Arab for OMR35,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed by 0.31

per cent at, 5997.08 points. Bank Nizwa was up by 1.0 per cent. Muscat Finance, Al Sharqiya Investment, National Bank of Oman, Oman Emirates Investment and Taageer Finance were down by 3.85 per cent, 2.86 per cent, 2.23 per cent, 2.13 per cent and 1.11 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 3,972.25 points, down 0.06 per cent. Al Maha Ceramics and Al Anwar Ceramic were up by 2.46 per cent and 1.27 per cent respectively. Oman Fisheries, Galfar Engineering and Gulf International were down by 4.44 per cent, 1.96 per cent and 0.95 per cent respectively. Services index was up 0.11 per cent before closing at 1,568.54.81 points. Phoenix Power was up by 1.82 per cent. Al Batinah Power, Al Jazeera Service and Ooredoo were down by 1.82 per cent, 0.6 per cent and 0.52 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT SECURITIES MARKET

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSM30 Index	3,707.45	3,700.18	3,701.19	3,706.36	-5.17	-0.14
Financial Index	6,016.23	5,992.83	5,997.08	6,015.66	-18.58	-0.31
Industrial Index	3,979.66	3,972.08	3,972.25	3,974.79	-2.54	-0.06
Services Index	1,569.15	1,565.83	1,568.54	1,566.81	1.73	0.11
MSM SHARIAH INDEX	519.99	518.76	519.99	519.02	0.97	0.19
MSM TOTAL RETURN	4,220.81	4,212.54	4,213.68	4,219.57	-5.89	-0.14

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,378,828	1,216,382	497	19,744,312,012	4	13	19	36

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

SEC.	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	6,789	1,408	1	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.203	0.005	2.463	0.208	0.203	0.208	0.100	11,440,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	582,669	227,154	33	0.388	0.390	0.388	0.390	0.390	0.000	0.000	0.390	0.390	0.398	0.100	39,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	52,000	8,320	9	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.156	0.160	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVESTMENT AND FINANCE	5,000	460	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.091	0.093	0.100	18,600,000
OM0000001772	AL ANWAR HOLDING	157,500	10,858	8	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.100	13,800,000
OM0000002176	AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	490,366	46,106	17	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.094	0.095	0.100	11,740,408
OM0000002026	OMAN TELECOMMUNICATION	188,638	104,556	49	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.000	0.000	0.620	0.620	0.624	0.100	465,000,000
OM0000002224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	900	99	1	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.328	0.330	0.100	78,015,300
OM0000002398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	316,037	31,604	9	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.102	0.100	243,450,674
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	233,749	90,589	47	0.392	0.396	0.390	0.390	0.392	-0.002	-0.510	0.396	0.392	0.396	0.100	1,287,313,790
OM0000002968	OOREDOO	343,850	134,369	89	0.392	0.392	0.390	0.390	0.392	-0.002	-0.510	0.392	0.392	0.396	0.100	253,868,250
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HOLDING	57,013	3,877	6	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.070	-0.002	-2.857	0.068	0.068	0.070	0.100	6,120,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	134,216	6,711	9	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.052	-0.002	-3.846	0.050	0.050	0.051	0.100	15,357,316
Total	13	2,546,107	666,110	279												
Parallel Market																
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	46,500	2,604	3	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.055	0.001	1.818	0.056	0.055	0.057	0.100	81,905,882
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC TILES	465,420	74,005	14	0.157	0.161	0.157	0.159	0.157	0.002	1.274	0.161	0.160	0.161	0.100	47,097,975
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	2,301,750	232,471	25	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	151,500,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	3,000	660	1	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.215	0.215	0.000	0.000	0.220	0.215	0.220	0.100	6,450,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	900	20	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.065	0.075	0.100	1,145,773
OM0000002930	GULF INVEST SERVICES HOLDING	30,000	2,010	2	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.068	0.100	3,942,496
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MAR	520	354	2	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.660	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.640	0.680	0.100	45,540,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	89	12	1	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.131	0.132	0.139	0.100	11,314,982
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	2,110	95	1	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.044	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.046	0.000	0.100	9,724,440
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	4,439	488	3	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.100	105,002,915
OM0000004768	AL MADINA TAKAFUL	145,000	10,875	18	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.076	0.100	13,125,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	30,152	1,658	4	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.100	39,292,349
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	6,803	2,149	10	0.324	0.326	0.324	0.326	0.326	0.000	0.000	0.326	0.326	0.000	0.100	22,947,140
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	773,544	129,187	14	0.167	0.168	0.167	0.167	0.168	-0.001	-0.595	0.168	0.167	0.168	0.100	10,221,114
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	10,000	1,040	1	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.105	-0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.103	0.107	0.100	2,184,000
OM0000001517	HISCB BANK OMAN	270,950	35,801	26	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	18,029,402
OM0000002381	TAAGEER FINANCE	10,000	890	1	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.100	22,569,510
OM0000004925	AL BATINAH POWER	33,072	1,796	4	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.055	-0.001	-1.818	0.054	0.054	0.055	0.100	36,443,921
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEERING AND CON.	247,280	12,374	11	0.050	0.051	0.050	0.050	0.051	-0.001	-1.961	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.100	14,499,032
OM0000001681	OMAN AND EMIRATES INV HOLDING	178,936	8,261	7	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	0.047	-0.001	-2.128	0.046	0.046	0.047	0.100	5,606,250
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN	244,056	42,660	67	0.175	0.175	0.173	0.175	0.179	-0.004	-2.235	0.175	0.175	0.179	0.100	284,504,612
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	9,000	774	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.090	-0.004	-4.444	0.086	0.086	0.089	0.100	10,750,000
Total	22	4,812,721	549,973	217												

COMMENTARY

Tackling network woes from home, the new standard for modern IT teams

ACCORDING to a Gartner analysis on the future of work trends 2020, the global pandemic has forever changed how organisations approach and view remote working. The market research firm predicts that at least 48 per cent of workers will telecommute, compared with 30 per cent before the pandemic forced most of the world's workforce to self-isolate. Gartner's report also suggests that the demand for IT teams to be agile will be greater than ever. IT managers responsible for the day-to-day operations of their organisation's network are facing new challenges as the work environment becomes more permanently distributed, thereby increasing the complexity of already intricate network infrastructure by several orders of magnitude. That said, this has allowed organisations to reexamine their networks and understand how artificial intel-



Jacob Chacko

ligence can help them meet the demand for connectivity in the face on an IT resource crunch. Comprehensive visibility key to remote working security challenges Despite advancements in technology, many organisations are unprepared for the sudden increase in remote workers. IT teams are put under pressure to set up new systems at top speed

while also having to deal with multiple requests for technical help that inevitably comes with new ways of working. Even with myriad hardware, software, and services available to businesses, some organisations inevitably discover that parts of their operations do not support the robust security requirements that give IT teams the visibility and access control they need. This will get worse as Gartner anticipates 5.8 billion endpoints in 2020 when today IT and security teams are already struggling and oftentimes unaware when new devices are being connected to their network. IT teams need to be able to have better visibility to better identify potential threats accessing enterprise resources. While many vendors preach visibility, where we are innovating today is in the area of providing organizations with cloud-native

software and services that not only provide unified management and orchestration but end-to-end visibility over remote networking issues that can be addressed from a single pane of glass. Seamless visibility into the state of WAN, LAN, and wireless LAN infrastructure is essential and critical for a post-pandemic world, where industry watchers anticipate large-scale remote working teams to become an enterprise norm. With a single pane of glass, IT managers can have an integrated network view to monitoring network health on specific devices, workflows, or circuits, where several gateways and security parameters can be managed. With this deep network visibility and ease of management, modern networks will enable IT teams to quickly determine the root cause of an application or network slowdown and pro-

actively troubleshoot to resolve these issues. With cloud-based networks that are flexible and simple, lean and time-strapped IT teams can do more with software that enables AI-powered insights to solve real-world issues. Apart from these essential workflows, AI-based profiling, policy enforcement and management can also help businesses reduce cyber risk. For example, allowing IT teams to extract intelligence about user roles, device type, application, and network location to secure connectivity can be done on a need-to-know basis. As reported on Gartner's top 10 Trends Impacting Infrastructure and Operation for 2020, most organisations are indeed automating to some level with the intent to refocus staff on higher-value tasks. However, these investments are oftentimes made without an overall

automation strategy in mind. It then becomes crucial for organisations to partner with network providers than can tailor a comprehensive portfolio that offers unrivalled scalability and deep machine learning expertise to deliver a highly tuned, autonomous mobile network. With a profound understanding of these smart technologies, businesses stay ahead of threats by selecting and addressing network issues swiftly and accurately, accessing sufficient and relevant data, and curating results in the most demanding of real-world environments. So, whether users are at home or on-the-go, IT teams can be set up for success by gaining access to simple and scalable cloud-native solutions. Jacob Chacko is the Regional Business Head – Middle East, Saudi & South Africa (MESA) at HPE Aruba

BI-ANNUAL REPORT

Venture Capital investment in fintech remains robust: KPMG report

DUBAI: While overall global fintech funding fell during the first half of 2020, with \$25.6 billion of investment globally across 1,221 deals, corporate deals are driving continued strength in VC (Venture Capital) activity, according to the Pulse of Fintech H1 2020, a bi-annual report on global fintech investment trends from KPMG International. The EMEA region saw \$4.6 billion in fintech investment in H1 2020, the report states. The fintech market in the Middle East is expected to expand and diversify for the foreseeable future with key jurisdictions all investing in fintech ecosystems. Several jurisdictions within the Middle East have continued to work to become global hubs, and investment in the region was focused primarily on early-stage deals in H1 2020. As these markets gradually mature, the region will likely see increasing investment as early-stage fintech grow. Abbas Basrai, Partner and Head of Financial Services, KPMG in the UAE, explained, "The UAE government has moved forward with several initiatives to help and foster the growth of fintech. The RegLab, a sandbox-style programme, is a big part of this effort, in addition to programmes like accelerates HER to promote diversity in entrepreneurship. Combined with



Abbas Basrai, Partner and Head of Financial Services, KPMG in the UAE

startup funds, are likely to be a big part of developing the UAE's fintech ecosystem over time." COVID-19 also catalysed the acceptance of digital business models in the Middle East, a region that has a very strong tradition of in-person, relationship-based service provision. This is driving traditional banks in the region to increasingly consider partnerships and alliances with fintech companies able to help them with accelerating their digital journeys. Given the long lead times for deal-making, many H1'20 deals

The fintech market in the Middle East is expected to expand and diversify for the foreseeable future with key jurisdictions all investing in fintech ecosystems. Several jurisdictions within the Middle East have continued to work to become global hubs, and investment in the region was focused primarily on early-stage deals in H1'20

were initiated in late 2019. COVID-19 saw new deal activity slow dramatically, except in high-priority sectors like payments. Despite the pandemic, investor interest in platform businesses remained incredibly strong in H1'20, particularly in less mature fintech markets. Platform business continued to see significant investment from investors and large techs. A sharp drop in M&A invest-

ment drove its global decline. During H1 2020, M&A accounted for just \$4 billion of fintech investment globally (compared to \$85.7 billion in H2 2019), including the \$1.3 billion reverse merger of Open Lending. The stalled M&A reflects both a general slowdown in deal activity and investors pressing pause on major deals to re-consider valuations and risk appetite given COVID-19. Despite global uncertainty, VC investment stayed strong globally, accounting for \$20 billion in H1 2020. It is on track to surpass previous annual record highs, should the trend continue. In H1 2020, VC investment in EMEA accounted for \$4 billion, \$6.7 billion in Asia and \$9.3 billion in the Americas. COVID-19 is likely to remain a key driver of change for fintech investment heading into H2'20, given the strong acceleration of digital trends – such as the use of contactless payments and the demand for and use of digital service models. The ongoing acceleration of digital trends may drive investment not only in direct fintech solutions but also in related enabling technologies – such as cybersecurity, fraud prevention and digital identity management. Platform businesses may also continue to be a hot ticket for investors, particularly in less mature jurisdictions.

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Indian male 29 yrs having 5 yrs experience in FMCG sales & marketing in Oman with D/L. Can join immediately. Contact 78057807. Email nozi70072@gmail.com

MA B.Ed in English language, Indian female, 5 yrs experience in teaching seeking suitable positions in schools. Currently in Oman on family visa. # 79716167, 24033571

HSE Officer, 15 years experience. Seeking job to join a reputed firm. Contact WhatsApp 99626821

Indian Male (30) 8 Year's Experience in Sales and marketing and Office Administration on visit, seeking a challenging careers. D/L available. Contact 9412 2402. Email: shinto.samuelit@gmail.com

Indian male, 24 years holding a bachelor's in management and Masters in finance, presently pursuing ACCA. Looking for relevant job, holding valid GCC driving license. Contact 98189064. Email shahahr806@gmail.com

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ROUND-UP

OFFER FOR HOME INTERNET CUSTOMERS

Omantel continues to strengthen regional partnership with STARZPLAY

MUSCAT: The first and leading integrated telecommunication services provider in the Sultanate, Omantel, continues to strengthen regional partnerships with STARZPLAY, the region's fastest-growing subscription video-on-demand service with the launch of a new exclusive offer for Omantel Home Internet customers. This partnership enhances STARZPLAY's existing relationship with Omantel by offering attractive and value-oriented deals to customers.

Through the new partnership, Omantel New Home Internet customers of OMR25 and above will be eligible for a six-months free STARZPLAY subscription followed by a 50 per cent discount on the remaining six months.

Furthermore, all existing customers of Omantel Home Internet plans will be eligible for a 50 per

cent discount on StarzPlay subscription. Omantel also offers the freedom to its customers to opt-out of the offer at any time without any penalty.

To access STARZPLAY's diverse content portfolio of premium content, original shows and Hollywood blockbusters, Omantel Home Internet customers can send an SMS with their fixed-line number to 92600. Customers will receive a confirmation SMS with their username and password.

Eng. Aladdin Abdullah Bait Fadhil, Acting Vice President at Omantel's Consumer Business Unit, said, "We are pleased to build on our strong relationship with STARZPLAY, the region's leading subscription video-on-demand platform, to offer additional benefits and convenience to our customers. With the evolving con-

sumer needs, digital TV and video content have become an extremely important part of our overall strategy as it helps attract and retain subscribers. We are confident that this new offer will be welcomed by our customers and will certainly add more value to their overall digital experience."

Raghida Abou-Fadel, VP Sales & Business Development, STARZPLAY, said, "Subscription through telecom operator is one of the fastest and easiest ways to access STARZPLAY's favourite content with no extra bills or payments. With the rapid increase of mobile penetration and connected devices and with consumers' looking for easy and convenient access to video streaming apps, bundling our services with Omantel is a strategic step in further expanding our reach by connecting with

new users and offering easy access to our platform. We have enjoyed a successful relationship with Omantel and we look forward to integrating our services to offer the best value deals to our Omani customers as they enjoy our high-quality premium content."

In addition, Omantel customers can subscribe to STARZPLAY via Omantel Hayyak prepaid and Baqati post-paid mobile payment method (Direct-Carrier-Billing) for the standard fee of OMR4 per month.

STARZPLAY subscribers can enjoy full HD and 4K content on most internet-enabled devices, smart TVs and game consoles, and it is widely available on regional IPTV services. Its iOS and Android apps are installed on more than six million devices - with the additional feature of offline playback downloads.



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Hyundai unveils new Kona N Line

Hyundai Kona, the 2019 North American Utility Vehicle of the Year, is back with a bold design update that retains the model's winning personality



MUSCAT: Hyundai Motor Company recently unveiled its newly enhanced Kona subcompact SUV and introduced the exciting all-new Kona N Line variant.

Hyundai Kona, the 2019 North American Utility Vehicle of the Year, is back with a bold design update that retains the model's winning personality. The B-SUV's exterior design is upgraded with various enhancements that make it even more appealing to customers who lead active lifestyles.

At the same time, Hyundai is expanding its B-SUV lineup by launching the sporty all-new Kona N Line. This attractive entry point to Hyundai's high-performance N brand is distinguished by signature fascia, body colour claddings and large rear spoiler as well as N Line specific design accents.

"Interestingly, there's a happy vibe that I feel is common with many Kona drivers," said SangYup Lee, Senior Vice President, Head of Hyundai Global Design Centre. "Our design inspiration stems from this positive spirit, and this is a dedication to all the adventurers out there who explore life with a smile."

With the latest product enhancement, Kona will be available for the first time as an N Line version, combining fun to drive with a sporty appearance. The Kona N Line stands out through its motorsports-inspired front and rear end, body-colour claddings, and diamond-cut wheel design.

Kona N Line's front is characterized by the dynamic features of the front bumper, harmoniously connected and unified with the body colour treatment of the wheel arch claddings. Instead of the rugged skid plate of the new Kona, the N Line version features a characteristic N-style aerodynamic lip with low-lying corner fins for a road-hugging appearance.

Larger, more technical air intake features are further distinguished by a unique mesh design and surface treatment.

On the sides, the body colour claddings and new rocker panels are complemented by the dedicated 18-inch alloy wheel design.

Kona N Line's rear design reinforces the model's dynamic image. The rear bumper incorporates a large central aerodynamic diffuser in a contrast colour to the body as well as a one-side double muffler. The bumper fascia is formed with sharply creased corners and N-style fins for better airflow.

The interior is now available with a dedicated N Line-colour package in one-tone black with cloth, leather or suede seats. In addition, the distinctive red stitching, metal pedals and N logo on the gear shift and seats all contribute to a sportier look and feel.

With a bold, progressive design and adventurous personality, Hyundai Kona has become an icon in its segment. Design updates, front and rear, give the new Kona a sleek, sophisticated look while

keeping its robust signature style.

The striking new front-end design stands out with eye-catching, protective cladding panels. At the top, the stretched bonnet ends sharply over the centre grille with a wide, distinctive shape that gives Kona a powerful look. This effect is further enhanced by the wide, thin LED DRLs. Lower down, the main bumper fascia connects smoothly to the wheel arch claddings, forming a unique and robust armour in a contrasting material to the main body.

On the lower bumper, the robust skid plate appears to embrace the lower air intake, and visually complements the shape of the main upper grille. Integrated into the bumper corners are vertically oriented aerodynamic inlets that improve airflow.

The side body retains the muscular and sculpted shape of the previous Kona, but the sporty wedge-shaped silhouette is further accentuated by the visual connection between the shoulder creases and the sharper, cleaner, more harmonious front end.

At the rear, the new taillights feature horizontally stretched graphics. These reflect the unique identity of the front-end light design. The new rear bumper, which also follows the protective armour concept of the front and sides, also uses a contrasting material.

Besides, the latest model comes with updated 17- or 18-inch wheel designs, in addition to 16-inch wheels carried over from its predecessor.

Kona Hybrid will be available with the same 16- or 18-inch wheels as before.

The new Kona is 40mm longer than the previous model, giving it a sleeker and more dynamic look that complements its wide, strong visual stance.

Exterior colours

The new Kona comes with five new exterior colours, including Surfy Blue, Dive in Jeju, Ignite Flame, Cyber Grey, and Misty Jungle. These are in addition to five existing colours, including Phantom Black, Chalk White, Dark Knight, Pulse Red and Galactic Grey. Every colour can be combined with the Phantom Black two-tone roof. The two-tone roof also comes with matching mirror housings. This contributes to its sporty and sleek appearance and gives customers more options for personalization and self-expression.

The redesigned interior of the new Kona expresses a more upscale and progressive look than its predecessor. It features a rugged yet refined style that matches the exterior's boldness, designed to appeal to customers who lead an active lifestyle. Extra cargocapacity and rear-seat legroom offer more accommodation and comfort.

This is in addition to a significant technology upgrade that contributes to the interior's comprehensive update.

The new console area is disconnected from the instrument panel

to emphasise the horizontal layout. The dashboard appears wide and airy to create a generously spacious atmosphere. An electric parking brake is added as a new convenience feature in response to customer demand.

Other enhancements that contribute to the interior's higher level of quality and refinement include new ambient light technology that illuminates the centre cup holders as well as in the passenger and driver side footwells, and new aluminium finish rings around the speakers and air vents.

The new Kona interior is completed by new colours and materials. New seat cover options include a black woven houndstooth design, cloth seats with black and grey embossing, and perforated leather seats in black, beige, or khaki.

With the black woven houndstooth seats, industrial-inspired and modern grains accentuate the fine-spun linear seat trim with its three-dimensional pattern. With the black and grey cloth seats, sophisticated visuals are created by shadows and dark nuances in several anthracite grey tones. Optional leather seats show a classy tartan texture that is also reflected in the material perforation. Both the texture and the colours of the leather seats harmonise the dynamic-looking interior.

As an alternative to the dark interior, Kona is also available with a light beige interior trim, accentuating the fresh look seen in the

door panels and seats. With the optional khaki leather seats and the khaki centre console, Hyundai is also offering a natural and premium look as an alternative to the black and beige versions.

The new Kona's interior packages include changes in colour to the dashboard as well as the seats and other surfaces.

The new Kona is equipped with the latest in-car connectivity and technology.

New to this model is a 10.25-inch digital cluster, first seen in the all-new i20. In addition, the new Kona also comes with an optional 10.25-inch AVN screen, providing new connectivity features. The new AVN screen also comes with a split-screen function and multiple Bluetooth connections.

In addition, Kona comes with the latest Blue Link upgrade, which includes User profile, Last Mile Navigation, Connected Routing, Live Parking Information, and more. Customers can have a personalised user profile that can be transferred to other Hyundai vehicles providing the same feature. Last Mile Navigation helps customers continue the journey to their destination even after the car is parked, using either Augmented Reality or Google Maps. Connected Routing is Hyundai's cloud-based navigation system. Live Parking Information gives users real-time information on the location and price of nearby available parking spaces. Besides, the latest Blue Link upgrade features Free Text Search for users to enter addresses or points of interest.

As standard, the new Kona is equipped with Display Audio that is increased from seven to eight inches and DAB radio. It's also upgraded with wireless Android Auto and Apple Car Play for convenient wireless connectivity of their phones to the Display Audio system.

For increased fuel efficiency, the new Kona will be equipped with 48-volt mild-hybrid technology. This technology is applied to the 1.6-litre Smartstream diesel engine with 136 PS as standard and is available with a seven-speed DCT (7DCT) or six-speed Intelligent Manual Transmission (6iMT) as well as optional four-wheel drive.

CONTEST

Omran Group launches 'Within_Oman' interactive Instagram competition

MUSCAT: Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development, has launched an interactive Instagram competition as part of its staycation campaign #WithinOman.

The contest offers 30 lucky winners the chance to enjoy a complimentary one-night stay at one of Omran's hotels and resorts by simply following@OmranGroupOMon Instagram and mentioning friends and family members. The accommodation voucher includes a complimentary stay with breakfast for two guests, in addition to two kids below 12 years.

The competition is open to Omani nationals and residents, and 5 winners will be drawn weekly and contacted with instructions on



how to redeem the prize and additional reservations can be made via Omran website.

All offers will be subject to terms and conditions applicable to each hotel and resort.

The 2020 'Within Oman' campaign aims to encourage visitors from across the country to enjoy a wide array of tourism offerings with heavily discounted rates on room and hotel experiences.

Guests can choose from three categories designed to suit every holidaymaker. Room rates range from OMR25 per night to OMR65 per night to allow guests to relax (65 OMR), chill (OMR45) and enjoy (OMR25) at the property of their choice and create their staycation with free stay for two kids aged below 12 and substantial reductions on additional leisure experiences including health and wellness, culinary journeys, cultural discovery, beach escapes and sea activities.

Safety remains of paramount importance and all Omran Group properties will implement the latest official health guidelines advised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to ensure the safety and wellbeing of guests.

SHABABI ACCOUNT HOLDERS



Bank Muscat to hold special draw on Omani Youth Day

MUSCAT: In line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday' and commitment to partnership in promoting a strong savings culture in Oman, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate will celebrate the Omani Youth Day, which falls on October 26, with a special draw for its Shababi account holders.

Fifty lucky customers will win prizes of OMR500 each in the Shababi special draw, which will be held in appreciation of the important role that the youth plays in the development and growth of the country.

Shababi accounts can be opened by youth between the age of 18 and 23 years old. It comes with several benefits including no minimum balance fee, the Shababi contactless debit card, exclusive competitions on social media, and participation in the Shababi monthly draw. Bank Muscat's Shababi Debit Card is a card which helps Oman's youth to learn early to spend, save and manage their money and comes with a daily withdrawal limit of OMR 600. It allows for several discounts and special offers at selected merchants. Shababi

account holders can also apply for contactless wristbands with near-field communication (NFC) chip, which can be used to make contactless payments at different merchants and points of sales (PoS), similar to a contactless debit card. All customers who have a minimum balance of OMR 10 are eligible to enter the Shababi monthly draw.

Bank Muscat recognises the goals and aspirations of its customers, especially the youth, who are the future of the country. The special draw and monthly prizes are a way to encourage them to save more for the future and carry forward this habit in their later years too.

The 2020 Al Mazyona scheme offers the biggest prizes in Oman with a total of OMR11 million to be won through the year during monthly draws and draws on special occasions including National Day, Women's Day draw, Mid-year draw and the end-of-year draw. Both the number of Al Mazyona prizes and the total prize money has been increased this year, with the total number of winners in the 2020 scheme going up by around 50 per cent to 6,677 winners.

E-CLEAN BRAND

Techno Elevators partners with Sanuvox for UV clean air and surface solutions



MUSCAT: Techno Elevators, part of North Ocean group of companies signed an agreement with Sanuvox, Canada for UV-based clean air and surface solutions with its brand as e-Clean in Oman.

"We are very honoured that we have signed with Sanuvox, Canada which has been there in the world market for 25 years with many ranges of high-quality products in UV Segment," said Shabbir Boriyawa, Chairman, Techno Elevators & NOE Group.

Sanuvox Technologies Inc. is a global leader in ultraviolet air purification and they are providing the most advanced cost-effective in-duct and stand-alone UV air and coil sterilisation systems. In-duct and stand-alone Sanuvox systems are used around the world in residential, school, commercial and medical installations & transport buses and highly recommended by health experts when the current

pandemic was announced which might be airborne on July 4, NYT.

For AHU based air conditioning systems they can provide UV coil cleaner to remove virus and bacteria in cooling coil. Inside the duct solutions and standalone UV air purifier systems to improve indoor air quality and energy efficiency, reduce maintenance costs and building-related illnesses, by sterilising up to 99.9 per cent of airborne bio-contaminants with all types of viruses, bacteria and fungus in a single pass.

Tasleem Khan, CEO, said, "We are receiving many enquiries from schools, hotels, malls & restaurants, clinics as these clean air solutions are for now and future as well. Sanuvox has been recognised by international agencies like ASHRAE, EPA, Lancet Medical Journal, RTI labs, McGill University and approved by CSA/ULC, and done prestigious project and hospitals in US, Canada, Middle East and India."

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