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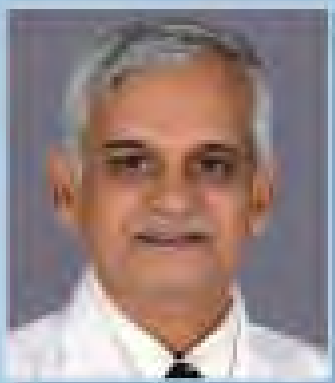


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EXPEDITE VACCINATION TO BRING OMAN'S BUSINESS BACK ON TRACK

Measures preventing businesses from working during normal working hours hurt them badly, say economic experts in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Speeding up vaccination distribution across Oman will help prevent taking drastic measures such as the on-going closure of businesses at night time, and help the economy recover faster from the impact of COVID-19.

Economists in the country say that measures that prevent businesses from operating during regular working hours will hurt them, and have suggested awareness campaigns be run urging locals and residents to take the vaccines available in the country as soon as they are able to.

Many businesses are currently required to close operations between 8pm and 5am, according to decisions issued by the Supreme Committee to deal with COVID-19. The measure began on Thursday, March 4, 2021 and is expected to end on Saturday, March 21, 2021.

Restaurants and cafes are also required to close early, although delivery services are allowed after 8 pm.

However, pharmacies, health centres and fuel stations will remain open.



"This is likely one of the fastest possible ways to accelerate the economy in the short-term," said Dr Mohammed Al Wardi, an economist and academician in the country.

"Accelerating the vaccine drive will help because the percentage of population vaccinated in Oman is very low compared to other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)."

Fiscal balance

"Measures such as the ones requiring businesses to close at night will only weaken the economy further, and it is already facing challenges owing to the ongoing debt, and initiatives being taken to improve the country's fiscal balance," he added.

Despite the efforts from the Supreme Committee to deal with COVID-19 to curb the spread of the coronavirus, incidents of in-

fection among people continue to rise in the country. An additional 426 new cases and three deaths from the disease were reported on Wednesday, March 10, according to the Ministry of Health's Tarasud COVID-19 monitoring app.

According to the Royal Hospital, a large number of new infections have been seen among younger people.

Khalfan Al Touqi, another economic analyst, said there were three levels of precautions that could be taken to stimulate the economy, with vaccinations being the best way to protect people from the virus and to help improve the current circumstances.

"The first level should involve increased vaccinations along with intensifying media awareness campaigns run by various government and private agencies asking people to take the vaccine," he said.

"At the same time, they must be informed of the dangers of not taking it has to them and others. If they don't take the vaccine, then maybe they should not be allowed to travel, walk about freely in places such as malls, enter public institutions to get work done, or even go to work and do their jobs normally."

"The second level of measures involves ending the closure of all industrial and commercial activities, as well as facilities such as seaports and airports, while the third type of measure should involve tougher penalties for those who violate the decisions of the Supreme Committee," he added.

Al Touqi said, "The awareness messages must also explain to people the continued impact the coronavirus will have on the health and safety of our citizens and residents, and its effects on the Sultanate's economy." **>A5**

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

'Economic stimulus has come at the right time'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People looking to set up businesses in Oman will benefit from doing so at the earliest, thanks to the economic stimulus plan that was launched a few days ago to help negate the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MOCIP) Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, the plan, approved by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, will provide equal benefits to large corporations, small and medium enterprises, and foreign investors looking to begin business in the country.

"I know the pandemic has created some difficulties and slowed down the economy, but now that the financial stimulus package, with the medium-term fiscal balance plan has been announced, it is the right time for people to start their businesses here," said Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef.

"We are here to support businesses and see what we can do to improve the investment and economic climate in the country," he added. "We are all happy His Majesty has approved the economic stimulus plan. This was worked on collectively by all government bodies to get it to where it is today, and also designates what each public agency has to do."

The economic stimulus plan is built on five pillars: taxation and fees, SME development packages, improvements to the business and investment climate, creating better employment opportunities and labour markets, and addressing challenges faced by the finance and banking sectors.

Improvements in the business



"We are here to support businesses and see what we can do to improve the investment and economic climate in the country"

and investment sectors include a number of incentives to encourage companies to operate in the country. These include reducing commercial registration fees for any business, be it through foreign direct investment, or in partnership with an Omani sponsor, which focuses on any of the economic diversification sectors mentioned in the 10th Five Year Development Plan. These include agriculture and fisheries, mining and energy, manufacturing, transport and logistics, and tourism development.

"If you are a company or investor establishing a business now across one of these five sectors, the commercial registration fee will be reduced to the same as it is for 100 percent Omani owned companies," Al Yousef said. **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Over 11,000 people in institutional isolation

1 More than 11,000 people coming to the Sultanate are under institutional isolation, and 90 percent of them are expatriates while the remaining 10 percent are Omanis. The number of hotels and hotel apartments used for accommodation in Oman reached 482. **>A5**

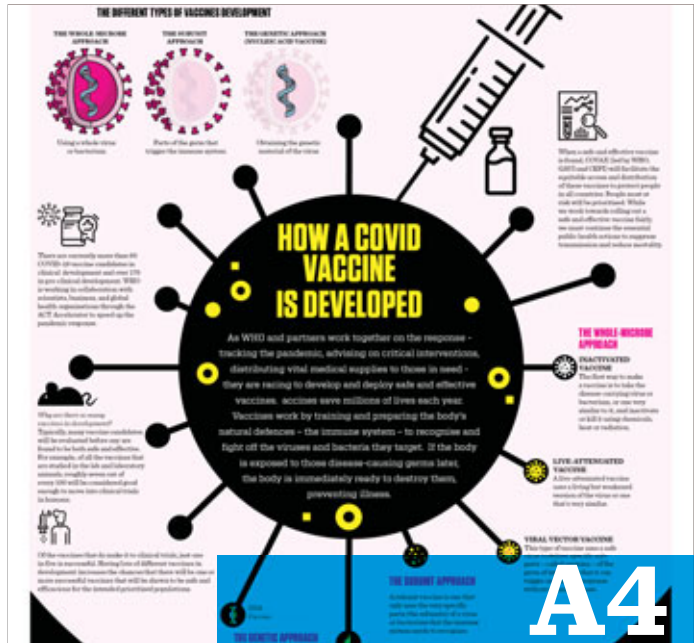
SPORTS Al Faisal to debut in endurance event

2 Oman's talented racer Al Faisal Al Zubair is set for a new challenge this season as he has signed up with Lechner Racing to debut in the endurance series - 2021 International GT Open Championship. Al Faisal will team up with Andy Soucek of Spain. **>A8**



WORLD Disparities in vaccine distribution: EU states

3 Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Latvia have claimed that deliveries of vaccines to EU member states were not being carried out on an equal basis and called for a summit to discuss the matter. **>A7**



LUCKY DRAW

Fortune smiles on first-time Omani woman customer of Rafeeq, bags grand draw prize



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A customer who ordered from Rafeeq for the first time just a few weeks ago has won a brand new 2020 Nissan Kicks in the online supermarket's grand draw.

Muscat resident Hind Al Balushi was taken aback when told she had won the car, and is waiting to take possession of her winnings.

"When I first received the call, I thought it was a joke, I did not believe it," she admitted to *Times of Oman*.

"I told my family the same thing, and they too did not think it was true. I however then decided to check Rafeeq's Instagram page, and I found out that it was indeed true...I had won a car."

"I still cannot believe I have won a car. This is the first time I have won anything in a draw of this kind. I have entered many of these kinds of competitions before, so to

win a car as my first prize is really amazing," she added.

Although Hind and her family are over the moon for her success, she is still not quite sure about what to do with the new car, since she already has one of her own. There are, however, others who are quite happy to take it off her hands, should she decide not to keep it for herself.

"My niece just received her driver's licence, so she has asked me if she can have the car," said Hind.

"I have not decided what to do with this car, but I would be happy to give it to her, if she really wants it. She is very close to me...almost like my own daughter."

"When I shopped on Rafeeq, I did not know there was a draw on, but a few days later, I came across advertisements for their raffle draw," she said.

"I prayed that I would win it, but I never expected those prayers to come true and be answered."

Rafeeq, which delivers more than 14,000 products in a 3,500 square kilometre radius around Muscat, turned out to be a very convenient way for Hind Al Balushi to shop for her home and family.

"The service they provide is really, really good," she said. "Rafeeq helps me get all of the things my family needs and all of the items I need to run my household from one location, so it makes my job very easy. It is very simple to order online from them."

"I have been recommending them to all my friends ever since I started using Rafeeq a few weeks ago, and I am very happy with their quality of service and products," she added. "After this win, I will definitely be shopping more from them. Hopefully, I may be able to win a few more things in the future as well."

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Oman ranks second at Arab countries’ level in sustainable tourism index



Jordan secured the first place, United Arab Emirates came third and Tunisia bagged fourth place at the Arab countries’ level

BRUSSELS: Oman has been ranked second at the Arab countries’ level and 57th at the world level in Sustainable Tourism Index 2020, according to the report of Euromonitor International Research Corporation.

United Arab Emirates came third and Tunisia was placed fourth at the Arab countries’ level. Sweden came in first followed by Estonia in the second place at the world level. Euromonitor has rated 99 tourism destinations in terms of environment, social and economic

sustainability, the country risk, the demand for sustainable tourism, transport and residence. The global coronavirus pandemic has shed light on clear defects in the traditional tourism models which are no longer suitable for the new pandemic era, said Euromonitor International Research Corporation. Researchers of Euromonitor International Research Corporation said that they have developed a new index for travel sustainability with the support of travel firms with the aim to transform into a more sustainable model. The future and success of travel business would be based on digital transformation, they added. — OMA





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STIMULUS

<FROM A1 Long-term residency

“You will also receive three work permits as soon as you establish your business, allowing you to start operations straight away, without the need to request further permits immediately. Long-term residency programmes associated with investment of a certain amount in certain sectors have also been launched: the details for these will be made public soon.”

The minister went on to say: “Another new element we have brought in is enabling foreign companies to own land measuring more than 500,000 square metres. The land they look to own has to be allocated either for commercial, mixed use, tourist, or industrial purposes. Earlier, companies were not allowed to own land, but they can do it under this stimulus, provided certain existing conditions are met.”

Foreign companies are, however, not allowed to own land in places not reserved for them. These stimulation measures are expected to enable the MOCIIP assure visitors of a warm welcome to the country, and enables them to stay here for the long-term. “The ministry is working on a programme along with eight government agencies, which will look at the approvals needed by companies from the time of registration until they actually start their businesses,” said Al Yousef. “So far, we have listed around 1,200 activities that receive auto-approval from the ministry, on registration.

“This means investors do not need to go anywhere else to seek approval, and can start working immediately,” he added. “All the teams from the eight government bodies are working collectively as one to see how we can further ease this, under a directive from His Majesty, as he is keen to this happen, and his cabinet is following our progress, so that this programme can be launched as soon as possible.”

To encourage exports from the country, an initiative that will help both large businesses and SMEs, an initiative has been launched by the ministry, in collaboration with Credit Oman and the ODB.

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11 from same family have colorectal cancer

People under the age of 50 being affected by colorectal cancer is prevalent in both Oman and the other Gulf countries



Dr Rashid Al Alawi.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Eleven people in Oman from the same family have been diagnosed with colorectal cancer, the head of general surgery, Dr Rashid Al Alawi at the Royal Hospital, has said.

Dr Rashid, a consultant surgeon added that there was a 44 per cent increase in cases of colorectal cancer in patients, between 2016 and 2017, and went on to say that this is among cancers whose detection rates are growing in the country.

“Colorectal cancer has taken priority and importance among healthcare providers in the country over the last 10 years,” he said.

“This is based on follow-ups done on the types of cancer seen in patients, and the extent to which their case numbers have increased.”

“In Oman, this was ranked fourth or fifth on the list of the most common types of cancer, about 10 or 15 years ago, but it has begun to rise up the ranks, and according to the latest statistics, which are from 2017, we have seen an increase from 151 colorectal cancer patients in 2016 to 218 cases in 2017, which is an increase of nearly 44 per cent,” Al Alawi added. This data came from the National Cancer Registry, which was

established by Royal Decree in 1985. Al Alawi said that the numbers of colorectal cancer patients continued to increase in 2019 and 2020, and continue to rise.

“There are families in Oman where there are cases of cancer among multiple members of the same house,” he said.

“If there are incorrect practices we follow in our lives, whether in our daily habits, food consumption and other routines, they might enhance the incidence of this kind of cancer. There are also other factors determining the cause of this cancer, such as genetic or hereditary factors, and age, which cannot be controlled by people.”

“This increase was expected in the country, like in the rest of the world, because Oman’s population has become a lot younger over the years,” said the doctor. “Thanks to healthcare and better quality life, the life expectancy of people is on the rise. There is an expectation of an increase in colorectal cancer incidents, but the increase we’ve seen is greater than that which we expected,” he further added.

While there are no scientific studies that help reveal the causes

of colorectal cancer, research from different parts of the world show that although it does tend to affect people aged 50 and above, more and more younger people are also getting it. In Oman, people in their forties, thirties, and even twenties are being diagnosed with this condition.

“Because of incidences of colorectal cancer in people, the methods to diagnose them changed in countries such as the US and the UK, where they would initially make early diagnosis for people aged 55 and above,” he said.

“That age has now gone down to 50 years. Many countries around the world have made plans to provide early diagnosis for people over 45.” Al Alawi added, “In Oman, we conducted a simple analysis of data, and found that 45 per cent of people with colorectal cancer are less than 50 years old. The global percentage, however, ranges to only 10 to 15 percent among people aged 50 and below.”

People under the age of 50 being affected by colorectal cancer is prevalent in both Oman and the other Gulf countries, he noted. However, he added that there are a number of treatments that can be provided to patients.

“We would have liked for the symptoms of this kind of cancer to be made known, but colorectal cancer is present in the abdominal cavity, and is not often noticeable, seen or even felt, as is in the case of breast cancer,” explained the doctor.

“Tests can be done periodically, so over the years, colorectal cancer begins with a very small bulge, which then turns into a stroma. This stroma enlarges and turns into cancer.”

Explaining some of the symptoms associated with colorectal cancer, Al Alawi said, “If a person is lucky, and this cancer is detected either by chance or through a CT scan or colonoscopy, during

advanced stages of the condition, a person with colorectal cancer feels pain, blockages or swelling in the abdomen, and blood flowing from the rectum, if the cancer is near the end of the colon or rectum. Unfortunately, however, there are no clear symptoms to detect whether a person has colorectal cancer.”

The doctor asked people in Oman to change the lifestyle factors under their control, whether they include a lack of physical activity, and consumption of fatty foods and red meat. The prevalence of diabetes is another factor that causes likelihood of colorectal cancer, as is obesity, smoking, and drinking alcohol.

There is, however, a cure for colorectal cancer, especially among people who have it due to genetic factors.

The earlier the diagnosis higher the chances of curing cancer patients.

For example, a patient diagnosed in the first stage of colorectal cancer has a 95 per cent chance of being cured, compared to someone who’s been diagnosed in the second stage, and has an 85 per cent probability of becoming cancer free. In the fourth stage of the cancer, however, patients have only a 10 to 15 per cent chance of being cured.

“Progress in medical development has been made in surgical techniques and improvements in chemotherapy, which now causes fewer side effects,” said Al Alawi. “There has also been great evolution in radiotherapy, particularly in the case of colorectal cancers, and to cure cancers in general. Most countries will now do early examination for patients at the age of 45 or 50, so everyone who reaches this age must perform a stool sample analysis to verify whether there are traces of blood.”

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

3 national football team players test COVID-19 positive

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Three players from Oman’s national football team have tested positive for COVID-19, during a training camp organised for the first team in the United Arab Emirates.

Two of the players had tested positive on arrival in Dubai, when PCR tests had been conducted shortly after landing in the UAE.

“The results of the PCR tests taken on arrival revealed two cases of the coronavirus among players,” said the Oman Football Association. “We have taken all appropriate measures for their safety.”

Lab tests

A third result came back positive after COVID-19 lab tests were done for all the players at the camp.

Tests for the rest of the players were returned negative.

The players who have tested positive “will be subject to institutional quarantine procedures in place in the United Arab Emirates,” added the Oman Football Association.

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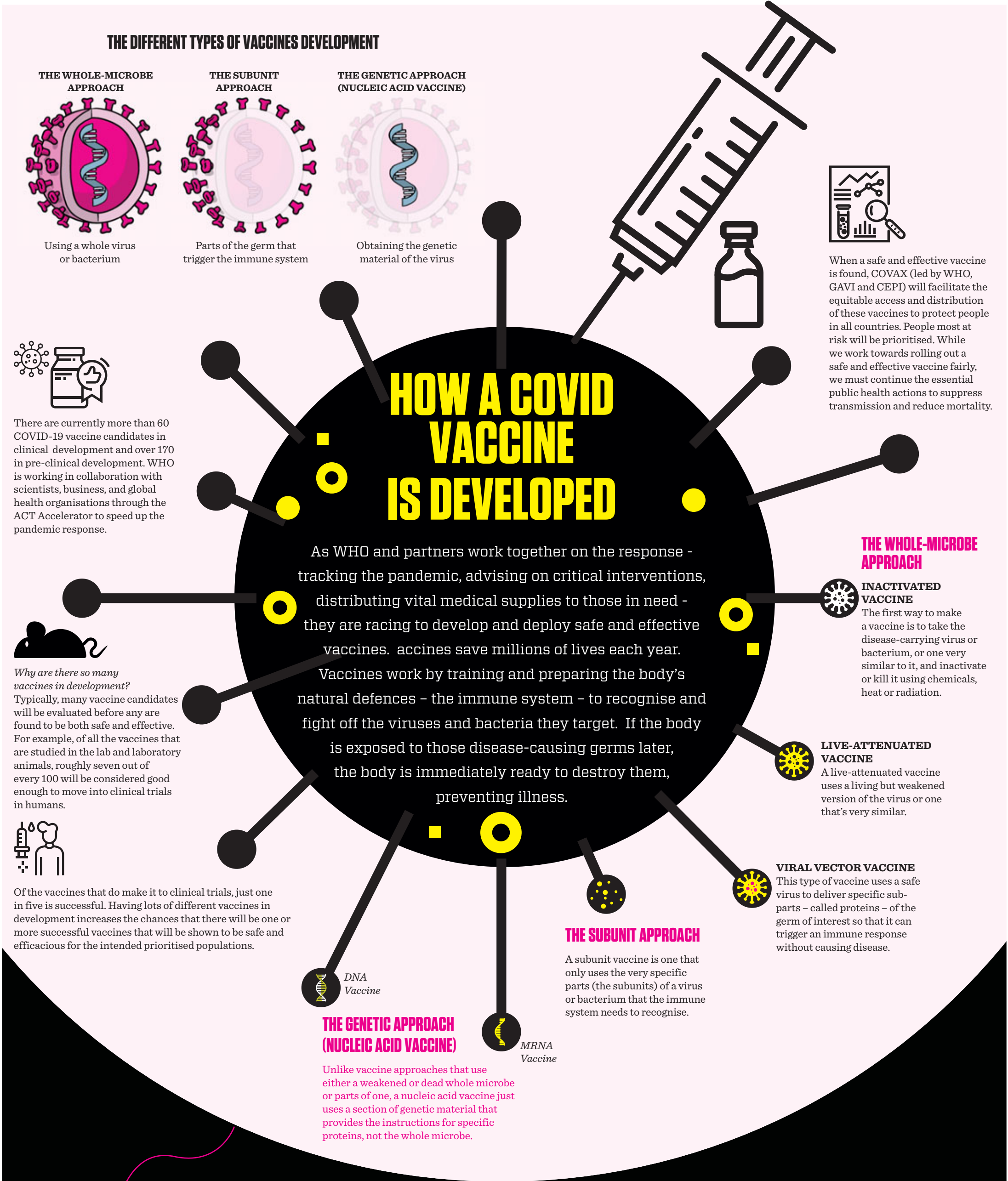
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COVID-19

FROM UN SECRETARY GENERAL

More than 11,000 people in institutional quarantine

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 11,000 people arriving in Oman have undergone institutional quarantine of which 90 per cent of them are expatriates and 10 percent are Omanis.

The number of hotels that took the facilities of institutional quarantine reached 482, and the Gov-

ernorate of Muscat recorded the highest number of 200 hotels.

Sheikh Rashid bin Ahmed Al Shamsi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Head of the Relief and Shelter Sector, in an exclusive statement to the Oman News Agency (ONA), said that 33 private institutions have been approved for institutional isolation.



HEALTH RISKS OF PANDEMIC

< FROM A1 People aware about dangers of virus

“The economy will only face more risk if measures such as closure of commercial and industrial activities are taken, as well as vital infrastructure such as airports and seaports are closed, and lock-downs are brought in.”

He went on to say that the government has already done a lot to inform people about the dangers of the virus, and people who continue to ignore their advice are doing so under their own will, but are posing a danger to themselves and others.

“Everyone knows of the health risks of the pandemic, and the economic impact on Oman and other countries around the world,” he

explained. “Should someone not comply with the rules, he exposes himself to health problems, along with the possibility of infecting someone else, including his family members and relatives, which could lead to their deaths.”

“We don’t want a repetition of 2020, which saw the closure of so many activities and a jump in the number of infections,” Al Touqi revealed.

“Although the Supreme Committee has called for the closure of businesses between 8pm and 5am, this does lead to people gathering in each other’s homes because they cannot go anywhere else.

“Foreign workers might gather in each other’s residences, while Omanis might choose to meet at farms and other such areas, which is what contributes to the rapid spread of COVID-19,” he said. “I hope the Ministry of Health specifies fixed dates by which the target groups receive their vaccines, as there are currently a lot of people who wish to take the vaccine, but do not fall within these groups.”

“I would suggest the concerned authorities make it possible for everyone to take the vaccine, so that people can take them as and when they feel they need to,” Al Touqi further said.

Busaidi receives phone call

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received a phone call on Friday from Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General. The telephonic conversation dealt with developments in the Yemeni crisis and efforts to end the war.

Emphasis was laid on the imme-

diated halt of military operations and the realisation of peaceful solutions through direct dialogue among the disputing parties in a manner that allows for the entry of humanitarian aid and the supply of livelihood materials for the Yemeni people.

The phone call also underscored

the significant role of Martin Griffiths, UN Special Envoy to Yemen, and the need to enhance his efforts, as well as efforts of the United States to put an end to the war, resume political negotiations and achieve aspirations of the Yemeni people for security and stability.

- ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Suspect arrested

MUSCAT: The police have arrested a suspect accused of robbing eight shops in North Al Batinah. The ROP said, “North Al Batinah Governorate Police Command arrested a person on charges of vandalism and robbing eight shops in the vicinity of Majan Police Station, and it has also become clear that he has a criminal record, and legal procedures are being completed against him.”

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MAJIS INDUSTRIAL SERVICES SAOC (Majis)
P.O. Box No. 553, Falaj Al Qabail, Postal Code 322, Sultanate of Oman
Tel No. 26852421 Email: Tender@miscoman.com (Office Location: Administration Building, Opposite Sohar Aluminium and Sohar Power co. at Sohar Industrial Port Area)



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Majis Industrial Services SAOC (Majis) is a closely held joint stock company fully owned by the Government of Oman. Majis is engaged in providing various water utility services at the Sohar Industrial Port Area, Sohar Free Zone and Madayn.

Tenders are invited from the similarly experienced local companies for the following tender:

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Description	Bids fees In R.O.	Last date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Last date for tender Submission
1.	Majis /5/2021	CCWS LV Power Supply Upgradation at Sohar Industrial Port area	125/-	18th March 2021	18th April 2021
2.	Majis /6/2021	RO Plant VFD 1 & 2 Upgradation for Process water Train at Sohar Industrial Port area	125/-	18th March 2021	18th April 2021

Bidders who have made electronic transfer of bid fee will be emailed soft copy of the tender document on the Thursday 18th March 2021. The companies participating must be registered with Majis' in e-tendering system (<http://tendering.majis.om/VendorLogin.aspx>) during the tendering stage. The payment of bid fee should be made by direct transfer to the following bank account of Majis. (**Account Name: Majis Industrial Services SAOC, Bank : Bank Muscat SAOG, Account Number: 0423010783830018**).

While making payment by direct bank transfer name of the firm should be clearly mentioned and an email sent to tender@miscoman.com with a copy of the money transmittal advice. Tender documents will be emailed to such firms only.

The Tender should be delivered in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Management Committee, Majis Industrial Service SAOC, P.O. Box No. 553, Falaj Al Qabail, Postal Code 322, Sultanate of Oman (at Majis's reception).

Tenderers must not display their identities on envelopes. Majis is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

Questions regarding this procurement process shall be directed to tender@miscoman.com.



النهضة للخدمات ش.م.ع.ع.
Renaissance Services SAOG

P O Box 1676, PC 114, Muttrah, Oman, Tel: 24796636 Fax: 24796639
www.renaissanceservices.com

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The Board of Directors of Renaissance Services SAOG (the 'Company') invites all shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting ("AGM"), which will be held on Tuesday, 30th March 2021 at 3:00 pm, using the online platform for general meetings, which can be accessed through Muscat Clearing and Depository (MCD) website (www.mcd.gov.om). In the event that the quorum for holding the AGM is not met, a second AGM shall be held on Thursday, 1st April to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Report of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To consider and approve the Report on Corporate Governance for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To consider the Auditors' Report and approve the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To consider and approve the proposed cash dividend distribution at the rate of 20 baisas per share.
- To consider and approve the Board of Directors performance evaluation report for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To approve the sitting fees being availed by the members of the Board of Directors and the members of the Board's sub-committees for the financial year ended 31st December 2020 and to specify the sitting fees for the next financial year.
- To consider and approve the Directors' Remuneration of Rial 163,400/- for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To apprise shareholders of the transactions entered into with related parties during the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To apprise shareholders of the amounts paid for the Corporate Social Responsibility ("CSR") programmes for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To approve an amount of Rial 150,000/- for CSR programmes for the financial year ending 31st December 2021.
- To appoint auditors for the financial year ending 31st December 2021 and approve their fees.

In accordance with the Articles of Association of the Company and the rules for convening general meetings using modern technology issued by the Capital Market Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- A juristic person shall have the right to authorise exclusively a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on his behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in Muscat Clearing and Depository (MCD).
- Voting on any of the agenda items shall begin no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the meeting. Where a shareholder has exercised his/her vote in the three days prior to the AGM, and his/her share balance has changed (i.e. increased or decreased) after voting, the vote will be cancelled and the shareholder will be required to vote again.

For further information, please contact Mr. Hatim Hilal Mahfoudh Al Hilali - Company Secretary, on phone number (00968-93220564) or email address: hatim@tawoos.com

Samir J Fancy
Chairman

Ernst & Young (EY)
Auditors

Al Busaidy Mansoor Jamal & Co.
Legal Advisor



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WORLD





Let's Talk Legal

Wednesday 11am





Ola Al Nabhanl
Lawyer at BK Law Firm

LAW SUIT

George Floyd's family settles case against Minneapolis for \$27mn

MINNEAPOLIS: The family of George Floyd, the African American man whose death set off a wave of protests after a video showed a white police officer kneeling on his neck for more than nine minutes last May, has settled a lawsuit against Minneapolis for USD 27 million, city officials said on Friday.

According to The New York Times, the City Council voted unanimously to approve the settlement, and a spokesperson for the city said that Mayor Jacob Frey would sign the measure. The settlement was among the largest in a case of police misconduct and was announced as Derek Chauvin, the former officer who knelt on Floyd's neck, has been charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

"This agreement is a necessary step for all of us to begin to get some closure," Rodney Floyd, one of Floyd's brothers, said of the settlement as reported by NYT.

"George's legacy for those who loved him will always be his spirit of optimism that things can get better, and we hope this agreement does just that -- that it makes things a little better in Minneapolis and holds up a light for communities around the country," he added. Ben Crump, the civil rights lawyer who is among those representing Floyd's family, said the settlement was the largest reached before trial in a civil rights wrongful death lawsuit. And that it came in a lawsuit over the death of an African American man, he said, "sends a powerful message that Black lives do matter and police brutality against people of color must end."

NYT further reported that the settlement follows several other large payments from cities after high-profile police killings, including a \$12 million payout in September from Louisville, after officers fatally shot Breonna Taylor, an African American woman, in her apartment last March.

Floyd's family had sued the City of Minneapolis in July, saying that the police had violated his rights and failed to properly train its officers or fire those who violated department policies.

As per the news outlet, the USD 27 million includes a USD 500,000 donation to the community around the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, the corner where the police had confronted Floyd over a convenience store clerk's claim that he had tried to use a fake \$20 bill to buy cigarettes, and where a bystander's video capturing the arrest brought worldwide attention to his death. **ANI**



UTTRAKHAND

No casualties reported in India train compartment fire

DEHRADUN: No injuries or casualties were reported in the fire which broke out in the C4 compartment of the Delhi-Dehradun Shatabdi Express train earlier on Saturday. As per Uttarakhand Director General of Police Ashok Kumar, the fire has been brought under control. "The fire which broke out in the C4 compartment of the Delhi-Dehradun Shatabdi Express train today has been brought under control. All passengers safe," Kumar said.

Visuals from the incident earlier in the day showed huge flames burning and smoke billowing from the windows. **ANI**

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C INVITES INTERESTED COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOLLOWING TENDER:

RFQ No.	Description	Last Date to Participate	Date of Submission	Grade	Price (R.O)	Sit Visit	Note
RFQ 26/2021	Selling of Dismantled/Used GRP Type Substations Enclosures	23/03/2021	06/04/2021	Specialized	Free	24/03/2021 at 9:00 Al Amerat Office with HSE PPE	To obtain the RFQ document, please contact us via e-mail nawal.hashmi@medcoman.com
RFQ No 27/2021	Unit Rate Contract For Provide Cleaning & Pest Control Services to Primary Stations at Muscat Governorate	23/03/2021	06/04/2021	Specialized	Free	24/03/2021 at 9:00 Head Office with HSE PPE	To obtain the RFQ document, please contact us via e-mail nawal.hashmi@medcoman.com

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	• Companies may obtain documents online.
Purchase timing	• Documents can be purchased at the official working time between 08:00 – 13:00 hours • To obtain the RFQ document, please contact us via e-mail nawal.hashmi@medcoman.com
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent using clarification available in the tender documents , one week before bid submission date
Submission	• Should be submitted in a sealed and stamped envelope addressed to the MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO. marked only with RFQ number and the subject
Bid Placement	The Completed Tender should be deposited in the RFQ Box No. 4 in the ground floor of MEDC Head Office building at Airport Heights, before 10 a.m. on the assigned date of tender submission
Email/Tele No.	24588600 Ext:8707 nawal.hashmi@medcoman.com

80070008
www.medcoman.com



Muscat Electricity Distribution Co.S.A.O.C
PO Box 1239, PC 131 - Al Hamriyah / Sultanate of Oman
Contact Center : 80070008 / Tel : 24588600
info@medcoman.com / www.medcoman.com



WORK PERMITS



RECENT MILITARY COUP: The administration cited the recent military coup in Myanmar and political violence against civilians as reasons behind the decision.

US grants Myanmar nationals protection from deportation

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's administration on Friday granted temporary deportation protections and work permits to citizens of Myanmar living in the United States.

The administration cited the recent military coup in Myanmar and political violence there against civilians as reasons behind the decision.

"Due to the military coup and security forces' brutal violence against civilians, the people of Burma (Myanmar) are suffering a complex and deteriorating humanitarian crisis in many parts of the country," Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement, adding he designated Myanmar for temporary protected status so that Myanmar "nationals and habitual residents may remain temporarily in the United States."

Temporary status protection is typically limited for a set period, such as 12 months, but can be extended if harsh political conditions continue. The Biden administration earlier this week issued temporary status protection to Venezuelans living in the United States for 18 months, due to the extraordinary political and economic crisis in their home country under President Nicholas Maduro.

US ramping up pressure on Myanmar military regime

The US decision to grant temporary deportation protections is a move in solidarity with the people of Myanmar facing off against the military regime that controls the country. Washington is also ramping up pressure against junta leaders. Myanmar's military, the Tatmadaw, seized power in a coup d'etat last month, arresting State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the ruling National League for Democracy party.

Earlier this week, the US initiated sanctions against family members of junta leader Min Aung Hlaing.

The Treasury Department had previously sanctioned Min Aung Hlaing, along with five other leaders of the recently installed junta, freezing their US-based assets.

The United Kingdom and Canada have also implemented sanctions on Myanmar military leaders after the coup, with Australia suspending its defense cooperation program with the country.

Myanmar crackdown on protesters draws UN condemnation

All 15 nations of the UN Security Council on Wednesday backed a statement condemning the military government's crackdown on protesters following the coup. The backers include Russia and China, two countries, which had previously defended the actions of the military junta.

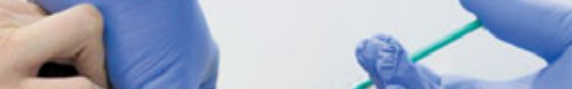
The statement expressed "deep concern at developments in Myanmar following the declaration of the state of emergency imposed by the military on 1 February and the arbitrary detention of members of the government, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint and others."

The Security Council called on the military to "exercise utmost restraint" and refrain from violence.

According to data compiled by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, over 70 civilians in Myanmar have been killed since the February 1 coup, with more than 2,000 people having been arrested amid widespread demonstrations. **DW**



Five EU leaders complain about disparities in vaccine distribution



distribution of the vaccines takes place on a per-capita basis. An EU spokesman said that member states could “ask for less or more of a given vaccine” if desired, however. Another EU official said on Saturday that “the coordination in the fight against the pandemic” had already been placed on the top of the agenda for the next summit, scheduled for the end of March. **By**

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	DPC/Tender/2021/035
Subject	UNE - LOT 03D - 2021
Tender Fee	RO. 100.000 Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above Tender should collect the tender document from DPC's office or send an e-mail to below mentioned mail id's for tender document
Experience	The tenderers shall be registered electrical contractor with Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) Oman (Minimum C-Grade for 11 kV jobs and D-Grade for LV jobs) and should have performed similar UNE jobs in Sultanate of Oman
Pre-qualification	Bids to be attached along with valid "DCRP Registration Certificate" and valid "CEP Passport by DPC" Shall only consider for evaluation, Further, Tenderers will be evaluated as per the pre-qualification criterion specified in the Tender documents.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 28 th March 2021
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 4 th April 2021
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, lawrances@dpcoman.nama.om; praveena@dpcoman.nama.om



Dhofar Power Company S.A.O.C.

23rd July Street behind West Salalah Health Centre

P.O. Box: 2609, P.C.: 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

Phone: 23232523; Fax: 23201183

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شركة ظفار للطاقة
Member of Nema Group

 VOLTAMP ENERGY SAOG P.O. Box 75, Rusayl, P.C. 124, Sultanate of Oman Phone: + (968) 24441202, Fax: 24448693, Website: www.voltampoman.com																																																																																									
DIRECTORS' REPORT																																																																																									
Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome you to the thirteenth Annual General Meeting of Voltamp Energy SAOG Company and present the Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2020. REVIEW OF OPERATIONS: The operations of the Company include the following Subsidiaries: - Voltamp Transformers Oman SAOC, a 100% subsidiary of Voltamp Energy SAOG. During the year the Company witnessed competition in the prices of Distribution transformers in addition to the high price of imported raw materials which impacted the results of the company. However, it secured long term supply orders during the year from reputed client in Oil & Gas sector. The company's transformer up to 1500 KVA got approved in one of UAE utility. It will help company to expand its base in export market. - Voltamp Power SAOC, a subsidiary of Voltamp Energy continued its improved performance both in domestic and export market. Although the company sales witnessed a decline during 2020 due to Covid 19 impacts yet the company was able to improve its profitability because of several cost leadership measures taken by the company. The company also secured its first order for manufacture and supply 500 MVA 220 kV transformers in Oman. - Voltamp Technology LLC, a 100% subsidiary of Voltamp Energy manufactures and sells low and medium voltage switchgears. During the year company received prestigious orders from reputed clients in Oman. These orders will be executed in 2021. The summary of the performance of the Company (including subsidiaries) is as follows: <table> <tr> <th>Particulars</th><th>2020</th><th>2019</th><th>% Increase / (decrease)</th></tr> <tr> <td>Revenue</td><td>34,380,932</td><td>41,113,986</td><td>(16.38)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other Income</td><td>273,369</td><td>269,859</td><td>1.68</td></tr> <tr> <td>Expenditure</td><td>(35,035,085)</td><td>(40,957,959)</td><td>(14.46)</td></tr> <tr> <td>(Loss)/ Profit Before Tax</td><td>(600,788)</td><td>424,866</td><td>N.A.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Provision for Income Tax</td><td>204,686</td><td>84,680</td><td>141.72</td></tr> <tr> <td>(Loss)/ Profit After Tax</td><td>(176,099)</td><td>509,566</td><td>N.A.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Basic (Loss)/earnings per share</td><td>(0.0044)</td><td>0.0042</td><td>N.A.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Net assets per share</td><td>0.240</td><td>0.251</td><td>(4.38)</td></tr> </table> The company incurred a fair value loss on its "Available For Sale" investment of RO 132,133 during 2020 (loss of RO 693,694 in 2019). Total comprehensive loss after adjusting for fair value loss in 2020 is RO -308,232 (RO -184,128 in 2019). MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR - During the year an agreement was signed with major Oil & Gas company in Oman to manufacture and supply transformers at a value of RO 6 million - The company manufactured and supplied its first solar inverter transformer for a domestic project and two other transformers for other solar power projects - Export of Package Substation to the utility in UAE. - The company obtained approval for distribution transformers in Electricity and Water Authority in UAE, followed by the first purchase order for 20 distribution transformers of 1500 KVA capacity. - Manufacture of the first aluminium core transformer for a solar power plant sold to reputed EPC companies in Transmission & Distribution field. - During the year the company secured first purchase order for the manufacture of two numbers 500 MVA 220 kV transformers. This will establish the company in the higher range of power transformer where competition is limited. - The company obtained contract for supply and erection of biggest E House manufactured by the company so far, for a project in Duqum. EMPLOYEES WELFARE The company considers its employees as its most valuable assets and provides them healthy working environment. As a part of welfare the company provides its employees a comprehensive medical insurance coverage. During the year, to minimise the impact of Covid 19 on the health of employees, the company took many steps to take care of employee's health and safety under the close supervision of committee consisting of senior management. Many employees are getting benefitted from Welfare Fund created by the company to support its employees to promote the spirit of friendship and cooperation in the work environment and to build an ideal society among employees. The company has inculcated innovation as a part of its culture. The company encourages its workforce to take part in Process Improvement initiatives through Innovative ideas based on their experience.. OMANISATION It is the policy of the company to recruit and train Omanis in all levels and all areas. The company is committed to the Omanisation policy and is in line with the required norms for the industry. The company have put plan to improve it annually. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY The Company acknowledges its responsibility towards contributing to the community. In this regard, the Company, contributed to Endowment Fund to support fight against Covid 19 pandemic and also contributed in and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry fund supporting the job safety fund. The Company aims to continue the discharge of its social responsibilities in an improved manner, year after year. The Company continuously tries to increase the SME support and In-Country Value addition, and several fabricated components are being sourced through locally developed vendors. HEALTH SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT The Company is keen on continuous compliance with its integrated management system which include quality environment and occupational health and safety. The Company has been regularly upgrading its Health and Safety Management Systems to international standards and also monitoring its environment health and safety performance continuously. ISO 45001 on Occupational Health and Safety Management, is Implemented in all manufacturing facilities of the company. Voltamp is committed to Zero Harm at its work place and therefore, Environmental Health & Safety is the top priorities in all its operations. Voltamp strives to maintain a strong, focused safety culture that reinforces and strengthens the operations. Comprehensive safety procedures and training are in place to ensure our people are aware of Voltamp's commitment to their well-being. This commitment has resulted in an excellent safety track record. The Company has implemented energy saving measures to optimise the electricity use in its factories. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: Your Company's Board and Management believe in maintaining a high level of professionalism and integrity in all its operations. The Company stands committed to fully comply with Code of Corporate Governance. All Board of Directors and senior management have undergone a training on this specific topic. A report on Corporate Governance and also a Management Discussion and Analysis Report have been included in the Annual Report. The Board has reviewed the existing system of Rules, Regulations and internal controls so as to ensure that they properly identify authorities at various levels and to ensure that there is an effective system of checks and balances in place. Furthermore, all systems and procedures are being regularly upgraded and strengthened, which will ensure efficiency and transparency. DIVIDEND The Board of Directors recommend cash dividend of 5 bz per share for the year ended on 31st Dec 2020 (2019 : 5 bz per share) OUTLOOK: During the year 2020 pandemic had impact on all sphere of business activities. This impacted the supply chain and as a result timely availability of raw material was a concern. Apart from it oil prices went down to a record low and improved only in the later half of 2020. As a result, the demand for the company's product was lower as compared to previous year. To mitigate the impact, the company continues to seek contracts from outside the Sultanate and is working to explore new markets. Further by establishing itself in 220 kV range of transformers, Voltamp will be the only company in the region to manufacture this range of power transformers. The company is also making efforts to quickly establish itself in 400 kV range which would help company in competing with global multinational companies. The company is committed to progress through continuous improvement in efficiency and productivity in its operation, innovation in its product manufacturing processes. In spite of existing challenges, the management is keen to find optimum solutions to overcome all difficulties in addition to its aspirations to find alternate markets to increase export sales and exert more effort to enter new markets. The spread of Covid 19 is not yet over and is likely to remain there till vaccination is given to large part of the globe. Therefore, for 2021 company's view remains as "cautiously optimistic" THANKS AND APPRECIATION: The Board of Directors and employees of the company have the honor to pledge our loyalty and allegiance to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Taik (May Allah Protect him) reaffirming our commitment under his wise leadership in the continued and blessed renaissance founded by His Majesty Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may his soul rest in peace. We pray to the Almighty Allah to bestow his blessings upon His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Taik as he continues to lead Oman and its people towards continued progress, prosperity and stability. The Board of Directors wish to register their sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange Company SAOC and Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The Board of Directors also wish to thank His Excellency Qais bin Mohamed Al Yousef for his valuable leadership as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Company during last 10 years. I also extend my sincere thanks to all customers and banks dealing with the company for their continuous support to the company. I would also like to convey my sincere thanks to the Shareholders of the Company for the confidence they have reposed in the Company and in its Board. For & on behalf of the Board of Directors Voltamp Energy SAOG Ayemen bin Hamad Al Busaidi Chairman				Particulars	2020	2019	% Increase / (decrease)	Revenue	34,380,932	41,113,986	(16.38)	Other Income	273,369	269,859	1.68	Expenditure	(35,035,085)	(40,957,959)	(14.46)	(Loss)/ Profit Before Tax	(600,788)	424,866	N.A.	Provision for Income Tax	204,686	84,680	141.72	(Loss)/ Profit After Tax	(176,099)	509,566	N.A.	Basic (Loss)/earnings per share	(0.0044)	0.0042	N.A.	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Separate and consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2020 <table> <tr> <th></th><th colspan="2">Parent Company</th><th colspan="2">Group</th></tr> <tr> <th></th><th>For the year ended 31 Dec</th><th>For the year ended 31 Dec</th><th>For the year ended 31 Dec</th><th>For the year ended 31 Dec</th></tr> <tr> <th></th><th>2020</th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>2019</th></tr> <tr> <th></th><th>RO</th><th>RO</th><th>RO</th><th>RO</th></tr> <tr> <td>Revenue</td><td>6,405,598</td><td>7,922,427</td><td>34,380,932</td><td>41,113,986</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cost of sales</td><td>(6,311,371)</td><td>(7,445,363)</td><td>(29,726,027)</td><td>(35,723,274)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Gross profit</td><td>94,218</td><td>477,064</td><td>4,654,905</td><td>5,390,712</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other income</td><td>126,229</td><td>144,965</td><td>269,721</td><td>267,084</td></tr> <tr> <td>Selling, administrative and general expenses</td><td>(868,153)</td><td>(1,004,685)</td><td>(4,167,473)</td><td>(4,461,122)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Impairment loss on trade receivables</td><td>(6,205)</td><td>(50,433)</td><td>(420,749)</td><td>(63,658)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Operating (loss) / profit</td><td>(653,911)</td><td>(433,089)</td><td>336,404</td><td>1,133,016</td></tr> <tr> <td>Finance income</td><td>50,220</td><td>39,152</td><td>3,648</td><td>1,775</td></tr> <tr> <td>Finance cost</td><td>(86,594)</td><td>(73,370)</td><td>(720,837)</td><td>(709,905)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Dividend income from subsidiary</td><td>-</td><td>499,950</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr> <td>(Loss) / profit for the year before taxation</td><td>(690,285)</td><td>32,643</td><td>(380,785)</td><td>424,886</td></tr> <tr> <td>Taxation</td><td>120,640</td><td>83,974</td><td>204,686</td><td>84,680</td></tr> <tr> <td>(Loss) / profit for the year after taxation</td><td>(569,645)</td><td>116,617</td><td>(176,099)</td><td>509,566</td></tr> <tr> <td>Net Income attributable to : Equity holders of the Parents Non-controlling interest</td><td>- -</td><td>- -</td><td>(35</td></tr></table>		Parent Company		Group			For the year ended 31 Dec	For the year ended 31 Dec	For the year ended 31 Dec	For the year ended 31 Dec		2020	2019	2020	2019		RO	RO	RO	RO	Revenue	6,405,598	7,922,427	34,380,932	41,113,986	Cost of sales	(6,311,371)	(7,445,363)	(29,726,027)	(35,723,274)	Gross profit	94,218	477,064	4,654,905	5,390,712	Other income	126,229	144,965	269,721	267,084	Selling, administrative and general expenses	(868,153)	(1,004,685)	(4,167,473)	(4,461,122)	Impairment loss on trade receivables	(6,205)	(50,433)	(420,749)	(63,658)	Operating (loss) / profit	(653,911)	(433,089)	336,404	1,133,016	Finance income	50,220	39,152	3,648	1,775	Finance cost	(86,594)	(73,370)	(720,837)	(709,905)	Dividend income from subsidiary	-	499,950	-	-	(Loss) / profit for the year before taxation	(690,285)	32,643	(380,785)	424,886	Taxation	120,640	83,974	204,686	84,680	(Loss) / profit for the year after taxation	(569,645)	116,617	(176,099)	509,566	Net Income attributable to : Equity holders of the Parents Non-controlling interest	- -	- -	(35
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Al Faisal to debut in 2021 International GT Open tournament

Al Faisal will team up with an experienced driver, Andy Soucek of Spain, and the duo will drive a Porsche GT3-R



GT OPEN: Al Faisal's return to a full-fledged series is a welcome development since motorsports across the globe were affected due to the coronavirus pandemic from early March in 2020.

MUSCAT: Oman's talented racer Al Faisal al Zubair is all set for a new challenge this season as he has signed up with Lechner Racing to debut in the highly-competitive endurance series – 2021 International GT Open Championship.

Al Faisal will team up with an experienced driver, Andy Soucek of Spain, and the duo will drive a Porsche GT3-R as they bid to provide a tough competition to their rivals, which features some of the world's best endurance racers and teams. The International GT Open will hold its 16th season since starting in 2006 and the seven-leg series will be begin the season with a race at the Paul Ricard circuit in France on May 16. The series concludes in Barcelona on October 24.

Al Faisal's return to a full-fledged series is a welcome development since motorsports across the globe were affected due to the coronavirus pandemic from early March in 2020. He now joins another Omani star, Ahmad al Harthy, in endurance racing and will be competing in the top Pro class at the GT Open.

With Ahmad having established himself as an endurance racing, Al Faisal's entry will put Oman drivers in focus at the top stage and boost the Sultan-

ate's profile in international motorsports.

Al Faisal's last participation was at the Silverstone Formula One circuit in October last when, participating for the first time in the British GT Championship, he along with Croatia's teammate Martin Kodric, claimed a Silver Cup class podium finish and an overall fourth spot.

Revealing the details of his participation in the 2021 International GT Open Series, the 22 year old two-time former Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East champion said, "I am excited to go for a new endurance series for the first time. It will be a new challenge and I am looking forward to it along with my teammate Andy [Soucek]."

Though Al Faisal has in the past competed in endurance races, this is the first time that the Muscat-based driver will be participating in a complete endurance championship series.

Till date since he began his motorsports career, Al Faisal had the opportunity to race in three endurance races – Abu Dhabi 12Hr, Dubai 24Hr and the British GT where he took a podium in silver class last year.

Al Faisal said, "It is going to be a new experience and with a large grid and some of the best endurance racers in the field with big professional teams, I am eager to provide a healthy competition on my debut season.

We will compete but it will be difficult to challenge for the overall championship title. We are hopeful of having good races and then taking each race as it comes."

Al Faisal will be racing in No77 car with all new black and red livery for the Porsche GT3-R car. The new design further enhances the beautiful lines of the Lechner Racing.

Tribute to Walter Lechner

Al Faisal said that he had fruitful talks with Lechner Racing and the Omani paid rich tributes to his mentor and Lechner Racing founder, Walter Lechner, who passed away last year.

"He had played a big role in my motorsports career and it would be nice to pay a tribute by racing for his team in the new championship. That's the best way he would have liked me to continue with the sport he loved the most," said Al Faisal, who is fully



backed by Oman-based Al Manar Financial Investments.

Testing and opener postponed

Meanwhile the organisers, GT Sport, on Friday said that the Winter Test for its International GT Open scheduled from March 18-20 at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain, has been postponed to April 19-20, at the same venue.

The measure was taken in light of the travel restrictions taken, or recently reinforced, by different countries, which make travel virtually impossible for drivers, teams and personnel from a number of countries targeted by specific restrictions.

Prior to the rescheduling of the test sessions, GT Sport announced that the cancellation of 2021 season-opening round of the International GT Open, scheduled at the Autódromo do Algarve in Portugal on April 23-25 and replaced by a round at the

Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari at Imola on July 23-25. The event at Imola will be the fourth in the 2021 season, which will now kick-off at Circuit Paul Ricard on May 14-16.

INDIA VS ENGLAND



Kohli and boys look to claw their way back after disappointing start

AHMEDABAD: England skipper Eoin Morgan might have labelled Virat Kohli-led India as the favourites for this year's T20 World Cup, but their performance in the first T20I of the five-match series clearly showed that India needs to replan strategically going into the second game.

Before the first T20I, India skipper Virat Kohli promised that fans would see a more expressive and aggressive nature from all batters, but it was not how things unfolded in the first T20I at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

In a surprise move, Rohit Sharma was rested for the first T20I even though skipper Kohli had said that Rohit and KL Rahul would start at the top and Shikhar Dhawan would come in as the third opener.

In the first T20I, both Rahul and Dhawan disappointed with the bat. Skipper Kohli was dismissed for a duck and this is the first time, he has been sent back to the pavilion for two ducks in a row in international cricket. Kohli did try to be ultra-aggressive with the bat as he looked to play cross-batted shots from ball one, but this brought about his downfall as he was dismissed by Adil Rashid.

Shreyas Iyer was the lone bright spot for India with the bat and his 67 ensured that the hosts crossed the 100-run mark and it looks like Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan will have to wait for their chance.

India might have been defending just 124 runs in the first T20I, but it was a disappointing show from the bowlers as they lacked in-

tent and discipline once the English openers got off to a good start.

The bowling attack just did not look potent enough. Kohli went in with Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, and Yuzvendra Chahal as frontline spinners while Shardul Thakur and Bhuvneshwar Kumar played as the seamers. The bowling attack did not manage to trouble the English batters and the two wickets only came when England was very much on their way to sealing the game.

Kohli and boys also failed to read the pitch as the side went in with three spinners on a pitch which was visibly a hard surface and on the other hand, England read the conditions perfectly as the side went in with four frontline seamers and Ben Stokes as the all-rounder.

This series might be a dress-rehearsal for the T20 World Cup, but India need to sort out the gameplan soon, otherwise, the Three Lions might just run away with the series.

India's T20I squad: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma (vc), KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Rahul Tewatia, T Natarajan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur.

England's T20I squad: Eoin Morgan, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Jason Roy, Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Billings, Jofra Archer, Chris Jordan, Adil Rashid, Mark Wood, Reece Topley. **ANI**

WI VS SL

Going ahead, will look to carry the game deep, says Lewis

ST JOHN'S: After playing a match-winning knock of 103 runs in the second ODI against Sri Lanka, West Indies opening batsman Evin Lewis said he would look to finish off games for his side going ahead.

Evin Lewis and Shai Hope played knocks of 103 and 84 respectively as West Indies defeated Sri Lanka by five wickets in the second ODI of the three-match



series on Saturday here at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. With this win, the hosts have gained an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series. "I feel very proud. I totally back myself and my ability. I look for a good start in the powerplay and push on from there. Playing the 50 over games last month helped me. The confidence was there, so I just tried to execute," said Lewis after the conclusion of the second ODI.

"This wicket is probably one of the best wickets in Antigua, as batters you got to love it. I could have probably carried the game to the end. I tried to take on the bowler and got out. From the next game I will look to carry the game deep," he added. Chasing 274, Windies got off to a fantastic start as openers Lewis and Hope put on 192 runs for the first wicket and the duo finished the match with this

start and Sri Lanka bowlers had no answers for their onslaught.

Sri Lanka did manage to take five wickets, but in the end, Nicholas Pooran (35) and Jason Holder (2) took the hosts over the line by five wickets with two balls to spare.

Earlier, Danushka Gunathilaka played a knock of 96 runs as Sri Lanka posted a total of 273/8 in the allotted fifty overs. **ANI**

COMMENTARY

Morgan, a team captain

Anis Sajan

EOIN MORGAN WHO HAS been England's white-ball captain since 2015 who successfully led his team to the 2019 World Cup title is a man who backs his players to the core.

I have known Eoin Morgan for more than four years since our first meeting back in 2017 during the inaugural T10 League in Sharjah where he led his team Kerala Kings to Victory! He has also captained my Delhi Bulls team in 2019 where I had the opportunity to spend more time with him.

A very calm and cool character in all situations but carries a very shrewd cricketing head on his shoulders. That's Eoin Morgan.

When I asked him about his journey of the 2015 world cup where England was knocked out on the league stage, he was honest in admitting that England was playing a different brand of cricket during that period compared to the rest of the world. With the support of Andrew Strauss who backed him with the players required for an aggressive and fearless brand of cricket.

England has never looked back after the 2015 world cup



Anis Sajan, right, Managing Director Danube Group

and the journey to winning 2019 is because of that preparation put in by Andrew Strauss along with Eoin Morgan. England could achieve the glory under Eoin Morgan that no other captain in their history of English cricket could ever achieve.

However, Morgan says that getting the best from the players is a very important aspect of being a good captain. He further stresses the point that the captain is as good as his team and if the captain can understand the players and their psyche, you can get maximum out of them. Moreover, he insists that one could not gauge a player on

the basis of a tournament but should only be adjudged on the basis of the player's potential and back them to the end.

When he was recently asked about Jofra Archer's commitment to test Cricket which was questioned by Michael Vaughan, he backed Archer by saying that, players like Archer are of kind match-winner and they will have their good and bad days.

No wonder Eoin Morgan's team is at top of the Rank List in T20 now and are the favorites to beat India in the T20 series beginning today and for the world cup in October.

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Muscat CT finish on top, Al Turki clinch runner-up spot

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Khalid Kail's sparkling 146 not out powered Al Turki NMC to an emphatic 5-wicket victory against Renaissance on Saturday, resulting in his side sealing the runner-up spot on a better net run rate than IT Works which also finished the Premier Division 50-over League campaign with 16 points.

Muscat CT finished on top due to a better NRR of 2.29 compared to Al Turki's 1.41 and IT Works' 1.36 after all three sides secured 8 wins each from 10 games.

Renaissance's 238 for 8 was led by top scores of 71 and 52 by Shubo Pal and Rafi Ullah respectively. Jay Odedara and Hemal-kumar Tandel were the pick of Al Turki bowlers, taking three and two wickets respectively.

Al Turki's response was dominated by its run machine Khalid Kail's excellent batting, making sure the job was done without any major hiccups as his side surpassed the total in 38.4 overs, scoring 235 for 5.

His 127-ball 142 not out was the highlight of a big game that decided the top three spots in the country's premier cricket tournament.

Zeeshan's ton helps IT Works upset Muscat

Riding on Zeeshan Maqsood's magnificent hundred and Shakeel Ahmad's 5 for 25, IT World defeated Muscat CT by 30 runs to end its Premier Division 50-over League campaign at 16 points and third place in a game at OC Turf 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Maqsood's 116 was the highlight of IT Works' total of 246 all out in 49.5 overs.

Sandeep Goud excelled with the ball again, taking 4 for 37 whereas Ayaah Khan and Ganesh Chandrashekhher took two wickets each. Shakeel Ahmad dealt some early blows reducing Muscat to 29 for 3 before Ayaan Khan (71) and Wasim Ali (44) put on 107 runs for the fourth wicket to put Muscat back on track. However, Zeeshan Masood removed the two well settled batsmen to derail Muscat's chase, dismissing it for 216 in the 45 th over. Apart from Shakeel's fifer, Zeeshan bowled well too, taking 2 for 14.

Khalid bowls Alpha to victory

Veteran left-arm spinner Khalid Rasheed picked up 5 for 17 for power Arm Alpha to 28-run victory against AER in a Premier

Division T20 League game at OC Turf 1 in Amrat on Friday.

Alpha posted 130 for 8 on board with main contributions coming from Sanuth Ebrahim (28), Chetan Mallya (25) and Ubaid Ullah (22). Muzahir Raza bagged 2 for 23. Failing to negotiate with Khalid's terrific spell, AER folded up for a dismal 102 in 18.2 overs. Only Muzahir and Azmat Ullah made notable scores of 24 and 22 respectively. Apart from Khalid's five-wicket haul, Kaleemullah and Ubaid Ullah claimed two wickets each.

Nayan shines as OCWA claims second spot

OCWA thus ended its league campaign with 6 points and three wins from four games, walking away with a creditable runner-up spot behind leader ISC Women who remained unbeaten with 8 points. Nayan (31) and Afida Aftab (27) were the main scorers in OCWA's 102 for 5 in 20 overs. Saparna Sivakumar bagged 2 for 24.

Muscat Women was then bowled out for 98 due to brilliant bowling by Shreya Dhuri (2 for 12) and Anshitha Tiwari (2 for 26). Bhakti Shakti topscored with 28 while Theertha Sivakumar chipped in with 21.

ECB'S KEY INTEREST RATES

The European Central Bank (ECB) on Thursday kept its key interest rates at historic lows and said it was stepping up its bond-buying stimulus in the coming months. The steps are aimed at halting what is regarded as a premature rise in borrowing costs in the 19 countries that use the Euro currency.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021



BIDEN'S COVID RELIEF PLAN

US President Joe Biden signed into law a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package bill, following its approval by Congress. Opponents of the package, which included all Republican members of Congress, accused the bill of being a Trojan Horse used by Democrats.

Omantel inks pact to diversify 5G uses beyond network capabilities

Omantel and Huawei entered a tri-party Proof of Concept Memorandum of Understanding with Hutchison Ports Sohar for showcasing successful utilisations of the telecom giant's 5G infrastructure in three areas

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omantel, the leading integrated telecommunications services provider in the Sultanate, has embarked upon yet another package of smart ICT solutions that leverage the company's 5G capabilities and have the ability to revolutionise operations in Oman's oil and gas, logistics and transport sectors, which are vital for the country's sustainable economic growth.

Omantel and Huawei entered a tri-party Proof of Concept (POC) Memorandum of Understand-



PROOF OF CONCEPT: These POCs, to be implemented at Hutchison Ports Sohar, aim to provide highly reliable communication services and improve operational efficiency, accuracy, time management, and security, among other services. - Supplied picture

ing (MoU) with Hutchison Ports Sohar for showcasing successful utilisations of the telecom giant's 5G infrastructure in three areas. These POCs, to be implemented at Hutchison Ports Sohar, aim to provide highly reliable communication services and improve operational efficiency, accuracy, time management, and security, among other services.

Talal Said Al Mamari, CEO of Omantel, said, "The overall objective of the POCs is to showcase the capability of our 5G network and how it enhances and streamlines performance of the port operations. These POCs will also highlight 5G for other uses other than

in the telecom network. 5G synergised with AI can streamline business operations across multiple sectors. Omantel is proud to leverage its smart solutions that use 5G technology is an important sector like transport and logistics. We are confident that these POCs will be successfully converted into strategic commercial agreements at the end of their evaluation period."

"One of Hutchison Ports Sohar's strategic aim is to become fully automated and engage with customers, stakeholders, and the cargo in the safest and highly efficient manner. We have continuously invested in automated equipment's and technologically advanced sys-

tems and apps for constant service enhancements. Ports are fundamental to Oman's economy. In the worldwide port and container terminal business, 5G has proven to be one of the crucial future development for automation and smart technologies. We're pleased to partner with Omantel and Huawei for the 5G PoC study in the terminal equipment and look forward to a solution out of it," said Anacin Kum, Chief Executive Officer, Hutchison Ports Sohar.

Robin Chen, CEO of Huawei Oman, noted, "Omantel is a leading ICT service provider in the Middle East region, Hutchison Ports is one of the largest port op-

erators globally and Huawei is a strategic partner of Omantel. It's our great pleasure to be part of this strong triangle to integrate 5G in Hutchison Ports Sohar Operational Activities. It is believed that 5G can bring significant values and benefits to Sohar port. Moreover, this 5G pilot will open new doors to introduce the technology advancements of 5G helping to reshape and upgrade vertical industries of Oman. This direction serves to create direct and indirect gains to Oman towards 2040."

Under the first POC, work on which will start immediately, Omantel will enable Smart Surveillance with artificial intelligence

(AI). Smart solutions under this POC will be mutually beneficial to Omantel and Hutchison Ports Sohar, as it will not only diversify and showcase the use of 5G infrastructure beyond network speed and efficiency but also bring more accountability and streamlining to port's operations.

The Smart Surveillance with AI will allow real-time surveillance of the port's loading and unloading transport area, monitor the sea tide, enhance ship container video surveillance, make AI-based intelligent video analysis, allow for AI-enabled unmanned detection and generate an automatic alarm in real-time in case of any default. Other benefits include leveraging AI for HSE compliance and meeting future cost optimisation goals. These technologies can be deployed in other port operation management scenarios and crane management etc.

The two other POCs will enhance the uses of handheld devices (Push to talk) for critical communication and pagers over a 5G network for real-time location monitoring and messaging.

Maintaining its position as the Sultanate's most trusted ICT and digitisation partner, Omantel will use these POCs as a springboard to further build and diversify its 5G capacities. The MoU is a demonstration of Omantel's commitment towards its enterprise customers for enabling them to embrace Industry 4.0, and with the guaranteed success of the POCs, create a lasting customer relationship based on its superior ICT infrastructure and efficient service delivery.

GDP GROWTH

Global GDP to surpass pre-pandemic level by mid-2021: OECD

PARIS: The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sees global GDP growth at 5.6 per cent this year, an upward revision of more than one percentage point since its projection in December 2020, and 4 per cent in 2022.

World output is expected to reach pre-pandemic levels by mid-2021 but the pace and duration of the recovery will depend on the race between vaccines and emerging variants of the virus, according to the OECD's latest interim economic outlook.

Economic recovery

It said a global economic recovery is in sight but a faster and more effective vaccination rollout across the world is critical while respecting necessary health and social distancing measures.

Activity in many sectors has picked up and adapted to pandemic restrictions over recent months. Vaccine deployment although uneven is finally gaining momentum and government fiscal stimulus -- particularly in the United States -- is likely to provide a major boost to economic activity.

But the pandemic is widening gaps in economic performance between countries and between sectors, increasing social inequalities, particularly affecting vulnerable groups, and risking long-term damage to job prospects and living standards for many people.

"Speed is of the essence. There is no room for complacency. Vaccines must be deployed faster and globally. This will require better international co-operation and co-ordination than we have seen up to now," said OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría.

"It is only by doing so that we can focus our attention on building forward better and laying the foundations for a prosperous and lasting recovery for all," he said.

Central scenario

In the OECD's central scenario, US growth is projected to be 6.5 per cent in 2021, an upward revision of more than 3 percentage points

since December, partly reflecting the large-scale fiscal stimulus now planned with a sustained pace of vaccination.

This also helps to lift output around the world. In the euro area, where the level of fiscal stimulus is lower and vaccine rollout slower, OECD sees GDP rising 3.9 per cent, a 0.3 percentage point upward revision.

Prospects are brighter in the Asian Pacific region where several countries have effectively contained the virus and where industrial activity has regained dynamism. In China, GDP growth is projected to be 7.8 per cent this year, in Japan 2.7 per cent, in South Korea 3.3 per cent and Australia 4.5 per cent.

Moderate recovery

The recovery is likely to be more moderate in the emerging market economies of Latin America and Africa amid a resurgence of the virus, slow vaccine deployment and limited scope for additional policy support.

The improved prospects of a global recovery have led to financial market expectations of higher inflation although the OECD's outlook said underlying price pressures generally remain mild in advanced economies.

In emerging market economies, inflation could rise further. Public debt levels have risen sharply almost everywhere but debt-servicing costs in most OECD economies continue to benefit from very low-interest rates protecting fiscal sustainability.

The report said the vital support provided by governments to preserve jobs and businesses should remain in place while economies are still fragile and hampered by containment measures.

Supporting young people

Particular attention needs to be paid to supporting young people and the less skilled to avoid a repeat of the long-term damage caused to the job prospects of these vulnerable groups after the financial crisis of 2008. -ANI

WORLD ENERGY COUNCIL

Oil and gas sector likely to witness less significant disruption in the short term

ABU DHABI: Although the COVID-19 pandemic is causing disruptions across almost all industries, the oil and gas sector is less likely to witness significant disruption in the short term, according to Dr Angela Wilkinson, Secretary-General of the World Energy Council (WEC).

"While the energy transition progresses, we now see that significant disruption in the short term is less likely for the oil and gas sector, where demand is already growing back," she told Emirates News Agency (WAM) from London by email on Wednesday.

"It is worth remembering, however, that human behaviours change constantly and impact the economy in unforeseeable ways. This is crucial for the Middle East, whose nations have played a pioneering role in the development of the world's energy infrastructure and will keep being an essential pillar of expertise in the industry for the years to come," Wilkinson added.

WEC is a leading member-based global energy network of over 3,000 member organisations in around 90 countries. Wilkinson added that WEC's latest COVID-19 survey of world energy leaders will be published soon.

US agency expects rising oil demand

Meanwhile, a report titled Short-Term Energy Outlook March 2021, published by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), the statistical and analytical agency within the US Department of Energy, said rising Brent prices in February continued to reflect expectations of rising oil demand as both COVID-19 vaccination rates and global economic activity have increased.

The ongoing petroleum supply limitations by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and partner countries (OPEC+) have supported this trend, EIA added.

The OPEC+ extension of existing supply cuts through April added significantly to near-term upward oil price pressures and EIA expects Brent prices will average between US\$65-\$70/ barrel



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Dr Angela Wilkinson
Secretary-General of the World Energy Council

rel during March and April, more than US\$10/ barrel above EIA's expectation last month.

WEC COVID-19 survey finds changing energy landscape

A preview of the World Energy Council's COVID-19 survey report accessed by WAM said the pandemic is changing the energy landscape with new players coming into the market.

The report was prepared based on 230 responses received during February 2021 from across 6 regions and 57 countries.

The preview report said traditional energy companies would

struggle to hold their leading positions, with integrated energy companies gaining momentum (71 per cent).

Digital giants (51 per cent), with their capacity to know and interact directly with individual customers, rapidly expand their capabilities in energy system integration and grid management to capture an increasing share of electrified mobility and other energy-plus services.

Governments will play a leading role in recovering from the crisis and progressing successful energy transition; almost a third (30 per cent) of respondents rec-

ognise the need for ecosystem approaches and engaging the whole energy system and adjacent sectors, said the preview of the survey report.

The WEC, established in 1923 to discuss the problems facing the global energy industry, has been non-governmental and non-commercial. Today, it has almost 100 national member committees, with member list including governments, businesses and expert organisations. The World Energy Congress, held over 20 times since the organisation's founding, is the world's premier energy gathering. -WAM

MARKET

Will Biden's COVID-19 relief plan cause inflation?

US President Biden's generous coronavirus relief package to the tune of \$1.9 trillion has economists worried who think it will drive up prices and wreak havoc on the economy



PARTISAN PRIORITIES: Opponents of the package, which included all Republican members of Congress, accused the bill of being a Trojan Horse used by Democrats to usher in partisan priorities under the guise of pandemic relief. -DW

NEW YORK: US President Joe Biden on Thursday signed into law a \$1.9 trillion (€1.6 trillion) coronavirus relief package bill, following its approval by Congress.

One of the largest US federal aid packages since the Great Depression in the 1920s, the bill includes, among other things, funds earmarked to help schools reopen, speed along with vaccine production and distribution, and help struggling state and local governments. It also provides \$400 billion in direct payments of \$1,400 each to most Americans and extra provisions for low-income families, including adjustments to a child tax credit that increases it from \$2,000 to as much as \$3,600 per child per year.

Opponents of the package, which included all Republican members of Congress, accused the bill of being a Trojan Horse used by Democrats to usher in partisan priorities under the guise of pandemic relief.

But Republican lawmakers haven't been the only ones to raise concerns. The sheer magnitude of the fund has prompted lively

discussions within economic and political circles about whether it is too large for its good, and whether inflation is now in the cards.

The economy on 'fire'

"I agree that too much is better than too little and we should aim for some overheating. The question is how much," economist and former chief economist for the International Monetary Fund Olivier Blanchard wrote on Twitter in February, responding to the proposed bill. "Much too much is both possible and harmful. I think this package is too much." "This would not be overheating; it would be starting a fire," he wrote.

Over the last decade, the rate of inflation in the US has only occasionally gone above the Federal Reserve's target of 2 per cent. For anyone born after 1960, it might be difficult to imagine what the US ravaged by exploding consumer prices might look like. But in the 1970s, overly loose monetary policy, the introduction of wage and price controls, and a series of energy crises pushed the inflation rate into the double digits and plunged the US into a painful recession.

"There's a real possibility that

within the year, we're going to be dealing with the most serious incipient inflation problem that we have faced in the last 40 years," former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers told Bloomberg News in February.

Unbridled inflation is bad enough on its terms. But it's also self-perpetuating. The faster people try to spend their depreciating money, the quicker it will lose value. If this were to happen in the US, the Fed would have to step in and consciously inflict pain on the economy. This would take the form of higher interest rates meant to increase unemployment, forcing a stop to the spending frenzy on the most unpleasant terms.

How low can you go?

So is this stimulus package an instance of robbing the future for the sake of the present? A widely agreed upon answer seems to be: maybe. Inflation could happen, and such a generous relief package would have been very unlikely to pass in the 1980s when the horrors of inflation were still fresh in everyone's minds.

But it's 2021 and right now the horrors of the pandemic appear

much more pressing. The Biden administration has opted to treat the problem in front of it and to deal with consequences as they come. "The risk of doing too little to help American families outweighed the risk of doing too much," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said in a press briefing on Tuesday. "That said, we will always be carefully monitoring inflation, and we will continue to do so going forward."

If inflation is the result, that might not be the worst thing.

For decades now, the inflation rate in the US has been more often too low than too high, falling short of the Fed's target of 2 per cent. This target exists to encourage people to invest their money rather than sit on it, and to give the central bank room to act in the case of an economic crisis by raising or lowering interest rates. The Fed can adjust federal interest rates to try to achieve its target inflation.

Since 2019, the Fed has slowly lowered interest rates in an attempt to stimulate economic activity, starting from rates that had already been quite low in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

With interest rates currently between 0 per cent and 0.25 per cent and the rate of inflation at 1.7 per cent as of February, the Fed is essentially out of options when it comes to stimulating the economy and impacting inflation.

If this continues in the long term, it can have repercussions on economic decisions people make in their day-to-day lives.

If the actual rate of inflation is consistently below the Fed's target and aimed for future 2 per cent inflation rate is not going to be a factor in the salary negotiations of employees and unions and the borrowing decisions of home buyers. Why push for, or accept, a salary increase that hedges against 2 per cent inflation when inflation never actually hits that mark? -DW

Air travellers gaining confidence, time to plan for restart: IATA

GENEVA: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced results from its latest poll of recent travellers, showing growing confidence in a return to air travel, frustration with current travel restrictions and acceptance of a travel app to manage health credentials for travel.

Right balance

While 88 per cent believe that when opening borders, the right balance must be struck between managing COVID-19 risks and getting the economy going again, 85 per cent believe that governments should set COVID-19 targets (like testing capacity or vaccine distribution) to re-open borders.

About 84 per cent believe that COVID-19 will not disappear and there is a need to manage its risks while living and travelling normally, 68 per cent agreed that their quality of life has suffered from travel restrictions.

Nearly 49 per cent believe that air travel restrictions have gone too far. A total of 4,700 interviews were conducted online in 11 markets between February 15 and 23. The sample size was 500 in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, India and Australia. In Chile, Japan, UAE and Singapore the sample size was 300.

The poll showed while there is public support for travel restrictions, it is becoming clear that people are feeling more comfortable with managing the risks of COVID-19. People are also feeling frustrated with the loss of freedom to travel with 68 per cent of respondents indicating their quality of life is suffering as a result. Travel restrictions come with health, social and economic consequences. Nearly 40 per cent of respondents reported mental stress and missing an important human moment as a result of travel restrictions.

And over a third have said that restrictions prevent them from doing business normally.

"The top priority of everybody at the moment is staying safe amid the COVID-19 crisis. But it is important that we map a way to being able to re-open borders, manage risks and enable people to get on with their lives," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's Director General and CEO.

Freedom to travel

"That includes the freedom to travel. It is becoming clear that we will need to learn to live and travel in a world that has COVID-19. Given the health, social and economic costs of travel restrictions, airlines should be ready to re-connect the world as soon as governments can re-open borders."

The poll showed that 57 per cent expect to be travelling within two months of the pandemic being contained (improved from 49 per cent in September 2020). About 72 per cent want to travel to see family and friends as soon as possible (improved from 63 per cent in September 2020).

Nearly 81 per cent believe that they will be more likely to travel once they are vaccinated and 84 per cent said they will not travel if there is a chance of quarantine at the destination (largely unchanged from 83 per cent in September 2020). About 56 per cent believe that they will postpone travel until the economy stabilises (improved from 65 per cent in September 2020).

There are some headwinds in travel trends. About 84 per cent of travellers will not travel if it involves quarantine at the destination. And there are still indications that the pick-up in business travel will take time with 62 per cent of respondents saying they are likely to travel less for business even after the virus is contained. -ANI

EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

ECB keeps key interest rates at historic lows

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank (ECB) on Thursday kept its key interest rates at historic lows and said it was stepping up its bond-buying stimulus in the coming months.

The steps are aimed at halting what is regarded as a premature rise in borrowing costs in the 19 countries that use the Euro currency. The bank hopes to keep credit flowing to encourage spending and investment.

"The Governing Council expects the key ECB interest rates to remain at their present or lower levels until it has seen the inflation outlook robustly converge to a level sufficiently close to, but below, 2 per cent within its projection horizon," the ECB said in a statement.

Key points from Lagarde's ECB speech

ECB President Christine Lagarde spoke at a news conference in Frankfurt, saying that increases in market interest rates pose "a risk to wider financing conditions."

She further elaborated on the ECB's monetary policy decisions announced on Thursday.

The European Central Bank expects the eurozone to contract during the first quarter of 2021.

She warned of "continuing uncertainty [for the Eurozone] in



BENCHMARK REFINANCING RATE: The European Central Bank has announced it is leaving its benchmark refinancing rate on hold at a historic low of 0 per cent. -DW

the near future."

The bank expects the currency bloc to post "a firm rebound" in activity with the economy expanding by 4 per cent this year.

The ECB expects the eurozone economy to grow by 4.2 per cent in 2022.

ECB aims for favourable conditions

Lagarde said that the bank was not in the business of managing bond yield movements and that its actions were aimed at maintaining economically favourable financing conditions.

"We are not doing yield curve control," she told journalists after the bank moved to "significantly" step up the pace of its pandemic bond buys.

SLOW RECOVERY

Global recovery will not be easy: Moody's report

NEW YORK: Most economies will not return to pre-pandemic activity levels until 2022 and the global recovery will not be easy, Moody's Investors Service said.

"We continue to expect a slow and bumpy global recovery. Despite the relative stability of our forecasts since last April, uncertainty around the macroeconomic outlook remains much higher than usual," it said in a sector in-depth report released on Wednesday (local time).

In the year since the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, the virus has disrupted the global economy and triggered a credit downturn accompanied by a spike in bond defaults.

COVID-19

"The credit challenges arising from COVID-19 have been substantial, but the credit downturn likely will be relatively short-lived. Risks remain more significant for the sectors most vulnerable to restrictions on their normal activities," said Moody's.

It said the pandemic's evolution will critically depend on vaccine rollout which should support a gradual easing of public health measures aimed at virus containment, allowing some return to normalcy. -ANI

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Accountant, 15 yrs of professional experience including 8 yrs in Oman looking for suitable placement. Contact 79898089

Accountant with 7 yrs experience along with Sales & Marketing in Oman with D/L. Local release available. Contact 91367217

Part time accountant having 13 yrs experience seeking job. # 79102100

Indian Male Accountant, M.Com 14 years experience in Oman with D/L & NOC seeks suitable placement Contact 99757409

SERVICES

Disinfection & Sterilization Treatments. Ocean Centre LLC. Contact 99329289 Email sales@oceancentre.co

Pest Control Treatments - Cockroaches, Ants, etc. Ocean Centre LLC. Contact 99329289 Email sales@oceancentre.co

Carpet & Sofa Shampooing, General Cleaning - Offices, Villas & Flats. Ocean Centre LLC. Contact 99329289 Email sales@oceancentre.co

Carpet Shampoo, marble & tile polishing, pest control & anti-termite treatment, general cleaning painting, Plumbing, Electrical, shifting. Contact Mundhir l-Rizaigi trading. L.L.C # 24810137, 99450130

JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

Civil Engineer (B.TECH) Indian, 1 year experience in site and design, currently in visit visa seeks job. Contact 91282483, 96345471

Indian Mech. Engineer with 14 yrs exp. in various industrial activities looking for short/long term project manager/engineer post anywhere in Oman. Visa available. Contact / whatsapp 95326432

Senior Civil Engineer (RE) with over 10 years of experience on major projects (Residential, Commercial & Industrial). Please contact 78270396

B.E in Mechanical Engineering with 2 yrs of experience in fire fighting & MEP. Currently working as estimation & design engineer is looking for a suitable placement. Contact 94417169

Indian B.Tech Electrical engineer with 11 yrs experience in construction field. Have DCRP licence, looking for job as an Electrical Engineer/ MEP engineer. NOC available. Contact 99873092 Email ranjithbhr17@gmail.com

Indian B.tech Electrical male engineer having 14 yrs experience in construction,looking for suitable placement as Estimation Engineer/ MEP engineer/MEP Qs. NOC available. Contact 92121940 Email abyeee@gmail.com

Planning Engineer, Indian BE (Mechanical), 20 yrs experience in using primavera (P6) with NOC, D/L. Contact 79822993

Civil engineer diploma with BBA, NEBOSH IGC, valid Oman D/L, 9 yrs experience building construction, network tower erection, gas pipe line project. Contact 00971501140652, 95305786

B.Sc civil engineer, 10 years experience (supervision, execution, project, QS, roads, building with PMP certified & HSE certified) Oman D/L valid. NOC available. Contact 91347385.

Indian Male (23) Fresh Mechanical Engineer, experience in quality control, CNC, research & automation. Available for immediate joining. Contact 71502536

Indian Graduate 3 years experience looking for suitable job. Contact 968 94575752

Sudanese civil engineer, 10 yrs experience (Supervision & execution, projects, management, dams, roads) with Masters degree in Business Management. Contact 93214768

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JOB WANTED

Indian male chief accountant 21yrs experience in financial accounting, budgeting and finalisation. Oman D/L familiar with Sap, customised ERP and Tally. On visit

Contact 78073734
Email sajeevsmi2005@gmail.com

EGYPTIAN CIVIL ENGINEER

2 yrs experience in Site & Design with Driving License seeks job

Contact 97500522
Email: mohamdelgeziry@gmail.com

SR. MECHANICAL / MEP ENGINEER / MEP MANAGER

Filipino, with over 21 years of experience (airport, seaport, infra, buildings) Working as a consultant since 2010 Having Oman D/L and NOC.

Contact: +96871180492
allirod1975@gmail.com

FINANCE

Indian Male 32yrs (CMA, MBA-Fin.) with 10 Yrs (8yrs in GCC Manufacturing & SAOG) experience currently working as Asst. Finance Manager expertise in MIS reporting, Accounting upto finalization, Budgeting, Financial modeling, Business Analysis, IFRS, ERP & Advance Excel, seeking similar position in the Finance department.

Contact 99250104, Email: hyder065@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Omani female looking for a job, BSc in Process engineering (Done four different internships in process engineering), marketing experience as well.

Contact: 95119284
alya_alsiyabi93@outlook.com

Omani Information Technology Field

Omani looking for a job, Bachelor degree in IT from the United States of America, 1 year experience in IT.

Contact: 71771213
Email: Hafes707@hotmail.com

B.E Civil Engineer

Indian Male 29yrs with 7 Plus years of Experience in handling High End Building Construction Projects, Infrastructure, MEP, Interior finish and Landscaping works looking for any suitable job in immediate. Having Knowledge of MS Project & Primavera P6. NOC & Oman D/L Available.

Contact/ Whatsapp No.: 95051103,
Email: loyannavildsouza@gmail.com

ELECTRICAL MANAGER

Graduate Electrical Engineer & MBA (Project Management) with 28 years' experience in Industrial Projects & Maintenance looking for senior role. NOC Available and can join immediately.

Contact: 968-94029112
Email: sakthiveljothi@gmail.com

Project Director / Senior Project Manager / Contracts Administrator

Indian National having 18 years of work experience, 14 years in Oman having master's in Construction Project Management & Construction Law & Dispute Resolution from UK Universities. Experienced in Handling High End Hospitality, Residential & Commercial Projects from initiation till completion. Seeks Placement as Clients or Consultants representative in Oman.

Please contact – 78022980

Indian male B Com, ICWA intermediate with 20 years of Oman middle management experience in handling MIS, project finance management, managing banks, budgeting, forecasting, finalization of accounts and year end audits, seeks proper placement. NOC / DL available.

Please contact 94839479,
sureshswaminathan2311@gmail.com

PROJECT ADMIN/CEO OFFICE MNGMT/HR/OPS CORPORATE & MKTG. COMMUNICATIONS/ADMIN

Indian, Masters, excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17years Oman exp in Airports Project, Hospital, Media in Project Coordination, Corporate & Mktg. Communication, CEO & Chairman Office Mngmt, Operations, Admin, HR. Immediate. NOC.

CONTACT 99283938

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT (SRI LANKAN)

CA, CPA, BSc. (Accountancy & Business Finance) Special with 12 years of experience (6th year in Oman) is looking for an opening. DL, NOC are available.

GSM: 78259755

GIS Engineer

Indian Male, Age 24, B.E. Computer Engineering and Masters of Science in GIS (Geographic Information System's) from U.K. Seeking suitable placement in GIS field. Having Oman Driving License. Resident of Oman. Ready to join immediately.

Contact: 99738614,
deepitkotian14@gmail.com

Indian male, bachelor's degree, Graduate (B.Com, B. Ed) looking for secretary, exec assistant, office administration jobs, 18 years experience, 7 years in Oman.

Call 97015841
Email khallid.bin.umar@gmail.com

FINANCE

Indian Female (MBA Finance) having 15 years (Oman) of work experience in Banking / Finalization / Audit; seeks suitable placement.

Contact 94953826 / 92824146

ACCOUNTANT

A certified VAT professional having Masters degree & 10 years of GCC experience in senior positions, is available to handle accounts & VAT compliance.

Contact 71990782

Finance Head

CPA, CMA, CIA with 19 years' experience in Strategic finance, Banking, Financial reporting, Budget, VAT. Looking for Senior management position in finance/ internal audit. Available to join shortly.

Contact 92148608

CIVIL ENGINEER

B.Sc in Civil Engineering having 13 years experience in Oman. Hand on experience in Ministry of Health, MOD, ROP and RCA prestigious project. Available in Oman with NOC and Valid DL.

Contact No. 92180869
E-mail: mamuns02@yahoo.com

FINANCE

Indian, Female, MCOM with B.Ed. Having 2 Years' experience in Office accounts (Inventory Checking, Book keeping, Payroll) and training experience (ICT Teaching, Lecture methods-Accounting) in schools. Looking for suitable placement in Accounts/ Admin / Teacher jobs. Currently on Visit visa, Residing in Wadi kabir, Muscat.

Contact 97131091, Email: gokulsbg@gmail.com

HR Manager

17 years' experience in Finance & HR (10 Yrs), Indian Male, MBA & M.Com. NOC Available.

Contact: 96332608

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT

Indian Bachelor, B.Com, 4 yrs experience as ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT seeks suitable placement. D/L & NOC Available.

Contact 96324484

PURCHASE + STORES + ADMINISTRATION

Indian Male 10+ yrs experience in Oman (Currently available in Oman). Experience in Engineering / Construction/Structural Steel Projects, Manufacturing & Trading Concern. With administrative skills with D/L & NOC. Looking for suitable placement.

Contact: 78039935

FOOD AND QUALITY

A Post Graduate in Food science and Technology, with certification in Food Safety Level 4 and HACCP Level 3, actively looking for a job in food industry.Ability to handle in-Process quality and Food Technology related activities. Excellent communication and Interpersonal skills.

Contact +968 78359939
Mail id: vargheseroy98@gmail.com

FINANCE MANAGER

INDIAN MALE, FINANCE MANAGER WITH OVER 20+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH NBFC, IT, MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES. GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF COMPUTERS. SEEKING SUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES. LOCAL RELEASE CAN BE ARRANGED.

CONTACT +968 95808315 / 94411825

JOB WANTED

HOSPITALITY

BSc Hospitality Management Graduate from Sunway University, Malaysia.Hospitality experience in Oman and Malaysia. Looking for a suitable long term placement in the Hospitality Industry. Contact 94575782 Email dhruvatu158@gmail.com

MECHANIC/TECHNIC

HSE, professional having 20+ yrs of experience in HSE field in building,airport construction & oil & gas. Contact 90125179

Technical supervisor, ELV, CCTV, IP/HD, Fire alarm & ups, electrical work. Have D/L. Contact 94625245

Tower crane operator. NOC available. Contact 91519095

Indian fitter with diploma certification in piping & structural engineering looking for job. Immediate joining. Contact 79500069

Indian male civil supervisor, 25 yrs experience in galfar Oman.Client approved permit holder OETC scaffolding tag inspector, reservior, HDPE, DI pipeline, earth works shuttering, reinforcement, concrete. Contact 97680142 Email awadhesh37@gmail.com

LOGISTIC

Young Indian male B.com graduate, PG Diploma in logistic (Air cargo and supply chain management) & Digital Marketing & Valid Oman Driving License. Looking for suitable placement. Contact 79748272 Email: shazil.sadique@gmail.com.

Indian 24 yrs presently in Oman, graduated in BCA,experience in Rent a car in Oman, airport & in Car showroom. Contact 79224987

8 yrs experience, Customer service,operations, logistics, secretary, trading,NOC available, currently in Muscat, D/L, Excellent communication in English, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam. Contact 91116374

8 years experience in supply chain and logistics.Having a vehicle and Oman valued D/L & valid work visa which can be transmitted. Contact 97338399 ,79844071. Email manjeshbpillai@gmail.com

MANAGER

Expert in oil and gas supply chain, operation and commercial management 18 years of Oman experience as mid level executive looking for immediate placement. Contact 95148237

Looking for management position (MBA &BBA), having 15 yrs experience in Oman/KSA, sales, logistics & procurement (FMCG & non food, household, electronics able to communicate 7 language with Arabic. Having D/L. Contact 98056640. email mafascv@gmail.com

Male having 10 years Experience (Oman), working as a “Fleet Manager” looking for a suitable position. Contact 93363316

SALES / MARKETING

14 yrs of Sales experience in FMCG, valid D/L. Looking for Supervisory / Management position. Contact 71554818. Email: mohammedsultan1977@gmail.com

Indian male (24) BBA, 2year experience in sales and administration. Contact 94890534 Email: jebinahmed@gmail.com

Mechanical engineer, 4 yrs experience in Oman & 1 yr in India, have Oman valid D/L.Looking for suitable placement. Contact 91521567

Indian male, 38 yrs old MBA graduate, 14 yrs experience in Oman. looking for appropriate placement in sales & marketing job in Muscat region having valid D/L. Contact 92255983 Email vijukrishnann@gmail.com

Indian males Sales officer with 3 years experience capable to manage from quotation till finalization tally. Contact 79880058

TOUR / TRAVEL

Seeking job in Travel & Tourism, 12 years experience, Graduate (B.Sc) IATA Certified professional presently available in Oman. Contact 968 92477622, 79842322 Email: tahaspm@gmail.com

Indian male 29, exp: 03yr-09 months as ticketing reservation executive seeks job.NOC available. Contact 97322323/94478168. e-mail: anwarijalil51@gmail.com

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ROUND-UP



Qatar Airways first airline in Middle East to start trial of IATA Travel Pass

Passengers on the award-winning airline's Doha to Istanbul route will become the first group to experience the 'Digital Passport' app which aims to play an important role in the airline's vision to have a more contactless, secure and seamless travel experience for its passengers



DOHA: Qatar Airways is proud to become the first airline in the Middle East to begin trials of the innovative new IATA Travel Pass 'Digital Passport' mobile app, in partnership with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Qatar Ministry of Public Health, Primary Health Care Corporation and Hamad Medical Corporation, starting from March 11.

Passengers on the award-winning airline's Doha to Istanbul route will become the first group to experience the 'Digital Passport' app which aims to play an important role in the airline's vision to have a more contactless, secure and seamless travel experience for its passengers.

IATA Travel Pass ensures passengers receive up-to-date information on COVID-19 health regulations at their destination country, as well as complying with strict global data privacy regulations to enable the sharing of COVID-19 test results with airlines to verify they are eligible to undertake their journey.

Innovative solution

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker said, "As the world's leading airline for safety, innovation and customer experience, we are the industry's firmest advocate for introducing digital solutions to help passengers safely and seamlessly navigate complex and ever-changing entry restrictions across the globe. We

have confidence in the credibility of the IATA Travel Pass as the industry's most reliable and innovative solution given its strong data privacy compliance, long-standing entry rules engine and ability to provide an end-to-end solution. We are proud to be at the forefront of trialling this platform, being one of the first globally and the first airline in the Middle East to trial the technology.

"With the strictest data privacy regulations, IATA Travel Pass is a huge step towards proving that ICAO's global standards for digital passports do work. It will also assist in laying the foundation for governments across the world to come together in the development of standardised regulations to reduce the current patchwork of red

tape across the international travel industry. In partnership with the World Health Organisation, IATA is also engaged in helping to define a standardised vaccine certificate that will be necessary for the opening of borders and scalable increase of global travel."

IATA Director General and CEO, Alexandre de Juniac said, "Qatar Airways' full deployment of IATA Travel Pass is a significant milestone in restarting global connectivity. Governments are requiring testing or vaccination certifications to enable travel and the IATA travel app helps travellers to securely and conveniently manage and provide their credentials. All passengers using IATA Travel Pass can be confident that their data is protected and governments can

trust that the “OK to travel” means both a genuine credential and a verified identity.”

Qatar Airways has become the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax.

This follows HIA's recent success as the first and only airport in the Middle East and Asia to be awarded a Skytrax 5-Star COVID-19 Airport Safety Rating.

These recognitions provide assurance to passengers across the world that airline health and safety standards are subject to the highest possible standards of professional, independent scrutiny and assessment. For full details of all the measures that have

been implemented on board and in HIA, please visit qatarairways.com/safety.

The national carrier of the State of Qatar continues to rebuild its network, which currently stands at over 130 destinations. With more frequencies being added to key hubs, Qatar Airways offers unrivalled connectivity to passengers, making it easy for them to travel when they need to.

Passengers can book flights with peace of mind, knowing that Qatar Airways offers unlimited date changes and fee-free refunds for all tickets issued before 30 April 2021, for travel completed by 31 December 2021.

The carrier's industry-leading flexible booking policy also provides the permanent feature of exchanging tickets for a travel voucher with 10% additional value for all customers booking travel via qatarairways.com. For full terms and conditions visit qatarairways.com/Flexibility.

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was named 'World's Best Airline' by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation Skytrax. It was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', 'World's Best Business Class', and 'Best Business Class Seat', in recognition of its ground-breaking Business Class experience, Qsuite. Qsuite is available on flights to more than 45 destinations including Johannesburg, London, New York and Singapore.

Qatar Airways is the only airline to have been awarded the coveted Skytrax Airline of the Year[®] title, which is recognised as the pinnacle of excellence in the airline industry, five times. In addition to this, Qatar Airways home and hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA) was ranked the 'Best Airport in the Middle East' and 'Third Best Airport in the World' by the SKYT-RAX World Airport Awards 2020.



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MUSCAT: Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat, in line with the bank's vision "To serve you better, everyday" is offering exclusive solutions for its ultra-high net worth clients. The Hafawa Private Banking proposition is built on the strong foundations of Meethaq Islamic Banking.

Meethaq Hafawa Private Banking is defined by its commitment to provide privileges and solutions specifically designed to meet the exclusive financial and lifestyle goals of the Ultra High Net Worth Individuals (UHNIs).

Being the leading Private Banking proposition in Oman based on Sharia principles, Meethaq Hafawa Private Banking places great emphasis on developing long-term relationships with its customers who are served through exclusive Hafawa Centres across the length and breadth of the Sul-



tanate. All Hafawa Private Banking clients are also assigned a dedicated Relationship Manager who provides personalised wealth management and financial advisory services.

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and from Muscat International Airport up to six times a year, toll-free access to a Global Concierge Service, more than 1,500 "Buy 1 Get 1 free" offers through the Hafawa Entertainer App and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, beauty and wellness segments.

Meethaq Hafawa Private Banking customers are also eligible for the Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card, which is based on the Sharia-compliant concept of Ujrah. The Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card offers up to 52 days of profit-free credit period and is accepted worldwide at more than 30 million locations. Cardholders are also provided coverage against accidental damage or loss and this coverage extends to goods purchased online.

In addition, Hafawa Visa Sig-

nature Credit cardholders have access to value-added benefits at over 900 luxury hotels around the world including automatic room upgrades (subject to availability), free in-room Internet and Valet parking, complimentary continental breakfast, late checkouts, VIP Guest status and vouchers for free food and beverages.

Meethaq adopts the highest standards of professionalism conforming to Sharia principles and internationally accepted best practices in Islamic banking including those of the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI). Every Meethaq product is certified by the bank's Sharia Supervisory Board for compliance with Sharia principles and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman.

Al Mar'a Fe Aser Al Nahda conference to celebrate women



MUSCAT: As the nation of Oman has developed over the last 50 years, so too has the role of its women. Driven from the background of daily life to the foreground of society, and the economy, women have taken a pivotal role in the transformation of the country.

At the Al Mar'a Fe Aser Al Nahda - Women in Renaissance conference on March 15, we would like to celebrate not just the speakers but all women and their roles in society. Each carefully selected speaker will contribute reflections on her journey, and offer her insights into the unique experiences she faced while becoming who she is today. The speakers will convey to the audience - a message of hope, development, drive, and inspiration.

People are always seeking new and innovative ways to advance society. One of the most enduring and successful methods of attaining this has been through appreciation, motivation and commitment. Women's rights worldwide have led to better outcomes for all people and their nations. By celebrating women here, we are celebrating the success of all humanity; as a collective community striving to see the development and success of the world united

as one. 15th March coincides with both International Women's Day on 8th March and Omani Mother's Day on 21st March.

This event is made possible by Presenting Partner Oman Arab Bank who has taken a special interest in the event and ardently supported us getting as many students as possible from Schools and Universities to view the event. As well as by our Supporting Partners Muscat Pharmacy, Khimji Ramdas, United Finance Company, Lakhoo's Exchange together with our Media Partner Times of Oman. Our dream is to make this event an annual one, under the New Normal - when it becomes possible

We would like to thank all our partners for their contribution to this worthwhile event.

BPOS Global has tirelessly strived to put this event together gathering speakers from Oman and throughout the world. We are proud of this achievement and the social impact it may have. We strive to inspire and encourage all the viewers who choose to spend their time with us. We invite anyone and everyone to register for this event at <https://www.bposllc.com/>

Please find the registration under the 'what's new' tab.

VIRTUAL GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

Hyundai Motor Group breaks ground on first overseas fuel cell system plant in Guangzhou

DUBAI: Hyundai Motor Group held a virtual groundbreaking ceremony for HTWO Guangzhou, the Group's first fuel cell system facility outside of Korea. The investment advances the group's global hydrogen leadership and supports its push into China's rapidly developing hydrogen industry.

Participating in the ceremony were Li Xi, Secretary of Guangdong Province, and Ma Xing Rui, Governor of Guangdong Province - both joining from Guangzhou Yuexiu International Congress Center in China - along with Euisun Chung, Hyundai Motor Group Chairman, and Saehoon Kim, Hyundai Head of Fuel Cell Center and Executive Vice President - both joining from Hyundai Motorstudio Goyang in Korea.

"The establishment of HTWO Guangzhou marks an important starting point for Hyundai Motor Group's dedicated fuel cell system brand HTWO," Chairman Chung said. "Hyundai Motor Group will actively lead clean mobility innovations using its strategic partnerships, world-class technology, hydrogen business capabilities and related expertise."

Hyundai Motor Group designated the production and sales hub 'HTWO Guangzhou' in line with the name of its dedicated fuel cell system brand. HTWO stands for 'H2', the hydrogen molecule, whilst also representing 'Hydrogen' and



'Humanity', the main pillars of the Group's fuel cell business.

HTWO Guangzhou will be built in the Guangzhou development district of Guangdong Province, China, to complete the project in the second half of 2022. Facilities, including a fuel cell system plant and an innovation centre, will be built on the 207,000-square-metre site.

The annual production target for the facility is 6,500 units, with a goal to gradually expand production capacity in line with Chinese market conditions and central government policies.

The group plans to take the lead in realising carbon neutrality by strengthening the production of

its world-leading hydrogen fuel cell systems, making them available as power sources for various industries.

In 2018, Hyundai Motor Group announced plans to expand its supply capacity to 700,000 hydrogen fuel cell systems annually by 2030, under its mid-to long-term hydrogen roadmap 'Fuel Cell Vision 2030'.

Through strategic partnerships with hydrogen, energy and logistics companies around the world, the Group has expanded its fuel cell system business, accelerating the development of a hydrogen society and laying the foundation for the company's HTWO brand, with an initial focus on major hub

regions - Korea, Europe, China and the US.

Since marketing the world's first mass-produced fuel cell electric vehicle ix35 in 2013, the Group has been expanding its vehicle offerings powered by its fuel cell system, such as Hyundai NEXO SUV, XCIENT Fuel Cell heavy-duty truck and a fuel cell electric bus, as zero-emission mobility solutions.

As a steering member of the Hydrogen Council, a global coalition of leading energy, transportation and industry companies with a shared vision and long-term ambition for hydrogen, Hyundai is committed to fostering a clean energy transition.

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