



**SANAD OFFICES IN OMAN WELCOME
RESUMPTION OF ONLINE SERVICES**

MUSCAT: Sanad offices in Oman that provide essential government services to people in the country have welcomed the resumption of online services that will help them assist customers faster. The Ministry of Labour needed to temporarily halt some online services, owing to a malfunction on the network. However, services will now be gradually restored, with the government confirming that no data has been lost or compromised while efforts were made to bring them back online. **>A2**



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WRITTEN MESSAGE

HM reaffirms support to Palestinian people

RAMALLAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a written message to Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Lib-

eration Organisation (PLO).

In his message, His Majesty the Sultan reaffirmed the Sultanate's firm stance towards supporting the Palestinian people in establishment of their independent

state with Eastern Jerusalem (Al Quds) as its capital and the continued Omani efforts for serving the Palestinian cause.

The message was handed over by Salim bin Habib Al Amiri,

the charge d'affaires at the Sultanate's embassy in the State of Palestine, when he met with Majdi Al Khaldi, Advisor to Palestinian President for Diplomatic Affairs. **>A2**

REAL ESTATE SECTOR TO SEE 40% GROWTH

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's real estate sector is expected to grow by 40 per cent in 2021, owing to measures by the government making it easier for Omanis and expats to own property.

Among these are reducing real estate transaction fees from five per cent to three per cent, enabling expatriates to own properties in mixed use residential and commercial buildings, and allowing developers to add extra floors to their buildings in exchange for a fee, said Hasan Al Ruqaishi, the head of the Real Estate Development and Construction Committee at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

"With the new financial year having begun for companies and banks in the country, we expect this rate to exceed 40 per cent," he said.



"For example, in Barka, after these decisions were made, the value of land rose by up to OMR1,000 a plot, because these decisions have helped both demand for land, and its sale and purchase.

"We have had instances of people requiring to pay more money towards ministry fees, than they receive from property sales to another person. A person, for ex-

ample, might receive a profit of OMR100 from his property sale, but he has to pay OMR180 in ministry fees. The fees increases in proportion to the price at which the property is sold," Al Ruqaishi added.

"The decision to raise real estate fees to five per cent began in 2016, and this had a great impact on real estate sales. As a

result, revenues to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning decreased as well."

Real estate fees were reduced after discussions between real estate sector representatives and the ministry, bringing them back to pre-2016 levels.

Under the previously existing fee structure, the property speculation market had reached a stagnation rate of 70 per cent, while a 30 per cent stagnation was seen in property purchases deemed necessary.

"There are two reasons people invest in real estate: the first is according to their needs, and the second is for economic reasons. "These new measures will definitely affect greater economic activity in real estate, as a large number of people in this country are employed in the property sector," said Al Ruqaishi. **>A5**

HIS MAJESTY'S GREETINGS CONVEYED TO QATAR EMIR



Times News Service

DOHA: Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, received yesterday Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, at the headquarters of the Police College in Al Sailiya area in Doha.

During the meeting, Al Busaidi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to the Emir of Qatar, wishing him good health and happiness, and Qatari people further progress and prosperity.

On his part, Sheikh Tamim asked Al Busaidi to convey his greetings and good wishes to His Majesty the Sultan, and further growth and prosperity for Omani people.

During the meeting, they reviewed the strong fraternal relations between the two countries and ways of developing and enhancing them in various fields.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar and Najib bin Yahya Al Balushi, Oman's envoy to Qatar.

The Minister of Interior also participated in the graduation ceremony of the third batch of students nominated at the Police College which was held at the college's headquarters in Al Sailiya.

The graduation ceremony was sponsored by Sheikh Tamim in the presence of a number of their excellencies and senior officials of the Arab countries and heads of diplomatic missions.

The delegation watched the presentations accompanying the graduation ceremony and the formations made by the graduate students. The participation by the Minister of Interior came in response to an official invitation received from the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Hashil appointed new CEO of Omran

1 Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development, appointed Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi as new CEO, replacing the former CEO, Peter Walichnowski. The appointment reflects the belief in empowering national competencies. **>A5**

WORLD UK variant of COVID-19 may be more deadly

2 The coronavirus variant first identified in Britain may be more deadly than the older strain, the British PM has warned. "There is some evidence that the new variant may be associated with a higher degree of mortality," Johnson said at a Downing Street news conference. **>A6**

MARKET Port of Salalah reports new container record

3 Despite the challenging situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Port of Salalah (Oman) finished 2020 with a record-breaking container volume of 4.34 million TEUs (twenty-foot-equivalent units) and thereby laying a solid foundation for undisrupted operations also in 2021. **>B2**

EDUCATION

Two new British schools opening in Muscat in 2021

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Two British schools with a long-standing reputation in achieving top academic standards and an emphasis on all-round student development are set to open this year.

Campuses for Cheltenham Muscat, a 180-year-old institution for children between the ages of three and 18, and the 113-year-old Downe House Muscat, will set up their facilities in the capital in 2021.

Their opening is subject to final approvals from the Ministry of Education, but applications for September 2021 have begun.

The schools will be run in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence Pension Fund, and the arrival of the two educational facilities has been welcomed by His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimour Al Said, the Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs.

"In line with the Sultanate's vision and the National Strategy for Education 2040, I am pleased to announce the opening of two international schools - Cheltenham Muscat and Downe House Muscat," he said.

"Both schools will offer education with modern, inspirational teaching that cater for the needs of every child both in-school and through a virtual learning



platform, blending the power of culture and heritage with innovation. The schools also offer an environment conducive to encouraging all children to be understanding and tolerant of others, whilst developing self-confidence to express ideas and opinions, thus enabling them to become global leaders of the future. I wish both schools success in their mission, and the students and their parents a beneficial tenure and successful careers."

Adding to this, Hamish Cowell, British Ambassador to Oman, said, "The British Independent Schools Inspectorate rates both Cheltenham and Downe House as "outstanding" in their formal appraisals and they feature with-

in the top 10 per cent and three per cent respectively of A-Level achievements. It is testament to the strong relationship between the UK and Oman that the schools have chosen to locate in the Sultanate and demonstrates their keen commitment to enhancing the traditionally strong bilateral relationship."

Unlike many other schools in the region, children will be taught by specialist staff rather than general class teachers.

Starting as early as KG1, specialists will teach across individual subject areas and from Grade 4 across all subjects, enabling scientists to teach science, artists to teach art and mathematicians to teach maths. **>A2**



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Isha.....	7:06pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5.32am

NO DATA COMPROMISED

Sanad offices in Oman welcome return of online services

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sanad offices in Oman that provide essential government services to people in the country have welcomed the resumption of online services that will help them assist customers faster.

The Ministry of Labour needed to temporarily halt some online services, owing to a malfunction on the network.

However, services will now be gradually restored, with the government confirming that no data has been lost or compromised while efforts were made to bring them back online.

In a statement, the ministry announced the “gradual return of electronic services. Those look-

ing to use these services can now complete their transactions. The technical operations have been completed and the electronic facilities will now continue to resume requests.”

Ministry of Labour website

“The electronic services on the Ministry of Labour website began to gradually return after noon on Saturday, after they’d been unavailable for about three weeks,” said Ahmed Al Junaibi, the owner of a Sanad office in Wilayat Duqm in the central Wusta Governorate.

“These services usually include a number of facilities used for expatriate workers, including the renewal of work cards, transfer



of sponsorship while changing companies, name change services, provisions for recruitment of new non-Omani manpower whether for an individual employer or a company, filing a missing persons

report for absconding workers, and departure services foreign workers use before leaving the country,” he added.

Al Junaibi admitted that the services were still very slow, but he hoped normal service would resume over time. “It is difficult for customers to pay their charges electronically, because sometimes, the payment does not go through but the money is still deducted from him during the transaction,” he explained.

Residence cards

“The renewal of residence cards costs OMR316, which is a large sum to recover in case it is lost. On other occasions, we are not able to process payments at all, while

in other cases, transactions take very long to complete,” he further added.

Al Junaibi asked government authorities such as the Ministry of Labour and Royal Oman Police to waive the late fees associated with delayed renewal of expatriate documents, owing to the problems they face.

“These technical problems lasted for about three weeks, and the process of completing these transactions online is still very slow,” he revealed.

“Delaying the renewal of a labour card by even a month, for example, will cost the employer OMR 40, owing to an OMR10 fine from the Ministry of Labour and an OMR30 fine from the Royal

Oman Police. Applications cannot be submitted to the ROP before they are processed by the ministry. The employee may have chosen to renew his labour card a month ago, but he would not have been able to do so because of the faults in the electronic services,” he said.

“Likewise, we also request an extension for the transfer of employment statuses of expat workers. The deadline for this was previously January 6, which was later extended to January 21, but the time during which these faults were present coincided with the extension provided,” he added.

The Ministry of Labour did acknowledge the difficulties the lack of online services caused.

TO PALESTINE PRESIDENT

<FROM A1 Message

During the meeting, Advisor to Palestinian President for Diplomatic Affairs reaffirmed the keenness of the Palestinian leadership for further enhancement of bilateral relations for the interest of the people of the two countries.

He also valued the Sultanate’s efforts led by His Majesty the Sultan for the support of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people — **ONA**

WEATHER

Dusty, strong winds continue

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate continues to be affected by the dusty and strong winds in a number of the Sultanate’s governorates.

Low clouds

The General Directorate of Meteorology said, “Condensation of low clouds continues in the gov-

ernorates of North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah and the spread of sand plankton and dust on the coasts of the Sea of Oman and the governorates of Musandam and South Al Sharqiyah.”

The rise of dust continues especially in the desert and open areas, and the low level of horizontal visibility, the General Directorate of Meteorology further added.

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

<FROM A1 Schools to be ready by August

This exceptional teaching is delivered via an extended all-inclusive school day giving the space for learning, growth and extra-curricular activities. Designed by award winning architects, the two distinct campuses offer state-of-the-art facilities. The schools are at the heart of the MODPF’s Al Bandar Master plan, conveniently located between Muscat and Seeb, only 10 minutes from Muscat International Airport and Al Mouj, making it readily accessible from most parts of the city.

Construction is ahead of schedule and on track for completion by August 2021. The schools will provide teaching hubs including high-tech science labs, design-technology workshops, art, music and performing arts studios, media centres and theatres. Alongside the incredible teaching and learning environment, there will be first-class sports academies. Facilities include multiple indoor sports halls, two semi-Olympic size swimming pools and learner pools, extensive outdoor sports areas with full size soccer, hockey, rugby, cricket and junior soccer pitches as well as numerous basketball, netball and tennis courts.

Michelle Scott is the Founding Principal of Downe House Muscat, having previously been the Deputy Head at Downe House UK. Her highly-experienced staff will deliver an outstanding British curriculum as well as exceptional Arabic and Islamic studies to the pupils. Scott commented, “We are delighted to launch Downe House Muscat. Underpinned by our Downe House DNA, our aim is to provide an inspirational experience that prepares every child for the next stage in their life within a happy, safe and nurturing environment. Our education reflects excellence in all that we do and provides the students with a vibrant range of opportunities in and outside the classroom to develop them into highly successful adults of the future.”

Cheltenham Muscat is led by Founding Head, Crispin Dawson who has moved to Muscat from his post as Senior Deputy Head at Cheltenham College UK. Dawson said, “An all-round education is the most valuable gift you can give your child, providing them with a foundation from which they can learn about themselves, their community and the world.

Of equal importance to the daily academic curriculum is our emphasis on developing well-rounded children. Every child will be encouraged to fulfil their potential, whether in academia, music, sport, or the arts.”

Colliers International recommended Cheltenham and Downe House to the MODPF and Mansoor Ahmed, Director Healthcare, Education & PPP said, “Colliers is proud to be associated with the overall development of the Al Bandar project in Muscat and assisted MODPF in the selection of Cheltenham and Downe House, from many other short-listed schools on the basis of quality, history and specifically their commitment to provide high-quality education in Oman.”

For further information about either school, please contact our admissions team: Cheltenham Muscat: Telephone (Arabic): +968 98555397 Telephone (English): +968 98555264 Email: admissions@cheltenhammuscat.com, Downe House Muscat: Telephone (Arabic): +968 98555381 Telephone (English): +968 98555482 Email: admissions@downehousemuscat.com

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A child who went missing on Friday has been found after search by police, army and citizens in Wilayat Buraimi

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HOT SAUCE DAY

ENJOY THE FIRE IN YOUR MOUTH

If you are someone who cannot live without hot sauce, here's an excellent opportunity for you to tell the world what makes it your favourite condiment. January 22 is celebrated as Hot Sauce Day every year mainly in the US but considering the fact that it is a hot favourite here in Oman as well, let the celebrations continue.

Made from chilli peppers and other ingredients it is available in various flavours and a staple in many countries throughout the world. Chunks of peppers are simmered in vinegar till they are soft with salt is how the sauce is prepared and the choice of the pepper used determines the colour and flavour of the sauce. The hot Habanero Pepper is very hot and gives an orange colour, Cayenne pepper is used in making Tabasco sauce, and green pepper like Jalapeno is used to make the green coloured sauce.

While the most common ingredients of hot sauce are chilli peppers, vinegar, and salt, some sauces also include fruits, vegetables, and a wide range of ingredients. Capsaicin extract and mustard oil are also used to increase the heat of some hot sauces.

It is said that the presence of hot sauce can be traced in history where containers storing them have been found during archeological surveys, in ancient ruins and in ships.

One of the oldest hot sauces is Tabasco discovered by Edmund Mcilhenney. Being an avid gardener he got some pepper seeds from Mexico and planted them on Avery Island near New Orleans. He loved the flavour so much that he decided to make a pepper sauce, and market it. Tabasco is a region in Mexico and also the name of a pepper. While in Africa, it is made from a base of red birdseye chilli peppers and seasoned with cumin and coriander, in Chinese cuisine it is called chilli sauce and is more likely to be a thick paste.

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OMAN



Omran Group appoints Hashil as new CEO

Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi will replace the former CEO, Peter Walichnowski



Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi as new CEO.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development, appointed Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi as new CEO, replacing the former CEO, Peter Walichnowski.

The appointment reflects the belief in empowering national competencies to lead the next stage of the Group's journey. Al Mahrouqi was selected after he passed the professional tests and job interviews conducted for various candidates for the position.

Hashil Al Mahrouqi's experience spans 20 years in managing real estate projects investments and commercial contracts, and he held a number of positions, the last of which was Senior Manager of Investment Real Estate at the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), Chairman and CEO of Yiti

Tourism Development Company, Chairman of the Executive Committee and a member of the Board of Directors at ASAAS Company.

In addition to his membership in a number of boards of directors and associated committees in the Oman Investment Authority's real estate investments in both the UK and Germany. This also coincided with other roles that he assumed, including managing local and international real estate investment portfolios amounting to one billion Omani rials in the sectors of hospitality, entertainment, logistics, retail and multi-purpose projects, as well as leading projects to attract foreign direct investment worth tens of millions. Commenting on the new appointment, Eng. Mohammed bin Salim Al Busaidi, Omran's

Chairman said: "We are delighted to welcome the new CEO of Omran Group. His appointment reflects our belief in the young Omani competencies to lead the group towards achieving more accomplishments".

"In the next stage, we are looking forward to expanding the capabilities of Omran, its subsidiaries and the wide portfolio of diversified tourism assets and investments throughout the Sultanate, in line with the directions of the Oman Investment Authority, while focusing on maximizing investment returns and achieving in-country value. These efforts will contribute to achieving the goals of Oman 2040 Vision, in addition to attracting tourism investments, developing pioneering projects and generating social and economic returns for the Sultanate," he added.

Omran Group's board of directors also thanked the previous CEO, Peter Walichnowski for his valued efforts during his tenure.

Hashil Al Mahrouqi holds multiple academic and professional qualifications, most notably the Master of Business Administration from Sultan Qaboos University, the Rising Leaders Program Certificate from HEC Paris Business School, the Real Estate Leadership Programme certificate from Harvard Business School.

OMAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

Al Suhail first at endurance racing

MUSCAT: Horse Al Suhail for owner and trainer Mohammed bin Saleh Al Balushi and horse rider Ahmed bin Salih Al Balushi has bagged the first place in the Endurance Race Competition organised by Oman Equestrian Federation at Al Mahamed Village for Endurance Racing in the Wilayat of Barka.

The competition was organised for 100 kilometres with the participation of sixteen horses.

Three stages

The race comprised three stages; the first for 40 kilometres, the second for 35 kilometres and the third for 25 kilometres.



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REAL ESTATE SECTOR

< FROM A1 Job opportunities

"With more sales of real estate units, they will receive more liquid money to spend on goods and services for their families and themselves." While Al Ruqaishi did praise these initiatives, he said more needed to be done to encourage more investment in Oman's real estate. Using the right for expatriates to lease flats in mixed-use multi-storey properties under usufruct agreements as an example, Al Ruqaishi said non-Omanis who would be more motivated in these schemes if they received residency in exchange for their investment, as is offered to property buyers in place such as Madinat Al Irfan and Al Mouj. "Any expat who seeks to obtain residency in Oman will obviously want to own their property in the country," he explained.

"If he is not offered that, he might be discouraged to invest under the current schemes, because he might lose his job, and will then not be able to fulfil any monthly payment obligations towards paying for his property," Al Ruqaishi said. "Moreover, he will also be unable to sell his house, because the rules prevent him from doing so until four years have passed from the time he has bought his flat," he added.

Parking spaces

Al Ruqaishi also addressed the issue of a lack of parking spaces in many buildings, which cause inconvenience to many of the tenants living in them, as well as visitors to these places.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

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Coronavirus variant detected in UK may be more deadly: PM

However, Johnson said that the current vaccines are still effective against the new variant



LONDON: The coronavirus variant first identified in Britain may be more deadly than the older virus strain, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned on Friday.

"There is some evidence that the new variant may be associated with a higher degree of mortality," Johnson said at a Downing Street news conference.

The new strain of coronavirus, first identified in Kent in England, is thought to be up to 70 percent more transmissible.

According to the British government's Chief Scientific Adviser

Patrick Vallance, early evidence suggests the difference is between 10 deaths in 1,000 infected with the older variant to 13 or 14 in 1,000 infected with the new variant. However, Johnson said that the current vaccines are still effective against the new variant.

"All current evidence continues to show" that the current vaccines remain effective against the old coronavirus variant and this new one, he said.

Johnson said the National Health Service (NHS) is under

significant pressure, urging the public to continue to follow the restriction rules.

The prime minister noted that there are more than 38,000 people in hospital, 78 percent higher than there were at peak of the first wave, and more than 4,600 people have been hospitalized in the last 24 hours.

Also joining Johnson for the press briefing, Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer said the most recent data showed that there has been a "turning of a cor-

ner" on the positivity rates amid lockdown.

However, he said the number of deaths is steadily increasing, which may go on for some days to come due to the delay of hospitalization.

Another 40,261 people in Britain have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 3,583,907, according to official figures released Friday.

Another 1,401 people have died within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 95,981, the data showed.

England is currently under the third national lockdown since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country. Similar restriction measures are also in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

To bring life back to normal, countries such as Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States have been racing against time to roll out coronavirus vaccines. **Xinhua**



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OUTBREAK



Hong Kong declares first lockdown amid mounting coronavirus cases

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's government declared its first lockdown on Saturday, ordering thousands of people to stay in their homes as authorities tackled an ongoing outbreak of the coronavirus in one of the city's poorest and most densely populated districts.

The lockdown affects 10,000 people living in the Jordan neighborhood in Kowloon. Authorities said they planned to test everyone in the designated zone within 48 hours, and the residents will not be allowed to leave unless they can show a negative test.

"Residents will have to stay at their premises to avoid cross-infection until they get their test results," Health Minister Sophia Chan told reporters on Saturday.

Vaccines update

Severe reaction to Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine is "rare," US health authorities have found, with only 10 cases of anaphylactic shock among a reported 4,041,396 first doses administered between December 21 and January 10.

Based on this early monitoring, anaphylaxis after receipt of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine appears to be a rare event," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a report.

The numbers represent 2.5 cases of anaphylactic shock per one million Moderna injections, compared with 11.1 cases per one million BioNTech-Pfizer injections, according to the CDC study. **AP**

BLACKOUT CHALLENGE

Italy targets TikTok after death of child

ROME: Italian authorities have opened an investigation into the accidental death of a 10-year-old girl in Sicily who allegedly took part in a so-called "blackout" challenge while using the video-sharing network TikTok.

Following a ruling that the girl died of asphyxiation, Italy's data protection authority said it was imposing an immediate temporary



block on TikTok's access to data for any user whose age could not be verified. The social media platform, popular particularly among teenagers worldwide, is owned by Chinese company ByteDance.

According to TikTok's terms and conditions, users must be at least 13 years old. The block will remain in place until February 15 as Sicilian prosecutors continue

to investigate the case. "While waiting to receive a response, the authority decided to take action to ensure the immediate protection of minors in Italy registered on the network," the authority said in a statement. The child died in a Palermo hospital after being found on Wednesday by her 5-year-old sister at home in the bathroom with her cellphone. **AP**

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TRUMP IN TROUBLE

Trump’s impeachment trial to begin in February, says US Senate leader



IMPEACHMENT TRIAL: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will send the article of impeachment to the Senate on Monday, triggering the start of the former president’s trial.

WASHINGTON: Former US President Donald Trump’s impeachment trial will begin on February 8, US Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer announced on Friday.

“The Senate will conduct a trial of the impeachment of Donald Trump. It will be a full trial. It will be a fair trial,” Schumer said.

The top Democratic leader in the Senate announced the schedule after reaching an agreement with Republicans.

According to the timeline, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will send the article of impeachment to the Senate on Monday, triggering the start of the former president’s trial on the charge of “incitement of insurrection” over the deadly riot at the US Capitol on January 6.

The initial proceeding will begin Tuesday, and Trump’s legal team will have time to prepare the case before opening arguments begin in February.

The timeline amounts to a two-week delay and allows the Senate to conduct normal business as a new administration takes charge.

The chamber will use this time to carry out confirmation votes of President Joe Biden’s cabinet nominations and start work on a massive coronavirus relief package, Schumer said.

Trump became the first president in US history to be impeached twice and his impeachment trial will be the first one to take place after the president has left office.

The former president was impeached for inciting a mob of his angry supporters who ransacked the US Capitol building in an attempt to overturn the results presidential election, which Trump falsely claimed was “stolen.”

‘Win for due process’

Senate Republicans wanted to push back Trump’s impeachment hearings to mid-February but the request was rejected by the Democrats who now control the chamber.

The Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell wanted the delay so as to give the former president time to prepare his pre-trial defence.

“Senate Republicans are strongly united behind the principle that the institution of the Senate, the office of the presidency, and former President Trump himself, all deserve a full and fair process that respects his rights and the serious factual, legal, and constitutional questions at stake,” McConnell said on Thursday.

House Democrats, on the other hand, have signaled they want to move swiftly with proceedings.

The current timeline is a compromise between the two sides.

A McConnell aide said the trial could begin as soon as February 9 – a Tuesday – and that McConnell was pleased Democrats had given Trump’s defense more time.

“This is a win for due process and fairness,” a McConnell spokesman said. **ow**

DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Joe Biden orders review of US domestic extremism threat

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden ordered law enforcement and intelligence officials to investigate the risk of domestic terrorism following the attack on the US Capitol, his spokeswoman said on Friday. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence will lead the investigation in coordination with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said.

“We want fact-based analysis, upon which we can shape policy,” Psaki told reporters in a briefing.

Tens of thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington weeks after a violent mob of Donald Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol in an attack that left five dead, including one police officer.

The national intelligence office was created after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center with a goal of thwarting international terrorism. **ow**



TENDER NOTICE

Majis announce 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-01-2021	Supply and Installation of Sludge Drying at MAJIS' CETRP Plot, Sohar Industrial Port area	200/-	1st February 2021	1st March 2021

- Interested companies may obtain the Tender documents from the e-tendering website: <http://tendering.majis.om/VendorLogin.aspx> against non refundable payment as mentioned above. Tender documents will be published to such firms only.
- Tenders should be submitted online on the given website; no documents can be accepted as manual submission except original Tender Bond
- The Tenderer shall register in E-tendering portal to enable purchase and collection of the tender documents
- All correspondences pertaining to the Tender enquiry much be online at the e-tendering system and sent to email ID: tender@miscoman.com
- Any clarification pertaining to the e-tendering system technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email ID: vendor@miscoman.com and phone No. 26852421.
- Majis is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

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MERC

Oman’s Al Wahaibi to be back for MERC this season

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s international rally driver Hamed Al Wahaibi will be behind the wheel after a long time. This was announced by the X-world rally championship group (N) leader Hamed Al Wahaibi who said that he will return to support the Oman Automobile Association (OAA) for the successful hosting of the second round of MERC this season.

Oman Sohar International rally which will be held in Muscat region from February 18-20 will witness the return of Al Wahaibi on Skoda Fabia R5 for the first time



RETURN OF WAHAIBI: Oman Sohar International rally which will be held in Muscat region from February 18-20 will witness the return of Al Wahaibi on Skoda Fabia R5.



after a gap of more than nine years when he was last seen in Oman rally championship in 2012.

Al Wahaibi said: “I am delighted to be back again to the rally world during an exceptional season to support the rally in Muscat, and as OAA is organising this event, I have been supporting them and will do so even this time.”

The Omani rally driver added that currently he is undergoing a physical fitness programme to be fully prepared for the rally and the championship. He said that he was working hard on that programme, and will start training on the rally car Skoda Fabia from this week.

Al Wahaibi said that it would not be easy to compete with Qatari rally champion Nasser Al Aattiyah as he has been racing for the last 20 years in different championships like MERC and Dakar rally, and he has been the winner of this championship for almost 15 times. It will be very difficult for us to win the race, but will do our best to be on top, he said.

The Skoda Fabia R5 has been prepared by Motor Tune under the supervision of the Lebanese rally driver Rojer Faghali. Al Wahaibi and his colleagues are aiming to showcase their talent and perform well in this rally.

Anderson picks six to register his best bowling figures in Asia

During the course of this innings, Anderson also became the oldest bowler to take a five-wicket haul in Asia



SL VS ENG: The 38-year-old took the wickets of Lahiru Thirimanne, Kusal Perera, Oshando Fernando, Angelo Mathews, Niroshan Dickwella (92) and Suranga Lakmal (0) in the first innings.

GALLE: England pacer James Anderson on Saturday recorded his best bowling figures in Asia. The bowler recorded the feat on day two of the ongoing second Test against Sri Lanka here at Galle. Anderson finished with figures of 6-40 from 29 overs as the hosts were bundled out for 381 in the first innings.

The 38-year-old took the wickets of Lahiru Thirimanne (43), Kusal Perera (6), Oshando Fernando (0), Angelo Mathews (110), Niroshan Dickwella (92) and Suranga Lakmal (0) in the first innings.

This is Anderson’s 30th fiver in Test cricket. During the course of this innings, Anderson also became the oldest bowler to take a five-wicket haul in Asia. He also went past Glenn McGrath (29) in the list of most five-wicket hauls in Test cricket.

Anderson now has 606 wickets in the longest format of the

game and he is the fourth-highest wicket-taker in Tests. He is only behind Muttiah Muralitharan (800), Shane Warne (708), and Anil Kumble (619).

The pacer has played 157 Test matches for England and this is the most number of games that a pacer has ever played in the history of Test cricket.

Resuming day two on 229/4, hosts Sri Lanka got off to a bad start as overnight centurion Angelo Mathews (110) was sent back to the pavilion by Anderson. Soon after, Ramesh Mendis was dis-

missed for a duck by Mark Wood, reducing Sri Lanka to 243/6.

Niroshan Dickwella then found support in Dilruwan Perera and the duo mixed caution with aggression to take the hosts to a position of safety. Both batsmen ensured that Sri Lanka did not lose more wickets before the lunch break, taking the score to 313/6 with Dickwella and Perera batting on 78 and 21 respectively.

In the second session, Anderson took two wickets quite early as he dismissed Niroshan Dick-

wella (92) and Suranga Lakmal (0). With Dickwella’s wicket, Anderson registered his 30th five-wicket haul in Test cricket.

In the end, Perera added some crucial runs to the hosts’ total and he went on to play a knock of 67 runs. Sri Lanka was finally bundled out for 381 with Anderson being the pick of England bowlers. Mark Wood also took four wickets for England while Dom Bess and Jack Leach went wicketless -- the first time a spinner has not taken a single wicket in an innings of a Test at Galle. **ANI**

UPCOMING TEST SERIES



Be positive and grab the chance: Azhar Ali tells Pakistan players

KARACHI: Pakistan’s senior-most batsman Azhar Ali has made an appeal to the young guns in the team to brush aside their insecurities and express themselves freely against South Africa in the upcoming Test series.

South Africa who last visited Pakistan in 2007 had won the two-Test series 1-0. Last week, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced a 20-member squad, including nine uncapped players, for the Test series, which commences on January 26.

“International cricket is always a challenge. Even if you play as a youngster or up there for long, pressure will remain forever,” ESPNcricinfo quoted Azhar as saying.

“But obviously for a new player it is a challenge to handle pressure and then there are insecurities in our culture around what if they are dropped,” he added.

Earlier, Pakistan batting coach Younis Khan highlighted how other teams have players who burst into the international arena after playing at least 100 first-class games, and Pakistan on the other hand picks players looking at their performances in other formats.

Azhar agreed with the former skipper and advised the youngsters to trust their skills and do what they are good at.

“Obviously we understand that there is a big difference between international and domestic cricket which makes them a bit insecure. But as a senior player, my advice to them is to trust their skills and stick with that they are doing to do well,” said Azhar.

“Because that is what is going to give them the best chance to perform. If you think too much that will bring negativity and hold you from doing well. So be positive and grab the opportunity,” he said.

Aleem Dar will be officiating in his first-ever Test at home, while on-field umpire Ahsan Raza and match referee Mohammad Javed Malik will also make their Test debuts as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), on behalf of the International Cricket Council (ICC), confirmed match officials for the Test series on January 16. **ANI**

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE



IOC prepares for various scenarios ahead of Tokyo Olympics 2021

MOSCOW: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is taking into account various scenarios for holding the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and has a wide array of measures for a proper response, IOC President Thomas Bach said.

Originally scheduled for 2020, the Summer Olympic Games in Japan have been postponed until July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We are working to prepare for all the potential scenarios we may face in July-August this year, and this is a wide range, so we

are putting together a huge toolbox of measures and then we will decide at the appropriate time, which of the tools we need to address the situation,” Bach said in a video release issued by the IOC.

Earlier in the week, The Times newspaper reported, citing a source in the Japanese ruling coalition, that the country’s leadership had privately concluded that the Olympic Games in Tokyo had to be canceled. The Japanese government responded by refuting such speculations. **ANI**

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Hammad Ifraq helps Renaissance to 6-wicket victory; comfortable wins for Sarco, PDO and OHI

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hammad Ifraq’s dashing 88 not out saw Renaissance to an exciting 6-wicket victory against AER in a Premier Division 50-over League match at OC Turf 1 in Amerat on Friday.

AER failed to capitalise on the opportunity to bat first and set a big total on the board, getting bowled out for 174 in the 43rd over. Asim Kamal (65) and Shoaib Muhammed (56) were their main scorers batting at number nine and ten.

Azam Khan and Yash Mehta claimed three wickets each.

Renaissance surpassed the total in the 45th over, scoring 176 for 4, thanks to brilliant batting by Hammad who stayed on to steer his side to a solid win.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): AER 174 all out in 44.2 overs (Asim Kamal 65 – 74, 3x6, Shoaib Muhammad 56 – 3x4, 4x6, Azam Khan 3-31, Yash Mehta 3-33, Asif Khan 2-24, Syed Muzamil 2-11) lost to Renaissance 176 for 4 in 44.4 overs (Hammad Ifraq 88 not out – 13x4, 1x6, Rubella Abdus 2-36) by 6 wickets.

Patil bowls Sarco to victory Sandip Patel’s magnificent 6 for 40 was the highlight of Sar-

AER failed to capitalise on the opportunity to bat first and set a big total on the board, getting bowled out for 174 in the 43rd over. Asim Kamal (65) and Shoaib Muhammed (56) were their main scorers batting at number nine and ten. Azam Khan and Yash Mehta claimed 3 wickets each

co’s superb win over Arabian Region Travel and Tourism (ARTT) in an A Division 50-over League encounter at OC Turf 2 on Friday.

ARTT did well to dismiss Sarco for only 160 in the 39th over with Zeeshan Siddiqui, Nazir Ahmed and Aqil Khan taking two wickets each. Dileepa Srilal (40) and Murad Khan (31) were Sarco’s main scorers.

ARTT found Sandip and Hafiz Zahid unplayable and was bundled out for a dismal 132 in the 35th over with only Zeeshan Siddiqui making a notable score (60 off 67). Hafiz bagged 3 for 29.

Brief Scores (A Division): Sarco 160 all out in 38.5 overs (Dileepa Srilal 40 – 5x4, Murad Khan 31 1x4, 3x6, Zeeshan Siddiqui 2-34, Nazir Ahmed 2-34, Aqil Khan 2-33) beat ARTT 132 all out in 34.3 overs (Zeeshan

Siddiqui 60 – 7x4, 1x6, Sandip Patel 6-40, Hafiz Zahid 3-29) by 28 runs.

Naveed ton helps PDO to easy win

PDO RC’s run-machine Abdul Naveed regained his touch, striking a beautiful 102 as his side thrashed Bank Muscat by 84 runs in a B Division 30-over league match at Muscat Municipality ground 1 in Amerat.

Apart from Naveed’s splendid knock, Nadeem Khan (45) was the other leading scorer as PDO posted 236 for 8 on the board. Mohammed Umar and Zeeshan Tufail bagged two wickets each.

Bank Muscat found the going tough and folded up for 152 in 28.1 overs. Opener Mohsin Nazir and Abbas Al Balushi topscored with 17 each. Pisharody Uday claimed 3 for 27.

Brief Scores (B Division): PDO RC 236 for 8 in 30 overs (Abdul Naveed 102 – 15x4, 1x6, Nadeem Ahmed 45 – 6x4, 1x6, Mohammed Umar 2-47, Zeeshan Tufail 2-37) beat Bank Muscat 152 all out in 28.1 overs (Mohsin Nazir 17 – 2x4, Abbas Al Balushi 17 – 2x4, Pisharody Uday 3-27, Abdul Naveed 2-20, Saud Baig 2-23, Zakir Khan 2-35) by 84 runs.

Ismail bats OHI to big win

An outstanding 178-run opening partnership between Ismail Al Balushi (100 off 57) and Santosh Vishwakarma (88 not out off 45) powered Douglas OHI to a big 145-run victory in a C Division T20 League game at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

Jumbo Electronics did not show the willingness to match OHI’s effort, managing only 98 for 8 in 20 overs. Saeed Mohammed topscored with 34. Abdul Rehman was the pick of OHI bowlers, taking 3 for 22.

Brief Scores (C Division): Douglas OHI 243 for 1 in 20 overs (Ismail Al Balushi 100 – 13x4, 2x6, Santosh Vishwakarma 88 – 12x4, 1x6) beat Jumbo Electronics Co. Ltd 98 for 8 in 20 overs (Saeed Mohammed 34 – 5x4, Abdul Rehman 3-22, Mohsin Alimamad 2-20) by 145 runs.

BEST INVESTMENT OPTION

With the launch of the OMR65.48 million Oman REIT Fund, and its OMR26.1 million initial public offering that can go up to OMR39.2 million, both Omani and non-Omani investors are presented with an unmatched opportunity to park their money safely in one of the most promising investment instruments in Oman.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



PORT OF SALALAH

Despite the challenging situation caused by the COVID-19, the Port of Salalah finished 2020 with a record-breaking container volume of 4.34 million TEUs (twenty-foot-equivalent units) and thereby laying a solid foundation for undisrupted operations also in 2021.

More winners, more cash with ahlibank's 2021 Wafra prize scheme

MUSCAT: In its efforts to enrich more lives and amplify its reach, ahlibank has launched its 2021 Wafra prize scheme, promising cash prizes worth more than RO two million, to be given through various draws across the bank's branch network in the Sultanate.

The bank has developed this year's scheme to target a wider customer base by adding more categories and draws, including the 'Salary for life' prize that will be held in March, June, September and December 2021, where four winners will receive OMR 250,000, and the bank will transfer OMR 1,000 per month to each winner's account for 250 months. Customers who maintain an average quarterly balance of OMR 1,000 are eligible to enter this grand draw.

Commenting on the launch, Muneer Al Balushi, AGM-Head of Retail Distribution at ahlibank, said, "The launch of Wafra in its new format this year confirms our keenness to instill a culture of wise savings for all customers and the community at large, and we look forward to offering an innovative prize scheme that helps add value to their lives. The new prize scheme has been curated to provide more opportunities to win to an increased number of people, thereby meeting their financial security needs and instilling confidence in them to achieve and make their dreams a reality. With a variety of weekly, monthly and special event draws, as well as major quarterly draws, the bank strives to provide



THE LAUNCH OF WAFRA IN ITS NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR CONFIRMS OUR KEENNESS TO INSTILL A CULTURE OF WISE SAVINGS FOR ALL CUSTOMERS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO OFFERING AN INNOVATIVE PRIZE SCHEME THAT HELPS ADD VALUE TO THEIR LIVES.

the best banking services and offers that suit the demands of the customer's daily lives and keep pace with socio-economic dynamics."

In 2021, ahlibank will reward over 1,600 Wafra customers with more than OMR2 million worth of prizes through its extensive branch network in the Sultanate. The weekly draws will reward one lucky winner from each branch with OMR 500. Customers who hold a minimum weekly average balance of OMR100 are entitled to participate in the draw. Additionally, there will be one winner of the weekly draw of OMR500, for premium and private customers, basis he/she maintaining a minimum weekly



average balance of OMR 35,000.

The 2021 Wafra monthly prize will reward one winner from each branch with OMR1,000, where the customer is entitled to win this prize by maintaining a minimum average monthly balance of OMR 5,000. A total of two winners will also be rewarded each month, with OMR 1,000 as part of the 'Salary Transfer' draw, and five winners from the youth 18-25 years old category will be awarded a cash

prize of OMR300; and a prize of OMR200 will be given to 5 winners under 18 years old, as part of the monthly draws.

In addition to the bank's quarterly draws to reward one winner with the 'Salary for life' prize, it has also allocated special quarterly draws to five lucky winners to be rewarded with a cash prize of OMR 5,000 each and a prize of OMR 25,000 for one exclusive and premium customer, in each quarter.

On the occasion of the 51st National Day, 51 bank customers will be able to win OMR1,000 each. This requires maintaining a minimum monthly average balance of OMR100 to be qualified for the draw. In addition to draws made by the bank specifically when opening any new branch, five winners will be awarded a cash prize of OMR500 for each winner.

ahlibank, one of Oman's most preferred banks and the recipient of numerous local, regional

and international awards, continuously strives to provide world-class innovative and advanced services and products, focusing on meeting the needs of its customers in easy and secure ways. The bank is uniquely positioned to meet customer demands through its wide network of branches, ATMs and deposits, and continues its digital transformation journey as part of its commitment to providing the best banking services.

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MONTHLY PRIZES			WEEKLY PRIZES	SPECIAL PRIZES FOR NEW BRANCHES
OMR 1,000 (1 guaranteed winner from each branch)	OMR 300 FOR 5 WINNERS (Special Draw for Youth Accounts)	OMR 200 FOR 5 WINNERS (Special Draw for Children's Accounts)	OMR 500 1 guaranteed winner from each branch & 1 Premium/Exclusiv winner & 1 Imtiyaz winner	OMR 500 FOR 20 WINNERS (5 winners in each draw)
NATIONAL DAY PRIZES				
OMR 1,000 FOR 51 WINNERS				

*Terms & Conditions apply. The above Wafra scheme is valid for 2021 only. The Ahlibank Wafra savings prize account does not offer interest. Please refer to the Bank's website for eligibility criteria and prize structure. Interest bearing account is also available.

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MARKET

INVESTMENT INSTRUMENT

Looking for best investment option? Oman REIT Fund could be the best bet

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the launch of the OMR65.48 million Oman REIT Fund, and its OMR26.1 million initial public offering (IPO) that can go up to OMR39.2 million, both Omani and non-Omani investors are presented with an unmatched opportunity to park their money safely in one of the most promising investment instruments.

Allowing subscribers to the fund to participate in the high potential Omani real estate sector in a hassle-free manner, Oman REIT Fund offers amazing returns with a targeted annual dividend of 7.5 per cent that is expected to grow to 8.2 per cent over five years.

Investment analysts look at Oman REIT Fund as a game-changer in the Sultanate's real estate investment domain, given the multiple benefits offered to the fund's subscribers. From stable and high income, hedge against inflation, long term capital appreciation and high liquidity to the professional management of the fund by expert wealth managers and the diversified, balanced and high-occupancy asset portfolio that are spread across strategic localities and sectors in the Sultanate, the fund has positioned itself as a pioneer and leader in Oman's REIT sector.



According to Jasser Al Aulaqi, Chief Executive Officer of the managing company, "Oman REIT Fund's core objective is to provide investors with a diversified, stable and sustainable income stream, while also allowing them to benefit from organic growth and value-added opportunities so that unitholder returns are maximised."

Explaining how Oman REIT Fund qualifies as the best-in-class investment instrument available today Tariq A. Razeq, Deputy General Manager of the Issue Manager, highlighted some of the outstanding features of the fund. "The key investment features of the fund include attractive yield driven by a large and scalable pan-

Oman asset portfolio; distribution of stable and high dividend continuously; the large fund size; and the opportunity to gain exposure to a potential recovery in Oman's real estate sector.

"The fund is also attractive as Oman's economic diversification efforts are expected to bring in positive results and the real estate sector's contribution to national GDP is set to rise considerably. The long tenure of the assets is another factor that enhances the value and appeal of Oman REIT Fund," he said.

Distributed across premium residential cum commercial, office and retail, logistics and industrial properties, the diverse range of assets owned by Oman REIT Fund is poised to take full advantage of the government's focus on economic diversification that drives the growth and sustainability of Oman's vibrant real estate sector, as well as the government's Vision 2040 that stresses on high-paced infrastructure development. The fund, which is operated by an active asset management strategy, has the added appeal of the availability of a remarkable asset pipeline at an attractive valuation. Presently the fund has as many as 20 high worth individual property assets in different governorates.

Port of Salalah ends 2020 with record-breaking container volume

The spectacular results accomplished by the port have been attributed to the commitment and dedication displayed by the staff at every level across the organisation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Despite the challenging situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Port of Salalah (Oman) finished 2020 with a record-breaking container volume of 4.34 million TEUs (twenty-foot-equivalent units) and thereby laying a solid foundation for undisrupted operations also in 2021.

The year 2020 had an unprecedented global impact on supply chain efficiencies with all players facing existential challenges which required fast, flexible, proactive and a very collaborative approach with all stakeholders for survival. The spectacular results accomplished by the port, in a rather difficult environment, have been attributed to the commit-



GLOBAL IMPACT: The year 2020 had an unprecedented global impact on supply chain efficiencies with all players facing existential challenges which required fast, flexible, proactive and a very collaborative approach with all stakeholders for survival.

ment and dedication displayed by the staff at every level across the organisation and a strong commitment of its customers and business partners.

Port of Salalah also highlighted the collaboration and remarkable efforts of various government agencies like ROP, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport and Information Technology and ASYAD to name a few.

Mark Hardiman, CEO of Port of Salalah stated, "While the year 2020 has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging years the world has witnessed, it was a privilege to lead a team that went above and beyond to ensure that our customers' supply chain were functional and operational during these uncertain times and also mitigated any adverse impact to the local economy to the maximum extent possible. The team also ensured that vital supplies moved in and out of the country

swiftly and seamlessly."

Throughout 2020, the staff displayed extreme caution and discipline in following the safety protocols as well as COVID precautions as prescribed from time to time. This not only helped minimise the infections amongst the port staff but also ensured that the terminal operations continued in an undisrupted manner.

"This is an impressive accomplishment considering the team has also achieved a new record in productivity on top of the record volume," said Scott Selman, Port of Salalah Chief Operating Officer.

According to Scott, these milestones were possible thanks to the Way of Working (WoW) standards adopted by the Port of Salalah together with other facilities operated by APM Terminals. The adoption and implementation of WoW and LEAN methodology have improved performance and increased efficiency.

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CONFERENCE

Virtual Davos aims to heal pandemic wounds

DAVOS: It's that time of the year again when a sleepy Alpine town in Switzerland usually comes alive as the global elite descends on its snow-clad slopes to debate global challenges. This year, however, Davos has been left undisturbed with its eponymous annual jamboree moving online amid a still raging COVID-19 pandemic.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will be among the speakers at the virtual conference that runs from January 25 to January 29. The meeting would be an opportunity for Xi to convey his vision for US-China relations to newly sworn-in US President Joe Biden — relations which grew increasingly strained under former President Donald Trump.

Also in attendance will be European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde and International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

The more than 50-year-old annual event attended by global political and business leaders, celebrities and prominent social activists is taking place amid the worst economic crisis in living memory that has rendered millions jobless and deepened global inequalities.

An annual risks survey published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) warned that economic and social fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to "social unrest, political fragmentation and geopolitical tensions."

We need an economic recovery



ANNUAL EVENT: The more than 50-year-old annual event attended by global political and business leaders, celebrities and prominent social activists is taking place amid the worst economic crisis. - **dw**

ery that is "more resilient, more inclusive and more sustainable," WEF founder Klaus Schwab told reporters.

Rebuilding trust

The pandemic and the uneven responses to the crisis unleashed by it have stoked geopolitical tensions. Governments have chosen to put national interests ahead of others, unilaterally shutting down borders and hoarding food and medical supplies.

We need to restore trust in our world, Schwab said. "We have to substantially reinforce global cooperation again and engage all stakeholders into the solution of the problems we face, and here we have to engage particularly business."

Nowhere has this me-first approach been more apparent than on the vaccine front where rich nations have secured billions of doses — many times the size of their populations — while poor

nations struggle for supplies. The head of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is also one of the speakers, cautioned that the world was on the brink of "catastrophic moral failure."

The global scramble for vaccines, or vaccine nationalism, risks prolonging the pandemic and delaying the easing of global travel restrictions.

"COVID anywhere is COVID everywhere," WEF President Borge Brende told reporters. "We all are in the same boat and we would have to collaborate to really make progress."

Need for green recovery packages

Climate change has dominated Davos meetings in recent years and it's not going to be any different this year.

Sweeping lockdowns to rein in the coronavirus caused global

emissions to drop last year, but experts fear a sharp economic recovery and an easing of restrictions later this year could lead to emissions swiftly bouncing back.

"There is a concern that we may risk doing more damage as we seek a fast return to growth in order to deal with all of the socio-economic issues in the short term. That's where political leaders have to strike a balance," Saadia Zahidi, managing director of the World Economic Forum, told DW. "They have to head towards greener economies, they have to take decisions that will potentially create some trade-offs when it comes to a quick return to jobs and growth."

There have been some optimistic signs. Several countries, including the European Union, have pledged billions of dollars in green recovery packages and a growing number of nations, including major polluter China, have set net-zero emission targets.

The United States is expected to join the club with President Biden taking charge. The new president recommitted the US to the Paris climate accord within hours of his assuming office. Biden's special climate envoy, John Kerry, is expected to make a statement during the Davos agenda week.

Singapore beckons

A virtual summit doesn't mean that Davos regulars, many of them without official badges, would be robbed of their opportunity to hobnob and strike deals at glamorous receptions that take place on the sidelines of the main event.

The WEF has said it would hold its marquee event in person in Singapore from May 13-16 later this year. - **dw**

VATing it out



Bipin Kapur, Managing Partner

With the impending VAT in April 2021, BDO will be addressing your concerns through a series of weekly articles.

Know your Value Added Tax (VAT) Registration Obligation

With VAT going live on 16 April 2021, the Oman Tax Authority (TA) has announced the deadlines for obtaining VAT registration in Oman. VAT registration process would be completed in a phased manner as follows:

Particulars	Annual Supplies	Registration deadline	Effective Date of VAT registration
Phase 1	Above OMR 1,000,000	1 February to 15 March 2021	16 April 2021
Phase 2	OMR 500,000 to OMR 1,000,000	1 April to 31 May 2021	1 July 2021
Phase 3	OMR 250,000 to OMR 499,999	1 July to 31 August 2021	1 October 2021
Phase 4	OMR 38,500 to OMR 249,999	1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022	1 April 2022

Does 'Annual Supplies' means value of sales-purchases turnover?

No, concept of 'Annual Supplies' specifically defined in Oman VAT Law and Registration Guide, includes the following:

Output / sales / services side:

- Value of 5% standard-rated supplies
- Value of 0% rated supplies
- Value of Intra-GCC supplies

Plus

Inward / purchases / procurement side:

- Value of purchases / procurements which are subjected to reverse-charge mechanism i.e. supplies which are typically received from outside of Oman. It has been clarified that aforesaid computation shall not include value associated with that of capital assets.

What are the benefits of obtaining VAT registration?

VAT registration enables a Taxable Person to charge VAT (subject to commercial agreement) to its customers and claim Input VAT (subject to outward supplies being either 5% standard-rated, 0% rated or out-of-scope) on the VAT paid on domestic inward supplies or VAT which is subjected under the reverse charge mechanism. Hence, Oman VAT Law allows voluntary VAT registration subject to certain specified conditions / thresholds.

What happens if VAT registration is not obtained based on prescribed timelines?

Oman VAT law defines following penalties for deliberately refraining from obtaining VAT registration:

- Imprisonment penalty of not less than one year to three years; and
- Fine of not less than OMR 5,000 to OMR 20,000

This is a 4-part series on VAT. Opinions expressed are personal and should not be considered as an opinion or interpretation of law. Further clarity shall be available as VAT Regulations / Guides are issued.

Contact us on info@bdo.com.om OR ashish.athavale@bdo.com.om for any queries on your VAT registrations/obligations.



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Contact: 78371040

Senior MEP Manager
Indian Male: Btech, having 23 years GCC experience with valid Oman driving licence seeks suitable placement.
Contact GSM: 79880377
Email: jaksona8081@gmail.com

FINANCE / ADMIN
Experienced Female with 8 years experience in accounts & Admin who is also a qualified paralegal in company law looking for a suitable post.
Contact: 96303874

FINANCE
Experienced European National Male with 7 years experience looking for a suitable post in the Accounts/ Finance. NOC available.
Contact: 97711584

Structural/Civil Engineer
with 14 years of experience (8 years in USA and 4 years in Oman) in PEB, RCC, Pipeline, Offshore, and Marine structures and have Master degree from USA. Seeking for placement as Project Engineer or Manager.
Please contact me on +968-93368626
irfan.sanjari.syed@gmail.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.
Please contact me on 95051103,
Email: loyannavildsouza@gmail.com

SR. Manager/GM/VP (Plant)
Indian Male, with more than 23 years exp. in repair/ maint/deployment/logistic/procurement of Vehicles/Heavy construction equipment in a large reputed construction industry seeks suitable placement in senior management level. NOC available.
Contact: 79198709

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

Senior Civil Engineer
Indian Post graduate civil engineer with 37 years of professional experience in Oman in property development and construction management seeks senior management opportunities in similar field.
Contact 96504377
jobsearchzac@gmail.com

MBA, seeking job, 27 yrs experience in capable managerial candidature with rich experience in Business operations, Vendor development, Procurement and HR generalist. Can join immediately.
Whatsapp: 7730012111
Mobile: 94268870
Email: mvssmngbr@gmail.com

SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEER
11+ Yrs of experience (10 Yrs Oman experience)
• On Engineer Visa (Expiry - Feb 2022), Can get release also.
• Experience in Building and Factory projects with Ministry & Private Clients.
Looking for fulltime/part time job. Having Omani DL.
GSM: 94125368 ;
premjitthpremanathan@gmail.com

Accountant Indian Male
MBA Finance 2 years experience in india with good knowledge in tally seeks placement.
9539 1786

Moroccan Sales Engineer with
over 6 years of industrial experience in Oman looking for suitable opportunity.
GSM: 93823132
Email: mehdikassen@yahoo.com

SENIOR CORPORATE AND RETAIL BANKER
With over 30 years experience in Credit Management, Relationship Management, Credit Administration, Operations Management and Recoveries/ IFR59 Provisioning Methodologies seeks suitable placement.
Email: DolphinOcean367@gmail.com

Project Engineer
32 yrs old - Having 10 years of experience (6 yrs in Oman) in oil & gas field - Intense work experience in fabrication of Pressure Vessels, Structural Steel fabrication & erection, Manufacturing of Skid Packages, Piping Spools & supports, Storage Tanks, Stack & Ducts, Pig Traps. EPC & Turnaround projects.
Having DL & Current Visa expires in Feb/2021.
Contact # boopathiraja88@gmail.com / 97412105

QUALITY MANAGER
Indian, Quality Manager, 18 years exp.4.3 years at Abu Dhabi, looking for top/senior management position in quality. Coordinating RFQ to Mass production, Time, Resource & Quality planning, Process design, Project execution, etc. Available to join shortly.
Contact: 91-9952022345,
venkatavaradu@rediffmail.com

PURCHASE + STORES + ADMINISTRATION
Indian Male 10+ yrs experience in Oman (Currently available in Oman). Experience in Engineering / Construction, Manufacturing, Trading Concern & Structural Steel Projects. Materials Management with administrative skills. Looking for suitable placement and ready to join immediately with D/L & NOC.
Contact: 78235621/bsdaa@gmail.com

OMANI HR/PRO
Omani, 15 yrs experience, PRO, Relation development, Labour & Crime law, HR & Time Management. Fluent in English, Arabic & Hindi seeks Part Time job.
Contact 97264447

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

Indian female B Com graduate having 7 years' experience as Accountant in Oman (Tally ERP 9). Seeking suitable placement in Accounts/ Admin.
Contact: 92999419
d.kaiyarla1986@gmail.com

Project Engineer
Experience more than 20 years of experience working in: Public Administration, Human Resource, Public Relations, Preparation and Writing of Reports, Coordination and Preparation of Meetings, Business Development, Marketing, Management and Retail Real Estate.
Contact whatsapp: 994777009
Email: abualmutsum@gmail.com

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION/CEO OFFICE/OPS/HR /CORPORATE COMMUNICATION/ADMIN/MKTG
Smart Indian, Masters, excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17years Oman exp including Multi-Billion Airports Project, Hospital, Media, EPC handling Project Administration, CEO Office Management, Corporate Communication, Admin, HR, Operations, Customer Relations. # 99283938

General Manager/ Sr. Manager Role, Indian Professional (BE, MBA, PMP, FIDIC) with 25 years experience into Civil and Infrastructure Constructions and Project Management. NOC available.
Contact 94634053

Senior Software Test Engineer
Indian Female 25yrs, BCA, M.tech, 5+ years experience in Wipro technologies. Key Skills – Web Application testing, Anti money laundering, Agile methodology, Manual Testing, Automation testing, selenium, Java, SQL, Appium and API testing.
Contact: 71792368 / 99295161 / nibesh.cmn@gmail.com

INDIAN, female, MBA, 4 years experience in Office administration and customer service (Banking & Construction field), knowledge of MS packages, currently on family visa, residing in Ruwi.
Mob: 95073054
Email: bfaqua88@gmail.com

Finance Manager / CFO
Indian Chartered Accountant and Cost Accountant with 25 years experience in Finance, MIS, Budget, Strategy, Projects, VAT seeks suitable placement.
Contact: 99884291 / 99741875
VIPUL70@GMAIL.COM

Junior Architect with 3-years Oman experience in designing, proficiency in AutoCAD, Sketchup, Lumion Vray & Photoshop. Has worked in quantity estimations. Looking for suitable placement in Muscat.
Contact 95972625

MicroMasters in Supply Chain Management, B-Tech in Mechanical Engineering 3 years industry experience as a Sales Engineer, Valid Oman DL.
Contact: 99137115
Email: adimurali7@gmail.com

CIVIL ENGINEER
16+ Years Experience In Site Supervision, Structural Engineering, ETABS, STAAD, ROADS, BRIDGES, Project manager, INDUSTRIAL. WORKED WITH SOHAR ALUMINIUM AND OCC. WITH ALL SAFETY Training & KNOWLEDGE. Available Noc & Valid Driving License.
Call or Wts app 98333185

Finance/Accounts Manager
Indian male (MBA Fin) with 20 yrs working exp as Accounts & Finance Manager (Strategic planning, Procurement, Finance, Accounting, HR Admin, Audit, Tax, VAT) seeking suitable post. Valid Oman DL. NOC available.
Contact No.99705790
email: thoms_mat@yahoo.com

Graduate Civil Engineer
From India with over 11 years Project Management Experience with Consultant and Client in Oman with local release & driving license seeks suitable opportunities.
Email: contactsyedshams@gmail.com;
GSM: +968 98500235

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 khalid.bin.umar@gmail.com



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Email: media@nexusnovel.com

JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

Indian Female Structural/Civil Engineer having 25 years of experience including 18 Years Gulf Experience, on employment visa is seeking for suitable placement. Ready to join immediately with necessary documents. **Contact: 92731684/79858363**

Irani Civil engg +18 yrs experience in GCC, looking for job. **Contact 79135430**

BE Civil engineer having 13 years oman experience mainly in building construction looking for a suitable position. **Contact no: 72132426**

Landscaping and Irrigation Engineer having 9+ yrs total exp, 6 yrs in oman, looking for suitable job. **Contact no. 72100025**

Omani is looking for job. UK graduate since 1991. B.Engg+MBA, experience PDO, Diwan, Abu Dhabi, group of companies as GM. **Contact/Whatsapp 94174443**

A Civil engineer with a valid D/L, 9 years experience in Oman seeks job. **Contact 97646908**

30 Yrs Male, Steel Fabrication Engineer, 6Yrs in Oman, Mechanical CAD, Shop Drawing, Ph: 97097688.

Project / Site Engineer, Btech Civil, 8+ yrs Gulf Experienced in Major Projects, Oman D/L Ph-99857800.

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 92180869, E-mail: mamuns02@yahoo.com**

Omani HSE engineer with 1.5 yrs experience in Oil & Gas & construction seeks job.DL available. **Contact 70707011.**
Email malisyabi@gmail.com

Looking for a job for the post of Electrical Engineer with Btech and 15 years exp in Oman. NOC and Release available **Contact 92254336.**
Email ameen1667@gmail.com

Electrical Engineer having 7 years of experience in construction sector in Oman in MEP, Data cabling, BMS works, ELV systems looking for opportunities. **Contact: +968-96335725**

Arabic/English speaking Civil engineer, 5 yrs experience in Projects coordination, preparing submittals & engineering software, resident & have valid DL. **Contact 95432250**

Indian male having diploma in mech engg & valid Oman DL have 6 yrs experience in Oman # 95645241

Civil Engineer, Indian female with 3 yrs experience in Oman, 28 yrs old, looking for a suitable job in a construction Company. Oman DL, valid visa. # 99772710, 99256371

Mechanical Engineer, 10 yrs exp with Oman DL, looking for sponsor/ position in MEP solar, Oil & Gas. **Contact 79550976, +919446253959.**
Email afsalhyder@gmail.com

Senior Civil engineer with 12 yrs exp in government & private construction projects, looking for a suitable position. **Contact 95962450.**
email solanki.ahmed@gmail.com

B.E Civil Engineer having over all 14 yrs Experience in building & Roads with consultant and contractor. NOC available immediate joining. **Contact 94011294.**
Email: adnanluky@gmail.com

Planning Engineer, Indian 20 yrs experience in using Primavera P6 for oil & gas, water pipeline & building, MEP works scheduling seek suitable senior position with release & Oman DL. # 92651105, 90643701
reji_mathai@hotmail.com

Safety officer (engineer), two years experience in Oil field in Oman, ne-bosh IGC, valid DL. # 79318246

Planning Engineer: Pakistani National with BE Civil, 13 years of experience including 8 years in Oman in Project Planning, Scheduling and Delay Analysis looking for a suitable position. Local transfer - NOC, **Contact: 97018909**

JOB WANTED

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT (SRI LANKAN)

MBA, B.Sc and CA (Intermediate) with 18 years of experience (12th year in Oman) in Retail, FMCG, Leasing and Property management sectors. Immediate joining. DL. NOC is available.
M: 9641 6394 / Mail: scms.acc133@gmail.com

Bsc In Civil Engineering, MBA in Project Management, PMP certified, having 14 yrs experience (12yrs in Oman) with experience of construction of 4 star hotel, Airports, commercial & residential buildings, factories, Oil stations, is looking for a suitable placement. Having Oman Driving licence with NOC.
Contract: 99721926, tanvircivil@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

IT

CRM, ERP & MIS analyst, experience 5 yrs. **Contact 71561266**

Sudanese, Male, BSc with honors in Computer Science. 5 yrs Experience in IT support, Android apps Development, ERB Systems, and systems management & Administration. **Contact 96606209.**
Email Blackmode21@gmail.com

LOGISTIC

Seeking opportunity in managerial position in logistics, having 4 yrs exp in administering logistice through air, sea, land & documentation within Oman & 6 yrs in India. **Contact 98347003**
Email jibyjohn28@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Lady G P. With M O H licence. Full or part-time, for Capital area only. **Contact 99470508**

MISCELLANOUS

Plumbing, painting maintenance works. **Contact 96191837, 98937266**

Driver plumber Electrician, looking for job. **Contact 96750080**

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MANAGER

Electrical Project Manager with 10 Years Experience in (Primary & Distribution) Substations and Over head lines, Oman DL. # 99022692

MECHANIC/TECHNIC

Civil Surveyor, 10 yrs experienced land surveyor. Experience in building, pipeline, Oil & Gas. **Contact 99451321**

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Sri Lanka male in Oman seeking a job as, procurement, store manager, operation & Administration, Degree, fluent in Supply Chain Management- Oracle ERP. **Contact 98878815**

Indian male 12 years experience in purchase store management and Inventory looking for suitable job with NOC, Oman DL. Gsm 97099785. **Email rajakmani66@gmail.com**

Keralite, 31 yrs purchase assistant, 10 yrs working experience in Oman, valid Oman DL. Looking for suitable jobs. **Contact 98615731**
Email sanalk73@gmail.com

Filipino, male with more than 10 years experience in Oman as Store Incharge, Sales associate, customer service, retail, warehouse logistics and merchandiser with driving license. **Contact no. 95042624**

Indian male (29)MBA, 6 years' experience in procurement and sales coordination with valid Oman D/L. available for immediate joining. **Contact: 92536194**

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JOB WANTED

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13 years exp in sales, marketing and distribution management. Indian male, MBA, DL. **Contact 78097687**

Indian with 16years experience in sales and marketing with valid Oman DL, looking for opportunities **Contact 79685337**

Indian male with Oman D/L, looking for job in Sales. Having experience in sales in a very well reputed FMCG company in Oman. **Contact 90625165,** **Email id: farookshamas@gmail.com**

Business development Executive with vast marketing knowledge 20 yrs experience seeks employment. **Whatsapp 95950370**

Sales Executive, 14 yrs experience in FMCG/TT/Oilfield supplies with DL, looking for suitable placement. **Contact 90174597**

Indian male B.com graduate, PG Diploma in logistic (Air cargo and supply chain management) & Digital Marketing. Valid Oman DL. Looking for suitable placement. **79748272**
Email: shazilsadique@gmail.com.

6 years experienced Sales officer looking for the suitable job. Valid. Omani driving license available. **Contact 98424254**

20 yrs experience in Sales & Marketing of Central Air Conditioning & Structural steel etc. **Contact 968-95950370**

23 Years Graduate in Marketing looking for job in Sales or Marketing having 03 years sales experience. **Contact: 9427 1666.**

MBA Marketing/HR, 5 years working experience in India. Experience in Sales, Marketing and operations. **Contact +96896652549**

15 yrs exp in perfumes & cosmetics in GCC. DL holder. **Contact 78399076, 95868684**

Sales/office driver, 15 yrs experience with DL & NOC. Muscat Area. **Contact 79758863**



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TFMOman

ROUND-UP

Meethaq unveils mega OMR1.5mn Hibati prize draw

The Hibati Savings Scheme has grown rapidly to become one of the top Islamic savings schemes in Oman

MUSCAT: Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat, has launched the 2021 edition of its Hibati Savings scheme based on Sharia rules and



principles. In line with its vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’ and commitment to partnership in promoting a healthy savings habit in Oman, the bank’s 2021 Hibati savings scheme will give away over OMR1.5 million in cash prizes

throughout the year. Since its launch in 2018, the Hibati Savings Scheme has grown rapidly to become one of the top Islamic savings schemes in Oman. Speaking on the occasion, Amor Said Al Amri, Meethaq Head of Retail Branches, said, “We are delighted to launch the Hibati Savings programme for 2021. The bank has been constantly updating the prize scheme taking into account customer feedback from across the Sultanate. The total cash prize amount has been increased substantially this year and the scheme will now give more chances for customers to win valuable prizes.” He thanked all customers for their confidence in the scheme and the various products and services of Meethaq.

Sohar International launches new prize scheme for 2021

MUSCAT: Sustaining the momentum of creating more winning journeys for its customers, and adding more value to their lives, Sohar International has announced the new Sohar|Prize Scheme for the year 2021, with total prizes worth over OMR 2.25 million, to be rewarded to more than 1,400 customers. The launch of the new scheme was announced at a press conference, held at the bank’s head office located at Waterfront, Muscat, in the presence of senior officials from the bank. The event commenced with a recap video of the 2020 prize scheme, followed by the welcome speech from Khalil Al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Sohar International. A new scheme animation led to a presentation on the bank’s Prize Scheme for the year 2021. This was followed by a Q&A session with representatives of the press. Emphasising on the bank’s vision to become a world-class Omani services company that helps customers, community



and people to prosper and grow, Khalil Al Hedaifi, said, “At Sohar International, we believe that as a responsible bank we must advocate the benefits of prudent saving habits among the people of Oman, which will help them to fulfil their dreams and aspirations. “By maximising the number of winners and prize values, the new prize scheme for the year 2021, brings winning closer to our account holders more than ever. Furthermore, the scheme’s diverse eligibility criteria make regular

saving an easy practice for individuals. Moving forward, we will continue to encourage our loyal and valued customers to commence their journey of savings by opening a Sohar prize scheme account to dream big and win big.” Catering to all segment types, the new scheme offers customers more draws, more chances, and more winners with the introduction of the newly added Salary Account Draws and beefing up the previous categories with more overall value in cash prizes.

MILESTONE

SV Pittie Sohar Textiles creates history

MUSCAT: SV Pittie Sohar Textiles, on January 11, 2021, achieved another milestone. The first batch of 305 Omani women completed their 14-month training programme and started work in the plant as full-time employees. The global pandemic leads to several exceptional challenges to be overcome. Despite it, all the company successfully maintained its operations whilst ensuring safety and precautionary measures. The company has pledged employment to a total of 1,000 Omani women who are undergoing their training programme at the dedicated training centre, ITQAN. The remaining batches have resumed their training programme and expected to graduate in the coming months. SV Pittie Group one of the prominent leaders in Compact yarn manufacturing envisage establishing an Integrated Textile Cluster of \$1.2 billion, positioning the Sultanate of Oman as a global textile hub creating enormous job opportunities, empowering local entrepreneurship and creating a new industry sector. The Sohar facility \$428 million investment in addition to Yarn manufacturing has also set up a downstream facility for knitting, weaving and apparel thereby creating value addition particularly the non-oil sector and substantial employment opportunities. The integrated apparel unit will be producing abayas, dishdasha, uniforms in addition to garments for international markets. The Board of Directors expressed their appreciation to its partners Ministry of Labour / National Training Fund for their support and cooperation. Chirag Pittie, Chairman in his note to the new employees congratulated



and welcomed them into Team SV Pittie, Oman. It is a historical and proud moment as the Yarn manufactured in the plant for the first time will be “Made in

Oman by Omani Women for the world”. We are happy to have you on board. Together we are creating history as the products you will be making will be exported

to various countries worldwide. Your dedication, hard work and commitment is crucial for the company and country, said the chairman.

AL KANZ SAVINGS SCHEME



NBO promises OMR3.25 million in cash prizes

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched its 2021 Al Kanz Savings Scheme, pledging OMR3.251 million in prize money over the year. Under the theme ‘Saving for a better tomorrow’, the yearly scheme aims to help the bank’s customers save for the future with a variety of monthly, quarterly and half-yearly draws, offering big rewards. The announcement was made during a special event with guest of honour Dr Said bin Hamad Al Rubai, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, in attendance. The bank also conducted the final 2020 Mega Draw, which gave two lucky account-holders OMR 250,000 each, as well as OMR 65,000 as part of its monthly draws. As it embarks on Al Kanz Savings Scheme’s 26th year, NBO continues to reward its customers, while supporting them to lead financially secure lives. Wessam Al Asfoor, Head of Premier Banking at NBO, said, “We are looking forward to this year’s Al Kanz Savings Scheme, which continues to be a way to

engage with our customers and instil in them a culture of saving. Last year, taught us how important financial security is. With the draw, along with our Al Kanz Savings account, which offers unique savings opportunities and the utmost in customer convenience, we aim to help people prepare themselves for the uncertainty of the future.” The scheme’s biggest payout will be OMR 3.251 million in prize money. The half-yearly mega draw, which will give a total of OMR 1 million to four winners in June and December. The quarterly regional draw will also give 24 customers OMR 25,000 each, totalling OMR 600,000 by the end of the year. Exclusive draws will also be conducted for Sadara account-holders, giving away OMR 25,000 each to 30 winners over 10 months; Mazaya Exclusive, with OMR 10,000 each going to four winners every month; as well as a Youth draw, giving away OMR 100 to 115 winners four times during the year. On top of that, 50 winners will be given OMR 500 every single month in the Salary Transfer draws.

CHARITY

Sohar Institute for Music & Arts raises OMR100,000

MUSCAT: Geetha Ravishankar, Director of Sohar Institute for Music & Arts (SIMA), along with her husband, R. Ravishankar, met with Munu Mahawar, the Ambassador of India to Oman, to present all the evidence of the charitable contributions made to various associations and centres in Oman. The initiative to raise funds, which commenced in 2006, focused on supporting associations and centres in the country that cater to critical mental and health issues and awareness of these issues and was done through SIMA’s Annual Cultural Programmes. The total funds contributed to amounted OMR100,000. The efforts of the contribution were received by the ambassador who congratulated Geetha for her contributions to help the local community. Geetha Ravishankar had also carried out similar efforts in Zambia and in Cyprus where she lived before coming to Oman. Her institutes in Zambia, Cyprus and Oman have worked in close cooperation with the Indian Embassies in these countries. The ambassador as-



sured her of continued cooperation. The funds amounting to a total sum of OMR100,000 was contributed to the following associations/centres in Oman: • Al Noor Association for the Blind in North Batinah • Oman Cancer Association • Association of Early Intervention for Children with Special Needs • Al Wafaa Volunteering Social Centres for Children with Special Needs

• Oman Association for the Disabled • Oman Women’s Association • Oman Autism Society The total amount on OMR100,000 excludes other contributions made to associations such as Al Wafaa, where she helped provide a Green Roofs and some air conditioners. Including these other such amounts would result in total contributions to exceed OMR100,000.

EVENT

Oman Forum to focus on Vision 2040

MUSCAT: Under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the 10th edition of Oman Forum 2021 imparting insights on the roadmap for Vision 2040 and Renewed Renaissance to facilitate a constructive dialogue amongst stakeholders, is set to enlighten the audience on 8 March. The half-day event delivered in Arabic and organised by Alam Al-Iktisaad will take place at the Sheraton Oman Hotel. Dr Saif bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al-Haddabi, Undersecretary - Research and Innovation, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation is the guest of honour and the keynote speaker. Attended by top government officials, decision-makers, C-suite executives, business owners, SMEs, young entrepreneurs, university graduates and change-makers, the event offers captivating content and a line-up of key personalities from the Sultanate. They will review Oman’s journey on the path of the Renewed Renaissance that aims to leverage its competitive advantage, foster private sector-driven competitive business environment, and create an efficient and friendly govern-



ance framework. The event will align the policymakers and thought leaders to offer perspectives for overcoming challenges posed by the pandemic, the economic and social implications and measures to make Oman a self-sustained nation. The engaging panel discussions and presentations made by industry stalwarts, budding entrepreneurs, ecosystem enablers and the thought-provoking address by the eminent profiles, will offer in-depth direction on Oman’s futuristic plans, government policies and socio-economic environment. The informative and interactive sessions will offer the audi-

ence more details on Vision 2040, which will create a nation built on innovation, sustainable development, diversified economy and empowered knowledge-based society. The two-panel discussions consisting of luminaries from various sectors will inspire the audience on topics that include ‘Oman’s readiness to transition to an innovation, technology and knowledge-based society & economy’ and ‘Building a sustainable future through innovation.’ The dynamic entrepreneurs and scholars from various fields will present a series of case studies. The event will also witness the presentation of the Alam Al-Iktisaad Sustainability Awards for achievers in the areas of human, social, and economy and environment. Over the years, the leading businesses, media and government bodies have supported the event. The 2021 edition of the event is endorsed by the Oman Manufacturers Association and supported by prominent media houses including Times of Oman, Al Shabiba, Oman Economic Review and Business Live Middle East. UMS Events, the leading events management company in the Oman, will manage the event.



ROUND-UP



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AUTO PARTS

Landmark International opens its sixth branch in Oman

MUSCAT: Landmark International, one of the leading auto body parts distributors in GCC region with customer network in Africa, CIS regions and the Middle East has opened its door to customers in Sur, its 6th branch in Oman. The latest branch was inaugurated on January 17 under strict COVID protocol.

Landmark International - Oman, under the leadership of vice-chairman Tariq Mohammed Al Balush, started its operation with its first retail outlet in Mabalah with four employees in 2018. In less than three years, it has expanded over Oman with four more branches, one each in Sohar, Wadi Kabir, Nizwa and Salalah bringing total branches to five.



With a storage facility of 15,000 square feet, 30+ employees and more than 30 plus well-known auto body part brands, Landmark is trying more and harder to reach out to end-users and consumers with best possible prices and service.

Landmark International Oman is the sister concern company of Landmark International UAE. As of date Landmark, International UAE has 12 branches spread out in UAE with 200+ employees, 200,000+ square feet of a storage facility, 60+ delivery vehicles and 3,000+ customers within UAE. Its main strength is the wide range of auto body parts availability it keeps at competitive prices and the highly experienced staff who ensure the best customer service.

Apart from UAE and Oman Landmark has a presence in India as well with an exclusive dealership of one of the world's most renowned auto lamp brand DEPO. With 30+ sub-dealers spread out in

India, storage facilities located in Mumbai and Delhi, 20 well-trained sales staffs we have been working hard to serve the customer in India as well for the past one year.

Tariq Mohammed Al Balush, vice president of Landmark International expressed hope of serving the people of Sur in the best possible way and also announced the opening of its 7th branch in Mabalah shortly.

Youth Sada and BP Oman conclude ‘Habbah’ initiative

The programme aimed at developing small and medium enterprises in the Al Dhahirah Governorate targeting entrepreneurs, students and jobseekers



MUSCAT: In partnership with BP Oman, Youth Sada held a virtual ceremony marking the conclusion of the 'Habbah' programme, under the patronage of Najeeb bin Ali bin Ahmed Al Rawas, Governor of Al Dhahirah Governorate.

The programme aimed at developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Al Dhahirah Governorate and targeted entrepreneurs, students and jobseekers.

The programme included open-to-public activities and specialised training courses attending to the current challenges faced by businesses. The training courses focused on business model development, human resources management, financial management, project marketing, business growth planning and contract and bid management. A total of 15 businesses and over 1,000 participants from around Oman

participated in the programme.

Shamsa Al-Rawahiya, BP Oman Social Investment Manager, commented, "This programme reflects BP Oman's commitment to diversifying our national economy by empowering start-up SMEs to run their business sustainably through unprecedented challenges. Our social investment programmes aim to support economic diversification, job creation and the overall development of Omani people in line with the nation's development goals. To date, over 94,000 people have benefitted directly through 106 initiatives since the launch of BP's programmes in 2014."

Qais Al Maqrashi, Chief Executive Officer at Youth Sada, added: "The 'Habbah' programme

came at an exceptional time this year. It focused on addressing current developments in the small businesses sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our programme played a huge role in supporting SMEs to manage these challenges by designating a specialised consultation and training team to help the start-ups come up with applicable and sustainable solutions."

It is worth noting that during the ceremony, Youth Sada announced the launch of its programme cycle for the year 2021 which are the Youth Sada Centre programme, Reading Family programme, and the third edition of the Al Dhahirah Leadership Forum and lastly the second cycle of the 'Habbah' programme.

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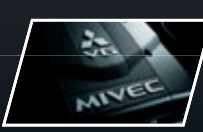




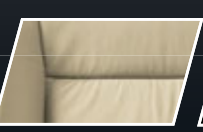
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RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY

Qatar Airways to resume Atlanta services with 4 weekly flights

DOHA: Qatar Airways announced it will add its 12th gateway in the US with the resumption of four-weekly Atlanta flights starting 1 June.

The carrier will also significantly increase frequencies adding an additional 13 weekly flights to operate a total of 83 weekly flights across its 12 gateways. Having become the largest international carrier during the early stages of the pandemic, the airline has applied its unrivalled knowledge of global passenger flows and booking trends to rebuild its global network and cement its position as the leading Middle East airline connecting the US with Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We are proud to be the leading Middle East airline providing safe and reliable connectivity to and from the United States via the Best Airport in the Middle East, Hamad International Airport. Having never stopped flying to the US throughout the pandemic, we have steadily rebuilt our network, gradually resuming destinations and adding more frequencies. With the upcoming launch of Seattle and the resumption of Atlanta, we will reach 12 gateways in the US."



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