



TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2021

www.muscatdaily.com

Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000



25°C/15°C

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK HAS SENT GREETINGS TO INDIAN PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND ON THE OCCASION OF INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY, AND DAVID HURLEY, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA ON HIS COUNTRY'S NATIONAL DAY.

HM restructures Defence, National Security Councils

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued three Royal Decrees on Monday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 12/2021 regulates/restructures the Defence Council

Article 1 stipulates that the Defence Council will be restructured under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander, and with the following as members:

The Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Minister of Royal Office, Head of Office of the Supreme Commander; Head of Liaison and Coordination at Royal Office; Head of Internal Security Service, Inspector-General of Police and Customs; and Chief of Staff of Sultan's Armed Forces. Article 2 stipulates that the Defence Council, without prejudice to its other specialisations/functions stated in laws and Royal Decrees, will specialise in reviewing all issues related to safeguarding and defending the sultanate's safety and will convene when it is deemed necessary to declare the State of Public Mobilisation.

Article 3 cancels Royal Decree No 105/96 on the Defence Council, as well as all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions. Article 4 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 13/2021 regulates/restructures the National Security Council

Article 1 stipulates that the National Security Council will be restructured under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander, and the following as members:

The Minister of Royal Office, Head of Office of the Supreme



Maj Gen Nasser al Ma'awali



Maj Gen Sulaiman al Zakwani



Maj Gen Salim al Hosni



Maj Gen Mussalam Ja'abob



Maj Gen Abdullah al Harthi



Maj Gen Khalifa al Siyabi

Commander; Head of Liaison and Coordination at the Royal Office; Head of Internal Security Service; Inspector-General of Police and Customs; and Chief of Staff of Sultan's Armed Forces.

The council may call for the attendance of whomever it might consider appropriate other than its members.

Article 2 states that the National Security Council specialises in all issues related to national security.

Article 3 states that the National Security Council will convene under the chairmanship of His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander, in cases he deems necessary. Otherwise, it convenes under the chairmanship of the Minister of Royal Office, Head of Office of the Supreme Commander.

Article 4 stipulates that the Na-

tional Security Council will have a Secretary-General who will be appointed by a Royal Decree.

Article 5 states that the National Security Council will be assisted by a Secretariat General that reports to the Royal Office and a number of committees reporting to the council.

It also states that the Minister of Royal Office, Head of the Office of the Supreme Commander, will issue a decision to regulate the functions of the Secretariat General and specialisations of the Secretary-General, besides the formation of the committees and determination of their specialisations.

Article 6 cancels Royal Decree No 63/2003 on the National Security Council, as well as all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article 7 states that this decree

will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 14/2021 on Military Promotions and Appointments

Article 1 promotes Brig Nasser Saleh Saud al Ma'awali to the rank of Major General and appoints him Secretary General of the National Security Council in the Royal Office.

Article 2 promotes Brig Sulaiman Khalid Sulaiman al Zakwani to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Secretary General of Military Affairs in the Royal Office.

Article 3 promotes Brig Salim Ali Badr al Hosni to the rank of Major General and appoints him Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman.

Continued on Page 03



Eid Mohammed al Thaqafi and Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said in the latter's office on Monday

Sayyid Asaad bids farewell to envoys of KSA, S Africa

Muscat - On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received separately in his office on Monday Eid Mohammed al Thaqafi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to the sultanate, and Manabile Shogole, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the sultanate, at the end

of their tour of duties.

The two ambassadors expressed their sincere thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to them while carrying out their duty in the sultanate from His Majesty the Sultan, the Government and the Omani people, which enabled them to perform their assignments. They also wished His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and a long life, and the sultanate further progress and growth under the wise leader-

ship of His Majesty.

Sayyid Asaad expressed his gratitude for the two ambassadors' efforts exerted in serving the relations between the sultanate and their countries.

He wished the two ambassadors success, and the people of their countries progress and prosperity.

The meetings were attended by the Secretary General and the two advisers at Sayyid Asaad's office.

ONA

Sayyid Shihab receives Bangladeshi ambassador, discusses bilateral ties



Muscat - H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik bin Taimour al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received in his office in Al Murtafaa Camp on Monday H E

Mizanur Rahman, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the sultanate.

The two sides exchanged cordial conversation and re-

viewed the relations between the two friendly countries. They also discussed matters of common concern.

ONA

Gipsy Kings live in Muscat on Feb 25

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Gipsy Kings, the legendary band that has mesmerised audiences from China to Brazil, New Orleans to Russia, and Australia to Africa with its distinctive musical style, will be performing in Muscat on February 25 at JW Marriott Muscat.

Having sold more than 60mn records worldwide, and winning the Grammy for Best World Music Album in 2013, Gipsy Kings led by André Reyes continues its epic musical journey. Millions of listeners are captivated by Gipsy Kings' unique mix of flamenco styles with Western pop and Latin rhythms that brings together many cultures. Many Omanis have grown up listening



to Gipsy Kings' music.

'After a warm welcome in 2019, the Kings of Catalan rumba, Gipsy Kings by André Reyes is returning to Muscat. Bright Act Middle East is reintroducing entertainment events with new safety standards where you can enjoy the music while getting your favourite food and

most importantly stay safe and healthy,' Bright Act Middle East said in a statement.

Seating is open for booking according to group size in allocated areas distanced from other groups. Tickets are available at platinumlist.net or for direct booking with Al Saeedy International Events.

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To help jobseekers and reduce their numbers in the country, three young Omanis are designing an app which has been feted by Sharqiyah University.

Khawla Khalfan al Omarani, Al Anoud Saeed al Eisaei and Ammar Saeed al Abri from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas are in the process of developing the app simply called CV App.

While still in its elementary stage, the app being developed by a startup formed by the three students, recently won the second place in a competition hosted by Sharqiyah University.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Al Anoud said, "We competed



We competed against 23 teams from various colleges and universities in the sultanate

AL ANOUD
SAEED AL EISAEI

against 23 teams from various colleges and universities in the sultanate. Our college supports



Khawla Khalfan al Omarani

us in competing in such events, besides helping us expand our knowledge and sharpen research skills."

According to Al Anoud, the idea for the app emerged after they noticed the number of jobseekers growing and the numerous problems entrepreneurs faced.

"Our app provides conven-

ience to jobseekers in an innovative way. The app has a striking design and is easy to use. It includes tips on writing CVs, advice from specialists, virtual interviews, sector-wise statistics on employment, job announcements and suitability match for available jobs," Al Anoud said.

"It also provides information on training centres for graduates as well as non-graduates and tips on applying for jobs. The app gathers employers and jobseekers on a single platform," she added.

She believes the country needs an app like the one they are designing, more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it allows jobseekers to send CVs and attend interviews remotely.



03

Over 900,000 housing units needed by 2040: H E Shu'aaili



04

Banks reveal over RO56mn exposure to Darvesh Group



07

Borders tighten around world; virus curfew fury spills over



12

H H Sayyid Theyazin meets club chiefs in Sohar



13

72nd Indian Republic Day: Special Supplement

Let's Read's writing competition announced

Muscat - The Dar al Atta'a Let's Read Committee, in association with Clair cleaning products, has announced the launch of its 15th Annual Children's Writing Competition. Students from the ages of eight to 18 years are invited to submit a 'Story from Oman'.

Jane Jaffer, chairperson of Let's Read, said that the entries will be judged according to the following criteria: The setting, the characters and the plot. Entrants should provide a vivid description of the place, create credible and memorable characters, and write an exciting story full of drama and suspense.

Jane added that additional points will be given to entrants who submit an accompanying illustration. Winners will be presented prizes and may see their work in print.

Sami al Lawati from Clair said, "We are delighted to support this Let's Read initiative and we look forward to presenting the winners with great prizes."

Stories submitted can be one of the following - a story based on Omani folklore and retold, a



completely fictional story set in Oman, or a personal account of something that happened in Oman. The entries can be written in English or Arabic. The word count must not exceed 500. Every entry should include the name, age, phone number and email address of the entrant and the school email address.

All entries should be submitted at the Let's Read Charity Book Shop on the third floor of Oman Avenues Mall or sent by email to letsreadoman@gmail.com.

Deadline for submission - April 3.

International Day of Education marked

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Almost a year after the World Health Organization first declared a global health emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating toll on the education of millions of children and young people. The closing down of physical classrooms in schools, colleges and universities has severely undermined learning opportunities for students at all levels.

As Oman joined the world in marking the International Day of Education, it remains as urgent as ever to tackle the global education crisis by mobilising and investing effectively and creatively to make the most of limited resources, and embrace a new vision of education for the future.

According to Unesco, education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. This year, the third International Day of Education (January 24) was marked on Monday, January 25, under the theme 'Recover and Revitalise Education for the COVID-19 Generation'.



'Now is the time to power education by stepping up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery,' Unesco said.

In Oman, since the dawn of the Blessed Renaissance initiated by the Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the government, within its successive development plans, has given education top priority. 'To contribute to the process

of building and developing Oman, the government began spreading the 'umbrella of education' over every inch of the sultanate, making it a fundamental and compulsory right for every child until the end of the basic education stage,' the Ministry of Education said in a statement to mark the day.

The indicators of the report 'Education in the sultanate from illiteracy to postgraduate studies

- 2020', issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information, confirmed Oman's achievement of significant progress.

'The report also indicated an increase in the number of schools in the sultanate to 1,163 schools across its governorates, 56,899 teachers and 637,000 students, besides keen interest in the students studying in special education schools, as well as in-

ternational schools that target foreign communities,' the MoE said. 'The total number of students is about 844,000 distributed in 2,046 government and private schools across all educational levels. The number of students constitutes approximately 18 per cent of the population of Oman.'

According to the MoE, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 was an important event in the human journey. Its impact on various vital sectors, including the education sector, resulted in crises that may be the most dangerous in the modern era.

After schools closed in mid-March following the virus outbreak in the sultanate, the MoE endeavoured to find appropriate alternatives for the continuity of education, taking into account the priority of safety and health of students, teaching and administrative staff.

With active community participation, many alternatives were proposed to operate schools for the academic year 2020/21 safely.

Tender Announcement



الواجهة البحرية وخدمات المراسي
WATERFRONT & MARINA SERVICES

Waterfront and Marina Services SAOC (WMS) is the onsite management company of Marina Bandar Al Rowdha, which is Omani's first marina development opened in 1996 and since then has enjoyed the enviable position of being the first choice to berth vessels in Oman. Over the years, WMS has developed Marina Bandar Al Rowdha to be the only full-service leisure marina in the Sultanate. The marina hosts the only currently public accessible ship lift for up to 65 tons that services the busy marina workshop. In the interests of better serving the marina membership and the wider leisure boating community, WMS is currently looking for an operator for its functioning marina workshop and ship lift facility at Marina Bandar Al Rowdha. The successful applicant will be able to move into the premises on a turnkey basis with potential to expand the capability of current outfit.

WMS would like to invite competent and experienced companies to participate in the tender below:

Particulars	Description
Subject	Operation and Management of Marine Workshop and Maintenance operations
Tender No.	1/2021
Brief of the Package	Operating Marina workshop, buildings stores, equipment and ship lift at Marina Bandar Al Rowdha
Registration of Interest	by email to tender@marinaoman.net
Grade	-
Tender Fees	50/- Omani Riyals (non-refundable)
Tender Document Sale Start Date	26.01.2021
Tender Document Sale End Date	08.02.2021
Experience	Demonstrable experience in servicing, refurbishment and renovation requirements within the leisure marine business in the region.
Mode of Payment	A proof of payment of Tender Fees is must for collection of Tender documents, which shall be deposited in account detailed as follows: Beneficiary: Oman Tourism Development Co. SAOC Bank: Bank Muscat Branch: Al Khuwair - Sultanate of Oman Account No. 0317008860360019 Swift Code: BMUSOMRXXX Finance Code: 11476301
Tender Document Collection	Proof of payment must be emailed to tender@marinaoman.net . Upon receipt and confirmation of the same, a digital copy of the Tender documents will be sent to the bidders by the document sale end date.
Tender Submission	All Bidders are required to submit their Tender, compliant with the Tender Documents instructions to the tender@marinaoman.net before 10:00 am on the date 01.03.2021

REGIONAL WEATHER			
Max	Min		
Abu Dhabi	24	15	
Doha	25	14	
Kuwait City	21	12	
Manama	21	14	
Riyadh	25	10	

PRAYER TIMINGS	
Fajr	5.31am
Sunrise	6.49am
Duhr	12.24pm
Asr	3.32pm
Maghrib	5.54pm
Isha	7.07pm

Omani-Turkish association established

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, issued Ministerial Decision No 6/2021 to establish the Omani-Turkish Friendship Association.

Article 1 stipulates that the Omani-Turkish Friendship Association be registered with Oman's Foreign Ministry. Issued on January 7, the decision came into effect a day following its publication in the gazette.



Oman LNG to provide cybersecurity training to university students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Attesting to its robust In-Country Value (ICV) initiatives, Oman LNG has signed an agreement with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences to provide certified training opportunities for 200 instructors and students on cybersecurity, a press statement said.

The agreement - signed by Dr Saeed al Rubaie, the president of the university, and Harib al Kitani, the chief executive officer of Oman LNG - 'translates the company's bold commitment towards supporting and nurturing local talents and skills, as it encapsulates developing instructors and students for future training', Oman LNG said in the statement.

The initiative additionally follows Oman LNG's efforts in developing ICV content, besides boosting environment and opportunities for this mission in Oman.

'Such ICV efforts by Oman LNG will continue to benefit business development in Oman, contribute to capacity building efforts, as well as stimulate innovations in the Omani economy,' the statement added.

"We extend our warmest gratitude and appreciation to Oman LNG for their funding and contribution to this project," said the university president, adding, "Through this project, we target enhancing the readiness of our students in cybersecurity-related majors to compete with international and local labour markets."

"Such partnerships assist us in achieving our goal of having a joint co-operation whose scientific and cognitive benefits accrue to students, faculty members and technicians," Rubaie said. Cybersecurity has become a basic requirement and a renewed skill needed by students and all workers in the educational institutions alike, he further said.

The Oman LNG CEO expressed his happiness saying, "We are delighted to collaborate with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences on this initiative to nurture local talents and boost skills development. We have great plans to further develop our ICV portfolio with initiatives we supported recently, and plan for many to come. Through such initiatives we reflect our robust commitment towards supporting the youth by developing their career capabilities."



FUEL THE SQUAD



EVERYONE IS A WINNER

WIN EXCLUSIVE IN GAME REWARDS

VISIT DEWSQUAD.COM AND GET THAT GEAR

Find the code under the ring pull

Go to WWW.DEWSQUAD.COM

Redeem the exclusive **PUBG** in-game items

Over 900,000 housing units needed by 2040: H E Shu'ailli

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's population is likely to be between 7.1mn to 7.5mn by 2040, which will require 911,400 housing units, according to H E Dr Khalfan bin Said bin Mubarak al Shu'ailli, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning stated during a media briefing on Monday that the experience of forming 100-day committees has proven a success.

"The ministry will continue to improve and accelerate its services in order to achieve the highest levels of quality and performance," H E Dr Shu'ailli said.

Among the projects and initiatives included in the ministry's executive plan for 2021 include two other programmes to achieve quick results within 100 days.

The ministry confirmed that the programme identified 421 investment sites, trained about 228 employees on technical sur-



The ministry will continue to improve and accelerate its services in order to achieve the highest levels of quality and performance

H E DR KHALFAN
AL SHU'AILLI

veys and cadastral drawings, and opened two branches for real estate registry in Bank Muscat and

Bank Dhofar.

H E Dr Shu'ailli issued Ministerial Decision No 346/2020 recently regarding the formation of work teams to undertake the study of ten service tasks provided by the ministry.

The decision stipulated that the results of the work and recommendations of the formed teams should be submitted within 100 days from the date of issuance of the decision.

The ministry confirmed that 91 per cent of Omani families owned housing, and the number was not an easy goal to achieve.

'It is highest in the world and the sultanate is one among the top five countries in the world in this regard,' it said.

According to the latest statistics, the number of residential land plots distributed from 2010 to 2020 reached 343,692.

The ministry said it will distribute 23,066 plots of land in various governorates of the sultanate in 2021.

The ministry confirmed that it is working on implementing a

number of initiatives aimed at providing suitable housing for low-income groups through partnership with the private sector and through real estate development programmes.

The ministry also said it is working to provide electronic services such as real estate registry transactions and renewal of cadastral drawings.

It will launch 59 new electronic services during 2021 in the various departments of the ministry such as housing, urban planning, real estate development and real estate registry.

The minister also talked about financial compensation for the residents affected by the Batinah Coastal Road project

The ministry stated that it is working to find alternative means to complete the project and give financial compensation to the population through investment in plots of land on both sides of the road so that it can achieve financial returns by establishing coastal recreational areas.



(Supplied photo)

Transport minister visits projects, facilities in Batinah

Muscat - H E Eng Said bin Hamoud bin Said al Ma'awali,

Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, visited several projects and facilities in North and South Batinah governorates.

He was accompanied by H E Eng Salim bin Mohammed al Nuaimi, Undersecretary for Transport, and officials from the ministry.

The minister started his visit by inspecting the locations of the seventh package of the Batinah Expressway project. Later, he listened to a briefing about the project and its components, such as linking roads and bridges over roundabouts in the Batinah dual carriageway and a 14km road connecting Khazaen Economic Zone to Batinah Expressway. A field inspection was also conducted in some parts of the Batinah Coastal Road, following which the minister and the team

visited Suwaiq port.

He reviewed its operations that has seen a rapid growth since its commercial launch in September 2018.

The port received 184 ships in 2019 and 959 ships in 2020, witnessing an increase of 421 per cent. Cargo handling increased from 448,410 tonnes in 2019 to 675,109 tonnes in 2020, a rise of 51 per cent.

The minister also inspected Suwaiq port berth, which Marafi has extended to reach 289m. The extended berth contributed to increasing the port's capacity, making the port handle more cargo and provide extra space. The new addition will also attract private sector investments in value-added projects to the port and the future expansion requirements.

Later, the team visited Sohar port to review the port and free zone's strategy to hasten growth

during the next five years (2021-25) and how the ministry can provide proper support to this growth strategy.

The Sohar Port and Freezone chairman of board and the executive administration team were there to receive the minister.

The delegation also visited Hutchison Ports Sohar and reviewed a comprehensive presentation of the terminal's performance in 2020.

The terminal has handled more than 802,000 TEU in 2020 compared to 796,000 TEU in 2019, an increase of 0.7 per cent annually despite the challenges that hurdled the global supply chain following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The minister concluded the day with a visit to the Wadi Haibi road which connects North Batinah governorate with Dhahirah governorate.

Sheikha Amina donates over RO500,000 for hospital

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sheikha Amina bint Saud Bahwan has donated RO500,929 to expand the Jalaan Bani Bu

Hassan Hospital in South Sharqiyah.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Health said, 'The Directorate General of Health Services in South Sharqiyah

governorate extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to Sheikha Amina bint Saud Bahwan for her initiative to donate RO500,929 to expand the emergency department

at Jalaan Bani Bu Hassan Hospital.'

'The directorate appreciates the initiative of Sheikha Amina in supporting the health sector in the sultanate,' it added.

208 new COVID-19 cases, one death reported on Monday

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday announced 208 new cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), taking the total to 133,253, while the number of deaths reported during the same time was one.

The number of those who have recovered also increased by 72. 'The number of recoveries has increased to 126,334, while the number of deaths has reached 1,522,' an MoH statement said, adding the rate of recovery is now at 95 per cent.

As of Monday, a total of 92 patients were admitted in health institutions, including 31 in ICUs.

MoH calls upon all to adhere to the isolation procedures by staying in an isolated room with an attached toilet and serving the isolated person from outside the room as instructed. It said that social distancing also helps curb the spread of the virus.

MoH advises all citizens and residents to continue washing hands with water and soap, avoid touching the face, nose, mouth and eyes, and follow healthy habits when coughing and sneezing.

CASES FROM JAN 18 TO JAN 25	
Jan 18	221
Jan 19	135
Jan 20	171
Jan 21	169
Jan 22-24	558 (Average 186)
Jan 25	208

His Majesty restructures Defence, National Security Councils

Continued from Page 01

Article 4 promotes Brig Musalam Mohammed Taman Ja'abb to the rank of Major General and appoints him Commander of Sultan's Special Force. Article 5 appoints Maj Gen Abdullah Ali Hamad al Harthy as Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Operations.

Article 6 promotes Brig Khalifa Ali Nasser al Siyabi to the rank of Major General and appoints him Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

Article 7 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

ONA

Send your comments to
muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

oman OASIS sifr
SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

WINTER OFFER

Get 1 Raffle Coupon for every RO 20 spent.

BUY & WIN EXCITING PRIZES

Buy from any of the offers (RO 50 or RO 20) or buy a coupon book worth minimum of RO 20.

Prizes include:

- 22 CARAT 4 GMS GOLD COIN
- APPLE IPAD
- 10 OMAN OASIS 5 GALLON WATER COUPONS
- LOLLI GIFT VOUCHERS WORTH RO 10
- TROLLEY BAG
- WIRE MESH WATCH
- AL MAHA PETROL VOUCHERS WORTH RO 10

To win, register your raffle coupon number at www.omanoasis.com/season2020

Offer valid from 25th November 2020 to 24th February 2021. Total of 3 raffle draws will be held at Omani Water Company, Asabah, Omani Water 20th December 2020, 26th January 2021 and 29th February 2021. Winners will be informed directly. Omani Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Gifts shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary.

Oasis Water Co. LLC, PO Box 87, Rusayl 124, Sultanate of Oman. www.omanoasis.com

CALL TOLL-FREE 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522

Winner of His Majesty's Cup Award in 2012 & 2013 for Best Five Factories (L.A. No. 1/2009/2014 & No. 1/2010/2021)

indian school talent fest
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INDIAN SCHOOLS, SULTANATE OF OMAN
ORGANISED BY
INDIAN SCHOOL AL MAABELA
(ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED INSTITUTION)

EXPERIENCE THE MOMENTS OF ELATION AND EXULTATION, VIBRANCY AND VIVACITY AT THE CULMINATION OF ISTF 2020

H.E. Shri. V. Muralaeddharan
Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs
Government of India
Chief Guest
VALEDICTORY CEREMONY
30 JANUARY 2021, TIME: 5.00 P.M.

H.E. Shri. Munu Mahawar
Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman
Guest of Honour
VALEDICTORY CEREMONY
30 JANUARY 2021, TIME: 5.00 P.M.

Mr. Chetan Bhagat
Indian Author & Columnist
29 JANUARY 2021
TIME: 6.00 P.M.

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

Platinum sponsors
PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE شركة برشوتم كانجي للصرافة
Shahi

Silver sponsor
Bank of Baroda बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा

Media Partner
MUSCAT DAILY

Social Media Partner
Studio.t

Partners: BADR AL SAMAA, Bank Muscat, Indiannica Learning, MIC, Oxford Advantage, OMAN UNITED INSURANCE COMPANY SAGS, NATIONAL LIFE & GENERAL INSURANCE, NESTO, Oman Investment Group.

Stay tuned with ISAM, YouTube, Navigate us

MARKET WATCH

MSM30	3,698.49
BSE Sensex	48,347.59

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)	
Indian Rs	189.73
Pakistani Rs	418.34
Bangladeshi Taka	220.36
Philippine Peso	125.00
Sri Lankan Rs	513.71

*Rates as on January 25
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Samsung chief will not appeal 2.5-year jail term: Lawyer

The de facto chief of South Korea's Samsung business empire will not appeal against his 2.5-year prison sentence for corruption, his lawyer said on Monday, in a move experts noted could pave the way for his early release on parole.

Lee Jae-yong, vice-chairman of Samsung Electronics, the world's biggest smartphone and memory chip maker, was found guilty of bribery and embezzlement in connection with the scandal that brought down former president Park Geun-hye.

The Seoul Central District Court jailed him after a retrial last week, the latest step in a long-running legal process that has hung over Samsung for years.

"Vice-chairman Lee will humbly accept the ruling and has decided not to appeal," his lawyer Lee In-jae said in a statement.

Prosecutors - who had demanded nine years in jail - also said on Monday they would not appeal, Yonhap news agency reported, essentially finalising the verdict.

Omani banks reveal over RO56mn exposure to Darvesh Group firms



Our Correspondent Muscat

Omani banks on Monday revealed combined exposure of at least RO56.1mn to the troubled firm Abou Nabil LLC and other related companies of Darvesh Group.

The local banks announced their credit exposures to Darvesh Group after the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) instructed all the listed financial institutions to disclose their exposures to the companies related to this group.

Sohar International Bank disclosed that its aggregate exposure to Darvesh Group amounts to RO13.921mn, equivalent to approximately 0.38 per cent of the bank's total assets.

'This is to inform the market that as on December 31, 2020 Sohar International has a legacy

outstanding direct exposure to Abou Nabil LLC to an extent of RO10mn. Further, the bank has a legacy outstanding direct exposure to Technova LLC, an associate company of Abou Nabil LLC, to an extent of RO3.921mn,' Sohar International said in a disclosure to the MSM.

'While it had already made loan impairment provisions to a sizeable extent, the bank is exploring all the options and measures for recovering its exposure, including enforcement of the charged securities and the partners' guarantees,' Sohar International added.

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) and its subsidiary Alizz Islamic Bank disclosed that Darvesh Group companies deal with the two banks and have availed credit facilities in total amount of RO23.4mn.

As per the OAB's disclosure filed to the MSM, OAB has exposure to Abou Nabil LLC, Gulf Star LLC, Mega Muscat International LLC and Technova LLC, while Alizz Islamic Bank has exposure to Abou Nabil LLC. 'OAB and Alizz Islamic Bank further advise that provisions have been allocated to such an exposure as per the applicable rules and regulations in the sultanate,' OAB said.

Bank Muscat, the largest financial institution in the sultanate, revealed that its total exposure to Darvesh Group is RO3.1mn.

'We would like to inform the market that Bank Muscat has an exposure totalling RO2.1mn to Abou Nabil LLC. The bank has also another exposure totalling RO1mn to another related company of Darvesh Group,' Bank

Muscat said in a filing to the local bourse.

Ahli Bank also said that it extended total credit facilities of RO6.3mn to two companies of Darvesh Group. 'We would like to inform that Ahli Bank has extended credit facilities of RO3.711mn to Abou Nabil LLC. The bank has also extended credit facilities of RO2.588mn to Gulf Star LLC, which is guaranteed by Abou Nabil LLC,' Ahli Bank said in its disclosure to the MSM.

HSBC Bank Oman's total exposure to Darvesh Group amounted to RO2.77mn which includes RO1.95mn exposure to Abou Nabil LLC and RO0.82mn exposure to Gulf Star LLC, according to the bank's disclosure to the Omani bourse.

On the other hand, National Bank of Oman (NBO) informed

Oman's NBFCs report RO10.7mn exposure to troubled group

Our Correspondent Muscat

Apart from the local banks, three Omani non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) have also announced a combined exposure of RO10.75mn to the troubled Darvesh Group.

National Finance Company, through a disclosure to the Omani bourse, confirmed that as on December 31, 2020 it has a total exposure of RO6.342mn to Darvesh Group which includes Abou Nabil LLC, Gulf Star LLC and Mega Muscat International LLC. 'All these accounts are classified as non-performing loans under IFRS 9 and reported accordingly in our fi-

nancials,' National Finance added.

In a separate disclosure to the Muscat Securities Market, Al Omaniya Finance Services Company said its total exposure to Darvesh Group (which includes Abou Nabil LLC, Gulf Star LLC and Mega Muscat International LLC) is RO2.74mn as of December 31, 2020.

Taageer Finance Company also confirmed to the local bourse that its total exposure to Abou Nabil LLC stands at RO1.665mn as of December 31, 2020.

All the three NBFCs said that they have adequate provision coverage towards the exposure to Darvesh Group as per regulatory and accounting standard requirements.

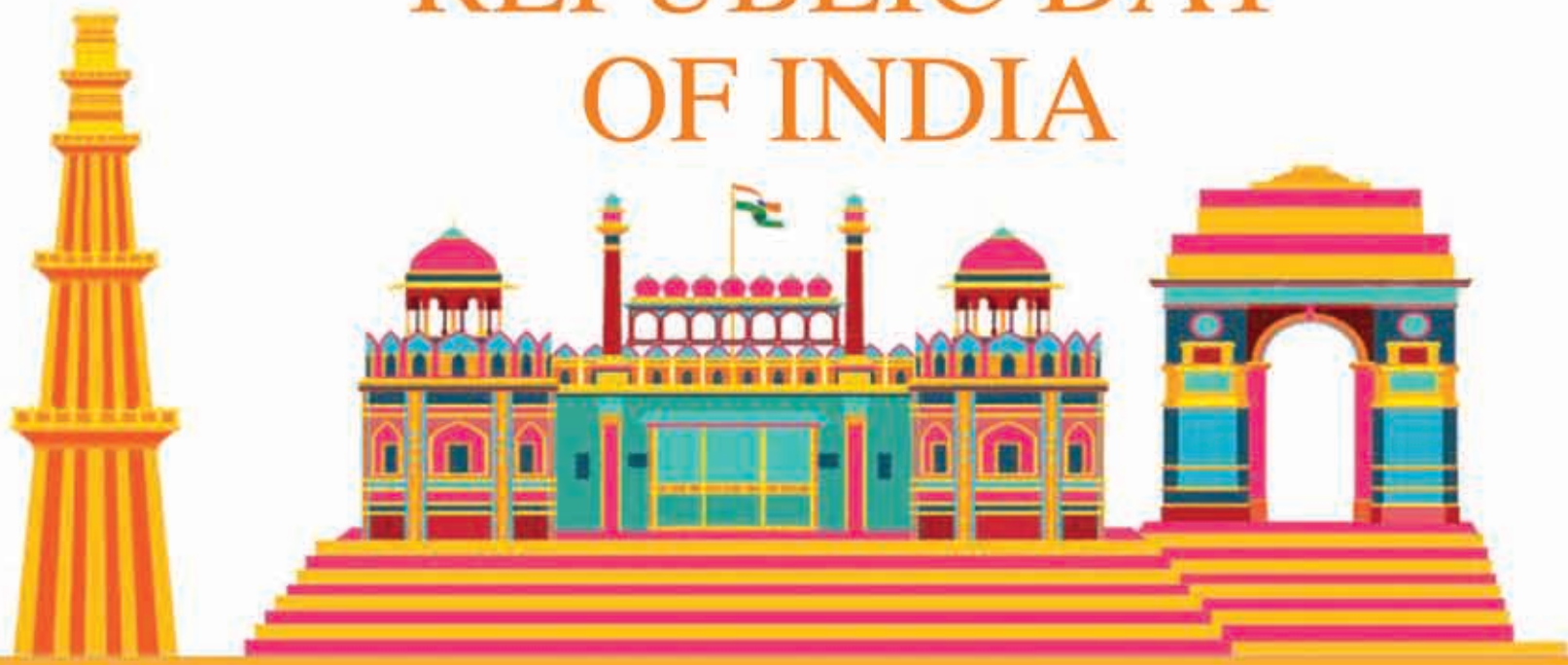
the market that it has no direct exposure to Abou Nabil LLC. However, NBO said, as of January 24, 2021, it has exposures to the UAE-based Elegant Industries LLC and Megastar Industries Co LLC, which are part of Darvesh Group, with a combined outstanding amount of AED62.99mn (approximately RO6.6mn).

'The exposures were categorised as non-performing loans

in 2018 and are covered by approximately 20 per cent by way of the mortgaged property and the balance exposure has been fully provided for in line with applicable regulatory requirements and standards,' NBO added in its disclosure.

Bank Nizwa informed the Muscat Securities Market that it has no direct or indirect exposure to Abou Nabil LLC or its related companies.

GREETINGS to the government and people of India on the occasion of the REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



Greater Muttrah
Tel: +968 24816368
E-mail: oman@bankofbaroda.com

Salalah Branch
Tel: +968 23360042
E-mail: salala@bankofbaroda.com

Call Centre nos: +968 24817373 / 24817563 / 24818287

MSM falls 0.86%; volumes down

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) fell 0.86 per cent to close at 3,698.5 points on Monday.

While turnover rose 22.26 per cent to RO1.13mn, volumes fell 20.84 per cent to 8.34mn shares.

Financial index fell 0.79 per cent, Industrial index declined 0.76 per cent and Services index fell 1.03 per cent. The MSM Shariah index closed up by 0.05 per cent at 533.33 points.

Market breadth remained negative as 6 companies closed up, while 18 companies closed down. The rest 17 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

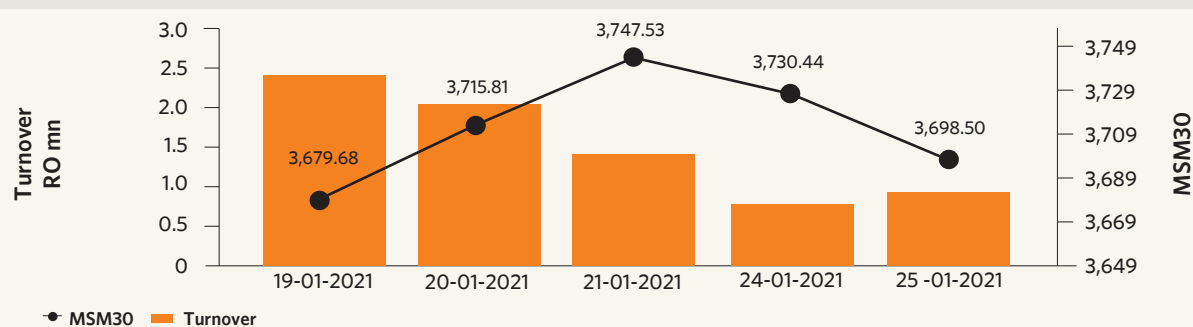
Top gainers were Al Hassan Engineering (71.43 per cent), Al Madina Investment (4.55 per cent), Al Madina Takaful (3.53 per cent) and Oman Qatar Insurance (1.09 per cent).

Top losers were Al Maha Petroleum



(-8.03 per cent), National Aluminium (-3.77 per cent) and HSBC Bank Oman Products (-4.55 per cent), Phoenix Power (-3.45 per cent).

MSM INDEX AND TURNOVER OF FIVE TRADING DAYS



Saudi wealth fund boosts domestic investments

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund will invest US\$40bn annually in the domestic economy over the next five years, the Crown Prince said on Sunday, as the kingdom battles high unemployment and a coronavirus-triggered slump.

The Public Investment Fund (PIF) 'will invest at least SAR150bn (US\$40bn) annually in the domestic economy until 2025', Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in a speech carried by state media.

The PIF, the main engine of the kingdom's efforts to diversify its oil-dependent economy, has previously been focused on investing in major global giants - from ride-hailing app Uber to US carmaker Lucid Motors.

The PIF intends to boost its assets to SAR4tn (US\$1.07tn) and directly or indirectly create 1.8mn jobs by 2025, the Crown Prince added.

Prince Mohammed's speech coincided with a royal decree on Sunday which declared the sacking of central bank governor Ahmed al Kholify.

Fahad al Mubarak was named as his successor, in what will be his second stint as the governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

Authority (SAMA).

The announcements come as the kingdom battles high unemployment and a sharp economic downturn.

Joblessness in Saudi Arabia touched 14.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2020, dipping slightly from an all-time high of 15.4 per cent in the second quarter, official data showed last week.

'The impact of COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the Saudi labour market and the economy,' Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics said in a statement last week.

Last year, the twin shocks of the novel coronavirus pandemic and a drop in oil prices prompted the top crude exporter to triple its value-added tax and suspend a monthly allowance to civil servants to rein in a ballooning budget deficit.

The highly unpopular austerity measures were implemented even as the kingdom continues to boost spending on a slew of megaprojects, including the planned US\$500bn NEOM megacity on the kingdom's Red Sea coast.

AFP

'Global FDI faces U-shaped recovery'

Geneva, Switzerland - Global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows are set to go through a U-shaped recovery, staying weak in 2021, the United Nations (UN) warned on Sunday.

FDI is likely to bottom out this year before picking up again in 2022, said the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

'Global FDI flows will remain weak in 2021,' UNCTAD said in its latest Investment Trends Monitor report, with the world still in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has eviscerated economies.

The UN agency said FDI collapsed last year, falling by 42 per cent to from US\$1.5tn in 2019 to an estimated US\$859bn in 2020. UNCTAD predicts a further drop of five to 10 per cent this year.

FDI finished 2020 more than 30 per cent below the trough after the global financial crisis in 2009, and at a level last seen in the 1990s, the report said.

"The decline of global FDI will bottom out in 2021, and a real recovery will start in 2022," James Zhan, UNCTAD's investment and enterprise director, told re-



Major infrastructure projects often require foreign direct investment

porters in Geneva.

"Overall, the global FDI is likely to follow a U-shaped recovery, unlike global trade and GDP, which have been predicted to be a V-shaped recovery starting already 2021."

The ongoing risks surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, the speed at which vaccination campaigns can be rolled out, and sluggishness in releasing economic aid will put the brakes on an FDI comeback this year, he explained.

'Investors are likely to remain

cautious in committing capital to new overseas productive assets,' said the report.

Greenfield outlook

Greenfield project announcements - considered an indicator of future FDI trends - were 35 per cent down in 2020, figures that 'do not bode well for new investment in industrial sectors in 2021,' said the report.

Greenfield investment typically refers to projects that create new physical facilities which are considered productive, in

part because they normally create jobs.

The indicator is flashing red for developing countries.

"For developing countries, the prospects for 2021 are a major concern," said Zhan.

Although FDI flows in developing economies seemed relatively resilient in 2020, greenfield announcements in such countries plunged by 46 per cent, while international project finance - typically financial arrangements from several partners for large infrastructure projects - dropped by 7 per cent.

International investment projects tend to have a long gestation period and react to crises with a delay, both on the downward slope and in the recovery.

The biggest shocks on these indicators were felt in Africa in 2020, with a 63 per cent drop in greenfield announcements, while international project finance in the continent fell by 40 per cent.

Greenfield announcements dropped by 51 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and by 38 per cent in Asia.

AFP

ELECTRONIC TENDER (S)

Majan Electricity Co. (SAOC) Announces the Following E-Tenders

TENDER NO	DESCRIPTION	GRADE	LAST DATE FOR BUYING	SUBMISSION DATE	TENDER PRICE R.O.
8/2021	EXTENSION POWER SUPPLY TO THE PLOT OF ROYAL OMAN POLICE (STF CAMP) AT SAHAM AREA IN NORTH BATINAH GOVERNORATE	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	52 /=
9/2021	MODIFICATION OF 11 KV NETWORK BY INSTALLING RMU FOR SWITCHING PURPOSE IN VARIOUS LOCATION AT IBRI AREA IN AL DHAHIRA GOVERNORATE	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	47 /=
10/2021	MODIFICATION OF 11 KV NETWORK BY INSTALLING RMU FOR SWITCHING PURPOSE IN VARIOUS LOCATION AT YANQAL & DHANK AREA IN AL DHAHIRA GOVERNORATE	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	35 /=
11/2021	NETWORK REINFORCEMENT (415 V& 11 KV) FOR THE YEAR 2021 AT AL-KHABOURAH AREA IN VARIES LOCATION N.B	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	47 /=
12/2021	CUSTOMER CONNECTION SERVICE PIPE REPLACEMENT AT NORTH AL BATINAH GOVERNORATE	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	52 /=
13/2021	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FAULT INDICATORS AND FUSE SAVER AT NORTH AL BATINAH	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	25 /=
14/2021	REHABILITATION WORK FOR 11 KV NETWORK EFFECTED BY HEAVY WIND IN VARIOUS LOCATION AT IBRI, YANQUL & DHANK IN DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE.	C	07/2/2021	16/2/2021	162 /=

Interested Firm having relevant experience in the similar nature of services and registered with Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for electrical work, may register and obtain the tender documents from E-Tendering Site <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against online payment of non-refundable fees mentioned above for each tender.

The Tenderers should enclose a copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any registered bank in the Sultanate of Oman for a value of (1%) of the submitted bid value valid for a period of (90) days from the date of Submission, and addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee. The original Bid Bond to be delivered in sealed envelope, and the tender number and title of project only are to be mentioned on the envelopes. The place of submission the original bond would be at: MJEC Contracts & tenders office at MJEC building in AL Sawari Center in Sohar or at MJEC Contracts & tenders office at Muscat in Al Mubailah- opposite to the industrial Area beside to Bank Sohar before 10 A.M. according to the assigned date of submission of the tender. Any Submission of original tender bond after the time and date mentioned in the advertisement will not be accepted and tenderer offer will be rejected.

The Completed signed and sealed commercial and technical offer with all tender documents should be submitted and uploaded online into the above mentioned E-Tendering website. The Hard copies of the tender document are not accepted.

For more information please contact Tel no.: 24051501- 26944266
For any technical assistance please contact
Helpdesk: +968-24166670
E-mail: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products & have a High level percentage of Omanization.

The Company is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders.
"WITH ELECTRICITY WE PROGRESS PLEASE AVOID EXTRAVAGANCE IN CONSUMPTION"



Majan Electricity Company S.A.O.C
P.O Box 286, Sohar
PC 311, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2694 4444 | Fax: +968 2694 4222
Information@majanco.nama.om | www.majanco.co.om

COVID-19 condemns billions to poverty for a decade: Oxfam

Paris, France - The COVID-19 crisis is aggravating inequality, with the richest quickly getting richer while it will likely take years for the world's poorest to recover, anti-poverty group Oxfam said on Monday.

In a report entitled 'The inequality virus', the group warned that the pandemic is the first time since records began that inequality is rising in virtually every country at the same time.

'The 1,000 richest people on the planet recouped their COVID-19 losses within just nine months, but it could take more than a decade for the world's poorest to recover,' said the Oxfam report.

Oxfam also highlighted the fact that the impact of the virus is also being felt unevenly, with ethnic minorities in certain coun-

tries dying at higher rates and women being overrepresented in the sectors of the economy that are hardest hit by the pandemic.

Oxfam argued in its report that fairer economies are the key to a rapid economic recovery from COVID-19. It calculated that a temporary tax on excess profits made by the 32 global corporations that have gained the most during the pandemic could have raised US\$104bn in 2020, an amount it said was enough to have provided unemployment benefits for all workers and financial support for all children and elderly people in low- and middle-income countries.

"Extreme inequality is not inevitable, but a policy choice," said Gabriela Bucher, executive director of Oxfam International.

AFP



OMAN CRICKET CLUB (OCC)

Invitation to attend the General Body Meeting of the Club for the years 2020 & 2021.

The Board of Management of the Oman Cricket Club (OCC) will be holding its Annual General Meeting of the Club for the years 2020 & 2021. The meeting will be held on Sunday, 28th February 2021 commencing at 7:00 pm at the Al Mirani Meeting Hall of the Al Falaj Hotel. All Members wishing to attend this meeting and whose membership may have expired are requested to proceed with renewal of the membership with effect from the date of this announcement. The last date for renewal of membership is Sunday, 21st February 2021 before 5:00 pm.

As per Article No. 29 of the Statute of the Sports Clubs No.124/2008, the meeting will be considered valid in the presence of an absolute majority of members of the club who are entitled to attend (half + one). If the required number of members are unavailable at 7:30 pm the meeting could be postponed to another date within 15 days from the date of the first meeting, or be held on the same day at 8:00 pm.

The second meeting held on the same day will be considered valid in the presence of (quarter) of working members. Agenda will be available at OCC office before 7 days of scheduled meeting.

Secretary of the Club
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Bank Muscat announces registration for Al Wathbah Academy training for SMEs

In line with its vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’ and as part of its CSR commitment to delivering long-term benefits to the nation, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has announced that registration for entrepreneurial training by the Al Wathbah Academy for SMEs has commenced for Dhahirah and North Sharqiyah governorates.

The registration for the training programme is being done online at present and Omani entrepreneurs may register for the same at <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/Pages/LeadDetails.aspx?LeadID=95&source=bankmuscat-EN>.

Ibrahim Khamis al Balushi, AGM - Small & Medium Enterprises, Bank Muscat, said, “Launched by the bank in 2014, the Al Wathbah Academy reflects the bank’s commitment to sustainable development,



strengthening the role of SMEs in the economic development of Oman. The programme leads to accredited international certification by PMI and the bank will continue to implement plans for developing Omani entrepreneurs as part of its commitment to the growth and development of the country.”

It is important to note that the Al Wathbah SME Academy curriculum has been tailored to suit Bank Muscat’s requirements for



a practical, comprehensive business course on how to grow a business successfully. After all,

successful business ownership requires not only starting a business correctly, but also continu-

ally seeking ways to expand and grow during times of uncertainty. With the central theme of “Sus-

taining Growth during Uncertainty”, the training programme will provide business owners the

opportunity to set goals, analyse the market, and revise strategies to meet new trends. The course content has been specially developed, based on the actual needs of small and medium business owners in Oman.

Utilising global best practices, local case studies and supplementary articles from premier institutions and organisations such as McKinsey & Company and Harvard Business School Publishing, the course empowers small and medium-sized business entrepreneurs by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and resources.

Led by experienced trainers from Radiant Sail, the course is covered over a period of 4-8 months. About 130 entrepreneurs have graduated from the Al Wathbah SME Academy till date and are successfully following their business dreams, contributing to the Omani economy.

KR Group adds iconic watch brand Titan

Known for bringing leading brands from around the world to Oman’s discerning consumers, Khimji Ramdas has announced its partnership with the iconic Indian watches brand - Titan. Under the partnership, Khimji Ramdas will house watches from Titan and its popular mass brand, Fastrack, across its retail stores network.

Recognised as one of the largest and most trusted watch brands in India, Titan is widely known for transforming the watch industry in India and for shaping India’s retail market by pioneering experiential retail, to cater to a wide segment of consumers.

Sachin Malhotra, chief operating officer - Lifestyle Cluster at Khimji Ramdas, said, “We are delighted at the addition of India’s iconic watch brand, Titan, to Khimji’s Lifestyle portfolio in Oman. Being entrenched in the sultanate’s premium lifestyle space through our extensive distribution network, Khimji Lifestyle is uniquely positioned to sell leading global labels that resonate with our versatile service and product offerings.

“Titan is the world’s fifth-largest watchmaker and a part of the TATA Group, and we are pleased to be extending our part-



ner network to them, bringing a range of timeless pieces from both Titan, and from their most loved youth fashion brand, Fastrack, catering to a wider customer base through various price points.”

“Oman is an important piece in Titan’s global vision of being a dominant watch player in the markets we operate. We are very excited about the future given the visionary new leadership of the sultanate. We are thankful for the love we have received

from the Omani consumers and take pride in our unique designs and superlative quality, and the ability to build products like the Edge. We believe these differentiated designs will be loved by all the consumers in Oman,” said Kuruvilla Markose, COO-International Business Division at Titan Company Ltd.

Adding to it, Aditya Kejriwal, business head - Watches & Accessories, International Business Division Titan Company Ltd, said, “We have a special place

for Oman, as it was the first overseas market for brand Titan. We have enjoyed the love and patronage of almost a million customers over the last two decades.

“In the last 25 years, Titan has established as a leading player in Oman, and the next 10 will help Titan to scale new heights with wide range of products including watches, sunglasses and perfumes. We plan to expand our distribution network across all key watch retail stores across

Oman with key focus on Muscat and Salalah. By the end of 2021 the aim is to be present in 100 stores across Oman.”

Currently, there are more than 100 models on display at Khimji’s Aalami stores both in Muscat and Salalah. The Aalami stores which fall under the lifestyle distribution and retail business of Khimji Ramdas provides a high-end shopping experience to its customers offering a wide range of lifestyle and household products.

For those who prefer to shop online, the www.khimji-lifestyle.com website also offers a wide range of Titan timepieces that customers can choose from. The website, made to impress even the most discerning of clients, provides detailed specifications of each watch coupled with high-resolution photos.

With a customer database that includes people from different walks of life, Khimji Ramdas ensures it has something to suit the demands of its varying customers. The prices for the Titan watches start from RO10 and also come with a two-year global warranty.

On the occasion, Titan also unveiled its latest collection under the Edge series called Titan Edge Ceramic.



SAI takes part in GCC committee meeting

The State Audit Institution (SAI) took part in the 18th meeting of the GCC specialists committee for agencies responsible for integrity promotion and fighting corruption. The meeting, which was convened through video conferencing on Monday, January 25, was held from the headquarter of Secretariat General of the GCC in Riyadh and with the participation of members SAI.

During the meeting, the participants discussed two main themes. The first highlighted on the review of the draft guiding system (law) for the protection of public fund in the GCC region and its chapters such as auditing public property, interim meas-

ures, crimes and punishments.

The meeting also focused on discussing member states views relevant to the proposed law and suggesting recommendations where appropriate.

The second theme involved discussing suggestions relevant to the mechanism to execute guiding principles for exchanging experiences between anti-corruption agencies in the GCC, collaborating with the civil society institutions in the field of protecting integrity and combating corruption.

Examples of such cooperation involves conducting joint events as well as awareness-raising and research based activities.

Education Above All Foundation hosts event to mark world day

To mark the International Day of Education, Education Above All Foundation (EAA) virtually brought together learners, education decision-makers and thought leaders from across the globe to discuss how education should be rebuilt and reshaped globally following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the right to education of nearly 1.6bn learners in over 190 countries impacted by the pandemic, the virtual event, titled ‘Education, a key to post COVID-19 pandemic recovery: How can we prevent a generational catastrophe?’, saw the participation of Lolwah R M al Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister and spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar; Maria Victoria Angulo Gonzalez, Minister of National Education of Colombia; Robert Jenkins, global chief of Education at Unicef; Dr Mammadou Dian Balde, deputy director, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR; and Marie-

Ange Saraka-Yao, managing director at Gavi, in addition to key global figures including Shakira, Unicef Goodwill Ambassador and founder of The Barefoot Foundation, Karen Bryson MBE, British actor and advocate for the rights of women and children.

They discussed the global commitment to rebuild education during two subsequent sessions.

Ahead of the International Day of Education, EAA launched its #BuildBackEducation campaign under the umbrella of #UniteToProtect, to raise global awareness for the urgent need to build back education, as a central element to the global COVID-19 recovery process.

Covering key areas such as access, safety, financing, education technology and the digital divide, the campaign will run for a further three months to urge the international community to join efforts to #BuildBackEducation.

Shakira said, “School is a place



of safety and of nourishment for children. Even before COVID-19, the world was already in an education crisis. To now truly recover, we must promote accessible, quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all.”

In her keynote speech, Lolwah said, “2020 was an exceptional year for the international community, which saw progress im-

ped. Through the pandemic, almost 90 per cent of students worldwide have been affected by school closures. It also exacerbated the inequalities we have been grappling with throughout the last decades.

“Our discussion today should outline a new future for education. By exposing the brittle areas of the sector, we must aim to

build back resilient education systems. We are here because we know there is no one-size-fits all solution.

“Together, we must work to secure a prosperous future for all students globally.”

Robert Jenkins, global chief of education at Unicef, noted, “The pandemic and subsequent disruptions to learning show how

important schools are in a very holistic way. We need to remember that schools provide a wide range of services that must cover all children – and that we need to rebuild stronger.”

Karen Bryson MBE, British actor and advocate for the rights of women and children, called on the international community to instil a sense of resilience, hope and pride to #BuildBackEducation.

“For post-COVID recovery, education is a priority. As always, the most marginalised are already deprived of their right to education and are most affected. We must appeal directly to the imaginations of our youth. It can plant the seeds for the thirst for knowledge and growth. It enables a brighter future. It inspires hope.”

Speakers and panellists included Dr Diosdado M San Antonio, undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction at the Department of Education of the Philippines; Elyas Abdi Jillaow,

director general, Minister of Education, Kenya; Hana Elshehaby, EAA Youth Advocate; Shawgi Ahmed, EAA Youth Advocate; Suzanne Grant Lewis, director, Unesco IIEP; Fazle Rabbani, GPE senior country lead for Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Eritrea and Lesotho, Global Partnership for Education; Dr Rukmini Banerji, CEO, Pratham; Mercy Musomi, executive director, Girl Child Network Kenya; Leon Botstein, president of Bard College; Hüseyin Oruç, IHH representative; Abdullaah AbuNamous, EAA Youth; Mohamed Munir, student at the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs; Ala’a Shawwaf, Istanbul University student; and Emi Mahmoud, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador.

The virtual event, that was held as part of the YouthTalkEd series, was concluded with a promise of a list of recommendations for young people across the world, to empower them to pursue education advocacy at a grassroots level.

Borders tighten around world as coronavirus curfew fury spills over

Washington, US - Border restrictions were being tightened around the world on Monday in the face of an unrelenting coronavirus threat, after a weekend in which anger at social distancing rules bubbled over into fiery clashes in the Netherlands.

The United States was set to join France, Israel and Sweden in pulling up the drawbridge to certain arrivals, with special concern about new strains of the pathogen that originated in Britain and South Africa.

"It's up to us to show that we are civic-minded," Spaniard Claudio Barraza told AFP upon arrival at Paris' main international airport, after new rules on tests for EU arrivals came into force.

The stipulations came as Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador became the latest public figure to test positive for the disease, and New Zealand reported its first community case in over two months.

In Washington, President Joe Biden is reimposing a ban on most non-US citizens who have been in Britain, Brazil, Ireland and much of Europe, as well as adding South Africa to the list, a senior White House official said.

Biden last week tightened mask-wearing rules and ordered quarantine for people flying into the country, which on Sunday topped 25mn cases.



A man enters a coronavirus mass vaccination centre at Stratford shopping centre, in east London on Monday (AFP)

Since it emerged in late 2019, COVID-19 has killed more than 2.1mn people, with almost 99mn cases registered, according to an AFP tally from official figures.

On Sunday, France started demanding a negative PCR test for arrivals by sea and air from European Union neighbours.

Sweden said it would prohibit

entry from neighbouring Norway for three weeks, after cases of the more infectious British strain were detected in Oslo.

And in Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the country was 'closing the skies hermetically, except for rare exceptions' to both arrivals and departures for a week.

Fury in the Netherlands

But government action to curtail the virus' spread still faces stiff opposition from some citizens.

Protests against a coronavirus curfew in the Netherlands degenerated into clashes with police and looting in cities across the country on Sunday, a day

after a COVID-19 testing centre was set on fire in the northern village of Urk.

Police used water cannon and dogs in Amsterdam, public television NOS reported, after hundreds gathered to protest the 9.00pm-4.30am curfew, set to last until February 10.

At least 30 people were ar-

rested in Eindhoven, where mayor John Jorritsma told reporters that if the country continued 'down this path, then I think we are heading for civil war'.

A reminder of the vigilance required to keep infections down came from New Zealand, where the first case was reported in the community in over two months - in a 56 year old woman who recently returned from Europe.

Vaccination issues

Scientists say the only way out of the pandemic is large-scale vaccinations, but the roll-out has stuttered in many places.

Egypt began its programme, with a doctor and a nurse getting the Chinese-made Sinopharm jab. Health Minister Hala Zayed said Cairo had inked deals for vaccine shipments from British, Chinese and Russian firms, for a

The 1,000 richest people on the planet recouped their COVID-19 losses within just nine months, but it could take more than a decade for the world's poorest to recover

OXFAM

And in Thailand, the country's largest seafood market, forced to shut after a coronavirus outbreak late last year, got a deep clean on Monday as authorities mulled when to reopen it.

The December outbreak at the Samut Sakhon Shrimp Centre - about 40 minutes southwest of Bangkok - sparked a second wave of almost 10,000 infections across Thailand, and workers who lost their livelihoods said the closure had been tough. "I have to rely on food donations, whether it's vegetables, rice, instant noodles," Myaw Nha, a migrant worker from Myanmar, said.

total of around 100mn doses.

Australia's medical regulator formally approved the Pfizer vaccine, with the first doses expected to be administered in late February, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Monday.

On the long-term economic impacts of the pandemic, anti-poverty group Oxfam said the emergency was aggravating inequality. "The 1,000 richest people on the planet recouped their COVID-19 losses within just nine months, but it could take more than a decade for the world's poorest to recover," it said.

AFP

Iran says no intention to expel IAEA inspectors

Tehran, Iran - Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday said that Tehran does not intend to expel the UN nuclear watchdog's inspectors, clarifying the implications of a controversial law approved by parliament last month.

The law, passed by the conservative dominated legislature despite opposition from a reformist government, mandates Iran to discontinue certain inspections by late February if key conditions are not met, stoking international concerns about a possible expulsion of inspectors.

However, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday that under the December law 'Iran's cooperation with the (International Atomic Energy Agency) will not cease and it does not mean expelling the agency's inspectors'.

The December law mandated the government to stop 'the implementation of the additional protocol' to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on February 21,

Under the law passed in December, Iran's cooperation with the (International Atomic Energy Agency) will not cease and it does not mean expelling the agency's inspectors

SAEED KHATIBZADEH

if the US does not lift unilateral sanctions or other key parties to a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran do not help Tehran to bypass those sanctions. The 'additional protocol' is a document prescribing intrusive inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities.

At present, such inspections are carried out under this protocol, in addition to regular IAEA inspections under the 2015 deal,

but the additional protocol has never been ratified by Iran's parliament.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, a moderate, slammed the December legislation - known as the 'strategic action plan for the lifting of sanctions and the protection of the Iranian people's interests' - as 'detrimental to the course of diplomatic activities' when it was still before parliament.

Former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew Washington from the 2015 multilateral nuclear accord and reimposed sanctions on Tehran in 2018.

Iran in response has retreated from most of its key nuclear commitments under the 2015 deal, which gives the Islamic republic relief from international sanctions in exchange for limits on its nuclear programme.

Rouhani's government has signalled a readiness to engage with US President Joe Biden. AFP

India, China clash again on Sikkim border

New Delhi, India - Indian and Chinese troops fought a new brawl on their contested Himalayan border that left injuries on both sides, officials said on Monday, highlighting the fraught state of relations between the giant neighbours.

The fighting on January 20 came six months after a pitched battle which left at least 20 Indian troops dead as well as an unknown number of Chinese casualties.

The world's two most populous nations have since become embroiled in a diplomatic showdown over their geographical and political differences.

India's military played down the latest skirmish as a 'minor face-off' at Naku La pass, which connects Sikkim state with Tibet on the Chinese side.

China's Foreign Ministry, however, said it had 'no information' on the incident.

In a statement, the Indian army said last week's clash was 'resolved by local commanders as per established protocols'.

Government sources said four Indian troops were injured when



This file photo shows a Chinese soldier near an Indian soldier on the Chinese side of the Nathu La border crossing between India and China, in the Indian state of Sikkim on July 10, 2008 (AFP)

a Chinese patrol was forced back. They added that China's People's Liberation Army suffered an unknown number of casualties.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Chinese troops 'dedicated themselves to safeguarding the peace and tranquillity' of the border region. "China urges India to work

in the same direction," he said.

Details of the latest clash emerged on the eve of India's Republic Day, when the country shows off its latest military hardware at a parade in the capital.

Hand-to-hand fighting between 150 soldiers at Naku La in May also set off tensions.

About 10 troops from each

side were injured.

The use of firearms by border patrols is banned under a bilateral agreement.

In June, troops fought with fists and wooden clubs in the Galwan valley of Ladakh region, leaving dozens dead. China has never confirmed fatalities.

AFP

Italy urges Egypt to cooperate in student murder investigation

Rome, Italy - Italian President Sergio Mattarella on Monday urged Egypt to cooperate with prosecutors seeking to try four Egyptian security officers over the torture and murder of an Italian student in Cairo.

In a statement marking five years since Giulio Regeni went missing on January 25, 2016, the head of state called for a 'full and adequate response' to the Italian investigation.

The mutilated body of Regeni, a 28 year old PhD student researching the sensitive topic of trade unions in Egypt, was found on the outskirts of Cairo days after he disap-

peared. His death sparked outrage in Italy and strained diplomatic relations between the two countries, with Italy's government accusing Egypt of failing to cooperate.

Prosecutors in Rome formally requested a trial in absentia last week for four Egyptian security officers on charges of kidnapping, conspiracy to murder and grievous bodily harm, with a preliminary hearing set for April 29.

Mattarella said the death had inflicted a 'very deep wound in the hearts of all Italians'.

AFP

Tractor rally aims to counter India's show of military might

New Delhi, India - Thousands of tractors gathered outside New Delhi on Monday, gearing up to rival an annual parade of tanks and troops on India's Republic Day in a protest against the government's agricultural reforms.

Since November, protesters have camped at the entry points to New Delhi, opposing farming laws which they say will invite conglomerates to dominate the agricultural sector.

Farmers plan to stage a huge rally involving tractors on Tuesday, following India's annual military parade in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Republic Day celebrations.

Thousands of tractors, decorated with giant India tricolour



An artist holds a model depicting farmers on tractors protesting against the recent agricultural reforms, in Amritsar on Monday (AFP)

flags, have already assembled at three main sites at the entrances of the capital.

Another 10,000 farmers have also gathered in the western city

of Mumbai to show solidarity.

The government has positioned security forces throughout the capital to keep the farmers away from what is tradi-

tionally a prestigious day on the Indian political calendar.

Britain's Boris Johnson was to attend on Tuesday but withdrew because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The farmers say they want to stage a 'peaceful' tractor rally into Delhi aimed at 'winning the hearts' of the population.

"For the first time ever farmers will take part in their own Republic Day parade," said Yogendra Yadav whose Swaraj India party has supported the protests.

"Barricades will be opened and farmers will be allowed to enter Delhi and hold their march," he said.

The government had opposed the farmers' rally, saying it would

be an 'embarrassment for the nation' on such an important day.

But police said they would allow 12,000 tractors into the city after the government parade.

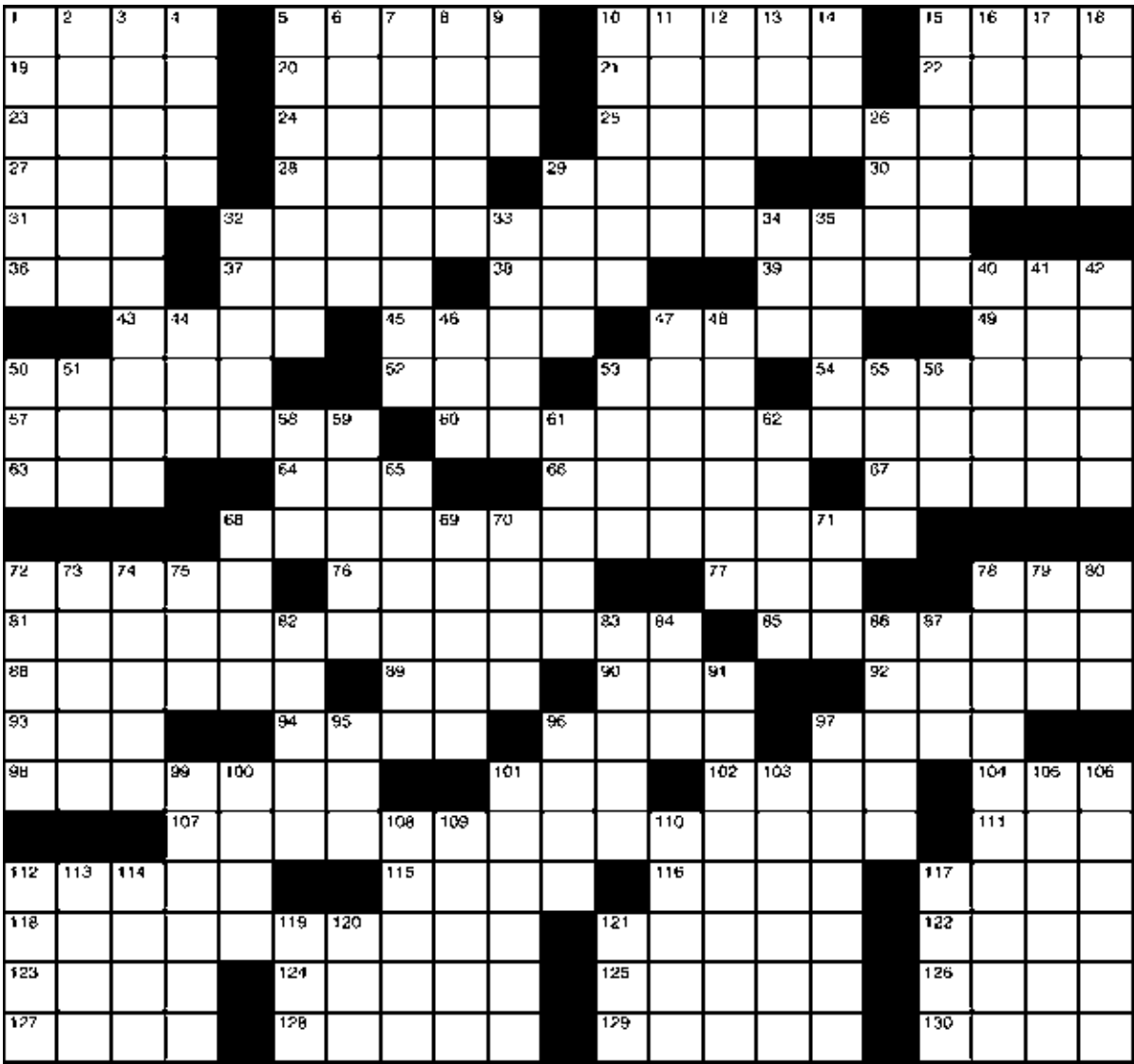
The new regulations will enable farmers to sell produce on the open market instead of only through state-run bodies that guarantee a minimum price.

But farmers have demanded the government repeal the laws that would leave them at the mercy of big corporates.

The government has offered to freeze implementation of the reforms for 18 months, but several rounds of talks between unions and ministers have failed to end the deadlock.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All rights reserved

- ACROSS**

1 Hence

5 “Remember the ___!”

10 Palindromic title

15 Seaweed

19 Regretted

20 Bible interjections

21 Soissons school

22 Weather condition

23 Hoarfrost

24 Columbus’s starting point

25 Heredity science specialist

27 Celebes ox

28 Stravinsky or Youskevitch

29 Small mountain lake

30 LuPone or LaBelle

31 ___ Aviv

32 Crossword specialist

36 Bustle

37 “I would fain ___ dry death!”: “The Tempest”

38 Zeta follower

39 Conceived

43 Secluded valley

45 Mahjong piece

47 Unctuous

49 Swiss canton

50 Larcenist

52 Author LeShan

53 Sail with the wind
- 54 Andes ruminants

57 Quits

60 Avian specialist

63 Colony inhabitant

64 Roman goddess of plenty

66 Cold

67 Passover dinner

68 Murder specialist

72 Binary star

76 Shorten a skirt

77 Cry’s partner

78 Debussy’s “La ___”

81 Skin specialist

85 Huge

88 Perfect bliss, to a Hindu

89 Yesterday’s discs

90 The human foot: L.

92 Locale of 5 Across

93 Qt. halves

94 Erato, for one

96 Confined

97 Major-___: head butler

98 Tennis technique

101 Phoebus

102 Pavarotti rendition

104 A type of service?

107 Fossil specialist

111 Unit

112 Bobbin for one

115 Small container for liquids

116 Cinch: sl.

117 Mild expletive: arch.

118 Veniculture
- specialist

121 Winged

122 Vegas comic

Rudner

123 High schooler

124 Adoree of the silents

125 Shiny element

126 “It’s ___ to tell a lie”

127 Mrs. counterparts in Spain

128 Liquid fat

129 News medium

130 Editor’s note

DOWN

1 Printing blunders

2 Destroyed

3 Jewelry specialist

4 Greek music halls

5 Popular pill

6 Part of NFL

7 Apportion

8 New Zealand native

9 Cries of surprise

10 Greek Saronic Gulf port

11 Bitter

12 Disco queen

Summer

13 Pub quaff

14 Encountered

15 Humboldt Bay city

16 Cafe au ___

17 Essential point

18 Against: L.

26 ___ dixit: L.
- 29 Place for a chapeau

32 B-H link

33 Palatal

34 Mae West role

35 Romantic interlude

40 Swollen

41 Expunge

42 Sep. into portions

44 Hawaiian handout

46 Altar words

47 Expenditure

48 ___ dudgeon: irate

50 ___ -la-la

51 Biddy

53 Small stream

55 Stein’s “___ Generation”

56 Ripen

58 Neither’s partner

59 Hubert, ___, Gerald

61 Ruth’s mother-in-law

62 Intense dislike

65 Olfactory senses

68 Clothed

69 “___ to see London once ere I die”: Henry IV

70 Photo films

71 The bounding main

72 Conform

73 Slow, to Solti

74 Comprehend

75 ___ noct.: prescription taken nightly
- 78 Cocktail specialist

79 Longoria or Mendes

80 Legal matter: L.

82 Dravidian person or language

83 Trance

84 Hamilton bill

86 Ermine in summer

87 Religious inst.

91 Lose freshness

95 Pierre’s one

96 Pocket billiards

97 Scatters

99 Chips to the green

100 Grow dull

101 NYC borough

Island

103 Lariats

105 Deadlocked

106 Educated showoff

108 Sheeplike

109 American-born Japanese

110 Can. physician Sir William

112 Topers

113 An equal

114 Draft status

117 Time periods

119 “___ y plata”: MT motto

120 Solidify

121 Elec. current measure

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

This time of year is all about setting big goals and making them happen. Tuesday’s skies suggest a few changes need to occur before that progress breaks through, as the sun spends the day in a tense square with erratic Uranus. This uneasy union prompts surprises and changes of plan concerning your goals and the resources you actually possess to make them happen.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

The universe has been asking you if you’re ready to step up to the plate via your relationships and career. That certainly feels like a lot to balance! Tuesday’s skies nudge this story onward, as your ruling planet, the sun, squares off to Uranus. This pairing emphasises your need to make significant, breakthrough changes in the aforementioned arenas, but beware of acting erratic.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Tuesday’s skies arrive with a rallying cry for change. The sun spends the day in an irritable square with Uranus, creating space for freedom, change, and revelations to emerge onto the scene. This erratic, exciting energy is likely to be found on the work front, as new ideas or forms of self-expression make their way to the forefront of your thinking.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

All eyes are on your career this month. You know that certain changes need to be undertaken as you pursue that path, and Tuesday’s skies work to assist you in that process. The sun spends the day in a tense square with Uranus, helping highlight which part of your achievement process needs changing. Look for little flare-ups around individual needs and work demands!

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

This time of year has you getting all your ducks in a row. You see where you want to be but have to make solid plans and commit to healthy routines to get there. Tuesday’s skies bring in an element of surprise to this department, as the sun squares off with Uranus. Look for new pathways to open up—even if they appear to dismantle your best laid plans.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Learning to “trust the process” is so much easier said than done. The universe is working to stretch your potential and break open new horizons for you to explore with your abilities, as the sun pairs off with Uranus. This pairing is a slightly unstable one, but its purpose is to encourage change and revelations between your creative talents and the ability to actualise your goals.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your perspective on the world is only beginning to crack open. This time of year, you tend to explore new methods of self-exploration and expansion. Tuesday’s skies nudge that story along, but with a strong subconscious flavour added into the mix. The self-defining sun squares off to sudden-insight Uranus today, prompting mental breakthroughs that stem from buried material.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You’re continually fascinated by exploring the ins and outs of relationships. Tuesday’s skies are likely to keep you on your feet romantically, as the sun squares off to Uranus. This pairing is a potentially unsettling one, but the minor earthquakes it brings can be refreshing. Look for new opportunities to relate or ways to break through old defences you’ve built around your heart.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

This time of year has you re-assessing everything you know about yourself. That state, however disorienting it may feel, is exactly where you need to be right now. The sun squares off to erratic Uranus this afternoon, prompting breakthroughs in your thinking around your home base. Reassess how you can continue to individuate, despite other people’s thoughts on your growth.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

It’s probably fair to say that you’ve “been going through it” when it comes to relationship matters, Cancer. You’re learning some vital lessons on that path and Tuesday’s skies work to push your learning even further. The identity-building sun squares off to lightbulb Uranus today, prompting revelations and breakthroughs around how intimacy functions.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

The universe has kept you busy tending to the very foundations beneath your feet. You’ve been asked to reassess your family story and evaluate how that fits in with who you are as an individual. The contentious square between the sun and Uranus develops new insights on this story today. Be on the lookout for revelations between relationship matters and the home front.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You may feel like a boat lost in the fog. Though you feel like you’re only treading water, the reality is you’re meant to embrace this suspension, and to look through the glass bottom of the boat to see what’s beneath you. Subconscious stirrings are highly active, as the sun squares off to Uranus, prompting unsettling but important revelations around how you stand in your own way.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The national sport of Canada is

a. tennis and cricket

b. lacrosse

c. judo

d. rugby and football

2. The Prize that is awarded every two years to people who have worded for 'Freedom of speech', is

a. Plame Prize

b. Unesco Prize for Tolerance

c. Unesco Peace Award

d. Monismanien Swedish

3. The origin of modern badminton is attributed to

a. India

b. Britain

c. France

d. Spain

Answers: 1: b 2: d 3: b

KIDS COLOURING

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

BOGGLER

H	F	A	O
G	R	U	C
A	I	H	S
D	E	F	A

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

APPLE	SCOPE	ACME	CEDE
PIKES	PIKING	SILAS	ADAY
ODS	MINING	NEESE	ALAN
SAD	OVENS	UPPING	
ESTONIA	GINN	PIRE	
FORAGED	AGIT	GOD	ARIM
GLAY	FOCAL	NOTES	ROBOTE
CLUB	INNO	DELING	CLIFF
BAND	DELANE	AVIATE	
THANKS	SVIN	ODAV	INNEI
ROTH	BEING	BAOULE	TOUR
GOALS	ACET	BIT	FORN
GOIN	BEAIV	JAUC	GOPE
ELITE	ALAN	BAIND	OVANG
ELON	VIQA	AGATIN	ANSIT
PONS	ATIN	MEITE	RETHI

WORD BUILDER

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

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

EDUCATION FURNITURE



LABOUR CAMP FURNITURE



OUTDOOR SHADES



uniQue
CITY TRADING

Contact: 9611 5353 / 9611 5252 Email: mybusinessoman@gmail.com

♦ RESIDENTIAL ♦ COMMERCIAL ♦ OFFICE

DISINFECTION SERVICES for COVID 19

30 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN OMAN

For ENQUIRIES call
♦ 94021502 ♦ 95437921 ♦ 98400408

We only use Electro Chemically Activated Solution/disinfectant which is safe and certified.

♦ FREE ESTIMATES
♦ 24x7 AVAILABILITY
♦ PROFESSIONAL TEAM
♦ EMERGENCY SERVICES

MODERN CLEANING SERVICES AND TRADING LLC
A Subsidiary Unit of W.J. Towell & Co.

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325

www.orbit-oman.com



أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

MUSCAT DAILY

Get your latest news updates on WhatsApp

SUBSCRIBE NOW
71509370

1. Save this number to your contact list.
2. Send "start" to receive news updates



SITUATION WANTED

Smart Indian, Masters, excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17 years Oman experience including Airports Project, Hospital, Media, EPC handling Project Administration, CEO office, Corporate Communication, Operations, Customer Relations, Marketing. Contact 99283938

Web developer, 22, Indian, BSc (Hons) IT, UK. Exp in various software projects (including PHP, Node.js, React.js). Seeking a suitable job. Currently in Oman. Contact: 79371798,

bit.ly/simpsonp

Computer service technician with 4 years exp in Oman, looking for suitable job. Indian male 28, currently in Oman, NOC available. Contact: 94496905 bit.ly/christopaul

Accounting Manager/Chief Accountant, Indian, Male, 15+ Years Of Experience In Oman, Uae & India, Looking For A Job And Have Noc On Visit. Contact: 79007124 / 78039524 Email: Shkkader@Gmail.Com

BIRTHDAY WISHES

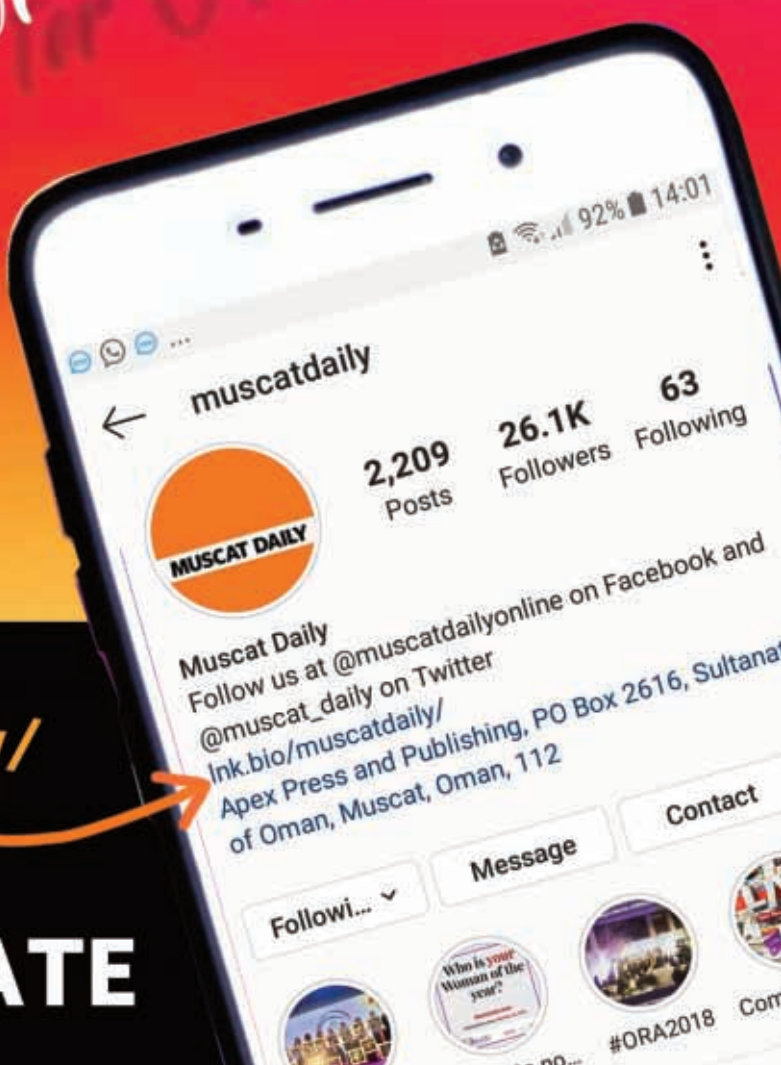


SAOUD SARWAR
January 26

Happy Birthday to our dearest son Saoud Sarwar. You are the reason for the endless happiness in our life.
From your Mama & Baba

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

Insta-News for Oman



Click on lnk.bio/muscatdaily/

GET YOUR LATEST NEWS UPDATE

Muscat Daily
Follow us at @muscatdailyonline on Facebook and @muscat_daily on Twitter
lnk.bio/muscatdaily/
Apex Press and Publishing, PO Box 2616, Sultanate of Oman, Muscat, Oman, 112

2,209 Posts | 26.1K Followers | 63 Following

Follow... Message Contact

Nominate no... #ORA2018



WINTER DRESSING

Beat the cold

During winter, while maintaining your own personal style of dressing, you also need to get a good layer of insulation between yourself and the environment. While wearing layers works well, selecting the right gear in the right material for each part of your body, from undergarments to hoods and boots, is also important.

Wearing layers help as one can remove or add layers, depending on fluctuations in the climate during the day and night. Layers also help in reducing sweating but one must note that some materials lose their insulation value when wet with sweat and can also cause hypothermia (a significant drop in body temperature).

In Oman, winters aren't cold enough to be worried about wearing the right clothing but by following the thumb rules one can conduct oneself comfortably through each day at work as well as at home. One needs to first find out what the weather conditions are for the day (or the week) and then make sure you have the right winter clothes that will protect you in that temperature, even if it drops ten degrees lower than expected.

Winter fabrics

For extremely cold conditions, if you chose synthetics, polypropylene wicks moisture away and insulates even when wet. For the insulating layer, look for down, Polarguard, Holofill, Thinsulate, or Primaloft. However, wool and silk are the best natural fibres to wear in cold weather.

Wool insulates better (even when wet) and is naturally odour resistant, besides being durable. But, if it is not too cold, silk is a good option as a thin layer of silk can fit under almost any garment. Silk is, however, less durable than wool. In any case, cotton is a poor choice because it absorbs water and holds it next to your skin.

Thermals

When buying thermals, remember, you want them fitted, but not too tight. Exterior layers should also be fitted but not tight. You don't want a draft blowing up under your shirt to give you a chill.

Cool jackets

Choice of cold weather jackets should depend on the weather conditions and your intended activity.

Head protection

They say, you lose 40% of your heat through your head. However, this isn't accurate as the head is similar to other areas of the body for heat loss, but you still need to protect your head and face in winter. There are dozens of options to protect your head from cold weather. You can wear a woollen cap or a ski-mask or balaclava with an aviator hat or with a full parka snorkel hood.

Cold weather boots

Get a size larger than your regular shoe size to accommodate thicker socks or boot liners. If you plan to double layer socks, you might need two sizes larger. If possible, while purchasing, try on similar boots with the socks you plan to wear outside so that you get the right size.

Also, consider wind and wetness.

Do you need insulation only, or do you need to block the wind, too? Are you likely to get wet or sweaty? Down (a fluffy insulation material) doesn't work well when wet, so does leather - unless it has a water-resistant surface.

THE FOUR LAYERS

When dressing in layers, remember these four basic layers that will make you feel most comfortable in cold climates



Long underwear

Your first layer should be your long underwear. It should fit snugly against your skin and be made of a nonabsorbent material. This layer works by wicking away water and keeping your skin dry. This first layer plays an important part in keeping you warm even as you shed or add layers as per the climate of the day.



Mid layers

The next layers is important because it serves to absorb the moisture out of your long underwear and transport it to the environment through evaporation. Use synthetics, angora, or wool. Shirts, sweaters, and trousers are what you will likely be wearing when you are active. Pay close attention to the fit, as the mid layers work by trapping air and preventing it from circulating and carrying away your body heat.



Insulation layer

Thickness is warmth. If you are holding still or it is extremely cold, choose an outer garment with several inches of loft. Down, Polarguard, Holofill, Thinsulate, and Primaloft are the types of insulation for extremely cold climates in snow and ice. However, one can use a more simple layer of insulation like woollens or silk garments.



Shell layer

The most important part of your layering system, and the most used besides your long underwear, is your shell which takes on the wind. Studies show, that in still air, wind shells worn over any garment can add up to 5 degrees of warmth. In windy conditions, wind shells can increase warmth by 10 degrees.

oman
OASIS

sifr

OMAN'S ONLY
SODIUM FREE
DRINKING WATER

5
IN GALLON
BOTTLE

Sodium Free
Drinking
Water



The healthy choice

It is beneficial to limit sodium intake if you have blood pressure, diabetes, heart or kidney disease.

Call Toll-Free 800 71 222 or GSM 9275 5522

 OmanOasis @ OmanOasisOfficial www.omanoasis.com

OASIS WATER COMPANY LLC P.O.Box: 87, PC: 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman.

Q.R. No.: 1365452

QUICK RUN

Hertha Berlin sack coach Labbadia

German League strugglers Hertha Berlin on Sunday sacked both coach Bruno Labbadia and general manager Michael Preetz in a shake up following their 4-1 thrashing at home by Werder Bremen. Saturday's heavy defeat leaves Hertha two points from the relegation places in the league table, which the club's CEO Carsten Schmidt described as 'a very precarious situation'. He is replaced by caretaker coach Pal Dardai, who was in charge of the first team from 2015 until 2019 before being moved to the club's youth academy.

Arsenal outcast Ozil joins Fenerbahce

Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil has joined Fenerbahce on a three-and-a-half year deal after last playing for the Gunners in March, both clubs announced on Sunday. The 32 year old German was omitted from Arsenal's Premier League and Europa League squads this season and his reported deal on a weekly salary of US\$475,000 was set to expire at the end of the current campaign. "I'd like to thank the club for this amazing journey over the past seven-and-a-half years," Ozil, who won the World Cup with Germany in 2014, said in a statement.

Four footballers die in Brazil plane crash

The president and four players from Brazilian fourth-division football club Palmas died in a plane crash that left no survivors on Sunday. The bi-plane pilot also died in a crash shortly after take off as the aircraft that was headed towards Goiania from Tocantins fell from the sky in the moments after leaving the runway. A club statement named the president as Lucas Meira, and the footballers as Lucas Praxedes, Guilherme Noe, Ranule and Marcus Molinari.

Cagliari extend Di Francesco deal

Italian League strugglers Cagliari confirmed on Sunday that coach Eusebio Di Francesco's contract had been extended despite the club falling to a seventh consecutive defeat in all competitions against Genoa. Hours earlier, Cagliari's winless streak extended to 12 games, dating back to an Italian Cup win over Hellas Verona on November 25, with the 0-1 loss at Genoa. The latest defeat leaves the Sardinian club 18th in Serie A.

Button to compete in Extreme E series

Jenson Button has joined Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg in entering a team for the inaugural Extreme E season but unlike his fellow F1 world champions he will also be behind the wheel. The announcement follows the unveiling of the 41 year old as a senior adviser to his ex-F1 team, Williams. Competitors in Extreme E will race electric SUVs in five venues around the world to highlight the impact of climate change and human activity on some of world's most remote locations. The five-race series starts in the Saudi Arabian desert on April 3, with further races in Senegal, Greenland, Brazil and Argentina.

AFP

England seal series



England skipper Joe Root holds aloft the trophy after his team completed a 2-0 Test series win over Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA VS ENGLAND

SECOND TEST: DAY FOUR

Galle, Sri Lanka - Dom Sibley and Jos Buttler anchored a run chase after a jittery start as England beat Sri Lanka by six wickets on Monday in the second Test to sweep the series 2-0.

Sibley and Buttler put on an unbeaten 75-run stand as England, who were struggling at 89 for four, got to their target of 164 in an extended final session on the fourth day in Galle.

The result gave England a second successive Test whitewash in Sri Lanka after winning all three matches here in 2018. England were given a deadline to finish in the day after spinners Jack Leach and Dom Bess skittled out Sri Lanka for 126 in their second innings.

Left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya claimed three wickets that gave Sri Lanka hope and helped him to his Test-best match figures of ten for 200.

Debutant spinner Ramesh Mendis got the key wicket of skipper Joe Root, who scored 11 after his 186 in England's first innings total of 344, to add to the scare given to the tourists.

Embuldeniya took Zak Crawley for 13 and then ended Jonny Bairstow's stay after a quickfire 29, putting England's nerves on edge, but Sibley calmly moved to his third Test half-century.

Leach and Sibley took four wickets each to set up England's win. The hosts started their second innings early in the day with a lead of 37 but it all came to an end in the afternoon session.

Batting at No 10 Embuldeniya top-scored with 40, after taking seven wickets with his left-arm spin to end England's first innings on 344.

He was the only batsman to score more than 20 as Sri Lanka collapsed from 29 for one in their second innings.

Embuldeniya put up some resistance with a ninth-wicket stand of 48 with Suranga Lakmal, who made 11 not out, before Root took the final two wickets with his off-spin.

Leach's left-arm spin got Kusal Perera trapped lbw for 14, and off-spinner Bess sent back Oshada Fernando for three in the first session.

First-innings centurion Angelo Mathews was then bowled by Bess for five and Chandimal fell

SCOREBOARD		
Sri Lanka 1st Innings 381		
England 1st Innings 344		
SRI LANKA 2 ND INNINGS		
K Perera	lbw b Leach	14
L Thirimanne	c Crawley b Leach	13
O Fernando	c Crawley b Bess	3
A Mathews	b Bess	5
D Chandimal	c Anderson b Leach	9
N Dickwella	c Lawrence b Bess	7
R Mendis	c Buttler b Leach	16
D Perera	c Crawley b Bess	4
S Lakmal	not out	11
L Embuldeniya	c Bairstow b Root	40
A Fernando	b Root	0
Extras:	(b 3, nb 1)	4
TOTAL:	126 for two in 35.5 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-29, 3-37, 4-37, 5-47, 6-66, 7-70, 8-78, 9-126, 10-126		
Bowling: J Anderson 2-0-6-0, S Curran 2-0-9-0, D Bess 16-1-49-4, J Leach 14-1-59-4, J Root 1.5-1-0-2		
ENGLAND 2 ND INNINGS		
Z Crawley	c O Fernando	13
	b Embuldeniya	
D Sibley	not out	56
J Bairstow	lbw b Embuldeniya	29
J Root	b Mendis	11
D Lawrence	c Dickwella	
	b Embuldeniya	2
J Buttler	not out	46
Extras:	(lb 4, nb 3)	7
TOTAL:	164 for four in 43.3 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-62, 3-84, 4-89		
Bowling: L Embuldeniya 20-3-73-3, D Perera 13-3-1-39-0, R Mendis 10-0-48-1		

Bangladesh whitewash West Indies

BANGLADESH VS WEST INDIES
THIRD ODI

Chattogram, Bangladesh - The process was different but the result was similar on Monday. Chasing a total for the first time in the series, the inexperienced West Indies line-up came a cropper once again to manage just 177 in 44.2 against Bangladesh to lose the ODI series 3-0 and not collect a single point for the ODI Super League.

With the top score again coming from Rowman Powell (47) in the lower order, West Indies were no match for Bangladesh's competitive 297 scored on the back of attacking half-centuries from Mushfiqur Rahim (64) and Mahmudullah (64 n.o.), and cautious fifties from Tamim Iqbal (64) and Shakib al Hasan (51).

Unlike in the first two ODIs, the West Indies batsmen showed more fight against the spinners but the twin strikes from Mustafizur Rahman early on, and then in the middle overs from Mohammad Saifuddin meant the visitors were hardly in the chase.

Batting at No 3 Nkrumah Bonner blocked one end for a long period and it was only him and Powell who provided any kind of resistance by facing over 40 balls each for contrasting scores of 31 and 47 respectively.

Batting first for the first time this series, Iqbal's 64 and

Shakib's 51 set the stage for Rahim and Mahmudullah to launch an attack at the end to collect 100 runs off the last ten overs and post their highest total at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Cricinfo

SCOREBOARD		
BANGLADESH		
T Iqbal	c Hosen b Joseph	64
L Das	lbw b Joseph	0
N Hossain	lbw b Mayers	20
Shakib al Hasan	b Reifer	51
M Rahim	c Joseph b Reifer	64
Mahmudullah	not out	64
S Sarkar	run out	7
M Saifuddin	not out	5
Extras:	(lb 4, nb 3, w 15)	22
TOTAL:	297 for six	
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-38, 3-131, 4-179, 5-251, 6-283		
Bowling: A Joseph 10-0-48-2, K Harding 10-0-88-0, K Mayers 7-0-34-1, R Reifer 10-0-61-2, A Hosen 10-0-46-0, J Mohammed 3-0-16-0		
WEST INDIES		
K Ottley	c Rahim b Rahman	1
S Ambris	lbw b Rahman	13
N Bonner	b Saifuddin	31
K Mayers	lbw b Hasan Miraz	11
J Mohammed	c Rahim b Saifuddin	17
R Powell	lbw b Sarkar	47
J Hamilton	c Rahim b Hasan Miraz	5
R Reifer	c & b Ahmed	27
A Joseph	run out	11
A Hosen	c Rahim b Saifuddin	0
K Harding	not out	1
Extras:	(b 1, lb 2, nb 2, w 8)	13
TOTAL:	177 in 44.2 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-30, 3-47, 4-79, 5-93, 6-117, 7-155, 8-174, 9-175, 10-177		
Bowling: M Saifuddin 9-0-51-3, M Rahman 6-0-24-2, T Ahmed 8.2-1-32-1, M Hasan Miraz 10-2-18-2, Shakib al Hasan 4.5-0-12-0, Mahmudullah 2-0-11-0, S Sarkar 3.1-0-22-1, N Hossain 1-0-4-0		



Shakib al Hasan (left) and Tamim Iqbal against West Indies on Monday

Easy wins for Mazoon Up, Ghantoot Group

LOCAL CRICKET

Mazoon Up and Ghantoot Group recorded easy victories in their respective matches of the Oman Cricket E Division T20 matches at Al Amerat on Friday.

Fahad Mohammed 2-21, Ashfakh Chaikinakath 2-28) lost to Mazoon Up 139-4 in 14.4 overs (Mohammed Ali 64, Khader Mohammed 30; Nathar Pashambah 3-21).

Abdul 2-24) beat Sam Royals 152-8 (Arjun Rajesh 51, Sinu Thankachan 35; Saravanan Manickam 3-59, Kirit Tandel 2-17).

F Division (T20): BSI 180-8 (Sanket Cyril 65; Prabakaran Ranganathan 3-22, Thimmanna Cholanda 2-27) beat Team Coorg Muscat 143-5 (Poonacha

Pattada 54, Milind Bhujwala 32; Fajes MP 2-33).

F Division: Y Horizon 182-6 (Rudhi Rasheed 81, Thiru Mothilal 34; Mohammed Ali 2-32) beat ACT Cricworld 116 all out in 19.3 overs (Dileep Chandran 35; Prashant Rana 3-18, Ashwin Dave 3-23).

MODERN EXCHANGE

الصرافة الحديثة

Charges RO 3.5 only

Now put on the best smile that you can!

All our transfers to USA, UK, Australia and entire Europe are charged just OMR 3.500 with no backend charges

98082703

98082703 / 98082705 / 98082709

www.modernexchange.com

Change for Life

HIGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERIES

BIG BIGGER BIGGER

BIG COMPRESSOR, BIGGER COOLING.

- Heavy duty reciprocating compressor
- High power saving
- Turbo cooling
- Auto restart
- 4-Way air outlet
- Gold Fin

THE LARGEST AIR CONDITIONER MANUFACTURER IN THE WORLD.

جنيكو Genetco

94108890, 96742452

Available at Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

C.R. No. 1009480

79011363

Asian Football Confederation cancels four championships

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic yet to be brought under total control and the uncertainties surrounding it, the Asian Football Confederation

(AFC), decided on Monday to cancel four of its championships to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders.

In an official statement, AFC said that in line with FIFA's decision to cancel the FIFA U17 and U20 World Cups in

2021 and taking into consideration the safety and health of Asia's youth players, it has cancelled the Asian U16 Championship Bahrain 2020 and the Asian U19 Championship Uzbekistan 2020.

The next editions of U16 and U19 championships will be allocated to the same hosts in 2023 when the Uzbekistan Football Association will host the U20 Asian Cup and the Bahrain Football Association will stage the U17 Asian Cup.

The AFC has also decided to cancel the Asian Futsal Championship Kuwait 2020 and the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2021.

Both the Kuwait Football Association and the Football Association of Thailand will

host the next editions.

Kuwait will stage the AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2022 and Thailand, the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup 2023.

Windsor John, the AFC general secretary, said, "We are grateful for the support of

the hosts for these competitions who agreed with the AFC the need to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders during this time of uncertainty and taking into consideration the risks of the current pandemic."

'Merger of culture, sports and youth sectors in line with Oman Vision 2040'

H H Sayyid Theyazin al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, meets heads of clubs in Sohar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The re-structuring and merger of culture, sports and youth sectors into a single ministry is a step in the right direction and will help serve the clubs better in fulfilling their social mission as they are in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, according to H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

H H Sayyid Theyazin was addressing the presidents of clubs at a meeting held at Sohar Club in Sohar on Monday

The minister said that the integration of the three sectors will also help the ministry

contribute to achieving laurels in these fields at international level.

H H Sayyid Theyazin said that 'the clubs will play an effective role with the merger of the three sectors'.

"Clubs in the various governorates are an important place for creativity, whether it is cultural, sports or youth," he said.

H H Sayyid Theyazin told the club presidents that there is a 'need to activate the roles of clubs to their maximum limits in all activities of culture, sports and youth'. He called upon them to redouble the efforts and urged them to participate in the ministry's various programmes, activities and competitions.

H H Sayyid Theyazin hoped



H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said (left) addressing the presidents of clubs in the sultanate at a meeting held at Sohar Club in Sohar on Monday



that the task of amending the statutes of sports associations will be completed soon.

The minister said the elections of sports associations

under the new statutes will help the new office-bearers to contribute more effectively and efficiently to Oman sports.

H H Sayyid Theyazin said that

'clubs financial dealings should be more transparent' and emphasised the 'importance on investment and need to diversify the financial resources'.

H H Sayyid Theyazin added that the ministry will soon have a separate department to assist clubs regarding investment opportunities. The meeting was

also attended by H E Rashad al Hinai and H E Said al Busaidi, undersecretaries at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. (With inputs from OANA)

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Chelsea sack manager Lampard, Tuchel set to be named new boss

London, UK - Chelsea sacked manager Frank Lampard on Monday after 18 months in charge, with former Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) boss Thomas Tuchel reportedly set to replace him at Stamford Bridge.

Sunday's 3-1 FA Cup fourth-round win against Championship side Luton was not enough to save Lampard, whose team have slumped to ninth place in the English Premier League. Chelsea said it had been a 'very difficult decision' to part ways with the 42-year-old, who replaced Maurizio Sarri in July 2019.

"We are grateful to Frank for what he has achieved in his time as head coach of the club," Chelsea said in a statement. "However, recent results and performances have not met the club's expectations, leaving the club mid-table without any clear path to sustained improvement."

The club's Russian owner Roman Abramovich said: "This was a very difficult decision for the club, not least because I have an excellent personal relationship with Frank and I have the utmost respect for him. He is a man of great integrity and has the highest of work ethics. However, under current circumstances we believe it is best to change managers."

Former PSG boss Tuchel, who was abruptly sacked by



Frank Lampard

the French champions in December, is in line to take over, reports said. Chelsea are struggling in ninth place in the Premier League table, 11 points behind leaders Manchester United. They have lost five of their past eight Premier League matches after a good start to the season.

Lampard signed a three-year deal in 2019 and despite a transfer ban, led them to the FA Cup final and a fourth-place finish in his first managerial campaign at Stamford Bridge.

Tuchel only became available a month ago when he left PSG, less than five months after taking them to the Champions League final, which they lost to Bayern Munich.

The 47-year-old German won back-to-back league titles with PSG, but that was not enough to satisfy the club's Qatari owners, who replaced him with former Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino. AFP

Fernandes' gem knocks Liverpool out

FA CUP

London, UK - Bruno Fernandes' superb free-kick sent troubled Liverpool crashing out of the FA Cup as Manchester United beat their bitter rivals 3-2 in the fourth round on Sunday.

Fernandes struck with 12 minutes left at Old Trafford to cap a thrilling clash that left Liverpool searching for answers after another painful defeat.

Jürgen Klopp's side took the lead through Mohamed Salah's first-half goal, but Mason Greenwood equalised before the interval. Marcus Rashford put United in front after the break and, although Salah equalised, Portugal midfielder Fernandes came off the bench to fire his free-kick past Alisson Becker.

After slumping to fourth in the



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes celebrates after scoring his team's third goal against Liverpool during the FA Cup match on Sunday

English Premier League following Thursday's shock 1-0 defeat against Burnley - their first league loss at Anfield since 2017 - Liverpool have to lick their wounds

again. The English champions, who trail leaders United by six points, have won only one of

their last seven games in all competitions and that lone success came against Aston Villa's youth team in the FA Cup third round.

Liverpool struck in the 18th minute when Roberto Firmino threaded a pass to Salah, who lifted his shot over Dean Henderson.

United levelled in the 26th minute when Rashford sent Greenwood clear for a low strike past Alisson Becker.

Ole Gunnar Solskjær's men netted again in the 48th minute as a mistake from Liverpool's young defender Rhys Williams allowed Greenwood to race clear and score.

Firmino's cross was converted by Salah for Liverpool's 58th-minute equaliser, but Fernandes won it with his sublime set-piece

after Fabinho fouled Edinson Cavani. United will host West Ham in the fifth round as their momentum continues to build.

"You know when you go a goal down the reaction of everyone was really good. We played some really good stuff, good goals. We have to defend well against them and we managed to react well," Solskjær said.

Liverpool have never got past the fifth round in Klopp's reign, but that will be the least of his concerns as he tries to spark a revival from his spluttering team.

"There was a lot of good things and some mistakes around the goals. If you want to win here you have to be absolutely top and we were not," Klopp said.

AFP

Suarez strikes again as Atletico march on

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Luis Suarez scored a brilliant team goal as Atletico Madrid came from behind to beat Valencia 3-1 on Sunday and move seven points clear at the top of La Liga.

After Real Madrid thrashed Alaves on Saturday, Barca had earlier followed suit with a scrappy victory over Elche.

But Atletico were undeterred in the capital, as their considerable advantage was restored again, with a game in hand.

"We don't get carried away or think too far ahead, we think about getting better," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone.

Suarez finished off a flowing move that had started almost on Atletico's goal-line before substitute Angel Correa capped another slick string of passes to end Valencia's resistance.

The visitors had taken an early lead in stunning fashion, Uros Racic curling into the top corner from 35 yards but Joao Felix equalised and Atletico came back, in a way that has begun to feel expected.

Felix was replaced by Correa after an hour by Simeone after assisting Suarez and scoring a goal for himself that should send a message to his coach, who has handed the 21-year-old a spell on the bench in recent weeks.



Atletico's Luis Suarez (L) vies with Valencia's Carlos Soler on Sunday

"It's not written that footballers have to play 90 minutes," said Simeone. "Joao scored a goal, made an assist, he came off

and on came Correa, who scored a goal and was close to another. The competition is healthy."

Barcelona win without Messi

Barcelona won again without the suspended Lionel Messi as goals from Frenkie de Jong and Riqui Puig were enough to secure a scruffy 2-0 win over Elche.

De Jong poked the ball over the line just before half-time at the Martinez Valero, which would have proved a suitably scrappy winner before Puig came off the bench to head in a second late on.

Messi is still serving his punishment for being sent off in

Seville but the Argentinian will be available again for Wednesday's cup tie at Rayo Vallecano.

OTHER RESULTS

Sunday: Osasuna 3 Granada 1, Celta Vigo 1 Eibar 1.

FRENCH LEAGUE

Sunday: Saint-Etienne 0 Lyon 5, Rennes 0 Lille 1.

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Sunday: Genoa 1 Cagliari 0, Lazio 2 Sassuolo 1, Parma 0 Sampdoria 2.

GERMAN LEAGUE

Sunday: Hoffenheim 3 Cologne 0. AFP

INDIA CAN BE A RESILIENT PARTNER FOR OMAN: HE MAHAWAR

Ambassador's message on the occasion of the Republic Day of India 2021

I extend warm greetings and heartiest felicitations to all members of the Indian community living in the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day of India. On behalf of the government and people of India, including the Indian community in Oman, I extend best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the first anniversary of his accession. I also take this opportunity to convey greetings and best wishes to the government and people of Oman for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of Oman.

The year 2020 was a difficult year for all of us, as the whole world was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The global health emergency showed the importance of concerted global action. India shouldered its global responsibilities and extended support to our friends and partners and emerged as the 'Pharmacy of the World'.

With the launch of the COVID-19 vaccines, all of us are looking ahead with hope and the end of the pandemic seems nearer. As India rolls out the largest vaccine drive in the world, which has no parallel in the history of mankind, we remain com-

mitted to helping other countries also, under our guiding philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* – the entire world is one family. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured that India's vaccine production capacity will serve the interest of the whole humanity.

India's fight against COVID-19 has been characterised by confidence and compassion. The COVID-19 pandemic united the nation and the collective power that India displayed in the fight against the coronavirus will serve as an inspiration for many generations to come.

The AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abiyan (Self Reliant India) was announced by Prime Minister Modi in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic for enhancing national capacities of India and make stronger contribution globally.

In India's approach of self-reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness and peace. India's diaspora across the world will be an important partner in the national endeavour towards self-reliance.

At the same time our quest for self-reliance will be based on global partnerships with our friends and

partners, opening up new opportunities for enhancing cooperation.

The Sultanate of Oman is a close friend and trusted partner of India. Our two countries have always enjoyed very close relations that have evolved into a vibrant strategic partnership in recent years based on our shared values, common interests and convergence in approaches. Robust defence and security cooperation, rapidly growing economic ties, and extensive people-to-people contacts are key pillars of this strategic partnership.

The COVID crisis has demonstrated the depth and resilience of India-Oman strategic partnership. Close engagement and cooperation continued between both the countries in addressing the urgent matters related to the pandemic.

I would like to convey gratitude to the Government of Oman for taking good care of the Indian diaspora residing in Oman during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the countries were also able to sustain momentum in consolidation of the strategic relationship through regular high-level engagements even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we look ahead to the post-

COVID-19 era, there are immense opportunities for the expansion of India-Oman strategic partnership.

India can be a strong and resilient partner for Oman in all priority areas identified under Vision 2040.

There are strong complementarities between both our countries in several areas. Oman can benefit from India's capabilities in the new areas of Space, Pharmaceuticals, IT and Cyber technologies. India is already partnering with Oman in its capacity building efforts through the ITEC Programme, and looks to scale it up post-COVID.

India accords high priority to its strategic partnership with Oman and remains committed to further increasing cooperation in existing as well as new areas. We hope that India-Oman bilateral cooperation will reach new heights in the coming years.

The Embassy of India looks forward to working closely with the government and people of Oman as well as the Indian diaspora in Oman towards this objective.

H E MUNU MAHAWAR
Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman



Greetings

to the Government and people of India on the occasion of the Indian Republic Day





UNIQUE
CONT. CO. LLC

P.O. Box 3289, P.C. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman,
Tel: 24782898, Fax: 24782898,
E-mail: info@uniqueom.com,
Website: www.uniqueom.com

Pandemic response: Using crisis as opportunity

Manish Chand

A crisis can trigger ruin and catastrophe, but it also sometimes brings out the best in people and nations. More than any other country in the world, India has shown vividly how to creatively and resolutely harness challenges thrown by the ongoing coronavirus crisis to script its own resurgence as well as contribute to global recovery. Amid apocalyptic death, destruction and dislocation unleashed by a rampaging pandemic, India, the world's fifth largest economy and an emerging global power, has managed to keep its recovery rate high (> 95 per cent in December 2020) as well as keep the fatality rate less than 1.5 per cent (December 2020) - one of the lowest in the world. This has been achieved through multi-pronged efforts and initiatives by the Indian government, including a far-sighted initiative to order a nation-wide lockdown in the early stage of the pandemic when there were barely 600 cases in the country.

World is one Family

For a country of over 1.3bn people, managing an epidemic that requires social distancing is an incredibly onerous task, but on balance, India has not only taken care of its own people infected by the virus, but has also complemented domestic efforts with timely international assistance to many countries. This trait of empathy and solidarity with friends and partners in the world is deeply embedded in India's civilisational ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* - The world is one



family' and reflects the country's rising reputation as a global caregiver and first responder in crises, in the exalted spirit of 'the world is one family'.

India has been prompt to provide essential drugs and medical items to over 150 countries. This medical assistance was provided quietly, without any fanfare, earning India heartfelt gratitude and admiration of countries, big and small.

From (former) US President Donald Trump to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, leaders around the world have appreciated India's timely assistance to fight this merciless pandemic.

First responder

The pandemic-related assistance also reaffirmed India's credentials as the first responder to humanitarian crises and a net security provider in the region. In a journey spanning over 7,500 nautical miles over 55 days, Indian Naval Ship *INS Kesari* travelled to the Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles and delivered assistance to India's maritime neighbours. A part of Mission SAGAR, which crystallises Prime Minister Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), India's humanitarian assistance included supplies of essential

food items, medicines, Ayurvedic medicines and deployment of Medical Assistance Teams (MAT) to Mauritius and Comoros. India also sent medical teams to the Maldives, Mauritius, Comoros and Kuwait to support them deal with the pandemic.

Self-reliant India

The COVID-19 crisis has sown the seeds of an economic renaissance pivoted around 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' that promises to revolutionise domestic manufacturing, and make India the hub of global supply chains. The quest for self-reliance has produced tangible results, with India mov-

ing from being a net importer of COVID-19-related medical items to a net exporter. Currently, India is manufacturing over 500,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and over 300,000 N-95 masks every day. India is playing the role as the pharmacy of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic with its vast experience and deep knowledge in medicine, setting the tone for many regional and global initiatives, observed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Secretary-General Vladimir Norov.

India is also expected to play a major role in COVID-19 vaccine development and manufac-

turing. There are six vaccines including three indigenous and three joint ventures that were in various stages of clinical trials in December 2020. Two vaccines, from Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute (in collaboration with Astra-Zenca) have been approved for emergency use in first week of January 2021. Prime Minister Modi has reiterated that India considers vaccines as not only vital to good health but also to a global good, and it is India's duty to assist other countries in their fight against COVID-19.

Diplomatic outreach

Given the transnational spread of the coronavirus pandemic, India launched an unprecedented diplomatic outreach to forge a coherent global response to the crisis. Prime Minister Modi displayed global leadership as he participated in various virtual multilateral summits and spoke to his counterparts from 61 countries. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to foreign ministers from 77 countries.

Showcasing India's Neighbourhood First policy, Prime Minister Modi hosted a virtual conference of the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and pledged US\$10mn SAARC Emergency Fund to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the region. At the first virtual G-20 summit, Prime Minister Modi underlined the imperative for a new kind of humane globalisation, which goes beyond economic and financial calculations. India's advocacy for people-centric globalisation was reflected the G-20's decision on debt serv-

ice suspension for developing countries.

India's global role

The rising global stature of India has been recognised and reaffirmed by the international community in many ways, especially during the last few months of the pandemic. India has been elected as the chair of the executive board of the World Health Organization (WHO) at a time when the world is rooting for reforming the global health body. Underlining India's rising global stock, US President Donald Trump has proposed the expansion of the G-7 grouping of the world's wealthiest countries to include India, Australia, South Korea and Russia.

To cap it all, India was overwhelmingly elected as a non-permanent member of the powerful UN Security Council for a two-year term on June 17. In a record of sorts, India won 184 of the 192 ballots cast in the elections for the five non-permanent UNSC seats.

It was a vote of confidence in India's capability to shape the global agenda. India's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC began from January 1, 2021.

Setting the tone for the eighth stint of India in the UNSC, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar underscored that India 'can play a positive global role', in the extraordinary situation spawned by the pandemic and stressed that India seeks to move toward NORMS, a 'New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System'. [Manish Chand is the CEO & Editor-in-Chief of India Writes Network and India and the World, a pioneering magazine focused on global affairs]



PURSHOTTAM KANJI

EXCHANGE



شركة برشوتم
كانجي للصرافة

INDIA

26

January



HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

 99101314, 99849289

 customersupport@pkexchange.net

 www.pkexchange.com

 pkexch

 @pkexchange1











Conservation efforts without borders

Juhi Mirza

India has been restoring several ancient temples and monuments across South-East Asian countries as part of its development partnership initiatives. The recent conservation projects of the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India and partner countries has brought forth a rich cultural heritage.

The Southern Asiatic region has been historically heralded as *Suvmabhumi*, or the golden land, in ancient Indian literature, a title that is true for the immense wealth and more importantly for a vibrant and friendly mix of cultures that is evident in ancient monuments across the countries in this region. India has had an important role to play in preserving this shared cultural heritage.

The recent discovery of a 9th century monolithic sandstone Shiv Lingam (representation of Lord Shiva) was made by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) during the ongoing conservation project at Cham Temple Complex, a part of the Unesco World Heritage Site, in the Quang Nam province of Vietnam. The project, part of the India's development partnership with Vietnam through conservation of shared heritage, is being supported by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India.

India has been actively involved in large-scale restoration and conservation projects which have reaffirmed the existence of strong cultural connection that thrived throughout the region in ancient times.



The conservation of the 12th century Angkor Wat temples between 1986 and 1992 is perhaps the most outstanding project that the ASI has undertaken outside India

The conservation work of the ASI is being carried out at several heritage sites beyond the national boundaries. India has been at the forefront of restoring heritage sites across South-East Asia, be it the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia or the My Son monuments in Vietnam. These initiatives can be attributed to the country's policy of promoting a healthy and mutually beneficial diplomatic outreach and bringing numerous facets of Indian cultural and civilisational heritage to the public at large.

The projects, funded by the MEA with ASI acting as the execution agency, have reaffirmed the ancient albeit strong connections across Southern Asia. Here are a some of large-scale undertakings:

Angkor Wat, Cambodia

Also known as *funan* in the ancient texts of India, this city reached its zenith under the leadership of Jayavarmana II. With the beliefs of Vaishnavism, Saivism and Mahayana Buddhism, the prominent archaeological site of Angkor Wat was built by King Suryavaramana II in the 12th century. It consists of magnificent temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.

The MEA with the ASI undertook its conservation on a grand scale in collaboration with the Government of Cambodia and have made tremendous efforts to preserve the beauty of these temples. In fact, in 1980, India was the first country to respond

to an appeal made by Cambodia to the world community to come forward to help save the Angkor Wat, the centre of the Khmer kingdom for several centuries. The ASI team worked for seven years at the complex, restoring the northern embankment of a moat, a gateway, the grand Samudra Manthana Gallery, the northern library and the central tower of the Angkor Wat temple among other sections. The temples' extraordinary bas-reliefs, decorated panels of folklore and notable iconography have been restored to their former prime.

Ta Prohm Temple, Cambodia

After Angkor Wat, ASI started restoration of the Ta Prohm temple located in the Angkor World

Heritage Site. The temple of Ta Prohm was built by King Suryavaramana VII and is an epicentre of the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism.

This particular temple is an ancient monastery and a university, this *rajvihara* (royal residence) was built by the King in memory of his beloved mother. With the passage of time, Ta Prohm encountered extensive growth of trees and bushes, which grew haphazardly threatening the original structure. The temple was also littered with excessive boulders and mounds that needed removal to form a clear passageway. The conservation project was taken partly under the expertise of ASI permitted by International Coordination Committee and Authority

for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA). The ancient walls adorning the magnificent motifs of Buddhist beliefs and Bodhisattvas are in process of being restored to their original quality.

Ananda temple, Myanmar

The Ananda temple of Myanmar is considered to be one of the most beautiful temples preaching the teachings of Theravada Buddhism. Built by King Kyansittha of Pagan dynasty, this elegant pagoda style temple is an exquisite example of Mon architecture and houses four colossal figures of Lord Buddha. The wall plaques portray his early life forms, the *jatakas* and their enigm-

atic stories. The region was devastated by intense seismic activity and the temple frequently requires structural and chemical restoration.

Vat Phou Temple, Laos

India shares a strong relationship with the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The ASI has undertaken the project to restore Laos' temple of Vat Phou. An ancient structure dating back to the 11th and the 13th century, part of an important city of the Khmer empire, this temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, which later was transformed into a Buddhist centre.

The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi also highlighted India's historic and cultural links with Laos and expressed satisfaction at being involved in the restoration of the World Heritage Site at Vat Phou over a telephonic conversation with Dr Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of Laos in June 2020.

My Son Temple, Vietnam

One of the most prominent temples dedicated to the Bhadreswar form of Lord Shiva, this one-of-a-kind monument and its subsidiary shrines were constructed by the kings of Champa dynasty between the 4th and 14th century.

Archaeological Survey of India has been successfully carrying forward with the conservation work to restore this temple premises.

[Juhi Mirza, a Lucknow-based writer, holds a master's degree in Archaeology and is a keen enthusiast for all things ancient]



Greetings to the
Government & People
of India on the
occasion of the
72nd Republic Day



muscatpharmacy.om

Tourism – Advantage India

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the services sector in India. Tourism in India has significant potential considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country. Tourism is also a potentially large employment generator besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the country. In FY20, 39mn jobs were created in the tourism sector in India; this accounted for eight per cent of the total employment in the country. The number is expected to rise by two per cent annum to 52.3mn jobs by 2028.

According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC), India ranked 10th among 185 countries in terms of travel and tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2019. During 2019, contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was 6.8 per cent of the total economy, approximately US\$194.3bn.

Market size

India is the most digitally advanced traveller nation in terms of digital tools being used for planning, booking, and experiencing a journey. India's rising middle class and increasing disposable income has supported the growth of domestic and out-bound tourism.

During 2019, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India stood at 10.89mn, achieving a growth rate of 3.20 pre cent year-on-year basis.

During 2019, foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from tourism increased 4.8 per cent year-on-year to US\$29.96bn. In 2019, arrivals through e-Tourist Visa increased by 23.6 per cent year-on-year to US\$2.9mn.

International hotel chains are increasing their presence in the country, and it will account for around 50 per cent share in the tourism and hospitality sector of India by 2022.

Investments

India was globally the third largest in terms of investment in travel and tourism with an inflow



of US\$45.7bn in 2018, accounting for 5.9 per cent of the total investment in the country. Hotel and Tourism sector received cumulative FDI inflow of US\$15.48bn between April

2000 and June 2020.

Government initiatives

The Indian government has realised the country's potential in

the tourism industry and has taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub.

Some of the major initiatives planned by the Government of India to boost the tourism and

hospitality sector of India are as follows:

In October 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated four new tourist attractions in Gujarat namely, Arogya Van,

Ekta Mall, Children's Nutrition Park and Sardar Patel Zoological Park/Jungle Safari, near the Statue of Unity at Kevadiya in Narmada district.

The initiative is a part of 17 new projects that are planned. Additionally, the government will also launch seaplane service from Ahmedabad to Statue of Unity in a major push to India's tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism developed an initiative called SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) by partnering with the Quality Council of India (QCI) in October 2020. The initiative will effectively implement guidelines/SOPs issued with reference to COVID-19 for safe operations of hotels, restaurants, B&Bs and other units.

Ministry of Tourism launched Dekho Apna Desh webinar series to provide information on many destinations and sheer depth and expanse on the culture and heritage of India.

Ministry of Tourism launched Audio Guide facility App called Audio Odigos for 12 sites in India (including iconic sites).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to visit 15 domestic tourist destinations in India by 2022.

Statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, also known as 'Statue of Unity', was inaugurated in October 2018. It is the highest stand-

ing statue in the world at a height of 182m. It is expected to boost the tourism sector in the country and put it on the world tourism map. Government of India is working to achieve two per cent share in world's international tourist arrivals by 2025.

Under Budget 2020-21, the Government of India has allotted US\$171.7mn for development of tourist circuits under Swadesh Darshan for the eight northeastern states. Under the Budget 2020-21, the Government of India has allotted US\$29.7mn for development of tourist circuits under PRASHAD scheme.

In 2019, the Government of India reduced GST on hotel rooms with tariffs of ₹1,001 (US\$14.32 approx) to ₹7,500 (US\$107.31 approx) per night to 12 per cent and those above ₹7,501 (US\$107.32 approx) to 18 per cent to increase India's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

Staycation is seen as an emerging trend where people stay at luxurious hotels to revive themselves of stress in a peaceful getaway. To cater to such needs, major hotel chains such as Marriott International, IHG Hotels & Resorts and Oberoi hotels are introducing staycation offers where guests can choose from a host of curated experiences, within the hotel.

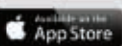
[Contributed by India Brand Equity Foundation]



Celebrate the essence of being a people's nation from the safety of your homes.

Wishing you a Happy India Republic Day.

Tel.: +968 2478 2242
www.unimoni.com/omn







NAVIC: India's very own navigation system

Gajanan Khergamker

Developments in India's space activities has not only proved the country's mettle in scientific research but has also ensured the nation a place at par with some of the most powerful in the world.

Soon you will not be checking GPS (Global Positioning System) in your smart phone or car! Instead, you will be using an indigenous version of the same developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Global standards body 3GPP, which develops protocols for mobiles, has recently approved India's regional navigational system NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) for commercial use by international and domestic mobile device makers.

The journey of NavIC started on July 1, 2013, when India launched IRNSS-1A, the first satellite in the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) followed by a series of satellites over the next six years till finally IRNSS-1L was launched on April 12, 2018, completing the constellation of nine functional satellites to provide foolproof satellite-based navigation signals.

It was following the successful launch of navigation satellite IRNSS-1G on April 28, 2016, that Prime Minister Narendra Modi named the new system 'NavIC' (boatman in Hindi) dedicating it to the people of the country and said the SAARC countries can also take advantage of its services.

Prime Minister Modi expanded 'NavIC' as 'Navigation with Indian Constellation'. With the launch, India joined the elite league of nations like the US,



China and Russia, and the European Union to own a satellite-based navigation system.

But the journey wasn't smooth. Three atomic clocks on-board IRNSS-1A to be used for precise coordination and to account for the effects of general relativity, failed. To replace it and complete the constellation of seven satellites, the IRNSS-1H was launched on August 31, 2017. This was the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) eighth navigation satellite and the first of its kind in the country to be built by the private sector and supervised by the space re-

search organisation. However, the satellite was not able to complete the fourth stage of its orbital placement. But that did not, in any way, mar the ISRO's spirit. Living up to its reputation, it pooled in all its resources and within eight months, launched IRNSS-1L on April 12, 2018, completing the NavIC constellation of eight satellites. The 1,425kg satellite was made by Bengaluru based Alpha Design Technologies in collaboration with the ISRO and is the second satellite to be actively built by the private industry.

NavIC, built indigenously, is

aimed at aiding terrestrial, aerial and marine navigation, vehicle tracking and fleet management, disaster management, mapping and geodetic data capture, and visual and voice navigation for drivers. Also capable of being integrated with mobile phones, NavIC is all set to be the perfect navigation tool for hikers and travellers across India. A restricted service providing enhanced access will be used by the military for missile delivery and navigation and tracking of aircraft.

Interestingly, compared to the American system, NavIC covers

only India, the Indian Ocean and its surroundings, and is, thus, considered to be more accurate. It will provide standard positioning service to all users with a position accuracy of five metres. The GPS, on the other hand, has a position accuracy of 20-30 metres.

India's NavIC uses dual frequency (S and L bands). When low frequency signal travels through atmosphere, its velocity fluctuates due to atmospheric disturbances. India measures the difference in delay of dual frequency and can assess the actual delay. NavIC, therefore, is not de-

pendent on any model to find the frequency error and hence more efficient than GPS. Along with NavIC, the country's space agency is also working on the GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) project as a Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) for the Indian airspace.

If that isn't ambitious enough, India has also initiated the process to develop the Global Indian Navigation System (GINS), which, according to the ISRO, is an independent regional navigation satellite system being developed by India to provide accurate

position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1,500km from its boundary. This, when implemented, will catapult the nation onto an all-powerful platform at par with some of the most powerful countries in the world. India has surely arrived and is all set to rule, even in space - the final frontier!

[Gajanan Khergamker is an editor, solicitor and documentary film-maker heading thinktank DraftCraft International. He is the Founder Editor of The Draft. He writes across borders on law, diplomacy, public policy and international affairs.]



Agriculture reforms: Prosperity economics

The latest agriculture reforms introduced in India propose to increase the prices farmers get for their output by giving them flexibility to sell, with governments continuing to support a base minimum thorough the minimum support price (MSP) within the extant system. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the farm reforms would help bring down barriers between agriculture and associated sectors, creating new markets for farmers.

Key provisions of the three laws
Here are some key provisions that these laws offer.

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

This law aims to ease excessive controls over the production and distribution of agricultural commodities. It brings an ancient law of the 20th century, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, in tune with the 21st century realities, flexibilities and aspirations. The law aims to deregulate cereals, pulses, potato, onions, edible oilseeds and oils that will come into effect 'only under extraordinary circumstances which may include war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity of grave nature'. These circumstances have been specified - 100 per cent increase in the retail price of horticultural produce, or 50 per cent increase in the retail price of non-perishables. The time period has been specified - the prevailing price over the preceding 12 months or



average retail price over the preceding five years. This amendment paves the way for cold chain infrastructure to come up. It enables food storage and hurts none.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020

This law beaks the monopsony of

Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC), overseen by state governments, and enables farmers to sell their produce to entities other than APMC - it does not exclude APMCs - and prevents state governments from levying any market fee, cess or levy outside APMC areas. Further, it prevents state governments from levying 'market fee or cess or levy, by whatever name called' on any farmer, trader or electronic trading and transaction platform. It also sets up a dispute resolution mechanism. Agriculture is a state subject under the Constitution; but food is a national market. This law enables farmers to access that market while remaining within the Constitutional confines of Union-State relations. A new enabling law has been enacted, granting greater flexibility but changes nothing else, hurts no farmer.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020

This law flows in a logical progression from the one above. It creates a legal framework of agreements within which farmers can engage with companies

and wholesalers that buy in bulk and sell further. The law aims to write into these agreements pricing, transparency, payment mechanisms and manner of delivery. It places compliances on quality and standards - a power held by the middlemen in APMCs and to which a small farmer has no questioning recourse. At worst, competition between APMCs and companies will ensure a better price to the small farmer. In addition, as protection to small farmers, it prohibits acquiring ownership rights of farmers at any cost. It links the agreements with financial instruments like insurance and credit. Finally, it creates a dispute settlement mechanism, including an appellant authority.

Focus on farmers

Although procurement from farmers by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) under the MSP will continue as it is, the performance data is not encouraging. In the past 15 years (2003 and 2018), procurement by government agencies has been 26.8 per cent for wheat (procurement of 359mn tonnes versus production of 1,340mn tonnes) and 31.3 per cent for rice (procurement of 488mn tonnes against a production of 1,558mn tonnes). The sur-

plus is purchased by moneylenders and traders at very low prices. The moneylender and traders buy independently or work as an agent of a bigger merchant of the nearby market. Clearly, the balance of power is against small farmers.

The same story plays out in horticulture. In Uttarakhand, for instance, small farmers leave their produce on the road in two to eight wooden boxes. The boxes lie there until a small truck from one of the traders at the APMC in Haldwani drives past and picks it up. The farmer can see the price on his phone. But the traders pay less than the market price. His tools of price cuts are size of the peaches or the extent of ripeness, all as per his decision, which is opaque. The farmer has no recourse but to accept the price. With the change in laws, and competition between middlemen and companies, the small farmers will definitely get a chance at higher price.

The APMCs are not doing what they were supposed to do; they are not working in the interest of farmers. Their monopsony status has entitled the worst practices - limited numbers of traders, reducing competition, cartelisation of traders, undue deduction in the name of market

fee, or commission charges. On the last, while the fees and charges are legally to be levied on traders, the cost is transferred to farmers by deducting the amount from their net proceeds. In some states, these fees are levied even when sale of agriculture produce takes place outside the market yard. These reforms could bring economic justice to small farmers.

Embrace prosperity economics

Agriculture accounts for more than 40 per cent of the total people employed in India and it is imperative that sound reforms are brought in to energise this vital sector of India's economy. The government is committed to double the income of farmers and the latest reforms are designed to provide an impetus to this vital sector. As Prime Minister Modi recently said, "Agriculture and its related sectors such as agricultural infrastructure, food processing, storage, cold chains had seen walls between them. Now these walls are being removed. These reforms will give farmers new markets, advantages of technology, and help bring investments. It is my country's farmers who will benefit the most from all this."



BADR AL SAMAA

GROUP OF HOSPITALS

Wishes you a

Happy Republic Day



Greetings to the Government and the

People of India on this glorious occasion.

مجموعة مستشفيات ومراكز طبية
BADR AL SAMAA
GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND POLYCLINICS
Where Your Healthcare - Human Care

OMAN'S MOST TRUSTED BRAND
2018-2017-2016-2015

Our Centres in Oman: Ruwi | Al Khoud | Al Khuwair | Salalah | Barka | Nizwa | Falaj | Sohar | Sur | Suwaiq | Duqm

www.badralsamaahospitals.com | wecare@badralsamaahospitals.com







India assumes membership of United Nations Security Council

As India assumes the membership of the Security Council for the eighth time, it is an honour for me as the Permanent Representative of India to take part in today's flag installation ceremony.

This is a proud moment for my country and for my delegation. I thank my Prime Minister for the trust he has reposed in me to represent my country in the Security Council. I am grateful to the Minister of External Affairs for his support. I am grateful to all the Member States of the United Nations who have given us an overwhelming mandate to represent them in the Security Council.

My deep appreciation to the delegation of Kazakhstan for instituting this practice of the Flag Ceremony and our best wishes to Tunisia for helming the reins of the Security Council for January.



Our appreciation to the outgoing members, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, and South Africa. We are inspired by their contribution to the Council's work over the last two years.

We welcome the delegations of Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway as we begin our two-year journey together.

The United Nations has completed 75 years of its existence,

and so has the Security Council.

India comes into the Security Council as the largest democracy representing 1/6th of humanity and with a strong commitment to reformed multilateralism, rule of law, a fair and equitable international system and to peace, security and development. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, we stand united as one, bound by our ethos of democracy, pluralism and commitment to fundamental rights.

We will use our tenure to bring human-centric and inclusive solutions to matters of international peace and security. India will be a voice for the developing world.

We will not shy away from raising our voice against the common enemies of humanity like terrorism.

Peace-keeping, peace-building, maritime security, women

and youth, especially in conflict situations, and technology with a human face, will receive our attention while on the Council.

We look forward to our collective pursuit for an ideal where the World is One Family - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Even as the world comes together in solidarity to face the COVID-19 pandemic, which has thrown our lives out of gear, we would do well to remember the words of the great Indian philosopher Swami Vivekananda who said "Each nation must give, in order to live. When you give life, you will have life; when you receive, you must pay for it by giving to all others."

Thank you.

The address of Ambassador T. S. Tirumurti, the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, to the UNSC

Happy Republic Day

GREETINGS
to the government and people
of India on the occasion of the
REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

MODERN EXCHANGE

الصرافة الحديثة

Available on the Google play | Available on the App Store

f i t y i n

@modernexchangeoman

98082703 / 98082705 / 98082709

www.modernexchange.com

GREETINGS to the government and people of India on the occasion of the REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



Indian Social Club Oman

P.O.Box 2916, PC.112 Ruwi, Tel: 24701347 Fax: 24797921
E-mail: indiansc@omantel.net.om, indianscmuscat@gmail.com

Self-reliant India: Enhancing national capacities



Happy Republic Day India

Our unbound respect and admiration go out to the visionary leaders of India and this great nation. Your shared thoughts of progress and innovation has brought lasting peace, prosperity & happiness enjoyed by all today.

Unity in Diversity.



The AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (ANBA), announced during the peak of COVID-19 pandemic has now evolved into a major programme for enhancing national capacities of India to make a stronger contribution globally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the ANBA when he announced a special comprehensive economic relief package of approx US\$270bn (equivalent to ten per cent of India's GDP), in May 2020.

The ANBA caters to the increased need for a more trusted, resilient, reliable and redundant supply chain in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The ANBA is a bold scheme having potential of transforming manufacturing sector in the country for steering it onto the path of rapid development and growth.

With the advent of the novel coronavirus pandemic, a new world economic order was emerging and nations were just coming to terms with it. India's Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi quickly realised this and altered existing policies and introduced several multi-sectoral initiatives with a vision of 'Vocal for Local' - use of indigenous products and its promotion in global markets. The initial steps for Aatmanirbhar Bharat or self-reliant India were taken during the course of the pandemic, be it the production of PPEs and masks, or indeed of ventilators and testing kits.

Prime Minister Modi stated India has the talent, qualitative and quantitative production capacity with a strong supply chain to become self-reliant, which stands on five pillars: 'economy' - that introduces quantum jump; 'infrastructure' in tune with the new India, a 'system' based on the 21st century technology; India's 'vibrant demography'; and 'demand', which will utilise our requirement and supply chain to full capacity. Government's plan of turning this crisis into opportunity had a two pronged approach: Undertaking of interim measures such as liquidity infusion and direct cash transfers to migrant workers and daily-wage earners; and long-term labour and legislative reforms, among others, in growth-critical sectors that will make them globally competitive and attractive with the main focus on credit provision, infrastructure, access to market, skill development and identifying job creators.

The ANBA seeks to build greater global partnerships on the basis of a stronger and self-reliant India. In the words of Prime Minister, "When India speaks of becoming self-reliant, it does not advocate a self-centred system. In India's self-reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace." Engagement with the world is fundamental in India's beliefs and traditions. During the pandemic, India emerged as a 'Pharmacy of the World' and it not only met its own medicine requirements but also supplied to the rest of the

world. As we now look at the supply of vaccines, Prime Minister has assured that we will live up fully to our international responsibilities.

The ANBA also provides greater opportunities to our diaspora across the world to be a partner in India's growth and development. Our diaspora can bring in resources, technology, best practices and innovations towards the endeavour of self-reliant India.

Under the ANBA, a number of measures have been announced by the government towards incentivising business and investment focused growth, enabling investment and trade reforms, opening up India as an investment destination in various sectors including minerals, defence, space, atomic energy, civil aviation, coal and agricultural sectors. In fact, the structural reforms in the agricultural sector, such as amendments to the Essential Commodities Act or agricultural marketing reforms or allowing barrier-free inter-state trade and enabling an environment for contract farming, are even being characterised as a '1991 moment for Indian agriculture'.

Apart from these, the ANBA package announced earlier provides relief to the poor, and support to the rural workers and farmers.

These initiatives include Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for giving a boost to the fisheries sector; allocation of food grains to migrants; Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana offered by the Life Insurance Corporation of India giving a guaranteed payout of pension at a specified rate for ten years; additional funding of up to US\$41bn for MSMEs; Scheme for Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (FME); and others.

Recent announcements:

- Third stimulus package announced in November 2020 with an aim to increase employment opportunities, support multiple sectors through Production-Linked Incentives (PLIs) as well as extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to non-MSMEs as well.
- AtmaNirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, an employment scheme for the creation of new employment opportunities amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with an overall allocation of US\$4.9bn.
- Over and above the Budget estimates for 2020-21, the Government of India has allocated US\$2.4bn towards the Prime Minister Awaas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U).
- Incentives for the Agriculture Sector and Rural Employment to the tune of US\$10.2bn.
- R&D Grant Towards COVID-19 Vaccine Development.
- In December 2020, the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Government of India signed a US\$1,000mn agreement to support the ANBA.



GAME ON

NOW'S THE TIME.



CHARGER SXT **RO 128*** PER MONTH
RO 10,990 AFTER CASH GIFT OF RO 3,010

FREE REGISTRATION
5 YEARS / 100,000KM WARRANTY
5 YEARS ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

CHALLENGER SXT **RO 152*** PER MONTH
RO 12,990 AFTER CASH GIFT OF RO 2,510

BOOK NOW

Offer Valid from January 1st till March 15th. EMI calculated on loan amount after 20% down payment. EMI calculated for a 7-year tenure with Bank Muscat. Credit subject to approval & at discretion of bank/finance company. *Terms & Conditions Apply. Vehicle images shown are for illustrative purposes only and accessories showing might not be part of standard model. Please ask for more details. ©2021 FCA US LLC. All Rights Reserved. Dodge is a registered trademark of FCA US LLC.

DODGE

dhofar ظفار
AUTOMOTIVE للسيارات

Wattayah, Athaiba, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah

For corporate enquiries **982 961 43** | For more information **245 845 30** | info@da-oman.com | www.dhofarautomotive.com