

Minister meets Governors to discuss plan



MUSCAT: Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, chaired a meeting at the ministry with Governors to discuss the draft Tenth Ten Year Plan (2021-2025) and its executive position in the presence of Sayyid Khalifa bin Al Murdas al Busaidy, Secretary-General of the Governorates Affairs at the

Ministry of Interior, and Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economy. The meeting, which discussed the proposed programmes and policies related to the development priorities in the governorates, aims to solidify the partnership between the Ministry of

Economy and different governorates, enhance the spatial and sectorial development and augment the role of individual governorates in the economic development in the Sultanate in line with Vision 2040 national priority related to the sustainable development of governorates and cities.

CBO warns against illegal money transfers

SAMUEL KUTTY
@SAMKUTTYVP

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) called on both citizens and residents to exercise caution and avoid remitting money abroad through channels not licensed by the bank.

With particular reference to 'Bkash', a statement said that the application is not approved by the apex bank for international money transfer.

"It is illegal and criminal to engage in unlicensed money transfer activities as per the Omani law. Customers who rely on these channels would make them vulnerable to fraud and loss of money," it said in the statement.

In Oman, collecting and transferring money without a licence is considered as a violation of the provisions of the National Payment System Law, Omani Banking Law, Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing ((AML/CFT), and other laws.

BKash is a mobile financial



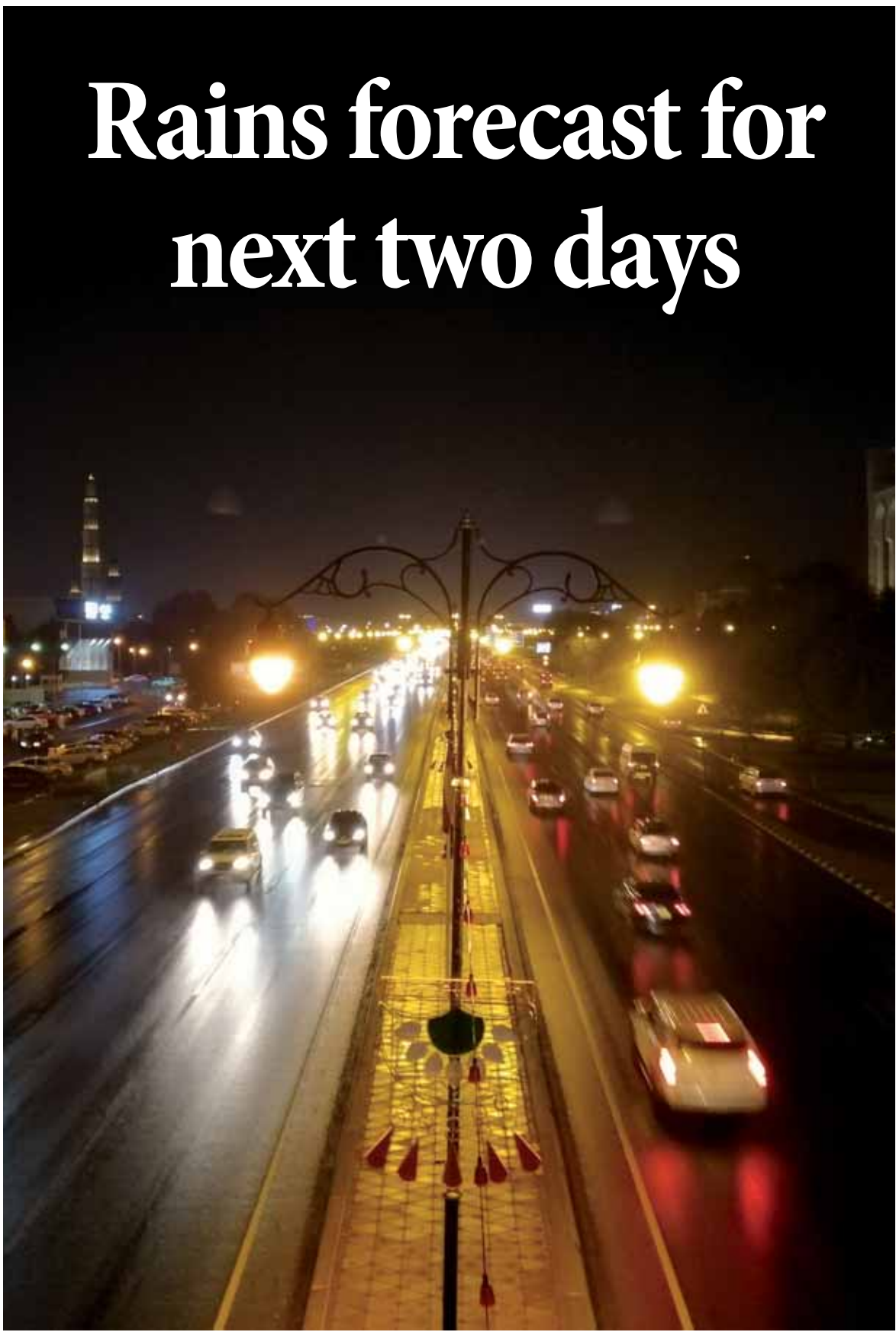
service used in an Asian country enabling its users to deposit money into their mobile accounts and then access a range of services, in particular transferring and receiving money domestically, making payments and recharging mobiles.

"In Oman, such money transfers are prohibited by law. Anyone dealing in such cryptocurrencies and similar products will be doing so at their own risk and responsibility and will attract fine and imprisonment.

Cryptocurrencies are not a legal tender in Oman," said Jose Chacko, Partner, Crowe Oman.

In July this year, the Central Bank had issued a cautionary notice warning the public against an increase in certain fraudulent practices originating from foreign and local sources.

It warned the public that users, holders and traders of cryptocurrencies and similar products may be exposed to potential financial, operational, legal and security related risks, in addition to the lack of customer protection.



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
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Rains are expected on Sunday and Monday in most parts of the Sultanate, except in Dhofar where clear skies are expected.

According to the Met Office, Civil Aviation Authority, the low pressure that has been over the Arabian Peninsula has been enhanced by the local cloud development by the Al Hajar Mountains.

Al Amerat received showers on Saturday evening as has been the case in other parts too. Elsewhere strong winds were experienced.

"The next two days it will be clear to partly cloudy in most of the governorates. We expect more cloud development over Al Hajar Mountains. In these areas we are expecting thunder showers," said the weather

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MET OFFICE

forecaster at the Oman Met Office.

Clear to partly cloudy skies over most of the Sultanate is expected with chances of rain occasionally thundershowers over Al Hajar Mountains and

surrounding areas extended to the coastal areas of Oman Sea.

Over most of the Sultanate winds will be easterly to southeasterly light to moderate. Sea is expected to be light along all Oman's coasts with a maximum wave height of 1.25 metres.

After two days mainly clear skies are expected over most of the Sultanate with chances of early morning low level clouds or fog patches along parts of the coastal areas of Oman Sea and the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar.

Ibri, Nizwa and Al Mudhaibi experienced the maximum temperature with 32 degrees Celsius with a low of 18 degrees Celsius. Jabal Shams recorded the lowest with a maximum of 16 degrees Celsius and a low of six degrees Celsius.

Senior citizens recall change of Oman as a modern nation

KABEER YOUSUF
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As the nation is all geared up to welcome the 50th National Day, some senior citizens are looking back at the bygone decades that saw Oman blossom into a modern nation.

Abdulrahman al Balushi and Musabbah al Balushi, two septuagenarians stationed at the traditional Muttrah Souq, feel it was just like yesterday that they witnessed the first Renaissance procession.

What makes them different is that they have virtual possessions of Oman's history and they religiously share with their customers who visit their



curios and sweets stands.

"I've been here for many years and seen the changes to this Muttrah Souq and the country the transformation of which has been incredible," said

Musabbah.

They still remember the plight of those days when people found it really difficult to move from one place to another. Oman's evolution from having just three



or four kilometres of roads to four-laned highways, from no schools to today's institutions for advanced studies, minimal healthcare facilities to the best healthcare services, was quite

historic.

"People used to drive their pickups for several kilometres through the dusty pathways and deserts to meet a doctor or to meet a relative living miles

away," he added.

"Communication was a remote dream in many villages and interaction between people from different villages was a thing we couldn't even imagine. Thanks to all what we have now," said Abdulrahman al Balushi.

They recall when the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said arrived from Dhofar after assuming power and took out a procession from Bait al Falaj.

"It was (the procession) a people's rally and as children we witnessed it with our parents. Today, we are blessed to have His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the nation will conquer newer heights in the days to come," they said.

Reuse and recycle whenever possible

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

The Sultanate celebrates the 50th National Day this month and throughout these years, the environment has played a major role in the policies that have been introduced at various stages.

What is that crosses the mind when it comes to individual responsibility towards the environment of Oman?

His Highness Sayyid Tariq bin Shabib al Said reflects, "As individuals we need to focus on wastage and that means less consumption. It also means reduce the amount of packaging, reuse the material and recycle whenever possible."

HH Sayyid Tariq feels we have been consuming things and discarding them without really thinking about it. "We are now at that point where we need to turn the corner and look at the consequences of what we have been doing and do something about it."

We have been talking about it for a very long time, but it takes an entire generation of young Omanis to basically look at what is being done in the past and say that is not how we behave in the future. I think this turning point is a critical time and we need to recognise that is what it is."

One of the major assets of Oman as a tourism destination is Oman's coastline. There are many initiatives that take up cleaning the beaches.

Beaches being one of the fa-



vourite leisure destinations have also meant it is one of the causes of pollution because of what people leave behind.

That includes discarded fishing nets to plastics bags and bottles.

"The sense that there is no consequence and no cost to discarding things in nature needs to change. That does not mean we must stop consuming and businesses have to suffer or anything like that. We just have to change the way we do things. And it should not just come from the consumers but it should also come from producers. We are beginning to see it come up across the world. They are much more ethical producers and in turn the ethical consumers gravitate toward them."

So what would be the biggest concern — the ocean, air or land?

"I think what is required is a holistic view of everything but we also need to prioritise. Let us start with the low hanging fruit, but let us not ignore some of the

The sense that there is no consequence and no cost to discarding things in nature needs to change. That does not mean we must stop consuming and businesses have to suffer or anything like that

HH SAYYID TARIQ BIN SHABIB AL SAID

largest issues. We are seeing a lot more conversations about renewable energy. The new power production projects need to have a certain percentage of renewable energy. It is slowly being baked into how we are doing things. The vision 2040 has an environmental aspect taking us towards that direction."

16 sentenced for lockdown violations

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 7

The primary courts across Oman have convicted a number of citizens and expatriates for organising illegal gatherings across the country against the decisions of the Supreme Committee on COVID-19.

A primary court in Al Buraimi convicted four people last week for

violating the lockdown as per the Law on Communicable Disease Control. They were sentenced for one-month imprisonment and deportation from the country, Oman Public Prosecution said on Friday.

A primary court in South Al Batinah Governorate convicted two people for violating the Law on Communicable Disease Control. They were sentenced for

four months in jail and a fine of RO300 in addition to deportation after serving the sentence.

The Public Prosecution initiated an investigation against 10 people who violated the movement restriction and were referred to competent courts.

The verdict varied from imprisonment for four months, fine of RO 1,000 and deportation for foreigners.

Indian airlines cancel flights from Oman

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 7

Due to the revision of the Air Bubble agreement between India and Oman, the Indian private airlines, Indigo and GoAir will stop flights from Muscat, starting Tuesday.

The decision is based on the instructions of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India.

Flights shall operate as scheduled on Sunday, both airlines said.

"Passengers who wish to change their flights to November 7 and 8 can get the same done by contacting our call centre."



Al Sahwa Schools, Oman

PE TEACHER

Al Sahwa Schools is a K-12 school following the IB PYP and MYP programmes and the Omani General Education Diploma. We are seeking to appoint an outstanding female PE teacher for a December 2020 start.

Interested candidates should request further information about the position and the details of the application process by school email (info@alsahwa.edu.om) before applying.

All applications will be received through the school's website www.alsahwa.edu.om under the careers section.

The deadline for applications is **Thursday 12th November 2020**.

LEADING OMAN LAW FIRM SCOOPS MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ACCOLADES

Oman's largest and leading independent law firm, Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co (AMJ), won the prestigious 'Oman Law Firm of the Year' award at the International Financial Law Review (IFLR) Middle East Awards on October 14, 2020. This accolade brings AMJ's tally of IFLR's 'National Law Firm of the Year' awards to an impressive and unrivalled 12 (twelve) times in Oman.

The annual IFLR Awards brings together leading global and regional corporate law firms to celebrate the most outstanding legal deals that have taken place in the region in the past 12 months. The Awards recognise the best law firms in each jurisdiction based on the innovation and the complexity of deals completed. AMJ was also shortlisted by the IFLR alongside the GCC's top, global law firms for number of significant deals.

In addition to the 'National Law Firm of the Year' award, AMJ has won the "Offshore Law Firm of the Year" award at the Islamic Finance News Awards 2020 for its work on a number of innovative transactions. The IFN judging panel highlighted the "ground-breaking" and "innovative" work undertaken by AMJ which "certainly is a model for many other countries".

AMJ's founder and managing partner, Mansoor Jamal Malik commenting on the awards said, "We are delighted with our continuing success at the IFLR and IFN awards in recognition of our teams' achievement. In an increasingly competitive market for legal services, these independent research-based awards are an important benchmark of performance. They also highlight the resilience of the Omani market in terms of the quality of transactions and projects being undertaken in the country particularly given the tough market conditions of the past few years."

Senior Partner, Dr Said Hilal Mohammed Al Busaidy added, "We are all proud that IFLR and IFN



AL BUSAIDY, MANSOOR JAMAL & CO.
—BARRISTERS & LEGAL CONSULTANTS—

have once again recognised the stellar effort of the teams and their dedication to serving the business and legal needs of our clients. It proves that the Firm's policy of investing in the recruitment of experienced international lawyers and the ongoing development of our first rate Omani lawyers, creates a degree of in-country value that is unique among law firms in Oman."

AMJ is a top-tier, globally-rated, independent, commercial law firm and the largest in Oman. In 2020, the firm celebrated 40 years of existence, and involvement in most, 'first of a kind' deals and landmark projects that have taken place in Oman and the region. Its resident team of lawyers includes many of Oman's most senior and experienced practitioners, recognised as leaders in their fields. They are able to draw on expertise gained in multiple innovative deals over more than three decades to respond to changing market conditions and the evolving commercial and legal needs of business and government.

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WHERE NATURE MEETS HERITAGE

Nizwa



THE WILAYAT OF NIZWA, WHICH ATTRACTS ARCHAEOLOGISTS AS WELL AS TOURISTS, IS THE CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTRE OF AL DAKHILIYAH GOVERNORATE



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 7

The Wilayat of Nizwa, which also is known as 'Baidhat Al Islam', is undoubtedly a place that attracts archaeologists as well as tourists. It is the cultural, historical and educational centre of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, which is located around 160 km away from Muscat.

Nizwa acquires its importance also because of its location: It is a meeting point between the main roads linking Muscat with other governorates. It embraces the most-frequently visited destinations such as Jabal Al Akhdhar and Birkat Al Mouz, Wadi Tanuf and Nizwa Fort. Nizwa's climate is often hot in summer and pleasant in winter, while Jabal Al Akhdhar is always cold.

Jabal Al Akhdhar is a tourist destination where different types of fruits such as grapes, pomegranate, apricot, fig and peach can be found.

There are also some plants and trees like olive and roses.

The wilayat is famous for Birkat Al Mouz, which is located between Nizwa and Izki. Falaj Daris is one of

the five Omani aflaj that figure in the international heritage list. Falaj Daris is the largest falaj in Oman and it is an important water resource for the surrounding countryside. There are also Al Ghantuq and Dhoot aflaj.

When it comes to natural beauty, Tanuf excels other places, where Al Riqraq Wadi attracts tourists who are interested in swimming, camping and grilling activities.

Another tourism destination is Farq village, which is known for date palm farms and ancient residential structures, besides Al Hawra mountain.

Nizwa gains its historical value by the presence of Nizwa Fort, which is the oldest fort in Oman. It is characterised by its round shape and known by 'Al Shahbaa'. The traditional markets located near the fort are famous for making handicrafts, selling fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and Omani halwa such as the well-known 'Al Saifi'. There is also a place known for gold and silver products. Nizwa is famous for Khanjar making.

In Nizwa, many folk art forms are practised, and among them is Al Razha, which is the oldest traditional dance in Oman. Al Azi is also performed in the wilayat.





Egypt holds second stage of parliament election

CAIRO: Egyptians began voting on Saturday in the second phase of a parliamentary election in which supporters of President Abdel Fattah al Sisi are expected to win.

Some 63 million of Egypt's more than 100 million people are eligible to elect 568 of the 596 lawmakers in the lower house, widely seen as a body for executive policies.

The remaining deputies will be appointed by Sisi, a former general, whose government over the past six years has launched a severe crackdown on dissent.

The first phase of voting took place last weekend in 14 governorates including the Mediterranean city of Alexandria and the south of Egypt.

The second and final phase, which wraps up on Sunday evening, is being held in 13 governorates, including Cairo, the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal.

The new parliament will be the second to convene under Sisi, who took office in 2014 after leading the military's deadly attack on president Mohamed Morsi the previous year.

The outgoing legislature, elected in 2015, was packed with Sisi supporters and featured only a small opposition bloc known as 25/30.

Runoffs are due to be held later in November and in December, and



People wait in line to cast their votes outside a school used as a polling station during the second round of Egypt's parliamentary election in Cairo. — Reuters

the winners will take their seats in parliament in January.

The National List, a political alliance led by the pro-Al Sisi Nation's Future Party, won 142 of the 284 seats up for grabs in the first phase of the polls, which was held late last month in 14 of Egypt's 27 provinces.

The second stage is being held over two consecutive days in the 13 remaining provinces, including Cairo, determining the remaining

The second and final phase, which wraps up on Sunday is being held in 13 governorates, including Cairo, the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal

284 seats. Around 30 million eligible voters will be able to cast ballots at polling stations, which

open for 12 hours from 9 am.

Al Sisi, who has been in office since 2014, cast his ballot in a polling station in Cairo's Helipolis district, according to presidential spokesman Bassam Radi.

Voter turnout in the first phase stood at 28.06 per cent, according to electoral authorities. More than 4,500 candidates have registered on one of three party alliance lists or as independents in both stages of the election. — dpa

Iraqi premier warns against use of bullets

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi warned security forces not to fire at protesters on Saturday, a day after a demonstrator was killed in the southern city of Basra.

"The state will not be lenient with any member of the security forces who violates orders of not using bullets against protesters," Al Kadhimi said in a tweet, adding that the person who killed the protester will be arrested and tried.

Security forces opened fire during clashes with protesters in Basra on Friday, killing one and wounding at least five others. The protesters were calling for better living conditions and an end to corruption in the country.

Street protests have roiled Iraq since October last year, with demonstrators calling for an overhaul of the country's political system, which has been in place since the 2003 US-led invasion.

In late November, then-prime minister Adel Abdel-Mahdi

resigned. There have been fewer and smaller street protests since a new government was formed by Al Kadhimi in May.

Meanwhile, Iraq's interior ministry confirmed the death but said in a statement that no Iraqi security forces were being allowed to use weapons against demonstrators and that it was investigating the incident.

Deadly flare-ups have been rare since protests against Iraq's ruling elite and demanding jobs and services largely subsided earlier this year.

During months of anti-government protests that erupted under his predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi in October 2019, more than 500 people were killed, mostly young unarmed demonstrators.

The Basra security sources and rights official said several dozen protesters had taken to the streets in the country's southern oil hub on Friday demanding jobs and basic services. — dpa



Iraqi riot police form a barrier as demonstrators gather near the local administration building in the southern city of Basra during an anti-government protest. — AFP

French minister holds Tunisia talks on return of extremists

TUNIS: Tunisia said on Friday it would take back from France its citizens suspected of being fighters after last week's deadly attack in Nice allegedly carried out by a Tunisian fighter.

But Interior Minister Taoufik Charfeddine, following talks with his visiting French counterpart Gerald Darmanin, said their return would be conditional.

The former French colony is "prepared to receive any Tunisian", Charfeddine said.

"But this must be done in line with conditions and regulations" under international laws and in "preserving the dignity of the Tunisian" being returned, Charfeddine told reporters.

Sources close to Darmanin said ahead of the talks that he would submit to authorities a list of some 20 Tunisians who France

wants to expel, on the basis that they had been convicted on terrorism charges or were suspected of inclinations.

The French interior minister is due to visit Algeria on Sunday on a similar mission.

Public opinion in Tunisia is hostile towards the return of suspected fighters, and authorities have refused the return of their citizens from France on the basis of travel restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

Tunisian nationals have constituted a significant proportion of foreign fighters in Syria, Iraq and Libya over the past decade.

In 2015, the United Nations said that some 5,000 Tunisians had flocked mainly to Syria and Libya to join the IS, while authorities in Tunis gave a lower figure of 3,000. — AFP

ART AND CULTURE

Sharjah shines light on Arab art

SHARJAH: It doesn't have the malls of Dubai or the mega-projects of Abu Dhabi, but Sharjah has carved out a role for itself as a cultural capital.

The unassuming emirate is ruled by Shaikh Sultan bin Mohamed al Qasimi, known for his keen interest in art and history.

Its cultural calendar has evolved to feature book fairs, exhibitions at more than a dozen museums and festivals that celebrate photography, theatre, poetry and calligraphy.

At the Museum of Sharjah, works on display showcase everything from daily life in the Old City of Yemen's capital Sanaa to a massacre of refugees by fighters during Lebanon's civil war.

"We are providing an artistic service for the Arab world," said



People attend the Sharjah International Book Fair in Sharjah. — AFP

Sultan Sooud al Qassemi, a well-known Emirati academic with half a million followers on Twitter, strolling through the galleries.

The Barjeel Art Foundation which he founded in 2010 aims

to preserve and exhibit more than 1,000 modern and contemporary pieces by Arab artists.

"Sharjah is not the richest emirate in the Gulf, but it is in terms of being the richest culturally," said

the 42-year-old who has taught in universities in the United States and France.

Sharjah is one of the seven emirates that make up the UAE, an innovative country which has poured huge sums into culture.

In 2017, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a branch of the iconic Paris museum, opened its doors — attracting some two million visitors in its first two years of operation.

The financial and entertainment hub of Dubai hosts a number of contemporary art galleries, and is next year to host the multi-billion-dollar world exhibition — Expo 2020 — with major arts components.

But it is Sharjah, that has claimed the country's cultural crown. — AFP

RAMALLAH

Palestinian ends hunger strike after 103 days

A Palestinian on Friday ended a 103-day hunger strike against being held without charge by Israel after being assured his detention would not be extended, the Palestinian Prisoners' Club advocacy group said.

An Israeli security official confirmed that Maher al Akhras, 49, had ended his hunger strike and would be released on November 26 at the end of his four-month detention. The official did not say whether Akhras had been offered any



special assurances. Akhras, a resident of the city of Jenin in the north of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, was taken into custody on July 27 under the Israeli "administrative detention" order. — Reuters

KHARTOUM

Sudan partially closes border with Ethiopia

Sudan partially closed its border with Ethiopia, state news agency SUNA reported on Saturday, in the wake of escalating violence in the region. Heavy fighting flared in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region on Wednesday, diplomatic sources said, after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched military operations in response to what he said was an attack on federal troops.

The local government in Sudan's eastern Al Qadarif state began closing its border with the



Ethiopian regions of Tigray and Amhara on Thursday evening until further notice, SUNA said on Saturday. The government also warned people living at the border to be wary of the repercussions of tensions in neighbouring Ethiopia, it added.

ALGIERS

Algeria war hero and protest icon dies

Lakhdar Bouregaa, a highly respected veteran of Algeria's war of independence against France and a key figure in an anti-regime protest movement, has died at the age of 87.

"Lakhdar Bouregaa is now under God's protection," his son Hani Bouregaa wrote on Facebook late on Wednesday, two weeks after the veteran's family announced he had contracted coronavirus. The longtime opposition political figure, who spent the last half of 2019 in



prison for his role in the Hirak mass protest movement, was buried at the Sidi Yahia cemetery in the hills above Algiers.

Hundreds of mourners turned out to pay their respects, despite coronavirus restrictions on gatherings. — AFP

Storm Atsani whips northern Philippine provinces

MANILA: A severe tropical storm on Friday whipped the Philippines’ northernmost provinces with gale-force winds and heavy rains, officials said.

Storm Atsani did not make landfall as earlier projected, but crossed over Misanga Island, which is part of Batanes province, a group of islands in the northern Philippines, the weather bureau said.

The storm was packing maximum sustained winds of 95 kilometres per hour (km/h) and gusts of up to 115km/h as it moved west-north-west at 20km/h.

The weather bureau warned the storm could trigger flash floods and landslides in Batanes and nearby Cagayan province.

Batanes was once called the “typhoon alley” of the Philippines because of frequent cyclones that hit it.

Due to that, most of its houses are made from stones.

Last weekend, the strongest typhoon this year battered the eastern Philippines, killing 24 people and affecting more than 1.6 million people, including over



408,000 forced to flee their homes.

Typhoon Goni triggered floods and mud flows that buried houses, and brought catastrophic winds that destroyed thousands of houses and infrastructure in the affected areas. It was the strongest typhoon to hit the country since Typhoon Haiyan battered the eastern and central provinces in November 2013, killing more than 6,300 people and displacing over 4 million.

The Philippines is battered by

an average of 20 cyclones every year.

Meanwhile, Taiwan was gearing up for potentially dangerous wind and heavy rain as Atsani approached the south of the island. Atsani, in the Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the Philippines, was about 100 kilometres south-east of Taiwan’s southernmost point as of early Friday.

It is expected to reach the Hengchun Peninsula in southern

Taiwan on Saturday, according to the Central Weather Bureau.

Minister of the Interior Hsu Kuo-yung on Friday urged residents to stay away from beaches and stay alert to upcoming heavy rain in southern Taiwan and the eastern counties of Hualien and Taitung.

On Friday, schools and businesses in some townships in southern Pingtung County and on two offshore islets of eastern Taiwan were closed.

— dpa

Bomb attack kills former Afghan TV presenter

KABUL: A former Afghan television presenter and two other civilians were killed in a Kabul bombing on Saturday, in an attack officials blamed on a group linked to the Taliban.

Yama Siawash was killed when a bomb attached to his vehicle exploded near his home in the Afghan capital, police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz told journalists.

The murder of Siawash comes amid a rise in violence across the country even as the Taliban and Afghan government engage in peace talks in Qatar to end the country’s grinding war.

Siawash, who recently joined Afghanistan’s central bank as an adviser, used to be a prominent political and current affairs presenter with Tolo News, the country’s biggest private TV channel, known for his hard-hitting interview style.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but the interior ministry blamed the Haqqani network, a group linked to the Taliban.

“Such targeted attacks and explosions of sticky bombs is the continuation of crimes by Haqqani network and the

Taliban”, Tariq Arian, spokesman for the ministry, told reporters.

Washington has listed the Haqqani network as a terrorist group.

Siawash’s death drew immediate condemnation from senior Afghan officials and foreign diplomats.

“I am shocked at the killing of former Tolo News anchor Yama Siawash”, Ross Wilson, US charge d’affaires in Kabul, said on Twitter.

“This attack is an assault on freedom of the press, one of Afghanistan’s core democratic principles.”

Abdullah Abdullah, who heads the country’s overall peace and reconciliation process, also said Siawash’s murder targeted freedom of expression in Afghanistan.

“This is an unforgivable and unforgettable crime”, he said in a statement.

The Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, a panel set up by media networks to oversee security for journalists in the country, called for “identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators” of the attack.

— AFP

Severe air pollution adds to Delhi’s COVID-19 woes

NEW DELHI: The Indian capital reported its sharpest spike in COVID-19 cases on Saturday amid warnings that high air pollution levels may make the situation worse.

A Health Ministry bulletin said New Delhi reported 7,178 new cases on Friday as the countrywide total neared 8.5 million. The rising cases in New Delhi come during a festive season marked by people thronging markets and amid seasonal spike in pollution aggravated by the burning of crop stubble on surrounding farmland.

Health experts had warned that rising pollution levels seen annually in October and November would adversely impact people suffering from COVID-19-related respiratory ailments.

On Saturday, air pollution at several monitoring stations reached the severe category, with the capital and its suburbs shrouded in a thick haze.

Levels of suspended particles smaller than 2.5 micrometres, or PM2.5, hovered above 500 micrograms per cubic metre at at least four monitoring stations.

This is more than 10 times the level deemed safe by the World Health organization.

Scientific studies have found that

exposure to increased air pollution can raise the mortality rate for COVID-19. India is currently second only to the United States in terms of its COVID-19 caseload.

It has reported 125,562 deaths, but its case-fatality ratio at 1.5 per cent is one of the lowest in the world.

On Thursday, the Delhi government decided to ban firecrackers in the national capital and announced steep fines for any violations. Delhi has installed anti-smog guns at various locations across the state to spray water droplets into the air, to reduce the level of air pollution.

There, however, have been calls for more stringent steps to address the pollution issue.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch, a nationalist group close to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s party, said green crackers made locally by nearly a million employed in the factories should be allowed at Diwali, the biggest festival for Hindus, instead of a blanket ban that will destroy the domestic industry.

“Delhi’s air stays in severe category AQI. Time for the govt to look at putting a stop to all construction activities, at least for a week. — dpa/Reuters



A man walks past a mural depicting the COVID-19 in New Delhi. — AFP

A'Sharqiya Investment Holding Co. (SAOG) and its Subsidiary

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Chairman's Report for the period ended September 30, 2020

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to present the unaudited consolidated financial statements of A'Sharqiya Investment Holding Company (SAOG) and its subsidiary – Qalhat Real Estate Investments & Services LLC. (QREIS) - for the nine months period ended September 30, 2020.

Overview of Operations and Financial Performance

A summary of the company's operating performance for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2020 in comparison to the corresponding period in 2019 and the full year ended 2019 is presented below:

(RO in '000)

Quarter ended September 30, 2020	Sep 30 2020	Sep 30 2019	% Increase/ (Decrease)	Full Year ended 2019
Total Operating Income	1,006	975	3.2	1,347
Profit after Tax (PAT)	525	473	11.0	504
Net change in Fair Value of FVOCI	(112)	(176)	36.2	(188)
Total comprehensive income/(loss)	412	297	38.9	316
Total Assets	15,919	15,706	1.4	15,927

Profit before tax recorded an increase of 10.9% at RO 590,841 as against RO 532,536. The profit after tax arising from the company's operations during this period aggregated to RO 524,611 as compared to RO 472,683 generated during the comparable period in 2019 reflecting an increase of 11.0%.

The decrease in the fair value of the company's investment portfolio under the fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) investments during the period stood

at RO 112,291 compared to a decrease of RO 175,933 recorded during the comparable period in 2019. The total comprehensive income attributable to the parent company for the period accordingly stood at RO 412,320 as compared to RO 296,750 during the comparable period in 2019.

The total assets of the company as at September 30, 2020 was RO 15,918,811 as compared to RO 15,705,615 as at September 30, 2019, reflecting an increase of 1.4%. The break- up value of the company's equity share works out to Baizas 134 on September 30, 2020 as compared to Baizas 132 on September 30, 2019.

Investment and future Outlook

The global economy is projected to decline 4.4% in 2020 -IMF World Economic Outlook Update- October 2020- slightly better from the 4.9% decline projected in the June update- driven by the better than expected 2Q GDP numbers in large advanced economies. In 2021 global growth is projected at 5.2% slightly down from the 5.4% growth projected in the June update. While the economy is coming back from the initial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, aided by swift and unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimuli by governments, the recovery has been uneven across regions. Uncertainty of recovery is getting exacerbated further due to recurrent shutdown measures preceded by spikes in infection cases. On the brighter side, to tackle the health crises and weather associated economic slowdown, the countries across regions have initiated more concerted efforts of cooperation.

The crude oil price underwent a rapid transformation earlier this year. Mutual respect for production cut agreement amongst the major oil producing nations has been holding up the crude price.

With this background, the Company has and will continue to exercise caution in its analysis of new investment opportunities. The investment objective of the Company is capital preservation with sustainable long-term growth for the shareholders.

On behalf of the Board, I express my sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his wise leadership, support and generous attitude towards private sector. Finally, I would also like to thank fellow board members and our shareholders for their continuous support. My appreciation also goes to the company's management, staff and other stakeholders for their contributions and commitment to the company.

Mohammed Ali Al Fannah
Chairman

UN-AUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

	30 September 2020	30 September 2019	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO
INCOME			
Finance income on lease receivables	-	481,398	-
Dividend income	438,551	438,551	411,858
Maintenance services income	-	66,465	-
Gain on Disposal of FVTPL asset	12,640	12,640	-
Other income	51,903	6,903	54,874
Operating income	503,094	1,005,957	466,732
EXPENSES			
Interest & finance expenses	(1,388)	(1,431)	(1,520)
Staff cost	(170,182)	(170,182)	(211,514)
Finance cost on lease payable	-	(138,582)	-
Depreciation	(3,067)	(3,133)	(1,405)
General administrative expenses	(98,423)	(101,788)	(85,844)
Operating expenses	(273,060)	(415,116)	(300,283)
Profit before taxation	230,034	590,841	166,449
Taxation	(12,109)	(66,230)	(4,940)
Profit for the period	217,925	524,611	161,509
Other comprehensive income:			
Net change in fair value of FVOCI financial assets	(112,291)	(112,291)	(175,933)
Total comprehensive income for the period	105,634	412,320	(14,424)
Total comprehensive income attributable to :			
Equity holders of parent	105,634	412,320	(14,424)
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-
Profit attributable to :			
Equity holders of parent	217,925	524,611	161,509
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-
Earnings per share	0.002	0.006	0.002

Note: The complete accounts either in Arabic or English as requested will be sent by mail within 7 days of request to any shareholder who makes a written request to the Company



BIDEN: I WILL BE A PRESIDENT FOR ALL AMERICANS

WASHINGTON: Democrat Joe Biden, the projected winner of the US presidential election, calls for unity and promises to be a president “for all Americans.”

“America, I’m honoured that you have chosen me to lead our great country. The work ahead of us will be hard, but I promise you this: I will be a President for all Americans — whether you voted for me or not,” he tweeted.

In a separate statement, Biden says: “It’s time to put the anger and the harsh rhetoric behind us and come together as a nation.”

CNN, NBC News and CBS News called the race in Biden’s favor just before 11:30 am (1630 GMT) as an insurmountable lead in Pennsylvania took the 77-year-old over the top in the state-by-state count that decides the presidency.

Trump had no immediate reaction to the announcement, but as Biden’s lead grew during vote counts since Tuesday’s election, the Republican president lashed out with unsubstantiated claims of fraud and claimed, falsely, that he had won.

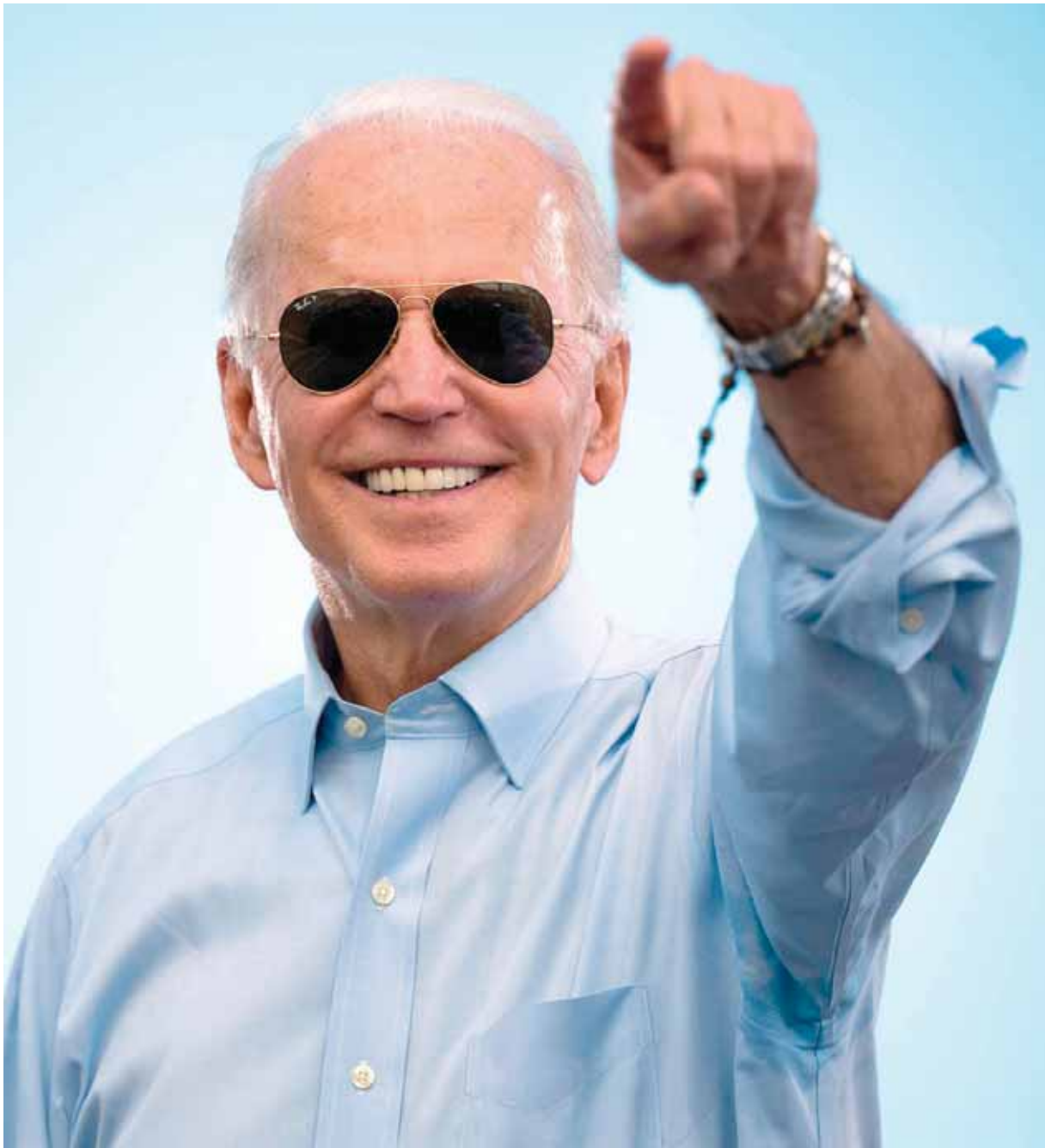
Earlier Saturday, as he headed to his golf course in Virginia, he repeated this, tweeting: “I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!”

However, the result now condemns 74-year-old Trump to becoming the first one-term president since George H W Bush at the start of the 1990s.

Biden, who got the votes of a record more than 74 million people, was hunkered down with his running mate Kamala Harris, in his home town of Wilmington, Delaware. Late Friday he delivered an address urging Americans to “come together as a nation and heal.”

The Secret Service has already begun intensifying its protective bubble around the president-elect, who will be inaugurated on January 20.

A centrist who promises to



bring calm to Washington after four turbulent years under Trump, Biden is the oldest man to win the presidency — a position he twice sought unsuccessfully during his long political career, before being elected vice president to Barack Obama in 2008.

Harris, a senator and former California attorney general, will make history as the first Black woman to enter the White House in either of the two top jobs. At 56, she is seen as a leading contender to succeed Biden and try to become the first female US

president.

Overall turnout on Tuesday broke records with some 160 million people pouring out across the United States after a deeply polarizing campaign complicated by the resurgent COVID-19 pandemic.

Biden secured his win by recapturing the Midwestern states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — traditional Democratic territory that Trump had flipped in 2016 with his powerful appeal to white, working class voters.

The division in Washington will likely complicate immediately Biden’s ability to govern, starting with disputes in Congress over a delayed economic stimulus package for Americans hammered by the fallout from the coronavirus crisis.

Joe Biden, who spent most of his life serving in Washington as a Democratic senator and then vice president under Barack Obama, will finally find himself atop the highest point in the capital city as president.

At the age of 77, Biden, a one-

America, I’m honoured that you have chosen me to lead our great country. It’s time to put the anger and the harsh rhetoric behind us and come together as a nation

JOE BIDEN

time lawyer, pitched himself during the campaign as a moderate “every man” who can relate to the problems working people are facing, while embracing some progressive ideas, like tackling climate change and improving health care.

He took a relatively low-key approach to campaigning, in part due to the pandemic, but often, it seemed, he was letting President Donald Trump seize the spotlight, making the election a referendum on an incumbent who often talked himself into trouble.

Biden, who studiously avoided radical politics during the months of campaigning, has denounced Trump as a chaos agent and much of his outreach to voters has been centred on a pledge to return to a better and calmer version of life pre-Trump.

His election victory, narrowly eked out through wins in key swing states, comes after two failed presidential campaigns in 1988 and 2008, with multiple family tragedies at times upending Biden’s life and political plans.

The septuagenarian is ever more grey and his speech is showing some signs of slowing, but he will soon be in the driving seat of the US, with decades of experience behind him. Biden was the long-serving senator from

Delaware — having first won the seat at the age of 29 — before being tapped as vice president to provide a seasoned Washington perspective to Barack Obama who won the White House in 2008 as a relative newcomer to national politics.

Biden was then viewed as someone pragmatic who would bring on board white working-class voters, and was sought after for his foreign policy bona fides. His time on Capitol Hill was also valued by the Obama team, as legislative deal-making is a delicate dance that trips up novices and can rattle presidencies. He is religious, but moderate; liberal, but not overly so.

Biden capitalised on this in the election as he played for the centre ground, while holding his left flank and even bringing on board disenfranchised Republicans.

In 1987, Biden’s hope to become president ended swiftly, when he was rather credibly accused of plagiarizing a speech during a primary campaign.

In 2008, his remark that Obama was not yet ready to be president came back to haunt him during the election. In 2016, though, he chose not to run after eight years as vice president, after his son died of cancer and he decided to spend time with his grandchildren. It was the latest personal setback for Biden. His first wife and a daughter died in a car accident in 1972.

His sons were badly injured. He nevertheless took his Senate seat but travelled back and forth each day from his home in Delaware to Washington, so he could see his two boys each night.

His use of the train became something of a legend and added to Biden’s popularity. It was still employed by his 2020 campaign — along with his famous love of ice cream — to market Biden as relatable and understanding of blue-collar workers. — **AFP/dpa**

■ FIRST WOMAN VICE-PRESIDENT

Harris: We have a lot of work ahead of us. Let’s get started

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris, who is heading to the White House as Democrat Joe Biden’s vice president, indicates she is ready to “get started” on the work ahead.

“This election is about so much more than Joe Biden or me. It’s about the soul of America and our willingness to fight for it. We have a lot of work ahead of us. Let’s get started,” she tweeted.

Kamala crashed through one of the world’s highest glass ceilings on Saturday to be elected America’s first woman vice president, making history and helping bring to an end Donald Trump’s turbulent rule.

Harris came into Tuesday’s election already a repeat trailblazer as California’s first Black attorney general and the first woman of South Asian heritage elected to the US Senate.

By winning the vice presidency, she will be a heartbeat away from

leading the United States and poised on a stepping stone to the ultimate prize.

With the 77-year-Biden expected to serve only a single term, Harris would be favored to win the Democratic presidential nomination four years from now.

That could give her a shot at more history-making -- as the first female president of the United States.

“This election is about so much more than Joe Biden or me,” she wrote on Twitter after US news media called the election in their favor based on state results.

“It’s about the soul of America and our willingness to fight for it. We have a lot of work ahead of us. Let’s get started.”

Since being tapped as Biden’s running mate in August, she has slammed Trump on his chaotic handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also racism, the economy and the president’s



crackdown on immigration.

Harris, 56, was born to immigrants to the United States -- her father from Jamaica, her mother from India -- and their lives and her own have in some ways embodied the American

dream.

She was born on October 20, 1964 in Oakland, California, then a hub for civil rights and anti-war activism.

Her diploma from historically Black Howard University in

Washington was the start of a steady rise that took her from prosecutor, to two elected terms as San Francisco’s district attorney and then California’s attorney general in 2010.

However, Harris’s self-description as a “progressive prosecutor” has been seized upon by critics who say she fought to uphold wrongful convictions and opposed certain reforms in California, like a bill requiring that the attorney general probe shootings involving police.

“Time after time, when progressives urged her to embrace criminal justice reforms as a district attorney and then the state’s attorney general, Ms Harris opposed them or stayed silent,” law professor Lara Bazelon wrote in The New York Times last year.

Yet Harris’s work was key to forging a platform and profile from which she launched a successful Senate campaign in

2016, becoming just the second Black female senator ever.

Her stint as attorney general also helped her forge a connection with Biden’s son Beau, who held the same position in the state of Delaware, and died of cancer at the age of 46 in 2015.

“I know how much Beau respected Kamala and her work, and that mattered a lot to me, to be honest with you, as I made this decision,” Biden said during his first appearance with Harris as running mates.

A veteran campaigner, Harris oozes charisma but can quickly pivot from her megawatt smile to her prosecutorial persona of relentless interrogation and cutting retorts.

Clips went viral of her sharp questioning in 2017 of then-attorney general Jeff Sessions during a Capitol Hill hearing on Russia.

— **dpa**

Who covets the rose must respect the thorn...

Life, living a ‘good’ life, and being true to one’s faith and heritage rely on neither money nor masculinity, either power or position, or a question of stature or station, but rather... respect.

It is not about being shown respect, deserving respect, or getting respect. The ancient hierarchal societies were built largely upon ‘due respect,’ and those at the top of that hierarchy expecting, nay demanding respect, because it was due to them. That was then, and today no-one can demand or ‘expect’ respect, unless it is earned. It is today, totally, and completely, about one’s ability to show, and give respect. You cannot force someone to respect you, but you can refuse to be disrespected.

This is not about reinventing any societal wheel! This is about the evolution of mankind, and about how communications, travel, and progress have brought us to a time and place where we can begin to appreciate the value in all people, all cultures, all societies and religions. This evolution has surely brought us to a time and place where we can accept that a failure to give respect is a personal and individual failure, and not a consequence of birth, or gender.

Someone earns respect with their actions and reactions, their character and personality, for it is within these



Ray Petersen
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WE,
COLLECTIVELY,
MUST DO BETTER
IN TERMS OF
RESPECTING
OTHERS, OR WE
CANNOT LEARN
TO RESPECT
OURSELVES

qualities that respect is developed, not through wealth or birthright. Many who would demand respect would have you believe they have never made a mistake, yet it is from mistakes that we all learn and grow better. Marilyn Monroe wasn’t perfect, yet she said something like, “I’m selfish, impatient, insecure, and I make mistakes. I get out of control and I’m hard to handle, but if you can’t handle me then, you don’t deserve me when I’m at my best.”

Admitting to mistakes allows one to gain, or regain respect, like Monroe, unlike which a stubborn refusal to budge identifies a failure of character. It is upon this obstacle which the respect of others so easily founders. “Respect for ourselves,” wrote Laurence Stern, “guides our morals, while respect for others guides our manners,” and one might add even more pointedly, our behaviour. Too many expatriates come here with a moral compass that loses polarity so much, and so quickly, we need to give ourselves a long hard look in the mirror.

We, collectively, must do better in terms of respecting others, or we cannot learn to respect ourselves. Labourers, housemaids, cleaners, drivers, waiters, are all looked down upon because of what they do, when they should be appreciated for what they do. They do things, so we do not have to, so the least we can do is smile, say hello, and acknowledge their service, and not

ignore them. Tip, but let your tips be an acknowledgement of good service, rather than compensation for boorish behaviour.

And what about the tradesmen and craftsmen throughout the Sultanate, the carpenters, plumbers, metalworkers, builders, mechanics, panel beaters, engineers, tradesmen all. Skilled professionals these are, who have learned how to correctly service A/C units and bathroom appliances, repair and refurbish furniture to new condition, build gates, windows, and doors to fit your every whim, and to build your dream houses. Men who can take your broken motor vehicle and put it back together again, doing what “all the king’s horses and all the king’s men” could not do. In their fields, these are artists and artisans, who, if they were rewarded appropriately, would not be so poorly seen.

Too many of us focus upon our need to be understood, for being known is not the same, and we lose our own ability to understand those around us. It is the vain and the egotistical who pick and choose who to understand, in their arrogance, not realising that understanding is on the pathway to respect. The Dalai Lama spoke of, “Understanding our human brothers and sisters, respecting their rights and dignity.” Do not let that other person, the one who cannot or does not seek understanding... be you!

POLITICAL WINDS

Is Rupert Murdoch dumping Trump?

THOMAS URBAIN

Fox News and the *New York Post*, magnate Rupert Murdoch’s main media outlets, have started distancing themselves from Donald Trump as the US election vote counting drama drags on — a first since the president came to power and a potential turning point.

Last Thursday night in Phoenix, Arizona, supporters of Trump bluntly shouted against Fox News in reference to the news outfit considered fiercely loyal to the president for the past five years. Fox News infuriated Trump and his people on election night by calling Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden.

Jared Kushner, Trump’s adviser and son in law, called Murdoch in vain to try to get that call retracted. Other media held off from calling the battleground state for Biden as the tallying of ballots continued. Since that night, Fox News has stepped very carefully around allegations of massive vote fraud coming from the Trump campaign and the man himself.

“We just haven’t seen it. It hasn’t been presented to us,” Fox News anchor Brett Baier said on the air last Friday.

The way Fox News has treated Trump since the election and its early calling of Arizona for Biden show the more serious side of the network is trying to “operate as independently as possible

JEFFREY MCCALL
A professor

had a twin identity — on one hand, star anchors who are more editorialists than journalists and on the other a newsroom that is much more measured.

Some Fox journalists, such as Chris Wallace, who was the moderator at the first Trump-Biden debate, are very well respected professionals.

On the in-your-face editorial side stands Fox star Sean Hannity, who is very close to Trump and said on Thursday evening, “Americans have every right to be suspicious... to distrust the legitimacy of the results.”

McCall said that the way Fox News has treated Trump since the election and its early calling of Arizona for Biden show the more serious side of the network is trying to “operate as independently as possible from the opinion section and even from the ownership.”

“These people have their own journalistic standards that they want to uphold.”

But Reece Peck, who wrote a book about Fox News called “Fox Populism”, said this distancing could alienate some viewers and prompt them to switch to another news source, such as OAN, a small new outfit, ultra conservative and extremely pro-Trump. Behind Fox News, which chalked up 14.1 million viewers on US election night, is, of course, Murdoch.

The 89-year old media mogul is known for his conservative views but over the past few months has come to grips with the idea of a Biden win, according to the Daily Beast. Still, said McCall,

“My guess is that the Murdoch family is not calling into the newsroom to tell Bret Bauer how to cover certain kinds of stories.” — AFP

DEBT BURDEN

Pandemic hikes concern over climate finance for poorest

MEGAN ROWLING

Rich nations will need to boost efforts to provide funding for pandemic-hit poorer countries to battle climate change if they are to meet a promise of raising \$100 billion a year from 2020, climate finance officials and analysts said.

In an annual update, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said climate finance for developing states rose by 11 per cent to \$78.9 billion in 2018 — about \$20 billion short of a flagship goal set for this year. In 2009, wealthy countries at UN climate talks agreed to channel \$100 billion — from public and private sources — each year starting in 2020 to help poor nations develop in a low-carbon way and adapt to worsening climate change impacts.

But reaching that target has proved a challenge, even as demand for help is growing as a result of coronavirus-related economic downturns and surging climate-related disasters. “Donors need to urgently step up their efforts to support developing countries to respond to the immediate effects of the pandemic and to integrate climate actions into each country’s recovery from the COVID-19 crisis,” OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said in a statement on the report.



FILE PHOTO: An aerial view shows smoke rising into the air around the Cuiaba river in the Pantanal, the world’s largest wetland, in Pocone, Mato Grosso state, Brazil on August 28, 2020. — Reuters

CLIMATE FINANCE
FOR DEVELOPING
STATES ROSE BY 11
PER CENT TO \$78.9
BILLION IN 2018

Patriciah Roy Akullo, co-chair of the ACT Alliance’s climate justice group, said meeting the \$100-billion goal was “about saving lives, and preventing further suffering around the world”, as wild weather intensifies and oceans creep higher.

“These funds are urgently needed to deliver action on the ground by people and communities in climate-

vulnerable countries,” she said. That could include planting drought-resistant seed varieties, providing early warning of storms, building higher flood defences, planting mangroves, or installing solar power.

Reaching the \$100-billion-a-year target is seen as vital to the progress of UN climate negotiations.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation

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DHOFAR, AL ORUBA

TO CLASH FOR HM CUP HONOURS

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 7

Al Oruba's Yousef al Mukhaini struck the all-important goal in the dying minutes to spoil Ibri's dream to reach the final of the His Majesty's Cup as the Sur-based team ended the semifinal second leg match with a 1-0 victory, late on Saturday at Sur Sports Complex.

Despite Al Oruba's 2-1 loss in the first leg game in February, they prevailed with an aggregate scoreline of 2-2 to move into the final as they scored at Ibri Sports Complex getting the crucial

away goal.

The victory meant Al Oruba secured a slot for the final of the coveted HM Cup and face Dhofar in the summit clash which will be officially announced later by the Oman Football Association (OFA).

The four times champions was the best side in the match as the strikers missed many scoring chances except Yousef's opportunity which translated to a goal. The Ibri team bounced back and depended more on the defence which impacted negatively on the team through continuous pressure from the

host. On the other hand, the Salalah giant Dhofar, confirmed their presence in the HM Cup final as they ended the second leg match in a goalless draw against Al Nahdha at Al Buraimi Sports Complex with a 1-1 advantage from the away leg of the semifinal.

The eight times winner managed to control the match and was the active side. Dhofar's Raed Ibrahim missed a golden opportunity in the operation box at the 60th minute.

The upfront forwards including youngster Salah al Yahaei and Mohammed Salim

came close to scoring for Dhofar but all the chances fell abegging without netting a goal. The visitors Al Nahdha sought a goal through but the scoring chances were few and far as the opponent defence thwarted most of their opportunities.

The experienced national coach and head of coaching staff of Dhofar, Rasheed Jaber said the team managed to accomplish one of the milestones which is securing spot at the final of the prestigious HM Cup. "The team missed many real scoring chances in the box. Also, we

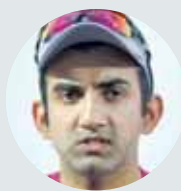
monitored the back sides of the team well and prevented the opponent reaching our goalkeeper. The focus now is on a proper technical preparation for the final and the forthcoming season", he added in post match statements at Dhofar's media centre.

The chairman of Dhofar club Shaikh Ali Ahmed al Rawas, congratulated the coaching staff, players and the audience on the team's presence in the final top domestic competition.

"A dedicated thanks for the players on their top efforts and performance during the game.

They monitored the match well and ended with the best outcome to advance into the final game. Many of the scoring opportunities were missed without proper translation of these chances to goals. I hope the coaching staff studies this part before the team's forthcoming matches", he added.

Commenting on the final match, Al Rawas affirmed previously the team is in full readiness to meet Al Oruba. "Both teams are well-known and we will prepare well for the final fixture in the purpose of clinching the title", he ended.



Gambhir calls for Kohli's removal

Former India batsman Gautam Gambhir feels Virat Kohli should be replaced as captain of the RCB after the team ended yet another IPL campaign without the trophy.



Klopp pleased with Palace's Sakho

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) apology to Crystal Palace's Mamadou Sakho for a drugs ban in 2016 was long overdue.



Wolves have room for improvement

Wolverhampton Wanderers have won three of their last four Premier League games but manager Nuno Espirito Santo has urged his side not to get carried away by their recent form.



AASF GENERAL CONGRESS DISCUSSES AQUATIC SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

AASF APPROVES TAHA AL KISHRY CONTESTING FOR BOARD MEMBERSHIP PLACE

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 7

Muscat city was the venue for the 14th AASF General Congress of the Asian Swimming Federation (AASF) which was held on Saturday at Kempinski Hotel.

The meeting was presided over by Kuwait's Hussain al Musallam, the first vice-president of the International Swimming Federation (FINA) on behalf of Shaikh Khalid al Sabah, Chairman of AASF, in presence of Taha al Kishry, Chairman of Oman Swimming Association (OSA), and 39 representatives of national federation members from Asia.

Qais al Zakwani, Secretary-General of Oman Swimming Association (OSA), delivered the welcome message. He commenced the speech welcoming all the guests to the Sultanate. "In light of the developments regarding COVID-19, I would like to first say that our thoughts and prayers are with those of our colleagues who have been affected by the pandemic. Over the past months, AASF and OSA have worked

extensively to prepare for this Congress. We have experienced a lot of setbacks considering the challenging and uncertain situation that we are in; however, we are determined to fulfil the mission of this federation," he said.

"I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has travelled just to be with us today despite all the travel restrictions and safety concerns. Hoping that the 14th AASF General Congress will represent for all delegates an unforgettable experience. I wish you a successful meeting and look forward to welcoming you back in the future," he ended.

Then, Dr Julio Maglion, FINA Chairman, joined the meeting virtually and he shared his speech through video conference at "MS Teams" platform.

"I highly appreciate the positive efforts of the Asian national federations on continuity development of the water sporting events. The Asian continent will host many mega swimming events including the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo and the FINA



Abdulwahab al Hinai

World Swimming Championship in Japan. I wish success for the Congress meeting in Muscat and to end with top outcomes that support the improvement of swimming sports," he said.

The third speech was from Shaikh Khalid al Sabah, Chairman of AASF, and delivered by Hussain al Musallam. He thanked in his speech the Sultanate for excellent organisation and warm hospitality of the Congress.

"I am happy that the Asia Aquatics Family is back in Muscat



Hussain al Musallam

after the extremely successful Asian Beach Games in Muscat in 2010. The AASF executive board made an unanimous decision to postpone all AASF events for the year 2020 until the situation improved. Despite the difficult conditions, I am very pleased that AASF has continued its operation and shows its cooperation with FINA and with all organising committees of different sports events," he said.

CONGRESS AGENDA

The Congress agenda began with approving the previous minutes of meeting for 13th AASF General Congress in Jakarta. Then, the yearly activity and financial reports were discussed without any comments from the members. The technical committee members shared their reports to the congress members as Yuan Haoran shared the swimming reports while Katsumi Kuroda discussed the Water Polo report. Li Na shared the Diving report and Miwako Homma shared the Artistic Swimming report. Ronnie Wong briefed on Open Water report while Sheehrio Takahashi talked about the "Masters".

Shaikh Abdulwahab bin Abdullah al Hinai presented the election of candidate from AASF to the FINA Bureau. The election of FINA will take place in Doha on June 5.

Kuwait's Hussain al Musallam is competing at the "President" position while Oman's Taha al Kishry on board membership position. Ji Hong Zhu from China is competing at the Vice-

President position. Kazakhstan's Karikoof, Japan's Suzuki and Indian Veerendra Nanavati on the board membership positions.

Al Hinai confirmed to all the Asian candidates that they are meeting all the requirements as set by the FINA. During the Congress meeting, all the national federations recommend on the Asian candidates to proceed at the FINA election and wishing them all the best.

The Director of the Asian Swimming Championships in New Clark City in Philippines in 2021 presented a visual presentation including the latest preparations, competition venues, accommodation, logo and other related stuff.

At the end of the Congress meeting, Hussain al Musallam delivered a message to Asia congress family on his intention for presidential position. "There has never been a President from Asia. In fact, there has never been a Presidential candidates from Asia. The action that you have taken today has already made history," he added.

Muscat, IT Works score impressive wins

MUSCAT: Kashyap Kumar Prajapati's scintillating 97 and captain Rajesh Kumar Ranpura's 5 for 14 were the highlights of Muscat CT's third consecutive win when it thrashed Arm Alpha by 92 runs in a Premier Division T20 game at Oman Cricket's Turf 1 in Al Amerat on Friday.

Opener Prajapati was involved in a 154-run partnership for the second wicket before Naseem Khushi came in to whack 19 off 7 balls, taking Muscat to a commanding 191 for 3 in 20 overs.

Arm Alpha suffered early setbacks, teetering at 25 for 5 in the seventh over including the prized scalps of Aqib Ilyas and Sanuth

Ebrahim, Chaminda Lakmal top scored with 43 as Arm Alpha meandered to a mediocre 99 for 8 in its quota of 20 overs. Ranpura was once again the pick of Muscat bowlers with a vital five-for return. **BRIEF SCORES (PREMIER DIVISION):** Muscat CT 191 for 3 in 20 overs (Kashyap Kumar Prajapati 97 - 13x4, 2x6, Ashish Odedara 69 - 5x4, 2x4, Kaleemullah 1-23) beat Arm Alpha 99 for 8 in 20 overs (Chaminda Lakmal 43 - 2x6, Ubaid Ullah 31 - 2x4, Rajesh Ranpura 5-14) by 92 runs. MoM: Kashyap Kumar Prajapati (Muscat CT).

SHAKEEL BOWLS IT WORKS TO VICTORY

In the day's other Premier Division game, IT Works rode on Shakeel Ahmad's superb 4 for 12 to hand AER an 80-run drubbing. Akmal Shahzad struck a

brilliant 68 while Khawar Ali contributed 23 as IT Works made its way to a robust 160 for 4 in 20 overs. Young Muzahir Raza bagged 2 for 34.

AER failed to make a match of it, folding up for a paltry 80 in the 19th over. Only Sachin Kumar (31) and Danish Mohammed (28) batted with some authority as Shakeel did the bulk of the damage with his wily left-arm spin. Pacer Muzammil Ilyas bowled well too, taking 2 for 11.

BRIEF SCORES (PREMIER DIVISION): IT Works 160 for 4 in 20 overs (Akmal Shahzad 68 - 7x4, 1x6, Khawar Ali 23 - 2x4, Muzahir Raza 2-34) beat AER 80 all out in 18.3 overs (Sachin Kumar 31 - 4x4, Danish Mohammed 28 - 3x4, Shakeel Ahmad 4-12, Muzammil Ilyas 2-11, Nester Dhamba 2-16) by 80 runs. MoM: Shakeel Ahmad (IT Works).



Muscat CT's Rajesh Ranpura, Kashyap Prajapati and Ashish Odedara after the win against Arm Alpha



Warner's Hyderabad eliminate Kohli's Bangalore in IPL

ABU DHABI: Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore were eliminated from this year's Indian Premier League after Sunrisers Hyderabad prevailed in a low-scoring thriller to remain on course for a second IPL title on Friday.

Kane Williamson's unbeaten 50 and Jason Holder's crucial cameo secured Hyderabad's six-wicket victory with two balls to spare after they had restricted Bangalore to 131-7.

Hyderabad will take on Delhi Capitals in what is effectively a semifinal on Sunday with the winners meeting defending champions Mumbai in Tuesday's final in Dubai.

Kohli sprang a surprise by opening their batting but the ploy did not work. The India captain gloved a rising Holder (3-25) delivery to perish caught behind for six.

Holder has had an excellent tournament since replacing injured Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh at Hyderabad and the West Indies captain dismissed the other opener Devdutt Padikkal to jolt Bangalore early.

Australia's limited-overs captain Aaron Finch made 32 but England all-rounder Moeen Ali ran himself out on a free-hit delivery, leaving the onus on AB de Villiers to lend some respectability to their total.

De Villiers made a fluent 56 but lost his middle stump to T Natarajan just when Bangalore expected him to provide the late flourish.

Bangalore, one of the most decorated batting sides in IPL, managed just one six, from Finch, in their innings. Hyderabad wobbled early in their reply and slumped to 67-4 with skipper David

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	
V Kohli c Goswami b Holder	6
D Padikkal c Garg b Holder	1
A Finch c Samad b Nadeem	32
De Villiers b Natarajan	56
M Ali (run out)	0
S Dube c Warner b Holder	8
W Sundar c Samad b Natarajan	5
N Saini (not out)	9
M Siraj (not out)	10
Extras (LB-1, NB-1, W-3)	4
Total (For 7 wkts, 20 overs)	131
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-15, 3-56, 4-62, 5-99, 6-111, 7-113.	
Bowling: S Sharma 4-0-21-0, J Holder 4-0-25-3, T Natarajan 4-0-33-2, S Nadeem 4-0-30-1, R Khan 4-0-22-0.	
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD	
D Warner c De Villiers b M Siraj	17
S Goswami c De Villiers b M Siraj	0
M Pandey c De Villiers b A Zampa	24
K Williamson (not out)	50
P Garg c A Zampa b Y Chahal	7
J Holder (not out)	24
Extras (LB-5, NB-1, W-4)	10
Total (For 4 wkts, 19.4 overs)	132
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-43, 3-55, 4-67.	
Bowling: M Siraj 4-0-28-2, N Saini 3.4-0-31-0, W Sundar 2-0-21-0, A Zampa 4-0-12-1, Y Chahal 4-0-24-1, M Ali 1-0-4-0, S Dube 1-0-7-0.	

Hyderabad will take on Delhi Capitals in what is effectively a semifinal on Sunday with the winners meeting defending champions Mumbai in Tuesday's final in Dubai.

Warner back in the hut after a run-a-ball 17. Bangalore spin duo of Adam Zampa and Yuzvendra Chahal restricted the Hyderabad batsmen but Williamson found the occasional boundary to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Needing nine of the last over from Navdeep Saini, Holder, who made 24 not out, smashed back-to-back boundaries to seal their victory.





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Introductory meeting on Dhamani insurance platform tomorrow

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) will showcase its Dhamani platform, which oversees the implementation of the Mandatory Healthcare Insurance Scheme (Dhamani), at a virtual meeting to be held on Monday, November 9, with the participation of the Vice President (Insurance Sector), Dhamani implementation company, and high level officials representing insurance companies, brokers and agents as well as representatives of third party administrators of health insurance claims, private hospitals and clinics.

The meeting will introduce the Dhamani platform, review the implementation framework and phases of the project, timeline and milestones, solution components and the link between insurance companies, health sector and the regulators.

The Dhamani Platform is an electronic platform for the exchange of health information, claims settlement, transfer of funds, requests for approvals and verification of insurance cover between the parties of the insurance relationship and the regulators and supervisors in the Sultanate. — ONA

Move to position Invest-Easy as Oman’s one-stop licensing portal

KEY MILESTONE: 26 government entities and municipalities integrated into the portal to date.

CONRAD PRABHU @conradprabhu

The Omani government has reiterated the importance of a centralised single window system for registering new businesses and issuing commercial licences — a mandate currently vested with Invest-Easy, a portal set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The significance of a one-stop national licensing portal has been highlighted in the newly published Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (2020-2024) formulated by the Ministry of Finance as a strategy for reining in Oman’s ballooning annual fiscal deficit and external debt.

The Ministry’s four-year blueprint for achieving fiscal sustainability underscores, among other goals, the need for enhancing Oman’s overall business environment and strengthening the Sultanate’s appeal as a destination for local and foreign investment.

Key to this objective is the



The significance of a one-stop national licensing portal has been highlighted in the newly published Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (2020-2024) formulated by the Ministry of Finance as a strategy for reining in Oman’s ballooning annual fiscal deficit and external debt

importance of digitising and streamlining the approvals process to make the experience a convenient, positive and cost-competitive one for interested investors, it noted.

Stressing the importance of electronic transformation initiatives to help strengthen Oman’s business-friendly

single access point to all electronic government services.”

To this end, much progress has been made in the integration of various government agencies — 26 entities to date — into the Invest Easy system, according to the Ministry of Finance.

They include the municipalities of Muscat, Suhar and Dhofar, which has reduced the time required to start a business from several weeks to only a number of weeks. Further, applications for labour permits for expatriate labour are being processed within three days as opposed to several weeks prior to the integration, it

said.

Recent challenges posed by the pandemic and associated lockdown measures have also accentuated the need for a fully digitized, one-stop licensing portal, the Ministry pointed out. “The current pandemic has shown that the government needs to adapt and move to an e-government in order to best to continue to provide services to both citizens and residents and to ensure business conditions necessary to foster economic growth”, it stated.

Significantly, all of the government ministries and agencies that have are stakeholders in the overall licensing process are now integrated into the Invest-Easy port.

These include the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (PACDA); Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Heritage and Tourism; Tax Authority; Environment Authority; Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources; and Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.

■ PRODUCTION UPDATE

Price of Oman crude averages \$47.2 per barrel in September

MUSCAT: The Sultanate’s oil production, including condensates, stood at 261.10 million barrels for the first nine month until the end of September 2020, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Of the total production, crude oil production fell by 8.2 per cent at 212.47 million barrels, while condensates production rose by 45.1 per cent to touch 48.63 million barrels. Oman recorded a daily average crude oil production of 952.9 barrels at the end of September 2020, against 970.8 barrels over the same period of 2019, the NCSI report added.

However, the average price of Oman crude fell by 26.8 per cent to reach \$47.2 per barrel until the end of September 2020, from \$64.6 per barrel in the same period of 2019.

Oman exported 215.72 million barrels of crude oil till the end of September 2020, against 222.31 million barrels for the same period



of 2019, falling by 3 per cent. In terms of exports, China retained its position as the leading destination for Sultanate’s crude oil exports at the end of September 2020, with the country importing 190.53 million barrels of crude oil from Oman. This was followed by India (8.79 million barrels), South Korea (4.99 million

barrels and Japan (2.10 million barrels).

Oman produced 354.3 million barrels of oil and exported 310.3 million barrels in 2019. Besides, the country’s daily oil production stood at 970,900 million barrels last year.

Meanwhile, Oman’s natural gas production and imports fell 0.7 per

cent to 33,995 million cubic meters (MNCM) at the end of September 2020, from 34,237 MNCM for the same period of 2019. Of this, non-associated gas and imports rose by 2.1 per cent to 28,643 MNCM and associated gas production fell 13.5 per cent to 5,352 MNCM, added the NCSI report. — ONA

Turkey’s Erdogan ousts central bank governor as lira slides

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan fired central bank governor Murat Uysal on Saturday and replaced him with ex-finance minister Naci Agbal, acting after a 30 per cent plunge in the lira currency’s value to record lows this year.

The decision to replace Murat Uysal gives Turkey its fourth central bank governor in five years. The presidential decree was announced in the early hours on Saturday in Turkey’s Official Gazette and gave no reason for the surprise move.

A senior official in Erdogan’s AK Party said Uysal was held responsible for the nosedive of the lira, the worst performer in emerging markets this year.

Analysts said that while Agbal is a close Erdogan ally, he is seen as a capable manager who could take a more orthodox approach to policy. That could ease concerns that have driven Turks to snap up hard currencies at record levels.



A man counts Turkish lira banknotes at a currency exchange office in Istanbul. — AFP

“Uysal’s leadership had been utterly disastrous. Agbal cannot be worse, surely. He had a reputation as a decent technocrat”, Timothy Ash at BlueBay Asset Management said on Twitter. “Agbal is actually qualified for the job.”

The lira closed at 8.5445 against the dollar on Friday after touching a record low of 8.58, despite dollar weakness as votes were still being counted in the US election.

— Reuters

Sectors profiting from COVID-19 crisis (Part 2)

Last week we saw how some sectors actually benefited from the pandemic crisis. Although it is too soon to measure the true magnitude of the damage to many industries, some areas have shown record-breaking profits. Gloves makers have seen an unprecedented surge in demand for their products. Some of such producers used to be mere marginal players in the pharmaceutical-healthcare industry until a few months ago. Most of them have not moved an inch into innovation for years if not decades: a glove is a glove. Yet the pandemic provided them with an immense uprisping opportunity, transforming their dull manufacturing to some

of the hottest stocks on the exchange. The Malaysian gloves producer Top Gloves had its shares steadily cruising around MYR 1.50 (\$0.36) for 2 straight years since 2018, before spiking to over MYR 9 recently (\$2.18). Medical masks makers enjoyed an even bigger growth all over the world, but given that making a mask requires less knowhow, less machinery and more readily available raw materials — fabric vs latex — many companies started producing face masks out of the blue. In Thailand alone, a country with a long history in garments and apparels manufacturing, companies such as Greyhound, Kloset, Leisure Projects, Painkiller Atelier, Baking Soda,



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THE JOBS OF THE FUTURE ARE INCREASINGLY GOING TO BE PERFORMED FROM HOME, SO MUCH THAT 1 IN 4 COMPANIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS ALREADY BEGUN IMPLEMENTING REMOTE WORKING AS A POLICY.

Rotsaniyom, Shaka, iCONic, Adhoe Store, Jaspal and Wonder Anatomie jumped on the bandwagon of fashion face mask making virtually overnight. In the Middle East, and more specifically in the GCC, there has been a surge in SME registration. An unprecedented trend that in line with the Government incentives to drive the private sector to a new renaissance, gave the extra drop of courage for a new generation of entrepreneurs to come. Many of the new SMEs that have been incorporated during the pandemic are eyeing online sales and distribution, logistics and remote services such as but not limited to IT and consulting. When it comes to technology, edutech (or edtech) seems to

have experienced a rebirth. Throughout my career as a trainer I saw e-learning coming and going several times over the past two decades. When face-to-face lessons were the norm, it was seriously challenging to make a case in favour of remote learning. But all has changed in 2020, and nowadays we might even wonder why we have travelled so much in the past to attend courses that we could have as well attended in the comfort of our homes. Speaking about education, there has been an increasing number of individuals who realised how important it is to speak near-to-perfect English. The jobs of the future are increasingly going to be performed from home, so much that 1 in 4 companies in the

Middle East has already begun implementing remote working as a policy. Therefore, it is likely to expect that international relationships will become more and more frequent. As such, basic English is no longer sufficient, so English courses have picked up large amounts of new enrolments. Some say that the pandemic is far from over, yet the world is preparing to go back to an altered normality. Part of the economic success stories that we have witnessed are here to stay, while others could go back to the point where they started once the real normality is back to business as usual. [The columnist is a member of the International Press Association]



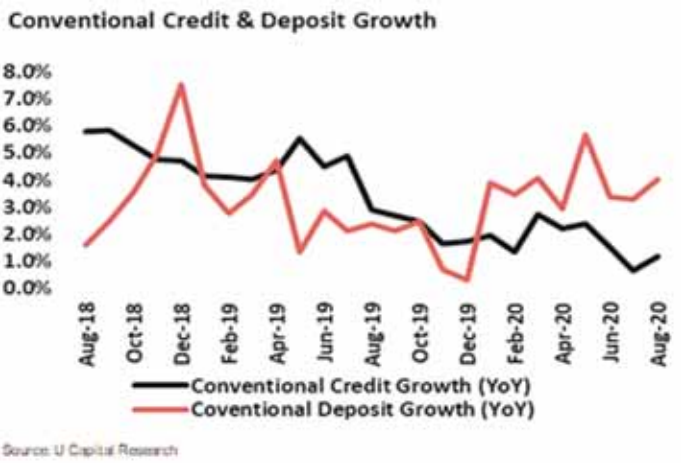
MSM WEEKLY REVIEW

MSM down led by drop in services sector

MSM30 ended the week marginally lower by 0.20 per cent. Services Index was down 1.19 per cent while Industrial was down by 0.21 per cent. Financial Index rose marginally by 0.02 per cent. Shariah Index was down 0.64 per cent.

Oman REIT Fund is planning an initial public offering that could raise about \$100 million, in what could be the biggest-ever listing of a property trust in the Gulf, according to media reports. The REIT, managed by Shumookh Fund Management LLC, plans to seek a valuation of \$170 million or more. It aims to offer an annual dividend yield of about 7 per cent. Shumookh Fund Management confirmed that it has filed a draft prospectus for the IPO with Oman's market regulator and is awaiting approval.

Conventional credit growth picked up to +1.2 per cent YoY in Aug'20 as compared to +0.7 per cent YoY in Jul'20. Total conventional credit reached RO 22.15bn (RO 104.3 million on MoM basis or +0.5 per cent MoM). Conventional credit expanded largely on account of a 6.4 per cent MoM (RO 193 million) increase in credit extended to Government and Public Enterprises, which form 14.5 per cent of total conventional credit. The private sector credit contracted by RO 71.9 million or 0.4 per cent MoM, and it forms about 84.9 per cent of the total. Credit to non-residents also declined by about 11 per cent (down RO 16.5 million). Conventional deposits growth also picked up to 4.0 per cent YoY in Aug'20 vs. 3.3 per cent YoY in Jul'20 and 3.4 per cent YoY in Jun'20.



Total conventional deposits stood at RO 20.38bn (+RO 141 million on MoM basis or +0.7 per cent MoM). Sector Loan-to-deposit (LTD) ratio decreased to 108.7 per cent, down from 108.9 per cent in Jul'20. Conventional deposits increased on MoM basis on account of expansion in all categories of deposits: Government deposits rose 0.1 per cent MoM (RO 2.6 million), Public enterprises' deposits rose 6.2 per cent or RO 67 million, Private sector deposits rose 0.3 per cent or RO 40.6 million, and finally, non-resident deposits rose 7.8 per cent or RO 30.9 million. The share of Government and Public Enterprises deposits, which had dropped to 27.7 per cent in Jul'20 as compared to a simple average of 31.6 per cent over the trailing 12 months, rose slightly to 27.8 per cent in Aug'20.

Islamic Banking financing (Banks and Islamic Windows) reached RO 4.13bn (flat MoM and +8.1 per cent YoY). Islamic deposits reached RO 3.65bn (+2.2 per cent MoM and +6.8 per cent YoY). Islamic financing stands at 15.7 per cent of total Oman banking credit, and Islamic deposits form 15.3 per cent of total bank deposits. Islamic Financing-to-Deposit Ratio contracted to 113.0 per cent vs. 115.5 per cent in Jul'20, on MoM deposit expansion

outpacing credit growth. Oman Government has announced its Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (2020-24). Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) 2020-2024 has been developed to reduce the primary and overall fiscal deficits to sustainable levels in the medium-term. The MTFP will be implemented over the 2020 to 2024 period and projects the budget deficit gradually narrowing to 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2024 which is considered a sustainable level. Government recognises the need to strengthen the Sultanate's revenue raising framework by decreasing its reliance on hydrocarbon revenue. Initiatives related to increasing non-oil revenues will have an impact of almost RO 1.4bn by the end of MTFP. Debt-to-GDP ratio remains at level of 80 per cent by the end of the MTFP. Under the MTFP, debt-to-GDP will plateau and start to decline after 2022. During 2020, the government adopted a policy position to reduce the operational and development expenditures of government agencies by 10 per cent from the 2020 State General Budget. The government is committed to further recognising efficiencies in 2021 by reducing recurring spending compared to the levels achieved in 2020. [Courtesy: U-Capital]

■ PERMISSION GRANTED

34 applications received for use of national emblems

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 7

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said that the number of applications for a permit to use the emblem of the Sultanate of Oman, the dagger and the two swords, and images of His Majesty the Sultan, as well as Sultan Qaboos bin Said on various commercial products have reached 34 to date. These applications were filed for use of the images on the occasion of Sultanate's celebrations of the glorious 50th National Day. The Ministry said that it was continuously carrying out inspections to monitor the



markets, in cooperation with the Consumer Protection Authority. It will take all necessary legal actions against violators and confiscate the materials and products which were found violating the laws and orders regulating them. The ministry said that the commercial use of the emblem

of the Sultanate; dagger and two swords and the Royal emblem; the crown, the dagger and the two swords, as well as the use of the Omani dagger, and the map of the Sultanate on various commercial products without obtaining the necessary approvals from the concerned authorities, is a violation of the law. It was noticed that some of the commercial establishments have put the state emblem, the Royal emblem, or the flag of the Sultanate or the map of the Sultanate on jewellery, other products or items which are produced or manufactured locally or have imported any of them without prior permission from the Ministry and other concerned authorities.

Global Money Exchange conducts National Day contests

MUSCAT: The Sultanate's premier money exchange company is conducting an online drawing competition for kids and adults. The topics are: 'National Day of Oman' for kids up to age of 10 years; 'Heritage of Oman' for children of ages 11 to 14 years; and 'Vision of Oman 2040' for those above 15 years. The submissions should be sent by e-mail at: business@globalmoneyexchange.net

Winners will receive attractive prizes. All

submissions should be on A4 size sheets, while paintings can be done using any medium. The submission should be accompanied by the resident card number and phone number. In case of kids, the resident card number and phone number of the parent should be provided. All submissions should reach on or before 11 pm on November 15. (For further details, please contact 99838325).

■ PRESS RELEASES

LULU OPENS E-COMMERCE FULFILMENT CENTRE



Lulu opened its new dedicated E-Commerce and Logistics Centre at Seeb on November 4, 2020. Asila bint Salim al Samsamiyah, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, inaugurated the new facility; this will serve as the logistics hub for the Group's growing e-commerce activity in Oman. Speaking from the sidelines of the inauguration, Al Samsamiyah said: "The COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting our everyday life, impacting it in ways we couldn't have imagined twelve months ago. But in the midst of this disruption we are inspired by the efforts of industries across Oman as they innovate to help us meet the challenges we all now face, to help us deal with this 'new normal'."

NAJAH TALK FOCUSES ON THE ROLE OF E-COMMERCE FOR OMANI ENTREPRENEURS

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, in line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday', and commitment to supporting and developing the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) sector recently hosted a Najahi Talks session organised by its Retail Enterprises Unit (Najahi).



The online session was moderated by Abdullah al Jufaili (pictured), Head, Retail Enterprises Unit (Najahi), Bank Muscat, and hosted well-known technology entrepreneur and investor Sharifa Al Barami, who is also the co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of MarkeetEx.com, a leading digital mall catering to the needs of Omani MSMEs. The session, which was livestreamed through the bank's social media channels, saw an engaging and informative talk followed by an excellent discussion on a number of topics vital to the growth of Omani entrepreneurs in the digital age. With over 1.4 billion people having shopped online at least once, WTO estimates that the annual global e-commerce market is presently placed well over \$25 trillion.



Walmart to sell retail in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES: Walmart Inc said it was selling its retail operations in Argentina to South American supermarket chain owner Grupo de Narváez. — **Reuters**



AIG plans IPO for life unit

WASHINGTON: Insurer American International Group Inc said it is considering an initial public offering or a private sale of nearly 20 per cent of its life and retirement unit. — **Reuters**



Chanel increases prices

MILAN: French luxury house Chanel has increased prices for a second time this year, as high-end brands seek to protect margins from the fallout of the pandemic. — **Reuters**

EU set to impose tariffs on \$4 bn US goods

A majority of EU governments have backed imposing the widely expected tariffs – the latest twist in a transatlantic trade saga that has spanned 16 years and four US presidents.

BRUSSELS: The European Union is poised to move next week to impose tariffs on \$4 billion of US imports in retaliation for US subsidies for planemaker Boeing, EU diplomats said, teeing up an eleventh-hour showdown with US President Donald Trump.

A majority of EU governments have backed imposing the widely expected tariffs once EU trade ministers meet next Monday — the latest twist in a transatlantic trade saga that has spanned 16 years and four US presidents.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is edging closer to victory in the US election, but Republican Trump would remain president until January 20 and has plenty of leeway to increase US tariffs on Europe that were imposed in a parallel case over subsidies for Airbus.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer last month



Ship and containers are shown at the port of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. — **Reuters**

warned any EU tariffs would “force a US response” and Trump has threatened to “strike back harder”.

Brussels views its own tariffs — authorised by the World Trade Organization last month — as important leverage in negotiations to end a dispute that began in 2004.

“I would expect the tariffs to be imposed next Tuesday or Wednesday,” an unidentified EU diplomat said.

In October 2019, Washington imposed tariffs on Airbus planes and other European products from cheese to olives and single-malt drinks. Combined, the two cases represent the world’s largest

ever corporate trade dispute.

Washington argues there is no legal basis for EU tariffs because underlying subsidies to Boeing have been repealed. European officials argue it is only the WTO that can decide on compliance and that last month’s green light stands.

Both sides accuse the other

of failing to obey WTO rulings but are seen as determined to maximise their positions ahead of probable negotiations.

If Biden wins, the avowed transatlanticist is expected to work quickly to mend fences with Brussels on a host of issues, and could use talks over the aircraft subsidies as a gesture of goodwill as he tries to build a more united front against China.

After holding off on tariffs to avoid clashing with the US presidential campaign, European Union governments formally cleared tariffs on Tuesday, Election Day, but must now decide their timing.

Tariffs will hit US planes and parts, fruits, nuts and other farm produce, orange juice, some spirits and other goods from construction equipment to casino tables, diplomats said.

The European Commission said it was fine tuning what it regards as its retaliation rights in case no agreed solution could be found with Washington, including an immediate suspension of US tariffs.

Lighthizer’s office had no immediate comment. One senior US source said Trump was not

expected to feel constraint about expanding US tariffs, even if he loses the election.

The United States is authorized to impose tariffs on \$7.5 billion of European goods, but has not used the whole quota. It could raise duties on various goods or expand the target list.

Chris Swonger, president and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the US, said any EU tariffs on spirits would further devastate an industry that has already seen a 41 per cent drop in US whisky exports to Europe due to previous EU tariffs.

European producers have voiced similar complaints about US tariffs. Politicians on both sides of the Atlantic are under mounting pressure to prevent the aircraft feud hurting other industries.

New EU tariffs will also hand Britain, which left the bloc this year, delicate decisions about whether to join neighbours in imposing tariffs at a time when it is caught between trade negotiations with both the United States and EU.

Britain, a partner of France-based Airbus, has pledged to “keep all options open”. — **Reuters**

Tesco gets nod for sale of Thailand supermarket business



People are seen at Tesco supermarket in Bangkok. — **Reuters**

BANGKOK: Thailand’s competition regulator has given the nod for British retail giant Tesco to sell its supermarket businesses to the Charoen Pokphand Group, despite monopoly concerns.

The \$10.6 billion sale to Thailand’s biggest conglomerate was first flagged in March and also covers Tesco’s operations in Malaysia.

“The majority of commissioners agreed that the merger of those businesses (could create) market dominance... but it’s not a monopoly,” Thailand’s Office of Trade Competition Commission said in a statement on Friday.

The regulator said CP Group is not allowed to pursue other retail merger deals during the next three years.

Thai Retailers and Wholesalers Association president Somchai Pornrattanacharoen, who was on the regulator’s vetting committee, last month publicly expressed concerns that the deal would grant CP Group a monopoly, according to local media.

It is a boomerang sale of sorts — Tesco has nearly 2,000 grocery stores across Thailand which it bought from CP Group during the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998. — **AFP**

Toyota more than doubles profit outlook

TOKYO: Toyota Motor Corp more than doubled its full-year operating profit forecast, as vehicle sales rebound in China from a coronavirus pandemic squeeze earlier this year that contributed to a 24 per cent slide in second-quarter earnings.

Japan’s top automaker said it now expects an operating profit of 1.3 trillion yen (\$12.6 billion) for the year through March, 2021, up from the 500 billion it predicted previously.

Operating profit for the previous financial year was 2.47 trillion yen.

That topped the 1.25 trillion yen average estimate for full-year profit from 26 analysts polled by Refinitiv.

For the second quarter, from July to September, operating profit fell to 506 billion yen from 662.4 billion in the same period a year earlier, according to Reuters’ calculations, as sales dipped amid the coronavirus impact globally. — **Reuters**

China exports surge, imports rise

BEIJING: China exports grew at the fastest pace in 19 months in October, while imports also rose, official data showed on Saturday, as the world’s second largest economy continued to recover after being hit hard by the coronavirus crisis earlier this year.

Exports in October rose 11.4 per cent from a year earlier, beating analysts’ expectations of a 9.3 per cent increase and quickening from a solid 9.9 per cent increase in September.

The surge in exports pushed the trade surplus for October up to \$58.44 billion, compared with the poll’s forecast for a \$46 billion surplus and a \$37 billion surplus in September.

China’s trade surplus with the



A worker stands near a crane unloading shipping containers from a cargo ship at a port in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province. — **Reuters**

United States widened to \$31.37 billion in October from \$30.75 billion in September.

China’s exports have stayed largely resilient amid the

COVID-19 pandemic, as strong demand for medical supplies and reduced manufacturing capacity elsewhere worked in China’s favour. — **Reuters**

■ JOB LOSS

Americans experience long bouts of unemployment

WASHINGTON: The US economy created the fewest jobs in five months in October and more Americans are working part time, underscoring the challenges the next president faces to keep the recovery from the pandemic on track as fiscal stimulus dries up and new COVID-19 cases explode across the country.

The Labor Department’s closely watched employment report on Friday also showed 3.6 million people out of work for more than six months. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden took the lead over President Donald Trump in the battleground states of Pennsylvania and Georgia



People who lost their jobs wait in line to file for unemployment at an Arkansas Workforce Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas. — **Reuters**

for the first time on Friday, putting him on the verge of winning the White House.

“Initially, the recovery was

breath-taking, but has lost much steam,” said Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los

With no fiscal stimulus and the resurgence of coronavirus, job gains will be tougher to achieve in the future.

SUNG WON SOHN
Professor, Loyola Marymount Univ

Angeles. “With no fiscal stimulus and the resurgence of coronavirus, job gains will be tougher to achieve in the future.”

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 638,000 jobs last month after rising by 672,000 in September. That was the smallest gain since the jobs recovery started in May and left employment 10.1 million below its peak in February.

Employment was held back by the departure of 147,000 temporary workers hired for the 2020 Census. A 271,000 increase in leisure and hospitality jobs accounted for about two-fifths of the payrolls gain last month. Employment in business services increased by 208,000, with about half in temporary help services.

— **Reuters**



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In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **The Unlimited Extension of Services LLC**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1178083**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials **100,000.000** to **25,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

Announcement of Capital Reduction

In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Bronze Celebrity Ray LLC**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1237560**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials **250,000.000** to **3,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

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5. Kitchen Equipment Technician:

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- Min 5 years hands on experience in installation / Trouble shooting and Maintenance of Commercial kitchen equipments (Combi ovens, All gas and electrical cooking equipments, Dishwashers, Ice machines, Refrigeration system etc.)
- Must have hands on experience in reading Circuit drawings, operation manual and trouble shooting guide.
- Must be able to work independently with minimum supervision with maximum flexibility.

Experience: 5-8 years
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Marvellous shells from Masirah

‘When in Masirah, watch carefully where you are walking and it may be on jewellery’, says Nancy Papathanasopoulou, a senior nature conservation consultant and a shell collector who has a huge collection of Molluscs from Masirah. A good ‘sheller’ requires skill, patience, perseverance and an eye for beauty and accuracy... **P18**

INSIDE STORIES

CITYSCAPE



SOUNDS AND THE CITY: ARTISTS PUT ASIA’S CHANGING URBAN IDENTITY ON TAPE

When composer Ng Chor Guan started commuting by bicycle in car-obsessed Malaysia a decade ago, he was struck by how quickly his city was changing and the sounds he would not have heard if he had been driving... **Story on Page P20**

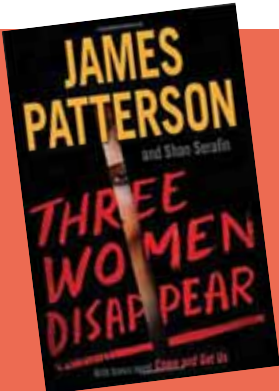
COOK LIKE A CHEF



LEMON & EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL CAKE

Borg continually focuses on how food can influence health — so he concentrates on using less salt, fat, sugar in preparations, and the way dishes are created today. Check out one of his cake concoctions... **Story on Page 19**

READ



THREE WOMEN DISAPPEAR

BY JAMES PATTERSON AND SHAN SERAFIN

Detective Sean Walsh must solve a case involving three missing women who had access to a home where a man was murdered.

HUMAN INTEREST



WHAT A TAIL: WHALE SCULPTURE SAVES RUNAWAY DUTCH TRAIN

A runaway Dutch metro train was saved from disaster on Monday after it smashed through a stop barrier but then came to rest on a giant sculpture of a whale’s tail.... **Story on Page 19**

CELEBRATE

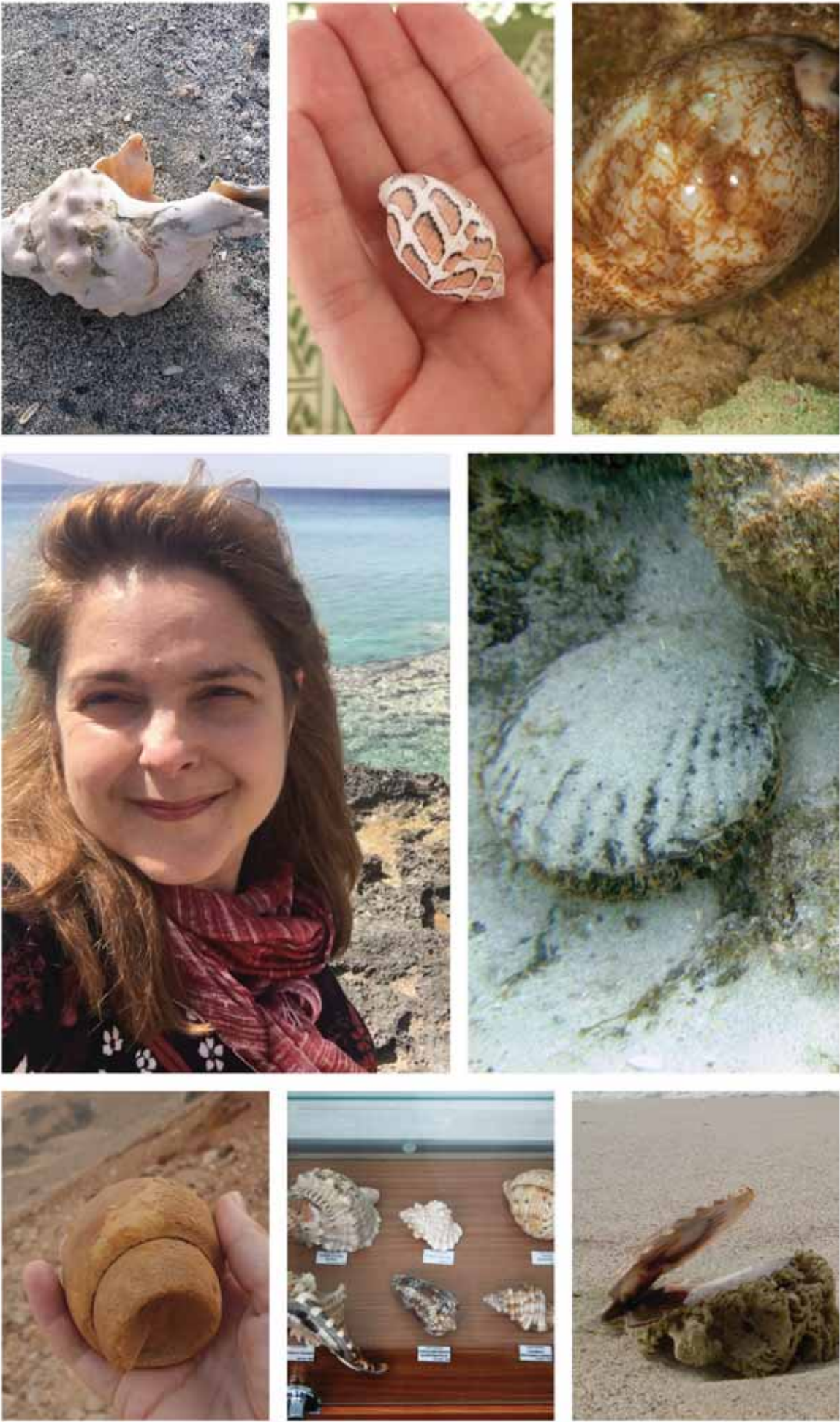


TONGUE TWISTER DAY

Tongue Twister Day is to challenge you to give your tongue a workout and to encourage a fun way for friends to interact as one challenge another to pronounce the most convoluted and difficult tongue twisters. To celebrate today, searched for the hardest tongue twister you can find and ask your friend to pronounce it.



Marvellous shells from MASIRAH



BY LIJU CHERIAN

Did you know that a species, for long among the great rarities of the shell world, has been first collected from Masirah Island during the first half of the 19th century?

The island is now known to be the principal haunt of *Cypraea teulerei*, a beautiful cowrie (a group of small to large sea snails).

Oman has deep and cool waters that favour the development of molluscan life along the coast of the country, and most notably Masirah.

"The influence of Khareef during summer months is decisive for the abundance of molluscs," mentions Nancy Papathanasopoulou, a senior nature conservation consultant from Athens, Greece.

Nancy worked as Project Manager, Kuwait Turtle Conservation Project, and earlier with the Ministry of Environment in Oman from 2004 to 2009.

She says molluscs and other organisms benefit from the rise of nutrients and food productivity created by this phenomenon, especially where subsequent rapid warming helps maintain coral communities.

The most conspicuous result of the cold upwelling is the existence of endemic species along the coasts of southern Oman, and around Masirah Island.

Nancy was the field coordinator and adviser to the Masirah Turtle Conservation Project (MTCP) possessing an incredible collection of seashells collected from her days at Masirah which she now preserves at her Athens home.

Over four years of strolling up and down Ras Radum, Nancy found 7 shells that were interesting and in good condition, worth collecting.

Ras Radum coast stretches along seven kilometres in the east coast of Masirah.

Martyn Day, an excellent teacher who lived and worked in Masirah for over 20 years, was also an amateur malacologist-perfectionist.

A keen environmentalist and a diver and an artist of 'shelling', Martyn never tires of teaching those who are genuinely interested in everything about seashells about the 'ethics of shelling'.

Martyn worked at the RAFO base in Masirah and was a great seashell collector for 25 years and a key contributor to the big book *Seashells of Eastern Arabia*.

He is sceptical about amateur shellers and believes people should need permits to take shells away from the rich beaches of Masirah.

Molluscs and their shells have played an important role in the economies of Arabian territories for thousands of years.

Martin and his wife marvelled at the beauty of the shells they collected among some of them.

"We started a collection which was destined for science and education, in both the Sultanate and the UK."

He became interested in molluscs and seashells and approached Nancy if she could help from her collection for the Environmental Information Centre which they launched in Masirah Municipality. The couple asked for a few shells but given their extraordinary work, Nancy decided to donate her entire collection destined at Oman.

"After 25 years of systematic collection and identification, it was now time to give back everything to the people and visitors of Masirah Island," mentions Nancy.

Famous among collectors for its frivolous orange and semi-symmetrical 'crescent moons' on white background is the *Punctateon eloiseae* or 'The Eloise shell', scientifically discovered by Dr Donald Bosch for the first time in 1970 after he obtained some specimens from local fishermen in Masirah.

Until then the island, now famous for its remarkable shell fauna, had been almost inaccessible to those with a specific interest in shells. Appropriately, the scientific name of this new shell commemorates the name of the discoverer's wife, Eloise Bosch.

Amelia German, a yoga teacher based in Masirah, also has her collection of Eloise shell and fossil of shells found at the top of Red Mountain in the island. Many such fossils as well as fossilised corals from thousands of years ago can be found here when mountain tops were under the sea bed.

As a shell collector during her tenure at Masirah, Nancy explains that a good shelling guide is necessary while walking on the beach. A stick to 'stir' amongst multitudes of fragments and pebbles to discover the 'right shell' is required.

Nancy mentions that it is only the experienced 'sheller' who spots the pieces worth collecting along the Island. Being a good 'sheller' requires skill, patience, perseverance and an eye for beauty and accuracy.

"Lack of fear for hermit crabs which often attack your fingers from the shell have picked up and served as their home, in a frantic attempt to escape the earthquake you are creating by picking it up. Shelling is an art to be developed. Some tire of it quickly, others commit for life," mentions Nancy.

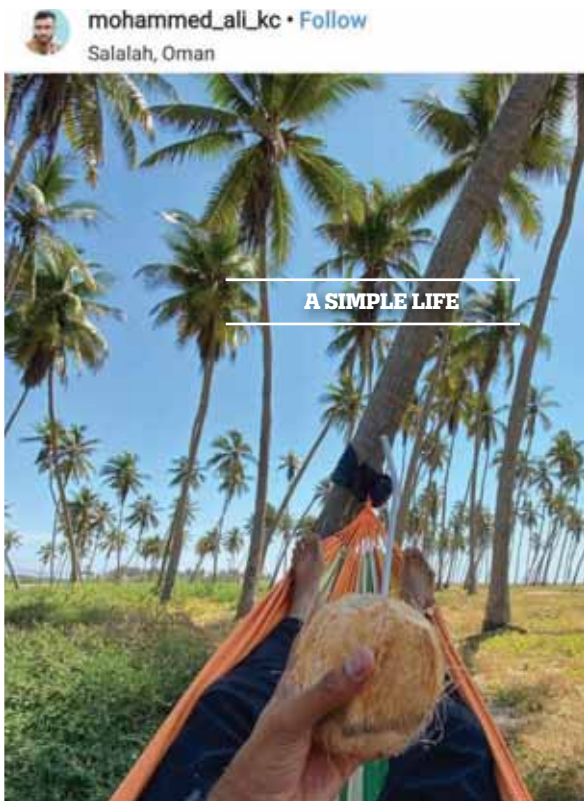
Thousands of seashells, their tenants 'liberated' by waves of flying predators, are strewn on these beaches. When in Masirah, watch carefully where you are walking. It may be on jewellery, cautions Nancy.





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Lemon & Extra Virgin Olive Oil Cake



LOCAL INGREDIENTS, SUSTAINABLE DISHES

There is an evolution, but there is no revolution;
Chef Luke's cuisine has always been centred on the produce, like the basics of any cuisine, it's all about the right gesture, the right technique and mastering that. It also relates to applying the right product with particular attention to sourcing. Using this base of techniques and ingredients to turn it into food that is very accessible. This has always been my line, my direction.
Borg continually focuses on how food can influence health – so he concentrates on using less salt, fat, sugar in preparations, and the way dishes are created today. Visiting the nearby Salalah farms and markets and sourcing natural/local ingredients to create more sustainable dishes.
The chef is just a translation between nature and what appears on the dining table.

PREPARATION METHOD

SPONGE:
In a Kitchen Aid mixer, mix the butter and sugar

Add egg one by one
Add flour and baking powder and lastly, add olive oil.
Cook for 12min at 180C

FOR LEMON CURD:
In a mixing bowl, add egg yolk, lemon and sugar, mix it and cook it in a double boiler.
Lastly, add the butter.
Chill the curd in the bowl over ice stirring it vigorously.

ABOUT THE CHEF

CHEF LUKE BORG

Executive Chef
Anantara Salalah

With over 18 years of experience, Luke is dedicated to instilling the highest standards in gourmet cuisine and will thus bring forth his passion for culinary excellence to Salalah. Born and raised in Malta, Luke never ceased to pursue his passion for food. A master's degree holder in Tourism, He completed his undergraduate studies in Gastronomic Studies at the University of Malta after previously attending St Julian's Institute of Tourism studies at his home country.
Prior to his new post, Luke held the executive chef title for a number of international luxury chains across 5 different countries; these locations include Thailand, Guinea, Mozambique, Oman and Malta respectively.
Chef Luke began his career in the industry working as a restaurant apprentice before gradually working his way up to Chef De Partie at the Hilton-Malta. As the years progressed, he took on a new role as a Chef De Cuisine at The Arches Restaurant – Malta before he acceded to Executive Chef. A truly cosmopolitan career, Luke has also managed to work with all aspects of the food industry, including some 2-star Michelin restaurants as well. Luke has also achieved many accolades for the fine dining restaurants he had worked for throughout his journey. These include winning prestigious titles such as European chef of the year in 2014 – a competition involving over 400 participants from 21 European countries.

INGREDIENTS:



SPONGE
350g Butter
350g Fructose
8 Organic Eggs
350g Flour
10g Baking Powder
100ml Extra Virgin Olive Oil

LEMON CURD
200g Organic Egg Yolk
150g Lemon Juice
120g Fructose
130g Butter



ENTERTAINMENT

What a tail: Whale sculpture saves runaway Dutch train



A RUNAWAY Dutch metro train was saved from disaster on Monday after it smashed through a stop barrier but then came to rest on a giant sculpture of a whale's tail.

Instead of crashing into the water 10 metres (30 feet) below, the front carriage ended up suspended dramatically in the air, propped up only by the silver cetacean.

The driver of the train, which had no passengers on board, was unharmed in the fluke incident which happened just after midnight at Spijkenisse, near the port city of Rotterdam.

In a twist of fate, the fortuitously positioned artwork is called "Saved by the Whale's Tail".

"This is such a weird scenario," Carly Gorter of the Rijnmond regional safety authority said.

"The metro went off the rails and it landed on a monument called Saved by the Whale's Tail. So that literally happened.

"Because of the whale's tail the driver actually was saved, it's incredible."

The driver was later held for questioning, the safety authority said. The cause of the crash was still being investigated.

"The driver is going to the police station to ask him about his story. So this is normal procedure for these kind of accidents," said Gorter.

The sculpture was built in a park underneath the raised metro, its name a deliberate play on the fact that it is a "tail track" at the end of the line after De Akkers metro station.

It features two large whale tails poking out of the water, one of which saved the train.

'DON'T THINK HE WOULD HAVE SURVIVED'

The architect who designed it, Maarten Struijs, said he was impressed that it could bear the weight of the train – and that the driver was lucky he did not collide with the other, higher whale tail.

"If this tail was not so strong, not so low, then the driver of the metro train would have jumped 10 metres down and then I don't think he would have survived," Struijs said.

"If he had bumped on the other tail then I think it would have been a different accident."

Struijs said the statue was not designed as a safety feature.

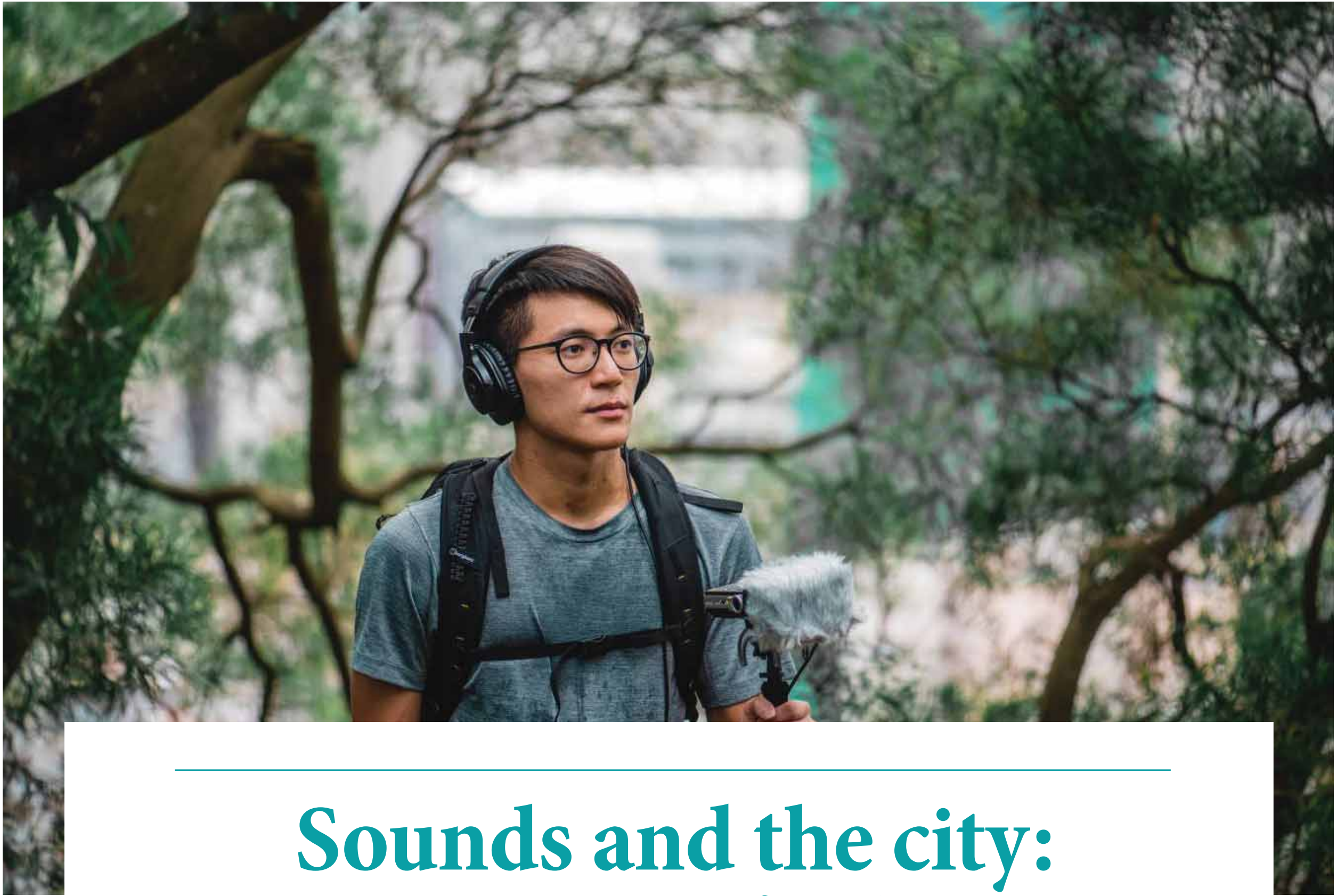
"It was not made to save the metro, because it's more for the neighbourhood and the people wanted to have something for themselves. So we made these two tails of the whale... for them, as a monument."

Stunned local residents turned out in force to see the bizarre sight – so much so that local authorities urged them to stay away and to observe coronavirus social distancing measures.

A team of emergency services and experts, including the architect, was now on site to work out how to safely remove the train.

"The problem is it's water around it, so a crane isn't able to get there," said Gorter.

"How long this will take, we actually don't really know at this moment. I'm not guessing today so maybe it will still be there tomorrow," she added. — **AFP**



Sounds and the city: Artists put Asia's changing urban identity on tape

When composer Ng Chor Guan started commuting by bicycle in car-o-b-s-e-s-s-e-d Malaysia a decade ago, he was struck by how quickly his city was changing and the sounds he would not have heard if he had been driving. It led him to start recording the everyday sounds of Malaysian cities, one of a growing number of artists in Asia from India to Hong Kong who are seeking to preserve audible heritage in the region's fast-changing urban hubs.

"Sound has many powerful hidden messages. It's not only about recording a certain event, but also the evolution of a place," said Ng, 39, who records urban soundscapes from pockets of jungle to communal areas threatened by redevelopment. Today the award-winning composer combines sound preservation with contemporary art, taking his performances to audiences across Asia and Europe.

"I realised some sounds are disappearing or changing," said Ng, citing multicultural Malaysia's 'rojak' pidgin. Blending several local languages and named after a mixed fruit salad, the pidgin can often be heard in places like street markets. "From one city to another, these sounds each have their own identity and uniqueness. I'm hoping more people can hear them and rediscover their cities," he said in the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

Asia-Pacific has one of the world's fastest urbanisation rates, according to the United Nations, with half of its population — or some 2.3 billion people — living in cities for the first time in 2019. As the region becomes more

developed, urban soundscape studies have often focused on noise pollution, while efforts to preserve the identity of cities have concentrated on heritage buildings or through visual works, conservation experts said.

"There are certainly not enough efforts to record 'historic sounds' related to places and activities," said Jeff Cody at the California-based Getty Conservation Institute, which seeks to preserve cultural heritage. "This is very lamentable, not only for nostalgic reasons, but also because often these sounds relate to the social significance of the historic places where they're present," said Cody, an architectural historian whose work focuses on Asia.

William Chapman, a historic preservation professor at the University of Hawaii, said sound conservation gave a peek into how a city once was, noting a recording of 18th century Paris in which the sound of pigs being taken to market could be heard.

VENDORS, TRAMS

In Delhi, the sing-song chants of hawkers who roam neighbourhoods selling everything from vegetables to shoes are a fixture of life in India's capital, but their numbers have dwindled in recent years, said Indian artist Rashmi Kaleka. In 2000, she began to record the calls of the vendors — known locally as the pheriwalla — who are coming under increasing pressure due to the rise of e-commerce and official efforts to regulate where they can trade.

"With coronavirus and lockdowns now, it has just become extremely difficult for them to come back to these middle-class colonies," said Kaleka, who has more than 2,000 clips she



recorded over 15 years before she took a break in 2015. Her sound installations on the vendors have been featured domestically and abroad, and she is considering starting a digital platform to archive her work more systematically. "They are disappearing, they are doing something else, it's not feasible or economical for them to be hawking," said Kaleka, 63.

In Hong Kong, Kan Hei-chun runs an online sound library archiving the

natural soundscape he recorded from forests across the densely packed city which he feared would one day give way to development and skyscrapers.

He also records urban sounds — from an ancient Chinese ritual of beating away the evil spirits with a pair of shoes that still thrives in Hong Kong today, to the city's famous trams which are nicknamed "ding ding" for the sounds they emit.

—Thomson Reuters Foundation