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NATIONALS TILL DECEMBER 15**

The government of the Sultanate of Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, exerted efforts to provide employment for job seekers in the public and private sectors. **>A2**



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HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF SWITZERLAND

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Ignazio Cassis of the Swiss Confederation on his election as his country's new president. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of success to the president in leading his country's people to further progress and prosperity and for the relations between the two countries further development and growth. **-OMA**



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AL BARAKA PALACE

His Majesty chairs Council of Ministers meeting



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Baraka Palace. At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the plentiful riches He has bestowed on Oman and its people. His Majesty the Sultan prayed to the Almighty to perpetuate His bounties on this dear country, its citizens and residents, and to endow all with full health and blessings.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed domestic affairs and affirmed that the accomplishments made in various spheres at the national level was the outcome of collaboration of efforts exerted by all officials and institutions of

the State. In particular, His Majesty the Sultan commended the positive role undertaken by the government to improve the financial position. He lauded the efforts made to curtail the State Budget's deficit and achieve fiscal sustainability, which reflected positively on economic and monetary indices and on Oman's global rating, despite the adverse international circumstances and the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

His Majesty the Sultan explained that the positive results realised at the economic and social levels enabled the government to implement a number of programmes and finalise many initiatives and strategic projects. **>A2**

Royal Decree ratifies State's General Budget for 2022

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has issued a Royal Decree No. 1/2022 on the ratification of the State's General Budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

Article (1) ratifies the State's General Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 according to the tables/schedules attached to this decree.

Article (2) instructs all units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal entities to implement the provisions of this decree, each within the scope of its prerogatives.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the first day of January 2022. **-OMA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Public spending to top OMR12 billion in 2022

1 The Sultanate of Oman's total public spending under the 2022 budget is estimated to be about OMR12.13 billion, an increase of two percent over the estimated budget for 2021. **>A3**

WORLD

COVID restrictions mute New Year celebrations

2 The last day of the year on Friday heralded muted celebrations in some countries due to COVID-related restrictions, while other nations are still pressing ahead with festivities like fireworks and gatherings. **>A6**

MARKET

Vodafone launches service operations

3 Vodafone Oman has announced the launch of its service operations in Oman, under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Azzan Kais Tarik Al Said. "Connecting for a better future is our company's purpose," says company Chief Executive Officer Bader Zidi. **>B1**

ECONOMIC INDICATORS POINT TO POSITIVE YEAR FOR OMAN

A rising gross domestic product and a falling deficit are among pointers to a economic upswing

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has posted positive results across the country's financial, economic, and monetary indices in 2021, reveal the latest figures published by the government.

Under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, several indicators have shown positive growth, including gross domestic product (GDP), a decline in deficit, more control



over public spending, positive feedback from credit agencies, and a large jump in exports.

"Oman witnessed a decrease in the estimated deficit from OMR4.8 billion – the amount before government measures were taken – to reach OMR1.2 billion in 2021, a decrease of 75 percent," said the Ministry of Finance in a statement.

"The government was also

able to control public spending despite the financial challenges that required the following: adopting financial allocations to confront the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, increasing the absorptive capacity in higher education institutions to 31,000 academic seats, and covering the costs of employment and related training programmes associated with employment."

Payments worth OMR418 million in financial arrears for previous years were made, alongside dues of OMR1.2 billion to private sector companies, until the end of 2021. Some OMR200 million has also been allocated towards those affected by the damage of Cyclone Shaheen.

Oman's GDP rose to OMR24.2 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2021. Forecasts pointed to an expected increase to OMR32 billion, with a 13.8 percent growth rate compared to 2020. As a percentage of GDP, the deficit fell from 15.5 percent in 2020 to 3.8 percent in 2021.

"Part of the additional credit was routed to cover the government's contribution towards capital and operational expenses of the oil and gas sectors due to a delay in procedures to establish Energy Development Oman (EDO)," added the Ministry of Finance.

Oman registered a 68 percent decline in the general debt ratio to GDP, as compared to a planned

83 percent ratio. Furthermore, all credit rating agencies have amended Oman's future outlook for this year to "stable" and/or "positive" after successive downgrades, which began in 2014.

As of September 2021, commodity exports rose by 42.2 percent September 2021, compared to the corresponding period in 2020, while commodity imports rose by 54.3 percent during the same time frame.

The Central Bank of Oman's reserves in foreign currency also grew by 31 percent to reach \$18 billion till the end of December 2021, compared to about \$14 billion by the end of December 2020. Total deposits held by the banking sector rose by 5.3 percent to reach OMR25.2 billion by the end of October 2021, while the total credit balance granted by local banks grew by five percent to OMR27.8 billion during this time frame.

(With inputs from Oman News Agency)

LOW PRESSURE

6 dead, over 20 rescued as rains lash parts of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Six people died, and at least 20 more required rescuing by emergency services, due to the heavy rains lashing Muscat and other parts of Oman.

"Six people have died as a result of the effects of low pressure over some of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman," said Captain Munir bin Mohammed Al Sinan of the Royal Oman Police, speaking to Oman TV.

Among the various emergency callouts made to the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) on 31 December and 1 January were those that requested their assistance to rescue two people from their vehicle, which had gotten caught in the fast-flowing rapids of Wadi Surur in Wilayat Samail, Ad Dakhiliyah.

While the CDAA was able to rescue one of the two people, search and rescue parties combed the



area for the second, who was sadly found dead.

Large operation

While two people were each rescued from Al Jifnain and Rusayl in Muscat, possibly the largest operation in terms of people requiring assistance took place in Nakhal, where 15 people required assistance, one of whom needed

extraction when rainwater entered their home.

Similarly, two people were rescued from a wadi near Rustaq, the capital of South Al Batinah. Fortunately, all of those who have been rescued are in good health.

The CDAA has also drawn up a list of recommendations for people to avoid heavy rains and flash flooding. **>A5**

Crystal clear waters and a soft sand beach at Bandar Al Khayran

A4



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MUSCAT**





PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:16pm
Asr.....	3:17pm
Maghrib.....	5:37pm
Isha.....	6:52pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:29am

< FROM A1 His Majesty calls for focus on economic diversification

Upon the approach of the second year of the 10th Five Year Plan, the first leg in Oman Vision 2040, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to all the departments concerned to exert greater efforts and make them harmonious with the implementation of scheduled plans and programmes.

He also urged all to address the challenges that might come in the way and to focus on economic diversification sectors. All should stick to the implementation and follow-up of the programmes to achieve the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and put the national economy on the right track for a healthy growth, His Majesty said.

As part of the Royal attention accorded to social aspects and the execution of development projects, His Majesty the Sultan affirmed that the 10th Five Year Plan comprised a number of development projects that have a social dimension (in different governorates), like schools, internal roads and social residences. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan exhorted the governors to follow up the implementation of planned projects and to coordinate with the departments concerned.

In his review of the progress made in the National Employment Programme, labour recruitment initiatives and the efforts exerted in civil and military sectors, as well as the private sector during 2021, His Majesty the Sultan laid emphasis on according more attention to ensure the continuation of employment of job-seekers, particularly young people, in different sectors.

After reviewing the integration of efforts made across different institutions of the State and the report of the State Audit Institution for 2020, His Majesty the Sultan underlined the need to devise suitable mechanisms to tackle any challenges and advance the public interest.

Referring to the successive surge in infection with Covid-19 mutating variants around the world recently, His Majesty the Sultan urged all individuals of society to adhere to the precautionary measures endorsed by the authorities concerned in a bid to help protect public health and ensure the sustained operation of institutions of the State and establishments of the private sector.

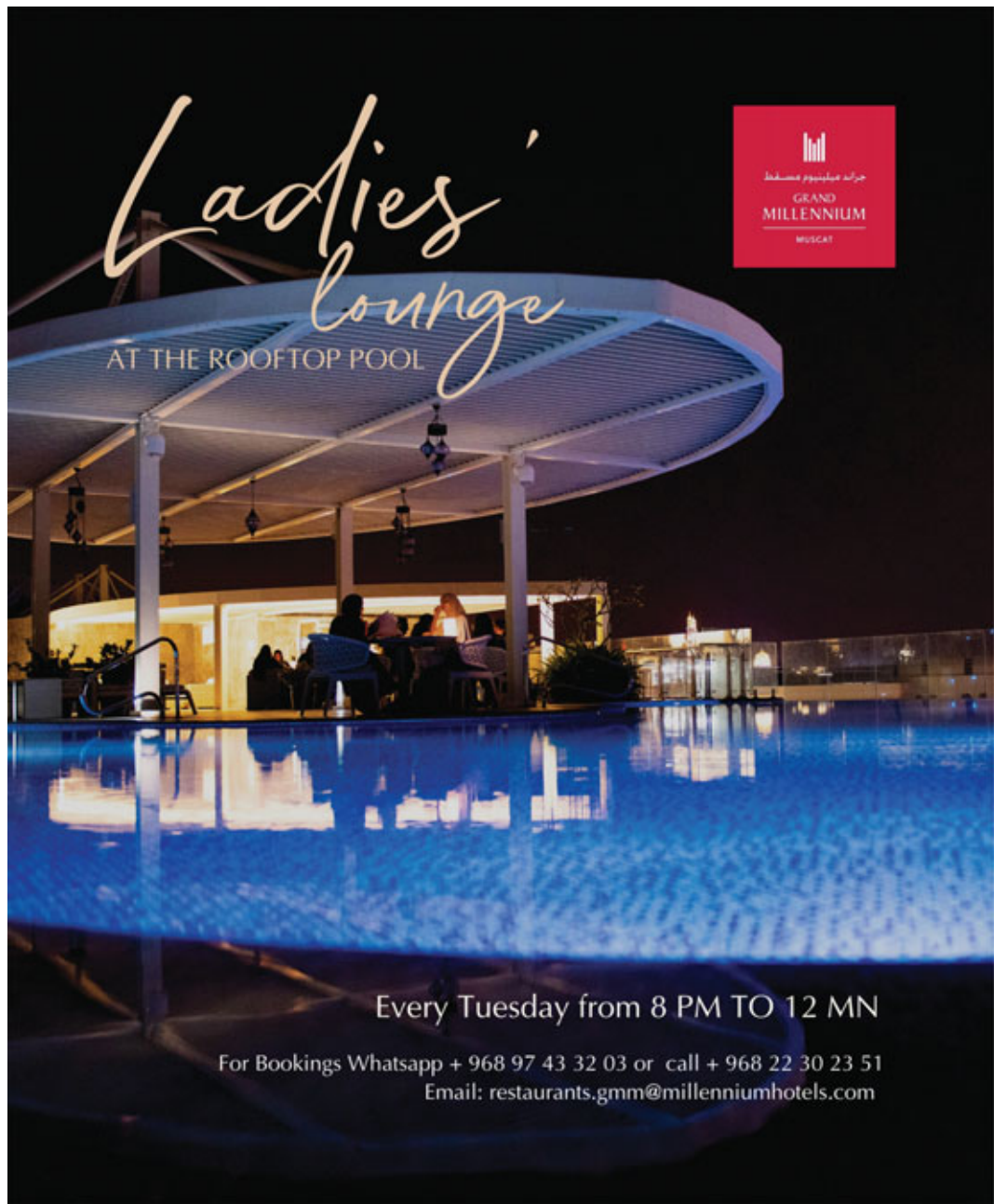
His Majesty the Sultan also spoke about Oman's relations with Arab and friendly countries. He expressed his appreciation for the recent active exchange of visits and the positive outcome of the same. His Majesty underscored Oman's keenness to promote cooperation with all countries of the world and realize interests of all.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave his Royal directives to accord attention to all issues of interest to the nation and the citizens. -ONA



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EMPLOYMENT

HM's policies secure jobs for more than 45,000 Omanis



MUSCAT: The government of the Sultanate of Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, exerted efforts to provide employment for job seekers in the public and private sectors.

Employment was made through the direct announcement of job vacancies, the replacement of non-Omanis, the employment-linked training programme and the on-the-job training programme.

The initiatives provided employment for as many as 40,594 jobseekers until mid-December 2021. Among these, employment procedures for 5,910 are underway.

The government also exerted efforts to secure more than 45,708



private sector workers against being laid off or exposed to mass termination of services or reduction of salaries. The efforts included negotiation with the employers, who were urged to keep the ser-

vices of the employees or transfer them to other sections to benefit from their services there.

As many as 10,305 Omanis benefited from the Job Security System. -ONA



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Total budgeted public spending to cross OMR12 billion in 2022

This includes the cost of servicing public debt, amounting to OMR1.3 billion

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's total public spending under the 2022 budget is estimated to be about OMR12.13 billion, an increase of two percent over the estimated budget for 2021. This includes the cost of servicing public debt, amounting to OMR1.3 billion. The budget also estimates that oil prices will stay at about \$50 a barrel, which will lead to an estimated revenue collection of OMR10.58 billion, a six percent rise in revenue compared to 2021. Oil and gas revenues are to account for OMR7.24 billion (68 percent of incoming revenues), with the remainder coming from non-oil sources of income. Oman plans to finance the estimated budget



REVENUES: Oil and gas revenues are to account for OMR7.24 billion.

deficit (about OMR1.5bn) by drawing about OMR400 million from the reserves, and financing the rest through external and internal borrowing. "Preliminary data indicate that the State's General Budget for 2021 is heading towards achieving the lowest annual deficit since 2014,

despite the fluctuation in oil prices during previous periods, as a result of the efforts made by the government through its commitment to the Medium-term Financial Plan, in terms of revenue and expenditure set out to achieve its main objectives of increasing the confidence of lenders and credit rating

institutions," Sultan bin Salem Al Habsi, the Minister of Finance, told Oman News Agency. "The draft budget for this year has been prepared in line with the objectives and pillars of the Tenth Five-Year Plan from 2021 to 2025," added Al Habsi. "This represents the first efforts within Oman Vision 2040, and is aimed at achieving financial sustainability and stimulating economic diversification." The budget takes into consideration the need to maintain spending levels in basic services such as education, health, housing and social care, which are among the most important considerations when it comes to preparing estimates linked to public spending. Furthermore, it also incorporates the measures required to improve the business environment and expand partnership projects with the private sector. The minister explained: "If oil prices rise above the price approved in the budget, the priority will be to exploit the additional returns to reduce the deficit and repay loan instalments." Oman expects to ramp up oil output this year to more than a mil-

lion barrels a day. The Ministry of Finance explained that the country has a number of economic and social objectives it wishes to achieve this year, including maintaining safe and sustainable levels of public spending, continuing to raise the contribution of non-oil revenues, and giving priority to projects related to productive sectors. Other important objectives include the digital transformation programme, maintaining the levels of spending on basic services, redirecting the support to the required segments of society, and continued efforts to improve the credit rating of the Sultanate. The budget also takes into account the need to support training and rehabilitation, create new job opportunities, and provide assistance to small and medium enterprises in the country. In 2021, the key credit rating agencies issued their assessment reports on Oman's credit rating. Standard & Poor's, in its report issued in October 2021, revised Oman's outlook from stable to positive and affirmed its rating at B+. This positive outlook is attributed to the robust policy responses to economic and health challenges and the steps taken within the framework of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) towards fiscal sustainability. This is in addition to a recovery in oil prices and a decline in the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, which would reduce fiscal deficits and limit the increase in net government debt over the next three years. Standard & Poor's also stated that Oman ratings could be raised over the next year if fiscal measures and stronger economic growth lead to further improved fiscal performance and reduction in net government debt. Moody's changed the outlook on Oman's credit rating to stable from negative and affirmed its rating at Ba3. According to Moody's, the change in outlook reflects the significant easing of government liquidity and external financing pressures, mainly as a result of the ongoing implementation of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan and significantly higher oil prices since the middle of 2020, which will underpin a steady decline in the direct government debt burden to around 60 percent of GDP by 2024. -With inputs from ONA

ADMISSION TO POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

SQU announces opening of applications

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University, represented by the Deanship of Graduate Studies, has announced the opening of applications for admissions to postgraduate programmes. These programmes include postgraduate diplomas, masters and doctoral studies. Applications have been opened for Omani as well as foreign

students for the academic year 2022/2023. Applications will remain open starting from today until the 28th of February. The number of doctoral programmes offered for this year reached 34, while the number of programmes offered for master's degrees was 69, and 4 programmes were in the postgraduate diploma. Among these programs are: The PhD Programme in Islamic

Studies at the College of Education, which is one of the new programmes that will be launched this year. It seeks to root scientific research in the field of Islamic sciences, contribute to the development of society, find successful solutions to legal and intellectual issues that occur, and fill the needs of the university and the Sultanate of Oman with specialised scientific competencies.

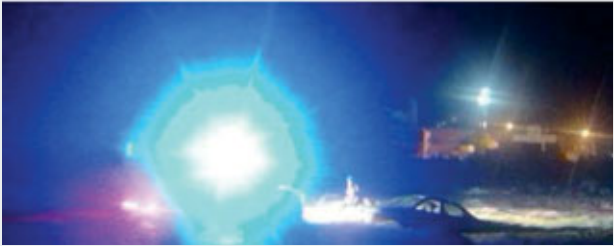
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Oman

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A story on 20 people rescued amid heavy rains

A story on 20 people rescued amid heavy rains in Oman reached 17,717 people and had 1,148 engagements on Facebook.

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730 VIEWS

8 PM





8 PM New Year Special show

The 8 PM New Year Special show had 730 views and 47 likes on Instagram.

📺 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

5,400 VIEWS

لواظف

Vodafone OMN





Midday Update on Vodafone launching

The Midday Update on Vodafone launching services in Oman had 5,400 views and reached 26,400 people on Facebook.



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CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS AND A SOFT SAND BEACH AT BANDAR AL KHAYRAN

Tucked between captivating sandy mountains 21-kilometres up hilly Qantab Road from Muscat, Bandar Al Khayran is an idyllic retreat with crystal clear waters and a soft sand beach that will make you feel a world away.

While you wander through the mountains and backroads of Bandar Al Khayran take caution while hiking as the soil here is quite loose. You can also swim to the adjacent beaches and explore them on foot.

On your way back to town, stop near the mosque at Bandar Al Khayran. Facing the mosque is an old, shipwrecked boat tucked between two beautifully situated mountains — a phenomenal spot to take some memorable photographs.

The place is known to be the best when it comes to snorkelling, so make sure to bring appropriate gear so you can explore Bandar Al Khayran's waters and marine life.

Bandar Khayran Reserve is at a distance of 30-40 minutes by boat from Bandar Al Rowdha Marina, located in the heart of Muscat.

According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "The boat ride is made even more pleasurable with the accompaniment of some dolphins which swim alongside the boats. As a visitor, you'll enjoy seeing the rocky mountains and the white-washed small houses that overlook the majestic sea. You'll also pass Al Bustan Palace Hotel and Barr Al Jissah Spa.

"Coral reefs permeate the Bandar Al Khayran waters, considered home to many diverse organisms and fish. The place is abuzz with divers, especially with the presence of more than 22 diving locations, each with its own charm and beauty."





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Oman trade delegation to review relation during Pakistan visit

The delegation will be headed by Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

MUSCAT: An Omani trade delegation will head on Tuesday for Karachi, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on a five-day visit. The delegation will review enhancement of relations and investment between the private sectors



of the two countries. The delegation will be headed by Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and comprises a number of members of the OCCI Board and Omani businessmen representing the various commercial sectors.

Commercial cooperation Redha bin Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry said: "The visit comes within the programme of OCCI aimed to boost aspects of commercial cooperation and investment and to increase exchange of trade between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan". The visit is aimed at creating commercial partnerships between the companies and establishments of the private sectors in the two countries.

The visit would comprise meetings with a number of officials from the Ministry of Commerce, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the commerce and industry bodies in a number of cities, he said, adding it would also see a number of meetings between members of the Sultanate's delegation and their Pakistani counterparts to discuss cooperation in the field of commerce and trade and investment between the two countries.

Industrial areas The programme would include visits to a number of industrial areas and factories of the Pakistani companies operating in the field of medicines and food items besides trip to a number of projects and tourism sites in the major cities, he said.

—ONA

WEATHER

FROM A1 Stay away from low-lying areas during rains

"Do not venture into flooded wadis, stay away from flowing wadis and low-lying areas, and avoid getting close to their sides," said the authority in their advisory. "Watch your children and do not allow them to get near any water bodies. "Switch off any unnecessary electrical switches and stay away from streetlights," they advised. "Look out for any hanging wires.

Avoid leaving your home if you suffer from respiratory conditions such as asthma." People are also advised to monitor the latest weather forecasts from official sources. The ongoing low-pressure event is expected to last until 5 January, and is likely to affect Musandam, North and South Al Batinah, Muscat, Buraimi, Dhahirah, Dakhiliyah, and North and South Al Sharqiyah.

During this period, people living in these areas can expect rain occasionally intensifying into thundershowers, as well as flash floods, said the National Multi Hazard Early Warning Centre at the Civil Aviation Authority. "The weather will be partly cloudy with chances of isolated rain over the rest of Oman's governorates," added the CAA. "A moderate sea condition is expected

along most of the Sultanate's coasts, with waves up to heights of two meters, although the sea can turn rough during thunderstorms, with waves rising to a maximum height of three metres." People are advised to take all the necessary precautions before venturing outside their homes during adverse weather, particularly those who are in areas near wadis and the sea.

NCSI

Sultanate's crude output increases



MUSCAT: The Sultanate's oil production increased by end of November 2021 by 1.4 per cent to reach 323,174,600 barrels compared to 318, 24,000 barrels during the same period in 2020. The production of crude oil amounted to 249,765,900 barrels compared to 256,450,400 barrels during the same period in 2020 a decrease of 2.6 per cent, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The average daily production of oil increased during the same period by 1.7 per cent to reach 967.6 thousand compared to 951.1 thousand barrels during the corresponding period in 2020, while the average price per barrel increased by 35 per cent from \$46.5 per barrel to \$62.7 per barrel. The statistics also showed a decrease in the total oil exports by 0.5 per cent up to end of November 2021 against the same period in 2020. —ONA

VACANCY

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Customers are hereby informed that all such sets must be collected within one month from the date of this Announcement on submission of the Official Repair Slip.

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ONLINE AUCTION SALE OF USED ITEMS

The U.S. Embassy Muscat is auctioning used household and office furniture, furnishings, appliances, computers and IT equipment by online auction.

Interested bidders may view the auction items online starting on December 28, 2021 by going to <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>. Bidding will open December 30 at 09:00. Bidders must first register on the site before placing a bid.

All items offered for sale will be sold "as is, where is," which means that there is no warranty, either expressed or implied. Bidding closes on January 3, 2022 at 14:00.

Successful bidders will be notified on January 4, 2022. At that point, they must make full payment of all lots won. Payment instructions are listed in the "How to pay for your items" section in the "How it works" link on the auction page. Full and complete payments must be received in the U.S. Embassy bank account no later than January 8.

Successful bidders with fully paid lots may collect their goods on January 15 at the Ghala warehouse.



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27-MEMBER BLOC

EU gives Irish language an upgrade

Brussels: The Irish language on Saturday received a New Year boost from the European Union (EU) when its upgrade to a working language of the 27-member bloc took effect. The move, which comes nearly 49 years after Ireland first joined the EEC, the predecessor of the EU, means all documents produced by the EU will also be translated into Irish. When

Ireland first joined, Irish was listed as a treaty language, meaning that only EU treaties had to be translated into Irish. However, any EU resident had the right to correspond with EU institutions in Irish. The EU granted Irish working language status in 2007 but a shortage of translation staff and technological resources meant the status was derogated and only

a limited number of documents were translated until now, according to a press release from the Irish government. Irish President Michael D Higgins said the EU's upgrade of Irish was recognition of "our specific identity as a people with a distinctive language of our own that we use alongside all the other languages we use and respect." Irish Minister of State

for Europe Thomas Byrne said the change of status gave hope for a potential renaissance of the Irish language. It was "fitting that it is happening this year, a year when we will also mark the 50 year anniversary since Ireland signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Communities," Byrne was cited by media as saying.

-dw



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COVID-related tighter restrictions mute New Year’s Eve celebrations

A year that began with a race to get vaccinated has ended with reluctant Europeans taking to the streets to vent their anger over a possible mandate to get jabbed, while dozens of countries are still short of doses



SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE: Unlike last year, Sydney planned to put on a public fireworks display against the backdrop of the famous Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge. The spectacle can be admired from 30 vantage points. Admission to these, however, is only permitted for ticket holders. Organisers are urging people to get fully vaccinated. -dw

NEW YORK: The last day of the year on Friday heralded muted celebrations in some countries due to COVID-related restrictions, while other nations are still pressing ahead with festivities such as fireworks and gatherings. A year that began with a race to get vaccinated has ended with reluctant Europeans taking to the streets to vent their anger over a possible mandate to get jabbed, while dozens of countries are still short of doses. In some parts of the world, the festivities are going ahead as normal, whereas others have added restrictions, such as a ban on large gatherings and no fireworks, and

some countries have even introduced curfews aimed at preventing large gatherings at midnight. Thousands of flights were canceled worldwide on Friday, with airlines blaming the disruption on crew shortages amid the coronavirus pandemic. Here's a roundup of how the world is marking New Year's Eve

Americas New York City has heralded in 2022 as it revived the city's annual event in Times Square,

even as public health officials cautioned Friday against unbridled celebrations amid a surge in COVID infections. The annual ball drop took place as the clock struck midnight. The occasion, usually commemorated with joyous embraces and the uncorking of champagne bottles, was marked with confetti and a limited crowd. The US' most populous city this year restricted the number of people into Times Square to witness the 6-ton ball encrusted with crystals descend from overhead to just

15,000 people. The number of spectators is far fewer than the many tens of thousands of revelers who usually congregate on the world-famous square for the occasion. New York City's incoming mayor, Eric Adams, took his oath in Times Square soon after the ball drop. "It's just great when New York shows the entire country how we come back," he said. "We showed the entire globe what we're made of. We're unbelievable. This is an unbelievable city and, trust me, we're ready for a major comeback

because this is New York." New York City reported a record number of new, confirmed cases, almost 44,000, on Wednesday and a similar number Thursday, according to New York state figures. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Copacabana beach welcomed a small crowd of a few thousand for 16 minutes of fireworks. This year saw no live concerts like in previous editions. Copacabana's New Year's celebrations usually draws more than two million party goers.

Oceania The continent of Oceania was the first to usher in the new year. At 11 a.m. GMT (1200 CET), the Pacific island nations of Tonga and Samoa, along with New Zealand, entered into 2022. The Australian city of Sydney, the customary fireworks display at the Harbor Bridge and Opera House went ahead as planned two hours later. Despite a surge in coronavirus cases, queues began forming at vantage points around the harbor early Friday in the morning for spectators to get a good view. Vaccination and the use of masks will not be mandatory to attend, organizers said.

Asia Beijing, Hong Kong, Jakarta and Bangkok have all welcomed in the new year 2022. President of China Xi Jinping in a New Year's address called on his nation to maintain a "strategic focus" and be mindful of "potential risks" to the Communist Party's long-term goal of transforming China into a global superpower. Xi also said China had achieved an important step on the way in building a "moderately prosperous" society.

Europe In Madrid's Puerta del Sol about 7,000 people, half the usual capacity, welcomed the new year by eating grapes, one for each time the clock chimed up to 12. In western Germany, a 37-year-old man was killed and a 39-year-old man was seriously injured in a fireworks accident during New Year's celebrations in the Hchel district of Hennef. -dw

OCHA REPORT

Myanmar people to face ‘unprecedented’ crisis in 2022: UN

NEW YORK: The impressive gains made since 2005, according to a UN Humanitarian Needs Overview published on Friday by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This comes as people in the Southeast Asia country are facing an unprecedented political, socioeconomic, human rights and humanitarian crisis with needs escalating dramatically since the military takeover and a severe COVID-19 third wave, UN News reported. The situation has been worsening since the beginning of 2021, when the military took over the country, ousting the democratically elected Government. Nearly 14 out of 15 states and regions are now estimated to be within the critical threshold for acute malnutrition. For this year, the analysis projects that 14.4 million people will need aid in some form, approximately a quarter of the population. The number includes 6.9 million men, 7.5 million women, and five million children. Price hikes, COVID-19 movement restrictions, and ongoing insecurity have forced the most vulnerable people to emergency strategies to buy food and other basic supplies, according to UN News. Prices for key household commodities have risen significantly, making some food items unaffordable. At the same time, farming incomes have been affected by lower prices for some crops, higher input prices, and limited access to credit. Monsoon floods in July and Au-



gust have also affected more than 120,000 people, resulting in crop losses and contributing to food insecurity. For 2022, the humanitarian affairs office OCHA, says the outlook "remains dire". The political and security situation is "expected to remain volatile" and the fourth wave of COVID-19, due to relatively low vaccination rates and the emergence of new variants, is considered a rising risk. According to the reports coming out of the country, prices are only expected to decrease marginally, while farm gate prices will likely remain low. As a result, consumer prices are projected to be higher, with incomes continuing to decrease. The unrelenting stress on communities is having an undeniable impact on the physical and mental health of the nation, particularly the psychological well-being of children and young people, according to OCHA.

-dw

A WEEK OF MOURNING

South Africa lays Archbishop Desmond Tutu to rest at Cape Town’s St. George’s Cathedral

CAPE TOWN: South African anti-apartheid hero Archbishop Desmond Tutu was laid to rest on Saturday at a state funeral in Cape Town's St. George's Cathedral, where he will also be buried. The funeral started with a hymn and a procession of clerics down the aisle burning incense and carrying candles inside the church where, for years, Tutu used the pulpit to fight against the country's white minority regime. South Africa has been marking a week of mourning following Tutu's death on December 26. He was aged 90. "When we were in the dark, he brought light," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the head of the worldwide Anglican church, said in a video message shown at the funeral mass. "For me to praise him is like a mouse giving tribute to an elephant," Welby said. "South Africa has given us extraordinary examples of towering leaders of the rainbow nation with President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu.... Many Nobel winners' lights have grown dimmer over time, but Archbishop Tutu's has grown brighter." Tutu died peacefully at the Oasis Frail Care Center in Cape Town, his trust said. He had been hospitalized several times since 2015 after being diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1997.

Tutu requests ‘no lavish spending’ Several thousand people on Saturday, some of whom had travelled across the country, filed past the rope-handled casket made of pine, adorned by a bunch of carnations. Renowned for his modesty, the



FUNERAL CEREMONY: The funeral started with a hymn and a procession of clerics down the aisle burning incense and carrying candles inside the church where, for years, Tutu used the pulpit to fight against the country's white minority regime. -dw

archbishop requested "no lavish spending" on his funeral and he even "asked that the coffin be the cheapest available," his foundation said. President Cyril Ramaphosa, who will deliver the eulogy, organized a special category funeral, usually arranged for presidents and very important people. Ramaphosa is also expected to hand South Africa's multicolored flag to Tutu's widow, Leah, as a symbol of her husband's description of the post-apartheid country as the "Rainbow Nation."

Anti-apartheid hero Tutu's death represents a huge

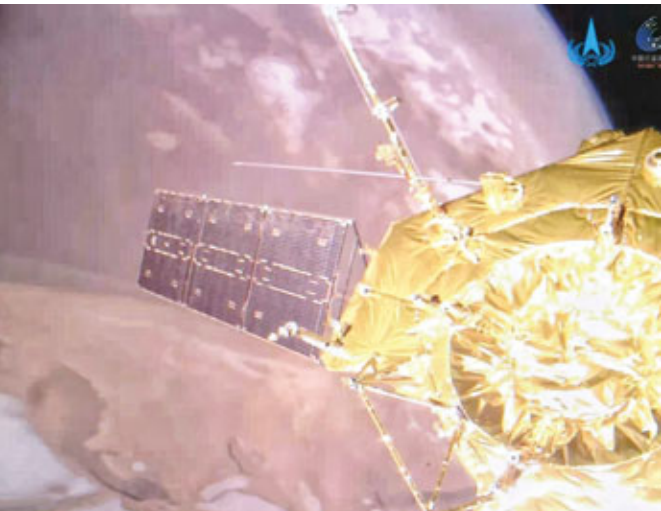
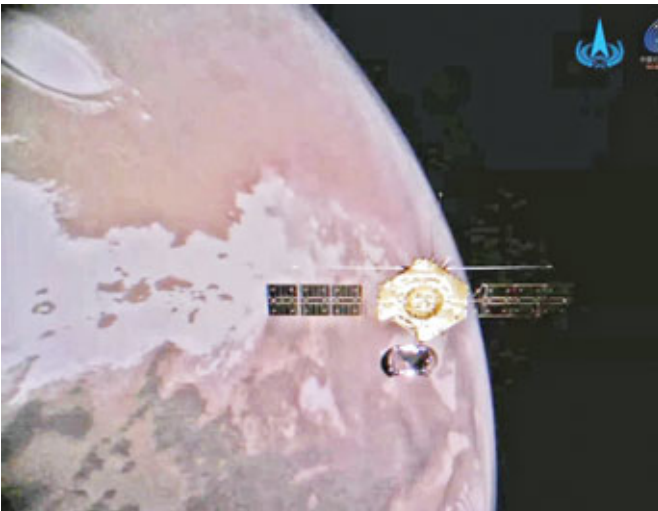
loss for South Africa, where many called him "Tata," meaning father. Born on October 7, 1931, in Klerksdorp, west of Johannesburg, Tutu became a teacher before entering St. Peter's Theological College in Rosettenville in 1958. He was ordained in 1961. In 1985, Tutu became the first Black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg. A year later, he was named the first Black archbishop of Cape Town. Throughout the 1980s, when South Africa was marred by apartheid violence, Tutu was one of the most prominent Black leaders to speak out against abuses

committed by the white regime. He was a powerful force for nonviolence in the country's anti-apartheid movement, earning him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. Tutu also campaigned internationally for human rights, particularly LGBTQ rights and same-sex marriage. "I would not worship a God who is homophobic," he said in 2013, launching a campaign for LGBTQ rights in Cape Town. "I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say, 'Sorry, I would much rather go to the other place.'"

-dw

CHINA RELEASES NEW MARS IMAGES ON NEW YEAR’S DAY

China released on the first day of 2022 a group of new Mars images taken by the Tianwen-1 probe. These new images showed diverse working conditions of the probe's orbiter and rover, as well as the Mars surface topography obtained by them, said the China National Space Administration. The images include the group photo of the orbiter and Mars, closeup of the orbiter, ice sheet on Mars' north pole area, surface landscape taken by the rover Zhurong. China's Tianwen-1 mission, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, was launched on July 23, 2020. -Xinhua



5 threats to the global economy

While the pandemic remains a big risk to global growth, it's not the only threat that is likely to keep investors on their toes in 2022

NEW YORK: The global economy recovered strongly in 2021 from its pandemic lows, only to lose some of its steam in the second half thanks to fresh pandemic outbreaks, supply chain bottlenecks, labor shortages and a slow rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, especially in low-income developing countries.

The slowing recovery prompted economists at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the 38-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to slightly trim their global growth forecasts for the year in October and December respectively. They, however, maintained their outlook for 2022 but warned that COVID variants could derail growth. They stressed the need to swiftly vaccinate a vast majority of the global population.

While the pandemic remains a big risk to global growth, it's not the only threat that is likely to keep investors on their toes in 2022.

Vaccine-resistant COVID variants

In November, financial markets woke up to a scare: A new coronavirus variant, omicron, had been reported in southern Africa. The highly transmissible coronavirus variant sent global financial and commodity markets crashing.

Over the next week, global markets kept seesawing as investors struggled to judge the economic



SHIPPING SNARLS: Shipping snarls along with a shortage of shipping containers, and a steep rebound in demand once pandemic-related restrictions were eased, have left producers scrambling for components and raw materials. -dw

implications of the new variant. Governments have been tightening up restrictions to keep the variant at bay, threatening the economic recovery.

Initial evidence, though little, and expert commentaries suggested omicron, while more transmissible than the delta variant, wouldn't be as deadly as its predecessor and wouldn't evade the immunity produced by existing vaccines or treatments. As scientists continue to analyze the data, JP Morgan strategists have said if omicron is found to be "less deadly" then it might eventually end up accelerating the end of the pandemic.

It's possible that omicron might not be the curveball to throw the economic recovery off track, but a future variant could potentially be one such risk. Experts have been warning that if the pandemic is allowed to rage then we could see the emergence of vaccine-resistant COVID variants, which could mark a return of lockdowns.

"If COVID-19 were to have a prolonged impact — into the medium term — it could reduce global GDP by a cumulative \$5.3 trillion (€4.6 trillion) over the next five years relative to our current pro-

jection," IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath said in October.

Gopinath said the top policy priority should be to ensure that 40% of the population in every country is fully vaccinated by this year and 70% by mid-2022. So far, less than 5% of the population in low-income countries has been fully vaccinated.

Supply chain bottlenecks

Supply chain disruptions have played a key role in stalling global recovery this year. Shipping snarls along with a shortage of shipping containers, and a steep rebound in demand once pandemic-related restrictions were eased, have left producers scrambling for components and raw materials.

The auto sector has been among the worst-hit, with production tumbling in the eurozone, including in Germany, in recent months. Carmakers have cut production as intermediate equipment, especially semiconductors, remain in short supply. While there are signs that supply shortages are easing with a drop in shipping costs and a rise in chip exports, experts expect the supply bottlenecks to continue weighing on growth well into next year.

"We expect that the situation

will not ease in 2022 — and not before new relevant ocean transportation capacities are deployed in 2023 or supply chains are adapted to nearshoring," Frank Sobotka, managing director at transport and logistics firm DSV Air & Sea Germany, told DW, referring to the practice of transferring a business operation back to a nearby country.

Soaring inflation

The raw material and input shortages, along with higher energy prices, have pushed inflation in the eurozone and the United States to multiyear highs. This has spooked global investors who fear that central banks would be forced to prematurely raise interest rates to tame soaring prices.

The European Central Bank has maintained that prices have been pushed up by temporary factors such as supply shortages, higher energy prices and base effects. It expects inflation to cool once the effects of global demand-supply imbalances subside.

With supply chain disruptions proving to be more persistent than earlier thought, inflation is expected to continue running hot for most of 2022, keeping European central bankers in a tight spot.

In the US, inflation concerns are expected to be even greater, propped up by rapid economic recovery, a massive fiscal stimulus and labor and supply shortages. The Federal Reserve has said it would be tapering its bond-buying stimulus plan more quickly and has signaled interest rate hikes in 2022. A Fed rate hike could spell trouble for some emerging economies, including South Africa, Argentina and Turkey, which could see a flight of capital.

China crackdown

A slowdown in China, the world's second-largest economy, would certainly add to investor worries in 2022. The Asian economic powerhouse helped the world emerge out of the pandemic-induced recession in 2020 riding on global demand for its electronic and medical goods. It was the only major economy to grow in 2020 and is expected to expand by around 8% this year, making it the fastest-growing major economy after India.

However, the post-pandemic recovery is being stymied by Beijing's crackdown on its tech titans, including Alibaba and Tencent, highly indebted real estate firms such as Evergrande and Kaisa, and

the private education industry. Top Chinese officials have sought to calm nerves by saying that stabilizing the economy would be their top priority for next year, prompting expectations of a fiscal stimulus in early 2022.

Beijing's reluctance to drop its "zero-COVID" stance, which has kept the country isolated for more than a year and has led to draconian restrictions following the emergence of even a single COVID case, would remain a big risk for the global economy.

Geopolitical tensions

Even as temperatures drop in the Northern Hemisphere, they have been rising as far as relations between Russia and the US and European allies are concerned. Washington has warned Moscow against invading Ukraine amid a massive Russian troop buildup on the Ukrainian border.

The US and European allies are weighing more economic sanctions against Russia, including stopping the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, should it invade its neighbor.

"US-Russia tensions are a huge risk that could increasingly have the Eastern NATO allies on the cusp of war," Edward Moya, senior market analyst at OANDA trading group, told DW. "If the US and Europe halt the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, that could lead to a global energy crisis that sends oil costs towards \$100 a barrel... Surging energy prices could be the straw that forces central bankers globally to accelerate tightening monetary policy."

US-China relations have also been tense over Taiwan, with Washington warning Beijing against unilaterally changing the status quo over the island territory.

Washington has further irked Beijing with its announcement that US officials will boycott the Beijing Winter Olympics in February over China's human rights "atrocities." China has threatened that the US would "pay a price" for its decision. -dw

CASUALTIES

12 people killed, 13 injured in stampede at a shrine in India

KATRA (Jammu and Kashmir): As many as 12 people were killed and 13 others injured after a stampede occurred at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine on Saturday morning, Jammu and Kashmir's Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh said.

"12 dead, 13 injured in the stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan in Katra. The incident occurred around 2:45 am, and as per initial reports, an argument broke out which resulted in people pushing each other, followed by the stampede," Singh said to ANI.

Earlier on Saturday, it was reported that 12 people have died in the stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra on Saturday morning.

The injured have been taken to Naraina Hospital after the rescue.

Speaking to ANI, Block Medical Officer of Community Health Centre, Gopal Dutt said, "12 people have died in the stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra. Casualties are from Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and one from



TRAGEDY: The incident occurred around 2:45 am after an argument broke out among groups.

Jammu and Kashmir. More details are awaited. Injured are being taken to Naraina Hospital after rescue."

A stampede occurred at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan here on Saturday morning.

An official from the police con-

trol room in Reasi town said in a brief communication that a stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan has occurred. -ANI

TESTING COVID POSITIVE

‘Wheels started turning in my brain’

WASHINGTON: A US school teacher voluntarily quarantined herself inside the airplane bathroom for a few hours after testing positive for COVID-19.

On her way to Chicago from Iceland on December 20, Michigan school teacher Marisa Fotieo who felt her throat hurting decided to test herself using rapid test kits "and within what felt like two seconds" discovered she was COVID-19 positive.

"I just took my rapid test and I brought it into the bathroom, and within what felt like two seconds there were two lines [indicating a positive test]," Fotieo told NBC News. "There's 150 people on the flight, and my biggest fear was giving it to them," she said.

Fotieo even shared a video on TikTok, from inside the plane bathroom, saying: "POV you test positive for Covid while over the Atlantic Ocean."

In a separate interview with CNN, Fotieo said she took two PCR tests and about five rapid tests, which came back negative.

However, about an hour into the flight, Fotieo started to feel a sore throat.

"The wheels started turning in my brain and I thought, 'OK, I'm going to just go take a test.' It was going to make me feel better," Fotieo told CNN. "Immediately, it came back positive."

While she was in the tiny cubicle of airplane bathroom, Fotieo was taken care of by the flight crew. "Of course, it's a stress factor when something like this comes up, but that's part of our job," said Ragnhildur Eiríksdóttir, the flight attendant Fotieo ran into, helped calm her down.

Fotieo, who is fully vaccinated, tests consistently since she works with an unvaccinated population.

Policies vary among airlines as to how to handle a Covid-positive passenger, according to CNN.

This comes just weeks after the US and other countries have made travel restrictions amid the spread of the Omicron variant of coronavirus.

-ANI

ROUND-UP

Khushi powers Ruwi, Sachin lifts Darsait on rainy day

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman star Mohammed Naseem Khushi's 13-ball 41 not out and pacer Kaleemullah's superb 3 for 22 powered Ruwi Rangers to a 16-run victory against Amerat Royals decided by Duckworth/ Lewis system in a rain-hit D20 Cricket League game at Oman Cricket Turf 1 in Amerat on Friday.

The highlight of Ruwi's 177 for 7 was Khushi's incredible hitting at number seven, smashing 5 sixes and 2 fours to lift the team's total. Khalid Kail and Gustav Burger were the other notable scorers, contributing 40 each.

Pick of Amerat bowlers

Bilal Khan was the pick of Amerat bowlers, taking 3 for 25 whereas Mehran Khan and Rafi Ullah

bagged two wickets each. Amerat's chase was hit by rain and the side was found to be 16 runs short of the required total in 7 overs when the game was stopped at 54 for 4. Kaleemullah's three early blows kept Amerat in check, turning the game in Ruwi's favour before it started pouring.

Brief Scores (D20): Ruwi Rangers 177 for 8 in 20 overs (Mohammed Naseem Khushi 41 - 2x4, 5x6, Khalid Kail 40 - 4x4, 2x6, Gustav Burger 40 - 4x4, 1x6, Bilal Khan 3-25, Mehran Khan 2-28, Rafi Ullah 2-41) beat Amerat Royals 54 for 4 in 7 overs (Vinayak Shukla 15 - 2x6, Kaleemullah 3-22) by 16 runs (D/L).

Ravinda helps Darsait to victory

In the day's first D20 League game

at the same venue, Sachin's Kumar's excellent all-round show and Ravinda K'ratne's brilliant 61 not out off 38 helped Darsait Titans to a comfortable 6-wicket win over Ghubrah Giants.

An unbeaten 53

Mohammed Imran Latif top-scored with an unbeaten 53 off 36 as Ghubrah posted 130 for 5 on the board. Shehbaz Naser batted well too, scoring 39 off 31. Sachin was quite impressive with the ball, taking 3 for 16.

Darsait surpassed the total comfortably, scoring 133 for 4 in 14.2 overs thanks to top knocks by Ravinda and Sachin (26 off 20).

Brief Scores (D20): Ghubra Giants 130 for 5 in 16 overs (Mohammed Imran 53 - 1x4, 5x6, Shehbaz Naser 39 - 2x4, 3x6, Sachin Ku-

mar 3-16) lost to Darsait Titans 133 for 4 in 14.2 overs (Ravindra K'ratne 61 - 10x4, 1x6, Sachin Kumar 26 - 3x4, 1x6) by 6 wickets.

Results of matches played

Brief Scores (D20): Darsait Titans 145 for 6 in 20 overs (Ravindra K'ratne 48 - 2x4, 3x6, Khurram Khan 47 - 4x4, 3x6, Ganesh Chandrashekhar 2-31) beat Qurum Thunders 88 all out in 15.1 overs (Shoaib Khan 61 - 6x4, 3x6. Ahmed Fayyaz Butt 3-14, Amanpreet Singh 3-14) by 57 runs.

Brief Scores (D20): Azaiba XI 68 all out in 19.1 overs (Hammad Mirza 34 - 2x4, Adnan Ul Haq 2-18, Hemalkumar Tandel 2-20) lost to Amerat Royals 68 for 1 in 5.2 overs (Prathik Athavale 26 - 4x4, 1x6, Rafi Ullah 19 not out - 3x6) by 9 wickets (D/L).



Conway's century helps Kiwis get decent score

At stumps on Day 1, New Zealand's score 258/5 read with Henry Nicholls (32*) currently unbeaten at the crease. Conway's century and Will Young's half-century provided momentum to the Kiwis

MOUNT MAUNGANUI : Devon Conway had an impressive day with the bat as New Zealand ended with a respectable score on Day 1 of the ongoing first Test against Bangladesh here at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on Saturday.

At stumps on Day 1, New Zealand's score 258/5 read with Henry Nicholls (32*) currently unbeaten at the crease. Conway's century and Will Young's half-century provided momentum to the Kiwis. Put to bat first, Bangladesh started off well as Shoriful Islam dismissed Tom Latham in just 4 overs, leaving the Kiwis'



FLUENT INNINGS: Bangladesh started off well as Shoriful Islam dismissed Tom Latham in just 4 overs, leaving the Kiwis' total at 1/1. Later, Conway joined Young and the duo played a fluent partnership of 138 runs. - ANI

total at 1/1. Later, Conway joined Young and the duo played a fluent partnership of 138 runs.

Young was sent back to the dug-out after getting run out by Linton Das on 52. Ross Taylor and Con-

way kept on scoring from each end to keep the scoreboard moving.

Shoriful Islam struck again and dismissed Taylor, with New Zealand's total at 189/3. Mominul Haque later sent Conway

back on 122.

Tom Blundell and Nicholls tried to hold the innings for some time and brought their side a decent total of 258/5. But on the cusp of Stumps, Kiwis' lost another wick-

et as Blundell was bowled out by Ebadot Hossain.

Brief Score: New Zealand 258/5 (Devon Conway 122, Will Young 52; Shoriful Islam 2/20) vs Bangladesh. - ANI

SELECTION COMMITTEE

We are grooming KL Rahul for captaincy, says India Chief Selector Chetan Sharma

MUMBAI: Chetan Sharma, Chairman, All India Senior-Selection Committee on Friday revealed that selectors are grooming KL Rahul for the role of captaincy.

KL Rahul who has been fulfilling the vice-captaincy duties in the ongoing three-match Test series against South Africa on Friday was handed the role of skipper for the ODI series. Rohit Sharma would have been the captain, but he was deemed unfit by the selectors and hence Rahul would act as a captain while Jasprit Bumrah will be deputy of the opener in the three-match ODI series. About grooming KL Rahul for the future, Chetan Sharma in the press conference said: "Yes, definitely we are looking at KL Rahul at the present. He is a three format player and he got a good experience of captaincy and he has proved his leadership qualities, this is what all selectors think." Captaincy comes with a lot of responsibility and the Karnataka lad is used to it as he has already captained the Punjab Kings team in the Indian Premier League. "Like Rohit is not fit and we thought KL will be the best who can handle the side and that's why we have good confidence in Rahul and we are grooming him," Sharma added.

India's tour of South Africa,

2021-22, consists of two series: the Test and One-Day International series, taking place from December 26 to January 23, 2022, across four venues. Visitors currently have a lead of 1-0 in the Test series, after the historic triumph at Centurion. The three-match ODI series will begin on January 19 at Boland Park, Paarl. The second ODI match will happen on Jan 21 at the same venue and the third ODI will be at Newlands, Cape Town on January 23.

Opening batter Rohit Sharma on December 8 was named India's new ODI skipper and the star player was set to take over from Kohli starting with the South Africa series. But as he is currently nursing his injury, the full-time ODI captaincy debut will have to wait for the 34-year-old.

Mohammed Shami has been rested while Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja are injured.

INDIA'S ODI SQUAD: KL Rahul (Capt), Shikhar Dhawan, Ruturaj Gaekwad, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Venkatesh Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Y Chahal, R Ashwin, W Sundar, J Bumrah (VC), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Prasad Krishna, Shardul Thakur, and Mohd. Siraj.

SA vs India: KL Rahul to captain visitors in ODI series as Rohit deemed unfit

MUMBAI: KL Rahul will don the captaincy hat for India in the upcoming three-match ODI series against South Africa, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced on Friday.

Rohit Sharma would have been the skipper, but a hamstring injury ruled him out of the series and hence Rahul would act as stand-in skipper while Jasprit Bumrah will be the opener's deputy. Mohammed Shami has been rested while Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja are injured.

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6 MEN & 8 WOMEN'S TEAMS



Volleyball tournament organised

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Men's and women's volleyball Tournament was held on 31 December, between 9am and 5pm at Injaz Private School Ansab with the participation of six men and eight women's teams.

In the men's final match played between Samah Barka vs Roman Team, Samah Barka won the match in two sets 20-18 and 20-15.

Women's tournament

In the women's tournament, the final match was played between Muscat Blazers and Slashers in which Blazers won the match 20-17, 20-18, and 15-13.

The tournament was organised by Khalil Balushi and Khalid Balushi with the participation of 14 teams. The men's teams were Roman Team, Bahla Team, Samay Barka Team, Perlas Spikers, Muscat Attackers, Muscat Spikers while the women's teams were Muscat Blazers, Slashers, Wild Angels, Muscat Strikers, Philippine Spikers, All Stars, Foxhard, Elite Fighters.

ICC MEN'S CRICKETER

Afridi, Rizwan, Root, Williamson nominated

DUBAI : Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Rizwan along with England Test skipper Joe Root and New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson has been nominated for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year award, the International Cricket Council announced on Friday. Match-winning knocks, sizzling spells, superhuman efforts and impeccable leadership - the four nominees for the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for the ICC Player of the Year had a year to remember in 2021. England's Test skipper has enjoyed a year that will go down in the pages of the history books.

Firmly establishing himself as the spine of England's batting in Test cricket, he has often been the lone man standing for their cause. His year began with a marathon knock in 228 against Sri Lanka in Galle and he has only gone from strength to strength.

In 2021, he scored 1855 runs in 18 international matches at an average of 58.37 with 6 centuries. Shaheen Afridi of Pakistan scalped 78 wickets in 36 internationals at an average of 22.20 with the best bowling figures of 6/51. The pacer was on fire throughout 2021, knocking some of the best batters over across all three formats of the game. He especially had a year to remember in Tests and T20Is, reaching his absolute peak during the T20 World Cup in UAE where he impressed one and all with his sheer speed and skills. - ANI

SAMA TO LAUNCH REPO

The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) announced that it will conduct repo, reverse repo and Open Market Operations (OMO) with locally operating banks using Bloomberg's Auction System from January 2022.

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



OIL PRICES TO GAIN

Oil prices fell on Friday but were set to post their biggest annual gains since at least 2016, spurred by the global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic slump and producer restraint, even as infections reached record highs worldwide.

Vodafone launches digital service operations in Oman

Our main objective is to advance digital progress, initially by bringing next-generation 5G network and cloud service and then subsequently going into ecosystems that reach far beyond telecommunication, says Bader Zidi, CEO of Vodafone in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Vodafone Oman announced the launch of its service operations in the Sultanate of Oman, under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Azzan Kais Tarik Al Said.

"Connecting for a better future is our company's purpose. We set out to be the pioneers of digital innovation and sustainable growth



in our community," says Bader Zidi, CEO of Vodafone in Oman.

He continued to say, "Our main objective is to advance digital progress, initially by bringing next-generation 5G network and cloud service and then subsequently going into ecosystems that reach far beyond telecommunication. Vodafone is positioned as Oman's premier technology company, digitalising lifestyles and society."

Vodafone brings the best of the world to Oman in a relevant and uniquely Omani way. Even before

the launch, the meaningful in-country value was delivered through employment (95 per cent Omanisation) and an amazing local partnership ecosystem across key sectors. The company's focus is on giving opportunities to small and medium enterprises and the country's youth.

Diego Massidda, CEO of Vodafone Partner Markets and Vodafone Carrier Services, said, "We are delighted to welcome Oman to our global Partner Market family. Consumers will now benefit

from unmatched global Vodafone services such as roaming, international calling and next-generation digital applications."

Vodafone's brand positioning, under the slogan, "Together We Can", emphasises how people, connectivity and technology can address the challenges faced individually and as a society. It demonstrates the company's profound belief that the partnership between technology and society can build a better future.

"With our launch, we are redefining

the way people experience communication by eliminating customer service pain points in the industry. Big Data Analytics and extensive market research tell us that customers want radically different, innovative and transparent products. I am excited to unveil our 77 launch offer, the first-of-its-kind offering with attractive global features to benefit our customers" says, Jan Holzberg, Commercial Director of Vodafone in Oman.

Vodafone's exclusive launch offer includes 77GB of data, 777 local

voice minutes and 777 local SMS for 77 days. Customers can enjoy the benefits in Oman and on Vodafone networks worldwide at no extra cost. The full period of 77 days is available for a one-time payment of OMR9. The offer is valid until January 31, 2022.

Vodafone is available from today across the Sultanate through the My Vodafone Application on Google Play Store and the App Store and in more than 3,500 outlets across Oman. The full list can be found on www.vodafone.om



OIL PRODUCTION

Tethys Oil's November production in Oman reaches 320,178 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore in the Sultanate of Oman in November 2021 amounted to 320,178 barrels of oil, corresponding to 10,673 barrels of oil per day.

Oil production in Oman is currently subject to production limitations under the Opec+ agreement. As a consequence, production from Blocks 3&4 is subject to limitations but is likely to fluctuate on a monthly basis.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for November 2021 was \$72.78 per barrel. The OSP, as published by Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4 Ltd, has a 30 per cent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 per cent



and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 per cent.

Tethys Oil is a Swedish oil company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The

company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58.

Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 26.9 mil-

lion barrels of oil (mmbo) and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 13.9 mmbo and had an average oil production of 11,336 barrels per day from Blocks 3&4 during 2020.

INCONVENIENCE

Wave of cancelled flights from Omicron closes out 2021

CHICAGO: More cancelled flights frustrated air travellers on the final day of 2021 and appeared all but certain to inconvenience hundreds of thousands more over the New Year's holiday weekend.

Airlines blamed many of the cancellations on crew shortages related to the spike in COVID-19 infections, along with wintry weather in parts of the United States, AP reported.

United Airlines, which suffered the most cancellations among the biggest US carriers, agreed to pay pilot bonuses to fix a staffing shortage.

By early evening Friday on the East Coast, airlines had scrubbed more than 1,550 US flights — about 6 per cent of all scheduled flights — and roughly 3,500 worldwide, according to tracking service FlightAware.

That pushed the total US cancellations since Christmas Eve to more than 10,000 and topped the previous single-day peak this

holiday season, which was 1,520 on December 26. The disruptions come just as travel numbers climb higher going into the New Year's holiday weekend. Since December 16, more than 2 million travellers a day on average have passed through US airport security checkpoints, an increase of nearly 100,000 a day since November and nearly double last December.

Led by Southwest and United, airlines have already cancelled 1,500 US flights on Saturday — about 700 at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, where the forecast called for a winter storm — and 700 more on Sunday. Cancelled flights began rising from a couple hundred a day shortly before Christmas, most notably for United Airlines, Delta Air Lines and JetBlue Airways.

On Friday, United cancelled more than 200 flights, or 11 per cent of its schedule, and that did not include cancellations on the United Express regional affiliate. -BNA

HIGH-PERFORMANCE WI-FI SERVICE

Awasr offers managed Wi-Fi service to subscribers from government institutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Awasr is the first specialised telecom company to provide internet over a broadband network in the Sultanate.

It provides managed Wi-Fi for the first time in the Sultanate, where Awasr customers from all government institutions and enterprise sectors will be able to obtain a distinct and high-performance Wi-Fi service to access the Internet via the fibre high-speed network.

In a statement to Abdulmonem bin Mohammed Al Futaisi, Chief Operating Officer of Awasr, he stressed the company's constant endeavour to provide the latest technologies and systems in the world, in cooperation with major international companies to ensure the quality of services and products provided to its customers from all sectors, this service is powered by Ruckus Networks/CommScope which is considered

as the best producer of Wi-Fi systems in the world through their local partner "Tawasul".

This service is managed by a highly trained professional team working around the clock at Awasr's Network Operations Centre, where networks are monitored to ensure excellent customer service is provided.

Providing this service will reduce the operational cost of subscribers compared to traditional services that require large capital expenditures for hardware, operation, and licensing.

Commenting on this topic, Engineer Khamis Al-Barhi, Head of Technology at Awasr, said that providing "managed Wi-Fi" is one of the technical solutions that provide a high-quality and secure data experience to subscribers, and it also provides high-speed and scalable services, whether, for subscribers, their employees or their customers, and the service we offer

Awasr provides managed Wi-Fi for the first time in the Sultanate, where Awasr customers from all government institutions and enterprise sectors will be able to obtain a distinct and high-performance Wi-Fi service to access the Internet via the fibre high-speed network

takes advantage of the high-speed broadband network to support the Wi-Fi network, and the service is managed by a specialised team in the Awasr operations where the central administration of this service provides quick solutions to any malfunctions that may occur.

Recently, Awasr has provided this service to many subscribers

from all sectors, which contributed to providing a unique experience to their customers and employees. Using this service, our subscribers were able to obtain an analysis of their customers' categories based on the personal data recorded in each device connected to the Wi-Fi network using the concept of algorithms.

Based on this analysis, our subscribers were able to provide customised commercial offers for each category of their clients and add new products and services to meet their customer's needs.

Eng. Mohamed Hassan, Operations Manager at "Tawasul", said, "We are proud of this partnership with Awasr, which will help us enhance our vision and develop our services to provide a strong and flexible network via Wi-Fi."

"This service has been designed based on scientific and global studies dedicated to providing the best experience for its users. The service provides many advantages such as controlling the bandwidth, central multi-layered security base to control access to the network, automatic tracking of all users and devices and detection, prevention, and limitation of electronic intrusions."

Eng. Essam Al Ismaili, Head of Commercial at Awasr, expressed

his happiness with the new services, pointing out that the "Managed Wi-Fi" service is a new experience in the Omani market, as this service supports all subscribers needs, the subscribers can control more than 1,000 internal and external access points.

Awasr provides tailored solutions for each customer so that they can get the best price and service at the same time. Our specialists provide the best solutions and advice based on the study of the site and the number of expected end-users and the speeds required to access the Internet.

Those interested customers from government institutions and enterprise sectors can obtain this service and any additional information about this service by contacting their account manager or by calling the call centre designated for government institutions and enterprise sectors on the toll-free number: 80009999.

 MARKET

Oil heads for biggest annual gain amidst global recovery

Global oil prices are expected to rise further as jet fuel demand catches up

NEW YORK: Oil prices fell on Friday but were set to post their biggest annual gains since at least 2016, spurred by the global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic slump and producer restraint, even as infections reached record highs worldwide.

Brent crude futures fell 70 cents, or 0.9 per cent, to \$78.85 a barrel at 10:16am EST (1516 GMT), while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures dropped 84 cents, or 1.09 per cent, to \$76.15 a barrel, Reuters reported.

Brent is on track to end the year up about 52 per cent, its biggest gain since 2016, while WTI is heading for a 57 per cent gain, the strongest performance for the benchmark contract since 2009, when prices soared more



OPEC MEET: With oil hovering near \$80, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and allies - together called OPEC+ - will probably stick to their plan to add 400,000 barrels per day of supply in February when they meet on January 4. - BNA

than 70 per cent.

Both contracts touched their 2021 peak in October, with Brent at \$86.70 a barrel, the highest since 2018, and WTI at \$85.41 a barrel, the highest since 2014.

Global oil prices are expected to rise further next year as jet fuel de-

mand catches up.

"We've had Delta and Omicron and all manner of lockdowns and travel restrictions, but demand for oil has remained relatively firm," said Australian brokerage firm CommSec's Chief Economist Craig James.

"You can attribute that to the effects of stimulus supporting demand and restrictions on supply."

However, after rising for several straight days, oil prices stalled on Friday as COVID-19 cases soared to new pandemic highs across the globe, from Australia to the United

States, stoked by the highly transmissible Omicron coronavirus variant.

US health experts warned Americans to prepare for severe disruptions in coming weeks, with infection rates likely to worsen amid increased holiday travel, New Year celebrations and school reopenings following winter breaks.

A Reuters survey of 35 economists and analysts forecast Brent crude would average \$73.57 a barrel in 2022, about 2 per cent lower than the \$75.33 consensus in November. It is the first reduction in the 2022 price forecast since the August poll.

Easing production outages in Nigeria and Ecuador weighed on prices earlier this week.

With oil hovering near \$80, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and allies - together called OPEC+ - will probably stick to their plan to add 400,000 barrels per day of supply in February when they meet on January 4, four sources said.

Brent and US WTI crude futures rise more than 50 per cent in 2021, the strongest performance for the two benchmark contracts since 2009. -BNA

AUCTION SYSTEM

Saudi Central Bank to launch repo operations from January

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) announced that it will conduct repo, reverse repo and Open Market Operations (OMO) with locally operating banks using Bloomberg's Auction System from January 2022. SAMA had announced in 2018 the completion of the development of the SAMA Bills and Murabaha issuance system using Bloomberg.

Ayman Alsayari, Vice Governor of SAMA said, "This collaboration with Bloomberg marks the next stage in developing the central bank's operations."

"The increased efficiency of liquidity management operations will have a positive impact on the banking sector."

"It also aligns with international best practice in liquidity management through electronic trading."

Nicholas Bean, Global Head of Electronic Trading Solutions at Bloomberg said: "Bloomberg's Auction System is part of a range Bloomberg solutions designed to help bring greater transparency, liquidity and efficiency to capital markets."

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TYRE HUB

Abu Dhabi to host region's first tyre storage and distribution hub

ABU DHABI: AD Ports Group has announced the signing of an agreement with China-based Shandong Port Group, to establish a Tyre Hub at KIZAD for the storage and distribution of tyres.

AD Ports Group will provide space for an upcoming 150,000 sqm facility in KIZAD under its

Industrial Cities and Free Zone Cluster. This will include warehouse management, logistics, distribution, and re-export services offered by MICCO under the AD Ports Group's Logistics Cluster, and SAFEEN Feeders, under the Maritime Cluster.

Commenting on the announce-

ment, Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Group CEO, AD Ports Group, said, "The agreement with Shandong Port Group is a momentous step that highlights the unique logistics offering of Abu Dhabi and the significance of the synergies created by the AD Ports Group for its various clusters. -WAM

OPTIMISTIC

Indian equities markets key indices ended 2021 on bullish note

MUMBAI: The Indian equities markets key indices ended the year 2021 on a bullish note with the benchmark Sensex surging 459 points and Nifty closing 150 points higher.

Bombay Stock Exchange
The 30 stock S&P Sensex of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) closed at 58,253.82 points, which is 0.80 per cent or 459.50 points higher from its previous day's close at 57,794.32 points. Earlier, the Sensex opened in the positive and touched a high of 58,409.30 points in the intra-day. The Sensex ended the year 2021 with nearly 22 per cent gain.

Broader Nifty 50
The broader Nifty 50 of the National Stock Exchange closed at 17,354.05 points, which is 0.87 per cent or 150.10 points higher from its previous day's close at 17,203.95 points. The Nifty witnessed bullish trend all through the day and touched a high of 17,400.80 points in the intra-day. There was broad-based buying support. Only four of the 30 stocks that are part of the Sensex closed in the red. -ANI

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JOB VACANCIES

WE ARE HIRING

Senior Regulatory Affairs PHARMACIST

Mission:

Act as a supplier agent and intermediary between the company and the concerned ministries, by preparing the related products registration documents, pricing and processes.

Duties:

- Submit products variations and notifications to the MOH and follow-up on their approval.
- Build and maintain a solid relationship with MOH key people.
- Submit newly registered products for inclusion in the reimbursement list.
- Communicate to suppliers and management the products that are due for re-pricing.
- Coordinate with clearing agent on received goods at Airport and monitor the clearance timelines from arrival date to warehouses.
- Retrieve cold product samples from the warehouse and proceed with their inspection process at the MOH.
- Keep track of all necessary licenses/ permits both personal and company and keeping them updated as per Governmental requirements (Documentation).
- Receive consignment; as per MOH standards, coordinate and implement standard operating policies and local legislations.
- Make sure the warehouse is always compliant with GSP, GDP and GMP standards.
- Classify, register and renew, pricing, re-pricing, variations and other MOH matters related to implementing regulations and policies.

Qualifications:

- 5-6 years of Experience in similar position.
- Omani MOH license is a must
- BS in Pharmacy, Regulatory and Quality knowledge
- Good understanding of both legal and scientific matters
- Excellent English, and Arabic.

If you feel you are right for the position and for any further information,
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CONNECT

JOB VACANCIES

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Sr Accountant/Accountant. 10 years Oman experience. Knowledge of Tally' Focus. Contact 96678594

Accountant, with 10 years experience seeks placement.Presently in Oman. Contact 78075373

Young Indian Accountant, B.Com graduate having 3 years experience in Accounts looking for immediate placement. Contact 97092353

Indian Accountant with 6 yrs Oman experience seeks suitable job.D/L available. Contact 92845414. Email: rehman.naseer999@gmail.com

Indian Male, 51 years, B.Com graduate with more than 25 years of experience, 10 years in Muscat, seeking jobs in finance, administration,data entry etc. Contact 94252197

Senior Accountant B.Com ,Indian male 15 yrs experience in 3 different companies in Oman with D/L available for immediate joining. Contact 96029600. Email: poovathanickal@gmail.com

Graduate Senior accountant with 7 years' Oman experience looking for a suitable position. Contact 91420128

Indian 23 yrs, B.Com,fresher looking for suitable job in accounts,office assistant or sales. Contact 72872847. Email runkudintabish@gmail.com

Sr. Accountant Indian male B. Com 11 years accounts experience in Oman. can handle accounts independently valid D/L immediate joining with NOC or Transfer. Contact 7809 4016 Email: bilalsagh@gmail.com

Indian male, BBA graduate with Oman D/L seeks appointment in Accounts/HR/Marketing, currently on family visa. Contact 97217971, Email: jobvacanciesof2021@yahoo.com

DRIVER

Bangaladeshi driver with 10 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 93539260

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94531675

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 95160208

CHANGE OF NAME

We **Shajahan Abdul Kalam** (name of father as per passport, holder of Indian Passport No. L9737833) and Shamsia Shajahan (name of mother as per the passport, holder of Indian Passport No. L6680781) having permanent address in Shamsia Manzil, Chandanathope (P.O.), Kollam-691014 (complete postal address in India) and presently residing at the following address in RUWI P.B. No.598 P.C. No. 112 Sultanate of Oman, hereby solemnly affirm and declare to change the name of our child **Miss FAIZAH MARYAM** (name as per passport) holder of Indian Passport No. U0087562 date of issue 01/08/2019 issued at Muscat. The name of our child will be henceforth known as **FAIZAH MARYAM SHAJAHAN** (new name) for all purpose. Any objection towards the change of name of our minor child may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P.Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

ADMIN/HR

Admin/HR Job having 24 years of experience in Oman with Valid DL and NOC ready. Contact 99578192

Indian Male, MBA, B.Com having 7 yr Oman & 4 yr India experience in HR / Administration & Accounts looking for suitable placement. Contact 97914340. Email: sampathrajkv@gmail.com

Indian HR-professional 8.5yrs Oman Exp (HR/SAP/Payroll/Admin-overall 14year-Exp) with Oman DL & NOC. Seeking openings in Human Resource & Admin jobs. Contact: +91 9544984757 (Whats App +968-94129291) Email: rkkambat@gmail.com

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Admin/HR Job having 24 years of experience in Oman with Valid DL and NOC ready. Contact 99578192

Smart Indian, male, excellent English, Double Masters, Arabic speaker, 18years Oman-EPC, Media, Hospital, Airports. Contact 99283938

IT

Indian male MCA, 6+ yrs experience IT admin, ERP admin, website application (NET/PHP). Contact 78668657

Computer science bachelor's degree holder with 1 year experience, looking for a job as a Frontend Developer and Website Development. Contact 78629566

ENGINEER

Operations and Maintenance Engineer (Electrical), MTech qualified, with 2 years' experience in KSEB, India as Operations Engineer, with experience in AutoCAD, looking for a suitable placement. Contact 79926101
Email: afroossahanaa@gmail.com

Approved DCRP protection engineer level 4, BSc of Electrical Engineering, seeks a full or part time job. Contact 96670117

HVAC Engineer/MEP coordinator, BE Mechanical Engineering, having 10+ years of experience including 7+ years in Oman. Efficient in design,BQQ, project follow up, valid Omani D/L. Seeking suitable placement, NOC available. Contact 78230713

Indian Civil Engineer with total 8.5 yrs. In Oman (2.5 years) seeks placement. Contact & WhatsApp 79547717

DCE 18years consultancy and contracting experienced Engineer, knows supervision, Q.S, MEP, interior & EarthWork Trench Excavation AutoCad, MS Office, D/L. Contact 96163786

Mtech Civil Engineer, 4.5 years work experience in Oman and India. Having Oman d/l . Looking for suitable job. Contact 96415454
Email: joeljohn.om@gmail.com

M.E Chemical Engineer & Safety Professional 3yrs' experience of HSE field in Pakistan and 2 years in Sugar manufacturing plant as process chemist. Currently residing in Muscat, looking for opportunity in HSE field and Manufacturing/Production plant in Oman. Contact 94624491. Email: razaarain151@gmail.com

Safety officer (engineer),5 years experience in GCC, two years in Oil field in Oman, nebosh IGC, valid D.L). Contact 79318246

ARCHITECT

10 years experienced Female Architect seeking for suitable job. Currenty in family visa (2 years). Contact 96146645

EDUCATION

Indian Female (45) - B.Ed Graduate. Primary, middle school teacher. Have 6 years exp. in CBSC School, Kerala.Looking an opportunity in Muscat Indian School. Contact Nos: 968-98378518 / 91 9495442210. Email: vkalluvilayil@hotmail.com

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Indian Male, 7 years working experience in Oman as an AutoCAD Civil Draftsman cum Document Controller in various projects. Seeking suitable placement. Contact 95223019, Email: prasanthnair2010@gmail.com

Freelancer 2D/3D Autocad/Revit (Civil / MEP). Contact 99506977

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MBA - Finance with 15years experience in 5 countries including GCC & Africa. Handled accounts, costing & banking of Trading, Manufacturing, Oil & Gas, Construction & service company. Available for employment in Muscat with transferable visa.

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Property manager MBA, Indian, with 8+yrs Oman experience in property leasing & management ,with valid D/L, seeks job.
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E-mail: suhaikmuhammed00@gmail.com

Quantity Surveyor

Srilankan Male Quantity Surveyor (BSc QS (Hons) reading) with 4 years of Civil & ID experience in Oman.
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Email: sifathhasan1995@gmail.com

Omani Statistical

Statistical (Omani), Graduated from Modern College of Business & Science with Bachelor degree in Statistics. Experience in Statistics in Ministry of HigherEducation and Purchase Assistant sales representative in hospital laboratory and chemicals for pesticides (current work).

Email: Radhiyaalkharusi24@gmail.com
Phone No: 00968-93987544

OMANI HSE

Bachelor's degree in BA & IOSH.
10 years experience in HSE and O&M.

Contact +968 95555865

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Indian, 23, (B.E Mechanical), fresher PG Diploma in Oil and Gas Piping and Pipeline, QA/QC, NDT, looking for suitable job.

Contact: 79056363, 99501396
Email: rejiakhil111@gmail.com

FINANCE

Sr Accountant/ Chief Accountant (Male). 15+ years of experience in Oman. Having Good Experience in Finance and Supply Chain also have great knowledge in Finalization ,Stock Audit, Various Accounts Packages, etc. Looking for Suitable Position. Having Valid Oman D/L.

Contact +968 79830539
Email : justmailshaik75@gmail.com

FINANCE

B.Com ICWAI (Intermediate), 18+ years Finance/Accounts/Reporting/Credit Control/ Finalisation, Expd in MFG/Retail/Service Ind, Expd in ERP-Orion/Focus/JD Edwards/D/L, NOC available, can join immediately.

Mobile: 97634372

PROCUREMENT

Indian male, 20yrs exp. in supply Chain management, Import Vendor Management. Skilled & forecasted sourcing. Inherent negotiation & documentation skill to benchmark, MIS, Inventory & Credit control, dynamic in office software handling, GCC D/L, N.O.C Available, immediate joining at Sr. Position.

Contact 78599071
Email: sahaiv548@gmail.com

OMANI HR/PRO

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

Contact 97264447

SALES / PURCHASE

Indian Male(31), MBA-Finance, 7 years experience as Sales Procurement Specialist, specialized in electrical & lighting for residential and commercial projects, Seeking suitable position. D/L Available.

Email: qaisebukhari@gmail.com
Contact: 94560161

Finance & Accounts

Indian Female (MBA Finance) having more than 15 years of Experience in Oman in Manufacturing and Trading company seeks suitable Senior Position in Finance and Accounts.

Contact # 94953826 / 92824146

JOB WANTED

SALES/MARKETING

Indian, graduate, 6 years experience in Sales and Marketing having valid Oman D/L, fluent in English, Hindi and Arabic. Presently in Oman, looking for immediate placement.
Contact 78699300.
Email: abidm0786@gmail.com

Sales operations coordinator B-com with E-commerce & Various other certifications.5 years of Dubai and 2 years of Muscat experience, with refined skill set, Looking for new challenges. Contact +968 9676 6702
E-mail: ilyas3299@gmail.com

Indian Male PG in Biotech. with 4 years experience in Insurance sales total 8 year exp. Looking For Sales Job, available in Oman.
Contact 79015490

Indian, 7 years of experience as a Sales executive in Oman with D/L looking for suitable placement. Contact 91883131

Indian male 30 B.com Having 7yrs on field experience in Inventory, operation assistant & Sales Executive DL & NOC available. Contact 97855282
Email: natigue.ahmed91@gmail.com

Indian male BBA/MBA having experience in Sales & Marketing, looking for job opportunity. Contact 94032127

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

8 Yrs of experience in procurement (Parts for Heavy machineries, Light motor vehicles & crushers) plus Accounting, Administration, Logistics support, B.Com, MBA. Contact 78234545.

7 yrs exp in purchase, logistics, warehouse/inventory and 10 yrs exp in commercial operations Having D/L. Contact 98531104

TOUR/TRAVELS

Indian Male 32 yrs Bachelors in Travel & Tourism with 7.5 yrs experience in hospitality field looking for suitable placement. Presently in Oman. Contact 72775792.



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YOUR KEY TO A HEALTHIER NEW YEAR? POTATOES

It's New Year's resolution season, and many people's goals involve improving their health — exercising more, eating better and losing weight. While it can be hard to stick to resolutions, a staple item in your kitchen can give you a leg up — potatoes.

Potatoes are a nutrient-dense vegetable. Per 5.3-ounce serving, they have more potassium than a banana and more vitamin C than a tomato. Potatoes are also packed with energy and are affordable, delivering more nutrients per penny than most other vegetables.

But how can potatoes help achieve your resolutions? Let's start with eating better. Potatoes can play a key role in many of the most popular approaches to eating well:

Plant-Based Diets

Plant-based diets are a growing trend, but getting enough high-quality protein is important. Potatoes provide 3 grams of plant-based protein, which is more than other commonly consumed vegetables except dried beans. Try Vegan Mashed Potatoes with Kale.

"Potatoes of all varieties are real, nutrient-dense foods," and the guidelines encourage mashed, baked or roasted potatoes. Try Frittata with Potato Crust.

WW (formerly Weight Watchers)

For people on this popular plan, potatoes are a ZeroPoint food. Potatoes are given this distinction because they're "filling and nutritious." Try 12 Surprising Ways to Cook with Potatoes from WW.

Mediterranean Diet, DASH Diet and Flexitarian Diet

U.S. News & World Report has ranked these as best overall diets as chosen by a panel of health experts, and potatoes are a staple in all three. Try Manhattan Paella.



Gluten-Free Diets

Potatoes are naturally gluten-free, and they can help provide several of the nutrients often inadequately consumed by people following gluten-free diets, such as fibre, thiamin, folate, magnesium, calcium and iron. Try Gluten-Free Spiralised Hash Brown Casserole.

Along with being nutrient-dense, some research suggests that potatoes are one of the most filling foods you can eat. Studies indicate that potatoes may stave off hunger better than common sides like pasta, rice and bread.

Beyond eating well, working out more is a resolution for many people, and carbohydrates provide important fuel for muscles during exercise. However, not all carbs are created equal. A medium potato has 26 grams of quality carbs, which is important for optimal physical and mental performance. Potatoes also deliver the energy, potassium and vitamin C needed to fuel your workout. In particular, the potassium in potatoes is perfect for aiding muscle, cardiovascular and nervous system function during long endurance events.

On a final note, you may believe that sweet potatoes are healthier than regular potatoes, but they're more alike than you think. They provide similar amounts of key nutrients like protein, potassium and vitamin B6, all of which contribute to a well-balanced, nutrient-dense diet. They're also both included on the FDA's Top 20 Raw Vegetable list, and they're similar in calories and carbohydrates.

So, as 2022 gets underway, pass the potatoes, and know you're helping achieve your health and fitness goals for the New Year. - BPT



FEATURE

ENDEMIC, EPIDEMIC, PANDEMIC: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

A lot of people hope that the coronavirus will disappear as quickly as it came. But many virologists assume that the virus will become endemic, especially with omicron. This means we will have to live with it.

Endemic: the constant threat

A disease that occurs regularly in certain regions is called endemic. When a disease becomes endemic, the number of people falling ill remains relatively constant over time.

The number of cases is higher than in other areas but does not increase over time. Over a certain period of time, approximately the same number of people repeatedly contract the disease.

A typical example is malaria, which annually affects 300 million people worldwide, with most cases in the tropics.

As early as May 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) predicted that the coronavirus could become an endemic virus. The delta and omicron variants have since shown how adaptable the virus is, much-like the flu. An endemic means the virus is out there in the world. We have to learn to live with it in certain regions around the world. It will not disappear.

Epidemic: only in one region

The spread of a disease is termed an epidemic when it occurs with unusual frequency in a certain region and for a limited period of time.

When the number of cases of a disease in that particular region rises above the expected (endemic) level, it is called an epidemic. When the disease incidence is localized, it is often referred to as an outbreak.

An epidemic occurs, for example, when the virulence of a particular pathogen changes: A virus mutates and becomes more contagious.

Epidemics can also occur when diseases are newly introduced into a certain area. The prerequisite is that a disease can be passed from person to person.

An example of this is smallpox, which was introduced to the Americas via the arrival of Europeans from the beginning of the 16th century. Because the indigenous population had never been in contact with the pathogens before, their immune systems could not fend off the virus.

Individual projections suggest that up to 90% of the indigenous population of the Americas fell victim to smallpox.

Pandemic: worldwide spread

If a disease spreads across countries and continents, experts refer to it as a pandemic.

This means, above all, that successful control of the disease depends on cooperation among the health systems of different countries. It does not mean that a disease is particularly dangerous or deadly.

According to the WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pandemics are usually caused by newly emerging pathogens or virus types. For example, these can be zoonoses — diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans.

If a disease is new to humans, very few people will be immune to the virus. Vaccinations are also not available in this case. This can lead to vast numbers of people becoming infected.

How dangerous or fatal the disease is depends on the specific virus and the health of the individual.

Even if, in percentage terms, a disease is harmless in most cases, the absolute number of serious illnesses during a pandemic can be very high. This is simply because a very large number of people are infected with the pathogens overall.

A typical disease that repeatedly assumes pandemic proportions is influenza. The 1918 influenza pandemic, also known as the Spanish flu, killed 25 million to 50 million people, that's more than died in World War I. Swine flu also triggered a pandemic in 2009.

However, even during a pandemic, individual isolated areas can be spared from the disease, for example, island or mountain areas. Air travel, however, favors the spread of pandemics.

'Epidemics' that are not the real thing

The terms epidemic and pandemic normally refer to infectious diseases. However, because it conveys a need for urgent action, noncommunicable diseases or unhealthy habits are sometimes referred to as epidemics as well.

Strictly speaking, those formulations are essentially metaphorical: "Diabetes epidemic" or "opioid epidemic," for example.

The term has even been used to describe the increase of criminal behavior in society with media referring to an "epidemic of rape." However, some note that this misuse of the word distracts from the responsibility of the perpetrators.

FEATURE



NEW YEAR'S DAY LESSONS FROM THE BEATLES

What do the Fab Four have in common with J.K. Rowling, Oprah Winfrey, and Steven Spielberg? Here's a hint: it's neither fame nor fortune.

On New Year's Day, 1962, two bands auditioned for Decca Records in London. The company had been scouting for a new act that would appeal to the younger crowd. After hearing both bands, the executives decided on Brian Poole and the Tremeloes, a 1960s beat band whose later hits would include a cover of "Twist and Shout."

Explaining their decision to the other band's manager, Brian Epstein, the record executives reasoned that "guitar groups were on the way out."

While Epstein continued seeking a record label for his Liverpool quartet, the band members — John, Paul, George, and Ringo — were themselves dispirited and close to calling it quits.

Today, 60 years later, The Beatles' New Year's Day rejection story holds timely lessons for us — even in the face of a pandemic.

Lesson 1: Resilience

The Beatles are not the only pop culture personalities who spectacularly bounced back after failure.

Bestselling author of the Harry Potter series, JK Rowling was rejected by 12 publishing houses before Bloomsbury picked up her manuscript. Oprah Winfrey, whose famous interviewees have included singer Michael Jackson and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, was once fired from her job as an evening news reporter. She was deemed "unfit for television news" for being unable to detach herself emotionally from stories. And Oscar-winning director Steven Spielberg who recently reimaged the bestselling musical "West Side Story," was rejected three times by the University of Southern California School of



Theater, Film and Television.

All however exhibited one particular trait: resilience.

"I believe those who perform, write, and entertain are some of the most resilient people in the world. Think about writers — they encounter so many rejections before their work gets published. Think about actors who try out for many roles before landing one. Any artist who has been working as one for 10, 20, 30 years is already resilient. Those who are starting their artistic career may not be. However, they are also probably very attuned to the new artistic mediums — YouTube, the internet, Instagram, etc. They make it work," Shantha Mohan, mentor and project guide at Carnegie Mellon University's Silicon Valley Campus tells DW.

While artists might have had to retreat to lick their wounds after an audition went south pre-COVID, the pandemic and its repeated lockdowns now require more grit than ever.

"Almost all artists took to the internet to keep their craft alive and stay relevant during the isolation. Many of them are collaborating. For example, Ariana Grande and

Justin Bieber together created a music video 'Stuck With U' that supports the First Responders Children's Foundation," says Mohan, who also co-founded Retail Solutions Inc. (RSi), a leader in retail data analytics.

Lesson 2: Innovation

In "The Beatles: an oral history" anthology by David Pritchard and Alan Lysaght, Paul McCartney says, "Listening to the tapes, I can understand why we failed the Decca audition. We weren't that good, though there were some quite interesting and original things," Regardless, "The Beatles looked at the setback as a learning experience and didn't give up. The failure propelled them to keep innovating," explains Shantha Mohan, an avowed Beatles fan herself.

She points out how the band had faced rejections prior to the Decca episode, yet continued honing their skills, sometimes playing back-to-back gigs in various locations including in Hamburg, Germany in 1960.

"It taught them to develop humility, tenacity, understanding their audience, the flair — who doesn't remember the vigorous

“While artists might have had to retreat to lick their wounds after an audition went south pre-COVID, the pandemic and its repeated lockdowns now require more grit than ever. Almost all artists took to the internet to keep their craft alive and stay relevant during the isolation.”



head-shaking — that woos the audience," says Mohan whose book "Leadership Lessons with The Beatles" is slated for publication in May 2022.

Fast forward to today, and Swedish pop icons, ABBA, have taken it up a notch. The band, who will be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year, will be embarking on a world tour with a difference come May 2022.

The singers will be projecting digital avatars — or "Abba-tars" — of themselves onstage instead of performing live, thanks to the technology provided by Industrial Light and Magic — the visual effects company founded by Star Wars creator George Lucas.

A nifty solution to entertaining while being socially distanced.

"ABBA is an excellent example of how entertainers are being innovative today. They have embraced cutting-edge technology to give them the power to reach today's tech-savvy audience. ABBA Voyage where they will appear digitally as they were in 1977, has been in the works since 2016," says Mohan, underscoring that resilience and innovation "go hand in hand."

Lesson 3: Hope

And finally, in light of an ever-evolving virus that has resulted in renewed restrictions and lockdowns, Mohan says that as individuals, we need to be hopeful. And one way of retaining our own hope is to render help whenever we can.

Referring to the Decca episode, Mohan argues that The Beatles, for instance, had their manager Epstein on their side and that gave them hope to keep going. "You can feed off each other's hopes too," she says.

Mohan is particularly inspired by the work of Jose Andres, the Spanish-born American chef, restaurateur, and founder of World Central Kitchen, a non-profit devoted to providing meals in the wake of natural disasters. Currently, the organization also provides meals to those affected by the pandemic.

"We have to believe that it is temporary and keep moving forward. Make ourselves useful in whatever we can do, if we are able. Helping others is one way to give ourselves hope that this too shall pass," she concludes.

ROUND-UP

NBO launches digital bank accounts

Just download the NBO mobile banking app, enter your details and select the type of account, then the bank will do the rest

MUSCAT: Bringing banking closer to customers, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) launched its new digital accounts, allowing customers to digitally open a new account without having to set foot

at the bank. Just download the NBO mobile banking app, enter your details and select the type of account, then the bank will do the rest. The digitally opened account's debit card can be sent directly to customers or collected from any NBO multi-functional kiosk 24/7, or visit any NBO branches. It can alternatively also be delivered to you or collected from the closest branch. Tariq Atiq, Chief Retail and Digital Banking Officer at NBO, said, "We aim to make banking with NBO as easy, simple and straightforward as possible. "The new service allows customers to open new accounts digitally when and where it suits them through our award-winning app without the customer needing to visit a branch. We have also added a host of exclusive benefits for new

customers to show just some of the many ways NBO makes banking a rewarding experience." The first 100 customers will also receive an exclusive cashback offer of OMR 20, while all new customers will benefit from a 1% interest rate per annum in addition to free local transfers for two transactions per month and a fee-free Debit Card issuance. An additional exciting perk is a chance to win tickets to Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 for customers transferring their salaries through digital onboarding. New customers will also receive 2,000 Nuqati points, subject to maintaining a minimum balance of OMR100. These points can be redeemed for utility bill payment, Credit Card outstanding payment, flight tickets, hotel bookings, car rental and purchases at partner retailers.



VIEWPOINTS

Sohar International Chairman's Forum to discuss 'Step by Step: A Journey to Now'

MUSCAT: Sohar International is set to conduct its 9th Virtual Viewpoints Session scheduled to be held on 5 January 2022 (Wednesday). The event will be live-streamed via the Zoom app and will commence at 7:30 pm welcoming its guest speaker - Mary Louise Gorno who is the Managing Director of Ingenuity International LLC and specialises in organisational governance, succession planning, and leadership issues.

To join the conversation and benefit from the wealth of knowledge transfer, Sohar International invites all to register for free through its corporate website - www.soharinternational.com. Commenting on the platform, Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, Chairman, Sohar International said, "The insightful conversations with industry leaders have truly inspired our Viewpoint viewers and listeners. With growing popularity and traction, it gives me immense pride to state that the forum has garnered much appreciation from the community, and was recently honoured with the coveted "OER Business Excellence Award" for creating a world-class knowledge platform, at the recent OER Business Summit 2021."



The upcoming Viewpoints edition targets university students, as well as people from private and public sectors, especially the new-age entrepreneurs, and professionals who will become future leaders. The session will allow participants to engage in meaningful dialogues with the speaker, connect with industry leaders and enhance individual leadership skills. "Viewpoints has hosted several well-known international experts in the past, and this time we are delighted to welcome Mary Louise Gorno who will take the topic beyond just standard leadership skills to highlight the need to encourage even established leaders to adopt a more courageous approach to tackling different scenarios, therefore transforming challenges into opportunities," added Al Ardhi. In line with the topic of discussion, "Step by Step: A Journey to Now", Gorno will touch on various aspects of courageous leadership and why it is instrumental to driving change. With a passion to empower executives, Gorno will discuss the importance of courageous leadership and engage in a conversation about living a life of purpose and consequence. Gorno has been actively leading CEO and Board practices for Fortune 500, mid-cap, and privately-owned companies and has more than two decades of experience in marketing, media and strategic

planning. In the past, she led global business-building responsibility for Walt Disney Company, Reebok Inc., and The Procter & Gamble Company. As a board and CEO advisor, she specialises in organisational governance, succession planning, and leadership issues. A highly qualified person, she has several educational and professional achievements to her credit. Her philanthropic work includes serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, in addition to being Chair of the Smart Museum of Art Board of Governors. She is also a Trustee of both the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and the Eisenhower Fellowship. With several successful editions in the past, Viewpoints has been conducting engaging, productive and dynamic sessions which have encouraged creative thinking amongst professionals and helped inculcate a progressive mindset in the community. Through initiatives like these, Sohar International has been a pioneering change, enhancing the skills of individuals and contributing effectively to the socio-economic growth of the country.

EXCEPTIONAL PROFILE

Take the lead with stylish, powerful Kia K5

MUSCAT: The K5's stunning design and exceptional profile, draw instant attention. With its power-packed performance, the K5 uses every opportunity to rise above the ordinary and make every experience, outstanding. The K5's powerful and angular design language represents another chapter of boldness and passion for the brand. From the side, the K5's low-slung and fastback silhouette confirm the impression it was made to excite, highlighted by a chrome garnish that spans the roofline and wraps around the rear glass. A number of other exterior design traits give the K5 an unexpected level of visual impact. Giving the K5 its stunning looks are features that include LED Headlamps, LED Daytime Running Lights, LED Front Fog Lamps, LED Rear Fog Lamps, 17" Alloy Wheels and Dual LED Headlamps. Enhancing on-road experiences in the K5 are features like Auto cruise Control, Auto Light control, LED Front Fog Lamps, LED Rear Fog Lamps, LED Rear Combination Lamps, Power Windows,



Electric Folding Mirrors, Keyless Entry System and more. In terms of performance, the K5 makes a fine mark with a 2.0L MPI engine dishing out 150 HP and 19.6 KG.M. Torque. This is paired with a 6-speed Automatic Transmission. Harmonising the open layout of the cockpit is a newly designed infotainment display that seamlessly stretches into the instrument panel, creating a futuristic, three-dimensional layout and driver-centric space. Creating an

inviting and comfortable interior are a range of features that include Tinted Glass, Tilt & Telescopic Steering, Radio with USB, Audio Remote Control, Driver's Seat Height Adjuster, Rear AC Vents, Leather AT Knob and more. While the K5 does its bit to increase the excitement on every journey, its range of advanced safety features ensure you make the most of your experiences. The K5 is equipped with Driver and Front Passenger Airbags, Anti-

Lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Tyre Pressure Monitoring system (TPMS), Front and Rear Parking Assist system and Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Auto Hold. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way.

5-STAR RATING



Milano unveils new range of water heaters

MUSCAT: Winter is a season to celebrate! With winter on its way, a nice warm shower is all one needs to beat the winter blues and make the most of your day. It's no surprise winter brings along a list of side effects however paving a brilliant way forward Milano has introduced a new range of water heaters starting from 10 litres up to 100 litres. All of these products are certified by the Emirates Authority for standardisation and metrology and come with a 5-star rating for energy consumption. Available at below the market rates, there is no compromise in the quality of the products or their spare parts. It comes with 7 years' unconditional replacement guarantee and 2 years warranty on the thermostat. Competitive pricing simply means value for money.

All the elements used are of the highest grade. The thermostatic element, made of 316L stainless steel, is Glass Lined enamel coated to guarantee a longer life span to the element, which is the highest quality of steel used. Another added feature is the Dry Block Technology, which allows contractors to test the feasibility of the products without water supply ensuring the element life doesn't get affected by the tests. The magnesium anode beside the element is 27% larger than the standard used and guarantees a longer resistance of the glass-lined inner tank which allows our water heaters to carry a longer warranty for the tank. A special PU foam is used as a second layer to increase the insulation quality of the vessel. When you turn on the tap, you want to ensure that you get hot water within a few seconds, rather

than waiting for 10 minutes for the water to heat up in the winter and Milano Water Heaters are the ideal brand/choice which makes you beat the winter and start your day with a warm shower to keep you fresh. In addition to providing the best value, these features also allow our customers to save even more energy compared to other water heaters. All of our heaters can hold full capacity, and our element heats faster than copper elements, so they perform better and are eco-friendlier. A top-quality insulation system also ensures that the water stays hot for a longer period. Our water heaters heat more volume, consume less energy, and store hot water for longer than any other product in the market. Commenting on the introduction of the new range of heaters, Anis Sajjan, Vice Chairman of Danube Group said, "We are one of the top players in the market for water heaters and it has only been possible because of 2 reasons. First, even though we sell the heaters at an affordable price, we have never compromised on the quality and second is our strong dealer network. These 2 factors have assured us to introduce new products in the market." Milano Water heaters are sold across the world, be it the Middle East (UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia), East Africa (Djibouti, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mauritius, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique), West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Cameroon, Liberia, Liberia, Gambia, Mali, Republic of Congo). Milano's water heaters are a perfect combination of these qualities - energy-saving, eco-friendly, durability and affordability.

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