



OMAN MARKS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), which falls on December 3. **>A2**



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TRAVEL



Legal action against airlines not following COVID-19 measures

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Airlines not following the regulations aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Oman will face legal action, the country's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has said.

The news came as part of the plans drawn up by the body for flights to operate in the country, shortly after the reopening of Oman's ports of entry was announced. The measures to be followed were sent in a circular to all the airlines.

"Airlines must take the necessary measures to ensure that the requirements to enter the Sultanate under this circular are implemented. Legal action will be taken against the offending airlines," said the government body.

Diplomats returning or arriving to the Sultanate must also now spend seven days in quar-

antine before returning to their duties. However, they are exempt from taking PCR tests, registering on the Tarassud+ app, and wearing the associated tracking bracelet.

International flights

"Scheduled international flights will continue to operate under the designated national air carriers of each country, according to the agreed-upon coordination with these countries, taking into account the applicable procedures in each country for operating scheduled flights," said the CAA. "Due to the ongoing implementation of COVID-19 precautionary measures, and as an exception to the air transport rights between the Sultanate and a number of countries, flights will continue to operate according to bilateral coordination," the authority added. **>A3**

Oman's financial situation witnessed challenges because of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's economy will receive a boost after a fiscal balance plan is implemented, according to the economic experts. The plan seeks to achieve sustainable levels of fiscal balance and establish suitable conditions to support the Oman Vision 2040.

The manner in which the National Programme for Fiscal Balance (Tawazun, which in Arabic means 'sustainability') is to be carried needs modifications, owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the experts said. "The emergence of the pandemic has led to a review of all the assumptions, statistics and initiatives around the plan," said Nasser bin Khamis Al Jashmi, secretary general of the Ministry of Finance.

"This has had a big impact on the plan, because it includes a large number of social and economic effects, and how that affects our financial balance. But the other alternative for us, if we do not take the measures in this plan, is that the damage to our



economy will be very great."

"Our financial situation saw more challenges because of the economic conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic," added Al Jashmi, speaking to national broadcaster Oman TV.

"Some social and economic measures and initiatives had to be taken, because this would make things easier for everyone, as opposed to not taking any measures at all. It was also important to protect the low-income categories of people, as we were directed by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik."

To ensure low income workers remain protected from economic shortfalls, the National Programme for Fiscal Balance has many socio-economic initiatives. Benefits to families under this category are based on the total income earned by them, as

well as the number of people in each family. The plan needed to be drawn up owing to Oman's fiscal deficit, its increased spending, and the downgrade in the country's credit rating, which led to financial challenges.

"The size of the annual deficit in our budget is very large – it accounts for about 20 per cent of it," explained Al Jashmi.

Electricity and water

"It was necessary for us to reduce this through several initiatives that look at spending and revenue. The total cost of electricity and water subsidies, for example, amount to OMR725 million annually, and this number will only increase if it is not rectified.

"Rather than cancel this entirely, it was decided to alter its conditions," he added. "Currently, these subsidies benefit

Omanis, expatriates and commercial establishments, but under the current circumstances, the government is unable to bear this cost. The largest group of those who will continue to receive subsidised bills are those earning an income of less than OMR1,250."

Other areas of spending that occupy key segments of the current budget are salaries, which account for 60 per cent, and development spending – money used to serve the community in general. Budgets for government agencies have been cut by up to 30 per cent, and next year, they will be reduced by an additional five per cent.

"53 per cent of the initiatives in this plan are the responsibility of the government, not its citizens, but if this plan is not implemented, the effect on the economy will be great," said Al Jashmi. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Linguistic Heritage Project funding

Three research studies to highlight Omani cultural heritage are being funded by the Linguistic Heritage Project, under the Omani Cultural Heritage Strategic Research Programme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The project is being conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth. **>A3**

WORLD Trump signs COVID-19 relief bill

US President Donald Trump has signed into law a massive \$2.3 trillion (€1.88 trillion) pandemic aid and spending package, restoring unemployment benefits to millions of Americans and averting a partial federal government shutdown. The president announced the signing in a statement issued on Sunday night. "I am signing this bill to restore unemployment benefits, stop evictions, provide rental assistance, add money for PPP, return our airline workers back to work, add substantially more money for vaccine distribution, and much more," the president said in the statement issued from his Christmas vacation at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. **>A7**



MARKET Oil output reaches 318.62mn barrels

Oman's oil production, including condensates, stood at 318.62 million barrels until the end of November 2020, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The average oil price in November 2020 fell by 6.1 per cent compared to October 2020. **>B1**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Shura calls for deferring water, power tariff hike

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Shura Council has called for the postponement of the implementation of the new tariffs until the electricity sector is restructured in accordance with the financial framework of the Tenth Five-Year Plan.

On Monday, the Shura Council held a meeting on the implications of lifting subsidies and changing electricity and water tariffs, on which a decision was recently issued.

The council said in its recommendations, "The council calls for the postponement of the implementation of the new tariff until the electricity sector is re-



structured in accordance with the financial framework of the tenth five-year plan with regard to 2021." The council called on the government to direct support to the

final identification cost that goes to the citizens instead of directing it to the operational cost of the sector and to reduce administrative costs by reviewing the payroll of the employees working in the sector.

The council suggested "Reviewing the production and distribution costs of the various electricity companies contracting with the government, in addition to reviewing and evaluating the expenditures of government companies operating in this sector, and reviewing all agreements and terms of the contract that have been concluded with the 10 companies that generate electricity in order to reduce the cost of production."

COVID-19

Vaccination drive begins across governorates



Times News Service

MUSCAT: People in several governorates of Oman have received the COVID-19 vaccine, as part of the country's national immunisation campaign.

Doses of the vaccine have been distributed to several parts of Oman, including Al Buraimi, Al Dakhiliyah, North and South Sharqiyah, Al Wusta, and Dhofar.

Vaccines were primarily administered to frontline healthcare workers treating COVID patients, as well as those vulnerable to the coronavirus, including the elderly, those with immune deficiencies, and chronic ailments.

Several public health centres in these areas have been tasked with vaccinating people in their surrounding areas. Four centres have been earmarked in Dhahirah: Ibra

Hospital, Ibra Health Complex, Dhank Health Centre, and Yanqul Health Centre.

"In the Dhofar, the first vaccine was issued at Sultan Qaboos Hospital, under the presence of Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen Al Ghassani, the chairman of Dhofar Municipality, Dr Khaled bin Muhammad Al Mashikhi, Director General of Health Services in Dhofar, and Dr Hassan Al Kathiri, Director of Sultan Qaboos Hospital," said a statement from the Ministry of Health.

Four health centres have been identified in Al Wusta as well: Haima Hospital, Duqm Hospital, Al Jazir Hospital, and Mahout Health Centre. Similarly, in North Sharqiyah, seven hospitals, one each in Ibra, Sinaw, Samad Ash Shan, Bidiyah, Wadi Dima, Al Yayyin and Wadi Bani Khalid, will distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to people.



SQU honours its highly cited researchers

A4

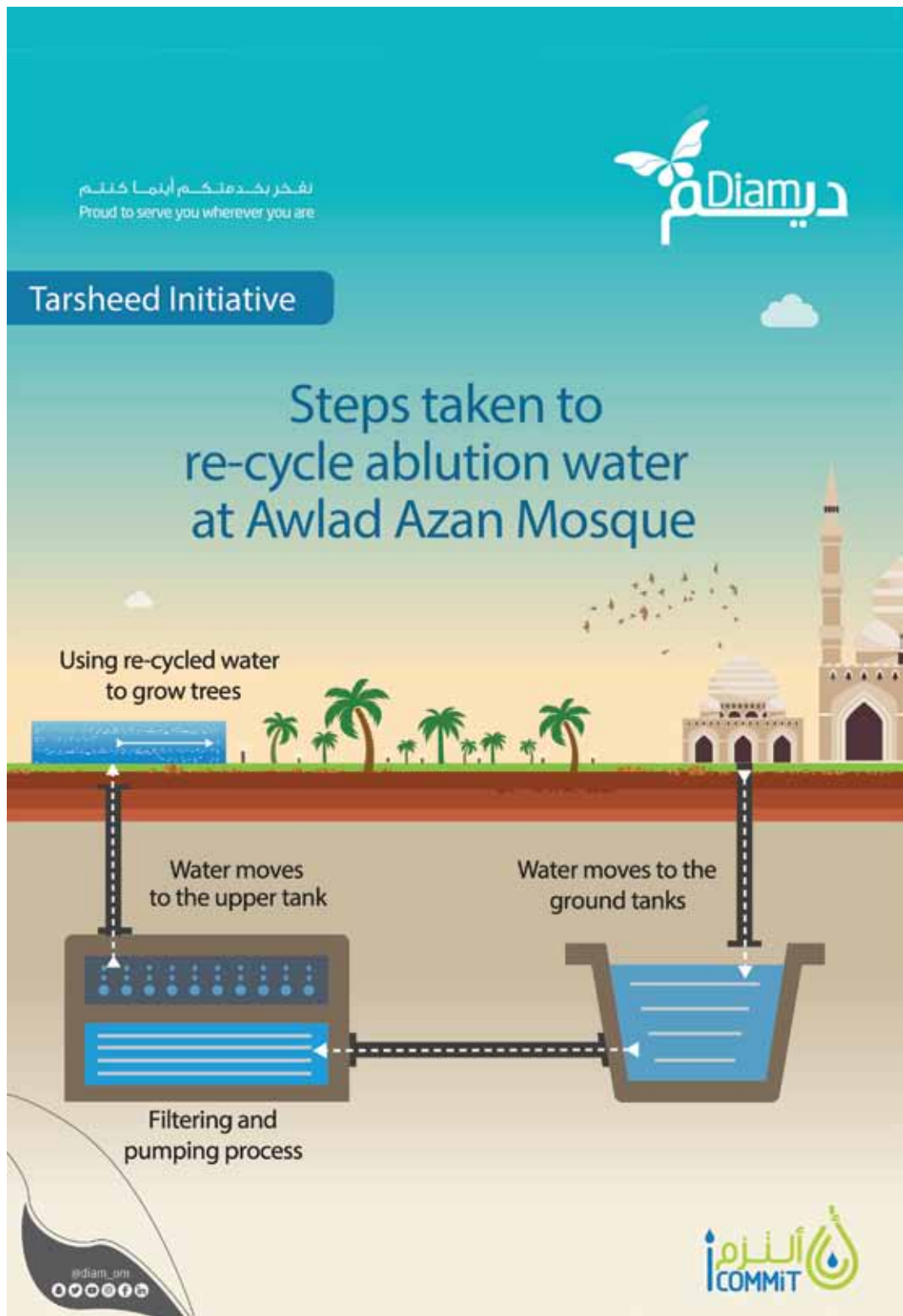


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DECEMBER 3



POST COVID-19 WORLD: The Sultanate has taken a set of preventive measures at the local level to limit the spread of the virus among persons with disabilities. — OMA

Oman marks International Day of Persons with Disabilities

MUSCAT: Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), which falls on December 3.

Themed 'Building Back Better: towards a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world,' the ceremony celebrating the IDPD was held under the patronage of Dr Mahad Said Ba'owain, Minister of Labour at Sheraton Oman Hotel on Monday.

Present at the ceremony was attended by Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

Hamoud Al Shabibi, Director General of Persons with Disabilities Affairs, delivered a speech saying, "The theme of this year's

IDPD is held due to the outbreak of COVID-19 which has affected various aspects of people's lives in general and persons with disabilities in particular as they are more vulnerable to being impacted by this virus due to many social and environmental barriers."

Physical distancing

"They are also vulnerable because of the closure of social and rehabilitative services and the failure provide them with information in an easily accessible way, besides the health conditions of severely and multi-disabled people who are also vulnerable to infection with the virus due to their weak immunity, and the difficulty facing some of them in terms of applying the necessary physical distancing," he added.

He said that the Sultanate has taken a set of preventive measures at the local level to limit the spread of the virus among persons with disabilities.

Such measures included suspending schooling and rehabilitation programmes in governmental, and private rehabilitation centres, and translating awareness programmes and the official statement issued in sign language.

At the end of the ceremony, the Minister of Labour honoured some outstanding persons with disabilities at volunteering, sports, media, poetry, acting, managing a special project, in addition to honouring retired people working in the field of disability and companies supporting projects and programmes for persons with disabilities. — OMA

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TRAVEL

< FROM

A1 All visitors need COVID-19 negative test report

Currently, citizens of the six GCC countries, as well as residents with valid permits, and passengers with the correct visas can enter Oman. All passengers arriving in Oman are required to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test conducted within a 72 hour period prior to the scheduled time of arrival in Oman. The COVID-19 PCR test shall be a validated and certified medical test result written in Arabic or English.

All passengers arriving to the Sultanate of Oman are required to have international health insurance covering the cost of treatment from COVID-19 for one month except for citizens, GCC nationals and passengers with free treatment cards. The CAA added, "Before departure to the Sultanate of Oman, passengers must complete pre-registration via www.covid19.emusharif.om/traveler/travel for the PCR test in Oman, pay the OMR25 test fees and download Tarassud+. Airlines must not check in any passenger who has not completed this requirement."

All passengers arriving to the Sultanate of Oman continue to be subject to COVID-19 PCR test on arrival, Tarassud+ bracelet, quarantine for seven days, and a COVID-19 test on the eighth day.



STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Linguistic Heritage Project funding for 3 research studies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Three research studies to highlight Omani cultural heritage are being funded by the Linguistic Heritage Project, one of the more important projects under the Omani Cultural Heritage Strategic Research Programme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

Conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth, the 'Linguistic Heritage' project aims to record, transcribe and preserve the oral linguistic texts before they disappear. It also seeks to support and encourage researchers interested such studies and provide them with appropriate directions, in addition to enriching and revitalising language studies in Oman.

The research studies funded by the project are:

1) *Inventorying and documenting inscriptions, drawings and archaeological writings on rock walls, tombstones and building walls in Wilayat Al Amerat*

Dr. Saif bin Yousef Al Aghbari, head of the research team, stated that the idea of the project started with the search for the beginnings of writing in the Omani civilisation, which began with rock drawings, then evolved into inscriptions and symbols, then into the current Arabic writing. The study aims to count these discoveries, collect and document them in accordance with the scientific classifications used in such studies. Its importance is evident in its historical value in terms of identifying the historical depth and the civilisational and cultural connotations of this region of Oman, as it reflects many aspects of the political, religious, economic, social and environmental life that the region lived through the different time periods. The project is expected to achieve a set of results, such as providing the geographic and astronomical identification of sites that include archaeological drawings on rock walls in Wilayat Al Amerat as well as providing their descriptive data and documenting them. The descriptive and photographic documentation will facilitate its availability for and reference by researchers and others interested in this field.

2) *Documentary research of the Kumzari language spoken vernacularly in the Sultanate of Oman*

Dr. Dola Al Gady, head of the research team, explained that this project is considered the first study that takes a scientific approach to archiving and documenting the Kumzari language by a team consisting of academic researchers specialising in linguistic studies, in addition to involving individuals from the same language community and speakers of both Kumzari and Arabic languages. The project idea is to document the Kumzari language spoken in of Oman in the form of an electronic archive that includes various refereed language materials (text, audio and visual) to make them available to the community, specialists and researchers for research purposes and to learn about this language and the culture behind it. The importance of this research project also stems from the fact that it contributes to preserving knowledge related to spoken languages that are fast becoming extinct Oman.

Dr. Dola Al Gady added that this research project will produce a specific dictionary that includes at least four thousand terms written in both English and Arabic. The vocabulary will be classified according to topics related to the geographical nature, life and cultural aspects of Kumzari speakers. This work will also complement and catalyze the efforts of some members of the local community who have worked to collect and transcribe the vocabulary, sounds and developments of the language over the past few years.

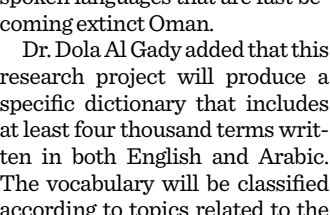
3) *Agricultural terms in the dialect of the people of Rustaq: A lexical study*

Dr. Zahir bin Marhoon Al Dawoodi, head of the research team, stated that the project traces agricultural expressions and studies them as a lexical study in the dialect of the people of Rustaq due to the city's interest in agriculture, diversity of its agricultural crops, and agricultural and animal imports since ancient times. The civilisational, urban and technological developments of recent times have contributed to the disappearance of traditional terms and idioms in agriculture. The project, seeks to trace these and frame them in a dictionary of agricultural expressions in order to preserve them from being lost.

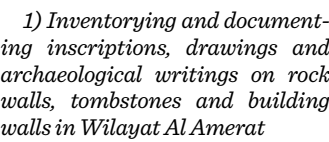
The Linguistic Heritage Project is important to preserve the Omani heritage of dialects, colloquial languages and ancient writings and provide classified linguistic material on them to preserve the archaeological linguistic writings from extinction, to promote linguistic and dialectal studies in general, and to open the horizons for investing in the linguistic heritage of Oman for sustainable development and strengthening of the economy.



Dr. Saif bin Yousef Al Aghbari



Dr. Zahir bin Marhoon Al Dawoodi



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OMR5,000 donated to Dar Al Atta’a from sale proceeds of ‘A Long Walk – Memories of Life’



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Maqbool Hameed Al Saleh, a prominent corporate leader in Oman, has donated OMR5,000 to Dar Al Atta’a for the charity’s work for the community.

With the release of his memoir ‘A Long Walk – Memories of Life’ on November 7, 2020, Maqbool had pledged to donate all proceeds from his book sales to charity in dedication to Oman’s 50th year of the renaissance. This is the first of the ongoing donations that he expects to contribute back to society.

Handing over the donation to Maryam bint Issa Al Zadjali, Chairperson of Dar Al Atta’a, Maqbool said, “I am delighted to present this donation to Dar Al Atta’a, a voluntary organisation that is dedicated to the community providing the less privileged in society with basics that secure them a decent living. I appreciate their good work, and wish them well in their noble efforts. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have bought the book. I hope you have enjoyed reading and sharing my experiences and thoughts.”

Receiving the donation, the Chairperson of Dar Al Atta’a, said, “We express our thanks and appreciation to Maqbool Hameed for his contribution. Maqbool’s life’s work has been encapsulated in his memoir, and that he has chosen to donate the proceeds to charity is humbling and remarkable. Dar Al Atta’a celebrates our association with Maqbool and we wish him the very best.”

‘A Long Walk – Memories of Life’ presents a personal account of Maqbool’s long and inspiring journey from humble beginnings to success, recounting multitude of interesting experiences and defining moments that have shaped his life through this long journey.

Copies of the book can be purchased at a retail price of OMR10 at leading bookstores across Oman including Borders, WH Smith, Al Fair/Spinneys Supermarkets, and Souq of Oman at Muscat International Airport.

All further proceeds will also be donated to charity.

The book is available in both Arabic and English languages

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY

SQU honours its researchers

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) yesterday honoured its researchers who were featured in the 2 percent most-cited researchers list in the world 2019. The honouring ceremony was held under the patronage of Sayyid Dr. Fahd Al Julanda Al Said, SQU Vice Chancellor.

A list, published by researchers from the US-based Stanford University, containing the 2 percent top researchers in the world in 2019, showed the names of 43 researchers from the Sultanate, 23 of them are from SQU, including 5 Omanis.

They are Prof. Dr. Yahya Mansour Al Wahaibi in the field of energy and chemical engineering, Prof. Dr. Sabah Ahmed Al Suleiman in the field of environmental sciences, Prof. Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Al Sa’adi in the field of plant and biological sciences, Prof. Dr. Samir Hamad Al Adawi in the field of neurology, and Dr. Mohammed Hamdan Al Badi in the field of energy.

The list of Stanford University has largely depended on how often researchers from different countries of the world have cited their published research. This indicates the quality of scientific outputs from SQU and its use as references of research at the global level. **-ONA**

INITIATIVES

Awareness campaigns on rational use of electricity

< FROM A1

Adding to this, Dr Mansour bin Talib Al Hinai, chairman of the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), said his organisation would continue to protect the interests of people in the country while this plan was being implemented.

“We need to monitor the costs of providing these services, by reviewing all our spending and returns,” he explained.

“We have also taken a number of initiatives to educate communities about rational use of electricity. A team consisting of Omani youths has been formed to raise awareness in this area. We have also begun awareness campaigns to ask people to switch to more energy-efficient devices.

“We will hold periodic dialogues which will look at the costs of energy and water in the country, and will undertake future projects to reduce them, which is one of the objectives of Vision 2040,” added Al Hinai.

“Among the initiatives we have undertaken as part of this is the generation of domestic energy through solar panels.

“However, anyone who abuses our services will be reviewed, and they money for which they seek compensation from us will not be given to them,” he warned.

Dr Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, said that the government needs to make sure the main economic sectors of the country continue to function during the pandemic, and to lessen its impact on the nation’s small and medium enterprises.

“Among the challenges facing our economy, due to the decline in oil prices, and the pandemic, is the need to maintain macroeconomic stability, which is measured in the form of GDP growth, economic growth, price stability, and the preservation of the purchasing power of the Omani Rial,” he explained.

“These challenges also include the halting and decline of economic activity, and the repercussions this has on the labour market,” he admitted. “This also includes the termination of Omani workers, and it is expected that this will lead to an economic contraction of about four percent. We have introduced several measures to alleviate the severity of the pandemic for our services to continue running.”

“The total value of the incentives to withstand the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic is about OMR 8 billion,” Al Saqri revealed. “The team from the National Programme for Fiscal Balance will present several recommendations that are aimed at mitigating the repercussions of the effects of the pandemic, and also lead to increased job creation and economic activity in the long run, as well as encouraging foreign direct investment in the country.”





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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Oman, Hungary sign pact to enhance economic cooperation



MUSCAT: Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, signed an agreement with Hungary on Monday.

The agreement aims at promoting the economic and technical cooperation among the public and private sectors in both countries, as well as establishing long-term economic relations and finding a conducive investment climate between the two sides.

Joint committee
The agreement includes forming a joint committee between the two countries to foster diversification of economic cooperation in fields of industry, energy, transport, communications, scientific research, logistic services, tourism, agriculture, environment and health.

Further, the agreement encourages the exchange and training of specialists, scientists, technicians and students, besides enhancing cooperation among government institutions, business communities, commerce and industry chambers.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Sultanate's Government by Dr Saleh Said Massan, Commerce and Industry Undersecretary while it was signed from the Hungarian side by Dr Tibor Szatmari, Ambassador of Hungary to the Sultanate. - **ONA**



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4	024/2020/OCC	OUTSOURCING OF IT AUDIT	RO. 50/-	21st January 2021, 5 PM	26th January 2021, 11 AM
5	025/2020/OCC	SUPPLY OF OILS AND LUBRICANTS	RO. 50/-	21st January 2021, 5 PM	26th January 2021, 11 AM

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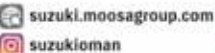
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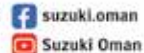
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VACCINATION DELAY

BioNTech-Pfizer delays COVID-19 vaccine deliveries to 8 EU nations

MADRID: BioNTech-Pfizer has postponed the delivery of new batches of its coronavirus vaccine to eight European nations including Spain, the Spanish health ministry said on Monday.

The hold-up is due to a "problem in the loading and shipment process" at its plant in Belgium, the health ministry said in a statement, citing the Spanish branch of Pfizer. The Spanish health ministry did not specify which European nations aside from Spain have been affected. The delay comes a day after Europe began its COVID-19 immunization program.

Delay 'linked to' temperature

Health Minister Salvador Illa told Spanish radio network SER that the delay was due to a problem "linked to the control of the temperature" of the shipments which was "apparently fixed."



The vaccine, which uses mRNA technology, is extremely sensitive to heat. It is stored at nearly -70 degrees Celsius (-112°F) ahead of shipping, before being sent to distribution centres in specially designed cool boxes filled with dry ice. On arrival, it must be kept at

2°C to 8°C for it to remain effective for up to five days.

Several German cities reported similar delays in receiving and administering coronavirus BioNTech-Pfizer on Monday after temperature trackers showed that they may not have been cold

enough due to inconsistencies in the cold chain.

Tobias Kurth, epidemiologist and director of the Institute of Public Health at Berlin's Charite hospital in Berlin told DW that Germany was already struggling with the low number of vaccines available. "The issue is that we don't have enough vaccines available in the first weeks or months. So the mass vaccination will likely start in March or even April," he said.

German Health Minister Jens Spahn told public broadcaster ZDF on Monday that the country "was doing everything together with BioNTech-Pfizer" to ramp up domestic production of the coronavirus vaccine in the country.

He said he hoped to get a production facility up and running in Marburg, in the central German state of Hesse, by February or March. **bw**



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TORRENTIAL RAIN

Storm Bella wreaks havoc across parts of France, UK

PARIS: Thousands of households in France and the UK were left without power on Sunday as storm Bella caused torrential rain and heavy winds in the region.

Brittany and Normandy in the north and west of France were the first regions to suffer power cuts, but "18,000 households were reconnected" later on Sun-

day, said power company Enedis. Some 34,000 households in the east and center of France were still without power as the storm made its way across the country. The storm has disrupted air travel, with over a third of flights from France's main airport in Paris suffering delays of an average of 50 minutes. **bw**




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Donald Trump signs COVID-19 relief bill, averts govt shutdown

Trump, who leaves office on January 20 after losing November's election, backed down from his threat to block the bill

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Sunday signed into law a massive \$2.3 trillion (€1.88 trillion) pandemic aid and spending package, restoring unemployment benefits to millions of Americans and averting a partial federal government shutdown.

The president announced the signing in a statement Sunday night. "I am signing this bill to restore unemployment benefits, stop evictions, provide rental assistance, add money for PPP, return our airline workers back to work, add substantially more money for vaccine distribution, and much more," the president said in a statement from his Christmas vacation at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

Trump, who leaves office on January 20 after losing November's election, backed down from his threat to block the bill, which was approved by Congress last week, after he came under intense pressure from lawmakers on both



COVID RELIEF BILL: Trump had earlier called the bill a "disgrace," demanding that various spending provisions, including some foreign aid, be ripped from the budget.

sides. Trump had earlier called the bill a "disgrace," demanding that various spending provisions, including some foreign aid, be ripped from the budget. He had also insisted that the direct stimulus payments to households be increased from the \$600 in the bill to \$2,000.

The president did not immediately indicate why he decided to sign now. Hours before he did, he said on Twitter to expect "good news."

Democrats are on board with the \$2,000 payments but many

Republicans have opposed it in the past.

Many economists agree the financial aid in the bill should be higher to get the economy moving again but say that immediate support for Americans hit by coronavirus lockdowns is still urgently needed. Unemployment benefits being paid out to about 14 million people through pandemic programs lapsed on Saturday but will be restarted now that Trump has signed the bill.

The package includes \$1.4 trillion in spending to fund govern-

ment agencies through September and contains other end-of-session priorities such as money for cash-starved transit systems and an increase in food stamp benefits. The relief bill would also provide funding for US states to distribute vaccines, replenish a loan program for small businesses and provide relief funds for airlines.

If Trump had not signed the legislation, then a partial government shutdown would have begun on Tuesday that would have put millions of government workers' incomes at risk. **bw**



Hundreds of British tourists flee quarantine in Switzerland

BERN: Hundreds of British guests put in quarantine over the new, more infectious variant of the coronavirus have fled the Swiss ski resort of Verbier, with some reemerging in neighbouring France, Swiss authorities reported on Sunday.

Verbier, an alpine village located in the municipality of Bagnes in Canton Valais, is a popular ski destination for British tourists.

Bagnes spokesperson Jean-Marc Sandoz said Swiss authorities had identified 420 guests from the United Kingdom who had been ordered into quarantine before Christmas.

About 50 fled immediately, and of the 370 others less than a dozen were still there on Sunday, he said, adding that some of the guests have reappeared in France.

"Many of them stayed in quarantine for a day before they set off unnoticed under cover in the darkness," he said.

According to local media, hoteliers began to suspect a "secret

departure" because calls to quarantine rooms "were repeatedly unanswered" and meals left in front of rooms "had not been touched."

"That was the worst week our community has ever experienced," Sandoz told a newspaper, calling it an "unprecedented situation." He said Bagnes felt abandoned by both the federal and regional governments.

Swiss 'understand' Brits' frustration

Sandoz condemned Switzerland's decision to hastily impose quarantine requirements for people arriving from the UK.

"We understand their anger," he said. On December 20, Switzerland blocked all flights from the UK and South Africa in connection to the new variants of the coronavirus found in those countries.

A day later, Swiss authorities ordered all people having arrived since December 14 to be quarantined retroactively for 10 days from their date of arrival. **bw**

Belarus authorities crack down on Lukashenko protesters

MINSK: Hundreds of demonstrators marched through the streets of Belarus on Sunday to protest against President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the country for more than a quarter century. Local human rights center Viasna said 13 people had been detained during the traditional weekend protests — 10 in Minsk and three more in other Belarusian cities.

Belarus media reported that groups of people took part in small rallies scattered throughout

the country and that heavy security forces were also present in Minsk. Videos showed protesters with red and white flags marching through courtyards in residential areas of the capital, chanting "Long live Belarus!" and "As long as we're united, we're invincible."

Opposition release balloons in protest

The democracy movement had called on Belarusians to release balloons as part of the protest.

At around noon local time on

Sunday, hundreds of red and white helium-filled balloons rose to the sky in Minsk.

"It is enough to open the window and let the balloon take off," an earlier appeal from the opposition said, pointing out that people did not have to leave their homes in order to protest.

The former Soviet nation has been rocked by mass protests every weekend since Lukashenko claimed victory in an August 9 election that gave him a landslide win. **bw**

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Green, Cummins dig in as bowlers put India on top

At stumps, Australia's score read 133/6 - lead by 2 runs - as India kept a tight rein on the hosts' batsmen and did not allow them to settle

MELBOURNE: Cameron Green (17*) and Pat Cummins (15*) played crucial knocks to help Australia stay afloat in the game after the Indian bowlers ran through the hosts' top-order in their second essay on the third day of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Monday.

At stumps, Australia's score read 133/6 - lead by 2 runs - as India kept a tight rein on the hosts' batsmen and did not allow them to settle.

With the Indian tail once again failing to contribute much, India ended their first innings on 326. But with a lead of 130 in the bag,



HISTORIC: Rahane hit his 12th century in the longest format of the game on Sunday.

the visiting bowlers came out all guns blazing to ensure that the hosts never really hit the accelerator in their second innings.

After the top-order collapsed, it was Green and Cummins' resilience that ensured that the horror of an innings defeat was avoided after their score read 99/6 at one stage with skipper Tim Paine sent back to the pavilion by Ravin-

dra Jadeja. With another 31 runs needed to make India bat again and just 4 wickets left, the game was spoilt to go either ways.

But the duo of Green and Cummins put their foot down and battled it out.

Australia witnessed a poor start to their second innings as Umesh Yadav dismissed Joe Burns in the fourth over, bringing in Marnus

Labuschagne to join Matthew Wade. Both provided their side with some momentum till Ravichandran Ashwin cut short their partnership by dismissing Labuschagne (28).

Labuschagne's dismissal brought Steve Smith out in the middle. Smith's (8) poor run continued as he could not contribute much and Jasprit Bumrah sent him packing in the 33rd over. When the team was two runs short of touching the 100-run mark, Australia lost the wicket of Wade, who played a knock of 40 from 137 balls. Mohammed Siraj then got hold of Travis Head as half of Australia's side was sent back to the pavilion. From 98/3, the score suddenly read 99/6 with Paine's dismissal.

Earlier, resuming day at 277/5, India got off to a decent start but just when things appeared to be going well for the visitors, skipper Ajinkya Rahane got run out while attempting a risky single. Jadeja though kept picking the runs as he hit his 15th half-century and India extended their lead over 100. However, in an attempt to add some quick runs, Jadeja went for the big shot off Mitchell Starc and found Cummins in the deep.

Umesh and Ashwin then stitched a brief stand of 19 runs before India lost their third wicket of the day. **-ANI**

Faheem, Rizwan help visitors avoid follow-on after Kiwi pacers run riot

TAURANGA: Faheem Ashraf's valiant 91 and stand-in skipper Mohammad Rizwan's fighting 71 helped Pakistan avoid the follow-on on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand here on Monday.

Pakistan folded for 239 courtesy an all-round bowling performance from the Kiwis, but it was Faheem and Rizwan's brilliant partnership that helped visitors pull off a recovery from 80/6.

For New Zealand, Kyle Jamieson picked three while Tim Southee, Neil Wagner, and Trent Boult bagged two wickets each. Resuming at 30/1, Pakistan got off to the worst possible start as New Zealand pacers took the wickets of both Abid Ali and Mohammad Abbas in the first 15 overs of play to leave the team at 45/3.

Jamieson continued from where he left the other day and sent back Abid before Boult dismissed Abbas in the 34th over.

Tim Southee then came firing on all cylinders and picked two wickets in the same over as Pakistan slipped to 52/5 in reply to New Zealand's 431.

New Zealand gave away just 32



runs and picked four wickets in the first session to extend their dominance in the game.

Neil Wagner, who was bowling with a fractured toe, dismissed Fawad Alam to leave Pakistan reeling at 80/6. However, much to the surprise, wicket-keeper batsman Rizwan and Faheem stitched a 107-run stand for the seventh wicket.

Both the batsmen brought up their half-centuries before Mitchell Santner ran Rizwan out with a brilliant throw. Ashraf continued his fine display of batting and helped Pakistan avoid the follow-on before the visitors were bundled out for 239. **-ANI**

FOOTBALL

Klopp says players are 'angry' after draw against West Brom

LIVERPOOL: After being held to a draw by West Brom, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp expressed frustration over the result and said his team should have won the game. Liverpool played out a 1-1 draw against West Brom in the Premier League here on Sunday. "We should have won the game, or we wanted to win the game and we didn't, and now we are all 'depressed' or whatever. The boys are angrier than anything else because they know that it was not perfect but that's it and now, of course, we have to play the next game in three days," the club's official website quoted Klopp as saying.

"We don't live in dream-land and just win football matches because we want to win them: we have to work for it and we have to play for it and we have to finish the situations off and we have to pass in the right moments. These kind of things, what the boys are able to do. That's it," he added.

Sadio Mane's superb 12th-



minute opener had put Liverpool ahead in the early stages of a dominant first-half performance. However, they were unable to force a second goal and, after the visitors had come back into the match following the break, Semi Ajayi headed in an equaliser inside the final 10 minutes.

Klopp further stated: "The problem that I have is I think West Brom deserved the point - it's our fault, but they deserved a point in the second half.. It's in the end a 1-1 and not a 1-0 or 2-0 or whatever. So that's what we have to accept and we do that, of course." **-ANI**

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Landmark Group, Danmark, BSI and Cricworld post wins

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Kuganeswaran Ramar's superb half century helped Landmark Group to an emphatic 6-wicket victory against Ghantoot Group in an E Division game at Muscat Municipality ground 4 in Amerat on Friday.

Nahas Theparambil struck an elegant 57 in Ghantoot's total of 139 all out. Hemant Magar and Ajay Kumar bowled well, taking three and two wickets respectively. Landmark raced to the target in just 13 overs, scoring 141 for 4 thanks to brilliant batting by Kuganeswaran (57) and Mohammed Thahir (45). Kamesh Maharaja took two wickets.

Brief Scores (E Division): Ghantoot Group 139 all out in 20 overs (Nahas Theparambil 57 - 7x4, Hemant Magar 3-21, Ajay Kumar 2-27) lost to Landmark Group 141 for 4 in 13 overs (Kuganeswaran Ramar 57 - 7x4, 2x6, Mohamed Thahir 45 - 9x4, Kamesh Maharaja 2-21) by 6 wickets.

Unas steers Danmark to victory

In another E Division match at the same venue, Unas Ali's 72 off 39 and Doresh Devender's 4 for 29 were the highlights of Danmark's 4-wicket win over Mazoon Up.

Mazoon Up posted a robust 190 for 8 on the board, thanks to main contributions from Bilawal Ali (56) and Mohammed Ali (31). Doresh was the pick of Mazoon bowler taking four wickets in his spell. Danmark's successful chase ended in the final over as it reached 191 for 6, thanks to splendid batting by Unas and Lal Shankarlal (38). Fahad Mohamed claimed 3 for 42 and Muhammed Ali 2 for 28.

Rakshan bowls BSI to big win

Rakshan Achary's magnificent 5 for 16 powered BSI to a big 113-run victory against Mazoon Dairy Company in an F Division match at OAC 3 ground in Seeb. BSI battled well to score 194 for 6 in 20 overs, Usman Siddique (59) and

Saud Haroon (49) being its main scorers. Ameer and Martin Yesupaul bagged two wickets each.

Mazoon Dairy slumped to 57 for 6 inside first ten overs, folding up for a dismal 81 in 15.5 overs. Rakshan did the bulk of the damage with his five-wicket haul while Saud Haroon picked up two.

Alif bats Cricworld to victory

Alif Hameed's sensational 16-ball 51 not out saw ACT Cricworld to a thumping 7-wicket victory against Muscat Young Stars in another F Division game at the same venue.

Young Stars managed to score a disappointing 107 for 6 which Cricworld overhauled in only 13.1 overs, scoring 112 for 3 thanks to Alif's brilliant knock in which he slammed 4 fours and 4 sixes. **Brief Scores (F Division):** Muscat Young Stars 107 for 6 in 20 overs (Tejas Rajeev 33 - 3x4, Shashank Ram Mohan 30 - 3x4, Jebin James 2-18, Rajan Anup 2-20) lost to ACT Cricworld 112 for 3 in 13.1 overs.

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by February 2020 reaching \$51.22, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman declined 19 cents. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSM index closed at 3,624.54 points, up 0.26 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.35 per cent at 516.93 points. Gulf Investment Services, up 5.81 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Hassan Engineering, down 12.50 per cent, was the top loser.

CMA creates new department to combat money laundering

The move will provide a safe investment climate for institutions in the capital market and insurance sectors, the Capital Market Authority said

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has created a new administrative structure for combating money laundering and for keeping an eye on terror financing as it is an organisational authority that ensures a safe investment climate for institutions in the capital market and insurance sectors.

This is in addition to achieving its main role in protecting the investors and policyholders' rights.

The establishment of this department comes with the authority's continuous efforts to meet the national and international requirements to complete the combat of money laundering and



BEST INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES: Establishing this department keeps pace with the best international practices and reflects the Sultanate's role and efforts at the regional and international levels in enhancing the combat of money laundering and financing terrorism system. - File photo

financing terrorism system and enhance its efficiency.

The authority issued previously this year the implementing regulations for combating money laundering and financing terrorism law number 30/2016 for the companies sectors working in securities, companies, brokers and insurance agents' fields.

Mohammad bin Said Al-Ibri, Vice-President of Capital Market Sector, said in his statement that the Capital Market Authority ensures by establishing this department

the continuous efforts for the Sultanate to enhance the legislative environment that provides sufficient protection for the institutions and the clients working in the capital market and insurance sectors.

"The establishment of this department is included in the preparation procedures to work on executing the national Oman vision 2040 based on achieving the main national priorities to develop the national economic system represented by achieving the financial sustainability, find an investment

and legislative environment that attracts investment, develop the institutional performance and coordinate the governmental efforts, alignment with the authority's strategic objectives based on enhancing the capital market and insurance performance and raise the awareness in addition to the sufficient raising of the authority's performance," Al-Ibri added.

He said that the new department will be specialised in reviewing and developing the legislations and instructions related to

combating the money laundering and financing terrorism crime in the capital market institutions, companies, brokers and insurance agents and following its compliance with legislations and instructions mentioned for combating this phenomenon. It will also enhance to spread the awareness and educational aspect for this international phenomenon's concepts and practices and how to limit and void it in the future. He ensures that raising awareness about the risks for practising money laundering and financing terrorism phenomenon and clarifying the regulations and precautionary measures to prevent it is considered the keystone for preventing and protecting the institutions and individuals from its economic consequences and effects.

International practices

On the other side, Al-Ibri clarified that establishing this department keeps pace with the best international practices and reflects the Sultanate's role and efforts at the regional and international levels in enhancing the combat of money laundering and financing terrorism system.

This department deals with protecting the capital market institutions, companies, brokers and insurance agents and their clients in the Sultanate from the money laundering and financing terrorism crime risks. This will enhance the trust level for the international

organisations, investor and clients from inside and outside the Sultanate in combating money laundering and financing terrorism system in the Sultanate.

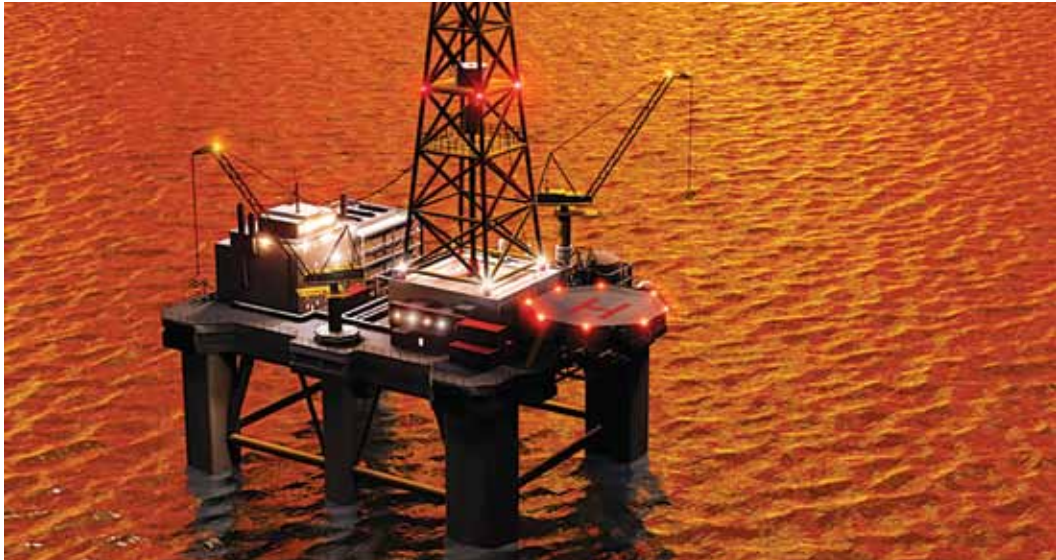
The concreted and complementary local, regional and international efforts are considered one of the means used to maintain the global financial system's stability through preventing the financial system used in the Sultanate for money laundering purposes resulting from the crimes and financing terrorism through adopting a control system based on the risks and for the best international practices followed in this regard.

Various tasks were assigned to this department like field and office examination and auditing.

The department also identifies which of the capital market institutions, companies, brokers and insurance agents are more exposed to money laundering and financing terrorism crime risks and working on raising its efficiency through putting adequate follow-up mechanisms and treatment programmes.

The department will study the capital market institutions, companies, brokers and insurance agents' conditions that are having problems in complying with combating money laundering and financing terrorism requirements, following the execution of condition compromising plans, analysing the financial statements and reports.

DHL REPORT



KEY TREND: Growth is expected to be subdued until at least till end 2021, but the oil and gas industry is optimistic that digitalisation and sustainability will feature more strongly in the region's agenda. - Supplied picture

Digitalisation to unlock up to \$2.6 trillion in energy sector

Times News Service

MUSCAT: DHL Global Forwarding has released a whitepaper examining the key trends impacting the oil and gas (O&G) industry in the Middle East and Africa.

According to the leading air, ocean and road freight specialist, digitalisation will continue to play a significant role in transforming the industry, potentially unlocking \$1.6 trillion to \$2.6 trillion by 2025. This is achieved as companies leverage digitalisation to improve margins, safety standards, as well as reduce emissions and water consumption.

The whitepaper predicts that owing to pandemic-induced slowdowns in travel, global oil demand will not reach pre-COVID-19 levels before the end of 2021. O&G companies in the Middle East and Africa region (MEA) need to take bold decisions to quickly reposition themselves, including redefining partnerships across the supply value chain, building resilience and going digital. For example, drones and autonomous robots can potentially reduce drilling and completion costs by 20 per cent in deep-water areas and 25 per cent in inspection and maintenance of assets.

Amadou Diallo, CEO, DHL Global Forwarding Middle East and Africa, who is also Executive Sponsor for the oil and energy sector at Deutsche Post DHL (DP-DHL) Group commented, "The

energy sector is grappling with multiple challenges due to the pandemic but it is not all doom and gloom, however. Whilst it is more critical than ever to ensure the smooth completion of projects, it is equally pertinent that energy companies leverage technology to offer smarter, simplified and greener solutions. To that end, DHL has implemented best-in-class logistics solutions for leading energy companies, such as TOTAL, to collectively tackle technological, digital and climate challenges."

The DHL whitepaper notes that increased investment in downstream projects will generate more value per barrel of oil through the production of value-added specialty chemicals and plastics. Over half of the global oil demand growth by 2025 is expected to come from the petrochemical industry - and this is evident in the region where national oil companies are already partnering with key players across key demand markets; for instance Saudi Aramco's non-binding deal for 20 per cent stake in Reliance's crude oil-to-chemical (COTC) operations.

Increased emphasis on sustainability

The whitepaper also highlights an accelerated transition towards a green economy. In 2019, 72 per cent of all new electricity generation globally came from renewable energy sources, and the

industry expects that nearly half (45 per cent) of the global energy demand growth until 2030 would be sourced from renewable energy. Keeping with the global shift to low-carbon energy, O&G companies are transforming from volume to value business models. Policymakers globally are also shifting gears toward decarbonising the economy.

The energy sector's drive toward sustainability and digitalisation is aligned with DHL's goal to reduce all logistics-related emissions to zero by 2050. Earlier this year, DHL launched a one-stop platform - myDHLi, to ensure customers have full visibility, control and access to all relevant information regarding their logistics operations and can calculate their emissions via the carbon calculator. DHL further announced that it would be neutralising the carbon emissions of all less-than-container load (LCL) ocean freight shipments from January 1, 2021.

Diallo concluded, "To stay relevant in a dynamic market, energy companies have to adapt and embrace new business models, which will allow them not only to participate but also to lead the global transition towards green energy. At DHL, we continue to work closely with our customers to optimise their complex supply chains and manage logistics costs better, so energy companies can focus on their core activities."

NCSI DATA

Oman's oil production reached 318.62mn barrels in November

MUSCAT: Oman's oil production, including condensates, stood at 318.62 million barrels until the end of November 2020, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The average oil price in November 2020 fell by 6.1 per cent compared to October 2020.

Of the total production, crude oil production fell by 8.9 per cent at 256.45 million barrels, while condensates production rose by 44.9 per cent to touch 62.17 million barrels.

The Sultanate recorded a daily average crude oil production of 951,100 barrels at the end of November 2020, against 971,000 barrels over the same period of 2019, the NCSI report added.

However, the average price of Oman Crude fell by 27.3 per cent to reach \$46.5 per barrel until the end of November 2020, from \$63.9 per barrel in the same period of 2019.



Korea 4,996,200 barrels and Japan 2,605,400 million barrels.

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

Meanwhile, Oman's natural gas production and imports fell to 42,215 million cubic metres (MNCM) at the end of November 2020, from 42,194 MNCM for the same period of 2019. Of this, non-associated gas and imports rose by 2.6 per cent to 35,450 MNCM and associated gas production fell by 11.5 per cent to 6,765 MNCM, added the NCSI report.

The use of natural gas in industrial projects fell by 3.8 per cent to reach 25,091 MNCM at the end of November 2020, against 26,087 MNCM for the same period of 2019. As much as 10,218 MNCM of natural gas was used in oil fields, against 8,886 MNCM units consumed for the same period of 2019. - **ONA**

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender title	Institutions eligible to bid and registered with the Tender Board	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
42/2020 Re-floated	Providing maintenance team to Al-Buraimi Vocational College (Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation)	Second Grade	Wednesday 06/01/2021 2:00 pm	Wednesday 13/01/2021 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tender's documents online through the following link, starting from Monday 28/12/2020 at 07:30 am: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Each bid shall enclose a tender bond for 1% of the total bid value in the form of a bank guarantee or certified cheque issued by a local bank addressed to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and valid for 90 days from the date of bid submission.
- Bids shall be submitted online along with a copy of the bank guarantee, provided that the original bank guarantee shall be submitted upon request by the Ministry.
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on Wednesday 13/01/2021.
(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

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MARKET

MSM index ends higher

Gulf Investment Services, up 5.81 per cent, was the top gainer, while Al Hassan Engineering, down 12.50 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSM index closed at 3,624.54 points, up 0.26 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.35 per cent at 516.93 points. Gulf Investment Services, up 5.81 per cent, was the top gainer, while Al Hassan Engineering, down 12.50 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Gulf Investment Services was the most active in terms of number of shares traded and Bank Muscat was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 381 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.05 million, with more than 6.0 million shares changing hands. Out of 38 traded stocks, 9 advanced, 6 declined and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR179,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR146,000 followed by foreign

investors for OMR33,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 5,603.16 points, up by 0.31 per cent. Gulf Investment Services, Al Sharqiya Investment Holding, Al Anwar Holding, National Bank of Oman, and Sohar International Bank were up by 5.81 per cent, 4.48 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.29 per cent, and 1.09 per cent respectively. Al Madina Takaful and Oman Arab Bank were down by 1.33 per cent and 0.57 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 4,212.05, points, up 0.21 per cent. Raysut Cement and Al Maha Ceramics were up by 1.80 per cent, and 1.40 per cent respectively. Al Hassan Engineering and Al Jazeera Steel Products were down by 12.50 per cent and 0.72 per cent respectively.

Services index was up by 0.21 per cent before closing at 1,570.87 points. – **United Securities**

MUSCAT SECURITIES MARKET

INDICES						
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSM30 Index	3,624.54	3,615.18	3,624.54	3,615.18	9.36	0.26
Financial Index	5,603.16	5,584.35	5,603.16	5,586.04	17.12	0.31
Industrial Index	4,215.36	4,203.26	4,212.05	4,203.26	8.79	0.21
Services Index	1,572.43	1,567.39	1,570.87	1,567.50	3.37	0.21
MSM SHARIAH INDEX	517.66	514.51	516.93	515.13	1.80	0.35
MSM TOTAL RETURN	4,136.41	4,125.73	4,136.41	4,125.73	10.68	0.26

Trading Summary						
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal
6,036,405	1,050,373	381	20,158,679,249	9	6	23
Sec. Traded						
38						

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 28

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (R)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HOLDING	50,000	3,500	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.067	0.003	4.478	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	6,300,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVESTMENT AND FINANCE	807,800	70,805	48	0.086	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.085	0.003	3.529	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	173,588	59,041	25	0.340	0.344	0.338	0.340	0.334	0.006	1.796	0.338	0.338	0.340	0.100	68,000,000
OM0000001772	AL ANWAR HOLDING	10,000	617	2	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.001	1.639	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	62,943	13,688	10	0.220	0.220	0.216	0.220	0.215	0.003	1.395	0.219	0.219	0.220	0.100	11,990,000
OM0000003386	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	502,000	46,620	8	0.092	0.093	0.092	0.093	0.092	0.001	1.087	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.100	226,409,126
OM0000001190	NATIONAL GAS	100	14	1	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.140	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.100	11,900,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	317,151	77,068	10	0.243	0.244	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.000	0.000	0.243	0.242	0.243	0.100	80,402,069
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	536,992	209,195	18	0.390	0.392	0.388	0.390	0.390	0.000	0.000	0.392	0.390	0.392	0.100	1,267,313,790
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOMMUNICATION	37,416	26,491	11	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.000	0.000	0.708	0.708	0.712	0.100	531,000,000
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	2,000	664	2	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.336	0.336	0.000	0.000	0.332	0.328	0.332	0.100	79,433,760
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	36,742	14,256	13	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.388	0.390	0.100	252,566,361
OM0000002176	AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	297,100	41,108	22	0.140	0.140	0.137	0.138	0.139	-0.001	-0.719	0.138	0.137	0.138	0.100	17,235,918
Total	13	2,833,732	563,076	171												

Parallel Market

OM0000002820	GULF INVEST SERVICES HOLDING	1,622,369	147,167	82	0.087	0.094	0.087	0.091	0.086	0.005	5.814	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.100	1,782,131
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	373,900	86,417	33	0.225	0.235	0.225	0.231	0.223	0.008	3.587	0.231	0.225	0.240	0.100	14,138,187
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN	6,000	942	2	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.155	0.002	1.290	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.100	255,273,578
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINE. INVT.	14,800	1,480	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.105	0.100	12,000,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	2,188	450	2	0.202	0.206	0.202	0.205	0.205	0.000	0.000	0.206	0.206	0.207	0.100	6,150,000
OM0000001301	DHOFA CATTLE FEED	204	22	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.000	0.108	0.100	9,378,600
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	340	240	3	0.700	0.716	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.000	0.000	0.716	0.704	0.716	0.100	110,250,000
OM0000001517	HSCB BANK OMAN	164,699	14,989	10	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.091	0.093	0.100	182,028,464
OM0000001822	UNITED POWER	100	90	1	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.000	0.896	0.900	0.896	1.000	793,600
OM0000002188	AL ANWAR CERAMIC TILES	258,920	64,730	8	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.250	0.252	0.100	74,053,421
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	21,500	2,688	4	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.131	0.100	206,207,183
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	95,372	4,006	9	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.041	0.042	0.100	14,664,065
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING AND CON.	32,471	1,299	4	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.039	0.040	0.100	11,599,225
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	62,300	5,921	2	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.095	0.097	0.100	142,500,000
OM0000004735	SENBICORP SALALAH	13,750	1,348	2	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.098	0.101	0.100	93,548,051
OM0000004925	AL BATINAH POWER	87,700	4,385	10	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.100	33,744,372
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	145,039	7,397	9	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051	0.052	0.100	36,434,723
OM0000007407	DHOFA GENERATING COMPANY	1,000	188	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.187	0.187	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.187	0.190	0.100	41,558,880
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FU	1,100	109	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.093	0.099	0.100	19,800,000
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	124,558	21,818	2	0.175	0.177	0.175	0.175	0.176	-0.001	-0.568	0.177	0.175	0.177	0.100	295,146,790
OM0000004788	AL MADINA TAKAFUL	129,965	9,672	10	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	12,950,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	15,477	811	4	0.052	0.054	0.052	0.052	0.053	-0.001	-1.887	0.054	0.052	0.054	0.100	76,055,276
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	6,000	972	3	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.180	-0.018	-10.000	0.162	0.000	0.162	0.100	15,843,950
Total	23	3,178,742	377,137	205												

GOVERNMENT REPORT

Japan's industrial output flat in November after five months of continuous increases

TOKYO: Industrial production in Japan was flat in November compared to a month earlier, bringing an end to a five-month streak of increases, the government said in a report.

According to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the seasonally adjusted index

of output at factories and mines stood at 95.2 against the base of 100 for 2015. The latest preliminary reading comes on the heels of an upwardly revised 4.0 per cent increase in October and brings to an end five straight months of increases.

The index of industrial ship-

ments in November, meanwhile, dropped 0.9 per cent to 94.0, while inventories slipped 1.1 per cent to 94.6.

Looking ahead, manufacturers surveyed by the ministry said they expect factory output to fall 1.1 per cent in December and rise by 7.1 per cent in January. – **xinhua**

NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTRE

NBC signs incubation pact with local skincare platform

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The National Business Centre (NBC), which falls under the umbrella of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn, signed an incubation agreement with Keatha Platform – an online platform that displays local and international beauty, skincare, perfume and fashion products.

Managed by Omani cadres, the platform features products of emerging Omani companies with the same concept of products that are displayed by Keatha. Rahma Al Habsi, Owner of Keatha, stated that the project aims at creating a healthy lifestyle for the users of the featured products and showcasing the trends in the skincare and fashion industry. Keatha also plans to hold training courses and live sessions with professionals from the industry in future.

Managed by Omani cadres, Keatha features products of emerging Omani companies with the same concept of products that are displayed by Keatha – an online platform that showcases local and international beauty, skincare, perfume and fashion products

It is worthwhile to mention that NBC is an initiative launched by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn at the Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM) to offer promising Omani entrepreneurs a platform to develop their business ideas and advance them into growing ventures. The

centre offers a premier platform for Omani entrepreneurs by providing business development support and guidance, training and mentoring, access to markets and industry experts, and state-of-the-art and fully equipped office space, meeting rooms and presentation facilities.

INVESTMENT INFORMATION

Securitisation volumes expected to bounce back in India in FY2022

NEW DELHI: The quarterly securitisation volumes will continue to strengthen for rest of the current financial year and remain robust in FY2022, investment information agency ICRA said. After a sharp fall in Q1 FY2021, the volumes more than doubled in Q2 due to three main factors. Growing investor confidence in asset quality due to improving collections. Two: higher funding requirement of originators on account of increasing disbursements. And three: improving business activities post the end of the lockdown and moratorium period.

Even though the collections may not have reached the pre-COVID levels, the credit enhancement available in transactions has further built-up owing to amortisation of pools supporting their credit quality.

Resumption of businesses, as the lockdown was gradually eased, will also support the ability of retail borrowers to meet their EMI payments.

ICRA said it expects collection efficiency across asset classes to further improve and remain robust in FY2022, notwithstanding any prolonged period of the economic slowdown that could have a bearing on the ability of the borrowers to sustain their EMI repayments. – **ANI**

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Shawati al-Ghazail Trad & Cont joint company announces that it is registered with the commercial register secretariat at the Ministry of Trad & Industry under No 1119413 announces that it is in the process of transferring its legal from joint - company to(One Person) company in accordance with Article No 30 of the Commercial Companies Law No. 2019/18 .. and its amendment and on the all anyone who objects to this must submit the reasons for his objection to the Commercial Registry Secretariat at the Ministry of Trad & Industry within a period of one month from the date publishing of this announcement.

Hamed Bin SalemaI Buraiki & his Partner for Trad joint company announces that it is registered with the commercial register secretariat at the Ministry of Trad & Industry under No 3084663 announces that it is in the process of transferring its legal from joint - company to(One Person) company in accordance with Article No 19 .. and its amendment and on the all anyone who objects to this must submit the reasons for his objection to the Commercial Registry Secretariat at the Ministry of Trad & Industry within a period of one month from the date publishing of this announcement.

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Indian male accountant with 5 years of accounting experience in Oman up to finalisation MIS, excel.seeks suitable positions. Contact: 93964920 Email: gokulah1993@gmail.com

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Sr.Accountant, Male, Semi qualified CMA US, MBA-Fin, 17 years exp on finance & accounts with Oman DL seeks suitable placement. Contact 78392239

Indian Bcom graduate having more than 10 years experience in Oman, expertise in Receivables / Payables and Inventory management looking for a suitable job. Contact. 91019796

Indian Male, Bcom, MBA 19 years experience in Budget,Banking,Audit, MIS,Payroll,ERP(Epicor,Sage,Tally, Oracle). NOC available. ready to join immediately. GSM 91190552.

M.Com/CA, 10+yrs of experience in accounts, finance, banking, taxation, MIS seeking suitable opening. DL, NOC available. Contact 92930407, 79202015

Assistant Accountant, Indian male, B Com 12 years experience in Oman with D/L and NOC seeks suitable placement. Contact 96395258

Looking for Senior Accountant Position Having 10 Years Experience, and driving license also . Mob - 79202007

Sudanese 32 yrs,6 yrs experience in Oman in Accounting & Administrative assistant.contact 94050251. email danygalaxy184@gmail.com

Indian male senior accountant with 20 yrs experience of accounting upto finalisation on SAP, tally, excel, Noc & DL available seeks suitable position. Contact 97887472, 71206125 Email asifkoman786@gmail.com

Accountant Indian Male, M.com 13 years experience in Oman with good knowledge in Focus ERP seeks placement. NOC available # 99757409

Accountant, office administration, back office.Contact 93403636.Email munafshaikh22@gmail.com

Indian female, M.com (Finance) & MBA (HR), 6 years experience seeking an opening in Muscat. Contact 95340104; sunilasunil30@gmail.com

Part time accountant with more than 12 yrs expereinece in different financial sectors.Good working knowledge of ERP softwares & advanced excel.Can do audit & cerification & consultancy work. Contact 94197499. Email ma.abdul1988@gmail.com

Indian, Male working as Senior Accountant over 16 years of experience in Accounts looking for a Job Contact: 95851920,78258270

Available 31 years Oman experienced Data Entry Operator in English/Hindi/Marathi & knowledge of Accounting. Contact +968 92720543

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GSM: 93823132

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Email: DolphinOcean367@gmail.com

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

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

Project Manager/Engineer Structural/Civil Engineer

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

ELECTRICAL MANAGER

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

QUALITY MANAGER

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

HSE Eng/Advisor, Msc Env & NEBOSH IGC with 10 years extensive construction, safety exp. Immediately available with NOC.
Contact 95193937

Execution Architect/ Finishing Manager

36, Male in design/ execution at consultancy & contracting with 13 Work experience in Hotel/Office/ Airport/ retail in Construction/Interior fit-out Space seeking suitable placement. Knowledge on CAD/ MS office/ Planning/ Tendering/ Estimation. D/L and NOC available immediately.
Contact: 78371040;
architdesign2020@gmail.com

FINANCE MANAGER

Group-Finance Manager, 19 years' experience in Strategic planning, Finance, Accounting, Income tax, VAT etc. Qualified CPA, CMA, CIA. Looking for Senior management position in finance/ internal audit. Available to join shortly.
Contact 92148608 / soji_ ansu@yahoo.com

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Email: muhdfahiz007@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Indian, Male, having bachelor's degree looking for position in Office Administration/ Document Control, total 22 years of experience, 19 years in Oman with Oman driving licence. NOC available.
Contact No. 99757759

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

CIVIL ENGINEER

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Call or Wts app 98333185

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Contact: 78235621/bsda@ymail.com

Smart Indian, excellent English, Research & Technical Writing Skills, Double Masters (Finance, Journalism & Mass Communication), Arabic Speaker, 17years Oman experience in Airport Project, Hospital, Media, EPC seeks role in Admin/HR/Projects/Corporate & Marketing Communications/Operations/ Customer Relations/Role in Chairman/CEO Office. Immediate joining. NOC.
99283938 / rajansampath@hotmail.com

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Indian, Group-Finance Manager, 19 years' world class experience in Strategic planning, Finance, Accounting etc. Multiple Professional qualifications in Accounting and audit. Looking for Top/Senior management position in finance/ internal audit. Available to join shortly.
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Email: sljobseeker72@gmail.com
Contact: 96223114

I T

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Contact on 93339660 for further details

Omani DL holder Indian from Kerala looking for a job in F M C G sector. 12 year experience in Oman. Speak Arabic, English, Hindi and Malayalam. Work experience in all over Oman.
Interested please Contact 94022634

JOB WANTED

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Indian Male 43.y.o seeking a suitable opportunity in Admin/Mktg/Ops Noc & D/L available. PH. 98274545

Indian male with 21 years' experience in Oman seeks job for HR/Admin. Contact 95425764

Indian male, 13yrs Oman Experience in Stores, Purchase, Operation, Admin. D/L.Immediate joining. # 78363835

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Office manager / Business coordination / project administration Indian Graduate Male Experienced in Engineering Consultancy & Construction Contacting Companies looking for a suitable placement. Ready to join immediately with Oman DL & NOC. Contact: 79705674
Email: pramoda.online@gmail.com

Indian Male seeking Admin/HR Job having 23 years of experience in Oman with Valid DL and NOC available - Contact: 99578192

Indian female with 10 yrs experience in payroll, executive secretarial,general admin/HR with valid D/L,looking for suitable placement. Contact 96441865. Email reeteequ1779@gmail.com

Omani Male 35 yrs old, looking for a PRO job. Has experience 14 yrs in the same field. Contact 92049106, 95422144

Indian Female 10 years' experience in Muscat, for the post of Sales Coordinator, Secretary or Office cum Commercial Assistant. Contact 94048550, 95431427. E-mail: bmnair27@yahoo.com

Indian Male, MBA,BCOM having 6 years Gulf & 4 years India experience in HR / ADMIN & Purchase looking for suitable placement. Contact 97914340, 92369044. Email: sampathrajkv@gmail.com

Indian female 29. Experience in telemarketing/secretarial/office admin work. On family visa. Ready to join ASAP. Muscat. 93605361

Smart Indian, Excellent English, Masters, Arabic speaker, 17years Oman experience including Airport Project, Hospital, Media, EPC. Immediate. Contact 99283938

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Looking for driving job. Contact 96312087

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Looking for driving job with Car. 6 yrs experience. Contact 96176918

Looking for job in driving, with 5 yrs experience. Contact 96189448

Driver need job with own Car. Contact 94087980

Driver, Electrician, plumber looking for job. Contact 96750080

Looking Heavy driver job. Contact 91703829

Looking for driving job, 8 yrs experience. Contact 79352646

IT

Indian Post Graduate with 21 years experience in Oracle SQL, PL/SQL, Forms, Reports, DBA, IT Manager, Orion ERP, Sage ERP with Accounts Knowledge and NOC. Contact 95398567 / 78141598 / anas2k@gmail.com

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Mobile app developer - MCA graduate with 5 years exp in Mobile App development.Interested can contact below. Contact 96879202545

MANAGER

Indian, Finance Manager 20Yrs Experience, Trade finance - MIS - Budget - Planning - Auditing - Finalisation - Banking: 90473368, devan801@gmail.com

Smart Indian Manager, Excellent English, Arabic Speaker, 17years Oman experience, seeks Corporate Communication/Operations/Management/Administration/HR/Suitable Role. Immediate. 99283938.

Accounts/Finance Manager 29 years experience, worked with reputed groups, expert in cashflow & Credit management, arranging loans, budgeting, Internal and external auditing etc. Contact: 98803439

MEDICAL

Indian Male 43.y.o seeking a suitable opportunity in medical centers for Admin/Mktg/Ops.Noc & D/L available. Contact 98274545

General practitioner 25+ years in Oman. Seeks employment in CLINIC. Contact 78356337

ENGINEER

Quantity Surveying, preparation of documents like BOQ. 23 years in Oman searching a job from contractor or consultant has experience in Civil, MEP, landscaping and interior decorations. Contact 93072517

B.E Civil engr with 14 years of Oman experience mainly in building construction looking for a suitable position. Contact: 72132426

Project engineer experienced in aluminium Industry with valid Oman DL,seeks job. Contact 79500069

Indian 22/Male, B.Tech (Comp. Science) from SRM University, Chennai, Interned at Uniq Technology, Chennai as an Android App developer is looking for an immediate placement. # 95495877

HVAC engineer with 1 year Experience seeks job. Contact 79027224

Mechanical engineer of Car diagnostic and maintenance with experience three years. Contact 93521100

Civil Engineer with 17 years experience in construction field and site supervision for bridges, infrastructure-projects and buildings with overseas consulting companies. Contact 96292267

Site and Planning Coordinator -12+ years Oman exp - Oil and Gas sector-knowledge of PDO rules and specifications, - work experience with large projects, multi-cultural teams, and MS Office. Contact - moinuiddins18@yahoo.com / 0091-7032030093.

Indian Female Structural Engineer (B-Tech Civil), 18 Years Gulf Experience is seeking for suitable placement. Having valid visa and driving license. Ready to join Immediately with necessary documents. Contact: 79858363.

Indian Civil QA/QC Engineer, Inspector (BE Civil, PDO approved, QMS Auditor, Oman Driving licence, NOC) with 10 years of experience looking for new job. 96359447, +919901059827

Facility engineer. (BE) 12 years exper. in electrical or maint.engineer field, valid Oman DL. Seeking facility or maint.engineer job. Contact 94493654 or syamsk2255@gmail.com

Senior Planner for Infra projects highway and buildings (B.Tech.Civil with 17 yrs Exp) Immediate join. local transfer -NOC. Contact : 91170802. Email: vvvrtammu@gmail.com

Civil engineer Quantity surveyor, 14+ years experience in infrastructure,Road & Building Projects,Oman DL,Gulf experience 12 years NOC available. Contact -97552659. Email shafic1983@gmail.com

Sri Lanka male QS Having 6 years Experience and looking for a suitable job in Oman and ready to join Immediately contact 79473123

Electrical engineer, experience 12 year in Oman. Contact 98148034

M/48, PM Civil Engineer, Indian 28 yrs exp (18 yrs in Oman) with consultants/client seeks placement. contact 92370274

B.Tech Civil Engineer with 10+ yrs experience valid Oman DL, looking for suitable position. Available for immediate join. Noc available. Contact 79023001

Project/Civil engineer with 8 yrs experience in construction projects, gulf experience & DL available. Contact 97906770

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

B.E civil engineer having 12 plus years of Oman experience in building construction looking for a suitable position. Contact: 72132426

B.E Civil Engineer having Oman experience looking for false ceiling sub contracting jobs plus building maintenance works. Contact: 79882467

B.Sc in Civil Engineering having more than 12 years experience in Oman. Hand on experience in Ministry of Health, MOD,ROP and RCA prestigious project. Available in Oman with NOC and Valid DL. Contact 92180869, E-mail: mamuns02@yahoo.com.

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MBA,7 yrs experience in Marketing seeks job with Oman DL. Contact 97200806. Email haleemkply@gmail.com

Indian male, bachelor's degree seeks job in Sales, customer service,administration.12 yrs experience in Oman with Oman DL. Contact 97268429.Email dinojthomas@gmail.com

23 yrs old indian male experience in sales & logistics seeking for suitable job opportunities. Contact 79964123. Email raheelrahman123@gmail.com

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

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Email kvvinodk@gmail.com

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Finance Manager, 28 years Oman experienced worked with reputed groups, Managing Cashflow, MIS, Budget, Forecast etc. Contact 968-98803439 (Call/Whatsapp)

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Diploma civil Indian male 26 yrs 5 yrs oman exp, NOC ready, sales/procurement/stores. E.mail vijju.asp7777@gmail.com, GSM/WA 00918712330030

Senior Procurement Engineer, M.tech-Civil, Looking for a job, NOC Available, Immediate Joining, Indian Male, 38yrs, have over 16+ years UAE& Oman experience. E. syed-kamaalsaba@yahoo.com, Watsapp +96871144578, GSM +917766019519

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

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ROUND-UP

Oman Air, Qatar Airways agree on expanded code-share pact

The expanded code-share agreement is the first step in further strengthening strategic cooperation between the two airlines that first began in 2000

DOHA: Qatar Airways continues to expand its portfolio of strong, globally strategic partnerships by signing an expanded codeshare agreement with Oman Air that will boost connectivity and provide more flexible travel options for both airline's customers.

The expanded code-share agreement is the first step in further strengthening strategic cooperation between the two airlines that first began in 2000. Sales of the additional destinations will commence in 2021.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker, said, "We are pleased to further expand our code-share cooperation with Oman Air, one of the leading airlines in the Gulf region. Now more than ever, it is important to strengthen strategic partnerships across the industry to optimise



our operations and provide seamless connectivity to hundreds of destinations across the globe for our passengers.

"Since 2000, both airlines have seen the benefits that commercial cooperation has brought, providing our passengers with unrivalled service and more flexibility to travel when they want. I look forward to further strengthening our commercial cooperation with Oman Air to provide even more benefits to our customers."

Oman Air Chief Executive Officer Abdulaziz Al Raisi said, "We are delighted to expand our commercial cooperation with Qatar Airways, which will streamline flying for leisure travellers from around the world to enjoy Oman's culture, scenic beauty and hospitality, and facilitate travel for those who visit the Sultanate of Oman for abundant, fast-growing business opportunities across a diverse range of sectors. The expansion of our code-share agreement is just the first step, and we look forward to working with Qatar Airways to

further strengthen our strategic partnership to enhance the business and leisure travel experience for our customers in Oman and throughout the world."

The code-share expansion will significantly increase the number of destinations available to Oman Air passengers from three to 65* on the Qatar Airways' network across Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe, India, and the Middle East. Qatar Airways passengers will also benefit from additional connectivity, with the ability to book travel on an additional six destinations across Africa and Asia in Oman Air's network. Both airlines will also explore several joint commercial and operational initiatives to further optimise their partnership.

Qatar Airways' strategic investment in a variety of fuel-efficient, twin-engine aircraft, including the largest fleet of Airbus A350 aircraft, has enabled it to continue flying throughout this crisis and perfectly positions it to lead the sustainable recovery of in-

ternational travel. The airline recently took delivery of three new state-of-the-art Airbus A350-1000 aircraft, increasing its total A350 fleet to 52 with an average age of just 2.6 years. Due to COVID-19's impact on travel demand, the airline has grounded its fleet of Airbus A380s as it is not environmentally justifiable to operate such a large, four-engine aircraft in the current market.

Qatar Airways has also recently launched a new programme that enables passengers to voluntarily offset the carbon emissions associated with their journey at the point of booking.

The national carrier of the State of Qatar continues to rebuild its network, which currently stands at over 110 destinations with plans to increase to 129 by the end of March 2021. A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was named 'World's Best Airline' by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by Skytrax.

It was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', 'World's Best Business Class', and 'Best Business Class Seat', in recognition of its ground-breaking Business Class experience, Qsuite.

The Qsuite seat layout is a 1-2-1 configuration, providing passengers with the most spacious, fully private, comfortable and social distanced Business Class product in the sky. It is the only airline to have been awarded the coveted 'Skytrax Airline of the Year' title, which is recognised as the pinnacle of excellence in the airline industry, five times.

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Bank Muscat wins MT 103 Elite Quality Recognition Award

It is a matter of great pride that the awards won by Bank Muscat recognise the ultimate level of performance by client banks

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, has once again been recognised by JP Morgan for its best in class Straight-through Processing (STP) rates for its US Dollar Clearing operations.

A global leader in financial services offering solutions to the world's most important corporations, governments and institutions, JP Morgan has been giving these awards since 1997 to acknowledge the consistent high-quality performance of client fund transfer operations.

It is a matter of great pride that the awards won by Bank Muscat recognise the ultimate level of performance by client banks. The MT 103 Elite Quality Recognition Award won by the bank is only given to clients who achieve STP of 99 per cent or more with a minimum debit volume of 8,000 MT 202 transactions.

Superior transaction

Recipients of these awards have to demonstrate superior transaction processing leading to higher efficiencies, faster payments, cost reductions and honouring of commitments to operational excellence to their customers. Bank



STP of 99.7 per cent or more with a minimum debit volume of 8,000 MT 202 transactions.

Muscat won the accolades after exceeding the elite benchmarks in both categories. Bank Muscat's exceptional quality of SWIFT messages on dollar payment and an outstanding error-free rate for remittances were highlighted by the two awards, which also appreciated the Bank Muscat's commitment to operational excellence and the valued partnership with JP Morgan.

The international payments landscape is an essential part of banking relationships in today's global economy. Given the dynamic environment and continuous enhancement in technology, the responsibility for quicker and efficient processing is a shared effort by all financial institutions that are involved in the payment cycle. Bank Muscat has established more than 500 correspondent banking

relationships across the world and JP Morgan is among Bank Muscat's prominent correspondent banks for dollar payments.

A multi-award-winning organisation, the bank's performance across different facets of banking and finance have been consistently lauded by the international financial and banking community for decades, with the bank winning similar awards from Wells Fargo,

Standard Chartered and Citibank in the past few years. Bank Muscat has also been listed by Forbes Middle East as one of the Top 100 companies in the entire region and has repeatedly won the Best Bank in Oman awards from EMEA Finance, Global Finance, The Banker and Euromoney. The bank won over 25 awards and accolades across its different lines of business in 2020.

PROGRAMME FOR SMES

UNIQUE SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES

Sharakah and HSBC Bank renew joint collaboration

MUSCAT: Fund for Development of Youth Projects, Sharakah and HSBC Bank Oman announced the launch of the second edition of "Istidama" Programme for SMEs.

The renewal of the programme comes as a result of the successful completion of the first edition that was held the last year and was funded by HSBC Bank Oman as part of its corporate sustainability agenda aiming to contribute to enhancing the role of SME's in the economy. Istidama programme is managed and implemented by Sharakah in partnership with Destination Sustainability, a personalised consultancy firm in Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility. It brings together international best practices and global research and innovation with deep local expertise and regional cultural awareness in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability Systems and Impact Measurement. Sharakah has signed a cooperation agreement with Destination Sustainability for assessing the sustainability aspects of the business. The agreement was signed by Dinkar Kishor, Deputy General Manager at Sharakah, and Shaima Al Lawati, Founder and General Manager of Destination Sustainability.

The programme aims to take the selected SMEs through an intensive evaluation of their business performance and sustainability practices including identifying areas of improvement, which will be executed over a period of 6 months.

This second edition of the programme will build on the success of its first edition, which received



very good feedback from the participants and has proven success in helping the enrolled SMEs in improving the sustainability practices within their businesses.

The selected SMEs will undergo a holistic evaluation with a focus on Sustainability practices.

The aim is to support SMEs to operate professionally and apply the best sustainability practices. It is worth mentioning that the applications received will be filtered and the participant will be selected by a panel consisting of a representative from Sharakah, HSBC Bank Oman and Destination Sustainability.

On the occasion, Shaima Al Lawati, Founder and General Manager of Destination Sustainability commented, "We are pleased to collaborate with HSBC Bank Oman and Sharakah for the second time to participate in implementing the Istidama programme. Through our role in this programme, we seek to evaluate the commercial projects of the participating SMEs to gain a

deeper understanding of the SMEs business status and positioning in regards to the sustainability aspects that include human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, and community involvement and development.

"We then shall propose areas of development as we believe in the role of these small and medium enterprises in contributing to sustainable environmental, social and economic development of Oman and their effects through socially responsible behaviour."

Nabiha Al Mandhari, Marketing Specialist at Sharakah further commented, "We encourage SMEs to utilise the opportunity to be part of the program for the sustainability of their businesses, registration is now open to all existing SMEs from all around Oman. Interested SME can register from <http://hsbc.sharakah.om>. All interested candidates should fill the form with accuracy and authenticity information about the business before January 3, 2021."

Grand Millennium Muscat offers amazing New Year's Eve deals

MUSCAT: Grand Millennium Muscat recently announced its wonderful and exciting offers to celebrate the festive season, especially the New Year's Eve.

The offers include providing accommodation and luxury dinner or even New Year's Eve dinner that allows lovers of joy and self-pampering a luxurious and varied dinner that includes all delicious food, beverages and entertainment activities that satisfy all tastes and suit all groups of different ages. The New Year's Eve dinner will be held on the night of December 31 and the reception of the first day of January.

With the days of the cold winter season and the advent of the festive season, the gathering is the best way to spread warmth between the loved ones. The offers and activities of Grand Millennium Muscat continue from the celebration of Christmas Eve, the end of the year, and the advent of the New Year.

Since the beginning of the month, the hotel has prepared itself waiting for its guests and lovers and welcoming its guests with a variety of the most famous food, beverages and gastronomic experiences that are diverse and unique to suit this celebration, which is accompanied by many musical evenings and dazzling entertainment events.

All this comes through the "Millennium Lazy Brunch" event, which provides visitors with a unique experience at Taybat Restaurant, which offers an elegant buffet of the most famous international food.

Grand Millennium Hotel is



distinguished by its distinctive location in the centre of the city. It enjoys a convenient and unique location in the middle of the business district, government and diplomatic departments, and steps away from the major shopping centres in the capital, Muscat. It is directly connected to Muscat Grand Mall shopping complex, and steps away from Avenues Mall, which includes a collection of the most famous and finest brands, and these days they launch wonderful festive season offers and sales, which reach 80 per cent in many stores.

This is what makes staying and having dinner at Grand Millennium Hotel a wonderful, unique and exceptional experience, through shopping, accommodation and dining at the Grand Stay Festive event. This event enables guests to pamper themselves with their families or loved ones and enjoy a luxurious feast befitting the end of the year and welcoming the New Year or enjoy a beautiful, unique and enjoyable stay in the

hotel crowned with the warmth of luxury, comfort and the genuine Omani hospitality for which Grand Millennium Hotel is famous.

Therefore, we can say that the dinner experience, or dinner and accommodation at Grand Millennium Muscat, combines enjoying a varied luxurious and delicious dinner that satisfies all tastes and entertainment, musical and singing activities, in addition to a unique shopping experience while saving a lot through this shopping experience.

Grand Millennium provides great discounts on reservations and self-management of your reservations. It also provides very special rates on your stay. The hotel includes 296 rooms and suites, and 40 spacious apartments, all with luxurious facilities and everything you need. You can indulge all your senses in the Zanta Spa that helps rejuvenation. Therefore, hotel accommodation allows the guest to enjoy an integrated experience in Muscat.

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