

HM ORDERS INTEREST-FREE LOANS FOR ENTREPRENEURS



MUSCAT: Within the context of Royal concern about the impact of coronavirus on the economic situation in the Sultanate, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has issued orders authorising a programme of interest-free emergency loans to assist some segments of entrepreneurs whose businesses took the brunt of the pandemic, particularly holders of Riyada Card (for small and medium enterprises) and self-employed entrepreneurs, as well as beneficiaries of loans of Oman Development Bank and Al Raffd Fund.

The loans shall be granted in accordance with terms and procedures set by the Supreme Committee, said a statement issued by the committee.

In its statement, the Supreme Committee prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect His Majesty the Sultan and keep him as a valuable resource for Oman and its loyal people. — ONA

HM WISHES MOROCCAN KING GOOD HEALTH

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik phoned King Mohammed VI of Morocco on Tuesday to check his health after his recent surgical operation. During the telephonic conversation, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere congratulations on the success of the operation, wishing him good health, well-being, quick recovery and the brotherly Moroccan people progress and prosperity.

The Moroccan King expressed his thanks and appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's gesture and sincere sentiments. He wished His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and long life. He also wished the Omani people further progress and growth under His Majesty's wise leadership. — ONA



With HM's blessings,
50th Renaissance
National Day Emblem
Endorsed

With the blessings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Secretariat General of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations has announced the endorsement of the 50th Renaissance National Day emblem. Shaikh Sabaa bin Hamdan al Saadi, Secretary-General of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that His Majesty endorsed the emblem of the 50th National Day of the Renaissance. DETAILS ON P2

MORE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL
ACTIVITIES TO OPEN FROM TODAY

MUSCAT: The Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic held a meeting on Tuesday under the Chairmanship of Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior.

The Committee decided to open a new set of commercial and industrial activities with effect from tomorrow (Wednesday), June 24. The departments concerned will announce the details of

the said activities and necessary health measures needed for their resumption. The Supreme Committee hereby urges all to stick to precautionary measures issued by the departments concerned. The Committee holds all responsible for their own protection and the protection of their families and communities against coronavirus infection. The Committee prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect all people against all harms. — ONA

SEE ALSO P4

50th Renaissance National Day emblem endorsed

MUSCAT: With the blessings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Secretariat General of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations has announced the endorsement of the 50th Renaissance National Day emblem. Shaikh Sabaa bin Hamdan al Saadi, Secretary-General of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that His Majesty the Sultan endorsed the emblem of the 50th National Day of the Renaissance.

Al Saadi pointed out that the Secretariat General of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations had announced a contest to design the slogan and



received a number of designs (from which one was endorsed). In this contest, Al Saadi prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect His Majesty the Sultan, grant him good health, and to bring back this glorious occasion and similar occasions for years to come while His Majesty enjoys well-being and long life. He also wished Oman plenty of bounties and prosperity. — ONA

SULTANATE COMMITTED TO SAUDI DECISION ON HAJ

KABEER YOUSUF

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs has acknowledged the decision on Haj taken by Saudi Arabia this year to conduct symbolic pilgrimage for those currently present in the country.

As per the decision on Monday, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs has also urged all citizens and residents to abide by the decision and not to try visit the holy land and to limit their prayers inside homes.

“This year’s Haj will be restricted to a symbolic, very limited number of pilgrims from within Saudi Arabia”, it said.

“We advise all citizens and residents in the Sultanate of Oman to abide by the decision taken by the KSA on Haj and not to try to enter the holy land during the Haj period”, said Abdulaziz bin Masoud al Ghafri, Assistant Director General of the General Directorate of Preaching and Guidance at the Ministry.

Haj pilgrimage is scheduled for late July this year. Over two million pilgrims visit the Kingdom to perform Haj rituals which is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world.

Saudi Arabia has asked all countries to put on hold their Haj plans and suspended the Umrah pilgrimage in March this year as more cases of COVID-19 reported from different parts of the world.



MINISTRY ISSUES STATEMENT ON LIMITED HAJ THIS YEAR

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs on Tuesday issued a statement on the Haj season for 1441 AH.

The following is the text of the statement: “Based on the statement issued by the competent authorities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which includes holding a very limited Haj this year 1441 AH, for those wishing to perform Haj rituals from different nationalities residing inside the Kingdom only.

This wise statement aims at preserving sharia objectives, taking



ONLY THOSE RESIDING INSIDE SAUDI ARABIA WILL BE ALLOWED TO PERFORM HAJ

into account the safety of the pilgrims from COVID-19 pandemic, and to achieve global health security in the face of the spread and rise of infections and precautionary measures

in this regard”. The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs would like to announce to the registrants in the electronic Haj system for the aforementioned season that no obligations are incurred because of that, including the inability to arrange their journey to perform the Haj rituals of this season. The registration mechanisms for the next season will be announced, according to the followed procedures. The statement prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect all and bestow peace and tranquillity on the whole world. — ONA

SULTANATE CHAIRS ARAB LEAGUE MEETING ON LIBYA

MUSCAT: The Sultanate presided over the emergency meeting of the Arab League at the ministerial level held on Tuesday via video conferencing to discuss developments in Libya and the construction of the renaissance dam in Ethiopia.

The session was presided over by Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdallah, Minister



Responsible for Foreign Affairs.

In his address, Alawi explained that the session is held on a request put forward by Egypt and endorsed by member states.

He added: "The current situation in Libya is regret-

table and we seek to address it with peaceful means. It is useful that one finds an excuse for one's brother in such situations."

Alawi underscored the bonds of brotherhood that hold the Arab countries together expressing his hope to reach a consensus in all the issues included in the meeting agenda. — ONA

SULTANATE DEPLORES ATTACKS ON SAUDI ARABIA

MUSCAT: The Sultanate followed up, with great anxiety and deep distress, the attacks staged at the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recently. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the Sultanate called for action to avoid any escalation which, Oman said, would be detrimental to the region's security and stability. The Sultanate urged all parties to focus, during the current period, on enhancing UN-sponsored efforts aimed at reaching rapid political settlement of the crisis in the sisterly Republic of Yemen in a manner that safeguards the neighbouring countries' security and interests. — ONA

1,318 MORE TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

MUSCAT: The Sultanate registered 1,318 new cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, in addition to 3 new COVID-19 related deaths. Out of the total cases, 853 were Omanis whereas 465 were non-Omanis. This brings the total number of positive cases to 32,394 in the Sultanate, in addition to 140 deaths, the Ministry of Health said. The ministry also pointed out that 871 new cases have recovered, bringing the total number to 17,279 cases. — ONA

Social Club facilitates repatriation charters

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH

SALALAH: A community club in Salalah is working on the possibility of engaging charter flights to facilitate the repatriation of Indians stranded in Dhofar Governorate.

The club is exploring the service in the wake of travel restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The first charter flight arranged by the Indian Club in Salalah is being considered for Kochi either on June 26 or 27, depending upon the standard approval from the governments of Oman and India. Others would be arranged based

on demand and destination.

Manpreet Singh, Chairman, Indian Social Club Salalah, said the club is exploring charter facilities based on demand for a particular destination. "We received requests for Kochi and as of now 175 passengers have confirmed seats."

"The club has roped in SpiceJet for the charter service and depending upon demand for other destinations in India the flights would be arranged," he said.

As of now seven repatriation flights have left Salalah Airport for the Indian state of Kerala. Five among them were under the Vande Bharat repatriation programme of the Government of India, while two were

private charters arranged by the Kerala based organisations called ICF and KMCC.

Three of the Vande Bharat flights took passengers to Kannur, while the other two were for Calicut and Kochi respectively. Both the private charters had passengers for Calicut.

Two more charter flights arranged by the KMCC are scheduled for Kochi and Kannur on Wednesday.

Intending to accommodate people from the maximum number of places in India, the Indian Club is exploring combined flights for two destinations depending upon necessary approvals, said the club chairman.

NOTIFICATION

This is to inform all concerned that Mr. Mohammed Fahad Ansari worked as Sr. Counselor, holder of Indian Passport No. R8902761, Resident Card No. 119032019 is no longer representing Strategy Management Consultancy Int. LLC (Stratix Consultants) Tel. 24502666 (+968 91739796) Office No. 310, Building No. 1/5941, Plot No. 106, Street No. 2501, Al Khuwair Oman.

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OIA consolidates 3 of its fisheries initiatives, dissolves boards

MUSCAT: Guided by the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to review the mandate and performance of government companies in order to develop and raise their efficiency and enable them to contribute effectively to Oman's economy, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) announced the completion of consolidating three of its investment initiatives in the field of fisheries, namely Blue Water LLC, Al Wusta Fishery Industries, and Oceanic Shrimp Aquaculture LLC,

to establish a new company under the name of the Fisheries Development Oman. The consolidation decision comes as a first step in the direction OIA intends to implement in the coming period to evaluate the performance of state-owned companies, in order to take the correct investment decision regarding them, whether by merging them, raising their capital, restructuring or exiting, according to its investment strategy, to ensure stronger returns from the state's financial resources.

The consolidation of these companies comes as a fruit of close cooperation between Oman Investment Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, a positive example of government institutions' cooperation with the investment authorities in the Sultanate and will create a positive incentive for private sector investors. The consolidation will include the dissolution of the boards of directors of the three companies to be under one board of directors, in addition to the integration of their

operations under one umbrella and one legal and investment entity. This will enhance the efficiency of investment and performance governance, as well as working to achieve unified economic and investment goals. The consolidation will push forward Barr Al Hikman Shrimp Aquaculture Farm, expected to be the second largest of its kind in the MENA region, with an area of 40,000 hectares, and an estimated production capacity of 200,000 tons of shrimp annually. — **ONA**

Fish markets in Muttrah, Seeb, Qurayat reopen

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality has announced the fourth package of commercial and industrial activities allowed to reopen from Wednesday, June 24. It should be noted that the decision to reopen a new package of commercial and industrial activities does not apply to a part of Al Hamariyah, the Wilayat of Muttrah and Wadi Kabir industrial area until further notice. The health guidelines attached to the previous decision for the reopening of the third package will be in place.

THE ACTIVITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

■ The fish markets in Muttrah, Seeb and Qurayat will be allowed to as of Wednesday, June 24. ■ Sale of charcoal and woods. ■ Travel and tourism offices. ■ Camel race tracks (for training only). ■ Installation of gypsum work. ■ Garment workshops. ■ Malls and commercial complexes (with abidance by health guidelines). ■ Labour recruitment offices. ■ Sale of used spare parts. ■ Sale of textiles. ■ Installation of CCTV cameras and protection systems. ■ Sale of doors and windows. ■ Sale of artificial jewellery. ■ Sale of iron and aluminum products. ■

Sale of paints and polishing materials. ■ Sale of plastic and paper leftovers. ■ Kitchen showrooms. ■ Sale and repair of traditional weapons. ■ Pottery and hand-made products. ■ Electric lift and stairs companies. ■ Sale of wood and iron boxes. ■ Furniture upholstery. ■ Sale of blacksmith requirements and aluminum chips. ■ Vehicle seats upholstery. ■ Ice factories. ■ Masar-making shops. ■ Sale and repair of musical instruments. ■ Repair of ACs and washing machines. ■ Tank factories. ■ Ink filling. ■ Sale of workshop requirements. ■ Make of Omani khanjar. ■ Financing offices. ■ Customs clearance and shipping offices. ■ Financial brokerage offices. ■ Cleaning companies. ■ Installation of thermal insulation. ■ Artistic production offices. ■ Sale of audio tape. ■ Metal printing. ■ Metal turning. ■ Sale and rent of wedding gowns. ■ Laundry. ■ Sale of antiques and paintings. ■ Garment workshops. ■ Sale and installation of hotel and kitchen equipment. ■ Advertising outlets. ■ Men's and women's garments. ■ Family consultants. ■ Sale of glass. ■ Cutting of used tyres. ■ Car driving instruction offices. ■ Hospitality services companies.



Recall For
Porsche Macan



Macan

Date of Campaign: 24 / 06 / 2020
Campaign Type: Technical
Campaign Section: Reworking service cover of fuel pump
Product Description: Porsche Macan

Number of Vehicles Affected	VIN Range		Production Year	Vehicle Model
	From	To		
237	WP1ZZZ95ZELB50172	WP1ZZZ95ZJLB08735	2013-2018	2014-2019

Description: There is a possibility that the bottom side of the service cover for the fuel pump may get into contact with the connection pipe of the fuel pump port.

Action Taken: The bottom side of the service cover has to be reworked to avoid possible contact between the underside of the service cover and the fuel support.

Contact Information: Service Department
Porsche Centre Oman
P.O. Box: 814, P.C:100
Tel. No. 2235 2940, ext: 400
Fax: 2235 2934
Email: info@satallc.co.om

CR. No. 1106236

STUDIES ON DIGITAL CULTURAL CONTENT, TOURISM REVIEWED

MUSCAT: The Culture, Media and Tourism Committee of the State Council held its 10th annual meeting on Tuesday, which was chaired by committee head Dr Aisha bint Hamad al Darmakiyah and attended by the panel members and employees of the General Secretariat.

The committee hosted officials of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, as part of the committee's studies on 'Omani digital cultural content' and 'Investment in traditional Omani heritage villages to attract tourism'.

The committee reviewed various aspects of its two studies with officials of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

Relating to the study titled 'Omani digital cultural content', it addressed the mechanism adopted by the ministry for marketing the Sultanate culturally and follow-up of presentation and cultural content and joint efforts to document and market the cultural product.

It also debated the cooperation between the Ministry of Heritage and



Culture and other governmental institutions, in addition to the challenges it faces in organising and marketing cultural content and its vision to overcome these challenges.

The committee also discussed the themes of the study 'Investment in traditional Omani heritage villages to attract tourism' and the talks touched on

STATE COUNCIL PANEL HOSTS OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND CULTURE

the legislation and laws that constitute a barrier in the restoration of the neighbourhoods. It also examined the role of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in the field of preserving the authenticity of the neighbourhoods, the future investment vision of post-restoration, in addition to plans for the development of the neighbourhoods.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA CELEBRATED

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT: The sixth edition of the International Day of Yoga (IDY), organised by the Embassy of India, Muscat, received enthusiastic participation from the Yoga lovers. The event was held on a virtual platform due to restrictions on public gathering owing to COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of this year's celebration was 'Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family'.

According to a press release from the embassy, the official event started with a brief introduction on IDY and glimpses of last year's mega celebration in Muscat followed by a brief speech by Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate.

"Yoga is a gift of India to the world and has become immensely popular around the world including in Oman," he said.



The ambassador also expressed his gratitude to the Omani government for its support to IDY and thanked the yoga organisations in Oman for their continuous contributions for promoting yoga.

A total of 44 events and sessions were

organised online on diverse themes including, Yoga for Immunity, Holistic Health, Mental Health, Women Well-being, Child Health and Youth, COVID-19 Frontline Warriors and Yoga at Workplace.

A video with messages by Omani officials, sport stars, ambassadors of different countries and other dignitaries on the enhanced importance of yoga in keeping mentally and physically fit was also played during the event.

After this, the message of Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi was played, who congratulated everyone on 6th IDY in extraordinary times and stated that yoga has linked the whole world as it helps to lead a holistic and balanced life. The event concluded with all the participants performing various yoga postures in complete harmony and unison by following the Common Yoga Protocol.

USE OF FACE MASK BY PEOPLE WITH RESPIRATORY DISEASES

KABEER YOUSUF

MUSCAT: Face masks are certainly going to stay as a part of life for some time. People with chronic diseases as well as children, however, should take some precautions while using masks even as they work as a barrier for potentially infectious droplets, according to the WHO.

The WHO also advises that governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread transmission and physical distancing is difficult, such as public transport, shops, or other confined or crowded environments.

Prolonged use of masks by those with chronic medical cases can cause allergy to the material used in the mask while some develop anxiety, dizziness, confusion and headache.

Some smokers whose lungs are dysfunctional (COPD) suffer from breathlessness. Wearing a mask may accentuate the symptom. "While wearing a mask he breathes his own exhaled air which is rich in carbon dioxide and this is harmful to a COPD patient who has already a tendency for high carbon dioxide levels in the blood," said Dr Raman.

"Masks should not be too tight. It may cause breathing difficulty, headache, pressure injury. It should not be too loose, because the purpose of wearing a mask is defeated," he said.

It gives a false sense of security to people who do not follow other measures such as physical distancing and hand washing. After wearing the mask one becomes less audible to other people and so people have a tendency to come closer to each other in order to be heard.

Dr Dilip Singhvi, a



SAFETY STEPS

1. Stay home, stay safe - limit your outdoor activities and if you or your family members are fine, there is no need for you to wear a mask at home.
2. If you have to go outside to the grocery store or pharmacy, wear your mask and make it quick. Limit your time outside the home (wearing the mask).
3. People with asthma might benefit from using a rescue inhaler before heading outdoors with a mask on. It can open your airways and improve your baseline airflow in the short term.
4. Consider the type of face mask. If you are not a health care provider, you don't need to wear an N95 mask.

Specialist, says that patients of COPD or asthma will have problems as it results in CO2 getting accumulated and gives the suffocating feeling.

"In light of this, I strongly advise people to stay at

home and use cloth fabric masks instead of other masks. Also, the mask should be washed after every use to minimise infection and one need not wear a mask at home," said Dr Dilip.

FAO hails Sultanate's use of water resources

ROME: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has praised the development witnessed by the Sultanate in terms of implanting the concept of hydroponics and the use of unconventional water resources in integrated farming systems.

FAO emphasised in its report that introducing the concept of hydroponic systems in the Sultanate enhances the future of agriculture, as it helps to attract investment to the country and reflects positively on the national income. The report pointed out that these integrated systems allow the cultivation of food while minimising the use of water.

The report added that while recognising that the Sultanate is vulnerable to water scarcity for a long time, hydroponics will be a solution to this, as the environmental and climatic conditions will not hinder the use of this system in food production. In addition to this, farmers consider this system positive, as hydroponics can be a key to solving food security issues in the country.

The report cited an example of a model of the hydroponic system in the Sultanate at Bidbid Farm, owned by Zayed bin Musallam al Seyabi. FAO affirmed that it is considered one of the most successful hydroponic farms in the Sultanate, pointing out that the farmer started his farm before 2010 by using soilless technologies to grow sweet basil and lettuce in cooling greenhouses, with subsidy from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to adopt this system of agriculture. — **ONA**



SAUDI CURBS HAJ AS GERMANY LOCKS DOWN DISTRICT AFTER OUTBREAK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said on Tuesday it will dramatically scale back the Haj pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites next month because of the coronavirus, while Germany announced a new lockdown after an outbreak of infections at a slaughterhouse.

With cases topping nine million worldwide, the World Health Organization warned that the pandemic was accelerating and new economic figures have underscored the scale of the carnage unleashed on global trade and industry.

The virus has also infected another high profile figure, after world number one tennis player Novak Djokovic of Serbia said he had tested positive for COVID-19.

Although a vaccine is still far away, South Africa is rolling out a trial of a drug this week -- the first on the continent.

Europe has been steadily easing lock-



I've been preparing for years. But what can I do? This is Allah's will -- it's destiny

KAMARIAH YAHYA
INDONESIA

downs and travel restrictions, but many parts of the world, including Latin America and South Asia, are only beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic, while other regions are being hit with second waves.

Saudi Arabia, which is suffering from the biggest virus outbreak in the Gulf, announced it will allow just 1,000 pilgrims living in the kingdom to perform the Haj -- a fraction of the 2.5 million from around the world who attended last year.

"I've been preparing for years. But what can I do? This is Allah's will -- it's destiny," said Kamariah Yahya, 68, from Indonesia.

And in Germany, the authorities ordered a new lockdown for an entire district -- the first since easing coronavirus restrictions and a major setback to hopes of a swift return to normality.

The new restrictions cover 360,000 people in the district of Guetersloh in Germany's most populous state of North Rhine-Westphalia and follow a coronavirus outbreak in a slaughterhouse that has infected more than 1,500 workers.

Several COVID-19 outbreaks at abattoirs, not just in Germany but also in France, have put a spotlight on the working and housing conditions facing the workers -- many of whom come from Romania or Bulgaria.

— AFP

IN BRIEF

UK outlines easing of lockdown measures

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the 2-metre distancing rule will be revised to "1-metre plus" from July 4 when pubs and restaurants are allowed to reopen in England amid further easing of coronavirus lockdown measures. "Our long national hibernation is beginning to come to an end," Johnson told parliament's lower chamber. The social distancing rule has been very hard on restaurants and pubs and other sectors of the hospitality industry, he said. Guidelines were to be issued later, Johnson said, noting they would include avoiding face-to-face seating, and adjusting shift rosters so that staff work in set teams.

Egypt to ease restrictions from end of week

CAIRO: Egypt will reopen restaurants, cafes, and places of worship from the end of the week but will keep some restrictions in place to limit crowding, the prime minister said on Tuesday, as new coronavirus cases continue to climb. Restaurants and cafes will operate at 25 per cent capacity and shut at 10 pm from Saturday, while mosques and churches will be open for daily praying but not for end-of-week prayers or services, Mostafa Madbouly said. Cinemas and theatres will also reopen at 25 per cent capacity. Beaches and parks will remain shut and public transport will be suspended from midnight until 4 am. The decisions to ease restrictions introduced three months ago could be revoked if people do not follow the rules still in place, Madbouly said.

Beijing testing to enter 'fast track' as cases mount

BEIJING: Beijing's mass testing for the new coronavirus will soon enter a "fast track", a senior municipal health official said on Tuesday, suggesting that COVID-19 screening in China's capital is about to gather pace in efforts to curb the latest outbreak. The city of more than 20 million residents reported its first case in the latest outbreak on June 11. — **Agencies**

WORLD

Trump to extend US work visa freeze to year-end

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump will prolong a ban on US employment permits to year-end and broaden it to include H-1B visas used widely in the tech industry, the White House said.

A senior administration official told journalists the move would affect 525,000 jobs in the US, which is currently reeling from a high unemployment rate caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump had repeatedly touted a strong economy, but now finds himself desperate for a political boost ahead of the November election.

The executive order, signed on Monday afternoon, will extend and widen the 60-day freeze Trump placed on new work permits for non-US citizens two months ago.

The administration official said the new order would extend to the end of 2020 and include H-1B visas provided to 85,000 workers each year with special skills, many of them joining the US



technology industry.

It will also cover most J visas, common for academics and researchers, and L visas used by companies to shift workers based overseas to their US offices.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai —whose company has been a leading beneficiary of the H-1B visa system — said he was “disappointed” by the announcement.

“Immigration has contributed immensely to America’s economic success, making it a global leader in tech”, he wrote on Twitter.

The move comes as Trump feuds with Silicon Valley after tech titans Twitter and Snapchat censored or hid

posts by the president they claimed incited violence or were misleading.

Last month Trump signed an order seeking to strip social media giants of legal immunity for content on their platforms in a move slammed by his critics as a legally dubious act of political revenge. — **AFP**

STRONG QUAKE JOLTS INDONESIA’S SULAWESI ISLAND

JAKARTA: A 5.9 magnitude earthquake jolted Indonesia’s Sulawesi island on Tuesday, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said, but there was no tsunami warning or immediate reports of damage. The strong offshore quake struck at a relatively deep 102 km.

The epicentre was some 97.5 km east south-east of Gorontalo city in North Sulawesi, according to USGS. Shallow quakes tend to cause more damage than deeper ones. The Southeast Asian archipelago is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth. In 2018, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island left more than 4,300 people dead or missing.

SINGAPORE HEADS FOR POLLS DESPITE VIRUS OUTBREAK

SINGAPORE: Singapore’s parliament was dissolved on Tuesday for an election even as the city-state struggles to recover from a major coronavirus outbreak that has swept through crowded migrant worker dormitories. A raft of safety measures will be in place to prevent infections, with voters required to wear masks and gloves at polling stations while campaign rallies look set to be banned. The financial hub initially won praise for keeping the virus in check with a rigorous system of testing and contact tracing, only for infections to later hit massive dormitory complexes housing low-paid foreign workers. More than 42,000 cases have been reported in the city-state, the vast majority among migrant workers.

GAZA BABY DIES AFTER PALESTINIANS CUT TIES WITH ISRAEL

TEL AVIV: Baby Omar Yaghi was eight months old when he died, unable to travel from Gaza to Israel for life-saving heart surgery after Palestinian officials cut coordination. The baby’s mother Raneen has been unable to speak or eat since losing her son last week, his uncle Mohammed Yaghi said. They are one of a number of families caught up in a high-level dispute, after the Palestinian Authority last month ended security coordination with Israel over its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. The move has had a dramatic impact on scores of Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza who need Israeli paperwork to access treatment which is not available closer to home.

— **Agencies**



Yang Tae-sung (centre) with his son Yang Kyung-mo (left) and grandson Yang Hee-kon at his home in Seoul. — AFP

Korean War echoes through the South's generations

SUNGHEE HWANG

From a veteran wounded in combat to a conscripted grandson, three generations of a South Korean family illustrate changing views of the North and the Korean War, 70 years after it began.

The conflict broke out in June 1950 and ended three years later, with an armistice rather than a formal peace treaty, after the two sides and their allies fought each other to a standstill.

The two Koreas remain technically at war to this day, with the Demilitarized Zone that forms their border often referred to as the world's last Cold War frontier.

Yang Tae-sung, 89, vividly remembers the summer day when North Korea invaded.

Already a soldier, he was returning from leave on June 25, 1950, when he was rushed

from the train station to the battlefield north of Seoul.

The South's ill-equipped military had been utterly unprepared for war, Yang recalls, with only around 103,000 soldiers and not a single tank.

In comparison, the Soviet-backed Korean People's Army had nearly twice as many troops, supported by hundreds of tanks, fighter jets and warships.

Yang supplied ammunition to frontline troops and experienced the full brutality of war, his left thigh bearing the scars of when enemy fighter jets bombed his unit, killing a close friend.

"When I regained consciousness after the shelling, I saw blood streaming out of him," Yang said. "Pieces of the shells had gone right through his stomach and out the other side." And he is still haunted by the memory of an injured soldier whose wound had been infested with maggots. — AFP

Learning without schools



Samuel Kutty
samkuttyobserver@gmail.com

Children and adults are bored to death after months of being cooped out at home, thanks to COVID-19. For kids, psychologists suggest a mix of home-schooling, balanced screen time, creative activities like painting or drawing and a healthy diet.

But how will our children make up for the loss of school time?

"Uncle, I am sick of being inside the room. It's boring. I have lost my vacation. I cannot see my friends and relatives. There is no excitement and I am not even allowed to leave the house. How long can I sit in front of the laptop or TV," my cousin's son screamed to me last week.

When I talked to his parents, the reply was "we ourselves are frustrated with many issues from the situation".

My 12-year-old cousin is one among the millions of children and teens who still don't know when their classes will resume and what future holds for them.

Unesco statistics show that education of nearly 1.6 billion or 90 per cent of the world's school-age children in 190 countries has so far been affected.

Closing any educational institution for 'until

further notice', that too, worldwide, due to an illness is not read or heard of. Occasionally, schools in some of the Asian countries shut down due to internal strife or rising cases of flu, smallpox or gastroenteritis.

With the passage of each day the children are missing out on several fronts that vary from personality development activities to sports and arts. Those in the higher classes are forced to skip milestones like prom and graduation. The stress is amplified with hardly any outdoor activities like hanging out with friends, playing or visiting places of worship.

This, psychologists point out, may delay their cognitive, emotional and social development. For those in the most critical periods of adolescence, it may even drain mental strength.

I am not suggesting that the schools reopen in a situation that will lead to the spread of the contagion, but look at our youngsters who are denied social interactions and chances to expand their understanding of the world.

No doubt, "learners simply have no incentive to keep at their studies without peer pressure, a teacher at hand or a structured learning environment."

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this page are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the *Observer*.

ITHRAA LAUNCHES INVESTMENT WEBINAR SERIES



MUSCAT: Ithraa's Director General for Investment & Export, Nasima al Balushi (**pictured**), has announced the launch of a series of interactive business webinars to promote Oman's exceptional offer to overseas investors as COVID-19 puts a pause on FDI roadshows.

Speaking at the launch of the series, Al Balushi said: "COVID-19 may mean that for now we can't talk face-to-face with overseas investors, but that doesn't mean we can't continue to share with them the great opportunities in Oman's diversifying economy. To make sure businesses interested in investing in the Sultanate have all the information they need and the opportunity to ask the questions that will help them make their investment decisions, we've added a series of webinars to our online investment and export promotion activities. Over the coming months these interactive events will keep local and international business players talking, enabling us to build relationships with them.

TURN TO P11



OMAN'S OQ SETS UP ALTERNATIVE ENERGY BUSINESS STREAM

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT: OQ (formerly Oman Oil and Orpic Group) — the Sultanate's integrated energy and petrochemicals powerhouse — has announced the formal establishment of a new business stream focused on investments in renewable and alternative energy resources.

Dubbed 'Alternative Energy', it adds to a substantial portfolio of business lines encompassing, among others, the Upstream, Downstream, Commercial, Duqm Refinery and Petrochemicals Cluster, and Projects segments of the integrated group.

"The establishment of the Alternative Energy (AE) function, as one of our busi-

MAJOR AMBITIONS:

OQ is set to position itself as an end-to-end, integrated energy giant, encompassing not only hydrocarbon-based fuels but potentially low-carbon fuels, such as hydrogen.

ness lines, will enable us to move towards a new future and allow us to become a more diversified company, contributing to the nation's development along the way," said the wholly Omani government-owned group in a post on Tuesday.

Outlining OQ's vision for this new business segment, the Group said: "Alternative Energy has been one of OQ's strategic priorities and is key to achieving our 2030 aspiration of an 'integrated energy company delivering sustainability and business excellence,



the Omani way'. We are pleased to announce OQ's Alternative Energy (AE) strategy and the establishment of AE as a new business line, alongside Upstream and Downstream."

OQ also announced the appointment of Ayad al Balushi (**pictured**) as head of the new business line. As Chief Executive for Alternative Energy, "Ayad will be leading this promising and captivating new energy sector which will make us more diversified, and resilient during downturns", OQ further stated.

Following its rebranding and revamp last December into an integrated energy conglomerate, OQ had revealed that the Group's Board had green-lighted a strategy for investments in renewables, including solar and wind, among other related initiatives. A fund has been instituted to invest in renewable energy and technology in general, a top official said, noting that energy efficiency would also be a key area of focus for the Group.

With the addition of renewables and alternative energy resources to its substantial business portfolio, OQ is set to position itself as an end-to-end, integrated energy giant, encompassing not only hydrocarbon-based fuels but potentially low-carbon fuels, such as hydrogen.

ITHRAA LAUNCHES INVESTMENT WEBINAR SERIES

FROM PAGE 10

And maintaining Oman's international investment profile."

Noting that the webinars will focus on investment opportunities in logistics, manufacturing, aviation, technology and tourism and feature locally-based speakers who will share details on current projects as well as future pipelines, the Ithraa Director General continued: "It's important we don't take our investment success for granted. Leading projects in Sohar, Salalah and Duqm have delivered much-welcomed jobs. And given

COVID-19 and subdued global economic growth, the challenge today is to maintain Oman's competitiveness and attractiveness with international companies. This is exactly what we're looking to achieve with this webinar series, reaching out to business communities in the US, Japan, Korea, Hungary, Singapore, Brazil, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and India."

On a final note, Al Balushi added: "I believe the scheduled webinars provide Ithraa and its partners with an excellent platform to build on Oman's proven strengths, its reputation as a

reliable trading partner, securing our long-term attractiveness with international investors. And I should mention that post-webinar, participants can explore more about our business environment on the Invest in Oman portal."

Organised in partnership with the Commercial Section at the US Embassy, the first webinar is scheduled to be aired on Wednesday, June 24, and will include representatives from Salalah Port, Sohar Port & Freezone, SEZAD and Oman Aviation Group.

BUSINESS

CORONAVIRUS SPARKS INNOVATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

On the brighter side of the coronavirus pandemic that we are experiencing, universities, R&D centres and scientific institutions have been compelled to pursue new research on drug treatments and vaccine production, among other scientific initiatives.

Some Arab countries, including Oman, have begun scientific research on topics emerging from the pandemic.

The Research Council (TRC) in Muscat recently approved its tenth five-year plan, which includes the financing of 28 research projects and the establishment of a Centre of Excellence to drive 5G networks and the Internet of Things. These decisions are in line with Oman's 2040 strategic for scientific research and development, which is closely aligned with the national strategy for inno-



HAIDER AL LAWATI

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vation, and the 2040 Economic Vision for Oman's development.

Today, the pandemic is receiving great attention from the scientific community, which is focused on conducting more scientific research on vaccines that can save mankind from this deadly virus behind the deaths of thousands of people of all ages, professions and backgrounds.

Today, this pandemic is pushing scientific centres and societies to enhance cooperation with academic institutions to carry out research projects that concern various aspects of the epidemic and other diseases afflicting humankind. As we know, scientific

research is considered the main engine for ideas and initiatives, and a source of new inventions, while governments and large private productive and industrial institutions in the world allocate part of their annual financial budgets to support and finance such research and studies.

Globally, the outputs of scientific research are linked to the production sector to find complementarity between disciplines and needs, and to enhance its role in development.

For its part, the Sultanate seeks to create a research and development sector in its scientific institutions to become an essential part of the economy, which

prompted it to allocate 2 per cent of the gross national income to scientific research by the year 2040.

UNESCO statistics indicate that there only a small handful of countries that spend more than 100 billion dollars annually in the fields of scientific research and development.

Topping the list is the United States, followed by China which is a competitor in the economic, scientific and commercial fields. There are other countries in the European Union that show great interest in spending on scientific research, although they are not sure of the outcomes. Countries like Japan, Germany, South Korea, France and Britain, among others in the developing world, have also entered the fray. Indeed, today there are tens of thousands of people working in research, working to develop and control markets as well as to serve humanity's goals.

OPAL SIGNS MOU WITH TOTAL E&P OMAN

MUSCAT: Oman Society for Petroleum Services (OPAL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Total E&P Oman Development BV (Oman Branch) to support the funding of testing for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

In a statement, Abdulrahman al Yahyaei, OPAL CEO, and Ronan Huitric, Oman Country Chair - Total E&P Oman Development BV (Oman Branch), signed the MoU.

Abdulrahman al Yahyaei said OPAL would continue to play major role in



increasing awareness of the good work practices to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

"OPAL is playing several roles during this difficult

time supporting not only the Industry and its members but also the wider community," he added.

Ronan Huitric said Total's support for the

COVID-19 testing initiative is in line with the operator's robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy.

OPAL provides a single umbrella body to promote and facilitate agreement on and maintenance of common standards on QHSE, work competency, operational effectiveness and professionalism. With more than 400 member companies, OPAL provides member companies the unique platform to contribute and influence in the development of the national agenda.

NBO wins ‘Best Private Bank ME’ Award

MUSCAT: In recognition of its unwavering efforts to provide best-in-class priority banking, National Bank of Oman (NBO) has been granted the Highly Acclaimed: Best Private Bank, Middle East Award from Digital Banker's Global Private Banking Innovation Awards 2020. Identifying and distinguishing the sector's best performers from all over the world, the awards are given to those who demonstrate unrivalled drive and innovation in meeting the

sophisticated needs of their high net worth clients. It's the latest in several wins for the bank's wealth management account, Sadara, which offers a wide range of products and solutions to its customers to help them meet their life goals. Wessam al Asfoor (pictured), Head of Sadara Wealth Management and Private Banking at NBO, said, "We are delighted to have been given with this award, amidst some tough competition. Sadara con-



tinues to expand and enhance its product offerings, in particular our digital capabilities, and we work hard to offer tailored

solutions that enable our customers to take their financial planning to the next level and secure the future for themselves and their families. For us, it's not just about business, it's about building long term relationship with our customers and delivering an exceptional level of hospitality and care that reflects the warmth of our Omani values. And that is what drives us to be the best-in-class Wealth Management and Private Banking service in Oman."

Tanweer posts 96pc Omanisation rate in 2019

MUSCAT: Rural Areas Electricity Company S A O C (Tanweer) strengthened its commitment to Oman's socio-economic development by recording a remarkable milestone with 97 per cent Omanisation rate till date and some of departments and divisions are 100 per cent Omanised. Tanweer provided several training courses for staff to improve their capabilities, competences. Offering its employees excellent career opportunities and ensuring sustainable development. Hence, over 200 training programmes delivered in various disciplines by the end of 2019. In addition, to more than 30 employees were enrolled in the Lean programme, which aim to develop more efficient mechanisms and improve overall work productivity and providing a stimulating and positive work environment. Tanweer believes in recruiting new blood by giving opportunities to fresh graduates. Since 2019 more than 20 university graduates have joined Tanweer family and the plan is to give more opportunity to fresh graduates in the coming months and in the future.



HAYA WATER TAKES STEPS TO FIGHT COVID-19

MUSCAT: Haya Water has been conducting many preventive measures to deal with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) with have help reassure employees about the safety of their workplaces. EngHussainbinHassanAbdulhussain, Haya Water's CEO, said: "Our objectives are to protect our employees from the epidemic spreading as well as protecting our customers who are considered our partners. The company has an effective business continuity plan to deal with such crises. Customers are encouraged to take advantage of the distinguished online services being provided by the company. We have also been receiving a lot of requests and applications either through the website or call centre." Abdulhussain said the Company has coordinated with Muscat Municipality to provide sterilisation equipment to



disinfect Haya Water premises including work sites such as treatment plants and offices. In compliance with the decisions of the Supreme Committee on COVID-19, the number of employees on the premises has been limited to 50 per cent, while the IT Department at Haya Water has enabled employees to work remotely. Employees are also urged to wear face mask and apply social distancing procedures.

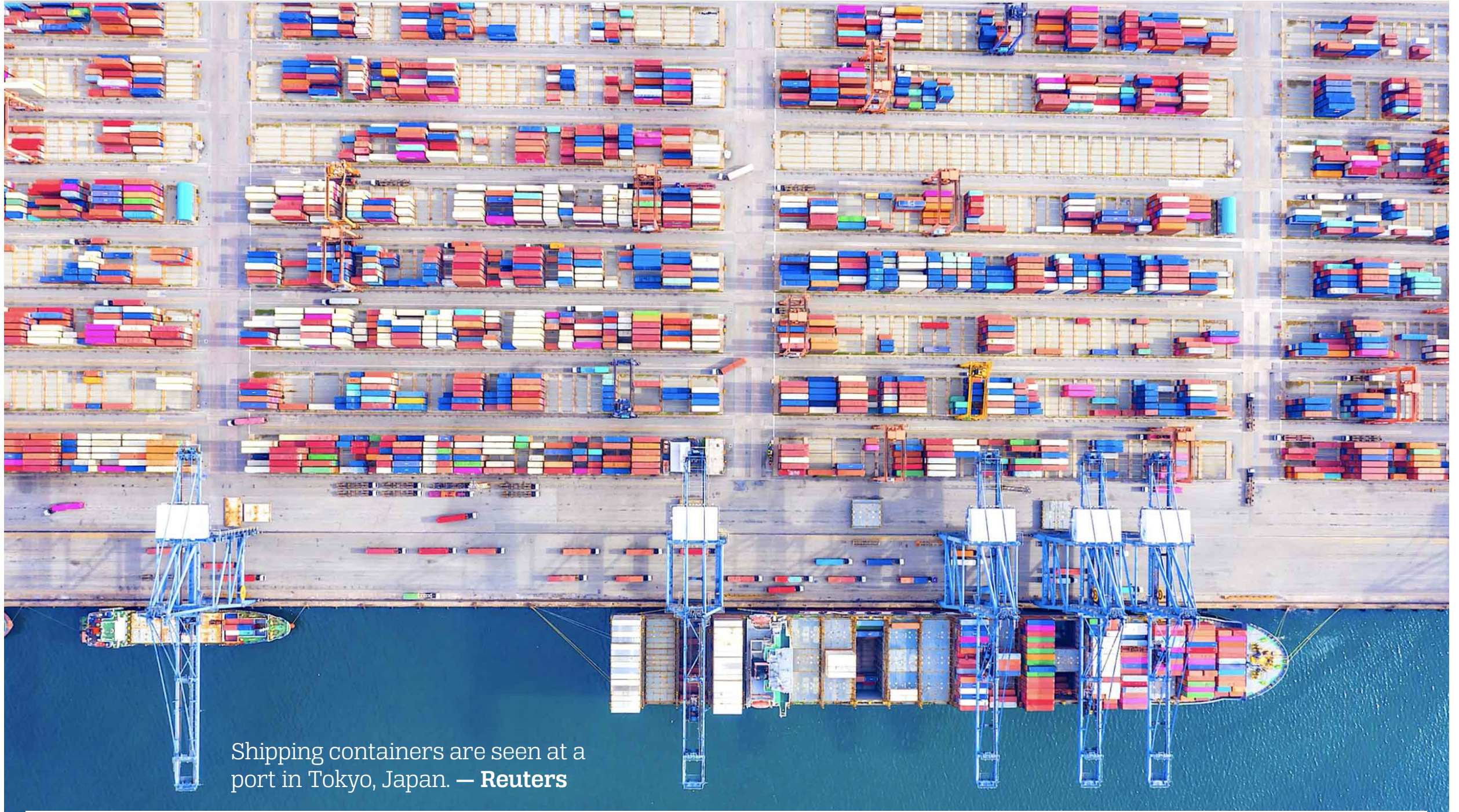
MILIPOL QATAR ATTRACTS INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITORS

MUSCAT: Milipol Qatar, the Middle East's leading international event for homeland security and civil defence, which returns to the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC) in October, has attracted an international exhibitor line-up with global sector heavyweights signing up. The latest exhibitor list for the biennial event shows confirmations from organisations across Scandinavia,



Europe, the UK, Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Far East, and Indian Sub-continent. "Many leading names from the homeland security and civil defence sectors are among the confirmations received and span a wide breadth of equipment, systems, product and consultancy offerings" explained Marie Lagrenée, Milipol Events Director.

BUSINESS



Shipping containers are seen at a port in Tokyo, Japan. — Reuters

Global trade set to shrink 18.5 per cent in Q2

GENEVA: Global trade is expected to drop around 18.5 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of this year in a huge coronavirus-driven plunge which nonetheless could have been much worse, the World Trade Organization said on Tuesday.

The WTO said that in the first quarter, the volume of merchandise trade shrank by three per cent compared to the same three months in 2019.

"Initial estimates for the second quarter, when the virus and associated lockdown measures affected a large share of the global population, indicate a year-on-year drop of around 18.5 per cent," the global trade body said in a statement.

However, it said the expected plunge was better than the WTO's worst-case scenario for the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on global trade — and that the world

THE EXPECTED PLUNGE WAS BETTER THAN THE WTO'S WORST-CASE SCENARIO FOR THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON GLOBAL TRADE — AND THAT THE WORLD ECONOMY MAY HAVE BOTTOMED OUT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE YEAR.

economy may have bottomed out in the second quarter of the year.

"The fall in trade we are now seeing is historically large — in fact, it would be the steepest on record. But there is an important silver lining here: it could have been much worse," said outgoing WTO director-general Roberto Azevedo.

"This is genuinely positive news but we cannot afford to be complacent."

In its annual trade forecast issued in April, the WTO forecast that volumes would contract by between 13 per cent at best and 32 per cent at worst in 2020.

"As things currently stand, trade would only need to grow by 2.5 per cent per quarter for the remainder of the year to meet the optimistic projection," it said.

"However, looking ahead to 2021, adverse developments, including a second wave of COVID-19 outbreaks, weaker than expected economic growth, or widespread recourse to trade restrictions, could see trade expansion fall short of earlier projections."

The WTO said the outlook for the global economy over the next two years remained "highly uncertain".

Azevedo said policy decisions had softened

the ongoing blow and would help determine the pace of economic recovery from the crisis.

"For output and trade to rebound strongly in 2021, fiscal, monetary, and trade policies will all need to keep pulling in the same direction," said the Brazilian career diplomat, who is leaving his post a year early at the end of August.

Looking at the pandemic and its impact on trade, the WTO said that measures to suppress the spread of the virus, such as physical distancing and restrictions on travel and transport that were in full effect in March, April and May were now increasingly being relaxed.

"These developments are reflected in a variety of economic indicators which, taken together, suggest trade may have possibly bottomed out in the second quarter of 2020," it said. — AFP



DJOKOVIC TESTS POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS

BELGRADE: World number one Novak Djokovic said on Tuesday he had tested positive for coronavirus, the Serb star becoming the fourth player to contract the virus after taking part in his exhibition tennis tournament in the Balkans.

Djokovic, who is “not showing any symptoms” according to a statement from his spokesperson, joins Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki in testing positive for COVID-19.

Djokovic said his wife Jelena also tested positive while the results of their children were negative.

“I am extremely sorry for each individual case of infection,” the 33-year-old Serb said in a statement.

“I hope that it will not complicate anyone’s health situation and that everyone will

be fine,” the 17-time Grand Slam winner said, adding that he would go into self-isolation for the next 14 days.

Bulgaria’s Dimitrov, the world number 19, announced on Sunday he had tested positive after pulling out of the event, the biggest since the tennis season was halted because of the pandemic.

Croatia’s Coric and Troicki of Serbia also followed suit on Monday, revealing they also had tested positive.

Sunday’s final in the Croatian coastal town of Zadar, which was supposed to feature Djokovic and Russia’s Andrey Rublev, was cancelled.

Some 4,000 fans watched the first leg of the tournament in Belgrade earlier this month. The slew of positive tests raises questions over the sport’s planned return in August. — **AFP**

Bank Muscat to announce 15 Green Sports beneficiaries today

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat will announce its much-awaited list of 15 beneficiaries of the Green Sports programme for 2020 on Wednesday at 7.30pm. The general public can follow the live broadcast of the announcement through the bank’s official social media accounts on YouTube and Twitter.

Since its inception in 2012, the programme has gained momentum with the number of applicants increasing every year. The Green Sports programme aims to enhance the bank’s pioneering role in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Oman.

The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams include greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights or water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. Ensuring wider representation, Green Sports support is helping develop sustainable sports infrastructure across the Sultanate.

The Green Sports programme has created an ideal platform for social engagement among youth and is contributing to the emergence of more Omani talent in football, which will greatly boost the national teams. The football fields developed as part of the Green Sports programme are serving as a meeting place for children and youth for different social activities and greatly contributing to a positive culture and community well-being. The programme has been continued every year by the bank as a result of the great popularity and support it enjoys among youth teams, the public and media in the Sultanate.

As a leading Omani institution keen to enhance public-private partnership, the bank’s CSR activities are leading to enhanced sustainable growth for Omani society. Since its launch in 2012, the programme has benefitted 108 teams.



SPORTS



Mohammad Hafeez

Seven more Pakistan cricketers contract coronavirus

KARACHI: Seven more Pakistan players due to tour England in August have tested positive for coronavirus, the country's cricket board said on Tuesday, taking the total to 10 since the first results were announced this week.

Pakistan are due to depart for England on Saturday ahead of a series that will see them play three Tests and three Twenty20 internationals against England, starting in August.

Despite the new cases, the Pakistan Cricket Board's Chief Executive Wasim Khan insisted the tour would still go ahead.

"The tour is very much on the track and the squad will depart as per schedule on June 28th," said Khan.

"Fortunately, all first-choice Test players, barring wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan, are negative which means they can start training immediately after they are tested and given all clear when they arrive in the UK," he added.

Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Rizwan, Wahab Riaz, Imran Khan, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Hasnain, Kashif Bhatti are the latest to be diagnosed with the virus.

It comes after three cricketers Shadab Khan, Haris Rauf and Haider Ali tested positive on Monday.

The team's massage therapist has also tested positive.

Pakistan is experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases, with more than 180,000 so far, including 3,590 deaths, while cases are falling in Britain. — AFP

DON'T 'POKE THE BEAR'

AUSSIERS SHOULDN'T SLEDGE KOHLI: WARNER

NEW DELHI: Australia's David Warner has warned against sledging Virat Kohli when India tour Australia this year, saying "trying to poke the bear" will only make the star batsman play better.

As cricket slowly gets back into action after coronavirus suspensions, India are slated to tour Australia for four Test matches in December-January in what is set to be a highlight of the year.

Warner, a lynchpin of Australia's batting attack, said he is looking forward to the confrontation but that he will steer clear of taunting India's captain.

"I thrive on the crowd, I thrive on people sort of going at me in the field. And getting into that battle," Warner told India Today television.

"I think Virat is quite similar, if you go a little bit at Virat he comes out harder with the bat and he plays amazing. We have seen that time and time again.

"There is no point in actually trying to poke the bear because at the end of the day if you do that it just fires up the person a bit more."

Last year, India claimed their first Test series win in Australia after 71 years of trying.

Warner, who along with Steve Smith missed the series while they served a ball-tampering ban, said Australia are much better prepared this time.

"It's a much-anticipated return to Australia for India. I am excited, one to be selected and to be a part of that. Last



time we were not bad but were beaten by a good team and their bowling was relentless," said Warner.

"Now, India has got the best batting line-up and our bowlers will like to target them."

Warner said he's also keen to play the lucrative Indian Premier League if the International Cricket Council postpones the T20 World Cup, scheduled to start on October 18 in Australia.

The fate of the T20 showpiece will be decided next month and if the World Cup is sidelined, the delayed IPL could take its place. Cricket

Australia has admitted the World Cup looks "unrealistic" this year as the pandemic lingers.

Warner, who is captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL, said quarantine rules for foreigners entering Australia was one of many problems for the World Cup.

"The challenges around getting every single nation that participates in the World Cup into Australia, given the fact that we have the quarantine for 14 days... we have to obviously abide by those rules and obviously we await the decision from the ICC," Warner said.

— AFP

MAN CITY CRUSH DEPLETED BURNLEY

MANCHESTER: Manchester City thrashed Burnley 5-0 at an empty Etihad to ensure Liverpool will not be able to clinch the Premier League title when they face Crystal Palace on Wednesday.

Phil Foden and Riyad Mahrez scored twice, while David Silva grabbed what could prove his final City goal to cut the gap at the top to 20 points.

The disparity of resources between the sides was shown even before kick-off as Burnley boss Sean Dyche could not even fill his bench, while Pep Guardiola was able to make eight changes from a 3-0 win over Arsenal on Wednesday. Dyche has been left frustrated by the Burnley board's refusal to extend contracts of five players who are out of contract at the end of the month.

Injuries to Ashley Barnes, Chris Wood and Johann

Berg Gudmundsson meant Dyche could name just seven of a possible nine substitutes.

Aymeric Laporte, Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling were among those kept in reserve for City's trip to Chelsea on Thursday.

FODEN SHINES AS SANE RETURNS

Foden made the most of his chance to start as the 20-year-old opened the floodgates with a sweet strike from outside the box.

Mahrez then killed the game as a contest before half-time as the Algerian left Charlie Taylor trailing on the floor before firing into the far corner on his weaker right foot.

VAR awarded Mahrez the chance to double his tally from the penalty spot after Ben Mee caught Sergio Aguero, forcing the Argentine striker off injured. — **AFP**

English Premier League results On Monday:

Manchester City 5 (Foden 22, 63, Mahrez 43, 45+2, David Silva 51)
Burnley 0

Played Sunday:

Aston Villa 1 (Hause 43)
Chelsea 2 (Pulisic 60, Giroud 62)
Everton 0
Liverpool 0
Newcastle 3 (Saint-Maximin 55, Ritchie 69, Joelinton 78)
Sheffield United 0



Italy and AC Milan great Pierino Prati dies

MILAN: Former Italy international striker Pierino Prati, winner of the 1968 European Championship and 1970 World Cup finalist, has died aged 73, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) said on Monday.

"Italian football mourns another great champion," FIGC president Gabriele Gravina said.

"Prati was an extraordinary footballer, a class striker, a star who shone in all the teams he played."



Prati won 14 caps for the Azzurri between 1968 and 1974, scoring seven goals.

He came through AC Milan's youth team, playing for his hometown club from 1967 to 1973, and netted a hat-

trick in the 1969 European Cup final victory over Johan Cruyff's Ajax.

His league-best 15 goals helped Milan to the 1967-68 title, and Prati would also lift two Italian cups, two European Cup Winners' Cups, and the Intercontinental Cup.

He moved to Roma from 1973 until 1977, and also played for Salernitana, Savona, Roma, Fiorentina and US club Rochester Lancers. — **AFP**

SPORTS

JUVE BACK TO WINNING WAYS

RONALDO, DYBALA STRIKE AS SERIE A LEADERS GO 4 POINTS CLEAR

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo and Paulo Dybala scored early as Juventus put their Italian Cup final woes behind them with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Monday to move four points clear of Lazio on top of the Serie A table.

Portuguese star Ronaldo had missed a penalty in the Italian Cup semifinal against AC Milan, and drew a blank in the final which Juventus lost 4-2 on penalties to Napoli.

But the 35-year-old made no mistake in Juventus's first league game since beating Inter Milan 2-0 in Turin on March 8.

He converted a spot-kick earned by Matthijs de Ligt after 23 minutes for his 26th goal for the Turin giants in all competitions this season.

Dybala curled in the second on 36 minutes off a Federico Bernardeschi back-heel flick as

Juventus, chasing a ninth consecutive Scudetto, opened up a four-point lead on second-placed Lazio.

"We need confidence and this victory will help us," said Dybala.

"It's not easy to be brilliant right now, we haven't been playing for a long time.

"If we had won the (Italian Cup) final everyone would have complimented us, because on a tactical level we have had a great game, even if we were not brilliant,

but we conceded little.

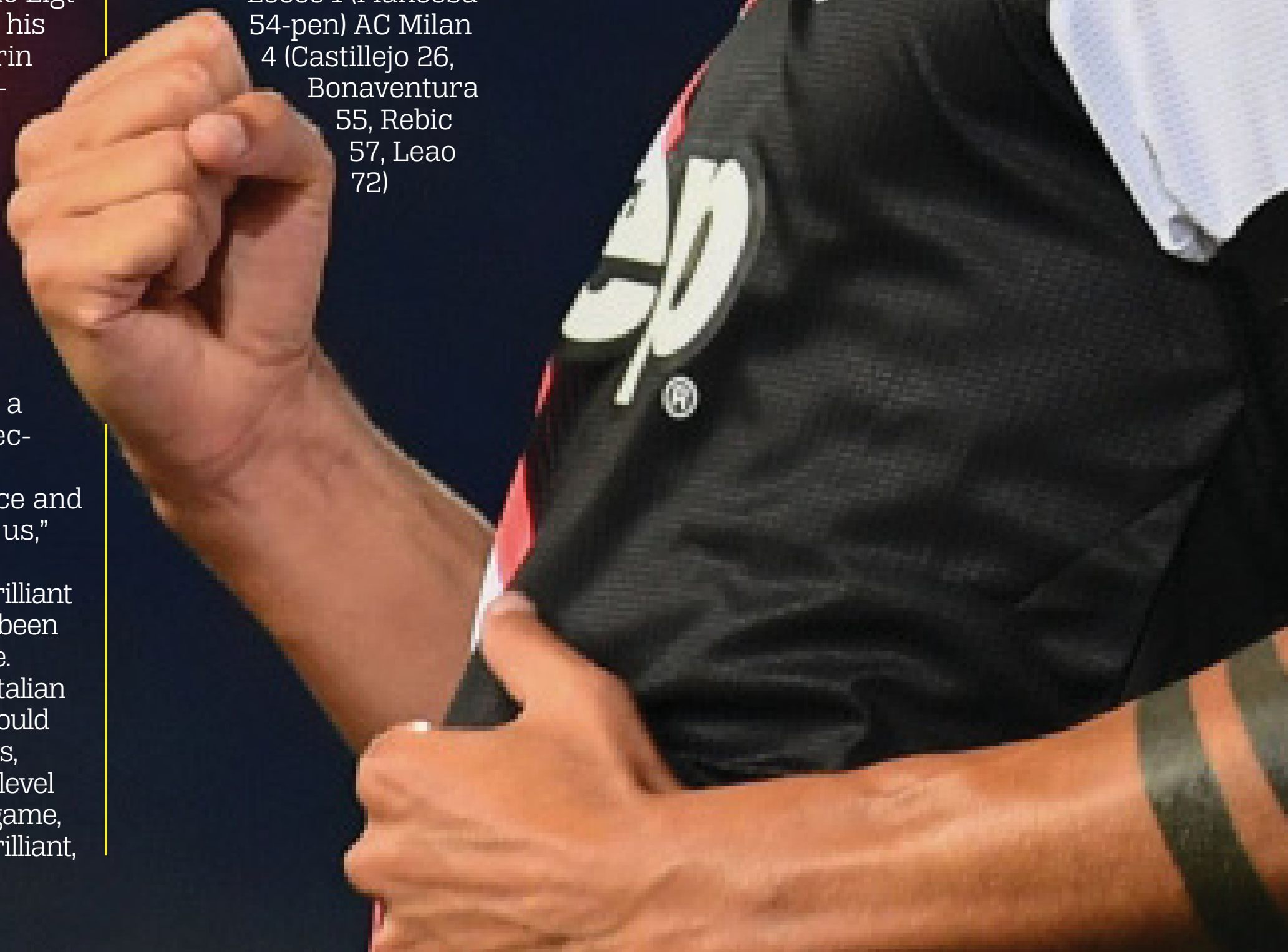
"Today we played a great game, even if after 2-0 we gave up a bit."

Lazio travel north to fourth-placed Atalanta in Bergamo on Wednesday, looking to keep their bid for a first Serie A title in two decades on track.

Inter Milan, in third, are nine points adrift of Juventus, and next host Sassuolo.

Serie A results on Monday:

- * Bologna 0 Juventus 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 23-pen, Dybala 36)
- * Fiorentina 1 (Pezzella 29)
- Brescia 1 (Donnarumma 17-pen)
- * Lecce 1 (Mancosu 54-pen) AC Milan 4 (Castillejo 26, Bonaventura 55, Rebic 57, Leao 72)



FEATURES

THE LATEST SKINCARE TREND IS FITNESS FOR YOUR FACE

There are a specific set of anti-aging facial exercises that, if done under proper supervision, helps remove toxins and increase blood circulation to the face – thereby maintaining the elasticity of the skin and creating a younger-looking appearance. Learn more about the benefits of Face Yoga... [page 20](#)

FIND US ONLINE



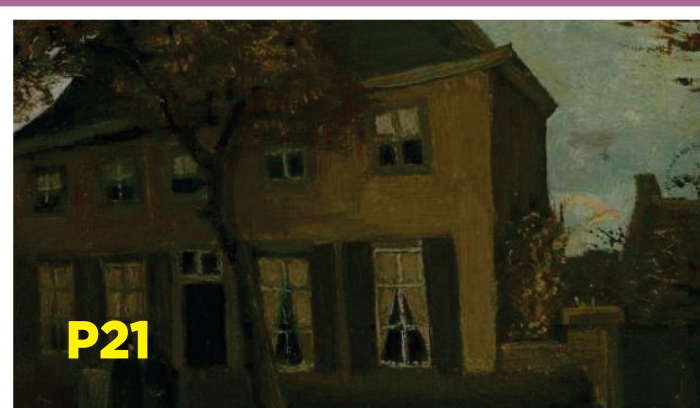
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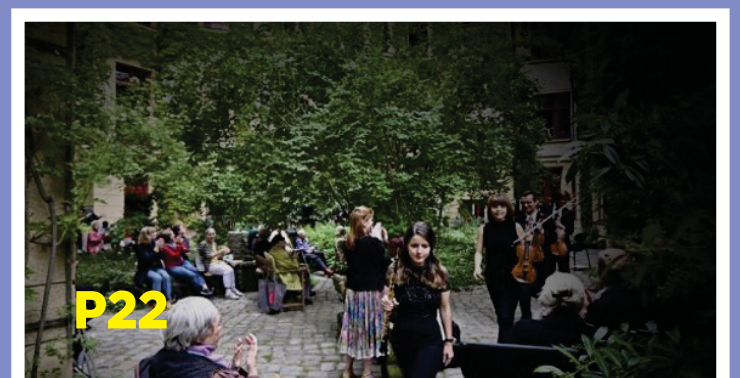
WHAT'S INSIDE

Photos of stolen Van Gogh handed to Dutch art sleuth



P21

Germany strives to kickstart culture in a world blighted by virus



P22

The latest skincare trend is fitness for your face

BY MARY OOMMEN

Celebrities and anti-aging experts swear by its effectiveness and research is starting to back it up too. Face yoga is now a much sought-after way to keep wrinkles away. There are a specific set of anti-aging facial exercises that, if done under proper supervision, helps remove toxins and increase blood circulation to the face – thereby maintaining the elasticity of the skin and creating a younger-looking appearance. Maria Sarfaraz, an Omani national, has experienced the benefits of Face Yoga herself. Certified as an instructor, she has started her own unique platform called Fit Faces Oman to share her

learnings. Read on to know Maria's story.

Tell us a little about yourself and how you discovered Face Yoga

Maria Sarfaraz: "I have always practiced natural self-care and yoga to keep fit. Unfortunately, in 2013, I suffered a fall which left my face asymmetrical. I decided to try Face Yoga in an attempt to heal myself. Gradually, I started seeing results and after 4 months even others could see the huge difference it made to my face. Face Yoga has taken away my headaches and jaw tension, fixed my face, helped me become more positive and

helps me sleep better.

"Once I realized the immense benefits that Face Yoga provided, I was eager to share my learnings. To become an instructor, I attended extensive programs in Slovenia, Latvia and Russia and I am happy to say that I am the first Omani and GCC national to hold certifications on the techniques of Face Yoga and Facial Restructuring Therapy. In October 2019, I created 'Fit Faces Oman- The Facial Gym' with the aim of building a platform to teach people about living a healthy lifestyle to slow down aging. I also try and highlight the fact that facial skin can be

harmful by chemicals and quick fixes. Face Yoga offers a better and completely natural way to look and feel younger."

What is Face Yoga exactly and how does it work?

Maria Sarfaraz: "Facial Yoga involves doing specific exercises that stretch and contract the muscles and skin on your face and neck. An ancient practice, Face Yoga 'if done correctly' can have tremendous benefits. Face Yoga must be practiced with a certified instructor. The reason being, that most face muscle are usually never activated and the poses if done wrong can actually mess up the skin and block lymph nodes. However, if done correctly, it can keep muscles strong, boost collagen and helps one relax.

"Your body has a clock, and the different energies in your organs work hardest at certain hours of the day. At Fit Faces Oman, I offer an individualized approach to infuse positivity and remove weak energies. There are some simple starter exercises that can be done as soon as one wakes up and just 10 mins a day can make a huge difference."

Interestingly, a 2018 study conducted at Northwestern University showed that 20 weeks of daily facial exercise resulted in measurably firmer skin, and fuller cheeks. Participants were women aged between 40 and 65 all of whom looked up to three years younger on average at the study's completion. Given that it is non-invasive, inexpensive and completely natural, it definitely seems worth it to dedicate a few minutes to Face Yoga daily. It's never too late to start.



FEATURES

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



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Wakan Village





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keysicle • Follow

Muscat, Oman





Photos of stolen Van Gogh handed to Dutch art sleuth

A DUTCH ART detective revealed Thursday he has received two recent photographs of a Vincent Van Gogh painting stolen from a museum during the coronavirus lockdown.

Burglars snatched the 1884 painting “Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring”, which is valued at up to six million euros (\$6.6 million), from the Singer Laren Museum near Amsterdam on March 30.

Arthur Brand, dubbed the “Indiana Jones of the Art

World” for tracing a series of high-profile lost artworks, said he was handed the photos a few days ago by a source he declined to identify.

The photographs, of which AFP was given two copies, show the painting, together with a front page of the New York Times newspaper of May 30 to prove when the photos were taken.

“After three months of intensive investigation, I was handed these pictures. This is the first ‘proof of life’ we have that the painting still

exists,” Brand said, adding that valuable pictures are often destroyed when the thieves realise they cannot be sold.

He added that the photos were “circulating in mafia circles”.

In the photographs, a new scratch can be seen on the bottom of the painting, which Brand said he believed must have happened during the robbery.

The New York Times issue in the photographs of the painting featured an inter-

view with Brand and Octave Durham, the notorious Dutch burglar who stole two paintings from Amsterdam’s Van Gogh Museum in 2002.

It also showed a copy of Durham’s 2018 book “Master Thief”, placed on a black plastic background.

Asked about the authenticity of the painting shown in the photos, Brand said one of them shows the back of the artwork featuring the so-called provenance — the history of ownership — which serves almost as a type of fingerprint for the artwork.

“There is no doubt in my mind that this is the genuine article,” he said.

‘GREAT NUMBER OF TIPS’

Brand, who declined to divulge how he obtained the photos, said he believed there could be a number of reasons the art thieves decided to circulate them.

“It could simply be that they are trying to find a buyer in the criminal underworld,” he added.

The photographs “could also be a plan to try and cast suspicion on Durham, because they used his book in the pictures,” he said.

Durham however was in hospital in Amsterdam at the time of the latest heist “and has a rock-solid alibi”, the detective said.

However, the reasons could be even more personal said Brand, who has recovered stolen art including a Picasso painting and “Hitler’s Horses”, life-sized bronze sculptures that once stood outside the Nazi leader’s Berlin chancellery.

“Perhaps they want to make a deal with prosecutors, using the painting as leverage,” the Amsterdam-based detective said. —AFP

FEATURES

Germany strives to kickstart culture in a world blighted by virus



The show illustrates how arts organisations across Germany are having to think creatively as they strive to get up and running again in a world where they must coexist with the Covid-19

Musician Cristina Gomez Godoy casts an excited glance towards the leafy stage where she is about to perform in front of an audience for the first time in three months.

"I'm actually nervous," said the oboist, 30, a member of Berlin's Staatskapelle orchestra, which has been unable to perform live since concert halls were shut in March to control the spread of the coronavirus.

Gomez and four colleagues are tuning up for a short concert in the courtyard of an apartment building in Berlin, accompanied by the buzzing of bees and against a backdrop of ivy tumbling down the walls.

The show illustrates how arts organisations across Germany are having to think creatively as they strive to get up and running again in a world where they must coexist with the coronavirus.

"It is a pleasure for us as musicians to play together again, despite the smaller format, and I think the audience will enjoy it too," Gomez said.

The courtyard has

space for only a handful of socially distanced audience members, while those who live on the upper floors have enjoyed the best seats lounging on window ledges, beers in hands.

Ursula Dyckhoff, 77, lives in an apartment on the first floor. "It was wonderful, the acoustic and the view too," she said after the concert.

LIMITED AUDIENCES

Libraries, museums and art galleries were allowed to reopen in Germany in April and the government published guidelines in May aimed at getting the rest of the cultural sector back to work, at least in some form.

But many challenges remain, especially for theatres, concert halls, opera houses and cinemas.

The guidelines include limiting numbers and ensuring 1.5 metres space between all, meaning auditoriums will have space for only a fraction of their normal audiences.

Berlin's Volksbuehne launched its 2020/21 season in mid-June with the caveat that capacity in the auditorium will be cut

to just 130, from the usual 800.

In neighbouring Austria, the Vienna State Opera has resumed performances to audiences of just 100 at a time, compared to 1,700 on a normal night.

The Salzburg Festival will also go ahead this summer with the repertoire reduced by about half and limited to a select few venues.

Performers, too, must remain socially distanced, meaning fewer of them on stage -- bad news for freelancers in particular, who have already seen their income fall off a cliff during the pandemic.

The Berlin Philharmonic offered a first glimpse in early May of what indoor orchestral concerts might look like in a post-lockdown world with a socially distanced concert featuring just 15 musicians.

Thanks to generous state funding, German arts organisations are better placed to cope with reduced income from ticket sales than many of their European and international peers.

But even they say there is only so long they can survive like this.—AFP