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HAMILTON TOPS QUALIFYING BUT GRID PENALTY GIVES BOTTAS TURKISH POLE



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OPAZ LAUNCHES E-SERVICE FOR DUOM SEZ INVESTORS



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MEXICAN EXHIBIT SHOWCASES RECOVERED ANCIENT TREASURES



MUSCAT

HIS MAJESTY GREET'S FIJI PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Jioji Konrote of Fiji on the occasion of his country's Independence Anniversary. His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes to the president and the friendly Fijian people.

DUBAI

OVER 81,000 VISIT OMAN'S PAVILION

The Sultanate's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai received 81,071 in the first week with an average of 11,500 visitors a day. This was stated by Khalid bin Salem al Zuhaimi, Director of the Sultanate's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. Al Zuhaimi said that among the personalities who visited the Sultanate's pavilion were Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Shaikh Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmed al Sabah, Director-General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). — **ONA**

SEE P5



POWER RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samuelkuttyyp

Restoration of basic services including electricity in most areas ravaged by tropical cyclone Shaheen is nearing completion thanks to the combined efforts of government machinery and volunteers.

Statements by the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) reveal that almost 99 per cent of the services like electricity, water, telecommunications, fuel and roads have been completed in South Al Batinah Governorate.

At the same time, 87 per cent of electricity work and 99 per cent of water and fuel services have been done in North Al Batinah Governorate.

"The relief and shelter sector is working hard to provide alternative residential accommodation until the damages are repaired in the affected homes. This is to ensure that the residences

SCHOOLS CLOSED TILL OCT 14

The Ministry of Education decided that the schools in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq and Al Khabourah will remain closed until October 14 and will resume on October 17. The decision was aimed to ensure the safety and health of students and also because some students in the affected areas may find it difficult getting back to their schools. — **ONA**



A boy cleans the road with brush and dust pan in Al Suwaiq on Saturday. PHOTO BY FAISAL AL BALUSHI

affected by the cyclone are ready for use", the NCEM said in a statement.

It appealed to all donors to send all electrical devices that they plan to donate to the stores of the Omani Authority

Meanwhile, Electricity Holding Company Nama Group launched a campaign that will focus on homes that face problems in restoring electricity.

The group will financially and technically support the licensed technicians of the Omani youth who are graduates of the Nakla programme or licensed technical volunteers, to ensure the safe return of electricity to homes. The licensed Omani youth will join the volunteers of the Nama Group.

"The group believes in the contributions of employees to volunteer work. Volunteer employees from the group will also cooperate with the General Directorate of Youth and Volunteer Initiatives at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth to support those affected and rehabilitate homes, roads and facilities affected by the tropical cyclone" said in a statement.

Distribution of RO 1,000 aid begins

MUSCAT: The National Committee for Emergency Management announced that one of the missing people, an Omani national, was found dead in the Wilayat of Al Amerat while two expats were found alive and in a good condition.

Hamood bin Mohammed al Mantheri, coordinator of the Relief and Sheltering Sector, said that it began paying RO 1,000 as urgent support for families affected by the tropical cyclone in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development.

He added that the priority was given to families staying at the sheltering centres who received urgent support to help them repair their houses or shift to other houses. The Relief and Sheltering Sector formed field teams in the wilayats of Al Musannah, Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah and Saham. These teams began visiting the affected families to make sure of the possibility that they can remain at their houses or provide alternative houses either by rent or from the flats that are available at the sector.

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■ SAF REVIEWS RELIEF AND RESTORATION EFFORTS



The Main Military Committee for Emergency Management at the Sultan's Armed Forces reviewed support efforts undertaken by SAF and the other units of the Ministry of Defence. At a meeting held on Saturday under the chairman of Brigadier Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Mantheri, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, the committee also followed up the work of the sub-committees and all units, formations and air and sea bases. – ONA



The Royal Army of Oman (RAO), as part of a plan devised by the Main Military Committee for Emergency Management, prepared and distributed meals to citizens and residents affected by the tropical Cyclone Shaheen in North Al Batinah Governorate. – ONA

Measured recovery in cyclone-hit areas

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

There has been measured recovery in cyclone-hit areas of North and South Al Batinah. Cyclone Shaheen had hit the northern coasts of the Sultanate last Sunday.

Civil societies, voluntary teams, army and police forces have been working in full swing to prepare and clean the schools for the students to return safely to the classrooms.

The authorities said that 90 per cent of the roads in Batinah north are now functioning normally. Thanks to the joint governmental and societal efforts, life began to slowly recover in the areas affected by Cyclone Shaheen, leaving mass human and material damages.

On Friday, the largest voluntary campaign was launched to provide relief to the wilayats of Al Khabourah and Al Suwaiq in the North Al Batinah Governorate to support citizens and residents affected by the tropical condition.

This campaign supports the efforts of the Ministerial Committee, which His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik ordered to be formed to assess the damage caused by the tropical situation. It also works along with the response sectors of the National Committee for Emergency Management and the Main Military Committee for Emergency Management of the Sultan's Armed Forces.

The volunteer campaign works through 7 sectors in each of the two wilayats to provide several services, including general



hygiene, distribution of needs and supplies, and support for the concerned authorities in providing basic services.

Ahmed bin Abdullah al Riyami, the Assistant Coordinator of the Relief and Shelter Sector, said that the number of volunteers is expected to reach more than 15,000 volunteers, as the sector works to supervise and organise roles in cooperation with the Sultan's Armed Forces and other relevant authorities.

Talking to ONA, he pointed out

that a field survey was activated for all hard-to-reach areas to immediately and quickly provide relief. All supplies and aid were collected at the Al Khabourah Club headquarters, where they are sorted and distributed as an integrated food basket for the affected people.

AID AND ASSISTANCE

The number of trucks of aid and assistance provided by citizens, institutions and charities reached 60 trucks per day, according to Shaikh

Rashid bin Ahmed al Shamsi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Head of the Relief and Shelter Sector. He mentioned that the campaign, which started on Friday, aims to organise the roles for each sector, where volunteers contribute to arranging the materials and transferring them to the eligible people of the Wilayat of Al Khabourah.

Regarding the homes that have become unsafe for the residents, Al Shamsi indicated that the Relief and Shelter Sector has worked to

secure places to stay for everyone who feels that their home are not safe in these circumstances.

Cyclone Shaheen, which hit the Sultanate on the night of October 3, destroyed many electric poles, power stations and road lamps. The torrential wadis began descending at the first hours of the dawn last Sunday morning, sweeping and severely adding more water, multiplying the damage, and causing the water to rise to great levels. The walls of many houses in the villages of the two wilayats

collapsed. The electricity was cut off after the poles fell.

Water supply was also cut off after the main water pipes broke in many areas. Besides, communications, roads, and other services were black out for 48 hours before gradually returning as rescue operations continued.

The National Committee for Emergency Management called upon entities that have licensed electricians to communicate with the call centre at Suwaiq police station to examine the electrical paths from the main complexes to the internal distribution networks in homes to ensure the safety of the main complexes and home residents in the wilayat.

The centre said camps will be provided to accommodate these technicians, who will be distributed to the affected areas to help restore electricity to the damaged homes.

The centre warned against the use of electrical generators inside properties. Aiming at preserving the safety of everyone from the dangers of electric generators and to avoid the occurrence of cases of electric shock, it called on residents in the wilayats of Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah and Saham to communicate with the electricity supplier company in the area in case they use generators inside the houses, indicating that operating those generators without coordination with the company may cause serious risks to the property owners and to the company's employees working to restore electricity service as soon as possible.

Flow of humanity & show of solidarity



KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Friday being the first weekend after the Shaheen cyclone that hit Al Batinah, a sea of humanity was seen visiting the cyclone-affected areas with all sorts of relief materials like food, clothes, tents, and furniture etc.

Some rescuers visited the cyclone site with mops, spades, shovels, and essential carpentry tools. They were equipped with industry gloves and shoes to take up the task of cleaning, and if necessary fixing the things within their own limitations.

Some just dropped in and took part in the cleaning as a helping hand to many others who were already doing the job. "Not less than 20,000 people visited Al Khabourah and Al Suwaiq along with relief and rescue materials. Everyone was on a mission to re-establish the people who were uprooted by the cyclone Shaheen just four days ago," said Ali Muqbali, an Ibri resident who works in Muscat. He took part in the relief operation as a volunteer with a group of people from his office.

Ali goes to Ibri every



weekend. This weekend he chose not to go to Ibri, to give a helping hand to Al Suwaiq people who were badly affected by Shaheen.

"What I saw there was unbelievable. It was a unique show of solidarity for the people of Al Suwaiq. There were people from all over Oman — including Dhofar, which is some 1,000km from Al Suwaiq. They came just to help the people of Al Suwaiq without any request from the government or any other agency. It was a rare show of humanity and commitment, and it was very touching."

Ali lapsed into emotions when he visited an affected house to clean and offer some relief materials he was carrying. "The lady owner of the house politely told me to visit the other

house behind her house, telling me they were more affected than her."

These volunteers are proving to be a great help for the government authorities, who are busy with major tasks of establishing connectivity, assessing the loss, and offering immediate relief to the affected people.

Humanity is at work in Al Suwaiq. "People from all nationalities, Indians, Asians, Europeans, Americans — you name it, and they are there to help people out in cyclone-affected areas," said Ali.

Omar al Jabri and Firas al Balushi were also part of random volunteers who chose to spend their weekends more constructively.

"And what can be better than this — working for people who were the victims of the cyclone. It is a different matter that Shaheen made landfall in Al Batinah. It might have been Muscat or any other place. So I felt my duty to be here and serve the people," said Omar. Firas was moved by the commitment of some college students who came to Al Suwaiq the very next day of the cyclone and started cleaning affected houses.

"They claimed to have cleaned 48 houses in four days, which was amazing, and there was no sign of tiredness on their faces. On the contrary, they were eager to do and do more," said Firas.

The most beautiful part was singing and drum beating by a group of volunteers after cleaning one area and moving to another. They would sing the song of accomplishing one task and moving for another with full enthusiasm and happiness.

"You can win any situation if you have this kind of spirit. These volunteers have capability to turn crisis into capability. They deserve our praise," said an old man who lost his house to cyclone Shaheen.



Women volunteers lend helping hand

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

As the country is witnessing one of the largest humanitarian efforts in the Northern and Southern Al Batinah governorates post-Shaheen cyclone, women are working shoulder to shoulder in coordinating aid to the needy families and reaching out to the far-flung places.

These women from different wilayats and regions are rendering a well-synchronised service to families by washing and cleaning households affected by the cyclone.

"The presence of women in voluntary campaigns at the cyclone-affected areas is significant. We provide 250 meals for lunch and dinner for those affected by the tropical situation in the Wilayat of Saham. We were stunned by the cooperation and coordination of women in executing the initiative, and I believe this initiative represents a form of solidarity among the members of Omani society," said Ahmed al Buraiki, a journalist who is part of the rehabilitation activities.

Women can be seen with all the cleaning equipment, brooms and buckets in their hands, stepping in and out of various houses here in Al Suwaiq, Saham and Musannah, while others coordinate the distribution of foods and other provisions along with men.

"It seems that young people, especially the young women, are determined not to give up until life returns to as it was before. I really admire this sense of unity at the faces of diversity," said Ishaq al Aghbari, a citizen.

"These volunteers are doing a great job at the cyclone-affected areas ignoring their other day to day tasks. I feel this kind of unity of peoples of various countries, of diverse ethnic backgrounds and different beliefs, coming together when humanity faced natural calamity, is a sight that we all can repose hopes upon," Mohammed Hameeda, an expatriate worker told the *Observer*.

There were mothers, working women, students of colleges and universities, newlyweds, recent mothers in the groups at the Cyclone-stricken places.

Tender

مدائن
madayn

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) announces the following Tenders:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last date of Buying	Date of Submission	Type of Work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
11/2021/PEIE/HQ-11	CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO PREPARE THE GUIDE OF DESIGN & BUILD FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE & BUILDINGS FACILITIES AT MADAYN'S INDUSTRIAL CITIES	24-10-2021	18-11-2021	Consulting Offices	First	50

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted on line on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to The Chairman of Tender Committee mentioned in above tenders.

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.

2. eTendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om and +968 24402200

Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

No Document can be accepted as Manual except Original Tender Bond. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system and original needs to be deposited before Bid Opening.

Madayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other Offer and has the right to cancel these tenders and the tenderers have no right to claim for any compensations.

@madaynoman



madayn.om



COVID CASES NOW 20 A DAY

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkutttyp

As a sign of marked improvement in the epidemiological situation in Oman, only 20 new Covid-19 infections cases have been reported on average each day in recent weeks. The recovery rate is in line with the observations by the WHO last week that the biggest drops in new cases were seen in the Middle East, the Western Pacific and the Americas. In Oman, the total number of Covid infection reached 303,915 cases and 4,101 deaths since the pandemic began. The total number of those recovered stood at 299,181.

During the last ten days, there have been only four deaths. Health experts stress that improving vaccination rates is the key to curb the spread of the virus. Vaccinated people are less likely to spread the virus even if they become infected. "Vaccination is a critical prevention measure to help end Covid-19 infections. Vaccines make it less likely someone who's vaccinated will transmit the coronavirus", said Dr Basheer Alikaparambil, Specialist in internal medicine.

SOHAR
PORT/FREEZONE

SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tenders:

NO	Tender Ref	Tender Title	Tender Fee OMR
1	SIPC 2021/0190	Only For Omani Based Consultants Consultancy Services for FEED of Fire Fighting Station at SOHAR Port	RO 26.250
2	SIPC 2021/0220	Supply Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab's Equipment for UTAS- SOHAR	RO 26.250

The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%. Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00am on Sunday 10th October 2021 until 4:00pm on Thursday 21st October 2021.

Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

Step 1: Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

Account Name	Sohar Industrial Port Co
Account Number	3101-007970-500
Bank Name	Oman Arab bank SAOC – Main Br
SWIT	OMABOMRXXX
Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted	

Step 2: Tenderers to send the following documents:

A request for the electronic tender documents
Scanned bank transfer
The firm's commercial registration documents
All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

Step 3: Tenderers will receive the electronic Tender Document by email. The Technical and Commercial Proposals must be in separate, marked " Technical and Commercial" addressed to: SOHAR Port and Freezone. Bid Opining Committee Tender Reference No Tender Title

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons
- All SMES are requested to provide their Green Card along with the required documents
- For any clarification regarding the tenders, kindly send an e-mail to: sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

It all starts here

+968 2685 2700 | soharportandfreezone.com

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental health. Some groups, including health and other frontline workers, students, people living alone and those with pre-existing mental health conditions, have been particularly affected. Services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders have been significantly disrupted.

"Yet there is cause for optimism. During the World Health Assembly in May 2021, governments from around the world recognised the need to scale up quality mental health services at all levels. And some countries have found new ways of providing mental healthcare to their populations", WHO stated.

This year the campaign slogan is, "mental healthcare for all: Let's make it a reality."

For Oman, this day also looks at another reality — it is exactly a week since cyclone Shaheen chose its track and made landfall resulting in deadly flash floods in North Al Batinah. The rampaging flood destroyed everything that stood in its path. In its aftermath, rescue operators and the public took the next step forward, and that was to bring back life to normalcy but practising patience meant waiting for the water to go and bringing out of home everything that was ruined by water. But there should have been something that was invisible to be out into use: The psychological first aid kit.

One group of the society that was also facing the cyclone was the children. But when the sun came out of the clouds, the children came out too to look at the next best way to make use of the situation and make the day enjoyable. They took to the newfound toys — metal sheets to float and go for a joy ride while adults went their way to clean the debris and mud out of the way. Some of the youngsters joined in the cleaning with their own little shovels.

Then there were other young ones who were organising parcels to be distributed to families that were hit by the tropical condition. They ran to receive the supplies from the armed forces of Oman as they arrived in helicopters and trucks.

If there was shock at the impact of what was left behind by the cyclone and the loss it incurred, the young

ones fluttered around with smiles spreading joy and hope. Social media captured the moments, and the images went viral.

By no means have the trauma the families were going through been little as family members had gone missing, houses had been swept away, vehicles submerged and many dreams probably have been washed away too.

So what is that we can learn from the children?

According to Dr Hamed al Sinawi, Senior Psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, "Psychological studies have proven that because children's brains are developing rapidly, they are more resilient, which means they are able to bounce back quicker than an adult; they are able to learn skills and cope at a quicker rate. Another factor is that kids do not know a lot about the world really, and this works in their favour."

He gave the example of another adverse weather condition Oman experienced and its psychological impact on people, "For example, when cyclone Shaheen hit parts of Oman, many of us recalled that happened in 2007 when cyclone Gonu hit many parts of Oman and destroyed houses and other properties and killed people. Our adult brains retrieved those memories and put us in a state of high alert. This can be useful to some degree as it makes us plan more and take precautions, but at the same time it can be counterproductive and overwhelming as excessive worrying can create a state of anxiety."

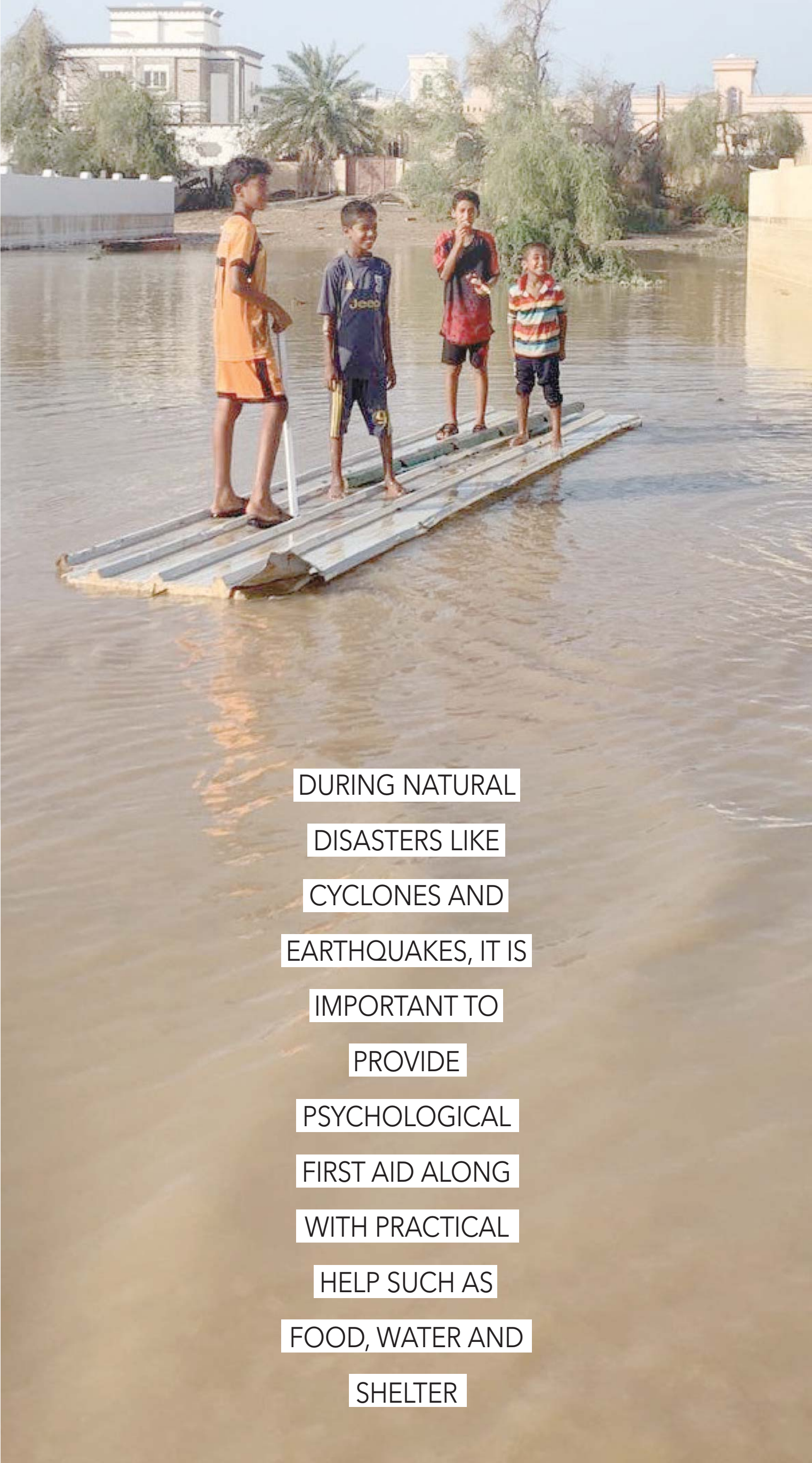
Dr Hamed said that during natural disasters like cyclones and earthquakes, it is important to provide psychological first aid along with practical help such as food, water and shelter.

When we talk about first aid we immediately think about physical wounds and medicines, but very little is known or even practised when it comes to mental health while going through calamities.

According to Dr Hamed, it is important for people to learn more about psychological first aid and learn more about how to support each other.

"But the focus has to be on protecting people from further harm, allowing them to talk without pressure, expressing compassion, acknowledging their concerns and discussing coping strategies. People with mental health challenges must be advised to seek professional advice from a Psychiatrist or psychologist", explained Dr Hamed.

ARE WE EQUIPPED WITH A PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID KIT?



DURING NATURAL

DISASTERS LIKE

CYCLONES AND

EARTHQUAKES, IT IS

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FOOD, WATER AND

SHELTER



Oman Trading Establishment LLC



Sultanate of Oman
Consumer Protection Authority

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For Elantra HD



Date of Campaign : 10 / 10 / 2021

Campaign Type : Recall

Recall Segment : Electrical

Product Description : Hyundai Elantra HD

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2008-2009	Hyundai	Elantra HD	KMHDT41B19U595362 to KMHDT41B29U623508	18

Description:

Vehicles equipped with driver side air bag inflator could get ruptured during the commanded event.

Procedure:

Driver side air bag will be replaced free of charge.

For More information:

Customers of effected vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment for further details/booking Appointment etc from Date – 10/10/2021

Contact Details:

Toll free No 80050003 on all working days between 8:00 am to 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm with effected from date 10/10/2021

RNO continues maritime surveying in North Al Batinah



The Royal Navy of Oman continues its maritime surveying operations on the coasts of North Al Batinah Governorate to clean up debris washed away by flowing wadis to ensure smooth traffic of fishing boats and vessels. The move comes within the framework of a plan drawn up by the main military committee for emergency management to cope with the impact of the tropical Cyclone Shaheen. — ONA

Sultanate's pavilion receives 81,000 visitors in first week



DUBAI: The Sultanate's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai received 81,071 in the first week with an average of 11,500 visitors a day.

This was stated by Khalid bin Salem al Zuhaimi, director of the Sultanate's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Zuhaimi said that among the personalities who visited the Sultanate's pavilion were Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmed al Sabah, Director-General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). — ONA

Oman, Lanka ODI cricket marks 40th year of diplomatic ties

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 9

Sri Lanka and Oman ODI cricket match began ahead of T20 World Cup with the commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the two countries.

Sri Lankan and Omani national cricket teams played their first ever ODI cricket ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 on October 7, 2021 at Al Amerat cricket ground, with the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Oman which coincidentally falls this year.

Sri Lanka Ambassador to Oman Ameer Ajwad and the Chairman of Oman Cricket



(OC) Pankaj Khimji together with the members of Oman Cricket Board inaugurated this first international cricket match between the two national cricket teams by ceremonially cutting a cake to mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between

the two friendly nations.

Sri Lankan and Omani national team squads led by their respective captains Dasun Shanaka and Zeeshan Maqsood together with Sri Lankan cricket manager Manuja Kariyapperuma and Oman's chief cricket development officer

and national team coach Duleep Mendis, who was the former Sri Lanka cricket captain, were also present during the inauguration.

Ambassador Ameer Ajwad presented 40th anniversary memorial logo pin to the Chairman of Oman Cricket and the members of the Oman Cricket Board to mark this momentous occasion in the history of cricket of Sri Lanka and Oman.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Ameer Ajwad said that the rise of Oman's cricket and the amazing development of its cricket infrastructure is remarkable and that the cricket would play a significant role in further enhancing Sri Lanka and Oman relations into new areas of cooperation in the years ahead.

CBO, NCFI sign cooperation programme

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) and the National Centre for Financial Information (NCFI) signed a cooperation programme aimed at the exchange of information related to money laundering and terrorism financing.

The programme was signed by Tahir bin Salim al Amri, Executive President of CBO, head of the National Committee for Combatting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, and Lieutenant Colonel Abdulrahman bin Amer al Kiyumi, Executive Chairman of the NCFI.

The programme aims to enhance cooperation and exchange of information pertaining to combating money laundering and terrorism financing. — ONA

شركة النماء للدواجن ش.م.ع A' Namaa Poultry Co. S.A.O.C

Job Opportunities

A'Namaa Poultry is an integrated poultry project, using state of the art technologies in the market for all the project components, to produce a high - quality poultry meat. A'Namaa Poultry currently seek to application for the following position by national candidates to joint A'Namaa Poultry team.

No.	Job Title	Number of Position
1	VICE PRESIDENT – FINANCE	1

For more details and to apply, kindly log to <https://foodjobs.om>
Last date for receiving applications will be on 21 Oct 2021.

جامعة صحر SOHAR UNIVERSITY

TENDER NOTICE No. 003/2021

Sohar University invites sealed tenders from specialized, professional and experienced sewage collection and disposal companies who have sufficient experience in providing similar service to Government/Private Organizations. The tender details are as follows:

Tender	Description	Fee OR	Submission Date
003/2021	Collection and disposal of sewage from various locations of University	100/-	28/11/2021

The tender document can be obtained from Procurement and Contracts Department from 10/10/2021 to 31/10/2021 08:00 to 16:00 at Sohar University Main campus in Sohar after payment of RO. 100.000/- in cash (Non-refundable) at the cash counter located in the Al Khauboor Building. The receipt of payment has to be taken to the Procurement and Contracts Department to collect the Tender Document.

Tenders offers must be submitted in closed envelopes sealed, delivered at the Sohar University premises, tender number shall be written only on the envelope, no indication shall be made, and deadline for submission of offers is 28/11/2021 15:30 hours.

Tender should be addressed to Deputy-Vice Chancellor - Resources and deposited in the tender Box at DVC-R Office as given below during office hours 08:00 to 15:30 Sunday to Thursday

Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Resources Office
Sohar University - P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 421 & 289 (Procurement and Contracts Department)



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY Advertisement No. (41/2021)

Specialized Companies in the field of tender shown below and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/21/055	44/2021/MM/QS-4- (Re-Call-2)	Supply and Installation of Ceramic Road Studs at Various Locations in Muscat Governorate (Re-Tender - 2) (E- Tender)	Rial 25	17/10/2021	24/10/2021	Specialized
PRE/20/058	2021/MM/HQ-32	Proposed Golden Jubilee Walkway (PHASE – 1)	Rial 250	04/11/2021	18/11/2021	Excellent
PRE/21/075	2021/MM/HQ-11	Thrust Boring and Rectangular Concrete Drainage at Ghala Heights	Rial 25	04/11/2021	18/11/2021	First

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Original Tender Bond envelope should be sealed with red wax and entitled to His Excellency/ Head of Intrnal Tender Committee and to be placed in the Tender Box at Muscat Municipality HQ, Third Floor, before **10:00 am** as per the date Mentioned in the above table. All envelopes are to be clearly marked with the name of the Tender being presented and no other marks.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ita.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).



SULTANATE OF OMAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Auction No.1/2021)

The Ministry of Health would like to invite sealed bids for the Lease for Cafeteria of Catering Services to all the Students and Staff at Oman College of Health Sciences in Al-Wattiyah, in Muscat Governorate. Offers should be submitted in sealed envelopes.

Specialized Companies and establishments may collect the documents and specifications of this Auction from the Directorate of Purchase & tenders at General Directorate of Financial Affairs at Ministry's Headquarters in Al Khuwair between 8.30am and 12.30 pm during official working hours on or before 13/10/ 2021.

A Bank Guarantee or a Certified Cheque valid for 90 days issued by a local bank for (1%) of the Auction Value addressed to Ministry of Health shall be enclosed with the bid as an auction bond that may be reimbursed to unsuccessful bidder. A bid unaccompanied by the auction bond will be rejected.

Offers enclosed in the sealed envelope duly signed and stamped in the original form shall be addressed to H.E. the Chairman of the Tender Committee providing the title of the auction Viz: "Auction No. 01/2021/RO – for the is clearly mentioned on it. Envelopes shall not bear any sign that refers to bidder's name or identity.

Offers shall be deposited at Purchase and Tender in Directorate of Financial Affairs by on or before **9:00 am on Wednesday, the 20/10/2021**. Offers submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The Ministry is not bound to assign any reason for rejected bids.

Iraqis head to vote today

BAGHDAD: Iraqis elect a new parliament on Sunday two years after a wave of anti-government protests swept the war-scarred country, but analysts say the vote is unlikely to deliver major change.

Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi's political future hangs in the balance, with few observers willing to predict who will come out on top after the lengthy backroom haggling that usually follows Iraqi elections.

A new single-member constituency system for electing Iraq's 329 lawmakers is supposed to boost independents versus the traditional blocs largely centred on religious, ethnic and clan affiliations.

The election is being held a year early in a rare concession to the youth-led protest movement that broke out in 2019 against a political class widely blamed for graft, unemployment and crumbling public services.

Hundreds died during the protests, and dozens more anti-government activists have been killed, kidnapped or

intimidated in recent months, with accusations pro-Iran armed groups have been behind the violence.

Many activists have urged a boycott of the polls, and record low turnout is predicted among Iraq's 25 million eligible voters, while experts predict the main parties are likely to maintain their grip on power.

The vote is "unlikely to serve as an agent of change," said Ramzy Mardini of the University of Chicago's Pearson Institute.

"The election is meant to be a signal of reform, but ironically those advocating for reform are choosing to not participate... as a protest against the status quo."

Security forces, displaced people and prisoners cast the first ballots in the election on Friday, two days before the rest of the country. In Baghdad, there was a heavy security force presence outside polling stations.

Iraq is mired in corruption and economic crisis, and nearly a third of its people live in poverty despite the country's oil wealth.

— AFP



Cars drive in front of electoral billboards of a candidate for the upcoming parliamentary elections, in the Iraqi capital Baghdad's Sadr City neighbourhood, on Saturday. — AFP

Assad's uncle returns home from decades in France

BEIRUT: The uncle of Syrian President Bashar al Assad has returned home from 36 years of exile to dodge arrest in France, the pro-government *Al Watan* newspaper reported on Friday.

Rifaat al Assad, 84, arrived in Damascus on Thursday, *Al Watan* said on its Facebook page, nearly a month after a Paris appeals court upheld a four-year prison sentence issued against him last year for misappropriating public funds in Syria, laundering the spoils and

building a vast property portfolio in France with ill-gotten gains.

Formerly Syria's vice-president, Rifaat al Assad left his home country in 1984 after mounting a failed coup against his brother Hafez, who led Syria from 1971 to 2000.

"In order to prevent his imprisonment in France ... President Assad rises above what Rifaat al Assad has said and done and allows him to return to Syria," *Al Watan* said. — AFP

■ LESSONS OF SURVIVAL



Children walk among the rubble as they attend the first day of school in a village in the countryside of Syria's northwestern Idlib province on Saturday. — AFP

Ten hurt in drone attack on Saudi airport

RIYADH: Ten people were wounded in a drone attack on a civilian airport in the Saudi city of Jeddah that was blamed on Yemen's Ansar Allah movement, official media said on Saturday.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting alongside the Yemeni government, quoted by the Saudi news agency SPA, said travellers and airport employees were among those injured in Friday's attack, updating an earlier toll of five.

The "militia" was behind the attack "using a bomb-laden drone, which resulted in (10) injuries among civilian travellers and airport staff", coalition spokesman Turki al Malki was quoted as saying.

SPA said the attack caused "minor material damage and some broken glass fronts" at King Abdullah Airport in Jazan, about 60 kilometres (37 miles) from the Yemeni border.

The Ansar Allah have been stepping up attacks on Saudi Arabia, which has escalated air strikes on rebel forces closing in on Marib, the last government-held stronghold in northern Yemen.

The latest attack comes after four workers were wounded on Wednesday when the coalition intercepted an explosives-laden drone targeting the kingdom's Abha airport, state media said.

The coalition said the workers sustained minor injuries from the drone's debris, SPA reported. — AFP

Iran's first president after revolution dies in exile

TEHRAN: Iran's first president after the 1979 Islamic revolution, Abolhassan Banisadr, died in a Paris hospital on Saturday aged 88, after decades of exile in France following his dismissal by parliament.

"After a long illness, Abolhassan Banisadr died on Saturday at the (Pitie-)Salpetriere hospital" in southeast Paris, official IRNA news agency said, citing a source close to the former president.

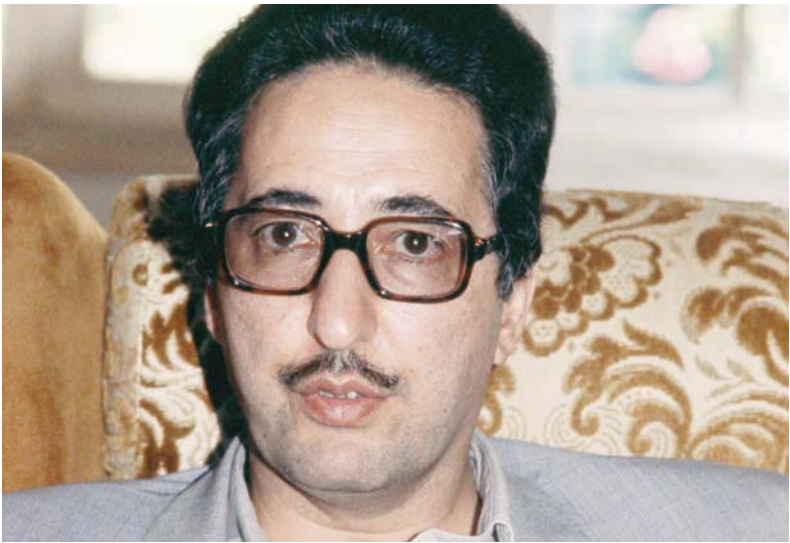
His family in France confirmed his death. The family statement hailed Banisadr as someone who "defended freedoms". But he was slammed by Iran's judiciary. "All these years, under the shadow of French and Western intelligence, he did not miss a beat to defame the people and the system of the Islamic republic," said a statement published on its Mizan Online website.

Banisadr won Iran's first free election in 1980 to become president hot on the heels of the previous year's Islamic revolution.

But he was dismissed by the Iranian parliament in 1981 as his relations with late supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini deteriorated. Since then, he had been living in exile in France.

Born on March 22, 1933 in a village near Hamadan in western Iran, Banisadr was a supporter of liberal Islam.

A practising Muslim, at the age of 17 he became active in the



Abolhassan Banisadr won Iran's first free election in 1980 to become president hot on the heels of the previous year's Islamic revolution.

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In 1970, he advocated the union of the Iranian opposition around Khomeini, who was exiled in Iraq at the time.

In October 1978, Khomeini went to France, and Banisadr became part of his inner circle, referring to him as "dear father".

Banisadr would later express regret that he had not recognised Khomeini's "taste for power".

On February 1, 1979, Banisadr was on the plane that brought Khomeini back to Iran.

He served as Iran's minister of economics and, for a few days, foreign affairs.

The man at times referred to as "Khomeini's spiritual son" was elected president of the Islamic Republic of Iran on January 26, 1980. — AFP

ranks of the National Front of Iran, the movement of nationalist leader Mohammad Mossadegh.

After studying theology, economics and sociology, Banisadr became a staunch opponent of the Shah's regime.

Wanted by the police, he was forced to flee Iran in 1963 and settled in Paris.

BEIRUT

Electricity grid collapses in Lebanon

Lebanon's electricity grid totally collapsed on Saturday after the two main power stations ran out of fuel, worsening the country's energy crisis. The Al Zaharani and the Deir Ammar power stations stopped operating on Friday and Saturday after diesel supplies ran out, Lebanon's state-run electricity firm, Electricite du Liban (EDL), said.

"This has led to a complete fall in the grid without the possibility of restoring it for the time being," EDL said without giving details.



The failure is expected to continue for several days, a government official said. Even before the collapse, the state provider was supplying very little electricity daily and had warned of the collapse two weeks ago.

TEL AVIV

Merkel travels to Israel for farewell visit

German Chancellor Angela Merkel travels to Israel on Saturday for a farewell visit that will take in meetings with President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

Merkel is leaving office as soon as a new government is in place in Germany after September's elections. Earlier in the week she visited the Pope in the Vatican. A trip to Israel scheduled for the end of August was cancelled on account of events in Afghanistan. During this visit, talks with Herzog and



Bennett are scheduled for Sunday, and Merkel is also to meet Foreign Minister Jair Lapid.

Among the likely topics on the agenda are the Iranian nuclear programme, relations with the Palestinians and bilateral relations.

TRIPOLI

Guards shoot dead six migrants

Guards shot dead six migrants at an overcrowded Tripoli detention facility on Friday, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said, the latest violence against migrants following mass arrests in recent days.

"Shooting broke out and six migrants were killed in total. They were shot by the guards," the UN agency's Libya chief Federico Soda said.

"We don't know what triggered the incident today but it is related to overcrowding and the



terrible, very tense situation" at the Al Mabani facility in the capital, he said.

He added that at least 20 other migrants were wounded and that many more had escaped in the chaos.

In brief

■ MANILA



RESSA SAYS AWARD FOR 'ALL JOURNALISTS'

Veteran Philippine journalist Maria Ressa on Saturday said her Nobel Peace Prize was for "all journalists around the world", as she vowed to continue her battle for press freedom.

"This is really for all journalists around the world", Ressa said in an interview. "We do need help on so many fronts — it is so much more difficult and dangerous to be a journalist today."

Philippine press groups and rights activists hailed Ressa's award as a "triumph" in a country ranked as one of the world's most dangerous for journalists.

■ NEW DELHI



MODI RECEIVES DANISH COUNTERPART

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held talks with his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen with a focus on expanding overall bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including health, agriculture, water management, climate change and renewable energy.

Modi said both sides reviewed the progress made under the India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership and deliberated on further expansion of overall cooperation in multiple sectors.

The two sides also inked four agreements that will provide for deepening of cooperation in areas of science and technology, climate change and skill development.

"A year ago today, we took the historic decision to establish a Green Strategic Partnership between India and Denmark in our virtual summit", he said.

■ SUVA



FIJI TO REOPEN FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Fiji will ease Covid-19 restrictions and announce its reopening for international travel after the country hit a vaccination milestone on Saturday.

Changes to the country's virus restrictions would be announced on Sunday afternoon after 80 per cent of the adult population received both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine, Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said.

"A full three weeks ahead of schedule! I'm grateful to everyone who's rolled up their sleeves to help make Fiji safe", Bainimarama said in a tweet.

Bangladesh to relocate 81,000 Rohingyas



Rohingya refugees carry a water tank at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukha. Some 19,000 refugees from Myanmar have already relocated from crowded camps on the mainland to Bhashan Char island. — AFP

COX'S BAZAR: Bangladesh wants to send more than 80,000 Rohingya refugees to a remote island in the Bay of Bengal after sealing an agreement for the United Nations to provide help, officials said.

Some 19,000 of the refugees from Myanmar have already relocated from crowded camps on the mainland to Bhashan Char island, despite doubts raised by aid groups, officials said.

Bangladesh refugee commissioner Shah Rezwan Hayat said that tens of thousands more would go once the monsoon storms that batter the Bay of Bengal each year-end in November.

"We are aiming to relocate some 81,000 (Rohingyas) to Bhashan Char by the end of February to complete the 100,000 quota", he told reporters.

The government has spent about \$350 million building shelters on the 53 square kilometre island which was formed by tidal silt deposits about 20 years ago.

On top of the inhospitable weather, the island is 60 kilometres from the Bangladesh mainland and some Rohingya groups say people were forced to go there.

About 850,000 Rohingyas are packed into camps along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Most fled a Myanmar military clampdown in 2017 that the UN

The government has spent about \$350 million building shelters on the 53 square kilometre island which was formed by tidal silt deposits about 20 years ago

says could be genocide.

Bangladesh has been praised for taking in the refugees who poured across the border but has had little success finding them permanent homes.

UN CONFIRMS DEAL

While a Bangladesh security intelligence agency is responsible for relocating the refugees, the government denies that any coercion has been used.

Still, several hundred Rohingyas have fled Bhashan Char only to be detained on other islands or in coastal villages. Dozens died after a fishing boat packed with Rohingyas trying to flee the island sank in August.

The United Nations has signed an agreement with Bangladesh to provide humanitarian support to thousands of Rohingyas who have been relocated away from crowded mainland camps.

The agreement will allow close cooperation between the government and the UN to provide services for refugees on

Bhasan Char island, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement after the agreement was inked in Dhaka on Saturday.

"The UN response will build upon and complement the humanitarian assistance so far provided by Bangladeshi NGOs on the island", the statement said.

Humanitarian agencies will be better able to deliver services to refugees in terms of protection, education, skills training, livelihood and health among others, said Enamur Rahman, the Bangladeshi Junior minister for Disaster Management and Relief.

Refugee commissioner Hayat said there would also be greater opportunities for Rohingyas to work on the island than there are now in the rigidly policed camps.

But Amnesty International raised new concerns over the relocations and highlighted the attempts made by refugees on the island to get away again.

"Some refugees have drowned at sea and many are either being arrested, detained, or forcibly returned to the island", Saad Hammadi, Amnesty's South Asia campaigner, said.

He said Bangladesh, the UN and donor countries should "develop a rights-respecting policy and ensure the participation of Rohingya refugees in decisions that affect their lives." — AFP

US and Taliban hold first in-person talks

WASHINGTON: The United States representatives and the senior Taliban officials met in Doha on Saturday, their first face to face talks since US forces withdrew from Afghanistan in August — ending a 20-year military presence — and the Taliban's rise to power.

The meeting discussed "opening a new page" in their countries' relationship, according to Afghanistan's acting foreign minister.

Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, said the focus of the Afghan delegation was humanitarian aid, as well the implementation of the agreement the Taliban signed with Washington last year which paved the way for the final US withdrawal.

The minister said the Afghan delegation had asked the US to lift its ban on the reserves of Afghanistan's central bank. He added that the US would offer Afghan people vaccines against

Covid-19.

The State Department on Friday evening stressed that the meeting did not indicate that the United States was recognizing Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

"We remain clear that any legitimacy must be earned through the Taliban's own actions", the spokesperson said.

The US team will also press President Joe Biden's key priority of letting US citizens and Afghan allies during the 20-year military operation leave the country.

The United States says that the Taliban have largely cooperated on letting out US citizens. Around 100 remain, predominantly US citizens with roots in Afghanistan who are undecided on whether to leave, according to US officials.

But the United States acknowledges that it was not able to get out most Afghan allies who wanted to leave during a hasty airlift that pulled tens of thousands of people out of Kabul before the withdrawal. — AFP



Taliban fighters working as a police force stand guard next to a Humvee vehicle at the entrance gate of a police district in Kabul. — AFP

Thai diners whet their appetites at flood cafe

BANGKOK: A Thai restaurant has taken dining with a water view to the next level — its customers perch precariously on wooden stools as murky brown floodwater laps at their tables.

Tropical storm Dianmu and heavy monsoon rains have caused flooding in 33 Thai provinces, inundating more than 300,000 households and claiming nine lives.

Riverside areas of Bangkok are bracing for flooding in the coming days and more storms are expected to hit the kingdom next week.

But the crisis has been a boon for the Chaopraya Antique Cafe in Nonthaburi, part of the vast sprawl of Bangkok upriver from the city centre.

In the afternoons and evenings the restaurant is full of diners munching miang kham, a fiery leaf-wrapped appetiser, giggling and jumping on their seats as boats and rice barges cruise past the Chao Phraya River, sending waves of caramel-coloured water towards them.

When flooding began owner Titiporn Jutimanon intended



People eat at a flooded restaurant, where patrons stand up from their tables every time the waves come in, on a river bank in Nonthaburi near Bangkok. — AFP

to close the restaurant but soon realised customers did not actually mind being surrounded by water.

"The concept has spread by customers' word of mouth", he said, adding footage of the quirky eatery quickly started trending on

social media.

Restaurants in Bangkok and other hotspots yoyoed in and out of restrictions on in-house dining this year as a deadly third wave of coronavirus infections took hold.

Thai authorities allowed

in-house dining to resume in September, as part of an easing of restrictions as new cases fell to around 10,000 a day, down from a peak of 23,000 in August.

An estimated 50,000 restaurants have shut down permanently

according to the Thai Restaurant Association, and Titiporn is grateful he can keep his doors open. "If I have to close down the restaurant again, it wouldn't survive for sure", he said.

Operating a flooded restaurant is a lot of hard work, Titiporn noted.

"You have to navigate your way through floodwaters while holding the customers' food", he said, adding staff also have to mop up mud at the end of the day.

The experience has proved popular with young people and families.

"The economy is pretty bad these days... I think it's a very good idea. The owner has turned the crisis into an opportunity", customer Neung, 49, said.

Health authorities in many countries advise people not to expose themselves to or swim in flood water.

Faecal matter from overflowing sewage, chemicals and industrial waste can cause illness and skin infections can occur from contact with open wounds.

— AFP

4-party coalition to resolve political crisis in Vienna

VIENNA: Austria's Social Democrats may approach the far-right Freedom Party of Austria in a bid to form a four-party coalition to replace the current government of Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who is being investigated for corruption.

Kurz's ruling conservative Austrian People's Party is governing in coalition with the Greens, who have called on the chancellor to resign after officials found indications that Finance Ministry funds were used to manipulate opinion polls.

In order to do so, the Social Democrats would have to reverse their earlier decision not to work with the Freedom Party of Austria at federal level. Social Democrat leader Pamela Rendi-Wagner appeared to signal this was an option when she told public broadcaster ORF that "extraordinary situations call for extraordinary measures."

Rendi-Wagner described a four-party alliance of the Social Democrats, Greens, the liberal NEOS party and the Freedom



Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz gives a press statement on the government crisis at the Federal Chancellery in Vienna. — AFP

Party of Austria as "unlikely, but possible," adding that if it did happen, it would be important for each minister to respect departmental boundaries.

The leader of the FPÖ, Herbert Kickl, a vocal opponent of vaccination against the coronavirus, would certainly not become health minister, Rendi-Wagner said, adding that she would be prepared to become chancellor, given Kurz's likely ouster.

Austria's other political parties are also holding talks to discuss potential alternative coalitions in order to avoid having to hold fresh elections

Kurz has denied the corruption allegations but is set to face a no-confidence motion in parliament on Tuesday at a special session of



Austrian Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler (Greens) gives a statement following talks with SPÖ, liberal NEOS Party and Freedom Party of Austria FPÖ in Vienna. — AFP

the National Council. Austria's other political parties are also holding talks to discuss potential alternative coalitions in order to avoid having to hold fresh elections.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said last week that there was no reason for him to resign as head of a coalition government despite a corruption investigation against him and his party.

Kurz and his Austrian People's

Party (ÖVP) were "capable and willing to act," he said, adding that he would do whatever it took to ensure political stability.

The comments came after a debate about whether a governing coalition between his ÖVP and the Greens remained viable despite the fact that anti-corruption investigators searched the offices of Kurz, the ÖVP, the Finance Ministry and a media house on Wednesday.

According to the Economic and Corruption Prosecutor's Office (WKStA), there are indications that, from April 2016 onwards, funds from the ministry were used to publish "party-politically motivated, sometimes manipulated polls by an opinion research company" in the interest of Kurz, who was then foreign minister.

A continuation of the coalition with ÖVP would only be possible without Kurz in light of the severe corruption charges made against him, said the parliamentary group leader of the Greens, Sigrid Maurer, earlier on Friday. "It is quite clear that such a person is no longer fit for office," she added.

Maurer called on the conservative party to nominate someone with an untarnished reputation to continue to lead the current government.

But, so far, the ÖVP has mostly backed Kurz, who also leads the party. The Greens are set to hold talks with other parties on Friday to find a solution to the government crisis. — dpa

ROYALS URGED TO REWILD LAND



TV presenter and naturalist Chris Packham gestures outside Buckingham Palace as school students and parents gather in order to hand over a 100,000-signature petition urging the Royal Family to rewild their land, in central London ahead of the Cop26 climate talks. — AFP

Ethiopia forces strike Tigray rebels in 'massive' move

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian troops and their allies are launching air and ground strikes against Tigray rebels in the northern region of Amhara, humanitarian and rebel sources said, amid growing speculation of a major offensive.

A spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been locked in a brutal conflict with pro-government forces in northern Ethiopia for 11 months, said on Saturday there was a "massive move" against the rebels. The reports come just days after

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was sworn in for a new term, vowing to defend "Ethiopia's honour" despite mounting international criticism of the war and alarm about the desperate humanitarian crisis it has triggered.

TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda said there had been "mostly air, drone and artillery bombardment" of rebels, and reported a major troop build-up, saying "tens of thousands are amassed" in northern Amhara including the North Gondar and



Soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defence Forces pictured during training in Amhara. — AFP

North Wollo zones. "We are confident we will thwart the offensive in all fronts and more," he said. "We will stand our ground until the siege is lifted." Humanitarian sources had said that federal soldiers and Amhara regional troops conducted air and ground offensives in the North Wollo area and other locations on Thursday and Friday. Representatives from Amhara, as well as federal and military officials, did not respond to requests for comment. — AFP

British unions call for tougher Covid-19 measures in schools

LONDON: Education unions have urged the government to consider reintroducing extra safety measures in schools as an expert warned about the level of coronavirus circulating among secondary pupils.

The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that around one in 15 children in school years 7 to 11 in England are estimated to have had Covid-19 in the week to October 2 — the highest positivity rate for any age group.

Professor Calum Semple, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), which advises the government, said there is a risk children in that age group could reach herd

Most children in England aged 12-15 are currently being offered one dose of the Pfizer vaccine by immunisation teams at schools

immunity through infection rather than vaccination.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "There is a risk of that and it's not a good way to get to herd immunity.

"Commentators would usually say it's ridiculous to aim for herd immunity using natural wild-type infection because that brings with it disease and damage to children



both from acute disease and potentially long Covid."

He said there is "no pretence that this is a deliberate attempt to get herd immunity — that would also be ridiculous".

He suggested "some flexibility would be great" for parents in England to be able to take children to vaccination centres.

Most children in England aged 12-15 are currently being offered one dose of the Pfizer vaccine by immunisation teams at schools.

Prof Semple said the uptake so far in this age group has been "really encouraging", but added: "I'm sure it will take time for confidence to build among many parents." — dpa

SHORT TAKES

KINSHASA

New case of Ebola virus detected in eastern Congo

A new case of the deadly Ebola virus has been recorded in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced. The case was discovered in a young child who died on Wednesday having developed Ebola-like symptoms shortly beforehand. This is the first confirmed Ebola case since a recent outbreak in North Kivu was officially declared over in May. The WHO is supporting the



Congolese authorities in the investigation of the new case, said the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Matshidiso Moeti. The case occurred near the town of Beni, a commercial hub with close links to neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda. — dpa

NICE

Successful operation for Monaco's Princess

Princess Charlene of Monaco has had surgery to deal with an ear, nose and throat infection she contracted in May, with a palace source telling AFP the operation "went very well". The operation in South Africa on Friday was performed under general anaesthetic, and "is the last she had to undergo following her ENT infection. She will be under observation for 48 hours," the source said. Zimbabwean-born Charlene, 43, has been living in her home



country of South Africa for much of this year, and was joined there by Prince Albert and the couple's children following a previous operation in August. But in early September she was rushed from the lodge where she had been staying in hospital. — dpa

TBILISI

Partial building collapse kills 5 in Georgia

At least five people were killed when a block of flats partly collapsed in Georgia's Black Sea resort of Batumi, police said blaming unsafe renovation work for the accident. Around five floors of the building collapsed on Friday, crushing several cars parked outside and leaving "up to 15 people" missing under the rubble, according to police. "So far emergency responders have saved two citizens, who were brought to hospital, and recovered five bodies," the police



said in a statement. Three people have been arrested in a probe into the collapse, the statement added, identifying them as the owner of a ground-floor apartment and two construction workers he had hired. — AFP

Capt Kirk lends star power to Blue Origin flight

ISSAM AHMED

When Star Trek first aired in 1966, America was still three years away from putting people on the Moon and the idea that people could one day live and work in space seemed like a fantasy.

On October 12, William Shatner — Captain James T Kirk to Trekkies — is set to become the first member of the iconic show’s cast to journey to the final frontier, as a guest aboard a Blue Origin suborbital rocket.

For fans, the 10-minute hop from a West Texas base back to Earth will be a fitting coda for a pop culture phenomenon that inspired generations of astronauts.

“I plan to be looking out the window with my nose pressed against the window, the only thing that I don’t want to see is a little gremlin looking back at me,” the 90-year-old Canadian, who will become the oldest person ever to go to space, joked in a video release.

Blue Origin’s decision to invite one of the most recognisable galaxy-faring characters from science fiction for its second crewed flight has helped maintain excitement around the nascent space tourism sector, as the novelty starts to wear off.

This summer saw flamboyant British entrepreneur Richard Branson fly just beyond the atmosphere in a Virgin Galactic vessel on July 9, beating the Amazon founder Jeff Bezos by a few days in their battle of the billionaire space barons.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX sent four private astronauts to orbit the Earth for three days as part of the Inspiration4 mission in September, which raised more than \$200 million for charity.

“Bringing on a celebrity like William Shatner, who’s related to space, brings a kind of renewed novelty, and creates media and cultural attention,” Joe Czabovsky, an expert in public relations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill said.

The original Star Trek was cancelled after only three seasons, but went on to spawn more than a dozen movies and several spin-off series, including some that are ongoing.

Shatner, as the plucky and decisive Kirk, commanded the USS Enterprise on a five-year-mission “to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.”

— AFP

I plan to be looking out the window with my nose pressed against the window, the only thing that I don’t want to see is a little gremlin looking back at me

WILLIAM SHATNER

Star Trek star



YET TO LOSE STEAM

Enthusiasts prepare to stage a ploughing display using steam engines on the first day of the 70th British national Ploughing Championships at Mindrum Mill, near Berwick-upon-Tweed, northern England, on Saturday. The two-day Championships, which were cancelled last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, feature 15 ploughing classes including: horse ploughing as well as vintage and modern tractor disciplines. — AFP

Second chance for global development



Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

THE COVID-19 CRISIS HAS GENERATED GLOBAL POLITICAL MOMENTUM TO ALTER THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE MARKET

Second chances are not common in this world, but one is arriving now. The scope and scale of government support for businesses and workers during the Covid-19 crisis of the last 18 months have swept aside entrenched policy dogmas. This has generated political momentum across advanced and developing economies to change the balance of power between the state and the market, and thereby foster a new consensus for achieving more equitable and sustainable growth. By building on this impetus, we can avoid repeating the policy mistakes of recent decades.

The pandemic has tested governments’ responsiveness and the resilience of economic systems everywhere, and changed social behaviour and personal habits in previously unthinkable ways. There has also been cause for genuine hope amid the suffering. The dedication of essential workers has been inspiring, while the global scientific community has harnessed the power of collaborative research and public money to develop safe, effective Covid-19 vaccines at breakneck speed.

A global economic recovery began in the second half of 2020, as countries found less draconian ways to manage the pandemic’s health risks and launched vaccination programmes.

Global growth is expected to reach 5.3 per cent this year, the highest rate in

almost a half-century. But the outlook beyond 2021 is uncertain, given disparities in countries’ financial resources, the prospect of new coronavirus variants, and highly uneven vaccination rates.

If we are not careful, these challenges — like governments’ misguided embrace of fiscal austerity after the 2008 global financial crisis — could slow the momentum for meaningful change. A return to the pre-pandemic policy paradigm, which delivered the weakest decade of global growth since 1945, would be a disaster. This is especially true for developing countries, where the economic damage caused by Covid-19 has exceeded that resulting from the global financial crisis a decade ago — in some cases by a considerable margin.

The new US administration’s wide-ranging economic initiatives, if complemented by similar actions in other developed countries, could restore the global economy to a sounder footing. Moreover, US backing for the recent \$650 billion allocation of International Monetary Fund special drawing rights (SDRs), as well as for a global minimum corporate tax rate and a waiver of Covid-19 vaccine-related intellectual-property rights, suggests a possible renewal of multilateralism. The global economy’s existing asymmetries, and the interlocking economic and environmental crises these have caused,

should top the multilateral agenda.

Progress will depend on improved policy coordination among major economies as they push to maintain the recovery’s momentum, build resilience against future shocks, and address the increasingly urgent climate crisis. But better coordination will not be enough to build back better. Above all, developing countries need renewed international support.

That implies creating more jobs that guarantee a secure future for working people and their families. It means not only expanding fiscal space but also ensuring that the taxes people pay result in adequate public services and social protection. Besides responsible sovereign borrowing, policymakers should ensure that the debts people acquire to put a roof over their heads or send their children to school are not a lifelong burden. Lastly, governments must not only price carbon appropriately but also preserve the natural environment for future generations.

Today, building back better hinges on the emergence of a new policy paradigm — this time, to help guide a just transition to a decarbonised world. The crucial question is whether governments will adopt the necessary measures together. If they act separately, this crisis will prove to be merely another missed opportunity.

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Humpty Dumpty: How do you put people back together?



Ray Petersen
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SEEING, AND BEING SURROUNDED BY THE DEVASTATION WROUGHT BY EXTREME NATURAL EVENTS CAN BE A KNIFE THAT CUTS DEEPER THAN WE OFTEN GIVE CREDIT

Cyclone Shaheen has left her indelible mark upon the Sultanate, which must now turn to the cleaning up, rebuilding of damaged infrastructure, and replacement of lost resources and possessions. But what about the people? How do you put people back together after such a traumatic event?

Potentially life-threatening natural disasters, such as Gonu, in 2007, and now Shaheen, last week, can be psychologically overwhelming, whether lives are lost, or not. Seeing, and being surrounded by the devastation wrought by extreme natural events among families, communities, societies, can be a knife that cuts deeper than we often give credit. Most people, being resilient, will bounce back

quickly, but what of the others?

Anka Vujanovic and Matthew Gallagher are in the Department of Psychology at the University of Houston say, “For those directly impacted, the immediate aftermath of a disaster can be disorienting, marked with displacement, shock, and a strong need to restore order. Thus, for some people, the full impact of a disaster and its impact on their mental health may not be obvious for weeks or months after the disaster occurs.”

Many impacted, though not severely by such events may feel what is known as ‘survivor’s guilt,’ a much deeper feeling of loss for others in that complex, yet simple manner that is another hallmark of humanity, asking themselves... “Why them?

Why not me?” In this, families, societies and communities must avoid isolation, and focus on supporting each other.

Vujanovic and Gallagher insist that a return to normality through “regular eating, sleep, and exercise, can be key to promoting health and well-being through challenging times.” In recovery from anxiety, deep breathing exercises, and conversations with supportive others can make a significant difference, to the holistic nature of disaster recovery.

Long-term psychological consequences are rare among those who have lost possessions or been inconvenienced, but post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and anti-social behaviours can occur.

Especially if someone failed to listen to prior warnings concerning the disaster, and this is quite prevalent. Some people stop listening to weather warnings, this being the ‘cry wolf effect,’ and then regret not moving to higher ground or some such response. They are the ones most likely to have issues.

Again, the academics caution awareness of those around you, and especially if others ‘open up’ to you, it is probably a cry for help, so be a good listener. Panic attacks, nightmares or a lack of sleep, intrusive and repetitive memories, ‘over the top’ reactions to minor events, irritability, even at the other end of the conversational spectrum, topical avoidance in not wanting to talk about it can be as clear a signpost

as excessive unsocial behaviours. Depression, disinterest, disheveled appearance, and a lack of care and respect for oneself, and strained relationships are other indications that something may be amiss. Don’t be too quick to ignore the signs.

There is no perfect solution here, but the experts agree that togetherness is a panacea for most such ills. Share your experiences, re-establish normality and routine as soon as possible, and make good small decisions, that will lead to good big decisions, in time.

‘All the King’s horses and all the King’s men, couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty back together again, but maybe you can help others rebuild their lives in Shaheen’s aftermath.



HAMILTON TOPS QUALIFYING BUT GRID PENALTY GIVES BOTTAS TURKISH POLE

BIDDING FOR A RECORD EIGHTH WORLD TITLE, HAMILTON HOLDS A SLENDER TWO-POINT LEAD

BERLIN: World champion Lewis Hamilton topped qualifying for the Turkish Formula One Grand Prix but a grid penalty means that Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas will have pole position on Sunday.

Hamilton clocked 1 minute 22.868 seconds on a damp 5.338-kilometre Istanbul Park circuit on Saturday to beat Bottas by more than one-tenth and his main title rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull by three-tenth.

The outcome is the best possible scenario for Mercedes and Hamilton, who will have to start from 11th owing to a 10-place grid penalty for introducing a fourth internal combustion engine of the season, one more than the permitted three.

Bidding for a record eighth world title, Hamilton holds a slender two-point lead in the championship over Verstappen, who will start alongside Bottas in the first row.

Having won from sixth on the grid last year, Hamilton will hope to limit the damage by moving up the field quickly — just as Verstappen did two weeks ago in Russia when he started from the last row after a full power unit change but finished second behind Hamilton.

Overtaking is possible on the Istanbul circuit and there is also a threat of rain which in Russia helped Hamilton and Verstappen.

“The session was really tricky



Mercedes’ driver Valtteri Bottas gets ready for the start of the qualifying session at the Intercity Istanbul Park in Istanbul. — AFP

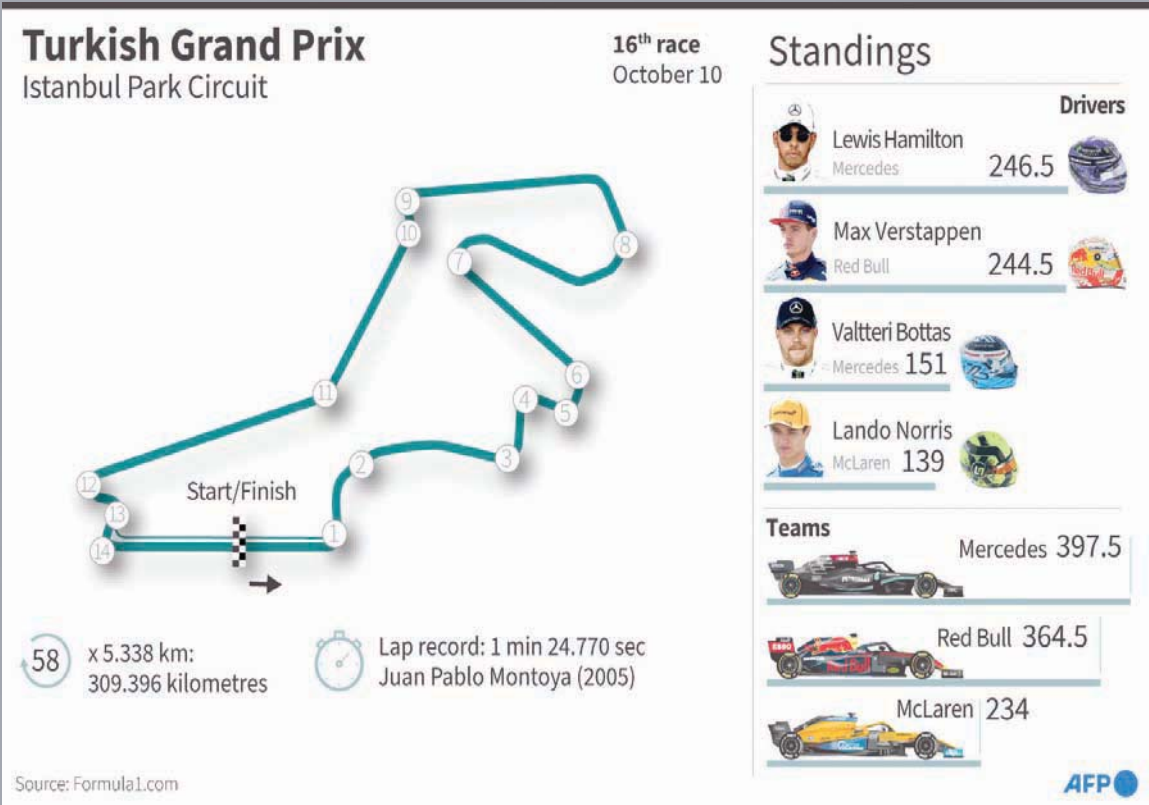
with some damp patches, but it was a really great job by the team,” Hamilton said.

“Tomorrow’s going to be difficult, but I’ll give it everything. It’s not the easiest overtaking at the moment, and we’re all on the same tyre, so I imagine tomorrow’s going to be difficult to move up.”

Bottas said he would concentrate on his own race but Mercedes will hope he can hold up Verstappen a little bit, even though Red Bull appeared strong on Saturday after some initial problems on Friday.

“It’s quite a decent recovery compared to yesterday,” Verstappen said.

“Tomorrow, lining up in second, let’s wait and see what the weather will do, but overall



I’m pretty happy. Let’s see how competitive we will be in the race.”

Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc and Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri, who led a wet final practice

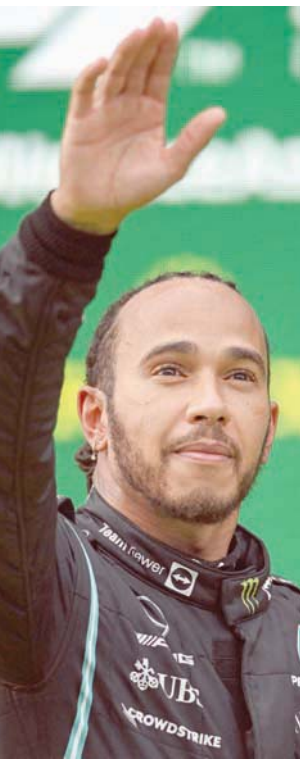
earlier in the day, will start from the second row.

McLaren’s Daniel Ricciardo was a shock elimination in Q1 which saw some early drizzle before conditions turned dry,

and Carlos Sainz will start from the back of the grid in the other Ferrari owing to a grid penalty.

Haas driver Mick Schumacher delighted in competing in Q2 for the first time and a career-best 14th-place finish. he also made Q2 in France but couldn’t compete owing to a crash.

“I really enjoyed it. I am very happy. We made all the right decisions,” the German told Sky TV. — dpa



Tomorrow’s going to be difficult, but I’ll give it everything. It’s not the easiest overtaking at the moment, and we’re all on the same tyre, so I imagine tomorrow’s going to be difficult to move up

LEWIS HAMILTON
World champion

Mercedes’ driver Lewis Hamilton drives during a practice session at the Intercity Istanbul Park in Istanbul. — AFP

Over 100 paddlers to compete at WTT Youth Contender

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 9

As many as 100 paddlers will take part in the 2021 WTT Youth Contender Muscat which will begin on Sunday in the main indoor hall at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

The TT event is organised by Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) in coordination with World Table Tennis (WTT) and ITTF. The players attending the tournament are from 19 countries including: Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, India, UAE, Iran,

Yemen, Qatar, Maldives, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Syria, Bangladesh, Iraq, Sri Lanka and beside the hosts Oman.

TT world-class event in Muscat will be hosted in two stages. The first part of the championship is for boys from Sunday to Tuesday. The girls competition will commence from Thursday and will conclude on Friday.

The five days event will feature different competition categories including U-11, U-13, U-15, U-17, and U-19. All the competitions will be played as singles category.



Oman’s junior paddlers will look for a perfect show and target for the top positions in the event.

The national TT team had an internal preparatory camp in SQSC in Muscat under watchful eyes of Syrian Adnan Fawakherji who is technical supervisor of the team. The girls paddlers are under way in the ITTF High performance camp until Wednesday.

The organising team completed all the technical and logistics preparations ahead of the event start. More than eight tables are set in the venue for

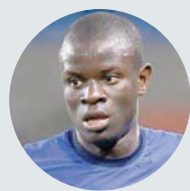
the competitions. WTT Youth Contender Muscat event is the first in Muscat and it is expected Muscat will host more upcoming events of WTT soon.

The national squad comprised the following players: Laith al Balushi, Eyad al Jassasi, Turki al Abri, Badar al Farsi, Omar al Awadi, Mohammed al Jassasi, Ali al Ghafri, Moyad al Mutawa, Loqman al Farsi, Ayman al Shehi, Mohammed al Moutawa, Badar al Jassasi, Abdulrahman al Zaabi, Mashal al Shehi. The girls team feature from: Al Hoor al Jassasi, Noor al Farsi and Retaj al Abri.



Germany, Netherlands edge closer to World Cup finals

Germany needed a late winner from Thomas Mueller to beat Romania 2-1 while the Netherlands eked out a 1-0 win in Latvia to stay on course for the World Cup finals on Friday. Four-time world champions Germany now have a six-point lead in Group J after their win in Hamburg.



Kante returns to training with Chelsea after virus isolation

N'Golo Kante has returned to training at Chelsea following a period of self-isolation after he tested positive for coronavirus, the Premier League club announced on Friday. The World Cup-winning midfielder has missed Blues' matches against Juventus and Southampton.

Delhi top IPL table, champions Mumbai crash out

DUBAI: Delhi Capitals topped the Indian Premier League table despite losing to Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore while holders Mumbai Indians crashed out on Friday.

Srikanth Bharat hit a last ball six to steer Bangalore to a dramatic seven-wicket win in Dubai on a day IPL witnessed the final two league games played simultaneously at different venues.

Five-time champions Mumbai thrashed Sunrisers Hyderabad by 42 runs after they posted a mammoth 235-9 in Abu Dhabi but the effort was not enough to take them into the playoffs.

The result ensured Eoin Morgan's Kolkata Knight Riders' entry into the final four alongside Delhi, Chennai Super Kings and Bangalore.

M S Dhoni's Chennai, who lost their last three matches, will take on Delhi in the first qualifier on Sunday.

Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma said the break in the Covid-hit tournament, that was halted in May due to a devastating pandemic in India and later resumed in the United Arab Emirates, was a setback.

"We have had a fabulous run as a franchise. It was wonderful to be part of this set-up, we can be very proud of that," said Sharma.

"We were getting momentum in Delhi and there was a break, that didn't help the team."

On a day of big runs, Bharat (78) and Glenn Maxwell (51) put on unbeaten stand of 111 as Bangalore chased down their target of 165.

Needing to defend 15 off the final over, Delhi pace bowler Avesh Khan faltered in the last few balls and bowled a wide when Bangalore required six to win on

the final ball.

Bharat then smashed the extra delivery over long on to trigger celebrations in his team looking for their maiden IPL title in captain Kohli's last season as captain.

"A win like this gives you the confidence. We have played well in Sharjah," Kohli said, looking ahead to the eliminator with Kolkata in Sharjah.

"We have the experience already and we need to utilise it as much as possible to keep moving on in this tournament."

In the other match, Ishan Kishan came all guns blazing to hit 84 and set the tone for Mumbai's highest ever IPL total that was defended by restricting Hyderabad to 193-8.

Suryakumar Yadav kept up the charge with his 40-ball 82 to raise Mumbai's hopes of winning their third straight title, but they needed to win the game by 171 runs after they batted first.

The winner of the first playoff will make the final scheduled for October 15. The loser gets another shot to make the title clash in the second qualifier.

The eliminator, meanwhile, will witness one team bow out while the other move into the third playoff match. — AFP

Brief Scores: Royal Challengers Bangalore 166/3 (KS Bharat 78*, Glenn Maxwell 51*; Anrich Nortje 2/24) beat Delhi Capitals 164/5 (Prithvi Shaw 48, Shikhar Dhawan 43; Mohammed Siraj 2/25) by 7 wickets.

Mumbai Indians 235/9 (Ishan Kishan 84, Suryakumar Yadav 82; Jason Holder 4/52) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 193/8 (Manish Pandey 69, Jason Roy 34; Jasprit Bumrah 2/39) by 42 runs.



"We have had a fabulous run as a franchise. It was wonderful to be part of this set-up, we can be very proud of that. We were getting momentum in Delhi and there was a break, that didn't help the team"
ROHIT SHARMA
Mumbai Indians captain

Delhi take on Chennai in 1st Qualifier



IPL was racing along nicely in the third gear and suddenly the final day of the league stage went into the sixth gear, when Mumbai gave it everything possible to make it through, but in vain.

A lot of players gave their auditions, prior to the mega auctions prior to the next season. 428 runs were scored just in a single match between Mumbai Indians and Sunrisers Hyderabad, where both teams got their season best scores. On the other hand, Royal Challengers Bangalore needed five off the last ball, which was smashed for a six by Srikanth Bharat.

UNDERSTANDING THE QUALIFIER

Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings have finished first and second respectively. They will clash today, where the winner will go to the finals and loser will



play qualifier 2. Royal Challengers Bangalore and Kolkata Knight Riders will play the eliminator, where the winner will play the loser of qualifier 1 (in qualifier 2) and winner goes to claim the second position in the finals of this grand event.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Mahendra Singh Dhoni has always been splendid with his captaincy in such crucial and important games and it's not just his captaincy, but he has some absolute quality for

the application of those high end strategies. Chennai has lost all its last three games and is definitely out of momentum, but what gives Chennai a massive advantage despite this is that, they have a fairly experienced team on the ground, who understands that it's all about today. To add on, these experienced players are controlled by one of the best captain/think tank of all time.

DELHI CAPITALS

If Chennai is captained by the

ex-Indian wicket-keeper, then Delhi Capitals is captained by the current Indian wicket-keeper. In addition, Delhi Capitals has the likes of Ricky Pointing, who has also been one of the best captain/think tank of his era. The young Rishabh Pant, who took over from Shreyas Iyer, has been brilliant with his decision-making skills at crucial moments. The pace of Rabada and Nortje, followed by spin of Axar and Ashwin has worked well. Youngster Avesh Khan has also bowled well in the death overs.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

The match at Dubai International Stadium, the average score is around 160. In the last match Royal Challengers Bangalore chased a stiff 164, set by Delhi Capitals, in a last ball thriller. Spinners have had a good role to play here. Both teams would like to put their best foot forward and qualify for the finals in the first attempt itself. Rituraj Gaikwad, will have a crucial role to play and Dhoni might come in early to express himself.

Malik gets T20 World Cup place in Pakistan squad

KARACHI: Veteran batsman Shoaib Malik has been included in Pakistan's Twenty20 World Cup squad, replacing top order batsman Sohaib Maqsood, who was ruled out due to a back problem, selectors said Saturday.

The 39-year-old has been in prolific form in the ongoing National Twenty20 tournament in Pakistan, having scored 225 in seven games and there were calls from the fans for his inclusion.

Having retired from test cricket in 2015 and one-day internationals two years ago, Malik had announced he will end his career after the Twenty20 World Cup, if selected.

On Friday, Pakistan made three changes to their 15-man World Cup squad announced last month but had included Maqsood in the squad subject to proving his fitness.

But chief selector Mohammad Wasim said doctors have ruled Maqsood out.

"Sohaib is devastated to miss out on the T20 World Cup on doctors' advice and following



discussions with the team management, we have decided to include Malik in the side," Wasim is quoted as saying in a Pakistan Cricket Board release.

Malik captained Pakistan in the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 and was a member of the side that won the tournament in 2009. — AFP

BANGLADESH EASE PAST OMAN A COMFORTABLY

Mohammed Naim made 63 from 53 (retired hurt) while fellow opener Liton Das made 53 in 33 balls. Nurul Hasan hit 49 from 15 balls to power the team to a formidable total of 207-4 in their 20 overs.

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 10

Bangladesh posted a comfortable 60-run win over Oman A team in the warm-up match as part of the T20 World Cup at Al Amerat Grounds on Friday.

Oman A team won the toss and elected to field in the day-night match.

Mohammed Naim made 63 from 53 (retired hurt) while fellow opener Liton Das made 53 in 33 balls.

Nurul Hasan hit 49 from 15 balls to power the team to a formidable total of 207-4 in their 20 overs.

In reply, Oman ended up at 147 for nine in the stipulated 20 overs.

Shoaib Khan scored 43 while Rafiullah made a quickfire 31.

Playing their first match at Al Amerat, a solid 102-run opening partnership made it feel like Bangladesh were cruising to a mammoth total but Oman put the brakes on scoring after spinner Samay Shrivastava had prolific opener Das caught and bowled in the 12th over.

Bangladesh lost another three wickets while adding 22 runs more and were 124-4 in the 15th over.

Soumya Sarkar made eight from eight balls and was caught by Obaidullah in the bowling of Shrivastava.



Mushfiquir Rahim was out for golden duck after wicketkeeper Rauf Attallah caught him giving first wicket for Oman A captain Aamir Kaleem.

Kaleem struck again in the same over when Afif Hussain hit out to Khurram Navaz.

The 17th over by Aamir fetched 15 runs for Bangladesh as Nurul Hassan hit two sixes in the last two balls.

Rafiullah did well to concede eight runs in the 18th over,

but Nurul Hassan slammed three sixes in the 19th over by Obaidullah as the Oman under-19 bowler gave away 21 runs.

Rafiullah's last over went even further with Shamim Hossain and Nurul dealing with sixes to collect 25 runs and Bangladesh total reaching 207-4.

OPENING JOLTS

In Oman innings, Bangladesh struck in the first over itself

when Akshay Patel was out for nought when he was caught by Afif Hussain off the bowling of Mehdi Hasan.

Prithvikumar Macchi got out for one in the second over as Oman slumped to 2 for 10 in the second over.

Then on, Oman lost wickets in regular intervals as Khalid Kail (7), Kaleem (7) and Khurram Nawaz (11) failed to make any impact.

A well set Shoaib Khan was run out at the wicketkeeper's end after setting out for a needless run as Oman were 75-5 in the 14th over.

Next Khurram Nawaz was bowled by Mohammad Saifuddin for 11 and Oman fell to 83-6.

In the final stages, Mehran Khan (19 from 10 balls), Rauf Attallah (19 from 14 balls) and Rafiullah (31 from 14 balls) tried their best but the target was beyond their reach.

After 19 overs, Oman were 146 for 8 wickets, needing 62 runs from six balls.

In the last over, the first five balls yielded only one run as Mohammed Saifuddin cleaned up Rafiullah to end the Oman innings.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 207-4 in 20 overs (Mohammed Naim 63, Liton Das 53, Nurul Hasan 49 n.o., Shamim Hossain 19 n.o.; Aamir Kaleem 2-39, Samay Shrivastava 2-24) beat Oman A 147-9 in 20 overs (Shoaib Khan 43, Mehran Khan 19, Rauf Attallah 19; Shoriful Islam 3-30, Mohammad Saifuddin 2-17)



PICTURES BY ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH



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CYCLONE SHAHEEN AFTERMATH

'THOUSANDS' OF CARS DESTROYED,
'HUNDREDS' OF HOMES RAVAGED

IMMENSE DAMAGE: CMA launches electronic link for insured parties to file complaints over rejected claims

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

As a massive clean-up mounted by government agencies, aided by thousands of volunteers, picks up pace in North and South Al Batinah governorates in the wake of Cyclone Shaheen's devastating sweep last week, the scale of the damage inflicted on private homes, small businesses and farm holdings is becoming increasingly evident.

A preliminary assessment of the damage, based on first-hand accounts shared by representatives of charity groups, insurance firms, loss adjusters and urban planning agencies, characterises the physical damage unleashed by the tropical cyclone as "immense".

"The scale of damage is truly devastating," said an Omani insurance executive returning from a weekend of volunteer work along with a group of friends in flood-ravaged neighbourhoods of Al Suwaiq Wilayat.

"Virtually every home has lost everything that once filled the ground floors, parking lots and garden settings. The owners are now dealing with mucky silt and debris, which has destroyed parked cars, furniture, carpets, electrical appliances and electronics and



other household effects. The scene is heart-breaking," the executive, who did not wish to be identified, told the *Observer*.

Over the weekend, the Capital Market Authority (CMA), the regulator of the insurance sector in the Sultanate, published an extensive database of licensed insurance companies, along with contact particulars of their local representatives distributed across the country.

The Authority encouraged insured individuals and organisations that have suffered material damage inflicted by Cyclone Shaheen to submit their complaints via an electronic link (<http://cma.gov.om/home/ecma>) if

their claims go unheeded.

DELUGE

The deluge sparked by Cyclone Shaheen during October 3 and 4, 2021 inundated potentially "thousands" of cars all across Barka, Al Musannah, Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah and Saham wilayats, among other nearby neighbourhoods, according to preliminary estimates. A final tally is expected to take several weeks, but insurers are already bracing for sizable exposure in the form of claims from car owners.

Until the fine print in the unified motor insurance policy mandated by the CMA in 2008, one year after Cyclone Gonu struck Oman

with devastating effect, is clarified, insurance experts are divided over whether the great majority of car-owners will receive some compensation for their wrecked vehicles.

On the one hand, there are experts who argue that coverage against Storm, Tempest and Flood (STF) is built into every motor insurance policy — whether Third Party Insured or Comprehensively Insured — in line with CMA directives. Unless where proven that the car owner was reckless or negligent in safeguarding their vehicle during the storm, such as by attempting to cross a flooded wadi, all insured vehicles are automatically covered for STF-

related damage.

On the other side are those who insist that STF coverage is an add-on option in Third Party insurance policies that comes with an extra fee. As reported by the *Observer* earlier, large numbers of vehicle owners are understood to have switched to Third Party insurance coverage over the past two years to reduce their cost burden in the face of financial constraints posed by the economic downturn and exacerbated by the pandemic. Whether they are now entitled to insurance compensation is not a given, it is argued.

SALVAGEABLE CARS

From the insurance standpoint, the large majority of cars affected

by the Shaheen floods is unlikely to be salvageable and may have to be written off.

"If the flooding was up to the carpet level in the car, then there's a good chance it can be fully repaired, assuming it wasn't running at the time. But if the level has reached the dashboard level, then given the dominant role of electronics in modern vehicles, such vehicles are beyond redemption," one expert explained.

The outlook for homes damaged by the floodwaters is even worse, it is pointed out. An insurance executive contacted by the *Observer* noted: "The uptake of home insurance products has been dismal. Sadly, the hundreds of homeowners who have seen their household effects destroyed in the floods would have received RO 5,000 in compensation had they considered home insurance amounting to a few tens of Omani riyals per year."

However, home or building owners who still have an outstanding housing loan can hope to get some compensation because most such loans have inbuilt insurance coverage, according to one expert.

"It is advisable for those with housing and property loans to approach their service providers to ascertain any possibility to obtain some coverage for flood-related damage to their dwellings," he said.

Cyclone Gonu, described as the most destructive storm to hit Oman in modern times, is said to have caused losses totalling around RO 3 billion in 2007. However, insured losses amounted to only RO 245 million.

OPAZ launches e-service for Duqm SEZ investors

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 9

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced on Saturday the launch of an electronic land selection service for investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Introducing the new service reflects OPAZ efforts to facilitate and expedite procedures for investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, reduce the time and effort, and ensure transparency

and fairness for all investors in the Zone. OPAZ plans to extend this service during the coming period to include other free zones.

This service allows investors to select the plot of land directly as soon as an investor determines the type of project and the required space of the plot. Based on the application's details, the system displays the vacant plots in the masterplan for investors via the Geographic Information System (GIS), which has become one of the modern technologies used in achieving governance of



procedures. The new service assists the investor to easily make the investment decision by selecting the appropriate location of the land while providing a spatial description that reinforces the decision.

Moreover, the service is distinguished by allowing investors to select the plot of land in interactive maps for more than 800 different economic activities. It also brings other features, including: the possibility of measuring the distance between the selected land and the key landmarks in the

Special Economic Zone at Duqm, providing accurate information about the level of land's altitude above sea level, merging joint lands, getting full measurements of lengths and spaces, determining the geographical location coordinates, and sharing the approximate distance of the land from the nearby utilities such as electricity, water, telecommunications, and roads.

Further, investors could also access the service of searching and inquiring about information on interactive maps, printing maps, obtaining modern satellite

images of the area, data of the masterplan, public services and nearby landmarks. Likewise, investors can request for a land with different specifications, as concerned employees will act upon the investor's request.

Investors can access the newly launched service through the digital portal (eoss.duqm.gov.om) from all over the world. To obtain the service, they have to register in the portal, submit the usufruct request, pay the fees, and then choose the land, which is appropriate for their projects.

MB Group launches aid package to cyclone Shaheen victims

MUSCAT: The MB Group of Companies has begun to send aid packages to help those who were impacted by Shaheen.

The first phase of aid consisted of trucks loaded with packages of supplies which were sent to Al Ghuzayn in North Al Batinah after coordinating with Al Khabourah Municipality and the Wali's office.

Mawarid Mining, the operator of the Al Ghuzayn mining project, has represented MB Group in this aid plan.

Employees from Mawarid have managed the process of acquiring the aid packages and distributing them among families impacted by the cyclone.

Haitham al Bahrani, representative for Mawarid, said: "Today we coordinated the acquisition and distribution process, and we are still here to help mitigate the cyclone's impact on the people in any way possible. We operate in this location, and so we view this work as part of our humanitarian and national responsibility, as well as our Corporate Social Responsibility."



Iman al Barwani, Vice-Chairperson of MB Foundation, said: "Distributing supplies over these days is step on of the Group's

plan to help lessen the impact of the cyclone, and other forms of aid will continue coming. Our main goal is to supply the people in

need in Al Khabourah and other locations impacted by Shaheen. We will continue offering aid as part of our sustainable CSR."

Nama Group launches 'Wiyakum', internal volunteering initiative

MUSCAT: Nama Group has launched the sixth edition of Wiyakum initiative for its employees of both electricity and water sectors in Oman. Wiyakum is one of many projects empowered by the communication and sustainability department within Nama Group.

This project aims at promoting the culture of volunteering among the group's employees.

Wiyakum aims at encouraging the group employees to utilise the volunteering leave available as per the HR manual. The volunteering programme embraces initiatives that have implemented at least one of the sustainability pillars, which are the economic, social, and environmental, and delivered on a voluntary basis, by Nama Group volunteering formed teams.

Wiyakum should implement



voluntary initiatives to serve the community where the volunteering ideas will be evaluated as per the internal approved mechanism, the awarded volunteering ideas, then, will be financially supported to reach the implementation phase.

In previous editions of the programme, more than 1,233 of Nama Group employees have participated in Wiyakum volunteering initiatives and

activities compared to 9,460 non-employees participants and volunteers from outside the organisation.

'Combat Desertification' project in the Governorate of Dhofar, is a major volunteering project achieved by Wiyakum initiative.

The project is achieving the environmental pillar which represents the idea of manufacturing advanced solar-powered devices that can minimise desertification.

These devices draw in atmospheric air and convert it into freshwater that irrigates crops and trees in natural reserves. The project targeted Dhofar Governorate due to the deteriorating fertility of arable lands caused by overgrazing and soil levelling.

BankDhofar demonstrates solidarity with families affected by Shaheen

MUSCAT: As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, and in support of the national efforts to contain the effects of the tropical cyclone Shaheen, the Board of Directors of BankDhofar has approved the contribution of RO 500,000 to be distributed to families impacted by the latest tropical condition.

The bank has also allocated RO 10 million as interest-free loans for affected customers, and announced deferment of loan instalments for up to 5 months.

Abdul Hakeem bin Omar al Ojaili (pictured), CEO of BankDhofar, reiterated the bank's ongoing commitment to philanthropy causes and pro-bono activities that contribute to the welfare of the community. BankDhofar has always been at



the forefront in giving support to various social and economic causes.

The tropical Cyclone Shaheen resulted in catastrophic damages in properties; thus, in demonstration of our support of the national efforts to contain the effects of the cyclone, the Board of Directors approved the contribution of RO 500,000 for

the affected families.

This comes in addition to RO 10 million to be allocated as interest-free loans for affected customers, as well as deferment option on loan instalments for up to 5 months."

The donated amount will be processed in coordination with one of the local charitable organisations to ensure proper distribution is in place.

Those affected by the cyclone can also benefit from the RO 10 million allocated by the bank with no interest, no processing fees, no insurance fees or prepayment fees.

The bank has also announced loan deferment facility for up to 5 months. Customers may visit their nearest branch to apply for the loan and for the deferment starting from October 14.

Kia Telluride is powered to take you beyond

MUSCAT: The powerful Kia Telluride SUV loads up your desires to go places and live the moment. Packed with thrilling performance capability and space enough to comfortably carry your loved ones and your adventure equipment along, the Telluride is engineered to settle for everything but routine.

Customers looking forward to pulsating moments in the Telluride SUV can benefit with paying no VAT (5 per cent VAT on net selling price will be borne by Kia Oman). The offer is valid until December 28.

Powering the Telluride ahead on every journey is the 3.8L GDI engine that produces 291 hp and 36.2 kgm.

Torque. For exciting performance the engine is paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission.

Built rugged to go beyond

on every journey the full-size Kia Telluride SUV is a perfect companion to navigate your way across terrains. The Telluride with its advanced technology and features helps you stay in control wherever your desires take you.

The Telluride's stylish exterior highlights its every arrival, encouraging more than just second stares. Contributing to this are the Bi-Function Projection Headlamps, LED Daytime Running Lights, 20" Alloy Wheels, LED Rear Combination Lamps and more. Arming you with the advantage of having great start to your days is the Remote Engine Start. During the summers when the heat could be discomforting, the Remote window control feature, can be a much needed advantage. Faster cooling, happier journeys.

The interior of the Telluride is as interesting as the exterior.



The Telluride has a very spacious cabin that has enough room to welcome occupants right up to the third row along with their well-packed belongings.

That is a definite luxury.

Passengers can revel in the comfort of being surrounded with well-thought appointments that include USB charging port

in every row, Leather Seats, Ventilated Front Seats, Power Driver Seat, Power Passenger Seat, Walk-in Button, Rear Side Manual Curtain, Smart Tailgate,

Roof Mounted Rear AC Control, Diffusing Roof AC Vents, Dual Independent Full Auto A/C, Audio Remote Control, Sunroof, 10.25-inch colour LCD with Smart Navigation, Rear Seat Driver Talk Mode, Rear Seat Quiet Mode, and much more.

The Telluride is made to go the distance and backing you on your ambitions is the Safety suite that includes Side and Curtain Airbags, Brake Assist System, Electric Parking Brake with Auto Hold, Front and Rear Parking Assist System, Self Levelling Rear Suspension, Head-up Display, Smart Cruise Control, Blind Spot Collision Avoidance Assist, Around View Monitor, Lane Following Assist, and much more.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.

OECD hails 'major victory' as global tax holdouts join reform

PARIS: A global push to enact a minimum international tax on big corporations moved closer to reality on Friday as one of the last holdouts, Hungary, agreed to join a reform that now counts 136 countries.

The OECD-brokered deal, which sets a global tax of 15 per cent, is aimed at stopping international corporations from slashing tax bills by registering in nations with low rates.

"Today's agreement will make our international tax arrangements fairer and work better", said OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann. "This is a major victory for effective and balanced multilateralism."

Hungary's announcement came a day after another key opponent, Ireland — whose low tax rate has attracted the likes of Apple and Google — relented and agreed to join the global effort.

With Hungary, 136 countries representing 90 per cent of global gross domestic product have now signed up, the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development said. Estonia also joined the reform on Thursday.

The OECD said Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are the last holdouts among 140 countries that have negotiated the tax. Pakistan had been on a previous list of signatories.

The organisation said countries are aiming to sign a multilateral convention in 2022, with an eye on implementing the reform in 2023.

The years-long talks received a boost earlier this year when the administration of US President Joe Biden backed a global minimum tax rate of at least 15 per cent.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks during a press briefing with the Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Mathias Cormann at the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in Paris. — AFP

Major victory for balanced multilateralism as global minimum corporate tax adopted by 136 countries

The coronavirus pandemic added urgency to the reforms as countries need new sources of revenue to pay for huge stimulus programmes that were deployed during last year's global recession.

"Today's agreement represents a once-in-a-generation accomplishment for economic diplomacy", US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

"As of this morning, virtually the entire global economy has decided to end the race to the bottom on corporate taxation", Yellen said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called it a "historic moment", saying "all companies have to pay their fair share".

The Brussels-based Computer and Communications Industry Association welcomed the deal.

It was a step "to ensure that

the international tax rules reflect today's global economy", the CCIA's Vice President Christian Borggreen said in a statement. "This is an important step towards more fairness and certainty in the global tax system." Facebook said it was "pleased to see an emerging international consensus."

The social media platform "has long called for reform of the global tax rules, and we recognise this could mean paying more tax, and in different places", said Facebook vice president for global affairs,

Nick Clegg. But the charity Oxfam was scathing.

"Today's tax deal was meant to end tax havens for good. Instead it was written by them", said Oxfam's tax policy expert, Susana Ruiz.

"This deal is a shameful and dangerous capitulation to the low-tax model of nations like Ireland."

The Hungarian government said in a statement that it agreed to join the global tax after securing concessions including a transitional period of 10 years for a special rate to remain in place.

Hungary has a nine percent tax rate, even lower than Ireland's 12.5 per cent.

"A compromise has come about that we are able to join wholeheartedly", Hungarian Finance Minister Mihaly Varga said. "Hungary will be able to collect the global tax using a targeted solution." — AFP

MSX closes higher supported by Financial Index

Vehicles Registered - Month end



Source: NCSI

MUSCAT: The MSX30 Index ended the week higher by 0.50 per cent. All sub-indices ended lower except financial index which gained 0.08 per cent by. Services & Industrial Index closed lower by 0.29 per cent and 0.41 per cent, respectively.

MSX Shariah Index closed lower by 0.39 per cent.

Al Kamel Power disclosed that there has been no formal decision from the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP) on the results of the Power 2022 tender which the Company has participated in.

As it stands, the Company's Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is due to expire on December 31, 2021. Further, OPWP is developing a Spot Market for the wholesale trading of electricity. The Spot Market is expected to go live by end of 2021. The Company appointed an independent consultant to conduct a study to assess the revenues that the Company can expect to generate from the said Spot Market. The study concluded that the level of revenues that the Company can expect to generate from the Spot Market will be negligible and hence will not be economically feasible for the company.

Accordingly, the Company will be in a position to continue carrying out business only if the PPA is extended. Based on the above the Company will assess the impairment of its Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and record any necessary adjustment resulting therefrom in the financial statements for the period ended September 30, 2021.

S&P Global Ratings could upgrade Oman's sovereign grade for the first time since 2007 after improving its outlook to positive, following a fiscal turnaround that's reducing the strain on its public finances. S&P's change in the outlook from stable is a signal the firm is more inclined to raise the rating than cut it. S&P, the first of the major credit assessors to give Oman a non-investment grade, affirmed its long-term foreign currency rating at B+ last week, on par with Bahrain.

Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has issued a number of directives to all banks and finance leasing companies (FLCs), including the announcement of a stimulus package of procedures and incentives aimed at containing the economic impact of the Covid -19 pandemic on the lives of individuals and institutional borrowers.

Taking into account, the current economic scenario and in continuation of previously issued instructions, the CBO, has issued further directives, to banks and Finance & Leasing Companies, to extend the grace period for repayment to borrowers. (Courtesy: U-Capital)

SOHAR PORT PITCHES IN WITH RELIEF

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 9

Sohar Port and Freezone has donated RO 250,000 to the Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) to aid Cyclone Shaheen recovery efforts. Relief work will start immediately to repair infrastructure, restore vital services, shelter for residents and will also provide food, clean

water and medical supplies throughout the governorate. Staff also volunteered to work with government entities and local NGOs to support relief activities within the region. The company is also encouraging employees to donate a percentage of their salaries to the cause.

"Oman is a strong nation and its people always do all they can to support each other in times



of need. The dedication of our staff and tenants to help the community shows how close they are to our hearts and we are committed to supporting the recovery of the country in any way we can," said Mark Geilenkirchen, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Port.

The OCO is accepting donations through the electronic portal for charitable organisations.

Idemia, Seeracom sign MoU to explore Oman opportunities

MUSCAT: Idemia and Seeracom have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore synergies for strategic projects in the Sultanate.

The signing ceremony was held last week at the Diplomatic Club in the presence of Khalid bin Hashil al Muslahi, Head of the Minister's Office Department, Foreign Ministry, Sultanate of Oman, and Véronique Aulagnon, Ambassador of France to the Sultanate.

Seeracom was represented by Aadiya R Khimji, Managing Director and Idemia by Hadi Hussant, General Manager of Idemia Oman and Sales Vice-President.

With the signing of the agreement both the companies signalled their intention to explore further cooperation in support of the economic diplomacy



Aadiya R Khimji from Seeracom and Hadi Hussant from Idemia signing the agreement.

by Foreign Ministry with the Sultanate's progress towards the ambitious 2040 Economic Vision under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq.

Both companies will capitalise on their respective expertise, leveraging their knowledge and technology to deliver state-of-the-art solutions aimed at supporting

Oman's progress towards the achievement of this goal.

Idemia is a trusted partner in public security and identity around the world for delivering innovative, secure and contactless biometric technology for border control, passenger facilitation, civil identity and law enforcement. Seeracom, a subsidiary

of Ramesh Khimji Group of Companies, is a trusted Omani turnkey integrator, which has successfully delivered various systems for Oman's airports and other stakeholders. They have developed and deployed complex critical communication and drone detection systems notably for international airports in the Sultanate.

Seeracom has also partnered with various multinational OEMs and vendors primarily focused on providing in country skill sets for integration and support of end user systems.

Idemia is the global leader in Augmented Identity, provides a trusted environment enabling citizens and consumers alike to perform their daily critical activities (such as pay, connect and travel), in the physical as well as digital space.

Steep rise in transactions processed through Invest Easy

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 9

The number of transactions processed by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) through the 'Invest Easy' electronic portal during the second quarter of 2021 totalled 166,775, representing a 421 per cent over the corresponding figure for 2020.

This increase reflects growing usage of the portal by investors to conduct their transactions. The Directorate of Information, Data and Statistics at the Ministry said the number of transactions completed through the front offices of the ministry during Q2 2021 totalled 12,581, compared to 750 transactions for the same period of 2020.



Transactions handled by the departments and directorates of the Ministry reached 48,519 in Q2, compared to 878 in Q2 2020.

Meanwhile, the free zones at Sohar and Al Mazyona and the SEZ at Duqm handled a total of 1417 transactions this year, compared to 119 transactions during the same period of last year. Sanad offices handled 70,303 transactions versus 13,240 last year.

Govt should tackle rising energy costs

Rising energy costs should be tackled by the Government “right now” amid fears over a difficult winter, an industry leader has said.

The Energy Intensive Users Group (EIUG) chair Dr Richard Leese said he put forward three “technical” proposals to the Government to avoid interruption to supply chains.

It comes after he attended a meeting with Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng and other representatives of energy intensive industries to discuss the wholesale gas crisis on Friday afternoon.

Dr Leese told BBC Breakfast on Saturday morning: “All across the energy intensive industries, they’re equally affected. We’ve seen the curtailment in production in the steel and fertiliser sector — that’s had a knock-on impact into the supply chains in the industrial supply chains and domestic supply chains.

“What we’ve done is lay out to Government a winter package of measures that we think is needed to prevent those interruptions in supply chains occurring again.

“It’s needed absolutely right now — gas prices are at an unprecedented level and the businesses that manufacture the goods that we need are trying to operate under these unprecedented conditions.

“The measures that we laid out in front of the Secretary of State yesterday will go some way to alleviating the pain this winter and we really need action for this winter.”

The EIUG said it “welcomed” the opportunity to meet with Mr Kwarteng to discuss practical solutions to the issue.

Dr Leese, who said the Business Secretary “took on board” the three proposals put to him, advised the government to work alongside the industry.

His first proposal was for the government to look at “cost containment measures” over winter, as relief for the industry is “not widespread”.

He went on to say: “Our second measure is to look at network costs within the UK. Network costs are distributed differently to other European countries in terms of energy intensive industries getting a higher proportion of the network costs, and that’s something within Ofgem’s gift.

“The third measure is to look at emergency measures, should any of our energy intensive plants need to shut down rapidly, looking at the threshold for emergency relief to try and prevent lasting damage to very expensive plants and equipment”

Dr Leese added: “We’ve already seen the tip of the iceberg with fertiliser consequences — energy intensive industries manufacture goods throughout all supply chains, everything from minerals to paper goods. — dpa

It’s needed absolutely right now — gas prices are at an unprecedented level and the businesses that manufacture the goods that we need are trying to operate under these unprecedented conditions

DR RICHARD LEESE
EIUG chair



PANDORA PAPERS
A man rides his bike past a poster depicting Brazil’s Economy Minister Paulo Guedes on a \$9.55-million bill, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, just days after he was mentioned in the ‘Pandora Papers’ media investigation exposing world leaders’ use of tax havens. — AFP

Cryptocurrencies move to next phase



ALEH TSYVINSKI,
Professor of Economics
at Yale University.

THIS “MAIN-STREAMING” OF BLOCKCHAIN APPLICATIONS MARKS THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE TECHNOLOGY’S DEVELOPMENT. NOW, WITH THE HELP OF REGULATORS IN A RANGE OF COUNTRIES, CRYPTOCURRENCY IS ENTERING THE NEXT PHASE OF ITS EVOLUTION: BECOMING AN INVESTABLE ASSET.

Regulators around the world are cracking down on cryptocurrencies. China has banned them. The United States is considering a range of measures aimed at reining them in. The Bank of England is developing capital requirements for financial institutions that hold them. But, far from spelling disaster for the crypto industry, regulation is vital to its long-term prospects.

The crypto market’s development began with what can best be described as the “product innovation” stage. Blockchain technology enabled people to approach old questions (What is money? How can art be created and valued?) in new ways. This resulted in highly visible applications, such as virtual currencies and tokenized artworks. But it also enabled less glamorous innovations in a wide range of areas, from tracking container shipments to improving the integrity of health-care records.

Now, cryptocurrency is entering the next phase of its evolution: becoming an investable asset. To be sure, cryptocurrencies are already an asset, with a market capitalization of around \$2 trillion. But it is a market marred by fraud, scandals, insider trading, pump-and-dump schemes, and other shady or illegal activities.

This is the case even for the “safest” cryptocurrencies, stablecoins, which are supposed to be backed by hard currency. In fact, Gary B. Gorton, my colleague at Yale, and Jeffery Zhang, a member of the US Federal Reserve System’s Board of Governors, compare stablecoins to the private banknotes that were circulated

during America’s “free-banking era,” from 1837 to 1862, when any bank could issue its own currency. With regulations porous or nonexistent, the private money was prone to wild price fluctuations and panics.

As it stands, large institutional investors either shy away from the sector or dabble in it in “venture-capital mode,” investing at an individual-company level. If they are to start regarding cryptocurrencies as an alternative asset class — like fiat currencies, commodities, or derivatives — three conditions must be met.

First, there must be clean and reliable data. Here, the cryptocurrency market has made important strides. Although financial information remains imperfect and incomplete, many data providers now go beyond pricing data, at least for the largest cryptocurrencies. Key players in the traditional finance sector — such as the S&P Dow Jones, with its Digital Market Indices portfolio — provide an important methodological benchmark for constructing such data and ensuring its credibility.

Second, we need research that facilitates a deeper understanding of cryptocurrencies as an asset class. Academic research has underpinned the creation of a number of new asset classes, such as derivatives and index funds, not to mention investment approaches like factor investing. Now, important progress is being made on cryptocurrencies.

For example, Cornell’s Will Cong, Ohio State University’s Ye Li, and Columbia’s Neng Wang have developed

theoretical models that allow valuation of cryptocurrencies. The University of Texas’s Michael Sockin and Princeton’s Wei Xiong have done the same. And Yukun Liu of the University of Rochester, Xi Wu of the University of California, Berkeley, and I have studied cryptocurrencies from an empirical asset-pricing perspective and concluded that they can be analyzed using conventional financial tools and should be a part of investors’ portfolios.

The third condition is a credible regulatory framework. As it stands, such a framework remains nascent, not least because regulating cryptocurrencies presents significant challenges. Some are conceptual and require the development of new theories, or the modification of existing ones, in accounting and law. Others are practical: for example, while the records of all transactions are public, the identities of the parties executing the trades are difficult or impossible to ascertain. And virtually all of these considerations are global, meaning that regulators in most major countries (at least) will need to coordinate their oversight efforts without stifling innovation.

Once these challenges are overcome, and an effective regulatory framework is put in place, cryptocurrencies will come of age. The attention-grabbing, experimentation-heavy teen years will be followed by the establishment of a more predictable version of the crypto market in which cryptocurrencies represent a credible asset class.

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Berkus method for start-up valuation



STEFANO VIRGILLI
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A GOOD THING FOR YAHYA IS TO DISPLAY WHEN HE IS PRESENTING TO INVESTORS

After the latest column on business valuation, I was contacted by Yahya, a young Omani entrepreneur who asked me if the valuation criteria presented could be applicable to his start-up.

A bit of context. Yahya founded a food delivery start-up in December last year and he is currently looking for an investor. The start-up has a mobile app — for iPhone only — that has been downloaded about a thousand times. There are only 20 restaurants on the app, most of which are not active.

Given the current status, the quick answer to Yahya is no, the valuation criteria presented in the latest column are not applicable

to his start-up. However, there are valuation methodologies out there that could certainly help him to come up with a value to present to potential investors.

The Berkus method has helped thousands of pre-revenue start-ups to approximate a logical valuation. It pivots around 5 core elements and draws a picture that mitigates investment risk.

- The five elements are:
- 1) Sound business idea as base value
 - 2) Quality of the management team to reduce the investor’s risk when it comes to execution
 - 3) Strategic partnerships with clients and or suppliers to reduce the risk of poor marketing

performance

4) Existence of a prototype to reduce the tech risk, if the idea turns out to be unfeasible

5) Product rollout or sales to reduce the risk of failing in scalability

It is never an easy task to assign a dollar-value to an idea, but a good starting point is to compare similar ideas in similar geographies.

Yahya’s unit of comparison cannot be Uber Eats in the US. It must be a comparable successful start-up in Oman that has already successfully launched and delivered.

Yahya would need to work on his management team. At the

moment his start-up is a part time one-man-show while he is completing his master’s degree. Although he is getting support from wise mentors, he should engage to have a co-founder or a CTO to take care of the tech side. Especially since the app was developed by a third-party tech company overseas and carries little value as an asset.

I applauded Yahya for having onboarded merchants on the app.

I know how hard that is, having been there before when I launched the ‘I LOVE OM’ tag. It took a team of 3 sales managers nearly 9 months to onboard the first 100 merchants.

But I clearly remember that the

turning point was when we signed a partnership with — arguably — the most popular restaurant in Oman. Once they joined, every other restaurant joined much faster. So, I would urge Yahya to seal a deal with a prominent restaurant in order to accelerate growth.

Indeed there is a prototype available in Yahya’s case. That is a good thing for him to display when he is presenting to investors. If he could get to a base line of 100 transactions a month, then the pilot project could be considered successfully completed.

(The writer is a member of the International Press Association)

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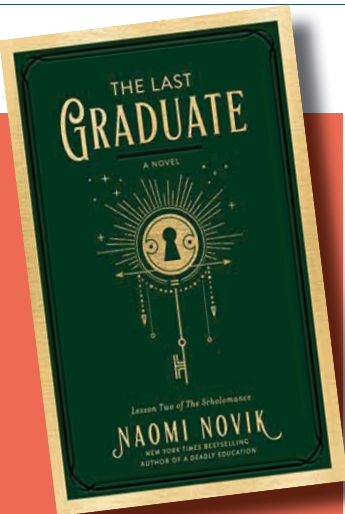
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Bond's Aston Martin goes electric

DANIEL CRAIG may be saying goodbye as James Bond, but his iconic Aston Martin is about to be given a new lease of life, for an ultra-cool \$1 million.

Bond actually drove a DB5, which features again in the latest Bond movie, "No Time To Die". But the DB6 is regarded by many as the epitome of British motoring style since it was first unveiled in 1965.

In a modern twist, the DB5 and DB6 are now being retrofitted to reappear in limited numbers as electric cars.

"For the women and men of tomorrow this, electrified, is what you should be driving," said David Lorenz, CEO and founder of Lunaz, which specialises in making classic cars electric, at the wheel of a DB6.

"You've got the aesthetic

beauty which you will never get in a modern vehicle yet the aesthetics can now be combined with a modern powertrain," Lorenz said.

Lunaz, based near Silverstone, home of the British Grand Prix, is producing limited numbers of an electric DB6.

The company was founded, Lorenz said, to take upcycling to a whole new level and answer a tricky question — when internal combustion engines are banned, what are we going to do with the two billion vehicles already on the roads? "I want to preserve these vehicles for future generations to come. My daughter is three years old. When she's of driving age she'll be driving electric cars and I want her to enjoy vehicles like this," Lorenz said.

A James Bond 1965 Aston



Martin DB5 coupe is displayed at Sotheby's auction house in New York, US, July 26, 2019.

Technological upgrades include the latest brakes, suspension and steering along

with air conditioning and the electronic infotainment systems.

The electric powertrains give the car a range of 255 miles. — **Reuters**



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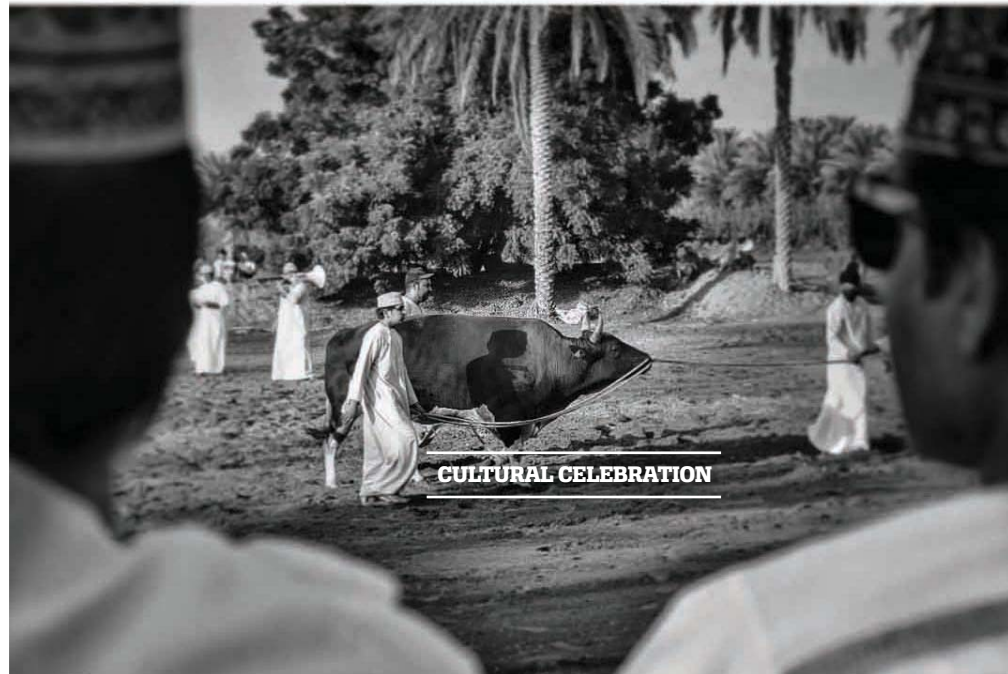
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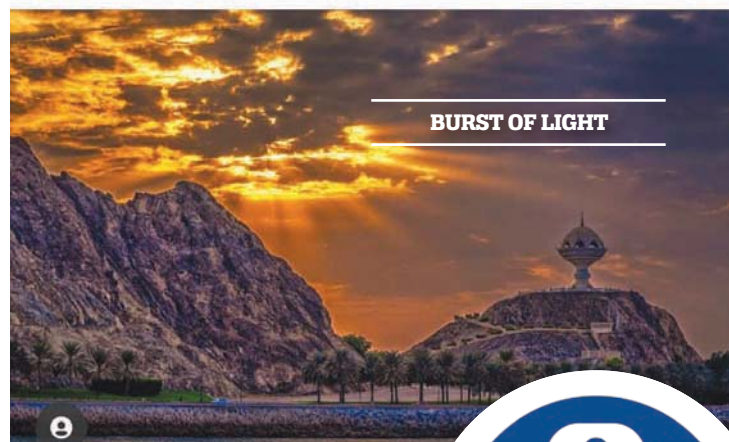
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Adam-based artist wants to showcase truth and dreams in paintings

BY JADE TAMPEPE

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and Sultan Haitham are revered figures in Oman so to put both of them on a canvas and capture their essences is quite a daunting task especially if such art is hyper-realist in nature.

But Filipino artist Emmanuel P. Peralta Jr who is based in Adam wanted to showcase his high respect for both figures. He is aware that Sultan Qaboos will always have a special place not only in his heart as a great leader but to everyone in Oman and that His Majesty Sultan Haitham will accomplish great things to honour Sultan Qaboos' legacy.

After going through a massive challenge with the onslaught of Cyclone Shaheen, Emman is quite aware of the journey that Oman has to go through and thinking of the great Renaissance, he knew that while Oman is having a rough patch between Covid-19 and the aftermath of the cyclone, that the country will rise again.

Looking at the two great figures on his canvas, he believes that the country is in good hands and he is in awe to be able to see the fast action of the government and the supporting authorities to aid its people to get back to their feet.

His two paintings of the two majesties were his constant reminder that while he is based in a remote village in

Adam where he serves as a nurse and although he didn't suffer as much as other people in the Batinah Governorate, there is no better place and no better country to be in in a time of crisis — because the leaders will always do its part.

Emman was born in Vigan City, Philippines — 1987. He studied Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Northern Philippines and graduated in 2007. After a storied educational journey, he became a licenced Nurse in the Philippines, found a great offer in Oman and presently works under the Ministry of Health in the Sultanate for more than 10 years now.

During his day-offs from working in the hospital, instead of wasting time doing nothing and roaming around, Emman invest his time in a painting. He loves his space where he paints in a solitary environment and the old charm of Adam allow him to conjure vivid images of the art he wants to do next.

Whenever he feels homesick, he turns to his art for comfort and entertainment.

"Art gives meaning to life which is why, despite my work as a nurse, I still find the time to paint. Art gives me a certain freedom to express my thought and through it, I can pour in my emotions," he said.

"My style is hyperrealism and contemporary abstract influenced by the great American portrait artist John Sargent. As an artist, I'm still on that journey of finding out my signature," he shared.

"Working on my art pieces including the two majesties, they become truly captivating because I render them with fine and intricate brushstrokes. Through my art pieces, I'd like to be able to touch other people by showcasing the truth and dreams, reality and ideals, and soul on different media available," he shared.

"To make these pieces come to life, I use acrylic, oil, watercolour and even air dry clay in sculpture. My favourite medium when painting is oil because it is the most forgiving of all the mediums available," he shared.

He added, "Other than the paintings of the two majesties, one of my other favourites is my parent's oil portrait painting entitled 'Love to Infinity and Beyond' because it is my gift on their 38th wedding anniversary last year."

A painting might take him about 3 to 5 days with 6 up to 8 hours per day

for him to finish.

"All in all, it depends on the complexity of the artwork. From my range of works, it took me a year to finish a 3x4 feet oil painting of Calle Crisologo of Vigan — this is one of Philippines landmark destinations where one can see the Spanish influence in the country," he said.

Most of his inspirations came from the people around him especially his family, from events and his experiences, through the culture and nature that he encountered as he lives in Oman.

Art-wise, Emman has actively participated in different Philippine and international competitions. He was a semifinalist in the prestigious Metrobank Art and Design Excellence (MADE) Philippine painting competition in 2017. He has also participated in the UAE 1st International Watercolour Festival in 2018.

Additionally, he's an author of a poetry book, called, "Sam-it and Alsem Ken Appad (Titik, Tinta, Pinta at Pluma). In this book he shares what it feels like to be in a shoe of an Overseas Filipino Workers and through it, he wanted to inspire his fellow OFW's by simply putting a picture on reader's mind about the life, love and heartache, inspiration, dealings, hardship and sacrifices of being an OFW.

"If you have the passion and dedication to learn a skill in drawing and painting, just work hard to develop it. Even if it takes you a long period, yet it will pay off in the end," he said.

His works, Sultan Qaboos and Sultan Haitham oil portrait paintings on canvases were recently displayed in Fatma's Gallery in Al Arai Complex, Qurum, Muscat. He's also been in a group art show in April Spring Salon 2021 at Matti Sirvio Gallery Al Shati Complex, Muscat, participated by 26 artists of different nationalities. Emman's art pieces will also be displayed in the upcoming group art exhibition Autumn Salon 2021 with a themed, "I See Music" with 40 different artists from 15 different nationalities on October 9, 2021, at Matti Sirvio Art Gallery at Al Shati Complex, Qurum. He is currently busy with his commissioned works that are still in progress and waiting to be finished.

To know more about Emman and his work, you can follow him on Instagram: **@emman_art_oil_painting**



Rasha Al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

I SLIPPED ON THE MUD WHILE GOING DOWN THE WADI TO FEED THE DOGS. THERE WEREN'T ANY BUT I LEFT THEM FOOD. THEY'LL COME DOWN SOON

Shaheen and the restless cats

WHEN WE STARTED Getting constant messages on Mom's phone regarding a tropical storm that might be hitting us on the weekend, we were hopeful that it might change its course at the last minute and save everyone the worry and damages that come along with it.

The only thing that seemed to change in Shaheen was the definition. Now, it was a cyclone and certainly heading towards us. On Saturday morning while driving by the beach road, the sea was grey and raging with high waves.

By late afternoon, dark clouds were gathering and my brother came to check on our windows and doors. He even moved the cars into a safe place away from

the course of any flying objects.

We stood in front of the laundry room deciding to turn it into a shelter for the outdoor cats. To lure them in, I left some dry food along with some cushions.

Only Borsa was smart enough to find herself a spot along with her two grown-up kittens. As for the rest of the cats, they kept following me around in and out of the shelter, which made me wonder how effective their disaster detecting senses were (probably nonexistent or simply mushed in their fat bellies!). I had to move Rocky to the bathroom as his cage was the first thing that would flood. Strong wind and rain started about 7 pm and I kept checking on the Kitzanians from the balcony.

Some were hiding under the cars and others in corners of the house where water couldn't reach them. Sleep denied me that evening and I woke up around 1.30 am to find the rain and wind at their peak and amongst all that a white Land Cruiser roaming around the neighbourhood. (What is there to see or film in these horrible conditions?). Kiki the blind was the only indoor cat panicking and meowing in distress. I almost slipped to discover that water was leaking from my windows. I had to wipe it twice before giving up; it was a fool's errand as more water kept coming in.

I managed a few hours of sleep and woke up to more rain and wind. Our garden was ankle-

deep in water as the drain got blocked by the cats' toy ball. I removed it and went to check on the shelter to find more cats gathered there despite the mess that was made by the water and wind that scattered the food and broke a pot.

I started cleaning up but Borsa swiped me twice, she wasn't happy with me sharing her space. Ignoring her and the scratches, I cleaned the place as fast as I could before heading to the front to check on the rest of the cats.

Despite the ordeal, my cats were hungry and demanding breakfast but how to feed them in this bad weather? I had to squeeze their food in spots where it was somewhat

dry. Many ate hurriedly before hiding once again under the cars as the rain got stronger. As for my indoor cats, they kept shaking their wet paws and giving us dirty looks.

The day was spent clearing the water off the floor, checking on family and friends and watching storm updates on TV. The storm finally ceased by 2.30 pm. It was still drizzling when I went to feed the cats around five. Thankfully, no cats were lost. I slipped on the mud while going down the wadi to feed the dogs. There weren't any but I left them food. They'll come down soon, now that Shaheen had left.

(The writer is a certified skills trainer and an author)



Mexican exhibit showcases recovered ancient treasures

Pop diva Adele breaks silence and bares pain in return interview



BRITISH MEGASTAR Adele has spoken of her “year of anxiety” that led her to live like a “recluse”, in a rare interview published in *Vogue* ahead of the release of her new album “30”.

“I thought, I’m just going to lock myself in a house”, she said of her anxiety-fuelled retreat from the public glare, which began with two cancelled shows at London’s Wembley Stadium in 2017 due to problems with her voice.

“That’s what I did. I was very reclusive. It paid off. People are used to me being a recluse”, she said in comments published on the fashion magazine’s website late on Thursday, her first major interview since 2016.

The 33-year-old singer graces the cover of its US and UK editions this month. It was during what she called her subsequent “year of anxiety” that her marriage to Simon Konecki, with whom she had a son Angelo in 2011, fell apart.

“Neither of us did anything wrong”, she said. “Neither of us hurt each

other or anything like that. “I’ve been on my journey to find my true happiness ever since”, added Adele, who currently lived in Los Angeles.

FINDING ROOT OF ANXIETY

Adele revealed that a new song on the album was inspired by a comment her son made to her as the marriage collapsed.

She took solace in “a lot of sound baths” — a meditative experience in which participants are “bathed” in sound waves — alongside more traditional meditation, exercise, and “a lot of therapy”.

“I realised that when I was working out, I didn’t have any anxiety.”

Adele added that therapy had made her realise that much of her anxiety stemmed from her childhood and relationship with father Marc Evans, who left home when she was aged 2.

“My relationship with men in general, my entire life, has always been: ‘You’re going to hurt me, so I’ll hurt you first’. It’s just toxic and prevents me from actually

finding any happiness”, she told *Vogue*.

However, the pair “got our peace” before Evans died of cancer earlier this year.

The stresses of the business and the death of compatriot Amy Winehouse almost led her to quitting the industry altogether, she revealed, at one point writing to her manager: “This isn’t really for me. It’s not why I love music”.

“I got really famous right as Amy Winehouse died”, she told *Vogue*. “And we watched her die right in front of our eyes.”

The Oscar and 15-time Grammy Award winning soul star told fans to expect a slight change in sound with the new album, noting there “isn’t a bombastic ‘Hello’”, referring to her 2015 smash single.

Her lyrics have also taken a change of course, she said.

“I realised that I was the problem”, she added.

“All the other albums are like, you did this! You did that!. Then I was like... I’m the running theme, actually. Maybe it’s me!” — **AFP**



ANCIENT MEXICAN artefacts recovered from abroad are among the archaeological treasures on display at an exhibition showcasing the country’s cultural heritage 200 years after it won independence from Spain.

Titled “The Greatness of Mexico”, the exhibition at the National Museum of Anthropology and another site showcases 1,500 rare pieces, including Mayan sculptures and Aztec codices.

Almost half of them are on display in Mexico for the first time, having been loaned or returned by European countries or collectors.

The exhibition demonstrates “who we Mexicans are”, said Yectli Hernandez, a Mexico City resident who came to the exhibit.

Hernandez said she was proud of her given name’s indigenous roots, as well as her Spanish surname — a reflection of Mexico’s diversity.

“I’m as proud to enter a cathedral as I am to visit pyramids”, Hernandez said.

The exhibition illustrates that “the history of this country did not begin just 500 years ago”, said Culture Minister Alejandra Frausto Guerrero.

She was referring to the fall of the Aztec empire to Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador’s government says that it has recovered more than 5,700 artefacts from foreign countries since late 2018.

Italian general Roberto Riccardi was recently awarded the Aztec Eagle, the highest distinction granted to a foreigner in Mexico, for his work in the recovery of archaeological pieces.

Just last month, Riccardi helped recover more than a dozen items that were due to be auctioned off in Italy.

“The sale of these objects constitutes an offence in the eyes of Mexican law”, the culture minister said.

Every time there is an auction of Mexican artefacts, the government asks that they be seized and returned, said Bernard Tallet, outgoing director of France’s Center for Studies on Mexico and Central America.

“Mexico says that its works have been stolen from it”, some during the colonization era and others during the 19th century, Tallet said.

Like many Mexicans, Hernandez, the museum visitor, hopes more artefacts will be returned.

“The truth is that they belong to us”, she said. — **AFP**

