

Vision 2040 to put varsities on global map

The Oman Vision 2040 gives top priority to raising the quality level of higher education, especially in the field of scientific research and innovation. It was revealed that Oman Vision 2040 targets at least three institutions to make it to the top 300 of the QS World University Rankings. **DETAILS ON P3**



Established 1981. Editor-in-chief: Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili

OMAN OBSERVER

www.omanobserver.om editor@omanobserver.om

P10

MURRAY BEATS DANIEL FOR 700TH CAREER WIN



P14

HALF WORKING DAY AT AL HASSAN ON THURSDAY



P20

A VICTORIOUS BATTLE AGAINST LUPUS



MUSCAT

BILARAB AWARDS ON TUESDAY

MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said will preside over the award ceremony of the Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design to be held at the Royal Opera House Muscat on Tuesday. The ceremony will witness the announcement of the three top winners who will be honoured with the award shields which will be presented in digital copies using NFT technology for the first time in the Arab region.

REPORT ON P2

SEARCH AND RESCUE DRILL CONCLUDES

The National Search and Rescue Team of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) concluded its participation in the joint exercise with Qatar International Search and Rescue Group carried out in the sisterly State of Qatar. The drill is part of the training and operational plans conducted by CDAA with international search and rescue teams to boost readiness and efficiency required for dealing with various emergency cases.

REPORT ON P2

READ IN OPINION

WHAT IS HEALTH ANXIETY DISORDER?

DR HAMED AL SINAWI

P8



INSULIN BELONGS TO THE WORLD

JAYASREE K IYER

P9

INSIDE



AIRLINES READY TO ADD CAPACITY ON INDIAN SECTOR

P3



DUOM SEZ CUTS SME REGISTRATION FEES

P15



People stand in front of a destroyed shoe factory in the aftermath of a Russian missile attack in Dnipro, Ukraine on Saturday. – Reuters

Russian forces close in on Kyiv

MOSCOW: The Russian army is continuing its attacks on a “broad front” in Ukraine, according to the Defence Ministry in Moscow, as Russian troops appeared to close in on the capital Kyiv.

Outside Kyiv, an airbase in Vasylykiv and a Ukrainian military intelligence reconnaissance centre in Brovary were taken out of action, ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said on Saturday.

According to British intelligence, a large Russian military column has partially dispersed north of Kyiv and is “likely to support a Russian attempt to encircle the city.”

However, the British Ministry of Defence wrote on Twitter, the move could also be “an attempt by Russia to reduce its vulnerability to Ukrainian counter-attacks, which have taken a significant toll on Russian forces.”

The bulk of Russian ground

The capture of Mykolaiv by Russian troops would give Russian forces a strategic position on the land route to the important south-western port city of Odessa

forces were now about 25 km from the centre of the city, the ministry said.

Several Ukrainian cities, including the encircled Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy and Mariupol continued to suffer heavy Russian shelling.

Two people were injured in renewed fighting and shelling on Friday in the southern region of Mykolaiv, Governor Vitaly Kim said.

“The occupying forces shelled hospitals and boarding schools at night with indiscriminate, chaotic fire”,

Kim said.

He added the attackers had changed tactics and were hiding in villages among civilian buildings. “Now there are no more rules, we will crack down on them”, the governor said.

The capture of Mykolaiv by Russian troops would give Russian forces a strategic position on the land route to the important south-western port city of Odessa, which could be cut off from the rest of the country.

In the separatist Luhansk region, areas that remained under the control of Kiev faced constant shelling and dozens of civilians were injured or killed.

According to Ukrainian figures, 70 per cent of the Luhansk region is under separatist control. At the beginning of the war on February 24, the separatists had about 30 per cent.— dpa

SEE ALSO P6

Denial of parity in marriage may lead to divorce

SAMUEL KUTTY

@samuelkutttyp

In most cases of divorces initiated by women in the Sultanate of Oman, denial of parity in marriage partnership or a shift in the gender role expectations are cited as the reasons.

Adding to them are better education and jobs to sustain their living standards.

Basma Suleimani, who got her divorce two years back, substantiates, “a marriage is not just a contract to live together. Both husband and wife should hold equal responsibility for domestic and caretaker tasks in the family”.

Gender roles are no longer acceptable, says Basma, who is employed in the public sector and sought her divorce to challenge “the dictatorship by her husband in all matters”.

Safia Ahmed has a different tale for ending her six years of married life. “We both were working. But I alone had to hold the responsibilities of all household work, childcare and even taking care of husband.”

Safia says she is leading a happy life with her five-year-old daughter and has no plan for a remarriage.

Even as the divorce rate in the Sultanate of Oman is not as alarming as in some other countries, it signals that women and men are beginning to choose personal freedom over conventions.

“Some of the other causes for

Since women are highly educated these days and hold well-paid jobs and positions, they do not fall into the normative roles of staying with an overbearing spouse

AMINA AL BALUSHI

A social worker



divorce in Oman, like many other countries, include financial problems, social media impact, adultery, drug addiction and physical abuse”, points out Dr Hamed al Sinawi, senior consultant psychiatrist.

In 2021, more than 3,800 divorces were filed, some 12 per cent more divorces than the previous year, while 3,426 divorce certificates were issued in 2020, which averaged almost nine divorces a day.

There has also been an increase in the number of marriage certificates issued, with 2.1 per cent more issued in 2020, compared to 2019. As many as 18,621 marriage certificates were issued in 2020.

Reports indicate that 67 per cent of the divorce cases filed in 2021 were initiated by women.

TURN TO P3

Plan to develop vocational colleges to realise Vision 2040

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, MARCH 12

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, disclosed that it has formed a team for developing vocational colleges.

In addition to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the team comprises the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy.

The team is tasked with revising all that concerns



vocational colleges and devising a clear working plan for developing vocational colleges.

This was stated by Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation during a visit to Salalah Vocational College.

The minister stressed the importance of diversifying the disciplines offered by the college in line with the specificity of the region, the industry trends and the labour market. Some new specialisations were identified during the meeting, and the

feasibility of introducing them will be studied by the college and the vocational education and training sector at the ministry in cooperation with the team entrusted with developing vocational colleges. The minister highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between school, university and industry, and linking the student to the labour market. She spoke about the ministry’s strategic plan especially in relation to the education and vocational training sector which aims to realise Oman Vision 2040.





Bilarab Award for Architectural Design winner to be announced on Tuesday

MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said will preside over the award ceremony of the Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design to be held at the Royal Opera House Muscat on Tuesday.

The ceremony will witness the announcement of the three top winners who will be honoured with the award shields which will be presented in digital copies using NFT technology for the first time in the Arab region.

The deadline for the submission of the final project designs of ten shortlisted entries expired today. The judging panel stipulated the submission of high-resolution designs featuring the technical and artistic details and architectural components of the projects while taking into account the observations made during the final review phase when the participants presented their displays before the judging panel on February 27-28 at Sultan Qaboos University in the



presence of HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said.

The organisers of the Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design received a total of 356 projects that met the award's conditions in the opening stage. The designs revolved around the development of Al Mina quarter in the Wilayat of Muttrah through projects featuring 50 years of the Sultanate of Oman's Renaissance and the promising launch of Oman Vision 2040. Of these, 10 projects designed by 19 young Omanis (including 5 individual participations and 5 group projects), were shortlisted to the final stage of the award. — ONA



Ambassador to Malawi presents credentials

LILONGWE: President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera of the Republic of Malawi received Saleh bin Suleiman al Harthy, who presented his credentials as Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Malawi.

During the meeting, the Omani

Ambassador conveyed greetings and best of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to President Chakwera.

On his turn, President of Malawi asked the ambassador to convey his greetings to His Majesty the Sultan.

— ONA

Joint search and rescue drill in Qatar concludes



MUSCAT: The National Search and Rescue Team of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) concluded its participation in the joint exercise with Qatar International Search and Rescue Group carried out in the sisterly State of Qatar.

The drill is part of the training and operational plans

conducted by CDAA with international search and rescue teams to boost readiness and efficiency required for dealing with various emergency cases.

The exercise included many hypothesis tests related to international search and rescue teams. The two teams handled the activities of the exercise which lasted for 36 continuous

hours in accordance with the guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at the United Nations.

Brigadier General Salim bin Yahya al Hinai, Chairman of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, attended

the exercise.

CDAA's National Search and Rescue Team is among teams that are internationally recognised by the United Nations INSARAG. The team handles domestic and global emergencies the most prominent of which was the involvement in the Nepal earthquake in 2015. — ONA

SALE

20% - 70%

Terms & Conditions apply

Clarks

SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1825

Al Khamis Plaza, Qurum - Tel. 24560992 | Muscat Grand Mall - Tel. 24399930 | Al Hail South - Tel. 24558148
Al Khamis Shoes Sohar - Tel. 26841178 | Al Khamis Shoes Al Hail - Tel. 24543045. 93894474

10 illegal possessions removed

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), in cooperation with the Public Prosecution and the Royal Oman Police (ROP), carried out a campaign to remove 10 illegal possessions in different locations within the boundaries of the zone and the necessary measures were taken accordingly. The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) continues its efforts to investigate and monitor any illegal possessions within the boundaries of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm or its affiliated areas and take the necessary measures in accordance with the legal procedures applicable in this regard.



Tender Announcement	
Tender Number	T-03-2022
"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tender:	
Tender Name	SLA - MWASALAT Vessel Fleet & Docking Facilities Maintenance Services.
Project Summary	Within the framework of this tender, MWASALAT would like to have a qualified contractor to provide specialized labourers for Mwasalat Vessels and Land Facilities maintenance and repair Services on call-off basis for 2 years.
Tender Fee	OMR 100/-
Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field
Start date for tender document distribution	Sunday, 13-MAR-2022
Last date for tender document distribution	Tuesday, 22-MAR-2022
Last date for submission	Monday, 11-APR-2022
The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M. Tenderers are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email All Tenderers shall submit with their offers a Tender Bond in the amount of not less than one percent (1%) of the Tender Value, valid for (90) days from the date of Tender Submission obtained from a locally registered Bank, drawn in favor of The Chairman of Procurement Committee, National Ferries Company L.L.C "MWASALAT". Any bid without tender bond will be rejected. The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head-quarter National Ferries Company L.L.C (MWASALAT) at Ghalat, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor), Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected. "Mwasalat" Head Quarter, Ghalat Tel: 24121555/24121500 968+ P.O.Box: 911, Al Khurair, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman For more information please send to: tenders@mwasalat.om	



Follow us on **facebook**
omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
SUNDAY | MARCH 13 | 2022

3

■ IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, visits Salalah Vocational College. The minister stressed the importance of bridging the gap between school, university, and industry, and linking the student to the labour market.

■ FROM PAGE 1

Denial of parity may lead to divorce

Families have been influenced by the new urban culture and modern information technology. Education and employment of women and the country's openness to foreign cultures were other factors for the divorces, points out Dr Hamed.

"Although higher educational attainment is often correlated with more stable marriages, in the Sultanate of Oman, higher education and increased employment for women have brought in a change in their role in the family", he argues.

In the academic year of 2020-2021, the total number of Omani female students studying in public schools was 321,690 out of a total of 652,606 students.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information, Omani women in higher education constituted 53.3 per cent of the total admissions in the academic year 2020-2021, a dip of 3.9 per cent compared to 2015-2016.

The percentage of Omani women graduates from higher education institutions in the academic year 2019-2020 increased by 1.4 per cent compared to 2015-2016 period.

Even though the reason for more women seeking divorce is attributed to the availability of more resources including a legal system to pursue it, rising education level and job status are other contributing factors.

"Since women are highly educated these days and hold well-paid jobs and positions, they do not fall into the normative roles of staying with an overbearing spouse", said Amina al Balushi, a social worker.

Hence, more women make decisions about their marriage and divorce, she said.

Women can now leave marriages and support their children without having to move back into their parents' homes because of financial needs, said Amina.

"Still divorce is a matter of concern because of its effects on the family structure, but it could also be a step towards improved women's rights", she said.

Oman Vision 2040 to put varsities on global map

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

The Oman Vision 2040 gives top priority to raising the quality level of higher education, especially in the field of scientific research and innovation.

It was revealed that Oman Vision 2040 targets at least three institutions to make it to the top 300 of the QS World University Rankings.

Speaking during an interaction, Dr Bakhait bin Ahmed al Mahri, Under-Secretary for Higher Education, said the 'Strategic Research Projects' programme will be implemented and that the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) has recently conducted a study to find out the challenges of researchers and innovators.

Al Mahri said that there is a continuous review of curricula and teaching methods in higher education institutions.

Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Under-Secretary for Research and Innovation, said the total expenditure on scientific research amounted to RO 66 million, according to the latest survey of science and technology indicators submitted by the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO.

He said there are nine of 28 institutions in the higher education sector that have obtained academic accreditations and there are institutions that have not yet applied or completed the same process.



Al Mahri said private universities in the Sultanate of Oman continued to be not profitable despite great efforts and progress made by them over the years.

He said that many programmes to support scientific research and innovation were launched by the ministry, including the Competency-Based Research Programme, including 461 research projects.

Al Haddabi said what has been accomplished in scientific research and innovation since

1995 until today is a matter of pride as these achievements are made in a short period.

Al Mahri said the focus is not only to have a large number of institutions but also to make them accessible to all as per the goals in Oman Vision 2040.

Al Haddabi said, "Considering scientific research as a sector for innovation and linking it with higher education is an important and supportive step because the quality of education is directly linked to the quality of scientific research and innovations."

Airlines ready to add capacity on Indian sector

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

With India's lifting ban on international scheduled flights, the airlines operating out of the Sultanate of Oman are expected to add capacity to pre-pandemic levels gradually from March 27.

India's Civil Aviation Authority said that the resumption of commercial international passenger services would imply reversion to bilaterally agreed capacity entitlements and termination of air bubble arrangements.

"Airlines will, however, restrict their operations to capacity entitlements under bilateral traffic rights available with the airlines, with effect from March 21, 2022," the statement said.

Special passenger flights have been functioning between India and around 40 countries since July 2020 under air bubble arrangements.

In a message to the Observer, an official of GoFirst said, "The airline, which used to operate flights to Mumbai and Kannur in the pre-pandemic days, will soon resume services to both these destinations as we finalise our schedules."

Speaking to Observer, the regional manager for Air India



in the Sultanate of Oman, said, "Starting March 27, we will resume regular services following the schedules that were in place before."

"Passengers are expected to get a reprieve from high ticket fares as airlines bound for India are likely to operate daily services, which were restricted under the Air Bubble agreement. Some private airlines will also resume service bringing in more competition," a senior executive of a leading travel portal based in India said.

He added it will still take some time for fares to stabilise especially in the context of rising prices of aviation fuel.

All travellers will be subject to strict adherence to India's guidelines for international travel dated February 10 and as amended from time to time.

Regular international flight operations will resume from March 27 and will follow the standard operating procedures effective at Indian airports for foreign arrivals and departures, the government said on Tuesday.

Scheduled international flight services have remained suspended in India since March 23, 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

PCR tests and quarantines are exempted for fully-vaccinated passengers.

نفت عمان
omanoil

Post Box 92, Mina Al Fahal, Postal Code 116, Sultanate of Oman Tel: 24574100, Fax: 24574101

NOTICE OF ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG (the company) is pleased to invite all the shareholders of the company to attend the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the company scheduled to be held at 5 pm on Monday, March 28, 2022 meeting Room Al Mandaloon at Crowne Plaza and the online MCD platform. which you can access via the Muscat Clearing and Depository Company website (www.mcd.gov.om), and if the quorum for the meeting is not complete, a second annual ordinary general Meeting will be held at 3 pm On Thursday, April 4, 2022, to discuss the following agenda:-

Agenda for Annual Ordinary General Meeting

1. To consider and approve the Director's Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
2. To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
3. To consider the Auditors' Report and approve the Financial Statement (Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Comprehensive Income) for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
4. To consider and approve the proposed cash dividend of 40 Baisas per share which is equivalent to 40 % of Share capital for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
5. To approve the sitting fees of RO 27,350 to the Board of Directors for attending the Board meetings and the related committees for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 and to indicate the sitting fees for the financial year ending 31 December 2022. {attachment 1 (a, b)}
6. To consider and approve distributing a total sum of RO 300,000 /- as the Board of Directors remuneration for the financial year ended 31 December 2021. {attachment 1 (a)}
7. To disclose the transactions and contracts which the Company has entered into with Related Parties in the course of the Company's normal and ongoing business during the financial year ended 31 December 2021. {attachment 2}
8. To study and approve the company transactions which the Company will enter into with Related Parties in the course of the company's normal and ongoing business during the financial year ending 31 December 2022. {attachment 2}
9. To disclose details on donations and Social Corporate Activities that company has entered into during the financial year ended 31 December 2021. {attachment 1 (c)}
10. Informing the General Meeting of the RO 250,000 donation to Oman Charitable Organisation during the financial year ended 31 December 2021. {attachment 1 (c)}
11. To study and approve the donation and social corporate activities sum of RO 200,000 to be used during the financial year ending 31 December 2022. . {attachment 1 (c)}
12. To appoint auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2022 and fix their remuneration. {attachment 1 (D)}
13. To appoint consultants for the Board evaluation and Board of Directors training for the year ending on December 31, 2022. {attachment 1 (E)}

In accordance with the company's Articles of Association each shareholder is entitled to give a written proxy to another person, who need not be a shareholder, to attend the meeting and vote on his/her behalf. If you wish to appoint a proxy, please complete and submit the Proxy Form upon attendance at the Annual General Meeting. All individuals must make sure to accompany their proxy forms with a copy of their ID cards (for adults) and a copy of passport (for women and minors and any individuals who do not hold an ID card) and a copy of residency card and passport for non-Omanis. With regards to corporates, the proxy form must be signed by an authorized person and stamped with an official company stamp. Additionally, all corporates must attach the company's commercial registration with a copy of the list of authorized signatories.

For further information, please contact **Mr. Ahmed Murad. Al Balushi on phone numbers 24574285 for Arabic and Mr. Mohammed Humaid Al Yahyai on phone number 24574108 for English** respectively. The material relevant to the meeting is being mailed to all shareholders along with the notice at their registered address with Muscat Depository.

Note: Shareholders and their proxies are requested to make themselves available at the venue of the meetings at 4:30 p.m. so that the meetings can be held at the scheduled timings.

Hilal Bin Ali Al Kurwsi
Chairman

KPMG LLP
Auditors

Dr. Ahmed Al Mufarji Advocates & Legal Consultants
For Advocacy & Legal Consultancy



NICHE TOURISM

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

After two years of a lull due to travel restrictions, the Ministry of Tourism is all set to welcome international travellers with a slew of offers and incentives.

Officials in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) told the Observer that the Sultanate of Oman will be a niche tourism product and is not for mass tourism. “We will welcome each and everyone who wishes to visit this country, but as a policy or branding, it will be positioned for a premium offering.”

A representative from Italy told the Observer, “The message is clear from several internal surveys that we conducted recently. The Sultanate of Oman need not follow neighbouring markets and what we need is a quality traveller who is ready to spend money here. We must have facilities that will ensure that these clients are comfortable and will spend more nights in the country.”

With lives restricted to homes for most of the last two years, some travellers have saved some money during this period and are willing to spend that on leisure and enjoy the freedom that comes from travelling places. “This is the right time to tap such travellers because they are looking for something new and Oman has already been among the must-visit places of 2022”, a representative of the Sultanate of Oman in Germany said.

He added that it is important to have an aggressive campaign about the products that this market has to offer and not worry about copying other markets and competing with them.

Several representatives also told the Observer that people look for places that are safe from petty crimes or volatility. “Oman is certainly one of the safest best places in the world and there is no second opinion about this.”

One of the challenges for leisure travellers coming to the Sultanate of Oman is the limited air connectivity. Generally, tourists don’t mind spending a little more, but they want to reach their destinations on either side as soon as possible. It may be noted that direct travel has gained relevance

AIR CONNECTIVITY WILL BE KEY
AS OMAN SEEKS TO ACHIEVE
A MORE SUSTAINABLE
APPROACH TO
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

since the start of the pandemic.

“We do not have direct flights from Muscat to many important markets in the world despite having a brand-new airport that can cater to nearly 20 million passengers a year. Take the upcoming World Cup 2020 in Doha for example. It will be difficult for many football lovers to get an affordable hotel in Qatar, and they will not mind staying in Oman on the eve of the game and returning immediately to the game. We don’t need to compromise on our traditions and culture, but certainly, we can have good restaurants that can open 24/7”, said a representative from Finland.

Neighbouring cities with bigger airlines and capacity, which are also closer to Doha, will also try to tap the football fans bound for the World Cup. But Muscat has a special distant advantage, which is the city does not have a traffic density and it is easy to reach the airport within 15-20 minutes from the hotel.

“All stakeholders, especially the national airlines should ensure that they have enough capacity with convenient timings to meet this demand.”

Speaking to the Observer, Saada bint Abdullah al Harthiyah, Director of Business Development, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, told the Observer we will have roadshows and special packages in time for the World Cup. “With visa-free travel available for nationals of many countries, Oman will be an ideal tourist destination.”

Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said, “We must offer incentives to maximise the economic return from the tourism sector in cooperation with local partners such as airlines, travel offices and companies and any party that has direct contact with the tourism sector.”

Al Ghassani said, “We are working to enhance the effective and strong presence of the Sultanate of Oman in the foreign tourism markets by participating in the most prominent events, activities and tourism activities that are held in various countries.”





UTAS-Sur students launch anti-bullying campaign

SUR: Public relations students at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Sur (UTAS) launched an awareness campaign on child bullying titled "Do not extinguish their lights". The campaign aims to educate the community about the impact of childhood bullying and empower parents to deal with the situation. Dr Salma al Musharraf, the Dean of the UTAS-Sur, released the campaign logo at the launch event held on the campus.

As part of creating awareness among the community, the campaign plans to offer seminars and workshops led by subject experts to parents and children. Inaugurating the campaign, Dr Salma said, "I am impressed by the campaign logo, especially the word "no" because it emphasises the campaign's theme — not to extinguish their light; also the colours used in the logo are very contextual." The logo represents the silhouette of a child accompanied by a flame of light with the campaign title. Awareness campaigns are organised by public relations students annually as part of their practical learning on campaign planning and implementation. Students will choose socially relevant topics to prepare strategies and tactics to disseminate campaign messages to the identified target groups.

A month-long campaign will continue till the first week of



April. Updates on various campaign activities are available on the social media accounts of the campaign.

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Sur (previously Sur College of Applied Sciences) is a government university that provides a range of applied sciences study programmes in Mass Communication, Information Technology and Applied Biotechnology.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

A company, based at Salalah in Sultanate of Oman, the largest producers of PET Preforms & Plastic Closures.

We are looking for the Sales Representative

Number of Vacancies : 01

Qualification :
3 Years Bachelor's Degree in Science / Commerce.

Experience :
4 to 5 Years in Sales & Marketing preferably in PET Preforms & Plastic Closures. In Gulf or Abroad.

Candidate having additional experience in FMCG field especially in PET Bottling of Mineral Water, Beverage Industry will be an added advantage.

Driving License : Oman or any GCC.

Salary & Benefits : Will match to the Best in the market.

Last Date : Apply within 10 days of this advertisement.
Apply To : hr.vacancies.oman@gmail.com

CBSE 10th term 1 results declared

MUSCAT: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) of India has declared the Class 10 term 1 results. The board has communicated to the schools the performance of Class 10 students in the theory paper of the exam. The scores of the practical papers are already with the school. CBSE term 1 exams for class 10 were conducted between November 30 and December 11, 2021. The term 1 exams were conducted in the respective schools in an offline mode. The board clearly stated that no student will fail or pass according to the scores obtained in the first term. The final result will be computed on the basis of scores in both the terms, at the end of the academic year.

Reinventing education in post-pandemic era

A STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, MARCH 12

A panel discussion on "Reinventing Education in the Pandemic Era and Beyond" was moderated by Dr Reshmy Krishnan, Head of Research, Muscat College, for the Youtube channel "Raw and Real" with Dr Sivakumar, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Indian School Board, Dr Krian GR, Dean, Middle East College, and Dr Mathew Philip, Assistant Dean, Muscat College.

The discussion focused on the implications of Covid-19 on education, encapsulating several vital ideas and recommendations that would shape the future of education.

During the discussion, Dr Sivakumar said the pandemic has not dampened the spirit of enthusiasm among Indian Schools — enhancement activities pertaining to scholastic and non-scholastic domains have been successfully conducted during the last two years.

He also mentioned teachers and counsellors indeed deserve sincere appreciation for their efforts in handling this unprecedented situation. Samridhi Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching is introduced to serve as a nodal resource center for the teachers to develop their professional and digital literacy skills along



The discussion focused on the implications of Covid-19 on education, encapsulating several vital ideas and recommendations that would shape the future of education

with numerous transformational academic programmes like skill-based training programmes such as touch-typing.

Dr Krian mentioned that online learning itself is a skill and that the success of online learning would depend on how we can blend it properly so that the overall learning experience is enhanced. He also pointed out that the pandemic has shown the significance of flexibility in education mechanisms, pushed for more collaboration and brought more realisations about the nature and implications of education. He reminded that

youngsters should understand the purpose of education, and accordingly, the sector needs to work together to come up with innovative practices to ensure true educational experiences.

Dr Mathew Philip noted that the pandemic had connected classrooms with the world on a large scale with more research and scholarly collaborations. The pandemic has made many realisations to the education system like (a) Educational institutions are not just a place but a collaboration of people to support the learners; (b) Flexible and humanised options according to students' career choices and aspirations are highly needed in the future; (c) Teachers need to look for designing learning environments more creatively suiting to each learner; (d) Teachers are to be more equipped and trained; (e) A competency model is required by combining knowledge, skills and attitude to create meaning and purpose of education.



P.O. Box: 147, Jawharat A' Shatti, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24073800, Fax: 24698496
Website: www.soharpower.com

Invitation to Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) & Annual Ordinary General Meeting (AOGM)

The Board of Directors of Sohar Power Company SAOG. (hereinafter referred to as the "Company") is pleased to invite the Shareholders of the Company to the Extraordinary General Meeting & the Annual General Meeting (AOGM) to be held at [3:00] pm on Sunday 27 March 2022 on the Holiday Inn Salwa Ballroom, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and through the electronic platform of the General Meetings, which you can access through the Muscat Clearing and Depository website (www.mcd.gov.om), and in the event the quorum requirement for holding the EGM or AOGM has not been met, a second EGM or AOGM shall be held at [3:00] pm on Thursday 31 March 2022 on the Holiday Inn, Salwa Ballroom, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and through the electronic platform of the General Meetings, to consider the following agenda items:

First: Extraordinary General Meeting agenda:

- To consider and approve one of the following two options:

Option 1

For the Company to wait until the issuance of the Executive Regulations for Direct Sale of Power by the Authority for Public Services Regulation, study the economic feasibility of entering into agreements for the direct sale of electricity under the upcoming framework, and then convene another EGM for the period does not exceed 30 June 2022 (as per appendix 1).

Option 2

For the Company to commence bankruptcy proceedings in accordance with Article 69 of the Bankruptcy Law" every merchant who has suspended payment of his commercial debts due to the disruption of his commercial business, may submit a petition in bankruptcy. Cessation of payment of the debt shall be a proof on the disruption of the business, unless otherwise is proved. The state of bankruptcy shall only arise upon the issuance of an adjudication of bankruptcy. Except by the issuance of the said adjudication, the cessation of payments shall have no effect unless otherwise provided by Law". (as per appendix 1)

Second: Annual Ordinary General Meeting agenda:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report and Financial Position for the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider the Board of Directors' Report on the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider the Auditors' Report and approve the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and note the transactions carried out by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2021 (as in Annexure 2).
- To consider and approve the transactions that will be carried out by the Company with related parties for the financial year ending 31 December 2022 (as in Annexure 3).
- To consider and ratify the Board and Committees' sitting fees paid during the preceding year and specify the Board and Committees sitting fees for the coming year (as in Annexure 4).
- To notify the meeting with the donation made by the Company on account of corporate social responsibility during the financial year ended 31 December 2021 (as in annexure 5).
- To consider and approve the proposal to allocate up to OMR 25,000 for Corporate Social Responsibility activities for the financial year ending 31 December 2022.
- To appoint the statutory auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2022 and approve their remuneration.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDC.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be cancelled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For more information, please contact **Mr Salah Issa al Farsi**, the Company's Admin Manager,
Telephone number (+968) 99219419 or email salah.farsi@soharpower.com



MINISTRY OF HEALTH ROYAL HOSPITAL

ANNOUCEMENT FOR TENDER

THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ROYAL HOSPITAL INVITE SPECIALIZED COMPANIES TO SUBMIT TENDER

TENDER NO	DESCRIPTION	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENT	CLOSING TIME/ DAY/DATE	ELIGIBILITY	TENDER FEE (NON- REFUNDABLE)
428/2022/ MOH/ DGRHP-35	SUPPLY OF SURGICAL ITEMS (LAPAROSCOPE) FOR ROYAL HOSPITAL	24/MARCH/2022	BEFORE 10 AM ON TUESDAY 19/APRIL/2022	SPECIALIZED COMPANIES REGISTERED WITH TENDER BOARD	25 RIALS

All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain 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 the given website signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee or a certified Cheque issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee before one day of date submission.

The Original Bank Guarantee should be submitted to the office of Director of Finance-Royal Hospital one day before the submission date for all Tenders.

Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via
Telephone: 24166670
Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Fighting rages outside Kyiv

LVIV: Conflict raged near Kyiv on Saturday and Ukrainian officials said heavy shelling and threats of Russian air attacks were endangering attempted evacuations of desperate civilians from encircled towns and cities elsewhere.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russia was sending in new troops after Ukrainian forces had put 31 of its battalion tactical groups out of action in what he called Russia's largest army losses in decades. He gave no details and it was not possible to verify either statement.

Zelenskiy also said he had spoken to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron about pressuring Russia to release the mayor of the city of Melitopol, who Ukraine says was kidnapped on Friday by Russian forces.

More than 2,000 residents of the southern city, which is now under Russian control, protested outside the city administration building to demand the release of the mayor, Ivan Fedorov, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the president's office, said.

A call between Scholz, Macron and Russian President Vladimir Putin was under way, the French presidency said. Russia has not commented on the fate of Fedorov, who Ukrainian officials said was kidnapped by Russian forces on false accusations of terrorism.

Zelenskiy said his country could not stop fighting but was upholding a ceasefire around an agreed humanitarian corridor out of the southern port of Mariupol, which has been under an almost two-week



People cross the Irpin river as they evacuate from Irpin town next to a destroyed bridge, amid Russia's attack of Ukraine, outside of Kyiv. – Reuters

siege, and called on Russia to do the same.

Moscow has previously blamed Kyiv for failed evacuations.

Putin launched the attack on February 24 in an operation that has been near universally condemned around the world and that has drawn tough Western sanctions on Russia.

The bombardment has trapped thousands of people in besieged cities and sent 2.5 million Ukrainians fleeing to neighbouring countries.

Ukrainian officials had planned to use humanitarian corridors from Mariupol as well as towns and villages in the regions of Kyiv, Sumy and some other areas on

- * Bulk of Russian ground forces outside Kyiv, says UK
- * Ukraine says humanitarian corridors threatened
- * US sanctions hit top Kremlin staff, oligarchs

Saturday.

But the governor of the Kyiv region said fighting and threats of Russian air attacks were continuing during evacuation attempts and the Donetsk region's governor said constant shelling was complicating bringing aid into Mariupol.

The UN humanitarian office said conditions in Mariupol were grim.

"There are reports of looting and violent confrontations among civilians over what little basic supplies remain

in the city," the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

"Medicines for life-threatening illnesses are quickly running out, hospitals are only partially functioning, and the food and water are in short supply."

An adviser to the Ukrainian presidency said earlier that 79 evacuation buses and two trucks with humanitarian cargo had left for Sumy on Saturday. Buses and trucks also left Zaporizhzhia for

Mariupol, a video released by the deputy head of the Ukrainian presidential administration on social media showed.

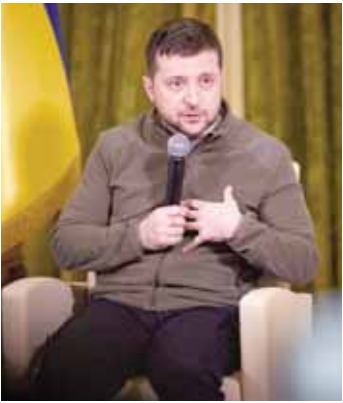
At least 1,582 civilians in Mariupol have been killed as a result of Russian shelling and a 12-day blockade, the city council said in an online statement on Friday. It was not possible to verify casualty figures.

Air raid sirens blared across most Ukrainian cities on Saturday morning urging people to seek shelters, local media reported.

The exhausted-looking governor of Chernihiv, around 150 km northeast of Kyiv, gave a video update in front of the ruins of its Ukraine Hotel, which he said had been hit on Saturday.

"There is no such hotel any more," Viacheslav Chaus said, wiping tears from his eyes. "But Ukraine itself still exists, and it will prevail."

Russian rocket attacks destroyed a Ukrainian airbase and hit an ammunition depot near the town of Vasyilkiv in the Kyiv region on Saturday morning, Interfax Ukraine quoted Vasyilkiv Mayor Natalia Balasnovych as saying. — Reuters



Ukrainian President Zelenskiy during a news conference for foreign media in Kyiv. – Reuters

Ukraine at 'turning point,' says Zelenskiy

LVIV: Air raid sirens blared across most Ukrainian cities on Saturday morning urging people to seek shelters, local media reported, after President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said the war had reached a "strategic turning point". Russian forces appeared to be regrouping, possibly for a fresh offensive which could target the capital Kyiv, Ukraine's military and Britain's defence ministry said.

Efforts to isolate Russia economically stepped up, with the United States imposing new sanctions on senior Kremlin officials and Russian oligarchs and the European Union set to strip Russia of its privileged trade status on Saturday.

With the Russian assault in its third week, Zelenskiy, who has rallied his people with a series of addresses from the capital Kyiv, said Ukraine had "already reached a strategic turning point".

"It is impossible to say how many days we still have (ahead of us) to free Ukrainian land. But we can say we will do it," he said. "We are already moving towards our goal, our victory."

— Reuters

Crisis talks conducted via video link

MOSCOW: Crisis talks between Moscow and Kyiv over the conflict in Ukraine, which had been conducted in person in Belarus, have continued via a video link, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Saturday, according to the RIA news agency.

Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin had briefed French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in a call on Saturday about the negotiations held in video format in recent days.

Around 1,300 Ukrainian troops killed

LVIV: Around 1,300 Ukrainian troops have been killed since the start of the Russian attack, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said. Speaking at a news briefing, Zelenskiy said Ukrainian and Russian negotiating teams had started discussing concrete topics rather than exchanging ultimatums. He said the West should be more involved in negotiations to end the war but welcomed efforts by Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to mediate between Ukraine and Russia, and said he had suggested to Bennett holding talks in Jerusalem.

Putin showed not ready to end war

PARIS: Russian President Vladimir Putin did not show a willingness to end a war with Ukraine during a call on Saturday with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a French presidency official said. The French and German leaders reiterated their call for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine as a condition for full negotiations, the official said.

Engineers inspect seized N-plant

KYIV: Russian engineers have arrived to measure radiation at a Ukrainian nuclear plant, the seizure of which during Moscow's attack of the country sparked international alarm, officials said. Russia occupied Zaporizhzhia, Europe's biggest atomic power plant, after its forces attacked it on March 4. Its reactors appeared undamaged after the assault despite a fire that broke out there after tanks bombarded it. — Reuters/AFP

Florist stays open to 'cheer people up'

MYKOLAIV: Most business owners have shut up shop and fled Ukraine's Mikolaiv, but florist Angela Kalisnik continues to sell tulips and roses just a short drive away from the frontline. "We didn't know the war was coming," says the 25-year-old.

"Flowers continue to bloom in our region and we don't want to throw them away." Snow falls on the wide streets of the deserted city, and only a few people have ventured out in the bitter cold.

Outside the city, soldiers are fighting off attacking Russian forces. But inside Kalisnik's shop, multicoloured bouquets line the wall.

And against all odds, there have been customers. A man steps out the door with a huge bouquet for his mother's birthday.

A few days ago, a passer-by dropped in to buy a bunch for a woman who had found and returned his lost wallet.

And many soldiers flocked in to buy flowers for their girlfriends for Women's Day on Tuesday, she says.



Ukrainian florist Angela Kalisnik answering questions during an interview in her store in Mykolaiv. Picture shows a video grab taken from a footage of AFP TV. – AFP

Kalisnik says she closed her shop a week after Russia attacked her country on February 24, but then decided to open back up.

"War is war, but people continue to live, to celebrate birthdays," she says. "We need to cheer people up and keep the economy going."

A short walk away, dozens huddle in a queue for an ATM. Some have been waiting for more than two hours.

Vitaly is annoyed. "I don't understand, two days ago, everything was normal," he says, without giving his second name.

"But now we can only take out 400 hryvnia (\$13) at a time," so have to withdraw several times in a row.

For several days, the Russians have bombarded Mykolaiv, which lies on the road to the strategic port city of Odessa some 130

kilometres down the Black Sea coastline.

But the Ukrainians have managed to repel the Russians at their gates, the region's governor Vitaly Kim says, and "the battle is being won".

At a news conference on Friday in front of the city hall, the young politician assures those attending that the Russians have been pushed back to 15-20 kilometres outside the city. "They thought we'd welcome them with flowers, they didn't expect such resistance," says Kim, who admits he did "not know anything about war 15 days ago".

Thousands of civilians have fled Mikolaiv in recent days, heading towards Odessa, which has so far been spared the bombardment.

The mass exodus has left the city near empty.

Most shops are closed and the supermarkets still open are starting to run low on pasta, rice and canned food.

Army chaplain Valentin prays the nightmare will soon be over.

— AFP

Europe's trains take fighters to Ukraine, and bring back refugees

MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF

On the 12th night of the war, on a platform at Prague's central train station, Vitali Slobodianiuk and Volodymyr Kotsyuba met for the first time.

They had few things in common: Both were Ukrainians working in construction sites in the Czech Republic. On that frigid evening, both got on a train back to Ukraine to join the fight against Russia's attacking army.

Slobodianiuk, a 47-year-old former soldier, and Kotsyuba, a 35-year-old university graduate, shared a neat compartment on the sleeper train from Prague to the Polish-Ukrainian border town of Przemyśl, sticking together, even though most carriages were virtually empty.

“We’re sort of friends now”, Kotsyuba chuckled.

The train, run by a Czech private operator, RegioJet, was on a special mission that night, and every night. It carried humanitarian aid to the border, as well as a handful of people — volunteer fighters and Prague-based Ukrainians rushing to the Polish-Ukrainian border to collect fleeing family members.

On the way back, it took refugees into the heart of Europe, away from Ukraine and the war, and deeper into open-ended displacement.

Europe's trains and railways boomed in wartimes past. From the second half of the 19th century onward, trains carried soldiers to and from the front lines, supplied armies in combat and grew to meet the needs of the continent's defining conflicts. Most grimly, trains were taken over by the Nazis to take millions of Europe's Jews to their deaths in camps in Poland and elsewhere during the Holocaust.

In the 1990s and 2000s, as the European Union began to expand eastward and peace took hold, trains instead became a key vehicle for European integration.

Interrailing became a rite of passage for young Europeans who enjoyed cheap, borderless travel where trenches once lay, in what felt for a while like irreversible progress. Migrant workers from the European Union's poorer members in the East rode trains to jobs in the West as the labour market opened up to them.

Now Russia's attack of Ukraine is turning Europe's trains and ornate imperial-era stations into a new refugee crisis network, putting them on a war footing yet again. At least a dozen state- and privately owned railway operators have opened up their services for free to refugees, and their cargo trains are being deployed to bring humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

The German operator Deutsche Bahn, in cooperation



Women and children who fled the war in Ukraine prepare to board a train bound for Prague, in Przemysl, Poland.

with other major European railway companies such as ICE, TGV and Thalys, now offer completely free cross-continental travel to people fleeing Ukraine to Germany, Denmark, Belgium, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy. Deutsche Bahn is also putting food, water and sanitary items on its freight trains and sending them into Ukraine.

On Monday, on the RegioJet night train from Prague to the Polish station of Przemysl, the last stop before Lviv in western Ukraine, the few occupied compartments held intimate stories of heartbreak and sacrifice.

“We’ll wait in Przemyśl for four hours, then we’ll catch the train to Lviv”, Slobodianiuk said, referring to the western Ukrainian city that is a key node of the country’s railway system and is currently a safe haven for refugees fleeing by train.

Slobodianiuk, the former soldier, a slender man with short hair and veiny arms, was heading home to Vinnytsia in central Ukraine to join his wife, twin daughters and

3-year-old grandson. The last time he held a weapon was in 2016, in Mariupol, the southern Ukrainian city that had been targeted by Russian-backed separatists, he said. He was ready to do it again. "I'm afraid; everyone is afraid," he said, clasping his hands, toughened and callused by years of fighting and manual labour. "Fear is all around us. We hope this will end soon."

His fellow traveller, Kotsyuba, was headed to the western Ukrainian city of Slavuta where his mother and grandmother still were. He was leaving his wife and two young daughters behind, in Prague.

“Slava Ukraini,” he whispered, repeating the rallying cry “Glory to Ukraine” that’s galvanised the country.

The 19th-century Przemyśl station, with its golden chandeliers, arched passages and ornate pale blue plaster mouldings, was packed with families who had fled Ukraine and taken the slow journey past an overwhelmed border crossing into Poland, in below-freezing temperatures, carrying children, pets and a bag or two.

A 459-foot mystery in a Tuscan Port

MICHAEL FORSYTHE, GAIA PLANIGIANI
AND DAVID D KIRKPATRICK

From Germany's North Sea ports to the French Riviera, open season has been declared on superyachts. Across Europe, authorities are hunting down luxury vessels tied to Russian oligarchs in the effort to inflict pain on President Vladimir Putin's allies.

In Marina di Carrara, a small Italian town on the Tuscan coast, one of the world's biggest, newest and most expensive superyachts — called the *Scheherazade* — is under scrutiny by Italian police. Almost as long as a US guided-missile destroyer, it dominates the waterfront.

The yacht, estimated by the website SuperYachtFan to cost about \$700 million, has two helicopter decks and is studded with satellite domes. Inside, photos supplied by a former crew member show, is a swimming pool with a retractable cover that converts to a dance floor. Then there's the fully equipped gym and gold-plated fixtures in the bathrooms.

In the rarefied world of the biggest superyachts, the Scheherazade is alone in that no likely owner has been publicly identified. That has spurred speculation that it could be a Middle Eastern billionaire or a superconnected Russian — even Putin.

The ship's captain, Guy Bennett-Pearce, a British national, denied that Putin owned or had ever been on the yacht. "I have never seen him. I have never met him," he said. He added, in a phone interview from the yacht, that its owner was not on any sanctions list. He did not rule out that the person

could be Russian, but declined to say more about the owner's identity, citing a "watertight nondisclosure agreement."

Bennett-Pearce said that Italian investigators had come aboard on Friday and examined some of the ship's certification documents. "They are looking hard. They are looking at every aspect," he said. "This isn't the local coppers coming down, these are men in dark suits."

A person familiar with the matter, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to discuss it, confirmed that the Italian financial police had opened an inquiry.

On Monday night, Bennett-Pearce said he had “no choice” but to hand over documents revealing the owner’s identity to Italian authorities. He said he would do so on Tuesday and had been told they would be handled with “confidentiality.”

“I have no doubt in my mind whatsoever that this will clear the vessel of all negative rumors and speculations”, he wrote in a message to a New York Times reporter.

The mystery about the ship's owner arose because — even for the hyper-confidential world of superyachting — there is an unusual degree of secrecy surrounding the boat. Not only do contractors and crew members sign nondisclosure agreements, as on many superyachts, but the vessel also has a cover to hide its name plate. And when it first arrived at the port, workers erected a tall metallic barrier on the pier to partly obscure the yacht from onlookers. Some locals remarked that they had never seen anything like it for other boats.



تنمية TANMIA

الشركة العمانية لتنمية الاستثمارات الوطنية
Oman National Investments Development Company

Invitation to attend the Ordinary Annual General Meeting Oman National Investments Development Company SAOC

The Board of Directors of Oman National Investments Development Company SAOC ("Company") is pleased to invite the Company's shareholders to attend the company's ordinary Annual General Meetings, to be held at **10:30 on Tuesday, March 29 2022**, via the electronic platform to hold general meetings which can be accessed through the website of the Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) if the quorum of the meeting is not completed, a second annual ordinary general meeting will be held on **Wednesday March 30 2022**, at the same time and place to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors on the activities of the Company and the financial status of the Company, for the financial year ended on 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors on the organisation and management of the Company, for the financial year ended on 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the auditor's report, balance sheet and profits and loss statement for the financial year which ended on 31 December 2021.
- To notify the shareholders of the related party transactions entered into by the company in the ordinary course of business during the financial year ended on 31 December 2021.
- To approve the sitting fees paid to the members of the Board of Directors and the committees under the Board of Directors for the financial year ended on 31 December 2021, and to determine the sitting fee for the financial year ending on 31 December 2022. (as per the annexure)
- To consider and approve the proposal of distributing a total sum of (RO.41,800) as remuneration for the Board of Directors of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2021.
- To appoint the external auditor for the financial year ending on 31 December 2022 and to determine their remuneration.

Pursuant to the Company's Articles of Association, a shareholder can appoint a proxy in writing to attend and vote on the proceedings on his/her behalf.

If you wish to attend a proxy, please complete, and submit the attached Proxy Form to the Company's office. The proxy form shall be signed by an authorized signatory and sealed with the Company's seal and submitted together with a copy of the commercial registration certificate.

To prevent delay in starting the meeting shareholders are requested to arrive half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

For further information please contact as follows:
Phone No.: 22300447
E-mail: deena@tanmia.om

إعلان الدعوة إلى اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية الشركة العمانية لتنمية الاستثمارات الوطنية ش.م.ع.م

يسر مجلس إدارة الشركة العمانية لتنمية الاستثمارات الوطنية ش.م.ع.م. (»الشركة«)، دعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية للشركة والمقرعقدته في تمام الساعة ١٠:٣٠ من صباح يوم الثلاثاء الموافق ٢٩ / ٣ / ٢٠٢٢، وذلك عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لاتخاذ الجمعيات العامة والتي يمكن الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع العامة (www.mcd.gov.om). وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب القانوني للجمعية سيتم عقد الاجتماع الثاني في يوم الأربعاء الموافق ٣٠/٣/٢٠٢٢ في ذات المكان والزمان لمناقشة جدول الأعمال التالي:

١. دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن نشاط الشركة ومركزها المالي للسنة المالية المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، والموافقة عليه.
٢. دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن تنظيم وإدارة الشركة خلال السنة المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، الموافقة عليه.
٣. دراسة تقرير مراقب الحسابات، والميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر للسنة المالية المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، والموافقة عليه.
٤. إحاطة المساهمين بالتعاملات مع الأطراف ذات العلاقة التي قامت بها الشركة في سياق نشاطها الاعتيادي في السنة المالية المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، والموافقة عليها.
٥. التصديق على بدل حضور جلسات مجلس الإدارة واللجان النشيطة عنه عن السنة المالية المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، وتحديد مقدار البديل للسنة المالية القادمة التي ستنتهي في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٢م (حسب المرفق)
٦. دراسة مقترح توزيع مكافآت أعضاء مجلس الإدارة بمبلغ وقدره (٤١,٨٠٠ ر.ع) عن السنة المالية المنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢١م، والموافقة عليه.
٧. تعيين مدقق الحسابات الخارجي للسنة المالية القادمة والمنتهية في ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٢م وتحديد أتعابه.

يحق لأي من المساهمين طبقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة، أن يعين خطياً وكلياً له ونائباً عنه لمحضر والتصويت على القرارات المتخذة.

إذا كنت ترغب في تعيين وكيل، يرجى تعبئة استمارة التفويض المرفقة وإحضارها لقر الشركة. توقع استمارة التفويض من قبل الشخص المخول بالتوقيع ومختومة بختم الشركة ومرفقة بها شهادة التسجيل في السجل التجاري.

يرجى التكرم بالحضور قبل موعد الاجتماع بنصف ساعة وذلك لتلافي حدوث أي تأخير في بدء الاجتماع.

للمزيد من المعلومات يرجى الاتصال
هاتف رقم: ٢٢٣٠٠٤٤٧
بريد إلكتروني: deena@tanmia.om

المستشار القانوني

مراقب الحسابات

رئيس مجلس الإدارة

What is health anxiety disorder?



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

A man in his mid-forties came to the clinic with his wife carrying a thick file of his medical tests and reports. He said that he has seen several consultant in the private and government hospital looking for treatment for his problems that started three years ago.

He feels pain in different parts of his body but all his tests are normal. He would be very anxious before going to the hospital telling his wife that he is going to die soon. He kept moving between doctors locally and abroad doing more than 100 blood tests and all reported normal. Despite doctors’ reassurance he could not stop himself from seeking consultations.

This man suffers from a

condition called “illness anxiety disorder” which is a psychological problem where the person becomes preoccupied with his health worrying excessively that he may become seriously ill, even when the doctors tell him that all medical tests are normal.

Some patients experience extreme anxiety that they interpret normal body sensations like a mild headache or feeling tired as a sign of undetected serious illnesses.

As a result, the person’s life becomes affected as he is unable to focus on his job or enjoy being with friends and family. Some patients end up talking about their health worries whenever they meet a friend which does not help as some

THE FIRST STEP IS TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT ‘ILLNESS ANXIETY DISORDER’ BY READING MEDICAL INFORMATION FROM TRUSTED RESOURCES AND DISCOURAGE THE PERSON FROM EXCESSIVE CHECKING FOR HIS SYMPTOMS

friends would recommend new doctors, which feeds on the initial problem.

This condition affects both men and women from different age groups but may get worse with

aging especially when the person has limited social activities so worrying about his health takes up most of his time.

There are a few possible explanations of what causes illness anxiety disorders but the main ones focus on the affected person misinterpretation of common bodily sensations while other theories focus on the reward that the affected person gets from people around him so he or she such as getting more sympathy and exemption from work or other social duties.

So how can you help a friend or a family member who has illness anxiety disorder?

The first step is to educate your

self about this condition by reading medical information from trusted resources and discourage the person from excessive checking for his symptoms.

Try to distract him with other activists or new hobbies. Help him develop effective coping skills such as reminding oneself that the problem is the anxiety not the physical symptoms.

Help him identify his thinking errors such as jumping to conclusions, making assumptions, imagining worst-case.

Encourage him to do some inspirational reading, self-calming and relaxation techniques such as breathing and muscle relaxation techniques and mindful walking.

The green entrepreneurship paradox

UBAIS PARAYIL IQBAL

A recent discussion in a research debate group raised an intriguing point concerning the contradictory nature of the terms ‘Sustainability’ and ‘Entrepreneurship.’

The obvious answer to the question of ‘whether sustainable business practices reduce the carbon footprints of entrepreneurial activities in a country to zero?’ is a resounding ‘No’.

“It does, however, play a critical role in reducing the environmental impact of corporate activities and safeguarding natural resources. Sustainability, according to Prof Knut Haanaes of IMD in Lausanne, Switzerland, has evolved a business strategy that increases a company’s longevity.

According to Talal Rafi, a member of the World Economic Forum Expert Network, the shifting perceptions of their surroundings have made sustainability more crucial for businesses.

The rising demand for sustainability adoption from a variety of stakeholders has created a new arena for businesses to compete in.

As a result, businesses have begun to report on their sustainability efforts using various reporting frameworks and standards. GRI is one of the most widely used frameworks for sustainability reporting (Global Reporting Initiative Standards). PDO, Omantel, Oman Arab Bank, OQ, and Bank Muscat are among the companies in the Sultanate of Oman that use GRI standards for sustainability reporting.

Apparently, all sustainability policies and practices across the globe are reserved for the big players and SMEs find no place in it. The erstwhile CSR and the current ESG are the best examples of giving overemphasis to big players in the industry. In fact, SMEs are also significant if we take them collectively. Hence, we need an inclusive approach to sustainability rather than a reserved one.

The whole scenario of viewing sustainability as a competitive tool by these big players and the possibilities of undertaking dummy acts for the sake of reporting can decay the objectivity of sustainability policies by the government.

The most sustainable strategy to ensure green behaviours in any economy is to instil a sustainability attitude among the people, rather than making reporting mandatory. It is the collective obligation of the entire society to assure green business in an economy in order to create a brighter future for future generations, not only managers, employees, investors, or consumers.

Finally, rather than enforcing a sustainable mindset through the legal system, it is past time to invest in cultivating one. We need to restructure the curriculum to impart sustainability values, which will serve as the foundation for developing sustainable practices.

(The writer is a lecturer at the Business Studies Department, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Nizwa)

Ukraine war gives freight firm a new purpose



DAN BARRY

The writer is a longtime reporter and columnist for TNYT

PORT READING: A blue dot on a box means nonperishable food, ready for shipping. A red dot means first-aid items for hospitals still standing. A green dot means supplies for Ukrainians taking up arms: boots and kneepads, socks and gloves, thermal underwear and camouflage-patterned clothing.

And in this cavernous warehouse, at the back end of an industrial park in central New Jersey, green dots are everywhere — emerald signals that Ukrainian Americans stand behind Ukrainian civilians who are defending their homeland with their lives.

Just three weeks ago, the warehouse hummed with the business of Meest-America Inc, a freight delivery service that specialises in shipping goods to Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, including Russia. “Meest” is Ukrainian for bridge.

But on February 24, Russia attacked Ukraine, the native country for most of Meest-America’s 108 workers, and business all but stopped. The company was unable to ship to Ukraine, and it could not in good conscience continue shipping to Russia and Belarus.

“Once we saw the images of bombing, it was an easy decision,” said Natalia Brandafi, the company’s chief operating officer.

Overnight, the New Jersey warehouse became a Ukrainian outpost. The lobby was decorated with a blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag, and the phone system modified to play the Ukrainian national anthem for callers on hold. The entire business model was changed to a single purpose: Help Ukraine.

As raw images and reports of war’s life-shattering toll spread online, Ukrainian American organisations pleaded for donations to help the wounded and displaced. But they also sought aid for those who were setting aside pens and shovels to pick up guns. The response, organisers said, has been overwhelming.

A glimpse could be found in the modest basement of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Holy Ascension in Maplewood, New Jersey, where the wintry backdrop of the Christmas

pageant still adorns the small stage. Boxes of donated items covered the tiled floor, and handwritten signs of organisation — “diapers + baby care” — were taped to the wood-paneled walls.

But the desired “priority items” listed on a church leaflet more directly reflected the carnage of war. Abdominal bandages. Water-gel burn dressing. IV starter kits. Emergency

THE ENTIRE BUSINESS MODEL WAS CHANGED TO A SINGLE PURPOSE: HELP UKRAINE

compression dressings that stem the bleeding from hemorrhagic wounds.

On Wednesday afternoon, Dan and Lynne Gulak, married retirees and church members who had been volunteering since the outbreak of the war, were taping and labeling boxes in the basement when the telephone rang. It was the Maplewood Fire Department.

Dan Gulak listened to the caller, said that words could not express his thanks, hung up — and briefly lost his composure. Removing his glasses to wipe his eyes with a handkerchief, he explained in a quavering voice that

the department would be dropping off several dozen boxes of medical supplies. It had also collected \$5,000 in donations, and more money was coming.

Many donations like the one delivered to the church in Maplewood are being trucked to Meest-America’s massive warehouse, where evidence of the company’s interrupted business could be seen in one corner of the 92,000-square-foot space. There, row after row, sat thousands of packages whose delivery to Eastern Europe had been halted by war: books, clothes and household items, many in Amazon and Target and Walmart boxes.

Lesya Tenderyak, who works in accounts payable, paused to explain why she had been sorting and packing seven days a week. She said she comes from Chervonohrad, in western Ukraine. She said she has family there and would take up arms if she could.

“I’m fighting this way,” Tenderyak said. Her nephew, who had joined a civilian defense unit, had been killed.

“She collapsed in her chair, crying,” Brandafi said of the volunteer, whom she has known for years. “And she kept crying.”

Such scenes have unfolded while some Russian customers have been calling to berate and complain, leading to raised voices at the reception desk. “They yell at our employees and blame the war on Ukrainians,” she said.

— *The New York Times*



Medicines donated for Ukraine are organised at the warehouse in Port Reading.

‘The fault is not in our stars... but in ourselves’



The writer is a media consultant

It really is ironic, isn't it? Here we are, having ploughed our way through a couple of petrol 'shocks,' a cyclone or two, and a global pandemic, to feel we can begin to relax a little, and what happens? Death and destruction have alighted on our global doorstep, that's what!

So, Russia attacks neighbouring Ukraine, to save them from themselves no less, and both countries lose... Sons, daughters, husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, houses, homes, and jobs, while we, watching on powerlessly, are immediately plunged into global uncertainty... yet again.

All of us want, and need, this madness to stop! Well... most of us.

It is ironic perhaps... because a similar set of circumstances to those which caused the First and Second World Wars, and for which Nato and the United Nations were specifically created to ensure never happened again... is happening again. Make no mistake, this is not a conflict based on ideological, territorial, or political need. It must have more the obvious dimension, and only the naïve or ultra-simplistic should see it as a European battleground... it has already gone global, far quicker than the pandemic, and potentially with horrendously greater consequences.

It's ironic that Moscow is using the Neo-Nazi threat of the Ukraine as their justification for its most recent incursion, as much of the world has similar right leanings, even Russia itself. We just don't talk about it. The right loves its hard-as-nails, no compromise, in-your-face reputation, its propensity for violence and control, its dogmatic refusal to knuckle under, its ability to hide, and survive, with its 'ShutzStaffel,' mantra less than a heartbeat away.

IT IS IRONIC PERHAPS... BECAUSE A SIMILAR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES TO THOSE WHICH CAUSED THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS, AND FOR WHICH NATO AND THE UNITED NATIONS WERE SPECIFICALLY CREATED TO ENSURE NEVER HAPPENED AGAIN... IS HAPPENING AGAIN

It's ironic too, that the revered Russian author and activist, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, saw the danger of too much power being in one man's hands in his homeland, may have had an eye on his future, and our today, when he asked wryly, "Why is it that right-wing so-and-so's stand shoulder to shoulder, while the liberals are always arguing with each other?" He recognised that the extreme right flourishes on, and thrives in, subjugation and adversity, hiding in the shadows, ubiquitous in conflict, yet it is even more threatening from that blackest edge of darkness.

Ironically though, while the far right is being signposted as the reason for the conflict, I cannot help feeling it's a red herring. I guess if it looks like a fish, and smells like a fish, it must be a... well maybe I'm just naturally suspicious, but the political right has never been far from much of Europe's thinking and culture, and the Russian leadership must surely understand this is one bear that they really, I mean really, do not want to poke. So, what's the play here?

After all, there is an exasperating irony in the way that while global sanctions may well be reducing the oligarchs to their last trillions that they will never spend anyway, global gas and fuel price rises are hurting the ordinary 'man-in-the-street,' and that's not the way it should be, is it? Sanctions should hurt those that they are inflicted upon, but once again the superpower politicians, wanting to be seen as politically indignant, maintain their own wealth and position. It's very, very, Shakespearean.

The fragrance lingers though, and while global oil producers must feel the wheel has turned full circle, unease is emerging that a courtship is emerging from the conflict as those oil producers show signs of impending nuptials as Russia garners support from unlikely quarters. Trita Parsi, of the Iranian American Council, spoke this week of nations pursuing their own interests, and questioning whether we should not all be doing the same? And that makes me so uneasy.

I cannot help feeling there is so very much more to this conflict with its Shakespearean machinations, as "Something smells rotten..." and not in Denmark. I hope I'm wrong, yet I fear the worst, and to quote the bard, "Sweet are the uses of adversity which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head."



LOVE AGAINST WARS

People take part in an outdoor special concert "Love against wars" to support Ukraine, in Tokyo's Ikebukuro district on Friday. - AFP



Jayasree K Iyer

The author is CEO of the Access to Medicine Foundation

Insulin belongs to the world

After insulin was discovered in 1921, the Canadian scientists behind the breakthrough sold the patent for their formula for just C\$1. As medical researcher Frederick Banting said at the time, they wanted to make it as widely available as possible because "it belongs to the world." In the century since then, a host of improved forms of insulin have been developed, offering greater efficiency and convenience to people with diabetes. Yet millions still struggle to access any version of this lifesaving drug.

More than a half-billion adults are estimated to be living with diabetes, and this number is expected to reach nearly 800 million by 2045. For people with Type 1 diabetes, insulin transforms a deadly disease into a manageable condition. For those with the more common Type 2 form, insulin prevents kidney failure, blindness, and the risk of gangrene.

Sadly, poor availability and unaffordable prices mean that one in two people globally who need insulin to treat Type 2 diabetes lack access to it. The shortfall is most severe in low- and middle-income countries, where diabetes cases are rising at an alarming rate.

The inability to ensure equitable access to insulin is a tragic failure of the world's health system. It betrays the scientists' original vision for their lifesaving therapy and causes patients unnecessary harm. And it has continued despite significant progress in product development and manufacture over the past two decades.

As insulin has evolved from a tool for managing Type 1 diabetes to an important treatment for Type 2, pharmaceutical companies have scaled up production and developed innovative new products like synthetic insulins. These analogs have expanded the possibilities for diabetes treatment by offering longer duration of action and improved control of blood-sugar levels between meals and overnight. They can make patients' lives easier and cut the risk of dangerous hypoglycemia. Increasingly, analogs are the preferred choice of both doctors and patients.

Analogues also have been a multi-billion-dollar windfall for the three largest manufacturers - Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk, and Sanofi - which control over 90 per cent of the insulin market globally and two-thirds of the market in low- and middle-income countries. But these products largely are inaccessible in poorer countries, so millions of patients cannot choose which treatment option is right for their medical needs. And while the expiration of patents on certain analogs should open the door for the production of cheaper biosimilar versions, few rival manufacturers have entered the market, despite some notable launches from India's Biocon and US-domiciled Viatrix.

Recently, the World Health Organization decided to add long-acting insulin analogs and their generic

equivalents to its Model Lists of Essential Medicines - an inventory of basic products every health system should have for its patients. This move could be a catalyst for improved access, but only if industry increases production and governments are ready to foot the bill.

Cost remains a primary factor in insulin accessibility. While the Big Three manufacturers have initiatives to address the access gap, they are not enough to solve the problem. One study of insulin pricing in 13 low- and middle-income countries found wide discrepancies and

COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE REGULATORY PROCESSES SHOULD BE SIMPLIFIED TO ALLOW MORE MANUFACTURERS TO ENTER THE MARKET. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ALSO MUST BE REFORMED TO EXPAND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES' CAPACITY TO PROCESS APPROVALS FOR BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS. ANALOGS OFTEN ARE EXCLUDED FROM NATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEMS BECAUSE THEY ARE CAUGHT IN BUREAUCRATIC BACKLOGS.

inconsistencies in insulin costs. While a few countries do provide insulin free of charge through their public-health systems, the median cost for patients who pay out of pocket is \$9.36 for traditional insulin and \$29.39 for analogs in public pharmacies, and \$9.65 for traditional insulin and \$43.81 for analogs in private pharmacies.

But median costs can obscure the stark affordability gap between countries. For example, patients in Madhya Pradesh, India, pay around \$13 for the analog insulin glargine in private pharmacies, whereas patients in Brazil pay ten times

as much. Part of the problem is that governments also pay vastly different prices for insulin procurement. The same study found that Indonesia pays \$21.56 for one brand-name insulin analog, whereas China is charged \$106.52 for the same product.

To improve access to insulin in poorer countries, the number of producers of all insulin types must increase. Complex and expensive regulatory processes should be simplified to allow more manufacturers to enter the market. Government policies also must be reformed to expand regulatory authorities' capacity to process approvals for biological products. Analogs often are excluded from national reimbursement systems because they are caught in bureaucratic backlogs.

For their part, the Big Three insulin producers must do more to ensure their products reach those who need them, no matter where in the world they live. Their current programmes to donate insulin to the poorest are admirable, but these companies also must work to support regional production of both traditional and analog insulins. Expanded production capacity will ensure availability and reduce costs.

With further improvements in analogs in the pipeline, these changes must start now. For example, a new product developed by Novo Nordisk, insulin icodec, will be taken once a week rather than daily. This could reduce costs for patients significantly and improve their adherence to treatment regimens.

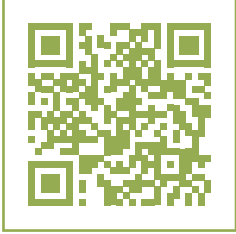
Innovations like these should be available to all patients who need them, not just those with the deepest pockets or those who live in countries with well-funded health systems. Until chronic problems in the insulin market are addressed, many vulnerable patients will continue to suffer unnecessarily. Only when every insulin-dependent diabetes patient has reliable access to an affordable supply of the treatments that suit them best will insulin truly "belong to the world."

© Project Syndicate, 2022



sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Murray beats Daniel for 700th career win

INDIAN WELLS: Andy Murray overcame a slow start and a third set service break to beat Taro Daniel 1-6 6-2 6-4 in the first round of Indian Wells on Friday and notch his 700th career win.

With the victory, the Briton became the 18th player of the Open era to achieve the feat on the ATP Tour.

“This was a target that I set for myself on the back end of last year,” Murray said in an on-court interview.

“It’s a lot of wins obviously, and I’m very happy to get it here.

“Let’s go for 800 now.”

It appeared Murray would have to wait to reach the milestone after Daniel came out sharp, attacking Murray’s serve and cruising through the first set on a sunny day in the Southern California desert.

Murray, who is three years removed from major hip surgery, did not move well early on but sprang to life in the second, breaking Daniel at love when the Japanese player sent a forehand wide on set point to level the match at a set apiece.

Daniel won eight straight points to open the third and take a 2-0 lead with help from some sloppy play by the three-time Grand Slam champion.

But Murray would not give in, pumping his fist when he broke



Andy Murray hits a shot as he defeats Taro Daniel for his 700th career match win at the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. – USA Today Sports

back with a forehand winner for 3-3 to the delight of sun-soaked crowd at Stadium One.

Nerves appeared to get to Daniel in the final game as he committed three straight unforced errors to

give Murray three match points, and the 34-year-old converted his third opportunity to seal the win.

“I got off to a bit of a slow start,” Murray said. “I’m old now so with these 11

“This was a target that I set for myself on the back end of last year. It’s a lot of wins obviously, and I’m very happy to get it here.

ANDY MURRAY
Three-time Grand Slam champion

a.m. starts, it takes me a bit of time to get going.

“But Taro played extremely well. I lost to him in Australia so I was expecting a tough match,” Murray said of Daniel, who beat the Briton in straight sets in Melbourne in January.

Tournament wild card Murray will look to notch his 701th win when he faces Alexander Bublik in the second round of the Masters 1000 tournament on Saturday.

In other first round action, Australian Jordan Thompson beat David Goffin in a tight three-setter, Australian John Millman battled past Jan-Lennard Struff and American Sam Querrey bested Tallon Griekspoor.

— Reuters

Oman teams to participate at GCC Golf Championship

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, MAR 12

The Sultanate of Oman’s Men and Under 18 National Teams are competing at the 24th GCC Golf Championships for men and the 13th edition for boys’ GCC Golf Championship held at Abu Dhabi Golf Club.

The opening ceremony is to be held on Sunday at 4pm and the championship will continue until March 17, 2022.

The UAE General Authority of Sports is hosting the event along with the Emirates Golf Federation at Abu Dhabi Golf Club.

The Sultanate is participating with Ghaleb al Busaidi as head of the delegation, Peter Bailey as coach of the national teams comprising Azzan al Ramahi, Badr al Ameri, Muhammad Ambisaidi and Fahd al Kettani. Youth national team under 18 years have Mohammed al Noamani, Al Mundhir al Hinai and Ayman al Busaidi.

Mundhir al Barwani, Chairman of the Oman Golf Association said, “We are extremely grateful for the support that has been extended to us by Mohsin Haider Darwish, Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions (ITICS) and in particular to the Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish. This generous support will allow our Men’s and Under 18’s National Teams to travel and compete in the GCC Golf Championships at Abu Dhabi Golf Club.”



Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, Chairperson, MHD ITICS stated that MHD ITICS is honoured to be a sponsor to the National Team for the GCC Golf Championship.

“As an organization, we strongly believe that competitive sports are one of the best builders of youth temperament in the country. May these talented individuals succeed and bring more glory to our beloved homeland,” she said.

The chairman of Oman Golf Association said that this tournament brings together

the best amateur golfers from the region and Oman’s players’ participation is key in generating interest across all levels within the Sultanate in an effort to grow the game.

“We have already seen the positive effects of this within our Ladies and more junior squads who both won medals in the last GCC Golf Championships which were played here in Oman in 2019,” he said.

Six teams from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia including Oman have confirmed their participation.





India's Smriti Mandhana (R) celebrates hitting a boundary for four runs with team-mate Harmanpreet Kaur. — AFP

Mandhana, Kaur set up India win with tons

HAMILTON: Centuries by Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur powered India to a 155-run win over the West Indies in Hamilton. Mandhana and Kaur's 184-run partnership saw India set the West Indies an ICC Women's Cricket World Cup record chase of 318. Deandra Dottin looked set to steer West Indies all the way, guiding her side to 100 in 12 overs, only for her dismissal to start an unrecoverable collapse. Jhulan Goswami dismissed Anisa Mohammed to become the leading wicket-taker in World Cups with her 40th scalp as India sealed victory. India won the toss and chose to bat, meaning previously unbeaten West Indies would have to chase for the first time in the World Cup.

Yastika Bhatia made a fast start to the innings taking Chinelle Henry for three fours off the second over before dynamic fielding from Dottin saved more boundaries. Shamilia Connell would also be taken round the ground before Shakera Selman came in and got the first wicket, catching Bhatia off her own bowling for 31 from 21. Mithali Raj, captaining in a World Cup record 24th game, came out to join Mandhana but could only make five from 11 before being caught by Connell to leave India on 62 for two at the end of the powerplay. Deepti Sharma was the next batter to make a start before being dismissed, but she could be forgiven as Hayley Matthews took a stunning, stretching catch at slip as she departed for 15.

Shoaib stars as Oman canter to easy victory over Namibia

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

A match-turning century by Shoaib Khan and splendid half-centuries from Kashyap Prajapati and Khawar Ali propelled Oman to a convincing seven-wicket victory over Namibia in their ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League Two ODI series match on Friday. Shoaib's scintillating 105 from 75 balls comprising 11 boundaries and three sixes took the game away from Namibia, who had posted a healthy 275 batting first. Oman's chase was launched by the dependable opener Kashyap Prajapati after he struck a well-made 71 off 76 balls with nine boundaries and a six that laid the platform for Oman. Although, Oman were in a spot of bother at 126/3 after the loss of skipper Zeeshan Maqsood's wicket, Shoaib and Khawar Ali joined forces in taking them home. Khawar slammed a quickfire 54 off 46 balls that comprised six boundaries and in the company of Shoaib ensured Oman had crossed over the line with 23 balls to spare.

MIDDLE ORDER RESCUES NAMIBIA Earlier, Namibia were rescued by a creditable effort by their middle order after the openers and No 3 were out cheaply to leave them reeling at 34/3. Timely half-centuries from Jan-Nicol Loftie Eaton and Gerhard Erasmus and handy 40s from David Wiese and JJ Smit helped the Namibians reach the score of 275. Wiese's 40 off 26 towards the slog overs of the game powered Namibia when they needed it the most as they set up Oman a challenging chase. Oman were upto it and responded by ensuring their victory in style.



SCOREBOARD

NAMIBIA	
S Baard c N Khushi b Bilal	0
C Williams c N Khushi b Kaleemullah	7
M Lingen c Prajapati b F Butt	13
JN Loftie-Eaton lbw Ayaan	73
G Erasmus c N Khushi b B Khan	76
JJ Smit c S Goud b Bilal	44
D Wiese c S Goud b Bilal	40
R Trumpelmann c S Khan b Bilal	7
J Frylinck (not out)	1
PY France (not out)	1
Extras (B-1, LB-5, NB-3, W-4)	13
Total (For 8 wickets, 50 overs)	275
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-10, 3-34, 4-153, 5-194, 6-247, 7-273, 8-273	
Bowling: B Khan 10-0-60-5, Kaleemullah 10-0-49-1, F Butt 10-0-67-1, K Ali 8-0-30-0, Z Maqsood 5-0-25-0, Ayaan 7-0-38-1	
OMAN	
K Prajapati c van Lingen b Scholtz	71
Jatinder b Frylinck	28
Shoaib (not out)	105
Z Maqsood c Frylinck b Scholtz	8
Khawar (not out)	54
Extras (LB-5, W-5)	10
Total (For 3 wickets, 46.1 overs)	276
Fall of wickets: 1-94, 2-103, 3-126	
Bowling: R Trumpelmann 8.1-1-45-0, D Wiese 8-0-55-0, J Frylinck 10-0-55-1, JJ Smit 9-0-51-0, B Scholtz 9-0-49-2, PY France 2-0-16-0	

Iyer rescues India after Sri Lankan spin onslaught



BANGALORE: India's Shreyas Iyer clawed back against Sri Lanka's spin onslaught to make 92 with the hosts all out at 252 by dinner in Saturday's pink ball Test. Iyer missed a century after being stumped off Praveen Jayawickrama as India's innings folded in an extended second session as evening fell in Bangalore. But he helped claw back a respectable total after Sri Lanka steamrolled the top order, leaving the hosts a worrying 86-4 -- with skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli both back in the pavilion -- before tea. Jayawickrama and fellow left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya took three wickets each. Iyer put on key partnerships including a 40-run fifth-wicket stand with Rishabh Pant, who made 39, and raised his second Test fifty to take the attack to the opposition. The left-handed Pant attempted to hit back after the top-order wobble as he smashed seven fours in his 26-ball stay before falling to Embuldeniya

SCOREBOARD

INDIA	
M Agarwal (run out)	4
R Sharma c de Silva b Embuldeniya	15
H Vihari c Dickwella b Jayawickrama	31
V Kohli lbw de Silva	23
R Pant b Embuldeniya	39
S Iyer st Dickwella b Jayawickrama	92
R Jadeja c Thirimanne b Embuldeniya	4
R Ashwin c Dickwella b de Silva	13
A Patel b Lakmal	9
M Shami c de Silva b Jayawickrama	5
J Bumrah (not out)	0
Extras (B-7, LB-8, NB-2)	17
Total (all out, 59.1 overs)	252
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-29, 3-76, 4-86, 5-126, 6-148, 7-183, 8-215, 9-229	
Bowling: Lakmal 8-3-12-1, Fernando 3-0-18-0, Embuldeniya 24-2-94-3, Jayawickrama 17.1-3-81-3, De Silva 7-1-32-2	

after tea. Iyer, who survived dropped catches on 50 and 82, soon took over and finished with 10 fours and four sixes in his 98-ball knock. Earlier, Kohli put on 47 runs for the third wicket with Hanuma Vihari as the pair attempted to rebuild the innings from 29-2. Jayawickrama broke the stand after sending back Vihari for 31 and Dhananjaya de Silva got Kohli trapped lbw in the next over to put India in trouble. — AFP

Khawaja shines as Australia dominate Pakistan

KARACHI: Usman Khawaja said he felt elated at scoring a hundred in the country of his birth Pakistan and was pleased with the chants of “Khawaja, Khawaja” from the crowds on the opening day of the second Test in Karachi on Saturday.

Khawaja’s unbeaten 127 was the cornerstone of Australia’s dominating 251-3, with Steve Smith also contributing 72.

The 35-year-old has made the most of a recall to the national side, missing out on a hundred in the first Test at Rawalpindi by three runs after scoring centuries in both innings in his return match against England.

“Look, it’s very nice, they were saying ‘Khawaja, Khawaja’ and they said that in Rawalpindi as well,” said Khawaja who was born in Islamabad before migrating with his parents to Australia as a four-year-old.

(“The fans) have been great and very supportive, I couldn’t have asked for more.”

Khawaja said a few of his relatives were also in the stands at the National Stadium.

“I do have four members of the family in the crowds,” said Khawaja. “I have a big family in Karachi because my mother is from here.”

“Look, it’s very nice, they were saying ‘Khawaja, Khawaja’ and they said that in Rawalpindi as well. (“The fans) have been great and very supportive, I couldn’t have asked for more.

USMAN KHAWAJA
Australian batsman

His unbeaten 127 included 13 boundaries and a six with Smith providing support at the other end until he fell to a sharp Hasan Ali delivery with seven balls left in the day. The ball made Smith play and barely carried to slip where Faheem Ashraf pounced to his left for a brilliant grab.

Pakistan could have claimed another wicket on the day’s final ball but Imam-ul-Haq put down nightwatchman Nathan Lyon at short leg off Shaheen Shah Afridi.

All-rounder Ashraf -- recalled after missing the first Test due to injury -- snagged the first



Australia’s Usman Khawaja (R) plays a shot as Pakistan’s wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan watches during the first day of the second Test at the National Stadium in Karachi. – AFP

breakthrough, getting the ball to nip away and drawing an edge from David Warner (36) straight into the gloves of keeper Mohammad Rizwan.

Marnus Labuschagne was run out for nought nine deliveries later. But from then until the second last over of the day Australia looked

in complete control with Khawaja leading the charge.

He pushed spinner Sajid Khan for a sharp single towards square leg to reach the landmark, punching the air to celebrate his tenth Test ton -- drawing applause from a crowd of 10,000 people at the National Stadium.

He first put on a solid 82-run stand for the opening wicket with Warner, who looked dangerous and greeted Sajid into the attack with two sixes.

Then Khawaja repaired the innings alongside Smith, who struck seven boundaries in a cautious 35th Test half century.

SCOREBOARD	
AUSTRALIA FIRST INNINGS:	
D Warner c Rizwan b Ashraf	36
U Khawaja (not out)	127
M Labuschagne (run out)	0
S Smith c Ashraf b Hasan	72
N Lyon (not out)	0
Extras (B-5, LB-4, NB-3, W-4)	16
Total (for 3 wkts, 90 overs)	251
Fall of wickets: 1-82, 2-91, 3-250	
Bowling: Shaheen 17-6-39-0, Hasan 12-4-31-1, Ashraf 13-3-32-1, Sajid 19-0-71-0, Nauman 25-5-56-0, Azam 2-0-3-0, Azhar 2-0-10-0	

The duo frustrated Pakistan’s attack forcing spinners Nauman Ali and Sajid to resort to a negative leg-side line to contain the runs and only 36 were scored in the hour after tea in 17 overs.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam came on to bowl and used part-timer Azhar Ali on the other end to complete the 80 overs before the second new ball, with the score at 235-2.

Australia made one change for the match, with leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson making his Test debut in place of pacer Josh Hazlewood, while Pakistan have brought in Hasan Ali and Ashraf.

Australia are on their first tour of Pakistan since 1998, having previously refused to visit the country over security fears. — AFP



SAIF AL ITTIHAD
OCRF
SWORD
FESTIVAL
STARTS
TODAY

The 2022 Saif Al Ittihad (OCRF Sword) Festival for camel racing starts at the camel race track in Barka today, with 57 runs over 4 days of competition in different age and categories to win the car and cash prizes. The event will start with (Hajayg) category (2 years old) in 23 halves, the first eight halves will win car prizes and other 15 halves will win cash prizes for top places. The event will be held with a distance of 4km.

Sports Ministry to train lecturers for physical activity

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

In order to raise awareness in the community of the importance of physical activity, and its significant positive impact on the health of the individual in the short and long term, it has become necessary to train and qualify a number of candidates from the relevant sectors in all the governorates.

The idea is to deliver the correct information, guide and motivate community members in order to raise awareness, which contributes in increasing the number of physical activity practitioners in the Sultanate of Oman, and in this context, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by

the Department of Physical Activity.

It is implementing a programme to train lecturers for the Physical Activity Promotion Programme “Ambassadors of Sports for All”, from March 13-14, 2022, at Al Amal Club in Muscat.

The programme aims to introduce and empower the workshop participants with the theoretical knowledge about the physical activity promotion programme, and to provide them with the appropriate skills to be able to deliver the correct information to the community.

After the programme, it is expected that the participants will be able to practice the skills of communicating concepts and effective training



in the programme to promote physical activity and to serve as ambassadors of sport for all in the governorates to which they belong.

The training topics revolve around physical activity (definition, concepts, recommendations) and everything related to it, recreational sports (its importance, objectives and how to do them), in addition to speaking, managing dialogue, how to speak fluently in public, office exercises, physical therapy, first aid and nutrition.

The participants in the programme will be trained by a team consisting of experts, academics and consultants in several fields, including sports and health, community

sports, sports and therapeutic nutrition, physical therapy and home and office exercises.

It is noteworthy that one of the most prominent work of the Physical Activity Promotion Team was the launch of the multi-sectoral national plan to promote physical activity and the launch of the media and marketing campaign at the beginning of 2017 under the slogan “Health begins with a step”. The second of October was also dedicated to the celebration of the Omani Day of Physical Activity, which aims to inform members of society of the importance of physical activity and contribute to increasing the number of practitioners in the Sultanate of Oman.

business



Follow us on
omanobserver.om/business

Transfer your salary and enjoy attractive interest rates starting from

HOUSING LOAN

PERSONAL LOAN

CAR LOAN

4.95%

4.99%

4.95%

For more information:
https://bit.ly/ShortTermPersonalLoanEN

BankDhofar

Oman bourse eyes ‘emerging market’ status

NEW MILESTONE: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) unveils strategy to boost market positioning ahead of its listing as a public traded company in five years

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), the only bourse of the Sultanate of Oman, has outlined a raft of initiatives to help strengthen its regional and international positioning during the timeframe leading up to its public listing on the stock market in about five years’ time.

They include strategies to,



Haitham al Salmi, CEO of Muscat Stock Exchange (right), with Dr Konstantin Saroyan, FEAS Secretary General, during the virtual event.

among other things, enhance the appeal of the MSX, introduce new products for investment, support easier access to local and international investors, develop a futuristic exchange, enhance market infrastructure and operations, and strengthen its commercial sustainability the

creation of new revenue centres.

An overview of MSX’s ambitious strategy was presented by Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of Muscat Stock Exchange and Chairman of Muscat Clearing & Depository, during a virtual event hosted by the Armenia-headquartered Federation of

Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges (FEAS) on Thursday.

Around 100 key figures, representing Stock Exchanges, Investment Banks, Brokerage Firms, Asset Managers, Funds, International Corporations, as well as local market participants, spanning the world from Asia to

Europe, Middle East to Africa, attended the event, titled: ‘Meet the Market with FEAS — The Omani Capital Market’.

Established by Royal Decree last year as a private Omani closed joint stock company, owned by Oman Investment Authority, MSX is being actively transformed into an attractive bourse for local and foreign investors before it is slated to become a publicly traded company within five years, said Al Salmi.

“As we are part of the Omani economy, we want to ensure our main activities and initiatives support national economic development, enhance our contribution to the GDP by increasing the size of our market capitalisation, support the growth

of a platform for SMES because they represent the seeds feeding the main market, and also attract foreign investment by opening up access to the market.”

The latter objective – opening up the market to foreign investors – has now been fully accomplished, said the CEO.

“Today itself we have achieved the most important milestone towards upgrading the market: We have removed the ceilings for almost all of the listed companies, except in a few situations where their Articles of Association specify a 70 per cent ceiling. 29 of our MSX Index of 30 companies have no ceilings on foreign ownership – which is a milestone achieved today!” he stated.

TURN TO PAGE 15

oman oil

OMAN OIL MARKETING COMPANY SAOG

Post Box 92, Mina Al Fahal,
Postal Code 116, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: 24574100, Fax: 24574101

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of your Board of Directors’, it gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG (OOMCO) for the financial year ending on 31st of December 2021.

Health, Safety, Environment, Quality, Technical and Sustainable Development

At OOMCO, our most valued resources are our employees, customers, and the communities we serve. We are dedicated to provide a safe work environment for our employees and customers, protecting the public, and preserving OOMCO properties and assets. During 2021, OOMCO has maintained a Zero Lost Time Injury safety record in 32 million working man-hours in Oman and Tanzania. However, the Company’s subsidiary in KSA had witnessed one Lost Time Injury incident in the first quarter of 2021. Moreover, the Company’s Total Recordable Injury Rate (TRIR) overall was stood at 0.4. Also, OOMCO achieved another Safety record for the fourth year continuously since it has not recorded any major road traffic accident in transporting its fuel across the sultanate where the Company crossed 117 million kilometers during the operations of fuel transportation last year. Moreover, OOMCO has not witnessed any fire or environmental accident in its overall facilities.

For the exceptional health conditions that the world in general and the Sultanate in particular faced, the Company has activated the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic to mitigate and reduce the effects on the Company’s employees and business. The Company has taken all necessary measures by activating the work from home with minimal office attendance and putting safety mechanisms into effect by holding workshops and hosting specialists from the health sector to educate employees about the epidemic, safety procedures and the importance of the vaccination. The Company has ensured the provision of two doses of vaccine to all its employees and outsourced employees. No outbreaks were recorded in all the Company’s facilities and among its employees, and the Company was able to fulfill all its obligations to all its customers during this period by ensuring the maximal compliance with the decisions of the Covid-19 Supreme Committee. The BCP also had been activated during “Shaheen Hurricane” which aimed to return in a safe condition all the service stations that were exposed directly to the impact of the Hurricane within a short period, which ensured the resuming of fuel supply in a record time of no more than six hours in most affected areas.

Our HSEQ culture is vivid across all our operations through a combination of policies and best practice. We strategically implement policies and audit our HSEQ management system, and developed performance reviews to identify areas required for improvement. OOMCO sustained its compliance with the four different Management system standards: ISO9001:2015 (Quality Management System), ISO14001:2015 (Environmental Management System), OHAS18001:2007 (Occupational Health & Safety Management System) and ISO27001:2013 (Information Security Management System).

As part of its commitment to deploy sustainable and clean energy at its operations, OOMCO has powered eight of its service stations with solar energy as part

of environment care. OOMCO has also installed an Electric Vehicle (EV) charger at its second Green Service Station “SQU Mega service station”. We are looking at the future of green motoring, in line with Oman’s national strategy to adapt and reduce CO2 emissions as well as reducing electricity consumption.

Financial Performance

Against the backdrop of a recovery in the economy despite the continuing adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the OOMCO group generated sales revenue of OMR 560.7 Million in the year 2021, a rise of 27% compared with the previous year. The increase was mainly the results of higher sales in the retail & aviation businesses and the positive crude oil prices. The gross margin rose to OMR 37.74 Million compared to OMR 30.32 Million for the year 2020.

At OMR 6.81 Million, the OOMCO Group’s operating profit for the year 2021 exceeded last year figure by OMR 4.42 Million. The OOMCO group earning before tax increase by OMR 4.38 Million while the earnings after tax increase by OMR 3.61 Million compared to the year 2020.

Human Resources

OOMCO brand image, reputation and success are built on a foundation of personal and professional integrity. OOMCO has also become an employer of choice, offering premium employment and career development opportunities to a wide cross section of people.

OOMCO achieved an Omanisation ratio of 87% by end of 2021. This is a significant achievement as the field requires staff with specific skills to serve a wide spectrum of customers across the retail network and overall company’s operations.

To continue raising our performance, we dedicate our efforts on developing the capacities of our human capital across our various businesses: we provide them with opportunities to enhance further their knowledge on specialized and specific competencies in addition to a wide range of applied, technical and creative skills.

We believe in growing our employee skills through consistent training programs, therefore we have launched OOMCO Management Coaching Program and OOMCO Succession Planning Program to equip our employees with the right skills and competencies. The e-learning platform has also been improved to include more than 60,000 training programs that can be accessed online through mobile applications.

As a young and energetic Omani organization that prides itself on being a pioneer in the Sultanate’s energy sector and a valued partner in the development of its infrastructure, OOMCO continuously seeks to bolster its existing workforce. A key factor of its long-term corporate objectives, the Company recruits the right Omani talents on the right job at the right time to become the preferred employer of choice within the fuel marketing sector.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Oman Oil Marketing company continued its efforts to support small and medium enterprises by continuing the support granted to entrepreneurs through the “Tasweeq” program during the previous year. Also, with the aim of empowering the Sultanate’s youth, the company entered into an agreement with Studio Infox as a logistic partner to sponsor and support

the production of a documentary project with the name of (Oman Up Close: Undiscovered Yet). The company ensure to accommodate the opportunities of support that aims to achieve sustainable benefits to the community; one of the most important pillars of our CSR contribution during emergency situations. The company has contributed an amount of OMR 250,000 to the Oman Charitable Organization to support the affected families in many areas affected by “Shaheen Hurricane”.

Outlook

The future outlook of the national economy is positive and such is expected to reflect on the company performance. Moreover, your Company is pursuing its new five-year plan (2022-2026), which is driven by significant diversity and dramatic growth on domestic and international spectrum and the transformation towards supplying of renewable energy.

New retail premium sites are to be launched with the ever-popular Ahlain convenience stores and other facilities in strategic locations nationwide as well as in Saudi Arabia and Tanzania.

The Commercial team is mobilized on securing supply to infrastructure projects as announced by the Government and the private sector: construction of various infrastructure related projects, upgrading of highways and roads will support demand for our products and services.

Challenges are expected: to face them at best and for the benefit of our customers, it is imperative that the Company continues to be innovative and undertake changes through new initiatives, thus sustaining its leadership. Your Company will improve its operational and service excellence, cost efficiency and realigning business strategies to cope with market uncertainties ahead.

Your Company will continue to focus on human capital development, IT systems reliability, and good HSEQ practices. Emphasis will be on cost efficiency and delivery without compromising on customer service and product quality. Customer Care will continuously be enhanced with the spirit of our motto “You trust, We care.”.

The Company is committed and prepared for future challenges: we are confident we will continue to deliver value to all stakeholders.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, OQ, Ministry of Interior, Muscat Municipality, ROP and other Government authorities have had dealings with and our dealers, their staff and our own dedicated employees for their continued support. I would reiterate our unwavering commitment to the provision of the highest level of service at all times.

On behalf of all Board of Directors and all company employees, we pledge to Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur, to continue serving Oman, following his order and tracing his approach.

Thank you.

Hilal Ali Al Kharusi
Chairman

Parent company and consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Group		Parent	
	2021 RO	2020 RO	2021 RO	2020 RO
Revenue	560,671,587	442,208,811	550,710,226	438,489,005
Other income	2,280,946	1,991,773	1,925,949	1,872,558
	562,952,533	444,200,584	552,636,175	440,361,563
Cost of goods sold	(522,936,181)	(411,884,559)	(514,475,875)	(408,868,298)
Staff costs	(7,010,218)	(5,739,188)	(6,243,066)	(5,734,451)
Depreciation and impairment of property, plant and equipment	(5,848,126)	(6,021,078)	(5,699,303)	(5,989,730)
Depreciation on right of use assets	(4,845,136)	(4,737,661)	(4,331,931)	(4,318,344)
Other operating expenses	(15,134,679)	(12,664,534)	(13,675,059)	(11,834,709)
Impairment loss on receivables	(371,572)	(771,453)	(340,749)	(771,453)
Operating profit	6,806,821	2,382,111	7,870,192	2,844,578
Share of loss from subsidiaries	-	-	(1,506,412)	(769,961)
Share of loss from equity accounted associates	-	(26,605)	-	(26,605)
Impairment on investment in an associate	(75,594)	(34,779)	(75,594)	(34,779)
Finance income	1,098,816	1,169,565	1,098,816	1,169,565
Finance cost on borrowings	(866,041)	(1,049,523)	(866,041)	(1,049,523)
Finance cost on lease liability	(1,231,720)	(1,092,406)	(824,022)	(824,760)
Profit before tax	5,732,082	1,348,363	5,696,939	1,308,515
Income tax	(1,156,046)	(382,551)	(1,120,903)	(342,703)
Profit after tax and total comprehensive income for the year	4,576,036	965,812	4,576,036	965,812
Basic and diluted earnings per share (Bz)	77	15	77	15

Parent company and consolidated statement of financial position As at 31 December 2021

	2021 RO	Group 2020 RO	1 Jan 2020 RO	2021 RO	Parent 2020 RO	1 Jan 2020 RO
ASSETS						
Non-current assets						
Property, plant and equipment	56,773,800	54,135,341	46,495,914	42,747,082	53,083,660	46,064,544
Right-of-use assets	24,584,118	25,821,905	22,407,147	15,823,742	19,004,054	18,468,378
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	-	16,479,706	3,430,311	2,169,162
Investment in associates and joint venture	-	749,581	897,183	-	749,581	897,183
Deferred tax assets	1,142,688	1,050,644	831,159	1,142,688	1,050,644	831,159
Total non-current assets	82,500,606	81,757,471	70,631,403	76,193,218	77,318,250	68,430,426
Current assets						
Inventories	6,651,179	4,518,934	5,651,324	3,320,199	4,321,509	5,485,289
Trade and other receivables	67,894,842	38,088,123	57,135,485	70,604,795	38,151,136	57,293,948
Prepayments	1,798,276	1,913,330	-	956,757	1,447,835	-
Term deposits	-	7,000,000	7,000,000	-	7,000,000	7,000,000
Cash and cash equivalents	12,874,149	13,500,773	19,854,552	9,462,902	11,425,531	18,002,708
Investment held for sale	89,218,446	65,021,160	89,441,361	84,344,653	62,346,011	87,781,945
	451,517	-	-	451,517	-	-
Total current assets	89,669,963	65,021,160	89,441,361	84,796,170	62,346,011	87,781,945
Total assets	172,170,569	146,778,631	160,072,764	160,989,388	139,664,261	156,212,371
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES						
Capital and reserves						
Share capital	6,450,000	6,450,000	6,450,000	6,450,000	6,450,000	6,450,000
Retained earnings	2,150,000	2,150,000	2,150,000	2,150,000	2,150,000	2,150,000
Retained earnings	69,569,286	64,993,250	67,897,438	69,569,286	64,993,250	67,897,438
Total equity	78,169,286	73,593,250	76,497,438	78,169,286	73,593,250	76,497,438
Non-current liabilities						
Lease liabilities	21,071,872	21,218,236	17,455,683	12,974,276	14,689,265	13,944,383
Employees end-of-service benefits	279,548	324,946	285,159	273,067	320,394	283,681
Total non-current liabilities	21,351,420	21,543,182	17,740,842	13,247,343	15,009,659	14,228,064
Current liabilities						
Trade and other payables	66,585,476	45,837,110	60,008,920	63,737,101	45,367,856	59,847,086
Bank borrowings	-	-	578,250	-	-	578,250
Advance from customers	1,303,647	1,089,782	-	1,303,647	1,089,782	-
Lease liabilities	3,077,707	3,798,164	3,591,677	3,005,916	3,726,419	3,454,848
Current tax liabilities	1,351,680	716,898	1,455,392	1,325,850	677,050	1,406,440
Environmental provision	200,245	200,245	200,245	200,245	200,245	200,245
Derivative financial instruments	131,108	-	-	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	72,649,863	51,642,199	65,834,484	69,572,759	51,061,352	65,486,869
Total liabilities	94,001,283	73,185,381	83,575,326	82,820,102	66,071,011	79,714,933
Total equity and liabilities	172,170,569	146,778,631	160,072,764	160,989,388	139,664,261	156,212,371
Net assets per share	1.212	1.141	1.186	1.212	1.142	1.186

These consolidated financial statements were approved and authorized for issue by the Board of Directors on 6 March 2022.

PDO to host Oman Sustainability Week to boost sustainable practices in Oman

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) is the main host of Oman Sustainability Week (OSW), hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, underlining its strong commitment to being a champion of sustainable development. The Company will showcase a number of its initiatives highlighting the importance of sustainability in achieving economic and social development, as well as preserving the environment and its resources.

The event will be hosted under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, who will inaugurate the week on March 14 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister (pictured), said the company is determined to

strike the right balance between meeting the oil and gas demands of the country while mitigating its impact on the environment and supporting the communities in which it operates.

He added: “At PDO, we have a symbiotic relationship between our operations and the environment. We don’t just incorporate and comply with evolving ESG norms, we try to find innovative ways to enhance our processes to do better for the environment.

“As the main hosts of the Oman Sustainability Week, we seek to lead by example. While we have integrated sustainability in every aspect of our business, it also becomes our inherent duty and moral obligation to continue to raise public awareness about sustainable practices and why it is critical to adopt these measures.”

The week will provide a platform for the company to showcase



its collaboration with different government bodies and private companies to boost sustainability initiatives in Oman while acting as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth.

Phimister said: “Hosting OSW is a significant milestone in our journey as we align ourselves to the Sultanate of Oman’s Energy Vision. We have been at the forefront of spearheading

sustainability initiatives in the Sultanate of Oman, encouraging energy independence and paving the way for a sustainable, green economy for future generations. While we remain committed to meeting national energy needs, we have also developed a detailed Decarbonisation Roadmap that will enable us to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 with a step-change by 2030.”

PDO has unveiled a new five-year Environmental Strategy and Action Plan that is geared to achieving its overall corporate objectives of sustainable growth, operational excellence and meeting its sustainability commitments in line with the Oman Vision 2040.

PDO was also the first national oil company in the Gulf to become a member of the United Nations Global Compact in 2015, the largest voluntary corporate social responsibility initiative in the world

aimed at fulfilling fundamental responsibilities related to human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

And, as part of combating climate change, it has pioneered landmark solar energy schemes at Amin and Amal in the South and at its Muscat headquarters, is a founder member of the National Hydrogen Alliance and is working to open its first wind energy farm in 2024.

Last year, it committed to spending more than \$10 million on 83 social investment projects aligned to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as water and energy management, education and science, youth and female empowerment and community welfare. Phimister said: “Adopting ethical business practices is now a prerequisite for any company to succeed.”

ODBW to take place on March 14-16 at OCEC



MUSCAT: The most definitive networking and sourcing event for the building, construction and real estate industry in Oman, Oman Design and Build Week (ODBW), incorporating Oman Real Estate Exhibition, is set to be inaugurated at 9:00 am on March 14, 2022 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC), Muscat, with the event open to the public from 10:00 am. Organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and supported by the Oman Real Estate Association and Muscat Municipality, the three-day event will run until March 16, 2022, with exhibits in Halls 3, 4 and 5, at OCEC.

ODBW will witness over 250 exhibitors and will showcase the latest products, advanced services and emerging solutions from the building, construction, and real estate industry. Techno will assume its role as the Platinum Sponsor of the event, whereas Wujha will be the OREX Lead Sponsor, Sakan will be the OREX Registration Sponsor and Al Mouj will be OREX Strategic Sponsor.

ODBW will provide exhibitors and visitors an excellent platform to network with industry peers, target suppliers and distributors and gain insights into the market.

The event will also see in attendance a number of architects, consultants, engineers, contractors, distributors, procurement managers and decisions makers, therefore, providing an opportunity to manufacturers to showcase their unique building materials and solutions.

To know more, visit www.omandesignandbuildweek.com.

Thursday: Half working day at Al Hassan LLC



MUSCAT: Leading organisations place great importance on employee well-being because happy and satisfied employees provide more focused and efficient service. At Al Hassan LLC Group the commitment to employee welfare is at the core of its values. “During the last several years, many steps have been taken to support our employees’ physical, psychological and social health because we believe that happiness and satisfaction of the employees have a direct impact on the quality and efficiency of their work,” said Zahra bint Maqbool al Lawati, General Manager of Marketing and Corporate Excellence.

Continuing that tradition, last month, another initiative was taken to reduce the working hours on Thursday to give employees more time to relax on the weekend, thus encouraging their vitality and

engagement. Now at Al Hassan LLC, employees are required to work only for one half day on Thursdays. This especially helps those who spend their weekends with their families in other remote areas of the country.

Besides, the employees themselves were involved in deciding the new working hours at the office through an online poll. In this regard, many employees expressed their pride and happiness for the implementation of the new working hours, and the mechanism by which this initiative was implemented.

“The new schedule gives us more time to spend with our family and friends; it allows us to be more active in community work. More importantly, with more time to relax, we can plan for the next week with a clearer mind,” said Salha al Hinai from Accounts Department.

Meethaq’s Neswa Account: Designed to meet the aspirations of modern Omani women

MUSCAT: Every year, International Women’s Day is celebrated on March 8 to spread the message of gender equality and to highlight the achievements made by women around the world.

On this occasion, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, in line with its vision “To serve you better, everyday and commitment to partnership in encouraging a savings culture in Oman, has greeted all women in the Sultanate for their extraordinary achievements over the last 5 decades. To celebrate the occasion, Meethaq has also invited women in Oman to discover the advantages of using its Neswa account, a special women’s account that is designed for both everyday needs and personalised services.

Speaking on the occasion, Sami Arfah, Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Personal Banking, said: “Meethaq is particularly proud of the role that Omani women play in various sectors. By achieving their full potential, Omani women are contributing greatly to the economic progress and development of the Sultanate of Oman.

With women being one of its important customer segments and in line with its customer-centric vision, Meethaq offers unique products and services aimed at enriching the lives of women from different sectors. Today, the need for specific banking products and services for women is more than ever, and Neswa addresses this need by offering a personal and comfortable banking environment for women.”

Neswa account holders have access to a wide range of features, which include a Visa Debit Card with an ATM withdrawal limit of RO 800, access



to the largest network of ATMs and CDMs across Oman, complimentary Takaful life cover up to RO 10,000, coverage up to RO 1,000 for loss of wallet or handbag resulting in misuse of cards and coverage up to RO 100 for loss of ID cards and keys.

Account holders can also receive attractive indicative profit rates on their average monthly balance and are eligible for up to 50% discount on the first year’s rental charge for safe deposit lockers. All Omani and resident women above the age of 18 are eligible to open a Neswa savings account with a minimum balance amount of RO 300 or a minimum salary transfer of RO 500.

As the pioneer of Islamic banking in the Sultanate of Oman, Meethaq has adopted industry best practices in Islamic banking and finance to provide a robust model that benefits its customers. Every Meethaq product goes through Sharia compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. Please go to <https://www.meethaq.om/en/depositproducts/Pages/details.aspx?neswa> or call 24656666 for more details about the Neswa Savings Account.

Oxy Oman sponsors national freelancer platform

MUSCAT: Oxy Oman recently signed an agreement with AWJ Innovation (Sustainable Technologies & Innovation Development – STID), to develop a national freelancer platform, which is designed to provide opportunities for freelancers and fresh graduates in the market to present their skills and capabilities to companies registered on the platform.

The signing event was held at AWJ Innovation Headquarters. Saif al Busaidy, Vice-President of Admin, Human Resources, and Corporate Social Responsibility at Oxy Oman, represented the

company at the agreement signing, and Dr Yousuf al Balushi, CEO of AWJ, represented AWJ Innovation.

The freelancer platform will enable clients to get different expertise and services from skilled and qualified registered workers.

In addition, the platform will showcase freelancer profiles to employers and facilitate employment opportunities.

The platform is to be developed to advance the goals of the Oxy Oman exclusively sponsored - .NXT training programme, which continues on its 2nd year



to target fresh graduates with training in frontier technologies and entrepreneurship, through workshops and online technical

courses.

The platform will also service .NXT programme graduates to find future career opportunities and have access to the job market.

“We are proud to sponsor the development of a national freelancer system, as a unique service to connect employers with fresh graduates and job seekers, and to display their skills and capabilities,” said Stephen Kelly, President and General Manager at Oxy Oman.

“The freelancer platform builds on Oxy’s commitment to investing in national capacity development and prioritising the training of

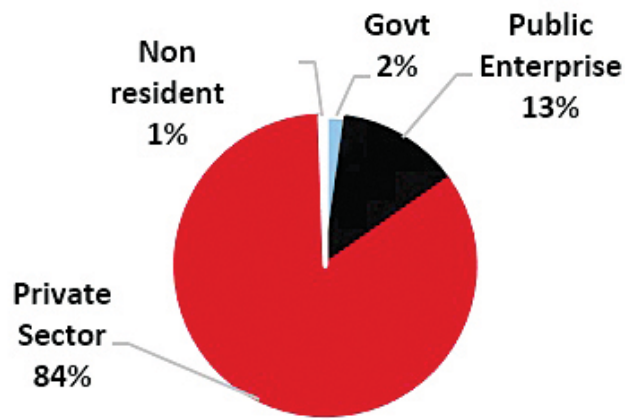
fresh graduates for entry into the job market, as we continue to support job seekers with internship programmes, on-the-job training, and other specialised programmes such as .NXT,” he added.

This sponsorship falls under the umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders, and is part of Oxy Oman’s endeavour and long term commitment to support programmes that enhance economic growth and sustainable development that yields positive impacts in the neighbouring communities.



MSX closes the week higher by 4.70 per cent

Total Credit Concentration, Dec'21



MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week on a green note by 4.70 per cent. All indices closed high for the week, except services index.

The financial Index closed on a very good note by 6.85 per cent. Industrial Index ended higher by 1.85 per cent. Services Index closed lower by 1.13 per cent. The MSX Shariah Index closed lower by 0.60 per cent.

GCC and, to some extent, foreign Investors were net buyers on the bourse and bought a net \$0.95m worth of securities.

Oman banking sector's total credit stood at RO 27.87 bn (+0.4 per cent MoM and +4.4 per cent YoY) at end-FY21. Total deposits stood at RO 25.36 bn (+0.3 per cent MoM and +5.7 per cent YoY) as at the end of Nov'21.

Loan-to-deposit ratio dropped to 108.8 per cent in Dec'21 compared to 109.7 per cent in Dec'20. Conventional credit growth picked up pace from May'21 to end FY21 at +3.1 per cent YoY.

Total conventional credit reached RO 23.03 bn (+RO 54m on MoM basis or +0.1 per cent MoM). Conventional credit expanded on MoM basis largely on account of a 1.3 per cent MoM, or RO 40m worth of credit expansion in the Credit to the Public Sector Enterprises.

Government and Non-resident credit registered growth of RO 11.0m and RO 20m during Dec'21. Credit to Private Sector declined by RO 16m, the total contracting by 0.1 per cent MoM.

Conventional deposits grew

by +3.2 per cent YoY to reach RO 21.2 bn. Conventional deposits increased by 1 per cent on MoM basis on account of a rise in Public Enterprises and Government deposits which grew by 1.3 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively.

The share of Government & Public Enterprises deposits, which had dropped to the lowest value in our records at 26.6 per cent in Jun'21, has now risen to 29.1 per cent as at the end of Dec'21. Loan-to-deposit (LTD) ratio dropped slightly to 108.6 per cent as compared to 108.8 per cent as at the end of Dec'20.

At end-FY21, Islamic banking financing (Banks & Islamic Windows) reached RO 4.84 bn (+1.1 per cent MoM and +15.2 per cent YoY). Islamic deposits reached RO 4.40 bn (+1.0 per cent MoM and +16.2 per cent YoY).

Islamic financing stands at 17.4 per cent of total Oman banking credit, and Islamic deposits form 17.2 per cent of total bank deposits. Islamic financing-to-deposit ratio dropped to 110 per cent at end-Dec'21 compared to 115 per cent in Dec'20.

A forum was held here between Omani entrepreneurs from the Governorate of South Al Batinah and their counterparts from Iran. The forum discussed means of boosting economic relations and increasing trade exchange between Oman and Iran.

It also highlighted the promising sectors in the Governorate of South Al Batinah and Khazaen Economic City.

(Courtesy: U-Capital)

Duqm SEZ cuts SME registration fees to RO 30-40, from RO 1000

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has approved a sizable reduction in the commercial registration fees for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating within the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Accordingly, SMEs setting up a company in SEZAD now pay a revised registration fee ranging from RO 30-40, as opposed to



the original fee of RO 1000. The fee for opening a branch of a local

company in the SEZ has been slashed to RO 12.

Dr Said bin Khalifa al Turashi (pictured), In-Charge of Managing Operation of Commercial Registration & Business Services Department of OPAZ, said the new package of facilities approved by OPAZ's Board of Directors includes other benefits aimed at encouraging SMEs to operate in the Duqm SEZ.

Notable is a 50 per cent reduction in fees for all services provided by OPAZ, aimed at

wooing small businesses to provide support services to the megaprojects, among other investments, taking shape in Duqm.

Following the issuance of Royal Decree 105/2020, OPAZ has been working to improve the appeal of SEZs and free zones to investors through the rollout of a number of initiatives, such as one-stop channels designed to fast track the processing applications, enhance efficiency and introduce new incentives and benefits for investors.

Duqm SEZ takes action in 10 suspected cases of land grabbing



MUSCAT: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), in cooperation with the Public Prosecution and the Royal Omani Police (ROP) carried out a campaign to remove 10 structures set up illegally in different locations of the zone.

The drive was part of the continuing efforts of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ)

to investigate and unearth any unauthorised holdings set up within the SEZ and its affiliated areas.

Legal action is initiated against those behind the illegal structures. In a statement, OPAZ called upon all concerned to strictly eschew land grabs targeting government and public lands. Violators will be held to the full account of the law, it added.

Oman bourse eyes 'emerging market' status

FROM PAGE 13

Another key goal is to secure an upgrade for MSX from the current 'Frontier Market' classification to 'Emerging Market' status, said the official.

"We want to be on the radar of investors looking at emerging markets", he said, citing in this regard the world-renowned MSCI and FTSE indices as MSX's "main strategic mapping points" in securing an upgrade to 'Emerging Market' status.

Further, to ramp up the underlying appeal of the stock exchange to investors, MSX plans to introduce a diverse array of new products on the market.

"We want to provide a wider range of products to investors and introduce more instruments to be listed. At the same time, we want to reduce the cost of investment, create

an attractive marketing scheme, and also enhance the capabilities of our intermediaries -- our brokers -- because they are the ones who face the clients and investors."

Also as part of its strategy, MSX plans to invest in cutting-edge technology to strengthen the efficiency of its operational processes, said Al Salmi.

"At MSX, we believe that technology is the best way to achieve our goal of being a futuristic exchange. Our main interest is to use technology to enhance our financial performance; We believe in smart exchanges, in integration and in strengthening the Settlement, Clearing and Depository processes, and so on. We want the digital platforms to be user-friendly and to reflect our trading volumes", he added.

PDO launches first-ever drilling mud production plant

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

Building on its successful In-Country Value (ICV) programme, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) celebrated on Thursday the inauguration of a first-of-its-kind Drilling Mud Production Plant at Nimr in the south of its Block 6 licence.

Announcing the launch of the facility, which recycles drilling mud fluids, the majority state-owned energy firm said: "PDO's ICV programme has been enhancing and supporting the local industry culture to compete internationally while also developing human capital. We continue to pave the way for a brighter economy for Oman."

Drilling mud, also called drilling fluids, in petroleum engineering, is a heavy, viscous fluid mixture used in drilling fluids jobs.

They promote borehole stability, remove drilled cuttings



Drilling mud, also called drilling fluids, in petroleum engineering, is a heavy, viscous fluid mixture used in drilling fluids jobs

from borehole, cool and lubricate bit and drill-string, control subsurface pressures, suspend cutting/weight material when circulation ceases, supports partial weight of drill-string or casing and minimise adverse effects on productive formations.

The opening of the unique facility comes as part of PDO's strategy to localise industries related to the oil and gas sector, develop local capabilities in this field and preserve the environment.

"Drilling muds are traditionally water-based, either fresh water, sea water, natural brines, or prepared brines", a petroleum engineer explained.

"Many types of slimes are petroleum-based, using direct products of petroleum refining such as diesel oil or mineral oil as the fluid matrix. In addition, many purported synthetic slimes are prepared using high-purity liquid compounds that are manufactured to specifications for more precise properties than conventional petroleum-based oils."

"In general, water-based muds are satisfactory for the less demanding drilling of conventional vertical wells at medium depths, while oil-based muds are better for greater depths or for directional or horizontal drilling, which puts more stress on the drilling rig.

Synthetic muds were developed in response to environmental concerns regarding oil-based fluids, although all drilling muds are highly regulated in their composition, and in some cases the use of certain formulations is prohibited in certain environments", he added.

Goldman learns Russian for ‘reputational risk’

Goldman Sachs was the first major foreign investment bank to go into Russia when the iron curtain disintegrated. Now it's the first since President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine to head the other way. David Solomon's firm is halting operations in the country, it said on Thursday.

Goldman is learning the Russian for “reputational risk.”

The history of Goldman in Russia is long, but hasn't always been edifying. It pitched up in 1992 to help Boris Yeltsin's government make the country appealing to international investors, only to pull out as the economy faltered.

It came back shortly before Russia's 1998 debt crisis, and then again a couple of years ahead of 2008's global financial meltdown.

Nonetheless, Goldman has made money along the way. Its \$114 million of Russian investment banking fees over the past five years, based on Refinitiv data, beat any other foreign bank.

The decision to quit the country has moral overtones in light of Putin's aggression, but it also reflects reality on the ground.

Widespread sanctions imposed by the United States and Europe make doing business in Russia difficult if not impossible.

Many staff had already asked to go elsewhere — often ending up in Dubai — which had cut the bank's 100-or-so headcount in half, according to a person familiar with the situation.

For a people business that paid its staff an average \$400,000 each last year, idle hands are a shareholder's nightmare.

It's easier for Goldman to pull the plug than for a commercial lender like Citigroup or JPMorgan with more loaned dollars at risk.

Peers may follow as Russia's assault on Ukraine continues. But it's arguably more urgent for Goldman to act, because the firm wins not with its balance sheet but with its reputation. Thirty years ago, then-partner Robert Rubin said the Goldman name would give investors comfort and optimism.

The best way to defend the brand now is to leave — and refrain from giving that kind of succor to the Kremlin. — **Reuters**

For a people business that paid its staff an average \$400,000 each last year, idle hands are a shareholder's nightmare.



40-YEAR HIGH PRICES

A clerk bags dried peppers for a customer inside Grand Central Market in downtown Los Angeles, California. US consumer prices hit a new 40-year high in February 2022 as the world's largest economy continued to be battered by a surge of inflation, which the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is expected to worsen. — **AFP**

Mining the ‘new oil’



STEFANO VIRGILLI stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member of the International Press Association

OMAN'S MINING INDUSTRY HAS ATTRACTED GROWING INTEREST FROM BOTH FOREIGN AND LOCAL OPERATORS.

In a recent article published on the very pages of the *Oman Daily Observer*, my distinguished friend and colleague Conrad Prabhu, shared the strategy and the numbers behind the leading position of the Sultanate of Oman in the global export of gypsum.

Today I want to reflect on the enormous opportunities that Oman is experiencing within the global minerals market. Probably not everyone knows that Oman's mountains host intact and exposed ophiolites, which could contain metal deposits such as chromite, cobalt, copper, gold, lead, magnesium, manganese, nickel, palladium, platinum, silver, vanadium, and zinc.

In a report published in late 2021 by the US International Trade Administration, it was revealed that Oman identified large-scale copper mining as a strategic project, and that several foreign mining companies were and are active in Oman.

Especially, a joint venture with an Australia-based mining firm planned to construct a copper concentration plant that could produce one million metric tonnes per year. In September 2020, British firm Savannah Resources sold its mining permits for two copper blocks in Oman to Australia-listed mine development

company Force Commodities.

In the current geopolitical turmoil, Oman has a rare opportunity to grab. The supply of oil and gas, we very well know, has been hit by a “tsunami” in the past weeks.

But beside the same old commodities, the Sultanate of Oman can now gain the spotlight as a mineral rich global supplier. The global demand for copper, for example, has grown from 23.6 million metric tonnes in 2019, to the current estimate of 25.1 in 2022.

Oman can start climbing the production ladder, despite competition being tough. Currently, Chile is the undisputed leader in Copper extraction, with 5.6 million metric tonnes a year, supplying nearly a fifth of the international market.

The mining sector is certainly one of the Omani government's main focus areas as part of the Sultanate of Oman's economic diversification programme. Oman's mining industry has attracted growing interest from both foreign and local operators.

Also, Oman has become the top GCC producer and exporter of ferrochrome. The government established the Public Authority for Mining (PAM) in 2014 to regulate the mining sector, and two years later it established Minerals Development Oman (MDO) as a new holding company.

In August 2020, a royal decree dissolved PAM and transferred its powers to the newly renamed Ministry of Energy and Minerals, which could increase transparency and competitiveness in Oman's mining sector.

In July 2021, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM) created a new unit, Industry Development of Energy and Minerals, to focus on the downstream processing of minerals and value addition in-country instead of exporting unprocessed raw materials.

Additionally, Oman has the strategic advantage of a pristine location. The proximity to India, and the new port of Duqm, makes a perfect combination for a trade highway. The port was officially inaugurated in early February under the auspices of HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan in the presence of their Majesties the King and the Queen of the Belgians.

With a growing global demand for minerals, the right investments on land to extract accordingly, and the logistic routes in place, the Sultanate of Oman could experience a new economic renaissance in the very near future.

Will Putin's war slow China's growth?



NANCY QIAN

The author, a Professor of Managerial Economics and Decision Sciences at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, is Founding Director of China Econ Lab and Northwestern's China Lab

On March 5, China announced a GDP growth target for this year of about 5.5%, the lowest target since 1991. But that should not come as a surprise. In 2013, World Bank economists and the Chinese State Council projected that China's annual growth rate would decline to 5% by 2030.

This may still be an overestimate, given that growth rates during 2010-16 have been found to be inflated by 1.8 percentage points and that average growth in OECD economies is around 3%.

Back then, economists and policymakers also accurately predicted the main challenges to long-run growth in China, including increasing inequality, corruption, an aging population, inefficiency in large and often state-owned firms, and pollution. But no one could have foreseen the additional significant economic uncertainty stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic and now Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The pandemic has severely disrupted supply chains and pushed up prices everywhere. China is particularly worried about rising food prices, because the country is a net importer of food, with the bill totalling \$133 billion in 2019. Supply problems and bad weather caused the price of vegetables in Chinese cities to increase by 30.6% year on year in November 2021.

The price of eggs, a major source of protein for the middle class, rose by 20.1% over the same period. China's other main concern is the cost of energy, because it is also a net importer of coal, natural gas, and crude oil.

Increased demand from Chinese factories resuming production during the post-pandemic economic recovery contributed to further increases in the prices of energy commodities. Chinese regulators responded by increasing the cap on subsidised electricity prices. But this was insufficient to offset the losses to electricity generators as coal prices

and domestic demand continued to rise. As a consequence, power plants in several northeastern provinces shut down in September 2021, leading to sudden mass power outages and a cascade of economic and social disruptions.

The Chinese government has since increased the price cap even more and boosted domestic production of coal, using its large reserves. But China's reserves of other energy sources are limited, and demand for energy is likely to continue to rise.

These economic concerns, along with a desire to present a common front against the United States, help to explain China's commitment to the “no limits” relationship with Russia that President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin proclaimed in early February.

Energy is the economic centrepiece of Sino-Russian relations. In 2019, fuel accounted for about 17%, or \$344 billion, of China's total imports of \$2.1 trillion. Russia has been the biggest

crude oil exporter to China since 2016, and is its fastest-growing supplier of natural gas. Twelve per cent of all Chinese oil and gas imports now come from Russia.

To meet domestic energy demand and moderate its greenhouse-gas emissions, China plans to increase the share of natural gas in its primary energy consumption to 15% by 2030. Russia holds nearly a quarter of the world's gas reserves and is the largest exporter. The two countries therefore agreed last month to a long-term contract under which Russian gas exports to China will increase to 48 billion cubic metres, or nearly 10% of China's predicted gas consumption of 526 billion cubic metres, by 2025.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the subsequent Western-led economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia, has suddenly cast a shadow of uncertainty over these plans. Besides exacerbating existing supply-chain disruptions, the wide-ranging sanctions have made it difficult for Chinese

firms to operate in Russia. Most importantly, the war involves two of the largest global exporters of food and energy.

Ukraine and Russia together account for 28% of world grain exports, and wheat futures on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange have soared by more than 50% since the invasion. Similarly, oil, gas, and coal prices have surged due to supply disruptions and the sanctions against Russia. These inflationary pressures could have potentially devastating effects on the Chinese population, as well as on the country's manufacturers.

Clearly, 2022 will be a year of uncertainty in which China has limited control over its rate of economic growth. New risks arising from the war in Eastern Europe have compounded the challenges that policymakers anticipated owing to the slow and uneven post-pandemic recovery. At this point, how China and the rest of the global economy will fare in the coming months is anyone's guess. © **Project Syndicate, 2022**

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
Choose from a wide range of brands & models
PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

Tally
POWER OF SIMPLICITY

TALLY FOR VAT

For Tally Sales, Services or Customization

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
ASIA SOLUTIONS

https://www.asiasolutions.net

TallyPrime

SUNDAY

MARCH 13, 2022

SHABAAN 10, 1443 AH

OMAN DAILY
Observer

Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN female (BCom CA), 5 years experience (including GCC), looking for accounts and admin job in Oman. Expert in Tally and MS Office. Mobile 99560633, +971568704551. Email: johnsirani2026@gmail.com

INDIAN male 30, Field/installation engineer (subsea) with 4+ years of experience in Oil & Gas industry onshore/offshore, looking for a suitable placement. 98406202.

SITUATION VACANT - OMAN

A well reputed diversified group in Oman is seeking the following positions for their Interior Fit-out division:

SALES MANAGER

5+ years experience in sales/business development role in interior fitout & office furniture industry with a proven track record for growing sales.

SALES EXECUTIVE

3+ years experience in project sales of commercial furniture/ interior fitout.

INTERIOR DESIGNER

2+ years experience in designing commercial interiors. Well versed in Autocad, Photoshop & 3 D Max.

ASSISTANT PROJECT MANAGER

3+ years experience in Interior fit-out project execution and preferably with Civil Engineering background. The candidate must be familiar with joinery operations and estimation.

ESTIMATOR

5+ years experience in joinery, woodworks, and interior fit-out. Graduate/ Diploma in Engineering

All applicants must be well-versed in English, proficient in MS office and have good presentation skills. Applicants are requested to send their CVs with color photograph attached to: recruitments007@gmail.com

GCL GALAXY CARGO LOGISTICS

WORLD WIDE AIR & SEA CARGO SERVICES

Location: Rex Road, Behind Modern Oman Bakery
GSM : +968 99635330 / 93569551
Email : gcloman@hotmail.com
Website : gcloman.com

Airport to Airport
Port to Port
Door to Door
FCL Services
LCL Services
Consolidation
GCC Road Transport
Professional Packing
Moving Local & International

Al Eman Dental Clinic

Flat 22, Floor 2
Abu Zaki Trading Building
Opp. Al Nahda Hospital
Sultan Qaboos Street

+968 24834113
+968 97454854
+968 96438854

Our Mission: To preserve your teeth and smile for a lifetime

M M T CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE

MUSCAT: 95605353, 95605454
BARKA: 95893242, 93743308
SOHAR: 96773031, 95347988
FALAJ: 94002341, 95136067
SALALAH: 94575905, 97858656
DUQUIM: 97218831, 94002341

ROAD, SEA & AIR TRANSPORT WORLD WIDE

GTC Building, Near Badr Al Sama Hospital, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: mmtcargo@yahoo.com
Customer Care: 96773031 / 97695454

Sea Cargo 800 Bz/Kg Express Cargo to Kerala 5 to 7 days*

Quality Comes First

Tower Cranes & Passenger Lifts:

- Sales and Rental Services
- Installation
- Maintenance Service
- Breakdown Service
- Spare Parts Supply
- Hoist & Lowering
- Support Fixation
- Dismantling

Steel Fabrication Works

NEW MANARA TECHNICAL SERVICES LLC
Mobile: +968 9853 1975, 9853 1970
E-mail: info@newmanara.com / newmanaratechnical@gmail.com
Website: www.newmanara.com

INDIAN male (MBA) with 16 years of experience in finance and accounts in Oman. Seeks senior position, holds D/L and NOC. Currently in Oman and ready to join immediately. Contact: 98820824. E-mail: shamsu.arkd@gmail.com

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact 79256679.

PREVIOUS Oman experience in Outdoor Sales & Operations looking for suitable job opportunity. Oman Driving Licence. Expected Salary 850/. 00918281058000 igin.tom@gmail.com

21 YEARS of experience in Oman as an Accountant in different industries with 14 years of continuous service in a real estate company. Oman D/L and NOC available. Contact 92583726. Email: georgetvm@live.com

FOR RENT

FLATS, 2BHK and 1 BHK in Mumtaz
99341138/
90991079.

FLATS, 2BHK in Ghubra near Indian School. 99341138/
90991079.

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

URGENT HIRING FOR SALES / PURCHASING EXECUTIVES AND TECHNICIANS

Leading Lab Chemical/Consumable distribution company in Oman

- Minimum More than 2-year experience in same field in Oman/GCC.
- Driving License in Oman.

Suitable Candidate can send CV along with Expecting salary to Recruitment74@gmail.com

Dr. Monikeerthana Anandhasekar
MBBS, DPM, MRCPsych(UK)
Specialist Psychiatrist

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

Al Salama Polyclinic

24451726 - 24455904
24451739
info@alalamamusc.com
www.alalamamusc.com
Al Mabelah (Near Traffic Signal) Sultanate of Oman

TIMING:
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCE CARDS

Emergency number 94502100
Clinic Whatsapp 94502102

VIGAS CARGO
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR

Transportation, Packing & Cargo Services

- CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA WORLD WIDE
- DOOR TO DOOR DELIVERY IN INDIA, INDONESIA & UK
- PROFESSIONAL PACKERS & MOVERS
- MUSCAT - DUBAI - MUSCAT REGULAR TRANSPORT

H.O. Ruwi 99851366 92495068

Ghubra: 93571703
Falaj: 93571704
Store: 93571823
Misfa: 98119561 93260956

vigas.cargo@yahoo.com

SERVICES

A LEGAL translation office needs **Marketeers**. Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

VAT REGISTRATION, RETURN FILING, TAX CONSULTANCY
Contact: 9246 9602 / 9723 0025

RENT A CAR

Buttercup

Rent A Car

AMAZING OFFERS

○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.

○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts.

972494490.

LUXURIOUS

Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/annually, Muscat.

Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocroches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Our Services

- KST Spare Parts
- Car Accessories
- KST Rent a Car

9478 2288

EURO CHOICE FOODS L.L.C
(Importers of Frozen, Chilled, Fresh & Dry Food Products)

- Food Service
- Catering Supply
- Ship Chandling
- Re-export
- Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
- Fresh & Chilled Meat and Chicken
- Dairy Product & Grocery Items

Tel: +968 24435211 / 24435177
foodservice@eurochoicefoodsllc.com
www.eurochoicefoodsllc.com

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

AL KHOORY EQUIPMENT EST.
P.O. Box 545, P.C. 117, Al Wadi Al Kabir Area, Sultanate of Oman

Official distributor of **Schneider Electric**

Stockist & Wholesaler of Low Voltage Switchgear Products and a One Stop Solution for all Switchgear Products and Assembly

Tel: +968 24832474, 968 79474556
E-mail: alkhoory@omantel.net.om • www.alkhooryoman.com

OMAN DAILY Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

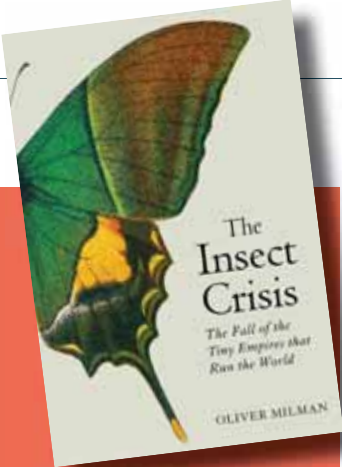
features



A victorious battle against Lupus

Diagnosed with Lupus, Mazzan al Farsi has heard all the worst things that could happen to her including that she will never be able to walk or move on her own again. It was a battle of her life but through sheer will and determination, she still manages to win despite fighting a seemingly unbeatable foe...**P20**

READ



THE INSECT CRISIS
BY OLIVER MILMAN

A devastating examination of how collapsing insect populations worldwide threaten everything from wild birds to the food on our plate.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Turn down the volume as WHO sets new safe limit for music venues

YOUNG PEOPLE RISK hearing loss from loud music in venues such as nightclubs and concerts, the World Health Organization (WHO) said as it issued a new global standard

for safe listening. Nearly 40 per cent of teenagers and young adults aged 12-35 years in middle and high-income countries are exposed to potentially damaging sound

levels in venues such as nightclubs, discotheques and bars, the WHO said in a statement, adding that it recommended a maximum average sound level of 100 decibels. The risk of hearing loss is intensified because most audio devices, venues and events do not provide safe listening options, Bente Mikkelsen, WHO director for the department for noncommunicable diseases, said on Wednesday. The WHO also said that it recommended live monitoring of sound levels and designated "quiet zones" at venues. The new recommendations are in addition to guidelines the WHO issued in 2019 outlining how individuals can limit hearing damage due to prolonged exposure to loud music on devices such as mobile phones and audio players. — Reuters



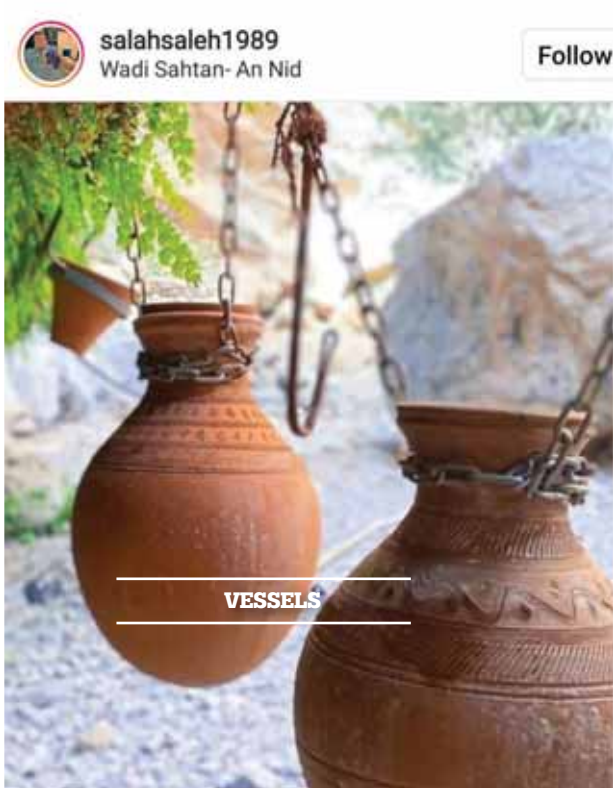


find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
SUNDAY | MARCH 13 | 2022

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.

AROUND THE WORLD

CONSERVATION

100 new species in Myanmar reveal its 'biological riches'



AT LEAST 100 NEW SPECIES — from monkeys to mus-sels — were found in Myanmar in a decade, according to conservationists who said discoveries during the country's fleeting period of openness revealed "astonishing biodiversity".

Beginning in 2010 with the identification of the Myanmar snub-nosed monkey, a small black primate known as the "sneezing monkey", researchers have made an "incredible sequence of discoveries", said International wildlife group Fauna and Flora International.

Over ten years, during which Myanmar's generals eased their stranglehold on power, scientists from all over the world made a beeline to the country to explore rainforests, delve into cave systems, wade through rivers and pick their way across majestic karst rock formations.

"Myanmar harbours biological riches that most countries can only dream of. Its remaining tracts of forest are home to some of the most spectacular wildlife in mainland Southeast Asia," FFI said in a statement.

But the organisation raised fears over a "barrage of threats", including from illegal logging, hunting, agriculture, infrastructure development and quarrying.

FFI had tallied up the list of 100 new species early last year. But before they could celebrate, the Myanmar army seized power in a February 2021 coup.

With field operations already suspended because of the Covid-19 pandemic, FFI's Acting Country Manager Ngwe Lwin said the team was focusing on existing conservation programmes with Myanmar partner Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

He said a decade of openness had afforded researchers a rare chance to travel into remote areas of the country, some of which had previously been heavily restricted and conflict-torn.

But that does not mean the discoveries came easily. In 2010, Ngwe Lwin and colleagues travelled to the forests of northern Kachin state near the border with China, looking for a new monkey species.

Local people had seen the monkeys and said they were easy to track, particularly in the rain because their upturned noses collect water causing them to sneeze. They told the conservation team to head through the dense forest to a spot near their village.

"Actually that was about one day's walk," Ngwe Lwin told AFP. "They said it's very easy, but for us, it was really hard."

After days of fruitless searching, they were presented with a single dead monkey that local hunters had accidentally captured in an iron trap meant for black bears.

"Unfortunately, the snub nosed monkey got trapped," Ngwe Lwin said, adding that a conservation area had now been set up there and local people were far less likely to use traps or target the critically endangered creatures.

FFI said it was crucial to involve local communities in preservation efforts, adding that many people in the country were dependent on natural resources for survival.

The United Nations Development Programme has estimated that nearly half of Myanmar's 55 million population will be living below the national poverty line this year. — **AFP**

CULTURE

Arab women entrepreneurs defy odds with leap into sportswear



NATHALY DAOU zigzags through an underground fabric store in Beirut, pulling out bolts of neon Lycra and patterned polyester before settling on a roll of white cotton.

Finding affordable fabric for her budding sportswear line during Lebanon's economic crisis has been a challenge for the 36-year-old entrepreneur, one of several women making strides into the activewear sector in the Middle East and North Africa.

"We had all these imported brands, but I wanted to do something special — something different," said Daou, who is also a professional photographer and pole-dance instructor.

She launched her line "Nat-Usual" in August 2020 — weeks after Beirut's devastating port blast and nearly a year into the financial collapse that has put more than three-quarters of Lebanon's people below the poverty line.

The currency has lost more than 90% of its value over the last three years, meaning imported fabrics either quintupled in price or were no longer available.

Rampant power cuts across the country delayed production by months and the banking sector had effectively collapsed, cutting off potential financing for her fledgling business.

"It was impossible to create a business plan. I kept thinking, should I do it? But I've had this idea for 10 years, and I didn't want to wait anymore," Daou said.

She hunted down affordable fabrics across the city, spread news of her line through her pole-dancing network, and initially priced her pieces in Lebanese pounds to keep them affordable.

"I had a vision of a Lebanese brand priced in pounds — but in the end, even my tailor was asking to get paid in US dollars because his own expenses had gone up, too. I had no choice."

SMALL MARGINS, BIG AMBITIONS

Across the Middle East and

North Africa (MENA), just 5% of formal firms are led by women. For every female entrepreneur, there are another six women who want to start a business but do not manage to achieve their goal.

Small and medium-sized enterprises led by women in the region have long struggled to access sufficient financing, according to the World Bank, which said the situation had become "even more dire" during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tunisian business owner Fatma Ben Soltane, who launched her sportswear line Fierce in 2019, has struggled to scale up due to a credit crunch during the pandemic.

She did access some funding through Flat6Labs Tunisia, an accelerator programme and early-stage venture capital fund backed by the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) arm and supported by the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi).

"It's so much more difficult to access financing than pre-Covid. I'm trying to get credit to open a big two-level flagship store for Fierce, but it's taking too much time," she said.

Fierce focuses on sustainability — its best-selling leggings are made from recycled plastic bottles.

Other items are made out of reused Tunisian cotton, and Ben Soltane insists on producing in smaller batches to reduce textile waste.

"It's much more expensive for us because it's not an economy of scale and to push this eco-friendly product, we kept the margins on those products low to encourage people to buy it," she said.

The leggings run at 85 Tunisian dinars (\$29.60) — much less than brands imported from abroad, on which Tunisia charges tariffs as high as 150%.

It seems to have worked: Ben Soltane said the company's revenues have tripled in the last

year.

'GO GIRL'

For Saudi designer Eman Joharij, inspiration came from her love of exercising outdoors.

The former financial professional said she wanted to be able to run and cycle outside, but Saudi's conservative norms mean women wear loose robes known as abayas and cover their hair — making exercise difficult.

The usual skin-tight leggings and t-shirts on sale at shopping malls would not do, so Joharij designed a "sports abaya" for herself in 2007.

The loose, cotton, one-piece garment had long sleeves, pockets, zippers, and cinched legs — and came in blue, instead of the conventionally black robes.

The first time she wore it out for a jog, she got stares and plenty of laughs.

"Little by little, I went from being the joke of the town to the trend of the town — and the sports abaya became a new niche," Joharij said, speaking by video call from her studio in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

They now come in cotton and dry-fit fabric, and run up to 650 Saudi riyal (\$173.23).

"When I see a lady jogging or running with my abaya, I'm like, 'Yes! Go girl!'" said Joharij, who is being mentored as part of Vogue Arabia's 100 Saudi Brands fashion programme.

She has gone on to design pieces for Saudi women professionals — architects who needed to be on construction sites or photographers who needed big pockets for their lenses.

"I wanted to give women more access to the public space to say, we are here, and we can do anything," she said.

Other designers across the region have begun producing sports abayas — but Joharij is not fazed.

"It's beautiful to be a trend-setter," she said. — **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

COLUMN



Rasha Al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

More of ancient Arabic proverbs: 4

23) Of a Blamed without Guilt: this was said by Al Ahnaf ibn Qais (619-691 A.D) the leader of Tameem tribe and a man known for his patience that it was said: "More Patient than Al Ahnaf ibn Qais".

Al Ahnaf was sitting with some people when someone claimed that there is nothing he hates as much as dates and butter, to which Al Ahnaf replied: "Of a blamed without guilt". It became a proverb that indicates the importance of putting the blame on the right person or thing.

24) Of a Shot without an Archer: There was a man who lived during Al Jahiliya period called Hakeem al Manqari who was an excellent archer. He swore to sacrifice an oryx for the idol he worshipped and went hunting.

He came across an oryx and missed shooting it more than once. Returning home with a great disappointment, his brother suggested to sacrifice 10 camels instead to fulfil his promise. But Hakeem was worried that something bad would happen if he didn't keep his word and decided to go back hunting.

His son — a boy called Al Mutt'im — insisted on going with him to help despite his father's argument of him being young and coward. How would a boy fulfil a task that a grown man had failed to complete? The two went together and were met by two oryx that Hakeem managed to miss again.

After a long argument, Hakeem agreed to give Al Mutt'im his bow and to his surprise the boy caught one instantly. The father exclaimed: "Of a shot without an archer!" which indicates being lucky or successful without a real effort.

25) Of a Bad Thing Turning Good: Arabs are strong believers that whatever happens in life happens for a reason, known now or later. And when bad things happen, there is always a good outcome awaiting those who persevere and have patience.

26) Of a Word that Took Away a Blessing: words are more powerful than

weapons as they cause more damage when spoken without much thinking. Some people would add to this proverb: "... and brought in scorn".

27) Of a Word that Begged its Speaker to Renounce it: this is similar to the proverb above. The story behind this proverb dates back to one of the Lakhmid kings Of Iraq (268-633 A.D) who suspected his maternal uncle of wanting to overthrow him. One day they went out hunting and came upon a hill.

The uncle wondered loudly: "If a man was slaughtered here where would his blood reach?". Taking advantage of the situation, the king ordered his killing as a mean of finding out the answer.

Other resources mention a similar story of a king from the Himyarite Kingdom of Yemen (110 B.C-570 A.D) who executed his companion over a smooth rock after asking the same question.

28) Of an Excuse Worse than Guilt: Harun al Rashid the great Abbasid Caliph (766-809 A.D) asked the poet Abu Nuwas to show him how an excuse could be worse than guilt. Abu Nuwas asked for a few days to think and came back while the Caliph was standing in the balcony admiring his garden.

Not noticing his presence, Abu Nuwas slapped the Caliph lightly on the nape and the Caliph almost drew out his sword wondering loudly about the audacity of the act! Abu Nuwas answered coolly that he'd mistook the Caliph for his wife the queen, which infuriated the Caliph even further. That was when the poet pointed out that he was just demonstrating the proverb as was asked of him and the Caliph laughed.

(To be continued....)

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and author of The World According to Bahja. You can reach the author at rashabooks@yahoo.com



A Victorious Battle Against Lupus

By Kabeer Yousuf
@kabeeryousef

They say 'When the going gets tough, the tough gets going' but little did Mazzan al Farsi, a young, ambitious and enterprising lady knows that she needed to get tougher to sail through the difficult times to fulfil the dreams that her mother had seen for her, and the aspirations that her family had for little Mazzan.

Some doctors once told her after she was diagnosed with Lupus that she would never walk again. She heard them all, the most of hopeless of tales including that she would probably not be able to stand up and move on her own nor could do her daily chores by herself.

Today, years later, besides securing the world's best certifications in academic brilliance to her credit, Mazzan stood in front of the world at the prestigious TedX and urged the world to shed prejudices and sympathy towards fellow beings and instead, grow equality and empathy as means of making the world a better place to live in.

Mazzan developed symptoms like feeling high temperature, loss of weight, bloating abdomen and massive hair loss at age of four. She was not in a position to consume solid or liquid as it wouldn't last for a few minutes before her body rejected it. After several diagnosis and tests and experiments, she was diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus, an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks its own tissues, causing widespread inflammation and tissue damage in the affected organs.

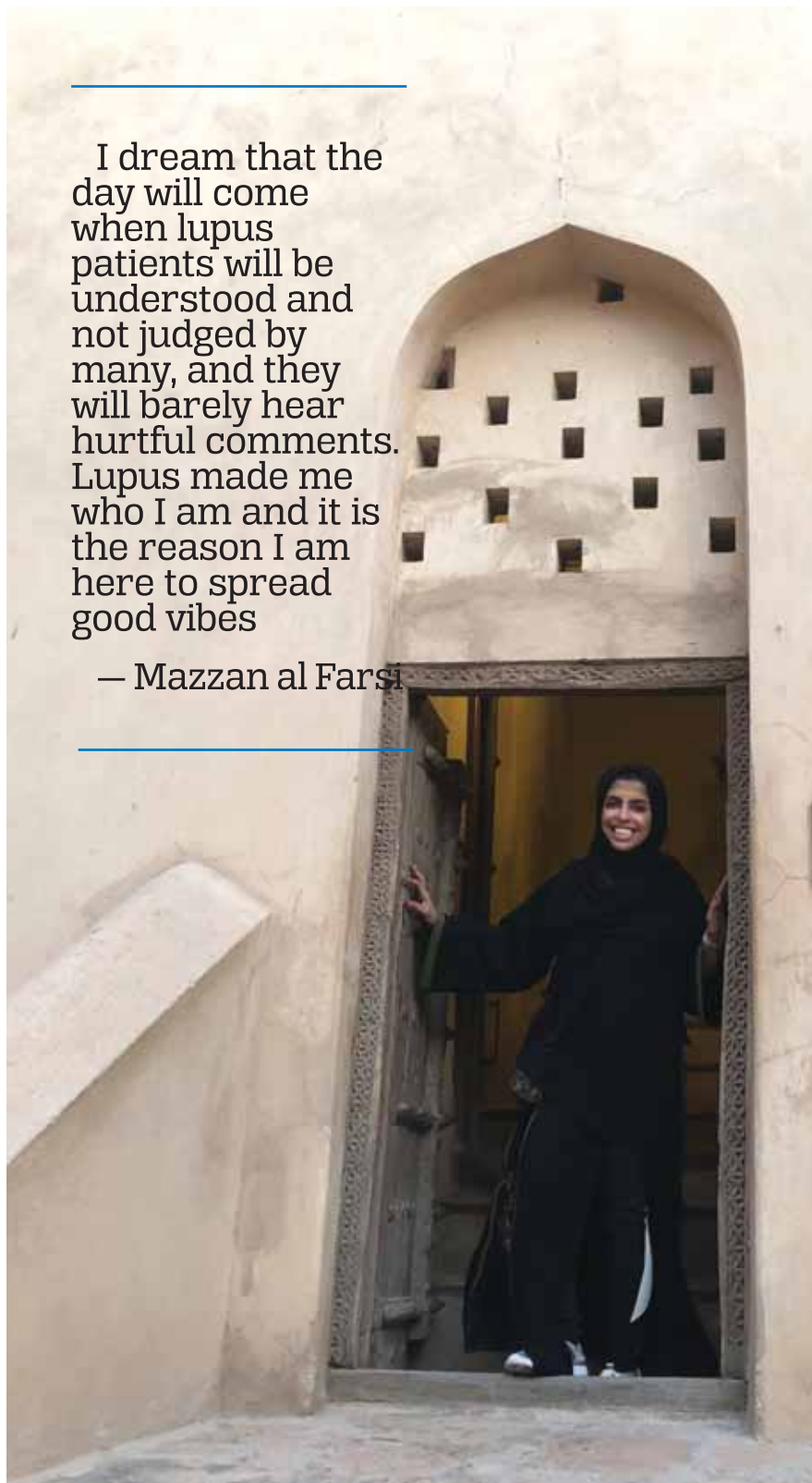
"It was 28 years ago and there were hardly any advanced medical facilities to understand what the disease was all about and I was too young to understand what I was going through."

But her determined mother searched for whatever information she could find about the illness through meeting with doctors or books and pamphlets at a time when the Internet and google were not even in dreams.

"I wasn't depressed but was blessed to have such a wonderful family as every single member in the family took care of me. Whenever my mother recognised any other woman with Lupus, she would get in touch with her and

I dream that the day will come when lupus patients will be understood and not judged by many, and they will barely hear hurtful comments. Lupus made me who I am and it is the reason I am here to spread good vibes

— Mazzan al Farsi



find more info about the same".

Lupus erythematosus is a systemic autoimmune disease that occurs when your body's immune system attacks your own tissues and organs. Inflammation caused by lupus can affect many different body systems — including your joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, brain, heart and lungs. Lupus can be difficult to diagnose because its signs and symptoms often mimic those of other ailments.

The most distinctive sign of lupus — a facial rash that resembles the wings of a butterfly unfolding across both cheeks — occurs in many but not all cases of lupus. Some people are born with a tendency towards developing lupus, which may be triggered by infections, certain drugs or even sunlight. While there's no cure for lupus, treatments can help control symptoms. On an average, out of the 10 women test-

ed, 9 are proved to be having lupus in their body. Although there's an arabic name for Lupus, 'Adhahaba al Hamra', they are trying to avoid this with Lupus.

The journey has just begun. Her family took her to different countries for treatment including France, the UK, Mayo Clinic in the US, Germany and India. Visits, tests, diagnosis, disappointments and thus years flew by.

She led a very active, jovial and fun-filled life for years till 2014 when she had a severe lupus flare up that led to vasculitis which in medical science is an inflammation of the blood vessels. It happens when the body's immune system attacks the blood vessel. Vasculitis can affect arteries, veins and capillaries and in her case, it attacked the brain vessels leading to three strokes.

"The three strokes left my body paralysed. I lost my peripheral vision: Side vision. The ability to see objects and movement outside of the direct line of vision in my left eye."

As the doctors advised, Mazzan was taken to Germany for treatment by her family. There she was to face some shocks in life in the form of doctors warning her to accept, if it happens, the inability to drive again or to go back to work one more time. She was then told that continuing her masters degree which she had begun before getting the stroke would be inadvisable and dangerous for. Instead of falling into depression, she expressed her love for life by saying, "it was the God to decide on what I should do and don't do but with my faith in God, my family's support and my determination I will do everything you said I will not".

After nearly a year's stay in Germany undergoing different treatments, between chemo doses to reduce the inflammation of the vasculitis and the rehab centre, she took her first steps in life after so many years. Her brother who was with her couldn't hold back but cried out loud thanking the Almighty and fell into prostration.

"It was hard, uneasy and there were many moments where I broke down and gave up. The month before heading home, I contacted my university to continue my degree and they approved. I came home and went back to work, driving alone. All I remember was I had an annual check up after my graduation

and I went to my doctor laughing and told him I had something to show him — it was a picture of me holding my degree". Mazzan made a futile attempt to hold her tears back.

One incident that literally moved her was when she lost her hair due to the chemo sessions and her mum consoled her saying the hair would grow fast and prompted her to get the hair cut so that it will grow evenly.

"She took me to the nearest beauty salon and before I could sit on the chair, she grabbed a scissors and cut her own hair saying we were going to grow hair together. If I didn't have my locks, she also was not going to maintain hers. It was a highly emotional gesture from my mother", pauses Mazzan

Sooner or later it was during her constant visits to the hospitals, tests and diagnosis and immunity boosters that she realised there have been many such Lupus patients who needed support. It was then she thought of sharing her experience with the rest of the world through social media platform and thus born the 'Lupus Oman' social media handles. Through these groups, the message that she wants to send out is that 'we the lupus warriors, can live a life that's full of accomplishments, fun and adventures just like any other person, so stop looking at us and treating us like an infection in some cases.'

These Lupus groups today educate themselves, families and people around them constantly.

"I'm pretty sure that I cannot change the world but I can try to help lupus patients to feel less pain and sadness when comments are thrown their way about their thinning hair, skin rash and weight fluctuations."

I dream that the day will come when lupus patients will be understood and not judged by many, and they will barely hear hurtful comments. Lupus made me who I am and it is the reason I am here to spread good vibes.

Today, she dreams that the day will come when lupus patients will be understood and not judged by many and they will barely hear hurtful comments.

"Lupus made me who I am and it is the reason I am here to spread good vibes", Mazzan started sharing her answer to a question popped up in the group, underlining the fact that 'it was just the beginning.'