

Covid-19 vaccines used in Sultanate are safe

No serious side effects have been reported for vaccines used in the Sultanate against Covid-19 pandemic till date, the Ministry of Health reaffirmed in a statement on Sunday. Additionally, the ministry confirmed that what has been circulated in various media platforms about vaccine safety and about the temporary suspension of AstraZeneca vaccine by some countries was a precautionary measure. **DETAILS ON P3**



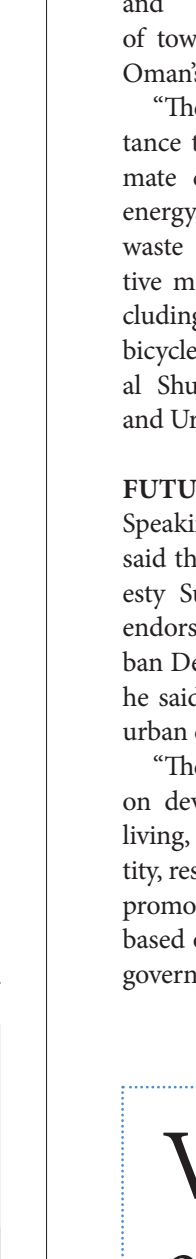
P11

IT WORKS END MUSCAT'S UNBEATEN RUN; SARCO LOSE



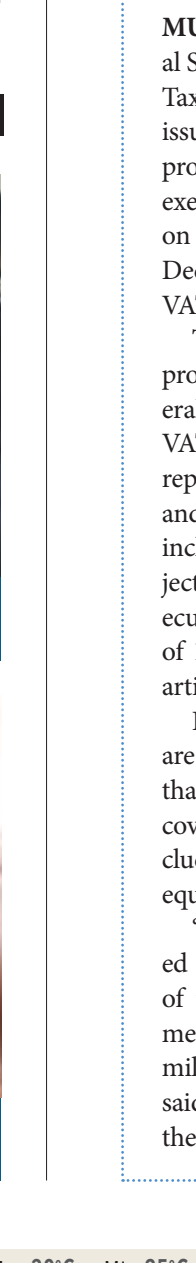
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YIELDS KEEPING LID ON MAJOR COMMODITIES



P20

LEARNING ABOUT GOURMET FOOD FROM THE FRENCH



MUSCAT

JOINT PLATFORM FOR QUICK RESPONSE

The executive bureau Arab Health Ministers is expected to submit an urgent recommendation for discussion before the Arab Health Ministers Meeting in today's session, including a proposal to set up a joint platform under the Arab League (and in cooperation with health and housing ministers) to undertake quick response to emergency situations, including catastrophes and accidents which might cause great loss of life. The Sultanate was represented in the meeting by Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health. **DETAILS ON P5**

BEIJING

ASTRONAUTS ON MOON FOR A LONGER PERIOD

Once China establishes a lunar research station, its astronauts will stay on the moon for long periods of time as they conduct scientific studies, state media reported on Sunday, citing the architect of China's lunar programme. China has mapped out a series of uncrewed missions this decade, including the setting up of a robotic base to explore the moon's south polar region, ahead of manned landings", said Wu Weiren, the Chief Designer of China's lunar exploration programme.

Suhar, Duqm to emerge as major cities

ONA/VINOD NAIR
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The government's National Urban Development Strategy (NUDS) will focus on integrated, balanced and sustainable development of towns and cities in line with Oman's Vision 2040. "The strategy will give importance to the issues related to climate change, use of renewable energy, efficient water network, waste management and alternative means of transportation, including promotion of walking and bicycles", said Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning on Sunday.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
Speaking on the new strategy, he said the ministry values His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's endorsement of the National Urban Development Strategy which, he said, is the mainstay of future urban development. "The strategy will be based on developing cities suitable for living, preserving Omani identity, responding to climate change, promoting economic growth based on the components of each governorate, waste management,



The strategy will give importance to the issues related to climate change.

environment protection and sustainable transport system." Dr Khalfan said that the NUDS will contribute to channelling investment and development to appropriate destinations and will thus, help achieve harmony among development activities, diminish the probability of clash of objectives and provide the necessary incentives to foster socioeconomic prosperity while at the same time safeguarding environment for the coming generations.

POPULATION GROWTH
The strategy expects the population of Oman to increase between 2.5 million and 3 million to around 7-7.5 million from current levels by 2040. The Omani workforce will increase by 32 per cent to reach 3.9 million, including skilled workers. There will be significant growth in the private sector by 83 per cent, with an increase in annual GDP growth of 5 per cent, foreign direct investment (FDI) contribution to GDP will increase by 10 per cent. **TURN TO P3**

NUDS 2040



Expected population increase at 2.5-3 million



A 32% rise in national manpower. Expected rise in manpower 3.9 million



Skilled labour in private sector to stand at 83%



Annual GDP growth estimated at 5%



A rise in demand for residential units estimated at 911,400 units



INSIDE



NEW LIBYA PM SLAMS OUTGOING GOVT ON VIRUS CRISIS

P6



FOR A SYRIAN GRANDCHILDREN ARE HIS SOLACE IN OLD AGE

P9

VAT comes into effect from April 16

MUSCAT: Saud bin Nasser al Shukaili, Chairman of the Tax Authority, on Sunday issued Decision No 53/2021 promulgating VAT Law's executive regulation, based on the provisions of Royal Decree No 121/2020 on VAT Law. The bylaw includes all procedures related to general provision stated in the VAT Law, like registration, repayment, tax collection and details about the tax, including methods of objection and petition. The executive regulation consists of 13 parts comprising 211 articles.

He said that some goods are charged zero tax and that Decision No 2/2021 covers 93 such items, including medical drugs and equipment. "The Sultanate is expected to generate 1.5 per cent of the value of Gross Domestic Product or RO 400 million per year from VAT", said Al Shukaili, noting that the VAT figures among the

The Sultanate is expected to generate 1.5 per cent of the value of Gross Domestic Product or RO 400 million per year from VAT

SAUD BIN NASSER AL SHUKAILI
Chairman, Tax Authority

types of tax which do not affect the business sector and, instead, have a potential to generate abundant revenue as per its global applications. Al Shukaili affirmed that all preparations and necessary requirements have been finalised for the application of VAT from April 16, 2021. The steps include issuance of statutes related to VAT (the law and executive regulation)... **TURN TO P3**

TRAINING ON A HILLTOP



Athletes train in martial arts atop the hills of Salsal Buddha, the site of the Buddhas of Bamiyan statues, which were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, in Bamiyan province on Sunday. **- AFP**

Women suffered most from Covid

MUSCAT: Majority of women suffered anxiety and sleep disorders related to Covid-19. This was revealed in a study in which 1,580 citizens and residents took part. In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Dr Hamad bin-Nasser al Sinawi, Senior Consultant at the Department of Behavioral Medicine at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, said: "Upon the start of the pandemic, we conducted a research that confirmed frontline workers' exposure to psychological pressures which turned into disillusionment when infections



went up. Exhaustion also had its toll on medical staff who have to continue working for longer duration due to steady rise in cases which required medical care."

Dr Hamad added that depression and sleep disorders figure high among psychological impacts on patients of all age groups. At present, taking the vaccines and living with the virus (Covid-19) is one of the most efficient methods of gradual return to normal life, he added. Some countries have vaccinated a large proportion of their populations and set themselves on track for the next stage, said Dr Hamad, noting that hesitation to take vaccines or believing in rumours circulating on social media or exaggeration... **TURN TO P3**

INAUGURATION TODAY LULU HYPERMARKET

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Vaccines used in Oman are safe: MoH

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, MARCH 14

MUSCAT: No serious side effects have been reported for vaccines used in the Sultanate against Covid-19 pandemic to date, the Ministry of Health (MoH) reaffirmed in a statement on Sunday. Additionally, the ministry confirmed that what has been circulated in various media platforms about vaccine safety and about the temporary suspension of AstraZeneca vaccine by some countries was a precautionary measure taken by these countries to investigate some cases of blood clotting

NO VACCINE IS REGISTERED FOR USE IN OMAN UNTIL IT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OR THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY BODIES ACCREDITED IN THIS REGARD

observed in some of those who received the vaccine.

The Ministry of Health added that there is no preference among the vaccines currently used in Oman in terms of efficacy and safety. Moreover,



these vaccines were selected by a specialised technical team that studies vaccines from all aspects based on published studies in prestigious scientific journals, as well as recommendations issued by international organisations.

The ministry assured that no vaccine is endorsed for use in Oman until it has been approved by the country of origin or the accredited relevant international regulatory bodies. The ministry once again called on all vaccine target groups to quickly take the vaccine, not to entertain rumours, and to take information from reliable official sources.

VAT comes into effect from April 16

the operation of VAT computer system and electronic collection with the departments concerned.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Shukaili said the application of VAT is made in accordance with exhaustive studies undertaken over a long period of time. The studies covered the economic and social impacts of the VAT. Study in Oman showed that the impact of VAT on consumers will be minimal. — ONA

FROM PAGE 1

Suhar, Duqm to emerge as major cities

There will be an increase in public spaces for recreation in urban areas by 10 square metres per capita, and an increase in demand for housing units to 911, 400 housing units, and the total area of private areas is 73544 square metres.

GLOBAL CITY

Muscat will emerge as a global city and Oman's gateway to the world by 2040 with a population of 2.5 million and a workforce of 2.3 million, of which the national workforce will be 1.7 million (75 per cent) and the rest expatriates (25 per cent).

By 2040, the population of South Al Batinah with a population of one million, of which 263,000 will be in Barka. The total workforce will be 551,000 (Omani and expatriate workforce constituting 50 per cent each).

The North Al Batinah will be one of the main centres for international trade and will play a major role due

to industries, availability of minerals, and agriculture. The governorate will have a population of 1.3 million, of which 550,00 will be in Suhar, with a workforce of 650,000 with Omanis constituting 34 per cent of them.

North Al Sharqiyah will have a population of 365,000, of which Ibra will be home to 110,000. The total workforce will be 155,000, with Omanis 60 per cent of the population.

Al Wusta Governorate will have a population of 250,000, of which Duqm will be home to 200,000 people. The total workforce will be 188,000 with expatriates constituting 91 per cent of them.

Dhofar Governorate will witness economic growth due to the economic zone and the airport. With a population of 600,000, Salalah will be home to around 480,000. The total workforce will be 364,000, equally divided between Omanis and expatriates.

Al Dhahirah Governorate

will witness economic growth in the areas of logistics, applied engineering, food processing, and agriculture. The total population will be 290,000, of which 130,000 of them will be in Ibri. Omanis will constitute 70 per cent of the total workforce in the region.

The minister said that the ministry has embarked on the strategy's implementation — partnering with the departments concerned, devising plans, following-up criteria and promoting the strategy at a large scale in the Sultanate.

Recently, the ministry has launched a 100-day programme featuring the methodology of comprehensive transformation. The programme fits with the concept of integration among institutional society and competent authorities. A number of initiatives will be launched at various levels to roll out the NUDS, within wide-scale participation of the departments concerned.

Women suffered most from pandemic

... of the phobia will only lead to the persistence of infections and more loss of life and money.

Dr Badr bin Ali al Habsi, Medical Consultant and Director of Al Masarra Hospital, said that elaborate studies around the world reaffirmed the rise in symptoms of anxiety and depression ranging between 48-51 per cent. Post-shock and sleep disorder cases increased significantly recently.

Dr Nada bint Abdullah al Balushiyah, Specialist at the Rehabilitation Department, said that women and young people aged 40 or less constitute the most vulnerable segments impacted with depression, irrespective of the extent of prevalence of the pandemic and the outcome of social distancing or isolation that limited youth activities. In the same context, Health Minister Dr Ahmed bin

Mohammed al Saeedi regretted the fact that some shunned vaccination with Oxford-AstraZeneca. He reaffirmed that the Sultanate will not receive any vaccine or drug before checking that it is safe and secure for humans. In an earlier statement to ONA, he exhorted citizens, residents and health workers to come forward and take the vaccines which, he said, are effective and secure.

A year after, same scenario likely for Ramadhan 2021

ZAINAB AL NASSRI

@zainabalnasseri

After about a month from today, Muslims across the globe will receive their most sacred month, Ramadhan, which like last year comes in exceptional circumstances. The Covid-19 has unprecedentedly changed all the aspects of public life and it is going to be the same with this year's special month as well.

Going by the developments, it seems people are going to witness the same scenario of Ramadhan last year, unlike their hope that the pandemic would soon be over.

As Muslims around the world prepare to receive the holy month in mid-April, quarantine and social distancing measures imposed by most of the Islamic countries world continue to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Mosques apparently will continue to be closed and group prayers will still be banned. These measures

will once again cast a shadow over the social customs such as visits, feasts and charitable works, which have always been the characteristics of the month of Ramadhan.

This year, Ramadhan comes at a difficult time due to the pandemic, as the crisis imposed a divergence in the month in which Muslims consider communication and rapprochement as an important matter of worship.

Nouf al Jabri, an employee, says "The month of Ramadhan has always been an opportunity to revive the joy in the hearts of people, by drawing close to Allah through fasting and prayer, not to mention popular social customs during fasting days, such as visiting relatives, holding group breakfast banquets, etc. It seems that the coming Ramadhan will be like last year, unfortunately."

Usually the holy month witnesses vital aspects among those who are fasting, whether spiritual or social, but the

pandemic will force us to fast differently this time, free of the most prominent aspects such as Traweeh prayers, family gatherings, suhoor evenings, sporting events, and others.

Mohammed Saif, a family man, says: "We will definitely abide by the home quarantine where I can draw close to Allah with my wife and children. I will fast, break the fast, and perform my prayers in my home," calling everyone to abide by that.

He also says, "I also call for doubling help to the poor and the needy this year as businesses has been weak because of the virus, and thus, needs of the poor must have doubled as well."

Isam al Rumhi says: "It is not easy for any Muslim to be forbidden from Friday prayers, Traweeh prayers, or group prayers, but there is something stronger and greater than that. A person is the successor of God on earth, so preserving his soul comes over anything else."



TENDER NOTICE

Haya Water hereby announces the following Tenders:

TENDER NO:	DESCRIPTION	ELIGIBILITY	TENDER FEE	LAST DATE OF DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	BID SUBMISSION DATE
T/2428411/2021	General Maintenance Works for Haya Water Buildings	Small and Medium Enterprises specialized in similar works	Free	25/3/2021	15/4/2021
T/2417399/2021	Design and Construction of Anoxic Tank at Ibra Sewage Treatment Plant	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in similar works	R.O 50/- Non - Refundable	25/3/2021	19/4/2021

The tender documents can be purchased from Haya Water e-tendering page ([Supplier Login](#)) from the date of publication of this announcement until 25/3/2021. The applicants shall pay the tender fee through electronic payment gateway through [Supplier Login](#).

Applicants who are not registered with Haya Water shall register from: <https://haya.om/en/Pages/VendorRegistration.aspx> to have the login credentials of Supplier portal.

All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through Haya Water e-tendering page ([Supplier Login](#)).

All participating companies shall submit a bid bond of %1 of bid value in a sealed envelope to Haya Water not later than 10.00 am on the bid submission date. Bid bond must be obtained from a bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of Haya Water.

The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through Haya Water e-tendering page not later than 10.00 am on the date specified above.

For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.haya.om or Email to: tender@haya.om



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Although several pieces of research have thrown light on a better understanding of mental health, many people continue to look down on the sufferings of the people who live through mental disorders. This at times results in undiagnosed sufferings and lifelong struggles. The consequences of the mental disorders can also have its impact on the family members. The number of such cases is increasing due to many reasons, but what is important is to have the knowledge and awareness to realise there are solutions. Nervous disorders can even influence thoughts and moods.

Dr Munira al Rabkhy from the Department of General Psychiatry at Al Masarah Hospital has listed out the ten misconceptions about mental illness:

10

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

1 That mental disorder is not a disease.
In reality, mental illness or disorders are diseases just like any other such as diabetes, blood pressure etc, the reason being the chemical imbalance. Most people suffer from brief sadness but if it is prolonged, then it can affect a person's efficiency and his/her ability to control situations. It can lead to depression or a disorder where treatment might be required.

Sometimes a person is going through a physical illness and it can also cause mental strain.

2 People think that going through a mental disorder is being insane. A common opinion is that if a person is going through a mental disorder they are losing control of themselves. Mental illness is also due to nervous system disorders. Diagnosis might take time and this cause can affect the mental ability of the individual, as well as emotions, feelings and behaviour.

3 Thinking there is no solution and there is no end to the problem.
Some people conclude wrongly that there is no medical solution. However, the fact is the patients can overcome these diseases, recover and lead a normal life if they are treated with the right medication and practices. There are chronic diseases just like others such as hypertension or diabetes. Some of the problems might have a recurrence and need treatment.

4 The notion that medication cannot treat mental illness.
Quite a few people believe that taking medications for psychotherapy can lead to drug addictions. Sometimes when the doctor prescribes medicines it will lead to addiction or misuse, but the reality is that the medications are prescribed under the supervision of the concerned specialists. They require the medication depending on the health status.

5 The idea that the use of electric shock is a torture.
The psychiatrist explains that this is far from the truth. Some media has created this image and some of the patients who need it refuse to take it because of the image that has been built. Electroconvulsive therapy is a procedure used to treat certain psychiatric conditions. The treatment is scientifically proven to be successful in handling the brain and is used to relieve severe depressive and psychotic symptoms. According to experts the modern-day ECT is safe, effective and not painful.

6 Some people believe that depression happens to people who do not have religious faith and who are weak.

Dr Munira states that there is no connection between faith and mental disorder illness. It has also not been mentioned in the holy book. On the other hand, mental disorders can be hereditary.

7 Compulsive Obsessive Disorder is a mental disorder that creates emotions, actions, repetitive feelings which can also be obsessive.

At times they know they are wrong and may want even to stop but he cannot resist as something could have upset them. It is also caused by a disorder.

People have the misconception that it is because one is not close to the religion. They think that as sometimes the disorder leads a person to commit meaningless actions such as the doubt about the door is locked or not.

8 Thinking that mental diseases are prevalent because of the wrong upbringing.
There is no doubt childhood experiences do have an impact when a person grows up but it does not have a direct impact. Many types of research are being conducted. Childhood can have an impact and can be a factor but not the main reason.

9 A wrong idea that people with weak personalities get depressed.

This is not true because we know there are also chemical imbalances that are involved. Depression is not temporary sadness or something that is caused by circumstances.

Depression can affect a person's life, the ability to produce or participate in a normal routine, to contact and communicate with others. In adverse situations, if people cannot have the right treatment, they might commit suicide.

It is a dangerous disease and can even cause immobility.

10 The worst misconception — people who have mental disorders are violent and aggressive.

Studies do show that there can be some aggressive actions but other studies have shown that there is not much difference between the people who have disorders and others who do not have. An important factor is that people with mental disorders are vulnerable and can be attacked by others. People with split personalities have certain symptoms that make them feel insecure, which can prompt them to take defensive actions.



NDC organises annual symposium on strategic issues

MUSCAT: The National Defence College (NDC) organised the annual strategic issues symposium under the auspices of Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Ra'eesi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces and Chairman of the board of directors of NDC, on Sunday.

The symposium was held amid preventive measures against Covid-19 as per the decisions of the Supreme Committee tasked with

following the developments resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's symposium is held under the title 'Renewed Renaissance for Sustainable Efficiency'.

The symposium is part of the curricula of the eighth course at NDC. It will continue until March 18 with the participation of several government departments and private establishments.

The symposium includes a



number of topics such as the future economy (sustainable economy, small and medium

enterprises, innovation and scientific research and future skills), fiscal and economic

policies (fiscal balance, fiscal sustainability and economic incentives), decentralisation in the management of governorates, social partnership, integration and balanced development, the state administrative apparatus (governance, performance indicators, qualification of human resources, integration between planning and implementation and government communication).

The symposium aims to analyse the reality of the future

economy in the Sultanate, identifying the competitive advantages and the enablers of the future economy and the required legislations for realising decentralisation in the governorates.

It is also aimed at realising the requirements of sustainable development through local management of governorates, studying and analysing economic and fiscal policies and studying the tools of economic incentivisation. — ONA

MAJIS INDUSTRIAL SERVICES SAOC (Majis) TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT



Majis Industrial Services SAOC (Majis) is a closely held joint stock company fully owned by the Government of Oman. Majis is engaged in providing various water utility services at the Sohar Industrial Port Area, Sohar Free Zone and Madayan.

Tenders are invited from the similarly experienced local companies for the following tender:

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Description	Bids fees In R.O.	Last date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Last date for tender Submission
1.	Majis/5/2021	CCWS LV Power Supply Upgradation at Sohar Industrial Port area	125/-	18th March 2021	18th April 2021
2.	Majis/6/2021	RO Plant VFD 1 & 2 Upgradation for Process water Train at Sohar Industrial Port area	125/-	18th March 2021	18th April 2021

Bidders who have made electronic transfer of bid fee will be emailed soft copy of the tender document on the Thursday 18th March 2021. The companies participating must be registered with Majis' in e-tendering system (<http://tendering.majis.om/ VendorLogin.aspx>) during the tendering stage. The payment of bid fee should be made by direct transfer to the following bank account of Majis: (Account Name: Majis Industrial Services SAOC, Bank : Bank Muscat SAOG, Account Number: 0423010783830018).

While making payment by direct bank transfer name of the firm should be clearly mentioned and an email sent to tender@miscoman.com with a copy of the money transmittal advice. Tender documents will be emailed to such firms only.

The Tender should be delivered in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Management Committee, Majis Industrial Service SAOC, P.O. Box No. 553, Falaj Al Qabail, Postal Code 322, Sultanate of Oman (at Majis's reception).

Tenderers must not display their identities on envelopes. Majis is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

Questions regarding this procurement process shall be directed to tender@miscoman.com.

ELECTRICITY AND WATER PRODUCTION IN OMAN

MUSCAT: The total electricity production in the Sultanate at the end of December 2020 stood at about 37,961.6 gigawatt (GW) per hour, comprising a drop of 2 per cent compared to the end of December 2019, according to the initial statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Water production reached 474,561,300



cubic meter as at the end of December 2020 comprising an increase of 6.4 per cent compared to December 2019.

— ONA

Proposal to set up Arab emergency health platform

MUSCAT:

The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Health, participated on Sunday in meetings of the executive bureau of Arab Health Ministers in preparation for the 54th ordinary session of the Council due to be held via video-conferencing on Monday.

The Sultanate was represented in the meeting by Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health.

The meeting reviewed and endorsed agenda of the forthcoming online health ministers' session. The executive bureau is expected to submit an urgent recommendation for discussion before the Arab Health Ministers meeting in Monday's session, including a proposal to set up a joint platform under the Arab league (and in cooperation with Health and Housing ministers) to undertake quick response to emergency situations. — ONA

Electronic Tender (s)



Majan Electricity Co. (SAOC) Announces the Following E-Tenders

Tender NO	Description	Grade	Last date for buying	Submission date	Tender price R.O.
12/2021 Re Tender	CUSTOMER CONNECTION SERVICE PIPE REPLACEMENT AT NORTH AL BATINAH GOVERNORATE	C	17/3/2021	23/3/2021	52 /=
43/2021	POWER TRANSFORMERS OIL REGENERATION AT MJEC NETWORK IN NORTH ALBATINA, AL DAHIRA & AL BURAIMI GOVERNORATES	B	22/3/2021	30/3/2021	25 /=
44/2021	CONVERSION OF 11KV OHL TO UG CABLE NEARBY WAJAJAH BORDER AT SHINAS AREA IN NORTH AL BHATINAH GOVERNORATE (ROP PROJECT)	C	22/3/2021	30/3/2021	41 /=
45/2021	11KV INTERLINK PROJECTS AT SAHAM AND KHAABURAH AREA IN NORTH BATINAH GOVERNORATE	C	23/3/2021	30/3/2021	93 /=

Interested Firm having relevant experience in the similar nature of services and registered with Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for electrical work, may register and obtain the tender documents from E-Tendering Site <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against online payment of non-refundable fees mentioned above for each tender.

The Tenderers should enclose a copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any registered bank in the Sultanate of Oman for a value of (1%) of the submitted bid value valid for a period of (90) days from the date of Submission, and addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee. The original Bid Bond to be delivered in sealed envelope, and the tender number and title of project only are to be mentioned on the envelopes. The place of submission the original bond would be at MJEC Contracts & tenders office at MJEC building in AL Sawari Center in Sohar or at MJEC Contracts & tenders office at Muscat in Al Mubailah- opposite to the industrial Area beside to Bank Suhar ,before 10 A.M. according to the assigned date of submission of the tender. Any Submission of original tender bond after the time and date mentioned in the advertisement will not be accepted and tenderer offer will be rejected.

The Completed signed and sealed commercial and technical offer with all tender documents should be submitted and uploaded online into the above mentioned E-Tendering website. The Hard copies of the tender document are not accepted.

For more information please contact Tel no.: 24051501- 26944266

For any technical assistance please contact

Helpdesk: +968-24166670

E-mail: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products & and have a High level percentage of Omanization.

The Company is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders.
"WITH ELECTRICITY WE PROGRESS PLEASE AVOID EXTRAVAGANCE IN CONSUMPTION"



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Majan Electricity Company s.a.o.c
 P.O Box 286, Sohar
 PC 311, Sultanate of Oman
 Tel: +968 2694 4444 | Fax: +968 2694 4222
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دعوة لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة السنوية عن السنة المالية المنتهية في ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١

يتشرف مجلس إدارة شركة الخزائن للخدمات النفطية (ش.م.ع.م.) بدعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية للسنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١، المقرر عقدها في تمام الساعة العاشرة من صباح يوم الأربعاء الموافق: ٢٠٢١/٠٣/٣١ عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لانعقاد الجمعيات العامة والتي يمكنكم الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع (www.mcd.gov.om) وإذا لم يكتمل النصاب القانوني لانعقاد اجتماع هذه الجمعية فسيتم عقد الاجتماع الثاني في تمام الساعة العاشرة من صباح يوم الخميس الموافق: ١ إبريل ٢٠٢١ عبر المنصة الإلكترونية المذكورة أعلاه، لمناقشة جدول الأعمال التالي:

١. دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١، والموافقة عليه.
٢. دراسة تقرير مراقبي الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١، والموافقة عليه.
٣. دراسة مقترح توزيع أرباح نقدية على المساهمين بنسبة (٢٥ ٪) من رأس المال بما يعادل (٢٥٠) بيسة لكل سهم والموافقة عليه.
٤. دراسة مقترح توزيع مكافآت على أعضاء مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١، والموافقة عليه. (حسب المرفق).
٥. التصديق على بدل حضور جلسات مجلس الإدارة الذي تقاضاه أعضاء مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٠/١٢/٣١، وتحديد مقدار البدل للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في: ٢٠٢١/١٢/٣١. (حسب المرفق).
٦. انتخاب أعضاء مجلس إدارة جديد للشركة من المساهمين وغير المساهمين، وعلى كل من يرغب في ترشيح نفسه تعبئة الاستمارة المعدة لهذا الغرض وتسليمها للشركة قبل موعد الجمعية العامة بخمسة (٥) أيام على الأقل في موعد أقصاه نهاية عمل يوم الثلاثاء الموافق ٢٣ مارس ٢٠٢١، وعلى المترشح مراعاة اشتراطات المقررة لعضوية مجلس إدارة الشركة.
٧. تعيين مراقبي حسابات للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في: ٢٠٢١/١٢/٣١، والموافقة على تحديد أتعابه.

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة وضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة، نود أن نلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي:

١. يحق للشخص الاعتباري دون غيره تفويض شخص طبيعي لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة والتصويت نيابة عنه من خلال وسائل التقنية على أن يكون لهذا الشخص الطبيعي رقم مستثمر بشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.
٢. يبدأ التصويت على أي من البنود المطروحة على جدول الأعمال قبل تاريخ انعقاد الجمعية بمدة لا تزيد على ثلاثة أيام حتى انتهاء عملية التصويت في يوم الاجتماع، وفي حال تغير رصيد أي مساهم بالزيادة أو النقصان سيتم إلغاء أي عملية تصويت قام بها وعليه إعادة التصويت مرة أخرى في يوم اجتماع الجمعية إذا رغب في ذلك.

في حالة وجود أي استفسارات يرجى الاتصال على هاتف رقم ٢٤٢١٨٥٨٤

رئيس مجلس الإدارة مراقبي الحسابات المستشار القانوني

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Holding invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tenders below;

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	TIME & LAST DATE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION	TENDER FEE (OMR)
EHC/2021/09	Property All Risk Insurance for the following companies: Oman Wastewater Services Company (Haya Water) The Public Authority for Water (Diam)	18 March 2021	29 March 2021	500/-
EHC/2021/10	Property All Risk Insurance for the following companies: Salalah Sanitary Drainage Services (SSDS) Dhofar Directorate General of Water (DGW)	18 March 2021	29 March 2021	100/-

- Bids shall be submitted in a single envelope and sealed with red wax addressed to the "Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee" and must write on the envelope the tender name & number.
- 3 separate envelopes shall be included inside the single sealed envelope, and each of these 3 envelopes must be marked with a tender name & tender no. as per the below:
 1. Commercial Proposal
 2. Technical Proposal
 3. Bid Bond
- Bids should be dropped in the tender box at the Nama Holding reception area before 12.00 pm time of the Sultanate on Monday 29-March-2021.
- Each bid should be accompanied with a temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers, addressed to the "Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee". Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered.
- NH is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- Registration of the bidders to be done through the company website (www.nama.om/tenders).
- Interested party to deposit Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) on: Account Name: Electricity Holding Company, Bank Muscat: 0423-010776440-018 Corporate Branch (Bidder name and Tender Number to be clearly mentioned). Tender Documents will be received by email.
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 pm.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



Nama Holding
 In Beach One Building, 3rd Floor (Units 305 & 307), Shatti Al Qurum
 P.O Box 850, Post Code 116, Sultanate of Oman.
 Phone Number: +968 24559287/276
 E-Mail: Fatima.Alajmi@holding.nama.om

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.



Israeli soldiers walk past election campaign banners of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the occupied West bank. — AFP

Netanyahu eyes victory as Israel heads for fourth vote

TEL AVIV: Israel this month will hold its fourth election in under two years, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hoping goodwill from a world-beating coronavirus vaccination campaign can finally secure him an elusive majority government.

When Israelis last went to the polls a year ago, they delivered a result that had become familiar: neither the right-wing Netanyahu nor his centrist challenger Benny Gantz had enough support to form the necessary 61-seat parliamentary majority.

The world, and Israeli politics, have been upended since then. Just weeks after the last election, Israel entered the first of three coronavirus lockdowns.

In May, Netanyahu and Gantz formed a unity government, declaring that the unprecedented health and economic threats from the pandemic required political stability.

Their coalition, which had been set to last three years, collapsed in December when Netanyahu's refusal to approve a 2021 budget forced new elections, to be held on March 23.

Netanyahu, Gantz, other political leaders and voters have all expressed frustration with the seemingly endless cycle of campaigns that have mired the Jewish state in grinding political gridlock.

But Netanyahu, a wily political veteran with a long record of out-manoeuvring his rivals, is hoping he can sneak over the line this time thanks to the inoculation drive. — AFP

New Libya PM slams outgoing govt's handling of virus crisis

TRIPOLI: Libya's interim prime minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah criticised on Saturday the outgoing government's management of the coronavirus outbreak and the delayed delivery of vaccines, promising to tackle the crisis.

"The people are very unhappy with the measures taken... against this illness," said Dbeibah in the capital Tripoli at the opening of a national conference on managing the health crisis.

Dbeibah was named interim premier under a UN-sponsored transitional political process and is set to be sworn in on Monday after parliament approved his proposed cabinet this week.

His government is tasked with unifying the country's divided institutions after a decade of conflict and ensuring a transition toward elections scheduled for December.

Oil-rich Libya descended into chaos after ruler Muammar Gaddafi was toppled and killed in a Nato-backed uprising in 2011, resulting in multiple forces vying for power.

The prolonged instability has left Libya's infrastructure derelict, its economy in tatters and public services wretched, including the health system.

Dbeibah said vigilance in the face of the health crisis had



Libya's interim prime minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah (4th R) attends a national conference on the Covid-19 pandemic, at a conference hall in Tripoli. — AFP

slipped and pledged to implement new measures.

"At the beginning, the awareness campaign was good, but we apparently forgot that we are living in the middle of a pandemic," the 61-year-old premier said.

He added that there would be a "new campaign with a new spirit" and that wearing "masks will again be compulsory".

Acquiring vaccine doses is "at the top of the government's priorities", he said.

Dbeibah added there would be a 'new campaign with a new spirit' and wearing 'masks will again be compulsory'

On Thursday, Dbeibah said he was unhappy with the management of budgets for fighting the coronavirus outbreak.

His predecessor, Fayez al Sarraj, in February allocated 600 million dinars (around \$133 million) for vaccines and isolation centres.

But the centres are now starting to reach capacity, with the main public hospital in the second city Benghazi saying on Monday it was no longer able to accept new patients. — AFP

'The Baghdad Beatle' longs to get back on stage

AMMAN: The Arab world's favourite troubadour Ilham al Madfai, who last year had to perform in an empty Roman amphitheatre and scrub concert dates across Europe and the Gulf, can't wait to get back on stage.

Unveiling his latest work in Amman where he has lived since 1994, the Iraqi star widely known as simply Ilham has tried to break free of the shackles imposed by Covid-19 with a song of hope entitled "After the Absence", taken from a poem by Omar Sari, a young Jordanian.

"After the absence, you must come back, your dream is a cloud, your sadness is a mirage," the 79-year-old veteran performer with the world-weary voice sings, strumming a guitar.

"Come back tenderly, your voice rings in my ears, leave behind the sadness, forget the past," read the lyrics of the song posted this week on YouTube, in which Madfai is accompanied by young Iraqi-Egyptian female vocalist Nadin al Khalidi, also on guitar.

Ilham was a dashing rebel in his younger days, replacing the stringed oud and qanun, the flute and violin with electric guitar, piano, drums and saxophone, to the delight of young Arabs if not musical purists.



Iraqi musician Ilham al Madfai pictured with his guitar in the ruins of the Amman Citadel in the Jordanian capital. — AFP

That dates back to his time in London in the 1960s where he had been sent to study architecture like his two brothers and their sister.

Later, he blended in the traditional instruments in a fusion of the East and West, an Arab jazz crossover with a flavour of Andalusia, accompanying European songs with Middle Eastern sounds and also vice versa.

Germany calls for support for people of Syria

BERLIN: Germany's Development Minister Gerd Mueller has called for more support for the people of Syria ten years into the country's civil war. "This terrible tenth anniversary must be a call to the world community to show international solidarity," Mueller wrote in an op-ed piece for the Welt am Sonntag newspaper. At the Syria conference at the end of this month, all participating states would have to step up their efforts.

Mueller called the 10th anniversary of the Syrian conflict "a day of horror." "Most of the country is in ruins and 600,000 people have died. 80 per cent live in poverty and only have a dollar or less a day. Syria has become the greatest tragedy of this century." — dpa

SHORT TAKES

KHARTOUM

WFP to procure tonnes of wheat for Sudan

The World Food Programme will procure 200,000 tonnes of wheat for Sudan in 2021, in the second year of a programme that allows the country to help prevent shortages while preserving precious foreign currency reserves, a WFP official said.

The system agreed with the WFP last year allows Sudan to reimburse the organization for the wheat in local currency, and aims to help reduce the impact of frequent shortages of wheat, which have become common as Sudan suffers a protracted economic crisis.

"We did that last year, just about 200,000 tonnes, and they've asked us to do the same this year, so we'll do another 200,000 tonnes." — Reuters



TUNIS

Tunisia starts vaccinations month behind plan

Tunisia launched its coronavirus vaccination campaign on Saturday, a month later than planned, with health professionals first in line. Around 300 nurses, doctors and other health personnel who are heavily exposed to the virus received shots during the morning at the El Menzah vaccination centre in the capital Tunis.

The country received 30,000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine on March 9. This initial delivery is being used to vaccinate 15,000 health professionals, said



Abdelmoumen Samir, a doctor who is part of the country's coronavirus taskforce.

"With the vaccination launch, we are taking a very important step in the fight against this pandemic," he said. — AFP

AMMAN

5 detained over Covid hospital deaths in Jordan

The director and four other officials of a Jordanian hospital treating coronavirus patients were detained over deaths at the facility after it ran out of oxygen, judicial sources said. A prosecutor decided to place them in custody for a week for questioning after seven patients died in the hospital in Salt, near Amman, they said.

Public anger over the deaths led to the resignation of health minister Nazir Obeidat, and King Abdullah II, who visited the state hospital on Saturday, ordered its



director Abdel Razak al Khashman to also step down.

The head of health services for the province where Salt is located has likewise been suspended pending the completion of an investigation. — AFP



Lee says may reopen borders by year-end

SINGAPORE: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in a TV interview he hoped Singapore would start re-opening its borders by the end of the year as more countries ramp up vaccination drives against Covid-19 infections.

The Southeast Asian island nation has largely banned leisure travel, but has put in place some business and official travel programmes. It is also discussing the mutual recognition of vaccine certificates with other nations.

"I hope if that many countries can have substantial proportions of their

populations vaccinated by later this year, we will be able to have the confidence and to have developed the systems to open up our international borders to travel safely again", Lee said in an interview with BBC that aired on Sunday.

"Hopefully by the end of this year or next year, the doors can start to open, if not earlier", he said.

The city-state has brought its Covid-19 situation under control with few new local cases and has been rolling out its vaccination programme.

— Reuters

Five killed in Myanmar protests

YANGON: Myanmar security forces opened fire on anti-coup protesters in the commercial capital Yangon on Sunday, and at least three people were killed, witnesses and domestic media said.

Video taken at the site showed protesters holding handmade shields and wearing helmets as they confronted security forces in the Hlaing Tharyar district of the city. Plumes of black smoke rose over the area and one report said two factories in the district had been set on fire.

The Irrawaddy media group said three people were killed.

At least two people were killed elsewhere in the Southeast Asian nation, a day after the acting leader of the parallel civilian government said it will seek to give people the legal right to defend themselves.

A young man was shot and killed in the town of Bago, near Yangon, witnesses and domestic media said. The Kachin Wave media outlet said another protester was killed in the town of Hpakant, in the jade mining area in the northeast.

More than 80 people had been killed as of Saturday in widespread protests against the military's seizure of power last month, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners advocacy group said. Over 2,100 people have been arrested, it said.

Mahn Win Khaing Than, who is on the run along with most senior officials from the ruling National League for Democracy Party, addressed the public via Facebook on Saturday, saying, "This is the darkest moment of the nation and the moment that the dawn is close."

He said the civilian government would "attempt to legislate the required laws so that the people have the right to defend



Protesters sit on a makeshift barricade erected to deter security forces during demonstrations against the military coup in Yangon. — AFP

'Darkest moment', says leader of civilian shadow government

themselves" against the military crackdown.

The Monywa township in central Myanmar declared it had formed its own local government and police force.

In Yangon, hundreds of people demonstrated in different parts of the city after putting up barricades of barbed wire and sandbags to block security forces.

In one area, people staged a sit-in protest

under sheets of tarpaulin rigged up to protect them from the harsh midday sun. "We need justice", they chanted.

At least 13 people were killed on Saturday, one of the bloodiest days since the February 1 coup, witnesses and domestic media said.

"They are acting like they are in a war zone, with unarmed people", said an activist in the city of Mandalay, Myat Thu.

A spokesman for the junta did not answer phone calls seeking comment. Junta-run media MRTV's evening news broadcast on Saturday labelled the protesters "criminals" but did not elaborate. — Reuters

هيئة تنظيم الخدمات العامة Authority for Public Services Regulation

NOTICE

The Authority for Public Services Regulation, Oman (the Authority) in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Article (2) of the Law for the Regulation and Privatisation of the Electricity and Related Water Sector promulgated by Royal Decree (No. 78/2004) (the Sector Law), proposes to grant Al Asilah Desalination Company SAOC (the Company) a Desalination Licence of a Special Nature (the Licence) to authorize the Company to undertake the regulated activity of the Desalination of Water from its Desalination Facility of a Special Nature up to a maximum Production Capacity of (80,000 m3/day) located at Costal site near Al Shkharah in Wilayat Jalan Bani Bu Ali and to be procured by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company S.A.O.C.

The proposed Licence shall be effective from the grant date and continue for a period of twenty-five (25) years, unless revoked in accordance with the provisions of the Licence or the Sector Law. The draft Licence is available for review at the offices of the Authority at the address mentioned below.

Any person who has any objection to the grant of the proposed Licence shall submit details of their objection to the Authority within 28 days from the date of publication of this Notice pursuant to the provisions of Article (102) of the Sector Law.

Any objection submitted after the period stipulated in this Notice will not be considered.

Objections shall be submitted to the following address:

The Authority for Public Services Regulation

Ominvest Business Center | Muscat Hills | Airport Heights | Block No 9993 | Building No. 95 | First Floor.

Sultanate of Oman, Muscat, Al Khuwair | P.O. Box 954, Postal Code 133

email: enquiries@apsr.om

Tel: +968 24609700

Fax: +968 24609701

Biden, Suga likely to meet on April 9

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is likely to meet US President Joe Biden on April 9, the first foreign leader to meet the president in the White House, Japan's Yomiuri newspaper reported. The two are expected to agree to strengthen the bilateral alliance and their commitment to the freedom of passage in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Calls to the prime minister's office were not answered. Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said that Suga will make the visit in the first half of April. Suga's predecessor, Shinzo Abe, was the first foreign leader to meet Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump.

Biden and Suga joined the leaders of India and Australia in a virtual summit on Friday, vowing the "Quad" nations would supply up to a billion doses of coronavirus vaccine across Asia by the end of 2022.

— Reuters

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

THE MAZOOON ELECTRICITY COMPANY (MZEC) INVITES THE FOLLOWING TENDERS:

Tender No	DESCRIPTION	Last Date of purchasing	Last Date for Submission	DCRP Grade	TYPE OF PARTICIPATION	Tender Price R.O
Re-tender mzec/9/2020	REFURBISHMENT OF 11KV NETWORK AND DISTRIBUTION SUBSTATIONS IN AL RUWAIH & AL KABBAH AT JA'ALAN BANI BU ALI SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE	18/03/2021	27/04/2021	c	Local	580
	THE SITE VISIT WILL BE ON 25/03/2021 AT 9:00 AM IN JALALAN BANI BU ALI OFFICE					
Re-tender mzec/05/2021	ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION, NETWORK SERVICES AT AL MUDHAIBI DISTRICT IN NORTH AL-SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE	18/03/2021	30/03/2021	B	Local	1,145
	SITE VISIT ON (23/03/2021) AT (10:00 AM) IN IBRA MZEC OFFICE.					
Re-tender mzec/06/2021	ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION NETWORK SERVICES AT BIDIYAH & WADI BNI KHALID IN NORTH SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE	18/03/2021	30/03/2021	B	Local	750
	SITE VISIT ON (23/03/2021) AT (10:00 AM) IN IBRA MZEC OFFICE.					
Re-tender mzec/07/2021	ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION NETWORK SERVICES AT DEMA AND TAYEEN IN NORTH SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE	18/03/2021	30/03/2021	B	Local	620
	SITE VISIT ON (23/03/2021) AT (10:00 AM) IN IBRA MZEC OFFICE.					

- Interested companies registered with DCRP and Tender Board and having a valid Registrations may obtain tenders documents through scm.tenders@mzec.co.om.
- Value of each tender document copy is non-refundable.
- The offers and related documents should be submitted in a sealed with red wax envelope addressed to the chairman of the (Internal Tender Committee).
- On the top of the envelopes bidder should write the tender number and the subject only and no other marks or any reference thereto should be written outside the envelopes.
- Due to covid-19 all offers shall be submitted via the following email mzec-offerssubmission@mzec.co.om
- The tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of tender price valid (90) days as a bid bond and addressed to the chairperson of the (Internal Tender Committee) of Mazoon Electricity Company S.A.O.C and **any offer is not including the bond will be rejected immediately.**
- The completed tenders should be deposited in the tender box at main head office building in Al Saih Al Hmer - BidBid before 10:00 am on the assigned closing date for submission of the tender.
- The priority of the awarding will be given to those bidders who assure recruitment of the maximum numbers of Omani staff and utilizing Omani products.
- The related parties only are invited to attend the tender opening meeting based on the assigned date.
- All Clarifications are to be sent to the email address: MZEC-Clarification@mzec.co.om, and the Last date for receiving vendor's clarifications for tender no. 9/2020 on 14/04/2021 and for tenders no. 5,6,7/2021 will be on 24/03/2021.
- Mazoon Electricity Company S.A.O.C. is not bound to accept the lowest tender.

(WE LIGHT...WE CARE)

Tenders & Contracts Section : (+968) 25371366 / 25371067 / 25371070



MUSCAT FINANCE
Enabling Dreams

INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of **Muscat Finance SAOG** is pleased to invite the honorable shareholders of the Company to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held at 3:00PM of the evening of Monday corresponding to 29 March 2021, via the electronic portal for General Meetings, which you can access through the Muscat Clearing and Depository website (www.mcd.gov.om), and if there was lack of quorum, requirement for holding the AGM has not met, a second AGM (as the case may be) will be held Monday 05/04/2021 at 3:00 pm to discuss the following work schedule:

Annual General Meeting (AGM) agenda:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report on the Company's activities and financial position for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.
- To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.
- To consider the Auditors' Report and to approve the Auditor's Report on the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.
- To consider and approve the sitting fees of the directors and sub-committees of the Company during the year ended 31 December 2020, and determine the sitting fees for the next financial year as set out in Annexure (1).
- To notify the General Meeting of the related party transactions during the financial year ended 31 December 2020, as set out in Annexure (2).
- To notify the General Meeting of the donations made by the Company on the account of corporate social responsibility during the financial year ended 31 December 2020 as set out in Annexure (3).
- To consider and approve the allocation of an amount of RO 6,000 during the financial year ending 31 December 2021 as corporate social responsibility initiative.
- To appoint Statutory Auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2021.
- To Approve the criteria for measuring the performance of the Board of Directors for the financial year ending December 31, 2021 (as per Attachment).
- Appointing an independent body to evaluate the performance of the Board of Directors during the fiscal year that will end in 31/12/2021 and determine its fee.
- To consider and approve the utilization of the Legal Reserve to extinguish the accumulated losses shown in company's financial statement ending 31/12/2020.

For further information, please contact **Mr. Ali Taqi Abdul Rasool Al Lawati** on Telephone No. (+968) 24625680 - 95283878

Legal Advisor

Auditor

Chairperson



Mazoon.co



Mazoon_co



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80077771



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شركة كهرباء مزون س.أ.ع.
MAZOOON ELECTRICITY COMPANY S.A.O.C.

إحدى شركات مجموعة نامة
Member of Nama Group



Election posters of Malu Dreyer (R), State Premier of the western federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate and top candidate of SPD party, are pictured in Mainz, western Germany, during state elections. — AFP

Merkel’s CDU braces for drubbing

STUTTGART: Germans headed to the polls in two key regional elections on Sunday, with Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives bracing for a drubbing on anger over a corruption scandal and a series of pandemic setbacks.

The votes for new regional parliaments in the states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Wuerttemberg are seen as a bellwether ahead of September 26’s general election — which will be the first in more than 15 years not to feature Merkel.

Recent surveys have shown that support for Merkel’s CDU/CSU alliance has fallen to a one-year low at around 30 per cent as

‘Merkel’s CDU is facing a disaster,’ the top-selling Bild tabloid said, calling the German state polls a ‘corona election’

Germans sour on its coronavirus crisis management.

“Merkel’s CDU is facing a disaster,” the top-selling Bild tabloid said, calling the polls a “corona election”.

Merkel’s centre-right CDU and its Bavarian CSU sister party have been roiled by damaging claims about MPs apparently profiting

from face mask deals early on in the pandemic, forcing three lawmakers to step down in recent days.

Deepening the conservatives’ woes is growing public anger about a sluggish vaccination campaign, a delayed start to free rapid testing and stubbornly high infection rates despite months of shut-downs.

Germans could perhaps look past the “mask affair”, Der Spiegel weekly wrote, “if citizens felt that the government was doing its job, protecting it from the virus and guiding it through the crisis. But it’s not”.

In Rhineland-Palatinate, the

centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) have overtaken the CDU in opinion polls, paving the way for popular state premier Malu Dreyer to head another coalition government with the Greens and the pro-business FDP.

In Baden-Wuerttemberg, the only German state to have a premier from the Green party, the left-leaning ecologists have widened their lead on the CDU.

The Greens there currently govern together with the CDU, in what they hope could serve as a blueprint for the next federal government as Germans grow more concerned about climate change.

— AFP

9 cops hospitalised in Belgium riots

BRUSSELS: Nine Belgian police officers were taken to hospital for treatment due to violent clashes with 200 to 300 people in Liege at the weekend, according to local police on Sunday.

In total, 36 police officers were injured and around 10 people were arrested on Saturday, the eastern Belgian city’s police chief Christian Beupere said.

The apparent trigger for the violence was the forceful public arrest of a black woman earlier in the week on the central Place Saint-Lambert square.

Shops and fast-food outlets were attacked, with some being looted, while police were pelted with flying objects and used tear gas, Belgian media reported.

Calm was restored after a

few hours.

“Order was quickly re-established in a very complicated situation,” Beupere said, describing the rapid escalation as a “fury” or “surge.”

Some 250 officers were present and water cannon were used, he said.

Police believe the damage was organised. “They appeared in a few minutes and from the way they set about the damage, the thefts, we see that it wasn’t a trial run,” Beupere said.

Belgium has seen a number of protests against police racism in the last year.

Footage has been circulating of a black woman pinned to the floor by two police officers during her arrest for “rebellion” in central Liege on Monday, sparking accusations of racism. — dpa



A woman holds her wrist in the air as she protest in front of Belgian anti-riot police standing guard at the entrance of a shopping mall in the streets of Liege, eastern Belgium as clashes erupted on the sidelines of a Black Lives Matter demonstration. — AFP

Anger grows after cops disperse vigil for murdered woman

LONDON: London police faced a backlash from the public and politicians on Sunday for their heavy-handed tactics in breaking up an outdoor vigil for a woman whose suspected killer is a police officer.

The disappearance of Sarah Everard, 33, as she walked home on the evening of March 3, has provoked a huge outpouring of grief and dismay in Britain at the failure of police and wider society to tackle violence against women.

Police had denied permission for a vigil on Saturday evening at London’s Clapham Common, near where Everard was last seen alive, citing regulations aimed at preventing the spread of coronavirus.

But hundreds of people, mostly women, gathered peacefully at

the park in defiance of the ban to pay their respects to Everard throughout the day, including Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge.

Late on Saturday dozens of police officers marched into the crowd to shouts of “shame on you”. Scuffles broke out and officers dragged women away from the scene.

“Last night people were very, very upset, there was a great deal of emotion, completely understandably, and the police, being as they are operationally independent, will be having to explain that to the Home Secretary,” safeguarding minister Victoria Atkins told Sky News.

Home Secretary Priti Patel, the minister in charge of policing, described footage of the incident as “upsetting” and said she had



Well-wishers lay flowers to honour murder victim Sarah Everard at the bandstand on Clapham Common in south London. — AFP

asked police for a full report on what happened.

An image of officers handcuffing a woman as she lay on the floor was widely shared and condemned on social media.

The woman, Patsy Stevenson, told LBC radio: “The main point that everyone was trying to get across when everything happened is that women don’t feel safe, they don’t feel safe walking down a street and that’s the bare minimum we should feel the freedom to do.”

She said she was fined 200 pounds for breaching Covid regulations

A steady flow of quiet mourners visited the site of the vigil on Sunday, placing flowers around a bandstand.

“I feel very angry that they think that they have the right to dictate how we mourn and how we react,” 24-year old student Lilith Blackwell said at the bandstand.

Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Helen Ball defended the officers’ actions and

said they were faced with a very difficult decision.

“Hundreds of people were packed tightly together, posing a very real risk of easily transmitting Covid-19,” she said.

A police officer charged with Everard’s murder and appeared in court on Saturday. Police discovered her body on Wednesday in woodland about 80 km southeast of London.

The court heard that her body was found in a builder’s refuse bag, and identified using dental records.

Everard’s murder has resonated with woman across the country, prompting thousands to share on social media their experiences of violence and assaults perpetrated by men, and vividly describe the daily fear they feel. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

TEL AVIV

New app to protect women in public

The city of Tel Aviv has launched an app to help women and girls feel safer in public.

The app, called Safeup, is based on a network of local communities of women, the operators said.

The system of nearby guardians can “assist where necessary via telephone, video, or by personal accompaniment,” it said. Women can use the app any time they feel threatened or unsafe.

The app will significantly



shorten response times and assist women, even in cases where there is no need for police intervention, according to the statement by the Tel Aviv Yafo municipality. — dpa

KADUNA

Armed men attack another Nigerian school

Armed men attempted to kidnap more students in Nigeria’s Kaduna state overnight, a state government official said, as 39 others from an earlier attack remain missing. Attacks by armed gangs, usually referred to as bandits, have intensified across northwest Nigeria in recent years. Four school kidnappings since December have provoked nationwide outrage.

Some 39 students, including a pregnant woman, are still missing from Thursday’s abduction



from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, in northwest Nigeria. Samuel Aruwan, Kaduna state commissioner of internal security and home affairs, said. — AFP

MUNICH

Italy’s ex-prime minister is new PD party chief

Former Italian prime minister Enrico Letta was voted in as the new head of the centre-left PD party in an online meeting.

He won 860 votes, with only two against, and will succeed Nicola Zingaretti, who resigned after internal infighting in early March. Letta was the country’s prime minister from 2013 to 2014, when he was toppled by Matteo Renzi, then a member of the same party.

Since then, Renzi has left the PD and now heads Italia Viva, a



small party founded in 2019.

The PD is one of the larger forces in the government headed by technocrat Mario Draghi, the former chief of the European Central Bank. — dpa

Heroes in white gowns!

Have you ever questioned yourself about the real meaning of the word nurse?! Definitely, we all know that a nurse is someone who cares for the sick, old or young people in a healthcare institution, or someone who provides medical assistance.

Possibly some might associate the word with an experience that reminds them of a certain incident with a nurse. It could also jog someone's attention to a particular experience at a hospital. As well, the word 'nurse' brings back an old memory of a loved one who had been treated by a nurse.

To tell the truth, the word nurse is just another term describing a person, who is strong enough to tolerate anything and soft enough to understand anyone. Mostly, nurses are called the angles of mercy and it is true if we could call them so!

Nurses provide their patients comfort, compassion, and caring without even a prescription. However, we sometimes underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Becoming a nurse, as a profession, marks one of the most self-sacrificing deeds which a person can undertake. The dedicated work which nurses do



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NURSES PROVIDE
THEIR PATIENTS
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COMPASSION,
AND CARING
WITHOUT EVEN
A PRESCRIPTION

and the kindness they shower on a daily basis in every hospital should serve as a reminder of the essential humanity inside us all. Behind the scrubs and white gowns are armies of devoted professionals who deserve a tribute and respect. Yes, it is true what has been said for a nurse is compassion in scrubs! As a point of fact, nurses are a universal gift to all in this world of many different races, cultures, attitudes and beliefs.

Every nurse was drawn to nursing because of a desire to care, serve or help. Possibly, this comes out of their belief in Mahatma's saying: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others". Nurses remain committed to providing care and nurturing of both healthy and ill people, individually, or in groups, or even in communities. Usually, nurses, as medical practitioners, do not have complete independence in decision-making and practice. However, nursing is a profession, which requires an extended education and has a theoretical body of knowledge.

The nobility of nurses is when they always understand the basic principles of care and intervention that are usually implemented towards patients and with other nurses in the hospital. It is important to apply the

principles of ethics so that the patient's safety and recovery will have a speedy recovery while being admitted to the hospital. Nurses always ensure that the safety of patients is always secured under any circumstances.

In view of that, the contributions of the nurses to society every single day should be highly valued by all. People are urged to thank every nurse who has been there for them or their loved ones during days of sickness. Overall, nurses are related to care, compassion and serving others. Though, there are people who disregard all the sacrifices and duties of nurses; perhaps impatient patients are just to name a few. However, nurses always administer care in a painstaking and knowledgeable manner without causing harm to others.

As a healthy attitude is contagious, nurses do not wait to catch it from others, but they are always a carrier. Generally, they are habitually patient with patients who are not patient. Nurses are usually there when the last breath of a person is taken and when the first breath is taken. Nurses are always there for all of us. Hats on for all your sacrifices dear nurses; you are not only stitching painful wounds, but crowning your patients with happiness!

WRITE FOR US

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SECOND ROUND

Central Africa votes in shadow of rebel offensive

CAMILLE LAFFONT

The Central African Republic began voting in the second round of a legislative election on Sunday as it battles back against a rebel insurgency the government has called an attempted coup.

It will be the first time many will be able to vote after only one in three of those registered were able to cast their ballots in the first round in December due to security fears.

A little over a week before that vote, six of the armed groups that control two-thirds of the country joined forces vowing to disrupt the election, march on the capital and overthrow the government of President Faustin Archange Touadera.

When people vote for the first time they no longer see the point of voting a second time

CODEFROY MOKOAMANEDE
Office worker

But the presidential and legislative elections went ahead on December 27, with Touadera winning re-election with 53.1 per cent of a vote slammed by the opposition as so

few were able to cast a ballot.

The rebel offensive went on to seize a series of northern and western towns and even reached the outskirts of the capital Bangui in January. But Central African troops, bolstered by Russian and Rwandan reinforcements, have since waged a counteroffensive, retaking many of the towns and reopening a key trade route to neighbouring Cameroon.

Touadera's party is expected to easily retain its majority in the National Assembly in Sunday's election, but there are fears the vote could again be disrupted by the rebels, who have withdrawn to the countryside but are still threatening to overthrow the government.

There were few voters at polling stations at the Barthelemy Boganda high school in Bangui on Sunday morning, an AFP reporter said. After casting his vote, office worker Godefroy Mokoamanede said that "unlike December 27, there is not a real passion.

"When people vote for the first time they no longer see the point of voting a second time," he said.

Forty-nine of the National Assembly's 140 seats are up for grabs in Sunday's second-round vote, after 22 MPs were elected outright in the first round.

For the other 69 seats, Sunday will serve as the first round, to be followed by a second on an as-yet unscheduled date. The country's constitutional court said that for the new National Assembly to be confirmed, at least 71 MPs will need to be elected by May 2.

Thousands of people have been killed since the civil war erupted in 2013 when a mainly Muslim coalition called the Seleka toppled then-president Francois Bozize in a coup.

Touadera's government has accused Bozize of leading the latest coup attempt, a charge he denies. — Reuters

A WAR VICTIM

Syrian farmer lost wife and sons to war; grandchildren are his solace

KHALIL ASHAWI

Abdel Razzak al Khatoun was a well-to-do farmer in Syria's rural Hama province. Ten years after the civil war began, he is penniless, homeless and living in a tent in northern Idlib.

Far worse, he said he had lost 13 sons in the conflict, the oldest aged 27 and the youngest 13. Some were rebels opposed to the government of President Bashar al Assad who were killed in the fighting.

His wife also died when a rocket hit their home in Hama as they were about to have their morning tea. After the missile struck, he managed to climb his way out of the rubble and found her remains.

Khatoun's account of the civil war, which Reuters could not independently verify, is not uncommon. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in the fighting which began with protests that quickly turned violent in 2011.

Millions more, like Khatoun, have fled their homes for safer areas within Syria or as refugees abroad.

Assad has survived the insurgency, and now holds sway over many parts of the country, helped by Russia's military and other militias. He is set to maintain power after a presidential election later this year.

Hostile Turkey still controls territory in the northwest where Khatoun is, while the United States has a presence in the northeast, a major oil and wheat-producing area.

Despite the rebels' defeat and Assad's ascendancy, Khatoun remains defiant.

"Anyone with a brain will conclude



Abdel Razzak al Khatoun, a grandfather raising his 11 orphaned grandchildren, in the village of Harbanoush. — AFP

MILLIONS MORE,
LIKE KHATOUN,
HAVE FLED THEIR
HOMES FOR SAFER
AREAS WITHIN
SYRIA OR AS
REFUGEES ABROAD

that they have to oppose the (Assad) regime," he said in his tent, located in a large camp for internally displaced Syrians. "I gave up my martyrs and I have no regrets."

When protests broke out in March 2011, Khatoun, now 84, and his sons were quick to join. Three of them were killed during the first year. As the demonstrations turned into full-fledged conflict and some of them took up arms, he lost more.

Wearing a red headscarf and shedding tears as he spoke, Khatoun recalled coming across a video on his phone which he said showed the grisly execution of one of his sons. Such footage was circulated regularly by

security forces early on in the conflict to intimidate the opposition, activists said.

"I was looking through the phone the other day and I came across the clip... My tears just started to fall, they were in the flower of youth and yet I've lost all of them. What more can I say?"

After escaping to Idlib, Khatoun's war was not over.

Idlib was the last rebel bastion in the northwest of the country, and Syrian and Russian forces pounded the area between April, 2019 and March last year, killing hundreds of people and forcing more than a million people to flee.

— Reuters

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EVERTON STUMBLE IN TOP-FOUR RACE WITH LOSS AT BURNLEY

Burnley's Ben Mee heads at goal during the English Premier League match against Everton. – Reuters

Man City go 17 points clear

* AGUERO ON TARGET AS MAN CITY BEAT FULHAM 3-0 * CHELSEA HELD IN STALEMATE WITH LEEDS * WEST BROM BEATEN BY PALACE

LONDON: Manchester City moved 17 points clear of the pack with a 3-0 win at Fulham on Saturday with John Stones continuing his surprising goalscoring touch and Sergio Agüero rediscovering his.

Defender Stones, who had managed one goal in his first 170 Premier League appearances, has now netted four in his last 10.

His close-range effort broke Fulham's resistance two minutes after the interval and after Gabriel Jesus capitalised on a Fulham mistake to make it 2-0, Agüero netted a penalty to grab his 181st City league goal, but first for 14 months.

While City have all but sewn up their third title in four seasons, the battle for a top-four spot continues to be unpredictable and looks set to go to the wire.

Chelsea's 0-0 draw at Leeds United made it 12 games without defeat since Thomas Tuchel replaced Frank Lampard in charge.

But it opened the door for Everton later to close the gap on Chelsea who occupy the fourth spot.

Victory against Burnley would have put Everton into fifth, two points behind Chelsea having played a game less, but Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered another home stumble.

Chris Wood and Dwight McNeil gave



Manchester City's John Stones scores their first goal. – Reuters

Burnley a 2-0 lead and while Dominic Calvert-Lewin did pull a goal back for the hosts they could not avert a seventh league defeat at Goodison Park.

"It's a big disappointment but we can't give up. There are 10 games left and we fight until the end," Ancelotti said.

Everton remain in sixth spot with 46 points from 28 games, two points behind West Ham United who could go level on points with Chelsea, and have a game in hand, on Sunday if they win at second-placed Manchester United.

Tottenham Hotspur, who have 45 points from 27 games, could go fifth on Sunday if they win at Arsenal.

RELEGATION FEARS

Burnley's win eased their relegation fears as they are now seven points ahead of third-from-bottom Fulham who had looked impressive in the first half against City before crumbling.

"Disappointing. I asked the team to be brave and show courage against the team who will be champions -- and we were,"

Fulham boss Scott Parker said. "There's no denying the mistakes we gave away for the goals were sloppy.

"We will dust ourselves down and move on."

Bottom club Sheffield United parted ways with manager Chris Wilder on Saturday and while they look doomed to the drop, West Bromwich Albion are also running out of time.

Their 1-0 defeat by Crystal Palace left them eight points behind Fulham and 17th-placed Brighton and Hove Albion.

"There are 27 points available and 20 needed," West Brom manager Sam Allardyce, who has never been in charge of a relegated team in the top flight, said.

Palace captain Luka Milivojevic decided the game with a VAR-awarded penalty while the other talking point was Palace's Wilfried Zaha opting not to take a knee before kickoff -- the first Premier League player not to make the anti-racism gesture this season.

"There is no right or wrong decision, but for me personally I feel kneeling has just become a part of the pre-match routine and at the moment it doesn't matter whether we kneel or stand, some of us still continue to receive abuse," he said.

"I now just want to focus on football and enjoy being back playing on the pitch. I will continue to stand tall." — Reuters

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE AFTER SATURDAY'S MATCHES (PLAYED, WON, DRAWN, LOST, GOALS FOR, GOALS AGAINST, POINTS):

Man City	30	22	5	3	64	21	71
Man Utd	28	15	9	4	55	32	54
Leicester	28	16	5	7	48	32	53
Chelsea	29	14	9	6	44	25	51
West Ham	27	14	6	7	42	31	48
Everton	28	14	4	10	40	37	46
Tottenham	27	13	6	8	46	28	45
Liverpool	28	12	7	9	47	36	43
Aston Villa	27	12	5	10	39	28	41
Arsenal	27	11	5	11	35	28	38
Crystal Palace	29	10	7	12	31	47	37
Leeds	28	11	3	14	43	46	36
Wolves	28	9	8	11	28	37	35
Southampton	28	9	6	13	35	49	33
Burnley	29	8	9	12	22	37	33
Newcastle	28	7	7	14	28	45	28
Brighton	27	5	11	11	27	35	26
Fulham	29	5	11	13	22	36	26
West Brom	29	3	9	17	20	57	18
Sheffield Utd	28	4	2	22	16	45	14

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

On Saturday

Crystal Palace 1 (Milivojevic 37-pen) West Brom 0

Leeds 0 Chelsea 0

Everton 1 (Calvert-Lewin 32) Burnley 2 (Wood 13, McNeil 24)

Fulham 0 Manchester City 3 (Stones 47, Jesus 56, Agüero 60-pen)

On Friday

Newcastle 1 (Lascelles 90+4) Aston Villa 1 (Clark 86-og)



Pioli says dressing room photo cheers up Milan players

Stefano Pioli revealed that a photograph of AC Milan's epic Europa League playoff victory over Rio Ave is pinned up in the dressing room to motivate the players, ahead of his side's Serie A clash with Napoli on Sunday.



Mumbai City win first Indian Super League title

Mumbai City have clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City. India midfielder Bipin Singh scored a 90th-minute winner to edge out three-time winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final.

Rashid's best anchors Afghanistan's series-levelling win

ABU DHABI: A career best wicket haul by leg-spinner Rashid Khan helped Afghanistan level their two-match series against Zimbabwe with a hard fought victory in the second Test in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

The 22-year-old continued his fairytale rise at international level with 7-137 in a marathon 62.5 overs effort to end Zimbabwe's resistance-packed second innings on 365, soon after lunch on the fifth and final day.

That gave Afghanistan 108 runs to win in 45 overs which they achieved for the loss of four wickets, two each to pacer Blessing Muzarabani and spinner Ryan Burl.

But Rahmat Shah with 58 and Ibrahim Zadran 29 ensured Afghanistan achieved the target to win by six wickets and level the series at 1-1.

Zimbabwe won the first Test — also in Abu Dhabi — by ten wickets. The two teams now play a three-match Twenty20 international series on the same



venue from March 17.

Rashid, whose previous best of 6-49 came against Bangladesh at Chattogram in 2019, finished the match with figures of 11-275, his second ten wicket haul in five Tests.

But the wily spinner had to overcome a tough eighth wicket

stand of 187 — a new record stand for Zimbabwe in all Tests — between skipper Sean Williams and Donald Tiripano.

Williams was left stranded on 151 which came in 465 minutes of defiant batting, his highest score in the format.

William's previous best of

119 was against New Zealand at Bulawayo five years ago.

Tiripano was unlucky to miss on a well deserved hundred by five runs when he was trapped leg-before by Rashid on the stroke of lunch.

Tiripano, whose previous highest of 49 not out came in

the same Test as Williams's, hit 16 boundaries in a 261-minute defiance.

The Williams-Tiripano stand broke the previous highest eighth wicket stand for Zimbabwe of 168 between Heath Streak and Andy Blignaut made against the West Indies at Harare in 2003. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Afghanistan first innings: 545-4 dec
Zimbabwe first innings: 287
Zimbabwe second innings (0/n: 266-7):
P Masvaure c and b Ahmadi.....15
K Kasuza c Rahmat b Rashid.....30
T Musakanda lbw Rashid.....15
S Williams (not out).....151
W Madhevere c Zazai b Shirzad.....0
S Raza c Jamal b Rashid.....22
R Burl lbw Rashid.....0
R Chakabva lbw Rashid.....0
D Tiripano lbw Rashid.....95
B Muzarabani c Zazai b Hamza.....17
V Nyauchi lbw Rashid.....0
Extras: (B-12, LB-7, W-1).....20
Total: (all out, 148.5 overs).....365
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-46, 3-101, 4-102, 5-140, 6-140, 7-142, 8-329, 9-362
Bowling: Shirzad 27-7-49-1, Rashid 62-5-17-137-7, Hamza 34-7-104-1, Ahmadi 16-5-40-1, Shahidullah 5-1-6-0, Asghar 1-0-1-0, Rahmat 3-0-9-0

Afghanistan second innings:
J Ahmadi b Muzarabani.....4
I Zadran c Musakanda b Burl.....29
R Shah b Burl.....58
S Kamal c Kasuza b Muzarabani.....0
N Jamal (not out).....4
H Shahidi (not out).....6
Extras: (B-4, NB-2, W-1).....7
Total: (for 4 wks, 26.1 overs).....108
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-89, 3-91, 4-101
Bowling: Muzarabani 9-1-25-2, Nyauchi 6-1-28-0, Williams 3-0-18-0, Tiripano 4-0-17-0, Burl 4-1-16-2

IT Works end Muscat's unbeaten run; Sarco lose

MUSCAT: Shakeel Ahmad's 4 for 19 and Zeeshan Masood's fighting 46 not out were the highlight of IT Works' thrilling 4-wicket victory against Muscat CT in a Premier Division T20 League game at OC Turf 1 in Al Amerat on Saturday.

With 12 points from 9 games including 6 wins, IT Works are now in the forefront of a three-horse race for the second spot which also involve Renaissance with 12 points from 10 matches and Al Turki NMC with 10 points from 9 games. A victory against AER on March 16 will seal the runners-up spot for IT Works.

Muscat are sitting safe and strong at top with 16 points and a game against Al Turki in hand on March 19. They may still win the T20 title even if they lose their last match. A big win for Al Turki and a bad loss for IT Works will mean the runners-up will be decided on net run rate.

Brilliant bowling by IT Works, led by Shakeel and Muhammed Nadeem (2 for 22), led to Muscat's dismissal for 115 in 19.3 overs. Jatinder was the main scorer with 30.

Struggling at 44 for 4 in 10 overs, IT Works were rescued by Zeeshan's gutsy knock as they surpassed the total in 19.2 overs, scoring 118 for 6. Khawar Ali scored 24 before being run out.

Awtad upset Sarco

Parameswaran Shankar's splendid 4 for 36 and Vijayanand Dhayanandan's 60 off 41 helped



Vijayanand Daynand and Parameswaran Shankar of Awtad International.

Awtad International to an emphatic 5-wicket win over fancied Sarco in a crucial A Division 50-over League game at OC Turf 2 in Al Amerat on Friday.

Sarco missed the opportunity to reach the top spot by losing their final league game on Friday. The winners will now be decided by the outcome of the vital game on March 19 between Zawawi Powertech, who are on top with 10 points from 6 matches, and Arabian Region Travel and Tourism (ARTT), who have 8 points from 6 games but the best net run rate of 2.04. A Zawawi win will seal the championship for the A Division leaders. However, if ARTT win their last game, they could walk away with the trophy on better net run rate.

Awtad did well to dismiss Sarco for 187 in 44.2 overs due to brilliant bowling by Shankar, Sidhh Mehta (2 for 34) and

Muhammed Irfan (2 for 35). Pradeep Salian (58) and Dileepa Srilal (38) were the main scorers.

Vijayanand's splendid batting was instrumental in Awtad's upset win as they scored 188 for 5 in 40 overs. Joel Biju scored a patient 39 off 60. Sandip Patel took all the five wickets to fall, conceding 57 runs in his 10-over spell.

BRIEF SCORES Premier Division T20

Muscat CT 115 all out in 19.3 overs (Jatinder Singh 30 – 3x4, Shakeel Ahmad 4-19, Muhammed Nadeem 2-22) lost to IT Works 118 for 6 in 19.2 overs (Zeeshan Masood 46 – 4x4, 1x6) by 4 wickets.

A Division
Sarco 187 all out in 44.2 overs (Pradeep Salian 58 – 5x4, 4x6, Dileepa Srilal 38 – 4x4, Parameswaran Shankar 4-36, Siddh Mehta 2-34, Muhammed Irfan 2-35) lost to Awtad International 188 for 5 in 40 overs (Vijayanand Dhayanandan 60 – 9x4, 1x6, Joel Biju 39 – 3x4, Sandip Patel 5-57) by 5 wickets.

Atletico title bid dented with Getafe draw

MADRID: La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid drew 0-0 away to struggling Getafe on Saturday, despite playing the latter stages of the game with an extra man, offering renewed hope to title rivals Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Getafe's Allan Nyom was shown a red card after a VAR review for a crunching tackle on Atletico's Renan Lodi in the 70th minute but the visitors could not make their advantage count.

Atletico did manage to put the ball in the net in the second half when Joao Felix nodded in a cross from Marcos Llorente but it did not count as the ball had gone out of play.

Substitute Moussa Dembele missed two good chances to score in the closing stages and Atletico had to settle for a draw which interrupted a remarkable run of 13 consecutive league wins over their Madrid neighbours.

Diego Simeone's side lead the standings on 63 points while Real Madrid are second on 57 after beating Elche 2-1 on Saturday and third-placed Barcelona can reduce the gap behind Atletico to four points if they beat Huesca at home on Monday.

GETAFE 15TH ON 28

"We did a lot of things well today but if you only draw it means you have not done enough", said Atletico keeper Jan Oblak.

"Getafe play a tough brand of football, a little different from the rest and it's never been easy against them."

Getafe have now failed to score



Atletico Madrid's Angel Correa in action with Getafe's Mathias Olivera. — Reuters

against Atletico in 19 consecutive games in all competitions since Simeone took charge in 2012 but they had several chances to take the lead, going closest when Enes Unal fired at goal from inside the box but was foiled by Oblak.

Getafe keeper David Soria was even more decisive, keeping out an early strike from Yannick

Carrasco then thwarting Dembele late in the second half.

Dembele was fortunate not to concede a penalty when he appeared to foul Nemanja Maksimovic while defending a corner and he had another chance to snatch a goal, meeting a cross from Lodi but glancing just wide of the far post. — Reuters

BASILASHVILI BEATS BAUTISTA AGUT TO SCOOP QATAR OPEN

DOHA: Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili, who ended Roger Federer's comeback in the quarterfinals, beat Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6 (7-5), 6-2 to win the Qatar Open in Doha on Saturday and secure a fourth career title.

Their clash in the Gulf desert nation was characterised by the hot, dusty wind that slowed down their exchanges but world number 42 Basilashvili bided his time to snatch the first set in a tie-break.

Basilashvili, who arrived at the Qatar Open with a 2-13 record since the resumption of the sport in August, penetrated 2019 champion Bautista Agut's defences in the sixth game of the second set, winning a crucial breakpoint with a backhand.

He made simple work of the eighth game to win the trophy on his first championship point after 90 minutes on court.

"I had zero expectations to win the tournament," said 29-year-old Basilashvili.

"It was very tough conditions today it could have gone both ways."

The tournament will be mostly remembered for Federer's return to tennis after 13 months out following knee surgery, mustering a win again Britain's Dan Evans before falling to Basilashvili.

Federer, who has since pulled out of the Dubai event next week, now has his eyes firmly set on Wimbledon where he has won eight of his 20 majors.

On Saturday, the wind blew from left to right in the opening points, with Bautista Agut's opening serve given a noticeable swerve by the breeze.

Outswing from Bautista Agut's forehand saw balls that would have ended up well inside the court under normal conditions touching the line.

The blustery night made the play more tentative than in pre-



vious rounds with rallies noticeably slower. Basilashvili moved to control the points early but nine holds of serve in the first set, and with the pair tied at 6-6, the set went to a tie-break.

He ground it out from the baseline with a backhand delivering him set point, overpowering



I had zero expectations to win the tournament. It was very tough conditions today it could have gone both ways

**NIKOLAZ
BASILASHVILI**
Qatar Open champion

Bautista Agut's slice backhand.

The second set was a simpler affair with the Georgian racing ahead to win the set and the tournament.

"Today it was his final," said fifth-seeded Bautista Agut after his defeat.

"He played very aggressive and now it's time to recover... and hopefully come back next year and try to get the title again."

Qatar has pressed ahead with sporting events like the Qatar Open, which allowed spectators at 20 per cent capacity, despite seeing an uptick in coronavirus cases.

— AFP

Muguruza ends two-year title drought with Dubai triumph

DUBAI: Garbine Muguruza ended a two-year title drought by claiming a maiden Dubai crown with a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 victory over unseeded Czech Barbora Krejckikova on Saturday.

The ninth seed was contesting her third final of 2021 and became the first Spanish woman to triumph in the emirate thanks to her success over Krejckikova.

Muguruza, who had lost her last three finals, had not won a title since Monterrey in April 2019 prior to this week in Dubai.

"It's a great achievement. I've been coming here for many years in a row and I felt like I was close, but not enough, and today finally I got the champion's trophy.

"I'm very happy after losing a

few finals in a row, to get this one," said the 27-year-old Muguruza.

"It paid off this week. The other weeks I was close. Today I fought harder and I'm very happy about it"

The two-time major champion now owns a tour-leading 18 match-wins in 2021 and a total of eight winner's trophies in her cabinet.

It is the former world number one's biggest title since Cincinnati in 2017.

"I feel like the consistency on tour is so hard to get. Being able to play three finals (this year) is a great sign that we are on the right way," said Muguruza, who was runner-up in Doha last week, as well as at the Yarra Valley Classic

in Melbourne last month.

A netted forehand from Muguruza handed Krejckikova a break of serve in the opening game but the Spaniard retaliated immediately to draw level.

An aggressive return saw Muguruza break for a 4-2 lead but Krejckikova utilised her fluid backhand to peg her back. Krejckikova dug deep to fend off three set points on her own serve and force a tiebreak.

Muguruza trailed 3-5 in the breaker and saved a set point at 5-6 before she grabbed the 65-minute opening set on a wide forehand from her opponent.

Krejckikova went off court for 11 minutes, delaying the start of the second set.

The 25-year-old blew a 40-0 lead to get broken upon resumption of play as Muguruza marched towards a 4-2 advantage.

She gave a huge sigh of relief when a Krejckikova forehand sailed long on Muguruza's second match point.

The Spaniard has been competing in Doha and Dubai without her coach Conchita Martinez, who contracted Covid-19 and was forced into isolation. "It was very challenging, more than people think, with so many things that happened in this Middle East swing but we stood strong and I'm very proud of my whole team," said Muguruza. — AFP





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VAT to generate RO 400 million per annum in revenues



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

Oman is expected to earn around RO 400 million in revenues from the Value Added Tax (VAT) Law when it comes into force next month, according to Saud bin Nasser al Shukaili (pictured).

Earnings from VAT will roughly equate to about 1.5 per cent of GDP in a full fiscal year, he said.

They made the observations in a statement to ONA while issuing Decision 53/2021, enshrining the Executive Regulations for the Value Added Tax (VAT) Law promulgated by Royal Decree 121/2020.

The regulation includes all the procedures relating to the general provisions of the VAT Law, registration procedures, payment and collection of tax, details of the tax bill, objections and grievance procedures, and consists of 13 chapters with a total of 211 articles, he said, adding that all preparations and requirements for the implementation of VAT from April 16 have been completed.

Al Shukaili said Decision 3/2021 formally kicked off the process for companies to register for the new tax starting from February 1 to February 28.

Registration was open for any business with annual supplies exceeded RO 19,250.

He added that Decision 2/2021 applies a zero tax rate for VAT for 93 type of food commodities, medicines and medical equipment.

Oman pledges express business start-up for 1,200 types of investments

AUTO APPROVAL: “Of a total of around 1,800 economic activities regulated by the ministry, we are trying to come up with around 1,200 activities that (investors) can immediately start their operations without requiring any further permits upon the establishment of their business”

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

New investments in as many as 1,200 different types of commercial and economic activities will receive preferential treatment under the Economic Stimulus Plan (ESP) unveiled by the Omani government last month to help hasten the Sultanate's economic recovery.

According to Qais bin Mohammed al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and



Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), new businesses operating in any of the designated 1,200 economic fields will be able to commence operations as soon as they complete their commercial registration formalities.

The measure will help combat the widely held sentiment that the permitting and approvals process is steeped in bureaucracy to the detriment of Oman's goal to enhance its business and investment environment.

“Of a total of around 1,800 economic activities regulated by the ministry, we are trying to come up with around 1,200 activities that (investors) can immediately start their operations without requiring any further permits upon the establishment of their business,” he said.

“This means that, upon registration of your company, you can immediately start operating your business.” In an interview to Oman TV over the weekend, Al Yousuf said the ministry is currently reviewing all

Economic Stimulus Plan

1,800 economic activities under its remit with a view to identifying 1,200 that will subject to fast-track commercial start-up under the newly launched Economic Stimulus Plan.

“We are working on this (initiative) and hope to see this ready within a month,” he stated. The Economic Stimulus Plan, approved by Council of Ministers last week, aims at supporting efforts to mitigate the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the national economy.

The plan enshrines a set of stimulus measures and initiatives with the aim to support economic recovery efforts, enhance economic activities performance, and attract more foreign investments. It complements the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (2020-2024) unveiled last year.

Among the array of incentives and concessions contained in the Plan is a provision that automatically entitle foreign investment companies to three work permits for recruiting

expatriates immediately upon establishment and after issuance of the commercial registration.

To eliminate any bureaucracy that may impede the smooth and speedy startup of such new businesses, the MoCIIP is working alongside government stakeholder ministries and agencies that are also part of the regulatory process, said Al Yousuf.

“We are working on a programme along with eight other government agencies to track what approvals an investor needs from the time the Commercial Registration (CR) is issued to the start of his business. Thus, for around 1,200 activities, the new investor has automatic approval to start his business as soon as his CR is online.

To this end, we are working collectively with the other government agencies responsible for the economic sector to try to see how we can further ease the process. This is a directive from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who is keen to see this happen, and the Cabinet as well, which is following up this matter to ensure that the programme is launched as soon as possible,” he added.

We are working on a programme along with eight other government agencies to track what approvals an investor needs from the time the Commercial Registration (CR) is issued to the start of his business

QAIS AL YOUSUF
Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

Zain Group buoys Omantel's 2020 revenues

The Kuwait-based regional mobile telecommunications group contributed revenues of RO 1.991 billion

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

Majority Omani government-owned Omantel reported group revenue for the year ended December 31, 2020 of RO 2.513.4 billion compared to RO 2.592 billion for the corresponding period 2019.

The lion's share came from its subsidiary, the Kuwait-based regional mobile telecommunications group Zain, which contributed revenues of RO 1.991 billion. Omantel's domestic revenues reached RO 533.1 million compared to RO 554.3 million for the corresponding period 2019.

Revenues growth achieved in mobile postpaid, fixed broadband, data services, ICT, wholesale international business and device revenues have contributed in managing the revenue for the year 2020, despite a fall in prepaid revenue due to challenging market conditions, said the telecom operator in its Board of Directors' report for year 2020.



The Group achieved an after tax net profit of RO 229 million compared to RO 299.7 million in 2019. Omantel's domestic operation recorded a net profit of RO 77.3 million, which is a marginal decline in comparison to year 2019 performance.

“Effective management of sales activities along with proactive cost optimisation measures taken by the management has positively contributed in minimising the overall impact by achieving a 12 per cent reduction in operating and administrative expenses YoY,” the report said.

The Group's total operating expenses decreased to RO 2.0978 billion compared to RO 2.111.5 billion for the corresponding period 2019, a decrease of 0.7 per cent. Omantel (domestic operation) managed to reduce its operating and administrative expenses by 12 per cent YoY, which is mainly resulting from the cost optimisation measures, it noted.

Omantel's Board has recommended a dividend of 55 bz per share which will be subject to the approval of AGM. The payout ratio is 61.6 per cent of the Group

Profit.

The total domestic subscriber base as of December 2020 (including mobile and fixed businesses) was 3.3 million (excluding mobile resellers) compared to 3.4 million of the corresponding period of the previous year, recording a decline of 3.4 per cent over the last period. Total subscriber base with mobile resellers reached 3.9 million.

Zain Group revenues recorded a drop of 3 per cent and reached RO 1.991 billion as of December 2020 compared to the corresponding period revenues of RO 2.045

Revenues growth achieved in mobile postpaid, fixed broadband, data services, ICT, wholesale international business and device revenues have contributed in managing the revenue for the year 2020

billion. EBITDA stands at RO 823 million, recording a decline of 8 per cent. Net profit stands at RO 255 million compared to RO 306 million of the previous period.

“Covid-19 pandemic disrupted economic activity due to lockdowns and travel bans across all Zain markets, impacted Group's revenue by RO 161m for the full year. To counter the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Zain Group financials, management proactively took decisive cost optimisation measures in areas such as contracts renegotiation, and management of cash flows that succeeded in reducing operational expenses by RO 65 million,” the report said.

Total customer base of Zain Group decreased by 3.4 per cent to 47.8 million compared to 49.5 million of the previous period.

Making money with chess

I admit it: I am obsessed with the game of chess. And I am sure I am not alone. First of all, it is something that started recently. Of course I played chess when I was a child. The very basic way, just to learn the rules.

Then I took a very long 30 years break, and towards the end of last year — maybe because the various travel restrictions — I bought a chess set. I did not want to play at home so I planned to bring it to my usual café and hope that someone would have asked me to play.

I didn't have to wait long. To my surprise I played three different players on the same first day. By now we have a little chess club with some 15 regular players. It was amazing to see how everyone joining our little group would say the same sentence: "oh, chess! I haven't played since I was a child..." And they were hooked again into this fascinating game.

So, given that I am quite competitive in anything that I do, I thought of upping my game by watching tons of video tutorials online. I now master the London System opening for white and learning now the Sicilian Defense as well as the King's Indian Defense for black.

Chess theory sucked me in. It is a bottomless well of knowledge. I love it. And despite the fact that I play mostly for fun (and to win of course) I realised



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BUT IF YOU CAN'T WAIT TO WATCH THE NEXT GRANDMASTER GAME AND MEMORISE THE MOVES THAT LED TO A SPECTACULAR CHECKMATE, THEN YOU COULD HAVE THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MONEY WHILE PLAYING AND TEACHING YOUR FAVOURITE GAME.

that some Chess Grandmasters made really good money. It came as a shock to me.

While I was watching a Twitch live streaming conducted by one of my favourite teachers I started noticing that some viewers were offering tips to the Grandmaster. Then all of a sudden a \$200 tip made my jaw drop.

Until that moment I was too focused on the lesson to care about the tips panel. But when the Grandmaster interrupted

the lesson to thank the generous tipper I looked at the tips piling up to over a thousand dollars in less than one hour.

So as business driven as I am, I also offered a tip and then started playing with numbers in my mind to calculate how much could a chess teacher make. Let us start by saying that there might be quite a bit of competition out there, and it might not be a business opportunity easy to take. Also, the amount of knowledge needed is massive.

If you have not started learning chess theory when you were a child and you are in your 40s or 50s, then it might be too late to start now. On top of that, if you like to play, but you get easily bored when watching others play, then probably this is not for you.

But if you can't wait to watch the next Grandmaster game and memorise the moves that led to a spectacular checkmate, then you could have the great opportunity to make money while playing and teaching your favourite game.

A Grandmaster charges on average \$40 per hour teaching chess, but the biggest opportunity comes from online streams in my opinion. If you are great at communicating you could build up your audience quickly and monetise greatly.

[The writer is a Member of the International Press Association]

BANK MUSCAT'S EASY PAYMENT PLAN SEES AN EXCELLENT RESPONSE

Bank Muscat's Easy Payment Plan (EPP) for its credit cardholders has been receiving an excellent response from its customers and merchant partners over the year.



The EPP scheme was earlier launched by the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate in line with its vision "To serve you better, everyday" and commitment to offer attractive value propositions for the benefit of its customers. Through the EPP scheme, customers can make high value purchases from the outlets of participating merchants and pay for these purchases in 12 monthly instalments without having to pay any interest.

Amjad Iqbal al Lawati, Assistant General Manager — Cards & eBanking, Bank Muscat, said: "In line with the bank's customer-centric vision and providing of excellent financing facilities, the Easy Payment Plan allows customers to avail goods and services and pay conveniently over a period of 12 months. Customers can easily purchase high-value items without having to pay high interest rates or to delay their purchase decisions.

PRESS RELEASE

GO THE DISTANCE WITH NISSAN GENUINE CAR PARTS



Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), has urged owners to use only Nissan genuine parts which are designed under strict standards and rigorous rounds of quality control. Nissan genuine parts, which assure maximum safety and reliability, are tested for best accuracy of fit, and are available at a competitive price and covered for warranty.

Nissan Oman offers a broad range of Nissan genuine parts which are designed, tested and manufactured to the same exacting standards to fit perfectly for optimum performance, durability and safety. Salem al Kamyani who uses only Nissan genuine spare parts says, "They keep our cars operating with optimal performance and extend performance lifetime."

Abdullah al Kindi stresses that genuine parts are rigorously tested by the makers as an integral component of the vehicle to meet high quality, safety and performance standards. "This ensures that our vehicle will drive, function and protect us the way it was intended. I always go for Nissan genuine spare parts when I need to replace a part," he says.

NBO APPOINTS ALI AL LAWATI AS HEAD OF PRIVATE BANKING

National Bank of Oman (NBO) has announced the appointment of Ali bin Mustafa al Lawati as its new Head of Private Banking.

An industry veteran with a career spanning 27 years, he has held several prominent roles in brokerage, private banking and wealth management.



A finance leader with a successful track record in achieving business transformations in challenging operating environments, he is anticipated to strengthen the bank's efforts to expand its digital offerings, while catering to the ever-evolving needs of the affluent segment.

Abdullah al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer at National Bank of Oman, said, "It is with pleasure that we welcome Ali onto the team, whose wealth of experience is certain to be an added value to this growing segment. Our leadership is full of hand-picked and highly qualified Omani professionals who are able to build relationships with our customers and deliver an exceptional level care that is in line with our values and our drive to be the best-in-class private banking in Oman."



Own a Toyota C-HR and save with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: The stylish, sharp and fuel-efficient Toyota C-HR is now available with cash gift RO 2,700, insurance 1 year comprehensive or cash gift In lieu of insurance RO 250 and service 2 years / 20,000 kms (whichever is earlier).

(Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms and conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details, please). Designed to stand out, the C-HR — promotes stylistic freedom and engineering creativity.

The C-HR Hybrid-Electric model also offers the lowest fuel consumption value in its category at 23.9km/l, C-HR enables customers to contribute to a greener future while enjoying the increased driving satisfaction provided by its advanced technologies.

The C-HR is built on the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA) platform, which ensures a more rewarding driving experience. A low centre of gravity and double-wishbone rear suspension contribute to outstanding stability and handling with exceptional ride

comfort.

Available with a 1.8-litre VVT-i full-hybrid powertrain and automatic CVT transmission, the vehicle meets all the requirements of daily commutes and weekend leisure journeys while offering peace of mind through its comprehensive array of safety features. The C-HR's high-quality interior is designed to delight the most discerning drivers. Exuding a genuine sense of luxury and refinement, the cabin offers an elegant contrast between curving surfaces and crisp lines to deliver a fresh, yet comfortable environment.

In Oman, the nationwide parts and service network of Saud Bahwan Automotive supports Toyota's outstanding product quality. No wonder that today, Toyota is one of the most trusted and well-known brands.

For the latest press releases, test drive requests and more, please visit www.toyotaoman.com, www.youtube.com/toyotaoman, www.facebook.com/toyotaoman, and instagram.com/toyotaomanofficial/. For any further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota Showroom.

OLE S HANSEN

The month-long commodity rally continues to be challenged by elevated bond market volatility driving a renewed rise in US bond yields which in turn is causing risk aversity and a stronger dollar.

These developments left the Bloomberg Commodity Index near unchanged and close to a 2-1/2-year high, and combined with a record long position held by funds, the sector is currently, despite strong underlying fundamentals, still at risk of entering a period of consolidation.

Metals of most colours saw their price action ebb and flow in line with dollar and bond yield developments. US stimulus supported copper despite signs of easing tightness, especially in the Chinese market where exchange-monitored stock levels have started their seasonal increase, albeit from a price supportive multi-year low.

Platinum rose after report from the World Platinum Investment Council said 2020 produced the largest deficit on record, with third consecutive annual deficit expected in 2021. Iron ore suffered a weekly loss after the Chinese Government initiated a pollution crackdown on steel mills in the steelmaking hub of Tangshan, one of most polluted cities in China.

For steel, the government has already pledged to rein in capacity as the country embarks on its planned journey to carbon neutrality by 2060.

Gold and silver remained under pressure as the direction



continued to be dictated by developments in the dollar and bond market where yields rose again in response to the passing of the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package. While the deal will support growth, it will also stoke inflation risks but following a weak US CPI reading earlier in the week, such risk is not yet being reflected in the numbers.

We maintain a positive outlook given our belief inflation will eventually overshoot current market expectations. Until such time, however, a continued rise in 10-year bond yields towards the next big target at 2 per cent from the current 1.6 per cent could see the downside being challenged again.

For now, gold remains caught in a downtrend with key support being an important area between \$1,670 and \$1,690 while potential buyers are in no rush to enter longs before it manages to regain \$1,765/oz, the level below which

helped trigger the latest weakness.

Crude oil traded close to unchanged on the week as the market struggled for direction. Earlier in the week, a failed attack on a Saudi oil installation drove Brent crude above \$70/b but the 7 per cent correction that followed could reflect a market that potentially may have gotten close to its current potential.

Despite being supported by the US stimulus Bill and signs of a fuel consumption rebound around the world, the market is still waiting to see a sustainable pickup in global fuel demand that can justify current oil prices.

The weekly EIA inventory report showed another large draw in gasoline stocks amid rising demand from motorists. Refinery disruptions during the Texas freeze a couple of weeks ago helped trigger a two-week jump in US crude oil stocks by 35.3 million barrels, while gasoline and distillate stocks have

slumped by more than 40 million barrels. With the summer driving season and reduced lockdowns on the horizon, refineries will have a busy few months ahead and gasoline prices are likely to remain elevated during this time.

Somewhat offsetting the still positive sentiment was the renewed push for a higher yields and dollar together with Opec striking a cautionary tone in its Monthly Oil Market Report.

In their latest report for March they downgraded the outlook for demand for its crude over the next six months amid a weaker demand outlook and stronger non-Opec supply growth.

A development that calls for an extended period of production discipline and restraint from the Opec+ group of producers. On March 17, the International Energy Agency will release its Oil Market Report. *[The writer heads Commodity Strategy at Saxo Bank]*

British Airways calls for vaccinated people to travel without restrictions



A woman holds her PCR test result at an airport in Madrid, Spain. — Reuters

LONDON: British Airways's new boss said vaccinated people should be allowed to travel without restriction and non-vaccinated people with a negative Covid-19 test, as he set out his ideas for a travel restart a month before the UK government finalises its plans.

Holidays will not be allowed until May 17 at the earliest, the government has said, but before that, on April 12, Britain will announce how and when non-essential travel into and out of the country can resume.

Sean Doyle, appointed BA's chief executive last October, called on Britain to work with other governments to allow vaccines and health apps to open up travel, after a year when minimal flying has left many airlines on life support.

"I think people who've been vaccinated should be able to travel without restriction. Those who have not been vaccinated should be able to travel with a negative test result," he said.

Doyle said the roll-out of vaccines made him optimistic BA would be back flying this summer, but added the recovery depends on what is said on April 12. — Reuters

US producer prices rise leading to largest annual gain in two years

WASHINGTON: US producer prices increased strongly in February, leading to the largest annual gain in nearly 2-1/2 years, but considerable slack in the labour market could make it harder for businesses to pass on the higher costs to consumers.

That was supported by a survey on Friday showing an easing in consumers' near-term inflation expectations early this month, even as their confidence in the economy rose to a one-year high. Receding new Covid-19 cases, an acceleration in the pace of vaccinations and more pandemic relief money from the government are seen allowing wider economic re-engagement in the spring.

Inflation is expected to accelerate in the coming months and exceed the Federal Reserve's 2 per cent target, a flexible average, by April.

Part of the anticipated spike would be the result of price declines early in the pandemic washing out of the calculations. Many economists, including Fed Chair Jerome Powell, do not expect the strength in inflation will persist beyond the so-called base effects.

"Beyond a rise in the metrics this year on base effects and a fuller reopening of the economy



Engines assembled as they make their way through the assembly line at the General Motors (GM) manufacturing plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee. — Reuters

that will revive demand, price pressures are unlikely to keep accelerating, given an incomplete recovery in the labour market," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics in White Plains, New York.

The producer price index for final demand rose 0.5 per cent last month, with the costs of energy

products and food surging, the Labor Department said. That followed a 1.3 per cent jump in January, which was the biggest advance since December 2009.

In the 12 months through February, the PPI accelerated 2.8 per cent, the most since October 2018. The PPI increased 1.7 per cent year-on-year in January. Last month's rise in the PPI was in line

with economists' expectations.

Manufacturing and services industries have been flagging higher production costs as the year-long pandemic gums up the supply chain. Surveys this month showed measures of prices paid by manufacturers and services industries in February racing to levels last seen in 2008. — Reuters

Court ruling suspends US ban on investment in Xiaomi

WASHINGTON: A US federal judge temporarily blocked the Department of Defense from forcing American investors to divest from Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp on the grounds the company has ties to China's military.

The Defense Department, under the Trump administration in mid-January, added Xiaomi and eight other firms to a list that requires Americans to sell their interests in the firms by a deadline.

The restrictions were set to go into effect next week.

Xiaomi in late January filed a complaint in a Washington court seeking to be removed from the list, calling its inclusion "unlawful and unconstitutional" and arguing it was not controlled by the People's Liberation Army. — Reuters



A man uses his smartphone next to the Xiaomi brand's store in central Kiev, Ukraine. — Reuters

Slow Gulf economic recovery to weigh on banking sector

DUBAI: Economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis in the oil-rich Gulf region will be slow, weighing on the region's banking sector, S&P Global Ratings said.

Gulf countries fell into a sharp recession last year as the Covid-19 pandemic affected vital non-oil economic sectors such as hospitality, commerce, and real estate, while lower oil prices hurt state revenues.

Events like Dubai Expo this year and the World Cup in Qatar next year, as well as a rebounding oil market, will provide some support but growth will remain below historical levels, S&P said.

"Indeed, most countries will not return to 2019 nominal GDP before 2023, with an even longer



A man holds Saudi rial banknotes at an exchange house in Riyadh. — Reuters

road for Saudi Arabia," it said in a report on Sunday.

Recovery in sectors such as aviation, tourism, and real

We think that the measures implemented by most central banks in the region are supportive of liquidity but do not remove or reduce credit risk from the balance sheet of banks (yet)

S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

estate will take time, and while vaccination programmes are

progressing, there are downside risks due to mutations in the novel coronavirus.

These factor swill weigh on bank's asset quality with non-performing loans expected to increase, as well as on profitability, with some banks expected to post losses in 2021.

"We think that the measures implemented by most central banks in the region are supportive of liquidity but do not remove or reduce credit risk from the balance sheet of banks (yet)," said S&P.

"Cost of risk will remain elevated following a jump of 60 per cent in 2020 as banks set aside provisions in preparation for more stress." — Reuters

India's e-commerce policy calls for equal treatment of sellers



A billboard outside a metro station in New Delhi advertises Amazon's annual Great Indian Festival sale, in this file photo. — Reuters

NEW DELHI: India will require e-commerce firms to treat sellers equally on their platforms and ensure transparency, according to a draft policy seen by Reuters on Saturday that follows criticism against business practices of big online companies.

India has been deliberating a new e-commerce policy for months amid complaints from brick-and-mortar retailers who allege online giants like Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart flout federal regulations. The companies have denied the allegations.

A special report last month revealed that Amazon has for years given preferential treatment to a small group of sellers on its India platform and used them to circumvent the country's foreign

investment rules.

The latest draft of the policy document says operators should be impartial in their dealings with sellers. "E-commerce operators must ensure equal treatment of all sellers/vendors registered on their platforms and not adopt algorithms which result in prioritising select vendors/sellers," it says.

The policy will apply to Amazon and Flipkart — two top e-commerce players in India — as well as domestic players like Reliance Industries, which has plans to expand its JioMart online platform. All three firms did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Separately, India is also considering changes to foreign

investment rules that could prompt players including Amazon to restructure their ties with some major sellers, Reuters reported in January. Government officials are set to hold talks next week with industry executives on such rules, according to people with direct knowledge.

On Saturday, top government officials from various departments, including the commerce ministry, met to discuss the e-commerce policy. The timeline of publication and whether it will be subject to further changes were not immediately clear.

Indian traders have also complained about steep discounts offered by online companies which smaller retailers have not

been able to match.

Amazon and Flipkart have said they comply with all laws. E-commerce firms must "bring out clear and transparent policies" on online discounts, the draft document says.

The Reuters special report last month — based on internal Amazon documents dated between 2012 and 2019 — showed the company helped a small number of sellers prosper on its India platform, giving them discounted fees and helping one cut special deals with big tech manufacturers. Amazon has said it "does not give preferential treatment to any seller on its marketplace," and that it "treats all sellers in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner." — Reuters

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MANAGER Sales and Distribution seeks suitable placement. Sales Professional with 25 years' experience in Oman, includes 12 years in Sales Management, with leading FMCG, Consumer Durables Companies. Currently working with a leading group as Branch Manager for Retail and Distribution. Accountable for the total business and P&L. NOC available. 99369127.

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From pure passion to sweet perfection

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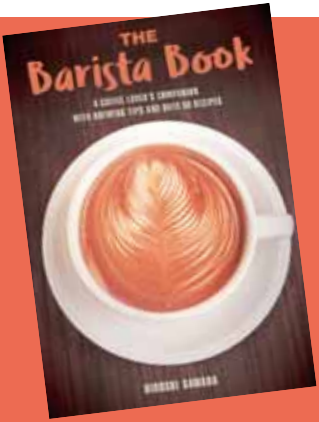
AUCTION



SOTHEBY'S TO AUCTION RARE STAMPS, GOLD COIN FROM STUART WEITZMAN'S PERSONAL COLLECTION

A "Three Treasures" sale of rare stamps and a gold coin from the personal collection of shoe designer Stuart Weitzman is set to fetch millions of dollars at an auction at Sotheby's in New York City in June...**Story on P19**

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THE BARISTA BOOK BY HIROSHI SAWADA

Hiroshi Sawada offers step-by-step instructions on how to make more than fifty delicious coffee drinks—lattes, americanos, cappuccinos, espressos, mochas, and more!

ICONS

BRONZE STATUE OF RUTH BADER GINSBURG UNVEILED IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

A 7-foot-tall [2.1-metre] bronze statue honouring late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was unveiled on Friday morning in her Brooklyn hometown (in New York City)...**Story on P19**



TRAVEL TALES



JAPAN'S TEAMLAB MELTS MUSEUM AND SAUNA IN FRESH DIGITAL ART EXPERIENCE

A wall of flower petals bursts into a thousand fragments. A huge ball levitates in the air, turning from red to blue to purple. Hundreds of butterflies dart around a screen of tiny water particles...**Story on P19**



From pure passion to sweet perfection

BY KABEER YOUSUF

"LEARNING NEVER STOPS" was the first sentence that Habiba al Khabori, a person who chased her passion and made it big said in a tête-à-tête with the *Observer*.

The story of Habiba Al Khabori, an Omani woman who made her hobby into a lucrative activity and set an example to those who follow her, is overwhelming.

Habiba opened her cake boutique, CINDERELLA SWEETS in the early 80s. She ran the business successfully for almost 25 years. In 2012, her daughter established The Dried Lemon, infusing local flavours into an array of international cuisine and became one of the leading culinary creators of food in the Sultanate of Oman. With their innovative designs and wide range of available and trendy styles, she and her family create their own recipes, dishes and assortment of various sweets, confectionaries and savoury items.

The Dried Lemon creates beautiful cakes for all occasions — celebration cakes for weddings, birthday parties, anniversaries etc. They also cater to private and corporate events and dinners with their famous canapés, snacks and other delicious dishes.

One of her magnum opuses, as she calls it, is a huge wedding cake that she cre-

ated in collaboration with an extremely exclusive client. The cake was epic because of its 9 tiers and 78 inches' height. This cake was decorated with 39,550 handmade, sugar, edible flowers which took some 6 months in the making, from beginning till the end and it made her a cynosure of appreciation and acclamation.

Another stunning cake made by The Dried Lemon was also 78 inches tall, 9 tiered, and had 34,039 handcrafted edible sugar flowers. These flowers also took 6 months to make.

In 2017, she made the tallest wedding cake in Oman for another exclusive wedding ceremony at Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz Carlton Hotel. This cake had 10-tiers and was 3.5 metres high with a base of 42 inches. It was the centre of attention of the cake-lovers.

"Although the cake captured the eyes and hearts of the sweet-lovers, logistics faced an issue and we had to transport the mammoth cake in pieces and assemble them at the venue which was a strenuous exercise and took many people's efforts as well. The client wanted it taller, but obviously, we couldn't go higher because it nearly touched the ballroom ceiling," admitted Habiba.

Habiba believes in innovation and spares no stones unturned in experimenting and creating newer recipes and ideas. In 2015 she was

the first in Oman to introduce Entremets, a French variety of mousse based desserts, which have taken the confectionary world by storm. These have also become extremely popular here in Muscat. They are time-consuming and challenging to make but Habiba has mastered the technique and know-how to perfection.

Some of her widely acclaimed sugar craft masterpieces are: handcrafted, sugar Gerbera and its foliage, edible, sugar Marigolds of 3 varieties and foliage, sugar lilies adorning a cake, Sugar begonia leaves of different varieties, Sugar Physalis seed pods with berries, Giant Goblet Black Forest Trifle with Morello Cherries, Fudge Sauce, Cream, chocolate shavings and Maraschino Cherries, Dutch mini pancakes for home breakfast; yeast-based little morsels are addictive, served piping hot, dotted with butter and a sprinkling of icing sugar; accompanied by maple syrup, strawberry and chocolate sauce, Nutella Cake with Ferrero Rocher, Fudge lacing through every delicious bite, Giant Bon Bons / Pinata cakes in various flavours Black Forest, Caramel Fudge, Raspberry Ripple Cheesecake. And of course, a classic 4 - tiered wedding cakes, adorned with beautiful peach flowers Chocolate Handbag and Shoes.





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Sotheby's to auction rare stamps, gold coin from Stuart Weitzman's personal collection

A **'THREE TREASURES'** sale of rare stamps and a gold coin from the personal collection of shoe designer Stuart Weitzman is set to fetch millions of dollars at an auction at Sotheby's in New York City in June.

The 1933 Double Eagle Coin was originally cast as a \$20 coin, but it was never issued for use. After US president Franklin Roosevelt took the country off the gold standard, all of the Double Eagles were ordered destroyed. However, a handful were released and all but one of them deemed stolen.

Now, the only 1933 Double Eagle Coin ever allowed to be privately owned is up for sale at Sotheby's, with the auction house estimating the coin will sell for between \$10 million and \$15 million.

The exquisite design of the Double Eagle has led to it being described as the "Mona Lisa of coins", said Sotheby's Luxury Division Senior Vice President, Richard Austin. "It's America's most famous gold coin. It's the only one. There are other examples, but they're all owned by the US Mint."

The "Three Treasures" sale also includes the British Guiana One-Cent Magenta stamp and a plate block of the "Inverted Jenny" stamp.

Issued in 1856, the Magenta is the rarest stamp in the world and the only stamp of its kind. Weitzman bought the stamp in 2014 for \$9.48 million, according to Sotheby's — about one billion times its face value. It is now expected to sell for between \$10 million and \$15 million.

The plate of the "Inverted Jenny" stamp is expected to fetch between \$5 million and \$7 million. The 24-cent stamp issued in 1918 is the most recognized and sought-after US stamp.

Austin said the three items are "the very best examples and the rarest in their respective categories."

"Stuart was, I think, groundbreaking in the way that he collected, which instead of having a lot of one thing, he simply had the best in any given area. And that includes stamps and coins", said Austin.

He said each item has had some sort of mishap or mistake that makes them valuable.

The Double Eagle coin went overseas to King Farouk in Egypt before the government was able to halt its export, said Austin.

"In the case of the British Guiana, it was a case of the stamps that had been printed in England didn't make it over to the colony, so they decided to print their own. And this is the only one that survived", said Austin, adding that the stamp was found by a 12-year-old boy 20 years later.

And on the 'Inverted Jenny'? The biplane is upside down.

The three items will be on display to the public, by appointment, at Sotheby's in New York through March 17. The auction is on June 8. — **Reuters**

Bronze statue of Ruth Bader Ginsburg unveiled in downtown Brooklyn



A **7-FOOT-TALL** [2.1-metre] bronze statue honoring late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was unveiled on Friday morning in her Brooklyn hometown [in New York City].

Borough President Eric Adams and Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte pulled a sheet off the 650-pound [295-kilogram] sculpture in the lobby of downtown Brooklyn's City Point shopping centre as cameras clicked.

"She kept that Brooklyn pride and stride as she sat on the bench", said Adams. "She made it clear — right out of Midwood — that she was happy to be a Brooklynite."

Brooklyn is returning the love. Her March 15, 1933 birthday will now be celebrated as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Day in the city's most populous borough.

The liberal icon, who authored groundbreaking opinions and withering dissents during a 27-year run on the nation's Supreme Court, died September 18.

The statue, crafted by Australian artists Gillie and Marc Schattner, was planned before the justice's death, and she was aware of the project, said Erica Roseman, a spokesperson for City Point.

The sculpture, made in Australia and then shipped to New York, shows the Columbia Law graduate standing in a judge's robe, her hands clasped together.

The second woman to serve on the Supreme Court, Ginsburg proved a powerful voice for gender equality.

"Her work is not over", Bichotte said. "We must continue championing women's rights. Gender bias is still alive and well — even in unprogressive city. We must carry Justice Ginsburg's torch of justice."

The artists' new work is one in a series honouring women. The project is intended to offer some balance in a city where depictions of men make up the vast majority of statues.

"With the two steps on its large base representing the Supreme Court and the climb she made to get there, the work is designed to provide the public with an opportunity to stand at her side, and gain inspiration from her journey fighting for equal rights", the artists said in a joint statement.

Previous sculptures by the pair include likenesses of talk show host Oprah Winfrey, actress Nicole Kidman and Olympic gold medallist Gabby Douglas.

Beginning Monday, the statue of Ginsburg will be available for daily viewing from 10 am to 8 pm, according to City Point.

"Her remarkable legacy, her profound sense of justice, and her unwavering desire to do what is right will forever serve as inspiration", State Attorney General Letitia James said in a statement. — **dpa**



Japan's teamLab melds museum and sauna in fresh digital art experience

A **WALL OF** flower petals bursts into a thousand fragments. A huge ball levitates in the air, turning from red to blue to purple. Hundreds of butterflies dart around a screen of tiny water particles.

This is not a modern art museum, but the latest creation of Japan's teamLab collective of engineers, artists and architects, anchored around a maze of seven saunas lit up in hues of red, green and yellow.

The Tokyo-based digital art group took over an empty lot in the city's glitzy Roppongi district and over the last year erected a gigantic tent housing the sauna rooms and three immersive art installations.

"Art is traditionally exhibited in luxurious places like palaces or museums — we wanted to create a



luxurious state of mind for people to experience it", said Takashi Kudo, a teamLab lab member at a demonstration on Saturday.

"TikTok teamLab Reconnect" opens runs March 22 until the end of August. For \$44 on weekdays and \$53 on weekends, visitors can dip in and out of the hot rooms and cold showers, and walk inside the artworks sporting only swimming suits.

The coronavirus means seating in the biggest saunas was cut from 24 to 12 and ventilation was adjusted to meet government standards for air circulation.

Kudo stood under dozens of large, hand-blown glass lamps from Italy. The lamps slowly changed colours from burnt orange to magenta, illuminating dark corridors separating the rooms.

The team said it wanted to affect all senses, including touch, sound and smell. Aromas such as roasted green tea waft through one of the saunas, and white birch in another.

"Nobody goes to an art museum in this fashion because art is art and sauna is sauna", said Kudo, pointing to his swimming trunks. "What we wanted to try is to combine and offer a very different experience — and a very different experience of this art." — **Reuters**



Oman is learning about gourmet food from the French

BY YERU EBUEN

The past week posed a real challenge to late eaters. With commercial activities coming to a halt at 8 pm, those who don't know how to cook were in a bind. Noticeably, the whole Covid-19 saga has caused tremendous drawbacks not only in the food scene in Oman but the world.

As one Omani woman from Suhar gushed, it is only through gourmet delivery that they experienced some food luxury. Her family has totally avoided going out to eat in restaurants in the fear of getting the family infected with the virus.

Chef Thony Renard used to work for one of the Sultanate's high-end hotels. Before Oman, he has worked with some of the best hotels in Dubai and other parts of the world but recently realised that gourmet food or high-end food do not need to be exclusive to hotels or restaurants and that it can

be brought directly to people's kitchens.

Working hand in hand with Al Marsa Gourmet managed by fellow French Nicolas Durin, they started an initiative of encouraging people to "Be Your Own Chef" which means providing high-end products to customers and educating them not only on how to acquire ingredients but sharing tips on how to achieve restaurant and hotel-quality food.

"Our company started 15 to 20 years ago as Al Marsa Fisheries exporting fish from Oman to Europe, USA and anywhere in the world. As Oman market grew, the company responded with that growth transitioning to Al Marsa Food diversifying the food we offer which now include numerous high-end products from cheese and dairy, to seafood, from duck and poultry to meat covering a variety of specialties including organic food, veggies, Italian, French, Asian favourites among others," Nicolas said.

"When Covid happened in Oman, we realised that the qual-

ity of food drop drastically. It was when we decided that we have leftover stocks from supposed orders of hotels. We decided to make those products accessible to residents and citi-

Chef Thony said that because restrictions are being placed throughout different food outlets, people who are uncomfortable getting out can turn themselves into their own chefs working in the safety of their personal kitchens.

zens of Oman," he explained.

"Basically, what we wanted to provide is any high-end food that you cannot find in the supermarket. It's a niche market but some people are looking for it. If you are looking for high-end food and you cannot find it

anywhere, we are the place to go," he said.

Chef Thony said that because restrictions are being placed throughout different food outlets, people who are uncomfortable getting out can turn themselves into their own chefs working in the safety of their personal kitchens.

"We are empowering the people to not get intimidated with preparing good food. One of our team members, Amina who is in charge of our social media and customer engagement, is creating different materials that allow people to have access to product information as well as recipes", Nicolas explained.

He added, "When we decided in doing business-to-customer, we expected our market to be comprised of mostly expats. We were surprised to discover that more than 50 per cent of our customers are Omanis."

Al Marsa's best sellers include salmon fillets from Norway and their Fine De Claire oysters hold more promise — something of which they will divulge in even better news soon.

If there is something that the French know so well, it's quality and best food. Al Marsa's selection also includes caviars, a wide assortment of cheese and even slow-cooked foie gras.

"At the heart of our operations, our goal is to empower everyone to be their own chef. We provide an outlet for people who don't know how to cook and get them an opportunity to prepare their meals by simplifying the process," Chef Thony explained.

"We also have an in-house delivery system which means that our team personally delivers the items you order to your doorsteps. With this mechanism in place, we can gauge our customer's needs and also listen to their feedback," Nicolas said.

Al Marsa Gourmet looks forward to creating a different food experience for people in Oman eliminating the fear of being in the kitchen. To order, product details and pricing can be found on their website <https://www.almarsa-gourmet.com/>. You can also follow them on Insta: [almarsa_gourmet](https://www.instagram.com/almarsa_gourmet).