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SABALENKA SHOCKS BARTY IN MADRID



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NAPOLEON'S BATH MEETS ITS WATERLOO



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ME CITIES REQUIRE COMPREHENSIVE 5G STRATEGIES



MUSCAT

MINISTERS VISIT AFFECTED HOUSES IN KHABOURA

Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, visited the Wilayat of Al Khaboura in North Al Batinah Governorate, to assess the damage that affected the citizens' houses due to the adverse weather conditions that hit the wilayat recently. The ministers listened to the requests of the affected citizens promising to compensate them for the damage inflicted on them. The minister of social development said the visit was aimed at following the affected families and providing support for them in an urgent manner. She added that approximately 450 affected families have been sorted out with 250 cases have been dealt with directly.

WORK ON AL HAFa PROJECT BEGINS

The Office of the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, represented by Dhofar Municipality and Muscat National Development and Investment Company (ASAAS) announced the commencement of construction works to develop Al Hafa waterfront and build a traditional heritage market in Al Hafa in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate. DETAILS ON P14

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SCOTLAND VOTE SETS UP NEW CLASH WITH LONDON

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New terms for granting govt plots to build houses

ONLY CANDIDATES WHO FULFILL CONDITIONS WILL GET LANDS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has issued the terms and conditions for granting government lands. The ministry has a right to grant one government residential land plot to an applicant wishing to have one in approved maps. The ministry said that the terms stated below govern the granting of government residential lands to applicants who meet the conditions.

If the applicant is a male, he should have attained the age of 23 years, to be the supporter of a family constituting a wife and children or either of the two or to be the supporter of one parent. If the man is supporting only himself, he should be aged 40 years. The title deed will be issued in the name of the two spouses if the man is a family supporter.

If the applicant is a woman, she should have attained the age of 23 years, and should be the sole supporter of her family or married to a non-Omani and permanently resident in the Sultanate or

“**Priority in granting government residential land is given to a family which does not possess a house or residential land suitable for building**

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

divorced or widow or deserted and has no children or is a self-supporter provided she is aged not less than 40 years.

Priority in granting government residential land is given to a family which does not possess a house or residential land suitable for building.

It is not permissible to sell granted lands, except after the

completion of construction in accordance with the terms and conditions set by a decision to be issued by the Minister of Housing and Urban Planning.

For granting government residential land to a family, it is a condition that no member of the family has been granted a government residential land as per the provisions of the Royal Decree on granting government residential lands.

A government residential land is granted to an applicant in his respective wilayat or in the wilayat where the applicant has his/her permanent place of work, depending on the circumstances.

It is possible to exempt some applications from some of the above-mentioned terms and conditions on granting government residential lands in accordance with rules to be set under a decision issued by the Minister of Housing and Urban Planning and after the approval of the Council of Ministers.

TURN TO P2



HIS MAJESTY CONFERS RENAISSANCE OF OMAN ORDER ON MOHAMMED MUSTAFA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik conferred Renaissance of Oman (2nd Class) Order on Mohammed Al Sayyid Mustafa al Nuamani, in appreciation from His Majesty for Mohammed Mustafa's efforts during his tenure at the Diwan of Royal Court. The order was handed over by Sayyid Khalid Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court when he received him at his office on Sunday. — ONA

Daily deaths, patients in ICUs still on higher side

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Ministry of Health on Sunday announced 2,006 new cases of Covid-19 and 37 deaths for three days.

Of these, 760 cases were recorded on Thursday, 612 on Friday and 634 on Saturday.

Seventeen deaths and 1,082 cases were reported from Muscat Governorate alone.

The total number of cases registered in the Sultanate has now reached 201,350, including 2,120 deaths.

The total number of recoveries is 184,647, while the recovery rate is 92 per cent.

Eight-four (84) people were admitted to hospitals across the country, taking the total number of inpatients to 752, including 275 in intensive care units (ICUs).



ROP has called upon citizens and residents to avoid gatherings and family visits during Eid holidays.

Meanwhile, based on the decision made by the Supreme Committee on May 4, the Civil Aviation Authority issued new guidelines to all airlines operating in the Sultanate.

TURN TO P2

Large Chinese rocket segment disintegrates over Indian Ocean

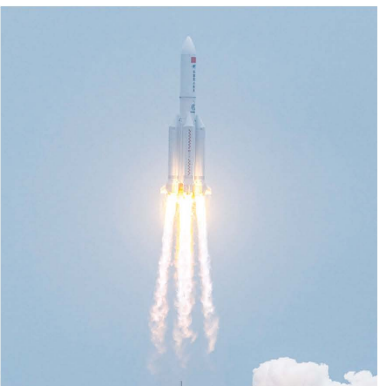
BEIJING: A large segment of a Chinese rocket re-entered the Earth's atmosphere and disintegrated over the Indian Ocean on Sunday, China's space agency said, following fevered speculation over where the 18-tonne object would come down.

Officials in Beijing had said there was little risk from the freefalling segment of the Long March-5B rocket, which had launched the first module of

China's new space station into Earth orbit on April 29.

But the US space agency Nasa and some experts said China had behaved irresponsibly, as an uncontrolled re-entry of such a large object risked damage and casualties.

"After monitoring and analysis, at 10:24 on May 9, 2021, the last-stage wreckage of the Long March 5B Yao-2 launch vehicle has re-entered the atmosphere," the China Manned Space Engineering Office



A Long March 5B rocket, carrying China's Tianhe space station core module. — AFP file photo

The segment's descent matched expert predictions that any debris would have splashed down into the ocean, given that 70 per cent of the planet is covered by water

said in a statement, providing coordinates for a point in the Indian Ocean near the Maldives.

It added that most of the segment disintegrated and was destroyed during descent. The US military's Space Command said the rocket "re-entered over the Arabian Peninsula at approximately 10:15 pm EDT on May 8 (0215 GMT Sunday)". "It is unknown if the debris impacted land or water."

Monitoring service Space-

Track, which uses US military data, said that the location in Saudi Arabia was where American systems last recorded it.

"Operators confirm that the rocket actually went into the Indian Ocean north of the Maldives," it tweeted.

The segment's descent matched expert predictions that any debris would have splashed down into the ocean, given that 70 per cent of the planet is covered by water.

— AFP



**For the first time in the Sultanate,
BankDhofar introduces the PaySticker**

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EFFORTS TO STEM VIRUS SPREAD



With the approach of Eid Al Fitr, The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has enhanced its efforts to achieve the highest security level for citizens and residents. -- ONA



Daily deaths, ICU patients still on higher side

FROM PAGE 1

Institutional quarantine applies to all non-Omani arrivals into the Sultanate, including families with children under the age of 18 from 6 pm on May 11.

The home quarantine for citizens and the other categories excluded under previous circulars will continue to be in place, taking into consideration that the excluded categories will be subject to the

approved procedures upon arriving in the Sultanate.

NO EID GATHERINGS

With the approach of Eid al Fitr, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) has enhanced

its efforts to achieve the highest security level for citizens and residents.

ROP has called upon citizens and residents to continue with their commitment to the decisions of the

Supreme Committee tasked with handling the developments resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic especially by avoiding gatherings and family visits during the Eid holidays to ensure the safety of all.

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New terms for granting govt lands for houses

FROM PAGE 1

Applications registered previously will not be cancelled. They will be dealt with as per the terms and conditions stated in Royal Decree No 42/2021. Those applicants will be distributed in accordance with a set of criteria, including precedence of application, the number of family members and whether the family possesses a residence or an existing land plot suitable for building.

In case the wife applies in one governorate and the husband applies in another governorate, the two applications will be merged in one to be given the date of the earlier application.

In case the wife applies in one governorate and the husband applies in another governorate, the two applications will be merged in one to be given the date of the earlier application. In this case, the land will be granted in the governorate to which the husband belongs or is his permanent place of work.

If the applicant possesses a

In case the wife applies in one governorate and the husband applies in another governorate, the two applications will be merged in one to be given the date of the earlier application

built residential land plot, his/her application will not be cancelled, but the applicant will not be given priority among entitled persons.

It is not permissible to sell the granted land plot except after the completion of its construction.

As per the law, it is permissible to grant a woman a residential land plot if she is aged 23, and is a supporter of a family. If a woman is not a supporter of a family, she

can be granted a land plot only after she attains the age of 40.

In the condition that a spouse is granted a land plot, the application of the other spouse is deemed null, since the purpose is to provide the family with residential land.

Ownership of a commercial land plot or a commercial building has nothing to do with granting residential land.

In the case of a woman married to a non-Omani, it is a condition to grant her a government residential land from the state provided she is a permanent resident of the Sultanate, with her residency evidenced through standard methods of authentication.

According to the law, an application is not cancelled if the applicant is not aged 23, but in this case, the applicant has to wait until he/she is aged 23, and only then conditions stated by the law are applied. — ONA



Legal luminary passes away



KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Oman's legal fraternity mourned the demise of Dr Suad bint Mohammed al Lamkiyah, the first law graduate of Oman, the world's second Arab female judge and one who inspired women of many generations to stand at par with men in the march of nation-building.

"Suad al Lamkiyah is a national treasure; an inspirational daughter of Oman," remembers Dr Mohammed al Zadjali, Chairman of Oman Lawyers Association, adding, "We send our deepest sympathies to her family and friends and join the dear and near ones in their grief."

Omani Lawyers Association had honoured her as the first female lawyer in the Sultanate, on Omani Women's Day in 2020. She was considered the first legal adviser in the Sultanate and the first lawyer as well, and the first female public prosecutor, who studied law outside the Sultanate, in Ireland, in 1959.

"She was more than a lawyer, a human who felt for the less-privileged and poor people," Dr Asyah al Bualy, Senior Adviser for Cultural Sciences at the Council for Scientific Research, remembers her aunt.

Suad had a very disciplined and resolute childhood in education, based on religious schools, besides schools like St Joseph Convent School in Zanzibar, then the American School in Ghamra in Cairo, and followed by the well-known Alexandria College. She was honoured by the Ministry of Legal Affairs on Omani Women's Day in 2014.

"Suad was a person we always wanted to emulate and the whole family was proud of her, for the legacy set by our grandfathers who gave much importance to education as a way to progress. She was the second woman to occupy the position of the judiciary in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and the first Omani woman to occupy the position of Legal Adviser "Senior Adviser (A)" at the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

Al Lamkiyah graduated in Law in 1964 from the prestigious School of Law at Trinity College Dublin, the oldest established law school in Ireland. She was Oman's 1st female lawyer, legal adviser, and the world's 2nd Arab female appointed Judge (Dar es Salaam).

"The death of Suad al Lamki leaves a big vacuum not only in Oman's legal world but in the humanitarian efforts scene as well," remembers Khamis al Abri, lawyer.

Investment opportunities at Khasab, Shinas ports

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has invited investors to submit their proposals to manage, operate and develop Port Khasab and Port Shinas.

These investment opportunities include the land plots owned by these ports provided with many facilities and features, including services at anchor points and running shipping lines between Oman and global ports. Additionally, maintenance and ship services, catering and free markets activities will be allowed.

The Ministry invites all interested investors based on a concession agreement to email their proposals to the Director-General of Ports at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology at sami.baabbad@mtcit.gov.om no later than June 20, 2021. — ONA



Fasting can restore immune system

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
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Some of the studies show that fasting can restore the immune system. According to Dr Mariam al Waili, Senior Consultant in Nutritional Medicine, Director of Supportive Services, Ministry of Health, fasting for three days itself allows the body to start producing new white blood cells, which rejuvenate the immune system to fight infection.

"Although it has been shown in humans and animals that the number of white blood cells decreases with long-term fasting, the blood cells return when they are re-fed. Ramadhan fasting forces the body to consume glucose and stored fat, and significant white blood cells are broken down. As a result, the change in the body causes the cells to regenerate new cells in the immune system," explained Dr

Mariam.

She pointed out that fasting in Ramadhan might reduce the C-Reactive Protein and oxidative stress as well as inflammatory interleukin-6, interleukin-b and TNF alpha -- Tumour Necrosis Factor alpha.

"My advice during this Ramadhan is to adhere to all the advice of WHO recommendations of maintaining distance, washing hands and wearing of the mask and during fasting avoid being in public places such as and sit together in large numbers to have Iftar. And pray at your place and take rest too," she said.

Exercising is essential for health, but there are a few things to keep in mind while training during Ramadhan.

"Exercising in the duration of 45 to 60 minutes has many health benefits such as anti-inflammatory and oxidation as it improves immune function

by enhancing the functional activity of the tissue. This leads to the strengthening of the immune defence. But we have to remember that while brief exercise can induce significant alteration in the pattern of circulatory cytokine, vigorous exercise training for a long period may cause immunosuppression and oxidative stress," she said.

She advised to take equal consideration to nutrition as well – have a balanced meal between exercises, but this is difficult for individuals who are fasting as a fasting person cannot consume carbohydrate or water during day time and this is likely to result in altered immunological so it is better to exercise during night time.

"The physical training should only be done after one-hour form Iftar meal. Night training is the logical way to do it because it allows people to stay well hydrated and

maintain blood glucose level. We also must remember that before exercise, we must consume only a light meal containing one gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of body mass to reduce the risk of insulin increase hypoglycemia after the onset of fitness training," she noted.

According to Dr Mariam, exercise is a form of medicine.

"Physical training has been known as a lifestyle factor that can maintain and even promote immune function and act as a vaccine against certain diseases and infections by producing physiological stress in the human body, which leads to a series of adaptations to overcome the stimuli. These positive adaptations may not be achieved without taking some functional food such as carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and minerals and maintaining suitable timing to avoid any side effects," she concluded.

Richwood Antiques to showcase rare 19th century furniture

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

An exciting exhibition is being planned in the capital city in which an antique enthusiast has decided to put up rare nineteenth-century European furniture in Muscat.

In all likelihood, the exhibition will take place on May 20, depending upon pandemic protocols and permissions from the competent authorities.

The exhibitor Rosemary Whelan said Richwood Antiques are organising the exhibition in association with Art and Soul Gallery. The event venue is Water-Front Mall, Muscat.

"As I said, we have planned the exhibition 7 pm onwards from May 20 to June 6 depending upon the directives of the Supreme Committee on Covid-19. This would certainly be an opportunity to have a glimpse of 19th-century European furniture collection mainly from UK, France, Italy and Ireland," said Rosemary Whelan.

Impressed with the unprecedented success of her first exhibition at Bait al Zubair



Museum in 2011, Richwood Antiques hosted many shows in Oman. Rosemary decided to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Richwood Antiques in the Sultanate and joined hands with Art and Soul Gallery to provide a rare opportunity to the public to view a number of impressive nineteenth-century furniture pieces sourced from the UK, Ireland and the finest that the European market has to offer.

"I am genuinely delighted to



have this opportunity to show some beautiful, classic pieces of furniture for the Omani and expatriate communities to enjoy. I take great pride in the work I do in Oman, with individuals, families and organisations, providing bespoke statement pieces which are so well-received and appreciated by our diverse client base," she said.

This public exhibition is a wonderful opportunity for the personalised services that the Richwood Antiques offers to find

out more about the work it does and how it takes pride in helping customers here in the Sultanate.

"Visitors will have the pleasure of seeing exquisite, skillfully hand-crafted pieces, constructed in exotic timbers such as mahogany, satinwood and walnut, which have been expertly carved to incorporate intricate inlays and fine brass-work."

The public are encouraged to browse through the sought-after selection of delightful French



gilded mirrors, console tables, mahogany framed sofas, inlaid chairs and decorative polished brass lamps.

"Some notable mahogany items not to be missed include: A magnificent English hand-polished dining room table constructed in 1850 from the finest South American wood;

An impressive Victorian cabinet stamped by renowned British furniture makers, Lamb of Manchester, and a unique 19th

century Irish carved exhibition-quality sideboard by Robert Strahan of Dublin," said Rosemary.

The underlying message, according to her, is to take advantage of the unique opportunity to attend this noteworthy event in the Muscat calendar.

Now celebrating its tenth anniversary trading in Oman and on the international stage, Richwood Antiques offer a bespoke service finding high-value, original nineteenth-century European furniture and decorative items for both commercial and private projects.

Its entrepreneurial founder, Rosemary Whelan, originally from Ireland and resident in Oman for more than a decade, is the only International Confederation of Art and Antique Dealers' Associations (CINOA) purveyor of fine antiques in the Middle East.

This gold-standard membership guarantees the highest standards of quality, expertise and integrity. Rosemary is also an active member of the Irish Antique Dealers Association and had a seat on its council for many years.



Ramadhan

M U B A R A K

A FEAST FOR IFTAR EVENINGS!

HOTELS ARE
OFFERING
PEOPLE THEIR
FAVOURITE IFTAR
DELICACIES AT
HOME WHERE
THEY CAN
BREAK THEIR
FAST WITH THEIR
FAMILIES

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

As the holy month of Ramadhan is slowly bidding adieu to the believers and as night lockdown literally is keeping people home, hotels in the city are on a different iftar mode.

Leading star hotels are offering people their favourite iftar delicacies at home where they can break their fast with their families and have the delicacies together at the comfort of their homes.

Starting from early evenings and ending just before the iftar time, these 'dial an iftar' service is evoking a sound response from both citizens and residents like.

"We are also delighted to announce that a limited edition Iftar menu is available for takeaway and delivery throughout Ramadhan. For the first time, guests will have the option to enjoy the profound Omani generosity and luxurious fine dining experience offered by The Chedi Muscat in the comfort of their home," Nataly Fedchenko,

Marketing Manager, The Chedi.

"We make it a point that foods are prepared with utmost care and attention, the special at home iftar menu will include all-time favourite Ramadhan dishes and treats available for takeaway and delivery daily from 4 pm till 8 pm," she adds.

While traditional iftar gatherings allow the believers to embrace the divinity of fasting during the holy month of Ramadhan at their restaurants with traditional Arabic iftar buffet blending the traditional with the contemporary, others invite guests to immerse in the warm Omani hospitality of fine dining destinations.

Most of these hotels welcome guests to break their fast with traditional dates, dry fruits and lentil soup. The meal will continue with delectable starters, including lush Middle Eastern salads and delicately prepared cold and warm mezze, including favourites such as Kibbeh, Cheese Sambousek, and Falafel. As night falls, guests will relax into the evening by indulging in a choice of mouth-watering main courses, including traditional Omani slow-roasted Ouzi and a variety of dishes with a modern twist. A wide selection of Arabic desserts will provide the sweetest end to this elevated dining experience.

"It is good to breakfast with your dear and near ones in the cosy ambience of the hotel but the coronavirus has made it just a dream only. Under these circumstances, programmes like the dial an iftar is a boon to many people like me," Mohammed Shareef, media personnel, opined.

With a few more days left for the holy month to be over, people like Ahmed Shareef are finding the iftar at home more comfortable helping them get rid of the bitter memories of the pandemic into oblivion.



Palestinians injured in clashes

TEL AVIV: The situation in Jerusalem's Old City came to a dangerous head over the weekend, with medics saying around 300 Palestinians have been injured in violent clashes with Israeli security forces since Friday evening.

The violent clashes continued into Sunday.

An Israeli police spokesman said Sunday morning that confrontations took place at the Damascus Gate — one of the entrances to the Old City — and around the holy site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Several arrests were made.

Near the Damascus Gate, Palestinian demonstrators threw stones, bottles and firecrackers at security forces, according to police.

Police used rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades, according to media reports.

According to radio reports, more than 90,000 devout Muslims had gathered in the Noble Sanctuary, where Al Aqsa Mosque is located, to pray on the last weekend before the fasting month of Ramadhan ends.



Palestinian protesters hurl stones at Israeli security forces amid clashes in Jerusalem's Old City. — AFP

Saturday evening marked Lailat al Qadr (Night of Destiny), when, according to tradition, the Quran, was handed over to the prophet Mohammed. The situation around the Old City and the Sheikh Jarrah quarter had already escalated the previous night. Afterwards, there was talk of more than 200 people being injured, and police spoke of almost 20 security forces who had been injured.

The situation in the West Bank and in the Arab-dominated eastern part of Jerusalem has been tense since the beginning of Ramadhan. Many Palestinians are angry because Israeli police had cordoned off areas of the Old City to prevent gatherings.

In addition, some Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah are facing eviction from their homes by Israeli authorities, further

heightening tensions.

Police presence has been stepped up amid concerns about renewed violence on Israel's Jerusalem Day, which begins on Sunday evening.

At a special government session to mark Jerusalem Day, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that religious freedom would be upheld for all in the city, but that violence would not be tolerated.

Israel celebrates the conquest of the eastern half of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War on that day. The Palestinians see East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state of their own.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called on the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international organisations to take action. A world that cannot protect Jerusalem and Muslims has betrayed itself, Erdogan said.

The UAE and Bahrain also criticised Israel over the clashes.

The Middle East Quartet envoys expressed deep concern over the new escalation in a joint statement. — dpa

Tunisia orders lockdown



A Tunisian police officer controls a food shop, amid a general confinement imposed by the authorities in a bid to slow down a surge in coronavirus infections, in Tunis. — AFP

TUNIS: Tunisia ordered a partial lockdown on Sunday for the week-long Eid al Fitr holidays, warning that any further increase in coronavirus infections could overwhelm specialist care facilities.

Announcing the measure on Friday, Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi said Tunisia was going through "the worst health crisis in its history".

Mosques, markets and non-essential businesses will be closed under the new restrictions, which

come as Muslims mark the end of Ramadhan, Mechichi told reporters.

"Health institutions are at risk of collapse," Mechichi said, adding that medics were stretched to the limit, with around 100 people a day dying of Covid-19.

More than 500 people are currently in intensive care, an unprecedented number that has required medics to set up field hospitals, and the North African country is struggling to meet the demand for oxygen. — AFP

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan sign pacts to improve ties

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed agreements Saturday to improve ties, after months of strained relations between the close allies.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Khan, who arrived Friday for a three-day visit, held talks in which they stressed "the importance of expanding and intensifying the horizons of cooperation." The country's state news agency added officials from both countries signed two agreements in the western city of Jeddah addressing the treatment of criminals, and crime.

They also agreed two memorandums of understanding around combating drug trafficking; as well as financing energy, infrastructure, transportation, water and communications projects.

The nations also agreed to establish a higher coordination

council.

During his trip Khan — who has visited six times, most recently in December 2019 — will focus on improving ties with Riyadh and the needs of the roughly 2.5 million Pakistanis working in Saudi Arabia.

Last year, the kingdom recalled \$1 billion of a \$3 billion loan to cash-strapped Pakistan, and an expired multi-billion-dollar oil credit facility to Islamabad has not been renewed, a diplomatic source said in September.

Earlier, on his seventh visit to the wealthy kingdom since his 2018 election, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan was given a warm welcome by Saudi officials in the western coastal city of Jeddah. He was greeted by Saudi Arabia's de-facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the airport, before holding talks with Saudi officials at Jeddah's Al Salam Palace. — AFP/dpa



شركة الأسماك العمانية
Oman Fisheries CO.SAOG

DIRECTORS REPORT For 1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) Results – Year 2021

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the Company's unaudited consolidated results for the three-month period ended on 31st March 2021.

Our key results are annexed below:

Key Results:

Key Indicators	Group (Oman Fisheries Co.)			Parent Company (Oman Fisheries Co.)		
	Jan-March 2021	Jan-March 2020	Percentage Change	Jan-March 2021	Jan-March 2020	Percentage Change
Total revenue	3,719,263	4,066,619	-9%	3,642,886	3,992,719	-9%
Total Costs	(3,702,878)	(4,219,653)	-12%	(3,609,872)	(4,196,282)	-14%
Profit before tax	16,385	(153,034)	-111%	33,014	(203,562)	-116%
Tax Income	58,867	0		58,867	0	
Profit after Tax	75,252	(153,034)	-149%	91,881	(203,562)	-145%

Turnover and summary of results:

The unaudited results of the first quarter represent the consolidation of Oman Fisheries Co. SAOG (Parent), Al Ameen Stores and Refrigeration LLC and Oman Fisheries Co. Sharjah (FZE). Your company has achieved the consolidated turnover of RO 3.719 Million in 2021 up to Quarter one compared to the previous year turnover of RO 4.066 Million for the same period last year. The group made a net profit of RO.75,252/- compared to the net loss of RO 153,034/- during the same period of previous year.

Following are the key operational highlights for the first quarter:

The company had performed reasonably well during this period, despite of unabated havoc of COVID-19 pandemic worldwide along with its catastrophic effects which continue to repel the world economy as a whole and also Oman economy being a part of cascading effect.

The average GP margin achieved was 24% which is significantly higher than overall industry average which ranges between 16% to 18%. Principle reason for high GP margin had been the continuous efforts of the management to minimize the direct costs per unit of production and at the same time secure premium rate per unit of specie sold to customers.

The company managed to retain its overall market share both in domestic and as well as export arena despite the continued onslaught of COVID-19 situation, primarily due to prompt fulfillment of orders as well as consistency in quality.

On the procurement side, the management managed to secure overall budgeted volume either through its supplier base or through its network of SME operators.

Beside the overall sound performance managed by the company, there were series of factors which continued to pose challenges towards the overall growth in revenue and operational efficiencies. The principal factors worth mentioning are:

During this quarter, due to prolonged dip in average oceanic temperature the overall harvest had been lower for pelagic species, especially Mackerels and Sardines, which consequently affected the catch of our commercial vessel (Al-Khair).

While the rise in fuel charges had increased the freight forwarding cost as well as Marine freight, the incremental factor could not be absorbed by our customers who are predominantly functional at B2B level, as their ultimate customers being in the B2C platform had been extremely price sensitive.

Further, the entire GCC region phased shortage of outbound containers, which had forced Oman Fisheries to accept further orders within the scheduled period.

During the second half of March, the accidental blockage of Suez Canal had forced cancellation/postponement/delay of many of the consignments both in African belt as well as European markets result in lower achievement for that month.

We also wish to draw attention of shareholders to the significant verdict by Supreme Court in favor of Oman Fisheries, on the forcible dumping of 350 MT stock in 2017, through which the company suffered severe operational losses during that period. The Supreme Court awarded compensation to the tune of OMR 141,208 as full and final against the claim lodged.

The administrative costs were lower than the overall budget as well as respective period of the previous year due to stringent control over the expenses and right sizing of the divisional costs.

The selling and distribution expenses were lower than the forecasted limit, principally due to abolishment of inter-branch/direct transfer and transfer of processed fish to principal warehouse. Further, management ensured direct loading from the branches thereby reducing the warehousing charges and also improving inventory turnover ratio to a significant extent.

Due to lower demand for warehousing of food products, the average volume of storage for Al-Ameen shrunk from 85% (Jan to March 2020) to 70% (Jan to March 2021), thereby reducing the overall occupancy by 15% as compared to same quarter of preceding year.

The logistics division of Al-Ameen is more or less consistent and had been principal service provider for its parent company.

Debtors and cash collection cycle has been consistent in relation compared to the volume of sales both in the domestic and export market

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Management of the Company, I wish to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq and his Government for establishing good working environment in the fisheries sector and for taking good steps for food security in the Country.

Further, we are extending our thanks to, government bodies, suppliers, service providers, banks, customers, consultants and employees of the Company for their continuous efforts and we are wishing them all the success for the remaining period of the year.

Chairman






OMAN FISHERIES

Interim condensed consolidated and separate statement of financial position as at 31 March 2021

	Group		Parent Company		
	(Unaudited) 31 March 2021 RO	(Audited) 31 December 2020 RO	(Unaudited) 31 March 2021 RO	(Audited) 31 December 2020 RO	
ASSETS					
Non-current assets:					
Property, plant and equipment	5,728,695	5,760,906	3,427,440	3,417,131	
Right-of-use assets	277,679	289,942	238,927	250,558	
Finance lease receivables	-	-	310,230	314,088	
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	515,750	515,750	
Deferred tax assets	573,608	514,740	554,243	495,376	
Non-current assets	6,579,982	6,565,588	5,046,590	4,992,903	
Current assets:					
Inventories	1,971,953	2,097,948	1,970,993	2,097,948	
Current portion of lease receivables	-	-	15,526	15,526	
Trade and other receivables	1,624,912	1,662,135	1,440,388	1,508,997	
Amounts due from related parties	-	-	745,396	705,311	
Financial assets at FVTPL	57,367	78,529	57,367	78,529	
Fixed deposit	1,121,888	1,121,888	1,121,888	1,121,888	
Cash and cash equivalents	842,632	737,836	492,189	534,636	
Current assets	5,618,752	5,698,336	5,843,747	6,062,835	
Total assets	12,198,734	12,263,924	10,890,337	11,055,738	
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES					
Equity:					
Share capital	12,500,000	12,500,000	12,500,000	12,500,000	
Legal reserve	3,480,985	3,480,985	3,314,319	3,314,319	
Capital reserve	29,269	29,269	29,269	29,269	
Accumulated losses	(8,670,024)	(8,745,276)	(10,208,177)	(10,300,061)	
Total equity	7,340,230	7,264,978	5,635,411	5,543,527	
LIABILITIES					
Non-current liabilities:					
Term loans	460,690	532,599	260,726	282,634	
Lease liabilities	238,210	251,975	238,210	251,975	
End of service benefits	107,269	105,178	82,487	80,865	
Non-current liabilities	806,169	889,752	581,423	615,474	
Current liabilities:					
Current portion of term loans	276,039	275,473	76,035	75,469	
Current portion of lease liabilities	46,270	46,270	46,270	46,270	
Short term loans	2,400,000	2,500,000	2,400,000	2,500,000	
Trade and other payables	1,283,617	1,237,262	1,170,686	1,154,291	
Amounts due to related parties	-	5,030	980,512	1,120,707	
Income tax payable	46,409	45,159	-	-	
Current liabilities	4,052,335	4,109,194	4,673,503	4,896,737	
Total liabilities	4,858,504	4,998,946	5,254,926	5,512,211	
Total equity and liabilities	12,198,734	12,263,924	10,890,337	11,055,738	
Net assets per share (RO)	0.059	0.058	0.045	0.044	

Interim condensed consolidated and separate statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period ended 31 March 2021

	Group		Parent Company		
	(Unaudited) Period ended 31 March 2021 RO	(Unaudited) Period ended 31 March 2020 RO	(Unaudited) Period ended 31 March 2021 RO	(Unaudited) Period ended 31 March 2020 RO	
Revenue	3,673,518	3,916,112	3,561,324	3,806,179	
Direct costs	(2,807,513)	(3,178,383)	(2,693,388)	(3,119,988)	
Gross profit	866,005	737,729	867,936	686,191	
General and administrative expenses	(628,946)	(641,004)	(547,722)	(494,019)	
Selling and distribution expenses	(353,136)	(366,877)	(462,421)	(558,822)	
Gain on disposals of property, plant and equipment	-	1,589	-	1,589	
Loss on fair value of financial assets at FVTPL – net	(21,163)	(384)	(21,163)	(384)	
Other income	180,408	154,390	212,208	186,190	
Operating profit/(loss)	43,168	(114,557)	48,838	(179,255)	
Finance income	9,767	9,278	13,784	13,511	
Finance costs	(36,550)	(47,755)	(29,605)	(37,819)	
Profit/(loss) before tax	16,385	(153,034)	33,017	(203,563)	
Tax income	58,867	-	58,867	-	
Profit/(loss) for the period	75,252	(153,034)	91,884	(203,563)	
Other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	
Total comprehensive profit/(loss) for the period	75,252	(153,034)	91,884	(203,563)	
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.0006	(0.0012)	0.0007	(0.0016)	

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request them, either in Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of receipt of the request.

الشركة المتحدة للطاقة (ش.م.ع.م.)
UNITED POWER COMPANY (SAOG)

P.O. Box 147, PC 134, Jawharat A'Shatti, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24698498, Fax: 24698496, Website: www.upcmanah.com

Notice to Shareholders of United Power Company SAOG

Last 3 days to avail the offer

As the official holiday fall on 12th May 2021,

the last day would be the first business day after Eid holiday

On behalf of United Power of Company SAOG, Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC sent out following message through its electronic system to all United Power Company SAOG shareholders:

"Dear shareholders, A last opportunity to exit from United Power Company -selling your shares at Ro 1.015 per share starting 21 April 2021 till 12 May 2021,. Please contact Ubhar Capital, the broker of the buyer on 24949009 and mobile numbers 99267286 and 99315839 for more information, if any.

For clarity, each shareholder has a right to sell their holding through their own broker and is not obliged to appoint Ubhar Capital."

Whereas, we have noted that a large number of shareholders have not updated their contact information with Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC and therefore may not have received this message.

For the benefit of such shareholders, we have published this notice in Oman Newspaper. We again request all those shareholders to update their contact information with Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC and avail this opportunity to exit their shareholding.

Death toll rises to 50 from blasts near Afghan girls’ school

KABUL: Dozens of young girls were being buried on Sunday at a desolate hilltop cemetery in Kabul, a day after a secondary school was targeted in the bloodiest attack in Afghanistan in over a year.

A series of blasts outside the school during a peak holiday shopping period killed more than 50 people, mostly girl students, and wounded over 100 in Dasht-e-Barchi, a west Kabul suburb.

The death toll from a car bombing near a school in the western part of Kabul followed by two mine blasts has increased to more than 50 people, the Afghan Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

At least 100 more people were wounded in the bombing that took place on Saturday near a school in Dasht-e-Barchi, a Hazara-populated area of the Afghan capital, ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said.

Most of the victims were civilians, mainly students, who were leaving the school when the bombings happened.

The number of victims might still increase as ambulances were transferring wounded and dead people until late on Saturday night, Arian added.

The bombing targeting students was widely condemned domestically and internationally.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. The Taliban were quick to reject their involvement in the attack. However, the government has blamed the militant group. The IS is also active in the country.

Saturday’s blasts came as the



Onlookers stand next to the backpacks and books of victims following multiple blasts outside a girls’ school in Dasht-e-Barchi on the outskirts of Kabul. — AFP

United States military continues to pull out its last 2,500 troops from the violence-wracked country despite faltering peace efforts between the Taliban and Afghan government to end a decades-long war.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tareq Arian told reporters that a car bomb detonated in front of the Sayed Al Shuhada girls school on Saturday, and when the students rushed out in panic, two more devices exploded.

Residents were shopping ahead of this week’s Eid al Fitr holiday, which marks the end of Ramadhan, when the blasts occurred.

On Sunday, relatives began

Residents were shopping ahead of this week’s Eid holiday when the blasts occurred

burying the dead at a hilltop site known as “Martyrs Cemetery”, where victims of attacks against the Hazara community are laid to rest.

Bodies in wooden coffins were lowered in the graves one by one by mourners still in a state of shock and fear, an AFP photographer said.

“I rushed to the scene (after the blasts) and found myself in the

middle of bodies, their hands and heads cut off and bones smashed,” said Mohammad Taqi, a resident of Dasht-e-Barchi, whose two daughters were students at the school but had escaped the attack.

“All of them were girls. Their bodies piled on top of each other.”

Last week the school’s students had protested a lack of teachers and study materials, said Mirza Hussain, a university student from the area. “But what they got (in return) was a massacre.”

Books and school bags belonging to the victims still lay scattered at the site of the attack. Afghan officials including President Ashraf Ghani blamed the Taliban. — AFP

Calls for nationwide lockdown mount in India

MUMBAI: India’s Covid-19 deaths rose by more than 4,000 for a second consecutive day on Sunday as calls for a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the virus mounted.

India’s health ministry reported 4,092 fatalities over the past 24 hours, taking the overall death toll to 242,362. New cases rose by 403,738, just shy of the record and increasing the total since the start of the pandemic to 22.3 million.

India has been hit hard by a second Covid-19 wave with cases and deaths hitting record highs every other day. With an acute shortage of oxygen and beds in many hospitals and morgues and crematoriums overflowing, experts have said the actual numbers for Covid-19 cases and fatalities could be far higher.

Many Indian states have imposed strict lockdowns over the past month to stem the surge in infections while others have announced restrictions on public movement and shut down cinemas, restaurants, pubs and shopping malls.

On Sunday, India’s national capital New Delhi and the

northern state of Uttar Pradesh extended their lockdown and curfew rules till May 17.

But pressure is mounting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to announce a nationwide lockdown similar to the one imposed during the first wave last year.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), the umbrella body for all conventional doctors and surgeons, called for a “complete, well-planned, pre-announced” lockdown across the country instead of “sporadic” night curfews and restrictions imposed by states for a few days at a time.

“IMA is astonished to see the extreme lethargy and inappropriate actions from the ministry of health in combating the agonising crisis born out of the devastating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic,” it said in a statement on Saturday.

Modi has already been battling criticism for allowing a huge gathering at a religious festival and holding large election rallies over the past two months even though Covid-19 cases were surging. — Reuters



A medical worker inoculates a man with a dose of the Covaxin vaccine against the coronavirus at a vaccination centre in Mumbai. — AFP

Third arrest in manhunt after Maldives bomb attack

MALE: A third man has been arrested following the attempted assassination of Maldives’ former president Mohamed Nasheed, police said on Sunday, as they renewed an appeal for more information about another suspect.

The democracy pioneer and climate activist was seriously hurt after a bomb attack in the capital Male on Thursday night that also injured a British national and two others, which police have blamed on “religious extremists”.

“We can confirm that a third individual has been arrested in connection with the May 6 attack early today,” police said in a



Soldiers secure a site after a bomb blast injured former Maldives president and current parliament speaker Mohamed Nasheed in Male last week. — AFP

statement.

No further details about the man were released.

Police also appealed for more information about another man seen in the area where a motorcycle that the bomb had been rigged to was parked.

The owner of the motorcycle as well as another man were arrested on Saturday.

The bomb detonated as Nasheed walked to his car.

Family members tweeted that the 53-year-old ex-president, now the parliament’s speaker, remained in the intensive care unit of a hospital.

But he was able to speak to

close relatives on Saturday after no longer needing life support, they added. There was no immediate update on his condition from the hospital.

Nasheed underwent 16 hours of surgery to remove shrapnel from his body and doctors said one shard narrowly missed his heart.

There has been no claim of responsibility for the attack, but officials from Nasheed’s Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) have alleged that religious extremists and political interests could be involved.

The Indian Ocean archipelago of 340,000 people is Muslim majority and in October 2019

police arrested a suspected IS recruiter accused of sending dozens of Maldivians to Syria.

The same man was accused of setting off a homemade bomb that wounded 12 Chinese tourists in Male in September 2007.

Nasheed ended decades of one-party rule in the Maldives and became its first democratically-elected president in 2008, only to be toppled in a military-backed coup in 2012.

He is known internationally as a champion in the fight against climate change and rising sea levels that he says threaten to submerge the nation of 1,192 coral islands. — AFP

COLOMBO

Lanka approves Pfizer vaccine for emergency use

Sri Lanka approved Pfizer’s Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use in Sri Lanka, as the island nation battles a third wave of the virus, while suffering a restricted supply of vaccines from India.

Dr Sudharshani Fernandopulle, the minister overseeing the fight against the epidemic, said in a statement the government would order 5 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

Sri Lanka is seeking to secure other vaccines as the Serum In-



stitute of India, the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer, has suspended the delivery of AstraZeneca’s Covishield vaccine due to spiralling coronavirus infections in India. — Reuters

MEDAN

Indonesia’s Sinabung volcano erupts

Indonesia’s Mount Sinabung erupted, spewing a massive column of smoke and ash up to 2,800 metres into the sky. The volcano in North Sumatra province started belching ash and volcanic material at 9 am and the eruption lasted almost six minutes, a local geological agency said. Images showed a thick column of ash spewing from the inside of Sinabung towards the east. No evacuation orders have been issued, and there has been no reported flight disruption.



Authorities have instructed residents to avoid a five-kilometre radius around the crater, a zone that has been left unoccupied for years as volcanic activity increased. — AFP

MANILA

Philippines receives biggest delivery of vaccines

The Philippines received the single biggest delivery of Covid-19 vaccines from the World Health Organization’s Covax facility, officials said.

A total of 2,030,400 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were delivered to Manila from the Netherlands, according to the national taskforce on the coronavirus pandemic. “These 2 million doses represent a lifeline for so many Filipinos who have been waiting for relief from the suffering and the fear that this virus



has brought upon all of us,” UN Philippines Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez said.

“Looking at these vials, I see hope and relief for Filipinos who need it most,” he added. — dpa

In brief

■ LONDON



LABOUR'S SADIQ KHAN RE-ELECTED AS LONDON MAYOR

Labour politician Sadiq Khan won re-election as London mayor on Saturday in a narrower than expected victory over Conservative rival Shaun Bailey. Khan became the first Muslim mayor of a Western capital when first elected in 2016.

He won a second term with just over 1.2 million votes, who gained 977,601 votes in Thursday's poll. Turnout was lower than at the previous election, at 42 per cent. The 50-year-old politician's victory was one of the bright spots for the main opposition Labour party after a largely desultory showing in local elections on Thursday. — AFP

■ BRUSSELS



THOUSANDS CELEBRATE END OF CURFEW IN BRUSSELS

Thousands of young people were celebrating the end of nightly curfews in Brussels on Saturday night — until police showed up in the early hours of Sunday to clear out two squares. Belgian media reported that a flashmob had been called for on social media at the popular Flagey square in the Ixelles quarter. People turned out in droves to Flagey and the nearby Sainte-Croix square.

They crowded close together, and many of them weren't wearing masks.

Police initially observed the celebrations for several hours, spokesman Olivier Slosse told the Belga news agency. — dpa

■ BERLIN



GERMANY'S SPD COME OUT SWINGING AT PARTY CONFERENCE

Germany's Social Democrats (SPD) came out swinging against their conservative coalition partners in government as a party conference to pick their chancellor candidate began on Sunday.

Lars Klingbeil, secretary-general of the SPD, described Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives as beset by brutal power struggles and a new scandal every week, as well as criticised their choice for chancellor, Armin Laschet, as cowardly and already defeated.

"It is empty in terms of content, and it is good for Germany if these conservatives no longer bear responsibility," Klingbeil said. — dpa

Scotland vote sets up new clash with London



Scotland's First Minister and leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), Nicola Sturgeon congratulates SNP candidate Kaukab Stewart after she was elected MSP for Glasgow Kelvin in the Scottish Parliamentary Election in Glasgow. — AFP

to lead to a legal wrangle in the Supreme Court, as could happen if Westminster blocked it and the Scottish parliament passed its own legislation.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said the 2014 referendum where 55 per cent voted "no" should be a once in a generation event.

Johnson said on Saturday that the SNP's aim of a second referendum was "irresponsible and reckless" while he wrote a



Westminster now has 'no democratic justification' to deny a second independence referendum

NICOLA STURGEON

SNP leader

public letter to Sturgeon asking her to "work together" in "Team UK."

Sturgeon told the BBC that she thought the UK government ultimately would not stand against the referendum because this would come across as disrespectful of Scots' democratic rights.

"It would mean that the Conservative government had refused to respect the democratic wishes of the

Scottish people," she said.

"I think it is an understatement to say that that wouldn't play well."

On Sunday, senior UK minister Michael Gove sought to downplay the brewing conflict.

He insisted in comments to the BBC that for all UK leaders including Sturgeon the priority is recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and claimed the country did not have time now for a "protracted conversation about the Constitution."

Gove also argued that the fact that the SNP do not have an outright majority in the devolved parliament — as they did before the first referendum in 2014 — made a "significant difference."

Asked whether Scotland was allowed to leave the UK, however, he said: "Of course it is... through a legal referendum which would allow people to make that choice."

With the Scottish Greens also backing a referendum, Holyrood now has a stronger majority of pro-independence politicians than before, with 72 seats out of 129.

"The immediate problem is that the Conservative government at Westminster will say no in the short term," Dr Lynn Bennie, a reader in politics at the University of Aberdeen, said. The UK government has the remit to grant or refuse a referendum despite the debate about democratic rights, she stressed. — AFP

Putin on WWII Victory Day vows to 'firmly' defend Russian interests



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with veterans after the Victory Day military parade in Moscow. — AFP

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Sunday vowed Russia will "firmly" defend national interests and denounced the return of "Russophobia", as the country marked the 76th anniversary of victory in World War II.

His speech to thousands of soldiers and veterans on Red Square came as recent tensions between Moscow and the West have recalled the Cold War over the conflict in Ukraine and a litany of spy scandals in Europe.

"The Soviet people kept their sacred oath, defended the homeland and freed the countries of Europe from the black plague," Putin told the crowd. "Russia consistently defends international law. At the same time, we will firmly defend our national interests to ensure

Over 12,000 military personnel took part in the parade, as well as some 190 pieces of military equipment and 76 fighter jets and helicopters

the safety of our people," he said.

The Russian leader also condemned what he called a creeping return of ideologies of the time, when "slogans of racial and national superiority, of anti-semitism and Russophobia, became ever more cynical".

His speech came at the start of an annual parade that sees military hardware roll through the streets of Moscow.

More than 12,000 military

personnel took part in Sunday's parade, as well as some 190 pieces of military equipment and 76 fighter jets and helicopters.

Victory Day parades, which only became an annual event after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and have taken on increasing importance in projecting Russia's renewed military might during Putin's two decades in power, also took place on Sunday in dozens of cities across the nation.

A survey this week by state-run pollster VTsIOM showed that 69 per cent of Russians view Victory Day as the most important holiday on the calendar.

A third of respondents said they would take part in the celebrations, while a fifth said they would watch on television. — AFP

Spain ends Covid state of emergency

MADRID: Spain has lifted a state of emergency in place since October to fight the pandemic, allowing Spaniards to travel between regions for the first time in months.

"It's like New Year's," said 28-year-old Oriol Corbella in Barcelona, where the lifting of the curfew was met with shouts, applause and music. "We're getting a bit of normality back, of freedom, but we have to keep in mind that the virus is still around," he added.

"I was fed up with not being able to get out of Madrid," jewellery designer Blaca Valls said on Saturday, echoing the relief of many in the country over the easing of restrictions.

"I felt frustrated, locked down, with no freedom," added the 46-year-old who plans to go to Galicia, in northwest Spain, next weekend to celebrate a birthday.

Fellow Madrid resident Laura, who did not wish

to share her last name, was teary-eyed on Sunday as she waited at the Atocha train station for family members travelling from the central region of Castilla-La Mancha.

"It's been eight months since we've seen them and this is all very emotional," said the 45-year-old.

Although the emergency measure, which expired at midnight will lead to more freedoms, it is a headache for the country's 17 regional governments responsible for healthcare.

The state of emergency provided them with a legal framework to impose measures — such as nighttime curfews or a ban on non-essential travel between regions — that limited freedoms.

Except for a few days over Christmas when the restrictions were lifted, people have not been able to travel to other regions, go on holiday, or see family.

— AFP



Police officers patrol the beach of Barceloneta, as the state of alarm decreed by the Spanish Government to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease ends in Barcelona. — Reuters

Curtains fall on month of happiness...

People always seek out for what they believe it brings happiness. Mostly they chase thrills and chills, things and events as well as direct satisfaction and enjoyment to live moments of happiness. Despite all these are fun-making aspects, they bring short-lived moments and emotions of delight. Therefore, to guarantee a real happiness, one must be true to oneself, honest with those around and treat others fairly.

Generally, getting a real source of happiness comes by having an inner peace. If one's mind is peaceful, s/he shall be happy all the time, regardless of external circumstances. However, if the mind is disturbed or troubled in a way or another, one shall never be happy, no matter how good the external conditions may be. Having a peaceful mind is what mostly makes make people happy and this could be understood through experience!

Case in a point, the moment you get angry you lose your sense of happiness you may have even if you live a beautiful surrounding, enjoying everything you need. This usually happens because of anger, which destroys one's peace of mind. It has been attributed that the only way through which one can sustain inner peace is by training the mind and body through different spiritual practices. Hence Ramadan marks an ideal season to develop and strengthen one's inner peace.

For Muslims, Ramadhan gives them various ways to work on



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RAMADHAN IS THE MONTH IN WHICH THE QURAN WAS REVEALED AS A GUIDANCE FOR HUMANITY AND AS A CLEAR PROOF OF THAT GUIDANCE

recovering their inner peace. Fasting, ritual prayers, recitation of the Holy Quran and Remembrance of Allah throughout the month of fasting are just to name a few opportunities. Actually, Ramadhan brings happiness, goodness, spiritual enlightenment, rewards, and physical and spiritual benefits to all Muslims. That is why most Muslims become more self-controlled and compassionate during Ramadhan.

Another way of building on Muslims' inner peace is the different feelings of emotional excitement and religious enthusiasm that Ramadhan brings among Muslims of all ages. From the way of welcoming this month, Muslims look forward to the excitement of sighting the moon and start fasting. Also, they get stimulated to gather with their families and loved ones for breaking the fast. Moreover, they appreciate the opportunity to double their rewards from the Almighty Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins.

Further, Ramadhan renews Muslims enthusiasm for worship and devotion to Allah. While fasting, they become more serious and careful of their daily prayers and other rituals. Being the month of blessings and double rewards, Muslims, in this month, strengthen and deepen their religious life and relation with Allah.

The first 10 days of Ramadhan are of mercy, second 10 days are of forgiveness and the last 10 days are of being freed from Hell. Ramadhan is a

month in which mercy and blessings of Allah descend continuously upon Muslims.

Likewise, Ramadhan stands as the time of renewing contact with the Holy Quran as both are linked from the beginning. In this month, the Quran was revealed as a guidance to Muslims. As stated in the verse, "The month of Ramadhan is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guidance for humanity, as a clear proof of that guidance, and as a criterion for distinguishing between right and wrong".

Many regard Ramadhan as the time of character-building, where Muslims can find themselves again and bring themselves closer to Allah. Throughout a full month of fasting, Muslims have to change their physical and emotional characters.

They tend to be more obedient worshipers, striving to change for a better person. Ramadhan is the spring season for goodness and virtues when righteousness blossoms throughout Muslim communities. It offers every Muslim an opportunity to strengthen his belief, purify his heart and soul and to remove the evil effects of the committed sins.

Most importantly, the rewards for good deeds are multiplied manifold during Ramadhan. Thus, it is the month that Muslims await with eagerness. Whenever the month of Ramadhan approaches, happiness and joy return to all Muslims worldwide for it brings the greatest gifts of Allah.

TRUMP LOOMS LARGE

Republicans are preparing for 2024 campaign

ADAM WOLLNER & MCCLATCHY

Just six months after the last presidential election, ambitious Republicans are already busy laying the groundwork for the next one, visiting key states and hitting the fundraising circuit. It could all be for nothing if former president Donald Trump decides to run again.

Without him in the picture, Republicans expect a free-for-all 2024 primary race that will draw candidates from across the country, ranging from senators to governors to former Trump administration officials.

But Trump, who has maintained a firm grip on the GOP base since leaving office, could ruin other Republican presidential aspirants' carefully laid plans in an instant, likely leaving them with a much narrower path forward if he chooses to launch another White House campaign.

"You have to assume he's not going to run again. And if he does, you reassess at that time. Lay the groundwork now, but if he does run, your plans will likely be delayed for four years."



You have to assume he's not going to run again. And if he does, you reassess at that time. Lay the groundwork now, but if he does run, your plans will likely be delayed for four years

ALEX CONANT
A GOP consultant

It's a unique scenario for the GOP. Defeated presidents and party nominees usually fade into the background after an election, clearing the way for the next wave of leaders. But Trump has stayed in the mix, setting up his own political operation and saying that he will decide whether to run for president again after the 2022 midterm elections.

In an interview with the conservative media outlet Daily Wire last Tuesday, Trump said his supporters would be "very, very happy" when he eventually makes his announcement.

In the meantime, his fellow Republican hopefuls are moving ahead. Party operatives and officials in the three states that kick-off the nomination process — Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina — say they are seeing an early uptick in visits from national Republican figures who don't want to be caught flat-footed if Trump decides against running.

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Florida Senator Rick Scott, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee; and South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, who delivered the official GOP response to President Joe Biden's congressional address last week, have all visited Iowa this year. Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley and Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton are both scheduled to travel to the first caucus state in June.

Cotton and Pompeo have also recently spoken to virtual gatherings of Republicans in New Hampshire. And former Vice-President Mike Pence, after delivering a speech last week in South Carolina, announced plans to travel to New Hampshire next month.

"I think you have to just proceed as you would normally in an open field of Republicans and not let Donald Trump's presence or decision really impact what you're doing," said Craig Robinson, a former political director for the Iowa Republican Party. — dpa

GOING BACKWARDS

Soul-searching for UK's Labour after Johnson triumphs

JITENDRA JOSHI

The "bitterly disappointing" election defeat of Britain's Labour party has reopened internecine fighting as the centre-left opposition struggles to dent the vaccine-boosted appeal of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives.

Results so far from "Super Thursday" regional and local polls indicated the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit have remade the normal rules of politics, with the centre-right government building on its triumph from the 2019 general election.

Labour leader Keir Starmer took over a year ago after the party under hard-left predecessor Jeremy Corbyn crashed to its worst result since 1935, and has faced the near-impossible task of opposing Johnson during a national emergency.

Starmer on Friday conceded the results in the Labour heartland seat of Hartlepool and other races around England were "bitterly disappointing", and vowed to do "whatever is necessary" to rebuild trust in the party.

But he refused to say whether he would now shake up his front-bench team or sharpen his messaging.

"This goes way beyond a reshuffle or personalities, it's about focusing the Labour party on the country and making sure that we close the gap between the Labour party and working people,"



Opposition Labour party leader Keir Starmer and partner Victoria walk to vote in their polling station in local elections in London on last Thursday. — AFP

LABOUR LEADER KEIR STARMER TOOK OVER A YEAR AGO AFTER THE PARTY UNDER HARD-LEFT PREDECESSOR JEREMY CORBYN CRASHED TO ITS WORST RESULT SINCE 1935

he said.

Starmer has struggled to break through when the public has wanted a sense of common purpose during the pandemic, and the elections came just as a new mood of optimism is swelling thanks to Europe's most successful inoculation campaign.

More fundamentally, Britain's 2016 referendum on EU membership eroded old party loyalties, and continues to bring the Tories unprecedented success in areas such as Hartlepool. The

constituency in the rust-belt port in northeast England, which was strongly pro-Brexit, voted for a Conservative MP on Thursday for the first time since its creation in 1974.

"Labour have taken people in Hartlepool for granted for too long," Conservative candidate Jill Mortimer said. Polling expert John Curtice said in "Leave" areas where the last local elections were held in 2016, the swing from Labour to Conservative was averaging 12 points. — AFP



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka poses with her trophy after beating Australia's Ashleigh Barty in Madrid. – AFP

Sabalenka shocks Barty in Madrid

MADRID: Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka stunned world number one Ashleigh Barty to win the Madrid Open for the first time on Saturday and put her success down to losing her fear of playing on clay. Sabalenka was beaten by Barty in the final in Stuttgart last month but exacted revenge at the Caja Magica, a storming 6-0, 3-6, 6-4 victory clinching the biggest title of her career.

The 23-year-old has never gone past the fourth round at a Grand Slam but on this evidence, she will be among the contenders at the French Open, which starts in Paris later this month.

"She takes the racket out of my hand when she serves the way she did in the first set," Barty said.

"I guarantee it won't be the last time that it happens. I'll continue to fight and try to find a way back in each and every time."

This was Sabalenka's 10th career title but her first on clay and it will see her rise to number four in the world rankings on Monday.

"Before I was too much thinking about clay, that this surface is not for me, that it's really tough to play, it's about long rallies," said Sabalenka.

"Something changed in my mind this year. I'm not really



scared of this surface anymore." Barty was the heavy favourite heading into the final, especially after beating Sabalenka in Stuttgart last month, also on clay, in a match that also went to three sets. The Australian appeared to

have recovered from a chastening opening set, after levelling up in the second and then leading 4-3, 30-15 on Sabalenka's serve in the decider. But her opponent never gave in and produced a brilliant finish by

winning the last 11 consecutive points to hand Barty her first defeat on red clay since 2019 in Rome. "To be honest after the final in Stuttgart, I was injured, I couldn't move and wanted to withdraw," Sabalenka said on court afterwards.

"But the recovery was good, in four days I feel better and now I'm the champion. It's been an amazing week." Barty will still be one of the favourites at Roland Garros, where the Australian won her first Grand

Something changed in my mind this year. I'm not really scared of this surface anymore

ARYNA SABALENKA
World No 5

Slam title in 2019. Her route to the final in Madrid included beating reigning French Open champion Iga Swiatek in the round of 16. After losing the second set 6-0 in Stuttgart, Sabalenka took some revenge by delivering the same punishment to Barty, in a whirlwind opening frame. Barty was blown away by her opponent's relentless hitting from the back, especially off the forehand wing, as three breaks sealed the set for Sabalenka, who conceded only four points on serve. But Barty finally gained a foothold with a break in the first game of the second, a Sabalenka backhand floating long to shift the momentum in her favour. — AFP

Zverev books Berrettini clash in Madrid Open final

MADRID: Alexander Zverev avenged his defeat by Dominic Thiem in last year's US Open final in clinical fashion on Saturday, beating the Austrian 6-3, 6-4 to reach the final of the Madrid Open. Zverev, who beat top seed and tournament favourite Rafael Nadal in straight sets in the quarterfinals on Friday, will meet Matteo Berrettini in Sunday's final after the Italian beat Norway's Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-4 in the second semifinal. Germany's Zverev, who was champion in Madrid in 2018, made a strong start, breaking Thiem early in each set in what turned out to be a routine victory, despite a swirling

wind at Caja Magica. "I'm quite happy to win this one," fifth seed Zverev said in a courtside interview. "We've had some fantastic matches. I think we played the biggest matches in the world. "We've played Masters finals, Grand Slam finals, we're still developing, we're going to go on for a few more years and hopefully we'll play a few more amazing matches. "I'm definitely looking forward to playing in another big (Grand Slam) final and I hope I can turn it my way this time." Thiem held an 8-2 head-to-head



Italy's Matteo Berrettini (L) and Germany's Alexander Zverev celebrating points in Madrid. – AFP

advantage over Zverev coming into the semifinal, winning their last four meetings, including his come-from-behind victory at last year's US Open where he claimed his first major title. The third seed's only defeat to Zverev on clay was in the final in Madrid two years ago, but he never really settled into his stride on Saturday, struggling with his first serve and making 20 unforced errors, including three double faults. Zverev, on the other hand, sent down six aces and 25 winners as he cruised to victory. "It was a little bit of a weirder

match than against Rafa," the German added. "I feel like the conditions were difficult. It was clearly windy today. Sometimes (that's) not easy but I'm definitely happy with the win." Eighth seed Berrettini, who has dropped only one set in the tournament, will be aiming to win his maiden ATP Masters 1000 title against Zverev on Sunday. "I saw him (Zverev), he's playing really good," said Berrettini, who sent down five aces against Ruud. "He beat Rafa (Nadal) and Dominic (Thiem), probably the best players on clay. It's going to be a challenging match." — Reuters

In brief

CHRISTCHURCH



NZ'S BOULT, NEESHAM ARRIVE IN AUCKLAND

New Zealand players including Trent Boult and Jimmy Neesham were among a first group to return to the country from the Indian Premier League on Saturday after the series was abruptly suspended, *NZ Herald* reported. Boult and Neesham were joined on a charter flight to Auckland by their Mumbai Indians team mate Adam Milne plus Royal Challengers Bangalore duo of Finn Allen and Scott Kuggeleijn, the report said.

RCB's Director of Cricket Operation Mike Hesson was also part of the group along with James Pamment and Shane Bond who have coaching and management roles in the IPL.

LONDON



ARTETA SAYS ARSENAL SQUAD NEEDS CHANGES

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said the north London club needed changes in the squad to turn their fortunes around after a disappointing season, and added that he was confident the club owners would back him. Arsenal were knocked out of the second-tier Europa League on Thursday and sit 10th in the Premier League, facing the prospect of no European football for the first time in 25 years. "The squad needs changing," the Spaniard said. "There were already a lot of changes in December, something that has not been done in years, but it tells us where we were."

MILAN



FIVE-GOAL INTER CELEBRATE WITH 14TH STRAIGHT WIN

With thousands of fans celebrating outside the San Siro stadium and a guard of honour onto the pitch, Inter Milan celebrated their first Serie A title in over a decade with a 5-1 victory over Sampdoria giving Antonio Conte's side a record 14th successive home win. Saturday's match took place behind closed doors because of coronavirus restrictions but thousands of 'Nerazzurri' supporters celebrated outside the San Siro.

"The satisfaction is immense," said Conte.

"It's natural that we and our fans are now so desperate to celebrate something that we'd been waiting for so long to do."

"We're happy to bring this joy to them."

NO SPECTATORS WERE PRESENT IN THE OLYMPIC MAIN VENUE

Tokyo's Olympic Stadium holds test event



Justin Gatlin of the US wins the men's 100m final at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games test event. — Reuters

TOKYO: Hundreds of athletes, including US sprinter Justin Gatlin, participated in a test event at the Olympic Stadium on Sunday, as organisers fine-tuned operations and Covid-19 countermeasures with under three months to go before the Tokyo Games.

No spectators were present in the stadium, where the Games' opening and closing ceremonies will be held, as Tokyo remains under a state of emergency to tame a rise in coronavirus infections.

Sunday's event, involving 420 athletes, including nine who came from abroad to participate, was

split into morning and evening sessions with 2004 Olympic gold medallist Gatlin on the start list for the 100 metres in the evening.

Despite the state of emergency, organisers have operated more than 11 test events since last month with no reported coronavirus cases resulting from them.

Four of those of events — volleyball, diving, marathon and Sunday's athletics — included athletes from abroad.

Opinion surveys have shown that most Japanese oppose holding the Games this summer due to worries about the pandemic.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe sought to ease those worries.

"We are very empathetic to the need to be fully recognising that communities around the world are inevitably nervous about many things related to Covid," he told a news conference at the stadium.

"We take those concerns very, very seriously. The Covid protocols, particularly that World Athletics have developed over the last year and a half by our health and science teams who are extremely good at this, have consistently helped deliver events

in a safe and secure environment."

Many athletes have said they want the Games to go forward.

"People are really worried about people coming from overseas as coronavirus variants are spreading, but as an athlete I want the Olympics to be held with people from various countries running," said Suzuha Kobari, after participating in the women's 100 metres in the morning session.

Japanese rhythmic gymnast Nanami Takenaka said at a separate test event the previous day that she understood there were opposing views, but that gave

her team an extra reason to bring cheer through their performances.

"We'll focus on the things that we can do and when the Olympics are held, we want to give our best performance so that people can smile and feel glad they took place," she said.

Sunday's morning session also included the men's shot put, the women's triple jump and the women's 200 metres.

The evening session is to include several events including finals for the pole vault, high jump, javelin and the men's 100 metres. — Reuters

Hamilton ecstatic after 100th pole

BARCELONA: Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton became the first Formula One driver to take 100 pole positions after lapping fastest for Mercedes in Spanish Grand Prix qualifying on Saturday.

The 36-year-old was already way ahead of the rest in the record books, with retired Ferrari great and fellow seven-time champion Michael Schumacher second on the all-time list of polesitters with 68.

The Briton whooped with delight over the team radio as his engineer told him the news.

"I feel very humble, very grateful. I'm ecstatic, like it's my first," said Hamilton after the session at Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen joined the championship-leading Briton, who has an eight-point lead after three races, on the front row with a time 0.036 seconds slower and another wheel-to-wheel duel looming on Sunday.

Valtteri Bottas qualified third for Mercedes, a week after the Finn took pole in Portugal.

Hamilton's pole continued a remarkable run of Mercedes domination, with the champions taking the top slot in every race at the Spanish circuit since now-retired Nico Rosberg began the sequence in 2013.

"I can't believe we're at 100 and really it's down to the men and women back at the factory who are continuously raising the bar and just never giving up," said Hamilton, who will be chasing a record-extending 98th career win on Sunday.

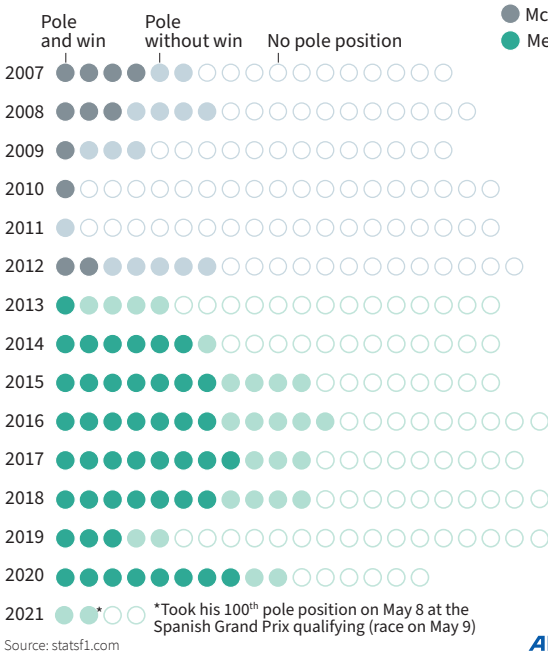
"The support that I have, it's been a dream for me to work with these guys, and the journey that we've been on has been immense."

Only five constructors in the 71-year history of the sport have racked up 100 poles or more, and Hamilton's milestone puts him far ahead even of Red Bull, who as a team have so far managed 64.

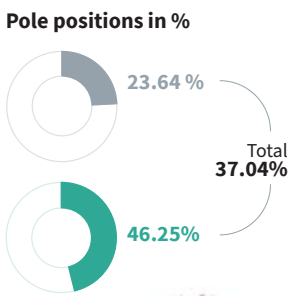
SHOULDER PAIN

Hamilton, who took his first pole with

Lewis Hamilton, 100 pole positions in 15 seasons



Source: stats1.com



I can't believe we're at 100 and really it's down to the men and women back at the factory who are continuously raising the bar and just never giving up

LEWIS HAMILTON
British F1 driver

McLaren in 2007, had set the fastest time of one minute 16.741 seconds with his first flying lap of the final phase and was unable to improve on it with his second.

It had looked like he had been slowed by Mexican Sergio Perez spinning his Red Bull ahead but there were no yellow warning flags.

Perez told reporters afterwards that

he had been struggling with pain in his left shoulder that became worse as the session, delayed 10 minutes for marshals to fix barriers, wore on.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc qualified fourth with Esteban Ocon fifth on the grid for Alpine ahead of Ferrari's Spaniard Carlos Sainz.

Australian Daniel Ricciardo will line up seventh for McLaren, one place ahead of Perez, with McLaren's Lando Norris qualifying ninth and Spaniard Fernando Alonso 10th for Alpine.

Norris had been fastest in the first phase of qualifying, with Verstappen on top in the second part with a stunning 1:16.922 lap.

Hamilton meanwhile made small adjustments to find more pace and getting the "lazy" car to turn as he wanted before the final shootout.

"It's quite gusty around here so the wind changes a lot," said Verstappen. "But nevertheless, I think second for us here on this track was very good today. We know they are hard to beat around here but to be that close, I can be happy." — Reuters

Zimbabwe follow-on after all out for 132



HARARE: Pakistan enforced the follow on after bowling hosts Zimbabwe out for 132 on the third day of the second and final Test at Harare Sports Club on Sunday.

Pakistan, seeking to complete a sweep of the two-match series, had a first-innings led by 378.

Fast bowler Hasan Ali continued his mastery over Zimbabwe's batsmen with a career-best five for 27 as Zimbabwe lost six wickets for 80 runs in an extended morning's play.

The lunch interval was delayed because Zimbabwe were nine down at the scheduled break. Last-wicket pair Richard Ngarava and Blessing Muzarabani added 22 runs before Muzarabani was run out.

Hasan, man of the match after taking nine for 89 as Pakistan won the first Test by an innings and 116 runs at the same venue, gave another impeccable display of controlled fast bowling.

He struck with the fourth ball of the day after Zimbabwe resumed on 52 for four, having Tendai Chisoro caught at second slip.

He followed up by removing top-scorer Regis Chakabva, caught at first slip for 33, before bowling Luke Jongwe in a spell of three for 14 in six overs. Hasan came back later to have injured batsman Roy Kaia caught at gully.

Kaia, who hurt his left knee fielding at short leg on Friday, came out to bat at number nine. Although restricted in his movements he defied the Pakistan bowlers for 52 balls in scoring 11.

With a rare attacking shot, Kaia struck Abid Ali, fielding at short leg, on the left elbow. Abid, who inflicted the injury on Kaia while making a double century in Pakistan's innings, was forced to leave the field. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES:

Pakistan, first innings, 510-8 declared
Zimbabwe, first innings, 132 (R. Chakabva 33; Hasan Ali 5-27, Sajid Khan 2-39).

CHELSEA DELAY CITY TITLE PARTY



Chelsea's Timo Werner in action with Manchester City's Aymeric Laporte. – Reuters

ANDY JALEEL
MANCHESTER, MAY 9

This match was being viewed as a 'dress rehearsal' of the Champions League final between the two sides at the end of this month. Chelsea's 2-1 win just three weeks after defeating the same opponents in the FA Cup will be an enormous confidence booster while Manchester City must feel the enormity of their task that lay ahead in Europe's showpiece final in three weeks' time.

The defeat left City on 80 points with three games left, 13 ahead of Manchester United who have five to play. They could still secure the title this weekend if United lose at Aston Villa on Sunday.

Thrilling as the game was, City felt that the controversial decision on a second penalty had a bearing on the match. City claimed a late penalty when Raheem Sterling looked to have drawn a foul out of Kurt Zouma's tackle but the referee waved play on.

City manager, Pep Guardiola, convinced it was a penalty, said: "It's a penalty. That's all. I saw it on TV it was a penalty. We missed the first. The second was not given. It happens, it's football."

Guardiola added: "Congratulations to Chelsea for the victory."

And referring to the Champions League final he said: "We'll see about the impact on our confidence, but we have 20 days until the final. It's a different competition so we'll analyse this game, and then play the game. It's a dream come true for us. Chelsea have been there many times, but this is our first time. We are going to approach it in the best possible way."

City took the lead on the stroke of half-time. Sergio Aguero mis-controlled the cross from Gabriel Jesus but Sterling, who was at the Argentine's shoulder, slammed the ball into the net. Then in added time to the first half, again receiving a pass from Jesus, Aguero was pushed in the back by Billy Gilmour and was awarded a penalty. Aguero decided on a terrible shot, a Panenka-style dink, which Edouard Mendy saved with one hand.

Chelsea were brilliant in the

“It was a tactical match, we never stopped attacking. Congratulations to the team for the second half”

THOMAS TUCHEL
Chelsea manager

second half and drew level in the 63rd minute when Rodri lost possession. Christian Pulisic picked up the ball and fed Cesar Azpilicueta on the right. The Chelsea captain in turn passed to Hakim Ziyech whose low finish went into the corner.

Three minutes before normal time, Zouma tried to intercept a pass to Sterling and in attempting he put so much pressure on Sterling that the City striker went tumbling and that was the controversial penalty that was not given. City thought that robbed them of a goal to the absolute fury of Guardiola who displayed his rage at the touchline.

To make matters worse for him, two minutes into added time, Timo Werner, who earlier had two disallowed goals for apparently narrowly off side, crossed into the box from the right. Callum Hudson-Odoi and Marcos Alonso both went for it with the latter getting his shot over Ederson in the goal and that was the winner.

Chelsea manager, Thomas Tuchel praised his team: "What a performance in the second half. In the last five minutes of first half, we almost gave it away. It was a tactical match, we never stopped attacking. Congratulations to the team for the second half."

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS ON SATURDAY:

Leeds 3 (Dallas 13, Bamford 42, Rodrigo 84) Tottenham 1 (Son 25)
Liverpool 2 (Mane 31, Thiago 90)
Southampton 0
Manchester City 1 (Sterling 44)
Chelsea 2 (Ziyech 63, Alonso 90+3)
Sheffield United 0 Crystal Palace 2 (Benteke 2, Eze 88)

Oman national teams set for busy schedule in May

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAY 9

The Oman national football team players are set for busy month of May as the team will travel to Dubai on May 16 to complete the second part of the overseas camp. The Sultanate's Olympic (U-23) team will head off to Bahrain for external preparatory camp from May 20 to June 9 while the national beach soccer team will begin a warm-up camp in Morocco from May 11. The national teams' directorate at Oman Football Association (OFA) had approved the plans set by the technical staff for better preparations for the forthcoming international and regional assignments.

The 'Red Warriors' will begin their warm-up for the remaining three matches of the joint qualification of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup Championship through Dubai camp as the qualifier will be held in Doha next June.

Dubai camp will feature two friendly matches, against Thailand and Indonesia on May 25 and 29 respectively. The last preparatory



gathering of the team will be scheduled in Doha prior the kick off the World Cup qualifier in few days.

Oman will also take part in the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2021 in December and Arabian Gulf Cup in Iraq.

Head coach Branko Ivankovic recently expressed his satisfaction after conclusion of the first phase of Dubai camp. "All the supporting

tools were available at Dubai camp as we focused on our technical preparations. We had concentrated on the fitness and physical part

during the recently concluded camp in Dubai while the next part will be focused on some tactical sessions," the Croatian coach said.

BEACH SOCCER WORLD CUP

The Oman national beach soccer team will start the first preparatory camp in Morocco from May 11 to gear up for the top assignment in FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021. Two friendly matches are confirmed for the team against Morocco and will take place on May 15 and 16. The next camp will be in Dubai during June and will feature some friendly games.

After an absence of more than two months, the Oman Olympic (U-23) football team will return to training sessions as they will have an overseas camp from May 20 to June 9 in Manama city, Bahrain. The Olympic team will meet Bahrain team in friendly matches on June 5 and 8 as a part of the external warm-up camp. The camp is part of the team's preparation for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers that will take place in October. The finals of the AFC Asian (U-23) will be held in September 2022 in Uzbekistan during September 6 to 25.

ramadhan



Oman and Indonesia share Iftar delicacies

BY KABEER YOUSUF
Twitter: @kabeeryousef

The iftar delicacies from Oman and Indonesia bear a strong resemblance to each other and both carry a tradition of delectable foods that transcend geographical boundaries. Both hold familial iftars close to their traditions and as Islam instructed, iftars are times of enhancing the bonding and cementing the relationships.

The moment of breaking the fast has created a culinary tradition of its own in various communities of Muslims across the world. A varied menu that arouses one's appetite after enduring hunger and thirst all day is, for the majority, a must. Various countries have their unique culinary delights that are a favourite of the people in breaking their fast, including in Indonesia.

Hundreds of types of Indonesian food and drinks have become a favourite menu when breaking the fast for around 220 million Indonesian Muslims in the country.

Just like people from Oman follow, Iftar food for Indonesians usually consists of two types, Takjil and main course. The first one called Takjil is the first one eaten to break the fast. Takjil can be in the form of food or drink or fruit. Takjil food can be easily found in street food carts and five-star hotels.

Just as Arabs and other Asians do, the fruit that is always present in the month of Ramadhan is dates. Dates are not native to Indonesia, so they must be imported, especially from countries like the Sultanate of Oman. However, in the month of Ramadhan, people can easily find this sweet fruit in shops and markets as well as at every iftar event.

"Ramadhan is the month that Muslims always waiting for. Ramadhan is a month of blessing when all Muslims are competing to perform their prayers as well as possible and as much as possible. The month of Ramadhan is also an occasion

when families spend time together more. "We value the most eagerly awaited time with family, relatives and friends are breaking the fast or well known as Iftar," said Reza Abdulrojak, Counsellor, Information and Socio-Cultural Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Muscat.

Apart from dates, some of the most popular Takjil menu foods and drinks throughout the archipelago are as follows:

KOLAK (BANANA STEW)

This sweet dessert menu made from bananas and sweet potatoes boiled in coconut milk is the most typical during Ramadan in Indonesia. Every Ramadan, it is almost certain that at least once a month there is a Kolak on your dining table when breaking the fast.

Kolak is a dessert bowl filled with slices of bananas, sweet potatoes, or pumpkins along with coconut milk mixed with palm sugar and pandan leaves as its soup. Not only has a sweet flavour, but kolak also has a very appetizing smell that came from its pandan leaves.

Kolak can be served in two versions: hot and cold. If you are a fan of cold beverages, feel free to put some ice cubes inside it and if you are in the mood for a hot dessert, go ahead and warm it a little bit. Whether it is hot or cold, kolak will still be a good option to break your fasting.

ES TIMUN SURI (TIMUN SURI MELON AND BLEWAH MELON WITH ICE AND SYRUP)

In addition to Kurma, fruits that are always plentiful during Ramadhan are Timun Suri Melon and Blewah Melon. Es Timun Suri is a phenomenal Ramadhan drink since most people mistakenly think that the fruit grows only during Ramadan. It is not entirely true, since the fruit can actually grow any time of the year, but farmers usually start

planting before Ramadhan to meet the yearly demand.

Timun Suri is shaped like a melon and contains lots of juice. It is usually served with coco pandan syrup or honey. In some parts of the country, people mix it with palm sugar syrup or condensed milk, then pour a little bit of lime juice for a sweet and sour fresh taste.

CANDIL (SWEET DUMPLING IN BROWN SUGAR AND COCONUT MILK PORRIDGE)

These gluten-free, vegan, soft and chewy sweet potato dumplings are served in palm sugar syrup and coconut sauce. This sweet dessert is called Bubur Candil. Bubur means porridge and candil is the sweet dumpling. In some areas, they are called Biji Salak because the shape of the dumpling is similar to the seed found inside snake fruits (Salak). Salak fruit is one of the native fruits of Indonesia.

The Candil ball can be made from glutinous rice flour with a bit of tapioca flour and also can be made from sweet potato and tapioca flour. Other option is using mashed pumpkin, mashed purple sweet potato, or mashed sweet yam.

The foods and drinks mentioned above are some of the most popular specialties of the month of Ramadhan which can be found in almost all of Indonesia. In addition, there are many other types of food and drink popular during Ramadhan. Each of the 34 provinces in Indonesia has a variety of special Ramadhan dishes. Indonesian Iftar desserts are a must following the fast-breaking and before entering for the long prayers.

THE RECIPE FOR BUBUR CANDIL:

Ingredients
For Candil
200 g white glutinous rice flour (tepung ketan)
175 ml warm water

1/2 tsp salt
1kg sweet potato (boil it until boiled then peeled and mashed it) (Optional)
For Porridge
800 ml water
200 g coconut sugar or brown sugar
1 Pandan leaf

Coconut Milk sauce
250 ml thick coconut milk
¼ teaspoon of salt
2 Pandan leaves
25 g rice flour & 25 g white glutinous rice flour (tepung ketan), mix with 50 ml water

STEPS:

Make the balls (candil): mix white glutinous rice, salt and mashed sweet potato (if you don't use sweet potato then you can slowly add water and knead using your hand. Stop adding water when you already can form the mixture into balls.) Shape it like a small ball.

Make the porridge: Boil the water with coconut sugar/brown sugar and pandan leaf. When it's boiling drop the balls into it until the balls are floating to the top of the water level then remove from the heat.

Make the coconut milk sauce: boil the coconut milk together with pandan leaves and salt. When it's boiling pour the mixture of rice flour and white glutinous rice flour then stir it until boiled and turn off the stove. Serve the porridge with coconut milk sauce.

Iftar is one of the important worship in the month of Ramadhan. Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah the Majestic and Exalted said: "Every deed of man will receive ten to 700 times reward, except Siyam (fasting), for it is for Me and I shall reward it (as I like). There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts: one when he breaks the fast and the other when he will meet his Lord" (Muslim)."

QURAN VERSE OF THE DAY

We have given you plenty. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. He who hates you is the loser.

al Kawthar

FATWA QUESTION & ANSWER



HIS EMINENCE
SHAIKH AHMED BIN
HAMAD AL KHALILI
GRAND MUFTI OF OMAN

QUESTION

A person drank water accidentally during Imsak. He realised this during Al Fajr. What should he do?

ANSWER

If he was aware that the period of Imsak has already begun, he should make amends for that slip on the same day.

HADITH A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that he heard the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, saying: "No man accuses another of impiety or disbelief except that it (the accusation) rebounds on him if the one accused is not as he said".



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ramadhan

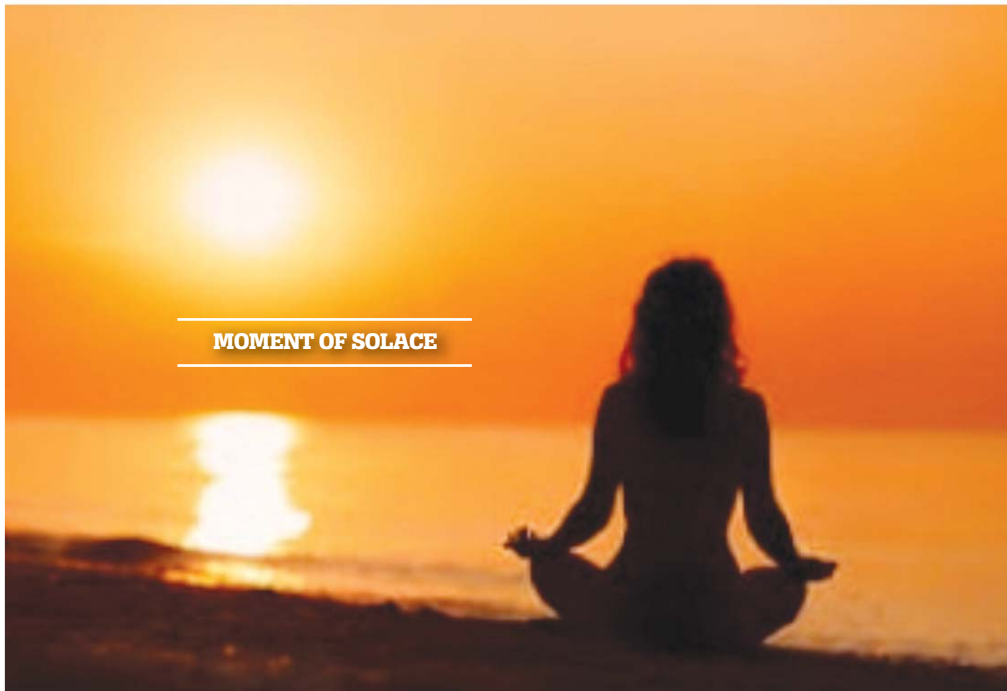
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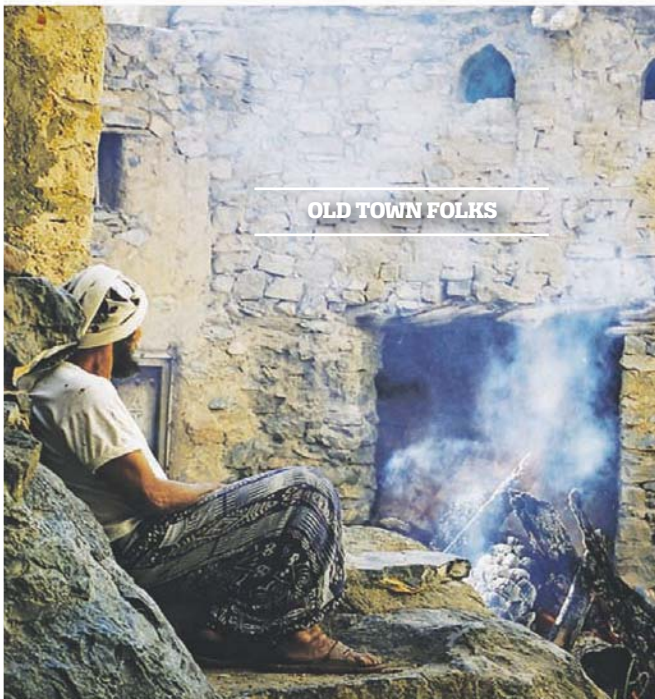
INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



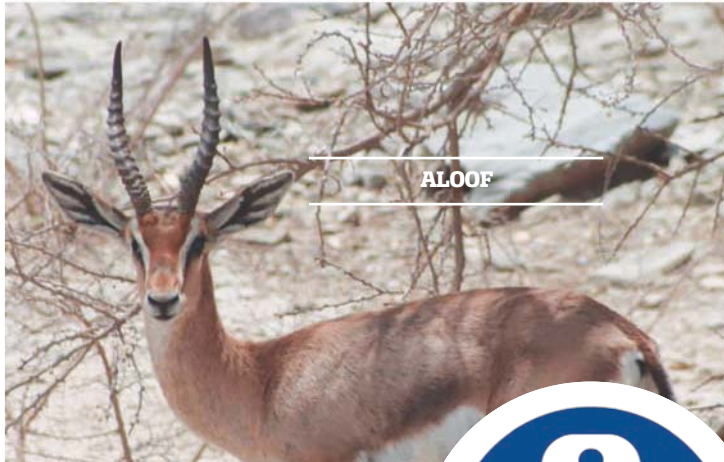
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HUMAN INTEREST



Napoleon's bath meets its Waterloo

ONE OF THE many things Napoleon Bonaparte was famous for was taking long soaks in the bath, during which he read newspapers and held forth to his entourage.

It was a habit he carried over to isolated but relatively comfortable exile, reinforced by his doctor recommending it as therapy for chronic skin rashes.

Now, the copper bathtub he used in Saint-Helena, his remote island prison in the South Atlantic, is being put on show in perhaps the most famous site associated with the French emperor: Waterloo, in Belgium.

There, inside a museum that is part of the Waterloo Memorial commemorating the close defeat of Napoleon's troops in June 1815, it features alongside other exile memorabilia, including indoor garb and billiard balls.

The exhibition, "Napoleon: from Waterloo to Saint-Helena, the birth of the legend", opened on Wednesday and is to run until October.

Letters, games, clothes, tableware and personal items attest to the daily routine Napoleon, once ruler of half of Europe, carried through for the last six years of his life, until his death at age 51.

"This daily life in Saint-Helena was the missing chain between his defeat at Waterloo in 1815 that the whole world knows about and the time of his death," the curator of the exhibition, French historian David Chanteranne, told reporters.

He noted the mystery that still surrounds the cause of Napoleon's death 200 years on, saying the former emperor's body was subjected to five autopsies.

That, he added, was because the English military guarding Saint-Helena wanted to verify the conclusions reached by Napoleon's personal doctor, Francois Antommarchi.

The official verdict was stomach cancer, believed to be the source of the ulcer that long plagued Napoleon.

A LATE GARDENER

But theories blossomed, then as now, that he might have been poisoned or over-medicated for his rashes or intestinal cramping.

His remains today are entombed under a vast golden dome at Les Invalides, in the heart of Paris.

Chanteranne explained that Napoleon, once used to striding across a continent, ended up becoming an artful gardener on Saint-Helena, encouraged by his doctor to get outside and "do exercise".

The gardens around Longwood House, the residence he had on the island, were designed by Napoleon himself. The 16-hectare (40-acre) domain became property of the French government in the middle of the 19th century.

Most of the personal articles exhibited at the Waterloo Memorial come from Longwood House, and several have not been presented elsewhere, the organisers said.

The famous bathtub was used by Napoleon "for between an hour and an hour-and-a-half... each afternoon from 2:00 pm," one of them said.

The water was served "hot, nearly boiling" to treat the rashes, for which mercury ointment and potassium nitrate were also prescribed.

With such a chunk of time spent in the copper tub, Napoleon took to having his entourage stand around him for "endless discussions".

The exhibition also has a pair of silk stockings that Napoleon usually wore, as well as a long white shirt and a soft-leather slipper — all of which he slipped into after emerging from the bath. — **AFP**

CHANGING WORLD

KINGS OF LAGOS: CHILDREN LEARN CHESS TO SEEK ESCAPE FROM NIGERIA'S SLUMS



LAGOS: A dozen children crowd around plastic tables in the Majidun neighbourhood of Lagos. Intently focused on plastic mats printed with chess boards, the children thoughtfully move pieces on the board as supervisors observe their moves.

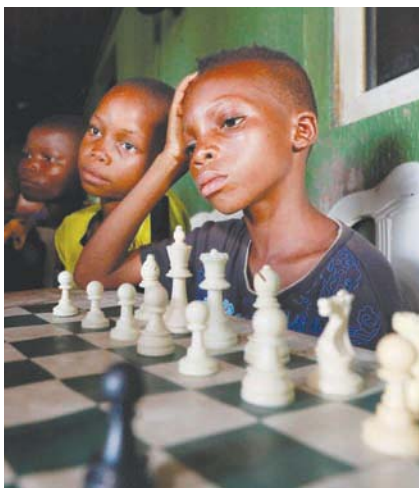
The waterside shanty town is just across the lagoon from the mansions and towering office blocks of Nigeria's commercial capital. They hope the cunning and strategy they learn on the chess board will help them make the leap out of their homes in the slum.

"To live here is hard," said Michael Omoyele, who at 14 has already dealt with food scarcity and worked to feed himself. Inspired by "Queen of Katwe", the 2016 film about a girl who escapes poverty in a Kenyan slum through chess, Omoyele hopes chess will help him, too.

"On the chess board you work hard in order to win, and from winning chess games I believe I can do better in becoming a champion and being wealthy also."

Omoyele practises at home, in a room with watermarked concrete walls and peeling blue paint and the din of crying children in the background.

Babatunde Onakoya, 26, founded Chess in Slums Africa in 2018. Chess aided his rise from his own deprived



childhood in Lagos. Onakoya said he was driven by a conviction that Nigerian education is in crisis, with many children either out of school or not learning what he sees as useful survival skills.

He now spends his free time playing crowded alleyways, tinged with the smell of burning trash and generator fuel, in the hope that teaching kids chess can build a better future for all of Nigeria.

"This is why we are teaching them chess, as a way to raise a new generation of intellectuals, people... who will be curious enough to question everything, who will be curious enough to innovate," he said. — **Reuters**

DISCOVERY

Study: Newly revealed Mars glacier could support human exploration



NEW YORK: Mars is slowly revealing its secrets, and a new study of its terrain done here on Earth has unveiled an anomalous glacier on a flat plain, akin to those found in Antarctica — and it could someday support humans.

Glaciers and other ice have been confirmed on Mars since 2008, as Nasa chronicled at the time, and had been detected back in the 1970s by the Viking probe.

These newly discovered ice floes are in a different part of the planet than the earlier studies, and their properties have intrigued researchers. They're found in Arcadia Planitia, in the northern lowlands of Mars, where lava flows have smoothed the planet's surface over the past 3 billion years. This has left any underlying ice closer to the surface, and the flat terrain makes for an easier landing.

"There's lots of evidence that this is an ice-rich area, but we don't have any major topographic relief occurring where these sinuous features are," lead researcher Shannon Hibbard told Live Science. "They're existing in a pretty flat-lying plane, so that was kind of odd."

Hibbard, a PhD candidate in geology and planetary science at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), was joined by researchers at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and several other institutions.

Once the formations had been detected on Mars, their properties could be studied closer to home, as scientists turned their attention to the similarly situated ice streams of Antarctica, reported Glacier Hubout of the Columbia Climate School at Columbia University.

One thing that excites researchers is the possibility of extracting this ice for use as water by future human explorers, and perhaps even settlers, they said in the study, published this month in the journal *Icarus*. Most of the glaciers on Mars are near slopes, but the flat terrain of the Arcadia Planitia glacier could make it both an ideal landing site and a good place to extract water, since the ice is apparently fairly close to the surface, Universe Today explained.

"Finding possible flow features in this flat-lying region was very exciting," Hibbard told GlacierHub. "Previous studies have suggested there is a buried ice sheet at our study site, and our evidence of channelised ice within this ice sheet indicates that there are more complex glacial dynamics at hand on Mars."

While Mars looks dry and dull from where we sit on verdant Earth, it may well have been much different over the eons. A study in January found that Mars may have undergone several ice ages, perhaps as many as 20, over the past several hundred million years, as Earth Sky reported. — **tca/dpa**

Omran Group signs pact to promote Oman globally

WILD OMAN: Omran Group partners with 'Oman Infocus' to showcase Sultanate's natural beauty through documentaries

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 9

Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) — the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development — has signed an agreement to support and sponsor 'Oman Infocus' project to produce a series of documentary films that highlight the richness, the fascinating environmental diversity and the wildlife of the Sultanate.

The epic exploration project initiated by Oman Infocus under the title "Not Discovered Yet" will cover 12 landmark tourist destinations and encompasses a one-hour documentary — "The Shoreline of Oman" and a Blue Chip — Two-part documentary series called 'Wild Oman', that will capture the essence of Oman's beaches, rare land and marine wildlife, carrying the audience on an extraordinary exploration of all corners of our fascinating country, from the top of the desolate



escarpment to the bottom of some of world's richest seas.

The film will be broadcasted on a number of Arab and international TV channels and broadcast networks.

"Omran Group's support for this project reflects the group's endeavours to work in harmony with various stakeholders to promote the country's tourism sector, and in line with the

National Tourism Strategy 2040 which focuses on increasing the number of tourists to achieve economic growth," said Qais bin Zahir al Hosni, VP of Government & Corporate Affairs at Omran Group.

"We hope that this initiative will help to raise awareness on the importance of preserving natural resources and ensuring their long-term viability, hence achieving

alignment with the group's responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

In addition, the collaboration reaffirms the commitment towards implementing Omran's sustainability framework across its various projects and initiatives, while ensuring the integration of its four main pillars: economy, society, environment and cultural heritage," Al Hosni added.

We hope that this initiative will help to raise awareness on the importance of preserving natural resources and ensuring their long-term viability, hence achieving alignment with the group's responsible and sustainable tourism practices

QAIS BIN ZAHIR AL HOSNI
VP of Government & Corporate Affairs, Omran Group

diversity, which helps to draw visitors from all over the world, whether they are looking for leisure or nature and adventure experiences.

The fan base of the TV channels and networks that will broadcast this movie around the world will play a significant role in promoting the name of Oman and its natural and ecological treasures to a wide range of viewers around the world."

She continued, "We thank all of our partners for their productive collaboration in making this initiative a success, and we particularly thank Omran Group for providing logistical support by hosting those responsible for the film's preparation, shooting, and directing in a number of its hotels."

As a strategic sponsor for the project "Not Discovered Yet", Omran Group's hospitality assets will be serving as the hospitality partner for the project in providing the relevant venue support at the filming locations, including Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC, Crowne Plaza Salalah, Crowne Plaza Duqm, Ras al Jinz Turtle Reserve, Masira Island Resort and Atana Musandam Resort. The documentaries are expected to air on two international channels mid of year 2022.

Cloud services to create 15,800 jobs in Oman by 2024: IDC

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 9

The increased adoption of cloud services and Microsoft's ecosystem is expected to create more than 15,800 jobs across the Sultanate by 2024, according to a new research by International Data Corporation (IDC). The study finds that spending on public cloud services in Oman is expected to rise nearly 3.4 times, from approximately RO 6.5 million in 2019 to RO 22.4 million in 2024.

IDC's whitepaper discusses the impact that IT, cloud services, and the Microsoft ecosystem will have on Oman's economy during the 2019–2024 period. It builds on more than a decade of analysis around the economic impact of IT on local economies.

The report finds that together with investments in public, private and hybrid cloud solutions, the Omani economy will enable businesses to generate nearly RO 387 million in net new revenues over the next five years.

IDC's research further shows that the IT sector in Oman is expected to reach RO 406 million by 2024, a five-year compounded annual growth rate of 0.81 per cent from 2019 to 2024. And that IT employment in the country is also projected to reach more than 60,900 at the end of 2024.

"We have seen years' worth of digital transformation happen in a matter of months across Oman, as throughout the pandemic response and recovery has been enabled by the cloud," said Shaikh Saif bin Hilal al Hosni, Country Manager, Microsoft Oman & Bahrain.

"Microsoft is steadfast in its commitment to empower the Sultanate in delivering upon



its vision for a sustainable knowledge-based economy, as we work with the Information Technology Authority (ITA) to pioneer the implementation of E-Oman Strategy. In doing so, we are driving Oman towards its transformation to a sustainable Knowledge-based economy."

"The Sultanate of Oman has a very strong focus to transform the country into a digital economy by 2040. The country runs several initiatives including eOman, its national Digital Oman Strategy. Technologies such as cloud, AI, IoT, and analytics play a critical role in the country's long-term digitalisation and innovation strategies," said Manish Ranjan, Program Manager for Software & Cloud at IDC Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META).

"Increasing investments within the cloud and AI and ongoing national and organisational level modernisation initiatives are driving demand for the skills necessary to run, implement, manage, service, and execute digital solutions in Oman.

The increasing use of cloud services is certainly creating demand for cloud architects, datacentre administrators, and datacentre engineers, while security and governance requirements in regulated sectors such as government, healthcare, and banking are driving demand for skills in vendor management, IT governance, and data privacy," concluded Ranjan.

ASAAS commences construction of Al Hafa Development

TOURISM ENHANCEMENT: Waterfront development will add to tourist and heritage attractions of Salalah

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 9

Muscat National Development and Investment Company (ASAAS) announced the commencement of construction enabling works to develop Al Hafa waterfront and create a traditional heritage market in Al Hafa in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

This is in continuation of the company's approach and aspirations in contributing to the diversification of national income sources, developing tourism projects, providing job opportunities, and strengthening cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors.

ASAAS is developing Al Hafa area, a vital waterfront in Salalah and one of the most important landmarks of the Dhofar Governorate and one of the country's leading tourist attractions. This stage of development includes several components with a total area of more than 50,000 square metres, including retail and entertainment.

A heritage souq with local architectural design elements will be an alternative to the current souq. This area will house many small and medium enterprises besides attracting



ASAAS has taken upon itself to promote value-added tourism projects in the Sultanate, covering the real estate, hospitality, and entertainment sectors

some international brands to meet the needs of the visitors of this souq.

The project will also provide public parking spaces that will serve the market-goers and visitors to Al Hafa Beach. This package of components comes within the general master plan for developing the area, to be implemented in successive stages.

Ahmed bin Salem al Busaidy, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ASAAS, referred to the economic feasibility of the project and the desired return from the investment to the governorate.

It will be a distinct addition to the governorate's tourism and investment projects. He

also added that ASAAS is moving forward to achieve the aspirations of the shareholders of this project.

Al Busaidy also emphasised the role of the Oman Investment Authority in empowering Omani development and investment companies and giving them priority and confidence in developing tourism projects in the Sultanate, in line with the Sultanate's strategy to promote tourism and diversify sources of income.

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humidi, Acting CEO of ASAAS, said: "We have completed the master plan for the project, and the enabling construction works have been assigned. With this project, we affirm the continuity

of our strategic partnership with the government sector to achieve a common national goal in advancing the tourism sector and making the Sultanate a favourite tourist destination for all. I thank all concerned parties, among them the Office of the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar and the Dhofar Municipality, for their cooperation and support to build a partnership for continuous success.

ASAAS has taken upon itself to promote value-added tourism projects in the Sultanate, covering the real estate, hospitality, and entertainment sectors.

These projects encompass shopping and entertainment centres, in line with the national strategy to raise the contribution of these sectors to the GDP by providing quality projects that will speed up urbanisation and enhance economic value.

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Omani business house invests in e-commerce platform

ONLINE MARKETPLACE:
MHD becomes significant stakeholder in Nabay.com

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 9

Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC, one of the largest business houses in the Sultanate, has signed an agreement to become a significant shareholder in the unique innovative global online marketplace – Nabay.com. The investment will help accelerate the platform’s user-focused mission to become one of the largest cross-border e-commerce marketplaces in the region.

Representing Nabay.com at the signing was its founder and chairman, Nabeel Jawad Sultan, while Mohammed Abdallah al Kharousi, the Chief Investment



Officer of MHD-ITICS, signed on behalf of MHD LLC.

Nabay.com, a pioneering initiative by Nabeel Jawad Sultan, is a unique global online e-commerce marketplace

offering. The platform offers three core services from a single platform for consumers and businesses around the world – both on web and mobile apps – termed as its three pillars – a one

of its kind online mall ‘The Nabay Mall’, a community exchange engine ‘The Barter Exchange’, and a unique concept for an existing website to plug into the platform ‘The Plugged In’.

The first of these pillars, and the one that is at the very heart of the platform, ‘The Nabay Mall’ has been designed to offer businesses and sellers the freedom to open their personalised store, complete with their own brand identity, within a dynamic and diverse global online mall. In addition to the independent store, businesses are also presented with the full gamut of e-fulfilment services expected of a platform of this calibre, including payment gateways, end-to-end logistics store administration, and analytics.

The ‘The Barter Exchange’, on the other hand, allows users to swap items with one another. It is an exchange engagement that can be done in publicly or within the confines of private groups or special interest groups.

And lastly, the ‘The Plugged In’ pillar completes the trio by allowing website owners

to plug their existing websites directly into Nabay.com; thereby expanding their opportunities with a greater level of global exposure and direct access to consumers.

“As we step into the next stage of our growth, though available globally, we are looking forward to focus our marketing efforts into the Middle East, starting with the UAE. From here we will look towards establishing a strong foothold in KSA and eventually the rest of the Middle East,” said Nabeel Sultan. “

We are delighted to be backed by a group as renowned as MHD. Their investment will no doubt provide us with an enhanced strategic and competitive advantage in our endeavours. I am confident that with them beside us, it will only be a matter of time before we realise our full potential as the preeminent ecommerce platform in the region.”

NBO empowers young graduates



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the launch of its newest corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, Innovation Incubator.

In collaboration with the SMEs Development Authority, Oman Academy for SMEs, and Paradigm Consulting, the programme will teach young graduates how to design their own start-up FinTechs.

Attended by Qais al Toobi, Acting Vice-President of the SMEs Development Authority, and Hassan Shaban, Chief Government Banking & Alliances of NBO, the signing marks the latest milestone in the bank’s active CSR programme, which focuses on fostering Oman’s young people and equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to the development of the nation.

Toyota Land Cruiser with biggest benefits

MUSCAT: Own the pride of the land – the powerful and dependable Land Cruiser and get cash gift from RO 2300 up to RO 4000, service 5 years / 50,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and an assured gift voucher. Also get a chance to win a Supra as grand raffle and raffle of two new Camry.

Customers walking in to Toyota showroom too have a chance to win seven units of iPhone 12, 64 GB. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Showroom locations: Wattayah, Barka, Bidaya, Sur, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Al Buraimi, Ibra, Maabela, Nizwa, Al Rustaq, Al Seeb Al Mawaleh, Sinaw and Suhar).

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all-terrain performance and reliability, the Land Cruiser indeed, is one of the most technically advanced four-wheel drive vehicles ever produced and is equipped with a series of advanced dynamic and handling features.

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ME cities require comprehensive 5G strategies

Digital transformation:
5G use cases can re-imagine economic and infrastructure development with latency, bandwidth, data rates, and devices density 10 times greater than 4G

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 9

Cities face many challenges stemming from societal and technological changes, with population growth, urbanisation, infrastructure provision, cybercrime, and environmental pollution driving the increasing necessity for new digital use cases. Looking ahead, projects based on 5G, the next generation of mobile network technology, will help overcome these challenges and enhance economic development across industries.

Well-known management consultancy firm Arthur D Little (ADL) expounds this viewpoint



in its latest report entitled: “Is your city ready to go digital? How 5G use cases will unleash your city’s full potential.”

The report details how 5G is fundamentally changing the way by which cities can shape urban life for citizens and improve ecosystems for corporations, providing strategic insights and a comprehensive explanation of why cities must pursue the technology.

ADL highlights that 5G implementation frameworks must address two main points. Firstly, cities must decide which

5G use cases are of strategic importance to them and whether they should be provided by the city itself.

Secondly, cities must overcome 5G infrastructural challenges by building infrastructure or supporting telecom operators’ efforts to carry out the same mandate. Should these areas not be addressed, people and businesses may view relocation as the answer to declines in competitiveness and quality of life caused by insufficient technological infrastructure coverage in their city.

However, new applications based on 5G can make valuable contributions in tackling the challenges above, ultimately preventing residents and organisations from seeking opportunities elsewhere.

“Across the Middle East, we see cities facing population, pollution, urbanisation, and infrastructure issues. If they continue to exacerbate at current rates, many people are sure to look elsewhere to live, and economies will suffer from businesses going in the same direction,” said Andrea Faggiano,

Partner, Telecom, Information, Media & Electronics Practice Lead at Arthur D. Little Middle East & India.

“Fortunately, this scenario hasn’t yet transpired. There are plenty of reasons for us to be optimistic, and one of these is 5G. Because the technology can help cities overcome such problems, it can ensure they become attractive places to live and work not just for ourselves, but also for the next generation.

What’s equally encouraging is that 5G use cases are coming to fruition in numerous countries, serving as sources of inspiration for others to follow. As city leaders establish a 5G blueprint that helps achieve their sustainability and digital transformation goals, they can take confidence that others are already paving the way for them to learn from and improve on.”

Cities defining well-grounded 5G strategies will significantly increase citizens’ living standards, boost attractiveness for businesses, and drive industrial, public, and business-related use cases.

Bank Muscat encourages customers to use digital channels to transact safely

MUSCAT: In line with the directives of the Supreme Committee on dealing with Covid-19 and its commitment to promoting financial inclusion across the Sultanate, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the country has urged all its customers to use its various e-channels for their various banking transactions including making payments and fund transfers.

The bank pointed out that the bank’s e-channels and digital channels are continuing to play a key role in promoting health and safety of everyone during a period of enhanced social distancing, while customers also get to enjoy the convenience of banking 24/7 from the comfort and safety of their homes.

The move to digital channels will also benefit customers during the upcoming Eid holidays.