



SUNDAY, 21 MARCH 2021

www.muscatdaily.com

Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000



36°C/26°C

HM'S AWARD FOR INDUSTRIAL EXCELLENCE

GO TO PAGES 17-20

Providing healing touch to Yemen

M Najmuz Zafar
Muscat

Even before fighting broke out in early 2015, Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the Arab world. Over five years of conflict has left thousands of civilians dead and 3.65mn internally displaced. Despite ongoing humanitarian assistance, 16.2mn Yemenis are food insecure.

It is estimated that in the absence of food assistance, largely from UN World Food Programme (WFP), this number would go up to 20.1mn.

According to WFP, the risk of large-scale famine has never been more acute with nearly 50,000 already living in famine-like conditions.

Oman has been at the forefront, politically as well as working on the ground, to provide all kinds of assistance to the people in Yemen.

Companies, particularly from Dhofar, continue to support and aid the humanitarian efforts in the neighbouring worn-torn country.

WFP has transported over 37,000m³ of medical supplies through Salalah to Yemen since 2019, including medicines, medical and laboratory equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE), a WFP spokesperson told Muscat Daily.



Children with sandwiches distributed by WFP as part of the emergency flood response for internally displaced people in Aden, Yemen (WFP)

400,000

AT RISK OF DYING DUE TO MALNUTRITION

24.3

million people in need of humanitarian assistance

3.6

million people internally displaced

16.2

million people are food insecure

Source: WFP

"These items were shipped by air, sea and land on behalf of humanitarian partners, such as the Unicef and the WHO, to support the Yemen emergency. WFP continues to support various humanitarian agencies in transporting and storing of items for the humanitarian response via Salalah. Salalah has proven to be a key logistics hub and an integral part of WFP's supply chain network to assist the people affected by the conflict in Yemen," the spokesperson said.

Port of Salalah's demonstrated ability to handle and store a wide spectrum of cargo, we are honoured and humbled to be able to contribute to and support the ongoing relief operation in Yemen."

He added that the setting up and development of this humanitarian hub has been made possible by the continued support of various stakeholders like the ROP, the Oman Charitable Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asyad, etc.

Salalah has proven to be a key logistics hub and an integral part of WFP's supply chain network to assist the people affected by the conflict in Yemen

WFP SPOKESPERSON

Being the logistics hub that provides global direct connectivity with ability to seamlessly handle both containerised and non-containerised cargo, Port of Salalah offers itself as an indispensable option for the humanitarian agencies to use it for their operations.

Mark Hardiman, CEO of Salalah Port Services, said, "The sultanate has been playing a significant role in providing relief to the ongoing crises in Yemen from a very early stage. With

In 2020, Oman was used by WFP as a hub for air shipments directed to Yemen in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

"WFP transported items such as PPE, hand sanitiser, oxygen cylinders, ventilators and emergency medical supplies to Yemen from Oman on behalf of the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Population Fund, the Unicef, the WHO and Oxfam," the WFP spokesperson informed.

Continued on Page 04

British envoy hopeful of resolving travel impasse

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With Oman's Supreme Committee imposing a ban on direct flights from the United Kingdom (UK) in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases, H E Hamish Cowell, British Ambassador to Oman, said his embassy is closely working with Omani authorities to reopen travel routes between both the countries.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Committee said it would impose a ban on direct flights from March 19 until further notice and suspend the entry of non-citizens who had travelled to the UK in the previous two weeks.

In a statement issued on Thursday, H E Cowell said, "I know that many of you here in Oman are following closely the recent COVID-19 related restrictions on travel to and from the UK. I hope that those who joined our online Consular Q&A on Tuesday on this subject found it useful. These are difficult times and such restrictions are the last thing that any of us want to see.

I know that many British and

Omani nationals will have been affected in some way by these announcements. "Given the exceptionally close links between our two countries, we have worked hard over the last year to keep travel options available, even when the airport here was closed. While that has changed this week, I want to assure you that we are working intensively with the Omani authorities to reopen travel routes as soon as the situation allows."

Last week, the UK added Oman to the travel ban Red List, a part of travel regulations aimed at stopping COVID-19 variants from entering the country. Oman, along with Ethiopia, Somalia and Qatar, was added to the list. The ban came into effect

at 4am on Friday, March 19. A statement from Oman's Cultural Attache in London, said, "Dear students, we regret to inform you that from March 19, 4am, Oman will be on the red list for travellers to and from the UK. We urge everyone who booked to travel to the sultanate during the spring break to rearrange their travel plans."

Oman to establish new firms to boost pharma sector

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With an aim to support the pharmaceutical sector and increase the national income, the sultanate is seeking to establish five new pharmaceutical firms that would help the country to increase its market share in the coming days.

The establishment of the new firms envisages an increase in the market share of medicines and medical equipment produced locally by up to 50 per cent by 2050 from the current eight per cent.

In an interview with Oman TV, Dr Mohammed bin Hamdan al Rubaie, director general of Pharmacy and Drug Control at the Ministry of Health, said, "The sultanate currently has five factories for the production of medicines and medical equipment and is seeking to establish five more."

The sultanate produces eight per cent of the total market supply of medicines and medical equipment currently, while the percentage of consumption increases by ten per cent annually, he added.

"The strategic plan aims to raise local production to meet 20



The ministry strives to ensure that the procedures and laws regarding pharmaceutical manufacturing and obtaining licences are clear and specific

DR MOHAMMED AL RUBAIE

per cent of the demands by the end of 2025 and up to 50 per cent of the demands by 2050."

"The ministry strives to ensure that the procedures and laws regarding pharmaceutical manufacturing and obtaining licences are clear and specific. The sultanate aims to invest in scientific research in the medical field. Nizwa University and Dho-

far University are carrying out research in medical fields," added Dr Rubaie.

Dr Waleed bin Khalid al Zadjali, chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Pharmaceutical Industries Company, said, "There are obstacles to achieving drug security in the sultanate, including the absence of an integrated system between institutions, the lack of scientific research and the future outlook for qualifying national cadres in this aspect."

Dr Zadjali explained, "We need facilities for setting up pharmaceutical factories and make arrangements for planning and follow-ups supervised by a specific body including the concerned authorities."

Hilal bin Hamad al Sarimi, chairman of the Health and Environmental Committee of the Majlis A'Shura, pointed out that the medicinal security was a 'national issue' that everyone should work on. "We annually import medicine and medical equipment to the tune of US\$450mn. In the Gulf, more than US\$3bn are spent on importing these materials, which means that there is a market and a profitable return for this industry."

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



Read 'Going solo' on Page 15



Tanzania's first woman President calls for unity

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - Tanzania's first woman President Samia Suluhu Hassan on Friday called for unity after she was sworn in following the sudden death of her predecessor, John Magufuli, from an illness shrouded in mystery.

Samia (61), a soft-spoken ruling party stalwart from the island of Zanzibar, will finish Magufuli's second five-year term, set to run until 2025.

Wearing a bright red headscarf, Samia was sworn in at a ceremony in Dar es Salaam, where neither she nor the majority of attendees wore a mask, in the COVID-19 sceptic nation.

"I can assure Tanzanians that there is nothing that will go wrong during this time. We will start where Magufuli ended," she said in a brief speech after she took the oath of office, inspected a special guard and received a 21-gun salute. "Let us all be patient and unite as we move forward."

She becomes the only other current serving woman head of state in Africa alongside Ethiopia's Sahle-Work Zewde.

Samia was little known outside Tanzania until she appeared on state television on Wednesday night to announce that Magufuli had died from a heart condition.

AFP

'Oman is working on vaccine passport to help travel between countries'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is working on a vaccine passport to help smooth travel between countries.

Several countries are rolling out vaccine passports for those inoculated against the coronavirus. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) successfully trialled its 'Travel Pass' on first international flight between Singapore and London on a Singapore Airlines flight on March 18.

H E Dr Mohammed bin Saif al Hosni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, while speaking to Oman TV last week, said that there is a plan to use a health passport to travel between countries, and it is under study.

Oman has reserved more than 3mn doses of COVID-19 vaccine of various types so far, and is planning to acquire more than 5.4mn doses by the end of the year. H E Dr Hosni said, "We expect to get more than 5.4mn doses by the end of this year. The plan is to vaccinate 30 per cent by June this year and 70 per cent of Oman's population by end of the year."

H E Dr Hosni said there is a hope life may return to normal by the end of the year.

"Indications are that almost normal life will return by the end of this year," he said.

On the recent news about the link between AstraZeneca and blood clotting, H E Dr Hosni said, "There is no direct relationship between the AstraZeneca vac-



cine and the blood clotting conditions that have occurred in some people in some countries."

H E Dr Hosni said that the interval between the two doses has been extended to ten weeks.

"European studies have shown that a single dose is sufficient to protect against admission to intensive care or death," he said.

He urged everyone to adhere to precautionary measures as number of cases increases.

"We are now at the beginning of the third wave, and we hope everyone will stick to plans to

curb the rise in infections."

"Also, we urge all citizens and residents to take the initiative to get vaccinated if you are over 60 years old," he said.

577 new cases

On Thursday, the Ministry of Health reported 577 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total to 149,135 while three new deaths were reported during the same time taking the total number of deaths to 1,620.

The number of recoveries also increased by 327 taking the total number of recoveries to 137,871.

Now you can exercise your way to better mental, physical health

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

The COVID-19 pandemic and the preventive measures it necessitated disrupted just about every aspect of ordinary life including people's exercise routines. However, the authorities have been considerate and sensitive towards the need for public to maintain good physical health and mental well-being during the pandemic.

Last week, the Supreme Committee dealing with COVID-19 said people can again go to the beach, to take part in 'individual' sports.

'The committee permits the use of beaches to practice individual sports while at the same time maintaining a total ban on gatherings at beaches and elsewhere,' it said. No doubt, it's a huge relief for those who were used to go to beaches for their daily exercise sessions.

In a recent study conducted in Oman in which 1,580 citizens and residents took part, 30 per cent of them, the majority being women, said they suffered moments of anxiety and sleep disorders related to COVID-19.

Dr Hamad Nasser al Sinawi, senior consultant at the Department of Behavioural Medicine at the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, said, "Upon the start of the pandemic, we conducted a research that confirmed frontline operators' exposure to psychological pressures which turned into disillusionment when the cases of infection went up. Ex-



(Supplied photo)

Set up by the sea in Muttrah and at Qurm beach by Muscat Municipality, each open-air gym consists of 11 pieces of equipment, including elliptical machines and benches to perform sit-ups. They are free to use

haustion also had its toll on medical staff who had to continue working for longer durations due to the steady rise in cases that required medical care."

And this is where physical and mental exercises come in to beat the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic that has brought fast-moving world to a standstill.

"The impact of this pandemic is massive with the imposed lockdown, resulting in the closure of business activities, public places, fitness centres. This has hampered many aspects of the

lives of people including routine fitness activities, which has resulted in various psychological issues. Thanks to the authorities for reopening the beaches as well as ensuring that people have facilities to exercise," said Obail al Khaldi, an avid walker from Barka.

Last week, Muscat Municipality installed open-air gyms.

Set up by the sea in Muttrah and at Qurm beach, each open-air gym consists of 11 pieces of equipment, including elliptical machines and benches to per-

form sit-ups.

"Using these equipment is free and they are meant to encourage people to keep fit and spend some time outdoors during the pandemic," an official from the Muscat Municipality said, adding that this is in addition to different walkways available across Muscat.

Some people *Muscat Daily* spoke to were in high praise for the government.

"I will definitely be using those equipment set up by the municipality when I am not at the beach for my usual walks. Now that I have many options, I will make good use of my free time to exercise since most of the commercial activities are closed, meaning that I am free from my night duty," said Abdul Karim, a cosmetics store attendant.

@shadadm

SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS NATIONAL MUSEUM



Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr Faisal al Miqdad (second from left) visited the National Museum on Saturday. The minister along with his delegation were shown around by Jamal al Moosawi, secretary general of the National Museum (Supplied photo)

More services added to Invest Easy portal

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Commercial establishments can now submit requests for promotional offers, discounts, marketing cards and advertising brochures electronically through the Invest Easy portal.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) said in a statement that the new facility will contribute to strengthening the

partnership between the public and private sectors with an aim to encourage investments, stimulate local economy, encourage local capital and to attract foreign investments to contribute to achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The ministry also emphasised that the adding of this service to Invest Easy portal comes within the framework of the ministry's plan to modernise various services that fall within its competen-

cies, in order to cope with the economic and commercial changes, as well as the expansions witnessed by the sultanate's markets.

'It also ensures the sultanate's obligations towards a number of regional and international agreements.'

Amal bint Abdullah al Fahdia, head of Commercial Licences Department at the Department of Commercial Affairs at MoCIIP, said, "The Invest Easy portal has

been created to facilitate establishing of commercial and industrial projects, supporting the import and export activities and saving the time and efforts of the investors. Hence, by adding this new service to the portal, the requests to hold promotional offers and discounts will be received electronically.

"This can be done by attaching the required documents via Sanad offices or online through the portal."

Now in 1 Liter!

Topfruit PREMIUM NO ADDED SUGAR

100% JUICE

ORANGE NO ADDED SUGAR

RED BERRY NO ADDED SUGAR

Topfruit

China offers scholarships to Omani students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation has announced scholarships for Omani students offered by the Chinese government for the academic year 2021.

The ministry said, 'The Chinese Ministry of Commerce has granted PhD and Masters scholarships for Omani students for the academic year 2021 in various disciplines.'

To apply for the grants access <http://www.campuschina.org>

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.52am
Sunrise	6.10am
Duhr	12.14pm
Asr	3.39pm
Maghrib	6.18pm
Isha	7.48pm

PUBG MOBILE

FUEL THE SQUAD

Mountain Dew

WIN EXCLUSIVE IN GAME REWARDS

VISIT DEWSQUAD.COM AND GET THAT GEAR

EVERYONE IS A WINNER

Find the code under the ring pull

Go to **WWW.DEWSQUAD.COM**

Redeem the exclusive **PUBG** in-game items

*Terms & Conditions apply

Offer valid till 31 March 2021

صلاحية العرض إلى ٣١ مارس ٢٠٢١



رمضان مبارك
Ramadan Mubarak



ماء للشرب (ماي دبي) ٣٣٠ مل
Mai Dubai drinking water 330ml

MyCLUB points +5
24 Pieces
SAVE 50%
1 RIAL 800
0 RIAL 900



زيت الذرة (عافية) ١,٥ لتر x ٢
Afia corn oil 1.5L x2 + 750ml x2

MyCLUB points +10
SAVE 50%
5 RIAL 840
2 RIAL 920



صلصة حارة (مرحبا) ٨٨ مل
Marhaba hot sauce 88ml

MyCLUB points +10
14 Pieces
SAVE 48.98%
0 RIAL 980
0 RIAL 500



حمص مسلوق (لونا) ٤٠٠ غرام
Luna chick peas 400g

MyCLUB points +10
6 Pieces
SAVE 50%
1 RIAL 320
0 RIAL 660



أرز بسمي (تيلدا) ٢٠ كيلو
Tilda basmati rice 20kg

MyCLUB points +10
SAVE 50%
23 RIAL 900
11 RIAL 950



خليط البسبوسة (العلالي) ٥٠٠ غرام
Al Alali basbousah mix 500g

MyCLUB points +5
2 Pieces
SAVE 50%
1 RIAL 380
0 RIAL 690



شوفان أبيض (كويكر) ٥٠٠ غرام
Quaker white oats 500g

MyCLUB points +10
2 Pieces
SAVE 50%
1 RIAL 580
0 RIAL 790



شعيرية (أحمد) ١٥٠ غرام
Ahmed vermicelli 150g

MyCLUB points +15
10 Pieces
0 RIAL 500



أرز مصري (ديلي فريش) ٢ كيلو
Daily fresh Egyptian rice 2kg

MyCLUB points +10
3 Pieces
SAVE 50%
4 RIAL 710
2 RIAL 355



كاتشاب الطماطم (مرحبا) ٣٤٠ غرام
Marhaba tomato ketchup 340g

MyCLUB points +5
6 Pieces
SAVE 50%
0 RIAL 960
0 RIAL 480



معجون طماطم (مرحبا) ٧٠ غرام x ٢٥
Marhaba tomato paste 70g x25

MyCLUB points +10
0 RIAL 500

Get 10% off *

On all detergent powder, Frozen Meats parts, Liquid Soap, Evaporated & Creamers, Chocapic, Pepper & Spices, Canned Vegetables, Pasta, Gargage bag, Soups, Starters & Multi purpose home cleaning

100 points = 10MR

DOWNLOAD
the Carrefour app & enjoy more deals

*credited as MyCLUB points

MyCLUB
Earn more everyday

Available on the App Store

Google play

Shop online now at Carrefour MAF APP

FOLLOW US: @carrefour_oman

@carrefouroman

كارفور Carrefour

اتصلوا بنا على الرقم المجاني
Carrefour toll free number
800-73232

أوقات التسوق من السبت إلى الخميس
٩ صباحاً إلى منتصف الليل
Shopping Hours Saturday to Thursday
am to 12:00 am 9:00



The new fish market in Jalaan Bani Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah (Supplied photo)

Dhahirah, Dakhliyah to get fish markets

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a move to support the fishing sector and stimulate economic activities, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) is planning to establish two new fish markets in two different governorates.

The ministry has called tender inviting Omani companies to bid for setting up the markets in the wilayat of Yanqul in Dhahirah and the wilayat of Bahla in Dakhliyah governorates.

The deadline for submitting the bid is March 28.

The project aims to stimulate economic activities in the two governorates, said MAFWR.

The ministry has also announced the start of operations in the new fish market in the wilayat of Jalaan Bani Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah, which came up with private sector investment, at a cost of RO400,000.

As per the ministry the total area of invested land is 8,402sqm. The area of the market building is 1,000sqm.

The facility has an air-conditioning system, a cooling store, an ice factory, a calling hall, and the main fish sales hall containing 35 tables for sale and 12 tables for cutting. The market also contains administrative offices and parking for customers, and 26 shops for various commercial activities, the ministry said.

Increase in fish landing

The total quantities of fish landed in the sultanate till the end of December last year reached around 800,000 tonnes, an increase of 38 per cent, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

NCSI said that the total quantity of fish landed in 2020 reached 799,366 tonnes and was valued at RO349.832mn.

'The highest quantity of fish landed by artisanal fishing came from Al Wusta governorate, reaching 293,893 tonnes, while the largest quantity of fish came from the share of small pelagics reaching 450,868 tonnes,' NCSI added.

Over 4,200 violations of marine fishing law reported in 2020

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Over 4,200 violations of the Marine Fishing Law and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources were registered in the sultanate in 2020, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, an MAFWR official said specialists in the ministry arrested 492 expatriates for violating provisions of the Marine Fishing Law and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources in 2020.

"They also registered 4,298 violations. They included non-compliance with the regulations of Marine Fishing Law, 2,875 violations of fishing licensing regulations, 408 cases of the use of prohibited fishing methods and possession of unauthorised equipment, 111 violations of fishing in prohibited areas and times, 156 cases of the employment of unlicensed expatriate workers, and 364 instances of non-compliance with the placement of plates on boats and ships and 237 various other violations," he added.

As per the official 2,086 sets of equipment were seized which included boat, engines, nets and devices. The specialists also



(Supplied photo)

seized more than 4.7 tonnes of fish and marine resources that were caught and traded during the prohibited seasons in 2020.

Talking about the MAFWR's

efforts to reduce violations, he said, "The ministry organises monitoring campaigns in cooperation with the relevant authorities, such as the Coast Guard of

the Royal Oman Police, the Royal Oman Navy, the Maritime Security Centre and the Ministry of Labor in all fishing sites and living aquatic resources."

The ministry's work includes monitoring fishing craft, coastal and commercial activities, selling live aquatic resources in the local markets, controlling fish exports through land, sea and air ports and monitoring commercial fishing fleet through the electronic tracking system linked to satellites. Campaigns aim to ensure compliance with laws and regulations. The ministry's Fisheries Control Operations Room also uses modern technology in its work by using satellites and applying a remote sensing system to monitor the movement of commercial and coastal fishing vessels.

Talking about the monitoring campaigns, the official said in 2019, the ministry seized more than 5,500 illegal expat workers and took legal measures against them including deportation for some of them and correct the conditions for others.

"In 2020, joint campaigns stopped due to the pandemic, but the ministry is coordinating with the concerned authorities to implement the campaigns during the current year."

ROP film against cybercrimes adjudged best

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An awareness film produced by the Royal Oman Police (ROP) on combatting cybercrimes in the Arab world has won the first place.

'The awarding ceremony was organised by the General Secretariat of the Arab Interior Ministers Council on the sidelines of the 44th Conference of Arab Police and Security Leaders 2021 in Tunis,' the ROP said in a statement. 'The competition, in which a number of Arab countries took



part, aimed to deepen awareness on security of citizens, and encourage them to contribute to the prevention of cybercrimes. In cooperation with the private sector institutions, the ROP's participation aimed to enlighten the community of the risk of these crimes.'

Earlier, the ROP came first in an awareness film competition in the field of social media risk organised by the General Secretariat of the Arab Interior Ministers Council in 2016.

This year's contest had five main areas: Controlling extremism and terrorism, controlling the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances, controlling cybersecurity crimes, protecting human rights and enhancing traffic safety.

SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT RECEIVES OMAN'S ENVOY



Gotabaya Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, received H E Sheikh Jumah bin Hamdan al Shehhi, sultanate's ambassador to the country, at the President's House on Saturday. During the meeting, the distinguished relations as well as issues of common interest between the two friendly countries were reviewed (Supplied photo)

Providing healing touch to Yemen

Continued from Page 01

"WFP works with various private sector service providers in Oman to support this work."

Salalah Mills is another company that in partnership with WFP is helping fight hunger and famine in Yemen. The company had signed a contract with WFP in 2018 to provide wheat milling service for supply to Yemen. About 500 tonnes of wheat milled at the factory was trucked to the war-torn country every day.

Although that contract with WFP is over, Salalah Mill continues to export food items to Yemen.

Ahmed al Dhahab, CEO of Salalah Mills, said, "We export some foodstuffs to the Yemeni people through local Yemeni agents. Food items include macaroni and flour." The company's exports to Yemen increased by 55 per cent compared to 2019.

According to Hardiman, Port of Salalah presently gives comprehensive support to the aid and relief agencies by providing handling and storage of commodities ranging from bulk grain, wheat flour, nutrient supplements, medicines and medical equipment and support vehicles like ambulances.

The agencies not only use the warehouses inside the port but also facilities in the Salalah Free Zone for its storage of ambient and temperature-controlled cargo. The WFP has also been instrumental in developing the concept using local mills to process imported wheat to wheat flour which is then shipped directly to Yemen.

"Activities like this and an inclination to source from local companies wherever feasible has also supported the economic development of the hinterland," Hardiman added.

@mujamuzafar

**KNOW
THE LAW**



Jail term, fine for stunt driving

Stunt driving on roads can bring the offender a jail term of three months and a fine of RO500.

As per the Public Prosecution, Traffic Law in Oman defines a road as any path accessible for public movement whether for pedestrians, materials or livestock. It includes roads, hard shoulder, streets, yards, passages, tunnels and bridges, which people may cross.

'Any vehicle stunt on roads or places not designated for such purpose is an offence punishable by imprisonment for a period of three months and a fine of RO500 or by either of these,' the Public Prosecution said.

It added, 'Driving a vehicle with a cancelled licence or a withdrawn plate number or with revoked or cancelled driver's licence is an offence punishable by imprisonment for a period up to three months and a fine of RO500 or by either of these two sentences.'



Dhofar International Development And Investment Holding Company (SAOG)

P.O.Box 2163, Salalah, Postal Code 211, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 23295400, Fax: 23291500, Email: didico@omantel.net.om, Website: www.didic.com

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE EGM AND AGM

The Board of Directors of Dhofar International Development & Investment Holding SAOG is pleased to invite the honorable shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting and Annual Ordinary General Meeting, scheduled for Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 3:00 pm through the electronic platform designated for holding the general meeting. You are therefore kindly requested to login to the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) to attend and participate in the meetings. In the event that quorum for the above-mentioned two meeting or any of them is not met, the second meetings of the Extraordinary General Meeting and \ or Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 4th, 2021 at the same time and via the above -mentioned online platform to consider the following agenda: -

First: The Extraordinary General Meeting:

Study and approve the restructure the company's capital in accordance with the attached explanatory memorandum.

Second: The Annual Ordinary General Meeting:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31st December 2020.
- To approve the Report of the Independent Consultant on the performance appraisal of the Board of Directors for the period ended 31 December 2020.
- To consider and approve the Auditors' Report and approve the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.
- To ratify the payment of sitting fees for the Board and Committees' meetings during the year 2020 and to determine the sitting fees for the financial year 2021.
- To consider the proposed distribution of the remuneration to the Directors of Directors an amount of RO 70,000 for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.
- To notify the shareholders of related parties' transactions entered during the financial year ended 31 December 2020.
- To approve the related parties' transactions to be entered into during the financial year ending on 31 December 2021.
- To notify the AGM of the donations paid for (Corporate Social Responsibility) during the financial year 2020.
- To study the proposal to allocate RO. 7,000 (RO. Seven Thousand) for (Corporate Social Responsibility) in the year 2021, approve it and authorize the Board of Directors to disburse it.
- Electing a new board of directors for the company for the period 2021 - 2024. Those who wish to nominate themselves for membership in the board of directors must fill out the nomination form prepared for that purpose and deliver it to the company at least (5) five days before the meeting of the AGM, i.e., no later than the end of work on Wednesday 24/3/2021, noting that the candidate must fulfill the requirements for membership of the company's board of directors.
- To appoint auditors for the financial year ending on 31st December 2021 and approve their fees.
- To approve the standards for the appraisal of the performance of the Board of Directors in its upcoming term, which will end on 31 December 2023.
- To appoint an independent consultant to carry out the performance appraisal of the board of directors for the next period of the new board of directors, which will end on 31 December 2023, and determine their fees.

According to the articles of association of the company and to the regulations issued by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) in respect of using modern online technology, we would like to draw your attention to the following: -

- A Juristic person, exclusively, has the right to authorize a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on his behalf through the online electronic platform, provided that this natural person has an investor number registered with the MCD.
- Voting on any of the items on the agenda begins no more than three days before the date of the meeting and continues until the voting process ends on the day of the meeting. In the event that the shareholder's balance is increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and such a shareholder will have to vote again on the day of General Meeting.

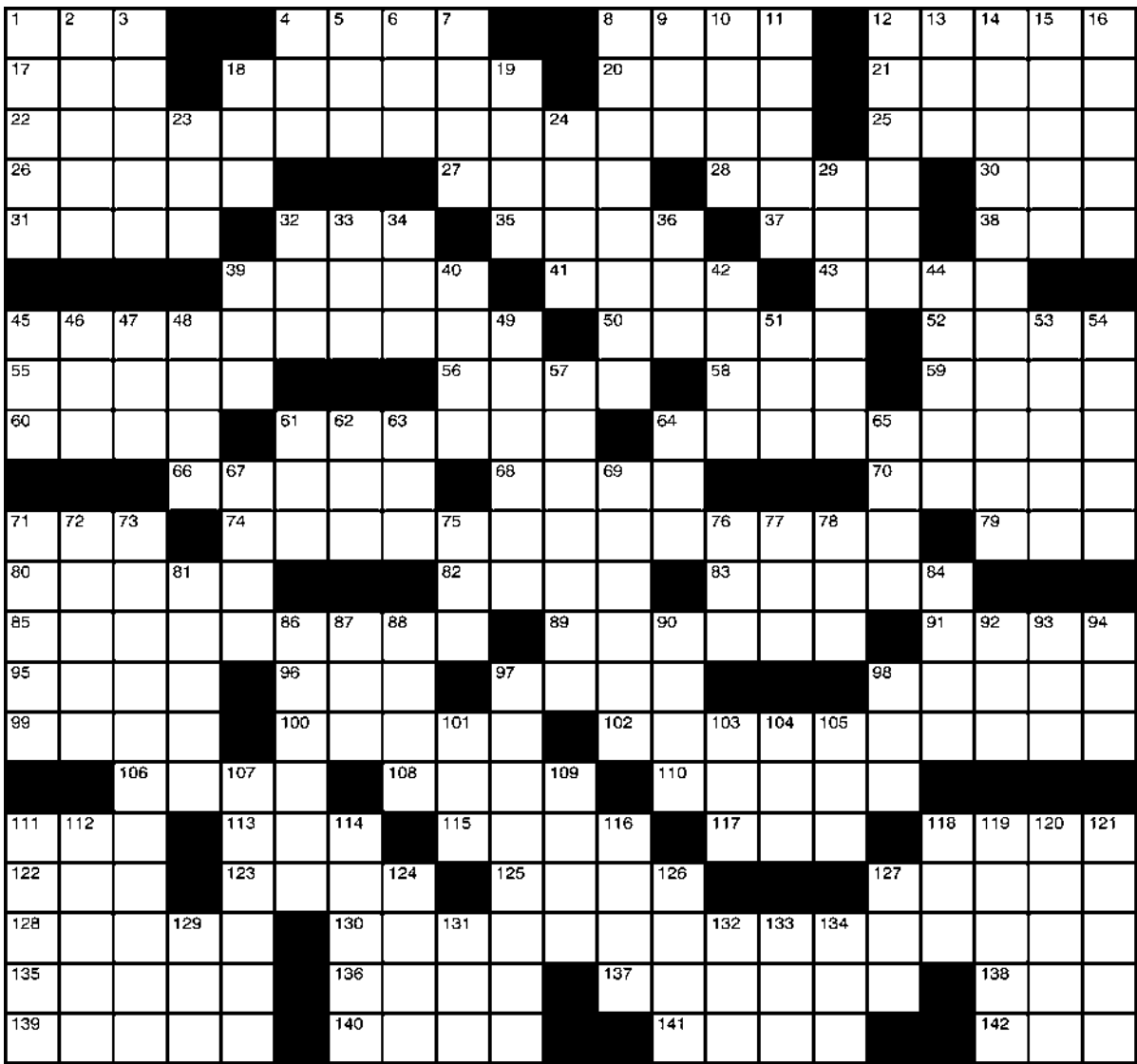
For further information please contact the Company Secretary on telephone number 24210355.

Chairman

Auditors

Legal Advisor

DAILY CROSSWORD



©2020 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All rights reserved

ACROSS

- 1 Morning moisture
- 4 Arrow poison
- 8 Wing: Prefix
- 12 Sir, in Delhi
- 17 Siderite or stibnite
- 18 Syrian city
- 20 ___ avis
- 21 Outwit
- 22 Down market players
- 25 Candy ___
- 26 ___ Park, Colorado
- 27 Sched. headings
- 28 Initials of ancient Rome
- 30 Make picots
- 31 Take ten
- 32 Cigar litter
- 35 Cockney dwellings
- 37 Litigate
- 38 Pacino and Yankovic
- 39 Verb for innocent or guilty
- 41 Indigo dye
- 43 Collar for a scholar
- 45 J.F. Cooper's "The ___"
- 50 Ascend
- 52 Caucasian tongue
- 55 Apportion
- 56 Scorched
- 58 Prairie State pres.
- 59 ___ facto

- 60 Comical sketch
- 61 On the go
- 64 Hunt hinds
- 66 Rocky debris
- 68 Nickname of hockey's Phil
- 70 Mother-of-pearl
- 71 Morning hrs.
- 74 Manhattan school
- 79 Solution
- 80 Nasty nickname for chubby
- 82 Astonish
- 83 Bay window
- 85 Gethsemane monks
- 89 Did a publishing job
- 91 Chilled
- 95 Fashion magazine
- 96 Born
- 97 Consumer
- 98 ___ of his own medicine
- 99 Mist, Manchester style
- 100 Openings
- 102 Trap for an urban pest
- 106 Rim
- 108 Word with beat or stick
- 110 Loud
- 111 Total
- 113 Small cobra
- 115 Erstwhile Persia
- 117 Caboodle's complement
- 118 Head line?

- 122 Wkly. periodical
- 123 School advisory gps.
- 125 Words of comprehension
- 127 Arctic Circle bear
- 128 Hopping mad
- 130 Chitchats
- 135 Professor
- Harold ___
- 136 Reiterative skirt
- 137 Sound system
- 138 Anonymous
- Richard
- 139 "Waiting for Lefty" author
- 140 Queen's workers
- 141 Entreat
- 142 Corp. board
- DOWN**
- 1 Widow's portion
- 2 Rub out
- 3 Stripes
- 4 Last, for short
- 5 For each
- 6 Mimic
- 7 Graf ___
- 8 Attendance
- 9 Chinese pagoda
- 10 Goes astray
- 11 Speaks harshly
- 12 ___ Service
- 13 In the manner of
- 14 Tyro's typing technique
- 15 Sine qua non
- 16 Conquers
- 18 Silly one
- 19 Palindromic man

- 23 Court call
- 24 The Crimson Tide
- 29 Montreal's province
- 32 Sum total
- 33 Richard Carson concern
- 34 Staff stuff
- 36 Part of RSVP
- 39 L.A. wintertime
- 40 Lucy's costar
- 42 Munchausen type
- 44 Marie Louise de la Ramée
- 45 "___ Kapital" author
- 46 Antlered animal
- 47 Ingenious Whitney
- 48 Decays
- 49 Change back
- 51 Bus. degree
- 53 River to the Rhone
- 54 Actor Jeff or Wendell
- 57 Saves
- 61 Indonesian island group
- 62 100 yrs.
- 63 Asian holiday
- 64 Sp. primate's city
- 65 Joint or cap
- 67 Hew
- 69 Consider
- 71 "Time ___ time"
- 72 Thomas girl
- 73 Hunted for food
- 75 Double curve
- 76 Sodom citizen
- 77 Before, to Keats
- 78 Pop. Bible

- 81 Race
- 84 Resort near Venice
- 86 Endow
- 87 Observe
- 88 Care for
- 90 Wrinkle remover
- 92 Soldier's sack
- 93 Origin: Suffix
- 94 State: Abbr.
- 97 Excessive as to interest
- 98 Actress Irving
- 101 State or angle lead-in
- 103 Hunky-dory
- 104 Ovid's 102
- 105 FDR-DDE separator
- 107 Gawkers
- 109 Sail support
- 111 Kind of acid
- 112 Ventured
- 114 Trattoria treat
- 116 Capone's nemesis
- 118 Part of EAP
- 119 Keen
- 120 Facial trimmer
- 121 Forest features
- 124 Avoid
- 126 "___, Brute!"
- 127 Plays for bucks
- 129 Famous pharaoh
- 131 Giant great
- 132 ___ excellency
- 133 Energy unit
- 134 Stinger

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You are trying to move ahead and everyone else is trying to hold you back. You can't help that people are more interested in what you've already done than what you want to do next. Don't be in such a hurry. Slow down and soak up some of the admiration. There is plenty of time for what you have in mind. You always wanted something built to last, didn't you? This may be your chance.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

No matter what anyone else tells you, you really know what's best for you. Your friends and family mean well when they give you their opinions, but in the end it's up to you. Put all of your options out on the table and then choose the very best one. The sooner you begin taking responsibility for your actions, the easier it will be to keep making the right choices with confidence.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Sometimes the siren song of a good party is just too hard to resist, but you might have to do that in this case. Face it: you have too much to do and too many things to think about, and no amount of pretending will make it otherwise. Buckle down and get all the necessary tasks done, and then it will be time to let your free spirit loose. You'll be glad you did.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You have a lot of good energy surrounding you right now. Romance happens if you let it. In fact, you might not be able to stop it. Your intense nature attracts all kinds of excitement to your doorstep. You won't be able to accomplish anything if you don't take a chance. Step outside and show everybody how it's done. Tonight, you are the envy of everyone around you.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Even if you're already a full-blown technophile, you still have a lot to learn. Everything is changing on a daily basis. Go full speed ahead into the information age. Your endless quest for data keeps you in constant motion. It's good to be connected and busy. Remember to balance all this out with some relaxation. Once you're rejuvenated, you'll be more productive.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Go for the elegant instead of the excessive. When it comes to stating your feelings, you have all the right words at your command. Do with them what you will. Everyone who encounters your way with words is sure to have a positive comment. This could even lead to an interesting opportunity. If you can find the time to relax tonight, it will feel well earned.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Pay close attention to details, especially when dealing with communication issues. Keep in mind that people who speak with their hands offer a unique map of a mind in motion. You'll be able to tell a lot about someone by watching their body language. Avoid misunderstandings. Alarming words are ordinary when you put them in context. Remember that things aren't always as they seem.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

It's no secret that you're easily delighted, but that doesn't mean you have to settle for less than you deserve. Force yourself to look for the substance beneath a fabulous offer. Examine every little detail meticulously. If everything doesn't meet with your approval, feel free to pass on the deal. A dose of cynicism might ruin your fun, but it might also help you survive.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Some things are simply out of your control. The sooner you accept that fact, the better off you'll be. Don't be surprised if an administrative glitch or a hardware failure throws a stumbling block in your path. Make good use of the ensuing downtime. Isn't there some paperwork you've been meaning to catch up on? Tonight, recounting history gives you something to smile about.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Try not to worry so much about how you present yourself to others. Be yourself and the rest will follow. Remember that teasing can be a sign of affection when everyone's in on the game. Open the doors of your heart and invite your loved ones inside for a grand tour. You might be surprised by what you find tucked away in an old corner of the attic!



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your leadership skills could be needed in a critical situation. Don't let anyone else's comments discourage you from performing the task at hand. You are the one in control. Figure out a system and then slowly work toward each individual goal. You have the unique ability to press your point until things go your way. Gentle insistence works better than brute force.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Beautiful words appear out of thin air almost by magic today. No thought is too complex or powerful to express. Make sure you have the means to write down every idea that comes to mind. Tonight, understanding others is the beginning of peaceful coexistence. Give someone else a chance to explain their point of view before you add your comments.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. When does Russia celebrate its Independence Day?

- a. 14th November
- b. 8th October
- c. 9th August
- d. 12th Junet

2. What is the language mostly used in Madhya Pradesh?

- a. Hindi
- b. Marathi
- c. English
- d. Malayalam

3. When and where was hockey introduced for women in Olympics?

- a. 1908 at London
- b. 1980 at Moscow
- c. 1936 at Berlin
- d. 1924 at Paris

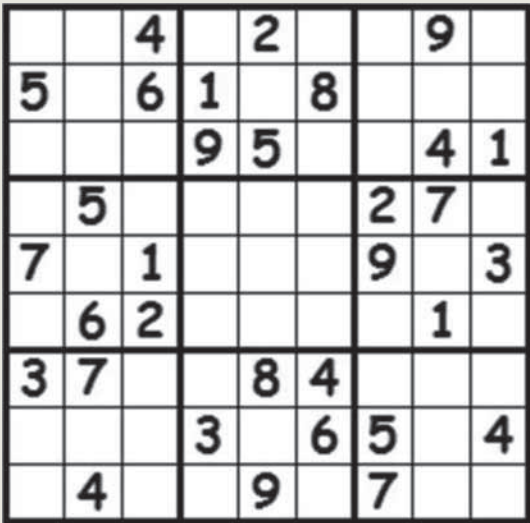
Answers: 1. d 2. a 3. b

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number



BOGGLER



Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (MARCH 18)



WORD BUILDER

You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count



Real face Liverpool, Bayern draw PSG in Champions League last-eight round

Paris, France - Holders Bayern Munich will face last year's beaten finalists Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in the quarterfinals of this season's Champions League, while Friday's draw for the last-eight also threw up a clash between Liverpool and Real Madrid. The draw also pitted English Premier League leaders Manchester City against Borussia Dortmund, with Chelsea playing Porto in the other tie.

Hansi Flick's Bayern side defeated PSG 1-0 behind closed doors in Lisbon last August to win their sixth European Cup and remain the team to beat, having won 18 and drawn one of their 19 games in the Champions League since the beginning of last season. The first-leg is set to be played in Germany on April 7, with the return in Paris on April 13.

"The draw is of course a difficult one, and surprises exist, but we're going to play against the team that is the best on the continent at the moment," said PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino, who was appointed in January and oversaw a 5-2 aggregate win over Barcelona in the last-16.

The meeting of Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and Zinedine Zidane's Real is another re-run of a recent final, with the Spaniards beating the Reds 3-1 in Kiev in 2018 to win the last of their record 13 titles to date. Liverpool then won the trophy for the sixth time in Madrid in 2019 but their Premier League title defence this season has unravelled, with the Anfield club sixth in the table having lost nine times in 17 games in 2021.

Klopp's side are due to be away in the first-leg on April 6, but it remains to be seen where

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

QUARTERFINALS

Tuesday, April 6
Man City vs Borussia Dortmund
Real Madrid vs Liverpool
Second legs:
Wednesday, April 14

Wednesday, April 7
Porto vs Chelsea
Bayern Munich vs PSG
Second legs:
Tuesday, April 13

EUROPA LEAGUE

QUARTERFINALS

Granada vs Manchester United
Arsenal vs Slavia Prague
Ajax vs Roma
Dinamo Zagreb vs Villarreal

First legs: April 8
Second legs: April 15

SEMIFINALS
First legs: April 29
Second legs: May 6

that match will be played. Atletico Madrid's home leg against Chelsea in the last-16 was moved to Bucharest due to restrictions imposed on travel to Spain by British authorities in the pandemic.

The winner between Liverpool and Real will go onto a semifinal against either Chelsea or Porto, throwing up the possibility of an all-English last-four tie. This season's semifinals are due to be played in late April (April 27-28) and early May (May 4-5), with the final on May 29 in Istanbul.

AFP



Victorious Oman Women's Cricket Academy players with the trophy after defeating ISC Women in the final of the Oman Cricket's Women's T20 League at Al Amerat recently

OWCA are champions

Defeat holders ISC Women in the final of Oman Cricket's Women's League

LOCAL CRICKET

Nayan Anil's half-century and tidy bowling spells by the trio of Shreya Dhuri, Saya Channa and Afida Afthab powered Oman Women's Cricket Academy (OWCA) to a 11-run win against the defending champions, Indian Social Club (ISC) Women, in the final of the Oman Cricket (OC) Women's T20 League at Al Amerat recently.

Batting first, OWCA, who were making their debut in the league, scored 113 for four with Nayan top-scoring with 62. Afida contributed 19. Payal Kanojia claimed two wickets.

ISC Women, which reached the final without losing a game, were then restricted to 102 for four, despite Priyanka Mendonca's unbeaten 50 off 60 and Trupti Pawde's 38-ball 35. Saya, Shreya and Afida claimed a wicket each.

Nayan's knock in the final helped her emerge as the tournament's top scorer with 237 runs from six matches. Payal and Shreya were the joint highest wicket-takers with 13 each.

Speaking after the title win, OWCA captain Vaishali Jesrani said, "It feels amazing to beat the defending champions. We were making our debut this season and nobody expected us to reach the final, let alone winning it. All my girls are talented and deserve full credit."

Vaishali added, "I would also like to express my thanks to our coaches - Desmond Berhardt, Nilesh Parmar and Haider Ali - for guiding us."

About the final match, Vaishali said, "Discipline was key to winning the final. Our girls believed in themselves and fought hard when it mattered the most."

Following the conclusion of the league, individual awards were also presented. Asma'a Al-Maraghi, managing director of TM! DONE, Oman women's cricket team sponsor, was the guest of honour and presented



Best batswoman: Fiza Javed of PSM (L) receives the award from Asma'a

It feels amazing to beat the defending champions

VAISHALI JESRANI, OWCA CAPTAIN

the awards and the trophy in the presence of Madhu Jesrani, OC secretary and Duleep Mendis, OC chief development officer.

PSM's Fiza Javed was named

the best batswoman while Payal Kanojia was adjudged the best bowler. Priyanka Mendonca was declared the best allrounder while Muscat Women's Amanda D'Costa got a consolation award in batting.

BRIEF SCORES

OWCA 113-4 (Nayan 62, Afida 19; Payal Kanojia 2-26, Mamta Thakur 1-16) beat ISC Women 102-4 (Priyanka 50 n.o., Trupti 35; Saya 1-16, Shreya 1-15, Afida 1-20).



Best bowler: ISC Women's Payal Kanojia (left) receives the award



Best allrounder: ISC Women Priyanka Mendonca (second from left)



Action from the Women's T20 League final match between OWCA and ISC Women at Al Amerat recently

OMAN OASIS immuno

DOUBLE GOODNESS
GAIN HEALTH
WIN PRIZES

Fortified with **Zn & Copper**
Boost your immune system

SCRATCH REGISTER WIN

Every Immuno shrink pack comes with a scratch coupon inside. Register the hidden number at www.omanoasis.com/immuno and stand to win amazing prizes.

Promotion valid from 25th February 2021 to 24th May 2021. Raffle draws on 25th March, 26th April and 25th May 2021. Three draws in total. Winners will be intimated in 7 days from the draw date. Pictures shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary. Customers to retain purchase receipts and scratch coupons to claim the gift. Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Terms and conditions apply.

OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOC
PO Box 87, Rusayl 124,
Sultanate of Oman.
www.omanoasis.com

CALL TOLL-FREE
800 71 222
or GSM: **9275 5522**

Scan QR Code to Register
CRN: 138545/2 Permit No: P20091

oman OASIS

Sifr

OMAN'S ONLY SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

5 IN 5 GALLON BOTTLE

Sodium Free Drinking Water

The healthy choice

It is beneficial to limit sodium intake if you have blood pressure, diabetes, heart or kidney disease.

Call Toll-Free **800 71 222** or GSM **9275 5522**
f OmanOasis @ OmanOasisOfficial www.omanoasis.com
OASIS WATER COMPANY LLC P.O.Box: 87, PC: 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman.

C.R. No.: 138545/2

INDIA ROUT ENGLAND TO CLINCH T20I SERIES



Indian players celebrate with the trophy after defeating England in the fifth and final T20I match to clinch the series 3-2 in Ahmedabad, India, on Saturday

INDIA VS ENGLAND FIFTH T20I

Ahmedabad, India - An unbeaten 80 by Virat Kohli and a stunning half-century by Rohit Sharma in an unfamiliar but effective opening partnership set India up for a comfortable victory over England in the fifth T20I before Bhuvneshwar Kumar finished it off to seal the series 3-2 in Ahmedabad.

India left out regular opener KL Rahul and brought in an extra bowler, T Natarajan, in a move Kohli described at the toss as prompted by a desire to 'bring in a good balance with bat and ball'. But there was no denying Rahul's struggles - he had made 1, 0, 0, and 14 in the series - and his absence meant Kohli would open for just the eighth time in T20Is.

Kohli and Rohit combined for a 94-run stand from 56 balls to lead India to a commanding total

of 224 for two, their third-highest T20I total at home and fourth highest overall. India bettered their previous best of 218 against England at the 2007 World Twenty20 in Durban.

England had said after India levelled the series 2-2 with an eight-run victory on Thursday that they would relish the pressure of a must-win clash as ideal preparation for the World Cup in October. They set out in pursuit needing to score at 11.2 an over and recovered from the early loss of Jason Roy as David Malan (68) and Jos Buttler carried them to 62 for one by the end of the powerplay, which compared favourably with India's 60 for one, en route to a 130-run partnership.

But some wonderful bowling by Kumar - who claimed two for 15 from his four overs, including 17 dot balls and the vital wickets

of Roy and Buttler on a batting-friendly pitch - damaged England's hopes beyond repair.

Shardul Thakur accounted for Malan and Jonny Bairstow in the space of four deliveries, which left England needing 83 off the last five overs. When Eoin Morgan fell cheaply to Pandya, the task proved too much.

The win was an important confidence boost for India before they host the T20 World Cup in October. They have won or drawn their last eight series.

Kohli said the result showed what India, just behind top-ranked England in the world T20 international rankings, can do when they are 'firing'.

"India outplayed us in the big moments of the game," England captain Eoin Morgan admitted.

Rohit hit five sixes in his blitz before he dragged a slower leg-cutter from Ben Stokes onto

his stumps. Suryakumar Yadav kept up the attack with a flurry of sixes and fours in his 32 off 17 balls, but a stunning fielding manoeuvre by Chris Jordan cut short his innings.

Yadav hit an Adil Rashid ball towards the boundary for a likely six and Jordan sprinted from long-on to attempt a one-handed catch. He flicked the ball to Jason Roy who completed the relay catch. Kohli stood firm to complete his third fifty of the series and then combined with Hardik Pandya. Kohli, who hit seven fours and two sixes in his 52-ball knock, and Pandya, who smashed 39, put on 81 for the third wicket. Kumar was later named the player of the match while Kohli was declared the player of the series. The teams will next play three ODIs in Pune on March 23, 26 and 28.

Agencies

SCOREBOARD

INDIA		
Rohit Sharma	b Stokes	64 (34)
V Kohli	not out	80 (32)
SK Yadav	c Roy b Rashid	32 (17)
H Pandya	not out	39 (17)
Extras:	(lb 3, w 6)	9
TOTAL	224	for two
Fall of wickets: 1-94, 2-143		
BOWLING: A Rashid 4-0-31-1, J Archer 4-0-43-0, M Wood 4-0-53-0, C Jordan 4-0-57-0, S Curran 1-0-11-0, B Stokes 3-0-26-1		
ENGLAND		
J Roy	b Kumar	0 (2)
J Buttler	c Pandya b Kumar	52 (34)
D Malan	b Thakur	68 (46)
J Bairstow	c Yadav b Thakur	7 (7)
E Morgan	c sub (KL Rahul) b Pandya	1 (4)
B Stokes	c Pant b Natarajan	14 (12)
C Jordan	c Yadav b Thakur	11 (10)
J Archer	run out	1 (2)
S Curran	not out	14 (3)
A Rashid	not out	0 (0)
Extras:	(lb 9, w 11)	20
TOTAL:	188	for eight
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-130, 3-140, 4-142, 5-142, 6-165, 7-168, 8-174		
BOWLING: B Kumar 4-0-15-2, H Pandya 4-0-34-1, W Sundar 1-0-13-0, S Thakur 4-0-45-3, T Natarajan 4-0-39-1, R Chahar 3-0-33-0		



New Zealand players celebrate a dismissal of a Bangladeshi batsman

Boult, Guptill guide Kiwis to emphatic win

NZ VS BANGLADESH

FIRST ODI

Dunedin, New Zealand - New Zealand captain Tom Latham called it 'awesome' as star performers Trent Boult and Martin Guptill powered the Black Caps to an emphatic eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in the opening one-day international in Dunedin on Saturday.

With swing king Boult moving the ball both ways, New Zealand dismissed Bangladesh for a mediocre 131 and a blistering cameo with the bat by Guptill saw them cut down the target with more than 28 overs to spare. In New Zealand's first ODI in 12 months, Boult took four for 27 while Guptill blazed away for 38 off 19 deliveries.

All but two of Guptill's 38 runs came from boundaries with four sixes and three fours before Taskin Ahmed found a faint edge and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim completed the dismissal.

Devon Conway in his maiden ODI was the other wicket to fall for 27 while opener Henry Nicholls was left 49 not out.

Nicholls was denied his 12th half century when another debutant Will Young (11 not out) brought up the winning runs.

Earlier, Bangladesh were sent into bat opener and skipper Tamim Iqbal immediately looked to dominate with a six off Boult's third ball and a four off the second over from Matt Henry. But

the tourists were soon in trouble when Boult took two wickets in his third over. He started with the dismissal of Iqbal, trapping him lbw. New batsman Soumya Sarkar went three balls later without scoring and Bangladesh never recovered. When the tourists were all out in the 42nd over, Iqbal said he knew 131 was nowhere near enough.

The second match in the three-match series is in Christchurch on Tuesday.

AFP

SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH		
T Iqbal	lbw b Boult	13
I Das	c Boult b Neesham	19
S Sarkar	c Conway b Boult	0
M Rahim	c Guptill b Neesham	23
M Mithun	run out	9
Mahmudullah	c Santner b Henry	27
M H Miraz	b Santner	1
M Hasan	c Nicholls b Santner	14
T Ahmed	c Santner b Boult	10
H Mahmud	b Boult	1
M Rahman	not out	1
Extras:	(lb 3, nb 1, w 9)	13
TOTAL: 131	in 41.5 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-19, 3-42, 4-69, 5-72, 6-78, 7-98, 8-125, 9-130, 10-131		
Bowling: T Boult 8.5-0-27-4, M Henry 9-1-26-1, K Jamieson 8-1-25-0, J Neesham 8-1-27-2, M Santner 8-0-23-2		
NEW ZEALAND		
M Guptill	c Rahim b Ahmed	38
H Nicholls	not out	49
D Conway	c Mahmudullah b Mahmud	27
W Young	not out	11
Extras:	(b 1, lb 2, nb 2, w 2)	7
TOTAL: 132	for two in 21.2 overs	
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-119		
Bowling: M Rahman 4-0-26-0, H Mahmud 4.2-0-49-1, T Ahmed 4-0-23-1, M Hasan 6-0-17-0, M H Miraz 2-0-90, S Sarkar 1-0-5-0		

Najibullah leads Afghanistan to series sweep

AFGHANISTAN VS ZIMBABWE THIRD T20I

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Asghar Afghan became the most successful men's T20I captain of all time, surpassing MS Dhoni, as Afghanistan recorded their 42nd win under him in the format. Their 47-run win over Zimbabwe on Saturday ensured a clean-sweep of a three-match series and extended their record over Zimbabwe to 11 wins from 12 matches, and their winning streak in T20Is in the UAE to 16 matches.

Though this was Afghanistan's lowest total of the series (they batted first each time), the margin of victory was similar to the previous matches - 47 runs, after wins by 48 runs and 45 runs.

After totals of 198 and 193 earlier in the week, Afghanistan were kept to 183 in this match and owed their total largely to Najibullah Zadran, who smashed a 35-ball unbeaten 72 to dent a Zimbabwe attack. Despite giving themselves their best chance to win a match, Zimbabwe's batting once again let them down. Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl's unbroken 80-run sixth-wicket stand was not enough to put any real pressure on Afghanistan.

Brief scores: Afghanistan 183-7 (Najibullah 72 n.o., Usman Ghani 39, Richard Ngarava 2-35) beat Zimbabwe 136-5 (Raza 41 n.o., Burl 39 n.o., Karim Janat 2-34).

Cricinfo

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS FOR AIR CONDITIONERS - COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

GENETCO PROVIDES MAINTENANCE, REPAIR SERVICE & AMC FOR ALL BRANDS AND ALL TYPES OF HVAC EQUIPMENT

- Genuine Spare Parts
- Fast Response
- Competitive Pricing
- Modern Call Center
- Skilled Technical Team

Regular maintenance of your Air Conditioner is very important to improve energy efficiency and performance. It increases product life and helps reduce electricity bills.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (AMC)

- Periodic preventive maintenance service by our expert service team
- Well equipped mobile team to take care of breakdown calls
- On call Service team available during Holidays / Emergencies

Genetco 50 YEARS OF SUCCESS

Mohsin : **96396274**
Riyas : **96740302**
Email: razamohsin@genetco.net, riyas@genetco.net

C.R. No. 1109680

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories:
Situations Wanted/Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)
Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

The new & improved Bose Sleepbuds™ II

so you can sleep better, all night long.

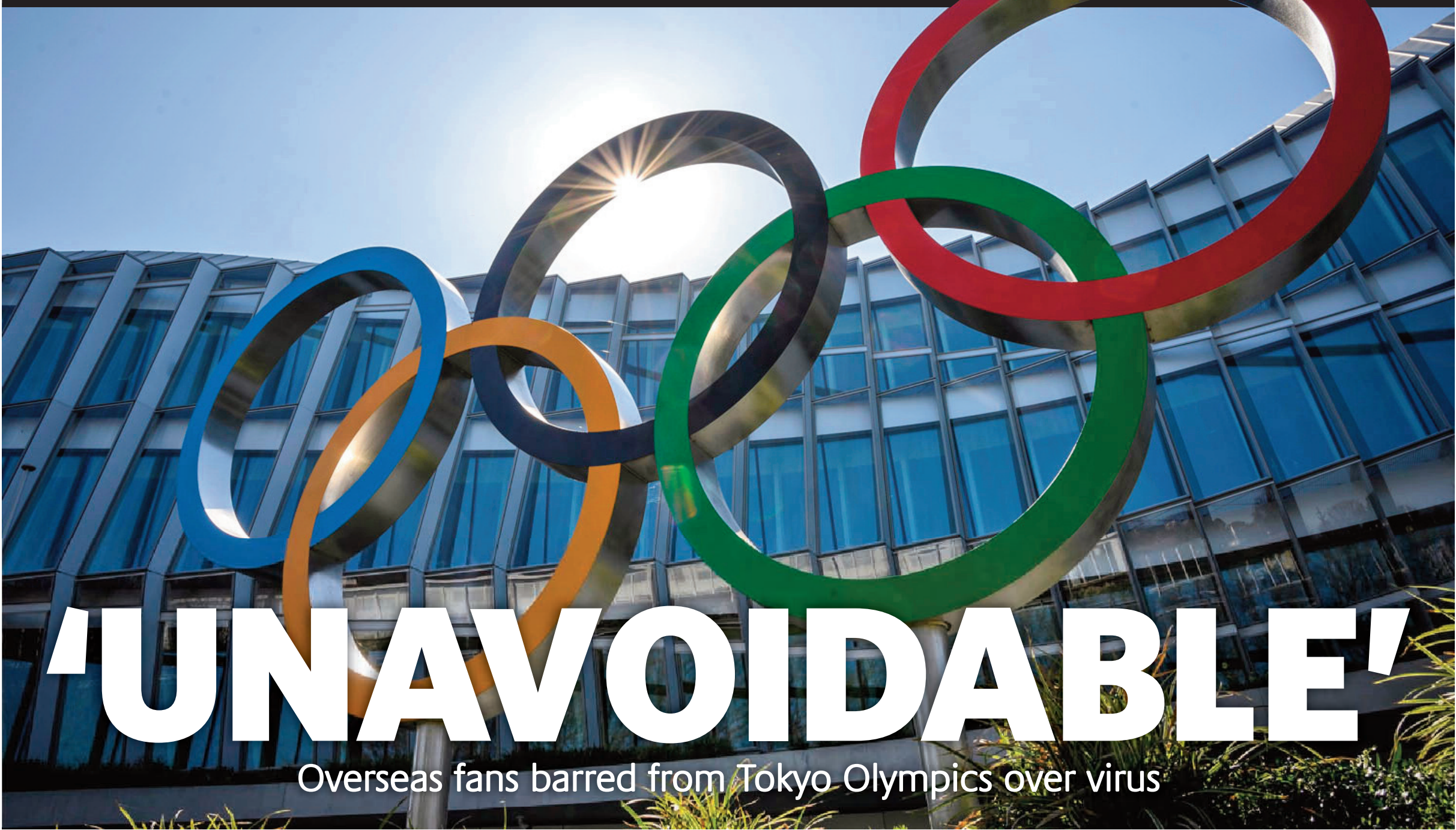
Tiny, comfortable and your perfect sleep-easy solution.

- Upgraded new nickel-metal hydride battery that's small enough to fit a compact enclosure.
- Upgraded USB-C charging.
- Upgraded battery life that lasts up to 10 hrs on a single charge & get 3 additional charges from the case.
- Upgraded Bose Sleep App to bring you a library of 40 specially engineered sounds to sleep by.

OHI
ELECTRONICS

Bose Showroom at Qurum City Centre
Tel: 24470497

Also available at Lulu (Bowsher, Markaz Al Bahja, Mall of Muscat & Salalah), Emax, Sharaf DG & Virgin.



Tokyo, Japan - Overseas fans will be banned from this summer's virus-delayed Tokyo Olympics, organisers said on Saturday, calling the decision disappointing but 'unavoidable' as they try to hold the Games safely during the pandemic.

The unprecedented ban will make the Tokyo Games the first ever without overseas spectators, with organisers scaling back their ambitions for the pandemic event.

Once billed as a party to celebrate 'proof of humanity's triumph over the virus', the Games are instead shaping up to be a largely television event, with little of the international party atmosphere that usually characterises an Olympics.

In a statement issued after talks between local organisers, Japanese officials and Olympic and Paralympic chiefs, Games officials said the virus situation in Japan and abroad remained

"very challenging". They said it was 'highly unlikely' Japan could guarantee overseas visitors entry by the summer, and therefore the ban on spectators from abroad was necessary.

Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto admitted the decision had not been easy. "I myself was an athlete. I had the pleasure of participating in the Olympics a number of times. So the fact that spectators are not able to attend the Games from abroad is very disappointing," she said.

But, she added: "We have to ensure a safe and secure environment for all the participants. It was an unavoidable decision."

In a statement, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee voiced their disappointment at the ban, but said they 'fully respected and accepted' the decision.

They stressed that all tickets to the Games already purchased by overseas residents would be refunded. The US Olympic team called the decision 'news we hoped would never come', adding in a statement that it

It has never happened that foreign spectators were banned from entering the host country at the time of the Games

JEAN-LOUP CHAPPELET

would 'continue to advocate for opportunities for American fans to experience the Games in person'.

'Difficult decisions'

Organisers had planned to sell 630,000 tickets for the Olympics and Paralympics to overseas fans, but that has looked increasingly unrealistic in recent weeks. Leaks ahead of the talks made clear organisers were leaning against allowing fans from abroad, and IOC chief Thomas Bach set the stage earlier on Saturday, warning 'difficult decisions' would be necessary to ensure safety.

The IOC has reportedly sought limited exemptions for some overseas guests, but the rules are likely to be strict.

Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto admitted last week it

will be 'difficult' for even the families of foreign athletes to attend.

Just how many domestic spectators will be in venues this summer has yet to be decided.

Organisers originally suggested they would rule on that by April, but Bach has said the decision could be pushed closer to the July 23 opening ceremony.

Whatever they decide, there's no doubt that barring overseas fans will help make the Games a very different event from years past. "It has never happened that foreign spectators were banned from entering the host country at the time of the Games, even during the Spanish flu at the time of the Antwerp 1920 Olympic Games," said Jean-Loup Chappelet, a Lausanne-based professor who specialises in the Olympics.

"Even for Athens 1896, the

Cook agency organised 'packages' for those who wanted to attend the first modern Games."

When the Games were postponed last year, organisers and Japanese officials had hoped that the pandemic would be receding by spring 2021. They proclaimed the event would mark the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, and a celebration of the end of a global crisis.

But even with vaccines rolling out in much of the world, the virus continues to cause havoc, and the narrative from Olympic officials looks to be changing.

'Completely different'

The torch relay kicks off next week, with spectators barred from the launch ceremony and those lining the route asked to avoid cheering.

In an interview last week, Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshirō Muto acknowledged that the virus situation in the Japanese capital remained 'extremely serious' and said the Games offered 'solidarity' during a difficult time.

Japan's public remains sceptical about the safety of the event,

with a majority opposed to holding it this year and favouring either cancellation or further postponement.

But organisers and Olympic officials have said neither of those are options, and they have put together virus rulebooks they say will ensure the Games are safe regardless of the pandemic.

Hashimoto said the Games would still have much to offer.

"The Tokyo 2020 Games will be completely different from the past, but the essence remains the same, athletes will put everything on the line, and inspire people with their outstanding performances," she said.

The year-long delay and virus safety countermeasures have helped balloon Tokyo 2020's already mammoth budget to an eye-watering US\$15bn, making the Games potentially the most expensive summer Olympics in history. And Muto said it was 'very clear' that barring overseas fans would affect organisers' bottom line, though the final impact won't be clear until limits on domestic spectators are decided.

AFP

SETTLE DOWN IN THE COUNTRY OF YOUR CHOICE

Choose the best. Choose MJ Global...



M-J GLOBAL
Immigration & Business Services



Get Permanent Residency of Canada through Express Entry/ Provincial Nominee Program in 6-12 months OR Get Permanent Residency through Owner operated LMIA within 12 months with minimum investment of CAD 150,000 OR Start your business in British Columbia with minimum CAD 250,000 and get residency in 11 to 13 months.



USA EB-3 Visa: Direct employment and US Green Card for you and your Family. Processing Time 15 months. Occupation in Demand: Caregiver, Janitor, Production Helper, General Laborer



Germany Business Immigration with minimum Euro 25,000 capital investment in business. Processing time is only 5 months. Resident Visa for entire family. Get Passport on the 5th year.



Invest in real estate of minimum Euro 280,000 and get the Portugal Golden Visa in 6 months. Get Portugal Passport in 5 yrs with access to 177 countries visa free travel. Stay requirement only 7 days per year in Portugal. Excellent returns on investment



Hungary Business Immigration • Euro 50,000* Minimum Investment • Temporary Resident Visa for entire family • Processing time only 4-5 months • 2yrs Business experience/Senior Management role preferred



Cyprus: Get a Permanent Residency in 3 months by investing in Real Estate with investment worth Euro 300,000



Dominica Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 100,000* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 120 Countries • Processing time 4-5 months • No need to stay in Dominica



Grenada Citizenship by Investment • Starting from USD 150,000* • Direct Citizenship • Visa free travel to over 130 Countries • Processing time 6 months • Tax advantages



Turkey: Get your citizenship in 5 months by investment of USD 250,000 in Real Estate. Smooth and Fast processing with excellent returns.

M-J Global, Floor no.2, Globex, Panorama Office Center, Panorama Mall, Bousher, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Office Timing: Saturday to Thursday 10 am to 6:30 pm

Email: cs@m-jglobal.com, Phone: +968 93571122, +968 93899424

www.m-jglobal.com

Leeds great 'Hotshot' Lorimer dies

London, UK - Peter Lorimer, Leeds United's record goalscorer and a key player in the great side managed by Don Revie, has died aged 74, the club announced on Saturday.

The Scotland international midfielder known as 'Hotshot Lorimer' scored 238 goals in 705 appearances for Leeds over two spells spanning 23 years.

Along with the likes of compatriot Billy Bremner and Norman Hunter they won two league titles (1968-69, 1973-74) and the 1972 FA Cup under Revie's tutelage.

"It is with great sadness, Leeds United has learned of the passing of club legend Peter Lorimer this morning at the age of 74 following a long-term illness," read a club statement.

"With the ability to put fear into the opposing goalkeeper with his fierce striking of the ball, Peter famously earned the nicknames 'Hot Shot' and 'Lasher' from supporters."

Lorimer was also a member of the Leeds side - by that time managed by Jimmy Armfield - that reached the 1975 European Cup final scoring a goal that was



Leeds' Peter Lorimer

disallowed in the controversial 2-0 loss to Bayern Munich in Paris.

He was in the side that sensationally lost to Sunderland in the 1973 FA Cup final where Jim Montgomery pulled off a remarkable save from one of Lorimer's trademark strikes.

Capped 21 times Lorimer scored four goals for his country including the 2-0 win over Zaire in the 1974 World Cup finals.

"We are deeply saddened to hear about the passing of former

@ScotlandNT International, Peter Lorimer," tweeted the Scottish Football Association.

Lorimer, the youngest player to represent Leeds at the age of 15 years and 289 days, was retired as a player in 1986 and was later appointed to the club board. He was named as the their first ambassador in 2013.

Leeds said in late February that Lorimer was in a hospice.

Current Leeds captain Liam Cooper tweeted: "Fly High Peter. A legend that we all aspire to be like. Sending all our love to Peter's family".

Leeds midfielder Stuart Dallas also wrote on Twitter: "After the high of last night, we learn of such sad news this morning. My thoughts are with Peter's family and friends at this difficult time."

Lorimer's passing follows those of fellow Leeds icons Jack Charlton, Trevor Cherry and Hunter last year.

Leeds chairman Andrea Radrizzani tweeted: "Another Legend left us. My prayers with the family - it has been an honour to meet you and host you at Elland Road, your home."

AFP



Southampton's Nathan Redmond celebrates after scoring on Saturday

Southampton in FA Cup semifinals

London, UK - Southampton cast aside their English Premier League struggles to reach the FA Cup semifinals with a 3-0 win at Bournemouth, while quadruple chasers Manchester City prepared to face Everton later on Saturday.

Ralph Hasenhuttl's side booked a place in the Wembley semifinals thanks to Nathan Redmond's double after Moussa Djenebo's opener.

Southampton, FA Cup winners in 1976, are back in the semifinals for the first time since 2018, with their most recent final appearance coming in a 2003 defeat against Arsenal.

Playing in the FA Cup quarter-

finals for the first time since 1957, second-tier Bournemouth were outclassed. Southampton carved open the rival defence to take the lead in the 37th minute.

Redmond's enterprising run took him past two defenders to the edge of the area and he slipped a deft pass to Djenebo, who guided a composed finish into the far corner from eight yards. Having provided the assist for the Mali winger's first goal since October, Redmond did it all on his own to double the lead in first half stoppage-time.

Redmond put the result beyond doubt with his third goal of the season in the 59th minute.

AFP



GOOGLE TO ADD 10,000 JOBS
Google has plans to invest more than US\$7bn in the US this year and create at least 10,000 new full-time jobs in a move aimed at helping the economic recovery

BUSINESS



DIRECTORS' REPORT For the Year ended 31 December 2020

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Audited Financial Results of Oman International Investment and Development Company SAOG (OMINVEST) for the year ended 31 December 2020. Notwithstanding a protracted economic weakness and a broader slowdown witnessed by the local and regional businesses, OMINVEST achieved healthy performance both at the Group and the Parent level in 2020. Below, I would like to apprise you of the challenges we faced during the year, major transactions completed during an otherwise challenging market environment, our major areas of focus, and the company's future direction.

Macro Overview

Oil prices are the key driver of business and economic activities in the Sultanate and the region. In 2020, oil prices experienced wild swings. The Brent oil price started the year at around \$70 per barrel. However, hammered by the onslaught of COVID-19 pandemic, the oil prices crashed below \$20 per barrel in April 2020 before recovering to around \$45 per barrel during the 3Q 2020. Led by OPEC's supply cuts and glimmers of recovery in the global economy, oil prices ended the year a tad above \$50 per barrel. After all the dramatic ups and downs, oil prices averaged at about \$43 per barrel for the full year 2020. Going forward, we foresee elements of stability in the oil market and expect the Brent oil benchmark to mostly trade between \$50 and \$60 range, during the year 2021. This will likely bring some relief to our economy.

Although oil prices have recovered decently, the globally witnessed second wave of COVID-19 infections has clouded the near-term economic outlook of GCC economies. Consequently, budget deficits and government debt levels continue to rise while liquidity conditions remain tight. Omani and regional businesses across all key sectors continue to operate under extremely challenging circumstances. We do not foresee any meaningful reprieve in the near term and expect that the cumulative adverse impact of low oil prices and the rise in COVID-19 cases will linger well into 2021.

Amid the aforementioned challenges, the visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has boosted confidence of the nation. Businesses across the sectors are encouraged by the prudent policies and reforms initiated by the Government to restore the Sultanate to sustainable social and economic growth.

Current Focus and Future Direction

In view of the prolonged weakness in the macro environment, OMINVEST and our Group Companies are taking pro-active measures to minimize the negative impact of such difficult operating conditions on our future performance. Anticipating the prevailing and evolving situation precipitated by COVID-19 and low oil prices, OMINVEST has built a robust liquidity position with a cash balance of OMR 68.4m at the end of 2020, translating into a net debt to equity ratio of just 0.72x. We will prudently deploy the available cash into new investments to further strengthen our growth prospects and enhance our diversification profile. Our other strategic initiatives include building fee-based businesses, optimizing existing portfolios and realizing synergies between our platforms to lift our overall return on capital to even higher and more sustainable levels.

Major Transactions Update

One of the most remarkable transactions during the year was the successful completion of the merger between Oman Arab Bank (OAB) and Alizz Islamic Bank (AIB). In line with the merger's terms, OAB issued its shares to the shareholders of AIB, bringing their shareholding to 19.36% in the share capital of OAB post-merger. I am pleased to share with you that pursuant to the merger, OAB was successfully listed on the Muscat Securities Market and transformed into an SAOG. As part of the steps leading up to the merger, OMINVEST also sold 11.76% stake in OAB to Arab Bank Plc (ABP) for RO 46 million and generated a profit of RO 12 million. As a result of the above transactions, OMINVEST's stake in OAB was reduced to 31.64% and OAB is now classified as an Associate in OMINVEST's financials.

After the successful completion of the merger between Oman Arab Bank (OAB) and Alizz Islamic Bank (AIB), we are now focusing on enhancing operational efficiencies and realizing synergies between the platforms. In addition, OMINVEST Group and our subsidiaries and associate companies are working tirelessly and utilizing technologies to serve the needs of their customers with greater efficiencies while ensuring safety and wellbeing of their staff. During the year, Jabreen International Development Company SAOC (Jabreen Capital) sold 6.74% of treasury shares at an attractive price, which further boosted our liquidity position. In addition, International General Insurance (IGI), a portfolio company of Jabreen Capital in the insurance sector, completed its listing on Nasdaq in March 2020.

Below, I would like to present the financial performance of OMINVEST Group and our major portfolio companies for the year 2020:

Group Consolidated Performance

During the year ended 31 December 2020, total Group revenues declined by 17% to RO 261.5m and the net profit attributable to OMINVEST's shareholders increased by 5% to RO 33.7m from RO 32.1m, over the same period in 2019. The Group revenues declined during the year as Oman Arab Bank (OAB) was converted to an associate and the Group discontinued the consolidation of OAB's financials and commenced equity accounting for OAB's results in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards from 1st July 2020. The increase in Group Profits is due to the realized gain on partial disposal of our stake in Oman Arab Bank and strong performance of our key subsidiaries: National Life and General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC), and Jabreen Capital.

Parent Company Performance

During the year ended 31 December 2020, total revenues increased by 10% to RO 59.8m and net profit increased by 6% to RO 38.0m, over the same period in 2019. The increase in profits is due to realized gains on partial disposal of our stake in Oman Arab Bank and an increase in the interest income. As at 31 December 2020, total assets of the Parent Company stood at RO 636m compared to RO 601m as at 31 December 2019. Increase in total assets was due to growth in the investment portfolios and business activities of our key subsidiaries.

Performance of Key Subsidiaries & Associates:

National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC), our subsidiary in the insurance sector, reported a strong profit of RO 15.0m for the year ended 31 December 2020 compared to RO 10.2m for the same period in 2019; a growth of 47%. The growth is due to optimized re-insurance strategy, higher investment income and lower claims reported during COVID-19 related lockdown. NLGIC reported Gross Written Premium (GWP) of RO 134m, of which Oman contributed 46%, UAE 51%, and Kuwait 3%. NLGIC achieved a net insurance premium of RO 113.8m compared to RO 105.9m for the same period in 2019; a growth of 7%. NLGIC continues to maintain leadership position in Oman in terms of assets, gross written premiums, investment income and net profits. We believe that NLGIC's growth prospects remain strong and its recurring revenues from insurance business are on an upward trajectory.

Jabreen International Development Company SAOC (Jabreen Capital), our subsidiary, is focused on making private equity investments in diverse sectors and expanding into new growth markets in Asia. Jabreen Capital reported a net profit of RO 23.8m for the year ended 31 December 2020 compared to RO 20.7m for the same period in 2019; a growth of 15%. The profit growth was mainly attributable to the gain on disposal of partial stake in IGI, good performance of private equity portfolio, and dividend income received from Jabreen Capital's public and private equity portfolios. As at 31 December 2020, Jabreen Capital's total assets stood at RO 334m compared to RO 331m at 31 December 2019. We expect Jabreen Capital to further enhance and diversify its investment income in the years ahead.

Oman Arab Bank (OAB), our associate in the banking sector, reported a profit of RO 14.2m for the year ended 31 December 2020 compared to RO 32.6m for the same period in 2019; a decline of 56%. The decline is due to higher Expected Credit Losses (ECL) provisions being created as a precautionary measure, given the stress in the economic and business conditions on account of COVID-19 and lower oil prices. In addition, as an exceptional item, a provision of RO 6.2m was created on account of a fraud incident, which is being investigated, and has also been reported to the concerned insurance company. Post the merger with Alizz Islamic Bank, loans and advances rose by 31% to RO 2.64bn compared to RO 2.01bn, and customer deposits rose by 38% to RO 2.76bn compared to RO 2.00bn, as at 31 December 2019. The equity shareholders' funds were RO 359m compared to RO 296m, as at 31 December 2019. We believe that OAB's revenues and profits will see significant rebound in 2021 and the bank will resume its growth trend after an exceptionally difficult 2020.

National Finance Company (NFC), our associate in the leasing sector, reported net profit of RO 8.0m for the year ended 31 December 2020 compared to a net profit of RO 10.0m for the same period in 2019; a decrease of 20%. NFC's revenues fell by 1.6% to RO 43.9m in 2020 compared with RO 44.6m in 2019. NFC continues to adopt a conservative approach to credit approvals keeping in view the overall macroeconomic scenario and perceived increase in credit risk. Lower levels of credit offtake combined with increased interest costs has impacted the profitability levels. NFC will continue to focus on strengthening its efficiencies, customer experience, product offerings and quality of service delivery. We expect NFC to further consolidate its position as the leading finance company in Oman.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020					
	Group		Parent Company		
	2020 (RO'000)	2019 (RO'000)	2020 (RO'000)	2019 (RO'000)	
Assets					
Balances with banks and money at call	40,874	191,505	24,125	4,549	
Deposits with banks	85,885	80,916	44,289	-	
Premium and reinsurance balance receivable	43,156	62,642	-	-	
Re-insurance share in insurance funds	16,175	19,565	-	-	
Investment securities	142,903	242,197	5,328	3,215	
Investments in associates	323,368	239,635	142,250	38,937	
Investments in subsidiaries	-	-	299,391	432,664	
Loans and advances to customers	-	2,006,330	-	-	
Due from subsidiaries	-	-	112,173	115,876	
Other assets	14,400	67,274	1,140	300	
Investment properties	11,139	10,776	2,100	2,100	
Property and equipment	12,579	50,904	969	1,102	
Intangible assets	21,795	18,377	-	-	
Total assets	712,274	2,990,121	631,765	598,743	
Equity and liabilities					
Equity					
Share capital	80,777	80,777	80,777	80,777	
Share premium	43,838	43,838	43,838	43,838	
Treasury shares	(58,580)	(81,464)	-	-	
Legal reserve	19,859	38,871	19,859	38,871	
General reserve	-	13,033	-	13,033	
Other non-distributable reserves	5,641	41,350	5,641	19,618	
Cumulative changes in fair value reserve	(13,155)	(8,384)	(23,004)	(21,891)	
Retained earnings	136,953	64,268	135,185	84,461	
Equity attributable to equity holders of the Parent Company	215,333	192,289	262,296	258,707	
Perpetual bonds	52,098	116,762	60,638	60,638	
Non-controlling interests	267,431	309,051	322,934	319,345	
Total equity	288,699	471,573	322,934	319,345	
Liabilities					
Due to banks	302,470	307,994	302,470	274,529	
Deposits from customers	-	1,978,832	-	-	
Insurance funds	74,713	80,108	-	-	
Subordinated debt	-	20,000	-	-	
Other liabilities	43,555	122,467	5,722	4,730	
Taxation	2,837	9,147	639	139	
Total liabilities	423,575	2,518,548	308,831	279,398	
Total equity and liabilities	712,274	2,990,121	631,765	598,743	
Net assets per share (RO)	0.322	0.313	0.325	0.320	

Corporate Citizenship

Today more than ever before, businesses need to join forces to create a positive impact and leave a better world for future generations. Therefore, we are placing great importance on becoming an impactful player in the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework and contribute more to our communities and the society.

In line with OMINVEST's Purpose of **Transforming Businesses to Enrich Societies**, we believe that business can be a significant catalyst for creating scalable economic, social, and environmental value. Our investment philosophy, strategies, and ESG efforts will continue to reflect this conviction throughout our various initiatives, creating value for all our stakeholders going forward.

As a corporate citizen and considering our responsibility towards the safety and well-being of our communities, OMINVEST contributed in the first half of the year RO 500,000 to "The Endowment Fund to Support Health Services" to address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, our Subsidiaries and Associate companies combinedly contributed another RO 1.85m towards this important national cause. Accordingly, OMINVEST's share of contribution at the Group Level amounted to RO 1.1 million.

In 2020, we continued supporting active social impact partners – Zubair SEC, Injaz Oman, and Oman Environment Society. On the philanthropic side, OMINVEST supported several associations that align with our social impact pillars: Education, Small Businesses, Youth, the Environment.

Acknowledgements

We are profoundly thankful to our beloved leader His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his great vision and initiatives as he continues to lead the Sultanate on the path of development, peace, and enduring prosperity.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the Capital Market Authority, Muscat Securities Market, Central Bank of Oman, and Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for their continued support and guidance. I also take this opportunity to thank the management teams and employees at OMINVEST and across our Group companies for their dedication and hard work.

Khalid Muhammad AlZubair

Chairman

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020				
	Group		Parent Company	
	2020 (RO'000)	2019 (RO'000)	2020 (RO'000)	2019 (RO'000)
Gross premium earned	140,890	143,159	-	-
Interest income	63,834	116,583	6,996	5,439
Investment income – net	17,866	3,858	7,965	(37)
Fee and commission income	9,518	20,052	-	-
Other operating income	7,350	6,985	451	192
Share of results of subsidiaries	-	-	40,387	45,239
Share of results of associates	22,080	25,699	3,956	3,389
Total revenues	261,538	316,336	59,755	54,222
Premium ceded to re-insurers	(27,088)	(37,173)	-	-
Net claims	(80,077)	(79,922)	-	-
Fee and commission expenses	(10,876)	(11,870)	-	-
Interest expense	(36,526)	(53,647)	(14,851)	(12,258)
Operating expenses	(48,697)	(69,715)	(5,859)	(5,640)
COVID-19 contribution	(1,175)	-	(500)	-
Allowance for loan impairment of a subsidiary (net)	(9,237)	(5,527)	-	-
Total expenses	(213,676)	(257,854)	(21,210)	(17,898)
Profit before tax	47,862	58,482	38,545	36,324
Income tax expense	(5,463)	(8,358)	(500)	(410)
Profit for the year	42,399	50,124	38,045	35,914
Profit for the year attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	33,700	32,121	38,045	35,914
Non-controlling interests	8,699	18,003	-	-
	42,399	50,124	38,045	35,914
Basic earnings per share attributable to the equity holders of the Parent Company (RO)	0.044	0.041	0.040	0.035
Other comprehensive (loss) / income:				
Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:				
Cash flow hedges – effective portion of change in fair value	(475)	-	(475)	-
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	350	-	257	-
Equity accounted investee – share of OCI	(685)	-	(685)	-
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	(1)	(15)	(1)	(15)
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Changes in fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income and share of OCI from equity accounted investee – net of tax	(5,915)	(481)	(4,436)	(2,076)
Other comprehensive loss for the year	(6,726)	(496)	(5,340)	(2,091)
Total comprehensive income for the year	35,673	49,628	32,705	33,823
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	27,210	31,476	32,705	33,823
Non-controlling interests	8,463	18,152	-	-
	35,673	49,628	32,705	33,823

Note: The audited financial statements of the Company would be made available to any Shareholder or interested Party on request in Arabic or in English within 7 days from the date of request.
PO Box 3886, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: +968 24769500, Fax: +968 24951620

JABREEN CAPITAL



'Oil price rally to reduce Oman's immediate borrowing needs'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oil prices have risen recently to nearly US\$70 per barrel, sharply up from US\$52 at the end of last year. If sustained during the rest of this year, higher oil prices will reduce the immediate government borrowing and external financing needs of the GCC countries, most significantly for Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, Moody's Investors Service has said.

Higher oil prices, which are now US\$20 per barrel above Moody's average assumption for 2021, will also increase the resources available to advance the economic diversification projects of the sultanate and other GCC countries, the ratings agency said in a report released on Thursday.

'If sustained during the rest of the year, higher oil prices will reduce immediate government borrowing and external financing needs by boosting government revenues well above our expectations as well as the budgeted amounts, which were based on oil price assumptions in the US\$40-US\$50/barrel range,' Moody's said.

For the GCC sovereigns with the lowest budgetary breakevens, Moody's said higher oil prices could even result in fiscal surpluses and help to reverse some of the large debt increases during 2020, provided the additional revenue is not used to fund higher than budgeted spending.



Moody's estimates that a US\$20 per barrel increase in the average oil price could improve GCC fiscal revenues (and government balances) by around 5-10 per cent of GDP relative to its current forecasts. 'Due to their large size of the oil and gas sector relative to the overall GDP, the effects would be most pronounced for Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.'

The state budgets of Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, Moody's said, are most sensitive to changes in the oil price. As per Moody's estimates, a sustained US\$20 per barrel increase in oil price could

improve Oman's fiscal revenues by around 9 per cent of the country's GDP.

However, the duration and durability of the current oil price rally remains uncertain, Moody's noted, adding 'there is a risk that the prospect of higher than budgeted oil prices will prompt governments to relax their fiscal consolidation efforts planned for the year and increase spending in areas that may be difficult to reverse when oil prices are lower like social spending and wages.'

Oil prices, Moody's explained, have recently bounced back to

pre-coronavirus levels and now exceed the budgetary breakeven prices of some GCC sovereigns [including Oman].

As per Moody's, Oman's budgetary breakeven oil price stands at around US\$60 per barrel. 'Oman's 2021 breakeven oil price is significantly lower than in previous years due to the government's decision to move oil and gas related spending equivalent to more than 6 per cent of GDP off the budget to newly established Energy Development Oman,' the ratings agency noted.

Despite still weak global oil

demand, crude oil prices have risen in anticipation of a strong economic recovery in 2021 on the back of the global vaccination drive and large government stimulus packages, especially in the US.

The oil price rally has also been supported by the greater than expected production cuts from the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), especially Saudi Arabia. In February, OPEC as a whole produced 15 per cent fewer barrels of crude oil per day than it produced on average during 2019.



A file photo shows workers at Qatar's Lusail Stadium construction site (AFP)

Qatar extends minimum wage to all workers

Doha, Qatar - A minimum wage of US\$275 a month came into force for all workers in Qatar on Saturday, official media reported, as the Gulf state overhauls its labour laws amid international scrutiny in the runup to the 2022 World Cup.

The minimum became mandatory for all newly signed contracts from August 30, and will now also be compulsory for existing employment agreements.

It requires that all workers, including domestic staff, be paid at least QR1,000 (US\$275) for a month of full-time work - equivalent to around US\$1.30 an hour.

Employers are also required to either provide bed and board, or an additional QR800 a month allowance for food and accommodation.

Previously, there was a temporary minimum wage set at QR750 (US\$206) a month.

The state-run Qatar News Agency reported that the Labour Ministry had 'announced imple-

mentation of new minimum wage for all workers starting Saturday'.

Campaign group Migrant Rights has said that the new level is too low and does not reflect Qatar's high cost of living.

The Labour Ministry has said the changes will 'boost investment in the local economy and drive economic growth'.

'Qatar is the first country in the region to introduce a non-discriminatory minimum wage, which is part of a series of historical reforms of the country's labour laws,' the International Labour Organization said in a statement.

'More than 400,000 workers or 20 per cent of the private sector will benefit directly.'

Qatar has made a series of reforms to its employment regulations since being selected to host the 2022 World Cup, which has required a vast programme of construction dependent on foreign workers.

AFP

MARKET ANALYSIS - OMAN

Positive economic outlook props up MSM

The Muscat Securities Market (MSM) recorded weekly gains as investor sentiments improved after significant increase in oil prices and the announcement of the sultanate's new Economic Stimulus Plan.

The gain in the benchmark MSM30 index was supported by all the sub-indices during last week. The MSM30 index ended the week up by 1.40 per cent. While Financial index rose by 0.88 per cent, Services and Industrial indices gained 0.59 per cent and 0.39 per cent, respectively. The MSM Shariah index was higher by 0.95 per cent.

Foreign investors will be entitled to ownership of land for the first time in the sultanate under the new Economic Stimulus Plan unveiled by the Omani government. According to the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), the move is part of a series of incentives offered by the government to enhance Oman's investment appeal, as well as ease the business environment severely impacted by the pandemic and economic slowdown.

Local new

►Oman Fisheries Company (OFC) has outlined plans to set up two new subsidiaries to oversee its investments in a new fishing fleet as well as in value-added processing activities. Oman Fishing Fleet Company (OFFC) is proposed to be the primary portal for the value chain model where its core operations would be fishing in the high seas and selling the catch



(Muscat Daily)

to the parent company. The new subsidiary will also enter into strategic tie-ups with international fishing fleet companies that are interested in joining hands with OFFC to fish in Omani waters on profit-sharing or fish catch sharing arrangements. The second spin-off, named Value Added Processing Company (VAP), will focus on adding value to the processed fish by introducing high-end ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products targeted primarily at health-conscious consumers.

►Ooredoo's highly anticipated Data Centre is now open for business. The 7,000 sqm facility, located in Baushar, was completed in less than 12 months, and is now fully

equipped to manage the requirements of the rapidly growing demands for local hosts and digital data processing in Oman. ►Al Hassan Engineering Company reported a net profit of RO14.6mn in audited financials compared to RO0.052mn in initial disclosure. Higher profit was largely because of gain on loss of control of subsidiaries in the UAE amounting to RO14.56mn. Company lost control of three of its subsidiaries in the UAE, namely, Al Hasan Engineering Company Dubai LLC, Al Hasan Engineering Company Abu Dhabi LLC and Al Hasan Technidas Reunidas Project LLC.

►A'Saffa Foods has announced the completion of its poultry production plant expansion in

Thamrait in Dhofar Governorate.

This new expansion adds several new facilities and expands on existing ones, enabling A'Saffa Foods to increase its production capacity to meet the high demand for white meat both locally and regionally. Furthermore, this new expansion will increase the production capacity to 45,000 metric tonnes. The new expansion is in Hanfit, Thamrait with a total area of 50 sqkm. It introduced several facilities like hatcheries, breeding farms, a feed mill, and a slaughterhouse, in addition to a wastewater treatment plant.

GCC markets

Saudi Arabia's inflation acceler-

ated to 5.2 per cent in February 2021, according to recent data by the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT).

The authority attributed the growth in inflation to an increase in value-added tax (VAT) from 5 per cent to 15 per cent from July 1, 2020. The cost-of-living index for February rose to 103.87 points, according to the base year 2018, compared to 98.69 points the year before. The increase in consumer price index (CPI) was mainly driven by a rise of 11.2 per cent year-on-year in the average prices of food and beverages and a 9.8 per cent increase in the transport sector, as vehicle prices grew by 9.9 per cent. The governor of Qatar Cen-

tral Bank (QCB) hailed the ability of Qatari banks to maintain the strength of their financial position despite the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing that measures to confront it did not affect the financing policies of the banking sector in the country. He said that the financing policies of banks are achieving their goals, indicating that the domestic credit growth exceeded QR1tn at the end of 2020.

Majority of Qatari companies have reported their profitability for the year 2020. As per the companies which have announced the results (excluding four), Qatar reported net income of QR37.3bn in 2020 compared to QR39.2bn in 2019, drop of 4.8 per cent. In terms of quarterly numbers, the fourth quarter of 2020 was the lowest in 2020 with profitability at QR6.8bn compared to QR8.54bn in the third quarter. Banks and petrochemical companies were the leading contributor to the profitability.

Global news

The US Federal Reserve announced the outcome of its meeting last week. Some of the salient announcements include:

Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) left its benchmark rate unchanged in the range of zero per cent to 0.25 per cent and said it would continue its US\$120bn monthly bond purchases.

Fed policymakers appear in no hurry to hike rates, continuing to back rates to remain near-zero through 2023.

The US economy is expected to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2021, and 3.3 per cent in 2022, up from previous estimates of 4.2 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively.

The pace of inflation is forecast to improve to 2.4 per cent in 2021, and 2 per cent in 2022, compared with prior estimates of 1.8 per cent and 1.9 per cent, respectively.

Recommendation

The US equity markets took off to start the week as the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) climbed to new record highs yet again. However, the markets remained volatile during the week as investors awaited FOMC meeting outcome, which continued their same dovish stance.

The GCC markets remained range bound as oil price came off after touching highs in earlier weeks.

The banking and petrochemical sectors continued to be most sought stocks in GCC.

Locally, the market was buoyed by the news of economic stimulus approval and its subsequent benefits to various sectors. Also, we saw some of the companies in financial sector revising their dividends lower, which to some extent affected the performance of the sector.

The companies in Oman are disclosing their management outlook reports. We advise investors to go through these reports as they detail about the future plans.

Bank Muscat gives tablets and laptops to students

In line with its leading role in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Bank Muscat has started the eighth edition of its annual Tadamun programme.

The programme is currently distributing 1,150 tablets and laptops to school and university students from low-income families. The distribution of the devices is being organised in cooperation with Walis' offices and charity organisations across different governorates of the sultanate, and reflects the bank's strong partnership with the community.

Speaking on the occasion, Talib Saif al Makhmari, manager, Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, said, "The sustainability and CSR strategy pursued by Bank Muscat is focused on bringing long-term benefits to the community and the nation. Bank Muscat is proud to partner with the Government of Oman to develop Omani human resources and empower the youth. This is in keeping with our vital role in Public-Private Partnership and should also be seen in the



context of the new challenges brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

"We hope that deserving families across the sultanate will benefit from this initiative

Mazoon Electricity wins at Asian Power Awards

Oman's leading electricity provider, Mazoon Electricity Company has won the 'Environmental Upgrade of the Year' recognition at the 2020 Asian Power Awards in recognition for its successful environmentally friendly electrical transformers.

Considered as the 'Oscars of the power industry', Asian Power Awards honours ground-breaking projects and trailblazing initiatives in the power sector in Asia. The awards aimed at recognising the broad spectrum of Asia's power industry and acknowledging their vital input.

Several leading Asian power companies participated in the awards. The jury of the Asian Power Awards encompassed practitioners and experts from related industry.

Understanding that current and future energy challenges require a market efficient, reliable, and environment-friendly technology, Mazoon Electricity uses modern approaches to implement suitable environmental upgrades. As part of this strategy, the company began using environment friendly green oil as an insulating medium in the elec-



tricity transformers rather than traditional mineral oil.

Mazoon Electricity was honoured with the Asian Power Awards for its state-of-the-art execution capabilities of this important project.

Salim Said al Kamyani, chief executive officer, Mazoon Electricity, said, "This global recognition of our performance is an endorsement of our sustained business excellence practices. We are honoured and proud to receive this award. It is an acknowledgement of our commitment to provide cutting-edge solutions and services underlined by our dedication to extending

continuing value to our customers, communities, and shareholders in a responsible and sustainable way.

"Using the green oil in the electricity transformers, for which Mazoon won the award for, will benefit the environment and society in general. We are proud of the honour and delighted to be leading the energy sector's transition towards the continuous development and improvement of the market. The success of Mazoon Electricity at Asian Power Awards also reiterates the determination to augment the Oman's global position in the field of sustainable development."

Alizz Islamic Bank conducts Bushra savings account draw

Alizz Islamic Bank organised the latest monthly draw event for Oman's first Sharia'a-compliant Prize Savings Account, Bushra, recently. The draw was held at Alizz Islamic Bank head office, in the presence of a number of senior staff members of the bank.

Three winners received the monthly prize of RO25,000 each. The special monthly draws for men and women were also conducted, which include one male winner from each branch, receiving RO500 each and one female winner from each branch, receiving RO500 each as well.

Alizz Islamic Bank launched the Bushra Prize Savings Account in 2016 as Oman's first Sharia'a-compliant prize savings account offering daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual cash prizes as hiba (gift) from the shareholders.

The account, which comes with the approval of the Sharia'a Supervisory Board, reflects the bank's efforts to deliver innovative and high-quality products and ensure a premium customer experience.

Bushra Prize Savings Account is based on the Sharia'a principle of 'Mudaraba' under which the bank invests customer savings in Sharia'a-compliant financing to generate the best possible re-



turns and profits. The customer acts as the capital provider while the bank takes up the role of 'Mudarib' or entrepreneur.

All customer funds, along with the bank's own capital, are pooled and invested in Sharia'a-compliant investment options. The profit generated are being shared between the bank and the customer on predetermined ratios.

Cash prizes offered under the scheme are gift from shareholders' funds. The minimum amount required to be eligible for all the draws is only RO100, and customers also receive monthly generated profit on their deposited amounts.

Bushra Prize Savings account reflects the bank's commitment in pioneering innovative Sharia'a-

compliant products and services that cater to customers' needs.

Today, Alizz Islamic Bank delivers over 35 innovative retail and wholesale products that are designed to meet the basic needs of individuals and companies enabling them to fulfill their financial requirements.

Speaking on the draw, Murtadha Jawad al Lawati, AGM - head of Marketing & Corporate Communications, said, "The Bushra prize savings account encourages the habit of saving and gives customers the ability to multiply their wealth. We strive to help customers invest their money and achieve their desired financial returns by saving their funds, and we are always keen to deliver the products and services that customers want and need."

Galaxy A52, A72 make innovation accessible

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd unveiled the Samsung Galaxy A52, A52 5G and A72, making powerful innovation accessible to everyone in Oman. The latest Samsung Galaxy A series lets you communicate and express yourself with an awesome camera, immerse yourself in a clear viewing experience with a smooth scrolling display, and enjoy greater peace of mind with innovative Galaxy foundation features including water resistance and a long-lasting battery. The Galaxy A series will also expand your mobile experience by providing access to the wider Galaxy ecosystem of connected devices, such as Galaxy Buds Pro, Galaxy SmartTag, and Galaxy Tab.

"At Samsung, we are driven by our enduring commitment to provide those we serve with the products they require, features they deserve, and technologies that make a real difference," said Osman Albora, senior director - Mobile Division, Samsung Gulf Electronics.

"The Galaxy A52, A52 5G and A72 represent the latest successful step in this direction. These next-generation products are sure to deliver an awesome experience and make a positive impact in the tech world, with accessible prices ensuring nobody misses out."



Awesome camera

Samsung has set the bar high for camera quality, and the Galaxy A52, A52 5G and A72 are no different. By making exciting camera innovations available for the new Galaxy A series, you can enjoy more fun and versatile photos and videos.

►Versatile Camera Experience - Shoot vivid and crisp photos and videos with ease thanks to a versatile quad camera with 64MP high-resolution. Instantly turn your favourite moments from 4K videos into 8MP high-resolution images with 4K Video Snap. Scene Optimizer uses AI to shoot with optimal settings for 30 categories of images and backgrounds such as food, landscapes, and pets.

►Stable day or night - Whether

filming the latest dance trend or capturing a new skateboard trick, OIS (optical image stabilization) ensures pictures and videos come out sharp and steady. No need to miss an important moment anymore because of low lighting. Night mode uses multi-frame processing, resulting in a bright and crisp image even in the dark.

►Fun content capture - Add style and unique flair to content using AR Emoji and My Filter. Additionally, you can now apply AR Lenses from Snapchat with Fun Mode when snapping content from the native camera app.

►Brighter and Smoother - Enjoy your favourite show on Samsung's beloved Super AMOLED display. Now with 120Hz refresh rates on the Galaxy A52 5G, and 90Hz on the Galaxy A52 and

A72, the scrolling experience is even smoother. Keep watching and scrolling social media posts even when outside thanks to an increased 800nits luminance.

►Comfortable viewing experience - The display is also 'Eye Care' certified, and automatically adjusts the display's color temperature based on smartphone usage patterns to reduce eye fatigue with 'Eye Comfort Shield'.

►Refined design - The new Galaxy A series features a refreshed design that is simple yet purposeful with a soft-edge design and minimal camera housing.

The new Galaxy A series experience is enhanced by the seamless connections and new opportunities offered through the Samsung Galaxy ecosystem.

►Stay organised and connected - SmartThings connects to and controls thousands of devices in a smart home environment right from the Galaxy A series—including wearables, tablets, PCs and TVs. Additionally, SmartThings Find locates your paired devices with more intuitive and detailed directions, and Galaxy SmartTag Bluetooth locator can find non-connected devices.

The new Galaxy A Series will be available in Awesome Violet, Awesome Blue, Awesome Black, and Awesome White starting March 18.

Hyundai NEXO awarded maximum five-star Green NCAP rating

Hyundai Motor's second-generation fuel cell electric vehicle, NEXO, has received a maximum five-star rating from Green NCAP, the independent organisation that ranks vehicles based on their energy efficiency and emissions.

The rating was based on three indices, each of which contained several metrics: clean air, energy efficiency and greenhouse gases. As a fuel cell electric vehicle, powered by hydrogen and producing distilled water as its only emission, NEXO naturally scored full points on both the Clean Air and Greenhouse Gas index.

Its excellent rating for energy efficiency was a further testament to the quality of the product, proving that fuel cell mobility is a mature technology and a viable transportation solution.

In its report, Green NCAP



wrote, '[With Hyundai NEXO] there are no tailpipe emissions other than water. As a result, the NEXO scores full points for both the Clean Air and Greenhouse Gas indexes. Energy efficiency is

also very high and the NEXO emerges with an average index just high enough to earn the car a maximum five-star rating.'

"We're proud to announce that NEXO is the latest Hyundai

model to have been awarded a five-star Green NCAP rating, joining the ranks of IONIQ and KONA Electric. This is further proof that we are achieving our goal of making high-quality,

eco-friendly mobility solutions available to all," says Andreas-Christoph Hofmann, vice president Marketing and Product at Hyundai Motor Europe.

"Our flagship fuel cell electric

vehicle has been recognised not just for being an environmentally-friendly zero-emission vehicle, but also a strong product with very high energy efficiency."

Hyundai's NEXO is a fuel cell electric vehicle and the technological flagship of Hyundai's growing eco-vehicle fleet. It combines the practicality of an SUV crossover with advanced electrified technology, comprehensive driver assistance functions and innovative design features.

NEXO is the third Hyundai model to receive a maximum five-star rating. In 2019, Green NCAP also awarded the five-star rating to the battery-electric version of Hyundai IONIQ.

In 2020 the organisation also awarded the Hyundai KONA Electric the maximum score.

The full report can be found at

<https://www.greencap.com/assessments/hyundai-nexo-2021-0069/>

Green NCAP

Green NCAP is an independent initiative which aims to promote the development of cars which are clean, energy efficient and not harmful to the environment.

The organisation uses a broad range of tests that go above and beyond legislative testing and, through consumer information, rewards manufacturers whose vehicles go beyond the minimum requirements.

OTE Group is the exclusive dealer for Hyundai in Oman offering excellent sales and after-sales service support, underpinned by a nationwide service network, that's on par with global standards. For more information dial 800-50003.

'0% interest for three years' offer on classy Nissan Altima comes to an end on March 23

As part of a special offer, Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), is extending zero per cent interest up to three years on Nissan Altima which is known for its classy design, fuel economy, driving performance, technology, and comfortability. Other interest slabs on Nissan Altima include 1.99 per cent for four years or 2.49 per cent for five years or 2.99 per cent for six years.

Nissan Oman is also offering a wide range of benefits on Nissan Altima including periodic maintenance service, cash gift, free registration and free insurance on the model. The special promotion will be available till March 23 on Nissan Altima purchased for personal use.

A senior official of Nissan Oman said, "We have received a tremendous response to the Nissan Altima since we announced the offer. It is popular because it offers an outstanding drive, enhanced handling, fuel efficiency and thoughtful technology solutions. Its powerful high-performance engine and a range of other options adds to its appeal. We would like to remind that the offer is coming to end soon, and request interested customers to take advantage of the promotion at the earliest."

Nissan Altima is also cherished by owners in Oman for its good looks, striking exterior, colour range, spaciousness and



fashionable interior have brought the car a lifetime of fans. The vehicle offers those who drive it an effortless power while furthering remarkable fuel economy.

Special interest rate
Special rate of interest is available on Nissan Altima. On select models of Nissan Altima customers can get zero per cent up to three years or 1.99 per cent for four years or 2.49 per cent for five years or 2.99 per cent for six years. For all tenures beyond six years, normal interest rates will apply for the full tenure of the loan. This rate is applicable for individual purchase with private registration only and is subject to Finance/Credit approval.

Customers can opt for only one of the interest rate options. EMIs will be highest for zero per cent for three years scheme. This offer is valid till stocks of these unit last. This benefit will be applicable for financing through select finance companies only. Customers purchasing in cash, LPO, credit will not be eligible for special interest rate benefit. Terms and conditions apply.

EMI
Customers can avail low EMI rate as part of the offer. Starting EMI for Nissan Altima starting EMI is RO163. These EMIs are calculated basis 2.99 per cent rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure and the special interest

rates are applicable on select stocks of these models.

Free insurance
Nissan Altima customers can enjoy free insurance in Oman and UAE for first year for private registration.

Service package
Customers can enjoy free periodic maintenance service package for 3 years/ 60,000km on Nissan Altima. This offer is valid for 10,000km service intervals.

Assured cash gift
Under the special promotion, customers can avail assured cash gift ranging from RO2,200 to RO2,600 on Nissan Altima.

Free registration
Nissan Altima patrons can enjoy free registration for the first year.

Advanced safety features
Nissan Altima has advanced safety features for those seeking a more focused driving experience. Owners vouch that with its advanced technology and in-built design, Nissan Altima is a pleasure to drive.
The Nissan Altima 2.0lt Turbo, which has a new standard of design, driving enjoyment and technology has been creating waves within the mid-size sedan segment since its launch. The sedan's advanced VC-Turbo engine - the company's first pro-

duction-ready variable compression ratio engine - is one of the most advanced internal combustion engines ever created. Similarly, Nissan Altima 2.5lt features expressive styling, an uplifting interior, two powertrains, and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility features.

The Nissan Altima 2.0 has the world's first variable compression turbo engine. The engine is so smart that it anticipates what the driver wants. The Altima's shape-shifting VC-turbo engine lets the driver enjoy a lot. Nissan Altima 2.5lt unlocks the pure joy of driving through its innovative latest technology and Nissan Intelligent Mobility feature that responds to the world around in real time.

The VC-Turbo engine has been developed after years of research and consumer feedback. It seamlessly changes its compression ratio between 8:1 (for high performance) and 14:1 (for high efficiency) - with an advanced multi-link system continuously raising or lowering the pistons' reach to transform the compression ratio. While a high compression ratio gives greater efficiency, a low compression ratio allows for greater power and torque and avoids knocking.

Driving enjoyment
Creating a new standard of design, driving enjoyment and technology within the mid-size sedan

segment, Nissan Altima features expressive styling, an uplifting interior, two powertrains, and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility features.

Among the Nissan Altima's many features, perhaps the one that stands out most is its 'class above' appeal, which is apparent at first look and first touch of both the exterior and interior executions.

Technology
Cutting-edge Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies have been integrated into the Altima as standard. These include Nissan's Rear Cross Traffic Alert, which helps drivers to detect stationary objects when reversing. When an object is detected, the system warns the driver with visual and audible warnings. Altima also provides front, side and rear safety monitoring and intervention technologies - including Automatic Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection, Lane Departure Warning (LDW), radar-based Blind Spot Warning (BSW), Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) and High Beam Assist (HBA).
Nissan is now offering extended service hours at Nissan Service Centre. Service hour has been extended from 5.30pm to 7pm. It is currently available at Azaiba only.
For test drive options call Nissan Toll free 80050011.

Kempinski Hotel Muscat gets new finance director

In line with its strategy and continuous vision to develop and promote Omani talents to occupy important executive positions, Kempinski Hotel Muscat announced the appointment of Mohammed al Harrasi as director of finance, with effect from March 1.

As the first Omani director of finance in Muscat and an experienced professional hotelier, Harrasi brings over 25 years' experience in hotel operations to his new role, and we are confident that he will be a valuable addition to the executive team as we continue to deliver sustained profitable growth.

Harrasi joined Kempinski Hotel Muscat as director of purchasing in 2017, where he has managed to understand and fully commit to every DNA value in a way that is uniquely Kempinski. He complements our strong performance-oriented culture, and his impressive reputation for execution and achieving results makes him the right choice to lead our finance team.

Harrasi was one of the highly deserving winners of the 'Hospitality Championship 2020' awards, in recognition of his exemplary achievements in supporting Omani Craft Industries by purchasing locally crafted items to be used at the hotel, not to mention his continuous efforts to enhance the career development of local talents in his department.

Before Kempinski Hotel Muscat, Harrasi served as logistics manager at the hotel Crowne Plaza Muscat. In his role, he developed new strategies to streamline processes and reduce costs, ensured that



quality, quantity, customer satisfaction and financial commitments were met and performed metrics reporting and data analysis tasks to identify issues and opportunities for process improvements.

He also served as purchasing manager at Shangri-La Barr al Jissah Resort & Spa in 2015. He was responsible for all supply chain management duties, including monitoring vendors for quality, service and price through standard purchasing specifications, assessing budgets and organising storage.

Carsten Wiegandt, general manager of the hotel, said, "The appointment of Mohammed al Harrasi confirms the keenness and commitment of the hotel management towards its vision and goal of contributing to the promotion of Omani talents. At the hotel, we are constantly working to achieve our goal of training and refining national competencies."

Harrasi said, "I am proud to hold the position of director of finance at Kempinski Hotel Muscat. The hotel has a prominent position in the sultanate through the services and products it provides. Therefore, I am proud to join the management team."

Roses are blooming now at Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort

Moments of relaxation and tranquillity are in full bloom with the return of the highly anticipated Rose Season at the Middle East's highest resort. Every spring, Anantara al Jabal al Akhdar Resort welcomes the spectacular rose season that transforms the surrounding slopes of the fabled green mountain into a riot of colour with an abundance of indigenous pink Damask roses that burst into full bloom every year from mid-March until May.

In honour of this exquisite natural wonder, the resort is offering a special Rose Season Package for two, which includes an overnight stay in a room or villa, breakfast at Al Maisan, a 'Rose Water of Jabal Akhdar' tour and a Rose Rescue Ritual at Anantara Spa, starting from RO250. With the roses in full bloom and a range of experiences to enjoy, from F&B to adventure and spa, a fully immersive multi-sensory treat awaits guests at Oman's leading resort.



With the 'Rose Water of Jabal Akhdar' tour, guests can witness the enchanting bloom and heady aroma of the Damask roses cascading down the mountain slopes. Accompanied by an expert mountain guru, embark on a 90-minute guided tour of the famed damask rose farms of Jebel Akhdar and one of the oldest rose distilleries to discover the ancestral technique of extracting varieties of pure rose water from the harvest petals.

During the tour, guests will have the opportunity to watch

the local rose-pickers in action as they work their way through the different stages of rose water production, from plucking the blossoms from the stems to placing them inside traditional mud ovens, known as 'Al-duh-jan', for distillation. With a variety of climbing routes and hiking trails, guests can explore the mountain landscape and soak in the beauty as bushes groan under the weight of flowers in full bloom and the sweet scent of roses wafts in the air.

For a more laid-back experience, guests can also look forward to a luxurious and soothing spa treatment at the world renowned Anantara Spa, where the essence of fragrant roses and the expert touch of wellness therapists will see them leaving in the pink of health.

For more information or to make a booking, call +968 2521 8000, visit the website at jabal-akhdar.anantara.com or email jabalalakhdar@anantara.com.



Oman Cricket to host Ramadan tournament

Oman Cricket (OC) will organise 1st T10 Ramadan Bash Floodlight MRI-ball Cricket Tournament on its famed OC Turf 1 green ground in Amerat from April 10 to 21.

Country's top 16 softball teams, to be registered on first come, first served basis, are likely to participate in Ramadan's biggest cricket bonanza that guarantees each team a minimum of two league games before moving on to the knockout stage. As per the tournament format, two matches will be played daily, first starting at 7.15pm, to be followed by the second at 9pm. Each team must pay RO140 as the registration

fee and fill up a form at <https://forms.gle/BLkghc5QQ9Dd6vEE9>.

A maximum of two players from the Premier Division are allowed to play for one team. All the teams will be required to arrange their own jersey (t-shirt and trouser) of a colour of their choice.

The OC-organised tournament will be supervised by qualified umpires.

The tournament's champion will walk away with the Winner's Trophy and a cash prize of RO250 with the Runner-up receiving a trophy and a cash prize of RO150.

Milipol Qatar 2021 attracts 7,924 visitors

Milipol Qatar 2021, the leading international event dedicated to homeland security and civil defence in the Middle East, closed a three-day run at the Doha Exhibition & Convention Centre. The number of visitors reached 7,924 and an on-site declared sales tally worth QR390mn.

The event is held under the patronage of the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani who visited Milipol Qatar 2021 on March 16.

Milipol Qatar 2021 was a watershed in the event's history in that it was held against a background of strict health, safety and hygiene protocols implemented to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, the show, at-



tracted 150 exhibitors from 17 countries and five national pavilions representing Brazil, France, Germany, the UK, and USA. Fifty-four per cent of the exhibitors were new to Milipol Qatar.

The exhibitor line-up was a showcase of advanced technology include breakthroughs in the fields of robotics, biometrics, trace and detection technologies, communication, and control systems as well as counter-drone

systems, big data, smart sensors, 5G, and AI-based cybersecurity and video analytics.

The exhibiting turnout was largely attracted by industry forecasts which predict the Middle East's homeland security market will grow to be worth US\$19.7bn by the end of 2022. Milipol Qatar was one of the industry's first opportunities to meet face-to-face since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pandemic has supercharged the industry's response to a rapidly changing world. National security are focusing on protection from and response to cybercrime, pandemics, humanitarian crises, and climate change," explained Marie La-

grénée, events director, Milipol Qatar.

"These changing priorities were in evidence amongst the highly sophisticated technology on display at Milipol Qatar 2021 and which will find its way into the industry's newly formed mainstream."

The show which was inaugurated by Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al Thani, along with other dignitaries from 30 countries which included Ministers from Ukraine, Moldova, Pakistan, Lebanon and Iraq.

Some 257 delegates also attended the two-day Milipol Qatar seminar series which was addressed by 16 experts.

China dominates Austin's India visit

New Delhi, India - Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin praised India's growing ties with 'like-minded partners' as he held talks in New Delhi on Saturday dominated by shared alarm about China.

India is a vital US partner in the Asia-Pacific region as Washington seeks to take on Beijing, and Austin's two-day trip is New Delhi's first face-to-face meeting with President Joe Biden's administration.

It follows hot on the heels of frosty US-China talks in Alaska and a visit by Austin and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Japan and South Korea, two other important partners irked by China.

Last week saw the first ever summit of the leaders of the Quad, a four-way alliance of the US, Japan, Australia and India seen as a bulwark against China.

In early April the four countries' navies - plus that of France - are due to hold joint exercises in the Bay of Bengal.

Austin arrived in New Delhi late on Friday and held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Austin told Modi that he 'commended India's leadership role in the Indo-Pacific and growing engagement with like-minded partners across the region to promote shared goals', Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said.

Also not mentioning China directly, Modi tweeted that 'India and US are committed to our strategic partnership that is a force for global good'.

Washington is keen for its partners in the region to deepen cooperation among themselves into 'a network of overlapping re-



US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin (right) with India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh before taking the guard of honour, in India's capital New Delhi on Saturday (AFP)

lationships' not necessarily involving the US, a senior US official said.

To that end, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar and Australian counterpart Marise Payne will hold separate meetings with their French and Indonesian opposite numbers Jean-Yves Le

Drian and Retno Marsudi in New Delhi in mid-April, the Hindustan Times reported.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said after meeting Austin that he had agreed to 'pursue enhanced cooperation with the US Indo-Pacific Command, Central Command and

Africa Command'. He told reporters that New Delhi wanted 'to make the Indian-US relationship one of the defining partnerships of (the) 21st century'.

Austin called India a 'central pillar of our approach to the region', hailing the two nations' 'shared values and converging

strategic interests'.

Historically prickly

Austin is also meeting Jaishankar later on Saturday.

He may raise the question of human rights in India, with a second senior US official calling the issue 'an important part of the

Biden administration defence and foreign policy'.

US-Indian relations have historically been prickly but China's growing assertiveness pushed them closer together under Modi and former US president Donald Trump.

This accelerated after 20 In-

dian soldiers and four Chinese troops died last June in a clash on their disputed border high in the Himalayas.

The nuclear-armed Asian giants then sent thousands of extra troops to the frontier, although tensions have eased somewhat with a pull-back from one area of contention.

Beijing has irked New Delhi with its support for arch-rival Pakistan, as have Chinese investments in Indian Ocean nations that India sees as its backyard.

India and China have also engaged in a tussle of 'vaccine diplomacy', competing to supply other countries with coronavirus shots to secure goodwill and influence.

'Major Defence Partner'

In 2016, the United States designated India a 'Major Defence Partner', and they have since signed a string of deals easing the transfer of advanced weaponry and deepening military cooperation.

US defence firms have inked billions of dollars in deals to supply military hardware, including helicopters, under India's US\$250bn modernisation of its armed forces.

But Russia is India's biggest arms supplier and New Delhi agreed in 2018 a US\$5.4bn purchase of Moscow's S-400 missile defence system, even though this could lead to US sanctions.

Austin's visit so soon after Biden took office 'shows the priority Washington is assigning to New Delhi', Manoj Joshi from India's Observer Research Foundation told AFP.

AFP

Sri Lanka bus crash kills 14

Colombo, Sri Lanka - A crowded bus crashed into a precipice in central Sri Lanka on Saturday, killing the driver and 13 passengers in the worst road accident in 16 years, police said.

The bus was travelling through the hilly region of Passara when it went off the road and crashed as the driver swerved to avoid an oncoming truck at a narrow pass, police said.

Five of the dead passengers were women and eight were men, police said, while another 30 people sustained injuries. CCTV footage suggested the bus driver was negligent before the accident. An investigation was under way.

129 died in Tunisia in '11

Tunis, Tunisia - Tunisia's government has finally given an official toll of 129 dead and 634 injured in its 2011 revolution, in what an independent body called 'a strong signal' of a democratic transition.

The tally, long demanded by victims' families, was published late Friday on the eve of the 65th anniversary of Tunisia's independence.

"It is recognition by the state of the sacrifices made by the people for the fall of the dictatorship" of the late president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, the head of an independent association for 'martyrs and the injured' of the revolution, lawyer Abderrazak Kilani, told AFP.

AFP

Saudi coalition launches airstrikes on advancing Yemen rebels in Marib

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said on Saturday it had launched airstrikes in support of pro-government forces battling a quickening Huthi rebel advance on the northern city of Marib.

The move came after a drone strike sparked a fire at a Riyadh oil refinery Friday, in an attack claimed by the Huthis, as the Iran-backed rebels made major advances on Marib, seizing a strategic mountain.

The official Saudi Press Agency published footage of air strikes launched by the coalition, saying the campaign was designed to 'thwart the Huthi militia's attempt to advance towards Marib in Al-Kasrah'.

Al-Kasrah is one of the lines of defence to the northwest of the city, which is the government's



This file photo shows a damaged silo at the Saudi Aramco oil facility in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah (AFP)

last remaining stronghold in the north and the capital of an oil-rich region.

The coalition, which entered the Yemen conflict in 2015 to defend the beleaguered government, said it had succeeded in

destroying Huthi military equipment, including tanks, and inflicting 'heavy losses'.

Rebel-controlled Al-Masirah television reported 38 airstrikes across various parts of Marib, while a government official said

that the coalition had launched at least 20 strikes.

"At least 70 fighters were killed, including 22 from the government forces, and dozens were injured in clashes in the past 48 hours," the source said.

"The rebels launched a violent attack, including with tanks, in al-Kasrah and the attack was thwarted with aerial support from the coalition."

The Huthis and the internationally recognised government have been locked in a power struggle since 2014, when the rebels overran the capital Sanaa. Since last month, the rebels have been pushing to seize Marib.

Loss of the city would be a huge blow for the Yemeni government, but would also threaten catastrophe for civilians.

AFP

US charges 10 Iranians with evading sanctions

Washington, US - US authorities on Friday unveiled charges against ten Iranians for allegedly evading American sanctions on Tehran by concealing more than US\$300mn in transactions over 20 years through front companies.

The individuals are believed to have conducted transactions on behalf of the Iranian government, including purchasing two US\$25mn oil tankers, through more than 70 front companies in the United States, Iran, Canada, the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong, the Justice Department said in a statement.

The suspects, who were also slapped with a money laundering fine of more than US\$157mn, are believed to be outside the United States.

"Through the use of front companies, money service busi-

nesses and exchanges throughout the world, the defendants worked to disguise hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of transactions on behalf of a state sponsor of terrorism," John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security, was quoted as saying. "Make no mistake, the Department of Justice will continue to deploy all tools necessary to curb the Iranian regime's ability to use the US financial system to support its malign endeavours," he said.

If convicted of the conspiracy charge, the defendants face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Iran is subject to US economic sanctions, with previous president Donald Trump aggressively using the measures to punish the Islamic republic.

AFP

Turkey railed for pulling out of treaty protecting women

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkey sparked both domestic and international outrage on Saturday after it withdrew from the world's first binding treaty to prevent and combat violence against women.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government announced the decision before dawn on Saturday, the latest victory for conservatives in his nationalist party and their allies who argued the treaty damaged family unity.

The 2011 Istanbul Convention, signed by 45 countries and the European Union, requires governments to adopt legislation prosecuting domestic violence and similar abuse as well as marital rape and female genital mutilation.

Europe's top rights body, the Council of Europe, denounced Turkey's withdrawal from a treaty it sponsored and expressed concern about global efforts to protect women and girls.

"This move is a huge setback to these efforts and all the more deplorable because it compromises the protection of women in Turkey, across Europe and beyond," Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejcinovic Buricse said.

The treaty 'is widely regarded as the gold standard in international efforts to protect women and girls from the violence that they face every day in our societies', she added.

Conservatives had claimed the charter damages family



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a video conference call with the EU Commission President and EU Council President on Friday (AFP)

unity, encourages divorce and that its references to equality were being used to gain broader acceptance in society.

The publication of the decree in the official gazette early on Saturday immediately sparked anger among Turkish rights

groups, which called for protests in Istanbul.

Gokce Gokcen, deputy chairperson of the main opposition

CHP party, said abandoning the treaty meant 'keeping women second-class citizens and letting them be killed'.

'Despite you and your evil, we will stay alive and bring back the convention,' she said on Twitter.

Turkey had been debating a possible departure after an official in Erdogan's party raised dropping the treaty last year.

Since then, women have taken to the streets in cities across the country calling on the government to stick to the convention.

Labour and Social Services Minister Zehra Zumrut Selcuk said that Turkey's constitution and domestic regulations would instead be the 'guarantee of the women's rights'.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Paris enters new lockdown as Europe resumes AstraZeneca vaccinations

Paris, France - A third of France's population was under a new partial lockdown on Saturday to stop the spread of COVID-19, as some European countries resumed AstraZeneca vaccinations following an all-clear from EU regulators and the WHO.

The pandemic is still speeding up worldwide, with the number of new global coronavirus infections rising by 14 per cent over the last week compared to the previous week, according to AFP data.

Fighting to prevent yet another wave of the virus, several countries in Europe went back into partial lockdown on Saturday - with Poland, parts of Ukraine and some French regions all waking up to tight new restrictions.

Parisians packed trains leaving the capital and crammed into shops ahead of the new restrictions coming into force, which will apply to Paris and several other regions for a month.

The mayor of Yerres, just outside Paris, told AFP he had told businesses there to remain open, defying the 'totally incomprehensible' restrictions.

"Why would we catch COVID more in a shoe store than a bookshop?" he asked.

Bookshops are considered essential under the new measures, and later on Friday the government added florists, chocolate shops and cobblers to the list.

Signs of lockdown weariness



People walk on a pedestrian street with non-essential shops shut on the first day of a one-month lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 in the Ile-de-France region, in Paris on Saturday (AFP)

abounded in cities across the world, with protests against restrictions popping up in Vienna, Sofia and Montreal.

Infection rates are once again rising exponentially in Germany, with the vice president of the Robert Koch Institute for infectious diseases warning of signs of a return to 'many severe cases and deaths, and hospitals that are overwhelmed'.

Belgium and Switzerland, where cases are also soaring, put off lifting restrictions on Friday too.

Worries that AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine may cause blood clots had seen countries pause its use recently.

But after the European Medi-

cines Agency said it was 'safe and effective', Germany and Italy announced they were using the jab again as of Friday.

France also brought it back into use - but just hours later, the national health regulator recommended its use only for over-55s, given the reported blood clots were only seen in younger people.

WHO on AstraZeneca

World Health Organization vaccine safety experts said 'available data do not suggest any overall increase in clotting conditions' among vaccinated people.

The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Indonesia are also

ending their suspensions, while Ireland's advisory committee is recommending following suit.

Seeking to reassure their populations, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his French counterpart Jean Castex received their first AstraZeneca dose on Friday.

"I literally did not feel a thing. It was very good, very quick," Johnson said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi also committed to get the AstraZeneca vaccine soon.

While political leaders were enthusiastic, some members of the public remain reluctant.

"I'm a bit anxious of course,

but what can you do? We have to do this," said 42 year old teacher Valentina at a vaccine centre at Rome's Termini station.

'We're not scared'

In Spain, 22 year old medical student Florentino Quinteiro said he wasn't worried after receiving an AstraZeneca dose last month.

"The population isn't always familiar with the situation, but we're not scared," he said of his colleagues. "In pharmacology there's always a trade-off between benefit and risk."

Denmark, Norway and Sweden are yet to bring the jab back into use, pending further review, while Finland said on Friday it would pause for at least a week 'until there is more information'.

However, use and production of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine has been ramping up, with the Philippines becoming the latest country to give it the green light on Friday, and Indian drugmaker Stelis Biopharma signing on to produce 200mn doses.

Germany said it would order the Sputnik vaccine if the EU authorises its use.

The United States marked a major milestone in its inoculation drive on Friday, administering its 100 millionth vaccine dose to meet President Joe Biden's goal weeks ahead of schedule.

"We did it in about 60 days," he said. "We're not stopping now."

AFP



Protestors take part in a march demanding end to the restrictive measures in Kassel, central Germany, on Saturday (AFP)

Ursula threatens to ban AstraZeneca exports

Frankfurt, Germany - EU chief Ursula von der Leyen threatened on Saturday to halt exports of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccines if the bloc did not receive its promised deliveries first, escalating a row that has fanned international tensions.

"We have the option of banning a planned export. That's the message to AstraZeneca: You fulfil your contract with Europe first before you start delivering to other countries," von der Leyen told Germany's Funke media group.

The warning comes as the European Union struggles to speed up its inoculation campaign, just as many member states face a third coronavirus wave and renewed curbs on public life.

Von der Leyen said Anglo-Swedish pharma giant AstraZeneca had delivered only 30 per cent of the 90mn vaccine doses it had promised for the first quarter of the year.

The company has blamed

production delays at its EU plants, but European officials are furious that AstraZeneca has been able to deliver its UK contract while falling short on the continent.

German city clash

Police used pepper spray to disperse people protesting against coronavirus curbs in the German city of Kassel on Saturday, in one of the country's largest such rallies so far this year.

Several thousand people gathered at the main protest site on a square in the city centre, packed closely together without wearing face masks, an AFP reporter saw.

Scuffles erupted when a group of demonstrators tried to break through a police cordon to join up with other protesters, resulting in shoving and prompting officers to use pepper spray.

'This is not what a peaceful protest looks like,' North Hesse police tweeted.

AFP

UK drive completes jabbing half of all adults

London, UK - The British government on Saturday hailed its coronavirus vaccination programme as 'a huge success' after announcing half of the adult population had now received a jab.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the biggest vaccine drive in the country's history, which began in early December, was 'making massive strides' following a record number of inoculations on Friday.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson was among those to get a jab that day, receiving a first dose of AstraZeneca's vaccine at the same London hospital where he fought for his life almost a year ago after contracting the virus.

Britain has vaccinated nearly 27mn people, and administered on average more than 421,000 doses a day in the week to Mon-



Prime Minister Boris Johnson receives his first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine at the St Thomas' Hospital centre, in London on Friday (AFP)

day, according to the latest Health Ministry statistics.

However, the state-run National Health Service (NHS) in England warned this week in a letter to local vaccination centres that doses will be 'significantly constrained' from March

29 for four weeks.

The setback means the next phase of the inoculation campaign, covering people in their 40s, will have to be suspended until May, the letter said.

The government has insisted the change, caused by a supply

shortfall from the Serum Institute of India, the world's biggest vaccine maker, would not derail its plan to ease COVID-19 lockdowns in the coming months.

'I am absolutely delighted to tell you that we have now vaccinated half of all adults in the United Kingdom. It's a huge success,' Hancock said in a video posted on Twitter. 'It's so important, because this vaccine is our way out of this pandemic.'

Britain's successful vaccination campaign contrasts with Europe, which has struggled with its own rollout and has been seeing a fresh surge in infections.

The AstraZeneca jab was suspended briefly in several EU countries this month, until the European Medicines Agency restated its approval for the vaccine on Thursday.

AFP

Pakistan PM Imran Khan tests positive for COVID-19

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday, officials said, just two days after he received his first vaccination against the disease.

The 68 year old former top cricketer received a shot of the Chinese-produced Sinopharm vaccine on Thursday, as the country battles a third wave of the virus.

"At this point, the prime minister's office can only confirm that the honourable prime minister has tested positive for COVID-19 and has self-isolated," his office said.

Khan was suffering from a mild cough and a mild fever, his spokesman Shahbaz Gill later added, saying the positive test was performed on Saturday.



This image grab shows Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan receiving a dose of the Chinese-made Sinopharm, in Islamabad on Thursday (AFP)

His aides were quick to put distance between the diagnosis and his first jab of the two-dose vaccine.

"Please do not link it to the corona vaccine. Immunity develops a few weeks after the vaccine is given. Make sure to vaccinate your elders and loved

ones. Be careful," Gill added.

Khan was probably infected before he got the vaccine shot, during a series of public engagements this week, information minister Shibli Faraz told the Geo News television channel.

AFP

Protesters defy Myanmar junta; regional powers flay forces for violence

Yangon, Myanmar - Protesters returned to the streets across Myanmar on Saturday, defying a junta-led campaign of fear as regional powers Indonesia and Malaysia condemned the violence deployed by security forces against anti-coup demonstrators.

The country has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi from power in a February 1 coup, triggering a nationwide uprising as protesters call for a return to democracy.

So far, more than 230 people have been killed in anti-coup unrest, according to a local monitoring group, as security forces have deployed tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds against anti-coup protesters.

But the movement has pushed ahead - albeit in smaller numbers.

Local media showed protest-

ers in gas masks gathering in northern Shan state, while in the southern coastal city of Dawei, motorists hoisted posters of Suu Kyi and signs that said 'end the dictatorship'.

The protesters in Shan state wielded home-made shields that said 'protect unarmed civilians'.

Outside of protests, crackdowns continue on the streets and residential areas across Myanmar, said the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) monitoring group.

'Casualties and unprovoked shootings are increasing day by day,' it said.

In the central ruby-producing city of Mogoke, local media Myanmar Now reported that a neighbourhood's night guards were shot overnight.

"One died on the spot last night while two others are in critical condition in the hospital," a rescue team member confirmed



Protesters gather by a barricade during a crackdown by forces on demonstrations, in Yangon on Saturday (AFP)

to AFP, declining to give more details.

The country's commercial hub Yangon has emerged as a hotspot for unrest, as security forces armed with guns continue to root out protesters wielding homemade protection gear.

But the resistance movement

remains defiant.

"Who says we have to give up because of unequal weapons? We are born for victory," tweeted prominent activist Ei Thinzar Maung, with the hashtag #SpringRevolution.

Sporadic demonstrations persisted on Saturday across the

former capital, with a small group marching on a residential area chanting for the military to "Surrender if you do not want life in prison!"

Myanmar's regional neighbours on Friday condemned the escalating violence, with Indonesian President Joko Widodo call-

ing for a high-level regional meeting 'to discuss the crisis'.

"Indonesia urges that the use of violence in Myanmar stop to avoid more victims," he said.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin echoed the need for an 'emergency' summit among the ten-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

'I am appalled by the persistent use of lethal violence against unarmed civilians... The use of live ammunition against peaceful protests is unacceptable,' he said in a statement Friday.

'This deplorable situation must stop immediately.'

International condemnation by the United States, former colonial power Britain and the United Nations has so far failed to slow the violence.

European Union foreign ministers are set to approve sanctions on Monday against 11 junta officials, according to EU diplomats.

Since the military took over in February, the junta has sunk Myanmar further into isolation, throttling mobile data this week that left citizens without WiFi capabilities in an information blackout.

It has also instated a nightly Internet shutdown for more than a month.

Security forces have also gone after the country's press corps, raiding multiple newsrooms and arresting more than 30 since the coup, according to AAPP.

A Burmese journalist, Aung Thura, with BBC's Myanmar language service was taken away by men on Friday in the capital Naypyidaw while reporting outside a court.

'The British Embassy... shares the BBC's concerns about missing BBC Burmese journalist Aung Thura,' tweeted the embassy on Friday.

AFP

GOING SOL

The joys and challenges faced by single mothers

Mother's Day is that time of the year for children to acknowledge the role of their mothers in shaping their lives. It is also an occasion for mothers to walk back through time and cherish precious moments on the journey of nurturing their children. However, some mothers had to shoulder a dual responsibility, physically as well as emotionally, as destiny would have it so. And they did so with no regrets whatsoever. On the occasion of Mother's Day today, three 'single Moms' in Oman share some aspects of their journey – the joys and challenges of being on their own and striking unique bonds of togetherness with their children. *(As told to Hubert Vaz)*

DR LAILA AL KHARUSI

What do you see as the key challenges for a single Mom?

At the beginning it was hard to adjust my entire life to me becoming the primary custodian for our children. Especially when I had a two month old and a two year old, and I was working 45 minutes away from home. It was hard. If it wasn't for my family I would have really struggled. I also found it awkward going to play dates and seeing parents around, as I went solo.

But once I adjusted my perception of what the new norm is, it became easier. I realised quite early in my divorce that I can either play the victim, complain and feel sorry with myself, or accept change, embrace it and just get on with my life.

What do you see as the key joys for a single Mom?

Not having to share my kids with their dad, I get to have them all to myself when they are with me, and we have the best of time together going on adventures of a lifetime. And for that, I am so grateful.

How did you emotionally compensate for an absent parent?

It was different for my family. My children's father was never an absentee father ever. He is always there for them and for me, too, if I

asked him. We have a good schedule between us, on when to see the kids.

We decide together on everything related to our children. We even spend birthdays together and celebrate occasions together. We have never allowed our separation to diminish us as a family.

What type of support did you receive from family members?

All the love that I needed. All the attention that I needed. All the space that I needed. All the advice that I needed. I lucked out with the best parents and siblings, Alhamdulillah!

What advice do you have for young single mothers?

I think to feel defeated is ok. But to be defeated due to a change of circumstance is a choice. You can decide whether you want to be empowered or not. No husband, no person, no one can do that for you, except yourself. So my advice is, choose to be content and to never allow a change of circumstance to define your happiness or peace of mind.

What wish do you hold for your own mother and your children?

I pray for them to always have peace of mind and to always live earnestly. After all, it has become a rare commodity nowadays.



FAWZIA ABDULAZIZ

What do you see as the key challenges for a single Mom?

It is seriously hard to be a single parent. One of the key challenges, is the emotional challenges of a child - he/she will always want to be with both parents, especially when they see their relatives/friends with both parents. The other challenge was limited time, and fatigue, especially for a working mother.

For me it was not easy to manage these two challenges initially, since I had decided to focus more on my career. However, I worked on my time management to always spend quality time with my daughter. I must add, that I never felt the need for financial support because I worked hard to provide my daughter with the best of everything.

What do you see as the key joys for a single Mom?

What really makes me happy is, when my daughter tells me that she wants to become like me - that she wants to become a very strong woman who appreciates and value independent women. Such statements makes me stronger, especially if it comes from our children who appreciate our sacrifices. Being a single mother was very tough, indeed, but somehow I enjoyed accepting it, and it made me stronger, independent, a dreamer and a decision maker.

How did you compensate emotionally for an absent parent?

I have compensated the emotional part by spending most of my time with my career. During this period, I started working very hard to become very successful, and my aim was to reach senior positions. My parents have been a great support, besides a few close friends. Lastly, I also started working on a few hobbies to close the loop.

What type of support did you receive from family members?

I received emotional support from my parents on how to be focused and firm to overcome any obstacles.

What advice do you have for single mothers?

I emphasise, a woman is not a weak creature. We should work on our weaknesses to stand stronger and powerful. I always say, 'dream big and set your own vision/goals'. Self-motivation is the greatest tool we possess.

What wish do you hold for your own mother and your children?

I always wish good health and a long life for my mother. May the Almighty bless her and keep her safe always. And I pray to continue with the beautiful relationship with my lovely and only daughter.



SANGEETA KUNDNANI

What do you see as the key challenges for a single Mom?

As a working mother, the biggest challenge a parent would face is to manage time efficiently. It is also difficult to balance work and parenting all by oneself. Apart from physical needs, it is very important to cater to your child's emotional needs as absence of the other parent can cause numerous dilemmas.

It is true that, 'money cannot buy happiness', but lack of financial support can cause stress and anxiety. Equipping myself for these challenges came with practice - only practice. Creating a healthy and loving environment for your child is very important. I also learnt to efficiently budget expenses.

What do you see as the key joys for a single Mom?

After I learnt to parent single, nothing that could stop me. I became a multi-tasker and performed multiple roles. This feeling of achievement comes from within and no one can take it away. Being a single parent also empowered me - I started taking control of my life, gaining confidence, and taking decisions by myself. I started living the way I chose to and even enhanced my career by doing an MBA in Shipping and Logistics.

How did you emotionally compensate for an

absent parent?

To be honest, it was tough. There were many anxious days and sleepless nights. But once you see your child adjusting well, you gain confidence. There were times when we would cry together, laugh together and fight with each other, just like any family. My strength has always been my ability to never give up.

What type of support did you receive from family?

My siblings and their spouses were like pillars of strength for me. Whenever, I had to stay longer at work, my sisters would take care of my daughter. She grew up with my siblings children and the emotional bond between them, which continues till date, is highly admirable.

What is your advice to young single mothers?

To all the beautiful single Moms out there, my advice is 'never give up in life'. To give up, is the first step to be defeated. Keep yourself occupied with your job and a social life. Be happy and spread joy.

What wish do you hold for your own mother and your children?

I pray for my Mom to be in eternal peace, wherever she is. My wish for my daughter is that she remains as she is. I am proud of her abilities.



CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

IT Manager with 15+ years of experience. Currently working with a reputed institution in Muscat for last 7 years. MCSA, CCNA, ITIL certified. Seeks suitable placement as IT Manager/System Admin. Contact 92514687 Email: hi.binu@gmail.com

LOST CERTIFICATE

LOST MY B.COM FIRST YEAR MARK LIST OF UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT WHILE TRAVELLING FROM AL HAIL TO MUSCAT (SAJITH MEPRAMKUTTIYIL, S/O SUDHAKARAN, REGISTRATION NUMBER 49432 AND YEAR OF COMPLETION 1998). IF FOUND/SEEN, PLEASE CONTACT: 99866573.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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



Send your request for Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

Job Vacancy for Senior Position

Urgently required Sales Executive with minimum 5 to 8 years experience in Building Materials Business in Oman. (Age limit below 45 Years) Candidate with good products knowledge with computer and marketing skill. Candidate should be fluent in English. Arabic speaking will be given preference. Attractive salary depending on experience & skills.

Deserving candidates should send their updated CV with a recent colour photograph to the email address : recruit@groupcentury.com with the subject line "Sales Executive"

وزارة التجارة والصناعة وترويج الاستثمار دائرة الملكية الفكرية إعلان

تلعب دائرة الملكية الفكرية عن طلب تسجيل العلامة التجارية المقبولة وفقاً لإحكام قانون (نظام) العلامات التجارية لدول مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية الصادر بالمرسوم السلطاني رقم 33 / 2017



طلب تسجيل العلامة التجارية رقم : 105695
تصنيف : 44 عيادة طب الأسنان
باسم : المركز الكوري لطب الأسنان
العنوان : سلطنة عمان
ص ب: 196، الرمز البريدي 136
مسقط جراند مول، OM
تاريخ تقديم الطلب : 07/11/2016

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories: **Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances** (Word limit is 35)

Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

Living with Art LOK KALA

Virtual Indian folk art exhibition

Hubert Vaz

Rangrez, the artist group of the Indian Social Club, is back with its virtual art exhibition for the month of March. Opening on March 25, this exhibition called 'Lok Kala' provides a comprehensive window to the diverse folk arts of India and is seen to be one of the most colourful artistic initiatives in Oman till date.

Founding member of Rangrez, Sushmita Gupta said, "The heart of India still beats true in the rural mountains, plains, forests and river banks, The techie skills thrive in urban scapes but 'jugaad' (tricks to enhance efficiency) comes with an Indian DNA, no matter which part of the country the Indian hails from. Folk art in India is as diverse as its people and cultures. It is vibrant. It is living. It tells tales of creation, destruction and everything in between."

The current exhibition has been visualised and



For this visual treat, weeks of research has gone into familiarising with origins of the forms and their representations. We have tried to showcase 34 different folk art forms from India in over 43 paintings done by 39 artists."

SHALINI KARTIK

curated by Shalini Kartik, who is herself an accomplished artist with a special dedication to rural art forms. "We, at Rangrez, salute her tremendous efforts and dedication towards researching each of the different styles from remote corners of India," Gupta added.

Kartik, a resident in Oman for over two decades, uses a variety of media to reflect moods and depict the complexities of her subject with vibrant colours. She is proficient in oil, mixed media and also creates craft work that enhances any home décor. Her paintings are often steeped in culture and inspired by tra-

dition. Her repertoire includes a variety of Indian folk art forms, making her an ideal choice for this exhibition.

"Cure, in Latin, means to take care, and as the custodian of 'Lok Kala', it has been my responsibility to present to the audience beautiful pieces of Indian folk art that will not only enhance their visual pleasure but also take them on a journey to the different corners of our country and acquaint them with India's rich and varied folk art and culture," Kartik told Muscat Daily, adding, "For this visual treat, weeks of research has gone into familiarising with the origins of the forms and their representations. We have tried to showcase 34 different folk art forms from India in over 43 paintings done by 39 artists."

Here, the various art forms have been divided into five regional categories - central, eastern, northern, southern and western. Reproduced below are the artworks representing central and eastern India.

(Artworks representing the other three categories will be featured next Sunday.)

CENTRAL INDIA



Harini Kumar

Dhokra art

Dhokra art is essentially stunning metal figurines fashioned from bronze and copper-based alloys using a 'lost wax casting.' There are several processes involved in the making of Dhokra art and it could take up to a month or two to be created.

I chose Dhokra art as I love the linear figures with their imperfect shapes and non-realistic representations. I'm also fascinated by how the metallic effect goes hand in hand with the extensive use of lines used for decoration and embellishment.



Tarini Agarwal

Gond art

Gond art is a distinct art form practised by the largest tribe in India. A prominent feature of this style is the use of line work. These lines create movement, and together with the dots and dashes a greater sense of movement and detail is achieved.

An effort has been made by me to find movement in the lines and dots, to achieve this I have overlapped lines and dots. Without losing the traditional subject and design I've tried to make it contemporary by my choice of colours. I really did enjoy doing this work and found it very meditative.



Shabana Khan

Pithora paintings

Pithora art is a highly enriched folk art culture of the Rathwas of Gujarat. The painting is done on the 3 walls usually in the 'ofari' or porch of the house at the entrance. The motifs comprise community mythological elements like Pithora Baba, Pithora Rani, Raja Bhoj with his elephant, Nagdevta, etc. Pithora highlights the components of the tribal ecosystem with pictures of their day-to-day activities, biodiversity, men and women in a myriad of colours.

It quintessentially communicates the essence of the lives of the Rathwas. Pithora fascinated me because of its vibrance and allowed me to play with colours and do a little mischief with the child inside me.

EASTERN INDIA



Sushmita Gupta

Kalighat paintings

Originated in 19th Century Kolkata, Kalighat was traditionally created by artisans from nearby villages called patuas. The paintings were simple with few strokes and a limited colour palette. These served as cheap souvenirs, for foreigners to take home. Over the years, it has attained the importance of emerging as a school of art and still living and evolving.

I veered towards it because of my many reasons. Firstly, my organic affinity towards my roots in Bengal. Secondly, there is a touch of humour to these paintings. Thirdly, the narrative of some paintings break the patriarchal boundaries, even though they are from the 19th century. Lastly, they tell tales of everyday life, as of mythology, in a simplistic style.



Uma Gopinath

Madhubani art

Madhubani is a folk art from Mithila region of Bihar. It is believed, this art form came into place when King Janaka wanted to capture his daughter Sita's marriage to Lord Rama for eternity. This form uses natural dyes and pigments and twigs and depicts rituals, stories from mythology, and nature. There are 5 forms - Bharni, Kachni, Godhna, Tantrik and Kohbar. It is characterised by its eye-catching geometrical patterns. There is ritual content for particular occasions, such as birth/marriage, and festivals.

I have always been enamored by the simplicity and beauty of the folk art. It is rooted in culture and nature of the region it belongs to. Mahhubani uses the simplest of designs and motifs to tell stories about mythology and nature. This art is colourful, and yet, the spaces left uncoloured enhances the beauty of the painting. The beauty lies in its simplicity, which draws me to this art form.



Jyoti Bokil

Santhal art

Santhal painting is a creative expression of the Santhal tribe revolving around harvest, rituals, and family life. The Santhal painting shows child like simplicity in depiction of birds, humans, and animals. The paintings often show love and togetherness between humans as well as between humans and animals.

I was always interested in colours and Santhal paintings are made in multiple colours. It also comprises leafy patterns in the foreground with simple depictions of birds, animals, and humans and this interests me since I love nature.

The art is made with child like simplicity and it is more often about love and togetherness of humans and their involvement and harmony with nature. Hence, by choosing this art form, I am contributing my bit towards promoting love and togetherness with nature.



Bhavna Maini

Saura tribal art

Saura tribal painting is a style of wall mural paintings. The art form is made on the red or brown clay walls of the home with natural dyes made out of rice, white stone, and flower and leaf extracts, using a brush that is made of tender bamboo. The figures in the art form are recurring motifs and symbols such as people engaged in various activities, Sun, tree of life, birds, animals, huts, cattle, etc, deeply connected with nature and simplistic depictions of everyday village life.

Tribal art has always fascinated me. It looks simple but illustrates a deep connection between nature and humans. I chose the famous Saura art as it is rich with symbolism and meaning, and its story needed to be told.