



HM RECEIVES CABLE OF THANKS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, in reply to His Majesty's congratulatory cable to him on his country's National Day. In the cable, King Hamad expressed his utmost appreciation for His Majesty's congratulations and best wishes. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to perpetuate good health and happiness on His Majesty the Sultan and to fulfill all aspirations of progress and prosperity for the Omani people under His Majesty's wise leadership. He wished the fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries and peoples further growth and development. — **ONA**



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TELECOM OPERATOR

His Majesty issues Royal Decree

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on Tuesday issued a Royal Decree No. 4/2021, granting first class license to Oman Future Telecommunications Company (OFT).

Article (1) grants First Class License to Oman Future Telecommunications Company (OFT) to provide general basic mobile telecom services in accordance with the 'License' attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its day of issue. — **ONA**

BILATERAL RELATIONS

HM sends written message to King Salman

AL-ULA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik sent a written message to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The message deals with the strong bilateral relations binding the two brotherly countries and people and means of promoting them on various spheres.

The message was handed over by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Bussaidi, Foreign Minister when he met with Prince Faisal Farhan Al Saud, KSA Foreign Minister, on the sidelines of the 41st Summit of GCC Leaders, which is being hosted by the Saudi Arabia in Al-Ula city.

The meeting reviewed the fraternal relations and horizons of cooperation between the two countries. It also discussed regional and international issues of common concern, as well as touching on several topics listed on the Summit's agenda. — **ONA**

GCC LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE TO LATE HM SULTAN QABOOS



— Mohamed Al Rashdi/ONA

GCC Leaders signed the final communiqué of the 41st Summit and Al Ula Declaration

AL-ULA: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers led the Sultanate's delegation at the 41st Summit of GCC leaders at Al-Ula city in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

In his speech, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said: "This year, the world has lost two great leaders: the Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour and Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah, who

have played a remarkable role in supporting the Gulf Cooperation Council's march".

He said that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has issued directives on naming this summit as the "Sultan Qaboos and Sheikh Sabah Summit".

He also praised the efforts of the late Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait and the support of the US and all parties whose efforts have led to the reaching of the Al Ula Declaration.

The Emir of Kuwait gave a

speech in which he praised the keenness of the GCC States on convening the summit for the support of the joint Arab and GCC march aimed at meeting the aspirations of their people.

Praising the role of the late Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah and his efforts which have contributed towards reaching this Declaration, he also valued the tremendous efforts accorded by the brotherly leaders, US President Donald Trump and Special advisor to the US President Jared Kushner whose efforts have led to the success of the Declaration.

The GCC Leaders signed the final communiqué of the 41st Summit and Al Ula Declaration.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Advisor to the US President, Jared Kushner; Dr. Yousef bin Ahmed Al Othaimin, Secretary General of the OIC, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League. — **ONA**



ROP officers graduate on Police Day; electronic systems launched

A4

SQU STUDY

Families learn the importance of saving during pandemic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The COVID-19 pandemic helped 45 per cent families save more, and 81 per cent said that online study is difficult for parents and children, according to the results of a study conducted by researchers from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Omani families

The research sample consisted of 120 Omani families that were randomly selected, where the study covered the social, economic, cultural, health and psychological aspects.

Regarding social impacts the study revealed that 78 per cent of participants confirmed that they adhered to the instructions of the Supreme Committee by staying at home and not shaking hands or social visits, 86 per cent said using social platforms to contact their families and relatives were very useful, as 79 per cent of the total sample indicated that the application of the principle of staying at home positively affected social relations within the same family, and 72 per cent confirmed that the crisis helped them evolve new methods to regulate leisure time, and establish positive controls in the appropriate socialisation of children.

On the educational front, 82 per cent of the research sample indicated that they are concerned that the distance education process does not meet the educational process for their children, and 81 per cent of the research sample indicated that the distance learning process is considered difficult



for parents and children, as 70 per cent from the participants said that their children do not prefer distance education.

As for the economic impacts; 45 per cent of the research sample indicated that they were able to save well during the closure period, and 60 per cent indicated that their families have become heavily dependent on electronic commerce, and 76 per cent of the total sample confirmed that there is a big trend for home business as an additional source of income even after the pandemic.

With regard to the cultural, health and psychological dimension; 85 per cent of the research sample indicated that they and their family members got acquainted to methods of preventing infections, methods of sterilising the home and personal hygiene, and 83 per cent of the respond-

ents confirmed that they rely on reliable sources to follow health guidelines, 73 per cent of the study participants said that they fully trust the decisions of the Supreme Committee in-charge of combating the Corona pandemic.

72 per cent people of the total sample said they were worried about going to health institutions for fear of being infected with the COVID-19.

The study was conducted by students of the Department of Sociology and Social Work within the course of the graduation project, the team consisted of students Hamdan Al Zaidi, Ahmed Al Maamari, Humayel Al Junaibi, Fatima Bahjaj, Muhammad Al-Jabri, and Abdullah Al Abri under the supervision of Dr. Wafa bint Said Al Maamari, an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Work.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Mawaleh market

1 Mawaleh Central Market has reopened with stringent COVID-19 precautions. **>A4**

WORLD England lockdown

2 A new COVID lockdown has been announced for England. **>A6**

MARKET Vodafone licence

3 Vodafone has become the third telecommunications operator in Oman. **>B1**

PANDEMIC

Oman reports first case of new COVID-19 strain

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health on Tuesday announced the registration of the first case of infection with the new strain of COVID-19 that had appeared in the United Kingdom recently and other countries of the world.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Health Ministry said that infection with the genetic variant of COVID-19 was detected on an expatriate who arrived in Oman from the UK. The patient showed symptoms of the infection during the post-landing quarantine period, though he tested negative to COVID-19 before and after arrival. Precautionary public

health procedures were applied when dealing with the patient, who is currently in a good health and undergoing home isolation.

The announcement reaffirms the vigilance of the health system, preparedness to handle public health emergency and measures applied in travel outlets to detect infection and to upgrade the capabilities of central public health laboratories. The Ministry of Health thereby urges citizens and residents to abide by decisions of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. — **ONA**

OMAN

PRAYER
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Asr.....	3:20pm
Maghrib.....	5:40pm
Isha.....	6:55pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5.30am

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Close to 58,000 expats apply to leave Oman

The Ministry is working hard to regulate the labour market, said Salim Said Al Badi, Director General of Labour Welfare at the Ministry of Labour. -**ONA**

The initiative is aimed at regulating the labour market and facilitating the departure of workers in implementation of the decisions of the Supreme Committee

MUSCAT: Close to 58,000 expatriate workers in Oman have sought to take up the Ministry of Labour offer facilitating their departure.

The initiative is aimed at regulating the labour market and facilitating the departure of expatriate workers in implementation of the decisions of the Supreme Committee tasked with

ment discrepancies provided the expatriate manpower leave the Sultanate terminally.

Al Badi pointed out that the grace period has been extended till the 31st of March 2021. He urged all those wishing to leave the Sultanate to benefit from the grace incentives offered within the grace period.

In a statement, Al Badi said that as many as 57,748 expatriate workers responded to the offer of the Ministry. Among these, a total of 12,378 already left the Sultanate, said Al Badi.

He added that the Ministry is working hard to regulate the labour market in the private sector and improve ties with "the production parties" (employers, employees).

The Ministry is conducting regular visits to private sector establishments to check their commitment to provisions of the Labour Law and ministerial decisions, said Al Badi.

He explained that the ministry has a specialised department tasked to study different phenomena and developments in the labour market and their implications. The department also proposes solutions to issues raised in the studies. -**ONA**

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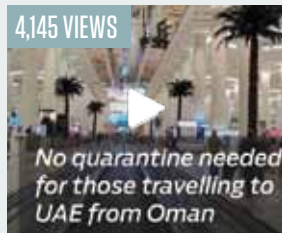
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Maghrib News wrapup video

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📺 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM



Morning Minute video on quarantine

The Morning Minute video on quarantine for UAE travellers got 4,145 views and 394 likes on Instagram

Sayyid Fahd conveys His Majesty's greetings to GCC summit leaders

His Highness Sayyid Fahd lead the Sultanate's delegation at the 41st Summit of GCC Leaders, held at Maraya Concert Hall

AL-ULA: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers arrived on Tuesday at Al-Ula city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to lead the Sultanate's delegation in the 41st Summit of GCC Leaders, held at Maraya Concert Hall.

Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, KSA Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence headed the reception team welcoming HH Sayyid Fahd upon his arrival at Prince Abdul Majeed bin Abdulaziz Airport in the Governorate of Al-Ula. HH Sayyid Fahd was also received by Dr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, GCC Secretary General and the deputy head of the Sultanate's mission in Saudi Arabia.

Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, gave a statement upon his arrival reading as follows: "On the occasion of convening the 41st GCC Summit in Saudi Arabia, I am honoured to head the Sultanate's delegation



His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers. — ONA

on behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and to convey His Majesty's greetings to his brethren, leaders of GCC states, along with his wishes that the summit will meet with success and achieve its goals.

'Stability and security'
"Developments in the regional and international arena require the co-ordination of stands and the devis-

ing of means to tackle challenges, secure the region's interests and achieve the aspirations of its people for a better future of stability and security. The GCC has made many achievements at all sectors, and this requires exerting efforts to safeguard the gains realised since the establishment of the GCC in 1981."

"The Sultanate of Oman reaffirms its permanent stance in sup-

porting the GCC march. Oman also expresses its appreciation for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—as leadership and people—and prays to the Almighty Allah to bestow bounties of progress and prosperity on the brotherly Saudi people and all other GCC people."

Sayyid Fahd returned to the Sultanate in the evening after taking part in the GCC Summit.

— ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

ROP officers graduate on Police Day



MUSCAT: The Police College at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences concluded on Tuesday the training programme for the 46th university officers batch, the 43rd diploma officers batch, the 7th limited-service batch, and the 47th specialised



university officers batch on the occasion of Royal Oman Police (ROP) Day.

On the same occasion, Lt Gen

Hassan Mohsen Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, inaugurated three electronic systems, including the ROP

e-training platform, the HR management system (Masar), and the e-wallet (Care) within the ROP social services. — ONA

NCSI DATA

67 sports facilities served 1.2mn people

MUSCAT: The number of government sports facilities in the Sultanate reached 67 by the end of 2019, serving about 1.2 million people, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The NCSI sports statistics bulletin showed that the largest number of government sports facilities belonged to 44 sports clubs, which possessed 66 percent of the total government sports facilities, followed by 12 sports complexes, and 11 sports centres.

The number of beneficiaries of the sports complexes in 2019 was 1,191,982 people, of whom 874,038 were males and 317,944 were females, compared to 1,073,989 people in 2018, of whom 809,763 were males and 264,226 were females.

The bulletin indicated that in

2019, the Sultanate witnessed about 158 competitions and championships, 78 training sessions, 84 camps, and 12 conferences and seminars.

Oman Athletics Federation (OAF) led the sports federations in terms of the number of medals won by the national teams with 43 medals, followed by Oman Shooting Association (OSA) with 26 medals, Omani Swimming association (OSA) with 22 medals, Oman Tennis Association (OTA) and Oman Camel Racing Federation with 6 medals each, 5 medals for Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) 3 for Oman Hockey Federation (OHF), Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF), Omani Handball Association (OHA) 2 medals each, and one medal for Oman Football Association (OFA).

— ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

PREVENTION PROTOCOLS

Mawaleh Central Market reopens with strict COVID measures

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Customers returned to Mawaleh Central Fruits and Vegetables Market as it reopened to the public with COVID prevention protocols in place. The market is a key source of fruits and vegetables stocked on supermarket shelves in the capital. Individual visitors also frequent the market to meet their grocery needs.

"The main COVID prevention being carried out is the compulsory wearing of masks," said an eyewitness who visited the market on the day of its reopening. "At the gate, customers who entered the market had their temperatures checked."

"One of the things I noticed is that not all of the stalls were open," he added. "Maybe it is because these fruit and vegetable vendors are still waiting for their supplies

to come. There was a good crowd of people in the morning."

The Mawaleh Market was reopened after being given the go ahead by the Directorate of Muscat Municipality in Al Seeb. Under new regulations, it is open from 5am to 11am for wholesalers, and between 1pm and 6pm for individual customers.

The market had been temporarily closed to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Oman, and Badr bin Ali Al Bahri, the Director General for Muscat Municipality, said the Supreme Committee to deal with COVID-19 has given the reopening permission.

"The municipality has carried out works to improve all the internal and external service facilities in the market, such as the market's external paved areas that accommodate more than 800 parking spaces," he said, speaking to ONA.



REOPENED: The market had been temporarily closed to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Oman. — Pictures by Talib Al Wahabi/ Times of Oman



CABLE

His Majesty receives thanks from Lao President

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Bounnhang Vorachith of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in reply to His Majesty's congratulatory cable to him on his

country's National Day. In the cable, President Vorachith expressed his utmost thanks for His Majesty's congratulations, wishing His Majesty permanent health and success.

-ONA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

COVID-19 cases reach 129,774

MUSCAT: The total number of positive COVID-19 cases in the Sultanate reached 129,774, while the number of recoveries stood at 122,406, comprising 94.3 percent.

Meanwhile, the total number of COVID-19 related death cases stood at 1502, the Ministry of Health said. The Ministry also pointed out that 12 cases were hospitalised over

the past 24 hours, adding that the total number of current hospitalized COVID-19-infected patients stands at 70, of them 26 are in intensive care units (ICU).

-ONA



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CANCELLED

British PM cancels India's Republic Day visit

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday cancelled his planned trip to India to be a chief guest on Republic Day, saying it was important for him to remain in the United Kingdom to focus on the domestic response to the virus.

A Downing Street spokeswoman said that Johnson spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in

the morning and expressed his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned. "The prime minister spoke to Prime Minister Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," a Downing Street spokeswoman said.

"In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and

the speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading, the prime minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," she added.

The cancellation of the visit was announced a day after Prime Minister Johnson imposed the third lockdown in the UK amid rising

coronavirus cases in the country.

The UK has reported more than two million COVID-19 cases and 70,000 deaths linked to the disease. India had invited the prime minister of the UK as the Chief Guest in the Republic Day parade in 2021. UK Foreign Secretary Raab visited India in December and announced Johnson has accepted India's invitation. **ANI**



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Boris Johnson orders new coronavirus lockdown for England

People will only be allowed to leave their homes to shop for essentials, exercise, medical reasons, or to go to work



Record COVID case numbers

Johnson's declaration followed a call from the UK's chief medical officers to ramp up restrictions to the highest level, as there is a "material risk of the National Health Service in several areas being overwhelmed over the next 21 days."

"Cases are rising almost everywhere, in much of the country driven by the new more transmissible variant," said the health chiefs for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in a statement released on Monday.

The UK has been recording more than 50,000 new coronavirus cases daily since December 29. On Monday, a record 58,784 cases were reported across the UK.

New vaccine in use

The lockdown announcement comes as UK health authorities on Monday began administering the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, with an 82-year-old man receiving the first shot. **AW**

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday announced a new lockdown for England's 56 million residents to combat a fast-spreading new variant of the coronavirus.

As part of the measures, which are to last until mid-February, primary and secondary schools will be closed from Wednesday, he said during a televised broadcast.

People will only be allowed to leave their homes to shop for essentials, exercise, medical rea-

sons, or to go to work.

University students would not return to their studies – from the Christmas-New Year's break – until the middle of next month.

The UK is at "a critical moment," Johnson said, with cases rising rapidly in every part of the country, with "tough, tough" weeks to come in the fight against COVID-19.

"As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from COVID than any time since the start of the pandemic," he added.

"We must therefore go into a national lockdown, which is tough enough to contain this variant. That means the government is once again instructing you to stay at home."

AVIAN INFLUENZA

Several Indian states report bird flu outbreak

NEW DELHI: Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, India has reported the emergence of bird flu since last week. The presence of the virus is confirmed in the dead birds in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala while Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, too, have a strong suspicion of avian influenza in dead birds.

Bird flu has been confirmed in two places in Kerala, said state's Minister for Forest, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development K Raju on Monday. Even on Tuesday in Jhalawar, Rajasthan 10 birds were found dead. But the report ascertaining the cause of death is yet to come. Till date, 138 birds died in Jhalawar since

January 3. The emergence of bird flu has alarmed the city of Indore and Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh as well. The presence of the virus has been confirmed in the dead crows. Around 100 crows died in Mandsaur between December 23 and January 3. As a precautionary measure, the veterinarians have started conducting investigations in poultry farms. Meanwhile, animal husbandry department officials in every district have been put on alert and asked to follow standard operating procedures to check the spread of the virus.

In Himachal Pradesh, after hundreds of winter migratory birds were found dead in

the Pong Dam Lake sanctuary recently, Kangra District Magistrate on Monday issued an order completely prohibiting the sale, purchase and export of any poultry products in Fatehpur, Dehra, Jawali and Indora areas of the district. The officials have a strong suspicion of Avian influenza in dead birds. However, the medical investigation of the cause is under process.

It also completely prohibited the slaughter of poultry/birds/fish of any breed/age and their related products (eggs, meat, chicken) in all slaughterhouses or in-home or in any place within the areas prohibited by the administration. **ANI**

NEW VARIANT

NYS confirms first infection of UK variant of coronavirus

NEW YORK: A state laboratory has confirmed New York State's first case of the UK variant (B.1.1.7) of the virus that causes the COVID-19, Governor Andrew Cuomo tweeted on Monday.

"An individual from Saratoga County, New York, tested positive for the strain. The individual had no known travel history," said Cuomo in his tweet.

"It's a gentleman who is in his 60s. He was symptomatic, but he is on the mend and he's doing better. He did not travel recently, so this suggests that it's in the community, it was community spread as opposed to having traveled to the UK," the governor was quoted as saying in an official release.

Meanwhile on Monday, the governor tweeted that the total COVID-19 hospitalizations topped 8,000, reaching 8,251 on Sunday in New York State, up from 7,963 on Saturday. **XINHUA**



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UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS

Al Batinah Power Company SAOG hereby informs its respected shareholders that Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC (MCDC) has deposited the unclaimed dividends whose cutoff date was 04 June 2020 with Capital Market Authority (investors' trust funds). The Shareholders who have still not claimed their dividends are requested to approach MCDC, and submit their identity card or passport along with the supportive documents to prove their rights.

- A copy of claim form can be obtained from the below **website: <http://www.mcd.gov.om/>**
- For more information on the claim procedures, kindly contact the concerned officials at MCDC at 24822237.





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Trump, Biden hold dueling rallies ahead of Georgia Senate runoff

The first vote for Georgia's two Senate seats in November was too close to call

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden sought to rouse support for Democrats during a rally Monday ahead of a Senate runoff in the hotly contested-southern US state of Georgia.

"This is it. It's a new year, and tomorrow can be a new day for Atlanta, for Georgia and for America," Biden said at a drive-in rally in the state's capital.

Georgia's Senate runoff on Tuesday puts Republican incumbents Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue against Democrat challengers Jon Ossoff and Raphael



Warnock. The first vote for Georgia's two Senate seats in November was too close to call.

Both Democrats and Republicans are campaigning heavily in Georgia, once a solidly Republican state, which emerged as an battleground in the 2020 election. Opinion polls have the Senate runoffs neck-and-neck.

Biden won the presidential election in Georgia by a thin



margin of nearly 12,000 votes. If Democrats can flip the state's two Senate seats currently held by Republicans, it would split the chamber 50-50, giving Vice President-elect Kamala Harris a tiebreaking vote in passing legislation.

Biden said having a Democratic majority would be necessary to pass laws to combat the coronavirus.

"Unlike any time in my career,

one state can chart the course, not just for the four years but for the next generation," Biden said, adding that Loeffler and Perdue think they have "sworn the oath to Donald Trump" and not the US constitution.

Trump: 'Stakes couldn't be higher'

Following Biden's Atlanta rally, President Donald Trump held a nighttime rally in the rural town of Dalton in northern Georgia to drum up Republican support, urging voters to "swamp" the polls.

Trump called Tuesday's runoff one of the "most important elections" in US history, while reiterating his unsubstantiated claims that the presidential election was "rigged" and there was "no way" he lost Georgia.

"The Democrats are trying to steal the White House, you cannot let them," the president said. "You just can't let them steal the US Senate, you can't let it happen." **bw**

Google employees form new labour union in the US

CALIFORNIA: Leaders of the new Alphabet Workers Union went public on Monday in a newspaper opinion piece, saying they wanted a workplace "without fear of abuse, retaliation or discrimination" and accusing Google of abandoning its founding "don't be evil" ethics in current artificial intelligence (AI) projects.

On its website, the new union said it would be "open to all employees and contractors at any Alphabet concern" [120,000 people in all], adding that it wanted an end to "unfair disparities" between casual employees and benefits paid to full-time staff.

"A few wealthy executives define what the company produces and how its workers are treated. This isn't the company we want to work for," wrote union chair Parul Koul and vice chair Chewy Shaw.

'Engaging directly' with employees, says Google

Google's director of people operations Kara Silverstein responded Monday: "We've always worked hard to create a supportive and rewarding workplace for

our workforce."

Google would continue "engaging directly with all our employees," she said.

Formation of the new union, which will be affiliated with the Communication Workers of America, was part of a "growing techlash" against very wealthy tech giants, said Darrell West, governance studies director at the Brookings Institution in Washington and prize-winning author of books on AI and the future of work.

"This unionization drive differs from the past ones from the industrial era in focusing not just on pay and benefits, but the broader role of technology in society," said West.

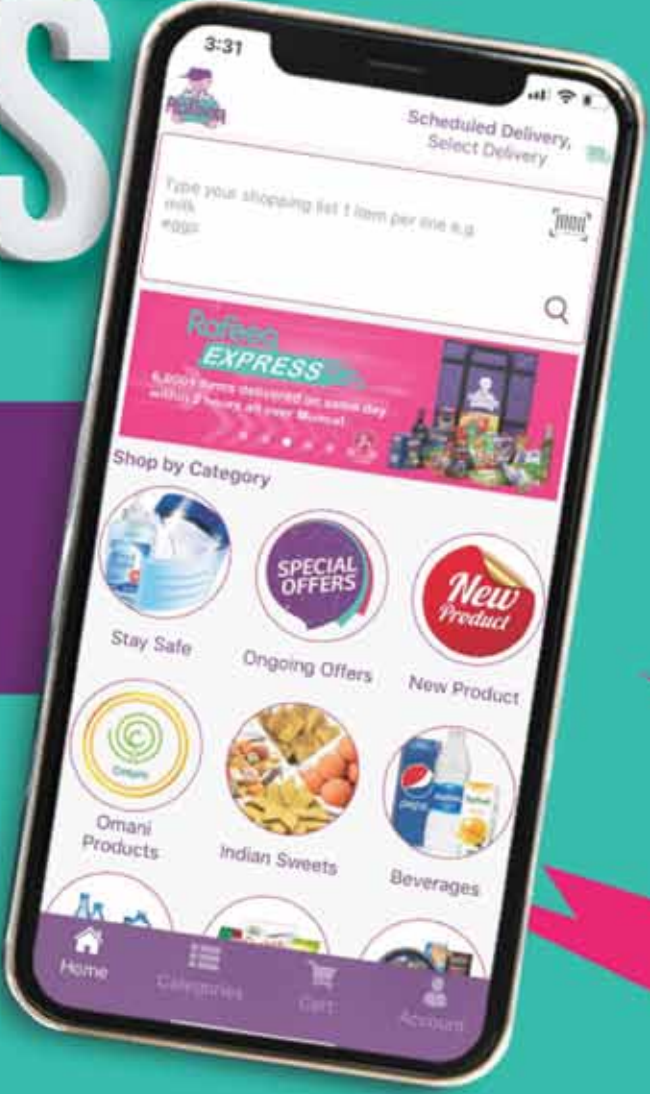
'Collaborated with repressive governments'

Union leaders Koul and Shaw, both software engineers, in their newspaper opinion piece accused Alphabet executives of dismissing workplace concerns. In 2018, thousands of workers protested worldwide over the company's handling of allegations of sexual harassment. **bw**

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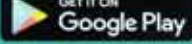


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Williamson, Nicholls script record stand in Christchurch Test

Williamson and Nicholls put on 359 runs for the fourth wicket in the second Test against Pakistan

CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and Henry Nicholls on Tuesday scripted the third-highest partnership for the Kiwis in the longest format of the game. Williamson and Nicholls put on 359 runs for the fourth wicket in the second Test against Pakistan.

The stand is also the fourth-highest Test partnership against Pakistan for any country. It was also the first triple-century partnership by a Kiwi pair against Pakistan in the longest format of the game. Interestingly, Williamson broke his own record which he had stitched with BJ Watling against Sri Lanka in 2015 with a 365-run partnership.

Andrew Jones and Martin Crowe's 467-run stand for the third wicket against Sri Lanka in 1991 is still the highest partnership for a New Zealand pair. Williamson also became the fastest New Zealand batsman to register 7,000 runs in the longest format of the game.

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor, who has scored the most



NZ VS PAKISTAN: The stand is the fourth-highest Test partnership against Pakistan for any country

runs for the Blackcaps in Test, had reached the landmark of 7,000 runs in 96 matches.

Williamson, on the other hand, took just 83 games and surpassed former New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming and Taylor to become the fastest Kiwi batsman to reach the 7,000-run milestone.

Fleming scored 7,172 runs for the Black Caps in 111 Test while Taylor has scored 7,379 in 105 games respectively.

Williamson also hit a double ton on day three to give New Zealand firm control in the second Test. Williamson played an innings of 238 as New Zealand declared on 659/6 -- a lead of 362 runs. Along with Williamson, Nicholls and Daryl Mitchell also played knocks

of 157 and 102* respectively.

Pakistan had to bat out 11 overs before stumps and with Kyle Jamieson sending back Shan Masood (0) to the pavilion, the visitors ended the day on 8/1 -- trailing New Zealand by 354 runs.

With Pakistan finding themselves in a difficult position in the second Test against New Zealand, former pacer Shoaib Akhtar on Tuesday lambasted the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for bringing in "average players" and said the team is playing "school-level" cricket.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and Henry Nicholls scripted the third-highest partnership for the Kiwis in the longest format of the game as the

hosts completely dominated the Pakistan bowlers. "The policies of the Pakistan Cricket Board is seeing them get what they had sowed. They keep bringing and playing average players, and they keep making an average team and will continue to do average work and because of this, average results will keep coming," Akhtar said in a video he shared on Twitter.

"Whenever Pakistan will play Test cricket, they will be exposed. They are playing school-level cricket and the management has made them school-level cricketers. And now they are again thinking to change the management but when will you change?" he added. **ANI**

TO BE DISCHARGED



Sourav's heart today is as strong as it was when he was 20, says doctor

KOLKATA: Renowned cardiologist Dr. Devi Shetty on Tuesday said that the heart of BCCI president Sourav Ganguly is now as strong as it was when the former India skipper was 20-years-old.

Dr. Shetty met the medical team of nine doctors attending to Ganguly at the Woodlands Hospital and a further course of action was decided by the hospital on Tuesday. Ganguly will be discharged on Wednesday and thereafter he will be monitored at home on a daily basis, said Dr. Rupali Basu MD and CEO of Woodlands Hospital. The 48-year-old Ganguly will be ready for the next course of procedures or medical intervention after about 2-3 weeks. "Sourav didn't have any major problem. This is the problem which most Indians experience at some point in time, which is a blockage in the coronary artery. Did he have heart damage? No. He had a blockage and he was getting some discomfort, but at the right time he landed in the right hospital and he had the right treatment."

"His heart is today as strong as it was when Sourav was 20-years-old. I want everyone to understand that he didn't have a major cardiac event which has damaged his heart. He has a very, very strong heart," ESPNcricinfo quoted Dr. Shetty as saying.

Earlier on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Ganguly and enquired about his health and wished him a speedy recovery. He also spoke to Ganguly's wife Dona Ganguly.

Ganguly was hospitalised at 1 pm on January 2 with "chest discomfort, heaviness of head, vomiting and a spell of dizziness" while performing physical exercise in the home gymnasium at around 11 am. Following this, doctors had conducted angioplasty on him.

On January 2, 48-year-old Ganguly was tested for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which turned out to be negative. The family members were present during the board meeting and were explained about the disease process and further therapeutic plan. **ANI**

FOOTBALL

Barcelona postpone training as two test positive for COVID

BARCELONA: FC Barcelona has confirmed that their training session has been postponed following two positive COVID-19 results at the club.

The side's morning training scheduled for later today has been halted ahead of all players and staff being tested for COVID-19. Two members of the club's staff have tested positive for the virus and the club will now find out if there are any further cases. "After PCR tests carried out today (Monday) two members of the football first-team staff have returned positives for COVID-19. The club has informed the relevant sports and health authorities. Furthermore, the whole squad will undergo further PCR testing on Tuesday morning local time in line with La Liga protocol," the club said in an official statement.

"As a result the training session planned for tomorrow (Tuesday) at 10:00am (11:00am CET) has been postponed. The new time



for training and the subsequent press conference ahead of Athletic Club v FC Barcelona will be announced tomorrow," he added.

Ronald Koeman's side are currently unbeaten for six games in La Liga, but two of those have been draws against Valencia and Eibar.

The side is currently placed at the fifth position in La Liga standings, 10 points adrift of table-topners Atletico Madrid.

Barcelona will next take on Athletic Club on Wednesday in La Liga. The side had last defeated Huesca 1-0 on Sunday. **ANI**

TENNIS

Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal lead field for 2021 ATP Cup

LONDON: Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic and Spanish tennis star Rafael Nadal are set to return for the 2021 ATP Cup.

In 2020, Serbia defeated Spain 2-1 in a thrilling championship clash, which included an exciting match-up between Djokovic and Nadal. Twelve countries will battle for the prestigious team trophy, with 2020 finalists Serbia and Spain leading the way. This year's ATP Cup will take place at Melbourne Park alongside two ATP 250 events, with the three tournaments being held the week before the Australian Open.

The draw will take place on January 20, when the 12 teams will be divided into four groups of three for the group stage, round-robin play. The four group winners will advance to the semi-finals.

"Playing as a team, for one's country, is a rare privilege in tennis which brings the best out of our players. This was highlighted by the incredible matches and camaraderie on display at last year's



inaugural ATP Cup," said ATP Cup Managing Director Ross Hutchins in an official statement.

"We would like to thank our partners, Tennis Australia, for their dedication and commitment to staging this year's tournament, which promises to deliver a strong start to the new 2021 season," he added.

The showpiece event will take place from February 1 to February

5 in Melbourne.

Reigning Nitto ATP Finals champion Daniil Medvedev headlines Russia's team alongside fellow Top 10 star Andrey Rublev, and World No. 3 Dominic Thiem will try to take Austria to glory.

The 2021 ATP Cup will feature 14 of the Top 15 players in the FedEx ATP Rankings. Each team will consist of four players per country. **ANI**

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Victorious weekend for OCT Ruwi, Orient Travels, Design Group

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Wasim Ismail Al Balushi struck a superb 70 off 44 to help OCT Ruwi to an exciting 7-wicket win over Zubair CT in a 30-over B Division League clash at Muscat Municipality ground 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Mustansar Hussain topscored with 58 while Naveed Akhtar contributed 54 but Zubair's total of 200 for 6 was insufficient to fetch it a victory as OCT Ruwi raced to the target in 25.1 overs, scoring 203 for 1.

Apart from Wasim's brilliant batting, Zubair Ali (55) and Shuaib Ismail (41 not out) were Ruwi's other main scorers.

Brief Scores (B Division): Zubair 200 for 6 in 30 overs lost to Oct Ruwi 203 for 3 in 25.1 overs (Wasim Ismail Al Balushi 70 - 11x4, 2x6, Zubair Ali Al Balushi 55 - 9x4, Shuaib Ismail Al Balushi 41 not out - 6x4, 1x6, Mubashar Iqbal



VICTORY: Karthik Rajappa's 44 was instrumental in helping Design Group Engineering Consultants to a 5-wicket win over Ideal International.

2-32) by 7 wickets.

Adil, Arif shine in Orient Travels win

In another B Division game, Adil Khan's splendid 91 and Arif Hussain's vital all-round show powered

Orient Travels/Gitacs to a 12-run victory over Bank Muscat at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

Orient posted a robust 235 for 8 on the board in 30 overs, thanks to brilliant knocks from openers Arif (50 off 34) and Adil (91

off 68). Mohammed Umar and Zeeshan Tufail picked up three wickets each.

Bank Muscat failed to rise to the occasion, folding up for a disappointing 115 in the 23rd over. Manan Tufail topscored with 35 as Rafique claimed 3 for 27. Arif Hussain removed the openers while Rahman Umar also bagged two wickets.

Brief Scores (B Division): Orient Travels/Gitacs 235 for 8 in 30 overs (Adil Khan 91 - 13x4, Arif Hussain 50 - 8x4, Mohammed Umar 3-46, Zeeshan Tufail 3-36) beat Bank Muscat 115 all out in 22.5 overs (Manan Tufail 35 - 3x4, 1x6, Rafique 3-27, Rahman Umar 2-15, Arif Hussain 2-30) by 120 runs.

Design Group beat Ideal

Karthik Rajappa's 44 was instrumental in helping Design Group Engineering Consultants to a 5-wicket win over Ideal Interna-

tional in a C Division T20 League match at Muscat Municipality ground 1.

Shahrulkh Mohamed struck an elegant 53 in Ideal's 152 for 8. Satham Hussain, Mohammed Feroz and Suraj Sukumar took two wickets each.

Design Group overhauled the target in the 18 th over, scoring 155 for 5 thanks to vital knocks by Karthik, Satham (29) and Parvez Beg (29).

Brief Scores (C Division): Ideal International 152 for 8 in 20 overs (Shahrulkh Mohamed 53 - 5x4, 1x6, Satham Hussain 2-12, Mohammed Feroz 2-21, Suraj Sukumar 2-28) lost to Design Group Engineering Consultants 155 for 5 in 17.4 overs (Karthik Rajappa 44 - 7x4, Satham Hussain 29 - 3x4, Parvez Beg 29 - 4x4) by 5 wickets.

Sushil stars in Khalsa win

In another C Division game, Sushil Kadam's superb all-round perfor-

mance paved the way for Khalsa United's 54-run victory against Al Waad Trading at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

Topscorer

Sushil topscored with a solid 51 off 42 while fellow opener Majid Rafique scored 43 off 23 in Khalsa's big total of 203 for 4. NV Shine bagged 3 for 43.

Al Waad could not mount a serious challenge, managing to score only 149 for 5, Parthipan Krishnan topscoring with 52 off 36. Sushil and Muhammed Pervez bowled well, taking two wickets each.

Brief Scores (C Division): Khalsa United 203 for 4 in 20 overs (Sushil Kadam 51 - 4x4, Majid Rafique 43 - 7x4, 1x6, NV Shine 3-43) beat Al Waad Trading 149 for 5 in 20 overs. (Parthipan Krishnan 52 - 7x4, 1x6, Ratheesh Puliyakottu Parambil 31 not out - 5x4, Sushil Kadam 2-14, Muhammed Parvez 2-25) by 54 runs.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has declined, with prices for delivery by February 2020 reaching \$50.54, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman declined \$2.01 from the price of Monday, which was \$52.55. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSM index closed at 3,714.91 points, up 0.53 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.26 per cent at 526.15 points. Muscat Finance, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Raysut Cement, down 2.30 per cent, was the top loser.

Vodafone receives first-class licence to operate in Sultanate

Vodafone will contribute to enhancing the ongoing progress of the telecommunications and technology sectors in the country, inspired by the goals of Oman Vision 2040



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Vodafone has recently obtained a first-class licence to establish and operate public telecommunications services in the Sultanate of Oman based on Royal Decree No. 4/2021, making the company the third telecommunications operator in the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng. Nasser bin Salim Al Hosni, Duty Chairman of the Board of Directors of Vodafone, stated that

the Royal Decree No. 4/2021 “represents a significant step into the future of the telecommunications sector in the Sultanate, whether in terms of providing cutting edge technologies in this field, or offering more options for the citizens and residents of the Sultanate, affirming that Vodafone Oman will work on providing the most advanced technologies in the field of information and communication, which, in turn, will contribute to the implementation of the government’s strategy represented by Oman Vision 2040”.

Diego Massidda, CEO of Vodafone Partner Markets, added



PARTNERSHIPS: Even before the sales operations start running in the market, Vodafone has enabled partnerships between several small and medium enterprises with international companies in the marketing, technology and logistics sectors. - Photo used for illustrative purpose

“The strategic partnership between Oman Future Telecommunications Company SAOC and Vodafone ensures that Vodafone Oman receives the right infrastructure and advanced technolo-

gies. Through partnerships and projects, especially with small and medium enterprises, the local community will also benefit from Vodafone’s global expertise.”

Even before the sales opera-

tions start running in the market, Vodafone has enabled partnerships between several small and medium enterprises with international companies in the marketing, technology and logistics sec-

tors. Given its global experience, Vodafone believes in supporting local business environments and enhancing investment opportunities in the markets they are entering. Vodafone will also contribute to enhancing the ongoing progress of the telecommunications and technology sectors in the Sultanate, inspired by the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Vodafone is a leading telecommunications company in Europe and Africa, operating mobile and fixed networks in 21 countries and partnering with mobile networks in 48 more. Pursuant to the partnership between the “Oman Future Telecommunications Company SAOC” and “Vodafone”, the third telecom operator will join Vodafone Partner Markets, which provides access to a variety of special Vodafone services. It should be noted that shareholders of the “Oman Future Telecommunications Company SAOC” include many Omani institutions such as government pensions and investment funds, as well as a group of private investors.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR74mn issued

MUSCAT: Oman’s central bank raised OMR74 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday. The treasury bills are for a maturity period 28 days, starting from January 6, Wednesday until February 3, 2021.

The average accepted price reached 99.951 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.950 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.63769 per cent and 0.63801 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 1 per cent. Furthermore, Treasury Bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the Government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**



FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT: Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. - **ONA**

STRATEGIC PLAN



LATEST TECHNOLOGIES: This project is considered as part of its strategic plan for digital transformation in all of its factories using the latest technologies. - Supplied picture

Sohar Cement adopts SAP solutions for its digital transformation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Cement Factory launched SAP S4/HANA and SAP Success Factors development project, this system is considered as the new generation of the commercial SAP programme group.

This project is considered as part of its strategic plan for digital transformation in all of its factories using the latest technologies, and the experimental work has started on the SAP system on January 1, 2021.

Joey Ghose, Chief Executive Officer, said, “The digital transformation of companies and organisations has become a necessity in the current time, the digital transformation is concerned with developing the operations of institutions and companies by changing

their method of working by using various digital technologies and following strategies to apply technology to increase productivity and reduce the costs.”

Salim bin Ahmed Al Ibrahim, Acting Deputy Group CEO, stated, “It gives us immense pleasure that we have the most advanced ERP and Cloud Application in the region as well as a cement manufacturing network across GCC.”

Besides, the digital transformation isn’t an application of technology inside the institution only but is a means to provide intensive programmes, which can have a direct impact on the institution and its work methodology and the way to provide the required services to the customers and the beneficiaries easily and quickly.

OMAN ARAB BANK

OAB enhances skills of entrepreneurs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) launched the second batch of educational workshops on its online Learning Hub platform, which has received a positive response from its users.

These include youth and upcoming entrepreneurs interested in enriching their skills in the fields of computer science, financial technologies and business administration. Following the launch of the second batch in November, several young individuals signed up to register and attend the innovative workshops that focus on a multitude of topics, including machine learning, artificial intelligence, new technology applications, business identities and other specialisations.

Commenting on the workshops, Adil Al Rahbi, Head of Human Resources Division at OAB, said, “A majority of institutions focus on launching initiatives centred on fields they specialise in. At OAB, we believe that our broader vision and role in society goes above and beyond the framework of financial services, through the provision of



Adil Al Rahbi, Head of Human Resources Division at OAB.

free educational services for the widest possible segment of young individuals. Future job competencies will differ from what they are today and it is our role to empower and prepare the youth.”

“To achieve this, we have entered into partnerships with specialists and institutions that are known to deliver expertise and knowledge enhancement. Agreements have been signed with re-

nowned companies locally, regionally and globally, with the main aim to provide free educational sources to the youth and upcoming entrepreneurs in the Sultanate,” Al Rahbi added.

The second batch of workshops kicked-off on November 22 and will continue until February 2021. Each will cover a specific topic and will be presented by an expert from within or outside Oman. All workshops are announced on OAB’s social media platforms on monthly basis. The launch of the second batch follows the success of the first series of workshops, which was launched earlier this year. The preliminary set of workshops saw over 700 participants attend more than 20 workshops in two months.

“Oman Arab Bank’s Learning Hub is the ideal platform for the youth to acquire a new and diverse set of skills to help them build a promising career in the future. Given the high number of registrations for the workshops, we believe that that the youth are keen to become the leaders of tomorrow and are proud to do our part in empowering them to achieve this objective,” Al Rahbi concluded.

DELOITTE REPORT

Experts discuss COVID-19 impact on hospitality, insurance sectors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Deloitte experts discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality and insurance sectors, customer behaviour, and how CFOs are weathering the storm in the latest edition of Deloitte’s *Middle East Point of View* magazine.

Alex Rankin, in his article *The pandemic playbook*, looks at insights into the levers utilised by CFOs as they respond to COVID-19 and subsequently recover and thrive. He says, “it is clear that the vast majority of regional CFOs are firmly focused on the short term and keeping their companies financially afloat. Time will tell whether the operational, tactical and strategic changes made in this time of crisis are retained, the extent to which efficiencies are realised or perceived risks crystallise.”

This new environment brought on by COVID has had an immense impact on customer behaviour, says Jean Abou Assi. In his article Ready, set, elevate!, he discusses

the impact of the pandemic on customer behaviour, “If a business manages to successfully care for their customers, listen to their needs and concerns, and always meet them where they are, they are bound to thrive and prosper, provided they never ignore the human in Human Experience.”

Audit operations

Jude Rodrigues and Krishna Kumar study the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality industry and its effect on audit operations.

They say, “Businesses heavily reliant on travel and human interaction are the hardest hit, while the indispensable segments (for example, pharmacy, food retail, essential services) remained resilient.”

The authors see the effects of the pandemic as “an opportunity to do things differently, by using new, or flexing the use of existing technology. There could continue to be restrictions on travel to client premises and audits might need to be performed remotely”.

As travel restrictions ground planes and affect the travel and tourism industry, travel insurance policy sales have also plummeted, only one of the negative ripples on the insurance industry in the UAE. In their article, The business of uncertainty, Elias Ma’ayeh and Thomas Sam look at How COVID-19 is impacting the insurance sector in the GCC and write that, in the GCC, where the challenge of the pandemic has been “compounded by reduced oil prices, the effect has been mixed.”

Data centres

From his point of view, Zaid Selman in his article COVID-19 implications for data centres notes that the productivity of employees working from home means that “large internet companies are likely to purchase and utilise more spaces in data centres, making collaboration between providers of enterprise software, network infrastructure and facilities more integral to their respective strategies.”

MARKET

MSM index ends higher

Muscat Finance, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer, while Raysut Cement, down 2.30 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSM index closed at 3,714.91 points, up 0.53 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.26 per cent at 526.15 points.

Muscat Finance, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer, while Raysut Cement, down 2.30 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Galfar Engineering was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat was most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 463 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.22 million, with more than 8.43 million shares changing hands. Out of 34 traded stocks, 16 advanced, 3 declined and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR92,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR118,000 followed by GCC

& Arab investors for OMR74,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 5,738.64 points, up by 0.56 per cent. Muscat Finance, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Oman & Emirates Investment Holding, Bank Dhofar, and Al Sharqia Investment Holding, were up by 10.00 per cent, 5.88 per cent, 2.22 per cent, 2.04 per cent, and 1.37 per cent respectively. Oman Arab Bank was down 0.53 per cent. Al Madina Takaful closed lower by 1.28 per cent.

Industrial Index closed at 4,370.55 points, up 0.48 per cent. Oman Cables Industry, Oman Fisheries, National Aluminium Products, and Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles were up by 5.21 per cent, 2.33 per cent, 2.25 per cent, and 1.82 per cent respectively. Raysut Cement was down 2.30 per cent.

Services index was up by 0.92 per cent before closing at 1,617.44 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT SECURITIES MARKET

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSM30 Index	3,714.91	3,695.16	3,714.91	3,695.16	19.75	0.53
Financial Index	5,740.54	5,706.47	5,738.64	5,706.47	32.17	0.56
Industrial Index	4,370.55	4,343.18	4,370.55	4,349.67	20.88	0.48
Services Index	1,617.44	1,605.14	1,617.44	1,602.64	14.80	0.92
MSM SHARIAH INDEX	527.72	526.15	526.15	524.78	1.37	0.26
MSM TOTAL RETURN	4,239.55	4,217.01	4,239.55	4,217.01	22.54	0.53

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,434,006	1,221,982	463	20,305,011,926	16	3	15	34

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	118,492	5,164	7	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.044	0.040	0.004	10.000	0.044	0.043	0.000	0.100	13,514,438
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SER.	501,128	35,948	15	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.068	0.004	5.882	0.072	0.071	0.001	0.100	21,019,332
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOMMUNICATION	39,679	29,011	13	0.716	0.732	0.716	0.732	0.720	0.012	1.667	0.732	0.732	0.736	0.100	549,000,000
OM0000000440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HOLDING	819,266	60,465	47	0.073	0.075	0.073	0.074	0.073	0.001	1.370	0.073	0.072	0.001	0.100	5,660,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVESTMENT AND FINANCE	836,021	76,897	32	0.091	0.093	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.001	1.099	0.092	0.091	0.002	0.100	18,400,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	21,500	7,310	2	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.338	0.002	0.592	0.340	0.336	0.340	0.100	274,642,592
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	247,500	99,000	10	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.380	0.400	0.100	40,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	1,100	160	1	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.145	0.146	0.100	12,325,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	501,000	122,744	3	0.244	0.245	0.244	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.245	0.250	0.100	81,063,814
OM0000001772	AL ANWAR HOLDING	340,837	22,876	18	0.067	0.068	0.066	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.066	0.067	0.100	13,400,000
OM0000002176	AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	106,500	15,408	12	0.147	0.147	0.144	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.144	0.143	0.145	0.100	18,110,204
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	527,500	210,107	40	0.396	0.400	0.396	0.398	0.398	0.000	0.000	0.396	0.394	0.400	0.100	1,293,309,971
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	22,900	5,304	8	0.225	0.230	0.225	0.227	0.227	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.222	0.225	0.100	12,485,000
OM0000003968	QOREDOO	55,672	21,831	31	0.394	0.394	0.390	0.392	0.394	0.002	0.508	0.392	0.390	0.392	0.100	255,170,138
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	298,276	101,414	19	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.348	0.008	2.299	0.340	0.336	0.340	0.100	68,000,000
Total		4,437,371	813,538	258												

Parallel Market

OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	8,302	453	3	0.054	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.052	0.003	5.769	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.100	80,443,080
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	25,000	11,080	3	0.440	0.448	0.440	0.444	0.422	0.022	5.213	0.448	0.444	0.456	0.100	39,826,800
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	583,916	148,468	76	0.252	0.258	0.250	0.254	0.245	0.009	3.673	0.250	0.247	0.254	0.100	15,545,885
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	15,000	1,320	1	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.086	0.002	2.326	0.088	0.087	0.000	0.100	11,000,000
OM0000001319	NATIONAL ALUMINIUM PRODUCTS	80,000	7,310	14	0.089	0.092	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.002	2.247	0.092	0.089	0.091	0.100	3,055,002
OM0000001681	OMAN AND EMIRATES INV HOLDING	20,000	920	1	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.045	0.001	2.222	0.046	0.045	0.047	0.100	5,606,250
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	786,000	78,380	14	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.002	2.041	0.100	0.100	0.105	0.100	299,635,144
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC TILES	40,000	11,200	3	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.275	0.005	1.818	0.280	0.275	0.280	0.100	82,939,831
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	110,000	11,000	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.099	0.001	1.010	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	95,457,195
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	33,900	6,441	3	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.189	0.001	0.529	0.190	0.180	0.190	0.100	317,187,900
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	4,700	3,384	1	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.700	0.700	0.000	0.000	0.720	0.720	0.748	0.100	110,250,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	5,000	775	2	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.155	0.148	0.155	0.100	14,400,000
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	44,484	4,671	1	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.103	0.108	0.100	2,205,000
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MAR.	700	476	1	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.672	0.672	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.608	0.680	0.100	46,368,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING AND CON.	1,833,850	85,401	57	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.047	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	13,629,090
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	147	18	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.115	0.125	0.100	10,175,344
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	322,750	31,038	15	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	144,000,000
OM0000004925	AL BATINAH POWER	10,886	545	2	0.050	0.051	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.100	33,744,372
OM0000004768	AL MADINA TAKAFUL	72,000	5,564	5	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.100	13,475,000
Total		3,996,635	408,444	205												

US FEDERAL RESERVE

US monetary policy to be accommodative for a long time

WASHINGTON: The US monetary policy will be accommodative for a long time as the economy slowly recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior US Federal Reserve official said Monday. "The bottom line is that it will

take a long time for average inflation to reach 2 per cent. To meet our objectives and manage risks, the Fed's policy stance will have to be accommodative for quite a while," Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago President Charles Ev-

ans said in a speech to the annual meeting of the Allied Social Science Associations. Evans also said the Fed should aim to boost inflation to 2.5 per cent if the central bank wants to get average inflation up to 2 per cent. — **Xinhua**

MIDDLE EAST, TURKEY & AFRICA REGION

Cyberthreat estimates for 2021 in META region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The world didn't just change in 2020. It transformed—so much so that it's been hard to keep up. And, as any cybersecurity expert will tell you when the external world transforms—cyberspace transforms with it.

These same experts will also tell you that cyberspace isn't ubiquitous. Every region must content not only with global trends but also country-specific developments. In other words, true comprehensive security comes when a global perspective is supplemented with a regional one. That's why, this year, in addition to the usual global KSB reports, Kaspersky is offering a series of local predictions to ensure that - wherever you live - you can bring on a more secure 2021.

Here are some local developments in META (Middle East,

Turkey & Africa) region experts predict you should keep an eye on in the coming year.

Increase in advanced persistent threat intrusions in the Middle East and Turkey: Increasing geopolitical tension across the board influencing an increase in the espionage-based cyber offensive. Geopolitics has been historically the primary contributing factor - among other factors such as economic, tech and foreign affairs - to influence cyber intrusions to steal sensitive data for national security purposes.

Growth of cybercrime attacks in META at-large, especially in Africa: Every country globally has had its own issues with varying impact since the pandemic started. Economic turbulence stormed many countries and had the most affection on countries who had weak economy prior to the pandemic.

Traditionally, weak economies lead to unemployment, social inequality, corruption and more, and this leads to an increase in traditional crime.

Increase in data breaches in META at-large: To cope with social distancing and fighting the pandemic, more companies are exposing their systems online with availability in mind to maintain their "business as usual" status, but without adequate security controls, leaving some type of databases and systems open to intruders.

More hackers-for-hire/cyber mercenaries groups' activities targeting SMBs and financial institutions: Increasing economic uncertainties globally and in the META region mandates that businesses understand their competitive marketplace to navigate the current and upcoming foggy situation.

REAL GDP

Better outlook for Bhutan economy in 2021: Fitch

SINGAPORE: Bhutan's real GDP is likely to grow by 4.7 per cent in 2021, rebounding from a 3.5 per cent contraction in 2020, Fitch Solutions said.

An almost complete absence of tourism activity for 2020 crippled hospitality and transport services. Manufacturing and construction were also affected during 2020 from disruptions to critical inputs, temporary export restrictions, foreign labour shortages (due to lockdowns in India), and weaker external demand. However, a rise in hydropower output and exports due to the on-streaming of 720 megawatt Mangdechhu hydropower project likely cushioned the economy's decline.

"We expect somewhat of a reversal of the above trends in 2021, with tourism-related services, manufacturing and construction to aid the recovery," said Fitch. "Hydropower output will stabilise without commissioning of another hydropower project, implying low growth. A weak pipeline of public infrastructure projects also suggests a limited rebound in construction despite an easing of foreign labour constraints."

Fitch said Bhutan remains effectively closed to inbound tourism as of January 2021. — **ANI**

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+96892737149
Email drpkabbas@yahoo.co.in

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Property Leasing Manager Send
CV To vepsupervisor@gmail.com

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**Looking for Electrician, Plumber,
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Email atf24704415@gmail.com

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**Accountant (CA Inter) - Indian
(male) with 10 years' experience**
Accounting. Oman DL. Contact
94450401.

**BCom Graduate with DL & Experi-
ence looking for suitable placement.**
Contact 92695069.
Email: zameelpv@gmail.com

Indian Male, Senior Accountant
over 16 years Oman experience in
Accounts looking for a Job & have
NOC. Contact: 95851920, 78258270

Indian male B.Com, tally
experience,accounts upto finaliza-
tion with DL. Contact 94532610.
Email vargheseekkuttikattil@gmail.com

Male accountant M.S finance, 7yrs
gulf experience with DL. Contact
95318382. Email salmanriaz1988.thumrait.int@gmail.com

Indian male 18+ yrs experience in
finance,debt collection & credit,audit
operation available for immedi-
ate joining. contact 95500941,
78159940. Email
tatabrezaziz@gmail.com

**Looking for Senior Accountant Po-
sition.** Having 10 Years Experience,
and DL also. Mob - 79202007

Accountant Indian Male, 34 years
old, 9 years of experience in finance,
Looking for suitable job. Contact
9874 8634

**Looking for Senior Accountant Po-
sition** .Having 10 Years Experience,
and DL also . Mob - 79202007

Indian Male, Bcom, MBA 19 years
experience in Budget,Banking,Audit,
MIS,Payroll,ERP(Epicor,Sage,Tally,
Oracle). NOC available. ready to join
immediately. GSM 91190552.

MBA Finance 16+ Exp of Oman in
Accounts up to finalization,looking
for suitable senior position Contact:
92383882

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MIS seeking suitable opening. DL,
NOC available.
Contact 92930407, 79202015

Assistant Accountant, Indian male,
B Com 12 years experience in Oman
with D/L and NOC seeks suitable
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Position** .Having 10 Years Experi-
ence, and driving license also . Mob
- 79202007

Sudanese 32 yrs,6 yrs experience
in Oman in Accounting & Adminis-
trative assistant,contact 94050251.
email.danygalaxy184@gmail.com

Accountant, office administration,
back office.Contact 93403636.Email
munafshaikh22@gmail.com

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GSM: 93823132
Email: mehdikassen@yahoo.com

Structural/Civil Engineer with 14 years of experience (8 years in USA and 4 years in Oman) in PEB, RCC, Pipeline, Offshore, and Marine structures and have Master degree from USA. Seeking for placement as Project Engineer or Manager.

Please contact me on +968-93368626
irfan.sanjari.syed@gmail.com

SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEER
11+ Yrs of experience (10 Yrs Oman experience)
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• Experience in Building and Factory projects with Ministry & Private Clients.
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Having Omani DL
GSM: 94125368 ; premjithpremanathan@gmail.com

Accountant Indian Male
MBA Finance 2 years experience in india with good knowledge in tally seeks placement.

9539 1786

MBA, seeking job, 27 yrs experience
in capable managerial candidature with rich experience in Business operations, Vendor development, Procurement and HR generalist.
Can join immediately.

Whatsapp: 7730012111
Mobile: 94268870
Email: mvssmgbr@gmail.com

Senior MEP Manager

Indian Male: Btech, having 23 years GCC experience with valid Oman driving licence seeks suitable placement.

Contact GSM: 79880377
Email: jaksona8081@gmail.com

ELECTRICAL MANAGER
Graduate Electrical Engineer & MBA (Project Management) with 28 years' experience in Industrial Projects & Maintenance looking for senior role. NOC Available and can join immediately.
Contact: 968-94029112
Email: sakhthiveljothi@gmail.com

SR. Manager/GM/VP (Plant)
Indian Male,with more than 23 years exp. in repair/ maint/deployment/logistic/procurement of Vehicles/Heavy construction equipment in a large reputed construction industry seeks suitable placement in senior management level. NOC available.

Contact: 79198709

Chief Accountant MBA
Indian Male With 16 Years' Experience in all aspects of Accounting. NOC & Oman DL Available, seeks Suitable placement.
Contact: 97741485
Email: stm.crg@gmail.com

FINANCE MANAGER
Group-Finance Manager, 19 years' experience in Strategic planning, Finance, Accounting, Income tax, VAT etc. Qualified CPA, CMA, CIA. Looking for Senior management position in finance/ internal audit. Available to join shortly.

Contact 92148608 / soji_ansu@yahoo.com

Project Engineer
32 yrs old - Having 10 years of experience (6 yrs in Oman) in oil & gas field - Intense work experience in fabrication of Pressure Vessels, Structural Steel fabrication & erection, Manufacturing of Skid Packages, Piping Spools & supports, Storage Tanks, Stack & Ducts, Pig Traps. EPC & Turnaround projects.

Having DL & Current Visa expires in Feb 2021.
Contact # boopathiraja88@gmail.com / 97412105

Execution Architect/ Finishing Manager
36, Male in design/ execution at consultancy & contracting with 13 Work experience in Hotel/Office/ Airport/ retail in Construction/Interior fit-out Space seeking Suitable placement. Knowledge on CAD/ MS office/ Planning/ Tendering/ Estimation. D/L and NOC available immediately.

Contact: 78371040;
architdesign2020@gmail.com

SENIOR CORPORATE AND RETAIL BANKER
With over 30 years experience in Credit Management, Relationship Management, Credit Administration, Operations Management and Recoveries/ IFRS9 Provisioning Methodologies seeks suitable placement.
Email: DolphinOcean367@gmail.com

QUALITY MANAGER
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Contact: 91-9952022345,
venkatavaradu@rediffmail.com

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Contact 97264447

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Contact: 78235621/bsda@gmail.com

Graduate Civil Engineer
From India with over 11 years Project Management Experience with Consultant and Client in Oman with local release & driving license seeks suitable opportunities.

Email: contactsyedshams@gmail.com;
GSM: +968 98500235

JOB WANTED

ADMIN/HR

Indian male with 21 years' experience in Oman seeks job for Hr / admin. Contact 95425764

Indian Male 43.y.o seeking a suitable opportunity in Admin/Mktg/Ops Noc & D/L available. PH. 98274545

Indian male with 21 years' experience in Oman seeks job for HR/ Admin. Contact 95425764

Indian male, 13yrs Oman Experience in Stores, Purchase, Operation, Admin. D/L.Immediate joining. # 78363835

Smart Indian, Excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17years Oman experience in Airport Projects, Hospital, Media, EPC. Contact 99283938

Indian male 14+ yrs experience NOC available looking for secretarial, administration job. Contact 99341481. Email mhd82ajaz@gmail.com

Bangladeshi male, B.SC looking for suitable job. Contact 79978201

Looking for HR & Admin Manager / Executive or Secretarial postions. Knows custom clearance and costing also. Over 15 years of experience, please call 91732334

Office manager / Business coordination / project administration
Indian Graduate Male Experienced in Engineering Consultancy & Construction Contacting Companies looking for a suitable placement. Ready to join immediately with Oman DL & NOC. Contact: 79705674 Email: pramoda.online@gmail.com

Indian Male seeking Admin/HR
Job having 23 years of experience in Oman with Valid DL and NOC available - Contact: 99578192

Indian female with 10 yrs experience in payroll, executive secretarial,general admin/HR with valid D/L,looking for suitable placement. Contact 96441865. Email reeteeku1779@gmail.com

Omani Male 35 yrs old, looking for a PRO job. Has experience 14 yrs in the same field. Contact 92049106, 95422144

Indian Female 10 years' experience in Muscat, for the post of Sales Coordinator, Secretary or Office cum Commercial Assistant. Contact 94048550, 95431427. E-mail: bmnair27@yahoo.com

Indian Male, MBA,BCOM having 6 years Gulf & 4 years India experience in HR / ADMIN & Purchase looking for suitable placement. Contact 97914340, 92369044. Email: sampathrajkv@gmail.com

HOSPITALITY

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BTECH IN ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING *(EEE)*WITH 3 YEARS EXPERIENCES DIPLOMA IN PLC & SCADA. NOC, Oman Valid Driving License Looking for a suitable Job. **Contact 78227500**
Email: muhdfahiz007@gmail.com

ARCHITECT

9 years experienced Female Architect with Urban planning experience seeking for a job - Contact 96146645.

DRIVER

Experienced driver with car, looking job in office/company for contract. Contact 79250786

10 yrs experience driver looking job. Contact 91335595

Looking for driving job. Contact 96312087

Looking for driving job with Car. 6 yrs experience. Contact 96176918

Looking for job in driving, with 5 yrs experience. Contact 96189448

IT

CRM, ERP & MIS analyst, experience 5 yrs. Contact 71561266

Indian Post Graduate with 21 years experience in Oracle SQL, PL/SQL, Forms, Reports, DBA, IT Manager, Orion ERP, Sage ERP with Accounts Knowledge and NOC. **Contact 95398567 / 78141599 / anasd2k@gmail.com**

Web developer, 22, Indian, BSc (Hons.) IT, UK. 1yr exp in various software projects (including PHP,NodeJS,ReactJS). Seeking a suitable job. Currently in Oman. Contact: 79371798

Computer service technician with 2 years exp, also with 2 years exp in sales in oman, looking for suitable job. Indian male 28, currently in oman, NOC available. # 94496905

IT Administrator, Indian Male Looking for Job. 12years of Exp.in Oman with D/L. CCNA Certified Work Exp. in POS system, CCTV, IT Network. 95059065 / 95147348 / jaxonnj@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Indian Male 43.y.o seeking a suitable opportunity in medical centers for Admin/Mktg/Ops.Noc & D/L available. Contact 98274545

Indian 30yrs, MSW (Medical & psychiatry) MSC Psychology,6 yrs experience seeks job.Contact 79308281,91 9207258008

ADMINISTRATION

Indian, Male, having bachelor's degree looking for position in Office Administration/ Document Control, total 22 years of experience, 19 years in Oman with Oman driving licence. NOC available.

Contact No. 99757759

JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

Quantity Surveying, preparation of documents like BOQ. 23 years in Oman searching a job from contractor or consultant has experience in Civil, MEP, landscaping and interior decorations. Contact 93072517

Safety officer (engineer), two years experience in Oil field in Oman, nebosh IGC, valid D.L. Contact 79318246

Planning Engineer: Pakistani National with BE Civil, 13 years of experience including 8 years in Oman in Project Planning, Scheduling and Delay Analysis looking for a suitable position. Local transfer - NOC, Contact: 97018909.

HVAC Technican cum Supervisor, chiller plant coldroom all refrigeration system, VRF system, 30 yrs experience DL holder Contact 79816271. Email mohandaskd@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer (B.E) with 7+ yrs exp in MEP projects,Oil&Gas piping projects.NOC & Oman DL available. Contact 91293770. email jebilk212@gmail.com

B.E Mechanical engineer, having overall of 5 yrs experience in steel fabrication industry seeking a suitable job.Ready to join immediately with local NOC arranged. Contact 968-78052560

Indian 26, experience in Telecom Networks (Oman) & master's degree, seeking position as Project/Network Engineer. Contact 92613254. Email mohdsalih22@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer, Looking for a job in Quality Control, with DL Contact 79714227. Email lokeshshirodkar15@gmail.com

Senior civil engineer with over 10 yrs experience on high end projects(RE) Contact 78270396

MANAGER

Electrical Project Manager with 10 Years Experience in (Primary & Distribution) Substations and Over head lines,Oman DL.Contact 99022692

Indian, Finance Manager 20Yrs Experience, Tradefinance - MIS - Budget - Planning - Auditing - Finalisation - Banking: 90473368, devan801@gmail.com

GM / NSM / Head Of Sales

Male 49 – Proven Business Manager with exceptional sales management skills. Chartered Institute of Marketing - UK, MBA in Marketing, 15+ years of FMCG sales & business management experience in GCC & OMAN. NOC/DL available.

Email: sljobserver72@gmail.com
Contact: 96223114

Senior Civil Engineer with 8 years' experience in government and private construction projects with NOC/DL looking for a suitable job , GSM : 93352004

Electrical Engineer B.Tech, 15 years exp in Oman seeks job. NOC and Release available. Contact 92254336 Email ameen1667@gmail.com

B.E Civil engr with 14 years of Oman experience mainly in building construction looking for a suitable position. Contact: 72132426

HVAC engineer with 1 year Experience seeks job. Contact 79027224

Mechanical engineer of Car diagnostic and maintenance with experience three years. Contact 93521100

Looking for a job for the post of Electrical Engineer with B.Tech and 15 years exp in Oman. NOC and Release available. Contact 92254336. Email ameen1667@gmail.com

B.E civil engineer having 12 plus years of Oman experience in building construction looking for a suitable position. Contact: 72132426

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20 yrs experience in Sales & Marketing of Central Air Conditioning & Structural steel etc. **Contact 968-95950370**

Experienced and academically qualified retail professional available in Oman with more than 20 years experience in multinational brands. Looking for a challenging opening in the top management role. **Contact +968 92639013**

Indian male B.com graduate, PG Diploma in logistic (Air cargo and supply chain management) & Digital Marketing. Valid Oman D/L. Looking for suitable placement. Contact: 79748272 Email: shazil.sadique@gmail.com.

Indian/female (28)/MBA, 6+ years' experience in digital marketing and business development with valid Oman D/L. available for immediate joining. Contact: 97210952

Indian Sales/Marketing manager selling of Constructional,building material products with 14 yrs experience in Oman with DL,looking job. Contact 95952066



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Finance Manager, 28 years Oman experience worked with reputed groups, Managing Cashflow, MIS, Budget, Forecast etc. Contact 968-98803439 (Call/Whatsapp)

Civil / MEP Draughtsman (Indian- aged 35) having 13 years of oman experience seeking a better placement. Valid oman driving licence. NOC available. Contact 98079806. Email shirshadbabu@gmail.com

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PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Diploma civil Indian male 26 yrs 5 yrs oman exp, NOC ready, sales/procurement/stores.
E.mail vijju.asp7777@gmail.com, GSM/WA 00918712330030

Senior Procurement Engineer, M.tech-Civil, Looking for a job, NOC Available, Immediate Joining, Indian Male, 38yrs, have over 16+ years UAE& Oman experience. E. syed-kamaalsaba@yahoo.com, Watsapp +96871144578, GSM +917766019519

Keralite, 31 yrs purchase assistant, 10 yrs working experience in Oman, valid Oman DL. Looking for suitable jobs. Contact 98615731 Email sanalk73@gmail.com

Indian/Male(29)/MBA/6 years' experience in procurement and sales coordination with valid Oman D/L. Available for immediate joining. Contact: 92536194

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ROUND-UP



Bank Muscat opens four new Green Sports fields

The bank recently opened four new sports fields in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate in line with the bank's commitment to community development and promoting Oman as a sporting nation

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continues to open new sports fields across the Sultanate as part of its flagship Green Sports programme.

The bank recently opened four new sports fields in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate in line with the bank's commitment to community development and promoting Oman as a sporting nation.

The opening of the Al Nojoom team's stadium in the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid was attended by Khamis bin Masoud Al Saifi, Chief Financial Officer of the team. The bank also inaugurated the Al Arabi



team's stadium in the Wilayat of Bidiyah, in the presence of Salem bin Eid Al Balushi, Vice President of the team.

Another field was handed over to the Al Ittifaq Sports Team in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi at an event attended by Hamoud Bin Saif Al Shabibi, chairman of the team. The fourth sports field was handed over to the Al Ansar Sports Team in the Wilayat of Dima Wa Al

Tayyin, in the presence of the vice-chairman, Hilal Bin Khalfan Bani Araba, Abdullah Bin Juma Al Arai-mi, Regional Manager, Bank Muscat handed over project completion certificates to the respective teams at all the four events, which were organised in full compliance with COVID-19 norms.

With the latest openings, the bank has officially handed over 104 Green Sports fields to teams

across different governorates of the Sultanate. The total number of teams which have benefitted from the programme until the end of last year has now reached 123, confirming the great success of the programme. The scope of support under the Green Sports programme included the installation of artificial turf or natural grass on sports fields, floodlighting and water-desalination systems.

There is no doubt that it has been greatly contributing to further build Omani sporting talent. The programme is provided with an excellent means to channelise the energy and talents of Omani youth productively, besides helping local communities develop stronger bonds. Importantly, it is building a pipeline of talented players who can represent the country at all levels in the future.

It must be noted that the facilities provided under the programme are used not only by the teams but also by the local communities that they are based in. There is no doubt that it also has a positive impact on the environment.

Abdullah Juma Al Araiimi, Regional Manager – North Al Sharqiyah, congratulated all the teams and their members for this achievement and for what they have done during the recent past. The bank has successfully handed over 104 sports fields and many more will be inaugurated in the coming months. The bank's longest-running CSR programme will continue to support and serve the community as it implements the bank's vision of serving you better, every day.

Manchester City Football Club visits A'soud Global School in Oman

MUSCAT: Aisoud Global School (AGS) welcomed English Premier League behemoths, Manchester City Football Club to its virtual campus. Students from Grade 4 to Grade 9 interacted and participated in virtual workshops led by the Manchester-based club, which imparted insights on Global 'City'zenship and healthy lifestyles.

AGS students were excited to meet the six-time English Premier League Champions, as coaches led engaging virtual sessions focusing on healthy living, sustainability and nutrition; providing students with a unique opportunity to learn from their football heroes.

Lee Davies, Principal of A'soud Global School says, "At AGS we are continuously thinking of 'out of the box' ideas to enhance our students' learning outcomes, including unique and memorable experiences that excite and motivate them to work towards their own career goals."

Patrick Pritchard, Community Manager and Goalkeeping coach at Manchester City Football Club led the Global 'City'zenship workshop and shared invaluable insights about sustainability. The interesting workshop explored the various benefits of water conservation and efficient water consumption; from how much water is essential for hydration to how much is required to wash the human body and household items. The healthy lifestyles workshop, led by Lewis Barlow Head of Performance Analysis was aimed at



key aspects required to sustain good mental and physical health such as; sleep routines and patterns, understanding emotions, nutrition, where our food comes from and hydration for body and muscles. The interactive workshops provided students with a creative platform to discuss Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, part of the AGS curriculum.

AGS has entered into a partnership with Manchester City for the 2021 – 2022 academic year, which will enable AGS football teams to benefit from professional coaching sessions from the club's expert coaching staff.

“Our partnership with Manchester City Football Club highlights what can be achieved through technology, despite the challenges affecting the world at this time, and we are excited to learn from the club’s wealth of knowledge. I would like to thank Manchester City for their support and all members of the AGS community, who have made this partnership possible. We are looking forward to a positive start to the New Year and the endless opportunities it holds,” concluded Davies.

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ROUND-UP



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Alizz Bank appoints Issa Al Riyami as Head of Sharia Audit & Compliance unit



Issa bin Salem Al Riyami is the first Omani to be appointed to this position in a full-fledged Islamic bank in the Sultanate

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank has announced the appointment of Issa bin Salem Al Riyami as the Head of the Sharia Audit & Compliance unit at Alizz Islamic Bank. Issa bin Salem Al Riyami is the first Omani to be appointed to this position in a full-fledged Islamic bank in the Sultanate. In his capacity as head of the unit, Issa Al Riyami will oversee, review products and documents, comment, correct and submit them to the Sharia Board after ensuring that they adhere to the principles of Islamic Sharia. His role is to also ensure the implementation of the Sharia guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman, represented by the Supreme Sharia

Supervisory Board. He will also oversee the Islamic Banking educational campaigns conducted by Alizz Islamic Bank, both internally and externally; and raise awareness about Islamic banking and its products, in order to assist the public to choose products that fall in line with their requirements, with complete transparency. Al Riyami possesses a bachelor's degree in Islamic law from the College of Sharia and Law (currently the College of Law) and has an extensive work experience of 18 years, where he worked in the government sector for 11 years in the Ministry of Justice and the Administrative Affairs Council of the Judiciary. He then moved to work in the Islamic banking sector in the Meethaq Islamic Banking window of Bank Muscat in 2013 as the Head of the Sharia Audit Unit and then the Head of the Sharia Compliance Unit. In 2016, Al Riyami became a Certified Sharia Supervisor and Auditor approved by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI). He is also the first Omani to hold the position of Head of Sharia Audit and Compliance in a full-fledged Islamic bank after fulfilling the requirements of the regulatory framework for Islamic banks by the Central Bank of Oman.

DIGITAL INTERVIEWS

Business experts speak on how SMEs can adapt and evolve in COVID-19 environment

MUSCAT: In a series of digital interviews, business experts and partners of Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC), along with the Centre's advisory team, has urged SMEs to face the COVID-19 situation with a positive attitude and take needed action to stay afloat.

Sharing their insights to help entrepreneurs and local businesses ride out the storm, they encouraged them to 'keep faith', 'maintain financial discipline', 'embrace innovation', and 'go digital' whenever applicable. They encouraged SMEs to prepare business continuity plans, and if necessary, make changes in the way they need to conduct business.

Remarking on how to handle current challenges, Abdulaziz Al Balushi, Group CEO, OMINVEST said, "These are indeed unprecedented times. Here in Oman, we are facing a twin crisis - one of COVID-19 and the other one is that of oil prices. However, I have no doubt that we will come out stronger by mainly helping each other. At this critical moment, I believe we must help SMEs to navigate through these difficult times. It is important for SMEs to effectively engage with all their shareholders and build trust with them."

Emphasising that SMEs must have financial discipline, Abdulaziz Al Balushi said, "We need to cut unnecessary expenses. Every penny that is earned or saved will make a lot of difference." He reminded SMEs who are financially and operationally strong that this is the time for them to grow. Advising SMEs to do more for less, he asked them to embrace technology, commenting, "that is the only way forward. If we think about innovation let us think how we can innovate through technology." Abdulaziz Al Balushi asked SMEs to revisit their business plan. He said, "The lessons we learnt in this crisis will help us redefine our business strategy. For us to be relevant in the future, it is important that we reconsider the way we do our businesses. Please have faith and hope and inshallah we will come out of this stage stronger."

OMINVEST has been supporting Zubair SEC's flagship Direct Support Programme (DSP) for the three yearly rounds.

Saying that the COVID-19 has disrupted the complete SME ecosystem, Pankaj Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas said, "This sector has taken a massive hit as has the other sectors. We must remember that SMEs is an ancillary industry, a service provider to a major cluster. SMEs will survive only if there is an ecosystem which is providing them with a so-called 'feed' to



grow on." Pankaj Khimji explained that SMEs who are hit badly are the ones who have large 'ongoing fixed overheads' such rent or those invested on a vehicle which is a 'non-productive cost'. He suggested permission from authorities to operate from home or garages or outsourcing the transport of delivery systems is certain to help young entrepreneurs.

He advised SMEs who have borrowed loans to go upfront to the banks or lenders ask them for a furlough in paying interest. "If you need more loans don't borrow more than you require. Be frank with your bankers because they have been given an unofficial mandate by the CBO and the government to help SMEs. Please get in touch with your electricity or water provider because they will also give a deferment on their payment."

Suggesting to large corporates to start a 'mentoring and monitoring' programme for SMEs, Pankaj Khimji said, "We could work with them and talk to landlords to defer rents. Large corporates can lend their warehouses for the time being. Large organisations or icons of Oman must have a plan to outsource non-core part of their business to efficient SMEs or cultivate them to make them efficient and give them a cost beneficial and win-win proposition. Businesses should be aware of how many small businesses they have helped mushroom."

Commenting on adjusting and using opportunities, Humayun Kabir, Chief Executive Officer at ABQ Education Group said, "We live in unprecedented times and face challenges we could never really plan for. SMEs should try to out adapt and out-innovate our competitors and delight our customers." Offering useful tips to budding entrepreneurs, Humayun Kabir urged them to keep the faith. He said, "The idea that inspired you to become an entrepreneur is still valid. You just need to adjust and adapt as to how you execute it."

He further added, "Your advantage is speed and flexibility of execution. This is where you could make bold decisions, modify varied proposition a lot faster than many of your competitors." Implying them to exceed customer expectation, Humayun Kabir reminded, "An opportunity to exceed custom-



er expectation is much better in a crisis because clients expect less. Besides, any business that goes the extra mile will get noticed and strengthen its customer loyalty."

Speaking on the importance of learning and self-development during the crisis, Prof. Yusra Mouzugh, Vice-Chancellor of Muscat University said, "COVID-19 is a difficult reality that has cast a shadow on our lives and changed our world completely. Successful institutions are the ones who deal with the situation with positivity. Investing at this stage is important; we can face the future in a stronger and better way. I believe one of the most important measures to combat this pandemic is to invest in continuous learning. I would advise SMEs to look for new tools to help them and their staff keep learning and developing important skills at this time."

Elucidating on how businesses can respond to COVID-19, Dr Rashid Al Balushi, Managing Director, Iskan Oman Investment Company said, "The pandemic has forced small and large companies to rethink their strategies. The slowdown of economic movement and the freezing of activities such as aviation, hotels, and restaurants has led to disruption. I would guide SMEs to be ready with measures to come out of the situation."

"The most important of which is a careful review of all financial matters, especially the availability of cash liquidity to review financial obligations and entitlements, negotiate with banks and creditors to document the financial situation in a manner that is suitable for the availability of cash liquidity, as well as negotiate with suppliers to schedule payments and work to improve non-received revenue in addition to working to reduce operating expenses for the coming months and write off all non-core debt and maintain liquidity within the company."

Articulating on how a company can cope with this crisis Martin Luxemburg, Managing Director of Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship (ECE) asked SMEs to, "Stay connected to your customer. Go to them, talk to them and ask them what their needs are. It is possible that their needs have changed, so you have to make sure that you are still able to support them."



Zubair SEC and ECE have collaborated on empirical research back in 2017 that also resulted in the development of an SME Support Ecosystem mapping for Oman.

Luxemburg asked entrepreneurs to check how they can make small changes that can add value to customers. "SMEs can offer certain things online or maybe offer new products for which maybe they didn't have time to develop before."

Urging SMEs not to forget their employees Luxemburg said, "They are the biggest value that you have in your company and you need to have them to deliver that value to your customer. So, ask them how they are doing and what you can do to provide them with the support they need. Remember every company is different so you need a different strategy."

Speaking on the importance of research and development to prepare for post-COVID-19, Ali Shaker, Advisor, Business Development and Strategic Partnerships, Zubair SEC said, "While everyone's primary focus is on how to perform better, it is important that research and product get management attention. With the future market and customer demand unclear, it is important to focus on R&D too. Ultimately, the world will return to some modicum of normalcy, and businesses should take steps with R&D so they are ready with plans."

To support its members and other SMEs, the centre has uploaded around nine video interviews conducted with business leaders and key partners on the Zubair SEC's YouTube channel. Around six interviews with members of the centre have been uploaded where they are sharing their journey through COVID-19.

Zubair SEC has been making continuous efforts to create dialogue around best ways to assist and extend advice to SMEs. Recently, the centre supported the SME community by holding virtual Tajribati sessions to discuss measures and steps the SME sector must take to prepare for the post-COVID-19 world. Specialists at Zubair SEC have been continually helping by focusing on special measures to enable business continuity and assist members in preparing the grounds for recovery while looking for new opportunities.

ENRICHING LOCAL TOURISM



Omran Group installs pedestal points for recreational vehicles

MUSCAT: Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development, recently installed pedestal points for Recreational Vehicles (RV) in 3 of its hospitality assets.

This initiative comes in line with the group's efforts to enrich local tourism by introducing unique services and benefits directed to citizens and residents, while also promoting tourism products associated with camping activities.

The pedestal points will provide many features for the users, such as 110-120V power outlet, water supply and waste services. These RV points are activated in three prime tourism locations nearby Omran hospitality assets and tourism destinations.

The locations were selected based on the high demand by the local visitors, including, Atana Stay Salalah, Ras al Jinz Turtle Reserve and Atana stay Ashkara.

"Recently, we have witnessed an increase in the usage of RVs by nature and adventure enthusiasts. As such, we took the initiative to provide this unique service in several prime locations that are known for its picturesque landscape and natural sights. Through such projects, Omran Group aspires to meet the expectations of tourists and attract visitors from across the Sultanate, providing them with a memorable experience," said Eng. Khalid Mohammed Al Ajmi, Director of Special Project at Omran Group.

The pedestal points will provide many features for the users, such as 110-120V power outlet, water supply and waste services

The hospitality assets will provide these services to visitors, thus enhancing their tourism experience by making use of the various facilities and offers available at the hotels.

Omran Group seeks to establish tourism products and services that meet the interests of the various groups of visitors and tourists enjoying the unique offerings in its hospitality assets and destinations.

Besides, the facilities and services associated with camping are considered promising tourism products that will contribute to achieving an added value to the tourism industry in the Sultanate, and ultimately supporting the domestic tourism, economic diversification and the growth of the tourism sector.



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