

P14

NATIONAL DAY HORSE RACE TO BEGIN ON FRIDAY



P20

OMANTEL GROUP 9M REVENUE AT RO 1.8 BN



P24

INFUSING MUSIC SCENE WITH AFRICAN MASTERY OF THE BASS



MUSCAT

MAJLIS PANEL APPROVES DRAFT BUDGET REPORT

The Economic and Financial Committee of Majlis AshShura has approved its final report on the draft state's budget for the fiscal year 2022 which will be discussed at the third ordinary meeting of Majlis AshShura to be held next week. The meeting discussed the committee's recommendations included in its report particularly those relating to the mechanisms of financing the deficit, the government's plans related to the diversification of the national income sources and increasing the contributions of the industrial, tourism and logistics sectors.

DETAILS ON P7

GENEVA

GLOBAL LICENSING DEAL FOR COVID PILL

US pharmaceutical firm Pfizer — which co-created one of the most widely used vaccines against the coronavirus — has agreed with licence companies to create generic versions of a drug designed to minimise the effect of the disease, a UN agency announced on Tuesday. A group called the Medicines Patent Pool will decide which firms are to be part of the programme, according to Unitaids, a UN agency originally created to help find cheaper supply lines of medicines against HIV/Aids, malaria and tuberculosis for poor countries.

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INSIDE



LIBYA STRONGMAN HAFTHA ENTERS PRESIDENTIAL RACE

P10



TRIPLE BOMBING KILLS 3 IN UGANDA CAPITAL

P12

HIS MAJESTY TO PRESIDE OVER NATIONAL DAY MILITARY PARADE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, the Supreme Commander, will preside on Thursday over the military parade, to be staged at the military parade ground of Muaskar Al Murtafaa on the occasion of the 51st Glorious National Day. Symbolic units representing the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Air Force of

Oman (Rafo), the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), the Sultan's Special Force (SSF), the Royal Oman Police (ROP), the Royal Court Affairs (RCA), the Royal Cavalry, the Royal Guard of Oman Cavalry and the joint military musical band will take part in the military parade.

— ONA

HM greeted on National Day

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has received greetings from His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, and His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, on the occasion of the 51st National Day. In his cable, His Highness Sayyid Fahd said, "Upon the happy advent of the 51st National Day Anniversary, in pursuance of the developmental achievements covering all parts of our dear homeland, the Council of Ministers is honoured to greet Your Majesty on this auspicious occasion, praying to the Almighty Allah to endow Your Majesty with divine assistance to achieve further

progress and prosperity for the Sultanate of Oman. "The Sultanate of Oman takes pride in the comprehensive renaissance it accomplished over the past five decades. It has become a modern state established on solid foundations. The country's leadership strives to provide decent life for citizens in a society governed by principles of equality in rights and duties. "In its resolve to safeguard these accomplishments and to explore future prospects of progress, the government presses ahead with Oman Vision 2040, which envisages the best rates of growth and the realization of the comprehensive, sustainable development march."

DETAILS ON P4



Oman decked up for the occasion

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH @patkaushal

National Day is an opportunity for people to express gratitude to the nation by expressing joy on the occasion. The nation has already slipped into celebration mode for the 51st National Day. Everyone has his own way of celebrating it. Muscat is decorated with all shades of national symbols like national flag and khanjar prominently on display. Some bike lovers are seen taking out bikes decorated with national colours while receiving cheers from motorists and pedestrians. The Omanis are showcasing their national pride, while expatriates are also part of the celebration for their peaceful living in the country, which is also a second home for them. The country is receiving some



Preparations for the National Day celebrations are well under way across the Sultanate of Oman. PHOTO BY KHALID AL MAWALI

tourists these days after the opening up of airports and ease in travel restrictions. Amid fun of being in the Sultanate of Oman and enjoying the country's true

nature, the tourists are getting the surprise of National Day preparations, which is adding value to their journey to a Middle Eastern destination.

TURN TO P4

Avoid social gatherings to mark special events

VINOD NAIR @vinot_nair

Authorities confirmed on Tuesday that holding any kind of events or celebrations to mark the 51st National Day has been prohibited. According to a circular issued by the Ministry of Social Development, "It is prohibited to hold special events and celebrations to mark the occasion of the 51st National Day. This decision has been taken as part of precautionary measures because gatherings may result in an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases." The Ministry of Education has also asked all schools not to hold any special celebrations to mark the National Day, which may lead to social gatherings and interactions.

The Minister of Health, responding to queries at the press conference, on Monday said the decision to ban group events is still valid, urged the authorities concerned to take necessary action in case of any violations. He said the Supreme Committee is following up the situation at local and international levels due to concerns of a new wave, which has been reported in some countries. "We hope that we do not have to close activities again. The matter is in our hands, so everyone must bear his or her responsibility", the minister said. He also urged the imams of mosques to ensure worshippers maintain social distancing and take precautionary measures.

51 العيد الوطني المجيد

Omani National Day



Our sincere greeting to
**His Majesty Sultan
Haitham bin Tarik**
and the people of Oman
on the glorious occasion of
the National Day of the
Renaissance.



> oq.com | @thisisoq



51 Dawns of our Renewed Renaissance

Since early history, Omanis have been a generous, enterprising and welcoming. Omanis have been inspiring examples of integration, solidarity and unity. We all have something in common and that is our love for Oman, its glorious past, cheerful present and a bright future for coming generations.

We express our sincere greetings to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**, the courageous people of Oman and all residents of this kind land on Oman's 51st National Day.



His Majesty receives greetings on the occasion of 51st National Day

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received greetings from His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, on the occasion of the 51st National Day.

Your Majesty, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, may the Almighty Allah protect you.

Upon the happy advent of the 51st National Day Anniversary, in pursuance of the developmental achievements covering all parts of our dear homeland, the Council of Ministers is honoured to greet Your Majesty on this auspicious occasion, praying to the Almighty Allah to endow Your Majesty with divine assistance to achieve further progress and prosperity for the Sultanate of Oman.

YOUR MAJESTY,
The Sultanate of Oman takes pride in the comprehensive renaissance it accomplished over the past five decades. It has become a modern state established on solid foundations. The country's leadership strives to provide decent life for citizens in a society governed by principles of equality in rights and duties.

In its resolve to safeguard these accomplishments and to explore future prospects of progress, the government presses ahead with Oman Vision 2040, which envisages



the best rates of growth and the realization of the comprehensive, sustainable development march.

The success made by the Sultanate of Oman is not limited to the local arena, but it extends to regional and international fronts. The Sultanate of Oman earned the respect and appreciation of all, thanks to its balanced policy focusing on the promotion of dialogue and good neighbourliness and the consolidation of understanding and harmony, so that security and peace prevail all over the world.

The Council of Ministers will continue to exert efforts to carry forward the banner of development and modernisation in all walks of life. The Sultanate of Oman will remain an oasis of

bounty, progress and prosperity.

We, at the Council of Ministers, pray to the Almighty Allah that this glorious occasion returns over and again and finds Your Majesty in full health and happiness.

His Majesty also received greetings on the occasion from His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, reading as follows: "Your Majesty, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, may the Almighty Allah protect you.

"On the occasion of the 18th of November, the glorious national anniversary, I am honoured, and so are your valiant Armed Forces and personnel of the Ministry of



Defence, to express our sincerest greetings, coupled with heartfelt prayers that the Almighty Allah guard Your Majesty under His divine care, endow Your Majesty with good health, happiness and a long life and bestow the bounties of prosperity, peace and stability on our dear homeland, the Sultanate of Oman.

YOUR MAJESTY,
As the 18th of November dawns on the Sultanate of Oman, this land of splendour and glory receives the fragrant breeze of its 51st National Day, which celebrates its comprehensive development under the auspicious Renewed Renaissance led by Your Majesty.

Inspired by Your Majesty's farsighted thought, the march of bounty presses ahead with firm resolve towards the attainment of its noble goals of making progress in all spheres and contemplating a more brilliant future based on pillars of Oman Vision 2040.

Your Majesty, the Supreme Commander
Your Majesty's triumphant Armed Forces set models of praiseworthy national epics to be added to the accomplishments of the Sultanate of Oman's deep-rooted history. The Armed Forces stand in adoration, respect and gratitude for the great status they attained, being an established modern force that defends the country's territory

and safeguard its gains and stability.

The Armed Forces' services to citizens and residents are manifest and immeasurable.

The Armed Forces have been honoured by the Royal visit of Your Majesty to a number of their units.

YOUR MAJESTY,
The personnel of your Armed Forces are also honoured to take the lead in providing all types of support to other sectors of the country. This strong presence was deeply felt as the Armed Forces spearheaded national action in the aftermath of the tropical cyclone 'Shaheen'. It was a historic feat credited to servicemen who supported those who suffered most from the climatic condition.

Your Majesty, the Supreme Commander,

The personnel of the victorious Armed Forces hereby renew the pledge of loyalty and allegiance to Your Majesty and to dear the Sultanate of Oman under Your Majesty's wise leadership. They are steadfast in their timeless oath of 'Faith in Allah, Allegiance to the Sultan, Defence of the Nation'.

"May the Almighty Allah protect Your Majesty, may He guide you to achieve further progress for the Sultanate of Oman, and may He guard you as a source of inspiration for the nation and its citizens." — ONA

Sultanate in joyous mode for 51st National Day



FROM PAGE 1
Most of them have a chance to be part of the festivity and experience the joyous mood everywhere as something, or the other, is scheduled to happen in every aspect of the country.
"We did not know that we were coming during National Day week. We are surprised by the decorations and special treatment in hotels and restaurants. Everyone looks happy as National Day is approaching. We could witness the Omanis sense of pride for the nation and the national symbols. The expatriates living in the country are equally grateful to the nation and its ruler", said Erika, who has come from the Czech Republic as a tourist.





Omani-German Forum explores trade opportunities

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), in cooperation with the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on Tuesday organised the Omani-German Business Forum.

The forum, held via video-conferencing, comes within the chamber's initiative themed "OCCI: Global Communication". The forum discussed means of promoting trade exchange and exploring investment opportunities between the Sultanate of Oman and the Federal Republic of Germany. The forum was attended by Yousuf bin Said al Ameri, the Sultanate of Oman's



Ambassador to Germany, Thomas Friedrich Schneider, Germany's Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the OCCI Board of Directors and Peter Ramsauer, President of the Arab German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Chairman of OCCI's Board of Directors said that the forum is being held as part of the efforts made by the private sector's institutions in the Sultanate of Oman and Germany in order to enhance cooperation and raise the volume of trade exchange rates, as well as establish joint commercial partnerships. The value of the Omani imports

from Germany amounted to approximately \$436 million in 2020, while the Omani exports to Germany exceeded \$5,460,000. The volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached approximately \$442 million, Al Saleh added. Moreover, a number of work papers were presented in the forum covering topics such as the trends and pillars of Oman Vision 2040, priorities of the current stage, opportunities and incentives for investment in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as the advantages and facilities offered by special and free economic zones to investors — ONA



Dhofar Fisheries and Food Industries Company (S.A.O.G)

P.O. Box 2438, P.C. 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

Tel: 23219140, 23219141, Fax: 23219217, E-mail: difco@omantel.net.om

SUBMITTING AN OFFER TO PURCHASE SHAREHOLDER SHARES

Dhofar Fisheries and Food Industries Company (S.A.O.G) is pleased to inform our valued shareholders of the approval of the company's board of directors.

On the proposal to convert the company from a public joint stock company to a closed joint stock company, at its meeting held in 4/11/2021, after obtaining the initial approval of the Authority on 15/11/2021, where the company announces that the main shareholder the Honorable Company Hassani Trading Company submits an offer to purchase the shares of the shareholders wishing to sell (1) Omani Riyal, noting that the company has commissioned the Office of Moore Stephens LLC to assess the company's assets as on December 31, 2020, which in his report, he recommended that the fair value of the share be equal to (0.123 Baizas) per share. According to the details specified in the table below:-

Company Name	Dhofar Fisheries & Food Industries Company S.A.O.G P.O Box: 2438 P.C: 211 Web: www.dhofarfisheries.com E-mail: almamari@dhofarfisheries.com
Legal Type	Closed Joint Stock Company (SAOC)
The name of the shareholder wishing to buy	Hassani Trading Co (Partnership)
Suggested purchase price	(1) Omani Rial per share
Purchase offer start date	01/12/2021
Purchase Offer End Date	30/12/2021
The name of the brokerage company executing the purchase	Ubhar Capital (SAOC) P.O Box: 1137, P.C: 111 Web: www.u-capital.net E-mail: info@u-capital.net Contact: Mohamed Alawi 99813336 Hisham Bakthir 91733331 Mohammed Al Mashani 99421639

Salalah decked up for National Day

BAYAN AL MAHRI

SALALAH, NOV 16

Salalah is lit up with all shades of national colours for the 51st National Day of the Sultanate of Oman. The city is decorated, and people are excited for the day.

National Day of the Sultanate of Oman is a proud moment for every Omani. It reminds us about the struggles and achievements the country made in the last 50 years.

The Omanis eagerly await this occasion to celebrate it with love and passion as a mark of national pride.

National fervour is seen everywhere, and everyone is excited to celebrate the occasion. The country has been decorated with lights, and the national flag is flying high.

There has been excitement among the students for National Day as they have special events marking the day. Some schools have organised quiz competitions, while others have many other programmes.

Due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, precautions are being taken in terms of gatherings and social distancing.



The preparations for the 51st National Day celebrations are well under way across the Sultanate of Oman.
— Photo by Khalid al Maawali

DU faculties among Stanford scientists list for 2021

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Two faculty members of Dhofar University have been selected among the top 2 per cent of scientists in the world by Stanford for the year 2021.

The exhaustive list containing more than 190,000 researchers from around the globe has been recently released by Stanford.

Dr Mazhar ul Islam of the Department of Chemical Engineering, College of Engineering, has been selected for the second consecutive year under the single-year impact indicator while Dr Sameen Ahmed Khan has been selected for the first time under the career-long impact indicator. Dhofar University congratulated both the faculty members for their achievement and expressed its commitment to come out with more impactful research of national relevance.



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 52/2021

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tenders:

Serial	Tender No.	Tender Description	Document Fee	Last Date for inquires submission	Last Date for obtaining Tender Docs.	Last Date for Submission
1	50/2021/MM/PA-11 - Recall-1	Upgrade the AMC for Telephone System	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	22/12/2021	26/12/2021
2	51/2021/MM/PA-12 - Recall-1	Supply of AC's Spare Parts	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	22/12/2021	26/12/2021
3	54/2021/MM/PA-15 - Recall-1	Supply of Printer Inks	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	22/12/2021	26/12/2021
4	82/2021/MM/PA-17	Supply of Air Conditioners, Water Coolers and Refrigerators	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	22/12/2021	26/12/2021
5	83/2021/MM/PA-18	Supply of Batteries	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	22/12/2021	26/12/2021

Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.

Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through the link shown above accompanied with an electronic copy of a bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. The details of bond (amount & validity) must be as per tender's terms and conditions in the tendering Website starting from the date of bids submission. The original copy of the bond shall be submitted as the table below:

Tender at The Serial	The box's location for Tender Bonds
1, 2, 4	First floor at The Directorate General of Quantity Surveying & Contracts in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait
3, 5	Third floor at The Directorate General of Quantity Surveying & Contracts in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait

Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.

Note:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to (etenderhd@mtc.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة Tender Notice

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology
In AL Khuwair invites for the Following Project:

TENDER NO	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
57/2021/MTCIT	REPAIR DAMAGED AREAS AT EXISTING MAIN AND INTERNAL ROADS - WILAYAT WADI BANI KHALID (NORTH AL SHARQIYYA GOVERNORATE)	17-11-2021	02-12-2021	23-12-2021	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(50/-) FIFTY OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with The Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to (Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee).

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE

📞 📧 📠 @mtcitoman

www.mtcit.gov.om

SULTANATE OF OMAN MARKS TOLERANCE DAY



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, on Tuesday marked the International Day for Tolerance which falls on November 16 each year. The sideline events include the exhibition 'Message of Islam from Oman' and 'Message of Peace from Oman to the World'.

Tenders worth RO 50m issued

MUSCAT: A tender of Government Treasury Bills, issue number 128, worth RO 50 million was announced this week.

The 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 (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.65179 per cent and 0.65211 per cent

and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The results of the said issue are as follows: The total value of the

allotted Treasury bills amounted to RO 50 million, for a maturity period of 28 days, from November 17, 2021 until December 15, 2021.

The average accepted price reached 99.950 for every RO 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.950 per RO 100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.65179 per cent and 0.65211 per cent, respectively.

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 0.75 per cent.

Furthermore, the 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

Oman, US hold official talks

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the United States held an official session of talks to discuss ways of enhancing security cooperation.

They also reviewed training programmes and joint exercises to be implemented in 2022, with a view to upgrading national capabilities in various joint security fields.



The aim is also to sustain security cooperation to help maintain regional stability and security and consolidate the two countries' advanced strategic relations. — ONA

MoHT unveils conditions for new hotel projects

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) has announced regulations for the establishment of new establishments, aimed at providing a balance to the quality of hotels available to the guests.

The ministry will receive requests to establish hotel establishments projects on private lands as per the new regulations from December 1.

In Muscat, Muttrah, Al Amerat and Qurayat, MoHT will not allow projects classified as one and two stars, hotel apartments, guest houses.

At the same time, three to five-star hotels, luxury hotel apartments, heritage and green hotels will be allowed in Muscat Governorate. The same regulations will be applicable to the Wilayat of Al Seeb.

Khoula Hospital organises Service Improvement Day



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Khoula Hospital's (KH) Service Improvement Department observed 'Service Improvement Day' at the hospital's main auditorium on Monday.

The event was attended by Dr Qamra al Sariri, MoH's Directorate General of Quality Assurance, and Ahmed al Khinji, Minister Adviser for Development Affairs.

Directors and heads of department attended the event.

In his welcome address, Dr Mazin al Khabouri, KH Direc-



tor General, applauded the hospital's health workers for providing the best health care to patients and clients, affirming the priority of patient as well responsibility of all workers of hospital in achieving improvement.

Wa'ad al Salmani, Head of Service Improvement pointed out that the department was established in 2020 where a team was formed for project governance and management.

The speakers recognised the efforts of the Service Improvement section in improving health services in the hospital.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY MARKS OMANI WOMEN'S DAY



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, celebrated the 'Omani Women's Day' which annually falls on October 17. The ceremony was held under the auspices of HE Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development. A group of Omani women were honoured during the ceremony for their impact in various fields and their diverse accomplishments. During the ceremony, Omantel's prize code-named 'Badira' or 'Gesture' was launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development. The move comes in conviction of the importance of supporting the work of Omani Women Associations and their members in the field of empowering women and highlighting their efforts to enhance their participation in general life. — ONA



Shura economic panel approves final budget report for 2022



MUSCAT: The Economic and Financial Committee of Majlis Ash-Shura has approved its final report on the draft state's budget for the fiscal year 2022 which will be discussed at the third ordinary meeting of Majlis Ash-Shura to be held next week.

The meeting discussed the committee's recommendations included in its report particularly those relating to the mechanisms of financing the deficit, the

The committee discussed recommendations related to the employment of job-seekers, details about the Job Security Fund and the conditions of the laid-off national workers

government's plans related to the diversification of the national income sources and increasing the contributions of the industrial, tourism and logistics sectors.

The report includes recommendations related to the electricity, water and fuel services and ways of avoiding any social impacts on the various segments of the society.

The committee also discussed recommendations related to the

employment of job-seekers, details about the Job Security Fund and the conditions of the laid-off national workers.

The meeting discussed the draft Securities Law including the opinion of the Legislative and Legal Committee, and reviewed a proposal on the importance of statistical highlights of the results of private sector investments and its contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP).

Glittering virtual ceremony marks launch of film fest

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 16

A virtual ceremony marked the launch of the third edition of the Film Fest of Indian Schools at Maabela unit under the auspices of the board of directors (BoD) of the schools in Oman.

Mohammed bin Salim al Abri, Senior Studies and Follow-up Specialist, General Directorate of Education, South Al Batinah Governorate, graced the function as the chief guest. Dr Talib bin Mohammed al Balushi, an acclaimed actor and theatre artist, was guest of honour.

Present on occasion were Syed Salman, Vice-Chairman, BoD, Ambujakshan M, Director in Charge of Indian School Maabela, Sujith Kumar, President of the School Management Committee, and P Parabakaran, Principal, Indian School Maabela.

Sujith Kumar welcomed the gathering and underscored the pedagogical significance of the films in students' lives. In his inaugural address, Mohammed bin Salim al Abri emphasised the transformation the films can bring about in the students' character formation.

"Films can create awareness about the importance of education, art, sports and can also warn us about the dangers

of drugs and other criminal activities. It also brings us to understand more about other cultures, and help us understand the world and influences our thought process in a positive way and helps us try to do our bit in order to be of some help to humanity," Al Abri said.

Dr Talib al Balushi spoke about the influence of films and diversified learning aspects about culture, language and traditions children could imbibe in getting involved in film making.

Syed Salman delved into the numerous opportunities the film industry can provide to the students and how this exceptional medium of art and culture can transform young minds for the better. Ambujakshan M illustrated the positive impacts films can make in society.

The school principal expressed gratitude for support from different quarters and hoped the film fest would be yet another milestone event for the schools that take part in the fest.

The Film Fest 2021 is characterised by the participation of the international, private and government schools in the Sultanate of Oman, and it has been envisioned to encourage opportunities for the students who aspire to pursue a career in the field of media and films.

OMSB, Higher Education Ministry sign cooperation programme



MUSCAT: Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation on Tuesday signed a programme of cooperation to provide Oman Research Repository with content ranging from published research papers in the *Oman Medical Journal (OMJ)*, diverse books

and reports, as well as audiovideo materials.

The agreement was signed by Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, CEO of OMSB, and Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, the ministry's Under-Secretary for Research and Innovation.

Oman Research Repository codenamed 'Shuaa' is a national

project based on cooperation and the common interest of institutions. The repository aims to be a leading contributor to scientific research and education locally and internationally by making Omani scientific resources available for researchers all over the world.

— ONA



Dhofar education officials visit schools

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 16

Shaikh Yaqoub bin Saif al Shehimi, Director-General of Education in the Governorate of Dhofar, concluded his visit to the schools in the Wilayat of Maqshan.

The visit covered Maqshan School for Basic Education, Manader School for Basic Education, and Qutabit School for Basic Education in the Wilayat of Thamrait.

During the visit, the DG interacted with the teaching and non-teaching staff of the schools and got feedback of the progress on the educational process, demands and needs of the schools, and issues being faced by them.

He put stress on students' levels, while assuring all possible support



to raise the academic standards of the schools and students.

He called upon the staff members to focus on educational losses due to Covid-19 and commitment to the health protocols and all possible precautionary measures for the

safety of students and employees.

He appreciated the efforts towards improving the educational institutions in the governorate and called for coordination between various authorities in the ministry and the governorate's educational institutions.



Marketing exhibition held in Nizwa

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, NOV 16

A marketing exhibition was held at the Grand Mall in Nizwa on Tuesday under the auspices of Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah.

The exhibition included a group of successful projects financed by the Oman Development Bank (ODB), Nizwa branch. The projects reflect the success stories of investors to others and provide them with the opportunity to exchange experiences, benefit from each other's experiences, and encourage Omani youth to move towards entrepreneurship.

Said bin Muslim Ambusaidi, Director of the Oman

Development Bank, Nizwa Branch, said: "The exhibition which includes about 20 participants from various sectors such as industrial sector, tourism sector, educational sector, in addition to professional projects. We held the exhibition with the aim of introducing the projects to people and the most important products that exist in the projects in Al Dakhiliyah. In addition to exchanging experiences with each other and with the public by telling their success stories."

The projects included in the exhibition varied.

There are projects to produce meat, production of rose water, olive oil and aromatic, an

institution for the production of electrical control panels, the manufacture of Omani halwa, production of plastic pipes and containers UPVC, produce green houses, manufacture of cosmetics, tour carts, guest houses, cup factory, date factory, grain mill, design on screens glass factory, poultry farming, marble factory, timber factory and others.

The exhibition also included providing economic and financial advice to the participants and the public and also a marketing corner for ODB.

In the exhibition Omran al Hadidi, who opened his business selling coffee supplies and equipment and produced

his own coffee, said how he began his business online and plans to start opening his own store soon.

Among the participating projects are The Idea Design Company, which provides interior and exterior design services and garden design.

Eng Omaima al Shukaili from The Idea Design Company, Nizwa branch, said: "The exhibition opened the opportunity to display and highlight our work to the public. The company is owned by Said al Rashidi, and Eng Saud al Ishaqi with him. He hires six engineers working with him in the company and opened three different branches for his company."

OMANI PROJECTS OF SUSTAINABLE NATURE SHOWCASED

DUBAI: Sustainability Forest at Oman Pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai hosts Omani projects of sustainable nature. These projects highlight a key theme of this global event namely sustainability.

Among the projects showcased at the Oman Pavilion is the Million Date Palm Plantation Project. It has 11 farms so far that are spread in different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, such as Ibri, Nizwa, Al Safa and Rahab.

Each of these farms are home to between 10 to 100 thousand palm trees. The project aims to achieve food security and economic growth.

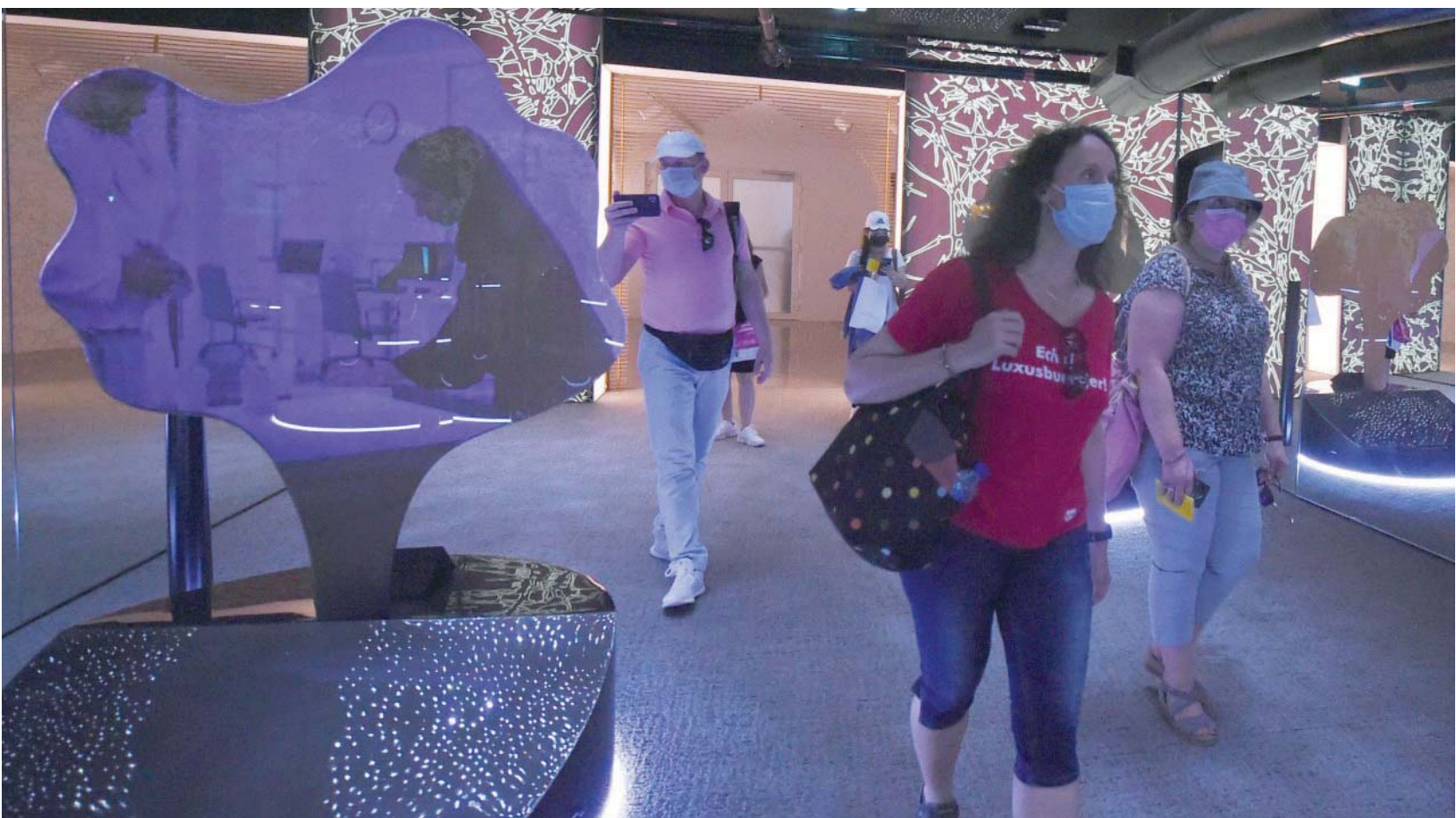
With the funding of Oman Technology Fund, Engineers Malek and Younis from Wakan Tech are using drone technology to pollinate date palm trees, 300 times faster than traditional pollination.

Waleed and his team at Blue Waters Company and Fisheries Development Oman are developing a high-tech Fish Farming Station to further develop the Aquaculture sector in the Sultanate of Oman, benefiting from the length of the Oman coasts extending to 3,165 km and overlooking the Arabian Sea and Sea of Oman, and ultimately fulfilling food security and economic growth.

This project is one of several projects funded by Oman Technology Fund to support young Omani talents and harvest their potential. The Sustainability Forest at Oman Pavilion also hosts a cooperation project between the Sultanate of Oman and United Arab Emirates. They join forces to harvest the power of wind to produce sustainable electricity.

Set in Harweel, the Dhofar Wind Power Project is the first large-scale wind project in the Gulf region. This project is a collaboration between Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) and the Rural Areas Electricity Company of Oman (Tanweer).

Madinat Al Irfan, a sustainable urban development by Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran) is coming to life in the



city of Muscat. The award-winning design created by Omani architects is adapted to the urban habitat of the Sultanate of Oman, attaining a unique standard for its residents, businessmen and tourists.

Madinat Al Irfan is the product of an exciting ambition to establish a new urban centre within Muscat. Situated in close proximity to the new international airport and enjoying excellent transport connections to the capital area and beyond, Madinat Al Irfan will become the gateway to the Sultanate of Oman; creating a new downtown for residents, for business and for visitors. The city will establish an integrated, sustainable and inclusive community, catering for different ages, income groups and ethnicities.

The Arabian Leopard is a rare breed of tigers present scarcely in the Arabian Peninsula. The number of the critically endangered creature in the world does not extend beyond 200 leopards. It is therefore that the Office for Conservation of the Environment at the Diwan of Royal Court in the

EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Sultanate of Oman took measures to preserve the wild creature in its natural habitat, Dhofar, knowing its value and importance to the wildlife and the environment in the governorate.

The Sultanate of Oman represented by the Diwan of Royal Court, is making persistent efforts to preserve and protect the Arabian Leopard from extinction. These relentless efforts have contributed to the stability of numbers of the Arabian Leopard and the conservation of sustainability of its natural habitats in Dhofar.

The Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai also showcases the first Botanic Garden in the Sultanate of Oman and the largest in the Arabian Peninsula. The garden exclusively hosts the country's native plants.

Oman Botanic Garden (OBG) is a world-class development of the Diwan of Royal Court in the

Sultanate of Oman, currently operated by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The garden houses unique plants, landscapes and cultural traditions of the Sultanate of Oman. Located just outside of Muscat, near Al Khoudh village, the garden will be situated on a 430 hectare protected natural area, surrounded by the Northern Mountains of the Sultanate of Oman.

The garden is currently under construction and when it opens, it will showcase all the native plant species of the Sultanate of Oman in a series of carefully created, naturalistic habitats from the dry deserts to the rich monsoon cloud forests. The garden will also showcase the traditionally cultivated crops and the many ways that people use plants in the Sultanate of Oman.

Be'ah, a government owned company specialised in waste

management, has transformed Al Amerat Landfill in Muscat, to become an engineered landfill, which migratory birds use as a feeding stop during their travels. This move underscored the significance of the sustainable and environmental aspect in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Oman Pavilion also sheds light on the Sultanate of Oman's spectacular beauty that never fails to astonish its visitors. The marvellous beauty of the Sultanate of Oman is a breathtaking portrayal of the natural wonders across the Sultanate of Oman.

Beginning from the summer's sunny mountains to the monsoon's foggy rainfalls in the Governorate of Dhofar, moving to the winter's golden desert sands in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah and ending with the spring's green valleys, the tourist season in the Sultanate of Oman is an ongoing journey of exploration.

The pavilion also hosts Frankincense Crystals Section that shows knowledge-based economic projects, such as e-Mushrif Inc,

which is Muscat-based IoT and Artificial Intelligence (AI) product provider. It uses a locally developed and engineered system to allow parents to track their children's ride on the school bus, ensuring their safe travels.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, e-Mushrif's products 'Rased' and 'Sahala' managed the quarantine of patients and returning passengers. The Sultan Qaboos Academic Chair for Quantitative Water Management is present at the Oman Pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai to lay emphasis on sustainability at the pavilion.

The Chair is one of 16 academic chairs and scholarships spread across prestigious universities around the world, focusing on different majors, in the name of the late Sultan Qaboos. The Utrecht University Chair in the Netherlands researches the similarities and differences in water problems, and solutions in the wet deltas of the Western world, as well as the extremely dry areas in the Middle East.

Dr Fatma al Maamari, winner of the 2019 L'Oreal-Unesco for Women in Science Fellowship, is using spintronics technology to develop an eco-friendly substitute of Rare Earth Elements.

Rare earth elements are used in technology devices, smartphones, television screens, laptops and much more. Not to mention that the current method of extraction possesses great danger to the environment.

In an affirmation of the theme on Connecting Minds being a key theme of Expo 2020 Dubai, the Oman Pavilion highlights the uses of frankincense extending from personal use, to religious, spiritual and medical uses.

Frankincense is scientifically proven to fight cancer, depression, and asthma. Frankincense is still used as a disinfectant when burnt. Additionally, the frankincense oil was historically used by ancient civilisations in the mummification process.

How promotion could unravel Italy’s fragile progress

ANGELO AMANTE

In office since February, Prime Minister Mario Draghi has brought a measure of political stability to Italy and overseen economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, but lawmakers could soon jeopardise that by electing him president of the republic.

Parliament will convene to choose a new head of state in late January, and the former European Central Bank chief is the bookmaker’s favourite to replace the Sergio Mattarella, who has made clear he does not want another seven-year term.

However, such a move may alarm investors, who view Draghi as the safest pair of hands to oversee the management of more than 200 billion euros (\$230 billion) from a European Union post-pandemic recovery fund seen as vital to Italy’s future.

His promotion to the Quirinale presidential palace might also plunge Italy, which has had seven prime ministers in the past decade, back into political turmoil and stymie efforts to enact crucial reforms.

New national elections are not due until the first half of 2023 and analysts say the current government needs another year to continue its programme of measures agreed with Brussels in return for regular instalments of Recovery Fund cash.

For this reason, Italy and Draghi face a quandary. Is the premier more useful in his current role, due to expire in little more than a year, or as head of state until 2029?

From being a largely ceremonial figure, the Italian president has become a much more proactive force in recent years as the political landscape fractured, regularly stepping in to resolve crises and decide who should form governments.

“The president is the lynchpin of the system and the guarantor of our international accords,” said Giovanni Orsina, politics professor at Rome’s LUISS university. — **Reuters**

Due to the Recovery Fund, relations between Italy and the EU are particularly important, and with the parties in crisis the president will have the key role for the next seven years

GIOVANNI ORSINA
Politics Professor



POSING FOR A PHOTO

A girl poses for a photo before a wall showing the Palestinian flag and posters of late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, at the Rafah camp for Palestinian refugees in the southern Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. — **AFP**

Blinken to show Africa commitment

SHAUN TANDON

Antony Blinken was heading to sub-Saharan Africa on his first trip as secretary of state, hoping to demonstrate a broad commitment focused on democracy and climate change even as crises in Ethiopia and Sudan put security front and centre.

The top US diplomat will travel to three countries seen as key to President Joe Biden’s Africa strategy — first Kenya, one of America’s most longstanding allies in a region where China has made inroads, followed by Nigeria, the continent’s most populous nation, and then Senegal, a beacon of democratic stability.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the last inhabited region to be visited by Blinken, whose travels in the early months were rattled by Covid-19 precautions and the US exit from Afghanistan, although he has been in virtual contact and Biden has welcomed Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta to the White House.

Blinken is eager to draw a distinction with previous president Donald Trump, who made no secret of his lack of interest in Africa, becoming the only president in decades not to visit and disparaging African immigrants.

The visit comes weeks before Biden convenes a summit of democracies in Washington and on the heels of the

COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, where the Biden administration joined calls to move away from polluting fossil fuels.

“The focus on revitalisation of democracies as well as climate change and sustainable development underscores the current approach” on Africa, senior State Department official Ervin Massinga said.

Massinga said Blinken would also discuss boosting African capacities to manufacture Covid-19 vaccines — a major push in which Biden is hoping to draw a distinction with China, which has assertively promoted its own vaccines.

Blinken comes as the United States steps up diplomacy over two nations where it earlier saw hope — Ethiopia and Sudan. Ethiopia has been a close US ally but the United States has been dismayed by curbs on food delivery into the northern Tigray region, where hundreds of thousands of people face famine-like conditions.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government has been locked in a year-long war with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which has pushed south in recent months and has not ruled out a possible march on the capital Addis Ababa.

“This is not the Ethiopia that we

thought we would see two years earlier, when we were applauding this country as the fastest-growing economy in Africa,” the US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said recently.

Biden has moved to remove Ethiopia from the landmark African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which grants duty-free access for most exports, but has held off on sanctions on the Ethiopian government and rebels in hopes of encouraging a settlement.

The United States has separately suspended some \$700 million in assistance to Sudan, where the military ousted the civilian leadership last month, halting a democratic transition that followed the toppling in 2019 of longtime ruler Omar al Bashir.

Johnnie Carson, who was the top diplomat on Africa under former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, said it would be a “missed opportunity” if Blinken visited Kenya without inviting leaders from nearby countries to seek a regional solution.

“The Horn of Africa is enormously fragile and the democratic transitions that we thought were going to move forward in Ethiopia and Sudan have been derailed,” said Carson, now at the US Institute of Peace. — **AFP**

The smart climate money is on women



MARJUT FALKSTEDT

THE WRITER IS SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

Women account for 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, but account for only about 7 per cent of investment in the sector. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, investing more in female farmers could increase agricultural yields by up to 30 per cent — almost enough to offset the decline in output expected by 2030 because of climate change.

This is just one example of how climate and gender are deeply intertwined. Women’s livelihoods often depend on forests, rivers, lakes and oceans, and their knowledge of these resources could spearhead conservation efforts. At the same time, women suffer more than men from climate change, because they tend to be poorer and often lack the financial wherewithal to recover

from flooding, heat waves, or wildfires.

But even as climate change profoundly affects women’s lives, high-level climate discussions or policy initiatives rarely consider their conditions, needs and views. This is both unjust and short-sighted. Climate projects need women’s input to succeed, given the huge role they play as consumers, community leaders, workers and entrepreneurs.

We already know that investing in women is good business. Enterprises in which women occupy at least half of the leadership positions have higher sales growth, are more profitable, and generate a better return on their assets. And because women make roughly 80 per cent of consumer buying decisions, firms with stronger female representation often produce

better-selling products.

But investing in women also makes good climate sense. Women are more likely than men to start businesses focused on sustainability. Companies with women on their boards are likely to improve energy efficiency, reduce costs and invest in renewable power generation. Similarly, firms that increased female representation on their boards over a five-year period were 60 per cent more likely to reduce the intensity of their energy consumption, 39 per cent more likely to cut their greenhouse-gas emissions and 46 per cent more likely to lower their water use.

A growing number of investors evaluate companies not only on the basis of their financial performance, but also with a view to their environmental and biodiversity commitments and

their efforts to promote gender equality. EcoEnterprises, a Latin America-based biodiversity investment firm, is tapping into that investor interest. It has a solid track record of helping environmentally sustainable businesses in the region to scale up their operations and provide economic opportunities for women in rural areas.

Moreover, EcoEnterprises is owned and led by a woman, Tammy Newmark, and its management team is almost entirely female. The firm has raised money for three investment funds to date. The third fund — in which the European Investment Bank has invested about \$20 million — will allocate 15 per cent of its capital to investments in women-owned or women-led companies, and will push for firms in its portfolio to employ women

in 50 per cent of jobs. Those objectives mean that the fund has qualified for the 2X Challenge, a global initiative supported by the EIB since its inception that aims to raise \$15 billion to enhance women’s economic participation.

One EcoEnterprises investment, an organic orchard in Colombia, is hiring women to rebalance its male-dominated workforce and has promoted two to senior positions as head of human resources and chief operating officer. EcoEnterprises has also invested in Ecoflora Cares, a fast-growing Colombian producer of environmentally friendly natural colorants for the food and personal care industries. Founded by Sandra Zapata, the company is actively expanding its supply network to include more women.

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Libya strongman Haftar enters presidential race

BENGHAZI, Libya: War-scarred Libya's eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar registered on Tuesday to run for president in a December 24 election also contested by a son of former ruler Moamer Gaddafi.

"I declare my candidacy for the presidential election, not because I am chasing power but because I want to lead our people towards glory, progress and prosperity," Haftar said in a televised speech.

Haftar's announcement came two days after Seif al Islam Gaddafi declared his own candidacy, a decade on from his father's death in a 2011 Nato-backed rebellion. Both are deeply divisive figures.

Kadhafi is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes, while many in western Libya despise Haftar after his year-long assault on Tripoli, accusing the military commander of seeking to establish a military dictatorship.

On Tuesday Haftar vowed

to defend "Libya's unity, independence, sovereignty" and called for "reconciliation and peace, construction and stability".

Haftar later officially submitted his bid at an electoral board office, where he told journalists: "The next stage will be difficult. I call on all Libyans to make the right choice, one they will not regret."

His candidacy marks the latest stage in Haftar's dramatic trajectory from exile in the United States to becoming one of the most controversial figures in Libya's 10-year conflict.

From 2014, he led a three-year battle against militants in Benghazi, establishing himself as the dominant power in the country's east. In April 2019, backed by Russia, Egypt and others, he launched an offensive on Tripoli on the pretext of rooting out militant groups.

The year-long battle left the outskirts of the capital in ruins and Libya more divided than



Libya's eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar

ever. But a United Nations-brokered ceasefire in October last year paved the way for a peace process leading to elections set for December 24. In September, Haftar provisionally quit his military position in line with a controversial electoral law to allow him to run for president. On

Tuesday, wearing a formal suit and tie instead of his military uniform, he said the vote is "the only way to pull Libya out of chaos".

Libya's electoral process, already beset by disputes over who can stand and the legal basis for the polls, looks as shaky as ever just six weeks ahead of the vote.

I declare my candidacy for the presidential election, not because I am chasing power but because I want to lead our people towards glory, progress and prosperity

KHALIFA HAFATAR
Eastern military chief

On Monday evening, the head of the UN-backed unity government Abdulhamid Dbeibah said the process was facing "huge" problems given the lack of laws and consensus over a constitutional framework for the vote.

Last week, Haftar's forces said 300 mercenaries fighting on his

side would leave Libya at the request of France in a "unilateral gesture", expecting nothing in return from the government in Tripoli. But pro-Haftar forces remain in control of much of eastern and southern Libya, and some analysts have voiced scepticism over the chances of a free and fair vote. Analyst Khaled al Montasir said Haftar had "imposed himself on the political scene, but he will remain a controversial figure rejected by many in Libya".

"Moreover, there's no guarantee that any election process that brings him to power will be respected," he said.

"Haftar's forces have by far been Libya's leading perpetrators of war crimes since 2014, and are bound to use intimidation or worse to influence the elections," tweeted Wolfram Lacher, a Libya specialist at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. — **Agencies**



People attend the funeral of the 19-year-old migrant from Syria Ahmed Al Hassan in the village of Bohoniki near Sokolka, Poland. — **Reuters**

Teenage Syrian laid to rest by Poland-Belarus border

BOHONIKI, Poland: A Syrian teenager who drowned last month while trying to cross a river into the EU from Belarus was laid to rest in a forest cemetery for Poland's tiny ethnic community.

Following a prayer in front of the wooden mosque in the eastern village of Bohoniki, a handful of people attended the migrant's burial — the first in Poland since the border crisis erupted this summer.

The family of 19-year-old Ahmad Al Hasan was able to watch as well, thanks to a telephone livestream from a Syrian doctor who has lived in the area for years.

"It's a human being, so we have to give him a proper burial. You feel for them all," local Muslim leader Maciej Szczesnowicz said.

"It's a Muslim, a young

person. We have to help," said Szczesnowicz, the chairman of the Muslim community in Bohoniki.

One of at least 11 migrants who have lost their lives at the border, Al Hasan was given a final farewell more than 2,300 km from his devastated hometown of Homs, Syria.

Szczesnowicz said the teenager died while trying to cross the Bug river from Belarus.

A fellow migrant who survived the river crossing told Polish authorities last month that Belarusian guards had pushed them into the river, even though they did not know how to swim.

Al Hasan "had hoped to continue his studies, which he began at a centre in Jordan," said Kasim Shady, the Syrian doctor who livestreamed the burial for the family. — **AFP**

All roads lead to EU through Belarus on Iraq 'package deals'

BAGHDAD: Iraqis willing and able to pay thousands of dollars for would-be "package deals" to the EU via Belarus have a variety of itineraries to choose from.

As thousands of migrants remain stuck in the cold at the razor wire fence along the Belarus-Poland border, AFP spoke with travel agents and migrants involved.

The EU has accused Belarus, which is backed by Russia, of engineering the crisis and taken steps to stop flights from the Middle East to Minsk — but travel agents in Baghdad say they have found other ways.

"Now everything is going through Russia," a staff member of one travel agency said, asking not to be named. "A tourist visa for Russia costs \$700. Travellers need an invitation and a guarantor. That takes about 10 days to arrange. The flight itself costs \$500.

"Once in Russia, traffickers take them secretly overland to the border with Belarus, and that costs another \$500."

The costs can add up to almost \$2,000 for Iraqis, a huge sum for many in the war-scarred country where the average monthly salary is \$300. For Iraqi Kurds, who make up the majority of migrants bound for Belarus, Dubai, Doha and Ankara offer alternative



Taman's father, Sangar, speaks about his family's situation, at a migrants' camp near Bruzgi-Kuznica checkpoint on the Belarusian-Polish border. — **AFP**

routes, according to Mera Jassem Bakr, an Iraqi Arab researcher and expert on Kurdish emigration.

They do not even need visas for Qatar if Doha is only a transit point. As for the Turkish capital, it has turned into "a hub" to acquire visas for Belarus in the migrants' vain efforts to start a new life in the European Union, explained Bakr. The Kurds hand their passport to travel agents, who

send documents to colleagues in Ankara to apply for Belarus visas.

"Around two months ago, the whole package cost \$2,500. Now it is something between \$3,500 up to \$4,000," Bakr said.

Turkey last week banned Iraqis, Yemenis and Syrians from flights to Belarus, while the former Soviet country's carrier Belavia has announced a similar measure on flights from Dubai.

Bakr, 28, is one of the thousands of desperate migrants camped on the Belarus side of the border with EU member Poland.

"We're exhausted and sick," said the young man, reached by telephone.

"We got here on a tourist visa a week ago. Because there are no more flights between Baghdad and Minsk, we passed through Dubai. — **AFP**

SHORT TAKES

PARIS

Israeli firm linked to Middle East cyberattacks

Technology sold by Israeli spyware company Candiru appears to have been used for a campaign of cyberattacks targeting high-profile Middle Eastern websites, an analysis by cybersecurity firm Eset said on Tuesday.

"We think it was a client of Candiru that carried out these attacks," Eset investigator Matthieu Faou said. Eset did not name the client. Based in Tel Aviv, Candiru sells sophisticated spyware to governments.

It was blacklisted by the US



government earlier this month.

The offensive revealed by Eset used what are known as "watering hole" attacks, which add malicious code to legitimate websites.

BEIRUT

Turkey saddened by Lebanon-Gulf crisis

Turkey is saddened by a crisis between Lebanon and Gulf states, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said during a visit to Beirut on Tuesday, calling for a resolution to the dispute through dialogue and diplomacy.

Lebanon is facing its worst diplomatic crisis yet with Gulf states.

"I would like to emphasise that we are saddened by a crisis between Lebanon and some Gulf states. We want this issue to be resolved as soon as possible on



the basis of mutual respect and with dialogue through diplomacy," Cavusoglu told reporters in Beirut.

"As Turkey, we are ready to do what we can on this."

AMMAN

Britain's Prince Charles visits Jordan

Prince Charles and his wife Camilla arrived in Amman on Tuesday to begin a tour of Jordan and Egypt, their first since the coronavirus pandemic began last year. Britain's heir apparent and his wife the Duchess of Cornwall met King Abdullah II and Queen Rania.

They were also due to visit Al Maghtas, or Bethany Beyond the Jordan, the site where the faithful believe Jesus Christ was baptised.

During his visit, Prince Charles is also expected to meet



representatives of humanitarian organisations that he supports, including the UN refugee agency. Jordan hosts some 650,000 Syrian refugees who are registered with the UN.

In brief

NEW YORK



FACEBOOK SAYS HACKERS IN PAKISTAN TARGETED AFGHAN USERS

Hackers from Pakistan used Facebook to target people in Afghanistan with connections to the previous government during the Taliban's takeover of the country, the company's threat investigators said in an interview.

Facebook said the group, known in the security industry as SideCopy, shared links to websites hosting malware which could surveil people's devices. Targets included people connected to the government, military and law enforcement in Kabul, it said. The social media company said the group created fictitious personas of young women as "romantic lures" to build trust and trick targets.

SEOUL



KIM VISITS NEW CITY IN FIRST PUBLIC OUTING IN OVER A MONTH

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a new city being built near the border with China and a sacred mountain revered by his family, state media reported on Tuesday, in his first public appearance in more than a month.

The northern alpine town of Samjiyon is being transformed into a massive economic hub, called a socialist utopia by officials, equipped with new apartments, hotels, a ski resort and commercial, cultural and medical facilities.

The developing city is near Mount Paektu, the holy mountain where Kim's family claims its roots, and he has made multiple visits since 2018.

KUNDUZ



MAN ARRESTED FOR SELLING 130 WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

The Taliban have arrested a man for allegedly selling dozens of women in northern Afghanistan after duping them into believing they would be marrying into money, officials said on Tuesday.

The man was arrested in northern Jawzjan province late on Monday, Damullah Seraj, the Taliban provincial police chief, told reporters.

"We are still in our initial stages of the investigation. We hope to find out more about this case later," he said.

Mohammad Sardar Mubariz, a district police chief in Jawzjan, said the man would target poor women desperate to improve their circumstances.

Biden promises candor, Xi greets 'old friend' as US-China talks open

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping stressed their responsibility to the rest of the world to avoid conflict as the heads of the two top global economies opened their closely watched talks on Monday.

"It seems to me our responsibility as leaders of China and the United States is to ensure that our competition between our countries does not veer into conflict, whether intended or unintended," Biden said.

"Just simple, straightforward competition."

Calling Biden an "old friend," Xi said the two sides must increase communication and cooperation to solve the many challenges they face.

Speaking through an interpreter, Xi said: "As the world's two largest economies and the permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and the United States need to increase communication and cooperation."

Biden promised to address areas of concern, including human rights and other issues in



US President Joe Biden speaks virtually with Chinese leader Xi Jinping from the White House in Washington, on Monday. — Reuters

the Indo-Pacific region, adding that "you and I have never been that formal with one another."

The talks, which were initiated by Biden and began at 7:46 pm on Monday (0046 GMT Tuesday), were intended to make the relationship less acrimonious. The US president smiled broadly as the Chinese president appeared on a large screen in the conference room.

The early moments of the two leaders' dialogue were observed by a small group of reporters with Biden in the White House's

Roosevelt Room before the heads of state and top aides spoke privately in a meeting US officials expected to stretch for several hours.

The two sides took a short break after a nearly two-hour first session, according to a report from Chinese state media.

Biden and Xi have not had a face-to-face meeting since Biden became president and the last time they spoke it was via telephone in September.

The United States and China disagree on the origins of the

It seems to me our responsibility as leaders of China and the United States is to ensure that our competition between our countries does not veer into conflict

JOE BIDEN

US President

Covid-19 pandemic, trade and competition rules, Beijing's expanding nuclear arsenal and its stepped-up pressure on Taiwan, among other issues.

US officials have downplayed expectations for any concrete agreements between both sides, including on trade, where China is lagging in a commitment to buy \$200 billion more in US goods and services. Not on Biden's agenda are US tariffs on Chinese goods that Beijing and business groups hope to be scaled back.

— Reuters

SMOG HITS VISIBILITY



Visitors take pictures inside the Taj Mahal amid smoggy conditions in Agra, India, on Tuesday. — AFP

Duterte's daughter joins Marcos as running mate

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's daughter will be running mate of Ferdinand Marcos Jr in next year's presidential election, the two candidates said on Tuesday, confirming weeks of speculation of an alliance between two powerful families.

Sara Duterte-Carpio, 43, who is seeking the vice-presidency, announced in a video message her intent to run on the same ticket as Marcos, the latest twist in the Philippines' political drama that has gripped the country.

"My party allied with and asked for support for Bongbong Marcos and for me after I accepted your challenge and your call," Duterte-Carpio told her supporters, referring to 64-year-old Marcos by his nickname.

Marcos, the son and namesake

of the late dictator who was toppled in a 1986 uprising, also issued a statement announcing he was teaming up with Duterte-Carpio.

"We and our parties agreed that we will pursue a unifying leadership should we be fortunate to win the election on May 9, 2022," he said in a statement.

In the Philippines, the president and vice-president are elected separately.

The alliance would be formidable and a boon for both campaigns, analysts have said, with Marcos able to tap the huge support base of the Dutertes in the south, and Duterte-Carpio likely to gain from the Marcos dynasty's decades of dominance in its northern stronghold.

"I know that this fight is long



Filipino students take selfie with Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, eldest daughter of President Rodrigo Duterte, in Davao city in southern Philippines, on August 6, 2017. — Reuters file photo

and hard, but I am confident you will join and help me until the end, until we win this for our beloved country," Duterte-Carpio, who

is mayor of Davao, said. "If not for your outpouring of support, I would be out of this race".

Experts say Marcos has



Myanmar junta charges Suu Kyi with fraud during 2020 polls

YANGON: Myanmar's junta has charged Aung San Suu Kyi with committing electoral fraud during the 2020 polls, state media reported on Tuesday, the latest in a barrage of allegations against her since her party won in a landslide.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military coup in February sparked nationwide protests and a deadly crackdown on dissent.

Detained since the putsch, Suu Kyi, 76, has been charged with illegally importing walkie talkies, sedition and corruption, and faces decades in jail if convicted.

Suu Kyi is now also accused of "election fraud and lawless actions" during the polls, state-run newspaper *Global New Light of Myanmar* reported, without giving details on when court proceedings would begin.

Fifteen other officials — including former president Win Myint and the former chairman of the election commission — face the same charge, the report added.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) saw its support increase in the 2020 vote compared to the 2015 election, trouncing a military-aligned party. But the junta has cited fraud during the poll as its reason for seizing power and ending Myanmar's democratic interlude.

In July, it cancelled the results of the polls, announcing it had uncovered more than 11 million instances of voter irregularities. In a report on the 2020 polls, the Asian Network for Free Elections monitoring group had said it was "by and large, representative of the will of the people". — AFP

EU to aim
for rapid
deployment
force without
US help
by 2025



BRUSSELS: The European Union is considering a joint military force of up to 5,000 troops by 2025 to intervene in a range of crises and without relying on the United States, according to a draft plan. The “EU Rapid Deployment Capacity” should be made up of land, sea and air components that could be swapped in and out of any standing force, depending on the crisis, according to the confidential 28-page document dated on November 9 and seen by Reuters.

EU foreign and defence ministers began debating the plan on Monday evening in Brussels and continued on Tuesday, aiming to settle on a final document by March next year. Italy and France, two of the EU’s military powers, welcomed the draft. The view of Germany’s incoming federal coalition government, expected soon, will prove critical. “The document combines a high level of ambition but also makes concrete and operational proposals. It’s a good balance,” French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly told reporters. Her Italian counterpart, Lorenzo Guerini, said it would also be complementary to Nato and strengthen transatlantic ties. Two decades after EU leaders first agreed to set up a 50,000-60,000-strong force but failed to make it operational, the draft strategy by the bloc’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell is the most concrete effort to create a standalone military force that does not rely on US assets. — Reuters

Triple bombing kills 3, wounds dozens in Ugandan capital

KAMPALA: A triple bombing killed at least three people in the heart of Uganda’s capital on Tuesday, sending members of parliament and others rushing for cover as cars burst into flames in the latest in a wave of bomb attacks. The blasts in Kampala shocked a nation that is known as a bulwark against violent militants in East Africa, and whose leader has spent years cultivating Western security support. At least 33 people were being treated in hospital, including five who were in critical condition, police spokesperson Fred Enanga said. A diplomat said two police were among the victims. Enanga confirmed the death toll included police but declined to give further details. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Police said intelligence indicated the IS-aligned Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) were responsible. “Our intelligence... indicates that these are domestic terror groups that are linked to ADF,” Enanga said. The explosions — the first near the central police station and the second very close to parliament



People extinguish fire on cars caused by a bomb explosion near Parliament building in Kampala on Tuesday. — AFP

— sent bloodied office workers rushing for cover over shards of broken glass as a plume of white smoke rose above the downtown area. A suicide bomber wearing a backpack carried out the first blast near the checkpoint at the police station, which killed two people, Enanga said. The second attack, involving two bombers on motorbikes, killed one other person. “A booming sound like that from a big gun went off. The ground shook, my ears nearly went deaf,” said Peter Olupot, a 28-year-old bank guard who was near the attack close to parliament. “I saw a vehicle on fire and everyone was running and panicking. I saw a boda boda (motorcycle) man — his head was smashed and covered in blood.” A Reuters journalist saw burned cars behind a police cordon at the scene and a reporter

with local television station NTV Uganda said he saw two bodies in the street. Anti-terrorism police caught another person who was preparing to carry out an attack, Enanga said, adding: “We are now pursuing other members of the terror group.” — Reuters

Polish forces fire tear gas at migrants on border

SOKOLKA, Poland: Polish forces fired tear gas and deployed water cannons against stone-throwing migrants trying to cross the Belarusian border on Tuesday, sparking accusations from Belarus that Poland was trying to escalate the crisis. Polish border guards estimate up to 4,000 migrants are currently camped out along the border between Poland and Belarus in increasingly dire conditions and freezing temperatures. Western powers accuse Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko of orchestrating the crisis, possibly with the backing of Russia, by luring migrants to the border to sow division in the EU — claims denied by Minsk and Moscow. A standoff near the Bruzgi-Kuznica border crossing on the EU’s eastern frontier began last week when hundreds of migrants gathered there.



A man throws a stone in the direction of a border fence and Polish law enforcement officers, as migrants attempt to cross the Belarusian-Polish border at Bruzgi-Kuznica checkpoint in the Grodno region, Belarus, on Tuesday. — Reuters

“Migrants attacked our soldiers and officers with rocks and are trying to destroy the fence and cross into Poland,” Poland’s defence ministry said on Tuesday, tweeting a video showing apparent clashes at the border. “Our forces used tear gas to

quell the migrants’ aggression.” A police officer, a border guard and a soldier were injured in the clashes, Polish officials said, with police saying stun grenades and tear gas canisters had also been thrown at officers. Belarusian foreign ministry spokesman Anataoly Glaz accused Poland of exacerbating the problem. “The goal of the Polish side is completely understandable — it needs to escalate the situation even more, to stifle any progress in resolving the situation,” he said. “We see today from the Polish side direct provocations and inhumane treatment of the disadvantaged,” he said. Russia also condemned Poland’s use of tear gas and water cannons against the migrants, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling it “absolutely unacceptable.” — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BRUSSELS

Nato chief slams ‘reckless’ Russian satellite strike

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Tuesday slammed as “reckless” Russia’s destruction of a satellite that created a debris cloud he said was dangerous to orbiting space stations. “This has created a lot of debris, which is now a risk to the International Space Station and also to the Chinese space station — so this was a reckless act by Russia,” Stoltenberg told journalists. Russia’s defence ministry acknowledged destroying one of its satellites during a missile test



to bolster its defence capabilities, but denied the move was dangerous. US officials on Monday had denounced Moscow for the “irresponsible” test and said they had not been informed in advance.

AMSTERDAM

Crown Princess Amalia ‘not yet ready to be queen’

In a biography published ahead of her 18th birthday on December 7, the Netherlands’ Crown Princess Amalia says she is not yet ready to become monarch even though she is committed to a life in service to her country. The book, written with approval of the government’s information service (RVD), which handles publicity for the Royal House, and released on Tuesday, is the deepest look to date into the life and character of Amalia, the eldest daughter of King Wil-



lem-Alexander. Apart from excelling at school — which was known — the book revealed that Amalia worked a part-time job as waitress at a beach-side cafe.

KENOSHA

Jury begins deliberating in Rittenhouse trial

The judge in the Wisconsin murder trial of Kyle Rittenhouse instructed the jury on Tuesday to begin deliberating on the fate of the teenager, who killed two men and wounded a third during racial justice protests last year. The jury, which numbered 18 through two weeks of testimony, was whittled down to 12 for deliberations. Kenosha County Judge Bruce Schroeder told the jury to begin weighing the case, which pits the prosecution’s argument that



Rittenhouse recklessly shot the men without justification, against the teenager’s assertion that he acted in self-defence. “OK folks, you can retire to consider your verdicts,” Schroeder said.



ITO SCORES WINNER FOR JAPAN AGAINST OMAN

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Japan's Junya Ito delivered a crucial win for his team as he netted the winner against the Sultanate of Oman to end the tough encounter at 1-0 on Tuesday at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in the sixth round of group B in AFC Asian qualifiers — Road to Qatar 2022.

The triumph took Japan to the second place in the group with 12 points behind the topper of the group Saudi

Arabia who have 16 points after edging Vietnam 1-0 in Hanoi on Tuesday.

With the third defeat of Red Warriors in Group B, Oman remained at the fourth place with seven points.

The head coach of the national team, Branko Ivankovic, began the crucial fixture against heavyweight Japan with a starting line-up featuring Faye al Rushaidi as goalkeeper. Ali al Busaidy, Juma al Habsi, Ahmed al Khamisi and Amjad al Harthy were in the defence line.

The experienced Harib al

Saadi was heading the middle line besides Zaher al Aghbari, Arshad al Alawi (Abdullah Fawaz) and Salah al Yahyai. Al Mundher al Alawi (Jameel al Yahmadi) and Issam al Subhi (Khalid al Hajri) were the two attackers in the front.

The initial 15 minutes of the first half were played carefully from both sides to avoid receiving an early goal.

The first actual opportunity for Red Warriors came through Arshad al Alawi who tried to find the net by sending a strong ball in 17th minute.

The opponent's movement were better as they controlled and pressed hard towards Faye al Rushaidi seeking for the opening goal.

Japan's Junya Ito received a long ball from Yuto Nagatomo but Ito's ball went above Faye's net in the 23rd minute.

The Croatian coach decided to replace Issam al Subhi by Khalid al Hajri in the 33rd minute due to injury of Issam. Oman's strong defender Ahmed al Khamisi broke all the Japanese attempts created by Miiki Yamane and his team-mates

in the right side. The first half ended in a goalless draw.

The second half of the fixture started with a dangerous moves by Japan strikers but once again the stronger defence line and the goalkeeper in behind saved the scoring attempts. The Sultanate of Oman bounced back strongly as Arshad al Alawi sent strong ball went right side of the net in the 56th minute. In the upcoming minutes, Jameel al Yahmadi and Abdullah Fawaz entered the pitch replacing Arshad al Alawi and Al Mundher al Alawi respectively

in the 69th minute.

In the last ten minutes of the game, Japan strikers continued pressing hard towards Faye's goals and they managed to penetrate in the penalty box through Kaoru Mitoma who assisted Junya Ito with a golden pass and Junya converted the ball into the net in the 81st minute. In the remaining minutes, coach Branko Ivankovic's men tried their best to register the equaliser but all the attempts broken by the opponents defending line and the match ended for the guests 1-0.



NATIONAL DAY HORSE RACE TO BEGIN ON FRIDAY

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

The Royal Horse Racing Club will organise the 51st edition National Day trophy on Friday at Al Rahba Racing Racecourse. HH Sayyid Fahar bin Fatik al Said will preside over the event and will deliver the trophy and awards to the top winners in the final ceremony. The race of the National Day



trophy is one of the top racing events in the season. The race will feature eight

rounds including six rounds for the top purebred Arabian horses and two rounds for thoroughbred horses. The last three rounds will be dedicated for competing at the coveted trophy. The horse owners geared up for the awaiting 51st edition National Day trophy through series of training during the last period. It is expected that this edition of the National Day trophy race will register tough competition from all the participants. The race will be held under strict medical protocols inline to the protective measures against Covid-19. The rider, Al Motasim al Balushi, who won the National Day trophy in the previous editions, said that he is willing to recall the triumph again in this edition.

UAE beat Lebanon for first win

SAIDA: United Arab Emirates gave their AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar campaign a much-needed shot in the arm, defeating Lebanon 1-0 thanks to a late Ali Mabkhout penalty on Tuesday. Lebanon had the edge in terms of chances but couldn't make any of them count before the UAE's prolific front man converted from 12 yards in the 85th minute at an empty Saida Municipal Stadium. The result ends a five-match winless run for Bert van Marwijk's side and temporarily lifts them above Lebanon and third in Group A, keeping their chances for a playoff spot very much alive with four matches remaining. Still hurting from Thursday's last gasp defeat to Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon began



strongly, with Mohamad Kdouh firing narrowly over the crossbar from 25 yards with their best early effort. The visitors had the lion's share of possession, but Lebanon's

cutting edge made them the better side in attack and they nearly got the goal their play had merited just before half-time, with Rabih Ataya's free-kick turned against the crossbar by Ali Khasief before Mouhammed Ali Dhaini saw his follow-up header cleared off the goal-line. Goalless at the interval, the Emiratis benefitted from another goal-line clearance early in the second half with the dangerous Ataya's curling corner kick chested clear by Bandar al Ahbabi when it appeared to be curling just inside the far post. Lebanon increasingly found joy from their ability to press the visitors high up the pitch, with the UAE players forced into several possession errors as their struggle to create chances of their own continued, with Mabkhout firing a header wide from point blank when Al Ahbabi did manage to breach the Lebanese defence in the 70th minute. But the Emiratis best chance came in the dying stages, with Sebastian Tagliabue fouled in the penalty area, and Mabkhout shrugged off an otherwise quiet outing by easing the subsequent spot-kick home with five minutes remaining. Lebanon's Kassem El Zein went within inches of salvaging a point with an 89th minute header, but Ivan Haaek's side were left to rue a second last gasp defeat in as many matches and UAE celebrated three priceless points on the Road to Qatar.

Saudi Arabia defeat Vietnam to edge closer to Qatar 2022



HANOI: Saudi Arabia will go into 2022 on top of Group B after a 1-0 victory over Vietnam at My Dinh Stadium on Tuesday made it five wins from six games in the final round of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar campaign. Saleh al Shehri broke the deadlock on the half hour with his third of the campaign with what proved the only goal of the game as the Green Falcons made it two wins from two against Park Hang-seo's Vietnam. The result means Herve Renard's Saudi Arabia will finish the year at least three points clear at the top of the standings as they bid to reach the Fifa World Cup for the sixth time. Vietnam went into the match aiming to pick up their first points in Group B, while Saudi Arabia were looking to get back to winning ways after their goalless stalemate with Australia last Thursday. The visitors missed a golden opportunity to open the scoring in the fourth minute when the unmarked Al Shehri at the back post headed wide from just a few yards out after being teed up by Fahad al Muwallad's cross from the right. But the striker made amends for his miss in the 31st minute and again it was Al Muwallad the provider as he sent a lovely delivery from the byline towards Al Shehri, whose looping header just

edged over the line despite the best efforts of goalkeeper Bui Tan Truong. The goal appeared to calm any Saudi nerves as they began to spray the ball around with confidence and the Green Falcons almost doubled their advantage early in the second half. Captain Salman al Faraj slipped in Nasser al Dawsari down the left and his first-time cross was stabbed goalwards by his namesake Salem al Dawsari, but Tan Truong was equal to the challenge as he got down low to deny the Al Hilal SFC man. Renard's team continued to push for the two-goal cushion and were denied by the woodwork in the 57th minute when Mohammed al Burayk's deep cross from the right was headed onto the top of the bar by Ali al Bulayhi. Vietnam had a rare sight of goal midway through the second half but skipper Que Ngoc Hai volleyed wide from 15 yards after Nguyen Cong Phuon's floated free-kick into the box. Saudi Arabia then thought they had added the all-important second with 15 minutes to play, but the goal was ruled out after Firas al Buraikan was adjudged to have fouled defender Nguyen Thanh Chung before playing across goal for Al Muwallad to tap home. — AFC

MoCSY concludes the Secretaries-General forum

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by Leadership Preparation Centre, concluded the Secretaries-General workshop on Tuesday. As many as 30 clubs took part in the forum which comes out with a number of recommendations to activate the role of clubs in the community. During the forum, many discussions took place including the role of clubs and the civil teams for the national campaign during Shaheen

Cyclone. The initiatives to develop the clubs' relations with the community were brainstormed. The forum recommended to contribute to the promotion and development of sports and community aspects and the role of the club in community service. Also, the event recorded many interventions, discussions and open dialogues during the two days, where it discussed the common challenges and difficulties between the sectors of the ministry and the public-private bodies in the sports



field, in addition to discussing modern methods and ways of communication between clubs and the community and presenting international and local experiences on the relationship of clubs with society and the roles of clubs. The most prominent outputs of this forum were the emphasis on the importance of activating the roles of clubs in accordance with Oman Vision 2040. The forum discussed finding solutions to some aspects related to clubs and the sectors of the ministry and coming up with a number of initiatives

to develop the relationship between clubs and society and to identify the aspects required by boards of directors. A number of initiatives and ideas were presented by the secretaries of the clubs before the conclusion of the forum, which serve some aspects in activating the club and its importance in the community. At the end, Khalifa bin Saif al Isa'ei, Adviser of Sporting Bodies in the Office of Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth, delivered the certificates to all the participants.

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-may Allah bless and protect him-



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business

Solar energy to contribute 21 per cent of Oman's power needs by 2030

DECARBONISATION STRATEGY:
Wind (6.5 per cent and waste-to-energy (2.5 per cent) are also part of the energy mix

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](https://twitter.com/conradprabhu)

Solar based projects will account for a dominant share of electricity produced from renewable energy resources, according to a key document submitted by the Sultanate of Oman as part of its commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Of a pledge to secure a minimum 30 per cent of the country's electricity requirements from renewable energy resources by 2030, a share equivalent to 21 percentage points will come from solar capacity alone.

The share of wind resources will be 6.5 per cent, while waste-to-energy (WTE)



(Picture for illustration only)

projects will account for a 2.5 per cent contribution. The figures are part of a series of 'Mitigation Actions and Effects' outlined by the Sultanate of Oman in the 'Facilitative Sharing of Views' submission made recently by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the country's principal focal point on climate change issues, under the UNFCCC framework.

A commitment to harness renewables for 30 per cent of the country's power needs by 2030 is one of the cornerstones of the National Energy Strategy 2040 of the Sultanate of Oman.

It envisions an energy mix with natural gas continuing to play a predominant role in power generation, but with solar and wind resources making a rising contribution as well.

A timeline included in the 'Facilitative Sharing of Views' document projects a contribution of 2,450 MW of capacity coming from renewables by 2025.

TURN TO PAGE 20





OMINVEST

Transforming Businesses to Enrich Societies

Unaudited Financial Results For the Period Ended 30 September 2021

DIRECTORS' REPORT

For the Period Ended 30 September 2021

Dear Shareholders

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Unaudited Financial Results of OMINVEST Group for the period ended 30 September 2021. During the period, OMINVEST achieved steady results both at the Group and the Parent level, despite the difficult business and economic conditions caused by the continuation of COVID-19 pandemic. Below, I would like to present the financial performance of OMINVEST Group and our major portfolio companies for the period ended 30 September 2021:

Group Consolidated Performance

During last year Oman Arab Bank SAOG (OAB) was converted from a subsidiary of OMINVEST to an associate and the Group discontinued the consolidation of the bank's financials and commenced equity accounting for OAB's results in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards. As a result, during the period ended 30 September 2021, total Group revenues decreased by 30% to RO 151.18m. The net profit attributable to OMINVEST's shareholders decreased by 17% to RO 23.65m in comparison with RO 28.65m, over the same period in 2020, mainly due to the following reasons:

- The Group's year-to-date profits edged lower as we did not have a large and profitable investment exit such as the sale of a sizeable stake in OAB in the previous year.
- Our main insurance subsidiary, National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC), reported lower profits due to a sharp rise in medical claims related to COVID-19 and certain high pay-outs in the motor business during the current period. Nevertheless, we expect some improvement in NLGIC's profitability due to expected reduction in claims related to COVID-19, considering the increasing levels of vaccination.

Parent Company Performance

During the period ended 30 September 2021, total revenues decreased by 12% to RO 42.99m and net profit decreased by 16% to RO 27.43m, compared to the same period in 2020. The reasons for decline in the revenues and profits of the Parent company are the same as highlighted above in Group performance. Parent company's total borrowings stand at RO 301.64m with a healthy leverage ratio of 0.93.

Performance of Key Subsidiaries & Associates:

Jabreen International Development Company SAOC (Jabreen), our subsidiary, is focused on making private equity investments in diverse sectors and expanding into new growth markets in Asia. Jabreen reported a net profit of RO 20.15m for the period ended 30 September 2021 compared to RO 17.96m for the same period in 2020, an increase of 12%. The increase in profit is primarily due to good performance by Bank Muscat SAOG and other portfolio companies. The increase was partially offset by an absence of a one-time gain of RO 3.7m recorded on change in investment classification of International General Insurance Holding Ltd (Nasdaq listed company) during the first half of 2020. On 30 September 2021, Jabreen's total assets stood at RO 346m compared to RO 333m on 31 December 2020. We expect Jabreen to further enhance and diversify its investment income in the years ahead.

National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC), our subsidiary in the insurance sector, reported a Gross Written Premium (GWP) of RO 121.5m, an increase of 8% compared to RO 112.9m for the same period in 2020 and net profit of RO 7.05m for the period ended 30 September 2021 compared to RO 14.02m for the same period in 2020; a decrease of 50%. Decline in profitability was primarily attributable to a significant rise in medical claims and motor insurance claims, which on a combined basis rose by 16% (net of re-insurance share). We expect the claims to stabilize and performance to improve by year end. The decrease was partially offset by an increase in investment income by 36%. In terms of geographical distribution of GWP, Sultanate of Oman contributed 47%, UAE 50%, and Kuwait 3% during the period. We believe that NLGIC's growth prospects are strong, its recurring revenues from insurance business are stable and on a clear growth trend.

Oman Arab Bank SAOG (OAB), our associate in the banking sector, reported a profit of RO 11.3m for the period ended 30 September 2021 compared to RO 13.7m for the same period in 2020; a decrease of 18%. OAB increased its loans and advances by 4% to RO 2.75bn compared to RO 2.64bn, as of 31 December 2020. Customers' deposits decreased by 2% to RO 2.71bn compared to RO 2.75bn, as of 31 December 2020. The shareholders' funds were RO 366m compared to RO 359m, as of 31 December 2020. OAB successfully issued USD 250m Tier I capital securities during the period.

National Finance Company SAOG (NFC), our associate in the leasing sector, reported a net profit of RO 5.73m for the period ended 30 September 2021 compared to RO 5.61m for the same period in 2020; an increase of 2%. NFC's revenues decreased by 2% to RO 30.6m in this period compared to RO 31.3m in the corresponding period in 2020. NFC continues to adopt a conservative approach to credit approvals keeping in view the overall macroeconomic scenario and perceived increase in credit risk. NFC will continue to focus on strengthening its efficiencies, customer experience, product offerings and quality of service delivery. We expect NFC to further consolidate its position as the leading and best performing finance company in the Sultanate of Oman.

Corporate Citizenship

In solidarity with national relief efforts addressing the needs of local communities affected by Cyclone Shaheen, OMINVEST contributed RO 100,000 which was channelled through the Oman Charitable Organisation.

In line with OMINVEST's purpose of "Transforming Businesses to Enrich Societies", I am pleased to inform you that we have started a capacity building initiative covering Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices. The initiative addressed top and middle management executives at the Parent Company and Group companies through focused training sessions; it also included a comprehensive online course especially designed for all staff. The aim of the initiative is to build needed knowledge and skills for integrating ESG at operational and investment levels across the Group, aligning with global best practices.

Acknowledgements:

We are profoundly grateful to our beloved leader His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his great vision and initiatives as he continues to lead the Sultanate of Oman on the path of development, peace, and enduring prosperity. We also extend our sincere wishes to His Majesty and the people of the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of the 51st National Day of the Renaissance.

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

Khalid Muhammad AlZubair
Chairman

UNAUDITED INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPERHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTH PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Consolidated (Unaudited)			
	9 months ended 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	9 months ended 30-Sep-20 (RO'000)	3 months ended 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	3 months ended 30-Sep-20 (RO'000)
Gross premium earned	105,665	107,537	35,868	35,003
Interest income	4,307	62,612	1,283	1,400
Investment income	11,658	13,379	1,498	359
Fee and commission income - net	5,079	11,863	1,419	1,005
Other operating income	2,620	2,894	1,015	782
Share of results from associates	21,851	16,345	6,791	6,521
Total revenue	151,180	214,630	47,874	45,070
Premium ceded to re-insurers	(17,996)	(20,755)	(5,940)	(6,425)
Net claims	(67,107)	(57,717)	(22,650)	(20,770)
Fee and commission expense	(9,540)	(8,861)	(3,104)	(2,424)
Interest expense	(11,477)	(32,753)	(3,833)	(3,815)
Operating expenses	(18,444)	(41,943)	(5,810)	(5,644)
COVID-19 contribution	-	(1,175)	-	-
Allowance for loan impairment, net of recoveries	-	(9,237)	-	-
Total expenses	(124,564)	(172,441)	(41,337)	(39,078)
Profit before tax	26,616	42,189	6,537	5,992
Income tax expense	(1,424)	(5,201)	(461)	(630)
Profit for the period	25,192	36,988	6,076	5,362
Profit for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	23,647	28,654	5,610	4,536
Non-controlling interests	1,545	8,334	466	826
	25,192	36,988	6,076	5,362
Basic earnings per share attributable to the equity holders of the Parent Company (RO)	0.032	0.039	0.008	0.007
Other comprehensive income / (expense) :				
<i>Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:</i>				
Movement in cash flow hedge	203	(524)	(52)	37
Foreign currency translation reserve	3	(2)	5	9
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	(452)	(773)	(16)	(201)
<i>Items not to be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:</i>				
Changes in fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income and share of OCI from equity accounted investee-net of tax	194	(8,115)	(1,213)	2,797
Other comprehensive income / (expense) for the period	(52)	(9,414)	(1,276)	2,642
Total comprehensive income for the period	25,140	27,574	4,800	8,004
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	23,557	19,702	4,349	7,160
Non-controlling interests	1,583	7,872	451	844
	25,140	27,574	4,800	8,004

UNAUDITED INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT COMPANY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Consolidated		Parent Company	
	(Unaudited) 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	(Audited) 31-Dec-20 (RO'000)	(Unaudited) 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	(Audited) 31-Dec-20 (RO'000)
Assets				
Balances with banks and money at call	25,267	40,874	9,074	24,125
Deposits with banks	62,147	85,885	15,000	44,289
Premium and insurance balance receivable	61,667	43,156	-	-
Re-insurance share in insurance funds	18,204	16,175	-	-
Investment securities	166,675	142,903	5,490	5,328
Investment in associates	341,239	323,368	150,107	142,250
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	299,725	299,391
Due from subsidiaries	-	-	142,104	112,173
Other assets	36,605	14,400	3,941	1,140
Investment properties	6,862	11,139	2,100	2,100
Property and equipment	11,946	12,579	861	969
Intangible assets	20,880	21,795	-	-
Total assets	751,492	712,274	628,402	631,765
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	80,777	80,777	80,777	80,777
Share premium	43,838	43,838	43,838	43,838
Treasury shares	(58,580)	(58,580)	-	-
Legal reserve	19,859	19,859	19,859	19,859
Other non-distributable reserves	7,078	5,641	7,078	5,641
Cumulative changes in fair value reserve	(14,238)	(13,155)	(26,426)	(23,004)
Retained earnings	139,747	136,953	138,147	135,185
Equity attributable to equity holders of the Parent Company	218,481	215,333	263,273	262,296
Perpetual bonds	57,843	52,098	60,638	60,638
	276,324	267,431	323,911	322,934
Non-controlling interests	20,520	21,268	-	-
Total equity	296,844	288,699	323,911	322,934
Liabilities				
Due to banks	303,281	302,470	299,631	302,470
Insurance funds	110,351	74,713	-	-
Other liabilities	39,391	43,555	4,221	5,722
Taxation	1,625	2,837	639	639
Total liabilities	454,648	423,575	304,491	308,831
Total equity and liabilities	751,492	712,274	628,402	631,765
Net assets per share (Rial Omani)	0.327	0.322	0.326	0.325

UNAUDITED INTERIM CONDENSED PARENT COMPANY STATEMENT OF COMPERHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTH PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Parent Company (Unaudited)			
	9 months ended 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	9 months ended 30-Sep-20 (RO'000)	3 months ended 30-Sep-21 (RO'000)	3 months ended 30-Sep-20 (RO'000)
Interest income	5,757	5,047	1,835	1,941
Investment income	4,677	6,521	79	107
Other income	816	438	688	63
Share of results from subsidiaries	26,189	33,989	6,754	5,771
Share of results from associates	5,560	2,975	985	1,600
Total revenue	42,999	48,970	10,341	9,482
Interest expense	(11,406)	(11,001)	(3,818)	(3,800)
Operating expenses	(4,168)	(4,510)	(999)	(1,278)
COVID-19 contribution	-	(500)	-	-
Total expenses	(15,574)	(16,011)	(4,817)	(5,078)
Profit before tax	27,425	32,959	5,524	4,404
Income tax expense	-	(500)	-	-
Profit for the period	27,425	32,459	5,524	4,404
Basic earnings per share attributable to the equity holders of the Parent Company (RO)	0.031	0.036	0.007	0.006
Other comprehensive income / (expense) :				
<i>Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:</i>				
Movement in cash flow hedge	203	(524)	(52)	37
Foreign currency translation reserve	3	(2)	5	9
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	(424)	(725)	(15)	(188)
<i>Items not to be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:</i>				
Changes in fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income and share of OCI from equity accounted investee-net of tax	(2,211)	(8,778)	(1,706)	1,495
Other comprehensive expense for the period	(2,429)	(10,029)	(1,768)	1,353
Total comprehensive income for the period	24,996	22,430	3,756	5,757
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	24,996	22,430	3,756	5,757
	24,996	22,430	3,756	5,757

Note: The unaudited interim consolidated financial statements of the Company would be made available to any Shareholder or interested Party on request in Arabic or in English within 7 days from the date of request.

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JABREEN CAPITAL



OAB sponsors talk on influential women



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) is sponsoring a discussion session that will be organised by the Omani Women's Association in Muscat. This support is in line with the bank's objective of enhancing its role in supporting society, stemming from the umbrella of its sustainability strategy.

Aimed at highlighting the efforts and empowering Omani women, the session will be conducted under the auspices of HH Sayyidah Basma bint Fakhri al Said and will cover two main topics, namely, Omani women and entrepreneurship and the inspiring success stories of influential women.

Over the course of the session, several women entrepreneurs will shed light on their success stories. This will include Zakira Jamal Khader, owner of Taj Al Yasmeen, Badriya Hilal, owner of Mandazi and other projects, Raeda bint Mohammed al Wahaibiyah, owner of Al Raeda Gold and Jewellery and Nadia bint Saeed al Rawahiyah, owner of Silver Sunlights. Other notable mentions that will be present are Muzaffa bint Hamad al Amriyah, owner of Al-Amriya incense and Maymouna bint Hamdan al Dahmaniyah, owner of Lavender and Rose, a vendor of soaps, gifts and other distributions.

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the Sultanate. Today, the bank operates a nationwide network of 53 branches and representative offices with 150 ATMs spread across Oman.

OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services through its OAB Online App.

Alizz Islamic Bank wins best initiative for empowerment of women award

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank added another recognition to its list of accomplishments by winning the award for the "Best initiative recognising and empowering women" at the *Al Mar'a* Magazine Summit and Annual Awards event which was held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel under the auspices of Dr Rahma al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation.

Alizz Islamic Bank won the honour for its new female banking segment 'Hiyya' which features products and services that are designed exclusively for women. The award highlighted the achievements of Omani women and shed light on their



contributions and effective roles in the comprehensive development of the Sultanate of Oman. The award was received by Muna al Khusaibi, Deputy Senior Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communications on behalf of the bank.

Mohammed al Ghassani, Chief Consumer Banking Officer, Alizz Islamic Bank stressed that "Achieving a pioneering role in the banking sector is not an easy matter. We have a clear understanding of women's banking needs and services and we do not make a product without putting in it the maximum benefits for the customer, whether it is a woman or a man."

Al Ghassani added, "Alizz

Islamic Bank won the award for its continuous provision of exclusive and exceptional services and products that it provides to its customers, all of which are in compliance with the provisions and principles of sharia."

Hiyya, offers women a sharia compliant savings account that is based on the Sharia principle of mudaraba whereby the customer is the 'rab-al-mal' (investor) and the bank is the 'mudarib' (investment manager), wherein the bank invests the funds within a common investment pool, including other Mudaraba accounts. As per the arrangement, profits will be shared between customers and the bank according to the previously agreed distribution ratios.

Hyundai Motor launches 'Expecting Generation One' global campaign

MUSCAT: Hyundai Motor Company launched a global campaign, 'Expecting Generation One,' with the online premiere of a short film signalling its commitment to fight climate change and achieve carbon neutrality in order to secure a habitable world for future generations.

The campaign reinforces Hyundai Motor's recent declaration at the 2021 IAA Mobility Show in Germany that it aims to achieve carbon neutrality in its products and global operations by 2045 through clean mobility, next-generation platforms and green energy. Hyundai Motor plans to roll out more customer communications for 'Expecting Generation One' throughout the remainder of the year.

With this campaign, Hyundai aims to build consensus with customers about the value of planning for future generations", said Thomas Schemera, Global Chief Marketing Officer and Head of Customer Experience Division of Hyundai Motor Company.

Expecting Generation One.



"Our action is not just for us living in the present, but also for all future generations, including the ecosystems of our precious planet."

In the campaign film, which debuted today on the company's official YouTube channel (@HyundaiWorldwide) and other platforms, mothers and grandmothers from around the globe are seen and heard conveying their heartfelt wishes for a sustainable world in which future generations of people, animals, plants and ecosystems can thrive together.

Vulnerable species, such as whales, elephants and penguins, are featured alongside human mothers from diverse backgrounds, heard with a soundtrack of nature sounds and a mother's lullaby.

The campaign serves to reinforce Hyundai Motor's pledge to cultivate a sustainable future through a multi-dimensional strategy focused on clean mobility, next-generation platforms and green energy, particularly hydrogen, which Hyundai Motor Group detailed at its recent Hydrogen Wave event.

NBO to give away 18,000 Nuqati points to customers

MUSCAT: To mark the Sultanate of Oman's 51st National Day, National Bank of Oman (NBO) is celebrating with a special one-day offer, giving away 18,000 Nuqati points to 18 lucky customers. All cardholders who make a POS or online purchase of at least RO 20 using their credit, debit, or prepaid card on November 18 will be automatically entered into a draw with the chance to win the points, which can be redeemed on a whole host of products and services including airline tickets, hotels bookings, restaurants, gift shops, fuel stations, entertainment venues and supermarkets.

Maha bint Saud al Raisiayah, Head of Retail Products at NBO, said, "Celebrating National Day with our community and country is something we look forward to every year. Everyone enjoys getting rewards so this year we wanted to show our appreciations to our loyal customers and reward them for using NBO cards. We continue



to live up to our commitment to offer our customers the best banking experience possible."

Nuqati Rewards is the country's first and only free loyalty programme that rewards members with points for their day to day banking. Nuqati points can be earned across a wide range of products and services such as spends on cards, increase in deposits, and online transactions.

In addition, Al Kanz Savings account-holders will receive nine points for every RO 100 deposited.

Meanwhile, NBO's suite of credit, debit and prepaid cards offer cashless convenience, tailor-made to meet the needs of its customers.

Bank Muscat wins 2 awards from JP Morgan for excellence in straight-through processing



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat has been recognised by JP Morgan for its best-in-class Straight-through Processing (STP) rates for US Dollar clearing operations.

The bank won the 2021 Quality Recognition Award for MT103 with its best-in-class STP rate of 98.63% and the 2021 Quality Recognition Award for MT202 with STP rate of 99.9% from JP Morgan, which is a global leader in offering financial services and solutions to the world's leading governments, corporates and institutions.

Recipients of this award have traditionally demonstrated superior transaction-processing quality, resulting in higher efficiencies, faster payments and cost reductions and honouring commitments to operational excellence. JP Morgan has been giving these awards since 1997 to acknowledge consistent high-quality performance by its partner banks.

The international payments landscape is an essential part of banking relationships in today's global economy. Given the dynamic

environment and continuous developments in technology, the responsibility for quicker and efficient processing is a shared effort by all financial institutions that are involved in the payment cycle. Bank Muscat has established more than 500 correspondent banking relationships across the world and JP Morgan is among Bank Muscat's prominent correspondent banks for dollar payments.

Bank Muscat won the accolades after exceeding the elite benchmarks in both categories.

Shycocan, World's First Virus Attenuation Device, launched in Oman, in partnership with IITC (OHI Group)

MUSCAT: Shycocan Corporation, in partnership with International Information Technology Co. (IITC), an OHI Group company, has officially launched the Shycocan Virus Attenuation Device in Oman. The one-of-its-kind device has been developed by well-known Indian scientist and inventor Dr Rajah Vijay Kumar. IITC is the official distributor of the device in Oman.

Scientific evidence indicates Shycocan, a cylindrical device, neutralizes and helps curb the spread of the Coronavirus and the Influenza family of viruses in indoor spaces with up to 99.9% efficacy, enabling people to have a normal life at home and allowing schools, colleges, hospitals, and businesses like hotels, offices, restaurants, auditoriums, malls / retail shops, banks, public transports, and airports to return to normal operations and to offer customers a safe environment. In addition to supplying the product, Shycocan / IITC offer customized consultations, installation services, a one-year replacement warranty, customer support and service network across Oman, and a post-installation audit.

While reviewing the launch of the Shycocan brand in Oman, Mr. S. Jayakumar, General Manager of IITC,



said: "Mankind is facing one of the most challenging times, with lives, livelihoods and businesses impacted across the globe. We need the best of science and technology along with social responsibility and the willpower to fight it and to triumph. Keeping true to our vision of getting the safest and most innovative solutions for the people of Oman, IITC is glad to distribute Shycocan all over the country. With Shycocan, Oman has now the technology and the capability to bring businesses and lives back to normal."

Alok Sharma, CEO of Shycocan Corporation, said: "The world faced one of its' biggest challenges with the pandemic bringing us to a standstill. More livelihoods than lives have been lost, in fact, close to a billion at last count. And

Science, Technology and Innovation are going to play a big role in helping us reclaim our lives and work safely. We are delighted to launch the pathbreaking one of a kind virus attenuation device, the Shycocan, in the hope of doing just that. Helping people bring lives and businesses back to normal."

When mounted correctly, a single Shycocan device has an effective coverage area of 1,000 square feet (10,000 cubic feet). Multiple devices can be installed to cover a larger indoor space.

The device has seen a robust demand from institutional buyers across the globe and is already in use in various locations such as India, the USA, Europe, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the UAE, among others.

Omantel Group 9M revenue at RO 1.8 bn

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Majority state-owned Omantel reported group revenue of RO 1,802.2 million for the first nine months of 2021, compared to RO 1,859.2 million for the corresponding period of 2020, representing a decline of 3.1 per cent. Domestic revenue declined 3.2 per cent to RO 396.9 million, compared to RO 410.1 million for the corresponding period of 2020.

Announcing its results for the 9M period, the country's leading telecom operator said: "Revenues growth achieved in Mobile Postpaid and Fixed Broadband have contributed in managing the margin for the third quarter of 2021, despite a fall in Mobile Prepaid due to challenging market conditions."

The Group's total operating expenses decreased to RO 1,507.6 million compared to RO 1,548.6 million for the corresponding period 2020, a decrease of 2.7 per cent. Net profit after tax



amounted to RO 168.1 million this year, compared to RO 167.7 million in 2020. After adjusting for minority interest the net profit for the period, it amounted to RO 48.9 million, compared to RO 46.3 million in 2020.

The net profit of its domestic operations stood at RO 54.7 million, which is a decline of 2.3 per cent in comparison to Year

2020 performance, the publicly listed company said.

"Revenue growth was achieved in Mobile Postpaid (20.3 per cent) and Fixed Broadband (9.8 per cent), while prepaid revenue declined due to challenging market conditions.

The continued focus on cost optimisation measures has resulted in managing the net

profit decline despite the revenue decrease", it further noted.

The total domestic subscriber base as of September 2021 (including mobile and fixed businesses) was 3.303 million (excluding Mobile Resellers) compared to 3.286 million of the corresponding period of the previous year, recording a growth of 0.5 per cent over the last period.

Total subscriber base with mobile resellers reached 3.8 million.

Omantel subsidiary Mobile Telecommunication Company (Zain) recorded revenues of RO 1,413.1 million for the period, representing a drop of 3.2 per cent from revenue of RO 1,458.2 million for the corresponding period of 2020.

EBITDA stood at RO 594.3 million, compared to the corresponding period EBITDA of RO 611.6 million recording a decline of 2.8 per cent. Net profit stood at RO 180.9 million compared to RO 182.9 million of the previous period.

The total customer base of Zain Group decreased by 2.3 per cent to 48.4 million compared to 49.6 million of the previous period. Omantel's mobile market share (including Mobile Resellers) was 53.6 per cent with a revenue share of 60.1 per cent. The Fixed Telephone (post & pre-paid) market share was 70.3 per cent with a revenue market share of 80.1 per cent.

Solar energy to contribute 21 per cent of Oman's power needs by 2030

FROM PAGE 17

This target is based on projections provided by the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) in its 7-Year Outlook Statement spanning the 2019 — 2025 period.

Solar capacity in the energy mix is anticipated to rise from 500 MW in 2022 (a reference to the Ibri-II Solar PV Independent Power Project set to come on stream in Al Dhahirah Governorate) to 2,000 MW by 2025.

This includes a 1,000 MW capacity solar PV IPP planned at Manah in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, the award and implementation has been somewhat delayed by the economic downturn and the pandemic.

The potential for a solar-based Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) plant, originally envisaged in Al Wusta Governorate, is also foreseen by 2025.

Contributions from wind resources will aggregate to about 350 MW by 2025, with a further 100 MW coming from a stalled Waste to Energy project planned at Barka in South Al Batinah Governorate. The share of gas-fired power plants, currently accounting for almost all of the Sultanate of Oman's power generation output, is expected to be substantially capped going forward, with renewables covering any demand growth in the short to long-term.

Dr Rumhy, Opec's Barkindo attend ADIPEC 2021 opening

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Opec Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo attended the opening ceremony of the 2021 edition of the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) in Abu Dhabi on Monday.

The Secretary General also participated in a ministerial panel titled "The new world of energy", along with Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhy, the Sultanate of Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals, Suhail Mohamed al Mazrouei, UAE's Minister of Energy and Infrastructure; Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima, Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Industry, Mines and Energy; Dr Mohammad Abdullatif Alfares, Kuwait's Minister of Oil, Minister of Higher Education and Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

Barkindo also hosted a leadership roundtable titled "Collaborating to define the global energy future." The ministerial panel touched on a



number of key topics relevant to the energy industry, including the world post Covid-19, the economic recovery and energy demand, as well as topics related to climate change.

The leadership roundtable focused on the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts; balancing the energy trilemma components: affordability, security and emissions reduction; multilateralism and international cooperation; investment in

energy; technology's potential in improving the environmental credentials of energy; and the recently concluded COP26 in Glasgow, in which the Secretary General took part.

Addressing the panellists and attendees of the roundtable, the Secretary General stated, "The gathering could not be timelier, for we are truly living in an historic epoch", adding, "The energy industry has been affected by a range of factors that warrant

careful analysis and discussion."

"The carefully considered actions of the Declaration of Cooperation (DoC) countries continue to provide vital support for the ongoing market rebalancing efforts.

This is critical, given the remaining macroeconomic and public health uncertainties", Barkindo stated, adding, "The cooperation between Opec and 10 non-Opec producing countries involves Opec working

in concerted action with 10 non-Opec countries towards sustainable stability in the global oil market."

The DoC, which was established in 2016, has helped overcome two global oil cycle downturns in 2015 and 2020, the later caused by Covid-19. The multilateral process has been underpinned by three key principles: Transparency, equity and mutual respect.

The Secretary General also highlighted the importance of predictable investment in addressing global energy needs.

"Cumulative oil-related investment requirements amount to \$11.8 trillion in the 2021-2045 period. Of this, 80 per cent, or \$9.2 trillion is in the upstream, with another \$1.5 and \$1.1 trillion needed in the downstream and midstream, respectively", Barkindo stated, adding, "This underscores the importance of creating the oil market stability necessary to attract investments to ensure long-term security of supply."

"The DoC plays a critical role in this regard," he emphasised.

Easier immigration will keep UK talent pools strong



ANDY JALIL
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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

The UK's credentials as a leading global financial centre are undisputed. The British time zone, language and regulatory system all contribute to this unrivalled status. Over the centuries the sector has combined tradition with innovation and shown openness and willingness to change and adapt.

This has made the financial district of London, with its myriad facilities, an attractive arena with unique strengths for business — such as the UK's access to a deep pool of the most highly skilled and talented workers in the world. Currently just under 20 per cent of the financial services workforce is international, rising to 42 per cent in Fintech.

This world class multinational and multilingual workforce gives Britain an edge over its rivals. The benefits that the UK gains from being at the zenith of financial services are immense. The industry contributes over 10 per cent of the UK's total economic output, and it is the country's largest taxpayer and exporter.

With over 2.3 million people across the UK working in financial and related professional services — two thirds of whom are employed outside of London — the sector is vital in bringing about recovery.

It provides a boost to the wider economy by financing businesses in all sectors, thereby creating jobs and driving growth. But other financial centres are taking steps to catch up with the UK which cannot rest on its laurels — however good

they may be.

In order to protect the UK's competitive advantage, policymakers must ensure that the country's businesses maintain unrivalled access to the most important source of future growth available: Top global talent. The question that arises here is what can be done. Last year the City of London Corporation and EY produced a report which proposed reforms to develop a world-class visa regime to help international businesses.

At the same time, The CityUK and EY published a paper outlining how the UK's new independent trade and investment policy could help UK businesses secure access to global talent. Both bits of work emphasised this as a top priority for industries across the

UK in order to ensure its enduring competitive edge. Since then, the Government has acted on many of the recommendations.

But businesses continue to struggle with process-related issues. Since the introduction of the new points-based immigration system, it is becoming more difficult, and costlier, to secure the talent that the UK has always relied on to keep the country competitive.

Early last month, the City Corporation, The CityUK and EY produced a series of recommendations to ensure the UK stays in front of the pack, including vital reforms to the countries immigration system which they had also mentioned in their previous report.

It included a suite of proposals to attract the best people, and help

firms to access and export to the high-growth market of the future.

Ministers need to create a new short-term business visa to allow overseas staff to visit and work in the UK. This would streamline the cost and time taken to move people around regional offices under current immigration rules.

Remote working has had a transformative impact on international talent. It has opened up new growth opportunities for UK-based businesses and the finance industry. As the Lord Mayor of the City of London Corporation, William Russell points out, the UK needs to ensure it takes advantage of these opportunities. This needs to be a public and private partnership between Government and industry to keep the pools of talent deep and the country's economy strong.

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SECOND-HAND GAMING EQUIPMENT

Oman Family Leisure Company LLC – under liquidation announces the availability of gaming equipment for sale. Those wishing to buy should inspect the used gaming equipment must take into account the below matters:

- 1- The inspection will take a place at the Muscat Grand Mall, Happy Land on Tuesday 23 November 2021 from 10 AM – 12 PM.
- 2- The last day for submitting purchase offers is Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 5 PM.
- 3- Offers to purchase shall be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the liquidators of Oman Family Leisure LLC on the following address:
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC,
Salam Square - South, 4th Floor, Suites 402-404,
Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos
P.O. Box 3075, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
- 4- Company is not obligated to accept any offer.
- 5- Individual or Company who is willing to buy the equipment will be responsible for moving the equipment form Happy Land, and all costs will be incurred by the buyer.

For inquiries, please contact
Mr. Nawaf Al Lawati on 97295405 or nawaf.allawati@pwc.com

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#Living_with_COVID19

features

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Infusing Muscat's music scene with African mastery of the bass

From performing with mainstream artists in Africa, Zachaeus Mwendwa moved away from his home in Mombasa in Kenya to Muscat after seeing Oman's music scene's need for diversity. Zach believes in the amazing potential of the Sultanate to grow its music industry... **P24**

ENTERTAINMENT

READ

The book cover features a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on the left and Frederick Douglass on the right. The title 'The President and the Freedom Fighter' is prominently displayed in the center, with the author's name 'BRIAN KILMEADE' at the top.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTER

BY BRIAN KILMEADE

The Fox News host gives an account of the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

'Genuine fan' Rosamund Pike brings 'The Wheel of Time' fantasy to TV

IN A NEW TELEVISION drama, Robert Jordan's fantasy book series "The Wheel of Time" arrives to the big screen. In that new drama, Rosamund Pike is the award-winning actress.

According to Amazon Prime Video series, the British actor is Moiraine, a member of the

huge Aes Sedai society, who travels with young men and women by chance around the world. One of them is insisted upon to discredit humanity and defeat humanity.

Pike is the famous man of "Good Luck" and "Die of Day," an unknown young actor.

When she appeared on

Monday, she said, I haven't made a cast like that since I made "Pride and Prejudice" such a special alchemy, that has a special scheme of personalities to whoever shooting is such a great magic," she said.

"And so that makes me optimistic for how fans will respond. And we're just sharing it - so I hope the word "Although the Wheel of Time" has not even infected me for the past few years is still on the rise of our fans. So we've become genuine fans."

In respect of the series, which has drawn comparisons to the "Game of Thrones," the movie has begun in the Czech Republic.

It'd be a travesty if we didn't get the success of it because what (Jordan has) written is



very amazing", said Pike.

The first book of the World, published in 1990, was translated into fourteen volumes. The third of the last three books was translated into a book by a fantasy writer.

"Do what you could do now is to see what the reaction is but I have high hopes," said the actor, Daniel Henney, who plays Lan Mandragoran.

"The Wheel of Time" hits Friday. — Reuters



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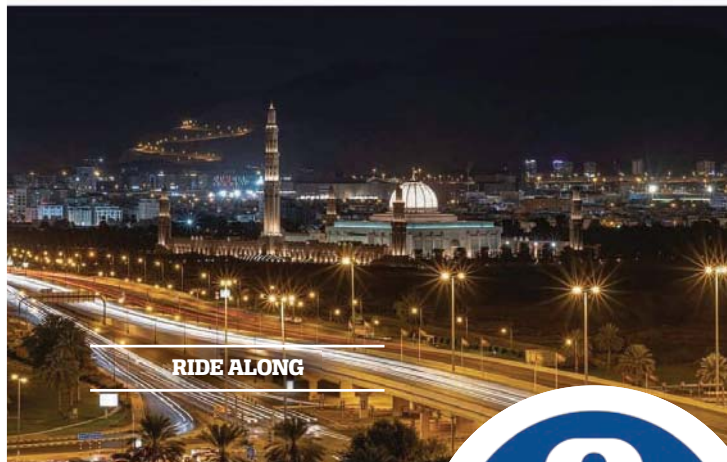
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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Eric Clapton, Elvis Presley guitars hit the auction block



OVER 900 ITEMS from some of the world's biggest music stars including Eric Clapton, Elvis Presley, Madonna and Michael Jackson are hitting the auction block in New York this week.

The Martin guitar is expected to fetch \$300,000 to \$500,000, said Martin Nolan, Executive Director of Julien's Auctions. The bidding on the guitar and other items will take place on Friday and Saturday at the Hard Rock Cafe in New York and online.

A guitar played by Presley and given to Norman Taurog, who directed many of his films, could fetch up to \$90,000. The auction also features a suit Madonna wore in the movie "Evita" that is valued up to \$12,000.

Dresses worn by Amy Winehouse and Katy Perry are also up for grabs.

Several items from the rock band Nirvana and lead Kurt Cobain are also included in the sale.

"We have a teenage photograph of Kurt Cobain, very rare you see a photograph of Kurt Cobain so young, tickets for concerts.

"Anything from Kurt Cobain is highly sought after," Nolan said. — Reuters

FASHION



Kering appoints Matthieu Blazy as creative director of Bottega Veneta

FRENCH LUXURY group Kering has appointed Matthieu Blazy as creative director of Bottega Veneta, he said on Monday, bringing in an insider as he moved quickly to fill the position after Daniel Lee's surprise departure last week.

A ready-to-wear designer for the high-end Italian brand since last year, Blazy has risen through the fashion ladder, gaining experience at labels such as Raf Simons, Maison Margiela and Calvin Klein, and has been a senior designer at Celine in 2014.

"I am convinced that the wealth of experience and culture of Matthieu Blazy will allow him to bring his creative impetus to the task of perpetuating the legacy of Bottega Veneta," declared François-Henri Pinault, CEO and Chairman by Kering.

Lee's departure, announced last week, took the industry by surprise. — Reuters

CHANGING WORLD

Milk, meat and might: In Somalia, 'the camel is king'

THE NOMAD WAS thirsty, and the journey into the Somali desert would be long and taxing.

Turning to one of his beloved camels, Ali Abdi Elmi squeezed fresh milk into a wooden urn, and took a deep drink.

"I have five children, and we all depend on camel milk to survive," said Elmi, passing the pot to one of his sons, who took a swig of the rich brew.

For many Somalis, the camel is a gift from the gods: a source of milk and meat, a beast of burden in the desert and — as climate change spurs extreme weather in the Horn of Africa — insurance in times of crisis.

An animal of haughty and cantankerous repute, in Somalia the camel is celebrated in songs and folklore, a symbol of status and prosperity, and exchanged in marriages or to settle feuds.

In this overwhelmingly rural society of 15 million, the rearing of camels and other livestock underpins an economy devastated by war and natural disaster that ranks among the world's very poorest.

The livestock industry is the main contributor to economic growth in Somalia and in normal years accounts for 80 per cent of exports, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Camels are far outnumbered by sheep and goats, which wander Hargeisa in northern Somalia with their owner's phone numbers scrawled on their sides, should they get lost and need returning.

But at seven million beasts, there are more camels in Somalia than almost anywhere else, and they don't just confer respect on their owners — they fetch much higher prices.

"We don't have crude oil in this country. Camels are our crude oil," said Abdi Rashid, a trader clad in aviator sunglasses and tan safari suit at Hargeisa's biggest livestock market.

CULTURAL ICON

An impressive specimen can carry a \$1,000 (860 euros) price tag, said Khosar Abdi Hussein, who oversees the market where camel milk is sold fresh and even camel urine — believed to have health benefits — is bottled.

A sale is made by locking hands under the checkered shawls carried by herders.

The number of knuckles tapped and fingers grasped determines the price — a tradition to ensure negotiations are kept private.

The transaction is completed by a mobile money transfer, a modern touch to an ancient way of doing business.

"Camels are important to Somali culture because one is always considered wealthy, or can rise in social status, by the number of camels they have," said Hussein, who stressed that he had nine of his own.

But in Somalia, where nearly seven out of 10 live in poverty according to the World Bank, few can afford one camel, let alone



many.

Elmi is among the two-thirds of Somalis dependent on livestock, and though he isn't making lucrative deals at the city market, his camels are a godsend in other ways.

Camels still produce milk during drought, sating nomads who can go a month in the dry lands consuming nothing else.

"The milk is good for us, be-

water and grazing land for their prized beasts, whose reputation as 'ships of the desert' is being sorely tested by a changing climate.

Thousands of camels and other livestock drowned when Cyclone Gati — the strongest tropical storm to ever make landfall in Somalia — turned deserts into seas in late 2020.

Two years earlier, a prolonged



cause camels graze from trees with medicinal properties that help combat diseases," said Elmi, a wiry 40-year-old with skin leath-ered by the sun.

In lean times, he can still buy essentials for his family by selling milk to vendors in Hargeisa, where fresh bottles are available daily on the streets.

In a real pinch, a camel can be slaughtered and its meat sold in town, where it is a local delicacy.

HARSH LIFE

The pastoral life is a difficult one, made more so by increasingly erratic rainfall over the Horn of Africa, a region US scientists say is drying faster now than at any other time in the past 2,000 years.

Nomads are being forced to travel greater distances to find

drought thinned herds in some parts of the country by 60 per cent, the FAO said.

The loss of livestock invariably spells hunger in Somalia, and destitute herders have fled to cities by the millions in recent years as life on the land has become unsustainable.

In the northern region of Somali land, local authorities want to resettle people along its Gulf of Aden coastline — an inconceivable prospect for some hardy desert folk.

"I don't see our way of life changing anytime soon," said Khosar Farrah, a grizzled 68-year-old who has been herding camels for half a century.

Hussein, too, couldn't picture nomads taking up fishing in a hurry: "Here, the camel is king," he said, chuckling. — AFP

A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

The pandemic is still around!

SINCE THE PANDEMIC has started, many people had been unhappy having to go through a lot of the inconveniences they had to. However, the latest number of coronavirus cases are finally on the decline and since then, people are already starting to feel some relief.

Interestingly, if you haven't noticed, 2020 was a notable year for uncertainty. We've experienced consistently extended closures, choppy day-to-day gaudiness and unexpected spikes. But by 2021, we won't be slipping a bit out of control:

most will recover. And this after all — if you agree with me — that simply humanity has survived two dozen pandemics over the past two centuries!

So for people who are thinking of returning to normal life, or trying to jump their head first as many did, it is easy to do the risk calculation only in terms of physical health, maybe this is what is all about for a long time. But vaccines have changed that and we need to update our mental data and be optimistic after all.

While we are all seeing a beautiful light at

After getting the vaccine, the freedom that came along with it — being able to eat in restaurants and ride planes make us forget the reality. While the world is opening and we are able to do the things we use to do, the threat continues

vaccines have provided answers and an exit.

It is still not a full ride into the sunset yet as there is still the floating threat of the coronavirus variant which has then again, disrupted summer plans, spoiled much of our hard-earned knowledge about the coronavirus and made us rethink our personal risks, isn't it?

The pandemic, if it continues, people's moods will continue to deteriorate, especially if we experience more setbacks. These moods can manifest as irritability or more serious mental health problems.

On other hand, outbreaks affect different people in different ways. The more stress people had to bear, the greater the risk of psychological problems. Nevertheless, I feel that as humans, we are still resilient. Yes, some people will continue to struggle, but

the end of the tunnel, I wanted to raise a question that needed to be asked. As we see more variants still affecting the world, do we still have the capacity to go another year or two of sacrifices?

We see a lot of people these days putting the pandemic behind them as the number of cases goes down. Most have returned to a life of wanton disregard. After getting the vaccine, the freedom that came along with it — being able to eat in restaurants and ride planes make us forget the reality. While the world is opening and we are able to do the things we use to do, the threat continues. So don't be immersed: remember the world is only normal until you test positive!

Dr Yousuf Ali Al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and a writer.



Infusing Muscat's music scene with African mastery of the bass

By Jade Tampepe

You can't dance to a piece of music without the bass and it is with this philosophy that musician Zachaeus Mwendwa is proud and passionate about his career.

"Bass is the link between rhythm and melody/harmony. It ties the music together", he said.

He added, "A bassist contributes to a song by adding depth and linking the harmony and rhythm together, contributing to the groove, feel, style of the music and completing the overall sound."

Coming from a family of musicians, Zach was born and raised in Kenya in the coastal region in a city called Mombasa but moved to the Sultanate of Oman to take part in its evolving music scene providing the needed variety to grow the industry.

"Music has basically been my form of living; I could say, music is my life and vice versa. My dad was my mentor. From the age of three, I started playing African jazz piano, then after high school, I decided to major in the art", he shared.

Zach is currently a guitar teacher in the Classic Music and Arts Institute in Al Qurum and can be seen performing in different venues in the country providing that funk that pulls people in.

"I play bass because I love it. I love the sound of the bass on its own and in a song. I love the look of a bass, I love the feel of the

bass in my hands and I love what the bass does for a song. How cool is it to play the instrument that holds the whole music down?" he said.

"Whenever I play the bass, that is the moment I feel at home. I feel I can communicate to a diverse audience through sound that entirely touches the heart. It's the only moment I can say something without actually saying something. Before every performance, however, I have to know what I want to communicate, what I want my people to feel", he added.

Naming American Frank Brunot as his biggest influence, Zach shared that any musician worth their salt needs to master their weapons.

"The most common misconception about playing the bass is that it is easier to play than the guitar. The bass may only have four strings compared with the electric guitar's six, but that doesn't make it any easier to learn to play properly. It's a different instrument that's played differently from the electric guitar. Playing the bass requires a different knowledge base and skillset, so to speak", he said.

"I've learnt amazing slap baselines techniques from Frank Brunot. I've also picked up mind-blowing styles from other bass masters. To be good in anything, the key is to practice and listen to how other musicians play", he added.

From performing with mainstream artists in

Africa to touring the country doing different gigs, Zach's move to Oman was to "make better and more diverse performances here in the Sultanate of Oman."

"The Sultanate of Oman is a beautiful country.. with very kind social and nice people. I feel there is a great opportunity or rather potential for the music scene exploding to an infinite level", he said.

"For those looking to start a career in music, remember that there is no beginner that is going to be brilliant overnight. You have to be curious, learn from your tutors and ask the right questions. You also have to immerse yourself in music, to check different types out there especially the ones you never heard before and learn. The ability to play an instrument is a wonderful gift. Stick in and you won't regret it", he encouraged.

Zach is currently performing with local music royalty Thanae and her Pulse and Soul band. He is also bound to perform at Dubai Expo on November 27 with the group.

"I will be dropping my new guitar album on February 24, the same day as my birthday. I also conduct workshops at work so if you're interested to learn, you can reach out to Classic Music and Arts Institute in Al Qurum", he said.

For updates, you can follow Zach on Instagram @ **Zach_bassman** or Youtube and Twitter using the same handle.

