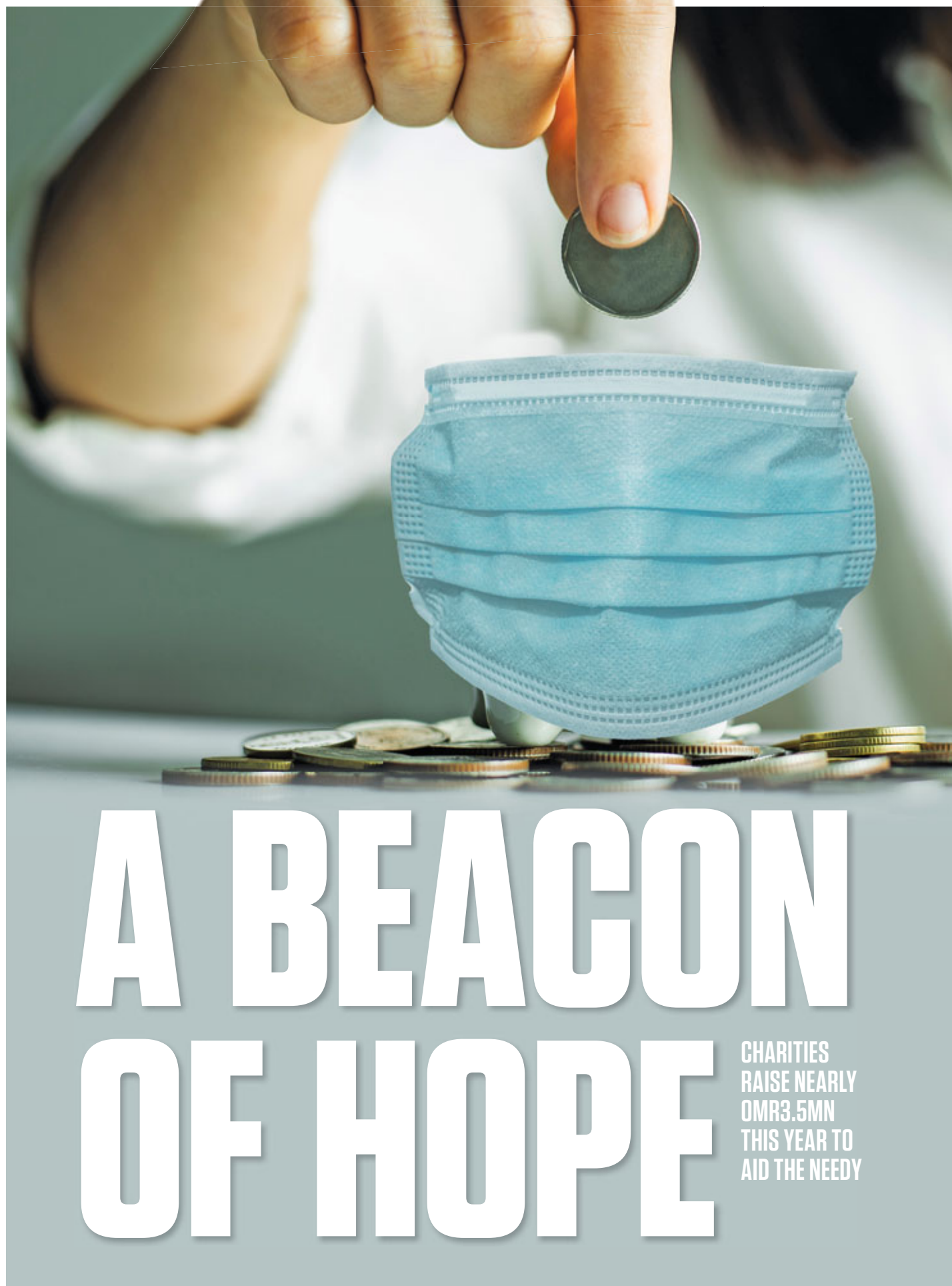




CHARITIES
RAISE NEARLY
OMR3.5MN
THIS YEAR TO
AID THE NEEDY

Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, many families previously not dependent on aid now need assistance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nearly OMR3.5 million has been raised for volunteer teams and charity organisations that are doing their best to help those who require assistance, which includes many affected by COVID-19. Charitable organisations have received donations worth OMR3,449,676 so far this

year, through the donate.om portal to assist people in need of aid. This includes some affected by lay-offs and reduced purchasing ability during the pandemic. Habib Al Subhi, the Director of the Associations and Community Organisations Department at the Ministry of Social Development, encouraged all those who could contribute towards a worthy cause

to do so, because our small donation today could put a smile on another person's face tomorrow. "Any amount you donate will contribute towards solving problems," he said. "Charities derive their strength from the donations made by the civil and private sectors to carry out their initiatives and provide aid to the needy. They will not be able to continue their voluntary projects without the help of communities who provide them much-needed support. "Charitable societies and volunteer teams have played a major role during the coronavirus pandemic," he added. "They have provided great support to job seekers, those who were laid off from work, and families in need. They continue their amazing charita-

ble work by launching several initiatives, and the Ministry of Social Development has accelerated the procedures for launching these initiatives and granting them the necessary permits." Habib Al Subhi admitted that due to the challenging circumstances faced by people both around the world and in Oman at present, there are many families in the country that were previously not dependent on aid, but now find themselves needing assistance. In light of an increasing number of families requiring intervention from charities, he praised the efforts being made by organisations and donors who have shown solidarity with those in need of assistance, by donating when it matters most. **>A3**



FLYING IS FREEDOM, SAYS 20-YEAR-OLD PILOT ASPIRANT

Flying for me is freedom and passion, and it makes me feel completely comfortable as I watch the planes closely. My only wish is to fly in the skies of the world through Oman Air. Flying for me is my great ambition and passion that I will work hard to achieve, even if this requires me to study aviation on my personal account, Moaz Al Saeedi from North Al Batinah has said. **>A4**



TRAIL BLAZER

A tribute to a pioneer of Omanisation in the oil and gas industry

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

MUSCAT: Suleiman bin Mohammed Al-Lamki has died at the age of 81 and is considered as one of the stalwarts in the Omanisation process in the oil and gas sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

He was the first Omani to be in the management team in Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) in the early 1980s. PDO's management positions, before then were entirely filled by expatriates, mainly nominated by Shell. Suleiman was later appointed the first Omani Head of Human Resources at PDO, a position he occupied until his retirement in 1999.

While he was in that position, Suleiman led the Omanisation process at PDO and worked hard to bring in fresh Omani talents to the company. Before he retired, PDO Omanised about 70 per cent of the total workforce, which many felt was a great achievement, considering many of the positions required high professional skills.

He was born in Zanzibar in October 1939 and his father sent him to the United Kingdom to a boarding school at the age of 13. He went on to enrol in the London School of Economics and graduated with a Political Science Degree. He worked in four different countries: Zanzibar, United Kingdom, Libya and eventually in Oman. His friends and colleagues remember Suleiman as helpful, kind and generous.

"I am still affected by his untimely death. He was a wonderful man, a true professional and a gentleman," Ali Al-Battashi, who was Adviser at the Ministry of Oil and Gas, said.

Others remember him as a colleague who always had time with the staff when they needed him.



The late Suleiman bin Mohammed Al-Lamki

league who always had time with the staff when they needed him.

"Suleiman was a very dear friend and a colleague at PDO for many years. He was a true professional who established the HR systems as we have them now at PDO. He took time to deal with staff and consulted with them. Socially, he was very much a family man surrounded by a circle of friends. To me, he was like an older brother. I miss him dearly," said Abdullah Al-Lamki, former Deputy Managing Director at PDO.

His former secretary also has fond memories of Suleiman when they were working together.

"I worked with him as his secretary for almost 20 year from 1981 until he retired. Initially, I worked with him when he was Employee Relations Manager, in charge of company policies, staff issues and benefits. When later he became Director of HR, he never changed as his responsibility grew bigger and challenging," Fathiya Al-Ismaily, said. **>A6**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



WORLD UK nationals told to leave Afghanistan

2 UK told all its nationals to leave Afghanistan immediately as fighting between Taliban and security forces intensified and hours after militants ambushed and killed the director of Afghanistan's government media centre. **>A7**

OMAN Towards sustainable engagement

1 The world is currently dealing with circumstances as difficult as the Great Depression of the 1930s. Countries will need many years to return to the normal levels of growth they had in 2019. **>A3**

MARKET Oman ports score high in operations

3 Oman's ports achieved growth in several commercial operations and volumes of direct import during the first half of 2021 affirming their leading role in boosting trade. **>B1**



OMAN BOTANIC GARDEN

Oman's first cable car to be operational in 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Visitors to the Oman Botanic Garden (OBG) will be able to ride the country's first cable car once it opens its doors to the public in 2023.

Spanning 420 hectares, the OBG will be among the largest botanic gardens in the world when complete, and is located about 35km from the capital, Muscat.

"This unique and diverse location will be the site of the first cable car that will enhance visitor experiences of the garden's various elements," said Salim Al Mahrouqi, the Minister of Heritage and Tourism, in a statement.

"Intense follow-ups take place in this regard," he added. "There are many challenges here, and the targeted goal is the year 2023."

Spearheaded by the Diwan of Royal Court, the project is being



overseen by three design firms: Arup, Grimshaw, and Haley Sharpe Design, which have collaborated to deliver the engineering, landscape design, architectural and interpretive design that befits

the ambitious and creative brief given.

The botanic gardens are envisioned with the intent of providing memorable experiences to visitors for generations to come. Once



open, it will showcase all the native plant species of Oman in a series of carefully created, naturalistic habitats. These range from dry, arid deserts, to the rich monsoon-fed forests in the south of the country.

The garden will also showcase the traditional practices people use to cultivate crops and the many ways in which people use plants in Oman.

Eight habitats

The eight habitats featured include the oasis, wadis, sabkha, sand deserts, northern mountains, northern gravel deserts, central deserts, and the southern mountains.

The Oman Botanic Garden also intends to be a hub for plant research. Scientific expeditions and fieldwork at the centre will be encouraged, while detailed information of indigenous flora will be stored at the herbarium.

Plans for research and conservation efforts around plants have also been drawn up, as have those for a seed bank, where seeds will be stored for future planting and afforestation programmes.



PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12.18pm
Asr.....3.42pm
Maghrib.....6.50pm
Isha.....8.07pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4.19am

TIMES OF OMAN

Chief Editor RANA N. PARVEZE

VOL. 2, NO: 24

MUSCAT, SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 1976

PRICE BAIZAS 200

SOUTH YEMEN SHOULD RECIPROCATE OUR GOOD INTENTIONS

—YUSUF AL ALAWI ABDULLA

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

The Under Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs Mr. Yusuf Al-Alawi Abdulla has said that the Sultanate of Oman does not intend to permit any country to establish bases in the Masira Island following the British withdrawal from there in March next year. He said that Britain has only an airport and a maintenance team in Masira and that the Civil Aviation authorities currently there will handle the Salalah airport totally after the British pull-out. He said a number of new projects are presently under implementation at the Salalah airport.

Speaking to a correspondent of the Qatari News Agency, Mr. Yusuf Al Alawi said that the Dhofar mountains are under the control of the Sultan's Armed Forces and that the situation there is absolutely peaceful. He said that the Omanis who were led astray returned home and His Majesty The Sultan granted them a general amnesty in March, following which they have started serving the country in an atmosphere of peace and stability. There is presently no anti-Omani Organization or movement in the Omani territory, he said. Regarding the Egyptian—Saudi mediation between Oman and South Yemen,



Mr. Yusuf Al-Alawi said that things have started improving and we, on our part, are ready for good neighbourly relations as already announced by His Majesty. The fundamental principle of Oman's foreign policy, he said, is to strengthen the bonds of friendship with all the countries of the world especially the sisterly and neighbouring countries. Now, it is for the South Yemen to reciprocate our good intentions and our desire to strengthen good neighbourly relations, so that the dispute comes to an end, he said.

Mr. Yusuf Al-Alawi commended the existing relations between the Gulf countries and described them as "excellent". The Sultanate, he said wants the existing bonds of fraternity and co-operation

Continued on page 6

OPEC for aid without conditions

Vienna : (AFP)

The Finance Ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries ended their meeting here Friday night, after adopting a resolution on the aid to be given by the Organization to the Third World countries. An official statement issued following their talks said, the ministers asked the industrialized countries to increase their contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development so that the fund may play an effective role.

The ministers declared that their countries would not increase their present contribution of \$ 400 million, and asked the industrialized countries to contribute \$600 million so that the fund may have \$1000 million. The ministers said that they would not impose any political conditions for extending aid to the countries of the Third World.

Hormuz oil production to start in 1980

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

Oil production in the Strait of Hormuz will begin early in 1980. The fields were discovered by a French Company which, after exploration drilling, has confirmed there are substantial commercial quantities in the area.

Meanwhile, an American company has found extensive reserves of oil in the waters surrounding Oman's Masira island and is now measuring the extent of the strike before going into production.

New oil fields have also been discovered in the Interior around Naseer and Marmuk.

Fighting continues in Lebanon despite a new cease-fire.

Royal audience in Salalah

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

H.M. Sultan Qaboos recently received at his Salalah Palace the Ambassador of Iran Ali Khiradmeh. The meeting was attended by Mr. Yusuf Al-Alawi, Under Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs. His Majesty also received Mr. Hasan Saeed, Under Secretary for Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Appeal for T.B. inoculation

Muscat :

(By our Staff Reporter)

The campaign for inoculation against tuberculosis continued this week in Jabru, Al-Hamriyya, Dar-seit, Ghibru, Busher East and West, Adhiba, Seeb and villages near Seeb's main road.

The General Health Department of the Ministry of Health appealed to the people not to hesitate in having their children inoculated against the disease, adding the injection is painless and remains effective for a long time.



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OMAN

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COMMENTARY

Towards Sustainable Engagement

ANN ALKINDI
Twitter: @AnnAlkindi

Each development stage has its own needs and requirements according to the surrounding circumstances. Today, Oman is facing the consequences of a pandemic, the repercussions of low oil prices, and the implementation of a fiscal balance programme to handle public debt. These challenges coincide with the commencement of Oman's Vision 2040 programme and its associated changes. This unprecedented global and national context requires high-quality communication, engagement, and dialogue among economic stakeholders in order to build effective policies. Is there currently an effective dialogue between the public and private sectors?

The circumstances at the end of the 1990s can offer us some clues. At that time, in a similar manner to today, oil prices plunged following the Asian financial crisis, dropping to just above ten dollars a barrel. How did we deal with these circumstances at the time? The Sultanate established the Economic Coordination Council and the Businessmen Council. The Sultanate is not the only country to adopt these coordination strategies. In Malaysia, for example, the National Economic Council was established during the collapse of the Malaysian currency following the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis.

If commercial enterprises were left to go bankrupt, this would not help anyone. That was the stance taken by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir when he established the advisory body following the Malaysian currency collapse. His biography documents his recognition of the importance of imposing taxes to support the state's budget. The economic situation resulting from the collapse of the Malaysian currency required collective actions and joint efforts by



Ann Alkindi

participants from both the public and private sectors.

The world is currently dealing with circumstances as difficult as the Great Depression of the 1930s. Countries will need many years to return to the normal levels of growth they had in 2019. Official statistics indicate that the GDP decreased by approximately 15% of current prices, a figure which may not reflect the real decline in the economy as figures should depend on constant prices. What are the tools required today to achieve fruitful cooperation between the public and private sectors? Oman's Vision 2040 aims to create the appropriate environment for an 'enabled private sector that leads a competitive and integrated economy'.

This article considers the demands of the private sector for constructive dialogue, communication, and engagement, calling for an inclusive decision-making process. For an effective economic dialogue to take place, state-owned companies need to have effective representation in the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). The representation of some large family-owned companies in the OCCI is currently almost zero. How can we ensure a constructive dialogue between the public and private sectors if these important commercial institutions in the Omani economy are excluded from the interaction? The well-established SMEs sector also lacks representation

in the OCCI, and it is crucial to engage these young people in the policy and decision-making process. Likewise, banks, which are major players in development and economic growth, are not engaged in dialogue with other economic stakeholders. Omani startups that will lead the digital economy are also excluded from the policy-making process.

The Dutch experience is instructive here. After World War II, the Dutch government was concerned that the country would return to the economic depression of the 1930s. There were impassioned debates about the future of the Dutch economy. These debates resulted in the establishment of the Economic and Social Council (SER). Over time, the SER has become one of the most important sources of consultation for the government and parliament alike in constructing socio-economic policies. The Dutch experience has meant that there are independent experts in the Economic and Social Council, in addition to private sector institutions and the trade union. This independent council is funded by the private sector and receives 16 million euros annually.

The role of the Dutch Social and Economic Council has evolved since the 1950s. It now provides consultations on various topics such as macroeconomic structure, pension systems, and transportation and industry strategies. Mahathir is also proud of Malaysia's experience in providing an unprecedented model of cooperation between the public and private sectors. He claims that no country in the world has surpassed Malaysia in this type of cooperation. However, various Western journalists have accused him of favouring the private sector over the public.

This is not a call to establish councils, bodies, and committees, but rather a call for more discussion and reflection that can generate mechanisms to deal with current circumstances and create effective private sector

engagement. We have already established councils, but we are not fully satisfied with these and are seeking new ideas in light of the current changes. What is the appropriate mechanism? How mature are our civil institutions? Is it preferable to select members by self-nomination or by appointment? There are three main components in ensuring an integrated vision for the formulation of socio-economic policies. The first is the public sector, which should be responsible for setting policies. The second is the private sector, which should drive economic growth, and the third is made up of independent experts who can ensure impartiality and provide objective opinions. Such experts are called Crown Members in the Netherlands.

Countries can adopt these mechanisms to engage all stakeholders in the process of formulating the economic and social policies, despite having other specialised chambers of commerce and parliament. Building public policy requires rich experiences and a deep understanding of details. These can only be obtained by going to the field or by drawing upon the advice of experts and specialists. Both methods require management and strategic capabilities. Advisory institutions provide room for engagement, dialogue, and diversity of experiences, as well as fostering an ability to overcome challenges in the field.

We can also learn from our previous experience with the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversification, launched in 2016. This programme took an unprecedented step towards enhancing partnership between the public and private sectors. The discussion sessions between the two sectors, hosted by the Thinking Unit at the Diwan of Royal Court, were also helpful but unfortunately stopped. A first step to partnership would be reinstating similar opportunities for productive dialogue.

CHARITY

< FROM A1 Calls for support

"Many of those who were self-employed, such as taxi drivers, street vendors, and SME owners have faced a lot of income loss due to the pandemic," he revealed. "Some of them have even closed their places of work, and therefore need community support and charitable institutions to help them. We have a database of needy families, which will help speed up sending donations to the required people."

In Oman, a total of 59 volunteer teams and three charitable organisations have exerted efforts towards helping those in need of assistance. Many charity initiatives were to do with helping people in the build-up to Eid.

The Nizwa Charitable Team, for example, received OMR76,000 in donations that went towards providing 1,826 sacrificial animals, which were distributed to various families. With a number of homes also adversely affected by the recent torrential rains, the team sent two truckloads of electronic goods to the relevant authorities so that they could be distributed to those who needed them.

Dr Shamsa Al Harthi, the Director General of Dar Al Atta'a, said her organisation was supporting more than 24,000 people affected by the pandemic, adding that this number is expected to increase in the coming months.

"We need to set up other initiatives to benefit residents as well, but there are more citizens who need our assistance as well," she said. "There are families who could fend for themselves previously, but they are no longer able to. Our association has a number of programmes that run throughout the year to help people, such as the Fak Kurba effort, which helps people who are unable to pay their debts or house rent, because they have lost their jobs."

Dar Al Atta'a received donations exceeding OMR400,000 from January till the end of July, from over 20,000 donors. A further OMR4,036 was sent to them as part of their Eid clothing initiative. "We have specific

programmes set up, such as the one with Nama to pay electricity bills for families who were unable to do so, for which we received OMR1,200 so far this year," said Al Harthi. "Since the start of the pandemic, volunteer workers have made great and uninterrupted efforts towards easing the burden on families. Their stories deserve to be told publicly."

Another charity, Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Childhood, raised funds of more than OMR 200,000 this year, with one of their main initiatives being their People to People programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, to help street vendors and others affected by the nighttime bans in the country. Since the start of the pandemic, the association has launched 12 initiatives to help people whose incomes have been affected by the pandemic. Last Ramadan, Al Rahma teamed up with restaurants to offer iftar meals to locals and expatriates in need. Their Eid clothing efforts received more than OMR99,000 in donations. OMR70,000 worth of clothes were given to more than 1,400 families in Muttrah and Seeb, the remaining OMR29,000 worth was distributed among 1,460 orphans in the country. The organisation also received more than OMR65,000 to provide respirators and buy medicines needed for COVID patients. The charity also raised OMR124,000 to provide 3,100 Eid sacrifices.

"Many volunteer teams have supported hospitals with respirators, as well as have helped out the elderly during the pandemic by offering them respirators in their homes," said Al Subhi. "One association has also offered to provide COVID vaccines free of charge to expatriates who look after the elderly in poor families, but cannot afford the cost of the doses."

"They have contributed towards solving many problems," he added. "Many teams have made efforts to ensure continuous flow of funds. Some others even donated land and a building for storing all charitable goods."

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

31,119 REACH

Story on Oman invites Ranji Trophy giants Mumbai

A story on Oman invites Ranji Trophy giants Mumbai reached 31,119 people and had 2,051 engagements on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

4,200 VIEWS

Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 4,200 views and reached 14,400 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

970 VIEWS

Out & About video

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FLYING IS FREEDOM,

SAYS 20-YEAR-OLD PILOT ASPIRANT FROM NORTH AL BATINAH

Times News Service

Flying for me is freedom and passion, and it mesmerises me as I watch the planes. My only wish is to fly in the skies of the world through Oman Air. Flying for me is my ambition and passion that I will work hard to achieve, even if it requires for me to study aviation on my personal account, said Moaz Al Saeedi from North Al Batinah.

Flying in the skies of the world has been Moaz's childhood dream. Till today he has not deviated from his goal despite doing his specialisation in a different subject at Sultan Qaboos University, in Muscat. But the dream of flying did not leave the 20-year-old pilot aspirant even for a moment.

Moaz did not specialise in aviation or study how to fly a plane, but he still dreams of being given a chance to fulfill his ambition.

Moaz bin Musabab bin Mohammed Al Saeedi, from the Wilayat of Al Khabourah in the Governorate of North Al Batinah, spoke exclusively to the *Times of Oman* about his passion to be a pilot for Oman Air.

"My passion to become a pilot made me call many people in my town, on social media, relatives and friends to chose Oman Air for their travel around the world. I introduced them to the advantages of Oman Air, its history, its schedule of flights and the destinations to which it flies weekly, if not daily," said Moaz.

We visited Moaz's house to know more about his passion for aviation, and he greeted us with his hospitality by offering juice, fruits and dates, and Omani coffee. When Moaz showed us his room, we were surprised to see pictures of Oman Air planes on the walls, his carry-on bag, the back of his laptop, his Mercedes car key and T-shirts.

"These pictures are enough to reflect the extent of my passion for Oman Air. It is a big part of my life. I hope that this message reaches the officials of Oman Air and that they help me to achieve my desire

and ambition, which I have since childhood."

When Moaz was nine years old he used to watch many documentaries on the challenges that pilots face during their training.

"As a child I was watching one documentary and I was amazed to see the challenges one had to overcome in order to become a pilot. The challenge to fly, in controlling the steering wheel of the plane in the air, and in controlling the direction of its destination, and its steering during takeoff and landing. The feeling of being responsible for protecting the passengers and to help them reach to their destination safely is a great challenge. That day I set my mind to become a pilot not only for the pleasure of flying but also to hear my name being called to be ready for my flight," said Moaz.

"The fun lies in sitting in the cockpit when all passengers board, putting the big speaker and then closing the plane's door before takeoff, and checking the aircraft's instrumentation and settings, when approaching the main landing strip for takeoff, with the sound of the engine roaring. When you are talking to the passengers about the destination and how long it will take for the flight to reach to the destination, it is a very good feeling. The biggest part of my passion is while taking off and landing, and that is by controlling the steering wheel down and up.

"What a truly wonderful feeling that I cannot describe as I imagine being in the cockpit, and how I really hope my wish to become a pilot comes true. I am sure I will reach my goal very soon," he added.

"The flight crew always undergoes training courses, sometimes intensive. The pilot also renews the driver's book at least once a year, where he is subject to medical and written examinations. In case the pilot is driving two types of planes, the pilot must renew the driving book each six months. As the pilot undergoes medical and academic examinations, on the basis of which the driver's license is renewed, and whenever the pilot

What a truly wonderful feeling that I cannot describe as I imagine being in the cockpit, and how I really hope my wish to become an Oman Air pilot comes true and I am sure I will reach my goal very soon

Moaz bin Musabab bin Mohammed Al Saeedi



is related to how decisions are made," Moaz said.

Regarding the dangers of flying and whether he was aware of the dangers he said: "The real problem while flying the plane lies in the bad weather conditions, for which the pilot needs to take necessary precautions. If he encounters bad weather conditions, he must avoid the storm, and be a decision maker as well, and know how to neutralise the plane from facing strong and stormy weather. But the most important thing in the world of aviation remains safety and security, as safety is related to the quality of the plane and adherence to flight rules and instructions, while security is a matter of caution."

It is worth noting that Moaz has an account on the Instagram and is followed by about 50,000 followers from inside and outside Oman. Usually he publishes news, pictures, information and advantages about Oman Air and information about destinations and unscheduled flights at the moment.

Oman Air is the national airline of Oman, headquartered in the capital, Muscat, and operates its flights from its main operations centre at Muscat International Airport in addition to its second sub-centre at Salalah Airport. Oman Air flies to millions of passengers annually to more than 51 destinations in North Africa, Asia and Europe on its fleet of 48 Airbus, Boeing and ATR aircraft.

wants to travel on a new aircraft, he must do training courses for two months and this is called the type rating. There are two types of planes, one of which is Airbus which is usually flown, but if the pilot is asked to fly another plane, such as Boeing, he must undergo different training, as each plane has its own rules of operation," informed Moaz.

As for the autopilot, Moaz said,

"On the basis of my extensive reading and after watching documentaries I understand that the autopilot greatly relieves the pilot."

But can anyone fly the plane? "First of all, a person must love flying and heights, and most importantly, he should have a strong personality, have a leadership spirit, and be a decision-maker. As for the practical part, it is easy to implement but the main thing

FOREIGN MINISTER

Sayyid Badr welcomes appointment of new UN Special Envoy for Yemen

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud Al Busaidi, the Foreign Minister, has welcomed the appointment of Swedish Ambassador to Yemen, Hans Grundberg as the UN Special Envoy to Yemen by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in succession to Martin Griffiths.

He also expressed the Sultanate's wish for working with him in such important dossier along with the determination to continue with the efforts aimed at providing solution to the Yemen crisis at the earliest.

Sayyid Badr also valued the experience of Hans Grundberg, the UN Special Envoy to Yemen and his knowledge with the affairs of Yemen and the region.

Sayyid Badr also hoped that the professional experience of the new UN Special Envoy to Yemen will contribute to the efforts extended to ensure comprehensive and permanent ceasefire by all parties and to ease the flow of humanitarian aid and involvement in a political process that would achieve aspirations of the Yemeni people towards security, stability, national unity and reconstruction. — ONA



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GREECE

Oman sends condolences

MUSCAT: In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, yesterday, the Sultanate expressed its condolences and sympathy to the government and people of the Hellenic Republic (Greece) and the bereaved families on the victims of the wildfires which broke out at different areas, wishing the injured persons speedy recovery.

— ONA

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Ticket cancellation policies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Travel and tourism offices have to notify the customers on cancellation and return policy when issuing a ticket in order to avoid legal liability, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said in a statement.

The ministry said: "The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in cooperation with the partners

in tourism sector must regulate the travel and tourism offices. It has come to our notice that some travel and tourism offices issue airline tickets to travellers without notifying them on the ticket policies such as whether the ticket is valid for refund or exchange and the mechanism to change the travelling date or cancellation of the ticket, according to the airline terms and conditions."

Stamped invoice

"The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism strongly urges all travel and tourism offices to notify the travellers and provide them with office stamped invoice and explain the details of the ticket purchased with its cancellation and return policy in both Arabic and English, in order to protect the passenger's legal rights and avoid legal liability."

NCSI DATA

Oman airports witness 45% drop in number of passengers in first half

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of passengers travelling through the Sultanate's airports during the first half of 2021 decreased by 45.82 per cent, bringing their number to 1.6 million passengers, compared to the same period in 2020.

Flight movements

Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that the number of flight movements through



the Sultanate's airports reached 15,874 by the end of June, including 11,411 international flights and 4,463 domestic flights.

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Tender No.	No E- Tender	Description of Tender	Document Fee	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
PRE/21/039	(43/2021/MM/HQ-31)	DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE WIDENING OF AI QURM STREET (E- Tender)	Rial 50	07/09/2021	07/10/2021	First
PRE/21/055	(44/2021/MM/QS-4)	Supply and Installation of Ceramic Road Studs At Various Locations in Muscat Governorate (E- Tender)	Rial 25	02/09/2021	19/09/2021	Specialized
PRE/21/057	(45/2021/MM/QS-5)	RFP for Renewing IBM FILENET & CMS Licenses for Record and Document Management System (E- Tender)	Rial 25	02/09/2021	19/09/2021	Specialized
PRE/21/058	(46/2021/MM/QS-6)	Renewal of Hardware Maintenance Service & Accessories (E- Tender)	Rial 25	02/09/2021	19/09/2021	Specialized

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Original Tender Bond envelope should be sealed with red wax and entitled to His Excellency/ Head of Internal Tender Committee and to be placed in the Tender Box at Muscat Municipality HQ, Third Floor, before 10:00 am as per the date Mentioned in the above table. All envelopes are to be clearly marked with the name of the Tender being presented and no other marks.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ita.gov.om) or call (+96824166670).

PASSING AWAY

< FROM A1 Tributes pour in for Suleiman

"He had an open door policy. He was a clear thinker and a natural leader. He was also kind and a gentleman," Al-Ismaily added.

He is also remembered as an intellectual who loved to quote English writers and poets.

"It was a sad day when we heard that Suleiman had passed away whilst we were out of the country. I have known him personally all my life as we are related and always looked up to him as a big brother. He was always jovial and had a great command of the English language and a great sense of humour having been educated in the United Kingdom. He could quote Shakespeare or Chaucer when we used to meet on Wednesday evening for a social gathering at the PDO Club with many friends from all walks of life. I found him very well read on many subjects including world events and was very caring for those who are very oppressed. He loved to joke as well as quote odd phrases. I always remember one of his quotes, "Life is like a Bombay curry."

"Suleiman was a professional and worked with him and for him at PDO for over 25 years. I took over his role as HR Director in 1999 when he retired. He was instrumental in getting off many of the Human Resources Policies in the company. He was one of the pioneers who helped in building the company. He was a thorough and fair professional and a prominent figure in the Shell group of companies. I certainly will miss him as a cousin and as an ex-colleague and will always be dearly remembered," Mohammed Al-Kharusi, a man who took over from him as Director of HR at PDO, said.

His other colleagues remember his early days at work in PDO.

Suleiman was a true HR person but with a passion for people. He was a very respectable person who was down to earth in his approach. Most importantly he was a good listener and welcomed all PDO staff.

"He will be remembered as the pioneer of the first ever Omani HR Director when he took over from Tom Murphy at the time the position was known as Administration Manager. He was also graceful after he retired and we used to meet at the PDO Clinic from time to time with his family. He inspired me to become Chairman of PDO Pensioners. May Allah rest him in peace," Ali Said Al-Mandhry, a retired Head of Medical Laboratory and the current Chairman of PDO Pensioners Committee, said.

A colleague remembered him as a passionate and focused person.

"Professionally, Suleiman was a true HR person but with a passion for people. He was a very respectable person who was down to earth in his approach. Most importantly he was a good listener and welcomed all PDO staff."

tener and welcomed all PDO staff. He tried to be fair but firm in his dealings with staff and that was a credit in his favour. On personal basis he was more of a friend to me who would always give me a sensible advice. A very humorous person even at times of difficulties with great care in his dealings and very supportive. In short, he was a real gentleman and a very respectable person," said Khamis Al-Maskeri, ex-Community Relationship Manager at PDO, said.

They also recall Suleiman's humane and compassionate side of him.

"The late Suleiman Al-Lamki, to me, was a people's person and contributed a lot to bring Omanisation to the company. Every morning Suleiman would find his staff whenever they were in the building to greet them. He had an open-door policy. If he recognises a voice, he will come out to say hello, never refused to see anybody. When you meet him in the corridor, Suleiman would shout your name from a distance. This was very touchy, even after retirement. I met him several times at Alfair Supermarket in Qurum, and he would always come to say something and the meeting would always end up with a smile as he had a good sense of humour. He would call the salespeople by their names in supermarkets. He was also very focused and I had a privilege of knowing that when I once I worked for him when his secretary was on leave," Sheikha Al-Harthi, a retired PDO's Executive Secretary to Deputy Managing Director and Safety Advisor.

His family are grateful and would like to thank all for their kind accolades and tributes to him that helped them in their difficult time to cope with the loss.

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A name you can trust!

UK tells its nationals to leave Afghanistan

The announcement came just hours after the Taliban killed the director of Afghanistan's government media centre

LONDON: The British government has told all UK nationals to leave Afghanistan immediately as fighting intensifies between Taliban militants and Afghan security forces.

The announcement came just hours after the Taliban ambushed and killed the director of Afghanistan's government media centre in Kabul on Friday.

Britain's Foreign Office warned that "terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks" amid a drawdown of international troops stationed there.

"Specific methods of attack are evolving and increasing in sophistication," it said. "There is a high threat of kidnapping throughout the country."

The UK's diplomatic service, which regularly updates travel advisories for countries all over the world, said Britons would not be able to rely on the UK government for an emergency evacuation.

"You are advised to leave now by commercial means because of the worsening security situation," it said in the statement.

Second provincial capital 'fallen completely'
The Taliban has made rapid advances across Afghanistan in



ADVISORY: The UK's diplomatic service said Britons would not be able to rely on the UK government for an emergency evacuation.

recent months, wrestling back control of key border posts, swathes of countryside and key towns and cities.

The hardline Islamist insurgents captured the provincial capital of Zaranj, in the southern Nimroz province, on Friday afternoon.

On Saturday, Afghan officials confirmed the loss of another provincial capital, the city of Sheberghan in Jawzjan province.

"The (government) forces and officials have retreated to the airport," the region's deputy governor Qader Malia told the AFP news agency.

"The city has unfortunately fallen completely," AFP quoted him as saying.

Sheberghan is the former stronghold of infamous warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, a former army paratrooper who returned to Afghanistan on Wednesday following medical treatment in Turkey.

Will any British nationals stay in Afghanistan?

A small number of UK military troops is expected to stay in Afghanistan temporarily, but most British soldiers have already left.

Britain's last combat troops left Afghanistan in October 2014. Just 750 stayed on as part of a NATO mission to train Afghan forces.

General Nick Carter, the head of the British armed forces, said last month that the situation in Afghanistan was "pretty grim" and warned there was a danger of "state collapse."

But Prime Minister Boris Johnson denied Britain was "walking away," pointing to the British government's pledge of millions of pounds in funding for education and military aid.

A total of 150,000 British soldiers have served in Afghanistan since a US-led coalition invaded in 2001 in what was then dubbed

"a war on terror."

As many as 457 UK service personnel lost their lives over the past two decades while fighting militant groups.

Who else has pulled out of Afghanistan?

Most other European troops have already wound down their presence in the central Asian nation; Germany pulled its remaining soldiers out at the start of July.

Their withdrawal has been brought about by the decision of US President Joe Biden to end all US operations on 31 August.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has criticized Washington's withdrawal strategy.

"The reason for our current situation is that the decision was taken abruptly," he told parliament on Monday, adding he had warned the Biden administration the withdrawal would have "consequences." **bw**

KNIFE ATTACK



Man wielding knife injures 10 on Tokyo train

TOKYO: A man with a knife attacked at least 10 people on a commuter train in Tokyo's Setagaya ward, in the west of the city, on Friday evening.

Nine of the victims were taken to nearby hospitals, Tokyo fire department officials said. A man in his 30s has been reportedly arrested.

The site of the attack is a few kilometers from the venue of the Olympic equestrian events. The Tokyo Summer Games end Sunday.

How did it happen?

A man in his 30s brandished a knife on the Odakyu Odawara Line in the west of the city. He reportedly developed the intent to kill after seeing women who looked happy and chose his targets at random, according to the NHK public broadcaster.

He left the knife behind as he fled the scene of the attack. Ultimately, he walked into a convenience store and identified himself as the man who stabbed people on the train, according to the public television. The store manager called the police after seeing bloodstains on his shirt.

Some train services were suspended following "an assault in a carriage," railway operator Odakyu Electric Railway Co. posted on its website.

All those who were taken to hospitals were conscious, fire department officials said. A woman in her 20s was seriously injured, according to NHK media.

What happened at the station?

Witnesses told NHK media that they saw passengers smeared in blood walk out of the train. One person was asking for immediate help, announcing there had been a stabbing on the train.

Dozens of paramedics and police had arrived at the station immediately after. The attack reportedly took place around 8:30 p.m. local time. Japan has strict gun laws but there are occasional violent crimes involving knives.

In 2019, a man carrying two knives attacked a group of schoolgirls waiting at a bus stop just outside Tokyo, killing two people and injuring 17 before killing himself.

In 2018, a man killed a passenger and injured two others in a knife attack on a bullet train. **bw**

IN FIRST ATTEMPT

NASA's Mars rover fails to collect rock samples

WASHINGTON: NASA's Mars rover Perseverance has failed in its first attempt to grab rock samples on Mars for future return to Earth.

The car-sized Perseverance landed inside the Red Planet's Jezero Crater this past February with an objective to search for signs of ancient microbial life. The American space agency in a statement said that data sent to Earth by NASA's Perseverance rover after its first attempt to "collect a rock sample on Mars and seal it in a sample tube indicate that no rock was collected during the initial sampling activity".

"While this is not the 'hole-in-one we hoped for, there is always a risk with breaking new ground," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. "I'm confident we have the right team working this, and we will persevere toward a solution to ensure future success."

The rover carries 43 titanium sample tubes and is exploring Jezero Crater, where it will be gathering samples of rock and regolith (broken rock and dust) for future analysis on Earth. Perseverance's Sampling and Caching System uses a hollow coring bit and a percussive drill at the end of its 7-foot-long (2-metre-long) robotic arm to extract samples. Telemetry from the rover indicates that during its first coring attempt, the drill and bit were engaged as planned, and post-coring the sample tube was processed as intended.

"The sampling process is autonomous from beginning to end," said Jessica Samuels, the surface mission manager for Perseverance at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. "One of the steps that occur after placing a probe into the collection tube is to measure the volume of the sample. The probe did not encounter the expected resistance that would be there if a sample were inside the tube."

The Perseverance mission



is assembling a response team to analyze the data. One early step will be to use the WATSON (Wide Angle Topographic Sensor for Operations and eNgineering) imager - located at the end of the robotic arm - to take close-up pictures of the borehole. Once the team has a better understanding of what happened, it will be able to ascertain when to schedule the next sample collection attempt.

"The initial thinking is that the empty tube is more likely a result of the rock target not reacting the way we expected during coring, and less likely a hardware issue with the Sampling and Caching System," said Jennifer Truesper, project manager for Perseverance at JPL. "Over the next few days, the team will be spending more time analyzing the data we have, and also acquiring some additional diagnostic data to support understanding the root cause for the empty tube."

Previous NASA missions on Mars have also encountered surprising rock and regolith properties during sample collection and other activities. In 2008, the Phoenix mission sampled soil that was "sticky" and difficult to move into onboard science instruments, resulting in multiple tries before achieving success.

Curiosity has drilled into rocks that turned out to be harder and more brittle than expected. Most recently, the heat probe on the InSight lander, known as the "mole," was unable to penetrate the Martian surface as planned.

"I have been on every Mars rover mission since the beginning, and this planet is always teaching us what we don't know about it," said Truesper. "One thing I've found is, it's not unusual to have complications during complex, first-time activities."

Perseverance is currently exploring two geologic units containing Jezero Crater's deepest and most ancient layers of exposed bedrock and other intriguing geologic features. The first unit, called the "Crater Floor Fractured Rough," is the floor of Jezero. The adjacent unit, named "Seitah" (meaning "amidst the sand" in the Navajo language), has Mars bedrock as well, and is also home to ridges, layered rocks, and sand dunes.

Recently, the Perseverance science team began using colour images from the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter to help scout for areas of potential scientific interest and to look for potential hazards.

Ingenuity completed its 11th flight Wednesday travelling about 1,250 feet downrange of its current location so that it could provide the project aerial reconnaissance of the southern Seitah area.

The rover's initial science foray, which spans hundreds of sols (or Martian days), will be complete when Perseverance returns to its landing site.

At that point, Perseverance will have travelled between 1.6 and 3.1 miles (2.5 and 5 kilometres) and may have filled up to eight of its sample tubes. — **ANI**



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NOTICE FOR ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of AL JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS COMPANY SAOG (the "Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the General Meeting, which will be held at 03:00 PM on 22/08/2021, via the electronic platform to hold general meetings which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second General Meeting shall be held at 03:00 PM on 25/08/2021, to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the proposal to distribute interim cash dividend of 12 baizas per share to shareholders on the date of the meeting out of the retained earnings of the company as shown in the company's audited accounts for the six months ending on June 30, 2021.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Legal person exclusively has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins not more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be cancelled and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact on telephone No 99320026 or email: yousuf@jazeerasteel.com

Chairperson

Legal Advisor

External Auditor



“I feel surprised to win the gold medal, but I think it could be attributed to my good state of mind today.”
Liu Shiying, China



TOKYO OLYMPICS: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY



Medals, fame and money; a lot can change for Olympians who make the podium. In racing disciplines, human beings are often are unable to determine the fine margins between success and failure fairly, but technology can.

It's the last 5 meters. Water splashes about, heads bob in and out, and hands are hard to see.

Who touched the wall first? Swimmers, coaches and journalists all look up at the scoreboard after the men's 100-metre free-style final.

The time 47.02 seconds appears. USA's Caeleb Dressel is the 2021 Olympic champion. His time is a mere six-hundredths of a second faster than the Australian Kyle Chalmers.

The decision cannot be discerned by the naked eye without the help of technology. But so much depends on the result for athletes: medals, fame and money.

"We cannot make mistakes. We have a special responsibility," Alain Zobrist told DW. He's the head of Swiss Timing, which has been responsible for timekeeping at the Olympics since the 1932 Summer Games in Los Angeles.

"After all, you can't ask the athletes to run the race again," he added.

How precisely can time be measured in sports? In swimming, there has been a touchpad at the edge of the pool since 1968. When they reach the finish, swimmers touch it, thereby stopping the time themselves.

"We've improved this technology over the years, which, by the way, is now also used in sports climbing," Zobrist said. "But the principle remains the same."

That six-hundredths of a second can decide medals, qualifications and disqualifications seem strange. In 1972, for instance, the American Tim McKee lost the final of the 400-metre medley to Sweden's Gunnar Larsson by two-thousandths of a second. That's the equivalent of two millimeters in the water.

"We can measure to the millionth of a second," Zobrist explained. "But the equipment is calibrated according to the rules and regulations of each sports federation."

After the 1972 Games, world swimming's governing body FINA decided to only measure times to the hundredth of a second. That led to a strange situation at the 2016 Rio Games in which American Michael Phelps, South African Chad Le Clos and Laszlo Cseh of Hungary finished in a three-way tie for silver in the men's 100-metre butterfly after touching the wall at the exact

same time — down to the hundredth of a second. In sports with higher speeds like cycling, time is displaced with three decimals in accordance with the rules.

How does a photo finish work? In addition to a time-stopping function, photographs of finishes to races can show how close the margins between victory and defeat often are — and can sometimes provide a better conclusion.

In last week's cycling road race at the foot of Mount Fuji, the winner, Ecuador's Richard Carapaz, was clear to see. But who finished second? Was it Belgian Wout van Aert (above) or two-time Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar from Slovenia (below)?

In the photo finish, the camera took 10,000 photos per second of the first five millimeters of the finish line. Pictures are then superimposed to get the photo often seen on television.

"Almost always, the times and finish pictures are available 15 seconds afterwards at the latest," said Zobrist. But they are always checked and approved by the official judges.

When is a start judged as a false start? Progress in start-signal technology has led to more fairness. The race starts used to favour whoever

was closer to the starting gun. Now, it is linked to loudspeakers directly behind each individual starting block and can be heard everywhere simultaneously.

Most athletes welcome technical advancements because they ensure objective and fair results. On the other hand, some runners have issues with the new development in the starting blocks. There, sensors are installed on the footrests of the starting block that measure the reaction time of the runners.

"Anyone who sprints off faster than a tenth of a second after the gunshot will be disqualified," Zobrist said. That's because reacting so quickly to a sound is physically impossible, he explained.

This happens quite often in athletics, like in Saturday's men's 100-metre final in which Britain's Zharnel Hughes was disqualified for a false start.

There are 350 scoreboards in total at the Tokyo Games. Some 124 miles of cables have been laid. The equipment weighs 400 tonnes. There are 530 professional timekeepers and 900 volunteers to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

But what makes the Olympics — the personal stories, the rousing will to fight, the unforgettable emotions — cannot be provided by technology. That's something that only the athletes can elicit. **AW**



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MORE

MEDALS
TALLY

as of 6PM
(Oman time)



Rank		G	S	B	T	Rank		G	S	B	T
1	PR China	38	31	18	87	48	Hong Kong, China	1	2	2	5
2	USA	36	39	33	108	49	Philippines	1	2	1	4
3	Japan	27	12	17	56	49	Slovakia	1	2	1	4
4	ROC	20	25	23	68	51	South Africa	1	2	0	3
5	Great Britain	20	21	22	63	52	Austria	1	1	5	7
6	Australia	17	7	22	46	53	Egypt	1	1	4	6
7	Germany	10	11	16	37	54	Indonesia	1	1	3	5
8	Netherlands	10	11	12	33	55	Ethiopia	1	1	2	4
9	Italy	10	10	19	39	55	Portugal	1	1	2	4
10	France	8	12	11	31	57	Tunisia	1	1	0	2
11	New Zealand	7	6	7	20	58	Ireland	1	0	2	3
12	Brazil	7	4	8	19	59	Estonia	1	0	1	2
13	Hungary	6	7	6	19	59	Fiji	1	0	1	2
14	Canada	6	6	11	23	59	Latvia	1	0	1	2
15	Republic of Korea	6	4	10	20	59	Thailand	1	0	1	2
16	Cuba	6	3	5	14	63	Bermuda	1	0	0	1
17	Poland	4	5	5	14	63	Morocco	1	0	0	1
18	Czech Republic	4	4	3	11	63	Puerto Rico	1	0	0	1
19	Norway	4	2	1	7	66	Colombia	0	4	1	5
20	Jamaica	4	1	4	9	67	Azerbaijan	0	3	4	7
21	Spain	3	8	6	17	68	Dominican Republic	0	3	2	5
22	Sweden	3	6	0	9	69	Armenia	0	2	2	4
23	Switzerland	3	4	6	13	70	Kyrgyzstan	0	2	1	3
24	Denmark	3	4	4	11	71	Mongolia	0	1	3	4
25	Kenya	3	4	2	9	72	Argentina	0	1	2	3
26	Croatia	3	3	2	8	72	San Marino	0	1	2	3
27	IR Iran	3	2	2	7	74	Jordan	0	1	1	2
28	Belgium	3	1	2	6	74	Nigeria	0	1	1	2
29	Slovenia	3	1	1	5	76	Bahrain	0	1	0	1
30	Georgia	2	5	1	8	76	Saudi Arabia	0	1	0	1
31	Chinese Taipei	2	4	6	12	76	Lithuania	0	1	0	1
32	Turkey	2	2	9	13	76	North Macedonia	0	1	0	1
33	Serbia	2	1	4	7	76	Namibia	0	1	0	1
34	Bulgaria	2	1	2	5	76	Turkmenistan	0	1	0	1
35	Uganda	2	1	1	4	82	Kazakhstan	0	0	8	8
36	Ecuador	2	1	0	3	83	Mexico	0	0	4	4
37	Israel	2	0	2	4	84	Finland	0	0	2	2
37	Uzbekistan	2	0	2	4	85	Botswana	0	0	1	1
39	Greece	2	0	1	3	85	Burkina Faso	0	0	1	1
39	Qatar	2	0	1	3	85	Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	1	1
41	Bahamas	2	0	0	2	85	Ghana	0	0	1	1
41	Kosovo	2	0	0	2	85	Grenada	0	0	1	1
43	Ukraine	1	5	12	18	85	Kuwait	0	0	1	1
44	Belarus	1	3	3	7	85	Malaysia	0	0	1	1
45	Romania	1	3	0	4	85	Republic of Moldova	0	0	1	1
45	Venezuela	1	3	0	4	85	Syrian Arab Republic	0	0	1	1
47	India	1	2	4	7						

Neeraj Chopra wins India's first gold at Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO: Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra created history on Saturday as he became the first from the country to win a gold in track and field in the Olympics. He threw a distance of 87.58m to pick the gold at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.

Neeraj began his quest for medal with a massive throw of 87.03 meters and was leading the pack after the end of first attempt. He bettered it with the second throw of 87.58m. While he wasn't able to improve any further, it was enough to get him the coveted medal. He is now the second Indian after Abhinav Bindra to win



a gold medal in individual events. As a result of this win, India has now won seven medals in the multi-sporting event. In the ongoing Tokyo 2020, Bajrang Punia

(Bronze), Mirabai Chanu (silver), PV Sindhu (bronze), Lovlina Borgohain (bronze), men's hockey team (bronze), and Ravi Kumar Dahiya (silver) have also won medals.

Neeraj had announced his arrival in style in the Tokyo Olympics on Wednesday when he threw a monstrous throw of 86.65m and automatically qualified for the final after just his first attempt.

The Indian javelin thrower had a personal best of 88.07 metres which was also his season-best before starting his Olympics campaign. **ANI**

Oman invites Ranji Trophy giants Mumbai ahead of T20 WC

NEW DELHI: Ranji Trophy giants Mumbai have been invited by the Oman Cricket Association to play six games (three T20Is and three ODIs) in Muscat ahead of the T20 World Cup. The invitation has been sent out by Oman's Chief Development Officer, Duleep Mendis.

Mendis has written a letter to the Mumbai Cricket Association, inviting them over to Muscat to give proper game time to Oman before they play the T20 World Cup qualifiers. "On behalf of Oman Cricket, we would like to invite the Mumbai Cricket team to play matches against Oman's national cricket team. As we understand that both teams are currently pre-



paring for the upcoming season, it will be an excellent opportunity for the players to get some quality practice just before the commencement of the season," states the letter written by Mendis, which is in possession of ANI.

The sources within the Mumbai Cricket Association told ANI that

the details of the tour to Oman are still being worked out. It is highly likely that MCA will accept this invitation.

"We have been invited for the tour between August 19-September 3. The details of the tour to Oman are still being worked out," the source pointed. **ANI**

ENHANCING GAS NETWORK

Abu Dhabi Ports announced that it has embarked on a wide-ranging network service upgrade across ZonesCorp, part of the Industrial Cities and Free Zone Cluster of Abu Dhabi Ports, to ensure non-stop gas supply to its customers.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



AIRLINES OPTIMISTIC

The results of the International Air Transport Association's (IATA's) latest survey of airline CFOs and heads of cargo show that the second quarter brought some relief to airlines' financials as air travel demand started to slowly recover in some markets.

Ports in Oman ranked high in operations



LEADING ROLE: Omani ports have thus affirmed their leading role in enhancing trade activities, augmenting the Gross Domestic Product of the Sultanate and supporting the government's economic diversification goals - **ONA**

The Sultanate's ports achieved growth in several commercial operations and volumes of direct import during the first half of 2021

MUSCAT: Bolstering the Sultanate's global logistics competitiveness, Omani ports ranked first globally in Port Calls and Port of Salalah came sixth worldwide in operational efficiency.

The Sultanate's ports achieved growth in several commercial operations and volumes of direct import during the first half of 2021. Omani ports have thus affirmed their leading role in enhancing trade activities, augmenting the Gross Domestic Product of the Sultanate and supporting the government's economic diversification goals.

Working in close cooperation with government agencies and the private sector, Asyad Group introduced many initiatives and offered attractive incentives to maintain the strong operational and logistic performance of Omani ports.

As a result, the ports sector achieved sustainable economic growth through increasing direct

shipping lines and connecting Oman with major global ports.

The overall objective was to facilitate the export of homemade products, build strategic partnerships with international business markets and reinforce Oman as a global logistics hub.

Omani ports handled nearly 2.5 million containers (TEUs) from January to June 2021 as well as 28.8 million tons of general cargo, recording a rise of 18 per cent over its performance in the first six months of 2020. In the meantime, liquid commodity handling grew by 12 per cent to 9.9 million this year, compared to the corresponding period last year. Such a steady rise in volumes of liquid and general cargo keeps pace with the growth of economic and business activities in the Sultanate.

Compared to the corresponding period in 2020, imported livestock witnessed a notice spike of 65 per cent during the first six months this year (1.9 million heads). The import of vehicles and equipment dropped by 8 per cent (55,500 vehicles and equipment imported or re-exported) due to the decline in the global economy and its impact on local and regional markets.

More than 4,400 vessels visited the Sultanate's ports from January to June 2021.

Mohammed Al Mashani, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Port of Salalah said that the sizeable capacity of Salalah Port and its modern facilities cement its position as a maritime gateway and transshipment hub. The Port plays a crucial role in maintaining the flows of

vital medical and food supplies; critical agricultural products; energy streams; and other goods and services essential to enhance commercial activities.

Accordingly, Port of Salalah was ranked sixth out of 351 ports worldwide in operational efficiency when receiving and handling container ships based on the Container Ports Performance Index in 2020.

Batti Mohammed Al Shibli, Harbour Manager, at Sohar port, said that the port is pressing ahead with its commitment to the local and international business community. "Sohar Port keeps upgrading its logistic operations with the objective of becoming a global logistics hub connected with Asian, European and African markets. It is already assuming a pivotal role in the global supply chain and it helps in securing the flow of commodities, facilitating the transport and handling of raw and basic cargo and maintaining the continuity of operations round the clock."

Al Shibli adds, "We are proud of the positive results achieved by Sohar Port during the first half of this year (2021). The port saw tangible growth in handling operations (30 per cent up in general cargo handling). This reflects our efforts in integrating the operations of different business partners as well as our clients in local and international markets. We are confident that the port will continue to maintain its central role in enriching the Sultanate's GDP and supporting the government's economic diversification plans." - **ONA**

BEST PRACTICES



Oman Cement Company implements SAP S/4 HANA and SuccessFactors

MUSCAT: Eng. Salim Al Hajri, CEO of Oman Cement Company kick-started the implementation of SAP S/4 HANA and SuccessFactors on August 1, 2021.

"The SAP S/4 HANA shift is expected to make smarter, faster decisions with capabilities that utilise Artificial Intelligence and next-gen best practices for core business processes in finance, human resources, sourcing and procurement, manufacturing, sales,

engineering, services, and supply chain, among others," Al Hajri stated. "OCC looking to adopt the best practices and features of the solution as a comprehensive, seamlessly integrated system with very low customisation, to cover every single aspect of the core business," he added.

OCC, using SAP ERP Central Component (ECC) for the past 10 years chose greenfield implementation of the SAP S/4 HANA intel-

ligent ERP system, along with the SuccessFactors (SF) full suite, cloud-based software for human capital management, inclusive of the SF cloud payroll.

Indus Novateur, an ISO Certified IT Service company and an authorised SAP gold partner, will be the partner to help the digital transformation process of Oman Cement Company. The event was attended by executives from OCC and Indus Novateur.



RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

India's GDP growth target retained at 9.5%

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday retained real GDP growth at 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 as domestic economic activity is starting to recover with the ebbing of COVID-19's second wave.

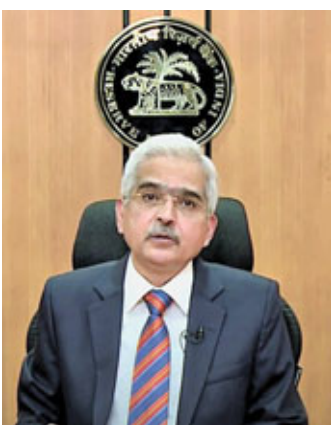
This consists of 21.4 per cent in Q1, 7.3 per cent in Q2, 6.3 per cent in Q3 and 6.1 per cent in Q4. Real GDP growth for Q1:2022-23 is projected at 17.2 per cent, said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das after a three-day meeting of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Looking ahead, he said, agricultural production and rural demand are expected to remain resilient. "Urban demand is likely to mend with a lag as manufacturing and non-contact intensive services resume on a stronger pace, and the release of pent-up demand acquires a durable character with an accelerated pace of vaccination."

Das said buoyant exports, the expected pick-up in government expenditure, including capital expenditure, and the recent economic package announced by the government will provide further impetus to aggregate demand.

"Although investment demand is still anaemic, improving capacity utilisation and congenial monetary and financial conditions are preparing the ground for a long-awaited revival."

Firms polled in RBI surveys expect expansion in produc-



Shaktikanta Das

tion volumes and new orders in Q2:2021-22 which is likely to sustain through Q4.

However, said Das, elevated levels of global commodity prices and financial market volatility are the main downside risks. He said the recovery remains uneven across sectors and needs to be supported by all policy makers. The RBI remains in whatever it takes' mode with a readiness to deploy all its policy levers - monetary, prudential or regulatory.

Das added, "In parallel, our focus on preservation of financial stability continues. At this juncture, our overarching priority is that growth impulses are nurtured to ensure a durable recovery along a sustainable growth path with stability." - **ANI**

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MARKET

Airlines are more optimistic about future travel volumes, profitability

Nearly 81 per cent of the survey sample reported an increase in passenger volumes in second quarter (Q2) of 2021 compared with Q2 last year when passenger traffic was de facto non-existent amid large-scale travel bans and sharp capacity cuts

GENEVA: The results of the International Air Transport Association's (IATA's) latest survey of airline CFOs and heads of cargo show that the second quarter brought some relief to airlines' financials as air travel demand started to slowly recover in some markets. Respondents have also become more optimistic about future air travel volumes and profitability. About 72 per cent of carriers report-

ed smaller losses as the pandemic got better under control in Q2. Significant cost reductions and moderate gains in passenger demand contributed to the improvement. On the other hand, 28 per cent of the sample reported that COVID continues to have a major impact on their operations. Nearly 81 per cent of the survey sample reported an increase in passenger volumes in Q2 2021



IATA SURVEY: Significant cost reductions and moderate gains in passenger demand contributed to the improvement. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

compared with Q2 last year when passenger traffic was de facto non-existent amid large-scale travel bans and sharp capacity cuts. As a result, the backwards-looking weighted score rose strongly, although it had been even higher in 2007. This is due to the nature of the index rather than passenger traffic. Looking ahead, expectations about passenger demand are op-

timistic. Respondents stated that vaccine rollout and easing of travel restrictions should continue boosting air travel volumes. About 89 per cent of the respondents anticipate that demand will recover with the reopening of markets. The remaining 11 per cent expect no change in the current air traffic volumes due to new Covid waves and uncertainty about

vaccine progress. The slow recovery in air travel has been positively reflected in employment results. Moreover, in some instances, layoffs were limited by government regulations. About 33 per cent of the respondents reported an increase in their workforce versus a 6.1 per cent share in the April survey. The majority of the respondents (55

per cent) continued to report falling employment levels as airlines needed to adjust their operations to a new pandemic normal. Forward expectations regarding employment also improved modestly as airlines expect that the rise in scheduled services will require hiring more staff. Nearly 45 per cent of respondents expect to see an increase in the employee's numbers, up 6 percentage points versus the April survey. However, nearly 40 per cent of the sample expects to record no change in employment, since the modest rise in traffic might not be enough to justify hiring in their business. Some also mentioned the need to keep the cost base low amid uncertain pandemic developments. About 15 per cent of the respondents expect to see further layoffs since organisational restructuring has not been finished. Overall, the forward-looking score rose further into expansion territory. -ANI

LOWER POLLUTION

Biden pledges 50% of US car sales to be electric by 2030

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has vowed to make 50 per cent of all vehicles sold in the US "zero-emissions" by 2030, the White House said in a statement on Thursday. Biden is set to make the policy official through a presidential executive order. Although Biden's target does not exceed what many American car manufacturers were already considering, it is a major statement for the US, where car emissions are the single biggest US contributor to climate change.

The White House said that the new goal will apply to "battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, or fuel cell electric vehicles." While electric vehicles comprise roughly 10 per cent of European car sales, they account for less than 2 per cent in the US, according to the International Energy Agency in 2020. "The global market is shifting to electric vehicles and tapping their potential to save families money, lower pollution, and make the air we breathe cleaner. Despite pioneering the technology, the US is behind in

the race to manufacture these vehicles and the batteries that go in them," the White House said. The Biden administration hopes the policy will position "America to drive the electric vehicle future forward, outcompete China, and tackle the climate crisis," the statement added. The three main US auto manufacturers, Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis, reacted to Biden's announcement by expressing their "shared aspiration to achieve sales of 40-50 per cent" of electric vehicles by 2030. -aw

ABU DHABI PORTS

Plan to enhance gas supply in Industrial City of Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi Ports announced that it has embarked on a wide-ranging network service upgrade across ZonesCorp, part of the Industrial Cities and Free Zone Cluster of Abu Dhabi Ports, to ensure non-stop gas supply to its customers. The system modernisation will take place over the next several months as part of a continuous comprehensive zone development plan, which will serve to reduce risk by protecting ZonesCorp's customer facilities to ensure an uninterrupted flow of gas to more than 700 manufacturing industries across the Industrial City of Abu Dhabi (ICAD). Upon completion, customers will benefit from operating within a highly optimised data-driven network, together with detailed gas consumption and consumer analytics. The network upgrade will also ensure greater energy efficiencies in line with the highest international safety and maintenance standards. Abdullah Al Hameli, Head of the Industrial Cities and Free Zone Cluster at Abu Dhabi Ports, said, "The enhancement of the gas network within our zones is part of a larger development plan aimed at providing the best ser-



Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed



Abdullah Al Hameli

vices and infrastructure to our customers. We aim to maintain the highest standards in service by collaborating with premier service providers so that our valued customers can be assured of a risk-free and uninterrupted gas supply. "By reaching this development milestone, we will be safeguarding and improving the reliability of our network and modernising our systems with the world's leading data-driven technologies to ensure business continuity." Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, ZonesCorp, said, "A steady and secure supply of energy sources

such as natural gas is the backbone of ZonesCorp's proposition and as a crucial prerequisite for our industrial investors. ZonesCorp is determined to ensure the reliability and capacity of our infrastructure across the diverse base of businesses and industries within our highly efficient, safe, sustainable, and digitally advanced ecosystem." ZonesCorp is set to complete the project in multiple phases by the end of 2022, leverage the latest technology and measures for leakage prevention, fire detection, surveillance, installation of fire-fighting systems and advanced monitoring and controls.

TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft working on single unified OneNote for Windows app

WASHINGTON: American tech is working on plans to unify its OneNote and OneNote for Windows 10 apps into a single unified OneNote app. According to The Verge, Microsoft has taken all the improvements in its Windows 10 UWP OneNote app and brought them over to the traditional OneNote desktop app instead. These improvements to the traditional OneNote desktop app that installs as part of Office will appear in a series of updates over the next 12 months. The new updates include a visual refresh and "key existing features currently unique to OneNote for Windows 10." It's not clear which features from OneNote for Windows 10 will make their way over to the OneNote desktop app, but Microsoft has said, "We are working to ensure that all the most loved features will continue to be a part of OneNote." The OneNote team explains, "Advances in Windows and Office will allow us to unify the two apps so that you'll have the simplicity of a single OneNote app on Windows while enjoying the interface and features you're already familiar with." -ANI





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Experienced accountants, accounts data entry upto finalisation, with audit support & filing IT & VAT returns, contractual with Tally Prime cloud based solution seeks opportunity. Contact 91334194

Srilankan with 5 yrs experience & have completed BBA in Accounting looking for an Accountant job. Contact 98981998, 9388825

ADMIN/HR

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

Lebanese Female, MBA, looking for an executive job, experienced in project coordination, management and logistics, bilingual Arabic, English, D/L. Contact 98103298

Senior Accountant, currently working in Oman with 15 years experience in Oman seeks a suitable opening in reputed organization. Ready to join within one month. Contact 78581435 or Email: career_@rediffmail.com

BTech, MBA with 2.5 years of work experience, presently working in Oman. Looking for suitable placement. Contact 79556453

HR Manager with 10+ years of Experience in Recruitment, Welfare, Mobilisation, Policies & Procedures, Holding Oman D/L, Can Join Immediately, Contact 72828004

Experienced expat lady looking for secretary, HR/Admin assistant or any office jobs. Contact 94551898

DESIGNER/AUTOCAD D/MAN

16 Years Experience Draughtsman in Building & Roads Can Design also looking for Job or freelancer Job. Contact 93935786

3D Designer/Graphic designer*. Having 10 years of experience looking for Job. Contact 96425994

SALES MANAGER

Indian National, Mechanical Engineer having 14 years of experience including more than 8 years in Oman as Sales & Purchase Manager for Scaffolding; having good knowledge & experience in Fasteners & Steel wires as well. Valid Oman D/L & release available for immediate recruitment.

Contact: 96497864
Email: taranrajpal@gmail.com

Purchasing and Marketing

Indian Male, 26 Years old, B Com Graduate having 4+ years of Oman experience in Purchasing and Sales role in an excellent grade Construction and Trading Company with fine market knowledge is looking for suitable openings. Valid D/L, NOC available.

Contact: 90158051
junaidsalaahi@gmail.com

ACCOUNTANT

Indian male B.com, Accountant, 12+ years of experience in power plant O&M up to finalisation. Oman D/L & NOC available.

Contact: 96774266
Email: gexongorgep@gmail.com

15 Year's in Oman

Experienced Civil Inspector plus **Quality Controller & Supervision Engineer** seeking immediate placement, including 10 Year's in specialise Engineering Consultancy Department experienced.

NOC available. Light license with own car

Please contact imrankelani@gmail.com **95785529**

JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

BE Civil Engineer with PMP having experience more than 21 years looking for a suitable job. NOC available. Contact 98522059, prakashrathi7707@gmail.com

MEP Mechanical Engineer, 9+ years GCC experience, with valid D/L (Oman & UAE) and NOC available. Can join immediately. Contact 96706269 Email: mirshanzanee@gmail.com

B.E Civil Engineer having Oman exp looking for sub contracting jobs like plastering, false ceiling, tiling and so on. Contact 72132426

B.Tech Civil Engineer 25 yrs plus exp (18 yrs Oman) Buildings Multi-storeyed Commercial/Residential Complex, Infrastructure Waterline, Oil/Gas, Refinery. Valid Omani D/L, NOC is available - Seeking suitable placement. Contact 92871539 Email: pvrmani_2006@yahoo.com

Young Indian male, Civil QA/QC/ Materials Engineer having 6+ years of experience in Civil Engineering Industry looking for an suitable opportunity. NOC available. Contact +968-91631010 Email: naseem.sulthaan@gmail.com

Srilankan male, Mechanical quantity surveyor having 7 years gulf (Oman & Qatar) experience now looking job Oman. Contact 0094777001136 Email: thameemrifmas@gmail.com

Project Manager/Engineer (Electrical) with 10 Years Experience in Oman at (Primary & Distribution Substations and OHL) Tendering , Estimation and Execution, Oman Driving License & NOC available. GSM: 99092164 E-Mail: awiloooo18@gmail.com

Electrical Engineer, more than 19 years of experience in both Consulting and contracting fields with valid D/L & NOC is looking for suitable placement. Contact +968 91321203, Email: ragheshp@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer MEP with 2 years Experience. Contact 79027224

Indian, Civil Engineer, 24 yrs of Oman Experience in Construction Industries with DL & NOC seeks suitable position. Contact 78390920, 94288227 yousufyounusalikhan53@gmail.com

Sr.Civil Engineer (BE) Over 15 yrs experience (Ministry, ROP, Diwan, commercial G+11, Municipality, Industries projects in Oman with D/L. Contact 97432396 Email: jamal_rangun@yahoo.com

Very Experienced Civil Engineer worked as Estimation, Tendering, Billings, prepared Shop Drawings, As Built Drawings, Snags, Handled MEP. Contact 96163786

FINANCE MANAGER

Finance Professional CA/CIMA/ MBA, with 18 years of GCC experience, open to Immediate Managerial Vacancies.

Contact Number # 78556829

OMANI HSE Engineer

Bachelor's degree from the United States of America in Mechanical Engineering & IOSH, NEBOSH Holder from the UK. 3 years of experience in engineering (2 years of Technical experience in the Oil & Gas)

Contact +96895070748
Email: Siyabi1430@gmail.com

Senior Manager

Indian male, 42, MBA, 12yrs' experience in Senior management role with international exposure in many countries including Europe, worked as HR and Admin Head of company in Qatar. Previously worked as Director of Admission and Administration at college in Bangalore seeks for Senior management role in company or educational institutions in Muscat. Presently in Muscat (family visa).

Contact: 94326527
Email: sreekanth.kerala987@gmail.com

ACCOUNTANT

Indian Male 39 years B.com having 14 years Gulf experience as Accountant looking for suitable placement. Having Oman driving license and NOC available.

Contact: 97998397
Email: salafcs@yahoo.com

DRIVER

Looking for driving job with NOC. Contact.97095200

Oman experienced Indian L. Driver looking for a job. Contact 78552271

IT

Female, MCA, Working as software professional in MNC, seeking suitable job. On a visit. Contact 78037607

MANAGER

Finance Manager Indian 22 Yrs experience (UAE & Oman), looking Job Change. Contact 90473368

MECHANICAL/TECHNICAL

Land Surveyor, Indian Male 30 yrs land surveyor with 9 yrs experience in Oman, valid D/L. Contact 93079335 Email adarshsoman2@gmail.com

HSE OFFICER with valid Oman D/L. 7 years experienced in Oman. Contact 94743007 (Oman), +917902565053 (Indian), Email: ajeesh4god@yahoo.com

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Inventory, Purchase, Sales: Indian male 30, having 8 years experience in Retail, F&B operations, Accounting and various other skills, NOC available. Contact 96219904 Email: khanshah98@gmail.com

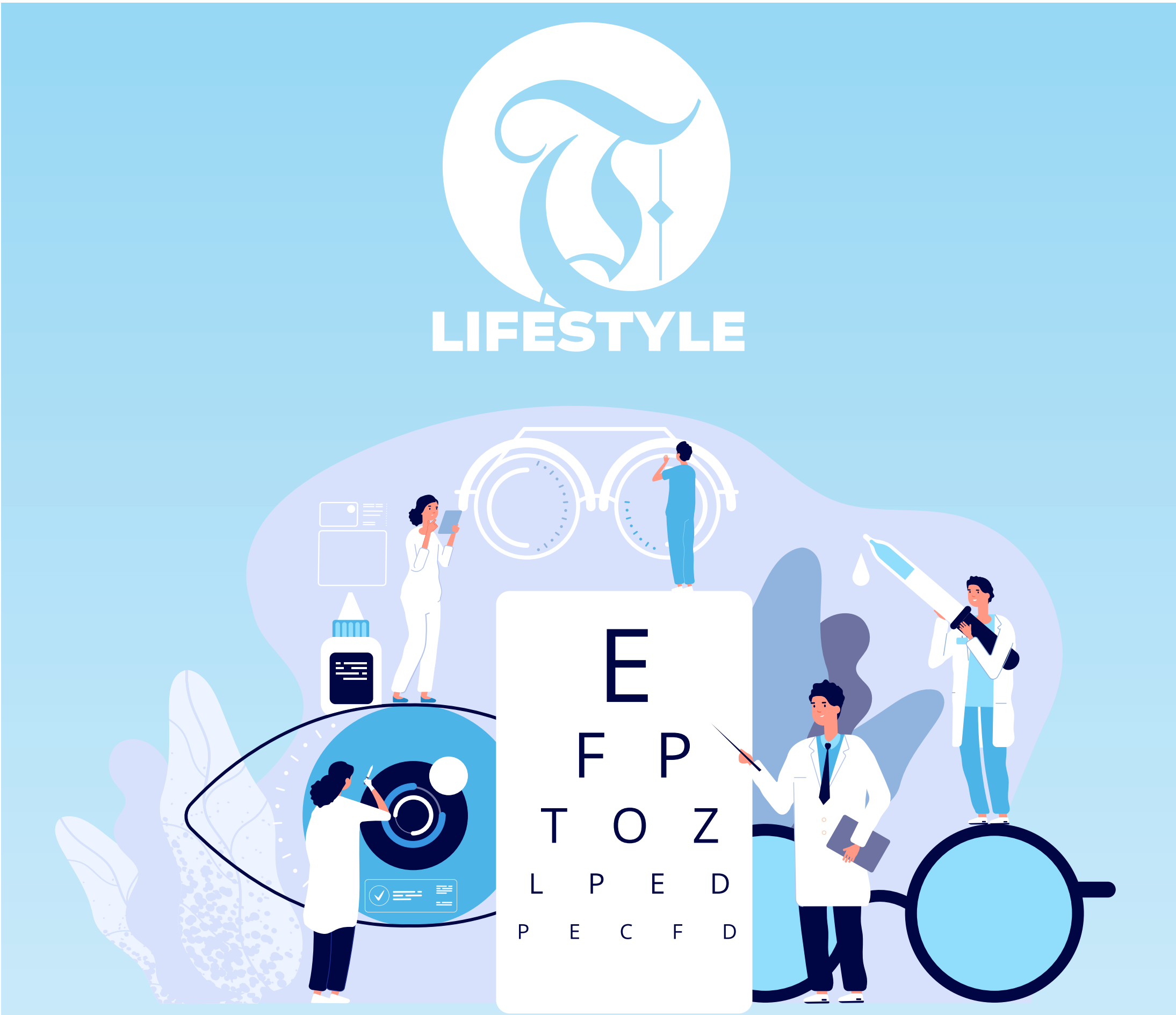
SALES/MARKETING

Indian male (30) MBA, 6 years' experience in Sales and procurement with D/L. Fluent in English, Hindi, Malayalam and Arabic. Contact 97291114. Email: jawadazez123@gmail.com

6 Years Experience outdoor sales-man with driving in Oman.NOC available. Contact 91550548

Sales Executive, B.Com with 10 years experience in food products in Oman looking for job. Have Oman D/L & Visa. Contact 78273463

26, Indian male born in Oman, with 3years of experience, having valid D/L, looking for suitable placement in Engineering Sales/Marketing Field Holder of Bachelors in Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering. Contact 98914229



Top paratriathlete encourages everyone to take care of their eyes



As one of the world's top paratriathletes, Amy Dixon is always looking forward. Even though an autoimmune disorder has taken away most of her ability to see, she has extraordinary vision for reaching her goals. For Dixon, it's an incredible journey that would have seemed unimaginable two decades earlier.

Vision troubles come to light

Dixon first noticed her vision problems as a 22-year-old college student. She struggled to see clearly in a darkened room. Driving at night, she failed to notice oncoming cars. The signs were clear that something was wrong with her eye health, but she wasn't convinced.

"I had 20/20 vision as a kid, so I dismissed the problems I was having as being related to some other condition like migraine," said Dixon, a migraine sufferer since she was a teen. "I was ignoring what was obvious - that something was wrong with my eyes."

After scheduling an appointment with an ophthalmologist, Dixon learned she had uveitis, a form of inflammation inside the eye. Her doctor told her that the disease had already put her eyesight in serious jeopardy. He said that 70 per cent of her peripheral vision had been lost and she would need to begin treatment immediately or risk going blind within 10 years.

"Unfortunately, I waited too long before having my eyes examined and uveitis had already attacked my vision. When the diagnosis sunk in, I thought I was destined to go blind," Dixon said.

Becoming her own advocate

Rallying behind a forward-looking attitude that would become her calling card, Dixon confronted her condition head-on.

Working with her doctor, she began an aggressive treatment regimen. While uveitis would eventually take 98% of her vision, the treatments succeeded in slowing down progression of the disease.

A new diagnosis and the athlete reemerges

With her uveitis in remission, Dixon received a second vision diagnosis: She now had developed glaucoma as a result of her treatment. Resilient and determined to keep her life moving forward, Dixon began treating her glaucoma.

Along the way, she reengaged in sports and took up swimming, a favorite activity for the former competitive high school swimmer. When a friend introduced her to triathlons (swimming, running and biking), she was hooked. She completed her first triathlon in 2013 and today, she is the reigning ITU Aquathlon World Champion and a seven-time ITU Triathlon Gold Medalist. In the competition in Tokyo, Dixon races towards the finish line in the same way she approaches life: by overcoming the setbacks in her path. It's an important lesson she is eager to share.

"There is always a way forward," said Dixon. "I encourage people to maximise the strengths they have and find creative ways

to do the things they want. It may not be the way you wish for, but if you are open to learning, you can do great things."

A prescription for better eye health

Dixon views her journey as a cautionary tale and she encourages everyone to be proactive in taking care of their eyes.

"Uveitis progressed quickly in impacting my vision because I waited too long to see a doctor and wasn't diligent about getting my eyes examined annually," Dixon said. "Pay attention to your eyes. If you suspect you have a vision problem, then see an eye doctor right away."

As she continues to manage her glaucoma, she also urges people, particularly young adults, to be wary of a disease that can sneak up without symptoms and is the leading cause of irreversible blindness.

"A dilated eye exam could save your sight," Dixon said. "The power is in your hands, so be your own advocate for achieving better eye health. **APT**

ROUND-UP

JAC T8 pickup: When looks are as important as the power

It dignifies the bold, aggressive and tough persona of the owner through the same inherent qualities of a pickup

MUSCAT: Looks are as important as the power, and the JAC T8 pickup is an embodiment of both. A pickup is one of the most sought after vehicles in Oman, especially outside Muscat. With the new trend of big pickup catching up within Muscat also, the JAC T8 has become one of the favourites in Muscat and outside. It dignifies the bold, aggressive and tough persona of the owner through the same inherent qualities of a pickup. Fahad Al Zadjali is one such proud owner of the JAC T8 pickup. He bought the JAC T8 a couple of months ago and has fallen in love with his powerful new pickup in these months. He calls JAC T8 “an absolute king of the road,” and

nicknames it as “The Uber stylish and bold JAC T8”. He had a lot of positive things to say about his new ride. “The JAC T8 pickup is excellent in every aspect for my needs and I use it as a second car for my trips to wadis. JAC T8 is practical yet delivers on performance, is a value for money with ample space for my load.” Moreover, he adds “JAC T8 pickup is perfect and meets all my expectations”. The features that I like the most are the sound system, Bluetooth, touch screen and the large space. I also like the manual transmission and the turbo engine responds instantly and is a lot of fun and meets my adventurous personality”. The JAC T8 commands a powerful #TurboCharged 2.0 litre engine that generates 182 Hp and 290 nm of torque. A massive grille up front gives it a commanding stance and highlights its bold look. 18-inch alloy wheels decked in 265/60 R18 tires also give it comfort and style. The JAC T8 has a two-toned interior i.e. black and soft brown materials having a mixture of both hard and soft materials specifically on the dash, centre console and its leather seats. On the front and centre, there is a large eight-inch infotainment system with Bluetooth and USB connectivity coupled with a six-

speaker music system. For safety and driver assistance there's a rearview monitor with rear parking sensors, traction control for rough surfaces, electronic stability control with Tyre Pressure Management System and cruise control. Other prominent features include a multifunction steering wheel and a keyless entry and a push-start ignition. JAC was founded in 1964 but has been a partner with Towell Auto Centre in Oman for over 12 years. The strides JAC has taken over in this short period is envious, to say the least. With a promise of #Experiencethenew, JAC Motors has come a long way from building reliable commercial vehicles to have a global presence in 130+ countries to its partnership with the Volkswagen Group as of April 2018. In Oman, JAC Motors has a long-standing partnership with Towell Auto Centre. JAC Motors is a breath of fresh air, the road less travelled by but the road that is on its way to new horizons with each passing day. With a wide range of vehicles in the pipeline, especially with a joint venture collaboration with the VW group and having said that it started as a company that only produced commercial trucks onwards to producing MPVs and SUVs worldwide is well worthy of praise.



COVID-19 VACCINE

Suhail Bahwan Automobiles initiates vaccination drive for its employees

MUSCAT: To safeguard the health and safety of its employees and customers against the spread of COVID-19, Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) has initiated a vaccination drive for its employees across the organisation. The vaccination drive was initiated as per the Oman government's guidelines and protocols. So far, nearly 500 employees have been immunised with the COVID-19 vaccine and 95 per cent of these employees have received both doses as per norms set by the Ministry of Health. A spokesperson for Suhail Bahwan Automobiles said, “Vaccination is a proven way to successfully reduce the risk of spreading the virus, safeguard the health and help provide a safe purchase environment across our workshops and showrooms. Through this initiative, we aim to protect our employees from COVID-19 as well as contribute towards the nationwide immunisation efforts. We are confident that with adequate safety measures and vaccination drives, we shall overcome this challenging situation.”



‘Nissan Safe & Clean’ certification Nissan recently received the coveted ‘Nissan Safe & Clean’ certification from Nissan Middle East FZE (NMEF) for complying with the sales and service COVID-19 protocols established as per the programme. Designed to maintain high levels of health and safety measures across authorised Nissan dealers in the region, Nissan Middle East FZE (NMEF) ‘Safe & Clean’ certification programme requires partners to abide by set preventive and safety measures. Keeping in mind that the safety of its customers, associates, employees, and community is of uppermost priority, NMEF had prepared a set of guidelines in the region on safety procedures that covers customer safety,

employee safety at the workplace and facility network. The ‘Safe & Clean’ certification indicates that Nissan follows best practices while offering confidence to its customers. These protocols along with operating procedures set by the Supreme Committee have been adhered to meticulously at all its facilities to ensure safe environments for all its discerning customers.

COVID-19 protocols

SBA is fully committed to offering a safe experience to its customers. In line with Supreme Committee's instructions, it has prepared a comprehensive protocol across its workplace and showrooms. The precautionary measures and guidelines in place include regular disinfecting of common surfaces, the mandatory wearing of masks and gloves while in a showroom, temperature checks of all employees, social distancing and consultation on prior appointments.

INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT



Historic result exhibited by ISD in AISSE 2021

MUSCAT: Indian School Darsait (ISD) scripted yet another success story as its students of Class X displayed an impressive 100 per cent result in the AISSE 2021. This splendid achievement has added one more golden feather to the crowning glory of the school. The grit and determination of the Class X students to fight adversity and come out victorious have paved the way for this historic performance with a splendid school average of 81.45 per cent. Students also scored centum in mathematics, science and social science enhancing the accomplishment of the batch that faced an unprecedented academic year. Magandha Dinesh and Sahana Sandesh Kumar topped the school with 97.8 per cent followed by Sandeep Ramanujam who secured the second position scoring 96.4 per cent while Anavadya Rajesh got the third position with 96.2 per cent. An overall 32 per cent of students scored 90 per cent and above in aggregate marks and 97 per cent of students have scored 60 per cent and above in aggregate marks.

The following students are the subject toppers - (English -99 per cent): Gopika Thalavai Nallasivan, Sandeep Ramanujam, Yogil Adrin Poomaniamuramai; (Hindi - 95 per cent): Aryan Sachin Shirke, Mohammed Rayyan Ul Bari, Yogil Adrin Poomaniamuramai; (Malayalam – 98 per cent):

Sandeep Ramanujam; (Arabic – 95 per cent): Ammar Shakeel Ash Shareef; (Sanskrit- 97 per cent): Magandha Dinesh, Sahana Sandesh Kumar, (Mathematics Standard – 100 per cent): Anavadya Rajesh, Magandha Dinesh, Sahana Sandesh Kumar; (Maths Basic-95 per cent): Gopika Thalavai Nallasivan; (Science- 100 per cent): Magandha Dinesh, Sahana Sandesh Kumar; (Social Science – 100 per cent): Angel Jomy, Prathima Shri Shanmugam Vijayhema; (Painting – 98 per cent): Varsha Varghese; (Computer Applications – 90 per cent): Azim Ahammed & (Home Science – 77 per cent): Enosh Prabhakaran. The school average in various subjects: Painting (94.6); Social Science (87.3); English (86.9); Computer Applications (86.3); Sanskrit (85.6); Malayalam (83.7); Arabic (83.1); Mathematics Standard (80.1); Science (78.5); Hindi (75.8), and Home Science (74.0) & Mathematics Basic (58.1). Amar Srivastava, principal heartily congratulated all the students and appreciated the tireless efforts of the teachers and the unstinted support of the parents in moulding the students to become real achievers. Sebastian Chungath, president, and other members of SMC too conveyed their profuse gratitude and appreciation to Team ISD over the outstanding result.

RECOGNITION

Joyalukkas wins coveted RetailME ICONS award

MUSCAT: Joyalukkas, the world's favourite jeweller, was recently awarded the coveted RetailME ICONS award as an acknowledgement of their pioneering leadership in the business of retail in Mena. Joy Alukkas, Chairman, of Joyalukkas Group, received the award from Laila Mohammed Suhail, CEO – Alliance and Partnership, Dubai Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing in the presence of John Paul Alukkas, Managing Director, Joyalukkas Jewellery – International Operations in a glittering function in Dubai. According to Joy Alukkas, this is yet another recognition for the world's favourite honour from the region's leading media that is exclu-



sively dedicated to the retail industry. “Awards are a recognition for the efforts we put in our business and I am happy to note that we have been bestowed with this great honour. As I understand, there were stringent

guidelines in the selection process and the awardees were selected based on nominations received, jury scoring and editorial selection,” said Joy Alukkas. According to a note from the award organisers, the re-

tailers who have won have demonstrated great leadership with clear examples of innovation, proven their legacy and expanded their operations. The aim behind the award function is to let the world know who the top retailers in the region are. It is also noted, by the organisers, that a pioneer is someone who sees potential builds the courage to lay out the foundation with the grit to explore and push boundaries and Joyalukkas has been recognised in this category. “We always strive to provide an unmatched retail experience to our valued customers and this award reinforces our commitment,” Joy pointed out after receiving the award.

OMAN ARAB BANK

OAB extends support to families affected by floods in Sur



MUSCAT: As part of its commitment to support the community and in line with its sustainability strategy, Oman Arab Bank announced the launch of an initiative to aid families and individuals that were affected by the recent floods in Sur. The OAB initiative will see the provision of a three-month loan deferment for affected bank customers, as well as financial support for families in need, in collaboration with the Ministry

of Social Development. Highlighting the importance of this initiative, Rashad Al Shaikh, Head of Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, “Our community initiatives are targeted towards those within the community that need it most. With this in mind, we will be deferring loans for our customers who have been affected, for three months to help them overcome this difficult situation. From his side, Feras Al Farsi, Head of Sustainability and CSR

at OAB, said, “A key focus of our sustainability strategy is centred on reinforcing our relationship with our communities. Given the impact of the floods and the effects of the pandemic, we are doing our best to extend support to affected families and individuals that need it most. Together with the Ministry of Social Development, the cases are reviewed and necessary action is taken accordingly. We will also be donating to the Ministry and recommending three SME

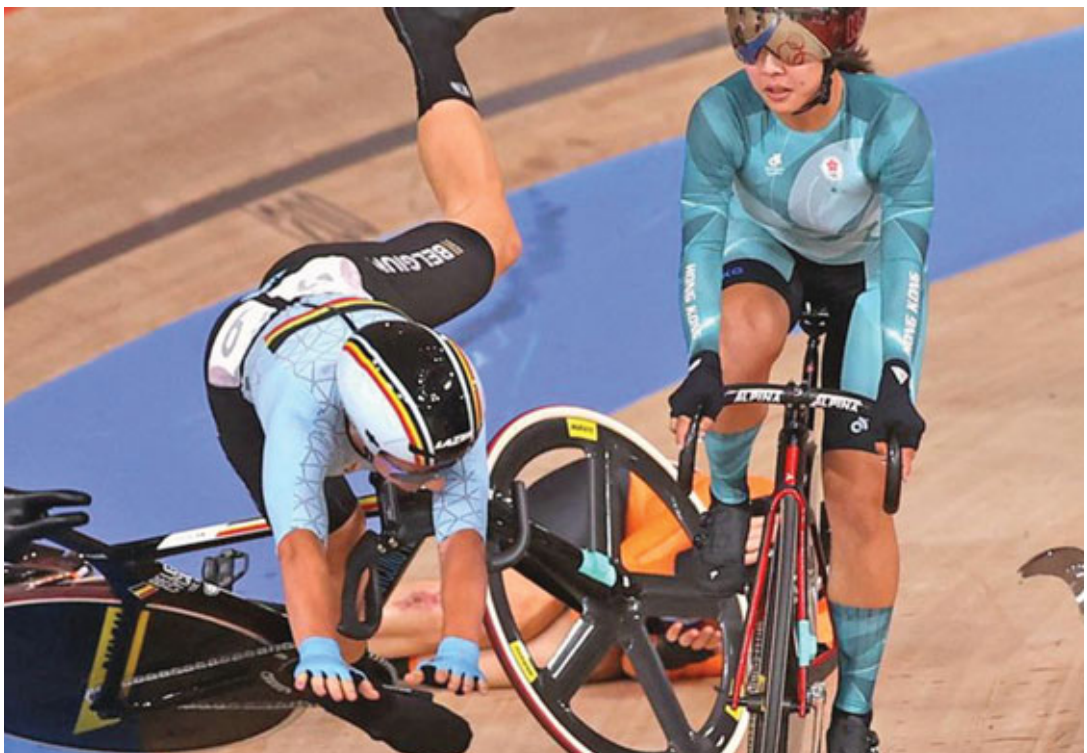
construction companies, who are our customers, to facilitate the required repairs.” Emphasising the bank's strategy, Feras adds, “We continue to work towards implementing initiatives that fall under our three sustainability pillars, community partnerships, environmental responsibility and financial inclusion. The initiative launched today is just one example of the activities we undertake to support our communities in a time of need.”

PHOTO-FEATURE

TOKYO OLYMPICS:
HIGHLIGHTS, DAY 14

The Olympics produce some of the best moments in sports. As the world's elite athletes gather in Tokyo 2020, so do the best photographers to capture all of the action. Take a look at these iconic moments. -ow





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