



SUNDAY, 08 NOVEMBER 2020

20 PAGE ISSUE

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OMANTEL REPORTS RO168MN NET PROFIT IN NINE MONTHS
GO TO **PAGE 13 BUSINESS**

Envoys present credentials to HM

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received the credentials of eight ambassadors of countries accredited to the sultanate at Al Barakah Palace on Thursday.

On the sidelines of the credentials presentation ceremony, the ambassadors conveyed greetings of the leaders of their countries along with their best wishes of good health, happiness and long life to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people, and continuous progress and prosperity under his wise leadership.

They also expressed their honour and delight in presenting their credentials before His Majesty the Sultan. They pledged their sincere efforts to promote relations of their countries with the sultanate in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their own.

His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors and expressed his gratitude for their leaders' greetings and best wishes. His Majesty the Sultan affirmed to them that they would receive all his support, besides the government and the Omani people's in carrying out

their duties.

The credentials presentation ceremony was attended by the Minister of Interior, Foreign Minister, Head of the Royal Protocols, Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman and the military aides to His Majesty the Sultan.

His Majesty the Sultan received the credentials of:

► Thomas Friedrich Schneider, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany, accredited to the sultanate.

► Manabile Shogole, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, accredited to the sultanate.

► Abdallah Abasi Kilima, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr John Magufuli of the United Republic of Tanzania, accredited to the sultanate.

► Dmitry Dugadkin, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, accredited to the sultanate.

Continued on **Page 02**



Thomas Friedrich Schneider, Ambassador of Germany

Biden to be 46th President of US; Trump refuses to concede

Washington, USA - Democrat Joe Biden won the White House, defeating Donald Trump and ending a presidency that convulsed American politics, shocked the world and left the United States more divided than at any time in decades.

CNN, NBC News and CBS News called the race in Biden's favour just before 11:30am (1630 GMT) as an insurmountable lead in Pennsylvania took the 77 year old over the top in the state-by-state count that decides the presidency.

President-elect Joe Biden issued a statement, saying he was "honoured and humbled by the trust the American people have placed" in him and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

"In the face of unprecedented obstacles, a record number of Americans voted. Proving once again, that democracy



beats deep in the heart of America. It's time for America to unite. And to heal."

President Donald Trump reacted on the election result, saying, "We all know why Joe Biden

is rushing to falsely pose as the winner, and why his media allies are trying so hard to help him: they don't want the truth to be exposed. The simple fact is this election is far from over. Joe

Biden has not been certified as the winner of any states.

"Beginning Monday, our campaign will start prosecuting our case in court to ensure election laws are fully upheld and the rightful winner is seated."

Biden, who got the votes of a record more than 74 million people, was hunkered down with his running mate Kamala Harris, in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware.

Harris, a senator and former California attorney general, will make history as the first Black woman to enter the White House in either of the two top jobs.

At 56, she is seen as a leading contender to succeed Biden and try to become the first female US president.

The president-elect will be inaugurated on January 20.

Agencies

Final phase of serological survey begins

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The fourth and final phase of the national serological survey of COVID-19, conducted by the Ministry of Health, commences on Sunday.

The survey has been undertaken to determine the prevalence of infection in the population - Omanis and expatriates - based on age groups, undetected cases and the level of infection in wilayats.

'The role of the survey has been significant in highlighting the overall prevalence of COVID-19 infection and assessing the prevalence rate in the sultanate's various governorates as well as the prevalence of



asymptomatic cases,' the ministry stated.

'As the final phase of the survey approaches, individuals are urged to participate in it in order to complete it and achieve its objectives. The survey aims at serving both the individual and the society as a whole.'

The ministry added that there

are no specific criteria to participate.

'Do not hesitate and participate with us,' the ministry statement added.

'If you are approached to participate in the national survey, please complete the process by going to the health institution to which you are directed.'

UAE introduces sweeping legal reforms

Dubai, UAE - The United Arab Emirates scrapped reduced sentences for so-called 'honour' killings in a sweeping overhaul of criminal and family law announced on Saturday.

It also lifted a ban on unmarried couples living together and eased restrictions on alcohol consumption, while raising the penalties for rape and sexual harassment.

With the reforms, 'honour' crimes in the UAE will now be punishable like any other.

There will no longer be separate sentencing guidelines for 'honour' killings.

Continued on **Page 02**

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Envoys present credentials to HM

Continued from Page 01

► Anwar Abdul Halimov, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of the Republic of Uzbekistan, accredited to the sultanate.

ited to the sultanate.

► Suwat Kaewsook, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of King Maha Vajiralongkorn of the Kingdom of Thailand, accredited to the sultanate.

► Qadam Shah Shahim, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Ashraf Ghani of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, accredited to the sultanate.

► Ayrorit Mohammed Yasin, ONA

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Sahle-Work Zewde of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, accredited to the sultanate.

ONA



Ayrorit Mohammed Yasin, Ambassador of Ethiopia



Manabile Shogole, Ambassador of South Africa



Abdallah Abasi Kilima, Ambassador of Tanzania



Dmitry Dugadkin, Ambassador of Russia



Anwar Abdul Halimov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan



Suwat Kaewsook, Ambassador of Thailand



Qadam Shah Shahim, Ambassador of Afghanistan

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UAE scraps 'honour' defence in legal overhaul

Continued from Page 01

The guidelines previously provided for jail terms of between three and 15 years, according to Emirati media. Those convicted will face the death penalty or life imprisonment, unless the victim's family waives its right to 'retribution', in which case the penalty will be at least seven years in jail.

Human rights groups and women's organisations have long campaigned for the scrapping of the 'honour' defence, which they say allows male murderers of women to get off lightly.

Other reforms approved by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin



Zayed al Nahyan included changes to the sentencing guidelines for other offences targeting women.

Harsher penalties will be stipulated in cases of harassment, while those convicted of "rape of a minor" or of "someone with a

limited mental capacity" will face the death penalty, Abu Dhabi-based newspaper *The National* reported.

Expatriates, who make up some 90 per cent of the UAE population, will be able to ask for their own country's law to be applied in cases of divorce and inheritance.

Penalties will no longer be imposed against those found drinking alcohol without a licence.

The UAE has developed the most diverse economy in the Gulf but is heavily dependent on foreign tourism and its large expatriate workforce.

AFP

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Education for all

From all of three schools in the 1970s, the developments in the educational sector have been remarkable

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's commitment to education is reflected in his famous statement: "Let there be learning, even under the shade of trees."

Fifty years since the dawn of the Omani renaissance, the education sector has grown by leaps and bounds, setting the groundwork for an educated and enlightened society.

As educational facilities in Oman improve year by year, there has been a significant increase in the number of government schools. For the academic year 2020/2021, there are now a total of 1,182 schools across the sultanate in which 676,943 students are enrolled, including 334,889 girls. In the 1970s, there were three schools in Oman. The Ministry of Education has developed strategic plans, including special activities and literacy programmes to reduce illiteracy.

According to the ministry's figures, there was an increase of 94 new private schools from the academic year 2017/18 to 2018/19, accounting for a growth rate of 14.8 per cent in the

number of schools and 10.2 per cent more students.

The ministry also provided quality education to individuals with disabilities, training for teachers and specialists, procured additional equipment and devices, and added more school building facilities. The number of special education schools (for individuals with disabilities) has increased to three, where 525 students were enrolled in the academic year 2018/2019. The total number of teachers in special education schools in that period was 313, 83.1 per cent of who were females.

LITERACY CENTRES

In a reflection of the increasing awareness on education among Omani women, they constituted 95.9 per cent of the total number of students in literacy centres in the sultanate during the academic year 2019/20. According to National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), 5,145 students were registered in literacy centres during the academic year 2019/20.

The sultanate has made great efforts since the academic year 1973/74 to combat illiteracy and eliminate it in all its forms.

As a result of these efforts, the illiteracy rate in the sultanate decreased to 5.78 per cent in the age group of 15 years and older. The literacy rate stood at 94.22 per cent at the end of 2018.

The Ministry of Education has set up a number of support projects to strengthen partnerships between government and private sector institutions making illiteracy a national issue. The projects include programmes such as the 'Training Bag Project' that contains basic scientific material to be used to train teaching staff in literacy classes and raise their professional level and teaching skills.

Additionally, the 'Educated Village Project' being conducted in various governorates targets all illiterate people in villages. The number of villages in the 'Educated Village Project' at the end of 2018 was 30.

The ministry also focuses on raising the quality of its teaching staff, and the Omani teacher in particular, through continuous training and upgradation of academic qualifications.

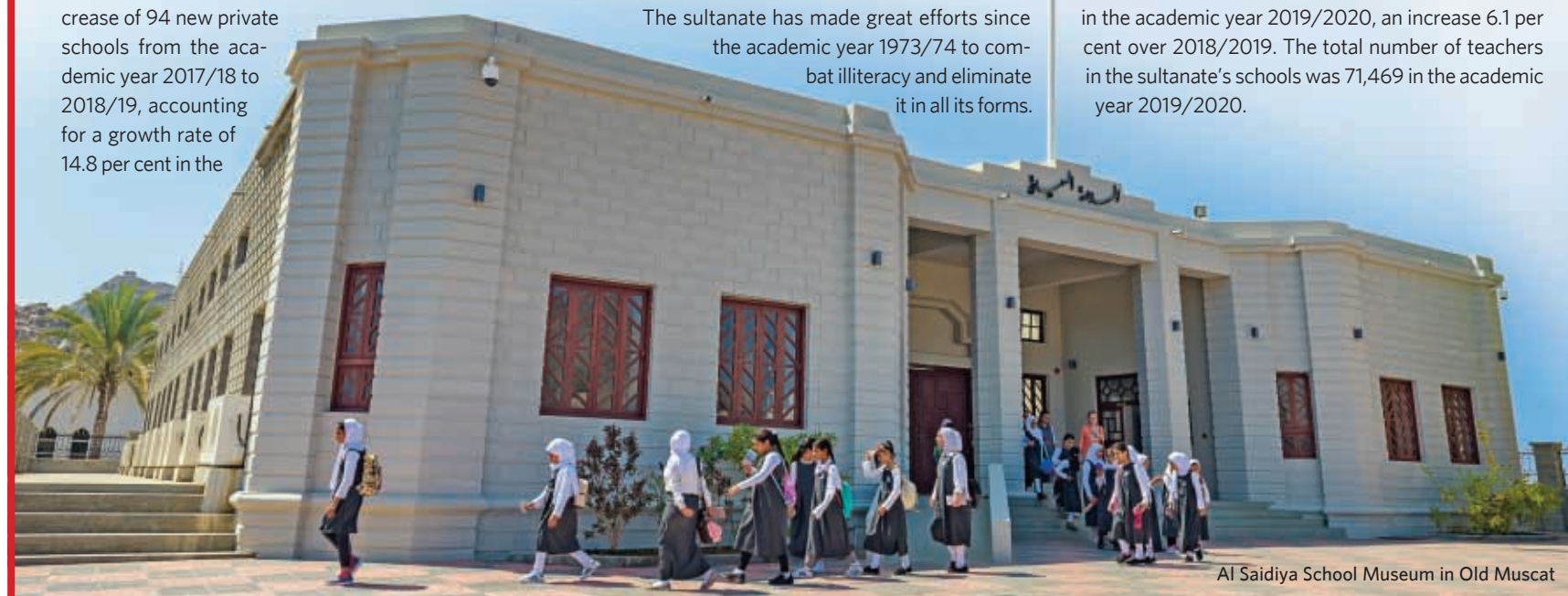
According to the NCSI, there were 2,046 schools in the academic year 2019/2020, an increase 6.1 per cent over 2018/2019. The total number of teachers in the sultanate's schools was 71,469 in the academic year 2019/2020.



Al Saiidiya School, Salalah

Oman's first government school - the Al Saiidiya School - opened in Salalah in 1936. When first opened, the school taught Quranic studies, Islamic jurisprudence and monotheistic studies, alongside basic subjects like Arabic, English, history and geography.

A branch of the Al Saiidiya School was opened in Muscat in the year 1940 by His Majesty Said bin Taimur al Said, the father of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. The school, which was located in what is now Old Muscat, was initially an all-boys school. The school was later converted into a museum to showcase the pioneering role it played in the sultanate.



Al Saiidiya School Museum in Old Muscat

Happiness curriculum in Indian schools

Muscat - The Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman, with its mission to ensure transformative learning for every child, will be introducing a new supplementary Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, termed 'Happiness Curriculum' in all 21 Indian Schools across the sultanate.

As a pilot project, the Happiness Curriculum will be implemented in a few selected classes across all Indian schools in the sultanate with effect from January 2021, with one period per week.

As per a press statement, there is a need to redefine the purpose of education as more than merely improving the student's scholastic performance.

'More than ever before, it is now essential to raise and prepare students as future citizens who are emotionally intelligent, mindful and empathetic, firmly rooted in their identity.

'Introduction of Happiness Curriculum in schools will enable students to be aware of their emotions and strive for optimal emotional health, as a member of their families, school, society and



the world at large. The intended outcome is to enhance students' level of self-awareness, mindfulness and deepen learning to lead a happier and meaningful life.'

"The Happiness Curriculum is an endeavour to guide the attention of students towards exploring, experiencing and expressing emotions. We hope to enable positive emotions to be experiences not just momentarily but also in deeper and sustainable forms as well. This can create a paradigm shift where a learner moves from searching happiness externally from senses to be able

to ensure it within oneself through learning and awareness and ensure continuity of values," noted Dr Baby Sam Saamuel, chairman, Board of Director, Indian Schools in Oman.

A holistic curriculum not only promotes development in cognition, language, numeracy and the arts but also addresses well-being and happiness of the students, the statement said. The Happiness Curriculum will focus on emotional intelligence striving to bring about emotional literacy skills and at the same time, teach children to identify and boost

positive emotions such as happiness and well-being. It will also emphasise on co-scholastic skills of mindfulness, self-awareness, critical thinking, reflection and inner stability.

This SEL syllabus is designed in line with international practices in this regard and will be age appropriate.

The teacher's handbook for Happiness Curriculum classes include description of activities, stories and activities with reflective questions. Like any other subject, students will have a dedicated period for the curriculum.



Grade 5 ISG student listed in India Book of Records

Muscat - Arunima Das, a student of Grade 5 in Indian School Ghubra (ISG), has made it into the *India Book of Records 2020*.

She was able to recount a total of 80 countries with their capital cities in one minute, setting the record for recalling and reciting the most number of countries and their capitals in one minute.

According to Arunima's parent, this achievement is the result of a talent show organised by her class teacher Letisia Fernandes.

The members of the ISG family congratulated Arunima on her success.

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Minister of Economy and governors discuss progress

Muscat - H E Dr Said bin Mohammed bin Ahmed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, chaired a meeting with governors to discuss the draft Tenth Five Year Plan (2021-25) and its execution.

The meeting was held in the presence of H E Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Mawali, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Economy, and Sayyid Khalifa bin al Murdas al Busaidi, secretary general of the Governorates Affairs in the Ministry of Interior.



(Supplied photo)

The meeting discussed the proposed programmes and policies related to the development priorities in the governorates.

It aimed to solidify the partnership between the Ministry of Economy and the governorates, enhance the spatial and sectorial development and augment the role of individual governorates in the economic development of the sultanate in line with Oman Vision 2040's national priorities related to sustainable development.

Measures to stimulate real estate market

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to stimulate the real estate market in order to achieve the objectives of the medium-term fiscal balance plan and economic diversification programmes, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has laid down a number of measures.

Accordingly, the real estate transaction fee has been reduced to three per cent from earlier five, the ministry announced.

Apart from reducing the real estate fee, the ministry has also activated procedures of the sale system for usufruct of residential real estate units in com-

mercial residential buildings for expats.

The ministry added that it is activating the documentation and registration of contracts for sale in instalments for real estate units existing in the real estate registry departments in all housing and urban planning directorates according to the following controls - documentation and registration will be against the fee prescribed for sale, issuing the buyer's title deed with a note in the title deed clearly stating the seller's name with deferred instalments and cancellation of the note from the title deed after paying all instalments in the presence of the parties.

Oman Air wins again at World Travel Awards

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Air has received international recognition in the 2020 World Travel Awards Middle East programme again. The airline has been named the Middle East's Leading Airline: Business Class and Middle East's Leading Airline: Economy Class.

The airline's in-flight magazine, *Wings of Oman*, also earned the title Middle East's Leading In-flight Magazine.

The airline has been awarded the Middle East's Leading Airline: Business Class title every year since 2016, as well as in 2014; and the Middle East's Leading Airline: Economy Class title for six years running since 2014.

A win at the annual World



Travel Awards is the ultimate travel and tourism industry accolade. Voted for by travel and tourism professionals and consumers worldwide, the honour recognises the commitment to

excellence each winner has demonstrated.

Abdulaziz bin Saud al Raisi, chief executive officer, Oman Air, said, "We are extremely delighted and honoured to earn

these awards. Winning three categories of the prestigious World Travel Awards is a remarkable achievement for Oman Air, especially when we were pitted against some of the world's largest airlines. Although the category of Leading In-flight Magazine was previously a part of the World Travel Awards, this is the second time it was included in the WTA Middle East. We are delighted to be the winner in this category for two consecutive years."

He added, "On behalf of all my colleagues at Oman Air, I would like to thank the jury and all those knowledgeable and experienced professionals from travel and tourism and the consumer-travel buyer sectors whose votes have contributed to our success."

34 applications seek to use Oman's emblem, images of HM

Muscat - The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said it has received 34 applications to obtain permission to use the emblem of the Sultanate of Oman, the dagger and the two swords, and images of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said on various commercial products.

These applications were filed for products to be used during the sultanate's celebrations of the 50th National Day.

The ministry said that it continues to carry out inspection drives to monitor the markets, in cooperation with the Consumer Protection Authority.

'All necessary legal actions

Ministry will take all necessary legal actions against violators and confiscate the materials and products found violating the laws and orders regulating them

will be taken against violators and the materials will be confiscated if products violate the laws and orders regulating them,' stated the ministry.

The ministry said that the commercial use of the emblem

of the sultanate: dagger and two swords, and the royal emblem: the crown, the dagger, and the two swords, as well as the use of the Omani dagger, and the map on various commercial products without obtaining the necessary approvals is a violation of the law.

'It has been noticed that some commercial establishments have put the state emblem, the royal emblem, the flag or the map of the sultanate on jewellery, other products or items which are produced or manufactured locally or imported without prior permission from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and other concerned authorities.'

 صناعة قرطاسية الكمبيوتر (أ.م.ع.م.ع.) Computer Stationery Industry S.A.O.C. Board of Directors' Report for the nine months period ended 30th September, 2020			
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am presenting the un-audited results of Computer Stationery Industry SAOG and its subsidiary for the nine months period ended 30th September 2020. The Group's turnover during the first nine months was Rials 782,571 which was 31 % lower than the turnover recorded during the same period last year. The Group's net loss for the period was Rials 187,458 as against a net profit of Rials 1,249 generated during the same period last year. The commercial printing industry has been profoundly affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The outbreak of the corona pandemic and the enforced lockdowns has led to a significant reduction in print volume. With events and exhibitions being cancelled, offices and production facilities are getting temporarily shut, and with a temporary ban on printing & distribution of Newspapers, Magazines and promotional flyers have adversely affected the printing industry. Further, Growth of digital marketing and intense competition in the sector has also impacted the printing industry. The Company will closely monitor the market and make efforts to sustain the impact. With this, we look at the residual part of the year with cautious optimism. On behalf of the Board, I wish to express our highest gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman for His Majesty's wisdom and guidance which has ushered in peace, prosperity and progress for our nation.			
Ali Mohamed Zabnoot Vice Chairman			
Notes :- 1) Previous year figures have been regrouped wherever necessary. 2) Complete Accounts are available with Capital Market Authority. However the same will be sent by mail to any Share Holder who requests them, either in Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request. Request shall be forwarded to the following address: P.O. Box: 13, Postal Code: 124, Rasayil, Sultanate of Oman E-mail : info@csiops.com			
UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2020			
Particulars	As on 30-09-2020 Rials	As on 30-09-2019 Rials	
ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	1,304,598	1,400,492	
	1,304,598	1,400,492	
Current Assets	1,217,802	1,305,478	
Less : Current Liabilities			
Short term maturity of Long term Loan	-	-	
Other current Liabilities	446,340	360,044	
Net Current Assets	771,462	945,434	
TOTAL ASSETS	2,076,060	2,345,926	
LIABILITIES			
Share Holders' Funds:			
Share Capital	1,000,000	1,000,000	
Reserves & Retained Earnings	1,076,060	1,345,926	
Long Term Loan	-	-	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,076,060	2,345,926	
UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2020			
Particulars	9 months ended 30-09-2020 Rials	9 months ended 30-09-2019 Rials	
Sales	782,571	1,137,297	
Gross Profit	123,516	366,761	
Depreciation	(107,178)	(127,688)	
Admin & General Expenses	(219,536)	(243,895)	
Operating Profit / (Loss)	(203,198)	(4,822)	
Finance Charges	(2,055)	(2,437)	
Other Income	27,433	34,038	
Balance	(177,820)	26,779	
Prior year tax payment	(1,988)	(1,195)	
Profit/(Loss) before taxation and minority interest	(179,808)	25,584	
Provision for Taxation	(7,650)	(24,335)	
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) AFTER TAX	(187,458)	1,249	



Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

KNOW THE LAW



Children's rights

Our Correspondent
Muscat

What's in a name?

A name carries self esteem, self respect and self validation.

As per Public Prosecution, every child has the right to have a distinct name that is not derogatory or disrespectful.

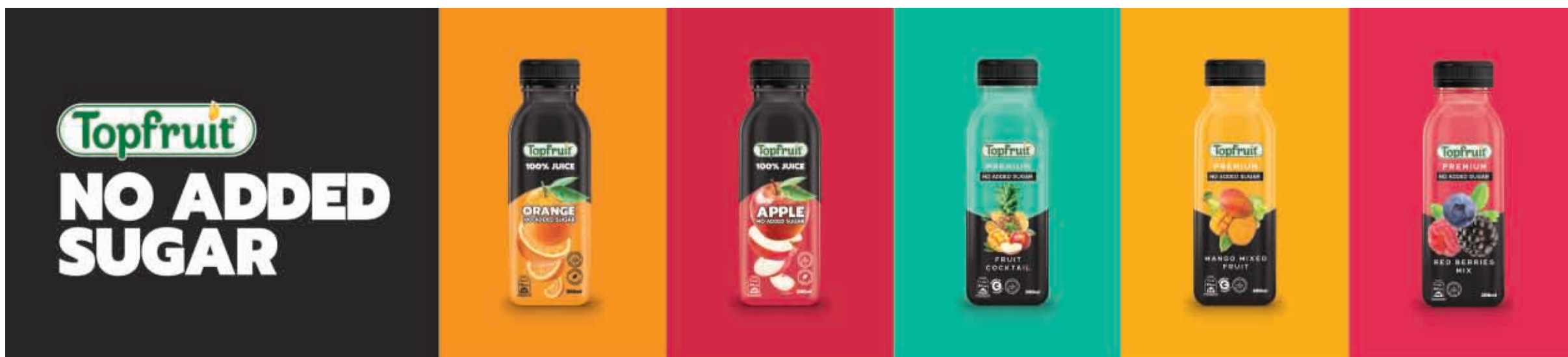
'Having the right name for the child will ensure protection from violence, abuse and maltreatment. The name also signifies that he or she must be treated with dignity and manners,' says Public Prosecution.

Also, as per the other rights, children are entitled to have access to knowledge, innovation and creativity and expression of thoughts.

'All civil rights are included in Child Law,' adds Public Prosecution.

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.59am	Asr	3.06pm
Sunrise	6.17am	Maghrib	5.29pm
Duhr	11.56am	Isha	6.42pm





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Public Offer - Series 5
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Profit Rate	Tenure	Minimum Subscription Amount
4.75% p.a.	2 years (Due 2022)	OMR 100

Issue Opens 10 November 2020 | Issue Closes 23 November 2020

This summary has been extracted from the unofficial translation of the original Prospectus prepared in Arabic and approved by the CMA in accordance with Administrative Decision no. E/65/2020 dated 3 November 2020. This does not constitute an offer to sell or an invitation by or on behalf of the Issuer to subscribe to any of the Shares in any jurisdiction outside of Oman where such distribution is, or may be, unlawful.

Series 5 Prospectus has been issued for the purposes of Article 17 of the Sukuk Regulations.

Series 5 Prospectus for Series 5 (the "Prospectus") is supplementary to, forms part of and must be read and construed in conjunction with, the base prospectus dated 9 December 2019 as updated and amended by the supplemental prospectus no. 1 dated 21 September 2020 and as further updated amended by the supplemental prospectus no. 2 dated 3 November 2020 (together the "Base Prospectus") prepared by Omani Sovereign Sukuk S.A.O.C. (the "Issuer" or the "Trustee") and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Finance (the "Oligor" or the "Government") in connection with the Trustee's Omani Rial Sukuk Issuance Programme (the "Programme") for the issuance of trust certificates ("Trust Certificates").

Terms defined in the Base Prospectus shall, unless the context otherwise requires, have the same meaning when used in Series 5 Prospectus.

The issue of Series 5 OMR 25,000,000 trust certificates due 2022 (the "Trust Certificates"), will be constituted by (i) a master declaration of trust (the "Master Declaration of Trust") dated 9 December 2019 entered into between the Trustee, the Obligor and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company S.A.O.C. as agent for and on behalf of the holders of the Trust Certificates (the "Certificateholders") (in such capacity, the "Certificateholders Agent") and (ii) a supplemental declaration of trust (the "Supplemental Declaration of Trust") and, together with the Master Declaration of Trust, the "Declaration of Trust") in relation to the Trust Certificates.

Pursuant to the Master Declaration of Trust as supplemented by the Supplemental Declaration of Trust, and subject to the conditions governing the Trust Certificates set out in the Base Prospectus (the "Conditions") and the First Terms which, for the avoidance of doubt, complete the Conditions, the Trustee in its capacity as the trustee for and on behalf of the Certificateholders will hold the Trust Assets and all rights, benefits and interests relating thereto, on trust for the benefit of the Certificateholders.

Periodic Distributions

Periodic Distribution Amounts shall be payable subject to, and in accordance with, the Conditions on the outstanding face amount of the Trust Certificates from and including the Issue Date to (but excluding) 24 November 2022 (the "Scheduled Dissolution Date") at a profit rate of 4.75 per cent. per annum, on an Actual/365 basis.

Taxation

Pursuant to Condition 12, all payments in respect of the Trust Certificates shall be made without set-off or counterclaim of any kind and free and clear of, and without withholding or deduction for, any Taxes of whatever nature imposed, levied, collected, withheld or assessed by or within the Relevant Jurisdiction or any authority therein or thereof having power to tax, unless the withholding or deduction is required by law. In that event, the Trustee shall pay such additional amounts as will result in receipt by the Certificateholders of such amounts as would have been received by them had no such withholding or deduction been required, except that no such additional amount shall be payable in respect of any Trust Certificate held by or on behalf of a holder who is liable for such Taxes in respect of such Trust Certificate by reason of having some connection with the Relevant Jurisdiction other than the mere holding of the Trust Certificates.

Redemption of Trust Certificates

The Trust Certificates will be redeemed on the Scheduled Dissolution Date but may also be redeemed before the Scheduled Dissolution Date in accordance with Condition 10.

The Trust Certificates are limited recourse obligations of the Trustee

The Trust Certificates are not debt obligations of the Trustee. Recourse to the Trustee in respect of the Trust Certificates is limited to the Trust Assets and the proceeds of such Trust Assets are the sole source of payments on the Trust Certificates. Upon the occurrence of a Dissolution Event or early dissolution pursuant to Condition 10, the sole rights of each of the Trustee, the Certificateholders' Agent and, in certain limited circumstances, the Certificateholders will be against the Trustee and the Government, as applicable, to perform their respective obligations under the Transaction Documents.

In accordance with Condition 4.3, the Trustee and the Certificateholders' Agent (as well as the Certificateholders in the circumstances described in Condition 15.3) will have direct recourse against the Government to recover payments due to the Trustee or the Certificateholders' Agent from the Government pursuant to such Transaction Documents (such payments forming part of the Trust Assets) notwithstanding any other provisions of the Conditions.

Furthermore, under no circumstances shall the Trustee, the Certificateholders' Agent or any Certificateholder have any right to cause the sale or other disposition of any of the Trust Assets except as otherwise expressly provided in the Transaction Documents and the Conditions.

An investment in the Trust Certificates involves certain risks. For a discussion of the principal risk factors that may affect the ability of the Trustee to fulfil its obligations under the Trust Certificates and the relevant mitigating measures, see "Risk Factors" in the Base Prospectus and in the Series 5 Prospectus.

Final Terms

November 2020

Omani Sovereign Sukuk S.A.O.C.

Fifth Issue of Omani Sovereign Sukuk OMR 25,000,000

Trust Certificates due 2022 under the Omani Rial Sukuk Issuance Programme

PART A – CONTRACTUAL TERMS

Terms under which shall be deemed to be defined as such for the purposes of the Terms and Conditions of the Trust Certificates set forth in Base Prospectus. Full information on the Trustee, the Government and the offer of the Trust Certificates is only available on the basis of the combination of these Final Terms and the Base Prospectus.

Full information on the Trustee, the Government and this offering of Trust Certificates is available on the basis of the Base Prospectus. The Base Prospectus is available for viewing at no cost on the websites of the CMA (www.cma.gov.om), the MSM (www.msm.gov.om), and the websites of all the Collecting Banks / Agents and during normal business hours of the Certificateholders' Agent at P.O. Box 952, P.O. 112, Muscat, Oman and copies thereof may be obtained from the registered office of the Paying Agent and Registrar at P.O. Box 952, Ruwi, P.O. 112, Muscat, Oman.

(a) Trustee, Seller and Lessor	Omani Sovereign Sukuk S.A.O.C. (registered in Oman with commercial registration number 1225873)
(b) Purchaser, Obligor, Lessee and Servicing Agent	The Government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Finance (the "Government")
Series Number	5
Aggregate Face Amount of Series	OMR 25,000,000
Issue Price	Fixed Price of OMR 1
Fixed Denomination	OMR 1
(a) Issue Date	24 November 2020
(b) Return Accumulation Commencement Date	Issue Date
Scheduled Dissolution Date	24 November 2022
Dissolution Basis	The Trust Certificates will be redeemed at 100 per cent. of the Aggregate Face Amount.
Put/Call Rights	Not Applicable
Status	Unsubordinated
Date of Trustee's approval and date of Government's approval for the issuance of the Trust Certificates	16 November 2019 and [Issue Date] 2020, respectively
Periodic Distribution Provisions	
(a) Profit Rate	4.75 percent per annum payable semi-annually in arrears on each Periodic Distribution Date
(b) Return Accumulation Period	means the period from (and including) a Periodic Distribution Date (or the Return Accumulation Commencement Date) to (but excluding) the next (or first) Periodic Distribution Date
(c) Periodic Distribution Date(s)	24 May and 24 November in each year up to and including the Scheduled Dissolution Date
(f) Day Count Fraction	Actual/365
(g) Determination Date(s)	Not Applicable
Provisions relating to dissolution	
Optional Dissolution Call Right	Not Applicable
Certificateholder Put Right	Not Applicable
Clean Up Call Right	Not Applicable
Dissolution Event Amount	As per Condition 1 of Base Prospectus
Final Dissolution Amount	As per Condition 1 of Base Prospectus
Other Dissolution Amount	As per Condition 1 of Base Prospectus
General provisions applicable to the Trust Certificates	
Form of Trust Certificates	Registered book-entry form (electronic)
Provisions in respect of the Trust Assets	
Trust Assets	Condition 5.1 applies
Lease Assets as at the Issue Date	The undivided ownership interest will be determined based on actual allocation, in the Government's 80.76 per cent. undivided ownership interest in the plot of logistics land located in Banks with Commercial Plot Number 3-07-001-01-001 and as more particularly described in the extract (appended to the Supplemental Purchase Agreement) provided by the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Housing, Directorate General of Housing South Batinah Governorate, Planning and Survey Department
(a) Transaction Account	Omani Sovereign Sukuk S.A.O.C. Transaction Account with Maisarah Islamic Banking Services (Bank Dhofar S.A.O.Q.) for Series 5
(b) Supplemental Declaration of Trust	Supplemental Declaration of Trust between the Trustee, the Government and the Certificateholders' Agent
(c) Supplemental Purchase Agreement	Supplemental Purchase Agreement between the Trustee and the Government
(d) Supplemental Lease Agreement	Supplemental Lease Agreement between the Trustee, the Lessor, the Lessee and the Certificateholders' Agent

PART B – OTHER INFORMATION

Listing	
(a) Listing	Application has been made by the Trustee (or on its behalf) to the Muscat Securities Market for the Trust Certificates to be listed on its Bonds and Sukuk Market with effect from 25 November 2020.
(b) Estimate of total expenses related to listing	OMR 85,000
Ratings	
Rating	The Trust Certificates to be issued will not be rated
Interests of Natural and Legal Persons involved in the Issue	
Save for any fees payable to the Issue Managers and Collecting Banks / Agents, so far as each of the Trustee and the Government is aware, no person involved in the issue of the Trust Certificates has an interest material to the offer. The Issue Managers and Collecting Banks / Agents and their affiliates have engaged, and may in the future engage, in investment banking and/or commercial banking transactions with, and may perform services for, the Government and/or the Trustee (and each of their affiliates) in the ordinary course of business for which they may receive fees.	
Operational Information	
(a) Any clearing system(s) other than MCD	Not Applicable
(b) Delivery	Delivery against payment
Distribution	
(a) Additional Selling Restrictions	Not applicable
(b) Offer Period	10 November 2020 until 23 November 2020
(c) Greenhouse Option	An unlimited-value Greenhouse Option has been reserved for the Issuer who, in case of excess demand and/or over-subscription for the Trust Certificates and with the approval of the CMA, shall have the right to retain excess subscription amount by allotting additional Trust Certificates against it to investors.
(d) Financial intermediaries (each an Authorised Offeree) granted specific consent to use the Base Prospectus in accordance with the Conditions in it	All Collecting Banks / Agents
(e) Date of the CMA approval in the form of its Administrative Decision	3 November 2020
(f) Other Authorised Offeree Terms	Not applicable

SUBSCRIPTION CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

Prospective investors who wish to subscribe for the Trust Certificates (the "Applicants") and each an "Applicant") will be permitted to participate in the offering of the Trust Certificates by way of public offering (the "Offering") and, subject to the terms of the Application Form (as defined below), the Trust Certificates will be allotted to such investors on such terms as set out below.

Summary of Subscription Conditions and Procedures	
Trust Certificates available for subscription	25,000,000 Trust Certificates
Minimum Subscription Amount (as defined below) for each Applicant (as defined below)	OMR 100 (being a minimum of 100 Trust Certificates of OMR 1 each (in aggregate))
Terms of payment	Full Application Amount (as defined below) payable at the time of submission of the Application Form (as defined below) to the Collecting Banks / Agents.

Eligibility for the subscription of the Trust Certificates

The Offering will be undertaken as a public offering and will be open to Omani and non-Omani individuals and juristic persons.

Prohibitions with regard to applications for subscription

In accordance with the CM Law and its Executive Regulations, the following restrictions and requirements shall be observed by the Applicants when subscribing for the Trust Certificates:

- Sole proprietorship establishments: the owners of sole proprietorship establishments may only submit Application Forms in their personal names.
- Multiple applications: an Applicant may not submit more than one Application Form.
- Joint applications: Applicants may not submit Application Forms in the name of more than one individual (including on behalf of legal heirs).
- Trust accounts: customers registered under trust accounts may only submit Application Forms in their personal names.

All such Application Forms which do not meet the above restrictions and requirements will be automatically rejected by the Collecting Banks / Agents without contacting the Applicant.

Subscription on behalf of minor children

For the purpose of the Offering, any person under 18 years of age as at the Closing Date (as specified below) of the subscription process will be defined as a minor.

Only a father may subscribe on behalf of his minor children.

If an Application Form is submitted on behalf of a minor by any person other than the minor's father, the person submitting the Application Form will be required to attach a valid Shar'i (legal) power of attorney issued by the competent authorities authorising him or her to deal in the funds of the minor through sale, purchase and investment.

Applicant's investor account and Investor Number with the MCD

Each Applicant who subscribes for the Trust Certificates must have an account and an investor number (an "Investor Number") with the MCD. Any Applicant may apply for the issuance of an Investor Number by way of opening an investor account through completion of the relevant MCD Application Form. Such Application Form may be obtained from the MCD's head office at the address below or its website at www.mcd.gov.om, or from any brokerage companies licensed by the CMA. The completed form may be submitted by an Applicant through either of the following channels in the Commercial Business District, Muscat, Oman, or by sending a facsimile to MCD at +968 2465 2231; or

- at the office of any brokerage company in Oman which is licensed by the CMA.

In order to open an investor account with the MCD and receive an Investor Number, a juristic person will be required to provide a copy of its constitutional documents in the form prescribed by the MCD, along with a completed MCD Application Form.

Applicants who already hold investor accounts with the MCD are advised, before submitting their Application Form, to confirm their details as noted in the Application Form. If required, Applicants should update their particulars with the MCD through any of the channels mentioned above.

All correspondence, including Allotment Letters (as defined below), will be sent to the Applicant's address as recorded with the MCD. Applicants should ensure that their address as provided to the MCD is correct and is kept up to date.

Each Applicant should obtain its Investor Number from the MCD. The Investor Number will be required in order to complete the Application Form. Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring that the Investor Number set out in its Application Form is correct. Application Forms not bearing the correct Investor Number may be rejected without contacting the Applicant.

For more information on these procedures, Applicants should contact the MCD at the following contact information:

Muscat Clearing & Depository Company S.A.O.C.
Tel: +968 2482 2222 and +968 2482 2290; Fax: +968 2482 2231
www.mcd.gov.om

Subscription Period

The subscription period will commence on the Opening Date (as specified below) and close on the Closing Date.

Subscription Process and Minimum Subscriptions

Applicants who wish to subscribe for Trust Certificates may do so by completing an application form (the "Application Form"). Application Forms can be downloaded from the websites of the Issue Managers and/or the Collecting Banks / Agents as provided in Series 5 Prospectus.

Each Applicant may only submit one Application Form.

An Applicant must submit an Application Form for a minimum of 100 Trust Certificates (in aggregate) of OMR 1 each (the "Minimum Subscription Amount").

Completed Application Forms must be submitted to the Collecting Banks / Agents (at the address of the Collecting Banks / Agents provided at the back of Series 5 Prospectus) on or before the Closing Date. Application Forms submitted to the Collecting Banks / Agents after the Closing Date will not be accepted.

Maximum Subscription Amount

The maximum number of Trust Certificates that can be applied for is 1,000,000 Trust Certificates of OMR 1 each (the Maximum Subscription Amount).

For the purpose of calculating the Maximum Subscription Amount, applications included in the Application Forms received from the father (or guardian) of an Applicant shall be taken together with applications included in the Application Forms of his minor children. If all the Applicants concerned are to be allotted more Trust Certificates collectively than the Maximum Subscription Amount, each Applicant's allotment shall be reduced proportionately to ensure that the total Trust Certificates allotted do not breach the Maximum Subscription Amount.

Allotment Process

In case of over-subscription of the Offer, the Issuer may exercise the Greenhouse option and increase the issue size to accommodate all additional subscriptions.

The Issuer, in consultation with CMA and the Issue Managers, will finalise the actual basis of allocation. The Issuer, in consultation with CMA and the Issue Managers, may decide to allocate a minimum number of Trust Certificates equally to all Applicants, taking into consideration small investors, and the remaining Trust Certificates shall be distributed on a pro-rata basis.

In case of under-subscription the Trust Certificates will list on the MSM based on the actual subscription. The Issuer will, in consultation with the CMA and the Issue Managers, determine a suitable course of action regarding the unsubscribed Trust Certificates.

The Issue Managers will confirm the number and amount of Trust Certificates allocated to each Applicant using the email address or Fax No. provided in its Application Form and request MCD to send SMS and allotment letters (the "Allotment Letters") to Applicants who have been allotted Trust Certificates to their mobile numbers and addresses registered with the MCD.

None of the Issuer, the Government, the Collecting Banks / Agents or the Issue Managers will be liable for rejecting any Application Form in accordance with the procedures and conditions set out in this document or for any change in the applicable laws or regulations that occur after the date of Series 5 Prospectus. Applicants are advised to make their own independent investigations to ensure that their Application Forms comply with prevailing laws and regulations.

Should any Applicant require additional explanation or clarification on the issue or allocation procedures, the

following representatives of the Issue Managers can be contacted:

Maisarah Islamic Banking Services (Bank Dhofar S.A.O.Q.)
Mr. Hamid Habeebullah
Tel: +968 24212598, Email: h.hamid@maisarah-oman.com

Ubhar Capital S.A.O.C.
Ms. Sahar K. Al Zaghra
Tel: +968 24949007
Email: s.zaghra@u-capital.net

Terms and mode of payment

- The Applicant will be responsible for satisfying all the particulars and the validity of the information set out in the Application. Collecting Banks / Agents have been instructed to accept only the Applications satisfying all the requirements of the Application Form and the Prospectus.
- The Applicant, before completing the Application, shall read the Prospectus including the Offer terms and conditions.
- The Applicant shall fill in the Application with all the relevant details as required by the Application and the Prospectus including the Applicant's number with MCD, civil number and date of birth for minor children.
- The Applicant shall submit the Application to one of the Collecting Banks / Agents as referred to in the Prospectus, together with the Application money and any relevant documents in support of the Application.

Particulars of the bank account of the Applicant

Each Applicant is required to provide the particulars of the Applicant's bank account (registered in the name of the Applicant). The Applicant must not use the bank account number of any other person except in the case of minor children for which the minor child's bank account may be used.

If the bank account of the Applicant is with a bank other than the Collecting Banks / Agents, the Applicant will be required to submit a document to confirm the details of its bank account particulars as provided in its Application Form. This can be completed by submitting any document from the bank of the Applicant that states the Applicant's bank account number and name of the account holder. Documents that may be accepted include account statements or a letter or any document issued by the bank confirming this information. The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that the evidence submitted is legible and contains the required information. In case the bank account referred to in its Application Form is maintained with the Collecting Banks / Agents, the Applicant is not obliged to submit any evidence with regard to the accuracy of its bank account. In such cases, the Collecting Banks / Agents will verify the Applicants' account through its own systems and procedures.

In accordance with the instructions of the CMA, the details of the bank account will be listed in the records of the MCD for crediting any payments in connection with the Trust Certificates listed on the MSM.

Any Application Form containing the bank account number of a person other than the Applicant will be rejected, with the exception of Application Forms submitted on behalf of minor children that contain bank account particulars of their fathers.

Documentation required

Submission of a document confirming the accuracy of the bank account number provided in the Application Form is only required where the bank account is registered with a bank that is not the Collecting Banks / Agents.

A copy of a valid power of attorney duly endorsed by the competent legal authorities (e.g. notary public) must be included in the event the Application Form is signed on behalf of another person (with the exception of an Application Form which is submitted by a father on behalf of his minor children).

In case of juristic persons (non-individuals), each Application Form must be submitted together with adequate and valid evidence, in form and substance satisfactory to the Collecting Banks / Agents, that the person signing the Application Form is duly authorized on behalf of that juristic person.

The Applicant must provide any documentary evidence, in form and substance satisfactory to the Collecting Banks / Agents, that the Collecting Banks / Agents may request to establish that the Applicant has and/or will have adequate funds available to pay an amount up to the Full Application Amount on or before the Issue Date.

Mode of Application

The Applicant can only subscribe for the Trust Certificates in the Offering by submitting to any of the Collecting Banks / Agents a duly completed Application Form either in person or through email as advised by the relevant Collecting Banks / Agent. The Applicant will be responsible for providing all particulars and will ensure the correctness and validity of the information set out in the Application Form. The Applicant is required, before completing the Application Form, to carefully read Series 5 Prospectus, including the conditions and procedures relating to the Application Form.

The Applicant is required to complete the Application Form and provide copies of all particulars as noted in the Application Form in form and substance acceptable to the Collecting Banks / Agents in their sole and absolute discretion.

The Applicant is required to submit the Application Form to the Collecting Banks / Agents and the documents in support of the Application Form on or before the Closing Date.

Acceptance of Application Forms

Application Forms will be accepted by the Collecting Banks / Agents if received on or before the Closing Date. The Collecting Banks / Agents shall refuse to accept any Application Forms received after the Closing Date.

The Collecting Banks / Agents may, in its sole and absolute discretion, refuse to accept an Application Form, including (but not limited to), in the following circumstances:

- If the Application Form does not bear the signature of the Applicant.
- If the mode and terms of payment, as set out in Series 5 Prospectus, are not followed by the Applicant.
- If the Application Form does not include the Applicant's Investor Number registered with the MCD.
- If the Application Form is submitted in joint names.
- If the Applicant is a sole proprietorship.
- If the Applicant is a trust account.
- If the Investor Number mentioned in the Application Form is incorrect.
- If the Applicant submits more than one Application Form in the same name, all of them will be rejected.
- If the required supporting documents are not enclosed with the Application Form.
- If the Application Form does not contain all the particulars of the bank account of the Applicant.
- If the particulars of the bank account provided in the Application Form are found to be incorrect or not relevant to the Applicant, with the exception of Application Forms submitted in the names of minor children, who are allowed to make use of the particulars of the bank accounts of their fathers.
- If the power of attorney is not attached to the Application Form in respect of an Applicant who subscribes on behalf of another person (with the exception of the fathers who subscribe on behalf of their minor children).
- If the Application Form does not comply with the legal or eligibility requirements as provided for in Series 5 Prospectus.

If the Collecting Banks / Agents receive an Application Form that does not comply with the procedures set out in the Prospectus, the Collecting Banks / Agents may, but shall not be required to, notify the Applicant of this non-compliance but the Collecting Banks / Agents shall in no event bear any liability whatsoever for doing or not doing so. If the Applicant does not rectify the Application Form and submit it on or before the Closing Date the Application Form may be rejected.

In all events, the Issue Managers may reject any Application Form if they consider the Application Form to be incomplete or insufficient or for any other reason in its sole and absolute discretion. Additionally, the Issuer may decide to reject any Application Form and determine the allotment of Trust Certificates to each Applicant and the number of Certificates to be issued.

Proposed timetable

The following table shows the expected time schedule for the Offering of the Trust Certificates:

Procedure	Date
Opening Date	10 November 2020
Closing Date	23 November 2020
The CMA's approval on allocation*	24 November 2020
Allocation confirmation by the Issue Managers upon approval of the CMA*	24 November 2020
Settlement Date / Issue Date*	24 November 2020
Dispatch of Allotment Notifications*	25 November 2020
Listing*	25 November 2020
*Indicative dates	

Listing and Trading of the Trust Certificates

Application will be made to the MSM for listing and trading of the Trust Certificates on the Bonds and Sukuk Market of the MSM. The following is to be observed with respect to the listing and trading of the Trust Certificates:

Oman

Series 5 Prospectus will be filed with the CMA, and the Trust Certificates shall be governed by the Omani legislations regulating the Trust Certificates.

The information contained in Series 5 Prospectus does not constitute:

an offer to sell, or the solicitation of any offer to buy non-Omani securities in Oman as contemplated by Articles 139 of the Executive Regulations or an issuance of the Trust Certificates under Chapter III (Part II) of the Executive Regulation.

General

Neither the Issuer, the Collecting Banks / Agents nor the Issue Managers has represented that the Trust Certificates may at any time lawfully be sold in compliance with any applicable registration or other requirements in any jurisdiction, or pursuant to any exemption available thereunder, or assumes any responsibility for facilitating such sale. Persons into whose possession the Series 5 Prospectus or the Trust Certificates may come must inform themselves about, and observe, any applicable restrictions on the distribution of this Prospectus and the offering and sale of the Trust Certificates.

Enquiry and complaints

Any Applicant who wishes to seek clarification or file a complaint with regard to issues related to the allotment or rejected Application Forms or refunds may contact the Collecting Banks / Agents to which their Application Form was submitted.

Issue Managers



Legal Advisor



Collecting Banks / Agents

All conventional and Islamic banks and Islamic banking windows licenced to operate in Oman by the Central Bank of Oman. All securities brokerage companies and firms licenced to operate in Oman by the Capital Market Authority of Oman.

Bank Muscat talk focuses on role of e-Commerce for entrepreneurs

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, in line with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday', and commitment to supporting and developing the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) sector recently hosted a Najahi Talks session organised by its Retail Enterprises Unit (Najahi).

The online session was moderated by Abdullah al Jufaili, head, Retail Enterprises Unit (Najahi), Bank Muscat, and hosted well-known technology entrepreneur and investor Sharifa al Barami, who is also the co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of MarkeetEx.com, a leading digital mall catering to the needs of Omani MSMEs.

The session, which was livestreamed through the bank's social media channels, saw an engaging and informative talk followed by an excellent discussion on a number of topics vital to the growth of Omani entrepreneurs in the digital age.

With over 1.4bn people having shopped online at least once, WTO estimates that the annual global e-commerce market is

presently placed well over US\$25tn. The sector is undergoing rapid growth, fueled by near instantaneous local and international payments. It is thus vital for Omani MSMEs to capitalise on this far-reaching and tectonic shift in both consumer shopping habits.

Sharifa, who was previously the managing director of the Omani Accelerator Fund, a US\$15mn seed fund and accelerator programme aimed at investing in technology startups at the seed stage, discussed in detail how Omani startups can benefit from the present rapid growth in e-commerce. She pointed out the key factors that are contributing to the rapid growth of e-commerce, and explained how consumer behaviour is rapidly changing. With the current pandemic, shopping online by both retail and business consumers have sky-rocketed and this trend is likely to continue in the future too once customers get accustomed to the convenience factor and online payments.

Sharifa discussed in detail the steps that Omani entrepreneurs, especially SMEs, should consider



before selling products and services through electronic channels as well as the importance of digital marketing.

She also spoke on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in setting up an e-Commerce platform and explained how these can be overcome.

The online discussion was carried out in an engaging and interesting manner and the participants thanked Sharifa for sharing her in-depth knowledge about the topic.

Abdullah al Jufaili, head, Retail Enterprises Unit (Najahi), Bank Muscat, said, "As a pioneer in supporting the Omani MSME sector, the bank is continuously



coming up with new initiatives to strengthen this important sector. Our Najahi Talks sessions feature leading subject experts and entrepreneurs who are eager to share their knowledge for the benefit of the entire Omani entrepreneurial community and strengthening our nation.

"Omani MSMEs are providing more and more jobs for our youths and contributing to the development of Oman in line with goals of our Blessed Renaissance and Oman Vision 2040.

Over the last one year, 'Najahi Talks' has grown in popularity because of the way in which it contributes to strengthening

Omani MSME business owners.

The sessions are usually held in the first week of every month and details are updated on the bank's social media accounts for the benefit of those who are interested in participating in these knowledge-sharing sessions.

The entire discussion is available on Instagram for the benefit of viewers who could not participate in the live event.

Aimed at boosting the role of Omani entrepreneurs, Bank Muscat Najahi recently signed an agreement with MarkeetEx Digital Mall so as to facilitate the sale of products and service using an online market.

As per the agreement, the bank will offer financial support to promising SMEs in selling products through the MarkeetEx Digital Mall.

Given the current social distancing norms where the holding of the usual products exhibitions are not possible, this initiative by Najahi will particularly help Micro and Small-sized businesses in growing their business and revenues, thereby also contributing to the National Economy.

Celebrate this Diwali with handful of gold from Joyalukkas

Joyalukkas, the world's favourite jeweller that has been adding glitter for over three decades, is now all set to make this a glittering and joyous Diwali for its customers with handful gold coins as gifts.

In addition, there is also a special collection of festive jewellery in all the showrooms to make the occasion all the more glittering. Announcing this in a press release Joy Alukkas, chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group, said that Diwali is one of the most preferred times to buy gold ornaments.

"Traditionally, this is the time of the year when we see an up-take in jewellery sales. For many consumers Diwali is the time to buy gold for their personal use as well as to give as gifts to their loved ones. I am confident that the upcoming Diwali will encourage people to come out and buy their preferred jewellery from our stores, spread all over the world, since it is an established tradition among Indians to buy gold during this occasion. It is a well known fact that gold and gold ornaments are an integral part of In-

dian tradition and culture. While gold has financial value, gold jewellery also has social value which adds glitter to the whole thing. I would also like to stress on the fact that gold is one of the best investment options at the moment and people should also look at gold from an investment perspective that will give decent returns in the long run," he added.

This Diwali Joyalukkas has launched a special promotion 'Happy Waali Diwali' which is on till the mid of November.

Joyalukkas is giving free 1gm 22k gold coin on purchase of diamond and Polki jewellery worth RO300, free 0.200gm 22k gold coin on purchase of gold jewellery worth RO300 from November 12 to 15, as part of the promotion.

Customers can also sell/exchange gold jewellery purchased from any jeweller. They can also pay 10 per cent advance and get gold rate protection till the end of the promotion period. Overall, this Diwali the valued customers of Joyalukkas will be glitteringly rewarded when they buy gold.

Alam al Iktisaad Awards to felicitate companies

Oman will witness the most high profile event of its kind targeted primarily at the top echelons of the business community in the sultanate on November 24. Hosted by Sheikh Salim bin Muthail al Mashani, Alam al Iktisaad Awards will be an exclusive platform for thought leadership sharing and felicitating the top achievers in Oman's corporate world.

Eng Abdul Amir al Ajmi, external affairs & value creation director, Petroleum Development Oman, will deliver the keynote address during the event. This year marks the tenth edition of the event.

The premium event will witness the congregation of key decision-makers who are driving the country's business and economy, and individuals instrumental in the nation building process. The select business leaders, CEOs and senior officials from a cross-section of industries and government bodies will attend the by-invitation only event in person under strict social distancing measures. The larger audience will attend the event on Zoom and YouTube.



Overall 15 top ranking MSM-listed companies will receive the coveted trophy across three categories based on their performance on select financial parameters. Furthermore, special awards will be presented for achievements that go beyond the balance sheet. These include Lifetime Achievement, Excellence in Corporate Leadership, CEO of the Year, Business Leader of the Year, Innovation & Technology, etc.

The event is organised by UMS Events, the specialist events and conferences arm of United Media Services (UMS).

Samsung's next-generation System AC products now available in Oman

Samsung Gulf Electronics has announced that its world-class System Air Conditioning (AC) products are available for commercial customers in Oman. Specially designed to boost operations for real estate, architect, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) companies, Samsung's innovative Split Air conditioners, the 4Way Cassette AC with WindFree cooling and 360 Cassette AC Bladeless design, have succeeded in maintaining cool and comfortable environments and matching a host of interior designs thanks to its capabilities and advanced technologies.

Ali al Zein, head of System AC division at Samsung Gulf Electronics, said, "At Samsung, our vision has always been to inspire the world with technologies, products, and design that enrich people's lives. Creating a new future is important to us, and this is why we continuously drive innovation to break barriers in the tech world and introduce next-generation appliances. Personal and professional life are en-



twined. As such, we are equally committed to helping those we serve across the region's commercial sector."

An array of company directors, mechanical and HVAC engineers, designers, consultants, architects, and project managers have provided glowing reviews and responses concerning the next-generation appliances, pointing out their efficiency and effectiveness in delivering flawless results in every instance.

Simple yet intuitive, the 4Way WindFree Cassette AC is an air

conditioner like no other. Because it has lived up to its promise to provide powerful cooling with no direct wind, it has established itself as the perfect innovation to keep houses and offices cool and ensure everybody is comfortable.

As for the 360 Cassette AC, its futuristic circular design can match many interior designs, so it perfectly fits in everywhere.

Furthermore, because it is bladeless, it softly disperses cool air across any room, so people are comfortably cool without



ever experiencing the unpleasant feeling of a cold draft associated with traditional AC appliances.

"By welcoming products to the market that enhance operations and convenience, they are then used to deliver new meaning at home and work," added Zein.

"Air conditioning has always been a necessity, particularly considering the warmer climate in this part of the world. We are delighted with the success of our System AC products and look forward to providing further sup-

port, assistance, and inspiration."

For more information concerning Samsung's System AC products, including prices and specific features, please visit www.samsung.com.

Samsung inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies.

The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, wearable devices, tablets, digital appliances, network systems, and memory, system LSI, foundry and LED solutions.

A'soud Global School reinforces parent-teacher communication

A'soud Global School (AGS), after successfully launching its dynamic e-learning curriculum earlier this year, is determined to ensure parents receive the necessary level of communication and feedback on students' academic progress and mental well-being. The British international curriculum school invited parents to join teachers and tutors in discussions during its first ever 'Virtual Parent - Teacher Programme' held recently to address key topics such as student grades, performance highlights and adaptability to the e-learning curriculum.

Since the launch of AGS's e-learning curriculum as part of its 'Back to School' programme, students have enjoyed a comprehensive online learning experience. The launch of the Virtual Parent - Teacher programme marks an important



milestone in A'soud Global School's vision to further strengthen the triangle of communication between the school, students and parents, to positively impact students' learning experience.

Lee Davies, principal of A'soud Global School, says, "The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted some necessary com-



munications between schools and parents. After the resounding success of our e-learning programme, we decided to customise our digital learning

platforms towards the school's annual Parent-Teacher meeting, to ensure open lines of communication."

"We were delighted to recon-

nect with our school community and share feedback with parents in person. It is vital to give feedback on student progress and listen to any concerns our parent

body may have. The online learning programme will continue at AGS until the parents are ready to send their children back to school and the success of

this event has been an important learning experience for the whole AGS community," adds Davies.

The innovative digital meeting provided an opportune moment for parents and teachers to interact with one another and develop essential face-to-face communication.

Parents received the virtual sessions positively, as nearly all families eagerly signed up to e-meet their teachers and tutors from across the school.

"I am very satisfied at how the programme was structured and also very happy with the level of communication," states a Grade 3 parent.

Additionally, another parent shares, "I would like to thank the teachers for making online learning smooth and fun for our children. My daughter is having a great time in class."

Own technology-packed Infiniti QX60

Infiniti Oman has announced a low EMI on the award-winning Infiniti QX60 LUXE 19 the most versatile three-row, seven-passenger vehicle. The luxury crossover, repeatedly among Infiniti's top two selling models is available at a low EMI of RO175. A stylish and performance driven vehicle, Infiniti QX60 offers world class technology, comfort, space and an array of features which underline its position as a luxury SUV.

A senior spokesperson at Infiniti Oman said, "Striking with its powerful elegance and craftsmanship, the QX60 has become an important part of Infiniti's growth strategy. The crossover addresses the needs of today's modern families and features additional enhancements that are aimed at empowering the driver with a more premium experience. We are happy to make it simpler for luxury motoring enthusiasts to own this luxury brand with low EMI."

The low EMI (terms and conditions apply) of RO175 is applicable on the model Infiniti QX60 LUXE 19. Subject to credit approval. Terms and conditions apply.

For enquiries, please contact Renjith on +968 9533 4246 or email renjith@sbigh.com.

Fine features

Infiniti QX60 offers a combination of family features with a welcoming, crafted design inside and out. Above all emphasising Infiniti's originality and accent for safety of drivers, Infiniti QX60 offers the unique Back-up Collision Intervention System (BCI).

The Infiniti QX60 features enhanced interior and exterior design with a suite of assistive and intuitive technologies to give discerning customers a vehicle that



redefines versatility. With its comfortable seating, powerful 3.5lt V6 engine, and technology and safety features to enhance the driver experience, Infiniti QX60 has turned out to be a winner all the way.

In-built technologies

Featuring superior interior and exterior design with a collection of assistive and in-built technologies, the Infiniti QX60 which is a fantastic three-row luxury crossover stays ahead of the curve by bringing a unique offering to the segment. While it impresses auto enthusiasts with its array of features, Infiniti QX60's intelligent technology, advanced performance, and leading-edge craftsmanship has brought it new fans too.

Infiniti QX60's innovative design gives it both luxurious versatility and visual appeal, besides its improved interior design with a suite of assistive and intuitive

technologies provide adaptability precisely tailored to the needs of every guest. Furthermore, the state-of-the-art Infiniti QX60 is completely redesigned from the exterior and also boasts a host of new features and technologies that enhance comfort, convenience and safety.

The redesigned double-arch grille at the front is flanked by standard-fit bi-xenon headlamps. There is greater use of LED lighting, including new LED Daytime Running Lights as well as front fog lamps which feature LED lighting and chrome finishers. It also features the signature brand design cues such as double-wave bonnet, and crescent-cut D-pillar.

On the interior, Infiniti QX60 offers the signature driver-oriented cockpit, highlighted by thin chrome accents as well as an upper instrument panel has been wrapped in soft-touch material with contrast stitching.

A responsive V6 engine

The Infiniti QX60's standard 3.5lt V6 engine is rated at 295 horsepower and 270 lb-ft of torque. The engine's Direct Injection Gasoline system provides better wide-open throttle performance and emissions performance (versus a non-direct-injection system).

The engine is matched with an efficient, sport-tuned, electronically controlled continuously variable transmission with D-Step Logic that provides high responsiveness and seamless, efficient shifting feel. The transmission can mimic a step transmission, and it features a wide gear ratio and low friction design.

The QX60 also features an independent-strut front and multi-link rear suspension designed to provide smooth ride control with a reduction in body movement when cornering. To enhance stability through the controls when

cornering, the Active Trace Control system links with the QX60's standard Vehicle Dynamic Control system. This automatically applies the brakes in a specific pattern and then smooth engine torque characteristics while accelerating.

Back-up Collision Intervention System

Further proving Infiniti's innovation and concern for the safety of drivers, the incredible SUV offers Back-up Collision Intervention System (BCI).

With safety at the core of technology, the BCI system is designed to help prevent accidents while reversing up the vehicle. In order to do so, it involves a range of sensors in crucial locations. These sensors are able to detect both moving objects, such as crossing traffic or incoming vehicles, and larger stationary objects that a driver may not be aware of. This allows the system

to provide extra protection in case the driver happens to miss a moving or stationary object while backing up.

If for some reason a driver doesn't notice the first warning indicators of an approaching vehicle or doesn't react in time, Backup Collision Intervention will take appropriate steps to avoid collision and keep them safe. This comes in the form of a red indicator on the display unit of the vehicle accompanied by three beeps. At the same time, the system will automatically push backward on the accelerator and engage the brakes so the driver doesn't hit the moving or stationary object.

Keeping you safe

The Infiniti QX60 doesn't just keep you safe with the Backup Collision Intervention system; this is just one of many innovative features offered by Infiniti to prevent accidents and serious in-

juries if the worst does occur. Around View Monitor and Moving Object Detection systems give the driver a 360-degree view of the area around the crossover's display. Moving Object Detection gives drivers both audio and visual warnings and cues to help them park their vehicles, even when parallel parking.

Other great features that will keep the driver safe are Blind Spot Intervention and Lane Departure Prevention, which work with the existing Blind Spot Warning and Lane Departure Warning systems. These intervention and prevention systems take the warnings found in many vehicles a step further by automatically helping the drivers to stay in their lane when a potential collision is detected.

Other innovative safety features worth mentioning include Brake Assist with Preview, Intelligent Brake Assist, and the Infiniti Advanced Air Bag System.

The goal of Infiniti is to keep drivers safe, and that clearly comes through in its innovative safety features. When driving the Infiniti QX60, simply remember that a driver should still follow the standard safety methods while driving, but they will always have peace of mind with Backup Collision Intervention and other advanced safety features. Infiniti QX60 has always delivered in spades on the technology front. Added to the Infiniti QX60 is Forward Emergency Braking (FEB) with Pedestrian Detection. When combined with the already existing features like Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Backup Collision Intervention and Around View Monitor, it makes for one of the safest 7 seat crossovers in its segment from a technology perspective.



Animation movie creates COVID-19 awareness

Children and elderly people are the most affected in the ongoing pandemic. They have been forced to stay indoors for no fault of theirs.

A recently released 160 seconds 2D animation movie - *COVID-19: Changing Social Habits & Relationships* - talks about life before and during COVID-19, also highlights the changing life perceptions. The short movie, conceived by Ramachandran Nair, has gained a good response from public.

The pandemic scenario is a good learning for both parents and children to realise how life changes and what it feels like to

remain locked indoors.

The ongoing scenario has come as a great relief to working parents who were earlier unable to spend time with their children.

The narration of the animation movie is given in Malayalam with English subtitles. With appropriate visuals, the message is clearly conveyed to viewers about life before COVID-19 and how it has changed during the pandemic, and stressing on the importance of a real family concept. The movie is also made to raise social awareness on COVID-19 protocols, such as wearing facemasks and social distancing in public places.

OAB, Dar al Atta'a collect and donate food

Oman Arab Bank partnered with Dar al Atta'a again this year to commemorate World Food Day which took place on October 16. The World Food Day campaign is an annual food drive that sees individuals and entities such as OAB donate food items to those in need.

Commenting on the importance of this initiative, Hilal al Siyabi, head of Corporate Communications at OAB, said, "Now, more than ever, it is crucial to support each other and lend a hand to those in need and that's what makes World Food Day so important. We are grateful to the team at Dar al Atta'a for coordinating and partnering with us for this important cause once again. The staff at Oman Arab Bank have been doing their part by donating food to help make a difference."

Oman Arab Bank has participated in and initiated a number of charity initiatives since the start of the year, all of which underline its dedication to sustainability, which remains a fundamental pillar in the bank's operational strategy. Under the umbrella of the #OABistidama,



the bank seeks to give back to society through projects focused on environmental responsibility, community partnerships and financial inclusion.

"Our participation in the World Food Day campaign is something that is close to our hearts. Just as we hope to make a difference in the life of our customers, we aim to create value for the communities we are a

part of. By collecting more than 1,017kg of food and donating them to Dar al Atta'a for distribution, we know that we can make a difference and reach those most in need," Siyabi added.

World Food Day is an initiative launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and is celebrated internationally on October 16 each year,

commemorating the founding day of the Organization in 1945.

On this day, more than 150 countries around the world organise events that promote worldwide awareness and action for those in need. The initiative is also an opportunity to demonstrate commitment towards sustainable development and the achievement of FAO's goal of ending world hunger by 2030.

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the sultanate. Today, the bank operates a nationwide network of 55 branches and representative offices with 152 ATMs spread across Oman. OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services for personal and corporate banking.

Indian School Ghubra wins Ambassador's Polemic Challenge 2020

The Indian School Ghubra (ISG) contingent consisting of Kshama Sushilkumar Mumbai and Suyog Suhas Bhat won the prestigious Ambassador's Polemic Challenge in the debate event organised recently, under the aegis of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools, Oman.

The Ambassador's Polemic Challenge is an annual event for the Indian schools in Oman, or-

ganised by the Board of Directors. This year, the 12th edition of the event was held virtually, with Indian School Sohar as the host. The topic of the debate was 'Online Education has made students more independent learners'.

In his introductory message, Dr Baby Sam Samuel, chairman, Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman, noted the infor-

mation of misinformation and stressed that skills such as critical thinking, rational thinking and openness to new ideas are important to overcome misinformation and also thrive as a 21st century global citizen.

He added that straddling the opposing positions during the debates can help students in enhancing their persuasion skills while also helping to see new

perspectives.

H E Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, inaugurated the debate competition and noted that debating has been a part of Indian tradition.

It is very important to look at an issue from all angles, considering its pros and cons in an objective manner and then arrive at the conclusion. H E Mahawar

commented that the topic of the debate was quite relevant and wished that the participants would bring forth the inherent challenges entailed in online education.

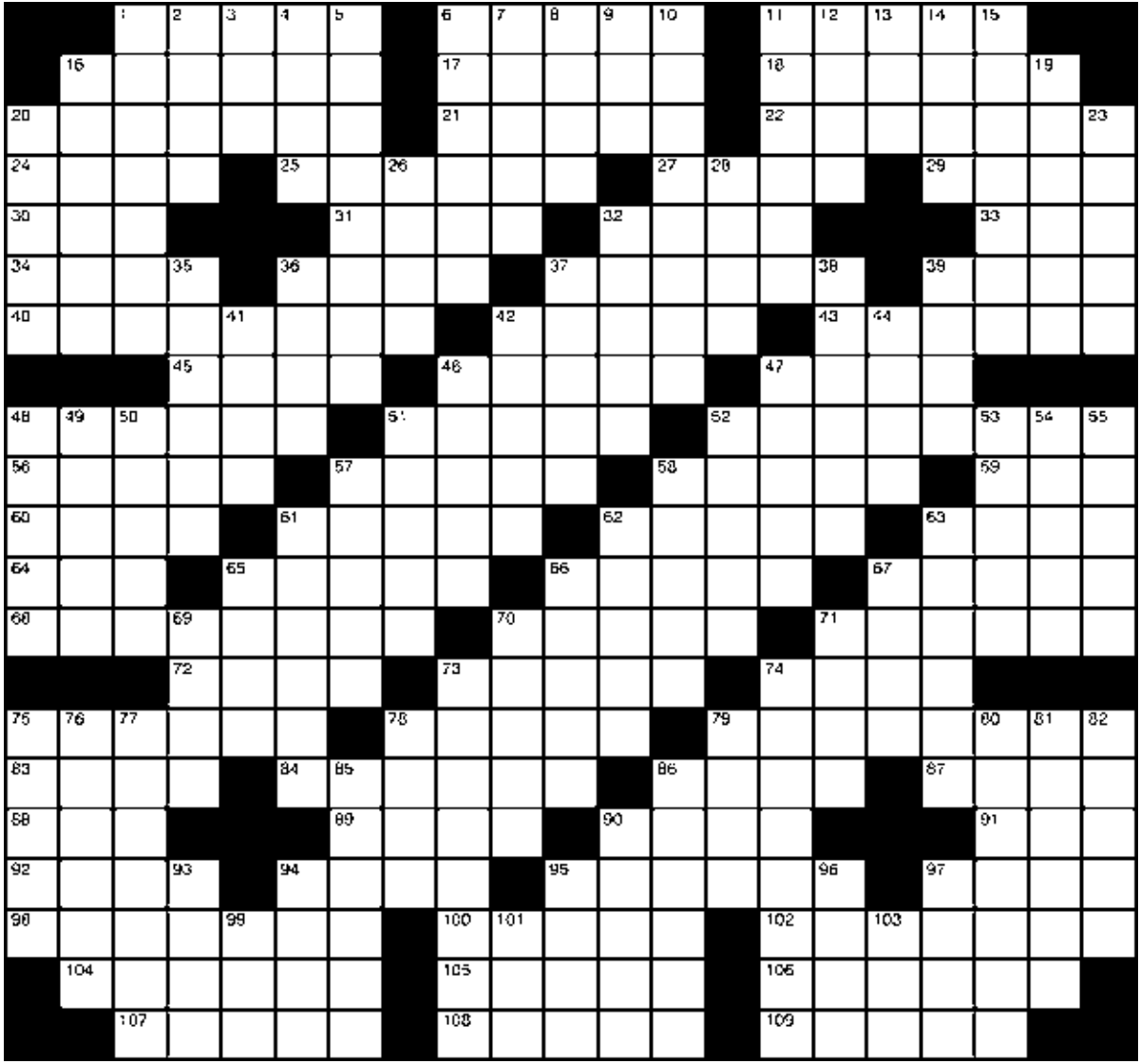
Sanchita Verma, principal, Indian School Sohar, welcomed the dignitaries that included Anil Khimji and Kiran Asher, representatives of the Banyan Community of Oman; Abraham

George, president of the School Management Committee; Vinoba MP, senior principal and education advisor; the panel of judges consisting of John Moshi, Dr Arya Aiyappan and Gayatri Khanna; members of the School Management Committee; principals and teachers of various Indian schools in Oman.

Kshama Sushilkumar Mumbai of Indian School Ghubra and

Samved Shaji Nambiar of Indian School Salalah were declared as the Best Speaker and the First Runner-up respectively. Monisha Badlani of Indian School Ma'a-bela was placed at the Second Runner-up position. Arin Idhant (Indian School Seeb), Kshama Sushilkumar Mumbai (Indian School Ghubra) and Dua Zainab (Indian School Ibri) bagged the prize for the Best Rebuttal.

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 1 Italian physicist
- 6 Form
- 11 Markets
- 16 Leave in helpless isolation
- 17 Sheltered inlets
- 18 Worships
- 20 Block by overcrowding
- 21 Discloses
- 22 Artless
- 24 Greek letters
- 25 Bed canopy
- 27 Pitcher
- 29 Great Lake
- 30 Musical direction: abbr.
- 31 Require
- 32 Unexpected difficulty
- 33 A wing
- 34 Wicked
- 36 ___-Neisse Line
- 37 Croquet hoop
- 39 Pace
- 40 Supported
- 42 Volcano on Martinique
- 43 Coursers
- 45 Marsh grass
- 46 He had a "golden touch"
- 47 Antitoxins
- 48 Negligent

- 51 Throes
- 52 Exhausting
- 56 Choose
- 57 Fencing position
- 58 Metrical writing
- 59 Born
- 60 ___ Hari
- 61 Mends
- 62 Fasten again
- 63 Molten rock
- 64 Shoshonean Indian
- 65 Indian tent
- 66 Fragrant flower
- 67 More delicate
- 68 Keeps in repair
- 70 A resin
- 71 Animal trainers
- 72 Arabian chieftain
- 73 Type of beaver?
- 74 Explosive weapon
- 75 Cited
- 78 More ancient
- 79 Resowed
- 83 Unfasten
- 84 Sea ducks
- 86 Band across escutcheon
- 87 To anger
- 88 Append
- 89 Buffoon
- 90 Metric unit of weight

- 91 Escape
- 92 Obscures
- 94 Lion's pride
- 95 One of the Three Musketeers
- 97 Spouse
- 98 Gym shoe
- 100 __ Crane of "Fraser"
- 102 Recounts
- 104 Whole
- 105 Social division
- 106 Volcano mouth
- 107 A dogma
- 108 More secure
- 109 Chopped

DOWN

- 1 Religious zealot
- 2 Units of energy
- 3 Fish eggs
- 4 Greatest amount
- 5 Meant
- 6 Sea duck
- 7 Waited expectantly
- 8 Avouch
- 9 Female swan
- 10 Perfumes
- 11 Riding academy
- 12 Jewish month
- 13 Decay
- 14 Real
- 15 Notched, like a saw

- 16 Reason
- 19 Navigated
- 20 Goddess of vegetation
- 23 Bounds
- 26 Germ
- 28 Irish ceremony
- 32 ___ Marner
- 35 Roman cuirass
- 36 Poems
- 37 Shoe or golf club
- 38 African fly
- 39 To blast
- 41 Cozy place
- 42 Measures of capacity
- 44 Zipline connection
- 46 French river
- 47 Silken
- 48 Legendary cofounder of Rome
- 49 Puff up
- 50 Measuring device
- 51 Peels
- 52 Flower part
- 53 Senseless
- 54 At no time
- 55 Machine parts
- 57 To frolic
- 58 Of the soft palate
- 61 Determine

- 62 More mature
- 63 Lithe
- 65 Sci-fi machine
- 66 Theater boxes
- 67 Renown
- 69 Interdiction
- 70 Skeleton organization: Mil.
- 71 Throw
- 73 Component parts
- 74 Sully
- 75 Four-wire units
- 76 Fictional water spirit
- 77 A leftover
- 78 War god
- 79 Paper measure
- 80 Expanded
- 81 Click beetle
- 82 Townships of Attica
- 85 Turkish inn
- 86 American sculptor
- 90 Swimming bird
- 93 Gratify
- 94 Simple
- 95 Arabic letter
- 96 Withered
- 97 Arachnid
- 99 Relative
- 101 Writers Glass or Levin
- 103 Crow's call

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Aries is the quintessential individualist. You're here to follow your path, with or without other people's approval. That's why this time of year can be so educational for you, as you're drawn to understanding the dynamics of creating a functional partnership based on equality. Today's third quarter moon in Leo highlights the ongoing set of changes that need to be identified internally.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

This time of year sees you dealing with difficult emotional material. You're working hard to build a nest and connect to family in a way that feels supportive to you, but you have to deal with elements of your past that you've kept under lock for quite some time. Today's third quarter moon in your sign speaks to the changes waiting in the wings around your identity and self-image.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Like any good philosopher, you have to hide out and mull things over alone. That's where you're at this time of year, as you come to terms with the little snags in your thinking and behaviour that keep you from being your best self. Today's third quarter moon in Leo prompts you to look at the bigger picture and identify these pressing changes needing to be made.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

'What is love? Baby, don't hurt me...' This seems to be your theme song. Relationships, with all the warmth and pains they can encapsulate, call for your steady attention. Today's third quarter moon points its eye to the past—primarily your early upbringing and family dynamics. This helps you see what hung-up elements you continue to project onto your present.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Finding your voice is of importance. Your main focus this month has likely vacillated been educational pursuits your own mental world. Telling your story and activating your ability to share your perceptions is key. Today's third quarter moon in Leo stirs up ancient feelings from the depths of your subconscious. Pay attention to what thought patterns are calling to be cleared.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

What are your current set of goals? They needn't be grandiose; they also don't have to be so tiny that you're afraid to dream big. This time has you trying to strike a balance and find what's worth pursuing. Third quarter moon in Leo calls for emotional alterations that need to be made in your thinking. It's all so you can free up enough space and confidence to go after the dream.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Devoting yourself to meaningful work is of importance. You've been sinking your teeth into your interests, finding ways to hone your skills, while also taking on more work than ever. Sunday's third quarter moon places its focus on the changes needing to be made around your perception, communication, and mental inner world. This is all so you can clear space for continued learning.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

This time of year is all about self-discovery, Libra. You've been wrestling with old hurts around your self-confidence and self-worth in recent weeks, which is never easy territory to stay strong in. Yet, that work has helped you to shore up your faith in talents and abilities. Today's third quarter moon in Leo pinpoints the changes needing to be made to your long-term goals.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

All eyes are on you. You're at the top of your career game and public reputation and have the ability to make things happen ambition-wise. It may feel uncomfortable in the spotlight, given all the tricky emotional material you've had to deal with behind closed doors. Today's third quarter moon in Leo points to changes needing to be made in your close personal relationships.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Part of your life's work involves creating a secure emotional foundation to operate from. That base helps you reach out and share your gifts. This time of year sees you stretching your horizons for creative action and self-expression. Today's third quarter moon in Leo prompts you to create more space to openly share your talents and skills with the onlooking world.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're in the midst of getting closer to your core self. This time has you fully focused on your individuality and self-expression. Your identity is changing and shedding old costumes. This month promises to help you become certain of what direction is right for you. The arrival of the third quarter moon in Leo points to alterations needing to be made around your career path.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You're knee-deep in the process of transformation. This time of year has you confronting your relationship demons, helping you alter your approach to intimacy on a more balanced and self-revealing level. Today's third quarter moon in Leo illuminates the changes waiting to be made around opening up your heart and helps you identify which problems stand in your way.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. John F. Kennedy, President of USA, died in

- a. 1963
- b. 1964
- c. 1965
- d. 1966

2. Lal Bahadur Shastri

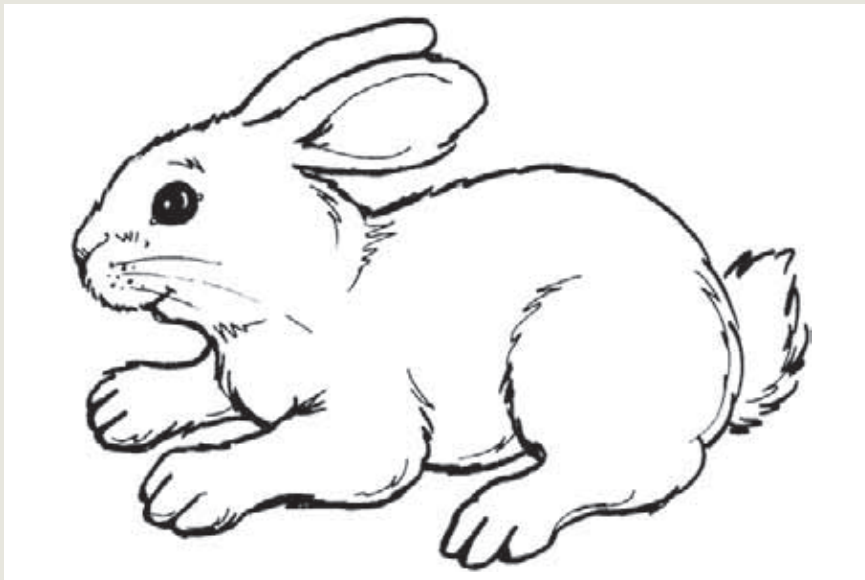
- a. succeeded Pandit Nehru as the second Prime Minister of India
- b. signed the Tashkent Agreement with Ayub Khan for a ceasefire between India and Pakistan
- c. is also known as "Man of Peace"
- d. All of the above

3. Normally the Commonwealth Games are held at intervals of

- a. 3 years
- b. 4 years
- c. 5 years
- d. there is no fixed interval

Answers: 1: a 2: d 3: b

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

9			4	6				1
		6		7	9			
		4				8	9	
	3			9				8
5	7		2		1		3	4
6				5			2	
	2	3				9		
			1	2		4		
4				3	8			2

BOGGLER

I	M	N	L
G	R	I	D
F	U	A	P
U	N	N	A

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

2	1	5	8	3	6	7	9	4
3	9	7	2	1	5	6	8	
7	8	6	9	4	5	3	2	1
6	2	1	5	3	7	8	4	9
7	3	9	1	8	2	6	7	5
8	5	7	4	6	9	1	3	2
9	6	8	2	1	3	4	5	7
4	5	2	6	7	8	9	1	3
1	7	3	5	9	7	2	8	6

DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (NOVEMBER 05)



WORD BUILDER

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

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



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I, Sonam Shaileshkumar Gandhi (holder of Indian Passport No. Z4227623) D/o Shaileshkumar Gandhi having permanent residence in Aavishkar Flat No. 202, Opp. Nirmala Road, Kalawad Road, Rajkot 360001 (complete postal address in India) and presently residing at Muscat, Post Box No. 100, Postal Code 438, Sultanate of Oman (complete postal address in Sultanate of Oman), intend to marry Mr. Vicky Chandrakant Mandavia (holder of Indian passport bearing No. T9494451), S/o Chandrakant Mandavia having permanent residence in 22 D Sunder Nagar, Near Mahavir Nagar, Dahanukar wadi, Kandiwali West, Mumbai 400067 (complete permanent address) at Embassy of India, Muscat. I swear that I am marrying him at my own free will and not under any duress and intimidation. Any objection towards this marriage may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P.O. Box No. 1727, Postal Code No. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman within 30 (thirty) days of publication of this newspaper advertisement.

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Wallabies shock All Blacks

Brisbane, Australia - Australia pulled off an unlikely win on Saturday as they bounced back from a record loss to beat New Zealand 24-22 in a thrilling Tri Nations Test match in Brisbane.

With both teams reduced to 14 men in the first half following red cards for New Zealand's Ofa Tuungafasi and Australia's debutant Lachlan Swinton for high tackles, the Wallabies dug deep to come from behind to stun the All Blacks.

After being smashed 43-5 in Sydney last weekend, the Wallabies were given little chance of turning the tables on the All Blacks, who had already secured the Bledisloe Cup with a game to spare.

But they finished the stronger of the two teams and sealed the win when replacement prop Taniela Tupou crashed over with five minutes left to put the home side 24-15 ahead.

But there was still time for All Blacks to cross with two minutes remaining when Tupou Vaai scored next to the posts and Jordie Barret converted to reduce the gap to 24-22, but the Wallabies held on for a deserved win.

"I'm really proud of the guys, we've been working hard for a lot of weeks," said Wallabies coach Dave Rennie, who was enjoyed his first win since taking charge of Australia.

"We knew we were better than last week and showed a lot of character tonight. We know



Australian players celebrate their win over New Zealand in the fourth Test at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, Australia, on Saturday

we get still be better, we can be tidier and finish off the game without putting the coaches through the wringer.

"But they're a good bunch of boys, they're working hard and great that we got a result tonight."

The Wallabies got away to a

blistering start in front of over 36,000 fans when winger Tom Wright scored with his first touch in Test rugby.

A perfectly placed chip kick from flyhalf Reece Hodge fell perfectly for fullback Tom Banks, who then found Wright with a clever flick pass.

The All Blacks struck back only six minutes later when winger Rieko Ioane crossed in the corner after 29 phases to level the scores at 5-5.

Two red cards

Hodge put the Wallabies back in front with a penalty in the 21st

minute before the All Blacks were rocked by Tuungafasi's red card when the big prop was adjudged to have hit Wright in the head with a high tackle.

After weathering a storm from the Australians, the All Blacks drew level at 8-8 when Micheal Hooper was penalised

for entering the ruck from the side right in front of the posts and Jordie Barret made no mistake with the penalty.

But from the ensuing kick-off Swinton smashed Sam Whitelock with a shoulder to the head and referee Nic Berry had an easy decision to show him the

second red card of the match.

The Wallabies were rocked once again when winger Marika Koroibete was shown a yellow card right on half-time for a professional foul but they held on and went into the break with the scores level.

They then took the lead against the odds ten minutes after the restart with a second Hodge penalty, and when Koroibete returned to the field the Wallabies were ahead 11-8

But that lead lasted just two minutes as Codie Taylor crashed over at the back of a driving maul after Whitelock secured good ball at the line-out five metres out.

Jordie Barrett converted from out wide to make it 15-11 to the All Blacks.

A third Hodge penalty following a dominant Australian scrum got the Wallabies to within a point at 15-14.

Then with 13 minutes to go, the All Blacks were down to 13 when Scott Barrett was shown a yellow card for a cynical foul, battling the ball away illegally to stop an attack while lying on the ground.

The Wallabies took full advantage with another Hodge penalty before Tupou's match-winning try.

"We said we wanted a response after last week and we got it," said a delighted Rennie. "Good to get a result like that as it helps with belief."

AFP

TENNIS ROUND-UP

Djokovic equals Sampras' year-end world No 1 record



A file photo of Novak Djokovic

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic on Friday emulated childhood hero Pete Sampras by claiming the year-end world No 1 ranking for the sixth time.

Djokovic, 33, was confirmed in the position after Rafael Nadal, the only man who could deny him top spot, opted not to play in the Sofia event next week.

Djokovic was also a season-ending world No 1 in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018.

"Pete was somebody I looked up to when I was growing up, so to match his record is a dream come true," said Djokovic.

The Serb star, a winner of 17 Grand Slam titles, had already moved past Sampras' tally of 286 weeks in the top spot in September.

Djokovic can go past all-time record-holder Roger Federer's mark of 310 weeks on March 8 next year.

"To finish the year as No 1 is one of the most impressive achievements in our sport, one which requires sustained excellence across the season," said ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

"To see Novak achieve this for

the sixth time and match Pete's record is simply incredible, and he continues to cement his place in the history books."

Djokovic has compiled a 39-3 winning season, picking up four titles - a record eighth Australian Open, Dubai, the Cincinnati tournament, which was staged in New York, and in Rome.

However, he was disqualified from the US Open for hitting a line judge with a ball before his bid to win a second Roland Garros ended in a tame defeat to Nadal in the final.

Djokovic was virtually assured of ending 2020 on top of the rankings when he reached the quarterfinals in Vienna last month. He was stunned 6-2, 6-1 by Italian lucky loser Lorenzo Sonego in the Austrian capital, suffering the heaviest loss of his career in a best-of-three sets clash.

"I have done what I came here for, securing the No 1. And I'm completely fine with today's result," he said to some consternation.

Later this month, Djokovic will attempt to secure a record-equalling sixth ATP Finals trophy in London from November 15.

AFP



Alexander Zverev in action against Stan Wawrinka in Paris on Friday

Zverev beats Wawrinka to set up Nadal semifinal

PARIS MASTERS

Paris, France - Alexander Zverev battled past Stan Wawrinka in straight sets in the Paris Masters quarterfinals on Friday and will face Rafael Nadal in the last-four.

The 23 year old German, who is seeking a third straight title after back-to-back victories on home soil in Cologne, edged out Wawrinka 6-3, 7-6 (7-1).

Fourth seed Zverev has won 11 consecutive matches since losing in the French Open last 16 to Italian youngster Jannik Sinner.

He has a 5-1 losing record against Nadal, but won their last meeting at last year's ATP Tour Finals, which was also

played on an indoor hard court.

Earlier, Nadal came up with a comeback victory over Pablo Carreno Busta on Friday, ending his fellow Spaniard's ATP Tour Finals hopes. The top seed won 4-6, 7-5, 6-1.

Carreno Busta defeat gives Diego Schwartzman the last spot in ATP Tour Finals.

Argentinian Schwartzman had earlier lost 6-3, 6-1 to Daniil Medvedev, who will face Milos Raonic in the other semifinal.

Canadian tenth seed Raonic made the semifinals by seeing off French hope Ugo Humbert 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (9-7).

AFP

Maradona to remain in hospital for several days

Olivos, Argentina - Argentine football great Diego Maradona is not allowed to leave hospital yet following brain surgery on a blood clot, his doctor said on Friday.

Maradona, 60, underwent surgery on Tuesday to remove the clot lodged between his brain and skull.

And while the World Cup winner is determined to leave the clinic in Buenos Aires where he is recovering, Leopoldo Luque said he won't be allowed to any time soon.

"It's one of the few times I've said 'no' to Diego," said

Luque. "He's still insisting he won't, but he will remain" at the clinic. Luque had revealed earlier that Maradona was receiving intensive treatment for withdrawal symptoms.

Although the doctor didn't say so himself, Maradona is known to be addicted to alcohol. "You cannot imagine how difficult Diego can be, but in that moment I had to try to be stronger than him," said Luque, who added that Maradona's family was involved in the decision to keep him in hospital.

AFP



L-R: Ranpura, Prajapati and Odedara of Muscat CT

Muscat and IT Works post easy victories

LOCAL CRICKET

Kashyapkumar Prajapati's knock of 97 and captain Rajeshkumar Ranpura's deadly spell of five for 14 steered Muscat CT to their third consecutive win as they thrashed Arm Alpha by 92 runs in an Oman Cricket Premier Division T20 game at Al Amerat on Friday.

Opener Prajapati was involved in a 154-run partnership with Ashish Odedara (69) for the second wicket as Muscat scored 191 for three. Arm Alpha stumbled in their chase and were tottering at 25 for five in the seventh over. Chaminda Lakmal top-scored with 43 as they struggled to reach 99 for eight.

In the day's other Premier Division game, IT Works rode on Shakeel Ahmad's four for 12 to hand AER an 80-run drubbing.

Akmal Shahzad struck a brilliant 68 as IT Works scored 160 for four. Young Muzahir Raza bagged two for 34. AER was then bowled out for a paltry 80 in the 19th over.

Brief scores: Muscat CT 191-3 (Prajapati 97, Odedara 69) beat Arm Alpha 99-8 (Lakmal 43, Ubaid Ullah 31; Ranpura 5-14).

IT Works 160-4 (Shahzad 68, Khawar Ali 23; Muzahir Raza 2-34) **beat AER 80 all out in 18.3 overs** (Sachin Kumar 31; Shakeel Ahmad 4-12, Muzammil Ilyas 2-11, Nester Dhamba 2-16).

Sixteen year old El Salvador player handed doping ban

Paris, France - Alejandro Licea, a 16 year old tennis player from El Salvador, was on Friday banned for 14 months after failing a drugs test, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) said. Licea, ranked a lowly 1,629 in the world, tested positive for a banned steroid after playing in a Davis Cup tie in San Salvador in March. "He provided a urine

sample...which was found to contain clostebol," said an ITF statement. "Clostebol is prohibited under the 2020 WADA Prohibited List."

The ITF said they accepted Licea's explanation and that his 'violation was not intentional'. His suspension has been back-dated to start from March 7.

AFP



Alejandro Licea



IPL 2020

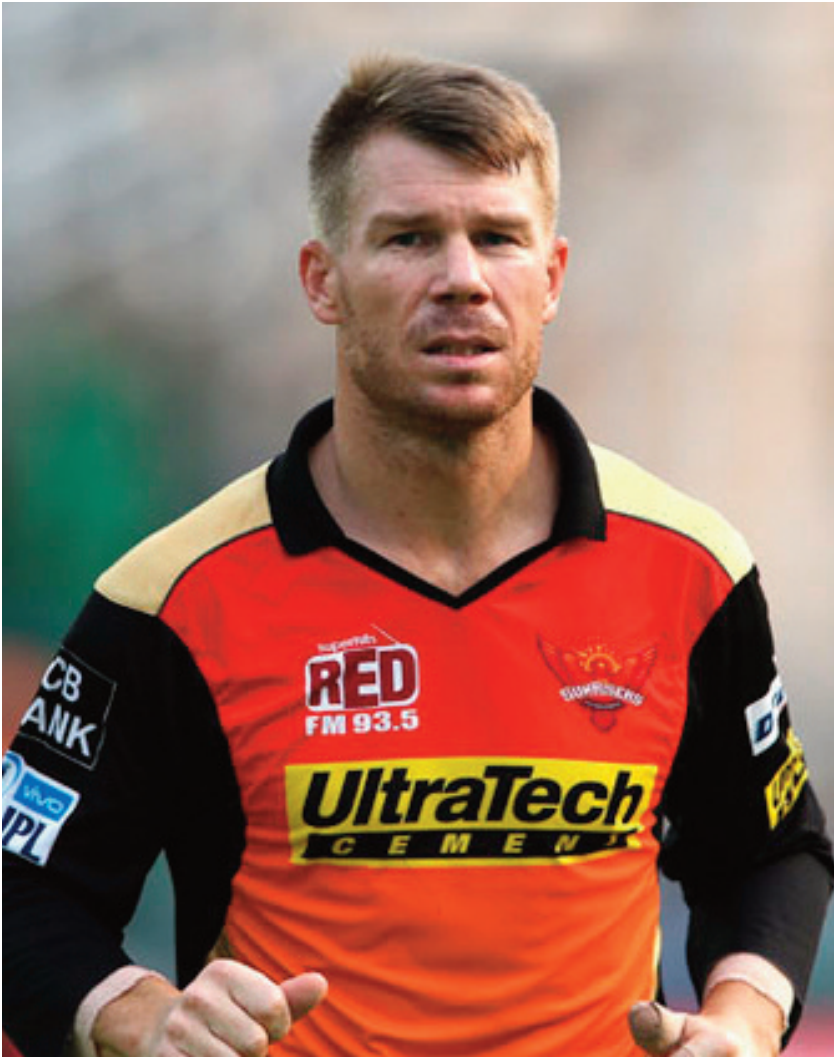




QUOTE OF THE DAY
It was tough, it was the same kind of feeling like the game against KXIP. A game which is Eliminator, and that pressure as well. Thank god we won it.
Rashid Khan
Sunrisers Hyderabad bowler, after his team's win over Royal Challengers Bangalore, on Friday



Shreyas Iyer, Delhi Capitals skipper



David Warner, captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad

THE KNOCKOUT BOUT

Floundering Delhi Capitals come up against in-form Sunrisers Hyderabad

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The Delhi Capitals and the Sunrisers Hyderabad couldn't have taken more contrasting paths to Qualifier 2 of IPL 2020.

The Capitals' coach Ricky Ponting wanted his side to play their best cricket in the second half of IPL 2020.

But things have gone in the opposite direction: after winning seven of their first nine games, the Capitals lost four matches on the trot.

Smiles returned on their faces when they beat the Royal Challengers Bangalore in their last league match to qualify for the playoffs, but a timid performance against the Mumbai Indians in the first Qualifier meant they are back to figuring out their best XI.

Do they continue with left-arm seamer Daniel Sams, who has an economy rate of 9.50 after three wicketless outings?

Do they replace Sams with Harshal Patel, which will also

The Sunrisers, meanwhile, are peaking at the right time. At one stage, they were seventh on the points table with three wins from nine games but now are on a four-match winning streak

allow them to bring back the big-hitting Shimron Hetmyer?

To make room for Hetmyer, do they leave out the out-of-form Prithvi Shaw and open with Ajinkya Rahane, or leave out Rahane and keep faith in Shaw?

The Sunrisers, meanwhile, are peaking at the right time.

At one stage, they were seventh on the points table with three wins from nine games but now are on a four-match winning streak, which includes a comprehensive win over the Capitals as well.

They know what their best XI looks like, each player in the XI knows his role and, more

importantly, their bowling has come together well: only once in the last six games have they conceded more than 150.

However, it's not that they have become invincible. Despite allrounder Jason Holder acting as a shield, their lower-middle order still has some cracks, glimpses of which could be seen during the Eliminator against the Royal Challengers Bangalore.

And they still don't have a reliable sixth bowling option in case one of their bowlers has an off day. But do the Capitals have enough firepower left to take advantage of those issues and

make it to their first IPL final ever?

Previous meetings

The Sunrisers have had two easy wins against the Capitals. In Abu Dhabi, David Warner, Jonny Bairstow and Kane Williamson lifted them to 162 for four. The Capitals were always behind the asking rate in their chase, and any hopes of a revival were quashed by Rashid Khan, who picked up three for 14 to give the Sunrisers a 15-run win.

In Dubai, the Sunrisers trounced the Capitals by 88 runs in a must-win game for them. Batting first, Saha (87 off 45) and Warner (66 off 34) set the platform for a mammoth 219 for two. In response, the Capitals were all out for 131. Rashid once again proved to be their tormentor, picking up three for seven from his four overs this time.

LIKELY TEAMS

Delhi Capitals: Shikhar Dhawan,

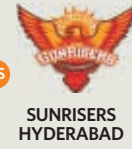
TODAY'S MATCH QUALIFIER 2

ABU DHABI, 6PM



DELHI CAPITALS

VS



SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Ajinkya Rahane, Shreyas Iyer (capt), Shimron Hetmyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Marcus Stoinis, Harshal Patel, Axar Patel, Kagiso Rabada, R Ashwin, Anrich Nortje.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner (capt), Shreevats Goswami (wk), Manish Pandey, Kane Williamson, Priyam Garg, Jason Holder, Abdul Samad, Rashid Khan, Shahbaz Nadeem, Sandeep Sharma, T Natarajan. Cricinfo

Kohli's mentorship, never-say-die attitude vital for Bangalore, says coach Katich

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Eight seasons as captain, zero titles. And unlike most previous seasons, Virat Kohli didn't enjoy a whole lot of success with the bat during IPL 2020 either, with his 466 runs coming at 121.35, his worst strike rate in any season he's captained in.

Those returns, and the Royal Challengers Bangalore's poor finish - they lost each of their last five games, in the process squandering a possible top-two finish, only qualifying for the playoffs by the skin of their teeth and losing the Eliminator to the Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday - have left critics, most notably the former India opener Gautam Gambhir, asking if Kohli should continue to lead the side.

Simon Katich, the Royal Challengers' head coach, has defended Kohli's leadership, highlighting two facets in particular: his mentorship of younger players - notably the opener Devdutt Padikkal, who scored 473 runs, including five half-centuries, in his debut season - and his ability to lift the players and keep them fighting to the end, up to and including the team's defence of a below-par 131 against the Sunrisers in Friday's Eliminator.

"We're very fortunate to have spent these last 11 weeks working with him and I think what we've seen is someone that's highly professional, someone that's very, very well-respected by the group here, and not just for what he does on the field," Katich said on Saturday.

"I think his time around the group - both he and his wife Anushka [Sharma] spent a lot of time around the group, in the

team room, and socialising with everyone - and what we saw, we saw someone that is very invested in this group, spent a lot of time with the younger players.

"We paired him up with young Padikkal as a mentor, and we saw the growth in him throughout the tournament, having that time speaking batting with Virat Kohli is invaluable for his growth, and that's the side a lot of people don't see with Virat.

"The other thing we saw, which was very visible on the field, was that we've got a leader that, no matter what the game situation is, gets the other ten guys to follow him and stay in the contest. And one thing [for which] we're very proud of this group throughout this season is that we hung in the contest, we fought right to the end, even last night [in the Eliminator] when it looked like we didn't have enough runs on the board. We fought right till the end, and that's something that we're very proud of, and Virat can take a lot of credit for that."

On the batting front, Katich pointed to a few mitigating factors that contributed to Kohli's returns, and said it wasn't right to judge his season 'purely on the numbers'.

"I think what we saw this year was, we did have consistent opening partnerships, between Padikkal and [Aaron] Finch," Katich said. "Even though Finch probably [didn't get] the volume of runs that he would have hoped for, we actually did get solid opening partnerships, so from that point of view, that was an area we wanted to address."

Cricinfo



Virat Kohli (left) with Bangalore's head coach Simon Katich

OUTSIDE IPL

Uncapped Stuurman in SA white-ball squads

Johannesburg, South Africa - Kagiso Rabada is back in South Africa's white-ball squads after missing their last ODI assignment against India, with a groin strain. Seamer Glenton Stuurman, who received his first international call-up, and Junior Dala, who has not played for South Africa since March 2019, were also included in the 24-man squad for the upcoming three T20Is and three ODIs against England.

The six-match series will be the first international cricket played in South Africa in almost eight months since the home summer concluded with white-ball cricket against Australia.

All the players who were involved in limited-overs matches against Australia at home and those who were part of the squad that went to India have been picked in this squad, apart from one big name: Dale Steyn.



Glenton Stuurman

South Africa squad: Quinton de Kock (captain), Temba Bavuma, Junior Dala, Faf du Plessis, Bjorn Fortuin, Beuran Hendricks, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, George Linde, Keshav Maharaj, Janneman Malan, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Lutho Sipamla, Jon-Jon Smuts, Glenton Stuurman, Pite van Biljon, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne. Cricinfo

Azam trumps Madhevere, Pakistan take lead

PAKISTAN VS ZIMBABWE FIRST T20I

Rawalpindi, Pakistan - Zimbabwe have perhaps exceeded expectations on this tour so far, but they turned in one of their more lackadaisical performances on Saturday, as Pakistan cantered to a six-wicket win in the first T20I between the sides.

Opting to bat first, Zimbabwe were pegged back early, and Pakistan peppered them with regular wickets as the visitors struggled to build momentum.

Only Wesley Madhevere really appeared comfortable with what were batting-friendly conditions, bolstering his reputation with a classy 48-ball 70 to give his side 156 to defend. It was never close to par, and Babar Azam punished Zimbabwe for it, countering with his own elegant innings, a 55-ball 82 to run the target down with



Mohammad Hafeez (right) and Babar Azam during the T20I game

seven balls to spare.

Zimbabwe captain Chamu Chibhabha fell early, leaving the usual pair of Brendan Taylor and Sean Williams to attempt a rebuild. Taylor's cameo meant Zimbabwe's start was respectable, but he holed out for 20. Enter Madhevere. The 20 year old soon rocked back to knock Usman Qadir out of the park off a delivery there was

really nothing wrong with. Partners at the other end were in short supply, though.

Williams couldn't carry on beyond 25, handing Qadir his first T20I wicket. Sikandar Raza was done by the extra pace from Wahab Riaz. Madhevere brought up his half-century in just 35 balls and following up with successive boundaries off Faheem Ashraf, and was aided by Elton Chigumbura, who announced earlier today this would be his last international series. But despite that late little surge, Zimbabwe only put 156.

In the chase, Fakhar Zaman's little flurry was ended cheaply at the other end, while an out-of-sorts Haider Ali was removed thanks to a fantastic diving catch from Brendan Taylor.

By this time, Babar had raced to 35, and brought up another T20 half-century with the effortlessness of a man at the peak of his powers. Along with Mohammad Hafeez, the pair put 80 off just 57 balls to bring the target to under 15. Babar will be frustrated he wasn't able to finish the game off, holing out for 82, but the game was as good as done either way. Zimbabwe had one final laugh when Blessing Muzarabani knocked back Hafeez's off stump with one run to get.

Cricinfo

SCOREBOARD		
ZIMBABWE		
B Taylor	c Ali b Rauf	20 (33)
C Chibhabha	lbw b Hasnain	0 (2)
S Williams	b Qadir	25 (24)
W Madhevere	not out	70 (48)
S Raza	c Rizwan b Riaz	7 (3)
R Burl	b Rauf	8 (15)
E Chigumbura	c Hafeez b Riaz	21 (33)
Extras	(b 1, lb 2, w 2)	5
TOTAL: 156 for six		
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-34, 3-70, 4-87, 5-122, 6-156		
Bowling: M Hasnain 4-0-25-1, H Rauf 4-0-25-2, F Ashraf 4-0-35-0, W Riaz 4-0-37-2, U Qadir 3-0-24-1, M Hafeez 1-0-7-0		
PAKISTAN		
F Zaman	c Chigumbura	19 (32)
b Muzarabani		
B Azam	c Madhevere b Chatara	82 (55)
H Ali	c Taylor b Ngarava	7 (8)
M Hafeez	b Muzarabani	36 (32)
K Shah	not out	5 (4)
M Rizwan	not out	0 (3)
Extras	(lb 5, nb 1, w 2)	8
TOTAL: 157 for four in 18.5 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-62, 3-142, 4-156		
Bowling: W Madhevere 1-0-8-0, B Muzarabani 3.5-0-26-2, T Chatara 3-0-25-1, R Ngarava 4-0-37-1, T Chisoro 4-0-26-0, S Williams 1-0-11-0, S Raza 2-0-19-0		

HM's Cup: Al Arouba set up title clash with Dhofar

Both former winners advance on away goals rule after second-leg semifinals



Action from the second-leg HM's semis between Al Arouba and Ibri at the Sur Sports Complex on Saturday

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Al Arouba's disappointing season could still see a trophy adorn their cabinet as the four-time champions eked out a narrow 1-0 win over surprise package Ibri Club in the second-leg semifinal of the 2019-2020 His Majesty's Cup Football Championship at the Sur Sports Complex on Saturday.

The 1-0 win, thanks to a powerful header from Yousuf al

Mukhaini in the 88th minute of the match, steered the Sharqiyah club to the final on away goals rule, having lost the first-leg 1-2 in Ibri in February.

The triumph on Saturday set Al Arouba on course for an explosive summit clash with eight-time champions and Salalah heavyweights Dhofar.

The date of the final will be announced soon by the Oman Football Association (OFA).

A solitary goal turned out to be enough for Haitham al Alawi-

coached Arouba side to reach the final but the coach would be a relieved man after seeing his strikers missing easy chances on Saturday.

Arouba had a miserable domestic top-flight 2019-20 season and were relegated from the Omantel League recently. The club was also penalised twice by the OFA Disciplinary Committee and docked six points in the top-flight after they were found guilty of fielding a player who had broken



Action from the second-leg HM's Cup semifinal between Dhofar and Al Nahda at the Al Saada Sports Complex



Dhofar players celebrate after securing berth in the HM's Cup final

quarantine safety protocol.

Earlier on Friday, Dhofar, too, kept themselves in hunt for the prestigious trophy after finishing runner-up to Seeb Club in the just-concluded Omantel League.

Playing at the Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah, the eight-time HM's Cup champions and hosts drew with Al Nahda 0-0 in the second-leg to also advance to the final on away goals rule. Dhofar had played out a 1-1 draw with hosts Nahda in their away game in February.

Later speaking after the match, Dhofar coach Rasheed Jaber expressed 'satisfaction' at the team's result and said 'the primary goal was to ensure a spot in the final'.

Sheikh Ali bin Ahmed al Rawas, the club chairman, congratulated the players, coaching staff and the fans on the team's entry into the final.

"I am confident our players have the potential to bring back the prestigious trophy," added Rawas.

Dhofar will be aiming to equal the long-standing HM's Cup record of nine titles won by Fanja Club. Dhofar last reached the final of the HM's Cup in 2017 when they lost 0-2 to Suwaiq in the summit clash. Their last title glory was achieved in 2011-12 when they edged past Al Ittihad in the final in December, 2011.

Dhofar's first title victory was way back in 1977 and the Salalah powerhouse won back-to-back crowns in 1980-81 before their fourth title came in 1990. The fifth trophy was grabbed in 1999 while they had twin successes between 2004-2007.

Arouba, too has tasted title wins in the sultanate's most coveted championship. The club's last title was in 2014-15 when they recorded a 2-0 win over Sur in Sharqiyah derby. Their maiden crown was in 1993 before tasting further glory in 2001 and 2010-11.

[@ashokmuscat](#)

QUICK RUN

Fernandes at the double as United beat Everton

Bruno Fernandes inspired a Manchester United fightback against Everton on Saturday, scoring twice in a 3-1 win to ease the pressure on Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and deny the Merseysiders a return to the top of the English Premier League (EPL). United came into the match at Goodison Park in the miserable position of 15th in the EPL table and smarting after defeats to Arsenal and Istanbul Basaksehir. Everton slipped to their third consecutive defeat in the EPL while it was United's seventh straight EPL away win. In another game, Crystal Palace trounced Leeds 4-1 at home. Palace's win move them into the top six while a third defeat in four games sees Marcelo Bielsa's men slide behind Manchester United into 14th.

Other results: Friday: Brighton 0 Burnley 0, Southampton 2 Newcastle 0.

Super-sub Messi scores twice in Barca victory

Lionel Messi came on at half-time to rescue Barcelona by scoring twice, including his first goal from open play this season, in a 5-2 victory over Real Betis on Saturday. Messi had been rested by Ronald Koeman but was thrown on with the game in the balance after Antoine Griezmann missed a penalty in the Argentinian's absence, before Antonio Sanabria cancelled out Ousmane Dembele's opener.

But within four minutes of his introduction, Messi gave Griezmann an open goal with a superb dummy and then scored twice himself, the first a penalty that saw Betis' Aissa Mandi sent off for a handball on the line.

In between, Loren Moron had given Betis brief hope but Messi's second and a late strike from Pedri ensured Barcelona ended their four-match winless run and climbed to eighth in La Liga.

Other results: Huesca 1 Eibar 1. **Friday:** Elche 1 Celta Vigo 1.

FRENCH LEAGUE: Bordeaux 0 Montpellier 2. **Friday:** Strasbourg 0 Marseille 1.

ITALIAN LEAGUE: Cagliari 2 Sampdoria 0. **Friday:** Sassuolo 0 Udinese 0.

GERMAN LEAGUE: Union Berlin 5 Arminia Bielefeld 0, RB Leipzig 3 Freiburg 0, Mainz 2 Schalke 2, Augsburg 0 Hertha Berlin 3, VfB Stuttgart 2 Eintracht Frankfurt 2. **Friday:** Werder Bremen 1 Cologne 1.

Pol Espargaro on European MotoGP pole

KTM rider Pol Espargaro will start from pole for Sunday's European MotoGP after setting the fastest time in tricky conditions in Saturday qualifying at Valencia in Spain. His fellow Spaniard Alex Rins (Suzuki) and Japan's Takaaki Nakagami (Honda-LCR) join him on the front row. It is his second pole position of the season, following the Styrian GP in Austria. Championship leader Joan Mir will start from the second row. Valentino Rossi, who missed the last two races and Friday's practise sessions after testing positive for coronavirus, was back in the saddle on Saturday but could only finish eighth in Q1 and failed to progress to the final shootout in Q2.

AFP

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AASF nominates Oman's Kishry for FINA Bureau



Ashok Purohit
Muscat

Oman Swimming Association (OSA) president and Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) secretary general Taha al Kishry is among the six administrators that have been nominated by the Asian Swimming Federation (AASF) on Saturday to face elections for six posts in FINA, the world governing body.

The FINA elections are scheduled to take place during the FINA General Congress in Doha, Qatar on June 5, 2021.

Though the six names were revealed earlier in August, the confirmation of all the nominations were done on Saturday at the 14th AASF General Congress, which was held in Muscat on Saturday.

Kishry, who is a long-serving OSA chief, is currently serving the FINA Bureau as a member

since 2017 and is also the director-general of the AASF since 2009. If elected, the well-known Omani sports official will be in the world governing body's Bureau for the second time.

Kuwait's Husain al Musallam has been nominated for the coveted post of president of FINA, and China's Jihong Zhou's name has been put forward for the vice-presidential candidate.

Musallam has been the FINA vice-president since 2015 and has been with the FINA Bureau since 1996. The Kuwaiti is eyeing to take over from current chief Julio Maglione of Uruguay.

Besides Kishry, the other three officials nominated to face elections for the Bureau are Andrey Kryukov of Kazakhstan, Daichi Suzuki of Japan and Virendra Nanavati of India.

With more than 30 years of experience in sports management and administration, Kishry

dons many key roles in Arab and Asian sport. He is currently a member of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Sports Committee since 2008 and also the chairman of the Arab Swimming Federation. The 60 year old Kishry has been the OSA chief since February 2009 and has been the OOC secretary general since April 2013.

Suzuki, a former world-class swimmer and Olympian, is currently the head of the Japanese Swimming Federation.

A former water polo player for the Soviet Union, Kryukov is Secretary General of the Kazakhstan National Sports Federation and also AASF vice-president.

Nanavati is currently the CEO of the Swimming Federation of India and is the vice-chairman of FINA's Swimming Committee.

At the AASF Congress on Saturday, OSA general secretary Qais al Zakwani welcomed the delegates of nearly 40 countries. The Congress was presided over by Musallam in the absence of AASF chief Sheikh Khalid al Sabah.

Musallam urged the Asian members to be united and ensure the win of all the candidates at the FINA elections next year.

If Musallam is elected as the FINA chief, it will be the first time that an Asian will be heading the world swimming.

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BERKSHIRE PROFITS FALL

Berkshire Hathaway Inc's third quarter profit fell 32 per cent to US\$5.48bn from US\$8.07bn a year earlier as the coronavirus pandemic was expected to weigh on some of its businesses

BUSINESS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 08, 2020 | MUSCAT DAILY | 13

Omantel Group's nine months profit declines 15% to R0168mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omantel Group's net profit declined by 15 per cent to R0167.7mn in the nine months period ended September 30, 2020 compared to R0198.3mn reported for the same period of 2019, Omantel announced on Thursday.

Omantel's total group revenues decreased by 2 per cent to R01.859bn during the January-September period of 2020 against R01.893bn recorded in the corresponding period of last year, according to the company's disclosure submitted to the Muscat Securities Market.

Omantel said its domestic operation witnessed a 6 per cent decline in net profit at R056mn for the nine months period ended September 30, 2020 in comparison to R059.3mn in the same period of last year.

The company's domestic revenue, however, increased by 3 per cent to R0410.1mn in the first nine months of 2020 from R0396.3mn in the corresponding period of 2019. Domestic operation results have been resilient considering the serious business disruptions witnessed since March 2020 due to the



Omantel's domestic operation witnessed a 6 per cent decline in net profit at R056mn for the nine months period ended September 30, 2020

COVID-19 pandemic,' Omantel said in its disclosure.

It said the proactive cost optimisation measures taken by the Omantel management has positively contributed in minimising the overall impact by achieving a 6 per cent reduction in operating and administrative expenses year-on-year.

Omantel said the 3 per cent growth in domestic revenue mainly came from the increase in

its wholesale international business and device revenues, which are typically of low margin compared to the core revenues.

According to the Omantel disclosure, Zain Group contributed R0150.3mn to the 2020 net profit (before non-controlling interest) of Omantel Group compared to R0179.6mn in 2019, a decrease of 16.3 per cent. After adjusting for non-controlling in-

terest, Zain Group contributed R028.9mn in the first half of 2020 compared to R033.8mn in the year 2019.

The interest costs incurred to Omantel Group relating to Zain Group acquisition is R039.2mn in 2020 (against R039.3mn in 2019) and is accounted at Omantel Group level and is not part of Omantel's domestic performance, the company said.

CMA to introduce Dhamani to insurers, healthcare providers

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In preparation for the implementation of the compulsory health insurance scheme in the sultanate, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) will hold a virtual meeting on Monday with the insurers and healthcare providers to introduce Dhamani platform implementation.

The meeting will be attended by the CMA's vice president for the insurance sector, the company executing Dhamani project,



CEOs and general managers of insurance companies, insurance brokers and agents and private hospitals and clinics.

According to an Oman News Agency report, the meeting will introduce the Dhamani platform

beside reviewing the implementation framework and phases of the project. The meeting will also discuss the timeline and milestones related to Dhamani project along with the solution components and link between insurers, health sector and the regulators.

The Dhamani platform is an electronic platform for the exchange of health information, claims settlement, transfer of funds, requests for approvals and verification of insurance cover.

GCC insurers' profits under pressure amid tightening liquidity: Moody's

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The insurance companies in GCC countries are exposed to substantial levels of receivables, putting them at risk of increased provisioning and exacerbating pressure on their profitability, Moody's Investors Service has said in a new report.

"The coronavirus-driven economic shock caused a sharp decline in oil prices that widened the region's budget deficits and will weigh on public spending across the region, with negative economic consequences," said Mohammed Ali Londe, a vice president - senior analyst at Moody's in Dubai.

"In particular, tightening liquidity will lead to delays in premium collections as well as pressures on the recoverability of intermediary and inter-insurance receivables, leading to additional requirements for provisions and eventual write-offs impacting insurers' profitability and capital," he added.

The leading insurers in the GCC region reported receivables equivalent to 117 per cent of shareholders' equity, as of the end of 2019, compared with an average of 68 per cent for rated European counterparts, Moody's said.

"While the level of GCC insurers' receivables from policyholders was roughly in line with that

reported by European insurers, receivables from reinsurers and intermediaries were significantly higher at 72 per cent, compared with just 27 per cent for their European peers," Moody's said.

As liquidity tightens in the GCC region, Moody's expects receivables from policyholders to grow, while at the same time existing exposures will continue to deteriorate in quality, leading to increased provisions and write-offs.

According to Moody's, the risk of rising levels of receivables is highest for insurers serving SMEs and corporate clients, as retail customers in the region tend to pay cash for their policies upfront.

TAIWAN ONLINE PRODUCT LAUNCH TO THE MIDDLE EAST MARKET

Entrusted by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) will hold an 'Online Taiwan Product Launch to the Middle East Market' on November 11 at 10:00 (Middle East Time: Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia GMT+3,) and 11:00 (Middle East Time: Oman, Dubai GMT+4). The event serves as a platform for Taiwanese companies to introduce their latest epidemic prevention products, medical products and Muslim (halal) food to businesses and media in the Middle East. The seven Taiwanese companies are GENERAL BIOLOGICALS, TAIDOC TECHNOLOGY, TEX-RAY INDUSTRIAL, AMCAD BIOMED, E-DA MEDICAL FOUNDATION, TAIPEI BEITOU HEALTH MANAGEMENT HOSPITAL and MITAGRI CO., LTD. Please visit the official website for more information.

<https://sites.google.com/> GENERAL BIOLOGICALS is a developer and manufacturer of diagnostics and pharmaceutical products including high quality in-vitro diagnostics to assist doctors make clinical decisions in the area of hepatitis, tumor markers, retro virus, fertility, thy-

roid, and steroids. TAIDOC TECHNOLOGY provides blood glucose monitoring systems, blood pressure monitoring systems, infrared

thermometers, and more. TEX-RAY INDUSTRIAL's protective clothing has been widely applied by local governments in disease control

worldwide. AMCAD BIOMED's develops innovative Computer-Assisted Detection and Diagnosis (CAD) devices. Moreover, AmCad is committed to developing unique products that assist medical professionals in making more accurate and early diagnoses. E-DA MEDICAL FOUNDATION Featured Healthcare Services: I. Reconstructive Microsurgery, II. Minimally Invasive Surgery, III. Cancer Treatment, IV. Degenerative Osteoarthritis. TAIPEI BEITOU HEALTH MANAGEMENT HOSPITAL is the first in Taiwan to integrate the Taipei Beitou Health Management Hospital and five-star-standard Hotel Royal Beitou to provide triple innovative services of "spa hotel, health management and cosmetic medicine". In addition, MITA-

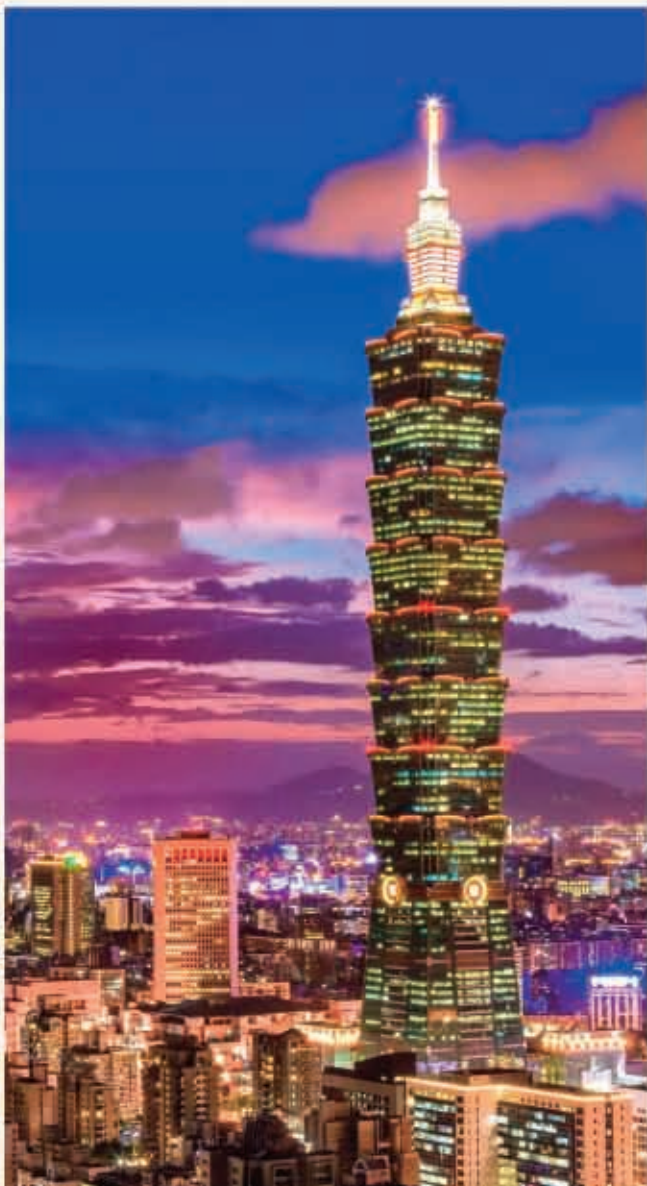
GRI CO., LTD. has established a new export platform that provides high quality and trustworthy products to overseas clients. The company exports high quality products with Halal certification across the world, including to the Middle East, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia.

In the fight against COVID-19, Taiwan is fully committed to delivering life-saving supplies and innovations to the global medical front line. Moreover, the Ministry of Health and Welfare has launched a website to share with the world the successful policies that Taiwan has implemented in its efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic.

TAITRA has officially launched the "Taiwan Global

Anti-Pandemic Pavilion", a portal that encompasses the know-how and capabilities of experts from multiple fields, 20 top-tier medical institutions, and over 2,000 Taiwanese companies. The online platform will proactively share successful anti-COVID-19 experiences and

information, and explore the potential of delivering Made-in-Taiwan anti-pandemic products around the world. Please visit the official website below for more information. www.anti-covid-19.tw. We also provide the best medical products and best Muslim food from Taiwan.



Taiwan Product Launch to the Middle East Market 2020

ADVERTORIAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
TAIWANESE PRODUCTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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There's no return to pre-crisis economy before 2023: EU

Brussels, Belgium - A second wave of the coronavirus pandemic has stalled a nascent recovery in Europe, the EU said, warning that the economy would not return to pre-virus normality before 2023.

"The rebound has been interrupted," the EU's economic affairs commissioner Paolo Gentiloni told reporters as he announced new forecasts.

The soured outlook dashed hopes for a quick turnaround of the European economy and raised questions whether more stimulus would be needed to avert more lasting damage.

"We never counted on a V-shaped recovery. Now we know for sure that we won't have one," Gentiloni said.

In its forecast, Brussels pointed to a whole series of danger signs, including higher unemployment and soaring debt levels for countries that will need to keep spending to revive their economies.

The European Commission said the eurozone economy would expand by just 4.2 per cent next year, much lower than the 6.1 per cent it predicted in July.

In effect, renewed disruptions across the continent will 'put the recovery on hold in the short term', Gentiloni said, but added that the outlook was subject to 'extremely high uncertainty'.

The loss of steam came despite a better-than-expected re-



A woman wears a face mask as she walks past a closed restaurant, due to national restrictions in Brussels, Belgium on Friday (AFP)

covery in the middle of 2020 which limited the depth of this year's historic recession.

The economy in the 19 countries that use the single currency would crash by minus 7.8 per cent in 2020, instead of the minus 8.7 per cent predicted earlier, the EU said.

But, unlike earlier hopes, EU economic output 'will not return to pre-pandemic levels by 2022', warned commission vice president Valdis Dombrovskis.

All 19 eurozone countries are mired in recession this year, but three are particularly hard hit - Spain with a dive of 12.4 per

cent, Italy at minus 9.9 per cent and France at minus 9.4 per cent.

Germany, the bloc's leading economy, has limited the damage, with GDP expected to fall 5.6 per cent in 2020.

The downturn has led member states to open the purse strings in the hopes of saving their economies and public deficits have widened to more than 10 per cent in the case of France, Italy, Spain and Belgium.

As a clear consequence, the debt of the member states is expected to soar in 2020 and will exceed 100 per cent of GDP in

the eurozone as a whole.

The commission called on the European Central Bank (ECB) to keep doing all it can to offset the negative consequences of this heavy debt.

So far, thanks to the ECB's action, the financial markets have shrugged off the extra public spending with borrowing costs currently near record lows despite the high debt.

The EU also underlined the uncertainty of stalled post-Brexit talks, which 'clearly weighs on the EU's economic outlook', Dombrovskis said.

AFP

Wall Street cools as Joe Biden nears finish line

New York, US - World markets lost momentum on Friday after four straight days of gains on Wall Street, as vote counting across US battleground states showed Democrat Joe Biden poised for victory.

US stocks from Monday to Thursday posted the best four-day streak since April, and Friday featured positive economic data for traders to peruse as unemployment dropped a full point to 6.9 per cent in October, a bigger-than-expected fall.

The US economy regained 638,000 jobs last month, far more than analysts had been expecting, the Labor Department data showed, despite rising coronavirus cases and Congress's failure to pass another spending package to aid the economy's recovery.

But the Dow Jones index closed 0.2 per cent lower, while the Nasdaq was flat for the day as was the S&P 500. But despite the lackluster Friday, this week was the best since April with a gain of 7.3 per cent for the S&P.

In London, the FTSE 100 was almost unchanged but still added 6 per cent for the blue chip index's best week since June, a similar pattern to other major European bourses.

Oil fell, with the WTI and Brent Crude falling back nearly four percent after a volatile week as US President Donald Trump continued making unsubstantiated claims he is being



People pass by the exterior of New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York, US on Wednesday (AFP)

cheated of an election victory.

Latest vote tallies showed Biden was on his way to the White House. US media reported that the challenger had pulled ahead in the key states of Pennsylvania and Georgia. A victory in Pennsylvania alone would give Biden the presidency based on the Electoral College tally.

Despite some profit taking Friday, stocks generally surged over the week as a Biden win became more likely, with traders betting on him paving the way for a bigger fiscal stimulus package compared to Trump, said Fawad Razaqada, market analyst with ThinkMarkets.

While control of the upper chamber has yet to be determined, a 'Republican-controlled Senate will make it unlikely that Trump's corporate tax cuts will be rolled back', he added.

Democrats and Republicans failed to reach a deal before the election, owing to disputes over how much to spend.

The prospect of further monetary easing measures from the Fed and a new stimulus have weighed on the dollar, boosting safe haven investment gold.

The rather less-traditional haven of Bitcoin meanwhile 'blitzed through US\$15,000 for the first time since the beginning of 2018... as investors rode a momentum trade that has been building up a head of steam ever since PayPal announced it would let users buy, sell and hold a variety of major cryptocurrencies', noted Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Markets.com.

Tokyo was the highlight in Asia as the Nikkei jumped 0.9 per cent for its highest close in 29 years.

AFP



Jerome Powell

More stimulus needed to help US economy: Powell

Washington, US - The trajectory of COVID-19 remains key to the US recovery and until it is eradicated, more emergency spending will be 'essential' to support the economy, Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell said.

But with America's knife-edge election yet to be called, as state officials continue to tally ballots, the potential for a split government in Washington makes it less likely Congress will end months of gridlock and quickly approve another giant spending package to help workers and businesses.

Democratic challenger Joe Biden appears well-positioned to unseat President Donald Trump, but Republicans could retain control of the Senate -- although the final outcome may not be known for weeks, until after at least one run-off election in Georgia.

Powell steered away from any discussion of politics, saying the economy - not the election - was the focus of the two-day meeting of the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC).

A full economic recovery is unlikely until people are confident that it's safe to re-engage in a broad range of activities

JEROME POWELL

The recent spike in COVID-19 cases is 'particularly concerning' for the US economy, Powell told reporters.

While the United States has done better than expected economically, the outlook 'is extraordinarily uncertain', he said.

The Fed chief warned that despite a jump in growth, 'the pace of improvement has moderated' and spending has slowed, while the economy has regained just half the jobs lost in March and April.

"A full economic recovery is

unlikely until people are confident that it's safe to re-engage in a broad range of activities," he said.

The support provided by the US\$2.2tn CARES Act 'was absolutely essential in supporting the recovery that we've seen so far, which has generally exceeded expectations', he said, but 'further support is likely to be needed'.

The central bank chief has been increasingly vocal in his calls for Washington to spend more to help support the recovery after most provisions of a massive stimulus measure passed in March expired.

Despite months of negotiations, the White House failed to reach an agreement with congressional Democrats on a new stimulus package before Tuesday's presidential election.

"Fiscal policy can do what we can't, which is to replace lost incomes for people who are out of work through no fault of their own," Powell said, calling government spending measures 'absolutely essential'.

AFP

TikTok owner ByteDance eyes asset listings in Hong Kong

Shanghai, China - ByteDance, the Chinese parent of viral video platform TikTok, is in talks to raise US\$2bn from investors before a possible listing of some of its businesses in Hong Kong, according to a report.

The plan could eventually value ByteDance at a massive US\$180bn, Bloomberg News reported, citing people familiar with the talks.

It could result in Beijing-based ByteDance eventually listing some of its biggest assets, such as Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, in Hong Kong.

ByteDance is currently fighting to avoid US attempts to ban TikTok over national security concerns.

Listing ByteDance assets could provide a major boost for Hong Kong's market, which has been weighed down by the US-China trade war, the coronavirus pandemic and last year's roiling pro-democracy protests.

Beijing is pushing its tech giants to list on Chinese exchanges.

Hong Kong and Shanghai were set this week for the dual



listing of Ant Group, the Alibaba-linked digital payments and finance provider, which would have been a world-record IPO.

But it was pulled at the last minute amid an escalating dispute between Ant Group, whose controlling shareholder is billionaire Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma, and Chinese regulators.

Citing fears of systemic finan-

cial risks, Beijing has imposed new restrictions on fast-growing online lending and credit products, like those offered by Ant Group, in the run-up to the share issue.

This was seen as potentially changing the business landscape for Ant, forcing the IPO to be shelved for now.

The Trump administration has insisted on the need to ban

TikTok, saying it has links to the Chinese government through ByteDance and that user data could be obtained by Beijing.

TikTok has repeatedly denied the claim. ByteDance has avoided a ban in the country by setting up TikTok Global, which will run the short-video app's US operations and be part-owned by Walmart and Oracle.

AFP

Alibaba posts 30% growth in revenue

Shanghai, China - Chinese e-commerce leader Alibaba reported solid 30 per cent year-on-year revenue growth for the July-September quarter, providing some much-needed good news amid turmoil over its Ant Group affiliate's abandoned IPO.

Hangzhou-based Alibaba said revenue - a key measure of the internet giant's business health as well as overall Chinese consumer spending - rose to 155bn yuan (US\$23bn).

The announcement comes ahead of China's November 11 'Single's Day' shopping festival



next week, which was popularised by Alibaba and is now the world's biggest annual shopping

event.

Alibaba's latest quarterly earnings provided further evi-

dence of China's recovery from the coronavirus, which emerged in the country late last year and hammered its economy earlier in 2020.

Alibaba has said the pandemic may be helping e-commerce as consumers opt for the safety of online shopping.

Alibaba's profit for the quarter fell 60 per cent, however, to 28.7bn yuan compared to last year, when it booked a significant one-time gain upon receiving a 33 per cent equity interest in its financial arm Ant Group.

AFP

Iran urges next US administration to learn from failures



This file photo shows Iranian President Hassan Rouhani chairing a Cabinet meeting in the capital Tehran on November 4 (AFP)

Tehran, Iran - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday he hoped the next US administration will have learnt that sanctions cannot make Tehran bow to American policy.

US President Donald Trump, who appears to be on the verge of having lost Tuesday's election to challenger Joe Biden, has applied a 'maximum pressure' policy and punishing sanctions against Iran since his 2018 withdrawal from a landmark nuclear agreement with Iran.

"We hope the three-year experience will be a lesson for America's next administration to abide by laws and regulations and return to its commitments," Rouhani said in a televised speech.

"Our people have faced economic terrorism for the past three years."

Rouhani said Iran would 'continue its resistance and patience until the other side bows before laws and regulations'.

The Islamic republic hoped that 'those imposing sanctions realise their path was wrong and that they will not achieve their goals in any way'.

Iranian officials have said they will focus on the policies of the next US administration rather than who becomes president.

Tehran has also stressed that a possible US return to the nuclear agreement would have to be accompanied by compensation for damages caused by the withdrawal and a 'guarantee' it will not be repeated.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that the US election would have 'no effect' on Tehran's policies towards Washington.

Biden has said he plans to embark on a 'credible path to return to diplomacy' with Iran if he wins the presidency and raised the possibility of returning to the 2015 nuclear deal, negotiated when he was vice president under Barack Obama.

The policy of 'maximum pressure' has reached its end, and contrary to Trump's expectations, Iran has not crumbled', government spokesman Ali Rabiee wrote on Saturday in the state daily Iran.

"Whatever administration comes to power ... (it) has no (more) sanctions left to impose," he said.

Rabiee called on the next US president to 'attempt to dismantle the structure which Trump created' and return to a 'reasonable policy'.

AFP



This file photo shows a man fixing electricity cables next to a destroyed house in the city of Shusha, some 15km from Nagorno-Karabakh province's capital Stepanakert, on November 1 (AFP)

Armenia says heavy fighting near key town in Karabakh

Yerevan, Armenia - Armenia reported on Saturday that 'fierce combat' with Azerbaijani forces took place overnight near the town of Shusha, a key stronghold in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

After weeks of heavy fighting over the mountainous province, Azerbaijan appears to be closing in on the strategic town, 15km from Karabakh's main city Stepanakert.

The hilltop town of Shusha is located on a main road that links the unrecognised republic's capital with the territory of Armenia, which backs the separatists fighting for Karabakh's indepen-

Throughout the night there was regular shelling on Shusha, home to an iconic Armenian cathedral that was damaged in attacks last month

SHUSHAN STEPANYAN

dence.

Armenian Defence Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan reported 'especially intensive and fierce combat' overnight outside Shusha, adding that numerous attacks from Azerbaijan were thwarted.

Armenia also said that throughout the night there was

regular shelling on Shusha, home to an iconic Armenian cathedral that was damaged in attacks last month.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry rejected this claim saying the information of shelling on Shusha is 'completely untrue'.

Clashes broke out late Sep-

tember between Azerbaijan and Armenia-backed separatists over control of Karabakh, a region that proclaimed its independence from Baku during a war in the 1990s.

The recent flare-up has been the worst in decades, killing more than 1,000 people, including civilians, although the death toll is believed to be much higher.

The fighting has continued despite several attempts by Russia, France and the United States to help reach a lasting ceasefire.

Those three countries make up the Minsk group of mediators which helped broker a truce be-

tween the former Soviet rivals in 1994 but are yet to find a lasting solution to the long-simmering conflict.

Both sides have accused the other of targeting civilian areas and the United Nations this week decried indiscriminate attacks that could amount to "war crimes".

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has appealed to ally Russia for military support, while Azerbaijan has won the backing of Turkey, which is accused of sending mercenaries to Karabakh to fight against the separatists.

AFP

Protester, activist killed in Iraq, say police, medics

Baghdad, Iraq - A young demonstrator was shot dead in the southern Iraqi city of Basra on Friday as gunmen killed an activist in the capital, police and medics said.

They said Omar Fadhel was killed in the centre of Basra, while at around the same time a key figure in anti-government protests launched in Baghdad in October 2019 was shot and killed by men using a silenced gun as he drove through an eastern district of the capital.

The name of the activist killed in Baghdad was not immediately known.

Fadhel was the first demonstrator killed since October 1 this

year, a date that saw the first anniversary of the protest movement and was marked by demonstrators trying to revive their campaign.

Medics said Fadhel was hit by at least one bullet as hundreds of protesters clashed with anti-riot police.

The interior ministry confirmed his death, but said its forces had operated "in conformity with the letter of the instructions" from Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi, who has repeatedly ordered security forces to avoid the use of lethal force against demonstrators.

Almost 600 people have been killed since October 2019, mostly



Iraqi riot police form a shield as demonstrators gather near the local administration building during a protest in the southern city of Basra on Friday (AFP)

in clashes with security forces.

The key demand of the youth-led protest movement in the capital and southern Iraq has been the ouster of the entire ruling class, which it accuses of corruption and of being beholden to neighbouring Iran.

Activists have long suffered a campaign of kidnappings and killings to intimidate them into halting demonstrations.

The months-long protest movement eventually lost momentum as tensions between Baghdad's key allies Tehran and Washington spiralled, before demonstrations ground to a halt due to the coronavirus pandemic.

AFP

Egypt holds second stage of parliament election

Cairo, Egypt - Egyptians began voting on Saturday in the second phase of a parliamentary election in which supporters of President Abdel Fattah al Sisi are expected to win.

Some 63mn of Egypt's more than 100mn people are eligible to elect 568 of the 596 lawmakers in the lower house, widely seen as a rubber-stamp body for executive policies.

The remaining deputies will be appointed by Sisi, a former general, whose government over the past six years has launched a severe crackdown on dissent, targeting journalists, bloggers, lawyers and intellectuals.

The first phase of voting took place last weekend in 14 governorates including the Mediterranean city of Alexandria and the south of Egypt.

The second and final phase, which wraps up on Sunday evening, is being held in 13 governorates, including Cairo, the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal.

The new parliament will be the second to convene under Sisi, who took office in 2014 after leading the military's ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi the previous year.

The outgoing legislature, elected in 2015, was packed with Sisi supporters and featured only a small opposition bloc known as 25/30.

Runoffs are due to be held later in November and in December.

AFP

French Minister holds Tunisia talks on return of Islamist extremists

Tunis, Tunisia - Tunisia said on Friday it would take back from France its citizens suspected of being radicals, after last week's deadly attack in Nice allegedly carried out by a Tunisian extremist.

But Interior Minister Taoufik Charfeddine, following talks with his visiting French counterpart Gerald Darmanin, said their return would be conditional.

The former French colony is 'prepared to receive any Tunisian', Charfeddine said.

"But this must be done in line with conditions and regulations [under international laws and in] preserving the dignity of the Tunisian [being returned]."



Tunisia's Interior Minister Taoufik Charfeddine (right) with his French counterpart Gerald Darmanin (centre) in Tunis on Friday (AFP)

Charfeddine told reporters.

Sources close to Darmanin said ahead of the talks that he would submit to authorities a

list of some 20 Tunisians who France wants to expel, on the basis that they had been convicted on terrorism charges or

were suspected of extremist inclinations.

The French Interior Minister is due to visit Algeria on Sunday on a similar mission.

Public opinion in Tunisia is hostile towards the return of suspected extremists, and authorities have refused the return of their citizens from France on the basis of travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tunisian nationals have constituted a significant proportion of foreign extremists in Syria, Iraq and Libya over the past decade. In 2015, the United Nations said that some 5,000 Tunisians had flocked mainly to

Syria and Libya to join the Islamic State group (IS), while authorities in Tunis gave a lower figure of 3,000.

Their return has been a cause of concern in Tunisia, which has been under a state of emergency following a string of IS-claimed attacks in 2015 and 2016.

Darmanin's visit to Tunis was scheduled some time ago but it took on new urgency following the October 29 killing of three people at a church in the southern French city of Nice.

The alleged perpetrator of that attack, 21 year old Brahim Ouissaoui, who arrived illegally in Europe in late September, is not the first Tunisian suspected

of carrying out a deadly extremist attack in Europe.

In 2016, 31 year old Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel ploughed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd on the Nice seafront, killing 86 people. Later that year fellow Tunisian citizen Anis Amri (24) carried out a similar attack at a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 people.

IS claimed both men as its followers.

Darmanin also met Tunisian President Kais Saied who stressed that his country would seek to find a 'solution to obstacles that may arise' in the face of expulsions from France.

AFP

Bomb attack kills ex-Afghan TV presenter

Siawash, who recently joined Afghan central bank as an advisor, used to be a prominent news presenter

Kabul, Afghanistan - A former Afghan television presenter and two other civilians were killed in a Kabul bombing on Saturday, in an attack officials blamed on a group linked to the Taliban.

Yama Siawash was killed when a bomb attached to his vehicle exploded near his home in the Afghan capital, police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz told journalists.

The murder of Siawash comes amid a rise in violence across the country even as the Taliban and Afghan government engage in peace talks in Qatar to end the country's grinding war.

Siawash, who recently joined Afghanistan's central bank as an advisor, used to be a prominent political and current affairs presenter with Tolo News, the country's biggest private TV channel, known for his hard-hitting interview style.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Interior Ministry blamed the Haqqani network, a group linked to the Taliban.

"Such targeted attacks and explosions of sticky bombs is the continuation of crimes by Haqqani network and the Taliban," Tariq Arian, spokesman for the ministry, told reporters.

Washington has listed the Haqqani network as a terrorist group.

Siawash's death drew immediate condemnation from senior



This file photo shows a boy in front of a policeman with a rocket-propelled grenade, at Deh Qubad village in Kandahar province on September 27 (AFP)

Afghan officials and foreign diplomats.

"I am shocked at the killing of former Tolo News anchor Yama Siawash," Ross Wilson, US charge d'affaires in Kabul, said on Twitter.

"This attack is an assault on freedom of the press, one of Afghanistan's core democratic principles."

Abdullah Abdullah, who

heads the country's overall peace and reconciliation process, also said Siawash's murder targeted freedom of expression in Afghanistan.

"This is an unforgivable and unforgettable crime," he said in a statement.

The Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, a panel set up by media networks to oversee security for journalists in the country,

called for 'identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators' of the attack.

President Ashraf Ghani ordered an investigation into the murders, the presidential palace said.

Targeted killings of prominent figures, including journalists, clerics, politicians and rights activists, have become more common in recent months amid

growing violence in the country.

On Thursday, the father of Zarifa Ghafari, one of Afghanistan's first female mayors, was gunned down in front of his house in Kabul. His assassination was condemned by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had awarded Ghafari with the International Women of Courage award earlier this year.

US watchdog Special Inspec-



This video grab image distributed by TOLO TV shows their presenter Yama Siawash during a broadcast at their office in Kabul (AFP)

I am shocked at the killing of former Tolo News anchor Yama Siawash. This attack is an assault on freedom of the press, one of Afghanistan's core democratic principles

ROSS WILSON

tor General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said in a report this week that violent attacks in the country had surged by 50 per cent during three months to September when compared to the previous quarter.

Dozens of people were killed in less than two weeks in Kabul in brutal attacks that also left scores wounded.

On Monday, a deadly raid by

militants on Kabul University left 22 people dead.

The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the attack but the government blamed the Haqqani network.

The attack on the university came just days after a suicide bombing near an educational centre killed 24 people. That attack was also claimed by IS.

AFP

UN aviation agency urges Iran to speed up plane crash probe



This file photo shows people near the wreckage of a Ukrainian plane after it crashed with 176 passengers near the Imam Khomeini airport, in Iran's capital Tehran on January 8 this year (AFP)

Montreal, Canada - The UN aviation agency's governing body on Friday called on Iran to speed up its investigation into a Kiev-bound passenger plane mistakenly shot down in January and issue a final report.

Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 crashed shortly after taking off from the Iranian capital's main airport on January 8.

The Islamic republic admitted days later that its forces accidentally shot down the plane, killing

all 176 people on board, after firing two missiles amid heightened US-Iran tensions.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council, backed by all 36 member states, issued a statement calling on Iran to 'expedite the accident investigation'.

"We have had several exchanges with the Iranian CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) in which we urged its authorities to expedite the accident investiga-

tion in accordance with ICAO Annex 13 provisions," ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano said.

Annex 13 outlines that final accident reports should be issued within 12 months of a crash. Both Sciacchitano and Canadian Transport Minister Marc Garneau noted the 'grief and expectations' of the families of Flight PS752 crash victims.

Canada, which lost 55 nationals and 30 permanent residents

We have had several exchanges with the Iranian CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) in which we urged its authorities to expedite the accident investigation in accordance with ICAO Annex 13 provisions

SALVATORE SCIACCHITANO

in the crash, has demanded answers from Iran after Tehran's 'limited' initial report failed to explain why it fired missiles at the plane.

Iran's civil aviation authority has said the misalignment of an air defence unit's radar system was the key 'human error' that led to the plane's downing.

Iran last month vowed to reveal 'detailed' information on the probe by the end of October.

AFP

Lebanon President demands proof against US-sanctioned Minister

Beirut, Lebanon - Lebanon's President on Saturday asked for proof against his son-in-law and ex-Cabinet minister Gebran Bassil to justify US sanctions for alleged corruption, the presidency said.

The sanctions announced on Friday are the first against a senior Christian ally of Hezbollah, a powerful Shiite movement long targeted by US sanctions and blacklisted as a 'terrorist' organisation.

"[President Michel] Aoun has asked his foreign minister to obtain the proof and documents that pushed the US Treasury to direct accusations against lawmaker Gebran Bassil", his office said on Twitter.

Aoun also stressed 'the necessity of handing over the documents to the Lebanese judiciary to take the necessary measures', it said.

A source at the presidency said the request was made as 'Bassil is a Lebanese lawmaker and (former) minister accused of graft'. "If there were evidence against him, the Lebanese judiciary should follow up on the issue," the source said.

Bassil (50) has been dubbed by many as the 'shadow president'.



A file photo of the then Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil (AFP)

He is married to the president's daughter and heads the Free Patriotic Movement founded by Aoun, which together with its allies holds a parliamentary majority.

He was minister in every single cabinet from 2008 to late last year, when the cabinet stepped down under pressure from massive street protests against the entrenched political elite.

His portfolios included communications, energy and most recently foreign affairs.

Critics say he was behind many shady state dealings, especially during his time at the head of the energy ministry between 2009 and 2014.

But Bassil has repeatedly denied the accusations.

In September, Washington also slapped US sanctions on former finance minister Ali Hassan Khalil and ex-transport minister Youssef Fenianos over alleged support to Hezbollah and corruption.

Lebanon is mired in its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war, with recovery hampered by endless political deadlocks.

Prime minister-designate Saad Hariri is struggling to form a Cabinet to replace a government that resigned after a devastating August 4 blast at Beirut port.

AFP

US removes shadowy group condemned by China from terror list

Washington, US - The United States said on Friday it had removed from its list of terror groups a shadowy faction regularly blamed by China to justify its harsh crackdown in the Muslim-majority Xinjiang region.

In a notice in the Federal Register, which publishes new US laws and rules, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he was revoking the designation of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a 'terrorist organisation'.

"ETIM was removed from the list because, for more than a

decade, there has been no credible evidence that ETIM continues to exist," a State Department spokesperson said.

The administration of George W Bush in 2004 added ETIM, also sometimes called the Turkestan Islamic Party, to a blacklist as it found common cause with China in the US-led 'war on terror'.

Beijing has regularly blames ETIM for attacks as it justifies its measures in Xinjiang, where rights groups say that one million or more Uighurs or other Turkic-speaking, mostly Muslim people



This file photo shows people waving the flag of East Turkestan during a protest against China's treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang (AFP)

are incarcerated in camps.

But scholars say that China has produced little evidence that ETIM is an organised group or that it is to blame for attacks in Xinjiang, which separatists call East Turkestan.

The Washington-based Uighur Human Rights Project called the State Department decision 'long overdue' and a 'definitive rejection of China's claims'.

"The harmful effects of China's exploitation of the imagined 'ETIM' threat are real - 20 years of state terror directed at Uighurs," said the group's executive director, Omer Kanat.

China has acknowledged camps in Xinjiang but describes them as vocational centres meant to reduce the allure of religious extremism.

While experts have doubted a role of ETIM, China has suffered a series of attacks that authorities blamed on Uighur separatists.

In 2014, assailants stabbed to death 31 passengers at a railway station in the southwestern city of Kunming.

In 2009, hundreds died in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi in riots that largely targeted China's majority Han.

Activists say that China is trying to forcibly integrate Uighurs by indoctrinating them with communist ideology and making them renounce Islamic customs.

Pompeo has previously called the mass incarceration 'the stain of the century'.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Biden vows virus action on ‘day one’ as Europe suffers under second wave

Washington, US - The United States reported record new coronavirus cases for the third day in a row, as Joe Biden vowed to act against the pandemic on ‘day one’ if he wins the presidential election in the world’s worst-hit nation.

Global infections have surged past 49mn and Europe has become the new pandemic epicenter in recent weeks with more than 300,000 deaths - nearly a quarter of the global total.

More than 127,000 new infections were reported in the US on Friday, the third straight day of record cases, as votes from the bitterly fought election were still being counted.

No winner has been declared but Biden promised he would not waste time in addressing the pandemic if he is victorious.

“I want everyone, everyone to know on day one we’re going to put our plan to control this virus into action,” the Democrat said.

The infection figures came as President Donald Trump, who survived a bout of COVID-19 in October and has been widely criticised over his handling of the crisis, trailed his Democratic challenger in the vote count.

US cases are fast approaching 10m, with more than 236,000 deaths, and the pandemic has hammered the world’s biggest economy, leaving millions jobless.



Medical workers provide care to a COVID-19 patient in a dedicated unit of the ‘Hopital Prive de la Loire’, in France’s Saint-Etienne on Friday (AFP)

Trump has been a vocal opponent of lockdown measures, citing their impact on the economy, and has repeatedly clashed with his own government’s experts over coronavirus policy.

Unlike Biden, Trump held massive campaign rallies ahead of the November 3 vote, insisting the US was ‘rounding the turn’ despite the virus surges.

Senior members of his administration have contracted the virus recently with Trump’s chief of staff Mark Meadows

the latest to test positive, media said late Friday.

The pandemic has been cited as one of the factors for the delay in US election results, with state authorities deluged with millions of ballots mailed by citizens not willing to risk infection by voting in person.

‘More distrust’

Across the Atlantic, Greece became the latest European nation to enter lockdown on Saturday with the continent reeling from a second, relentless coronavirus

wave. Under the measures, which came into force before daybreak, Greeks can only leave home if they receive authorisation to a mobile phone request. Essential shops can stay open, including supermarkets and pharmacies.

On the first day of the second lockdown Athens woke to checks on vehicle movements and doubled fines for not wearing masks, up to 300 euros.

The capital’s main shopping thoroughfare Ermou street was quiet.

But hairdressers have been allowed to stay open for two more days and they were booked out.

“I want to have my hair done so that what I see in the mirror every morning during lockdown won’t cause me sadness,” said Petrina, ahead of her Sunday appointment.

The measures follow the imposition of restrictions in Italy, France, Ireland and Britain, while Switzerland is also being hit hard by the virus.

Germany reported record



I want everyone, everyone to know on day one we’re going to put our plan to control this virus into action

JOE BIDEN

daily figures on Saturday with 23,399 new cases and 130 deaths.

Thousands of demonstrators were expected to gather in Leipzig on Saturday to protest against mask-wearing and new curbs to halt the virus spreading across Germany.

Poland was imposing fresh measures Saturday too, closing most shopping centers. The government is also shutting cinemas, theatres, galleries and other cultural institutions and making hotels available for busi-

ness travellers only.

Governments are also exploring mass testing as a way to curb the pandemic.

In England, Liverpool on Friday began the country’s first city-wide coronavirus testing program. All 500,000 residents will be offered repeat tests, even if asymptomatic, under a pilot scheme that could be rolled out nationwide if successful.

Britain on Saturday banned entry to all non-resident foreigners coming from Denmark after a mutated version of the coronavirus linked to mink farms was found in humans.

With populations growing increasingly weary of lockdowns, protests have broken out in some countries. Demonstrators and the police have clashed in parts of Italy and the Czech Republic in recent weeks.

Giorgio Gori, the mayor of Bergamo - the epicenter of Italy’s coronavirus crisis earlier this year - said ‘there is more tiredness and more distrust around’ than during the first lockdown, after people protested outside his home.

The Italian government announced new measures early Saturday to help businesses and families cope with the latest restrictions, including a national night curfew and lockdown in four regions. The latest aid package would be total €2.5bn, media reported on Saturday.

AFP



Alan Viarengo (AFP)

US teacher faces trial for threatening

Los Angeles, US - A California college teacher with ties to the far-right Boogaloo movement has been ordered to stand trial for sending threatening letters to a health official over restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

Alan Viarengo (55), who taught math at a community college in northern California, was arrested in August at his home in the town of Gilroy where officers seized 138 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition and explosive materials.

At a court hearing on Thursday, a judge in Santa Clara County ruled that he must stand trial for two felony counts of stalking and threatening a public official.

According to authorities, Viarengo over the course of several months beginning in April sent Santa Clara County Public Health Officer Dr Sara Cody 24 threatening letters.

One letter seemingly from the same sender expressed satisfaction that Cody was getting threats.

AFP

Six countries reported virus on mink farms, says WHO

Geneva, Switzerland - Denmark and the United States are among six countries that have reported new coronavirus cases linked to mink farms, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden are the other nations to have discovered SARS-CoV-2 in minks, WHO said in a statement.

Denmark has imposed strict measures on the north of the country after warning that a mutation of the virus had jumped from minks to humans and infected 12 people.



Mink farmers protest in Holstebro, Denmark, on Friday (AFP)

Copenhagen has warned the mutation could threaten the effectiveness of any future vaccine and has ordered the slaughter of all the estimated 15-17mn minks in the country.

Britain on Saturday banned entry to all non-resident foreigners coming from Denmark after the mutation linked to mink farms was found in humans.

Scientists say virus mutations are common and often harmless, and this one doesn’t cause a more severe illness in humans.

AFP

US cases hit record for third day, topping 127,000: Monitor

Washington, US - The United States has set a third straight daily record for new COVID-19 infections, notching more than 127,000 cases, John Hopkins University reported on Friday.

And the death toll as of 8.30pm over the past 24 hours was 1,149, the Baltimore-based university said.

The outbreak has been surging for weeks across the country, with the Midwest worst-hit even as the number of new diagnoses were approaching springtime levels in the south, northeast and west.

While deaths remain far lower than the peak in spring, Friday was also the fourth day in a row that fatalities were above 1,000. The last time people were dying of COVID-19 at that rate in the US was early September.

As of Friday evening, the US - the worst hit country in the world in terms of deaths and total cases - had more than 236,000 coronavirus-related fatalities and 9.7mn known in-



People enjoy outside lunch on 7th Avenue in Manhattan, New York on Thursday (AFP)

fections. Cases are expected to increase as the country moves into colder weather and people switch to socialising primarily indoors, prime conditions for passing the virus from person to person.

Colder, drier weather might also play a role in creating favor-

able conditions for the virus to linger in air and on surfaces.

Reasons that deaths are down from their peak include the fact that as cases are more spread out geographically than they were at the start of the US epidemic, hospitals are better able to cope with the caseload.

Doctors have also learned how to better treat severe cases of COVID-19 - by placing patients on their stomachs, avoiding the use of ventilators where possible and using them on low-pressure settings if they are required.

AFP

COVID-hit Peru fights to bring diphtheria outbreak under control

Lima, Peru - Peru’s Health Ministry said on Friday that a diphtheria outbreak in the South American country had been brought under control, indicating it was a minor outbreak.

Health authorities launched a national epidemiological alert late last month after detecting the country’s first case of the deadly disease in 20 years.

“So far, the investigation and control allows us to say that no additional cases to the family outbreak have been identified,” deputy health minister Luis

Suarez told a press conference. Diphtheria is a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease that mainly affects the nose and throat but sometimes also the skin.

Five cases of the disease came to light in the La Victoria area of the capital Lima.

Two of the victims died, including a five-year-old girl who had been vaccinated at birth but never received programmed follow-up vaccinations that would have immunised her for a decade.



A health worker knocks the door of a house during a preventive vaccination campaign against diphtheria, in Lima on October 28 (AFP)

The second victim, a 69 year old woman, died on Wednesday, but health authorities said she had not been contagious.

An emergency vaccination campaign in the area where the child lived let to 7,000 people receiving vaccinations, the ministry said.

“We hope that with the vaccination of the 7,000 people, the outbreak in La Victoria is contained,” Suarez said.

“There is no reason to generate a national alarm, nor is it necessary to carry out a specific

vaccination day for diphtheria at this time,” he said.

Peru is however planning vaccinations against five diseases this weekend, to resume a campaign suspended by the coronavirus pandemic. Among the vaccines are those for diphtheria and influenza.

The World Health Organization warned several months ago that the coronavirus pandemic has had a ‘devastating impact’ on health care systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

AFP



I can look at something and recreate it on stone but I find it difficult to come out with abstract concepts just for art's sake

APSA VIMALA
MADHUSOODANAN

ART OF STONE

An Indian housewife paints art on smooth pebbles picked up from Tiwi beach

SCAN ME

to see Apsa's art



Living with Art

Hubert Vaz

She picked them up out of sheer curiosity but breathed new life into them...and now they stand transformed into new entities, each with a charming character of its own.

When Apsa Vimala Madhusoodanan, an Indian housewife, visited Tiwi beach a couple of years ago, she was so taken up by the smooth pebbles adorning the beach that she returned home with a bagful of those stones. Not knowing what to do with them, she initially felt it was just her passion for nature that awakened an affinity for them. But soon the dormant artist in herself woke up from its slumber and began dictating terms.

Apsa bought a set of acrylic paints and brushes and let her creativity take wing upon these stones. Beginning by creating a bunch of cactii, she soon started painting fancy designs as well as images of animals, especially cats, with such intricate detail that her stones resemble miniature creatures coiled up in comfortable positions.

"I am not an artist but I did have an interest in art which remained hidden as I got busy with my education, career, and marriage," said the young network engineer who had

been working in the field of IT in UAE before coming to Oman two years ago. Since she wasn't able to secure a job in Oman, she decided to utilise her time on hand with a creative hobby and the stones came to her rescue all of a sudden,

Apsa has created a whole range of artistic stones besides using some to create images and scenes in frames. A lot of friends and well-wishers who have seen her work have also placed orders with her to create fancy stone art for them, while she has gift many of her creations to friends and family members.

Yet at a nascent stage in her artistic venture, Apsa says she would like to further her talent by creating stone art of various sizes. Though most of her work includes replicas of photographs and pictures, she has not yet experimented with creating artistic images from her own memory.

"I can look at something and recreate it on stone but I find it difficult to come out with abstract concepts just for art's sake," she asserts, however, adding that she is aware that she can go a long way with her talent if she organises herself to cater to popular demand. As of now, she has been only obliging friends.



PEBBLE ART

What is pebble art?

Pebble painting is also called 'rocking' or 'rock art/stone art'. It is a craze that began in the US with Megan Murphy's 'The Kindness Rocks Project'. Meghan, who is an author, activist and life coach, came up with the idea after collecting heart-shaped stones and pieces of glass from the beach which she found quite intriguing. It involves painting and converting smooth pebbles into pieces of art as table décor which can be used as humble gifts.

The process

First, wash the pebbles clean to rid them of dirt and impurities. Then dry them well before beginning to paint designs or images of objects that interest you. Use several coats and let them dry between layers. Use fine brushes for intricate details. Oil based paint pens can also be used for creating graffiti on them.

The paint

The best paints to use for painting on stones or pebbles are water-proof craft paint or acrylic paints which are available in stationery shops or art stores. You may add a coat of varnish after the paints have dried, for added sheen on the painted pebbles. Glitter decor is another way of embellishing the pebbles.

Kindness Rocks

'Kindness Rocks' are those with a painted message or 'thought for the day'. One can personalise it for the recipient to express joy, sorrow, gratitude or convey compliments/good wishes. Most pebble artists paint meaningful messages or inspiring anecdotes that are relevant to everyone at all times.



Apsa's pebbles - the cat is the most popular, while framed images are ideal gifts



AUTUMN ART SALON

Joint exhibition



Hubert Vaz

Matti Sirvio is back with a bang! After a long gap due to the current pandemic and the spate of lockdowns in its wake, this jovial artist from Finland, who set up his own art gallery to propagate art and give artists from all over the world a common platform to showcase their work in Muscat, is back to what he does best – showcasing art.

Matti’s annual group exhibition called Autumn Salon 2020 is a platform for selected artists to display their latest works and find buyers. Opened last week, this group exhibition runs until November 28 and people are encouraged to visit in small groups taking all necessary precautions of wearing masks and social distancing.

“As an artist-run gallery we don’t charge the artists for their participation. Too many international competitions and group shows squeeze the money from artists, though artists should not pay for their works to be shown. They’ve already done their job. Now it’s the turn for the business community and collectors to recognise their talent and support them by buying their work and displaying it in their offices and homes,” says Matti matter-of-factly.

Around 44 artworks by 25 artists from 11 countries, including Oman, are displaying their work at this exhibition. All the works are abstract or semi-abstract and the show is defined by earthy colours, he disclosed.

Asked if any of the proceeds



Art does change people. Often it simply works as an instrument or a frame of reference

MATTI SIRVIO

would go towards charity, Matti felt perturbed. He said, it is not justified to always expect artists to pledge their proceeds for charity, as if their profession is not a serious one, and considered just a ‘luxury hobby’ by people who have nothing else to do. “I believe in charity, but, this is not a charity event,” he stressed.

Having spent his lifetime immersed in art and promoting/supporting artists, Matti says, “Art is a high form of communication to me. Some thoughts, ideas and sensations are too complex to define with words and numbers. Abstract art provides us with tools to experience non-material

values and ideas that often are neglected. A person who learns to think creatively with the power of imagination will not only survive, but will excel in his future.”

About how art has influenced his own way of life, Matti explains, “Artistic experience is usually very private and subjective. The power of good art is not necessarily in its mass popularity, but in its unique-

ness. You can fill your house with Mona Lisa pictures that will look exactly like her, but they will never give you the real experience. You have to travel to Paris to stand in front of the original work. It weights more than the image. Her history, magic, and statement has stood the challenges of time.”

He further asserted, “Art does change people. Often it simply works as an instrument or a frame of reference. If you visit The Rothko Room at Tate Modern or in the Phillips Collection Museum in Washington DC, you’ll be surprised to see how many things were sorted out in your mind during those 15 or so minutes that you sat there.”

As a clear message to budding artists in Oman, Matti says, “Oman is full of special concepts and non-material images that need to be shared with the world. Explore a lot of international art, but don’t merely copy it. Find your own language with your symbols and compositions. Abstract art is not an escape for those who don’t know how to draw. Without a deeper connection with your personal life, it remains just empty. Don’t be empty and your art will reach others, not only in Oman, but in all the corners of this world.”

Participating artists

Matti Sirvio, Finland
Dheraj Gadicherla, India
Nuura Kide, Finland
Elizabeth Davis, India
Carrie Wareham, UK
Tahira Fida, Oman
Shiva Noroozi, Iran
Ezaidi Shahroni, Jordan
Kanak Mitra, India
Estelle Kenyon, South Africa
Soni Budhia, India
Amjad al Siyabi, Oman
Abdelrehman Saad, Sudan
Dr Hafsa Banu, India
Rashmi Dauria, India
Asawari Deoras, India
Summer Bassam, Oman
Sara Riaz Khan, Pakistan
Essa al Mufarji, Oman
Shalini Kumar, India
Amal Soliman, Egypt
Fatima Maleki, Iran
Marcia Mallick, USA
Alma DeVille, Bosnia
Harini Kumar, India



The work of 25 international artists, including four Omanis, are on display



What determines the price of art

“The price of art is not determined by the size of the artwork, neither by the cost of material used to make it. Three elements come to play while determining the price of an artwork – firstly it is the time or age when it was prepared; secondly, it depends on the credibility and stature of the artist; thirdly, it is the uniqueness of the work which make it special or priceless,” says Matti Sirvio who has been based in Muscat since 2013. “Its tough for an artist to put a price on a work. Often, it is done by the galleries, art dealers or others who represent the artist who get a percentage from the sales,” he added.

His abstract and semi-abstract paintings have elements from his long career as a pastor and an artist in Eurasia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Oman. Sirvio has opened two art galleries, branding his name Matti Sirvio Art Galleria - one in Oman and the other in Lapland, Finland.



Autumn Salon 2020 exhibition is on display at Matti’s Gallery till November 28