

APP REVEALS SIX TYPES OF COVID-19 INFECTION

LONDON: British scientists analysing data from a widely-used COVID-19 symptom-tracking app have found there are six distinct types of the disease, each distinguished by a cluster of symptoms.

1

'Flu-like' with no fever: Headache, loss of smell, muscle pains, cough, sore throat, chest pain, no fever.

2

'Flu-like' with fever: Headache, loss of smell, cough, sore throat, hoarseness, fever, loss of appetite.

3

Gastrointestinal: Headache, loss of smell, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, sore throat, chest pain, no cough.

4

Severe level one, fatigue: Headache, loss of smell, cough, fever, hoarseness, chest pain, fatigue.

5

Severe level two, confusion: Headache, loss of smell, loss of appetite, cough, fever, hoarseness, sore throat, chest pain, fatigue, confusion, muscle pain.

6

Severe level three, abdominal and respiratory: Headache, loss of smell, loss of appetite, cough, fever, hoarseness, sore throat, chest pain, fatigue, confusion, muscle pain, shortness of breath, diarrhoea, abdominal pain. — AFP

ONLINE SCAMSTERS ON THE PROWL WITH FAKE DEALS ON PRECIOUS METALS

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

SAMUEL KUTTY

MUSCAT: With the gold prices on a roll, scammers posing as legitimate traders are using online platforms to dupe investors.

According to Capt Hashem bin Hamad al Ajmi at the General Department of Criminal Investigations and Investigations in the Economic Crime Division at the Royal Oman Police, fraudsters set up fictitious online exchanges to lure people to trade in gold, precious stones and even digital currencies.

"We have started to see an increase in fraudulent activities on different online platforms. Beware of those scammers, who under the shadow of the coronavirus crisis, are capitalising on investor sentiment," said Capt Al Ajmi.

He warned against advertisements and links that lure people with lucrative offers as a result of trading in precious metals or currencies on the so-called electronic exchanges.

Capt Al Ajmi's advice was podcast by the Radio Programmes Department of Royal Oman Police following a case of online fraud in which a woman used a gold jewellery shop to dupe customers.

During the recent period, he said, the ROP has been monitoring a



diverse range of criminal methods such as electronic trading used to target potential investors.

According to Capt Al Ajmi, most of the fake accounts use images of well-known personalities, posting news and activities of the real person, to establish their accountability to deceive the victims. The account owners then lure unsuspecting people into paying money for a charity.

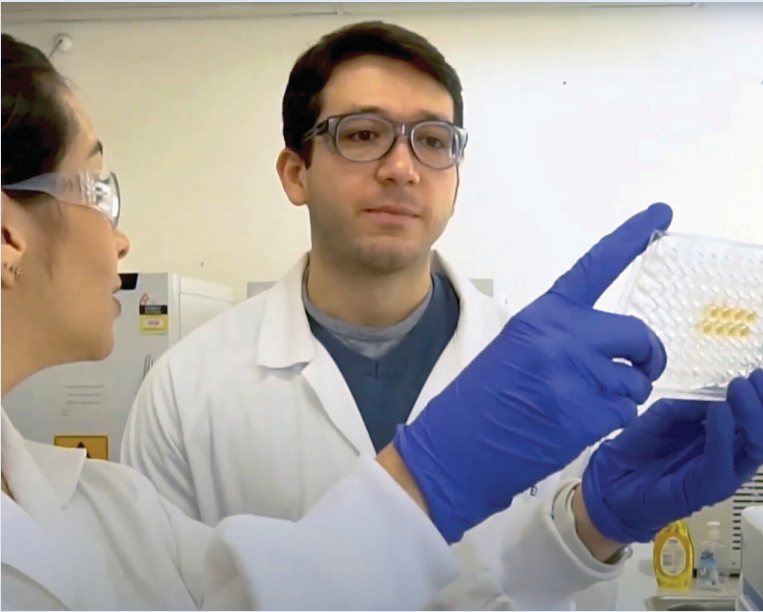
TURN TO P2

TEST CAN IDENTIFY CORONAVIRUS IN 20 MINUTES

SYDNEY: Researchers in Australia have devised a test that can determine novel coronavirus infection in about 20 minutes using blood samples in what they say is a world-first breakthrough.

The researchers at Monash University said their test can determine if someone is currently infected and if they have been infected in the past.

Their test, using 25 microlitres of plasma from blood samples, looks for agglutination, or a clustering of red blood cells, that the coronavirus causes.



While the current swab test is used to identify people who are infected with the coronavirus, the agglutination assay - or analysis to detect the presence and amount of a substance in blood - can also determine if someone had been recently infected, after the infection is resolved, they said. Hundreds of samples can be tested every hour, the researchers said, and they hope it can also be used to detect antibodies raised in response to vaccination to aid clinical trials. — AFP

TRENDS

A SMILE BEHIND THE MASK IS STILL A SMILE

MAŁGORZATA PIECHOWICZ-PIETRUSZKA

MUSCAT: When I first came to Oman, almost seven years ago, I remember that what struck me most was the local hospitality. Omani people were beaming with friendliness and openness, and a sign of that was the omnipresent smile. Now, when our faces must be covered with masks, this simple but kind gesture is one of the many things I miss a lot during this pandemic.

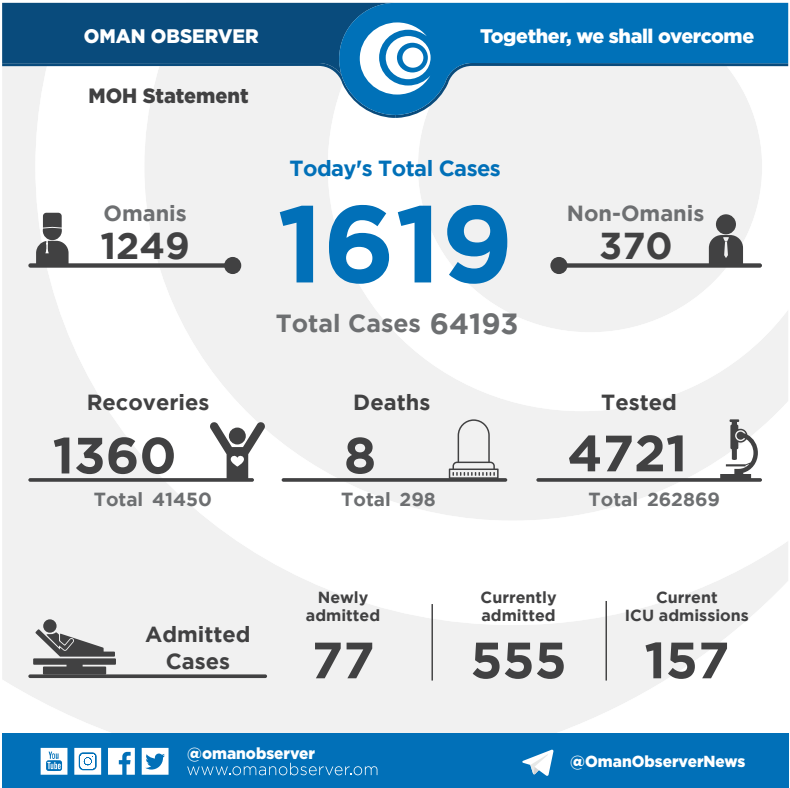
A smile makes such a difference and its value cannot be underestimated. It's a universal act of nonverbal communication that makes us all a little bit more humane, no matter if you give it or receive it. Without a smile, to my mind, our world became almost dystopian, hostile and definitely sadder. So I started to wonder, what is in a smile?

Smiling itself, if it's genuine, induces a whole array of positive emotions comparable to those we feel after a good night's sleep. It keeps our immune system strong and heart healthy. It reduces our stress levels and improves mental health, enhances our general state of well-being and promotes happiness.

And what's best about smiling is that we can all do it quite effortlessly and

naturally. It has been measured that a child, on average, smiles 400 times a day, whereas an adult person somewhere between 20 and 40 times. If smiling stimulates our brain's reward mechanisms in a way that even chocolate, a well-regarded pleasure-inducer, cannot match, I am sure my average has drastically plummeted since the beginning of COVID-19 prevalence. I am judging on the amount of chocolate I devour every day to make up for the 'lost' smiles and keep my 'reward mechanisms' working.

But in a world covered with masks, is it all lost? Is it still worth smiling if nobody can see it? Well, if we get to the anatomy of our faces, we will get the answer. There are two smiling muscles: zygomaticus, which lifts the corners of our mouth, and obicularis oculi encircling our eye socket. The first one makes a "social" or a forced smile but can still be quite beneficial to our bodies (odd, I know). The problem is we cannot see it under the mask. The second one makes a person smile 'with their eyes' and this is what we are interested in - a genuine, sincere smile that makes us kinder and happier, and we can see it.



So, flex those obicularis oculi muscles and make your smile visible through your eyes. Please. I honestly cannot continue with this amount of chocolate.

OMAN OBSERVER Be Careful, Be Responsible!

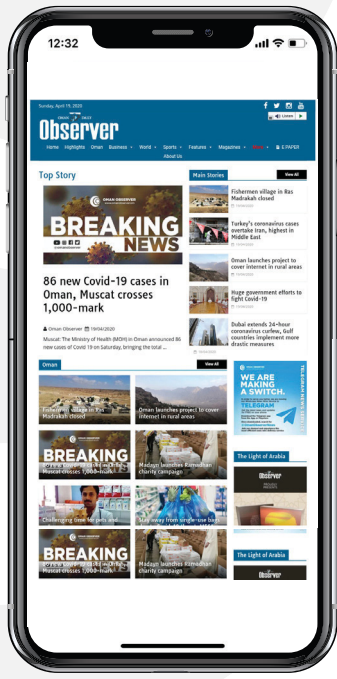
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ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

FROM PAGE 1

Al Ajmi reminded that trading in currencies or gold is not through electronic platforms through browsing on websites, but rather it must be from official and documented bodies like exchange traded funds.

Unmonitored large scale electronic financial transactions inevitably pose a substantial amount of risk that can aid cybercriminals in

carrying out fraud, money laundering and piracy in the country, Capt Al Ajmi said, with advice that the public should not provide details about bank accounts and other data that the perpetrators ask for.

In some crimes, the fraudsters manage to delude their victims and persuade them to transfer money in installments in tens of hundreds of thousands riyals, he said.

LIJU CHERIAN

T

he thoughts of dancing palm fronds often transport Oksana Prozorova from Muscat to Salalah. The longing for the land of coconut palms finds shape and colour in this Russian-British artist's paintings.

"I find inspiration in different forms of beauty that surround me, right from the colours of flowers to the shapes of simple objects. This is why I revel in painting the palm trees," confesses Oksana.

Her first paintings featuring palm trees were produced during the time she lived in Salalah. Now, seven years later and living in Muscat, she still paints them a lot.

As a result of her experience of living in Dhofar, palm trees and seashells became new subjects for her paintings.

She had worked as an English teacher at the College of Applied Sciences (CAS) Salalah



for 5 years.

Before coming to the Middle East, she painted mostly flowers.

Painting them is a source of energy for her, which comes from the variety of colours and shapes.

What amazes Oksana is how different 'generations' of coconuts can coexist on a single tree simultaneously.

"You may see full-sized nuts, a group of medium-sized unripe ones and then another cluster of orange baby-coconuts," she explains.

Her genre is primarily still life and landscape with acrylic as the medium.

Her style is expressionist and semi-abstract and characterised by bold colours with a joyful feel.

"I am always learning and trying out new tech-

Art an Anchor of Hope

“

Finding balance between things that need to be done, caring for my loved-ones (even though virtually) as well as physical and mental self-care has been an important lesson I learnt through lockdown. My art has definitely been the anchor in a quiet harbour which helped stay connected to nature.

**OKSANA
PROZOROVA**

niques and approaches," she says.

She usually paints during weekends when she is free from her busy job as an English language teacher at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) as a language teacher.

During the stay at home period, she found herself even busier than earlier. Like many others, this has been a time for her to learn new things and adjust to new reality.

Supporting the students, considering that many of them had experienced anxiety related to on-line education and unusual life circumstances, which become an important part of her teaching job. As the semester ends, she says it further brings great satisfaction to hear from students that her help and support were appreciated during these unsettling times.

"Finding balance between things that need to be done, caring for my loved-ones (even



though virtually) as well as physical and mental self-care has been an important lesson I learnt through lockdown. My art has definitely been the anchor in a quiet harbour which helped stay connected to nature."

In one of her lockdown paintings she featured a coconut tree in pink lighting. This, Oksana says, was an attempt to bring some cheer to those of us who have found ourselves in isolation and confined to our own spaces.

"I stepped out of my comfort zone and introduced my art to a wider circle of colleagues and friends using e-mail and social media," she says. "So, despite the current difficulties we face, I feel I am lucky because I have been able to draw some comfort from expressing myself through art."

REVIEW



مقشـن لخدمات النفط والغاز ش.م.ع.م
MAQSHAN OIL & GAS SERVICES SAOC
 COM. Reg. No : 1079797

إعلان

الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة الغير عادية

يتشرف مجلس إدارة شركة مقشن لخدمات النفط والغاز (ش.م.ع.م) بدعوة المساهمين الكرام لاجتماع الجمعية العامة الغير عادية للشركة والمقرر عقده في تمام الساعة الحادي 11:30 صباحاً من يوم الأربعاء الموافق 29 يوليو 2020م ، وذلك عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لانعقاد الجمعية العامة الغير عادية والتي يمكنكم الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع WWW.mcd.gov.om وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب ستعقد الجمعية العامة الغير عادية ثانية في تمام 11:30 صباحاً، من يوم الأحد الموافق 09 أغسطس 2020م وذلك لمناقشة بنود جدول الأعمال التالية :

1. اجازة تعديل النظام الأساسي للشركة وذلك وفقاً للقانون الشركات 2019/18.
2. زيادة رأس مال الشركة

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة والقرار الوزاري الخاص بضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة للشركات المساهمة المقتلة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة نود أن تلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي :

- الالتزام بقيود وشروط الخدمة التي تقدمها المنصة الإلكترونية لشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع .
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ولمزيد من الاستفسارات أو طلب نسخة من التقارير المالية يرجى الإتصال بالفاضل / محمد بن علي المسهلي على أرقام الهواتف التالية : 24231219/24231218



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إعلان

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إعلان

الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة الغير عادية

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ENTERTAINING BUT HISTORICALLY INACCURATE

A couple of years back, while flipping the channels I came across a TV series called Reign. The scene was a mesmerising one with few young, gorgeous looking people wearing historical costumes and speaking in English accent. The first thought that came to mind was: "I seriously can't think of a time when I was that young or pretty!" I came across the series again on Netflix in February and started watching it, managing to finish the four seasons in two months.

My verdict? Entertaining though historically inaccurate starting with the choice of the main actress who played Mary Queen of Scots. The Australian actress was 5'4 while the real Mary was 5'11. The series had the usual teenage drama mix: many fictional characters, modern songs, romance and the suspense of wandering ghosts and heathen cults.

In the series, Queen Mary is depicted leading a splendid life full of love and political achievements. But the reality was a far cry. Mary Queen of Scots was born in December of 1542. Her father King James V died when she was six days old. Her French Mother Mary De Guise, sent her to the French court at the age of five accompanied by "the four Marys" her ladies-in-waiting and the daughters of the noblest families in Scotland, who were her own age.

Mary married Francis the Dauphin of France in 1558 when she was sixteen and he was fifteen. Two years later he died of abscess in the brain. She returned to Scotland nine months later in 1561 to be welcomed by a complex political situation. Like England, the majority of Scotland had converted to Protestantism and her illegitimate half-brother Earl of Moray was a leader. Being a devout Catholic, Mary was regarded suspiciously and was preached against by John Knox the Protestant reformer who didn't approve of her French upbringing. Mary faced many challenges, mainly

the internal problems of Scotland. However, her main focus was the English throne occupied by Elizabeth I, the illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII. To many European Catholics, Mary was the rightful queen of England as she was the legitimate descendent of Henry VII. Both queens were ruling in a hostile environment and had to find an eligible husband to produce a heir in order to secure their thrones. Mary got married to her half cousin Lord Darnley in 1565 and had her only child James a year later. Lord Darnley was unpopular with a violent streak.

Though he was named a king consort of Scotland, Darnley had a bigger aim: to be granted the Crown Matrimonial- becoming the king if the queen died childless- which Mary rejected. The problematic marriage didn't last long as Lord Darnley was assassinated by another nobleman called Earl Bothwell in 1567. Soon after, Earl Bothwell abducted Mary and forced her to marry him.

Many of her lords didn't believe the abduction story and regarded Mary as a murdering accomplice, turning against her and raising an army to fight them both. Bothwell managed to escape and Mary was imprisoned and forced to abdicate in favour of her one-year old son James. Her brother was named regent.

After almost a year, Mary managed to escape to England, thinking that Elizabeth would help in attaining her throne. Instead, Elizabeth imprisoned her for nineteen years in different castles, before charging and beheading her for treason in 1587. Mary saw James last when he was ten-month-old. Elizabeth never got married and when she died in 1603, he was named King James VI of Scotland and James I of England and Ireland, fulfilling his mother's lifetime dream.

The author is a certified skills trainer and the author of: The World According to Bahja. rashabooks@yahoo.com



RASHA AL RAISI

FOSTERING SELF-MOTIVATION IN CHILDREN

MASSRAT SHAIKH

I hated every minute of training, but I said, “do not quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion: Muhammad Ali

Self-motivation is the strength that helps us achieve without influence from other people or situations. Children with self-motivation will find a reason to complete a task, even when things are challenging. They do not give up easily and do not need another to encourage them.

Motivated people do not accept the world as it is or wait for direction from others to initiate change. Instead, they take matters into their own hands, acting to make the world better for themselves and others. They speak truth to power, take charge to solve problems, and champion new ideas. There is evidence that self-motivation is a trait that we can develop.

Self-motivated people are also highly determined. Grit predicts accomplishing challenging goals of personal significance. For example, research studies show that grittier students are more likely to graduate from high school. Excellence sometimes seems like the result of natural talent. But no matter how gifted a child is and no matter how easily they climb up the learning curve, they do need to do that climbing. There are no shortcuts.

Just like other character strengths, self-motivation and grit are learnt by modelling. Children learn it through their parents. So, if you love what you do, let your chil-

dren know. Wear your passion on your sleeve. When you fail, openly share your frustration but go out of your way to point out what you learned from the experience. Emphasise playing the long game, life is a marathon and not a sprint.

Let children know that projects that take a long time to complete are enjoyable and show them that from your experience.

Show children how you are working towards a very long-term goal. Showing children what you do each day is connected to your deepest personal values.

Show them about at least one subject or activity that you never get bored of thinking about.

Teach children that setbacks should not discourage them for long.

Teach them to work hard and finish whatever they begin.

Teach them always for better ways of doing things. Encourage them always to take the initiative.

Praise passion in children. “You’re so into this! That’s just awesome!”

That steely determination of individuals is made possible by the warmth and support of friends, families, teachers, and mentors. Do not let children quit on a bad day.

Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It is not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it is a day when you have everything to do, and you have done it: Margaret Thatcher

The author is an educational psychologist. Email: massrat@ahlameducation.com



STAY

HOME

STAY

SAFE

SHINAS

شركة تطوير شخاص

إعلان لحضور الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية

يسر مجلس إدارة شركة تطوير شخاص (ش.م.ع.م) دعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية المقرر عقده بقاعة السلام في تمام الساعة ١٠ من صباح يوم الاثنين الموافق ٢٠ يوليو-٢٠٢٠ للنظر في جدول الاعمال التالية:

١. دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة المنتهية في ٣١-١٢-٢٠١٩م.

٢. دراسة تقرير مدقق الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية للسنة المالية المنتهية ٣١-١٢-٢٠١٩م.

٣. تعيين مراقب حسابات الشركة للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في ٣١-١٢-٢٠٢٠م.

وينص النظام الاساسي للشركة على أن يحق لكل مساهم تفويض أي شخص آخر لحضور هذا الاجتماع، والتصويت على مقررات الجمعية نيابة عنه بموجب التفويض الخطي.

للعلم في حال عدم اكتمال النصاب ستعقد الجمعية العمومية العادية مرة أخرى في تاريخ ٢٣ يوليو ٢٠٢٠، لأي استفسار بما يتعلق بالبنود على جدول الاعمال يرجى الاتصال على ٩٧٧٧٧٨٥.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم

وتفضلوا بشفقة الاحترام والتقدير

رئيس مجلس الادارة

مقشن

لخدمات النفط والغاز ش.م.ع.م

MAQSHAN OIL & GAS SERVICES SAOC

رقم السجل التجاري: 1079797

إعلان

الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية

يشرف مجلس إدارة شركة مقشن لخدمات النفط والغاز (ش.م.ع.م) بدعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية للشركة والمقرر عقده في تمام الساعة 10:00 صباحاً من يوم الأربعاء الموافق 29 يوليو2020م، وذلك عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية والتي يمكنكم الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع (www.mcd.gov.om) وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب ستعقد الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية ثانية في تمام الساعة 10:00 صباحاً من يوم الأحد الموافق 09 أغسطس 2020م يكون الاجتماع صحيحاً إيا كان عدد الأسهم الحاضرة وذلك لمنقطة بنود جدول الأعمال التالية:

1. دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31 والموافقة عليه.

2. دراسة تقرير مراقب الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

3. دراسة مقترح توزيع أرباح نقدية على المساهمين بنسبة (264 %) من رأس المال وذلك بمبلغ قدره (2.64) ريال ع.ا.سهم والموافقة عليه.

4. الإحاطة بالتعاملات التي أجرتها الشركة مع الأطراف ذات العلاقة خلال السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

5. التصديق على بدل حضور جلسات مجلس الإدارة واللجان المنبثقة والتي تقاضاها أعضاء مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31. وتحديد مقدار البدل للسنة المالية التي تنتهي في 2020.

6. مكافأة أعضاء مجلس الإدارة بمبلغ (50,000) ريال عماني عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

7. تخصيص مبلغ (15,000) ريال عماني لدعم المجتمع المحلي عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2020/12/31.

8. تعيين مراقب الحسابات للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في 2020/12/31 وتحديد أتعابهم.

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة والقرار الوزاري الخاص بضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة للشركات المساهمة المقتلة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة نود أن نلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي:

- الالتزام ببقود وشروط الخدمة التي تقدمها المنصة الإلكترونية لشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.

- يحق للشخص الاعتباري دون غيره تفويض شخص طبيعي آخر لحضور الاجتماع والتصويت على القرارات المتخذة نيابة عنه من خلال وسائل التقنية الحديثة على أن يكون لهذا الشخص الطبيعي رقم مستثمر لشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.

- يبدأ التصويت (عبر النظام المخصص لذلك) على أي من البنود المطروحة في جدول الأعمال قبل تاريخ انعقاد الجمعية بمدة لا تزيد على (3) ثلاثة أيام وحتى انتهاء عملية التصويت على البند المطروح يوم الاجتماع وفي حالة تغيير رصيد أي مساهم بالنقصان سيتم إلغاء أي عملية تصويت قام بها قبل انعقاد الجمعية، وعليه إعادة التصويت مرة أخرى إذا رغب في ذلك.

- كما يجب على جميع المساهمين التأكد من تحديث بياناتهم لدى شركة مقشن لخدمات النفط والغاز وخاصة رقم الهاتف النقال للمساهم ولزمزيد من الاستفسارات أوتطلب نسخة من التقارير المالية يرجى الاتصال بالفاضل / محمد بن علي المهدي على أرقام الهواتف التالية : 24231218/24231219.

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A PETROLEUM FIELD LCC COMPANY

مقشن

للخدمات والاستثمار (القابضة) ش.م.ع.م

MAQSHAN SERVICES & INVESTMENT (HOLDING) SAOC

رقم السجل التجاري: 21529677

إعلان

الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية

يشرف مجلس إدارة شركة مقشن للخدمات والاستثمار القابضة (ش.م.ع.م) بدعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية للشركة والمقرر عقده في تمام الساعة 10:30 صباحاً من يوم الأربعاء الموافق 29 يوليو2020م، وذلك عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية والتي يمكنكم الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع (www.mcd.gov.om) وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب ستعقد الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية ثانية في تمام الساعة 10:30 صباحاً من يوم الأحد الموافق 09 أغسطس 2020م إيا كان عدد الأسهم الحاضرة وذلك لمنقطة بنود جدول الأعمال التالية:

1- دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

2- دراسة تقرير مراقب الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

3- دراسة مقترح توزيع أرباح نقدية على المساهمين بنسبة 51% من رأس المال بمقدار 0.510 ريال عماني عن كل سهم والموافقة عليه.

4- الإحاطة بالتعاملات التي أجرتها الشركة مع الأطراف ذات العلاقة خلال السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

5- تعيين مراقب الحسابات للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في 2020/12/31 وتحديد أتعابهم.

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة والقرار الوزاري الخاص بضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة للشركات المساهمة المقتلة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة نود أن نلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي:

- الالتزام ببقود وشروط الخدمة التي تقدمها المنصة الإلكترونية لشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.

- يحق للشخص الاعتباري دون غيره تفويض شخص طبيعي آخر لحضور الاجتماع والتصويت على القرارات المتخذة نيابة عنه من خلال وسائل التقنية الحديثة على أن يكون لهذا الشخص الطبيعي رقم مستثمر لشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.

- يبدأ التصويت (عبر النظام المخصص لذلك) على أي من البنود المطروحة في جدول الأعمال قبل تاريخ انعقاد الجمعية بمدة لا تزيد على (3) ثلاثة أيام وحتى انتهاء عملية التصويت على البند المطروح يوم الاجتماع وفي حالة تغيير رصيد أي مساهم بالنقصان سيتم إلغاء أي عملية تصويت قام بها قبل انعقاد الجمعية، وعليه إعادة التصويت مرة أخرى إذا رغب في ذلك.

- كما يجب على جميع المساهمين التأكد من تحديث بياناتهم لدى شركة مقشن لخدمات النفط والغاز وخاصة رقم الهاتف النقال للمساهم ولزمزيد من الاستفسارات أوتطلب نسخة من التقارير المالية يرجى الاتصال بالفاضل / محمد بن علي المهدي على أرقام الهواتف التالية : 24231218/24231219.

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A PETROLEUM FIELD LCC COMPANY

مقشن

الشاملة للخدمات الزراعية ش.م.ع.م

MAQSHAN GLOBAL AGRO SERVICES SAOC

رقم السجل التجاري: 1079787

إعلان

الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية

يشرف مجلس إدارة شركة مقشن الشاملة للخدمات الزراعية (ش.م.ع.م) بدعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية للشركة والمقرر عقده في تمام الساعة 11:00 صباحاً من يوم الأربعاء الموافق 29 يوليو2020م، وذلك عبر المنصة الإلكترونية لاجتماع الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية والتي يمكنكم الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع (www.mcd.gov.om) وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب ستعقد الجمعية العامة العادية السنوية ثانية في تمام الساعة 11:00 صباحاً من يوم الأحد الموافق 09 أغسطس 2020م ويكون الاجتماع صحيحاً إيا كان عدد الأسهم الحاضرة، وذلك لمنقطة بنود جدول الأعمال التالية:

1- دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31 والموافقة عليه.

2- دراسة تقرير مراقب الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر عن السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

3- الإحاطة بالتعاملات التي أجرتها الشركة مع الأطراف ذات العلاقة خلال السنة المالية المنتهية في 2019/12/31.

4. تعيين مراقب الحسابات للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في 2020/12/31 وتحديد أتعابهم.

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة والقرار الوزاري الخاص بضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة للشركات المساهمة المقتلة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة نود أن نلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي:

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- كما يجب على جميع المساهمين التأكد من تحديث بياناتهم لدى شركة مقشن لخدمات النفط والغاز وخاصة رقم الهاتف النقال للمساهم ولزمزيد من الاستفسارات أوتطلب نسخة من التقارير المالية يرجى الاتصال بالفاضل / محمد بن علي المهدي على أرقام الهواتف التالية : 24231218/24231219.

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SCIENCE

HOW NEW INVENTIONS CAN FIGHT SPREAD OF COVID-19 INDOORS

ISSAM AHMED

It's become a familiar mantra: masks, hand washing and physical distancing can slow the spread of the coronavirus while work continues on developing the vaccines and treatments needed to rid the world of its threat.

But as tens of millions of people return to public transit, their workplaces and schools, are these interventions enough?

Researchers are increasingly looking at the pandemic through the lens of engineering, devising ways to make indoor environments safer. Here's a preview of what's in store.

HEATED NICKEL AIR FILTERS

Scientists are getting more worried about the potential airborne spread of the coronavirus, at distances far greater than the two metres of spacing urged by guidelines.

Certain super-spreading events, such as a choir practice in Washington state in the spring, appeared to involve so-called microdroplets that became suspended in the air.

HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters - technology that first came to market in the 1950s - are used widely in hospitals, biocontainment labs and airplanes. These use a fan to draw air through felt-like filters to capture the tiniest of microbes.

But the filters become contaminated over time and must eventually be incinerated or autoclaved.

A research team at the Texas Center for Superconductivity at University of Houston and Galveston National Laboratory has now demonstrated the efficiency of a new type of filter based on an ultra-fine foam made of nickel.

By heating the foam to 200 degrees Celsius (392 degrees Fahrenheit), the researchers were able to eliminate 99.8



A member of the cleaning staff disinfects air vents aboard an Emirates plane. The company Medistar says its new air filtration system based on heated nickel foam can be placed inside air conditioning systems or walked through a plane via a mobile unit. — AFP

per cent of airborne SARS-CoV-2 virus from a room on first pass.

Crucially, the foam is insulated, so it doesn't heat up the room.

The team published their findings in the journal Materials Today Physics last week, and Medistar - the company behind it - has received regulatory approval to sell the system.

The firm says the system can either be installed in pre-existing air conditioning units or walked through a room in a mobile unit.

"This is a very timely invention with great potential in fighting against COVID-19, particularly with increasing consensus that COVID-19 can be airborne," Gang Chen, an MIT professor who was not involved in the work, said.

But since COVID-19 carriers may stay in a room for a prolonged period, the key to how useful any filtration system is lies in how fast it can exchange air at high volume.

NEW UV TECHNOLOGY

Lamps that operate on a particular area of the ultraviolet spectrum known as UVC have long been used to kill bacteria, viruses and molds, notably in hospitals and in the food-processing industry.

But direct exposure to UVC is dangerous because the rays, which aren't present in regular sunlight, cause skin cancer and eye problems - meaning they can only be used once people leave.

Researchers at Columbia University have been working for several years on a new type of UVC lamp, whose shorter wavelength of 222 nanometres makes them safe for humans but still lethal to microbes.

Last month, a team led by physicist David Brenner published a paper in the journal Scientific Reports showing that their technology killed 99.9 per cent of seasonal coronaviruses present in airborne droplets.

"We really need something in situations like offices, res-

taurants, airplanes, hospitals," Brenner said.

Japanese company Ushio has already started selling far-UVC lamps in the US but says on its website that ongoing studies on their safety will decide when they are ready for occupied spaces.

ANTIVIRAL COATINGS

Catching the virus via touch is also a potential risk, hence the directives to frequently wash our hands and use disinfectant on surfaces.

Long-lasting antimicrobial surface coatings can also complement cleaning products, but the decade-old technology has thus far largely been confined to hospitals.

Researchers at the University of Arizona recently proposed widespread use of coatings as a new line of defence against SARS-CoV-2.

An antiviral coating made of quaternary ammonium polymer, developed by Allied BioScience, was found to reduce the amount of a coronavirus closely related to SARS-CoV-2 on a surface by 90 per cent in 10 minutes.

It does this by "denaturing" the virus's proteins - effectively twisting them out of shape - and attacking its protective layer of fat. — AFP

RESEARCHERS ARE INCREASINGLY LOOKING AT THE PANDEMIC THROUGH THE LENS OF ENGINEERING, DEVISING WAYS TO MAKE INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS SAFER

EU MEETS ON VIRUS RESCUE PLAN AS INDIA PASSES 1 MILLION CASES

BRUSSELS: EU leaders met face to face on Friday to try to rescue Europe's economy from the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic, as India became the third country to record one million cases, joining Brazil and the United States.

The virus has now killed more than 585,000 people and infected over 13,600,000 as it continues to surge across the globe despite months of unprecedented measures aiming to stop its spread.

The pandemic has also shattered economies worldwide, and the mood was sombre as European Union leaders met in person for the first time in five months hoping to overcome divisions about a planned 750-billion-euro (\$855 billion) stimulus package.

Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Thursday that the differences between EU member nations were still very large so she expected "very, very difficult negotiations".

French President Emmanuel Macron described it as a "moment of truth".

"It's our European project which is in play here," Macron warned before meeting Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who leads a group of northern European countries holding out against



Policemen check the details of motorists on a street after a new lockdown was imposed as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Siliguri, India, on Friday. — AFP

handing cash to southern nations without strict conditions.

'I HAVE TO KEEP FIGHTING'

Elsewhere COVID-19 is spreading at an ominous pace, with India surpassing one million infections just a day after Brazil's number topped two million.

And the United States, which has recorded more cases than both countries combined with over 3,560,000, on Thursday posted yet another record number of new infections in one day with 68,428.

More than 600 people are

dying daily in India, where lockdowns have been reimposed on millions of people.

India's main hotspots had previously been the megacities of Mumbai and New Delhi, but smaller cities and rural areas -- where 70 per cent of Indians live -- have recently begun to raise the alarm.

The coastal tourist region of Goa is the latest Indian state to go under lockdown, imposing a three-day shutdown and a night-time curfew until August 10.

With per capita spending on healthcare among the lowest in the world, India's

hospitals are reeling.

VACCINE HACKING

After two studies this week raised hopes for a potential vaccine, the United States, Britain and Canada accused Russian-linked hackers of targeting labs in their countries conducting coronavirus vaccine research.

The three governments pointed the finger at the Kremlin, saying that the hacking group involved was "almost certainly" linked to Russian intelligence.

Moscow rejected the accusations as "groundless".

— AFP

Protests after student held for not doing homework

PONTIAC, Michigan: Hundreds of Detroit-area students turned out in protest outside their high school on Thursday calling for the release of a classmate who is in juvenile detention after not completing schoolwork during remote learning this past semester.



Detroit-area students stage a protest outside their high school on Thursday. — Reuters

The 15-year-old student, called Grace in the original ProPublica report that highlighted her situation, was on probation for fighting with her mother and stealing. ProPublica reported that Grace, who

has attention deficit disorder, was easily distracted when studying at home and fell behind during remote learning. A Michigan circuit court judge sent Grace to juvenile detention in May, citing the schoolwork as a probation violation.

On Thursday afternoon, protesters assembled at Groves High School in the suburb of Beverly Hills before they drove to the Oakland County's Circuit Court and prosecutor's office holding up signs with calls to "Free Grace." — Reuters

WORLD

Britain eyes normal life by Christmas



An advertising board for the Evening Standard newspaper carries the headline 'work from home advice axed' in London on Friday. — AFP

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he hoped Britain could return to normality before Christmas, setting out a phased removal of lockdown restrictions, but warned that while he was hoping for the best, the country must also prepare for the worst.

Britain's death toll of more than 45,000 from confirmed cases of COVID-19 is the worst in Europe but the country has begun to lift lockdown measures as case numbers and infection rates fall.

Johnson set out the latest timetable for easing on Friday, saying employers would be given more discretion over working from home rules, that the safety of larger gatherings would be evaluated, and that social distancing rules might be dropped in time for Christmas.

"It is my strong and sincere hope that we will be able to review the outstanding restrictions and allow a more significant return to normality from November at the earliest — possibly in time for Christmas," he said. However, he stressed that the plan was conditional on success in keeping infection rates down, setting out extra healthcare funding and new powers for local government to lock down COVID-19 hotspots.

"We're making sure we're ready for winter and planning for the

- * HOPE FOR THE BEST, PREPARE FOR THE WORST: PM
- * GOVT TO DROP 'WORK AT HOME' GUIDANCE

worst. But even as we plan for the worst, I strongly believe we should also hope for the best," he told a news conference.

The government has faced criticism over several aspects of its pandemic response, including that it was too slow to impose a lockdown and failed to ramp up testing capacity fast enough.

Opposition leader Keir Starmer said it was vital that Johnson's plan was endorsed by experts in order to win public confidence: "This can't be done on a wing and a prayer. It requires a credible plan and national leadership."

Johnson said that from August 1 he would scrap official guidance that encouraged people to work from home and instead give employers the power to decide whether it was safe for workers to return. — Reuters

New virus cases spark alarm in China's Xinjiang

SHANGHAI: The capital of China's far-western Xinjiang region curtailed most flights into the city on Friday and has shut down subway and public bus services after several coronavirus infections were detected, government authorities and state-controlled media said.

So far, at least five cases linked to Urumqi have been discovered, including a man who was confirmed positive after he travelled from the city to the eastern province of Zhejiang, state media said.

The infections were detected beginning on Wednesday, and news of the cases prompted state media outlets in Urumqi to issue assurances on Friday that supermarkets had ample stocks of food — an apparent attempt to discourage panic-buying. — AFP

No dancing, singing, mingling at weddings

SYDNEY: Australia's Victoria state reported a record daily increase in COVID-19 cases on Friday while neighbouring New South Wales said it was banning dancing, singing and mingling at weddings as authorities struggle to contain a new wave of infections.

Victoria, which has forced nearly 5 million people in the country's second most populous state into a partial lockdown for more than a week, said it has found 428 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, most from community transmission.

The Victoria outbreak led to Australia posting its second biggest one-day rise in new COVID-19 infections, with 438 cases on Friday. It was largest 24-hour spike since late March, when most cases detected in Australia were people returning from overseas. — Reuters

Global warming, pollution endanger fish and corals

CANBERRA: Global warming and pollution are causing a hormonal change that makes coral reef fish more vulnerable to predators, according to a scientific study released on Friday.

Fish face a variety of human-induced stressors including increasing water temperatures caused by climate change and pollution from agricultural pesticides.

The researchers said the first-time study showed that stresses disrupt the way the coral reef fish secrete different hormones that regulate the body and control their development.

The hormones control the development of sensory structures such as the retina, the nostrils and the lateral line, which enable fish to detect nearby water movement, including dangers and threats. — dpa



EU leaders elbowing their way into the summit. — AFP

Birthday torte and mask gifts at EU’s ‘elbow bump’ summit

ALEX PIGMAN

In a major test for global diplomacy during a pandemic, EU leaders met physically in Brussels on Friday and the elbow bump was the greeting of choice.

The 27 European heads of state and government are holding their first sit-down since coronavirus lockdowns spread across the globe in March.

This summit will have been the most hygienic ever, the EU insisted, with tweets showing staff scrubbing down the conference room with chiffons and power sprays. Other images showed workers scrubbing their hands assiduously.

Leaders entered the summit room in the Europa building to be greeted by the host and chair, EU council chief Charles Michel, with a slight bow and a tap of the elbow.

They wore masks during this traditional on-camera meet and greet, circling around to say hello to their long lost counterparts whom they hadn't seen

as a group since February.

Some, including EU commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, wore a mass produced mask that you might buy at your local pharmacy.

Others, like Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel and Bulgarian premier Boyko Borisov, preferred something more custom made, with their national flag or insignia.

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa, who takes over the EU's rotating presidency from Germany in six months' time, offered a luxury box of masks to each of his counterparts with embroidered flags.

Certain long-held summit pleasantries remained unchanged. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the EU's veteran supremo, turned 66 on Friday and France gave her bottles of a beverage, but behind the scenes, out of sight from the others.

Austria brought her a Sacher-torte cake, the Viennese chocolate delicacy supposedly created for Prince Metternich, who chaired his own crunch summit to divide up Europe after the Napoleonic wars. — AFP

US Congress set for battle over next virus aid bill

RICHARD COWAN

The US Congress returns to Washington on Monday with Democratic and Republican leaders agreeing that they need to pass something to salve the heavy toll of the coronavirus pandemic but \$2 trillion apart on what that something should be.

In the 12 weeks since President Donald Trump signed into law the last of the \$3 trillion so far committed to the crisis, COVID-19 has spread aggressively across the United States, with the number of confirmed and presumptive cases more than tripling to over 3.5 million people. There have been more than 137,000 US deaths.

A politically charged response to the virus, with some officials rejecting health experts' pleas to wear face masks and maintain social distancing, has contributed to the United States having the largest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the world.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who previously resisted another round of coronavirus relief, has floated the idea of a \$1 trillion bill focusing largely on protecting businesses and schools from liability lawsuits as they reopen

A POLITICALLY CHARGED RESPONSE TO THE VIRUS, WITH SOME OFFICIALS REJECTING HEALTH EXPERTS' PLEAS TO WEAR FACE MASKS AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE US HAVING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS IN THE WORLD

after suspending operations because of the pandemic.

The Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives is pushing a far more extensive, and expensive, response. House Democrats in May passed a \$3 trillion bill that included funds for struggling state and local governments and more direct payments to families, which McConnell rejected.

While the differences are huge, McConnell said earlier this week: "I do think we'll get there and do something that needs to be done."

Time is tight. Extended unemployment benefits for the more than 30 million Americans thrown out of work during the crisis are scheduled to end July 31 and with the Nov 3 election looming, the two-week summer session may be lawmakers' last chance to pass a major bill this year. — Reuters

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this page are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the *Observer*.



China lifted 78.4pc of total Omani crude exports in 2019

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT: China, long the principal market for Omani crude exports, saw its share dip slightly to 78.4 per cent of total exports in 2019, down from 83 per cent a year earlier, according to Oman's Ministry of Oil and Gas.

Of an estimated 310 million barrels shipped to a string of markets around the world last year, China lifted 243 million barrels. This compares with 240 million barrels of total exports of 289 million barrels of Omani crude in 2018.

China has seen its share of Oman crude exports nearly double over the past decade. It was roughly 40 per cent in 2010.

Japan was the second most important destination for Omani crude exports last year, lifting 23 million barrels or 7.5 per cent of the total. Its share about a decade ago was about 15 per cent.

In third place was India with a 4.8 per cent share, lifting around 15 million barrels of Omani crude last year. This compares with a share averaging about 14 per cent in 2010.

Myanmar has been a rising market for Omani crude in recent years, accounting or 3.5 per cent of the total exports (11 million barrels) in 2019. A further four million barrels (1.4 per



KEY MARKET:
SHIPMENTS OF OMANI CRUDE TO CHINA AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPORTS HAVE DOUBLED OVER THE PAST DECADE

cent) were shipped to Malaysia, while Tanzania with two million barrels (0.5 per cent) and Thailand with 0.5 million barrels (0.2 per cent) received some volumes as well.

Oman's output of crude oil and condensate totalled around 354 million barrels in 2019, down from 357 million a year earlier. This represents an average daily production of 971,000 barrels in 2019, down from 978,000 bpd in 2018, a slight dip of 0.7 per cent.

"The Sultanate maintained its level of oil production in compliance with the agreement to curb output among the OPEC and non-OPEC producers in order to stabilise the international oil supply and demand," said the Ministry in its report.

On eve of bankruptcy, US firms shower execs with bonuses

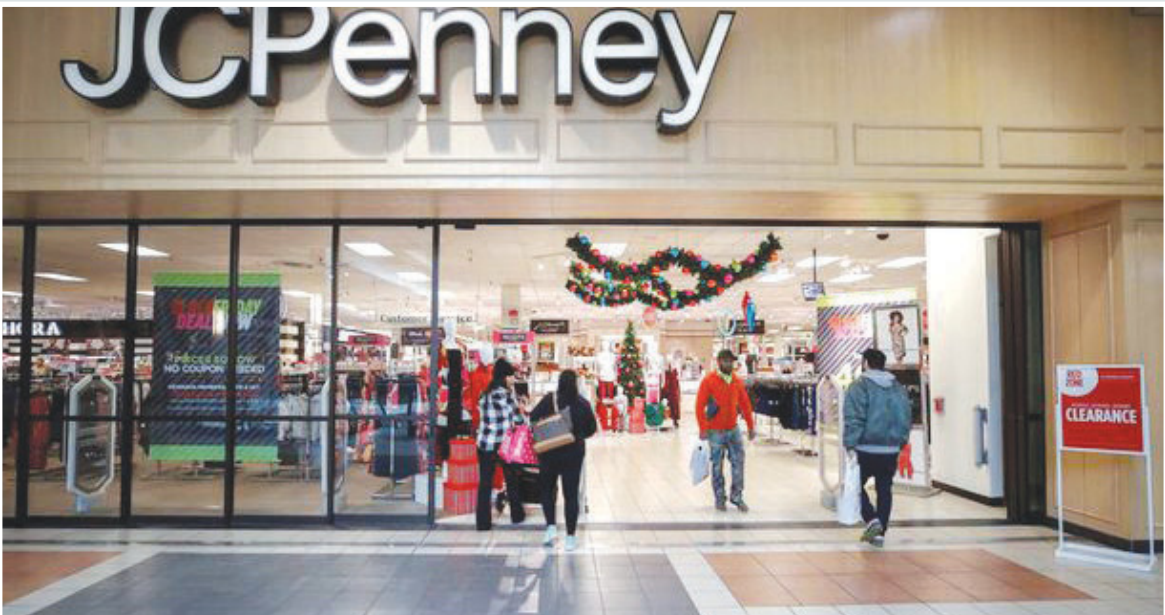
NEARLY a third of more than 40 large companies seeking US bankruptcy protection during the coronavirus pandemic awarded bonuses to executives within a month of filing their cases, according to a Reuters analysis of securities filings and court records.

Under a 2005 bankruptcy law, companies are banned, with few exceptions, from paying executives retention bonuses while in bank-

ruptcy. But the firms seized on a loophole by granting payouts before filing.

Six of the 14 companies that approved bonuses within a month of their filings cited business challenges executives faced during the pandemic in justifying the compensation.

Even more firms paid bonuses in the half-year period before their bankruptcies. Thirty-two of the 45 companies Reuters examined approved or paid bonuses within six months of filing. Nearly half authorised payouts within two months. — Reuters



After 7.3pc slump in 2020, GCC's oil GDP to recover to 3.5pc in 2021



HEFTY PRICE:

Oil price shock, demand destruction and pandemic to cost Gulf states \$270 billion in lost oil export revenues this year

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT: Oil exporting member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), having been severely impacted by the global economic slowdown and the pandemic, are expected to see the contribution of hydrocarbons to the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) recover to around 3.5 per cent next year, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This compares with a hefty 7.3 per cent decline in the sector's contribution to the GDP in 2020.

Jihad Azour, Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF, warned that the six member states of the GCC, comprising Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, could witness a drop in oil export revenues to the tune of a staggering \$270 billion during 2020.

Despite a recent uptick in oil prices since the extension of the Opec+ agreement, current prices averaging \$43 a barrel are still around 30 per cent lower than the average of \$68 a

barrel that prevailed at the start of the year. Any further recovery will be dependent on a pickup in global demand, Opec+ negotiations, inventory levels and developments in the shale oil industry, he noted.

"Therefore, all these elements play into the composition of the price, and this is why we're seeing a high level of volatility currently still in the oil market. Yet, the expectations for the oil price to remain in the corridor of \$40 to \$45 which means that the impact, the negative impact on the oil sector for this year will be deep. We expect a drop in the oil GDP this year for the GCC to exceed to 7.3 per cent as a negative growth this year with a potential recovery to 3 and 3.5 per cent in 2021", Azour remarked.

Sharing his outlook for the Middle East and Central Asian countries – a region that includes Oman and the GCC bloc – the IMF official said the "double whammy and lockdown and severe oil price fluctuations" would result in a 7.3 per cent decline in GDP growth across a region encompassing the Middle East,

North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2020.

Azour noted measures adopted by the GCC states in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A fiscal package announced at the outset of the outbreak was designed to support the livelihoods of people through cash transfers, reductions in some bills, and deferment of tax payments. Central banks too rolled out measures extending liquidity and financing support, while some states reduced the level of interest rates.

In this regard, he stressed the need for continued support to sectors that have been central to the economic diversification strategies of the Gulf region. Affected sectors include tourism, real estate, airline transportation logistics, and so on, he said.

Key to fuelling a strong recovery, Azour stressed, will be the non-oil sector where high value-add activities and technologies will play an important role. "We expect also that this will give an opportunity to streamline some of the public entities and to make them more productive, and allow the private sector to gain an

additional space in the economy. This also can be done by looking at the support to SMEs, which was one of the issues of the past and to see how access to finance can be expanded here in this area. Importantly, is to make sure that over the medium-term, that this process of reducing the dependence on oil and oil cycle will be maintained".

Commodity dependent economies are also starting to transform their economic structures and adopt newer fiscal management policies, he noted. "We saw several countries diversifying their source of revenues and also recalibrating some of their expenditures. This is something that we also saw during the COVID-19 shock. Some countries have reallocated some of their expenditure items in order to, on one hand, increase the support to the economy, but also do it by reallocating and reprioritising among the list of expenditures those who are important. Some also have continued in reforming the subsidy system in order to increase the effectiveness of public spending," he added.

BUSINESS

OPEC FEARS SECOND VIRUS WAVE TO PROLONG OIL INVENTORY OVERHANG



An army member stands next to the logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries in front of Opec's headquarters in Vienna. . — Reuters

LONDON: Opec fears its record oil cuts will fail to rebalance the market and solve the worst glut in history if a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic undermines an economic recovery later this year, according to internal Opec research seen by Reuters.

Opec, Russia and their allies, a group known as Opec+, said they would ease record oil curbs from August 1 citing a gradual recovery in demand as global lockdowns loosen up.

The group expects oil demand to climb by 7 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2021 after falling 9 million bpd this year. Opec wants to lift its output by 6 million bpd in 2021.

But internal research by Opec suggests those targets could be at risk if a second wave of the virus forces new lockdowns around the world.

Such a scenario would push demand down by 11 million bpd in 2020 and, most importantly for Opec, lead to bigger inventories, a key measure Opec uses to monitor the efficacy of output cuts.

"It should be noted in this scenario that the overall stock build reaches an unprecedented high of 1.218 billion barrels in 2020", Opec said in research prepared for Wednesday's Opec+ panel meeting

Opec+ said they would ease record oil curbs from August 1 citing a gradual recovery in demand as global lockdowns loosen up

where ministers recommended easing output cuts.

Such a figure would mean putting into storage the equivalent of more than 12 days of global oil output due to poor demand.

Under the "second wave" scenario, global stocks would fail to draw down in the third quarter and would only modestly decline in the fourth quarter, staying about 149 million barrels above a five-year average in industrialised OECD nations.

Opec has said it wants to keep inventories at or below the five-year average. Its current base case scenario foresees OECD stocks staying 104 million barrels below a five-year average in the OECD by the end of 2020 after a drawdown later in the year.

— Reuters

Daimler plans to cut up to 20,000 jobs



Workers assemble engines for Mercedes-Benz S-class models at the Daimler Powertrain plant in Bad Cannstatt, Germany. — Reuters

STUTTGART: German carmaker Daimler plans to cut up to 20,000 jobs in the coming years, company sources said on Friday.

According to the Handelsblatt business daily, the downsizing of the workforce is to save the Mercedes auto giant 2 billion euros (\$2.3 billion).

Daimler's board had initially spoken of 1.4 billion euros in savings.

A spokesman for the company's works council said that thorny negotiations with Daimler were ongoing.

He noted that it was important for clarity to be achieved soon so that workers know what is in store for them.

Management sources said on Friday they would not comment on speculative media reports.

However, Human Resources Executive Wilfried Porth had said last weekend that a previously announced target of 10,000-15,000 job cuts would not be enough.

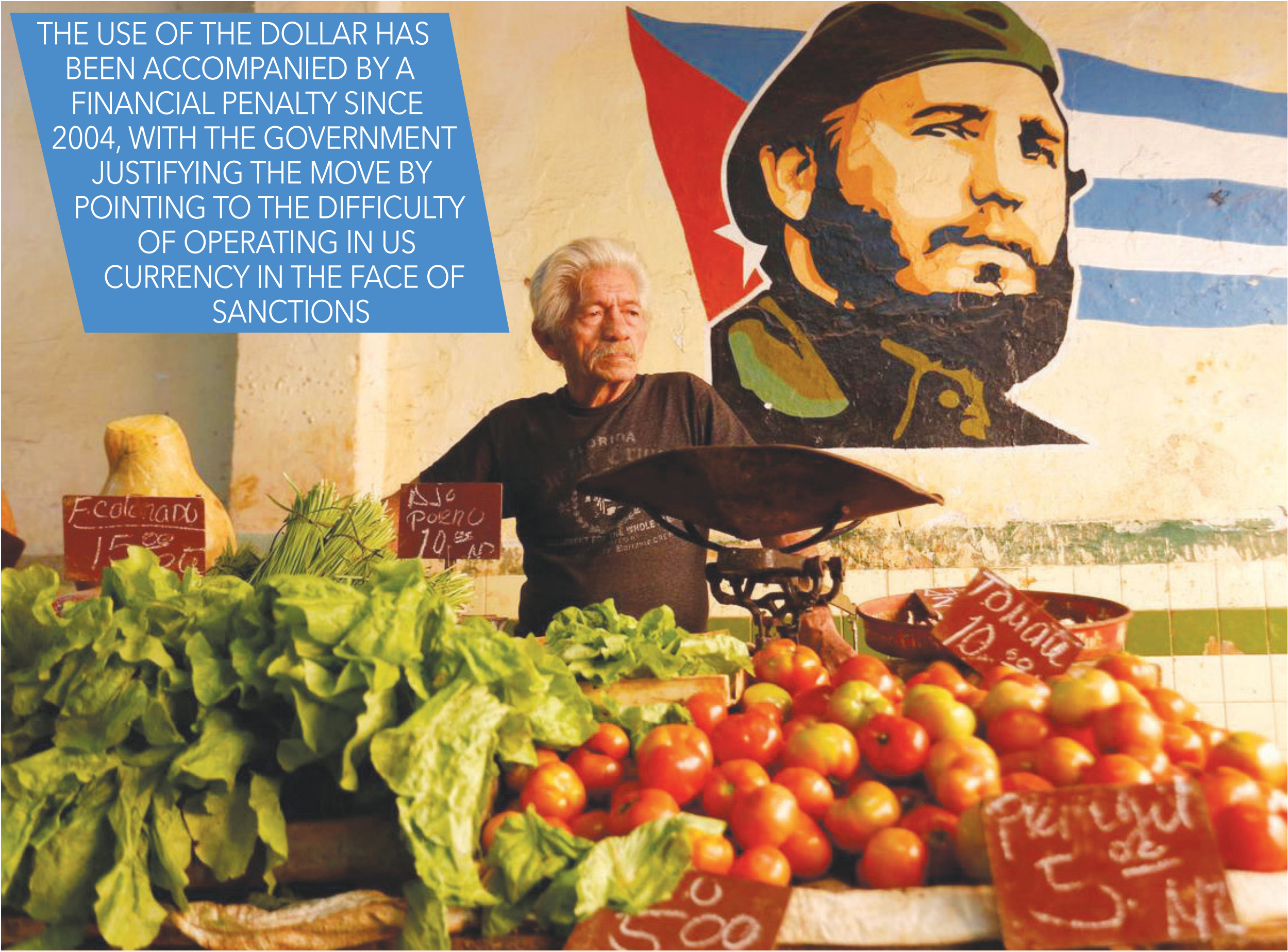
Daimler's shares got a major boost off the back of the reported job cuts and a better-than-expected performance in the second quarter.

Daimler's stock climbed by 3.7 per cent to the top of Germany's DAX index of 30 major companies.

The company made an operative loss of 1.7 billion euros in the second quarter, according to preliminary results, significantly better than forecast by analysts.

The German automotive industry has been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, after the pandemic disrupted global supply chains and forced production stoppages earlier in the year. — dpa

BUSINESS



A man waits for clients inside a private vegetable market, next to an image of Cuba's late president Fidel Castro, in Havana. — Reuters

Cuba to eliminate dollar tax to boost economy

HAVANA: Cuba will eliminate on Monday the 10 per cent tax it has previously levied on the use of the US dollar — and widen the categories of products for which it can be used to pay — in response to the country's economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic and Washington's ongoing embargo.

"We are going to eliminate that 10 per cent levy even despite the hostility and the intensifying of the blockade of the United States", Economy Minister Alejandro Gil told state TV.

The use of the dollar has been accompanied by a financial penalty since 2004, with the government justifying the move by pointing to the difficulty of operating in US currency in the face of sanctions.

Facing a cash shortage as the embargo tightened and its own economic reforms were delayed, Cuba last year began allowing citizens to purchase household appliances and

cars with dollars via bank cards.

Despite the high demand for using dollars, consumers had to deposit their money — often received through remittances — into a bank before they could use it. With the penalty, only 90 cents of every dollar made it onto their cards.

With the tax cancelled as of July 20, demand could increase even more.

"It is a fair and logical measure" Economist Omar Everleny Perez said. "To continue supplying stores, the country needs a currency that allows it to do so".

The new rules will allow certain high-end groceries and hygiene products to be purchased using dollars in some stores, though it is so far unclear which ones.

"There is a segment of the market with economic solvency" Perez said, pointing to the purchases some in Cuba are able to make.

The sale of groceries in both cur-

rencies — with one CUC equivalent to one dollar and 24 CUP equivalent to one dollar — will continue.

The Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) predicts Cuba's GDP will contract 8 percent in 2020 thanks to the pandemic.

Tourism, the country's economic driver, has been paralysed for the last four months due to travel restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus and the island has had to make adjustments in the face of an "exceptional" situation, Economy Minister Gil said.

The government has supported the creation of small and micro businesses in both the public and private sphere, as well as encouraged foreign investment in food production.

"This is a system of measures that are orientated to strengthening us, not just to stay afloat but also to get ahead and develop", Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said. — AFP

SPORTS



BUDAPEST: Six times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton started his bid for an eighth Hungarian Grand Prix victory by leading Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas in a dominant practice one-two on Friday.

The Briton's best lap of one minute 16.003 seconds at the twisty Hungaroring was 0.086 quicker than championship leader Bottas, despite being on harder tyres than the Finn.

Mercedes-powered cars filled the top four slots on the timing screens, with Racing Point's controversial 'Pink Mercedes' cars third and fourth with Mexican Sergio Perez and Canadian Lance Stroll.

Perez — whose place at the team appears uncertain for next year despite having a long-term contract — was half a second off the leading Mercedes' pace but a further 0.437 quicker than Stroll.

The Racing Point cars, copies of last year's title-winning Mercedes, were protested by Renault at the previous Styrian Grand Prix in Austria with the governing FIA still investigating.

HAMILTON LEADS MERCEDES ONE-TWO IN HUNGARIAN GP PRACTICE

THE BRITON'S BEST LAP OF ONE MINUTE 16.003 SECONDS AT THE TWISTY HUNGARORING WAS 0.086 QUICKER THAN CHAMPIONSHIP LEADER BOTTAS, DESPITE BEING ON HARDER TYRES THAN THE FINN

Renault's Daniel Ricciardo, a previous winner in Hungary with Red Bull, was fifth fastest but 1.197 seconds slower than Hamilton.

"Mercedes, again, out of

the blocks look very very, quick," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner, whose quickest driver was Max Verstappen in eighth place on a cloudy day.

Ferrari's Sebastian



Vettel, increasingly linked to Perez's seat, and team-mate Charles Leclerc were sixth and seventh respectively.

Hamilton is six points behind Bottas after they each won a race in Austria, the Finn taking the season-opener and the champion the second at the same Red Bull Ring.

The Briton has won a record seven times in Hungary and an eighth victory would equal Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's record number of wins at the same grand prix, the German achieving that in France. — **Reuters**



Oman’s 3x3 basketball referee geared up for challenges

ADIL AL BALUSHI

MUSCAT: The year 2015 is unforgettable for the 3x3 basketball referee, Fatma al Harthy as she had received the International umpiring badge. Fatma was the first Asian and Arabian woman who completed the International 3x3 basketball umpiring course and owned the global licence. She recalled her memories from her early days as well as her major achievements which she attained simultaneously along with the challenges in a chat with Oman Daily Observer.

“My beginning with basketball was in 2002 as I was a player in the national team. Then, I moved to the umpiring field in 2004 for the normal basketball sport. I reached the 1st division level as a referee and I decided to apply for the international badge but unfortunately I had an injury that proved to be a barrier to clear the physical test. Few years later, I had applied for the umpiring course of 3x3 basketball in Qatar in 2014 and I managed to finish all the



DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, I MANAGED TO HAVE THIS CERTIFICATION WHICH WILL SUPPORT US IN ORGANISING EVENTS AND USING “EVENT MAKER” PROGRAMME TO HOST TOURNAMENTS IN THE FUTURE

FATMA AL HARTHY
3X3 INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL REFEREE

course requirements with accomplishment of the international badge in 2015,” she added.

3x3 basketball's rules is almost similar to the normal basketball except that it is played in streets with three players from each side accompanied with one substitution. It is played in a half basketball hoop.

A series of regional and international 3x3 basketball events that Fatma took part in. “I had officiated in different championships and tournaments including the

World 3x3 basketball championship in China in 2018. Last year, I attended the first edition of ANOC World Beach Games in Doha and participated in officiating of 3x3 basketball games and many other events including the Islamic Olympic Games in Indonesia, and Asian 3x3 basketball championship in Maldives,” Fatma pointed out.

Despite all the success that was achieved by Fatma, she is suffering many challenges. “Recently, the FIBA announced that each local

association will have to organise advanced ranking or international 3x3 basketball events. Also, the international umpires cannot officiate in the overseas events if they did not tally certain points in their ranking at domestic tournaments. Unfortunately, we had a low budget locally for the 3x3 basketball events. I hope we receive the required support from the private sector as well as from the government to organise and host top 3x3 basketball events soon,” she added.

SPORTS



REAL MADRID SEAL SPANISH TITLE WITH WIN OVER VILLARREAL

MADRID: Real Madrid clinched a record-extending 34th La Liga title with one game to spare by beating Villarreal 2-1 at home on Thursday thanks to two goals from their leading scorer Karim Benzema. Real have 86 points after 37 games, seven more than deposed champions Barcelona who were beaten 2-1 at home to Osasuna. Benzema fired through the legs of keeper Sergio Asenjo to put Madrid ahead after 29 minutes and converted a penalty in the 77th to help Real on their way to a remarkable 10th consecutive league win since the season resumed after the COVID-19 stoppage. Benzema had put the ball in the



net moments earlier after an audacious pass from the spot kick by original penalty taker Sergio Ramos but it had to be re-taken due to encroachment. The French forward then stepped up to take the penalty himself and slammed it into the bottom corner to score his 21st league goal of the campaign. Villarreal pulled a late goal back

through Vicente Iborra and should have snatched an equaliser in added time, while Real's Marco Asensio thought he had added a third goal later on but it was ruled out by VAR for offside. After the match Real captain Ramos hoisted the Liga trophy into the air at the empty Alfredo di Stefano stadium, where the Madrid side have been playing their final games of the season while their Santiago Bernabeu home is being renovated. "To return after spending three months locked in our homes and to win 10 matches in a row is incredible, but I always believed in my team and knew we could win it," said Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois. — **Reuters**