

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over a meeting of the Supreme Committee on coronavirus at Bait Al Barakah on Monday.

His Majesty the Sultan praised the major efforts exerted by the government in containing the pandemic. His Majesty the Sultan expressed his total satisfaction with the role of the Supreme Committee and the measures it undertook over the past period.

His Majesty the Sultan ordered the government to set up a new advanced

central laboratory to meet the needs under all circumstances.

His Majesty the Sultan thanked all, particularly health workers, the Sultan's Armed Forces, the Royal Oman Police and security services operating in different locations, as well as other state institutions in the public and private sectors.

His Majesty the Sultan thanked all citizens and residents and appreciated the media's role in spreading awareness. He commended all other initiatives and every effort made at the national level to tackle the pandemic.



PHOTO BY: MOHAMED MUSTAFA

TURN TO P2

HM chairs Supreme Committee meet

HM orders setting up of new central laboratory

HM thanks govt, health workers, army, police

HM praises media's role in health awareness

Everybody must follow precautions to curb infections

Oman determined to protect citizens and residents

HM praises Dhofar relief

MUSCAT: The Diwan of Royal Court on Tuesday issued a statement reading as follows:

The Diwan of Royal Court is honoured to convey to the people of Oman that His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik followed up the drastic atmospheric condition that prevailed in the Governorate of Dhofar.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his total faith and submission to the will of the Almighty Allah for what He destined during the climatic condition and what emanated from it.

His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounty of cohesion, compassion and collaboration

amongst Omani people.

His Majesty noted Omani people's awareness, commitment and dedication that, he said, reflected their high sense of responsibility as they set the most wonderful standard of national solidarity.

His Majesty the Sultan hereby expressed his pride and appreciation for the sincere efforts exerted by the departments concerned in extending help to those who needed.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan, the people of Oman and residents on its land. May the Almighty Allah spare the Sultanate all evils and harms. — ONA

COVID-19 claims 8 lives in Muscat

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT: Coronavirus claimed record nine lives on a single day on Sunday taking the total death toll to 59. Of the fatalities, eight are from Muscat and one from South Al Batinah.

The Ministry of Health said there were 576 new positive cases of COVID-19 including 209 Omanis and 367 residents, which brought the case load to 12,799. Among governorates, Muscat tops the list with 9,735 cases including 47 deaths followed by North Batinah 856 cases with one death, and

South Batinah 825 cases with seven deaths.

Seeb recorded the highest number of new coronavirus cases in the Muscat Governorate. Among the total 576 cases recorded in the country, 227 alone came from Seeb. The wilayat now has a total of 2,745 cases. The Wilayat of Muttrah which is currently under quarantine recorded 132 cases, taking the total tally to 4,198 cases. Bausher recorded 59 new cases.

The Ministry of Health has urged the people to contact the doctor if they suffer from uncontrolled chronic diseases.



HM chairs Supreme Committee meet

FROM PAGE 1

His Majesty the Sultan reaffirmed that the prime objective of the Sultanate, since the outbreak of the pandemic, is to protect all those who live on the pristine land of Oman, citizens and residents alike. His Majesty the Sultan reaffirmed the sustained functioning of the state, which, he noted, will keep delivering its duties in all sectors, while at the same time protecting Oman's economy, with a determination to maintain the functioning of the private sector with the least possible losses.

His Majesty the Sultan pointed out that, due to persistence of the pandemic and the lack of effective treatment so far, it has become necessary to co-exist in accordance with this emerging situation and adapt to it gradually, which cannot be realised without the cooperation of all members of society. All must have full commitment to precautions and



necessary preventive measures, as well follow awareness programmes disseminated by official channels.

His Majesty the Sultan asserted that the state is resolute in its quest to curb this pandemic and utilise all means to contain it. At

the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect the world from pandemics. He also prayed to the Almighty to grant quick recovery to all patients, to have mercy on departed souls and grant patience and fortitude

to the bereaved families.

May the Almighty Allah protect Oman from all harms and evils and may He grant His Majesty the Sultan continued good health and keep him as a precious resource for Oman. — ONA

PHOTOS BY: MOHAMED MUSTAFA

Lessons learnt from rains: Dhofar Municipality to assess old houses

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

MUSCAT: The roads of Dhofar Governorate connecting the western wilayats, Rakhyout and Dhalkout, were opened for traffic by Tuesday afternoon.

Although flooding during storms has been a persistent problem, another issue that has been brought up is the state of the old houses.

"A committee has been formed to assess the suitability for living in them and accordingly we will take decisions on closing some of them or advising the owners to do major renovations or demolish some of the houses," Dr Ahmed al Ghassani, Dhofar Municipality Chairman, said.

During this unstable weather it was the flooding that caused damage to roads as well as houses. The rains this time proved that houses with low or no maintenance can cost life.

Dr Al Ghassani has been visiting sites in Mirbat, Taqah and Sadah with the team studying the damage caused by the tropical low pressure and exploring solutions to the problem areas.

Dhofar Municipality is identifying areas where water has been collecting for short term projects to start working on remedial actions.

"Hopefully within a year we will be able to fix many of the problem areas so that we will be ready for future floods when these specific places will be able to conduct a smooth transfer of water during adverse weather.

"We are also working on long-term proposals, which will be included in the



next five-year plan following the Vision Oman 2040. We are now looking into professional expertise from the municipality and outside to identify best practices and solutions. We will try to include them in the five-year plans of the municipality. And some of them might extend to the 11th five-year plan,"

said Dhofar Municipality Chairman.

"We divided our work into three stages as soon as we got the weather alert. Stage one was prior to the floods. We cleared all the drainage pipes so there would be a smooth flow of water. During the floods, however, some of the drains got blocked again as there were debris including trees and rocks.

"Municipality workers were continuously clearing them, but during the floods we took two actions and one of them was to identify all the blockages in roads and water flow," said Dr Ahmed al Ghassani.

The team worked hard and the result was smooth flow of vehicles within a short period. In addition to the annual monsoon, Dhofar gets its share of low pressure systems. Accordingly, the Dhofar Municipality had geared up for the weather by activating the emergency team.



RAFO CARRIES OUT MEDICAL EVACUATION

SALALAH: A Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) helicopter on Tuesday carried out a medical evacuation for a number of patients from the Wilayat of Shaleem and Halaniyat Islands and transferred them to the Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah.

On Monday, RAFO had carried out a medical evacuation of a number of patients from the Wilayat of Al Mazyouna to the Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah to receive medical attention.

The operations are part of the humanitarian services rendered to citizens and expats by the Sultan's Armed Forces and the other units of the Ministry of Defence alongside other state departments.

OMAN

IT’S ROUND-THE-CLOCK JOB TO REMOVE WATERLOGGING IN DHOFAR

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH

SALALAH: An emergency committee of the Dhofar Municipality is working round the clock to monitor the status of waterlogging and other issues related to civic work post tropical depression, all over the governorate.

The committee is working under Dr Ahmed bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality. Working teams have been formed to assess overall situation following heavy rain due to tropical depression and damages thereafter.

Waterlogging in residential areas and main roads has emerged as a major issue, which has largely been addressed in two days.

Mohammed bin Ahmed Kashoub, Director of the Drainage Department at Dhofar Municipality, said, “The governorate witnessed unprecedented heavy rains for five days. Despite solid drainage net-



work, some of the main roads got flooded and even rainwater retention tanks were full.”

Commenting on mechanism to handle such situation, Ahmed Kashoub said, “Due to heavy rain, the capacity of drainage network was full despite the fact we had divided the work team in three sectors - Salalah City (central), Arzat (east) and Raysut (west) - to receive the reports and deal with it according to priority.

Many sites have been monitored and documented, which can be addressed in future.”

The Director of Sewerage pointed out that 15 tankers were used on daily basis along with 25 pumps of different sizes. Large quantity of water was withdrawn from various roads and sub-roads, streets and residential areas, including some government institutions.

Ahmed Kashoub emphasised that many streets are

equipped with water drainage system such as Rabat Street, July 23 Street and Umm al Ghawar Street.

Similarly, Taymour Street from its intersection and Rabat Street to Al Dahriz Roundabout has drainage system. “But management of so much of water suddenly put us in a fix. Our teams worked day and night and were successful in removing water from many locations Salalah city.”

“Waterlogging has many related issues like movement of vehicles, formation of water patches, which in turn become germination points of insects and mosquitoes, and thus affect people’s health. Our teams are active to address all the issues and I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to the rain-water drainage team in Dhofar Municipality as well as support that we got from Muscat Municipality, Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, and Diwan of Royal Court,” Ahmed Kashoub said.

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH

SALALAH: The telecommunication and water services in areas which were worst affected during the four days of rain caused by the tropical depression have either been restored or work is on to rectify them.

Due to incessant rain, interruptions in mobile communication reached about 6.65 per cent. The reasons behind the interruptions were found in breaking of the optical fibers, power outages, network errors and disturbance in microwave links.

The problem in the fixed line connections were a little less at 5.21 per cent,

Telecom, water services being restored in affected areas

again due to break in the optical fibers, which came in direct contact of gushing water of the wadis (natural canals).

The connections have been restored in the areas where waterlogging has either been dried or drained out, but in some affected areas the link is yet to be established in fixed lines where

the location of wiring is still under water.

According to Sahalnout residents, water supply in Sahalnout has been largely restored with some exception of pressure beyond second or third floors.

“The municipality authorities acted swiftly upon our complaints and did alternative arrange-

ments if immediate change of pipeline was not possible due to rain,” said a house owner.

As desalination plants both in Sadah and Hadbin stopped working due to power outages in Sadah, water tanks there worked as an alternative source for resumption of water supply temporarily. Similarly some waterlines in Taqah, Mirbat, Sadah and Salalah got affected either due to drowning of supply pumps or due to outage because of local issues and not in main supply.

The situation is stable for most networks have been established. The water plant in Al Hashman had stopped due to interruption in power supply.



FIRST FLIGHT TO JAMMU AND KASHMIR TAKES OFF

KABEER YOUSUF

MUSCAT: The first flight to Srinagar took off from Muscat International Airport with 157 passengers, including four infants, at 1.45 pm as part of the ongoing repatriation programme which started on May 9.

The AI 1974 Muscat-Srinagar flight which arrived at 6.10 pm at the Srinagar Airport forms part of the Phase 2Plus of the Vande Bharat programme which aims at bringing back the citizens in the wake of the COVID-19 impact worldwide.

The people onboard included stranded visitors who arrived on short visit, elders as well as pregnant women and people needing medical assistance.

As many as 4,000 Indians, including some 300 infants, reached home in the past three weeks since the government of India allowed the national carrier to fly the citizens home from the Sultanate.

Ever since the first flight flew from Muscat to Kochi on May 9, the repatriation mission has sent nearly 4,000 passengers home with more in the waiting list.

"We have been able to send Indian nationals home only with the support of the authorities of the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ROP, the Airport Authority and all concerned," said Munu Mahawer, the Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman.

OTHER FLIGHT SERVICES TO VARIOUS CITIES OF INDIA ARE:

June 4 Muscat - Kochi (Kerala)

June 4 Muscat - Trivandrum (Kerala)

June 7 Muscat - Chennai (Tamil Nadu)

The embassy had announced 15 more flight services as part of the Phase 2Plus between May 28 and June 7, 2020 to various Indian destinations as part of the repatriation programme, 'Vande Bharat'.

The ticket fares were borne by the passengers and air tickets were issued only to short listed persons. All passengers are required to confirm acceptance of all conditions of travel, including quarantine requirements in India as well as health requirements in order to board the flight.

CIRCULAR ISSUED ON RETIREMENT OF STAFF IN GOVT FIRMS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance on Monday issued a Financial Circular No 17/2020, to all government firms on the regulation of some aspects of employment. The statement stipulates that, as per the Council of Ministers' decision at the Cabinet's sitting No 5/2020 on the regulation of some aspects of the labour market and employment policies at government firms (with a view to expediting recruitment rates and accommodating Omani job-seekers), it has been decided to apply retirement status to employees aged more than 60 years pursuant to similar action taken in government departments. No extension of employment is permitted, unless extremely necessary and within very limited parameters, the statement said.

The Ministry of Finance urged all government companies to stick to the directives and implement the decision. — ONA

SHURA OFFICE REVIEWS VIRUS-RELATED MEASURES

MUSCAT: The Office of Majlis Ash'shura reviewed the measures recently taken by the relevant departments to stem the spread of the COVID-19 in the Sultanate and discussed the development relating to the pandemic. On Tuesday, the office held its 12th regular meeting under the chairmanship of Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura. At the beginning of the meeting, the office members valued the government's efforts to curb the spread of the virus in the Sultanate through the Supreme Committee tasked with handling the developments resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and its suitable decisions it has taken so far to prevent citizens and expats from the infection. — ONA



شركة مطاحن صحار
SOHAR FLOUR MILLS

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Sohar Flour Mill LLC, Sohar hereby announces the following tenders:

Tender No	Description of Works	Grade	Tender Fee	Date of Submission	Place of collection of tender and submission of tender documents
DGEC/8190388/SFM/2020/RO/1	CIVIL FOUNDATION WORKS FOR SHIP UNLOADER FOR THE PROPOSED GRAIN SILOS PROJECT FOR SOHAR FLOUR MILL AT SOHAR INDUSTRIAL PORT AREA, SOHAR, SULTANATE OF OMAN	Grade -1, 2 and Excellent grade registered in Chamber of Commerce and Tender Board.	RO 25/ each.	22 nd June 2020	Sohar Flour Mills LLC P.O Box: 307, Falaj Al Qabil, Postal Code: 322, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman Tel: 26644800
DGEC/8190388/SFM/2020/RO/2	STRUCTURAL STEEL FABRICATION AND INSTALATION WORKS FOR SHIP UNLOADER FOR THE PROPOSED GRAIN SILOS PROJECT FOR SOHAR FLOUR MILL AT SOHAR INDUSTRIAL PORT AREA, SOHAR, SULTANATE OF OMAN	Grade -1, 2 and Excellent grade registered in Chamber of Commerce and Tender Board.	RO 25/ each.	24 th June 2020	Sohar Flour Mills LLC P.O Box: 307, Falaj Al Qabil, Postal code: 322, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman Tel: 26644800

Scope of Works

- Upon purchase of the tender documents in the form of Electronic copy.
- The interested contractor who are qualified for such type of works are invited to contact "Sohar Flour Mills P.O Box: 307, Falaj Al Qabil, Postal code: 322, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman Tel: 26644800/+968 98213510 to collect the full tender documents. The document price quoted above is non-refundable.
- Contractors to provide full contact detail for tender correspondence during collection of tenders. & Bidders can send tender queries to the below mentioned email id: info@soharflourmills.com
- The **Sohar Flour Mill LLC** has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

OMAN

UK institution hails Oman's ICT progress

LONDON: A report prepared by Intelligent CIO, a technology intelligence platform specialising in information technology solutions, praised the development witnessed by the Sultanate in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), which strengthens the government's efforts to diversify the national economy.

The report published on Monday said that the Sultanate is at the forefront of digital transformation as one of the key initiatives for the country in line with its Vision 2040 and Digital Oman Strategy that lays emphasis on Digital Transformation and innovation to boost

the economy and prosperity of the society.

The report added, "The e.Oman strategy focuses on IT industrial development in order to enable the society and individuals and enhance e-Government and e-Services in the next five years".

It furthered, "These are further divided into achievable strategic pillars to advance the digital society and fabric of Oman, thereby enabling smart government and services,

creating a vibrant digital and ICT led ecosystem, governance, standards and policies to guide this new framework".

The report also said that the impact of the country's decision to scale digitalization has been incremental particularly in the governmental sector where the vision is to enhance end-user experiences and a welcoming response by people in adopting these technologies. — **ONA**



Citizen's body recovered

MUSCAT: The body of an Omani man who went missing on Saturday after his vehicle was swept away during a failed attempt to cross Wadi Dhahboun in the Wilayat of Thamrait, was recovered on Tuesday, Royal Oman Police has said.

A water rescue team from the Directorate of Civil Defence and Ambulance and Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo) along with volunteers were involved in a relentless search and rescue operation that lasted for four days.

NBC signs incubation deal

MUSCAT: The National Business Centre (NBC), which falls under the umbrella of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn, signed an agreement to incubate Science Traveler Company.

Science Traveler provides well-being and self-development programmes integrated with engaging tourists' experiences. The incubated company aims at contributing to the society by creating valuable experiences that inspire self-growth, well-being and prosperity. — **ONA**

MINISTRY CLARIFIES ON DIABETES MEDICINE

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT: The Directorate General of Pharmaceutical Affairs and Drug Control (DGPA&DC), the supervisory authority in Oman, has evaluated the information received from the US drug authorities regarding the recall of some batches of substances containing metformin used in the treatment of diabetes, due to lack of conformity with the technical specifications.

"Their investigations

revealed levels of the nitrosamine impurity N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) above the acceptable intake limit", a statement from the Ministry of Health said.

The withdrawn batches in the US are not marketed in the Sultanate. However, as a precautionary action, the DGPA&DC contacted all metformin manufacturers registered in the country to ensure appropriate testing to prove the absence of these impurities in their products or if detected are at acceptable levels.

DGPA&DC is further following up closely with any updates in this regard and that appropriate procedures will be taken to ensure the safety and security of medications in the local market.

Hence, the Directorate calls on patients to continue taking metformin tablets. It further urges all

members of society and health providers to report any adverse effects of medicines or for any inquiries contacting the Department of Pharmacovigilance & Drug Information on: 151 22357687/ 22357686 12 22358489





A protester kneels during a call for justice for George Floyd during his brother's visit, outside the Cup Foods in Minneapolis on Monday. — AFP

5 COPS SHOT DURING US RIOTS

FLOYD DEATH

TRUMP VOWS TO DEPLOY MILITARY TO QUELL PROTESTS

WASHINGTON/MINNEAPOLIS: At least five US police were hit by gunfire during violent protests over the death of a black man in police custody, police and media said, hours after President Donald Trump said he would deploy the military if unrest does not stop.

Trump deepened outrage on Monday by posing at a church clutching a bible after law enforcement officers used teargas and rubber bullets to clear the way for him to walk there after he made his remarks in the White House Rose Garden.

Demonstrators set fire to a strip mall in Los Angeles, looted stores in New York City and clashed with police

in St Louis, Missouri, where four officers were taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

An emotional St Louis police commissioner, John Hayden, said about 200 protesters were “jumping up and down like crazy people”, looting and throwing fireworks and rocks at officers.

It gave no details of the shootings or the officers’ condition. Police declined to comment to Reuters.

Trump has condemned the killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American who died after a white policeman pinned his neck under a knee for nearly nine minutes in Minneapo-

lis on May 25, and has promised justice.

But, with anti-police brutality marches and rallies having turned violent after dark each day in the past week, he said rightful protests could not be drowned out by an “angry mob”.

“Mayors and governors must establish an overwhelming law enforcement presence until the violence has been quelled,” Trump said. “If a city or state refuses to take the actions that are necessary to defend the life and property of their residents, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them.”

— Reuters

IN BRIEF

Saudi seeks \$2bn for Yemen

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia seeks to raise \$2.3 billion from an emergency donor conference on Tuesday to support war-battered Yemen as it faces a coronavirus catastrophe in the sixth year of the kingdom's military intervention. The virtual conference, which Riyadh is co-hosting with the United Nations, comes as aid groups warn that the fast-spreading virus could wreak havoc after years of war and amid crippling funding shortages.

Britain, a leading arms supplier to Saudi Arabia, stepped in Tuesday with a new aid package for Yemen worth £160 million (\$200 million).

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan as well as Mark Lowcock, UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, were to take part in the aid conference.

Mumbai, grappling with pandemic, braces for Cyclone Nisarga

Mumbai braces for cyclone

NEW DELHI: A tropical storm over the Arabian Sea approaching India's western coast near Mumbai prompted authorities in the region to issue high alerts and evacuate thousands of people on Tuesday.

Cycle Nisarga is expected to make landfall close to Alibag, 100 kilometres south of Mumbai, on Wednesday afternoon, the Indian Meteorological Department said. The storm is expected to bring heavy rains and winds gusting up to 120 kilometres per hour. Officials have begun to evacuate vulnerable and low-lying areas in Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital. Up to 20,000 people are likely to be evacuated in neighbouring Gujarat.

No COVID-19 cases in Wuhan

BEIJING: The Chinese city of Wuhan, where the novel coronavirus outbreak began, has found no new cases of people suffering from COVID-19 after testing almost its entire population, and 300 asymptomatic carriers of the virus, officials said on Tuesday.

Authorities launched the vast testing campaign on May 14, and reached 9.9 million out of 11 million people, after a cluster of new cases raised fears of a second wave of infections.

WORLD



A waiter wearing a face mask serves at Cafe de Flore, as restaurants and cafes reopen following the coronavirus disease in Paris on Monday. — Reuters

Virus hammers Latin America

PARIS: The French revelled in a return to cafe terraces on Tuesday as Europe emerges from its darkest days of the coronavirus pandemic, which has shifted its centre to Latin America where pressure is mounting on fragile healthcare systems. The virus has claimed more than 375,000 lives in its more than six-month tear around the globe, upending ordinary and economic life in nearly every country

on the planet. After suffering some of the highest human losses, Europe and the United States are now emerging from months of confinement in a bid to soften the blow of a looming recession. In the French capital, Parisians reclaimed the beloved morning rituals at cafe terraces that were allowed to sprawl across pavement to accommodate social distancing measures.

Elsewhere in France, bars and restaurants were allowed to go a step further and allow customers to sit inside, while beaches and weddings were also back in business. Yet the country, which has suffered the world's fifth highest toll with nearly 29,000 deaths from the virus, still faces tough times ahead with the economy expected to shrink by 11 per cent this year due to the pandemic. A similar story is playing

out elsewhere on the continent where schools, swimming pools and tourist sites are steadily reopening to ease the economic pain of their lockdowns, despite fears of a second wave of infections. In the UK, British MPs were set to return to parliament in person after ending a virtual system, with plans to debate quarantine requirements for those entering the hard-hit country. — AFP

HITLER BIRTH HOUSE TO BE POLICE STATION SOON

VIENNA: The Austrian house where Adolf Hitler was born will be stripped of its Nazi-era look to neutralise it as a magnet for extremists, the Interior Ministry announced on Tuesday in Vienna. The building in the city of Braunau will be used as a police station in the future, Interior Minister Karl

Nehammer told a press conference. The unassuming three-storey building in the centre of Braunau has been attracting neo-Nazi visitors since the 1950s. The Interior Ministry therefore tasked a commission of historians and political scientists to solve this problem. "The key outcome was that the entire location

must be neutralised," senior ministry official Hermann Feiner said. To achieve this, Austrian architect Marte decided to subtly remove the changes that were made under Nazi rule, when the ground-floor facade received a fortress-like shape, while the windows and roofs were also altered. — dpa



Protestors marching are seen in the reflection of a demonstrator's glasses in Times Square on Monday during a "Black Lives Matter" protest in New York on Monday. — AFP

Hammered by pandemic, protests

CHARLOTTE PLANTIVE

The Fehrenkamp brothers were excited to reopen outdoor seating on their pub's patio on Monday, when Minneapolis began easing COVID-19 lockdown restrictions — but before that could happen rioters set their restaurant ablaze.

Like them, dozens of business owners across this populous city in the northern state of Minnesota have found themselves in a difficult financial situation, facing both the effects of the novel coronavirus and violent protests over the death of George Floyd.

The Iron Door pub, located about half a mile from a police station, paid the price of the protesters' anger Friday night. Daniel Fehrenkamp, watching from his home on a security camera feed, saw a small group of people break down the door, steal beers and set a fire behind the bar.

The sprinklers activated, and water rained inside the building

for six hours — causing more damage than the flames. Their pub had been closed for two months and was only able to start offering take-out service for three weeks, thanks to a federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan.

The brothers failed to get their insurance to compensate for their loss of income. Daniel said it was "heartbreaking," but he's hopeful for a more favourable outcome this time.

While awaiting the answer, he will rely on his wife's income and take a small part-time job to make ends meet. In order to avoid the same fiery fate, Jack McCrery — the owner of Zoe Bakery Cafe, just 100 yards away — has been spending every night in his restaurant.

Others have boarded up their shops with panels that read "Justice for George," "Kids live here" or "Minority Owned," in an attempt to deter protesters.

City residents have also generously participated in fundraisers, organised online or by neighborhood councils, to support the city's small-business owners. — AFP

Time for science, not numbers



Samuel Kutty
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Ever since the World Health Organisation named the coronavirus as Covid-19 and later declared it as a global pandemic, the media across the world have made its coverage a top priority. The scribes, no doubt, have been carefully following every development in the catastrophe with multiple stories and continuous updates since then.

Not ignoring the fact that thousands of health experts are also struggling to present their findings to the public in order to create awareness about the new pathogen.

But what makes difficult for the journalists, rather challenging in the journey to provide accurate information, are the ever-changing and, sometimes, unverified nature of the COVID-19 data and symptoms.

The never-ending developments coupled with perplexing new information, new cases and new advices on the pandemic have aggravated the challenges in preparing the reports.

For example, an information about the pandemic that you get today could be entirely different by the next morning, raising doubts about the authenticity of the source. Another fact is that experts and

public health officials do revise their opinions, advice and recommendations continuously.

Still the fact is that there should be free flow of information which is more essential than ever in the current situation, both in making the public aware on the vital measures taken by the authorities to contain the pandemic.

However, one of the serious worries in the outbreak is clearly the constantly growing case numbers.

In a recent webinar hosted by leading international agencies, while discussing about the role of the media in the pandemic, a question was raised as to whether the numbers still matter.

No doubt the numbers are of interest to the public. But sometimes that media is over reacting to the number of cases and deaths. They compete each other for 'breaking the news.'

So we can go by what WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said, "This is the time for science, not rumors. This is the time for solidarity, not stigma." It is not the numbers that matter more, energizing the people with positive breaking news that can combat the outbreak.

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

FEATURES

Protecting the environment doesn't stop

YERU EBUEN

In a world tamed by Covid19, some of the pressing environmental problems are pushed back into the background. But as the world race to find the cure for the virus, environmentalists confined in their home spaces have not stopped finding ways to spread the message across of how we can better protect the environment as well.

The Environment Society of Oman has been working nonstop to launch awareness campaigns taking advantage of the situation where people have more time to listen to different messages shared on social media.

In a series of videos shared with the press, Oman's non-profit organization for the environment launched the "Responsible Net Disposal Awareness Campaign" made in partnership with the Renaissance SAOG, a leading international facilities management, and services solutions company, highlighting the effects of abandoned fishing gears, how these garbages can harm marine animals, and subsequently, how they affect local fishing communities.

The video was delivered by a heart-touching animated film with the core messaged centered around the proper disposal of nets and how this leads to the safety of the beaches and underwater animals as well as food security for families.

In a separate video, ESO highlighted the efforts made with the local community of Masirah focusing on "ghost fishing" and how the practice causes immense damage to sea animals and harms oceans worldwide.

Also made in partnership with Renaissance, the video highlighted real-life experiences of the people of Masirah, showcased the treasures of the islands as well as the bounty of nature enjoyed by its residents and delved into the environmental challenges the residents face and

how they work towards making a safe and sustainable environment.

In the video, Dr. Hamed Al Gheilani of ESO shared what his experience was like growing up in Masirah.

He said, "I lived on this spectacular island when I was a child. We enjoyed watching the rich nature, landscape, biodiversity, and the huge number of marine turtles on the beaches. We used to see a lot of whales and dolphins while crossing from the island to the mainland."

He added, "ESO carried out several events and activities over a long period of time, since 2006. Parts of these activities include scientific research specific to sea turtles, whales, and dolphins in this area."

ESO's numerous campaigns including public lectures and forums with local communities and programs such as beach clean-ups and net removals conducted more than once a year in coordination with relevant authorities, who are actively involved and participating, had resulted in many advancements in awareness and protecting the island.

The Wali of Masirah lauded ESO for the efforts it made into looking after the natural beauty of the island.

Talal Saif al Hosni said, "The

Environment Society of Oman played a big role in providing support and raising awareness to the local community and visiting tourists on the importance of protecting these unique resources."

A local fisherman, Mohammed al Farsi said, "By protecting the environment, you are securing the future and that of your children."

And it is within this vein that ESO and its partners wanted to message to reach more people to guarantee that the efforts are not confined within Masirah Island but resonate all throughout the country from the far-off coast of Dhofar to the pristine beaches of the capital.

To aid in the efforts being made by ESO and to contribute to the preservation of Omani heritage and increasing awareness of various environmental issues, people can make their donations by sending "Donate" to 90108 for RO 1 per month.



INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS

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‘Little Chef’ charms Myanmar with lockdown cooking classes

FROM BOILED CATFISH soup to spicy fried frog, an eight-year-old in pyjamas and a chef’s hat is delighting Myanmar with her culinary prowess in a nation still being told to stay at home due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Moe Myint May Thu’s mother posted a video online at the end of April showing off her daughter’s skills as the youngster threw together some spicy fried prawns.

With her wide gap-toothed grin, the video has bounced across social media and

brought stardom to the child along with an online moniker: “Little Chef”.

She now sells dishes to order — and is counting the dividends. “I just love cooking,” she tells AFP, during a break from the kitchen in her family’s Yangon flat.

“It’s made us happy cooking together in the lockdown,” she says, adding she wants to translate her childhood passion into a career when she grows up.

In her most popular video, which has nearly 200,000

views, the young star wears a unicorn-themed T-shirt as she gives instructions on how to make Myanmar breakfast favourite Mohingya, concocted with boiled catfish.

Moe Myint May Thu has mastered 15 dishes, including tomato fish paste curry, pork stew and spicy fried frog.

Each meal sells for a flat-rate of 10,000 kyat (\$7.20) and is delivered by the family at the end of each day, the whole operation under the guidance of the experienced hands of her social influencer mum,

Honey Cho.

The business venture is clearly paying off.

One posted video shows the youngster feeding a pile of 10,000 kyat notes into her musical moneybox, cash she hopes to put towards a puppy.

“It makes me very happy to see so many people from Myanmar and other countries sharing her videos,” says her mum, adding that her daughter’s self-confidence has increased.

The celebrity chef’s clips were initially posted on her mum’s social media pages, but have now gone live on her own Facebook account, gaining 8,000 likes in just four days.

“She is so adorable that I keep losing attention and have to watch her videos again,” fan Pohnt Pohnt comments.

Moe Myint May Thu plans to keep cooking until school starts in August, two months later than planned due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Commercial capital Yangon is returning to normal despite authorities still urging people to stay at home.

Myanmar has recorded 228 cases of the virus with six deaths.—AFP

Grand Prizes

Maisarah Anniversary Prizes April

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for 1 winner/ per branch

Monthly Grand Prizes

2,000 OMR
for 1 winner per month

Yearly Grand Prizes

25,000 OMR
For 1 winner

50,000 OMR
For 1 winner

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making life easy

USE OF METHANOL IN POWER GENERATION UNDER STUDY IN OMAN

KEY FEATURES:
Methanol as a fuel alternative to diesel has both cost benefits as well as environmental advantages.

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT:The Sustainable Energy Research Centre (SERC) at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has embarked on a first-of-its-kind study of the potential use of methanol as a cost-competitive and cleaner-burning fuel alternative to diesel in the generation of electricity.

The initiative will go a long way in reducing Oman's dependence on diesel-based power generation to meet the electricity needs of remote communities that are located far beyond the coverage of the country's two main grids – the Main Interconnected System (MIS) covering the northern half of Oman and the Salalah System serving Dhofar Governorate.

Methanol as a fuel alternative to diesel has both cost benefits as well as environmental advantages, according to Dr Amer al Hinai (pictured), Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and the Director of the Sustainable Energy Research Centre at Sultan Qaboos University.

"Methanol is not only significantly cheaper than diesel, it is also not prone to fluctuating international prices that petroleum fuels like diesel are subject to.

More importantly, methanol produces fewer carbon emissions and almost none of the harmful NOX and SOX emissions associated with diesel burning."

As part of the study, Dr Al Hinai and his team of researchers will examine

the potential use of methanol fuel cells to generate electricity.

Here, the fuel cell will be used to convert the chemical energy of methanol into electrical energy.

Additionally, the study will explore the use of methanol as a fuel source in place of diesel in existing, but suitably modified, diesel-powered generators.

Yet another facet of the study will focus on the potential for green methanol production using renewable energy, such as solar, to produce hydrogen gas.

The gas is then made to react with carbon dioxide to produce methanol.

Significantly, the project is in line with Oman's nascent efforts to transition away from its longstanding dependence on fossil-based fuels for power generation into renewable and alternative energy resources with a lower carbon footprint.

إعلان مناقصات

Tender Announcement

Sinyar is the new integrated commercial identity for Oman National Transport Company SAOC and National Ferries Company L.L.C.A leading Land and Maritime public transport operator and the first mass transport operator in the Sultanate. Sinyar has more than 1,600 employees and operates more than 500 buses and 7 ferries across the country.

Sinyar invites professional firms for the following tender:

Tender Name

توفير خدمات النظافة لمركبات سنيار في صلالة

Call Off Agreement for Providing Cleaning Services to Sinyar Vehicles in Salalah

Project Summary

Within the framework of this tender, Sinyar would like to have a qualified contractor to provide Cleaning Services required for Vehicles in Salalah

Tender Number

T-03-2020

Tender Fees

25/- (OMR)

Grade & Specialty

Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field

Last date for submission

Monday, 22nd June 2020

Start date for tender document distribution

Wednesday, 3rd June 2020

Last date for tender document distribution

Thursday, 11th June 2020

Tender Name

توريد وتوصيل المواد التموينية

Call Off Agreement for Supply & Delivery of Food Stores for Sinyar.

Project Summary

Within the framework of this tender, Sinyar would like to have a qualified Supplier to provide Supply & Delivery of Food Stores for Sinyar Fleet of Vessels and HO at Ghala.

Tender Number

T-08-2020

Tender Fees

50/- (OMR)

Grade & Specialty

Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field

Last date for submission

Thursday, 2nd July 2020

Start date for tender document distribution

Wednesday, 3rd June 2020

Last date for tender document distribution

Tuesday, 16th June 2020

Oman National Transport Company S.A.O.C. & National Ferries Company L.L.C.
PO Box 911, Post Code 133, Al Khuwair, Sultanate of Oman

For Tender document collection & bank details please send to: tenders@sinyar.om

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COVID-19: MAKERS OMAN TO DISTRIBUTE UV DISINFECTION UNITS

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT: Adding to its portfolio of products aimed at bolstering the capabilities of frontline agencies tackling the COVID-19 menace in the Sultanate, Makers Oman – a new hub for Omani-driven science and technology innovations – says it is close to rolling out a special unit that utilises ultraviolet (UV) light to disinfect high-end face masks for potential reuse.

The UV Disinfection Chamber will be offered to hospitals and other first responders eager to reuse good quality N95-type face masks after their safe and effective disinfection.

UV light, while invisible to the human eye, is effective in destroying harmful pathogens, including viruses. When exposed to UV light (at a specific range of wavelengths), the pathogens are rendered incapable of reproducing and infecting.

According to a key representative, around eight masks can be disinfected at a time in a standard unit designed by Makers Oman in collaboration with the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech). Each session ranges from 5 to 15 minutes, but can be standardised.

“The prototype we have come up with – after a great deal of research and testing – works perfectly,” said Ahmed al Zadjaly, Operations and Maintenance Lead Engineer at Makers Oman. “It offers a speedy, safe, cost-effective and environment-friendly solution for reusing face masks without compromising the properties of the mask.”

Located at Innovation Park Muscat (IPM) in Rusayl, Makers Oman has



“

It offers a speedy, safe, cost-effective and environment-friendly solution for reusing face masks without compromising the properties of the mask.

AHMED AL ZADJALY
Operations and Maintenance Lead Engineer

been at the forefront of Oman’s efforts to innovate personal protective equipment (PPE) and other devices to help offset supply shortfalls in the country amid a surge in global



demand for these goods. The outfit is sponsored by the Public Authority for Privatisation and Partnership (PAPP).

Speaking to the Observer, Al Zadjaly said the latest initiative stems from a specific requirement voiced by first responders at a leading healthcare institution in the capital

region. “They expressed a desire to optimise the use of N95 face masks, partly out of concerns that they may temporarily run out of them and partly because some of the supplies received from abroad do not fit snugly on the faces of the users. Besides, the chemical disinfection process currently used at the hospital leaves behind a strong odour that made reuse a bit difficult.”

UV disinfection in healthcare is not a novel concept, says Ahmed. “There are UV-based disinfection cabinets installed in most hospitals, but the demand has surged in the wake of the pandemic. Furthermore, existing ones are not suitable for face mask or PPE disinfection, and are generally 4 – 5 times more expensive than our prototype.”

In line with its mission, Makers Oman will mobilise its resources to mass-produce UV Disinfection Units for the nation’s requirements, said Al Zadjali. “We see ourselves to be partners alongside those on the frontlines in the fight against the pandemic. Our goal is to support the requirements of healthcare institution and other agencies engaged in this campaign.”

Makers Oman’s recent COVID-19 related innovations have included mass-produced face shields using laser-cutting technology; Hands-free door-opener; ‘Ventilator Splitter’ – a device that helps connect one ventilator with multiple patients; a portable ventilator for use in hospitals and home settings; an indigenously designed bed for Intensive Care Units (ICU); and ‘Respiratory Helmet’ – an advanced face mask with a filter unit strapped to the healthcare worker’s back.

BUSINESS

PANDEMIC AN APT TIME TO PARE GULF'S EXPAT NUMBERS


HAIDER AL LAWATI

haiderdawood@hotmail.com

It is no secret that the issue of migrant workers begun to attract attention in most of the Gulf states against the backdrop of the low oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic.

It has raised questions about the circumstances that led to the influx, build-up and proliferation of expatriate workers in the region over the past years, at a time when the number of graduates from national universities and colleges in the region is increasing as well.

This has presented an unequal challenge and competition for citizens seeking employment amid the current conditions in the region.

According to Gulf experts, the arrival of expatriate workers in previous decades stemmed from the need to develop this region.

From half a million workers in the seventies, it has risen to 35 million workers presently. They leave significant impacts on the demographic composition, as well as on various aspects of social and cultural life, particularly with regard to violations of laws and legislations.

Today, all GCC countries are seriously looking to decrease the number of illegal labour in institutions gradually, and work to provide more job opportunities for locals.

The challenges ahead for the region are many and increasing in light of the decline in global oil prices, and the persistence of the pandemic, which has forced Gulf governments to bear financial cost of healthcare and security care for those workers who transfer annually more than \$122 billion from the

region. The problem also lies in the fact that 80 per cent of expatriate workers are engaged in blue collar jobs.

Many live in dense clusters that today constitute hotspots for the spread of the coronavirus. Also, the cost of hosting them includes costs towards electricity, water and transportation for their daily needs.

Given that most of the expats are from the blue collar segments, their low monthly salaries make little impact in driving local economies. But their combined financial remittances, coupled with the presence of 'hidden trade practices' that deprive governments of any taxes, have con-

sequences for the fiscal situation of countries in the region.

Hence, some people in the region propose the constitution of a Gulf working group to map out a process for replacing foreign workers with nationals. Some believe this can be achieved reducing expatriate workers by 10 per cent annually.

This will reach 50 per cent over the next five years. In addition, foreign workers can be encouraged to invest in financial bonds which will help return part of their monthly earnings within the country. Opportunities for investment in real estate, industrial and productive projects, and so on, can be encouraged as well.

Options may be also considered to encourage professionals in science, knowledge and technology remain in the region. Finally the region needs to support employment that drives the inflow of know-how and new technologies.

Today, all GCC countries are seriously looking to decrease the number of illegal labour in institutions gradually, and work to provide more job opportunities for locals.



Oman Oil Marketing names new Chairman

MUSCAT: Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) has announced the appointment of its new Chairman, Hilal al Kharusi (pictured).

Al Kharusi, who has 28 years of experience in the energy sector, including various executive positions, has been credited with implementing a number of domestic and international growth strategies across the Sultanate's energy value chain, as well as playing a leading role in the clean energy domain.

In his new role, he is anticipated along with the Board to drive Oman Oil Marketing Company into a new chapter of its transformational roadmap and complete its vision to become the most customer-centric marketer in GCC while reaching its goal to be among the top 5 fuel marketers by market share in the GCC region.

"Taking on this role with a key player in Oman's energy industry, is an exciting prospect with so much potential. It is a privilege to join Oman Oil Marketing Company at this pivotal moment in its journey, with a number of significant ventures in their early stage and many more planned. I look forward to building a sustainable and prosperous future for Oman's energy industry, and for Oman," commented Al Kharusi.

Al Kharusi brings a wealth of experience with almost three decades in the industry. During this time, he has held key management positions in energy companies both in Oman and abroad.

He has been responsible for the development and delivery of large-scale domestic businesses in Oman covering refining and petrochemicals, infrastructure, shipping, trading, power and utilities, mining and metals as well as oil and gas, building strong relationships at ministerial levels in the GCC, Asia and Europe.

He has also steered various business sectors as Chairman of the Boards and as Director.

French economy to shrink 11 per cent this year

PARIS: The French economy is expected to shrink 11 per cent this year because of the coronavirus crisis, a “brutal” shock and worse than the government’s previous forecast of an eight per cent contraction, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Tuesday.

“The shock is very brutal”, Le Maire told RTL radio, though he said that “I am absolutely certain that we are going to bounce back in 2021”.

The business closures and confinement orders to halt the COVID-19 pandemic had left the economy gasping for air, he said, warning that “the hardest part is still ahead of us”.



The shock is very brutal. I am absolutely certain that we are going to bounce back in 2021.

BRUNO LE MAIRE,
FINANCE
MINISTER

The government has progressively revised upwards the damage caused by the pandemic and the latest estimate will be included in a recovery budget which will be submitted to ministers on June 10.

Last week, the official statistics agency INSEE warned that the economic contraction would be much larger than the government’s previous estimate of eight percent, because the pickup as the virus lockdown was eased would only be gradual across the second half of the year.

The government has launched a series of massive aid packages, complete with billions of euros for key sectors such as tourism, the auto industry and aviation, to keep the economy afloat and plans a major programme by September to speed up the recovery. Officials are progressively easing the restrictions imposed to curb the coronavirus outbreak, and Le Maire also announced that traditional mid-year sales by retailers would be pushed back to July 15 instead of June 24.

He said the delay had been requested by small-business owners who needed more time to prepare after being closed for more than two months. — **AFP**



A 3D printed oil pump jack is seen in front of displayed stock graph and Opec logo in this illustration picture. — **Reuters**

Oil prices rise ahead of Opec+ meeting on extended output cuts

SINGAPORE: Oil prices rose on Tuesday, with traders waiting to see whether major producers agree to extend their huge output cuts to shore up prices at a virtual meeting expected later this week.

Brent crude futures rose 0.94 per cent, or 36 cents, to \$38.68 a barrel as of 0630 GMT.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 0.73 per cent, or 26 cents, to \$35.70 a barrel.

Brent has doubled over the past six weeks, thanks to supply cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and allies, including Russia, a grouping dubbed Opec+.

Both Brent and WTI prices, however, are still down about 40 per cent for the year so far.

“The whole story is very much based around the supply cuts and the demand recovery”, said Commonwealth

Bank commodities analyst Vivek Dhar.

Opec+ producers are considering extending their output cut of 9.7 million barrels per day (bpd),

OPEC+ PRODUCERS ARE CONSIDERING EXTENDING THEIR OUTPUT CUT OF 9.7 MILLION BARRELS PER DAY (BPD), ABOUT 10 PER CENT OF GLOBAL PRODUCTION, INTO JULY OR AUGUST, AT AN ONLINE MEETING LIKELY TO BE HELD ON JUNE 4.

about 10 per cent of global production, into July or August, at an online meeting likely to be held on June 4.

“Most likely, Opec+ could extend current cuts until September 1, with a meeting set before then to decide on next steps”, said Citi’s head of commodities research Edward Morse.

Under the Opec+ plan agreed in April, the record supply cut was to be for May and June, scaling back to a cut of 7.7 million bpd from July through December. Saudi Arabia has been leading talks to push for extending the heftier cuts, sources said last week.

“Russia will be the key obstacle in any extension, and they are unlikely to agree on any extension which goes beyond a couple of months”, said analysts at Dutch bank ING.

An extension could push oil prices to \$40, but there would have to be follow-through on that commitment to sustain higher prices, said Commonwealth Bank’s Dhar.

A drop in crude stockpiles at Cushing, Oklahoma, which fell to 54.3 million barrels in the week to May 29, also buoyed prices, traders said, citing a Genscape report on Monday.

— **Reuters**

BUSINESS



A man works at a retail clothing store in Stuart, Florida. — Reuters

SELL, STOW OR DUMP?

RETAILERS WRESTLE WITH MOUNTAIN OF UNSOLD STOCK

MADRID: Forget fast or slow fashion, now it's ground to a halt. A mountain of apparel stock has been piling up in stores, distribution centres, warehouses and even shipping containers during months of COVID-19 lockdowns.

As retailers reopen around the world, they have to work out how to get rid of it. Their main options? Keep it in storage, hold a sale, offload it to "off-price" retailers like TJ Maxx which sell branded goods at deep discounts, or move it to online resale sites.

None are ideal, and all are damage-limitation.

Real estate company Knight Frank said it had fielded inquiries for excess stock for over 6 million square feet (557,500 square metres) of short-term let warehouse space in Britain since the pandemic took hold there in March.

Yet storage is only a realistic option for evergreen "basics" that are not tied to one particular year and

could be sold at a later date should consumer demand bounce back — items like underwear, T-shirts, chinos and classic sneaker styles.

Apparel chains including British high-street retailer Next and German sportswear brand Adidas said they had stashed away unsold basics, with the aim to offer them to shoppers next year instead.

But stowing away piles of inventory is risky.

"This is not like wine that gets better with age. Your inventory gets worse", said Emanuel Chirico, Chief Executive of PVH Corp, which owns Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, on a recent earnings call.

In the United States, clothing sales fell 89 per cent in

April from the same month in 2019, while in Britain clothing sales sank by 50 per cent compared with an already-squeezed March.

Retailers hope that easing of lockdown measures will

see shoppers return to stores, eager to unleash pent-up demand. But there is no guarantee that sales will rebound any time soon.

Many stores are likely to pursue a combination of holding sales as well selling stock to off-price retailers.

The mix will depend on consumer appetite, how much merchandise stores have to shift and how fast they must free up space for new collections.

In-store discounts are usually a better option as dumping inventory in bulk

to off-price players returns just pennies on the dollar for the retailers.

Off-price retail group TJX, which started opening its TJ Maxx and Marshalls stores this month, said in May there was "incredible availability" of stock on the market.

UK-based Parker Lane Group, which helps companies manage excess stock and advises on selling off-price, is processing at least double its usual volume of up to 1.5 million items of apparel per month, founder Raffy Kassardjian said.

"Some of our customers are waiting for retail to open up to gauge their performance before they make a commitment on how much stock they want to write off", he said, referring to both selling at discount in-store and offloading to off-price.

Potentially more lucrative is moving merchandise to online re-sale marketplaces that take a commission on sales, although that option is largely only open for high-end brands. — Reuters

IN THE UNITED STATES, CLOTHING SALES FELL 89 PER CENT IN APRIL FROM THE SAME MONTH IN 2019, WHILE IN BRITAIN CLOTHING SALES SANK BY 50 PER CENT COMPARED WITH AN ALREADY-SQUEEZED MARCH.

SPORTS



MAHA
JONOUD
APPOINTED
AS HEAD
COACH
OF OMAN
WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL
TEAM

ADIL AL BALUSHI

MUSCAT: The Oman Football Association (OFA) announced on Monday the appointment of Syrian coach Maha Jonoud as the head coach of the first national women football team at their twitter official account.

The newly appointed coach signed the contract at OFA premises in presence of Said bin Othman Al Balushi, the General-Secretary of OFA, Shaikh Shabib al Hosni the assistant of General-Secretary and Hajer al Muzayaniyah, the head of Women's Football Division at OFA.

The former head of Syrian Women's Football Department at Syrian Football Association (SFA) will lead the Sultanate women football team at the third edition of GCC Sports Games which will be held in Kuwait at the end of this year in football, athletics, swimming, basketball, volleyball, handball, shooting, karate, judo, tennis, bicycle, swimming, sailing, beach football, beach handball and beach volleyball.

Based on the OFA post, the selection of coach Jonoud came after evaluation of many resumes. Coach Maha Jonoud has

an approved license for providing technical courses and training sessions from Asian Football Confederation (AFC). She was the first woman coach in the region who supervised men's football team in 2018 as she was in charge for local club (Al Mufazat team) in Syria. She is the former head of Women's Football Division at Syrian Football Association and she was behind the project of Syrian Women football league (2019/2020).

OFA had launched this season (2019/2020) the first edition of Oman's women futsal league. As many as 30 teams and 16 clubs took part in the league. In 2016, the inaugural edition of women's football tournament had been organised and around eight teams took part at the event representing different organisations and clubs. The tournament continued for three continuous years until 2019.

It is expected that the experienced Syrian coach will select the best talented players in the squad with regard to the latest top domestic women football activities. Also, the training sessions may start after the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control.



SPORTS



‘YOUTH CREATION’ PROGRAMME USE ZOOM TO ORGANIZE ANNUAL COMPETITION

ADIL AL BALUSHI

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Sports Affairs represented by the “youth creation” programme conducted the last stage of the yearly competition programme through “Zoom” application. The top winners will be recognised through technology means. This step came as a result of implementation of the instructions raised by the supreme committee to deal with COVID-19 and to the Ministry’s instructions to avoid any gathering due to spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The competitions which was supposed to be completed in March every year-, postponed till June due to the current situation of spreading of the coronavirus. The final round of the competition

programme commenced on Sunday with poetry filled until Wednesday. Public speaking competition will be held on Thursday while the Q&A competitions (Omaniat) on June 7 and 8.

As many as ten qualified participants competed on Sunday and Monday for poetry competitions. The judging panel evaluated all the participants from different clubs through allowing them to represent for few minutes at Zoom application. Aqeel al Lawati, member of judging panel said that this year’s competition implemented remotely for safety reasons due to the current situation.

“ It was an opportunity to deal with the technology means as well as it allow for others to see the competition live from their laptop or Smartphone safely

It was an opportunity to deal with the technology means as well as it allow for others to see the competition live from their laptop or Smartphone safely at home. Thanks for the technical team efforts for professional organisation and arrangement. A dedicated thanks to Ministry of Sports Affairs for conducting this yearly competition.

Aqeel al Lawati
Judging panel member

at home. Thanks for the technical team efforts for professional organisation and arrangement. A dedicated thanks to Ministry of Sports Affairs for conducting this yearly competition,” he added.

The youth creation competition programme for this season 2019/2020, run by the ministry in cooperation with sports clubs, aimed to develop the youth creation at the clubs and identification of the creative and talented members from the clubs in different fields.

Moreover, the programme provide the right environment for the top youth members in the clubs to improve their skills and experience. The programme targeted different age categories including: (10-15), (16- 25) and (18-30).

SPORTS



LONDON: The curtailed Formula One season will start with two races behind closed doors in Austria on July 5 and July 12 followed by six other grands prix in Europe, the organisers said on Tuesday.

Formula One said it hoped to have between 15 and 18 races in total, with the season being completed in December.

The F1 season was thrown into chaos with the cancellation of the traditional curtain-raising Australian Grand Prix in March only hours before practice was due to begin as the coronavirus pandemic spread across the world.

Last week, the Austrian government sanctioned the season-opening double-header at the Spielberg circuit after F1 organisers “presented a complete and professional plan” to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Hungarian Grand Prix will be brought forward to July 19 before a two-week break, followed by consecutive races in Britain and events in Spain, Italy and Belgium. All will likely be run without spectators while participants must adhere to strict safety protocols.

Regular health tests will be conducted with the number of team members and race staff at the venue also reduced.

“While we currently expect the season to commence without fans at our races we hope that over the coming months the situation will allow us to welcome them back once it is safe to do,” said F1 chief executive Chase Carey. “But we know the return of Formula 1 will be a welcome boost to sports fans around the world.” — **AFP**

F1 UNVEILS EIGHT RACE SCHEDULE IN EUROPE FROM JULY 5



While we currently expect the season to commence without fans at our races we hope that over the coming months the situation will allow us to welcome them back once it is safe to do.

CHASE CAREY,
F1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE



SPORTS

“I was supposed to leave in the January transfer window because I wasn't playing much and I needed more game time to make the France squad for Euro 2020”

Olivier Giroud,
Chelsea striker

REJUVENATED

GIROUD VERY NEARLY LEFT CHELSEA

LONDON: Chelsea striker Olivier Giroud has revealed he “very nearly” left Stamford Bridge in January but says he now has his sights set on winning more trophies with the Premier League club.

Giroud recently signed a one-year contract extension that will keep him at Chelsea until the end of next season.

The new deal completed a sudden change of fortunes for the France international.

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard had been searching for a striker in the January transfer window and Giroud, linked with a move to Tottenham, would have been surplus to requirements if a new recruit had arrived.

But Lampard was unable to make a signing and Giroud, who had been reduced to fringe status for much of the season, was suddenly back in the team after an injury to forward Tammy Abraham.

“I was supposed to leave in the January transfer window because I wasn't playing much and I needed more game time to make the France squad for Euro 2020”, Giroud told Chelsea's website on Tuesday.

“I very nearly left the club but I really think that God wanted me to stay at Chelsea.

“The manager told me that he couldn't let me leave because he didn't have anyone to replace me. Everyone knows what happened so I won't go back over it but the coach spoke to me privately and told me that he'd give more games.

“He kept his word and what then mattered to me was proving to him that he could count on me when I was called upon”.

Giroud responded to his unexpected chance with a crucial goal in a win against Tottenham and also impressed in victories against Liverpool and Everton. — **AFP**