

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتام كانجي للتحويل

SEND MONEY TO USA

SAME DAY CREDIT

SWIFTLY - SECURELY - SMARTLY

99101314, 99849289

customersupport@pkexchange.net

www.pkexchange.com pkexch @pkexchange1

OMAN 1 Exchange

DOWNLOAD OUR APP TODAY!

Google Play App Store



P10

VERSTAPPEN LEADS RED BULL ONE-TWO IN DAMP FINAL PRACTICE



P13

OMAN ADOPTS NEW STRATEGY FOR MINING INVESTMENT



P20

NOSTALGIA OF THE 90S KIDS AND THE GIFTS OF THE PRESENT



MUSCAT

10,000 FOOD SAMPLES TESTED FOR SAFETY

More than 10,000 food samples, mostly imported foods, were tested for safety and quality at the Central Laboratory for Phytosanitary and Foods Safety under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the recent past. A centralised facility to monitor the arrival of food products to Oman through various sea, air and land routes assumes importance in the wake of the pandemic. Dr Ibrahim Yahya al Ismaili, CEO, United Integrated Laboratories (UIL), said several rounds of checks are carried out on all food products before they enter into distribution. **DETAILS ON P2**

NEW DELHI

INDIA SEES HIGHEST DAILY NEW CASES

India is seeing another surge in the Covid-19 pandemic driven largely by fresh cases in the southern state of Kerala, Health Ministry data released on Saturday showed. On Saturday, India reported 46,759 new cases of Covid-19, the highest for a 24-hour period in about two months. Kerala reported about 70 per cent of the fresh cases. Loosening of restrictions on gatherings and travel during the annual festival of Onam is suspected of leading to the latest spike in numbers. **DETAILS ON P7**

READ IN

OPINION P9

Get jabbed and get with the national programme
Ray Petersen

An English neighbour and the blind puppy...
Rasha Al Raisi

INSIDE



BIDEN HAS SAME DEMANDS AS TRUMP ON IRAN N-ISSUE | P6



US GULF COAST BRACES FOR HURRICANE IDA | P8

ONE DOSE OF VACCINE MUST FOR RENEWAL OF RESIDENT CARD

ROP TO RESUME ISSUING VISAS FROM SEPTEMBER 1

ZAINAB AL NASSRI @zainabalnasseri

As part of its plan to ramp up vaccination, the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, said that an expat must take at least one dose of vaccine approved by the Sultanate to renew residency permits.

For attending work, government employees should be vaccinated. “Renewal of residency permits for expats in Oman will be conditional on obtaining at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccines approved for use in Oman”, said Dr Saif bin Salem al Abri, Director-General of Disease Control at the Ministry of Health, at the press

conference of Supreme Committee last week. The Sultanate has also booked additional doses of vaccines to cover children. The ministry said the Sultanate has booked a total of 8,597,740 doses of Covid-19 vaccines, of which 3,536,171 have so far been administered. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) will extend

visas issued at the beginning of the year until the end of this year regardless of the visa type, and no additional fee will be charged for this extension, said Maj Gen Abdullah bin Ali al Harthy, Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Operations, during the press conference.

TURN TO P3





A ‘MISTY’ ATTRACTION

Children enjoy the misty weather of Salalah. The khareef season has turned mountains and plains of Dhofar green. The season is a major attraction for residents and tourists as this is the only place in the entire GCC where it rains and temperatures come down to 20 degrees Celsius when other countries are very hot.

PHOTO BY DR SACHIN SINGH

Salim al Wahaibi re-elected as OFA chairman



Ocean surface climates may disappear by 2100

PARIS: Up to 95 per cent of Earth’s ocean surface will have changed by the end of the century unless humanity reins in its carbon emissions, according to a research. Ocean surface climates, defined by surface water temperature, acidity and the concentration of the mineral aragonite — which many marine animals use to form bones and shell — support the vast majority of sea life. The world’s seas have absorbed around a third of all carbon pollution produced since the Industrial Revolution. But with atmospheric CO2 levels increasing at a rate unprecedented in at least three million years, there are fears that ocean surface climates may become less hospitable to the species it hosts. US-based



researchers wanted to see what effect carbon pollution has already had on ocean surface since the mid-18th century. They also projected the impact of emissions

through to 2100. To do so, they modelled global ocean climates across three time periods: The early 19th century (1795-1834); the late 20th century

(1965-2004); and the late 21st century (2065-2014). They then ran the models through two emissions scenarios. The first — known as RCP4.5 — envisions a peak in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 followed by a slow decrease across the rest of the century. The second scenario — RCP8.5 — is a “business as usual” approach, where emissions continue to rise throughout the next 80 years. Writing in the journal *Nature Scientific Reports*, the researchers found that under the RCP4.5 scenario, 36 per cent of the ocean surface conditions present throughout the 20th century are likely to disappear by 2100. Under the high emissions scenario, that figure rises to 95 per cent.

— AFP



OMANI
DELEGATION
ARRIVES IN
MANAMA

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, and accompanying delegation arrived in Manama on Saturday for a two-day official visit to head the Omani side at the seventh session of the Omani-Bahraini Joint Committee to be held on Sunday. – ONA

Saudi business delegation to explore investment opportunities in Oman

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 28

A business delegation headed by Eng Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih, Minister of Investment, will visit the Sultanate on Sunday to attend the Omani-Saudi Council meeting and inaugurate the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum.

Within the context of the state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Saud Arabia had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to set up an Omani-Saudi Coordination Council. The MoU was signed on the Omani side by Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al

Busaidy and his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud. The signing of the MoU stems from the directives of the two countries' monarchs for consultation and coordination between the two countries on matters of common concern. It is also aimed at enhancing and expanding cooperation be-

tween the Sultanate and Saudi Arabia, which are expected to sign more agreements and memorandums to serve their joint interest. The two countries hope that the coordination council will promote existing cooperation and joint projects with a view to achieving full integration in various spheres.

Retailer warns of fake anniversary offers

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 28

The Lulu Group has cautioned people against online frauds that are doing the rounds in the guise of offers in connection with the 20th anniversary of Lulu Hypermarket. The Abu Dhabi-based group, which runs a chain of hypermarkets across the world, said it has taken legal actions against a fake website which claimed the group is offering products at dirt-cheap prices and mobile phones through e-mails and WhatsApp messages. "We are moving the court against the perpetrators of an e-mail that was aimed at misleading our patrons and loyal customers and the same has been trending for many days now," Lulu Oman management told the *Observer*. "We have no connection with such e-mail or social media campaigns and it's in the best interest of our patrons that we are moving court against such campaigns that target to tarnish our image built over many decades," it said. The group urged shoppers across the world to not fall for such fake campaigns and



websites. It also requested customers not to share any personal details, bank account or credit card numbers on such websites or any other suspicious links. The group said its genuine offers are only posted on official social media accounts and websites. "We have made a formal complaint but tracing the culprits in most of the cases is difficult as they operate from other countries," it said.

Sultanate wins membership of UPU board of directors

MUSCAT: Represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Sultanate won membership to the board of directors of Universal Postal Union (UPU) for the period 2021-2024. Oman's access to the UPU board took place during elections on the sidelines of the international posts conference currently held in Ivory Coast. Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani,

Communications and Information Technology Under-Secretary, affirmed that UPU members have confidence in the Sultanate's role and active presence in global organisations. Dr Ali told Oman News Agency (ONA) that Oman looks forward to contributing effectively in drafting international strategies and policies of posts and electronic trade. Oman also seeks to localise successful experiences in posts and e-business.



The UPU is a United Nations' agency established on October 9, 1874. Being the second oldest international organisation, the UPU has 192 members and it is tasked with drafting global posts policies and related services. The UPU sets criteria for posts, courier and other services and it facilitates postal connection among member states to maximise common gains from the infrastructure of each state. — ONA

Four drowned in two separate incidents during weekend

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Four people, including two citizens and two expatriates, drowned in two different incidents over the weekend. In the first incident, two Omanis drowned in Wadi Al Khad Dam in the Wilayat of Suhar, according to the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA). "Their bodies were retrieved after they went missing in the dam," a CDAA representative said. The bodies were repatriated to the relatives after necessary inquest and other procedures, according to the Royal Oman Police. In another incident, two young expats drowned in the sea at the Al Kaluf Beach

in Duqm. The victims have been identified as Rizwan Alekala and Zameer Kotepura, from the Indian city of Mangalore. Eyewitnesses said that the two were part of a group of 18 people who visited the beach over the weekend and some of them ventured into the sea. The CDAA has warned beachgoers to observe precaution while venturing into the seas and to take safety measures before doing so. "Parents of children need to supervise the activities of their children near swimming pools and ponds and kids should be equipped with safety gears," CDAA added.

Central lab tests over 10,000 food samples for safety and quality

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

More than 10,000 food samples, mostly imported foods, were tested for safety and quality at the Central Laboratory for Phytosanitary and Foods Safety under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the recent past. A centralised facility to monitor the arrival of food products to Oman through various sea, air and land routes assumes importance in the wake of the pandemic. Speaking to the *Observer*, Dr Ibrahim bin Yahya al Ismaili, CEO, United Integrated Laboratories (UIL), said several rounds of checks are carried out on all food products before they enter into distribution. "We have tested more than 10,000 food samples, predominantly agricultural



products that entered the market through various ports of entry. "The mission of this institution is to ensure quality and food safety of agricultural products and foods in general," Dr Ibrahim said. Since the UIL was awarded the operation and management of the central lab, the team has applied international standards and best practices to test samples and ensure consumer rights. "We started putting in place

the equipment and systems in 2020. We are proud to say that we have succeeded in establishing and commissioning this lab at international standards," he said. The centre has 10 chemical and biological laboratories following international standards manned by Omanis and expats. The bio lab does several tests ranging from food microbiology to seed quality, plant pest examinations and GM tests. At chemical Labs, tests include water analysis, chemical residues, food constituents, fertiliser and pesticide qualities. "If they are coming from outside the country, we need to ensure they have passed the quarantine testing against different kinds of diseases and pests." The centre receives more than 700 samples every month whereas it has a capacity to check 400 samples per day.

Oman-UAE land border to fully open from Sept 1

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

Dr Saif al Abri, Director-General of Disease Control at the Ministry of Health, during the press conference of the Supreme Committee has said Oman will open the land borders from September 1, while adhering to the controls announced by the Supreme Committee, including conducting a Covid-19 examination before arrival.

"The land borders will be opened from September according to the conditions set by the Supreme Committee... As for the land ports, the vaccination will be required as well as the examination before coming and not upon arrival," Al Abri said.

The officials from the Sultanate and UAE recently inspected the land border between the two countries and discussed a number of issues to facilitate the smooth flow of commercial traffic and the transit of travellers.

The meeting reviewed the joint



coordination mechanism between the Omani and Emirati sides, the process of facilitating the transit of travellers, especially in light of exceptional circumstances

and precautionary measures to curb the emerging Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, in addition to discussing the direct coordination mechanism for

the stage of recovery from the pandemic.

Lt Colonel Saeed bin Saleh al Siyabi, Director of Customs of the Buraimi Police, and Khalifa

bin Hamad al Shamsi, Director of the Land Ports Department at the General Authority for Ports, Borders and Free Zones Security in the Emirates led the meeting

The officials from both the countries recently inspected the land border between the two countries and discussed a number of issues to facilitate the smooth flow of commercial traffic and the transit of travellers

from both sides.

The Sultanate reopened land borders with neighbouring countries in June allowing Omanis and residents to cross the borders for work purposes.

However, it was mandatory for residents to provide proof of work from the employer at the border checkpoints.

According to sources, the issuance of visas for expatriates will resume soon at land borders.

Mwasalat bus services between Muscat and Dubai have been suspended until further notice.

One dose of Covid-19 vaccine must for renewal of Resident Card

FROM PAGE 1

"Any employer who has workers abroad can contact them, access the visa portal, and get the visas which have been extended for additional periods," he said, confirming that ROP will resume issuing visas from September 1.

Touching on air travel, Dr Al Abri said, "Many countries have adopted QR code, and the World Tourism Organisation has introduced a link for countries to check the tests and certificates verified through the QR. Yet, some countries detected forgery in the tests and certificates."

Dr Al Abri said the public sector will have 100 per cent attendance from September 1, however, entry will be limited to the vaccinated employees only.

"There is an ongoing study to reopen cultural and social activities, and a decision will be issued by the Supreme Committee."

The health minister said that the Sultanate seeks to obtain



500,000 doses of Sinovac, noting that vaccines provide 85-95 per cent protection against the acuteness of the disease and cuts

down the number of hospitalised people and deaths as a result of the disease.

However, vaccination does

not provide total protection from exposure to the virus, transfer or transmission of the virus, he added.

Sultanate remains on UK red list

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, AUG 28

Oman has not been moved from the United Kingdom's Red list to the amber list in the latest review despite the fact that the ban from the UK to the Sultanate has been lifted. Only seven new countries moved to the green list, with two moving down from amber to the red list last week.

The next review of the red, green, and amber travel lists is expected to be announced on September 15 or 16.

The lifting of the ban to the UK is important for the national airline, Oman Air, as it is a prime destination. Also, many Omani students study in UK universities.

The Supreme Committee had last week lifted the suspension of entry to the Sultanate until further notice for arrivals from the United Kingdom.

According to rules, if a traveller has been in a country or territory on the red list in the last 10 days, then he or she will be al-

lowed to enter the UK if they are a British or Irish National, or you have residence rights in the UK.

Travellers from the amber list must take a Covid test three days before travelling to England, book and pay for Covid-19 tests — to be taken after arrival in England and complete a passenger locator form. If fully vaccinated, they must take a Covid-19 test on or before day two.

Several Oman students enrolled in UK universities have been urging the government to move Oman from the red list as the Sultanate has a good vaccination rate and a relatively low number of cases. The Sultanate on Thursday reported only 101 new cases with two people succumbing to the infection.

Only 17 new patients were admitted to hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of inpatients to 147 including 68 in intensive care units.

The total number of recoveries improved to 96.4 per cent.

■ JABS FOR EXPATS



More expatriates rush to get jabs at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC) over the weekend just as the Ministry of Health (MoH) ramped up vaccination campaign for expat population in the country. From September unvaccinated expats will not be eligible for visa renewal. "The renewal of residency cards for expats will be conditional on obtaining at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine approved for use in Oman," Dr Saif Al Abri, Director General of Disease Surveillance and Control at the Ministry of Health, said at a Supreme Committee press conference on Thursday.



MICE

AWAITS OFFLINE REBOOT

JOBS ARE AT STAKE AND BUSINESSES FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE
AFTER MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES MIGRATE ONLINE

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

In the past 17 months, if there was an industry that was totally disrupted and didn't get any chance to recover, it was the extravagant and high spending MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) sector.

But it was the small and medium enterprises that had to bear the brunt of the ban on gatherings, including that on weddings and other anniversary celebrations. Not to forget that these sectors also offered direct employment, even on daily wages, to many unskilled workers.

The decision to ease all kinds of restrictions in Oman from September is a welcome sign for businesses such as selling flowers, decoration items, catering and transportation that depended heavily on the events and management industry.

"I have been working at a flower

shop alongside a colleague and doing reasonable business for over 20 years in the CBD area of Muscat. We have seen up and downs before, but since March this year things came to a total standstill as we could not generate enough for basic electricity, water and rent. With two big festivals totally washed away in lockdown, the sponsor decided to close the business for now", said Maria D'Silva, whose employer also has businesses selling cakes and chocolates.

According to industry sources, while online press conferences and webinars gave a credible alternative to the MICE sector, they do not offer the multiplying effect in terms of job generations.

"Someone is making money and offering jobs when people exchange business cards at networking sessions over a breakfast or lunch on the sidelines of conferences or seminar", said Jose Kurian, a sound mixer with an events management company.

"My boss agreed for us to stay here

**SOMEONE
IS MAKING
MONEY AND
OFFERING JOBS
WHEN PEOPLE
EXCHANGE
BUSINESS
CARDS AT
NETWORKING
SESSIONS OVER
A BREAKFAST
OR LUNCH
ON THE
SIDELINES OF
CONFERENCES
OR SEMINAR**

and continue on the job for no pay till the businesses and jobs return. The wait has been getting longer and longer due to the pandemic."

The corporate and government conferences, events and celebrations in Oman were already affected since 2015 when companies following drop in revenues after oil prices led to a decline in both public and government spending.

The business-related to exhibitions and conferences have been continuously meeting with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and seeking exemptions from government fees, such as rents and tax, in addition to discounts of around 75 per cent from Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

According to a report by GlobalData, MICE tourism was one of the first types of tourism to be impacted by the global spread of Covid-19 and it could be one of the last to fully return as international business arrivals are still affected.

"Companies in all sectors will be looking for ways to reduce costs in the coming years as they reel from the economic impact. Business travel is a costly expense for all companies, and with the rise of video conferencing software such as Zoom and Google Meet, many will realize that this type of ongoing expense is unnecessary", it said.

According to experts, just like the hybrid education, we will continue to have blended conferences, which will also give a boost to the SMEs supplying hand sanitising stations and masks gloves.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has authorised 4 and 5-star hotel establishments to operate meeting and celebration halls, and entry to these facilities are limited to those who received two doses of one of the vaccines approved in the Sultanate. As of today's date, the total capacity of these halls cannot exceed 35 per cent.



Training for graduates to become primary school teachers

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 28

The Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, organised a training programme for 119 graduates in the first field of pre-school and kindergarten.

The six-month programme aims to provide female candidates with a job in the fields of education, Islamic, Arabic language and social studies in accordance with the requirements of the grades 1-4.

Dr Intisar bint Abdullah Ambosaidi, Assistant Director-General, said the training is based on the directives to replace expatriate teachers with Omani cadre.

She said that the programme will provide the trainees with the necessary skills in Arabic language, Islamic and social studies. They will be trained



to use various educational platforms, distance education and some other administrative aspects. The ministry seeks to

absorb a number of Omanis looking for work in the teaching profession through on-the-job training.

Digital Covid vaccination certificates mulled

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Since entry to public places including shopping malls, parks and restaurants as well as public offices is going to be regulated by vaccination certificate, a digital vaccination certificate with a QR code or clues to the holder's vaccination status on his/her phone is advisable too.

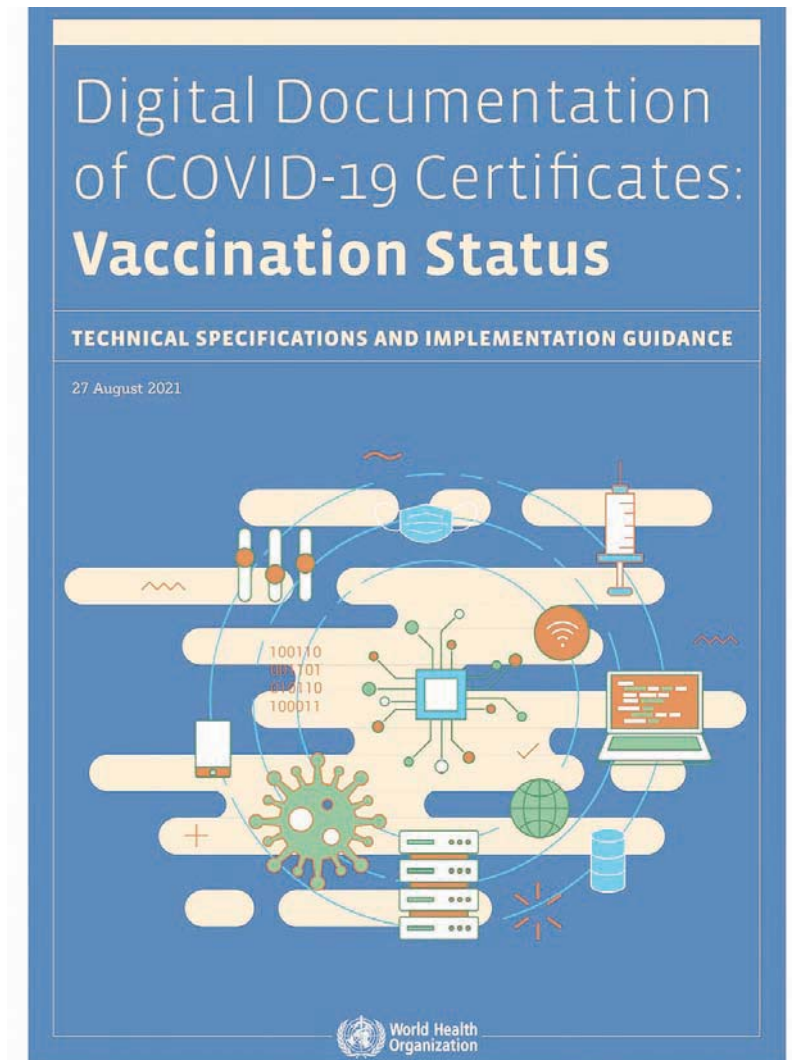
The digital documentation of Covid-19 certificates is a mechanism by which a person's Covid-19-related health data can be digitally documented via an electronic certificate which can be used in the same way as a paper-based vaccination record/card. That is to provide information to healthcare providers about the vaccination status of the holder.

"Moving with the world, a digital vaccination card would be more suitable for people with digital devices in their hands as paper-based vaccination records have many challenges," says Doctor Nihal Azizi, specialist and a social activist.

The challenges include possibility of losing or damaging the card, or even the possibility of fraud. However, the digital solutions are designed to address these challenges and to hold the vaccination cards safe and handy as the card will be highly needed for many purposes in the future.

"Digital vaccination card is better and safer for following Covid infection guidelines as there is no need to touch any surface which is feared to be spreading the virus. Instead, one just has to show and roll like our digital credit or debit cards," says Dr Dilip Singhvi, Specialist, Internal Medicine and Diabetes at Apollo Hospital.

Although the WHO doesn't



support vaccination certificate as a proof of vaccination to support travel, it has issued some guidelines to the same, saying "the digital documentation of Covid-19 certificates is proposed as a mechanism by which a person's Covid-19-related health data can be digitally documented via an electronic certificate."

Accordingly, the WHO has published a guidance document for countries and implementing partners on the technical requirements for issuing digital certificates for vaccination against Covid-19. The guidance is part of a series of planned documents on digitalisation of Covid-19 certificates.

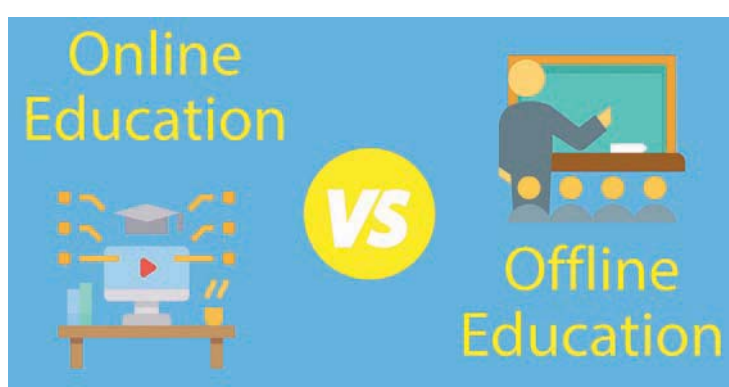
"The guidance will, amongst other things, support member states in adopting digital tools for documenting Covid-19 vaccination status for the purposes of effective healthcare, and proof of vaccination should it be needed for other purposes," a statement from the WHO stated.

"Digital vaccination card is acceptable to a great extent as long as there is QR code and all the details of the person can be retrieved online. But here in Oman, we have Tarassud plus which is equally useful," said Dr Mahmoud bin Nasser al Rahbi, Senior Consultant of Emergency Medicine at the Al Nahdha Hospital.

Moving from online to offline: Overcoming teaching challenges

In the coming academic year many countries are moving from online to offline teaching which can also be called as traditional teaching. In the beginning of online teaching the major factors like adaptability, self-motivation, time management, computer knowledge and technical issues are almost of all covered to most of the teaching staff. Now once again the adaptability plays very important role in going back to traditional system of teaching. It is not difficult but little concerned to both teachers and students. In offline teaching examinations are better than online teaching.

During online teaching, teachers mostly face challenges like lack of IT support, continuous technological changes, unequal access for all students, un-optimised software for mobile devices and security issues.



But now while moving from online to offline, teachers have to face motivational issues. For the first few days, students are very enthusiasts to come to the classes since longtime they are in the houses and missing the opportunity to meet their friends and feel free. After that they start the comparison of two different types of system. Here the teacher has to use sociological and psychological methods of education and concentrate more on motivation rather than the content transfer.

Mathematics, Engineering and IT teachers may face

little difficulties comparing to language and business teachers. Here the content transformation is to be done so technically.

Educational administrators have to think about this transition period so seriously and should not pressurise to complete the huge syllabus.

In fact, in the first year of transition period the syllabus may be reduced to make the students feel comfortable. Students should feel that we got an opportunity to listen to our teacher in person and study with our friends.

Creation of this feeling is the main responsible of

the teachers. Educational psychologists' role also increases during this period. Counselling is the most important issue in this transition period.

It is better to the educational institutions to make the first week as the counselling week and knowing the issues of the students and problems faced by them during the epidemic period.

In online teaching, teachers are busy in learning the new technology and implementing the technology in their teaching but when they turn in to offline teaching then the problems are differing and they are hidden.

Now assessing socio-psycho condition of the student is an important issue. Teaching methodologies may help here but before the methodology let us assess the receiver status.

(Dr Mohammed Shafiuddin, Educationist, shafishamshad@gmail.com)

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 36/2021

Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/21/029 Re-Tender	(33/2021/MM/HQ-27) (Re-Call-1)	Supply and Laying of Asphalt for Muscat Governorate (E- Tender)	Rial 100	26/09/2021	10/10/2021	Excellent

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Original Tender Bond envelope should be sealed with red wax and entitled to His Excellency / Head of Internal Tender Committee and to be placed in the Tender Box at Muscat Municipality HQ, Third Floor, before 10:00 am as per the date Mentioned in the above table. All envelopes are to be clearly marked with the name of the Tender being presented and no other marks.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ita.gov.om) or call (+968 24166670).

Macron warns against dropping guard against IS terror

BAGHDAD: French President Emmanuel Macron warned on Saturday the IS group “remains a threat”, speaking days after an affiliate of the group claimed a deadly bombing in Kabul.

“We all know that we must not lower our guard, because Daesh (IS) remains a threat, and I know that the fight against these terrorist groups is a priority of your government,” Macron said, after a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi in Baghdad, where a summit of Middle East leaders begins at midday.

Organisers have been tight-lipped on the agenda of the summit in Baghdad, but the meeting also comes as Iraq, long a casualty of militancy, tries to establish itself as a mediator in the region.

Iraq and France “are key partners in the war against terrorism,” Kadhemi replied.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi and Jordan’s King Abdullah II are due at the summit, while the foreign ministers of regional foes Iran and Saudi Arabia will also be present.

The Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, as well as Kuwait’s



Iraq’s President Barham Salih and France’s President Emmanuel Macron attend a news conference ahead of the Baghdad summit at the Green Zone in Baghdad on Saturday. – Reuters

Prime Minister Shaikh Sabah Al Khalid al Sabah are also expected to attend. Iraq is seeking to play a “unifying role” to tackle crises shaking the region, sources close to Iraq’s Kadhemi have said.

Oil-rich Iraq has been caught for years in a delicate balancing act between its two main allies, Iran and the United States.

Iran exerts major clout in Iraq through allied armed groups

within the Hashed al Shaabi, a powerful state-sponsored paramilitary network.

Baghdad has been brokering talks since April between US ally Riyadh and Tehran on mending ties severed in 2016.

Macron aims to highlight France’s role in the region and its determination to press the fight against terrorism, his office said.

The French president considers

Iraq “essential” to stability in the troubled Middle East, it added.

An IS affiliate claimed Thursday’s suicide bombing in Kabul that killed scores of people, including 13 US service members. The attack has revived global concerns that the extremist organisation, which seized swathes of Syria and Iraq before being routed from both countries, is emerging anew, analysts said. — AFP



Friends and relatives of Omar Hassan Abu al Nile, who died of wounds he sustained during a protest on the Israel-Gaza border fence last week, mourn during his funeral in Gaza City, on Saturday. – AFP

Boy wounded by Israeli army in Gaza dies

JERUSALEM: A 12-year-old Palestinian boy shot last week by Israeli soldiers during clashes along the border with Gaza has died of his injuries, the territory’s health ministry said on Saturday.

Omar Hassan Abu al Nile was hit during clashes last Saturday on the sidelines of a demonstration near the border fence separating the Gaza Strip and the Jewish state, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

He “succumbed to his injuries,” the Gaza’s health ministry said in a statement.

The August 21 unrest left around 40 people wounded, according to Gaza’s Hamas rulers, including a 32-year-old Palestinian man who died on Wednesday.

An Israeli police officer was

also shot, and remains in a critical condition.

The Israeli army said it had responded with live fire and other measures to Palestinian “rioters” who were hurling explosives over the border fence and attempting to scale it.

Following the clashes, Israel carried out air strikes it said were targeting weapons manufacturing and storage sites of Hamas.

Israel struck Gaza again overnight Monday-Tuesday in response to incendiary balloons that sparked multiple fires in Israel’s southern Eskhol region.

There were no reported casualties from the strikes.

New clashes took place on the border between Gaza and Israel on Wednesday, but they were less violent than those on Saturday.

Egypt dig uncovers 2,300-year-old settlement in Alexandria

CAIRO: Egypt on Friday announced the discovery of a settlement in the Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria dating back to at least the second century BC.

An Egyptian archaeological team made the find in the city’s central Al-Shatby district during nine months of excavations, a statement from the tourism and antiquities ministry said.

The settlement had a “residential and commercial” function, the statement said. The head of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities, Mostafa Waziri, said initial studies showed “a main road and adjacent streets linked by a sewage network”.

The area was in use from the late Ptolemaic period until the middle of the period of Roman rule, covering a timeframe from “the second century BC until the fourth century AD,” Waziri was quoted as saying.

Archaeologists discovered a large number of wells cut into the rock and a network of water cisterns, the statement said.

They also found an alabaster statue of an unidentified Roman emperor, amulets, numerous amphorae and some 700 ancient coins.

Ahmed Abu Hamd, head of antiquities in Alexandria, said the remains correspond to a “market, workshops and votive and sculpture shops”. Cairo has announced a series of archaeological discoveries in recent years, hoping to revive a vital tourism sector battered by a 2011 uprising, insurgent attacks and the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Khamenei: Biden has same demands as Trump on nuclear issue

TEHRAN: Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday accused US President Joe Biden’s administration of making the same demands as his predecessor Donald Trump in talks to revive a nuclear accord.

The multilateral deal that offers Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme was torpedoed by Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from it in 2018.

A last round of negotiations between Iran and the deal’s remaining parties to revive the 2015 accord concluded in June with no resumption in sight.

“America’s current administration is no different from the previous one, because what it demands from Iran on the nuclear issue is different in words, but the same thing that Trump demanded,” Khamenei said, quoted by his official website.

“The Americans truly have no shame on the nuclear issue, and



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei meets with Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi and his cabinet members in Tehran on Saturday. – AFP

even though they withdrew from the JCPOA... they now talk in a way and make demands as if it was (Iran) that withdrew,” he added, referring to the deal by its official name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with President Ebrahim Raisi’s newly formed cabinet,

during which he acknowledged public trust in government had been “damaged”.

Raisi won a June 18 election marred by record low turnout and an absence of significant competitors.

He succeeded the moderate Hassan Rouhani, the architect of the political opening that

culminated in the nuclear agreement between Tehran and six major powers.

A year after Trump’s decision to withdraw from the deal and impose sanctions on Iran, the Islamic republic retaliated by gradually waiving most of the key nuclear commitments that it had accepted under the agreement.

Six rounds of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers — with the US indirectly taking part — were held in Vienna between April and June.

The last round concluded on June 20, with no date set for another.

“Behind the scenes of America’s foreign policy, there is a predator wolf that sometimes changes to a cunning fox,” Khamenei said.

Khamenei’s remarks came after a senior security official in Tehran said Iran reserves the right to a “reciprocal response” to Washington, after what it deemed as threats by Biden. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

KHARTOUM

Sudan receives over 200,000 doses from France

Sudan has received a shipment of 218,400 doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine as a donation from France, the health ministry and UNICEF said.

The vaccines were delivered with UNICEF’s support through the COVAX facility, they said in separate statements on Friday.

In March, Sudan received an initial 820,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine made by AstraZeneca in March through COVAX and UNICEF.

It also received 606,700



doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccines as a donation from the United States earlier in August. China also had donated quantities of Sinopharm’s Covid-19 vaccine.

CAIRO

Fossil of new amphibious whale discovered

Egyptian scientists have discovered the fossil of a new species of amphibious whale that dates back 43 million years, a member of the research team said.

“This is a species that was not known” previously, said Hesham Sallam, an Egyptian palaeontologist from the team.

“This is the first time that an Arab research team, specifically an Egyptian one, is in charge of documenting such a discovery,” he said on television late on



Thursday.

The fossil was found in the Fayum region, a part of Egypt that was once covered by sea and is home to Whale Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

BEIRUT

Amnesty urges Syria to lift ‘siege’ on Daraa

Rights group Amnesty International on Friday urged the Syrian government to immediately allow humanitarian aid into a rebel holdout under regime “siege” in the southern city of Daraa.

The United Nations has warned of food shortages in opposition-held Daraa al-Balad, which is surrounded by Russia-backed regime fighters seeking to retake control of the area.

“The Syrian government must immediately lift the siege



to facilitate unfettered access for humanitarian organisations and allow the medical evacuation of the sick and injured,” said Amnesty’s Syria researcher Diana Semaan.

In brief

■ MANILA



DUTERTE LIFTS CASINO BAN TO BOOST REVENUE

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted a moratorium on casino operations in the country's top holiday island to generate taxes for its Covid-19 pandemic response, the presidential spokesperson said on Saturday.

The firebrand leader has had a longstanding opposition to gambling, halting the construction of new casinos in the Philippines, one of Asia's fastest-growing gambling markets before the pandemic.

"The president has given his go signal allowing the operation of a casino in Boracay", presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement.

■ TOKYO



JAPAN PROBES TWO DEATHS AFTER MODERNA JABS

Japan is investigating the death of two men who received jabs from batches of Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine suspended from use due to contamination, the health ministry said on Saturday.

The men aged 30 and 38 died earlier this month after getting their second Moderna doses from one of three manufacturing lots suspended by the government on Thursday after several vials were found to be contaminated, the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the cause of death was still being investigated and "currently, causal relations with the vaccinations are unknown".

■ DHAKA



21 KILLED IN BANGLADESH BOAT ACCIDENT

At least 21 people were killed and dozens remain missing as a boat packed with passengers and a sand-laden cargo ship collided Friday in a lake in eastern Bangladesh, officials said.

The boat was reportedly carrying some 60 passengers when the incident occurred on a lake in the town of Bijoynagar, local government administrator Hayat-ud-Doula Khan said.

The cargo ship's steel tip and the boat collided, causing the passenger vessel to capsize, he said.

"We have recovered 21 bodies including nine women and six children so far", he told AFP, adding that the toll would likely rise.

US strikes IS target in Afghanistan



Women, hoping to leave Afghanistan, walk to the main entrance gate of Kabul airport in Kabul on Saturday. — AFP

KABUL: The United States conducted a drone strike against an IS target in Afghanistan on Saturday, as the airlift of those desperate to flee moved into its fraught final stages with fresh terror attack warnings and encroaching Taliban forces primed to take over Kabul airport.

US forces overseeing the evacuation have been forced into closer security cooperation with the Taliban to prevent any repeat of the suicide bombing that killed scores of civilians crowded around one of the airport's main access gates and 13 American troops.

The attack was claimed by a regional IS chapter, and the Pentagon announced it had carried out a drone attack on a "planner" from the group in eastern Afghanistan.

"Initial indications are that we killed the target", said Captain Bill Urban of the US Central Command.

With the airlift window narrowing sharply ahead of an August 31 deadline, more than 5,000 people remained inside Kabul airport awaiting evacuation on Saturday.

Gone are the crowds of

thousands around the airport's perimeter, hoping to be let through and allowed onto a plane.

Now, the Taliban have sealed off roads leading to the airport and are only letting sanctioned buses pass.

"We have lists from the Americans... if your name is on the list, you can come through", one Taliban official told AFP near the civilian passenger terminal.

The carnage of Thursday's suicide attack injected further stress and tension into a situation already fraught with panic and despair for those wanting to leave and high risk for the US forces tasked with securing the operation.

On Saturday, two senior health officials from the former Afghan administration told AFP the death toll from the blast had topped 100, including the 13 Americans.

Some media have put the toll as high as 170.

The bombing followed a chorus of warnings about an imminent threat and, as people gathered outside the airport on Saturday, the United States issued a fresh alert for its citizens to leave areas around the main gates

"immediately".

In recent years, the IS's Afghanistan-Pakistan chapter has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in those countries — massacring civilians at mosques, shrines, public squares and even hospitals.

At the White House, President Joe Biden's Press Secretary Jen Psaki said US national security experts consider another attack is "likely" and the next few days will be "the most dangerous period to date".

Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi tweeted that the group's fighters had already moved into parts of the military side of Kabul airport, but the Pentagon stressed that US forces retained control over the gates and airlift operations.

Racing to meet the Tuesday withdrawal deadline has required close cooperation with the Taliban on evacuee movements and the IS threat.

The head of US forces at Hamid Karzai International, Rear Admiral Peter Vasely, is in constant contact with the Taliban official overseeing security around the airport. — AFP

Pentagon holds talks with Chinese military

WASHINGTON: A senior Pentagon official held talks with the Chinese military for the first time since President Joe Biden took office in January to focus on managing risk between the two countries, a US official said on Friday.

The United States has put countering China at the heart of its national security policy for years and Biden's administration has described rivalry with Beijing as "the biggest geopolitical test" of this century.

Relations between China and the United States have grown increasingly tense, with the world's two largest economies clashing over everything from Taiwan and China's human rights record to its military activity in the

South China Sea.

Despite the tensions and heated rhetoric, US military officials have long sought to have open lines of communication with their Chinese counterparts to be able to mitigate potential flare-ups or deal with any accidents.

Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defense for China, spoke last week with Chinese Major General Huang Xueping, Deputy Director for the People's Liberation Army Office for International Military Cooperation.

"(They) utilised the US-PRC Defence Telephone Link today to conduct a secure video conference", the US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

— Reuters

India vaccinates 10m people in one day

NEW DELHI: India has given more than 10 million Covid-19 jabs in a single day for the first time, authorities said on Saturday, as the South Asian giant bolsters its defences for a predicted new surge.

India has administered more than 622 million vaccine doses in total, giving at least one dose to more than half of its 944 million adults

The health ministry said the 10 million landmark was passed on Friday, beating the country's previous daily record of 9.2 million. The government has been stung by criticism after a brutal coronavirus wave in April and May killed more than 200,000 people.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the milestone as a "momentous feat" for the nation of 1.3 billion people.

"Kudos to those getting vaccinated and those making the vaccination drive a success", he said on Twitter.

The government had aimed to vaccinate about 1.1 billion



A woman gets inoculated with a dose of the Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination camp in Chennai on Saturday. — AFP

adults by the end of the year but shortages, administrative confusion and hesitancy have held back numbers. Only around 15 per cent have had two doses since the drive began in January.

India's daily infection count has dropped dramatically since the devastating surge in April-May which overwhelmed its creaking health infrastructure.

Almost all restrictions on movement and activity have been lifted even though experts have warned of a new wave hitting as early as next month as the festival season starts.

— AFP

Australia logs record Covid cases, driven by New South Wales

SYDNEY: Australia reported a record 1,126 coronavirus infectious on Saturday, the vast majority in New South Wales, the epicentre of the Delta-fuelled outbreak.

More than half of Australians have been in weeks-long lockdowns as officials in Sydney and Melbourne, the country's largest cities, and the capital Canberra struggle to quell the outbreak.

New South Wales, the most populous state and home to Sydney, reported 1,035 locally acquired Covid-19 infections, breaking Thursday's record of 1,029 as the outbreak that started in mid-June continues to grow.

Victoria reported 64 cases, mostly in its capital Melbourne, and Australian Capital Territory that includes Canberra had 26 infections. Queensland had one, Australia's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd told a briefing.



Residents exercising along the Sydney Harbour during the lockdown. — AFP

Despite the record in New South Wales, the state's conservative Liberal Party government said it would ease some restrictions

next week, allowing for five-guest weddings.

The state's management of the outbreak — which has

nearly 14,700 active cases — has been criticised by officials in neighbouring Victoria, who have imposed stricter restrictions,

believing the outbreak there can be suppressed.

"I'm not sure 1,000 cases a day is a sign of hope", Victoria's Health Minister Martin Foley said of the New South Wales infections. "I'm pretty sure that if you ask those intensive care nurses in Sydney hospitals at the moment how they saw the situation, it wouldn't be a hugely rosy picture."

After months of supply delays with the Pfizer shots and public unease about the AstraZeneca vaccine, Australia has been racing in recent weeks to inoculate its population. At current rates, 80pc could be vaccinated by mid-November.

The federal government announced a plan last month that envisaged lockdowns as a key to quelling outbreaks until 70 per cent of the population gets vaccinated and a gradual re-opening of Australia's borders when the number reaches 80 per cent. — Reuters

Researchers discover world's 'northernmost' island

COPENHAGEN: Scientists have discovered what is believed to be the world's northernmost landmass — a yet-to-be-named island north of Greenland that could soon be swallowed up by seawaters.

Researchers came upon the landmass on an expedition in July, and initially thought they had reached Oodaaq, up until now the northernmost island on the planet.

"We were informed that there had been an error on my GPS which had led us to believe that we were standing on Oodaaq Island," said the head of the mission, Morten Rasch from Copenhagen University's department of geosciences and natural resource management.

"In reality, we had discovered a new island further north, a discovery that just slightly expands the kingdom" of Denmark, he added.

Oodaaq is some 700 kilometres (435 miles) south of the North Pole, while the new island is 780 metres (2,560 feet) north of Oodaaq. Copenhagen University said in a statement on Friday the "yet-to-be-named island is... the northernmost point of Greenland and one of the most northerly points of land on Earth."

— AFP

US braces for Hurricane Ida after Cuba takes hit



A man walks under the rain in Batabano, Mayabeque province, about 60 km south of Havana, on Saturday. — AFP

ATLANTA: Hurricane Ida intensified over warm Gulf of Mexico waters and took aim at the US Gulf Coast on Saturday, prompting tens of thousands in Louisiana and offshore energy workers to flee to safety.

Forecasters said it could make a US landfall as an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm on the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale, generating winds of 140 miles per hour (225 kph), heavy downpours and a tidal surge that could plunge much of the Louisiana shoreline under several feet of water.

Ida's pace accelerated overnight and carried top winds of 85 mph (140 kph) as it headed northwest, the National Hurricane Center said on Saturday morning. The storm will continue to intensify rapidly over Gulf waters that are several

degrees higher than normal, before coming ashore late on Sunday.

Flooding from Ida's storm surge — high water driven by the hurricane's winds — could reach between 10 and 15 feet (3 and 4.5 metres) around the mouth of the Mississippi River, with lower levels extending east along the adjacent coastlines of Mississippi and Alabama, the NHC said.

Officials ordered widespread evacuations of low-lying and coastal areas, prompting an exodus that led to gasoline stations running dry and massive lines on highways leading from the shore.

Utilities were bringing in extra crews and equipment to prepare to restore electricity after the storm passes. Forecasters expect coming winds will cut power to hundreds of thousands of homes

in the area.

Lifelong Gulf resident Hailey DeLaune, 29, said she and her fiance spent Friday evening boarding up the windows of his house in Gulfport, Mississippi, and gathering provisions to ride out the storm.

"Hurricanes have always been part of my life," said the high school theology teacher, who was born during 1992's Category 5 Hurricane Andrew. "You just run through your list and hope for the best."

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, whose state is reeling from a public health crisis stemming from a fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, urged residents to ready themselves for the hurricane immediately.

— Reuters

Bobby Kennedy's assassin granted parole in California

LOS ANGELES: The man convicted of shooting dead Robert F Kennedy in a 1968 assassination that rocked the United States was granted parole on Friday.

Sirhan Sirhan, now 77, has been behind bars for five decades — despite doubts that he fired the shots that likely changed the course of US politics.

Kennedy, the younger brother of slain president John F Kennedy, was campaigning for the Democratic nomination when he was gunned down in a Los Angeles hotel.

His murder came just months after the killing of Black civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr, and as a divided America was deep in an unpopular war in Vietnam.

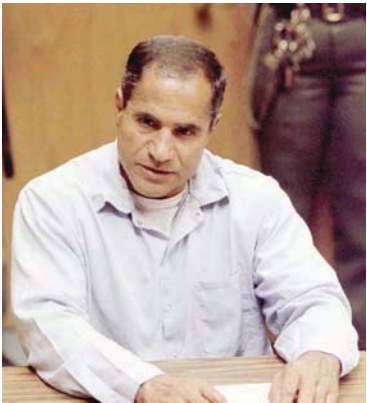
Sirhan (pictured) was convicted and sentenced to death in 1969 after pleading guilty.

His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment several years later. But doubts soon surfaced that he was actually responsible for Bobby Kennedy's death, with claims that there could have been a second gunman in the Ambassador Hotel on June 5, 1968.

Kennedy had given a speech at the hotel after winning California's Democratic presidential primary.

On a walkabout in the kitchen where he met staff, he was shot, as were several other people in his entourage, among them Paul Schrade, who took a bullet to the head.

Schrade, along with Kennedy's then-14-year-old son, have since



campaigned for Sirhan's release, saying the evidence against him does not stack up.

"It is a good decision," Schrade said on Friday.

"I'm really grateful to the parole board for giving Sirhan the chance to go home." The vote on Friday by a two-person panel of the California parole board does not mean that Sirhan will automatically be released.

The decision is subject to a three-month review, and then ultimately passes to state Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat who faces a recall vote in September.

During Friday's hearing, Kennedy's youngest son, Douglas, spoke in favour of Sirhan's release, media reports said, adding that Robert F Kennedy Jr had sent a letter of support to the parole board.

Robert F Kennedy Jr told *The Washington Post* in 2018 that he had visited Sirhan in the California desert prison where he was serving his sentence, and had become convinced that an injustice had been perpetrated.

— AFP

Using creativity to highlight extinction, climate change

LONDON: Environmental action group Extinction Rebellion is in the midst of staging a fortnight of protests to demonstrate against the world's ongoing use of fossil fuels, which are driving climate change.

As part of the campaigning, Extinction Rebellion uses elaborate costumes, props, art displays (dubbed "art actions" by the group), banners and flags when parading through different cities.

A member of the group, known only as Bridget, is the UK arts factory coordinator and said creating the artwork for the protest begins weeks, sometimes months, in advance.

She told the PA news agency: "We try to resource as many

materials as we can. Our printer ink is the most environmentally-friendly printer ink you can get on the planet. We do a lot of research. We get donations and t-shirts from merch companies with their dead stock and charities.

"Everything is upcycled as much as we can. We bought 20 litres of paint and the rest was freecycled, and we have about 300 metres of fabric for banners."

The more elaborate costumes are created by art coordinators across Britain. They design a costume, which is easy for others to make, and then create a design pack which is sent out to other members of the group across the country to create a "unified" look.



Extinction Rebellion climate activists take part in a protest in London on Saturday. — Reuters

In London, dozens of fashion students at universities and colleges also help create the more elaborate designs.

Bridget said: "We have decentralised, across the UK and nations, and even globally. We provide advice on how to make everything. We then help other movements, so we've been working with Black Lives Matter and showing them how to make banners, how to make flags.

"There's a community aspect to it. It's all about everybody being able to do everything. We are all crew."

The group has around 100 people across the country who make banners and flags but it also

has volunteer puppet-makers, sculptors, 3D designers, musicians and architects, which brings the total up to around 2,000 volunteers who solely work on the artwork.

Speaking about the London protests, Bridget said: "Our main principle is to promote autonomy and decentralise the movement. Because we've had so much help from the regions, [the artwork for the London protests] has been really, really successful."

"The whole point of this is to reach out to the general public and talk to them about what is going on with the planet. In the next few days, there's going to be lots more theatrical and beautiful things to see." — dpa

MADRID

Migrants stopped from crossing into Melilla

Around 350 migrants tried to scale the fence from Morocco into Spain's Melilla enclave before dawn on Saturday but none managed to get across, a Spanish government spokesman said.

Spanish border forces had been alerted at around 5:30 am by their Moroccan counterparts that "a group of 350 sub-Saharan Africans" were trying to scale the fence near the Barrio Chino border post, prompting Guardia Civil police to deploy a helicopter to head them off.



"No one got across," the spokesman said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Another group of more than 300 people had tried to cross into Melilla on August 20 but none managed to get in, he said.

BERLIN

Germany will offer Africa up to 70 mn vaccine doses

Germany will make up to 70 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine available to African countries this year, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday, more than doubling a previous pledge to donate 30 million.

"Germany will make available not only 30 million doses of vaccines but it will be as much as 70 million doses," Merkel told a news conference after a summit with African leaders on the G20's Compact with Africa initiative. South African President Cyril



Ramaphosa said African leaders told the summit "it is not fair that Africa has vaccinated only 2 per cent of the their 1.3 billion population and yet the more developed countries in the north have vaccinated up to 60 per cent."

KINGSTON

Only emergency treatment in Jamaica's hospitals

Due to the high number of coronavirus cases, only emergency cases will be treated in all public hospitals in Jamaica, effective immediately, the Caribbean state's Health Ministry announced on Friday.

Most of the country's hospitals had exceeded their quota of beds for Covid-19 patients, it said. Oxygen supplies were also running low in the face of high demand.

Hospitals would now suspend non-essential operations, the



ministry added. Patients who could be treated at home would be discharged.

The public would be asked to visit an emergency room only if medical treatment was needed for serious cases.

Pentagon seeks answers for deadly Kabul attack

IDREES ALI

By last Wednesday night, US intelligence agencies were near certain that an attack was imminent outside Kabul airport, triggering a State Department warning to American citizens to leave the area immediately. Just over 12 hours later, a bomber walked through the large crowds to a gate manned by US troops and detonated explosives, killing at least 13 US service members and 79 Afghans.

It was a tragic coda to America's 20-year war in Afghanistan, the largest loss of life for the US military there in a decade, on the cusp of the full withdrawal of troops by August 31 ordered by President Joe Biden.

Among the most pressing questions as the US military launches its investigation: How did the bomber make it through Taliban checkpoints? Why were US troops in such a concentrated space when they knew an attack was imminent?

"It was a failure somewhere," General Frank McKenzie, the head of US Central Command, told reporters hours after the attack, which was claimed by IS Khorasan (IS-K).

But at some point, McKenzie added, troops had no choice but to come in contact with people trying to board evacuation flights, screen them, pat them down for weapons, and ensure they did not make it into the airport if they posed a threat.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the conditions for the attack were set months in advance.

They said that weeks before the evacuation from Kabul airport began following the Taliban's takeover of the capital, the military had been seeking approval to get at-risk Afghans out of the country. — Reuters

“It was a failure somewhere. But at some point, troops had no choice but to come in contact with people trying to board evacuation flights, screen them, pat them down for weapons, and ensure they did not make it into the airport if they posed a threat

GENERAL FRANK MCKENZIE

Head of US Central Command



MILITARY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Participants perform during the Spasskaya Tower international military and music Festival opening ceremony at the Red Square in Moscow on Friday. The festival runs until September 5. — AFP

It ain't over: Get jabbed and get with the national programme



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES APPEAR TO LEAD US TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING THAT TOTAL VACCINATION, AND SUBSEQUENT HERD IMMUNITY, IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY FORWARD

Congratulations to the Supreme Committee for taking the unpopular step of implementing a full lockdown, as it appears from the last two week's statistics that cases of Covid-19 and fatalities have sharply declined. Forgetting the social and public impacts for a moment, this must be like a blessing from heaven for a health service, and healthcare professionals and volunteers who must have been at their wits end, day after day, week after week, as their efforts appeared to offer them, or the communities, little respite. Please, all of you, take this literary hug from me, and others, as a massive, massive... thank you.

As for the rest of you, or the rest of us, depending how facile or profound were your own levels of compliance and integrity where both commonsense, and legal Covid compliance have been concerned. Some of you, I'm sorry to say, can take little or no credit whatsoever for the statistical downturn as you ignored all attempts to draw you in to community compliance, based on your own selfish wants and needs. You know who you are... you are the ones who have already thrown away all except one mask, which you keep for show, and who pat yourselves on the back for being clever! There really is a special place for you. Most however, did at least try. And to you should go your community's thanks and prayers to

remain safe. The Delta variant now poses the main challenge to a return towards, not to, national and global normality, so don't think it's over... far from it, but we are moving in the right direction.

The international Covid-19 landscape, and the diverse international responses and emerging scenarios tell us something about what the future may look like, and the Australian and New Zealand experiences tell us that an isolated existence has significant fragility, with Australia being plunged into a variety of interstate responses that run the full gamut of pandemic responsibility, to stall off rising case numbers, and fatalities. New Zealand, meanwhile, with only thirty fatalities during the whole pandemic, has recorded Delta cases, and immediately gone into national lockdown again, however based on the fact that they could not keep Covid out, even with the most stringent precautions, they are now rethinking their future strategy.

These, and other international experiences appear to lead us towards an understanding that total vaccination, and subsequent herd immunity, is the most effective way forward. Health authorities globally are reporting a slight fall in case numbers, but significantly reduced recovery times and greatly reduced fatalities are emerging on a pro rata basis, in response to rising vaccination numbers,

and that surely is our way forward too, no?

I know, I'm going to get pushback from anti-vaxxers, but, the BBC reports, "The vast majority of vaccine-hesitant people do not have a political agenda and are not committed to an anti-scientific cause: they are simply undecided about their choice to take the injection." Okay, and the others say... the vaccine was developed too quickly; the vaccine doesn't work; the vaccine changes our DNA; the vaccines cause cancer; the cure is worse than the disease; only dissolute, unhealthy people get Covid; the vaccines infect more than they protect; Covid is a Steve Jobs 'con-job', to make more money; the vaccine is implanting us with surveillance nano-bots; and so on, and so on... Yet, when they get sick... they will expect healthcare professionals to put themselves at risk to save them.

I have no time for their diatribes. My generation was vaccinated for measles, mumps, rubella, polio, whooping cough, influenza, chickenpox, rabies, hepatitis B, typhoid, tuberculosis, and numerous anti-malaria and goodness knows what else shots... and my generation has the longest life expectancy of all... and I'm not special! The Supreme Committee is right to ban people from travel, or public places without vaccination. Get with the programme people... or lose some of your rights.

An English neighbour and the blind puppy...



Rasha Al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

THE ENGLISH NEIGHBOUR SEEMED CONCERNED AS HE HAD ADOPTED THE BLIND PUPPY'S TWO SIBLINGS, WHAT WAS THE CHANCE OF THEM BECOMING BLIND TOO?

Mr T was hesitant to come and see the afflicted puppy. He argued that it was pointless — after all — knowing that we won't be able to help him as he was difficult to catch.

However, having an outstanding level of nagging skills due to a lifetime spent around grumpy old people — a secret weapon I proudly reserve for special occasions — Mr T finally gave in and came to visit.

It was in the afternoon when he arrived and we walked to the wadi to be welcomed by two dogs sitting side by side, like a mirror image. One of them was the blue-eyed puppy and the other was a copy of him but with brown eyes. I instantly declared that it must be the mother to be

corrected that both were the same age, probably siblings. Mr T and I squatted opposite of the puppies who approached us but kept their distance.

Mr T announced that both were females and that the blue-eyed one was blind, probably from birth due to a genetic defect. This meant that what I saw were different puppies a day apart and not the same one turning blind the following day!

Both puppies were flea-ridden and I almost swooned noticing the huge ticks infesting all over their ear and dangling from the tips like chandeliers. It felt like a scene from Alien movie and childhood memories came rushing back in the form of mom's voice warning us from ticks that could burrow under our skin to only be removed

with a red-hot pin.

Mr T was now mentioning some chewable pills that he'll be giving me to add to the puppies' food to rid them of the ticks (problem solved!). While still giving his expert opinion, our English neighbour passed by and I introduced him to Mr T.

The English neighbour seemed concerned as he had adopted the blind puppy's two siblings, what was the chance of them becoming blind too? Mr T assured him that it was slim as the defect would've shown at birth.

The English neighbour sighed in relief and left in peace. Mr T declared that the only way to deal with the blind puppy was either by putting her down or finding her an adoptive family. I agreed

with the second suggestion but who would adopt a blind dog? He recommended taking a picture of her and posting it on local pet rescue pages, maybe volunteers would show up and help in capturing her before finding someone to foster or adopt her.

The very next day, another one blue-eyed puppy turned up — must've been the blind's sibling — and I decided to follow Mr T's advice. I placed a picture of the blind puppy and mentioned her one-eyed sibling in two pet rescue pages on Facebook.

I got an answer from only one group who apologised for being stretched too thin in funds and volunteers due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, the visually impaired siblings caught the

interest of a lady in Switzerland called Mary who was keen on helping them. She got in touch with her acquaintances from other rescue groups here. Sadly, they gave her the same answer: they couldn't afford rescuing the blind puppy. I decided to keep feeding the whole lot.

The puppies always took turn in showing up individually as if they were on a roster, which was really amusing. I also kept updating Mary with their news. Sadly, the two visually impaired puppies disappeared within a week and I was left with the healthy one who later introduced me to her own interesting pack (to be continued...)

(The writer is a certified skills trainer and author)



Red Bull's driver Max Verstappen drives during the second practice session of the Formula One Belgian Grand Prix. – AFP

VERSTAPPEN CAME INTO THE WEEKEND DETERMINED TO REVIVE HIS TITLE CHALLENGE WITH A MAIDEN WIN AT SPA AFTER SEEING HIS 33-POINT LEAD OVER HAMILTON TURN INTO AN EIGHT-POINT DEFICIT IN TWO RACES

VERSTAPPEN LEADS RED BULL ONE-TWO IN DAMP FINAL PRACTICE

BRUSSELS: Max Verstappen led team-mate Sergio Perez in a Red Bull one-two on Saturday in a wet final Formula One practice session for the Belgian Grand Prix.

The Dutchman, who also set the pace in Friday's practice before spinning out into the barriers, lapped the undulating, seven-km Spa-Francorchamps track in one minute 56.924 seconds, nearly a second quicker than Mexican Perez. Mercedes title rival Lewis Hamilton was third.

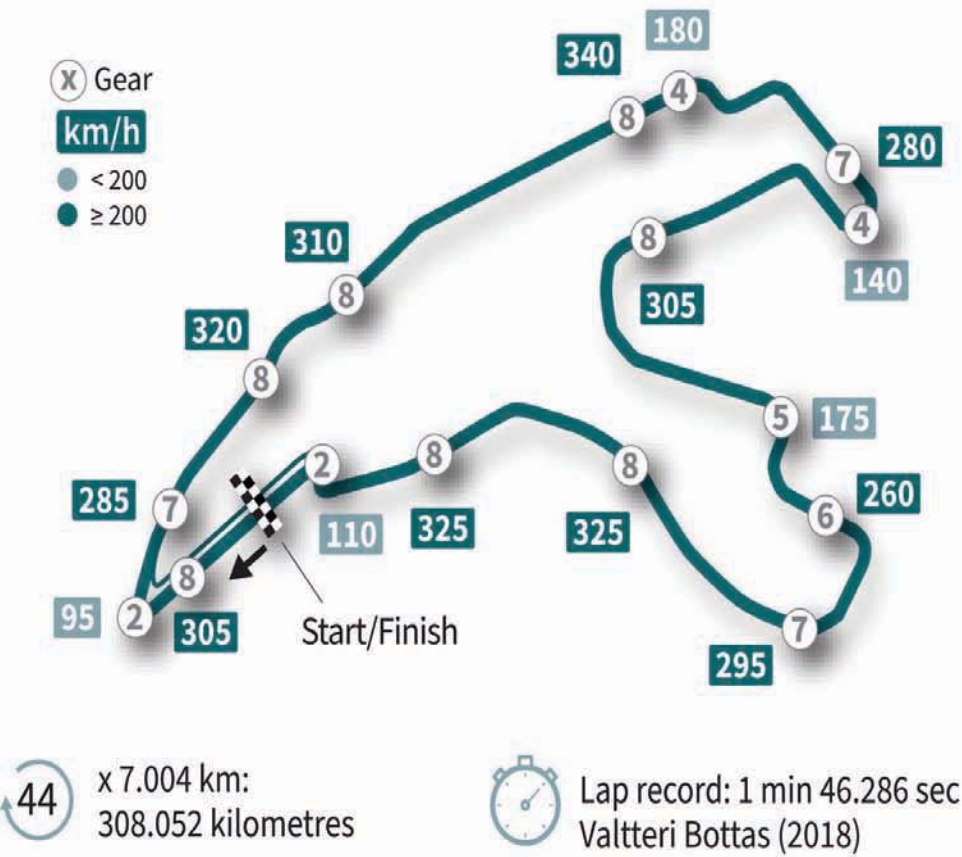
Verstappen came into the weekend determined to revive his title challenge with a maiden win at Spa after seeing his 33-point lead over Hamilton turn into an eight-point deficit in two races.

Briton Hamilton, a four-time winner around the forested track, is gunning for a landmark 100th win in Sunday's race.

After an overcast but largely dry day on Friday, Spa's capricious weather delivered the threatened rain on Saturday.

Drivers used intermediate tyres on the damp track with several taking to the run-off areas as they got to grips with the slippery conditions. The track appeared to be drying as the session progressed but the rain returned

Belgian Grand Prix Spa-Francorchamps Circuit



12th race
Aug 29

Standings

Drivers		
	Lewis Hamilton	195
	Max Verstappen	187
	Lando Norris	113
	Valtteri Bottas	108
Teams		
	Mercedes	303
	Red Bull	291
	Ferrari	163

with a little under half-an-hour to go before relenting at the end.

More rain ahead of qualifying could turn the battle for pole position into a lottery later on Saturday. Behind the top three, Lando Norris went fourth quickest for McLaren. Frenchman Esteban Ocon, who raced to his maiden Formula One win at the last race in Hungary, was fifth for Alpine.

Lance Stroll, carrying a five-place grid penalty for colliding with Charles Leclerc at the start of the race in Hungary, was sixth for Aston Martin ahead of AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly.

Sebastian Vettel, a three-time winner at Spa, was eighth in the other Aston Martin ahead of the Williams of Briton George Russell and Fernando Alonso who rounded out the top 10 for Alpine.

Valtteri Bottas, celebrating his 32nd birthday, was only 11th in the other Mercedes. The Finn is also carrying a five-place grid penalty for triggering a start-line crash in Hungary. Leclerc, running a new chassis after crashing on Friday, was 16th for Ferrari. Kimi Raikkonen pitted early in the session with a brake failure on his Alfa Romeo.

— Reuters



Salim al Wahaibi re-elected as OFA chairman



A board meeting will take place next week to address all the new strategies and initiatives related to improvement of soccer in the Sultanate. After agreeing with the board of directors on the future programmes and plans, we will share it for the Ordinary Assembly General for final approval as they are top stakeholder for OFA

SALIM AL WAHAIBI
OFA chairman

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 28

Shaikh Salim bin Said al Wahaibi was re-elected as chairman of Oman Football Association (OFA) for the term (2021-2025) on Saturday during the Ordinary Assembly General meeting to elect new board of directors (2021-2025).

Al Wahaibi won the chairmanship post after having 37 votes while Dr Jassim al Shukaili received seven votes only. A total of 44 clubs attended the OFA meeting besides representatives from AFC and Fifa.

Mohsin al Masrouri retained his post as vice chairman of OFA against tough rival Dr Khalid al Ghilani. Mohsin polled 25 votes while Dr Ghilani had 19 votes.

Lujana Mohsin Darwish was elected to the mandatory women board member seat (39 votes). Her opponent Fatma al Fazari had five votes only.

The six board members elected



were Ibrahim al Hosni (26 votes), Qutaiba al Ghilani (26 votes), Ali al Ajmi (23 votes), Nasser al Hadabi (19 votes), Ahmed al Hadad (19 votes) and Ibrahim al Alawi (19 votes).

After obtaining the confidence from the general assembly members, Al Wahaibi thanked them for the trust and he said that will do the best for Oman's football development.

"A board meeting will take place next week to address all the new strategies and initiatives related

to improvement of soccer in the Sultanate. After agreeing with the board of directors on the future programmes and plans, we will share it for the Ordinary Assembly General for final approval as they are top stakeholder for OFA," he added.

The OFA chief affirmed that he is fully satisfied with the national teams' performance during the last period.

"We will have a well prepared plan for the development of the national teams. Everyone is

focusing on the senior national team but we will focus on all the teams with special care for the junior teams as they are classified as the future for any team.

According to the initial plan, we will work closely with clubs and Oman School Sports Association for building strong junior teams. With regards to the fourth participation of the national beach soccer team in 2021 Fifa beach soccer World Cup in Russia, We will review the Sultanate's team in this globe event and take the right



decision. Enhancing the positive side and improving the weakness areas are the top target towards achieving the best for Oman's football," he said. The re-elected chairman said that they will focus on the futsal team.

"There was a set plan with defined budget to have a national futsal league. However, it was impacted with the Covid-19 pandemic. All these ideas and programmes will be re-organised in the forthcoming period," he ended.

India collapse again as England seal crushing win



England's James Anderson celebrates taking the wicket of India's Ajinkya Rahane. — Reuters

LONDON: England's Ollie Robinson struck four times with the second new ball as the hosts thrashed India by an innings and 76 runs to level the series on day four of the third test at Headingley on Saturday.

Resuming on an overnight score of 215-2, the visitors crashed to 278 all out before lunch, with the Indian middle-order once again failing miserably against the pace and guile of the England fast bowlers.

Cheteshwar Pujara (91) was the first to be dismissed, shouldering arms to a Robinson in-swing that was given out leg before wicket on review, before captain Virat Kohli (55) edged one to Joe Root soon after completing his half-century.

Ajinkya Rahane's dismissal for 10 off James Anderson all but ended India's hopes of overhauling the England lead, with Ravindra Jadeja's late flourish of 30 offering some entertainment but eventually being in vain.

Robinson, who was named player of the match, finished with figures of 5-65, while Craig Overton chipped in with three wickets.

Kohli put the collapse down to scoreboard pressure, saying it was a tall order to come back into the game after conceding a huge first-innings lead.

"We did well to stay in the game yesterday, fight back as much as we could, and gave ourselves a



England's Ollie Robinson celebrates with team-mates after taking the wicket of India's Ishant Sharma. — Reuters

chance. But the pressure today was outstanding from the England bowlers," he said.

Opting to bat on day one, India were shot out for 78, undone by a superb spell of new-ball bowling by veteran Anderson.

In reply, England, led by skipper Root's wonderful 121 and half-centuries by Rory Burns, Haseeb Hameed and Dawid Malan, were bowled out for 432, claiming a 354-run lead.

Kohli added: "Quite bizarre

(the first innings), it can happen in this country... we thought the pitch was good to bat on, coming on nicely. But the discipline forced mistakes... it's difficult to cope when you're not scoring runs."

Root praised his team for the win after they were comprehensively outplayed in the second test at Lord's.

"It was a fantastic, clinical performance... look at the talent in the dressing room, we know we're capable, just have to be more consistent. And yesterday, to hold the rate and build pressure, when it wasn't going for us — we knew with the second new ball we always had an opportunity today."

The fourth test starts at The Oval on Thursday with the series tied 1-1. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

India first Innings: 78	
England first Innings: 432	
India second Innings (O/n: 215/2):	
R Sharma lbw Robinson.....	59
KL Rahul c Bairstow b Overton.....	8
C Pujara lbw Robinson.....	91
V Kohli c Root b Robinson.....	55
A Rahane c Buttler b Anderson.....	10
R Pant c Overton b Robinson.....	1
R Jadeja c Buttler b Overton.....	30
M Shami b Moeen.....	6
I Sharma c Buttler b Robinson.....	2
J Bumrah (not out).....	1
M Siraj c Bairstow b Overton.....	0
Extras (8-4, LB-4, NB-5, W-2).....	15
Total (all out, 99.3 overs).....	278
Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-116, 3-215, 4-237, 5-239, 6-239, 7-254, 8-257, 9-278	
Bowling: Anderson 26-11-63-1, Robinson 26-6-65-5, Overton 18.3-6-47-3, Curran 9-1-40-0, Moeen 14-1-40-1, Root 6-1-15-0	



Inter Milan's Joaquin Correa vies with Hellas Verona's Bosko Sutalo during the Serie A match. — AFP

CORREA

MAKES INTER DREAM COME TRUE WITH WINNING BRACE

MILAN: Joaquin Correa hailed a dream Inter Milan debut on Friday after he scored twice to help the Serie A champions come from behind and win 3-1 at Hellas Verona.

Correa completed his move to Inter from Lazio on Thursday and came off the bench to snatch the points for Simone Inzaghi's side, who have begun their title defence with two wins from as many games.

The Argentina forward struck Inter's second goal seven minutes from the end, leaping high to power home Matteo Darmian's cross and complete a second-half comeback after Lautaro Martinez had levelled shortly after the break with a header of his own.

He added the cherry to the cake in stoppage time when he gathered the ball and fired home the third with a precision finish.

"I dreamed about coming here as a kid,

I've put the Inter jersey on for the first time and thankfully we won thanks to my goals," a joyous Correa told Sky Sport Italia.

"I want to thank my team-mates, coach and the club who showed their faith in me and made me feel like I had been here for years."

Defeat was harsh for Verona who had deservedly taken the lead through Ivan Ilic in the 15th minute and gave Inter a battle throughout the match, but they are pointless after their two opening fixtures.

Inzaghi, who replaced title-winning coach Antonio Conte this summer, has his new team singing from his hymn sheet with the players signed to replace departed stars Romelu Lukaku and Achraf Hakimi all slotting straight into place.

After Edin Dzeko and Hakan Calhanoglu shone last week against Genoa, it was Correa's turn to snatch the headlines with his match-winning brace.

I dreamed about coming here as a kid, I've put the Inter jersey on for the first time and thankfully we won thanks to my goals

JOAQUIN CORREA
Inter Milan forward

Martinez had a chance to put Inter ahead in the 13th minute of his season debut, but his close-range snap shot was well saved by Lorenzo Montipo.

Just two minutes later Verona took the lead through Ilic, who was quick to read that keeper Samir Handanovic was about to pass to Marcelo Brozovic and nipped

the ball away from the Croatia midfielder before dinking home a classy finish.

CORREA SAVES INTER

Inter dominated possession but looked bereft of ideas as the well-drilled hosts initially kept a lid on Dzeko and playmaker Calhanoglu.

However, Inter were level straight after the break with Dzeko pressure from an Ivan Perisic long throw leading to the ball dropping kindly for Martinez, who nodded home from close range.

Fresh from netting his 50th Inter goal, Martinez somehow lashed wide seven minutes later following another long throw and a Dzeko flick on, the Argentine's left foot failing to find the target from just yards out. Inter slowly started to squeeze Verona into their own half but beyond a well-saved Alessandro Bastoni drive Verona kept restricting their opponents to

very little.

However, Correa came to the rescue with his Cristiano Ronaldo-esque header on the day the Portuguese superstar left Italy for Manchester United and his superb second strike to keep the positive vibes flowing in Milan.

"I'm happy for 'Tucu,'" Inzaghi, who managed Correa at Lazio, told DAZN.

"I'm glad that he can enjoy this debut double because he's a great player who will help bring us results." In Friday's early match, Udinese carried on their encouraging start with a comfortable 3-0 win over Venezia which follows up on their opening weekend draw with Juventus.

Goals from Ignacio Pussetto, Gerard Deulofeu and Nahuel Molina gave Udinese, from the far north-east some 100 kilometres from Venice, a deserved three points after a dominant display against their promoted rivals. — AFP

Tsitsipas expects tough fight from Murray

NEW YORK: Greek third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas expects a relentless fight from three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray of Britain in their first-round match in next week's US Open.

Tsitsipas came close to capturing his first Grand Slam title at this year's French Open, grabbing a two-set lead over top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the final before falling in five sets.

Now the 23-year-old from Athens is set for a first career match-up against Murray, a 34-year-old Scotsman who won the 2012 US Open and the 2013 and 2016 Wimbledon crowns as well as 2012 and 2016 Olympic

gold medals.

"He's still on," Tsitsipas said. "He's trying to be back on the tour last couple of weeks. He's someone that has been putting a lot of work to get back and has been playing very good tennis to be standing where he's at right now."

"I'm going to go for it, try my chances against him. He's someone that won't give up. I'll have to bring some good tennis from my side."

Tsitsipas was asked about how he thinks he would fare in a US Open meeting with Djokovic, which could only happen in the final, when the Serbian star would be playing for a calendar-year Grand Slam and an unprecedented 21st men's career Slam singles title.



"I'm focusing on what's next. This is way too deep to look into," Tsitsipas said. "Got to stay in the moment. He's someone that has a good run on the Slams right now."

"Me personally, I just try to stay in the moment and get to play the best in each single match that I will have the opportunity to play here."

It's a lesson well learned from

last year's US Open, when Tsitsipas lost to Croatian Borna Coric in the third round after squandering six match points and being a break up in the fifth set.

"It taught me a lot of things," Tsitsipas said. "It was important that that happened. Very unfortunate it happened here."

"I never thought it would have been possible to go through something like this. But I was very close. For me that was more of a win than a loss because in a way I really earned to be in that position that I was... maybe I got a little bit unlucky, I didn't manage to find ways to close it in the best way."

"I saw it as a positive loss, despite me being so close from winning

that match. I guess it built strength and gave me belief that things will get better."

Tsitsipas is among a group of rising young stars all chasing their first Grand Slam crown, including Russian second seed Daniil Medvedev and Tokyo Olympic champion Alexander Zverev of Germany. "All of us, we're in that kind of path. We share the same goals and aspirations," Tsitsipas said. "I believe all of us have good game to get to Grand Slam titles."

"It's important we're able to showcase that level of tennis in these kind of tournaments as best as possible to represent our generation of tennis in the best possible way." — AFP





For the first time in the Sultanate, BankDhofar introduces the PaySticker

Now you do not have to worry about forgetting your debit card. Place the sticker on your mobile phone and use it to pay by tapping your mobile phone on the POS machine.*

*The maximum payment via the PaySticker is OMR 40 per transaction, OMR 100 per day.

For more information
<https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/PaySticker.aspx>



مرور وادفع
بثانية
Tap & Pay
in 1 second

the best bank for you 24781111 www.bankdhofar.com

*Terms & conditions apply



Osool Poultry announces export of hatching eggs

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 28

Osool Poultry, the largest poultry parent stock project in the Sultanate, announced the export of its maiden consignment of hatching eggs last week.

“After starting the commercial production of hatching eggs, Osool Poultry begins today to export the first shipment of production outside Oman,”

the company said in a tweet on Wednesday. The new milestone comes just over a month after the project, set up with an investment of RO 61.5 million, commenced operations at a site at Ghaftain in the Wilayat of Haima. Described as the largest of its kind in the Middle East, the breeder poultry venture is part of a portfolio of investments conceived in support of the country’s food security strategy.

US economy may be ready for less stimulus

WASHINGTON: The US economy and labour market have healed to the point that the central bank could begin to withdraw its stimulus measures by the end of the year, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Friday.

But the Fed chief stressed that there was no hurry to raise interest rates, arguing that current inflation pressures will be temporary.

When Covid-19 hit the world’s largest economy last year, the Fed jumped into action to prevent a major recession, slashing the key lending rate to zero and buying huge amounts of treasury debt and agency mortgage-backed securities to provide liquidity to the financial system.

The pandemic recession was “the briefest yet deepest on record,” Powell said in his highly anticipated speech to the annual Jackson Hole central banking symposium.

With millions of jobs recovered, he signalled that the Fed may ease the pace of bond buying from its current \$120 billion per-month.

Powell provided no specifics, but instead repeated the Fed’s stance that “it could be appropriate to start reducing the pace of asset purchases this year.”

Any move to slow asset purchases would still leave a large amount of stimulus in place, and would not be a signal that an increase in the benchmark lending rate would soon follow, he said. — AFP

Oman adopts new strategy for mining investment

PANDEMIC IMPACTS:
Reflecting the downturn suffered by the sector last year, revenues earned from mineral ore sales tumbled 25 per cent to RO 92.661 million, down from RO 123.793 million in 2019

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals says it has embraced new methodologies to help encourage local and international players to invest competitively and sustainably in the country’s resource-rich mining sector.

One such initiative centres on the establishment of large mining concessions that are then offered for investment on a competitive basis. Another initiative seeks to encourage local Omani businesses to explore mining and mineral processing opportunities centring around the country’s marble, building materials, cladding and ornamental stone resources.

The overarching goal is to develop this promising sector with the aim to support value addition, job growth and socioeconomic development, while safeguarding local communities and the environment, the ministry stressed.

Explaining the new methodologies set in place, Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals, said: “...the ministry has adopted a new investment method for mining sites, represented by establishing



large concession mining sites, to be open for competition by local and global prospecting and mining companies. These sites will help creating an added value for mineral ores in the Sultanate through establishing mining and/or manufacturing projects in the downstream industries as well as providing secured job opportunities for citizens.”

In a foreword featured in the ministry’s 2020 Annual Report, released over the weekend, Dr Al Rumhy added that the second initiative is primarily targeted at local companies.

“The ministry’s strategy is to establish public sites of building materials (crushers), backfills, marbles and ornamental stones to reduce its environmental and social impacts and to be monitored easily.

“The ministry will first conduct preliminary studies to determine the viability of these sites for mining activities and then offer them for investment to local companies based on competitive approaches, as well as technical, environmental and financial

requirements in order to ensure the success and the sustainability of these projects.”

Separately, the ministry said it is discussing the request of Mineral Development Oman (MDO), the Sultanate’s biggest mining sector player, for mining licences that it is seeking for investment in collaboration with global investors.

Established in 2016 with a capital of RO 100 million, MDO is as a partnership between Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Oman National Investments Development Company (TANMIA).

Meanwhile, licence renewals nearly doubled to 161 last year, up from 89 renewals in 2019, according to the ministry.

As many as 30 new permanent licences were issued last year, up from 21 a year earlier. Exploration licences renewed in 2020 climbed to 14, up from just 5 in 2019.

However, the number of issued exploration licences declined to 26, down from 35 in 2019.

Overall, the sector was significantly impacted by the global economic slump and

the pandemic, according to the report. Royalties accruing to the government dived 34 per cent, while total mineral production fell 19 per cent to 19.88 million tonnes, down from 24.491 million tonnes in 2019.

Contributing to the overall production decline were slumps in the output of marble chips (15 per cent), limestone (36 per cent), gypsum (7 per cent), industrial salt (22 per cent), chromite (48 per cent), manganese (83 per cent) and silica (71 per cent). Output of building materials fell 16 per cent to 48.349 million tonnes in 2020, down from 57.667 million tonnes in 2019.

Reflecting the downturn suffered by the sector last year, revenues earned from mineral ore sales tumbled 25 per cent to RO 92.661 million, down from RO 123.793 million in 2019.

Overall exports of mineral ores dipped 4 per cent to 37 million tonnes, although the share of building materials climbed to 59 per cent of total exports by volume, followed by gypsum (24 per cent), and limestone (14 per cent).

PDO announces record condensate output in 2020

KEY MILESTONES: Average oil production falls 3% to 601,530 bpd in keeping with OPEC+ output curbs

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

Production of condensate — a commercially valuable hydrocarbon stream often occurring with natural gas — soared to a record 106,880 barrels per day (bpd) in the Block 6 concession of Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), the country’s largest producer of oil and gas, in 2020.

The new production record was one of several milestones achieved by the majority-state owned energy

firm during pandemic-impacted 2020, the company said in a report of its operational performance for the year.

“In 2020, PDO navigated a difficult path through the challenges arising from the Covid-19 outbreak and fall in oil and gas prices. Throughout, we remained committed to excellence by creating value across all aspects of our business, achieving key milestones in our main mandate: the safe and proficient exploration and production of hydrocarbons.

“At the same time, we made tangible strides in our transition to renewables, specifically solar and wind energy,” PDO stated in the 2020 Annual Report of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals published over the weekend.

Average oil production for 2020



was 601,530 bpd, which was lower by 2.4 per cent from the 2019 total of 616,380 bpd. Explaining the drop, the company said: “As the country’s largest hydrocarbon

producer, PDO complied with directives on total oil production output in line with the pledge by the OPEC+ alliance, which includes Oman as a signatory, in response to

record low international oil prices.” Natural gas production averaged 67.91 million m3/d, which was “consistent with export targets and lower (Covid-19 impacted) domestic demand”, the company said.

The combined total average barrel of oil equivalent production per day (oil, condensate and gas) rose 3.6 per cent to 1.254 million boepd (barrels of oil equivalent per day), compared to 1.210 million boepd in 2019, it further noted.

Pressing ahead with its exploration programme during the year, PDO made a number of oil and gas bookings across its licence. A total of 102 million barrels of oil and 0.5 TCF of non-associated gas were booked as CCR (commercial contingent resources) in 2020.

Additionally, the company posted an overall unit finding cost of just \$1.4 per barrel of oil equivalent.

“The unit technical cost of these discoveries was also highly competitive, with early wells already in production and full field development plans underway,” the company said.

On the well engineering, PDO drilled a total of 617 wells in 2020 notwithstanding Covid-19 related challenges.

“PDO ended the year by setting a new cost per metre record at \$1,066 with 68 per cent of our wells being rated in the top quartile, and 32 per cent best-in-class through our relentless pursuit of Continuous Improvement (CI) and reducing the Gap to Potential,” the company added.

Lexus NX300, a combination of compact and luxurious

MUSCAT: The sharp-looking, compact and luxurious NX300 is a brilliant combination of luxury, contemporary design and enjoyable driving dynamics.

The NX's advanced turbocharged 238hp, 2.0-litre engine combines fuel efficiency with outstanding power output, generating exhilarating acceleration for sporty driving, together with exceptional fuel economy.

It is also available with features offering both driver and passengers comfort and convenience such as Head-Up Display (HUD), a dual zone air conditioner, a power folding 60:40 split rear seat, in addition to a hands-free power backdoor to name a few.

The interior of the NX exudes

a sportier nature and a more luxurious feel.

There is also a focus on the ease of use, convenience, and comfort of the equipment features, faithful to Lexus' commitment to the principles of Omotenashi (hospitality).

The first thing you are bound to notice is the 10.3 inch multimedia display on the dashboard. The central analog clock, with a clearer face and a more pronounced outer ring adds to the luxurious ambience. 14" speaker Mark Levinson Sound system adds a unique dimension to entertainment on the move with its crystal-clear audio quality.

Nearly all the controls and switches inside the NX, including the drive mode selector, shift



knob, and door handles, have a metallic satin finish, enhancing the premium look and feel of the cabin. Even the audio knob and window switches feature a metallic coating.

Reflecting Lexus' utmost commitment to passenger safety, the NX300, comes equipped

with a comprehensive suite of active and passive safety features complemented with the addition of the preventive safety package, Lexus Safety System+, which integrates active safety technologies, such as the Pre-Crash Safety System Adaptive Cruise Control System Lane

Departure Alert and Adaptive High Beam. Apart from the Lexus Safety System+, other safety features are also available, including Blind Spot Monitor, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Panoramic Back View Monitor and Tyre Pressure Warning System to name a few.

The most athletic NX trim level, the performance-minded F SPORT, is distinguished by its pronounced mesh grille with jet-black plating and exclusive Alloy. Inside, it has specially textured ornamentation, which provides a high sense of elegance and sporty flair. The F SPORT also features Sports tuned suspension, Sporty steering wheel with paddle shifters and exclusive Seat material.

For more information, please visit www.lexusoman.com or www.youtube.com/lexusoman or www.facebook.com/LexusOmanSBA or instagram.com/oman.lexus/.

For further details and to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Lexus Showroom.



MSX WEEKLY REVIEW

Slumping sub-indices pull down MSX

The MSX30 Index ended the week down by 0.52 per cent largely on weakness seen in the Services Index which fell by 0.59 per cent. The Industrial Index and financial sector also fell by 0.58 per cent and 0.10 per cent respectively. MSX Shariah Index closed higher by 0.32 per cent.

Oman's inflation rate further increased in July as consumer prices rose after a surge in global prices of many commodities and the implementation of value-added tax (VAT) in April.

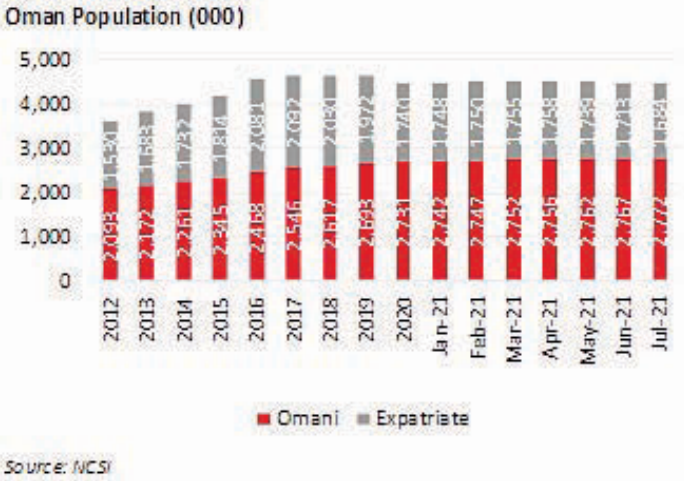
The Sultanate's annual inflation rate, which is based on the consumer price index (CPI), increased to 2.2 per cent in July 2021 from 1.25 per cent recorded in the previous month, according to CPI data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Consumer prices in July 2021 remained 0.75 per cent higher compared to June this year, the data showed.

The inflation rate in food and non-alcoholic beverages group, which has nearly 24 per cent weight in Oman's CPI, jumped to 1.18 per cent in July compared to the same month a year ago.

Consumer prices in food and non-alcoholic beverages group in July increased by 1.41 per cent compared to June, mainly due to a 6.6 per cent surge in prices of non-alcoholic beverages.

Within the food items, prices of fruits in July inched up 0.43 per cent year-on-year while vegetable prices decreased 0.77 per cent on year-on-year basis.

On the other hand, prices in the transport group jumped by 7.8 per cent in July compared to the same month a year ago. Furnishing,



Year	Omani	Expatriate
2012	2,008	1,504
2013	2,172	1,588
2014	2,261	1,732
2015	2,315	1,816
2016	2,418	1,931
2017	2,516	2,032
2018	2,517	2,064
2019	2,608	2,172
2020	2,741	2,111
Jan-21	2,742	2,118
Feb-21	2,747	2,124
Mar-21	2,747	2,155
Apr-21	2,745	2,158
May-21	2,762	2,167
Jun-21	2,767	2,172
Jul-21	2,772	2,172

SOURCE: NCSI



Maisarah introduces instant self-service ID update via mobile application

MUSCAT: Adding to the vast array of convenient services offered to its mobile banking users, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services — the Islamic banking window of BankDhofar — recently introduced a new feature that allows existing customers to update their ID/ Resident Card expiry date instantly through the mobile application without the need to visit the branch.

Maisarah is the first financial institution in Oman to provide instant update of ID expiry date without manual input by customers or service agents. With seamless scanning of the ID card, the system captures the new expiry date and updates the customer's profile automatically without any human intervention.

Highlighting the Islamic window's efforts to bring in state-of-the-art digital banking solutions, Marwan bin Mohammed al Zadjali, Head of Digital Banking at Maisarah, stated: "Our innovative mobile app is a full-fledged smart banking platform that has been designed thoroughly with the utmost attention to details in order to offer 24/7 convenience to our customers at their fingertips. We are constantly looking for opportunities to improve the platform and to introduce new services and features that add value to our customers and give users the ultimate banking experience they deserve."

The new feature adds to the expansive bundle of services offered via Maisarah's mobile banking application where customers can get their transactions completed in simple steps anytime and anywhere.

Occidental Oman boosts ICV, Omanisation



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 28

LOCALISATION:
93 per cent of company's 4,300-strong workforce Omanised as of 2020

International oil and gas exploration and production company Occidental of Oman, Inc, a wholly owned subsidiary US based Occidental, says it continues to grow its contribution to In-Country Value (ICV) development, either directly or through its contractors.

Occidental is currently the largest independent oil producer operating in the Sultanate, with major operations in the north, primarily at Safah Field, and in central Oman at Mukhaizna Field. Occidental was also recently awarded three new exploration blocks, more than doubling its land position in Oman to 6 million gross acres.

The ICV contribution of Oxy's contractors reached 49 per cent by Q3, 2020 compared to 47 per cent last year in the same period, the company stated in the 2020 Annual Report of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

In support of ICV initiatives, Occidental Oman established a development programme for Omani Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in 2013.

As of end of Q4 2020, the headcount of the participated SMEs increased to 325 and achieved a growth up to 50 per cent.

The average Omanisation

within the participated SMEs reached in the same quarter to 77 per cent with total of 225 Omanis headcount and three SMEs have already achieved 100 per cent Omanisation, it said.

Overall, participants achieved up to 215 per cent total increase in contract value reaching a comprehensive total increase of \$151 million. In addition, nine ISO Certifications and one API Accreditation have been received by the participants SMEs, 74 of participants' personnel have been enrolled in soft skill training, and 38 of participants' personal have been enrolled in technical training.

In addition, Occidental Oman has initiated and supported a number of ICV initiatives to improve the capacity and capability of Omani contractors, and ring fencing of certain services to Omani companies, which has resulted in the creation of new employment opportunities, and enhancement of Omani SME and capabilities.

Key ICV accomplishments by the company in 2020:

- Identified one manufacturing opportunity for supply of Flexible Flow Line Pipes RTP and Fittings.
- Awarded two ICV opportunities for supplying dolomite lime.
- Sponsored a new ICV opportunity for manufacturing of casing accessories.
- Awarded ring-fencing initiatives for supplying caustic soda; for high temperature logging; for fasteners studs & bolts; and for premium connection machine shop.



Reading ups and downs for SMEs (Part 1)

In my weekly brainstorming around the topic to cover in my upcoming column for the *Observer*, I need to gauge the various interests of the readers.

At times I write about global economy: Having lived in Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia, I consider myself blessed with multicultural insights that help me appreciate better the complex dynamics at work.

In other occasions I write about local business matters: As a former Mentor to the SME appointed by the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprise Development to support Omani entrepreneurs, I have appreciated the challenges of day-to-day operations. The latter — I must admit — is one of the dearest topics to cover.

In the past two weeks I posted columns about business cases where add-backs were not kept in account when calculating the valuation of a business.

After that column I have received countless emails and messages on LinkedIn by entrepreneurs from Oman and beyond.

One of such messages stood out to me. It was from Mahfoudha, a strong female entrepreneur whom I have been enduring the pandemic difficulties with ingenuity and resilience. After being retrenched in mid 2020, she decided to rent a small commercial space and to start cooking for take away and delivery. I will cover Mahfoudha's story over the next two columns.

She told me that at the beginning it all went well, with so many orders that she could barely keep up. But just a few weeks in, she noticed a sudden drop in business.

By the end of 2020 — she confessed — business was so slow that she consulted with her husband on whether she should have stopped or continued until completing one full year of



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

EVERY SME WOULD EXPERIENCE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT WHEN SIGNS OF STABILITY START APPEARING, THEN IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP WHAT WORKS IN PLACE AND CAREFULLY EXPLORE SOMETHING NEW

business.

Mahfoudha's husband supported her and that turned out to be the extra help she needed to get back to a decent business volume.

Fast forward to last week when Mahfoudha wrote me asking how to grow more now that the daily orders seem to be stabilised. Moreover, how to avoid another dip towards the year end?

My first thought was on whether she should expect seasonal highs and lows. A simple explanation for what she experienced last year could be that in the beginning there was a sense of novelty attached to her new food business.

Her family and friends certainly supported her placing orders in the first few weeks. Other clients were curious about the new establishment and decided to try her food. If that was the case, then it was natural for that first boom to slow down

significantly.

Some clients might have wanted to experience different food while other, simply put, did not find Mahfoudha's food enough to continue ordering on a regular basis. I did not try her food — and I am sure it is delicious — but I could imagine that — especially at the beginning — she might have needed to fine tune some recipes, and perhaps lost some clients in the process.

I have a positive feeling about Mahfoudha's business moving forward.

Every SME would experience ups and downs, but when signs of stability start appearing, then it is important to keep what works in place and carefully explore something new.

Next week we will see what else Mahfoudha can do to improve her business.

[The writer is a member of the International Press Association]

Stocks rise as Powell cautious on stimulus withdrawal

NEW YORK: Stock markets jumped on Friday after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell took a cautious stance on a potential withdrawal of the central bank's huge economic stimulus measures later this year.

Major Wall Street indices closed at records after Powell delivered his annual speech at the virtual Jackson Hole central banking symposium, while European trading ended positively after a quiet session.

Powell's address was closely watched for signs of the Fed's plans to reduce the bond-buying that has helped support the pandemic recovery, and for any indications of when the bank could see interest rates rising. — **Reuters**

India's Future files new case against Amazon

NEW DELHI: India's Future Retail on Saturday filed a new case against Amazon.com Inc at the Supreme Court in its latest effort to seek clearance for its \$3.4 billion retail assets sale, which the US firm has challenged.

The Supreme Court this month dealt a blow to Future when it said an interim decision by a Singapore arbitrator in October 2020 that put its deal with Reliance Industries on hold — following Amazon's complaint — was valid in India.

The top court had also said Future could not appeal a lower court's decision against it. The retailer is now asking the top court to hear the challenge, people familiar with the case said.

In its over 6,000-page filing, Future has argued that if the deal with Reliance doesn't go through, it would cause "unimaginable" damage to the group, including possible job losses for 35,575 employees, and put at risk roughly

280 billion rupees (\$3.81 billion) in bank loans and debentures.

"There is extreme urgency to hear this petition", Future counsel Yugandhara Pawar Jha said in the Supreme Court filing, which is not public. Reuters has seen the filing.

Amazon and Future spokespersons did not respond to requests for comment on Saturday.

Amazon has for months been locked in a dispute with Future, and accuses the Indian firm of violating contracts when it sold its retail assets to market leader Reliance last year. Future denies any wrongdoing.

The outcome of the tussle involving two of the world's richest men, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Reliance's Mukesh Ambani, is seen as reshaping India's pandemic-hit shopping sector and deciding whether Amazon can blunt Reliance's dominance of the country's nearly trillion-dollar retail market. — **Reuters**



From dried fruit to bike repair, Cuban entrepreneurs prepare for open economy

HAVANA: Cuban entrepreneurs, running businesses ranging from selling dried fruit to repairing bikes and developing software, are scrambling to understand the opportunities and challenges ahead after a landmark change in the rules governing the Communist-run economy.

Earlier this month, the government released regulations about a reform that would allow small- and medium-sized ventures to formally incorporate as businesses and access state financing, ending decades of classifying them as 'self-employed'.

The measure is seen by many analysts as one of the most important reforms undertaken since all businesses — down to shoe-shine boys — were nationalised in 1968 by former leader Fidel Castro.

Omar Everleny, one of Cuba's best-known economists, described the reform as a very positive one, long-sought by many Cubans.

It does have important limits — for instance, people can own no more than one business and cannot contract foreign partners or carry out direct foreign trade.

"Given the economic situation and remaining restrictions, it will not mean a big economic improvement in the short term", cautioned Everleny.

For Nayvis Diaz, founder of



Nayvis Diaz (C), founder of Velo Cuba, speaks to employees at her bicycle repair and rental company in Havana. — **Reuters**

Velo Cuba, a bicycle repair and rental company with 17 employees in Havana, it marks a significant change, however.

"What is important is we are now fully part of the economy and no longer marginalised", she said.

"Many people with a lot of social and business responsibilities in the city, and many others in the private sector, were waiting for this." The measure forms part of a package of market-oriented reforms

undertaken by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel over the last year, as the coronavirus pandemic and tougher US sanctions tipped the shaky economy into a tailspin and led to shortages of food, medicine and other basic goods.

Cuba's economy contracted by 10.9 per cent in 2020 and shrank another 2 per cent this year through June, compared with the same period in 2020. It remains reliant on tourism and imports.

The Fernandez brothers, who own Deshidratados Habana, Cuba's only company processing and selling dried fruits, were nevertheless enthusiastic.

"A bad economy can present opportunity", Oscar Fernandez said, standing amid makeshift ovens and other equipment in his basement. The company began when the pandemic forced their cafeteria to close, he explained.

— **Reuters**

SHORT TAKES

CHICAGO

ESPN explores sports-betting deal worth \$3 bn

Walt Disney Co's ESPN is looking to licence its brand to major sports-betting companies for at least \$3 billion over several years to take advantage of the booming online betting industry, the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) reported on Friday.

It held talks to license its brand to sportsbooks including Caesars Entertainment and DraftKings, the report on WSJ website said, adding there is no guarantee that it will reach a deal.

The companies did not



immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment. It remains unclear whether gaming companies would want to pay for the ESPN name when they are already investing to establish their existing brands, the report said. — **Reuters**

WASHINGTON

Rivian Automotive announces IPO

Rivian Automotive, the Amazon-backed manufacturer of electric trucks and utility vehicles, said it had filed for a stock market listing as it prepares to ramp up production and delivery. The California-based firm said it had filed confidentially for an initial public offering, under a provision allowing it to keep its financial data private.

The size and price range for the offering was not disclosed. Rivian has raised more than \$10 billion in funding since its



founding in 2009, including from Amazon, which has pledged to purchase 100,000 electric delivery vans from the startup. Rivian is producing electric trucks and sport utility vehicles for consumers with prices starting from around \$70,000. — **AFP**

HAVANA

Cuba seeks to regulate cryptocurrency use

Cuba said this week it would authorise and regulate the use of cryptocurrency, a move that could help the Communist-run country skirt US sanctions that have complicated transactions through the international banking system. Cryptocurrencies, which allow financial operations to be carried out anonymously in a decentralised manner, have been used in the past to get around capital controls, as well as to make payments and transfers more efficient.



Cuba's central bank can, for 'reasons of socioeconomic interest', authorise the use of certain virtual assets for payments and issue licenses to providers of services related to them, according to a resolution published in the official gazette. — **Reuters**

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

OMAN DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office
Bakht Al Shihri
92998577
bakht.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office
Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Sohar Office
Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

OMAN DAILY
Observer Classified Section

SUNDAY AUGUST 29, 2021 MUHARRAM 20, 1443 AH

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Urgently Required

A leading Healthcare distributor in Oman requires Omani / Expat Pharmacist for its Retail branches with following minimum qualifications:

- Bachelor's in Pharmacy.
- Registered as Pharmacist with MOH, Oman.

Please send application to
wpl@omzest.com

■ SIT. VACANT

PROPERTY Leasing Manager send CV to
vepsupervisor@gmail.com

A **Patissier** to work in a pastry in Wilayat of Al Hamra. Tel: 99891881

URGENTLY required **assistant HR & Admin manager** (only Omani national), oil & gas experience must. Contact: hrrecruit2828@gmail.com

■ FOR SALE/RENT

NEW 3 storey villas for sale/rents Wadi Kabir/Al Khuwair), (Shops/offices for rent/ Al Khuwair) (Flats for rent/Wadi Kabir). 96596348.

المركز التجاري للكهرباء ش.م.م
CETRAL Electrical Trading LLC

OFFICIAL ADDRESS :
P.O. Box: 397, P.C.: 117
Tel: +968 24832308 / 24832053
Fax: +968 24832309
Mob.: +968 99252965 / 99491438
E-mail: sales@cetoman.com
Web: www.cetoman.com

CET SWITCHGEAR & CONTROLS

Switchgear Division :- Tel. +968 24830952
Equipment Division :- Tel. +968 24830947

ABB, E-T-N, BOSCH, SIEMENS, YUASA, OMRON, SCHNEIDER, HONEYWELL, FLUKE, RUD, AUTONICS, KATSEH, CAL PAPER

ROYAL CARGO

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

- ▶ ALL OVER INDIA
- ▶ INDONESIA
- ▶ NEPAL

AIR EXPORT (Port to Port)
SEA EXPORT (Container Booking)

FOR MORE INFORMATION JUST DIAL
CUSTOMER CARE **93213207**

PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT **93213206**

AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR & SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

ALL OVER INDIA EXPRESS DELIVERY

Online Tracking
TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766

24/7 FREE PICK UP
Service Available
www.alnamanicargo.com

INDIA | BANGLADESH | INDONESIA | PHILIPPINES |
SRI LANKA | ETHIOPIA | ALL GCC SERVICE AVAILABLE

95587410, 99785420, 99638698, 98523831
22 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE IN OMAN
Branches
HO: RUWI - HAMRIYA, GHALA, AL AMRAT, SEEB, SOHAR

■ SIT. WANTED

B Arch, Post graduate in Urban Management
Indian, female, (experience in Urban services planning, operations and management, Smart Cities). Looking for suitable position. Can join Immediately. Contact: 79580953

PROJECT Management professional PMP® - Senior Mechanical Engineer. 18 years' experience in oil gas field -agile, predictive & hybrid (especially pressure vessels, horizontal & vertical tanks, pipe lines, silos, structures, bridges, special type equipment installation etc) Contact: 94330012

SENIOR Accountant, B.Com with MBA Finance, with 15 years experience in accounts in Oman seeks immediate placement. NOC available. Please contact: 78581435 or e-mail: career.4727@gmail.com

FINANCE Manager/ CFO. Indian Chartered Accountant and Cost Accountant with 25 years of experience in Trade Finance, MIS, Budget, Planning, Strategy, Projects, Procurement, Admin, seeks suitable placement. Contact: 99884291 / 99741875 Email vipul70@gmail.com

OMANI male, 17 years experience as driver. Looking for transporting job for nurses, office goers, sight seeing. Contact: 97947900.

INVENTORY, Purchase, Sales: Indian male 30, having 8 years experience in retail, F&B operations, accounting and various other skills, NOC available. Contact: 96219904, E-mail: khanshah98@gmail.com

SMART Indian, excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17 years Oman experience in Airport, Hospital, Media EPC seeks Admin/ Hr/ Project coordinator/ Operations. 99283938.

INDIAN male, 24 years of total experience in which 16 years in a Multinational Freight Forwarding and Logistic Co., worked under the capacity of Senior Operation Executive/Senior Accountant having thorough knowledge in Ocean Freight, Air Freight, Land Transport, Warehouse Operations and Finance & Accounting. NOC available. Contact 93587605

INDIAN, male, Master Degree in Accounting, 15+ years of experience in Oman, UAE & India as Finance / Accounts Manager/ Chief Accountant. Looking for a job and have noc on visit. Contact: 79007124/ 78039524. email: kadercok@outlook.com

YOUNG experienced Pakistani driver with Omani light vehicle driving licence seeks suitable opening. Speaks Arabic, Hindi, English and familiar with interior and Muscat areas. Contact GSM 95856719.

EXPERIENCED L/Driver, speaks English/Arabic, looking for job. Call 79250786

MECHANICAL engineer, 21, Indian male currently in Oman looking to work at any engineering field. Contact 96511338. Email: rkdhanush11@gmail.com

INDIAN male, 24, B.E. computer science, masters in GIS from UK. Seeking placement in GIS field. Having Oman driving licence. Contact: 99738614.

CIVIL engineer/QS engineer, 11 years in UAE, freelance & Oman driving licence available, looking for full-time or part-time job 97299165.

THREE years experienced in administration / sales and marketing seeking placement. Omani D/L, and NOC available. Gsm- 98270993

SALES/Marketing/ retail executive BMS in Marketing. 6 years experience. Contact 93920174. Rehankadri91@hotmail.com

MANAGER Sales and Distribution seeks suitable placement. Sales Professional with 25 years' experience in Oman, includes 12 years in Sales Management, with LEADING FMCG, Consumer Durables Companies. Currently working with a leading group as Branch Manager for Retail and Distribution. Accountable for the total business and P&L. NOC available. 99369127.

■ FOR SALE

USED vehicles, scrap telephone cable and steel as-is-where-is basis. This can be inspected at NTS Camp in Ghala. Interested parties may contact on 99259157. Sealed offer should be submitted on or before 26th August 2021.

3BHK flat for sale in Al Khoud Commercial Road with an allocated parking space. Call: 99411330.

FOR sale in SFZ, near port — 4-storey factory for Guar Gum powder, total 3,7000 square metres, warehouse 1,700 Square metres, with or without machines. Write to guargulf@gmail.com or call +968 94615439 (www.gulfguargum.com)

WE supply quantities of excellent mountainous soil in Bausher (suitable for compaction and filling) 99242445, 99327939.

■ FOR INVESTMENT

STEEL factory for investment in Muscat, specialising in the manufacture of different sizes of construction steel. Contact 93648245.

■ ACC AVAILABLE

SINGLE room with attached bathroom and air-condition for executive bachelor, non- cooking, Wadi Kabir/ Al Falaj/ Ruwi High Street area. Contact 99657906

المجرة للشحن اللوجستية
GCL GALAXY CARGO LOGISTICS

WORLD WIDE AIR & SEA CARGO SERVICES

Location: Rex Road, Behind Modern Oman Bakery
GSM : +968 99635330 / 93569551
Email : gcloman@hotmail.com
Website : gcloman.com

Airport to Airport
Port to Port
Door to Door
FCL Services
LCL Services
Consolidation
GCC Road Transport
Professional Packing
Moving Local & International

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

■ RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

- Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
- Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. ☎972494490.

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

■ SERVICES

A LEGAL translation office needs **Marketeers**. Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

1. AC maintenance and servicing. 2. Fridge, washing machine and dish washer repairing. 3. Painting and cleaning services. 4. Electrical, plumbing and carpentry work 97014234, 99447257, 24290686.

ORIENT Trading llc, Shampooing, sofa, carpet, floor polishing. Old house repairing. 99834373.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

■ BUYING

AL Awsad Modern llc, electronic and furniture used. 99834373.

OMAN DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact our Team

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

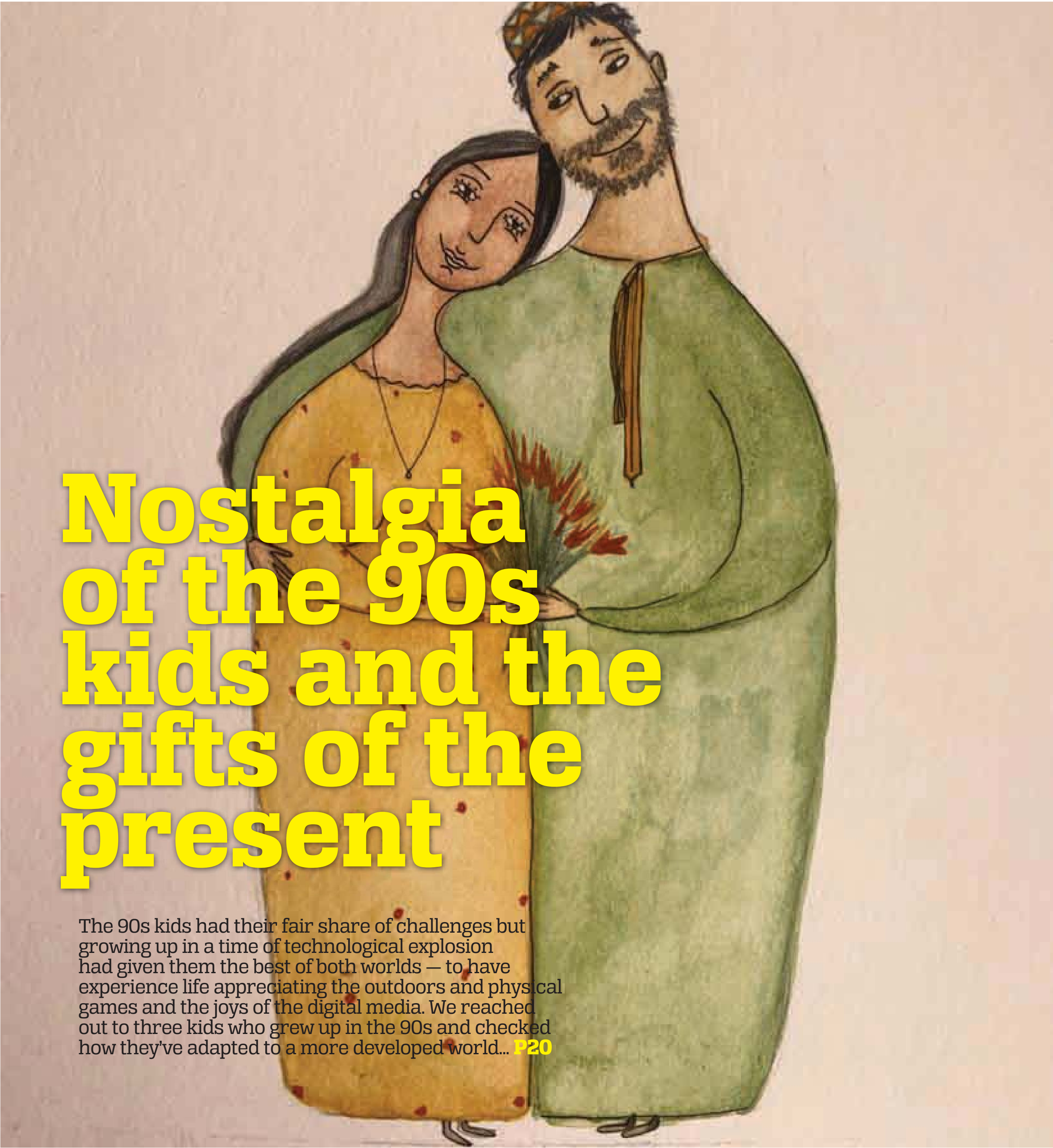
Salalah Office
Bakht Al Shihri
92998577
bakht.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office
Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office
Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com



features



Nostalgia of the 90s kids and the gifts of the present

The 90s kids had their fair share of challenges but growing up in a time of technological explosion had given them the best of both worlds – to have experience life appreciating the outdoors and physical games and the joys of the digital media. We reached out to three kids who grew up in the 90s and checked how they’ve adapted to a more developed world... **P20**

CHANGING WORLD

READ

THE DAY YOU BEGIN
BY JACQUELINE WOODSON.
ILLUSTRATED BY RAFAEL LÓPEZ
A group of school children embrace their differences.

Hands-on experience as pianists learn to play with robot thumb

HOW WOULD PIANISTS cope with suddenly having two thumbs on one hand? Would their brains become scrambled or would the extra digit add a new dimension to their playing? Neuroscientist Adlo Faisal and the team he heads at Imperial College London developed a robot thumb to find out. Within an hour of being fitted with the artificial digit next to the little finger of their right hand, six players had

learned to integrate it on the keyboard, steered by electrical signals generated when they move their foot. "It came out of my own passion for piano that I wondered what happens if I have an extra finger?" Faisal, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience at the college's Department of Bioengineering and Department of Computing, said. "There's a dedicated area of your brain responsible for

every single finger," he said. "So now comes the question, if I give you an eleventh finger, ... are you processing it the same way as you're processing a regular limb?" Researchers at the Brain and Behavior Lab that Faisal heads found that, regardless of playing ability, the six pianists and six other non-playing volunteers all adapted to the thumb quickly, suggesting we are not limited to using an extra digit for tasks we are familiar with.



"The fact that you can actually play with eleven fingers is not entirely trivial and that has to do with how your brain is actually wired up..." Faisal said.

"So what we can say is it's a proof of existence. We can do it. So the next challenge would be can we do two thumbs, so 12-fingered? Can we do something else?" — **Reuters**



Jabal Khounieh, an amazing destination for hiking

Jabal Khounieh, or the Saal terraces, has become one of the favourite places for hiking enthusiasts, due to the beautiful tourist attractions that the site possesses, especially for those coming from Muscat towards the Ghala-Al Ansab road, and from there to Al Misfah road, and down into Saal in the Wilayat of Bidbid.

The road leading to Mount Khounieh is surrounded by palm trees, citrus trees and green plants that provide you with positive energy while you are heading to your destination. the mountains surround the town of Saal from two sides.

The site is frequented by mountain hiking enthusiasts of both genders, whether from the Sultanate or residents of different ages. Mountain hiking is an inspiring sport full of fun and challenge for some, while the love of exploration and adventure is motivating to reach Mount Khounieh.

Climbing Mount Khounieh or the Saal terraces is not easy for beginners, but difficult and enjoyable at the same time. Despite the fatigue and hardship, the incentive to reach the top pushes one to continue the path.

The Saal Walk, as the guide signs at the beginning of the ascent of Mount Khounieh, says that the length of the path from the starting point below the mountain extends for a distance of 1.8 km, and despite the short distance, it requires a long breath and good preparation to reach the summit. The sea is 190 metres, while the endpoint rises to 545 metres above sea level, with an altitude difference of 355 metres.

The average brisk walk is about 35 minutes, the average medium jogging speed to reach the summit is 25 minutes. Another stage of walking begins through concrete terraces, amounting to 626 concrete stairs, and the remaining short part is not paved up to the transmission tower.

Ahmed al Maashari, a hiker, said: "Jabal Khounieh is one of the beautiful places that I started to go-to for mountain walks. The place is a wonderful and enjoya-



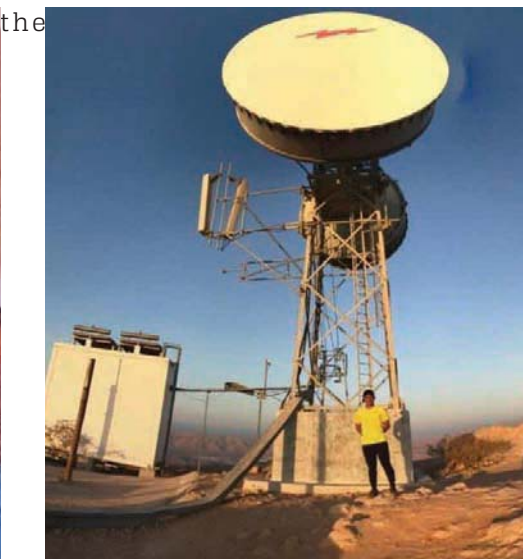
ble outlet for mountain sports pioneers. It is also a moral motivation for challenge, endurance and strong determination. Through this sport, we revive the ancient heritage of ancestors in moving from one village to another through the mountain paths, as there were no modern means of transportation.

He added that Jabal Khounieh represents an inspiring tourist destination, as it is located near

heart of Muscat Governorate. the place is frequented by many people of different nationalities, which gives the site great importance. The town of Saal, in addition to its urban development, is a beautiful site with a group of old houses built of mud with towers scattered in the village, as well as palm and lemon trees and other crops. It represents a tourist destination that attracts visitors and families, so it needs attention

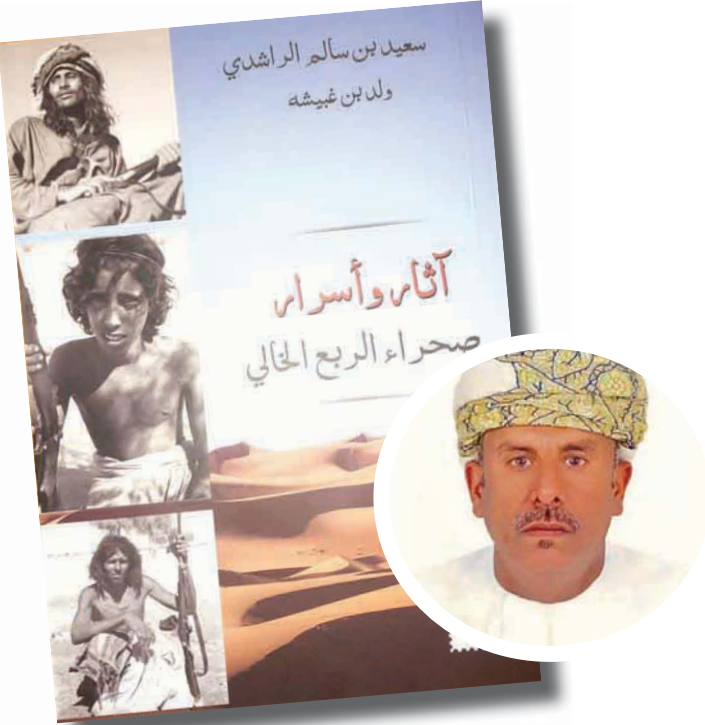
from the competent authorities to improve the road and pave it to the starting point.

Nasser al Majrafi, a hiker, said: Climbing Mount Khounieh is worth the experience, but those who do not have physical fitness will find it difficult at first. climbing the mountain in itself is an enjoyable and unique experience, especially when seeing the views from the top at sunset and watching the whole town from the top.



BOOK REVIEW

The secrets of the Empty Quarter Desert



THE GREATNESS OF the Empty Quarter Desert and its economic and geographical importance make it imperative for authors to write about it. It is an area that deserves all the attention of those interested and specialists, because of its economic and scientific components, as well as its geographical nature and unique terrain that attracts adventurers, explorers and those looking for fun and recreation, especially in the winter.

The book "The Traces and Secrets of the Empty Quarter Desert" by the writer Said bin Salem al Rashdi came to explore this desert with a picture, word and events through eight chapters. The first chapter included the history, population and societal characteristics, including the names of the parts of the Empty Quarter desert, their history, origins and their relationship to the valleys descending from Dhofar Mountains, such as Ramlet al Malhit and Ramlet Muqshan, as well as some parts in the depths of the desert, such as Ramlet Ghneim and Ramlat Al Dakakah. It addressed the population pattern of this desert, and its historical importance as it was a transit area for caravans coming from the Governorate of Dhofar, transporting goods, the most important of which is frankincense to the parts of the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to the discoveries that were found in the middle and outskirts of the desert, such as Niyabat Al Hashman and Khor bin



Hamouda, which indicates its deep historical roots.

The second chapter contained geography, climate, topography and water resources, as well as the names of some of the dune topography that is locally recognised as Al-Uruq, which are longitudinal high-rise dunes that reach tens of kilometres in length, and the names of Al Qaaed, which are conical or star dunes that stands high for hundreds of metres.

In the third and fourth chapters, the book dealt with clothing, ornaments, jewellery, methods of water conservation, food, textiles and other needs, in addition to the types of weapons, including guns, daggers and tools used by desert dwellers.

Because of the importance of camels and the wildlife in this desert, the fifth and sixth chapters included the wildlife that abounded in the Empty Quarter desert, many of which have become extinct at present due to overhunting, especially the oryx, which has become completely extinct, as well as the white deer, which has become rare. The writer did not overlook the important plants in that desert, including the Abia tree and the flower tree that camels eat. The fifth chapter included the importance of camels, their advantages, types and colours, and the extent to which the dwellers of the Empty Quarter were attached to them.

As for the seventh chapter, which is devoted to the British travellers who crossed this desert and wrote about it, the writer dealt with the importance of what previous writers had done in documenting their travels in the Empty Quarter Desert. These travellers refuted the saying that was prevalent among many people, that the Empty Quarter is empty. Travellers met with the inhabitants of those tribes. These travellers succeeded at documenting the life of people in the Empty Quarter and this is conclusive evidence of the existence of a population in this vast area with difficult terrain.

The eighth chapter sheds light on the government's endeavour to find comprehensive development, including basic services that correspond to the modern era and its requirements. It also highlights the great changes in the lifestyle of the Bedouins, who were wandering in the corners of this desert. As a traveller from one place to another, many of them nowadays live a civil life, yet their love and passion for camels are still ingrained in their hearts.



find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.



AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

The children who run away to work: Ethiopia's hidden weavers



FIVE BAREFOOT YOUNG boys were walking to town to look for work when they were apprehended by the police, in a cat-and-mouse battle to stamp out child labour among traditional weavers who produce Ethiopia's famous, white 'shamma' shawls.

The Gamo and Dorze people of southern Ethiopia have woven the soft, cotton cloth with its delicately embroidered edges for decades, proud of their heritage and of a valuable source of income in the impoverished Horn of Africa nation.

"My family will not be hurt (that I left)," said one of the rescued boys, sitting in a government-run children's shelter in Chencha, some 450km southwest of the capital, Addis Ababa.

"They will only regret that I will no longer be working for them as a shepherd," he said, as officials tried to trace the parents of the five runaways, all aged between eight and 10.

The persistence of exploitation in the weaving industry illustrates the challenges in meeting a United Nations (UN) goal of ending child labour by 2025 in Africa, where 87 million children work, usually on family farms or small businesses.

Interviews with about a dozen child weavers, as well as parents, activists, and officials in and around Addis Ababa and Chencha found child labour is thriving because of poverty, culture, family pressure and clandestine trafficking networks.

Mathewos, 13, has been weaving in a windowless room since his mother fell sick six months ago and his cousin, Wesenu, brought him to the capital to work, even though he is under Ethiopia's legal working age of 15.

"I provide food and clothing for him," Wesenu told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, as Mathewos, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, worked on a scarf.

"It is better for him to learn how to weave here rather than being a shepherd in his hometown," said the 42-year-old, who kept answering questions posed to Mathewos, saying that he considered himself like a father to the boy.

OUT OF SIGHT

The UN says most of the world's child labourers are in Africa and Ethiopia is home to one of the largest populations. Government data shows that 43 per cent of under 15s — 16 million children — work in a country of 115 million people.

The bustling streets around Addis Ababa's main market for traditional clothes, Shiromeda, were the hub of the illegal child weaving trade until the government shut down the workshops and issued warnings in homes and schools that it was a crime.

"Despite a win at Shiromeda, child labour in the weaving sector... has not vanished but only changed form and location," said Endeshaw Menychil of the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs.

Children now mostly work on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, where they are out of sight. One hidden hotspot is Wolete, where dozens of boys play table football and eat out when their employers are out selling the shawls they have made. — Reuters

COOK LIKE A CHEF

Delectable, melt-in-your-mouth steamed fish



IN TODAY'S COOK LIKE A Chef, we are back to utilising Dhofar's gift from the sea. When was the last time you had seafood? If the answer has been a while, then you definitely would need to try this speciality concocted by Chef Alessandro for Alila

Hinu Bay.

The seas of Dhofar are teeming with different varieties of fish. Actually, make that all over the Sultanate. From mahi-mahi, to yellow-fin, to hamour, it's whatever fish you fancy for that day. With fish being the most

important component of this recipe, make sure to visit the nearest fish market and search for something that can work well with this recipe. Don't forget the little things as they are the ones that bring out the flavour of this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 200gm fish fillet
- 8gm lemongrass
- 20ml lime juice
- 4gm lime leaves
- 6gm ginger chop
- 3gm garlic
- 20gm spring onion
- 10ml soya sauce
- 4gm thai red chilli
- 10gm coriander stem chop

- 3gm salt
- 3gm pepper
- 20gm banana leaves
- 10ml peanut oil

METHOD OF PREPARATION:

Combine all the ingredients together and marinate with the fish. Wrap the marinated fish in banana leaf. Steam for 16 minutes and serve with jasmine rice

ABOUT THE CHEF

Alessandro Sandrolini
Head Chef, Alila Hinu Bay



Born and raised in Bologna, Italy, Alessandro started his passion for hospitality at the Istituto Alberghiero Statale Riolo Terme, where he studied Hotel Management. He then began his first job as a Commis to Sous Chef at Ristorante Silverio in Italy. The restaurant was a new big entry in Bologna and was awarded 1 Michelin star in 1989. In 1991, five years later, Alessandro moved on to a bigger dream, by following a family legacy. He became the Chef-Owner at the Ristorante da Angelo, an old Italian restaurant opened by his father in 1968. When the restaurant closed, he became the Chef de Cuisine at the Ristorante Al Ghisello in 1995 managing the kitchen operation for 10 years. In 2005, he moved to Belgrade to become the Italian Chef at Hyatt Regency. Alessandro's entry to the Middle East started in 2009 when he moved with his family to Oman. This would be followed by different movements from Delhi to Jeddah and back to Italy. Now with almost three decades of experience, specialising in fine Italian cuisine, Alessandro contributes his humble and extensive knowledge as Head Chef at Alila Hinu Bay. His passion for food and innovation keeps him motivated, and his dream to work in a casual Italian restaurant by the sea has become a perfect reality.

DIGITAL TRENDS

Daniel Wurtzel's visual poetry takes flight



Daring and forward aren't so much what Daniel Wurtzel does, but rather who he is.

The New York-based sculptor and artist was selected by INFINITI to celebrate the automaker's growing lineup of SUVs and crossovers in New York on August 17 via a beautiful display of design and art that captures the brand's essence — daring, forward, and human — called "Sine Wave." Daniel's work around the world is highly acclaimed for its motion and grace, capturing an elegance that's inspired, in part, by his fascination with fluidity and flight.

"I've found (flight) to be, for whatever reason, enormously compelling — visually compelling and the physics behind it too," Daniel says from his studio in New York on a hot summer afternoon before the August 17 debut of his work at Oculus Transportation Station. "Motion is really what I'm about. I've done a lot of different things. But flight seems to be... always there." More than just the surface-level concept of flight, Daniel's installations embrace deeper meanings of flying by working with the way air naturally organises itself. In combination with other materials, it can evoke a hypnotic and more emotional connection with viewers.

"Sculpture is more like poetry than it is like a novel. More like a picture than a movie. You only have a few words to say exactly what you mean to say. So, it needs to be succinct, and it needs to be on target," Daniel says. But airflow is chaotic by nature, as are most, if not all, natural systems. "The ways that chaos plays out over time creates a visual poetry that we humans are pre-programmed to recognise as beauty."

He's right. There are plenty of references to poetry to be found in Daniel's work. From the more overt Paper Tornado he created for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics closing ceremony to the flowing, Pas de Deux installation created for the Grand Palais in Paris, the direct and indirect lines to poetry are apparent.

There's an efficiency of movement in his pieces, a sense of awe and wonder. "What I am trying to do is find order in a fluid ocean of chaos," he says. There's poetry in what appears to be pandemonium.

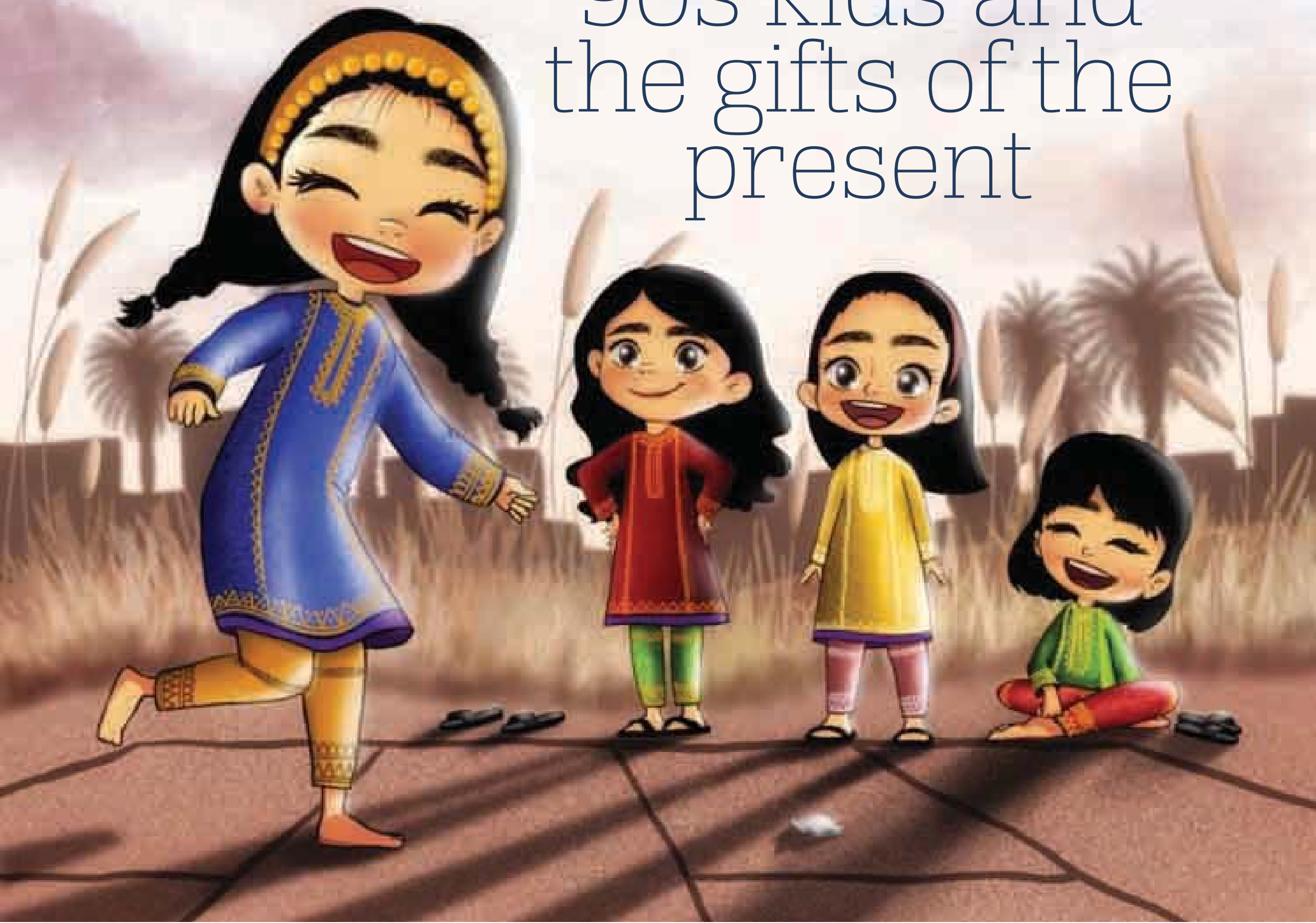
But it's his connection to the physical world that elevates Daniel's work beyond its superficial chaos. Trained as an architect, Daniel is also rooted in his art firmly through his analytical mind. Creating an installation begins conceptually but then takes shape in how Daniel works with his medium to present. Manipulating his materials in-flight demands intense coordination between sometimes dozens of fans that create a repeatable aerodynamic system that is also inherently variable.

Daniel spends his days refining those processes the way a poet whittles words and phrases, bending language to evoke emotion. "If you expand the definition of poetry beyond the written word and include poetic things, poetic visuals, poetic experiences, and feelings and all of these things, you could make an argument that driving a really well-made car is a poetic experience," he says. In the same way, Daniel's art also requires a human. Central to the experience, viewers are encouraged to bring their own interpretations to Daniel's creations. "I don't want to tell people what to think," he says. "Let the experience speak for itself and spark whatever connotations it might with other people."

He doesn't mind, and whether it's spirituality, sensuality, or sensual, the poetry in his pieces resides in each viewer.



Nostalgia of the 90s kids and the gifts of the present



BY ANAN AL BALUSHI

So many things have happened in the 1990s. The Internet just started to boom, pop music became a thing for teenagers, Barbie dolls, Nintendo and game boy became a fad. Some say that growing up in the 90s had given them some of the best childhood memories. But what is life like now for those 90s kids?

For Oman Board Games founder Ahmed al Busaidi, the years flew by so quick but he felt that he is living the dream. Ahmed is one of the few who are trying to revive the fun times of the 90s by re-introducing some of the games that have gotten popular during that era. This also includes board games and other card games that have begun to capture the interest of the much younger generations.

"Our concept is to bring people together and let them create happy memories. Our goal is to deliver delight and entertainment. Over time, we've noticed that it's not just the kids who are interested in what we do but even young adults and the elderly", Al Busaidi said.

Oman Board Games is one of the pioneers in Oman that introduce tournaments in games such as Jenga and UNO, allowing the public to buy or rent them during any event.

He said that the events they conducted allow for wholesome family fun and even those who are coming alone eventually meet new friends.

"We live by the slogan 'It's your turn to roll the dice' or as we say it in Arabic 'Yallah Dorak'. When we compare our generation to kids nowadays, there are lots of differences. For instance, kids these days find joy in playing UNO while our generation loves physical games and playing outdoors", Al Busaidi said.

Al Busaidi felt that 90s kids were raised to be more conservative.

"If I had to name a trait that defines us, it is the mindset of evolving with technol-

gy. It is during our time that technology started to boom. So we have this amazing — a magnificent cocktail, one would say", he said. Follow @omanboardgames to check his latest available games.

Another 90's kid, Buthaina al Shukaili shared, that 90's generation kids are uniquely special.

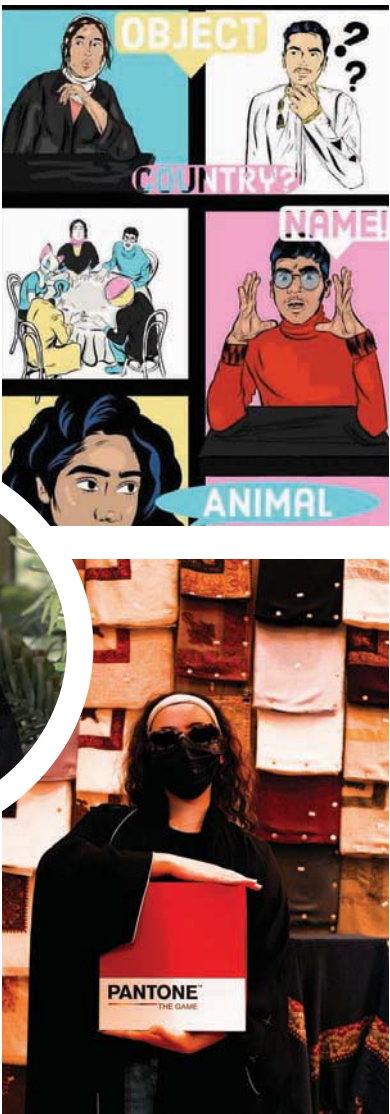
"They always seem to know what they are doing by being exceptionally creative and exposing their talents in the most unexpected ways", she shared.

"Back in my school days, I struggled with math, yet my friends had trouble with art, so we ended up exchanging homework. Funny how life works, my fondness of art grew since then and now taking over my life", she added.

Buthaina graduated with an art degree from the Scientific College of Design. She shares her work on digital platforms. Check her out on Instagram @buthaina.alsukaili

Dr Fatma al Aamriyah is now the proud owner of Asnan Lounge. With someone who grew up in the 90s, she shared life had been a well-balanced endeavour for her but they had their own sets of challenges.

"After graduation and working for quite some time, I thought of having my dentist-



ry empire. However, we, as fresh graduates back then, faced a real-life crisis with expertise proficiency. Some of us hardly got an opportunity to work and practise our skills", she shared.

At Asnan Lounge, her goal is "To educate and spread awareness about oral hygiene" adding that "Looking after our oral hygiene is a part of our health. It is more of a lifestyle."

Al Aamriyah shared that one's attitude towards change should always be positive and open-minded to receiving various ideas while adapting to life changes. Check her out on Instagram @dr.fatmahamed for the latest offers and services.

All the 90s kids interviewed for this piece agree that their era has its fair share of challenges the same way that kids nowadays have their share of issues.

They also agree that there is a generational divide but that we should look at each other with awe and try to understand better how we can learn from each other's experiences. The three agreed that one of the best benefits of the technological changes is that social media has made it easy to market services and this is something that every generation will be able to appreciate no matter their background.