



SUNDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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26°C/18°C

OMAN HAS EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH SAUDI ARABIA ON ITS POSITION TO A REPORT THAT WAS PROVIDED TO THE US CONGRESS ON THE MURDER OF SAUDI CITIZEN JAMAL KHASHOGGI, APPRECIATING THE EFFORTS AND ACTIONS OF THE COMPETENT JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES IN THE KINGDOM REGARDING THE CASE AND ITS CIRCUMSTANCES.

## Oman's soft power enhanced by its swift COVID-19 response

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Oman's response to COVID-19 and governance have been recognised as key drivers in bringing recognition to the country in the international arena. The Global Soft Power Index 2021 compiled by Brand Finance, the world's leading brand valuation consultancy, ranks Oman eighth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and 51st globally with a score of 33.6 out of 100.

Soft power is defined as a nation's ability to influence the preferences and behaviours of various actors in the international arena (states, corporations, communities, the public etc) through attraction or persuasion rather than coercion.

Although Oman is ranked 51st globally, the sultanate has performed well in categories like COVID-19 Response (28<sup>th</sup> global rank), Governance (32<sup>nd</sup>), International Relations (36<sup>th</sup>), Business and Trade (37<sup>th</sup>), Reputation (42<sup>nd</sup>) and Educating and Science (43<sup>rd</sup>) among others.

Fifteen countries from MENA feature in the Global Soft Power Index 2021, and those that fea-



### MENA RANKINGS

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>UAE</b>          | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Saudi Arabia</b> | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Qatar</b>        | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Egypt</b>        | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Kuwait</b>       | <b>42</b> |
| <b>Morocco</b>      | <b>48</b> |
| <b>Jordan</b>       | <b>50</b> |
| <b>Oman</b>         | <b>51</b> |
| <b>Iran</b>         | <b>62</b> |
| <b>Bahrain</b>      | <b>65</b> |

tured on the list last year have all seen their scores improve: the UAE (up 2.4 points), Saudi Arabia (up 2.3 points), Qatar (up 3.8 points), Egypt (up 3.5 points), Iran (up 0.4 points), Algeria (up 1.3 points) and Iraq (up 2.5 points). Oman was not included in the 2020 index.

The UAE is the region's high-

est ranked nation with an overall index score of 48.4 out of 100; it has inched up the index to 17<sup>th</sup> globally.

The country celebrates significantly improved scores across the Governance (18<sup>th</sup>), Education & Science (19<sup>th</sup>) and People & Values (24<sup>th</sup>) categories, recording the greatest increase in Gov-

ernance to be among the top 20 countries (up 0.8 points), as perceptions of its political stability improve. The UAE's neighbours - Qatar and Saudi Arabia - have also celebrated marked improvements in Governance, with significant jumps in positive perceptions of their leaders, as well as views of being safe and

secure nations.

David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance, said, "As the UAE approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in December, it continues to flourish and showcase its impressive growth trajectory, reflected in its 13<sup>th</sup> rank for future growth potential among the general public. The successful Emirates Mars Mission is a clear example of the nation punching above its weight. Entering the race with global heavyweights China and the US also forms an integral part of the nation's journey to diversify its economy with sights set on long-term growth."

Despite being this year's fastest-falling nation in the 2021 index, the US still managed to retain its position in the top ten ranking nations overall, with a Global Soft Power score of 55.9 out of 100.

Germany claims top spot, while New Zealand, hailed as a global success story in response to COVID-19, is the fastest-improving country in ranking, climbing up to 16<sup>th</sup>.

Japan is the top-performing Asian nation and second overall, followed by the UK, Canada, Switzerland, US, France, China, Sweden and Australia.

## Cases of fake hotel reservations for isolation detected

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

A large number of fake hotel reservations have been detected among travellers arriving in Oman, according to Hamoud bin Mohammed al Mundhiri, spokesman of the Ministry of Social Development's Relief and Shelter Sector.

"Everyone who enters Oman through land borders or airports must register and wear the electronic tracking bracelet. The second stage begins by heading for the hotel chosen for institutional quarantine. A large number of violations of furnishing fictitious hotel bookings have been detected. Violators' data have been recorded," Mundhiri said.

He informed that the Relief and Shelter Sector has contacted the concerned authorities to verify hotel bookings and site of isolation. "Travellers are visited at the isolation centre for verification if necessary. Violators are referred to the police for necessary action," Mundhiri said.

Airlines are required to provide a list of passengers entering the sultanate to facilitate the institutional quarantine process, which is based on a decision of the Supreme Committee, accord-

ing to H E Rashid al Shamsi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Social Development.

"Health isolation in Oman has passed through several stages. The Relief and Shelter Sector is coordinating the process with the concerned authorities. Whoever has been asked to isolate must do so and not expose himself to legal action," H E Shamsi said.

He informed that requests were received from private sector organisations for institutional quarantine of staff in company accommodation which were granted following necessary procedures in coordination with concerned authorities.

"In the event of any violation, necessary action will be taken in cooperation with the Royal Oman Police. Violators will be contacted to find out the reason for non-compliance," H E Shamsi said.

The ministry has opened three phone lines - 24994267, 24994266 and 24994266 - for enquiries and to report violations of institutional quarantine.

"Whoever has been directed to isolate, must do so or risk legal action. Efforts are currently underway to install devices in malls to ensure compliance with the procedures of the Supreme committee," H E Shamsi said.

## Oman reserves 200,000 Johnson & Johnson doses

Shaddad al Musalmi  
Muscat

Oman has reserved 200,000 doses of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which will help boost the vaccination campaign in Oman, according to H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health.

The US FDA advisory panel endorsed Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine for emergency use on Friday, a critical step paving the way to distribute the third vaccine - after Pfizer and Moderna - in the US soon.

A third vaccine is also seen as a vital step to ramp up the immunisation drive in Oman. "Everyone can rest assured that the sultanate will not take any step without first making sure of the safety and efficacy of any vaccine imported," H E Dr Saeedi said.

"Vaccination reduces disease, number of hospitalisations, complications and deaths. Some people still do not trust the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and insist on receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Many people have so far relied on social media rumours on vaccines," he added.

H E Dr Sa'eedi said that private healthcare institutions will also receive their share of vaccines as



soon as there are enough doses. "Once we expand the immunisation drive after receiving adequate numbers, we will also distribute doses to the private sector," he said, adding that individuals older than 60 will be immunised starting this week. The earlier campaign targeted persons aged 65 and older irrespective of health status.

Meanwhile, a health passport for COVID-19 among the GCC states is under discussion, according to Dr Saif bin Salim al Abri, director general of Disease Surveillance and Control in MoH.

A vaccination passport is a document that proves the holder is vaccinated against COVID-19.

"A study is under way for a COVID-19 health passport project that will allow GCC travellers to travel freely without any ob-

stacles for those who have been vaccinated. In a week's time, the initiative will be launched," Dr Abri said on Thursday, adding that institutional isolation is currently compulsory for those who have taken the vaccine.

The MoH is planning to vaccinate 60 per cent of the population soon. "The main goal currently, however, is to vaccinate 20 per cent of the target groups," Dr Abri said.

Dr Salem Hamdan Salem al Tamimi, senior consultant pediatrician, clinical immunologist and allergist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, said, "No serious complications have been reported among those vaccinated. Any vaccine with an efficacy of more than 50 per cent is considered acceptable by the World Health Organization."

### FRENZY BY THE SEA



Mornings at the picturesque Muttrah Corniche aren't complete without a visit to the famed fish market. As day breaks, Muttrah Corniche and the fish market stir to life with the arrival of boats laden with fish with the day's catch. Juma al Wahaibi is in the thick of the action every day. He has been volunteering as auctioneer and serving the fishing community for close to ten years. "I do it for the community. I feel happy supporting our fishermen folk and keeping a tradition alive," Wahaibi said (Syed Fasiuddin/Muscat Daily)

## United States set to approve J&J vaccine

Washington, United States - A US panel on Friday recommended Johnson & Johnson's one-dose COVID-19 shot for emergency approval.

The United States is the world's hardest-hit country, and its emergency use authorisation - which is now expected shortly - of the J&J vaccine would follow those for the Pfizer and Moderna doses.

"We're going to use every conceivable way to expand manufacturing of the vaccine... and make even more rapid progress," said President Joe Biden as the country tries to finally get on top

of the virus that has already claimed 510,000 US lives.

J&J stressed its vaccine was proven to work with a single shot,

*Unlike the AstraZeneca vaccines, which South Africa first procured but later opted not to use, Johnson & Johnson's shots are believed to be effective against the country's 501Y.V2 variant*

and could be stored long-term at standard fridge temperatures, which "offers logistical and practical advantages".

Meanwhile, South Africa on

Saturday received its second consignment of J&J vaccines, its health minister said. The country of almost 59mn people, which

has seen nearly 50,000 succumb to the virus, has been widely criticised for a slow procurement of vaccines and lack of strategy. Health minister Zweli Mkhize

tweeted that the second tranche of J&J vaccines had touched down at OR Tambo International airport.

"It comes as the majority of initial doses received two weeks ago have been administered to healthcare workers," Mkhize tweeted as the precious cargo landed in the financial capital Johannesburg.

Unlike the AstraZeneca vaccines, which South Africa first procured but later opted not to use, J&J's shots are believed to be effective against the country's 501Y.V2 variant.

AFP



**Omantel reports RO229mn group net profit**



**World's largest art canvas to raise \$30mn for charity**



Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion

## Tender 10 / 2021

The Internal Tenders Committee at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion announces the following tender:

| Tender No | Title of the Tender                                               | Tender document price R.O (un refund-able) | Company rate | Deadline for Tender Document collection | Deadline For Offers Submission |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10/2021   | Supply & Installation of IP Telephony (PBX) system for the MOCIIP | 25/— R.O                                   | Specialized  | Sunday 7/3/2021                         | Tuesday 23/3/2021 10:00 am     |

Companies Specialized in such fields and the **Omani Local Companies that have valid registration certificate from the Tender Board and a valid tax card issued by tax Authority** can participate and obtain requirement for proposals and tender terms from the following website : <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

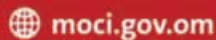
- Offers should be submitted online to the above mentioned website, enclosed with a copy of Bank Guarantee or certified cheque issued by a local bank in the Sultanate of Oman values (1%) of the offer, valid for (90) days from the date of offer submission and addressed to H.E the Undersecretary of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee.
- Offers shall be submitted in a wax-sealed envelopes accompanied by the original Bank Guarantee or the cheque to the Secretariat of the Internal Tender Committee located in second floor of the Ministry's main building in Muttrah AlKubraa.
- The Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest or any other submitted offer.

**Note:** Priority shall be given to companies and institutions whose bid has the highest Omanisation rate.

### Correspondences:

- Tender inquiries: All correspondence pertaining to TENDER Inquiries shall be online through E-Tendering System . ( <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System inquiries : All correspondences pertaining to the technical support of E-Tendering System shall be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number .

Tel. : [+968 24166670](tel:+96824166670) E-mail : [etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om)



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# Short film zeroes in on exam pressure of school students



A still from the film

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

A short film, which talks about the pressure schoolchildren face over marks and grades, is doing rounds on social media.

Produced by Amovies and starring child actors Niharika Nishant and Amirah Khalfan, the five-minute *Runaway* was shot in Ruwi, Darsait and Amerat.

The other actors who play significant roles are Chandni and Lovelyn.

Vinod Raghavan, the production controller of *Runaway*, said the film is an awareness movie on the pressure that children have to face on a daily basis for excellence.

"From schools to peers to parents, children are pressurised to

*From schools to peers to parents, children are pressurised to produce good marks. They are told if they fail to produce marks the future is doomed*

VINOD RAGHAVAN

produce good marks. They are told if they fail to produce such marks their future is doomed. This causes stress and some children rebel. In the long run this undue pressure spoils their child-

hood as well as the relationship with their parents," he said.

The film, inspired by *The 400 Blows*, is a narrative of a nine-year old girl named Anamika who runs away from her home fearing humiliation from her parents because she got bad marks for her maths paper. She finally tries to contact her father but the call reaches a wrong person, who with empathy and maturity, guides her back home.

Dr Baby Sam Saamuel, chairman, Board of Directors Indian Schools, giving closing remarks in the film, says, "These days we all are obsessed with perfection and in this quest for perfection we are forgetting to cherish life. I urge the children - let your efforts be in finding joy in both life and skills."

# Three temporary markets in Muscat promote honey

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

As part of its effort to support Omani beekeepers, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has set up three temporary honey markets in three commercial centres in Muscat.

"The ministry has suspended the 15<sup>th</sup> Omani Honey Market due to the ongoing pandemic. The ministry has decided to set up three markets for selling honey. The shops are located in Lulu supermarkets in Wadi al Lawami in the wilayat of Seeb and Amerat and Oman Avenues Mall. The ministry has also provided electronic platforms [alnahal.om](http://alnahal.om) and [asaloman.com](http://asaloman.com) to market and sell honey," MAFWR stated.

"The objective of this initiative is to popularise Omani agricultural products and to open up



(Supplied photo)

new markets," a ministry official said.

Honey sales jumped by 15.7 per cent in 2019 over 2018. Sales from the 13<sup>th</sup> Omani Honey Market, which was held in December 2019 at Muscat Grand Mall, accounted for RO142,026, while

the market organised in June 2019 saw sales of RO99,000, taking the total for 2019 to RO241,026. The number of beekeepers in the sultanate was 5,336 with 112,068 honeycombs that produced 672,208kg of honey in 2018.

# RO300 fine for violations related to bracelets

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

The fine for tempering with or violating electronic tracking bracelets rules is RO300, according to Maj Mohammed al Hashmi, director of public relations at Royal Oman Police.

"We urge all segments of society, commercial sectors and private institutions to cooperate and commit to the decisions of the Supreme Committee. The public must wear masks and not gather to curb the spread of COVID-19. The Inspector General of Police and Customs has

listed penalties for gatherings; an invitation to a gathering issued by any individual will draw a fine of RO1,500, and every participant in such gatherings will be fined RO100," Maj Hashmi said.

The ROP has activated an operations centre and a toll-free number - 1099 - to report COVID-19 violations.

"We call on the public to report any violation related to the decisions of the Supreme Committee. The police can easily reach people in violation of institution quarantine even if the electronic bracelet is removed," Maj Hashmi said.

# Night lockdown in N Sharqiyah extended

Muscat - The Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has decided to extend the closure of all commercial activities in the Governorate of North Sharqiyah from 7pm to 6am till further notice, with the exception of fuel filling stations, health establishments and private pharmacies.

The Supreme Committee has also decided to extend the closure of all beaches, leisure spaces and public parks in all governorates of the sultanate till further notice.

ONA



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## UBHAR GCC FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

### The Chairman's Report For December 31st, 2020

On behalf of the Investment Committee Members, I am pleased to present the financial results of **Ubhar GCC Fund** for the year ended December 31, 2020.

A brief summary of financial results is as follows:

| Figure 1:             | For the year ended Dec 31, 2020 (OMR) | For the year ended Dec 31, 2019 (OMR) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Total Income          | 324,686                               | 606,485                               |
| Total Expenses        | (148,282)                             | (251,046)                             |
| Profit for the period | 176,404                               | 355,439                               |
| Profit per Unit       | 0.033                                 | 0.042                                 |

### Fund Performance:

For the year ended December 31, 2020 the performance of Ubhar GCC Fund is as follows:

| Figure 2:                             | Dec 31, 2020 | Dec 31, 2019 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Net Asset Value (OMR)                 | 5,436,309    | 7,629,205    |
| Number of Outstanding Units           | 5,153,522    | 7,523,203    |
| Net Asset Value per Unit              | 1.055        | 1.014        |
| UBGCC Fund Performance for the period | 4.0%         | 5.2%         |
| Benchmark Performance for the period  | -1.7%        | 8.3%         |

NAV per unit for 2019 after distributing 7% bonus units

YTD Performance as of December 31, 2020

| Figure 3: | Ubhar GCC Fund | S&P GCC Benchmark | ±/-   |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
| 3-Months  | 6.9%           | 5.9%              | 1.0%  |
| 6-Months  | 16.5%          | 17.1%             | -0.6% |
| 9-Months  | 27.1%          | 30.8%             | -3.7% |

### Market Performance:

2020 was a year of unprecedented events and swinging markets behavior. Despite record negative GDP numbers, increasing debt burdens and increase in unemployment, most of the global stock markets managed to recover gradually post pandemic supported by governments fiscal support, liquidity injection by central banks and the development of vaccines. However, most GCC equity markets lagged behind the international peers and closed on a negative note for the year. Only Saudi Arabia and Qatar indices managed to close in green, with gains of 4.1% and 0.1% respectively, while Kuwait and Dubai were the worst performers losing ground by 11.7% and 9.9% respectively. The S&P GCC Composite Index finished the year losing 1.7%.

### Figure A: Index Returns

The following table illustrates the performance of GCC indices for the year ended December 31, 2020

| Index                          | YTD (December 31, 2020) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul) | 4.1%                    |
| Qatar Exchange                 | 0.1%                    |
| Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange  | -0.6%                   |
| S&P GCC Index                  | -1.7%                   |
| Bahrain Bourse                 | -7.5%                   |
| Muscat Securities Market       | -8.1%                   |
| Dubai Financial Market         | -9.9%                   |
| Kuwait Bourse                  | -11.7%                  |

Despite entering second wave of the COVID 19 across the globe and the appearance of new virus variants, the MSCI World Index managed to post gains of 14.1% led by strong recovery during the second half of 2020. Quantitative easing by central banks, and the betting on the success of vaccines drove the international markets higher. The US markets registered new highs as the tech-heavy Nasdaq was up a whopping 42% and the wider S&P 500 was up 15% for the year.

Oil prices witnessed extreme volatility in 2020 as Brent crude reached the lowest price levels in single digits during pandemic, while the prices have recovered towards the end of the year 2020 due to OPEC+ supply cuts led by Saudi Arabia, optimism on economic recovery, positive news on the vaccination progress.

As per IMF, GCC real GDP is estimated to increase by 2.3% in 2021 and reveal stronger growth of 2.9% in 2022 amidst economic reopening and faster vaccination drive. The major GCC economy, Saudi Arabia to reveal economic growth of 2.8% in 2021 and stronger progress of 4% in 2022. GCC fiscal deficit is estimated to remain lower to about 5% of GDP in 2021. In addition, the regional Governments has announced a balanced approach in 2021 Budget, focussing on priority projects locally to revive the real economic growth going forward.

GCC economy is estimated to recover gradually in 2021 and stronger in 2022 on the basis of improving corporate earnings, as we remain positive for equity markets outlook over the medium term. We also remain conservatively positive on the oil price outlook in 2021 with the improvement in global trade activities and the same could be supportive for the outlook of GCC equities.

As corporate earnings for full year are being released, we continue to analyze them in depth, and look for fundamentally strong names with strong balance sheet. Our approach is to adopt stock specific opportunities with focus on economic reopening and earnings recovery themes. The prevailing low interest rates globally, estimated weakening of US dollar along with the improvement in oil prices to remain supportive for the foreign flows in emerging markets including GCC region in 2021.

On behalf of the Investment Committee

Chairman

February 23, 2021

| Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For 31 December 2020                             |                  |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                                                                                             | 2020 RO          | 2019 RO          |
| <b>Income</b>                                                                                               |                  |                  |
| Dividend income                                                                                             | 175,294          | 395,029          |
| Interest income                                                                                             | 27,963           | 22,585           |
| Other income                                                                                                | 35,551           | 28,481           |
| <b>Total income</b>                                                                                         | <b>238,808</b>   | <b>446,095</b>   |
| Net realised gain/(loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss                   | (226,329)        | 56,381           |
| Net unrealised gain/(loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss                 | 3,12,207         | 104,009          |
| <b>Net investment income</b>                                                                                | <b>324,686</b>   | <b>606,485</b>   |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                                                                             |                  |                  |
| Management fees                                                                                             | (76,441)         | (132,069)        |
| Administration fee                                                                                          | (6,115)          | (11,006)         |
| Custody fees                                                                                                | (22,683)         | (24,207)         |
| Transaction costs                                                                                           | (23,960)         | (49,867)         |
| General and administrative expenses                                                                         | (19,083)         | (33,897)         |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                                                                                       | <b>(148,282)</b> | <b>(251,046)</b> |
| Profit and total comprehensive income increase in net assets attributable to the unitholders for the period | 176,404          | 355,439          |
| Profit per unit                                                                                             | 0.033            | 0.042            |

| Statement of financial position As at 31 December 2020               |                     |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                                                                      | 31 December 2020 RO | 31 December 2019 RO |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                                        |                     |                     |
| Cash and cash equivalents                                            | 822,233             | 1,034,187           |
| Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss                | 4,788,926           | 6,812,967           |
| Other receivables                                                    | 19,152              | 7,338               |
| <b>Total assets</b>                                                  | <b>5,630,311</b>    | <b>7,854,492</b>    |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                                                   |                     |                     |
| Payables and accruals                                                | 9,281               | 25,287              |
| Amount due to brokers                                                | 184,721             | -                   |
| Net assets attributable to the unitholders                           | 5,436,309           | 7,629,205           |
| <b>Total liabilities and net assets attributable to unit holders</b> | <b>5,630,311</b>    | <b>7,854,492</b>    |
| Net assets attributable to the unit holders per Unit                 | 1.055               | 1.014               |

For more information please contact:

Ubhar Capital SAOC, P.O. Box 1137, Postal Code 111 CPO, Sultanate of Oman  
Tel: 24 949 032/030, Fax: 24949099, Email: [ubhargccfund@u-capital.net](mailto:ubhargccfund@u-capital.net), website: [www.u-capital.net](http://www.u-capital.net)

# COVID-19 situation worrying: Dr Sa'eedi

Shaddad al Musalmay  
Muscat

The epidemiological situation linked to the COVID-19 pandemic in the sultanate is worrisome given the increase in infections, hospitalisations and deaths caused by the disease, according to H E Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health.

"The epidemiological situation has been painful and worrying since mid-January when the number of infections started to escalate. Also, intensive care units are under pressure again," H E Dr Sa'eedi.

He added that the Eastern Mediterranean Region is still witnessing a spike in infections, as other regions are stabilising or recording few cases.

"Everyone must realise the gravity of the situation and take responsibility. Many of those placed in institutional quarantine evade compliance. Safety precautions and adherence to the necessary measures must continue. Unfortunately, there are a few who escape from institutional quarantine," he noted.

H E Dr Sa'eedi informed that the Supreme Committee's decision to prevent travellers coming from several countries last week



was due to passengers testing positive upon arrival in the country. In the case of one particular country, over 20 per cent of passengers flying in from it tested

positive.

He said that delay in reporting the disease to health centres puts pressure on intensive care units. "There were ten cases on

Wednesday that were transferred directly to intensive care because of delay in going to health centres. Within a period of less than two months, the number

of intensive care patients increased to 70, compared to 20 cases earlier."

H E Dr Sa'eedi said the economic impact of closing beaches



*Everyone must realise the gravity of the situation and take responsibility. Many of those placed in institutional quarantine evade compliance. Safety precautions and adherence to the necessary measures must continue*

H E DR AHMED BIN  
MOHAMMED AL SA'EEDI

and public parks is less than closing shops and commercial centres. "We reiterate the necessity to adhere to preventive measures against the virus due to the

hardships and difficulty faced by health workers. Increase in infections will have a negative impact on patients' appointments."

Not ruling out additional precautions if necessary, he said, "There is close coordination and follow up with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. We will take appropriate decisions at the next meeting of the Supreme Committee."

With regard to a case being reported in a school, Dr Saif bin Salim al Abri, director general of Disease Surveillance and Control in MoH, said, "As per our investigation, the infection was not passed on inside the school but rather from the community, as a result of laxity in applying the precautionary measures."

Dr Abri said teachers are included in the target groups for vaccination, when doses are available in sufficient quantities. "Currently, the main goal for the government is to vaccinate the elderly. There has been a decrease in the number of elderly people in ICUs in Oman," he said.

On Thursday, MoH announced 288 new cases taking the total to 140,588. There were four deaths and 192 patients admitted in health institutions, including 68 for intensive care.

@shaddadm

## EA, CPA launch campaign to promote eco-friendly bags

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) and the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) are making every effort to spread awareness on the use of environmentally friendly bags and have lined up a number of initiatives to encourage their usage.

"The Environment Directorate in North Batinah governorate organised a campaign to distribute environmentally friendly bags in the last few days in the wilayats of Sohar, Saham, Liwa and Shinas," said an official at EA.

He added, "The campaign aims to encourage citizens and residents to use environmentally friendly shopping bags and to avoid single-use plastic bags. This initiative came in implementation of Ministerial Decision No 23/2020 banning the use of single-use plastic shopping bags, which came into effect from January 1, 2021, to preserve the Omani environment.

"The authority seeks to preserve the Omani environment and wildlife from pollution and harmful waste, implement the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Law No 114/2001 and achieve more sustainable development. It will also contribute significantly to reducing plastic pollution in the local



environment."

Meanwhile, Sulayem bin Ali al Hikmani, chairman of CPA, held a meeting recently with a number of goods suppliers and owners of commercial centres in Muscat, as part of efforts to follow up on local market conditions and consumer-related topics, including the provision of alternatives to plastic bags in stores and commercial centres.

Some commercial centres responded to the CPA by presenting initiatives that serve the interest of consumer, including distribution of environmentally friendly bags free of charge for

every purchase exceeding RO3.

"Some other companies have taken the initiative of distributing bags free of charge regardless of purchase value. One commercial centre has allocated a total of 1mn environmentally friendly reusable bags that will be distributed in the coming days, while another mall will distribute 50,000 bags during the year 2021," Hikmani said.

Hikmani emphasised that providing environmentally friendly bags in stores and commercial centres for free requires a simultaneous shift towards sustainable consumption to safeguard the environment.

## 14.4% increase in number of SMEs

Muscat - The total number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) registered in the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development till the end of January 2021 stood at 49,337, compared to 43,134 in January 2020, an increase of 14.4 per cent, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Among the governorates, Muscat topped the list with 33.6 per cent of the total registered SMEs till the end of January 2021, followed by North Batinah with 15.7 per cent, Dakhliyah with 12.6 per cent, Dhofar with 8.3 per cent, and 29.8 per cent for the remaining governorates.

The number of SMEs regis-



tered in Muscat was 16,583 at the end of January 2021, followed by North Batinah with 7,750, Dakhliyah with 6,214, Dhofar with 4,111, South Batinah with 3,704, North Sharqiyah with 3,309, South Sharqiyah with 2,938, Dhahira with 2,839 and

Buraimi with 1,052 registered SMEs.

The number of SMEs registered in the Governorate of Al Wusta was 652 and 185 in Musandam, the lowest among all governorates. ONA



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## Tenders Announcement

**Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tenders:**

| Tender No.       | Description                                                                                                          | Tender Fee (Nonrefundable) | Tender Purchase deadline | Clarification deadline | Tender Submission Date |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| PDEN/2021/02/009 | Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning Of Fuel Containers For Mod Andat Filling Station In Dhofar Governorate | 50.000                     | 04.03.2021               | 09.03.2021             | 14.03.2021             |
| PDHA/2021/02/03  | Al Maha Vehicle Insurance                                                                                            | 50.000                     | 03.03.2021               | 08.03.2021             | 11.03.2021             |
| PDHA/2021/02/04  | Al Maha Properties Insurance                                                                                         | 100.000                    | 03.03.2021               | 08.03.2021             | 11.03.2021             |

Bank Name & Account Number

Bank Muscat (0319005687760012)

**The Conditions:**

- Collection of Tenders:** Interested, specialized companies and establishments registered under grade 3 and above (in C.R) with minimum of 3 years' experience in the same field. Bidders can collect the tender documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to [procurement@almaha.com.om](mailto:procurement@almaha.com.om) The tender may be collected on any working day between 08:00 AM – 03:00 PM.
- Bank Guarantee:** The bidder should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value, with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG.
- Offer Submission:** Tender bids should be submitted in two separate sealed envelopes (Financial and Technical), addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelopes containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 02:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.
- For any enquiry email us at ([procurement@almaha.com.om](mailto:procurement@almaha.com.om)) or by calling **24610289/24610282/24610355**

# Thirty-eight tonnes of tomatoes - a day's work for Omani farmer in Mussanah

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

An Omani farmer has managed to produce 38 tonnes of tomatoes on a daily basis at his farm in the wilayat of Mussanah in South Batinah governorate.

Khalid Salem al Buaiqi cultivated tomatoes on 32 acres of land this season and his harvest was deemed the highest among his fellow farmers.

The idea of planting Omani tomatoes emerged following Buaiqi's interactions with the Omani Agricultural Association specialists who recommended diversification of crops with the aim of increasing food security in keeping with most countries' efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in food production.

"I started in 2007 with the main goal of diversifying income sources through investing in a number of farms in Mussanah. I have followed experts' recommendations regarding the expansion and diversification of crop production to boost food security which has become a key goal for countries that target to achieve self-sufficiency in domestic crops," Buaiqi said.

"I grew tomatoes on three acres in the first year just to know about the crop. I had to understand all the agricultural and market requirements of the crop, starting with planting of seeds right through to harvesting and delivery to markets. Now we cultivate 32 acres for eight months



(Supplied photo)

*We also need modern machines to increase agricultural areas. Oman can achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural produce easily by providing marketing support to farmers*

KHALID SALEM AL BUAIQI

a year. Our daily production is around 38 tonnes."

Tomatoes from Buaiqi's farms are sold in local markets, besides being exported to neighbouring countries like the UAE.

"We grow other vegetable crops as well, including four

types of peppers - red, orange, green and yellow. We are currently working on greenhouses in our farm. We rely on modern agriculture methods, such as drip irrigation. These reduce effort, time and labour."

Buaiqi said he wants to thank

the Omani Agricultural Association for its supports and for conducting meetings among farmers to exchange experiences.

"Marketing our produce is a big challenge. We also need some modern farming machines to increase agricultural areas.

Oman can achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural produces easily by providing marketing support to farmers."

Buaiqi plans to double the acreage in the next season.

"I call on jobseekers to work in agriculture. It is profitable."



## FINCORP AL AMAL FUND

**Notice For Annual Ordinary and ExtraOrdinary General Meeting**

The Board of Directors of FINCORP AL AMAL FUND ( the "Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting, which will be held at 03:00 PM on 15/03/2021, via the electronic platform to hold general meetings which can be assessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Annual General Meeting shall be held at 03:00 PM on 21/03/2021, to discuss the following agenda:

**Extra Ordinary Agendas:**

- To discuss and approve the amendment of some of the provisions of the Fund's article of association

**Ordinary Agendas:**

- Study and approve the fund management report for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2020
- Study the auditor's report and approve the balance sheet and profit and loss account for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2020
- To approve the sitting fees of the fund's management body meetings paid to them for previous financial year, and to determine the sitting fees for the next fiscal year
- To consider and approve the transactions entered into by the fund with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2020
- To consider and approve the transactions will enter into by the fund with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2021
- To appoint the fund's auditors for the financial year ending on 31 December 2021 and to approve their fees.

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

- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDC.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact on telephone No 92923107 or email: [harsha@fincorp.org](mailto:harsha@fincorp.org)

**Investment Manager & Administrator**

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Send your comments to [muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om)

## KNOW THE LAW



### Invading privacy can cost RO5,000 fine, jail

Invading a person's private or family life by taking photos, publishing news or audio recordings can lead up to three years in jail and a fine of up to RO5,000, Public Prosecution said.

"Using the Internet or means of information such as cell phones with a built-in camera to invade the private or personal familial life of individuals by taking photos or publishing news or audiovisual records in connection to that even if they are true or by insulting and slandering others is an offence," Public Prosecution said in a statement.

"The offence is punishable by imprisonment for a period that extends up to three years and a fine that ranges up to RO5,000 or any one of the two," it added.

**REGIONAL WEATHER**

|             | Max | Min |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Abu Dhabi   | 24  | 14  |
| Doha        | 24  | 15  |
| Kuwait City | 21  | 16  |
| Manama      | 22  | 16  |
| Riyadh      | 26  | 14  |

**PRAYER TIMINGS**

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| Fajr    | 5.15am  |
| Sunrise | 6.30am  |
| Duhr    | 12.24pm |
| Asr     | 3.45pm  |
| Maghrib | 6.14pm  |
| Isha    | 7.24pm  |

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# Omantel reports RO229mn group net profit

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel) on Thursday reported its group net profit at RO229mn for the year ended December 31, 2020, a decline of 23.6 per cent compared to the group net profit of RO299.7mn in the previous year.

Omantel Group's total revenue decreased by 3 per cent to RO2.513bn in 2020 as compared with RO2.592bn recorded for the full year 2019, the company said in a disclosure announcing its unaudited results to the Muscat Securities Market.

As per the disclosure, net profit attributable to the shareholders of the company came at RO66.9mn for 2020, around 14

per cent lower compared with RO77.7mn recorded in the previous year.

Omantel's domestic operations in 2020, however, showed an impressive performance considering the serious business disruptions witnessed since March 2020 resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The company's net profit from domestic operations marginally decreased to RO77.3mn last year against RO79mn net profit recorded in 2019.

'Effective management of sales activities along with proactive cost optimisation measures taken by the management has positively contributed in minimising the overall impact by achieving a 12 per cent reduction in operating and administrative expenses year-on-



*Omantel said its domestic operations showed an impressive performance in 2020 considering the serious business disruptions witnessed since March 2020 resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic*

year,' Omantel said.

Omantel's revenue from domestic operations decreased by 4 per cent to RO533.1mn for the year ended December 31, 2020

from RO554.3mn reported in the previous year.

'The growths achieved in mobile postpaid, fixed broadband, data services, ICT, wholesale international business and device revenues have contributed in managing the domestic revenues for 2020 despite a fall in prepaid revenue due to challenging market conditions,' Omantel said.

For the full year 2020, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of US\$5.3bn while consolidated net income of Zain Group reached US\$605mn, Omantel said.

The company informed that the unaudited financial results for the year 2020 are subject to the review of its audit and risk committee and approval of the board of directors.

# OETC, PDO sign deal for 400kV connection line



**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

In its efforts aimed at integrating electricity networks in the sultanate, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) has signed an agreement with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) to operate 400kV inter-connection line.

This initiative comes in parallel with the development and economic objectives which OETC is seeking to achieve to complement its efforts, OETC said in a press statement.

OETC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with PDO and Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) to establish a framework for evaluating the expected 400kV electrical connection.

The MoU has been signed to achieve the comprehensive objectives of economic energy trade benefits, to regulate power generation resources in order to improve system generation efficiency and reduce fuel input requirements while observing network security.

OETC said this project will also open the doors for more investments in renewable energy

generation in these areas of high potential of renewable resources by allowing an easy access to the transmission network.

OETC has commenced the first phase of the north-to-south electrical connection with a capacity of 400kV in response to the request received from Tanweer and PDO. PDO had submitted two electrical connection requests for Barik and Al-Suwaihat on June 12, 2019, to export and import energy at each network station. The implementation of the project will further include the construction of network stations for Barik, Suweihat, Duqm and Mahout, to displace diesel generation in Duqm and Mahout regions by the second quarter of 2023.

'It is worth mentioning that such agreement specified the duties and responsibilities of OETC and PDO to comprehend the economic and technical potentials of the interconnection,' OETC said.

It added that the agreement confirmed the financial obligations between the two parties where OETC will fund the project and PDO will pay back in settlement wise over an agreed period.

# Global LNG demand to double by 2040

Ankara, Turkey - LNG demand is increasing worldwide as natural gas has an important role to play in building a lower-carbon recovery from COVID-19 and in progress towards net-zero emissions, according to Shell's LNG Outlook 2021.

Global LNG trade grew by 1mn tonnes to 360mn tonnes - enough to power 725mn homes for a full year in 2020, the report showed.

According to Shell, as demand for natural gas continues to grow strongly in Asia and gains further traction in powering hard-to-electrify sectors, global LNG demand is expected to double to 700mn tonnes by 2040.

Shell noted that natural gas can play a key role in addressing

emissions reduction, as this would require cleaner energy solutions for all sectors.

Natural gas, whether in partnership with renewables or as an energy source for hard-to-electrify sectors, helps to lower overall emissions, the report showed.

The report gave the example of South Korea, which aims to reach net-zero emissions by reducing its dependence on coal and increasing the share of gas and renewables in its national energy mix.

"Despite the unprecedented volatility, global demand for LNG increased to 360mn tonnes. Though marginal, the growth reflected the resilience and flexibility of LNG," it said.

Anadolu Agency

| <div>  <div> اس ام ان باور القابضة ش.م.ع.ع.<br/> SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG </div> </div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                         |                         |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Audited Consolidated Financial Statements For the 12-month period ended 31 December 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Dear Shareholders,</b></p> <p>On behalf of the Board of Directors ("the Board") of SMN Power Holding SAOG ("the Company"), I have the pleasure to present the audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.</p> <p>First of all, I would like to acknowledge that 2020 was a very challenging year for the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this unprecedented period, the Company focused on the safety of employees while maintaining reliability of operations. On account of stringent measures taken at the corporate office and at Operator level, there were very few COVID cases and I am happy to report that none required hospitalization.</p> <p>In terms of Corporate Governance, the Company reviews its corporate structures, policies and processes on a continuous basis to ensure that the highest standards of governance are adopted and implemented, in compliance with local and international regulatory requirements and principles.</p> <p>I invite the investors to refer to the Corporate Governance Report.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Operations</b></p> <p>During 2020, SMN Power Holding and its subsidiaries, SMN Barka and Al Rusail, have focused on Health, Safety and Environment ("HSE") as their primary objective.</p> <p>The Company and its O&amp;M contractor STOMO have taken all necessary precautionary measures in line with Supreme Committee's directions to deal with the spread of Covid-19, in close coordination with OPWP, OETC and other stakeholders like Ministry of Health. SMN and STOMO teams have closely monitored the situation to ensure &amp; maintained plant availability and reliability despite of challenging period of COVID-19. Regular HSE reviews together with STOMO ('O&amp;M contractor') have produced significant improvements in the HSE culture at the plants, reaffirming to all employees that HSE is given the highest priority in our operations.</p> <p>The overall HSE performance over 2020 was excellent, as no Lost Time Accident ("LTA") occurred: SMN Barka and Al Rusail plants completed 4,809 and 4,334 days respectively without LTA as at 31st December 2020.</p> <p>The commercial performance of both plants, SMN Barka and Al Rusail, is measured by their reliability which is the ability to deliver the declared capacity as per the contract. In 2020, SMN Barka's reliability was 98.2% for power and 96.5% for water (93.4% and 99.1% in 2019). The reliability of the desalination plant was slightly impacted by some technical issues (forced outages) and by a higher occurrence of algae bloom (force majeure). Al Rusail maintained an excellent reliability of 99.5 % (99.9% in 2019).</p> <p>The Company is in compliance with all the stringent environment permit conditions required by Environment Authority. In view of the importance of cyber security, the Company has strengthened its policies and procedures in coordination with the Operator. The Company also has a robust plan in place to comply with the cyber security regulations issued by APSR.</p> <p>I invite the investors to refer to the Management Discussion and Analysis section of this Annual Report for further explanation on the performance in 2020.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Financial Results</b></p> <p>The Company generated a consolidated net profit RO 10.3 Million for the year 2020 compared to a net profit of RO 8.0 Million in 2019. The significant increase in net profit is mainly due to improved commercial availability and lower repair and maintenance expenses, as well as lower finance charges following the scheduled repayments of the term loan facilities for the two project companies.</p> <p>The Company was however not in a position to distribute any dividend in 2020. As previously disclosed and in line with the financing arrangements disclosed during the Initial Public Offering ("IPO"), the cash sweep mechanism (accelerated repayment of the debt) started on 30 September 2018 for SMN Barka, similar to the mechanism already in place for Al Rusail since 30 September 2016. As a consequence, the excess cash generated by the project companies is now paid to the lenders and will not flow to the Shareholders until the loans are fully settled or until the time the loans can be restructured.</p> <p>I invite the investors to refer to the Management Discussion and Analysis Report for further explanation on the financial performance of the Company.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b></p> <p>At the AGM held on 9th June 2020, the Shareholders approved an amount of RO 25,000 for CSR activities during the year 2020.</p> <p>The Company successfully delivered within budget the following projects during the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquaponics project at Rashid Bin Al Waleed Basic Education School in the Governorate of Muscat;</li> <li>Continuation of the 'Free Plantation project' on the beach next to the Barka power plants;</li> <li>Donation of 27 newly purchased laptops to the Ministry of Education for needy students.</li> </ul> <p>Please refer to the CSR report included for further details on these initiatives.</p> <p>As a responsible corporate citizen, the Company contributed RO15,000 to the Ministry of Health to support the fight against Covid-19.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Future Outlook</b></p> <p>The Company is prepared to deal with any COVID-19 challenges. In terms of plant operations and performance, the Company will maintain its full vigilance during this unprecedented period to protect the health of its employees and the interests of all stakeholders. The Company has taken necessary legal steps in accordance with the P(W)PA contractual terms to cover any adverse impact on its operations and mitigate any losses caused as a direct result of the Covid-19 situation.</p> <p>The Company will continue its focus on H&amp;S and maintain the excellent plant reliability at both plants. Management will continue to liaise with OPWP, the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) and the Load Dispatch Centre with the aim to reduce the cycling of the plants.</p> <p>In terms of initiatives to prepare for the future of Al Rusail and SMN Barka power plants, the Company will work intensively on the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Al Rusail, a bid was submitted in April 2020 for a new PPA term for 2 Gas Turbines, GT7 &amp; 8, beyond March 2022 and OPWP's decision is awaited by end of Q1 2021.</li> <li>As per Al Rusail PPA, GT 1 to GT6 are set to retire by September 2021. The Company will initiate discussion with OPWP on the retirement plan.</li> <li>For SMN Barka, the Company will work closely with APSR, OPWP and all stakeholders of the power and water sector on any opportunity to extend the P(W)PA agreement and in parallel work on implementation of the spot market.</li> </ul> <p>The spot market is expected to go live in 2021. While both Al Rusail and SMN Barka will participate in the implementation of the spot market, such implementation will have no impact on the Company's cash-flows in the next financial year as both Al Rusail and SMN Barka will remain under the P(W)PA framework and will be remunerated based on their capacity and availability. The profitability and ability to generate cash flows are independent of market demand throughout the P(W)PA term.</p> <p>In terms of dividend distribution, as previously disclosed and in line with the financing arrangements during the IPO, the excess cash generated by the project companies is now paid to the lenders and will not flow to the Shareholders until the loans are fully settled or until the time the loans can be restructured. The P(W)PA extension projects for both Al Rusail and SMN Barka will be a key factor to potentially restructure the debt in the coming years and allow further dividend distribution.</p> <p>As Chairman of the Board, I would like to thank our Shareholders, not only for their confidence, but also for their continued support and for the expertise they bring into the Company. The Board of Directors expresses its gratitude to Oman Power &amp; Water Procurement Company ("OPWP"), the APSR, the Capital Market Authority ("CMA") and other governmental and non-governmental bodies for their guidance and support.</p> <p>I also insist upon thanking all the operational staff working at SMN Barka and Al Rusail plants as well as the team at our corporate office for their remarkable efforts to ensure reliable power and water supply to the residents of Oman despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment allowing us to contribute effectively to the growth of the Sultanate of Oman.</p> |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <p><b>Dr. Abdullah Al Yahya'e'y</b><br/>Chairman of the Board</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020 (Audited)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         |                         |                         |                         |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 31 Dec. 2020<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2019<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2020<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2019<br>RO '000 |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Finance lease receivables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | -                       | -                       | 168                     | 4,258                   |
| Property, plant and equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -                       | -                       | 147,316                 | 155,341                 |
| Right of use assets                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | -                       | -                       | 376                     | 464                     |
| Long term prepayment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | -                       | -                       | 133                     | 239                     |
| Goodwill                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -                       | -                       | 15,739                  | 15,739                  |
| Investment in subsidiaries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 27,405                  | 27,405                  | -                       | -                       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 27,405                  | 27,405                  | 163,732                 | 176,041                 |
| <b>Current assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Inventories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -                       | -                       | 3,002                   | 2,973                   |
| Trade and other receivables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 65                      | 66                      | 46,757                  | 35,247                  |
| Finance lease receivables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | -                       | -                       | 4,434                   | 5,460                   |
| Fixed term cash deposits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -                       | -                       | 4,825                   | 4,973                   |
| Cash and cash equivalents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 13                      | 30                      | 2,768                   | 3,931                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 78                      | 96                      | 61,786                  | 52,584                  |
| <b>Total assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 27,483                  | 27,501                  | 225,518                 | 228,625                 |
| <b>EQUITY AND RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <b>EQUITY AND RESERVES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Share capital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 19,964                  | 19,964                  | 19,964                  | 19,964                  |
| Statutory reserve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 6,522                   | 6,522                   | 6,691                   | 6,691                   |
| Retained earnings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 923                     | 923                     | 32,489                  | 22,170                  |
| Hedging Reserve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | (5,307)                 | (5,036)                 |
| <b>Net equity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 27,409                  | 27,409                  | 53,837                  | 43,789                  |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Term loans                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -                       | -                       | 84,895                  | 105,845                 |
| Lease liabilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | -                       | -                       | 383                     | 444                     |
| Derivative financial instruments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -                       | -                       | 4,182                   | 4,446                   |
| Provisions for end of service benefits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | -                       | -                       | 99                      | 112                     |
| Provisions for site restoration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | 2,835                   | 2,701                   |
| Deferred Operating Income                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | -                       | -                       | 808                     | -                       |
| Deferred tax liability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | -                       | -                       | 15,506                  | 15,822                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | 108,708                 | 129,370                 |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Term loans                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -                       | -                       | 15,237                  | 17,441                  |
| Lease liabilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | -                       | -                       | 64                      | 76                      |
| Derivative financial instruments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -                       | -                       | 2,061                   | 1,477                   |
| Trade and other payables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 74                      | 92                      | 43,360                  | 34,815                  |
| Current tax payable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | -                       | -                       | 2,251                   | 1,657                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 74                      | 92                      | 62,973                  | 55,466                  |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 27,483                  | 27,501                  | 225,518                 | 228,625                 |
| <b>Net assets per share (RO)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.137                   | 0.137                   | 0.296                   | 0.245                   |
| Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2020 (Audited)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |                         |                         |                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Parent Company          | Consolidated            |                         |                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 31 Dec. 2020<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2019<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2020<br>RO '000 | 31 Dec. 2019<br>RO '000 |
| <b>Revenue</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | -                       | -                       | 82,678                  | 83,691                  |
| Operating costs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | (64,008)                | (66,806)                |
| Gross profit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | -                       | -                       | 18,670                  | 16,885                  |
| General and administrative expenses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | (267)                   | (234)                   | (1,200)                 | (1,217)                 |
| <b>(Loss)/Profit from operations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | (267)                   | (234)                   | 17,470                  | 15,668                  |
| Finance charges                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | (6,048)                 | (7,335)                 |
| Investment income                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | -                       | -                       | -                       | -                       |
| Other income                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 267                     | 219                     | 778                     | 1,092                   |
| <b>Profit before tax</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -                       | (15)                    | 12,200                  | 9,425                   |
| Income tax                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -                       | -                       | (1,881)                 | (1,468)                 |
| <b>Net profit for the year</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | -                       | (15)                    | 10,319                  | 7,957                   |
| <b>Other comprehensive income</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| <b>Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Fair value of cash flow hedge adjustments - net                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | -                       | -                       | 2,331                   | 1,137                   |
| Reclassification to profit or loss - gross                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -                       | -                       | (2,650)                 | (1,862)                 |
| Deferred tax liability- current period change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -                       | -                       | 48                      | 109                     |
| <b>Total comprehensive income/(expense) for the year</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -                       | (15)                    | 10,048                  | 7,341                   |
| <b>Basic and diluted earnings per share (RO)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.000                   | 0.000                   | 0.052                   | 0.040                   |

## MARKET ANALYSIS - OMAN

## MSM closes up led by financial stocks

The benchmark index of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) ended the week up by 1.02 per cent, supported by the Financial index, which rose by 1.44 per cent. Services index, however, declined by 0.51 per cent and Industrial index also declined by 0.36 per cent. The MSM Shariah index was higher by 0.79 per cent. Omanis and foreigners absorbed selling pressure from GCC investors.

## Local news

►A'Saffa Foods, the largest fully integrated poultry and biggest snack food producer in Oman, said one of its units - A'Saffa Food Processing - is set to expand its factory in Raysut Industrial City as part of its efforts to implement modern facilities and practices. Once the expansion work gets completed, the Al Rusayl plant will help contribute to increase the volume of production in line with high demand for white meat locally and regionally while ensuring the quality of the products.

►Shell Oman Marketing Company has expanded its operations in the port city of Duqm, by commencing supply of aviation fuel to Duqm Airport. Duqm Airport serves as a gateway into a region with significant economic, industrial and commercial potential as it primarily handles business traffic, with great potential of becoming part of the tourism industry too.

►SMN Power disclosed in its

annual report that excess cash generated by the project companies will be paid to lenders and will not flow to the shareholders until the loans are fully settled or until the time the loans can be restructured. The power/water purchase agreement extension projects for both Al Rusail and SMN Barka will be a key factor to potentially restructure the debt in the coming years and allow further dividend.

►In Oman, the new electricity consumption bill has not been rescinded, but it will be applied in a phased manner. Generally, the January bill includes the approved tariff as per the regulations published in December, which involves the gradual application of the new tariff over the year.

►The Capital Market Authority has approved the results of the initial public offering (IPO) of Oman REIT Fund. A total of 49.9mn units valued at around RO 5mn were subscribed, out of 261.9mn units offered for subscription.

The CMA gave its green light for the allocation of the subscribed units. Oman REIT Fund offered 40 per cent of its issued capital of RO65mn for public subscription at an issue price of 120bz comprising 100bz per unit and 2bz as issue expenses.

►The total number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at the end of January 2021 were 49,337 which is an increase by 14 per cent compared to the



same period of 2020.

Among the governorates, Muscat topped the list with 34 per cent SMEs registered in January 2021, followed by North Batinah with 16 per cent, Dhakiliyah with 12 per cent, Dhofar with 8 per cent, and the rest of governorates with 30 per cent. The Governorate of Muscat had 16,583 SMEs registered at the end of January 2021, followed by North Batinah with 7,750, Dhakiliyah with 6,217, Dhofar with 4,111, South Batinah with 3,704 and North Sharqiah with 3,309 SMEs registered. This was followed by Dhahirah with 2,839 SMEs, South Sharqiah with 2,938 SMEs and Buraimi with 1,052 registered SMEs.

## GCC markets

All banks within the GCC that have reported earnings so far posted a total net profit of US\$5.09bn in the fourth quarter of 2020, down by 26.2 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 32.7 per cent year-on-year for the quarter. On full-year basis, combined net profits of the said banks stood at US\$25.31bn for the financial year 2020 vs. US\$34.94bn in 2019, down by 27.6 per cent year-on-year.

Within the GCC, an analysis of banks for the fourth quarter of 2020 earnings indicates that Bahraini banks posted the highest decline in their combined net profits at -84 per cent year-on-year, followed by Kuwaiti banks at -66 per cent, UAE

banks at -53 per cent year-on-year, Oman at -42 per cent, Qatar banks at -19.8 per cent year-on-year and Saudi Arabian banks at -2.2 per cent, largely due to higher impairment charges given the current macroeconomic situation amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

Kuwait's government submitted a draft law to parliament seeking permission to withdraw as much as KD5bn (US\$16.5bn) a year from the country's sovereign wealth fund to help finance a spiralling deficit. If approved by lawmakers, it would be the first time since the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1990 that Kuwait had extracted funds from the US\$600bn Future Generations Fund. Previous

withdrawals were treated as loans and had to be repaid. The government is also attempting to push through parliament legislation allowing it to tap international bond markets, and wants to plug its monthly shortfall using both cash and debt, according to two people familiar with the matter who aren't authorised to speak publicly.

## Global news

US Fed chair, Jerome Powell, began two days of testimony to lawmakers toward the end of the week.

The Fed has been adamant that it will not raise the overnight lending rate or let up on its US\$120bn in monthly government bond purchases until the economy is in better shape. The US economy is improving, however, it's just an uneven and unequal recovery that is leaving millions of people behind. But that's not keeping long-term bond yields from rising, and as they do, valuations and expectations for equity returns come more into question.

German economy expanded 0.3 per cent on quarter in the last three months of 2020, much better than initial estimates of a 0.1 per cent growth, led by an 8.3 per cent jump in gross capital formation, namely in construction and inventories. Net trade also contributed positively while consumer (-3.3 per cent) and government spending (-0.5 per cent) shrank due to the second coronavirus wave

and another lockdown imposed from November. Year-on-year, the economy contracted 3.7 per cent. Full 2020 drop was revised lower to -4.9 per cent from a preliminary -5.3 per cent. The German economy is seen expanding 3 percent in 2021, according to government estimates from late January 2021.

## Recommendation

The global markets continued to remain under pressure as tech stocks came under scrutiny over valuations and the situation remain suppressed by increasing treasury rates. However, value stocks like banking and oil continued to rise during the week.

Regional markets also continued to rally behind the increasing oil prices which are supported by new vaccines. Stocks in petrochemical and banking sector continued to pick based on higher oil prices.

Locally, market remained driven by dividend announcements. Companies which announced dividend lower than the expectation or lower than last year remained under pressure, while companies which announced dividend higher than last year were most sought by investors.

Overall, we believe higher oil prices and subsequent benefit to GCC economies and companies are here to stay. We advise to invest in banking, petrochemical and infrastructure plays.

By special arrangement with U Capital

## President Biden's \$1.9tn COVID-19 plan clears US House

Washington, US - The US House passed an enormous, US\$1.9tn coronavirus relief package early Saturday, hailed by Democrats as a critical step in funneling new funding toward vaccinations, overburdened local governments, and millions of families devastated by the pandemic.

Four days after the COVID-19 death toll surpassed 500,000 in the United States, the sprawling measure backed by President Joe Biden and seen as a moral imperative by many now heads to the Senate for consideration.

"After 12 months of death and despair, the American recovery begins tonight," congressman Brendan Boyle told the House chamber shortly before lawmakers approved the package on an rare post-midnight vote of 219 to 212. No Republicans voted for the bill.

The sharply partisan result comes weeks after Biden's January 20 inauguration, when he called for unity in the face of a once-in-a-century health crisis.

The package cleared the House despite a major setback for Democrats, when a key Senate official ruled that the final version of the bill cannot include a minimum wage hike.

Biden had campaigned extensively on raising the national minimum wage to US\$15 an hour, from a rate of US\$7.25 that has stood since 2009.

He aimed to include it in the rescue plan, which directly pro-



US President Joe Biden (AFP)

vides US\$1,400 checks to most Americans and allots billions of dollars to boost vaccine delivery, help schools re-open and fund state and local governments.

It extends unemployment benefits, set to expire mid-March, by about six months, as well as a moratorium on evictions for millions of people struggling to pay rent.

The bill is on track to be the second largest US stimulus ever, after the US\$2tn package Donald Trump signed last March to fight the pandemic's spread.

Even as the Senate parliamentarian ruled against including the minimum wage language in the bill as written under budget reconciliation rules, Democrats kept the provision, highlighting their 'fight for 15' as a top party priority.

"We will not rest until we pass

the US\$15 minimum wage," Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said.

Even without the wage hike, she said the bill was critical and it would be 'catastrophic' if it does not become law.

"The American people need to know that their government is there for them," she told the chamber. "As President Biden has said, help is on the way."

Republicans fumed over the bill's historically high cost - and the optics of holding such a consequential vote in pre-dawn hours.

Biden however made clear through a spokesperson that he respects the decision but 'urges Congress to move quickly to pass the American Rescue Plan', and would work with lawmakers to get it over the finish line.

AFP

## India exits recession with 0.4% growth

New Delhi, India - India's economy grew 0.4 per cent year-on-year in the final quarter of 2020, official data showed on Friday, ending its first recession since independence as easing coronavirus restrictions sparked a modest recovery.

The country has struggled to claw back lost ground after a stringent, months-long lockdown caused the labour market to collapse and the economy to contract by nearly a quarter between April and June.

India entered a 'technical recession' last year for the first time since gaining independence in 1947 after registering two successive quarters of contraction. The government now estimates annual GDP will fall 8 per cent in 2020-21.

The latest figures, which fell shy of the expectations of a Bloomberg survey of economists pegging growth at 0.5 per cent, will nonetheless bring some cheer to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's beleaguered government.

Key sectors such as construc-



A man walks past a shop in New Delhi, India on Friday (AFP)

tion and manufacturing showed an improvement compared to the same quarter last year.

And in January, car sales in the bellwether automobile sector increased by more than 11 per cent compared to a year earlier, according to industry figures.

Restrictions have been relaxed as coronavirus infections have slowed in the country of 1.3bn in recent weeks, allowing economic activity to resume.

But the government still faces

the tough task of creating enough jobs for India's overwhelmingly young population, as millions of migrant workers make their way back to cities, reversing a massive exodus sparked by the lockdown.

"We can't say we are completely out of the woods," Mumbai-based economist Ashutosh Datar told AFP.

"The real test would be what happens next financial year. Today's number is not a

major surprise."

The government has forecast economic growth of 11 per cent in the 2021-22 financial year, in line with the International Monetary Fund's prediction of 11.5 per cent.

But experts have warned that India, whose tally of 11.1mn infections is second only to the United States, could experience another wave and be hit by new variants of the virus, as has happened in Brazil, Britain and South Africa.

AFP

## Volvo and Geely abandon merger plans

Stockholm, Sweden - Swedish automaker Volvo Cars and China's Geely Auto said they were abandoning merger plans but said they would reinforce their collaboration on electric vehicles.

"Volvo Cars and Geely Auto have agreed on a wide-ranging collaboration that will maximise the strengths of the Swedish and Chinese automotive groups' but will preserve 'their existing separate corporate structures', the

two carmakers said in a joint statement.

In February 2020, Volvo and Geely had announced plans to merge their activities to create an 'international group' on the car market.

"Having evaluated different options ... we concluded jointly that a collaboration model between two standalone companies is the best way to secure continued growth and at the same time achieve technological

synergies in many areas," Volvo CEO Hakan Samuelsson said.

The collaboration will focus, among other things, on the sharing of electric vehicle architecture and autonomous drive technologies.

The two will also combine their existing powertrain operations into a new standalone company that provides internal combustion engines, transmissions, and next-generation dual-motor hybrid systems to be used

by both companies and other automotive manufacturers.

Geely Holding bought Volvo Cars in 2010 from Ford which hadn't been able to turn around the Swedish automaker. But under the Chinese firm Volvo has rebounded and smashed its sales records.

The Swedish carmaker aims to stop making fuel-driven cars and sell only electric cars by 2030.

AFP

# Bank Muscat wins top award from Global Finance

Bank Muscat, the flagship bank of the Sultanate of Oman, has been awarded the Best Investment Bank in Oman award by *Global Finance* magazine for 2021. The prestigious award recognises Bank Muscat's market leading investment banking offerings.

*Global Finance* editors used a series of criteria including entries from banks, market share, number and size of deals, service and advice, structuring capabilities, distribution network, efforts to

address market conditions, innovation, pricing, after-market performance of underwritings and market reputation along with inputs from industry experts to score and select winners. The magazine added that deals announced or completed in 2020 were considered for the awards.

Commenting on the achievements, Saleh Nasser al Habsi, deputy general manager, Investment Banking, said, "Bank Muscat is delighted to be ranked by *Global Finance* as the Best Invest-

ment Bank in Oman. The bank is synonymous with innovation, customer-centricity, agility and trustworthiness and always aims to deliver reliable, dynamic and customised solutions, which suit the unique requirements of our customers. In 2020, the bank completed a number of financial advisory and fundraising transactions for a number of prestigious clients including both the Government of Oman and large corporate entities."

During 2020, Bank Muscat



Saleh Nasser al Habsi

was involved in a number of transactions for the Government of Oman including a dual-

tranche Rule 144A/RegS bond issuance of US\$2bn and a rial denominated sovereign Sukuk issuance of RO200mn.

The bank also provided financial advisory and fund arranging services for a bridge loan facility to a leading Government Related Entity (GRE) in the electricity sector and the monetisation of an employee housing portfolio for a leading GRE.

The bank has also commenced its Fintech investments through the BM Innovate dedi-

cated investment vehicle.

The bank prides itself in its intricate understanding of complex business requirements of its clients, offering unmatched financial expertise and guidance, innovative solutions and wide array of services for various customer needs.

The award is a tribute to the consistency of performance and innovative strategies, which have further augmented the bank's position and reputation in a challenging market.

Bank Muscat is the market leader in financial advisory and fundraising solutions encompassing corporate finance, project finance, debt capital markets, debt refinancing and restructurings, IPOs, structured financings, quasi-equity financings, private placements, as well as mergers and acquisitions in the sultanate.

Its team comprises some of the most experienced investment bankers in Oman having a wide experience across sectors and geographies.



Dr Ashwini Gaddikeri



Dr Jayanthi Shanmugam

## Expert care for women at KIMS Oman Hospital

KIMS Oman Hospital (KOH), Oman's most advanced healthcare destination, offers full-spectrum medical solutions to women's health problems - from adolescent gynaecology to post-menopause stages.

The Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology has a team of experienced practitioners, offering a wide range of services. The team comprises two specialist doctors - Dr Ashwini Gaddikeri and Dr Jayanthi Shanmugam. Dr Ashwini holds MBBS and MS (OBGYN) degrees and has ten years of experience, and Dr Jayanthi, holds MBBS, DGO and PCMDCH degrees and has eight years of experience.

The department performs diagnosis, treatment and management of high-risk obstetrics (integrated prenatal and postnatal care), menstrual disorders, menopausal problems, cancer

screening and adolescent gynaecology.

Reflecting on the hospital's overall approach on women care, Stefan James MacMillan Skrzywanek, chief operating officer at KOH says, "We have always been at the forefront of providing top quality care for women through our expert team of doctors. Our objective is to provide healthcare solutions for women at all ages and stages."

KOH delivers state-of-the-art medical care with a professional team of doctors, nurses, paramedics and administrators, combined with high-end facilities and equipment. It provides affordable and safe care to its patients, in keeping with the highest international standards.

For appointments, call KIMS Oman Hospital on +968 2476 0100/200/300 or WhatsApp on +968 7157 2000.



## Samsung announces trade-in initiative for Galaxy S21 Series

Samsung Gulf Electronics announced the trade-in initiative for consumers in Oman aiming to purchase the brand new Galaxy S21 Series 5G.

Running until Friday, April 30, customers can save up to RO293 on their Galaxy S21, Galaxy 21+, or Galaxy S21 Ultra by trading their current smartphone, smartwatch, or tablet from any brand. Those wishing to exercise this option to purchase a new Galaxy smartphone can trade-in as many as three old devices, including those with cracked screens.

"Introducing customer-centric programmes that provide help and support to our customers is one of Samsung's longest-standing traditions," said Osman Albora, senior director - Mobile Division, Samsung Gulf Electronics.

"People often upgrade their tech devices for various reasons, which means there are always opportunities to make good use of the products they no longer

need. As such, we wanted to allow Samsung enthusiasts to trade-in their devices and enable them to unlock valuable savings when purchasing the Galaxy S21 Series 5G.

"We are sure this initiative will help many consumers nationwide, and we look forward to seeing Galaxy lovers benefit from the offer and acquire their new devices."

Consumers looking to trade-in can visit their nearest Samsung Experience Store or selected retailers, present their old device(s) for instant evaluation by store staff, and receive an instant discount value to purchase any Galaxy S21 Series product from the store.

The Galaxy S21, Galaxy S21+, and Galaxy S21 Ultra have several common features, including the all-new design, bold and sophisticated appearance, and iconic Contour Camera Design.

For more information, please visit [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com).



المدينة تكافل

Al Madina Takaful

Everything in harmony

Al Madina Insurance Company SAGC,  
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Al Khawair, Muscat,  
P.O. Box 80, MGA, PC 136,  
Sultanate of Oman,  
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Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,

Assalamu alaikum wa rahamatullahi wa Barakatuh!  
(May the Peace, Mercy and Blessing of Allah be with you!)

On behalf of the Board of Directors, and Management team of Al Madina Insurance Co ("Al Madina"), I am pleased to present to you the results achieved by your Company for the financial year ended on 31 December 2020.

The year 2020 has presented unprecedented challenges due to slowing down of economies induced by COVID-19. The Pandemic outbreak continues to impact businesses causing disruptions to businesses. It also redefined on how economy and businesses need to pursue, perform, and forecast outlook.

Al Madina continued its commitment towards its customers, shareholders and utilized its digital infrastructure and business continuity framework to respond quickly and effectively to COVID-19 pandemic. The Company provided uninterrupted services to its customers in terms of Sales & Post Sales Services. Our digital platforms ensured that customers received a seamless service on all Insurance related activities, be it issuance of policy, servicing of claim or any other financial transactions. A comprehensive range of preventive measures were undertaken to maintain health & safety of employees as well as to support customers and stakeholders.

Al Madina's successful adaptation to the new normal has yielded operational efficiencies that contributed positively to the Company's growth and to maintain its position of being 3rd largest Insurance Company in Oman with Gross written contributions (GWC) of RO 39.6 million, a 2% growth over the last Financial Year.

Al Madina continues to produce resilient financial performance and your company also exceeded its insurance operation budget. The overall Profit after Tax saw impressive increase in 2020, compared to 2019. The Profit of the Company increased by 51% to RO 1.8 million compared to RO 1.2 million in 2019.

The 2020 financial results delivered by your Company reflect our intent to deliver consistent surplus from Insurance operations so that the Policyholder's interest is safeguarded while we continue to reward our shareholders. Similar to the year 2019, we reduced the Wakala fees charge from 20% to 11.5% in the current financial year. This was done to reduce the deficit in the policyholders' fund and in compliance with recommendations of the Regulators.

Operating Environment

Your Company registered another successful year of underwriting performance and displayed remarkable growth in operational profit. This was achieved through strict underwriting discipline, effective claims administration, and a focused sales strategy for successful conversion of new business opportunities.

Results from Operations

Your Company continues to deliver stable growth while strengthening adequacy & sufficiency of its reserves. The underwriting surplus from Takaful operations before investment income, mudarib share and Wakala fees amounted to RO 5.5 million as against RO 4.6 million in the year 2019, registering a growth of 19% in underwriting surplus. This was possible through Prudent underwriting, Effective risk selection and Efficient claims administration backed by high-quality global Reinsurance arrangements.

Al Madina continues to maintain a healthy and well-balanced portfolio across all lines of business. The Company is constantly enhancing its customer experience by ongoing process efficiency, quick turnaround, professional expertise, top of the line claims servicing and adopting best international practices in the field of insurance operations.

Investment Income

The investment environment continues to remain very volatile and unpredictable with equities and real estate yields being under pressure. In this challenging environment, your Company was able to achieve a 5% growth in investment income as compared to previous year despite booking of impairment in the amount of RO 572K on equities and property valuations. The Company registered a total investment income (shareholders and policyholders) of RO 1.06 million compared to RO 1.01 million as of Dec 2019. This was mainly achieved due to prudent investment strategy adopted by the Company with its investment portfolio being well diversified across different asset classes with varied sources of return.

Shareholders' profit

Due to unprecedented market conditions, the company had to book impairment on certain equities and property valuation to the tune of RO 572K. Despite this your Company was able to report a profit attributable to the shareholders amounting to RO 715K.

Risk Management

The company constantly evaluates its risks associated with the insurance business as well as its investments and adopts necessary measures to manage these risks.

Dividend policy

Your Company adopts a well-balanced dividend policy for the distribution of profit and remains committed to delivering value to your investments. Your Company has a track record of consistent dividend payments over the last four years.

Company's Outlook & Vision

The year 2021 will continue to be challenging although market have seen more stability in Oil Prices. Insurance industry in Oman will see the tail effect of Pandemic mainly on its revenue, which will remain stressed. Much will depend on public spending, foreign investment and opening of Global economy in post pandemic era. Market credit issue and cash flow will continue to be a challenging concern to most industries. Globally, recovery of aviation and hospitality sector will take some more time which may hamper the non-ol-based revenue forecast.

Our position in the market, combined with strong underwriting fundamentals will enable us to continue our endeavor to provide sustained growth and profitability to all stake holders in 2021. We expect to maintain our market position in line with our projection for 2021. Focus will be more on increasing retention of business and the Company expects to show sustainable growth and profitability in 2021. Mandatory health insurance is expected to launch in 2021 and it will give a thrust to health insurance market. Al Madina has fulfilled the licensing requirement and awaits further instructions of Capital Market Authority.

The Company continues to maintain its steady track record of having always been driven by and supportive of national objectives, such as in job creation and Omanization.

Al Madina will focus on its mission of Superior Customer service with many technology- driven innovation and consumer centric strategies. The Company, with its well-planned growth strategy is well positioned to achieve stable growth and Operational Profit in 2021 through disciplined underwriting, Process efficiency, and focused sales planning.

The Company will continue to invest on IT upgrades for Value Added Tax implementation, Process automations and increased digitization of insurance processes to drive business growth, operational effectiveness with positive engagement with customers and grow on the back of a superior customer service.

The Company will continue to look at growing opportunities within the Islamic finance space to generate stable yield on its investment book and achieve the targeted investment returns for shareholders and policyholders.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Board, we extend our thanks to our customers, business partners, shareholders, and staff members for their support. We also thank and appreciate the Capital Market Authority for their constant support and their initiatives oriented towards the insurance Market, with special emphasis on the development of Takaful Insurance in the country. We also take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Health and express our sincere gratitude to those on the frontline for their unwavering commitment and immensely appreciate the measures taken by the Government of Oman in managing the pandemic COVID-19.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our greetings and congratulations to His Majesty Hatham Tariq Al Said as we celebrate the first anniversary of Oman's renewed renaissance. We are confident that under the leadership of His Majesty the Sultanate will continue to march towards development and prosperity. Above all we also pay tribute to late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said for his inspiring visionary leadership for setting the path that will achieve the aspirations of every citizen of this blessed Country for further progress and prosperity.

May God Bless you all,

Dr. Mohammed Ali Al Barwani  
Chairman of the Board.

| STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020                            |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Shareholders' fund                                                                |            |            |            | Participants' fund |           |           |            | Grand total              |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| General takaful                                                                   |            |            |            | Family takaful     |           |           |            | Total participants' fund |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2020 RO                                                                           | 2019 RO    | 2020 RO    | 2019 RO    | 2020 RO            | 2019 RO   | 2020 RO   | 2019 RO    | 2020 RO                  | 2019 RO    | 2020 RO     | 2019 RO     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                                                     |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cash and bank balances                                                            | 1,132,259  | 1,340,320  | 5,954,229  | 4,450,957          | 173,898   | 181,695   |            | 6,128,127                | 4,632,652  | 7,260,386   | 5,972,972   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Investments carried at fair value through profit or loss                          | 1,212,211  | 1,308,445  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 1,212,211   | 1,308,445   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Takaful balance receivable                                                        | -          | -          | 11,095,636 | 12,181,562         | 920,514   | 965,173   | 12,016,150 | 13,146,735               | 12,016,150 | 13,146,735  | 12,016,150  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Retakaful / reinsurance balance receivable                                        | -          | -          | 452,375    | 187,049            | 27,731    | 40,195    | 480,106    | 227,244                  | 480,106    | 227,244     | 227,244     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receivable from participants' fund - family takaful                               | -          | -          | 394,204    | 1,598,675          | -         | -         | 394,204    | 1,598,675                | 394,204    | 1,598,675   | 1,598,675   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receivable from participants' fund                                                | 1,637,332  | 1,524,565  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 1,637,332   | 1,524,565   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Due from retakaful / reinsurance companies in connection with takaful liabilities | -          | -          | 43,332,129 | 42,900,049         | 1,434,019 | 1,198,529 | 44,766,148 | 44,098,578               | 44,766,148 | 44,098,578  | 44,098,578  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deferred policy acquisition cost                                                  | 7,875      | -          | 762,721    | 732,398            | 53,358    | 55,852    | 816,079    | 788,250                  | 823,954    | 788,250     | 788,250     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other receivables and takaful assets                                              | 658,512    | 763,185    | 784,766    | 628,684            | 499,722   | 395,374   | 1,284,488  | 1,024,058                | 1,943,000  | 1,787,243   | 1,787,243   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Investments at fair value through equity                                          | 2,225,974  | 2,282,799  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 2,225,974   | 2,282,799   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank deposits                                                                     | 5,600,000  | 5,526,500  | 5,525,000  | 4,876,416          | 575,000   | 1,247,084 | 6,100,000  | 6,123,500                | 11,700,000 | 11,650,000  | 11,650,000  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Investments carried at amortised cost                                             | 6,229,587  | 5,251,228  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 6,229,587   | 5,251,228   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deferred tax asset                                                                | 135,551    | 75,545     | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 135,551     | 75,545      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Investment in real estate                                                         | 5,468,830  | 5,946,675  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 5,468,830   | 5,946,675   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Property and equipment                                                            | 729,144    | 847,511    | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 729,144     | 847,511     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total assets                                                                      | 25,037,275 | 24,876,773 | 68,301,060 | 67,555,790         | 3,684,242 | 4,083,902 | 71,985,302 | 71,639,692               | 97,022,577 | 96,516,465  | 96,516,465  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUND AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b>                   |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                                                                |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Takaful liabilities                                                               | -          | -          | 55,351,342 | 55,390,384         | 1,802,065 | 1,554,168 | 57,153,407 | 56,944,552               | 57,153,407 | 56,944,552  | 56,944,552  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unearned retakaful commission                                                     | -          | -          | 160,625    | 165,014            | -         | -         | 160,625    | 165,014                  | 160,625    | 165,014     | 160,625     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Retakaful/reinsurance payables                                                    | -          | -          | 8,580,189  | 9,137,624          | 892,730   | 601,309   | 9,472,919  | 9,738,933                | 9,472,919  | 9,738,933   | 9,738,933   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Accounts and other payables                                                       | 1,065,584  | 873,248    | 3,299,072  | 2,936,961          | 775,187   | 713,220   | 4,074,259  | 3,650,181                | 5,139,443  | 4,523,429   | 4,523,429   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Charity fund payable                                                              | 38,177     | 18,970     | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 38,177     | 18,970      | 18,970      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payable to shareholders                                                           | -          | -          | 1,198,047  | 1,282,079          | 439,285   | 242,486   | 1,637,332  | 1,524,565                | 1,637,332  | 1,524,565   | 1,524,565   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payable to participants' fund - general takaful                                   | -          | -          | -          | -                  | 394,204   | 1,598,675 | 394,204    | 1,598,675                | 394,204    | 1,598,675   | 1,598,675   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Employees' end of service benefits                                                | 531,831    | 438,079    | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 531,831    | 438,079     | 438,079     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total liabilities                                                                 | 1,635,592  | 1,330,297  | 68,589,275 | 68,912,062         | 4,303,471 | 4,709,858 | 72,892,746 | 73,621,920               | 74,528,338 | 74,952,217  | 74,952,217  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>PARTICIPANTS' FUND</b>                                                         |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deficit in participants' fund net                                                 | -          | -          | (288,215)  | (5,436,726)        | (619,229) | (807,434) | (907,444)  | (6,244,160)              | (907,444)  | (6,244,160) | (6,244,160) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contingency reserve                                                               | -          | -          | -          | 4,080,454          | -         | 181,478   | -          | 4,261,932                | -          | 4,261,932   | 4,261,932   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total participants' fund                                                          | -          | -          | (288,215)  | (1,356,272)        | (619,229) | (625,956) | (907,444)  | (1,982,228)              | (907,444)  | (1,982,228) | (1,982,228) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b>                                                       |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Capital and reserves</b>                                                       |            |            |            |                    |           |           |            |                          |            |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share capital                                                                     | 17,500,000 | 17,500,000 | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 17,500,000 | 17,500,000  | 17,500,000  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share premium                                                                     | 1,380,151  | 1,380,151  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 1,380,151  | 1,380,151   | 1,380,151   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Legal reserve                                                                     | 1,072,093  | 1,000,576  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 1,072,093  | 1,000,576   | 1,000,576   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Investment fair value reserve                                                     | 741,124    | 420,112    | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 741,124    | 420,112     | 420,112     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Property fair value reserve                                                       | -          | 130,976    | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | 130,976     | 130,976     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Retained earnings                                                                 | 2,708,315  | 3,114,661  | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 2,708,315  | 3,114,661   | 3,114,661   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total shareholders' equity                                                        | 23,401,683 | 23,546,476 | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | 23,401,683 | 23,546,476  | 23,546,476  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total liabilities, participants' fund and shareholders' equity                    | 25,037,275 | 24,876,773 | 68,301,060 | 67,555,790         | 3,684,242 | 4,083,902 | 71,985,302 | 71,639,692               | 97,022,577 | 96,516,465  | 96,516,465  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Net assets per share attributable to shareholders                                 | 0.134      | 0.135      | -          | -                  | -         | -         | -          | -                        | -          | -           | -           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020     |              |              |             |                |              |              |         |                          |              |             |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| General takaful                                                                         |              |              |             | Family takaful |              |              |         | Total participants' fund |              |             |             |
| 2020 RO                                                                                 | 2019 RO      | 2020 RO      | 2019 RO     | 2020 RO        | 2019 RO      | 2020 RO      | 2019 RO | 2020 RO                  | 2019 RO      | 2020 RO     | 2019 RO     |
| <b>Takaful revenue</b>                                                                  |              |              |             |                |              |              |         |                          |              |             |             |
| Gross contributions                                                                     | 36,963,467   | 36,397,382   | 2,635,318   | 2,515,143      | 39,598,785   | 38,912,525   |         | 36,963,467               | 36,397,382   | 2,635,318   | 2,515,143   |
| Retakaful/reinsurance share                                                             | (23,584,191) | (22,322,355) | (2,015,905) | (1,893,266)    | (25,600,096) | (24,215,621) |         | (23,584,191)             | (22,322,355) | (2,015,905) | (1,893,266) |
| Retained contributions                                                                  | 13,379,276   | 14,075,027   | 619,413     | 621,877        | 13,998,689   | 14,696,904   |         | 13,379,276               | 14,075,027   | 619,413     | 621,877     |
| Net movement in unearned contributions reserve                                          | 310,715      | 551,787      | (2,901)     | 8,475          | 307,814      | 560,262      |         | 310,715                  | 551,787      | (2,901)     | 8,475       |
| Net earned contributions                                                                | 13,689,991   | 14,626,814   | 616,512     | 630,352        | 14,306,503   | 15,257,166   |         | 13,689,991               | 14,626,814   | 616,512     | 630,352     |
| Income earned from retakaful contracts                                                  | 411,931      | 295,796      | -           | -              | 411,931      | 295,796      |         | 411,931                  | 295,796      | -           | -           |
|                                                                                         | 14,101,922   | 14,922,610   | 616,512     | 630,352        | 14,718,434   | 15,552,962   |         | 14,101,922               | 14,922,610   | 616,512     | 630,352     |
| <b>Takaful expenses</b>                                                                 |              |              |             |                |              |              |         |                          |              |             |             |
| Gross claims settled                                                                    | (16,515,961) | (18,324,373) | (1,052,242) | (1,217,764)    | (17,568,203) | (19,542,137) |         | (16,515,961)             | (18,324,373) | (1,052,242) | (1,217,764) |
| Claims recovered from retakaful/reinsurance                                             | 9,678,634    | 9,443,053    | 904,057     | 1,031,704      | 10,582,691   | 10,474,757   |         | 9,678,634                | 9,443,053    | 904,057     | 1,031,704   |
| Net claims settled                                                                      | (6,837,327)  | (8,881,320)  | (148,185)   | (186,060)      | (6,985,512)  | (9,067,380)  |         | (6,837,327)              | (8,881,320)  | (148,185)   | (186,060)   |
| Net movement in outstanding claims                                                      | 160,407      | 123,419      | (9,504)     | (12,915)       | 150,903      | 110,504      |         | 160,407                  | 123,419      | (9,504)     | (12,915)    |
| Net claims incurred                                                                     | (6,676,920)  | (8,757,901)  | (157,689)   | (198,975)      | (6,834,609)  | (8,956,876)  |         | (6,676,920)              | (8,757,901)  | (157,689)   | (198,975)   |
| Commission expense                                                                      | (1,659,450)  | (1,552,786)  | (134,910)   | (131,902)      | (1,794,360)  | (1,684,688)  |         | (1,659,450)              | (1,552,786)  | (134,910)   | (131,902)   |
|                                                                                         | (8,336,370)  | (10,310,687) | (292,599)   | (330,877)      | (8,628,969)  | (10,641,564) |         | (8,336,370)              | (10,310,687) | (292,599)   | (330,877)   |
| <b>Surplus from takaful operations</b>                                                  |              |              |             |                |              |              |         |                          |              |             |             |
| Fees and other income                                                                   | 5,765,552    | 4,611,923    | 323,913     | 299,475        | 6,089,465    | 4,911,398    |         | 5,765,552                | 4,611,923    | 323,913     | 299,475     |
| Provision for impairment of receivables                                                 | (240,000)    | (110,000)    | (10,000)    | (10,000)       | (250,000)    | (120,000)    |         | (240,000)                | (110,000)    | (10,000)    | (10,000)    |
| Takaful expense                                                                         | (449,190)    | (350,691)    | (26,540)    | (298)          | (475,730)    | (350,989)    |         | (449,190)                | (350,691)    | (26,540)    | (298)       |
| Surplus from takaful operations before investment income, mudarib share and wakala fees | 5,190,896    | 4,331,455    | 287,776     | 289,715        | 5,478,672    | 4,621,173    |         | 5,190,896                | 4,331,455    | 287,776     | 289,715     |
| Investment income - net                                                                 | 28           |              |             |                |              |              |         |                          |              |             |             |

# OIH to offer multi-specialty health services

Oman International Hospital (OIH) will soon open its doors to Oman's public. The hospital, backed by Oman Brunei Investment Company together with Suhail Bahwan Group and Idealmed GHS, is a state-of-the-art multidisciplinary hospital focusing on women and children excellence.

Idealmed GHS that also operates the hospital, is an integrated European health group based in Coimbra, Portugal, operating hospitals and clinics across the globe, and has been recognised for its mission to provide the highest standard of healthcare by incorporating the latest medical technology in the most modern and sophisticated facilities with highly skilled and trained human resources.

Oman International Hospital will develop networking with representatives from the insurance, corporate, and government sectors in the upcoming days. Set to be a series of nine meetings, the hospital aims to familiarise key players in the health industry with its offerings. Each meeting will be conducted with reduced occupancy, in line with the directives of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from the



coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with regard to holding large-scale gatherings.

Commenting on the new landmark in Oman's healthcare sector, Sheikha Amal Suhail Bah-

wan, chairperson of Oman International Hospital, said, "At Oman International Hospital, we are committed to extending world-class medical and health services to the people of Oman

and setting a new standard in the sector. We believe that this new investment in the health sector is a major milestone, which has resulted from a strategic collaboration between the government

and private sectors that is focused on delivering high-quality and efficient healthcare.

"Our mission is to provide excellence in terms of healthcare, diagnosis and clinical treatment

to all the people."

Oman International Hospital was established with the objective of creating a unique environment for the implementation of clinical and research activity in Oman. It hosts health professionals in various specialisations, international key leaders from abroad and has different partner entities - from the academic world to medical and pharmaceutical domains, as well as IT, architecture, certification companies, offering the best services, while keeping in mind patients' well-being and comfort.

"The OIH has recognised institutions as partners, such as the University of Coimbra, which is considered to be one of the oldest and the most prestigious academic institutions in the world, Siemens, IBM and Ciberbit among many other well-known organisations that will add value to this outstanding hospital and make the difference in the healthcare scenario of the Gulf region. The OIH is the largest private health entity in Oman, with an area of 42,000sqm built from the ground up, as per the highest standards of quality, and it's ready to allocate +200 beds, have 41 medical consultation of-

fices, 73 observation/treatment/exam rooms, five operating theatres, three delivery rooms, an emergency department, full range of intensive care units, a radiology department, a medical SPA, R&D facilities and four laboratories," said Dr José Alexandre Cunha, chairman of Idealmed GHS and Board Member of OIH.

Integrated into the same complex, OIH has four main Excellence Centres, namely the Women's & Children's Centre, the Heart & Vascular Centre, Ortho & Spine Centre and the Oman Vision Centre. Each centre adopts the latest medical practices and state-of-the-art medical technologies.

Fathi al Balushi, chief executive officer, Oman Brunei Investment Company and vice chairman of the OIH Board said, "We are proud and honoured to play our part in contributing to the country's healthcare sector, in line with the objectives of the Omani government to develop integrated medical services and medical training. With the government encouraging the private healthcare sector, we look forward to being recognised as the reference private hospital in the entire region."

## Radhakrishnan leaves ISM after long years of service

Four decades ago, when even the most adventurous of the men would reconsider their decision of sailing to a gulf nation, A Radhakrishnan touched the shores of this beautiful country Oman. Since then, there has been no turning back for him. As an assisting staff, he has been associated with Indian School Muscat (ISM) for 43 years.

The school was in its neonatal stage in the year 1978. His joining a three-year old institution with 85 students, and witnessing it reaching an incredible strength of 9,500 is most certainly an inspiring story. Radhakrishnan has witnessed the transition of its premises from a seed to a full-grown tree that spreads its branches wider with every passing year. It is a lifetime of service that he has rendered to the school. His contributions to the school have been implausible and immense.

His integrity and allegiance will always be a prime example for others. His work ethics and commitment towards the organisation is legendary and unquestionable. He created a niche in



everyone's heart with his smiling disposition. The reassuring smile on his face, the soft polite words impacted everyone who came his way. In this journey of life, he has left an indelible impression with everyone. His ability to remember the names of each and every

student and even the ex-students is an astounding characteristic. He has been an integral part of the organic coexistence of the school with its principals, administrative staff, teachers, students, the entire workforce and the sequence of events.

The chairman, Board of Directors, Dr Baby Sam Saamuel lauding Radhakrishnan, expressed that the length of his tenure was quite incredible. The president, Indian School Muscat Management Committee, Ajay Kummur. J extolled him for being sincere, resolute and hardworking.

Principal Dr Rajeev Kumar Chauhan observed that Radhakrishnan is conversant with every brick of this renowned institution and every nook and cranny of the school is familiar with the sound of his footsteps. His self-discipline, resilience, respect for young and old and concern for others, will last for long in our memory.

Indian School Muscat family bids adieu to Radhakrishnan. The new innings begins. We wish him all the very best for an upbeat and thriving life ahead.



## MENA's European apple imports grow

Interfel, the French fresh fruit and vegetable interprofessional organisation responsible for promoting the consumption of apples in the Middle East and the European Commission, participated at GulfFood.

As part of their participation, the company has revealed its most recent trade figures which show an increase in apple exports to the MENA region.

According to the data, apple exports have increased by 16.43 per cent between August 2019 and July 2020, (compared with 2018-2019), representing approximately 11 per cent of total French apple exports. In total, 46,386 tonnes of French apples were exported to MENA, up from

39,839 tonnes the previous year, the top three markets being Saudi Arabia (12,975 tonnes), UAE (12,920 tonnes) and Egypt (6,210 tonnes), which together import over 66 per cent of French apple exports to the region.

Other major markets include Israel, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.

"This underscores the large variety of apples, which are very healthy and flavourful due to the exceptional richness of the soil and the climate. Also, 65 per cent of French apples are produced in eco-friendly orchards, which has also contributed considerably towards the popularity of French apples," said Daniel Soares, marketing export manager, Interfel.

## BIIT students excel; applications invited for new batches

Students of the Bahwan International Institute of Technology (BIIT) have outperformed in competitive exams and academics yet another year, with many gaining admissions in top institutions in India and abroad. The Institute is now inviting applications for new batches for IIT-JEE/NEET coaching.

Bahwan International Institute of Technology (BIIT), a premier institute for competitive exam coaching in Oman, has always produced excellent results, and BIIT students have consistently outperformed their peers in academics and competitive exams.

They have gained admissions in premier engineering and medical colleges in India such as IIT, NITs, IIITs, CFTIs, JIPMER and also across the world. In fact, a large number of NRI students, particularly from Oman, have immensely benefited through BIIT by topping competitive exams since 2014.

The institute is now inviting applications for new batches of

IIT-JEE/NEET coaching for students from Classes VI to XII.

With JEE scores now becoming the decisive factor for entry into top-tier Indian engineering institutions and NEET scores being critical for admission in medical colleges, aspirants will significantly benefit from coaching at BIIT to score high in these competitive exams.

### Online classes

In line with the changing times, BIIT changed the pedagogy from instructor-based to live virtual mode during the pandemic for students to continue taking classes without interruption at the start of new academic year in March 2020. BIIT conducted special live classes for students to ensure that they optimize their time productively from home in preparing for their new academic year through BIIT-offered live online classes without any charge. Students across Oman registered for the free live sessions conducted and got benefited.

## Renault Oman announces attractive benefits for customers

Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, has announced a host of benefits on Renault's top selling and new models as part of its special promotion.

Customers who buy Renault vehicles under the Renault Oman special scheme are guaranteed an assured cash gift of up to RO3,500, free insurance, free registration, up to three years/60,000km periodic maintenance service and three years/100,000km manufacture warranty. The offer is not applicable for vehicles purchased for commercial use, rent-a-car, taxi and driver trainer segment. The assured cash gift amount varies between models, model variants, model year and manufacturing year.

Renault's special promotion, which has already begun, will go on till March 25.

A spokesperson for SBA said, "Renault Oman's scheme offers



multiple benefits to customers purchasing their popular models as well as latest models. With its pioneering engines, fuel efficiency and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, Renault vehicles are among the world's best models. Every Renault owner vouches for a great ownership experience."

### Attractive scheme

**Renault Symbol:** Customers who purchase Renault Symbol will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO1,200, free registration,

periodic vehicle maintenance service of three years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty and free first year insurance (Oman and UAE only).

**Renault Megane:** Customers who purchase Renault Megane 1.6lt and Renault Megane 2.0lt will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO1,800, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), three

years/100,000km manufacture warranty and free first year insurance (Oman and UAE only).

Customers who purchase Renault Megane RS Trophy - R will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO3,500, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty.

**Renault Koleos:** Customers who purchase Renault Koleos will be entitled to receive assured

cash gift from RO2,100 to RO2,500, free registration, and free first year insurance (Oman and UAE only) and periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty.

**Renault Duster:** Customers who purchase Renault Duster will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO1,550, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/60,000km

(whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty and free first year insurance (Oman and UAE only).

**Renault Captur:** Customers who purchase Renault Captur will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO1,700, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/60,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty and free first year insurance (Oman and UAE only).

**Renault Dokker Van:** Customers who purchase Renault Dokker Van will be entitled to receive assured cash gift from RO2,000 to RO2,300, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/30,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty.

tomers who purchase Renault Dokker will be entitled to receive assured cash gift of RO1,150, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/30,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty.

**Renault Master Van:** Customers who purchase Renault Master Van will be entitled to receive assured cash gift from RO2,000 to RO2,300, free registration, periodic vehicle maintenance of three years/30,000km (whichever is earlier), three years/100,000km manufacture warranty.

SBA is largely committed to supporting Renault Oman's growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. For more information, visit <https://www.renault.com.om/> or call Toll Free number on 80050011.

# Khashoggi case: US in balancing act

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - US President Joe Biden's decision not to sanction Saudi Arabia's crown prince over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder has frustrated campaigners, underscoring Washington's delicate balancing act as it seeks to avoid a diplomatic rupture.

Washington on Friday released a long-delayed intelligence report that accused Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of approving Khashoggi's 2018 murder in Istanbul, drawing a rebuke from Riyadh, which strongly rejected the assessment.

The public censure of the prince and a slew of US sanctions on dozens of Saudi officials marks a sharp departure from the policy of former president Donald Trump, who sought to shield the kingdom's de facto ruler.

But Washington did not slap any direct sanctions on Prince Mohammed, known by his initials MBS, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken explaining that Biden wants to 'recalibrate' but not 'rupture' its relations with Riyadh, a longstanding Middle East partner.

"This is not the Saudi smack-down that many hoped for," said Varsha Koduvayur, a research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a conservative Washington think tank.

"[It indicates] Biden's overall



This file photo friends of murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi with posters bearing his picture at an event marking the second-year anniversary of his assassination in front of Saudi Arabia's Consulate in Istanbul on October 2 last year (AFP)

Saudi stance: Put values at the heart of US foreign policy, emphasise human rights, and reverse the transactional approach of last four years (under Trump) - while preserving the relationship," Koduvayur added.

The Washington-based campaign group Freedom House said

it was 'disappointing and frustrating that the US is yet unwilling to act on its own intelligence' and impose sanctions on the Saudi prince.

"We expect nothing less than justice for Jamal Khashoggi and all of Saudi Arabia's brave dissidents," said the New York-based

Human Rights Foundation, which produced *The Dissident*, a critically acclaimed documentary on the journalist's murder.

"The United States and the European Union must urgently place sanctions on MBS himself."

The intelligence report - which had been withheld after

being completed under Trump - said it was 'highly unlikely' that Khashoggi's murder could have taken place without his green light.

The killing of Khashoggi, a *Washington Post* columnist and critic of Prince Mohammed, also fits a pattern of 'the Crown

Prince's support for using violent measures to silence dissidents abroad', it added.

But Saudi observers dismissed the highly anticipated report, with Ali Shihabi, a government advisor close to the kingdom's royal court, saying the 'thin' assessment lacked a 'smoking gun'.

Soon after the report was made public, the Arabic hashtag 'We are all MBS' began trending on Twitter, with pro-government cyber armies tweeting in support of the Saudi heir apparent.

## Preserving ties

Biden had pledged during his campaign to make the kingdom a 'pariah' after it got a free pass under Trump, but observers say he is instead adopting a middle path.

While scrutinising human rights, his new administration is expected to work to preserve a valuable security partnership while it moves to reboot nuclear talks with Riyadh's arch-enemy Tehran.

Biden also needs to deal with the top crude producer on the highly fraught issues of energy, counterterrorism, and efforts to end the conflict in Yemen.

"The Biden foreign policy team is comprised of seasoned experts who are not so naive as to think that they can achieve their goals in the Middle East without dealing with a Saudi

state that still anchors, though in a less totalising way, both oil and security in the Gulf," said Kristin Diwan of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"For this reason, they have ruled out the sanctioning of Mohammed bin Salman, preserving space to deal with the Saudi state and its top leadership."

Still, Washington on Friday announced the 'Khashoggi Act' that will ban entry into the US of foreigners who threaten dissidents and placed 76 Saudis on the blacklist, in what could serve as a strong deterrent.

Biden also appears to have steered away from his predecessor's transactional relationship with the kingdom, an important buyer of US military hardware.

Recent official statements from the US have called Saudi Arabia a 'security partner', instead of what the Trump administration highlighted as an 'ally'.

In an apparent snub earlier this week, Biden insisted on making his first Saudi phone call to 85 year old King Salman, even as Saudi pro-government supporters insisted that his son, Prince Mohammed, was the kingdom's day-to-day ruler.

"Washington realises that MBS could go on to rule Saudi Arabia for the next half century, so it cannot afford to completely alienate him," a Western diplomat said.

AFP

## Anger over death of writer in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Hundreds of people in Bangladesh took part on Saturday in a second day of demonstrations sparked by the death of a writer at a high security prison in a case that has drawn international concern.

Protesters marched at the University of Dhaka chanting slogans condemning the government's treatment of Mushtaq Ahmed as well as other dissident writers, journalists and activists. Another protest was staged at the National Press Club.

Demonstrators demanded the scrapping of Bangladesh's hardline Digital Security Act (DSA) under which Ahmed was imprisoned. The law has been used to crack down on dissent since it was enacted in 2018.

Security forces clashed with students in Dhaka on Friday night. Police said six people were arrested while activists said at least 30 were injured.

Ahmed collapsed and died at Kashimpur High Security Prison late on Thursday. He was first detained in May after criticising on Facebook the government's handling of the pandemic.

The 53 year old, a crocodile farmer and a writer known for his satirical style, was charged with spreading rumours and conducting 'anti-state activities'.

Protesters have called his death a 'custodial murder' after he was denied bail six times in ten months.

"Mushtaq Ahmed's death was not a normal death. We'll say it was a murder," said Manisha Chakraborty, a protester with a leftwing group.

AFP

# US airstrike on Syrian targets a warning to Iran, says Biden

Washington, US - President Joe Biden said on Friday that a US airstrike against an Iranian-backed militia in eastern Syria, the first since he took office, should be seen by Iran as a warning. Asked what the message was from the airstrike, Biden said: "You can't act with impunity."

"Be careful," he added, speaking in Houston during a tour of relief efforts after a huge winter storm in Texas.

Syria and Iran on Friday condemned the attack with Damascus calling it a 'bad sign' from the new Biden administration and Tehran saying it would further destabilise the region.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said two F-15E 'Strike Eagles' dropped seven precision-guided munitions on Thursday on facilities in eastern Syria used by the militias believed to be behind a spate of rocket attacks on US troops in Iraq.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Biden was sending 'an unambiguous message'.

"He's going to act to protect Americans and when threats are posed, he has the right to take an action at the time and in the manner of his choosing," Psaki said.

Secretary of State Antony



This handout satellite image taken on Friday shows the aftermath of recent US airstrikes on the Syria-Iraq border near Alm-Qaim in Iraq (AFP)

Blinken said the administration wanted to make it 'very, very clear - notably to Iran - that they cannot act with impunity against our people, our partners, our interests'.

"And I think - and expect - that that message was clearly received," Blinken said.

Syria condemned the strike as 'cowardly American aggression'.

"It is a bad sign regarding the policies of the new US administration which should adhere to international (norms)," the Foreign Ministry said.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned what it called 'illegal attacks' that are a

'clear violation of human rights and international law'.

The airstrikes would lead to 'intensifying military conflicts and further destabilise the region', the Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

## Hashed casualties

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 22 fighters from Iraq's state-sponsored Hashed al Shaabi paramilitary force were killed.

It said US warplanes hit three trucks loaded with munitions coming from Iraq near the Syrian border town of Albu Kamal and destroyed border posts of the

Hashed, an umbrella group that includes small militias with ties to Iran.

Kirby said the Pentagon had received 'preliminary details' about casualties but declined to release any figures. He said nine 'facilities' used by the militias were 'totally destroyed' and two 'partially destroyed'.

It was the first US military action targeting such groups since Biden took office five weeks ago and came just as Washington had opened the door to resuming negotiations with Tehran over its nuclear programme.

Kirby said the targeted location was used by Kataeb Hezbollah and Kataeb Sayyid al Shuhada, two Iraqi pro-Iran groups operating under the Hashed.

Kataeb Hezbollah said one of its fighters was killed and slammed the strike as a 'heinous crime in violation of international law'. Kirby said Iraqi and Kurdish partners had provided intelligence that led to the identification of the groups behind the rocket attacks.

Iraq's Defence ministry denied the US had coordinated with it to conduct the strike.

AFP

# India rebuffs UN take on extradition of UK arms dealer

New Delhi, India - India on Saturday hit back at UN rights experts who accused the country of jailing a British arms dealer extradited from the United Arab Emirates in a suspected swap for a runaway princess.

Christian Michel has been imprisoned in India since December 2018 after he was extradited from Dubai on charges of bribing and conspiring with Delhi officials over a major helicopter deal.

On Friday the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) raised concerns that his extradition represented 'a de facto swap' for India's capture and return of a high-profile detainee to the UAE, without providing more details. Michel's detention was politically motivated and without a legal basis, WGAD said, demanding his immediate release and compensation from both nations.

But India's Foreign Ministry on Saturday rejected the assessment and accused the expert group of bias, accusing them of having an 'inaccurate understanding of the country's criminal justice system'.

They said that Michel's re-



Christian Michel

moval was permitted under an extradition treaty between the states. 'The arrest and subsequent custody were done as per the due process of law and cannot be considered arbitrary on any grounds,' it said.

The ministry said Michel has been given all legal rights.

New Delhi did not directly comment, however, on allegations his extradition were part of a 'de facto exchange' for princess Sheikhha Latifa, daughter of Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum.

Latifa attempted to flee her homeland in December 2018 on a boat that was intercepted by commandos off India's coast, according to the UK-based group Detained in Dubai.

AFP

# UN, European states call on Israel to halt demolitions

United Nations - The United Nations and European members of the Security Council on Friday called on Israel to stop demolitions of Bedouin settlements in the Jordan Valley, and for humanitarian access to the community living in Humsa al-Baqia.

In a joint statement at the end of a monthly session of the Security Council on the conflict in the Middle East, Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway and Britain said they were 'deeply concerned at the recent repeated demolitions and confiscation of items, including of EU and donor funded structures carried out by Israeli



This file photo shows beduins of Humsa al-Baqia moving around their settlement two days after Israeli army demolished nearly 80 homes, in east of the occupied West Bank village of Tubas on November 6 last year (AFP)

authorities at Humsa al-Baqia in the Jordan Valley'.

It said the concern was also focused on the 70 people or so living in the Bedouin community, including 41 children.

'We reiterate our call on Israel to halt demolitions and confiscations,' the statement said. 'We further call on Israel to allow full, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to the community in Humsa al-Baqia.'

Humsah al-Baqia in the Jordan Valley, a fertile and strategic patch of land that runs from Lake Tiberias to the Dead Sea, emerged as a flashpoint in the

struggle over the West Bank.

It is in the West Bank's so-called Area C, occupied Palestinian territory that remains under full Israeli military control.

Under Israeli military law, Palestinians cannot build structures in the area without permits, which are typically refused, and demolitions are common.

The UN envoy for the region, Tor Wennesland, also voiced his concerns over the demolitions and land confiscations. He said Israel security forces had 'demolished or confiscated 80 structures' in the Bedouin community.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# New Zealand's largest city in lockdown as virus lingers

Wellington, New Zealand - Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern ordered New Zealand's largest city back into lockdown on Saturday as COVID-19 cases continued to be detected in the community.

The latest restrictions in Auckland will last at least seven days and come less than two weeks after a three-day shutdown in the city.

Ardern said a new coronavirus case confirmed on Saturday could not be directly connected to other positive tests over the last two weeks, although a school in South Auckland was a common link.

From Sunday morning the city's 1.7mn residents must stay at home except for essential shopping and work.

Schools and non-essential shops will close, and entry in and out of the city will be restricted.

The remainder of the country will be under level two restrictions which include limits on the size of public gatherings.

Ardern said there was 'cause for concern' that the latest case involved a person who had been infectious for a week but had not been in isolation.

Since the latest outbreak first emerged in a family of three, several people have reported



From Sunday morning the Auckland city's 1.7mn residents must stay at home except for essential shopping and work (AFP)

*There is a cause for concern that the latest case involved a person who had been infectious for a week but had not been in isolation*

JACINDA ARDERN



symptoms, with the school in South Auckland the connecting factor.

Ardern blamed the creeping spread of community infection on people not isolating when

they should have been.

In the latest case the person visited a doctor on Friday and then went to the gym.

"It's frustrating," Ardern said. Authorities have the ability to take enforcement action against rule breakers but that needed to be balanced with ensuring people with symptoms came forward, the prime minister added.

"We will always weigh up, are we creating an environment

where people will be open and honest?" she said. "We are dealing with young people here and what we ask them to do is share with us their entire lives, and it's very important that we have a situation where people are able and willing to do that."

New Zealand has been widely praised for its handling of the pandemic, with just 26 deaths in a population of 5mn.

AFP



Policemen get ready to patrol a promenade in the city of Nice during the first weekend lockdown, on Saturday (AFP)

## Virus killed over 2.5mn globally

Paris, France - The novel coronavirus has killed at least 2,518,080 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources at 1100 GMT on Saturday.

At least 113,374,410 cases of coronavirus have been registered. Of these, at least 69,506,100 are now considered recovered.

These figures are based on daily tolls provided by health authorities in each country and exclude later re-evaluations by statistical organisations, as has happened in Russia, Spain and Britain.

On Friday, 9,676 new deaths and 421,848 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were the US with 2,046 new deaths, followed by Brazil with 1,337 and Mexico with 782.

The US is the worst-af-

ected country with 510,467 deaths from 28,486,575 cases. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 252,835 deaths from 10,455,630 cases, Mexico with 184,474 deaths from 2,076,882 cases, India with 156,938 deaths from 11,079,979 cases, and Britain with 122,415 deaths from 4,163,085 cases.

The country with the highest number of deaths compared to its population is Belgium with 190 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Czech Republic with 189, Slovenia 184, Britain 180 and Italy 161.

Europe has 848,583 deaths from 37,377,892 cases, Latin America and the Caribbean 673,866 deaths from 21,221,851 infections, and the US and Canada 532,372 deaths from 29,346,951 cases.

AFP

# Canadian wants no presents, just COVID vaccine for 94th birthday

Toronto, Canada - All a Canadian woman wants for her 94th birthday is a COVID-19 vaccine, according to a handwritten sign outside her home in Toronto.

'I am 94 today! No gifts, just the vaccine please,' it reads.

Nina Rockett's daughter Margot made and hung the banner at her mother's house in Canada's largest metropolis when she turned one year older on February 24, amid mounting frustrations with the relatively slow pace of Canada's vaccine rollout.

Canada has ordered or reserved more than 400mn doses of vaccine from seven suppliers,

and started inoculating its citizens in December 2020 with the first authorised candidates made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. A third one developed by AstraZeneca was approved on Friday.

But the nation, with no vaccine production capacity of its own, hit a bump in the past month with shortages and delivery delays linked to European manufacturing issues.

So far less than three percent of Canada's population of 38mn has received at least one shot.

"It was the night before my mother's birthday and I realised she is turning 94 and she has no



Nina Rockett's (in the photo) daughter showed her frustration over the government's slow rollout of vaccine by making and hanging the banner outside her mother's house on the birthday on February 24 (Twitter)

vaccine," Margot said in an interview with AFP.

She lamented 'a lot of broken promises' and a lack of firm information from doctors, public health officials and governments. Each of Canada's ten provinces is responsible for administering vaccines purchased in bulk and distributed by the federal government.

"What is happening here is terrible, is shameful," she said. "I was fed up and I thought I just want the world to know that she is 94 and she is worthy of having the vaccine - and she wants it."

As she spoke, the sounds of a passing car honking its horn

broke the uneasy quiet of the neighbourhood in a city that has been in a pandemic lockdown since December 26.

It's been two days of 'horns honking, thumbs up, (passersby) yelling I support you' and sharing stories of being unable to see their isolated elderly parents or grandparents for fear of unwittingly passing on the novel coronavirus to them, Margot Rockett said.

"I think everybody should hang a banner like this" to raise awareness of the plight of the elderly in Canada over the past year, she commented.

AFP

## Hostages released after ten days in Nigeria

Lagos, Nigeria - Abductors have freed 42 people, including 27 children, snatched from a school in central Nigeria ten days ago, officials said on Saturday, a day after more than 300 schoolgirls were abducted by gunmen in the northwest.

"The abducted students, staff and relatives of Government Science College Kagara have regained their freedom and have been received by the Niger state government," Niger state governor Abubakar Sani Bello said on Twitter.

In mid-February, gunmen in military uniforms raided the college, killing one student and taking 42 others - including 27 schoolboys, three teachers and other relatives of school staff, officials said.

Northwest and central Nigeria have seen a surge in attacks by heavily armed criminal gangs locally known as 'bandits' who raid villages, killing and abducting residents after looting and torching homes.

On Friday, in the Jangebe, a village in Zamfara state, a sus-

pected criminal gang attacked the Government Girls Science Secondary School in the country's third school attack in less than three months - a series that has revived traumatic memories of the 'Chibok girls' kidnapped by extremists nearly seven years ago.

Zamfara State Police Command, working with the military, 'commenced a joint search and rescue operations with a view to rescuing the 317 students', police spokesman Mohammed Shehu said.

The situation in Jangebe was tense as local people vented their anger on journalists, security personnel and officials who arrived in the village.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari condemned the latest kidnapping as 'inhumane and totally unacceptable'.

'This administration will not succumb to blackmail by bandits who target innocent school students in the expectations of huge ransom payments,' he said in a statement on Friday.

AFP

# Myanmar police forces fire rubber bullets on protesters as UN diplomat breaks ranks

Yangon, Myanmar - Myanmar police fired rubber bullets to disperse protesters in Yangon on Saturday, after the country's ambassador to the United Nations broke ranks to make an emotional plea for action against the military junta.

The country has been shaken by a wave of protests since a coup toppled civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1.

Authorities have ramped up the use of force to suppress dissent, deploying tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets to disperse some protests. Live rounds have been used in isolated cases.

In Myanmar's biggest city Yangon on Saturday, police used rubber bullets to disperse a demonstration at Myaynigone junction, the site of an hours-long standoff the day before.

"What are the police doing? They are protecting a crazy dictator," the protesters chanted as they were chased away by the police.

Hundreds of ethnic Mon pro-



Police arrest protesters following a demonstration against the military coup, in Yangon on Saturday (AFP)

testers had gathered there to commemorate Mon National Day and protest the coup, joined by other minority groups.

They scattered into residential streets and started building

makeshift barricades out of barbed wire and tables to stop the police. Many wore hard hats and gas masks, wielding homemade shields for protection.

At least 20 protesters were

arrested, a police official confirmed.

Local reporters broadcast the chaotic scenes live on Facebook, including the moments when the shots rang out, which AFP re-

ported on the ground also witnessed.

"We will try to find another way to protest - of course, we are afraid of their crackdown," said protester Moe Moe (23), who used a pseudonym. "We want to fight until we win."

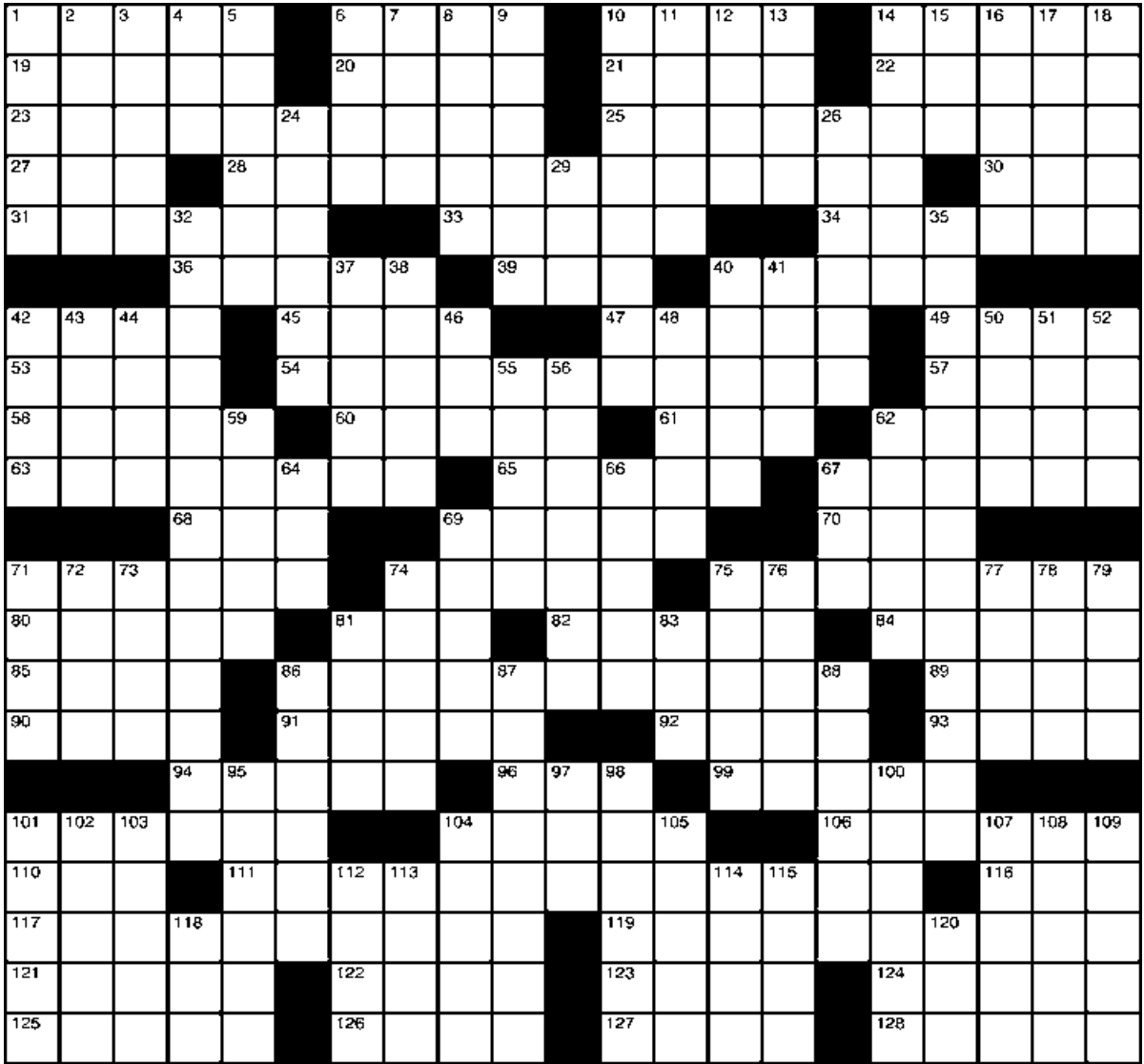
At least three journalists were among those detained, including an Associated Press photographer, a video journalist from Myanmar Now, and a photographer from the Myanmar Pressphoto Agency.

At nearby Hledan junction several rounds of stun grenades were fired, according to AFP reporters, and a police source said more than 140 people had been arrested. Another protest near a shopping centre in nearby Tamwe Township was broken up by police.

Similar scenes of chaos played out across Myanmar as demonstrators entered their fourth week of daily protests against the junta.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 1 Computer communication device
- 6 Highly excited
- 10 Hence, to Caesar
- 14 British streetcars
- 19 Burn \_\_\_ in one's pocket
- 20 Zeus' wife
- 21 Synagogue
- 22 Allow
- 23 Plateaus
- 25 Fit for inhabiting
- 27 Stray
- 28 Cookbook quantity
- 30 Ever, to Byron
- 31 Very harmful
- 33 Harvests
- 34 \_\_\_ blanc: French sauce
- 36 Indian tenant farmers
- 39 Dine
- 40 Stone heap
- 42 Church recess
- 45 Russian range
- 47 A Barrymore
- 49 Moist
- 53 Win and show
- 54 Complete meals
- 57 Iroquoian
- 58 Let

- 60 Of early Sanskrit constellation
- 62 A Kilmer poem
- 63 Superintend
- 65 Tomcod or pollock
- 67 Floating
- 68 King Cole
- 69 Belonging to Leander's lover
- 70 Residue
- 71 Linear measure
- 74 Ill-tempered
- 75 Scorn
- 80 Terminate
- 81 Feel ill
- 82 Inventor Howe
- 84 Ornamental cases
- 85 Milkweed
- 86 Ping-pong
- 89 Nick and Nora's dog
- 90 Slight
- 91 Synthetic fiber
- 92 Donjon
- 93 Endure
- 94 Faithful
- 96 Weep
- 99 Train
- 101 Vein
- 104 Eliot's cruelest month
- 106 Double dagger
- 110 Card game

- 111 Reverse a situation
- 116 Tidbit for a pangolin
- 117 Out in the open
- 119 Capable of being introduced from abroad
- 121 Heads
- 122 Moselle feeder
- 123 Vegas lights
- 124 Daytime's TV icon
- 125 Small drink
- 126 Being
- 127 Actor Peck, to friends
- 128 Old English courts
- DOWN**
- 1 Married
- 2 Chicago hub
- 3 Sao Tome and Principe money
- 4 Building wing
- 5 Suitably
- 6 Pequod skipper
- 7 Col.'s superior
- 8 "Law and \_\_\_"
- 9 Fumigates
- 10 Barred
- 11 Elec. devices
- 12 "Project Runway's" Tim
- 13 Norse king
- 14 British journal
- 15 Letters on a

- vitamin bottle
- 16 Brownish-yellow
- 17 Distance runner
- 18 Cubic meter
- 24 Arrangement
- 26 Marriageable
- 29 City by the Pyrénes
- 32 Vanity
- 35 Covertly
- 37 Crossbeam
- 38 Toothy tiger
- 40 Harmony
- 41 Philippine native
- 42 Competent
- 43 Hammer part
- 44 Dateless
- 46 Law deg.
- 48 Massenet opera
- 50 Scope
- 51 Appearance
- 52 Nuisance
- 55 "The \_\_\_ Sanction"
- 56 Brilliant red
- 59 Growing outward
- 62 Savor
- 64 Old English letter
- 66 Holmes's creator
- 67 River in Thailand
- 69 Greeting
- 71 Girl, in Glasgow
- 72 Black
- 73 "\_\_\_, the Killer Whale"

- 74 Sorceress
- 75 Flogged
- 76 Willow
- 77 Ponder
- 78 Pocket bread
- 79 Despot
- 81 Wide shoe width
- 83 Black, red or India
- 86 Audition
- 87 Enclose in a globe
- 88 Arachnid
- 95 Supplicate
- 97 Mine yield
- 98 Caustic
- 100 Architectural fillet
- 101 Drops heavily
- 102 Chinese province
- 103 Bingo resembler
- 104 Book of maps
- 105 More ineffectual
- 107 Marten species
- 108 Fiord
- 109 British carbines
- 112 Demolish, in London
- 113 Basketballer's orgs.
- 114 Elks' gp.
- 115 Yearn
- 118 Female pronoun
- 120 Ginger \_\_\_

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You have a lot of interesting opportunities now, so you can afford to be very selective about which ones to accept. You shouldn't say yes to all the invitations you've received. You won't have enough energy to enjoy them all. It's important to have balance in your life, so partying all the time is just as bad as never partying at all! But don't forget that you'll have to do things out of obligation too.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You could have a lot of warm conversations with people, so enjoy discovering the softer side of the folks you used to think were hard to get along with. Whether this change in the temperature is due to their change of heart or your overwhelming charm isn't relevant. All that matters is that things are getting better and you're connecting with more types of people than ever before.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Timing is everything, and that's never more applicable than in a romantic situation. Luckily, you've got great timing right now, so if you have been waiting to work up the nerve to ask someone out, you'll suddenly start to feel a lot braver about the idea. You should take a philosophical view of the proposition and not worry so much whether they'll accept your invitation or not.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You're going to feel more idealistic. The world looks like a great big bunch of happy people who want only the best for each other, and you're one of them. Getting back in touch with your more positive self is going to feel good. Even if you get into an argument with someone who woke up on the wrong side of the bed, you're going to be able to cheerfully agree to disagree.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Your day could get off to a vocally aggressive start. Jumping to conclusions could put you in an awkward spot if you're trying to navigate tricky communications. The times when getting angry or overreacting will help your case are few and far between. Try to look at situations calmly and keep your blood pressure in check!



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Today you need to put the past behind you. Accept what it was and try to learn from it. There is no way to change it, so you need to settle in and be comfortable with it. What you did (or didn't do) will fade as time goes by. Your patience is strong and it will get you through the rough parts. The people who love you will offer you great distractions too, so talk with your friends.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's fine to start being tighter with your money. Being thrifty right now is wise. Just don't let the idea of saving every single penny take over your world. Obsessions of any kind are not optimal, but an obsession with saving money could alienate you from other people. Just as you have to invest in your financial health, you need to invest in your social health. Don't bow out of something fun.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Friends and family are foremost in your mind right now because they're the people who always have your back. New faces may promise intrigue, excitement, or even romance, but they could also bring nothing but stress, disappointment, and drama. What you need right now is reliability. You need to be with people who know you inside and out. That's the best way to relax.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Emotional breakthroughs don't come along every day, so when you start to feel like you're coming to a realisation today, you need to stop whatever you're doing and devote some serious time to contemplating what it all means. If you just can't afford an hour to sit by yourself, at least try to make some time later. Your mind is in the right place to look at tender issues with a new eye.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

The two sides of you, your public persona and your private persona, need to be kept separate. And make that separation stick. The people who want you to mix the two halves together don't necessarily have your best interests at heart. They aren't thinking selfishly, but they are thinking senselessly. Maybe they can meld their two halves together seamlessly, but you can't.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

A friend needs your advice somewhat desperately, but they're too embarrassed to talk to you about it. So turn on your antennas and keep an eye out for which friend it might be. Send a few e-mails to the likely party and just check in with how they are. They'll appreciate you meeting them halfway in this situation. It makes them feel like you're really there for them.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

It's time for you to starting using your wonderful creativity to its full potential. It's good for more than just writing cute little notes inside birthday cards, you know. Go get some inspiration outside, or, if the weather doesn't make a long walk possible, at least spend some time looking out the window at the wonders of nature. Then think about what interests you and intrigues you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The world's largest international organisation and a successor to the League of Nations is
- a. UNESCO
  - b. UNO
  - c. UNICEF
  - d. None of the above

2. Tomb of Vasco-da-Gama is situated at
- a. Chittorgarh (Rajasthan)
  - b. Kochi (Kerala)
  - c. Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu)
  - d. Durgapur (West Bengal)

3. UNO Day is on
- a. 20<sup>th</sup> July
  - b. 24<sup>th</sup> October
  - c. 14<sup>th</sup> November
  - d. 12<sup>th</sup> February

Answers: 1: b 2: b 3: b

KIDS COLOURING



DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

BOGGLER

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| M | E | M | Y |
| W | O | A | R |
| O | A | P | E |
| N | A | B | R |

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 7 |   |
| 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| 8 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 5 |
| 6 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 8 |
| 7 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| 8 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 1 |
| 1 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 2 |

|            |         |        |         |
|------------|---------|--------|---------|
| CAIM       | ATLAS   | RAPID  | CLEW    |
| EMUS       | LEAST   | THINE  | LAIA    |
| EAST       | MEDIA   | ACHES  | OWAR    |
| THEAIGON   | YAIN    | THEECS | TAISY   |
| TOSS       | ORIAN   | RAH    |         |
| ACIDENT    | THATIS  | WHITTE | CAIP    |
| SHALLE     | SHARP   | TRITIB | CAPE    |
| TTIO       | ACATIO  | SUGIO  | ACHIE   |
| ONE        | MORICU  | WARING | TRITAIL |
| ROTARIAN   | BALLT   | BROODS |         |
| ANAMERICAN | ANDREAM |        |         |
| CAPIES     | ABO     | BELL   | GALE    |
| OLIOS      | TOILES  | DEALT  | REG     |
| MINN       | SHOLE   | GRADO  | GAOS    |
| THE        | BALES   | GRADY  | GRAND   |
| ENDANGER   | TRAMS   | LINDEN |         |
| LEA        | ORIAN   | PANG   |         |
| WICKLE     | MEIS    | MARK   | WAIN    |
| AAIR       | OREGAD  | SEBIS  | ALICE   |
| SNAG       | RIODIE  | UTTER  | YAWN    |
| BLAGE      | ELASID  | RIEDS  | HALE    |

WORD BUILDER

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

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





Sacha Jafri with his huge canvas

# JOURNEY OF HUMANITY

World's largest art canvas to raise \$30mn for charity

**B**ritish artist Sacha Jafri on Thursday unveiled 70 framed sections of his work 'Journey of Humanity', the world's largest painting on canvas, which will be auctioned off to raise millions for charity.

The 44-year-old contemporary artist hopes his Guinness World Record-holding painting, which spanned 1,595.7 sqm of the ballroom at Dubai's Atlantis, The Palm hotel, will spark a humanitarian movement. The colourful painting now adorns the walls of the luxury hotel's ballroom in 70 separate framed pieces of varying sizes that will be sold at auc-

tions in the coming years.

The aim is to raise at least \$30mn to fund health, sanitation and education initiatives for children in impoverished parts of the world. But Jafri, who is currently based in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, said he has an even bigger goal.

"I don't want this to be a one-off thing. I want to actually help change the world, and the way to do that is we're going to put the internet in all the poorest communities of the world," the artist told AFP. "Then we can bring education in, and give (children) a real education. And where are they going to put that? Back into their community."

"All you need is five success stories from

those communities and you can change the world. That's what we're going to try to do. It's going to take 10 years, but we can do it."

**Humanity-inspired**

For Jafri, the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic across the globe has resonated with him, highlighting a break between humanity and the planet and driving him to focus his efforts on connecting people to counter its impact on children.

"When humanity becomes disconnected from the soul of the Earth, it's a far bigger problem than COVID-19 will ever be," he said. "We were allowing the destruction of the planet, that's well known, but what isn't well

known is that we were allowing the destruction of humanity. That's unforgivable," added Jafri, sporting a paint-splattered blazer over jeans, a white T-shirt and cowboy boots.

Children from 140 countries submitted artwork online to be included in Jafri's creation, which was completed at the end of September, shortly before it was confirmed by Guinness World Records as the "Largest Art Canvas".

"It depicts the soul of the Earth, nature, humanity itself, the love and nurture of the mother, the guidance and protection of the father, as they guide their child through life and enable them to feel safe, loved and brave, so they can grow their wings, make their dreams

come true, and take them into the solar system," Jafri asserts.

**Herculean effort**

**Time taken** - The artwork took Jafri seven months to complete.

**Pace of work** - He worked around 18 to 20 hours a day.

**Material used** - He used more than 6,000 litres (1,500 gallons) of paint.

**Tools needed** - Over 1,000 brushes were his key tools.

**Task** - Laying 300 layers of colour on the massive canvas.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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**BIRTHDAY WISHES**



**RIDA FATIMA RIZVI**  
February 28

Dear Rida,  
Wishing you a very Happy Birthday. May God bless you always!  
With lots of love and blessings -  
Grandparents, Papa, Mamma & Ayaan



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ART MENTALITY

BEHIND THE BRUSH

Hubert Vaz

The definition of art has taken on many forms ever since its evolution from cave art during the stone age (when the sole purpose of art was said to be the need to transmit information) to contemporary art since the second half of the 20th century wherein art is not bound by any single objective.

Leo Tolstoy's *What is Art?* (1896), a treatise concerning the nature and purpose of art, does not define art in terms of its ability to express form and beauty, but instead defines art in terms of its ability to communicate concepts of morality. According to Tolstoy, art cannot be defined as an activity which produces beauty, rather it is an important means of expression

of any experience or of any aspect of the human condition.

Tolstoy defines art as an expression of a feeling or experience in such a way that the audience to whom the art is directed can share that feeling or experience. However, the more that art restricts itself to a particular audience, the more obscure and incomprehensible it becomes to people outside that particular audience, he states.

According to Tolstoy, the most important quality of any work of art is its sincerity. He claims that professionalism causes a lack of sincerity in the artist, and argues that if an artist must earn a living by producing art, then the art which is produced is more likely to be false and insincere.

On the other hand, Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, attributes much of art to the intellect's amazing ability

to recognise patterns and the human tendency to imitate. Humans clearly take pleasure in discovering likenesses, and according to Aristotle, much of our compulsive need to create art comes from this pleasure. However, imitation is not the only purpose of art.

To take it a step further, Aristotle believed that part of the artistic exercise was not only to capture what we see, but to make it more extraordinary by removing its imperfections. According to Aristotle, art is an attempt to grasp at universal truths in individual happenstances. He took a particular interest in tragedy through art, which he described as an 'imitation of action'.

Artists in Oman, when asked to choose relevant words to represent the three alphabets of the word 'ART', fished out a whole range of meaningful words that not only represented how they view art but also

provided a window to their own mindsets. Most also said the ability to think creatively and out of the box, as well as the need to present inspiration in diverse artistic forms is what sets artists apart from other human beings. And, if granted one wish, most wished for creating meaningful art with far reaching consequences for a better world.

Here are some of their responses to 3 questions:

1. What words would you choose to represent the alphabets A R T?
2. What makes artists different from other human beings?
3. If granted one wish for your artistic career, what would you wish for?



Sushmita Gupta

1. A - Avocado, R - Rhododendron, T - Tambourine.
2. Openness to accept ideas.
3. To have my art projected on the walls of Red Fort (in India) and forts of Muscat.



Sheffy Tattarath

1. Always Remember about your Time - because we artists don't know what it really means!
2. Thank God, you reminded me. But we are being human, rather than human beings.
3. To have my own store of painting material, so that I can have access to it at any time.



Dr Hafsa Banu

1. A - Aesthetic, R - Respect, T - Tranquility.
2. Artists belong to a different world all together. Their perception and imagination of beauty and everything in this world and beyond is way different from other humans.
3. I wish I could meet and work with more like-minded artists who have the same perception and outlook like I do - a sense of acceptance, unique yet different.



Tahira Fida

1. A - Artwork, R - Represent, T - Talent.
2. What makes me different from others is that I always try to look at things from 'outside the box' or from a creative perspective, a beautiful angle.
3. I wish to be fully devoted to improve art knowledge in Oman.



Saleem Sakhi

1. A - Art, R - Remember, T - Timeliness.
2. What makes artists different from others is their vision.
3. I wish for true appreciation.



Hafsa Abdullah Salim al Tamimi

1. A - Art & heart, R - Reality, T - Talent.
2. What makes artists stand out from the rest is their sense of feeling.
3. I wish to be very famous, such that everyone around the world should view my art.



Elizabeth Davis

1. A - Abstract, R - Relaxing, T - Thankful.
2. All human beings are artists, some of them have just forgotten it...
3. A masterpiece.



Olga Velikaya

1. Ability to Recreate the True form.
2. Ability to see beyond the image or form. An artist doesn't just see a white cloud, he/she sees purple, blue, grey, white, pink, forms that resemble another object. Sometimes, their vision could be compared to the way children see the world.
3. Publishing a book with my writing and drawings.



Matti Sirvio

1. Always Ready to Think.
2. His/her inner self.
3. To hang art in 100 Omani villas.



Farideh Zariv

1. A - Ability, R - Right direction, T - Talent.
2. Creativity and inspiration, and using the power of inspiration and imagination.
3. I wish to present my works of art in museums and galleries, and let my works reach private collections and culture/art lovers.



Harini Kumar

1. A - Artistry, R - Rejuvenating, T - Treat (a treat to the eyes).
2. The ability to look at things from a different perspective. The ability to make even the mundane things look interesting.
3. My thoughts are always racing ahead and I always feel I don't have enough time to complete what I have in mind. My wish would be to catch up with my thoughts.



Farah Asquil

1. A - Artist, R - Read, T - Thought.
2. What makes an artist different is, often they are vulnerable, deeply sensitive people who look at the world differently due to their wild imagination and influences. But, they display themselves to the world regardless of this.
3. My dream is for Oman to have its own pavilion in the Venice Biennale and for myself to be a participating artist.

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

City's record run one of my greatest feats: Guardiola



Manchester City's John Stones (L) celebrates after scoring against West Ham at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, UK, on Saturday night (AFP)

**ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**  
Manchester, UK - Pep Guardiola rates Manchester City's 20-game winning run as one of the greatest achievements of his glittering career. City moved 13 points clear at the top of the English Premier League with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over West Ham at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday. Guardiola's side are unbeaten in 27 games and their run of 20 successive victories in all competitions is a record for an English top-flight side.

The Spaniard has won 29 trophies as a manager with Barcelona, Bayern Munich and

City, including consecutive Premier League titles in 2018 and 2019. But Guardiola believes City's remarkable winning streak this season, amid a pandemic and despite injuries to Sergio Aguero and Kevin De Bruyne, is up there with his finest moments. "It is so difficult. Twenty in this period, in this era, with this situation around the world. To be able to do 20 is maybe one of the greatest achievements we have done together in our careers," Guardiola said.

"That doesn't mean we will win titles but we have not had one week's rest in three months.

A game every three days, with the Covid situation, injury situations - to make this winning run shows mental strength."

Ruben Dias, imperious since signing from Benfica in September, put City ahead with his first goal for the club. Michail Antonio equalised for West Ham just before half-time, but the revitalised John Stones bagged the winner with a fine strike after the break.

"It was really difficult. After 10-15 minutes today we realise we are not going to paint anything beautiful," Guardiola said.

"Second half we were much better than the first half. When



Pep Guardiola

you play a lot of games, in the league and then the Champions League, this is normal. "We were lucky to get all three points. The mathematics matter at the end of the season."

Barca defeat Sevilla to reignite La Liga hopes

**SPANISH LEAGUE**  
Seville, Spain - Barcelona reignited their title hopes after Lionel Messi and Ousmane Dembele scored in a 2-0 victory over Sevilla on Saturday to put them two points behind Atletico Madrid.

Atletico still have two games in hand, the first of those coming against sixth-placed Villarreal on Sunday, but a dip in form from La Liga's leaders has given their chasing rivals hope. This was their ninth win out of ten in La Liga, a surge that has put them back in contention, with Atletico playing against Real Madrid next weekend.

On Saturday, it took a counter-attack for Barcelona



Lionel Messi (L) celebrates

to take the lead. Messi curling the decisive one through for Dembele to race clear and finish. Sevilla's fightback was brief and ended by Messi with six minutes left. He traded passes with Dembele, nipped inside Diego Carlos and tried to finish with a chip. Bono saved but the ball came to Messi, one yard out.

AFP

Elsewhere, Brighton lost 0-1 at West Brom with hosts' defender Kyle Bartley giving them an early lead.

**GERMAN LEAGUE**  
Bayern Munich go five points clear  
Berlin, Germany - Robert Lewandowski and Serge Gnabry both scored twice as Bayern Munich romped to a 5-1 win at home to Cologne on Saturday to open up a five-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga.

Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting headed Bayern into an early lead before Lewandowski, the

league's top scorer, struck twice to increase his league tally for the season to 28 goals.

Gnabry came off the bench to claim two late goals at the Allianz Arena on his first appearance since tearing his thigh a fortnight ago in Bayern's Club World Cup final win in Qatar.

**OTHER RESULTS**  
**SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP:**  
Celtic 1 Aberdeen 0, Hibernian 0 Motherwell 2, St Mirren 1 Ross County 0, Kilmarnock 1 Dundee United 1.

AFP

QUICK RUN

**Rally legend 'Flying Finn' Mikkola dies aged 78**  
Hannu Mikkola, one of the top-ten rally drivers of all time, has died of cancer aged 78, his sons and the World Rally Championship have said. "Yes, this sad news is correct," a World Rally Championship (WRC) spokesperson said on Saturday. The Ford and Audi driver, known as the 'Flying Finn', won the coveted World Rally Championship in 1983 and Finland's notoriously unnerving 1000 Lakes Rally seven times. Mikkola began his career at Volvo, won his first World Rally Championship race in a Ford Escort and secured his only championship with Audi, his Quattro ushering in the four-wheel drive revolution. He retired professionally from motor sport in 1993, with a career total of 18 wins on the WRC stage, the last coming in Kenya in 1987.

**Woods in 'good spirits' after follow up treatment**  
Tiger Woods is recovering and in 'good spirits' after a second day of treatment at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center following his horrific rollover solo car smash that left him with serious leg injuries. The golf superstar was transferred to Cedars-Sinai on Wednesday night after undergoing emergency surgery the day before at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center to repair compound fractures sustained in each leg in addition to a shattered ankle. "Tiger and his family want to thank you all for the wonderful support and messages they have received over the past few days," said a statement on Woods' Twitter account. "We will not have any further updates at this time. Thank you for your continued privacy."

**Sampaoli named new coach of Marseille**  
Marseille have appointed Jorge Sampaoli as their new coach, the troubled French club's American owner Frank McCourt announced in a statement on Friday. Sampaoli, a much-travelled Argentine, replaces Andre Villas-Boas who was suspended on February 2. McCourt, who promised 'profound changes' at the club, also replaced president Jacques-Henri Eyraud, who has become a target of fan discontent, with sporting director Pablo Longoria. Marseille, second when last season was cut short, are seventh this season, 20 points behind leaders Lille. The 60 year old is a former Chile, Argentina and Sevilla coach. He has signed a contract with Marseille until June 2023.

AFP

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Ireland's Hugo Keenan celebrates after scoring a try against Italy

Improved Ireland cruise past Italy

**SIX NATIONS RUGBY**  
Rome, Italy - Ireland got their first Six Nations win this campaign with a 48-10 victory over Italy as the hosts fell to their 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive defeat in the tournament. Tries from Garry Ringrose, Hugo Keenan and Will Connors lifted the Irish 27-10 at half-time.

And CJ Stander, Connors, Keith Earls added three more after the break for a bonus-point win for the Irish who had lost their opening two games against France and Wales.

Captain Johnny Sexton marked his return with 18 points

on the day in the Stadio Olimpico. "Thankfully we got victory we were desperate for," said Sexton. "Proud of the way we stick together and very happy to come to a tough place like this."

Italy's six-year drought continued as Franco Smith's side are without a win in the tournament since beating Scotland in Murrayfield back in 2015.

The Azzurri have not beaten Ireland since 2013 with Irish trio Iain Henderson, Dave Kilcoyne and Cian Healy the only survivors of that clash on duty on Saturday.

AFP

Mehran shines for Al Turki; Asif stars for Renaissance

**LOCAL CRICKET**  
Allrounder Mehran Khan's five for 23 guided Al Turki NMC to a four-wicket win against IT Works in an Oman Cricket Premier Division (50-over-a-side) game at Al Amerat on Friday.

Also on Friday, in a T20 Premier Division match at the same venue, Asif Khan's allround show powered Renaissance CT to an emphatic 65-run victory against AER.

(Akshay Patel 58, Twinkal Bhandari 28; Mohammed Nadeem 4-48).

**Premier Division (T20): Renaissance 176-7** (Asif Khan 51, Rafi Ullah 39; Muzahir Raza 2-34) beat **AER 111 in 19.2 overs** (Mahbub Alam 34; Faizal Jerome 4-15, Asif Khan 2-21).

**A Division (50-over-a-side): Basta CT 204 in 47 overs** (Prasad Peruli 83, Chirag 41; Khalid al Balushi 2-25, Mohammed Aslam 2-28, Shaed Ali 2-38) beat **OCT Muscat 192 in 46.2 overs** (Munthir al Balushi 36, Shaed Ali 2; Shaheer Najeed 3-22, Mohammed Abbas 3-24, Nazish Mohammed 2-34).



Mehran Khan (left) and Akshay Patel of Al Turki NMC

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# 'India Test pitch pushed England to extremes'

England coach Silverwood says the experience will toughen his players

## INDIA VS ENGLAND TEST SERIES

Ahmedabad, India - The Indian Test pitch on which England lost in two days pushed the players to 'extremes' but the experience will toughen them for the final clash of the series, coach Chris Silverwood said on Friday.

Trailing 2-1 to India after the ten-wicket mauling in Ahmedabad, Silverwood said captain Joe Root and his players must now find a way to 'come out fighting'. The pitch has faced criticism from pundits though the England management have said nothing publicly. "Whatever the pitch did or didn't do, India ultimately played better than us on that surface," said Silverwood.

"But it probably pushed us to the extremes of what any of our players... have experienced."

The conditions have clearly ranked within the England camp.

"We will be talking about certain things behind the scenes. Joe and I have to sit down, have a conversation and see where we go with it," the coach added.

After scoring just 193 runs in two innings, Silverwood acknowledged that England will have to work hard on their confidence before the fourth and final Test starts on March 4 at the same 110,000 capacity stadium. The coach said the team must aim to 'make amends and come out fighting for the next one and hopefully draw the series'.

Many of the young side, ranging from Zak Crawley to Ollie Pope and Dom Sibley, on their first tour of South Asia, have come through a traumatic experience in Ahmedabad. "As tough as it is at the moment, hopefully this will galvanise them," he said. "When they do get on flat surfaces, better surfaces, it will make them even more hungry



England coach Chris Silverwood (right) chats with skipper Joe Root during a training session

and desperate to make sure they get runs. "When we travel to other countries, such as Australia, hopefully if they get themselves in they'll get greedy and go big. This experience will just harden them towards that.

"Equally, the next time they experience a situation like this, it won't be as much of a shock to them. As tough as it is and as painful as it is at this moment, hopefully we can take some good lessons."

Silverwood backed India captain Virat Kohli's assertion that the batting on both sides had suffered. He said the coaching staff were coming up for 'counter-actions' for the next time they have to face spin duo Axar Patel, who took 11 wickets in the match, and R Ashwin, whose seven wickets took him past 400 in Tests.

AFP

## Indian fast bowler Bumrah leaves Test side for 'personal reasons'

Ahmedabad, India - India said on Saturday that star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has left the squad for the England Test series for 'personal reasons'.

The surprise move came only two days after India, with Bumrah in the side, thrashed England in the third Test inside two days to take a 2-1 series lead. The final match starts on Thursday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said Bumrah had asked 'to be released from India's squad ahead of the fourth Test owing to personal reasons'.

"Accordingly, the fast



Jasprit Bumrah

bowler has been released and he will not be available for selection for the fourth Test."

The BCCI said no replacement would be called up.

Bumrah, who has become India's pace spearhead in

recent years, bowled only six overs in England's first innings this week and none in the second innings when only spin bowlers were used.

Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Siraj are the other two pacers India can call upon in Bumrah's absence. Yadav was added to the squad ahead of the third Test after recovering from a calf injury he sustained on the tour of Australia. If the team management chooses to play an extra spinner or an allrounder, then Kuldeep Yadav or Hardik Pandya could come into the fray.

Agencies



Chris Gayle

## Gayle returns to WI T20 squad

St John's, Antigua and Barbuda - Chris Gayle was called into the West Indies Twenty20 squad on Friday for the first time in two years as the 41 year old eyes a place in the World Cup later this year.

Gayle, one of cricket's global superstars, was named in the 14-man squad for the three-game series against Sri Lanka which starts in Antigua on Wednesday.

The charismatic Gayle wants to help steer West Indies to a successful defence of their World Twenty20 title in India in October and November.

The Jamaican opening batsman played the last of his 58 T20 internationals against England on home turf in March 2019.

He has made 1,627 runs in the format with a highest score of 117 at an average of over 32.

"As we build towards the defence of the T20 World Cup, the opportunity is being taken to determine our best team and squad as we go forward," said chief selector Roger Harper.

"Chris Gayle has performed very well in recent tournaments and the selection panel thinks that he can still add great value to our team."

Gayle has been playing in the Pakistan Super League but will break off to resume his international career in the three games against Sri Lanka taking place on March 3, 5 and 7.

Also back in favour is 39 year old fast bowler Fidel Edwards, who hasn't played for the West Indies since 2012.

The three-game floodlight series will be the first T20 internationals to be played at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

Three ODIs will also be played in Antigua at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on March 10, 12 and 14.

**T20 squad:** Kieron Pollard (captain), Nicholas Pooran (vice-captain), Fabien Allen, Dwayne Bravo, Fidel Edwards, Andre Fletcher, Chris Gayle, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Evin Lewis, Obed McCoy, Rovman Powell, Lendl Simmons, Kevin Sinclair.

**ODI squad:** Kieron Pollard (captain), Shai Hope (vice-captain), Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Kyle Mayers, Jason Mohammed, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shephard, Kevin Sinclair.

AFP

## NZC moves matches to Wellington

Wellington, New Zealand - New Zealand Cricket (NZC) has relocated next week's T20Is in Auckland involving the Australia men's team and the England women's side to Wellington, after Auckland was put into a week-long COVID-19 lockdown. The remaining matches of the two tours are set to be played behind closed doors.

A community coronavirus outbreak in Auckland has forced New Zealand cricket bosses to hastily reschedule two T20 matches against Australia as other affected sports assessed their options.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has ordered Auckland into a seven-day lockdown from Sunday, requiring people to stay at home except for essential shopping and work.

A NZC spokesman said the third match in the current T20 series, to be played in Wellington on Wednesday, will go ahead but without spectators. Game four, scheduled for Auckland on Friday, has been moved to Wellington and, again, will be played behind closed doors.

The spokesman said they would wait for government advice on whether crowd restrictions are to be lifted before deciding if there will be spectators at the final game of the series in Tauranga on Sunday, March 7.

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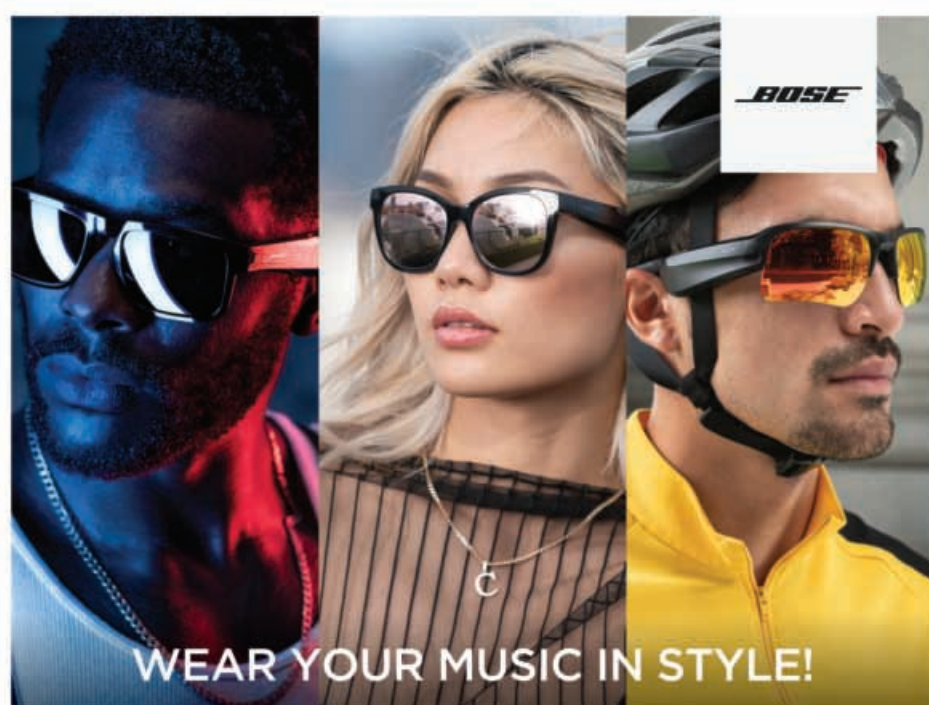
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# All set for hockey 'Clasico'

Seeb meet Ahli-Sidab in first semifinal at SQSC on Sunday; Bausher face Sohar in other semifinal

Ashok Purohit  
Muscat

## 50<sup>TH</sup> HIS MAJESTY'S CUP HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

For the past couple of decades and more, a derby match between hockey heavyweights, Ahli-Sidab and Seeb, is what the hockey lovers of Oman would eagerly look forward to. And the reasons were crystal-clear. The two teams have offered some of the most thrilling and hard-fought games and it is no wonder that the two giants have dominated the domestic hockey scene for long.

A peek into their club's roll of honours board shows both the teams having a record 11 His Majesty's Cup titles to their names. Sidab won it five times, Al Ahli claimed once and after their merger to form Ahli-Sidab, the club claimed another five to match Seeb's 11.

Following the conclusion of the second round of the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the His Majesty's Cup Hockey on Friday, Seeb and Ahli-Sidab are now set to face in the semifinals of the coveted tournament with Oman's hockey 'Clasico' set to begin at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex (SQSC) at 6pm on Sunday.

In the other semifinal of the evening, which will begin at 8pm, two teams eyeing their maiden crown - Bausher and Sohar - face off each other.

However, it is the match between arch-rivals Seeb and Ahli-Sidab that the hockey fans are waiting for. The last time when the two met in a knockout match was in the 2018 HM's Cup final when Ahli-Sidab beat Seeb 3-0 to equal the latter's record of 11 titles.

Prior to that, the two teams met in the semifinals of 2016 HM's Cup which Seeb prevailed and then went on to win the crown, their last of the 11 crowns. Yet another knockout match the two were involved was the 2015 final which Ahli-Sidab won 2-1.

Since 2015, either Seeb or Ahli-Sidab have featured in the final of this prestigious competition and the streak will continue with one of them meeting the winner of Bausher vs Sohar game in the title clash on March 1.

On Friday, Seeb held defending champion Al Nasr 2-2 to knock the holders out of the competition. The reigning champions made their exit as they lost out on goal-difference to Seeb with both collecting four points



Action from the concluding Group B match of the HM's Cup Hockey Championship between holders Al Nasr and Seeb at the SQSC on Friday night



Action from the match between Ahli-Sidab and Majees on Thursday

each. Bausher topped Group B with six points despite going down 2-3 to Dhofar in an earlier game on Friday.

Speaking ahead of the semifinals, Seeb coach Khalid al Raisi said, "It is going to be a very tough match. The 'Clasico' between these two clubs have always produced thrilling action with both the teams' players passionate and keen to win. I am hopeful of a good game and *Inshallah*, a positive result for us."

"I have confidence in my boys and the presence of three top-class players from India and Pakistan have been very good so far for us."

Raisi said that he would be happy if the prestigious cup is won by one of the Muscat-based club as three of them in fray are from capital region.

Pakistan World Cupper and world-class dragflicker Mubashar Ali has provided the much-needed impetus to Seeb and with his countrymate, Muhammad Ateeq, and Indian Junior World Cupper, Abharan Sudev, teaming up well, unbeaten Ahli-Sidab are expected to face their first major test in the tournament.

Ahli-Sidab's coach C R Kumar, a former Indian women's and junior team coach, who is on his

first stint with the club, sounded confident ahead of the semifinals.

In his remarks to *Muscat Daily*, on Saturday he said, "The team has been playing very good hockey and is unbeaten in both the rounds. The confidence of my players is high but I am aware that Seeb is a tough team. We are well-prepared and hope to overcome the challenge."

Ahli-Sidab have been relying on their three Indian imports a lot with Affan Yousuf, Jasjit Singh Kular and Sayyad Niyaz Rahim in their ranks. Ahli Sidab concluded their group engagements with a 4-1 win over Majees on Thursday to top the group with nine points following their earlier wins against Nizwa (4-0) and Sohar (3-0).

## 'Foreign players doing world of good'

Kumar said that the presence of foreign players in different clubs have raised the intensity of the matches in the second round and this will do a 'world of good' to the young Omani players ahead.

"The Omani players have a good build and few of them have impressed me. However, what I feel is that they lack exposure and they need to play more competitions and face more international teams to develop their potential further," said Kumar.

In the other semifinal match, Bausher, who were finalist in

2016, have been the team to watch out in this edition under coach Saleh al Farsi.

Bolstered by the presence of former Indian Olympian Pradeep Mor along with India dragflicker Gaganpreet Singh and Sukhjeet Singh, Farsi's men topped the group comprising defending champions Al Nasr and Seeb with six points.

"It is difficult to maintain the high-level of tempo day after day and despite playing a decent match, we lost to Dhofar 2-3. In a way, it is a good wake-up call for my players ahead of our semifinal against Sohar," said Farsi.

The former UAE national team coach, who has previously had two stints with Sohar, said, "We will give our best and the boys know that they are a step away from the summit. Sohar is a strong and attacking team and we have to be at our best to get past them."

Though Nizwa was the weakest team in Group A comprising Ahli-Sidab, Majees and Sohar, the fact that Sohar, coached by former Oman international Hamood al Wahaibi, managed to strike 14 goals in the second round (beat Nizwa 10-0, beat Majees 4-2) underlines their attacking prowess.

Sohar have roped in Egyptian internationals to carry the burden of the club's campaign in this tournament.

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Tayyab Ikram



Sheikh Said al Hinai

## AHF chief executive to attend HM's Cup

Muscat - The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) chief executive, Tayyab Ikram, has arrived in Oman to attend the semifinals and final of the 50<sup>th</sup> His Majesty's Cup Hockey Championship. Ikram has been a great supporter of Oman hockey and has been instrumental in Oman getting to host top-level AHF competitions in the past.

Sources have said that Oman Hockey Association (OHA) are in touch with the AHF to host another major AHF tournament by the end of year.

OHA chairman Talib al Wahaibi told *Muscat Daily*

that the AHF top boss will be the chief guest during the first semifinal on Sunday and present the 'player of the match' award.

Wahaibi also revealed that the second semifinal will be graced by Sheikh Said bin Saleh al Hinai, the first captain to lift aloft the HM's Cup football trophy in 1971 as captain of Al Ahli Club.

Wahaibi said that they had made attempts to invite Dr Hamad al Riyami, who had the honour to hold the first HM's Cup hockey trophy in 1971 but his health condition has forced him to express his regret.



Javed Shaikh (left) and Raghuprasad R V



## Indian umpires officiate, VAR system in use

Ashok Purohit  
Muscat

For the second year in a row, the OHA has begun using the VAR (Video Assistant Referee) system in the HM's Cup after the arrival of top-class FIH umpires, Javed Shaikh and Raghuprasad R V from India.

Both the FIH Grade I officials have officiated in top-class tournaments and their presence will also benefit the local umpires, who have been rubbing shoulders with the duo over the past few years. The duo have been regularly

officiating in HM's Cup.

Shaikh and Prasad have been selected by the world hockey governing body, FIH, to officiate the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Shaikh has previously been an umpire at Rio Olympics in 2016 and 2014 World Cup and also umpired at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Prasad too have umpired Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, three World Cups but will make his debut in Olympics at Tokyo. They are the only two Indian umpires at the Tokyo Games.

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# Seeb, Dhofar in a goalless draw; Ittihad down Suwaiq



Action from the match between Al Ittihad and Al Suwaiq in Salalah

Ashok Purohit  
Muscat

## 2020-21 HIS MAJESTY'S CUP FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Defending champions Dhofar were left to rue a penalty miss as they were held to a goalless draw in the first-leg semifinals of the 2020-21 His Majesty's Cup Football Championship at the Seeb Sports Stadium on Friday night.

In the other first-leg semifinal match, hosts Al Ittihad took a slender advantage against former champions Al Suwaiq with a 2-1 victory at the Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah on Friday night.

At the Seeb Sports Complex, the much-awaited clash between the defending Omantel League champions Seeb and HM's Cup reigning champions Dhofar was expected to provide some fireworks but except for the brilliant penalty save by Seeb



Action from the HM's Cup semifinal first-leg match between Seeb and Dhofar at the Seeb Sports Stadium on Friday

goalkeeper Ahmed al Rawahi in injury time of the first half, both teams failed to do much.

Dhofar's Omar al Malki's penalty shot was saved by Rawahi in the 47<sup>th</sup> minute to keep

Seeb in contention as they held on bravely to a goalless draw. The teams have all to play

when they meet again in the second leg at the Al Saada Sports Complex on March 2.

In the second match of the evening, Hakeem Shaker's Suwaiq side was a bit unlucky as they conceded an own goal in the 63<sup>rd</sup> minute after the teams were locked 1-1 till half-time.

Hosts Ittihad went ahead through a spot kick converted by Junior in the tenth minute but three-time champions Suwaiq were back on even keel as Issam al Subhi found the equaliser nine minutes later.

With an away goal, Suwaiq was well-placed to share the spoils before Yousuf al Saadi's own goal handed the advantage to the Salalah side.

Iraqi coach Shaker will now hope to bank on his side's experience in the tournament when they host the return leg at the Al Rustaq Sports Complex on March 2.

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