

Attendance must for SQU students

The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has announced that study during the new academic year 2021-2022 will begin on September 5, 2021, and that all students are required to attend classes at the campus. The announcement was made after studying the recent decision of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. **DETAILS ON P3**



Established 1981. Editor-in-chief: Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili



OMAN OBSERVER



www.omanobserver.om

editor@omanobserver.om

P10

BRITAIN'S
STOREY SHINES,
RECORDS TUMBLE
ON DAY ONE



P15

GLOBAL
CORPORATE
PROFITS TO FALL
8 PER CENT IN Q3



P20

TRACING THE
CONNECTION OF
SAHAM'S PEOPLE
TO THE SEA



MUSCAT

DEAL TO SUPPORT
10M TREE PLANTING

The Environment Authority and Nama Group signed a memorandum of cooperation to allocate RO 100,000 as a contribution to the national initiative to plant 10 million trees. The authority and the departments concerned have set a plan to press ahead with the initiative. Therefore, the green-houses were expanded and new ones were established and provided with seeds from the recently established seed bank. Community and formal teams were formed to collect these seeds from various types of wild trees in the Sultanate as well as organising farming campaigns in selected sites. **DETAILS ON P5**

AIRFARES SOAR AS
BOOKINGS BEGIN

Fares between Oman and South Asian countries went sky-high after airlines started bookings for September. A one-way Oman Air ticket from Kochi to Muscat now costs RO 340 for the first week of September. The budget carrier Salam Air has offers in the range of RO 260-290 for Kozhikode-Muscat fight. The fares to Bangladesh capital Dhaka is now around RO 250 on US Bangla and about RO 260 on Biman Bangladesh. "These fares are a hard blow to ordinary people who wish to travel after such a long break," Malaika, an expat graduate student, said. **DETAILS ON P3**

READ IN

OPINION P9

Objects as the
ultimate happiness...
Sonia Ambrosio

Commercial fraud
continues in the
region
Haider al Lawati

INSIDE



IRAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES
MOST RAISI NOMINEES

P6



FIVE BILLION COVID SHOTS
INJECTED WORLDWIDE

P8

Summit discusses Palestinian cause and issue of refugees

LUGANO: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, participated in the fourth edition of the Middle East Mediterranean (MEM) Summer Summit, held at the Swiss-Italian University in Lugano, Switzerland.

Sayyid Badr delivered a keynote address on the issue of social justice

and its relevance to both foreign and domestic policy.

Oman's participation at the summit was warmly welcomed by a diverse audience including a number of young people from the GCC states, Morocco and Palestine. The main topics discussed at the summit throughout the week



were the Palestinian cause, the challenges facing Europe as a result of refugees fleeing conflict zones, and the need for the new US administration to rebuild the trust of their regional allies. The summit analysed the complexity of the Middle East Mediterranean Region, contextualising its current

developments in global history and prompting a broader reflection on contemporary challenges. The participants noted that this region has a significant impact on international dynamics, and on Europe and its political structures.

— ONA

PICTURE ON P2



OMAN SAIL SAILORS HEAD TO ITALY

Five of Oman Sail's team headed to Italy to compete in the upcoming Marina Militare Nastro Rosa Tour held in port cities along the Italian coast from Thursday till September 20. The team will take part in the first six stages before joining their teammates in Switzerland to train for the Star Sailors League Finals which runs from September 21 to October 4. Team Captain, Nasser al Mashari, along with Hussain al Jabri, Ali al Balushi, Haitham al Wahaibi and Akram al Wahaibi, will represent Oman at the races in Genova, Rome, Gaeta, Naples, Brindisi and Bari before joining their teammates for the Star Sailors League Finals. **DETAILS ON P11**

Ambassadors hail Duqm's potential

DUQM: Omani ambassadors to brotherly and friendly countries visited the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) on Wednesday. The two-day visit's programme included an overview on the SEZAD and a visit to a number of projects including dry-dock, the port of Duqm, Saay commercial complex, the Duqm Refinery project, Karwa Motors,

the multipurpose Fishing Port and the Fisheries and Food Processing Complex.

Saleh bin Sulaiman al Harthy, Oman's Ambassador to Kenya, said that the zone is planned to be an integrated global economic gateway with a large strategic port which can serve shipping lines from east to west.

DETAILS ON P13

Clarity on air travel, schools and vaccines

SUPREME COMMITTEE PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

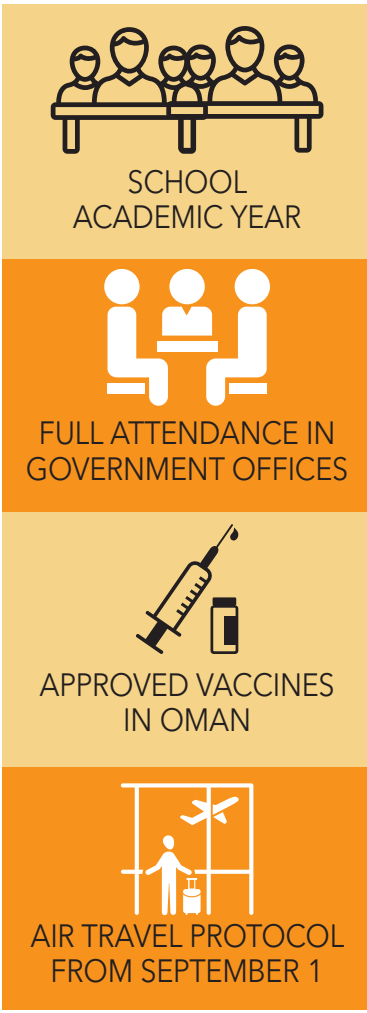
The Supreme Committee may spell out details of opening-up decisions, which were announced recently, in a press conference on Thursday. It is likely to cover the school academic year, attendance in government offices, approved vaccines and air travel protocol in the background of Covid-19 pandemic in the Sultanate.

An official statement said that the press conference will explain and evaluate the Covid-19 situation, including the implementation of several decisions, which will come into effect from September 1.

"We welcome your inquiries and questions to the Supreme Committee on issues related to the measures to deal with Covid-19 at the 26th Press Conference on August 26," the statement added.

The Ministry of Education officials are expected to clear queries related to the general framework of school operation for the academic year 2021-2022. The ministry has already announced that public schools in Oman will start the new year from September 12 for teachers and September 19 for students.

The ministry has been encouraging private and



international schools to resume normal classes this month.

Currently, all government offices in the country function with 50 per cent attendance.

A decision is awaited on whether the full presence of all

government employees will be required from September 1.

"There will be procedures against any person who refuses to receive the vaccination without a medical reason, which will be announced later," the government had warned in the last press conference.

MANDATORY

It may be noted that from September 1, vaccination will be mandatory for entry to government and private establishments, shopping malls, restaurants as well as venues hosting cultural, sports, and group activities. The heads of government units have a duty to take necessary action to implement the public safety measures.

"We expect guidelines for all stakeholders to ensure that only vaccinated people get access to our facilities," said a senior executive of a hypermarket.

The Supreme Committee will also spell out details on the protocols for those wishing to enter the Sultanate through all land, sea, and airports.

A clarification is also expected on the vaccines that have been approved for entry into the country.

TURN TO P3

Afghans race to flee Taliban after Biden confirms deadline

KABUL: Afghans on Wednesday faced an increasingly desperate race to escape life under the Taliban after President Joe Biden confirmed US-led evacuations will end next week.

More than 80,000 people have been evacuated since August 14, but huge crowds remain outside Kabul airport hoping to flee the threat of reprisals in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

Biden said on Tuesday the

United States would stick to his August 31 deadline to completely withdraw its troops despite warnings from European allies that not all vulnerable Afghans would be able to leave by then.

"The sooner we can finish, the better... each day of operations brings added risk to our troops," Biden said on Tuesday.

"We are currently on the pace to finish by August 31."

Washington and its allies have

A man holds a child as people who have been evacuated from Afghanistan arrive at Melsbroek military airport in Melsbroek, Belgium, on Wednesday. — Reuters



been flying out thousands of Afghans every day on hulking military transports, but it has become an increasingly difficult and desperate task.

Many Afghans fear a repeat of the brutal five-year Taliban regime that was toppled in 2001, and violent retribution for working with foreign militaries, Western missions and the previous US-backed government.

SEE ALSO P7

WEATHER

MUSCAT: Max 34°C Min 30°C SALALAH: Max 30°C Min 26°C NIZWA: Max 41°C Min 25°C

PRAYER TIMINGS

SUNRISE: 05:47 FAJR: 04:29 DHUHR: 12:14 ASR: 15:41 MAGHRIB: 18:36 ISHA: 19:49

FOREIGN MINISTER PARTICIPATES IN MEM SUMMER SUMMIT



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, participated in the fourth edition of the Middle East Mediterranean (MEM) Summer Summit, held at the Swiss-Italian University in Lugano, Switzerland. Sayyid Badr delivered a keynote address on the issue of social justice and its relevance to both foreign and domestic policy. Oman's participation at the summit was warmly welcomed by a diverse audience including a number of young people from the GCC states, Morocco and Palestine. – ONA

Plan to
appoint
nearly 1,000
Omani
teachers



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has set a plan to appoint 997 Omani teachers in various disciplines. The plan aims to replace expats with Omani teachers across a number of disciplines. Of which, 68 are Arabic language teachers, 203 mathematics, 26 chemistry, 34 physics, 67 biology, 107 music skills and 492 first field teachers. Majid al Bahri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs, said that the announcement comes within the plan of the two ministries to replace Omani cadres in educational jobs in various disciplines through appropriate preparation and qualifications. The Omanisation drive targets Omani job seekers and retirees of the Ministry of Education, who hold a university educational qualification. — ONA

Over 1,600
health facilities
in Sultanate



MUSCAT: More than 1,600 private hospitals and medical centres operate in the Sultanate, including 31 private hospitals, 335 health centres and complexes, and 129 public clinics, in addition to 1,201 specialised clinics. Dr Mazin bin Jawad al Khabouri, Director General of the General Directorate of Private Health Establishments (GDPHE) at the Ministry of Health, said to the Oman News Agency (ONA), that private health institutions are one of the main pillars of the health system in the Sultanate along with the rest of the government health institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Health and other government agencies. "To get a licence from the GDPHE, the private health facilities should meet the conditions set by the ministry, which qualify them to provide health services of a high level to ensure the health and safety of people," Al Khabouri said. The health cadres working in these institutions are subject to strict evaluation by the concerned authorities in the ministry before they get the green signal to practice the profession to ensure and measure their competence. According to Al Khabouri, health insurance plays a crucial role in private health institutions through insurance companies that provide insurance packages of various levels, whether for workers in the private or government sector or the rest of society.

SALE
20% - 50%
OFF

GARMENTS | FOOTWEAR | LADIES BAG
BABY ACCESSORIES | LUGGAGE
(Selected brands only)

From 26th Aug to 11th Sept 2021

HYPERMARKETS.
SUPERMARKETS.
DEPARTMENT STORES.



Airfares soar sky high after bookings begin

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Fares between Oman and South Asian countries went sky-high after airlines started bookings for September.

A one-way Oman Air ticket from Kochi to Muscat now costs RO 340 while Thiruvananthapuram-Muscat seat sells for RO 260 for the first week of September.

The budget carrier Salam Air has offers in the range of RO 260-290 for Kozhikode-Muscat flight.

The fares to Bangladesh capital Dhaka is now around RO 250 on US Bangla and about RO 260 on Biman Bangladesh.

"These fares are a hard blow to the ordinary people who wish to travel after such a long break," Malaika, an expat graduate student of Architecture in Mangalore, told the Observer.

Experts in airline industry said the sudden spike in the airfares is due to a strong expectation that there would be regular



services between Oman and some countries.

"Airline business these days are operating under tremendous challenges and we don't have full scheduled departures. On the other hand, what we have are flights operating under bubble agreements between countries. Based on supply and demand prices are high," said Sunil D'Souza, CEO, Travel City Group. "Once regular international schedules are in place, then you

would have better airfares."

On average, Air India Express fares from Kochi is RO 250; Trivandrum RO 250, and Kannur RO 160 during the first week of September.

"Airline fares are based on the law of demand and supply. If people don't make a rush for it, prices will be normal. If they allow airlines like Salam Air, Indigo and Go First to operate, then prices will come down," says Ejaz Kazi, GM, Easy Travel and Tours.

Normal schedules and operation of budget airlines may bring down prices

Airline executives said the fare spike is also due to the stoppage of flights by some budget airlines since last year.

"More airlines registered in Oman who have the traffic rights should be allowed to operate when the travel is open. That way, fares can be controlled to a great extent," said an Indigo official.

"Air bubble agreement between Oman and India should be renegotiated with more capacity as well as more airline operators. We as GoFirst have already contacted the DGCA India to permit the schedule operators to resume operations to facilitate the influx of traffic and this would help to control the airfares in a more consistent manner," Venkat Perumal, representative of GoAir, said.



SQU students required to attend classes from September 5

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has announced that study during the new academic year 2021-2022 will begin on September 5, 2021, and that all students are required to attend classes at the campus.

The announcement was made after studying the recent decision of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments

resulting from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The SQU exhorts students, teaching and administrative staff to take the vaccine against Covid-19 and to stick to the precautionary measures and procedures set by the Covid-19 Supreme Committee. An instructional guide to this effect was issued by the SQU to ensure a safe return to study at the university. — ONA

Indian expats celebrate 75th Independence Day with cultural fervour

MUSCAT: Indian Social Club in association with the Embassy of India organised a virtual mega cultural event on the evening of 16th August to celebrate the 75th Independence Day of India. Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, was the Chief Guest for the event.

Shaikh Khalifa conveyed his best wishes on the historical occasion, stating: "The Sultanate of Oman and Republic of India have enjoyed close relations, and are linked by geography and history". He added, "Our two countries have undergone a huge transformation, but our strong and distinguished friendship has remained constant".

Chairman of the Indian Social Club, Dr Sathish Nambiar welcomed the guests and spoke about the challenges the community has had to face due to Covid and how the Indian Social Club has stood by the community and conducted various social welfare programmes, including food distribution to the needy, repatriation flights, blood donation and vaccination drive.



HE Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy



HE Shri Munu Mahawar

Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate, wished the Indian community in Oman on the joyous occasion of Independence Day and lauded the efforts of the Indian Social Club and community members for standing together and supporting one another during the covid pandemic.

He also spoke about the strong bilateral relations between India and Oman. The occasion is being celebrated as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. A festival celebrating India's glorious past and progress in the past 75 years and commemorating and honouring the history of its people and culture as it moves towards becoming a developed and prosperous nation.

Themed Festive folk, this year's programme saw ISC and its linguistic wings coming together to present an array of folk dances portraying the diversity of India's rich culture from across the different states.

From the colourful Garba from the west to the graceful Odissi from the east, the elegant Mohiniyattam from the south to the vibrant Bhangra from the north, the viewers were presented with a delightful and energetic performance of 12 traditional dances featuring members of ISC and its linguistic wings. Suhail Khan, Jt General Secretary and Entertainment Secretary at ISC Oman, proposed the vote of thanks on the occasion.



Clarity on air travel, schools and vaccines



FROM PAGE 1

Currently, only AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sptunik V and Sinovac have been approved for emergency use in Oman.

The *Observer* is flooded with queries from expatriates struck

abroad about the acceptability of WHO-approved vaccines such as Moderna, Johnson and Johnson, and Sinopharm, which has been widely administered in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

"In Pakistan, the government has been giving Sinopharm

vaccine to everyone and I have been not getting convincing replies to my queries whether it is approved in Oman or not," said Ataf, a Pakistani expatriate based in Lahore. Similarly, Bangladesh has been giving Moderna vaccine to its nationals.

Tender

مدائن
madayn

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) announces the following Tenders:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last date of Buying	Date of Submission	Type of Work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
8/2021/PEIE/HQ-8	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUR INDUSTRIAL CITY MASTER PLAN	08-09-2021	30-09-2021	Consulting Offices	First	100
9/2021/PEIE/HQ-9	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR MASTER PLANNING OF NEW UPCOMING SAH A' SIRAYYAH INDUSTRIAL CITY	08-09-2021	04-10-2021	Consulting Offices	First	50

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted on line on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to The Chairman of Tender Committee mentioned in above tenders.

- Tender Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.
- eTendering System Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@ita.gov.om and +968 24166670, 24166409.

Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

No Document can be accepted as Manual except Original Tender Bond. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system and original needs to be deposited before Bid Opening.

Madayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other Offer and has the right to cancel these tenders and the tenderers have no right to claim for any compensations.

@madaynoman



madayn.om

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkutttyp

To achieve food security, the Sultanate has developed an array of plans and programmes focused on the sustainability of food supply for citizens and residents.

The 2040 Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy in Oman aims to promote agricultural sector sustainability, increase economic revenues, create job opportunities for nationals, support rural communities, and limit structural imbalances in the agricultural sector.

The Food Security Strategy (2020-2040) sets forth a set of objectives seeking to enhance Oman's food security system in terms of production, import, storage and distribution. It focuses on three key themes, namely food demand, local food production and securing imports

According to proposals in Oman's National Spatial Strategy, new agricultural areas and food processing hubs will be established to contribute to food security in the country.

"To promote food security and self-sufficiency within Oman, ensuring appropriate integration of agricultural and resource management as the economy develops, whilst seeking to protect land suitable for agricultural development and coastal waters suitable for fisheries", the report points out.

In this regard, Najd in Dhofar, Al Masarat in Al Dhahirah and North Al Batinah have been identified as major arable areas in this regard.

These areas have been identified taking into account the importance of sustainable management of limited water resources, the exploitation of non-traditional water resources, and the use of modern production techniques.

According to Oman's Sustainable Development Goals, the government opts to encourage its citizens to produce and invest in agriculture and livestock fields by providing them with lands to establish economically viable projects.

Many programmes and projects were also dedicated to sustainable consumption and production, including agricultural pests and technical employment for production operations, with a view to preserving agricultural products, reducing damage caused by pests, and ensuring optimal employment and sustainability of available agricultural resources.

Efforts have also been directed towards improving and updating relevant laws and executive regulations that organise agricultural development action and maintain the sustainability of agricultural production and food safety.

The Sultanate has also developed a comprehensive food security strategy

(2020-2040) to enhance Oman's food security system in terms of production, import, storage and distribution, through three key themes: Food demand, local food production and securing imports.

Oman's strategies have been successful in controlling malnutrition among children. The percentage of overweight among children under 5 years of age was reduced from 23.6 per cent in 1995 to 3.1 per cent in 2017 and wasting has also declined from 13 per cent to 9.3 per cent, while stunting dropped from 22.9 per cent to 11.4 per cent during the same period.

According to the Global Food Security Index (GFSI), developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit, which was published in February last, Oman ranks second in the Arab world and 34th globally. Qatar is ranked 37th, Saudi Arabia 38th, UAE 42nd and Bahrain 49th.

GFSI considers four broad categories — Food Affordability, Availability, Quality and Safety, and Natural Resources and Resilience — across 113 countries to rank them.

In addition, the index is a quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model constructed from 59 unique indicators that measure the drivers of food security across both developing and developed countries.

The food security strategy aims to increase the overall water availability from a base level of two billion m3 by 40 per cent and land for agriculture expansion to be brought into water-efficient, commercial production with a base level of 544 KM2 to 1,044 KM2.

Additional land available for food production within existing agricultural properties if fully utilised will be increased to 1,044 KM2 from a base level of 65,000 and the level of Food Self-Sufficiency to be achieved will be 70 per cent from base level of 48 per cent.

With regard to the Long-Term Fisheries Strategy, it aims at increasing fisheries production, promoting the sector's efficiency in a sustainable manner, and improving the exploitation of fish stocks, in addition to boosting private sector investment and attracting foreign investment in fish industries and aquaculture projects.

Accordingly, the strategy aims to increase the total catch to 220,000 tonnes per year from 1,705 tonnes.

At the same time, the government also faces challenges like limiting the quantity of food available for human consumption, agricultural pests as well as animal-borne diseases and controlling epidemics that have adverse effect on food provision, in addition to water scarcity due to Oman's location in a semi-desert area with low precipitation.

ONSS Key Targets

-  Increase in overall water availability (m3 per annum)
Base: **2bn m³** Target: **40%**
-  Land for expansion of agriculture brought into water-efficient, commercial production
Base: **544 KM²** Target: **1,044 KM²**
-  Additional land available for food production within existing agricultural properties if fully utilised
Base: **65,000 HK** Target: **1,044 KM²**
-  Level of Food Self-Sufficiency (FSS) achieved
Base: **48%** Target: **70%**
-  Aquaculture – Increase in total catch
Base: **1,705 Tonnes/Year** Target: **220,000 Tonnes/Year**

HARVESTING
SELF-SUFFICIENCY

THE GOVERNMENT
ENCOURAGES
CITIZENS TO
PRODUCE AND
INVEST IN
AGRICULTURE AND
LIVESTOCK BY
PROVIDING THEM
WITH LANDS TO
ESTABLISH
ECONOMICALLY
VIALE PROJECTS





Oman Trading Establishment LLC



Sultanate of Oman
Consumer Protection Authority

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For TUCSON TL



Date of Campaign : 26 / 8 / 2021

Campaign Type : Recall

Recall Segment : Electrical

Product Description : Hyundai TUCSON TL

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2019-2020	Hyundai	TUCSON TL	TMAJ2817ALJ000007 to TMAJ3817GLJ179856	7730

Description:
An electrical short in the HECU (Hydraulic Electronic Control Unit) module may occur very rarely. It could increase the risk of an engine compartment fire.

Procedure:
Replace the Multi-Fuse with improved part & rework ABS wiring on vehicles with EPB (Electronic Parking Brake)
On vehicles with MOC (Motor on Caliper Installed) perform the HECU module software update.

For More information:
Customers of effected vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment for further details/booking Appointment etc from Date - 26/8/2021

Contact Details:
Toll free No 80050003 on all working days between 8:00 am to 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm with effected from date 26/8/2021



Pact signed to support plant 10 million trees initiative

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority and Nama Group on Wednesday signed a memorandum of cooperation to allocate RO 100,000 as a contribution for the national initiative to plant 10 million trees.

The MoC was signed by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, and Eng Omar Khalfan al Wahaibi, CEO of Nama Group.

Dr Al Amri affirmed in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the authority and the departments concerned have set a plan to press ahead with the initiative. Therefore, the greenhouses were expanded and new ones were established and provided with seeds from the recently established seed bank, Dr Al Amri pointed out that community and formal teams were formed to collect these seeds from various types of wild trees in the Sultanate as well as organising farming campaigns in selected sites.



The agreement states that Nama Group allocates RO 100,000 of its social responsibility funding to support farming projects and initiatives; in addition to

contributing with quantities of treated water from its sewage plants for five years which will cover a number of governorates. — ONA

Workshop on leading the change

MUSCAT: The Directorate-General of Specialized Medical Care (DGSMC) represented by the Medical Rehabilitation Services Section organised a training workshop in management on the topic "Leading the change" on Wednesday. The workshop targeted the DGSMC employees, heads and supervisors of medical rehabilitation departments in the Ministry of Health hospitals and other health institutions.

Spectrum of topics were highlighted at the event. It introduced the concept of change and its significance at a time where health services have been overwhelmed by the implications of Covid-19 pandemic. The workshop touched upon means of dealing with the changes associated with the pandemic spread, implementations of leading the change principles.

Omani delegation participates in Arab-Turkish economic forum

ISTANBUL: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and the Omani business delegation took part in several exhibitions on the sidelines of the 15th Arab-Turkish Economic Cooperation Forum, being held in Istanbul.

The forum covers a spectrum of areas namely food materials, technologies specializing in food processing, agriculture, hotel equipment, restaurants, cafes and bakeries among others.

Eng Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI and head of the Omani business delegation, said that the forum is an opportunity to highlight the investment climate and the attractive environment for investment in the Sultanate.

Al Saleh added that the forum underscores the importance of Arab-



Turkish economic and trade relations. He also reiterated the keenness of boosting those relations and benefiting from them, especially in developing the private sector and increasing its contribution in the gross domestic product (GDP).

The Omani business delegation comprises officials operating in diverse economic and investment sectors in the Sultanate. Madayn and the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) are taking part in the event. — ONA

Teachers have to play role of parents during pandemic

DR MOHAMMED SHAFIUDDIN

The role of teaching has widened during the pandemic as classes move from offline to online. Apart from regular lessons, they have to instill healthy habits and Covid-19 appropriate behaviour in pupils.

As a teacher, knowing the facts will not only protect yourself but also your students. Be aware of fake information and dangerous myths about Covid-19 circulating that are feeding fear and stigma. It is the duty of teachers to debunk stories and 'miracle cures' peddled by WhatsApp doctors.

Let me share a few important points stressed by Unicef which may be useful to the teaching community.

Understanding Covid-19, how it spreads and how we



can protect ourselves and others is an important first step in establishing classroom procedures and protocols.

Students need to understand what it is in order for them to follow the rules.

Listen to their concerns and ideas and answer their questions in an age-appropriate manner. Discuss the different reactions they may experience and explain that these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. To encourage your students to stick to the rules, it can be helpful to create a dos and don'ts list with them.

Develop a list together around how students will greet each other; how desks will be arranged; physical distancing measures during lunch breaks. Even with clean hands, encourage students to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

Germans can transfer from those areas to their clean hands and spread around the classroom this way. It is better to prepare and maintain handwashing stations with soap and water, and if possible, place alcohol-based hand sanitizers in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near

lunchrooms and toilets.

Identify some practical steps/activities you can take to demonstrate good hygiene practices to your students. Teachers need to educate the students.

Teachers should play the role of parents during this period. One has to keenly observe all the students and note down the changes if any are found.

If the teacher fails to perform his/her role effectively then the situation will be unpredictable. Listening, analysing and deciding plays well this time.

Student's health is the top priority. Administration also has to arrange Covid Protocol posters in the institution. Prevention is better than the cure. This principle is to be taken into consideration.

Let all go well. (The author is an educationist. shafishamshad@gmail.com)

Nizwa university registers patent for IBD drug

NIZWA: The University of Nizwa has registered a new patent for using nanotechnology to initiate change to Budesonide, the medicine used to treat inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

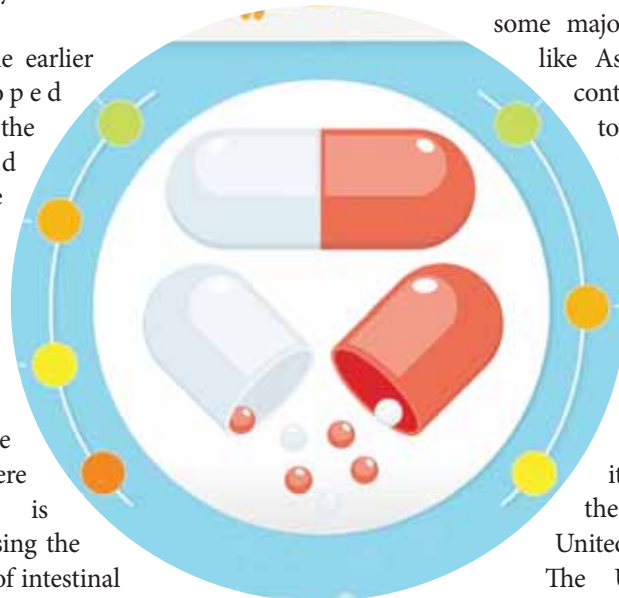
Unlike the earlier undeveloped drug, the advanced Budesonide drug, which comes in capsules, has been developed to arrive intact in the colon. There the drug is extracted, using the acid nature of intestinal enzymes to deal directly with faeces.

The medicine developed by Nizwa University spares patients high doses from existing capsules known to dissolve in the upper sections of the alimentary system and cause side-effects without

benefiting the body.

International medical drug production companies were seeking ways to upgrade the efficiency of Budesonide. This prompted some major drug firms, like AstraZeneca, to contribute sums towards lab tests after the encouraging results of research at the University of Nizwa, which registered its patent for the same in the United States.

The University of Nizwa hopes its invention would cause a shift forwards in the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease. The university is working in cooperation with drug firms to pave the way for clinical applications and streamline production. — ONA



OMAN CHLORINE S.A.O.G. عمان كلورين ش.م.ع.م.
P.O. BOX 193, POSTAL CODE 134, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN TEL: 24695839 - FAX: 24695768

Distribution of Cash Dividend for the year 2020

Oman Chlorine SAOG is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the Company has deposited at Muscat Clearing & Depository Company S.A.O.C. (MCD) the approved cash dividends (at the rate Bz 12.5 per share), to be distributed to the shareholders as of the day of Annual General Meeting held on 29/3/2021.

MCD will remit the cash dividends amount to the shareholders' bank accounts as per the details available with MCD. For the other shareholders, MCD will mail Bank Cheques to their registered addresses.

Any shareholder who has not received his dividends/cheque may contact the Operations Department of MCD at +968 24822237/24822222.

We request all the shareholders to update their bank details and postal addresses with MCD to facilitate fast & secure remittance of dividends in future.

Thank you.



ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Tenders Announcement

Environment Authority invites all specialized companies and establishments to submit their offers to the following tenders:

Tender No	Tender Title	The tender document value (non-refundable)	Date of purchase of tender documents	Last date for purchasing tender	Last date for submission of tender
7/2021	Construction of green belt fence in four selected sites in the Wilayat of Mirbat, Dhofar Governorate	R.O 25/-	26/8/2021	23/9/2021	7/10/2021
8/2021	Construction of green belt fence in five selected sites in the Wilayat of Mirbat, Dhofar Governorate				
9/2021	Construction of green belt fence in five selected sites in the Wilayat of Taqah, Dhofar Governorate				
10/2021	Construction of green belt fence in six selected sites in the Wilayat of Taqah, Dhofar Governorate				
11/2021	Construction of green belt fence in six selected sites in the Wilayat of Taqah, Dhofar Governorate				
12/2021	Construction of green belt fence in six selected sites in the Wilayat of Taqah, Dhofar Governorate				
13/2021	Construction of green belt fence in six selected sites in the Wilayat of Salalah in the Governorate of Dhofar				
14/2021	Construction of green belt fence in seven selected sites in the Wilayat of Salalah in the Governorate of Dhofar				
15/2021	Establishing a nursery for the germination and propagation of wild trees in Al Buraimi Governorate				

Companies registered with the Secretariat General of the Tender Board wishing to purchase the tenders can apply through the e-tendering website (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) provided that an original copy of a Bank guarantee (1%) of the tender value valid for (120) days from the date of tender submission shall be submitted to the Financial Affairs Department at the Authority's main building in Al-Khuwair before bids opening.

For assistance in tender purchase and tender submission, please contact 24166670, e-mail: etenderhd@ita.gov.om



An Algeria man holds a newspaper in the capital Algiers. Algeria's Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra said the previous day that his country has severed diplomatic relations with Morocco due to "hostile actions", following months of resurgent tensions between the North African rivals. — AFP

Algeria cuts diplomatic ties with Morocco

ALGIERS: Algeria's Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra said on Tuesday that his country has severed diplomatic relations with Morocco due to "hostile actions", following months of resurgent tensions between the North African rivals.

The countries have long accused one another of backing opposition movements as proxies, with Algeria's support for separatists in the disputed region of Western Sahara a particular bone of contention for Morocco.

"Algeria has decided to cut diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Morocco from today," Lamamra announced during a press conference.

"History has shown... Morocco has never stopped carrying out hostile actions against Algeria," he added.

In a statement later on Tuesday, Morocco's foreign ministry said Algiers' move was "completely unjustified" but "expected given the logic of escalation seen in recent weeks".

Rabat added that the decision to cut ties was based on "false, even absurd pretexts".

The rupture followed a review of bilateral relations announced by Algeria last week as it alleged its neighbour was complicit in deadly forest fires that ravaged the country's north.

Lamamra accused Morocco's leaders of "responsibility for repeated crises" and behaviour that has "led to conflict instead of integration" in North Africa.

Late last month, Morocco's King Mohamed VI deplored the tensions between the two countries, and invited Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune "to make wisdom prevail" and "to work in unison for the development of relations" between the two countries.

But Algeria's forest fires, which broke out on August 9 amid a blistering heatwave, burned tens of thousands of hectares of forest and killed at least 90 people, including more than 30 soldiers, further stoking tensions.

While critics say Algerian authorities failed to prepare for the blazes, Tebboune declared most of the fires were of "criminal" origin. — AFP

Calls for renewed Gaza protests against Israeli blockade

GAZA CITY: Palestinian organisation Hamas as well as other groups in the Gaza Strip have called for protests at the border fence with Israel later on Wednesday against the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

According to official reports, 41 Palestinians and one Israeli border police officer were injured in confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers on Saturday. The Israeli air force later attacked Hamas targets in Gaza, according to Israeli military sources.

The clashes in the border zone on Saturday were the most violent since 2019, when Palestinians held the last of their weekly protests against the blockade and for the



A demonstrator waves a Palestine's flag during a protest against Israeli settlements, in Beita, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on Wednesday. — Reuters

Palestinian right to return to homes that they had fled during the conflict when Israel was founded in 1948.

A Palestinian has died from injuries sustained during weekend

clashes with Israeli forces on the Gaza border, the territory's health ministry said, ahead of fresh protests called for Wednesday.

Following Saturday's unrest — which wounded dozens and

left an Israeli police officer in critical condition — 32-year-old Palestinian Osama Khaled Deaih died after being shot by Israeli forces, the ministry said.

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

The territory's rulers Hamas said that among the wounded was a 13-year-old boy who was shot in the head and left in critical condition. The protests come three months after an informal truce ended 11 days of conflict between Hamas and Israel, the worst fighting between the two sides in years. — Agencies

■ FOLLOW IN PHARAOHS' FOOTSTEPS



Tourists visit Karnak Temple, in Luxor, Egypt, on Wednesday. One of the biggest open-air archaeological sites in the world is due to open in Luxor in southern Egypt this winter after decades of work to uncover the 3,500-year-old Grand Avenue of the Sphinxes. — Reuters

Iran's parliament approves president's cabinet choices

TEHRAN: Iran's parliament on Wednesday approved almost all new President Ebrahim Raisi's cabinet choices, enabling him to start working in earnest with his government, following a June election victory.

Lawmakers approved one-by-one 18 out of 19 candidates put forward by Raisi for the ministerial posts.

They rejected only his pick for the education portfolio, thus requiring the president to make another choice for that post.

Iran has been strangled financially by sanctions reimposed by Washington after then US president Donald Trump pulled out of a multilateral nuclear deal in 2018.

The country of 83 million

people has since been hit by a severe economic crisis amplified by the Covid pandemic.

Iran is currently grappling with a fifth wave of infections — the strongest wave yet.

The country recorded its highest single day death toll on Tuesday, with 709 fatalities registered by the health ministry in 24 hours.



Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi. — AFP

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

He succeeded president Hassan Rouhani, architect of the political opening that culminated in the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and major powers.

The new president was sworn in by parliament in early August,

but the outgoing administration remained at the helm until Wednesday's parliamentary vote.

The confidence vote will allow Raisi to begin leaving his mark.

The president announced on Saturday that his government's first priority will be the battle against coronavirus, closely followed by the economy.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

RAMALLAH

US donation of vaccines arrives in Palestine

A US donation of 500,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses arrived in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza on Tuesday, as Palestinian officials work to boost uptake and counter a surge in new cases by requiring some workers to get the jab.

The Palestinians began administering vaccines in February, but despite having purchased or received what officials have called "an abundance of doses", uptake has stalled at just 35 per cent of age-eligible Palestinians in the



West Bank, and around 11 per cent in Gaza.

Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said on Monday that unvaccinated public-sector employees would be put on unpaid leave, with immediate effect.

JUBA

IMF extends \$334m in aid to South Sudan

The IMF has loaned \$334 million (284 million euros) to South Sudan, the country's central bank governor said on Tuesday, as its ailing economy teeters from a currency crisis and soaring inflation. It is the third time in a year the Washington DC-based lender has extended financial aid to the troubled country, which ran out of foreign exchange reserves last year when oil prices fell sharply.

The price slump, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, deprived the fragile government



in Juba of much-needed revenue and sent its currency into freefall.

Earlier this year, one US dollar was fetching 700 South Sudanese Pounds on the black market — the weakest exchange rate since independence a decade ago.

TUNIS

Tunisian parliament suspended indefinitely

Tunisian President Kais Saied (pictured) has extended his suspension of parliament "until further notice", a month after sacking his premier and granting himself greater powers in a shock intervention opponents decried as a coup.

"Parliament is a danger to the state," he said on Tuesday during a meeting with Trade Minister Mohamed Bousaid.

"The existing political institutions and how they operate represent a persistent danger to the



state." A statement from the presidency late on Monday extended an order freezing immunity for lawmakers and said Saied would address the people in the coming days, without elaborating.

In brief

■ JAKARTA



PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL HIT BY HANDLING OF PANDEMIC

Indonesian President Joko Widodo's approval rating has fallen to the lowest level in five years on the back of a devastating second wave of coronavirus infections, a survey released on Wednesday showed. Conducted by pollster Indikator Politik Indonesia, the survey showed that 59 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the president, the lowest ranking since March 2016.

The survey, which involved 1,220 respondents, was conducted between July 30 to August 4, while the country was in the throes of a virulent virus wave that led to overflowing hospitals and oxygen shortages on the densely populated island of Java.

■ TOKYO



UNDERSEA TUNNEL TO RELEASE TREATED WATER

Operators of Japan's stricken Fukushima nuclear plant unveiled plans on Wednesday to construct an undersea tunnel to release more than a million tonnes of treated water from the site into the ocean. Plans for the one-kilometre (0.6-mile) tunnel were announced after the Japanese government decided in April to release the accumulated water in two years' time.

Ministers say the release is safe because the water will have been processed to remove almost all radioactive elements, and will be diluted. But the April decision triggered a furious reaction from neighbouring countries, and fierce opposition from local fishing communities.

■ KUALA LUMPUR



NEW PM, OPPOSITION SEEK TO EASE TENSIONS

Malaysia's new prime minister and the opposition pledged on Wednesday to find "common ground" to tackle a coronavirus outbreak and boost the economy, seeking to ease long-running political turbulence.

Ismail Sabri Yaakob was inaugurated at the weekend following the resignation of his predecessor after a tumultuous 17 months in office.

The country's fourth premier in as many years, he faces the daunting task of uniting bickering politicians and reining in the country's worst Covid-19 wave yet. On Wednesday, he held discussions with opposition leaders, including Anwar Ibrahim, as they seek to put aside their differences, at least while the pandemic is raging.

RACE ON TO COMPLETE AFGHAN EVACUATION AS DEADLINE LOOMS

KABUL: Western nations rushed to complete the evacuation of thousands of people from Afghanistan on Wednesday as the August 31 deadline for the withdrawal of foreign troops drew closer with no sign that the country's new Taliban rulers might allow an extension.

In one of the biggest such airlifts ever, the United States and its allies have evacuated more than 70,000 people, including their citizens, Nato personnel and Afghans at risk, since August 14, the day before the Taliban swept into the capital Kabul to bring to an end a 20-year foreign military presence.

US President Joe Biden said US troops in Afghanistan faced mounting danger and aid agencies warned of an impending humanitarian crisis for the population left behind.

Biden said they were on pace to meet the deadline, set under an agreement struck with the Islamist group last year to end America's longest war.

"The sooner we can finish, the better," Biden said on Tuesday. "Each day of operations brings added risk to our troops."

Two US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was growing concern about the risk of suicide bombings by IS at the airport.

British Foreign Minister



Afghan citizens board a Spanish military plane as part of their evacuation, at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul on Tuesday. — Reuters

Dominic Raab said the deadline for evacuating people was up to the last minute of the month.

Tens of thousands of Afghans fearing persecution have thronged Kabul's airport since the Taliban takeover, the lucky ones securing seats on flights.

Many people milled about outside the airport — where soldiers from the United States,

Britain and other nations were trying to maintain order amid the dust and heat — hoping to get out.

They carried bags and suitcases stuffed with possessions, and waved documents at soldiers in the hope of gaining entry. One man, standing knee-deep in a flooded ditch, passed a child to man above.

"I learned from an e-mail from London that the Americans are

taking people out, that's why I've come so I can go abroad," said one man, Aizaz Ullah.

While the focus is now on those trying to flee, the risk of starvation, disease and persecution is rising for the rest of the population, aid agencies say.

"There's a perfect storm coming because of several years of drought, conflict, economic deterioration,

compounded by COVID," David Beasley, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, said, calling for the international community to donate \$200 million in food aid.

"The number of people marching towards starvation has spiked to now 14 million."

The EU said this week it was planning to quadruple aid and was seeking coordination with the United Nations on delivery as well as safety guarantees on the ground.

The UN human rights chief said she had received credible reports of serious violations by the Taliban, including "summary executions" of civilians and Afghan security forces who had surrendered. The Taliban have said they will investigate reports of atrocities.

The Taliban's 1996-2001 rule was marked by harsh Shariah law, with many political rights and basic freedoms curtailed and women severely oppressed. Afghanistan was also a hub for anti-Western militants, and Washington, London and others fear it might become so again.

A Nato country diplomat in Kabul, who declined to be identified, said several international aid groups were desperate to get Afghan staff out and neighbouring countries should open their land borders to allow more people to leave. — Reuters

This can squeeze out more vaccine doses



A technician works at AutoVacc vaccine extraction machine designed by the Chulalongkorn University's Biomedical Engineering Research Center to extract extra doses out of AstraZeneca vaccine vials in Bangkok. — Reuters

BANGKOK: As Thailand struggles with its worst coronavirus outbreak yet, researchers in the country have developed a machine to draw out Covid-19 vaccine doses more efficiently and optimise lower-than-expected supplies.

Using a robotic arm, the "AutoVacc" system can draw 12 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in four minutes from a vial, according to researchers at Chulalongkorn University, who made the machine that has been used at the university's vaccination centre since Monday.

That is up 20 per cent from the standard 10 doses drawn manually, they said. The machine only works on AstraZeneca multi-dose vials currently and labels show each vial can provide 10 to 11 doses.

"The machine guarantees with accuracy that we can gain an extra 20 per cent from each vaccine vial — from 10 to 12 doses," said Juthamas Ratanavaraporn, the lead researcher of the team at the university's Biomedical Engineering Research Center.

The extra 20 per cent that we get means that if we have AstraZeneca for 1 million, this machine can increase the number of doses to 1.2 million people

LEAD RESEARCHER

"The extra 20 per cent that we get means that if we have AstraZeneca for 1 million people, this machine can increase the number of doses to 1.2 million people," said Juthamas.

While some health workers using low dead space syringes (LDSS) that aim to reduce waste can draw up to 12 doses per vial, it requires manpower and a high level of skill, she said.

"This could drain a lot of the health workers' energy. They would have to do this every day for many months," Juthamas said. — Reuters

US, China accuse each other of 'bullying' nations

HANOI: US Vice-President Kamala Harris on Wednesday again charged China with bullying its Southeast Asian neighbours, the second time in two days she has attacked Beijing during a regional visit, as Washington tries to rally regional partners to take on China's growing economic and military influence.

The Chinese foreign ministry shot back on Wednesday and accused the US of meddling in regional affairs and disrupting peace. Earlier in the day, Chinese state media accused Harris of seeking to drive a wedge between China and Southeast Asian nations with comments in Singapore that Beijing used coercion and intimidation to back its unlawful South China Sea claims.

Speaking in Hanoi on Wednesday, Harris said there was a need to mount pressure on China over its maritime claims and offered to support Vietnam in several key areas, including enhancement of maritime security to take on Beijing's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

"We need to find ways to pressure, raise the pressure... on Beijing to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to challenge, its bullying and excessive maritime claims," said Harris during a meeting with Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

Harris offered Vietnam more visits by US warships and aircraft carriers, vaccines and aid to tackle



US Vice-President Kamala Harris lays flowers at the Senator John McCain memorial site, where his Navy aircraft was shot down by the North Vietnamese, on the three-year anniversary of his death, in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Wednesday. — AFP

Covid-19 and announced the launch of several programmes to help combat climate change, according to a White House official who did not wish to be named.

Harris's seven-day trip to Singapore and Vietnam is part of a broader US strategy to take on China globally. China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan lay claim to parts of the disputed waters of the South China Sea, which is crossed by vital shipping lanes and contains gas fields and rich fishing grounds.

China has established military outposts on artificial islands in the South China Sea and objects to foreign warships sailing through what it claims is its sovereign waters.

The US Navy regularly conducts "freedom of navigation" operations through the disputed waters, which China objects to,

saying they do not help promote peace or stability. In 2016, the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled against China's claim, but Beijing has rejected the ruling.

"While pointing a finger at China and accusing it of 'coercion' and 'intimidation', Harris wilfully ignored her own hypocrisy in attempting to coerce and intimidate regional countries to join Washington in its scheme to contain China," the state run *China Daily* said in an editorial responding to Harris's comments in Singapore.

Harris's Singapore speech was a baseless attack on China, the editorial said.

"It seems that the United States' only commitment to Southeast Asia is its dedicated efforts to drive a wedge between the Southeast Asian nations and China," it added. — AFP

Five billion Covid shots injected worldwide

PARIS: More than five billion anti-Covid jabs have been given globally, an AFP tally of official sources at 1430 GMT on Tuesday showed, with the worldwide inoculation drive reaching cruising speed.

While it took around 140 days to get the first billion shots into people's arms, the third, fourth and fifth billions each took between 26 and 30 days, the data show.

Nearly 40 per cent (1.96 billion) of the five billion shots have been administered in China. India (589 million) and the United States (363 million) make up the trio of countries that have given the most jabs.

In terms of population protected among countries with more than one million people, the United Arab Emirates is the leader. It has administered 179 doses per 100 inhabitants, meaning it has



Children remain under observation after being vaccinated against Covid-19 with Cuban vaccine Soberana Plus, in Havana on Tuesday. — AFP

fully vaccinated nearly 75 per cent of its population.

Uruguay follows with 154 per 100 inhabitants, Israel (149), Qatar (148), Singapore (147), Bahrain (144), Denmark (143), Chile (140), Canada (139), Portugal and Belgium (138 each), China (136), Spain (134), Ireland (133) and the United Kingdom (132).

Most of these countries have fully vaccinated between 65 per cent and 70 per cent of their populations.

Some, like the Emirates, Bahrain, Israel, Uruguay and Chile have even started giving out booster shots to prolong the immunity of the fully vaccinated.

France, which will start giving booster shots from mid-September, is not far behind, with 126 doses injected per 100 people and 62 per cent of the population completely vaccinated.

It has bypassed the United States which has given 110 doses per 100 inhabitants, with 52 per cent completely vaccinated.

Most poor countries have now started to vaccinate, mainly thanks to the Covax scheme, but the coverage remains very unequal.

High-income countries (as defined by the World Bank) administered an average of 111 doses per 100 inhabitants compared with just 2.4 doses in low-income countries.

Injections in these countries have picked up recently after donations by some richer countries.

On average around the world, 64 doses have been injected per 100 inhabitants.

Three countries have yet to start their vaccination drives: Burundi, Eritrea and North Korea. — AFP

Pianists learn to play with robot thumb



Within an hour of being fitted with the artificial digit next to the little finger of their right hand, six players had learned to integrate it on the keyboard, steered by electrical signals generated when they move their foot.

LONDON: How would pianists cope with suddenly having two thumbs on one hand? Would their brains become scrambled or would the extra digit add a new dimension to their playing?

Neuroscientist Adlo Faisal and the team he heads at Imperial College London developed a robot thumb to find out.

Within an hour of being fitted with the artificial digit next to the little finger of their right hand, six players had learned to integrate it on the keyboard, steered by electrical signals generated when they move their foot.

"It came out of my own passion for piano that I wondered what happens if I have an extra finger?" Faisal, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience at the college's Department of Bioengineering and Department of Computing, told Reuters.

"There's a dedicated area of your brain responsible for every

single finger," he said.

"So now comes the question, if I give you an eleventh finger, ... are you processing it the same way as you're processing a regular limb?"

Researchers at the Brain & Behaviour Lab that Faisal heads found that, regardless of playing ability, the six pianists and six other non-playing volunteers all adapted to the thumb quickly, suggesting we are not limited to using an extra digit for tasks we are familiar with.

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

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

— Reuters

Gatwick plans to make second runway fully operational

LONDON: London's Gatwick Airport, Britain's second-biggest air hub, on Wednesday announced plans to make its second runway fully operational, claiming it would help secure its long-term growth and generate 18,400 jobs.

The airport, 30 miles (48 kilometres) south of London, operates as a single-runway airport at the moment.

Its second runway is available but is currently too close to the main runway for them both to be used at the same time.

The airport said it plans to move the centre-line of the second runway by 12 metres in order to meet international safety rules.

Although passenger numbers remain low due to the pandemic, the airport said it expects capacity problems by the time that the approval process has potentially been completed.

"Gatwick has today announced that a public consultation will start on the 9th September 2021 on plans to bring its existing Northern Runway into routine use alongside its Main Runway," it said in a statement.

"The scheme will help secure the airport's long-term growth, generating approximately 18,400 additional jobs by 2038," it added. — AFP

Zanzibar unveils plan for sub-Saharan Africa's 'tallest skyscraper'

DAR ES SALAAM: Zanzibar announced plans on Tuesday to build sub-Saharan Africa's tallest skyscraper, with the \$1.3-billion bill exceeding the archipelago's annual budget by more than 60 per cent.

The 70-storey Zanzibar Domino Commercial Tower will be developed on the west coast, 15 kilometres (nine miles) from the UNESCO World Heritage site of Stone Town, and involve the creation of a man-made island along with a marina for yachts

and cruise ships.

At more than three trillion Tanzanian shillings, the total outlay will surpass the 2021/22 budget of the semi-autonomous archipelago by more than 60 per cent.

Mudrik Ramadhan Soraga, Zanzibar's minister of state for labour, economy and investment, told reporters the project would bolster "the government's efforts in inviting more local and foreign investors to the isles".

The finished project will

house 560 apartments, luxury hotels, resorts, a golf course and a wedding chapel, according to a statement by the New York and Dubai-based design firm xCassia, Tanzania's AICL Group and Scotland's Crowland Management Ltd.

"First sketched in Paris in 2009 after my late father, two sons and I played a round of dominos, I dreamed of building this project for over a decade," Jean-Paul Cassia, founder of the eponymous firm, said in the statement. —AFP

■ DOCTOR ROBOT IS IN



Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon tours a mock theatre set up with innovative new medical equipment, including robotic surgery devices, during a visit to launch the NHS recovery plan at the new national Centre for Sustainable Delivery (CfSD) at the Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank, Scotland, on Wednesday. — AFP

WARSAW

Poland urged to take in migrants

The UN refugee agency on Tuesday urged Poland to take in a group of migrants believed to be from Iraq and Afghanistan who have been stranded on the border with Belarus for more than two weeks.

Thousands of migrants — mostly from the Middle East — have crossed the border from Belarus into the eastern EU states of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in recent months.

Brussels believes the influx is being deliberately engineered



by the regime in Minsk in retaliation against EU sanctions — an accusation that Belarus denies — and Poland has called it a "hybrid attack" on the bloc.

COTONOU

Benin confirms H5N1 avian flu outbreak

Benin has identified an outbreak of the highly contagious H5N1 avian flu in two districts near the capital Porto Novo, the agriculture ministry said on Wednesday.

Benin is the latest West African country to declare an avian flu outbreak, after Ivory Coast identified the disease last week near its commercial capital Abidjan.

Cases have also been detected this year in Ghana, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania and Senegal. Laboratory testing conducted last week showed



that several recent bird fatalities in Benin's southern Seme-Podji and Abomey-Calavi districts were associated with positive H5N1 cases, the agriculture ministry said in a statement.

ABIDJAN

Ivory Coast Ebola patient recovers

A woman in Ivory Coast who earlier this month tested positive for the Ebola virus has recovered, allowing the country to begin a 42-day countdown to declaring an end to the outbreak, a senior health official said on Wednesday.

The 18-year-old woman, who tested positive after arriving in the commercial capital Abidjan from neighbouring Guinea, has been the only confirmed Ebola case so far, said Mamadou Samba, Ivory Coast's director-general of health.



However, authorities are still looking for potential contacts of the woman, who travelled hundreds of kilometres by bus, Samba said, raising the possibility of additional unidentified infections.

Resorts key to tourism development in Oman



Ali Al Matani
alimatani2@gmail.com

ALILA HINU, MIRBAT, IS IMPORTANT FOR PROMOTING TOURISM SECTOR IN DHOFAR GOVERNORATE. THIS RESORT GIVES A RARE EXPERIENCE TO TOURISTS WHO COME IN SEARCHING OF NATURE

Substantial efforts are being made to further develop the tourism sector in Oman. The government is working on new ideas to make the sector more vibrant. It has made rules and regulations, frameworks, laws for public, private, and foreign investments, programmes to encourage innovative ideas, roping in younger generations as entrepreneurs and employees. All this was not just grand talking, but real actions. This has received tremendous appreciation locally and internationally.

The leadership of the country has realised the potential of tourism in the Sultanate. Therefore, it has set up Omran as an investment arm of the government. It has also embarked on promoting accommodation facilities and tourist destinations in all governorates of the country. The company wanted to make all extraordinary preparations before inviting tourists from around the world. It has also addressed the requirements of domestic tourists as well. Omran had an idea that accommodation is a primary concern for the sector which should be developed in quality of world class. It has made massive investments in this area and came up with amazing infrastructure with its own investments. It also

made it a challenge for the private sector to be involved in the area and to play a complementary role in the tourism sector.

Many experiments were done in the country with the same idea and vision. Perhaps, Alila Hinu, Mirbat, is one of the major investment projects in this vital sector. It is important for promoting tourism sector in Dhofar Governorate. This resort, located in the Wilayat of Mirbat, is a unique experiment in tourism sector. It also gave a rare experience to tourists who come in searching of nature.

From reception to its services and facilities, it has made its mark in terms of quality. It has taken the standard in this sector to another level. Alila Hinu's 112 hotel units, 96 diverse types of rooms and 16 high quality villas are not just numbers. They are another name for quality. Such infrastructure and facilities do not come up without a clear vision to take the country to top levels of tourist destinations in the world.

Now the major challenge is ahead. It is not just to bring more such facilities, but to maintain the quality and to preserve the authenticity of Mirbat.

The ray of hope is the determination of Omran which never allowed its own investments in the tourism accommodation sector to compromise in quality. It realises that building a facility like Alila Hinu resort is easier than maintaining its quality. We know that it will be a herculean task. Therefore, the company plans everything accordingly.

If local or foreign tourists want to visit attractive destinations in Oman, they first look for quality accommodation facility and the resorts are their first choice. Alila Hinu has shown the way. But it has to maintain the standards so that tourists can enjoy the natural beauty of the country in moderate weather of Dhofar. It will certainly attract more and more tourists to Mirbat. Tourists like to have the same experience everywhere and it is a major challenge for Omran. More such resorts will be required... means more investment.



A PEACE RALLY

A youth performs a stunt with a bicycle as cyclists ride on Wednesday from Yemeni capital Sanaa bound for the northern Saada province about 320 km away. Dozens of Yemeni cyclists hit the road with a shared goal – to spread peace in the country that has been embroiled in conflict for more than seven years. Saada is one of the areas devastated by the ongoing war between the government and Ansar Allah fighters. – AFP

Objects as the ultimate happiness...



Sonia Ambrosio
soniambrosio@gmail.com

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF MONEY IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS AN ECONOMIC MEASUREMENT

What money means to people was a hotly discussed topic among a group of friends recently. For most of us, money was defined as the means to a better life, and the capability to purchase exclusive products.

If one wants a good level of freedom, this person would look for money. Yes, because money is a mediator between things: circulation, exchange and consumption. Wealthy people don't just have better holidays, cars and housing. They also have better nutrition and better medical care. On the flip side, money creates problems when we don't have it.

The basic principle of the philosophy of money is to understand that it is an economic measurement. It is based upon satisfying individuals' desires and upon consumption of things. Money becomes the centre in which people turn out to be segregated, differentiated and labelled. Think about individuals as a commodity; it is a buying and selling 'thing' – "preferring a servant from 'X' country, not 'Y' country.

One step further, money objectifies the style of life but also socialises people. With some awareness, we can understand that money makes us masters or slaves. The young, the unemployed, and those on low incomes have the lowest levels of financial capability. Joining the list are the retired people. They all face increased

financial problems. Just heard the other day people have been encouraged to pay their bills in instalments – a perfect recipe for slavery. Debt is debilitating and stressful. Of course, some pros and cons need to be evaluated.

Relationships and job satisfaction bring happiness – but mostly measured in wealth and remuneration. Let's consider a diamond engagement ring or an exotic holiday destination. For these examples, money is the reifer of these relationships – it gives a sense of happiness. So, happiness is called a diamond ring, or an exotic holiday. This reification serves to reinforce status, hierarchies and differences. A gold-plated pen or a gold-plated yacht provides a notion of endless here and now happiness – 'presentness'.

The simple idea that walls freely give money is dangerous, though it can put a smile on one's face. In a shopping complex, I witnessed parents withdrawing money from an ATM, and heard children asking 'how come the walls were giving money' – the kids asked to use the card as an experience. It is a small and positive step for a child to be allowed to use their parent's card, but that should come with some lessons.

The incident signals that the time is overdue to teach children about financial literacy, particularly when we are moving from hard currency to

cryptocurrency – trading in digital currency has become increasingly profitable. Online payment is a dated reality while the growth of real-time payments is changing the traditional payment types. Bear in mind that ATMs that transact cryptocurrencies are already a reality in 75 countries. So, with education and awareness, children can be taught about money strategies and management from an early age and – with hope – avoid pitfalls later in life, such as bank loans or not honouring credit card spending.

To improve public understanding of the financial system, industry, government, and education could come together to make changes in the population's financial capability. This can be translated into teaching children the role of banking in society, questions about costs and expenditure, and the dynamics of how much income comes in versus what expenses go out, besides the difference between needs and wants.

Despite the initiative for financial literacy, children and adults will still be out-of-date because virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are already entering e-commerce with a focus on customer experience and happiness: trying the diamond ring before buying it or adding a virtual image of sunglasses to your picture before purchasing it.

Commercial fraud continues in the region



Haider al Lawati
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

RECENTLY, ONE OF THE GCC COUNTRIES REFERRED 228 CASES OF COMMERCIAL FRAUD TO AUTHORITIES WITH THE AIM OF ARRESTING VIOLATORS

Despite the measures taken by governments to combat commercial fraud, these operations continue in the world, especially in our region, which depends on lot of foreign imports. In addition, there are some fraudulent industries for products and materials in the region, where fraud occurs in packaging, production and expiry dates, which greatly affects people's health, productivity and daily movement.

Over the past months, we have read a lot of messages published by social media platforms in this regard urging to take measures towards those who carry out commercial fraud in goods, whether they are imported from abroad, or those that are manufactured in the

region.

Recently, one of the GCC countries referred 228 cases of commercial fraud to authorities with the aim of arresting violators and enhancing consumer awareness of their rights and duties towards these issues.

There are many laws which deal with these cases in the Gulf countries, including deportation of expatriate workers if they commit these crimes, and preventing them from entering later in accordance with the laws of trade, investment and health. Commercial fraud is violation of the provisions of the regulations adopted by countries, because it is considered a deceptive matter in Shariah, whether it results from the product itself or an error in its components

or qualities, in addition to fraud that occurs in the process of sorting, weight, size and standard. Fraud operations do not only occur in food products and commodities, but also extend to necessary luxury goods, entertainment and others.

Whoever cheats or attempts to cheat with any product is considered a violation, as well as whoever sells or displays the fraudulent product for the purpose of trading knowing fully well that it is fraudulent, or manufactures products that violate the specifications and standards approved by official institutions, whether in the way they are packaged, processed, stored, transported and labelled contrasting publications with the aim of promoting false and fraudulent marketing.

From this point of view, the authorities concerned in the countries are keen to continue their efforts to control any violation, while governments have established institutions that work to protect consumer rights, and take legal measures against manipulators and violators who have committed crimes against consumers.

In the Sultanate, over the past years, we have followed up on a number of commercial fraud cases, especially in the field of food products, while today there are many other cases that have been referred to the authorities concerned related to the fraud in food, recreational or service products, some of which are punishable by imprisonment and financial fines, in addition to defamation of institutions.

Within its tasks, the Public Authority for Consumer Protection works to follow up on these issues and coordinates its efforts with other government institutions in order to address and reduce the phenomenon of commercial fraud and counterfeiting.

The phenomenon of commercial fraud is one of the negative phenomena that affect foreign investment operations and the economic progress of countries, in addition to its negative effects on consumer safety and health. There are international institutions such as the Intellectual Property Institution following up on these issues, as fraud in production means losses for the original institutions that own these products.

sport

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om
follow us: @observersportz
f t i y l o

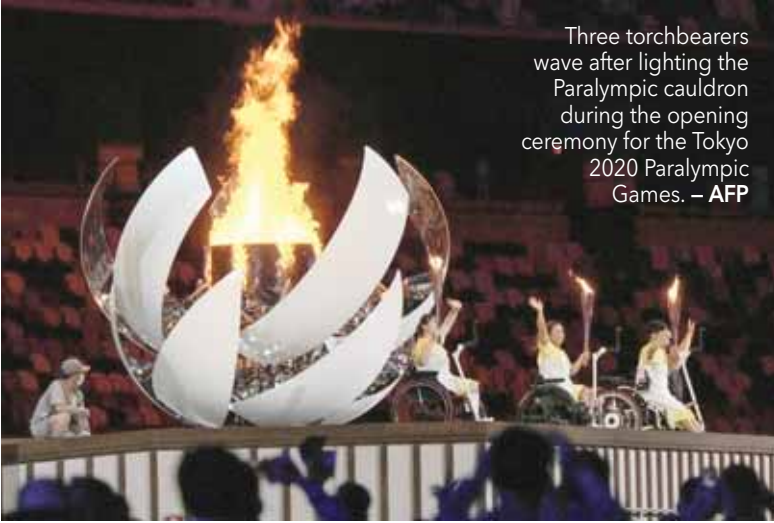
0

OMAN ATTENDS PARALYMPICS OPENING IN TOKYO



TOKYO: The Sultanate participated in the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games hosted by Tokyo with the participation of 4,400 athletes from 160 countries. The Games will continue until September 5. The Sultanate delegation is headed by Dr Mansour bin Sultan al Touqi, Chairman of the Oman Paralympic Committee. For Oman, Mohammed bin Jamil al Mashaikhi, opens the campaign in the F32 class mace-throwing event on August 28. Al

Mashaikhi will compete in shot put on August 31. In women's section, Iman bint Tayseer al Shamsiyah will take part in the shot put for the F34 class on August 31. Taha bin Abdullah al Harassi, will try his luck in T36 category of long jump competition on August 30. Al Harassi will compete in the 100 metres sprint qualifiers on September 3. The final of 100m is scheduled for September 4. — ONA



Britain’s Storey shines, records tumble



TOKYO: British cyclist Sarah Storey added to her glorious golden history as wheelchair rugby powerhouses Australia suffered a shock defeat on day one of the delayed Tokyo 2020 Paralympics on Wednesday. Paige Greco, an Australian cyclist, had the honour of winning the first gold of the Games, 354 days later than originally envisaged because of the Covid-19 pandemic and a day after a high-energy but poignant opening ceremony. Despite a year-long postponement, and with coronavirus fears hanging over the event, world and Paralympic records tumbled in the swimming pool and on the cycling track on a pulsating first day of competition that saw 24 gold medals awarded. Greco was in record-breaking form as she beat China's Wang Xiaomei in the gold medal race in C1-C3 class 3,000 metre individual pursuit at the Izu Velodrome. She smashed her own world record by nearly eight seconds in the heats and lowered it by another second and a half to 3min 50.815sec in the final. "I still can't believe it. I keep



Gold medallist Francesco Boccia of Italy celebrates on the podium after winning men's 200m freestyle S5 swimming. – Reuters

looking down and seeing (the gold medal). It's not really sunk in yet", said Greco. Storey moved a step closer to becoming Britain's greatest Paralympian, shattering her own world record in the heats before powering to victory in the C5 3,000 metres individual pursuit final for her 15th Paralympic gold. The 43-year-old took the title for a fourth consecutive Games when she caught compatriot Crystal Lane-Wright inside eight laps of the 12. Storey is just one medal

behind the British record held by Mike Kenny, who won 16 swimming golds from 1976 to 1988. "I never expected to go as quickly this morning, but I'm so glad I did", said Storey. Brazilian Daniel Dias, who is competing at his last Paralympics, has the chance to become the most decorated male Paralympic swimmer of all time if he wins three more golds to eclipse Kenny. But could only take bronze in his opening event, the S5 men's 200m freestyle, which was won



Gold medallist Paige Greco of Australia celebrates after winning women's C1-3 3000m Individual Pursuit cycling. – Reuters

by Italy's Francesco Boccia in a new Paralympic record time. Dias, who has now won 25 Paralympic medals, will have several more chances to add to his 14 golds starting on Thursday in the 100m freestyle. Defending gold medallists Australia suffered a setback in their bid to become the first team to top the wheelchair rugby podium at three consecutive Games, edged out 54-53 by Denmark. "I'm pretty devastated, to be honest — I had never lost a game at the Paralympics ever", said

Australia's Chris Bond. "I don't know what to feel. All we can do is turn around and win the next two and make the semifinal." **'MANY DOUBTED'** The Games had been declared open on Tuesday night by Japan's Emperor Naruhito, with International Paralympic Committee chief Andrew Parsons paying tribute to the grit of the athletes who made it to Tokyo. "Many doubted this day would happen, many thought it impossible, but thanks to

the efforts of many, the most transformative sports event on Earth is about to begin", he said. The opening ceremony was themed around the story of a one-winged plane taking to the skies, and featured high-octane musical and acrobatic sequences in a departure from the more sombre Olympics opening ceremony. Notably missing were Afghanistan's team, who had been trapped in the country after the Taliban takeover. The IPC confirmed on Wednesday that the team, comprising two athletes, had left Afghanistan, but declined to say where they had gone. The opening ceremony took place before a largely empty stadium with almost all spectators barred from venues because of coronavirus rules. Organisers on Wednesday reported 16 new Covid-19 cases linked to the Paralympics, including two athletes in the Paralympic Village, whose identities have not been disclosed. The new cases bring the number of infections linked to the Paralympics to 176, most of them Japan-based staff or contractors. — AFP



Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi (C) and teammates walk off the field after beating West Indies in the second Test. – AFP

SHAHEEN SHAH TAKES 10 WICKETS TO ROCK WINDIES

PAKISTAN LEVEL SERIES WITH 109-RUN WIN

KINGSTON, Jamaica: Shaheen Shah Afridi completed a 10-wicket match haul to bowl Pakistan to a series-levelling 109-run victory over the West Indies in the final session of the second and final Test at Sabina Park on Tuesday.

Frustrated by the loss of an entire day's play and another session to rain and a sodden outfield over the weekend, Shaheen kept Pakistan's hopes alive with a devastating first innings effort of six for 51 on day four - his best Test innings performance - and returned on the final day to strike critical blows.

Then, when it seemed the weather would ruin their desperate push for victory, he came back for a final spell with the second new ball to take the last two wickets and give his team a tremendous triumph with one hour to spare.

Starting the day at 49 for one and facing the unlikely target of 329, the West Indies were again let down by their top-order batting,

SCOREBOARD	
Pakistan 1st Innings - 302-9 decl	J Holder c F Alam b N Ali 47
West Indies 1st Innings - 150	J da Silva c F Ashraf b SS Afridi 15
Pakistan 2nd Innings - 176-6 decl	K Roach lbw SS Afridi 7
WEST INDIES 2ND INNINGS	J Seales not out 0
K Brathwaite c F Alam b N Ali 39	Extras (b-4, lb-2, nb-5, w-1) 12
K Powell run out 23	Total (83.2 overs, all out) 219
A Joseph c M Rizwan b SS Afridi 17	Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-65, 3-69, 4-73, 5-101, 6-113, 7-159, 8-199, 9-212
N Bonner lbw Hasan Ali 2	Bowling: Mohammad Abbas 14-3-42-0,
R Chase c I Butt b Hasan Ali 0	Shaheen Shah Afridi 17.2-5-43-4, Hasan Ali 14-
J Blackwood c M Rizwan b N Ali 25	6-37-2, Faheem Ashraf 13-5-36-0, Nauman Ali
K Mayers c M Rizwan b SS Afridi 32	22-7-52-3, Fawad Alam 3-1-3-0

sliding to 113 for six in mid-afternoon despite a battling 39 from captain Kraigg Brathwaite.

Former skipper Jason Holder eventually top-scored with 47 but it was his demise to Nauman Ali, the left-arm spinner's third wicket, which eased a rising sense of panic in the Pakistan camp. Then Afridi, new ball in hand and with eight wickets down, trapped Kemar Roach leg-before.

Afridi then induced a mistimed drive from Joshua da Silva for Faheem Ashraf to take the catch at mid-on and dismiss the West Indies for 219 and seal yet another

come-from-behind effort for Pakistan in the Caribbean.

As in 2005 and 2011, Pakistan, this time led by Babar Azam, lost the first Test but rebounded to take the second and share the honours with the hosts.

"This was a very important win for us, especially given the way we lost that first Test," said Babar, reflecting on the heart-breaking one-wicket defeat at the same venue nine days earlier.

"My partnership with Fawad Alam and his brilliant century was, of course, valuable, but I have to give massive credit to the

bowling of Shaheen because he makes things a lot easier for us."

'GREAT TEAM EFFORT'
Shaheen's second-innings figures of four for 43 gave him a match haul of ten for 94 and with a series-leading tally of 18 wickets in the two matches at an average of 11.28, it was inevitable that the 21-year-old would be both Man of the Match and Man of the Series.

"It was a great effort, a team effort. This is what the team needed and I am just happy that I was able to deliver," said the left-arm pacer.

"It was really tough out there, extremely hot and even though we were picking up wickets along the way we really had to work very hard and credit must go to the entire bowling unit."

Shaheen started the ball rolling for Pakistan within the first half-hour of the day when he removed nightwatchman Alzarri Joseph via an ambitious top-edged hook which was held by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan. — AFP

India slump to 78 all out against England

LEEDS, United Kingdom: India collapsed to 78 all out after winning the toss on the first day of the third Test against England at Headingley on Wednesday.

It was their lowest Test total against England since being dismissed for 42 at Lord's in 1974.

In reply, England were 21-0 at tea.

The visitors lost their last six wickets for 22 runs having been 56-4 at lunch, with this slump following their all-time lowest 36 all out against Australia in Adelaide in December during a series India eventually won 2-1.

Home great James Anderson ripped through India's top order while talking 3-6 in eight overs, including the prize scalp of Virat Kohli for seven.

Both Sam Curran and Craig Overton took two wickets in two balls after lunch, with Overton finishing with 3-14 in 10.4 overs after being recalled in place of

SCOREBOARD

INDIA 1ST INNINGS	
R Sharma c Robinson b Overton	19
KL Rahul c Buttler b Anderson	0
C Pujara c Buttler b Anderson	1
V Kohli c Buttler b Anderson	7
A Rahane c Buttler b Robinson	18
R Pant c Buttler b Robinson	2
R Jadeja lbw Curran	4
M Shami c Burns b Overton	0
I Sharma not out	8
J Bumrah lbw Curran	0
M Siraj c Root b Overton	3
Extras (lb 11, nb 5)	16
Total (all out, 40.4 overs, 194 mins)	78
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-4, 3-21, 4-56, 5-58, 6-67, 7-67, 8-67, 9-67	
Bowling: Anderson 8-5-6-3, Robinson 10-3-16-2, Curran 10-2-27-2, Moeen 2-0-4-0, Overton 10-4-5-14-3	

injured fast bowler Mark Wood.

India opener Rohit Sharma (19) and vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (18) were the only batsmen to make it into double figures on Wednesday, with 16 runs coming in extras.

India lead the five-match series 1-0 after a 151-run win in the second Test at Lord's last week. — AFP



England's James Anderson celebrates taking the wicket of India's Virat Kohli. – Reuters

Oman Sail to compete in Italian Tour event

MUSCAT: Five of Oman Sail's team have headed to Italy to compete in the upcoming Marina Militare Nastro Rosa Tour held in port cities along the Italian coast from August 26 to September 20. The team will take part in the first six stages before joining their teammates in Switzerland to train for the Star Sailors League Finals which runs from September 21 to October 4.

Team captain Nasser al Mashari along with Hussain al Jabri, Ali al Balushi, Haitham al Wahaibi and Akram al Wahaibi will represent Oman at the races in Genova, Rome, Gaeta, Naples, Brindisi and Bari before joining their teammates for the Star Sailors League Finals. The 12-man team will compete against professional teams from around the world for the Sir Roland Symonette Trophy in the first major international tournament for Oman's elite sailors post-pandemic.

Nasser al Mashari said: "We are all eager to get back on the water



and take every opportunity we can to learn, train and compete. The Nastro Rosa Tour is a great

chance to gain experience on the DIAM 24 ahead of Sailing Arabia – The Tour later this year, assess our

performance and test ourselves against some very experienced sailors both in Italy and at the Star

Sailors League in Switzerland."

Oman Sail's team will meet their cohorts from Nastro Rosa again at Sailing Arabia – The Tour when the Italian team travels to Oman to participate in the Sultanate's premier offshore race, taking place from November 24 to December 5.

In most seasons, the Star Sailors League Finalists are the top-ranked teams based on five major events each year, however, due to the lack of international competition, the teams have been invited to ensure there can be a winner this year. The Sultanate was selected based on the sailors' impressive track record and the country's long-standing pedigree in global sailing. The finals take on a playoff-style knockout format to decide the eventual winners.

The team will then return to Oman ahead of a busy winter season which sees Oman Sail host seven major tournaments, including the 2021 World Youth Sailing Championships, 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17

World Championships, and the 2021 ICLA Radial World Championships headed to these shores.

Oman Sail will also organise the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 Asian Championships and 2021 Asian Windsurfing Championships, alongside regular fixtures in Oman's sailing calendar when the Mussanah Race Week and Sailing Arabia – The Tour 2021 return to close out the year as the competitive sailing spotlight shines on the Sultanate.

Oman's Nasta Rosa Tour team: Nasser al Mashari (team captain), Hussain al Jabri, Haitham al Wahaibi, Akram al Wahaibi and Ali al Balushi

Oman's Star Sailors League team: Hashim al Rashdi (team manager), Nasser al Mashari (captain), Haitham al Wahaibi, Yassir al Rahbi, Waleed al Kindi, Musab al Hadi, Hussain al Jabri, Ahmed al Hasani, AbdulRahman al Mashari, Akram al Wahaibi, Ali al Balushi and Raad al Hadi

Oman-Mumbai tour matches to be live streamed

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket Board, in partnership with ITW Consulting has announced that they will be broadcasting 6 games of Mumbai's white ball tour of Oman. Two T20 and four One-Day matches would be available Live on Fan Code in India; Geo Super in Pakistan; CricLife in the UAE.

Confirming the broadcast, Pankaj Khimji, Chairman Oman Cricket, said, "We are elated to announce that the six matches between Oman and Mumbai will be live streamed from August 26 to September 3. This will give the Oman Cricket an exhilarating opportunity to a reach wide-spread audience and encourage the players for the upcoming season. In association the ITW Consulting, we believe in accelerating the recognition cricketers received by broadcasting the game."

Richard Saldanha, Head of New Initiative, ITW Consulting MEA, confirmed that the tournament would have Dafa News, as Principle Sponsors and Brighto Paints and Osaka Batteries as Associate Sponsor.

He said: "We are delighted to partner with Oman Cricket and start a new journey in bringing Oman Cricket matches to viewers regionally as well as internationally. For the upcoming series we are pleased to confirm live tel-



Pankaj Khimji

In partnership with ITW Consulting, 6 matches will be broadcasted between August 26 and September 3

ecast of these matches will be on Fancode in India, Geo Super in Pakistan and CricLife in the UAE."

"We are discussing with other broadcast partners as well to reach maximum viewers", he added.

Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer and National Coach, Oman Cricket, added: "We are not only committed to improve the quality of the game but also be known for our talents. Broadcasting the white-ball tour helps them to gain momentum and acknowledgment internationally. This tour is a healthy practice for both the teams and will also be a delight for cricket enthusiasts around the globe."



Oman futsal team to take part in Thailand tourney

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 25

After a long absence, Oman futsal team will return to action as they began a short domestic camp on Wednesday ahead of taking part in the friendly international futsal tournament in Thailand.

The internal preparatory gathering will be for four days and on August 28 the team will head off to Bangkok city. The international friendly event will feature participation of hosts Thailand, Chile, Thailand futsal league stars besides the Sultanate team.

The national experienced head coach of the futsal team, Younis al Fahdi, announced the probables for the upcoming internal camp and the friendly tournament. The list featured the following players: Hisham al Wahaibi, Abdulaziz al Raqadi, Waleed al Farsi, Essa al Balushi, Muhannad al Shibli, Omar al Hasani, Loai al Wahaibi,



Muatsaem al Shamsi, Zamel al Balushi, Khalfan al Mawali, Samer al Balushi, Mansoor al Hadi, Mohammed al Lawati and Mukhaled al Raqadi.

The Sultanate team is gearing up to participate in the forthcoming edition of the GCC Futsal Championship which is scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia during November. Also, Red Futsal team will join the qualification of AFC Asian Futsal Championship in Kuwait in 2022. The qualifications will take place in April 2022.

On the other hand, Thailand are

The Sultanate team is gearing up to participate in the GCC Futsal Championship in Saudi Arabia in November

making their final preparations as they will play at the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup in Lithuania, which is scheduled to take place from September 12 to October 3. Thailand team is grouped in Group C alongside Portugal, Morocco, and Solomon Islands. The other Asian nations which will take part in the world futsal championship include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and IR Iran.

The upcoming Thailand International futsal tournament will act as an alternative preparatory event instead of cancelled tournament in Iran

which was supposed to be held during last July. The overseas camp and the international friendly tournament are vital for the team members to continue in their preparatory programme and shape the players' readiness for the upcoming GCC and Asian assignments.

Due to impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Sultanate futsal team was absent from training for the last six months after the cancellation of the 2020 AFC Asian Futsal Championship in Kuwait but host country Kuwait will have all the rights to host the forthcoming edition in 2022.

OMAN CRICKET RECOGNISES SENIOR DIVISION TOPPERS

Arif, Noushad claim B Division top awards



B, C, D, division teams



E and F division teams



D Division winners



E Division winners

SHAHZAD RAZA
MUSCAT, AUGUST 25

Arif Hussain of Orient Travels/Gitacs and Noushad Haneefa of LC Tech were presented best batsman and best bowler awards respectively at a prize ceremony for toppers of B to F Division organised by Oman Cricket at OC Ground One in Al Amerat on Tuesday.

The prizes were presented by Oman Cricket Board Directors including Madhu Jesrani, OC Secretary, Kiran Asher, Treasurer, Paul Sheridan, Ali Moosa Yousuf and Alkesh Joshi in the presence of Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer, Oman Cricket.

C Division's top prizes went to Pervez Baig (best batsman) of Design Group Engineering Consultants and Adnanul

Haq (best bowler) of Maniz Azad.

Wajid Ali of Pitspot won the D Division's best batsman award while best bowler and best all-rounder prizes went to Rahul Chadha who was the star player for Vanderlande.

Omani player Rafeeq Mohammed of OCT Al Nahdha received E Division's best batsman award while Shah Abbas of Aflag Group won the best bowler prize. Yusuf Patanwala of Sketch International was declared the best all-rounder.

Mazoon Dairy's Sakeel Khan claimed the best batsman award for his brilliant batting in F Division's League competition whereas Prashan Rana of Y Horizon was presented the best bowler prize.

The best all-rounder prize was received by Saud Haroon Khan of BSI.



B Division winners

business

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

3,958.92

CRUDE
OIL PRICE

Oman Crude \$69.58
Brent Crude \$71.19
Light Crude \$67.02

OMAN OBSERVER

www.omanobserver.om
follow us: @oman_biz

Banking Services
Made Special
to Suit Your World

BankDhofar provides you with a host of innovative products, services that are specially designed to suit your needs and exceed your expectations

For more information:
<https://bit.ly/BankDhofarEng>

Al Riadah Priority Banking Services

Al Riha Special Banking Services

Ladies Banking Services

Youth Banking Services

Expat Banking Services

Children Banking Services

بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

the best bank for you

24/7/365

www.bankdhofar.com



Madayn focuses on food industry innovation

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 25

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn, in cooperation with Oman Liquefied Natural Gas (Oman LNG), is all set to launch Industrial Innovation Programme in October. The programme comes in line with Oman LNG’s project of financing business incubator project at Sur Industrial City under the supervision of Madayn Industrial Innovation Academy.

Presenting an ideal platform for the innovators and entrepreneurs in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, the programme aims at qualifying Omani industrial innovation specialists through a series of training courses to be delivered by innovation experts.

The programme will feature a variety of topics including introduction to innovation; innovation in food and beverage industry; transforming innovative food products into viable models; food safety and food systems; branding; marketing of innovative products;

and development of initial innovative models of food products.

The programme, which will take place in October in Sur Industrial City, targets entrepreneurs and innovators in South Al Sharqiyah in food and beverage industry, as well as owners of household food products, and graduates of food science and nutrition, sales and marketing, and business fields in the governorate.

By end of the programme, the participants will be awarded certification by Madayn Industrial Innovation Academy, Innovation Certification Level 1 by Global Innovation Management Institute in the United States, certification by the World Packaging Organisation, and certification by the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.

Moreover, top six participants will be selected for their food products to be developed for commercial production with the support of Oman LNG and under the supervision of Madayn Industrial Innovation Academy.

Omani-Saudi JVs invited to bid for 51 km Duqm road project

NEW PROCUREMENT
STRATEGY: OPAZ limits bidding to JV partnerships between the two countries

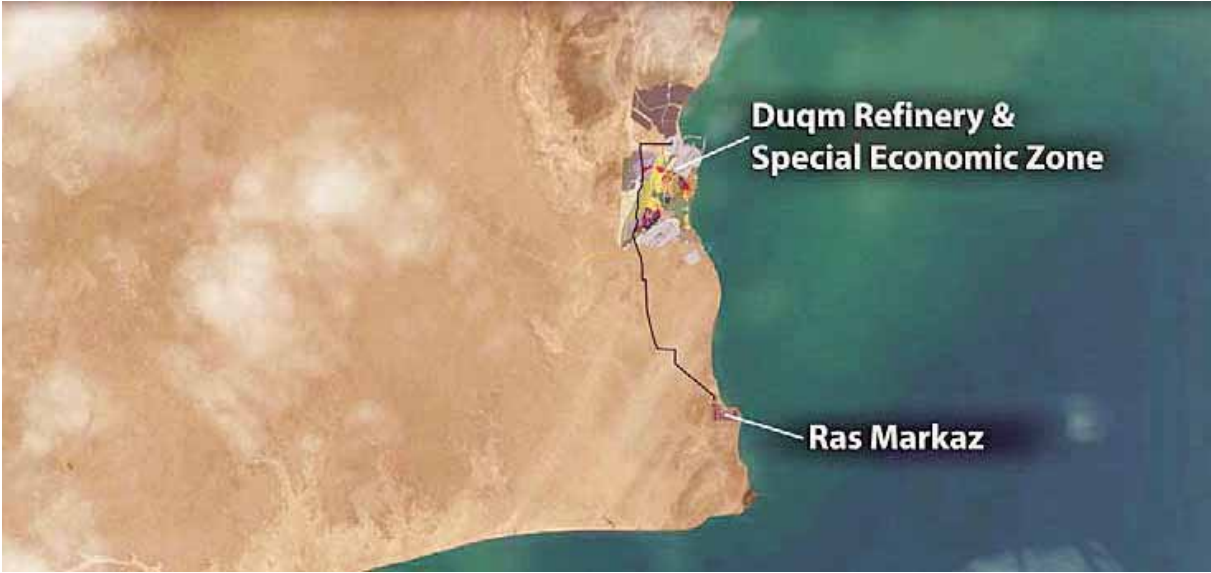
CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](https://twitter.com/conradprabhu)

In a further fillip to Omani-Saudi economic ties, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has announced that a new road project planned in Duqm SEZ will be open to bidding only by joint venture partnerships set up by construction firms of the two countries.

The 51-km dual carriageway will link Duqm with a Crude Oil Storage Terminal nearing completion at Ras Markaz just south of the SEZ. Oman Tank Terminal Company (OTTCO), a subsidiary of OQ – the Sultanate’s global integrated energy group – is preparing to launch the first phase of the crude oil hub early in 2022.

Prospects for a strong uptick in economic relations between Muscat and Riyadh received a boost following the historic visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Saudi Arabia last month.

The Sultanate has sought to promote the SEZ at Duqm, among other investment opportunities, as particularly promising for Saudi industrial and economic investment, given Duqm’s strategic geographical location and its proximity to international shipping routes.



The Sultanate has sought to promote the SEZ at Duqm, among other investment opportunities, as particularly promising for Saudi industrial and economic investment, given Duqm’s strategic geographical location and its proximity to international shipping routes

According to OPAZ, the 51-km all-weather road will run from Duqm Airport to Ras Markaz. It includes 42.7 km of dual carriageway (with two lanes on either side) and 6 km of single carriageway (one lane on either side). Further, as many as eight roundabouts will be constructed along the length of the road project.

The successful bidder will also construct drainage structures and embankment protection systems, besides installing street lights.

A three-year timeframe has been stipulated for the completion of the project. Significantly, it marks the first time that a road project is being procured based on bidding criteria of the kind that has been specified by OPAZ in this particular contract.

The objective, according to market experts, is to give new impetus to Oman-Saudi economic relations.

Auguring well for stronger trade and investment ties between the two countries is a new 800 km carriageway that links Oman with Saudi Arabia via The Empty Quarter.

When operational, sometime later this year or early next year, the desert road will enable speedier flows of goods, tourists and business travellers.

Additionally, the new Duqm–Ras Markaz road project will open up Ras Markaz to international investment.

When launched next year, the Crude Oil Storage Terminal will position the Sultanate as a global hub for all kinds of local, regional and international crudes. An array of huge tanks has been constructed at site, offering up to 25 million barrels of storage capacity in the first phase of the project.

When fully built, in increment stages over several years, the facility will offer a world-leading 200 million barrels of storage capacity.

Overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean beyond, the storage park’s geographically advantageous location — far removed from the contentious Strait of Hormuz — will open up opportunities for regional and international oil traders to store their volumes on a short-term and long-term basis.

Omani ambassadors tour Duqm SEZ’s vital projects

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 25

Oman’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), organised a visit for the Sultanate’s ambassadors to a number of brotherly and friendly countries, to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

In all, seven officials took part in the two-day visit, which offered an overview of the zone and included visits to a number of projects notably the dry dock, Port of Duqm, Saay commercial neighbourhood, OQ8 refinery project, Karwa Motors, the multi-purpose fishing port project, and fish and food industries complex.

Saleh bin Suleiman al Harthi,

the Sultanate’s Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya, said the visit came as an initiative from OPAZ to introduce the zone, its existing and planned facilities, economic enterprises, investment facilities, commercial outlets and tourist resorts.

“We were indeed pleased to see the great and relentless efforts made to develop this zone, which is planned to be an integrated global economic gateway with a large strategic port that can serve shipping and shipping lines from east to west,” he said.

He pointed out that as key partners in supporting Oman economy abroad, our introductory visits are significant and will undoubtedly open new horizons of communication and cooperation in marketing this



promising zone to gain its place on the global economic map.

Idris bin Abdulrahman al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate to the United Nations (UN), stressed the importance of increasing visits to the targeted countries

to introduce the zone, its components, available incentives and opportunities to help attract more diversified investments that add value and enhance strategic objectives.

“It is important to increase the communication efforts

Through these channels, we can promote the objectives of the promotional campaign for Duqm at a global level. Through these channels, we can also arrange and organise seminars and programmes to introduce the zone abroad on a continuous periodic basis

IDRIS BIN
ABDULRAHMAN AL
KHANJARI

with different countries by coordinating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sultanate’s diplomatic missions abroad, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which has good relations with the joint Arab Chambers of Commerce in many countries of the world.

“Through these channels, we can promote the objectives of the promotional campaign for Duqm at a global level. Through these channels, we can also arrange and organise seminars and programmes to introduce the zone abroad on a continuous periodic basis,” he added.

The delegation also visited the rock garden, which is one of the most important geological sites in Oman, to see its unique and diverse rock formations.

Omani students do well in ACCA programme

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has announced that the Omani youth supported by the bank in the Chartered Certified Accountant course by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) have been achieving excellent results.

The bank has partnered with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) to provide scholarships for a number of Bachelor's degree holders to complete this internationally-recognised accountancy course, which prepares entry and mid-level professionals to work in any aspect of finance or management.

The participants supported by the bank have been achieving excellent results with many of them ranking among the highest globally and the GCC region. The group performance in ACCA subjects surpassed global benchmarks validating the bank's strategy of supporting talented Omani youth.

Said bin Salim al Aufi (pictured), Group Deputy



General Manager — Human Resources, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat is delighted with the excellent results achieved by the students. The bank continues to focus on nurturing and supporting Omani talent so as to meet the ambitious growth plans of the bank and also help Omani youth develop their skills and qualifications. The bank earmarks substantial funding every year for the training and development of employees across all job functions and roles.

"This approach is part of a strategy put in place by the bank's Executive Management to enhance the role of Omani cadre across all the different lines of business and activities of the bank."

Oman Shell entrepreneurship to focus on renewable energy

MUSCAT: Oman Shell has announced the launch of the new version of Shell Intilaaqah, which aims to build the capabilities of entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the fields of sustainability and renewable energy. The launch comes in collaboration with the SME Development Authority (Riyada).

Oman Shell designed the programme to ensure that it aligns with Shell's social investment strategy and Oman Vision 2040. The programme takes into consideration the aspirations of its partners and entrepreneurs, whilst focusing on empowering entrepreneurs and Omani businesses working in the fields of sustainability and renewable energy.

The new version of Shell Intilaaqah includes an intensive one-month certifiable training programme, where participants will undergo courses in the fields of sustainability, solar panel installation, health, safety and environment, as well as topics in the fields of entrepreneurship, marketing, quality management,



work ethics, compliance and other relevant topics.

Additionally, the programme will host local and regional experts to enrich the programme with their practical experiences. The programme also includes a module that is considered a requirement to register and obtain accreditation in the installation of solar panels by the Authority for Public Services Regulation.

"Through our partnership with Shell, we look to support SMEs growth and widen their horizons with necessary knowledge



and skills. This programme will contribute to achieving better results by connecting entrepreneurs to experts who have paved the way in solar energy and sustainability in Oman and beyond," said Halima bint Rashid al Zari, President of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada).

Malak bint Ahmed al Shaibani, GM Corporate Relations and In-Country Value, Oman Shell, said, "Since the inauguration of Shell Intilaaqah in the Sultanate more than 25 years ago, it has

Through our partnership with Shell, we look to support SMEs growth and widen their horizons with necessary knowledge and skills. This programme will contribute to achieving better results by connecting entrepreneurs to experts who have paved the way in solar energy and sustainability in Oman and beyond

HALIMA BINT RASHID AL ZARI
President, Riyada

positively inspired and equipped entrepreneurs and SMEs with the right skills and tools to develop their businesses and contribute to the national economy."

Talabat partners with MoH and OCEC to provide 3,000 meals for healthcare workers

MUSCAT: In partnership with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), talabat, the GCC's leading food delivery app, has offered over 3,000 free meals to healthcare employees and volunteers working at the National Vaccination Centre (NVC).

Around 350 meals were provided every single day for a duration of 9 days, from a selection of some of Oman's most popular dining outlets including Cake Creations, Pizza Hut, Burger Garage, Go Koshary, Kabasa Station, Magboos Kuwaiti and Karak Gholam.

The initiative, part of talabat's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, aimed to



support the Sultanate's efforts to combat Covid-19 by increasing the nation's vaccination levels.

Mohamed Zourab, Managing Director of talabat Oman, said, "Front-line healthcare workers in Oman have been risking their lives

since the start of the pandemic in order to ensure that people are being vaccinated. Providing them with a meal to re-energise them and keep them motivated was the least we could do."

Eng Said al Shanfari, Chief

Executive Officer at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, added, "The OCEC is proving once more its ability to cater to varying numbers of visitors by hosting the National Vaccination Campaign for the past two months.

"There are thousands of people receiving their vaccination on a daily basis, and we thrive to ensure that their experience is seamless. Our volunteers play a key role in delivering the experience. We have ventured in multiple partnerships, including that with talabat to provide catering services to over 250 volunteers on a daily basis. The event is still ongoing and the service continues at the OCEC to offer all stakeholders a memorable experience."

MEC introduces new study modes in Master's programmes

MUSCAT: MEC announced several convenient study modes in its Master programmes to cater to the needs of working individuals and other postgraduate aspirants. The new study modes include a blended weekend mode, a blended part-time mode, and a blended full-time mode, in addition to the previously available full-time and part-time study modes.

The blended mode allows students to take 50 per cent of the classes online and the remaining 50 per cent on-campus. In contrast, the regular mode requires students to be physically present on campus. The new study modes apply to students joining from the Fall 21 semester starting in the first week of October. MEC's new modes of study for PG



are very flexible and convenient due to the combination of online and on-campus learning experiences.

In this context, Dr Smitha Nair, Head-Centre for Postgraduate Studies at MEC, said, "It is always a priority for us to introduce mechanisms to provide access to working individuals who are planning to upskill and advance their careers. The new modes in Master's study with a blended weekend and part-time format are convenient options for working professionals in and outside Muscat."

Head out to exciting experiences in the Ford Escape

MUSCAT: The Ford Escape is a perfect SUV to make the most of when you choose to get around the city or head out to fascinating experiences in the country side. One of Ford's best-selling SUVs for a reason, the Escape's popularity is born of its reputation for great fuel economy, versatility and technology aimed at helping customers, and it stands proudly as an integral part of Ford's SUV line-up.

The Escape offers Ford's sophisticated SYNC 3 communications and entertainment system with Apple Carplay compatibility, an 8" Touchscreen, innovative driver assistance technologies, an ergonomic and comfortable interior. And powerful and efficient engine including Ford's twin-scroll turbocharged, direct-injected



2.0-litre four cylinder EcoBoost engine, which produces 242 PS and 345 Nm of torque. This is paired to a 6-speed automatic SelectShift transmission.

The Ford MyKey technology allows Escape owners to programme a key for younger drivers that can inhibit incoming

phone calls; restrict top speed; prevent deactivation of driver assistance and safety features; reduce audio system maximum volume, and disable the audio system altogether if occupants are not using safety belts.

The enhanced MyKey system offers a greater number of choices

in both the speed limiter and speed minder settings.

Driver-Assist technology in the Escape includes cruise control with ASLD, compass display, electric parking brake, intelligent access with push button start, steering wheel radio toggle, rear view camera and reverse parking sensor.

The Escape's meticulously crafted interior has been refined to offer a more ergonomic, stylish and comfortable experience for occupants. It features dual zone automatic climate control, rear AC ducts and more.

A range of convenience features make Escape even more user-friendly; an electronic parking brake is effortless to operate and frees room for improved storage in a centre console that now also features a storage area capable of accommodating a variety of bottles and cups, and a new USB connection point for integrating and charging mobile devices. A door lock indicator now tells drivers at a glance whether the doors are locked.

The Escape also offers Hands-Free Liftgate that can be opened or closed using a kicking motion

beneath the rear bumper. The technology helps parents to easily access the boot when returning to their vehicle with shopping, pushchairs or toddlers.

Like all other Ford vehicles, safety makes a reassuring mark with features like 7 airbags, ESP that includes trailer stability function and Hill Launch Assist with Rollover mitigation, electronic emergency brake assist, power door locks, child proof rear door locks, seat belt reminder and tyre pressure monitoring system. In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Please log on to www.fordoman.com, or www.facebook.com/FordOman or www.youtube.com/FordOmanChannel or www.instagram.com/ford_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.



Global corporate profits to fall 8 per cent in Q3

WASHINGTON: Global corporate profits in the third quarter are likely to fall for the first time in 18 months after record earnings in April-June, Reuters calculations showed, as the spreading Covid-19 Delta variant squeezes supply chains and raises labour costs.

Massive fiscal stimulus to support economic recovery and loosened pandemic curbs generated high consumer demand in the second quarter, and companies contending with disrupted supplies and falling inventories raised prices to offset rising input costs.

This helped boost the combined net profits of 2,542 global companies with market capitalisation of at least \$1 billion to a record \$734 billion in the quarter ended on June, according to a Reuters analysis of Refinitiv data. But profits are estimated to fall 8 per cent on average to \$678.2 billion in the July-September quarter.

China's factory output and retail



Workers checking rolls of sheet aluminium at a factory in Wuhan, central Hubei province, China. — AFP

sales growth contracted sharply in July, as new Covid-19 outbreaks and floods disrupted business operations, while US business activity growth slowed for a third

straight month in August.

Also, a months-long shortage of semiconductor chips that forced automakers to slash production and smartphone makers to save

chips for popular models is turning into a fresh crisis as Covid-19 cases surge in Asian countries that are key to global supply chains.

"Supply chain issues, labour

Avoiding lost sales due to supply chain issues is a more acute problem today than it has been historically. Shipping costs are high. Fading support from stimulus checks may change the composition of consumer spending

BRIAN JACOBSON
Investment strategist

issues, and input price increases are all likely to dampen growth in the third quarter", said Brian Jacobson, Senior Investment Strategist at Wells Fargo Asset Management.

"Avoiding lost sales due to supply chain issues is a more acute problem today than it has been historically. Shipping costs

are high. Fading support from stimulus checks may change the composition of consumer spending."

Toyota Motor Corp said last week it would slash global production for September by 40 per cent from a previous plan. Apple Inc predicted last month that growth would slow in the September quarter. Profits at US firms are estimated to decline 7.2 per cent in the third quarter, data showed, after rising 12.4 per cent in the second quarter.

A strong dollar could hurt US exporters and a further fall in interest rates could squeeze profits at banks, said James Solloway, Chief Market Strategist at wealth manager SEI. Earnings at European and Asian firms are set to fall 10.3 per cent and 9.6 per cent, respectively.

By sector, real estate, financial and consumer discretionary sectors are expected to see a decline of 22.2 per cent, 18.8 per cent and 16.2. — Reuters

Retailers, unions extend binding worker safety accord in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Major global retailers have agreed to extend for a further two years a legal agreement with garment workers and factory owners in Bangladesh that subjects retailers to legal action if their factories fail to meet labour safety standards, according to a copy of the agreement seen by Reuters on Wednesday.

A representative for the agreement, originally signed in 2013 and known as the Bangladesh Accord, said an official statement would be issued shortly, and declined to comment further. The agreement was due to expire on August 31. The new version comes into force on September 1.

Some 200 retailers signed up to the accord in 2013, including retail giants H&M, Inditex, Fast Retailing's Uniqlo, Hugo Boss and adidas. A list of those that have also signed up to the extension will be made available on September 1, sources said.

A spokesperson for Uniqlo said they had not yet seen the new accord, but that they "generally support a new binding agreement... that has independent oversight and can be expanded to other countries."

The five-year accord,



A woman works in a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh. — AFP

struck in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 which killed more than 1,100 garment workers, instituted an independent body which held thousands of inspections and banned unsafe factories from supplying its signatory buyers.

That helped make some 1,600 factories safer for 2 million workers, according to labour activists. Under a transition deal agreed in 2018 after the original Accord expired, a newly formed body, the Ready-Made Garments Sustainability Council (RSC),

including unions, brands, and factory owners, took over the work of running factory inspections.

However, the RSC did not take over one unique portion of the accord — the ability for retailers to be tried in court in the country in which they are domiciled if they fail to meet their obligations, including cutting ties with factories which do not meet the accord's standards.

This has now been extended until the end of October 2023, according to the document.

— Reuters

US approves licences for Huawei to buy auto chips

WASHINGTON: United States officials have approved licence applications worth hundreds of millions of dollars for China's blacklisted telecom company Huawei to buy chips for its growing auto component business, two people familiar with the matter said.

Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, based in China, has been hobbled by trade restrictions imposed by the Trump administration on the sale of chips and other components used in its network gear and smartphones businesses.

The Biden administration has been reinforcing the hard line on exports to Huawei, denying licenses to sell chips to Huawei for use in or with 5g devices.

But in recent weeks and months, people familiar with the application process said the US has granted licences authorising suppliers to sell chips to Huawei for such vehicle components as video screens and sensors.

The approvals come as Huawei pivots its business towards items that are less susceptible to United States trade bans.

Auto chips are generally not considered sophisticated, lowering the bar for approval. One person close to the license approvals said the government is granting licences for chips in vehicles that may have other components with 5g capability.

— Reuters



An Arcfox Alpha-S HI (Huawei Inside) electric vehicle (EV) is seen displayed during a media day for the Auto Shanghai show in Shanghai, China. — Reuters

Oil steadies near \$71 after two-day rally

LONDON: Oil prices steadied near \$71 a barrel, taking a breather after a strong rally in recent days as Mexico was set to resume crude production following a major outage. Brent crude was up 14 cents, or 0.2 per cent, to \$71.19 a barrel by 1028 GMT, reversing earlier losses.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was up 8 cents, or 0.12 per cent, to \$67.62. Both benchmark contracts over the previous two days rose by about 8 per cent.

That rally erased most of the slump from a seven-day

losing streak on the back of a resurgence in Covid-19 cases. The rally came after Mexican supply fell by more than 400,000 barrels per day following a fire on an oil platform. Mexico's state oil firm said it expected to resume production by August 30. "While volatility looks set to continue, we see further gains for oil as global economic normalisation continues and Opec remains disciplined on crude supplies", said Mark Haefele, Investment Officer at UBS Global Wealth Management. — Reuters

BoJ warns of global impact from chip crunch

TOKYO: A shortage of semiconductor chips may persist for the rest of this year if the coronavirus pandemic keeps Southeast Asian factories shut, a Bank of Japan policymaker said, highlighting supply constraints as among key risks to the global economy.

BoJ board member Toyoaki Nakamura said Japan's economy is expected to recover as the pandemic's impact fades, pointing to the boost to growth from robust global demand and a recovery in capital expenditure. But he warned the outlook was "highly uncertain" with risks skewed to the downside, as a worldwide resurgence in Covid-19 infection

The outlook was "highly uncertain" with risks skewed to the downside, as a worldwide resurgence in Covid-19 infection cases force Japan to expand state of emergency curbs and disrupt factory production in Asia

cases force Japan to expand state of emergency curbs and disrupt factory production in Asia.

"If the pandemic suspends chip production in Southeast Asian factories, that will emerge as



Employees wearing protective equipment work at a semiconductor production facility in Beijing. — Reuters

among source of uncertainty for the global economy", Nakamura told an online news conference.

"The chip crunch may not be fixed for the rest of this year," Nakamura's remarks are the strongest warning to date by a BoJ policymaker of the broadening impact of the chip crunch, which has affected Japanese manufacturer. Car makers worldwide have been cutting production due to the months-long chip shortage. A resurgence in Covid-19 cases in Japan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia — home to auto factories and chip plants — have led to stricter curbs and compounded the crisis.

— Reuters

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

OMAN DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Salah Office
Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omanidaily@gmail.com

THURSDAY AUGUST 26, 2021 MUHARRAM 17, 1443 AH

OMAN DAILY
Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Urgently Required

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

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

Please send application to
wpl@omzest.com

■ SIT. VACANT

ENGINEERING
Coordinator, Sales
Engineer, Marketing
and Sales. Call
97602926

Property Leasing
Manager send CV to
vepsupervisor@gmail.
com

WE need a **Crusher Operator** work in Crusher with experience. For more information call:
99450330/25542760.

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

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

■ FOR SALE/RENT

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

■ FOR RENT

FLAT for rent in Maabela 3 master rooms. 96088926.

A LUXURIOUS spacious and furnished apartment in Burj al Yasameen is offered for rent in Al Khuwair. It is 200 sqm and has 3 bedrooms, spacious majlis, housemaid room and kitchen. It is offered with its quality furniture. RO 660/- Contact 98873373

FLATS in Al Khuwair. 99899273.

FOR rent: INDUSTRIAL land in Al Rusayl Area, 1,000 sqm, good location. 99202224, 99417541.

FOR rent: Cooling store in Al Seeb. 99202224, 94272979.

1BHK & 2 bhk flats for rent at Ruwi and Al Khoudh. 93994402, 93994403, 24834644.

2 BEDROOM flat Al Khuwair. 99322344.

3 BHK Flat & studio flat in central Ruwi & 2 BHK in Medinat Al Ilam. Call 99238012/ 24704994.

■ SIT. WANTED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

■ FOR SALE

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

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

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

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

■ FOR INVESTMENT

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

■ ACC AVAILABLE

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

المجرة للشحن اللوجستية
GCL GALAXY CARGO LOGISTICS

WORLD WIDE AIR & SEA CARGO SERVICES

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

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

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

■ RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

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

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

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

■ SERVICES

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

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

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

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

■ BUYING

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

OMAN OBSERVER

Now get news on the go



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,
WhatsApp <your name> to **96473232**

www.omanobserver.om

المركز التجاري للمركبات ش.م.م
CENTRAL Electrical Trading LLC

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

CET SWITCHGEAR & CONTROLS

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

ABB, PULSAR, Honeywell, SIEMENS, YUASA, OMIRON, BOSCH, Schneider, Eaton, etc.

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

ALL OVER INDIA EXPRESS DELIVERY

Online Tracking
TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766

24/7 FREE PICKUP
Service Available
www.alnamanicargo.com

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

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

ROYAL CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR CARGO
SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

► ALL OVER INDIA
► INDONESIA
► NEPAL

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

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

PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT **93213206**

OMAN DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact our Team

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadi.almeeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office
Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omanidaily@gmail.com

features

The Land is a Treasury of Gold: Tracing the connection of Saham's people to the sea

Oman's relationship with the sea has long been documented not only through the archaeological discoveries made but also through the different historical accounts of merchants and travellers from ancient times. Omani author Jawaher bint Mohammed al Zaabiyah felt that some of the smaller coastal towns have not had their time under the sun. She's decided to dedicate her latest book to the people of Saham and explore their relationship with the sea... **P20**



ENTERTAINMENT

READ

WE DON'T EAT OUR CLASSMATES!

BY RYAN T. HIGGINS

Penelope Rex must control her urge to eat the children in her class.

TikTok star Addison Rae moves to film in rom-com reboot

AMERICAN TIKTOK star Addison Rae's dreams are coming true as she makes her feature film debut in a Netflix (NFLX.O) movie. "He's All That," a reboot of the 1999 romantic comedy "She's All That," parallels Rae's real life as a popular social media influencer. Since 2019 Rae has gained over 82 million followers on TikTok and her videos have amassed over 5.4 billion 'likes'.

"As long as I can remember, I've had a huge passion for just entertaining and making people smile and being in front of a screen," she said. "Being a part of this film is so incredible and hopefully just the beginning for everything that is to come."

In the movie which premieres on Friday, Rae plays Padgett, a teen who suffers heartbreak and embarrassment live and online. To redeem

herself she aims to turn her unpopular classmate into a prom king, but the plan hits a snag when she falls for him. Rae's whirlwind success has fueled some criticism, but she brushes it off. "There's always going to be a side of the Internet that is a little more critical and judgmental," she said. "At the end of the day, I think remembering who I am, which is what Padgett ends up finding out and learning, is that... you really have to know yourself and embrace who you are and love who you are and know your intentions and know your heart."

The film also stars Rachael Leigh Cook from the original film. Reality star Kourtney Kardashian has a cameo role. — **Reuters**





Building a career out of make-up and special effects

BY SAFIYA AL MANJI

Creating a movie involves a lot of people working behind the scene making the magic happen on the screen. Like many behind the scenes crew, make-up artists are usually some of the most underrated stars of each programme.

While we are a bit familiar with how make-up artists work, a lot of us are still in awe at how special effects professionals can either help or break a movie. The work of these artists helps films or movies transform the actors' looks creating a lasting impression that viewers either love or hate.

But to make a good-looking human being into a monster takes not only talent and dedication but also training and creativity.

Almontaser al Jahwari is an artist who loves scarred beauty and notices coolness in each object around him. Seeing details can sometimes be difficult for an ordinary person but not for an artist, one of the primary criteria is to have the eye of details and a clear vision of the look.

"When you start digging and learning about the make-up industry, chances are you're beginning to look at make-up not just as a hobby or even a passion, but as a potential career. So, eight years back, this was my beginning. The competition in the field then was little and the field itself was rare and many people wouldn't accept the idea, let alone consider it a career", Almontaser shared.

"The growing of the film production company, years later, expanded the work in the field of cinematic make-up and many young talented people appeared in the scene competing to achieve the best. This is healthy of course and I believe we all succeed."

"In fact, different make-up art-

ists have different definitions of what "success" even means. Some have visions of gold statuettes, others want to see their work light up a high fashion runway, and others simply want to see how many cool ways they can spray fake blood around on the screen. Your goal is your own as long as you have one", he said.

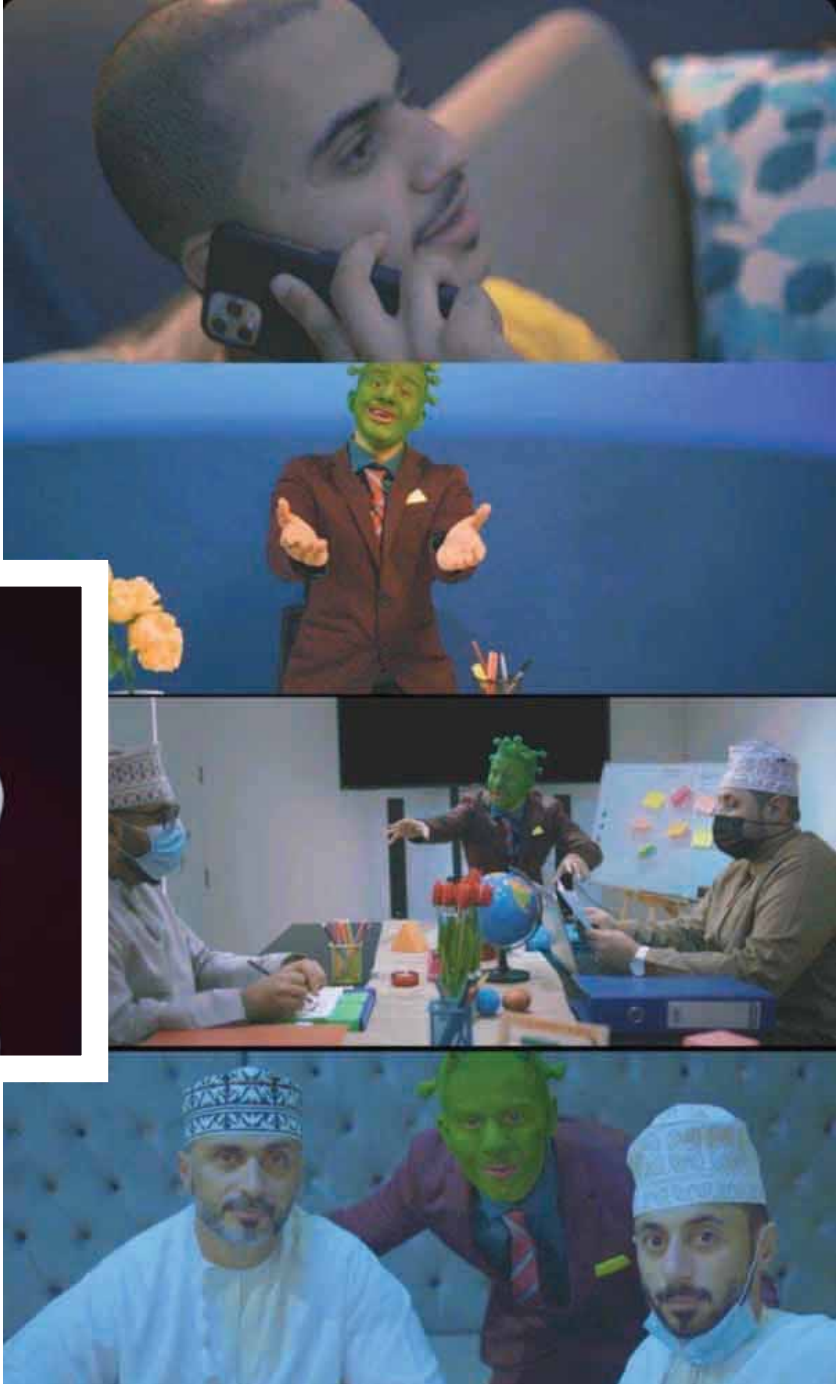
"Challenges exist everywhere. This is the fun part of life. If you achieve things simply, it won't have any flavour later when you think about it. Since I turned my talent into a career, first thing was to make people especially those around me to accept what I am doing. This is one of my simple



rights. Making them accept that artists can make a living working in salons, for private clients, and for cosmetics companies just as they can by working on TV shows and movies, was tough but eventually, they accepted", he said.

Then, as the competition was little, the tools were so insufficient in the market. It was hard to get them. However, as film production companies specialised in short films increased, things started to get smooth.

"To succeed in the make-up business, like any field, requires hard work, dedication and a certain amount of luck. You will be so lucky if you are surrounded by loving friends and family who sup-



port you with good advice and moral encouragement. Film-makers and producers are also a big support to me and this was the reason why I continued in this unique field", he said.

Now, Almontaser is one of the well-known young Omanis in cinematic make-up and he participated

in many competitions in Oman, and also participated in the comic con festival in Dubai and won third place. "Sharing expertise when I met different make-up artists during this festival has added a lot to my career. These are the chances I am looking for and will continue searching for uniqueness", he said.

CULTURE

With Assam silk and trees, Indians fight climate change and trafficking



WHEN SENAI Mili invited Rekha Doley into her home in India's northeastern Assam a few months back, the two women shared knowledge that has revolutionised their lives.

Doley, a 30-year-old master weaver, taught Mili, a 48-year-old grandmother, how to embroider new designs into the fabric she has woven to make clothes for her family for the past three decades – and also told her to sell it at the local market.

Doley, in turn, was introduced to the sought-after eri silk – a natural fibre made in Assam which fetches a good price and is popular around the world.

"Traditionally people didn't see weaving as a way to earn money", Doley said from her home in Panbari Mising village, which, like Mili's village, sits in the flood plains of the mighty Brahmaputra River.

"The shawls made from eri silk are very expensive. I am excited about weaving with it", she said, adding that a growing number of local families were now benefiting financially from selling their traditional textile products.

"We didn't weave throughout the year and it depended on availability of yarn. These gaps would result in migration and trafficking", she said.

The two families met as part of an initiative that has brought hundreds of families across the region together to fight both climate change and human trafficking, major problems in an area hit by frequent floods, poor farm yields and unemployment.

Assam has one of India's highest rates of trafficking, with 201 cases in 2019, government data shows. Most victims are migrants looking for a better life, only to be exploited in poorly-paid jobs, with girls often trafficked to brothels.

While the women exchanged notes, Mili's 19-year-old grandson, Biman, traded tips with Doley's husband, Ranjit, about agroforestry – a land management approach that combines trees and shrubs with crops and livestock farming. Agroforestry is an important tool for combating climate change because the trees take planet-heating carbon dioxide out of the air while also making soils more fertile and reducing farmers' vulnerability by not relying on just one type of crop.

"The idea that agroforestry can generate so much income is new to us", said Doley. "It was good my husband and I made that four-hour bus journey to learn these new things... Now we do agroforestry in the months we are not weaving."

NURTURING THE ECOSYSTEM

India is the world's third-biggest carbon emitter after China and the United States, and thus is vital in the fight to reduce carbon emissions which are fuelling climate change.

According to the government's latest Climate Vulnerability Assessment, states in northeastern India, including Assam, are particularly vulnerable to climate change, with those who depend on natural resources, like small farmers, worst hit.

"The intensity of floods is increasing and people are getting impacted every year", said Hasina Kharbhih, founder of anti-trafficking charity Impulse NGO Network, a partner in the initiative, which began in December.

"Response to human trafficking is not just about rescue but also about how the environment is protected and can provide income generating activities."

The other partner in the project is the Rural Futures programme, run by non-profit Balipara Foundation that supports people across the Eastern Himalayas to make a living from their natural assets.

"The economy in these regions is intrinsically linked to the ecology and the income is being generated by nurturing the ecosystem", said Saurav Malhotra, co-founder of Rural Futures. "Increased green cover assists in sequestering carbon, reducing soil erosion and reducing unsafe forms of migration."

NEW BEGINNINGS

Teenager Biman, who like many young people in Assam would have migrated, is now busy educating others in his village about the advantages of agroforestry.

"My family income has more than doubled since we met other weavers and started agroforestry", said Biman, who switched from growing only rice to cultivating papaya and the famed bhut jolokia (ghost pepper) chilli.

"Most people my age have migrated to work as security guards or in hotels across India because there was no work here and farming was not profitable. But now there are options and income. So I stayed."

Since the start of the project, his family's income has grown five-fold to about 15,000 Indian rupees (\$202) a month from selling their rice, vegetables and hand-woven cloth.

"Now we tell everyone to divide the land they have and ensure a portion is kept for agroforestry. Through the initiative, we also give saplings to families to plant on their land", Biman said. — **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

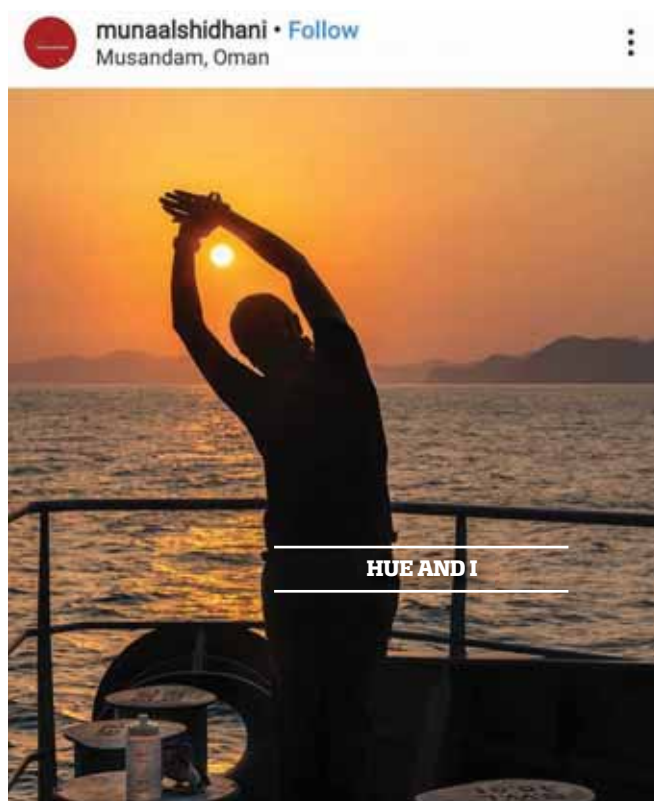


find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
THURSDAY | AUGUST 26 | 2021

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



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

AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Marion Cotillard to be honoured by San Sebastian film festival



OSCAR-WINNING French actress Marion Cotillard will receive a lifetime achievement award at Spain's San Sebastian film festival next month, organisers said on Tuesday.

The 45-year-old, who won the Best Actress Academy Award for her role as Edith Piaf in "La Vie en Rose", will collect the festival's Donostia award during the event's opening ceremony on September 17, they said in a statement.

Cotillard "has shone brightly in European and North American productions, putting equal talent into dramatic, comedy and action roles," the statement added.

The actress has also appeared in Woody Allen's "Midnight in Paris," and Batman movie "The Dark Knight Rises."



Past recipients of the Donostia award — the festival's highest honour which is named after the Basque word for the coastal town of San Sebastian — include actors Meryl Streep, Richard Gere and Robert De Niro.

The festival will also give the award this year to Hollywood star Johnny Depp, best known as the swaggering Jack Sparrow in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" franchise.

The decision has sparked controversy since Depp recently lost a libel case against a British tabloid newspaper that branded him a "wife-beater" during his tempestuous relationship with his ex-wife, actress Amber Heard.

The 69th San Sebastian film festival, the highest-profile movie event in the Spanish-speaking world, takes place from September 17 to 25. — **AFP**

FILM

New Bond, Matrix footage thrills CinemaCon as theatres eye recovery



NEW FOOTAGE from upcoming James Bond, Matrix and Batman sequels took centre stage at the movie theatre industry's CinemaCon summit in Las Vegas on Tuesday, as Hollywood executives struck a defiant tone about the future of the big screen.

A nine-minute clip from "No Time To Die" — billed as Daniel Craig's final 007 outing, and the series' 25th instalment — showed Bond apparently awakening from an explosion in a picturesque Italian village, before launching into a series of car and motorbike chases.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros unveiled more footage from its formidable slate of new movies, including a trailer for the next Matrix sequel — now officially titled "The Matrix: Resurrections" — in which Keanu Reeves' Neo appears confused by dreams of his past life.

The annual CinemaCon trade show sees Hollywood studios bring glitzy stars and never-before-seen footage to a Las Vegas casino to woo theatre bosses.

Although A-listers have largely stayed away from this week's event amid Delta variant concerns, executives from studios and theatre chains have tried to draw a line under a difficult year with an upbeat message.

"I'll cut to the chase — James Bond's coming out in October," MGM film chief Michael De Luca reassured movie theatre bosses to

loud cheers, after the film had been delayed multiple times by Covid-19 and the studio itself was sold to streaming giant Amazon.

The 007 instalment is of huge importance to movie theatres this year as Hollywood hopes to entice viewers back to cinemas despite the pandemic.

"No Time To Die" picks up after 2015's "Spectre," with the loyalty of love interest Madeleine Swann (Lea Seydoux) now seemingly called into question.

Bond producers have insisted that future 007 films will still appear in theatres, despite the \$8.45 billion takeover deal intended to boost Amazon's streaming presence, as competition intensifies in the on-demand market.

The MGM presentation also featured footage from upcoming Ridley Scott drama "House of Gucci" starring a glittering ensemble including Lady Gaga and Adam Driver, as well as a new musical of "Cyrano" led by Peter Dinklage ("Game of Thrones").

'EMOTIONAL' BATMAN

Warner Bros' presentation on Tuesday came after the studio angered many Hollywood film-makers and movie theatres this year by releasing all of their titles simultaneously on the HBO Max streaming platform.

The studio's executives were absent in Las Vegas this year, delivering an hour-long presentation by video.

But the package squeezed in plenty of new material, including an extended scene from upcoming sci-fi epic "Dune," in which a harrowing rescue operation to extract a team of spice miners from one of the desert planet's deadly giant worms goes badly wrong.

The film from Denis Villeneuve, out in October, is the latest attempt to adapt Frank Herbert's sprawling novel for the big screen, and stars Timothee Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Oscar Isaac and Javier Bardem.

A featurette presented next year's "The Batman" starring Robert Pattinson and directed by Matt Reeves, who promised it would be "the most emotional Batman movie" yet, in which the hero is just setting out on his crime-fighting career.

An opening scene from "The Many Saints of Newark," a feature-length prequel to "The Sopranos," whetted appetites for fans of the acclaimed US mob television series.

The sequence featured Christopher Moltisanti narrating from beyond the grave the story of Tony Soprano's childhood years.

Other upcoming films fleetingly shown included Clint Eastwood's neo-Western "Cry Macho," and Will Smith's portrayal of the father of tennis greats Serena and Venus Williams in "King Richard".

— **AFP**

DIGITAL TRENDS

TikTok to offer in-app shopping with Shopify



TIKTOK UNVEILED PLANS to allow users to buy products while using the video-sharing app in a partnership with e-commerce platform Shopify.

The fast-growing social media app said it would begin pilot-testing TikTok Shopping with a group of Shopify merchants in the United States, Britain and Canada in the coming weeks.

"TikTok Shopping will bring new features that help Shopify merchants create engaging, organic content that sends consumers directly to their online store for checkout, making it easy for people to explore and buy the products they discover on TikTok," said a statement from the app owned by China-based ByteDance.

Blake Chandee, head of global business solutions at TikTok, said the app "is uniquely placed at the centre of content and commerce, and these new solutions make it even easier for businesses of all sizes to create engaging content that drives consumers directly to the digital point of purchase."

Harley Finkelstein, Shopify president, said the partnership will help boost platform "creators" who promote products online by "enabling new in-app shopping experiences and product discovery on TikTok for the first time."

"Shopify is powering the creator economy on one of the fastest-growing social and entertainment platforms in the world," he said. "We are excited to help this next generation of entrepreneurs connect with their audiences."

The news comes amid rising interest in "social commerce" that is expected to be worth some \$36 billion in the United States this year, according to the research firm eMarketer.

An eMarketer report said Facebook was leading this segment, and that an estimated 56 million US residents would be making at least one purchase on the leading social network this year.

TikTok came under pressure last year from former president Donald Trump, who claimed the platform represented a national security risk because of its links to China.

Joe Biden's administration shelved plans to ban TikTok or force a sale to US investors, instead ordering a national security review of foreign-controlled platforms. — **AFP**

Get full stories online at www.omanobserver.com



The Land is a Treasury of Gold: Tracing the connection of Saham's people to the sea

By Yeru Ebu
With translation
by Mai al Abri

As a country with one of the longest coastal areas in the Middle East, Oman has always been in history books as a stopover for merchants, seafarers and traders. While it may have been known in different names throughout history, the ports of Qalhat, Sohar, Sur and Khor Rori are some of the most exemplary trading ports that gave Oman its seafaring fame.

The popularity of some of Oman's coastal villages overshadowed others but it doesn't mean these smaller coastal areas have no stories to tell as fascinating as those that found themselves recorded in the annals of history. For instance, one of the most time-enduring story that the world is familiar with is Sindbad that many of the people of Suhar claim come from their area.

For Omani author Jawaher bint Mohammed al Zaabiyah, telling the stories of smaller coastal villages is just as important not only for documentation or for posterity but also in making sure that their historical importance will be remembered by future generations.

Her book, "The Land is a Treasury of Gold" looks into what life is like in the coastal villages in the Wilayat of Saham in North Al Batinah Governorate. If young Omanis today will be asked what they know of Saham's historical sea trade, the probability of anyone knowing will definitely be less than one per cent which is why Al Zaabiyah believes that creating a book will serve a greater purpose of educating the masses.

Al Zaabiyah's book discusses the long-standing historical activity filled with beautiful memories of the sailors and their voyages and marine adventures, and their connection to the sea and traditional ships of all kinds, each of which carries an integrated story.

In this book, the writer relied on the memoirs of the life and sea voyages of her father, captain Mohammed bin Salem al Zaabi, who began the story of his struggle and his connection with the sea and ships since he was 7 years old until he passed away at the age of 78. She also reinforced this by col-



lecting some historical information through an interview with people who lived through that era and also through reading books. She talked about the sea voyages and the glories that the Omanis have achieved since they knew the sea.

In her introduction to the book, the writer said: "This biography bears many meanings between its lines, including the glories that our Omani fathers and grandfathers wrote since ancient times and their close relationship with the sea. Let's smell the scent of dried lemon and fish on the shores of the Sultanate of Oman, until we reach the quiet beaches at times, the walking boats and the gulls soaring in the skies of the homeland, passing by watching the giant ships in their full elegance, defying the raging waves of the sea and standing tall in front of the strong storms to reach the shores of the Sultanate in peace."

The book is a good mix of nostalgia for the past and the celebration of the great changes that had swept Saham in the last 100 years.

Did you know that Saham used to export dried lemons? Other than

Did you know that Saham used to export dried lemons? Other than his father's story and the families that lived in the area, Al Zaabiyah also delves into the kinds of ships that were used by Omanis to cruise Oman's challenging seas

his father's story and the families that lived in the area, Al Zaabiyah also delves into the kinds of ships that were used by Omanis to cruise Oman's challenging seas. One of her topics looked into the vessels used by the people of Saham on trips to export dried lemons, the method of making these ships, and the types of ropes and wood used in them, as well as the most prominent challenges experienced by sailors on their voyages before the advent of the age of development and technology.

Overall, upon reading the book, one will notice the author's attention to detail. Al Zaabiyah documented the smallest details of life in the old days in a village overlooking the sea, inhabited by the people with simplicity, calmness and serenity of the soul, and how young people learn from

their parents the rules of the sea and the controls of sea voyages and patience in the face of risks and challenges, interdependence and collective cooperation, especially in travelling and the conduct of trips that extend for several months.

Other interesting sub-stories also cover the life and work of a shipbuilder and a silversmith whose jobs were integral to the sea trade. On his father's part, Saham explored how his father's name was linked to the ship *Al Boom* which he bought from Sur and was later called *Taybat Saham* and became the wilayat's icon that is almost always in attendance to all national occasions in Saham. *Taybat Saham* is still present with all its beautiful memories and photos, despite the passing away of her captain about 10 years ago.

