

TEMPERATURES FALLING IN OMAN

The governorates of the Sultanate of Oman are witnessing a decrease in temperatures and frost in some areas, but the country had recorded much lower temperatures in previous years. **>A3**



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HM RECEIVES THANKS FROM EMIR OF QATAR

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable to him on his country's National Day. In the cable, Sheikh Tamim expressed his utmost appreciation for His Majesty's sincere sentiments and best wishes. Sheikh Tamim also wished His Majesty good health and wellbeing, and the Omani people continuous progress and prosperity under His Majesty's wise leadership, wishing the strong fraternal relations between the two countries further development and growth. **-ONA**



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TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS WHEN YOU TRAVEL FOR TREATMENT ABROAD

Providing treatment abroad at the government expense is one of the main pillars of healthcare system for citizens

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Availability of treatment, reputed medical facilities overseas, and adequate information about the country to which they are flying, are a few of the factors patients in Oman need to take into account, when they plan to travel overseas for medical treatment.

The Ministry of Health, keen on educating people in the country on the need to travel overseas for treatment, added that another key factor for such patients is whether they are able to do so, given their medical condition at the time.

"Firstly, the decision of travelling abroad for treatment must be taken upon the recommenda-



tions of the treating physician in Oman," said Dr Sultan Al Harthy, the director for treatment abroad at the Ministry of Health. "Moreover, patients should scrutinise the availability of the appropriate treatment and treatment plans at the intended destination with prior coordination.

"Travelling to unreliable health facilities that do not provide the patient with adequate information, in terms of the nature, quality, and cost of treatment, exposes pa-

tients to the risk of relapse, which confines them to a prolonged stay in an ICU or hospital, thus imposing on them unexpected financial costs. Furthermore, the prevalence of diseases, or an unstable security situation, makes some countries unsafe for travel."

Providing treatment abroad at the expense of the government is one of the main pillars of Oman's healthcare system for citizens, and it serves as a last resort for some in critical condition. **>A4**

PANDEMIC

Flying to India? You will have to home quarantine for a week

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Passengers flying to India from the Sultanate of Oman and all other countries have to enter mandatory home quarantine on arrival, as per new guidelines issued by the Indian government.

The latest procedures published by the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) on 7 January call for all passengers from countries not deemed 'at risk' to undergo a week-long home quarantine, followed by a subsequent PCR test on the eighth day since their arrival.

"A sub-section (two percent of the total flight passengers) shall undergo post-arrival testing at random at the airport on arrival," said the MOHFW guidelines. "These two percent of such travellers in each flight shall be identified by the concerned airlines (preferably



from different countries).

"All travellers, including those two percent who were selected for random testing on arrival and were found negative, will undergo home quarantine for seven days and shall undertake RT-PCR test on the eighth day of arrival in India," added the ministry.

India's list of at-risk countries includes 18 nations, as well as all

countries in Europe, including the UK, with arrivals from these countries needing to follow additional procedures on arrival.

These countries include South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Ghana, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Hong Kong, Israel, Congo, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Zambia. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Remittances fall to lowest since 2013

1 Remittances sent by workers in Oman to their home countries in 2020 fell to the lowest amount recorded since 2013, statistics released by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) show. Workers remitted OMR 3.373bn to their friends and families in 2020, reveals the CBO's 2020 Annual Report. **>A3**

WORLD

India reports 141,986 COVID cases in 24 hours

2 India reported 141,986 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the daily positivity rate to 9.28 per cent, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday. With this, the country's COVID-19 case tally has gone up to 35,368,372 according to the Health Ministry. **>A7**

MARKET

Omani firm to fund Pakistan project

3 An Omani company has signed an agreement to contribute a portion of funding towards a project set up by Pakistan Railways. The funding agreement was signed between Anwar Asia Investment Company and Pakistan Railways during a ceremony in the Pakistani city of Lahore. **>B1**

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STARTS 20TH JANUARY



OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:19pm
Asr.....	3:21pm
Maghrib.....	5:42pm
Isha.....	6:57pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:31am

OHRC receives over 385 complaints from residents, expats in 2021

Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) continues to carry out its human rights duties and responsibilities, as stated in its establishment law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 124/2008. The decree emphasises the protection and promotion of human rights and the preservation of their dignity. The Law guarantees the mechanisms that achieve this in accordance with the basic principles on which all UN member states depend - the Paris Principles are the international minimum standards that all NHRIs – regardless of size or structure – must meet.

The issuance of the new “Basic Law of the State” under Royal Decree No. 6/2021 affirmed the importance accorded by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to developing local legislation and laws to meet the current stage requirements and protect basic human rights in the Sultanate of Oman. This will be achieved through a number of means, including activating oversight mechanisms, strengthening the governance of government institutions, monitoring and evaluating the performance of those in charge of them, and ensuring public freedoms. This will lead to a decent life for citizens and residents on the land of the Sultanate of Oman.

Based on these important foundations, and within this important humanitarian framework, OHRC seeks to carry out its duties using mechanisms of cooperation and coordination with the competent authorities and supported by the community members and civil society institutions.

OHRC uses many tools to monitor human rights in the Sultanate of Oman, such as receiving reports at its headquarters directly or through various means of communication. OHRC also follows up on issues and topics related to human rights through print, audio, visual, social media and other platforms. OHRC also conducts field visits to the complainants, as well as relevant institutions such as detention places, prisons, specialized hospitals and others. OHRC also contributes to finding appropriate solutions to humanitarian issues in this regard.

On the other hand, OHRC strives to enhance its activity in the regional and international arena and participates in the events organized by human rights organizations and institutions. OHRC always welcomes international reports from governments or external human rights organisations on issues related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman. OHRC is pleased to express its satisfaction with the efforts made this year during the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Shaheen.

About OHRC

OHRC is an independent national committee established by Royal Decree No. 124/2008 with the aim of contributing to the protection and preservation of human rights in the Sultanate of Oman. It enjoys independence in the exercise of its functions and has its juristic personality.

OHRC is made up of a general secretariat that carries out and monitors its responsibilities, and thirteen members, including the president. The members represent the State Council, the Shura Council, a number of government agencies, and civil society institutions.

Responsibilities

OHRC is responsible for following up on the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Sultanate of Oman, in accordance with the Basic Law of the State and international charters and conventions. OHRC also monitors the observations that foreign governments, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations may raise in the field of human rights in the Sultanate of Oman.

OHRC coordinates with stakeholders to verify and respond to them. OHRC also provides the necessary proposals to the concerned authorities in the country in matters related to human rights and freedoms. OHRC contributes to preparing reports and recommendations that address these topics and monitoring any violations or abuses related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman. OHRC assists in resolving human rights abuses, as well as proposing an annual plan to promote human rights culture. OHRC coordinates



“OHRC always welcomes international reports from governments or external human rights organisations on issues related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman. OHRC is pleased to express its satisfaction with the efforts made this year during the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Shaheen.

with the relevant authorities to ensure the implementation of this annual plan.

Mechanism

OHRC follows up on the human rights situation in the Sultanate of Oman through monitoring and receiving communications. The monitoring process is carried out through field visits, following media, and other social networks. OHRC is also responsible for receiving communications and complaints from individuals. OHRC treats these reports with a great deal of confidentiality and privacy, and the details of the whistleblowers are not published or circulated.

Reports may be received from the relevant person or his representative at OHRC headquarters. The reporter will be required to fill-up the form designated for reporting a complaint. The person may also write a letter addressed to OHRC Chairman, with the supportive documents. In cases where the whistleblower or his representative is unable to personally visit OHRC premises, the complaint or report can be sent by e-mail to complaint@ohrc.om or via the website www.ohrc.om or register a voice message on the toll-free number 1970. A person can also send a text message via the WhatsApp service 72221966. Any complainant can also call 24218900 and speak to the person concerned with monitoring and receiving reports or post at OHRC Twitter account: [@ohrc_oman](https://twitter.com/ohrc_oman) or OHRC Instagram: [ohrc_oman](https://www.instagram.com/ohrc_oman)

Memberships

OHRC is accredited by the UN Geneva-based Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions since 2013. It is also an affiliate

member of the Asia Pacific Forum since 2013, and a key member of the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions. OHRC is also a member of the Arab Commission for Human Rights.

Legislative and Legal Developments

In 2021, a number of human rights regulations and legislation were issued. The aim of these systems and legislations is to keep pace with the aspirations of the Sultanate at this stage of the Omani renaissance and enhance the protection of human rights in the Sultanate.

OHRC

In 2021, His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik issued the Royal Decree No. 40/2021 amending the annex attached to Royal Decree No. 124/2008 establishing OHRC and determining its responsibilities. The issuance of the decree comes in a bid to keep pace with the developments in the structure of the state's administrative apparatus and ensure providing it with representatives from the concerned authorities. This in turn will facilitate communication between OHRC and the rest of the units of the state's administrative apparatus. His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik also issued Royal Decree No. 66/2021 amending some provisions of Royal Decree No. 29/2019 appointing members of OHRC representing the Shura Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, and the Environment Agency.

After merging some ministries, many institutions are not represented in OHRC.

Nationality

In 2021, OHRC followed up the issuance of a number of royal decrees granting Omani citizenship to 250 applicants.

Royal Decree No. 38/2014 grants the government the authority to grant and receive applications for Omani citizenship from those who meet the requirements. This confirms His Majesty the Sultan's keenness to give nationality to those who meet requirements as per the Nationality Law. This also reflects another form of human rights protection and promotion in the Sultanate.

Freedom of Association

The right to form associations is exercised in the Sultanate of Oman according to Article 40 of the Basic Law of the State, which states that

“The freedom of forming societies on a national basis and for legitimate objectives and for peaceful means - provided that it is not in conflict with the provisions and objectives of this Basic Law - is guaranteed in accordance with the terms and conditions stipulated by the law.

Right to Security, Stability

In continuation of the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman to confront the crime of financing terrorism and as part of its keenness to achieve security, stability, and human protection, Decision No. 1/2021 was issued on June 22, 2021, issuing a list of procedures for implementing Security Council Resolutions issued under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on the prevention and suppression of terrorism and its financing, and to prevent, suppress and impede the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its financing.

Litigation Procedures Simplification Law

In 2021, the Judicial Administrative Affairs Council issued the regulations for Litigation Procedures Simplification Law. The Regulations of this law included many procedures to facilitate the exercise of the litigation right, whether by registering and registering cases or by submitting memoranda and other procedures related to the law.

Human and material development, legislation

In 2021, the Royal Decree No. 1/2021 was issued approving the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan 2021-2025. The plan aims to promote sustainable human development, preserve human capital, achieve balanced development for the governorates, increase per capita income through empowering the governorates and optimize the use of natural resources according to the relative advantages of each governorate.

Amending Regulations of Foreigners Residence Law

The Inspector-General of Police and Customs issued Decision No. 234/2021 on 10/21/2021 amending some provisions of the Executive Regulations of the Foreigners Residence Law. The new amendments provided facilities for the foreign investor with regard to entering and residing in the Sultanate of Oman – for the investor, his spouse, and first-degree relatives. The decision promotes the investment sector to achieve the aims of Oman Vision 2040.

Environmental and Development Rights

Environmental, cultural, and development rights are some of the basic human rights. These rights include the right to live in a clean environment. In this framework, OHRC has followed up issuing important decisions that promote living in an environment free of pollutants. Several decisions were also issued to preserve the environment.

First: Civil, Political Rights

Physical safety: OHRC tracks physical safety reports through its updated and developed monitoring and reporting mechanism.

The positive relation and cooperation with the relevant authorities and institutions made it easier for OHRC to reach quick solutions to a number of human rights complaints.

Prisons: His Majesty the Sultan's pardon for some prisoners confirms royal keenness to uphold human rights. In 2021, a number of royal orders were issued pardoning a group of central prison prisoners convicted in various cases. The total number of prisoners who benefited from the royal pardon during 2021 stood at 1,670 of which 1,069 are Omani and 601 are non-Omani.

Litigation and fair trial: Litigation and a fair trial are some of the rights guaranteed by national and international legislation. Article 30 of the Basic Law of the State secured that right. Litigation is a safeguarded right guaranteed to all people. The law sets out the procedures and conditions necessary to exercise this right. The Sultanate's government endeavours to ensure that courts and public prosecution premises are very close - as much as possible - to litigants to ensure speedy settlement of cases.

Right of movement: OHRC has pursued efforts to limit the spread of mutated strains of coronavirus and restrictions on the right to movement. The government has taken precautionary measures, including restricting entry to the Sultanate of Oman for Omanis and residents during periods of widespread mutated strains of the Corona virus around the world. During such times, entry to the Sultanate of Oman has also been suspended for those coming from a number of countries considered hotspots for the virus.

Second: economic, social, and cultural rights

Healthcare: OHRC has followed the efforts made by the Ministry of Health to provide vaccinations against the Corona epidemic. The Sultanate of Oman was able to provide large numbers of doses that covered all medical and paramedical staff, security and military agencies, and employees of the state's administrative apparatus, according to a schedule and appointments supervised by the Supreme Committee concerned with following up on the repercussions of the pandemic. Intensive vaccination campaigns were also initiated to cover the different groups benefiting from the vaccine, including the elderly, young people, and school students from the age of 12 years and above. To ensure that the study returns on a regular basis. University and college students were also vaccinated.

Family care: The social protection system in the Sultanate of Oman contributes to family stability. National laws also ensure family protection and care for all

segments of society. Regarding the right to family care.

Adequate housing: On April 8, 2021, OHRC monitored the Social Protection Initiative approved by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. The initiative exempts all Omanis whose monthly income is less than OMR350 from the indebtedness of the soft housing loan program with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. More than 650 benefited from this initiative.

Labour and Labourer: In the first quarter of 2021, OHRC followed the protests of young job seekers and those who were laid-off from their jobs. His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik paid attention to the matter and gave directions to implement a plan to provide more than 32,000 job opportunities during this year, including 12,000 jobs in the civil and military government sector. His Majesty also gave directives to provide 200,000 job opportunities in the government sector under the temporary contract system as per the actual needs of government institutions in the various governorates.

Third: The rights of groups

People with disabilities: The Sultanate of Oman dealt with the designation of a person with a disability in accordance with the contents of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Sultanate is one of the leading Arab countries in this regard, and one of the first countries to ratify the convention, according to Royal Decree No. 121/2008. With regard to this right, OHRC followed up on January 13, 2021, with the issuance of Royal Decree No. 8/2021 amending some laws and Royal Decrees. The first article stipulates that people with special needs shall replace the word “persons with disabilities”. This is the term that has been adopted internationally for this category of society.

Child: The family social protection system in the Sultanate of Oman includes many programs and policies aimed at protecting children and ensuring their safety. On June 14 and 16, 2021, OHRC observed that children of a family with limited income were abused. OHRC has coordinated with the Ministry of Social Development, to provide them with the necessary protection and to ensure an adequate standard of living for them.

Woman: OHRC follows the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman to empower women to ensure their effective participation in various sectors of political, scientific, social, economic, health, and other development to achieve equality between them and men.

The elderly: The Sultanate of Oman has been interested in enhancing the supportive environment for the elderly in society, through several themes, including infrastructure, transportation, community communication, active life, investment of energies, and civil participation.

This year, OHRC received more than 385 reports from citizens and residents.

International Reports

OHRC monitors what organizations and governments raise about the human rights situation in Oman. During this year, OHRC studied all external reports that dealt with human rights issues and analysed them in a systematic and scientific manner to extract aspects that can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights conditions in the Sultanate. OHRC also responded to the observations included in those reports.

The annual US report on the human rights situation in the Sultanate of Oman for 2020:

The US Department of State publishes an annual report on the human rights situation in various countries of the world.

With regard to the Sultanate of Oman, the report noted that there were no reports that the government or its employees had committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities. The report also stated that there were no clear allegations of government interference in the conduct of the election process, and no case of forced abortion was recorded.

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Pandemic pushes down outward remittances to lowest since 2013

Workers' remittances decreased by 4 percent in 2020 as against a decline of 8.3 percent in the previous year, according to CBO

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Remittances sent by workers in Oman to their home countries in 2020 fell to the lowest amount recorded since 2013, statistics released by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) show.

Workers remitted OMR 3.373bn to their friends and families in 2020, reveals the 2020 Annual Report released by CBO. The last time the figures were lower than this amount was in 2012, when a total amount of



IMPACT: The expatriate population declined amidst uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

OMR3.109bn was sent home. Remittance figures were on a rise after 2012, climbing to OMR3.501bn in 2013, OMR3.961bn in 2014, and OMR4.226bn in 2015, before dipping to OMR3.965bn in 2016 and OMR3.774bn in 2017. Remittanc-

es rose slightly in 2018 to reach OMR3.829bn, before falling to OMR3.512bn in 2019.

"The external sector showed deterioration during 2020 with a spike in the current account deficit (CAD)," read the report. "Merchandise exports contracted

sharply during 2020 primarily due to a decline in oil prices, even as re-exports surged during the year.

Merchandise imports also declined during the year but at a slower pace than exports, leading to a notable reduction in trade surplus.

"The services account deficit saw

an improvement during the year reflecting lower demand for imported services like travel," added CBO.

"The current transfers consisting mainly of workers remittance, however, declined amidst stagnant wages and falling expatriate population, providing some cushion to external sector management."

"The current transfers (workers' remittances) decreased by four percent in 2020 as against a decline of 8.3 percent in the previous year," added the report.

"The pandemic has significant implications on employment conditions in Oman. The expatriate population declined amidst uncertainty caused by the pandemic."

The expatriate population in Oman fell from 1.942 million people in January 2020, to 1.745 million in January 2021, a decrease of nearly 200,000 people.

The expatriate population fell further in 2021, falling to 1.634 million people in October of last year, before gradually rising once again to reach 1.724 million on 1 January, 2022, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

In this context, Tahir Salim Abdullah Al Amri, the executive

president of CBO, added that while vaccination drives around the world have raised hopes of returning to normalcy, the recent surge in infections in some parts of the world, and continued mutations of the coronavirus made for uncertain economic predictions of the near future.

"While the Omani economy is also facing these uncertainties, the implementation of the vaccination programme has strengthened the conditions for a rebound in economic activities," he explained in the annual report.

"Going forward, continued focus on fiscal consolidation and a further improvement in the business environment will encourage more investment and support economic activities. The CBO would continue to play its due role in supporting growth and stability in the Sultanate during these exceptional times."

He added: "Oman managed the pandemic effectively as reflected by the high recovery and low fatality rates. With continued efforts and firm determination, I firmly believe that the Sultanate will emerge even stronger out of the pandemic."

WEATHER DATA

Temperatures falling in Oman but not to their lowest so far

MUSCAT: The governorates of the Sultanate are witnessing a decrease in temperatures and frost in some areas, but the Sultanate had recorded much lower temperatures in previous years.

The General Directorate of Meteorology issued statistics on average minimum temperatures

during the month of January, compared to the lowest temperatures recorded in some meteorological stations in previous years.

The lowest temperature recorded in the Governorate of Muscat was 10.7 degrees Celsius in 2006, while the average minimum temperature in the

current month of January is 17, and the monitoring stations in Al Buraimi recorded the lowest temperature in previous years, which were 2.5 and 3.2 degrees, respectively, while in January 2022 the average minimum temperature was 11.8 in Buraimi and 10.9 in Haima.

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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56,990 REACH

UK, China, South Africa among countries from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival.

Story on India mandating quarantine for new arrivals

A story on India mandating quarantine for new arrivals reached 56,990 people and had 3,949 engagements on Facebook.

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BREATHTAKING SUGAR DUNES AT AL KHALUF



Al Khaluf is a small fishermen’s village in Oman where one can find large white sand dunes along the breathtaking beach coast that are known as Sugar Dunes. The sugary white sands are truly breathtaking and ideal for camping. Khaluf Beach boasts of a 50km sea-front, and is located some 450km south of Muscat. The place is absolutely beautiful.

Its desert is graced with silky white sands and pristine dune formations that will remind you of how beautiful and geographically diverse Oman is. The desert is stretched all the way to untouched beaches, giving campers a spot to relax away from tourist attractions.

The area is relatively empty, with a few fishing villages here and there. So, be cautious when travelling, and ensure your trip consists of two 4x4 vehicles.



TREATMENT

<FROM A1 Select reliable, certified health centres abroad

The role of Al Harthy’s department is to provide treatment options abroad at ministry expense for eligible patients, if these services are not available in governmental and private health institutions in Oman.

A list has been prepared to define criteria under key criteria of sending patients abroad for treatment. The Ministry of Health has additionally outlined conditions and procedures for the service.

As for those travelling on their own expenses, it is important that they select reliable and certified health centres and physicians, in addition to consulting the ministry in advance in this regard, to avoid any health issues or serious medical complications.

“Please keep in mind that travelling overseas for treatment must not worsen the patient’s health,” explained Al Harthy. “The ministry is striving to provide health and well-being for all

citizens at all levels of care.”

Overseas treatment

There are currently many challenges that the department concerned with overseas treatment is facing, he added.

“There is difficulty in providing the required equipment when we receive returning patients who experienced deterioration of their health during travel,” he admitted.

“Challenges are also present when it comes to providing medical staff, supportive medical devices, and air transport, not to mention that in many cases require prior coordination is required with a number of authorities, including embassies, Muscat International Airport, Oman Air, the Ministry of Defence, and the concerned in-country health institutions, along with other relevant parties.”

To provide patients who need

to travel overseas better forms of treatment, the department regularly searches for accredited forms of care at reputed medical centres in other countries. The department then evaluates those facilities and studies the possibility of sending patients there, or aims to draw up a cooperation agreement between the treating physician in Oman and the healthcare provider abroad.

“The department also hosts senior doctors and specialised consultants to treat some people in Oman,” added Al Harthy.

Health services

“Aside from enhancing existing health services and providing more options for citizens, this also helps in training medical staff in the country and adds to their knowledge. Each patient who requires treatment is looked at differently, on the basis of the care they require.”

COVID-19

<FROM A1 Self-declaration forms must be shown to airport staff

Passengers coming from these countries will need to take an additional self-paid PCR test on arrival in India, and just like those coming from destinations not deemed ‘at-risk’, will need to quarantine at home for seven days and take a further PCR test on the eighth day.

“Travellers shall also be required to upload results of repeat RT-PCR tests for COVID-19 done on the eighth day, on the Air Suvidha portal,” added MOHFW. “If negative, they will further self-monitor their health for next seven days.

“However, if such travellers are tested positive, their samples should be further sent for genomic testing at the INSACOG laboratory network,” the ministry went on to say. “They shall be managed at isolation facilities and treated as per laid down standards.”

The uploading of follow-up PCR tests will be monitored by state/union territory authorities.

Home quarantine

If travellers under home quarantine or self-health monitoring develop signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 on re-testing, they will immediately self-isolate and report to their nearest health facility. They can also call the national helpline number (1075), or the given state helpline numbers.

International travellers arriving through seaports/land ports will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, except that the facility for online registration is not available for such passengers. They are therefore required to submit the self-declaration form to the concerned authorities of the Government of India at seaports/land ports on arrival.

Thermal screening of all passengers is being carried by the health officials present at the airport. Self-declaration forms filled

online must be shown to the airport health staff.

Passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facilities, per health protocols.

If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed as well. Contacts of those suspected of COVID-19 are their co-passengers seated in the same row, and those seated up to three rows both in front and behind them, along with identified cabin crew.

All community contacts of those travellers who have tested positive, during their home quarantine period, will also be subject to quarantine for 14 days and tested per ICMR protocol.

Children under five years of age are exempt from both pre- and post-arrival testing. However, if found symptomatic for COVID-19 on arrival, or during home quarantine, they shall undergo testing and treatment.



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THUMRAIT



Empty Quarter Festival boosts tourism activities

THUMRAIT: The activities of the first edition of Empty Quarter Festival concluded at Al Khazaf Area, Niyabat of Al Shaser in the Wilayat of Thumrait in Dhofar Governorate on Saturday.

The festival, which continued for seven days, was organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in cooperation with a number of government departments and private sector companies and establishments.

The activities of the festival included training workshop on the teamwork skills and a five-kilometre walk.

The activities of conclusion ceremony comprised cleanliness campaign in the area, a campaign for planting trees and landscaping work.

The function coincided with the Omani Environment Day organised in cooperation with the Frankincense Team under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Abdullah Al Sai'ari, Advisor to the Chair-



man of the Environment Affairs Authority and Acting Director General of the Directorate General of Environment in Dhofar Governorate.

Khalid Abdullah Al Abri, Director General of the Directorate General of Heritage and Culture in Dhofar Governorate said that the organisation of the first edition of the Empty Quarter Festival came within the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for encouraging internal tourism and utilisation of various tourism and natural foundations of

the Sultanate.

The first edition of the festival attracted a large number of visitors and tourists from within and outside the Sultanate, he added.

Al Abri has also valued the efforts exerted by the Organising Committee of the Empty Quarter Festival, and the cooperation of the government departments, mainly the Office of the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, Dhofar Municipality, the Authority for SMEs Development and the private sector companies and establishment. —ONA

PROJECTS

Health sector topped the list of Tender Board's contracts

MUSCAT: The Tender Board awarded projects worth OMR252.5 million in 2021 against projects worth OMR392.2 million in 2020. Last year, the award of tenders focused on completion of a number of infrastructure projects which the government had started executing in the past.

The Tender Board also awarded several tenders in vital sectors such as health, education and road.

The health sector topped the list by receiving the bulk of tenders awarded by the Board, last year.

This included supply of medicines and vaccines for 2022 for the Ministry of Health and other five government departments for OMR37 million, catering, food, cleaning, laundry and pest control services for the hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health for OMR17.8 million, supply of surgical materials and other consumables for the Ministry of Health for OMR7.9 million.

On the airport sector, the Tender Board awarded in 2021 a project for the completion of the electrical, mechanical and other works and the equipment associated with the cargo buildings of Muscat International Airport and Salalah International Airport, repair, testing and operation of the system



and training of employees on operating equipment and programmes at the above project for OMR 24.6 million, approximately.

Air corridors

The Tender Board also awarded tender for a project for rehabilitation of the southern runway and air corridors of Muscat International Airport for OMR 21 million.

The Tender Board awarded a project on the design and construction of Wadi Al Meih Road in the Wilayat of Al Amerat, Muscat Governorate for approximate sum of OMR19.1 million among other projects.

The Tender Board also awarded tender for provision of transport services for students of Sultan Qaboos University for 2021 -2022 for OMR4.2 million and supply of computer systems to school students under social security scheme for OMR3.5 million. —ONA

11th Year Remembrance



Theresa Johar
28th July, 1951 – 9th January, 2011



In Loving Memory;
Arun Johar
Sonia, Paul and Emily Waters

On Angel's Wings you were taken away,
But in our hearts you will always stay.
We will hear your whisper in the tallest trees,
Feel your love in the gentle breeze.
And when we find we miss you the most,
Inside our beautiful memories we will hold you close.
You are an Angel watching over us
With the comfort and blessings you bring.
You embrace our hearts and hold it close,
Forever on Angel's Wings.

By Crailin Hardy



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 2 /2022

Specialized Companies in the field of tender shown below and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents from the website through the following link:
(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
against non-refundable fees until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	No E- Tender	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
PRE/21/088	2021/MM/QS-41 (Re-Call)	Construction of Box Culverts in Al Udhaiba (Wadi Al Khalil) (Re-Call) (E- Tender)	Rial 25	23/01/2022	08/02/2022	First
PRE/21/098	2021/MM/QS-36 (Re-Call)	Construction of Sub-base layer for Internal Roads in Wilayat Muscat , Al Sifah (Re-Call) (E- Tender	Rial 25	24/01/2022	20/02/2022	First

Tender Conditions :-
1- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of abond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
2- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
3- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
4- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).
5- For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200/24402330).



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HEAVY SNOW

Over 20 die in cars stranded in snow at Pakistan's resort

ISLAMABAD: At least 21 people have died after heavy snow trapped them in their vehicles in Pakistan.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said the military has been mobilised to clear roads on Saturday after a devastating winter storm hit the mountain resort town of Murree. Videos on social media showed cars pushed bumper-to-bumper

with piles of snow on their roofs. Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed shock over the "tragic deaths" and "ordered inquiry and putting in place strong regulations to ensure prevention of such tragedies."

Thousands of tourists had rushed to the town, which is located some 28 miles from the capital Islamabad. Authorities estimated

over 100,000 cars had entered the area in recent days, causing traffic congestion. With the hotels full, many visitors were forced to sleep in their cars.

Many people remained stuck in their vehicles on Saturday.

Locals also in trouble

More than 4 feet of snow fell in the area overnight as temperatures fell

to -8 degrees Celsius (around 18 degrees Fahrenheit).

"It's not only the tourists, but the local population is also facing severe problems," tourist Usman Abbasi told the AFP news agency.

"Gas cylinders have run out and drinking water is not available in most areas — it's either frozen or the water pipes have been damaged due to severe cold." — **aw**

Kazakhstan's President gives security forces 'kill without warning' order

Kazakh state media reported on Friday that 18 security personnel and 26 "armed criminals" had been killed in violent protests



VIOLENT PROTESTS: More than 100 people were arrested while carrying out "terrorist actions," the state media added.

NUR-SULTAN: Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has ordered security forces to "kill without warning" to crush the violent protests that reportedly left dozens dead.

Kazakh state media reported on Friday that 18 security personnel and 26 "armed criminals" had been killed in violent protests, reported CNN. More than 3,800 people have been detained so far, Kazakh state media reported, citing the country's Internal Affairs Ministry. More than 100 people were arrested while carrying out "terrorist actions," the state media added.

In Almaty, the country's largest city, several dead bodies riddled with bullets lay in the streets and the air was repeatedly filled with gunfire, according to a journalist in the area, reported CNN.

In a defiant public address Friday, Tokayev claimed the unrest, which began earlier this week as protests against rising fuel prices, had been masterminded by well-trained "terrorist bandits" from both inside and outside the country.

Tokayev said the situation had "stabilized" in Almaty, and that the "introduction of a state of emergency is yielding results".

"But terrorists continue to damage state and private property and use weapons against citizens," he said. "I gave the order to law enforcement agencies and the army to open fire to kill without warning," reported CNN.

Tokayev doubled down on that rhetoric on Twitter later, writing 20,000 "gangsters and terrorists" were involved in at least "six waves of attacks" in Almaty this week and added: "No talks with the terrorists, we must kill them."

The government has control over the centre of Almaty near the president's residence and mayor's office, and three large military

checkpoints have been set up, the journalist told CNN.

If anyone goes near the checkpoints, military forces shoot into the air. It is not clear whether they are shooting live or rubber rounds, the journalist said.

Tokayev's speech attempted to undermine the narrative that the demonstrations were a product of popular unrest that turned increasingly destructive and deadly.

However, several protesters who spoke to international media rejected that characterization.

"We are neither thugs nor terrorists," one woman said. "The only thing flourishing here is corruption."

Another man told CNN that people "want the truth," adding, "The government is rich, but all

of these people here have loans to pay. We have our pain, and we want to share it."

The demonstrations are the biggest challenge yet to the autocrat's rule, with initial public anger over a rise in fuel prices expanding to wider discontent with the government over corruption, living standards, poverty and unemployment in the oil-rich nation -- all of which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, experts said.

"This is a government that is highly detached from the reality of what happens on the ground. It's a country where there are no institutions through which to protest; the only route is on the streets," Paul Stronski of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace told CNN. **ANI**



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LAVA SPEWING



Volcano erupts on Galapagos Islands

QUITO: Ecuador's Geophysical Institute said on Friday the tallest mountain on the Galapagos Islands was erupting and spewing lava and ash over the Pacific Ocean.

Shortly before midnight Wednesday local time, the Wolf Volcano sent a cloud of ashen lava 3,793 metres (12,444 feet) into the sky, the Ecuadorian institute said.

Government images showed a piercing ray of light emerging from the mountain streaking into the sky.

The institute said it had observed "thermal anomalies and gas and ash clouds" constituting the eruption. The Galapagos National Park posted pictures of the eruption from the earliest moments.

What risk does the eruption pose?

Ecuadorian officials said there was no immediate danger to residential areas on the other side of Isabela Island, the largest of the Galapagos.

Eight people were evacuated from the area as a precaution; all

were national park guards and scientists engaged in fieldwork focused on pink iguanas residing on the volcano's slopes.

As of last August, only 211 pink iguanas remain on Isabela Island. The condition of the pink iguanas and other unique wildlife was not immediately known.

Yellow iguanas and the Galapagos giant tortoises also live in the area.

Where are the Galapagos Islands?

The Galapagos Islands are some 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) off the coast of Ecuador. A UNESCO World Heritage site, many of the animals and plant species on the Galapagos can only be found there.

Wolf Volcano is one of several volcanoes active in the Galapagos. It is 1,701 metres tall (5,580 feet) when not in a state of active eruption. The volcano erupted last in 2015 following 33 years of inactivity.

Isabela Island is also home to four other active volcanoes. **aw**

DETENTION CENTRE

Amnesty urges US President Biden to keep the promise of closing Guantanamo Bay

WASHINGTON: Human rights group Amnesty International has urged US President Joe Biden to keep his promise to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center as the 20th anniversary of its opening approaches next year.

Designed to detain foreign suspects apprehended by the US in its "war on terror," the facility at a US military base in Cuba is notorious because of harsh interrogation methods used there that critics say amounted to torture.

"The longer the prison remains in use, the longer it continues to undermine US credibility globally on human rights," Daphne Eviatar, director of the security with human rights program at Amnesty International USA, said in a statement.

9/11 'mastermind' still at Gitmo

Roughly 780 people have been detained in Guantanamo since its establishment on January 12, 2002, many of whom haven't been charged with a crime.

The camp currently has 39 detainees left, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the suspected planner of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Even decades after the attacks, however, the case against Mohammed and four other defend-



ants remains in the pretrial phase due to numerous delays. They are to face 9/11-related charges before a military tribunal, but no trial date has been set.

At least 10 other detainees have been cleared for release.

Guantanamo sets a "dangerous precedent" both with regard to the lack of due process of law "and in terms of impunity for the most serious human rights violations, such as torture and enforced disappearances," Matthias Schreiber of Amnesty International in Germany told the AFP news agency.

He said detainees have no access to "fair trials under the rule of law."

Schreiber urged the interna-

tional community to pressure the US to close the facility.

Why is Guantanamo still open?

Former US President Barack Obama already ordered it to be closed in 2009 but failed to get it done during his presidency.

Biden's predecessor, President Donald Trump, wanted to retain the facility, which is also known as Gitmo.

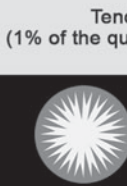
But Biden promised during his election campaign that he would close it before his tenure is up.

Biden is facing strong resistance from Congress. The federal government is still barred by law from transferring any inmates to prisons on the US mainland. **aw**

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable contractor for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Tender Reference No	Title of the Tender
DISC/W/Tender/2022/001	Supply, Install and Commissioning of Electromagnetic flow Meters for Transmission and Distribution lines in Dhofar Governorate
Tender Fee	RO. 105.000 Inclusive VAT (5%) each Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	The Tenderer must show previous experience in performing similar jobs in the past.
Pre-qualification	The Tenderer should be a registered business owner with proper commercial registration certificate and Oma chamber of commerce and Industry certificate in Sultanate of Oman.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 23 rd January 2022
Site Visit	-
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 25 th January 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 27 th January 2022
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 3 rd February 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om



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COVID INFECTION

US President Biden says he doesn't think COVID is here to stay

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Friday said that he doesn't think that the COVID-19 is here to stay, but added that he does think it will remain around the world.

"No, I don't think COVID is here to stay, but having COVID in the environment here and in the world is probably here to stay," Biden said at the White House briefing,

according to *The Hill*.

"COVID as we're dealing with it now is not here to stay, the normal doesn't have to be. We have so many more tools we developed and we continue to develop that can contain COVID and other strains of COVID," the President added, according to *The Hill*.

Biden's remarks come amid a severe surge of the coronavirus in

the United States and across the globe due to the highly transmissible omicron variant.

The United States government awarded a contract worth over 50 million USD for the distribution of over-the-counter COVID-19 test kits on Friday (local time).

The contract was issued as part of Biden's plan to deliver 500 mil-

lion at-home COVID-19 tests to the American people at no cost in response to the Omicron variant, according to the Defence Department release.

"The US... awarded a \$51.6 million contract to Goldbelt Security, located in Newport News, Virginia, for delivery of over-the-counter COVID-19 test kits," the Defence Department said. **ANI**



SPIKE IN CASES

India reports 141,986 new COVID cases in last 24 hours, Omicron tally reaches 3,071



TALLY: The country's COVID-19 case tally has gone up to 35,368,372.

NEW DELHI: India reported 141,986 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the daily positivity rate in the country to 9.28 per cent, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday.

With this, the country's COVID-19 case tally has gone up to 35,368,372. According to Health Ministry, the country has so far reported 3,071 cases of Omicron of which 1,203 have been recovered.

Maharashtra accounts for the highest number of Omicron cases (876), followed by Delhi (513) and Karnataka (333).

The Ministry informed that India's active caseload presently is at 472,169. It accounts for 1.34 per cent of the country's total cases.

The weekly positivity rate is at 5.66 per cent, while the daily positivity rate is at 9.28 per cent.

Current recovery

With the recovery of 40,895 patients in the last 24 hours, the cumulative tally of COVID recovered patients, since the beginning of the pandemic, now stands at 3,44,12,740. The current recovery rate is at 97.30 per cent.

The country also reported 285 new fatalities in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 4,83,463.

India conducted 15,29,948 COVID-19 tests in the last 24 hours, and so far the country has conducted 68,84,70,959 tests as per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data.

India administers over 1.50 billion doses so far

With the administration of more than 90 lakh vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 150.61 crores (1.50 billion) till 7 am on Saturday.

According to the Union Ministry of health release, India executed 90,59,360 doses in the past 24 hours. This has been achieved through 1,60,89,073 sessions. The break-ups of the cumulative figure as per the provisional report till 7 am today include:

40,895 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and the cumulative tally of recovered patients (since the beginning of the pandemic) now stands at 3,44,12,740. **ANI**

PREVENTIVE AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Take each COVID positive case seriously: WHO

NEW DELHI: The World Health Organization on Saturday urged strict implementation of COVID appropriate behaviour as coronavirus infections rose in most South-East Asian nations, with some seeing exponential rise.

"All preventive and protective measures must be implemented with full earnestness by one and all. Authorities must implement situation-specific measures to arrest the further spread of the virus. People must adhere to these measures. Masks, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, ventilation, and physical distancing is an absolute must," said Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region. She said that though the Omicron variant of the virus appears to be milder, it should not be overlooked. This highly contagious form, which has emerged as the most common, is already overwhelming health systems throughout the world and Omicron is causing illness and fatalities over the world, she added.

"We must also not forget that not every COVID-19 case is an Omicron infection. Other variants, including Delta, are also circulating, which, as we know cause severe infections and deaths," the WHO Regional Director said.

She urged people to take each positive COVID-19 case seriously. She informed the public that the COVID-19 virus spreads mostly among persons who are in close proximity to one another, such as at a conversational distance but the virus can also spread in a crowded or poorly ventilated indoor environment.

Because contagious persons don't usually show symptoms or realise they're harbouring the virus, it's critical to promote proper ventilation by opening windows and doors whenever feasible when sharing an interior environment with others, she alerted.

She also pointed out that It is critical that individuals wear well-fitting masks and avoid crowds and large gatherings, among other precautions.

Another important COVID-19 preventative approach is to increase COVID-19 vaccine coverage, and all efforts must continue to guarantee that the high-risk group is covered as soon as possible, Singh said.

People must continue to take all preventative and protective measures even after being completely vaccinated, she added.

She cautioned people and said that to preserve lives, we must keep our healthcare systems from being overburdened. **ANI**





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Djokovic exempted as he tested positive for COVID in December

The Australian Open organisers granted a medical exemption to vaccine-skeptic Djokovic after which he jetted to Melbourne

SYDNEY: World number one men's singles player Novak Djokovic was granted a medical exemption to enter Australia and compete in the Australian Open because he had recently tested positive for COVID-19, court documents published on Saturday has revealed.

recovered from COVID," the document said, as per CNN. "The date of the first positive COVID PCR test was recorded on 16 December 2021," the document added.

tion detention after having his visa canceled. In the court documents published on Saturday, it is stated that he has "not had a fever or respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 72 hours". Djokovic on Friday had thanked people for their support since he was refused entry to Australia over his COVID-19 vaccine status. "Thank you to people around the world for your continuous support. I can feel it and it is greatly appreciated," the Serbian, who is in a detention facility in Melbourne awaiting an appeal, said on Instagram. **ANI**



LEGENDS LEAGUE CRICKET

Sachin Tendulkar not part of Legends League Cricket, says SRT Sports Management

MUMBAI: SRT Sports Management Private Limited on Saturday issued a clarification saying Sachin Tendulkar is not a part of the upcoming Legends League Cricket.

This clarification came after a promotional video for the league featuring Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan was aired that said Tendulkar is also going to be a part of the league. "The news about @sachin_rt's participation in 'Legends League Cricket' is not true. The organisers should refrain from misleading cricket fans and Amitabh Bachchan," stated an official spokesperson, SRT Sports Management Pvt. Ltd.

Mohammed Kaif and Stuart Binny are the new names in the India Maharajas squad for the Legends League Cricket starting in Muscat, Oman from January 20, 2022.

In an official release, Ravi Shastri, Commissioner of Legends League Cricket said, "Mohammad Kaif and Stuart Binny's contribution to the Indian cricket is huge and likewise I feel they will also



have an immense role to play in the league as well. I am looking forward to watching them play the Legends League Cricket."

The first season of LLC will have former cricketers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, Eng-

land, among other cricket nations divided into three Teams representing India, Asia, and the rest of the World. Cricket fans all across the world will get to see the Legends of Cricket sweat it out at their competitive best. **ANI**

TENNIS

Halep, Kudermetova enter final in Melbourne, injured Osaka withdraws

MELBOURNE: Former world number one Simona Halep booked a spot in the Melbourne Summer Set 1 final after holding off Chinese qualifier Zheng Qinwen on Saturday.

The Romanian thumped Chinese teenager 6-3, 6-2 to earn a shot at her 23rd career title on Sunday in what will be her first final since Cluj Napoca on home soil in November. She has not landed the silverware since Rome in September 2020, due largely to a calf tear, which scuttled her mid-season in 2021 and saw her briefly fall outside the top 20 for the first time since 2013.

No.3 seed Veronika Kudermetova of Russia will face Halep in the final. Kudermetova was slated to face No.1 seed Naomi Osaka of Japan in the nightcap semifinal, but former World No.1 Osaka withdrew from their clash due to an abdominal injury.

Taking to Twitter, Osaka tweeted: "Sad to withdraw due to injury from my match today, my body got a shock from playing back to back intense matches after the break



I took. Thank you for all the love this past week I'll try to rest up and I'll see you soon!"

Kudermetova is now into her third career WTA singles final.

The World No.31 made her first WTA singles final one year ago in Abu Dhabi, then earned her first WTA singles title at the Volvo Car Open in Charleston in April. **ANI**

CRICKET

Kail, Nadeem excel in final as Ruwi crowned D20 champion

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Khalid Kail's superb 49 off 39 and Muhammed Nadeem's sensational 3 for 9 powered Ruwi Rangers to the D20 Cricket League crown with a thumping 8-run victory against Darsait Titans at Oman Cricket Rurf 1 in Amerat on Thursday.

Having lost its first three wickets for 43 in 6 overs, Ruwi's innings was stabilised by a 65-run partnership between Kail and Wasim Ali (26 off 24), paving the way for its final total of 175 for 9. Mohammed Naseem Khushi provided the late impetus with a typically aggressive 22 off 8 including three huge sixes.

Oman all-rounders Khawar Ali and Ahmed Fayyaz Butt were the pick of Darsait bowlers, taking

three wickets each.

With a rampaging Kaleemullah breathing down Darsait neck from the other end, Muhammed Nadeem was unplayable with a red hot cherry in hand. Darsait's chase was over inside 12 overs as it limped to 47 for 8 before being all out for 95, five overs later. Jitenkumar Ramanandi and Mohit Patel bowled well too, taking three and two wickets respectively.

Brief Scores (D20): Ruwi Rangers 175 for 9 in 20 overs (Khalid Kail 49 – 1x4, 3x6, Wasim Ali 26 – 2x4, Mohammed Naseem 22 – 3x6, Khawar Ali 3-35, Ahmad Fayyaz 3-40) beat Darsait Titans 95 all out in 17.1 overs (Khurram Khan 34 – 2x4, 2x6. Muhammed Nadeem 3-9 Jitenkumar Ramanandi 3-23, Mohit Dhirubhai Patel 2-29).



D20 CRICKET LEAGUE: Having lost its first three wickets for 43 in 6 overs, Ruwi's innings was stabilised by a 65-run partnership between Kail and Wasim Ali (26 off 24), paving the way for its final total of 175 for 9.

AUSTRALIA VS ENGLAND

Crawley, Hameed keep hopes alive for England

SYDNEY: Zak Crawley and Haseeb Hameed anchored the innings as England fought back against Australia in the third session on Day 4 of the ongoing fourth Ashes Test here at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday.

At Stumps on Day 4, England's score read 30/0-- still needing 358 runs to win.

Earlier, Australia declared their innings at 265/6, with a lead of 388 runs. Resuming the third session at 149/4, Australia batters Usman Khawaja (101*) and Cameron Green (74) continued with their fiery batting performance and completed their century and half-century, respectively. This was Khawaja's second ton in the 4th fourth Test.

England finally got a sigh of relief when Jack Leach dismissed Green (74), which was followed by Alex Carey's wicket on his very first delivery.

After declaring at 265/6,



Zak Crawley (22*) and Haseeb Hameed (8*) took the batting charge for England and played a flawless innings to bring their

side's score at 30/0.

Brief Scores: Australia 416/8d and 265/6d (Usman Khawaja 101*, Cameron Green 74; Jack Leach

4-84; England 294 and 30/0 (Zak Crawley 22*, Haseeb Hameed 8*, Scott Boland 0-5).

-ANI

FOOTBALL

Lionel Messi continues COVID-19 recovery, misses PSG trip to Lyon

PARIS: Lionel Messi will miss Paris Saint-Germain FC's Ligue 1 clash against Olympique Lyonnais as the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner will continue his recovery from COVID-19.

The Parisian club confirmed on Saturday that Messi will miss the club's trip to Parc Olympique Lyonnais. In a statement, PSG said: "Lionel Messi will continue his individual post-Covid recovery programme in the coming days." Messi along with three other Paris Saint-Germain FC players had tested positive for COVID-19 on January 2. The three other players who tested positive for COVID-19 were Juan Bernat, Sergio Rico, and Nathan Bitumazala.

PSG also confirmed that Angel Di Maria, Julian Draxler, Danilo Pereira, Layvin Kurzawa



and Gianluigi Donnarumma will continue their isolation due to COVID-19.

The club added that Neymar Jr is continuing his treatment with the Paris Saint-Germain medical and performance staff.

The Brazilian forward is still scheduled to return to training in three weeks. **ANI**

GLOBAL ENERGY FORUM

The Atlantic Council announced that the 2022 Global Energy Forum will now be held alongside Expo 2020 in Dubai on March 28-29. The forum will also convene several virtual programmes this month during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week to complement ADSW's critical mission of accelerating global climate action.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



NEW BANKING PLATFORM

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate has announced the launch of its next-generation digital solution 'Integrated Transaction Banking Platform'.

Omani company to fund portion of railway project in Pakistan

The project, which aims to improve rail linkages in Pakistan, will be implemented in four stages

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Omani company has signed an agreement to contribute a portion of funding towards a project set up by Pakistan Railways. The project, which aims to improve rail linkages in Pakistan, will

be implemented in four stages.

The funding agreement was signed between Anwar Asia Investment Company and Pakistan Railways during a ceremony in Lahore, on the sidelines of a visit to Pakistan by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

The OCCI, led by Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, the chairman of the board of directors, was in Lahore to organise bilateral meetings between businessmen of the two countries, reported Oman News Agency (ONA).

The meetings were aimed to enhancing areas of trade and investment, increasing the volume of trade between the two countries, and creating commercial partnerships between private sector institutions and organisations on both sides.

"The visit of the Oman trade del-

egation to Pakistan contributes to discussions on issues pertaining to economic development in the two countries, as well as the opportunity to share information related to investment in various economic sectors," said Muhammad Riyad, a Pakistani investor in Oman.

"There are many investment opportunities from which businessmen in both countries can benefit, across various economic sectors," he added.

During his time in Lahore, Chairman Al Saleh met with Muhammad Suroor Chaudhry, the governor of Punjab Province, as well as a number of officials in Lahore, to discuss proposals for co-operation in trade and investment, encourage investment in tourism, agriculture, healthcare, education, and manpower.



AGREEMENT: The funding agreement was signed between Anwar Asia Investment Company and Pakistan Railways during a ceremony in Lahore, on the sidelines of a visit to Pakistan by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. - ONA

COOPERATION AGREEMENT

A'Saffa Foods inks deal to export poultry products to Saudi Arabia

MUSCAT: A'Saffa Foods signed a cooperation agreement with the Saudi Arabian firm Stallions United Trading Company to export A'Saffa high-quality poultry products and further processed products to Saudi Arabia.

The signing ceremony was held at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, and was attended by Dr Ahmed bin Nasser Al Bakri, Undersecretary for Agriculture, and Abdullah bin Saud Al Anzi, the ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appointed to the Sultanate, together with several other delegates.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Mohammed Suhail Al Shanfari, CEO of A'Saffa Foods Company, and Dr Essam Mohammed Al Mouawad, CEO of the Stallions United Trading Company.



2021-22

India's GDP estimated to grow at 9.2%

NEW DELHI: India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to grow by 9.2 per cent in 2021-22 as against a contraction of 7.3 per cent recorded in the previous year, the government data showed.

GDP at Constant Prices (2011-12) in the year 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 147.54 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2020-21 of Rs 135.13 lakh crore, according to data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

"However, these are early projections for 2021-22. Actual performance of various indicators, actual tax collections and expenditure incurred on subsidies in the following months, fresh relief measures for the vulnerable sections (such as providing free food grains which has now been extended till March 2022) and other measures, if any, taken by the government to contain the

The GDP expanded by 20.1 per cent during the first quarter of the current financial year while it grew by 8.4 per cent in the July-September 2021 quarter

spread of COVID-19 would have a bearing on subsequent revisions of these estimates," the NSO said in a statement.

The growth in nominal GDP during 2021-22 is estimated at 17.6 per cent. Nominal GVA at Basic Prices is estimated at Rs210.37 lakh crore in 2021-22, as against Rs 179.15 lakh crore in 2020-21, showing a growth of 17.4 per cent.

Nominal GDP or GDP at Current Prices in the year 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 232.15 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Esti-

mate of GDP for the year 2020-21 of Rs 197.46 lakh crore, released on May 31, 2021.

Actual figure for the first half of the current year has been officially released. The GDP expanded by 20.1 per cent during the first quarter of the current financial year while it grew by 8.4 per cent in the July-September 2021 quarter.

This is the First Advance Estimate of National Income for the financial year 2021-22. It was introduced in 2016-17 to serve as essential inputs to the Budget exercise. -ANI

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 MARKET

Bank Muscat launches ‘Integrated Transaction Banking Platform’

The integrated transaction banking platform offers a comprehensive suite of advanced digital solutions that includes payment, account services, collections and receivables, liquidity and trade solutions for corporates, SMEs and government institutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with its pioneering role in introducing new and innovative digital banking services for the benefit of its customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate has announced the launch of its next-generation digital solution ‘Integrated Transaction Banking Platform’.

The integrated transaction banking platform offers a comprehensive suite of advanced digital solutions that includes payment, account services, collections and receivables, liquidity and trade

solutions for corporates, SMEs and government institutions. The launch of this platform is a key move towards the bank becoming the leading ‘Transaction Banking Solutions’ provider in Oman to service bank customers with a full array of products for their local and international transaction banking needs. The platform will greatly help customers to streamline their operational processes, reduce business complexities and minimize costs.

Bank Muscat’s digitally-enabled services ecosystem will play a major role in accelerating corporate B2B and B2C transactions, unfolding a



“

The implementation of the platform meets our aspirations to embed digital efficiency in client business and digitising the entire customer journey to enhance our customer value proposition

Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi
Assistant General Manager,
Transaction and Government Banking

digital economy and promoting a customer-centric business model, which is vital to Oman Vision 2040.

With the ‘Integrated Transaction Banking Platform’, customers can gain full visibility and control over their funds position across geographies in multiple currencies through account services, benefit from flexibility in collections of funds through direct debit and virtual account solutions, automate

the management of funds efficiently through sweeps mechanism and can benefit from straight-through reconciliation tools available in the platform. This digital transformation will ease business operations, bring insights, and provide complete control on visibility and management of funds.

With the availability of customised reports and information at their fingertips, the platform will

help customers with making strategic decisions in addition to efficiently managing daily operations. Bank Muscat is always addressing the entire value chain of corporates by developing and adopting new technological solutions.

Speaking about the bank’s Integrated Transaction Banking Platform, Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager - Transaction and Govern-

ment Banking, Bank Muscat, said, “We are excited to launch our Integrated Transaction Banking Platform, which is a comprehensive suite of digital products, designed to assist our customers in managing their working capital and trade requirements. In line with the bank’s vision “To serve you better, every day”, the implementation of the Integrated Transaction Banking Enterprise Suite will help us fulfil our strategic goals as well as provide unmatched banking convenience to corporate, SMEs and government entities. We strive towards making banking simple, convenient, and secure for our customers with our digital solutions. The implementation of the platform meets our aspirations to embed digital efficiency in client business and digitising the entire customer journey to enhance our customer value proposition.”

Bank Muscat’s Transaction Banking unit is already a leader in helping government and corporate entities in Oman. The size and volume of the transactions processed over its corporate online platform continue to scale up with OMR5 billion worth of transactions processed during the year 2021.

MAJOR EVENT

Global Energy Forum to be held from March 28

ABU DHABI: The Atlantic Council announced that the 2022 Global Energy Forum will now be held alongside Expo 2020 in Dubai on March 28-29.

The forum, which is part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, will also be hosted in conjunction with the 2022 World Government Summit a major global convening focused on the tools, policies, and models that are essential in shaping future governments and will

take advantage of the unparalleled opportunities at expo during its closing week.

“As the global energy system faces unprecedented challenges and promising new innovations, it is more important than ever for leaders around the world to collaborate in person to advance the energy transition,” said Randy Bell, senior director of the Atlantic Council’s Global Energy Centre. “The recent sharp rise in COVID-19 cases in

the United States due to the Omicron variant made it necessary to postpone the 2022 Global Energy Forum. We are confident the new event dates and location will allow for an even more impactful and engaging convening.”

The forum will also convene several virtual programmes this month during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week to complement ADSW’s critical mission of accelerating global climate action. -WAM

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CES 2022

Google to introduce new connectivity features for smart devices in 2022

WASHINGTON: At CES 2022, Google shared its future plans to make device connectivity easier and more seamless for Android phones, Chromebooks, Android TVs and Wear OS smartwatches.

According to GSM Arena, Google will begin with Fast Pair for Bluetooth headphones, which will automatically pair with your Chromebook or even use your Android phone to set up a new Chromebook giving it all the information needed of paired devices and Wi-Fi passwords.

This should be available in the coming weeks. Looking a couple of months ahead, Matter-enabled smart devices will support pairing with your Google TV or Android TV OS devices.

Unlocking Chromebook using your Android phone has been a feature for a while now but Google wants to enable that on your Wear OS smartwatch too. The watch will be able to unlock not only your Chromebook but your Android handset without having them around you.

Samsung and Pixel phones, on the other hand, will see extended support for digital car key features. UWB-enabled phones will even have the ability to unlock your BMW vehicle, as long as it supports the tech, just by getting close to your car door. -ANI

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ACCOUNTS ADMIN

Accountant with 10 yrs experience in trading & contracting, oil & gas, building materials, manufacturing, constructions & IT sectors. Expertise in accounting, VAT, finalization, auditing, budgeting, costing & payroll. NOC / local release & driving license available.

CONTACT: 91183601
E-MAIL: SUNEEL.SUNEEL@GMAIL.COM

RETAIL- ADMINISTRATION

Indian - 10 yrs of experience in retail, health care & telecomm as Administration, Sales & Marketing. Work experience with: Joyalukkas India Pvt Ltd, Aster DM Healthcare, Reliance JIO Infocomm Ltd. International License & Medical done.

Contact no: 78621939
E-mail: suhailkmuhammed00@gmail.com

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Indian, 23, (B.E Mechanical), fresher PG Diploma in Oil and Gas Piping and Pipeline, QA/QC, NDT, looking for suitable job.

Contact: 79056363, 99501396
Email: rejiakhil111@gmail.com

ADMIN/FINANCE

33 year Female MBA with valid Omani D/L seeks placement in Admin/Finance or Marketing.

Contact: 96711850
Email: snehalturm06@gmail.com

FINANCE

Sr Accountant/ Chief Accountant (Male). 15+ years of experience in Oman. Having Good Experience in Finance and Supply Chain also have great knowledge in Finalization ,Stock Audit, Various Accounts Packages, etc. Looking for Suitable Position. Having Valid Oman D/L.

Contact +968 79830539
Email : justmailshaik75@gmail.com

SENIOR MANAGER SUPPLY CHAIN

Indian Male with +25 years of Experience in Supply Chain, Purchase, Sales & Distribution, MIS, Inventory & Credit Control seeks placement.

CONTACT 94619442

Finance & Accounts

Indian Female (MBA Finance) having more than 15 years of Experience in Oman in Manufacturing and Trading company seeks suitable Senior Position in Finance and Accounts.

Contact # 94953826 / 92824146

JOB WANTED

DRIVER

Bangladeshi driver with 2 yrs experience in Oman looking job as house or company driver. Contact 94658280

Bangladeshi driver with 8 yrs experience & NOC seeks job. Contact 90122947

Pakistani driver with 20 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 92091552

Bangladeshi driver with 3 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94256510

Bangaladeshi driver with 10 yrs experience seeks job. # 93539260

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94531675

IT

Indian male MCA, 6+ yrs experience IT admin, ERP admin, website application (NET/PHP). Contact 78668657

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

8 Yrs of experience in procurement (Parts for Heavy machineries, Light motor vehicles & crushers) plus Accounting, Administration, Logistics support, B.Com, MBA. Contact 78234545

Finance Controller/CFO

Male,CPA UK, MIPA. AIFA, have 10 years experience in audit, accounts, tax and secondment. Currently working as a managing partner in an audit firm. Looking for attractive package.

GSM: 90608097

Omani Statistical

Statistical (Omani), Graduated from Modern College of Business & Science with Bachelor degree in Statistics. Experience in Statistics in Ministry of Higher Education and Purchase Assistant sales representative in hospital laboratory and chemicals for pesticides (current work).

Email: Radhiyaalkharusi24@gmail.com
Phone No: 00968-93987544

ENGINEER

BE Electronics & Communication
Indian Male looking for a suitable job in Oman. Presently in Oman.

Contact 78644119
E-mail: terancefranklin25@gmail.com

OMANI HSE

Bachelor's degree in BA & IOSH.

10 years experience in HSE and O&M.

Contact +968 95555865

Business Unit Head

15+ years of experience in Sales,Marketing and Operations worked for a well renowned Trading Company for (ELV & Electrical Products) in Oman, experience in developing Product Market for Projects and Retail Business, looking for a suitable job change.

Contact: 9364 3218

PROCUREMENT

Indian male, 20yrs exp. in supply Chain management, Import Vendor Management. Skilled & forecasted sourcing. Inherent negotiation & documentation skill to benchmark, MIS, Inventory & Credit control, dynamic in office software handling, GCC D/L, N.O.C Available, immediate joining at Sr. Position.

Contact 78599071
Email: sahaiv548@gmail.com

ACCOUNTS

Indian Male, 38yrs (age), 13 years of experience in accounts in Oman, Having D/L, NOC is available, Can join Immediately.

Contact No: 95920740,
Email ID: alhameed1527@gmail.com

OMANI HR/PRO

Omani, 15 yrs experience, PRO, Relation development, Labour & Crime law, HR & Time Management. Fluent in English, Arabic & Hindi seeks Part Time job.

Contact 97264447

Senior Manager (HR/Administration/Operations)

Indian male, 42, MBA, 12yrs' experience with international exposure. Having GCC experience. Also having Experience in the Education Industry (India). Presently in Muscat. D/L Available.

Contact: 94326527
Email: sreekanth.kerala987@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

SALES/MARKETING

Indian male with 12 years experience in indoor sales within Oman & UAE looking for job, have valid D/L, ready to join immediately. Contact 91901852

Indian, graduate, 6 years experience in Sales and Marketing having valid Oman D/L, fluent in English, Hindi and Arabic. Presently in Oman, looking for immediate placement. Contact 78699300.
Email: abidm0786@gmail.com

Indian, 7 years of experience as a FMCG Sales executive in Oman with Oman D/L, looking for suitable placement. Contact 91883131

33 yrs Male, MBA & 11+ yrs experience in Sales, Service, lead & Supervision (Automobiles & FMCG). With D/L (UAE) Contact 7862 2687

Indian Male, MBA-Marketing, 6 years Oman experience as Sales & Marketing Executive. Seeking suitable position. D/L available. Contact 94883005

ARCHITECT

Young Indian Female Architect (B.Arch) looking for a suitable placement in Oman. Currently in Muscat.

Contact: +968 9364 0106
Email: shamritharavi99@gmail.com

Quantity Surveyor

Srilankan Male Quantity Surveyor (BSc QS (Hons) reading) with 4 years of Civil & ID experience in Oman. Looking for a job.

Contact: 92187572
Email: sifathhasan1995@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Mechanical Engineer, & Graduate Marine Engineer Indian male, 36 year old, having an experience of 12 years. Presently in Oman, having Oman D/L seeks suitable placement in Oman.

Contact: 95476011
Email: noblesimon1985@gmail.com

Senior Accountant

Indian male M. Com with PG in computers, working as Senior Accountant in Oman with over 12 years with advanced knowledge in MS Dynamics, ODDO, Tally Erp/Prime (Tally customising with developer), looking for suitable position.

Contact on +96871551938

ADMINISTRATION

More than 22 years of experience, Indian, Male, having bachelor's degree seeking suitable placement, having experience in Administration/ Document Control/IT, HR, and Finance Support, with valid Oman Driving Licence. NOC available.

Contact No. 99757759
Email: bijucchacko85@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Indian Male, 42 yrs, B Tech Graduate, 15+ years gulf experience in Civil construction field. In an excellent grade construction and Trading Company with good Knowledge is looking for suitable opening. Valid D/L, NOC Available.

Contact 98032824, peer.ktr@gmail.com

FINANCE

B.Com ICWAI (Intermediate), 18+ years Finance/Accounts/Reporting/Credit Control/ Finalisation, Expd in MFG/Retail/Service Ind, Expd in ERP-Orion/Focus/JD Edwards/D/L, NOC available, can join immediately.

Mobile: 97634372

English Teacher

Experienced English Teacher
Bachelor's degree & Academic IELTS with a 6.5 +4 years of experience.

Contact: +968 99022926

FINANCE

MBA, Mcom, ICWA (inter) 21 years experience in Oman working as Manager in Business / Accounts / Finance / Operations. Looking for Senior positions in Business / Finance and Operations.

CONTACT: 9621 1885

JOB WANTED

Sales operations coordinator B-com with E-commerce & Various other certifications,5 years of Dubai and 2 years of Muscat experience, with refined skill set, Looking for new challenges. Contact +968 9676 6702
E-mail: ilyas3299@gmail.com

Indian male experience in Sales and Marketing for 12 years with D/L looking for suitable placement. Contact 92085257"

Indian Male PG in Biotech. with 4 years experience in Insurance sales total 8 year exp. Looking For Sales Job, available in Oman. Contact 79015490

Indian male 30 B.com Having 7yrs on field experience in Inventory, operation assistant & Sales Executive DL & NOC available. Contact 97855282
Email: natigue.ahmed91@gmail.com



Four easy ways to limit carbs for a healthier you

A new year is an ideal opportunity to consider positive lifestyle changes, and what you choose to eat is a big part of that. The good news is, you can focus on nutritional goals while still enjoying the food you eat.

“Think about important nutrients your body needs to stay healthy, like protein, healthy fat and fiber, when choosing what to eat,” says registered dietitian nutritionist Kristin Kirkpatrick, M.S. “Focusing on foods with those nutrients, while reducing carbs, can help you stay on track toward your goals.”

Here are Kirkpatrick's tips to help you limit carbs.

1 UTILISE NET CARBS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

The great thing about tracking net carbs is that it helps you get the most bang for your nutritional buck, as an essential component of a net carb calculation is to deduct fibre. In the low carb world, fibre is found in nuts, seeds and cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli or cauliflower). Fibre is not digestible, which is why you deduct it from the total carbs. Adding more of these foods into your daily routine means you're getting fewer digestible carbs and more healthy fats, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

2 ADD INDULGENCES TO STAY ON TRACK

It's much easier to stick with healthier life-

HERE ARE SOME LOWER CARB DIP INGREDIENTS TO TRY:

Mayonnaise

This versatile condiment has zero carbohydrates. You can create plenty of dips combining mayo with mustard and/or sour cream.

Mustard

Add zing to your dips with mustard, as it contains zero net carbs. Some mustards will have added sugar or honey, so be sure to check labels

Sour cream

While you may think full-fat sour cream is not the best choice, it actually contains fewer carbs than the low-fat version - and a lot fewer carbs than non-fat sour cream. It also adds flavour to any recipe and combines well with a variety of herbs and spices.

Meeting your health and wellness goals for 2022 will be easier if you centre your goals on nutrition as well as enjoyment of foods you eat that also help give you what your body needs.

style changes if you include foods you truly enjoy that also provide nutritional content.

“I advise my patients to indulge but indulge smart,” adds Kirkpatrick. “See individual product for nutrition information, including calories, total fat and saturated fat content.

3 UNDERSTAND HOW SOON YOU'LL SEE BENEFITS

“When you limit carbs, the results can be seen fairly quickly,” says Kirkpatrick. “That's because the process of limiting carbs (at least in the beginning) leads to a reduction in water weight. Before the real weight starts coming off, you can start seeing the benefits. Sometimes, just feeling lighter will keep you motivated to continue in the beginning.”

Additionally, limiting carbs means reducing processed foods and sugar. Multiple studies have found these eliminations to be beneficial to mental health. So, limiting carbs can help you with your physical health as well as your happiness factor!

4 SWAP DIPS AND SIDES

Most dips and sides can be made low carb and reinforce your healthy habits. For example, you can make spinach-and-artichoke dip (a source of antioxidants) with almond flour (or no flour at all), snack on an apple with no-added-sugar peanut or almond butter, or dip low carb chips into a healthy fat source like guacamole. These options give you way more nutrient density than the potato chips or pretzels you might be tempted to grab. They also help you feel fuller, longer. **-BPT**



SPORTS



Oman Sailing Festival heads south to Hawana Salalah

MUSCAT: The Oman Sailing Festival continues into January when the fun and excitement rolls into Hawana Salalah from 6-9 January 2022. For two days, visitors to the destination will be able to try sailing and windsurfing with Oman Sail coaches for free from 10am-5pm each day.

Ali Al Shuhaimi, Centre Manager of Al Mouj Sailing School and project manager of the Oman Sailing Festival, said, "The Oman Sailing Festival has been incredibly popular up and down the coastline so far with people of all ages reconnecting with Oman's maritime history and trying the sport for the first time. Now we are heading south to Salalah and look forward to sharing the thrill of being on the water with crowds at Hawana Salalah."

Karim Boushra, Hawana Salalah Destination Director said, "Everyone at Hawana Salalah is looking forward to welcoming the Oman Sailing Festival to the destination. We have hosted several stages of

Sailing Arabia – The Tour in the past and having the chance to try sailing and windsurfing, for free, is an opportunity not to be missed. The beaches at Hawana Salalah are the perfect setting for Salalah locals, residents at the destination and visitors to learn how to sail and windsurf in our wonderful clear blue seas."

To date, the Oman Sailing Festival has welcomed over 2000 visitors at stops across the country. After wrapping up in Salalah, the festival will visit Duqm for the final stop from 12-15 January 2022.

The Oman Sailing Festival is proudly supported by platinum sponsor OQ, gold sponsors Oman Air and Salsabeel, and environmental partners Be'ah, the Environment Society of Oman and the host venue in Salalah Hawana Salalah. To pre-register for Oman Sailing Festival events, please visit www.omansail.com/sailing-festival-activities or search #Sail-WithUs on social media.



Everyone at Hawana Salalah is looking forward to welcoming the Oman Sailing Festival to the destination. We have hosted several stages of Sailing Arabia – The Tour in the past and having the chance to try sailing and windsurfing, for free, is an opportunity not to be missed.



ROUND-UP

Health Minister officially inaugurates Oman International Hospital

The high-profile event started with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting by the chief guest Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Health declaring the hospital fully open with all its services and treatments available to the people of Oman

MUSCAT: Oman International Hospital (OIH), Oman's newest multi, a super-speciality hospital that soft-opened in May 2021, was officially inaugurated on Thursday 6 January 2022 by Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Health in the presence of Abdul Salam Mohammed Al Murshidi, Executive President of Oman Investment Authority, Her Highness Basma Al Said, Sheikha Amal Suhail Bahwan, Chairperson of Al Afia Healthcare Development and Investment company and Vice Chairperson of Suhail Bahwan Group Holding, several ambassadors and distinguished guests.

OIH is a joint venture by Suhail Bahwan Group Holding, Oman



Brunei Investment Company and IdealMed GHS, Portugal.

The high-profile event started with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting by the chief guest Dr Ahmed Al Saidi, Minister of Health declaring the hospital fully open with all its services and treatments available to the people of Oman.

Addressing the distinguished gathering, Sheikha Amal Suhail Bahwan Chairperson of Al Afia Healthcare Development and Investment company and Vice Chairperson of Suhail Bahwan Group Holding said, "Just a few years ago, Oman International Hospital was a dream by a group of visionaries to set up a world-class, comprehensive healthcare institution for the people of Oman, according to the highest international standards, to be a milestone in the development of the health sector in the Sultanate of Oman to contribute to the achievement of visions and objectives of our contemporary renaissance under

the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik Al Said."

She further added, "Oman International Hospital was not conceived to be just another hospital but a holistic healthcare destination that offers the world-class standard in its treatment, facilities and services in Oman and the region. That's why we have brought together a highly qualified and experienced medical team from Oman as well as from across the World. We have also equipped the hospital with state-of-the-art equipment and cutting-edge technology so that our guests can get the best healthcare service."

"Within a short span of its soft opening, our hospital has achieved several milestones, but our ambition has no limit. We promise you more achievements in the months and years as we continue to progress ourselves," Sheikha Amal Bahwan concluded.

Following, Fathi Al Balushi, Vice Chairman, Board-member of Al



Afia Healthcare Development and Investment Company and CEO of Oman Brunei Investment, said, "Since the beginning of the renaissance, the Omani government has focused on the health and medical sector, recognising that with a good healthcare system, a country can offer its people a better quality of life and the opportunity to live well and age well."

"Oman International Hospital is the result of a successful collaboration between Oman Brunei Investment Company, a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority, and Suhail Bahwan Group, a family-owned business. Under the guidance of our shareholders, we are extremely proud of the role Oman Brunei Investment Company has played in supporting the government's vision."

Representing the IGHS, the official operators of the hospital, Dr José Alexandre Cunha, Board Member of Oman International Hospital and Chairman of IGHS

Group said, "Today Oman can celebrate the formal opening of its largest private hospital, which has been designed and equipped to provide the best health care services, and which should be assumed as a flag of the country in its commitment to Excellence. At the "Oman International Hospital" excellence is a permanent goal that guides our daily challenge and, despite our recent existence, our internal level of exigence allow us to present today the "Oman International Hospital" as the first hospital in the entire GCC region awarded by the European Foundation for Quality Management with the accreditation "committed to excellence. I want to express my gratitude to our partners and shareholders, the Oman Brunei Investment Company and the Suhail Bahwan Group, for their trust, vision and commitment."

Dr José Alexandre Cunha presented Sheikha Amal Suhail Bahwan with a key as a symbolic

mark that the Hospital is now ready to operate in full capacity.

The Guest of Honour the Minister of Health, was presented with an artistic crystal sculpture of the hospital as a token of appreciation.

The guests were treated to an audio-visual presentation of the hospital's state-of-the-art facilities, world-class services, high-quality treatments, cutting edge technology, global expertise and other unique features!

Later, the distinguished guests were taken on a tour of the hospital visiting the Centers of Excellence, Hybrid Operation Theater, medical spa and other facilities.

Strategically located in the centre of capital Muscat's Al Ghubra area, just across the road from the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Oman International Hospital is easily accessible from any part of the city. For more information and to book an appointment, OIH can be reached on 24904500 or by WhatsApp on 99389376.

MIDSIZE SUV

Live the moment with all-new Kia Sorento

MUSCAT: The all-new Kia Sorento is a well-designed, power-packed and capable companion for any journey. The first vehicle to be based on Kia's new-generation midsize SUV platform, the Sorento is equipped with a larger body; enabling drivers to maximise cargo and luggage space.



The Sorento's redefined exterior and attractive cabin set it apart as much more than a work of engineering efficiency. Its innovative design catches the eye, adding a new layer of luxury to the Kia driving experience. The Sorento stands out with 19" alloy wheels, LED headlamps, LED daytime running lights, LED front and rear fog lamps, LED rear combination lamps, remote engine start and a panoramic sunroof.

The interior of the Sorento is enlivened by a modern suite of leading-edge features that firmly establish the Sorento as Kia's most high-tech car ever. The features include smartphone wireless charger, mood light, Android auto and car play, 8" audio display, audio remote control, power passenger seat, power driver seat, leather seats, dual full automatic A/C, 3rd row AC vents and more.

Powering the all-new Sorento SUV is the 3.5L engine with 268 hp and 33.8 kg.m. torque. This is paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission for smooth driving experiences. Adding to driving delights is the auto cruise control, drive mode select offering the driver choices to enjoy exciting driving experiences on varied terrains.

The all-new Sorento is built to take you places with confidence. A range of advanced safety features in the all-new Sorento include Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Vehicle Stability Management (VSM), Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS), Driver and Front Passenger Airbags, Smart Cruise Control, Blind Spot Collision Avoidance Assist (BCA), Lane Keeping Assist (LKA), Forward Collision Avoidance Assist (FCA) and Lane Following Assist (LFA).

Named as the 'All-Wheel Drive Car of the Year 2020' in the Auto Bild Allrad contest and winning the 'Das Goldene Lenkrad 2020' award (Golden Steering Wheel), the fourth generation Sorento has been celebrated by automotive expert's world over since its official debut in March 2020. As the winner of the J.D. Power quality award

for 9 consistent years, Kia continues to produce thrill-seeking, durable cars for those who pursue only excellence.

Kia Sorento enthusiasts interested in experiencing the all-new Sorento SUV are invited to visit any Kia showroom.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way. No wonder then that Reliable International Automotive has been ranked amongst the top Kia distributors worldwide and has been honoured with prestigious accolades including the 'Good Partnership award', 'Family Like Care' Service award, and 'Kia Distributor of Distinction' award.

LANDMARK SERIES

BBC Earth announces brand new series The Green Planet with Sir David Attenborough

DUBAI: BBC Earth announced its brand new five-part landmark series from BBC Studios Natural History Unit, The Green Planet, narrated by legendary English broadcaster and natural historian, Sir David Attenborough.

Set to air in the Mena region beginning January 10th, The Green Planet will be the first immersive portrayal of an unseen, inter-connected world, full of remarkable new behaviour, emotional stories, and surprising heroes in the plant world. This is Planet Earth from the perspective of plants.

Commenting on the announcement, Sir David Attenborough said, "This is a wonderful opportunity to explore a neglected yet truly remarkable part of the natural world. Once again, the innovative approach of the BBC NHU and ground-breaking technology will reveal new and surprising wonders to the audiences."

Mike Gunton, Executive Producer of The Green Planet, said, "This series will take viewers into a world beyond their imagination - see things no eye has ever seen. The world of plants is a mind-blowing parallel universe; one that we can now bring to life using a whole range of exciting new camera technology. This is Planet Earth for plants!"

Across the series, David will travel to the USA, Costa Rica, Croatia, and northern Europe, from deserts to mountains, from rainforests to the frozen north, to find new stories and a fresh understanding of how plants live their lives. He will meet the largest living things that have ever existed; trees that care for each



other; and plants that breed so fast they could cover the planet in a matter of months.

He will find time-travellers - seeds that can outlive civilisations, and plants that remain unchanged for decades. He will examine our relationship with plants, past, present, and future, and reveal how all animal life, ourselves included, is dependent on plants.

Using brand new technological advances and over two decades of discoveries, the show will take the viewer on a journey into a magical world. Audiences will discover that plants are as aggressive, competitive, and dramatic as animals - locked in desperate battles for food, for light, to reproduce and to scatter their young. They are social - they communicate with each other, they care for their young, they help their weak and injured. They can plan, they can count, they can remember.

Plants are the stars of this series but there will also be box-

office animals - plants are the arch-manipulators of the natural world. They bend the actions and lives of animals, including ourselves, to their ends.

The series uses new developments in robotics, moving time-lapse, super-detail thermal cameras, deep focus 'frame-stacking' and ultra-high-speed to travel beyond the power of the human eye and make visible the amazing, hidden life of the green planet.

The Green Planet (w/t) a 5x60' series for BBC Earth and PBS, is made by BBC Studios Natural History Unit. The Executive Producer is Mike Gunton. It was commissioned by Charlotte Moore, Director, BBC Content. For PBS the series is overseen by Bill Gardner, Vice President, Programming and Development. It was co-produced by ZDF and The Open University.

The Green Planet (5 x 60) premieres on beIN on Monday 10 of January at 21:00.

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ROUND-UP

All-new 2022 Chevrolet Groove makes its debut in Oman market

The all-new 2022-edition of the compact SUV, bristling with innovative technologies and infotainment features, has been designed keeping in mind the tech-savvy millennial generation of the Middle East

MUSCAT: Chevrolet Groove, the sporty and youthful new offering from General Motors, made its debut in the Omani market after garnering spectacular reviews following its launch in key markets across the world.

The all-new 2022-edition of the compact SUV, bristling with innovative technologies and infotainment features, has been designed keeping in mind the tech-savvy millennial generation of the Middle East. And with prices starting at OMR 6,889 (inclusive of VAT),

the superbly sculpted and engineered Groove is also one of the most affordable SUVs in its class and segment.

Every facet of Chevrolet Groove is inspired by Chevrolet's design ethos. Stunning in style, the trendy SUV exudes a combination of lean, muscular and athletic sportiness whether parked or in motion. This striking personality is also reflected in its signature horizontal three-line grille emblazoned with the Chevrolet bowtie and flanked by ultra-thin headlamps.



Neat and nimble, the Chevrolet Groove is powered by a 1.5L engine mated with a continuously variable transmission (CVT) to ensure a smooth and immaculate performance on the road.

With excellent fuel efficiency and fun-to-drive characteristics, the sporty crossover delivers on

looks, performance and reliability – the enduring hallmarks of GM's Chevrolet SUV range.

Safety features like 4 airbags and Technology features come standard across all variants in the Groove line-up from the base trim upwards. For ease of driving and manoeuvrability, there is a reverse

camera and sensors, while a multi-functional steering wheel ensures all controls are easily accessible from Cruise Control. Stability and Traction Control also ensures the driver remains in control, no matter the road conditions.

A spacious and delightfully designed cabin can seat up to five

people. Taking centre-stage in the cabin is an 8-inch screen packed with the latest Chevrolet infotainment capabilities with Apple Carplay and Android auto, including phone projection, USB ports, and up to six speakers. A panoramic sunroof in the Premier trim helps bring a bit of the outside world into the comfortable cabin.

"We are excited about the introduction of the all-new Chevrolet Groove here in the Sultanate of Oman, given the huge buzz it has generated elsewhere in the Middle East and the wider world. Its youthful appeal and trendy features, not to mention its immensely affordable price tag, position it well to be a bestseller in its segment in the Omani market," said Sudhir M., CEO – OTE Group, exclusive distributors of Chevrolet in the Sultanate of Oman.

Available in four distinct colour options - Metal Red, Candy White, Aurora Silver and European Blue - the Chevrolet Groove is on display at OTE showrooms across the country.

SPONSORSHIP

Design Group Engineering Consultants to conduct FIDE Rated International Chess tournament

MUSCAT: Design Group Engineering Consultants, Muscat is all set to sponsor and conduct a FIDE Rated International Chess Tournament from 26 to 29 January 2022 at the Mall of Oman Bausher.

The tournament is being held under the auspices of the Oman Chess Committee led by Ahmed Darwish Al Bulushi, the Chairman. Musallam Salim Al Wadhahi will be the Chief Arbiter. A passionate chess lover and trainer from India, V.U. Divakar will be the Tournament Director.

This tournament is seeing the light with the initiative of several parents of young chess players. Prominent among them are Dr Raj Mohan, Dinesh Sawlani, Raghavesh Dhandani,



pani, Priyanka Bansal, Pankaj Goel, Karthikeyan Jaya Chandran, Ashwini Katti and V.U. Divakar

The Managing Director of Design Group, the sponsor of the first of its kind event in Oman, released the brochure while sharing the above details. Several players from Oman, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Jamaica, UAE, Bahrain,

and Qatar are expected to participate. 15 cash prizes and age category medals will be distributed.

Omani players are allocated age category prizes. Damodar opined that Omani children are now getting quite competitive - thanks to the unceasing efforts being put in by the Oman Chess Committee. It is to this end that the tournament

is being sponsored by the Design Group. This is going to be the beginning of a great chapter of cooperation between Oman and the expat community in the field of chess.

Interested players may contact the following WhatsApp no. for details: +968 71549460, +968 93529493, +968 99466340, +968 92980154

SEMI-FINAL

Nama Group picks selected projects of 6th edition of Wiyakum

MUSCAT: Nama Group has announced the selected projects for the sixth edition of Wiyakum, the volunteering initiative empowered by the group for the employees of electricity and water sectors in Oman. Nama Group is willing to empower the selected projects to reach the implementation phase.

Wiyakum Initiative is one of many projects driven by the sustainability programs and policy aims at promoting the volunteering culture among its employees and incorporating their initiatives with society.

The sixth edition of Wiyakum

has witnessed participation in 32 volunteering projects, where eight projects have been qualified for the semi final phase.

The qualified projects in this phase will be assessed based on key evaluation areas such as budgeting and performance, creativity and presentation, target audiences and project objectives, project marketing and communication plan, project implementation and sustainability aspects.

The main areas of the projects should meet the group's sustainability pillars which are economic, social and environmental.

ESHRAQA'S QUDURAT PROGRAMME

Distribution of sewing machines promotes women empowerment

MUSCAT: In line with its objectives and continuous support to making women financially independent, Eshraqa, the social development arm of Khimji Ramdas recently distributed sewing machines to three Omani Women's Associations in the wilayats of Amerat, Samail and Alwabi. This is one of the many projects under Qudurat, which is Eshraqa's Omani Women Empowerment Initiative.

For these women, life has changed dramatically after they started a new life engaged in sewing and made themselves self-reliant. The women have also been trained in tailoring techniques at a workshop by the respective Women's Association.

Stressing the need for a better ecosystem for women empowerment, Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas, said that only skill development will help women to become economically independent. "And we, at Eshraqa are ever-ready to render all the required support to women on their education, healthcare, community well-being and training."

The initiative has tapped the potential the women of these three wilayats have when they receive the right training and mentoring. Eshraqa's sewing machines project

has been a boon to these women.

Moza bint Abdullah Al Kharusi, the head of the Omani Women Association in Wilayat Alwabi, was all praise for the Qudurat initiative when she commented: "Sewing paves the way for learning and empowerment. And KR's social activities will go a long way in making the women stand on their own."

Sheikha bint Salim Al Khali, the head of the Omani Women's Association in wilayat Amerat, was being candid when she said, "Entrepreneurial instinct and activity among Omani women at the grassroots are exemplary."

"We act as facilitators. Women empowerment is a key component of socio-economic development in the world, and the role played by Eshraqa on this front deserves to be replicated in many other pockets of Oman."

Rabaa bint Saif Al- Jabri, the Head of Omani Women Association in the wilayat of Samail said that Eshraqa's community initiatives empower women to chase their dreams and create productive livelihood opportunities for the unemployed women."

Eshraqa strives to work with local organisations to support the development of women in a bid to engage in productive activity that will generate income for their sustenance



and promote their empowerment.

These sewing machines were selected by the associations themselves and can be used for various types of embroidery and tailoring.

Eshraqa, the CSR Arm of KR

Group in the Sultanate, strives to improve the lives of the local community through a gamut of initiatives. As part of its commitment to empowering the people of Oman by providing access where

they can realise their full potential, the Khimji Ramdas Group has built collaborations with public, societal and, educational organisations on a not-for-profit basis, to help develop the Omani com-

munity at large, inspire the Omani youth and empower Omani women in particular. These community efforts have transformed the lives and landscapes in many villages across Oman.

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