

He also underscored the significance of investment and diversification of financial resources. He noted that a department at the Ministry to be entrusted with investment will assist the cause of clubs. -DNA



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12.24pm
Asr.....3:32pm
Maghrib.....5:54pm
Isha.....7:07pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5.31am

Drive for reusable bags held in 2 governorates

As part of the campaigns, the Environment Authority distributed reusable bags to customers in department stores, shops, and pedestrians on streets



REUSABLE BAGS: The environment-friendly and multi-use bags distribution campaigns were carried out in the Governorate of Musandam.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To make people aware of the benefits of reusable bags and the harm single use plastic bags do to nature, Oman's Environment Authority held awareness campaigns in two governorates.

In the governorates of Musandam and North Al Batinah, the government body distributed reusable bags to customers in department stores, shops, and pedestrians on the street.

"As part of the environment-friendly and multi-use bags distribution campaign carried out in the Governorate of Musandam, the community was educated about the decision to ban single-consumption plastic shopping bags and the dangers of plastic bags on the environment with an explanation of safe and environmentally friendly alternatives," the Environment Authority said in a statement.

While in Oman's northern enclave, members of the EA also planted trees at the Assad Park in Dibba, using saplings donated by Ali bin Saeed Al Shehhi, the owner of the Planet Dibba Nursery.



TREE PLANTATION: Members of the EA also planted trees at the Assad Park in Dibba, using saplings donated by Ali bin Saeed Al Shehhi, the owner of the Planet Dibba Nursery. - Credit

ed by Ali bin Saeed Al Shehhi, the owner of the Planet Dibba Nursery.

Regarding its efforts in North

Batinah, the organisation said these were also "a part of the campaign to distribute environmentally friendly and multi-use bags

to market and shop goers, in order to encourage the consumer to use safe and environmentally friendly alternatives.

Shopping bags

Adding to this, City Centre Sohar, which operates out of the capital of the governorate, said, "We were happy to host the Environment Authority. They distributed reusable shopping bags to our customers to promote sustainable development in Oman. This supports our efforts to be one of the most sustainable malls brands in the region."

The efforts in these two governorates come just days after similar initiatives in Muscat, South Al Batinah, and Ad Dakhiliyah, where as part of the body's awareness campaigns, multi-use bags and information on the harmful effects of plastics were provided to people in malls in these areas. Single-use plastic bags have been banned in Oman since January 1, 2021, in keeping with Royal Decree No. 23/2020.

MEETINGS



Sayyid Asa'ad bids farewell to ambassadors

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received separately in his office Eid Mohammed Al Thaqafi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to the Sultanate, and Manabile Shogole, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the Sultanate at the end of their tour of duty.

The two ambassadors expressed their sincere thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to them while carrying out their duty in the Sultanate from

His Majesty, the Government and the Omani people, which enabled them to perform their assignments.

They also wished His Majesty a good health, happiness and a long life, and the Sultanate further progress and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

Sayyid Asa'ad expressed his utmost thanks to the two ambassadors' efforts exerted in serving the relations between the Sultanate and their countries. He wished the two ambassadors continuous success, and peoples of their countries progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by the Secretary General and the two advisers at Sayyid Asa'ad's Office. -ONA

COMMENTARY



Sarweshwar Biyani

With a population of 1.3 billion people, the way India has controlled the COVID-19 pandemic is truly appreciable.

Now, when the world has started using vaccine to get rid of coronavirus, question arises what should India do to promote itself and bring the economy back on tracks.

The biggest task before opening the door post-COVID era is to vaccinate each Indian citizen amidst the challenges viz. logistic, storage of vaccines at designated temperature, digital registration of beneficiaries and monitoring post vaccination health issues. We hope that India would be able to vaccinate its people effectively.

Now, India should start striving for economic growth again. PM Modi is already geared up

for the same. During the pandemic the government provided stimulus packages which helped the Indian economy to come on recovery path in record time.

On August 15, 2021, India will enter into the 75th year of independence which would be the beginning of post-COVID era also. This will be the starting of year-long celebration. As a part of celebration, India will showcase its development, governance, technology reforms, progress and policy by expediting many ongoing infrastructure projects to be completed on or before August 15, 2022. This great dedication of Modi Government will help India to achieve 5 trillion-dollar economy by 2024-25 as targeted.

Despite numerous challenges during the pandemic, Invest India, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India has been declared winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award on December 7, 2020. During April 2020 to September 2020, India received FDI worth US\$ 30 billion with 15% growth. This builds confidence that the Indian economy will bounce back. Also, this encourages that post-COVID India will continue to attract good amount of FDI considering the world's fastest growing economy, largest youth population in the

world, efforts towards National Infrastructure Pipeline [NIP] initiative, consistent improvement in ease of doing business ranking, from 142nd (2014) to 63rd (2019). According to the IMF, India will remain one of the fastest-growing economies in the world despite the pandemic. IMF projects a growth of 8.8% for India in 2021.

India will have to take many bold actions quickly as this is the appropriate time to convert this adverse economic situation into an opportunity. Encouraging manufacturing sector should be the key for growth. This sector should generate many more jobs. Government should support this sector by bringing more products under production-linked incentive schemes to bring down the cost of production. It should also introduce incentive scheme which promote manufacturing of Global Standard Products. India should speed up execution of NIP. Businesses in India will have to develop and learn advanced complex technologies to increase the productivity and cost optimisation. Government should ensure appropriate flow of technology across the borders. Expanding base of education, encouraging research for competitiveness and keeping markets open are must for India in the long run. Also, for Im-

aginative economy, India must take advantage of its democratic principles, diversified thoughts and innovative ideas. All these efforts along with export-oriented policies will increase India's global competitiveness and export.

Oman and India had been a strategic partner of each other for decades. Both are linked by geography, history and culture and share great amount of bilateral relationship in trade. During 2019-20, bilateral trade was US\$ 5.93 billion which proves both countries contribute to each other in economic and social development. Both countries have certain potential areas to enhance bilateral trade considering proximity, connectivity and age-long relationship. Both governments should enhance bilateral dialogues to tap these untapped potentials and increase transparency for better business climate to investors, develop trade policies favourable to both and promote the use of International Standards at home to integrate companies into global value chains. Both countries should expedite the negotiation and conclude Free Trade Agreement at the earliest.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Oman, 4,100 Indian businesses are present in Oman with an estimated investment of over US\$

7.5 billion. Oman also invests in India, some of these are Oman-India Joint Investment Fund, Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd. Oman should promote aggressively its natural beauty as "Film Tourism" by providing facilities like special visa, publishing a full guide and map of Oman with prominent shooting location etc. The appearance of a tourist place in a movie provides tourism opportunities. Outside the GCC, Oman has been receiving the highest number of tourists from India with persistent increase since 2011, from 163,451 [2011] to 436,000 [2019]. Oman is becoming favourite spot for Indian Destination Weddings. Oman has great potential of "Nature Based Tourism [NBT]". Government should put efforts and direction to "Discover, Develop and Present to World" for promotion of NBT. Remittances from Indians residing in Oman is among the top 10 foreign sources of revenues for India.

Both countries have similar pluralistic society. Modi government strongly believes and encourages pluralism. Oman-India Friendship Association was established during the visit of V Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs of India. He said: "The historically close bilateral relations between Oman and India expanded into a vibrant, multi-level strategic

partnership, which is based on shared values and mutual trust." Strengthening relationship between both the countries and partnership in priority areas identified for Oman Vision 2040 is vital for comprehensive growth of Oman and India.

India's bilateral trade with five other GCC countries was US\$ 115 billion during 2019 - 20. Indian Government should frequently review bilateral relationship to enhance economic collaborations with these countries. These countries have tremendous economic potentials for India to explore and tap. All the GCC countries are striving for economic diversification and India can help them to achieve the same by providing its expertise and technical know-how which will strengthen the bilateral trade between these countries. Also, it will surge Indian investment in these countries and vice versa.

Indian economy is recovering faster than expected, according to global rating agency S&P. This is the appropriate time for the Modi government to take aggressive steps and push economic growth forward.

The writer CA. Sarweshwar Biyani is the Vice President - Finance and Accounts, SV Pittie Sohar Textiles (FZC) SAOC. Views expressed above are solely his own.



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MINISTRY OF LABOUR



< FROM A1 Job seekers will be given right training

“There are many types of job seekers whose capabilities differ from each other, because they have varying skill sets and degrees,” he said. “There are certain specialised jobs that cannot be done through training alone, but conversely, there are also non-specialised jobs that require training. The training processes associated with different jobs also vary in terms of their time scale and the programmes taught.”

Ba’owain added, “The National Centre for Employment and the National Training Centre will help hone the skills of job seekers. Although we do target a certain number of jobs every that need to be made local, job seekers must also cooperate with us if they are to get work.” With Oman feeling the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, much like several other countries in the world, the Ministry of Labour has formed a team to look into how this has affected people’s livelihoods in the country, and find solutions to minimise its effects.

“The COVID pandemic came after a period of economic stagnation that lasted for four or five years, and its impact is equal to what we felt during these years,” he admitted. “The economic downturn caused by the coronavirus has not just created major problems in terms of generating employment, but also in terms of laying people off. The ministry is trying to not lay off the national workforce, although we have about 300 companies who together employ about 70,000 workers demanding the dismissal and demobilisation of Omanis.

“The ministry has, as much as is possible, prevented this from happening, as we took decisions that contributed to flexibility in retaining employees,” said Ba’owain. “We try to assign this responsibility to authorities specialised in this area, as they are more knowledgeable about employee specialisations and skills. I would like to say, however, that the Omani worker is not a burden on any institution, but can become a real resource if he is invested in properly. He has the potential to achieve a return far greater than the salary he draws.”

The Minister of Labour also clarified the reasons behind some of the recent decisions the government had taken to benefit Omani employees in the country.

“There had been concerns about the minimum wage being provided to employees, but the decision to no longer link this to qualifications was an action meant to regulate the market,

which is based on the supply and demand of workers and opportunities,” he said. “The private sector is a large market, and provides opportunities for workers to steadily increase their salary levels. No longer linking qualifications to salaries aims to remove existing restrictions on jobseekers.”

Ba’owain also said that money from Oman’s pension funds had been invested into projects, so that the returns could be used to provide equal benefits to employees in the country’s private and public sectors.

“A person’s contribution to the company must be measured in terms of the productivity and work done by him,” explained the minister. “Unifying the benefits in terms of salaries, vacations and working hours will help motivate workers more, and these will be determined in the upcoming labour and civil service laws. These will be completed by the end of March or early April, and will create a healthy environment that rewards productivity and instills a culture of productive work,” he said. “Among other things the government is working on are temporary contracts for short-term or part-time work, which will enable people to work more if they wish to. All employee evaluations must be based on measuring their performances. We hope to solve the issues around job seekers in the next two or three years, but it is important that they too look for work seriously and improve their skills and experiences where necessary if they are to be employed,” Ba’owain explained.

Welcoming the directions communicated through the minister’s interview, economists said that this would have a positive impact in the country’s development.

“Developing the country’s human resources will help achieve economic diversification and help reduce its dependence on petroleum exports, leading to resilience for the economy,” said Dr Syed Mujahid, head of the Department of Economics and Finance at the College of Economics and Political Science at Sultan Qaboos University.”

“Companies in Oman and other GCC countries are pursuing policies of Omanisation and other nationalisation programmes, so that their locals can get gainful jobs,” said Ramanuj Venkatesh, an analyst in the country. “The private sector provides many opportunities for locals to learn and improve their skill sets as well as promote growth and development.”

Sri Lanka opens doors to tourists once again



BACK ON TRACK: Up to 2,500 tourists will be allowed into Sri Lanka each day. -Supplied photo



Sri Lanka had stopped all leisure travel for 10 months due to the coronavirus pandemic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People from Oman looking to spend a holiday in Sri Lanka can now do so, after the island country began once again welcoming tourists. Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, Sri Lanka had stopped all leisure travel to the country for a period of 10 months, and measures have been put into effect to test visitors for the disease.

Up to 2,500 tourists will be allowed into Sri Lanka each day. While applying for a tourist visa online, travellers now have to pay \$40 (OMR15.5) per PCR test for up to three swab tests, depending on

the length of stay, and \$12 (OMR5) for mandatory COVID-19 insurance of up to US\$50,000, valid for one month. “Another requirement is an advance booking at one or more of 52 properties certified as Level 1 hotels under the Sri Lankan government’s Safe and Secure scheme,” said Ameer Ajwad, the ambassador of Sri Lanka to Oman. “These lodgings will be used exclusively by foreign travellers during the first 14 days of their visit. All Level 1 hotels are located outside Colombo, and include properties run by leading hospitality brands.”

Incoming travellers must then prove that they are clear of the virus in a pre-departure PCR test taken up to 96 hours before their flight, and submit a health declaration form before boarding or upon arrival in Sri Lanka.

From the airport, each group of visitors will be whisked directly to their hotels for an on-arrival PCR test prior to checking in. A second PCR test will be conducted on tourists between the fifth and seventh day. Those staying longer



Ameer Ajwad, ambassador of Sri Lanka to Oman.

will be able to interact with the local community and move to any accommodation of their choice, although use of public transportation is still discouraged. More information is available at www.srilanka.travel/helloagain

“The decision to allow foreign tourists to Sri Lanka has already been made, and has been active since the 20th of this month,” said Ajwad. “Oman Air was actually the first flight to bring tourists into the country after this announcement was made public. WY 371 landed in Sri Lanka the day after this decision came into effect. Currently, passengers from Oman can only fly here on Oman Air, however. We do have some plans under discussion with SalamAir. Sri Lankan Airlines, is currently only being used for repatriation flights for our citizens from all around the world, but we hope to soon restart regular flights to Oman with our national airline as well.”

Tourists from the UK are currently not allowed to travel to Sri Lanka, as a precaution against the new strain of the virus.

PANDEMIC

< FROM A1 Focus on prevention

Locally, the number of COVID-19 cases from the beginning of the pandemic to date has reached more than 133,044 confirmed cases of which 10,685 cases needed admission. 1,521 COVID-19 related deaths were registered.

The minister stressed that “the solutions for the next stage

are limited to strengthening social and institutional preventive measures (such as physical distancing, wearing masks and hand hygiene) in order to live safely with the pandemic until the vaccination of target groups in the Sultanate is completed according to the established plan.”



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AT HER PEAK: HOW MENTAL STRENGTH HELPED NADHIRA AL HARTHY SCALE AMA DABLAM



NADHIRA AL HARTHY experienced a whirlwind of emotions during her recent climb up Mount Ama Dablam, but knew that much like the mountain she was scaling, she needed to be stoic and steady. At 6,812 feet, the mountain is one of Nepal's most challenging peaks, and also required her to display all of the qualities considered human: determination, courage, and the desire to not back down from a challenge. Take a step wrong, lose control of her emotions, particularly when victory lay so near, and Nadhira was likely to trigger an avalanche of dangerous consequences for herself and her fellow climbers.

"When I was going up to the top, I felt numb, my body only moved towards what my mind dictated to it and it was obedient because I had trained well two days earlier," she admits. "I was falling asleep with each step I took towards the top. My body was crying out for sleep from the intensity of exhaustion, but I was surprised by the strength of what my mind could control: we needed to control everything, until we ascended together," recalls Nadhira.

The only Omani among a team of six, Nadhira – who made history by becoming the first woman from the Sultanate to scale Mount Everest in 2019 – and her fellow mountaineers could feel the call of the peak increase with intensity as they edged ever closer to it. It was an emotion that was most strongly felt when they halted at their camp for the night to rest, recover, and forge ahead in the morning.

The tests they faced, ergo, were not just punishing on a physical level, but attempted to mentally manipulate them as well.

"We may not have lacked anything from the necessities of daily life during our stay at the Mount Ama Dablam camp, at the same time, you feel as if nothing within you is complete," she says. "Neither the taste of water, nor sleep, taking a walk, or reading makes you feel comfortable or at ease. You face conflicting emotions throughout the day, making you choose between preparation for the next day and waiting for it to come. Anticipation, enthusiasm, fear and longing, nothing will keep you steadfast here except your willpower to achieve your goal, you must be calm and coherent mentally, and preserve your strength and physical energy," she goes on to add. "Time passes slowly and sometimes frightens you, and the cold makes everything uncomfortable. Drinking boiling water makes you want to avoid it, and you spend your time living in a tent in which you cannot stand upright.

Ahead of the climb to Mount Ama Dablam, Nadhira and co. spent eight days training for the pitfalls they could experience on the way up and during their descent. Even if they did plan for the technical challenges and tricky terrain, only experience, preparation, and a large portion of luck would save from the sudden, unexpected obstacles they could face up there. "These days were dedicated to training in the methods of climbing that we were to encounter above us," she recalls. "This is because Mount Ama Dablam is dangerous and difficult to climb and there are many techniques



that we must learn in advance.

Nadhira adds: "As part of the climbing programme, we would first go up to the first base camp of the mountain, and then go down to the main camp as an exercise for our bodies to accept the temperature and air pressure found at altitudes of more than 1,000 metres above where we were camped. However, the winds were very strong and we had to descend after climbing 800 metres in the face of the cold, the intensity of the winds, and the effects of high altitude."

Rare days off during their acclimatisation period saw the group organise and maintain their equipment, and explore the surrounding areas to help them get used to the climate and terrain. Among their last stops on the way to Ama Dablam was the village of Fortchi, a picturesque, postcard-perfect hamlet perched nearly 4,000 metres above sea level. The villagers there make a living from agriculture and raising yaks. As the atmosphere thinned out en route to the mountain, so did the number of people on the roads. "From the village of Fortchi to the main camp, the road steadily became devoid of signs of life, because of the altitude near the mountains. We arrived at the camp, praise be to God, after six hours' walking, with the temperature at -10 degrees Celsius. Our climbing phase began soon afterwards."

At Fortchi is a mountaineering school set up by the famous American outdoorsman Conrad Anker, which offers education to local climbers, and serves as a sobering reminder of all those who've died while trying to climb up to the ceiling of our planet. She was able to explain in great detail the mental and physical tests, the yearning to return to the comforts of her home and her warm bed, but she knew that to turn back would be to give up on a challenge she'd come so far to overcome. Had Nadhira retreated the way she had come, her failure would gnaw at her, only increasing in intensity with each passing day.

"Resting in a sleeping bag everyday makes you want to return to your comfort zone, but also what makes you endure all of that and more, is to remind your heart and mind that all of these are obstacles and simple challenges in front of achieving your greatest goal," says Nadhira. "This is when you tell yourself and your mind to be steadfast in front of the challenge, to be strong, and not give up on achieving your goals."

–gautam@timesofoman.com





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AUSTRALIA

His Majesty sends cable

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes of good health and happiness to the Governor-General of Australia, and the friendly Australian people further progress and prosperity.

— ONA

DECREE

<FROM A1 Royal Decree grants military promotions

Article (4) stipulates that the National Security Council shall have a Secretary-General to be appointed by a Royal decree.

Article (5) states that the National Security Council shall be assisted by a Secretariat General that reports to the Royal Office and a number of committees reporting to the council.

It also states the Minister of Royal Office, Head of the Office of the Supreme Commander, shall issue a decision to regulate the functions of the Secretariat General and specialisations of the Secretary-General, besides the formation of the committees and determination of their specialisations.

Article (6) cancels Royal Decree No. 63/2003 on the National Security Council, as well as all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (7) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. 14/2021 on Military Promotions and Appointments.

Article (1) promotes Brigadier Nasser Saleh Saud Al Ma'awali to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Secretary General of the National Security Council in the Royal Office.

Article (2) promotes Brigadier Sulaiman Khalid Sulaiman Al Zakwani to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Secretary General of the Military Affairs in the Royal Office.

Article (3) promotes Brigadier Salim Ali Badr Al Hosni to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman.

Article (4) promotes Brigadier Mussalam Mohammed Taman Ja'abob to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Commander of the Sultan's Special Force.

Article (5) appoints Major General Abdullah Ali Hamad Al

Harthy as Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Operations.

Article (6) promotes Brigadier Khalifa Ali Nasser Al Siyabi to the rank of Major General and appoints him as Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

Article (7) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue. — ONA

SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES BANGLADESH ENVOY

His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik bin Taimour Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs received in his office at Al Murtafaa Camp on Monday Mizanur Rahman, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Sultanate. The two sides exchanged cordial conversation and reviewed the relations between the two friendly countries. They also discussed matters of common concern. — ONA



GCC SPECIALISTS

SAI takes part in meet to fight graft

MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution (SAI) on Monday took part in the 18th meeting of the GCC specialists committee for agencies responsible for integrity promotion and fighting corruption.

The meeting, held via video conference, discussed two main themes.

The first one highlighted the review of the draft guiding system (Law) for the protection of public fund in the GCC region and its chapters such as; auditing public property, interim measures, crimes and punishments. The meeting also focused on discussing member states' views relevant to the proposed Law and suggesting recommendations where appropriate. — ONA

RIYADA CARD HOLDERS

Riyada outlines incentives for small and medium enterprises

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada) has issued a detailed statement on incentives offered to owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with a view to writing off SME licence fees.

The incentives target SMEs operating in the sectors of manufacturing industries, agriculture and fisheries, services, logistics and related activities, according to the Invest-Easy portal rating specified by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion.

The incentives are a one-activity, one-time offer to Riyada card holders.

It is a condition (for exemption from government licence fees for the target activities) that the licences be issued for the first time. It is not allowed to sell, transfer or modify the commercial register of the beneficiary SME for a period of three years, except in the case of transfer of the commercial register to a full-time citizen who is a holder of the Riyada card or in the case of cancellation of the establishment by the cancellation of its commercial register.

According to this statement, the beneficiaries are exempt from payment of all government licence fees.

Holders of Riyada cards are also exempt from payment of labour licence fees for new activities specified in the sectors covered by the incentives, towards a total of 5 workers and for a single activity. The exemption does not cover payment of fees for renewal of existing government licenses across all sectors. — ONA



The beneficiaries are exempt from payment of all government licence fees. — File picture

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US COVID-19 cases surpass 25 million

Since the beginning of 2021, US caseload has increased by five million in just 23 days

NEW YORK: The total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States topped 25 million on Sunday, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

US COVID-19 case count rose to 25,003,695, with a total of 417,538 deaths, as of 10:22 a.m. local time (1522 GMT), according to the CSSE tally.

California reported the largest number of cases among the states, standing at 3,147,735. Texas confirmed 2,243,009 cases, followed by Florida with 1,639,914 cases, New York with 1,323,312 cases, and Illinois with more than 1 million cases.

Other states with over 600,000 cases include Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, Tennessee, New Jersey and Indiana, the CSSE data showed.

The United States remains the nation worst hit by the pandemic, with the world's most cases and deaths, making up more than 25 percent of the global caseload and nearly 20 percent of the global deaths.

U.S. COVID-19 cases reached 10 million on November 9, 2020, and the number doubled on January 1, 2021. Since the beginning of 2021, US caseload has increased by 5 million in just 23 days.



STEADY RISE IN CASES: President Joe Biden will renew the COVID-19 travel ban on most non-US citizens who have recently been in the European Union, the UK, and Brazil, a White House official said.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 195 cases caused by variants from more than 20 states as of Friday.

The agency warned the cases identified do not represent the total number of cases associated with the variants that may be circulating in the United States.

A national ensemble forecast updated Wednesday by the CDC predicted a total of 465,000 to 508,000 coronavirus deaths in the United States by February 13.

Biden set to reimpose US travel ban

US President Joe Biden will renew the COVID-19 travel ban on most non-US citizens who have recently been in the European Union, the UK, and Brazil, a senior White House official said on Sunday.

The ban will come into effect on Monday and will be extended to travelers who have been to South Africa, amid warnings that a new, more transmissible coronavirus variant was spreading in the US, the official said.

Last week, Biden tightened mask-wearing rules and ordered mandatory quarantine for people flying into the United States.

Former President Donald Trump had announced in the last days of his term that travel restrictions from much of Europe and Brazil would be lifted.

But the Biden administration said it would reverse the order.

"We're in a national emergency. It's time we treated it like one," Biden said on Thursday.

-ANI/DW



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HUSHAN MINE

Rescuers find nine workers dead in Chinese mine explosion



BEIJING: Nine Chinese miners who have been trapped underground for more than two weeks have been confirmed dead, authorities said on Monday.

It comes after Sunday's rescue of 11 gold mine workers who were part of a group of 22 trapped after an explosion at the Hushan mine in China's eastern Shandong province on January 10.

"From Sunday afternoon to this afternoon, rescue workers have not stopped searching, and found a further nine trapped miners who unfortunately all died," the mayor of Yantai city, Chen Fei, told journalists on Monday.

Another miner was found dead on Thursday, he said, leaving

one more unaccounted for. "It is possible that the miner could survive trapped for 15 days, but we don't know where he is located," Beijing journalist Fabian Kretschmer told DW. "So the chances of finding him are slim."

On Thursday, officials said it could take another two weeks to clear "severe blockages" before they could drill shafts to reach the remaining men.

But rescuers cleared an air ventilation shaft on Sunday and were able to free them earlier than expected.

Authorities have detained the mine's managers because they waited more than a day to report the explosion. DW



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Jurgen Klopp vows to get Liverpool's strikers firing again

Klopp's remark came as Liverpool bowed out of the FA Cup in the fourth round after losing to Manchester United 3-2

MANCHESTER: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has said that he will get his forwards (Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, Robert Firmino) firing on all cylinders in the upcoming matches.

Klopp's remark came as Liverpool bowed out of the FA Cup in the fourth round after losing to Manchester United 3-2. In the match, both goals for Liverpool were registered by Salah, but in the end, Bruno Fernandes' stunning free-kick tilted the match in favour of United. Liverpool has registered just one win from their last seven games across all competitions, and the side has also seen a lack of goals in their last few matches.

"I don't want to make that every week now. I didn't see any confi-



FA CUP: Liverpool has registered just one win from their last seven games across all competitions.

dence problems against United. But what we said is when you don't score for a while it's not good for the confidence, obviously. The best strikers in the world can tell you they all had moments when they didn't score with each chance. But it's all about how you deal with it. We are on it, believe me, and we will sort that," Goal.com quoted Klopp as saying.

Liverpool will now be seen in action against Tottenham on Thursday in the Premier League. Klopp has said that his side will

soon be back, firing and the trademark confidence would be there for everyone to see.

"There's no doubt about my trust. But trust doesn't mean we are not critical of ourselves, it's not that I say, 'You did everything right in the last few years so now I don't care if you made some mistakes.' That's not like this. We are really in the situation 100 per cent. But you don't have to worry about us, as a group we are really together. We know it," said Klopp. "If I have a problem, we have a

problem. If one player has a problem, we have a problem. That's all our problem at the moment so we have to sort it together and that's what we will do. Nobody thinks about the very good things that happened in the last few years -- nobody. We are just in this moment and try to win football games again. That's all," he added.

Defending champions Liverpool are currently at the fourth spot in Premier League standings, six points behind table-toppers Manchester United. **ANI**

FA CUP



Lindelof credits Man United's patience for win against Liverpool

MANCHESTER: After a win over Liverpool, Manchester United's Victor Lindelof said the side remains very calm and looks to be patient on the pitch as they know that they are going to get chances to score. Manchester United beat Liverpool 3-2 in the FA Cup here on Sunday.

"We have belief and even if we concede a goal we are very calm and we just try to be patient with the ball because we know we are going to get chances to score," the club's official website quoted Lindelof as saying.

"That is what happened, we conceded a goal but then we kept on going and we won. It was a hard game. We were playing against a tough opponent, but it was very nice to win and go through to the next round, so

I am very happy," he added.

During the match, Liverpool's Mohamed Salah opened the scoring in the 18th minute but Mason Greenwood quickly equalised for the home team and Marcus Rashford then handed Manchester United a lead early in the second half.

Salah struck again in the 58th minute, taking the scoreline to 2-2. However, Bruno Fernandes' sublime free-kick 12 minutes from time helped Manchester United progress in the competition.

Praising Greenwood, Lindelof said: "I'm very happy for him [Greenwood]. He is a brilliant young player and for him to get a goal and an assist as well is great for him. Hopefully, he can keep building and he can keep improving." **ANI**

TEST SERIES

England to host New Zealand for two Tests in June

LONDON: England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Monday confirmed that England will start their home international summer with a two-match Test series against New Zealand, commencing from June 2.

Joe Root's team will host number one ranked Test side New Zealand for two Test matches at Lord's (June 2-6) and Edgbaston (June 10-14). England will also play a three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka at Sophia Gardens on June 23 and June 24 and the final T20I will be played at The Ageas Bowl on June 26. These matches will precede the already-announced three-match Royal London Series against Sri Lanka which starts from June 29.

Planning for the England Visually Impaired team's Ashes series against Australia remains subject to COVID-19 assessments, ECB said.

"The prospect of our England Men's team taking on the world's two top-ranked Test nations in New Zealand and India this summer is something for us all to savour," ECB Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, said



in a statement.

England are currently playing a two-match Test series in Sri Lanka. After that, England are set to lock horns with India in four Tests, five T20Is, and three ODIs. The first Test is set to begin in Chennai on February 5.

Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer have been named in England's squad for the first two Tests against India, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Thursday.

Stokes and Archer are currently not a part of England's squad for the ongoing two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, but the duo will return to action after a much-deserved break. Rory Burns has also returned to the squad for Tests against India.

Under the leadership of Joe Root, England will be looking to show a spirited performance to bolster their chances of making it to the finals of the World Test Championship in June. **ANI**

FOOTBALL

Happy with the result but we can still improve, says Flick

GELSENKIRCHEN: Bayern Munich manager Hansi Flick feels there is still room for improvement after the club secured an impressive 4-0 win over Schalke in the Bundesliga.

Also, Bayern Munich's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is now the record holder for the most clean sheets in the Bundesliga. The 34-year-old equaled former Bayern goalkeeper Oliver Kahn's record of 196 games with a clean sheet in the 1-0 win against FC Augsburg on Thursday and picked up his 197th clean sheet with a solid performance against Schalke.

Earlier this month, Bayern Munich suffered a defeat against Borussia Monchengladbach before losing to Holstein Kiel in a penalty shoot-out in the DFB-Pokal. But now the club has made a comeback, securing three consecutive wins and Flick feels it was important to restore stability.

"After two defeats it was important that we got some stability back. We've now kept two clean sheets in a row. Of course I'm happy that we were able to pick up nine points this week. We're happy



with the result today, but we can still do one or two things better, especially how we position ourselves in possession," the club's official website quoted Flick as saying.

"We took advantage of league results around us. We now have a cushion of sorts, but it's still important to approach every game the way we approached the last few games, that we want to perform at 100 percent. We'll take two days off now. It's important to clear our heads. From Wednesday,

we'll then do some intensive preparation ahead of the Hoffenheim game," he added.

During the match, Thomas Muller netted twice while Robert Lewandowski and David Alaba scored one goal each to guide Bayern Munich to a commanding win. With this victory, Bayern Munich have consolidated their top position in the Bundesliga table with 42 points, seven points ahead of the second-placed RB Leipzig. **ANI**

SA SERIES

Starc needs to start swinging the ball to be picked for SA series: Ponting

MELBOURNE: Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting feels pacer Mitchell Starc might not board the plane for South Africa unless he's able to redeem the art of swing bowling in Test cricket again.

Starc picked eight wickets in the first two Tests against India but wasn't able to trouble the visitors' batsmen in the last two games which eventually saw Australia losing at The Gabba to hand the visitors the series 2-1. Ponting said the ball does move around in South Africa and if Starc is able to reclaim the swing he will be more lethal in the series. But with no first-class cricket ahead of the South Africa tour, the former skipper feels Starc will have to impress the coaches at training.

"It all depends on what he does between now and then in the nets, it's as simple as that. We've been talking about how he just didn't



swing the ball. He swung the ball beautifully in the first two Tests but didn't swing it after that," cricket.com.au quoted Ponting as saying.

"That must be a technique thing, whether he was a bit tired or fatigued. But if he can do something to prove to ... the coaches around the squad that he's swinging that new ball, in South Africa the ball does move and we know

how dangerous he is when the ball does swing," he further said.

"But we also know that there might be someone better to play if he's not swinging the ball. It's up to him; if he can get some remedial work done to sort his technique out and he starts swinging the ball in the nets, I'd play him for sure," Ponting explained.

Meanwhile, speedster Jhye Richardson has impressed every-

one with his wicket taking ability in the ongoing Big Bash League (BBL). The pacer, who had recently returned from a shoulder operation, has picked 26 wickets in the showpiece event.

With Starc's form coming under the scanner, Ponting feels Richardson might play against South Africa as he had shown signs of swing bowling on his Test debut in January 2019.

"He's just a quality new-ball bowler. And if there are question marks around Starc and you need someone to swing that new ball, he fits that mould really well. We saw that on his (Test) debut -- he can swing the ball," said Ponting.

Earlier, Australia assistant coach Andrew McDonald said one team will travel to South Africa and the other team will go to New Zealand to play the five-match T20I series, starting from February 22. **ANI**

HEAD COACH

Chelsea sack Frank Lampard, no successor named

LONDON: Chelsea FC on Monday confirmed the sacking of Frank Lampard as the head coach of the side.

The club said that the decision was taken looking at the recent results of the club. Chelsea on Monday progressed to the fifth round of the FA Cup after defeating Luton town 3-1. However, the win did not bring about much change in the thinking of the club's top management. Chelsea has not announced Lampard's successor as of now.

"This has been a very difficult decision, and not one that the owner and the Board have taken lightly. We are grateful to Frank for what he has achieved in his time as the head coach. However, recent results and performances have not met the club's expectations, leaving the club mid-table without any clear path to sustained improve-

ment," Chelsea said in an official statement.

"There can never be a good time to part ways with a club legend such as Frank, but after lengthy deliberation and consideration it was decided a change is needed now to give the Club time to improve performances and results this season," he added.

West Ham

Chelsea has managed to only defeat West Ham of the top 11 clubs this season. The Blues have registered five losses in their last eight games, and speculation was rife about Lampard's future with the club.

The club is currently at the ninth spot in Premier League 2020-21 standings with 29 points from 19 matches. The side will next take on Wolves on Wednesday. **ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by March 2020 reaching \$55.40, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman rose by 26 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$55.14. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX CLOSES FLAT

The MSM index closed at 3,698,499 points, ended flat from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up 0.00 per cent at 533,325 points. Al Hassan Engineer, up 71.43 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 8.02 per cent, was the top loser.

More than 90% of families in Oman have their own houses

Dr Khalfan bin Saeed Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, said during the ministry's first media meeting to address the transformation programme for the year 2020-2021



TRANSFORMATION PLAN: The transformation plan of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning includes creating a work environment that stimulates creativity and innovation, enhancing efficiency and complementarity. - **Supplied picture**

uaili said. "This requires the provision of 911,400 new housing units," he added.

Speaking about the ministry's transformation programme for the year 2020-2021, he indicated that the current status of the sector is represented by a large number of plots, a small and scattered development percentage, high cost and poor service delivery, poor quality urban planning, unplanned urban expansion, and inconsistency between land use and activities, he said.

The transformation plan of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning includes creating a work environment that stimulates creativity and innovation, enhancing efficiency and complementarity, and a quick wins programme that contains 30 initiatives including

the Urban Laboratory.

"These initiatives are represented in the acceleration of the implementation of social housing programmes, the mechanism of taking advantage of ready-made investment sites, speeding up their offering and promotion, finding a solution to expedite the decision on technical surveys and cadastral drawings that require a field visit, expanding the establishment of real estate registry branches, and granting public managers the powers to decide on and terminate pending transactions," he said.

The initiatives also include studying the status of residential land applications, following up on performance, training and speeding up the completion of transactions in the unified service hall in all governorates, improving revenue efficiency and studying raising them.

enue efficiency and studying raising them.

"Establishing a mechanism for urgently deciding on requests for proof and registration of ownership, preparing a guide of powers and a governance framework, and determining sites for model plans in line with the urban strategy in accordance with modern standards," the minister said.

An official from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning also spoke exclusively to *Times of Oman* and said that more than 450 employees of the ministry have left work during 2020 until now, either by submitting their resignations or according to the retirement system."

His Excellency confirmed that upon his appointment as Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, he found that in 2019 the number of requests to the minister's office reached 50,000, ie an average of 150 requests per day. "Now the number of requests that reach the office does not exceed 10 requests," he added.

The reason for the decline in the requests is because His Excellency has formed an internal committee that responds to all these requests, especially the outstanding ones during the COVID-19 period, an official from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning said exclusively to *Times of Oman*.

Applications for residential lands

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning said that the total number

of applications for residential lands totalled 447,612, of which 178,296 were for males. This constitutes 40 per cent of the total requests, and the number of applications for women reached 269,316, which constitutes 60 per cent of the total housing applications registered at the level of Sultanate.

Distributed lands

The ministry added, "The number of lands that were distributed during the past 10 years amounted to 343,692 and the share of women was 268,898, which constitutes 78 per cent of the total number of distributed lands."

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning also confirmed that the construction rate in residential plots during the past 10 years amounted to between 2 per cent to 19 per cent, while the percentage of owned and non-constructed lands in the Governorate of Muscat reached 40 per cent while the percentage of owned and constructed lands in the governorate amounted to 19 per cent.

As for Al Buraimi Governorate, the percentage of owned and constructed lands reached 10.4 per cent, the percentage of owned and constructed lands in Al Dhahira Governorate reached 2.3 per cent, the percentage of owned and constructed lands in Dhofar Governorate amounted to 7 per cent and 13 per cent the percentage of owned and constructed lands in Musandam Governorate.

The Ministry of Housing and

Urban Planning clarified the most important results of the 100-day programme initiatives that more than 8,000 transactions were completed in the Minister's office, 80 per cent of the usufruct database were completed, 7,685 requests from requests for proof and registration of the property were decided upon, 21 per cent of the delayed amounts of the usufruct contracts were collected (OMR3 million), 34 sites for model plans in the various governorates of the Sultanate were identified, 21 workshops for urban strategy and the preparation of an implementation completed plan for the year of 2021.

The most important results of the 100-day programme initiatives are also 53 per cent, the percentage of commitment from the total amounts allocated to housing assistance for the years 2019 and 2020, 80 per cent the percentage of the reduction of mail referred to the office of His Excellency the Minister after granting powers to the Directors General, 421 investment sites ready to be launched, 228 employees who have been trained and qualified on the cadastral technical and cadastral drawings.

"Two branches of the real estate registry were launched in each of Bank Muscat and Bank Dhofar, 7,880 requests of cadastral technical and cadastral drawings were completed, and finally 10-15 per cent, the percentage of reducing unnecessary procedures in the departments of social housing and projects," the minister added.

REPORT

India continues to see strong rebound in Venture Capital investment: KPMG

NEW DELHI: India reported 294 venture capital (VC) deals valued at 3.16 billion dollars in Q4 2020 despite global uncertainty resulting from several ongoing events including the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Q4 edition of KPMG Private Enterprise Venture Pulse report.

It said VC investment in India continues to focus primarily on sectors considered to be beneficiaries of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During Q4 2020, for example, home delivery, marketplace platforms and e-commerce were the hottest areas of investment, attracting the majority of India's funding rounds of 100 million dollars or more, including a 200 million dollar raise by marketplace platform Cars24, a 660 million dollar raise by food delivery company Zomato.

"There have been a number of sectors that have really benefited

from the pandemic here in India," said Nitish Poddar, partner and national leader for private equity at KPMG in India.

Interest in staples delivery - fresh food, groceries and the like - has grown quite significantly in recent months in addition to online retail and gaming. That has driven a lot of investment, he said. "Then there is edtech. It has been an attractive area for VC investors for a couple of years now -- but in 2020,

that interest skyrocketed and so did the investments," said Poddar.

After steadily rising throughout 2019, India saw a record quarter to close off the year. 2020 has been a mixed bag since but ended on a high note in terms of recovered volume, and also thanks to mega-deals saw significant rebounds in VC invested to close the back half of the year.

On a global level, said the report, VC investment remained strong quarter-over-quarter. **-ANI**

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM REPORT

Investment in upskilling can boost global GDP by \$6.5 trillion by 2030

GENEVA: Accelerated investment in upskilling and reskilling of workers can add at least 6.5 trillion dollars to global GDP, create 5.3 million new jobs by 2030 and help develop more inclusive and sustainable economies worldwide, according to a World Economic Forum (WEF) report published on Monday.

The report titled 'Upskilling for Shared Prosperity' and authored in collaboration with PwC finds that accelerated skills enhancement will ensure that people have the experience and skills needed

for the jobs created by the Fourth Industrial Revolution -- boosting global productivity by 3 per cent on average by 2030. The newly created jobs will be those that are complemented and augmented - rather than replaced - by technology.

"Even before COVID-19, the rise of automation and digitisation was transforming global job markets, resulting in the very urgent need for large-scale upskilling and reskilling. Now, this need has become even more important," said Bob Moritz, Global Chairman of PwC. **-ANI**

APPOINTMENT

Bank Nizwa appoints new chairman for its Sharia Supervisory Board

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa in its recent Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) meeting has collectively agreed to appoint Sheikh Dr Mohammad bin Rashid Al Gharbi who has been a member of the Sharia Supervisory Board at Bank Nizwa since July 2012 as SSB's chairman.

Sheikh Al Gharbi retired as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Islamic Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University and is a polished academician with an extensive research portfolio. He has delivered his research on Sharia subjects through numerous academic papers on financial transactions within Islamic jurisprudence. Sheikh Al Gharbi holds several degrees, including a Bachelor's from the Sharia Justice Institute in Oman, a Master's degree from Jordan University and a PhD in the field of Islamic Sciences from Zaytouna University in Tunisia.

Assisting Sheikh Al Ghabri as the SSB's Deputy Chairman is Assistant Professor Dr Aznan Hassan who also holds the position of President at the Association of Sharia Advisers in Islamic Finance (ASAS). Sheikh Aznan was involved in various mergers and acquisitions exercise particularly in Islamic Banking sector, structuring of various Islamic financial products, including banking, capital market and takaful products



in the ASEAN and Mena region.

Additionally, Sheikh Ibrahim bin Nasser Al Sawwafi, who had joined Bank Nizwa as a member of the Sharia Supervisory Board in July 2012, is the third member of the Sharia Supervisory Board. In his capacity, Sheikh Al Sawwafi also serves as the Fatwa Trustee for the Mufti of Oman and a Member of the Committee for Endowments and Zakat at the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs.

Recognised as the only listed fully-fledged and most trusted Islamic bank in Oman, Bank Nizwa remain dedicated to promoting Sharia-compliant banking in the Sultanate. The successful implementation of an Islamic banking model depends on the absolute adherence to Sharia principles and Bank Nizwa takes great pride

in its Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) which is comprised highly-qualified, well-versed and world-renowned Sharia advisers.

Bank Nizwa's Sharia Supervisory Board provide valuable Sharia opinions on the bank's end-to-end activities, review and approve all Bank's policies & procedures, products & processes, legal documentation, and issue Sharia Fatwas related to all items mentioned herein. Apart from that, the SSB is also issuing its annual Sharia Supervisory Board report which forms part of the bank's Financial Annual Report that reaffirm of the bank's compliance with Sharia principles in all operational and financial aspects.

The existence of such a Sharia board also gives the necessary oversight Sharia Governance function as well as assurance to shareholders and depositors that all funds invested with the bank are deployed in a Sharia-compliant manner be it in any Sharia-compliant investment activities or financing transactions where the profit for the clients are assured to meet the highest degree of Sharia requirements.

This shows that Bank Nizwa is fully committed to adhere and implement a holistic Sharia Governance Framework in all its operations in letter and spirit as enshrined in the Islamic Banking Regulatory Framework issued by the Central Bank of Oman.

ONLINE AUCTION NOTICE

AUCTION OF DISMANTLE & SALE OF USED MOBILE, FIXED, TRANSMISSION, SWITCHING & POWER EQUIPMENT

Oman Telecommunications Company (S.A.O.G),

P.O. Box 789, Postal Code 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman hereby gives notice of the auction as follows: -

Offers Submission Date	Description	Site visit (Location per Zone)	Ref. No.																		
7 February 2021	Auction of Dismantle & Sale of used Mobile, Fixed, Transmission, Switching & Power Equipment from Omantel's Salalah Warehouses/Site – Dhofar Region for different places : - 8 Sites for Sale - 20 Sites for Dismantle & Sale	<table><tr><td>A</td><td>Salalah City</td><td>31-01-2021</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>East Salalah</td><td>1-02-2021</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>West Salalah</td><td>2-02-2021</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>Al-Badiya East</td><td>3-02-2021</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>Al-Badiya North</td><td>4-02-2021</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>Al-Badiya west</td><td>4-02-2021</td></tr></table>	A	Salalah City	31-01-2021	B	East Salalah	1-02-2021	C	West Salalah	2-02-2021	D	Al-Badiya East	3-02-2021	E	Al-Badiya North	4-02-2021	F	Al-Badiya west	4-02-2021	RFI # 61
A	Salalah City	31-01-2021																			
B	East Salalah	1-02-2021																			
C	West Salalah	2-02-2021																			
D	Al-Badiya East	3-02-2021																			
E	Al-Badiya North	4-02-2021																			
F	Al-Badiya west	4-02-2021																			

The invitation to this bid is open to all international and local contractors specialized in this field.

- Bidders who are interested to participate in this auction are requested to submit pre-qualification details online (RFI No 61) on Omantel's e-tendering system (<https://tenders.omantel.om>). Companies that are not registered on Omantel e-tendering system are requested to register themselves in order to qualify/participate in the e-auction.
- The auction will be conducted online on Omantel's eTendering platform at <https://tenders.omantel.om>. The date and time of e-Auction shall be informed to shortlisted bidders based on evaluation of the pre-qualification submissions.
- A maximum of 2 participants will be allowed per vendor to enter the premises during the site visit.
- Shortlisted bidders will be requested to submit a bid bond or certified cheque valid for 90 days from the date of submission addressed to GM-Procurement & Contracts Omantel, prior to the date of e-auction.
- The details of the e-auction and the required registration/training will be provided to the shortlisted bidders before the e-auction.
- For auction enquiries, requests for clarifications and site visit, please contact us on 98080350 / 99293599 .

MARKET

MSM index closes flat

Al Hassan Engineer, up 71.43 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 8.02 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: Oman's benchmark MSM index on Monday ended flat and closed at 3,698.499. The Sharia Index also closed unchanged at 533.325 points.

Al Hassan Engineer, up 71.43 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Marketing, down 8.02 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Al Madina Takaful was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded and also was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 474 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.133 million, with more than 8.34 million shares changing hands. Out of 42 traded stocks, 16 advanced, 8 declined and 18 remained unchanged. At the session close, local Investors were net sellers for OMR116,000 while foreign

investors were net buyers for OMR111,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR4,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 5,591.104 points, down by 0.00 per cent. Al Madina Investment, Al Madina Takaful and Oman Qatar Insurance were up by 4.55 per cent, 3.53 per cent and 1.09 per cent respectively. Sohar International Bank, Muscat Finance, HSBC Bank, Al Omaniya Finance, and National Bank of Oman were down by 3.45 per cent, 3.26 per cent, 2.33 per cent, 1.43 per cent, and 1.35 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 4,577.583 points, down 0.00 per cent. Al Hassan Engineer was up by 71.43 per cent.

Services index was down by 0.00 per cent before closing at 1,604.442 points. Omantel was up by 1.06 per cent. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT SECURITIES MARKET

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSM 30 INDEX	3,731.01	3,698.50	3,698.50	3,730.44	-31.94	-0.86
FINANCIAL INDEX	5,647.68	5,591.10	5,598.94	5,643.66	-44.72	-0.79
Services Index	1,627.99	1,604.44	1,611.19	1,627.99	-16.80	-1.03
Industry Index	4,612.55	4,577.58	4,577.58	4,612.55	-34.96	-0.76
MSM Shariah Index	534.67	533.33	533.33	533.08	0.24	0.05
MSM TR INDEX	4,257.92	4,220.82	4,220.82	4,257.27	-36.45	-0.86

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,349,328	1,133,014	520	20,350,824,083	6	18	17	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 25

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000000326	OMAN TELECOM	71,458	54,304	18	0.780	0.780	0.756	0.780	0.752	0.008	1.064	0.760	0.760	0.100	570,000,000	
OM000000148	RAYSUT CEMENT	27,000	8,336	7	0.308	0.310	0.308	0.308	0.308	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.304	0.308	0.100	61,600,000
OM000000172	AL ANWAR HOLDING	81,000	5,427	9	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.100	13,400,000
OM000000240	AL SHARGIA INV.	328,896	24,190	16	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	6,660,000
OM000000368	OOREDOO	16,205	6,806	6	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.420	0.426	0.100	273,396,577
OM000000276	BANK MUSCAT	343,493	136,074	38	0.386	0.388	0.386	0.386	0.388	-0.002	-0.503	0.386	0.384	0.386	0.100	1,286,810,925
OM000000153	OMINVEST	145,310	46,350	20	0.320	0.320	0.316	0.318	0.320	-0.002	-0.625	0.316	0.318	0.318	0.100	256,871,601
OM000000207	AL OMANITA FIN.	75,432	5,305	9	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.070	-0.001	-1.429	0.069	0.069	0.072	0.100	20,143,527
OM000000155	OMAN INVSTR & FIN.	192,700	17,536	14	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.093	-0.002	-2.151	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	18,200,000
OM000000324	RENAISSANCE SER.	178,006	64,082	8	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.368	-0.008	-2.174	0.360	0.352	0.360	0.100	85,107,600
OM000000150	MUSCAT FINANCE	29,476	1,260	4	0.043	0.043	0.042	0.042	0.043	-0.001	-2.326	0.042	0.039	0.043	0.100	12,900,146
OM000000217	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	246,400	51,683	26	0.215	0.215	0.207	0.209	0.214	-0.005	-2.336	0.207	0.207	0.207	0.100	28,103,674
OM000000505	ALMAHA CERAMICS	132,787	32,784	28	0.251	0.251	0.244	0.246	0.252	-0.006	-2.381	0.244	0.244	0.244	0.100	12,530,000
OM000000174	OMAN CEMENT	67,132	19,520	19	0.289	0.289	0.287	0.290	0.289	-0.009	-3.010	0.289	0.287	0.290	0.100	95,853,086
OM000000398	SOHAR INT. BANK	16,200	1,442	2	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.092	-0.003	-3.261	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	216,671,099
Total		15	1,948,495	474,999	224											

Parallel Market

OM000000162	AL MADINA INV.	15,000	345	1	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.001	4.545	0.023	0.022	0.023	0.100	4,764,482
OM000000478	MADINA TAKAFUL	2,781,891	247,000	93	0.086	0.090	0.086	0.088	0.085	0.003	3.529	0.089	0.089	0.093	0.100	15,400,000
OM000000879	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	59,120	5,509	7	0.093	0.095	0.093	0.093	0.092	0.001	1.087	0.095	0.093	0.095	0.100	9,300,000
OM000000152	OMAN NAT. ENGL.	35,000	3,190	4	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.096	0.094	0.100	10,920,000
OM000000126	OMAN REFRESHMENT	200	221	1	1.105	1.105	1.105	1.105	1.105	0.000	0.000	1.105	0.000	0.000	0.100	55,250,000
OM000000216	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	200	58	1	0.292	0.292	0.292	0.292	0.292	0.000	0.000	0.292	0.292	0.292	0.100	86,494,395
OM000000275	SHELL OMAN MKK.	4,826	4,343	4	0.900	0.900	0.900	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.900	0.000	0.900	0.100	95,000,000
OM000000236	AL BATINAH DEV.	300	21	1	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.000	0.069	0.100	2,010,000
OM000000272	OMAN OIL MARKETING	1,500	1,056	2	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.780	0.780	0.000	0.000	0.704	0.000	0.704	0.100	47,794,500
OM000000361	VOLTAPE ENERGY	108,762	11,339	12	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	8,384,483
OM000000495	ALBATINAH POWER	3,945	152	1	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.045	0.053	0.100	33,744,372
OM000000493	AL SUWADI POWER	487,238	24,482	20	0.050	0.052	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.051	0.100	35,720,317
OM000000520	OMAN ARAB BANK	30,000	5,310	3	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.000	0.000	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.100	295,485,570
OM000000704	NATIONAL LIFE INS.	67,209	23,678	8	0.352	0.354	0.352	0.352	0.352	0.000	0.000	0.354	0.352	0.352	0.100	93,280,000
OM000000420	BANK NIZWA	9,000	855	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.097	0.100	142,500,000
OM000000475	SEMBORP S.A.L.A.L.	20,000	1,885	3	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.093	0.095	0.100	95,729,763
OM000000148	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	109,520	15,990	4	0.149	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	-0.002	-1.351	0.146	0.143	0.145	0.100	237,388,168
OM000000321	GALFAR ENGINEER	1,841,625	95,931	68	0.053	0.053	0.051	0.052	0.053	-0.001	-1.887	0.052	0.051	0.053	0.100	15,078,993
OM000000157	HSBC BANK OMAN	185,105	15,733	13	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.087	-0.003	-3.448	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	168,028,274
OM000000560	PHOENIX POWER	275,000	14,043	15	0.052	0.052	0.051	0.051	0.053	-0.002	-3.774	0.051	0.051	0.053	0.100	74,582,674
OM000000131	ALUMINIUM PROD.	138,630	11,728	16	0.086	0.086	0.084	0.084	0.088	-0.004	-4.545	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.100	2,820,002
OM000000300	AI MAHA MARKTING	14,172	8,456	11	0.612	0.612	0.584	0.596	0.648	-0.052	-8.025	0.584	0.584	0.584	0.100	41,124,000
Total		22	6,188,343	491,326	289											

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT OMAN

EDO appoints Haifa Al Khaifi as its CEO

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman's (PDO) Finance Director Haifa bint Juma Al Khaifi has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the newly established Energy Development Oman (EDO).

EDO was officially formed through Royal Decree 128/2020, marking a key milestone in PDO's

journey towards becoming a fully-fledged energy company. The new entity also provides important financing benefits, which will enhance the country's fiscal position.

Al Khaifi said, "The establishment of EDO is an extremely significant milestone for the Sultanate of Oman. Having led the establishment of EDO over the past year, and being a member of its Founder's Committee, I am

deeply honoured by my appointment as the transitional CEO during this critical and exciting stage. I look forward to continuing delivering extensive value to Oman with EDO, in addition to my role as the Finance Director of PDO."

Al Khaifi added, "EDO will play a central role in the Sultanate's energy transition as well as economic diversification."

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

ADB calls for reforms to build resilient education systems

MANILA: Governments and stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific should initiate far-reaching reforms to strengthen the resilience of education and training systems as they deal with COVID -19 pandemic, according to a guidance note from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) released.

"With the right resources, strengthened capacity and deliberate actions, the region can put its education systems on a new and positive path as we settle into a new normal post-COVID -19," said ADB Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department Chief Sector Officer Robert Guild.

"Powered by knowledge, skills and human capital, the recovery in education will also help to support the recovery in other sectors."

'COVID-19 and Education in Asia and the Pacific' calls for developing countries to identify critical policy reforms like revamping teacher professional development and concrete actions to improve the quality of education systems over the long-term. — ANI



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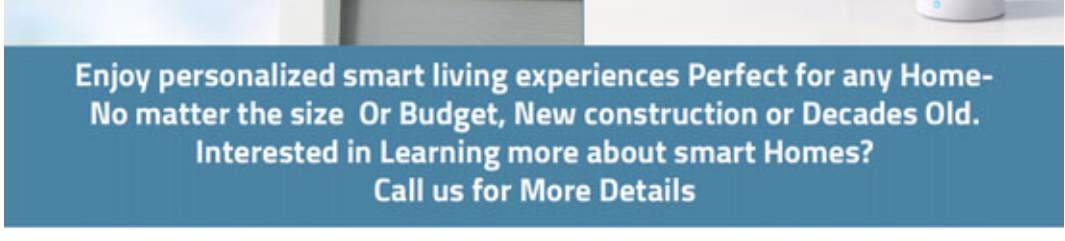
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Facility Manager / Operation (Project-Civil) Manager

B.E. (Civil) with 24 years expertise in Facilities Management, Civil Construction Management, Project Management, Maintenance Management, Construction Site Inspection & Audit, Process & Documentation, Security & Surveillance, Contracts & vendor management, Budgeting & cash flow. Available to join immediately. Omani DL & NOC is available.

Contact: +968-96180303 shiv60769@gmail.com

Architect/ Interior Designer

36 yrs old, 12 yrs working in Design, Consultancy & project execution. Experience working in commercial, Institutional/Educational, residential construction, Hospitality, Interior design/ fit-out work. Knowledge on CAD/ MS office/ Planning/ Tendering/ Estimation & execution. Ready to join immediately with D/L and NOC available

Contact: 78371040

Senior MEP Manager

Indian Male: Btech, having 23 years GCC experience with valid Oman driving licence seeks suitable placement.

Contact GSM: 79880377
Email: jaksona8081@gmail.com

FINANCE / ADMIN

Experienced Female with 8 years experience in accounts & Admin who is also a qualified paralegal in company law looking for a suitable post.

Contact: 96303874

FINANCE

Experienced European National Male with 7 years experience looking for a suitable post in the Accounts/ Finance. NOC available.

Contact: 97711584

Indian female (M.Sc. chemistry),

2 years experience as a quality control officer seeking a suitable opportunity in any chemical industry/food industry /lab assistant.

Contact +968 71548622
cleetadsu7259@gmail.com

B.E Civil Engineer

Indian Male 29yrs with 7 Plus years of Experience in handling High End Building Construction Projects, Infrastructure, MEP, Interior finish and Landscaping works looking for any suitable job in immediately. Having Knowledge of MS Project & Primavera P6. NOC & Oman D/L Available.

Please contact me on 95051103,
Email: loyannavildsouza@gmail.com

Omani Mechanical Engineer

Omani, looking for a job, Bachelor in Mechanical Engg from the United States of America, +2 yrs of experience in Oil & Gas. + NEBOSH certification Holder.

Contact: 95070748
Email: siyabi430@gmail.com

SR. Manager/GM/VP (Plant)

Indian Male, with more than 23 years exp. in repair/ maint/ deployment/ logistic/ procurement of Vehicles/ Heavy construction equipment in a large reputed construction industry seeks suitable placement in senior management level. NOC available.

Contact: 79198709

ELECTRICAL MANAGER

Graduate Electrical Engineer & MBA (Project Management) with 28 years' experience in Industrial Projects & Maintenance looking for senior role. NOC Available and can join immediately.

Contact: 968-94029112
Email: sakthiveljothi@gmail.com

Senior Civil Engineer

Indian Post graduate civil engineer with 37 years of professional experience in Oman in property development and construction management seeks senior management opportunities in similar field.

Contact 96504377
jobsearchzac@gmail.com

MBA, seeking job, 27 yrs experience in capable managerial candidature with rich experience in Business operations, Vendor development, Procurement and HR generalist. Can join immediately.

Whatsapp: 7730012111
Mobile: 94268870
Email: mvssmngbr@gmail.com

Structural/Civil Engineer

with 14 years of experience (8 years in USA and 4 years in Oman) in PEB, RCC, Pipeline, Offshore, and Marine structures and have Master degree from USA. Seeking for placement as Project Engineer or Manager.

Please contact me on +968-93368626
irfan.sanjari.syed@gmail.com

SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEER

11+ Yrs of experience (10 Yrs Oman experience)
• On Engineer Visa (Expiry - Feb 2022), Can get release also.
• Experience in Building and Factory projects with Ministry & Private Clients.
Looking for fulltime/part time job. Having Omani DL.

GSM: 94125368 ;
premjihtpremanathan@gmail.com

Accountant Indian Male

MBA Finance 2 years experience in india with good knowledge in tally seeks placement.

9539 1786

Moroccan Sales Engineer with

over 6 years of industrial experience in Oman looking for suitable opportunity.

GSM: 93823132
Email: mehdikassen@yahoo.com

SENIOR CORPORATE AND RETAIL BANKER

With over 30 years experience in Credit Management, Relationship Management, Credit Administration, Operations Management and Recoveries/ IFRS9 Provisioning Methodologies seeks suitable placement.

Email: DolphinOcean367@gmail.com

Project Engineer

32 yrs old - Having 10 years of experience (6 yrs in Oman) in oil & gas field - Intense work experience in fabrication of Pressure Vessels, Structural Steel fabrication & erection, Manufacturing of Skid Packages, Piping Spools & supports, Storage Tanks, Stack & Ducts, Pig Traps. EPC & Turnaround projects.
Having DL & Current Visa expires in Feb 2021.

Contact # boopathiraja88@gmail.com / 97412105

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

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT (SRI LANKAN)

CA, CPA, BSc. (Accountancy & Business Finance) Special with 12 years of experience (6th year in Oman) is looking for an opening. DL, NOC are available.

GSM: 78259755

Indian female B Com graduate having 7 years' experience as Accountant in Oman (Tally ERP 9). Seeking suitable placement in Accounts/ Admin.

Contact: 92999419
d.kaiyarla1986@gmail.com

Experience more than 20 years of experience working in: Public Administration, Human Resource, Public Relations, Preparation and Writing of Reports, Coordination and Preparation of Meetings, Business Development, Marketing, Management and Retail Real Estate.

Contact whatsapp: 99477009
Email: abualmutsum@gmail.com

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

Srilankan Senior Accountant looking for a suitable opportunity. 7 years experience in Oman & capable of handling accounts up to finalization. On hand experience in Tally, Spur, QB etc. Having D/L

CONTACT: 92821932

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Indian Male, 41 Years, B.Com + CA intermediate, having more than 15 Years of experience (13 years in Oman) in the different positions as Accounts Manager, Internal Auditor and statutory auditor. currently working as Accounts Manager, seeking similar Managerial position in finance.

Contact: 99169501

Senior Software Test Engineer

Indian Female 25yrs, BCA, M.tech, 5+ years experience in Wipro technologies. Key Skills – Web Application testing, Anti money laundering, Agile methodology, Manual Testing, Automation testing, selenium, Java, SQL, Appium and API testing.

Contact: 71792368 / 99295161 / nibesh.cmn@gmail.com

INDIAN, female, MBA, 4 years experience in Office administration and customer service (Banking & Construction field), knowledge of MS packages, currently on family visa, residing in Ruwi.

Mob: 95073054
Email: bfaqua88@gmail.com

Finance Manager / CFO

Indian Chartered Accountant and Cost Accountant with 25 years experience in Finance, MIS, Budget, Strategy, Projects, VAT seeks suitable placement.

Contact: 99884291 / 99741875
VIPUL70@GMAIL.COM

Junior Architect with 3-years Oman experience in designing, proficiency in AutoCAD, Sketchup, Lumion Vray & Photoshop. Has worked in quantity estimations. Looking for suitable placement in Muscat.

Contact 95972625

MicroMasters in Supply Chain Management, B-Tech in Mechanical Engineering 3 years industry experience as a Sales Engineer, Valid Oman DL.

Contact: 99137115
Email: adimurali7@gmail.com

PLANNING ENGINEER/MANAGER

Planning Engineer/manager 20 yrs experience in Mechanical, civil, pipeline 7 MEP projects using Primavera with NOC & D/L seeks suitable position.

Contact 92651105
Email rej_i_mathai@hotmail.com

General Manager/ Sr. Manager Role, Indian Professional (BE, MBA, PMP, FIDIC) with 25 years experience into Civil and Infrastructure Constructions and Project Management. NOC available.

Contact 94634053

Finance/Accounts Manager

Indian male (MBA Fin) with 20 yrs working exp as Accounts & Finance Manager (Strategic planning, Procurement, Finance, Accounting, HR Admin, Audit, Tax, VAT) seeking suitable post. Valid Oman DL. NOC available.

Contact No.99705790
email: thoms_mat@yahoo.com

Graduate Civil Engineer

From India with over 11 years Project Management Experience with Consultant and Client in Oman with local release & driving license seeks suitable opportunities.

Email: contactsyedshams@gmail.com; GSM: +968 98500235

Indian male, bachelor's degree, Graduate (B.Com, B. Ed) looking for secretary, exec assistant, office administration jobs, 18 years experience, 7 years in Oman.

Call 97015841
Email khalid.bin.umar@gmail.com



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JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

M/48/Indian Civil engineer, 28 yrs exp, 18 yrs Oman exp with Consultants & Clients seeks opportunities.
Contact 92370274

Indian 28/Male Diploma Electrical Engineer, 4.5 yrs. Exp. (2 yrs. (Exp.) in Dubai) as an Electrician. Seek job
Contact no 79572738.

Indian Female Structural/Civil Engineer having 25 years of experience including 18 Years Gulf Experience, on employment visa is seeking for suitable placement. Ready to join immediately with necessary documents.
Contact: 92731684/79858363

Indian BE Civil engineer 10 yrs experience in Construction, Oil & gas field in Oman having valid D/L. Immediately join. Contact 96455880

BE Civil engineer having 13 years oman experience mainly in building construction looking for a suitable position. Contact no: 72132426

Landscaping and Irrigation Engineer with 9+yrs total exp, 6 yrs in oman, looking for suitable job. Contact no. 72100025

Omani is looking for job. UK graduate since 1991. B.Engg+MBA, experience PDO, Diwan, Abu Dhabi, group of companies as GM. Contact/ Whatsapp 94174443

A Civil engineer with a valid D/L, 9 years experience in Oman seeks job. Contact 97646908

30 Yrs Male, Steel Fabrication Engineer, 6Yrs in Oman, Mechanical CAD, Shop Drawing, Ph: 97097688.

Project / Site Engineer, B.tech Civil, 8+ yrs Gulf Experienced in Major Projects, Oman D/L Ph-99857800.

B.Sc in Civil Engineering having 13 years experience in Oman. Hand on experience in Ministry of Health, MOD, ROP and RCA prestigious project. Available in Oman with NOC and Valid DL. Contact 92180869, E-mail: mamuns02@yahoo.com

Irani Civil engg +18 yrs experience in GCC, looking for job. Contact 79135430

Electrical Engineer having 7 years of experience in construction sector in Oman in MEP, Data cabling, BMS works, ELV systems looking for opportunities. Contact: +968-96335725

Arabic/English speaking Civil engineer, 5 yrs experience in Projects coordination, preparing submittals & engineering software, resident & have valid DL. Contact 95432250

Omani HSE engineer with 1.5 yrs experience in Oil & Gas & construction seeks job. DL available. Contact 70707011. Email malisaybi@gmail.com

Looking for a job for the post of Electrical Engineer with Btech and 15 years exp in Oman. NOC and Release available. Contact 92254336. Email ameen1667@gmail.com

Indian male having diploma in mech engg & valid Oman DL have 6 yrs experience in Oman # 95645241

Civil Engineer, Indian female with 3 yrs experience in Oman, 28 yrs old, looking for a suitable job in a construction Company. Oman DL, valid visa. # 99772710, 99256371

Mechanical Engineer, 10 yrs exp with Oman DL, looking for sponsor/ position in MEP solar, Oil & Gas. Contact 79550976, +919446253959. Email afsalhyder@gmail.com

B.E Civil Engineer having over all 14 yrs Experience in building & Roads with consultant and contractor. NOC available immediate joining. Contact 94011294. Email: adnanluky@gmail.com

Planning Engineer, Indian 20 yrs experience in using Primavera P6 for oil & gas, water pipeline & building, MEP works scheduling seek suitable senior position with release & Oman DL. # 92651105, 90643701 rej_i_mathai@hotmail.com

JOB WANTED

IT

CRM, ERP & MIS analyst, experience 5 yrs. Contact 71561266

Sudanese, Male, BSc with honors in Computer Science. 5 yrs Experience in IT support, Android apps Development, ERB Systems, and systems management & Administration. Contact 96606209. Email Blackmode21@gmail.com

LOGISTIC

Seeking opportunity in managerial position in logistics, having 4 yrs exp in administering logistics through air, sea, land & documentation within Oman & 6 yrs in India. Contact 98347003
Email jibyjohn28@gmail.com

MEDICAL

Lady G P. With M O H licence. Full or part-time, for Capital area only. Contact 99470508

MISCELLANEOUS

Plumbing, painting maintenance works. Contact 96191837, 98937266

Driver plumber Electrician, looking for job. Contact 96750080

MECHANIC/TECHNIC

Civil Surveyor, 10 yrs experienced land surveyor. Experience in building, pipeline, Oil & Gas. Contact 99451321

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SALES / MARKETING

13 years exp in sales, marketing and distribution management. Indian male, MBA, DL. Contact 78097687

Indian with 16 years experience in sales and marketing with valid Oman DL, looking for opportunities
Contact 79685337

BM, with 26 yrs FMCG exp, handling large distribution looking for better prospects. Contact 90925520

Indian male with Oman D/L, looking for job in Sales. Having experience in sales in a very well reputed FMCG company in Oman. Contact 90625165, Email id: farookshamas@gmail.com

Business development Executive with vast marketing knowledge 20 yrs experience seeks employment. Whatsapp 95950370

Sales Executive, 14 yrs experience in FMCG/IT/Oilfield supplies with DL, looking for suitable placement. Contact 90174597

6 years experienced Sales officer looking for the suitable job. Valid, Omani driving license available.
Contact 98424254

20 yrs experience in Sales & Marketing of Central Air Conditioning & Structural steel etc.
Contact 968-95950370

Indian male B.com graduate, PG Diploma in Logistic (Air cargo and supply chain management) & Digital Marketing. Valid Oman DL. Looking for suitable placement. 79748272 Email: shazil.sadique@gmail.com.

23 Years Graduate in Marketing looking for job in Sales or Marketing having 03 years sales experience. Contact 9427 1666.

MBA Marketing/HR, 5 years working experience in India. Experience in Sales, Marketing and operations. Contact +96896652549

Sales/office driver, 15 yrs experience with DL & NOC. Muscat Area. Contact 79758863

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ROUND-UP

Nissan Navara pickup boasts durability, reliability features

Nissan Navara pickup delivers an enhanced level of safety, comfort and driving pleasure

MUSCAT: Combining a tough, working pedigree, with premium ride comfort, smart technologies and modern styling, Nissan Navara pickup pushes the boundaries of innovation further.

Adding to this, Nissan Navara pickup delivers an enhanced level of safety, comfort and driving pleasure, while continuing to bring durability, reliability and versatility.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, “A dependable partner for work or travel, the new Nissan Navara comes with many best-in-class technologies, including an array of Nissan Intelligent Mobility features and safety systems, making it among the most advanced yet. Nissan has a long history of building strong, dependable pickups. With each new model, the boundaries of innovation have been pushed, providing drivers with everything they need to get the job done. Nissan Navara pickup helps get all the job done.”

The Nissan Navara is powered



by the latest generation of Nissan engines and is designed to give the right amount of power when and where you need it most. The legendary Nissan Navara is available with two transmission options with both 2-wheel drive and 4-wheel drive options. The 2.5 L engine used in the Navara has a displacement of 2488 cc producing up to 168hp/244nm torque.

Navara diesel

Navara also comes with a diesel engine option.

This has been developed for excellent fuel efficiency and emissions ratings, yet with impressive power output and acceleration.

Diesel engine option is available with YD25 engine, a 2.5L unit producing 161hp/403nm torque. This variant comes with PDO specifications for use in desert operations.

Being a pickup one can trust right down to its core, Nissan Navara’s full-length fully boxed ladder frame provides solidity and strength one can rely on. With its steel double-wishbone front suspension and rigid leaf suspension, drivers and owners are sure to experience a smooth and comfortable ride on and off the road.

Enclosed on all four sides, the fully boxed ladder frame is reinforced in strategic areas with high-tensile strength steel for improved

structural rigidity. Stronger than conventional steel, it provides increased torsional stiffness, offering a marked improvement over traditional steel C-section frames. All of which ensures it performs impressively in the toughest driving conditions. Also, all cross members are welded, not riveted, which helps resist flexing and increases durability.

The 4WD system is electronically controlled via an easy-to-reach rotary switch on the dash. At the driver’s command is the shift-on-the-fly 4WD system that switches between 2WD and high range 4WD (4H) with the twist of a dial at speeds of up to 100 km/hr. Its Limited Slip Differential (LSD)

controls each of the four wheels to optimise traction in challenging conditions. When 4WD isn’t enough, drivers can push the button to activate the Electronic Locking Rear Differential, which delivers equal power to both rear wheels to boost traction and helps keep you moving forward.

The Hill Start Assist feature can help keep from rolling backwards when accelerating up a hill from a stop and Hill Descent Control helps maintain a steady speed and braking, so one can get down a steep grade more safely.

Load it up

Nissan Navara’s ample tray gives

one load of options to carry absolutely anything and everything for work or play.

All dual-cab pickup models feature a long, deep and wide rear cargo bed, giving one a huge and versatile load space.

Even in the toughest conditions, the Nissan Navara pickup delivers comfortable interiors. Every seat is spacious and pleasant. In the front, the fatigue-reducing all day comfort seats create a neutral posture that improves blood flow to make long rides considerably more pleasant. In the back, passengers will enjoy plenty of legroom plus their air-conditioning.

Smart tech

Nissan Intelligent Key with remote keyless entry allows to lock and unlock the doors without taking the key out of the pocket. Once inside the Nissan Navara pickup, drivers can take control of the environment with a few smooth moves - everything just seems to be in exactly the right spot.

Smart technologies such as Bluetooth Audio Streaming, Reversing Camera and Advanced Drive-Assist Display work seamlessly to put in full control. A cleverly designed, flexible interior with loads of storage makes it easy for both work and play.

The Nissan Navara Pickup Advanced DriveAssist Display (ADAD) serves up all the driving information one needs in one place. The intuitive 3D depth and tilt design lets one take it all in at a glance, which helps you keep eyes where they belong - on the road.

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Registration for Al Wathbah Academy's training begins

The registration for the training programme is being done online at present and Omani entrepreneurs may register for the same



source=bankmuscat-EN

MUSCAT: In line with its vision "To serve you better, everyday" and as part of its CSR commitment to delivering long-term benefits to the nation, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has announced that registration for entrepreneurial training by the Al Wathbah Academy for SMEs has commenced for Al Dhahirah and North Al Sharqiyah governorates.

The registration for the training programme is being done online at present and Omani entrepreneurs may register for the same at <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/Pages/LeadDetails.aspx?LeadID=95&>

velopment of the country."

It is important to note that the Al Wathbah SME Academy curriculum has been tailored to suit Bank Muscat's requirements for a practical, comprehensive business course on how to grow a business successfully. After all, successful business ownership requires not only starting a business correctly but also continually seeking ways to expand and grow during times of uncertainty. With the central theme of "Sustaining Growth during Uncertainty", the training programme will provide business owners with the opportunity to set goals, analyse the market, and revise strategies to meet new trends. The course content has been specially developed, based on the actual needs of small and medium business owners in Oman.

Utilising global best practices, local case studies and supplementary articles from premier institutions and organisations such as McKinsey & Company and Harvard Business School Publishing, the course empowers small and medium-sized business entrepreneurs by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and resources. Led by experienced trainers from Radiant Sail, the course is covered over a period of 4-8 months.

"The programme leads to accredited international certification by PMI and the bank will continue to implement plans for developing Omani entrepreneurs as part of its commitment to the growth and de-

Radisson Oman ensures safety while hosting meetings, events, weddings

MUSCAT: With the SGS certification and the Radisson Hotels Safety Protocol in place, the Radisson Hotel Group in Oman meets the highest cleanliness, disinfection and safety measures with the implementation of the 20-step and 10-step protocols for meetings and events.

To lower the risk for guests and to add a layer of safety, the group is enhancing the set-ups by focusing on health and safety protocols, social distancing arrangements, as well as adaptations in food and beverage service.

Reducing point of contacts, new room and seating configurations respecting the minimum distance between delegates, allowed number of delegates per square metre, keeping tables apart to indicate social distancing from each other and disinfecting pens and sanitisation of meeting rooms after every event are only a few measures taken by RHG hotels while ensuring quality and sophisticated



service combined with authenticity and personal care.

Inga Kaman, Director of Sales and Marketing, RHG Oman says, "We have learnt to navigate the new set-up which requires extensive planning and willingness by all our teams to adapt fast. We want the meeting and events guests to know that we care about their health and safety when entering our properties, and we are proactively demonstrating our efforts to make them feel safe. Our five properties, Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel, Radisson Blu

Hotel, Sohar; Radisson Blu Hotel, Muscat; Park Inn by Radisson Muscat; and Park Inn by Radisson Hotel & Residence Duqm are ready to go the extra mile and look forward to creating memorable moments for our guests."

Apart from reassuring guests by implementing the highest safety measures, RHG has also met this challenge with more innovative measure, from creating intimate gatherings for special events, weddings and enhance live interactive videoconferencing for hybrid meetings.

RECOGNITION

MG Oman wins top award for customer satisfaction

MUSCAT: Mohsin Haider Darwish has been ranked highest amongst GCC dealers in the Customer Satisfaction Index for MG Motor by SAIC Motor Middle East; further cementing its position as an industry leader.

Consumers were asked to rate MG Motor Oman on a host of criteria, which spanned - products, customer enquiries management, as well as pre and aftersales services.

Delighted with the win, Mohsin Hani Al Barwani, CEO MHD ACERE said, "This recognition underlines our commitment to providing our customers with an unrivalled automotive retail ex-



perience and not only proves that we are class leaders in our sector but also shows that we are one of the best companies in the GCC for keeping customers satisfied.

"Our employees are continually working to raise the bar, both in the pre-buying experience and

in the provision of exceptional aftersales service to our customers. So, I am particularly proud that this survey recognises the quality and performance of our team," the CEO further added.

From customer experiences and sales to marketing and exciting campaigns, MG Motor Oman continues to work to ensure that they deliver the highest standards across each department. Its customer-centric approach continues to catapult the company forward, helping it to maintain its reputation as one of the most successful and trusted car brands in the Sultanate.

WALLPAPERS

Bring your thoughts and feelings to life with Huawei Themes

MUSCAT: Art is a powerful way of expressing emotions, whether it be through a photograph, pencil or paintbrush. It is through these types of mediums that we are able to represent ourselves freely and unconventionally. Huawei Themes also provides its users with the opportunity to express themselves through customising and personalising their everyday mobile screens.

With over 300 000 free wallpapers, themes and fonts to choose from, Huawei Themes enables you to turn your smartphone screen into a mobile canvas. It provides users with art in their pocket through new mediums such as moving backgrounds, instruments and (of course) some of the user's favourite brands. Whether you are one that is more prone to abstract art, enjoy the sights of nature, or someone that enjoys having their favourite fantasy on-screen, Huawei Themes has the aesthetic for you.

If you want to add a bit more flair to your phone, it's important to ensure that your Huawei device is updated to the latest EMUI version.

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INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY

Immense opportunities for expansion of Oman-India strategic partnership



I EXTEND WARM GREETINGS and heartiest felicitations to all members of the Indian community living in the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day of India. On behalf of the Government and people of India, including the Indian community in Oman, I extend best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on first anniversary of his accession. I also take this opportunity to convey greetings and best wishes to the Government and people of Oman for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of Oman.

Concerted global action

The year 2020 was a difficult year for all of us, as the whole world was affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The global health emergency showed the importance of concerted global action. India shouldered its global responsibilities and extended support to our friends and partners and emerged as the 'Pharmacy of the World.' With the launch of COVID-19 vaccines, all of us look ahead with hope and the end of the pandemic seems nearer. As India rolls out the largest vaccine drive in the world, which has no parallel in the history of mankind, we remain committed to helping other countries also, under our guiding philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – the entire world is one family. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured that India's vaccine production capacity will serve the interest of the whole humanity.

Fight against coronavirus

India's fight against COVID-19 has been characterised by confidence and compassion. The pandemic united the nation and the collective power that India displayed in the fight against coronavirus will serve as an inspiration for many generations to come. The Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abiyan (Self Reliant India) was announced by the Prime Min-

“

India can be a strong and resilient partner for Oman in all priority areas identified under Vision 2040. There are strong complementarities between both the countries in several areas

ister Modi in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic for enhancing national capacities of India and make stronger contribution globally. In India's approach of self reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness and peace. India's diaspora across the world will be an important partner in the national endeavour towards self reliance. At the same time our quest for self reliance will be based on global partnerships with our friends and partners, opening up new opportunities for enhancing cooperation.

Close friend and trusted partner

The Sultanate of Oman is a close friend and trusted partner of India. Our two countries have always enjoyed very close relations that have evolved into a vibrant strategic partnership in recent years based on our shared values, common interests and convergence in approaches. Robust defence and security cooperation, rapidly growing economic ties, and extensive people-to-people contacts are key pillars of this strategic partnership.

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the depth and resilience of India-Oman strategic partnership. Close engagement and cooperation continued between both the countries in addressing the urgent matters related to the pandemic. I would like to convey gratitude to the Government of Oman for taking good care of the Indian Diaspora residing in Oman during COVID-19 pandemic. Both the countries were also able to sustain momentum in consolidation of the strategic relationship through regular high-level engagements even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Post-COVID-19 era

As we look ahead to post-COVID-19 era, there are immense opportunities for the expansion of India-Oman strategic partnership. India can be a strong and resilient partner for Oman in all priority areas identified under Vision 2040. There are strong complementarities between both our countries in several areas. Oman can benefit from India's capabilities in the new areas of space, pharmaceuticals, IT and cyber technologies. India is already partnering with Oman in its capacity building efforts through the ITEC Programme, and looks to scale it up post-COVID-19.

India accords high priority to its strategic partnership with Oman and remains committed to further increasing cooperation in existing as well as new areas. We hope that India-Oman bilateral cooperation will reach new heights in the coming years. The Embassy of India looks forward to working closely with the Government and people of Oman as well as the Indian diaspora in Oman towards this objective.

MUNU MAHAWAR

Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman

Khimji Ramdas & the people of Oman express their warmest congratulations to the people of India on the occasion of India's **72nd Republic Day**.

On this special occasion, we look forward to further strengthen our strategic partnership and take Oman-India relations to greater heights.

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INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY



FARM SECTOR

Agriculture reforms to help create new markets for farmers

The latest agriculture reforms introduced in India propose to increase the prices farmers get for their output by giving them flexibility to sell, with governments continuing to support a base minimum thorough the minimum support price (MSP) within the extant system. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the farm reforms will help bring down barriers between agriculture and associated sectors, creating new markets for farmers.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THREE LAWS

Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. This law aims to ease excessive controls over the production and distribution of agricultural commodities. It brings an ancient 20th century law, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, in tune with 21st century realities, flexibilities and aspirations. The law aims to deregulate cereals, pulses, potato, onions, edible oilseeds and oils that will come into effect “only under extraordinary circumstances which may include war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity of grave nature”. These circumstances have been specified – 100 percent increase in the retail price of horticultural produce, or 50 percent increase in the retail price of non-perishables. The time period has been specified – the prevailing price over the preceding 12 months or average retail price over the preceding five years. Given the wastage of food produce, this amendment paves the way for cold chain infrastructure to come up. It enables food storage and hurts none.

New law breaks the monopsony of APMC

The Farmers’ Produce Trade and

Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020. This law breaks the monopsony of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC), overseen by state governments, and enables farmers to sell their produce to entities other than APMC – it does not exclude APMCs – and prevents state governments from levying any market fee, cess or levy outside APMC areas. Further, it prevents state governments from levying “market fee or cess or levy, by whatever name called” on any farmer, trader or electronic trading and transaction platform. It also sets up a dispute resolution mechanism. Agriculture is a state subject under the Constitution; but food is a national market. This law enables farmers to access that market while remaining within the Constitutional confines of Union-State relations. A new enabling law has been enacted, granting greater flexibility but changes nothing else, hurts no farmer.

Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020. This law flows in a logical progression from the one above. It creates a legal framework of agreements within which farmers can engage with companies and wholesalers that buy in bulk and sell further. The law aims to write into these agreements pricing, transparency, payment mechanisms and manner of delivery. It places compliances on quality and standards – a power held by the middlemen in APMCs and to which the small farmer has no questioning recourse. At worst, competition between APMCs and companies will ensure a better price to the small farmer. In addition, as protection to small farmers, it prohibits acquiring



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ownership rights of farmers at any cost. It links the agreements with financial instruments like insurance and credit. Finally, it creates a dispute settlement mechanism, including an appellant authority.

Focus on farmers

Although procurement from farm-

ers by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) under the MSP will continue as it is, the performance data is not encouraging. In the past 15 years (2003 and 2018), procurement by government agencies has been 26.8 percent for wheat (procurement of 359 million tonnes versus production of 1,340 million tonnes) and

31.3 percent for rice (procurement of 488 million tonnes, production of 1,558 million tonnes). The surplus is purchased by moneylenders and traders at very low prices. The moneylender and traders buy independently or work as an agent of a bigger merchant of the nearby market. Clearly, the balance of power is against small farmers.

The same story plays out in horticulture. In the picturesque hills of Uttarakhand, for instance, small farmers leave their produce on the road in two to eight wooden boxes. The boxes lie there until a small truck from one of the traders at the APMC in Haldwani drives past and picks it up. The farmer can see the price on his phone. But the traders pay less than the market price. His tools of price cuts are size of the peaches or the extent of ripeness, all as per his decision, which is opaque. The farmer has no recourse but to accept the price. With the change in laws, and competition between middlemen and companies, the small farmer will definitely get a chance at higher price.

APMCs are not doing what they were supposed to; they are not working in the interest of farmers. Their monopsony status has entitled the worst practices – limited numbers of traders, reducing competition, cartelisation of traders,

undue deduction in the name of market fee, or commission charges. On the last, while the fees and charges are legally to be levied on traders, the cost is transferred to farmers by deducting the amount from their net proceeds. In some states, these fees are levied even when sale of agriculture produce takes place outside the market yard. These reforms could bring economic justice to small farmers.

Embrace prosperity economics

Agriculture accounts for more than 40% of the total people employed in India and it is imperative that sound reforms are brought in to energize this vital sector of India's economy. The government is committed to double the income of farmers and the latest reforms are designed to provide an impetus to this vital sector. As stated by PM Narendra Modi recently, “Agriculture and its related sectors such as agricultural infrastructure, food processing, storage, cold chains had seen walls between them. Now these walls are being removed.”

“These reforms will give farmers new markets, advantages of technology, and help bring investments. It is my country's farmers who will benefit the most from all this”.

HERITAGE SITES



Conservation without borders

India has been restoring several ancient temples and monuments across South-East Asian countries as a part of its development partnership initiatives. The recent conservation projects of the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India and partner countries has brought forth a rich cultural heritage.

The conservation work of ASI is being carried out at several heritage sites beyond the

national boundaries. India has been at the forefront of restoring heritage sites across South-East Asia, be it the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia or the My Son monuments in Vietnam. These initiatives can be attributed to the country's policy of promoting a healthy and mutually beneficial diplomatic outreach and bringing numerous facets of Indian cultural and civilizational heritage to the public at large. **BY JUHI MIRZA**



Greetings to the Government & People of India on the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day



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INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY



World leaders appreciate India's assistance during coronavirus pandemic

By Manish Chand

A CRISIS CAN TRIGGER ruin and catastrophe, but it also sometimes brings out the best in people and nations. More than any other country in the world, India has shown vividly how to creatively and resolutely harness challenges thrown by the ongoing Corona virus crisis to script its own resurgence as well as contribute to global recovery. Amid apocalyptic death, destruction and dislocation unleashed by a rampaging pandemic, India, the world's fifth largest economy and an emerging global power, has managed to keep its recovery rate high (> 95% in December 2020) as well as keep the fatality rate less than 1.5% (December 2020) - one of the lowest in the world. This has been achieved through multi-pronged efforts and initiatives by the Indian government, including a far-sighted

initiative to order a nation-wide lockdown in the early stage of the pandemic when there were barely 600 cases in the country.

World is one family
For a country of over 1.3 billion people, managing an epidemic that requires social distancing is an incredibly onerous task, but on balance, India has not only taken care of its own people infected by the virus, but has also complemented domestic efforts with timely international assistance to many countries. This trait of empathy and solidarity with friends and partners in the world is deeply embedded in India's civilisational ethos of *'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'* - The World is one family" and reflects the country's rising reputation as a global care-giver and first responder in crises, in the exalted spirit of "the world

is one family". India has been prompt to provide essential drugs and medical items to over 150 countries. This medical assistance was provided quietly, without any fanfare, earning India heartfelt gratitude and admiration of countries, big and small. From US President Donald Trump to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, leaders around the world have appreciated India's timely assistance against a merciless pandemic.

First Responder
The pandemic-related assistance also reaffirmed India's credentials as the first responder to humanitarian crises and a net security provider in the region. In a journey spanning over 7,500 nautical miles over 55 days, Indian Naval Ship Kesari travelled to the Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles and



delivered assistance to India's maritime neighbours. A part of Mission SAGAR, which crystallises Prime Minister Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), India's humanitarian assistance included supplies of essential food items, medicines, Ayurvedic medicines and deployment of Medical Assistance Teams (MAT) to Mauritius and Comoros. India also sent medical teams to Maldives, Mauritius, Comoros and Kuwait to support them deal with the pandemic.

Self-reliant India
The COVID-19 crisis has sown the seeds of an economic renaissance pivoted around *"Atmanirbhar Bharat"* that promises to revolutionise domestic manufacturing,

and make India the hub of global supply chains. The quest for self-reliance has produced tangible results, with India moving from being a net importer of COVID-19-related medical items to a net exporter. Currently, India is manufacturing over 500,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and over 300,000 N-95 masks every day. India is playing the role as the pharmacy of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic with its vast experience and deep knowledge in medicine, setting the tone for many regional and global initiatives, observed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Secretary-General Vladimir Norov.
India is also expected to play a major role in COVID-19 vaccine development and manufacturing. There are 6 vaccines including 3 indigenous and 3 joint ventures that were in various stages of clinical trials in December 2020. Two vaccines, from Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute (in collaboration with Astra-Zenca) have been given emergency use authorisation in first week of January 2020. PM Modi has reiterated that India considers vaccines as not only vital to good health but also as a global good, and it is India's duty to assist other countries in their fight against Covid-19.

Diplomatic Outreach
Given the transnational spread of the coronavirus pandemic, India launched an unprecedented diplomatic outreach to forge a coherent global response to the crisis. Prime Minister Modi displayed global leadership as he participated in various virtual multilateral summits and spoke to his counterparts from 61 countries. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to foreign ministers from 77 countries. Showcasing India's Neighbourhood First policy, PM Modi hosted a virtual conference of the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and pledged \$10 million SAARC Emergency Fund to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the region. At the first virtual G20 summit, PM Modi underlined the imperative for a new kind of humane globalisation, which goes beyond economic and financial calculations. India's advocacy for people-centric globalisation was reflected the G-20's decision on debt service suspension for developing countries.

Manish Chand is CEO & Editor-in-Chief of India Writes Network and India and the World

AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

Self-reliant India campaign



THE AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABIYAN (ANBA), announced during the peak of COVID19 pandemic has now evolved into a major programme for enhancing national capacities of India to make a stronger contribution globally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated ANBA when he announced a special comprehensive economic relief package of approx US\$ 270 billion (equivalent to 10% of India's GDP), in May 2020. ANBA caters to the increased need for a more trusted, resilient, reliable and redundant supply chain in the wake of COVID19 pandemic. ANBA is a bold scheme having potential of transforming manufacturing sector in the country for steering it onto the path of rapid development and growth.

Coronavirus pandemic
With the advent of the novel coronavirus pandemic, a new world economic order was emerging and nations were just coming to terms with it. India's Government under the leadership of PM Modi quickly realised this and altered existing policies and introduced several multi-sectoral initiatives with a vision of 'Vocal for Local' - use of indigenous products and its promotion in global markets. The initial steps for Aatmanirbhar Bharat were taken during the course of the pandemic, be it the production of PPEs and masks, or indeed of ventilators and testing kits.

PM Modi stated India has the talent, qualitative and quantitative production capacity with a strong supply chain to become self-reliant, which stands on five pillars: 'economy', that introduces quantum jump; 'infrastructure' in tune with the new India, a 'system' based on 21st century technology; India's 'vibrant demography'; and 'demand', which will utilise our requirement and supply chain to full capacity. Government's plan of turning this crisis into opportunity had a two pronged approach: undertaking of interim measures such as liquidity infusion and direct cash transfers to migrant workers and daily-wage earners; and long-term labour and legislative reforms, among others, in growth-critical sectors that will make them globally competitive and attractive with the main focus

on credit provision, infrastructure, access to market, skill development and identifying job creators.
ANBA seeks to build greater global partnerships on the basis of a stronger and self-reliant India. In the words of Prime Minister, "When India speaks of becoming self-reliant, it does not advocate a self-centered system. In India's self-reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace."
Engagement with the world is fundamental in India's beliefs and traditions. During the pandemic, India emerged as a "Pharmacy of the World" and not only met its own medicine requirements but supplied to the rest of the world. As we now look at the supply of vaccines, Prime Minister has assured that we will live up fully to our international responsibilities.
ANBA also provides greater opportunities to our diaspora across the world to be a partner in India's growth and development. Our diaspora can bring in resources, technology, best practices and innovations towards the endeavour of self-reliant India.
Under ANBA, a number of measures have been announced by the government towards incentivising business and investment focused growth, enabling investment and trade reforms, opening up India as an investment destination in various sectors including minerals, defence, space, atomic energy, civil aviation, coal and agricultural sectors.
Infact, the structural reforms in the agricultural sector, such as amendments to Essential Commodities Act or agricultural marketing reforms or allowing barrier-free Inter-state trade and enabling an environment for contract farming, are even being characterised as a "1991 moment for Indian agriculture". Apart from these, ANBA package announced earlier provides relief to the poor, and support to the rural workers and farmers.
These initiatives include Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY); allocation of food grains to migrants; Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana; additional funding of up to Rs 3 lakh crore for MSMEs; Scheme for Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (FME); and others.

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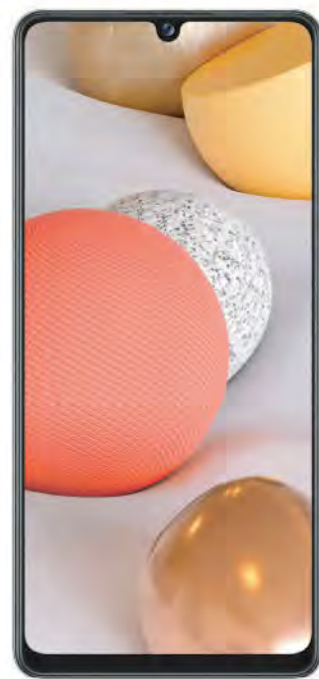
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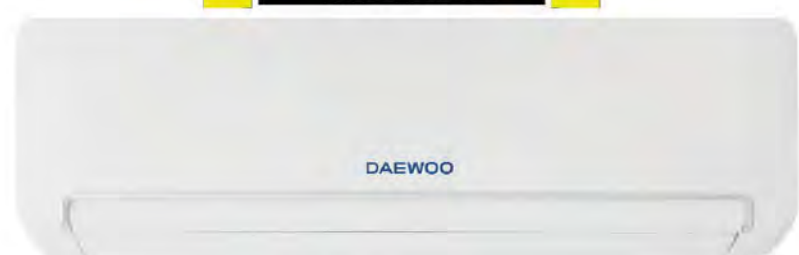
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