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**HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETES  
EMPEROR OF JAPAN**

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Emperor Naruhito of Japan on the occasion of his birthday. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to Emperor Naruhito, and the friendly people of Japan further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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**GLOBAL  
SITUATION**

Confirmed cases  
**111,518,562**

Deaths  
**2,468,646**

Countries affected  
**192**

**OMAN**

Confirmed cases  
**139,692**  
EXPATS: 59,366  
OMANIS: 80,326

Recovered  
**130,848**

Deaths  
**1,555**

Currently sick  
**7,289**

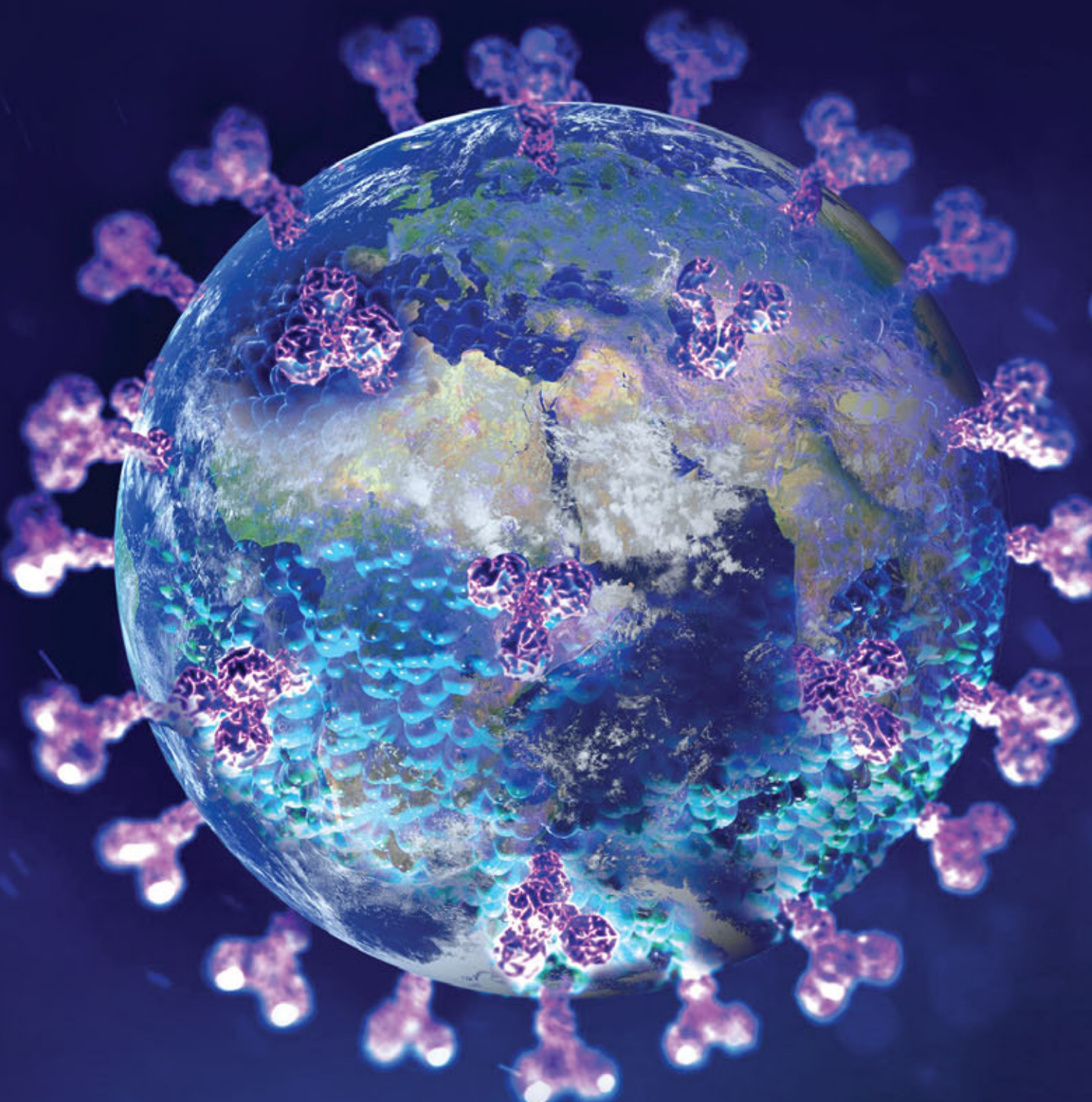
Recovery rate  
**94%**

Tested people  
**571,472**

# ONE YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC

HOW OUR LIVES HAVE CHANGED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

**THINGS THAT  
HAVE CHANGED  
OUR LIVES**



Mandatory mask wearing

Social distancing

Compulsory temperature checks

Online deliveries

Land borders closed

Hotels closed to customers

Lockdowns across country

Religious places shut

Closure of schools and colleges

Reliance on virtual world

Closure of parks, beaches and cinemas

Restaurants only open to take-aways/delivery

Suspension of flights

Mandatory quarantine on arrivals

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** On February 23, 2020, people in Oman lived their lives the way they always used to: after dropping their children off at school, mum and dad would head to work.

Weekends were often spent with friends, either at their homes, or outdoors at parks or beaches. All that changed the very next day, when on the 24th, the first cases of the coronavirus were detected in Oman.

Locals and expatriates in Oman

have shared their experiences of how the pandemic has completely changed their lives, from the year since it happened.

Oman has so far reported a total of 139,692 cases of infection. More than 130,848 people have recovered, but 1,555 have lost their lives from the disease.

However, tens of thousands of people in the country have also been vaccinated against the virus, as part of the national immunisation campaign.

To curb the spread of the pandemic

in the country, the Supreme Committee to deal with COVID-19 adopted a number of preventive measures.

**Preventive measures**

Lockdowns were instituted, restaurants, hotels, and shops were shut, and supermarkets that provided essential supplies were needed to close early and operate at 50 per cent customer capacity.

Schools and universities were among the first to close, with classes switching to online modes of teaching,

and while all of these activities are being reopened to the public in phases, with a number of precautions being taken, including social distancing, the installation of hand sanitiser points, the compulsory wearing of masks, and temperature checks, the unprecedented changes around the world to prevent and deal with the virus have strongly affected people's lives.

"Life has changed a lot – we are required to stay in most of the time, and don't have the same freedom to move around as we used to previously," said

Jassim Al Balushi, the deputy head of training and professional development at the National University of Science and Technology. "We don't take our children to the same places we did before.

"There is only some extent to which I can make sure they are well," he said. "For example, they have started going to school once again, and I can take a lot of precautions, but even that alone might not guarantee their safety, because it depends on the safety measures at the school as well." **>A3**

**MILESTONE**

## A wonderful, monumental 46-year journey for Times



*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** Oman's largest English daily celebrates its 46th anniversary today.

More than 46 years ago, *Times of Oman*, an integral part of Muscat Media Group, was born with the intention of creating an English newspaper to give people with the latest developments in Oman.

Since then, it has grown every single day. Today, more than 3.5 million people across the world read *Times of Oman's* stories every day.

The paper was founded by late Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali in 1975.

Though he is no longer with

us, *Times of Oman* continues his legacy and remains the market leader in both digital and print.

During the pandemic, when the printing of papers was temporarily halted, *Times of Oman* launched its digital e-paper to ensure that its readers continue to receive the latest news.

Then on August 24, 2020, Oman got its first evening e-paper. You know you can rely on Times which is always first with the breaking news, be it print, digital, radio and TV.

And we will do everything we can to keep it that way – today, tomorrow, and every day. Thank you all for the 46 wonderful years!

**TRAVEL BAN**

## Supreme Committee suspends flights from ten countries

**MUSCAT:** To protect individuals and society and to safeguard the outcome of efforts made over the past period, the Supreme Committee decided to suspend incoming flights from ten countries, which are: Sudan, Lebanon, South Africa, Brazil, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia.

In addition, the Committee has also suspended arrivals from any other country if the travellers happened to have visited the above-mentioned ten countries within 14 days before applying to enter the Sultanate.

The ban takes effect from 12 am of next Thursday and continues for a period of 15 days.

An exemption is granted to

Omani citizens, diplomats and health workers and their families who all have to undergo the usual approved health procedures governing entry to the Sultanate.

As part of its ongoing session, the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic held a meeting on Monday under the chairmanship of Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, to discuss updates about the pandemic, measures of protection against the virus and ways to curb its spread.

The Supreme Committee studied the impact of the global epidemiological situation on health systems in different coun-

tries of the world, particularly amid the spread of mutated variants of the virus linked to travel.

In this context, the Committee pondered over the potential risks lest the new strains might prevail in the Sultanate and exert pressure on its health establishments—a likely possibility indicated by local reports and PCR tests conducted on incoming passengers.

**Avoid travel**

The Supreme Committee urges all citizens and residents to avoid travel abroad, except under extreme necessity. The Committee prays to the Almighty Allah to protect all people against all harm.

-ONA

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Isha.....	7:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:18am

# Special corner on late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos at National Museum

The special section will convey comprehensively all the aspects of life of the late Sultan Qaboos



**MUSCAT:** The National Museum is setting up a special corner named after the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour.

The initiative comes as part of efforts to develop museum narrative art, which is considered

among innovative pillars of documentation and which aims to enrich the experience of visitors to this leading cultural edifice.

Jamal Hassan Al Musawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, said: "This corner will immortalise this towering figure in Omani history (Sultan Qaboos) and perpetuate his memory in the

hearts and minds of Omanis and expatriates. It will convey, almost comprehensively, all the aspects of life of the late Sultan Qaboos, both as an Omani individual and as a monarch. It is scheduled to inaugurate the Sultan Qaboos Corner by the end of this year, unless adverse conditions intervene otherwise, given the exceptional con-

ditions under coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic."

Al-Musawi pointed out that the National Museum was honoured by the Royal orders issued by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to transfer Royal 'sultani antiques' to the National Museum and make them available to members of the public.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Musawi explained that steps are underway to establish the Sultan Qaboos Corner, which

will showcase the most sought-after "Letter 1" - or what was often referred to as "The Will", addressed by the late Sultan to the Royal Family Council. It is the first unique rarity received by the National Museum. It will be on show in the State Symbols Section of the museum.

"Current action focuses on the stage of internal equipping, including the forging of show boxes. This will be followed by the stage of designing and fixtures for Royal sultani items.

Al-Musawi added that a minor, first-of-kind corner named "Armitage" will be established at the museum. It will be a miniature expo showcasing relics from the Islamic civilization in Russia and it will run on for one year, renewable for a similar duration.

"Meanwhile, close coordination is underway with Louvre Abu Dhabi museums to designate a corner

in the National Museum for antiques from the Ottoman civilization. Muscat will for the first time host such exhibits, the latter being in the context of cooperation with Louvre Abu Dhabi, which began four years ago," Al-Musawi added. Jamal Al Musawi outlined efforts undertaken towards the restoration and enrichment of museum collections, noting that the National Museum laid emphasis on programmes of preservation and maintenance to raise the standard of Sultan Qaboos-related items under its custody.

As many as 706 items were restored in 2019 and a total of 1,578 others in 2020, while a selection of antiques from the Ministry of Heritage and Culture is being restored. Since 2018, preservation services are offered to individuals and establishments against a certain charge, Al-Musawi added.

## Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

41,504 REACH

**Times of Oman**  
The Government Communications Centre has denied rumours being on social media regarding the lockdown in Muscat Governorate



TIMESOFOMAN.COM  
**Government slams rumours about lockdown**



**Government slams rumours about lockdown**  
A story on Government slamming reports of a lockdown in Muscat reached 41,504 people and had 9,016 engagements on Facebook.

### MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

25,600 VIEWS



**Video on strengthening immunity**

The video on strengthening your immunity got 25,600 views and reached 60,900 people on Facebook.

### MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

3,445 VIEWS



**Maghrib Minute newswrap**

The Maghrib Minute newswrap in Hindi had 3,445 views and 160 likes on Instagram.

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### Indian Social Club Oman

The Indian Social Club, Oman, is organising a condolence meeting for Late Shri Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji on Wednesday, 24th February 2021 from 4.00pm to 5.00pm.



Those Interested In joining may do so with the following link. Indian Social Club Oman is inviting you to their scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: **CONDOLENCE MEETING FOR SHRI KANAKSI KHIMJI**  
Wednesday, Feb 24, 2021 04:00 PM


Meeting ID: 847 7211 2771  
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NCSI DATA

## Number of white-collar expat workers in Oman up again

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** An increase in the number of white-collar expatriate workers is being seen in Oman once again, according to government figures.

Numbers released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that the number of expatriate workers stood at 1,439,908 million in January 2021, up from 1,406,976 at the end of December, 2020.

However, the numbers of expatriates holding bachelors' degrees increased from 112,186 at the end of December, 2020, to 114,812 in January, 2021, a 2.3 per cent increase. Similarly, Oman had more expatriates with masters' degrees and PhDs (9,100) in January 2021, as compared to the end of last year (8,892). There's also been an increase of expat workers with general diplomas: 242,341 workers in January, 2021, compared to 236,798 last December.

During this period, the numbers of expatriate workers lacking basic education has fallen, from 1,015,260 workers in December 2020, to 1,039,125 in January 2021.

Since the start of the year, about 8,700 Bangladeshi expa-



triate have come to the country for work. They make up Oman's largest expat community, with 549,234 workers. The numbers of Indians have also increased by around 8,150, to reach 491,138.

About 5,000 Pakistani nationals have also arrived to Oman this year to take up work, boosting their numbers to 182,293. There are now 44,185 Filipinos in the country, an increase of about 2,000 workers since last December. The numbers of workers from Egypt, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Tanzania, and Uganda have also increased slightly.

The private sector employs the lion's share of these workers: 79 per cent of expatriates (1,148,871 non-Omanis) are employed there, while the government sector has about 41,866 workers as of January 2021, down from 43,842 at the

end of December. About a quarter of a million foreign workers are directly employed by families.

Muscat is still home to roughly a third of the expatriate workers (587,547), while there about 200,000 workers in North Al Batinah, and more than 150,000 in the southern Dhofar region.

Al Dakhiliyah and South Al Batinah each have another 100,000 workers living there. There are between 75,000 and 80,000 workers in both North and South Sharqiyah, while 45,000 expat workers are based in Al Dhahirah.

The central Governorate of Wusta has about 25,000 workers, and there are nearly 40,000 workers in Al Buraimi. The northern Governorate of Musandam has the smallest expatriate worker representation in the country, at just 11,919 workers.

PANDEMIC

## FROM A1 Impact felt across society

The steps taken to contain the pandemic have been strongly felt in the economy, said Al Balushi, describing the effect on his job.

"I am unsure of what the future holds," he said. "I do not know if my job is likely to remain in the long-term. Our personal and professional lives have been compromised by this pandemic. As an academic, my job has become difficult over the past year: I cannot teach the way I used to before.

"Previously, I used to take lessons in the classroom, so I could see my students interact with me and each other, and the teaching was much, much easier," he added. "Now, you are teaching, but you do not know whether or not students are learning and participating in class.

Ali Al Barwani, a health and safety manager, said, "Switching to online practices worked fine initially, but after a while, we really felt like going out and meeting people, even if it meant following social distancing practices. This lack of in-person interaction really affected our productivity. Too much screen time was counter-productive for us."

It was the same for Indian expat Sushil Mehta, an engineer working in Muscat. His was one of many offices that decided to allow its people to work from home to cut chances of infection. While that was a step taken to protect

employees, it did come with some challenges.

"When we were required to work from home, the work pressure was actually more, because we were unsure of what everyone else was doing," he admitted. "It was more difficult to coordinate work. When you're in the office, your superior knows the work you are doing, and does not need to follow up with you all the time.

"Because we were working from home, some of the people we worked with also assumed we were available to them all the time, when this was simply not true," he added. "A lot of our colleagues have also left during the pandemic, so when businesses began reopening, it meant we had more work to do, but there weren't enough people to share it around."

To bring home expatriate workers who'd been let go of by their companies because of the pandemic, many countries organised repatriation flights for their citizens in Oman and other overseas countries. As a result of this, the country's expatriate population dropped from 1,942,440 at the start of 2020 to 1,739,692 at the end of last year. The country's total population on 1 January, 2021 was 4,481,705, having decreased from 4,640,927 in January 2020.

"My company tried to keep me for as long as possible even when

the pandemic affected our business, but in the end, I took the decision to return to India," said Rakesh Rajan, who left last December "I did search for jobs here, but the opportunities coming my way were not good enough, and would not let me maintain the same quality and standard of life I need to give my family."

According to Anuya Phule, a psychotherapist at Hatat Polyclinic, the preventive measures taken during the pandemic have caused a lot of mental fatigue to people, adding that it will take some time for people to overcome these issues.

"Different age groups have been affected differently by the pandemic," she said. "I see a lot of teenagers who don't have the will to study or learn anymore, because they're forced to stay at home all the time.

"Similarly, smaller children are putting on weight and spending more time on their gadgets because their parents won't let them go to play outside," she added. "Unless schools reopen, these problems might not go away.

Explaining how this affected adults, she said, "Homemakers are more anxious because their outlet to social interaction has gone, which means they are more tense, and working professionals feel guilty, in case they contract the disease and pass it on to their family members."

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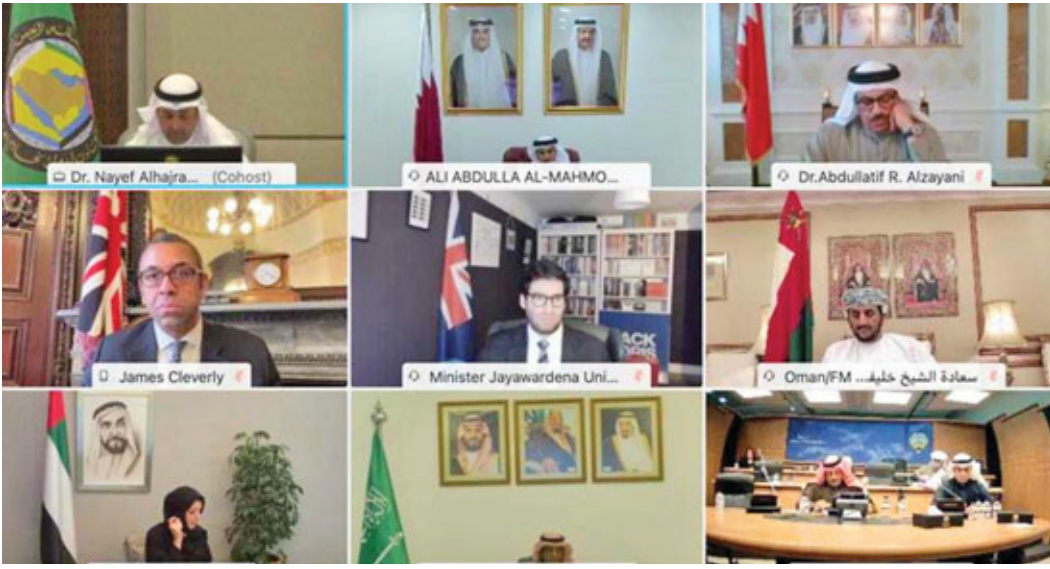




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JOINT MINISTERIAL MEETING



**JOINT MINISTERIAL MEETING:** The Sultanate was represented in the meeting by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs. – OMA

## GCC countries and UK discuss ways to enhance cooperation

**MUSCAT:** Oman took part in the joint ministerial meeting held via video-conferencing between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United Kingdom (UK) on Monday.

The Sultanate was represented in the meeting by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs.

During the meeting, the GCC


side in the meeting was headed by Dr Abdullatif Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Chairman of the GCC Ministerial Council for the current term whilst it was chaired from the British side by James Cleverly, Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa.

The meeting touched on relations of cooperation between the GCC countries and the UK

and means of enhancing them in various fields, as well as exchanging views on the regional and international issues of common interests.

Dr Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, GCC Secretary General, Ranil Jayawardena, UK Minister for International Trade and officials in the Foreign Ministry took part in the meeting.

– OMA





**Shri Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji**

← 1936 - 2021 →

We are deeply saddened for the loss of  
Shri Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji.

Our thoughts and prayers are forever with him and his family in this time of grief. Please accept our heartfelt condolences. We sincerely pray that may his great soul rest in eternal peace.



**CORRIGENDUM** 

## TENDER REVOKED

Please note that the tender no: RFP 21/005 which appeared in this publication on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 has been revoked until further notice.

**10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY - 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

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# OMAN



ASSIGNED BY HIS MAJESTY

## Al Harrasi to preside over His Majesty the Sultan's Hockey Cup



Dr. Abdullah bin Nassir Al Harrasi. - ONA

**MUSCAT:** Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Dr. Abdullah bin Nassir Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, will patronise over the final match of His Majesty the Sultan's Hockey Cup for 2020 on Monday, March 1, 2021, in the presence of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The 50th edition of the cup saw the participation of 14 clubs, namely Al Nasr, Al Salam, Sohar, A'Seeb, Muscat, Salalah, Majees, Al Ittihad, Ahli Sidab, Quriyat, Al Bashayer, Nizwa, Bausher and Dhofar. -ONA

PRESIDENT OF GUYANA

## HM sends cable

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on the occasion of his country's

National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes to President Ali and his country's friendly people. - ONA

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

## HM sends greetings

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes of good health and happiness to Sultan Bolkiah, and his country's friendly people further progress and welfare. - ONA

TRANSPORT

## Notice for foreign transporters

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** All the foreign transport companies have been advised to reshuffle their businesses by contracting with the national and local transporters as the permission for the entry of 'empty' foreign transport vehicles to Oman will end on October 19, 2021.

The notice issued by the Ministry on October 11, 2020, and the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology exhorts the use of national transport means by lessening the use of foreign vehicles.

CULTURAL ATTACHE'S OFFICE

## Omani students in Texas safe: Cultural Attaché

**WASHINGTON:** The Cultural Attaché's Office at Oman Embassy here reaffirmed that Omani students in the United States (US) city of Texas, partly overwhelmed by a winter storm, are safe and sound.

The Office described the students' conditions as "good and reassuring."

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Dr Talal Mohammed Al-Balushi, Cultural Attaché at the Sultanate's Embassy in Washington, said that the snow storm swept through the south-western side of Texas and that the University of North Texas is far from the centre of the storm.

Dr Talal stressed that weather conditions there are stable,



and he advised Omani students to stick to the instructions issued by the university and US authorities. - ONA

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- Preferably companies involved in catering industry
- Having at least one 40-foot trailer
- 10-20 ton frozen (thermo-king) trucks all with PDO spec.
- Driver and Petrol to be provided by the supplier.
- Contract for 3 years.
- Able to meet the schedule/criteria mentioned in the table below:

#	Capacity	Locations	Trips Per Month	Stickers Required
1	18 ton (1200 ctn)	NIMR-MARMUL-HARWEEL	3	PDO
2	18 ton (1200 ctn)	FAHUD-KHULOOD-YIBAL	3	PDO
3	18 ton (1200 ctn)	HAIMA-SHAMA-SAIWAN CCED-QARNALAM-BURHAN	3	PDO
4	18 ton (1200 ctn)	OCCEP-BP-SAIRAWL	3	PDO/OCCPEP/BP
5	18 ton (1200 ctn)	DALEEL-SAFAH-SHAMS-LEKWAIR	3	PDO

Interested parties are requested to submit their company profiles + price-per-trip to the locations mentioned to: [journeyplan.oman@newrest.eu](mailto:journeyplan.oman@newrest.eu) and contact us on 24493124 / 24499127 / 24497128

Last date of submission: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021



## Ministry of Defence

### TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Document Price per copy (RO)
SUPPLY OF LUMBER AND PLYWOOD FOR ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN	06/2021	02/03/2021	09/03/2021	142 RO
MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY OF SPARE PARTS FOR LIFE RAFTS FOR ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN	07/2021	02/03/2021	09/03/2021	150 RO

1. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs on the working days.
2. Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in Oman.

**Buckle up. Enjoy the ride.**  
**Buy NOW and SAVE**

- Cash Gift** from RO 1,600 to RO 3,200
- Free Registration & Insurance** (Oman & UAE) on all models
- Free Service** of 3 years/50,000 Kms, on all models
- Free 5 years/Unlimited Mileage warranty** on all models

Scan the QR Code to check out the SUZUKI DZIRE

Offer is valid from 21.01.2021 to 31.03.2021. Cash gift is optional and varies based on Model/Variant/Model year/Year of manufacture, and can be adjusted against down-payment. Insurance for the 1st year (Private yellow plate). Free Service is for 3 Years or 50,000 Kms whichever comes earlier. 5 Years/Unlimited mileage warranty is through A&A, in accordance with their terms & conditions. Sales to Government Institutions & Ministries, Rent-a-Car, Taxi, and Driving schools are excluded from the scheme. Vehicles shown are for illustrative purpose only.

MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC | 94760010: Watayah | 94106970: For branches at - Salalah | Sohar | Nizwa | Sur | Ibra | 800 76 200 | [suzuki.moosagroup.com](http://suzuki.moosagroup.com) | [suzuki.oman](https://www.facebook.com/suzuki.oman) | [suzukioman](https://www.instagram.com/suzukioman) | [Suzuki Global](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuzuki)

**VISION REAL ECONOMY GCC FUND**

### NOTICE TO UNIT HOLDERS

The Fund Management Body of Vision Real Economy GCC Fund in their meeting held on 21 February' 2021, approved to pay cash dividend of 6% i.e. 60 baiza per unit for the financial year ended 31st December 2020, to the unit holders as of record date of 4th March 2021.

In case of any queries,

Please contact Mr. Mohammed AL- Mahrezi at +968-24726020 OR Email: [fundoperations@investvis.com](mailto:fundoperations@investvis.com)



## A'SAFFA MOMS COOK WITH HERBS AND LOTS OF LOVE

When A'Saffa's delicious fresh chicken is combined with a mother's love - it becomes the world's best dish.

Omani, natural and halal - it's a name you can trust.

#AsaffaMoms







CORONAVIRUS

## All UK adults to be given coronavirus vaccine by July 31, says PM Johnson

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged that every adult in Britain will be given a jab of the COVID-19 vaccine by the end of July, local media reported Sunday.



"We will now aim to offer a jab to every adult by the end of July, helping us protect the most vulnerable sooner, and take further steps to ease some of the restrictions in place," Johnson told Sky News.

The British government has previously set a target to offer vaccines to all adults by September.

According to Johnson, people aged 50 and over and those with underlying health conditions will now be offered a jab by April 15.

More than 17.2 million people in Britain have been given the first jab of the coronavirus vaccine, according to the latest official figures.

"But there should be no doubt -- the route out of lockdown will

be cautious and phased, as we all continue to protect ourselves and those around us," he said.

Johnson's announcement came as he is set to unveil his "roadmap" exiting the current coronavirus

lockdown on Monday. It is widely expected that schools in England would start to open on March 8.

England is currently under the third national lockdown since outbreak of the pandemic in the country. Similar restriction measures are also in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Johnson has said he would take a "prudent" approach to lift the lockdown to ensure the process is "irreversible".

Another 10,406 people in Britain have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 4,105,675, according to official figures released Saturday. **Xinhua**



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LATEST DATA

### India's COVID tally tops 11mn

**NEW DELHI:** India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 11-million mark, reaching 11,005,850 on Monday as 14,199 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours, said the latest data from the fed-

eral health ministry. According to the official data, the death toll mounted to 156,385 as 83 coronavirus patients died since Sunday morning. **Xinhua**

## DEAL OF THE DAY

**APPLE GOLDEN IRAN**

**FEB. 23 ONLY** OMR / BOX APPROX 2.8KG **0.690**

### VISION AL KHAIR GCC FUND

## NOTICE TO UNIT HOLDERS

The Fund Management Body of Vision Al Khair GCC Fund in their meeting held on 21th February' 2021, approved to pay cash dividend of 2% i.e. 20 baiza per unit for the financial year ended 31st December 2020, to the unit holders as of record date of 4th March 2021.

In case of any queries,  
Please contact  
Mr. Mohammed AL -Mahrezi  
at +968-24726020  
OR  
Email: fundoperations@investvis.com

ANTI-COUP PROTESTS

### General strike goes ahead in Myanmar despite threats

**NAYPYITAW:** Protesters gathered in cities and towns across Myanmar on Monday as they answered the call for a general strike.

The industrial action brought large parts of the country to a standstill even as the military junta warned that confrontation could cost lives.

Despite the veiled threat from the military, people came out onto the streets as part of the "Spring Revolution" in support of the Civil Disobedience Movement — a nebulous organization that is pushing for open resistance to the junta in an effort to reinstate the civilian government under the democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi.

The military leadership had warned against Monday's general strike on Sunday in a statement broadcast over the state-controlled television channel MRTV. **dw**

## DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

**Nitin Jamnadas Khimji,**  
Management and Staff of Al Kahf Trading Co LLC  
extends sincere condolence  
to Khimji Ramdas Family and staff  
on the sad demise of  
**KANAKSI KHIMJI**

*May the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace, and grant strength and solace to the bereaved family.*

شركة الكهف للتجارة ش.م.م.  
**Al Kahf Trading Co. L.L.C.**

AL JAZEIRA SERVICES CO. SAOG		P.O. Box 2865, Ruwi, P.C 112, Sultanate of Oman Tel.: 24706499, Fax: 24703653																																																																																																																																																																																																						
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT		CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020																																																																																																																																																																																																						
<p><b>Dear Shareholders,</b> On behalf of Board of Directors of Al Jazeera Services Co. SAOG, I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.</p> <p><b>Profits and Assets</b> The revenue from catering and allied services business for the year 2020 increased by 3% to RO 7,714,085 compared to revenue of RO 7,514,947 for the year 2019. The operating profit of the Company was RO 792,324 down by 11% against RO 895,163 for the year 2019. The subdued business conditions due to Covid-19 disruptions and effects of low oil prices resulted in a decrease in operating profit for the year 2020.</p> <p>The loss from the investment segment for the year 2020 was RO 126,431 against a profit of RO 196,503 reported for the year 2019.</p> <p>The share of profit from associate company, Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles Co. SAOG, was up by 114% to RO 1,606,570 against RO 749,012 reported for the year 2019.</p> <p>The net profit after tax for the year ended on 31 December 2020 was up by 32% to RO 2,166,610 compared to RO 1,639,464 for the year 2019.</p> <p>The shareholders' equity as on 31 December 2020 was up by 3% to RO 18,276,875 against RO 17,708,197 for the year 2019. Therefore, the net assets per share as on 31 December 2020 was 164 baiza against 159 baiza as on 31 December 2019.</p> <p><b>Corporate Governance</b> I am pleased to confirm that your Company has adhered to all the applicable regulations covering Corporate Governance in Oman. A report on Corporate Governance and Management Discussion and Analysis forms part of the Annual Report 2020.</p> <p><b>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</b> The Company acknowledges its corporate social responsibilities and contributed to the organizations engaged in charitable and community development activities. The amount spent in this regard in the year 2020 was RO 12,000 and we propose to allocate RO 15,000 in the year 2021.</p> <p><b>Dividend</b> The Board of Directors has recommended a cash dividend of 25% (25 baiza per share) amounting to RO 2,792,930 for the year 2020 to the Shareholders registered as on the date of the Annual General Meeting.</p> <p><b>Future outlook</b> We remain cautiously optimistic and expect our catering business to withstand the challenging business environment. We also expect our associate company, Al Anwar Ceramics Tiles Co. SAOG to provide sustainable contribution to our profit. Our outlook for the future remains stable.</p> <p><b>Acknowledgements</b> On behalf of the Board of Directors, We express our deep gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his dynamic leadership and exemplary vision and pray Almighty Allah to protect His Majesty the Sultan and help Oman continue its progress under his wise leadership.</p> <p>We extend our sincere thanks to our Shareholders, Customers, Bankers, Muscat Securities Market, Capital Market Authority and other Government agencies for their continued support. My appreciation also goes to the company's management and staff for their contributions and commitment to the company.</p> <p><b>Abdurehda Mustafa Sultan</b> Deputy Chairman</p> <p><small>The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder, who requests them, either in Arabic or English, within 7 days from the receipt of the request</small></p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Group 2020 RO</th> <th>Parent Company 2020 RO</th> <th>Group 2019 RO</th> <th>Parent Company 2019 RO</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>ASSETS</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-current assets</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Furniture and equipment</td> <td>8,651</td> <td>577</td> <td>9,635</td> <td>157</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Goodwill</td> <td>90,000</td> <td>-</td> <td>90,000</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investment in subsidiaries</td> <td>-</td> <td>320,444</td> <td>-</td> <td>320,444</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investment in 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	<b>1,604,078</b>	<b>98,000</b>	<b>1,903,387</b>	<b>87,721</b>																																																																																																																																																																																																				
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>2,109,256</b>	<b>138,129</b>	<b>2,410,151</b>	<b>125,027</b>																																																																																																																																																																																																				
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>	<b>20,386,131</b>	<b>18,259,196</b>	<b>20,118,348</b>	<b>17,685,577</b>																																																																																																																																																																																																				
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SPORTS



# Sodhi, Conway shine as NZ beat Australia

New Zealand thrashed Australia by 53 runs in the first T20I to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match T20I series



**CHRISTCHURCH:** Devon Conway played a stunning knock before Ish Sodhi spun a web over Australia to help New Zealand register an emphatic win in the first T20I on Monday.

New Zealand thrashed Australia by 53 runs in the first T20I to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match T20I series. If Conway starred with the bat for New Zealand, it was an all-round bowling performance from the hosts that saw them clinch the game. Australia had reduced New Zealand to 19/3 before Conway unleashed the beast within himself to hammer an unbeaten 99 off 59 balls and guided the hosts to 184/5.

The visitors never looked comfortable in the chase and kept los-

ing wickets at regular intervals only to get dismissed for 131 runs. For New Zealand, Sodhi picked four while Boult and Southee scalped two wickets each.

Chasing 185 runs, Australia got off to the worst possible start as Tim Southee and Trent Boult both struck in their first overs. Southee ensured Finch's lean patch continued while Boult dismissed Josh Philippe in the second over.

Matthew Wade and Glenn Maxwell too didn't bother the scorers much and were soon in the dugout after Boult and Southee again wreaked havoc to reduce

Australia to 19/4.

Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis tried rescuing Australia from the precarious position but spinner Ish Sodhi joined the party.

Sodhi came out firing on all cylinders and first broke the partnership of 37 runs between Marsh and Stonis and then dismissed Ashton Agar and Daniel Sams in the same over.

Marsh was the only batsman who got going for Australia but he too failed to convert a good start into a match-winning knock and was dismissed for 45.

Earlier after being asked to bat,

New Zealand suffered an early jolt as Daniel Sams removed opener Martin Guptill for a duck off the third ball of the match.

If Guptill's poor form wasn't enough for the New Zealand players, the leading wicket-taker in the tenth season of Big Bash League (BBL) Jhye Richardson castled Tim Seifert in the third over to pile further misery on the Kiwis. Skipper Kane Williamson's wicket in the next over was an insult to the injury as New Zealand lost three wickets before the completion of the Powerplay. **ANI**

FOOTBALL



## Manchester City maintain winning streak with victory over Arsenal

**LONDON:** Manchester City maintained their winning run in the Premier League after securing a 1-0 win over Arsenal here on Sunday.

With this victory, Manchester City made it 18 straight wins in all competitions and equalled the club record 11 consecutive away victories. Also, it was their 13th consecutive Premier League victory. In the 2nd minute, Raheem Sterling leapt high to nod in Riyad Mahrez's right-wing cross and it proved to be decisive as Manchester City consolidated their top position on the Premier League table.

Sterling could have scored twice more in the first five minutes while Ilkay Gundogan was denied by Bernd Leno, who tipped away his 56th-minute shot. At the other end, Mohamed Elneny drove wide after some hesitancy in the City defence with 17 minutes left.

Manchester City now have 59 points from 25 games while the second-placed Manchester United have 49 points from as many games.

Pep Guardiola's men will next play against Borussia Monchengladbach in the Champions League on February 25. **ANI**

PREMIER LEAGUE

## Never going to say it's done until it's done, says Solskjaer

**MANCHESTER:** Even though Manchester City enjoy a massive 10-point lead at the top of the Premier League table, Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has said that the title race is not over just yet.

Manchester United returned to winning ways in the Premier League after securing a 3-1 win over Newcastle United. Prior to

this, the club was held to a draw by Everton and West Brom in the league. However, the team put on a dominating display against Newcastle United to ensure they secure three points from the game. "I am never going to say it's done until it's done. We have seen so many examples of teams that have hung in there, have kept working and have kept doing their own

jobs. Something might happen. It's not something we think about -- we just think about our own performances. That's the only thing we can control. We have got loads to play for, and as a team we've got loads to improve on," Goal.com quoted Solskjaer as saying.

"To build momentum by going on the pitch and playing well is important. We have had a couple of

setbacks in West Brom and Sheffield United where I can sit here and explain why we did not get the points we deserved but that's not what I want to do. For me, the boys are really focused. We have been good at recovering mentally and physically. It's not easy playing Thursday night [in the Europa League] and coming back here. Maybe that's why we needed 45

minutes to get going," he added.

During the match, Marcus Rashford had put Manchester United ahead in the 30th minute when he nutmegged Emil Krafth, beat him again inside the penalty area, and drilled the ball beyond goalkeeper Karl Darlow at his near post. The lead, however, did not last long as Newcastle United managed to equalise six minutes later through

Allan Saint-Maximin. Daniel James had restored the hosts' lead in the 57th minute before Bruno Fernandes sealed the victory from the penalty spot with 15 minutes left, following Willock's foul on Rashford. Manchester United now have 49 points, ahead of third-placed Leicester City on goal difference and 10 points behind leaders Manchester City. **ANI**

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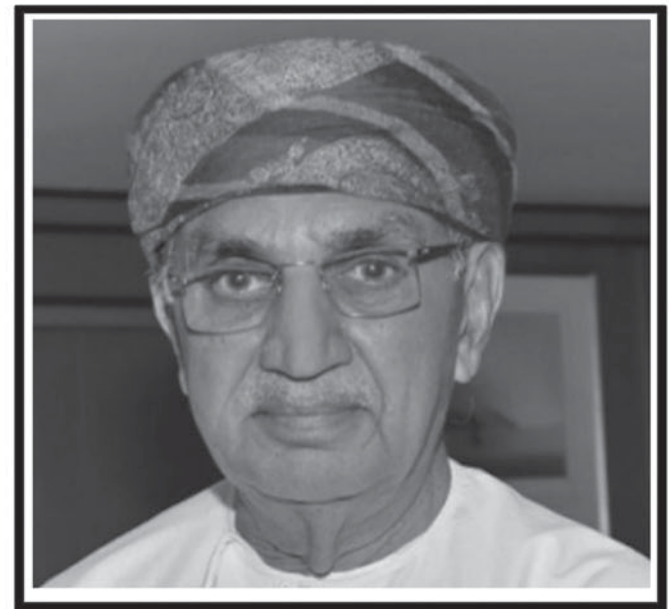
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## CONDOLENCES

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### SHREE KANAKSI GOKALDAS KHIMJI

We offer our sincere condolences to the bereaved family and may God give them enough strength to bear this irreparable loss.

May the Almighty bless Kanak Bhai's soul and may he rest in Eternal Peace.

FAMILY MEMBERS OF LATE QAIS ABDULMUNIUM AL ZAWAWI

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# JAPAN SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



## CELEBRATING THE EMPEROR'S 61ST BIRTHDAY

**AN OLD JAPANESE** folk story tells of a fisherman, who after rescuing a sea turtle, is invited to ride it on a journey to a fantastical and timeless kingdom under the sea. My own journey across the ocean to the Sultanate two years ago was far more conventional - nevertheless, I too found myself in a beautiful land of breathtaking nature, vibrant society, and enduring splendour, and I feel extraordinarily blessed to experience the Omani way of life. Oman too, of course, has its turtles aplenty; whenever I witness the majestic form of one off the coast of this country, I am possessed by a strange feeling that our two nations have been somehow linked by these beautiful creatures since eons past.

I have often come to remark and appreciate the unexpected similarity between the culture of our two countries, though we may be separated by over 8,000km, by climate, language, and ancestry. A strong sense of communal custodianship, a society guided by principles of integrity and sincerity, a proud tradition of hospitality and generosity - these are the qualities which are shared between our people, and form the invisible threads which bind together our international friendship. So too does our shared maritime heritage; nations such as ours whose fates have been shaped by the waves recognise the vital importance of fostering cooperation with overseas nations.

The Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour, may his soul rest in peace, possessed great vision and under his wise guidance, Oman established a precious and greatly admired diplomatic stance of positive neutrality. Since his accession to the throne, His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has affirmed and reinforced the uniquely Omani path of peaceful approach toward all nations. The great effort expended by the Sultanate to contribute to the peace and stability of the region and the world is recognised and appreciated by Japan as a noble and worthy un-



dertaking. Our shared 'DNA' as sea-faring nations brings with it a keen awareness of the gravity of maintaining maritime security and ensuring unimpeded economic activity in the oceans. These well-aligned priorities have convinced us that Oman is a valuable and assured partner for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific.'

Of course, our two nations already enjoy substantial long-standing relations.

From ancient radios long consigned to museums, to gleaming new vehicles displayed in dealerships, I am proud to see that Japanese products have long been viewed by the people of Oman as emblematic of quality and reliability. Nowhere is this more evident than in the enthusiastic recital of Japanese brand names by friendly locals in even the remotest of the mountain villages to which I have ventured!

It is not only the enduring popularity and desirability of Japanese cars and electronics that have contributed to the daily lives of Omanis, however. Consortiums led by Japanese companies produce around 70% of Oman's electricity, as well as more than 25% of the drinkable water. It is with great happiness that I see the corporations of Japan supporting the livelihoods of Omanis in this way, and I expect that our technology will be able to aid Oman further in fields ranging from environmental protection to medical science.

In turn, Oman's importance to Japan's energy stability, through the supply of crude oil and natural gas, cannot be understated.

In the face of unprecedented global challenges brought about by COVID-19, the government of Oman's decisive response has successfully tempered a tragic crisis. It is my sincere hope that once this difficult period is behind us, the ties between Japan and Oman will emerge stronger than ever before.

We celebrate the 61<sup>st</sup> birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito of Japan on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021. It is worth mentioning that H.M. Emperor Naruhito, accompanied by Her Majesty the Empress, paid an official visit to Oman in 1994 when His Majesty was the Crown Prince. During their visit, H.M. the Emperor and H.M. the Empress were received by warm welcome and generous hospitality by Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and the Omani people.

Inspired by the warm relationship between the Imperial Family of Japan and the Royal Family of the Sultanate of Oman, I hope to see our two nations further enhance our ties, and I would like to wish continued health, prosperity, and long-life for both H.M. Emperor Naruhito and His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik.

From a favourite vantage point on the hilltop beside the town of Qalhat, azure skies overhead and the shining ocean filling the horizon, I cannot help feeling the weight of time and a bond which stretches through the centuries. In the foreground lie the crumbling ruins of the ancient city, visited in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century CE by explorer Marco Polo who first brought word of Japan to the West. Behind it, across the bay, looms the LNG plant which today supplies the gas used in my hometown in Japan. And so, Oman and Japan have always been and will forever be connected by an ocean of opportunities.

**KOBAYASHI Toshinori**

*Ambassador of Japan to the Sultanate of Oman*

## Oman and Japan - Two Nations United by Timeless Bonds

It gives me great pleasure to convey my heartfelt greetings, on behalf of all Members of the Board of the Oman Japan Friendship Association (OJFA), to His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan, on the auspicious occasion of his 61st birthday.

This year, in Oman, we mark a significant occasion celebrating the Anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik taking over the reigns. We are confident that His Majesty's visionary leadership and guidance will steer Oman further ahead on its inspiring path of development, peace and stability. For this, we the people of Oman pledge our complete support to His Majesty's leadership. May the Almighty bless him with good health and long life.

Oman and Japan are two great nations, united by timeless bonds based on rich heritage and culture that goes back to hundreds of years. With time, these remarkable ties have grown stronger offering numerous opportunities to people of both the nations to learn about each other's absorbing culture and heritage while also taking advantage of mutually beneficial economic relationships.

As a responsible Association, focussed on taking these special bonds to even greater levels, the Oman-Japan Friendship Association uses every opportunity to build enduring relationships and foster meaningful ties between people of both the nations. The Association plans and initiates a number of activities in various areas, as diverse as commerce, education, culture, arts, tourism, sports and more. Like each year, this year too, the Oman-Japan Friendship Association reaffirms its commitment to taking these remarkable bonds to even greater levels.

Apart from building lasting relationships through deep-rooted culture, Oman and Japan have made impressive economic progress based on each other's strengths. Japan's expertise in Machinery, Iron, Steel, Electronics, Automotive and more continue to benefit Oman through



are popular among Japanese language enthusiasts here in Oman.

Due to limitations like social distancing norms and adherence to health and safety guidelines advised by competent authorities, the Embassy of Japan in last December offered students interested in learning Japanese language an opportunity to register and learn for free through the event - "Online Study in Japan Week 2020".

In September, the Embassy of Japan conducted the Japanese Illustration Online Competition for all residents in Oman. The theme of the competition was in relation to Japan such as: landscapes, nature, tradition and culture.

Earlier, in February the same year, the Embassy of Japan inaugurated the Japan stall at the 25th Muscat International Book Fair at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in cooperation with the Japan Foundation. The stall had books from Japan that covered a variety of genres and activities like Origami, Japanese calligraphy and more.

Every year several such events and activities like these held by the Oman-Japan Friendship Association, showcase each nation's rich culture and heritage to the people of both the nations - Oman and Japan. In the days to come, the Oman-Japan Friendship Association will continue to plan and initiate several such events and activities that will bring people of Oman and Japan closer.

On this special occasion, on behalf of all the Board members of the Oman-Japan Friendship Association, I convey sincere greetings to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito. May God Almighty grant him good health and long life. And may the beautiful bonds of friendship that binds Oman and Japan, continue to grow even stronger.

**Mohammed Saud Bahwan,**

*Chairman of the Board of Oman Japan Friendship Association*



OMAN JAPAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Warm wishes to the people of Japan on the occasion of the 61st Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito

### Building Enduring Bonds Through Deep-Rooted Relationships

Oman and Japan share a warm relationship that has grown stronger over the centuries. The rich and absorbing culture and heritage of both the nations continues to inspire and enhance the warm relationship between the people of both the nations.

The Oman Japan Friendship Association is focussed on deepening and enhancing the relationship between Oman and Japan. Through regular programmes and well-planned initiatives, the Association aims to draw people of both the nations to benefit from each other's strengths in various areas. Including fields as diverse as commerce, education, culture, arts, tourism, sports and more.

On this special occasion, the Oman Japan Friendship Association reaffirms its commitment to continue to play a significant role in taking the remarkable relations between Oman and Japan, to even greater levels.



# MARKET

## BUSINESS & FINANCE

### OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2021 reaching \$61.36, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 67 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$60.69. - OMA

### MSM INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSM index closed at 3,561.20 points, down 0.13 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down 0.59 per cent at 536.11 points. Sharqiyah Desalination, up 7.14 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Sharqiyah Investments, down 8.11 per cent, was the top loser.



# Oman's general budget deficit rises by 58.5% to reach OMR2.4 billion

The data was released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information on the analysis of the economic situation in the Sultanate at the end of the third quarter of 2020



**NCSI DATA:** The data also show that the GDP at current prices declined by 16.5 per cent, from OMR21.8 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2019 to OMR18.2 billion in 2020. - File picture

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate's general budget deficit increased by 58.5 per cent at the end of the third quarter of 2020, to reach OMR2.4 billion, compared to OMR1.5 billion in the same period of 2019, constituting a ratio of 13.5 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP) at the current prices.

The data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) on the analysis of the economic situation in the Sultanate at the end of the third quarter of 2020 indicate that the total public

revenue dropped by 24.4 per cent at the end of the third quarter of 2020, to hit OMR6 billion, compared to OMR7.9 billion for the same period of 2019. The total public expenditure fell by 10.9 per cent to reach OMR8.5 billion.

The data also show that the GDP at current prices declined by 16.5 per cent, from OMR21.8 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2019 to OMR18.2 billion in 2020. This decrease is mainly attributed to the slump in total value added of

oil activities from OMR77 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2019 to OMR5.8 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2020.

This drop in the value added of oil activities is mainly attributed to a decrease in the value added

of crude oil by 28.3 per cent and the value added of natural gas by 3.5 per cent to reach OMR1.15 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2020, compared to OMR1.19 billion for the same period of the previous year.

The report also points out that the value added of non-oil activities fell by 12.4 per cent to reach OMR13.2 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2020. This decrease is attributed to the drop in value added of industrial activities by 19.8 per cent and those of service activities by 10.6 per cent while the value added of agricultural and fish field activities rose by 9.8 per cent.

As for indicators of foreign trade, the NCSI data show that the surplus in trade balance at the end of the third quarter of 2020 decreased by OMR1.6 billion, compared to the same period of the previous year of 2019 when it stood at OMR2.7 billion. The decline in the surplus of the trade balance is due to a drop in the value of merchandise exports by 21.5 per cent at the end of the third quarter of 2020. The value of merchandise import decreased by 11 per cent to stand at OMR6 billion.

Indicators of the monetary situation within the NCSI report show that the total domestic liquidity (M2) at the end of the third quarter of 2020 rose by 11 per cent, to reach OMR19.3 billion, compared

to OMR17.4 billion in the same period of the previous year of 2019. The money supply (M1) increased by 13.4 per cent, to stand at OMR5.7 billion.

Total deposits of the private sector at the end of the third quarter of 2020 grew by 9.5 per cent, to reach OMR16.4 billion, compared to OMR15 billion in the same period of 2019.

The total value of loans and financing granted by commercial banks and Islamic windows at the end of the third quarter of 2020 rose by 2.1 per cent, to stand at OMR26.4 billion, compared to OMR25.9 billion in the same period of 2019.

The total value of personal loans at the end of the third quarter of 2020 also increased by 0.5 per cent, to reach OMR8.5 billion. The interest rate on total loans averaged 5.5 per cent.

The total value of foreign assets in the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) at the end of the third quarter of 2020 fell by 1.4 per cent, amounting to OMR6.5 billion, compared to OMR6.6 billion in the same period of 2019.

The purchasing power of the Omani rial at the end of the third quarter of 2020 declined by 2 per cent where the real exchange rate index scored about 104.0 points compared to 106.1 points in the same period of the previous year. - OMA

#### VIRTUAL SESSION

## Madayn Industrial Academy conducts lecture on digital transformation

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn, represented by Madayn Industrial Academy, organised a virtual awareness lecture on 'Digital Transformation Management' as part of a series of programmes held to develop the skills and capabilities of human cadres in Madayn's various industrial cities.

Delivered by Dr Yaqoob Al Bulushi, the programme highlighted several topics related to digital transformation including the challenges facing the process and

ways to overcome them, a methodology for implementation of digital transformation to meet the needs of the organisations, and the development of digital transformation strategy.

Al Bulushi explained that organisations are formed in different periods to do different tasks, and as time passes, they expand with a more hierarchical structure. Ultimately, Al Balushi emphasised, an organisation's requirements, duties, and responsibilities evolve, and the current role may require new communication and coordination approaches among employ-

ees. "This may demand advanced technologies, different thinking modes, problem-solving skills, new methods for developing the capabilities of the employees, and development of policies, enterprise architecture, portfolio management strategy, and strategic plans," he elaborated.

It is worthwhile mentioning that Madayn Industrial Academy was established in 2019 to offer training opportunities for the national cadres to enhance administrative, financial and technical skills, raise their productivity, provide value-adding services to the investors in

the industrial cities, and provide new job opportunities for the national cadres.

Madayn Industrial Academy organises a series of training programmes and events that address trending topics and challenges locally and globally. The academy also organises training-for-employment in cooperation with the concerned bodies in this field. Madayn aims through the academy to develop the skills of the national cadres by providing scientific and practical training opportunities to the cadres to meet the needs of the industrial sector.

#### NEW REPORT

## Mena nations could unlock hundreds of billions by investing in mapping data

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Governments across the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) could improve their economies by hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue by improving their mapping services according to a new report.

Upgraded geospatial data would also help nations in the region in fighting challenges such as population growth, climate change and dealing with pandemics according to the 'See Your Nation's Potential' Report from the UK's mapping agency Ordnance Survey (OS).

Peter Hedlund, OS International Managing Director, said: "Geospatial information helps us to tackle the biggest problems of our time - and capitalise on the greatest opportunities - by making it possible to monitor, measure, predict and adapt effectively. Government spending on geospatial information is a high-impact investment in a nation's long-term economic health, with benefits 3.2 times larger than the costs."

For over 200 years, OS has mapped every inch of Great Britain, first on paper and now digitally in 3D using geospatial data. Its National Geographic Database, the largest - and most accurate - of its kind in the world, contains over 500 million unique geographic features and updates the data with more than 20,000 changes every



**GEOSPATIAL DATA:** Upgraded geospatial data would also help nations in the region in fighting challenges such as population growth, climate change and dealing with pandemics. - Supplied picture

single day. OS is already working with governments in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain to help improve their geospatial infrastructure and enabling them to realise economic, societal and environmental benefits. Dubai Municipality is using OS' Geospatial Maturity Assessment to help realise the Dubai government vision 'to make Dubai the happiest city on Earth'. The report further grows the Municipality's leadership status within the Emirate, by providing them with the potential to deliver significant societal, environmental and economic benefits in areas such as urban planning, safety and security, sustainable development and environmental protection - all of

which rely on geospatial data.

Peter added, "Building national digital base maps is a core process in enabling your nation's digital economy to flourish, but base maps are also a fundamental enabler in providing the most basic of government services, including establishing property ownership, allocating resources and planning infrastructure," notes Peter Hedlund.

"Take, for example, the first 3D-enabled national spatial data model for the Kingdom of Bahrain we created with the Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB) mapping authority. As part of the 'National 3D Mapping of Bahrain' programme, it supports Kingdom-wide data sharing, analysis and

decision-making."

As well as boosting GDP, the report claims improved geospatial data can help nations secure long-term food and water security, increase productivity and resource availability, predict and mitigate the effects of climate change, rebuild after disasters, as well as generate billions in returns from the establishment of secure land rights, and unlock the benefits of technologies like 5G, autonomous vehicles and smart cities.

OS has harnessed major advances in technology which allow it to capture huge volumes of digital mapping data via surveyors and planes and using cloud-based processing and AI interpretation to make geospatial data ever more accurate.

This has led to huge growth in location-based commercial services. From our commute to work, the tools we use in the office, the social media platforms we use, to the parcels, meals and cabs we order online; all could not function without this highly detailed OS data.

The value of the global geospatial market in 2020 was put at \$439 billion. But this report identifies that without access to this technology the accuracy of geospatial data varies hugely from country to country and the report states that some economies - such as Canada - have seen the growth of up 1.2 per cent after improving their geospatial information capabilities.

#### CRUDE PRODUCTION



**ANALYSIS:** Abnormally cold weather in Texas and the Plains states forced the shutdown of up to 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude production along with 21 billion cubic feet of natural gas output, analysts estimated. - BNA

## Oil gains as US production slowly returns after freeze

**TOKYO:** Oil prices rose on Monday as the slow return of US crude output that was cut by frigid conditions raised concerns about supply just as demand is coming back from the depths of the coronavirus pandemic.

Brent crude was up 76 cents, or 1.2 per cent, at \$61.67 a barrel by 0104 GMT, after gaining nearly 1 per cent last week. US oil rose 74 cents, or 1.3 per cent, to \$59.98 a barrel, having fallen 0.4 per cent last week, Reuters reported.

Abnormally cold weather in Texas and the Plains states forced the shutdown of up to 4 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude production along with 21 billion cubic feet of natural gas output, analysts estimated.

#### Gas output

Oilfield crews will likely take several days to de-ice valves, restart systems and begin oil and gas output. US Gulf Coast refiners are assessing damage to facilities and may take up to three weeks to restore most of their operations, analysts said, with low water pressure, gas and power losses hampering restarts.

"With three-quarters of fracking crews standing down, the like-

US Gulf Coast refiners are assessing damage to facilities and may take up to three weeks to restore most of their operations, analysts said, with low water pressure, gas and power losses hampering restarts

likelihood of a fast resumption is low," ANZ Research said in a note.

"Longer term, the fall in capital expenditure at US shale oil companies this year will keep drilling activity subdued, leading to output remaining below pre-pandemic levels," ANZ said.

For the first time since November, US drilling companies cut the number of oil rigs operating due to the cold and snow enveloping Texas, New Mexico and other energy-producing centres. - BNA



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## ROUND-UP



# Attractive EMIs on Mitsubishi Outlander and Mirage models

The promotion includes a 2-year free service package, 1-year free insurance and registration, cash gifts of up to OMR3,400, and a six-year unlimited mileage warranty and roadside assistance

**MUSCAT:** General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi vehicles in Oman, is offering attractive EMIs, together with other value-added benefits on the Outlander and Mirage, together with the other models in its range.

The promotion includes a 2-year free service package, 1-year free insurance and registration, cash gifts of up to OMR3,400, and a six-year unlimited mileage warranty and roadside assistance.

Commenting on the promotion, Manoj Ranade, the General Manager of GAC, said, "The Mirage and Outlander each offer customers unique experiences, one is an economic yet spacious and comfortable hatchback that is perfect for city commutes, while the other is a practical, capable, and spacious 7-seat family SUV that is perfect for that weekend family trip. Regardless of which you pick, you are guaranteed to receive them at an attractive price and affordable EMIs



for the duration of this promotion."

For the duration of the two-month promotion, which ends on 31 March 2021, the Mitsubishi Mirage and Outlander will be available with EMIs starting from as low as OMR 49 and OMR 99 respectively. Customers purchasing either of these models will also receive cash gifts ranging from OMR 1,600 to OMR 3,400, together with one-year free insurance and registration, six years unlimited

mileage warranty and roadside assistance, and a 2-year/20,000kms free service package.

The Mitsubishi Mirage, available under the offer with EMIs starting from as low as OMR 49, offers customers a refreshing mix of clean yet functional hatchback styling, together with the best possible combination of versatility, practicality, and outstanding efficiency, thanks to several key design elements engineered into the vehicle.

On the inside, the vehicle features comfortable cloth seating and high-quality materials throughout the cabin, together with the best levels of interior room and cargo storage space available in its class.

The Mirage is powered by a 1.2-litre is available as either a five or seven-seat variant, offering customers flexible seating options. It is also bristling with technology and features, making it one of the most advanced vehicles in its

class. Powering the Outlander is a 2.4 L MIVEC, 4-cylinder engine producing 167PS at 6,000rpm and 22.6kgm of torque at 4,100rpm. This engine is mated to Mitsubishi's tried and true CVT transmission, ensuring reliable performance, low fuel consumption, low exhaust emissions, and an unmatched driving experience.

"With low EMIs, cash gifts, free insurance, free service, and more, this offer presents customers with

a great opportunity for savings on their vehicle purchase across our range, the Mirage and Outlander included. As such, we encourage all fans and customers to make the most of this offer before it ends on 31 March," concluded Manoj.

In addition to the Outlander and Mirage, this promotion also applies to the Mitsubishi Pajero, Montero Sport, Attrage, ASX, Eclipse Cross and L200 models with low EMIs and attractive benefits on each.

## LUCKY WINNERS



## Bank Muscat gives away OMR400,000 in first draw for Al Mazyona in 2021

**MUSCAT:** Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, in line with its vision "To serve you better, everyday" and commitment to partnership in promoting a strong savings culture in Oman conducted the first draw of the 2021 scheme for Al Mazyona at the bank's head office recently in the presence of Dr Hamood bin Ali bin Humaid Al Marshoudi, the Wali of Bidbid.

As many as 31 winners walked away with OMR 400,000 in high-value prizes in the draw. The winners included 10 Asalah customers who won OMR 25,000 each while 20 Al Jawhar customers walked away with prizes worth OMR 5,000 each. One lucky winner won the monthly mega prize of OMR 50,000 in the draw.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, Deputy General Manager - Premier Banking, Bank

The winners included 10 Asalah customers who won OMR25,000 each while 20 Al Jawhar customers walked away with prizes worth OMR5,000 each. One lucky winner won the monthly mega prize of OMR 50,000

Muscat, said, "The bank is pleased to conduct the first draw of the 2021 scheme and I congratulate all the lucky winners for their excellent savings habit, which has resulted in them winning these high-value prizes. Bank Muscat is

well known as an innovator in the financial services sector in Oman and the Al Mazyona scheme has been playing a very important role in creating a good savings habit amongst people in the Sultanate. The bank will continue to launch new innovative products and services in response to the needs of our valued customers."

It is noteworthy that a large number of high-value prizes worth over OMR 5.6 million have been exclusively reserved for Asalah and Al Jawhar customers in this year's scheme. In particular, customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 30,000 in their Al Mazyona accounts will be automatically entered into the prize draw for two mega prizes of OMR 250,000 each in the special Mid-year draw as well as the End of Year draw. High savings Asalah Priority Banking customers main-

taining a minimum balance of RO 30,000 are eligible for 10 monthly prizes of OMR 25,000 each, 10 Mid-year and 10 End of Year prizes of OMR 50,000.

Al Jawhar customers who maintain a minimum balance of OMR 10,000 are eligible to win one of the 20 prizes of OMR 5,000 each in the monthly draws as well as 10 Mid-year and 10 End of Year prizes of OMR 20,000 each. Al Jawhar customers with a salary of more than OMR 1,000 will also get a chance to win a fixed salary prize of OMR 500 every month for a year, with 10 winners being chosen every month. With a record 7,470 prizes totalling over OMR 11 million to be given away during the year, the country's biggest prize draw scheme was launched earlier in January and seeks to promote a strong savings culture in Oman among all members of society.

## INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

## LaLiga and Instituto Cervantes launch Spanish-Arabic football dictionary

**MUSCAT:** LaLiga, the Instituto Cervantes and the Spanish Embassy in Oman are celebrating Unesco's International Mother Language Day 2021, held on February 21, with the launch of a Spanish-Arabic football dictionary promoted by the Instituto Cervantes in Cairo and the Spanish Embassy in Egypt.

This dictionary aims to promote the study of Spanish in various Mena countries through the power of football and Spain's most famous teams and players.

The dictionary contains descriptions and information about clubs, players, stadiums, competitions, other football terminology and other useful travel and tourism phrases and expressions, with the Spanish and Arabic text presented side by side and colourfully and engagingly. It contains 59 pages with expressions and illustrations where both Arabic and Spanish speakers will be able to easily understand and learn useful expressions in both languages. The translation into Modern Standard Arabic allows Arabic speakers from many countries in the region to comprehend the words and terms.

### Online distribution

The dictionary will be distributed online to Spanish-teaching centres, universities, colleges and libraries throughout Oman, as well as in the sports environment. It can also be downloaded online for free from: [https://elcairo.cervantes.es/imagenes/File/diccionario\\_futbol\\_EspanoLarabe\\_instituto\\_cervantes.laliga.pdf](https://elcairo.cervantes.es/imagenes/File/diccionario_futbol_EspanoLarabe_instituto_cervantes.laliga.pdf)

The Instituto Cervantes is a non-profit organisation created by the Government of Spain to promote the study of the Spanish language and culture around the world. LaLiga has already partnered with the Instituto Cervantes to produce similar football dictionaries in the Chinese and Indonesian languages. This is in

addition to organising football and language learning courses in countries such as Morocco and Japan.

As Maite Ventura, LaLiga's Managing Director Mena, said, "This project demonstrates LaLiga's commitment to promoting Spain at an international level. It is a great honour for us to be able to bring our language closer to the people of this country and to be part of the daily life of the Arab culture". Daniel Barriga, LaLiga's Delegate for Oman, added: "We are glad that we have so many fans in Oman, and through this dictionary, we hope our bond will be stronger so that more people embrace LaLiga not only as football fans but beyond."

The Instituto Cervantes is a public institution created in 1991 with the aim to universally promote the teaching, studying and use of the Spanish language and other co-official languages in Spain. It also supports the knowledge of Hispanic Cultures abroad. Instituto Cervantes is well established in 88 cities of 45 countries on 5 continents. In Egypt, it is present in Cairo and Alexandria. LaLiga is a global, innovative and socially responsible organization, a leader in the leisure and entertainment sector.

It is a private sports association composed of the 20 teams in LaLiga Santander and 22 in LaLiga SmartBank, responsible for the organization of these national professional football competitions. In the 2018/2019 season, LaLiga reached more than 2.7 billion people globally. With headquarters in Madrid (Spain), it is present in 55 countries through 9 offices and 46 delegates.

The association carries out its social action through its Foundation and is the world's first professional football league with a league for intellectually challenged footballers: LaLiga Genuine Santander.

# ROUND-UP



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## Win easily with Maisarah Prize Account Scheme

The customer is entitled to the draw of the prize account when an average balance of OMR 100 is available for one week for weekly draws and a month for other draws



**MUSCAT:** Maisarah Islamic Banking Services has announced the 2021 edition of the Prize Account Scheme. The 2021 scheme makes winning easier by providing more chances for customers to win from draws to be held in categories – prizes per branch, grand prizes, special prizes and mega prizes.

The scheme had seen over 4,900 winners since 2016 and still counting. The prize scheme will be valid from January 2021 and will run till December 31.

Commenting on the 2021 Prize Account Scheme, Nasser Said Al Bahantah, Chief Retail Banking Officer, Maisarah said, “We have gained a lot of attention and positive feedback to our Prize Account Scheme in the last few years.

“Over the past years, we have seen more than 4,900 winners, and we look forward to seeing more customers join the winners in this year’s scheme. It is very easy to open this account which is based on the Islamic profit sharing concept of Mudarabah. The scheme has been encouraging people to take charge of their finances and rewarding them substantially for

their saving habits. Maisarah will continue to provide all customers with the best products and superior experience.”

The customer is entitled to the draw of the prize account when an average balance of OMR 100 is available for one week for weekly draws and a month for other draws. For every OMR 100 of average balance in the account, the customer will get 1 chance to participate in the draw. Anticipated profit rate up to 2.5 per cent p.a. subject to the weightages applicable for each month. Based on the Islamic concept of Mudarabah, this account is Sharia-compliant.

The prizes will be given by the shareholders’ funds.

Throughout the year customers have a chance to win from prize draws to be held in every branch. This includes weekly draws, with a total of OMR 171,600 to be held throughout the year during which three winners will from each branch per week get the chance

to win OMR 100 each. The total monthly prizes are OMR 343,200. Under the monthly draw children will get a chance to win OMR 100 each (one winner from each branch per month), one Standard and Affluent Banking customers will get a chance to win OMR 500 each, (one winner from each branch per month), and one Priority Banking customer will get a chance to win OMR 2,000 per branch every month.

Maisarah will hold special prize draws on specific occasions such as Omani Women’s Day with a total prize of OMR 11,000, and National Day with a total prize of OMR 55,000. To show appreciation to all women in Oman for their contributions to society, the Prize Account Scheme will pick one woman per branch who will win OMR 1,000 each. As part of the National Day Draw, five winners from every branch will have the chance to win OMR 1,000 each.

As part of the scheme, Maisarah

will conduct Mid-year Prizes with a total amount of OMR 16,000, under which a draw will be held for children, where one customer will win OMR 1,000. For Standard and Affluent Banking customers, one winner will have a chance to take home OMR 5,000. For Priority Banking customers, one winner will take home OMR 10,000.

Maisarah will also conduct Mega Prize Draws with a total amount of OMR 112,000. The draw will include a children draw, in which one customer will take home OMR 2,000. The yearly Mega Prize Draw amount is OMR 10,000 (for standard and affluent banking customers) for one winner each and OMR 100,000 (for priority banking customers) for one winner.

Prize amounts allocated for the new branches expected to be opened during the year will be distributed through special draws on special events announced during the year.

PROMOTION



## Grand Millennium Muscat celebrates Omani Teacher’s Day

**MUSCAT:** Grand Millennium Muscat, a five-star luxury hotel situated at the heart of Muscat City, take the opportunity to celebrate Teachers Day in Oman by offering these amazing discounts which are valid till the end of the month.

As a tribute to our great teachers in Oman, Grand Millennium has created an offer exclusively for them – a 25 per cent discount on rooms and suites from our best available rates, 20 per cent discount on selected food & beverage offers (Afternoon Tea and Sky View Lounge menu), valid till February 28.

Our beloved teachers may also get a chance to take advantage and enjoy a 30 per cent discount across Zanta Spa Health Club Membership and Spa treatments, valid from February 21 to 28.

“Grand Millennium Muscat would like to applaud teachers for their role in society and their commitment to fostering a nur-

Grand Millennium has created an offer exclusively for the teachers – a 25 per cent discount on rooms and suites from its best available rates

turing learning environment for our children. We would like to acknowledge their dedication and hard work by offering them exclusive discounts,” said Luca Medda, Cluster General Manager, Grand Millennium Muscat, and Millennium Executive Apartments Muscat.

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NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

## NBO’s revamped Mazaya account offers more benefits and rewards



**MUSCAT:** Committed to offering a superior banking experience, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) has added a range of dedicated products and unmatched rewards to its popular Mazaya account.

Tailored to its customers’ incomes and banking needs, the improved privilege account comes with a host of attractive benefits including its very own Entertainer and Nuqati programmes, which provide exclusive offers at thousands of merchants and access to airport lounges worldwide, as well as 2,000 bonus Nuqati points when opening an account.

Wessam Al Asfoor, Head of Premier Banking at NBO, said, “The experience of our customers is of paramount importance to us, as we continue to offer them more convenient and seamless solutions. Designed for select customers, Mazaya is the preferred choice for those wishing to make their busy lives easier. We want to encourage these customers to make the most of their money, whilst planning.”

With a dedicated relationship manager, priority experience at all NBO branches, and priority service in the call centre, Mazaya custom-



The experience of our customers is of paramount importance to us, as we continue to offer them more convenient and seamless solutions. Designed for select customers, Mazaya is the preferred choice for those wishing to make their busy lives easier. We want to encourage these customers to make the most of their money, whilst planning

**Wessam Al Asfoor**  
Head of Premier Banking at NBO

ers can enjoy a prompt, efficient, and personalised service that suits their lifestyles. More perks include special rates on loans and deposits, as well as global investment products, in addition to, a free Credit Card and an exclusive Platinum Debit Card with increased withdrawal and POS limits.

Omanis and expats can avail the benefits of Mazaya, simply by maintaining a deposit of OMR 15,000 or having a minimum monthly salary of OMR 1,000. Keen to offer innovative products and services that suit its customers’ evolving needs, NBO’s accounts are supported by its award-winning mobile app, which is available around the clock.

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