Low pressure trough effects to continue

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

Rains in January due to troughs from low pressure is an annual feature, but this is the first time the duration of the trough is prolonged for so many days.

"We can say that we have been affected like this because we have had this trough for a very long period. So this year, this is the difference," the weather forecaster at National Early Warning Centre, Jaifer bin Hamoud al Beesawy, explained.

The reason is this: "Because this trough has been for three different short waves and they came one after the other."

"We had a cloudy day with isolated rain front. Then we had this trough four days ago, and we will have the final effect of the same trough in the middle of this week. As this trough is strong, we are expecting some fresh wind in the desert and the open area of Dhofar, Al Wusta, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi, making it dusty and impacting horizontal visibility."

Thunderstorms took place over the Arabian Gulf, and the eastern coast of Musandam. The experts said some rain could be experienced in Musandam and North Al Batinah. The weather forecaster at Oman Met Office, Asha al Quwayni, said, "On Sunday there could be a possibility for isolated rain and thunderstorms over Musandam and North Al Batinah. But chances are higher on Monday and Tuesday."

Meanwhile, the health experts have also warned that this situation can change as the world currently has a new wave of daily cases and even deaths in some countries.

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Coronavirus cases surging

FROM P1
Dr. Jawwad al-Vali, the Minister of Health, said on Monday that the Omicron variant is spreading rapidly in Oman. The number of infections increased by 3,174 in one day, bringing the country’s total to 38,107. Dr. Al-Vali warned that the virus is still spreading in Oman, and people should continue to wear masks, maintain social distancing, and get vaccinated.

FROM P3
Generally, the weather forecast predicts a partly cloudy day on Monday with chances of thunderstorms and downpours. There are chances of scattered rains for the rest of the governorates. The wind direction is generally south-easterly to easterly, and for most of the northern part of the Sultanate of Oman it could be occasionally fresh. Aisha.

Low pressure trough effects to continue

There is a chance of horizontal visibility reduction in the desert and open areas due to dust storms. There are also chances of light night to early morning low-level clouds or fog patches over parts of Oman, especially in the west coast and Musandam. 

Sayyid Bel’arab opens Astronomy Exhibition 2022

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Belshar bin Hashim bin Tarik on Sunday presided over the opening of the Astronomical Photography Exhibition 2022. The event was organized by Oman Astronomical Society in cooperation with the History of Science Centre (HSC) at the German University of Technology in the Sultanate of Oman. The exhibition included 27 astronomical photos of 20 photographers.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, HH Sayyid Belshar felicitated the participants for the success of the exhibition. — ONA

‘Excellence’ showcases Oman to the world

KABEER YOUSUF

A repertoire of myriad images of the Sultanate of Oman, from ancient saluting to a modern nation embracing the new Renaissance, is featured in a coffee table book in the backdrop of the country’s participation at the Expo 2020 Dubai. The book, titled ’Excellence International’, launched under the auspices of Mohamed bin Khalid Al Balushi, Advisor, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCI), shares with the global visitors at the Oman pavilion a window to the history, society, culture, education, trade, commerce, economy, key performance indicators, and the possibilities available in the country for a better living.

“The Expo 2020 is no longer just a place to showcase the participating countries’ goods, products, industrial achievements, and investments. Instead, it’s a venue to exchange views and put forward new creative ideas that contribute to the enrichment of contemporary civilization,” said Ali Balwadi, who is also the Commissioner-General of the Sultanate of Oman for the Expo 2020. The book, divided into six parts, makes an attempt to delve into the six different facets of the Sultanate of Oman: Starting with the history and culture of the Sultanate of Oman that traces the maritime tradition through Qalhat, Dhofar region till the National Museum and Royal Opera House Muscat, the rich visual journey takes the readers to the sound safety and security through the Royal Oman Police and Oman Vision 2040.

“According to Oxford Business Report, Oman’s commitment to diversification has seen the country’s non-oil sector record an average real GDP growth rate of 7 per cent since the turn of the century. It also noted that the Sultanate’s strategic position near the established global trade routes and a history of political neutrality is opening up opportunities for Oman in transport, trade, tourism, and manufacturing,” Ayman Alzahrani, CEO of Darussalam LLC, Director of Production of the 116-page book said in the foreword. Ample pages have been set for the country’s march towards the future through the Renewed Renaissance and key performers in the national strategy of empowering the economy and landing upon the Expo 2020 and its importance in showcasing the country on the global platform. Inge Lochtner, President, Excellence International SA is the Publisher of the book while the production team consists of Musa, Al Hashmi, Head of Coordination and Fellowows at the MoCI, Sadiq al Ghairi, Director, Communications and Media, Adil al Owaid, Mechanical Engineer, Jokshi al Rashid, and Rawan Al Sabti.
Endowment forum launches partnership portal ‘Waqf’

MUSCAT: The Imam Jalil bin Zaid Waqf Foundation (BZWF) on Sunday launched an Oman Endowment Partnership Portal named ‘Waqf’. The portal aims to enhance the concept of community-based endowment service and offer targeted solutions to streamline the process of humanitarian donation.

The programme was unveiled during the first endowment forum organized by the BZWF in cooperation with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. The event kicked off under the auspices of Shaikh Ali Fadil Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. The Oman Endowment Partnership Portal (Waqf) will henceforth serve as a platform for endowment establishments in the Sultanate of Oman. Its electronic portal will gear the activities of donations made through the Oman endowment organizations.

Commenting on this move, His Eminence Sheikh Ali bin Hamad Al Khalidi, Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman, Founder of the BZWF, said, “While Islam — spiritual spending for the sake of the Almighty Allah — is deemed one of the tasks that bring one closer to Allah, the best Islami in the type of endowment that lasts even after one passes away”.

Al Khalidi took the opportunity to call for the consolidation of social cooperation, noting that collective action to promote social responsibility is a blessed task.

The forum saw the signing of a number of memorandum of understanding in the field of endowment-based donation.

— OMA

Education gets 17pc in Budget 2022

SAMUEL KUTTY

Oman Budget 2022, which maintains prudent and sustainable levels of public spending, accords priority for citizen standard of living.

“Public revenues and expenditure have been estimated after taking into account the Government’s Fiscal Plan (MTEP), as well as a set of bases and scenarios, which all aim to ensure the continuation of basic services delivery such as education, healthcare, housing and social welfare,” a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance said on Sunday.

According to it, the main considerations while preparing 2022 Budget estimates were maintaining the level of spending on essential services such as education, healthcare, housing and social welfare.

Education gets the highest 17 per cent out of a total of 40 per cent allotted for basic services in the budget, which has a public spending estimate of RO 12.1 billion for 2022.

Healthcare gets 11 per cent, followed by social welfare with seven per cent and housing five per cent.

In the budget statement, the Ministry of Finance said it would undertake a number of initial studies on certain projects to be carried out under public, private partnership to provide basic infrastructure.

“Developing educational infrastructure and benefiting from the private sector expertise in designing, building and maintaining schools to meet the increasing demand for schools in various governorates will be undertaken,” informs the statement.

In this phase, 40 schools are planned to be constructed under public-private partnership.

In the health sector, under the hemodialysis services project, a number of dialysis centres are planned to be established under public-private partnership as so as to reduce the costs borne by the Ministry of Health.

Current expenditures of ministry of health are estimated at RO 4.7 billion, in accordance with actual needs of all government civil units, the outcome of fiscal consolidations and government initiatives geared towards spending reduction.

Salary appropriations of government units allocated as per the occupied posts amount to 74 per cent totalling RO 5.2 billion.

The appropriations allocated under ‘Contributions and Other Expenses’ for subsidies are estimated at RO 1.07 billion.

These subsidies are for oil products, electricity, water, sewage and waste services. In additional there have been subsidies for oil products, housing and development loans.

These allocations are in addition to the building of housing, social housing units and housing loans. In 2021, the number of households that benefited from the social housing scheme reached 124,747 households.

“The amount allocated for such a scheme shall remain at the same level in 2022. The total appropriations allocated for oil products subsidy are estimated at about RO 35 million”, the statement adds.

While an amount of RO 575 million has been allocated for electricity and water subsidy, the transport sector is planned to receive a subsidy worth RO 80 million.

Follow healthy habits to protect self and others from Covid

KAREEM YOUSUF

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has urged all to follow a healthy lifestyle and take preventive measures to keep communicable diseases away and be better equipped against Covid-19 and other physical and mental challenges.

“Follow healthy habits and take preventive measures to protect you and others from communicable diseases and other physical and emotional issues”, a statement issued by the MoH has said.

One should necessarily be in the habit of washing hands before and after having food, cleaning hands after handling food, and wearing face masks when out and after cleaning household and surroundings to be strictly adhered to, according to the statement from the MoH.

Healthy habits are must to avoid getting a communicable disease like bacterial, viral, protozoal diseases in general and especially in view of ongoing covid 19 pandemic, says Dr Dilip Singhvi, Specialist- Internal medicine, Apollo Hospital.

All the other precautionary measures, such as using soap and water to wash hands after – sneezing, wearing masks and social distancing, should be continued. Often, sanitizer should be applied on hands whenever one touches common areas like lift buttons, electronic switches, etc.

“One should not fail to adhere to the precautionary measures including wearing masks and social distancing, as people are still dying due to the deadly virus,” Dr Faryal al Lawati, Senior Consultant and Head of Infection Diseases Section at the Royal Hospital under the MoH said.

“Healthy habits are must to avoid getting a communicable disease like bacterial, viral, protozoal diseases in general and especially in view of ongoing covid 19 pandemic,” says Dr Dilip Singhvi, Specialist- Internal medicine, Apollo Hospital.
W ith agriculture and fisheries forming the central part of the Sultanate of Oman’s economy and society, a positive impact has been noticed among social security households in terms of ensuring food availability. The leadership under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik devotes utmost attention to the security and sustainability of food supply for nationals and expatriates.

Even as most sectors witnessed a slowdown after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, agriculture and fisheries showed significant combined growth of 9.8 per cent to reach RO 571 million by the end of September 2020. Support for innovative government-backed dairy products, red meat and poultry projects continue to boost production and provide investment opportunities, while niche segments such as organic farming need more robust regulation.

Food production from agricultural, fisheries and animal sectors increased from 1.7 million tonnes in 2011 to 3.9 million tonnes in 2019. As a result, the total contribution of agriculture and fisheries sectors in the total food consumption amounted to 36 per cent in 2019 compared to 30 per cent in 2011.

A number of new programmes were launched to capitalise on the potential of individuals and households, engage them in the development process and empower and enable them to become productive and self-dependent. These programmes sought to turn social security households into self-dependent ones; invest in their capabilities, and support them at administrative, technical, and financial levels in the management of SMEs.

According to the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy towards 2040, the combination of priority policy reforms and targeted investments is intended to create a more conducive framework and enhance the quality of public service delivery. “This should, in turn, enable the more active participation of private investors while ensuring long-term sustainability”, it says.

The strategy aims to increase productivity and play a role in reducing its numbers to sustainable levels without compromising the environment. Investment priorities include establishing post-harvest infrastructure in key production areas like Al Batnah and supporting farmers to supply these facilities with the required quality standards.

The Sultanate of Oman is striving to maintain its agricultural acreage to preserve agricultural lands and allow workers in the farming sector to settle down in their villages. They contribute to the sustainability of this sector, promote its productivity and play a role in achieving food security, and protect the Omani environment from change and deterioration.

The strategy also aims to add value to livestock production and reduce its numbers to sustainable levels without compromising the environment. Investment priorities include establishing milk collection systems in order to strengthen the raw material base of the national dairy industry, providing animal health (e.g., diagnostic labs) and cold chain infrastructure (e.g., abattoirs for poultry cooperatives, refrigeration trucks); and rehabilitating rangelands in the Salalah area. In the same vein, the Government is currently executing construction projects of protection walls for farms located on the banks of wadis to prevent their deterioration due to precipitation and wadi floodwaters.

The leadership under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik devotes utmost attention to the security and sustainability of food supply for nationals and expatriates.
ROHM kicks off 2022 with 2 concerts starring Saber Rebai

Over 62,000 SMEs registered till November 2021

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Wadi Afool bridge to ease traffic, boost development in Dhofar

RAKHAYAT: The Wadi Afool bridge in the Wilayat of Rakhayat in Dakhiliyah Governorate has been opened after the financial allocation of which was approved by the Tender Board recently to ease vehicular movement between Salalah and the wilayats of Rakhayat and Dhallost and boost economic activities. In comments to ONA, Shakhb Jbn bin Ahmed al Musabini, Wali of Rakhayat, said the bridge is a dream of the projects that have recently been approved by the Tender Board and constitutes a step forward in terms of services and development aspects.

The bridge will play a significant role in solving the issue of road block and traffic and disruption of traffic movement to the west of Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The implementation of Wadi Afool bridge has a great importance in terms of future development and services in the west of Dhofar Governorate.

NIZWA: A number of agreements were signed on Sunday in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah to implement a package of municipal and developmental service projects.

The moves come as part of the efforts exerted by Al Dakhiliyah Governor’s Office to develop and improve municipal services in the wilayats of the governorate.

The agreements, worth over RO 1.8 million, were signed by Shakhb Hillal bin Saal al Haji, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah with a number of representatives.

The agreements included a number of projects, namely the development of commercial areas in Al Mudra area in the Wilayat of Nizwa, Al Alam area in the Wilayat of Dhallost, and the restoration of Birkat Al Mouz Park in the Wilayat of Nizwa, in addition to other agreements.

ROHM kicks off 2022 with 2 concerts starring Saber Rebai

ROHM will perform a programme of his best loved songs, accompanied by an orchestra in a show which is designed to stir the senses and enrich the souls of the audience of loyal and newly inspired fans.

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Security forces fire tear gas at protesters in Sudan

KHARTOUM: Security forces fired tear gas at anti-military protesters in Sudan's capital Khartoum on Sunday, the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors said.

The military took control in October 2021 after ending a power-sharing deal with civilian political forces. That deal, signed in 2019, was supposed to pave the way for a transitional government and eventually elections following the overthrow of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir.

Protests against military rule have continued even after Bashir was ousted and replaced in April as prime minister last month.

The demonstrators have demanded the military play no role in government during a transition to free elections.

Some people managed to post images on social media showing protesters in several other sites, including Al-Damier and Port Sudan.

Al-Jazira TV quoted an advisor to military leader Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan as saying the military would not allow protesters to pull the country into chaos and that continued protests would be "physical, psychological, and mental strain on the country" and "would not achieve a political solution.""The trend continues of communications that have been disrupted, sources at telecom companies have told Reuters that authorities demanded providers cut services. Officials could not immediately be reached for comment on Sunday.

In a televised speech on Friday, Burhan said disputes over power and the loss of trust mean everyone "should use the voice of reason.

"The only way to rule is by popular mandate through elections," Burhan said.

Abu-hasan, a former lawyer, is also quoted in several local newspapers, saying Burhan and his followers coerced and used all legal and military means to avoid a recurrence and ‘no body will go unpunished’.

Last week, the council reinstated powers of arrest and detention to the intelligence services.

According to Egydio, "UN humanitarian flight crews have reported at least 10 incidents in which they were unable to contact the air control tower... or had unclear communications."

TP: A Palestinian prisoner on hunger strike has been transferred to Israel to undergo treatment.

Palestinian Separatists Today quoted the prisoner, identified as Hisham Abu-Hawash, as saying he was transferred to Israel and was sent to the hospital.

The prisoner was recognized as one of the hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners. Hisham Abu-Hawash has claimed his angry strike, demanding to be brought back to his hometown and into Gaza.

"After even he ends his strike, he will have difficult problems," he said, adding that he realized he was suffering an urgent appeal against his detention in Israel's supreme court.

An Israeli security source described Abu-Hawash as a militant operative, who was arrested due to involvement in terrorist activity.

Israel said the protests provoked crimes while authorities continue to gather evidence, though the Palestinians say they demand their rights.

The ministry said it has used administrative detention in arbitrariness, and Shawan Jawa, head of the Al-Haq rights group based in Ramallah on the West Bank, said Abu-Hawash was one of about 550 Palestinians held by Israel in administrative detention.

Abu-Hawash's plight has ignited Palestinian support.

Palestinian civil affairs minister Hamdan al-Shahlaq said on Israel via Twitter to "release Abu-Hawash immediately," but his appeal echoed by protesters who marched over the weekend in Ramallah.

At a rally in Gaza, Jamal Badwan, an official with the Islamist movement Hamas that rules the strip, said Israel must understand that prisoners constitute a "red line" for the Palestinians.

The Islamic Jihad, the second largest militant group in Gaza, said it had "firmly rejected fully anything about the deterioration of the human rights of Abu-Hawash, threatening revenge of the shekels."
Fire brings down roof at South Africa parliament

CAPE TOWN: A master fire in South Africa's houses of parliament in Cape Town caused the roof of the old National Assembly building to collapse on Sunday as the blaze continued to rage after eight hours. No casualties have been reported in the fire, which has also spread to the wing housing the current National Assembly, where parliament meets.

The roof of the Old Assembly building has collapsed and in genus, Jean-Pierre Smith, Cape Town’s mayor, chaired committee member for safety and security, told reporters.

The cause of the fire was not yet known, but an investigation was begun. President Cyril Ramaphosa told reporters at the scene of the blaze that his government was on high alert.

“Somewhere there has been a failure,” he said.

The historic building houses a collection of rare books and the original copy of the former African Nationalist anthem “The Storm Sails Afire.”

“The entire building has suffered extensive smoke and water damage,” Smith said, adding “the fire has not been contained.”

It started at around 05.00 GMT on Sunday in the parliament complex’s oldest wing, which was completed in 1884 and has resembles a wood where parliamentarians once sat.

It then spread to newer parts of the complex which are currently in use.

“Firefighters are currently trying to control the blaze in the Vorster Wing, where the fire has affected the National Assembly Chambers,” parliament spokesperson Mdu- Mothibiso told an online press briefing.

South Africa's houses of parliament have recorded more than 10 major fires in April, when a blaze in the older wings of parliament constructed in the 1920s and 1930s destroyed a collection of African archives.

SECOND FIRE IN A YEAR

Cape Town has been home to South Africa's houses of parliament since 1910, including the National Assembly and upper house National Council of Provinces, while the government is based in Pretoria.

Johannesburg where South Africa last apart president Fred W de Klerk declared the end of the brutal white minority regime in 1990.

The houses of parliament in Cape Town consist of three sections, with the newest additions constructed in the 1920s and 1960s. Another fire also broke out in the older wings of parliament in March, but it was quickly contained.

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A year after Capitol siege, US democracy still faces test

TRUMP DEFANT

A year later, more than 700 people involved in the January 6 attack have been charged, including law enforcement officers and breaking into and desecrating the halls of Congress.

Investigations have shown a concerted effort by Trump and his allies to prevent Pence from leading Congress in certifying Biden as the lawfully elected president.

The looming question is how are the attack and Trump's effort linked?

A special committee of the House of Representatives is investigating, but the deeper they go, the more sensitive it becomes.

If they find evidence suggesting that Trump knowingly incited the attack, or plotted to illegally keep power, should they risk more turmoils by seeking an unprecedented criminal prosecution of an ex-president?

For the first anniversary of the attack on Thursday, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has ordered a "solemn observance" in Congress.

Trump, who remains the most powerful figure in the Republican Party, plans to push for a fourth term and 6th commemoration in Palm Beach, Florida, where his Mar-a-Lago estate sits on the "rigged" presidential election of 2020.

Although he has shown no evidence that the election was fraudulent, polls show get voting sizable two-thirds of Republican voters believe him — AFP

Healthy mind, happy life

There is no better time than today to take care of our mental health. It was used to be a taboo topic with so much stigma surrounding it and most people would not dare explore the subject — through fear of being judged, criticized or worse, chastised.

The term mental health refers to an individual’s emotional, psychological and social well-being. Just as taking care of our physical health makes us feel fit and strong, the same applies for our mental health. We can feel unmet needs, be overwhelmed or distracted and if not taken care of, this can easily lead to depression or anxiety disorders — bipolar, anxiety or post-traumatic stress, and an overwhelming feeling of “wanting to give up”.

It is crucial to understand that when you are feeling any of the negative emotions such as stressed, overwhelmed or anxious, the best solution is to welcome them, acknowledge them and listen to them. Our automatic response is to push them aside, thinking that ignoring them will make things better but being in denial will make them go away. Rather the opposite, your worries will come out in other ways, such as stomach problems, aches and headaches etc.

Coming from this angle you will be on top of your emotions rather than them being on top of you.

How can you take care of your mental health:

1. Speak up and get help: the more open you are, the more you will realise you are not alone in feeling this way.

2. Be physically active: the two are often linked. Physical and mental health are frequently highlighted, and taking care of one of them can benefit the other.

3. Get out into nature: soak in the vitamin D enriched sunbath and take a long walk on the beach — this will give your body with the earth’s energies and revitalize you. Research has proven that bacteria in soil and sand trigger our bodies to make serotonin, the happy hormone which calms us and makes us feel good


5. Stay connected: we are social creatures who thrive on community. When we are surrounded by people who understand us, there is a sense of belonging and we feel happier.

6. Eat healthy brain stimulating foods such as cut out sugars and anything that has been processed.

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MONDAY JANUARY 3, 2022

Nowhere to hide: Afghans find shelter dwindling

ELISE BLANCHARD

Muttered off at seven to a man old enough to be her great-grandfather, Fatema endured abuses, beatings and starvation until she could take no more.

Through tears she recalls the beatings she received — like the time, aged 10, she was shot against a wall and “very bad head crushed against a wall. I almost died”.

Today the 22-year-old is living in one of the few shelters for battered women still open in Afghanistan since the Taliban’s August return to power, but it is fearful she could lose her place at any time.

If the refuge closes, Fatema will have nowhere to go. She has lost touch with her own family, while in-laws have vowed to kill her for dishonouring them.

Fatema’s plight is shared by millions in this country of 38 million, who have experienced some form of physical or psychological violence.

The term mental health refers to an individual’s emotional, psychological and social well-being. Just as taking care of our physical health makes us feel fit and strong, the same applies for our mental health. We can feel unmet needs, be overwhelmed or distracted and if not taken care of, this can easily lead to depression or anxiety disorders — bipolar, anxiety or post-traumatic stress, and an overwhelming feeling of “wanting to give up”.

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5. Stay connected: we are social creatures who thrive on community. When we are surrounded by people who understand us, there is a sense of belonging and we feel happier.

6. Eat healthy brain stimulating foods such as cut out sugars and anything that has been processed.

7. Practice mindfulness: as well as being meditative, practicing meditation (even sitting still for a few minutes and deep breathing) improves our mental health and overall well-being.

8. Do something new: we all love our routines and get bored, make sure you add something new to your day.

9. Hydrate and get enough sleep. Dehydration affects your cognitive abilities and those who suffer from mental health conditions may find it impacts their sleep patterns.

10. Limit social media: the constant scrolling will only make you feel worse.

When we focus on our mental, physical and emotional health this will automatically create a much more rounded, balanced, happy human being.

Even though the subject of mental health is still a bit sensitive, gone are the days of feeling the need to appear brave or hide our feelings.

We have entered a new age where being vulnerable and honest is a sign of strength.

So let’s be those teary of light and strength for others to have a happier, healthier and stronger you!
The long decline: Mass migration batters Balkans

DARKO DUDJANIKOVIC & LAILA VESIĆ

Abandoned shops and mostly empty streets offer few signs of life in North Macedonian Valandovo, where young people are fleeing in large numbers hoping to find a better life abroad.

NORTH MACEDONIA HAS SHED 10 PER CENT OF ITS POPULATION IN THE LAST 20 YEARS TO AROUND 600,000.

MACEDONIAN CITIZENS NOW LIVE AROUND 1.8 MILLION.

Customers sitting at a cafe terrace in Valandovo. — AFP

Country’s Statistics Office. Villages and small towns such as Valandovo, 140 kilometers from the capital, offer few jobs, pushing the ambitious and able to leave elsewhere.

“The spirit of young people has been systematically destroyed,” Peris Kostandov, the newly elected 35-year-old mayor said.

“The enthusiasm to fight and stay here has been lost.”

In Valandovo alone, nearly 90 per cent of population is linked to agriculture, a common denominator across North Macedonia.

“Five of my friends from our class of 20 students have already moved away with their families,” said Brian Nikolic, 24, a member of the youth municipal council in Valandovo.

The anecdot draws a stark picture of where the country’s future is headed.

“BREAD TO WORK ABROAD”

Initial results from North Macedonia’s most recent census conducted in September estimate that the population has declined by more than 200,000 since 2011.

Since independence and the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, many hoped integration into the European Union would provide a life raft and promises of a brighter future.

But North Macedonia’s path to EU membership has been repeatedly blocked, first by Greece and later Bulgaria, seeking in fresh donor deals that the country will ever join and pushing many to jump ship.

For those who stay, monthly salaries average €470 (530). "It is not enough to live for 2,000 euros in some foreign country, than to be a struggle with 300 euros at home," goes a popular refrain in North Macedonia.

It is a picture replicated across the Balkans. — AFP

No winter lasts forever, but Iowa's long canebrake is just one of many different species of bracken that grow in the region. These plants have adapted to endure harsh conditions, providing an example of how nature can thrive even in challenging environments.

With the onset of winter, many plants enter a dormant state, conserving energy for the next growing season. The long canebrake, however, continues to grow throughout the year, showcasing its ability to adapt and persist in various weather conditions.

The long canebrake's resilience is a testament to the strength and adaptability of nature. As the cold temperatures approach, these plants prepare themselves for the upcoming challenges by reducing their metabolic activity, conserving resources, and entering a state of dormancy. This strategy allows them to survive the winter months and emerge anew with renewed vigor as the weather warms up in the spring.

In the context of broader ecological systems, the long canebrake and other similar species demonstrate the complexity and diversity of plant life. They play crucial roles in maintaining biodiversity and contributing to the overall health of ecosystems. By adapting to varying environmental conditions, these plants ensure the continuity of life in the face of seasonal changes.

The long canebrake is just one of many examples of how nature's resilience is tested and showcased in the winter months. As these plants persist through challenging times, they offer a fascinating glimpse into the enduring spirit of nature and the adaptability of living organisms. Through their perseverance, they inspire us to reflect on our own capacities for endurance and adaptation in the face of adversities.
Dhofar face Al Suwaiq in top draw HM Cup quarterfinal clash

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT JAN 2

Record tenth times winner, Dhofar, will meet Al Suwaiq in a crucial fixture at the quarterfinal of 2021/2022 HM football Cup. Both teams met in the final match of the previous edition and Dhofar were crowned as champions after defeating Al Suwaiq 5-1.

The draw of the coveted cup took place on Sunday at Al Seeb Stadium and unveiled for another top clash between Fanja and Al Nasr. Al Seeb will meet Sur in another tight encounter while Al Suwaiq and Al Nasr will face Nizwa in the same round.

From last-eight round onwards, first and second leg matches will be held which will give better chances for teams in case if defeat happens in the first game. The home matches will be held on January 19 and 20 while away games will be scheduled on February 10 and 11.

DIFFERENT SHOW
The Northern Al Batinah team, Al Suwaiq, will look this time for different close in order to clinch the fourth title this season after their last cup in 2016/2017. On the other hand, Dhofar players will try to rekindle their best memories of the last season and eye chasing records and claiming their 11th title in history.

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Messi and three others test positive for COVID-19

PARIS: Paris St Germain forward Lionel Messi and three other players have tested positive for Covid-19, the French Ligue 1 club said on Sunday.

Argentina international Messi joined PSG from boyhood club Barcelona in August and the 34-year-old has scored six goals in 19 games in all competitions for the Parisian side.

Defender Jean Bernat, back-up goalkeeper Sergio Rico and midfielder Nathan Bitumamala were the other players who returned positive tests. PSG said the four players were in isolation and subject to the appropriate health protocols.

Argentine international Messi and three other players have tested positive for COVID-19.
Novice Joy inspires Bangladesh as NZ toil

Bangladesh's batsman Mahmudul Hasan Joy plays a shot on day two of the first Test against New Zealand at Mount Maunganui on Sunday. The tourists were 175 for two at the close of play, trailing New Zealand by 133 with eight wickets in hand and the pitch playing true. It was only the third innings in Tests for the 21-year-old Joy, who was dismissed for nought and six in his one previous outing against Pak-istan last month.

But he played with plenty of maturity on a pitch that belonged to the tourists, facing 21 deliveries for his unbeaten 70 and forging a 93-run partnership with 22-year-old Shan-tuo which impressed New Zealand's only bowling success Neil Wagner.

"The younger guys that played today played phenomenally," Wagner said. "They played quite patiently, they didn't give many opportunities and they sort of batted well.

"When the ball was there to be scored on a crease we thought we looked like trying to get them out they felt well and defended well." Wagner said the New Zealand out- come was still far from clear with three sessions remaining.

"There's still a lot of cricket left and that's the beauty of Test cricket isn't it. The score can change from game to game."

The wicket might take turn but also create opportunities later down the line, if the batsmen can do it into play.

New Zealand resumed the sec- ond morning at 208 for five and were still out all lunch for 238, their lowest score on a home wicket in nine Tests against Bangladesh.

Bangladesh then enjoyed ideal batting conditions as they made a solid reply.

NEW ZEALAND VS BANGLADISH, 1ST TEST

New Zealand 208/5 in 90 overs

Scoreboard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Runs</th>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Wickets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicholls</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholls (c)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Young</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamieson</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next: Bangladesh 1st innings (Scr: 238/5) in 92 overs

Brief Scores (D20):

New Zealand 183 for 6 in 19.3 overs

Royals 180 for 6 in 20 overs (Pratik GUSTAV – 3x4, Mohit – 3x4, Rubel 14, Asif Khan 10),

Giants 183 for 6 in 19.3 overs

Pratik GUSTAV – 3x4, Rubel 14, Asif Khan 10

Total: 363 runs

Next: Bangladesh 1st innings (Scr: 238/5) in 92 overs

Scoreboard:

New Zealand 208/5 in 90 overs

India can improve on first Test performance, says coach Dravid

India's batsman Mahmudul Hasan Joy plays a shot on day two of the first Test against New Zealand. -- AFP

India can improve on first Test performance, says coach Dravid

Ghazanfar shines in thrilling victory for Chhurb; Ruwi, Bousher win

MUSCAT: Oman veteran Ghazanfar Iqbal was at his hitting best when he helped Chhurb Giants to a sensational 4-wicket win over Amerch Royals in a D20 Cricket League game at Oman Cricket Turf 1 in Al Amera Park on Saturday.

Prakaz. Alhilalik's 90 vs 1 and Nati Ulhika's holliegot 26 off 8 including 3 massive sixes, were the highlights of Amerch's 40 for 6. Ghazanfar and Alhilak jihar claimed two wickets each.

Opening the innings, Ghazanfar, however, was out by being made a victim by cloning 78 off 47 balls, including 7 fours and 5 sixes, panning the way for Ghazanfar's successful chase in 19.3 overs as it reached 185 for 6.

Husen Khan chipped in with a fine 38 and Prakaz, Sultanak Pakzad bagged 1 for 30.

Brief Scores (D20): Amerch Royals 188 all out in 19 overs (Ghazanfar. 90 – 4, Alhil. 24 – 3, Nati Ulhika 26 – 2, 4 sixes); Chhurb Giants 189 for 4 in 19.3 overs (Prakaz Alhilalik 78 – 4, 3 sixes, Ham. Khan 22 – 1, Akhtar Jhalak 24 – 3, Ghazanfar Iqbal 48 – 4, 3 sixes, Alhilak 42 – 3, 2 sixes, Prakaz Sultanak 3-1-30-4 wickets).

GUSTAV, MOHIT HELP RUWI TO VICTORY

RUWI: The visitors bundled the hosts out for 101 in the second game at the same venue, Ruwi. Khanspins rode on Gautam Bunga's 184 and Mohit's 30 of 4 overs to beat Danush Titans by 48 runs.

Apart from Gautam, Nasem

Khadhi was the other main scorer for the visiting side scoring 47 and 58. In the Chhurb Giants innings, Ghazanfar Iqbal got 78, Alhilak 42 and Prakaz Sultanak 3-1-30-4 wickets.

Brief Scores (D20): Rusw: 101 all out in 30 overs (Gautam Bunga 40 – 4, 3 sixes, Nasem 24 – 1, Alhilak 4 – 1, Prakaz Sultanak 2-2-48-3 wickets).

ASIF STARS IN BOSHER WIN

Asif Khan's all-round contribution helped Bosher Rout to a 3-wicket victory against Khawar Warriors in Saturday's first D20 match that was reduced to 15 overs due to rain.

Amit Dastur once again picked up wickets for Bosher, scoring 50 of 30 including 6 wickets as his side limped to 108 for 8.

Asif Khanspins and Iqbal Memon claimed two wickets each whereas Asif took one.

Bosher surpassed the modest total off the last ball, scoring 103 for 7, with a last ball hitting. Asif had the tense with a vital

Johannesburg: India's coach Rahul Dravid said on Sunday that his side had room for improvement ahead of the second Test against South Africa starting at the Wanderers Stadium on Monday.

Speaking at a pre-match press conference, Dravid sent out a clear message that there was no room for complacency following: In-

Dravid praised the Indians bowlers for twice bowling out South Africa for under 200 and gave credit to the top order batsmen for setting up the game with their batting on the first day.

"It's very nice to come to2se conditions and get to play for 232 for three on this best day," he said. "We know we could probably have got more runs. To get bowled out for 327, that's something we will have to improve.

Dravid added that India could also have bettered in the second innings, when they were dismissed for 174.

"It was a good Test match, but there were areas where we can learn and improve because we know we are going to have to live up to it in the game."

Indian rejection appeal coach said there was an awareness in the team that in the past that "maybe we've shipped a little up after winning a game. We're going to work very hard because I expect South Africa to roll out the red carpet to us when we return to the ground tomorrow."

"Victor has been a typical Wanderers pitch. There might be something better for the bowlers, as there usually is, and then for it to flatten out a bit, although it does get a little harder for batmen towards the end." — AFP

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Indi
HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MONDAY JAN 3

“For the strength of the Pack is
the Wolf, and the strength of the
Wolf is the Pack."
Rudyard Kipling’s iconic lines
from “The Jungle Book” could be
the ultimate summation of
the metamorphosis of Indian
fast bowling pack.

And especially so, away from
home where they have been on
a rampage since 2018 breaching
fortresses on their way to
capturing India to become the
World No 1 Test nation.

The rise of a certain Jasprit
Bumrah and his almost beast like
instincts unheard and unseen
in Indian fast bowling pantheon
for decades. The control over
pace, the precision of lengths
accuracy of seam positions all working in tandem
as the Ahmedabad-born player
transformed the character of
Indian fast bowling.

Bumrah has featured in 25
Test matches for India and 23 of
those Tests have been away from
home. With a bowling average
of 21.04 away from home and
19.47 in South Africa where
he has played 9 Tests since 2013
and picked up 42 wickets. The
Bengal bowler has been a thorn
in the flesh for the Proteas.

Although, his average in
other SECA nations is not that
impressive, Shami’s mastery over
batsman’s defensive fragilities
is a relentless pursuer of a
minimum devastation and has augmented India’s pace
department.

SHAMI LENDS THE EDGE
Mohammad Shami, who is five
years senior to Bumrah, has over
the years had an up and down
sort of a career but in the last
couple of years has matured to
become Bumrah’s most able ally.

Although, his average in
other SECA nations is not that
impressive, Shami’s mastery over
batsman’s defensive fragilities
is a relentless pursuer of a
minimum devastation and has augmented India’s pace
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JASPRIT BUMRAH
Test career
2018-2021
23 Tests, 22 Away
102 wickets (Away)
30.20 (Away Bowl Avg)

MOHD SIRAJ
Test Career
2020-2021
10 Tests, 8 Away
30 wickets (Away)
30.71 (Away Bowl Avg)

ONE PICKS UP WICKETS
and creates pressure for the
opposition batsmen. The others
are relentless as well and
eventually they hunt their prey
down with alacrity.

They are one for all and all for
one.
Oman Budget 2022: Key initiatives to enhance govt services

**RO 5 billion-worth Omani non-budgetary investments planned in 2022**

KEY DRIVERS: OIA, EDO and MoF to oversee investments in a range of economic sectors

**CONRAD PRAHBA**

Investments in new projects and initiatives totalling around RO 5 billion are envisaged during 2022, the Oman government stated on Sunday, explaining that funding for these ventures will come from non-budgetary sources.

Rs 2.5 billion of these investments are planned by various subsidiaries and affiliates of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the integrated sovereign wealth fund of the Sultanate of Oman.

According to details shared in the Ministry of Finance, OIA-led projects totalling RO 2.5 billion are slated for development, completion and expansion during 2022. These are distributed across a number of economic sectors: Tourism (RO 250m), Minerals (RO 27m), Logistics (RO 156m), Technology (RO 156m), Food (RO 90m), Fisheries (RO 146m), Energy (RO 140.6m), Services (RO 82m) and others (RO 52m).

A further investment of around RO 1.2 billion planned by Energy Development Oman (EDO), the state-owned holding company set up in 2020 to represent the government’s stake in Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

After the establishment of EDO, the methodology of purchasing gas from Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) Block 6 was changed. Accordingly, gas purchasing cost has risen. However, this has also led to an increment in gas revenue compared to the figures of 2021, the ministry stated in the 2022 Budget Statement.

**BUSINESS REPORTER MUSCAT, JAN 3**

The Oman government, represented by the Ministry of Finance, has outlined a stable portfolio of initiatives aimed at achieving improvements on a number of government and public sector objectives.

Targeted for improvement through 2022 are landmark initiatives are among other areas, individual and institutional productivity, digital transformation, governance development and a small business membership, fiscal performance improvement, modernisation of the government financial system, merger of pension funds, central government procurement, supply chain financing, and the establishment of a unified treasury account.

The initiatives, listed below here, are placed in two broad sections: (A) Government Projects & Initiatives, and (B) Fiscal Performance Improvement Initiatives:

**A) Government Projects and Initiatives**

i) Ejaalis: A new system for measuring individual performance and institutional proficiency, which will be implemented by the Ministry of Labour in January 2022. Ejaalis aims to develop human resources by linking incentives and rewards with the level of productivity.

ii) Digital Transformation Projects: In this category, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology will support four key initiatives: activities in support of e-governance (e-services), launch of a national platform for suggestions and complaints (114), launch of a first package of electronic services through the unified government portal, and (4) Launch of a unified guide for government services.

iii) Ministry of Economy projects: Governorate Development Programme; and following up of the implementation of strategic programmes. These include the drafting of a new SME Law, introduction of funding regulations, roll out of new legislation, policies, and programmes, announcing inceptive related regulations, new regulations for Sanad zones, launch of group financing platforms, and supporting craft industry/ one person industry.

B) Fiscal performance improvement measures:

- The financial challenges faced by the Sultanate of Oman have prompted the government to reconsider the priorities and align the objectives in accordance with Oman Vision 2040.

Therefore, the government has taken the following set of measures in order to achieve fiscal sustainability and improving financial indicators and maintaining social welfare:

i) Review of Financial Law and Executive Bylaws: The Ministry of Finance and other planning laws and reforming the regulations pertaining to economic and financial aspects, according to the new entities of the state’s administrative apparatus, the Financial Law and its Executive Bylaws are under revision in order to address the recent changes and to regulate the financial systems developed by the Ministry of Finance.

Some of the systems include Program Based Budget, GFDS and an online Single Account.

- ii) Public Debt Law: This law aims to manage the funding the government obtains as a loan from banks, financial institutions and individuals to finance its public expenditures.

The law also aims to Regulate and manage public debt operations; diversify the sources of funding; Monitor the level of indebtedness and associated risks; and Improve the cash flow management mechanisms.

- iii) Government Financial System (Malay): Malaysia is a modern system for managing public finances; the government units use Malay systems in planning, implementing, controlling, and reporting on the State's budget.

This act as an information technology platform for the application of the rules, policies, procedures, and operations of public finance management.

Malaysia provides accurate, reliable, timely, and consistent financial information, which supports the financial and economic decision-makers in creating, planning, implementing, fiscal decisions, and discipline to achieve economic diversification and fiscal sustainability.

It helps develop a modern financial accounting and reporting system using a unified Chart of Accounts (CoA) and new budget classification which is in line with Government Financial Statistics (GFS).

**TURNO TO PAGE 15**

MONDAY | JANUARY 3, 2022 | JUMADA AL ULQI 29, 1443 AH
Bank Nizwa supports and joins first Waqf Forum

MUSCAT: Continuing its efforts to contribute to social development, Bank Nizwa, the leading Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman, participated in and sponsored the first Waqf Forum, which was organised by the Islamic Development Bank and the Waqf Foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Islamic and Religious Affairs at Sheraton Hotel Muscat.

Aiming to empower the role of Waqf foundations in the Sultanate of Oman, this initiative comes in alignment with Bank Nizwa’s commitment to support Islamic Joséph and develop the endowments sector in the Sultanate of Oman, which is regarded as one of the most effective Sharia-compliant tools, contributing in the system’s growth and social well-being.

The forum was held under the auspices of Sheikh Al Fadh bin Mohammed Al Habsi, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, in the presence of a number of ministers and high representatives from the public and private sectors.

The event focused on key topics related to Islamic endowments, including activating the partnerships between endowment foundations, the mechanism of managing endowment foundations, and adopting the best practices to organise mosques in the country, as well as reviewed regulatory and framework of Waqf investments and its related challenges.

Commenting on the forum, Khalid Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer of Bank Nizwa said, “The Islamic Aseel sector in the Sultanate of Oman is witnessing remarkable developments thanks to the efforts made by the Ministry of Islamic and Religious Affairs to expand the role of community participation in developing endowments in accordance with specific governance and controls.

The annual forum is a great and ideal platform that brings together industry stalwarts and experts to discuss the significance of Waqf foundations and its role in promoting societal development. It has contributed in bridging communications between the endowment foundations across the Sultanate of Oman through exchanging experiences and knowledge, as well as developing some aspects related to the endowments sectors and their compliance in the Sultanate of Oman.

The event witnessed the participation of Khalid Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer at Bank Nizwa, in a panel discussion on the topic of ‘Waqf Partnership – Cooperation and Integration’ addressing the role of private sector in governance and its specific in developing the sector of the country.

The panel discussion also highlighted Bank Nizwa’s efforts in developing Waqf foundations and promoting awareness on the concept and principles of Islamic Waqf, as well as discussing the challenges faced by entities who are integrated roles between Waqf foundations and other entities.

The forum also carried out workshops covering a wide array of topics related to the Waqf topic, including governance of endowment foundations, feasibility studies for endowment investment projects, and promotion of endowment across the country.

NBO offers cash back on OOMCO fuel transactions

MUSCAT: Continuing to reward customers with convenient solutions, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) has partnered with Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) to offer a 15% cash back on fuel transactions.

From January 1, 2022, NBO customers can get up to RO 5 cash back per day when topping up their tanks using NBO credit cards at OOMCO filling stations across the Sultanate.

Musa Ali Rashid, Head of Retail Products at NBO, said, “We are always looking at new ways to reward our customers for their loyalty and to add value to our products. For the next two weeks, customers can earn cash back on fuel purchases with Omanoil simply by paying conventionally and securely using any NBO chip and pin or contactless credit card and receive ten per cent back by the next working day following an approved transaction.”

NBO offers a range of credit cards to suit every requirement, each unmatched benefits and lifestyle features loaded with exclusive discounts and offers which allow customers to save, earn naqfi loyalty points and win every time they use their NBO credit card.

Every NBO credit card is equipped with cutting-edge technology and leading security features to give customers a convenient and safe alternative to cash.

More details about NBO’s range of products and services can be found online at www.nbo.com, by using the award-winning NBO digital banking app, in-branch at any of the 91 conveniently-located branches across the Sultanate of Oman, or by calling the NBO Call Centre on 2477 0050.

Baituna home finance customers’ first choice for their dream homes

MUSCAT: Every New Year comes with new plans and dreams, just like owning a house that can warmly bring together family members.

Throughout the year, the bank and its customer-centric vision. The bank has been providing financing products to a wide range of customers, both Omanis and residents, facilitated by its large network of 174 branches.

The customers can easily visit any branch or apply for home finance through any of the dedicated Baituna Sales Centres at Qurum, Al Mouj, Nizwa, Salalah, Barka, Sur, Salalah, Sur, Bani al Kahlid, and Ibri. In line with the vision “to serve you better, everyday”, Bank Muscat has attractive offers aligned to the customers’ unique needs.

It should be noted that Bank Muscat offers very attractive interest rates and a tenure up to 25 years. Omanis employees of government and semi-government institutions as well as Tier 1 companies are eligible to apply for home financing products and enjoy the banking facilities.

Baituna home finance is available for salaried government employees with a minimum salary of RO 250 and minimum service of 3 months for up to 25 years of home financing. While employees of Tier 1 private sector companies with a minimum salary of RO 300 and minimum 6 months service, are eligible for home loans having a tenure of up to 25 years.

Loans of up to RO 200,000 are available through Baituna, subject to the applicant fulfilling the relevant criteria. Eary and convenient credit approval can be obtained at any of the dedicated Baituna Sales Centres or at branches across the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking about Baituna, Abdulrahman Al Muhammadi (pictured), General Manager – Products, Bank Muscat said: “Since its launch, we have seen how the demand for Baituna home finance has increased and it became the customers’ first choice when they think of buying a house or a land. During this season and the active movement in real estate sector, we anticipate a higher demand for our home finance.

The bank is fully prepared to receive its customers’ application requests for our product and we hope that they will enjoy the benefits it provides. We call upon all our valued customers to utilise these benefits and fast processing procedures to finance their dream home.

Bank Muscat is always committed to supporting the real estate sector, which contributes substantially to the Sultanate of Oman’s economic growth. Customers can use the bank’s Baituna financing facilities to construct or purchase new homes as well as land for residential use.

Bank Muscat customers can take advantage of the fast processing of applications across the bank’s extensive network of branches and dedicated Sales Centres and the excellent insurance coverage for their financing. Flexible payment options and simple documentation makes Baituna the leading home finance facility in the Sultanate.

Please visit https://www. bankmuscatt.com/en/finances/ details/abaituna or call 2479 5555 or visit the nearest Bank Muscat branch to know more about Baituna.

MUSCAT: The Toyota Hilux rises above expectations, to deliver some of the finest on- road and off-road experiences ever. The Hilux truly is two vehicles in one, a workhorse truck and a family vehicle, in the same way a family vehicle on weekends, thanks to added comforts and safety features. Indeed the Hilux models are steaming in design and features. Their performance & safety parameters are amongst the best and the strong frame and suspension impact toughness for any demanding task.

Apart from this, high-quality materials are used to ensure a high durability. The distinctive Toyota grille rends the Hilux instantly recognizable. Tough deck protects cargo and increase carrying capabilities, while wheels are fitted with wheel tydes for a better grip.

In the Sultanate of Oman, the Hilux is available in two versions – The rugged Hilux with 3.5 J-Deck and the sporty 4.0 Litre V6 Hilux Adventure with the A-J Deck. The 4.0 Litre V6 Toyota Hilux Adventure is a truly exciting mean machine that’s been developed by Toyota to get your pulse racing. Check out the Hilux Adventure and Unleash the Power! The Toyota Hilux Adventure packs the legendary Hilux ruggedness! Every Toyota Hilux Adventure comes with high- end features that start with the most powerful 4.0 Liter engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 33 Kg-m torque, it’s a true Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the temps going. Equal importance has also been provided to technical superiority and safety features of the Hilux 4x4. The noteworthy features include a 2.7 Letre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-speed Manual Transmission and 5-speed Automatic Transmission, outputing 164 HP.

The Hilux is not only a tough vehicle but also an advanced pick-up with stylish cues, and comes in a wide range of styles.

The front of the Hilux gives a sense that the vehicle is wider than it is. For the latest press release, test drive requests and more, please visit www.toyotaoman.com, www.youtube.com/tv/toyotaoman, www.facebook.com/toyotaoman, and instagram.com/toyotaomanofficial. For any further details please visit www.toyotaoman.com.

Go beyond with the powerful & dependable Toyota Hilux

Every Toyota Hilux Adventure comes with high-end features that start with the most powerful 4.0 Liter engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 33 Kg-m torque. It’s a true Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the temps going. Equal importance has also been provided to technical superiority and safety features of the Hilux 4x4. The noteworthy features include a 2.7 Letre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-Speed Manual Transmission and 5-Speed Automatic Transmission, outputing 164 HP.

The Hilux is not only a tough vehicle but also an advanced pick-up with stylish cues, and comes in a wide range of styles.

The front of the Hilux gives a sense that the vehicle is wider than it is. For the latest press release, test drive requests and more, please visit www.toyotaoman.com, www.youtube.com/tv/toyotaoman, www.facebook.com/toyotaoman, and instagram.com/toyotaomanofficial. For any further details please visit www.toyotaoman.com.

Go beyond with the powerful & dependable Toyota Hilux

Every Toyota Hilux Adventure comes with high-end features that start with the most powerful 4.0 Liter engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 33 Kg-m torque. It’s a true Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the temps going. Equal importance has also been provided to technical superiority and safety features of the Hilux 4x4. The noteworthy features include a 2.7 Letre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-Speed Manual Transmission and 5-Speed Automatic Transmission, outputing 164 HP.
S Korea exports grow 28.8% in 2021

SEOUL, South Korea’s exports expanded at their fastest pace in 11 years in 2021, with the total export value reaching a record high, supported by post-pandemic recoveries in global demand. For the full year, exports rose 28.8% from a year earlier to $646.54 billion, trade ministry data showed on Saturday, the fastest since 2010.

It also marked the first growth in three years after falling 0.1% and 10.4% in 2020 and 2019, respectively. “Now is the time to head towards the $700 billion export goal set by the trade ministry, which will bring the opportunity to take hold of new growth engines,” said a financial analyst at a local bank.

The report also said that state-owned enterprises would step up policy efforts so that industries and experts can take the complete (economic) normalisation this year,” Minister Moon said.

A breakdown by department showed exports of semiconductors jumped 29 per cent year-on-year to a record $126 billion, while those of semiconductors also surged 34.8 per cent on record $55.3 billion. Other items such as cars and steel jumped 24.2 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively.

By destination, exports to China, South Korea’s biggest trading partner, rose 22.9 per cent, andthose to the United States and the European Union jumped 29 per cent and 33 per cent.

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Banker pay surge prompts rise of the robot analyst

The problem is that old-school rainmakers often mistrust v a l u a t i o n m u l t i p l e s pulled from live databases. Some also prize the process of making analysts sweat into seeing over seemingly trivial details, as it helps to weed out the less committed.

An aversion to technology partly explains why the number of mergers, debt and equity bankers has risen by 25% year-on-year, according to Coalition Greenstock, even as the number of vintage trading bonds and shares has declined.

That will change. Record deal volumes and a tight borrower market pushed up pay in 2021. First-year analysts at Morgan Stanley will now earn $150,000 base salary, a $15,000 raise. British warehouses have followed.

That changes the calculus for tech-savvy seniors. Higher pay for junior jobs will help their bonus pot. It’s also harder to justify paying analysts on-size salaries to perform mental tasks, such as haggling around with font sizes on PowerPoint presentations.

The logical alternatives are to use software that gathers data automatically and pulls it into live pitchbook templates. It could be a stop on the way to a sleeker business model. Imagine if companies could issue bonds with the click of a button. Graceful execution up a list of merger targets on a smartphone app.

Senior bankers will defend the status quo, but the indistinguishability of roles and the entrenched habits can change.

The bigger question is whether analysts should welcome their robot counterparts. In theory, automation should mean fewer all-nighters and more time for interesting work. However, it may knock some of them out of a job. — Reuters

**The ECB’s savvy gradualism**

The ECB has found its footing by phasing in monetary stimulus in a very, very methodical way. This has allowed the euro to soar even as the ECB President Christine Lagarde has avoided the word “quantitative easing.”

In the past year, the ECB has gradually increased the size of its monthly asset purchases, and it has repeatedly warned policymakers not to equate “fection” with “monetary union.”

That care and caution is paying off. This summer, the ECB has been able to discontinue its asset purchase program and has announced plans to taper its monetary policy.

The ECB’s gradualism has been key to its success. By phasing in stimulus, the ECB has been able to ease the eurozone out of recession without triggering inflation.

The ECB’s gradualism is also important for the eurozone’s future. By avoiding quantitative easing, the ECB has been able to maintain the eurozone’s credibility as a stable currency.

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Announcement of Capital Reduction
IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law The company Jabel Wadi Al Hills Traded, Co. which is registered with the Commercial Registration No. 9047976A hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from RO 25,000 to 5,000. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretary of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date of the decision.

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To tell the truth, there is something special about couples who play music together. You may wonder how they can stay together and remain so well-matched! In fact, the music being played together has a way of stimulating the couple’s relationship... P20

Betty White, working actress into her 90s, dies just shy of her 100th birthday

White was an elderly anomaly who was a star in her 60s and a pop culture phenomenon in her 70s and 80s. Playing on her imminent likability, White was still starring in a TV sitcom, “Hot in Cleveland,” at age 93 until it was cancelled in late 2014. White said her longevity was a result of good health, good fortune and loving her work. “It’s incredible that I’m still in this business and that you are still putting up with me,” White said in an appearance at the 2018 Emmy Awards ceremony, where she was honoured for her long career. “It’s incredible that you can stay in a career this long and still have people put up with you. I wish they did that at home.”

White was not afraid to mock herself and throw out a joke that one would not expect from a sweet-smiling, white-haired elderly woman. She was frequently asked if, after such a long career, there was anything she still wanted to do and the standard response was “Robert Redford.” — Reuters
Vienna Nazi art show seeks to address WWII legacy

In a VIENNA MUSEUM, Nazi-era art crams two WWII legacy art show has been known. The artists behind the pro-Nazi works — of which often little of the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance. History. Trend of reconciling with an ugly chapter of Austrian sculptures, textiles and pottery — most of them kept the artists, the exhibition displays their paintings, and racist vision'', it says. The show's catalogue. Comply with the new rules were forced to flee or watch. More than 65,000 of them were killed in the Nazi annexation. Membership files of 3,000 artists who officially before Nazi Germany annexed the country in 1938. Ful not to give the artworks too much of an "aura''. The pieces are part of an exhibit in the Austrian woven into a tapestry. The 120 guards reined with immediate effect. "Nothing left here'', said De forest. The 120 guards remained for punishment. "Nothing left here'', said De Jesus Aguino. The 120 guards remained for punishment. "Nothing left here'', said De Jesus Aguino.

Colombia's forgotten Alcatraz: The island prison of Gorgona

AT THE END of October a provincial candidate started up old memories when proposing to avoid corruption allegations to organise a holiday trip to Gorgona, the island prison of Gorgona. To one took the threat serious, but it did play into interest about a little-known part of Colombia's history that could be compared to Alcatraz in the United States. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence.

### Colombia's former Alcatraz: The island prison of Gorgona

#### Environment

© Leopoldo Varela

#### History

Since the late 1800s, a big change of mood has taken place. "We had a lot of visits from former island prison of Gorgona. We talk about the threat serious, but it did play into interest about a little-known part of Colombia's history that could be compared to Alcatraz in the United States. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence. Gorgona is a small island located off Colombia's Pacific coast, near the city of Buenaventura, and was the site of a prison for political detainees during Colombia's 10-year civil war. The island prison of Gorgona has the shape of a heart, and is surrounded by a moat and a fence.

### The Adventures of a Blonde and a Very洋

"The Adventures of a Blonde and a Very洋 feat. It was only 10 in the morning, and I was already on my 3rd Early abalone. Mrs J had tried one and after that pretended she was allergic to shellfish, so as not to offend anyone by gagging on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail. The amount of pols refuse would stop the kind Shit's abalone divers rolling down their car windscreen, reaching into their bucket on the passenger seat, whipping into their bucket on the passenger seat. As an avid and passionate seafood hunter, I've been asked by my grandmother's brother to pass along their generosity. But between you, me and the sea, I was chewing on the raw sea snail.

### Most Read

**Costra Gorgona is a must-see destination for seafood lovers**

"Costra Gorgona is a must-see destination for seafood lovers" says Mrs J. "I couldn't stop saying how much I enjoyed the abalone, it was simply the best. The abalone was cooked to perfection, and the flavor is simply incredible." Mrs J had tried one and after that pretended she was allergic to shellfish, so as not to offend anyone by gagging on the raw sea snail.

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Soulmates in life and music

By Abdulaziz al Jahdhami

Connection and communication are integral parts of a healthy relationship. People are usually attracted to those who are like them, so a relationship happens subconsciously. This is called mirroring, which is often developed in business interactions, but it also applies to personal relationships. It sets apart a great friendship or love from all the rest.

This is reflected in the things you love about a partner and the actual connection and moments of harmony you both share, but cannot be expressed in words. Perhaps, you sometimes feel like your partner can read your mind and find yourselves completing one another’s sentences, or even walking, talking and acting in similar ways. This marks a sign of a strong and deep connection, whether you are emotionally involved or have been best friends for quite some time.

Case in point, if two partners are holding hands and walking down the street, they are most likely walking on the same foot at the same speed. Such mirror- ing brings harmony and love chemical between the partners, reflects their combined feelings and strengthens their bonds to build a lasting relationship. Mirroring between partners could be observed in playing music, with which there is always a lot to learn and experience.

Though people are mysterious and fascinating creatures, a joint music playing marks a fun way to explore each other's details as well as maintain a sense of wonder and grow together. Connecting with someone

Science, too, agrees that listening to the music we like, our brain releases a hormone called Dopamine. It is the cheerful hormone that makes one feel elevated, motivated, and happy. Likewise, when we listen to music with people, our brains release prolactin, a hormone that boosts bonding. All these bring us to the question, is it essential for couples to have the same taste in music?

A clear answer is marked by the couples, Talal al Siyabi and Farah Jamal, interpreting the philosophy of mirroring. Both are talented musicians playing different instruments as a long-making profession and talent alliance. Started their journey with music as colleagues playing music in the Royal Band and ended up being couples and soulmates in life and music.

Those couples have been spellbound by music, so it crossed all the bridges and boarders to connect them.

As music is what feelings sound like, both have been inspired by music since childhood days at school. Talal started playing Percussion and other instruments since 1980s with his brothers who were having a music band. He joined the Royal Band in September 1998 and 2 years after, he participated in his first musical show. On the other hand, Farah started first playing Accordion instrument at school since she was 8 years old and got employed in the Royal Band in 1994 while studying in grade 6. Now, she is mastering Qanun, a traditional Middle Eastern stringed instrument.

After years of being coworkers in the Royal Band, they came to know each other and eventually got married in 2000. Talal al Siyabi pointed out, “Reaching new grounds in music is easier when you have someone at your side who understands the concept and is ready to support you and make all hours of practice count. What makes it even more special and inspiring is if that person is a soulmate and a talent partner at the same time. She would undoubtedly encourage you musically and emotionally alike”.

Both attended a 4-year professional training course and jointly took part in high profile events and concerts and royal celebrations. They have travelled together to play in events and various scales including Royal Opera of Egypt, Oman and foreign cuisines overseas and special concerts for Royal families. They have played music in Iraq, Egypt, UK, Lebanon, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, and Lithuania, to name a few.

Farah commented, “I believe there is a special bond with playing music together. You feel always having someone who holds your back and can rely on with the music and with life. That is why we are complementing each other with every music and song we play wherever we go. This is very inspiring indeed”.

As a future plan, both are intending to form a private music band, which could be thrashed by their expertise in playing all sorts of music, including Arabic, Turkish, African and Indian. Talal and Farah, come from artistic families who play different instruments, where the love for music has always been there. They found out that there is something in music that united them together through youth and into old age.