

OMAN TAKES PART IN MEET ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, is taking part in the 63rd General Assembly meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). **>A2**



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SHABAB OMAN II ARRIVES AT PORT OF AMSTERDAM

The Royal Navy of Oman ship (Shabab Oman II) arrived at the port of Amsterdam in the Kingdom of Netherland, as part of its sixth international voyage on Monday. **>A5**



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SAYYID SHIHAB INSPECTS SAF TRAINING REGIMENT

His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs toured the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Training Regiment. HH Sayyid Shihab was greeted upon his arrival at the regiment's headquarters by Maj. Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and Brigadier Said Zaid Al Habsi, Commandant of the RAO Academy. HH Sayyid Shihab was briefed on the march of modernisation witnessed by the regiment and its equipment, as well as the military training system and plans. The Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs also toured the shooting range in Ghala. **—ONA**

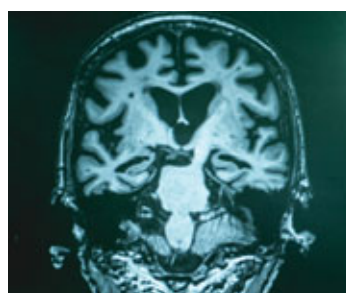
SCIENCE AND TECH

Omani research team develops smart programme for Alzheimer's diagnosis

MUSCAT: Using artificial intelligence, an Omani research team has developed a programme to diagnose Alzheimer's disease and also to determine its degree of severity.

Researcher Salma Sulaiman Al Hinai said, "The team applied 4IR techniques to help patients who suffer from the disease, which leads to exacerbated nervous disorder and a waste-away (atrophy) and death of brain cells—the most common manifestations of dementia."

The research project has been funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation to help provide practical solutions for the health sector, limit the scope of the disease and ameliorate



patient conditions, said Salma.

Through up-to-date resonance imaging, the research team has determined the extent to which brain tissues are affected. The application reveals cells' neuronal death and saves the time and effort of

the radiologist. She said the early detection of the nervous disorder is as important as the diagnosis of the disease, which would help radiologists working at the Sultanate's hospitals to understand the severity of the death of cells within a relatively short time and effort compared to clinical examinations.

The application automatically divides the brain tissues to have the size of tissue in Pixel using the digital image computing techniques, she said. The brain image is obtained through resonance imaging and the use of digital image computing techniques and that the images are dealt with using erosion and dilation application, she said. **—ONA**

SULTANATE PREPARING NEW STRATEGY FOR SME SECTOR

The proposed strategy will help in generating new job opportunities for Omani youth

MUSCAT: A strategy is being prepared for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector in line with Oman Vision 2040 by the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (ASMED).

The new strategy seeks to extend a supportive environment for SMEs through the development of mechanisms and programmes that

strengthen the integration of all entities related to entrepreneurship.

It is also being prepared to augment the contribution of SMEs to the gross domestic product (GDP), raising the Sultanate of Oman's indicators in the field of entrepreneurship and also to bring in new initiatives to generate employment opportunities in the country.

78,089

is the total number of SMEs registered at ASMED at the end of May 2022, increasing by 46.9 percent from 53,166 SMEs during the same period in 2021, according to the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total number of SMEs registered at ASMED at the end of May 2022 increased by 46.9 per cent to reach 78,089 compared to 53,166 SMEs during the same period in 2021, according to the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The Governorate of Musandam recorded the highest increase by 100.5 per cent, followed by the Governorate of Dhofar by 77.7 per cent, the Governorate of Al Wusta by 70.8 per cent and the Governorate of Al Dhahirah by 32.8 per cent.

The Governorate of Muscat registered the largest number of SMEs till the end of May 2022

reaching 26,374, followed by the Governorate of North Al Batinah at 12,030 and the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah at 8,821.

New measures

Earlier in June 2022, a raft of new measures was announced for the SME sector. It provided an additional package of subsidies for SMEs, entrepreneurs and insolvent persons. Also, to alleviate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the package included a number of subsidies and payment of overdue fees by entrepreneurs.

These included waivers for entrepreneurs who are Riyada card holders (for beneficiaries of emer-

gency loans) issued by the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises, waivers from fines and fees payable by SMEs against delays in loans to the Lender Portfolio (earlier called the Al Raffd Fund) until the end of this year and waivers in payments of overdue fees by entrepreneurs and SME owners who face prison charges following prosecution on account of bad cheques drawn on insufficient funds.

The measures also included postponement of lawsuits against individuals/ establishments not abiding by the provisions of loan agreements signed with the Lender Portfolio until the end of 2022.

—With ONA inputs

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34°
MUSCAT



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

ROP patrols on Dhofar route to help motorists

1 The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has set up checkpoints along the road leading to Dhofar Governorate and deployed patrols to lend support to road users during the monsoon season which is peaking now. The ROP also offers airborne ambulance service for emergency cases, a timely measure during accidents when victims require to be airlifted to hospital. **>A3**

WORLD

Four killed, 2 injured in US mall shooting

2 Four people, including a gunman, were killed after a man opened fire at an Indiana mall. "In all, four people were killed and two injured," Jim Ison, Greenwood Police Department chief said. **>A6**

MARKET

Crude oil production up by 12.9% in May

3 The Sultanate's crude oil production saw a rise by 12.9 percent by the end of May 2022, while condensates production declined by 2.4 percent, according to the latest NCSI data. **>B1**



Oman receives light rain showers

A2



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Dhuhr.....	12:18pm
Asr.....	3:39pm
Maghrib.....	7:00pm
Isha.....	8:21pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:06am

WIPO

Oman takes part in meeting on intellectual property law

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, is taking part in the 63rd General Assembly meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), which will continue till 22 July 2022.

The meetings discuss a spectrum of topics, namely the intellectual property law, the commercial brands law, industrial designs and geographical indicators, among other topics. -ONA



BOOK

‘Oman in Time of Corona’ outlines major changes during pandemic

MUSCAT: A recently published book titled “Oman in Time of Corona” outlines the major changes that the global pandemic brought about in everyday life.

Published in Jordan, the book was the outcome of a project undertaken by Oman Association of Writers and Literati. It was aimed at exploring the situation in the Sultanate of Oman in the back-

drops of coronavirus (COVID-19). The team of science researchers who compiled the book archived a pivotal moment in the history of humanity as a whole. They provide the readers with the gist of their experience while tackling Covid-19. They share their vision and specialization with counterparts and the general public.



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Oman receives light, moderate rain showers



The Wilayat of Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar topped the list with the highest amount of rain during the past two days

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Light to moderate rains lashed several governorates of Oman during the past two days under the influence of a much weakened tropical depression.

Met officials said the tropical depression weakened and retreated to an area of low air pressure.

However, according to a statement of Oman Meteorology, the light to moderate rains caused “a

number of wadis to overflow and there were low clouds all over Oman.”

Tropical depression

“Weakness and retreat of the tropical depression to an area of low atmospheric pressure with the continued hovering of rain clouds over most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman will result in rainfall with varying intensity over the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta and parts of Dhofar Governorate,” Oman Meteorology said in the statement.

The Wilayat of Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar topped the list with the highest amount of rainfall during the past two days at 35 mm, according to the weather stations of the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.

The Ministry listed a number of wilayats which received rains from July 17 to July 18, and it was as follows: “The Wilayat of Al-Jabal Al Akhdar 35 mm, Bidiyah 15 mm, Nizwa 12 mm, Bidbid and

Seeb 10 mm and the lowest was in the Wilayat of Amerat and Ibra at 2 mm.”

The Maritime Security Centre (MSC) held its daily meetings to find out the latest developments of the tropical situation in the Arabian Sea and the resulting impact on maritime traffic, movement of ships in the region, in addition to the movement of commercial ports and sea fishing ports, and following up and activating the discussion of the roles and tasks of the various military, security and civilian agencies.

Earlier, emergency services across Oman had been put on alert on Sunday to handle any consequences that might arise from the expected weather conditions.

On Sunday, two citizens drowned in the Wilayat of Rustaq while four children were saved from drowning in Muscat governorate. Six shelters were also prepared in South Al Sharqiyah: Two in Al Khor, one in Ras Al Hadd, one in Masirah, one in Al Ashkara and one in Jalan Bani Bu Ali.



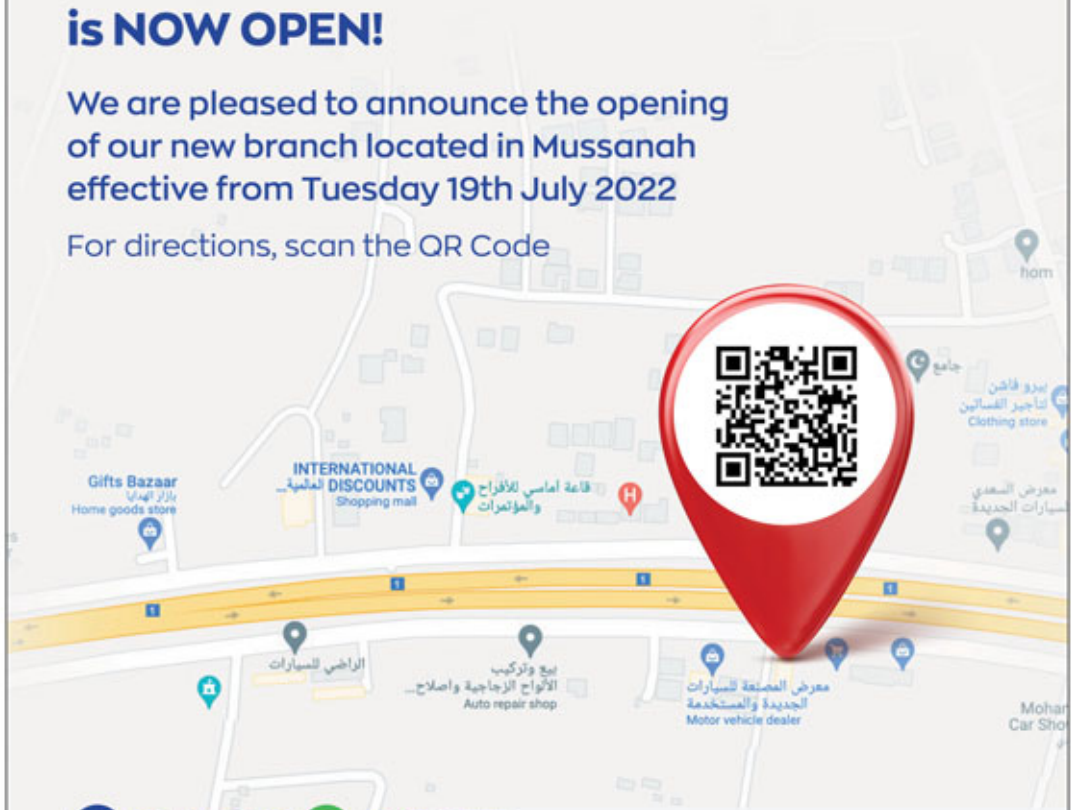
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ROP sets up checkpoints, patrols on Dhofar route to help motorists

While ready with all assistance including airborne ambulance service in case of need, ROP has advised visitors to abide by the laws as well as traffic speed and safety norms

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has set up checkpoints along the road leading to Dhofar Governorate and deployed patrols to lend support to road users during the monsoon season which is peaking now. The ROP also offers airborne ambulance service for emergency cases, a timely measure during accidents whose victims require to be airlifted to hospital.

The ROP advises all visitors to Dhofar Governorate to abide by laws and traffic systems regulating

speed and safety procedures. The drivers are in particular alerted to look out for sudden occurrences, like the presence of stray animals on the road at night or heaps of sands that are also likely to form on the road in desert areas. Other safety formalities to be observed include keeping a first aid kit, maintaining the vehicle in advance and checking brake power and tyre air pressure. The ROP said that the visitors/tourists may ask for help by ringing the Emergency Phone Number (9999) or directly get in touch with police patrols.



Colon cancer among most common form of cancers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Colon cancer is the most common cancer in the Sultanate and more than 70 percent of the cases are discovered late, according to a colorectal surgery consultant at the Royal Hospital.

Speaking exclusively to *Times of Oman*, Dr. Rashid Al Alawi, Colorectal surgery consultant at the Royal Hospital, said "Colon cancer has become very worrying for us as it is the most common cancer in the Sultanate, and more than 70 percent of the cases are discovered late, at a rate of 5-8 new cases per week in the Royal Hospital, which

is the main hospital for these cases." He explained: "Previously, breast cancer was ranked first in the Sultanate, but colon cancer overtook this kind of cancer. Colon cancer moved from the fifth to the fourth place and then to the second in 2018, and later became the most common."

Silent internal disease

Dr. Al-Alawi said, "I wish we could detect it early, and if it was, we would have gained time, but colon cancer is a silent internal disease and it begins to grow in the colon like a polyp and then grows with the passage of time and shows

Those who are 40 years or older should get themselves examined if they feel any symptoms such as bloating and pain in the abdomen or bleeding

symptoms such as bleeding from the anus, pain in the abdomen, flatulence and a change in the pattern of stool output."

Dr. Rashid explained: "Often and the most common bleeding from the anus is due to benign causes due to haemorrhoids, anal fissures, but the question is how to distinguish between benign causes and colon

cancer. At such a stage an endoscopy should be performed to find out the cause and identify the reasons."

About detection of the cancer at an early stage, Dr. Rashid said, "It is very difficult due to the lack of an early examination programme in the Sultanate."

Dr. Rashid stressed that the World Health Organisation,

(WHO), recommends to all countries to provide an early screening programme for colon cancer, describing it as a basic need. "Early detection of breast cancer is easy as it is a tangible external organ that can be touched, examined and detected by hand or even the naked eye. The patient himself or one of her relatives can examine it or get it examined by a doctor, but the colon is an internal part that cannot be seen with the naked eye or touched to examine it early and can be detected only after examining the stool and then through the endoscope."

Dr. Rashid stressed that medi-

cally advanced countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and some Asian countries, including Singapore, have an early examination programme for a certain age, as some of them adopt early examination at the age of 50 years and some reduce the examination years to 40 years."

Dr. Rashid called upon every one especially those who are 40 years or older to get themselves examined if they feel any symptoms such as bloating and pain in the abdomen or bleeding. They should consult a doctor until they are assured of their health condition.


ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Story on the reopening of Al-Mughail beach

A story on the reopening of Al-Mughail beach reached 51,212 people and had 2,056 link clicks on Facebook.

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2,400 VIEWS



Maghrib Minute video on 200 professions reserved for Omanis

The Maghrib Minute video on 200 professions reserved for Omanis had 2,400 views and reached 8,300 people on Facebook.

 **MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM**

1,786 VIEWS



Morning Minute video on emergency services on alert

The Morning Minute video on emergency services on alert in Oman had 1,786 views and 117 likes on Instagram.


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Located in the coastal area of Salalah between Dhariz and Hafa, Al Baleed is one of the ancient cities of Oman and was known to be one of an important commercial port.

The Land of Frankincense is one of many UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in Oman and was once the centre of the ancient world's thriving frankincense trade.

Heaps of rubbles can be found scattered all around the main site where the excavation work is still under process.

According to UNESCO, "The frankincense trees of Wadi Dawkah and the remains of the caravan oasis of Shisr/Wubar and the affiliated ports of Khor Rori and Al-Baleed vividly illustrate the trade in frankincense that flourished in this region for many centuries, as one of the most important trading activities of the ancient and medieval world."

"The four components of the Land of Frankincense dramatically illustrate the trade in frankincense that flourished in this region for many centuries," said the organisation. "They constitute outstanding testimony to the civilizations in south Arabia since the Neolithic era. The successive ports of Khor Rori (4th century BC to the 5th century AD) and Al Baleed (8th century to the 16th century AD) and an outpost close to the Great Desert Rub Al Khali, Shisr, about 170 km inland, represent in a unique way the distribution of frankincense which was produced in the wadis of the coastal hinterland.

The Museum of the Land of Frankincense is located in the region of Al Baleed in Salalah. One can see many artefacts displayed. These artefacts had been excavated from Al Baleed, Sumuharam and Ash Shisr. Several replicas of old boats and ships are also on display and one can learn the history of old Omani boats. The museum also houses various instruments along with the utensils that were widely used in earlier times.



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ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN SHIP SHABAB OMAN II ARRIVES AT THE PORT OF AMSTERDAM

The Royal Navy of Oman ship (Shabab Oman II) arrived at the port of Amsterdam in the Kingdom of Netherland, as part of its sixth international voyage (Oman, the Land of Peace). The ship will dock at the port for two days to allow visitors and those interested in sailing ships to visit it and learn about the objectives of its international voyage and about the role of the Sultanate of Oman in building bridges of love, brotherhood and peace among the peoples of the world. During its sixth international voyage, the Royal Navy of Oman vessel Shabab Oman II left the Port of Harlingen in the Netherlands on its way to Port of Amsterdam. The vessel capped up the first leg of its tour by winning the “Best Long-Haul Sail Ship Award 2022”. Shabab Oman II strives to deliver a message of friendship and fraternity between Oman and different countries of the world. While on the go, the vessel highlights Omani culture, maritime history and centuries'-old heritage. **ONA**



Delegation briefed about immense opportunities in Salalah Free Zone



The visit was aimed at highlighting and promoting the economic, investment and tourism projects

MUSCAT: The existing and potential investment opportunities and the world-class infrastructure that meet the requirements of investors, were conveyed to a delegation on their visit to the Salalah Free Zone and Port.

The media delegation comprising reporters of Arab and foreign news agencies were also acquainted with the transport system, the logistics sector and the available business opportunities in Dhofar Governorate.

The visit comes within the delegation's visit to the Governorate to promote economic, investment and tourism projects.

During the visit to Salalah Free Zone, the delegation was briefed by Ahmed bin Said Tabook, Director General of Commercial Affairs



at Salalah Free Zone.

The location of Salalah Free Zone is close to the ports which help in motivating multi-media communication and ensures smooth movement of goods and creation of opportunities for integration of the value added chains, he said, adding that the location also provides access to the international markets.

He said that the Salalah Free Zone provides several incentives and facilities to investors, includ-

ing tax exemption and freehold projects. The port enjoys sixth place out of 351 ports at the world level in the operations capacity.

The free zone is close to Salalah Airport and international shipping lines qualified as free zone to play a vital role in the supply chain and logistics services sector, he said.

The Salalah Free Zone is spread over an area of approximately 2.6 million sq. metres for the chemicals sector companies, he said, adding that the said area hosts a

number of companies in the petrochemicals sector such as OQ Methanol, OQ Liquefied Petroleum Gas, Octal and other companies.

The media delegation toured a number of projects at Salalah Free Zone, including Al Jood Food factory, one of the largest factories at Salalah Free Zone, established in May 2019.

The delegation also visited USG Company's factory which produces gypsum sheets meant for export to other countries.



On the visit to Salalah Port, the delegation was briefed by Mohamed bin Aufait Al Masha'ani, CEO for Corporate Affairs at Salalah Port on the logistics services , facilities, projects and investment opportunities the port offers.

International shipping

Al Masha'ani pointed out the role the Salalah Port plays in international shipping by receiving an increasing number of container vessels.

He also pointed out that the port possesses a general goods/cargo terminal established in 1976.

He said that Salalah Ports Ser-

vices Company operates in the field of management and its operation is in accordance with a concession agreements signed with the Government of Oman.

The company also manages the Salalah Port in coordination with the management of Salalah Free Zone and other companies operating in the zone.

He said that Salalah Port secured the second place in the container ports performance index (CPPI) in 2021, issued by the World bank and Standard & Poor's Global Market Intelligence and sixth place in the CPPI for 2020.

— ONA

ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

Registration opens for innovative challenge programme Manafaa

MUSCAT: Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre (Mawarid), affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, has declared open the registration of applicants wishing to contest the annual innovative challenge programme (Manafaa).

The programme, being organised for the fifth year in a row, runs till 22 December 2022.

The programme seeks to encourage innovation in addressing challenges such as air pollution

and climate change.

It focuses on artificial intelligence applications, medical and curative products, clean energy, sufficiency in energy consumption, environment-friendly systems of air sanitation techniques and innovation systems for the reduction of emissions and climate change.

The participants can access the electronic website of the programme through Mawarid portal: www.mawarid.gov.om/manafaa.

— ONA



WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK UNCTAD



Meeting in Geneva

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Consumer Protection Authority, took part on Monday in the 6th session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.

The session comes within the framework of the UNCTAD.

The session included several working papers on various topics, namely on continuous modifications to consumer protection laws all over the world and the experiences and challenges faced by some countries in utilising modern technology to serve consumers. — ONA

Sri Lanka's interim president declares state of emergency

Sri Lanka is due to choose a president this week, with parliament members set to hear nominations

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe has imposed a state of emergency, according to a government notice released late on Sunday and reported by local media.

"It is expedient, so to do, in the interests of public security, the protection of public order and the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community," the declaration stated.

Wickremesinghe also announced a state of emergency last week after ex-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country, but it remains unclear whether the order had lapsed or was withdrawn.

While specifics of the current regulation are yet to be announced, previous emergency powers have been used to deploy the military to arrest and detain



people, search private property and dampen protests.

Sri Lanka is due to choose a president this week, with parliament members set to hear nominations for the post on Tuesday.

Ongoing crisis

Sri Lanka has been battling an acute economic and political crisis in recent months. The country has been struggling with crippling shortages of essential items, including food, fuel and medicine.

The resulting public fury and

resentment toward the political leadership forced President Rajapaksa to flee the country and send a resignation letter to parliament, which was accepted on Friday.

Wickremesinghe, who has been serving as prime minister, was sworn in as interim president.

Political turmoil delays talks with IMF

Sri Lanka's parliament met on Saturday to begin the process of electing a new president, as a shipment of fuel arrived to provide some re-

lief to the crisis-hit nation.

Sri Lanka has appealed to the International Monetary Fund for a bailout package, but the political turmoil has delayed the talks.

The head of the nation's central bank told the Wall Street Journal that the economy would likely contract by more than 6% this year.

Street protests have waned since Rajapaksa fled the country. But some 500 people continue to occupy part of the president's office after it was overrun earlier this month. **DW**



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COVID TESTING

Canada to resume random COVID-19 testing at four major airports

OTTAWA: To track the importation of the COVID-19 virus into Canada and identify new variants of concern, the country is set to re-establish its mandatory random COVID-19 testing at four major airports from Tuesday.

The Government of Canada paused mandatory random testing for those entering Canada by air on June 11, 2022, as part of a broader strategy to transition testing for air travellers outside of the airports. Citing the safety of Canadians as a number one priority since the beginning of the pandemic, a Government Press release read, "Mandatory random testing will resume as of July 19, 2022, for travellers who qualify as fully vaccinated, arriving in Canada by air to the four major Canadian airports, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto." "The Government of

Canada set up entry restrictions, testing, and quarantine requirements to manage risks at the border. Testing was and remains an important part of our surveillance program to track the importation of COVID-19 virus into Canada and identify new variants of concern," it added.

To qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller to Canada, travellers must have been vaccinated with a primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine accepted by the Government of Canada for the purpose of travel at least 14 calendar days before entering Canada.

All testing for air travellers, for both those who qualify as fully vaccinated and partially or unvaccinated people, will be completed outside of airports, either via an in-person appointment or a virtual appointment for a self-swab test. **ANI**

MALL SHOOTING

Four killed, two injured in shooting at a mall in US

INDIANAPOLIS: Four people, including a gunman, were killed on Sunday evening at an Indiana mall after a man opened fire in a food court, media reported citing police.

"In total, four people were killed and two were injured," Jim Ison, Chief of Greenwood Police Department said, The New York Times reported. During a news conference on Sunday, Ison said that the emergency call center received calls about the shooting in the food court around 6 pm.

He said the shooting ended when an armed civilian stopped the gunman.

"It appears that a good Samaritan that was armed observed the shooting in progress and shot the shooter," he said.

Mayor of Greenwood said in a statement said: "We experienced a mass shooting this evening at the Greenwood Park Mall.

The Greenwood Police Department is in control of the scene. I am in direct contact with the command post, and there is no further threat. I would ask the public to please stay away from this area."

"This tragedy hits at the core of our community," the Mayor said.

The Indianapolis Metropolitan



Police Department said on Twitter that it was helping the local authorities and urged people to avoid the area.

With increasing incidents of gun violence in the United States, President Joe Biden had said that the US needs to ban assault weapons for the sake of protecting children and families or raise the age to purchase them from 18 to 21.

Furthermore, on June 22, a group of US lawmakers reached a much-awaited deal on a bipartisan gun safety bill after recent

mass shooting incidents in Uvalde, Buffalo and Texas, that struck a nerve in the country.

The new bill aims to take firearms away from dangerous people and provide billions of dollars in new mental health funding.

The bill does not ban assault-style rifles or significantly expand background-check requirements for gun purchases, but it gives states more resources to take guns away from dangerous individuals. **ANI**

FIRST TIME IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS

Wild bison return to UK for the first time in thousands of years

LONDON: Early morning on Monday, three gentle giants wandered out of a corral in the Kent countryside to become the first wild bison to roam in Britain for thousands of years.

The aim is for the animals' natural behaviour to transform a dense commercial pine forest into a vibrant natural woodland. Their taste for bark will kill some trees and their bulk will open up trails, letting light spill on to the forest floor, while their love of rolling around in dust baths will create more open ground. All this should allow new plants, insects, lizards, birds and bats to thrive.

The Wilder Blean project, near Canterbury, is an experiment to see how well the bison can act as natural "ecosystem engineers" and restore wildlife. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

A more natural woodland should also absorb more carbon, helping to tackle the climate crisis. Global heating was evident as the bison were released, with England in the grip of a heatwave, and the early timing was to allow the bison to reach the shade of the woods before temperatures started to climb.

European bison are the continent's largest land animal – bulls can weigh a tonne – and were ex-



tinct in the wild a century ago, but are recovering through reintroduction projects across Europe.

"The restoration of naturally functioning ecosystems is a vital and inexpensive tool in tackling the climate crisis," said Evan Bowen-Jones, CEO at Kent Wildlife

Trust (KWT). "We want Wilder Blean to mark the beginning of a new era for conservation in the UK. We need to revolutionise the way we restore natural landscapes, relying less on human intervention and more on natural engineers like bison, boar and beaver." **ONA**

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Britain announces national heat emergency as temperatures soar

Authorities placed more ambulances and medical workers on call amid health fears

LONDON: British authorities announced a rare extreme heat emergency for large parts of England on Monday, with temperatures expected to exceed 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) for the first time in British history.

The record-high temperatures were expected to disrupt travel, health care and schools as well as posing a serious threat to life.

Authorities placed more ambulances and medical workers on call amid health fears.

The Level 4 alert, issued by the Health Security Agency (UKSHA) for Monday and Tuesday, is defined as a “national heat emergency” and was triggered for the first time on record.

What kind of disruptions are expected?

The UK Met Office warned that the temperatures posed serious risks, including severe illness and death, even among healthy people.

It said there was a high risk of



localized loss of power, water and mobile phone services.

The national rail network asked customers not to use its services unless essential. Severe delays due to warped tracks and failing power supplies were expected, and some services, including a key route between northeastern England and London, were suspended for parts of Tuesday.

London’s metro network was running a reduced service on Monday and Tuesday, urging commuters to only travel if absolutely necessary.

While some schools were due to stay closed, others were preparing to cool off the children by setting up wading pools and water spray.

To relieve strain on the health service, some medical procedures were canceled.

What are the authorities advising?

With the British capital expected to endure the highest temperatures, Mayor Sadiq Khan issued a warning via Twitter, sharing the UKHSA’s guidelines on how to cope with the heat.

It advises that Britons look out for others, especially those that are most vulnerable to the extreme weather. Hydrating frequently and staying indoors were also recommended.

As children and the elderly are among the most vulnerable to the impact of heat, nursing homes were urged to protect their inhabitants as well as possible.

Khan went on to discourage Londoners from using public transport and to be prepared for delays.

Cabinet Office Member Kit Malthouse said the government was prepared for the heat wave and

would seek to learn lessons from it while British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was criticized for missing a meeting on Saturday concerning the government’s response to the weather crisis.

Where else is the heat wave spreading?

The heat wave has been building over much of Europe’s southwest, with wildfires raging in Portugal, Spain and France.

It was spreading north and was expected to reach Germany and the Netherlands by Tuesday.

The German meteorological service announced temperatures would climb as high as 40 C and would hit southwestern Germany the hardest. In France, more than 16,000 people, including both residents and tourists, were evacuated due to wildfires ravaging its tinder-dry forests in the southwestern region.

French authorities responded by setting up seven emergency shelters for evacuees.

They announced plans for more towns and 3,500 additional people at risk of falling victim to the fire to be evacuated.

According to local news reports, the country scrambled to send three extra water-bombing planes and a reinforcement of 200 firefighters to combat the spread of the wildfires on Monday, increasing the force of 1,500 firefighters in the southwest.

Spain managed to contain a wildfire that burned 2,000 hec-

tares (5,000 acres) of woodlands in Andalusia, according to regional authorities. All 3,000 residents evacuated from the southern coastal city of Malaga were allowed to return to their homes, regional leader Juan Manuel Moreno said.

Wildfires in Portugal have killed two people and injured about 60 more. Between 12,000 and 15,000 hectares of land were burned in the hottest July on record after the country was hit with 47 C temperatures. Despite a slight drop in the heat level, most parts of the country remained on high alert for further wildfires.

Forecasters in Italy were expecting temperatures above 40 C in several regions in the coming days.

Switzerland also suffered the impact of the heat wave. The operator of a nuclear plant in Beznau stated that it reduced output to not overheat the plant as it relied on the river Aare to draw cooling water.

What is the cause for extreme weather events?

Climate scientists rarely attribute specific weather events to climate change, however heat waves and extreme weather events become increasingly likely as global carbon emissions increase and global temperatures rise. Studies show that the UK is now 10 times more likely to reach 40 C compared to the pre-industrial era. Wildfires have also become more frequent and increasingly hard to fight due to climate change. **ow**

BLAME ON SOUTH KOREA

North Korea blames balloons from South for COVID spread



PYONGYANG: North Korean defectors in the South have dismissed accusations from Pyongyang that balloons floated over the border and carrying medicines, cash and propaganda messages are the cause of the coronavirus pandemic in the North.

Speaking to DW, the founder of Fighters for a Free North Korea said Pyongyang’s claims are “nonsense,” and merely an effort to deflect blame away from the regime’s incompetence in dealing with the pandemic and a critical shortage of medicines for civilians.

‘Malignant fever’

North Korean health authorities admitted their first case of coronavirus on May 12, more than two years after the regime sealed the nation’s borders in what it said was an effort to stop the virus from gaining a foothold in the country.

Since then, almost 25 million cases have been reported, although only a few patients have officially tested positive for the virus.

On May 19, state media reported 262,270 new cases of an unidentified “fever” and one death toll, bringing the official death toll to 63.

As of May 15, there were 240,459 patients treated for the “malignant virus” in Pyongyang – around 7% of the city’s population, Korean Central Television reported.

Pyongyang says 99.98% of its 4.77 million fever patients since

late April have fully recovered, but because of an apparent lack of testing, it has not published any data for those who tested positive.

On July 1, North Korean authorities announced that they had found the source of the epidemic in the North, tracing the route of the infection back to the small village of Ipho-ri, some 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of the Demilitarized Zone that divides the Korean Peninsula.

‘Alien things coming by wind’

North Korean state media attributed the COVID-19 outbreak in the country to “alien things coming by wind,” and landing close to the border with the South.

Korean Central News Agency said the source of the outbreak was an 18-year-old soldier and a five-year-old child who came into contact with objects near the border.

State-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper wrote that the soldier and child “came into contact with alien things on a hill close to a barracks and residential quarters in Ipho-ri in April.” The paper urged citizens to “deal vigilantly” with the “alien things,” as well as “other climate phenomena and balloons.”

The term “alien things” is understood to mean balloons sent over the border from the South.

Medical experts have rejected claims that the balloons are capable of transferring coronavirus. **ow**

WHITE HOUSE STRATEGIST

Trial of Trump ally Steve Bannon set to begin

WASHINGTON: Jury selection is scheduled to begin on Monday in the trial of former White House strategist Steve Bannon.

Bannon was an adviser to former US President Donald Trump.

Bannon faces charges of criminal contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate with investigations into the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

What are the charges against Bannon?

Bannon is charged with defying a subpoena from the House’s January 6 committee that sought his records and testimony.

He was indicted in November on two counts of criminal contempt of Congress. Each count carries a minimum sentence of 30 days of jail and a maximum sentence of a year. Over a week ago, Bannon said



he was now willing to testify. Bannon had previously argued that his testimony is protected by Trump’s claim of executive privilege. His lawyer said Bannon agreed to testify after Trump waived his claim

of executive privilege.

Executive privilege is the right of members of the executive branch of the US government to withhold information from courts.

Trump has used the claim to try

to block witness testimony and the release of White House documents. In January, the Supreme Court ruled against the former president’s efforts to stop the National Archives from cooperating with the House committee.

Who is Steve Bannon?

Bannon, who has likened himself to Darth Vader in interviews, served as the executive chairman of nationalist media organization Breitbart between 2012 and 2016.

The former investment banker for Goldman Sachs was a key adviser in the 2016 campaign that led Trump to the presidency.

In 2020, Bannon was charged with defrauding the public in an effort to raise private funds to build the US-Mexico border wall. Bannon later received a presidential pardon from Trump. **ow**

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RETIREMENT

Ben Stokes announces retirement from ODI format

LONDON: England all-rounder announced that he will be playing his last One-Day International match on Tuesday, which will be against South Africa.

Stokes has played 104 ODI matches and is set to end his international career in the format on his home ground at the Seat Unique Riverside. The 31-year-old's ODI career will forever be remembered for his Player-of-the-Match performance in the 2019 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup final at Lord's.

"I will play my last game for England in ODI cricket on Tuesday in Durham. I have decided to retire from this format. This has been an incredibly tough decision to make. I have loved every minute of playing with my mates for England. We have had an incredible journey on the way," wrote Stokes on his Twitter.

"As hard as a decision as this was to come to, it's not as hard dealing with the fact I can't give my teammates 100 per cent of myself in this format anymore. The England shirt deserves nothing less from anyone who wears it."

Adding further he stated, "Three formats are just unsustainable for me now. Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give Jos and the rest of the team their



all. It's time for someone else to progress as a cricketer and make incredible memories like I have over the past 11 years."

"I will give everything I have to Test cricket, and now, with this decision, I feel I can also give my total commitment to the T20 format. I would like to wish Jos Buttler, Matthew Mott, the players and the support staff every success going forward. We have made great strides in white-ball cricket over the past seven years, and the future looks bright," he added.

The all-rounder further stated that playing his last game at his home ground feels amazing and he hopes for his team's victory in the clash against the Proteas.

"I have loved all 104 games I have played so far, I've got one more, and it feels amazing to be

playing my last game at my home ground in Durham. As always, the England fans have always been there for me and will continue to be there. You're the best fans in the world. I hope we can win on Tuesday and set the series up nicely against South Africa," stated Stokes.

Stokes' unbeaten 84 helped to send the match into a Super Over as England claimed their first ICC Men's Cricket World Cup title in the most thrilling of circumstances.

After making his ODI debut against Ireland in 2011, Stokes has scored 2919 runs, including three centuries, and taken 74 wickets.

He captained the ODI side during last summer's victory against Pakistan by 3-0 and has been an inspirational leader. **ANI**

FOOTBALL

Memphis Depay has no place at Barcelona

MADRID: The signings of Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha, together with the renewal of Ousmane Dembele, have left Memphis Depay without a place in the Barcelona team.

Despite being the team's top scorer last season, the player would now be the seventh striker

behind the aforementioned plus Ansu Fati, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Ferran Torres.

It is an uncomfortable situation for a player who aims to be a starter in every game.

Memphis already knows what is at stake. The club have met with his agent to explain the situation.

At the moment he is not a vital player for Barcelona and the best solution would be for him to leave the team this summer.

The Dutchman is thinking about it. He knows that he has a good reputation and that he could go to a team where he will play regularly, but he won't go to just any team. **-DNA**

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2022 reaching \$102.68, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$4.24 from the price of Friday, which was at \$98.44. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,201.05 points, up by 1.41 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.3 per cent at 454.45 points. Oman Chlorine, up 9.77 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Flour Mills, down 10 per cent, was the top loser.

SHARIA SUPERVISORY BOARD

Alizz Islamic Bank discusses its performance at SSB meet

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) of Alizz Islamic Bank held its second meeting for the year 2022 at the bank's headquarters in the Central Business District of Ruwi, in the presence of the Chairman of the Sharia Supervisory Board and the other members of the SBB as well as Sulaiman Bin Hamad Al Harthi, the bank's CEO, some directors, the internal Sharia auditors and the bank's internal auditors.

During the meeting, the CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank presented and discussed the bank's performance during the second quarter of this year, highlighting the key indicators of the bank's growth and the enhanced services and products



offered by the bank to its customers after obtaining SSB's approval.

Moreover, the meeting discussed the Sharia Audit Report for the second quarter of the year and the Sharia Compliance and Risks Report, as well as several issues of interest, including the new products ap-

proved or rejected by the SSB. The meeting also discussed some of the requests to reschedule corporate finance and issued the appropriate decisions in this respect.

The meeting witnessed the introduction of a training programme to the bank staff on drafting Sha-

ria contracts, a key component of Islamic Banking practices. The programme was delivered by Sheikh Dr Ahmed Subhi Ayadi, a member of the SSB. The head and members of the SSB also previously attended a training programme on anti-money laundering and the applicable laws.

The Sharia Compliance and Audit Department performs various key roles to achieve its overarching goal of ensuring compliance with Sharia principles in all aspects related to customer service, products and services. To that end, it regularly reviews documents relating to the bank's products, operations and procedures to check their compliance with Sharia principles. It presents reports on its findings to the SSB and bank's management which in turn take the required actions to offer support to ensure compliance of the bank's products and services with Sharia principles.

The Sharia Compliance and Audit Department had other significant contributions, such as proposing Sharia-compliant solutions

that meet the requirements of the corporate customers who usually benefit from more sophisticated solutions. Guided by the SSB, the department took part in the development of several products that were launched last year, as well as the products to be launched in 2022. It also performed a Sharia audit on consumer and wholesale banking services.

It is worth noting that in 2021, the Sharia Supervisory Board held seven meetings, with a full quorum; reviewed several products and documents; and issued 162 decisions on several inquiries, in addition to reviewing monthly reports, policies, investment proposals, and Sharia audit reports. It also offered appropriate guidance following Sharia principles.

Crude oil production rises by 12.9% in May



NCSD DATA: The total exports of Oman's crude oil and condensates went up by 16.3 per cent by the end of May 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year. - **ONA**

The total average price for crude Oman oil recorded a surge of 46 per cent to reach \$80 per barrel compared to \$54.8 per barrel in 2021

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's production of crude oil and condensates recorded an increase of 9.4 per cent by the end of May 2022 to reach 157,462,200 barrels compared to May 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSD).

Separately, crude oil production saw a rise of 12.9 per cent by the end of May 2022, while condensates production declined by 2.4 per cent. The total average price for crude Oman oil recorded a surge of 46 per cent to reach \$80

per barrel compared to \$54.8 per barrel in 2021.

The total exports of Oman's crude oil and condensates went up by 16.3 per cent by the end of May 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year.

Oman's oil exports to Japan recorded a growth of 399.9 per cent to reach 5,008,400 barrels by the end of May 2022 compared to 1,001,900 barrels during the same period in 2021.

Oman's oil exports to India recorded a rise of 65 per cent during the same period.

The Sultanate of Oman's production of natural gas (including imports) increased by 1.5 per cent by the end of May 2022 to reach 20.401 million cubic metres compared to 20.106 million cubic metres by the end of May 2021.

The consumption of gas recorded a rise in industrial areas by 14.6 per cent, industrial projects by 6.3 per cent and electricity power plants by 0.7 per cent. Meanwhile, consumption of gas in oil fields by the end of May 2022 recorded a decline of 9.8 per cent compared to the same period in 2021. - **ONA**

A COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCE



Capital Market Authority launches electronic encyclopedia of legislations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has launched an electronic encyclopedia of its legislations, which contains all the legislations it issued incorporating the latest amendments. The system includes 52 legislations.

The move comes intending to create an integrated electronic search system that would act as a comprehensive reference for all the legislation issued by the Capital Market Authority, in addition to developing electronic search tools to obtain accurate information employing modern technology in all aspects related to exercising the relevant professions.

The system has several features in the search process, which allows search using several methods, namely (searching the titles of legislation, issuing methods and articles of legislation), it also allows search according to the classification of legislation (general, insurance and capital market) as well as matching words. The work team is in the process of issuing an English version.

It is worth noting that the Capital Market Authority endeavours to move swiftly toward digital transformation focusing on the quality of the services provided to the public and facilitating access to the services.

STOCK MARKETS

Asian shares rally following a bounce on Wall Street

SYDNEY: Asian share markets rallied following a much-needed bounce on Wall Street, though nerves were stretched ahead of a near-certain interest rate hike in Europe and another round of corporate earnings reports.

It is shaping up to be a fraught week for Europe as it waits anxiously to see if Russia resumes the flow of gas through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on July 21, while Italy teeters on the brink of political turmoil should Prime Minister Mario Draghi go ahead and resign.

"If gas flows do not resume meaningfully, European gas prices will surge, prompting Germany and others to enact gas and power rationing with a deep recession all but guaranteed if this were to occur," said Taylor Nugent, an economist at NAB. "Our base case is that gas flows resume."

The uncertainty will haunt the European Central Bank as it holds a policy meeting where it is likely to kick off a tightening cycle with a rise of 25 basis points, according to Reuters.

Markets are also hanging on details of an anti-fragmentation tool



intended to ease pressure on borrowing costs for the Union's most indebted members.

Investors found some relief in Friday's rally on Wall Street and MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan added 1.4 per cent, having shed 3.5 per cent last week.

Japan's Nikkei was closed for a holiday, but futures traded at 27,130 compared to a cash close of

26,788, while South Korea gained 1.7 per cent.

Chinese blue chips added 1.0 per cent, though Shanghai announced more district-wide coronavirus testing. S&P 500 futures edged up 0.4 per cent, while Nasdaq futures firmed 0.7 per cent. EUROSTOXX 50 futures rose 0.6% and FTSE futures 0.4 per cent.

A who's who of corporations report earnings will be on show this

week including Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Bank of America Corp, International Business Corp, Netflix Inc, Tesla Inc and Twitter Inc.

Of the 35 companies in the S&P 500 having reported, 80% have beaten Street expectations, according to Refinitiv. Analysts now expect aggregate year-on-year second-quarter profit growth of 5.6 per cent, down from 6.8 per cent at the beginning of the quarter.

Investors have also been encouraged that the Federal Reserve is likely to hike by "only" 75 basis points next week, in part thanks to an easing in consumer fears of inflation.

"This softening of inflation expectations is one reason why we expect the FOMC will not accelerate the near-term hiking pace and will deliver a 75bp hike at the July FOMC meeting," said analysts at Goldman Sachs in a note.

It is a lighter week for US data, though the first round of flash surveys on global manufacturing will provide a timely reading on how industries are faring this month.

The Bank of Japan holds its policy meeting amid concerns the breakeven drop in the yen is adding to the cost of imported commodities and widening the country's trade deficit.

Yet markets assume the central bank will stick with its ultra-easy policies, making it an outlier among the majors not to be raising rates.

The dollar was a shade softer at 138.27 yen, having climbed 1.8 per cent last week to a 24-year peak of 139.38. Against a basket of currencies, it was holding at 107.730, off

last week's top of 109.290.

The euro was a fraction firmer at \$1.0091, after bouncing from a two-decade trough of \$0.9952 last week.

"The Russia-Europe natural gas pipeline that is currently closed for maintenance is scheduled to be turned back on Thursday," noted CBA economist Joseph Capurso. "However, if the gas flow does not resume, EUR/USD could drop by at least 2 per cent."

Rising interest rates and a firm dollar have been a major drag for non-yielding gold which was stuck at \$1,713 an ounce after shedding 2% last week.

Oil prices see-sawed as President Joe Biden continued his trip to the Middle East hoping to get an agreement on an increase in output.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said a US-Arab summit on Saturday did not discuss oil and that Opec+ would continue to assess market conditions and do what is necessary.

After an early dip, Brent added 56 cents to \$101.72, while US crude rose 23 cents to \$97.82 per barrel. - **BNA**

MARKET



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MSX index ends higher

Oman Chlorine, up 9.77 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Flour Mills, down 10 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,201.05 points, up by 1.41 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.3 per cent at 454.45 points. Oman Chlorine, up 9.77 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Flour Mills, down 10 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Anwar Investment were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 615 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR3.39 million, with more than 16.31 million shares changing hands. Out of 52 traded securities, 22 advanced, 13 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR405,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR260,000, followed by domestic investors for OMR145,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,698.51 points, up 1.54 per cent. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, HSBC Bank Oman, Ahlia Insurance, Al Anwar Investment and National Bank Oman were up by 9.32 per cent, 8.4 per cent, 6.45 per cent, 4.11 per cent and 3.7 per cent respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Muscat Finance, Taageer Finance and Oman & Emirates Investment were down by 8.33 per cent, 2.94 per cent, 2.2 per cent and 1.18 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,687.51 points, down 0.81 per cent. Prices of Oman Chlorine, Jazeera Steel Products, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement and Oman Cement were up by 9.77 per cent, 9.74 per cent, 3.64 per cent, 2.67 per cent and 1.18 per cent respectively.

Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Oman Refreshment, Voltamp Energy, National Aluminium and Al Maha Ceramics were down by 10 per cent, 9.48 per cent, 9.17 per cent, 4.76 per cent and 0.82 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.05 per cent before closing at 1,606.83 points. Prices of Dhofar Generating, National Gas, Muscat Gases, Oman Telecom and Al Maha Marketing were up by 9.26 per cent, 3.7 per cent, 3.38 per cent, 3.21 per cent, and 0.58 per cent respectively. Prices of OIFC, Sembcorp Salalah, Phoenix Power and Ooredoo were down by 2.99 per cent, 2.78 per cent, 1.96 per cent and 1.16 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

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INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,205.56	4,141.16	4,201.05	4,142.77	58.28	1.41	
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,709.79	6,597.90	6,698.50	6,597.05	101.45	1.54	
Industry Index	5,794.71	5,684.10	5,687.51	5,733.80	-46.29	-0.81	
Services Index	1,615.93	1,602.36	1,606.83	1,607.68	-0.85	-0.05	
MSX Shariah Index	456.46	454.45	454.45	455.81	-1.36	-0.30	
MSX TR INDEX	5,301.32	5,220.14	5,295.64	5,222.17	73.46	1.41	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,021.04	6,903.96	7,009.23	6,903.07	106.15	1.54	
SERVICES TR IDX	1,670.84	1,656.81	1,661.43	1,662.31	-0.88	-0.05	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,013.93	5,899.14	5,902.68	5,950.73	-48.05	-0.81	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
16,317,573	3,387,354	615	22,498,814,484	22	13	17	52

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 18

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	P/B VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	41,764	12,878	8	0.308	0.338	0.308	0.338	0.308	0.030	9.740	0.338	0.308	0.338	0.100	42,215.510
OM0000007407 DHOFAR GENERATING	200	12	1	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.054	0.005	9.259	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	13,112.160
OM0000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	925,646	204,544	27	0.218	0.224	0.218	0.224	0.216	0.008	3.704	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.100	384,211.864
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	907,061	810,438	45	0.880	0.900	0.880	0.900	0.872	0.028	3.211	0.900	0.896	0.900	0.100	675,000,000
OM0000002440 AL SHARGIA INV	150,500	12,065	13	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.079	0.002	2.532	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.100	7,290,000
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	224,484	57,465	25	0.254	0.259	0.254	0.259	0.255	0.003	1.174	0.259	0.261	0.259	0.100	85,363.159
OM0000003398 SOHAR INT BANK	62,687	6,561	9	0.104	0.106	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.105	0.106	0.100	313,956.540
OM0000001533 OMINVEST	122,251	37,398	10	0.304	0.306	0.304	0.306	0.304	0.002	0.658	0.306	0.304	0.306	0.100	204,519.820
OM0000003000 AI MAHA MARKTING	11,654	8,158	5	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.696	0.004	0.575	0.700	0.680	0.720	0.100	48,300,000
OM0000002198 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	118,553	49,318	7	0.416	0.416	0.416	0.416	0.416	0.000	0.000	0.416	0.416	0.416	0.100	91,530,000
OM0000002200 AHLI BANK	162,827	20,338	12	0.124	0.126	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.000	0.000	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.100	241,757.526
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	1,077,013	575,405	29	0.534	0.536	0.534	0.534	0.534	0.000	0.000	0.534	0.536	0.536	0.100	2,002,004,208.016
OM0000003125 GLOBAL INV H	141,051	9,075	11	0.061	0.063	0.061	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.064	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000003224 RENAISSANCE SER	210,924	96,181	6	0.456	0.456	0.456	0.456	0.456	0.000	0.000	0.456	0.456	0.456	0.100	107,802.960
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	346,400	169,038	18	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.486	0.480	-0.004	-0.816	0.486	0.484	0.486	0.100	26,730,000
OM0000003968 OOREDOO	83,281	28,316	14	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.344	0.344	-0.004	-1.163	0.340	0.340	0.346	0.100	221,321.038
OM0000000281 TAAGEER FINANCE	127,004	11,314	9	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.089	0.091	-0.002	-2.198	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	23,020.900
OM0000001525 OMAN INVST& FIN	1,550,494	202,445	78	0.138	0.138	0.128	0.130	0.134	-0.004	-2.985	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	30,810,000
OM0000001400 OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,250	1,747	4	0.544	0.544	0.522	0.522	0.580	-0.058	-10.000	0.522	0.522	0.580	0.100	82,215.000
Total	6,270,444	2,312,726	331												
Parallel Market															
OM00000002341 OMAN CHLORINE	10,251	3,763	5	0.340	0.382	0.340	0.382	0.348	0.044	9.770	0.382	0.340	0.382	0.100	26,015.598
OM0000000520 OMAN ARAB BANK	100	13	1	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.118	0.011	9.322	0.129	0.116	0.129	0.100	215,353.890
OM00000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN	1,410,303	181,929	15	0.122	0.130	0.122	0.129	0.119	0.010	8.403	0.129	0.125	0.130	0.100	258,040.350
OM0000000912 AHLIA INSURANCE	27,472	9,066	3	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.000	0.452	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.100	33,000,000
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	3,653,257	269,120	54	0.072	0.076	0.072	0.076	0.073	0.003	4.110	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.100	15,200,000
OM00000001160 NATIONAL GAS	79,000	10,853	5	0.138	0.140	0.137	0.140	0.135	0.005	3.704	0.140	0.138	0.140	0.100	11,900,000
OM00000005521 GALFAR ENGINEER	2,987,150	355,043	66	0.110	0.114	0.110	0.114	0.110	0.004	3.636	0.114	0.113	0.114	0.100	32,140.455
OM00000001178 MUSCAT GASES	7,200	1,070	3	0.146	0.153	0.146	0.153	0.148	0.005	3.378	0.153	0.000	0.150	0.100	4,590,000
OM00000004118 RAYSUT CEMENT	6,460	965	1	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.150	0.004	2.667	0.154	0.150	0.154	0.100	30,800,000
OM00000004788 OMAN OIL MARKETING	64,300	5,851	5	0.898	0.898	0.894	0.894	0.890	0.004	0.488	0.894	0.828	0.828	0.100	50,490.630
OM00000004420 BANK NIZWA	252,164	23,935	15	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.001	1.064	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	212,510.538
OM00000001566 OMAN FISHERIES	249,020	27,299	18	0.110	0.111	0.109	0.109	0.108	0.001	0.928	0.109	0.109	0.110	0.100	19,846.545
OM00000002572 OMAN OIL MARKETING	124,966	100,012	8	0.898	0.898	0.894	0.894	0.890	0.004	0.488	0.894	0.828	0.828	0.100	50,490.630
OM00000001368 CONSTRUCTION M	33,000	2,607	3	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.075	0.079	0.100	4,337.500
OM00000002028 GULF INT CHEM	10,881	1,012	3	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.084	0.083	0.100	1,163,000
OM00000002275 SHELL OMAN MKR	5,130	4,309	2	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.000	0.000	0.840	0.756	0.840	0.100	79,800,000
OM00000002374 UNITED FINANCE	320	32	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.096	0.105	0.100	34,568.297
OM00000002549 BANK DHOFAR	437,900	50,359	11	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	844,580.415
OM00000004669 SHARJAH DESALIN	8,150	703	2	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.110	0.110	0.100	11,247.248
OM00000004925 ALBATINAH POWER	237,500	10,925	12	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	31,044.822
OM0000007084 MCT DESALINATE	17,293	1,944	4	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.112	0.112	0.100	17,577.186
OM00000008710 BARKA DESALINATION	5,000	695	3	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.100	10,497.558
OM00000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO	30,000	2,521	5	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.100	10,237.500
OM00000005903 PHOENIX POWER	121,179	6,020	7	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.084	-0.004	-4.762	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	2,685.716
OM00000004735 SEMBICORP SALALAH	33,000	2,356	3	0.072	0.072	0.070	0.070	0.072	-0.002	-2.778	0.070	0.072	0.071	0.100	66,820.037
OM00000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	140,350	9,263	8	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.066	0.068	-0.002	-2.941	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	20,271.657
OM00000001319 ALJUMINIUM PROD	38,200	3,069	2	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.084	-0.004	-4.762	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	2,685.716
OM00000004776 TAKAFUL OMAN	13,800	627	3	0.044	0.046	0.044	0.044	0.048	-0.004	-8.333	0.046	0.046	0.052	0.100	11,000,000
OM00000003651 VOLTAMP ENERGY	40,659	4,066	9	0.107	0.107	0.099	0.099	0.109	-0.010	-9.174	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	8,058.872
OM0000000456 OMAN REFRESHMENT	315	496	1	1.575	1.575	1.575	1.575	1.740	-0.165	-9.483	1.575	1.575	1.575	0.100	78,750.000
Total	10,042,320	1,072,996	281												
CARBON MARKET															

BEIJING: While being the world's largest in terms of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions covered, China's nascent carbon trading market is in need of further exploration and upgrading to boost liquidity, and make trading more active and broad-covered as the country races to its dual carbon goals, analysts said.

Over a year since its debut on July 16, 2021, China's national carbon market has seen encouraging results. The market in the first year included 2,162 power-generating enterprises, covering about 4.5



LIFESTYLE



GARDENING HELPS TO ACHIEVE BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

According to a recent study, even if a person has never gardened before, the garden is such a happy area that simply spending time with plants can improve one's mental health

The findings of the research published in the journal PLOS ONE, University of Florida scientists found that gardening activities lowered stress, anxiety and depression in healthy women who attended twice-weekly gardening classes. None of the study participants had gardened before.

"Past studies have shown that gardening can help improve the mental health of people who have existing medical conditions or challenges. Our study shows that healthy people can also experience a boost in mental wellbeing through gardening," said Charles Guy, principal investigator on the study and a professor emeritus in the UF/IFAS environmental horticulture department.

The study was co-authored by an interdisciplinary team of researchers with the envi-

ronmental horticulture department, the UF College of Medicine, the UF Centre for Arts in Medicine and the UF Wilmot Botanical Gardens, which also hosted all the study treatment sessions.

Thirty-two women between the ages of 26 and 49 completed the study. All were in good health, which for this experiment meant screening for factors such as chronic health conditions, tobacco use and drug abuse, and having been prescribed medications for anxiety or depression. Half of the participants were assigned to gardening sessions, while the other half were assigned to art-making sessions. Both groups met twice a week a total of eight times. The art group served as a point of comparison with the gardening group.

"Both gardening and art ac-

tivities involve learning, planning, creativity and physical movement, and they are both used therapeutically in medical settings. This makes them more comparable, scientifically speaking, than, for example, gardening and bowling or gardening and reading," Guy explained.

In the gardening sessions, participants learned how to compare and sow seeds, transplant different kinds of plants, and harvest and taste edible plants. Those in the art-making sessions learned techniques such as paper-making, printmaking, drawing and collage.

Participants completed a series of assessments measuring anxiety, depression, stress and mood. The researchers found that the gardening and art-making groups experienced similar improvements in men-

tal health over time, with gardeners reporting slightly less anxiety than art makers.

Given the relatively small number of participants and the length of the study, the researchers were still able to demonstrate evidence of what medical clinicians would call the dosage effects of gardening — that is, how much gardening someone has to do to see improvements in mental health.

"Larger-scale studies may reveal more about how gardening is correlated with changes in mental health," Guy explained. "We believe this research shows promise for mental wellbeing, plants in healthcare and in public health. It would be great to see other researchers use our work as a basis for those kinds of studies."

The idea of using garden-

ing to promote better health and wellbeing — called therapeutic horticulture — has been around since the 19th century.

But why does being around plants make us feel good? The answer might be found in the important role of plants in human evolution and the rise of civilisation, the study's authors explain. As a species, we may be innately attracted to plants because we depend on them for food, shelter and other means of our survival.

Whatever the deeper reasons might be, many of the study participants left the experiment with a newly discovered passion, the researchers noted.

"At the end of the experiment, many of the participants were saying not just how much they enjoyed the sessions but also how they planned to keep gardening," Guy said. **-ANI**




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IN-PICTURES

Chinese performance dazzles at Edinburgh Festival Carnival
 People watch the dragon dance during the Edinburgh Festival Carnival in Edinburgh, Britain. More than 800 performers from around the world, including over 300 from China, brought back the spectacle of the Edinburgh Festival Carnival, as the main thoroughfare of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital, was filled with music and colour. **Xinhua**



Reenactment of Battle of Grunwald staged in Poland
 Enthusiasts dressed as knights are seen in individual tournament during a reenactment of the Battle of Grunwald, in Grunwald, Poland. The battle took place on July 15, 1410, and is regarded as one of the most important battles in Polish history. **Xinhua**



Elli AvrRam at 'HT India's Most Stylish Awards 2022' ceremony
 Bollywood actress Elli AvrRam poses for a picture at the 'HT India's Most Stylish Awards 2022' ceremony, in Mumbai. **ANI Photo**



People travel in the Manakamana Cable Car
 People travel in the Manakamana Cable Car, in Chitwan, Nepal. **ANI Photo**

Afghanistan's Bamiyan recovers as tourist destination
 Tourists visit the site of the giant Buddha ruins in Bamiyan province, Afghanistan. Once a popular destination for tourists, Afghanistan's central Bamiyan province has been gradually recovering from the war aftermath to attract sightseers, but the scarcity of accommodations has become a new problem. **Xinhua**



Village transformed by fine arts in Shaanxi
 Aerial picture shows a view of Caijiapo Village, Huiyi District of Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. Faculty and students of the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts have been working with artists to transform villages by practicing their profession. **Xinhua**



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ROUND-UP



Al Maha Petroleum launches GoSmart app for NSS card users

This app enables users of Al Maha NSS fuel cards to carry out fast, simple, error-free, cardless fuel purchases

MUSCAT: In a first of its kind, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company announced the launch of its GoSmart app for NSS (National Subsidy Scheme) card holders. GoSmart app enables users of Al Maha NSS fuel cards to carry out fast, simple, error-free, cardless fuel purchases. The application also allows customers to better control their costs by reporting the fuel purchased and the balance available for the month after each transaction.

Speaking at the launch of the NSS GoSmart Application, the Division Head of Marketing, Ahmed Bakhit Al Shanfari, said, “Al Maha has always and will always be committed to initiatives that support the needs of the community.

Digitalisation effort “Additionally, we always prioritise the convenience of customers using our products and services. Our new GoSmart App is a product of these two principles, as well as a

part of our larger digitalisation effort to be a more customer-centric organisation.” The fuel subsidy applies to all Omani nationals who meet the criteria set by the Government of Oman – that is, those who are over the age of 18, own a vehicle or a boat, and have a total monthly income of no more than OMR 950. Those who fit within these criteria are eligible to receive up to 400 litres of M91 petrol at a special subsidised price.



HEALTHCARE

German Ambassador visits Aster Royal Hospital: The newest state-of-the-art hospital in Ghubra

MUSCAT: Following the three-day visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Germany, the Ambassador of Germany in Oman, HE Thomas Schneider made a friendly visit to Aster Royal Hospital that will soft open soon. During the visit, the Hospital's Group CEO, Dr. Ashendu Pandey made an introduction of the services provided for the first time in the private sector to serve the Omani community, namely organ transplantation, cath-lab & interventional cardiology, nephrology and neuro-surgery. His Excellency expressed his appreciation towards this new player in the premium private healthcare field in Oman, considering it a “very good hospital, ready to contribute to the country's overall healthcare capacity - delivering high quality and efficient healthcare in the region”. He also added that the German Embassy will start a cooperation process that will allow the on-



boarding of German doctors in the group, enriching the pool of nationalities in this project. Aster Royal Hospital is equipped with two underground parking area, 200 inpatient beds, which turns it into the biggest private Hospital in Oman - bringing a total of 150 new doctors and staff members, modern technologies and infrastructure, ready for any major operation or complication with 24-hour emergency service. Aster Royal Hospital will open four major Excellence Centers: Gastroenterology, Urology, Orthopaedics and Gynecology & Obstetrics, which will have an entire floor with specialized services dedicated to women and children. Aster DM Healthcare is currently one of the largest and fastest growing conglomerates in the MENA region.

IDEAL CHOICE

Lincoln Corsair: Luxury that impresses

MUSCAT: The Lincoln Corsair makes a fine mark with its impressive luxury, features and technology. The Corsair with its comfort and space makes it an ideal choice for those in search of luxury that makes every journey outstanding. The two-row Lincoln Corsair SUV combines refined power and a wealth of purposeful technologies. Staying true to its Quiet Flight DNA, Corsair is engineered to deliver an effortless drive experience and sensation of gliding over the road. Turbocharged four-cylinder engine options are available – a standard 2.0-liter with a targeted 250 horsepower and 275 lb.-ft. of torque. Each is paired to a new 8-speed automatic transmission for agile performance. The Corsair is designed to give luxury custom-



ers technology to make their drive effortless, such as Lincoln Co-Pilot360™ driver-assist features. The horizontal interior design lends a visual calmness to the space, which is crafted with supple, hand-selected materials. Breaking up the elements, particularly the cantilevered console, emphasizes volume and enhances

practicality with additional front-row storage. A specially tuned 14-speaker Revel™ premium audio system is available for the Corsair. Placement, tuning, calibration and the number of Revel speakers are all unique to each Lincoln vehicle, designed to ensure audio quality and accuracy for each cabin size and acoustics. Multiple power outlets are located throughout. Additional technologies are seamlessly integrated through SYNC® 3 with AppLink™; users simply plug their mobile phone into their SYNC 3-equipped Corsair to access apps directly from an available 8-inch touch screen. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

10-DAY EVENT



‘Art from the Heart’ paintings display at City Seasons from July 21-30

MUSCAT: The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown has brought out the best and worst among people. Those who lost their loved ones; lost jobs or had careers go kaput had to endure the worst. But some retreated into their shells and then emerged with guns blazing, unleashing their dormant creative sides. The lockdown free time enabled them to explore their passion and rediscover a new life of art and music and other hobbies. One such man for whom the lockdown came as a blessing in disguise and helped him enhance his creative learning experience and nurture his dormant art was Dr Benny Panakkal, a well-known cardiologist of the Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals. Dr Panakkal, who has earned quite a reputation in Oman as a cardiologist, has now a new avatar, displaying his artistic side, which has been dormant for many years. The pandemic has nudged him to resuscitate his long-term interest, fanning it to flame. Today, Dr Panakkal is all set to showcase his art forms to the public. Art from the Heart, a collection of his paintings will be on display from July 21 to July 30 at the Hotel City Seasons. The showing will be open to the public from 10am to 7pm, organisers said.

The 10-day event is ably supported by Bhavalaya, a global platform of art and culture and known to support art forms and other cultural events both in Oman and in India. Indian ambassador, Amit Narang, will launch the art event. The guests of honour include the well-known Omani artist, Maryam Al Zadjali and Tahira Al Mawali, director of the Omani Society for Fine Arts. “All these paintings on display are the products of COVID and post-COVID period,” noted Dr Panakkal. Dr J Retnakumar, chairman and founder of Bhavalaya, said he was pleasantly surprised when he discovered the cardiologist's passion for art. “The pandemic era had so many negative aspects, but here is a positive one that gives us inspiration and hope. Some of Dr Panakkal's paintings also reflect these aspects of death but also of hope,” Dr Retnakumar pointed out. “Bhavalaya's vision is to create a universal platform for artists from all over the globe with no barriers. We are here for all aspirants who believe in serving the global society through various media of ancient and modern art and culture. We are proud to present a collection of 40 paintings by Dr Panakkal,” he added.

51-MATCH PACKAGES TO FIFA WORLD CUP

Excellent response for Bank Muscat’s special promotion

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been greatly encouraged by the excellent customer feedback regarding the special promotion wherein the bank will give away 51 match packages to FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 courtesy of Visa. **Raffle draws** All Bank Muscat Visa Credit and Prepaid cardholders will be automatically entered into raffle draws to select winners once they use their cards to make a minimum cumulative spend of OMR 50. It must also be noted that customers will get multiple chances to participate in the draws till 31 August for every additional OMR 50 spent using their card. Customers of the recently launched Bank Muscat Limited Edition FIFA World Cup Visa Prepaid Card are also eligible to participate in the draws. These cards feature contactless payment technology and customers can load funds and top them up instantly. In addition, the cards can be used for secure online payments apart from PoS payments and ATM withdrawals.



Customers can easily apply for 3 Prepaid Cards for their family via Mobile Banking and Internet Banking and can customize the names on two of their cards for

their relevant family members. It is important to note that customers can enter the draws even when they are on holiday by using their cards for transactions during their travels. Each winner will receive a hospitality package for two to FIFA World Cup. The package includes airline tickets, hotel accommodation and tickets to exciting matches between some of the top football teams in the world. As many as 10 packages (1 Opening Match, 1 Final and 8 Quarter Final matches) have been reserved for Bank Muscat Private Banking Visa Infinite and Asalah Priority Banking Visa Signature credit cardholders. Nine packages featuring Quarter final matches have been reserved for Al Jawhar Visa Platinum credit cardholders, while Visa Prepaid cardholders can win one of the 8 Group Stage match packages reserved for them. Holders of Bank Muscat-Co-branded Visa Platinum credit cards, Visa Gold credit cards and Visa Classic credit cards are eligible to be entered into draws for one of the 24 Group Stage match packages reserved especially for them.

FOLDABLE PHONE

What makes Huawei Mate Xs 2 favourite flagship phone in Oman this 2022

MUSCAT: As smartphone manufacturers seek new solutions to accommodate bigger and better screens, foldable smartphones became an inevitable answer. We have been talking about foldable phones for numerous years now, but it is only now that they have gone mainstream. There were countless hurdles, but foldable phones eventually made it to the markets in the late 2019. However, judging by the enthusiasm towards this new phone form factor, there is optimism that the trend will slowly but steadily catch on. That brings us to the question – what is the best foldable phone you get lay your hands on today? Huawei recently announced the launch of its flagship foldable smartphone, the Huawei Mate Xs 2, which embodies the tech giant's latest explorations in the development of foldable phones. Inheriting Huawei's classic outward folding design, the Huawei Mate Xs 2 leverages its strengths of being ultra-light and ultra-thin, ultra-flat and ultra-reliable, bringing consumers the best experience. The Ideal Foldable Phone: Ultra Light, Ultra Flat, Super



Durable Huawei Mate Xs 2 also presents the new generation Double-rotating Falcon Wing Hinge, Huawei bestowed its flagship foldable with an elegant unibody design, which boasts a flat and seamless fold. The phone is also equipped with flagship features, including an industry-leading 7.8” True-Chroma Foldable Display and a 50MP True-Chroma Camera System that supports Huawei XD Optics, taking its excellent performance to new heights. Let us look at its features from up close and you will understand why we chose this newly launched foldable flagship from Huawei as our favourite choice in Oman.

New Falcon wing design, ultra light, ultra flat and super durable The Huawei Mate Xs 2 comes with the New Falcon Wing Design, which is minimalist and natural, giving an ultra-flat form factor for a foldable smartphone. Through the industry's first Double-rotating Falcon Wing Hinge, the movement trajectory of the hinge and the screen is precisely synchronised via the fixed-length linkage control, which makes the screen as flat as a mirror. Thanks to the industry-first lightweight materials, the Huawei Mate Xs 2 has a lighter and more seamless body; achieving an ultra-light and ultra-thin body that only weighs 255g with a thickness of 5.4mm, which is close to the weight of a typical smartphone on the market. Additionally, the Huawei Mate Xs 2 adopts an industry-first Composite Screen, which helps to absorb shock and buffer thanks to Huawei's self-developed innovative material – ultra-light, high strength steel. This shock barrier not only improves the phone's resistance to impact, crushing or drops, but also further improves the durability and reliability of the device from the inside out.

ROUND-UP

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ahlibank launches new Visa debit card for corporate & SME clients

The new Visa debit card will provide the corporate & SME sector round-the-clock access to the company's account, with convenient and easy-to-use payment options, with higher spending limits

MUSCAT: ahlibank has partnered with Visa, the world leader in digital payments, to launch its business debit card catered to its corporate & SME clients. The new Visa debit card will provide the corporate & SME sector round-the-clock access to the company's account, with convenient and easy-to-use payment options, with higher spending limits. It will facilitate quicker transactions and empower corporate & SME clients to conduct business without facing any financial delays or mismanagement that is commonly associated with the direct handling of cash. Account holders will also have the option of sepa-

rating company and personal expenses and enjoy transparency in their business operations. Heralding ahlibank's partnership with Visa as a prominent landmark in Oman's growing business horizon, Hana Al Kharusi, General Manager of Corporate Banking, ahlibank, said, "This partnership will augment our ongoing initiatives targeting the corporate and SME sector. It will instil an element of financial confidence in the sector while demonstrating our intent to assist and support our customers with relevant financial interventions. We have, over the years, established our commitment to serving our busi-



ness clients with viable products and services, and this partnership will corroborate our endeavours to foster and facilitate sustainable growth with an enhanced portfolio of banking solutions." "We continue to rely on market trends and customer feedback to

assess the immediate and future needs of our customers and, accordingly, improve our products to meet specific requirements. This partnership will act as a toolkit to shape the growth trajectory of businesses in the country; it will generate business opportunities and cultivate a dynamic economic environment, serving both SMEs and our Corporate Banking clients," she added. Manish Gautam, Visa's Country Manager for Oman, said, "For SMEs and corporates in Oman to thrive, it is critical that important elements of doing business, such as expense management are managed with efficiency and transparency to avoid mismanagement, fraud and other errors, which are often costly. We are therefore delighted to partner with ahlibank to introduce a Business Debit Card targeting the Corporate & SME sector in the country; it will equip them with the requisite tools necessary for growth. This new Visa business debit card supports the Oman government's digitization efforts and reflects our commitment to extending the benefits of digital commerce to more businesses in the country."

The Bank will leverage its Business Visa Debit Card to encourage a smooth transition from cash to digital payments and to provide solutions that help the SME and corporate sector to plan, budget and track their spending. It will further bolster these sectors with better controls to track expenditures and stay abreast of the market trends, in line with the country's vision to move to a cash-less society and enhance the digitisation of the financial economy. ahlibank has continued to strengthen its focus on technical and digital aspects to improve its customer experience, by enhancing features on the 'Ahli B2B' and Corporate Online Banking platform 'AhliNet', providing greater flexibility and more convenient banking services. ahlibank continues to expand its Point Of Sale (POS) offering supported by AFS, the leading payment and technology solutions provider in the Middle East and Africa region and implementing the Remote Deposit Capture (RDC) system, which allows customers to remotely scan and deposit cheques, instead of visiting the bank's branches daily.

APPOINTMENTS

Kempinski Muscat appoints new executive housekeeper and director of revenue

MUSCAT: Kempinski Hotel Muscat welcomed and announced the appointment of Claudia Arnhardt as the new executive housekeeper and Abhishek Ray as the director of revenue of the property. In her new role, Claudia Arnhardt will be spearheading the housekeeping team ensuring the five-star standards of European luxury that Kempinski Hotels are known for around the world are upheld. In his new role, Abhishek will be overseeing the revenue management as well as spearheading the reservations team to drive the hotel's financial performance through strategic planning and pricing of key initiatives and the proper positioning of Kempinski Hotel Muscat. Claudia joins the Kempinski Hotel Muscat team from Hotel Bareiss (recognised by the prestigious Falstaff Hotel Guide 2022 as one of the ten best hotels in Germany, awarded three-Michelin stars for restaurant Bareiss and the second in the gourmet category as per Connoisseur Circle), where she held the position of Executive Housekeeper from 2020 until the present. She has extensive knowledge in the department of Housekeeping and has accumulated over 20 years of experience working in some of the biggest hotel chains around the world. Kempinski Hotel Muscat's gen-



eral manager, Carsten Wiegandt, said, "We are delighted to announce Claudia's appointment and the latest addition to our executive team at the hotel. I am certain she will share her wealth of experience and know-how with the team, having led the department of housekeeping for over 20 years at leading international hotels. She is not new to the region and fully understands the Omani culture and will continue the promise to showcase Kempinski's beautiful performances in her area." During her years of experience, Claudia has overseen the rooms, public and pool areas, back of house and external F&B venues at some of the most prominent



hotels, such as Hilton, Sheraton, Movenpick and Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten am Schluchsee in Germany, Norway, the UAE, Switzerland, China, Jordan, Sudan and Lebanon. She is very well versed in the local culture having been part of the team for the reopening of the Sheraton Oman Hotel in 2016 as Director of Housekeeping. Claudia is a German national and has received significant awards and accolades, such as the Development Programme for Executive Housekeepers, Performance Management and many more. **Director of revenue** Abhishek joins the Kempinski Hotel Muscat team from the UAE,

where he has most recently held the position of Consultant - Revenue Optimisation at Insight Out Consultancy from November 2021 until the present. His experience includes having worked in the hospitality sector for prestigious brands around the region, starting in India, moving to Qatar, then to the UAE and now in Muscat. Some of these brands include Swissotel Al Murooj and Movenpick Grand Al Bustan in Dubai; Beach Rotana Complex in Abu Dhabi; and IHG Dubai Corporate Office, looking after hotels in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, Shangri-La and Traders Hotel Abu Dhabi, Grand Hyatt Doha, Hyatt Regency Mumbai, Leela Palace Kempinski Bangalore, Taj Residency Bangalore and Leela Kempinski Mumbai. He has accumulated over 20 years of experience, primarily focused on Revenue Management and F&B. He received his bachelor's degree in Hotel Management from India in addition to completing a master's degree in Hospitality Administration at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland. Abhishek is an Indian national, and his professional development includes CHBA - Certified Hotel Business Acumen, Certified Managerial skills - Green Belt in Six Sigma Management in 2006 and much vocational and industrial experience gained at the Taj Hotels and The Oberoi Grand in India.

EXTENSIVE COLLECTION



Danube Home's roster of home offerings includes exemplary selection of bath solutions

MUSCAT: Danube Home, one of the leading interior and home furnishing brands in the Middle East offers an extensive collection of bathroom solutions to cater to the growing demands of its cosmopolitan clientele. The brand which promises customers a solution to everything a home needs under one roof, continue to prove time and again that their customers' needs will always be met. The bath collection, called Milano, includes a range of stylish and modern pieces to suit every home. The Milano collection includes tiling solutions, sanitary ware, vanities, bath accessories, bathtubs, shower enclosures, and more. The sanitary ware extends from wash basins to water closets and mixers. As expected from Danube Home, the Milano collection is of superior, durable quality and is offered at reasonable prices. These affordable luxury pieces would be a welcome addition to any home. Danube Home's Milano products are sourced from Italy, Spain, Germany, Turkey, and China. Each of the tiling solutions

undergo a strict quality check before dispatch from factory as well as from the warehouse before reaching customers' homes. The attention to detail also ensures that the Milano Tiles designs have a guaranteed continuity of minimum 1 year. Seeking to make customers' lives as easy as possible, the brand offers free delivery and installation for shower rooms and massage bathtubs. The sanitary ware also comes with up to 10 years warranty. Danube Home's technicians will provide free expert services and offer any assistance necessary during the warranty period. Additionally, Danube Home also offers free installation supervision for large format tiles like the Milano Islabz and others. The exhaustive tile collection is sourced from Italy, Spain, India, Turkey, Egypt, and Oman to offer a wide variety of finishes and designs. Danube Home's Milano collection and complete range of home furnishings can be browsed in store at their major showrooms across the country.

ROLE MODEL

29-year-old Omani bellboy recognised by Hotelier Middle East 30 under 30 award



MUSCAT: Rawad Faez Subait Bait Rabia may be a young hotelier, but he has already proved himself to be something of a role model at the Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah. The 29-year-old bellboy was recognised by Hotelier Middle East 30 under 30 award recently. The Omani is described by bosses as an organised self-starter. He

joined the hospitality industry with no prior experience back in August 2019 with no prior experience and has quickly become one of the most valued hoteliers on the team. "Working with Rawad and experiencing his energy and drive have always inspired me to become a better leader. Rawad stands out amongst other colleagues in his department

because he consistently exceeds my expectations in terms of goals and responsibilities. He makes each working day a brilliant learning experience for all of us in the department. Working with Rawad is both a great pleasure and a privilege. Proud to have him as part of resort team," said Manuel Levonian, General Manager - Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah.



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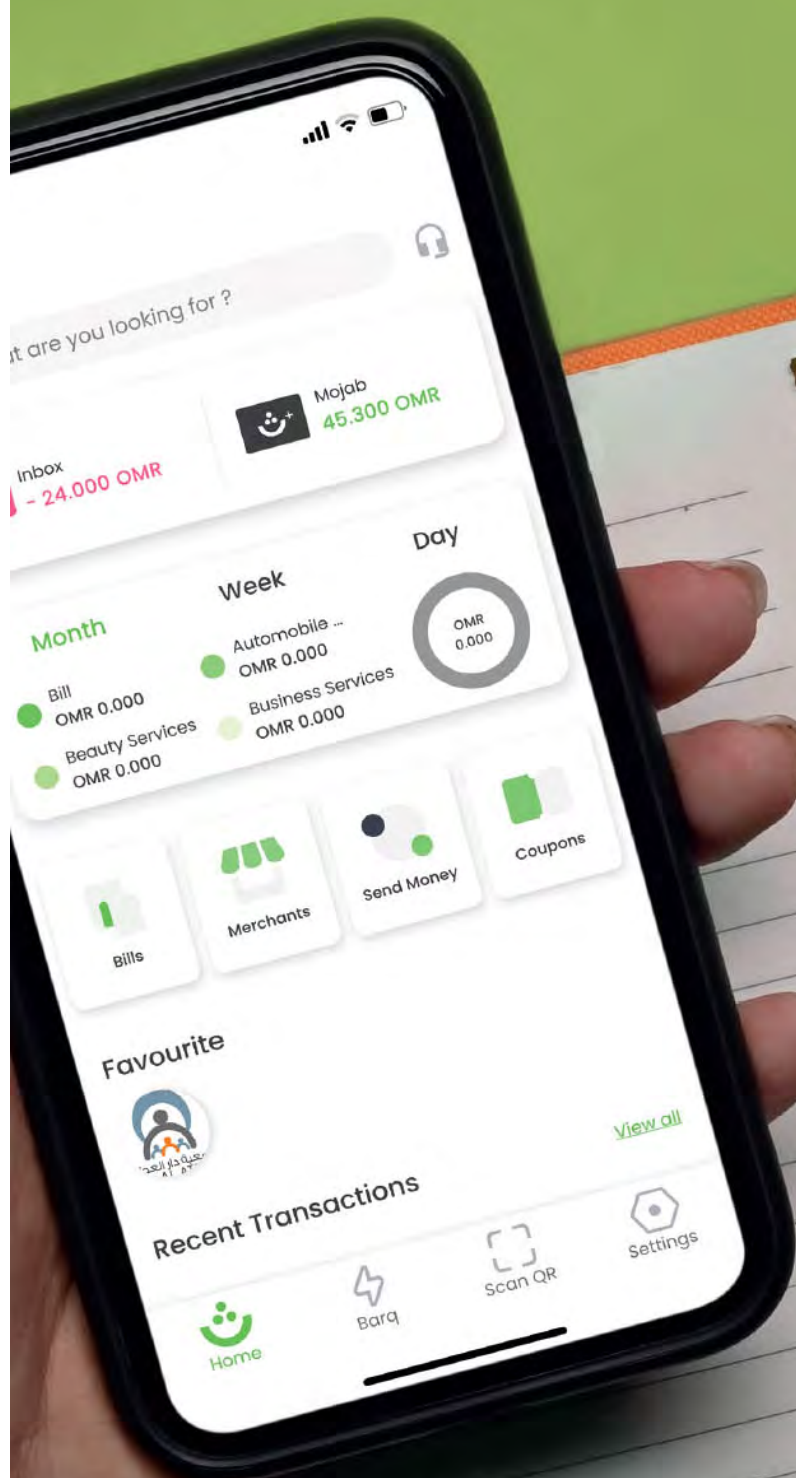


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