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Acting in cooperation with the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Sector Development, Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) announced 6 initiatives aimed at enhancing the position of MSX and encouraging investment therein. **>B1**



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HM THE SULTAN PRAISED FOR HIS ROLE BY IRANIAN MINISTER

Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed his thanks and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his constructive initiatives at the regional and international levels. **>A5**



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HM RECEIVES CREDENTIALS OF ENVOYS



The ambassadors expressed their delight at presenting their credentials to His Majesty

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received, separately, credentials of Ambassadors of several countries appointed to the Sultanate of Oman, at Al Barakah Palace on Wednesday. His Majesty the Sultan received credentials of the following ambassadors:

- Yahaya Lawal, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Sultanate of Oman.
- Robert Rostek, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Sultanate of Oman.
- Archbishop Nicolas Henry Marie Denis Thevenin, Ambassa-

dor of the Vatican to the Sultanate of Oman.

- Bulgan Enkhtuvshin, Ambassador of Mongolia to the Sultanate of Oman.
- David Velasquez Caraballo, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Sultanate of Oman.
- Mogobo David Magabe, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the Sultanate of Oman.
- Liselotte Plesner, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Sultanate of Oman.

During their meetings with His Majesty the Sultan, the ambassa-

dors conveyed greetings of their countries' leaders and their best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to His Majesty. They wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

They also expressed their great honour and delight at presenting their credentials to His Majesty the Sultan. They affirmed to exert sincere efforts to promote relations of their respective countries with Oman in various spheres in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their countries' citizens. **>A3**



ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

91 EV charging stations rolled out

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Owners of electric cars in the Sultanate of Oman or those interested to purchase in near future will find charging of electric vehicles easier than ever.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Wednesday announced that 91 electric charging stations have been rolled out along the main roads in Oman.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology's decision comes in the context of adopting modern technologies to reduce carbon emissions as it adopts alternatives to petrol and diesel-powered cars.

To begin with, 91 EV charging stations have been set up nationwide, with plans to grow the number in years to come. The short-term plan envisages installing more than 140 charging stations by the end of 2023, and more than 350 by the end of 2026.

The ministry pointed out that it seeks to provide a variety of green mobility solutions and enhance



the EV system in Oman. The approach fits with the ministry's programme to achieve carbon neutrality (zero carbon emissions) in the transport sector by 2050.

Muscat Governorate has the maximum 49 charging stations with 18 in Bausher, 2 in Muscat, 6 in Muttrah and 22 in Seeb.

A total of 10 charging stations have been installed in North Al Batinah Governorate with one in Sohar, one in Shinas, two in Liwa, two in Saham and four in Suwaiq.

Eight charging stations have been put up in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate with seven in Nizwa and one in Manah while Al Wusta Governorate got four charging stations, which includes three in Haima and one in Duqm.

AT THE BEHEST OF HM

Sayyid Bilarab discusses WTO role in overcoming economic challenges

GENEVA: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Honorary President of the Programme for Promising Omani Start-ups yesterday visited a number of international organizations, research centres and business incubators in Geneva, Swiss Confederation.

HH Sayyid Bilarab met with Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The meeting discussed the pioneering role of the WTO in overcoming the challenges facing the global economy. It also touched on developments in negotiations in the World Trade Organization, global economic opportunities and the procedures for ratifying the fisheries subsidy agreement, in addition to discussing cooperation opportunities to support innovative and technological startups.

During the meeting, WTO Director General affirmed that start-ups are the future of



global economies.

HH Sayyid Bilarab was briefed on the initiatives of the WTO in the fields of support for small and medium enterprises, and the opportunities for cooperation between the organisation and the Sultanate of Oman in this area, in a way that enhances the growth

opportunities for these enterprises and contributes to their expansion regionally and scientifically.

HH Sayyid Bilarab also went on tour of the WTO's facilities. Meanwhile, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said met with Daren Tang, Director General of the World Intellectual Property

Organization (WIPO).

The meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the WIPO. It also discussed the Frankincense (Luban) Project, due to be implemented next July in cooperation between Oman and the WIPO. **>A2**



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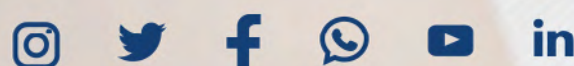


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MEETING

Oman, Iran discuss relations

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Wednesday Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged cordial conversation and discussed areas of bilateral cooperation and means of enhancing them to achieve the joint interests.

They also highlighted the march of the historic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides also discussed several matters of mutual concern.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Iran to Oman and the delegation accompanying the guest.

Royal visit

Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received here Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



The meeting touched on bilateral relations and following up the outcome of the Royal visit of His Majesty the Sultan to Iran last month.

The two sides reviewed means of activating the joint cooperation in the cultural, trade, economic and investment areas, in addition to the energy and transport projects and other areas that serve the joint interests.

The two ministers also ex-

changed views on various issues at the regional and international arenas. They affirmed their full support for the efforts exerted to maintain peace and stability in the world.

The meeting was attended by ambassador at large Sheikh Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Hinai, Sheikh Ahmed Hashil Al Maskari, Head of the GCC and Regional Neighbourhood and a number of officials at the Foreign Ministry.. -ONA

OMANI START-UPS



FROM A1 Sayyid Bilarab meets WTO chief

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on implementing cooperation programmes with WIPO Academy in Oman to support entrepreneurs. They also explored means of enhancing cooperation between the WIPO and the Program for Promising Omani Start-ups.

HH Sayyid Bilarab was also briefed on the Omani version of the course on Basics of Intellectual Property Course DL101 - which aims at disseminating awareness on the importance of intellectual property in the Sultanate of Oman. It targets workers in the intellectual property sector and innovators to contribute to generating new intellectual property assets for start-ups.

HH Sayyid Bilarab also visited the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), which is the world's leading laboratory for particle physics.

The CERN provides specialised programs to transform challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities and startups through the incubation programmes implemented by the organization.

During the visit, aspects of cooperation between the CERN and the Program for Promising Omani Start-ups were reviewed.

HH Sayyid Bilarab also visited Campus Biotech, which is one of the leading centres in providing the latest innovations, technologies and laboratories in the field of bioenergy. It also provides specialised business incubators for start-ups and training programmes to



support entrepreneurial projects and link them to global markets.

The potential of implementing joint programmes between the centre and the Program for Promising Omani Start-ups was discussed during the visit.

HH Sayyid Bilarab was accompanied during the visit by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Halima Rashid Al Zar'ee, Chairperson of the Au-

thority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) and Idris Abdulrahman Al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations (UN) and International Organizations in Geneva.

The accompanying delegation also comprised owners of Omani start-ups whose business is based on innovation and technology and working teams from various government units. -ONA

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CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR

SQU Council meeting endorses decision on placement of Omanis



MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) Council yesterday held its 4th meeting of the current academic year (2022-2023) under the chairmanship of HH Sayyid Dr. Fahd bin Al Julanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU, Deputy Chairman of the SQU Council.

The Council was briefed about the progress made in various courses of action at the university, including the implementation of decisions and recommendations during previous meetings.

The Council endorsed a number of decisions, including the amendment of regulations on the placement of Omanis in academic positions. It also looked into a proposal on two annual budget drafts, for the SQU and the University Hospital, during fiscal year 2024.

The SQU Council took note of the efforts made within the

framework of the second executive plan (2021-2025) of the university's strategy 2016-2040.

The plan envisages elevating the university's status in global rankings.

The Council also studied additional standards introduced by QS World University Ranking Organisation, as part of performance indices set for the year 2024. The Council considered conducting an analysis of the outcome of the university's performance, as well as major factors of significance to the rating.

The Council was briefed about the university's efforts to replenish its financial resources and accomplish the desired standard of financial sustainability. This is considered within the context of a strategic project titled "Augmenting and diversifying the University's Financial Resources". -ONA

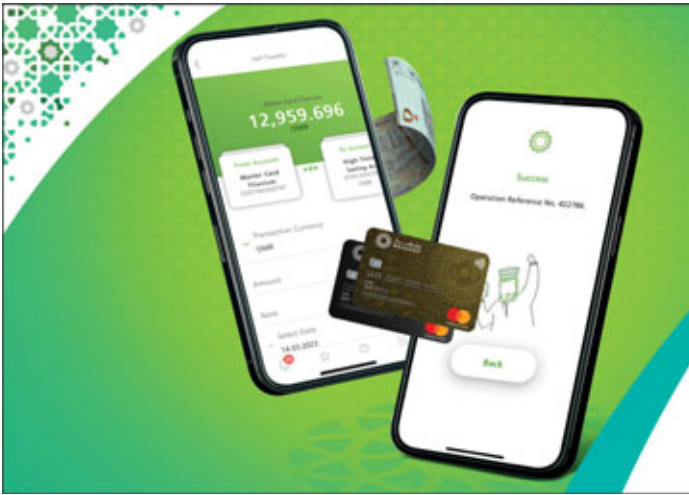
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CREDENTIALS

Envoys welcomed

<FROM A1 His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors, expressing his gratitude for their leaders' greetings and best wishes. His Majesty affirmed that they would receive all support from him, the Government and the Omani people to facilitate

carrying out their duties. The credentials presentation ceremony was attended by the Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, the Foreign Minister, the Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman, the Head of the Royal Protocols and the Military Aides to His Majesty the Sultan. -ONA



More than 1mn people expected to visit Dhofar

Tourists are likely to spend over OMR100 million during their visit to Khareef season this year

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than one million tourists are expected to visit Khareef in the Dhofar governorate this year, the Chairman of Dhofar Municipality said. Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghasani, the Chairman of Dhofar Municipality and Chairman of the Main Committee for the Dhofar Khareef Activities, said that visitors to the Dhofar Khareef this year will exceed the barrier of one million visitors, with spending expected to exceed OMR100 million. This came during a press conference organised by the Municipality at Al-Baleed Salalah Resort managed by Anantara, in the presence of Dr. Ahmed bin Mohsen Al-Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, Engineer Ammar bin Obed Ghawas, Director of Events and Awareness Department in Dhofar Municipality, and a number of officials and representatives of

various media organisations. Khareef activities will be held in several new and existing locations in Dhofar, which will provide citizens and residents varied opportunities and excitement, the Chairman of Dhofar Municipality said. He said that the most prominent events of this year's Khareef will be held at: Ittin Square in Ittin Plain, Return to the Past in Al Haffa, Kiddy Time in Awqad Park, Lights Park in Salalah Park and Salalah Eat - People's Kitchen - in the Garden of Al Sa'adah. "Each site has specific activities, programmes and shows for the public," he added. He also indicated that many specialised exhibitions will be held, including the Salalah International Chocolate Exhibition, the first jewellery exhibition, the Gulf Perfumes Exhibition, and the Gulf Fashion Exhibition, in addition to organising art concerts, local and international theatrical performances, and various sports competitions. Furthermore, he stressed that the Khareef activities will help preserve the cultural and civilisational identity of the governorate and highlight its historical heritage. He also confirmed that many tourist areas have been developed in Dhofar Governorate this year, such as the Darbat Falls, Wadi Darbat, and Al-Mughsayl area. This is in addition to the improvement of the Ain Jerziz area and Hamreer view area.



AVIATION SECTOR

Oman, Senegal sign air services agreement

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), on Wednesday signed an air services agreement with the Republic of Senegal to regulate operational and technical procedures in a manner that serves the common interests of the two countries.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Nayef Ali Al Abri, CAA Chairman, and Doudou Ka, Minister of Air Transport and Airport Infrastructure Development in the Republic of Senegal. The agreement comprised 24 articles, in addition to an appendix for the schedule of air routes

between the two countries. Its articles varied between economic provisions and terms for organizational and operational cooperation that enable the airlines of the two countries to operate a number of passenger and air freight flights between the airports of the two countries. - ONA



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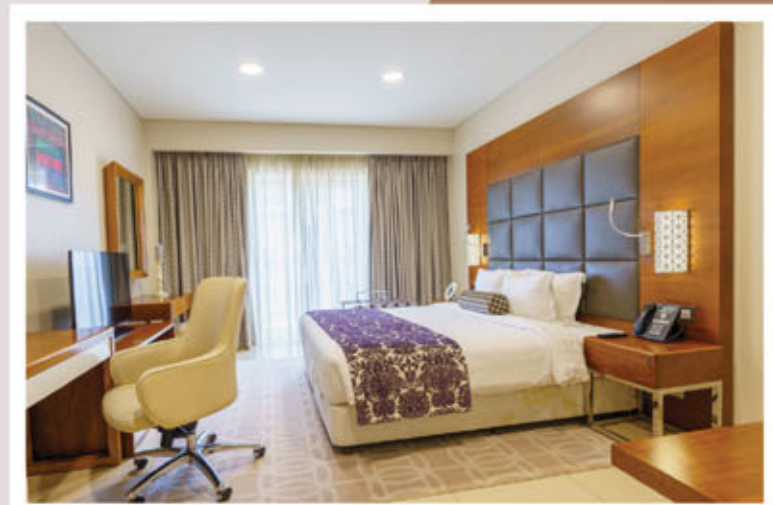
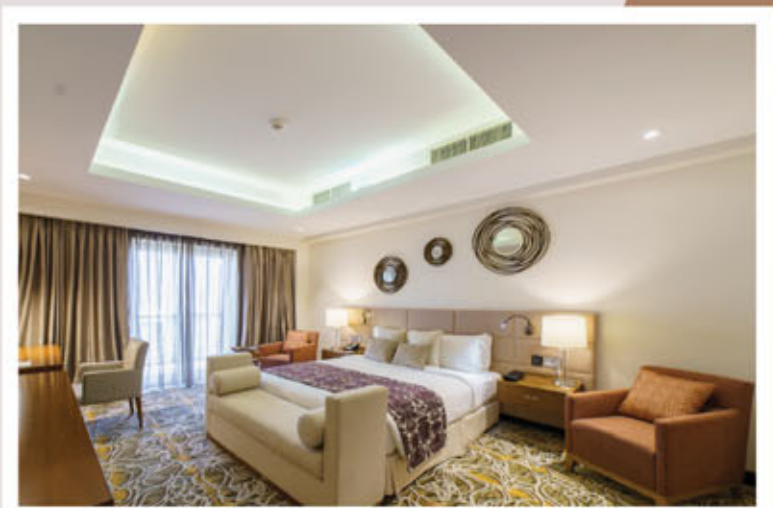
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BILATERAL TALKS

HM the Sultan praised for his role by Iranian minister

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister said: “The visit of his Iranian counterpart to the Sultanate of Oman aims to continue the consultations between the two sides and cooperation in many bilateral fields particularly those pertaining to following up the implementation and activation of the outcomes of the Royal historical visit of His Majesty the Sultan to the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Sayyid Badr affirmed the remarkable consensus in visions of the two countries in a set of topics and latest developments at the region and the world. Such topics, he said, were discussed during the meeting and would contribute in realising security, stability and peace, as well as backing all efforts and endeavours that target achieving the noble goals at the region.

Sayyid Badr said that it is expected to reach more agreements, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and executive programmes that would benefit the mutual interests to serve welfare and growth of the two neighbouring countries’ friendly peoples.

In a statement to ONA, Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed his thanks and appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for his constructive initiatives at the region-



al and international levels in a manner that serves peace and stability in the region and the world at large.

The Iranian minister described the bilateral consultations held today as “constructive and positive” during which consensus in views between leaders of the two countries were reviewed particularly during the recent Royal visit of His Majesty the Sultan to Tehran.

He also pointed out that the bilateral cooperation between the two countries has transcended the stage of dialogue and discussion to the phase of active bilateral cooperation in all spheres. It is also agreed to hold meetings of the new upcoming round of the Joint Committee between the two countries, he added.

He also asserted that the relations between the two countries witness a remarkable progress. There is also a consensus in the visions to implement these agreements in areas of economic and trade cooperation, transport and energy, as well as cooperation in science and tourism, he said.

Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran concluded by saying: “The UN Secretary General presented an initiative to hold a meeting in New York at the level of the foreign ministers of the eight countries in the Arabian Gulf region. There is also an agreement between the Omani Foreign Minister and his Qatar counterpart to continue this initiative that would lead to further strong cooperation.” -ONA

CBO BOARD OF GOVERNORS

CBO reviews major economic developments in Oman, world

MUSCAT: The Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) convened its second meeting for 2023.

At the outset of the meeting, the Board reviewed statements on major economic and financial developments in the Sultanate of Oman and globally during the recent period, especially the interest rate developments around the world referring mainly to the statement issued this month on CBO keeping interest rate on repurchase operations (repo) unchanged at 5.75 percent, in line with CBO’s monetary policy.

This comes after the US Federal Reserve decided to hold interest rates unchanged. The Board praised CBO’s role in monitoring and following up developments and variables related to the financial and monetary situation in the Sultanate of Oman.

In addition, the Board took stock of the circular on the authorised activities of finance and leasing companies, the launch of phase one of the national platform to verify the procedures of Know Your Customer and Digital Onboarding, as well as the policy of licencing payment service providers.

Moreover, the Board praised the efforts on the new national



Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS), which started actual operation on 18 June 2023. The system operates on a 24/7 basis, and has successfully settled 3,147 transactions amounting to more than OMR409 million on the operating day.

The Board also approved HSBC Bank Middle East Limited to open a branch to practice banking operations in the Sultanate of Oman. This is similar to the Board’s previous approval to grant licences to both Mashreq Bank and Gulf International Bank to each open a branch in the Sultanate of Oman. The Board also approved Sohar International Bank to open a branch in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Board also reviewed and approved requests for granting a license for the activity of the Payment Service Provider (PSP) to Salis Pay, the Global Money Exchange Company, and FRIENDI Pay. Additionally,

the Board reviewed the request for the establishment of a new investment bank under the name (Oman Investment Bank). The Board decided to approve the request, provided that the relevant requirements and conditions are fulfilled.

Moreover, the Board discussed a number of studies related to the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman, the most important of which are: a study on indicators of the interest rate cap on personal loans, and the performance of licenced PSPs.

The Board also took stock of a number of reports on indicators of financial soundness of banks, the positive position of reserves and the good performance of CBO foreign investments. In addition, the Board reviewed the financial position of CBO, together with the semi-annual report on the project to enhance the efficiency of monetary policy, a report on the prospects and challenges of stability in the Omani economy and the announcement issued by the CBO regarding the development of a methodology for calculating an index that measures the degree of financial stability in the Sultanate of Oman.

Full story at timesofoman.com/business

ROUND 2 PUBLIC AUCTION LAUNCHED

Hydrom signs two new pacts for green hydrogen projects in Oman

MUSCAT: Eng Salim bin Nasser Al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals (MEM) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hydrom, a subsidiary of Energy Development Oman (EDO), on Wednesday signed two new agreements awarding green hydrogen projects in Oman. The agreements were signed with the winning bidders of the round 1 of Oman green hydrogen auction process during a special event organised by Hydrom under the supervision of MEM at Crowne Plaza OCEC, Madinat Al Irfan.

The event saw the attendance of senior officials from the public and private sectors.

During the event, the Round 2 public auction was launched, which will see new land blocks auctioned in the the Governorate of Dhofar. Following the previous award of three projects earlier this month, Oman has in total awarded five large-scale green hydrogen projects, representing a total investment of more than USD 30 billion and a total produc-



tion of 750 KTPA.

The total investment in the two newly awarded projects signed with a POSCO-ENGIE consortium and Hyport Dugum is expected to exceed USD 10 billion. The contracts are expected to yield a total production capacity of 250 KTPA from more than 6.5 GW of installed renewable energy capacity at the sites.

The first agreement was signed with the winner of the public auction process. It is a consortium POSCO-ENGIE and consisting of POSCO Holdings, MESCOT Middle East DMCC, Samsung Engineering Co. Ltd., Futuretech Energy Ventures, Korea East-West Power Co. Ltd. and Korea Southern Power Co. Ltd. The consor-

tium is expected to produce more than 200 KTPA of green hydrogen by 2030, utilising over 5.2 GW of combined wind and solar energy to produce and export ammonia. The plant will be built in the Governorate of Al Wusta.

The second project was signed with a consortium Hyport Dugum consisting of the OQ Alternative Energy, and DEME Concessions NV, to produce green hydrogen. The consortium aims to produce more than 50 KTPA of green hydrogen by 2029 in the project’s first phase. The signing of this agreement follows the earlier signing of commercial term sheets in March 2023.

During the event, Hydrom also launched the second bid round of its green hydrogen auction process, which provides companies with the opportunity to submit investment proposals to develop large-scale green hydrogen projects in some of the most attractive locations of Oman. — ONA

Full story at timesofoman.com/business

EXCHANGE VIEWS



Defence Ministry Secretary General meets UK official

MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Za’abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence received in his office at Al Murtafa’a Garrison yesterday Air Marshal Martin Sampson, UK Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa and his accompanying delegation, currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

The two sides reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on various matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by a number of senior SAF officers and the Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Muscat.

-ONA



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- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
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- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.

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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ANNOUNCEMENT

Request for Expression of Interest No.EOI.1/2023
Development, Management and Operation for Maritime Salvage Service in the Sultanate of Oman

The Internal Investment Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology is pleased to invite local and international companies and specialized investors in maritime services to submit an Expression of Interest for the development, management, and operation of the Maritime Salvage Service in the Sultanate of Oman, according to the conditions outlined below in this announcement

Competition Submission Requirements:

- An expression of interest letter to invest in the development, management, and operation of the Maritime Salvage Service, in compliance with Oman Maritime Law No. 19/2023 and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Salvage Convention of 1989.
- Submission of a comprehensive operational model for the development, management, and operation of the Maritime Salvage Service, including the business plan, marketing strategy, promotion, business attraction, investment, and In-country value added enhancement.
- Submission of company profile details, commercial registration, and relevant licenses to the activities of the interested company.
- Submission of an economic feasibility study for the project, including an analysis of service delivery costs, estimated revenues, and expected profits.
- Submission of documents demonstrating the company’s and employees’ expertise in the development, management, and operation of the Maritime Salvage Service.
- Any other supporting documents for the investor in the project.
- The documents should be submitted as PDF format and sent to the email address (investment@mtcit.gov.om), indicating the title and number of the Expression of Interest request.

An Interested Investors in developing, managing, and operating the Maritime Salvage Service in the Sultanate of Oman are requested to submit their applications no later than August 31, 2023.

For any other inquiries, you can reach us via the following contact details:

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IN NEW YORK

Indian PM Modi leads Yoga Day event at UN Headquarters

NEW YORK: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday led the Yoga Day event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on the occasion of the ninth International Day of Yoga.

Visuals show people on the UN Headquarters lawns performing yoga along with PM Modi and other dignitaries.

Earlier at the event, PM Modi also paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at the UN Headquarters' lawns. The Yoga Day event led by PM Modi also saw participation from the President of the 77th United Nations General Assembly, Csaba Korosi, New York City Mayor Eric Adams.

Also participating in the event

was digital evangelist Vala Afshar, award-winning storyteller Jay Shetty, Indian chef and restaurateur Vikas Khanna and Grammy award winner Ricky Kej.

The function saw attendance by personalities and influencers from all walks of life including diplomats, officials, academicians, health professionals, technocrats, industry leaders, media personalities, artists, spiritual leaders, and yoga practitioners, among others.

People from more than 180 countries joined the PM for the Yoga Day programme.

The Prime Minister is presently on his maiden state visit to the United States, during which he will lead celebrations of Interna-



tional Yoga Day at the United Nations Headquarters.

People have gathered in huge numbers for the International Day of Yoga celebration at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Yoga is free of copyrights

Yoga is a very old tradition from India, which is absolutely free of copyrights, patents and royalty payments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi before leading a special

Yoga session at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Wednesday.

He also urged people to join hands together to realise the goal of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. Addressing the special event, PM Modi said, "On this fine morning, we are gathered here at the UN at the meeting point of entire humanity. In this wonderful city of New York. I know many people have come from very far. I thank them. I am told that almost every nationality is represented here today. Yoga means to unite, so your coming together is an expression of another form of Yoga."

"I remember nine years ago, exactly here I had the honour to propose celebrating International Yoga Day on June 21," he added.

Prime Minister Modi said last year, the entire world came together to support India's proposal to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets and it was wonderful to see the people across nationalities coming together for Yoga.

"I have just paid respect to UN peacekeepers. In 2015, I called for a new memorial to be built in their memory. Last week, the world came together to make this reality. As the largest troop-contributing nation, we are grateful to all nations for their support of the noble cause," he said. — **ANI**

US COAST GUARD

'Banging noises' heard as search operation of Titanic sub continues

NEWFOUNDLAND: Rescuers using sonar to search for the missing Titanic submersible with five people onboard detected underwater "banging" sounds in the North Atlantic where the craft vanished two days earlier, the US Coast Guard said on Twitter.

A Canadian aircraft detected underwater noises in the search area which led to the relocation of remotely operated vehicle's rescue operations "in an attempt to explore the origin of the noises," it said.

"Those ROV searches have yielded negative results but continue."

A Canadian aircraft involved in the search "heard banging sounds in the area every 30 minutes. Four hours later additional sonar was deployed and banging was still heard," said an internal email sent to US Department of Homeland Security officials, according to Rolling Stone magazine.

Broadcaster CNN also reported the detection of banging sounds, citing an internal US Government memo that did not clarify when the noises were heard Tuesday, for how long or what might have caused them.

This comes amid growing fears for the five people aboard, as the



vessel only had enough oxygen for up to 96 hours when it set out on Sunday morning.

On Tuesday, Jamie Frederick of the US Coast Guard said the submarine had "about 40 hours of breathable air" left.

Who was on board?

Prominent Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son, Suleman, were on board the vessel in the North Atlantic, their family said in a statement. Dawood is the vice chairman of one of the largest conglomerates in Pakistan, Engro Corporation, which has stakes in fertilizers, vehicle manufacturing, energy and digital technologies.

British billionaire Hamish Harding is also among the passengers, according to a social media post from a family member. Harding had earlier posted about his expedition on Instagram that he was proud to join OceanGate's Titanic mission. — **DW**

SOLAR DYNAMICS OBSERVATORY

NASA shares images of Sun emitting solar flare

WASHINGTON DC: NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory has captured incredible images of the Sun emitting a strong solar flare.

On June 20, the Sun released powerful solar flare, reaching its peak at 1:09 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

Solar eruptions

Solar flares are powerful bursts of energy. Flares and solar eruptions can impact high-frequency (HF) radio communications, electric power grids, navigation signals, and pose risks to spacecraft and astronauts.

The solar flare observed on June 20 is classified as an X1.0 flare, with "X" representing the most powerful category. The number provides additional information regarding the flare's strength within its class.

— **ANI**



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref:	DESCRIPTION	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENT	LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS	ELIGIBILITY	TENDER FEE (NON-REFUNDABLE)	BIDDING METHOD
2022/2326 Recal4	Supply and Fixing of Vinyl Sheet Flooring in Buraimi Hospital	Before 12 PM On 06/07/2023	Before 12 PM On 27/07/2023	Specialized companies and institutions registered with the Tender Board	R.O 25 Per set	Electronically via the Esnad system for electronic bidding
2023/2185	Supply and install duplex water softener plant in Buraimi Hospital	Before 12 PM On 06/07/2023	Before 12 PM On 27/07/2023	Specialized companies and institutions registered with the Tender Board	R.O 25 Per set	Electronically via the Esnad system for electronic bidding
2023/2284	Supply of Spare Parts and Servicing of Medical Air Plant in Buraimi Hospital	Before 12 PM On 20/07/2023	Before 12 PM On 10/08/2023	Specialized companies and institutions registered with the Tender Board	R.O 25 Per set	Electronically via the Esnad system for electronic bidding

- Tenders should be submitted on line on: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone:24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

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Double delight for Oman

Mendis' men record second win in a row



Aqib, Shoaib and Nadeem hit fifties while Odedra picked three wickets in team's five-wicket victory over the UAE

MUSCAT: June 21, turned out to be a memorable day for Oman Cricket. First, it was Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood reaching his career-best ranking as World No.3 ODI all-rounder. Later in the evening, a clinical Oman outplayed the UAE in Group B to record their second successive victory in the ongoing ICC Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier 2023 at the Bulawayo Athletic Club in Zimbabwe.

Oman's campaign at the CWC Qualifier couldn't have got off to a better start as they made it two from two to lead the table.

In the other match of the same pool, Michael Leask held his nerve to complete a comeback for Scotland as they kicked off their campaign with a thrilling one-wicket win off the last bowl over Ireland.

For Oman, Aqib Ilyas' second successive half-century and unbeaten fifties from Shoaib Khan and Mohammad Nadeem powered Oman to five-wicket victory with four overs to spare over the UAE to boost their hopes of making the Super Six. Two days on from the momentous chase against Ireland, Oman did it again.

In his post-match comments, Maqsood, Oman captain, said: "The way the boys are playing, we are happy. They are putting so much in all departments, our preparation's been great, players are taking responsibility and that's been the key."

"The way Aqib and Shoaib batted was key. Later on Ayaan and Nadeem played well. When Shoaib came off and I played a bad shot, there was pressure. But on that track, if you get set, bowlers can't get you out. We have games against Sri Lanka and Scotland, we need to play well and carry that confidence forward."



Oman's Shoaib Khan in action during his 52* against the UAE in Bulawayo on Wednesday. [icc/Getty photos](#)



Aqib Ilyas celebrates his 50, Jay Odedra exults after a dismissal.

A fine effort with the ball, after electing to field first, put Oman in a strong position as they restricted the UAE to 227 for eight. Spinner Jay Odedra (3/31) was the star of the show with the ball, bowling Ramez Shahzad (38) and Vriitya Aravind (49) in quick succession after their 87-run stand for the third wicket. He added Ali Naseer to bring Aayan Afzal Khan to the wicket, with the 17-year-old playing with a crucial knock.

Aayan hit 10 fours on his way to an unbeaten 58 from just 52 deliveries, adding 40 with Karthik Meiyappan and 33 with Zahoor Khan.

Needing 228 to win, Oman lost both openers to Junaid Siddique (2/31), Kashyap Prajapati first to go for six with Jatinder Singh (2) soon following.

That brought Aqib and Shoaib

Khan together, the pair adding exactly 100 before Rohan Mustafa got through the defences of Aqib on 53. Shoaib then left the field with cramps, before Zeeshan Maqsood was LBW to Mustafa for one as the chase started to falter.

However, a 76-run stand between Mohammad Nadeem (50 not out) and Ayaan Khan (41) steadied the ship before Shoaib returned to see the team home and bring up his half-century, finishing 52 not out.

Shoaib was named Player of the Match. He said: "It was a good toss to win. We executed our plans very nicely. The wicket was the same in both innings. Our plan was simple: to stay in as long as possible and rotate strike when spinners bowl. I had cramps. My partner Aqib gave me good support, told me to stay in the crease and that'll take us to the win."

Leask snatches dramatic victory for Scotland

Michael Leask hit two off the final ball as Scotland stunned Ireland with a one-wicket victory at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo.

Curtis Campher came to the crease with Ireland at 33/4 and rattled off a vital century to help Ireland post a total of 286 for eight.

That looked like plenty when Scotland slumped to 152 for seven in reply, before Leask turned the tide. Leask added 51 with Safyaan Sharif to leave Scotland needing eight from the last over. Leask took four off the first ball and then took a single. Mark Adair removed Sharif which brought last man Chris Sole to the crease. After a dot, he scrambled a bye to get Leask on strike needing two from the final delivery. An inside edge raced to the boundary to see Scotland to an unlikely victory.

Brief scores: UAE 227/8 50 overs (Aayan Afzal Khan 58*, Vriitya Aravind 49; Jay Odedra 3/31, Bilal Khan 2/46) **lost to Oman 228/5 in 46 overs** (Aqib Ilyas 53, Shoaib Khan 52*, Mohammad Nadeem 50*; Junaid Siddique 2/31, Rohan Mustafa 2/31).

Ireland 286/8 in 50 overs (Curtis Campher 120, George Dockrell 69; Brandon McMullen 5/34, Christopher McBride 1/24) **lost to Scotland 289/9 in 50 overs** (Michael Leask 91*, Chris McBride 56; Mark Adair 3/57, George Dockrell 2/34). [\(With inputs from icc-cricket.com\)](#)

Maqsood ranked World No. 3 ODI all-rounder

MUSCAT: Oman veteran and skipper Zeeshan Maqsood, who in May had entered the top-five rankings of ICC ODI all-rounders, moved into the exclusive top-three club on Wednesday.

According to latest rankings from world cricket body (ICC), Maqsood achieved a career-best No.3 rankings for ODI all-rounders following his half-century and a wicket in the opening match of the ongoing ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe.

Oman had stunned Test-playing Ireland in their opening Group B match in Bulawayo on June 19 with the skipper playing a key role to win the player of the match award. He moved one place up, and is behind only Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan and Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi.

Al Hasan has 367 rating points while Nabi has 305. Maqsood has garnered 262 and is followed by Afghanistan's captain Rashid Khan with 261. Papua New Guinea's Assad Vala and Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza are joint fifth with 248 points each.

The 35-year old Maqsood is Oman's long-serving skipper and is a left-handed batter and left-arm orthodox bowler. This is the first time that an Omani cricketer has scaled such heights. He also made progress in ODI batters rankings as he rose six places from 65th to 59th and also gained five places to reach 40th in the bowlers' rankings.

Root takes over as World No. 1 batter Joe Root's 30th Test century and a second-innings 46 in the first Ashes Test has given him the crown of the



world's No. 1 Test batter in the latest ICC rankings update on Wednesday. Marnus Labuschagne, who was the top-ranked batter before the Ashes began, dropped two places to the third position following scores of 0 and 13 in Edgbaston.

Another batter to make gains within the top 10 is Player of the Match Usman Khawaja, progressing two places to seventh position after smashing 141 and 65 in the Ashes opener.

While each of England's three seamers are in the top ten of the Test rankings for bowlers, Ollie Robinson has breached the top five with his match haul of 5 for 98 against Australia.

James Anderson stays at No. 2, behind R Ashwin, while Stuart Broad maintains his position at nine alongside Ravindra Jadeja.

Saurabh Netravalkar's four wickets in the ongoing ODI World Cup qualifiers have given a maiden entry for a USA player into the top 20 of the ICC rankings for ODI bowlers. He climbed five places to No. 18. Josh Hazlewood, Mohammed Siraj and Mitchell Starc remain as the top three.

The ODI rankings also witnessed notable gains for Oman batters, Aqib Ilyas, who rose four places to 51st, along with Kashyap Prajapati who is up five places to 91st. [\(With inputs from icc-cricket.com\)](#)

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by August 2023 reaching \$77.10, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 6 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was \$77.16. -ONA

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,721.69 points, up by 0.85 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.32 per cent at 466.75 points. Al Madina Investments, up 9.52 per cent, was the top gainer while Renaissance Services, down 4.52 per cent, was the top loser.

Sohar International shareholders vote to approve merger with HSBC

The shareholders of Sohar International Bank voted in favour of the merger with HSBC Bank Oman at the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on June 20

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar International Bank SAOG (Sohar International) shareholders vote to approve merger with HSBC Bank Oman SAOG (HSBC Oman)

Following discussions which began in June 2022, Sohar Inter-

national and HSBC Oman have been working closely on a proposed merger.

The shareholders of Sohar International Bank voted in favour of the merger with HSBC Bank Oman at the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on June 20. The shareholders of HSBC Bank

Oman have also voted to approve the merger.

Sohar International is working closely with HSBC Bank Oman to ensure a smooth process to minimise disruption, if any, to HSBC Bank Oman customers and, to-

gether, have set a tentative target date of August 17, 2023, as the date of completion of the merger.

This timeline remains subject to all formal steps and actions being completed without any delays on account of factors beyond the

control of Sohar International and HSBC Oman. If it changes, Sohar International will let know.

On completion of the merger, HSBC Oman customers and employees will automatically transfer to Sohar International and the

existing HSBC Oman entity will be dissolved.

Communications will shortly be issued to all customers.

Further announcements on any material developments will be made as required.



EXHIBITION

Omani products draw attention at Saudi Food Show in Riyadh

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) continues its participation at the Saudi Food Show held in Riyadh, while witnessing an impressive surge in demand for Omani companies specialising in the food and packaging industries. The exhibition has attracted a lineup of industry leaders, decision-makers and investors within this sector, with the participation of international brands representing 43 countries.

Marketing and promotion officials representing the participating Omani companies underscored the key role played by specialised exhibitions in the food, beverage and packaging sectors in enhancing the global presence of locally manufactured products. Hamad Al Attabi, PR Manager at Pragati Glass Gulf, said: "We aim through our participation at the Saudi Food Show to showcase our diverse range of products, maximise our brand exposure, and sign valuable sales agreements with international companies. The level of interest shown by the attendees



at the exhibition has surpassed our expectations."

Yahya Al Jabri, Marketing Officer at Majan Glass, stated: "This event in Saudi Arabia offers a valuable platform to showcase and promote the product range of Majan Glass and gather customer feedback. The Saudi Food Show facilitates direct communication with customers, fostering a deeper understanding of their requirements. Majan Glass aims to leverage this opportunity to enhance product quality, expand presence, establish international relations, attract new customers, and intro-

duce our diverse products to companies from around the globe."

On his part, Salim Fadel, Marketing Assistant at Salalah Mills, emphasised that the company's participation in the Saudi Food Show aims at bolstering the popularity of Omani products within the thriving and fast-growing Saudi market. "The Sultanate's pavilion has attracted significant attention from those interested in importing to the Saudi market, leading to the initiation of negotiations once the exhibition comes to a close," he pointed out.

Malallah Al Hamadani, Market-

ing Director at Oman Foodstuff Factory (Al Mudhish), highlighted the company's achievements in building consumer trust, expanding its market presence, and diversifying its export portfolio, and emphasised the company's commitment to adapting to the post-Covid-19 global market dynamics including the impact on raw materials, supply chains, and consumer behaviour. "The exhibition provided valuable insights, with numerous contract requests received. These requests will be evaluated in line with our current and plans, aligned with Oman Vision 2040 objectives for enhancing the food sector within the Sultanate," Al Hamadani commented.

Mohammed Al Balushi, Sales and Marketing Assistant Manager at Areej Vegetable Oils and Derivatives, highlighted the significance of their participation in increasing the market reach of their new products and exploring new partnerships in the Saudi and neighbouring markets. "The exhibition serves as an ideal platform for keeping abreast of the latest trends in the food industry and networking with industry experts from various countries," he added.

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE



Six initiatives unveiled to develop Muscat bourse

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Sector Development, Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) announced six initiatives aimed at enhancing the position of MSX and encouraging investment therein.

This was unveiled during a press conference organised by MSX. The initiatives seek to bolster market industry and the process of lending, borrowing of securities and pooled trading accounts. They also aim to establish a special market for companies and establishments, tripartite governance and a liquidity fund.

Nasser bin Khamis Al Jashmi, Secretary General of the Min-

istry of Finance, said that most of the initiatives will be completed before the end of this year. MSX is furnishing appropriate grounds for companies in terms of legal enablers, he added.

Al Jashmi pointed out that the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Sector Development acts in conjunction with MSX, the Capital Market Authority and other parties to address all challenges and difficulties that might impede the implementation of such initiatives which, he said, serve the interests of MSX customers.

The initiatives will have a positive impact on the performance of MSX in the forthcoming stage, he affirmed. -ONA

BANK DHOFAR-AHLI BANK

CMA urges stakeholders in acquisition process to maintain transparency



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Urging the parties in the Ahlibank acquisition process to exercise the highest standards of integrity and transparency and provide fair treatment for all shareholders the Capital Market Authority (CMA) closely monitored the disclosures published on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) website by Bank Dhofar SAOG and Ominvest LLC on the offers for the acquisition of the shares of Ahlibank listed on the MSX as well as the enquiries that reached the CMA, and on social media platforms from shareholders and stakeholders about the details of the takeover and acquisition offer.

CMA would like to confirm to all shareholders that this matter is regulated by the provisions of the Takeover and Acquisition Regulations issued by CMA's

Decision No 2/2019 dated May 9, 2019 and all the parties taking part in the takeover and acquisition process must comply with the Regulation specifically the provisions of Article 5 of the Takeover and Acquisition Regulation in observing the highest standards of integrity, transparency and providing fair treatment to all shareholders and ensure not provide information to shareholders on a selective basis in the takeover offer and guarantee not to mislead the consumers in the market.

CMA also emphasised the investor relations sections in the entities participating in the process to provide communication channels with the public following the directives for interaction between the public joint stock companies, analysts, investors and reporters issued vide CMA's Decision No. 109/2022.

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MALAIKA ARORA TO KAREENA KAPOOR: BOLLYWOOD DIVAS WHO PRACTICE YOGA TO STAY FIT



1

BIPASHA BASU

Bipasha Basu, a fitness enthusiast, is an ardent practitioner of yoga. She has released her own fitness DVDs of yoga workouts. Bipasha Basu believes that yoga not only helps her stay fit but also contributes to her mental peace and emotional well-being. She is often seen doing yoga with her husband and actor Karan Singh Grover in pictures on social media.

If you are looking forward to trying yoga to keep yourself fit and healthy, then you can definitely take cue from Bollywood divas who have prioritised yoga in their life.



2 KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN

Kareena, aka Bebo, also swears by yoga. In many interviews, she has credited yoga for postnatal healing benefits and its importance in maintaining overall fitness.

P.S. Kareena has the cutest yoga partner. Her son Jeh also gives company to her during her yoga sessions.

When it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, our Bollywood celebrities leave no stone unturned to inspire fans with their fitness regime. From eating clean and green to sweating it out at the gym, actors do everything possible to have a fit body. In fact, many practice yoga daily to stay healthy.

On the occasion of International Day of Yoga 2023, let's take a look at Bollywood divas who swear by yoga. -ANI



3 MALAIKA ARORA

Malaika Arora is a yoga enthusiast. Credits arguably go to her for making youth especially Gen Z understand the importance of yoga in their life. In fact, she has her own yoga studio named Diva Yoga centre in Mumbai.

She also often posts pictures and videos of her performing yoga asanas on Instagram in order to inspire people to take up this form of exercise seriously in life.

4 SHILPA SHETTY

Actor **Shilpa Shetty** is also a yoga-freak. She has been practising yoga for years now. She has released multiple yoga DVDs and even launched her own yoga wellness channel.



ROUND-UP

Engineering Village and bp Oman celebrate fourth cycle of Future Engineers programme

The programme offered theoretical and practical workshops within Engineering, Mathematics, Science and Technology fields, with topics related to programming and electronics targeting school students from the first to fourth grades



MUSCAT: Engineering Village held a closing ceremony in partnership with bp Oman, and collaboration with the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympics at the Ministry of Education, marking the conclusion of the fourth cycle of the Future Engineers programme. Dr Abdullah Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education was present to celebrate the occasion.

The programme offered theoretical and practical workshops within Engineering, Mathematics, Science and Technology fields, with topics related to programming and electronics targeting school students from the first to fourth grades.

It also included training ses-

sions for participating teachers. The programme was implemented across 22 schools within Al Dhahirah and Al Dakhiliyah governorates, training over 130 teachers and benefitting more than 12,000 students through the four cycles.

Ibrahim Al Hinai, social investment manager for bp Oman, Kuwait and Qatar, commented: "Enhancing education is one of our priorities at bp Oman. It aligns with our sustainability aims globally of advancing a just education system and Oman's national educational priorities. It has shown young kids that learning can be interactive, innovative and can be applied in real life. Thanks to key collaborations with our partners, we have witnessed the positive



impact of the programme on both primary students and teachers in the educational space."

Capable generation

Fahad Al Siyabi, CEO of Engineering Village, further added: "We are thankful for the continuous support received from bp Oman and the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympics at the Ministry of Education.

"This programme comes as a result of a great partnership between the community, government and private sectors to achieve our common goal and enhance the educational sector within Oman. We hope that Future Engineers programme contributed to building a capable and technical future gener-

ation; to progress further and compete locally and internationally."

Yaqoob Al Balushi, Head of Director of Innovation and Scientific Olympic Department at the Ministry of Education added: "We believe in the importance of partnering with private sector institutions in developing programmes that motivate our students to learn, especially in the first stages of school, as the students are more capable of absorbing information and applying their knowledge technically across different programmes at that age. Therefore, it is crucial to add such programmes to our schools, motivating and inspiring the students to learn, touching on their passions to develop their potential further."



SHARIA-COMPLIANT FINANCING OPTION



Alizz Islamic Bank signs agreement with Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning signed a joint agreement to provide Sharia-compliant financing options for those wishing to purchase housing units in Sultan Haitham City.

The agreement was signed by Dr Khalfan bin Saeed Al Shuaيلي, Minister of Housing & Urban Planning on behalf of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and by Ali bin Saif Al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank on behalf of Alizz Islamic Bank.

The signing ceremony was held at the Royal Opera House in the presence of CEOs of several banks, financing companies and real estate development companies in the Sultanate.

This agreement showcases the synergy between the government sector and the private sector and the advanced progress of the real estate development sector in Oman by providing the necessary services and facilities

to individuals and investors to enable them to contribute to serving these sectors.

Alizz Islamic Bank will provide the option to avail home finance for residential units with a competitive profit rate starting from 3.5% for those who meet the terms and conditions. All finance options provided by Alizz Islamic Bank are Sharia-compliant and compatible with the provisions and principles of Islamic Sharia. Alizz Islamic Bank buys the property from the developer/seller and leases it out to the customer with a promise to sell at the end of the lease term.

Commenting on the signing of the agreement, Al-Mani said: "We are very pleased to partner with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in providing financing facilities for those wishing to purchase housing units in this iconic sustainable project that is an architectural masterpiece.

"The design of the new city's external areas is inspired by the nat-

ural surroundings, with options for utilising the natural shade of trees during the daytime, which will be in harmony with the urban structures."

Al Mani added: In the banking sector we work side by side with the Government sector through providing innovative financial solutions that meet the needs of different segments of society. And we, in Alizz Islamic Bank, identified the need to facilitate those wishing to buy housing units in this project and came up with a proposition that meets their needs."

It is worth mentioning that the Sultan Haitham City of Sultan Haitham will cover an area of approximately 15 million square metres, with a focus on utilising green spaces estimated to be 2.9 million square metres. The city will house 100,000 residents and will have 20,000 residential units. The residential housing units range between villas, semi-detached villas, townhouses and flats. The hous-

ing units will be distributed over 19 integrated residential neighbourhoods, supplied with various facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents. It will have 24 mosques and a grand mosque. The city will also have 11 health facilities, including two health centres to cater to the needs of 20,000 patients and another set of six health centres with a capacity to serve 10,000 patients.

The city will also have a referral hospital with a capacity of 1,200 beds, a private hospital and a centre to serve special needs and elderly people. It will also have 39 Government and private schools that cover all levels of education.

The ambition behind this new city is to have 12 international criteria of luxury and welfare - ranging between affordable cost, integrated utilities and sustainable systems. All of these played a role in drawing out the city's master plan to make it an unforgettable icon.

NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

NBO strengthens leadership team with assistant general manager promotions



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) announces the promotion of two team members, Mustahil Ahmed Al Mamari and Dr Ali Salim Al Shekaili, who have been promoted to the positions of Assistant General Manager. These promotions demonstrate NBO's commitment to fostering internal talent and investing in the growth and development of its employees.

With an impressive track record in multiple areas, Mustahil Al Mamari and Dr Ali Al Shekaili bring a wealth of experience and expertise to their new role. As Assistant General Managers, Mustahil Al Mamari will assume a key role as Head of Strategy & Transformation, while Dr Ali will assume the role of Head of Digital & E-Channels, both driving strategic initiatives and playing an integral part in shaping NBO's future.

Mustahil holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Coventry University and an Executive Certificate in Digital Business Strategy from MIT Sloan Executive Education. He has more than 15 years of experience across, Information Tech-

nology, Project Management, Marketing, and the banking sector overall. He joined NBO in June 2015 as a project manager in the Project Management and Business Reengineering Office. Post this role he has successfully managed several leadership roles in the bank including the Head of the Chief Executive Office.

Ali holds a PhD in Digital Banking Management from Binary University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Coventry University and has more than 15 years of experience across the financial sector.

He joined NBO in December 2019 as the Head of Sales - Point of Sales Machines and Merchants Relationships in the Retail Group. Post this role he has successfully managed significant managerial roles and projects in the banking sector.

These promotions highlight NBO's outstanding and highly skilled staff and underscore NBO's commitment to its employees' growth and development, exemplifying its dedication to fostering a culture of excellence.

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ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat honours government institutions and corporates at Partners in Progress ceremony



Nine ministries and government institutions won awards for implementing the bank's payment acceptance solutions using POS terminals at the awards ceremony

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman celebrated the 16th edition of its annual Partners in Progress (PiP) awards ceremony at the Kempinski Hotel Al Mouj, Muscat to honour top merchant partners from government institutions and private sector companies.

The event was held in the presence of Sheikh Waleed K. Al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer, Bank Muscat and members of the bank's Management Team. The gala event was attended by representatives from the Top 40 institutions, who have implemented vari-



ous payment acceptance solutions using POS terminals.

Nine ministries and government institutions won awards for implementing the bank's payment acceptance solutions using POS terminals at the awards ceremony including the Royal Oman Police, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Oman Development Bank, Supreme Judiciary Council and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Corporate merchant partner winners included: Omantel, Landmark Group, OIFC, Otaxi, Awasr, Carrefour, Extra, NMC Healthcare, Ikea, Al Ahlia Insurance, Talabat, Lulu Hypermarket, Ooredoo, Al Shaya International, Shell Oman Marketing, Malabar Gold Jewellery, Pizza Hut, Muscat Pharmacy, ONEIC, Oman International Container Terminal, Apparel International, Salam Air, The International School of Choueifat, Global Exchange, Makkah Hypermarket, Thawani, Abdul Samad Al Qurashi, Tageer Finance, Six

Senses Zighy Bay, Saud Bahwan Automotive and Al Fair.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat congratulated all the winners and thanked them for their efforts in promoting various merchant solutions. He reiterated the importance with which Bank Muscat values its partnerships and added that the bank is very proud of this partnership with all its institutional customers and would strive to provide the best and latest services for its customers. He added that Bank

Muscat would work to further enhance and strengthen its partnership and wished everyone even greater success in the future.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager - Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, said that the bank was keen to maintain its market leadership and thanked all partners for their contribution in the growth of payment transactions. Customers are increasingly taking advantage of the ease and speed of such modern options. It is indeed a matter of pride that the bank's partner network has now grown to more than 20,000. Over 160 million transactions are now being carried out annually through an installed base of over 35,000 POS machines and 600 e-commerce outlets. We are delighted to be a leading bank in providing such solutions through which our partners can easily receive payments. He added that the payments sector was going through an intense period of innovation and that going ahead, Bank Muscat would continue to keep pace with the aspirations of its customers so as "to serve them better, every day".

As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat has an extensive branch network of 178 branches across the country and more than 820 devices, including ATMs, CDMs and omnichannel devices distributed in all governorates. Thus, Bank Muscat is the first choice for more than two million

customers in the Sultanate and plays a major role in enhancing financial inclusion in the country through the innovative products it develops for customers. In order to provide the best services, the bank is constantly updating its digital channels of internet and mobile banking to enhance the effectiveness and convenience of customers' experience through secure, easy and fast options at the same time. Today, these digital channels have more than 1.6 million registered customers to take advantage of the wide range of benefits offered, including bill payment, fund transfer within the bank or within Oman, international fund transfers and many others. Premier banking customers of the bank can benefit from exclusive and unique benefits offered by Private Banking, Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking.

Bank Muscat is always keen to develop its products and provide banking services to keep pace with current and future developments. It is a matter of encouragement that the bank has been praised and appreciated by various local, regional and international institutions. Forbes Middle East has ranked the bank as one of the Top 50 Banks and the Top 100 Companies in the Middle East.

The bank was also recently recognised by MEED as the Best Retail Bank in the Sultanate for its best practices, its customer-centric vision and the innovative and modern offers it provides.



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