

TRAVELLER SHARES ACCOUNT OF FLYING TO INDIA AFTER COVID RULES EASED

An Indian national who recently travelled to India to visit his family following the relaxation of COVID protocols in his home country has shared his experiences on how the updated measures have made travel easier. **>A3**



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Know more

KARWA MOTORS

Made in Oman buses being used at Expo 2020 in Dubai

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Buses manufactured in Oman are being used at Expo 2020, being held in Dubai in the neighbouring United Arab Emirates. The buses are made by Karwa Motors, located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and are being used for the first time outside Oman. "The use of the buses from Karwa Motors comes as part of the Oman pavilion's endeavour to promote economic gains and promote various opportunities for Omani industries," said Mohsen bin Khamis Al Balushi, advisor at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.



Al Balushi, who also serves as commissioner-general of Oman at the country's pavilion at the Expo, added, "The buses will be used for transporting Omani delegations participating in various events at the Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at Expo 2020." **>A2**

FOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Bilarab Bin Haitham Award inspired by traditional Omani architecture

MUSCAT: The shields being awarded to the top three winners of the Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design are designed and inspired using elements of the local environment, and feature original aspects of traditional Omani architecture.

The Organising Committee of the award affirmed that the shields were designed in a manner to impart the message that the award is closely associated with the local environment.

To cope with the digital transformation in the Sultanate of



Oman and in an unprecedented move at the level of Arab countries and other regional partners when it comes to awards, the shields of the top three winners

are to be delivered in the form of digital copies/ shields using the Non-fungible Tokens (NFTs).

The NFT is a digital asset and a modern technology that the world is currently implementing.

Worldwide, technology around NFT is considered a public favourite. The NFT is established on a person's digital asset such as a photo, drawing, video footage, or a piece of music, once proof of ownership of said asset has been established. This helps them generate income from such property, ownership or right of possession. Owners of NFTs

may also provide descriptive details or features of the assets they own.

It is worth mentioning that Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design targets the youth aged under thirty-five years. Ten projects have qualified for the final stage of the first edition of the award.

Those who qualify will have to deliver detailed presentations on their projects before the Arbitration Committee along with direct discussions on 27 and 28 February at the Exhibitions Hall of Sultan Qaboos University. **—OMA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Bank loans based on sustainability factors

1 Loans that have repayment conditions linked to sustainability targets are being issued to companies in Oman. **>A2**

WORLD Biden sure Putin will invade Ukraine

2 US President Joe Biden on Friday said, "I'm convinced" Putin has decided to further invade Ukraine. He cited the "significant intelligence capability" of the US government. **>A6**

MARKET Air travel momentum building: IATA data

3 The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data showing growing momentum in the recovery of air travel as restrictions are lifted. **>B1**

PRIVATE SECTOR A KEY PARTNER IN OMAN VISION 2040

Oman's government is pro-business and has invested heavily in creating robust infrastructure and a friendly business environment



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's private sector is a key partner in the country's efforts towards economic expansion and social development as enshrined in Vision 2040.

Stating this, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said "His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has launched Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on attracting foreign direct investment and developing the private sector as a priority." "Oman's government is pro-business and has invested

heavily in creating robust infrastructure and a friendly business environment that will help foreign investors set up production facilities in key sectors here."

Appeal to investors

Addressing the potential investors, he said: "I invite you to come and experience the possibilities and opportunities for yourself. Oman looks forward to welcoming you."

Al Yousef's comments came in an interview shared by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), an organisation that acts as a liaison

between the private sector and government.

OCCI Chairman Redha Al Saleh encouraged investors to become a part of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify and build a sustainable economy, create good standards of living, job opportunities for all and help businesses withstand the potential impact of global developments.

"The chamber requires foreign investors to invest in Oman Vision 2040, which banks heavily on the private sector to lead Oman's comprehensive economic development process," he said. "Foreign investors are also allowed up to

100 percent foreign ownership," explained Al Saleh. "They can also gain an advantage using Oman's unique geographical location, which is well-connected to both the east and the west by air, road and sea."

Conducive business climate

The government is taking a very direct approach to enhance the business climate and opportunities present here such as no income tax for individuals, tax exemptions for five years or more, the freedom of transferring capital and profits, full foreign ownership rights and one-stop

shop services.

The government has invested a lot in developing the country's logistics and transport infrastructure with the aim of becoming a key logistics and shipping hub in the Middle East.

Tanfeedh initiative

Areas targeted for economic expansion under the country's Tanfeedh initiative include agriculture and fisheries, mining and energy, transportation and logistics, manufacturing and tourism. The country's fisheries exports are likely to contribute OMR1.3bn to the country's GDP in 2023. **>A5**

HEALTHCARE

More cutting-edge medical tech for Oman soon

Times News Service

MUSCAT: After bringing in an augmented reality device that helped doctors in Oman perform critical spinal surgery on a patient, the company that provided this technology intends to bring other cutting-edge medical equipment to help doctors take better care of patients.

The ClarifEye augmented reality surgical device was brought to Oman by global engineering company Philips, making it the first country outside Europe to receive this technology.

Doctors from the Armed Forces hospital recently used this tech to perform spinal stabilisation surgery on a 52-year-old national. Led by Col. Dr. Ahmed Al Jabri, the head of orthopaedics, the medical team that performed the surgery included practitioners from the



orthopaedic, anaesthesia, operations, radiology and medical engineering departments.

"The Armed Forces hospital was interested in the imaging solutions that Philips could provide for their new operating room," said Manoj Arora, Philips'

business leader for image guided therapy in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META). "The local team worked closely together with the headquarters on this project to make sure that the Ministry of Defence in Oman could be the first site outside Europe to benefit

from this new solution.

"After the new hybrid operating room was installed, the ClarifEye augmented reality surgical navigation was added to it," he explained. "Dedicated training was provided to the clinical staff and our support staff was present to support the teams performing the first medical cases using ClarifEye."

'Middle East our priority'

"We have a long history of bringing innovative technologies in healthcare, as well as a robust pipeline of innovation," added Arora.

"The Middle East is a recognised area of growth geography, and Philips has its META headquarters based out of Dubai, which clearly shows the importance we attach to the Middle East region. **>A2**

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Isha.....7:21pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:20am

Loans based on sustainability targets being offered in Oman

As a community, taking personal responsibility can collectively deliver a substantial contribution to sustainability

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Loans that have repayment conditions linked to sustainability targets are being issued to companies in Oman.

One such bank is HSBC, which at the end of last year, completed its first sustainability linked loan in Oman. Issued to an oilfield services business, the client borrowed money where the terms of the loan were linked to sustainability factors such as the amount of wastewater generated.

Climate change solutions

“As a global business, we recognise that our planet urgently needs action to protect commu-

nities, businesses and the natural environment from the damaging effects of climate change,” said Simon Adcock, head of commercial banking at HSBC Oman. “We also recognise the potential impact of climate change and have set out an ambitious plan to unlock climate solutions that can support our customers in their energy transition and their journey towards net zero.”

Oman’s renewable energy sector is full of potential. Aiming to diversify its energy sources, the Government has set an ambitious goal of covering 30 percent of its electricity demand with renewable energy projects by 2030. This presents substantial opportunities for business and the wider economy.

With the launch of several major renewable energy projects in the sultanate, Oman Power & Water Procurement Company (OPWP) expects solar energy, wind power and waste energy projects to account for as much as 30 percent of the country’s energy mix by 2030.

“As a community, taking personal responsibility for something as simple as waste can collectively deliver a substantial contribution to sustainability, for example all too often plastic waste is discarded without any regard for the environment,” said Adcock. “Everyone



Simon Adcock. – File picture

can play a role.

“It has become more important than ever for businesses to embrace innovation and sustainability, open up new growth opportunities and stay relevant in the new low carbon economy,” he explained. “That is why we are intensifying efforts to help businesses, small and large, transition to more sustainable business models.

“We aim to unlock climate solutions such as clean tech innovation, sustainable infrastructure and nature-based solutions. Radical ideas are needed to tackle climate change, but turning concepts into commercially viable solutions at a global scale requires investment and governance.”

Sustainable & Transition Finance Team

In January 2021, HSBC formed a dedicated Sustainable & Transition Finance Team in the Middle East to help institutions, corporates and individuals transition to a more sustainable economy. The team leverages deep technical knowledge of environmental, social and governance opportunities, the challenges facing customers, and the evolving regulatory environment.

Furthermore, the HSBC Sustainable Financing & Investing Survey 2021, which took the pulse of major corporate issuers of securities and the companies that invest in them, showed that 97 percent of issuers in the region who responded to the survey had increased the attention that they pay to environmental and social issues over the past year.

Nearly 45 percent of issuers said that they were already seeing the impact of climate change on their business or activities – up from just seven percent a year ago. It is now critical for companies to engage on the topic to better understand how they can capture the economic, as well as environmental and social benefits of adopting robust sustainability policies.

Explaining the challenges facing sustainability efforts in Oman and other countries, Adcock said,

“The challenge is not only in Oman but across many emerging economies. At HSBC, we are committed to working with our customers during their journey to lowering carbon emissions. We are mobilizing finance to support our customers’ transitions, accelerating innovation to help scale up climate change solutions and building global partnerships to ensure investment is swiftly channelled towards sustainable projects.”

Changing customer demands

He added: “Across broader industries, we are seeing companies feeling the pressure of changing customer demands, for example, asking for less plastic packaging or single use plastics with consumer goods and pressure from investors or other large companies within their supply chains to change their practices. The subject is really increasing in profile as we emerge from the pandemic and companies who adapt quickly and view this as an opportunity, rather than a threat, will be the ones who thrive in the coming years.”

Adcock’s interview is part of Tejarah Talks, a series of discussions around sustainable business in Oman, organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.

NEW PRODUCT AND SOLUTIONS

< FROM A1 Seeking to team up with partners for healthcare delivery

“Our entire HealthTech portfolio is available in the Middle East,” he said. “Any new product and solution that we develop are launched and introduced in Middle East countries immediately subject to local regulatory approvals and clearances. We are looking forward to partnering with the right healthcare delivery providers in the region with whom we can collaborate in developing or testing prototypes or creating

proof points for our products and services, including developing AI solutions.”

A piece of technology Philips is currently working on is the Fibre Optic RealShape (FORS), which enables real-time 3D visualisation of the internal workings of the human body. FORS sends pulses of light through hair-thin optical fibres that run within minimally invasive devices. After successfully undergoing pre-clinical

trials, the technology is currently undergoing clinical studies in the US and Europe.

“Just like we introduced our technology in Oman, we will continue to look for interested institutes and physicians willing to partner in launching new solutions,” said Arora, before explaining how ClarifEye works.

The system works with four integrated optical, hi-resolution cameras that look at the back of

the patient, providing an external view. These optical images are combined with computer generated images of the internal spine, incorporating some of the same elements used in CT scanning.

In this way, the surgeon has a 3D view on the external and internal anatomy of the patient in the same view. The patient remains continuously tracked, as the cameras register the non-invasive markers that have been placed on

the back of the patient. The system then plots the planned path for the needle or screw that then can be placed in the exact position, without the need to open up the patient.

This helps greatly in increasing minimal invasive treatment of the patient, resulting in lesser operative pain, a shorter stay in hospital, little blood loss and scarring.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

KARWA MOTORS

< FROM A1 Made in Oman buses

Karwa Motors is a joint venture between Mowasalat Qatar, the state-owned transport company of Qatar and Oman Investment Authority, Oman’s sovereign wealth fund. The first phase of operations at the Karwa Motors facility will focus on manufacturing buses for the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Doha.

Due to its strategic location close to the regional market, the project is well-positioned to contribute to the success of this global event by reducing workloads, shipping times and storage costs. Moreover, this step also reflects Qatar’s vision of enhancing the contribution of neighbouring countries to the success of this global event.

Located on a 600,000 square metre site, the manufacturing facility is outfitted with the latest in technology. It also houses several key sections, including a large warehouse to store raw materials, core workshops for cutting and welding, dyeing and equipment and motor assembly, a full-fledged inspection yard and testing facility and a vast number of other auxiliary facilities. The factory will also create job opportunities for Omanis, whether they are regular job seekers or have experience in the automotive field.

The announcement of the first Karwa-branded bus rolling off the production line in Duqm came in November 2021. The occasion also marked the start of manufacturing operations for the joint investment project between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar, which in its first phase aims to produce 500 buses annually.

At that time, Hisham Al Sheedi, the acting director of Economic Diversification Investments, said, “The Oman Investment Authority invests in such projects to not only support Oman’s economic diversification efforts but also move us closer towards realising our vision of developing Oman’s logistics sector and establishing Oman as an industrial hub for the region.

“Moreover, the project will also help us enhance our technical expertise in the automotive sector and develop supplementary industries that will support its growth, including new small and medium-sized businesses,” he added.

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Traveller shares first-hand account of flying home after COVID rules eased

Scraping of the PCR test requirement for fully vaccinated travellers is the best piece of news in a long time, says an expat travelling to India

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Indian national who recently travelled to India to visit his family following the relaxation of COVID protocols in his home country has shared his experiences on how the updated measures have made travel easier.

Manoj Kumar, an Indian from the eastern state of Odisha who works in Oman, travelled to India this weekend on annual leave, after the government scrapped the



requirement for fully vaccinated travellers to take a PCR test before boarding their flight.

“That, to be honest, is the best piece of news I have heard in a long time, because taking a PCR test is quite strenuous,” he said. “Previously, you needed to come to the clinic for your test, wait for a long time to get tested and then wait once again to receive your test re-

port when you have many other things to handle before leaving.

“You are also on tenterhooks until such time as you receive the result: You never know if you are going to test positive, which means you have to scrap your entire travel plans,” he added. “Rebooking your ticket fares, organising another PCR test and arranging transportation when needed can be a costly

affair for a lot of people.

“It also means that I don’t have to spend the OMR15 or so required for a PCR test: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted a lot of us financially and money is tight for everyone,” said Kumar. “This is particularly welcoming for blue-collar workers, whose primary concern is getting money back to their families at home.”

My family is very happy to see me, as I am sure are the hundreds of thousands of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters and husbands and wives eagerly waiting for their loved ones

in to security screening – took only about 45 minutes. Conversely, clearing immigration in New Delhi took him nearly 2 hours: People who could not visit their families for so many years because of the stringent COVID-19 protocols took advantage of the updated requirements to fly to India.

Packed

“Immigration in New Delhi was packed,” he said. “I saw a lot of foreign visa holders at the airport: They probably came to the country because the old rules made it quite tough for them to travel in and out of India, particularly in cases of work.

“In India, your vaccination status is not checked at the airport: It is assumed that your vaccine status has been verified in your country of departure,” added Manoj. “If you aren’t fully vaccinated, you will of course not be allowed to board your plane without a PCR test.”

“My family is very happy to see me, as I am sure are the hundreds of thousands of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters and husbands and wives who are now eagerly waiting for their family members to come home to see them after more than two years of being apart,” he said.

Non-oil Oman-UAE commerce grew by 9 per cent in 2021

DUBAI: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has described the UAE as the most important importer of Omani non-oil products. It occupies second place in the list of Oman’s re-export destinations, he added.

The minister said that the volume of 2020 bilateral commercial exchange stood at more than OMR4 billion, compared to OMR3.7 billion in 2010.

As many as 3,507 UAE firms had investments in Oman in 2021, with an aggregate capital of more than OMR590 million, mostly in the sectors of constructions, trade and services. This came at the 2nd Oman-UAE Economic

Forum, held at Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the sidelines of Oman’s participation in Expo 2020 Dubai to discuss the consolidation of economic partnership between the business communities in the two countries in manner that serves economic relations, commercial exchange, investments and programmes of cooperation at government and private levels.

He also said that the forum is considered a step forward in the march of Oman-UAE economic relations. The forum focused on developing partnerships in various vital sectors, including innovation, renewable energy, water solutions, financial services, logis-

tics, constructions, real estate and entrepreneurship.

Abdullah Tauq Al Marri, Minister of Economy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), said Oman is the second largest GCC trade partner of the UAE, with 20 per cent of UAE’s total trade.

The value of non-oil commercial exchange between the two countries in 2021 stood at more than AED46 billion, a growth by 9 per cent over its value in 2020. Al Marri added in a speech before the 2nd Oman-UAE Economic Forum that hotel establishments in the UAE received more than 256,000 guests from Oman in 2021, constituting a growth rate of 32 per cent over the figures in 2020. -ONA



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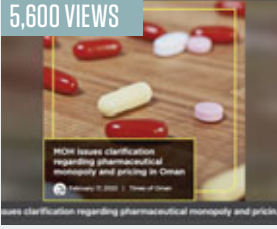
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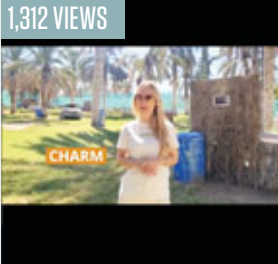
Story on no more PCR test or quarantine for travellers coming to Bahrain

A story on no more PCR test or quarantine for travellers coming to Bahrain reached 23,605 people and had 1,222 engagements on Facebook.

**MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK**

5,600 VIEWS

Maghrib Minute video
The Maghrib Minute video news wrap had 5,600 views and reached 19,500 people on Facebook.

**MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM**

1,312 VIEWS

Out & About episode with Charm
The Out & About episode with Charm had 1,312 views and 82 likes on Instagram.

AL MAZAR'E VILLAGE

FAMOUS FOR OLD
HISTORICAL
LANDMARKS

Al Mazar'e Village in the Wilayat of Quriyat in the Governorate of Muscat attracts many tourists, thanks to its natural beauty, picturesque green oases, abundant water and deep-rooted history.

Thirty kilometres away from the centre of the wilayat, the village is characterised by a towering mountain terrain with waters flowing amidst high mountains, and green spaces on the sides.

History seems manifested in its old houses, towers and forts. The many neighbourhoods that make up the village are all located along a narrow plain stretch on the sides of Wadi Dhiqah, which divides it into two halves.

The village is surrounded by mountains on all sides, forming a wall punctuated by paved roads along "Al Jabal Al Aswad," or the Black Mountain.

Al Jabal Al Aswad, known for its towering height, is a tourist destination that

beckons lovers of nature, adventure and exploration in Al Mazar'e village.

Tourists also come to see the historical and archaeological ruins spread across all the neighbourhoods of the village. Some of these date back to the pre-historic period.

The village is well known for its range of crops, an important aspect of the economic life in the village. These crops include maize, barley and alfalfa, cowpea, papaya, banana, mango, lemon, sweet lime, melons, etc. It is also famous for different types of date palms, such as Al Naghal and Al Khnaizi.

The village is also famous because among all the wilayat's villages, the date palm pollen season begins here first, thanks to its warm climate and abundance of water. Pollination and heat conditions start in Al Khazifa, Al Qadmi and Al Miznaj.

The village is also famous for its many

traditional craft industries, which rely on primitive ways in making mats, ropes and pottery.

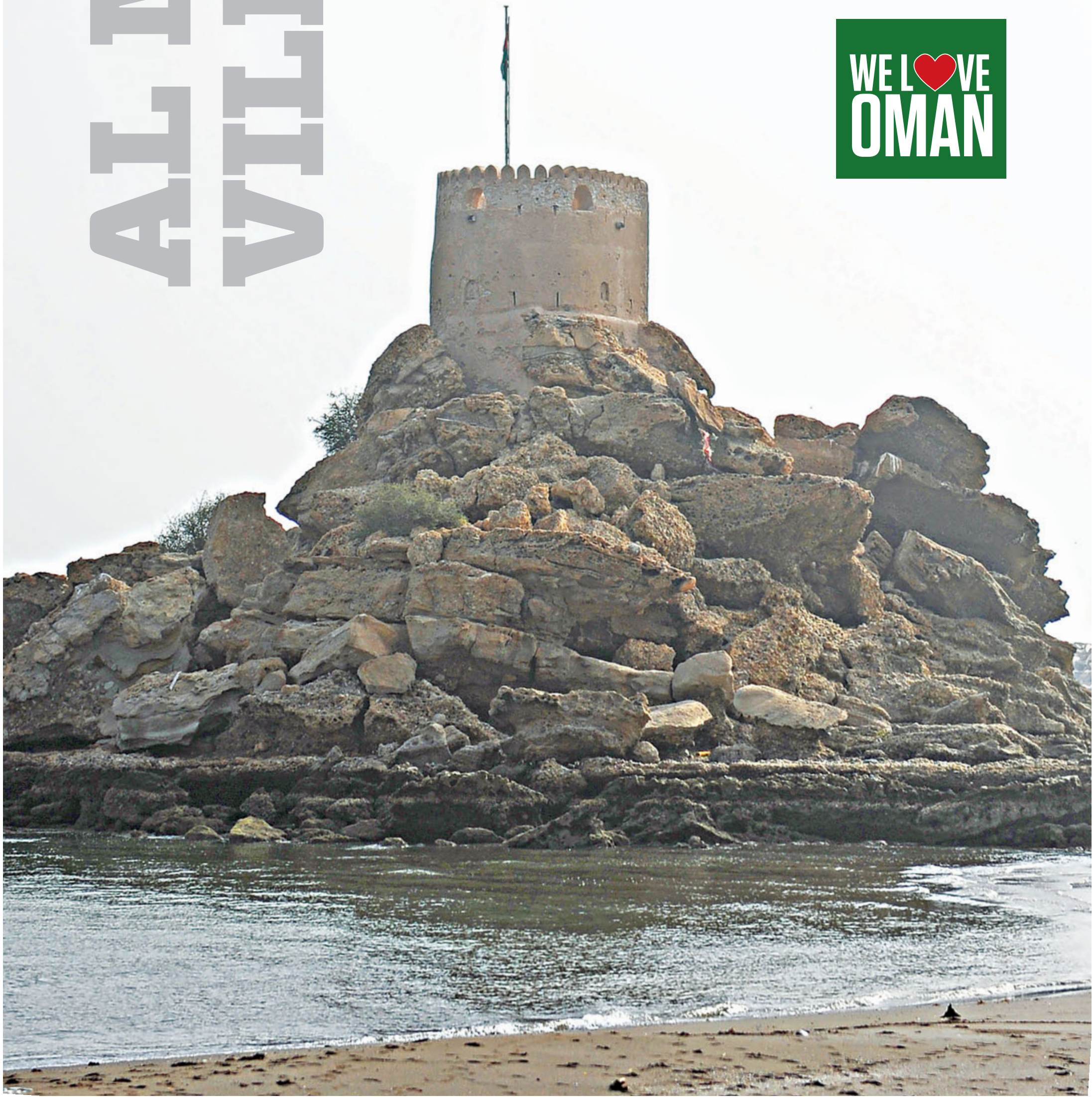
Al Mazar'e Village is famous for old historical landmarks that reflect the past of the ancestors.

There are towers, castles and forts, including Al Hisan Fort, A'Dhahir Tower, Mansfat Tower, Al Hisn Tower, and Al Jazeer Tower, which overlooks the Wadi Dhaiqah track to Hail Al Ghaf.

The village has many old mosques and houses in various neighbourhoods, such as Bait Al Qat'ei, Bait Al Hadid in Al Jazeer and Bait Al Abiya in Al Ghubaira.

There are a lot of old Aflaj, the ancient irrigation systems or water channels," some dating back to the pre-Islam period.

These included Falaj Al Qarya, Falaj Al Qayta'ei, in addition to Falaj Al Saih, Al Ghubaira, Al Jazeer, Mansfat and Al Mazra.





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ARAB PARLIAMENTARY VISION

Summit discusses challenges and concerns facing the Arab countries

CAIRO: The Sultanate, represented by Majlis Al Shura participated in the activities of the 4th Conference of the Arab Parliament and Heads of Arab Parliaments, held at the headquarters of the Arab League, in Cairo.

Khalid bin Hilal Al Mawali, Chairman of Majlis Al Shura chaired the Sultanate's delegation taking part in the conference.

The conference discussed the document on "the Arab parliamentary vision for achievement of security and stability and advancing the Arab countries' actual condition". The document was prepared by the Arab Parliament which would be submitted to the upcoming Arab Summit.

The document dealt with the key challenges and concerns facing the Arab countries and the role parliaments can play in formulating a common vision to face the challenges in the Arab nation.

Adel Abdulrahman Al Asoomi, Speaker of the Arab Parliament stressed the significance of the conference as it is held under exceptional conditions and challenges witnessed in the Arab countries at the internal and external level. — **ONA**



SULTANATE'S DELEGATION: Khalid bin Hilal Al Mawali, Chairman of Majlis Al Shura chaired the Sultanate's delegation taking part in the conference. — **ONA**



AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Forum sheds light on key projects in Oman

DUBAI: Within the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States, the Omani-US Forum held a meeting at the General Commission of the Sultanate Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai in the presence of Dubai-based US companies.

The forum aimed to shed light on the projects, available investment opportunities and the incentives offered by the Sultanate to investors in the various sectors along with exploring the opportunities FTA offers to Omani businessmen.

A number of officials from Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (PEIE) and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion reviewed the various investment opportunities

available at all industrial cities.

Leslie M. Tsou, the US ambassador accredited to the Sultanate praised the existing bilateral relations between the two countries, which she described as strategic and deep-rooted. She also spoke on the FTA signed between the Sultanate of Oman and the US in 2009 and the contributions of the FTA to development of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

The forum was attended by Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Mohsin bin Khamis Al Balushi, Advisor at the Ministry and Commissioner General of the Sultanate's Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai and Meghan Gregonis, the US Consul General in Dubai, UAE.



THIRD EDITION



Indian schools film fest inaugurated at virtual function

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The third edition of Indian Schools Film Festival 2021, the greatest platform to channelise students' burgeoning potential and to produce the best film makers, organised by the Board of Directors, Indian schools in Oman, was inaugurated at a dignified virtual function by Indian School Al Maabala, the host School of ISFF 2021, on February 17, 2022.

The grand inaugural ceremony commenced with the lighting of the lamp and an invocation song by the school choir. The Chief Guest Humaid Bin Saeed Bin Rashid Al Ameri, a renowned writer, film director, and the President of Omani Society for Cinema and theatre, enhanced the grandeur of the occasion with his august presence. Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman, Board of Directors of Indian Schools, Sultanate of Oman, Sirajudheen Nhelat, Academic Chair, Board of Directors, and Sujithkumar S, President, School Management Committee, ISAM graced the occasion.

The ceremonial unveiling of ISFF Statuette marked the official inauguration of ISFF 2021, the confluence of cinematic virtuosity.

Dr Sivakumar Manickam in his introductory note, highlighted the influence of social media among the people and acknowledged that art aids learning outcome.

"Films have a three-fold impact

on society, particularly the young people – they are a source of learning, motivation and entertainment," Dr Manickam said.

Sujithkumar S, President, School Management Committee, ISAM, greeted and cordially welcomed the chief guest and other dignitaries present in the function.

The Chief Guest Humaid Bin Saeed Bin Rashid Al Ameri expressed his joy in participating in the Film Festival and wished success and good luck to all the budding, enthusiastic film-makers. In his felicitation speech, Sirajudheen Nhelat, Academic Chair, reflected on the positive impact of films on the upcoming generation. The rollicking track of the theme song of ISFF 2021 by the school choir provided the viewers with the iconic magical moments and the images of the euphoric experiences. An outstanding fusion of dances presented by the young dynamic students of ISAM feasted the eyes of the onlookers. The ISFF 2021 Preview was flashed through a short presentation.

While the inaugural ceremony came to an end with the expression of gratitude by Vijay Velayudhan, Convenor, SMC and Chairperson of sports and co-curricular sub-committee of ISAM and the rendition of school anthem, it marked the beginning of the first day of live streaming of the nominated short films under various genres and categories.

NEW BOARD

Newly elected members of Pakistan School System sworn in

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The oath taking ceremony of the newly unopposed elected members of Pakistan School System was held on February 14, 2022 at Pakistan School Hall of Pakistan School Muscat. His Highness Sayyid Suhaib Fatih Fahar Al-Said graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

H.E. Muhammad Imran Ali Chaudhry, recently-appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to Sultanate of Oman administered the oath of office to the newly elected officials.

The event was attended by prominent personalities from Pakistan, including parents, all officials of Pakistan School System, staff and teachers.

Besides, distinguished guests from Pakistan and respected dignitaries from the Sultanate of Oman, including Dr. Saeed Al Saqlavi, Member State Council, Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Chairman of Omani Lawyers



Association & Member Majlis Al Shura; Honourable Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali, Chairman of *Muscat Media Group* and Shaiful Anuar Mohammad, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Sultanate of Oman, graced the occasion by their presence. Officers of the Embassy of Pakistan also witnessed the event.

Ameer Hamza, the new Chairman commended the efforts of the Pakistan School Management and pledged to further improve

the quality of Pakistani Schools. He vowed to bring in educational and administrative reforms in collaboration with parents, the Embassy of Pakistan and the Ministry of Education.

He further said that steps would be taken to promote an environment in the schools' administrative and educational systems to ensure better supervision of extra-curricular activities.

Addressing the audience, the

Ambassador of Pakistan said: "My priority is education as I myself have been the head of the Civil Service Academy. I also like this Hall and the students and teachers of the school. We will work together to achieve common objectives. And for that we should give the new Board a chance and extend full cooperation and help in educational matters because it is a prestigious institution of the community and of Pakistan which was established almost four decades back. To recognise the efforts of Steering Committees of the school, its members were awarded with commendation certificates."

At the end, the Ambassador of Pakistan presented a souvenir to the Chief Guest on behalf of Pakistan Schools in Oman.

The distinguished guest, His Highness Sayyid Suhaib Fatih Fahar Al-Said expressed his best wishes for the Ambassador of Pakistan and the Pakistani Schools in the Sultanate of Oman.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

< FROM A1 Pristine coastline

The second-largest country in the Gulf region which possesses a wealth of natural resources – some of which are still relatively untapped – Oman also has plenty of attractions for tourists. It has a long coastline with pristine, sandy beaches, beautiful mountains, golden deserts with rows and rows of sand dunes and was ranked among the world's 10 best destinations to visit in 2022, as reported by international travel magazine Lonely Planet.

Oman's landscape

Oman's landscape is changing: A host of towering megaprojects are changing the face of the economy – a clear indication that Oman is on the move.

To promote economic diversification and explore investment opportunities, Oman has set up

a number of free zones in the country.

"The purpose of establishing the special economic zone in Duqm, as well as free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Mazyna is to reach out to the outside world," said Dr Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, the chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). "The special economic zones and free zones are well-equipped and they are all in close proximity of large ports and airports, gas pipelines, road infrastructure and recently expanded 5G infrastructure."

"Right now, within the framework of the special economic zones and free zones, we are concentrating on renewable energy, in line with Oman Vision 2040," he added.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC would like to make a statement to the public confirming its sole registered address in Oman to be PO BOX 491, Ghala Industrial Area, Postal Code 115, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Recently we have witnessed some market abuse of the GORICA brand name, where some companies are abusing the GORICA trademark and brand name to try sell the same products and pretending to be true and genuine GORICA products. Please be aware and note that GORICA Genuine Products in Oman are only offered from our company GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC, located in Ghala Industrial Area, which has been operating since 2007 in Oman.



For any points of clarification please visit us at our registered location or call +968 24504499.





GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC
P.O. Box: 491, Ghala Industrial Area, Postal Code: 115, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman,
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UKRAINE INVASION

Joe Biden is ‘convinced’ Putin has decided to invade Ukraine

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Friday said the US believes Russian President Vladimir Putin has made up his mind to invade Ukraine.

Biden said, “I’m convinced” Putin has decided to further invade Ukraine. He cited the “significant intelligence capability” of the US government. “We have reason to believe that,” he added.

Speaking at the White House, Biden said the attack could come in the next “week” or “days” and that targets would include the capital, Kyiv, “a city of 2.8 million innocent people.”

“We’re calling out Russia’s plans. Not because we want a conflict, but because we are doing everything in our power to remove any reason Russia may give to justify invading Ukraine,” Biden wrote later on Twitter.

Russia has repeatedly denied that it has no plans to attack its



neighbor. But Western powers have warned of a possible Russian invasion, with over 150,000 Russian troops massed on Ukraine’s borders.

A Russian envoy said earlier this week, “There will be no escalation in the coming week, or in the week after that, or in the coming month.” But the US has warned that an attack was still possible.

‘Not too late’ to return to diplomacy

The US president described the decision he believes Putin has made as a “catastrophic and needless war of choice” but sought to emphasize that a diplomatic path is still an option should Putin choose to de-escalate in a meaningful way.

With the US Secretary of State

Antony Blinken scheduled to hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov next week, Biden insisted it was “not too late to de-escalate and return to the negotiating table.”

But Biden warned that if an attack comes, Putin will have “slammed the door shut on diplomacy.”

US, allies determined to support Ukraine

Before addressing the nation and the world, Biden said he had made “two vital calls.”

The first call he said was to a bipartisan group of members of the US Congress and Vice President Kamala Harris, who are all attending the Munich Security Conference. The second call was to EU and NATO members’ heads of state. In those calls, Biden said he briefed allies on what the US believes will happen in Ukraine in the coming days. **aw**

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FLOODING

Death toll hits 130 in Brazil mudslides, floods

BRASILIA: The number of fatalities due to floods and mudslides in Petropolis, a town in southeast Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro state, rose to 130 on Friday, according to local authorities.

The latest report from the local Civil Defence agency also said the number of people reported missing has almost doubled to over 200, since heavy rains on Tuesday caused rivers to overflow, sparking mudslides that destroyed many homes.

Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro, who flew over the disaster area at noon on Friday, said it looked like a “war scene,” and ordered his ministers to take a series of emerging measures. **ANI**

AL SUWADI POWER COMPANY SAOG

P.O. Box: 39, P.C. 103, Bareeq Al Shatti, Sultanate of Oman, alsuwadipower.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Suwadi Power Company SAOG (the “Company”), I have the pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Corporate Governance

The Company has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and applicable circulars issued from time to time by the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

Operational Results

The operational performance of the plant during the year was excellent.

The consistently high plant’s reliability and technologically superior fuel-efficient operations of the plant continues to place it at the higher end of the merit order list for dispatch and, as such, the plant continues to be dispatched at a high plant load. Following graph highlights the consistent increase in the plant load and the energy generated by the Company over the last five years:

The Company has seen excellent growth in its revenue over the past years. Revenue includes capacity income and energy income. The following graph depicts the growth in the gross revenue and good reliability highlighting the Company’s importance in the Oman’s power grid:

Due to the plant’s inherent deficiency, the Company does not fully recover the fuel gas cost expended to generate power. During the year, the Company continued to experience thermal inefficiency at high generation levels as also at high plant load operating configurations that are inherently unfavorable and together, these lead to heat rate loss suffered by the Company. Engaging internationally reputed consultants to advise a solution to this situation has not been helpful so far. No credible solution was advised by them to resolve this major and financially corrosive issue. Additionally, Performance Advisor, a state-of-the-art technology, to investigate the subject, installed on an experimental basis for over a year by Siemens at the plant, has also failed to come-up with any solution to this intractable issue. Consequently, the heat rate loss issue remains a major challenge for the Company without a redress.

An extended hot gas path inspection (“eHGPI”) of one gas turbine was completed during the year. The plant’s ‘Siemens-recommended’ upgrades were implemented during the inspection. Unfortunately, during the inspection, damage to few blades and vanes of the compressor was noticed and these were replaced, albeit at a substantial financial cost (the net impact of the cost to the Company was the excess above STOMO’s cap as agreed in the O&M agreement for such unexpected costs incurred during an inspection). A similar eHGPI of the other gas turbine has begun in January 2022. All other operating equipment and the balance of plant equipment were serviced as per the agreed annual maintenance

program. Consistent level of high plant availability is a testament of efficient and timely plant upkeep and periodic maintenance as per the equipment suppliers’ manual and ‘condition-based’ monitoring.

Presently, the plant’s water intake facility is being proficiently modified to ensure that the plant is protected from future massive jelly fish attacks that have in the recent past not only triggered extensive and costly damage to the water intake facility but has also caused major loss of revenue due to the plant’s consequential outages.

As during the previous year, during 2021, the restrictions and operational constraints due to the COVID 19 pandemic continued. It is creditable to note that STOMO’s staff operated the plant seamlessly and fully supported Oman’s power grid. Currently, although the plant has returned to normal shift operations, Oman’s COVID-19 precautionary rules and Engie approved COVID 19 guidelines continue to be fully observed at the plant.

The plant operated for 3,835 days without any lost time accident. This was the result of sustained focus on excellence in Health, Safety, Environment and Quality Management at the plant. For this excellent performance, we acknowledge the efforts of the dedicated and diligent team of STOMO, our Operation and Maintenance Contractor.

The Company duly met all the stringent environment permit conditions promulgated by Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs. The cyber security for the plant has also been strengthened in association with STOMO. The Company has strived to adhere to the cyber security regulations issued by the Authority for Public Services Regulation and other regulations promulgated by the CMA.

Financial Results

The following graph depicts the Company’s financial performance as compared to the previous year:

The net income for 2021 was 4.60% higher than 2020. Revenue growth was predominantly due to higher power generation. However, this saw higher gas consumption that directly led to higher cost of gas that increased the operating costs. Further, the persistent high heat rate loss suffered by the plant and the unexpected cost of replacement of Compressor blades and vanes, as explained above, increased the operating costs. On a positive note, the reduced finance cost on account of scheduled repayment of project loans delivered higher net profit.

The monthly fuel charge invoiced by the Company to OPWP is pass-through income and when received, is finally paid to the gas supplier, Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM). The Company has withheld gas invoice settlement to MEM since April 2021 as OPWP has not settled Company’s corresponding gas invoices. As in the past years, this issue has been successfully concluded for 2021 consequent to which the Company’s

receivables and payables as at December 2021 have been set off with no unfair consequences to any stake holder.

The Company has duly met all its commitments under the term loan agreement.

Finally, the Company has declared and paid dividend of 6.5 Baizas per share in 2021.

The share price stood at 48 Baizas per share at the close of 2021.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The Company takes its role as a responsible corporate citizen seriously. The year 2020 was challenging to everyone but more importantly to the students who had to continue their studies by on-line classes. Upon the request from the Ministry of Education to assist deserving students in Vilayat of Barka schools, the Company donated 143 computer tablets. To support Mussanah Primary Health center of the Ministry of Health, a dental system with view screen and monitor was donated. The Barka health center of the Ministry of Health was provided a much-needed Chambered Sterilizer set. In the light of the ongoing infectious COVID 19 pandemic and to provide clinical safety at the center, the Company agreed to fund the same. Totally, an amount of RO 20,891 was spent by the Company in respect of its CSR initiative during 2021.

Medium term Outlook

OPWP launched the Spot Market project in 2015. The Company has participated in the trial run of spot market operation. Effective January 2022, the spot market has gone ‘live’ and the Company has been successfully participating on a daily basis in offering our bid. All costs incurred by the Company for participating in the spot market process is being claimed from OPWP under the Change of Law protection agreed within the PPA. The Company’s Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with OPWP expires in April 2028. Consequently, as the Company’s tariff is already agreed in the PPA, the spot market process will have no impact on the revenue stream of our Company until the expiry of the PPA.

Compliance of Value Added Tax, introduced in Oman from April 2021, has been successfully met. Any financial impact on the Company arising from the introduction of VAT has been claimed from OPWP under the Change of Law protection agreed within the PPA.

The Company continuously endeavors to identify and implement areas of improvement in plant operations. All reasonable measures have been taken by the management to ensure that we maintain excellent plant’s operational performance in the coming years. The financial performance of the Company is mainly derived from plant’s availability and reliability and as such, plant’s operation and maintenance will continue to be accorded highest priority and consideration.

The Company and STOMO have strived to steadily increase the Omanisation in the staff members while ensuring smooth and reliable operation of the plant.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to express gratitude to OPWP, the Authority for Public Services Regulation, the Capital Market Authority and other governmental and non-governmental bodies for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank all personnel associated with the operation of Al Suwadi Power plant and the staff of the Company for their hard work and dedication, and also to those others such as our contractors, whose expertise has assisted us in achieving these excellent results.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I heartily extend our best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Bin Taimur Al Said. We thank the Government of Oman for creating an environment that allows us to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate’s economy. We commit our efforts to the building of a strong Oman.

Chairperson

Director

CEO

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021 (AUDITED)

	2021 RO'000	2021 USD'000	2020 RO'000	2020 USD'000
Revenues	82,497	214,556	78,305	203,655
Direct costs	(60,334)	(156,916)	(55,942)	(145,494)
GROSS PROFIT	22,163	57,640	22,363	58,161
General and administrative expenses	(808)	(2,100)	(818)	(2,127)
PROFIT BEFORE INTEREST AND TAX	21,355	55,540	21,545	56,034
Finance costs - net	(8,076)	(21,004)	(8,865)	(23,056)
PROFIT BEFORE TAX	13,279	34,536	12,680	32,978
Tax expense	(1,944)	(5,055)	(1,842)	(4,791)
NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	11,335	29,481	10,838	28,187
Earnings per share				
Basic earnings per share (Baizas / cents)	15.87	41.27	15.17	39.46

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 DECEMBER 2021 (AUDITED)

	2021 RO'000	2021 USD'000	2020 RO'000	2020 USD'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	249,388	648,602	257,207	668,937
Right-of-use assets	938	2,436	1,083	2,815
Capital spares	724	1,883	610	1,586
Current assets				
Inventory	1,905	4,955	1,867	4,856
Trade and other receivables	33,803	87,917	40,987	106,600
Short term deposit	884	2,300	692	1,800
Cash and cash equivalents	445	1,158	267	695
TOTAL ASSETS	288,087	749,251	302,713	787,289
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	71,441	185,801	71,441	185,801
Legal reserve	8,585	22,326	7,451	19,378
Retained earnings	28,144	73,203	22,587	58,747
Equity before hedging reserve	108,170	281,330	101,479	263,926
Hedging reserve	(6,091)	(15,841)	(9,721)	(25,283)
Total equity	102,079	265,489	91,758	238,643
LIABILITIES				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	97,542	253,685	115,468	300,307
Lease liabilities	960	2,497	1,095	2,848
Derivative instruments	7,165	18,636	11,436	29,744
Deferred tax liability	24,065	62,591	21,480	55,870
Asset retirement obligation	425	1,107	310	807
Current liabilities	130,157	338,516	149,789	389,576
Total liabilities	232,702	602,208	261,267	670,021
Total equity and liabilities	288,087	749,251	302,713	787,289
Net assets per share (Baizas / cents) - adjusted	151.41	393.80	142.05	369.43





DO
MORE

MEDALS
TALLY

BEIJING 2022



Rank		G	S	B	T
1	Norway	15	8	12	35
2	Germany	11	8	5	24
3	PR China	9	4	2	15
4	USA	8	9	7	24
5	Sweden	8	5	5	18
6	Netherlands	8	5	4	17
7	Switzerland	7	2	5	14
8	ROC	6	11	14	31
9	Austria	6	7	4	17
10	France	5	7	2	14
11	Canada	4	8	13	25
12	Japan	3	5	9	17
13	Italy	2	7	8	17
14	R. Korea	2	5	2	9
15	Slovenia	2	3	2	7
16	New Zealand	2	1	0	3
17	Finland	1	2	3	6
18	Australia	1	2	1	4
19	Hungary	1	0	2	3
20	Belgium	1	0	1	2
20	Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
20	Slovakia	1	0	1	2
23	Belarus	0	2	0	2
24	Spain	0	1	0	1
24	Great Britain	0	1	0	1
24	Ukraine	0	1	0	1
27	Estonia	0	0	1	1
27	Latvia	0	0	1	1
27	Poland	0	0	1	1

timesofoman.com

Oman beat Canada by nine wickets

Oman’s win helped them bounce back to keep their hopes alive for a spot in the semi-finals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Unbeaten half-centuries by Kashyap Prajapati and skipper Zeeshan Maqsood powered hosts Oman to a nine-wicket win over Canada in the Group A match of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Qualifier A, supported by Dream 11, at the Oman Academy ground in Al Amerat on Saturday. In the second game of the morning session, Nepal strolled to a 136-run win over Philippines to top the group with four points after their back-to-back victories. Canada and Oman have two points each now.

Oman’s win helped them bounce back to keep their hopes alive for a spot in the semi-finals. The top-two teams in each group will advance to the knockout round. Chasing a target of 156



to win, hosts lost opening batter Jatinder Singh in the fifth over with the total at 30.

Maqsood joined Prajapati in the middle and the pair exhibited some fine strokes all around the park. The duo took the attack to the bowlers to share a 129-run unbroken partnership to secure a comfortable win with 12 balls to spare. Prajapati was unbeaten for 74 off 56 balls.

His knock was studded with five boundaries and four sixes. Maqsood displayed more attacking intent to race to his 76 off just 44 balls, with six boundaries and five maximums. Jatinderpal Matharu’s second over cost him 19 runs as Maqsood hammered three fours and a six.

Along with Prajapati, the skipper continued the attack as they

smashed the bowling attack for a total of 47 runs in just three overs to wrap up the win. Rayyan Pathan and Matharu went for plenty in their spell as they gave away 24 and 23 runs respectively in their two-over spells.

Earlier, Ravinderpal Singh anchored Canada’s innings with a partnership with Saad Zafar to guide the team to 83 before Maqsood broke the stand.

Canadian opening pair Rayyan Pathan and Matthew Spoors – got off to a bright start. Pathan was in fine form as he found the early boundaries in the Power play but was run out in the fifth over for 26 that included four boundaries.

Matthew Spoors, who made century on his T20I debut on Friday, followed his partner in the pavilion soon as Kaleemullah

came up with a splendid wicket- maiden sixth over. Canadian skipper Navneet Dhaliwal departed in the next over to leave the side at 43-3. Singh and Zafar revived the innings with a 42-run stand.

Oman bowlers restricted their opponents to a 62-3 at the halfway mark. Hamza Tariq and Singh gradually accelerated the run-rate as they took 12 off Syed Aamir Kaleem’s 14th over. Singh finally fell in the 17th over caught brilliantly by Prajapati off Bilal Khan.

Dillon Heyliger struck some hits in the death overs, blasting a six and two successive boundaries in the 18th over to stay unbeaten on 21 off ten balls. Tariq ended Canada’s innings with a six to help the team’s total of 155 for six.

Navneet Dhaliwal, Captain Canada said, “Catches win matches is an age-old saying. We dropped some big catches, of their opener [Kashyap Prajapati]. If we had taken those chances, the match could have gone differently. We only have ourselves to blame. I think Oman bowled really well, so credit goes to them. But we were quite happy with the total we put up.”

Ahead of their must-win match against Nepal on Monday, Dhaliwal said: “We know it is a big game. The good thing is we are not out of the tournament yet so we will try our best.”

CHINESE FIGURE SKATERS WIN GOLD

China’s two-time world champions Sui Wenjing and Han Cong claimed the figure skating pairs title at the Beijing Winter Olympics on Saturday. Sui/Han led both short programme and free skate, collecting 239.88 points in total for the victory. Eugenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov of the Russian Olympic Committee took silver on 239.25 and reigning European and world champions Anastasia Mishina and Aleksandr Galliamov of ROC bagged bronze on 237.71. —Xinhua

India become second team after Pakistan to secure 100 T20Is win

KOLKATA: Rohit Sharma-led India on Friday became the second team to win 100 T20Is.

India achieved the feat after defeating West Indies by 8 runs in the second T20I of the three-match series here at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata. Apart from India, Pakistan is the only team to have won more than 100 T20Is. Pakistan has so far won 118 T20Is. Rohit Sharma is yet to lose a single game after becoming India’s full-time captain.

India has won all eight games so



far under the captaincy of Rohit.

Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant’s quality knocks were backed up by a spirited bowling performance at the death by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Harshal Patel as India defeated West Indies by eight runs in the second T20I. In the penultimate over, Bhuvneshwar conceded just four runs and it swung the match in the hosts’ favour.

Earlier, Kohli played a 52-run knock as India posted 186/5 against West Indies in the allotted twenty overs. Rishabh Pant

(52*) and Venkatesh Iyer (33) also contributed with the bat as India posted a score of more than the 180-run mark. Pant and Iyer had formed a 76-run stand for the fifth wicket.

In the final six overs, India managed to add 76 more runs to their total, taking the score past the 180-run mark.

With this win, India has gained an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series and the final T20I will now be played on Sunday at the Eden Gardens. **ANI**

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Victories for Ideal, Global, Capital Star, Landmark

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Ideal International rode on excellent all-round performance by Ruban Durai to beat Al Jadidi Engineering and Contracting in a C Division T20 League game at Muscat Municipality ground 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Al Jadidi posted a robust 176 for 9 on the board, thanks to top scores of 51 by Dhanesh Krishnan and 38 by Vaseem Pyarejan. Ruban was the pick of Ideal bowlers, taking 3 for 21 in his four-over spell.

Ruban led the way with the bat too, scoring a superb 51 as Ideal chased the total down in 18.4 overs, collecting 177 for the loss of 3 wickets. Vaseem Pyarejan contributed 38.

Brief Scores (C Division): Al Jadidi Engineering and Contracting 176 for 9 in 20 overs (Dhanesh Krishnan 51 – 5x4, Vaseem Pyarejan 38 – 5x4, Ruban Durai 3-21) lost to Ideal International 177 for 3 in 18.4 overs (Ruban Durai 51 – 5x4, 3x6, Wasim Jamadar 44 – 7x4) by 7 wickets.

Waseem bowls Global Corp to victory

Waseem Abbas claimed 3 for 5 to help Global Corp Logistics to a 37-run victory against Pitspot in a D Division T20 League match at Muscat Municipality ground 3 on Friday. In a game reduced to 18 overs a side, Global Corp was restricted to 125 for 8 due largely to brilliant bowling by Monty Navani who claimed 4 for 31. Giridharan topscored with 22 off 33.

Pitspot failed to mount a challenge, folding up for a paltry 88 in 15.2 overs due to outstanding bowling by Waseem, Muhammed Siddique (3 for 16) and Marshal Barmeda (2 for 21).

Brief Scores (D Division): Global Corp Logistics 125 for 8 in 18 overs (Giridharan Vyrawamoorthy 22 – 1x4, Ummer Mahmood 21 – 2x4, Monty Navani 4-31) beat Pitspot 88 all out in 15.2 overs (Vinod Shankar 17 – 2x4, Waseem Abbas 3-5, Muhammed Siddique

3-16, Marshal Barmeda 2-21) by 37 runs.

Rafeek shines in Capital Star’s win

Muhammed Rafeeq’s magnificent 5 for 13 and Maheswaran Annadurai’s unbeaten 68 off 37 were the highlights of Capital Star’s emphatic 8-wicket win over Y Horizon in an E Division T20 League match at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

Y H was dismissed for 140 in the 20th over as Mohamed Rafeek ran through the side with his fifer, getting excellent support from Nahas Theparambil who picked up 3 for 32. Amar Pal topscored with 30.

Capital Star surpassed the total in only 14.2 overs, scoring 142 for 2 thanks to Maheswaran’s top knock of 68 and Kamesh Maharaja’s 48.

Brief Scores (E Division): Y Horizon 140 all out in 19.5 overs (Amar Pal 30 – 1x4, Naresh Sudhakar 27 – 3x4, Muhamad Rafeek 5-13, Nahas Theparambil 3-32) lost to Capital Star 142 for 2 in 14.2 overs (Maheswaran Annadurai 68 – 11x4, Kamesh Maharaja 48 – 5x4, 2x6) by 8 wickets.

Kugan powers Landmark to easy win

In another E Division clash, Kugan Kuganeswaran powered Landmark Group to a comfortable 7-wicket win over Sam Royals at Muscat Municipality ground 3.

Sam Royals could score only 133 for 9 with Nandakumar Nair being its main scorer with 42. Kugan and Naresh Kumar bowled exceptionally well, taking three wickets each.

It took Landmark Group only 15.1 overs to overhaul the target, scoring 134 for 3 thanks to Kugan’s superb 45.

Brief Scores (E Division): Sam Royals 133 for 9 in 20 overs (Nandakumar Nair 42 – 4x4, 1x6, Kugan Kuganeswaran 3-20, Naresh Kumar 3-21) lost to Landmark Group 134 for 3 in 15.1 overs (Kugan Kuganeswaran 45 – 8x4, 1x6) by 7 wickets.

FOREX RESERVES DECLINES

India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$1.763 billion to \$630.19 billion in the week ended February 11 due to a sharp drop in the value of foreign currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed.

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



GLOBAL TRADE UP IN 2021

All major trading economies saw imports and exports rise above pre-pandemic levels in the fourth quarter of 2021, with trade in goods increasing more strongly in the developing world than in developed countries.

Air travel momentum builds as restrictions are lifted: IATA

Relaxations have been announced around the world by countries like Australia, France, the Philippines, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden



SHARP INCREASE: IATA reported a sharp 11-percentage point increase for international tickets sold in recent weeks (in proportion to 2019 sales). - File photo

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data showing growing momentum in the recovery of air travel as restrictions are lifted.

IATA reported a sharp 11-percentage point increase for international tickets sold in recent weeks (in proportion to 2019 sales).

In the period around February 8 (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 49 per cent of the same period in 2019.

In the period around January 25 (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 38 per cent of the same period in 2019.

The 11-percentage point improvement between the January and February periods is the fastest such increase for any two weeks

since the crisis began.

The jump in ticket sales comes as more governments announce a relaxation of COVID-19 border restrictions. An IATA survey of travel restrictions for the world's top 50 air travel markets (comprising nearly 92 per cent of global demand in 2019 as measured by revenue passenger kilometres) revealed the growing access available to vaccinated travellers.

Around 18 markets (comprising about 20 per cent of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travellers without quarantine or pre-departure testing requirements.

Nearly 28 markets are open to vaccinated travellers without quarantine requirements (including the 18 markets noted above). This comprises about 50 per cent of 2019 demand.

About 37 markets (comprising

about 60 per cent of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travellers under varying conditions (18 having no restrictions, others requiring testing or quarantine or both). These numbers reflect a spate of relaxation announced around the world, including in Australia, France, the Philippines, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden among them.

"Momentum toward normalising traffic is growing. Vaccinated travellers have the potential to travel much more extensively with fewer hassles than even a few weeks ago. This is giving growing numbers of travellers the confidence to buy tickets. And that is good news! Now we need to further accelerate the removal of travel restrictions," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director-General.

"While recent progress is impressive, the world remains far from 2019 levels of connectivity. Thirteen of the top 50 travel markets still do not provide easy access to all vaccinated travellers. That includes major economies like China, Japan, Russia, Indonesia, and Italy," he added.

IATA continues to call for re-

moving all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine.

It also seeks to enable quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travellers with a negative pre-departure antigen test result and remove travel bans, and, accelerate the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travellers pose no greater risk for COVID-19 spread than already exists in the general population.

"Travel restrictions have had a severe impact on people and economies. They have not, however, stopped the spread of the virus. And it is time for their removal as we learn to live and travel in a world that will have risks of COVID-19 for the foreseeable future."

"This means putting a stop to the singling out of the travelling population for special measures. In nearly all cases, travellers don't bring any more risk to a market that is already there. Many governments have recognised this already and removed restrictions. Many more need to follow," he added.

HIGH EARNINGS

Airbus posts record profit of \$4.8bn

PARIS: Airbus reported a record €4.2 billion (\$4.8 billion) profit in 2021 despite the coronavirus pandemic. The high earnings were due to the higher number of aircraft deliveries, good performance of the company's helicopter, defence and space subdivisions, as well as cost-cutting measures, said Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury.

Last year "was a year of transition, where our attention shifted from navigating the pandemic towards recovery and growth," he said.

"Thanks to the resilience and efforts of our teams, customers and suppliers, we delivered remarkable full-year results."



The 2021 earnings mark a strong comeback for the European aeroplane producer, which reported losses of €1.36 billion in 2019 and €1.1 billion in 2020.

2019 losses were due to the company paying out billions in

finances over bribery investigations in the US, the UK, and France. Then, 2020 brought unprecedented disruption to the aeroplane industry as the coronavirus halted travel across the world. Airbus responded to the pandemic by cutting

around 10,000 jobs.

The company delivered 611 commercial aircraft in 2021, compared to 566 the year before.

On Thursday, Airbus said it was ramping up production and hoping to reach 720 deliveries in 2022. It also stated an aim to recruit around 6,000 workers this year. This "assumes no further disruptions to the world economy, air traffic, the company's internal operations, and its ability to deliver products and services," according to a statement.

Airbus shareholders will now be offered dividends of €1.50 per share, the company said. -DW

US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Travel on US roads up 11.2 per cent in December 2021

WASHINGTON: US drivers are back on the road in force.

According to Reuters, travel on US roads rose 11.2 per cent in December 2021 compared with December 2020, the second straight month that driving surpassed pre-COVID-19 levels, the US Department of Transportation said on Friday.

The figures reflect more Americans travelling for leisure, more returning to offices and rising deliveries on US roads, experts said.

US driving also rose 11.2 per cent for all of 2021, to 3.23 trillion

vehicle miles, up from the 2020s 2.9 trillion. That was the lowest yearly total since 2003 as COVID shutdowns drastically reduced road use.

For all of 2021, drivers drove 325 billion more miles than they did in 2020. Overall 2021 driving was just 1 per cent lower than 2019's 3.26 trillion miles.

The Transportation Department said drivers logged 268.4 billion vehicle miles in December 2021, up 26.9 billion vehicle miles from the same month in 2020. -BNA

WIRELESS INTERNET

eduroam service activated at 32 locations in Oman



INNOVATIVE ROAMING SERVICE: eduroam is an innovative Wi-Fi internet access roaming service that allows users to have easy and secure access to wireless internet in research and education institutions within the Sultanate of Oman and abroad by using the same username and password provided by the institution and without the need for any additional settings. - Supplied picture

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Research and Education Network (Omren) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI) has activated eduroam at 32 locations in the Sultanate distributed among universities, colleges and research centres to enable researchers, academics, and students to stay connected through wireless internet when moving between institutions in Oman or abroad.

eduroam is an innovative Wi-Fi internet access roaming service that allows users to have easy and secure access to wireless internet

in research and education institutions within the Sultanate of Oman and abroad by using the same username and password provided by the institution and without the need for any additional settings.

With the activation of eduroam in Oman, statistics indicated that the service has been used 502,542 times in 2021 by students and researchers connected to the service. The service has been developed by the global research community and is available only for students, researchers and academics affiliated with official research networks such as Omren, which is the official network in Oman and the authorised organi-

sation to provide this innovative service in the country through Omren Federation.

Omren aims to enable eduroam in public areas for the benefit of the research community with the support of strategic partners and authorities concerned.

Oman Research and Education Network (Omren) is a central part of a sustainable infrastructure that contributes to the emergence of an effective national innovation ecosystem. It provides the research and education community in the Sultanate of Oman with a common network and collaboration infrastructure adapted to their needs.



TENDER

Oman chamber of commerce and industry would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
1/2022	IT licences Renewal	25 /-R.O	Companies specialized in information Technology	3/3/2022	Before 12 pm 17/3/2022

Companies specialized on **information Technology** may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the Second Floor of the chamber's Headquarters in Ruwi , during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:
Provide valued CR,OCCI membership and taxation certificate .

Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of **Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered.

The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee , OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.

Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the Second floor of OCCI Head office.

OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons.

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 17/3/2022.

For further details, you may call to : 24763855 - 881



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MARKET

Global trade hits record high of \$28.5 trillion in 2021: UNCTAD

UNCTAD's Global Trade Update shows that in 2021, world trade in goods remained strong and trade in services finally returned to its pre-COVID-19 levels



TRADE GROWTH: While most global trade growth took place during the first half of 2021, progress continued in the year's second half. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

GENEVA: All major trading economies saw imports and exports rise above pre-pandemic levels in the fourth quarter of 2021, with trade in goods increasing more strongly in the developing world than in developed countries.

UNCTAD's Global Trade Update published on February 17 shows that in 2021, world trade in goods remained strong and trade in services finally returned to its pre-COVID-19 levels.

"Overall, the value of global

trade reached a record level of \$28.5 trillion in 2021," the report says. That's an increase of 25 per cent in 2020 and 13 per cent higher compared to 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

While most global trade growth took place during the first half of 2021, progress continued in the year's second half.

After a relatively slow third quarter, trade growth picked up again in the fourth quarter, when trade in goods increased by almost

\$200 billion, achieving a new record of \$5.8 trillion. Meanwhile, trade in services rose by \$50 billion to reach \$1.6 trillion, just above pre-pandemic levels.

The report shows that in the fourth quarter of 2021, all major trading economies saw imports and exports rise well above pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

But trade in goods increased more strongly in the developing world than in developed countries. Exports of developing countries

were about 30 per cent higher than during the same period in 2020, compared with 15 per cent for wealthier nations.

The growth was higher in commodity-exporting regions, as commodity prices increased. Moreover, South-South trade growth was above the global average, with a 32 per cent year-on-year increase.

Except for transport equipment, all economic sectors saw a substantial year-over-year increase in the value of their trade during the

final quarter of 2021.

"High fuel prices are behind the strong increase in the value of trade of the energy sector," the report says, "Trade growth was also above average for metals and chemicals."

As a result of the global shortage of semiconductors, trade growth in communication equipment, road vehicles and precision instruments was subdued.

The UNCTAD report indicates that trade growth will slow during the first quarter of 2022. Positive growth rates are expected for both trade in goods and services, albeit only marginally, keeping trade values at levels similar to the last three months of 2021.

"The positive trend for international trade in 2021 was largely the result of increases in commodity prices, subsidising pandemic restrictions and a strong recovery in demand due to economic stimulus packages," the report says. "As these trends are likely to abate, international trade trends are expected to normalize during 2022."

Trade growth in 2022 is likely to be lower than expected, given the macroeconomic trends.

The International Monetary Fund has revised its world eco-

nomie growth forecast downwards by 0.5 points, the report notes, considering persistent inflation in the United States and concerns related to China's real estate sector.

It also points to ongoing logistic disruptions and rising energy prices, saying that "efforts to shorten supply chains and to diversify suppliers could affect global trade patterns during 2022."

On trade flows, the report projects the trend of regionalisation to increase because of various trade agreements and regional initiatives, as well as "increasing reliance of geographically closer suppliers."

Moreover, trade patterns in 2022 are expected to reflect the increasing global demand for environmentally sustainable products.

The report also flags the record levels of global debt, warning that concerns over debt sustainability are likely to intensify due to mounting inflationary pressures.

"A significant tightening of financial conditions would heighten pressure on the most highly indebted governments, amplifying vulnerabilities and negatively affecting investments and international trade flows," the report cautions. -WAM

RBI DATA

India's forex reserves drop by \$1.76 billion to \$630.19 billion

MUMBAI: India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$1.763 billion to \$630.19 billion in the week ended February 11 due to a sharp drop in the value of foreign currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed.

The foreign currency assets, which is the biggest component

of the forex reserves, slumped by \$2.764 billion to \$565.565 billion during the week under review, according to the RBI's weekly statistical supplement.

Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-dollar

currencies like Euro, UK's Pound Sterling and Japanese Yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

India's reserve position in the IMF dropped by \$16 million to \$5.217 billion.

However, there was a sharp increase in the value of gold reserves and SDRs. -ANI

INVESTMENT BANKING

Credit Suisse aims for 2022 profit, wants to go it alone

ZURICH: Credit Suisse aims to make a profit this year, Chief Executive Thomas Gottstein told Swiss newspaper *Finanz und Wirtschaft* in an interview published on Friday.

"We expect a profit in 2022. But uncertainty factors such as Russia, China, inflation and the interest rate environment are difficult to assess," he said.

Switzerland's second-biggest bank has been plagued by scandal and last week reported a \$2.2 billion quarterly loss. It said 2022 earnings would be weighed down by restructuring and compensation costs, Reuters reported.

Gottstein said he was convinced the bank's strategy of focusing even more on wealth management would pay off in the long run.

Asked about his relations with new Chairman Axel Lehmann, Gottstein said they were good. "We agree 100 per cent on strategic issues and are concentrating on implementing the new strategy," he said.

Addressing speculation that a plunge in the bank's stock price had left Credit Suisse exposed to a takeover, Gottstein said he believed the group was substantially undervalued. -BNA

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SMARTPHONE APP USE MAY REVEAL YOUR IDENTITY

According to researchers, the time a person spends on different smartphone apps is enough to identify them from a larger group in more than one in three cases.

The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Psychological Science'.

Psychologists Dr Heather Shaw, Professor Paul Taylor and Professor Stacey Conchie from Lancaster University, and Dr David Ellis from the University of Bath analysed smartphone data from 780 people.

They fed 4,680 days of app usage data into statistical models. Each of these days was paired with one of the 780 users, such that the models learnt people's daily app use patterns.

The researchers then tested whether models could identify an individual when provided with only a single day of smartphone activity that was anonymous and not yet paired with a user.

Dr Ellis from the University

of Bath said, "Our models, which were trained on only six days of app usage data per person, could identify the correct person from a day of anonymous data one-third of the time."

That might not sound like much, but when the models made a prediction regarding who data belonged to, it could also provide a list of the most to the least likely candidates. It was possible to view the top 10 most likely individuals that a specific day of data belonged to. Around 75 per cent of the time, the correct user would be among the top 10 most likely candidates.

Professor Taylor from Lancaster University added, "In practical terms, a law enforcement investigation seeking to identify a criminal's new phone from knowledge of their historic phone use could reduce a candidate pool of approximately 1,000 phones to 10 phones, with a 25 per cent risk of missing them."

Consequently, the researchers warn that software granted access to a smartphone's stand-

“

It is important to acknowledge that app usage data alone, which is often collected by a smartphone automatically, can potentially reveal a person's identity.

ard activity logging could render a reasonable prediction about a user's identity even when they were logged out of their account. Identification is possible with no monitoring of conversations or behaviours within apps themselves.

Dr Shaw from Lancaster University said, "We found that people exhibited consistent patterns in their application usage behaviours on a day-to-day basis, such as using Facebook the most and the calculator app the least. In support of this, we also showed that two days of smartphone data from the same person exhibited greater similarity in-app usage patterns than two days of data from different people."

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that app usage data alone, which is often collected by a smartphone automatically, can potentially reveal a person's identity.

While providing new opportunities for law enforcement, it also poses risks to privacy if this type of data is misused. -ANI

FEATURE

3 workable solutions to environmental problems

Shifting seasons, burning forests and cities so loud they're making us sick and harming birds. The report looks at three environmental problems and how they can be solved.



THE constant din of cities is bad for our health. That's one conclusion of a UN report published on Thursday. People across the globe from Barcelona and Cario to New York are at risk of high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease thanks to the constant roar of traffic, construction sites and other sources of noise pollution, according to the UN environment programme.

In Europe alone, loud and constant noise is responsible for 48,000 cases of heart disease and the premature death of some 12,000 people a year.

In the animal world, birds are among the worst affected by the problem. Zebra finches, tree sparrows and tits are singing louder or adjusting their frequency so they can communicate with each other over the clamor. But that's resulting in more frequent misunderstandings between birds and can damage the chances of males finding a mating partner. Their new songs are not always well received.

Planting more trees and shrubbery in cities could help, according to the report's authors. Plants would disperse and soften the noise, while also improving the climate and urban landscape. A line of trees growing behind a noise barrier wall, for instance, can reduce noise levels by around 12 decibels.

Traffic noise could also be reduced by expanding cycleways and reducing car lanes. Creating green zones in cities would promote quieter electric vehicles and improve air quality.

Migratory birds are no longer flying south in the winter, plants are blooming much earlier, and birds are building nests for their young earlier when there are not enough insects around to feed them.

Climate change is not just increasing global average temperatures, it's also disrupting life cycles established over thousands of years. These changes are affecting all kinds of habitats from mountain areas and coastal regions to forests and grasslands.

Animal and plant species cannot adapt at the speed at which the planet is warming, increasing the risk that entire ecosystems on land and in the ocean could collapse with unforeseen consequences for humanity.

To slow the pace of climate change, we must drastically and quickly cut emissions. But to deal with changes to life cycles, the researchers say it's essential to actively protect species, restore ecosystems and connect habitats by creating wildlife corridors. This is the only way to ensure that species' gene pools remain intact and that they have the chance to adapt to new conditions through natural selection.

Fighting fire with fire

Wildfires are a natural part of many environments but longer and more extreme heatwaves and droughts are prolonging fire seasons and increasing the probability of fires breaking out.

Fires destroyed huge swathes of forest from California and Siberia to Turkey and Australia last year. Those fires also released enormous amounts of pollutants such as soot, particulate matter and greenhouse gases, significantly worsening air quality in nearby cities. Wildfires can also cause water pollution, marine eutrophication and loss of biodiversity.

According to the authors of the UN report, some precautionary measures could help ameliorate wildfires and their consequences. Better cooperation between neighboring regions, satellite monitoring, lightning detection, improved early warning systems and firefighting capacity could all help.

Experts also recommend using traditional methods of fighting fire with fire. Controlled burning of forest or bush creates a barrier to an oncoming forest fire as it will use up all the available fuel. Fires can have benefits in certain ecosystems, as some flowers and plants only grow when their seeds are heated through burning. — DW



PHOTO-FEATURE

HEAVY SNOWFALL HITS GREATER TORONTO AREA, CANADA



The city of Toronto and surrounding areas got a heavy snowfall from Thursday afternoon to Friday morning. Photo by Zou Zheng/Xinhua





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ROUND-UP

Foton wins Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award in trucks category

Foton strives to provide global automotive markets with high quality, affordable vehicles powered by sourcing the best of current as well as emerging technologies

MUSCAT: Foton Oman, represented by Gulf Great Sands, has been bestowed with prestigious Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award at a ceremony held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the ‘trucks category’ in the automobile sector.

Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award is a distinctive recognition for brands that have maintained the highest standards of product integrity and brand development.

The awards are based on the results of a month-long extensive survey that was open to the general public for voting and is presented to the most trusted brands in the country by Apex Media. The event that annually recognises a spectrum of top brands in Oman is in its fifth year now. It is not just a commendation ceremony for market leaders, but also an affirmation of the consumers’ choice, which



has year after year rallied around the leading brands

Foton strives to provide global automotive markets with high quality, affordable vehicles powered by sourcing the best of current as well as emerging technologies. Formidable joint ventures with globally reputed manufacturers and major component brands, have enabled Foton to include sustainable engineering, advanced systems and state-of-the-art technology into every Foton vehicle.

A spokesperson for GGS said,

“We are delighted we have won the award in the trucks category. Earning recognition from customers that determine this honour is a validation of our world-class trucks including Foton Aumark (Light Duty Truck) and Foton Auman (Medium & Heavy Duty Truck) available in Oman. The new generation trucks developed by Foton Motor has designs integrated as per European standards and meet all market demands. With its stunning appearance, elevated structure, intelligence, safe,

and top technical specifications, our trucks provide us with an excellent driving experience.”

Light duty truck

Foton Aumark’s Light Duty Truck embodies everything the brand Foton stands for – amazing design, advanced technology and empowering performance. Foton strives to provide global automotive markets with high quality, affordable vehicles powered by sourcing the best of current as well as emerging technologies. Formidable joint

ventures with globally-reputed manufacturers and major component brands, have enabled Foton to include sustainable engineering, advanced systems and state-of-the-art technology into every Foton vehicle popular Light Duty Truck is powered by legendary Cummins 3.8L turbo diesel engine, ZF Transmission and DANA Axles are known for its excellent fuel economy, safety, and top-quality performance in the construction and cargo industry. The Foton Aumark – Light Duty Truck coupled with Cummins Engine and ZF (6-speed) manual transmission GVW (gross vehicle weight) of 6500 kg (3Tonn)the Light Duty Truck has many features including cruise control, low engine noise, reversing sensor, remote control central door-locking, ABS+EBD, air with exhaust brakes, power windows among others.

Medium duty truck

Foton Auman Medium Duty Truck is known for its legendary performance, reliability and durability. The Auman EST-M is powered by the latest generation Cummins ISDe 245 30 engine, which provides 245 hp@ 2500 rpm and 950Nm of torque. Turbocharged and intercooled, this engine provides the Auman with a premium powertrain which is generally not normally found on medium-duty trucks. It has an eight-speed manual transmission, provides better drive and fuel economy.

Foton Auman Medium Duty Truck boasts a 6.7-litre engine with 245 horsepower. Its Cummins engine features high burst pressure and strong power, with the maximum power output at

2100ps and the power per litre in excess of 34kW/L. This 1,000,000 km overhaul-free engine is manufactured strictly in accordance with the Cummins global quality system and manufacturing standard and passed the 2,000,000 km stringent road reliability and durability test. The vehicle took the lead to pass the stringent German DEKRA test, with the accumulative test mileage.

Heavy-duty truck

Foton Auman EST-A Flagship Heavy Duty Truck for long-haul transport and high-end logistics is jointly developed by Foton, BFDA and Cumminson for 4 years efforts in Europe and 10 million kilometre road test.

Foton Auman EST- A is equipped with Cummins 11.8 Litre Engine (430hp) with high displacement and high torque at low speed (Max. Torque 2200Nm/1000-1300 rpm)coupled with ZF AMT ie 12 speed- Automated Manual Transmission and low-speed ratio rear axle are matched perfectly to improve the drive efficiency. The Gross Vehicle Weight of the Auman truck is 18,000 kg and it is currently imported with a 4x2 driving system. The all-new platform is built with European leading technologies which are environment friendly. Foton Auman heavy-duty trucks are manufactured via joint efforts with Daimler - Foton accordance with German R&D standards. The Chassis with an all-new platform and optimized structure widely adopt new materials and technologies to reduce the dead weight and save more fuel based on European safety criteria.

INNOVATIVE

2022 ultra-slim 2-in-1 laptop Huawei MateBook E now available for pre-order in Oman

MUSCAT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) announced the launch of the new Huawei MateBook E, the first Huawei ultra-slim 2-in-1 laptop, featuring a new design and the first-ever Huawei OLED Real Colour Full-View Display in a laptop.

The new Huawei MateBook E is specifically designed for consumers who wish to stay productive on the go. It is also the perfect 3 screens-in-1 laptop because it depicts the complete experience of PC, tablet and smartphone in one device. Featuring a versatile hybrid design, smart interaction features, pro-grade performance and outstanding Super Device capabilities, the new Huawei MateBook E is a powerful mobile productivity tool that combines the advantages of traditional laptops and tablets.

The new Huawei MateBook E will be available in Nebula Gray at a starting price of 464.9 OMR with pre-order in Oman starting from 17th February including gifts worth 109.6 OMR – Huawei FreeBuds Pro, Huawei AF30 Bluetooth Mouse, Huawei Dock 2.

Technological advancements have enabled hybrid working and it is quickly gaining popularity, that’s why Huawei designed the Huawei MateBookE, its new ultra slim 2 in 1 laptop and an ultra-portable laptop to better empower consumers as they adopt to this new lifestyle.



It is specifically designed for those who wish to stay productive on the go, and the perfect 3 screens-in-1 laptop because it depicts the complete experience of PC, tablet and smartphone in one device.

The new Huawei MateBook E is a lightweight and portable laptop featuring a pure and simple design. It weighs only about 709g and measures just 7.99mm thick. The rounded edges along the sides provide a modern aesthetic while also offering a comfortable grip

Huawei MateBook E is the first Huawei’s laptop equipped with the Windows 11 operating system. The new Windows 11 brings new experiences, providing the 2-in-1 laptops with a simpler user interface, more responsive touch control, richer touch screen gestures and a new touch-screen virtual keyboard experience which greatly improve the experience of the 2-in-1 laptop form and tablet form.

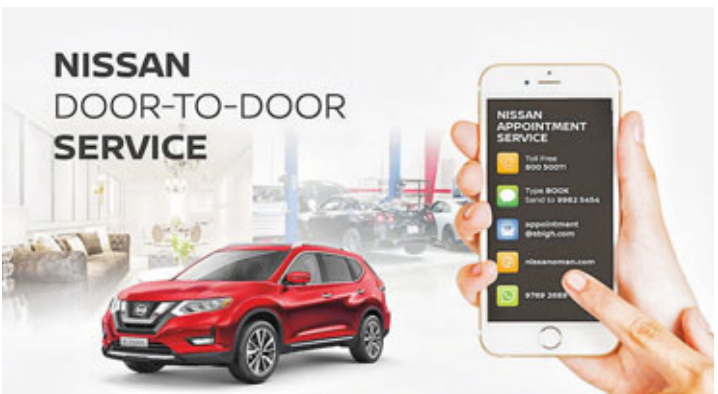
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Nissan’s pick up and drop off facility for service appointment enjoys popularity

MUSCAT: Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA)’s pick-up and drop-off service for customers with prior service appointments has found many takers.

The facility which is available in the capital area needs to be pre-booked at a nominal fee via Nissan Oman Toll-free (80050011), Nissan Oman website (www.nissanoman.com), sending SMS <BOOK> to 99825454, writing email on appointment@sigh.com or by WhatsApp on 97692689.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, “We are continuously engaging with customers on enhancing their experience. This offering is aligned with customer feedback and our efforts to make a difference in the ownership experience. This service



provides our service customers with the comfort that they can get necessary vehicle work completed without stepping out. It helps customers follow the COVID-19 safety protocols. As you all know Nissan Oman’s Qurum showroom has received the ‘Nissan Safe &

Clean’ certification from Nissan Middle East FZE (NMEF) for complying with the sales and service protocols established as per the programme. We will follow all related protocols while servicing a customer’s vehicle.”

He added, “When they opt for

this service, customers do not have to take time off work or adjust their plans. Their car will be picked up from their home or place of work, removing the inconvenience of delivering it to a service centre. Nissan Oman will take care of everything related to the car including servicing, repairs, tyres, wheel alignments and all services under manufacturer’s warranty.”

Every customer purchasing a Nissan vehicle can be assured of Nissan’s top class after-sales service, which guarantees the advantage of well-trained experts.

The customers can be assured that Nissan always uses only genuine replacement parts. Customers can expect consistency and support during after-sales service, which ascertains Nissan’s performance and resale value in the years to come.

COLLABORATION

College of Pharmacy, HMC Qatar sign MoU



MUSCAT: College of Pharmacy at the National University of Science and Technology signed a memorandum of understanding with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the State of Qatar on February 16.

The MoU included different fields of collaboration between the two parties such as National University College of Pharmacy students’ training at HMC in hospital pharmacy/clinical pharmacy under the supervision of HMC preceptors. The MoU also included col-

laboration in the areas of faculty/scholars/students exchange, collaborative research projects; and conducting professional development programmes, conferences, workshops and scientific symposia.

Such a relationship is an example of collaboration between academia and health institutions between the two countries to develop and enhance the quality of College of Pharmacy graduates and equip them with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for the job market.

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