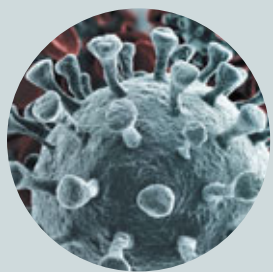




COVID-19 ICU CASES DROP TO 129

The number of COVID-19 patients in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) has dropped to 129 from over 460, statistics from the Ministry of Health said. On June 24, Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Al Saeedi, Minister of Health and member of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus, had said the number of COVID-19 patients admitted to ICUs were more than 460. **>A3**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Recognition for 'Musandam Sea Adventure'

1 Omani youth proved their competence and excellence through a tourism project 'Musandam Sea Adventure'. The project scored several international awards and it was classified among the best 5 companies in the world in 2016. It also won the silver prize in 2017 among the top 5 companies in the Middle East. In a statement to Oman News Agency, Abdul Fattah Ahmed Al Shehhi said that this story of success began as a tourism office in 2001, operating only a single vessel. That office came to be the second tourism-specialised office in the Governorate of Musandam. **>A4**

WORLD No regrets on troop withdrawal: Biden

2 US President Joe Biden on Tuesday said that he does not regret his decision to withdraw American forces from Afghanistan amid the offensive by Taliban militants who till now has captured eight provinces. **>A7**

MARKET OQ exits investment in Portuguese firm

3 OQ has announced that Mazoon BV, its wholly-owned subsidiary, has sold its 12 per cent stake in the Portuguese Utility Company, Redes Energeticas Nacionais (REN). **>B1**

TRAGIC

Saham in shock as three of same family die in accident

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People from the town of Saham were shocked and saddened to hear of the death of three members of the same family, who died in a car accident while returning from Salalah.

Keen to enjoy the amazing weather of the Khareef festival, Reem Al Zaabi travelled with her husband Muntasir Al Muraikhi, their young son, two-year-old Ali, and her younger brother, Taha (16). Her elder brother Ayman, 28, also went with them to Salalah, along with his wife, children, and their mother.

On the morning of August 10, Reem's family decided to begin their journey home, with Ayman



scheduled to depart later that day. Both of them had rented apartments next to each other to stay in during their holiday.

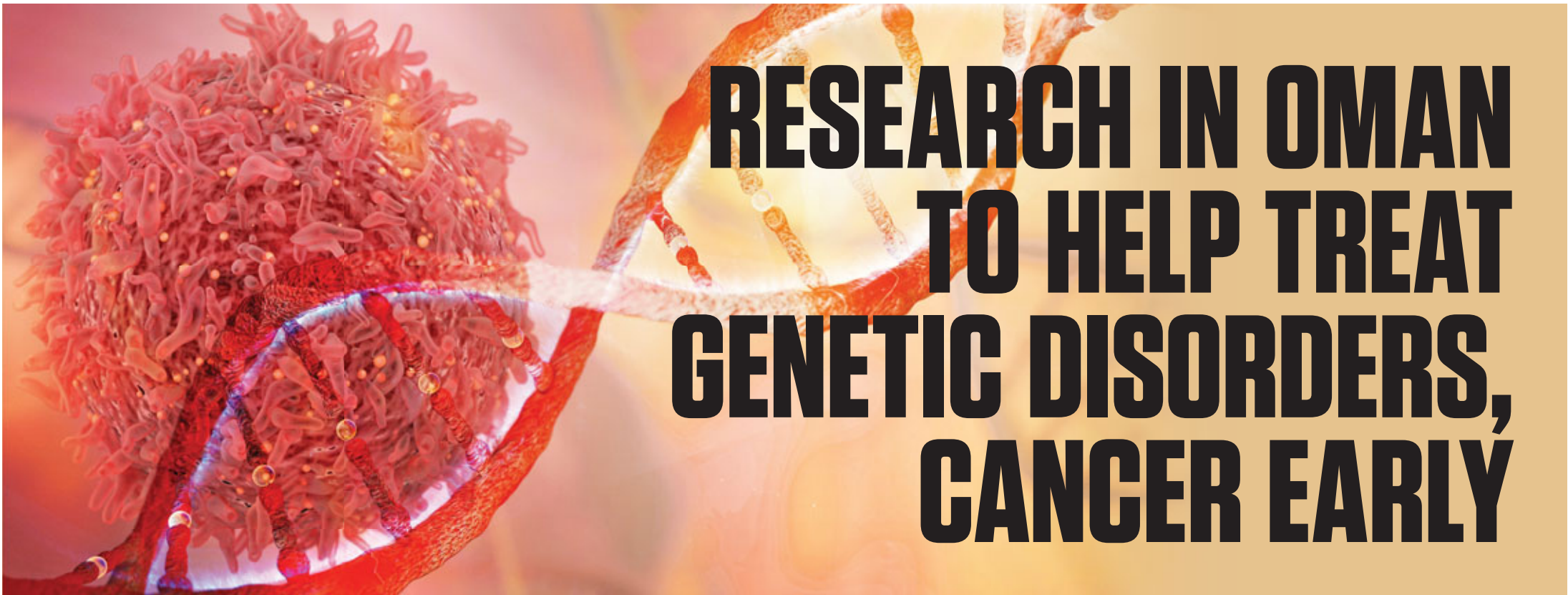
While making preparations to leave, though, the Royal Oman Police called Ayman to tell him the

tragic news: Reem, Taha, and Ali had died on the Salalah-Haima road after their vehicle collided with another. Muntasir and the housemaid sustained pelvic fractures.

Grief-stricken

"When I heard of what had happened to them, I just could not process my thoughts," recalled a grief-stricken Ayman, speaking to *Times of Oman*. "All I could do was sit on a chair in our apartment."

Ayman's face turned pale but chose not to share the shocking news with his family, ordering them to quickly pack their things, all the while hoping the police had made a mistake and that his sister's family were actually unharmed. **>A6**



The latest figures indicate that 10% of Omani families have a child with genetic problems that could lead to disability



Times News Service

MUSCAT: People with genetic disorders and cancer can now be diagnosed and treated early, thanks to new research and the latest medical equipment available at the Royal Hospital.

The research, which is focused on diagnostics and laboratory

analysis, aims to work hand-in-hand with medical devices available to counter the high rates of genetic disorders seen in the country, as well as record new causes of such ailments, said Dr Musallam bin Saeed Al Aarimi, the head of the Department of Genetic Counselling, Clinical Services, and Genetic Education at the National Centre for Genetic Health at the



Royal Hospital.

"Thanks to these efforts we were able to help 4,119 patients in 2020, up from 1,732 in 2016," he said. "Oman is among the countries that has a high occurrence rate of genetic diseases. For a child in Oman, the possibility of being born with a genetic disease is between 5.4 and seven per cent. Globally, however, this percentage does not exceed

4.4 per cent."

"There is also an existing plan to use genetic diagnosis to analyse cancerous tissue," added Al Aarimi. "This helps increase the effectiveness of diagnosis, treatment and evaluation of some common kinds of cancer in Oman."

More than 300 variants of genetic mutations have been detected in Oman, this includes 150



genetic disorders, making this factor the number one cause for genetic ailments in the country. Oman recorded 140 instances of Down syndrome in 2014 and 150 in 2015. Metabolic disorders caused by hereditary endocrine problems and nutritional problems accounted for 20.7 per cent of genetic diseases.

Congenital disorders

Thirty-seven per cent of premature deaths in babies were due to severe genetic congenital disorders. Less severe occurrences of genetic disorders were the reason for 10 per cent of infant deaths and 52 per cent of the deaths of older children. "Genetic disease of all kinds constitutes an important factor in the causes of hearing, motor, visual, and other disabilities," said Al Aarimi.

"The latest figures indicate that 10 per cent of Omani families have a child with genetic problems that could lead to disability." **>A4**

TOURISM

ROP guidelines for travel to Jabal Akhdar

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As visits to Jabal Akhdar pick up, visitors to the mountainous region are required to make sure their vehicles are properly maintained and that they familiarise themselves with the roads well, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) has said.

Those who wish to explore the mountains are also advised to take along a local guide, and make sure they are very familiar with the paths and hiking trails they intend to take. Visits to the area have increased of late, thanks to the pleasant weather, natural beauty, and opportunities to explore the wilderness, both behind the wheel and on foot.

Awareness

"Tourism in mountainous areas requires a kind of familiarity and awareness of the methods of driving on these roads," said Major Salem bin Hamoud Al-Azri of the Ja-



bal Akhdar police station, which falls under the command of Al Dakhiliyah Police. "The driver must pay attention and anticipate fellow motorists' mistakes and be familiar with the emergency exits along the road, in case of a breakdown."

Al Azri counselled visitors to



travel in well-maintained vehicles, fitted with sturdy tyres and equipped with enough spare parts.

"People driving in these areas need to concentrate on the task at hand," he said, adding that his police station had dealt with several accidents recently that were caused by poor vehicle maintenance, traffic violations, and unfamiliarity with the roads.

Climbing and adventure enthusiasts will do well to familiarise themselves with the hiking routes and terrain, or take along a guide who knows the routes, Al Azri said. "Trekking and climbers should be in good health and carry necessary first aid," he added.

Bonfires

The officer said that those lighting bonfires may do so with caution, and completely extinguish them before leaving the site. "This way, wildfires can be prevented, and we can all do our bit for the environment, which are the basics of ethical tourism," he said.

Salem Al Azri also asked visitors to the area to show more solidarity and cooperation, take all necessary precautions, adhere to the specified speed limits, and make sure they did not overload their vehicles with too many passengers, as that could affect their stability.





OMAN



PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:17pm
Asr.....3:43pm
Maghrib.....6:48pm
Isha.....8:04pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:22am

Times of Oman

VOL. 8, NO. 23

MUSCAT, THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 1982—SHAWAL 23, 1402

PRICE BAIZAS 200

Ambitious Health Ministry projects

PLAN FOR TWO NEW HOSPITALS

The Ministry of Health is examining plan for two new hospitals, one of which would be the biggest in Oman.

Oman rig on way to blow out

A semi-submersible offshore oil rig from the Sultanate of Oman 'Dixilyn Field 95' left on Saturday on an emergency mission to the west coast of India.

The rig, which is also a multi-purpose support vessel will join in the fight against a massive oil well blowout at Bombay High, India's largest offshore oilfield, some 100 nautical miles (180 Km) from Bombay.

The 1,600m well, code named SJ 5, which blew out on July 30 caught fire on August 2 destroying a \$30 million Japanese-built jack-up rig 'Sagar Vikas'.

The fire raged until Thursday after which it extinguished itself. The gas burst still continues and helicopter sorties indicate that the gas stream is about 80 ft high with a diameter of seven ft.

'Dixilyn Field 95' is a privately owned Panamanian-registered rig with a capability of drilling up to a depth of 20,000 ft. It was, until Saturday, based in the Amoco Oman offshore concession area in Kuria Muria Bay, South Oman.

The vessel will most likely be used to bore a leak-off well or a relief well at an angle, through which mud would be pushed to

level off the pressure, according to the office of the Dixilyn representative in Muscat, Mr Ellis Kingsman.

The Oil and Natural Gas Commission of India contacted the company soon after the blowout, but bad weather prevented the rig from moving out.

'Dixilyn Field 95, will reach its destination tomorrow or early on Saturday.

by Bala Menon

A spokesman of Amoco Oman told the Times of Oman that the company had released 'Dixilyn Field 95' on Thursday from its Kuria Muria base, where it had conducted drilling operations for 110 days (Each day of operation costs around \$100,000, according to Amoco).

'Dixilyn Field 95' which was built in 1974, will work along with other vessels from the Arabian Gulf, two of which — 'Pacific Constructor' and Gulfleet 46' are already at Bombay High. Another vessel, a derrick barge named 'Hercules' is now loading pumps and other fire-fighting equipment at Bahrain.

● Picture on page 2

The SCC plate



Members of the State Consultative Council can now put a special brass plate on their cars denoting their status.

The plates will be displayed beside rear number plates and bear the official emblem of the Council recently approved by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

A spokesman of the Council said on Monday that plates had been provided as a mark identification. They bring no special privileges to the holders apart from those already specified in the Royal Decree.

Also the use of plate is not compulsory he added.

The Ministry of Health is examining a plan for two new hospitals, one of which would be the biggest in Oman.

This would be a 500-bed hospital somewhere in Ghubra.

The other one would be a 200-bed paediatric hospital in Khoula Hospital's premises.

There is also a plan to re-plan and up grade Al Nahda Hospital.

The proposed 500 bed general hospital will offer treatment in all branches of medicine including surgery. The proposal is being discussed with foreign planning experts and a survey is being made to find a suitable site.

by Muzaffar Mohammed

The Ministry is also planning a big boost in maternity and obstetric services in the country.

Apart from allowing a few maternity homes in the private sector to open, there is a plan to close Al Saada Hospital in Muscat and build a big maternity hospital.

Facilities for specialised treatment of heart trouble, brain and nerve ailments and psychiatric problems are being overhauled.

There is also a plan to set up a cardio-vascular surgery unit. At patients are sent abroad. Facilities for general treatment of heart diseases are available in Oman.

The Ministry's hospitals have been geared to cope with a number of malignant diseases including cancer. Some patients are, however, referred abroad for deep X-ray therapy as that facility is not available.

For brain and nerve surgery, the Ministry have an arrangement with a neuro-surgeon in Bombay who visits the Sultanate three times a year.

He is also on stand-by for neuro surgery emergencies, in such cases the surgeon will either be summoned to Oman or the patient is sent to him in Bombay.

The Orthopaedic department at Khoula Hospital is well organised to cope with most cases. These are mainly due to traffic accidents.

The Ministry also have an arrangement with Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities whereby one of their senior registrars is posted to Khoula Hospital and is visited by consultants from the UK every three months for consultation and advice.

The Ministry expects to open a 60-bed psychiatric hospital at Al Hajar by the end of this year.



President Mubarak here

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak with His Majesty Sultan Qaboos at Salalah on Monday after the President had arrived for a visit

described as "private" and expected to last three or four days. The President is accompanied by his Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali and his political adviser Osama al Baz.

WAR NEWS-LATEST

Israel accepts US plan but...

The Israelis say they have accepted in principle the American plan for the withdrawal of PLO forces from Lebanon. But they have laid down conditions for their agreement.

The Israeli Cabinet Secretary said that a precondition was a complete list of all the countries ready to accept the PLO forces and an assurance that they would take exactly the number who were now in Beirut.

Later, sources said the government was insisting on several other conditions, that Israeli forces would not pull back until all PLO fighters were out of Lebanon and that no part of the multi-national peacekeeping force would be deployed until most of the PLO had left.

Israeli was also reported to be insisting that if the PLO failed to abide by any condition of the agreement, the international force would be immediately withdrawn,

thus freeing the Israelis to take military action.

Other pre-conditions were said to be the return of an Israeli Air Force pilot now prisoner and the return of the remains of nine Israeli soldiers killed during Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978.

Shortly after the announcement from Jerusalem, Israeli planes were again in action over Beirut, attacking Palestinian strongholds in the southern suburbs. The raids were followed by heavy shelling of Western Beirut.

An Israeli military spokesman said Israeli aircraft had attacked Palestinian camps south of Beirut but that only guerrilla forces and Syrian commanders had been in the area. Most civilians had already left.

The spokesman added that Israeli aircraft had also been active over the Ba'kaa valley inside Syrian-controlled territory and had destroyed anti-aircraft missile launchers. He said Israel was determined not to allow Syria to move missiles into Lebanon.

TV and radio programmes are on page 22



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COMMENTARY

The future of literature in Oman and other countries of the world

Fiction and nonfiction are two types of literature. Literature is the sum total of all books ever published, including comics, pamphlets, the works of Mark Twain, and Shakespearean plays.

The literature has been read for various reasons, most likely for pleasure. Where does literature stand today and what are its prospects in this age of technology and information? Various opinions were offered regarding the future of literature. Some thought that it was doomed to fail, while others saw that there were many opportunities for it to grow.

Among the Omani authors who won the Man Booker International Prize is Jokha Al Harthy, who wrote “Celestial Bodies” which was translated by Marian Booth from Arabic to English. Has this novel helped to open a discussion about literature among the Omani society?

The process of thinking on literature has developed after this novel. The literature and writing discussions and seminars about Omani literature do not see much engagement. What is the reason? The technology has shifted the mind from literature to business and money. As a result, writers do not earn much.

More focused

Even though the current generation is more focused on business, the demand for Omani novelists is still high. There are still many good novelists to write to. One of the first Omani novelists is Abdullah Al Tahi, who wrote the novel “Malaeka Al Jabal Al Akhdhar” in 1963. His second novel was “Al Shareh Al Kabir”, in 1981.

Omani women too, played a vital role in writing Arabic



Mohammed Anwar Al Balushi

novels. Badriya Al Shahi, wrote her novel titled, “Al Tawaf Haiso Al Jamar”, in 1980s.

Compared to other nations, writers, novelists, and poets in Oman and the Arab world as a whole are not appreciated. Novelists, like Chetan Bhagat from India and Mohammed Hanif from Pakistan are very famous. They have their fans and readers, globally. Is it because they write in English and their audiences are the entire world? What is there in their novels?

Indian literature

“That was the time when Indian literature was reaching its peak. That was the era of Meer Taqi Meer, Mirza Ghalib, and other writers. Now with industrialisation, the literature has also lost its appeal”, replied Dilip Kumar in one of the interviews with Ashfaq Hussain in Toronto, Canada, in 1985.

“Fathers think, that, what is there in literature, it can be better if our children study computer science, accounting and other subjects where they at least can earn some money to live with. Literature can be recreated, redecorated and can be built and rebuilt like any

Literature did not recede, it has regained its value. However, the mode of publication has changed, so that it is no longer in the form of hard books, but instead is available online and as e-books

buildings, roads and factories”, Dilip Kumar explained it further.

Taste of literature

In the same interview, Dilip Kumar, the profound and natural Indian actor said that, “You can import goods and materials, but culture and literature can’t be imported”. Well, of course, the taste of literature has not remained the same due to the industrial civilisation.

“If we talk about Arabic literature, there is no market of it as I observe,” said Abu Owais, an Engineer from Sudan, when I asked him through WhatsApp.

In reality, literature did not recede, it has regained its value. However, the mode of publication has changed, so that it is no longer in the form of hard books, but instead is available online and as e-books. I don’t believe that, technology, TV or internet have affected the literature, but these elements had promoted the literature. If we take the example of Harry Potter, we can say that, it became more famous due to the technology.

One of the devoted fans of Haruki Murakami said, “Whenever he writes any novel, the same will sell thousands of copies within one week”.

ICU cases dip from over 460 to 129

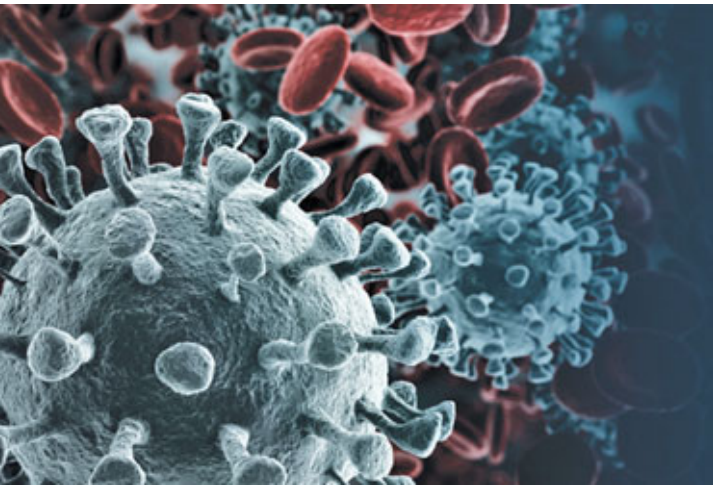
The number of COVID-19 patients getting treatment in hospitals currently stands at 299

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of COVID-19 patients in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) has dropped to 129 from over 460, statistics from the Ministry of Health said.

On June 24, Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Al Saeedi, Minister of Health and member of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from COVID, had said the number of COVID-19 patients admitted to ICUs were over 460, while 2,064 doctors have been attending the cases since the start of the pandemic.

The minister also pointed out that, at the start of the pandemic,



government health establishments had less than 148 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds.

“The number of those beds multiplied scores of times, thanks to the unrelenting support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and the sincere efforts of health workers,” he said.

On Wednesday (August 11), 476 new cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) were registered in the Sultanate over the past two days, in addition to 20 new COVID-19-related deaths.

This brings the total number of

positive COVID-19 cases in the Sultanate to 299,418.

The total number of COVID-19-related deaths reached 3,968, the Ministry of Health said. The Ministry also added that 1,015 new cases have recovered, bringing the total number to 286,679 recoveries.

The Ministry also pointed out that there were 22 cases where hospitalisation was required over the past 24 hours and the total number of currently hospitalised, COVID-19-infected patients stands at 299.



 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

21,866 REACH

Oman

Passengers travelling on Air India from Muscat to India might need to change their travel timing. Here's why.





Story on Air India cancels more flights from Muscat

A story on Air India cancels more flights from Muscat reached 21,866 people and had 281 engagements on Facebook.

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

10,467 VIEWS

No vaccine certificate needed for expats





Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video had 10,467 views and 608 likes on Instagram.

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

4,700 VIEWS

MIDDAY UPDATE





Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 4,700 views and reached 10,300 people on Facebook.







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INTERNATIONAL AWARDS



Musandam Sea Adventure project wins recognition

KHASAB: Omani youth proved their competence and excellence through a tourism project Musandam Sea Adventure’.

The project scored several international awards and it was classified among the best 5 companies in the world in 2016. It also won the silver prize in 2017 among the top 5 companies in the Middle East.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Abdul Fattah Ahmed Al Shehhi said that this story of success began as a tourism office in 2001, operating only a single vessel.

That office came to be the second tourism-specialised office in the Governorate of Musandam.

Al Shehhi pointed out that in 2002, he received an invitation from a German company, which previously visited him in the governorate, to participate in an exhibition specialised in promoting tourism.

In the exhibition, he highlight-



ed tourism and related products offered by his office to tourists wishing to visit islands, bays and creeks in the Governorate of Musandam.

German expertise

He added that in 2006, he utilised German expertise in tourism to help him attract tourists and to promote for his project.

Al Shehhi also hired Omanis, but only eight of them remained while the others found other jobs in the public and private sectors.

He further said that the pro-

ject saw a great turnout of tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate.

He had to transport 200 people a day, which forced him to multiply the number of operating vessels. In 2012, Abdul Fattah designed a yacht specifically for the project, and it was launched in December 2014, eventually attracting more tourists.

As for prices, they differ based on the vessel. The ship costs Omani people OMR15 while for people from other nationalities it costs OMR20. On the other hand, the yacht prices depend on the number of people and they range between OMR45 to OMR55.

The monthly revenues during the winter season hit OMR70,000 and in the summer to OMR30,000, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Nowadays, revenues do not exceed OMR5,000 as a result of the current circumstances and the suspension of tourism activities, Al Shehhi added. — ONA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

<FROM A1 National Centre for Genetic Health established in 2012

To help treat people with genetic disorders, the Ministry of Health set up the National Centre for Genetic Health in 2012, after plans for the same were drawn up in 2006.

There are 59 staff at the centre, including doctors specialised in genetic medicine.

The centre has a number of services to treat people with genetic disorders, including genetic medicine, counselling, screening for cancer caused by genetic defects, developmental medicine, child development and evaluation, and also expanded genetic laboratory facilities.

Among the machines available at the labs are a Hamilton Device, which helps extract DNA from blood samples and provides results in record time. The centre also developed a micro-irrigation, and a microcellular device, which display in chromosomes the anatomic defects that cause genetic disorders.

The setting up of this lab and the research and facilities within are part of the efforts of Oman Vision 2040.

“The centre’s laboratory services consist of chromosomal analysis services to identify the causes of genetic diseases with chromosomal abnormalities,”



said Al Araimi.

“Individual and multiple genetic diagnostic services use third-generation techniques to analyse the human genome to identify genetic mutations that cause genetic diseases with genetic abnormalities of various forms.

“Laboratory research also contributes to the centre’s diagnosis of cancers caused by hereditary factors,” he said. “There are plans for expansion in the provision of integrated health services. These include expanding the clinics available to analyse issues such as heart ailments caused by genetic issues, as well as other disorders that cannot be diagnosed with our current facilities.”

The National Centre for Genetic Health has for the first time diagnosed 160 rare genetic cases

over the past five years. This came about as part of efforts to provide accurate diagnosis of people with such issues, said Dr Alia bint Mahmoud Al Hosani, a molecular specialist in genetics and human genomics.

“Genetic diagnosis services include a wide range of neurological diseases, muscular dystrophy diseases, growth and development syndromes, skeletal dysplasia, dermatophytosis bullosa, immunodeficiency diseases, metabolic diseases and other rare genetic diseases caused by defects to genes,” she said.

“This test was developed at the National Centre for Genetic Health and included in the services available from the Royal Hospital,” added Al Hosani. “It aims to serve a large segment of people from those who want diagnosis of a rare genetic disease, to young people who are about to marry, and have a family history of a particular disease, or parents who carry a certain gene, but want to have healthy babies.”

The centre has also found chromosomal imbalances in people that are associated with various ailments, including congenital malformations, Down syndrome, Edwards’s syndrome, and leukemia.



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SULTANATE OF OMAN

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Secretariat General for National Celebration announces to the following Tenders for 51st national day :

1	TENDER NO 4/2021	Decoration of side sites
2	TENDER NO 5/2021	Decoration Arches
3	TENDER NO 6/2021	Decoration Trees

Those who are registered with Tender Board in grade two and above qualified to carryout the project perfectly, may collect the tender documents, against payment of R.O.25/- per set, non refundable, for each tender, from the Office of Secretariat General for National Celebration at Al-Khuwair , during the working hours, on working days from Thursday **12 of Aug 2021**. last Date of submission of the tenders will be **18th of Aug 2021**. Tenderer should submit their documents stating Grade. Registration Certificates and relevant papers, issued by the concerned authorities when collecting Tender Documents

Tender should be submitted in a red sealed wax envelope , addressed to H.M. Secretariat General for National Celebration. Tenderer should enclose approved Bank Guarantee or certified cheque for value of 1% of tender sum valid for 90 days and to be addressed to Secretariat General for National Celebration Al-Khuwair. For any information contact to technical office (24601271).

The Committee is not bound to accept the lowest offer or any offer.



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CAR ACCIDENT

FROM A1 Tragic news spread throughout the town

“My mother asked me why I was so pale, but I told her we needed to leave immediately because someone was waiting for us,” he added.

“I spoke directly with Oman Air and asked them to book us on the next available flight to Muscat. My mother kept asking me why I was acting weird, but I chose not to answer her, and only looked at my children.”

The bodies of the deceased were transported to Saham on police planes. By the time Ayman and his family came home, news of their passing had spread, and neighbours and well-wishers had gathered outside. It was then that his mother realised what had happened.

“No, no Ayman!” she exclaimed. “Do not tell me what has happened to your sister! Don’t say that Reem, Taha, and Ali, my heart and soul, have died! Tell me they are fine!”

Unable to contain his grief any more, Ayman broke down, tears

pouring endlessly down his face. His wife, also in tears, tried to calm his mother.

Soon after the bodies arrived in Saham, the tragic news spread throughout the town, and many mourners gathered to pay their final respects. They were buried at 3am on Wednesday, 11 August.



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Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC)
“Water Services” invites reputable contractors for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region:

Tender reference No.	Title of the tender
DISC/W/TENDER/2021/001	SHIFTING OF THE WATER LINE OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARY OF THE PLOT IN MIRBHAT
DISC/W/TENDER/2021/002	EXTENSION OF WATER LINE TO WADI NAHIZ TEAM

The Tenderer should be a registered business owner with proper commercial registration with ministry of commerce. The Tenderer must show previous experience in performing similar jobs in the past.

Shifting of the water line outside the boundary, construction, supply & lay underground, pipeline including all fittings to connected with existing line pipe, construction surrounding of pipe across wadi Construction of chambers, supply & install double orifice air valve, Carryout survey work for the pipe routes.

The tender documents detailing the scope of work can be obtained from DISC's office by paying an amount of RO. 105/- (each Tender) incuding VAT at the address provided below or send an e-mail to below mentioned mail id's for tender document.

The schedule for the tendering process is as below:

- Last Date for issue of tender documents : 3:00 PM 29th August 2021
- Last date for seeking pre-bid clarifications: 3:00 PM 1st September 2021
- Last date for providing pre-bid clarifications : 3:00 PM 6th September 2021
- Last Date for submission of Proposals : 2:00 PM 13th September 2021

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (2% of the quoted bid price) shall only be considered for evaluation.

Any Queries Please Contact: Phone 23232554/624 ; lawrances@dpcoman.nama.om ; praveena@dpcoman.nama.om



شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة
Dhofar Integrated Services Company
شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة ا.ص ب. ٢١١، الروم البريدي ٢١١، شارع ٢٣، بولفو خلف مركز صلاة الغربية الصحي ا.ص - صلالة - محافظة ظفار ا.الرقم المكياني ٨٠٠٧٧٧٠٠
P.O. Box: 2609, P.C: 211, 23rd July Street, behind West Salalah Health Center Salalah, Sultanate of Oman - Toll Free: 80077700
info@disc.nama.om www.disc.nama.om



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Oman reports 476 new cases, 20 deaths

MUSCAT: As many as 476 new cases of coronavirus were registered in the Sultanate during the past 2 days, in addition to 20 new COVID-19-related deaths. This brings the total number of positive COVID-19 cases to 299,418 in the Sultanate.

The total number of COVID-19-related death cases reached 3968, the Ministry of Health said.

— ONA



Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre

Tender Advertisement for the Supply & Installation of Car Parking Shades

The Operational Committee of Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre announces the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Last date for Collection of Tender Document	Bid Submission Closing	Tender Specification Fees
CCCRC/T/273 /2021	Supply and Installation of Car Parking Shades	19/08/2021	26/08/2021	OMR 50.000

Qualified companies interested in participating in this tender shall collect the tender specifications from the date of this advertisement from the following address:
Operational Committee of the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre, SQU Street Al Khoud, Sultanate of Oman, Procurement Department, Ground Floor.

Biddings that meet the above requirement should be submitted in a sealed envelope by an Omani National from your company addressed to the head of Purchase Committee in the tender box located at:

Operational Committee of the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre, SQU Street Al Khoud, Sultanate of Oman, Procurement Department, Ground Floor.

Please note:

- Bids received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, will not be considered.
- Queries/ clarifications should be submitted immediately, but not later than one week before the date of tender submission.
- For Queries you may Contact via **e-mail: purchase@ccrc.gov.om**
- The committee is not obliged to accept the lowest price of the bid or any other bid.



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SWEETS OF OMAN SAOG

P.O. Box 49, Rusayl - 124, Sultanate of Oman

DIRECTORS'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the financial results of Sweets of Oman SAOG for the six months ended June 30, 2021.

1. Results for the period:

The turnover of the company for the six months ended June 30, 2021 is R.O 1,733,766 (R.O 2,417,717 Restated for the corresponding period of 2020). The profit and Loss account for the six months ended June 30, 2021 shows a net loss of R.O 1,135,095. (The net loss was R.O 1,558,274 Restated for the corresponding period of 2020).

The pandemic situation continued to impact sales in major export countries as well as the local market coupled with low working capital availability in whole first half of 2021 has adversely affected the sales and profitability. On a positive note the markets like Qatar, Jordan and nominal sales from local market despite Covid impact has been a major breakthrough and testament to our strong brand equity in the Market.

2. Internal control:

After the management of the company was informed of the suspected misrepresentation, the board has taken adequate measures to strengthen internal controls and systems to commensurate with size of the business and in compliance local laws and regulations. The internal audit has been outsourced to Backer Tilly and regular audits are being planned to be carried out. The Audit Committee reviews these reports regularly, follows up on action points with the management and updates the Board of Directors.

3. Future outlook:

We expect the pandemic to impact sales negatively this year and working capital issues to be sorted out from Q3 2021. Stringent cost reduction measures have been planned to combat these difficult times. We are confident that these measures will help to cut fixed costs, thereby improving profitability.

4. Other Matters

During the year ended 31 December 2020, the management of the company was informed that the financial statements of the company for the half year ended 30 June 2020, years were materially misstated due to the misrepresentation by some of the key management personnel of the company. The board ascertained the misstatements as on 30th June 2020 and necessary corrections to the financial statements were done.

Chairman.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	30-06-2021	Restated 30-06-2020	31-12-2020
	R.O.	R.O.	R.O.
ASSETS			
Non current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4,025,433	4,478,918	4,233,442
Intangible assets	13,667	28,616	20,559
Right-of-use assets	548,426	420,795	638,808
Investment in subsidiary	461	461	461
Deferred tax asset	71,824	21,369	71,824
Total non current assets	4,659,811	4,950,159	4,966,094
Current assets			
Inventories	996,730	1,695,945	1,179,753
Accounts and other receivables	567,871	1,998,476	345,780
Cash and cash equivalents	22,754	24,744	128,551
Total current assets	1,587,355	3,719,165	1,654,084
TOTAL ASSETS	6,247,166	8,669,324	6,620,178
EQUITY & LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Share capital	700,000	700,000	700,000
Legal reserve	233,333	233,333	233,333
(Accumulated losses) / retained earnings	(6,865,480)	(2,776,953)	(5,730,385)
Total equity	(5,932,147)	(1,843,620)	(4,797,052)
Non current liabilities			
Employees' end of service benefits	436,469	488,846	413,721
Term loan	1,115,526	1,107,616	1,115,526
Lease liabilities	528,774	390,369	528,774
Total non current liabilities	2,080,769	1,986,831	2,058,021
Current liabilities			
Current portion of term loan	700,000	700,000	700,000
Current portion of lease liabilities	175,747	43,676	175,747
Bank borrowings	6,012,488	5,910,017	5,985,939
Accounts and other payables	3,210,309	1,872,420	2,497,523
Total current liabilities	10,098,544	8,526,113	9,359,209
Total liabilities	12,179,313	10,512,944	11,417,230
TOTAL EQUITY & LIABILITIES	6,247,166	8,669,324	6,620,178
Net assets per share	(0.847)	(0.263)	(0.685)

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO JUNE, 2021

	30-06-2021	Restated 30-06-2020	31-12-2020
	R.O.	R.O.	R.O.
Revenue	1,733,766	2,417,717	
Less : cost of revenue	(1,680,317)	(2,882,972)	
Gross profit/(loss)	53,449	(465,255)	
Other income		16,622	23,079
Depreciation		(325,936)	(300,771)
General and administrative overheads		(616,247)	(572,388)
Finance charges		(267,194)	(230,439)
Allowance for expected credit losses		4,211	(12,500)
Net loss before tax	(1,135,095)	(1,558,274)	
Tax expense		-	-
Total comprehensive loss for the period	(1,135,095)	(1,558,274)	
Basic earnings per share	(0.162)	(0.223)	



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Oman Sail marks 13 years of excellence, unveils team for Star Sailors League

Oman has been selected thanks to the sailors' impressive track record and the country's high standing in global sailing

MUSCAT: Oman Sail marked 13 years of excellence since its inception. Tasked with rekindling the Sultanate's maritime eminence, Oman Sail has continued to contribute to the sustainable prosperity of the nation and provide long-term learning opportunities for the youth of Oman.

As part of the celebration, and in the presence of Deputy Swiss



OMAN SAIL: Oman Sail marked the occasion by unveiling the team representing the Sultanate in the Star Sailors League, a leading inshore competition scheduled to take place in Switzerland.

Ambassador to Oman, Sabina Läderach, Oman Sail marked the occasion by unveiling the team representing the Sultanate in the Star Sailors League, a leading inshore competition scheduled to take place in Switzerland from 19 September to 4 October. Oman has been selected thanks to the sailors' impressive track record and the country's high standing in global sailing.

The 12-man team will compete against professional teams from around the world for the Sir Roland Symonette Trophy in what will be the first strong competition for Oman's elite sailors post-pandemic.

Dr. Khamis Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said, "We are incredibly proud of what Oman Sail has accomplished over 13 years. Having a team compete in the Star Sailors League will provide a great opportunity for us to promote the Sultanate and will give the team a platform to perform and compete against the best. As we celebrate the occasion, we are also looking forward to an incredibly busy period of sailing events that will open the eyes of

the international sailing community to Oman."

The winter season will see Oman Sail host three major world championships with the 2021 World Youth Sailing Championships, 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 World Championships, and the 2021 ICRA Radial World Championships headed to these shores. Oman Sail will also organise the 2021 49er, 49er FX Nacra 17 Asian Championships, 2021 Asian Windsurfing Championships, along with regular fixtures in the calendar the Musanah Race Week and Sailing Arabia - The Tour 2021 to close out the year as competitive sailing returns to the Sultanate.

Dr. Al Jabri added, "I would like to pass my sincerest gratitude to all Oman Sail team for their efforts over the last 13 years.

This has always been a team effort and all of achievements still to come are a result of the hard work put in every day since we began." Oman Sail is also extending its expertise to bring additional high-profile sporting events to the country.

COMMENTARY

When will the number one spinner in the world Ashwin get a chance to play in England?



Anis Sajan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

WHEN INDIA'S squad was announced after the toss in the first test, I felt I heard it wrong when I heard Virat saying Ashwin is not playing. I refreshed my mobile and saw the squad and it was true that India had opted for an extra seamer in Shardul Thakur ahead of Ashwin.

It was a gutsy decision by Virat Kohli to not pick your ace spinner who was exceptional for team India and was the highest wicket taker in the last two years. He also had done well in the county game where Ashwin had picked 6 wickets in an innings and every expert felt India had taken a very bold decision to leave him out and go one with one spinner in Ravindra Jadeja. Indian pacers did manage to prove the captain's decision right when they bowled England out for just 183 runs and it was all by their pacers with Jadeja bowling just 3 overs. In the second innings too Jadeja just bowled 13 overs but went wicketless as it was again the pacers who got all the ten wickets for team India. Ashwin's replacement which was Shardul Thakur picked four wickets in the match and got two big wickets one of Joe Root and other of Jose Buttler and the decision of the skipper picking him did justify even though Shardul scored a duck in his only innings of that match.

When Michael Atherton asked Virat about Ashwin's exclusion at the post match presentation, Virat answer was there it would be a template going ahead in the series and players would be picked according to the conditions. That means it seems Ashwin

would be picked only on a spin friendly track and with Jadeja doing well with the bat by scoring a half century, it would be difficult for Ashwin to get a place in the Indian team. Again a bold answer from a captain but mind you in Australia it was Ashwin who was the most successful spinner and out bowled Nathan Lyon in that Series. Even in the World Test Championship finals, it was Ashwin who provided the breakthrough in both the innings and looked the most threatening bowler on a green wicket in South-amp-ton. But the question is still on everyone's mind is how can you leave out India's number one spinner? I believe Ashwin is paying the price for being part of a squad with so many bowling options but none of them good enough to bat at number seven.

If England's weather changes drastically and the heat wave makes the green pitches turn in to brown, Ashwin might be back in contention. I vividly recall an incident when Ashwin was at my office for a motivational speech. It was soon after he had just lost his place in the team playing for Champions trophy, he said, "This Indian team is very competitive, only the best get to play". How true he was that teams are selected only on the basis of conditions and form. Whatever happens in the next four matches for Ashwin, we shall all get to know but one thing is for sure that even the best of best players can't be assured of their place in this very talented Indian team and that's why it keeps every player on its toes and once loss is someone's gain as we saw with Rahul grabbing with both hands his place now ahead of Mayank Agarwal.

ENGLAND VS INDIA

Time for Indian batsmen to make it count at Lord's



NEW DELHI: The first Test between India and England might have ended in a draw after rain played spoilsport on the final day of the match, but it is fair to say that the visitors hold the upper hand going into the second match of the series, beginning on Thursday at the Lord's Cricket Ground.

The Virat Kohli-led side needed 157 runs to win on the final day, with nine wickets in hand, but rain played spoilsport and as a result, the series stands level at 0-0. In the first Test, India went in with four-seamers (Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami, Shardul Thakur) and one spinner (Ravindra Jadeja).

However, a few eyebrows were raised when Ashwin did not feature in the playing XI even when he had played a county game before the first Test. While the bowling attack rose to the challenge and didn't let the English batsmen settle down, the same cannot be said of the batting unit.

India's batting performance in the first innings of the opening game left a lot to be desired. Openers Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul stitched a 97-run stand, but the visitors failed to capitalise as

Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, and Ajinkya Rahane disappointed with the bat.

Comeback man Rahul and Jadeja were the bright spots with the bat in hand, and it would be interesting to see whether the rest of the batting line-up comes forward and makes it count at the Lord's.

It will also be interesting to see how the battle between India skipper Virat Kohli and England's pace spearhead James Anderson plays out. It was 1-0 to Anderson in the first Test as he dismissed Kohli for a golden duck.

But one can expect Kohli to come back hard as the battle between the two has over the years managed to grab headlines and it is one of the most exciting spectacles in the longest format. A quality performance at the Home of Cricket is definitely something that the India skipper would be aiming for.

Talking about England, the hosts have a few problems of their own as the batting order still does not give much confidence and it is only Joe Root who continues to perform day in and day out. The rest of the batting order continues to struggle and in Ben Stokes' absence, it is the need of the hour that the likes of Jos Buttler and Zak Crawley rise to the occasion.

James Anderson and Ollie Robinson were the standout performers with the ball in hand for the hosts in the first Test, and it is likely that England once again plays Anderson and not give him rest, looking at the veteran's form. Moeen Ali has been added to the squad for the second Test, and it would be interesting to see whether England play him as a spin-bowling all-rounder.

Squad: England: Rory Burns, Dominic Sibley, Zak Crawley, Joe Root (c), Jonny Bairstow, Daniel Lawrence, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Ollie Robinson, Stuart Broad, James Anderson, Mark Wood, Craig Overton, Jack Leach, Dominic Bess, Ollie Pope, Haseeb Hameed, Moeen Ali.

India: Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (c), Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ishant Sharma, Axar Patel, Wriddhiman Saha, Umesh Yadav, Hanuma Vihari, Abhimanyu Easwaran. **ANI**

ICC RANKINGS

Kohli slips to fifth, Bumrah rises to ninth spot in ICC Test Rankings

DUBAI: England captain Joe Root and India fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah have advanced in the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings after fine performances in the opening match of their ICC World Test Championship series in Nottingham.

Root, top-ranked in the past, has overtaken counterpart Virat Kohli to the fourth position in the batters' list after his Player of the Match performance of 64 and 109 earned him 49 rating points. Bumrah has galloped 10 slots to return to the top 10 for bowlers with a match haul of nine for 110. Bumrah, who held a career-high third position in September 2019, is now ranked ninth. Seam bowlers James Anderson (up to one place to seventh) and Ollie Robinson (up 22 places to 46th) of England and Shardul Thakur (up 19 places to 55th) of India have also moved up in the latest men's weekly rankings update, carried out on Wednesday. India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has progressed three slots to 36th among batters with a first-innings half-century and opener Lokesh Rahul has re-entered the rankings in 56th position with scores of 84 and 26. England opener Dom Sibley is up to four places to 52nd.

In the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings, Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan has regained the top spot among all-rounders, having last reached that position in October 2017. He has also gained three slots to reach 53rd among batters and advanced six slots to reach 12th position among bowlers.

Captain Mahmudullah has gained two slots and is now in the 33rd position.

Fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman is back in the top 10, gaining 20 slots after taking five wickets in four matches. **ANI**

NEW TEAM

I'm going to play with the best players, says Messi on Neymar and Mbappe

PARIS: Lionel Messi has said he is excited to play alongside the world's "best players" after joining Paris Saint-Germain.

The Argentine icon has signed for PSG on a two-year contract with an option of a third-year after leaving Barcelona on Sunday. The move to the French capital sees him reunite with ex-Barca teammate Neymar, and France striker Kylian Mbappe.

"I am very happy. It's crazy. I'm going to play with the best play-



ers in the world, and that's always good," Lionel Messi told reporters in a press conference on Wednesday. "Neymar and I know each other very well," he said. "I hope we will be stronger together and with all our teammates."

Talking about winning the UEFA Champions League with PSG, Messi said: "This team is ready. There are some new transfers, but they have been close and are ready. I have just come here to help."

"My dream is to win this trophy again and I think Paris is the best place to do so." The six-times Ballon d'Or winner was certainly overwhelmed by the grand welcome he received in Paris, as he said: "I am really grateful to the people in the street. I was in Barcelona when the press reported that people were already out in the streets. It is incredible. I want to thank them and I want to see them in the city and the stadium. It will be an incredible year." **ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2021 reaching \$69.84, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 97 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was at \$68.87. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,005.92 points, up 0.15 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index up 0.82 per cent at 592.84 points. Voltamp Energy, up 7.81 per cent, was the top gainer while National Aluminum Product, down 7.08 per cent, was the top loser.

OQ exits its investment in Portuguese utility company



The investment was made in 2012, as OQ aimed to expand and diversify its growing investment portfolio locally and internationally

2012, as OQ aimed to expand and diversify its growing investment portfolio locally and internationally.

REN is a high-voltage transmission grid operator and natural gas transportation company with operations in several countries.

Privileged

On this occasion, Talal Al Awfi, Group Chief Executive Officer of OQ, said, "OQ is privileged to have been a significant shareholder in REN since 2012. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board and management of REN for working with us throughout this successful partnership. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish REN and the new investors the best of luck in the future."

REN was formed in 1994 as the electrical transmission company for Portugal. Its main role is to manage the energy transmission systems in Portugal and is one of the few European operators active in both electricity and natural gas transmission. - **ONA**



TRANSMISSION GRID OPERATOR Redes Energeticas Nacionais is a high-voltage transmission grid operator and natural gas transportation company with operations in several countries - **ONA**

BLOCKS 3&4 ONSHORE

Tethys Oil's July production in the Sultanate reaches 348,133 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore the Sultanate of Oman amounted in July 2021 to 348,133 barrels of oil, corresponding to 11,230 barrels of oil per day.

Oil production in Oman is currently subject to production limitations under the Opec+ agreement. As a consequence, production from Blocks 3&4 is subject to limitations but is likely to fluctuate on a monthly basis.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for July 2021 amounts to \$66.40 per barrel. The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4 Ltd, has a 30 per cent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East B.V. with 20 per cent and the operator CC Energy Development S.A.L. (Oman branch)



OFFICIAL SELLING PRICE: The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for July 2021 amounts to \$66.40 per barrel. - **Photo used for illustrative purpose only**

holding the remaining 50 per cent.

Tethys Oil is a Swedish oil company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultan-

ate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58.

Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 26.9 mmb

and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 13.9 million barrels oil and had an average oil production of 11,336 barrels per day from Blocks 3&4 during 2020.

IATA

Agreement signed to facilitate safe and easy travelling

GENEVA / MUNICH: SYNLAB, Europe's leading medical diagnostic services provider, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) have announced a partnership to facilitate safe and easy travel.

The two partners signed an agreement on Wednesday to incorporate SYNLAB's extensive lab network into IATA Travel Pass.

This will enable airline passengers to access SYNLAB's broad and secure COVID-19 testing services, benefiting from its international capabilities. SYNLAB and IATA build upon valuable experience gained during a successful pilot project for passenger testing in Columbia over the course of past months.

Travel Pass

IATA Travel Pass allows passengers to locate authorised laboratories at departure locations to get tested for SARS-CoV-2 as required by border and health authorities. After testing, SYNLAB will provide passengers with

their certified test results directly through the IATA Travel Pass. The app checks the result against the IATA Travel Pass registry of national entry requirements to produce an 'OK to Travel' status.

Through the app passengers can share their status and the digital test certificates with authorities and airlines to facilitate travel.

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, said verified COVID-19 testing is critical to restore the freedom to travel for people who are not vaccinated.

IATA Travel Pass aims to make it as simple as possible for travellers to locate certified labs and securely receive the test results that governments require for entry.

"Adding SYNLAB's extensive lab network will help travellers more easily ensure that they meet their COVID-19 travel requirements," he said.

SYNLAB has a network of more than 450 medical laboratories and over 1,600 sample collection points across 36 countries. - **ANI**

CRUDE PRICES

Oil drops on China fuel demand concerns

SINGAPORE: Oil prices dipped on Wednesday as analysts cut their forecasts for fuel demand in China following mobility curbs from the spread of the highly infectious Delta variant of the coronavirus, offsetting a bullish outlook for US fuel demand.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures fell 18 cents, or 0.3 per cent, to \$68.11 a barrel at 0500 GMT, after a 2.7 per cent jump on Tuesday, according to a media report.

Brent crude futures dropped 16 cents to \$70.47 a barrel, following a 2.3 per cent gain on Tuesday.

While both contracts have reclaimed their 100-day daily moving average, a technical chart indicator, they appeared to lack the momentum to stage meaningful revivals as Delta variant fears continued to weigh on markets, said Jeffrey Halley, OANDA's senior market analyst for the Asia Pacific.

"Short-term momentum has waned quickly in Asia," he added.

Beijing has imposed travel curbs that will reduce fuel demand in the world's second-largest oil consumer, prompting Goldman Sachs to cut its demand forecast for China by 1 million barrels per day for the next two months.

"Our base case remains that the Delta wave will impact demand - including in China - for only two months, consistent with prior cy-



US CRUDE OIL: Industry data showed US crude oil and gasoline inventories fell last week, while the US Energy Information Administration raised its forecast for fuel demand in 2021. - **BNA**

cles, including most recently in India," the bank said.

Industry data showed US crude oil and gasoline inventories fell last week, while the US Energy Information Administration raised its forecast for fuel demand in 2021 and said consumption in May through July was higher than expected, supporting prices.

US crude stocks fell by 816,00 barrels and gasoline stocks fell

by 1.1 million barrels in the week ended August 6, according to two market sources, citing data from the American Petroleum Institute. Weekly figures from the EIA are due on Wednesday.

"With OECD commercial crude oil stockpiles having dropped back to pre-COVID levels already, a tightening oil market outlook will likely amplify oil price gains," he said. - **BNA**

MARKETS

Dollar, US yields extend gain, Asian shares held back by Delta worries

HONG KONG: The dollar and US yields extended gains in Asia on Wednesday, spurred by tapering talk, while Asian shares traded sideways on fears about the spread of the coronavirus despite a record close on Wall Street.

The dollar index rose to its highest since mid-July, gaining against the yen, while the euro neared year-to-date lows against the greenback, according to a media report.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan (MIAPJ0000PUS) rose 0.08 per cent in Asian trading, with Chinese blue chips (CSI300) down 0.38 per cent Korea's KOSPI (KS11) down 0.37 per cent.

Improving US economic data and a more hawkish tone from Federal Reserve officials have led markets to expect the central bank to begin tapering its asset purchases later this year, pushing up yields and supporting the dollar.

But the move has been well flagged, meaning a repeat of the so-called "taper tantrum" of 2013 that shook markets when the Fed began putting the brakes on its quantitative easing program, is unlikely, said Ray Farris, chief investment officer South Asia, Credit Suisse.

"In Asia, there's a little bit of



RAISING FEARS: The Delta variant of the new coronavirus is spreading quickly in many Asian countries raising fears about local travel restrictions, hurting the economic recovery. - **BNA**

concern about tapering but there is an increasing understanding that we're unlikely to get a tantrum," said Farris. "But there is a lot more concern about Delta because of its impact on a lot of Asian economies where vaccination rates are lower," he said.

The Delta variant of the new coronavirus is spreading quickly in many Asian countries raising fears about local travel restrictions, hurting the economic recovery.

Australia was a rare bright spot, with the local index (AXJO)

gaining 0.61 per cent, helped by the announcement of a record share buyback by the country's largest bank, Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA.AX), with its annual results.

Japan's Nikkei (N225) gained 0.57 per cent.

The dollar was supported by rises in longer and shorter-dated Treasury yields which reached their highest levels since mid-July, with yields on benchmark 10-year Treasury notes touching a five-week high of 1.3610 per cent. - **BNA**

MARKET

VIRTUAL MARKETING EVENT

Digital Asia Summit concludes

JAIPUR: The biggest virtual marketing event - Digital Asia Summit concluded on a high note. The conference was held from August 6-8 on Airmeeet. The conference saw more than 1,300 people attend from over 20 countries. A summit of great marketing minds and aspirants, this conference was a podium to discuss key changes the business environment might witness in a post-pandemic world. Industry veterans from all over the world got together to talk and share their valuable insights. The conference gathered all marketing geniuses to talk about pertinent topics that would help marketing professionals and aspirants to navigate through the industry. **-ANI/News Vair**

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OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,007.53	3,997.41	4,005.92	4,000.10	5.82	0.15
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,367.72	6,347.65	6,361.78	6,362.45	-0.68	-0.01
Industry Index	5,940.14	5,889.45	5,940.14	5,889.45	50.69	0.86
Services Index	1,722.84	1,713.58	1,713.78	1,713.72	0.06	0.00
MSX Shariah Index	593.12	590.61	592.84	588.01	4.83	0.82
MSX TR INDEX	4,812.18	4,800.03	4,810.25	4,803.27	6.98	0.15

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,812,339	2,004,533	578	21,609,624,862	17	11	23	51

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	871,550	362,181	106	0.420	0.420	0.410	0.416	0.400	0.016	4.000	0.410	0.410	0.414	0.100	25,460,978
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	96,000	78,191	11	0.800	0.820	0.800	0.816	0.788	0.028	3,553	0.816	0.780	0.820	0.100	128,520,000
OM0000000440	AL SHAHRA INV	287,200	29,448	22	0.103	0.104	0.101	0.103	0.101	0.002	1,980	0.101	0.101	0.104	0.100	9,270,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	280,000	65,430	16	0.230	0.240	0.230	0.234	0.230	0.004	1,739	0.240	0.226	0.240	0.100	77,424,214
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	20,000	9,320	1	0.466	0.466	0.466	0.466	0.460	0.006	1,304	0.466	0.460	0.466	0.100	102,520,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	52,000	20,800	3	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.398	0.002	803	0.400	0.400	0.404	0.100	48,695,194
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	283,140	119,587	49	0.414	0.430	0.414	0.422	0.420	0.002	0,478	0.430	0.426	0.430	0.100	23,210,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	615,730	273,358	22	0.444	0.444	0.442	0.444	0.442	0.002	0,442	0.444	0.442	0.444	0.100	1,587,066,808
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	25,000	7,990	2	0.318	0.320	0.318	0.320	0.320	0.000	0,000	0.320	0.318	0.320	0.100	258,487,145
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	127,339	8,024	12	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0,000	0.063	0.062	0.063	0.100	19,350,218
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	20,000	20,600	3	1.030	1.030	1.030	1.030	1.030	0.000	0,000	1.030	1.010	1.030	0.100	92,391,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	48,973	5,387	5	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.110	0.000	0,000	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.100	214,452,221
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,623	2,826	2	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.788	0.788	0.000	0,000	0.780	0.784	0.792	0.100	591,000,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	23,937	6,302	7	0.264	0.264	0.262	0.263	0.264	-0.001	-0,379	0.262	0.262	0.262	0.100	52,600,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	314,587	141,364	13	0.450	0.450	0.450	0.450	0.452	-0.002	-0,442	0.450	0.420	0.450	0.100	106,384,500
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	20,850	2,930	4	0.140	0.141	0.140	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0,704	0.140	0.140	0.143	0.100	11,985,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,281,874	490,803	41	0.384	0.384	0.380	0.382	0.386	-0.004	-1,038	0.382	0.384	0.384	0.100	248,660,696
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	50,000	4,600	5	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1,075	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.100	223,974,620
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	30,000	3,540	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.120	-0.002	-1,667	0.118	0.116	0.119	0.100	23,600,000
Total		19			4,451,803	1,652,882	325									

Parallel Market

OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	185,667	25,557	24	0.130	0.140	0.130	0.138	0.128	0.010	7,813	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.100	11,233,580
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	34,949	1,577	8	0.046	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.001	2,222	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	67,279,667
OM0000004925	ALBATHINAH POWER	206,890	10,397	16	0.050	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.050	0.001	2,000	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.100	34,419,259
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	32,485	5,136	6	0.155	0.160	0.155	0.158	0.155	0.003	1,935	0.160	0.155	0.160	0.100	14,220,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	635,130	38,108	10	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.001	1,695	0.060	0.059	0.061	0.100	20,948,665
OM0000001982	AL MADINA INV	29,000	1,796	3	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.001	1,639	0.062	0.060	0.067	0.100	4,340,000
OM0000006912	AHLIA INSURANCE	23,200	8,485	1	0.362	0.366	0.362	0.366	0.362	0.004	1,105	0.366	0.366	0.366	0.100	36,600,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	268,559	27,903	24	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.001	0,971	0.103	0.103	0.104	0.100	18,200,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	340,000	62,106	19	0.182	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.182	0.001	0,549	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.100	297,548,183
OM0000001095	DHOOFAR INSURANCE	10,000	1,950	2	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.000	0,000	0.195	0.195	0.197	0.100	19,500,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. INV.	50,746	4,448	5	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.092	0.000	0,000	0.092	0.090	0.093	0.100	11,960,000
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM F	582	132	1	0.226	0.226	0.226	0.251	0.251	0.000	0,000	0.226	0.226	0.230	0.100	10,442,923
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	77,300	6,341	4	0.083	0.083	0.081	0.082	0.082	0.000	0,000	0.081	0.081	0.083	0.100	20,794,380
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	152,000	12,294	11	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.000	0,000	0.080	0.080	0.081	0.100	16,441,800
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	323,930	31,697	15	0.096	0.098	0.096	0.098	0.098	0.000	0,000	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.100	147,000,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALIN	2,230	259	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.120	0.120	0.000	0,000	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.100	11,738,259
OM0000004725	SEMBORIP SALALAH	4,185	343	3	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0,000	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	78,274,500
OM0000004776	TAKATUL OMAN	1,900	182	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0,000	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	8,600,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	15,334	799	5	0.052	0.054	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.000	0,000	0.054	0.052	0.054	0.100	37,149,130
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	2,911	539	1	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.000	0,000	0.185	0.185	0.000	0.100	308,840,850
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	1,292	110	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.000	0,000	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.100	13,221,794
OM0000007407	DHOOFAR GENERATING	20,000	2,500	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0,000	0.125	0.124	0.125	0.100	27,780,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	1,500	450	1	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.324	0.324	0.000	0,000	0.300	0.300	0.326	0.100	22,806,360
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	165,000	11,099	16	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.068	-0.001	-1,471	0.067	0.067	0.068	0.100	13,400,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	40,000	2,680	1	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.068	0.068	-0.001	-1,471	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	13,375,585
OM0000001301	DHOOFAR CATTLE	43,000	3,440	4	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.082	-0.002	-2,439	0.080	0.080	0.082	0.100	6,468,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK	6,423	5,652	5	0.880	0.880	0.880	0.880	0.912	-0.032	-3,509	0.880	0.880	0.912	0.100	83,600,000
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	672,334	70,557	55	0.110	0.114	0.103	0.105	0.113	-0.008	-7,080	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	3,325,002
Total		28			3,344,917	336,699	248									

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MSX index ends marginally higher

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,005.92 points, up 0.15 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index up 0.82 per cent at 592.84 points. Voltamp Energy, up 7.81 per cent, was the top gainer while National Aluminum Product, down 7.08 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Ooredoo was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 578 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.4 million, with more than 14 million shares

changing hands. Out of 51 traded stocks, 17 advanced, 11 declined and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, local investors were net buyers for OMR451,000 while GCC and Arab investors were net sellers for OMR374,000 followed by foreign

investors for OMR78,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6,361.77 points, down 0.01 per cent. Industrial Index closed at 5,940.14 points, up 0.86 per cent. Services Index remained unchanged closing at 1,719.89 points. **-United Securities**

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 AL JAZEIRA SERVICES CO. SAOG		P.O. Box 2865, Ruwi, P.C 112, Sultanate of Oman Tel.: 24706499, Fax: 24703653					
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT		CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2021					
Dear Shareholders,							
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Jazeera Services Co. SAOG, I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the half year ended on 30 June 2021.							
Profits and assets							
The revenue from catering and allied business for the half year ended on 30 June 2021 was RO 3,638,533 down by 13% compared to revenue of RO 4,162,011 for the same period in the year 2020. The operating profit of the Company was RO 299,607 down by 30% compared to RO 425,371 for the corresponding half year in 2020.							
The profit from investments for the period was RO 141,295 against loss of RO 178,709 reported for the same period in 2020.							
The share of profit from associate company, Al Anwar Ceramics Tiles Co. SAOG for the half year ended on 30 June 2021 was up by 154% to RO 1,294,036 compared to RO 509,842 for the half year ended on 30 June 2020.							
The net profit after tax for the half year ended on 30 June 2021 was RO 1,687,164 up by 150% compared to profit of RO 675,399 for the half year ended on 30 June 2020.							
The shareholders' equity as on 30 June 2021 was RO 17,192,273 up by 2% against RO 16,779,070 as on 30 June 2020. Therefore, the net assets per share as on 30 June 2021 was 154 baisa against 150 baisa as on 30 June 2020.							
Interim Dividend							
The Board of Directors has recommended an interim dividend of 20% (20 baisa per share) amounting to RO 2,234,343 to the Shareholders registered as on the date of the General Meeting.							
Future outlook							
We are cautiously optimistic and remain focused on our core business of catering and allied services. We also expect our associate company to provide sustainable contribution to our profit. Our outlook for the future remains stable.							
I am pleased to report that your company has adhered to all the applicable regulations covering corporate governance in Sultanate of Oman.							
Acknowledgements							
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for his great vision and initiatives as he continues to lead the Sultanate on the path of development, peace and enduring prosperity. We also extend our sincere thanks to our Customers, Shareholders, Muscat Securities Exchange and Capital Market Authority for their continued support. My appreciation also goes to the Company's management and staff for their continued dedication and hard work.							
Abdurehda Mustafa Sultan Deputy Chairman							
The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder, who request them, either in Arabic or English, within 7 days from the receipt of the request							

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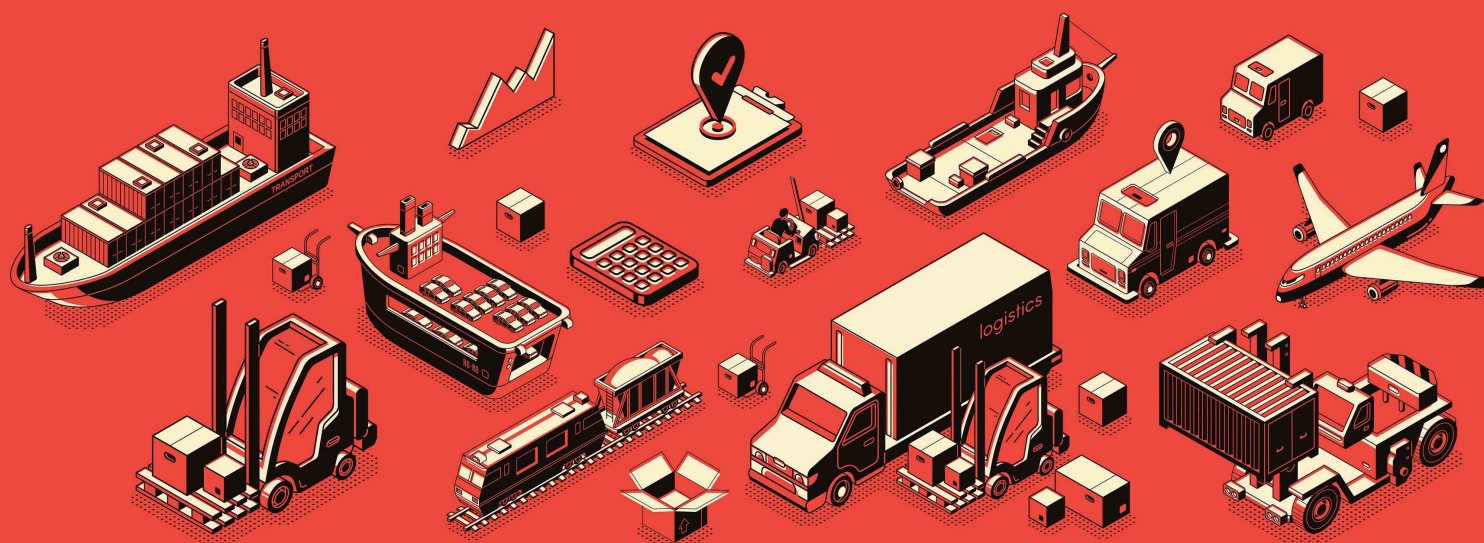
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Indian male, 42, MBA, 12yrs' experience in Senior management role with international exposure in many countries including Europe, worked as HR and Admin Head of company in Qatar. Previously worked as Director of Admission and Administration at college in Bangalore seeks for Senior management role in company or educational institutions in Muscat. Presently in Muscat (family visa).
Contact: 94326527
Email: sreekanth.kerala987@gmail.com

ACCOUNTANT
Indian male B.com, Accountant, 12+ years of experience in power plant O&M up to finalisation. Oman D/L & NOC available.
Contact: 96774266
Email: gexongorgep@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

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Senior Accountant: Indian male MBA Finance, with 2 yrs of Accounting experience looking for suitable job preferably as Senior Accountant position. NOC available. Contact 72420067 / 95272057. Email Id: fahadbinabdallah@gmail.com

Indian, MBA Finance with 14 + years of experience in Accounts, Audit & Finance is looking for a senior post in finance. Oman D/L & NOC available. Contact 99510161
Email: vinodpanchaman@gmail.com

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Indian Male, 24, B.com having 1 year six month experience in accounts, seeking suitable post from reputed companies, NOC available. Contact 78167102.
Email: alexpsojan@gmail.com

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Indian male having 21 years' experience in Oman seeks job for Hr/ Admin. Contact 95425764

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ACCOUNTANT
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Contact 93270023
rajugetme10@yahoo.com

HR & Administration Professional
With Executive Assistant exposure, well experienced with Oman labour law, well versed in office management, new office induction & administration, Indian male, with Valid Oman D/L, NOC available, seeks suitable placements.
Contact 94948676

ACCOUNTANT
Indian Male 39 years B.com having 14 years Gulf experience as Accountant looking for suitable placement. Having Oman driving license and NOC available.
Contact: 97998397
Email: salafcs@yahoo.com

JOB WANTED

DRIVER

Looking for driving job with NOC. Contact.97095200

Looking for driving jobs, 3 yrs experience in Oman. Contact 94447012

South Indian driver looking for job. Visa release available. Contact 79896629

Oman experienced Indian L. Driver looking for a job. Contact 78552271

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Finance Manager Indian 22 Yrs experience (UAE & Oman), looking Job Change. Contact 90473368

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Email adarshsoman2@gmail.com

SALES/MARKETING

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Indian, male 40 yrs. MBA marketing 18 yrs experience in sales Oman and UAE, valid D/L, seeking suitable placement. NOC available. Contact 71771060

Indian Female holding Oman D/L, 20 years experience at all levels of retail sales, reputed International brands and trained in many countries. Seeking suitable placement. NOC available. Contact 95183213

Indian male (30) MBA, 6 years' experience in Sales and procurement with D/L. Fluent in English, Hindi, Malayalam and Arabic. Contact 97291114.
Email: jawadazeez123@gmail.com

6 Years Experience outdoor salesman with driving in Oman. NOC available. Contact 91550548



LIFESTYLE

HOLLYWOOD STUNTMAN USES AN ATHLETE'S MINDSET TO OVERCOME HIS TOUGHEST RIDE



When Chris Arthur is asked to recall the highlight of his career as a Hollywood stuntman, his face lights up. He remembers how he once stepped foot on a helicopter to receive the memory of a lifetime in the air.

"There I was hanging out the side of a helicopter filming a scene for the season finale of a popular TV show," Chris says. "There were two of us, and while in a majority of stunts you're the bad guy, I'm pretty sure we were the good guys. Talk about a high point."

An unexpected turn

Reflecting back, the 42-year-old thrill-seeker can hardly believe the turns his life has taken since he was laying in a hospital bed 15 years ago, listening to doctors recommend surgery to remove part of his large intestine.

A lifelong athlete, Chris always had a love for athletics, competition, extreme sports and racing. However, at just 19 years old—in the prime of his life—he was diagnosed with a form of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) known as ulcerative colitis (UC). On the cusp of his dream of becoming a professional race car driver, his career would take a backseat as he focused on finding relief from his symptoms and learning to live with this chronic disease.

Approximately 3 million adults in the United States have IBD, which includes conditions like UC and Crohn's disease.¹ UC is a disease that affects the digestive system, causing symptoms such as abdominal pain, persistent diarrhea and weight loss.² For some patients, the disease can interfere with their day-to-day routine and change their sense of normalcy.

“

Just like athletes need a strong coach, finding the right doctor was critical in treating symptoms of my disease

Searching for the right path

Chris' subsequent journey evaluating his treatment options benefited from finding

the right doctor for him.

"Just like athletes need a strong coach, finding the right doctor was critical in treating symptoms of my disease, which helped me get back to the things I love doing, like racing," says Chris. "I found a doctor I was comfortable with and he talked to me about my health goals, and transparently walked me through what to expect living with ulcerative colitis."

After discussing all of Chris' questions, he and his doctor ultimately decided that a biologic medication was the proper choice for his moderately to severely active UC. From his own experiences, Chris knows everyone's body chemistry is different and there are no guarantees when trying new medicines. But, for him, this medicine got his symptoms under control which helped him get back to doing the things he used to do. —BPT

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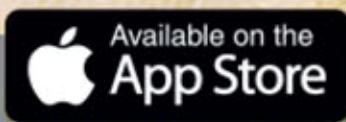
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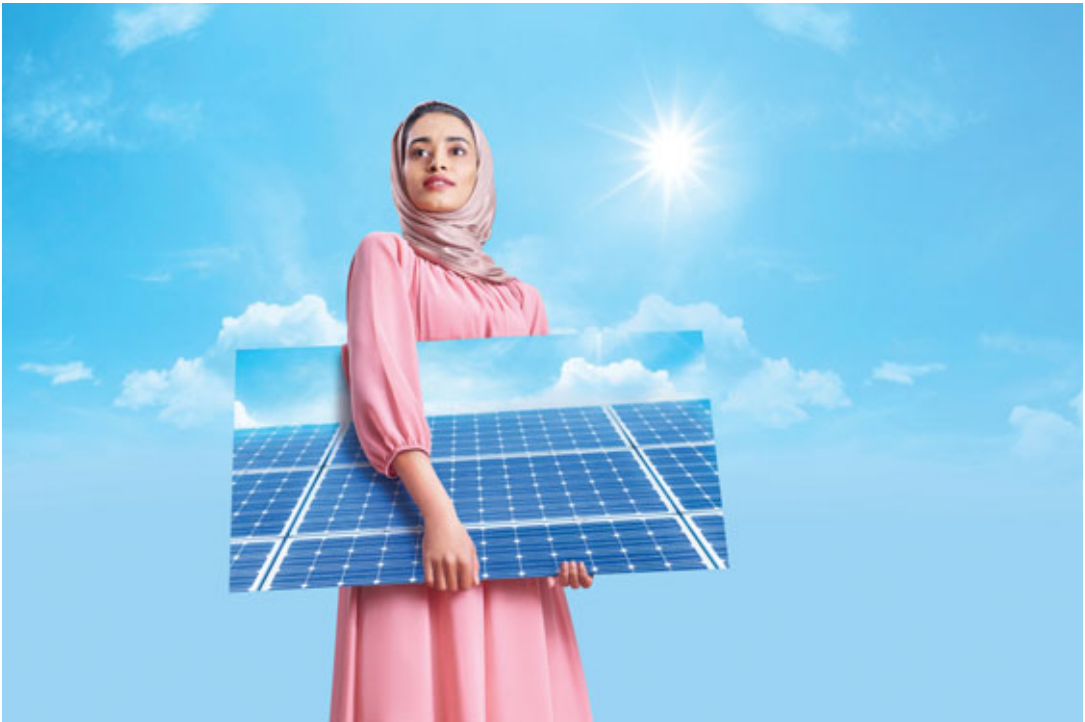


ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat offers financing for purchase, installation of solar panels

Launched earlier in association with the International Finance Corporation, the bank's Green Finance facility aims to promote sustainable practices and renewable energy in the Sultanate in the place of fossil fuels

MUSCAT: In line with its pioneering role in providing innovative financial products and services, Bank Muscat the leading financial services provider in Oman, has announced that its customers can continue to make use of its Green



Finance to purchase and install residential solar panels. Launched earlier in association with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the bank's Green Finance facility aims to pro-

mote sustainable practices and renewable energy in the Sultanate in the place of fossil fuels. The bank is thus targeting increased awareness of sustainable consumer practices and increase energy savings.

Green Finance, which is Oman's first environmentally-friendly finance product, encourages customers to install solar panels on their rooftops and use solar energy for a large part of their house-

hold energy requirements. Under the scheme, loans ranging from OMR1,000 to OMR25,000 are being given to eligible individuals at highly competitive interest rates subject to a maximum debt burden ratio (DBR) of 50 per cent. Loans under the scheme are available for a maximum of 5 years. This unique initiative reflects the bank's commitment to responsible banking and its continuous contributions to the country's overall progress and development.

Steady rise in interest
Abdullah Tamman Al Mashani, Deputy General Manager - Institutional Sales and Product Development, Bank Muscat, said, "The bank's Green Finance scheme has been witnessing a steady rise in interest from its customers and we are delighted with the response so far. Going ahead, we hope to reach out to even more customers. As a pioneer in offering products that meet the different needs of customers and a strong supporter of Public-Private Partnership in promoting national goals, the bank has been participating in many environmental-friendly initiatives. Through Green Finance,

customers will be able to install residential solar panels and use solar energy for a large part of their household requirements. It is important to note that this initiative will help Oman in reducing harmful emissions and also contribute to household savings as energy costs go down. Customers can get more information about Green Finance facility from Bank Muscat branches across the Sultanate."

The sustainability strategy pursued by Bank Muscat is focused on delivering long-term benefits to the community and the nation by offering products and services that contribute to the growth of different sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. In this regard, the bank also offers attractive home finance options through its Baituna scheme as the real estate sector is a major component of the national economy. Baituna home finance offers convenient mortgage plans to suit everyone's needs with simplified documentation, flexible repayment options, insurance coverage and processing across the bank's extensive network of branches and dedicated Sales Centres. Baituna home finance enables many customers to own their dream homes.

CAMPAIGN

Oman Oasis reveals second draw winners of 'Win Gold' promotion

MUSCAT: Revered as the nation's leading water brand, Oman Oasis has been the preferred choice amongst consumers because of its unwavering commitment to producing high-quality bottled water and its ongoing customer-centric promotions.

Delighting consumers with ongoing campaigns, rewards and offers, Oman Oasis recently announced the second round of winners of its 'Win Gold' promotion. The first round of draws was conducted on 16 June and received an overwhelming response from the market.

With a total of three rounds of raffle draws guaranteeing a total of 1061 prizes, the latest draw witnessed a total of 359 winners. As the name suggests, the key prizes from the draw include a number of gold bars to be won.

Rehab Saleh Hasani was one of the key lucky winners to walk away with a 50 gm gold bar, while Nooh Said, Kiadhia Al Mazrui and Muhammad Shabeer TV each won 25g gold bars. 85 winners also rejoiced on winning 4g gold coin each. Other prizes included 100 winners who were rewarded with OMR10 worth of shopping vouchers and an additional 170 winners who received 24x500ml Oman Oasis water.

With the third round of raffle draws slated to take place on 16 August, consumers are eagerly anticipating the 50 grams and 100 grams gold prizes. Ensuring more



chances to win for everyone, the third round will also include several other prizes still to be won.

The offer commenced on 16 May 2021 and will run until 15 August 2021. The promotion is valid on all Oman Oasis 1.5L and 500ml cartons and customers are to look out for a Scratch Coupon inside the carton. Upon scratching and revealing the unique code, customers have to register the code on www.omanoasis.com/wingold

to be eligible to participate in the raffle draw. Offering more opportunities to win, customers are free to participate more than once. To claim the prize, winners will have to preserve the Scratch Coupon, proof of purchase and present it along with their proof of ID.

Oman Oasis has conducted innumerable such raffle draws in the past to reward its customers for their loyalty to the brand. With a customer-centric approach to

all its campaigns, it has strengthened its ties with its customers while increasing its reach across the Sultanate. Complementing its creative marketing strategies is its state-of-the-art production line that ensures its adherence to international standards. Further attesting its commitment to providing quality drinking water are its international product quality certifications like the IBWA membership, NSF, ABWA, and WQA.

MORE UTILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Alizz Islamic Bank launches update to its mobile banking application

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently launched a new update for its mobile banking application, making bill payments even easier. The Alizz Islamic Bank mobile application now has more utility service providers added to its list of bill payment facilities.

The service providers added to the app include Awasr, Mazoon Electricity Company, Dhofar Power Company, Majan Electricity Company and others.

With the new update, customers of these companies can now pay their bills conveniently through the app and also be aware of their upcoming payments.

Additionally, users can now make international mobile top-ups easily when they are abroad through the updated Alizz Islamic Bank mobile banking application.

The bank's electronic channels, such as the mobile banking application, ATMs, online banking, and interactive teller machines provide an integrated and comprehensive delivery system. Customers can pay their bills, transfer money locally and abroad,



pay their credit card fees, deposit cheques and carry out other transactions on these platforms. For example, when a customer pays their water, electricity or telephone bill via the Alizz Islamic Bank mobile banking application, the payment is made immediately and the customer does not need to wait for

the approval and he/she gets the transaction confirmation immediately. Alizz Islamic Bank has implemented state-of-the-art security controls to ensure the safety of its customers' money and their personal information.

Speaking about the update to the application, Mohammed Juma Al Ghassani is the AGM -Chief Consumer Banking Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank, said, "At Alizz Islamic Bank one of our key focuses is to provide the very best digital banking experience for our customers, whenever and wherever our customers need. Throughout the bank's history, we have been at the forefront of digital banking in Oman and we are delighted to further reinforce this with the latest release of our bi-lingual application. With an increasingly young population in Oman who prefer more technologically advanced banking solutions, our wide range of cutting edge digital banking solutions enable our customers to benefit from more convenient and secure self-service channels, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Alizz Islamic Bank is proud to introduce the latest version of the mobile banking application to provide an easy and convenient experience for banking. The bi-lingual mobile banking application is available for Android, iOS and Huawei devices, and features the very latest in mobile banking technology with advanced security capabilities.

Through this app, customers are offered the convenience of applying for a new account or card, processes instant transfers, pay all their monthly bills simultaneously with one tap of a button, request for a chequebook, issue account statements and many other features and services.

The app also offers location information of Alizz Islamic Bank branches and ATMs and provides reminders for monthly bill and credit card payments that are due in addition to information on the account balance.

There are also additional tools such as prayer timings, Qibla direction, a Zakat calculator and a currency rates converter.

NEW LINKED SERVICE



Lusaka and Harare now boarding: Qatar Airways debuts two new gateways in Africa

DOHA: Qatar Airways enhanced its presence in Southern Africa with the launch of a new linked service between Doha and Lusaka, Zambia and Harare, Zimbabwe. To mark this milestone, the new linked service was inaugurated by the airline's state-of-the-art Airbus A350-900 featuring 36 seats in the award-winning Qsuite Business Class and 247 seats in Economy Class.

Qatar Airways now operates to Lusaka's Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (LUN). The country's largest city and commercial centre, Lusaka is the gateway to experiencing Zambia's legendary tourist attractions from Victoria Falls which it shares with Zimbabwe, to game reserves and a variety of wildlife. Meanwhile, Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, will be served via Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport (HRE) is also a destination with rich culture, World Heritage-listed archaeological sites, and diverse natural landscapes. The aircraft was greeted in Lusaka and Harare by traditional water cannon salutes upon arrival.

The airline has demonstrated its steadfast commitment to Africa throughout the pandemic having significantly grown its network by adding four routes to Accra, Abidjan, Abuja, Luanda and restarting services to Allexandria, Cairo and Khartoum bringing its footprint to 27 destinations in 21 countries. Earlier this month, Qatar Airways also signed an interline agreement with RwandAir giving customers greater access to the combined networks of both airlines.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We have ambitious plans for Africa which is one of the fastest-

growing economic regions of the world, with rising consumer demand and an abundance of natural resources. We see enormous potential in not just outbound travel from Zimbabwe and Zambia, but also inbound traffic from India, UK, and the Americas. We look forward to strengthening trade and tourism links between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and destinations on the Qatar Airways network, and steadily grow these routes to support the recovery of tourism and trade in the region."

Businesses and traders will also benefit from the airline's cargo offering, allowing more than 30 tonnes of cargo capacity per week, each way to support the two countries' exports such as vegetables and flowers to destinations on the Qatar Airways network such as London, Frankfurt and New York and multiple points in China. Imports will consist of pharmaceuticals, automotive and technology equipment.

Customers can look forward to the quintessential on-board hospitality from Qatar Airways' cosmopolitan cabin crew, including Zambian and Zimbabwean nationals, and generous baggage allowances ranging from 46kg for Economy Class split over two pieces and 64kg split over two pieces in Business Class.

As travellers return to the skies with Qatar Airways, they can take comfort knowing that they are travelling with the only airline in the world that has, together with its state-of-the-art global hub Hamad International Airport, achieved four 5-Star Skytrax ratings - including the prestigious 5-Star Airline Rating, 5-Star Airport Rating, 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating and 5-Star COVID-19 Airport Safety Rating.

ROUND-UP

MG Motor launches its first-ever pickup truck MG T60 in Oman

The MG T60 is a reliable and versatile partner in the lightweight pickup category

MUSCAT: The British born brand with a commitment to Do More, MG Motor has launched its first-ever pickup truck - the MG T60 - for its customers in Oman.

The MG T60 is a reliable and versatile partner in the lightweight pickup category. It has been designed to offer superior performance as a practical truck made for cargo as well as personal transportation needs.

The truck is available in two engine types: diesel and gasoline. It is also available in two transmission systems: 2WD and 4WD. This makes the MG T60 an ideal vehicle that meets all your needs - wherever you go and for whatever purpose.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani; CEO; MHD ACERE - the sole distributor of MG Motor vehicles in Oman - comments, "This launch is indeed a special one. Till now we have brought superior MG sedans and SUVs for individuals and families in Oman but with MG T60 we have forayed into the commercial vehicles category and will be able to meet the needs of wider customer segments. MG T60 is a highly versatile and highly reliable vehicle. At MHD ACERE, our efforts are always inclined towards bringing high-quality products for our customers and with this launch, we feel we have moved a step ahead in pursuit of excellence and customer satisfaction."

Whether you are hauling loads to a construction site or taking your family on an off-road adventure, the MG T60 enables you to Do More. With two engine options - a 2.8L turbo-diesel producing 150 HP and 360 Nm and a 2.4L petrol engine producing 143 HP, MG T60 promises to give power-packed as well as economical performance.

Its exterior is strong and graceful. The high ground clearance is one of the key features of the MG T60 as it allows the truck to be



driven on various road types, including rocky and rough terrains. The large front grille made of vertical bars surrounded by a bright chrome frame adds a touch of defiance and boldness to the vehicle.

While the MG T60's exterior is all muscle, its interior is crafted for comfort. Behind the wheel, both the driver and passenger can benefit from a range of adjustment settings, while the intuitive cockpit is designed to ensure every control is within easy reach. The cabin is roomy and can seat up to five, offering plenty of head and legroom for adults. There is automatic air conditioning that circulates to the rear via dedicated vents, as well as a four-speaker stereo system with a radio to keep you informed as well as entertained.

The MG T60 also comes with superior safety features to meet all challenging situations. It comes with ABS with EBD, stability control, EBA and traction control as standard to assist with the drive, as well as inner and outer rope hooks, a cargo bed fender and a sidestep for load security and safe access. Passive safety features include front and side airbags and a tyre pressure monitoring system.

To know more about the ve-



hicle, you can visit MG Motor showrooms located in Wattayah, Azaiba, Al Manuma, Bidaya, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah, Sur, Ibra and Ibri. You can also book a test drive and purchase the vehicle online on <https://mg-om.com/>

MG is a British-born automotive brand established in 1924, known for its historic models, awards and achievements throughout the past 97 years. MG was founded by Wil-

liam Morris and Cecil Kimbers and has one of the oldest car clubs in the automotive industry. Best known for its two-seat open sports cars, MG also produced saloons and coupes. Since it acquired MG, SAIC Motor, as a Global Top 500 company, has opened a new chapter for this British icon. MG is at the forefront of the introduction of innovative technologies and new energy vehicles for car buyers.



THIRD QUARTER DRAWS

More than OMR300,000 cash prizes to be won in ahlibank's Prize Scheme

MUSCAT: Committed to its promise of helping people achieve their dreams with more prize draws for more customer segments, ahlibank will celebrate the winners of its third quarterly draws at the beginning of October.

Stirring excitement amongst its customers, the bank is all geared up to reward prizes totalling more than OMR300,000, wherein one winner will walk away with the grand 'Salary for Life' prize of OMR250,000 (OMR1,000 monthly for 250 months). The event will be streamed live on the bank's official social media pages.

Expressing his joy on the success of the Wafra scheme and its role in changing the winners' lives, Muneer Al Balushi - AGM- Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank said, "The Wafra prize scheme has witnessed huge popularity since its launch and this has encouraged the bank to continue its efforts to create new products that encompass a wider customer base. The draws help the winning customers

in ensuring financial stability and secure their future and that of their families. ahlibank will continue to look for new opportunities that add value to customers and stakeholders through prize schemes, innovative banking products and superior customer service."

"We always encourage a savings culture among our customers, and this has been reflected in the increased winning opportunities and prizes offered under Wafra 2021 scheme. The prize program is part of our long-term strategy that aims to promote financial inclusion among citizens, and an opportunity to further contribute to the Sultanate's economic and social development objectives," he further explained.

In addition to the 'Salary for Life' prize draw, the Bank will also announce the winner of the quarterly prize for Al Nukhba and exclusive accounts worth OMR25,000, and the winner of the quarterly draw of Imtiyaz accounts, where the bank will present a prize of OMR5,000.



Encouraging the habit of saving, the Bank will also conduct special quarterly draws for those who maintain an average quarterly balance of at least OMR5,000 in their accounts. Five lucky winners will be rewarded with cash

prizes of OMR25,000 (OMR5,000 per winner).

In addition, the Bank will announce two winners in the monthly salary transfer draws where each winner will receive a prize of OMR 1,000. Ensuring that eve-

ryone stands a chance to win, it will reward 5 young winners a total prize of OMR 1,500 in the monthly draws that will be conducted under its 'MyChoice' category while 5 other winners in the children's category will win a total prize of OMR 1,000. Apart from these, a weekly draw is held for all branches, rewarding 20 winners with prizes worth OMR 500 each. Along with that, the bank provides RO 500 to the winner of the weekly prize from Al Nukhba and exclusive accounts, and a prize of OMR 500 to the winner of the weekly prize from Imtiyaz segment.

Most recently, ahlibank announced the winners of its second quarterly draws under the Wafra prize scheme with cash prizes totalling more than OMR 300,000. Mohammed Salim from Avenues Mall branch won the grand 'Salary for Life' prize of RO 250,000. The event was held at ahlibank's new branch in Al-Rustaq, in the presence of a limited number of the bank's officials, and was streamed

live on the bank's official social media pages. The bank also showcased increased engagement on its Instagram account, by rewarding 10 winners from the live audience of the draws with a total of OMR 1,000, marking the festive occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

'Wafra' - which means 'abundance' in Arabic - Prize Scheme 2021, aims to award total prizes worth over OMR 2 million to more than 1600 customers across ahlibank's branches in the Sultanate. These are given away across weekly and monthly prizes for the bank's branches, salary transfer prizes, children prizes and youth prizes under 'MyChoice', upper mass prizes under 'Imtiyaz', special prizes for premium and private customers under 'Al Nukhba' and 'Exclusive', and the special event draws such as the 51st National Day and the opening of new branches. This reflects ahlibank's vision of enhancing people's lives and helping them achieve their dreams.



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PAKISTAN AND OMAN ENJOY HISTORICAL BONDS OF AFFINITY, KINSHIP

I offer my deep gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman for his generous hospitality for more than 200,000 Pakistanis who benefit from the Blessed Renaissance

On the auspicious occasion of Independence Day of Pakistan, I have the privilege to extend heartiest felicitations to all Pakistanis Community Members residing in the Sultanate of Oman.

Pakistan and Oman enjoy historical bonds of affinity and kinship. The relations are strongly pegged on common faith, culture and values. I am confident that these would continue to grow further in times ahead under the able and sagacious leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman.

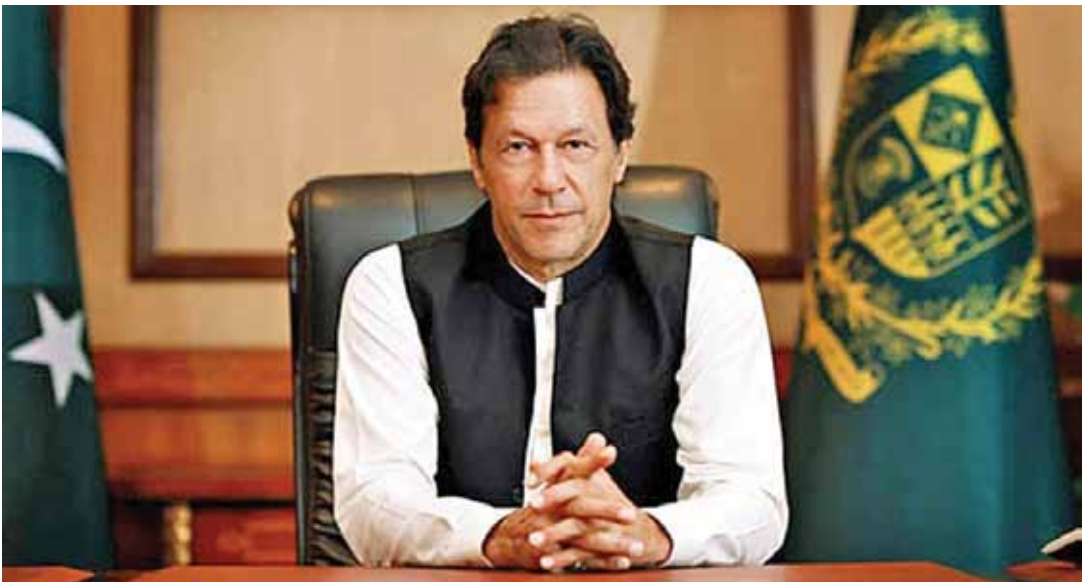
At this critical time when the world is witnessing the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and its aftershocks, I appreciate the efforts and timely decisions made by the Government of Oman in tackling the serious global health challenge.

Let me also acknowledge the generosity of the Government of Oman vis-à-vis medical facilities extended to Pakistani community members who contracted COVID-19 pandemic infections.

I am happy to share with my community members that Pakistan has successfully and effectively faced the challenges posed by ongoing pandemic. Our leadership's concept on 'smart lockdown' has been greatly acknowledged and appreciated by the World Health Organisation and other international agencies. Our exports have witnessed a substantial growth, whereas, globally exports of majority countries have declined.

Let me also highlight the prominent and unprecedented contribution made by Oman based Pakistani diaspora by trusting Roshan Digital Account as well as remitting a record US\$ 1,083 Million during last fiscal year (2020-21) to Pakistan.

It reflects the belief of Pakistani diaspora in Pakistani leadership's vision of transformed Pakistan which is centered around economic security with focus on three pillars;



Message of H.E. K.K. Ahsan Wagan, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of Independence Day of Pakistan

countries such as Saudi Arabia and UAE have also pledged investment in CPEC related projects. I invite my Omani brethren as well to come forward and invest in CPEC related projects especially in Gwadar and Balochistan.

When viewed individually and collectively, Pakistan and Oman are both strategic partners and may explore areas for Joint Investment/Joint Ventures in the fields such as Agriculture, Livestock, CPEC/Gwadar related projects, IT, Education, Defence and Health. Pakistan and Oman may complement each other to achieve economic development and progress for larger benefit of the people of two brotherly countries.

In the end, I offer my deep gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman for his generous hospitality for more than 200,000 Pakistanis who benefit from the Blessed Renaissance. I thank Government of Oman for its cooperation and all Omanis for their infinite and unconditional affection which demonstrates the true measure of our 5000 years old bond.

"Long Live Pak-Oman Friendship."

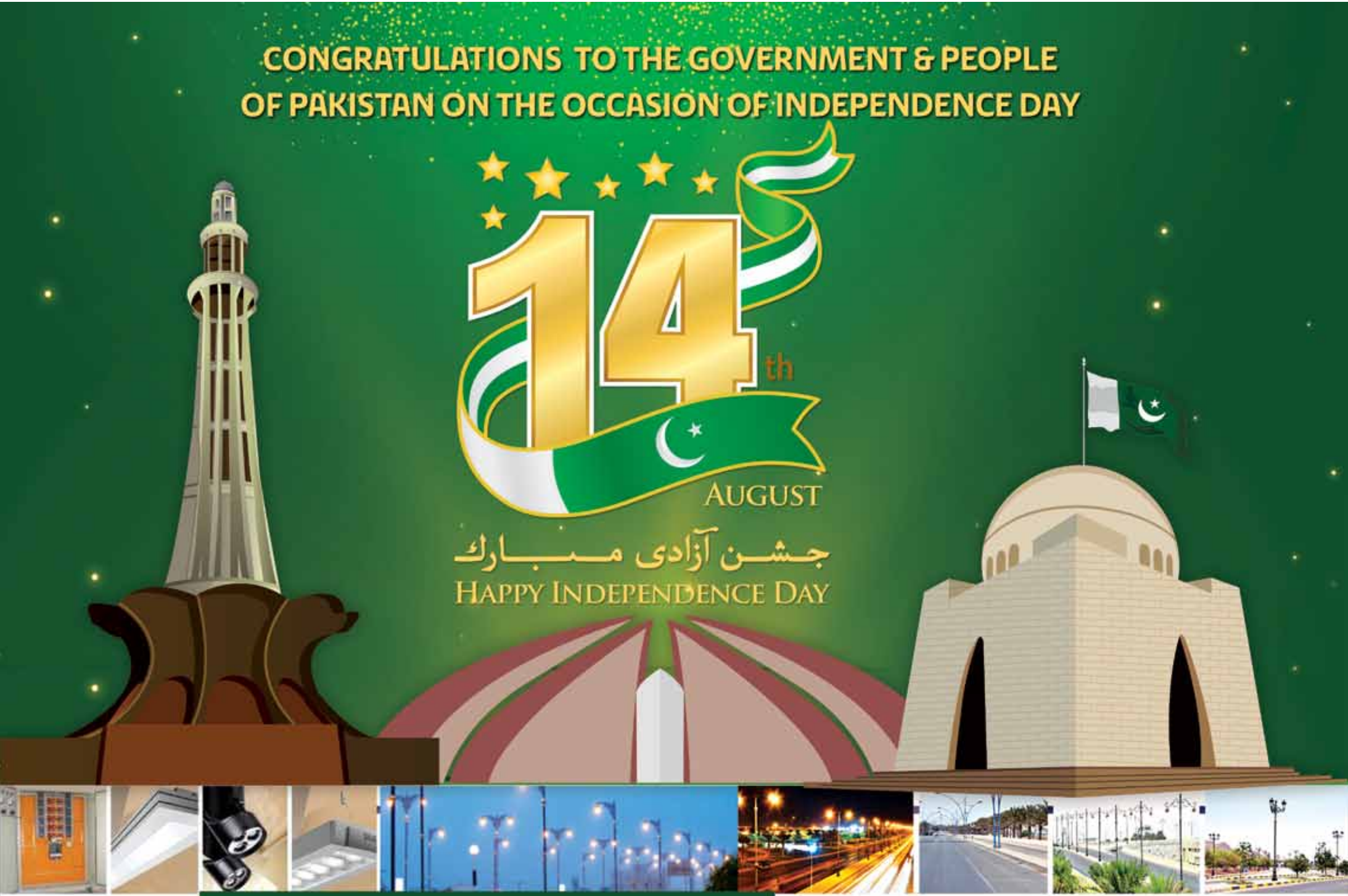
lars; i)connectivity; ii) providing economic bases as development strategy; and iii) peace within our borders and beyond.

I would like to state that Pakistan is now focused on optimally utilising its geo-economic location – at the crossroads of Middle East, South and Central Asia – to advance the goals of national economic development. Pakistan offers itself as an economic hub/ melting pot for positive global interests.

In the global changing dynam-

ics, our leadership's focus is on geo-economics and with this background, Pakistan has heavily invested on connectivity. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship programme, which is geo-strategic connecting point between South/ Central Asia, Eastern China, Middle East and North Africa.

The transformational nature of CPEC will be utilised as the epic centre of Regional Connectivity. China has invested approximately US\$ 60 billion in CPEC. Other





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Pakistan Independence Day

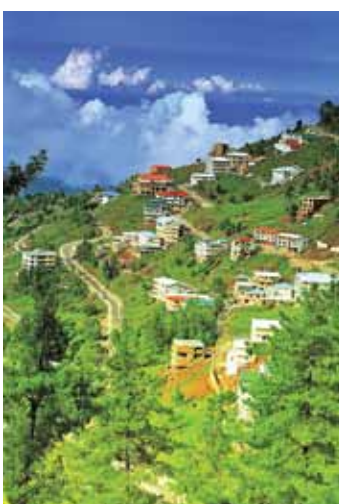


If you want to experience the thrills and chills of some unforgettable adventures, unveil the mysteries of some historical places and people and even enjoy the best comforts with all the luxuries of modern day life, come visit Pakistan. It will take your breath away.



The trip of a lifetime

Pakistan is one of the most populous countries in the world: China and India. In the Northern Areas, there is a white world full of black granite slopes and precipices, some of them too steep for snow. This witnesses the unbelievable physical drama of the world's four highest mountain ranges, the Himalayas, the Karakoram, the Hindukush and the Pamirs, and the fertile river basins with many tributaries feeding the mighty Indus River, to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.



AKISTAN is a land of contrasts and holds excellent diversity of habitats ranging from high snow covered mountains in the north to vast lush cultivated fields, great deserts of Cholistan and Tharparker to sandy seashores in the south. These mountains, plateaus, plains, deserts, rivers, lakes and seashores project the breathtaking natural beauty of Pakistan.

Geographical wonders
Pakistan has a geo-strategic place in the comity of nations, blessed with natural resources and bounded by Iran, Afghanistan, and two

Historical and cultural heritage

Pakistan has great treasures of the Indus and the Gandhara Civilisations, traces of which are found in the ruins of Mohenjo-daro (on the left bank of the Indus in Sindh), Kot Diji (on the left bank of the Indus), the plains of Punjab (near the city of Sahiwal), and Harappa.

In Sindh, one of the oldest and largest graveyards in Thatta, the shrine of the great Sufi Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, shrine of one of the greatest poets Shah Abdul Latif in Hala, Kot Diji and

water mark of Mughal architecture, and the Great Mughal emperor Jahangir's tomb. Further to north about 72 km, the birthplace of the Sikh religion, born in 1469 at Taluandi village known as Nankana Sahib is the most important place for Sikh Yatis. A large Sikh Gurdwara here has become the centre of annual pilgrimage by Sikh communities around the world.

The population is a unique blend of a variety of living habits, cultural and social values, and stunning arts and crafts. Some major cultures developed on the bank of Indus – an 8000-year old civilization. Greco-Buddhist (Gandhara) history abounds here with Buddhism being influenced by the Aryan and later Greek invasions through the legendary Khyber Pass. Gandhara, the ancient Peshawar Valley and the cradle of Buddhist civilisations, gave birth to the famous Gandharan Art. The cosmopolitan art of Gandhara with influence from Indians, Greeks, Romans, and Persian artists appeared in this region. The purpose of this art was the propagation of Buddhism through the images carved and made in stones, stucco, terracotta and bronze, mostly enshrined in the stupas and monasteries throughout the Gandhara region. The sites and antiquities of Takht-i-Bahi, Sahi Bahlol, Jamal Garhi, Rani Gat, Aziz Dohri, Butkara, Saidi Stupa, Kanpur and the monasteries in the Taxila valley have provided the richest collection of the Gandharan Art. The collection of this beautiful art and archaeological heritage is preserved in Peshawar Museum.

A modern state with convenience

All communication networks such as cell phone, fax and internet are found everywhere to make your trip memorable. Bazaars with old and modern collection of art, restaurant with spicy and tasty food of famous places such as Burns Road of Karachi, Food Street of Lahore, Jahangir of Rawalpindi, Food Street of Islamabad and Namak Mandi of Peshawar, and

the endless variety of landscapes, activities, flora and fauna are of much interest. All this and more are surprisingly available at reasonable and affordable rates.

Highly developed and inexpensive air network links all regions of the country, and neighbouring countries with multiple frequencies. Many top airlines of the world connect Pakistan with the rest of the world as tourists come from everywhere to visit these wonderful places. Travelling will be far easier once the COVID-19 pandemic is gone as PIA links all the major cities and operates direct flights to and from Europe, United States, Middle East and Far East.

Summer adventures

The mountain adventures can be carried out in the north, where lie the mountains of the Himalayas, the Karakoram, the Hindukush and the Pamirs. The lush valleys of Dir, Swat, Kaghan, Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza and Baltistan look really like a paradise on earth. Northern Pakistan is a trekker's delight and a hub of adventure tourism.



Trekking

One of the most popular treks is the Baltoro trek, which ends up at Concordia. Concordia is the point where all the glaciers coming from K2, Broad-peak, and Gasherbrum-IV meet and flow down towards Paju peak, like a highway. No where in the world can one witness four 8000 metre peaks in such a small radius. They are K2, Broad Peak, Gasherbrum-I and Gasherbrum-II.

On this trek, besides these 8000 metre giants one can also enjoy the scenarios of Mashrubum, Muztagh towers, Chogolisa, Baltoro Cathedrals and numerous other peaks. Amongst the other popular treks there are Biafo-Hisper trek, Nanga Parbat trek, Rakaposhi trek, Trichmir trek, and countless other trekking routes. There are still certain areas in northern Pakistan that are yet to be explored.

Mountaineering

Pakistan boasts of one of the world's highest collections of peaks rising above 6000 metres. The lofty mountain ranges of Karakoram, Hindukush and Himalayas offer great opportunities for mountaineering, which are unparalleled in the world. The area has been a magnet for mountaineers from all over the world since the 19th century.

Rock climbing

Pakistan is well known for high altitude and for rock climbing. The Trango towers in Baltoro area are well known all over the world. Besides Trango Towers, Kondus valley in Khaplu area is a paradise for rock climbers. There are numerous untouched rock faces in the Karakoram, Himalayas and Hindukush ranges of Pakistan, which are ideal for rock climbers.

Air safaris

Air Safari to the roof of the world offers great opportunities to the tourists to have a bird's eye view of Pakistan's northern paradise. This one-hour safari experience will take you to the peaks of Karakoram and Hindukush ranges such as Nanga Parbat, Mount Trichmir and Rakaposhi and the striking Baltoro Glacier. Above all, K2, the world's second highest peak, is spectacular. This wonderful experience leaves unforgettable impression on one's life and one feels like being in heaven.

Soft adventures

Adventures during the day include hiking and jeep rides among the major attractions of Chitral, the Kalash valley, the home of the Kafir-Kalash or "Wearers of the Black Robes", a primitive pagan tribe. The night can be spent in well-furnished motels and lodges. Over 3,000-strong Kafir-Kalash live in the valley of Birir, Bumburet and Rambur, south of Chitral. Bumburet, the largest and the most picturesque valley of the Kafir-Kalash, is 40 kms from Chitral. Birir, 34 kms, and Rambur, 32 kms, are also connected by rocky roads.

The people of Kalash are fun loving. They love music and dance, particularly on their religious festivals like Joshi Chilinjust

Highly developed and inexpensive air network links all regions of the country, and neighbouring countries with multiple frequencies

(14th & 15th May – spring), Phool (20th – 25th September) and Chomas (18th to 21st December for a week). Polo in Chitral is as popular as in Gilgit.

Polo matches are great attractions at festive occasions. A regular polo tournament is held every year (first week of July) at Shandur Pass, which many call 'polo on the roof of the world'.

Winter adventures

Sky and snow
There are a number of areas in Northern Pakistan, in both the high mountains of the Northern Areas and Chitral and in lower regions of Swat and Kaghan, which

can be developed as ski and snowboarding sites. There are plenty of sites and opportunities available for cross country skiing in the Northern Areas, Chitral, Kaghan and Swat. The precipitation and snow accumulation in these areas, except for the Northern Areas, are very high.

Skiing is the newest rage in Pakistan. Best available skiing areas are at Naltar near Gilgit, Burzil Pass area and Ratu, near Astore, District Gilgit.

There are a few skiing slopes available at Malam Jabba. 8700 feet above sea level, Malam Jabba Ski Resort stands on top of the mountains of the Hindukush range, north east of Saidi Sharif. It is a wonderful tourist resort offering picturesque skiing landscapes. The place gets 6 to 10 feet of average snowfall annually. The main attractions of the resort are skiing and chair lift.

Steam engine safaris

To the north of Pakistan the historic Khyber Pass is the gateway to Central Asia via Kabul. The Khyber steam safari from Peshawar to Landi Kotal is an attractive and unique train journey in this region. History has now been reversed and historical steam locomotives are on the run once again to the wonder of the whistle echoes, which are the history and myth of Khyber. The British built this railroad in 1920 that passes through 34 tunnels, totaling five kms and over 92 bridges and culverts provide a miraculous picturesque view. Besides scheduled services, the Khyber Steam Safari can be chartered and availed on demand at any time throughout the year.

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Pakistan Independence Day



A day to reconnect with the roots

BY SHAHZAD RAZA

T

o the whole Pakistani nation, Independence Day means much more than an annual reminder of the date the country was founded back in 1947. August 14 holds immense importance for every Pakistani as it not only unites them in celebration but serves to hold them together despite the diversity of ethnic backgrounds and disparity of political views.

Come to visit any major city of Pakistan on August 14 and you will be amazed to see the spirit of celebration that marks the Independence Day festivities every year. People's love for the green and white, colours of Pakistani flag, can not only be felt but seen everywhere as homes and offices are decorated for the day and high-



rise buildings illuminated for a wonderful view at night. Overseas Pakistanis mark the occasion by celebrating the Independence Day like a festival. Though COVID-19 restrictions would not allow gatherings this year, events are usually held, cakes cut and shouts of 'Pakistan Zindabad' raised at every personal or public celebration of the day.

Dr Ikram Burney, Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology at a hospital in Oman, believes the day comes to reconnect him with his roots in Pakistan.

"Independence Day is a special

People from every stratum of Pakistani diaspora abroad share the nostalgia that serves to strengthen the bond with their motherland

occasion for me; it's a day of joy and celebration.

I wait for August 14 like people wait for Eid and Christmas. Over the last few years, since I have been living out of Pakistan, I have seen August 14 as the day of my connectivity with the roots. The heart pounds and eyes water as the sounds of National Anthem strike the eardrum and the green and white flag goes up. The feeling of being a proud Pakistani is rejuvenated," Burney added.

People from every stratum of Pakistani diaspora abroad share the nostalgia that serves to strengthen

the bond with their motherland.

Qamar Riaz, noted poet, writer, businessman and a long time Oman resident, says August 14 is a reminder to him that he has a role to play for his country's growth and development.

"Our Independence Day comes to remind me that I have a beautiful homeland where my mother waits for me, my family thinks about me and where my father and forefathers have lived and served to the best of their abilities. Oman is my second home and I love this wonderful country but Pakistan beats in my heart and soul and my love for my motherland surpasses every material thing in this world. Nothing can separate me from Pakistan and I will continue to serve my country in every possible way," commented Qamar.

Distance lends enchantment to the view but Kashif Ahmed Zaeem, who runs an IT business in Oman, feels being far from the country makes one realistic and even more patriotic.

"This day reinforces the importance of independence which our forefathers achieved after immense sacrifices. Being away from Pakistan, all of us are our country's

ambassadors as we also represent our people and culture. Today, we feel proud of our country that stands firmly as a sovereign state on the world map. We are not physically present with our people on this auspicious day but our hearts and souls are. Long live Pakistan," added Kashif.

To Khadim Hussaim Jhakhari, General Manager NESPAK Oman, the spirit of celebration is high among overseas Pakistanis on August 14 as they are away from their homeland. "We celebrate our Independence Day with full vigour and enthusiasm. Although we miss the traditional festivities that mark this historic day back home, we join our nation with more sense of loyalty and belonging to our motherland.

"Overseas Pakistanis serve their country by making massive contribution to its economy. I am proud of the fact that NESPAK has been serving Oman too since 1980 by taking active part in building the country's infrastructure including roads, dams and water supply projects," said Khadim.

Shahzad Raza is a former editor and freelance writer

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PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY
14 August

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