

OMAN DENOUNCES TARGETING OF SCHOOL IN GAZA

Muscat - Oman has condemned Israel's continued unjustified military attacks against the Palestinian people, including the massacre that targeted the Al Fakhoura School run by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, which resulted in the death of civilians displaced from the northern Gaza Strip.

The sultanate has sent its condolences to the families of those killed and its best wishes for a speedy recovery for the wounded, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, adding that the country values the steadfastness of the brave Palestinian people in the face of injustice, aggression and the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, in flagrant violation of international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions. It renewed call on the international community to impose sanctions on Israel.

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Dream destination: Maldives is ideal for a honeymoon trip

Oman to invest R02.5bn in logistics

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has unveiled plans to invest approximately R02.5bn in the transport and logistics sector over five years from 2021 to 2025.

This significant development was revealed following the conclusion of the second series of workshops focused on attracting investments in this sector.

The workshops were jointly conducted by MTCIT and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), with support from the National Programme for Investment and Export Development (Nazdaher).

The intensive two-week workshops, which were a collaborative effort between the ministry, CAA, and Nazdaher, brought forth 27 investment opportunities and six initiatives to enhance the logistics sector.



Current valuation of proposed projects stands at R01.4bn, encompassing both announced and yet-to-be floated investment opportunities

ENG KHAMIS MOHAMMED AL SHAMMAKHI

These sessions provided a platform for investors and private companies to discuss challenges, refine their proposals, and explore investment possibilities in



partnership with Nazdaher.

Eng Khamis Mohammed al Shammakhi, Undersecretary for Transport at MTCIT, highlighted the ministry's strategic plan to

invest around R02.5bn in the sector. He indicated that the current valuation of proposed projects stands at R01.4bn, encompassing both announced

and yet-to-be floated investment opportunities.

Goals include boosting government revenue growth from the sector, achieving R018mn in

returns from land transport by 2025, and increasing employment opportunities in related sectors from 19% in 2023 to 21% in 2025.

The workshops witnessed participation from about 250 employees representing 56 government and private entities, along with 15 investors from Oman and abroad. They covered various topics aimed at increasing investment in the sector, enhancing its appeal to Omani professionals, and boosting Oman's standing in the Logistics Performance Index.

Additionally, these sessions were designed to address ongoing project challenges, attract new investments, and bolster overall support for the sector.

This initiative by MTCIT is a significant step towards advancing Oman's transport and logistics sector, aiming to drive economic growth and improve the sultanate's global logistics profile.

Dhofar sees remarkable surge in tourists, spending during khareef 2023

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dhofar governorate experienced a significant increase in tourist arrivals during the khareef season of 2023, recording approximately 962,000 visitors. This marks an 18.4% rise from the 813,000 visitors in the 2022 season.

Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information



(NCSI) revealed that spending by tourists in Dhofar during the 2023 khareef season escalated to R0103mn, up from R086mn in the previous year, a jump of 19.7%. Additionally, the duration of stay for visitors extended to 7mn nights, a notable increase from 6mn nights in 2022.

The NCSI data further showed a substantial rise in the number of Omani visitors during this period, with a 69.2% increase to

666,307. The region also welcomed 190,853 visitors from other GCC states, a considerable growth compared to 107,804 during the same period in 2022.

Expenditure on housing witnessed a 19.4% increase, totaling R033.68mn and accounting for 32.2% of the total tourist spending. Food and drink expenses followed, amounting to R025.598mn, which comprised 24.9% of the overall expenditure.

Travel ticket expenses represented 18.8% of the total, reaching R019.268mn. Spending on other miscellaneous items amounted to R024.693mn.

Omanis contributed the most to the tourist expenditure, accounting for 62.4% of the total, which equaled R064.7mn. Visitors from the GCC countries contributed 22.5% to the total spending, amounting to R023.8mn.

AWASR, AMS-IX, and Alliance Launch Oman-IX

Muscat, 20 Nov 2023 - AWASR, a leading fibre broadband provider in Oman, Alliance Networks, a regional digital infrastructure service provider, and Amsterdam Internet Exchange (AMS-IX), a world-leading Internet Exchange provider, have joined forces to launch Oman Internet Exchange (Oman-IX). The neutral and ground-breaking Internet Exchange aims to revolutionize digital infrastructure services in the region by interconnecting industry-leading organizations, networks, data centres, and cloud services across the Middle East and beyond.

The new Internet Exchange, Oman-IX, will be owned by AWASR, an established player in the telecommunications industry. AWASR aims to establish an Internet Exchange node in Oman as part of its commitment to enhancing connectivity and fostering digital growth in the Sultanate. They will leverage Alliance Networks' experience in the region, known for its extensive network reach and expertise in providing advanced connectivity and digital solutions, and collaborate with AMS-IX to provide the desired technical world-class experiences in establishing and operating Internet exchanges.

Engineer Adnan Al-Alawi, CEO of AWASR, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "We are thrilled to embark on this transformative collaboration with Alliance Networks and AMS-IX. The launch of Oman-IX will unlock new horizons for the Sultanate of Oman, enabling efficient exchange of internet traffic and promoting digital innovation across industries."

Adel Al Daylami, CEO of Alliance Networks, emphasized the importance of this collaboration, saying, "Alliance Networks is dedicated to providing reliable and robust digital infrastructure services in the region. Partnering with AWASR and AMS-IX



to establish Oman-IX aligns with our mission to interconnect networks and promote seamless data exchange across borders. Together with AWASR, we look forward to creating a strong digital ecosystem in Oman."

Peter van Burgel, CEO of AMS-IX, highlighted the significance of this venture, stating, "We are delighted to contribute our expertise in Internet Exchange services to this partnership. The collaboration between AWASR, Alliance Networks, and AMS-IX will empower Oman's digital landscape and accelerate the country's connectivity to global networks via public peering. Oman-IX will serve as a vital hub for internet traffic exchange, enabling an enhanced user experience and fostering digital innovation."

Through this mutually beneficial partnership, AWASR, Alliance Networks, and AMS-IX will collaborate to build digital infrastructure services, leveraging Alliance's infrastructure, AWASR's expertise, and Oman's Internet Exchange capabilities. Oman-IX will serve as a hub for aggregating IP peering traffic from both local and global networks within Oman, facilitating the exchange of peering traffic through AMS-IX Internet Exchange to other international internet exchanges.

The new Internet Exchange powered by AMS-IX will be situated in the MC1 carrier-neutral data centre of Equinix in Muscat. Implementation and go-live of the new Internet Exchange are expected in Q4 of this year.

This partnership marks a significant milestone in the development of Oman's digital landscape, underlining the commitment of AWASR, Alliance Networks, and AMS-IX to revolutionizing connectivity and digital infrastructure in the region.

About AWASR Oman and Partners SAOC: AWASR Oman and Partners SAOC is a licensed Service Provider that plays a pivotal role in Oman's telecommunications sector. Awasr is considered the fastest fixed Internet provider in Oman, winning the Ookla Speed test Award for seven years in a row. The company aims to provide cutting-edge connectivity solutions and enhance digital services across the

Sultanate.

About Alliance Networks Alliance Networks is a regional digital infrastructure service provider that interconnects industry-leading organizations, networks, data centres, and cloud services across the Middle East and beyond. The company offers advanced digital solutions, driving innovation and digital transformation in the region.

About AMS-IX AMS-IX (Amsterdam Internet Exchange) is a neutral member-based association that operates multiple interconnection platforms around the world. Our leading platform in Amsterdam has been playing a crucial role

at the core of the internet for almost 30 years and is one of the largest hubs for internet traffic in the world with over 11 Terabits per second (Tbps) of peak traffic. Connecting to AMS-IX ensures customers such as internet service providers, telecom companies and cloud providers that their global IP traffic is routed in an efficient, fast, secure, stable and cost-effective way. This allows them to offer low latency and engaging online experiences for end-users. AMS-IX interconnects more than 1000 IP-networks in the world. AMS-IX also manages the world's first mobile peering points: the Global Roaming Exchange (GRX), the Mobile Data Exchange (MDX) and the Internetwork Packet Exchange (I-IPX) interconnection points



CASIO Math Challenge 2023 Celebrates Exceptional Mathematical Talents in Oman

Seeb, Oman – 2nd November 2023 – The “CASIO High School Math Challenge 2023” was a rousing success. Organized by CASIO Middle East and Africa FZE (CMEA) — the regional subsidiary of CASIO Computer Co., Ltd. and the leading education technology company — in collaboration with The Sultan’s School in Oman, the event spotlighted the outstanding problem-solving skills, strategic thinking, and mathematical skills of students from some of Oman’s most prestigious institutions.

The competition saw the participation of 75 bright students from esteemed schools such as The Sultan’s School, Al Ibdah International School, Beaconhouse School, and Azzan Bin Qais International School. These participants, divided into 15 teams, exhibited not only their exceptional skills but also their deep passion for mathematics.

On this special occasion, Mr. Takashi Seimiya, the Managing Director of CASIO Middle East and Africa, expressed his enthusiasm for the challenge in Oman. “This collaboration stands as a testament to our mutual dedication to promoting academic excellence and nurturing the next generation of mathematical talent,” he remarked. “We are proud of the incredible potential and creativity of all participants, and we’re truly honored to be a part of their academic journey. We firmly believe in the transformative power of education,

especially in the realm of mathematics, which not only advances skills but also inspires young minds to delve into the boundless opportunities it presents.”

In line with this commitment to nurturing academic excellence, Mr. Avinash Dhar, Managing Director of Nishat Group of Companies, emphasized their ongoing collaboration with CASIO Middle East and Africa. Said Mr. Dhar, “Teaming up with CMEA allows us to provide students in the Sultanate of Oman with the best resources, setting them up for unparalleled success in their future pursuits”.

Mrs. Sarah Mary Jasiewicz, head of the Secondary Math department at the Sultan’s School, shared her thoughts on this occasion and added, “It was a delight to see teams of students from international schools across Muscat come together for the CASIO High School Mathematics Challenge. The event was a celebration of not only individual mathematical excellence but also the power of teamwork with students helping and supporting each other in teams of four to solve a series of mathematical problems. The challenge proved to be incredibly close, with just one point, and a tricky quadratic functions question, separating first and second place! Congratulations to all who took part and we look forward to more opportunities to join with other schools to celebrate and nurture the mathematical talents of our students.”

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4th Himam Trail Run Race to kick off on Thursday

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With over 2,600 participants congregating from various parts of the world for the celebrated Himam Trail Run Race, the organisers in Oman are all set for its mega start on Thursday.

Organised by Dakhliyah governorate with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism as main partner, this year’s edition will take place in the scenic terrains of Al Hajar Mountains.

Over 600 participants from 62 countries are competing in the main distances, while approximately 2,000 individuals have registered for the fun and kids’ races, the organisers informed.

On the first day, the classic

and challenging Al Hajar Ultra 110km will be flagged off in the picturesque town of Al Hamra. In this challenging trail, runners will embark on a journey through the rugged beauty of Jabal Akhdar before descending into Birkat al Mouz.

Along the way, they will navigate rocky paths, climb steep inclines, and take in the stunning views of the surrounding landscape, ultimately gaining a total of 5700 metres of elevation.

Two more races - the technical and scenic Skyward Canyon 55km and Scenic Sprint 20km - will be held consecutively in Izki and Birkat al Mouz on Friday.

Runners will expect a truly unforgettable experience as they navigate rocky paths, climb steep inclines, and take in the

breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape.

“The 20km distance is a completely new trail designed to give runners scenic views of authentic Omani landscapes”, the organisers stated.

A range of shorter distances are also on offer to enable more members of the community to embark on the wonders of trail runners with the Hilly Haven 10km, Village Rush 5km, Mini Marvels 4km, and the Tiny Titans races (2km and 1km) taking place over the weekend. These trails are designed to cater to all levels of runners, from elite athletes to young enthusiasts.

The event will see a roster of elite runners including Jason Schlarb (USA), Kristina Schou Madsen (Denmark), Moham-

mad Reza (Iran), Aziza el Amrany and Rachid al Emrany (Morocco), Salama Alaqla (Jordan), and Perrine Fages (France), adding a competitive edge to the race. Their presence is a testament to the race’s growing prominence in the international mountain running community.

In addition to the races, the event will feature an exhibition, with various vendors, sports-related activities, and food options.

“The race is a culmination of years of experience and dedication, with the goal of making it a landmark event at both the Middle East and international levels. The Hajar mountain range with a distinctive terrain enjoys an international recognition,” said Mohammed al Riyami, vice president of the race.

Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om



Sultan Qaboos University

Date extension Announcement

Date for the Purchasing the document
on 27/11/2023

Date for submission of the quotations
on 24/12/2023



New initiative to empower people with disabilities

Muscat – Omran Group; Al Wafa’a Centre for the Rehabilitation of People with Disability; and DustiD2 Naseem Resort, Al Jabal Al Akhdar; on Sunday launched a first of its kind initiative concerned with supporting people with disabilities in the tourism sector.

‘GIFTed’ was launched in Jabal Akhdar to enhance the capabilities of people with disabilities and pave the way for them to acquire practical skills through specialised training that qualifies them to engage in the labour market.

The inauguration was held under the patronage of H H Sayyida Hujaija Jaif al Said.



Dhofar International Development And Investment Holding Company (SAOG) AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

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CHAIRMAN’S REPORT FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Un-audited Financial Results of Dhofar International Development & Investment Holding Company SAOG (“DIDIC”) for the period ending 30th September 2023.

During the first nine months of 2023 Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) dipped by 194 points and closed at 4678.13 points as on Sept 30, 2023 which is a 3.99% drop over the nine months period. During this period, the Company’s investments in equities at a group level recorded a decrease of RO 0.903 million on account of drop in the prices of its key equity investments.

Group Consolidated Performance

During the nine months period ending 30th September 2023, Net Profits were RO 3.89 million and the total comprehensive income attributable to our shareholders amounted to RO 4.30 million as compared to net profit of RO 7.33 million and total comprehensive profit of RO 5.95 million for the same period in 2022.

The Group ended the first nine months of 2023 with total assets of RO 222.72 million, an increase of 0.8% while shareholders’ equity of RO 130.38 million registered an increase of 4.55% from the first nine months of 2022 where total assets amounted to RO 220.94 million and shareholders’ equity attributable to our shareholders was RO 124.70 million.

During the three months period ending 30th September 2023, the Company sold its entire shareholding in its associate Omani Gulf Food Company LLC for a consideration of RO 4.154 million to Dhofar Foods & Investment Company SAOG (“Dhofar Foods”) and Dhofar Foods

issued its new shares aggregating to 51.924 mn at price of RO 0.080 in favour of the Company. This has resulted in Dhofar Foods being an associate of the Company with effect from 24 July 2023 with a total shareholding of 26.75%.

Performance of Key Associates

Bank Dhofar, our banking associate, reported after tax net profit of RO 31.022 million for the nine months period ended 30 September 2023 as compared to RO 26.098 million for the same period in 2022, representing an increase of 18.9%. The net interest income and net income from Islamic financing activities and investments decreased to RO 84.727 million compared to RO 91.284 million during same period of 2022 registering a decrease of 7.2%. However, net fees and commission income for the period was 54.9% higher compared to same period last year. Net loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables witnessed an increase of 7.52% and reached RO 3.57 billion as at 30 September 2023 as compared to RO 3.32 billion as at 30 September 2022. Similarly, customer deposits including Islamic deposits, increased by 5.5% compared to comparative period of last year. Total shareholders’ equity in the bank registered an increase by 2.70%, increasing to RO 571.715 million from RO 553.233 million a year prior.

Dhofar Insurance, our insurance associate has applied IFRS 17 “Insurance Contracts” and has reported its nine months financials accordingly after restated their last year comparatives. Dhofar Insurance recorded a growth of 7% in its insurance revenue to RO 54.40 million from RO 50.72 million a year earlier for the nine months period. Its insurance service results jumped significantly from a net expense of RO 0.81 million to a net revenue of RO 1.70 million.

Also, its net insurance finance results improved from a net expense of RO 0.21 million to a net income of RO 1.45 million for the first nine months of 2023. It reported net profit of RO 3.12 million for this period as compared to RO 1.99 million a year earlier; a growth of 56%. The shareholders’ equity has increased by 23%, from RO 27.29 million as at 30 September 2022 to RO 33.58 million as at 30 September 2023.

Oman Investment & Finance Company, our billing and collection associate that has also ventured into money exchange and contracting operations through two specialized subsidiaries, had its revenue marginally increased in its group operations in the first nine months of 2023 by 1.6%. However, net profits decreased by 19% to RO 3.55 million from RO 4.38 million a year earlier. The Shareholder’s equity increased by 7.7%, from RO 27.716 million as at 30 September 2022 to RO 29.846 million as at 30 September 2023.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to extend our gratitude to the leadership of the CMA, CBO and MOCI for their continued support. I would also like to thank the management teams of DIDIC, our subsidiaries and associate companies for all their hard work and dedication.

Finally, we wish our country continued safety and stability under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, may God protect him and prolong his life.

Khalid Bin Mustahail Ahmed Al Mashani
Chairman

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request the company in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of receipt of the request.

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITIONS AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	Group 2023 RO	Parent Company 2023 RO	Group 2022 RO	Parent Company 2022 RO
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	2,477,746	1,850,041	3,003,367	2,313,526
Receivables and prepayments	801,908	4,466,507	770,886	5,477,291
Inventories	19,781	-	24,080	-
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	41,111,174	25,267,231	45,681,455	30,622,882
- Investment in equities	730,000	730,000	1,830,000	1,830,000
- Investment in term deposits				
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	948,441	-	1,055,116	-
Investment in subsidiaries	-	1,904,630	-	696,842
Investment in associates	171,310,158	171,310,158	163,095,684	163,095,684
Loan to subsidiary	-	4,950,000	-	4,950,000
Investment property	247,212	247,212	247,212	247,212
Property and equipment	5,075,846	512,416	5,227,004	546,991
Total assets	222,722,266	211,238,195	220,935,014	209,780,628
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	54,472,000	54,472,000	54,472,000	54,472,000
Legal reserve	10,329,624	10,329,624	9,745,374	9,745,374
General reserve	7,070,404	7,070,404	7,070,404	7,070,404
Investment revaluation reserve	(3,091,287)	(3,091,287)	(5,187,226)	(5,187,226)
Retained earnings	61,601,321	61,192,734	58,603,382	58,603,382
Total equity due to shareholders of the Parent Company	130,382,062	129,973,475	124,703,934	124,703,934
LIABILITIES				
Other liabilities	454,787	233,686	408,413	206,410
Income tax payable	9,383	-	109,383	-
Loans and borrowings	91,876,034	81,031,034	95,713,284	84,866,284
	92,340,204	81,264,720	96,231,080	85,076,694
Total equity and liabilities	222,722,266	211,238,195	220,935,014	209,780,628
Net assets per share	0.319	0.318	0.305	0.305

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	Group 2023 RO	Parent Company 2023 RO	Group 2022 RO	Parent Company 2022 RO
INCOME				
Dividend income	1,205,513	1,079,843	1,299,505	1,227,123
Net revenue of a subsidiary	225,990	-	185,085	-
Realised gain(loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	-	571	8,505
Unrealised gain(loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(902,608)	(896,031)	2,486,955	2,274,904
Interest income	265,550	461,597	330,380	466,160
Other income	75,276	73,105	63,663	67,653
Total income	869,721	718,514	4,366,159	4,044,345
EXPENSES				
Administrative and general expenses	(1,585,369)	(1,188,916)	(1,321,534)	(939,965)
Depreciation	(147,933)	(46,967)	(131,325)	(40,315)
Total expenses	(1,733,302)	(1,235,883)	(1,452,859)	(980,270)
Operating profit	(863,581)	(517,369)	2,913,300	3,064,075
Finance costs	(4,483,012)	(3,817,227)	(5,124,529)	(4,553,430)
Amortization of deferred finance cost	(1,407,790)	(1,407,790)	(97,930)	(97,930)
Share of loss from subsidiaries	-	(1,011,997)	-	(821,874)
Share of profit from associates	10,643,677	10,643,677	9,738,272	9,738,272
Profit for the period before tax	3,889,294	3,889,294	7,429,113	7,329,113
Income tax	-	-	(100,000)	-
Profit for the period	3,889,294	3,889,294	7,329,113	7,329,113
Other comprehensive income(loss)				
Items that will not be subsequently reclassified to profit or loss				
Changes in fair value of financial assets through other comprehensive income	(240,019)	-	427,657	-
Share of other comprehensive profit(loss) of subsidiaries	-	(240,019)	-	427,657
Share of other comprehensive profit(loss) of associates	653,539	653,539	(1,806,315)	(1,806,315)
Other comprehensive income(loss) for the period	413,520	413,520	(1,378,658)	(1,378,658)
Total comprehensive income for the period	4,302,814	4,302,814	5,950,455	5,950,455
Basic earnings per share	0.010	0.010	0.018	0.018



GCC railway opening date set for Dec 2030

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The GCC ministers of transport have set December 2030 as target for the completion of the GCC railway project.

The 25th meeting of the Committee of GCC Ministers of Transport and Communications - convened in Muscat on Thursday under the chairmanship of Oman's Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology - marked a significant stride in regional connectivity.

The session followed the discussions at the meeting of the GCC undersecretaries for transport and communications the previous day.

In a notable development, the 2024 budget for the GCC Railway Authority was ratified, along with three key bylaws/regulations: 'The GCC administrative regulation', 'The financial and accounting regulation', and 'The procurement and storage regulation' for the Gulf Railways Authority.

H E Eng Said bin Hamoud bin Said al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and

This project is expected to bolster intra-trade exchange, support joint investments, and enhance Gulf economic integration, with a notable impact on global supply chains

Information Technology, spoke about the transport and communications sector's pivotal role in promoting economic growth and sustainable development.

He emphasised the sector's unique position in bridging production and consumption areas, as well as facilitating the efficient movement of people, materials, and goods, thereby optimising the use of natural resources.

Khalid Ali al Sunaidi, assistant secretary for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC Secretariat General, shed light on

the transportation sector's crucial contribution to the national economies of GCC member states. He acknowledged the sector's rapid development in easing the movement of citizens and residents among the GCC countries and enhancing intra-trade, which stood at over US\$107bn in 2022.

Sunaidi elaborated on the strategic importance of the GCC railway project, currently in progress, as a significant step towards Gulf integration.

This project is expected to bolster intra-trade exchange, support joint investments, and enhance Gulf economic integration, with a notable impact on global supply chains.

Predictions suggest that the GCC railway network will serve over 8mn passengers and transport approximately 95mn tonnes of freight by 2045.

The meeting also recommended adopting a unified regulatory framework for conducting ballast water tests on ships at GCC ports, among other regulatory measures, further underscoring the commitment to regional development and cooperation.



No رقم	Tender Ref الرقم المرجعي	Tender Title عنوان المناقصة	Tender Fee OMR الرسوم
1	SFZ 2023/036	Construction of SOHAR Freezone Infrastructure	1,050/-

- The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%.
 - Tenderers can request to participate in this Tender from 9:00 am on Monday, 20/11/2023 until 4:00 pm on Thursday 30/11/2023.
 - Electronic Tender Documents will be given to all participated Tenderers on Sunday, 3/12/2023.
 - Proposals to be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on Thursday 11/1/2024.
 - This tender is applicable for National registered companies with excellent & 1st grade as per commercial registration ONLY.
 - Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:
- تتضمن الرسوم المناقصة المذكورة أعلاه ضريبة القيمة المضافة وقدرها 5٪.
 - يمكن للمتقدمي العطاءات طلب المشاركة في المناقصة ابتداءً من يوم الاثنين الموافق ٢٠/١١/٢٠٢٣ (الساعة ٩ صباحاً) وحتى يوم الخميس الموافق ٣٠/١١/٢٠٢٣ (الساعة ٤ مساءً).
 - سيتم تسليم مستندات المناقصة إلكترونياً لجميع مقدمي العطاءات في يوم الأحد الموافق ٣/١٢/٢٠٢٣.
 - تقدم العطاءات ما قبل الساعة ٤:٠٠ مساءً في يوم الخميس الموافق ١١/١/٢٠٢٤.
 - هذه المناقصة موجهة فقط للشركات الوطنية المسجلة بالدرجة الممتازة والدرجة الأولى في السجل التجاري.
 - على مقدمي العطاءات اتباع الإجراءات والخطوات التالية للحصول على مستندات المناقصة إلكترونياً.

الخطوة الأولى: يجب على مقدمي العطاءات سداد رسوم المناقصة وفقاً للتفاصيل البنكية أدناه:

Account Name الاسم الحساب	Sohar Industrial Port Co شركة ميناء صحر الصناعي
Account Number رقم الحساب	3101-007970-500
Bank Name اسم البنك	Oman Arab bank SAOC - Main Br البنك العربي ش.م.ع- فرع
SWIFT رمز التحويلات كود	OMABOMRUXXX

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted
ملاحظة: التحويل البنكي هي الطريقة الوحيدة المقبولة للدفع

- الخطوة الثانية:**
رغبين على مقدمي العطاءات تقديم المستندات التالية:

 - A request for the electronic tender documents
 - Scanned bank transfer
 - The firm's commercial registration documents

All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com
- طلب الحصول على النسخة الإلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة

 - نسخة من إيصال التحويل البنكي
 - أوراق السجل التجاري للشركة

على أن يتم إرسالها إلى:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

- الخطوة الثالثة:**
سوف يستلم مقدمي العطاءات نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

 - يقبل لشركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة قبول أو رفض أي مورد بدون الإصغاء عن الأسباب.
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The Glorious 53rd National Day

A legacy of deep-rooted civilization and a rejuvenating renaissance, guided by the wise leadership of
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
May Allah protect and guard him,
Each year, Oman thrives and progresses under your leadership, flourishing in prosperity and advancement.



chamber_oman



VOICES OF HOPE, AMBITION

Manoj Agarwala
General Manager

I would like to see advancements in Oman's tourism and education sectors. The development of a major airline hub, enhanced adventure and water sports facilities, and a focus on English language programmes would greatly benefit our integration with the global economy. Furthermore, the implementation of long-term visas for family members could contribute to societal well-being. Infrastructure development is crucial, and I envision the establishment of railways and seamless travel within the Gulf countries. I am particularly fond of Oman's rich culture and heritage, as well as its unique blend of deserts, mountains, and sea.



Manish Solanki
Club Manager

Looking ahead, the completion of the Oman Rail project will be a significant milestone. This ambitious railway network promises to transform Oman's transportation infrastructure, boosting logistics, trade, and tourism. The project symbolises Oman's commitment to economic growth and connectivity.



Ofelia V Hassan
Lecturer

Prioritising education is key. We need to strengthen values and environmental awareness from a young age. The Omani culture of helpfulness and peacefulness is admirable and contributes to the sultanate's unique environment of safety and tranquility.



Omar Mashuhur Thangal Sales

I'd like to see progress in sustainable living, healthcare, education, and environmentally friendly farming. The unmatched hospitality of the Omani people is what I find most attractive and distinctive.



CA Nikhil Raj
Internal Audit Manager

Consistent and clear regulations are crucial for attracting investors and fostering long-term economic growth. Once a robust regulatory foundation is in place, other factors like incentives, infrastructure, and workforce development can complement and further enhance the attractiveness of the investment landscape.



As Oman celebrates its 53rd National Day, Muscat Daily readers share their aspirations for the country's future. They envision a nation advancing in tourism, education, and infrastructure, embracing modernisation while upholding its rich cultural heritage. As Oman strides towards Vision 2040, these voices highlight the collective hope for a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future.

Aisha al Bakry
Artist

I envision a creative economy led by artists, focusing on youth employment and innovative activities. This approach will not only attract tourists but also provide meaningful jobs to the youth, contributing to Oman's cultural and economic development. Addressing the current unemployment rate is of paramount importance. To engage the population effectively, meaningful activities that contribute to public education should be promoted, particularly on weekends. Open-minded youthful visionaries should rightfully be entrusted with decision-making in this essential sector. Additionally, it's imperative for all ministries to collaborate.



Dr Fatima el Madkouri
Head of Registry and Student admissions, GUtech

On this special day, I envision community-centric developments in Oman, with improved infrastructure, eco-friendly initiatives, and strategies promoting social bonding and family time. I hope to see concrete incentives for using public transportations and



a clear national strategy for promoting social bonding among families by encouraging work from home when possible, closing shops and malls earlier, 6pm for few days a week, and enticing parents to spend more quality time at home with their kids and loved ones.

Syed Aqueel
Business Development Manager

Investing in human capital development and fostering a highly educated, skilled, and healthy workforce is the most prerequisite for a nation's progress. Economic diversification with focus on education, healthcare, and diverse economic sectors will enhance the nation's productivity and resilience.



Srividya Vurrinkala Kanaka
Homemaker

I wish to see a stronger focus on education, with an emphasis on STEAM and English language skills. Enhancing the ease of doing business by removing roadblocks and streamlining policy making and implementation, as well as promoting job opportunities based on skill sets and



the needs of businesses is crucial. Focus on developing the tourism sector and improving transport system is also important. The politeness and community spirit of the Omani people are truly heartwarming.

Charles Chukwunonso
Musician

Oman's rapid progress in infrastructure and healthcare is commendable, while the tourism sector continues to shine. However, I believe the country could further excel by expanding its entertainment, arts, and culture sectors, making it a hub for creative talents.



Wahid H N al Riyami
Private sector employee

I advocate stronger animal welfare laws, shelters for strays, and educational programmes on animal care. Stop illegal breeding and establish a system for adoption. Teach children the importance of respecting and treating our animals and pets the right way, and how we should care for them. Implement a proper government mandate for 'Trap, Neuter, Release' programmes.



Lateef Shahdad
Board Member of OSFA

I propose sustainable development with a focus on infrastructure, business investments, and public transport. Developing a robust railway network and promoting Oman as a tourist-friendly destination are my aspirations for the country. In terms of infrastructure, I advocate development based on green, sustainable, and renewable energy to position the country at the forefront in the Middle East in terms of GDP, per capita income, and investments.



Anita Mehta
Travel Consultant

As Oman celebrates its 53rd National Day, I hope the country will focus on eco-friendly energy solutions like solar and wind power. The friendliness of the Omani people and the blend of traditional and modern cultures make Oman truly special.



Chaamu Balaji
Fitness and Nutrition Specialist

I've observed a decline in driving discipline over the years. Addressing reckless driving and improving road safety is crucial for a safer Oman.



Zeena Chowdhury
student

I hope Oman grants nationality to long-term residents and investors, reflecting its inclusivity and diversity. Additionally, allowing expats to drive taxis would enhance transportation options; and lastly I advocate a ban on cigarettes for a healthy society.



Sadia Hamidi
Businesswoman

I would like to see Oman emerging as an independent pioneer of peace, with strong policies unswayed by external influences. Our commitment to building a strong nation capable of facing global challenges is paramount.



Zahid Abdul Kareem
System Administrator

In Buraimi, we urgently need a 24-hour private hospital. Affordable healthcare is essential, especially during late hours when private facilities are closed.



? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

Interior ministers of GCC have green-lighted action to electronically link traffic violations between the states. How do you see this decision and what else the Gulf countries need to do to reduce traffic accidents?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by Muscat Daily. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram

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NEW
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Polish sailing ship wins Sultan Qaboos Sailing Award in France

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) presented the 11th Sultan Qaboos Sailing Award in Dunkirk, France, aligning with the sultanate's 53rd National Day and reflecting Oman's commitment to sailing on both regional and international stages.

The prestigious award this year was bestowed upon the Polish sailing ship *Dar Młodzieży*

during the closing ceremony of the annual sailing conference hosted by the International Association for Training in Sailing (ISSA). The ceremony was held under the patronage of Azza bint Hamoud al Busaidiyah, Charge d'Affairs of Oman's Embassy in Paris.

Initiated in Norway in 2011, following the directives of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan Qaboos Sailing Award, managed by the RNO in collabora-



tion with ISSA, is recognised as one of the most esteemed awards in the sailing world. It symbolises strong support for training of sailing globally and embodies values of brotherhood, cooperation, and the fostering of peace and love.

The ceremony saw the presence of Brig Gen Mohammed bin Hamoud al Zadjali, Chief Staff Officer of RNO, along with the military attache at the Embassy of Oman in Paris, several RNO

officers, and the President of ISSA.

Azza highlighted that the award mirrors the Sultanate of Oman's dedication to sailing and its support for youth, including those with disabilities. It also serves as a beacon of peace, co-existence, and cultural heritage preservation, reinforcing Oman's long-standing maritime legacy.

Brig Gen Zadjali emphasised the award's role in commemorating and extending Oman's il-

lustrious maritime history.

"It aims to foster teamwork and bolster expertise in sailing across the globe."

Jonathan Cheshire, chairman of ISSA, acknowledged the ongoing partnership between RNO and ISSA in sailing endeavours. He noted the award's substantial success over the years, facilitating numerous young sailors from various countries to participate in diverse sailing festivals and races.

Investments at Sohar Port and Freezone reach \$27bn



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Total investment in the Sohar Port and Freezone has surpassed \$27bn mark over the past 20 years. Sohar Port and Freezone, a leading industrial complex and gateway to the Gulf, currently contributes 2.1% annually to Oman's gross domestic product (GDP), according to the CEO of Sohar Port.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Emile Hoogsteden noted that Sohar Port and Freezone contribute RO18.4bn to Oman's total volume of trade, which is equivalent to 45% of the

country's total volume of trade exchange.

Sohar Port achieved robust performance during the third quarter of 2022. Liquid bulk volume handled at the port, which includes liquid goods transported in large quantities, grew by 13% to 18mn metric tonnes compared to 16mn metric tonnes during the third quarter of 2022.

The number of ships calling at the port increased by two per cent, with 2,427 calls compared to the 2,384 calls in the third quarter of 2022. This indicates increased activity level at the port and its ability to handle

goods effectively.

Hoogsteden pointed out that Sohar Port also witnessed a 4% increase in the number of vehicle carriers, which is a means of transporting goods that uses cargo ships designed to transport wheeled goods, including cars, trucks, construction equipment, and others.

Recently, Sohar Port and Freezone, in collaboration with its industrial tenants, officially announced the formation of the SOHAR Net-Zero Alliance, a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to accelerating Oman's transition towards carbon neutrality by 2050. The alliance

serves as a platform for stakeholders to share insights, strategies, and requirements, propelling the region's path toward sustainability.

Omar al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone, pointed out that Sohar Port and Freezone witnessed the signing of 11 agreements since the beginning of 2023, securing new investments worth \$632mn.

He said that the Sohar Port and Freezone provide a range of services, including warehousing, logistics, and manufacturing facilities, making it an integrated center for companies looking to start their operations in Oman.

REAL ESTATE

45 years of shaping Oman's real estate landscape

As Oman marks its 53rd National Day, it's gratifying to recognise that the villages, towns, and cities of the sultanate have undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 53 years since the start of the Renaissance in 1970.

Alongside Oman's economic development, Al Habib & Co, now in its 45th year, stands as a cornerstone of the country's real estate fabric, supporting various building projects to foster economic growth. Whether it's a bank, shopping mall, office complex, housing project, hotel, industrial warehouse, or land valuation, Al Habib has played a crucial role in the real estate sector's remarkable growth story.

Founded in 1978 by Ali Mallalah in a modest office in Ruwi, the company has experienced exponential growth, becoming a trusted national real estate service provider and advisor. For the team at Al Habib, growth and trust are integral parts of the Renaissance. In our ever-evolving business landscape, staying at the forefront of the market requires continuous hard work to support the country's growth initiatives.

As our business progresses, we take pride in our achievements over the last 45 years.



IAN GLADWIN
Executive Director of
Al Habib & Co

However, this is not a time for rest; instead, we are moving forward from the early Renaissance years to Oman Vision 2040.

Demand drives change, and the urban fabric of Oman's real estate is leading the way for the country's future. New buildings, evolving business needs, and innovative real estate solutions are crucial for attracting cutting-edge companies to Oman, fostering the growth and success of the youthful workforce.

At Al Habib, technology, data analytics, energy, distribution, and evolving lifestyles guide our forward-thinking approach. We cater to the demands of our long-term clients, providing creative solutions for their future real estate interests.

Our challenge at Al Habib is to craft solutions for clients, turning real estate investment plans into a roadmap for Vision 2040. Similar to the Renaissance, determination, commitment, and trust are the keys to long-term success in real estate.

With a proven track record of commitment spanning 45 years, Al Habib looks forward to an exciting period leading up to 2040, remaining ever-present and committed to serving both old and new clients. From the Renaissance to Vision 2040, Al Habib is fully prepared for the road ahead!

Jordan cancels energy deal with Israel over Gaza war

Amman, Jordan - Jordan announced that it will not sign a deal with Israel to exchange solar energy for desalinated water in light of Israel's war against Hamas.

"The energy for water deal was supposed to have been done last month, but we're not going to sign it," Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi told the Qatar-based Al Jazeera news channel.

"We will not be able to continue the energy-for-water agreement because no Jordanian minister can sit next to an Israeli minister to sign an agreement while they are killing our brothers in Gaza," he added.

Regarding demands by Jordanians and in parliament to cancel the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement, Safadi said Jordan will not hesitate to do anything that would help the Palestinian people, adding "this agreement will now be a document covered in dust on one of the shelves".

"Israel is pushing the entire region into hell, and this war cannot continue," he said.

"We see the West Bank is on fire, and we see settlement terrorism and the northern front with Lebanon escalating...and what Israel is doing has created



Ayman al-Safadi

Jordan, UAE and Israel signed an initial Declaration of Intent in November 2021 to explore the feasibility of the 'energy-for-water' project

an environment of hatred amid which there cannot be normal, peaceful relations."

"We have a people that we respect. We have public opinion, and we have positions as a Jor-

danian state," he said.

"We signed the peace agreement in 1994 after the signing of the Oslo Accords as part of a collective Arab movement to reach a comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution.

"Comprehensive peace based on a two-state solution has not been achieved. On the contrary, we now see Israel reoccupying Gaza and disavowing all its obligations. As I said, in this atmosphere, the agreement will be a document gathering dust on the shelf for now," he added.

Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Israel signed an initial Declaration of Intent in November 2021 to explore the feasibility of the "energy-for-water" project.

Jordan decided to recall its ambassador to Israel in early November against the backdrop of Israel's war in the Gaza Strip.

Safadi said then that "the return of the ambassador will be linked to Israel stopping its war on Gaza and the humanitarian catastrophe it is causing along with all its measures that deprive the Palestinians of their right to food, water and medicine and for a safe and stable life on their national soil."

Anadolu Agency



OCCI establishes foreign investors committee

Muscat - The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has established a Foreign Investors Committee under the chairmanship of Abdullatif Muhyiddin Khawanji, an OCCI board member.

Other members nominated to the Foreign Investors Committee for the period 2023-2026 are: Davis Kallukaran, Ahmed Rayees, Dr Thomas Alexander, Sheikh Julanda al Hashmi, Ahmed Subhani, Naji Salim al Harthy, Alwyn, and Giovanni Piazzolla. Sharouq Hamed al Farsi is the committee's coordinator.

The committee formally met on Thursday under the chair-

manship of Abdullatif Muhyiddin Khawanji at OCCI headquarters, in the presence of the legal advisor Ali al Khasbi. Sharouq Hamed al Farsi made the presentation on the sectoral committee's structure, mandates, the mechanism of functioning, and the articles of association of the committee.

Davis Kallukaran was unanimously nominated to be the vice-chairman of the Foreign Investors Committee. Kallukaran is also one of the founder directors of the Indo-Gulf Middle East Chamber of Commerce (IN-MECC), incorporated in India and having chapters across the

states of India and the Middle East countries, including Oman.

The new committee's mandates include identifying obstacles and issues facing the private sector and trying to find solutions; preparing statistical reports to follow up on the recommendations; holding meetings with state officials and directly discussing the concerns and aspirations of the private sector; conformity with the proposed targets and Oman Vision 2040; study and review developments related to economic affairs; participation in seminars, conferences, and workshops; submitting recommendations to

the concerned authorities; integration between sectoral committees in the main center and branches in the governorates.

The committee will also be engaged in managing internal and external delegations, holding specialised workshops, holding joint meetings with chamber branches, representing OCCI in meetings outside, representing the chamber in conferences and events, holding conferences and seminars, participation in meetings held in OCCI, hosting officials, establishing emergency work teams, and conducting studies in coordination with the chamber.

Saudi Aramco produces first unconventional tight gas from South Ghawar

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi energy giant Aramco announced Tuesday its production of the first unconventional tight gas from its South Ghawar operational area, located 200km east of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia's Al Hasa Province.

This development supports Aramco's strategy to increase gas production by more than half, over 2021 levels, through 2030, subject to domestic demand.

The commissioned facilities



at South Ghawar have 300mn standard cubic feet per day of raw gas processing capacity and 38,000 barrels per day of condensate processing capacity, the company said.

Commissioned facilities at South Ghawar field have 300mn standard cubic feet per day of raw gas processing capacity

In response to growing gas demand, the company will continue to work to more than double the overall processing capacity to achieve South Ghawar's strategic goal of delivering 750mn standard cubic feet per day of raw gas.

"This first production of unconventional tight gas from South Ghawar is a milestone that demonstrates real progress on our gas expansion strategy, which we believe has a role to play in meeting the kingdom's needs for lower-emission energy

and supporting growth in the chemicals sector," Nasir al Naimi, Aramco's upstream president, was quoted as saying in the statement.

The successful production of tight sand gas at South Ghawar represents Aramco's second unconventional gas stream, after production commenced at the North Arabia field in 2018 with the delivery of 240mn standard cubic feet per day, the company disclosed.

"Work is simultaneously pro-

gressing at the giant Jafurah unconventional gas field, which is the largest liquid-rich shale gas play in the Middle East," it added.

Tight gas refers to natural gas reservoirs produced from reservoir rocks with such low permeability that considerable hydraulic fracturing is required to extract the well profitably. These resources are sealed in extremely impermeable, hard rock, making the underground formation extremely 'tight'.

Anadolu Agency

Growth gives you the means to lend a helping hand: Joyalukkas Exchange GM

Post the devastating earthquake in Turkey last year, the global outpouring of humanitarian aid included a significant contribution from Oman. Joyalukkas Exchange, a renowned money exchange company, played its part by offering free money transfers to those supporting Turkey.

This compassionate gesture resonates with Joy Alukkas' core belief that social responsibility is an integral aspect of ethical corporate practices. He believes, "With success and growth our commitment to the society we thrive in should increase."

The company has a commendable history of humanitarian aid, extending commission-free money transfer facilities to entities like the Prime Minister Relief Fund in Pakistan, and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in Kerala, India. This philanthropic approach is a corner-

stone of Joyalukkas Exchange's growth, making it a preferred money transfer organisation globally.

Antony Jose, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Exchange expresses the company's intention to establish its brand in other countries, mirroring the success of its sister concern, Joyalukkas Jewellery. The Joyalukkas Foundation underscores the commitment to humanitarian causes beyond business interests.

Joyalukkas Exchange, launched in 2013, stands as a beacon for expatriates, embodying its tagline 'We are with you.' Under the visionary leadership of Chairman & MD, Joy Alukkas, the company took over the ailing Majan Exchange LLC and successfully transformed it into Joyalukkas Exchange LLC. Today, with 40 branches and 314 staff, it provides efficient money transfer services to expats globally. In



Joyalukkas Exchange general manager Nixon Baby

2023 alone, Joyalukkas Exchange expanded with seven new branches, with plans to open ten more in the coming years.

The company embraces sophisticated technology, maintaining traditional values to ensure secure and rapid money transfers. It is set to introduce Mobile Exchanges, enhancing services for its valued customers, and providing vital support to middle-class individuals who face challenges with conventional money transfer methods to their home countries.

Presently, Joyalukkas Exchange operates in prominent shopping centres, including Nesto Hypermarket, Hala Hypermarket, Makkah Hypermarket, City Centre, and five Noor Hypermarket outlets. The company has strategic plans to extend its operations from Oman, the UAE, and Kuwait to other GCC countries, such as Qatar and Bahrain.

Nixon Baby, Joyalukkas Exchange general manager, affirms the company's commitment to identifying customer needs and

implementing innovative and helpful systems. The vision is to become the leading Exchange by 2025, prioritising customer-centric approaches and actively engaging with them.

'A single place to solve all your money exchange needs' is Joyalukkas Exchange's motto, upheld through cent percent safety and compliance with government regulations. The company utilizes advanced technology for Telegraphic Transfer and Swift Transfer. With over 200,000 agent outlets, it collaborates with firms like Western Union, Money Gram, Transfast, Instant Cash, and EzRemit, providing swift and secure money transfer services.

Additionally, the company extends flash remittance services to numerous countries, including India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Customers can convey

money from the comfort of their homes through the Joyalukkas Exchange mobile app. Furthermore, for corporate clients, Joyalukkas Exchange provides Corporate Money Transfer services, facilitating global money transfers from Oman, coupled with currency exchange options. Special arrangements have also been implemented to assist parents in sending money to their children studying in distant countries such as the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, and more.

The company actively conducts awareness campaigns against illegal money transfers and supports arts, sports, and social events for the welfare of expatriates. The Joyalukkas Exchange growth story is intertwined with its empathetic journey, reinforcing its commitment to ethical and customer-centric financial services.



Sohar Islamic ties up with Zakat Authority

Sohar Islamic - Sohar International's Islamic window reaffirms its dedication to serving the community by donating laptops to the Zakat Authority.

The laptop handover ceremony took place at a gathering hosted at the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs. This initiative reflects the bank's commitment to enhancing the role played by Zakat committees in the distribution, governance, and control of Zakat duties.

Abdul Wahid al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Sohar International, stated, "Our foremost objective has always been to uplift lives through our support for initiatives that benefit society. We maintain a steadfast commitment to making a positive impact on the communities we serve.

"The donation of laptops to the Zakat Authority will enhance the role of committees through the use of the latest innovative technologies and adjust the eligibility and disbursement criteria

for beneficiaries of various categories."

Sohar Islamic is dedicated to advancing socio-economic development, not only through responsible banking practices but also through meaningful contributions to the communities it serves. Aligned with this commitment, the bank initiates a range of programs aimed at creating lasting benefits for both the national economy and society. Recognizing the pivotal role of public-private partnerships in achieving these ambitious objectives, Sohar Islamic remains unwavering in its dedication to actively contribute to the comprehensive development of the nation.

Sohar Islamic's initiatives encompass various sectors, including education, health, sports, and more. Through meaningful partnerships with leading charities and institutions dedicated to community welfare, the bank has remained at the helm of contributing to the nation's socio-economic progress.

Bank Muscat partner in achieving Oman Vision

Under the watchful gaze of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, the Sultanate of Oman marks its 53rd National Day with notable accomplishments across various sectors, reaffirming its commitments to realising the goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040.

On this special occasion, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in Oman, takes pride in being a standout accomplishment of the renaissance era, channeling all its resources and capabilities towards serving the nation and consistently aiding its advancement and growth.

Over a period of 40 years, the bank - as a reliable banking partner - has contributed to the process of sustainable development through the products and banking solutions provided to various government and private institutions to implement different projects including economic projects.

It has the largest asset management portfolio in the Sultanate of Oman, with assets under management (AUM) over US\$2.5bn.

The bank is proud of its contribution to the emergence of many small and medium-sized enterprises operating in various fields. Through its financial and management consultation services, Bank Muscat has become a house of expertise locally and regionally. It offers suitable solutions to institutions and business owners, further solidifying its pioneering stance in delivering the best innovative banking services



and products. It will persist in attaining further successes in various domains based on the bank's vision 'to serve you better every day', which focuses on prioritising individual and corporate customers.

Substantial services for corporates and entrepreneurs Bank Muscat has witnessed significant development in the services provided to government institutions and corporates. The bank is keen to provide the best banking experience to customers through innovative and diverse solutions and services that suit their requirements and business. During the past period, the bank launched a number of services, including those that can be availed through e-channels, in order to align with the digital transformation adopted by different institutions.

The bank has launched an integrated digital platform for banking transactions, providing a range of digital solutions for corporate and institutional customers,

encompassing payment transactions, account services, collections and receivables, liquidity and trade services for companies, SMEs, and government institutions. With this new platform, customers get better control over funds from inside and outside the Sultanate and leverage the flexibility provided by direct deposit collection services or digital account solutions that enable customers to manage funds electronically through speed transfers and other tools available on the platform. Electronic corporate banking services are one of the solutions designed to help customers follow up on payment transactions in a safer manner. Available in English and Arabic, the platform is accessible, and it enables companies to view account details directly, upload account statements, and review transaction records. Customers can also process various types of transactions, including local and international transactions in Omani riyals and

foreign currencies, single payments, uploading payroll files and wholesale suppliers, in addition to special payments related to credit cards and invoices.

In order to provide the best services to the business sector, Bank Muscat recently celebrated the relocation of the corporate branch in Sohar. The new branch is characterized by its spacious area and modern design, and it provides various banking services. The bank also opened a new corporate branch in Duqm, Al Wusta, to keep pace with the development and growth witnessed by the wilayat. It will continue to provide innovative services to the business sector and offer banking solutions that contribute to the development of business in various fields.

Exceptional services

Through its customer-centric vision, Bank Muscat has introduced new services and innovative offers that give added value to customers and enable

them to benefit from features that commensurate with their different needs. It is also keen to develop a strategy that contributes to the implementation of digital transformation plans focused on Oman Vision 2040. This sets up fundamentals to launch a variety of edge-cutting services with benefits that suit the needs of different categories. Moreover, the bank this year celebrated the opening of many new branches and relocations within its long-term strategy to enhance the branch network and provide high-quality banking services. The new branches have a contemporary design with ample space, encompassing Madinat Sultan Qaboos branch, Al Nahdha branch in Amerat, Al Hail branch in Seeb, and Al Khoudh-6 branch, bringing the total number of branches to 178 distributed in all governorates of the Sultanate.

The bank is keen to create new products and offer exclusive deals and advantages that enhance customers' experience, in addition to providing various banking services.

The reflection of the interest in the bank's distinctive products is the rise in the number of MB and IB registered users, which reached 1.76mn until the end of September 2023. The total number of e-service omni-channels reached 849 devices spread across all governorates, including ATMs, CDMs, multifunctional devices, CDMs for corporates, in addition to account statement printing devices.

Mall of Muscat partners with EVO to install new EV charging stations

Taking a significant step forward in fostering sustainable mobility, Mall of Muscat, Oman's premium shopping destination, has partnered with EVO, the sultanate's leading provider of EV charging solutions, to install state-of-the-art 22kw chargers.

This initiative aims to energise the expanding electric vehicle community in the country, reinforcing both organisations' commitment to a more sustainable future.

As part of the collaboration, a pair of advanced 22kw chargers are now operational in a specially designated area for electric vehicle charging within the mall. Plans are being developed to expand the range of charging stations available in the mall's parking area soon.

Sustainability is an integral part of Mall of Muscat's ethos, and it recognises the critical role it can play in promoting a greener, more sustainable future for Oman. From using energy-efficient systems to encouraging eco-friendly practices among its tenants/renters, Mall of Muscat is persistently striving to minimise its environmental footprint.

Now by offering sustainable mobility options such as designated electric vehicle charging areas in its car park, Mall of Muscat aims to be a sustainability leader in the retail sector and make a significant contribution to wider environmental efforts across Oman.

A spokesperson for Mall of Muscat said, "We are happy to contribute meaningfully to the



broader green initiatives taking shape across the country and enhancing our visitor experience. Partnering with EVO, a pioneer in the green transition, aligns perfectly with our mission. EVO's extensive network of more than 80 charging stations nationwide is now enhanced by our own state-of-the-art charging facilities. These are all conveniently accessible through the EVO Oman mobile app, making the process of charging electric vehicles as effortless as possible. This collaboration is a testament to our ongoing commitment to promote sustainable mobility and environmental responsibility."

A spokesperson for EVO said, "Mall of Muscat stands out for its exceptional shopping and entertainment offerings, as well as its dedication to sustainability. Collaborating with them on this green initiative is a perfect fit. This partnership underscores our commitment to delivering high-quality services to visitors and aligns seamlessly with Oman's 2050 Net Zero goals."

Mall of Muscat encourages its visitors to try out the newly installed charging stations and to keep backing projects that further the cause of a sustainable Oman.

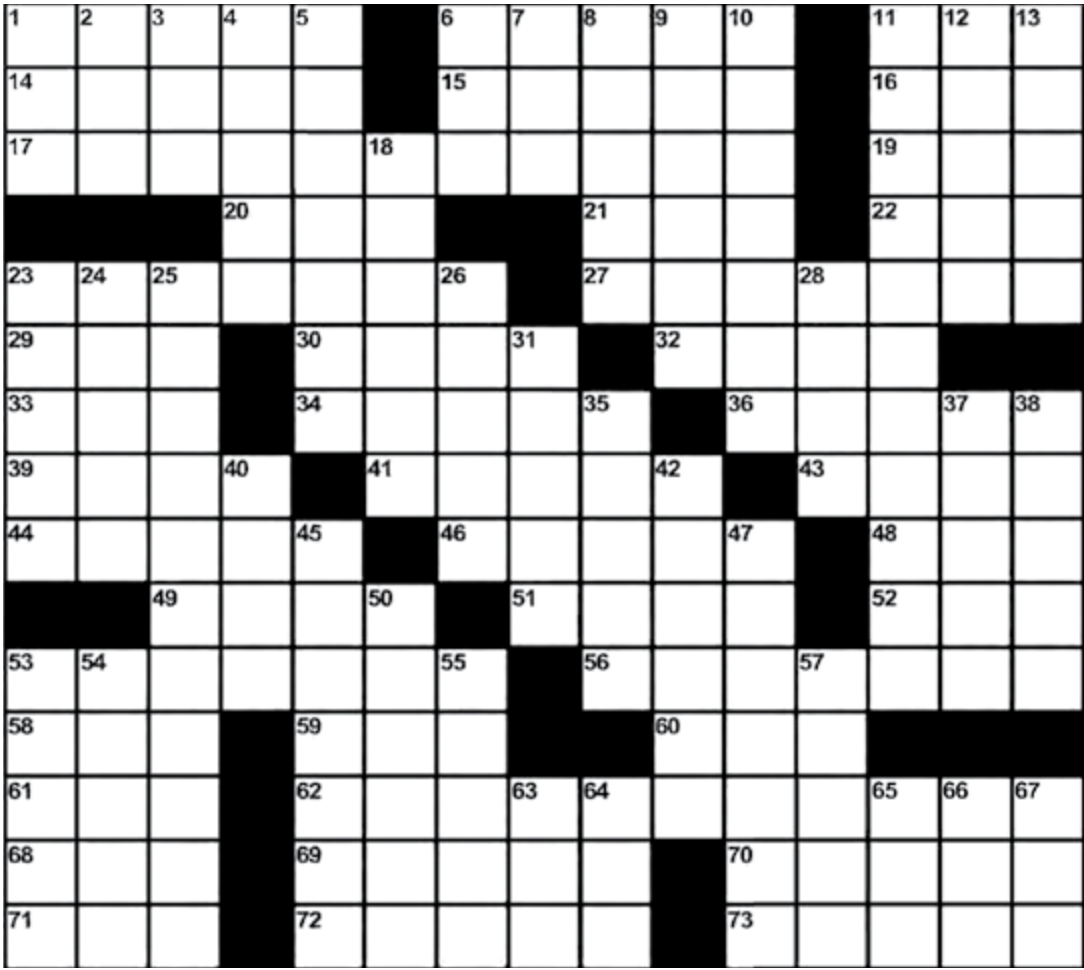
Incorporating an expanse of approximately 200,000 square meters and providing more than 3000 parking spaces, the Mall

boasts a substantial area. Beyond its shopping allure, Mall of Muscat presents a host of family-centric attractions, including a cinema, an entertainment zone, and other engaging features.

Remarkably, it also hosts the Oman Aquarium, the largest and only public aquarium within the Sultanate. With an impressive array of 240+ brands spanning across fashion, lifestyle, sports, and electronics, Mall of Muscat offers an unparalleled luxurious experience.

In close proximity to the Muscat International Airport, Mall of Muscat boasts an expansive collection of 240+ brands that span fashion, lifestyle, sports, and electronics at an impressive 200,000sqm expanse with over 3000 parking spaces.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Capital of Morocco
- 6) Shoppers' stops
- 11) Tire pressure fig.
- 14) Alpha's opposite
- 15) Notify of danger
- 16) Switzerland's _ Leman
- 17) Be an NFL offensive coordinator
- 19) "What _ bid?"
- 20) Cockpit prediction
- 21) Real ending?
- 22) "Silent Night" adjective
- 23) Ransom seekers
- 27) Chat
- 29) Online address, familiarly
- 30) Norwegian royal name
- 32) Class identifier
- 33) Place of many large schools
- 34) Spread seed
- 36) Leave no tip to
- 39) Handles the tab
- 41) Article of faith
- 43) Shrek, e.g.
- 44) Lots and lots
- 46) Philanthropist
- 48) Member of a historical

DOWN

- 1) Mythical "Arabian Nights" bird
- 2) Org. with real operators
- 3) "The Fresh Prince of _Air"
- 4) Lace tip
- 5) Body designs
- 6) West of old Hollywood
- 7) Matterhorn, for one
- 8) Archaeological find
- 9) Cheap and tawdry
- 10) Thwarts
- 11) Theater notables
- 12) Pago Pago location
- 13) Cake topper
- 18) Woman of ill repute
- 23) Crescent features
- 24) "You're in for _ treat!"
- 25) Musical instrument that operates mechanically
- 26) Worked in a lumber mill
- 28) Defense alliance since 1949
- 31) Scorpion's output
- 35) Huge star in Cygnus
- 37) Some produce
- 38) It may be seen around the house
- 40) Rock from side to side
- 42) Kind of soup or sauce
- 45) Small excerpt
- 47) Round, domed building
- 50) Sample the air
- 53) Choose by popular vote
- 54) Asian goatlike antelope
- 55) Main points
- 57) Urge forward
- 63) Boozehound

NOTE PAD

Blank area for notes.



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Today, you have a clearer understanding than ever of the connections between people, making it a wonderful day for you to play the role of matchmaker or host. You have a direct route to other people's hearts, and friends feel that they can trust you with just about anything, probably because they can! Reach out to people you know, or even those you don't know, with a kind word or flattering comment. People will be grateful for the chance to talk with someone as charming as you!



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Pay attention to the quieter, more subliminal conversations today, because they are the ones that are going to clue you in to the real business that's going on beneath the surface. The polite small talk isn't going to offer you anything more than boring chitchat about the weather. Listen to what people are not saying. You have strong intuition right now, and it will help you uncover the truth behind the smiles. Something big is coming and you'll be the first to know about it.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Monotony could drag down your mood today, so you should welcome any disruptions to your routine with open arms. Too many stale ideas and emotions have been hovering around you for too long, and you could use something to stir up the stagnation, even if it's something you initially find kind of annoying. This is the beginning of a new phase for you in which your outlook is much more positive. Things suddenly feel more possible than ever.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What large flightless bird found in Mauritius by the Portuguese is believed to have died out in 1681?

- A. Dodo
- B. Kiwi
- C. Emu
- D. Moa

02. What was the UK #1 single released by the band Stereophonics in 2005?

- A. Dakota
- B. Carolina
- C. Virginia
- D. California

03. What fictional island off the coast of Sumatra that first appeared in the 1933 film "King Kong" is the home of King Kong and other creatures?

- A. Soames Island
- B. Treasure Island
- C. Skull Island
- D. Pitcairn Island

Answers: 1.A 2.A 3.C



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Any time you spend your money today, whether you're just buying a cup of coffee or making a down payment on a home, the task will require greater intensity than usual. Numbers and financial issues are just hard for you to wrap your mind around right now, and you could quickly get overwhelmed by interest rates, fees, surcharges, and taxes. It isn't a good day to make any big business commitments either. Wait until your left brain wakes up again.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You might not consider yourself to be an intellectually curious person, but someone else sure does! They admire your thoughtful questions and sweet nature, so don't be surprised if they try to pick your brain today for insight on a problem they're trying to solve. Give them all the time you can, and take this opportunity to get to know them a little bit better. And let them get to know you better too! Get ready for an interesting conversation.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It might be time to give up on a goal. You had high hopes, but things don't seem to be panning out they way you wanted them to. And it's wise to know when to cut your losses and move on. Sometimes the pain of letting go is far less than the pain you'll feel if you keep banging your head against the wall. If that cutie just isn't succumbing to your charms, then find someone else to focus on. Or if that goal seems to be getting further from your reach, then reach for a new one.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's wonderful to get all excited about a new gadget once in a while. You can spend all day fantasizing about how it's going to change your life and make you more organized, more hip, more fashionable, more whatever. But before you plunk down your hard-earned cash on the latest and greatest toy, you owe it to yourself to go slowly and do some research. You can't let your feelings control your wallet. That's your brain's job!



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

If it's unclear what someone wants from you right now, why should you waste your time trying to guess? Ask! Going to the source of the confusion is always the best way to find clarity. Are you worried you'll look stupid or silly for asking a question? You'll look a lot sillier if you base your decision on an incorrect hunch. Before you go down all sorts of fanciful rabbit holes for an explanation, opt for the most direct approach and just ask what they want.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Being nice isn't always convenient, but it's always appreciated. Keep that in mind when you come across a grouch today. Be kind and contain your urge to give them a piece of your mind. They could have more influence over the rest of the day than you think, and you'll want them on your side. Let them think highly of you. Being a team player requires you to take others into consideration. Smart people appreciate other smart people who know how to play nice.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

There is no need to stress out over confrontations or difficult conversations, especially now. You're extremely capable of handling whatever comes your way with ease. You understand deep down inside (although you might not like to admit it) that there's no harm in having a little emotional intensity and upheaval in your life once in a while. It makes you grateful for the peaceful times, and it helps you see things from other people's perspectives



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Today, much to your surprise, you could feel a very strong magnetic pull toward a person you've never met before. There's a reason that they interest you and you've got to figure it out. So keep your eye on them, and while you can't exactly follow them around, just keep looking until you figure it out. There is something about them that you need in your life. They could be your inspiration, and you never even have to have a conversation with them.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Today isn't an ideal day to make any big decisions or commitments, at least not in the morning. The news you received recently has you in a fuzzy frame of mind and unable to see things clearly. Just let yourself bask in the glow of the good news and put off having to deal with detail-oriented work or stressful decision-making until later in the day, if you get to it at all. You deserve to enjoy just being happy for a while. It's a day for feeling more than thinking.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	A	R	B
E	U	R	Y
L	S	E	K
Y	P	E	M

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

		3	5	9	6	7		
	9			7			5	
			2		4			
		7	4		8	9		
	3	4		1		6	2	
		2	3		5	4		
			8		2			
	5			3			4	
		1	6	5	9	3		

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

2	7	8	6	9	1	4	1	8
6	4	8	1	5	7	9	5	2
1	9	5	2	4	8	6	7	3
7	1	4	9	5	3	2	8	6
8	2	9	7	1	6	4	3	5
5	3	6	8	2	7	1	9	
3	6	1	4	7	4	2	5	9
6	9	1	4	7	8	2	5	9
4	7	8	4	9	6	3	5	1

India: 5-option action plan to save lives of trapped workers

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the construction wing of the Indian Army are assisting in the rescue operation

Uttarkashi, India - As rescue operations continue for eight days to save the 40 trapped workers at Silkyara tunnel in Uttarkashi, Secretary, Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways Anurag Jain announced on Sunday the decision to take up a five-option action plan.

The government has taken a decision to work on all fronts to save the precious lives of the labourers trapped in the tunnel at Silkyara, Jain told ANI.

"The government has taken a decision to work on all fronts to save the precious lives of the labourers trapped in the tunnel at Silkyara. In a high-level meeting today, various options were examined based on technical advice and five options are to be pursued," he added.

"In addition to these five options, a couple of additional pipes for redundancy of food support would also be put up," he added.

According to Anurag Jain, National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN), Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited (THDC) and Rail Vikas



Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami conduct an on-site inspection to assess the rescue operations in Uttarkashi, on Sunday (ANI)

Nigam Limited (RVNL) have been assigned one option each.

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the construction wing of the Indian Army have also been assisting in the rescue operation, he said.

Jain further said that the Managing Director of NHIDCL has been made in charge of co-ordination with all the Central agencies and has been stationed in Silkyara.

"The government of Uttarak-

hand has appointed Dr Neeraj Khairwal, Secretary, as the Nodal Officer for coordination. All the agencies concerned have posted senior officers at the site," he informed further.

The centre has given clear di-

rections that whatever is possible must be done for the rescue operation, Jain added.

He further said: "Along with these five options, there is an action plan. We are working on the declared unsafe areas where we were working and stopped later due to movement on earth. We will make a canopy and restart the work with all the security measures."

Meanwhile, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami reached the scene to review the ongoing rescue and relief operation. They were accompanied by Uttarakhand Chief Secretary SS Sandhu at Silkyara.

The government has taken a decision to work on all fronts to save the precious lives of the labourers trapped in the tunnel at Silkyara

ANURAG JAIN

Speaking to ANI about the ongoing relief and rescue operations, CM Dhami said: "We are working on all the possibilities available. All types of expert teams are working here."

CM Dhami said that the state government is ready to provide all the help required to the agencies involved in the rescue operation.

The under-construction tunnel between Silkyara and Dandagaon on the Brahmkhal-Yamunotri national highway collapsed in the early hours of November 12.

ANI



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian

Iran's FM calls to strengthen regional peace

Tehran, Iran - Iran's foreign minister in a phone call with his Azerbaijani counterpart on Saturday emphasised the importance of strengthening regional mechanisms for regional peace.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, according to a statement issued by Iran's foreign ministry, in a telephone conversation with Jeyhun Bayramov discussed bilateral and regional issues.

Iran's top diplomat stressed the importance of 'strengthening regional mechanisms' to 'bring peace and strengthen convergence in the region'.

Amir-Abdollahian noted that the activation of formats for regional cooperation will bring benefits to regional countries, including Iran and Azerbaijan.

Bayramov, for his part, 'emphasised the need to strengthen regional dialogues and mechanisms away from the interference of extra-regional countries'.

While expressing satisfaction with the strengthening of bilateral relations, the two sides emphasised the importance of 'increasing and strengthening cooperation' in regional and international arenas.

Relations between Iran and Azerbaijan have seen ups and downs over the years, with tensions spiraling after the January attack on the Azerbaijani em-

bassy in the Iranian capital.

Following the attack, which killed the embassy's security staff head and injured two others, Azerbaijan decided to evacuate the embassy and airlift all the diplomatic staff in a special plane.

In recent months, officials of the two countries have held discussions at multiple levels in order to iron out differences and give fresh impetus to their bilateral ties.

Last month, chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, Mohammad Baqeri, said Azerbaijan has succeeded in reclaiming lost land and restoring territorial integrity, referring to the restoration of constitutional order in Karabakh.

His remarks came after Khalaf Khalafov, a veteran Azerbaijani diplomat and special aide to Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, visited Tehran and held meetings with Iranian political and military officials.

In his meeting with Khalafov at the time, President Ebrahim Raisi deemed it necessary to improve ties between Tehran and Baku and to 'counter the plots designed to sow discord' between them.

The two countries share a 765km border.

Anadolu Agency

Mohamed Ghassan Moumoon is new Maldives Defence Minister

Male, Maldives - The Maldivian politician and Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) leader, Mohamed Ghassan Moumoon was appointed as the new Defence Minister of the Maldives on Sunday.

Taking to X, the Maldivian Ministry of Defence congratulated the leader saying: "Congratulations Hon. Mohamed Ghassan Moumoon @mgmaumoon on being appointed as the Minister of Defence. Wishing a warm welcome from all staff at Defence Ministry."

Earlier on Friday, Maldivian President-elect Mohamed Muizzu took the oath as the eighth President of the Maldives, said the Maldives President's Office in a press statement.

In an oath-taking ceremony, the Maldives Chief Justice, Uz Ahmed Muthasim Adnan, administered the oath to the newly elected President at the Special Assembly of the People's Majlis held at the Republic Square.

As per the press statement, following the oath-taking ceremony, President Muizzu signed the Instrument of Oath and the Chief Justice and the Speaker of Parliament, Mohamed Aslam, signed as witnesses.

President Muizzu's acceptance of the oath of office was followed by a 21-gun salute and the National Anthem, with Hussain Mohamed Latheef also sworn in as the Maldivian Vice President.

The Presidential Inaugura-

tion ceremony was attended by former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, former President Mohamed Nasheed, and former President Dr Mohamed Waheed. Also in attendance at the inauguration were high-level foreign delegates and several invitees.

India had received an invitation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the oath-taking ceremony of Maldives president-elect Mohamed Muizzu, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

Union Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijju arrived in the Maldives on Thursday to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Mohamed Muizzu.

ANI

TO KEEP CHILL AT BAY



A vendor pushes a cart laden with kangris (earthen pots) as he crosses the road on a winter day, in Srinagar, India, on Sunday (ANI)

Research reveals how climate change could affect brain

Washington, US - A new aspect of climate change's destruction is emerging: how global warming affects the human brain.

An international team of researchers investigates how research has proven that a changing environment influences how our brains work, and how climate change may impact our brain function in the future in a report published in Nature Climate Change. The work is led by the University of Vienna, with contributions from Geneva, New York, Chicago, Washington,

Stanford, Exeter in the United Kingdom, and the Max Plank Institute in Berlin. It also looks at how neuroscientists might help to better understand and treat these issues.

Lead author Dr Kimberly C Doell, of the University of Vienna, said: "We've long known that factors in our environment can lead to changes in the brain. Yet we're only just beginning to look at how climate change, the greatest global threat of our time, might change our brains. Given the increasingly frequent ex-



The summer of 2023 (June-July-August) saw the highest average global temperatures ever measured (AFP)

treme weather events we're already experiencing, alongside factors such as air pollution, the way we access nature and the stress and anxiety people experience around climate change, it's crucial that we understand the impact this could all have on our brains. Only then can we start to find ways to mitigate these changes."

Since the 1940s, scientists have known from mouse studies that changing environmental factors can profoundly change the development and plasticity of

the brain. This effect as also been seen in humans in research looking at the effects of growing up in poverty, which found disturbances to brain systems, including lack of cognitive stimulation, exposure to toxins, poor nutrition, and heightened childhood stress. While not entirely surprising, this research highlights the profound impact that one's environment can have on their brain.

Now, the authors are calling for research to explore the impact on the human brain of being exposed to more extreme

weather events, such as heatwaves, droughts, and hurricanes, and associated forest fires and floods. They believe such events may change brain structure, function, and overall health, and also call for more research to evaluate how this may explain changes in well-being and behaviour.

The paper also explores the role that neuroscience can play in influencing the way we think about climate change, our judgments and how we respond.

ANI

WHO leads high-risk joint mission to Al-Shifa Hospital

Cairo, Egypt - The World Health Organization has called for an immediate cessation of military operations in the Gaza Strip while the organisation is working on developing a plan to rescue the remaining patients from Al-Shifa Hospital as soon as possible due to the dire situation there.

A joint UN humanitarian assessment team, led by WHO, accessed Al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza on Saturday to assess the situation on the ground and conduct a rapid situational analysis, assess medical priorities, and establish logistics options for further missions.

Given the current state of the hospital, which is no longer operational or admitting new patients, the team was requested to evacuate health workers and patients to other facilities.

"WHO and partners are urgently developing plans for the immediate evacuation of the remaining patients, staff and their families. Over the next 24-72 hours, pending guarantees of safe passage by parties to the conflict, additional missions are being arranged to urgently transport patients from Al-Shifa to Nasser Medical Complex and European Gaza Hospital in the south of Gaza."

On Saturday, the IDF had issued evacuation orders to the remaining 2,500 internally displaced people who had been seeking refuge on the hospital grounds. They, along with a number of mobile patients and hospital staff, had already vacated the facility by the time of the



team's arrival.

Due to time limits associated with the security situation, the team was able to spend only one hour inside the hospital, which they described as a 'death zone', and the situation as 'desperate'. Signs of shelling and gunfire were evident. The team saw a mass grave at the entrance of the hos-

pital and were told more than 80 people were buried there.

Lack of clean water, fuel, medicines, food and other essential aid over the last six weeks have caused Al-Shifa Hospital to essentially stop functioning as a medical facility

Lack of clean water, fuel, medicines, food and other essential aid over the last six weeks have caused Al-Shifa Hospital - once the largest, most advanced, and best equipped referral hospital in Gaza - to essentially stop func-

tioning as a medical facility. The team observed that due to the security situation, it has been impossible for the staff to carry out effective waste management in the hospital. Corridors and the hospital grounds were filled with medical and solid waste, increasing the risk of infection. Patients and health staff with whom they

spoke were terrified for their safety and health, and pleaded for evacuation.

Al-Shifa Hospital can no longer admit patients, with the injured and sick now being directed to the seriously overwhelmed and barely functioning Indonesian Hospital.

There are 25 health workers and 291 patients remaining in Al-Shifa, with several patient deaths having occurred over the previous two to three days due to the shutting down of medical services, WHO stated.

Patients include 32 babies in extremely critical condition, two people in intensive care without ventilation, and 22 dialysis patients whose access to life-saving treatment has been severely compromised.

The vast majority of patients are victims of war trauma, including many with complex fractures and amputations, head injuries, burns, chest and abdominal trauma, and 29 patients with serious spinal injuries who are unable to move without medical assistance. Many trauma patients have severely infected wounds due to lack of infection control measures in the hospital and unavailability of antibiotics.

German chancellor calls for two-state solution

Cologne, Germany - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday criticised Israel's illegal settlements in West Bank and called for a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

"In our view, there must be a two-state solution. There should be a possibility of peaceful coexistence between Israel as a state and a Palestinian state," German news agency DPA quoted him as saying during a visit to Nuthetal in Brandenburg state.

"This is also in the best interest of Israel."

Scholz criticised Israel's construction of new illegal settlements on Palestinian territory, saying: "We do not want new settlements in the West Bank."

He also spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, telling him that the humanitarian



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

situation in Gaza needs 'urgent' improvement.

"In a phone call with Israeli PM Netanyahu, I assured him of the full solidarity with the people of Israel and emphasised the urgent need to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza," Scholz said on X after the conversation.

"Humanitarian ceasefires can contribute to a significant improvement," he added.

Israel has killed at least 12,000 Palestinians in its air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip since the October 7 surprise offensive by Hamas.

The official Israeli death toll stands at about 1,200.

Thousands of buildings, including hospitals, mosques, and churches, have either been damaged or destroyed in Israel's relentless strikes on the besieged enclave.

An Israeli blockade has also cut Gaza off from fuel, electricity, and water supplies, and reduced aid deliveries to a trickle.

Israel has rejected growing calls for a cease-fire until the release of hostages held by Hamas.

Anadolu Agency

UN-run school in Gaza attacked

Tel Aviv, Israel - A school run by the United Nations in northern Gaza has been attacked, the UN confirmed on Saturday. A top UN official described it as a 'horrifying' incident, CNN reported.

Video from al-Fakhoura School in Jabalya, which was being used as a shelter for displaced people, showed bloodied bodies across a series of rooms on the two floors of the two-story building. Many women and children are among the dead.

In the video, one room appears to contain about a dozen bodies lying on the floor, covered in dust. Desks are strewn and smashed up and a huge hole can be seen in one of the room's walls. In the building courtyard, a canopy roof across a metal structure appears to have been torn off, and debris is visible on the ground, as per CNN.

A spokesperson for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Juliette Touma confirmed the inci-

dent. The total number of casualties remains unclear, she said, as information is still coming in.

UNRWA runs the schools in Palestinian refugee camps and serves as the main UN relief agency in Gaza. Touma could not confirm what caused the incident or who was responsible.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazarini, who called the images 'horrifying' in a post on X said thousands of displaced people had been sheltering there at the time of the incident.

ANI

CLASSIFIEDS

JOB VACANCY

Inviting applications for the post of production and factory in charge - steel fabrication from those specialised in steel pipes fabrication, structural steel, tanks, vessels, skid packages; with 5 years of experience and having a driving licence email: najma@alrouba.com

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BIRTHDAY WISHES



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AUSSIES CHAMPIONS

Opener Head scores dazzling century as Australia beat India to win World Cup

Ahmedabad, India - Australia produced a magnificent performance to beat India in the final to win the World Cup in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

The majority of a packed and partisan crowd arrived at the Narendra Modi Stadium hoping to see the host nation end their decade-long wait for a major ICC trophy win.

But it was Australia who delivered on the day. The Australian bowling attack combined to turn the screw after a fast-paced powerplay, bowling India out for 240.

And Travis Head was the star, hitting an inspired century to win Australia's men their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup crown.

Victory for Australia is a crowning moment in what has been a phenomenal year for Pat Cummins' side across formats, adding to their win over India in the World Test Championship final in June and their subsequent retention of the Ashes.

Tasked with a target of 241 to win the World Cup, Australia got off to a fast but shaky start in the face of a new-ball assault from India's seam attack.

David Warner (7), Mitchell Marsh (15) and Steven Smith (4) all departed cheaply as Australia slipped to 47/3 inside the opening seven overs, with Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah taking the wickets. But a superb partnership between Head and Marnus Labuschagne won it for Australia, with Head hitting a stunning century and Labuschagne playing the foil at the other end, bedding in with a resolute half-century of his own.

Head was caught in the deep with just one run needed to win



Australian players celebrate with the trophy after their victory against India in the World Cup final on Sunday

the game, departing to a standing ovation from his teammates having scored 137 from 120 runs.

And Glenn Maxwell scored the winning runs as Australia claimed victory with six wickets and seven overs to spare.

Earlier, Australia skipper Pat Cummins won the toss and chose to bowl first in Ahmedabad in-front of a packed crowd. But it was India who got off to a flier, in-

spired once more by captain Rohit Sharma.

The early loss of Shubman Gill didn't halt India's attacking momentum, as Rohit and Virat Kohli racked up the runs in the first ten overs, with 80 runs coming in the first powerplay, equalling the record for a men's Cricket World Cup final.

However, the departure of the skipper for 47 from 31 balls was

followed by Shreyas Iyer for 4 in the very next over, and the match took an abrupt turn from that moment on, as the runs dried up through the middle overs.

Looking to rebuild in the face of some excellent bowling on a tricky surface, Kohli and KL Rahul bedded in, ensuring India reached at least a competitive total.

Wickets fell frequently as Australia's bowling attack looked to

press home their advantage, and the final Indian wicket came off the last ball of the innings, with the total at just 240.

Pat Cummins' 2/34 from ten overs summed up the effort from the Aussie pacers, with Mitchell Starc taking 3/55 and Josh Hazlewood 2/60. Adam Zampa provided good control through the middle, finishing with 1/44, while Glenn Maxwell's 1/35 from

six overs included the crucial wicket of Rohit.

The innings fell into two distinct sections. Nine fours and three sixes were struck in the first powerplay as India reached 80/2. But in the following 240 balls of the innings, there were no further sixes, only four boundaries and just seven twos - with all other runs coming in singles.
icc

Is Kohli the greatest batsman?

Ahmedabad, India - The question of whether Virat Kohli is the greatest batsman in 50-over cricket history is gaining traction. At 35, Kohli has propelled himself into the conversation with an outstanding performance at the World Cup in India.

After Sachin Tendulkar's retirement in 2013, Kohli emerged as a dominant force in cricket, consistently showcasing his prowess over the last decade. Initially part of the renowned "Fab Four" alongside Joe Root, Steve Smith, and Kane Williamson, Kohli's consistency has stood out, especially as others have seen fluctuations in form.

From 2011 to 2019, Kohli notched over 1,000 ODI runs in a year on seven occasions before experiencing a brief drought in centuries. However, he ended that dry spell last September and has since been in formidable form, particularly evident in the recent World Cup. He concluded the tournament as the leading run-scorer with a staggering 765 runs from 11 matches, including three centuries.

One of Kohli's significant achievements during the World Cup was surpassing Tendulkar's record of 49 ODI hundreds. What's notable is the pace at which Kohli reached this milestone. He scored his 50th ODI hundred in just 279 innings, significantly quicker than Tendulkar, who achieved 49 centuries in 452 innings.

MUSCAT DAILY

YOUR WINDOW TO THE WORLD

R024

1 YEAR

(Print edition)

R015

6 MONTHS

(Print edition)

R015

1 YEAR

(Online edition)

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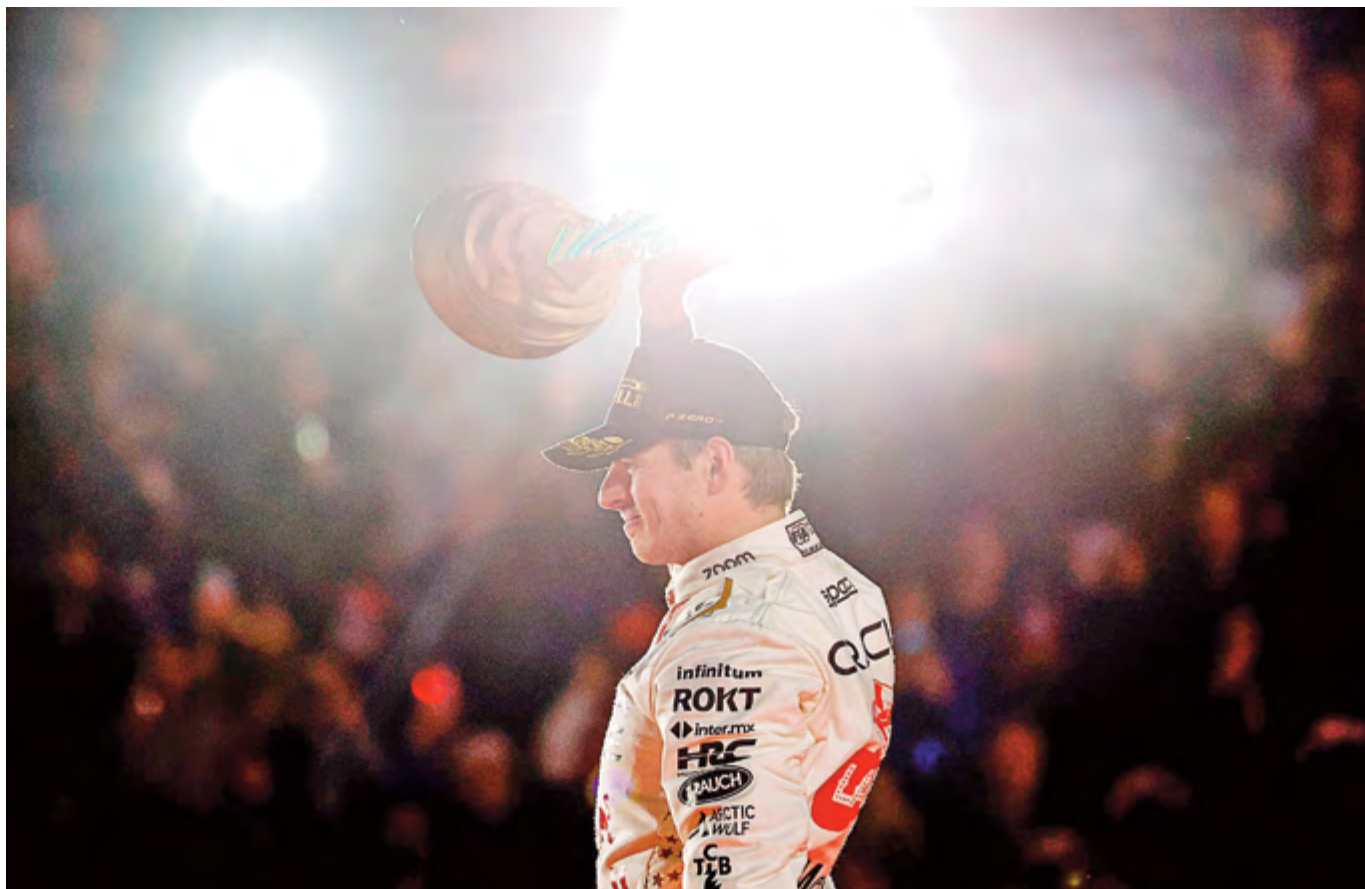
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MAX ON SONG

Verstappen reigns as F1's Las Vegas king with 18th victory of the season



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates with the trophy

Las Vegas, United States - Red Bull's Max Verstappen claimed his 18th win of the season amidst the glitz and glamour of Sin City and joined Sebastian Vettel in third place on Formula One's all-time winners' list.

Verstappen's victory, his 53rd in an illustrious career, was laced with drama, facing a five-second penalty for pushing Ferrari's Charles Leclerc off track at the race's start and later encountering a collision with Mercedes' George Russell.

Leclerc, starting from pole position, demonstrated remarkable resilience, securing a second-place finish despite the intense battle for the lead. His back-and-

Verstappen's victory, his 53rd, was laced with drama, facing a five-second penalty for pushing Ferrari's Charles Leclerc off track at the start and later encountering a collision with Mercedes' George Russell

forth tussle saw him ultimately pass Sergio Perez on the final lap and deny Red Bull a seventh one-two finish of the season.

The race marked Red Bull's 20th win in 21 races, setting another season record, and lived up to the anticipation surrounding Vegas's first Grand Prix since the 1980s. Verstappen's triumph in Las Vegas rounded off his dominance in the United States, pre-

viously clinching victories in Miami and Austin. Verstappen reflected on the challenging race, admitting, "It was tough. I tried to push at the start, but we braked late, went a bit wide, and the stewards penalized me for that."

Celebrating the victory, Red Bull played Elvis Presley's iconic song "Viva Las Vegas" over the team radio, with Verstappen embracing the moment by joining in

the singing.

Leclerc, showing his tenacity despite the initial setback, expressed his sentiments over the radio, gasping, "I wanted that win so bad, but what a race."

Perez, having narrowly missed out on victory in the previous race, secured second place in the championship, yet another milestone for Red Bull, securing a one-two finish in the season.

The race also witnessed a gripping battle between Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and a demoted Russell, with the Briton securing seventh place.

While Red Bull clinched both titles well in advance, Ferrari narrowed the gap to Mercedes in the championship standings to a mere four points.

Bhullar triumphs at Indonesian Masters

Jakarta, Indonesia - India's Gaganjeet Bhullar produced a virtuoso performance to win the Indonesian Masters on Sunday for his fifth title on Indonesian soil and the fourth wire-to-wire win of his career on the Asian Tour.

The 35-year-old eagled the par-five 18th at Royale Jakarta Golf Club for a closing four-under-par 67 to finish on 24-under, which was five shots ahead of second-placed Karandeep Kochhar, also from India.

Ben Campbell from New



Gaganjeet Bhullar celebrates with the trophy

Zealand, winner of the Hong Kong Open last Sunday, and Spaniard David Puig shots rounds of 65 and 66 respectively to claim third place, six back of Bhullar - in the final event of the season on The International Series.

It marks the first time Bhullar has raised the trophy, and it will proudly sit alongside three Indonesian Open wins and one Indonesia President Invitational title. It is also the 11th win of his career on the Asian Tour - the most by an Indian, with Arjun Atwal and Jyoti Randhawa next best with eight titles.



Jorge Martin in action at Qatar GP

Jorge Martin triumphs in Qatar GP sprint, narrows Bagnaia's championship lead

Doha, Qatar - Pramac Racing's Jorge Martin emerged victorious in the Qatar Grand Prix sprint, reducing Francesco Bagnaia's lead in the world championship to a mere seven points after the Ducati rider secured fifth place at the Lusail International Circuit on Saturday.

Starting from fifth on the grid, Martin showcased his aggressive racing style as he finished ahead of Gresini Racing's Fabio Di Giannantonio, while Luca Marini of VR46 Racing, the polesitter, secured the final spot on the podium.

Martin's win sets the stage for MotoGP to witness back-to-back final round title deciders for the first time in history, with the season concluding in Valencia next weekend.

Bagnaia faced challenges with grip on his rear tire, struggling to catch up with the leaders and ultimately finishing behind Gresini's Alex Marquez.

"I felt I was going to be strong

today. I was behind Marquez and Pecco (Bagnaia), and they're amazing riders, but I had the pace," remarked Martin after clinching his eighth sprint victory of the season.

Marini, leading into turn one from the pole position, saw Martin swiftly move up to third. However, Bagnaia reclaimed his position, trailing behind second-placed Marquez.

A tussle for position between Bagnaia and Martin unfolded from turn one, with several contacts before Martin maneuvered past his fellow title contender to move to third on the second lap. Di Giannantonio capitalized on the situation, overtaking the slower factory Ducati bike and leaving Bagnaia searching for answers as the top four pulled away.

"I tried to push a lot to close the gap, but they were faster than me today," noted Marini. "We need to find something for the race tomorrow; I was struggling for grip with the rear tire."

France makes history with demolition of 10-man Gibraltar

Nice, France - France, led by Kylian Mbappe's hat-trick and Warren Zaire-Emery's debut goal, etched their name in European Championship qualifying history with a resounding 14-0 victory over 10-man Gibraltar.

Les Bleus eclipsed Germany's 13-0 win over San Marino in 2006, marking their most significant victory in international football. The match also marked the first instance of a European team scoring 14 goals in a World Cup or European Championship qualifying fixture.

Marcus Thuram, Zaire-Emery, Mbappe, Jonathan Clauss, Kingsley Coman, and Youssouf Fofana contributed to France's dominant first-half performance in the Group B encounter, starting with a third-minute own goal.

Already secured at the top of the group, France introduced 17-year-old Zaire-Emery, marking him as the youngest France player since 1914. Despite scoring his debut goal in the 16th minute,



France's Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring against Gibraltar

Zaire-Emery's excitement was cut short as Gibraltar's Ethan Santos caught him on his ankle, resulting in a red card and an abrupt end to the teenager's debut.

Romania booked a place at Euro 2024 after recovering from a goal down to claim a 2-1 win against Israel in their Group I clash on Saturday.

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Imagine the sheer thrill of visiting a country that is 99 per cent ocean! Well that's what the Maldives is all about. But, if you're beginning to get butterflies in your stomach at the thought of a 'wet and wild' holiday, you needn't feel disturbed, for Maldives promises a heavenly getaway into tranquillity, from the hullabaloo of city life, with all the trappings of a mid-summer night's dream.

In the Maldives, you would get a taste of being on any one of those dream islands which one sees in the movies, where the sea comes into the lap of your verandah, where greenery forms a cosy haven on a beach with sugar-white sands, where the options for unwinding are endless. And, yes, if you are a water sports-freak, you can indulge in safe sports from snorkeling and surfing to deep-sea diving, fishing, et al.

Sunny side of life

Maldives lies in two rows of atolls in the Indian Ocean, just across the equator between Africa and Sri Lanka. The country is made up of about 1,190 coral islands formed around 26 natural ring-like atolls, spread over 90,000sqkm. A wonder destination for honeymooners and adventure seekers, it is also an ideal place for families to enjoy a quick break during extended weekends or anytime of the year.

Maldives is located just a four-hour flight away from Muscat and there is no scope for jet lag or confusion over time zones. Qatar Airways offers direct flights via Doha and after you land at the international airport in Male the hub and business centre of the archipelago.

You don't need to secure a visa to visit Maldives, free 30-day visit visas are stamped on your passport on arrival (which can be extended upto 90 days). There are no queues, except for passport control, no green channels, and as you walk out of the airport itself, you see blue lagoons welcoming you to a time of your life.

In fact, minutes before landing itself, from the aircraft window, you would have noticed the beautiful islands dotting the Indian ocean like shimmering beads, offering a stupendous preview of the fun that is yet to unfold.

Siyam Resorts

Every atoll in the Maldives offers explicit experiences, such that you can keep coming back again and again. But, if you're look-

Maldives – the perfect location for a quick vacation in close proximity with Oman – is ideal for a honeymoon trip, offbeat family vacation, or for mixing business with pleasure. Dazzling the Indian Ocean like a string of pearls, Maldives offers an affordable dream holiday – especially at Sun Siyam Resorts which boast of many firsts in the archipelago



PULSE OF MALDIVES

Timezone	: 1 hour ahead of Muscat
Flight duration	: 4 hours
Capital	: Male
Total islands	: 1192
Inhabited islands	: Around 187
Resort islands	: Around 164
Population	: 521,000 approx.
Major industries	: Tourism and fishing
Currency	: Rufiyaa (RO1 = 40 Rufiyaa)
Temperature	: 28-30° C



Olhuveli shipwreck dive site



Siyam Water World

ing for a robust family vacation, Siyam Resorts at Noonu atoll makes your getaway all the more magical in the Maldives.

Sun Siyam Resorts has an array of accommodation and facilities catering to varied audiences, from families or couples, to Gen Z travellers, especially from the Middle East. The Maldives isn't just the perfect setting for romance - it's also a dream destination for multi-generational families and

groups of friends hoping to make long-lasting memories.

Sun Siyam Iru Fushi

It is more suited for families and couples looking for pure relaxation, rejuvenation and reconnection. It offers multiple dining options, and high-level service with their personalised experiences guaranteed to guests. Ringed by a sugar white sandy

beach, it offers the height of affordable luxury for families. Go on a guiding snorkeling 'safari' in a vibrant reef that rings the resort, or sport dolphins on an incredible sunset cruise. Besides fun activities for kids, it also has 140 treatments at the award-winning 'The Spa by Thalgo'.

Florante Abuton Jr, assistant PR Communications manager, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, disclosed that Siyam Resorts are in good



Family Deluxe Beach Villa - Sun Siyam Iru Fushi



Aqua Villa

demand all through the year, though the most busiest season is about to begin in December and January, besides seasonal rush during Valentine's Day in February or other festive occasions. Also, Sun Siyam Resorts are ideal for planning destination weddings as they provide all the trappings for a memorable event of one's lifetime.

For prospective guests from Oman, he said, the resort provides all specific requirements of people from Islamic countries, including prayer rooms, prayer mats and copies of the Holy Quran, halal food as well as options for dining/staying and leisure activities in absolute privacy. However, the bulk of guests at the resort are from Russia, UK as well as other parts of Europe, especially couples on their honeymoon.

Sun Siyam Vilu Reef

Most suited for couples seeking the true Maldives experience with one of the most pristine house-reefs, guests can stay at the water villas of Sun Siyam Vilu Reef and enjoy 5-star luxury with the sand beneath your feet. It is also the ultimate haven for honeymooner. The water villas are surrounded by some of the best coral reef in the Maldives.

Siyam World

One of the most energetic resorts catering to group of friends, families and couples looking for and active holiday with multiple dining options, highlighting a world sports arena, water park, horses and ponies, and villas with pools as well for multi-gen families, Siyam World gas the largest inflatable waterpark in the Maldives, besides opportunities for riding the revolutionary sea-breacher or zooming across the waves on the resort's hydrofoil e-bikes.

Sun Siyam Iru Veli

A resort most suitable for couples celebrating something special. For a laid-back luxury in an authentic Maldivian setting, choose an idyllic island retreat pierced in a cyan-blue South Nilandhe Atoll. Pump for the resort's Premium all-inclusive signature plan and you can off completely, your every whim catered to from dawn till dusk. the glamorous beach villa or overwater villa each has a private pool. As part of the package, start the day with a stand-up paddleboarding session in the warm waters that lap the island.

Sun Siyam Olhuveli

Most suited for adventure seekers, divers - couples and families alike looking fir affordable luxury. At Sun Siyam Olhuveli, spanning three paradise islands, there is a wealth of activities to enjoy, whenever you decide to visit. In addition to thrilling sub-aquatic explorations of secret shipwreck and world-class water sports, there are opportunities to do some good with local island cleaning sessions and tree planting. Or dive into the sea for a coral planting session. (More details on Maldives in online version)

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