

HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF GERMANY

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has sent a cable of congratulations to President Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany on being re-elected as his country's President for a second term. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Steinmeier. His Majesty also wished the people of Germany further progress and prosperity, and the relations between the two countries further development and growth. - **ONA**



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WEATHER

One dead, 30 rescued after heavy rains lash parts of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: One person died and 30 more required rescue from incidents caused by rains across parts of the Sultanate and adjoining areas since Sunday evening.

Areas of North and South Al Batinah, Al Dakhiliyah, South Sharqiyah and Muscat received significant amounts of rain leading to fast-flowing wadis in some places. The rain also caused flooding and the formation of stagnant pools of water in the capital, where the downpour was stronger.

Royal Oman Police (ROP) personnel were called to help two expatriates who had been trapped inside their vehicle, owing to the rains. "One of them was suffering from shortness of breath inside their vehicle, which was in a pool of water in Jibroo in Wilayat Muttrah," said the ROP. "He died shortly after being rescued, due to poor health."

ROP teams were called to assist in many parts of Oman during the rains. In two separate incidents, three more expatriates and two Omani nationals in Ghubra re-



quired assistance after their vehicle had got caught in the rain. Two women in Al Khuwair were also helped by the ROP personnel.

Meanwhile, a bus on Sultan Qaboos Street also got stuck in a pool of water caused by the rain, requiring Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority personnel to rescue seven people trapped inside.

The rain caused disruptions in the flow of traffic in areas of the capital: Motorists coming on the Mountain Road connecting Amerat to Bausher were unable to travel, owing to the overflowing wadis and mud deposited on the roads. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Tour of Oman Stage 5: Hirt's masterpiece

1 Jan Hirt displayed impressive climbing legs on Monday to tame the famous ascent of Jabal Al Akhdar. The Czech rider enjoyed strong support from his teammates. **>A4**

WORLD

Ukraine calls for meeting with Russia

2 Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Sunday called on Russia to hold a meeting within the next 48 hours to discuss Moscow's military buildup along its borders. **>A7**

MARKET

Ministry inks pact to promote investment

3 The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion today signed a cooperation programme to promote available investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman. **>B1**

OIL PRICES MAY TOUCH \$100 AGAIN

Higher prices to
help the Sultanate
achieve its Five-Year
Plan projects with
ease

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With Oman oil price rising by \$2.46 to reach \$92.93 on Monday, analysts expect the price to touch \$100 a barrel or more during this week or the next.

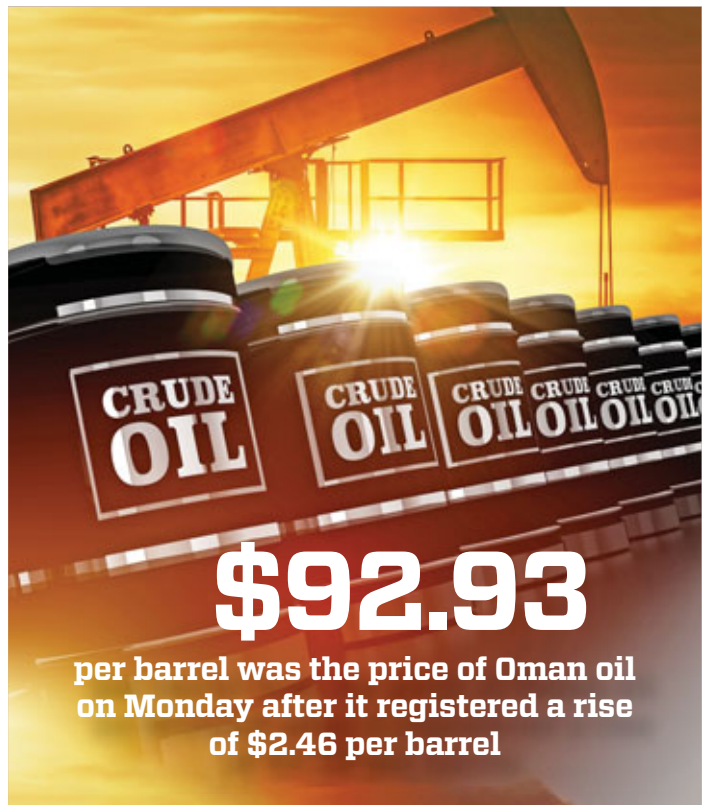
"There are several reasons that helped the rise in price, events on the international scene being one of them. I think it will further reach \$100 per barrel or more during this week or the next," Khalfan Al Tawqi, an economic analyst, speaking exclusively with the *Times of Oman*, said.

He added that the hike in prices will enable Oman to achieve its Five-Year Plan projections with ease, while helping to accelerate the realisation of plan targets.

Across the world, Brent crude futures were at \$95.61 a barrel by 5:06 GMT, up to \$1.17, after earlier hitting a peak of \$96.16, the highest since October 2014.

Edward Moya, an analyst for foreign exchange brokerage firm OANDA, also said oil prices could cross the \$100 mark.

"Besides, with global economic activity returning to normalcy after a two-year disruption due to COVID-19, the price of Oman oil is set to move upwards follow-



ing the increasing demand for oil worldwide," said Al Tawqi.

"Add to this the OPEC and OPEC Plus agreement deciding not to increase production, and the higher price of a barrel of Oman oil is a certainty," he said.

Also, with the US deciding not to subsidise shale oil because of its high costs, Omani oil price is bound to head northward, he said. Besides, the high cost of gas in global markets led to an increase in the demand for oil.

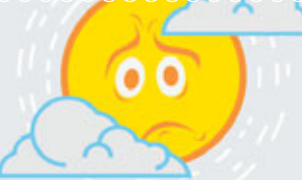
Listing the positive aspects of the price-rise on Oman's economy, Al Tawqi said it would open up for the Sultanate a whole host of opportunities.

"One of them would be a transformation of Oman into a revenue surplus state from a deficit that has been the case for several years now, or 2012, to be precise," he explained. "It would also enable the Sultanate to seek concessional loans from internal and as well as external sources."

"It would also help the Sultanate get a better credit rating and reduce the financial pressures enabling the country to inaugurate more liberal policies in place of the austerity measures it has been forced to adopt all these days," he summed up. "It would also afford the Sultanate a way to pay off the public debt in a timely manner."

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GREENHOUSE FARMING

In a first, SQU researchers grow Gladiolus in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A research team from the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has for the first time succeeded in growing Gladiolus plant in a greenhouse.

The effort was part of an intensive research on a number of cut flowers with the objective to improve the techniques of local production as also to cut import of the flowers from abroad.

The project to introduce cut followers as a new agricultural crop has already commenced and planting of cut flowers on a bigger scale would help boost the agricultural sector.

At present, vegetables dominate production in greenhouses in the Sultanate of Oman and inclusion of cut flowers in the list of agricultural crops would, besides bringing variety, boost income in the agricultural sector.



Oman imported cut flowers worth \$5.52 million during 2018. Gladiolus flower, also known as 'Sword Lily', belongs to the iris family and is used for internal décor, besides other usages.

The research team comprised Dr. Mohammed Mumtaz Khan, Walid Mubarak Al Busaidi, Abdullah Omar Al Farsi and Maryam Ismail Al Zaidi from the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University. **With ONA inputs**

PANDEMIC

Updated travel rules make it easier to travel from Oman to India

Times News Service

MUSCAT: It just got a lot easier for people travelling from Oman to India following the scrapping of the rule requiring passengers to submit mandatory PCR test results before boarding their flights.

From 14 February onwards, passengers to India will no longer need to take mandatory PCR tests if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Passengers, however, still need to fill in the Air Suvidha self-declaration form wherein they will upload their passport and flight details, vaccination certificate and contact information.

Although the space to upload PCR tests has been marked with an asterisk, Delhi Airport has confirmed that passengers can indeed fill in their self-declaration forms



without uploading the test results.

"We request you to ignore the asterisk sign and submit the Self Declaration Form," said Delhi Airport on social media in reply to a passenger's query "In case you get some error after clicking on the 'submit' option, please do tell us."

Vaccine certificates from 82 countries – including Oman – are accepted as valid in India. A full list of countries can be found here: <https://www.newdelhi-airport.in/pdf/List-of-Countries-10.02.2022-new-11-02-22.pdf>

"There are countries which have

agreements with India on mutual recognition of vaccination certificates of nationally recognised or WHO- recognised vaccines," said the ministry guidelines. "Similarly, there are countries which presently do not have such an agreement with India, but they exempt Indian

citizens fully vaccinated with nationally recognised or WHO recognised vaccines.

"On the basis of reciprocity, travellers from only such countries which provide quarantine-free entry to Indians will be allowed relaxation from a full primary vaccination schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations," added the ministry.

Airlines are to allow boarding of only those passengers who have filled in all the information in the self-declaration form on the Air Suvidha portal and have uploaded the negative RT-PCR test report or COVID-19 vaccination certificate of having completed the primary vaccination schedule. At the time of boarding the flight, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening. **>A2**

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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:26pm
Asr.....3:42pm
Maghrib.....6:07pm
Isha.....7:18pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:23am

CABLES

HM sends greeting to Serbia

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Aleksandar Vucic of the Republic of Serbia on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness.

He also wished the people of Serbia further progress and prosperity.

HM receives thanks from Italy

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Sergio Mattarella of the Italian Republic in reply to His Majesty's congratulatory cable on the occasion of being re-elected as his country's President. In the cable, President Mattarella expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments and affirmed his keenness to strengthen the existing relations between the two countries. He also wished His Majesty the Sultan good health and happiness and the Sultanate of Oman further progress and prosperity. -ONA

IMX22

RNO takes part in naval exercise

MUSCAT: Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) continued its participation in the international maritime exercise (IMX22) currently conducted in the Omani maritime area (Strait of Hormuz, Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea).

The Maritime Security Centre undertakes the command and control of IMX 22 of the second area.

A number of vessels from the Royal Navy of Oman and naval vessels from other friendly countries including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and South Korea are taking part in the IMX 22 with air support from the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) planes.

Commodore Tariq bin Isa Al



Raisi, Acting Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman accompanied by deputy chairman of the Maritime Security Centre paid a visit to the site of IMX 22 where they were briefed on the progress of the activities of the drill, the duties, responsibilities and roles of the vessels taking part in the drill.

They also got acquainted with the progress of the drill and methods of execution of the activities among other aspects. -ONA

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OQ8

Promoting CSR in Al Wusta

HAIMA: Sheikh Me'athad Mohammed Al Yaaqoubi, Governor of Al Wusta received in his office yesterday some senior officials of the Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries

Company (OQ8).

The meeting touched on the most important programmes set for the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Governorate and means of promoting them.

These regular meetings between Al Wusta Governor's Office and various partners aim to achieve more sustainable partnership.

-ONA

TRAVELLING

< FROM A1 Physical distancing, screening

On arrival, flight operators are expected to disembark passengers while ensuring physical distancing. Thermal screening is to be carried out by airport staff, to whom the completed self-declaration form should also be shown.

Passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facilities, in keeping with health protocols. If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed as per laid down protocols.

A sub-section stating that to two percent of the total number of passengers on board arriving flights shall undergo random

post-arrival testing at the airport. Such travellers on each flight shall be identified by the airlines concerned, which will select passengers for random testing from a cross-section of nationalities, where possible. Once these passengers have submitted their samples, they will be allowed to leave the airport.

If such travellers test positive, their samples would be sent for genomic screening at the INSA-COG laboratory network. These persons are to be treated/ isolated as per laid-down standard protocols. All travellers must also self-monitor their health 14 days after their arrival. If travellers under

self-health monitoring develop signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, they must immediately self-isolate and report to their nearest health facility, or call the national helpline number (1075) or state helpline numbers.

International travellers arriving through seaports and land ports will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, except that facilities for online registration are not available for such passengers currently.

Such travellers shall submit their self-declaration form to the authorities concerned of the Government of India at seaports and land ports on arrival.

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ACHIEVEMENT

Nautilus swim captain secures US scholarship

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A talented young swimmer at Nautilus Swimming Club has secured a scholarship to study at Kenyon College in the United States, where he has been admitted under the institute's sports criteria.

Mirjavohir Marvarov secured admission at Kenyon thanks to a placement programme run by Nautilus to help talented swimmers earn scholarships to pursue their higher education overseas, providing them an excellent platform to thrive in their chosen careers. The academic initiative run by Nautilus makes them the first swim academy in Oman to provide its young athletes a pathway to tertiary education.

They are also the only academy in Oman headed by a former Olympic-level coach, Ivan Proskura, who was over the moon with Mirjavohir earning a place at Kenyon, which has swimming and diving programmes, considered among the most successful in the US: The college counts 34 national titles to its name, 31 of them won consecutively.

"What we are doing is providing our swimmers a path that enables them to use their skills both in academics and in sport," said Proskura. "We have shared our database of young athletes with academic recruiters who find places for them in universities that are looking to provide sports scholarships to talented students.

"Kenyon are already assembling their team for the next term and Mirjavohir being a part of their setup, I am sure it is going to be a win-win for all involved," he added. "We were delighted that he was able to secure his admission through a scholarship as early as October last year, well before admissions on the basis of academics began this January." Kenyon College has been described in various academic-focused publi-



Mirjavohir Marvarov

cations as number one among the 25 "New Ivy" institutions, making it a great place for Mirjavohir and other students to learn.

The sports scholarship Mirjavohir has won will cover the cost of his tuition during his entire time at Kenyon and there are others waiting in the wings at Nautilus who have already been contacted by sports recruiters with a view to getting them placed in higher education institutions overseas.

"There are a couple of students who are in the final years of high school who have indeed been approached," said Proskura. "Should they receive scholarships, I would definitely encourage them to go for it, because you are being given a fantastic opportunity to learn and take both your athletics and your career forward.

"Of course, the final decision rests with the student and their parents, but it is our fervent hope that our young swimmers get into colleges that are ranked among the top 20 in the US and the other countries that offer them admission," he added. "Our aim is to one day get our students into Ivy League universities."

"It is a challenging task for students to get into their dream

college – hopefully, we can make that dream come true for some of them," he said. "The US college sports system is a fantastic opportunity for athletes to obtain top-notch education and the same is true in other disciplines as well. Many institutes are on the lookout for dancers, musicians and other talented youth."

In 2019, Proskura took Mirjavohir to the FINA World Cup to compete in five events against the world record holders, a great experience and motivation for him. Nautilus is looking forward to developing more international level swimmers in Oman. Although it has been challenging to maintain athletes' levels during COVID pandemic, Nautilus has received great support from its partner, KGIS, in ensuring their safety during training sessions.

One of the success factors of Nautilus swim school is that it offers a full range of programmes, starting from learning to swim, all the way to entering competitive programmes with swimmers entering national and international swimming championships.

Nautilus has become the first and so far only swim school in Oman whose swimmer became the first person living in Oman to qualify for the All India National Swimming Finals. Sergey Nazaryan has become one of the top swimmers for Armenia at the 2019 RA Swimming championships. An upcoming star at Nautilus, Hussain Taha, has been representing Oman at the recent GCC championships, bringing home two bronze medals.

Janani, the youngest among all of Nautilus competing swimmers, after winning gold medals in the 50m and 100m fly events and silver in the 50m heats at the state level swimming competition in India, entered the Indian National Swimming Championship before reaching the finals of all the three events.



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STAGE 5: HIRT’S MASTERPIECE



JAN HIRT (Intermarché-Wanty-Gobert Matériaux) displayed impressive climbing legs on Monday to tame the famous ascent of Jabal Al Akhdar (Green Mountain). The Czech rider enjoyed strong support from his teammates, especially Rein Taaramäe, and went solo in the last 2km. Not only does Hirt take the stage win with significant gaps ahead of Kevin Vauquelin and Elie Gesbert (Arkea-Samsic), he also cracked Fausto Masnada (Quick-Step Alpha Vinyl Team) on slopes of more than 10% to take the red leader’s jersey at the end of an eventful stage that saw the battle open up early in the wind. On Tuesday, the final stage will lead the riders to the spectacular Matrah Corniche.

The fifth stage took riders inland to the Al-Dakhiliyah region, beginning with a long stretch south through the Sumail Gap which divides the Al Hajar Mountains into their eastern and western subranges. A major centre of Islamic culture, education and trade, Nizwa is



home to some of the country’s most beautiful and historic mosques, some dating to the 9th century. West of Nizwa lies Bahla Fort, a wonder of ancient architecture built by the Banu Nebhan between the 12th and 15th centuries, and now one of Oman’s five

UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The ascent to the top of Jabal Al Akhdar is one of the best-known destinations in Oman offering panoramic vistas, cooler weather, vibrant green wadis (valleys) and a dramatic mountain landscape.



DIABETIC AND PROFESSIONAL CYCLISTS

Team Novo Nordisk joins for the first appearance with professional cyclists at the Tour of Oman



THE NOVO NORDISK team, consisting of diabetic and professional cyclists, has joined Tour Oman which is hosted by the Sultanate in collaboration with the National Team of Oman, UCI and in which hundreds of professional cyclists from around the world participate. Commenting on the participation, Dr Noor Al Busaidi - Director of National Diabetes & Endocrinology Centre in Oman, said: “Living with diabetes, as challenging as it may be, still has a very bright side as we see here today. Team

Novo Nordisk of seven professional cyclists who are affected by Type I Diabetes Mellitus competing in the Tour Oman clearly demonstrates a model on how youth living with diabetes can optimise their lives and well-being and be in good control of their condition. Nevertheless, such achievement would not have been possible without various support from governments, private enterprises, and society. Each partner contributed to this achievement and success.” “As president of Oman Diabetic

Association and a health care provider, I would like to call on our strategic partner, the Ministry of Health and all other local stakeholders to continue to work together to enhance care and support Omanis living with diabetes, especially children and youth. From what we see today, I have a strong belief that a day will come when we will have a diabetic champion from Sultanate of Oman.” elaborated Dr Noor Al Busaidi. “The Tour of Oman is a very important race for us, and we are

honoured to be making our first appearance here and to have the opportunity to help drive change in diabetes at such a big event,” said Vassili Davidenko Team Novo Nordisk General Manager. “It’s been a while since we raced in the Middle East, but we always have a great experience racing in this part of the world. It’s a perfect way to start the season in the sunshine and I’m sure that this time will be no different.” “The Tour of Oman is a beautiful race to start the season,” concluded Team Novo Nordisk

captain Charles Planet. “And an important one, not only for us but for all our supporters who help us inspire, educate and empower everyone affected by diabetes around the world. We have an important responsibility to those people and performing well in races like the Tour of Oman is the best way we can get our message across.” “It is a pleasure that Team Novo Nordisk have selected Oman as a part of their annual tour, as this will be the 1st time to include a Gulf Cluster country

in such a unique experience to showcase raising awareness on diabetes differently,” said Venkat Kalyan P K - VP & GM of Novo Nordisk Gulf Cluster. As of today, Tuesday, February 15th will witness the conclusion of the sixth and final round of the Tour Oman, which covered nearly 900 kilometres over six days of racing across the governorates of Muscat, North Al Batinah and Al Sharqiya. Participants will reach the final destination in Muttrah Corniche, where the winners will be announced.





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MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

Urban development performance and challenges outlined



MUSCAT: Dr Khalfan bin Said Al Shua'ili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning said that 16,300 applications have been decided for proof of ownership and registration of property.

Of these, the applications approved stood at 8,800 while those rejected totalled 7,500.

This announcement was made during the Second Media Dialogue for Comprehensive Transformation, organised at Oman International Convention and Exhibitions Centre. The Ministry also reviewed the benchmarks of the executive plan of 2022, the performance indicators and the challenges facing urban development in the Sultanate of Oman.

The minister of housing and urban planning said that the value of real estate traded during 2021 rose by 4 per cent to reach OMR2.552 billion while the revenues reached OMR72.5 million.

The minister added that the number of usufruct (land lease) contracts in 2021 stood at 9,300 and the fees collected amounted to OMR8.400 million.

He said that 16 sites with a total area of 597 million square metres for projects of food security have been approved, 7,645 land plots have been earmarked and five new sites have been allocated within the project of residential districts with integrated services.

The minister pointed to that there were 2,000 families that benefited from housing relief support in 2021 at a cost of OMR47 million and 700 residential units have been executed.

As many as 713 cases have been exempted from fees for a total of OMR13.5 million by Royal Direc-

tives, he said, adding that payment of loans for 544 cases affected with Tropical Cyclone Shaheen has been postponed for six months.

Forty field visits had been made during the Tropical Cyclone Shaheen and 328 cases have been approved for housing relief, he added.

Nearly 85 per cent of the project for shifting citizens whose property were affected with the activities of Sohar Industrial Port (Liwa Model City), have been completed, he said pointing to that the cash compensation amounted to 85 per cent, the land compensation to 97 per cent. There are 476 residential units under construction, he added.

On the compensations of Al Batinah Coastal Road Project, he said that the course of Phase I (Barka-Al Musana-Liwa-Shinas) has been assigned to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

As for the second Phase II of the project (Al Suwaiq-Al Khaboura-Saham-Sohar) 96 per cent of compensations for houses have been completed and 58 per cent of compensations for farms and cash compensations of 84 per cent have been completed.

The number of residential lands distributed and registered with the Ministry up to 2020 amounted to 1.319 million land plots, he said.

The minister pointed out that the trial operation of Amlak (property) platform for integrated digital services would begin today (Tuesday).

The platform hosts 50 eServices related to real estate development and services for citizens and investors among other services. — OMA

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Over 1.55 million vehicles registered till December 2021 in Oman: NCSI

MUSCAT: The total number of registered vehicles (excluding military vehicles) in the Sultanate of Oman declined by 0.3 per cent from 1,557,453 at the end of December 2020 to reach 1,552,665 at the end of December 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Information and Statistics (NCSI).

Vehicles with commercial registration recorded the biggest decline from 239,639 vehicles at the end of December 2020 to 232,985 at the end of December 2021.

The number of government vehicles went down by 12,695 in December 2020 to 12,206 at the end of December 2021.

Vehicles with private registration accounted for 79.4 per cent of the total number of registered



vehicles in Oman, increasing by 11,807 vehicles to reach 1,233,109 compared to 1,221,302 vehicles at the end of December 2020.

Tutoring vehicles rose from 5,730 by December 2020 to 5,842 at the end of December 2021.

Lightweight vehicles with engine capacities between 1500cc and 3000cc reached 833,155 at the end of December 2021.

Among colours, white was the most preferred colour for vehicles in Oman with 665,975 owners.

Silver was the second choice with 199,428, while gray came as the third most prominent vehicle colour with about 128,189 vehicles.

Vehicles with temporary registration (temporary inspection, export and import) dropped by 50.2 per cent at the end of December 2021 to reach 7,645 compared to 15,351 vehicles at the end of December 2020.

MUNICIPALITY CARRIES OUT INSPECTIONS

For enforcing proper health hygiene in markets and shops and to control unauthorised vending activities, the Muscat Municipality carried out 45 inspection visits at shops in Seeb and issued fines against six facilities for operating contrary to the laws and regulations.

The municipality also directed some shops to improve the quality of services they offer to the public.



Trending

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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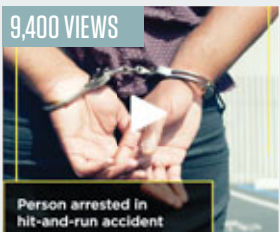
On Friday, 11 February, Dhofar Building went up in flames shortly after 6pm.



Life in limbo for Dhofar Building shopkeepers

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

9,400 VIEWS



Maghrib Minute video

The Maghrib Minute video had 9,400 views and reached 36,200 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

602 VIEWS



Video on rains across Oman

A video on rains across Oman had 602 views and 41 likes on Instagram.

ROP ADVISORY

FROM A1 Famed Muttrah Souq flooded

Traffic was also interrupted on Sultan Qaboos Street. "Please be careful and take alternative routes," said ROP in its advisory to motorists.

Meanwhile, occupants of a house in Wilayat Muttrah were forced to leave their home and seek shelter on the roof of their building, after water from an overflowing wadi burst into their home. Rain water also flooded the famed Muttrah Souq, as well as many other roads and public spaces that run between homes and shops in the area. "From Sunday evening until about 9am on Monday morning, our operations centre had received 20 reports of vehicles stranded due to the flooding," said an official from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA). "Thirty people have required rescue... fortunately, they are all in good health," he said. "We were also required to assist in another incident where four people needed to be evacuated and they are all unharmed," he said.

In the aftermath of the rain, Muscat Municipality has already begun its cleanup job, deploying bulldozers to remove debris from roads and water tankers to mop up all of the rainwater. Cleanup crews have also been sent to rain-hit parts of the capital to make the roads safe for motorists and pedestrians once again.

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable contractor for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Tender Reference No	Title of the Tender
DISC/W/Tender/2022/003	Design and Construction of Booster Station at Sahalnoot
Tender Fee	RO. 105.000 Inclusive VAT (5%) each Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	The bidder must provide previous experiences in the field of supplying, installing and operating pumping stations SCAD and electromagnetic meters during the past five years.
Pre-qualification	The Tenderer should be a registered business owner with proper commercial registration certificate and Oma chamber of commerce and Industry certificate in Sultanate of Oman.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 21 February 2022
Site Visit	10:00 AM on 22 February 2022
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	3:00 PM on 23 February 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	3:00 PM on 24 February 2022
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 28 February 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (1% of the quoted bid price and having 90 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.



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Dhofar Integrated Services Company

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US-Canada border bridge reopens after COVID-19 protests

Canadian police successfully cleared protesters and vehicles that had blocked the vital trade route

OTTAWA: The Ambassador Bridge, which connects the US and Canada, reopened late on Sunday after COVID demonstrations closed off the vital international trade corridor.

The owner of the bridge, Detroit International Bridge Co., told the AP news agency and local Detroit outlets that “the Ambassador Bridge is now fully open allowing the free flow of commerce between the Canada and US economies once again.”

A Canadian mayor said earlier in the day that the standoff on the key US border bridge was at an end.

Windsor City Mayor Drew Dilkens tweeted: “Today, our national economic crisis at the Ambassador Bridge came to an end. Border crossings will reopen when it is safe to do so and I defer to police and border agencies to make that determination.”

Canadian police successfully cleared protesters and vehicles that had blocked the vital trade route. The US, which pushed for a quick resolution to the border blockade, praised the actions of Windsor police.

White House national security advisor Liz Sherwood-Randall said Washington recognized “the imperative of taking swift, strong action and deterring future blockades.”

Police escalate their response

Windsor Police upped the ante on Sunday by placing bridge protesters in handcuffs, towing vehicles and reclaiming clogged lanes, say-



DEMONSTRATIONS END: Access to the key trade route between Canada and the US had been blocked as protests against coronavirus restrictions occurred in a number of Canadian cities.

ing that “there will be zero tolerance for illegal activity.”

In total, between 25 and 30 people were arrested by authorities.

“The arrested persons are all facing a charge of mischief. Multiple vehicles within the demonstration area were also seized,” Windsor Police said in a statement. The arrests came after a tense standoff between Canadian police and demonstrators, which escalated on Friday when a court order and threats of detention failed to end the blockade.

Access to the key trade route between Canada and the US had been blocked as protests against coronavirus restrictions occurred in a number of Canadian cities, including the capital, Ottawa.

Some 180 protesters were blocking the Ambassador Bridge linking Windsor in the Canadian province of Ontario with the US city of Detroit, even after Canadian police succeeded in persuading demonstrators to move some trucks barricading the crossing earlier on Saturday. A first arrest was made

by Windsor police on Saturday evening for a criminal offense in relation to the demonstration.

The bridge carries a quarter of all trade between the two countries, and the disruptions to traffic are believed to have caused millions of dollars in additional cost in the automobile sector alone so far. An order to end the blockade was issued by a court on Friday.

Police say many demonstrators ‘aggressive’

In Ottawa, where protesters have been encamped since a convoy of truckers arrived in late January, police say some 4,000 demonstrators were gathered on Saturday. Many people arrived from outside the city to join the protests.

Although politicians and residents have called for the protests to be dispersed, police say they are limited in what they can do.

“Safety concerns — arising from aggressive, illegal behavior by many demonstrators — limited police enforcement capabilities,” Ottawa police said in a statement

late on Saturday. They said a joint command center had now been set up together with the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Both federal and provincial leaders say they are not able to tell police what to do.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has called the protesters a “fringe” of Canadian society, has so far rejected calls to bring in the military. But his office has said authorities would not hesitate to pull out all the stops, if necessary.

“The prime minister stressed that border crossings cannot, and will not, remain closed and that all options are on the table,” it said in a statement late Saturday after Trudeau met with senior officials.

The protests in Ottawa have provoked complaints by many residents, with protesters often displaying loud or otherwise offensive behavior. On Saturday, some tore down a fence that had been erected around the National War Memorial after demonstrators urinated on it. -**AP**



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MEASLES OUTBREAK

Raging measles outbreak killed 150 in Afghanistan in January: WHO



GENEVA: Amid the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the raging measles outbreak infected tens of thousands and killed more than 150 people in Afghanistan last month, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier on Friday told a media briefing in the Swiss capital measles cases had been on the rise in all provinces of Afghanistan since the end of July 2021, reported Pajhwok Afghan News. He said a total of 35,319 suspected measles cases were reported in January, including 3,000 that were laboratory confirmed, and 156 deaths. Ninety-one per cent of the cases and 97 per cent of the deaths were children under the age of five.

“The rapid rise in cases in Jan-

uary suggests that the number of deaths due to measles is likely to increase sharply in the coming weeks,” he added.

The Geneva-based UN health agency said that the outbreak was particularly concerning as Afghanistan was facing massive food insecurity and malnutrition, reported Pajhwok.

This comes as Afghanistan's health situation is also on the brink of collapse and is in dire need of international aid and support after the Taliban took control of the war-torn nation last August.

Moreover, a combination of a suspension of foreign aid, the freezing of Afghan government assets, and international sanctions on the Taliban have plunged the country, already suffering from high poverty levels, into a full-blown economic crisis. -**ANI**

CONTROVERSIAL PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

Protests after president tightens grip on judiciary in Tunisia

TUNIS: Thousands of protesters took to the streets in Tunisia on Sunday, following a controversial presidential decree published in the early hours.

President Kais Saied has given himself powers over the judiciary by establishing a new judicial watchdog which allows him to fire judges and block promotions and appointments.

Judicial independence

Around 2,000 people demonstrated in the capital Tunis after the president's order, with many waving flags and shouting slogans.

Protesters carried signs with one reading “don't touch the judiciary!” while another read “save our democracy!”



Youssef Bouzakher, who is head of the now-defunct Supreme Council, described the decree as “unconstitutional that ends guarantees of the independ-

ence of the judiciary.”

Saied said on Thursday that he would issue the decree which effectively dissolves the Superior Council of the Judiciary. This is

the main legal body overseeing judges and one of the last remaining institutions working independently of Saied.

The announcement led to judg-

es and lawyers protesting outside the Palace of Justice.

The new decree also bars members of the judiciary from taking part in protest action.

Decree could ‘end democratic experiment’

A “Temporary Supreme Judicial Council” consisting of 21 members will be established. Nine of the members must be appointed by the president, and they will have to swear “to preserve the independence of the judiciary.”

Saied Benarbia, the regional director of the International Commission of Jurists, told AFP news agency that the decree “enshrines the subordination of the judiciary to the executive”.

“If implemented, it would effectively end judicial independence and the separation of powers in Tunisia, and with it, the democratic experiment in the country,” Benarbia said.

Last July, Tunisia was plunged into a constitutional crisis when Saied suspended the country's parliament, dismissed the sitting prime minister and granted himself executive powers.

He said that the “exceptional measures” were intended to save Tunisia from collapse.

Supporters welcomed his moves, describing Tunisia's whole political system as corrupt.

Critics say he is leading the country toward authoritarian rule. -**AP**

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Ukraine calls for meeting with Russia, other nations within 48 hrs

Taking to Twitter, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba said Russia failed to respond to Kiev’s request under the Vienna Document

KIEV: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Sunday called on Russia to hold a meeting within the next 48 hours to discuss Moscow’s military buildup along its borders.

Taking to Twitter, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba said Russia failed to respond to Kiev’s request under the Vienna Document.

“Consequently, we take the next step. We request a meeting with Russia and all participating states within 48 hours to discuss its reinforcement & redeployment along our border & in temporarily occupied Crimea,” he said.

In another tweet, Kuleba added, “If Russia is serious when it talks about the indivisibility of security in the OSCE space, it must fulfill its commitment to military transparency in order to de-escalate tensions and enhance security for all.”

In the past few months, the West and Ukraine have accused Russia of a troop build-up near the Ukrainian border in alleged preparation for an “invasion.”

Moscow has denied these accusations, repeatedly stating that



MEETING: In the past few months, the West and Ukraine have accused Russia of a troop build-up near the Ukrainian border in alleged preparation for an invasion.

it is not threatening anyone and at the same time expressing strong concerns over NATO’s military activity near the Russian borders, which it deems a threat to its national security.

Moscow has also said that Russia has the right to move troops within its national territory, Sputnik reported.

G7 warns Russia of sanctions if Ukraine attacked

The finance ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) on Monday said they are ready to collectively

The finance ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) on Monday said they are ready to collectively impose severe sanctions on Russia in the event of a military invasion by Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine.

impose severe sanctions on Russia in the event of a military invasion by Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine.

“We are prepared to collectively impose economic and financial sanctions which will have massive and immediate consequences on the Russian economy,” the bloc comprised of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States said in a statement. “We are united in our resolve to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity as well as economic and financial stability of Ukraine. The G7, together with international financial institutions and in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through its 2020 Stand-by Arrangement, are providing significant financial support to Ukraine,” the statement added.

The G7 foreign ministers said their immediate priority is to support efforts to de-escalate the situation, but stressed that “any particular further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will be met with a swift, coordinated and forceful response.”

They also pledged the support of the seven richest economies in the world to the Ukrainian economy.

Australia evacuates embassy in Ukraine

Australia is evacuating its embassy in Ukraine amid rising tensions between Moscow and Kyiv.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne on Sunday announced that all staff at the embassy in Kyiv had been told to leave. “Given the deteriorating security situation caused by the build-up of Russian troops on Ukraine’s border, the Government has directed the departure of staff at the Australian Embassy in Kyiv and temporarily suspended operations at our Embassy in Kyiv,” she said in a statement.

Payne said operations at the embassy were shuttered and moved to a temporary office in Lviv, a city in western Ukraine. “We continue to advise Australians to leave Ukraine immediately by commercial means. Security conditions could change at short notice,” she added.

The minister further explained that Russian military action in Ukraine will severely limit their ability to provide consular assistance to Australians.

This evacuation comes as western concerns are mounting that Russia may carry out an invasion of Ukraine. **ANI**

TREATED RADIOACTIVE WATER

IAEA reviews Japan’s plan to release Fukushima water into ocean

TOKYO: A team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived in Japan on Monday to review a plan to release treated radioactive water from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant into the ocean.

Japan hoped the visit would help it push through the plan, which is opposed by the local fishing industry and neighboring countries. The wastewater has been kept in massive tanks since the plant went into meltdown in 2011, and storage space is running out. The IAEA team would evaluate the safety and radiation effects on humans and the sea.

“This week, we will conduct a mission to review the action, plans, data, and relevant documents, to assess their compliance against the provisions included in international safety standards,” said Gustavo Caruso, director and coordinator of the IAEA’s nuclear safety and security department.

How safe is this water?

A massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011 destroyed the Fukushima plant’s cooling systems.

Three reactors melted down, and more than a million tons of water was used to cool the melted reactors.

Japan’s government said the water has been treated to remove dangerous isotopes. Some observ-



ers, however, note that the water would still have elevated levels of radioactive tritium. Others argue that a gradual release of wastewater, diluted with seawater, would render it harmless.

Tokyo Electric Power Co., known as TEPCO, plans to gradually release the water in a process expected to last decades.

“We hope to further improve the objectivity and transparency of this process through this review,” said TEPCO’s chief officer for the treated water management, Junichi Matsumoto.

The IAEA plans to review details of the water, the safety of the discharge, sampling methods and the environmental impact during their five-day visit.

It hoped the mission “in an objective, credible and science-based manner will help send messages of transparency and confidence for the people in Japan and beyond,” Caruso said.

Who is opposing the plan?

The 15-member team includes

experts from several countries, including South Korea and China. Both neighboring countries have strongly opposed Japan’s plan.

In Japan, local fishers feared it would undermine years of work to restore confidence in their seafood.

Japanese authorities regularly conduct extensive testing on food and fish from Fukushima to ensure safety. Tokyo and the IAEA have agreed to compile an interim report on the review later this year. **DW**

COVID CASES



India reports 34,113 fresh COVID-19 cases, 346 deaths

NEW DELHI: As many as 34,113 fresh COVID-19 cases were reported across the country in the 24-hour period, informed the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Monday.

A total of 75.18 crore tests have been conducted so far in India, with 1,067,908 tests held in the last 24 hours, as per ministry data. Country’s active caseload currently stands at 478,882, which accounts for 1.12 per cent of total cases.

The daily positivity rate in India has been recorded at 3.19 per cent and the weekly positivity rate at 3.99 per cent, as per the bulletin.

A total of 91,930 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and the cumulative tally of recovered patients since the beginning of the pandemic is now at 41,677,641, stated the bulletin. India’s recovery rate now stands at 97.68 per cent.

The country reported 346 deaths in the country in the past 24 hours, increasing the total reported death count to 5,09,011.

A total of 1,729,587,490 vaccine doses have been administered in the country so far under a nationwide vaccination drive. **ANI**

SUPERBOWL

LA Rams defeat Cincinnati Bengals in NFL Super Bowl

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Rams are the champions of Super Bowl LVI after playing a tight game against the Cincinnati Bengals on Sunday.

Both the Rams and the Bengals overcame the odds to reach the National Football League (NFL) championship game.

The Los Angeles Rams emerged victorious in their fight to secure a hometown win during the final, denying the Cincinnati Bengals their first Super Bowl win.

Despite a last minute push by the Bengals, the Rams managed to hold off their lead, putting the final score at 23 to 20 with the Rams in the lead.

The Rams scored the first touchdown of the game, taking the lead in the first quarter. The Bengals answered with a field goal,



followed by another touchdown by the Rams.

The Bengals recovered in the second quarter, scoring their first touchdown of the Super Bowl and narrowing the Rams’ lead.

At the start of the third quarter, the Bengals scored a quick touchdown followed by a field goal. The Rams fought back to score a field goal of their own and narrow the lead.

The fourth quarter saw the Rams once again take the lead with a touchdown, with less than 2 minutes left to go in the game.

Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp was named the Super Bowl’s Most Valuable Player (MVP). The offensive player logged eight receptions for 92 yards and two touchdowns during the game.

Who are the teams?

“It feels outstanding,” said Rams head coach Sean McVay, who is the youngest head coach to win a Super Bowl. “It was poetic, man.”

The Bengals came close to putting a crown on this season’s Cinderella story under the leadership of head coach Zac Taylor, but were denied in the end.

The game saw veteran Rams quarterback (QB) Matthew Staf-

ford pitted against rising Bengals QB Joe Burrow.

The Bengals were considered the underdogs entering the Super Bowl, having overcome two dismal losing seasons.

The Rams, however, brought more experience to the field and had the home field advantage while playing in LA’s \$5.5 billion (€4.94 billion) SoFi Stadium. The Rams’ defense is particularly formidable, headed by the best defensive player in the NFL, Aaron Donald.

Hip-hop legends at halftime

The highly-anticipated halftime show was a star-studded affair, featuring rap and hip-hop giants Dr. Dre, Mary J. Blige, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar and 50 Cent.

The performance was a tribute to Los Angeles, with moving sets resembling the streets of the iconic Californian city, and specifically the city of Inglewood.

At one point, rapper Eminem appeared to take a knee during the performance — a reference to the Black Lives Matter movement. The form of silent protest was famously initiated by former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in 2016 and has now become a global symbol of solidarity against racism.

The game was also broadcast live in Germany and other countries around the world, with global US football fans buckling down for a late night.

Fans had to face steep prices to view this year’s NFL championship live in the stadium, with the average price for tickets sold hitting \$6,136. **DW**





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1	Norway	9	5	7	21
2	Germany	8	5	2	15
3	USA	7	6	3	16
4	Netherlands	6	4	2	12
5	Austria	5	6	4	15
6	Sweden	5	3	3	11
7	PR China	5	3	2	10
8	ROC	4	6	8	18
9	France	3	6	2	11
10	Switzerland	3	0	5	8
11	Italy	2	5	4	11
12	Japan	2	4	5	11
13	Slovenia	2	3	2	7
14	Canada	1	4	10	15
15	Republic of Korea	1	3	1	5
16	Australia	1	2	1	4
17	Finland	1	1	2	4
18	Hungary	1	0	2	3
19	Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
20	New Zealand	1	0	0	1
20	Slovakia	1	0	0	1
22	Belarus	0	2	0	2
23	Spain	0	1	0	1
24	Belgium	0	0	1	1
24	Latvia	0	0	1	1
24	Poland	0	0	1	1

timesofoman.com

OLYMPICS 2022

French duo crowned, Chinese ice dancers make history at Beijing 2022

BEIJING:- France's four-time world champions Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron danced to the gold here on Monday, while Wang Shiyue and Liu Xinyu ranked 12th to set a new best result for Chinese ice dancers at a Winter Olympics.

Papadakis and Cizeron, the 2018 Olympic silver medallists, re-stated their dominance over this discipline with another new highest score, 136.15 points in the free dance, bringing their overall score to 226.98 for the championship.

Russian Olympic Committee athletes Victoria Sinitsina and Nikita Katsalapov, the current world champions and the 2020 and 2022 European champions, settled for the silver with a 131.66-point free dance and 220.51 points overall.

American 2021 world silver medalists Madison Hubbell and Zachary Donohue took the bronze with a season-best free dance of 130.89 and 218.02 overall.

China's sole ice dance representatives in this Olympic Winter Games, Wang and Liu, scored 111.01 points in the free dance, which added to their rhythm dance score of 73.41 to rank the Chinese pair 12th on 184.42 overall.

Before Wang and Liu's performance on Monday, the country's best result in ice dancing had stood for 30 years when Han Bing and Yang Hui finished 18th at Albertville 1992.

The French duo of Papadakis and Cizeron, who did not compete at last month's European Championships or the 2021 World Championships because of COVID concerns, set a new personal best and world-record score with 90.83 points in Saturday's rhythm dance.

Putting out an excellent performance to Gabriel Faure's Elegy in the free dance, Papadakis and Cizeron earned a level four to the straight line lift, the synchronized twizzles, the combined spin and the curve lift, as well as a level three to the one foot step sequence, the diagonal step sequence and the rotational lift.

"We have been waiting for this," Papadakis said after winning the gold. "We built upon the last Olympics. For years this was the only medal that we wanted, and the past four years were just about that moment."

FOOTBALL

Two Spanish coaches appointed for Oman's national youth football teams

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Spanish coaches Pablo Herrio Hernandez and Juan David Gordo have been appointed to Oman's national youth football teams. The duo were selected by the Oman Football Association to improve the competitiveness of Oman's teams, helping them to excel at international tournaments.

Fernandez and Gordo will be joined by local assistant coaches, enabling them to improve their own skills and learn on the job. The coaching staff also includes Anwar Al-Habsi, assistant coach, Jassem Al-Dohani, and Nasser Al-Abri, fitness coach. And Spain's Jose Angel Diaz joins as a performance analyst. The coaches aim to raise the competitiveness of Oman's teams, helping them to excel at international tournaments.



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CRICKET ROUND-UP

ISM, MCCC Blue, ISWK register victories

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Syed Saleemuddin's 3 for 7 steered Indian School Muscat (ISM) to an emphatic 8-wicket victory against Pakistan School Muscat (PSM) in a Junior League Under-16 30-over game at Muscat Municipality ground 1 in Amerat on Saturday.

ISM bowled exceptionally well to dismiss PSM for 90 in 25 overs due to superb spells by Saleemuddin, Sampat Arya (3 for 13) and Girish Aditya (2 for 4). ISM chased the small total down, scoring 91 for 2 in the 10 th over as Loya Devansh struck a brilliant 45 not out off 27.

MCCC Blue win

Muscat Cricket Coaching Centre (MCCC) Blue rode on Abdul Muqith's magnificent all-round performance to defeat Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) by 7 wickets in a Junior League Under-13 T20 match at Muscat Municipality ground 4 on Saturday.

SLSM posted 154 for 5 on the board, Sethmina Devin topscoring with 77. It took MCCC 17.2 overs to surpass the total as it reached 157 for 3 thanks to Muqith's excellent knock of 68 and Malvade Arush's 38.

Arsh ton lifts ISWK

In another Junior League Under-13 clash, Arsh Javed scored a superb 102 off 60 to help Indian School Wadi Kabir (ISWK) to an exciting 35-run win over Boshar Sports Centre (BSC) at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

ASWK amassed 201 for 2 thanks to brilliant batting by Arsh and Ayush Shetty (39).

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2022 reaching \$92.93, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$2.46 from the price of Friday, which was \$90.47. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,084.28 points, down by 0.08 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.35 per cent at 502.52 points. Oman Fisheries, up 9.26 per cent, was the top gainer while, OIFC Bonds, down 5.88 per cent, was the top loser

Ministry inks agreement to promote investment opportunities in Oman

The programme showcases Oman's economic value and targets local and international investors

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion signed a cooperation programme with Ubar Financial Investment Company to promote available investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman and to lure investors to the country.

The cooperation programme was inked by Aseela Salim Al Samsami, Investment Promotion Undersecretary, and Abdulaziz Khalifa Al Saadi, CEO of Ubar Financial Investment Company.

The programme showcases Oman's economic value and tar-

gets local and international investors. It involves drafting initial feasibility studies on economic projects rated in terms of volume, type and speciality.

As part of the programme, an itinerary of visits will be organised for foreign investors, who will then be introduced to strategies commensurate with their projects. The investors will be advised about how the ventures can be financed in coordination with the departments concerned.

The programme includes conducting reports about the environmental climate in Oman and the common challenges facing investors. -OMA



COOPERATION PROGRAMME: The cooperation programme was inked by Aseela Salim Al Samsami, Investment Promotion Undersecretary, and Abdulaziz Khalifa Al Saadi, CEO of Ubar Financial Investment Company. -OMA

INVESTMENT

Samail Industrial City attracts Omani firm specialised in production of milk

MUSCAT: Samail Industrial City has succeeded in localising Al Habib Food Industries, which is specialised in the production of milk and its derivatives, in a record time of 30 minutes after receiving the investment application on Madayn's website.

With a capital touching OMR500,000, Al Habib Food Industries will set up the project on an area of 10,000sqm.

The investment process time required for localising projects in the industrial cities of Madayn has decreased significantly during the past years, thanks to the developed integrated electronic system and Masar Service Centre, which play a key role in facilitating the investment procedures.

It should be noted that the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn is currently executing the design and implementation of an infrastructure complementary project in Samail Industrial City. This includes a dual-lane road spanning 1.4 km from the roundabout at the main entrance of Samail Industrial City to the roundabout near the Al Sharqiyah expressway. The project also includes designing and executing sewage pipe linking phase 3 with phase 1 of Samail Industrial City, which has exceeded 48 per cent of the completion rate and is expected to be completed next April. -OMA



INVESTMENT PROCESS: With a capital touching OMR500,000, Al Habib Food Industries will set up the project on an area of 10,000sqm. -OMA

CRUDE SUPPLY

Oil prices climb more than 1% to 7-year high on supply disruption fears

SINGAPORE: Oil prices on Monday hit their highest in more than seven years on fears that a possible invasion of Ukraine by Russia could trigger US and European sanctions that would disrupt exports from the world's top producer in an already tight market.

Brent crude futures were at \$95.61 a barrel by 05:06 GMT, up to \$1.17, or 1.2 per cent, after earlier hitting a peak of \$96.16, the highest since October 2014. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose \$1.41, or 1.5 per cent, to \$94.51 a barrel, hovering near a session high of \$94.94, the loftiest since September 2014.

Comments from the United States about an imminent attack by Russia on Ukraine have rattled global financial markets.

Russia could invade Ukraine at any time and might create a surprise pretext for an attack, the United States said on Sunday.

"If ... troop movement happens, Brent crude won't have any trouble rallying above the \$100 level," OANDA analyst Edward Moya said in a note.

"Oil prices will remain extremely volatile and sensitive to incremental updates regarding the Ukraine situation."

The tensions come as the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and its allies, a group known as Opec+, struggle to ramp up output despite



STRUGGLE: The tensions come as the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and its allies, a group known as Opec+, struggle to ramp up output despite monthly pledges to increase production by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) until March. -BNA

monthly pledges to increase production by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) until March.

The International Energy Agency said the gap between Opec+ output and its target widened to 900,000 bpd in January, while JP Morgan said the gap for Opec alone was at 1.2 million bpd, Reuters reported.

"We note signs of strain across the group: seven members of Opec-10 failed to meet quota increases in the month, with the largest shortfall exhibited by Iraq," JP Morgan

analysts said in a February 11 note.

The bank added that a super-cycle is in full swing with "oil prices likely to overshoot to \$125 a barrel on widening spare capacity risk premium."

CMC Markets analyst Tina Teng said spare supply is limited and oil demand has outpaced production growth, as economies bounce back from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It would not take long for prices to spike higher, though global leaders are rushing to help defuse the

growing tension," she added.

Investors are also watching talks between the United States and Iran to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. However, a senior Iranian security official said on Monday that progress in talks was becoming "more difficult".

In the United States, the robust oil prices are encouraging energy firms to ramp up output as they added the most oilrigs in four years last week, energy services firm Baker Hughes Co said on Friday. -BNA

SHARE MARKETS



MARKET CONCERNS: Investors moved money into Treasury bonds, gold and other assets seen as safe-havens. -BNA

Asian stocks fall amid concern over Russian invasion in Ukraine

BEIJING: Asian stock markets fell Monday and oil prices rose amid concern about a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Tokyo's benchmark index fell by an unusually wide daily margin of 2.1 per cent. Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul also retreated. Global crude prices added more than \$1 per barrel in a sign of concern about possible supply disruptions, AP reports.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 index tumbled 1.9 per cent on Friday after the White House encouraged Americans to leave Ukraine within 48 hours. Other governments including Russia were pulling diplomats and their citizens out of the country.

Russia is one of the biggest oil producers. Any military action that disrupts supplies could send shockwaves through energy markets and global industry.

"Markets are belatedly waking up to the geopolitical risks posed by Russian military action against Ukraine," Rabobank said in a report.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo was down 2.1 per cent to 27,117.18 at midday after being off 2.6 per cent earlier.

The Bank of Japan made an offer for unlimited government bond purchases on Monday, moving to curb a surge in long-term interest rates. Japan's central bank set the interest rate for purchasing 10-year government bonds at 0.25 per cent. The offer drew no bids but still had the effect of lowering interest rates and likely reassured investors of continued support for the markets.

The rate had risen on speculation the BOJ might begin reeling back its ultra-loose monetary policy in line with other central banks like the Federal Reserve. The latest decision highlights the BOJ's intention to keep interest rates super-low since inflation remains well below its target rate of 2 per cent. Japan's benchmark interest rate has been kept at minus 0.1 per cent for years.

The Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 1.2 per cent to 24,594.21. The Kospi in Seoul retreated 1.2 per cent to 2,714.33.

The Shanghai Composite Index shed 0.6 per cent to 3,441.23 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 gained 0.2 per cent to 7,234.20.

India's Sensex opened down 1.7 per cent at 57,153.59. New Zealand, Bangkok and Jakarta declined while Singapore was unchanged.

Investors already were on edge about Federal Reserve plans to wind down economic stimulus to cool inflation that is at a four-decade high and about how quickly Europe and other central banks would follow.

On Friday, the S&P 500 declined to 4,418.64 for its fourth weekly loss in the past six weeks after President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said the threat of a Russian attack is "immediately enough" that Americans should leave Ukraine.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 1.4 per cent to 34,738.06. The Nasdaq composite dropped 2.8 per cent to 13,791.15.

Investors moved money into Treasury bonds, gold and other assets seen as safe-havens.

The market price of a 10-year Treasury rose, pushing down its yield, or the difference between the day's price and the payout if held to maturity, to 1.91 per cent from Thursday's 2.03 per cent.

Treasury prices had been falling on expectations the Fed will raise interest rates as many as seven times this year. If the Fed succeeds in cooling inflation, that would increase the buying power of the payout from bonds, making them a more attractive investment.

In energy markets, benchmark US crude rose \$1.31 to \$94.41 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract added \$3.22 on Friday to \$93.10. Brent crude, the price basis for international oils, advanced from \$1.104 to \$95.48 per barrel in London. It gained \$3.03 the previous session to \$94.44.

The dollar gained 115.48 yen from Friday's 115.27 yen. The euro advanced to \$1.1346 from \$1.1334. -BNA

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman Fisheries, up 9.26 per cent, was the top gainer while, OIFC Bonds, down 5.88 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,084.28 points, down by 0.08 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.35 per cent at 502.52 points. Oman Fisheries, up 9.26 per cent, was the top gainer while, OIFC Bonds, down 5.88 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Taageer Finance were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 492 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.53 million, with more than 13.4 million shares changing hands. Out of 40 traded securities, 7 advanced, 16 declined and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR222,000

while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR116,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR106,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6489.15 points, down by 0.42 per cent. Prices of Vision Insurance, Sohar International Bank, Muscat Finance, Ahli Bank, and OM-INVEST were up by 7.61 per cent, 0.93 per cent, 0 per cent, 0 per cent, and 0 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, United Finance, Bank Muscat, and Al Madina Takaful were down by 3.61 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.54 per cent, 1.15 per cent, and 1.04 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5723.83 points, down by 0.08 per cent. Services Index was up by 0.35 per cent before closing at 1634.78 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
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EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,087.67	4,070.87	4,084.28	4,087.67	-3.39	-0.08
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,515.39	6,482.41	6,489.14	6,516.81	-27.67	-0.42
Industry Index	5,739.70	5,723.82	5,723.82	5,728.64	-4.81	-0.08
Services Index	1,634.78	1,629.00	1,634.78	1,629.00	5.78	0.35
MSX Shariah Index	508.13	502.53	502.53	504.32	-1.79	-0.35
MSX TR INDEX	4,920.52	4,900.30	4,916.44	4,920.52	-4.08	-0.08

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
13,401,885	2,530,419	492	22,005,164,976	7	16	17	40

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PR.PREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST PDLAST BIDLAST OFFERPWA VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM00000006920	VISION INSURANCE	55,000	6,410	8	0.096	0.099	0.096	0.099	0.002	0.007	7.809	0.099	0.090	0.099	0.100	9,900,000
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	500,000	399,337	15	0.788	0.800	0.788	0.800	0.012	2.564	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.100	600,000,000
OM00000001525	OMAN INVST & FIN	183,920	28,973	6	0.155	0.158	0.155	0.158	0.003	1.282	0.157	0.154	0.157	0.100	37,446,000	
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	429,490	46,885	18	0.108	0.110	0.108	0.109	0.001	0.928	0.110	0.108	0.110	0.100	325,916,790	
OM0000000418	RAYSUT CEMENT	2,000	376	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.192	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.180	0.188	0.100	38,400,000
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	98,550	5,056	9	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.058	0.059	0.100	17,814,487	
OM0000000268	ALANWAR CERAMIC	356,785	153,409	8	0.428	0.430	0.428	0.430	0.020	0.000	0.430	0.426	0.430	0.100	94,600,000	
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	22,664	8,615	10	0.380	0.382	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.378	0.380	0.100	47,461,225	
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	32,000	3,840	2	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.118	0.120	0.100	233,958,896	
OM00000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	35,000	10,969	17	0.314	0.314	0.312	0.314	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.312	0.312	0.320	0.100	15,218,142
OM00000003968	QOBEED	277,135	99,437	23	0.358	0.360	0.358	0.358	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.100	233,038,034	
OM00000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	4,500	2,061	1	0.458	0.458	0.458	0.464	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.458	0.442	0.462	0.100	25,520,000
OM00000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	5,500	3,820	3	0.680	0.686	0.680	0.686	0.006	0.000	0.004	0.686	0.686	0.686	0.100	109,620,000
OM00000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,403,215	721,747	29	0.518	0.518	0.514	0.514	0.020	-0.006	-1.154	0.514	0.506	0.514	0.100	187,280,043
OM00000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	619,925	271,527	14	0.438	0.438	0.438	0.438	0.004	-0.006	-1.351	0.438	0.438	0.438	0.100	103,547,580
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	6,745	1,565	2	0.232	0.232	0.232	0.232	0.000	-0.004	-1.695	0.232	0.232	0.237	0.100	76,762,469
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	9,551	879	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	-0.002	-2.128	0.092	0.091	0.094	0.100	8,280,000
OM00000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,450,860	116,568	66	0.082	0.082	0.079	0.080	0.003	-0.003	-3.614	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	16,000,000
Total	18	5,490,940	1,881,274	233												

Parallel Market

OM00000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	646,940	38,159	27	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.001	0.005	9.259	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	7,375,000
OM00000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	87,694	12,546	18	0.140	0.145	0.140	0.143	0.003	0.011	8.333	0.142	0.142	0.145	0.100	13,985,709
OM00000007084	MCT DESALINATE	128,000	12,922	11	0.099	0.102	0.099	0.101	0.002	0.004	4.124	0.102	0.102	0.105	0.100	15,710,590
OM00000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,000	182	1	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.000	0.000	0.182	0.180	0.182	0.100	295,922,237	
SHRI OMAN MTRK		1,119	1,007	1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	85,120,000
OM00000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	10,000	690	2	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.100	13,800,000
OM00000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	4,185,848	339,060	19	0.082	0.082	0.080	0.081	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.079	0.085	0.100	20,540,790
OM00000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	635,931	45,714	45	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.072	0.100	14,615,024
OM00000003711	SEHAR POWER	30,410	1,277	5	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.100	9,282,420
OM00000004735	SEMOORP SALALAH	300	22	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.071	0.074	0.100	70,638,324
OM00000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	10,000	480	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.052	0.100	32,394,597
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	100,000	8,200	2	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.100	38,637,284
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	147,097	17,357	4	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	-0.001	-0.840	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	353,569,469
OM00000001517	HISBC BANK OMAN	438,624	43,430	25	0.100	0.100	0.098	0.099	0.002	-0.001	-1.000	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	198,038,966
OM00000004420	BANK NIZWA	216,975	21,294	19	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	-0.001	-1.010	0.096	0.096	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM00000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	121,500	11,587	14	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.001	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	16,625,000
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	455,785	29,214	17	0.065	0.065	0.063	0.064	0.002	-0.001	-1.538	0.064	0.063	0.065	0.100	22,345,242
OM00000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	64,722	9,537	11	0.165	0.165	0.135	0.147	0.030	-0.003	-2.000	0.135	0.135	0.150	0.100	17,640,000
OM00000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	83,239	9,656	7	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.004	3.333	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.100	15,080,000
OM00000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	451,115	42,890	26	0.099	0.099	0.093	0.095	0.006	-0.004	-4.040	0.093	0.093	0.095	0.100	3,189,288
Total	20	7,816,300	645,195	256												

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FOOD AND HOSPITALITY EVENT

Oman begins participation at Gulfood

DUBAI: Oman represented by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn, has commenced its participation at Gulfood 2022 – one of the world's largest annual food and hospitality events – at Dubai World Trade Centre in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Held during February 13-17, Gulfood 2022 features the participation of more than 4,000 exhibitors representing 180 countries.

This participation represents the kick start of 'Made in Oman' activities for the current year through which Madayn aims to promote Omani products among consumers inside and outside Oman, build brand loyalty, and contribute to export growth.

Hamood Al Balushi, Assistant Director-General at Madayn, stated that Madayn has ensured to participate in the Gulfood event for the 10th consecutive year as, "This global event presents an ideal platform for the Sultanate of Oman's participants to promote the locally manufactured products to consumers and visitors from different countries, and explore new markets and collaborations."

A number of Omani companies and factories representing the food industry are taking part in Gulfood. -ONA

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RBI

India's retail inflation may touch 6% in January

NEW DELHI: India's retail inflation for January, which is scheduled to be announced later in the day, might have accelerated to 6 per cent, the upper tolerance limit of the central bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday.

"Today's inflation print is expected to be close to 6 per cent that should not surprise," Das said at a media briefing after the RBI Board meet. Retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index stood at 5.59 per cent in December 2021. It was recorded 4.59 per cent in November 2021.

Noting that retail inflation likely to touch the upper end of the RBI's target band of 6 per cent, Das said it should not create any panic.

"If you look at the momentum of inflation right from last October onward, it is on a downward slope. It's primarily the statistical reasons, the base effect, which has resulted in higher inflation especially in Q3," the RBI Governor said. "The same base effect will play in different ways in the coming months. Today's inflation print is expected to be close to 6 per cent. That should not surprise or create any alarm because we have taken that into consideration," he added. -ANI

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PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR MUSICAL PREFERENCES BOND WELL

Research involving more than 3,500,000 participants from over 50 countries and 6 continents has found that links between musical preferences and personality are universal.

The findings suggested that music could play a greater role in overcoming social division, as well as offering currently untapped therapeutic benefits. The study was published in the 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology'.

Ed Sheeran's song 'Shivers' is as likely to appeal to extroverts living in the UK as those living in Argentina or India. Those with neurotic traits in the US are as likely to be into Nirvana's 'Smells like Teen Spirit' as people with a similar personality living in Denmark or South Africa. Agreeable people the world over will tend to like Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On', or Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's 'Shallow'; while national borders cannot stop open people from replaying David Bowie's 'Space Oddity' or 'Nina Simone'. But it does not matter where a conscientious person lives, they are unlikely to enjoy 'Rage Against the Machine'.

These are the kind of assumptions supported by new research led by Dr David Greenberg, an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and a Postdoctoral Scholar at Bar-Ilan University.

Across the world, without significant variation, the researchers found the same positive correlations between extraversion and contem-

porary music; between conscientiousness and unpretentious music; between agreeableness and mellow and unpretentious music; and between openness and mellow, contemporary, intense and sophisticated music. They also identified a clear negative correlation between conscientiousness and intense music.

Greenberg, who wore many hats as a musician, neuroscientist, and psychologist, said, "We were surprised at just how much these patterns between music and personality replicated across the globe. People may be divided by geography, language and culture, but if an introvert in one part of the world likes the same music as introverts elsewhere, that suggests that music could be a very powerful bridge. Music helps people to understand one another and find common ground."

His study explained why personality traits were linked to musical styles. The researchers accurately predicted that extraversion, which is defined by excitement-seeking, sociability, and positive emotions, would be positively associated with contemporary music that has upbeat, positive, and danceable features. Similarly, they were not surprised to find that conscientiousness, which is associated with order and obedience, clashed with intense musical styles, which is characterized by aggressiveness and rebellious themes.

But one finding was proving to be more puzzling. Greenberg said, "We thought that neuroticism would have likely gone one of two ways, either

preferring sad music to express their loneliness or preferring upbeat music to shift their mood. Actually, on average, they seem to prefer more intense musical styles, which perhaps reflects inner angst and frustration."

"That was surprising but people use music in different ways — some might use it for catharsis, others to change their mood. So there may be subgroups who score high on neuroticism who listen to mellow music for one reason and another subgroup that is more frustrated and perhaps prefer intense music to let off steam. We'll be looking into that in more detail."

The researchers also found that the correlation between extraversion and contemporary music was particularly strong around the equator, above all in Central and South America. This could suggest that climatic factors influenced musical preferences and that people in warmer climates tend to have personality traits that make them more likely to prefer rhythmic, danceable music.

Greenberg, who continued to perform as a professional saxophonist, had a very diverse playlist which was typical of people who scored high on openness. He said, "I've always loved jazz and now I'm also really into the music of different world religions, which makes perfect sense based on my personality traits."

Greenberg and his colleagues used two different musical preference assessment methods to assess an unprecedented number of participants living in more than 50 countries. The

first required people to self-report the extent to which they liked listening to 23 genres of music as well as completing the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and providing demographic information.

The second used a more advanced approach and asked participants to listen to short audio clips from 16 genres and subgenres of Western music on the musicaluniverse.io website and then give their preferential reactions to each (people can still visit the site to receive their scores).

The researchers focused on Western music primarily because it is the most listened to globally and results based on Western music offer the strongest potential to be applied in real-world and therapeutic settings globally.

The researchers used the MUSIC model, a widely accepted framework for conceptualising musical preferences, which identifies five key musical styles: 'Mellow' (featuring romantic, slow, and quiet attributes as heard in soft rock, R&B, and adult contemporary genres), 'Unpretentious' (uncomplicated, relaxing, and unaggressive attributes as heard in country genres), 'Sophisticated' (inspiring, complex, and dynamic features as heard in classical, operatic, avant-garde, and traditional jazz genres), 'Intense' (distorted, loud, and aggressive attributes as heard in classic rock, punk, heavy metal, and power pop genres), and 'Contemporary' (rhythmic, upbeat, and electronic attributes as heard in the rap, electronica, Latin, and Euro-pop genres). -ANI



MOTORSPORT

Ahmad Al Harthy delighted with ‘perfect’ race in ALMS round two



DUBAI: Fifth place in round two of the Asian Le Mans Series at Dubai Autodrome on Sunday, 13th February, capped a strong and competitive opening weekend of the season for Ahmad Al Harthy and Oman Racing – the Sultanate’s number one racing driver hailing a ‘perfect race’ in the No.69 Aston Martin Vantage GT3.

Taking the second stint of Sunday evening’s four-hour encounter in Dubai, Al Harthy produced an absolutely sensational drive and ran as high as second in the GT class – Oman Racing having qualified 10th fastest – as a maiden ALMS podium result looked a possible reality.

In the end, with overall pace from the Aston Martin not quite a match on this occasion for the rival Ferraris and McLarens, Al Harthy and team-mates Sam De Haan and Charlie Eastwood had to settle for a nonetheless satisfying top five result.

“It was a perfect race from our perspective, everything was spot on and we didn’t do anything

wrong all race”, reflected Al Harthy, who is supported by Omantel, OQ and MHD-ITICS, “The team really did an amazing job, I drove a perfect race in my stint but we just didn’t have the overall pace compared to our rivals – that was the difference no matter how well we performed.

“Sam did an incredible job in the first stint, a fantastic start to the race, and Charlie – as he always does – delivered a faultless drive. I’m really delighted with the performance we gave, running in P2 for so long felt amazing and it gives us the motivation to take to Abu Dhabi where we can hopefully fight for stronger results next weekend.”

Following on from a strong top six result in round one on Saturday evening in Dubai, Oman Racing’s trio had their sights set on more in Sunday’s four-hour contest but with plenty of work to do from the fifth row of the GT class grid.

De Haan started the race in the No.69 Aston Martin and put to-



gether an awesome opening lap, slicing his way through the pack and avoiding drama to climb into third place. Initially soaking up pressure from Brendan Iribe in his McLaren 720S, De Haan was shuffled back to fifth place on lap three and remained there up to the first round of driver-change pit-stops.

Pitting from an improved fourth

under Full Course Yellow conditions just past the one hour mark, De Haan handed over the Oman Racing car to Al Harthy who ran in fourth position when the action resumed around 10 minutes later. Edged back to fifth prior to a second Full Course Yellow around 80 minutes into the race, Al Harthy took the opportunity to pit again during the cautionary period.

Proving to be an inspired move, when the action resumed shortly after the Omani was second in GT and just outside the overall top 10 – driving superbly. Able to keep a gap of several seconds over the Ferrari 488 of David Perel, as the race approached the halfway point Perel had closed onto the tail of the Aston Martin.

Driving faultlessly, Al Harthy

kept the Ferrari at bay and when yet another Full Course Yellow period was called around the two-hour mark the Omani concluded an absolutely fantastic stint by handing over the car to Eastwood.

Perel had also pitted to hand over the Ferrari to Davide Rigon, and so Eastwood was in the same position Al Harthy had been with Rigon close behind. Soaking up the pressure brilliantly, Eastwood fended off the Ferrari throughout most of hour three until Rigon was able to get ahead later on.

Just before the end of hour three Eastwood pitted, emerging back into the race in fifth spot and as bullet-proof as his performance was behind the wheel of the Aston Martin, that’s where he had to stay to the chequered flag at the end of hour four.

Now the Asian Le Mans Series moves on to neighbouring Abu Dhabi for rounds three and four of the 2022 season, taking place next weekend on Saturday, 19th February, and Sunday, 20th February, at Yas Marina Circuit.

MOTORSPORT

Al Amri gets second place in group N in Qatar International Rally

DOHA: Rally driver Zakaria Al Amri on Subaru Impreza N14 ended Qatar International Rally on a high when he clinched the second place in Group N with his Navigator Mohamed Al Amri and finished fifth overall after strong performance and pace during 10 stages of the Qatari International Rally.

Talking about the race, Al Amri expressed his gladness after conquering very rough terrain which was difficult for navigation during the 2-day race. He said that he did his best to be at the podium with the best result at least in his group, and a lot of efforts were made by the team to make this podium happen. During the rally, Zakaria said that he pushed as much as he could on the first day with some caution as the stage was hard in some areas and slippery at other places, and we had some mechani-

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Zakaria Al Amri ended Qatar International Rally on a high when he clinched the second place in Group N with his Navigator Mohamed Al Amri and finished fifth overall after strong performance and pace during 10 stages of the Qatari International Rally

cal problems but we overcame these issues at the proper time. He said that we got better timing in our group in front of Abu Shurfa and Abu Jamoos from Jordan behind Mishari Al Thufiari who won the group title.

Zakaria Al Amri said: “I am re-

ally thankful to my team and the mechanics for their support and hard work and special thanks goes to Oman United Insurance and Oman United Insurance garage and Alfaiha Real Estate for their support to my participation in MERC this year”.



ROUND-UP

Exclusive benefits on Lexus GX

The Lexus GX with its 292-horsepower 4.6-litre V8 producing 44.7 Kg.M of peak torque engine is a great companion for both city drives and weekend getaways

MUSCAT: The powerful and luxurious GX SUV is available with exclusive benefits. They include free service 3 years / 30,000km (Whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration. The campaign is valid up to March 23. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

The Lexus GX with its 292-horsepower 4.6-litre V8 producing 44.7 Kg.M of peak torque engine is a great companion for both city drives and weekend getaways. Its 2500 kg towing capacity, makes it a perfect boat hauler. Towing is aided with Trailer Sway Control, a function of the Vehicle Stability Control that enhances straight-line tracking.

Utilizing the technology of the



Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System (KDSS), the GX 460 enhances handling and ride comfort by helping to keep the vehicle level in both on and off-road conditions. When the GX encounters an uneven surface, one compressed cylinder causes fluid to flow to the other cylinder, helping the vehicle to keep all four wheels on the ground. The system works without any ac-

tion needed by the driver.

Thanks to an Off-Road Package featuring Multi-TerrainSelect, tackling tough terrain is equally as easy. Adding extra peace of mind is GX's Lexus Safety System+, completing Lexus' milestone of equipping models with active safety equipment. A Torsen torque-sensing limited-slip centre differential distributes power under most driving conditions and

changes the ratio as needed based on wheel slip. The four-wheel-drive system offers a low range for slow speed off-road driving. With Downhill Assist Control, Hill-start Assist Control, Active Traction Control, Vehicle Stability Control and available Crawl Control, the GX can roam unpaved roads, trails, and steep inclines with confidence.

Multi-Terrain Select allows you

to choose from multiple surfaces such as loose rocks, mud and sand, moguls, and more to optimize drivability. Activated with the press of a button, the available Crawl Control system is designed to automatically maintain an optimal slow and steady pace over demanding landscapes.

Bolstering this mission is the Lexus Safety System+ suite of

technologies that includes Pre-Collision System, Lane Departure Alert, Intelligent High Beams and High-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control

In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as Manufacturer's Warranty of 4 years/100,000km (whichever is earlier) and 24 hours on-road assistance from AAA.

RECOGNITION

Alizz Islamic Bank wins 'Mudarabah Deal of the Year 2021' award



“The award for the deal of the year is the testimony of Alizz Islamic Bank's expertise in advising its clients on such innovative Sukuk transactions

Sulaiman Al Harthi
CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its position as one of Oman's most dynamic Wholesale Banking Islamic banking institutions, Alizz Islamic Bank was recently conferred with the award for 'Mudarabah Deal of the Year 2021' at the Islamic Finance News Awards 2021.

Alizz Islamic Bank is pleased to announce its landmark Investment Banking transaction: the OMR52 million Ominvest Perpetual Sukuk has been recognised globally and has won the prestigious IFN award for the Mudarabah Deal of the Year 2021. Alizz Islamic Bank is honoured to have acted as the Joint Issue Manager on the deal along with Ubhar Capital.

The Islamic Finance News (IFN) Awards are one of the most prestigious awards in the world of Islamic banking and fi-

nance. They acknowledge and recognise the contributions of Islamic Banking institutions in the growth and expansion of the Islamic banking and finance sector.

Expressing the banks delight at winning the award, Sulaiman Al Harthi, the CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank said: "We are delighted to have worked on this pioneering Sukuk transaction for Ominvest. The IFN award for the deal of the year is the testimony of Alizz Islamic Bank's expertise in advising its clients on such innovative Sukuk transactions and our efforts to develop vibrant domestic Islamic capital markets. We would like to thank our clients and the investor community for their confidence and support. We are also grateful to our regulators – the Capital Market Authority and the Central Bank of Oman for their guidance and support."

REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

Kimi Räikkönen certifies 'Giulia GTA'

MUSCAT: To follow the testing session on the Giulia GTA and GTAm last fall, the Finnish world champion was back at the Balocco Proving Ground a few days ago to personally evaluate the work done on the highest-performing sports sedan the Italian brand has ever produced. His words leave no doubts in the mind: "I like it. We're looking at a car that can be used on an everyday basis, but that can also be taken onto the track, one in which you can enjoy yourself."

Kimi Räikkönen analysed the changes made to the car, specifically in terms of aerodynamics. He had already worked on this aspect in the first session, providing invaluable advice on the new appendages added both to the front – the new adjustable splitter built into the new front bumper – and to the rear – the addition of the new manually adjustable wing. More general changes have also been made to the overall balance guar-



anteed by the interaction of these new components with the extractor and the underbody fairing. Kimi's judgment?

"Of course, it's better at high speeds in terms of balance. It seems the front of the car is lower, making the steering faster. It's fast, easy to drive, and responsive." Once he takes off his racing suit and is away from the spotlight,

Kimi Räikkönen is back playing the role of father, taking his children to school. He, therefore, believes that the Giulia GTA represents the ideal mix for use every day and on the track.

The loop is therefore completed in a process of development, where the drivers lent their skills to the Alfa Romeo engineering team. This process began last October with a

first testing session, focused on the specific solutions taken up in terms of aerodynamics and handling.

Highlighting the features of the vehicle, Hatem El-Naggar, General Manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, "The Alfa Romeo Giulia GTA is an addition to the "Wild" version of the GTAm, and is inspired by the Giulia GTA launched in 1965, one of the motoring legends that achieved a remarkable achievement in the history of the brand. Representing an authentic return to the brand's roots and a return to the realms of performance and touring cars, the new Giulia GTA is the epitome of elegance, mechanical mastery and driving pleasure.

"The car is distinguished by its aesthetic and practical characteristics at the same time, which affirms that it is not only an application of the attractive Italian style but also a high-performance car derived from the exceptional Giulia Quadrifoglio.

CREDIT CARD CUSTOMERS

Ahli Islamic launches special campaign

MUSCAT: Ahli Islamic has announced the launch of a special campaign for its credit card customers, which allows them to win cash prizes monthly. The campaign is scheduled to be held for 3 months from February 2022.

This campaign aims to offer monthly cash prizes to four winners from Ahli Islamic credit card holders (OMR100 for each winner). Ahli Islamic will announce the winners on its social media pages.

Commenting on the promotion, Yousuf bin Salim Al Rawahi, Deputy General Manager and Head of Ahli Islamic said, "An exclusive campaign for our credit cardholders exemplifies our continued commitment towards the customer experience and confidence that we aspire to build. At Ahli Islamic, we provide various ways of banking to our customers, catered through multiple channels. This, coupled with a high level of secu-



urity, ease and convenience, especially while using credit cards, is something that we consider as an important aspect to us."

He also said that by adding more interesting offers and surprises for customers, Ahli Islamic is keen to keep pace with its client's lifestyle while also ensuring that these banking offers are in accordance

with Sharia.

Ahli Islamic's credit cardholders are eligible to participate in the campaign when they spend at least OMR100 monthly through their credit cards. There are four cash prizes every month each with a value of OMR100 which will be drawn through a random draw system.

Customers can use their Ahli

Islamic credit card, locally as well as internationally, to be eligible for the draw. Ahli Islamic will conduct the draw every month and will announce the winners on the bank's official social media pages.

Ahli Islamic has won many awards for its excellence in banking services provided to its customers. The bank has witnessed remarkable growth over the past period, bringing added value and exceptional Islamic banking experience to the people of Oman. Through an extensive branch network and digital channels, Ahli Islamic is committed to providing the market with new banking products consistent with the Sharia principles that meet the different banking needs of customers. This also effectively supports the Sultanate's economic and social development, as well as establishes benchmark customer satisfaction standards in the Sultanate are Islamic banking landscape.

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ROUND-UP

NBO supports healthcare services with donation of ambulances

The ambulances were handed over during a ceremony attended by Dr Thamra Al Ghafri, Acting Director-General of Health Services of Muscat Governorate, and Abdullah bin Zahran Al Hinai, CEO of NBO, as part of an OMR500,000 donation the bank pledged towards the cause in 2021



MUSCAT: As part of a long-running drive to support Oman's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) has donated eight fully equipped ambulances to the Ministry of Health for hospitals in Muscat and Salalah.

The ambulances were handed over during a ceremony attended by Dr Thamra Al Ghafri, Acting Director-General of Health Services of Muscat Governorate, and Abdullah bin Zahran Al Hinai, CEO of NBO, as part of an OMR 500,000 donation the bank pledged to-

wards the cause in 2021.

Abdullah Al Hinai commented, "The health and wellbeing of the community remain at the top of our agenda and we continue to work closely with our stakeholders and authorities to ensure that our help is directed where it is needed

most. Although we are starting to get over the worst throes of the pandemic, the healthcare authorities are still under pressure to treat those affected. We continue to see the incredible strength of our healthcare heroes and are both proud and honoured to con-

tinue our support of their efforts in bringing the community back to health."

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the bank has been active in contributing to the nation as it overcomes both the health impacts and the wider economic

impacts. Through a series of measures including donations, vaccinations, loan deferments, and targeted SMS advice, it has reiterated its care for the community, all while encouraging its customers to bank from the safety and comfort of home.

INTERNAL VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVE



Four winning projects in Wiyakum Volunteering Initiative by Nama Group

MUSCAT: Nama Group has announced the conclusion of the sixth edition of its internal volunteering initiative (Wiyakum) for the electricity and water sectors in Oman.

Wiyakum is a key project aiming at reflecting and enhancing the volunteering activities within the group and driven by the group's efforts to realise its sustainability policy, which aims at promoting a culture of volunteering among the group's employees by focusing on the pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The initiative also aims to activate the volunteering leave enti-

tled for employees by the implementation of their volunteering projects as per the policy.

The closing ceremony was held at Kempinski Hotel - Muscat, during which the Nama group has reviewed the voluntary initiatives conducted by the group's employees. Four winning projects out of eight which were financially empowered by the group to reach the implementation phase within the predefined framework of this initiative were honoured during the ceremony.

Engineer Saleh Al Rumhi, CEO, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), said: "It gives

us great pleasure to witness the conclusion of the sixth edition of Wiyakum our volunteer work initiative. Since its launch, each version of the initiative has left a special imprint in the world of volunteering in the Sultanate of Oman. It aims to achieve the pillars of development for economic, social and environmental sustainability. We will continue to strive for volunteer work efforts to continue, and we will move forward to achieve sustainability as a common goal."

In this edition, 32 voluntary projects have been submitted by different teams and individuals.

Wiyakum Application was honoured with the first place; the project which was proposed by different subsidiaries within the group and was merged under one umbrella is aiming at empowering the voluntary work of the group employees and organising it within the Sultanate of Oman in general. The environmental Playground was honoured with the second, the project aims at designing and building an environmental playground for kids by recycling unused car's tyres. A project to support children's mental health won third place followed by a hiking and mountain biking route project.

RACING SPIRIT

MC Edition: New special series to celebrate racing as beating heart of Maserati



MODENA: MC stands for Maserati Corse: a sporty nature, fostered on the track for everyday competition. The new MC Edition celebrates Maserati's uncompromising performance and racing spirit.

Victories, trophies, legendary cars and drivers: the world of racing immediately comes to mind when thinking of the Trident Brand, here paying tribute to its glorious history.

The focus is on the versions equipped with a V8 engine to highlight the concept of "uncompromising driving pleasure"; the most powerful Ghibli, Levante and Quattroporte become the stars of a new edition with a captivating aesthetic. MC Edition epitomises performance, orientation towards victory and bold driving pleasure, echoing a story that began almost 96 years ago when the Tipo 26 - the first model to bear the Trident on the bonnet - won the 1,500 cc class at the Targa Florio with Alfieri Maserati at the wheel.

The same racing feeling can now be found in this specific edition, available on the Ghibli, Levante and Quattroporte in two exclusive colours: Giallo Corse

and Blu Vittoria. The exterior recalls the Brand's roots, with its exclusive colours and powerful sporty character.

Yellow and blue are the colours of Modena, the city that symbolises the Motor Valley and is the home of Maserati. Giallo Corse is a three-layer yellow colour with blue mica interfering with the light in a highly sophisticated manner, for a sporty and advanced look. Conversely, Blu Vittoria is a matte three-layer blue. Extremely deep, impactful, new and contemporary, it has a notably tangible effect. To complement the exterior, the MC Edition range features distinctive details in Piano Black and a specific badge on the rear fender and B-pillar. The Levante MC Edition has 22" wheels, with 21" rims on the Ghibli and Quattroporte. The gloss black finish of the wheel rims and blue brake calipers complete the look.

The specs of the special series are completed with an electronic sunroof, Bowers & Wilkins surround sound system and Driver Assistance package.

The new MC Edition is available in EMEA, APAC and China from February 2022.

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