

HM SENDS GREETINGS TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Luis Abinader of the Dominican Republic on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people. — **ONA**



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BEFORE THE ARBITRATION COMMITTEE

Finals of Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design begin today

MUSCAT: The competition for the ten projects that have qualified from the initial stages to the finals of the Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design will kick off today at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

Detailed presentations

The participants will deliver, in two days, detailed presentations of their projects before the Arbitration Committee. The presentations will cover, in detail, all the technical and engineering aspects of the projects.



The Office of the Award announced earlier that it received 356 projects presented by Omani youth, of which ten projects earned qualification for the

current stage.

These projects include five submitted by individuals, and five submitted by groups totalling 14 participants, bringing the total to 19 participants.

Five individuals

The five individuals who qualified to the current stage are Buthaina bint Ta'ia bin Jandal, Ammar Abdulhamid Al Kiyumi, Mohammed bin Qais Al Asfour, Nasser bin Salam Al Haimali and Tahirah bint Mohammed Al Busaifi.

>A5

SAYYID THEYAZIN INAUGURATES MUSCAT BOOK FAIR



His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth, inaugurated on 24 February the 26th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event runs until 5 March, and will feature more than 715 publication houses from 27 countries.

>See also A4

WORKING TOGETHER FOR OMAN TO MOVE FORWARD

Different ministries are rolling out plans to accelerate Oman's development



35,000 jobs to be created in 2022 as part of 'Omanisation' efforts

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Employment opportunities for about 35,000 Omanis are to be created in 2022, as part of efforts to step up Omanisation in the country, the Ministry of Labour has said.

Steps to employ more Omanis come after more than 68,000 nationals were employed last year, either through the creation of fresh job opportunities or by replacement of expatriates.

During a virtual press conference, Minister of Labour Dr. Mahad bin Said bin Ali Ba'owain reviewed the work done by the ministry in 2021 and presented the objectives for 2022.

Minimum wage issues

"The ministry is creating a decent work environment for people who are productive and have skills that can be renewed," he said.

"Furthermore, the Labour Law was recently reviewed by the Council of Ministers and will be transferred to the Council of Oman. We have also received feedback on minimum wage issues from joint committees and those involved in production – a review of the same is in place."

"There is a request to study



DR. MAHAD BIN SAID BIN ALI BA'OWAIN, Minister of Labour

increasing the minimum wage," he added. "This matter does require plenty of effort and does involve studying the market as well as other factors that must be looked at, such as the current economic situation and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last time period has seen demands to increase the minimum wage, which currently stands at OMR325."

Among the 35,000 jobs created through recruitment and replacement, 14,000 will be in the private sector. Eight percent of these

opportunities will be in managerial, specialist and technical roles. 2,000 specialised jobs will be created for GED holders, while 10,000 jobs will be made available in the government sector.

Furthermore, 2,000 jobs will be provided through training in the government human resources sector, 5,000 jobs will be made available following training associated with work experience and on-the-job programmes and 2,000 jobs will be created in sectors supervised by government agencies and private sector organisations.

A report published by the Ministry of Labour added that training initiatives were provided to public and private sectors in 2021, including programmes to support various fields in both sectors. 8,859 people benefited from ministry training programmes, either in the form of employment or on-the-job training.

Assessment system

Furthermore, 3,236 job seekers were given training for entrepreneurship programmes for small and medium enterprises. 963 youth were also provided job experience training through a programme run by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. >A2

Tourism development budget under COVID-19 recovery plan ready

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under Oman's plan to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, a budget has been drawn up to allocate funds to develop a number of tourism sites in cooperation with local governing bodies.

Oman's Minister of Tourism Salim bin Mohammed bin Said Al-Mahrouqi added that these plans include providing integrated services in 10 beaches in different governorates, while also giving priority to a number of service projects in the Dhofar Governorate. "The next two years will see big differences and major additions to Oman's tourism sector," he said. "Within the plan to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, there is an approved budget for the development of a number of tourist sites."

"There is a deficit, and a big difference in terms of what Omani tourists spend inside the country as opposed to



SALIM BIN MOHAMMED BIN SAID AL-MAHROUQI, Minister of Heritage and Tourism

what they spend abroad," said the minister. "It is estimated that about OMR700mn is spent outside the country by Omani tourists. "It is our responsibility to reduce this deficit through the establishment of entertainment projects that attract Omani tourists," he added. >A2

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Space mission contract

1 ETCO and TUATARA have signed a strategic contract on Low Earth Orbit project. >A3

WORLD Russians near Kiev

2 UK said that the bulk of the Russian forces is now 30 kms from Kiev's centre. >A6

MARKET Tethys oil Oman output

3 Tethys Oil's share of the production in January 2022 stood at 325,632 barrels. >B1

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PRAYER
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Asr.....	3:44pm
Maghrib.....	6:11pm
Isha.....	7:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:18am

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Sajan Babu **Shumeiz**

Winners of first-ever MMG Eshhar Classifieds raffle draw announced

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The five winners of the first-ever MMG Eshhar Classifieds Raffle Draw have been announced. Fahim, Tomsy, Mudasir, Sajan Babu and Shumeiz have been named winners and will receive vouchers from Khyber Restaurant and McDonalds. Muscat Media Group congratulates the winners of the raffle competition and encourages others to take part.

To sign up for future raffles, people need to sign up to the Eshhar classifieds database by sending their names to +968 9338-8405. Signing up to Eshhar is free and winners will only be chosen from among those who have provided their names. Launched by MMG as a green advertisement service, Eshhar aims to provide classified advertisements at affordable and competitive rates to companies looking to offer their services to potential customers.

Companies and individuals can advertise on Eshhar for a number of services, including situations wanted, situations vacant, pest control, packing and moving operations, catering services, homes and offices for rent and many others. Advantages of online advertising include wide reach, immediate impact, greater responsiveness, cost efficiency and real time monitoring of effectiveness. As Internet reach continues to expand rapidly, online advertising is becoming an essential tool of today's marketing mix: It is fast, efficient and cost effective. With access to broadband increasing across Oman and the region, online media consumption continues to increase. The shift in media consumption means that online advertising is becoming an integral part of successful marketing campaigns.

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

< FROM A1 New Ejada employee assessment system

The Maran platform – which is part of the Ejada employee evaluation system – was also used to train 927 people, while 580 trainees benefited from the Inma programme, which develops personal skills and professional capabilities.

A key accomplishment rolled out in 2021 was the Ejada employee assessment system, which aims to develop a culture of proficiency at work. Implemented across 57 government systems and impacting more than 185,000 employees, Ejada aims to improve performance appraisal systems, find ways to link training programmes and their practical uses and determine the level of competency needed to fill jobs, training and development.

The system also emphasises linking productivity with incentives. So far, more than 2,500 training workshops have been held and more than 1.4 million employees have received training to chart their career. More than 155,000 people have also received training through the Maran platform.

Recruitment and replacement efforts in the government sector led to the creation of 19,097 jobs. 12,669 people were employed either through direct employment or replacement of workers. 12,081 have been appointed to their posts, while processing is underway for another 588. Additionally, 6,428 people were employed after training programmes, of whom 5,174 have been appointed, while 1,254 are under process.

With 3,599 employees, the Ministry of Education employed the maximum number of people among government institutions, followed by the Ministry of Health (1,999), the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (266), Dhofar Municipality (147) and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (123). 11,121 were offered employment in the rest of the government bodies.

Among those whose job applications are still under process, 212 are at the Ministry of Labour, 192 at the Ministry of Interior, 60 at the office of the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, 60 at the Ministry of Finance, 55 at the Ministry of Social Development and 1,263 in other government bodies.

In the private sector, 49,276 job seekers were offered employment through direct recruitment as well as replacement programmes. 42,609 people were given work contracts.

Among them, 13,620 people were hired as first-time employees and 28,989 were hired as a consequence of job turnover. 6,667 more job seekers were hired after undergoing training programmes. 3,588 of them have already been hired, while some 3,079 are under process.

TOURISM SECTOR

< FROM A1 Three key projects under development

“Infrastructure is complete in most of the tourist sites in the Sultanate, with the exception of some areas that need more attention to create wider tourism development in their next stage of planning. We also need to make basic services available in all licenced castles and forts in the country.”

Recreational tourism

Three key projects involving recreational tourism are under development: Al Sharq in the Blue City, which is expected to open in 2024 and will have all the main ingredients for recreational tourism, while work is also likely to start soon on the Nakhil Resort project, as well as another one in Wilayat Quriyat.

“We welcome all initiatives and ideas to establish recreational tourism projects in the Sultanate, and are working on preparing programmes to support small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector by providing many financing programmes, incentives and legislative procedures in terms of interest rates and exemptions, which we believe are important to push these projects,” added the minister.

As part of efforts towards heritage tourism, 85 castles and forts have been restored and are ready for tourism investors.

“We invite people to take the initiative to invest in them, as these are areas of high reward: Their profits are quickly generated and costs to run these facilities are not exorbitant,” explained Al Mahrrouqi. “The ministry will also provide financing programmes for these projects. We have previously seen successes of this nature in Nizwa Fort and Jibreen Castle.”

The Ministry of Tourism will also soon launch tenders for the management and operation of tourism sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List such as Qalhat, and Bat, under which investors will need to provide basic services and guide facilities to visitors.





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Sultanate’s space mission moves ahead with strategic contract

ETCO and TUATARA sign a strategic contract detailing the initial stage of a historic Low Earth Orbit project

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Multiple economic and sustainability benefits are expected to flow from the Omani satellite mission for which an initial agreement has been signed.

Under the auspices of Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of the Sultanate Of Oman, ETCO has signed an initial agreement with TUATARA for Oman’s space mission: the Low Earth Orbit (with TUATARA), acting also on behalf of the other signees of Memoranda of Understanding from October 2021 and January 2022 - Virgin Orbit and SatRevolution.

As part of this historic mission for the Sultanate, regarding the Low Earth Orbit project scheduled for this year, the group plans to launch the first Omani CubeSat satellite aboard a Virgin Orbit rocket that will conduct scientific research and capture space imagery.

The results will be digitally analysed, using computer vision



The collected data and images, both from the Low Earth Orbit and Deep Space missions, will potentially allow for the detection of hidden patterns, identify trends and predict changes caused, for example, by the climate or by natural disasters

(CV), machine learning (ML), and artificial intelligence (AI) by TUATARA—the AI and data analytics company in strategic partnership with ETCO. The mission will be followed by a Deep Space launch, that will take place in the near future.

Under the agreement, the project will initially deliver a nanosatellite that will enable ground-breaking scientific research and capture high-resolution images during the Low Earth Orbit. The collected data and images, both from the Low Earth Orbit and

Deep Space missions, will potentially allow for the detection of hidden patterns, identify trends and predict changes caused, for example, by the climate or by natural disasters. Such research would be cost-effective by increasing the sustainability of Oil& Gas exploration: minimising the time needed when choosing new well locations; reducing the risk of unmonitored leakage and predicting the environmental impact of natural resource exploration.

“Digital images acquired within

the Low Earth Orbit mission can be further utilised by many other industries and used to detect seismic lines, document persistent offshore oil seepage, map rock formations, elevation, and major structures, identify barren and productive basin areas or perform noninvasive mapping to preserved areas,” Krzysztof Goworek, VP and Chief Innovation Officer at TUATARA said.

“We are proud that the we can be a part of Oman space programme and develop solutions that will

translate outer space data into digital insights and provide scientific data which will boost not only the growth of the STEM industry but will also help Omani businesses in achieving more efficient, more sustainable growth.”

This partnership follows the Memorandum of Understanding signed during the International Astronautical Congress held in October 2021 in Dubai, establishing the co-operation of the parties to design, manufacture and launch the first Omani satellite, manu-

Dhofar Municipal Council reviews development of services

SALALAH: The Municipal Council in the Governorate of Dhofar today held a meeting under the chairmanship of Sayyid Mohammed Sultan Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, Chairman of the council. The council discussed a number of top-

ics and proposals, and took appropriate decisions on their regard. It also reviewed matters related to the development of services and municipal work in wilayats of the governorate, in addition to approving the minutes of the last meeting and its recommendations. -ONA





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The Out & About episode on hair makeover had 751 views and 31 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

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The Midday Update video had 2,100 views and reached 7,500 people on Facebook.

Out & About



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EYE-OPENING DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES HELD AT MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

Times News Service

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth, inaugurated on 24 February the 26th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event will run until 5 March and is featuring more than 715 publication houses from 27 countries.

COVID-19's impact on publications, the importance of creativity in stories and ways to tackle the problems facing humanity were some of the panel discussions organised at the Book Fair.

Organised to improve people's awareness and grasp of issues both within their sphere of interest and also to encourage them to broaden their minds, the panelists also spoke about how COVID had affected people's interest in reading.

At one of the discussions, a letter on the thoughts of the Grand Mufti of Oman was read out which explained when the problems facing humanity would be made clear and when they would end. The writings of the Grand Mufti address the problems of the world, the importance of people paying attention to and emphasising their true faith and how the family plays a major role in protecting children by instilling morals that help them face problems and challenges suffered by the world at the values and social levels.

Another panel featured testimonies from writers who excel at weaving narratives into their books. Hosted by Omani writer Moham-

med Al Shehri and his Jordanian counterpart Gelnar Zain, the event encouraged writers to speak about the challenges they faced.

"The writer creates his characters out of nowhere and he lives and interacts with them and through them owns what others do not have," said Al Shehri.

Pandemic and publications

In the presence of a number of writers, journalists and academics, writers Mohammed bin Saif Al Rahbi and Hammoud bin Hamad Al Shukaili and Egyptian publisher Reda Awad discussed how the pandemic had negatively affected publication houses.

"The pandemic has strengthened the market for e-books and interactive children's book platforms," said Al Rahbi.

Reda Awad added: "The impact of the pandemic was clear, especially since publishers rely on external exhibitions and the cessation of these exhibitions was tantamount to stopping life in publishing houses, because of which the publishing sector clearly suffered significantly."

"Exhibitions are the window that encourages the publisher to print and work continuously towards the release of new books," he added. "There are some publishers who had the ability to continue despite the impact of the pandemic due to the availability of financial resources, so they invested in new releases, but the negative impact of the pandemic on publishing houses is quite deep."





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OMANI RESEARCHER

Portable device to detect pesticides in food and environmental samples

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Omani researcher and her team have developed a portable device to test the levels of pesticides in food and environmental samples, making it easy to assess the quality of fruits and vegetables grown in farms in the country.

The research project, titled “A novel and selective multi-emission chemiluminescence system for the quantification of deltamethrin in food samples,” was conducted by Iman Al Yahyai from Sultan Qaboos University and was among the 13 winning projects in the 8th National Research Award organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The project was awarded in the Cultural, Social and Basic Sciences field in the Young Researcher’s category.

For this research project, Iman Al Yahyai and her team developed a portable device for on-site testing of pesticides in environmental and food samples by establishing a novel, strong and powerful chemiluminescence (CL) system resulting in a multi-emission peaks for selective determination of deltamethrin (DM). This system is based on



Iman Al Yahyai. — Supplied picture

the enhancing effect of polyphosphates (PP) on graphene quantum dots (GQDs) – potassium permanganate CL reaction.

“Special attention should be paid to different local and imported products in the market to ensure the quality of these products and their nutritional value,” she said. “Some of these products are put up in the market under the name of organic food and are sold at very high prices. Many efforts have been devoted to food analysis and both governments and citizens, especially farmers, may face several challenges in the analysis of different food samples either for monitoring purposes or to obtain the required certificates.

The project was awarded in the Cultural, Social and Basic Sciences field in the Young Researcher’s category.

“The need for farmers to transport their products over long distances to specialised laboratories can lead to food spoilage reducing their profits,” she added. “Moreover, for monitoring the food quality, carrying the whole fruit and vegetable products from the farms in Oman, results in a high overload on the government which means spending a lot of money in providing the required instrumentations and specialist technicians, increasing the analysis cost and the time needed to perform the test.”

This study has been introduced to reduce the burden on citizens as well as the government by es-

tablishing a portable analytical device as an alternative method for the analysis of pesticides in food and environmental samples. It can also facilitate the government in monitoring the food quality by performing on-site analysis at the lowest cost and fastest time and decreasing the pressure on laboratories.

This method was applied successfully on different fruit juices collected from local markets. Results were very promising and all samples were free from DM. Such positive results increase the confidence of the customers in the quality of the marketed products in local markets.

This research project was conducted by Iman Al Yahyai, Dr. Haider Al Lawati and Dr. Javad Hassanzadeh. It was published in a journal titled Sensors and Actuators B: Chemical.

Regarding her win, Iman stated: “It is an absolute honour to receive the National Research Award instituted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. This award is very important for me and is a significant milestone in my life to encourage me to devote more effort and I hope to continue doing my best in the future.

PHOTO EXHIBITION INAUGURATED

On the sidelines of Muscat International Book Fair (MIBF) 2022, Dr. Abdullah bin Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information and Chairman of the Main Committee of Muscat International Book Fair 2022, inaugurated on Saturday the Photo Exhibition of Al Arabi Magazine of Kuwait. The exhibition comprised various photos on the Sultanate since early 1970s. — ONA



Shell Oman Marketing Company SAOG

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NOTICE FOR THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING 2022

The Board of Directors of Shell Oman Marketing Company SAOG (the “Company”) are pleased to invite all the shareholders of the Company to attend the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Company (“AGM”) scheduled to be held at **3 pm on Tuesday, 15 March 2022** at Mandalaan Hall, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Qurum, Muscat and through the electronic platform hosting the AGM. The platform can be accessed through Muscat Clearance and Depository Company’s website (www.mcd.gov.om). In the event of not meeting the legal quorum, the AGM will be held at 3 pm on Tuesday, 22 March 2022, at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Qurum, Muscat and through the electronic platform hosting the AGM, to discuss the following agenda:

Agenda for Annual General Meeting

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors’ Report regarding the Company’s activities and financial position during the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the Board of Directors’ Report regarding Corporate Governance for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the Auditors’ Report regarding the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the Report of the Board performance evaluation criteria for financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the proposed cash dividend to shareholders as of the date of the AGM, equivalent to 36 Baisa per share for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To approve the sitting fees of the Board of Directors and sub-committees payable to the Board of Directors for the previous financial year and to determine the sitting fees for the next financial year.
- To consider and approve the proposal of distributing the total sum of RO 41,000 as remuneration for the Board of Directors of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To inform the shareholders about Related Parties Transactions entered by the Company during the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To inform the shareholders about the expenditure in support of social services during the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
- To consider and approve the proposal of allocating RO 75,000 to support social services for the financial year ending 31 December 2022.
- To elect two board members in the Board of Directors of the Company to fill vacant seats. Any person who wishes to be nominated to the Board of Directors of the Company is required to fill in a Director’s Nomination Form and deliver it to the Company at least five (5) business days prior to the date of the AGM of the Company (by the end of working hours on Tuesday, 8 March 2022). The Company shall not accept any applications received after such date. Candidates must meet the required conditions for the Board of Directors’ membership.
- To appoint the Auditors for the Company for the year ending 31 December 2022 and fix their remuneration.

In accordance with the Company’s Articles of Association and CMA’s regulations on holding AGMs using the electronic platform, we would like to bring to your kind attention the following:

- Any juristic person is entitled to authorize any natural person to attend the AGM and vote on their behalf through the electronic platform, provided that the natural person has an investor number in Muscat Clearing and Depository Company.
- Voting on any of the agenda items mentioned in the notice commences three (3) days before the date of the commencement of the AGM and until the end of the voting process on the day of the AGM. In the event that the shareholder’s balance changes, the voting shall be considered void, and he/she shall vote again on the day of the AGM.

To prevent delay in starting the Meeting, shareholders are requested to arrive about half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

For subsequent information, kindly contact **Azzan Hamed Al Yahmadi** on telephone number: **24570100**



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NEW VARIETIES

Sultanate at the forefront in banana production

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is at the forefront in producing bananas among the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) countries.

Oman News Agency said: “Banana cultivation in the Sultanate of Oman occupies the second place after palm trees cultivation. At the level of the Gulf countries, the Sultanate is at the forefront in producing bananas, and Al Batinah and Dhofar governorates contribute to the highest banana production.”

The Ministry of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources is making great efforts to develop the production of this crop. It has intro-

duced some new varieties for testing and evaluation, and it is expected that it will have a positive impact because of its significant impact on expanding the base of banana genetic resources in the Sultanate.

The General Directorate of Agricultural and Animal Research represented by the Tissue Agriculture and Biotechnology Research Centre contributes to supplying farmers with different varieties of bananas. 11 banana varieties have been propagated in the centre.

Funded by the Agricultural and Fisheries Development Fund.

ON 15 MARCH

<FROM A1> Top three winners will be crowned

The first team comprises of Humaida bint Sulaiman Al Azri and Rafia bint Ibrahim Al Bahlani, the second team features Hafsa bint Mohammed Al Balushi, Reem bint Rashid Al Hashmi and Shaza bint Abdullah Al Saifi; the third team has Isra bint Hamood Al Hina, Kawthar bint Ibrahim Al Lawati and Maryam bint Zakariya Al Kindi, the fourth team is made up of Kawthar bint Nasser Al Azri, Fatima bint Abdullah Al Balushi and Amal bint Salim Al Zawawi, while the fifth team involves Umayma bint Mahmood Al Hina, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jahdhami and Abdullah bin Saleh Al Bahri.

Out of all the participants who have qualified, the top three winners will be crowned on 15 March. — ONA

AT AL QURUM BEACH

International Ironman 70.3 Muscat Championship concludes

MUSCAT: The activities of the International Ironman 70.3 Muscat Championship have concluded.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism Ministry said: “Under the patronage of Haitham bin Mohammed Al Ghassani, Director General of Tourism Promotion, the activities of the International Ironman 70.3 Muscat concluded at Shati Al Qurum, Muscat Governorate.”

The championship was launched on Friday at Al Qurum beach, where 561 participants from 50 countries participated.



شركة إسمنت عمان
Oman Cement Company (S.A.O.G.)

P.O. BOX 560, RUWI, POSTAL CODE 112, SULTANATE OF OMAN
(Factory Al Misfah West, Bausher, Tel. # 00968 24437070 ext. 102, Fax # 00968 24437777)

TENDER

The company invites offers for the following tender:

Sl. #	Tender No.	Description	Tender Fee	Deadline for Purchasing of Tenders	Deadline for Submission of Offers
1.	19479	HIRING OF MANPOWER FOR TIRE PROJECT	RO. 52.500	17th March, 2022 5 PM	22nd March, 2022 11 PM
2.	19498	SUPPLY OF QUARRY HEAVY EQUIPMENT	RO. 105.000	17th March, 2022 5 PM	22 th March, 2022 11 PM

- All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Tender Board participate and get the specifications and conditions of the tender from the website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Tenders should submit their bids online on the given website Signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose a scanned copy of a temporary insurance in the form of a bank guarantee or a check certified by a bank, operating in the Sultanate of Oman of not less than (1%) of the Tender Value, valid for (90) days from the offers submission date, addressed to Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- The original bank guarantee should be submitted to the OCC’s Tender Box located at the reception area of the Administration Building at Al Misfah West factory Site not later than the time and date of the submission of tenders.
- OCC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bid, and reserves the right to accept or reject any offer without giving reason

For Clarifications on e-Tendering, you may contact via
Telephone : 24402200
Email Id: etenderhd@mtc.it.gov.om

UKRAINE INVASION

Bulk of Russian forces 30km from centre of Kiev: UK Defence Ministry

LONDON: UK Ministry of Defence on Saturday said that the bulk of the Russian forces is now 30 kilometres from the centre of Ukraine's capital city of Kiev.

Taking to Twitter, the Ministry shared the intelligence update and said, "Russian forces have continued their advance on Kyiv with the bulk of their forces now 30km from centre of the city." The Ministry further said that Russia has yet to gain control of the airforce over Ukraine "greatly reducing the effectiveness of the Russian Air Force."

"Ukrainian Armed Forces continue to put up staunch resistance across the country," the Ministry added.

Furthermore, the UK intelligence input said that Russian casualties are likely to be "heavy and greater" than anticipated or acknowledged by the Kremlin.

Earlier, the UK foreign office said on Friday said that Russian President Vladimir Putin and For-



eign Minister Sergey Lavrov will be hit with an assets freeze as part of the UK's sanctions to debilitate Russia's economy and military infrastructure.

"In a third wave of punishing sanctions in just four days, the

UK's sanctions have been strategically coordinated with international allies to impose a severe cost on Putin and his regime," the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office said in a statement. The new sanctions, which are

targeted personally at Putin and Lavrov, will see any UK-based assets frozen immediately and UK companies will be barred from providing goods, services or assets to them in the future.

UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said: "These new sanctions send a clear message that nothing and no one is off the table. These measures reflect the horror and gravity of what Putin and his regime have done, violating the territorial integrity of a sovereign nation with an illegal and unjustified invasion."

Notably, in the early hours on Thursday, Russia launched a special military operation after the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk requested assistance to defend themselves from ongoing attacks by the Ukrainian troops.

The Western countries have strongly condemned the Russian military operation and boosted the sanctions pressure on Moscow. **ANI**



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LIMIT ABILITY OF RUSSIA

UK PM calls for end to Russia's involvement in SWIFT

LONDON: Extending support to Ukraine, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday called for an end to Russia's involvement in the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) international payments system, to limit the ability of Russia to trade outside the country.

The Prime Minister said that they have also sent military sup-

port to the Polish border with Ukraine along with defensive military aid. The UK has trained 22,000 Ukrainian troops through Operation Orbital.

"We have imposed sanctions on President Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, five Russian banks, more than 100 companies and oligarchs at the heart of Putin's regime, and Belarus," Johnson said in a tweet. **ANI**

CALL FOR HELP

Ukraine President seeks India's political support



NEW DELHI: Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday over the current situation in his country and urged India for its political support in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) against Russia which is continuing its military operations in Ukraine.

Taking to Twitter, Zelenskyy said, "Spoke with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Informed of the course of Ukraine repulsing Russian aggression. More than 100,000 invaders are on our land. They insidiously fire on residential buildings. Urged India to give us political support in UN Security Council. Stop the aggressor together!" Notably, Russia on Friday (local time) vetoed a draft UN Security Council resolution on Ukraine, while India, China, and UAE abstained from the vote. The vote was 11 in favour, one against, and three abstentions. India abstained from voting saying that the path of the "diplomacy was given up".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday also urged Germany and Hungary to back Russia's expulsion from the SWIFT banking system as Moscow continues its military operation in Ukraine.

"We have almost full support from EU countries about disconnecting Russia from SWIFT. I hope Germany and Hungary will have the courage to support this decision," Zelenskyy said in a video address. **ANI**

VISION EMERGING GCC FUND VISION EMERGING GCC FUND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - DECEMBER 2021		
The Vision Emerging GCC Fund (VEGF) for year ending 31 December 2021 performance was 8.84%. The November drops seen amid the Omicron variant's widespread perceived impact have no fundamental shifts in business activity, as we have already started witnessing recovery across all markets in the first weeks of December, ending the month and year with strong gains across all GCC markets. This was bolstered by recovery in oil prices, along with rapid buying across the banking sector where interest rates are finally expected to go up in the coming year.		
The GCC region is set for another set of tremendous growth opportunities led by Saudi Arabia and UAE, like privatization and listing of IPOs, continue boost to public-private partnerships through programs like Shareek, capital investment in renewable energy and investment in the regional tourism and service industries.		
Regionally, the UAE was bolstered by announcements for improving the IPO pipeline in Dubai, along with further capex in the oil and gas space. December also saw gas prices moderating as supply constraints and climatic changes added pressure to prices. Supply chain issues continue to keep overall inflation higher. Banks remain attractive with easing provisions, strong loan growth and the likelihood of higher corporate lending for the announced megaprojects, renewable projects, green bonds, and other financing opportunities, while the retail side keeps adding to the mortgage loan book.		
Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, with the recovery phase intact, we are seeing construction activities picking up with major projects being announced in the pipeline. As part Vision 2030, the Saudi government plans to privatize various public sector units and increasing the IPO numbers over the coming years. 2021 has seen 34 IPOs being successfully launched and further 68 are expected between 2021-23.		
Tourism and Pilgrimage travel are slowly picking up as restrictions have eased, thereby leading to increasing air travel among major airlines. We are well positioned to further capitalize on this recovery through positions in the airline as well as hotel space. The Dubai Expo is bringing in many visitors, along with further inflow anticipated in the region to witness the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The region would also benefit from the announced PIFs investment in the region. OPEC+ has decided to keep its supply comeback plan unchanged amid soaring crude prices. There would be no acceleration in the supply as OPEC+ takes cognizance of a possible fourth wave. There were other supply-side pressures from hurricanes that have affected the US production and the low level of investment across the industry.		
We continue to remain invested in quality industrials, blue-chip banks, recovery stories in the petrochemical space, and are now in process of building positions in consumer-oriented businesses. Our view for 2022 also remains fairly positive across the same sectors with various catalysts expected to play out over the year. We are evaluating opportunities in the retail, banking, consumer, and industrial spaces.		
Lastly, we remain grateful to the late Sultan Qaboos for his vision to transform Oman for us and for the generations to come. We remain confident that Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will further increase the prosperity and peace of this nation.		
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
ASSETS		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	664,195	9,920,982
Cash and cash equivalents	117,064	277,367
Total assets	781,259	10,198,349
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	254,717	57,740
Total liabilities	254,717	57,740
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	526,542	10,140,609
Net asset value per unit	1.046	0.961
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	210,701	298,990
Interest income	2,180	1,716
Net realised gain / (loss) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	1,596,489	(861,375)
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	134,868	121,792
Foreign exchange gain (net)	6,552	--
	1,950,790	(438,877)
Expenses		
Performance fees	199,239	--
Management fees	92,505	145,968
Fund Management Body fees	43,700	49,000
Brokerage expenses	17,440	13,688
Custodian service fees	15,420	24,328
General and administration	18,831	21,248
Foreign exchange loss (net)	--	4,737
	387,135	258,969
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the year	1,563,655	(697,846)
Net profit / (loss) per unit	0.270	(0.065)



GULF HOTELS (OMAN) COMPANY LIMITED SAOG

P O Box: 1455, P C 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman

C.R. No. 1059459

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

We welcome you to the annual general meeting of Gulf Hotels (Oman) Company Limited SAOG to present to you a report on the company's activities, the annual financial statements, a report on corporate governance and the auditor's report for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.

Financial Results for the year

The company recorded gross revenue of RO 3,479 Million (2020: RO 3,021 Million) and net loss after tax of RO 0.699 Million for the year 2021 (2020: net loss after tax RO 0.745 Million). The Covid-19 pandemic and its variants continued to affect the travel and tourism business for most part of the year 2021. The raging Covid 19 variants in many western countries, local restrictions like limitation in capacity for events and limitation in working hours for restaurants etc... resulted in lower revenue and impacted the profitability of the company.

The much anticipated recovery in hotel business started slowly during the last quarter of 2021, after successful vaccination for most of the residents in Sultanate of Oman, reduced number of Covid 19 cases and hospitalization.

The hotel management continues to implement several measures to ensure the health and safety of hotel guests and employees. These include a safe guest check-in process, social distancing, use of masks, cleaning of the critical areas of the hotel and guest rooms, following the industry best practices and regulatory guidelines.

Future outlook

The international travel and tourism is expected to pick up in business with the reduction of Covid 19 and its variants in western countries, unless there are new and more serious variants. We hope that drop in Covid cases and removal of impediments to international travel will result in improvement in business sentiment and benefit the hotel in coming days. We also hope that a successful FIFA World cup football 2022 in Qatar will benefit tourism sector in the region.

Dividend

In view of losses the Board of Directors do not recommend any dividends for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.

Organization

The company values its employees as one of the important stakeholders in its business. The hotel has been pursuing organization plan to recruit, train and develop local Omani talent in hospitality sector. Going forward, the hotel would continue its efforts and focus in recruitment and nurturing of young Omani people and help them in their career advancement.

A Note of thanks

We express our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Al Said for His Majesty's inspiring leadership and vision. We pray to Almighty Allah to shower his everlasting blessings on His Majesty and give His Majesty the strength to lead our nation to further growth and prosperity. We thank the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for implementing right policies to encourage growth in tourism sector.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the hotel staff, management of Intercontinental Hotels Group, customers, suppliers, bankers and the shareholders for their continued support.

Ali Ahmed Abdullah Al Najjar
Chairman

Note:

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder or other interested party who requests them, either in Arabic or English, within 7 days from the receipt of the request at company's address: Gulf Hotels (Oman) Co. Ltd. SAOG, P O Box: 1455, P C 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

The above Directors' report and Audited annual financial statements would be presented for the approval of the shareholders at their forthcoming Annual General Meeting proposed to be held on 17th March 2022.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	31 Dec 2021 RO'000	31 Dec 2020 RO'000
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	29,141	29,676
Current assets:		
Inventory	46	64
Trade and other receivables	468	284
Financial asset at fair value through profit or loss	1	1
Cash and cash equivalents	501	751
Total current assets	1,016	1,100
Total assets	30,157	30,776
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity:		
Share capital	3,428	3,428
Share premium	58	58
Legal reserve	1,143	1,143
Revaluation reserve	18,620	18,620
Retained earnings	363	1,062
Total equity	23,612	24,311
LIABILITIES		
Non-current liabilities:		
Borrowings	1,259	1,489
Staff terminal benefits	258	235
Deferred tax liability	3,387	3,510
Total non-current liabilities	4,904	5,234
Current liabilities:		
Current portion of borrowings	460	345
Trade and other payables	1,169	874
Provision for income tax	12	12
Total current liabilities	1,641	1,231
Total liabilities	6,545	6,465
Total equity and liabilities	30,157	30,776
Net assets per share	6.888	7.092

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Year ended 31 Dec 2021 RO'000	Year ended 31 Dec 2020 RO'000
Revenue	3,479	3,021
Cost of materials consumed	(753)	(582)
Gross profit	2,726	2,439
Salaries and wages	(1,606)	(1,510)
Service expenses	(720)	(609)
Other operating expenses	(486)	(443)
Depreciation	(633)	(675)
Other income	-	1
Loss from operations	(719)	(797)
Finance income	10	23
Finance cost	(101)	(103)
Impairment loss	(12)	(3)
Loss before tax	(822)	(880)
Income tax credit	123	135
Loss for the year	(699)	(745)
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Loss on revaluation of land	-	(4,000)
Income tax effect on revaluation of land	-	600
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(699)	(4,145)
Basic and diluted loss per share	(0.204)	(0.217)

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WORLD



VISION AL KHAIR GCC FUND		
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2021		
The Vision Al Khair Fund (VAKF) for the year ended 2021 has shown an appreciation of 22.51%.		
The November Omicron impact had limited effect on fundamentals, as the recovery could be seen across all markets in the first week of December, ending the month and year with robust gains across all GCC markets. The gains were supported by the improvement in oil prices, and interest in banking stocks amid further expectations for multiple interest rate hikes in the coming year, as well as positive Q4 2021 results. Banks remain appealing with easing provisions, strong loan growth and the possibility of higher corporate lending for the declared megaprojects, renewable projects, green bonds, and other financing prospects, while the retail side continues the addition to the mortgage loan book.		
Announcements for improving the IPO pipeline in Dubai, along with further capex in the oil and gas space has led to growing investor interest in UAE markets with bourses reporting strong gains in 2021. The region would also gain from the announced PIFs investment in the region. OPEC+ has decided to keep its supply comeback plan unchanged in the midst of surging crude prices. There would be no progress in the supply as OPEC+ takes stock of further demand impact from COVID-19, thereby, pushing crude to multi-year highs and continues to fuel inflation pressures for economies recovering from the pandemic effects. There were other supply-side pressures from hurricanes that have influenced US production and the low level of investment across the industry.		
The travel and tourism recovery is a significant opportunity within the airline as well as hotel space. The Dubai Expo is in progress, and the preparations are ongoing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, which provide for much needed drivers to the sector. We do see lucrative growth opportunities led by Saudi Arabia and UAE, which include privatization and listing of IPOs that endure to boost the public-private partnerships through programs identical to Shareek, capital investment in renewable energy and investment in the regional tourism and service industries.		
Our expectations for Q4 2021 are relatively optimistic for the banking, retail, and real estate space, while petrochemicals and insurance are likely to be underperformers in the coming quarter. Our perspective for 2022 also remains optimistic across the same sectors with various catalysts expected to play out over the year.		
Lastly, we remain grateful to the late Sultan Qaboos for his vision to transform Oman for us and for the generations to come. We remain confident that Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will further increase the prosperity and peace of this nation.		
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
ASSETS		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5,184,626	8,191,159
Cash and cash equivalents	560,408	226,909
Total assets	5,745,034	8,418,068
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	301,123	90,586
Total liabilities	301,123	90,586
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	5,443,911	8,327,482
Net asset value per unit	1.235	1.028
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	243,152	203,936
Interest income	1,148	320
Net realised gain / (loss) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	929,864	(561,578)
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	1,029,783	571,331
Foreign exchange gain (net)	20,531	--
Excess provision for income purification written back	18,300	--
Total income	2,242,778	214,009
Expenses		
Management fees	118,499	116,924
Custodian service fees	19,750	19,487
Brokerage expenses	16,987	8,565
Shariah board fees	10,000	10,000
Performance fee	215,414	--
General and administration	27,216	33,531
Fund Management body fee	23,400	35,000
Foreign exchange loss (net)	--	8,940
Total expenses	431,266	232,447
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the year	1,811,512	(18,438)
Net profit / (loss) per unit	0.268	(0.002)

VISION FOCUSED FUND		
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2021		
The Vision Focused Fund (VFF) returned -3.24% for the quarter ending 31 December 2021 and 30.26% for 2021.		
After the overaction seen in late November amid the Omicron variant's widespread perceived impact, there are no fundamental shifts in business activity, as we have already started witnessing recovery across all markets in the first weeks of December, ending the month and year with strong gains across all GCC markets. This was bolstered by recovery in oil prices, along with rapid buying across the banking sector where interest rates are finally expected to go up in the coming year.		
Supply chain issues continue to keep overall inflation higher. Banks remain attractive with easing provisions, strong loan growth and the likelihood of higher corporate lending for the announced megaprojects, renewable projects, green bonds, and other financing opportunities, while the retail side keeps adding to the mortgage loan book. Regionally, the UAE was bolstered by announcements for improving the IPO pipeline in Dubai, along with further capex in the oil and gas space. December also saw gas prices moderating as supply constraints and climatic changes added pressure to prices.		
Tourism drive is being seen across increased air travel among major airlines. We are well positioned to further capitalize on this recovery through positions in the airline as well as hotel space. Our expectations for Q4 2021 are fairly positive for the banking, retail and real estate space, while we continue to see pressure in the insurance and petrochemical spaces.		
The Dubai Expo is underway, and the preparations are ongoing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The region would also benefit from the announced PIFs investment in the region. OPEC+ has decided to keep its supply comeback plan unchanged amid soaring crude prices. This has pushed crude to a three-year high and continues stoking inflation pressures for economies recovering from the pandemic effects. There were other supply-side pressures from hurricanes that have affected the US production and the low level of investment across the industry. The GCC region is set for another set of tremendous growth opportunities led by Saudi Arabia and UAE, like privatization and listing of IPOs, continue boost to public-private partnerships through programs like Shareek, capital investment in renewable energy and investment in the regional tourism and service industries.		
We continue to remain invested in quality industrials, blue-chip banks, recovery stories in the petrochemical space, and are now in process of building out more positions in consumer-oriented businesses. Our view for 2022 also remains fairly positive across the same sectors with various catalysts expected to play out over the year. We are evaluating opportunities in the retail, banking, consumer, and industrial spaces.		
Lastly, we remain grateful to the late Sultan Qaboos for his vision to transform Oman for us and for the generations to come. We remain confident that Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will further increase the prosperity and peace of this nation.		
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
ASSETS		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	1,540,110	1,181,717
Cash and cash equivalents	115,985	45,735
Total assets	1,656,095	1,227,452
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	67,363	7,840
Total liabilities	67,363	7,840
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	1,588,732	1,219,612
Net asset value per unit	1.092	0.838
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	26,240	26,997
Interest income	381	588
Net realised gain / (loss) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	152,895	(169,598)
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	282,072	10,684
Foreign exchange gain (net)	4,854	--
Expenses	466,242	(131,329)
Performance fees	46,205	--
Management fees	22,088	19,832
Custodian service fees	6,872	3,966
Brokerage expenses	5,541	4,877
Foreign exchange loss (net)	--	1,137
General and administration	16,416	14,295
	97,122	44,107
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the year	369,120	(175,436)
Net profit / (loss) per unit 12	0.254	(0.105)

VISION REAL ECONOMY GCC FUND		
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2021		
The Vision Real Economy Fund (VREF) performance for the year ended 2021 was 18.02%.		
Following a year of economic distress, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies are expected to return to an aggregate growth of 2.2% in 2021, according to the latest issue of the World Bank Gulf Economic Update (GEU). This growth is buoyed by the global economic recovery, projected at 5.6% and the revival of global oil demand and prices.		
December also saw gas prices moderating as supply constraints and climatic changes added pressure to prices. Supply chain issues continue to keep overall inflation higher. Banks remain attractive with easing provisions, strong loan growth and the likelihood of higher corporate lending for the announced megaprojects, renewable projects, green bonds.		
OPEC+ has decided to keep its supply comeback plan unchanged amid soaring crude prices. There would be no acceleration in the supply as OPEC+ takes cognizance of a possible fourth wave. This has pushed crude to a three-year high and continues stoking inflation pressures for economies recovering from the pandemic effects. There were other supply-side pressures from hurricanes that have affected the US production and the low level of investment across the industry.		
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the construction sector, which is sensitive to economic cycles. Yet, on the upside, the sector saw some upside, thanks to rapid growth in mortgage lending, government initiatives to improve housing for citizens and the various mega projects announced over the year.		
Despite the gloom of the past, prospects for the revival of regular tourism to the GCC countries look promising in the near future. In addition, the planned events are likely to provide a huge boost to tourism in some of the countries. It seems possible to hope that the impact of the pandemic might be abating and to expect T&T will once again play a prominent role in the GCC countries.		
The Dubai Expo is underway, and the preparations are ongoing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The region would also benefit from the announced PIFs investment in the region. The GCC region is set for another set of tremendous growth opportunities led by Saudi Arabia and UAE, like privatization and listing of IPOs, continue boost to public-private partnerships through programs such as Shareek, capital investment in renewable energy and investment in the regional tourism and service industries.		
We prefer quality industrials, blue-chip banks, recovery stories in the petrochemical space, and are now in process of building out more positions in consumer-oriented businesses. Our view for 2022 also remains fairly positive across the same sectors with various catalysts expected to play out over the year.		
Lastly, we remain grateful to the late Sultan Qaboos for his vision to transform Oman for us and for the generations to come. We remain confident that Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will further increase the prosperity and peace of this nation.		
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
Assets		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5,761,119	7,658,736
Cash and cash equivalents	569,016	474,450
Total assets	6,330,135	8,133,186
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	215,837	59,749
Total liabilities	215,837	59,749
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	6,114,298	8,073,437
Net asset value per unit	1.315	1.174
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021		
	2021 RO	2020 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	232,189	213,414
Interest income	1,448	483
Net realised gain / (loss) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	569,347	(276,598)
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	888,916	868,767
Foreign exchange gain (net)	18,807	--
Expenses	1,710,707	806,066
Performance fees	122,567	--
Management fees	123,179	110,163
Fund Management Body fees	32,400	49,000
General and administration	24,030	17,946
Custodian fees	20,532	18,360
Brokerage expenses	17,528	7,335
Foreign exchange loss (net)	--	6,228
	340,236	209,032
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the year	1,370,471	597,034
Net profit per unit	0.214	0.085



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ECONOMIC COOPERATION

India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said he held a detailed discussion with his Australian counterpart Dan Tehan Wannon on the "way ahead" for the proposed comprehensive economic cooperation agreement between the two countries.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



UNIQUE SAVINGS PLAN

Bank Muscat has announced the availability of class-leading retirement and children's education plans through its strategic tie-up with AXA Gulf, one of the leading insurance providers in the region, recently acquired by GIG (Gulf Insurance Group).

Tethys oil production from Oman reaches 325,632 barrels in January

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for January 2022 was \$80.26 per barrel

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government, take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore the Sultanate of Oman, in January 2022 amounted to 325,632 barrels of oil, corresponding to 10,504 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for January 2022 was \$80.26 per barrel.

The Official Selling Price, as

published by Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4, has a 30 per cent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East B.V. with 20 per cent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 per cent.

Tethys Oil is a Swedish oil company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries.

Core area

The company's core area is Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58. Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 26.2 million barrels of oil (mmbbl) and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.6 mmbbl and had an average oil production of 11,136 barrels per day from Blocks 3&4 during 2021.



BENCHMARK PRICE: The Official Selling Price, as published by Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

9TH NATIONAL DEFENCE BATCH



Delegation visits different projects and facilities in Sezad

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) organised a visit for the delegation of the 9th National Defence batch, headed by Air Vice Marshal Eng. Saleh bin Yahya Al Maskari, Commandant of the National Defence College and several faculty members, to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm continued for three days.

Upon their arrival at the headquarter of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad), the delegation met with Dr Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, and

many officials from Sezad and companies operating in the Zone.

The delegation was briefed on the different capabilities of Sezad in many sectors, most notably the renewable energy sector (green energy), logistics and others.

Further, the delegation was toured around the different projects and facilities in the zone, including the port and dry dock and energy projects such as Duqm Refinery and central facilities.

Moreover, the delegation visited several other projects in Sezad such as the multi-purpose Fishing Port, the Port of Duqm, the dry dock, the Karwa Motors factory, the tourist zone and the Rock Garden.

REPORT

Mobile malware attacks dip by almost a third in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: While analysing the threat landscape of Oman, a steady decline in attacks on mobile devices in the region. The overall mobile malware attacks have decreased by almost a third, as cybercriminals consolidated their efforts to focus on more complicated, dangerous and profitable threats instead. These and other findings are featured in Kaspersky's Mobile Threats in 2021 report.

Overall, in 2021 Oman users faced 27 per cent less mobile malware attacks than in 2020, similarly to other countries in the Middle East: Egypt saw a staggering 52 per cent decrease, followed by Qatar (47 per cent), Kuwait (46 per cent), UAE (29 per cent) and Bahrain (13 per cent). The only two countries where the dynamic was different were Saudi Arabia with a 19 per cent increase and Turkey, where the share increased by an anomalous 67 per cent.

This dynamic is a reflection of the global trend, as cybercriminals tend to invest less and less into the mainstream threats that are successfully neutralized by the modern security solution. Instead, they choose to invest more into new mobile malware that has become increasingly complex, featuring new ways to steal users' banking and gaming credentials, as well as other strands of personal data. For instance, in 2021 Kaspersky detected more than 95,000 new mobile banking Trojans in the world, but the number of attacks using such malware remained similar. Additionally, the share of Trojans - malicious programs capable of executing remote commands - doubled, reaching 8.8 per cent in 2021.

In addition to the strategic changes on the mobile threat landscape, experts also attribute the overall decline of mobile malware in 2021 to the enormous wave of attacks seen at the beginning of lockdown in 2020 as users were forced to work from home.

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MARKET

Bank Muscat and AXA Gulf offer unique savings, investment plans

Through this alliance, the bank offers highly customisable bancassurance products that cater to customer needs in a fast-changing world

MUSCAT: In line with its vision “To serve you better, everyday” and its commitment to innovative products that cater to the unique needs of its customers, Bank Muscat has announced the availability of class-leading retirement and children’s education plans through its strategic tie-up with AXA Gulf, one of the leading insurance providers in the region, recently acquired by GIG (Gulf Insurance Group).

Through this alliance, the bank offers highly customisable bancassurance products that cater to customer needs in a fast-changing world.



“We encourage all of our clients to learn more about these one-of-a-kind, highly customisable plans

Abdullah Al Maashani
General Manager – Products, Bank Muscat

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah Tamman Al Maashani, General Manager – Products, Bank Muscat, said: “The bank is delighted to partner with AXA Gulf Insurance, one of the region’s leading insurers, to offer unique and bespoke savings and retire-

ment plans that help our customers meet their financial milestones and offer them peace of mind regarding their family’s future. They can rest assured that their future life goals can be accomplished through these plans and that their loved ones will be covered should



“We are committed to being a trusted partner to our valued customers and their families by offering highly innovative products

Mehdi Salim Al Harthy
General Manager & Head of Partnerships for AXA Gulf in Oman

management specialists and that they are receiving the best life protection services available in Oman. We are committed to being a trusted partner to our valued customers and their families by offering highly innovative products that provide complete peace of mind.”

Unit-linked insurance plan
AXA’s savings plan is a unit-linked insurance plan, which combines savings and life protection under a single integrated policy. The plan is primarily intended to help customers set aside a part of their present savings to meet a future financial milestone – like saving up for retirement or to fund their children’s higher education. Customers have access to financial advisors who can design highly customised solutions depending on each customer’s unique profile and financial needs. At the same time, the AXA Savings plan also provides excellent protection against unforeseen events, offering good financial protection to the investor’s family, as well as an excellent retirement plan that takes care of one’s needs in old age.

The savings plan can also be customised to ensure an excellent retirement plan that takes care of the needs of people in old age.

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VIRTUAL MEETING

India, Australia discuss comprehensive economic cooperation agreement

NEW DELHI: India’s Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday he held a detailed discussion with his Australian counterpart Dan Tehan Wannon on the “way ahead” for the proposed comprehensive economic cooperation agreement between the two countries.

“Held a detailed discussion with

the Australian Trade Minister @DanTehanWannon on the way ahead for our Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement,” Piyush Goyal said in a tweet. “Both sides are committed to a mutually beneficial deal covering goods, services & investments for the prosperity of our people,” Goyal said.

The minister had said recently

that the proposed deal is likely to include lower tariffs and greater market access for Indian exporters in areas such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, footwear, and leather. The two ministers held a virtual meeting to discuss the way ahead for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. -ANI

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OFFICIAL DATA

China expects robust and rigid housing demand

BEIJING: China expects robust rigid demand for housing, the country’s housing regulator said, with demand in the sector shored up by an influx of migrants to urban areas and people’s desire for better housing.

Over 11 million new jobs are created in urban areas every year, one factor that has generated rigid demand for housing in the country, Wang Menghui, minister of housing and urban-rural development, told a press conference.

China is still in the stage of rapid urbanisation, as indicated by the increase in population and the number of families in urban areas, Wang noted.

Official data shows that the number of permanent urban residents in China had risen to 64.72 percent of its population by the end of 2021, with the number expected to continue growing amid the country’s urbanisation drive.

On top of demand from new arrivals in cities, Wang said that exiting city-dwellers also wish to improve their living environment and conditions, while residential communities built before 2000 are failing to satisfy the desire for bigger and better houses.

China’s urban development has entered a crucial phase of urban renewal. -xinhua

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HIGH-FIBRE DIET REDUCES RISK OF DEMENTIA

Fibre is something that every dietician suggests for better health. It's known to be vitally important for a healthy digestive system and also has cardiovascular benefits like reduced cholesterol. Recently, evidence has emerged that fibre is also important for a healthy brain. A new study has opened up about this. The study was published in the journal 'Nutritional Neuroscience'. It was led by researchers in Japan and showed that a high-fibre diet is associated with a reduced risk of developing dementia. "Dementia is a devastating disease that usually requires long-term care," said the lead author of the study Professor Kazumasa Yamagishi. "We were interested in some recent research which suggested that dietary fibre may play a preventative role. We investigated this using data that were collected from thousands of adults in Japan for a large study that started

in the 1980s." Participants completed surveys that assessed their dietary intake between 1985 and 1999. They were generally healthy and aged between 40 and 64 years. They were then followed up from 1999 until 2020, and it was noted whether they developed dementia that required care. The researchers split the data, from a total of 3739 adults, into four groups according to the amount of fibre in their diets. They found that the groups who ate higher levels of fiber had a lower risk of developing dementia. The team also examined whether there were differences between the two main types of fiber: soluble and insoluble fibers. Soluble fibres, found in foods such as oats and legumes, are important for the beneficial bacteria that live in the gut as well as providing other health benefits. Insoluble fibres, found in whole grains, vegetables, and some other foods, are known to be important for bowel health. The researchers found that the link between fiber intake and dementia was more pronounced for soluble fibres. The team had some ideas as to what might underlie the link between dietary fibre and the risk

of dementia. "The mechanisms are currently unknown but might involve the interactions that take place between the gut and the brain," said Professor Yamagishi. "One possibility is that soluble fibre regulates the composition of gut bacteria. This composition may affect neuroinflammation, which plays a role in the onset of dementia. It's also possible that dietary fibre may reduce other risk factors for dementia, such as body weight, blood pressure, lipids, and glucose levels. The work is still at an early stage, and it's important to confirm the association in other populations." In many countries today, such as the US and Australia, many people consume less fibre than is recommended by nutritionists. By encouraging healthy eating habits with high dietary fibre, it might be possible to reduce the incidence of dementia.

-ANI

SPORTS

Oman Sail to kick off 2022 season at Asian Sailing Championships

The Omani contingent features Musab Al Hadi and Waleed Al Kindi in the 49er class

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Sail will kick off the 2022 sailing season at the Asian Sailing Championships in Abu Dhabi where teams in three classes will compete from 27 February to 6 March. The 49er, Windsurfing and ILCA 4 teams will join over 140 sailors from 17 countries across the continent at the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club for a week of action against some of the best in Asia, under the guidance of team leader Mohsin Al Busaidi.



OMAN SAIL: The 49er, Windsurfing and ILCA 4 teams will join over 140 sailors from 17 countries across the continent at the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club for a week of action against some of the best in Asia.

The Omani contingent features Musab Al Hadi and Waleed Al Kindi in the 49er class, coached by Zakariya Al Wahabi; Abdulmajeed

Al Hadrami and Abdullah Al Sarhi in the Windsurfing class, along with coach Sultan Al Balushi; and Nibras Al Owaisi will team with

Elyass Al Fhadli in the ILCA 4 class which is coached by Mund-her Al Kindi. Team leader, Mohsin Al Busaidi,

Head of the Youth Sailing Pathway at Oman Sail, said, "This is an important test for our sailors across three classes and a great opportu-

nity to put into practice the techniques we have been learning in training. Qualifying for Paris 2024 is our main objective, and this tournament is the first step this year to reach that level. It will be an interesting opportunity for the team and a great chance to get into the rhythm of competitive sailing early in the year."

Racing will be staged in the harbour and open waters surrounding the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club every day from Tuesday 1 March until Sunday 6 March. The final day of races will also feature the medal event where the prizes will be decided, before concluding with a prizegiving and closing ceremony.

The event is organised by the UAE Sailing & Rowing Federation (UAE SARF) under the sanction of the Asian Sailing Federation (ASAF).

All participants will be subject to COVID-19 testing requirements and safety protocols as implemented by the authorities of the UAE and Abu Dhabi to ensure a safe tournament for all sailors, coaches, dignitaries and media.

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Khawar Ali bowls Majees to big win, Ali stars in exciting win for Al Jadidi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman star Khawar Ali's 5 for 24 and Ravindra K'Ratne's excellent 81 not out powered Majees CT to an emphatic 8-wicket victory against AER International Trading and Contracting in a Premier Division 50-over League clash at OC Turf 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Khawar's brilliant bowling was instrumental in AER getting dismissed for 167 in 48.3 overs despite Aamir Kaleem's superb 64.

Majees raced to the target in only 30.3 overs, scoring 168 for 2 thanks to Ranvindra's top knock that included five huge sixes. Danish Mohammed bagged 2 for 38.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): AER International Trad. & Contracting 167 all out in 48.3 overs (Aamir Kaleem 64 - 2x6, Khawar Ali 5-24) lost to Majees 168 for 2 in 30.3 overs (Ravindra K'Ratne 81 - 8x4, 5x6, Khurram Khan 34 - 7x4, Danish Mohammad 2-38) by 8 wickets.

Ali bowls Al Jadidi to victory

Muhammed Ali picked up 4 for 37 to pave the way for Al Jadidi Stars' exciting 4-wicket win over Orient Travels/Abu Amin Metal in a 50-over A Division League match at OC Turf 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Orient Travels was bowled out for 220 in 44.4 overs despite Adil Khan's fluent 89 and Darwish Ellickal's 33. Apart from Ali's superb spell, Parameswaran Shankar and Muhammed Waqas bowled well too, taking two wickets each.

Top knocks by Pradeep Kumar (62 off 71), Nidhin Mohan (43 off 54) and Nishanth Meethalveedu (33 off 33) helped Al Jadidi to 224 for 6 in 39.4 overs for a comfortable win. Gurvir Singh took 2 for 46.

Brief Scores (A Division): Orient Travels / Abu Amin Metal 220



all out in 44.4 overs (Adil Khan 89 - 8x4, 1x6, Darwish Ellickal 33 - 3x4, 2x6, Muhammed Ali 4-37, Parameswaran Shankar 2-35, Muhammad Waqas 2-36) lost to Al Jadidi Stars 224 for 6 in 39.4 overs (Pradeep Kumar 62 - 4x4, 1x6, Nidhin Mohan 43 - 4x4, Nishanth Meethalveedu 33 - 4x4, Gurvir Singh 2-46) by 4 wickets.

Wasim stars in easy win for Ruwi

Wasim Ismail's magnificent 75 not out off 57 was the highlight of OCT Ruwi's thumping 8-wicket victory against Maniz Azad International in a 30-over B Division League encounter at Muscat Municipality ground 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Ruwi bowled superbly to dismiss Maniz Azad for 193 in the 30th over thanks to brilliant bowling by Khalid Pir (3 for 30) and Ali

Akbar (3 for 31). Krishna Pradhan (39) and Muhammed Attique (37) were its main batters.

OCT Ruwi took only 21.2 overs to surpass the target, scoring 195 for 2 thanks to outstanding knocks from Wasim, Muhammed Al Balushi (43 off 21) and Zubair Ali Akbar (40 off 37).

Brief Scores (B Division): Maniz Azad International 193 all out in 29.2 overs (Krishna Pradhan 39 - 7x4, Muhammed Attique 37 - 5x4, 1x6, Khalid Pir 3-30, Ali Akbar 3-31) lost to OCT Ruwi 195 for 2 in 21.2 overs (Wasim Ismail 75 - 9x4, 2x6, Mohammed Al Balushi 43 - 6x4, 2x6, Zubair Ali 40 - 6x4) by 8 wickets.

Naveed stars in PDO win

In another B Division game, top PDO all-rounder Abdul Naveed powered his side to a 69-run victory against Bank Muscat at Muscat

Municipality ground 2. PDO's 247 all out in 30 overs included top knocks by Abdul Naveed (56 off 27), Mazhar Javed (47 off 40) and Awais Mohamed (32 off 37). Amir Mehmood and Benny Mathew claimed two wickets each.

PDO was equally good with the ball, restricting Bank Muscat to 178 for 8 in 30 overs due to brilliant bowling by Abdul Naveed, Muhammed Idrees and Nadeem Ahmed. Asghar Khan topscored with 36 off 31.

Brief Scores (B Division): PDO RC 247 all out in 30 overs (Abdul Naveed 56 - 9x4, 2x6, Mazhar Javed 47 - 3x4, 2x6, Awais Mohamed 32 - 4x4, Amir Mehmood 2-49, Benny Mathew 2-43) beat Bank Muscat 178 for 8 in 30 overs (Asghar Khan 36 - 5x4, Abdul Naveed 2-26, Muhammed Idrees 2-26, Nadeem Ahmed 2-41) by 69 runs.

SPONSORSHIP DROPPED

Manchester United drop Russian airline Aeroflot's sponsorship rights

MANCHESTER: Premier League club Manchester United on Friday announced that they have withdrawn Russian airline Aeroflot's sponsorship rights amid the Ukraine crisis.

United's deal with Aeroflot was due to expire this year. Earlier this week, Aeroflot were prevented from flying to the UK this week. Manchester United has released the following club statement: "In light of events in Ukraine, we have withdrawn Aeroflot's sponsorship rights."

"We share the concerns of our fans around the world and extend our sympathies to those affected," the statement added.

Earlier in the day, the UEFA Executive Committee decided to relocate the final of the 2021/22 UEFA Men's Champions League from Saint Petersburg, Russia to Stade de France in Saint-Denis.

The game will be played as initially scheduled on Saturday, May 28 at 21:00 CET. The UEFA Executive Committee today held an extraordinary meeting following the grave escalation of the security situation in Europe.

A number of explosions were heard in the capital city of Ukraine as the Russian special military operation entered the second day, local media reported on Friday.

On Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized Ukraine's breakaway regions - Donetsk and Luhansk - as independent entities. Later, Putin ordered special military operations "to protect" the people in the Donbas region.

Several countries including the UK, the US, Canada, and the European Union have condemned Russia's military operations and imposed sanctions on Moscow. **ANI**



FORMULA ONE

Sebastian Vettel says he will not race in 2022 Russian GP

BERLIN: German racing driver Sebastian Vettel has said he will not compete in Formula One's Russian Grand Prix this year amid the ongoing military operations of Russia in Ukraine.

The four-time Formula One champion said he was "shocked" to see what is happening. "In my personal opinion, I woke up to this morning's news, shocked, so I don't know. I think it's horrible to see what is happening," agencies quoted Vettel as saying at a press conference during pre-season testing.

"Obviously if you look at the calendar we have a race scheduled in Russia. For myself, my own opinion is I should not go, I will not go. I think it's wrong to

race in the country," he added.

Vettel said he has made his decision and when a country is at war it is not right to compete in a race there. "I'm sure it's something that we will talk about, but personally I'm just so shocked and sad to see what is going on. So we will see going forward, but I think my decision is already made," said Vettel.

"When a country is at war it is not right to race there," he added.

Leaders from a number of countries including the UK, the US, Canada and the European Union have condemned Russia's military operations in the Donbas region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday recognized

Ukraine's breakaway regions - Donetsk and Luhansk - as independent entities escalating the ongoing tensions between the two countries. Ukraine gained independence in 1991 after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Putin on Thursday said that special military operations are being launched "to protect" the people in the Donbas region. He also warned other countries that any attempt to interfere with the Russian action would lead to "consequences".

Leaders from a number of countries including the UK, the US, Canada, and the European Union have condemned Russia's military operations in the Donbas region. **ANI**



FEATURES

INVASION OF UKRAINE

‘Black day for Europe’ — society shocked at Russian attack on Ukraine

OUTRAGE paired with disbelief prevailed worldwide in the culture scene as Russia forged ahead with its invasion of Ukraine.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in a statement voiced its deep concern “about the ongoing military operations and the escalation of violence in Ukraine.”

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) on Friday announced that it is restricting academic exchange with Russia. “There can be no normal relations with a state that is waging a war of aggression against its neighboring country in the middle of Europe, not even in foreign science policy,” DAAD President Joybrato Mukherjee says.

“Putin is a very great danger to world peace,” said Vladimir Kaminer, a Russia-born writer who has lived in Berlin since 1990, and whose short stories and novels have repeatedly made it onto the bestseller lists.

This war, Kaminer told DW, is not directed against Ukraine.

Ukraine does not even exist in Vladimir Putin's mind, Kaminer said. “I am absolutely sure that this war is being waged against Europe and America, against the



Western world,” the writer added. “The Russian president lives in the past — Western politicians can’t cope with him, because they think about the future and what will happen in 80 years with our climate change. These are very different world views.”

‘Impossible to work for a killer’

Openly calling Vladimir Putin a “killer,” Elena Kovalskaya announced her resignation as director of Moscow’s Vsevolod Meyerhold State Theater and Cultural Centre on Friday.

In a Facebook post, she wrote: “Friends, in protest against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, I’m leaving my post as Director of Moscow’s Vsevolod Meyerhold State Theater and Cultural Centre. It’s impossible to work for a killer and

collect a salary from him.”

The Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, with musicians aged 12-22 from 32 cities of Ukraine, and its conductor, Oksana Lyniv, urged “all governments of European countries to stand by Ukraine with decisive action, with military and the strictest sanctions and to stop our murderers.”

“We ourselves will never give up defending our homeland and world peace with all our strength, with art, music and true values,” they said.

The German Stage Association called the Russian attack on Ukraine “a shocking violation of the European peace order of recent decades.” It declared that it “stands in solidarity with all those who continue to firmly believe in these possibilities of a diverse and peaceful coexistence, in the power of art and the pacifying effect of culture, and who must now fight for them.”

“Today is a black day for Europe,” the association said.

The Board of Trustees of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade expressed outrage at “Russia’s brutal attack on Ukraine,” and appealed “to the Russian people and their president to stop the deliberate destruction of peace and freedom in Europe.” - DW

Wildfires to increase up to 30% by 2050, experts warn

The intense, destructive fires that have dominated headlines in recent years are expected to become more frequent, even in places like the Arctic. Experts warn our response must shift toward planning and preparedness.



EXHAUSTED firefighters have been battling blazes in northern Argentina for weeks. Fueled by strong winds, little rain and dry conditions brought on by an unusually long drought, wildfires have already destroyed nearly 8,000 square kilometres (3,000 square miles) of forest, swamp and farmland, an area slightly smaller than the island of Puerto Rico.

“It never happened to us, we never lived something like this, we were really overcome,” one resident, Jorge Ayala, told news agency over the weekend. But wildfires like this are expected to become more prevalent, and more destructive, in the coming years and decades.

Extreme fires — more frequent, intense and increasingly found in atypical areas like the Arctic — are projected to rise up to 14 per cent by 2030 and 30 per cent by mid-century, according to a new report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Norwegian environmental nonprofit GRID-Arendal.

By 2100, they say, fires could be as much as 50 per cent more likely to occur. Even if we manage to significantly reduce emissions, the world is likely to see an increase in wildfires, the report said. Researchers have increasingly linked these disasters to human-caused climate change, a fact underscored by the report, which links the growing severity of fires to a higher incidence of drought, rising temperatures and strong winds.

“At the same time, climate change is made worse by wildfires, mostly by ravaging sensitive and carbon-rich ecosystems like peatlands and rainforests,” said the authors of the report. As these ecosystems are destroyed, they release stored CO2 emissions into the atmosphere, further contributing to global warming and reducing their potential to capture future emissions. “This turns landscapes into tinderboxes, making it harder to halt rising temperatures,” they said.

“Fire impacts air, soil and water,” said Glynis Humphrey of the University of Cape Town, who contributed to the report. “Fire interacts closely with the climate, in terms of carbon emissions and rainfall patterns, and it impacts human and ecosystem health. And it impacts people’s jobs and the economic situation that people find themselves in.”



around the world. That destruction — to crops and homes, human health and the natural environment — means wildfires “disproportionately affect the world’s poorest nations,” according to the report. The fallout can linger for years after fires have been extinguished, especially in parts of the world that lack the resources to rebuild and adapt to the changing environment.

Focus needs to be on planning and prevention, not response

And yet, experts warned, most global government spending when it comes to wildfires is devoted to fighting blazes after they break out, with less than one per cent going to planning, prevention and preparedness. To confront this increasing risk and to lessen the impact of destructive fires, governments will need to “radically shift their investments.”

“Current government responses to wildfires are often putting

money in the wrong place,” said Inger Andersen, executive director of UNEP. “We have to minimise the risk of extreme wildfires by being better prepared: invest more in fire risk reduction, work with local communities, and strengthen global commitment to fight climate change.”

The report calls on governments to divert two-thirds of funding to planning, prevention, preparedness and recovery. “It’s integral that fire be in the same category as disaster management [for] floods and droughts,” said Humphrey, speaking at a media briefing. “It’s absolutely essential.”

Reintroduction of indigenous knowledge key

While some of that funding should go toward improved monitoring and analysis, to better understand how wildfires are evolving in a changing climate and what can be done to manage that, the authors also highlight the importance of indigenous knowledge.

This can include the use of prescribed burns, or “good fires,” to reduce fuel that can feed larger blazes. Other methods include creating fire breaks or using controlled blazes to establish mosaic landscapes, which inhibit the spread of wildfires, or promoting the growth of grass and plants that help ward off drought. — DW



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ROUND-UP

Qatar Airways and Malaysia Airlines ink comprehensive MoU

The new agreement will further facilitate strategic cooperation that will see both airlines working closely together across multiple areas of the business to offer an unrivalled range of value-added services to passengers

DOHA: Qatar Airways and Malaysia Airlines Berhad announced a new chapter in their long-standing relationship by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The new agreement will further facilitate strategic cooperation that will see both airlines working closely together across multiple areas of the business to offer an unrivalled range of value-added services to passengers. With the enhanced partnership, both airlines will leverage each other's network strengths and provide more access for passengers to travel to new destinations beyond their networks while offering new and exclusive products to their customers soon.

Qatar Airways passengers will gain better access to the wider domestic Malaysia market and key destinations in Asia such as Penang, Langkawi and Medan, Indonesia. Operated by Malaysia Airlines via its hub, Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). Passengers will enjoy seamless connectivity to popular destinations



in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas with Qatar Airways' extensive network via Doha. Building on the close links between Qatar Airways and Malaysia Airlines' networks and rapid expansion of codeshare flights, the two Oneworld partners have also agreed to maximise synergies in other areas of the business such as air cargo, operations or commercial services, that will create a game-changing innovative synergy for both carriers in leading the new travel demand ahead. Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "This is a significant moment for us as we have just celebrated 20 years of serving Malaysia, and this new strategic cooperation with our Oneworld partner, Malaysia Airlines, further cements our commitment to the country. "This partnership will serve to link both our networks and allow

us to work together across different aspects of the business, therefore, creating exciting opportunities for our joint passengers, as well as for our airlines. As we move towards a post-pandemic world, successful business is driven by strong partnerships, and this close cooperation with Malaysia Airlines is a firm example of how symbiotic international partnerships can pave the way to industry recovery. Providing customers access to the most extensive route network with unrivalled services and seamless connections." Group Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia Airlines Berhad, Izham Ismail, said: "We are delighted to have taken the next important step with our close Oneworld partner. This partnership will provide better efficiencies and a more comprehensive network for our passengers whilst we further boost the growth of traffic flow via KLIA, which will serve as a primary gateway to Malaysia's domestic and selected Southeast Asian region destinations. "This MoU for strategic partnerships between Malaysia Air-

lines and Qatar Airways is an important part of our long-term business plan, as we explore more strategic opportunities and establish deeper partnerships. "At the same time, it underscores the commitment of both airlines to provide passengers with safer and increased choice of flights, wider destinations and greater flexibility on top of the excellent service hospitality throughout their travels with us. "We believe the strategic partnership will put both full-service carriers on a stronger footing to compete in the highly competitive market as we continue to navigate recovery of the pandemic, with the reopening of international borders and an increase in the demand for air travel." Qatar Airways and Malaysia Airlines launched their codeshare cooperation in 2004 and have significantly expanded the partnership in recent years, which today comprises 62 codeshare destinations in Malaysia, South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Middle East, Europe, the Americas and Africa.

PRESTIGIOUS



Four hospitals of Badr Al Samaa bags ACHSI accreditation

MUSCAT: Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Barka, Sohar, Salalah and Nizwa received the prestigious The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHSI) accreditation. ACHSI accreditation is an external review of the quality of care and services. It is an internationally recognised evaluation process used to assess and improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of healthcare organisations; it is also a way to publicly recognize that a healthcare organisation has met the quality standards. In a joint statement managing directors of Badr Al Samaa Group, Abdul Latheef and Dr P A Mohammed said, "We are highly jubilated by ACHSI accreditation of four of our hospitals with exceptional performance. We strive to introduce and set standards and trends in quality of care and patient safety and hence ensure the highest level of care for our patients. All our hospitals are benchmarked with international accredited standards. Our doctors, paramedics and allied services staff diligently follow the laid policies and protocols to ensure every healthcare function meets the standards. This accreditation has only increased the standards of care, our pricing is still the same and affordable." The ACHSI's assessment was based on EQuIP 6 module. The ACHS Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQuIP) is based upon principles that support best practices and are designed to facilitate a culture of continuous improvement. These principles can be applied to all aspects of service within a healthcare organisation. The assessment process of this accreditation was led by respective branch heads of these four hospitals with the support of the Medical Director, Nursing Director, Quality Assurance and administrative team; Shammath Aman in Barka, Manoj Kumar in Sohar, Abdul Azeem in Salalah and Maneesh Raghavan in Nizwa. Jacob Oommen, Chief Operating Officer and Head of ACHSI quality accreditation process said, "Badr Al Samaa has always set trends in the private health care sector. It played a crucial role as a catalyst to reform the patient care system in the region. Badr Al Samaa also raised its quality of services on par with world standards and it is evident by the various recognitions and accreditation received from different organisations and healthcare accreditation bodies and ACHSI is one amongst them. He appreciated the exemplary hard work and dedication of teams of all four hospitals who tirelessly work around the year to maintain the highest standards of quality." Sameer PT, Chief Executive Officer, "Apart from these four accreditations two of the Badr Al Samaa's hospital is already Joint Commission International (JCI) accredited, thus making Badr Al Samaa group as the only group in the private healthcare sector of Oman having the highest number of accreditations and whose all hospitals have quality accreditations. Badr Al Samaa is planning to bring its medical centres as well under the ambit of quality accreditation."

FLAGSHIP SEDAN

Experience fine journeys in flagship GA8

MUSCAT: GAC Motor GA8 is a fantastic sedan that makes a fantastic mark with its stunning design, power and comfort. The GA8 offer flagship sedan experiences for those in search of value-for-money. The GA8 flagship sedan is sure to make a lasting impression on every arrival with its LED Headlights with Alarm for Headlight On and Follow-me-home Function, 17" Aluminium Alloy Wheels, LED Daytime Running Lights, LED High Mounted Brake Light, Front and Rear Fog Lights, Power Adjustable Side Mirrors, Dedicated LED cornering lights and more. Giving you the opportunity to take the lead and enjoy the experience is the Turbo-charged 2.0L, 194 HP engine that produces 300 Nm Torque at 1600-4500 RPM. This engine is paired with a 6-speed automatic transmission. Making journeys comfortable and smooth is the double-wishbone independent suspension and rear five-link beam independent suspension. Making every entry warm and welcoming are the well-appointed interiors. An experience inside the GA8 will encourage you to spend more time in it. Passengers can easily getaway



in a world of their own and enjoy uplifting moments even on a busy day with the available Three-zone Automatic Air Conditioning, Second Row AC Vents, Negative Ion Air Purifier, Leather and Leatherette-trimmed seats, 10-way Power Adjustable Driver's Seat, 6-way Power Adjustable Front Passenger's Seat, Power Sunroof with Jam Protection and more.

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INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IITC partners with Omani SME to promote information security

MUSCAT: Nowadays living without access to the information of interest at any time, any place through countless types of devices has become unimaginable. Hence, information security has become a very critical element in today's businesses. It protects the organisation's ability to function and enables the safe operation of applications implemented on the organisation's IT systems. Parag Gurumukhi, DGM - Sales, International Information Technology Co. (IITC, an OHI Group Company) says, "I am pleased to announce that Hemaya has joined the IITC ecosystem. Through this partnership, Hemaya will be able to offer its specialised security services to our customers. Hemaya is a registered SME, and it has always been OHI's endeavour to encourage local SME companies



and help them increase their market presence and provide financial strength at the same time." IITC is a leading service provider of enterprise IT infrastructure, complex business solutions and high-quality learning services for more than three decades in the Sultanate. IITC helps its customer

transform digitally as their preferred technology partner. The core competencies include setting up a data centre, software-defined compute & storage, network & security, enterprise business applications, digital web development services, consultancy, managed services & high-quality

training services, to digitally transform customers. Hemaya Information Security, a registered SME, works in the field of IT security by providing flexible, secure, ICT project management and cost-effective solutions to clients. The continuing revolution in the IT industry is creating great opportunities for companies with the foresight to react faster to customers' needs and open new areas of business. Through this partnership, IITC and Hemaya customers will leverage a perfect synergy covering the most demanding technology requirements of any project, as IITC will add to their portfolio of services, some of the most advanced security services, giving their customers to meet specialised security consultants who have expertise in the field.

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