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Arabic certification test for non-native speakers in Oman from next year

The standardised test, intended to become the Arabic equivalent of the English-language IELTS exam, has speaking, reading, listening, and writing components

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Non-native speakers of Arabic who wish to obtain an internationally recognised certification of the language can sign up to attempt the Al Khalil Arabic Language Test, starting next year. Aimed at becoming the Arabic equivalent of the English-language IELTS exam, the test includes a standardised test of a person's ability to speak, read, listen, and write in Arabic. The announcement of the Khalil test came on 18 December, to coincide with World Arabic Language



PLANNED DEVELOPMENT: The development of the Al Khalil Arabic test is part of the Ministry of Economy's 10th Five Year Plan, and will be conducted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, starting early next year.

Day, which has been celebrated since 2012. The development of this test is part of the Ministry of Economy's 10th Five Year Plan, and will be conducted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, starting early next year. The programme aims to provide people the means to speak and understand high-quality Arabic, by adopting a unified system for assessment for non-native speakers of the language. There are five initiatives under the Khalil test. These include establishing the Centre for Measurement

and Quality Control in Teaching Arabic, unification of bodies supervising Arabic tests for non-native speakers, adopting a unified system of assessment, raising the efficiency of Arabic spoken by non-native speakers, and improving the quality of Arabic language education in Oman. The test will be supported by the efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, Sultan Qaboos University, and private universities. Among those teaching Arabic to

non-native teachers is the Arabia Experience Institute, which offers lessons to students of all ages. Among them are learners who come from abroad to learn the language, and experience Omani culture. "Arabic is a language for all ages and all nationalities...it is a language for all people," said Nasser Al Jabri, the director of the Arabia Experience Institute. "We teach the Gulf dialect of Arabic to non-native speakers. We welcome everyone to learn this language, as well as the customs, traditions, and culture of the Gulf. "We are proud of our experience in teaching the language of Oman, and are keen to share the country's culture, customs and traditions with others," he said. The institute offers Arabic language lessons across 10 levels of difficulty, as well as specialised classes that feature jargon suitable for those who work in medicine, the military, media, as diplomats, and in sport. They also offer special classes for disabled students, and provide learners the opportunity to learn Arabic calligraphy. "We know the Omani dialect is a distinguished one, and find great pleasure in teaching individuals and groups, both in the classrooms, and outside, in the wider world," explained Al Jabri. "To make sure people can experience authentic Omani culture, we also offer accommodation with Omani families where they can enjoy traditional Arabic and Omani dishes."

More Muscat-Istanbul flights every week

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People who wish to fly to Istanbul from Muscat now have more options to choose from, with flights available on all seven days of the week. In a bid to increase passenger movement between the two cities, the Turkish Airlines has strengthened the frequency of its flights to and from Muscat. Flights depart from Muscat at 1:20am local time on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, landing in Istanbul just after 6:00am. People looking to return to Muscat from Istanbul can also catch the evening flight on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday, which departs at 6:30pm, and arrives in Oman 20 minutes past mid-

night. Another flight operates on Thursdays and Sundays, departing just after 8am from Muscat, and landing shortly before 1pm. The return flight takes off at 1:15 in the morning and arrives in Oman a few minutes after 7pm. "Flying to more countries than any other carrier, Turkish Airlines has increased the frequency of flights from Muscat to Istanbul from five to seven flights a week, as of December 15, 2021, thereby offering more choice and convenience," said a statement from the airline. "These additional flights will further improve connectivity between the two cities, and over 330 destinations in 128 countries, spanning five continents served by Turkish Airlines from its hub at Istanbul Airport," added the airline.

12% yet to get jab

"There are, however, in some countries, people who are against vaccinations who behave in a typical manner associated with them," explained Al Saidi, as he added that was aware of people in the health sector who opposed vaccinations, with some 12 per cent of the population having not received their jabs so far. Reiterating the need for precautions to be adhered to seriously, the Supreme Committee also issued a statement along the same lines. "Due to the leniency shown by some members of the community in adhering to the decisions and measures installed to halt the

further spread of the pandemic, while holding social events, the Supreme Committee has decided to ban marriage ceremonies and condolence meetings organized in mosques, meeting halls, or any other public setting," said the statement. Measures people are required to follow include getting fully vaccinated, wearing a face mask, observing social distancing, and operating events only at the maximum permissible capacity. Public organisations concerned with upholding these measures will also take legal action if needed against those who violated these regulations.

UNITED NATIONS

UN welcomes Oman's positive role in tackling the crisis in Yemen



NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman and the United Nations (UN) recently held a meeting during which they reviewed developments of the situation in the Yemeni Republic. The meeting took place at the offices of Oman's Permanent Delegation to the UN here. Oman's delegation at the meeting was headed by its Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dr. Mohammed bin Awadh Al Hassan, while David Grisley, the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs in Yemen, represented the international organisation. Grisley reiterated the UN's

welcome for the positive role of the Omani government in seeking ways to resolve the Yemeni crisis. The two sides explored means of alleviating the Yemeni people's humanitarian suffering. They stressed the significance of engaging the global community so that it could exert more efforts and stand by the Yemeni people in their predicament. While appreciating the international efforts made so far for the restoration of security and stability in Yemeni, the two sides called for a re-start of negotiations to settle the differences between Yemeni parties by peaceful means. -ONA

OPPORTUNITY

Multiple incentives for investors

Incentives were announced for Al Buraimi, Ibri, Al Mudhaibi and Thumrait industrial cities, as well as any other industrial city that is announced later. Incentives include exemption from rental value for a period of two years for all new projects, followed by a reduction in the rental value for a period of three years by 50 per cent for contracts concluded from 2021 to 2024. The incentives also include reducing fees for IT activity license by 50 per cent for two years from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022 for existing and new projects at Knowledge Oasis Muscat; in addition to not imposing fines for the delay in payments for the years 2020 and 2021. Al Hasani also shed light on upcoming industrial cities planned in Oman. Located about 9 km away from Thumrait Air Base towards Marmul, the four million sqm area of Thumrait Industrial City will focus on mining industries such as gypsum and limestone industries, in addition to light industries related to building materials like cement products. Thumrait Industrial City will also be home to several support services such as vehicle maintenance workshops, cold and dry storage facilities, a fuel station and truck weigh station. Space has also been allocated for commercial projects such as car



showrooms, cafes, rest houses, and workforce accommodation, which will be developed through partnership with the private sector as investment opportunities. Speaking about Ibri Industrial City, Al Hasani said, "Madayn is currently working on the infrastructure works of phase 1 at a cost of approximately OMR9 million in order to develop an area of about three million sqm of infrastructure. This includes asphalt roads with a length of more than 18 km, lighting, water and electricity networks, sewage networks, and communications." "The project is in the preparation stage, and a notice of commencement was issued last October, with final delivery of the infrastructure to be done by mid-2023," he added. "Madayn is also in the process of floating a tender for

the one-stop shop in Ibri Industrial City, which will comprise a fuel station, hotel, public amenities, restaurants, and auto care services. The tender document is in the review stage and is expected to be floated before the end of this year." The CEO of Madayn added that Mahas Industrial City began with its administrative work in the wilayat of Khasab in Musandam in early October this year to offer services to the factories, investors and businessmen localised within. Located on an area of more than 1.5 million sqm, Mahas Industrial City presents competitive incentives to support the economic and social development in the governorate, attract local and regional investments, create job opportunities, and enhance the in-country value of the governorate's natural resources

Al Hasani said, "Work is currently in its final stages to award the tender for road and infrastructure construction of Mahas Industrial City on an area of one million sqm and at a cost of approximately OMR 6 million. The tender is expected to be awarded by the end of December this year and the project implementation to commence by the first quarter of 2022." "This project comprises construction of internal road network, installation of lighting fixtures, construction of a bridge linking the industrial city to the main road, electricity, water and communication networks, water and sewage tanks, construction of the administration building, fencing, and rainwater drainage channels. Madayn has also floated consultancy services tender for Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, which encompasses a detailed design for a total area touching 14 million sqm, and another detailed design for an area of two million sqm. It also includes planning of a number of warehouses and identifying 15 viable investment opportunities that depend on the governorate's natural resources. The tender also consists of the allocation and identification of sectors, namely: logistics, industrial, commercial, food, tourism and construction sectors. In addition to these areas, the tender includes carrying out traffic, topographic, and environmental studies.

Molten Chocolate Café opens new store in Mall of Oman

After successfully opening its first branch in Mall of Muscat in 2019, casual-dining restaurant, Molten Chocolate Café has now launched its second restaurant in Mall of Oman, Muscat. This will be the sixth outlet in the GCC and the second in Oman.

At Molten Chocolate Café the word chocolate brings joy to our hearts and smiles to our faces. A rich and loving chocolate experience is at heart of what makes Molten Chocolate Café the prime destination for chocolate lovers. They believe in emphasising the quality of the ingredients that are used in preparing the desserts. They take pride in offering a great selection of chocolate confectionaries that are not only creative but carefully prepared to achieve the highest standard of quality and

taste. They want you to smile at every touch point from the taste, smell, touch and sight of their finest Belgian chocolate, a rich chocolate made with 100% cocoa butter.

From flavourful breakfast, French crepes filled with delicious confectionary options and Belgian waffles covered in a variety of tempting toppings, to richly indulgent brownies drizzled in chocolate, mesmerising Molten Specials and so much more, the menu choices at Molten Chocolate Café are things of pure, unparalleled joy, capable of putting a smile on anyone's face.

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Prominent Emirati businessman Majid Al Futtaim died on Friday.



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Prominent Emirati businessman Majid Al Futtaim dies | Times of Oman

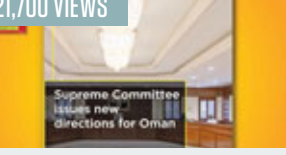
A story on Emirati businessman Majid Al Futtaim reached 67,122 people and had 7,762 engagements on Facebook.



Story on Emirati businessman Majid Al Futtaim

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21,700 VIEWS



Supreme Committee issues new directions for Oman

 Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video on Supreme Committee decisions had 21,700 views

 MOST TWEETED POST ON TWITTER

384 ENGAGEMENTS



Story on Majid Al Futtaim

A story on Emirati businessman Majid Al Futtaim had 384 engagements and 2,567 impressions on Twitter

AMMAN

Oman takes part in meet

AMMAN: The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Health participated yesterday in the meetings of the Executive Office of the Arab Board of Health Specialisations (ABHS), which commenced yesterday, in Amman, Jordan.

The meetings will be chaired by Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Health, Chairman of the Executive Office of the Arab Board of Health Specialisations.

The meetings will discuss a number of issues including the chart of the internal control system of ABHS, the human resources system and enhancement of co-operation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) among other issues. —DNA

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With heartfelt sorrow
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express their deepest condolences to
Al Futtaim family members and our colleagues
at Majid Al Futtaim Group on the sad demise of
the founder and visionary entrepreneur



MAJID AL FUTTAIM

May Allah grant peace to the departed soul.

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We Belong to Allah and to Him We Shall Return

CONDOLENCES

**Muscat Media Group
offer their sincere
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AL FUTTAIM FAMILY
on the sad demise of**



MAJID AL FUTTAIM

***MAY HIS SOUL
REST IN PEACE***

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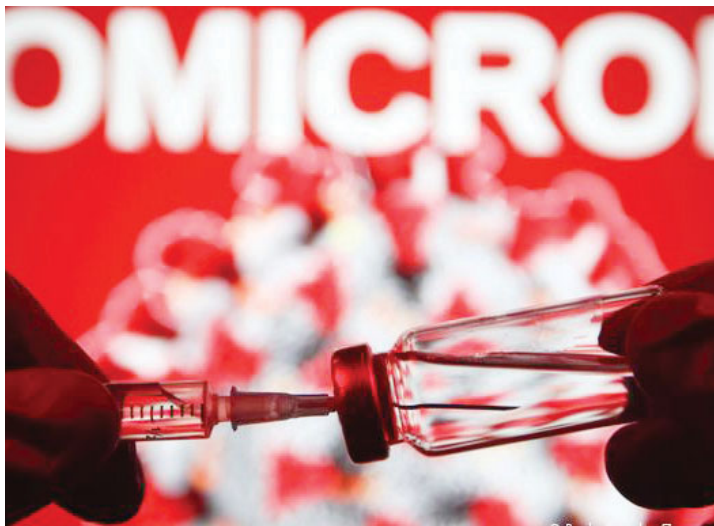


Britain reports 93,045 coronavirus cases in the last 24-hour period

The country also reported a further 111 coronavirus-related deaths

LONDON: Britain reported 93,045 coronavirus cases in the latest 24-hour period, breaking the daily record for the third consecutive day and bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 11,190,354, according to official figures released on Friday.

Another 3,201 Omicron cases have been found in Britain, the biggest daily increase since the COVID-19 variant was detected in the country, taking the total Omicron cases found in the country to 14,909, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said. The coun-



try also reported a further 111 coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 147,048, with 7,611 COVID-19 patients still in the hospital.

The latest data came as a study by Imperial College London showed that the risk of reinfection from Omicron is more than five

times higher than Delta and shows no sign of being milder than the previous coronavirus variant.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Sky News Friday that Omicron is a "very serious threat" and that the country is seeing a "very serious wave coming through."

Meanwhile, Scotland's First

Minister Nicola Sturgeon said Omicron cases have been rising exponentially in Scotland, with cases doubling every two to three days.

England's Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty has advised people to prioritize events that matter to them in the run-up to Christmas. Whitty said the record for daily hospital admissions for COVID could be broken in the coming weeks, and urged people not to "mix with people you don't have to."

More than 89 per cent of people aged 12 and over in Britain have had their first dose of vaccine and more than 81 per cent have received both doses, according to the latest figures.

More than 44 per cent have received booster jabs, or the third dose of a coronavirus vaccine. To bring life back to normal, countries such as Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States have been racing against time to roll out coronavirus vaccines.

ANI

Times OF OMAN

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SHOPPING DISTRICT

27 feared dead in Osaka building fire

OSAKA: At least 27 people are feared dead in a fire that broke out in a building in a shopping district in the western Japanese city of Osaka, fire department officials said on Friday.

Osaka city fire department official Akira Kishimoto said the fire broke out on the fourth floor of the building located in a busy business area near the Kitashinchi train station.

Police said they were investigating the cause of the fire for suspected arson.

The blaze affected 28 people, 27 of whom were found in a state of cardiac arrest, Kishimoto said. At least 23 people have been taken to



nearby hospitals, he added.

Local media footage showed dozens of firefighters outside the building, with the charred interior of the fourth floor being quite visible through broken windows. ANI

TYPHOON RAI

Typhoon Rai leaves trail of devastation in Philippines

MANILA: At least 21 people had died as typhoon Rai battered southern and central Philippines, officials said on Saturday.

Thousands have been displaced and several others are feared dead. The dpa news agency reported, citing local officials, that up to 24 people were killed.

The tropical storm, one of the most powerful of the year, made landfall on Thursday, with winds up to 120 miles an hour.

Rai has weakened since making landfall, being downgraded from a Category 5 storm — the highest classification — to a Category 3.

Typhoon's fury

"We have lost our homes. Walls and roofs were torn and blow off by Odette like paper," Kaka Bag-ao, the governor of Dinagat islands, located in the country's southeast, said on Facebook.

"We have a dwindling supply of food and water," she added.

More than 18,000 military and fire department personnel would



join rescue efforts in the worst-affected regions, Mark Timbal, spokesperson of the national disaster agency told AFP news agency.

Residents salvage what's left of the their damaged homes caused by Typhoon Rai in Cebu city, central Philippines on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021. The powerful winds have greatly damaged towns and cities, with trees uprooted, roofs torn off, and electricity lines cut.

Several villages were flooded in the wake of the storm as well.

The mayor of Mindanao is-

land, the second-largest island of the archipelago, told a local media outlet Friday that the typhoon had ravaged Surigao city, in Mindanao's northeast, for several hours, causing "severe" damage. Surigao city has a population of around 170,000 people.

Presidential spokesperson Karlo Nograles previously said that more than 332,000 people had been evacuated from high-risk villages and around 15,000 of them had sheltered in evacuation centers. -Dw

VACCINE MANDATE

US court reinstates Biden's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for companies

WASHINGTON: A US federal appeals court on Friday reinstated President Joe Biden's COVID-19 vaccine or testing mandate for businesses.

The Biden administration's rule of having workers at private companies either get vaccinated or get tested weekly for the coronavirus from January 4 has sparked deep controversy in the US.

The ruling by the 6th US Court of Appeals in Cincinnati overturned an injunction by a separate appeals court that blocked the Biden administration's COVID mandate from taking effect.

Republican state attorneys general and conservative groups have already said they would appeal Friday's decision to the US Supreme Court.

Biden's vaccine mandate

The mandatory COVID rules that apply to companies with at least 100 workers, first announced by Biden in September, prompted a backlash — especially from Republican-controlled states.

The rules were formulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in early November. The mandate covers more than 80 million

American workers.

Most recently, the Democrat-controlled Senate voted to overturn the vaccine mandate, with Republicans saying they faced immense pressure from businesses worried about having to fire employees who refused the jab. The final vote was 52-48 as two Democratic senators voted with their Republican colleagues to repeal the rule.

What did the court say?

The Cincinnati-based court of appeals, dominated by Republican-appointed judges, voted 2-1 on the issue, which means two judges voted in favor of enforcing the mandate and one against it.

"Given OSHA's clear and exercised authority to regulate viruses, OSHA necessarily has the authority to regulate infectious diseases that are not unique to the workplace," Judge Julia Smith Gibbons said in her majority opinion.

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said she would ask the US Supreme Court to block the order. Friday's decision is "extremely disappointing for Arkansans because it will force them to get the shot or lose their jobs," she said. -Dw

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MATCH RESULTS

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النهائي
مباراة
FINALS

١٨ ديسمبر
DECEMBER 18

تونس
Tunisia 0

الجزائر
Algeria 2

Algeria win after extra time

مباراة تحديد المركز الثالث
THIRD PLACE
MATCH

١٨ ديسمبر
DECEMBER 18

مصر
Egypt 0

قطر
Qatar 0

Qatar win 4 - 5 on penalties

ALGERIA CROWNED ARAB CUP CHAMPIONS

Gautam Viswanathan

DOHA: Extra time goals from Amir Sayoud and Yacine Brahimi saw Algeria crowned the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup champions against neighbours Tunisia in a match punctured by innumerable fouls.

While many were expecting a hotly contested, action-packed affair between two of Africa's top teams, what they witnessed instead was a game pockmarked by fouls and punctuated by regular bookings to players from both teams.

The fouls began as early as the third minute, when Tunisia's Naim Sliti committed the first infraction of the game. Sofiane Bendebka was the first Algerian to commit a foul, just a minute later...one that was immediately followed up by another from Tunisia's Ghaylen Chaalel.

German referee Daniel Siebert attempted to stamp his authority on proceedings by producing the first yellow card of the game in the 13th minute when defender Ilyes Cheti went into the book, the Algerian having committed yet another foul, before Tunisian



Hannibal Mejri responded in kind with one of his own.

Three minutes later, it was the turn of Djamel Belamri to foul the Tunisians, following which the Carthage Eagles did have some control over the game. The Algerians conceded two quick corners to Sliti, sandwiching his 19th minute attempt on goal, before Montassar Talbi conjured up one of his own a moment later.

If this was, however, any indi-

ods to stop the constant interruptions in play: Youssef Msakni and Seifeddine Jaziri both went into the book for Tunisia around the 40th minute mark, as did Algeria's Bounedjah. Mohamed Ben Hmida also saw yellow in the 43rd minute as the fouls continued to rain down.

It was a similar story in the second half that saw no less than seven separate players commit fouls for either side, before Siebert snapped once again and booked Ferjani Sassi for his latest attempts to halt play in the 64th minute.

The game continued to follow similar lines – Sofiane Bendebka was booked after committing two successive fouls in stoppage time – before the referee brought 90 minutes to an end, with both sides – rather predictably – goalless.

Amir Sayoud's goal nine minutes into extra time gave Algeria the lead, and try as they might, Tunisia could not find a way back.

Their hopes of mounting a comeback were extinguished when Brahimi made it 2-0, meaning the 2021 Arab Cup will go to the bigger of the two neighbouring countries.

THIRD PLACE

Qatar add to National Day fervour with third place finish in Arab Cup

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Mohammed Ben Sulayem elected as FIA president

PARIS: Former rally champion Mohammed Ben Sulayem has been elected as Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) President on Friday beating fellow candidate Graham Stoker, as incumbent Jean Todt stepped down after three terms.

Ben Sulayem is a 14-time FIA Middle East Rally Champion. He has won 61 international events from 1983 to 2002 and has held a number of roles in the FIA. He will now fulfill a four-year term

at the head of Formula 1's governing body. The United Arab Emirates' candidate, 60, was Vice President for Sport and Member of the World Motor Sport Council (2008-2013, re-elected in 2017); founder of the FIA AC-TAC region (which includes the Middle East and North African countries); Vice President for Automobile Mobility and Tourism (2013-2017); and Member of the Innovation Fund Steering Committee. -ANI

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hosts Qatar beat Egypt 5-4 on penalties in the game to decide third place at the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup.

Striker Mohamed Sherif and defender Ahmed Hegazi were the unlucky players who missed from the spot for the Pharaohs, one of Africa's best-ranked sides, as five Qatari players scored from the spot, following Hassan Al Haydos' opening miss.

The game, which was played at Stadium 974 in the Qatar capital, Doha, ended goalless after neither team could take the lead in either regulation or extra time.

Qatar's win sees them add to



their celebrations of the country's National Day, which falls on 18 December.

It was late substitute Mohamed Afsha who scored the

Amro Elsoulia went next, and his successful conversion was met in response by Abdelkarim Hassan. With the scores tied at 2-2, towering defender Ahmed Hegazy went next, only to see his spot kick saved. There would be no blushes however, for Ahmed Alaaeldin, who held steady to put Qatar 3-2 up from the spot.

Ahmed Fatouh drew Egypt level to give the African side renewed hope, but Qatar went ahead once again, after Akram Afif also scored from the spot. Akram Tawfik's penalty continued to keep Egypt in the game, but Karim made no mistake for the hosts as he wrapped up the win with the final spot kick.



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TURKISH AIRLINES

RBI CENTRAL BOARD MEET
Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) met in Lucknow on Friday to review the evolving domestic and global economic situation. This was the 592nd meeting of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



OPEC FUND APPROVES \$352MN
The Opec Fund for International Development (Opec Fund) has approved \$352 million for sustainable development operations across the world at the organisation's 178th Session of the Governing Board, held virtually.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Moosa Al Jadidi appointed as CEO of Oman Housing Bank

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of Oman Housing Bank has announced the appointment of Moosa Al Jadidi as the chief executive officer of the bank.

Al Jadidi is a seasoned banker with extensive industry knowledge armed with more than two decades of experience in the banking and financial industry across Oman and the GCC.

As an award-winning banker, he is renowned for having expert knowledge of both conventional and Islamic Banking, notably retail banking, corporate credit, wealth management and private banking investments coupled with his focus on continuous improvement and exemplary performance. He is also an expert in digital customer experience and strategic operational management and planning.

Prior to joining Oman Housing Bank, Moosa Al Jadidi was the Chief Operating Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank.

Al Jadidi has extensive international and regional banking experience as he previously worked for the Royal Bank of Canada, the European Financial Group Bank as Vice President – Global Private Banking, Dubai Bank as Vice President – International Business Development and several local banks such as Bank Muscat and National Bank of Oman. His professional journey has shaped Moosa professionally to become a key player in the development of the bank's financial markets business and driving the growth of assets and net profits.

Al Jadidi has a Master's degree



in Business Administration from the University of Bedfordshire & is a graduate of the Senior Executive Program from London Business School in the UK. He is also an associate of the Canadian Institute of Bankers and a certified private banker.

Speaking on this announcement, Salaam Said Al Shaksy, Chairman of the Board of Oman Housing Bank said, "On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Housing Bank and members of the executive management, I am pleased to welcome Moosa Al Jadidi as CEO of Oman Housing Bank and wish him the best of luck and success in his new position and look forward to seeing the enhancements that he will bring to the organisation."

"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Adnan Haider Darwish, the former CEO of Oman Housing Bank, for his hard work and the great effort that he put towards the bank's objectives in the past years."

MSME number in Oman rises by 27.8%

The total number of micro, small and medium enterprises registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority at the end of October increased to 60,340

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in Oman has increased by 27.8 per cent by October end.

The total number of micro, small and medium enterprises registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority at the end of October increased by 27.8 per cent to 60,340, compared to 47,220 during the same period in 2020, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Muscat Governorate ranked first in the number of micro, small and medium enterprises with 20,422 establishments, an increase of 29.2 per cent, followed



by the North Al Batinah Governorate with a total of 9,508 establishments, an increase of 27.5 per cent, while Al Dakhiliyah Governorate ranked third with 7,382 establishments, an increase of 23.8 per cent, while in the Dhofar Governorate it amounted to 5088 institutions, an increase of 29.1 per cent.

The total number of establishments in the Governorate of South Al Batinah increased to 4,613, an

increase of 30.9 per cent, by the end of October 2021, compared to the same period last year, while the total number of establishments in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate reached 3,973 establishments. In the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, the number of micro-enterprises reached and small and medium-sized 3,624 institutions, an increase of 30.5 per cent.

In Al Dhahirah Governorate,

the total amounted to 3,348 establishments, an increase of 21.3 per cent. In the Buraimi Governorate, it amounted to 1,282 establishments, an increase of 26.3 per cent. The number in Al Wusta Governorate reached 801 establishments, an increase of 31.1 per cent.

The number in Musandam Governorate reached 299 establishments at the end of October 2021, an increase of 64.3 per cent

BIGGEST AIRCRAFT

Airbus A380: The end of a multibillion-dollar dream

DUBAI: Sir Tim Clark, the president of Emirates airlines, had intended to be in Hamburg this week to attend a historic event — the last delivery of an Airbus A380. It's the 251st from the series, and the last one ever built.

A total of 123 have been ordered by the carrier from Dubai. Without all these orders, the programme would have been shut down years ago. Instead, it was announced in 2019 that production would end in 2021.

But the 72-year-old Clark, an industry legend, has not had it easy with his favourite aircraft. Nobody believed as steadfastly in the A380 as he. Clark had reckoned early on that the world's biggest aircraft, with room for up to 615 passengers in the Emirates version, was tailor-made for its business model of connecting the entire world — via Dubai.

Initially, he even went so far as to get cabin mock-ups, constructed at the airline's own expense, to show Airbus that it was possible to install two showers in the front of the upper deck, exactly where he wanted them.

Only later did Airbus and its engine manufacturers reject the idea to develop an improved version with more efficient engines. It's these four thirsty engines that made the A380 uneconomical for most operators long ago.

No celebrations planned
Clark was not able to celebrate the final A380 delivery with the



FUTURE OF TRAVEL: The last Airbus A380 has been delivered, bringing the programme to an end. Once seen as the future of travel, the world's biggest aircraft turned into a flop. But for the plane-maker, it was still worth the effort. - **dw**

fanfare he had hoped for. Airbus rejected the idea of celebrating the end of a programme, and then the pandemic situation in Germany rendered useless all efforts toward an event.

"I said to Airbus' CEO Guillaume Faury: 'This thing has got real life and legs for us, this is not a funeral, just the last of these great airplanes,'" Clark told DW. "And we will fly the A380 as a very potent aircraft until the mid-2030s, so we've got 14 to 15 years before we retire them."

But now the last A380 will be transferred unceremoniously on Thursday from the Airbus factory in Hamburg-Finkenwerder to Dubai. This will give Emirates a total of 118 service-ready A380s,

about half of which are currently in deep storage waiting for better times for the commercial aviation industry. It seems that the pandemic was the last straw for giant aircraft. Besides the end of the A380, the Boeing 747 program will also stop production in 2022 after more than half a century.

Giant aircraft back in fashion?

In the fall of 2021, however, passenger numbers shot up so rapidly that some airlines were quickly able to deploy their A380 fleets. These aircraft were then able to solve short-term capacity problems.

It gave giant aircraft a new lease on life. British Airways, for example, has been flying four of

its dozen A380s since November. Singapore Airlines, having been part of the giant's world premiere in 2007, also put some of its biggest airliners back in service on the London-Sydney route, among other destinations.

At Qatar Airways, the unexpected reversal of fortunes for the A380 represented a U-turn. At one point, the company operated 10 of them. But in May, Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker publicly declared: "Looking back, it was the biggest mistake we did, to purchase A380s."

"We grounded the A380 and never wanted to fly it again, because it is a very inefficient aircraft in fuel burn and emissions, and I don't think there will be a market for it in

the foreseeable future," he added.

"I know the passengers love it, it's a very quiet and smart aeroplane, but the damage it does to the environment should be a priority and not the comfort," he said.

But after a shortage of aircraft cropped up due to problems with the more modern Airbus A350s, the CEO announced in late September that "[u]nfortunately we have no alternative but to fly the A380 again." Since November, five of Qatar's grey giants have taken to the skies once again.

Money down the drain?

In total, the A380 programme cost an estimated €30 billion (\$33.9 billion) — and most of that money came from European taxpayers. But why was it a flop, at least in economic terms?

"We were blindsided by the engine manufacturers," said John Leahy, a legendary Airbus aircraft salesman now in retirement, in an interview.

The producers had said they would come up with improved engine systems. Yet those engines were developed secretly and deployed first in the smaller and more efficient 737 Dreamliner from rival Boeing.

Beyond those factors, the main problem was the long delay in bringing the A380 to market. This delay painfully demonstrated how Airbus partners in Germany and France were not on the same page. At the time, they worked on differ-

ent and incompatible IT systems.

SARS and a financial crisis

When the A380 finally went into service in 2008, that timing was unfortunate: the SARS pandemic of 2002-2003 was followed by the global financial crisis that led to a collapse in demand for big aircraft.

The market at that point demanded smaller, more efficient aircraft that were capable of flying nonstop long-haul routes that were economical, even from secondary airports.

The smaller Boeing 787 and Airbus A350 ended up as the aircraft providing direct flights between cities like Düsseldorf and Tokyo, or Munich and Bogota. Passengers were happy to avoid big-hub airports, and Airbus lost out with its mass transportation mammoths.

Industry experts and Airbus remain sure of one thing: Despite it being an economic failure, the effort to build the A380 wasn't entirely in vain. Most importantly, Airbus had been forced to act as a corporate entity for the first time, and the learning effect was paramount.

"All the fiasco around the A380 made the A350 definitely the best airplane programme we've ever had," said John Leahy, once the company's most senior salesman.

The manufacturer was able to finally get rid of "the many little kingdoms" in partner countries. But "spending €25 or €30 billion on the A380 just to get that education seems like a very inefficient way," Leahy said. - **dw**

 MARKET

Opec Fund approves \$352mn for global development operations

Members of the Governing Board also reviewed several milestones achieved as part of the Opec Fund Strategic Framework 2030

VIENNA: The Opec Fund for International Development (Opec Fund) has approved \$352 million for sustainable development operations across the world at the organisation's 178th session of the governing board, held virtually.

Members of the Governing Board also reviewed several milestones achieved as part of the Opec Fund Strategic Framework 2030, including inaugural credit ratings for the organisation from S&P Global (AA; Positive Outlook) and Fitch Ratings (AA+; Stable Outlook). The Strategic Framework 2030 is designed to diversify the Opec Fund's financial resources

and deliver greater development impact for partner countries.

The Opec Fund's new financing will support projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina (\$27.15 million); Côte d'Ivoire (\$60 million); Dominican Republic (\$60 million); Ghana (\$20 million); Kenya (\$40 million); Lesotho (\$19 million); Malawi (\$15 million); Nicaragua (\$23 million); Rwanda (\$18 million) and Turkmenistan (\$45 million).

The Opec Fund's new financing will also support a \$25 million private-sector operation to support infrastructure projects in selected Latin America and Caribbean countries. -WAM



FINANCIAL RESOURCES: The Strategic Framework 2030 is designed to diversify the Opec Fund's financial resources and deliver greater development impact for partner countries. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

SURVEY

China's e-commerce logistics activities contract

BEIJING: China's e-commerce logistics sector reported moderate contraction in November, according to an industry survey jointly conducted by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing and e-commerce giant JD.com.

The survey showed that the index tracking e-commerce logistics

activities stood at 109.5 points in November, edging down 2 points from the previous month.

Sporadic resurgence

The sporadic resurgence of domestic COVID-19 cases, as well as snowstorms and extremely cold weather in some areas, affected

the efficiency of logistics transport, transfer and distribution, according to the survey.

It also showed that rural e-commerce demand decreased last month, with the sub-index tracking e-commerce logistics in these regions shrinking 2.6 points from October. -Xinhua

GROSS MERCHANDISE VOLUME

China's Alibaba sets \$100bn target for Southeast Asian e-commerce division

SHANGHAI: Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba has set a target for gross merchandise volume of \$100 billion in gross merchandise volume (GMV), the total sum of purchasing transactions, for its Southeast Asian marketplace Lazada.

The goal, which was shared with investors on Thursday and later in a public online presentation, ups the ante for the company, which entered the region via acquisition in 2016 and competes fiercely with rivals, Reuters reported.

Lazada generated \$21 billion in GMV from September 2020 to the same month in 2021, according to the presentation. It also hopes to serve 300 million customers, roughly double its current count.

By comparison, Sea Ltd (SE.N)'s Shopee, the market leader in the region, generated \$35.4 billion in GMV for the full calendar 2020 year.



The division ranks itself the third-top player in Southeast Asia, behind MercadoLibre Inc (MELLO) and Shopee, according to the presentation.

Lazada has undergone top personnel changes since Alibaba acquired it, with two CEOs stepping down before current CEO Chun Li took the helm in 2020.

Earlier this month Alibaba announced an executive reshuffling

that saw Jiang Fan, who previously led the company's main Taobao and Tmall divisions, appointed to head up a newly formed international digital commerce unit that will include Lazada and AliExpress, the company's e-commerce site targeting parts of Europe and South America.

Alibaba concluded its two-day summit for investors on Friday. -BNA

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RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

RBI Central Board reviews evolving economic challenges

LUCKNOW: Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) met in Lucknow on Friday to review the evolving domestic and global economic situation. This was the 592nd meeting of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

"The Board reviewed the current domestic and global economic situation, evolving challenges and remedial measures," the RBI said in a statement.

The board also reviewed the half-yearly income statement of the Reserve Bank of India for the half-year ended September 30, 2021.

The Board also discussed various areas of operations of the RBI including the functioning of the local boards, activities of select Central Office Departments and the draft report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India, 2020-21.

Private crypto currencies

"The Board also discussed various aspects relating to central bank digital currency and private crypto currencies," the RBI said. -ANI

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Indian Male with +25 years of Experience in Supply Chain, Purchase, Sales & Distribution, MIS, Inventory & Credit Control seeks placement.

CONTACT 94619442

FINANCE

MBA, Mcom, ICWA (inter) 21 years experience in Oman working as Manager in Business / Accounts / Finance / Operations. Looking for Senior positions in Business / Finance and Operations.

CONTACT: 96211885

CIVIL ENGINEER

B.Tech graduate with 1+ years of experience working as a Site Engineer & Quantity Surveyor. Proficient in Quantity Survey, Quality Control, 2D Drafting, 3D Modelling & Project Management. Currently in Oman. Available to join shortly.

92408363
sawad.mohammed@outlook.com

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Indian, 23, (B.E Mechanical), fresher PG Diploma in Oil and Gas Piping and Pipeline, QA/QC, NDT, looking for suitable job.

Contact: 79056363, 99501396
Email: rejiakhil111@gmail.com

OMANI HSE

Bachelor's degree in BA & IOSH. 10 years experience in HSE and O&M.

Contact +968 95555865

FINANCE

Indian Male, Manager Accounts, M.Com with over 20 years of experience in Oman and India, in Accounts, Finance and Software implementation is looking for an immediate opening in senior level post. NOC available.

GSM: 92334161

Finance & Accounts

Indian Female (MBA Finance) having more than 15 years of Experience in Oman in Manufacturing and Trading company seeks suitable Senior Position in Finance and Accounts.

Contact # 94953826 / 92824146

OMANI HR/PRO

Omani, 15 yrs experience, PRO, Relation development, Labour & Crime law, HR & Time Management. Fluent in English, Arabic & Hindi seeks Part Time job.

Contact 97264447

SALES / PURCHASE

Indian Male(31), MBA-Finance, 7 years experience as Sales Procurement Specialist, specialized in electrical & lighting for residential and commercial projects, Seeking suitable position. D/L available.

Email: gaisebukhari@gmail.com
Contact: 94560161

JOB WANTED

ENGINEER

Mechanical/MEP engineer, Indian male,26yrs with 2 yrs experience, looking suitable job. Contact 79974535. Email: safeeralipk7@gmail.com

Graduate engineer having 20 years' experience in project supervision & construction management with reputable consultant/contractor specialized in Sezad Duqm projects seeks immediate placement. Contact 93475252

B.Tech (Mechanical) 5 years experience in HVAC and facility management with designing, drafting, mechanical systems commercial and residential buildings, hotels, hospitals looking for suitable job with NOC. Contact +968 79572775 Email OWais1313316@gmail.com

Quantity Surveyor, (Srilankan) HND(UK) , BSc QS (Reading) 4 years' Experience in Building Projects (Civil & MEP). Looking for a Suitable Placement in Oman. Contact 78149384 Email: tmsafnas@gmail.com

Indian male (23)/Mechanical Engineer/ 1.5 years' experience in design and manufacturing/valid Oman D/L. Contact 71502536

Indian Female (B.Tech IT) on family visa actively having 7 years experience in Client services. Looking for suitable jobs. Contact 94266838, Email: ganesh.shana@gmail.com

B.E. Civil Resident Engineer 35 Yrs. Exp. 12Yrs.in Oman & 3 yrs. in Qatar rest in India. Infrastructure mainly Roads, Bridges Utilities & STP works. Seeking in Consultant firm. WhatsApp No. +91 6385754610 Email: mrk6409@gmail.com

B.E.Mechanical Engineer, 3yrs experience in India for pipe line. Presently in Oman. Contact 71089758/ Whatsapp +918962292915 Email aadilahmadrits@gmail.co

ENGINEER

Indian, 23, Civil Engineer, fresher with Oman D/L, looking for suitable job. Contact 95257524

B.E. Civil Project Engineer/Project coordinator (INDIAN) with 8+ years of experience. Qualified Project management (QS & QC) with a knowledge of MS office, Autocad, MS project & estimation. NOC is available, can join immediately. Contact 97389893, mohammadshkhaermmlr@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer 4 yrs experience in factories and car maintenance with DL seeks job. Contact 93521100.

B.Tech Civil Engineer over 20 years experience looking for manager level job. can run medium size company individually. Contact 98036290, cmsarasu@gmail.com

Quantity Surveyor Indian 30 yrs. Experience. Strong Exposure in Contracts & QS activities in all type of construction field (Especially in Oil & Gas Projects). Mob & WhatsApp No. 7905 3616

B.Tech Electrical Engineer, currently residing in oman, experienced based on project management, site supervision/renewable energy sector seeking for suitable placement. Contact (mob) 79376313, (wsp) +91 8943932532, Email: adeebalr@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer, Male, 24yrs (Fresher) with diploma certification course in MEP, HVAC currently in Oman looking to work in any Engineering feild. Contact +968 79812894, 99177894 Email: mohdsawadkpl@gmail.com

M. Tech Structural Engineer with 14 years experience in Oman with ministries & consultants seeks suitable placement. NOC & D/L available. Contact 92497704 Email: fahadca@gmail.com

Civil Engineer, Indian, B.E Civil, having 11+ yrs Exp. Looking for a suitable position, valid GCC D/L, Currently in Oman. Contact 95085270 Email: fasee.syed@gmail.com

SALES/MARKETING

Sales operations coordinator B-com with E-commerce & Various other certifications, 5 years of Dubai and 2 years of Muscat experience, with refined skill set, Looking for new challenges. Contact +968 9676 6702 E-mail: ilyas3299@gmail.com

Indian B.E Civil 3yrs experience available in Oman with NOC.Looking for Sales/Purchase job. Immediate joining GSM 72651777

Indian, 24 yrs experience in consumer electronics company in Oman, looking for a suitable position. NOC available. Can join immediately. Contact 91163640

12 years experienced person in FMC6 industry, looking for a suitable placement. Holding valid Oman D/L. Contact 92428081

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

7 yrs of Experience in Procurement (Heavy Machineries) plus Accounting, Administration,Logistic Support, Mechanical engineering. Contact +968 93545741

Indian Female (45) - B.Ed Graduate. Primary, middle school teacher.Have 6 years exp. in CBSC School, Kerala. Looking an opportunity in Muscat Indian School. Contact Nos: 968-98378518 / 91 9495442210. Email: vkalluvilayil@hotmail.com

7 yrs exp in purchase, logistics, warehouse/inventory and 10 yrs exp in commercial operations. Having D/L, Contact 98531104

Purchase, Procurement, Logistics & Stores professional, more than 25 years experience having very good knowledge in Construction, Mechanical & Commercial materials, looking for immediate openings. NOC & DL available. Contact 99276414. Email: shettigarthulsidhar@gmail.com

Warehouse Incharge & inventory controller having 6 years experience with Oman D/L seeks suitable job. Contact 97915240



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NURSERY RHYMES MAY TEACH THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFE PLAY

According to a study, nursery rhymes can teach the importance of safe play and occupational hazards to help both young and old reduce their chances of head injuries. The study has been published in the 'BMJ Journal'. Declan Patton at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Centre for Injury Research and Prevention and Minds Matter Concussion Programme analysed seven popular nursery rhymes involving or suspected of involving fall-related head injuries.

The injured parties included humans of various ages, five little monkeys, and an anthropomorphic egg.

For example, Humpty Dumpty, who famously had a great fall from a wall, had inspired tests on chicken eggs to study the biomechanics of head injuries in humans "because of the similarities between the two in shape and physical properties."

Meanwhile, Jack and Jill might provide insights into sex-based differences in head injuries and the use of protective equipment to reduce skull fractures. "Jack's head injury and unnecessary treatment with vinegar and brown paper might have been avoided if he had worn a helmet," noted Patton.

Rock-a-Bye Baby highlighted the role of height and impact surface on the likelihood of head injury after a fall. Patton warned that as cradles are not designed, tested, and certified for falls - from treetops or elsewhere - its crashworthiness is unknown and could be inadequate. As such, he said consumer products for children "should only be used for their intended purpose according to the manufacturer's instructions."

Falls from standing height, as in Ring a Ring o' Roses, comprised a quarter of fall-related head injuries in those younger than 6 years. Paton said that children singing and dancing to this

rhyme "should be at low risk of head injury, but they ought to perform it on energy-absorbing surfaces for extra safety."

Falls from springy surfaces like beds — as in Five Little Monkeys — are also common. Patton suggested that, while trampolines continue to be an important cause of head injury in children, and should be used under adult supervision, "one of the best injury prevention methods is to avoid monkeying around."

Understanding the mechanism of falls can give a good idea as to the type of head injury that might occur, explained Patton.

For example, in Goosey Goosey Gander, an old man is taken "by his left leg" and thrown "down the stairs." Although the age of the assaulted man is unclear, Patton noted that nearly half of adults aged 65 or older who fall down stairs sustain a head injury.

In It's Raining, it's Pouring, it's likely that the old man injured his head falling out of bed. While the

effectiveness of bed rails and bed alarms is questionable, Patton said that advances in-home monitoring technologies "might have helped to prevent the old man's fall or at least detect the incident."

These nursery rhymes had the potential to offer invaluable insights into the biomechanics of head injuries — and provided an opportunity for parents and children to discuss how best to prevent injuries, wrote Patton.

He suggested that authors of future nursery rhymes "should bear in mind the risk factors associated with head injuries, especially when their characters might behave recklessly like jumping off a springy bed; might fall off a wall or down from a treetop; or are thrown down the stairs by unknown assailants."

"In this way readers both young and old can be taught the importance of safe play and occupational hazards and thereby reduce their chances of a head injury," he concluded. -ANI



SPORTS



MUSCAT: Oman Sail's 2021 sailing season came to a close with the successful hosting of the Youth World Sailing Championships, the Oman Sailing Festival and a new world record set at the beach clean-up event at Barceló Resort Mussanah.

A fleet of 433 sailors from more than 60 nations competed in 11 events with blue skies and winds of 8 - 10 knots rounded off five days of world-class competition. Away from the competition, Oman Sail has set a Guinness World Records™ title for the Most Nationalities Collecting Litter. Participants at the Youth Sailing World Championships, including sailors, Oman Sail officials, staff at Barceló Mussanah Resort and members from the OMRAN Group broke a new record with 73 nationalities collecting over 344kg of litter at Mussanah public beach on 15 December.

Dr Khamis Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said, "This has been an excellent end to a momentous season for sailing in Oman. The successful delivery of a series of World and Asian Championships held in Mussanah, the return of Sailing Arabia - The Tour, and the nationwide Sailing Festival, has seen some of the very best sailors in the world compete on these shores and inspire communities and future sailors across the country. Setting a new world record for our commitment to the environment underlines Oman Sail's dedication to sustainability and preserving our beautiful coastline for generations to come. We hope that the impact will be felt in increased environmental awareness and sporting prowess in the future."

He added, "We would like to thank the Ministry of Culture,



Sport and Youth, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and the support from Oman TV and Oman TV Sport, the Royal Navy of Oman, the Royal Oman Police, OMRAN, the technical delegates, race management and officials, and boat manufacturers, as well as all of our strategic partners. Oman Sail is certainly proud to host a spectacular event and welcome more than 1000 to mark the 50th edition of this prestigious sailing championships, the first to be held in Middle East."

This season has seen the eyes of the global sailing community turn towards the Sultanate as Oman Sail hosted the 2021 Asian Wind-surfing Championships, Mus-sanah Race Week, the 2021 49er

49er FX & Nacra 17 Asian Championships and the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 World Championships from 16-21 November. Sailing Arabia - The Tour 2021, set entirely within Oman returned this year while the 2021 ICLA Radial World Championships ran concurrently in Mussanah, from 29 November to 6 December 2021.

The latest stop in the Oman Sailing Festival was also at the Barceló Mussanah during the Youth World Sailing Championships, where more than 160 visitors of all ages took the opportunity to try sailing and windsurfing for free. The festival also featured a market showcasing local products designed and made by Omani entrepreneurs. To date, the Oman

Sailing Festival has introduced over 2000 people to the sport, with many returning to take lessons at Oman Sail's Sailing Schools in Sur, Marina Bandar Al Rowdha and Al Mouj Muscat.

The Oman Sailing Festival continues in January with two more stops. Hawana Salalah from 6-8 January 2022 and Duqm from 11-15 January 2022. The festival is proudly supported by platinum sponsor OQ, gold sponsors Oman Air and Salsabeel, and environmental partners Be'ah and the Environment Society of Oman. To pre-register for Oman Sailing Festival events, please visit www.omansail.com/sailing-festival-activities or search #SailWithUs on social media.



ROUND-UP

2022 Renault Koleos: Built to demand attention and make heads turn

Offering off-road capability with its all-wheel drive transmission, Renault Koleos stands out with its assertive exterior design and enhanced interior comfort



MUSCAT: The Renault Koleos 2022 is the perfect choice for those looking for a spacious SUV with elegant styling or a companion for adventurous off-road trips. The incredible model is engineered to demand attention and make heads turn. Offering off-road capability with its all-wheel drive transmission, Renault Koleos

stands out with its assertive exterior design and enhanced interior comfort. Featuring a powerful and efficient new engine and more on-board technologies Renault Koleos fully embodies the values of the top of the Renault line-up. The overall profile of the 2022 Koleos appear solid and athletic because of the well-defined edges. A great combination of power and refinement, the Koleos makes its

presence felt with large shoulders and muscular side panels that are further enhanced by a robust front-end; broad, smart-looking tires; and a distinctly large wheelbase. A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, “Renault’s first SUV the Koleos remains a favourite among customers and those looking for something different, which speaks

volumes about the innovativeness that the car was built on. With its athletic profile, robust front end, roomy seats, taut lines underscored with chrome, Renault Koleos allows owners to take their journey with confidence.” The all-mode 4x4-i transmission results in a car that promises owners all the power and comfort they would require on the road. The engine can be switched between two- and four-wheel driving giving drivers the liberty and flexibility to choose their own experience. The car is engineered to mirror the comfort of being home, with spacious legspace, ventilated memory seats, a breathable cabin. With a choice of colours for the seats, owners can choose what defines them the best — for a roomier feeling, one can opt for lighter shades, while darker ones can be picked for more assertive looks. The 2022 Koleos also comes with all-new black titanium trims that replace its predecessor’s wooden trims. The car’s ambient lighting, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto connectivity, R-LINK 2 all make for a memorable drive each time. The 2022 Renault Koleos is certainly a

notch above when it comes to contemporary SUVs that set out to offer a bit of everything to cater to all customers, no matter their drives. The 2022 Renault Koleos also comes with additional features, such as rich acoustics with the BOSE audio system, lighting options, multimedia, navigation, Bluetooth and driving assistance systems in addition to easy park assist. Renault Koleos is loved for its charismatic, features rich and packed with safety attributes. If you are looking for a spacious SUV with elegant styling and unparalleled four-wheel drive technology, Renault Koleos is the car to buy. Rafeeq Mustafa from Sohar says, “Renault Koleos particularly amazes car enthusiasts who value distinctive design, advanced technology, high reliability and superior performance. Koleos exudes elegance with its strong lines and signature Renault design cues. The carefully sculpted bonnet on the Koleos flows seamlessly from the stylish, chrome-highlighted grille to the sweeping taillight design.” Nazil Al Amri loves to take Renault Koleos through beaten track. “It’s all mode 4x4-i technology,

swap between 2WD mode, Auto mode and 4x4 (lock) mode is really impressive. It offers an ideal balance of torque between the front and rear wheels for perfect grip in all circumstances,” he says. Amit Sharma from Muscat calls Renault Koleos an outstanding car. He says, “I particularly like its blind spot warning with flank protection warning, auto park assists and remote start engine with timer option. Koleos extends a variety of features that are among the most capable in the market.” Aamir Zedjali loves the model for its great features. “Renault Koleos has a 2,705 mm wheelbase – for a total vehicle length of 4,673mm – counts amongst the longest in the class and allows Koleos to boast record-breaking interior space to position itself as a D-segment SUV,” he says. The brand’s easy trunk access and hand-free function has impressed Buthaina Balushi. She says, “It is very practical when your hands are full when returning from office or shopping. With a sensor located under the bumper, all you need is a simple gesture with your foot to open the boot with ease.”

ADVENTURE-READY

Own Nissan X-Terra with added benefits

MUSCAT: As part of its new promotion Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), has launched a special offer on Nissan X-Terra which empowers owners to go anywhere and beyond boundaries. The offer includes 3 years/60,000 km periodic maintenance service, free first-year insurance, free first-year registration and more. The offer, which is available on all models purchased for personal use, will go on till January 9, 2022. A spokesperson for Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, “Designed for adventure and the outdoors with a roomy interior and advanced technologies Nissan X-Terra ensures safety and comfort. It is equipped with an active safety suite, which comprises blind-spot warning, lane departure warning, intelligent driver alert, and intelligent forward collision warning.



The SUV also has multiple airbags and a digital rear-view mirror. “The X-Terra is a catalyst for new experiences, allowing owners to connect with the people in their

lives. The vehicle delivers a robust four-wheel-drive system, including a four-wheel lock, brake limited slip differential and electronic locking rear differential – while

leading the class in interior room and comfort.” Customers of Nissan X-Terra can enjoy free periodic maintenance service package for three years/ 60,000 km. This offer is valid for 10,000 km service intervals. Customers of Nissan X-Terra can enjoy free insurance in Oman & UAE for first year for private registration. Nissan X-Terra customers can enjoy free registration for the first year. Customers of X-Terra can avail low EMI rate of OMR 206 as part of the offer. EMIs are calculated on the basis of 20% down payment and 3.25% rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure. Powering the X-Terra is a 2.5-liter four-cylinder petrol engine with a seven-speed automatic transmission. The petrol engines deliver 124kW /165 hp and 241Nm of torque that ensures an exciting drive of speed and acceleration.

LUXURY 100 AWARD



Alfardan Motors wins ‘luxury automobile dealer of the year’

MUSCAT: Alfardan Motors, the exclusive importer of Ferrari and Maserati vehicles in Oman, has won the ‘luxury automobile dealer of the year’ at the 7th edition of The Luxury 100, Signature magazine’s annual luxury list and awards, held recently at the Majan Ballroom at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel. A spokesperson for Alfardan said, “We are delighted to receive

this recognition for our dealership. The Luxury 100 celebrates brands, people, and exemplary services that invoke passion, desire, exclusivity. Our commitment to excellence in the automotive industry has been further underlined by this award. Our company will continue in its quest to be extraordinary. Alfardan Motors is always committed to providing premium quality service to its customers.”

25TH BATCH

Majan University College holds graduation ceremony

MUSCAT: Majan University College, with 26 successful years in higher education to its credit, graduated its 25th batch of graduands. This year over 880 graduands of the 2019-2020 academic year were conferred their awards. The ceremony, held over a span of two days with two ceremonies each day, was conducted in strict compliance with Covid 19 measures. The ceremony was held in the state-of-the-art auditorium in Al-Maha Building, Majan’s newest edifice. The procession of Majan’s Academic staff, beautifully clad in their academic gowns, saw the start of the occasion closely followed by the recitation of the Holy Quran. The Dean & CEO of Majan University College, Dr Maha Kobeil delivered her welcome address by first appreciating the vision of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and looking to the future under the new leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said. She felicitated the graduands and applauded their steadfastness



and courage in facing head on the challenges of the preceding year when their studies were plagued with the Covid 19 pandemic. She urged them to remain resilient, adaptable and open to learning and most importantly embrace change. She also appreciated the relentless efforts and sacrifices made by parents and families in supporting their wards. Acknowledgements and appreciation were also rendered for the

support of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Majan’s main academic partner institution, the University of Bedfordshire, UK. Similarly, via video telecast, Professor Rebecca Bunting, Vice Chancellor and CEO of the University of Bedfordshire, UK commended the graduands for their zeal, hardwork and dedication in spite of all odds. She called on them to be bold, ambitious for

themselves as well as to be change-makers, making positive contributions to the Nation. She also called on them to extend gratitude to their families and to the excellent support staff at Majan. Furthermore, to the Dean and staff of Majan, Dr Bunting expressed her great respect and trust in the Majan Team, referring to the decades old partnership.. as still striving with new projects for collaboration and growth.



The graduation Speech in Arabic was read eloquently by Naama Yaqoob Al Qarni, reminiscing of students’ times in Majan. The English Speech on the other hand was rendered by Abdulsalam Mabrook Al Rashdi. Majan continues on its path to achieving its mission and vision with the periodic review of its systems and processes, and continued dedication to the release of new innovations, programmes



and pathways. The most recent development is the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Majan in 2020 with the University of Bradford, UK for academic collaboration, research, curriculum development and staff exchange towards an executive Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme. For the elated graduates, the just concluded ceremonies were filled with joy, laughter and lots of selfies.

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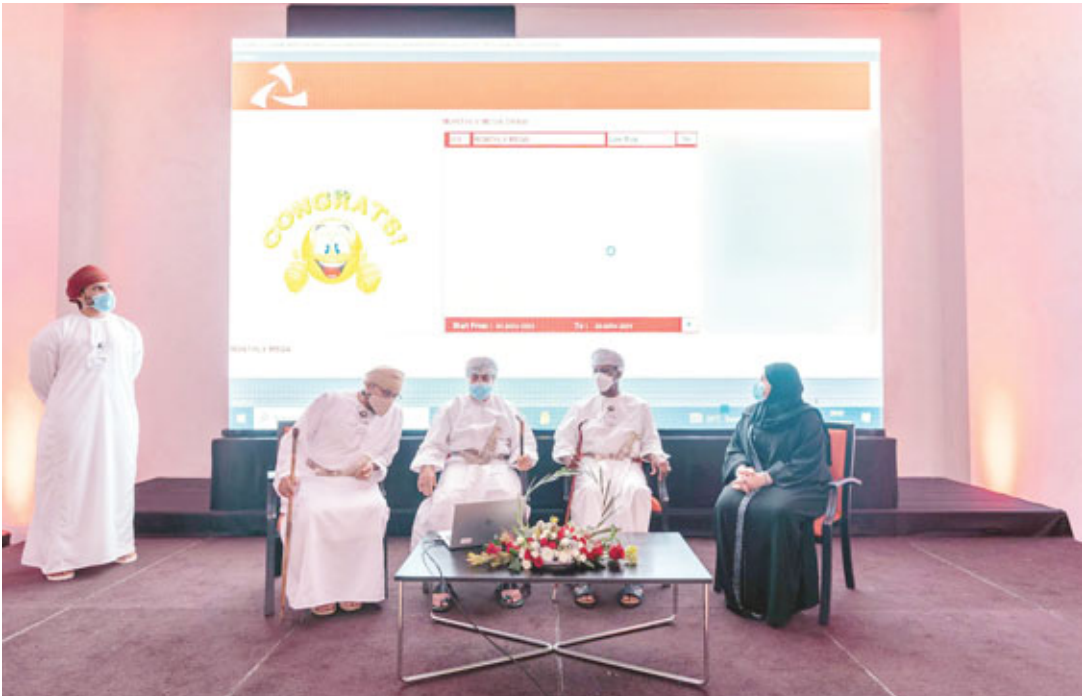
ROUND-UP

Winners rewarded with OMR415,000 at Al Mazyona draw held in Sohar

The event focused on Al Mazyona customers from the Governorate of North Al Batinah

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continues to bring joy and happiness to its customers by holding its Al Mazyona monthly draw.

The draw for November 2021 was held at a grand event at the Radisson Blu Hotel Sohar recently in the presence of Dr Saif bin Mohanna bin Saif Al Hinai, Wali of Sohar, and Taya Bait Sabeea Assistant General Manager - Branches Interior Regions, Bank Muscat. The event focused on Al Mazyona customers from the Governorate of North Al Batinah. Draws were also conducted in the Asalah Priority Banking, Al Jawhar Privi-



lege Banking and monthly Mega draw categories, with a total of OMR415,000 being given away in prizes to 61 lucky winners.

A total of 30 winners won prizes of OMR 500 each in the monthly draws for the Governorate of

North Al Batinah, while one lucky winner won the monthly mega prize of OMR 50,000. All customers who maintained a minimum balance of OMR 100 were automatically entered into the monthly draws for governorates while

the winner of the mega draw was chosen from amongst customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 1,000. Also, 10 Asalah customers won OMR 25,000 each and 20 Al Jawhar customers won OMR 5,000 each in the other draws. It

must be noted that all Asalah customers who maintained a minimum balance of OMR 30,000 and Al Jawhar customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 10,000 were automatically entered into these monthly draws.

Taya Bait Sabeea, Assistant General Manager - Branches Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, congratulated all the winners of the monthly prize draws and said that the prizes would enable them to realise their dreams. He stressed that all bank customers have the opportunity to win valuable and exciting prizes by regularly saving. He added that the November prize draws are a forerunner to the highly-anticipated End-of-Year Al Mazyona special draw that features over OMR 1.5 million in prize money. He encouraged all customers to continue a healthy and regular savings habit and save more to get more chances to win at the End of Year draw.

All customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 30,000 in their Al Mazyona accounts will be automatically entered into the draws to select the winners of the two OMR 250,000 mega prizes in the Al Mazyona End-of-Year draw.

High savings Asalah Priority Banking customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 30,000 will be entered into the special draws for 10 prizes of OMR 50,000 each with a total of OMR 500,000 reserved in prizes for them. Al Jawhar customers maintaining a minimum balance of OMR 10,000 will be eligible to win one of the 10 prizes of OMR 20,000 each, which adds up to a total of OMR 200,000. Also, 70 winners will be chosen from among customers across the Sultanate having a minimum balance of OMR 1,000. Each winner will get OMR 5,000 in the prize draw, which will give away a total of OMR 350,000 in prizes to customers from different governorates.

In total, more than OMR 1.5 million has been reserved for the bank's customers from over 140 personal banking branches spread across the Sultanate. With OMR 11 million to be given away in 2021, the country's biggest savings scheme is all set to create further excitement in the coming weeks as the year draws to a close. This year's programme is giving away record 7,470 prizes compared to 6,677 last year, a 12 per cent increase in the number of winners.

UNIQUE FORMATS

'Spider-Man: No Way Home' premieres at Cinépolis Cinemas, Oman Avenues Mall

MUSCAT: The latest instalment of Marvel's *Spider-Man: No Way Home* was premiered by Cinépolis Cinemas, a flagship in Oman Avenues Mall, Muscat on December 15.

Directed by Jon Watts, the third instalment of the Marvel franchise includes an all-star cast from Tom Holland, Zendaya, Willem Dafoe and Jamie Foxx. The story continues with Spider-Man's identity revealed and the difficulties he faced separating his normal life from being a superhero.

"We've been looking forward to the release of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' as it is one of the most anticipated movies of the year," says Alejandro Aguilera, CEO of Cinépolis Cinemas. He adds, "There is no better way than to watch and



live the Marvel Universe unfold their unique plot twists and characters than on the big screen in any of Cinépolis Cinemas' unique formats, whether it's the massive Macro XE, fully immersive 4D or the luxury auditoriums."

The event which showcased the movie for the first time in the MENA region boasted key personnel and influencers from across the Sultanate of Oman. Guests were welcomed by a majestic setup in-line with the movie and

served the unique food offerings from Cinépolis Cinemas.

For the super Spider-Man fans, the brand had also arranged a paid preview, one day before the official release of the movie from 8pm onwards.

'ICONIC JEWELLERY BRAND OF 2021'

Malabar Gold & Diamonds receives 'Signature Luxury 100' Award yet again

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of over 260 outlets spread across 10 countries, has won the 'Signature Luxury 100 award' for the sixth time in a row.

The award was conferred in the category 'Iconic Jewellery Brand of 2021' and was received by Muhsin P, Branch Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds - Oman from Thomas Friedrich Schneider - Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Oman in the presence of Atulya Sharma - CEO, United Media Services at a private event held in Oman.

The Luxury 100, a unique initiative that recognises the country's and the region's only list of iconic luxury brands of the year, is a consolidated list that embodies the spirit of luxury. It is after months of research that the editors of United Media Services, renowned luxury specialists, lifestyle journalists and a select mix of readers and industry experts get together



to create this list that features brands that have proven their luxury credentials. The categories range from personal luxury goods

to luxury cars, luxury hospitality and bespoke banking.

"We are extremely proud and honoured to be receiving this

prestigious 'Signature Luxury 100 award' for the sixth time in a row. With innovation being at the core of our products, we have always strived to deliver a world-class experience to our customers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers for this remarkable achievement & will continue to focus our efforts on becoming the world's most preferred jewellery retailer," commented Najeesh K - Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Oman on the achievement.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always kept customer-first as the principal attitude in all their efforts and caters to the discerning needs of its multinational and multicultural customers by incorporating the diverse tastes in the splendid jewellery designs they showcase. All products from Malabar Gold & Diamonds comes with the added assurance of Malabar Promise - a set of carefully curated policies that safeguard the interest and purchases of customers.

PROMOTION



Own Toyota Supra with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Toyota's powerful Supra is now available with exclusive benefits. It includes 1-year insurance or cash gift in lieu of insurance OMR450. The campaign is valid until December 30. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details.)

The Supra's 3.0-litre turbo-charged engine produces up to 335hp and 51 kg.m. of torque. The torque comes on strong even from very low engine speeds, thanks to a combination of a twin-scroll turbocharger, direct fuel injection, and continuously variable timing on both the intake and exhaust camshafts.

The 8-speed automatic transmission delivers speedy up and downshifts and features paddle shifters for manual control when desired. The Supra's Sport Mode sharpens throttle response, changes steering wheel characteristics and improves transmission shift crispness.

Meanwhile, traction mode can be activated as part of the vehicle stability control system to provide track-driving capability by reducing the intervention of the traction and stability control functions. Launch Control is available only when the vehicle is in Sport modes.

The frontal design was in-

spired by the fourth-generation Supra but has a more expressive look. The vehicle's low stance is emphasized by a prominent central grille flanked by large air intakes, which are essential for engine cooling. The distinctive headlight units feature a six-lens LED arrangement incorporating the indicators and Daytime Running Lights (DRL).

The rear combination lamps feature a purposeful structure with the turn, tail, and stop functions integrated into the distinctive main ring shape.

The Supra's gauge cluster features an 8.8-inch colour Thin Film Transistor (TFT) LCD with an analogue tachometer in the centre and a digital speedometer on the left side, creating a sporty image that reflects the vehicle's racing heritage.

A 1.8-inch full-colour Head-Up Display (HUD) provides various driver-focused information, while a further 8.8-inch widescreen touch display located on the dashboard contains the navigation system, which can also be operated via remote control on the centre console, enabling easy fingertip access without disturbing driving posture. Additional features include a back monitor with guidelines, a dual-zone automatic air conditioning system and a JBL 12-speaker HiFi Surround Sound system with a seven-channel amplifier.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى عِوَالِهِ وَجَلِّ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our
beloved founder,

Mr. Majid Al Futtaim

Mr. Majid Al Futtaim was a visionary entrepreneur who
transformed the face of business across our region.

His lifetime achievements have been an inspiration for many, none
more than the proud employees of his company.

His legacy lives on in our businesses and culture, which shall
continue to create innovative brands, exceptional destinations, and
spaces that incubate happiness for our people and our customers.

His passing is a tragic loss for our company,
our communities and our region, and our thoughts and prayers are
with his family and loved ones during this difficult time.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

ماجد الفطيم
MAJID AL FUTTAIM

الموج
al mouj
مسقط muscat

مول عمان
Mall of Oman

سينما سنتر
مسقط

سينما سنتر
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Offer valid from 10th November 2021 to 9th January 2022 on applicable models purchased for personal use. Offer not available for vehicles purchased for Commercial use, Rent-a-car, Taxi, Government and Driving School. #Periodic Maintenance Service only. Whichever is earlier. Applicable on all models except GTR, 370Z, Civilian. Offer includes only 10,000 km service intervals. @ 1st year Oman & UAE only. ^ For 1st year only. @ & ^ Applicable on all models except GTR, 370Z, Urvan & Civilian. Applicable for Private registrations only. For Commercial registrations, additional amount needs to be borne by the customer. */@Additional PMS Service for new car, exclusive discount on labor charges, parts & trade-in benefits. Second car purchase should be either in the name of existing Nissan owner or his/her immediate family member (Wife/Husband/Son/Daughter/Brother/Sister) to avail additional benefits under the scheme. Conditions apply. *#EMIs mentioned are calculated on the price of the base model variant with 20% down payment and 3.25% rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals.



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