

DECISION TO ESTABLISH DUQM COLLEGE ISSUED

A ministerial decision was issued by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI), to establish Duqm College in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in Al Wusta Governorate. **>A5**



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HM GREETES EMIR OF KUWAIT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait on the anniversary of his Accession to the Throne. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to Sheikh Nawaf, praying to the Almighty Allah for the return of this and similar occasions on him at a time his country has achieved further progress and prosperity for the brotherly Kuwaiti people. **-ONA**



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SAYYID THEYAZIN RECEIVES MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth received in his office on Wednesday Tariq Al Hussaisan, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Sultanate. The meeting reviewed the relations binding the two brotherly countries and touched on several topics of common interest. The meeting also discussed aspects of the existing cooperation in the cultural, sports and youth fields. **- ONA**



ROYAL DECREE

Royal Decree appoints two non-resident ambassadors

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on Wednesday issued a Royal Decree No. 61/2021 appointing two non-resident ambassadors, reading as follows:

Article (1) appoints Abdullah Nasser Musallam Al Rahbi, Oman's Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt as the Sultanate's extraordinary and plenipotentiary non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti.

Article (2) Appoints Moosa Hamdan Moosa Al Tae'e, Oman's Ambassador to the United States of America as the Sultanate's extraordinary and plenipotentiary non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba, Canada and the United Mexican States.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. **- ONA**



SECTORS OPEN TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT

TOURISM | MINING AND MINERALS | MANUFACTURING | FISHERIES | SERVICE SECTOR | EDUCATION
MEDICAL PRODUCTS | ENVIRONMENT SECTOR | WASTE MANAGEMENT | CIRCULAR ECONOMY



22 EXPATRIATE INVESTORS AWARDED LONG-STAY VISAS AT LAUNCH CEREMONY

LONG-TERM EXPAT VISA SCHEME TO SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

The scheme provides long-stay, renewable visas valid for up to 10 years to investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's new investment programme, which will provide long-term residency to expatriates who invest in the country, aims to attract quality funding to the sectors targeted for economic diversification, according to Qais Al Yousef, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The scheme provides long-stay, renewable visas valid for up to 10 years to investors, provided they meet certain conditions.

"The most important thing that attracts investors to the country today is the investment environment, the returns from their investments, the incentives, the exemptions that the government always offers them, the geographical location of Oman, the national workforce, and the modern lifestyle that the country provides, and accordingly, all these factors need to be made attractive to them," said Al Yousef, at the launch of the new investor visa scheme.

To mark the occasion, the minister also gave long-stay visas to 22 long-term expatriate investors in Oman.

"They have made investments in qualitative sectors, and also employ Omanis - some doing so in large numbers," he explained.



Azzan Qasim Al Busaidi, Advisor at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

"These investors also include a company in Oman that has employed 4,000 Omanis in its branches. We were also keen to make sure these 22 investors were of diverse nationalities - this indicates that ours is an attractive environment for investors from everywhere."

"I would like to invite investors to come here and take up residency for themselves and their families, in collaboration with Omani partners," said Al Yousef. "We have received another list of investors who communicated with us their desire to join this scheme. We will look at their requests next week."

Investment is expected to focus on areas marked for economic diversification, such as tourism, energy, mining, minerals, manufacturing, fisheries, as well as other support areas such as the service sector, medical products, education, and the environmental sector, including waste management. Emphasis has also been placed on investing in a circular economy.

Opportunities

"All of these sectors provide opportunities for investors to enter our economy and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Oman," said the minister. "All of these sectors are also compatible with the requirements of Omanisation and employment generation." **>A4**

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MUSCAT

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN User photo now visible in Tarassud app

People who have recently logged in to their Tarassud COVID monitoring app would have noticed that their photo also appears as part of their vaccination profile, making identification easier. With evidence of vaccination compulsory for entering malls, private offices and government institutions, the photo ID on the app makes it easier to show proof. **>A3**

WORLD Fumio set to become Japan's next PM

In a runoff between Kono Taro and Kishida Fumio to lead Japan's main ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the latter was declared the winner and is assured to become Prime Minister next week. "Kishida Fumio has been elected leader of Japan's main ruling Liberal Democratic Party," reported *NHK World*. **>A6**

MARKET Ericsson to power Vodafone network

Vodafone in Oman recently signed a deal with Ericsson to deploy, operate and maintain a new 4G and 5G core and radio access greenfield network. Ericsson will supply a complete core network solution based on Ericsson Cloud Core, NFVI and Cloud VoLTE as well as an end-to-end transport network solution. **>B1**

ECONOMY

Goals of 10th Five-Year Plan in line with Vision 2040

KHALID ORABI
k.orabi@shabiba.com

MUSCAT: Oman's 10th Five-Year Development Plan is aligned in achieving the objectives of Vision 2040, which aims for long-term economic sustainability and growth in the country.

"There is consistency and conformity at various stages between the 10th Five-Year Plan and Oman Vision 2040, so that the plan is able to execute the objectives of the vision," said Air Commodore (ret.) Nasser bin Juma Al Zedjali, who heads the Work Team for Labour Market and Employment Prioritisation.

"Several programmes have been amended so that they match with the vision," he added, speaking to Shabiba FM, the radio station of *Al Shabiba*, the Arabic publication of the *Times of Oman*. "We understand that there are changes during the stage of preparation of the plan, mainly in the labour market



which makes working on the plan a continued effort."

He added that the Ministry of Economy has a mechanism to implement changes to the plan to ensure consistency with the vision. The Implementation and Follow-up Unit plays a great role to ensure that the five-year plans are in harmony with Oman Vision 2040.

"Prior to my involvement in the work team, I had engaged with the National Defence College and we are one of the entities assigned

with evaluation of Oman Vision 2040, alongside other parties including Sultan Qaboos University and other international institutions," he said.

"We aspire to achieve the aspirations of citizens and I believe that the government is working as a team to implement the programmes and vision under the Royal Care of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik," he added. "Under collective efforts, we will achieve the target objectives." **>A4**



CIVILIAN



PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr	12:02pm
Asr	3:26pm
Maghrib	6:01pm
Isha	7:11pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:44am

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TIMES OF OMAN

AT A GLANCE

Royal cables
MUSCAT — His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said received greetings from Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed in the cabinet of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and wished her a successful trip.

Jacko in Switzerland
GSTAD, Switzerland — Michael Jackson is resting from his world concert tour in the chalet of his close friend Elizabeth Taylor, Swiss newspapers reported yesterday.

The Zurich-based mass-circulation *Blick* and the *Lausanne-based Le Matin* carried photographs of the 35-year-old singer shopping for winter clothes and compact discs with two boys in this jet-set mountain resort. *Blick* said the trio, accompanied by Jackson's bodyguards and advisers, arrived on Monday evening after the pop star gave a concert in Teneriffe, in the Canary Islands off northwest Africa. It wasn't clear whether Taylor was in Gstaad, but she and her husband, Larry Fortensky, joined Jackson last month in Singapore to give him support. The singer's world tour has been beset by allegations that he molested a 13-year-old boy in Los Angeles.

Taylor and Fortensky were married on Jackson's Neverland ranch in California in 1991. Jackson was to perform in South Africa today and Saturday, but a Johannesburg promoter said the singer was unable to fit the concerts into his schedule. — AP

Arms cache found in Ireland
DUBLIN — Police in Ireland and Belfast said yesterday they had found two significant arms caches and arrested two men.

Irish police said they discovered a stockpile of weapons during a hillside search with the Irish army around the town of Omagh, just south of the border with Northern Ireland. A spokesman said the Omagh cache contained two submachineguns, nine rifles, a sawed-off shotgun, two other shotguns, six pistols, 6,000 rounds of ammunition, five hand-grenades and camping equipment. "This is a big find. It looks like a training area for a terrorist group," he said. The search was still continuing.

In North Belfast, police arrested two men after discovering three rifles, four handguns, 400 rounds of ammunition, a radio scanner, bomb-making equipment and a cassette inventory device during a planned house search.

"It's a significant find," a police spokesman said. Both discoveries were made on Tuesday. — Reuters

India forms rights panel
NEW DELHI — India yesterday announced the setting up of a national human rights commission which would also deal with complaints against alleged human rights violations by the armed forces.

The constitution of the commission would go a long way in meeting criticism from international human rights organizations that alleged human rights violations by the Indian armed forces, especially in Kashmir, went unreported in India. With headquarters in New Delhi, the commission would be headed by a retired chief justice and would include incumbent or retired judges of the Supreme Court and high courts.

A presidential ordinance issued yesterday defined "human rights" as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Indian constitution or embodied in international covenants and enforceable by the courts in India. — ONA



Weather

Coastal areas of the Sultanate and Muscat will be mostly sunny with some light showers. Inland areas will be mostly sunny with some light showers. Inland areas will be mostly sunny with some light showers.

Temperatures recorded in other cities: Muscat 34 (Sun 30, Mon 31, Tue 32, Wed 33, Thu 34, Fri 35, Sat 36, Sun 37, Mon 38, Tue 39, Wed 40, Thu 41, Fri 42, Sat 43, Sun 44, Mon 45, Tue 46, Wed 47, Thu 48, Fri 49, Sat 50, Sun 51, Mon 52, Tue 53, Wed 54, Thu 55, Fri 56, Sat 57, Sun 58, Mon 59, Tue 60, Wed 61, Thu 62, Fri 63, Sat 64, Sun 65, Mon 66, Tue 67, Wed 68, Thu 69, Fri 70, Sat 71, Sun 72, Mon 73, Tue 74, Wed 75, Thu 76, Fri 77, Sat 78, Sun 79, Mon 80, Tue 81, Wed 82, Thu 83, Fri 84, Sat 85, Sun 86, Mon 87, Tue 88, Wed 89, Thu 90, Fri 91, Sat 92, Sun 93, Mon 94, Tue 95, Wed 96, Thu 97, Fri 98, Sat 99, Sun 100, Mon 101, Tue 102, Wed 103, Thu 104, Fri 105, Sat 106, Sun 107, Mon 108, Tue 109, Wed 110, Thu 111, Fri 112, Sat 113, Sun 114, Mon 115, Tue 116, Wed 117, Thu 118, Fri 119, Sat 120, Sun 121, Mon 122, Tue 123, Wed 124, Thu 125, Fri 126, Sat 127, Sun 128, Mon 129, Tue 130, Wed 131, Thu 132, Fri 133, Sat 134, Sun 135, Mon 136, Tue 137, Wed 138, Thu 139, Fri 140, Sat 141, Sun 142, Mon 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The Business Year renews collaboration with Oman's Chamber of Commerce and Industry

TBY recently sat down with Eng. Redha bin Jumah Al Saleh, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), to discuss its latest research on the local economy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Business Year, a global media group that has been providing investors, businesses, and governments with first-hand insights into the world's most dynamic markets for over a decade, recently sat down with Eng. Redha bin Jumah Al Saleh, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

Al Saleh discussed the role of OCCI in mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for businesses in Oman, the prospects of the private sector in the current environment, and the path to Oman Vision 2040. TBY's team, led by Elena Barreiro, TBY Regional Director for Oman, Andrea Tsiachtsiri, TBY Country Director for Oman, and Gergana



SPECIAL FOCUS ON OMAN VISION 2040: The project, supported by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, will have a special focus on Oman Vision 2040 and the steps Oman is taking toward a more sustainable future. — Supplied picture

Georgieva, TBY Country Editor for Oman, illustrated the goals of The Business Year: Oman 2021.

The project, supported by The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, will have a special focus on Oman Vision 2040 and the steps Oman is taking toward a more sustainable future. With regard to the OCCI's commitment to Vision 2040, Al Saleh underlined that the Chamber is laser focused on achieving sustainable economic development across the country via modern methods, including the effective representation of the private

sector and the creation of an active business community.

Radical transformation

The strategy is based on working to crystallise the Chamber's role and bring about a radical transformation in its strategies in line with Vision 2040, and striving toward financial sustainability for the Chamber in view of economic crises. The Chamber also aims to boost international trade links as well as benefit from the partnerships and cooperation agreements signed between the Chamber and international bod-

ies, organisations, and other chambers of commerce.

The strategy is based on working to crystallise the Chamber's role and bring about a radical transformation in its working strategies in line with the course of achieving the future Vision 2040, and striving toward achieving financial sustainability for the Chamber in view of economic crises, and finding a mechanism for how to deal with it, in addition to strengthening trade links with the outside world through benefiting from the partnerships and cooperation agreements signed between the

Chamber and international bodies, organisations and chambers of commerce, and diversifying the tools of participation with the private sector based on innovation and creativity in services, activities, and events that contribute to its development and serving all companies, institutions, and associates of the Chamber.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Economy (MoE) released the "Strategic Programmes Folder" for the 10th Five-Year Development Plan 2021-2025, which emphasises the main strategic programs and policies of Oman Vision 2040

and covers all areas relevant for a sustainable future.

Six priorities and 165 strategic programmes were outlined under the Economy and Development theme to ensure a long-term vision and medium-term development.

It will focus on generating a more attractive business climate, enabling foreign investment via a competitive economy at the local and global level, and creating new job opportunities for Omanis.

First-hand research

TBY's first-hand research reaches key international investors and members of the global business community, targeting international financial institutions, international corporations, investors, accountancy firms, industrial conglomerates, and governmental organisations.

150 interviews

The Business Year: Oman 2021 will feature more than 150 interviews with leaders from all major sectors of the economy, including, finance, energy, agriculture, industry, logistics, ICT, health and education, tourism, and others.

The Business Year: Oman 2021 will be distributed extensively, both domestically and globally, and will reach an even larger audience via TBY's powerful network of digital platforms.

Once the edition is published in 4Q2021, all interviews and content will be also available on key business information platforms including Bloomberg Terminal, Refinitiv Eikon, Dow Jones Factiva, and FactSet, as well as on PressReader, Google Books, and at thebusinessyear.com.

OMAN VISION 2040

<FROM A1 Strategic goals, pillars identified

Work on the tenth five-year plan started with guidance from Oman Vision 2040, he said, explaining that Oman Vision 2040 has identified the strategic goals and pillars covering 20 years from the year 2021 to 2040. Oman has followed the five-year plan method of development and has therefore made sure they conform to Oman Vision 2040.

"The plan of the work team was to set an action plan and to prepare strategic programmes that meet the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 during its first five years," explained Al Zedjali. "A central team has been formed to set the action plans and to review a number of visions and to evaluate the ninth five-year plan, which was established on the principles of partnership and the participation of a number of stakeholders, including citizens, the government, the civil society and the private sector."

The visions and development plans usually cover all aspects related to development, he said, with Oman Vision 2040 focusing on fourteen priorities/programmes. "Oman Vision 2040 was established to a great extent on the tenth five-year plan," he said. "However, in the tenth five-year plan, there are programmes

that should not be fully implemented. Only those aspects that serve the overall objectives must be rolled out."

"Some programmes may be affected by current legislations and finance, but the follow-up unit is relentlessly working on provision of solutions to this effect," he added. "There are certain programmes concerned with the labour market that we seek to carry out and implement before January 2022."

Mahmoud bin Humaid Al Wahaibi, a member of the Work Group of Cities and Governorates, who is also an urban planning expert at regional level, said that the consistency between the tenth five-year plan and Oman Vision 2040 has always taken into account the executive plan of the national urban development strategy.

"The strategic planning of any country/state starts with the plan of what we want as a country, represented by Oman Vision 2040, which has set the strategic objectives for the next 20 years," he revealed. "This is followed by the planning for all governorates in the Sultanate, which is adopted by the National Strategy of Urban Development that acts as a roadmap for Vision 2040."

INNOVATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



Five winning projects of Biodiversity Ideathon in Sultanate announced

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Environment Authority announced on Wednesday the five winning projects in the 2021 Biodiversity Ideathon.

The projects varied between the fields of smart farming and production systems, artificial intelligence (AI) applications, modern irrigation systems, organic fertiliser products, pesticides and organic control, as well as organic cleaning and natural waste recycling products.

Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, asserted that this partnership between the ministry and the authority stem from their belief in

innovation and scientific research to achieve environmental goals.

He added that the participant's ideas were excellent and serve the environment. They also achieve part of the 10-million-tree planting initiative, which is a national and global goal as it reduces emissions and improves air quality, said Dr. Abdullah.

At the end of the ceremony, Chairman of the Environment Authority honoured the winning projects.

The ceremony was attended by Dr. Saif Abdullah Al Haddabi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Scientific Research and Innovation. — OMA



FOR EXPATRIATE INVESTORS

<FROM A1 Retirees can also apply for long-term investor visa scheme

The minister further said: "One aspect we have found requiring attention, through our review of foreign investments, is that many investors only appoint nationals after many years of operations in Oman, because only then do they understand their capabilities and experience levels."

"This is despite the keenness and interest in Omanis to work with the investors," he added. "Investors find it most difficult when they first begin to invest in the country, if they employ more Omanis, there will be a mix of skilled Omani and foreign workers, which will lead to a better work environment that encourages innovation and creativity."

Azzan bin Qasim Al Busaidi, advisor to the minister, explained the criteria required for expatriate investors to qualify for the new scheme, which groups them into

two categories. The first relates to those who own homes, with the individual applying for residency required to own homes that are valued in total at a minimum of OMR500,000.

"The applicant must attach to the application a copy of the title deed and an authenticated purchasing contract registered at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, or an evaluation of the housing unit issued by a specialist, approved valuation company, or proof that the housing unit has been valued by the developer of the property," he explained.

The first category of investors also includes applicants who have set up a public/closed joint-stock company.

They must submit a certificate from a licensed brokerage companies operating in Oman to prove his ownership of shares

with a market value of no less than OMR500,000.

The investor can also establish other companies, but must provide a certificate issued by banks operating in Oman, to confirm they hold shares in the company that amount to at least OMR500,000. This can also be provided by a trading company in Oman.

Investor residency applicants can also fall under this category if they own a company that employs at least 50 Omani employees. Proof of this can be provided by the Ministry of Labour, or the Public Authority for Social Insurance. The scheme also includes owners of Omani government bonds valued at no less than OMR500,000 that have a remaining validity of at least two years at the time of application.

The second category of applicants includes people who fulfil

any of the above conditions, but have their assets (such as property, businesses or company shares) valued at OMR250,000 instead. The same procedures as listed above apply for them as well.

"Retirees can also apply for long-term investor residency," said Al Busaidi.

"They must have worked in Oman for at least two years, and submit a personal bank statement for a six-month period that proves his monthly income is a minimum of OMR4,000. They are also required to submit a home title deed or residential lease agreement in the name of the applicant, along with an integrated curriculum vitae."

Applicants must be aged 21 and above to apply for this scheme. They can have this residency extended to their children as well, provided the latter are below the

age of 25, and fulfil the criteria issued by the concerned authorities. They must also pay all the necessary processing fees, and adhere to the regulations concerning investment.

Investors under the new scheme are not entitled to claim Omani citizenship, except under the existing regulations in this context.

In case an investor passes away, the other members of his family are provided 90 days following his/her death to assess their situation regarding the investment. Residency may be transferred to any first or second order relative of the investor, provided they meet the required conditions.

Companies whose capital exceeds the amount mentioned in the first and second category can nominate more than one partner/employee to apply for residency, provided each one of them

meet the financial requirements needed.

Should the investor be involved in a judicial ruling, they will not be required to forfeit their residency, unless they are found to have violated the Foreigners' Residence Law, or are the recipient of a ruling that decrees their deportation from the country. Investors must also obtain a police clearance certificate authenticated by the relevant authorities in their country, as well as the local Oman embassy, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Investor applicants are not required to fulfil all criteria of the new scheme at the time of applying. But should they wish to secure final approval, they have three months from the time of their application to meet the criteria needed. This time period can be extended only once, and requires the approval of the minister.



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MEETING

Royal Office Minister receives commander of GCC military command



MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Wednesday Lt. Gen. Eid Awad Al Shalawi, Commander of the GCC Unified Military Command (UMC) and his accompanying delegation, currently visiting the Sultanate.

The two sides reviewed fields of cooperation and exchanged talks on matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Ra'eesi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF).

-ONA

MOHERI

Decision to establish Duqm College issued

MUSCAT: A ministerial decision was issued by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI), to establish Duqm College in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in Al Wusta Governorate.

The college will be subject to the laws and decisions governing universities and private colleges in the Sultanate.

It will also introduce its academic programmes in the fields of humanities, engineering, science and technology.

Duqm College will include a department for vocational studies, which will focus on training, employment and entrepreneurship covering areas of logistics, marine sciences, sustainability, emerging technologies, urban de-



velopment and construction.

The college is currently working on completing all the material, human, academic and other requirements to open its doors, in addition to other requirements, such as obtaining approvals related to the academic regulations and licensing its academic programmes.

-ONA

NEPAL

Nadhira Al Harthy scales Mount Manaslu

MANASLU: An Omani climber has succeeded in reaching the top of the eighth highest mountain in the world. Nadhira Ahmed Al Harthy successfully scaled Mount Manaslu in Nepal with a height of 8,163 metres above sea level. The climber, who also raised the Omani flag at the top of this mountain for the first time in the history of Oman, began her administrative and technical preparations for the new personal record several months ago.

The actual climb to the top of the mountain took 25 days, of which three days were for the uphill and downhill trip from the final camp and the ascent and descent from the final camp to the summit took 15 hours.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, she expressed her delight over the achievement of reaching the peak of the mountain and for



overcoming a number of challenges on the climb to the peak and the unfavourable weather conditions.

She said, "This achievement adds to my earlier achievements including reaching the peak of Mount Everest and Mount Ama Dablam, one of the highest mountains in the Himalayas. - ONA



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NEW PM

Kishida Fumio to become Japan's next prime minister

TOKYO: In a runoff between Kono Taro and Fumio to lead Japan's main ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Fumio was declared the winner and is assured to become Prime Minister next week.

"Kishida Fumio has been elected leader of Japan's main ruling Liberal Democratic Party. He is virtually assured to become Prime Minister next week," reported NHK



World. Kishida has also served as Japanese Foreign Minister.

Four candidates, namely Taro Kono, Kishida Fumio, Sanae Takaichi and Seiko Noda, entered the race for the presidential election of LDP.

As the LDP-led coalition constitutes a majority in both chambers of the parliament in Japan, the new party president is almost cer-

tain to be elected prime minister in the extraordinary diet session scheduled to be held on October 4, succeeding the incumbent Yoshihide Suga.

The election of party leader was forced upon the LDP by the recent announcement by deeply unpopular Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga that he would not stand for reelection after just a year in the job. **ANI**



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Top US military leaders defend withdrawal from Afghanistan

Military leaders
jostled with senators
on a host
of Afghanistan-
related issues

WASHINGTON: Top US military leaders defended the drawdown and ultimate withdrawal from Afghanistan before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

Military leaders including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Mark Milley and US Central Command chief General Frank McKenzie jostled with senators on a host of Afghanistan-related issues ranging from the withdrawal agreement made with the Taliban in Doha in 2020, specifics of the airlift as well as the generals' advice to the two US presidents who straddled the time between the Doha agreement and the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban.



WITHDRAWAL: The generals agreed on their advice prior to the August 15 fall of Kabul that a standing force of between 2,500 and 3,500 would have been required to maintain the central government.

The generals agreed on their advice prior to the August 15 fall of Kabul that a standing force of between 2,500 and 3,500 would have been required to maintain the central government and army of Kabul. They concurred that the Doha agreement had a demoralizing effect on the Afghan army.

Milley emphasised that while

the US held up its end of the agreement with the Taliban in Doha, the only condition the Taliban adhered to was to not attack US and NATO coalition forces during the withdrawal phase of the conflict.

On the Kabul airlift

In their opening statements, Austin and Milley emphasised the success

of the airlift from the Kabul airport that evacuated 124,000 people in 17 days, and said that a host of lessons needed to be learned from the US' twenty-year military engagement in Afghanistan.

Austin detailed some of the specifics of that airlift, outlining 23 sorties a day that brought 7,000 people out daily on average,

with a 40-minute gap between flights taking off from the Kabul airport at the height of the operation. He said it was the largest airlift in US history.

The speed of the airlift, Austin acknowledged, has led to capacity and screening problems at intermediate staging bases outside Afghanistan.

Austin also noted there are still US citizens and special immigrant visa holders who were unable to get out of Afghanistan during those 17 days who wish to be out now that the US is still working on evacuating.

"Noncombatant evacuation operations remain among the most difficult," Austin said.

Milley said the drawdown before the eventual end of operations in Afghanistan lasted 10 years, not 17 days. He later called the war a "strategic failure" because "the enemy is in charge in Kabul."

On future counter-terror operations in Afghanistan

Milley was firm the Taliban never disavowed or cut ties with al-Qaeda.

"I have no illusions who we are dealing with," he said. At this point, Milley said, the Taliban can either consolidate power or the situation

can erupt into civil war.

He provided a 12 to 36-month timeline for terror groups such as al-Qaeda or IS-K to reconstitute in "ungoverned spaces" and attempt to attack the US homeland.

Austin said the US maintains "over the horizon" capabilities, which he defined as "assets and target analysis that occur outside the country in which the operation occurs."

On lessons learned from the war

Austin said at the start of senators' questions, "We must also ask ourselves some tough questions about the wider war."

Austin conceded the US military did not understand many things about the theater of conflict and the government the US helped install in Afghanistan.

He said the depth of the corruption in the senior ranks of the Afghan government and military command, the rotations of senior commanders under ousted president Ashraf Ghani, the demoralizing effect of the Doha agreement on Afghan soldiers were all matters of strategic oversight reflecting back on America's longest war. **ANI**

SANCTIONS

US senators introduce legislation to impose sanctions on Taliban

WASHINGTON: More than 20 US Senators on Tuesday introduced legislation to impose sanctions on the Taliban in Afghanistan and the foreign governments that support the outfit.

The law titled the 'Afghanistan Counterterrorism, Oversight, and Accountability Act', would address the outstanding issues related to the Administration's rushed withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"The chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan was as awful as it was avoidable. It was unwise and unrealistic for the Administration to stick to its arbitrary August 31

deadline, which resulted in hundreds of Americans and tens of thousands of our most loyal allies -- drivers, translators, guides, and others -- and vulnerable Afghans such as women leaders being left behind in Afghanistan in dire jeopardy," said Senator Collins on the legislation introduced by Senator Jim Risch.

"Our legislation would help hold the Administration accountable and prioritise the complete evacuation of Americans, SIVs, and refugees. Additionally, it would impose sanctions on the Taliban and its supporters, sending a clear

message that the United States denounces the Taliban's human rights abuses and terrorism."

According to an official release, the new law would establish a US State Department task force to focus on the evacuation of American citizens, legal permanent residents, and Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) who are still stuck in Afghanistan.

It would impose oversight mechanisms on the processing of SIVs and refugees. The law requires strategies for counterterrorism and for the disposition of Taliban-captured US equipment. **-ANI**



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France to reduce visas for Maghreb countries in migration spat

Starting in a few weeks, the French government would halve the number of visas available to nationals from Algeria and Morocco

PARIS: France will sharply reduce the number of visas granted to people from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia because of their governments’ refusal to take back illegal migrants expelled from France, government spokesman Gabriel Attal said on Tuesday. Starting in a few weeks, Attal said the French government would halve the number of visas available to nationals from Algeria and Morocco, and reduce those for Tunisians by almost a third. “It’s a drastic decision, and unprecedented, but one made necessary by the fact that these countries are refusing to take back nationals who we do not want or cannot keep in France,” Attal told Europe 1 radio.

Why is France cutting back on visas? When a French court denies a person’s visa request, authorities must still secure a special travel pass from his or her home country in order to forcibly expel them, a document that Attal said the governments of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia were refusing to provide.



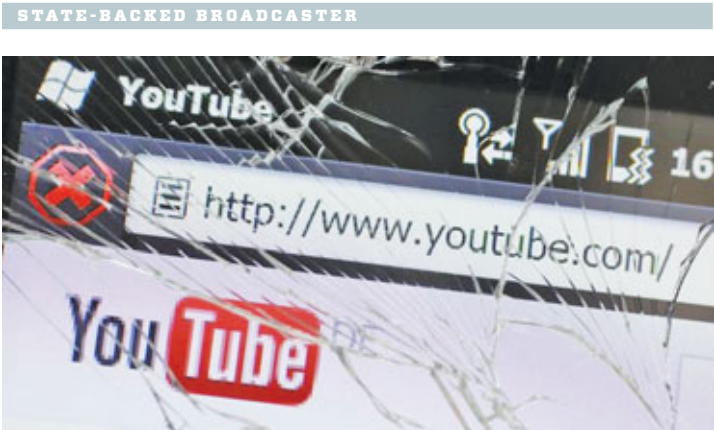
Coronavirus travel restrictions have also complicated efforts. “There was dialogue, then there were threats, and today we’re carrying out those threats,” Attal said, adding that France has been trying to reach a diplomatic solution since it passed a harsher immigration law in 2018. “We’re hoping that the response will be more cooperation with France so that we can apply our immigration rules,” he said. The Associated Press cited an unnamed senior official in the French presidency as saying that Paris notably wants North African countries to take back people flagged for extremism.

How have countries in North Africa responded? Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita called the stated rationale for the French decision “unjustified.” “The decision [by France] is sovereign. Morocco will study it, but the reasons given to justify

it require explanation and a dialogue, because they do not reflect reality,” he told reporters in Rabat. Bourita said his country had issued 400 consular documents to Moroccans being expelled from France, but the number was limited because many of them refused to take a virus test, which is required to re-enter Morocco. That is “the problem of France, which must deal with it,” he said. The office of Tunisian President Kais Saied, which faces a slightly smaller reduction in visa numbers, took a more conciliatory public stance: “We are among countries that are cooperative in this domain, and we have excellent relations with France,” it said.

Far-right ups pressure France’s decision comes amid pressure from far-right politicians on centrist President Emmanuel Macron to implement stronger migration rules. Migration could prove an important issue in next year’s presi-

dential election, when Macron is expected to face off again against the far-right leader Marine Le Pen. On Monday, Le Pen said on France 2 television that if she was elected president next year, she would call a referendum proposing strict criteria for entering French territory and for acquiring French nationality. She also said she would give French citizens priority access to social housing, jobs and social security benefits. In 2017, Le Pen made it to the second round of the election, but was defeated by Macron, who secured more than 66% of the vote. Her National Rally party, formerly known as the National Front, has historically fared better in first-round voting, when multiple mainstream candidates are in the running. Both she and her father Jean-Marie reached the second-round runoff once each, only to lose by large margins when pitted against one single rival. Macron has not yet announced that he will stand for re-election. **bw**



Russia threatens to block YouTube

MOSCOW: Russia on Wednesday threatened to block Alphabet Inc.’s YouTube. The development comes just a day after YouTube deleted state-backed broadcaster Russia Today’s German-language channels. YouTube said RT had violated its COVID misinformation policy, but the move has not been well received at the Kremlin. Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor said it wanted YouTube to reverse its decision “as soon as possible.” In a letter to Google, which owns YouTube, Roskomnadzor said it “demanded that all restrictions be lifted.” Russian Foreign Ministry: ‘Unprecedented information aggression’ in a statement. Earlier on Wednesday, Russia’s Foreign Ministry described the removal of RT from YouTube as “unprecedented information aggression” in a statement. The ministry is now considering “a proposal to develop and take retaliatory measures against the YouTube hosting service and the German media.” Meanwhile, the German government responded to Moscow’s threats, saying it had “nothing to do” with YouTube’s decision. “Anyone calling for such retaliation does not show a good relationship with freedom of the press,” Chancellor Angela Merkel’s spokesman Steffen Seibert told reporters, adding that the YouTube action “was not a state measure.”

What is YouTube’s COVID misinformation policy? YouTube deleted RT’s German-language channels on Tuesday, saying it had violated its COVID misinformation policy. “YouTube has always had clear community guidelines that outline what is allowed on the platform,” a YouTube spokesperson told DW. The video-sharing portal says that it “doesn’t allow content about COVID-19 that poses a serious risk of egregious harm.” Additionally, YouTube says that it does not permit content that spreads medical misinformation that “contradicts local health authorities” or the World Health Organization’s (WHO) medical information about COVID-19. **Russia Today ‘tried to circumvent’ the ban** Initially, RT’s German channel was issued a strike for uploading content that breached YouTube’s COVID misinformation policy, resulting in a week-long posting ban. Russia Today then used a second channel, “Der Fehlende Part,” — which translates to “the missing part” in German — to evade the suspension. RT DE [the name for RT in Germany] “tried to circumvent the enforcement by using another channel, and as a result, both channels were terminated for breaking YouTube Terms of Service,” the YouTube spokesperson said. **bw**

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OBITUARY

With great sorrow, We regret to inform, the sudden loss of our Director



Mr. Ramesh Nagardas Shah
on 28th September, 2021

Father Of Mr. Chetan Ramesh Shah

May the Almighty God rest the departed soul in eternal peace

Anil Ramniklal Shah
Paresh Navin Shah
Jeet Anil Shah
Karan Chetan Shah
Hiren Chetan Shah

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Real Madrid suffer stunning 2-1 defeat

The narrative was turned on its head on a firecracker of a goal from Sebastien Thill, who sent shockwaves through the Spanish capital

MADRID: Real Madrid suffered one of the most stunning and shocking defeats in their gilded European history with a 1-2 loss to Sheriff Tiraspol in Group D of the 2021/22 UEFA Champions League at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid.

The upstart visitors jumped out to a 1-0 lead, but a strong second half from Los Blancos, including a Karim Benzema penalty conversion, had everyone believing that the 13-time European champions would pull through like always.

But the narrative was turned on its head on a firecracker of a goal from Sebastien Thill, who surely sent shockwaves not just through the Spanish capital but also the entire continent with a late strike that will forever live in Sheriff folklore.

Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti opted to rest Luka Modric, Marco Asensio and Rodrygo Goes while Miguel Gutierrez, Eduardo Camavinga and Eden Hazard were slotted into the starting XI.

To no one's surprise, Real Madrid came out on the front foot, but had to wait a bit before the first chance came when Benzema fired a free-kick that was parried away by Sheriff goalkeeper Giorgos Athanasiadis, who was nothing



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Real Madrid got right to work to try to pull themselves level, but an error from Courtois almost resulted in a second for the guests, with Yakhshiboev hooking a shot just wide.

short of superb the entire night.

Sheriff were hanging tough and midway through the half they stunned the Bernabeu by taking a surprise 0-1 lead. A counter-attack ended with an inch-perfect cross from Cristiano for the unmarked Jasurbek Yakhshiboev, whose header beat Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Real Madrid got right to work to try to pull themselves level, but an error from Courtois almost resulted in a second for the guests, with Yakhshiboev hooking a shot just wide.

Ancelotti's men continued to hammer the Sheriff area, but could only shake their heads when Vinicius, Hazard and Benzema failed to finish chances just minutes apart.

Real Madrid's dominance carried into the second half as they peppered the Sheriff area, yet the visitors stayed compact and were resolute in their defending.

Minutes after Hazard had a crack from outside that forced Athanasiadis into a diving save, Real Madrid had a big penalty shout when Vinicius went down in the area after a clip from Fernando Costanza, but VAR said otherwise and play continued.

Vinicius kept at it, and moments later VAR would rule in Real Madrid's favour for an Edmund Addo foul on the Brazilian in the Sheriff area.

Benzema was tasked with penalty duties and promptly deposited the spot kick into the back of the net to make it 1-1. Right after the goal, Ancelotti went to his bench and made four changes, with Toni Kroos, Modric, Luka Jovic and Rodrygo all entering the pitch for Miguel, Casemiro, Hazard and Nacho respectively.

Vinicius was the player doing the damage for Real Madrid and a deflected effort almost fooled Athanasiadis for the home side's

second of the night. That was then followed by chances for Modric and Eder Militao, but once again Athanasiadis stood tall to make the saves. All of Real Madrid's attack was coming through Vinicius on the left wing and a cut-back pass from Rodrygo was begging to be finished, but instead it went over the crossbar.

The desperation of the Real Madrid attack and the supporters inside the Bernabeu was felt on every chance that went by the wayside, including a Jovic one in front of goal in the final minutes.

There was still the sensation that a winner would come, but nobody would have ever guessed that it would be Sheriff to do it, but that's exactly what happened in the final minutes when a ball fell perfectly for Thill, who took it on the bounce and fired an absolute bullet into the left corner of net to deliver the shock 1-2 victory.

ONA

Why are Chennai Super Kings on top this year?



Anis Sajjan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

IPL 2020 was the first time Chennai Super Kings did not make it to the play-offs in the history of the tournament. They were once again called the Dad's Army and fans were saying Dhoni and Chennai's time is up.

The biggest question asked by every fan was will Chennai Super Kings bounce back in 2021 season? And how well the three-time champions have bounced back. In the India leg, Chennai played seven games and won five and were at ten points. In the UAE leg, Chennai has won all their three games and are sitting at 16 points on the top of the table with still four games to go. They have not let their guard down and would surely be in the top two as they need to win just one more game to be secured out of the four games left to be in the top two position.

Now what has made Chennai to be on top this year. Moeen Ali who was picked in the auction has made important contributions to

most of their wins. He has scored more than 261 runs this season with a strike rate of 145 and has picked up five crucial wickets.

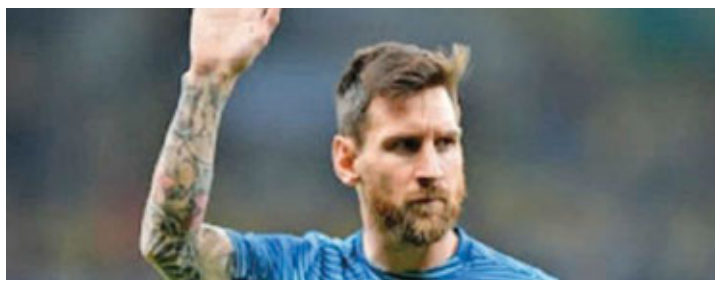
Another reason for their success is the start given by Ruturaj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis who have scored 362 runs at a strike rate of 137 and 394 at a strike rate of 141 respectively. They both have laid the platform for the middle order to build up on a good score for CSK.

The most important thing which Michael Hussey had told me that the secret of Chennai Super Kings in IPL is that they do not experiment with their squad and back them to the core. MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, Dwayne Bravo and Suresh Raina have been playing for CSK for long and their loyalty towards the franchise can be easily seen on and off the field.

What separates CSK from the rest of the franchise is they believe in the process and with process comes results and no wonder CSK has won three titles and are on course for their fourth title this year.

FOOTBALL

Adapting little by little, happy to score first goal for PSG: Messi



PARIS: After defeating Manchester City in the Champions League, Paris Saint-Germain's striker Lionel Messi said he is very happy on scoring his first goal for the club.

PSG defeated City 2-0 to move to the top spot in Group A with 4 points. Manchester City meanwhile is in the third spot with three points. "It was a perfect night against a great opponent. For us, it was very important to win this game after Brugge (a 1-1 draw away). I am very happy to have scored. I haven't played much recently, I had only played one game here. I am adapting little by little. What is important is to keep winning," Messi told Canal+, as reported by Goal.com

"Our relationship will get better and better with each game. We all have to grow together, increase our level of play. We have to continue. We won a very important game against a very big rival, who was in the final last year. We must continue to progress, improve a lot of things for the future," he added.

Idrissa Gueye got PSG off the mark in just the eighth minute of the game and this put Manchester City on the backfoot. No other goals were scored in the first half and PSG held on to its 1-0 lead.

In the second half, Messi doubled PSG's lead in the 74th minute and by then, it was known that City would not be able to make a comeback. **ANI**

FAREWELL

Former Oman cricket team captain Vaibhav bids farewell to Sultanate

MUSCAT: In the razzmatazz of WCL 2 drama and ICC T20 World Cup anticipation, former Oman cricket captain Vaibhav Wategonkar bid the country a quiet adieu after his tenure with his employer Khimji Ramdas ended recently.

An elegant left-handed batter, Vaibhav represented Muscat CT in the Premier League, country's topmost domestic competition, for 18 years, leading them to many memorable title triumphs. Representing Oman, he played a number of high quality knocks and led the country to many memorable victories. Recognising his valuable contribution to the team's success, Anil Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas, presented Vaibhav with a gift as a token of appreciation at a farewell dinner held in his honour.

"Thank you Vaibhav for being an integral part of not just the Muscat team but also a part of the journey of the Oman team in its formative years to the current phenomena that we have become on the global



stage as a leading high performing Associate nation. We wish you and your family much success and happiness in your future endeavours," said Pankaj Khimji, Chairman, Oman Cricket Board.

"Vaibhav was not just the pillar of Muscat Cricket Team but also

a big player for Oman. He was a quality batsman and led both the teams to victories single-handedly on a number of occasions. While we are going to miss his services, we wish him the very best and good luck for his future," commented Madhu Jesrani, Sec-

retary, Oman Cricket and a long-time mentor of Muscat CT.

"It was always a delight to watch him bat. He was one of the key batsmen for Muscat Cricket Team. We will miss him for a long time to come," said his former team mate and coach Wilson Burboz.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Salah, Firmino score a brace each as Liverpool cruise past Porto

LISBON: Mohamed Salah and Roberto Firmino netted two goals apiece as Liverpool waltzed to a comfortable 5-1 victory away at Porto in the UEFA Champions League.

Liverpool were the better side from start to finish and managed to turn their superiority into a goal in the 18th minute when Salah pounced on the rebound after Porto goalkeeper Diogo Costa denied Curtis Jones, as the Egyptian forward netted the opener.

Neither Diogo Jota nor Jordan Henderson managed to beat the goalkeeper on two occasions following Salah's goal, but Sadio Mane doubled Liverpool's lead just before the interval after an assist from James Milner.

Jota wasted another two fine



chances after the break to put the game to bed, but Salah did not miss from inside the box on the hour mark and practically finished the game as a contest.

Porto did not give in after conceding the third and pushed for a goal, though, with Mehdi Taremi pulling one back with 15 minutes to go, but that seemed to wake Liverpool back up as Roberto Firmino came off the bench to bag a brace

after replacing Salah.

Champions League

Liverpool have registered two wins from two in the Champions League and they currently top Group B on six points, followed by Atletico Madrid with four points and Porto, who have just one point while bottom-placed AC Milan have lost both of their two Champions League games so far. **ONA**

BOXING

Philippine legend Manny Pacquiao retires from boxing

MANILA: Philippine superstar Manny Pacquiao on Wednesday announced he is retiring from boxing after a glorious career in the ring.

Earlier this month, Pacquiao had already announced his plan to run for president in the May 2022 election. The 42-year-old has been a senator since 2016. He previously served two terms in the House of Representatives.

"To the greatest fans and the greatest sport in the world, thank you! Thank you for all the wonderful memories. This is the hardest decision I've ever made, but I'm at peace with it. Chase your dreams, work hard, and watch what happens. Good bye boxing," tweeted Pacquiao.

The Philippine legend retires



as the only boxer to hold world titles in four different decades. Pacquiao finishes with a 62-8-2 record and is the only eight-divi-

sion world champ ever. He also has a record of 25-7-2 (11 KOs) against former or current world champions. **ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by November 2021 reaching \$75.75, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.62 from the price of Tuesday, which was at \$77.37. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



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MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 3,943.39 points, down 0.22 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.56 per cent at 580.53 points. Oman & Qatar Insurance was the top gainer, up by 9.46 per cent, while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.83 per cent, was the top loser.

Vodafone Oman's new 4G and 5G network to be powered by Ericsson

Vodafone will benefit from Ericsson's AI tools and data-driven model to drive efficiencies and a shift from reactive to proactive IT and network operations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Vodafone in Oman recently signed an agreement with Ericsson (NASDAQ: ERIC) to deploy, operate and maintain a new 4G and 5G core and radio access (RAN) greenfield network.

Ericsson will supply a complete core network solution based on Ericsson Cloud Core, NFVI and



END-TO-END SOLUTION: The end-to-end solution range will deliver a cost-efficient, energy-efficient, and flexible layered architecture design to support 5G from network launch. - Supplied picture

Cloud VoLTE as well as an end-to-end transport network solution. The greenfield network includes other Ericsson Radio System products and solutions such as the antenna-integrated radio and Ericsson Spectrum Sharing.

The end-to-end solution range will deliver a cost-efficient, energy-efficient, and flexible layered architecture design to support 5G from network launch.

Vodafone customers will also benefit from Ericsson Voice over

LTE (VoLTE) services.

A five-year management services agreement has also been signed. This will result in an AI-powered data-driven network and IT operations and optimisation, enabling Vodafone to enrich its customer

experience, drive efficiency and facilitate innovation.

Vodafone will benefit from Ericsson's AI tools and data-driven model to drive efficiencies and a shift from reactive to proactive IT and network operations. In turn, Vodafone customers will get an enhanced user experience with improved network quality and performance.

Ericsson will take responsibility for the design, rollout, operations, management, optimisation, and maintenance of Vodafone's network. The move will support the service provider's goal to offer a wide range of new and differentiating services to its customers in Oman.

Bader Al Zidi, Chief Executive Officer of Vodafone says, "Our focus is to ensure that we offer our customers a wide range of differentiating services that will add value to their lives, as well as re-defining customer service in the country. We expect high performing Core and RAN technologies and AI, automation, and analytics to further accelerate operational transformation through our partnership. Ericsson has the knowl-

edge and understanding of our requirements. As part of this partnership, we are also joining hands to develop and build the capacity of Omani youth in the areas of technology and information. Our goal is to offer customers an exceptional customer experience as well as upscale the Omani youth, to ensure that Vodafone is able to meet its commitment of bringing superior quality network and mobile communications to the people of Oman through Omani local talent in the long term."

Fadi Pharaon, President of Ericsson Middle East and Africa says, "We are proud to be chosen by Vodafone to deploy and run their entire greenfield network in Oman. This collaboration will lead to Vodafone launching its new mobile broadband service and providing Oman with an additional nationwide mobile network."

"We are pleased to implement the latest in radio access and core technologies, as well as utilising the latest in automation, and artificial intelligence software to run the network and secure great user experience."

IATA REPORT

Middle Eastern carriers international cargo volumes rise by 15.4% in August

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern carriers reported a 15.4 per cent rise in international cargo volumes in August 2021 versus August 2019, according to a new report by IATA. This is an improvement compared to the previous month (13.4 per cent).

"The large Middle East-Asia trade lanes continue to post strong performance and international capacity decreased 5.1 per cent," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its August 2021 data for global air cargo markets on Wednesday.

The report showed that demand continued its strong growth trend but pressure on capacity is rising. As comparisons between 2021 and 2020 monthly results are distorted by the extraordinary impact of COVID-19, unless otherwise noted, all comparisons below are to August 2019 which followed a normal demand pattern.

Global demand, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs), was up 7.7 per cent compared to August 2019 (8.6 per cent for international operations). Overall growth remains strong compared to the long-term average growth trend of around 4.7 per cent.



RECOVERY: The report showed that demand continued its strong growth trend but pressure on capacity is rising. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

The pace of growth slowed slightly compared to July, which saw demand increase 8.8 per cent (against pre-COVID-19 levels).

Cargo capacity recovery paused in August, down 12.2 per cent compared to August 2019 (13.2 per

cent for international operations). In month-on-month terms, capacity fell by 1.6 per cent - the largest drop since January 2021.

Economic conditions continue to support air cargo growth but are slightly weaker than in the previ-

ous months indicating that global manufacturing growth has peaked.

The August manufacturing output component of the Purchasing Managers Indices (PMIs) was 51.9, indicating a short-term boost to demand if those orders are shipped by air. This was a decline from 54.4 in July.

The August new export orders component of the PMIs was favourable for air cargo, despite being less supportive than in the previous months. Expansion continued at the global level, however, there was a contraction in emerging economies.

The inventory-to-sales ratio remains low ahead of the peak year-end retail season. This is positive for air cargo, however, further capacity constraints put this at risk.

"Air cargo demand had another strong month in August, up 7.7 per cent compared to pre-COVID levels. Many of the economic indicators point to a strong year-end peak season. With international travel still severely depressed, there are fewer passenger planes offering belly capacity for cargo. And supply chain bottlenecks could intensify as businesses continue to ramp up production," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director-General.

OMAN INSURANCE COMPANY

Leading GCC insurer approved for Lloyd's SIAB initiative

DUBAI: Oman Insurance Company (OIC) and Asta the leading third-party managing agent at Lloyd's, announced that 'in principle' approval has been received from Lloyd's to launch Syndicate 2880 under the Syndicate-in-a-Box (SIAB) initiative.

The syndicate is subject to the usual regulatory approvals and is due to commence underwriting for the 2022 year of account. The Syndicate will operate on Lloyd's platform under the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

OIC, one of the leading insurers in the GCC, based in Dubai, provides lead and follow capacity on regional and international facultative business. OIC will be the first syndicate to operate from the Lloyd's Dubai Platform and it will further strengthen OIC's position and support Lloyd's plan to develop the regional distribution of capacity.

The Active Underwriter will be Christopher Wildee who has 23 years of experience and was previously International Head of Marine and Upstream Energy at Aspen Insurance Group and was responsible for the establishment of Chaucer's Singapore operation.

Jean-Louis Laurent Josi, OIC CEO, said, "Oman Insurance's ambition is to further its reputation in the region for underwriting and operational excellence to deliver the best customer experience. Partnering with Lloyd's represents the highest standards that will deliver security and expertise to our policyholders. It is not only great news for OIC, that reflects the quality and the expertise of its teams, but also for the UAE to have the first Lloyd's syndicate ever in the region. Our vision for Syndicate 2880 is to build a profitable business that will facilitate further growth of our international account and raise the profile of Lloyd's platform in the region. We are grateful to our partners in this venture, notably Asta as managing agent, Argenta Private Capital Limited as members agent, Lloyd's in London and Dubai and the DIFC for their help and guidance."

Asta chief executive officer Julian Tighe added, "We are delighted to launch our latest 'in-principle' approved SIAB, a pioneer in the Gulf region, where we see the potential for numerous opportunities."

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

One-third of technology providers plan to invest \$1mn or more in AI

DUBAI: One-third of technology and service provider organisations with artificial intelligence (AI) technology plans said they would invest \$1 million or more into these technologies in the next two years, according to a new survey from Gartner, Inc. The vast majority of survey respondents (87 per cent) with AI technologies as a major investment area believe industry-wide funding for AI will increase at a moderate to fast pace through 2022.

"Rapidly evolving, diverse AI technologies will impact every industry," said Errol Rasit, managing vice president at Gartner. "Technology organisations are increasing investments in AI as they recognise its potential to not only assess critical data and improve business efficiency but also to create new products and services, expand their customer base and generate new revenue."

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman & Qatar Insurance was the top gainer, up by 9.46 per cent while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.83 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 3,943.39 points, down 0.22 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.56 per cent at 580.53 points. Oman & Qatar Insurance was the top gainer, up by 9.46 per cent, while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.83 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman & Qatar Insurance was the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 525 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR4 million, with more than 17 million shares changing hands. Out of 43 traded securities, 14 advanced, 12 declined and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, Local investors were net sellers for OMR292,000 while

foreign investors were net buyers for OMR173,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR119,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6,256 points, up 0.16 per cent. Prices of Oman & Qatar Insurance, Taageer Finance, United Finance, Muscat Finance and Global Investment Holding were up 9.46 per cent, 3.95 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 1.67 per cent and 1.52 per cent respectively. Oman United Insurance, Oman & Emirates Holding, Sohar International Bank, Al Sharqia Investment and HSEC Bank Oman were down 2.70 per cent, 2.67 per cent, 2.15 per cent, 2.02 per cent and 1.09 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,256.94 points, up 0.86 per cent. Services Index was up by 1.13 per cent before closing at 1,697.54 points. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%	
MSX 30 INDEX	3,969.20	3,943.39	3,943.39	3,952.13	-8.74	-0.22	
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,277.24	6,228.96	6,228.96	6,256.76	-27.81	-0.44	
Industry Index	6,293.51	6,256.94	6,292.87	6,256.94	35.93	0.57	
Services Index	1,705.37	1,697.54	1,700.41	1,697.54	2.87	0.17	
MSX Shariah Index	581.01	577.35	580.53	577.35	3.19	0.55	
MSX TR INDEX	4,770.57	4,739.55	4,739.55	4,750.06	-10.51	-0.22	

Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
16,911,362	4,039,503	525	21,993,791,422	14	12	17	43

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000003224 RENAISSANCE SER.	890,500	417,972	11	0.468	0.470	0.460	0.470	0.454	0.016	3.524	0.460	0.436	0.470	0.100	111,112,700
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	99,934	22,680	7	0.227	0.228	0.227	0.227	0.222	0.005	2.232	0.227	0.227	0.228	0.100	75,108,105
OM0000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	220,181	104,882	17	0.470	0.478	0.470	0.475	0.466	0.010	2.146	0.476	0.460	0.478	0.100	194,720,000
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,464,398	1,307,501	42	0.530	0.538	0.530	0.530	0.520	0.010	1.923	0.530	0.530	0.538	0.100	29,150,000
OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	920,700	55,718	38	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.060	0.060	0.063	0.100	18,735,926
OM0000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES	84,082	32,717	19	0.384	0.392	0.384	0.390	0.384	0.006	1.563	0.388	0.380	0.390	0.100	23,869,656
OM0000006920 VISION INSURANCE	102,300	8,286	11	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.100	8,100,000
OM0000001533 OMINVEST	17,500	5,425	4	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.310	0.316	0.100	250,409,422
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,541,000	176,712	22	0.115	0.116	0.113	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.112	0.114	0.100	23,000,000
OM0000003077 AL OMANIYA FINS	50,000	5,600	8	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.100	32,696,739
OM0000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	2,120	789	2	0.374	0.374	0.372	0.378	0.378	0.000	0.000	0.372	0.370	0.376	0.100	47,211,429
OM0000003968 OOREDOO	1,000	384	1	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.000	0.000	0.384	0.380	0.390	0.100	249,962,584
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	514,307	228,433	16	0.446	0.448	0.444	0.444	0.446	-0.002	-0.448	0.444	0.444	0.446	0.100	138,706,808
OM0000001525 OMAN INVST&FIN	350,000	49,810	16	0.144	0.144	0.142	0.142	0.144	-0.002	-1.388	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.100	33,654,000
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	374,081	277,439	27	0.756	0.756	0.740	0.740	0.752	-0.012	-1.596	0.740	0.740	0.744	0.100	555,000,000
OM0000002440 AL SHARQIA INV	172,157	16,784	17	0.098	0.099	0.097	0.097	0.099	-0.002	-2.020	0.097	0.097	0.100	0.100	8,730,000
OM0000001160 NATIONAL GAS	47,490	6,744	5	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.145	-0.003	-2.069	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.100	12,070,000
OM0000003398 SOHAR INT. BANK	551,000	50,046	16	0.093	0.093	0.090	0.091	0.093	-0.002	-2.151	0.090	0.089	0.093	0.100	272,095,668
OM0000001087 OMAN UNITED INSUR.	461,850	166,109	22	0.362	0.362	0.350	0.360	0.370	-0.010	-2.703	0.350	0.350	0.358	0.100	36,000,000
Total	8,664,670	2,934,060	303												

Parallel Market															
OM0000006979 OMAN QATAR INSUR.	4,415,000	715,005	22	0.156	0.162	0.156	0.162	0.148	0.014	9.459	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000003281 TAAGEER FINANCE	265,088	20,837	11	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.076	0.003	3.947	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	20,033,610
OM0000002374 UNITED FINANCE	390,611	23,046	25	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.001	1.724	0.059	0.057	0.059	0.100	20,599,520
OM0000003125 GLOBAL INV. H.	304,720	20,416	17	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	13,400,000
OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	57,954	5,562	7	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.001	1.053	0.096	0.094	0.096	0.100	214,747,491
OM0000001152 OMAN NAT. ENG.	133,100	13,044	14	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	12,740,000
OM0000004788 MADINA TAKAFUL	553,200	57,980	27	0.104	0.106	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.982	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	13,400,000
OM0000001178 MUSCAT GASES	2,000	332	1	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.100	4,980,000
OM0000001426 OMAN REFRESHMENT	150	289	1	1.925	1.925	1.925	1.750	1.750	0.000	0.000	1.925	1.750	1.925	0.100	87,500,000
OM0000002029 GULF INT'L CHEM.	8,800	5,900	4	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.100	15,832,943
OM0000002549 BANK DHOFAR	50,000	5,900	4	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	8,724,440
OM0000002804 ASAFFA FOODS	831	286	1	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.000	0.000	0.344	0.310	0.344	0.100	41,280,000
OM0000003521 GALFAR ENGINEER	206,350	15,995	13	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.100	15,832,943
OM0000003711 SOHAR POWER	530	23	1	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.044	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.043	0.043	0.047	0.100	8,724,440
OM0000004925 ALBATINAH POWER	29,000	1,479	3	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051	0.052	0.100	34,419,259
OM0000004933 AL SUNADI POWER	849	45	1	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.053	0.051	0.053	0.100	37,149,130
OM0000005985 PHOENIX POWER	28,711	1,367	10	0.046	0.047	0.045	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.046	0.047	0.100	67,270,667
OM0000007084 MCT DESALINATE	790	65	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.077	0.082	0.100	12,755,133
OM0000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	510,573	94,407	15	0.185	0.190	0.184	0.185	0.186	-0.001	-0.538	0.184	0.184	0.185	0.100	300,800,076
OM0000001310 ALJUMINUM PROD.	135,964	20,319	8	0.150	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.667	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.100	5,002,146
OM0000001517 HSEC BANK OMAN	772,526	70,310	22	0.092	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.067	0.091	0.090	0.096	0.100	182,028,464
OM0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.	50,451	3,683	3	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	8,896,875
OM0000002572 OMAN OIL MARKETING	37,500	31,650	10	0.844	0.844	0.844	0.844	0.836	-0.002	-9.829	0.844	0.844	0.820	0.100	51,716,100
Total	23														

LARSEN & TOUBRO

L&T to showcase its capabilities in multiple sectors in Expo 2020

DUBAI: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) will demonstrate its capabilities in Expo 2020, particularly in Hydrocarbon Engineering (LTHE), Water Effluent Treatment (WET) and Power Transmission & Distribution (PT&D) businesses. Apart from these businesses L&T Group companies like Mindtree,

LTI and LTTS will also showcase their capabilities.

L&T's portfolio strategy targets well-balanced and geographically diversified businesses across India and international markets. The Middle East has been one of the key growth regions for the company, which constitutes al-

most 61 per cent of the international order book of \$9,280 billion. The region also accounted for 13 per cent of L&T's total order book composition.

In FY21, Middle East contributed the highest order backlog after India order book, contributing 12 per cent to its total revenue.

MULTI-MODAL LOGISTICS

Bahrain launches fastest Global Sea-Air Hub in the region

MANAMA: The Kingdom of Bahrain launched the fastest regional multi-modal logistics hub in the region with only a 2 hour turnaround time for all containers - meaning products can be with customers in half the time and at 40 per cent of the cost.

The launch of the "Bahrain Global Sea-Air Hub" capitalises both on Bahrain's strategic position midway between European and Asian markets as well as on its proximity to regional target markets by establishing the most efficient multimodal sea-air transhipment hub in the region with a global reach.

The hub relies on streamlined clearance procedures, optimised logistics, and full digitisation to achieve an end-to-end lead time of just under two hours for goods transiting from Bahrain International Airport to Khalifa bin Salman Port and vice versa.

These gains translate to a 50 per cent reduction in average lead time compared to pure sea freight and a 40 per cent reduction in cost compared to pure air freight. Accordingly, Bahrain's sea-air hub serves as a valuable alternative for manufacturers and freight forwarders, particularly in the context of the ongoing shipping crisis.

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Room rent starting from 60 to 200 R.O 02 (Two) rooms starting from 120 R.O
With accessories and include with following services:

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Jeep Grand Cherokee, Model 2009200K KM, good condition, Price RO 1350 & **Nissan Kicks**, 2019 full Automatic, 4 cylinder, 24.000 Kms driven, Price RO 5,450.
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Illustration of a person using a laptop with a magnifying glass over the screen.

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Illustration of a smartphone showing a restaurant app interface with a thumbs up icon and a location pin.

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Monthly Rent: 375/- to 650/-
Fully Furnished Apartment And Transport For Office Also Available

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JOB VACANCIES

RESTAURANT OPERATIONS MANAGER

Responsibilities:

- To manage operations and production of the restaurant.
- To liaise with the respective Government/ Statutory Authorities to procure the necessary licenses and documentations.
- To lead the operations and production team to deliver within specific standards and schedules required.
- To manage overall costs including material, equipment, manpower, etc.
- To manage production planning, forecasting, purchasing and stock control.
- To maintain and improve the overall performance of the restaurant on a regular basis including cost analysis and monitoring of processes.
- Provide on-job coaching and guidance to team members, managing their performance to ensure a smooth operation
- To work along with the Marketing team to develop Marketing Strategies and Promotion plans to successfully market the restaurant in the relevant media platform.
- Manage and supervise the food & beverage staff to ensure maximum utilization of the manpower allocated.
- Ensure strict compliance with all relevant Hygiene and Safety legislation and requirements.
- To maintain close, professional and effective links with all external contractors/suppliers to ensure that they deliver to mutually accepted

agreements and highest quality levels.

- To handle responsibilities for the special orders made at the restaurant. It involves all planning associated with each event, right through to delivery.

Educational Qualifications & Experience:

- Post Graduate/Graduate or equivalent qualification.
- Minimum 05 years of experience in a supervisory level at F&B, Catering, Hotels and Hospitality establishments.
- Knowledge of food hygiene and Health and Safety requirements.
- A good understanding of quality assurance, procedures and protocols.
- Excellent communication skills both verbally and written English/ Arabic.

Key Skills Required:

- Excellent co-ordination skills
- Strong presentation and communication skills, verbal and written.
- Effective planning, management and organizing skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills to work with internal teams and external suppliers and customers.
- Must possess neat and pleasant grooming habits.
- Proactive approach to problem solving.
- Change orientated to make business improvements.

If you feel you are right for the position and for any further information, please write us at **oman2020marketing@gmail.com**

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SPACE MARKETING for Online Directory

Responsibilities:

- Contact potential clients to describe advertising opportunities. This usually takes the form of cold calling over the telephone but may involve face to face contact as well.
- Contact existing clients to arrange the placement and design of advertisements they have agreed on and ensure an ongoing relationship.
- Research client needs and explain the benefits of buying advertising space, responding to any objections.
- Explain pricing costs to potential clients and negotiate a fee, if necessary.
- Account manage an existing client

to ensure their needs are satisfied and they are happy with the service.

- Work with production teams to ensure that agreed advertisements are carried in the right place and at the right time.
- Track purchases and keep record of sales, contacts and deals.
- Work to maximize sales and meet targets.
- Deliver sales reports to management.

Key Skills: Excellent telephone manner, ability to persuade clients, outgoing, and sociable

Education: Any degree, candidates with marketing background will be preferred.

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for a reputed organization

	Freelance Sales Agents	Part-time Telecallers
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Key Skills	Availability and prompt response, ability to persuade clients, and Excellent telephone manner	Superb interpersonal, research, and record-keeping skills.
Work Location	Work from Home	At Office
Timing	Flexible (target based)	4 hours

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JOB VACANCIES

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with 2-3 years of relevant experience with special expertise in social media and digital marketing.

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A leading contractor in the field of firefighting and fire alarm system is looking for a **Project Engineer** with the following requirements:

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- 3) Fluent in English.

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Operation Manager:
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For Private Family, with experience in Arabic and Indian cuisine.

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Email: hrrsalalah2021@gmail.com

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Urgently required young & energetic **Sales Executive** with Omani DL for a reputed MNC. Location – Muscat, Contact 96545020

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Contact 92550471/96736832

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Contact 99340475
Email: saidzadjali@gmail.com

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GSM 92166848 / 94110108

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Contact +96879990740
Email: mundhirsaidalrashdi@gmail.com

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Indian HSE Officer, diploma in Mechanical Engineering & Diploma in fire and safety engineering. NEBOSH, OSHA AND QA/QC Holder. 5 years Experience in HSE seeks suitable placement.

Contact 7974 3601

ADMIN / FINANCE

Indian male, MBA (Finance), having D/L, 22 years exp in finalization in Accounts, Internal auditing, MIS and Admin in various sectors. 15 years exp in Gulf & 13 Years in Oman looking for a suitable SR position.

GSM: 96974637
Email: goutam14b@gmail.com

ACCOUNTANT

Indian Male 39 years, B.com, having 14 years Gulf experience as Accountant. Looking for suitable placement. Having Oman driving license and NOC available.

Contact: 97998397
Email: salafcs@yahoo.com

Chemical Engineering

Knowledge of quality control, process control, simulation, refinery operations with GCC resident visa and a valid GCC D/L. Currently doing Nebosh IGC course seeks suitable placement.

Contact: 72201210/93379169
Email: waasifkarthedath@gmail.com

Chemist (Quality Controller) (BSC. Chemistry)

25 Years Exp in Testing and analysis of raw, intermediate & finished products, Calibrating lab instruments, compiling reports. Looking suitable placement. Having Oman driving licence.

Contact No. Oman-96359802, India+91 9400032844.
Email: mollythomas53@rediffmail.com

JOB WANTED

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Female Pharmacist approved by MOH, 4 years experience, ready for immediate join. Contact 94533602

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Inventory, Purchase, Sales: Indian male 30, having 8 years experience in Retail, F&B operations, Accounting and various other skills, NOC available. Contact 96219904
Email: khanshah98@gmail.com

Pakistani young man having 07 yrs Oman exp. in purchase/procurement as senior level with master degree, looking for suitable placement. NOC & VDL is available. Contact 92587919, jahanzeb_athar@yahoo.com

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

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Email: sales@oceancentre.co

Pest Control Treatments - Cockroaches, Ants, etc. Ocean Centre LLC. Contact 9932 9289
Email: sales@oceancentre.co

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Email: sales@oceancentre.co

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YOU CAN STOP RETINAL DISEASE FROM STEALING YOUR VISION

For decades, Glenroy Washington happily worked as a professional musician, a passion that led him around the world. Then while on tour in Europe, he noticed something was wrong with his eyesight, and that's when his life began to change.

Washington has diabetes and tried to keep his A1C, or blood sugar, under control even while on tour. However, his hectic travel schedule affected his ability to manage his diabetes and he experienced symptoms of diabetic retinopathy, a retinal condition that occurs when diabetes damages blood vessels in the retina.

Retinal conditions like diabetic retinopathy as well as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a condition caused by a deterioration of the retina that leads to a loss of central vision, are among the leading causes of blindness and vision loss in the U.S. Diabetic retinopathy affects 7.7 million Americans, a number projected to double by 2050. AMD impacts as many as 11 million Americans and is also expected to double by 2050 due to longer life expectancies.

Retinal disease can steal your vision, but it doesn't have to. The American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS) launched the See for a Lifetime See a Retina Specialist campaign to elevate awareness of retinal disease as a major public health threat and prompt people at risk and their families to take action. More information and resources can be found at SeeforaLifetime.org.

"Incredible advances now allow us to successfully treat conditions that just a generation ago typically led to legal blindness," said ASRS President Carl C. Awh, MD, FASRS. "The fact that we have these effective treat-

ments makes it more important than ever to educate patients and their families about ways to recognise, prevent and treat retinal diseases. By doing so, we should be able to preserve, or even improve, the vision and quality of life of many."

As part of the campaign, there are three important things retina specialists want you to know:

1 Knowing retinal disease risk factors and symptoms can save your sight

Common adult symptoms of retinal disease include blurred central vision, distortion or straight lines appearing wavy, and sudden onset of floaters or flashes of light. Common risk factors for retinal disease include older age, family history, smoking, and high blood pressure and cholesterol, or diabetes. Seek care immediately if you experience sudden changes in vision.

2 Early detection is a game changer

Many retinal diseases have few noticeable symptoms in their early stages. With regular dilated retina exams, your eye physician can help preserve your sight by detecting signs of a retinal condition early, before extensive damage occurs. During a dilated retina exam, your eye physician takes a very close look at the back of your eye to check for any problems and will refer you to a retina specialist if there are signs of a retinal condition.

3 Retina specialists can help

Innovative treatments developed and delivered by retina specialists can prevent vision loss, allowing patients to maintain active, independent lives. Retina specialists are among the most extensively trained and highly skilled eye care providers, with mastery of the newest and most sophisticated tools and surgical techniques available to diagnose and treat retinal diseases. With the right screening, and ongoing monitoring and treatment, almost all patients with retinal diseases can avoid significant vision loss.

If you're at risk for retinal disease because of family history or underlying conditions such as diabetes, or if you experience symptoms of a retinal condition, see a retina specialist as soon as possible. That's what Washington did. After returning to the states, he met with a retina specialist who determined that diabetic retinopathy had affected both of his eyes.

She immediately developed a personalised treatment plan to improve his vision that included laser treatments and intravitreal injections, also known as eye injections. With ongoing treatment, Washington is back to performing, driving and can read even small text, which is helping him as he works on his next two albums and travels for shows.

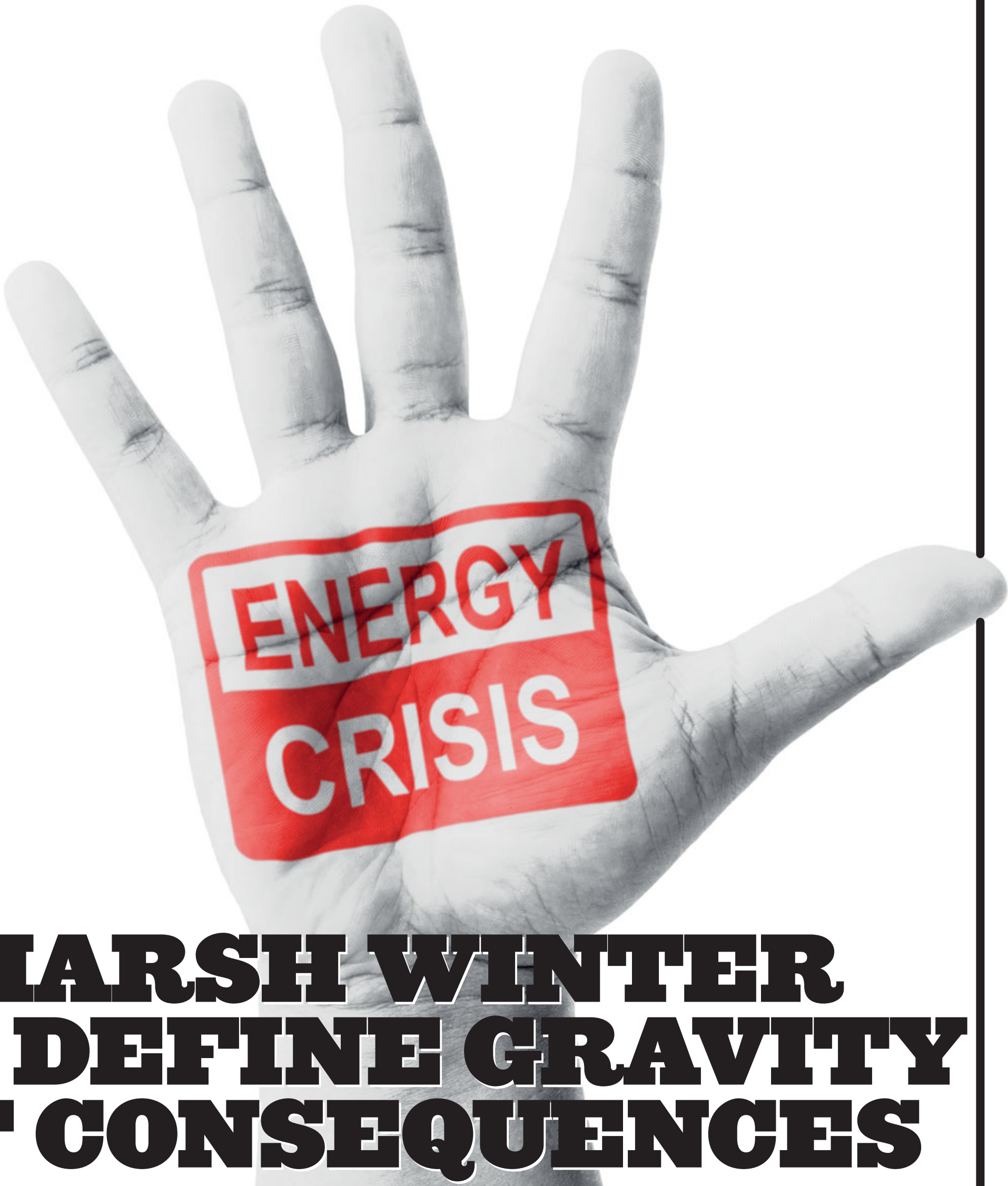
"If you have a family history of retinal conditions or experience symptoms, make an appointment with a retina specialist right away because delaying care can lead to vision loss," said ASRS Foundation President Timothy G. Murray. "Your retina specialist will use advanced retinal imaging and early treatment, if needed, to help preserve your vision." - BPT



LIFESTYLE



FEATURE



HARSH WINTER
TO DEFINE GRAVITY
OF CONSEQUENCES

EUROPEAN households should prepare to pay even higher electricity and gas bills in the coming months. Some European countries, like Spain, are passing emergency measures like capping prices and limiting utilities’ profits. The aim is to slow down the current price hike and avoid social and political repercussions.

“Climate and energy policies have become a cleavage and conflict line in our societies. That has to be politically hedged and managed to sustain social peace and avoid ramifications on the cohesion in the European Union,” Kirsten Westphal, senior analyst at the nonprofit German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), told DW.

The EU has plenty of programs to intervene in long-term measures to speed up the transformation of the energy systems and promote its plan of a so-called green recovery from the pandemic. The member states, whose budgets are already overstretched, are responsible for immediate measures to curb price jumps. But Spain is now calling for “a European policy menu predesigned to react to dramatic price surges.”

The Spanish example shows that emergency measures will have consequences on energy companies, whose profits will decrease, affecting also their ability to invest in futureproof energy systems.

“This price crisis with spikes and huge volatility comes at the worst possible moment for the green recovery. It has destroyed capital heavily needed for

investment in renewables and technologies,” said Westphal. Wholesale energy prices, the prices paid by energy companies, have more than doubled this year for many reasons, including the economy’s stronger-than-expected rebound and limited supply of fossil fuels. Russia, for instance, is selling a limited amount of gas to customers on the European spot market. Some commentators even suggested that the strategy is intended to speed up the approval of the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline by EU market regulators.

At the same time, some energy infrastructure is being updated this year. It was originally subject to regular maintenance work last year, but then the pandemic arrived.

On top of it, there are temporary factors adding pressure, among them the shutdown of the electricity cable between Britain and France due to a fire, or the many power outages caused by extreme climate events.

“There is little evidence to suggest that the upside will stop any time soon,” Tom Marzec-Manser, lead European gas analyst at energy consultancy ICIS, told DW.

These global trends added to weather conditions, which are undeniably key to gas and energy markets.

“In Europe, winter lasted almost until May with colder-than-average temperatures. Additionally, we registered cold snaps in January and February in Asia, Europe, and North America, which sharply increased gas needs for heating and power generation,” Jean-

Energy prices have been soaring globally. Consumers are not amused, and several European politicians are trying to instrumentalize the crisis, which could easily get worse, especially in case of a cold winter.

According to think tank Ember, climate change is mainly to blame for the current situation, as it increases the probability of extreme weather events, which create market shocks and eventually result in higher energy prices.

“The recent IPCC report clearly states that human-induced climate change is causing weather and climate extremes across the globe. We have seen local evidence of this with the unprecedented floods in Germany this July, with hundreds of lives lost and reconstruction costs estimated to reach €30 billion (\$35 billion). And this is just one of multiple incidents happening around the world every day,” Sarah Brown, senior electricity analyst at Ember, told DW.

The ongoing transformation of energy systems is such that the limited generation of electricity from renewable sources pushes energy companies to use more fossil fuels. Given simultaneous high gas prices, the switch from gas to coal is a global phenomenon.

“Europe has seen less gas-to-coal switching than other markets due to its carbon market. If Europe had not had EU carbon prices, it would probably burn much more coal and generate much more emissions than we currently see,” Dubreuil said. Carbon prices are a pillar of the European strategy to make its economy greener. These prices doubled over the past year and reached new highs at the end of summer. Some politicians blamed carbon prices for the rise in total energy prices, but experts do not agree.

“It is the rise in fossil gas prices that is predominantly causing the hike in electricity prices. It is not carbon costs,” said Frans Timmermans, vice president of the European Commission.

“The carbon price increase only accounts for around one-fifth of the uptick in power prices,” Ember’s Brown argued. According to the analyst, the only solution is to speed up investments in renewables.

The oil and gas industry says that the role of gas in the energy transition is pivotal, and consequences on household bills are due to an underinvestment in gas capacity. In June, JP Morgan’s head of Oil and Gas Research, Christy-an Malek, said the bank had identified a \$600 billion shortfall of upstream investment needed between 2021 and 2030 to meet global oil and gas demand.

A harsh winter coming?

Last week, Russian gas giant Gazprom decided not to maximize gas shipments to Europe, while Norway announced its intention to raise natural gas exports to the rest of Europe.

The impact on households, companies and national budgets will depend on these commercial decisions and other factors, including potential emergency measures adopted by governments throughout Europe.

Weather conditions will remain crucial, though. A cold winter will indeed increase energy demand, while extreme weather events could also cause supply disruptions.

ROUND-UP

Dhofar Auto introduces 2021 Model RAM 3500 and 5500 Chassis CAB

The powerful and high-performance trucks are customised for fleets and heavy-duty tasks to meet the needs of all businesses with exceptional capabilities

MUSCAT: Dhofar Automotive, the official distributor of Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Fiat, Ram, Alfa Romeo and Mopar vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, announced the introduction of the 2021 RAM 3500 and RAM 5500 models with chassis cab.



The powerful and high-performance trucks are customised for fleets and heavy-duty tasks to meet the needs of all businesses with exceptional capabilities. They are displayed alongside a variety of RAM models at the Dhofar Automotive showrooms in the Sultanate.

Commenting on this introduction, Hatem El-Naggar, General Manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, "The RAM 3500 and RAM 5500 models are renowned as the world's preferred heavy-duty commercial trucks due to their optimum performance and pow-

er, robust and durable chassis, as well as its incredible capability to transport the heaviest loads. These are also high-quality built vehicles, reinforcing the trust that our valued customers can have placed in our trucks."

"The RAM brand offers the best light and heavy-duty trucks available on the road today. 2021 models have either been completely modernised or have undergone significant improvements to enhance their performance. RAM Heavy Duty trucks deliver unparalleled performance, style and

capability, especially in the highly competitive truck segment. The RAM 3500 and RAM 5500 models are designed for both work and comfort, providing truck enthusiasts with powerful engines, a luxurious cabin together with a host of practical and useful features," he added.

Set new standards The RAM 3500 and RAM 5500 set new standards in power and performance in the heavy-duty fleet truck segment with their advanced equipment, state-of-the-art tech-

nology and safety standards. This is further enhanced with the presence of powerful engines that drive them. Whether it is the 6.4 litres HEMI® supercharged V8 or the powerful 6.7-litre Cummins® Turbo Diesel 6 cylinder engine, the latter transmits power through an advanced Aisin transmission, both enhance the RAM trucks' exceptional responsiveness and ease of driving, no matter the condition.

The 2021 RAM 3500 and RAM 5500 combine advanced features, modern technology and original premium materials with class-leading performance and status along with comfort and durability. The cabin design team chose premium materials, textures and colours to enhance the sense of luxury. RAM trucks are the most technologically advanced ever, packed with a host of innovative features along with the award-winning 4th generation Uconnect system that provides convenience and connected services, ensuring RAM truck customers stay connected and informed while keeping their

hands on the steering wheel and their eyes on the road or desert track in front of them. Safety and security were prioritized when developing the 2021 RAM models, providing more than 100 available safety and security features. Mopar offers over 100 factory-engineered and quality-tested performance parts and accessories specifically for the all-new 2021 RAM TRX and more than 600 features and accessories across the brand's entire 2021 RAM truck lineup. "I would like to invite all RAM fans to visit the Dhofar Automotive showrooms and learn about the new models on offer and take advantage of the incredible benefits available on RAM vehicles. As class-leading vehicles, its capabilities and strong performance are unmatched and we would like our valued customers to witness it first-hand," he added. In the Sultanate, RAM models are available at Dhofar Automotive showrooms with different equipment classes.

APPOINTMENT

Zubair Corporation appoints Qais Badr Al Batashi as Head of Public Relations



MUSCAT: The Zubair Corporation has appointed Qais Badr Al Batashi as Head of Public Relations. This is part of the corporation's strategy and vision in empowering young Omani competencies across various leadership positions and instilling in them the confidence to carry out their responsibilities. This appointment is also aligned with the vision of the Omani government focused on enriching national talents in private sector institutions.

Qais joined The Zubair Corporation 8 years ago, where he started as a public relations officer, moving up to his new position as

Head of Public Relations in the institution. Through his continuous diligence and hard work over the years, Qais was able to prove his efficiency and commitment. Following this, the company sought to provide him with valuable training opportunities by sending him to Britain to enhance his qualifications, develop knowledge and ideas and refine his skills and competencies, all of which was covered by the corporation.

Commenting on this occasion, Hilal Omar Al Siyabi, Head of Corporate Services at The Zubair Corporation, said, "At The Zubair Corporation, we are keen to build

young Omani competencies to assume senior administrative and operational positions within the Corporation and its subsidiaries. In line with this strategy, we were keen to attract young Omani talents across various disciplines and also train existing talented employees, who are a part of the senior management of the Corporation today."

"I would like to congratulate the ambitious and determined Qais Al Batashi, a talented young Omani, who has proven himself through hard work and perseverance. We extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to him for his admi-

nable performance and his constant efforts for continuous development at work. We hope that he will contribute towards achieving the Corporation's present and future roles in the national economy and support the institution's vision, mission and objectives by carrying out the administrative tasks entrusted to him. We wish him success and the best of luck in all his endeavours."

From his side, Qais Al Batashi, Head of Public Relations at The Zubair Corporation stated, "I will do my best and always strive to achieve the best performance at work. Furthermore, I will play

my part in supporting the Omani youth and urging them to develop their skills and learn new things at work. This way, they can gain the same support as I did from the management of the Corporation, ever since I started until this day."

The Zubair Corporation is one of the most important economic multi-activity conglomerates in the Sultanate, which operates in various sectors. Over the past years, the corporation has sought to empower national competencies by providing many training and qualifying opportunities to develop talent within the Corporation.



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ROUND-UP

Summer surprises on powerful Toyota Hilux

Born strong, the Hilux is engineered to go the distance, be it at work or on an adventure and surpass expectations

MUSCAT: Toyota Hilux, the most popular pick-up is available with exclusive benefits including 1 Year Comprehensive Insurance and Service 2 Years/20,000 km (Whichever is earlier) (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply.) The campaign is valid up to October 21. Visit the showroom for exact details.

Born strong, the Hilux is engineered to go the distance, be it at work or on an adventure and surpass expectations. The modern Hilux is two vehicles in one: a work



truck through the week and a family vehicle on weekends, thanks to added comforts and safety features. Indeed the current generation Hilux models are stunning in design and features. Their performance & safety parameters are amongst the best and the strong frame and suspension impart toughness for any demanding task.

Apart from this, high-quality materials are used to ensure high durability. The distinctive Toyota

grille renders the Hilux instantly recognisable. A tough deck protects cargo and increase carrying capabilities, while wheels are fitted with wide tyres for a better grip.

In Oman, the Hilux is available in two versions – The rugged Hilux with J-Deck and the sporty 4.0 Litre V6 Hilux Adventure with the A Deck. The 4.0 Litre V6 Toyota Hilux Adventure is a truly exciting mean machine that's been developed by Toyota to get your pulse

racing. Check out the Hilux TRD and Unleash the Power!

The Toyota Hilux Adventure packs the legendary Hilux ruggedness! Every Toyota Hilux TRD comes with high-end features that start with the mighty 4.0 Litre V6 Engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 38.3 Kg-m Torque. It has an Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the tempo going.

Equal importance has been provided to the technical superiority and safety features of the Hilux 4x4. The noteworthy features include a 2.7 Litre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-speed Manual Transmission and 6 Speed Automatic Transmission, outputting 164 HP.

The Hilux is not only a tough vehicle but also an advanced pick-up with stylish cues hitherto found only on SUVs. The front of the Hilux gives a sense that the vehicle is wider than it is. This is achieved by the horizontal bars that make up the Grille and Sleek Headlamps that wrap around the front of the Fenders. The Hilux sports a thick, chunky Front Steel Bumper sculpted like an SUV, Front Fog lamps, Alloy Wheels, Rear Lamp Garnish apart from Side Stripes that adorn the vehicle.

WIYAKUM

Nama Group launches sixth edition of internal volunteering initiative

MUSCAT: Nama Group has launched the sixth edition of Wiyakum initiative for its employees of both electricity and water sectors in Oman.

Wiyakum is one of many projects empowered by the communication and sustainability department within Nama Group. This project aims at promoting the culture of volunteering among the group's employees.

Wiyakum aims at encouraging the group employees to utilise the volunteering leave available as per the HR manual.

The volunteering programme embraces initiatives that have implemented at least one of the sustainability pillars, which are the economic, social, and environmental, and delivered voluntarily, by Nama Group volunteering formed teams.

Wiyakum should implement voluntary initiatives to serve the community where the volunteering ideas will be evaluated as per the internal approved mechanism, the awarded volunteering ideas, then, will be financially supported to reach the implementation phase.

In previous editions of the pro-

gramme, more than 1,233 Nama Group employees have participated in Wiyakum volunteering initiatives and activities compared to 9,460 non-employees participants and volunteers from outside the organisation.

“Combat Desertification” project in the Governorate of Dhofar, is a major volunteering project achieved by Wiyakum initiative. The project is achieving the environmental pillar which represents the idea of manufacturing advanced solar-powered devices that can minimise desertification. These devices draw in atmospheric air and convert it into freshwater that irrigates crops and trees in natural reserves. The project targeted the Dhofar Governorate due to the deteriorating fertility of arable lands caused by overgrazing and soil levelling.

Wiyakum has also implemented other initiatives to provide clean electric energy by using solar panels for a mosque located in the Jebel area, where frequent worshippers are passing by. The mosque consists of a chapel for men and a chapel for women including toilets with a separate wash area.

E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

Bank Muscat supports Najahi customers on MarkeetEx.com

MUSCAT: In line with its vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’, and commitment to supporting and developing Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Oman, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, is continuing its successful partnership with MarkeetEx.com, an e-commerce platform dedicated to promoting the products and services from local MSMEs.

The bank's efforts, which are coordinated through its Retail

Enterprises (Najahi) unit, boost the e-commerce sector in the Sultanate and support many Najahi customers by covering their subscription and commission fees, especially during a crucial period.

Widening customer base

Many Najahi customers have already signed up with MarkeetEx to showcase their products, promote their businesses and widen their customer base. MarkeetEx.com currently has over 1,000

merchants from different parts of the country registered on its online platform, including 27 Najahi customers who are active on it. It must be noted that more MSMEs are using the marketplace to sell and deliver products and services including groceries, household goods, mobiles and computers, fashion, beauty, and health products at highly competitive prices.

Bank Muscat has been continuously supporting the MSME sector through its different initiatives

and programmes that view these businesses as a primary pillar of Oman's plans for economic diversification in alignment with the landmark Oman 2040 Vision. The bank's initiatives are part of its strategy to promote Omani entrepreneurs, especially Najahi customers, to increase sales and improve their financial performance.

Bank Muscat also announced that it has managed to cross several important milestones since the beginning of this partnership

with MarkeetEx, earlier in 2020. The initiative continues to build on the success of the bank's exhibitions, which were an annual affair in previous years. However, with the continuation of social distancing norms at present, businesses can reach out easily to their customers through <https://markeetex.com>.

Bank Muscat seeks to support MSMEs in the country through its Najahi and Al Wathbah and Meethaq units to further strengthen the Sultanate's

economy. Najahi, in particular, is well known for having pioneered the availability of a number of collateral-free credit facilities for micro and small businesses in Oman.

It also offers non-financial support to Omani entrepreneurs through a number of innovative initiatives like free digital marketing certification programmes, consultation and seminars to share entrepreneurial success stories and learning.

NEW GARDEN COLLECTION

Danube Home announces launch of its garden e-Catalogue 2022

MUSCAT: just in time for winters, Danube Home, the leader in the home furnishing and home improvement industry, is inviting everyone to live a little bigger outdoors, to weave a little piece of heaven in the urban jungle, with the launch of its new Garden Collection in stores in the UAE, Oman, and Bahrain and online at www.danubehome.com.

With over 2,500 outdoor furnishings, themed furniture pieces, and garden accessories – Danube Home is the ultimate winter weather destination for your front-yard, back-yard, terrace, and balcony needs.

Whether you wish to cover your outdoor space with emerald-green, silky, fine grass dotted with geometrically aligned pebbles, in the midst of which squats a fountain elegantly squirting water into a basin, while a golden lamp accentuates your themed outdoor furniture, wherein the winter-time you can share hearty laughter with your loved ones, Danube Home gives you a luxurious opportunity to reconnect with nature through its “My Style, My Way” garden collection. Artistically incorporating the vision for simplicity, sophistication, and functionality of design into this year's Garden Collection, customers are offered an eclectic choice of

popular colour pallets, hard & soft top gazebos, quirky and fun kids play items, outdoor furniture, BBQ sets, camping equipment, décor pieces & fountains, grass carpets, and everything that can elevate any outdoor space into a family retreat.

Speaking on the occasion, Adel Sajani, Managing Director Danube Group, commented, “With special attention paid to aesthetically combining comfort, craft, and functionality, Danube Home's My Style My Way themed Garden collection stands a cut above the rest because it offers our valued customers a bewildering array of choices, exceptional value, great comfort, and functionality without compromising on style. With winter arriving soon, Danube Home's My Garden Collection ensures that your outdoors could be the most emphatic statement of self-expression.”

The new Family Collection includes larger lounge sets that fit the whole family to smaller lounge sets that most elegantly fit into your space. Whether you have a large outdoor space or relatively small, My Style My Way themed gazebos, umbrellas, sofas, and dining collection ensure consistency of style and colour and comfort. On top of that, you can take your outdoor game up a notch by cus-

tomizing your pillows to perfectly match your furniture. With the bewildering selection of pieces perfect for even the smallest of space, your balcony or terrace could be a perfect statement of style.

Shubhojit Mahalanobis, Director Retail & Danube Hospitality Solutions, was quoted as saying, “Anticipating a hike in spending on outdoor furniture in preparation for the start of the winter season in the Gulf region in the coming weeks, we have launched our much-awaited Garden e-Catalogue boasting an incredible array of choices and unbelievable product depth, so much so that consumers can make their outdoor spaces as fun and relaxing as possible.”

Syed Habib, Director of Business Development Franchise & e-Commerce, speaking candidly on the occasion said, “The Pandemic has had a profound effect on the concept of outdoor spaces and garden furniture. The search for safer outdoor hangouts became a hot trend among homebound people and that explains the increased focus on sprucing up the outdoor living spaces. This trend has attained permanence. Keeping tabs on the pulse of the market and changing consumer preferences, Danube Home has launched My Style My Way Garden.”

THREE UNIQUE CREATIONS

Alfardan Motors highlights Ferrari Personalisation Programme

MUSCAT: Alfardan Motors, the official Ferrari importer in Oman, highlighted Ferrari's unparalleled Personalisation Programme through the showcase of three unique creations – two 488 Pista Spiders and an 812 GTS. Through the Marque's Personalisation Programme, customers have the ability to create a car as unique as they are and showcase their personalities however they choose.

The exclusive Ferrari Tailor-Made programme helps Ferrari clients fully customise their cars, choosing from a vast selection of exclusive materials and finishes, for their car to stand out and be truly one of a kind. Rooted within the very first phase of the legendary history of the Prancing Horse, it is fuelled by its never-ending research and is imbued with the Marque's core values of passion, innovation and elegance.

The 488 Pista Spider created through the Ferrari Tailor Made programme is nothing short of eye-catching with Italian Tricolore accents throughout. Featuring a striking Viola Dino exterior with the Tricolore Livery with Fade Effect and accented with Bianco dream lines on the lower carbon fibre parts of the car. The contrasting Alcantara Nero interior is highlighted with a Tricolore Fade



effect in the middle part of the seats, finished with Bianco Pelle piping. The whole look of the car is brought together with the steering wheel and sports paddle shifts that boast Tricolore accents.

Designed in the special Atelier Ferrari, this bespoke 488 Pista Spider was created. This powerful model boasts a Giallo Modena exterior with a Blu Nart Racing Livery and stunning Blu Lucido carbon fibre accents. The impressive interior is a beautiful Blue Medio Alcantara with Giallo accents on the seats, dashboard and stitching, complete with Tricolore touch throughout, as an ode to Ferrari's birthplace.

Conceptualised with Alfardan Motors' dedicated experts in the

Atelier at Ferrari's newly renovated showroom, a dream was turned into reality with this 812 GTS. This remarkable V12 spider showcases a Verde Abeton exterior with eye-catching Verde Lucido carbon fibre and is finished with ORO Livery. The interior is personalised with Daytona racing seats in Cuio and Verde leather with Verde Lucido full carbon fibre interior and Tricolore touches throughout.

These three stunning models are a showcase of what's possible through the Ferrari Personalisation Programme which includes a range of programmes that enable customers to select every last detail of their car tailored according to their tastes.

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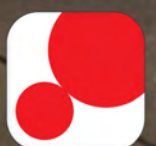
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