

**EFFORTS TO RESCUE
BEACHED WHALE
SHARK PROVE FUTILE**

Efforts to rescue a whale shark that was beached by a village near Sohar went futile, despite the best efforts of civilians and government agencies. **>A3**



**HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN
GREETES KING OF SPAIN**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Felipe VI of Spain on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to King Felipe VI. His Majesty also wished the friendly people of Spain further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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OUR TOP PRIORITY IS TO RESTORE NORMALCY AND PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS TO AFFECTED PEOPLE: HIS MAJESTY

A national patriotic epic unfolded as Omani people exhibited splendid forms of solidarity

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on Monday delivered a Royal speech reading as follows:
"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Thanks be to Almighty Allah for the bounties of security and stability. Praise be for Him Who made us one united nation, whose solid-packed ranks, row by row, whose will is unfettered by calamities—armed with the patience, perseverance and self-denial for the sake of this dear homeland.

Dear Citizens,
Our dear homeland, particularly

in the governorates of North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah, has undergone major climatic conditions that claimed the lives of some citizens and residents. The adverse climatic conditions also incurred immense material losses to citizens' properties and the infrastructure.

Right from start of the tropical condition, we were keen to follow up all that happened, moment by moment while our hearts turned to the Almighty Allah with pleadings and supplications to safeguard Oman and protect its citizens and residents therein against

any harm. A national patriotic epic unfolded as Omani people exhibited splendid forms of solidarity, collaboration and patience. This will forever remain testimony to the strength of this nation and its ability to stand the test of time in facing adverse conditions and unfavourable circumstances. This has been an everlasting incarnation of the sacrifices made by this nation over the ages.

Tropical condition

While we condole ourselves and the families of citizens and residents who lost their lives during this tropical condition, we pray to the Almighty Allah to have mercy on the deceased's souls and rest them in peace.

We also offer praise to the Almighty for granting safety to the citizens of Oman, who embodied values of selflessness and solidarity, collaboration and cooperation

while supporting the national efforts exerted by the departments concerned in facilitating the life of citizens.

In the meantime, we reaffirm that, in this stage, it is our top priority to work for the restoration of normalcy to public life and for providing basic needs to the stricken ones.

We will also accord our attention to the restoration of the damaged infrastructure. The departments concerned already began to accomplish this objective. All government departments have to work together as one schema whose segments cooperate and complement each other to perform their duties and responsibility in the best possible manner. They have to speed up the rate of action in serving the citizens in every part of the country. The Council of Ministers has to ensure the achievement of this goal.

The Ministerial Committee tasked with assessing the damage incurred to citizens' homes and properties has to deliver assistance as soon as possible. The government departments concerned have to facilitate the mission of the Committee and cooperate with it. The Ministerial Committee shall come under our direct supervision, and we shall follow up the progress of its tasks and operations.

To expedite the accommodation of the impacts of the tropical condition and alleviate the conditions of affected citizens, we have decreed the establishment of a National Fund for Emergencies (NFE) to tackle the aftermath of this tropical condition and similar natural disasters that may occur, God forbids.

From this podium, we would like to thank our brethren and friends—leaders of sisterly and friendly states—who showed soli-

darity by contacting us and conveying their sympathy. We pray to the Almighty Allah to spare them any harm or calamity.

We would also like to express our appreciation for all government and private establishments and individuals who played commendable roles in managing this crisis. We thank them for their prompt response to the handling of the situation. In particular, we note the performance of the National Commission for Emergency Management, our valiant armed forces, the Royal Oman Police, the security services, the forward-looking citizens and residents, the Shelter and Relief Sectors, the support services, the private sector firms, the non-governmental organisations, the volunteer teams—who all gave excellent examples of citizenship.

May the Almighty Allah protect Oman and its people!" **-ONA**

MEETINGS

Sayyid Asa'ad bids farewell to Indian, Nepalese envoys



MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan received separately in his office on Monday Sarmila Parajuli Dhakal, Ambassador of Nepal to the Sultan-

ate and Shri Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Sultanate, to bid them farewell at the end of their tasks in Oman.

The two ambassadors expressed their thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to them during their tour of duty in the Sultanate from His Majesty, the Government and the Omani



people, which had enabled them to carry out their duties. They wished His Majesty good health, happiness and a long life, and the Sultanate further progress and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

In his turn, Sayyid Asa'ad expressed his utmost thanks to the ambassadors for the efforts they

exerted in serving the relations between the Sultanate and their countries.

He wished them permanent success and the friendly peoples of Nepal and India further progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General and the two advisers at the Office of Sayyid Asa'ad. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN MOCIIIP to address industry challenges

1 Reviewing the challenges of industrial sector and finding their solutions were among the objectives of a workshop of the MOCIIIP. **>A4**

WORLD Climate protestors gather in Brussels

2 Belgium's capital was awash with activists seeking more stringent action on climate change. **>A6**

MARKET IIC extends strong support to startups

3 Industrial Innovation Centre (IIC) has supported startup in the Sultanate with an amount of OMR285,057. **>B1**

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MUSCAT



OMAN



PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr	11:58pm
Asr	3:19pm
Maghrib	5:49pm
Isha	8:59pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:48am

Philippines, Oman sign air accord

Story below

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TV TIMES
See Page 11

A complete daily schedule of Star Plus, BBC, MTV, CNN, Prime Sports, Pakistan TV and Oman TV

In this issue



A clan for all seasons

US dollar rates

Indian Rupee	28.49
Pakistan Rupee	25.09
Sri Lanka Rupee	44.00
Philippine Peso	25.00

Courtesy of the British Bank of the Middle East Group

Weather

Weather will remain fine with some amount of clouds over mountains of Dabhiyah. Temperature recorded in other cities:

Muscat 31 (38), Abu Dhabi 32 (36), Dubai 32 (36), Riyadh 37 (30), Jeddah 36 (30), Bahrain 31 (38), Kuwait 32 (31), Amman 27 (31), Cairo 32 (30), Cairo 28 (34), Karachi 34 (32), Bombay 32 (34), Paris 28 (43) and London 28 (43).
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TEMP MAX MIN

Seeb	35	25	23	73
Muscat	35	25	23	73
Bahra	36	26	24	75
Abu	36	26	24	75
Najaf	37	27	25	77
Sana	32	22	20	72
Baq	33	23	21	80
Sur	36	26	24	79
Amman	37	27	25	77
Thamir	36	26	24	79
Dahab	31	21	19	69
Mina Rayat	30	20	18	68
Qatar	39	29	27	82
Hama	36	26	24	79
Fairfield	37	27	25	80
Al-Hadrami	31	21	19	69
Mafra	34	24	22	75



1992 - The Year of Industry

Philippines, Oman sign air accord

By A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT — The national carriers of Oman and the Philippines will operate two weekly flights between Muscat and Manila, following an agreement signed by the two countries here yesterday.

The agreement was signed by Oman's minister of communications, Mr. Salim bin Abdullah al-Ghazali and the Philippine ambassador to Bahrain, Mr. Leonides T. Caday.

The accord is expected to help boost economic and social ties between the two countries.

The signing ceremony at the Al Qubba Guest House was attended by the charge d'affaires of the Philippine embassy in Muscat, Mr. Baharim A. Guisomila, as well as senior officials of the Sultanate's ministries of communications and foreign affairs, Gulf Air and Oman Aviation Services.

A preliminary agreement was signed in Manila on February 26 by civil aviation representatives of Oman and the Philippines.

Mr. Caday and his delegation arrived in Muscat on Saturday evening and were received at the Seeb airport by senior officials of the Ministry of Communications.

Minister al-Ghazali expressed his satisfaction at the signing of the agreement and said it will activate trade between the Sultanate and eastern Asia and other Gulf countries via Muscat. The agreement will be enforced immediately, he said.

A dinner was tendered by Mr. Guisomila the other night in honour of the visiting Filipino ambassador. The dinner was attended by the Philippine embassy staff and by leaders of the Filipino community in Oman.

Prices of lamb up this year

By Oswald Pereira

MUSCAT — Australian chilled lamb went from 120 to 130 per tonne in the United Arab Emirates market this year compared to last year.

The prices have also been "less volatile" during the year, according to information available here.

The cost and freight (C and F) indicator price for Australian chilled lamb in the UAE is \$3,000 per tonne and was around this level for most of September.

The large drop in the C and F prices in early 1991 was a result of trading returning to normal in the region following the Gulf conflict.

In September last year, Indian chilled lamb was being sold for prices similar to Australian lamb. This September it was selling at \$400 per tonne below the price of Australian chilled lamb at \$2,600 per tonne.

The indicator price for Australian frozen lamb fluctuated between \$1,900 and \$2,000 per tonne in September. Twelve months earlier, the product was selling at between \$1,800 to \$1,850 per tonne.

Prices this year have been higher than in 1991 except for the period during the conflict.

The wholesale indicator price for Australian wethers in the UAE has eased slightly to Dh 125 per head. Live sheep prices in September were around Dh 130 per head, at levels similar to last year.

A number of vessels have arrived recently in the Middle East and the increasing availability of sheep has resulted in easing of prices.

Preliminary figures indicated that live sheep exports to the Middle East were about 334,000 head in September, down by about 10 per cent from 370,000 head in August.

Water lack problem discussed

DUBAI — Gulf officials and experts yesterday delivered the growing water shortages of the oil-rich region.

The Gulf states are worried over the possibility of future disputes over the sparse ground water reserves under joint border waters.

UAE expert Khalid Ali al-Agha openly addressed the sharing of ground water reserves and called for bilateral agreements to distribute such reserves. He noted the reservoir known as 'Daman' goes through what is now Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

The Ilurimi reservoir lies between the UAE border city of Al-Ain and the Musandam in Oman. He recalled the historical conflicts among tribes over these water reserves.

The four-day conference was opened on Saturday by the United Arab Emirates minister of water and electricity, Saad Humaid bin Nasir al-Owais. It is dealing with shortage of natural water resources, marine environment pollution and excessive water consumption in the region.

The conference is the first by the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. It aims to establish schemes for water resources available and alternative means of water supply such as purification of seawater for agricultural use.

The GCC states have built many water desalination plants since the oil boom of the 1970s, but not enough to replace natural water reserves that are fast depleting. Abdulatif Ibrahim al-Miqan, head of the water and agriculture department at the GCC secretariat, said that in 1991 the GCC states were operating 45 water desalination plants, half of which are in Saudi Arabia. — AP

China seeks more trade with GCC

BEIJING — Chinese officials are hoping to attract Arab oil dollars at a weeklong conference with bankers and industrialists from the Gulf states, an official news report said yesterday.

So far, China has attracted little of the Arab states' overseas investment, the China Daily said. The biggest Arab investor has been Kuwait, at \$58 million.

Several Arab states, including Saudi Arabia and Oman, established relations with China only in the past few years. Saudi investment in China totals just 130,000, the paper said.

It quoted Lin Kun of the trade ministry as saying China hopes to encourage the Arabs to set up manufacturing bases in China to reduce their reliance on imported consumer goods from developed countries.

The conference is being attended by industrialists, bankers and government officials from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. — AP

UN team out to track Iraq's missing scuds

MANAMA — The leader of the largest UN weapons inspection team to visit Iraq said yesterday his mission will focus on up to 200 scud missiles that intelligence sources believe may still be hidden.

Nikita Smidovich, a Russian, said the inspection was not related to the Nov. 3 US presidential election.

Iraq tried to delay the team's two-week mission, to start on Friday, saying it is wary of a US-casualty Resolution 687, which demands elimination of Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes and long-range ballistic missiles.

The teams have already dismantled much of the country's weapons of mass destruction as well as facilities associated with these programmes.

They have tracked down or forced Iraq to destroy most of the Soviet-supplied scud surface-to-surface missiles or their variants.

But Smidovich said "governments of the council member states" had provided information on numbers varying "from zero to 200." These assessments are known to have come mainly from US and British intelligence sources.

Smidovich, a chemical weapons expert and to aide to Ekeus, led the first team into Iraq after a previous group was barred access to the Iraqi agriculture ministry in July.

The confrontation over the ministry inspection created fears that the United States would lead a military strike to enforce the UN resolution.

Smidovich's mission in a position to negotiate, to give it away or to modify it. Neither is Iraq.

"We know it is a very powerful tool and that it's important for us, and we exercise it with prudence," he said, insisting that the special commission is not looking for confrontations.

At the July confrontation over the agriculture ministry, Iraq rejected the leadership of teams by Americans. Since then, no Americans have led teams into Iraq but have been included as members.

Smidovich said his team includes "at least a dozen Americans," seven Russians, and experts from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Australia. — AP

Freed American recounts ordeal

CHAD HALL

KUWAIT — American bomb disposal expert Chad Hall, his eyes brimming with tears over his freedom from Iraq three days after a dispute with border guards, said yesterday he was treated forcefully but not harmed by his captors.

The 50-year-old retired US army major asked a little about his time in captivity after the Iraqi border guards seized him on Thursday afternoon and drove him to a series of detention centres in Basra and Baghdad.

"I am probably the only guy in captivity who gained weight. It wasn't like eating at the Ritz, but it was palatable food," said Hall, who carried about 100 kgs on his 185-cm frame.

Hall, from Houston, choked back tears when he talked about an Iraqi colonel threatening to shoot him at the border and about the Baghdad inspection on the details of his family.

He was speaking at a news conference at the US embassy, where he was taken after being handed over to American Ambassador Edward W. Gormley Jr. by the United Nations at Kuwait international airport.

The United Nations took custody of him in Baghdad on Saturday and flew him to their border headquarters at Um Qura for a medical examination Sunday before flying him to Kuwait.

Spokeswoman Cynthia Orms of Environmental Health Research and Testing, Hall's employer, said he was returning to the United States on a commercial flight later yesterday to visit his family. He is expected to return to his job in Kuwait, but no time frame has been set, she said.

Hall was working to dispose an exploded mine and other ammunition in a section of the demilitarized zone disputed by Iraq and Kuwait at the time of his capture. Once part of Iraq, it was returned to Kuwait this year by the United Nations border demarcation commission assigned the task of making a permanent border under Gulf war ceasefire terms.

Iraq has refused to recognise the line. But the Iraqi Ministry of Intelligence said it was working on dissuading him.

"Attempts are underway to convince his highness to resign his mind... but he believes that if there is no interest on him as a person, he would rather not continue," said Al-Saytsak, quoting unidentified political observers.

The diplomats also said they expected Sheikh Saad to retain both jobs, although many voters in the October 5 election campaigned on a platform of splitting the two.

Since the opposition, which took 35 of 50 seats, was for splitting the job, royal opponents of Sheikh Saad were trying to use that to get the post themselves, diplomats said.

Sheikh Saad's office would not comment on the reports, but the crown prince had complained in a recent televised interview that members of the past parliament had refused to accept government portfolios. He is believed to be having the same difficulties now.

In his resignation letter, he sounded defensive against sharp campaign attacks against the competence of his ministers.

The crown prince was expected to start consultations on Saturday to form a government before the parliament's first session on October 20. Kuwaitis expect the cabinet to indicate how much the ruling family intends to cooperate with the parliament. — AP

HM meets outgoing envoys

SALALAH — His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said yesterday received at his office in Hush Palace the ambassadors of the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania at the end of their respective tour of duties in the Sultanate.

Present at the audience was Foreign Affairs Minister of State Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah.

At the same time, His Majesty received a message from President Hafez al-Assad of Syria dealing with bilateral relations.

The message was delivered by the visiting Syrian Minister of Interior Muhammad Harbi during an audience with His Majesty.

Present during the audience were the Interior Minister Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Hareb al-Busaidi, Major-General Mohamed bin Marhoon al-Mamari, the assistant general for police and customs for operations, and the Syrian ambassador to the Sultanate.

His Majesty also received a cable of thanks for President Yang Sheng Kun of China in reply to His Majesty's congratulatory cable on the occasion of his country's National Day.

He also received a written message from the President of Burkina Faso.

The message was delivered to the Personal Representative of His Majesty, Sayyid Thawaini bin Shihab when he received the visiting envoy.

Present at the meeting was the Burkina Faso non-resident ambassador to the Sultanate. — OMA

Rabin vows to crush protests

JERUSALEM — An Israeli was killed inside the Gaza Strip yesterday only hours after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin vowed to crush Palestinian demonstrations against Israeli occupation.

The army which had imposed a curfew on most of the 750,000 Arab residents of the Gaza Strip, said an Israeli technician was killed by a blow to the head with a hoe while visiting a Jewish settlement in the densely-populated territory.

The attack followed Rabin's return from a surprise visit to Gaza and his warning that the army would do whatever was necessary to crush the new eruption of unrest similar to the early days of the five-year-old Palestinian revolt.

"The Israeli army orders are to act with all that is possible within the law to prevent the disturbances, whether by curfews, closures or military activities," Rabin told Israeli radio. "And we don't let the disturbances continue," said Rabin, who was defence minister when the revolt against Israeli occupation began in December 1987.

The vow by Rabin, who is both prime minister and defence minister, echoed his order early in the revolt to use "night, force and beatings."

Rabin's unexpected trip to Gaza, confirmed by defence officials, came as residents of Gaza's Nasser refugee camp said a 14-year-old boy was shot dead by Israeli troops. More than 40 Palestinians were wounded. Demonstrations in the camp of 32,000 refugees had ignored the curfew.

Rabin blamed the unrest — described by Gaza residents as the most sustained since early in the revolt — both on Palestinian frustration at the slow pace of Middle East peace talks and on those positioned to the current peace process.

"I hope the Palestinians will arrive more sober to the next round of talks," Rabin said. "For our part, we will continue with the peace process and on the other hand we will use all our strength to prevent disturbances."

Israeli radio reported one clash in the West Bank yesterday. Extra troops have been moved into the occupied territories. — Reuter

Prince won't form cabinet

KUWAIT — Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah has declined to form a new cabinet to replace the one that resigned following the election of the country's first postwar parliament, press reports said yesterday.

In what diplomats are calling a rare display of public piety over Al-Sabah infighting, the crown prince, who is also prime minister, said he felt he needed more support for his past efforts. The Al-Qabas independent daily quoted unidentified sources as saying that Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah warned editors last March of publishing "poisonous" articles aimed at tearing up national unity. — AP

Communications Minister Salim bin Abdullah al-Ghazali and Philippines Ambassador to Bahrain Leonides T. Caday signing the Oman-Philippines air agreement in Muscat yesterday. — Picture by Radojko Alfonsi



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RARE SPECIES

Best efforts to rescue beached whale shark come to nought

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Despite the best efforts of civilians and government agencies, a whale shark that was beached by a village near Sohar could not be saved.

The whale, which was discovered by Sohar citizen Abdullah Al Neyadi, said he was taking a walk by the beach near the village of Majaz Al Kubra at 7:30 am on Sunday morning, when he came by the massive mammal that was about six metres long and a metre-and-a-half wide.

“We saw a whale swimming towards the shore,” recalled Al Neyadi. “I rushed to help it with some fishermen on the beach, to try to find out why it was injured, and so that we could help it back to sea, but we were surprised that the whale was bleeding profusely from the back.”

After trying to discern the cause of the mammal’s injury, he called the Environment Authority to see if there was anything they could do to help. Sadly, there was little that could be done to save it, and the whale shark breathed its last.

“We were trying to help the animal, but it was difficult to do so while it was in the water,” he said. “It took six hours before the whale’s ordeal ended and it finally ended up on shore, thanks to the



momentum of the waves. I felt very sad that I was unable to save it.”

Bleeding profusely
A senior official at the Environment Department’s office in North Al Batinah said the creature had gotten tangled in nets commonly used by fishermen. Despite trying to remove the nets from the whale, the damage had already been done, and this led to the animal to bleed profusely.

“We arrived at the scene of the incident, but we found that the

whale had unfortunately died on the shore,” he said. “It was buried at the scene in coordination with Sohar Municipality.”

This particular species of whale shark that died near Sohar is considered to be quite rare, with even the death of a single animal from the pods of whales off the coast of Oman considered a great loss towards conserving whale shark numbers.

“For this group to survive, it can at best lose one animal a year to human accidents,” he said.

The pod of whale sharks off the coast of Oman to which this animal belonged has been under observation by environmental and wildlife groups in the country since 1998. Studies on the aquatic mammals have been carried out by a number of organisations, including the Environment Society of Oman, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, and the Environment Authority.

A network of international partners is working and cooperating closely in order to reach a deeper



understanding of the spatial environment of whales off the shores of Oman. The latest reports issued indicate that this small and isolated group of whales faces various forms of risk, including the type of entanglement incident that took the life of this whale shark.

The official also said, “The Environment Department in North Al Batinah Governorate calls on everyone to contribute to the preservation of whales, take precautionary measures to preserve them, do what is necessary to prevent them

from accidentally falling into fishing nets, and work to safely remove them from nets, should they come across such a situation.

“Should people come across such accidents or sightings, we ask them to inform us immediately,” he added.

Some researchers have classified whale sharks as descendants of unique species of marine animals, and do not consider them to be ordinary whales. For this reason, they are considered special and important to the world’s biodiversity.

CONDOLENCES



BAIDYA
NATH DAS

The Management and staff of Muscat Media Group offer their deepest condolences to our Managing Editor RAHUL DAS and members of the bereaved family on the sad demise of his father

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE



Times OF OMAN





WORKSHOP: The workshop was organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP).

Ministry’s focus on challenges of industrial sector

The plan is to develop the industrial sector, so that it can play its role in economic development in line with Oman Vision 2040

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Reviewing the challenges facing the industrial sector, finding solutions to fix them, and implementing the best practices for industries in Oman were among the objectives of a workshop held by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP). The workshop also aimed to exchange experiences and ideas with

the relevant authorities in the industrial sector to find the best solutions to the concerns faced by the country’s industries. Another priority of the event was to come up with the right recommendations for ministries and other relevant organisations to implement that will help the industrial sector grow.

Vital sector

“The industrial sector is a vital sector and plays a pivotal role in economic development,” said Sami Al Sahib, general manager of industry at the MOCIIP. “Many depend on it during this and the next stage of economic development, because it is one of the main sectors supporting the country. It is also considered one of the main pillars adopted by Oman in its economic diversification plans.”

Strategy

The organisation of the workshop comes out of the ministry’s efforts to develop the industrial sector, so that it can play its role in economic development in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the Industrial Strategy 2040.

The Industrial Strategy 2040 aims to diversify the manufacturing activities into technology- and knowledge-based activities and develop unique and diversified products, in addition to focusing on industries based on natural resources and industries based on capital.

“During the planning of the Industrial Strategy 2040, the reality of the industrial sector was diagnosed, the promising opportunities were identified, and the sectors that will provide a strategic direction for the development of the manufacturing sector were identified,” said Zahra Al Siyabiya, director of the Department of Industrial Development.

Knowledge-based

The programmes of the Industrial Strategy 2040 include creating new knowledge-based industries, entrepreneurship and industrial innovation, developing and modernising the Omani industry, governance and management of industrial development, and strategy developments to improve in-country value opportunities.

THREE-MONTH DRIVE

Turtle protection initiative to be launched in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An initiative to protect, control and monitor the sea turtle population in the Sultanate, led by the Environment Authority (EA) with the participation of the youth of Oman, will be launched today.

The three-month long initiative will encourage youth to volunteer for environment conservation projects, educate the local community inside the turtle reserves on best practices like not using lights, and teach them to protect and monitor sea turtles that nest on Oman’s beaches. In addition, it will also motivate them to keep the beaches clean of waste and help with clean-up post cyclone Shaheen.

The participants will undergo awareness training on the importance of turtles and they will in turn transfer this knowledge to



the community.

The EA said, “The idea of the Turtle Commandos programme is based on several factors. Because of the global situation of the COVID-19 epidemic and the difficulty faced by foreign tourists in travelling to Oman, domestic tourism flourished and this led to a crowded turtle sanctuary with a large number of visitors who come to watch turtles nest and hatch babies without knowledge of the guidelines and laws of the reserve.”

“Further, because of the fewer

number of inspection teams for the large number of visitors, the past two years has seen a loss of control and lack of protection of turtles in the reserve. The programme seeks to find effective solutions to meet this challenge,” an EA official added. The programme aims to engage 40 participants per week from all governorates of the Sultanate, and to work on various activities and workshops that achieve the objectives of the programme in Ras Al Hadd Reserve in the wilayat of Sur.

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

📖 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

20,197 REACH

The city of Qalhat is in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites for its historical significance and its role in Oman's evolution.

Story on Qalhat

A story on Qalhat reached 20,197 people and had 432 engagements on Facebook.

📺 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

872 VIEWS

More ROP teams sent to reinforce efforts in North Al Batinah

Video on more ROP teams sent to North Al Batinah

A video on more ROP teams sent to North Al Batinah had 872 views and 63 likes on Instagram.

📺 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

5,500 VIEWS

Maghreb Minute video

The Maghreb Minute video had 5,500 views and reached 20,200 people on Facebook.

OMAN SAIL READY TO WELCOME SAILORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSSANAH



MUSCAT: Oman Sail is ready to welcome sailors from around the world to Al Mussanah marking a return of sailing events this quarter of the year. Kicking off today is the Asian Windsurfing Championships at the Barcelo Mussanah Resort, bringing together a select group of talented male and female windsurfers in the Techno293, Techno293Plus as well as the brand-new foiling Formula Windsurfing class, which is making its debut at the championships this week.

The predominantly-Omani fleet will showcase the depth of local talent across all classes and demonstrate the potential of Oman as a world-class sporting venue after an enforced hiatus. Conditions are

expected to be perfect. Winds between 7 and 15 knots, a combination of powerful sea breezes and pleasant waves should see five full days of exhilarating action on the water.

The event is supported by a line-up of supported including Oman Air and the Barcelo Mussanah Resort as official partners, and Be’ah as environmental supporter and Salsabeel Water from the National Mineral Water Company.

The 2021 Asian Windsurfing Championships is the first in a busy period for Oman Sail and Al-Mussanah Sports City. Sailors from around the world are set to touch down in the Sultanate to compete in the Mussanah Race Week from 30 October-5

November, the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 Asian Championships from 5-9 November and the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 World Championships from 16-21 November.

Sailing Arabia – The Tour 2021, set entirely within Oman, begins in Mussanah on 24 November and runs to 5 December while the 2021 ICLA Radial World Championships also heads to Mussanah, from 29 November to 6 December 2021. The 2021 World Youth Sailing Championships closes the season as 350 of sailing’s future stars head to Oman for the 50th anniversary of the competition and the first to be held in Asia.





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BRIEFING: The field tours comprised Sana'a Bani Ghafir area, Wadi Al Hawasnah, Wadi Shafan and Wadi Al Sarmi. — ONA

Ministerial committee members inspect villages hit by cyclone Shaheen

The committee also visited a number of villages in the Wilayat and met with a number of citizens whose houses and property were affected

AL KHABOURAH: The head and members of the Ministerial Committee tasked with assessing damages resulting from the recent tropical condition (Shaheen) on Monday went on tour of the operations centre of the national search and rescue team and listened to a detailed account of its mechanism of functioning.

The committee, led by Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Chairman of the Committee, conducted a field visit to villages and mountainous areas in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah.

They met citizens whose homes and properties were impacted by the tropical condition. The visit covered Sanaa Bani Ghafir, Wadi Al Hawasna, Wadi Shafan and



Wadi Al Sarmi.

Eng. Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) and Oman TV that work on the restoration of damaged roads will begin next week in areas of Wadi Al Hawasna, Wadi Bani Omar and other wadis, where seven culverts in Wadi Al Hawasna were re-designed. This is in addition to the opening of roads and diversions from Al Khabourah to Ibri, among other places.

Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, told ONA and Oman TV that the visit

revealed many aspects of development that require the attention of the committee, which will draft joint plans in coordination with government departments concerned.

She added that the Ministry's assessment teams are in the field—talking to citizens, answering their queries and explaining the needed documents.

The committee is studying plans for the restoration of normalcy to public life. Part of its tasks include working with the Shelter and Relief Sector to lease apartments for citizens who find it difficult to return to their damaged homes. — ONA



FUNCTION

Omani talents honoured



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth yesterday awarded a group of Omani talents in art namely: artist Anwar Khamis Al Zedjali for the field of visual arts, and the poet Hassan Obaid Al Matroushi for the field of literary arts.

The move comes as part of the ministry's endeavour to honour Omani talents within the Sultanate and abroad in various in-

tellectual, literary and artistic knowledge fields.

Role models

It also aims to present them as role models of cultural giving to future generations, encourage the intellectual, literary and artistic movement, and support the innovative outputs to build this nation.

— ONA

MEETING

Cultural cooperation in GCC reviewed



MUSCAT: On behalf of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik Al-Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Said Sultan Al-Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture on Monday took part in the 25th meeting of the GCC Culture Ministers.

Held via video-conferencing, the meeting discussed means of enhanc-

ing the GCC joint cultural action.

It also reviewed the existing cultural cooperation and the partnership relations between the GCC countries, the regional and international organisations.

The meeting also approved the recommendations at meetings of the GCC culture undersecretaries and the GCC General Cultural Committee. — ONA

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH ISSUES

Oman represented by the Ministry of Health is participating in the meetings of the 68th Session of WHO Regional Committee for Eastern Mediterranean led by Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Health and officials from the Ministry of Health. — ONA





PAKISTAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL TENDERS

PSM intends to offer Annual Contracts for the year 2021-2022. The contractors with relevant experiences are invited for following bidding:

Tender No.	Tender's Name	Tender Collection Date	Submission Date
2021/001	Printing Jobs	October 12 to October 20, 2021 08:00 AM to 02:00 PM Working Days/Hours	Before and Until October 21, 2021
2021/002	Supply of Stationery		
2021/003	Group Personal Accident Insurance Coverage of Students		
2021/004	Building Fire And Allied Perils Insurance		
2021/005	Maintenance of Air Conditioners		

Experience contractor(s) having relevant experience of at least 3 years of similar nature jobs preferably in Oman, who wishes to participate in the bidding may collect the documents after payment of RO. 20,000 (non-refundable) per Job.

Admin Office
Pakistan School Muscat
P.O. Box 987, P.C. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman; Tel: 24702489 Fax: 24709746
In case of any query you may contact: Email: tulaib@pakistanschool.edu.om; 00968 93690691

The tenders shall be submitted in Original and complete with all relevant documents. Tenders not in compliance with tender's requirements shall not be considered.

Tender Documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope with clearly mentioned Tender Number/name, Company Name and POC's Number/name. The sealed envelope shall be dropped in the Tender Box available at Admin Office on or before the date mentioned above and addressed to:

Chairman Steering Committee, Pakistan School Muscat
(PSM is not bound to accept the lowest Tender or any Tender)



Ministry of Defence
TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defense invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Document Price per copy (RO)
SUPPLY OF MEDICAL DRUGS FOR ARMED FORCES HOSPITAL FOR TWO YEARS.	23/2021	30/11/2021	07/12/2021	1500/= RO
SUPPLY OF HEARING AIDS (ENT-AFH) FOR THREE YEARS.	24/2021	16/11/2021	23/11/2021	250/= RO

- Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs. on the working days.
- Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in Oman.



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La Palma volcano cone partially collapses, spews giant rocks

In a video posted on their Twitter account, giant lava rocks could be seen floating in a large river of lava, moving at high speed

MADRID: Spanish authorities said on Sunday that a new destructive lava flow was being monitored in the island of La Palma. The volcano has been continuously erupting for there for three weeks.

Spain's National Geological Institute (ING) said there were 21 seismic movements detected on Sunday, with the largest measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale, which caused the ground to shake, in the villages of Mazo, Fuencaliente and El Paso.

The ING published footage of the new lava flow, warning about blocks of molten lava that it said were "as large as three-story buildings" rolling down the hillside.

In a video posted on their Twitter account, giant lava rocks could be seen floating in a large river of lava, moving at high speed.

The Canary Islands Volcanology Institute said the lava flow, with temperatures of up to 1,240 degrees Celsius (2,264 degrees Fahrenheit), destroyed the last few buildings that remained standing in the village of Todoque.



ERUPTION: The Canary Islands Volcanology Institute said the lava flow, with temperatures of up to 1,240 degrees Celsius, destroyed the last few buildings that remained standing in the village of Todoque.

Partial cone collapse

On Saturday, ING reported that a partial cone collapse near the volcano's emission vent had taken place. This is said to have triggered the giant lava rocks that spilled out.

"The collapse of the northern flank of the Cumbre Vieja volcano has caused the release of large blocks of material and the appearance of new flows that run through areas already evacuated," tweeted Spain's National Security Department.

"The lava has reached the Camino de la Gata industrial estate and new buildings," the agency added.

So far, 1,186 buildings have been destroyed by the continuous eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano since it began on September 19, the Canary

Islands Volcanic Institute said.

Some 493 hectares (1,218 acres) of land have been engulfed by the lava rivers, said Miguel Ángel Morcuende, technical director of the Canary Islands Volcanic Emergency Plan (Pevolca) organization.

Around 6,000 of La Palma's 83,000 inhabitants have been evacuated from their homes as a result of the eruption.

Lava creates new land

La Palma is part of Spain's Canary Islands, which is located in the Atlantic Ocean, near northwest Africa. The island's economy depends on the cultivation of the Canary plantain and tourism.

"We cannot say that we expect

the eruption that began 21 days ago to end anytime soon," said Julio Perez, the regional minister for security on the Canary Islands.

The three-week eruption has already seen lava flows reach the ocean, dumping so much volcanic material that new land was created. Authorities sealed off the maritime area, as the lava's contact with the water released toxic gases.

Government experts estimated that new land being formed where lava is flowing into the Atlantic has reached a surface of 34 hectares.

Scientists have warned that if the new land continues to grow outwards into the sea, parts of it could break off and generate explosions, gas emissions and large waves. **DW**



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CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Tens of thousands descend on Brussels for climate protest

BRUSSELS: The streets of Belgium's capital city were awash with thousands of climate activists demanding more stringent action from world leaders.

The protest action comes ahead of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow later this month.

Marching for change

The streets of Brussels were crammed with protestors carrying placards and chanting various slogans.

Some of those who attended the march had come dressed as endangered animal species.

Dozens of organizations mobilized ahead of the march in the hope it would be the largest protest since coronavirus restrictions curbed public gatherings.

Xavier De Wannemaeker, a protestor with Extinction Rebellion said the time for action was now and that the problem was in plain sight.

"After you've seen all the disasters we have seen this summer, it's really crucial that we move now. Because everybody knows what the problem is."

Another climate activist, Lu-

cien Dewanaga said there was no backup plan when it came to earth's destruction.

"What do we do when we destroy the planet? We have nothing else. Human beings have to live in this world. And there is only one world," said Dewanaga.

Hope for more action from upcoming climate summit

Climate activists are concerned there will be nothing but more hot air from world leaders attending the upcoming UN climate Change Conference in Glasgow, which begins on October 31.

The summit is scheduled for 12 days and is looking for greater commitments to cut global emissions, thereby limiting global warming, keeping it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The summit also wants greater cooperation from participants and to speed up plans to tackle the climate crisis.

Various studies have found a correlation between high greenhouse gases emissions and the prevalence of extreme weather events, from wildfires to severe floods. **DW**

ROADMAP 2030

British PM Johnson discusses Afghanistan, travel restrictions, COP26 with India PM Modi

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday spoke with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed Afghanistan,, travel restrictions and Roadmap 2030.

A Downing Street spokesperson said, "The leaders also talked about the current situation in Afghanistan. They agreed on the need for a coordinated interna-

tional approach to engagement with the Taliban, emphasising the importance of upholding human rights in the country."

The spokesperson added, "The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Modi discussed the shared fight against coronavirus and the importance of cautiously opening up international travel.

"They agreed the UK's recognition

of Indian vaccine certification is a welcome development to that end."

Johnson underlined the importance of making concrete progress on climate change ahead of and at the upcoming COP26 Summit, noting that India already leads the world in renewable technology and expressed his hope that they will commit to a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution. **-ANI**

NEW CHANCELLOR

Schallenberg sworn in as chancellor of Austria

VIENNA: Alexander Schallenberg, 52, was sworn in on Monday as the new chancellor of Austria by President Alexander Van der Bellen.

A career diplomat who served as foreign minister, Schallenberg is a close ally of Sebastian Kurz, who resigned as chancellor Saturday following allegations of corruption in the wake of an investigation that opened last week targeting him and nine others, including senior aides.

The EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Council President Charles Michel offered their congratulations following the swearing in ceremony.

Why did Kurz resign?

Kurz and nine others are being investigated for breach of trust, corruption, and bribery while Kurz is under investigation separately for perjury. He denies wrongdoing and initially hesitated to resign but politically that position became untenable.

Prosecutors allege conservative officials in the Finance Ministry used state funds to pay for manipulated polling data and coverage favorable to Kurz starting in 2016. Last week, there were raids on the chancellery and People's Party headquarters as well as other locations tied to the scandal.

Kurz will remain head of his



party, a position he has held since 2016, and become its leading member of parliament after exiting the chancellery. He won election to the parliament in 2017.

Kurz's junior coalition partner, the Greens, were adamant Kurz resign.

His critics accuse him of over-seeing a system that flouted rules on party funding and appointments to state jobs, preferring to install loyalists in his pursuit of power.

Schallenberg to follow policies of Kurz

The opposition believe Schallenberg will continue to do bidding for Kurz, who will remain active politically and is expected to be somewhat of a "shadow chancellor." **-DW**



Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Documnet Price per copy (RO)
SUPPLY OF FROZEN CHICKEN	25/2021	16/11/2021	23/11/2021	1500 RO

1. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs. on the working days.

2. Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in Oman.



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CHIEF GUEST

HE Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion



GUEST OF HONOUR

HE Eng. Redha bin Juma Al Saleh

Chairman, Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI)

PANEL 1: Manufacturing: Negotiating a new Reality



Hilal Al Hasani
CEO, Madayn



Cinzia Farise
CEO, Oman Cables Industry



Abdullah al Badri
CEO, Voltamp Oman



Mohammed Al Barashdy
CEO, Oman Fiber Optic



Manash Ranjan Sanyal
COO, Raysut Cement



Himansu Mohapatra
Group GM – Investment, Muscat Overseas Group



Venkat AN
CEO, Al Jazeera Steel Products Co.

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VENUE: SHERATON OMAN HOTEL
SUMMIT TIME: 8:30 AM-1:30 PM
FOLLOWED BY LUNCH
WORKSHOP: 2:30-3:30 PM

PANEL 2: Crosscurrents changing manufacturing



Said Al Rashdi
CEO, Oman Manufacturers Association



Rajeev Singh
CEO, Al Maha Ceramics



Pradeepkumar B. Nair
CEO, Sebatic Oman and Skyline Duqm LLC



Atul Misra
COO, MISCO



Ramesh Kadaganchi
Founder, Cybriotics

SPEAKERS



Ibtisam AlFarouji
Director General of Investor Services, Madayn



Kevin Baake
Global CEO & Founder, b2wise



Mohammed Al Jabri
Sales Manager, Credit Oman



Naveen Narayanan
Managing Director, SSA



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FANATEC GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

Al Harthy dedicates GTWCE podium to people of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy celebrated a sensational Pro-Am podium finish during the final race of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Powered by AWS Endurance Cup season in Spain on Sunday, 10th October, with an outstanding drive to third place during a challenging three-hour encounter.

Dedicating the hard-earned and very emotional success to the people of Oman, who suffered terrible devastation last week when tropical cyclone Shaheen made landfall across the northern coast of the Sultanate, Al Harthy said the top three finish was the equivalent of a race win.

Starting the race at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya from eighth in the Pro-Am class, Al Harthy took the opening one-hour stint and delivered an excellent fault-free drive before handing over the No.97 Aston Martin Vantage GT3 to Italian teammate Giacomo Petrobelli. Aston Martin factory driver Charlie Eastwood took the final stint and stormed through to a fantastic podium.

"What an unbelievable result, I'm so happy", said Al Harthy, "I'm extremely delighted to have this podium result, it really feels like a win as it was a very tough race



MOTORSPORT: Al Harthy took the opening one-hour stint and delivered an excellent fault-free drive

weekend. I'm really proud to see the Omani flag flying here in Barcelona, especially after such tough times back home in Oman with the devastation of the cyclone last week. Our sincerest thoughts are with everyone affected.

"This is a beautiful way to end this part of the season for Oman Racing and a huge thank you to everyone who makes this happen,

the team and everyone back home who shows us such incredible support. I hope this podium can go some way in helping to lift everyone's spirits in Oman."

Focusing on preparing as well as possible in testing on Friday, 8th October, and again during the track sessions on Saturday, 9th October, Oman Racing concluded the official free practice second in Pro-

Am and an excellent 11th overall before finishing fifth in Pro-Am in pre-qualifying.

Final qualifying on Sunday morning wasn't quite what the team wanted with the eighth fastest time in Pro-Am, but Al Harthy had confidence he and his teammates would make progress in race trim during the big race.

Al Harthy lined-up for the start

in the Omantel, OQ and Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth liveried Aston Martin and climbed into seventh in Pro-Am on the first lap before taking sixth in class on lap two. Following a brief early Safety Car period, racing resumed on lap eight and the Omani continued his fantastic ascent up the order.

Within just a handful of laps, the double Pro-Am Champion had taken fifth and then fourth before breaking into the class top three. Although shuffled back to fourth place by the Ferrari of Manuel Lauck during the second half of his stint, Al Harthy remained right with his rival before making the first pit-stop close to the end of hour one.

Petrobelli took over the Oman Racing car for the second hour and when the order had settled he was fourth in Pro-Am. Maintaining position throughout his stint, just before the end of hour two he pitted and Eastwood climbed aboard the Aston Martin.

With 55 minutes to run the Northern Irishman was fifth in Pro-Am and he closed down the gap to the cars ahead. Moving into fourth ahead of a Full Course Yellow period, Eastwood was just a few tenths adrift of the class podium with 30 minutes to go.

Less than 10 minutes later he passed the Ferrari of Chris Frog-

gatt to take third place and after another yellow flag period late on he closed on the Lamborghini of Henrique Chaves, finishing the race a mere 0.4 seconds shy of second position.

"It was such a tough and competitive grid, for sure teamwork was the thing which helped us achieve this amazing result", reflected Al Harthy, "As a car we struggled, but as a team we didn't and that was something amazing. Everyone kept out of trouble and did a fantastic stint. I was so happy with the first hour, it was very difficult and so I was glad to stay out of trouble and put us in contention."

Of the two GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup contests Oman Racing has contested this year, the team achieved fifth in Pro-Am at the Nurburgring in Germany last month before returning to the podium in Barcelona, Spain, this weekend.

Al Harthy and Eastwood were race winners in the Intelligent Money British GT Championship back in August at Snetterton in England, and Al Harthy was a second place finisher with Michael Dinan in the 'Road To Le Mans' in France a week later. At the beginning of the year, Al Harthy and Oman Racing debuted in the Asian Le Mans Series and achieved a best result of fourth position in the GT class.

France clinch Nations League after Mbappe shines in comeback

Kylian Mbappe scored a controversial late goal to help France rally from a goal down to defeat Spain 2-1 in the final of the UEFA Nations League

MILAN: Karim Benzema and Kylian Mbappe starred for France as Les Bleus produced another stunning comeback to beat Spain 2-1 and win their first UEFA Nations League title at San Siro in Milan on Sunday.

These sides were both involved in semis that thrilled from the off, but this occasion delivered a more cagey opening 45 minutes. Benzema skipped around Unai Simon but failed to cut the ball back for a team-mate early on while Spain hoarded possession thereafter without threatening.

Les Bleus did suffer a setback



UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE: The game exploded into life in the 64th minute when Benzema's cross was thumped against the underside of the bar by Theo Hernandez.

before the break, though, as Raphael Varane was forced off injured. The pattern continued until the game exploded into life in the 64th minute when Benzema's cross was thumped against the underside of the bar by Theo Hernandez.

Just 40 seconds later, however, France found themselves behind as Sergio Busquets' through ball was driven across Hugo Lloris by

Mikel Oyarzabal. The touchpaper had been lit.

Indeed, La Roja's joy proved short-lived, because Benzema curled a sensational effort into the far corner from 25 metres within two minutes. The question now was whether Didier Deschamps' men could repeat the trick they had performed against Belgium in the last four when they had come

from two behind to win.

The answer arrived on 80 minutes as the reigning world champions completed their second successive fightback. Kylian Mbappe timed his run on to Hernandez's pass to perfection and swept the winner underneath Unai Simon, though it required two fine late saves from Lloris to seal the silverware. **-ANI**

COMMENTARY

Spinners are the key for KKR in the eliminator against RCB



Anis Sajan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

KKR piped Mumbai Indians and made it to the playoffs because of two main reasons. One is the aggressive style of cricket they deployed in the UAE leg where their batsman went bang bang from the first over and kept their net run rate high which eventually helped them with a better run rate than Mumbai Indians. Secondly, their spinners Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthi played a key role in bowling tight overs and picking key wickets in every game.

Sunil Narine, who has been with KKR for almost a decade, picked up 10 wickets in the 11 games he played and also played a cameo with the bat against Delhi in Sharjah scoring a quick-fire 25 off 10 balls to win the game for them. Also Varun Chakravarthi has been their triumph card picking up 16 wickets at an econ-

omy of 6.5 and an average of 22. If both the spinners can get rid of Glen Maxwell, the big show for Royal Challengers Bangalore, who has been the main stay scoring more than 400 runs, RCB will face a tough challenge because AB de Villiers and other batsmen have not fired. Moreover, Virat Kohli is also found wanting against quality spin bowling and I wouldn't be surprised if Varun Chakravarthi and Sunil Narine bowl in the power play.

We need to see how RCB can tackle KKR's key spinners as this will decide how the match pans out.

Sunil Narine had mentioned before the start of the UAE leg that he has been through a lot and he wants to thank his bowling coach for helping him in bowling action and the backing he got from the KKR franchise. Sunil hopes he can continue the good work for his franchise and win more matches.

FOOTBALL

Brazil's winning run comes to an end with loss against Columbia

BRASILIA: Brazil had the best opportunities of the encounter and forced Colombia goalkeeper David Ospina to make three key saves. The most important was in the 84th minute in a close range finish by substitute Antony.

Neymar returned to the Seleção after a suspension, but was off pace, missing several passes and running with apparent difficulty.

He left the pitch immediately after the final whistle. Brazil coach Tite said in a news conference too much is expected from his star player all of the time.

"He is an exceptional player because he makes exceptional plays, he does it exceptionally and not ordinarily," Brazil's coach said. "He is a special player, we know it. And he was also well marked, sometimes by two players."



Tite tested out lineup or formation changes, as he promised. His defensive midfield was Fabinho and Fred for the first time. He also used wingers Raphinha and An-

tony in the second half, following their impressive performances in the 3-1 win at Venezuela.

Colombia's next match will also be at home against Ecuador. **-ONA**

OMAN TO MEET VIETNAM IN ASIAN FINAL QUALIFIERS

The Oman's national football team will face Vietnam in the Asian final qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup at 8 pm today. "The Oman national football team will face Vietnam in the Asian final qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar at 8 pm Muscat time, at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher," ONA said. **-ONA**



OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by December 2021 reaching \$81.97, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 83 cents from the price of Friday, which was at \$81.14. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 3,957.86 points, down 0.28 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56 per cent at 577.67 points. Galfar Engineering was the top gainer, up by 7.50 per cent. While Dhofar Generating, down 9.32 per cent, was the top loser.

IIC has supported 20 startups to boost innovation, self-sufficiency

This comes as part of the efforts exerted by the Industrial Innovation Centre (IIC) to enhance innovation in industrial activities, add high value to natural resources in the Sultanate and promote self-sufficiency of locally made products



REPORT: The centre has provided 72 investment opportunities at several promising industrial sectors such as fisheries, marble, food and beverages, mining and technologies. - **ONA**

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Industrial Innovation Centre (IIC) has supported start-up companies in the Sultanate with an amount of OMR285,057 from 2017 until 2020, according to IIC's annual report.

This comes as part of the efforts exerted by the IIC to enhance innovation in industrial activities, add high value to natural resources in the Sultanate and promote self-sufficiency of locally made products.

The report of the IIC, established

as an outcome of the National Program for Bracing the Economic Diversity (Tanfeedh), showed that the centre has provided 72 investment opportunities at several promising industrial sectors such as fisheries, marble, food and beverages, mining and technologies. The IIC made this achievement by creating and financing economically viable industrial products, as well as qualifying the national cadres who develop such products.

The report indicated that the IIC developed 20 startups operating in the industrial sector. It also pointed out that such companies have registered their brands at the Intellectual Property Department in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The report demonstrated that the IIC sought to create an appropriate ecosystem for Omani innovators and national cadres through its finance, technical sup-

port, guidance and advice. It also indicated that the centre strived to enhance the competitiveness of Omani factories, improve its operational efficiency and qualify human resources who are the main pillar and sustainable component for leading national innovation.

The report revealed that the IIC financed and enabled 43 factories and companies to produce innovative technologies and services. It signalled that the centre



prepared 70 detailed economic feasibility studies to measure the potential revenues and promising investment opportunities. It also reflected that the IIC contributed to the provision of 41 training programmes, offered its services to 660 entities and entered into partnerships with 43 governmental agencies, private sector companies and academic institutions.

The report disclosed that the centre prepared and carried out four important programmes the first of which was the human resources development programme. Designed to prepare industrial innovation specialists, this programme contributed to qualifying about 400 innovators, entrepreneurs and job seekers, as part of the IIC's efforts to cement national innovation competencies in the

industrial sector.

The other programmes included the startup innovation programme, which contributed to the establishment of startup companies, in addition to the industrial innovation programme.

The report illustrated that the IIC has made significant achievements during the past four years by carrying out 128 technology transfer operations along with the companies benefiting from its services. In addition to providing 56 job opportunities, the centre has contributed to innovating 167 products. Furthermore, 566 young men and women benefited from its services. The ICC has also enabled 64 male and female students to innovate industrially in the food, fisheries, mining and technology sectors.

NCSI DATA

Super grade petrol production in Oman rises by 19% to reach 9.3 million barrels



M-95 GRADE PETROL: Sales of M-95 grade petrol reached 8,354,900 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 7,171,500 barrels during the same period in 2020, comprising an increase of 17 per cent. - **ONA**

MUSCAT: The Sultanate recorded a rise in the production of super grade petrol (M-95) by 19 per cent to reach 9,397,500 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 7,903,000 barrels at the same period of 2020, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Sales of M-95 grade petrol reached 8,354,900 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 7,171,500 barrels during the same period in 2020, comprising an increase of 17 per cent.

Exports of M-95 grade petrol reached 1,422,200 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 667,200 barrels during the same period in 2020, constituting a surge of 113 per cent.

The output of standard grade petrol (M-91) rose by 42 per cent to reach 8,963,400 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to

6,328,400 barrels during the same period in 2020.

The sales of M-91 grade petrol reached 5,487,300 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 5,136,400 barrels during the same period in 2020, comprising an increase of 7 per cent. Moreover, exports of M-91 grade petrol went up by 37 per cent to reach 3,708,900 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 2,702,400 barrels in the same period of 2020.

Gas oil (diesel) output increased by 10 per cent to 24,319,200 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 22,060,900 barrels at the end of August 2020. Sales of diesel declined by 1 per cent to reach 8,788,900 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 8,904,500 barrels sold by the end of August 2020. Meanwhile, exports of diesel rose by 18 per cent to stand at 15,463,500 as at the end of August 2021 barrels compared

to 13,052,700 barrels during the same period in 2020.

Aviation fuel oil production went down by 26 per cent to reach 3,987,000 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 5,356,500 barrels during the same period in 2020.

Sales of aviation fuel oil also fell by 32 per cent to reach 896,600 barrels as of the end of August 2021 compared to 1,318,100 barrels during the same period of the previous year. Moreover, the exports of aviation fuel stood at 3,111,000 as of the end of August 2021 compared to 4,120,200 barrels during the same period in 2020, comprising a drop of 24 per cent.

The production of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) increased by 25 per cent to reach 4,905,800 barrels at the end of August 2021 compared to 3,918,400 barrels during the same period of 2020. Sales of LPG stood at 4,909,400 barrels at

the end of August 2021 compared to 1,846,900 barrels during the same period in 2020, constituting a surge of 166 per cent. Exports of LPG dropped by 83 per cent to reach 392,200 barrels compared to 2,357,400 barrels during the same period in 2020.

As far as petrochemicals are concerned, production of benzene went up by 12 per cent to reach 146,300 Metric Tonne (MT) while its exports stood at 147,800 MT.

The production of Paraxylene reached 382,400 MT at the end of August 2021 while its exports stood at 389,200 MT.

Moreover, the production of polypropylene went up by 3 per cent to reach 144,000 MT.

Sales of polypropylene also increased by 15 per cent to stand at 26,800 MT while its exports also rose by 1 per cent to reach 101,400 MT compared to the same period of 2020. - **ONA**

GARTNER REPORT

Government firms around the world adopt AI technologies

DUBAI: Government organisations around the world are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to help them achieve their public purpose or mission, but government employees are still concerned about the technology's impact, according to Gartner, Inc.

Thirty-six per cent of government respondents in the 2021 Gartner CIO survey indicated that they planned to increase investment in AI/machine learning in 2021.

Conversational agents

Chatbots or conversational agents are leading the way in government AI technology adoption, with 26 per cent of survey respondents reporting they have already deployed them. A further 59 per cent expect to have deployed them within the next three years, according to the Gartner Digital Transformation Divergence Across Government Sectors survey.

However, a separate Gartner survey found that AI technologies are still viewed with a level of uncertainty, especially among the government employees who have not worked with any AI-backed solutions. More than half (53 per cent) of government employees who have worked with AI technologies believe they provide insights to do their job better, compared to 34 per cent of employees who have not used AI.

Interconnected priorities

"Automation, insight and intelligence are all interconnected priorities for government leaders," said Dean Lacheca, senior research director at Gartner. "But the operational and services delivery workforce is absolutely critical to the success of any attempts to automate or augment their ways of working. Leaders can generate more acceptance by clearly linking the technology to practical outcomes that benefit government employees and support mission objectives."

While chatbots and conversa-

tional agents are currently the most widely adopted, the most significant AI technology for governments in terms of planned adoption is machine-learning-supported data mining. Sixteen per cent have currently deployed it and a further 69 per cent plan to within the next three years.

Beyond the two leading AI technologies, government organisations also plan to implement more specialised AI solutions, such as geospatial AI (GeoAI) which uses AI methods to produce knowledge through the analysis of spatial data and imagery. The lower uptake reflects the fact that it is more relevant to sub-sectors of government such as defence and intelligence, transportation, and local government.

Public sector workforce remains uncertain about AI

Forty-two per cent of government employees surveyed who have not worked with AI solutions understand that AI is a means to getting work done. But only 27 per cent of these same respondents believe AI has the potential to replace many tasks, worsening to only 17 per cent when it comes to what they consider to be skilled tasks. Perception improves among those employees that have worked with AI solutions.

A higher proportion of those who have used AI (31 per cent) believes it is a threat to their jobs, compared to 24 per cent of those who have not worked with AI. However, 44 per cent of those who have used AI believe it improves decision making. Thirty-one per cent said AI reduces the risk of making a mistake, but 11 per cent thought it made more errors than humans do.

"Senior executives in the public sector must address the early apprehension among the government workforce by showing how the technology helps them to get their work done. Then continue to build confidence in the technology through exposure, use cases and case studies," Lacheca said.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Galfar Engineering was the top gainer, up by 7.50 per cent while Dhofar Generating, down 9.32 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 3,957.86 points, down 0.28 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56 per cent at 577.67 points.

Galfar Engineering was the top gainer, up by 7.50 per cent. While Dhofar Generating, down 9.32 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 753 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.6 million, with more than 17 million shares changing hands.

Out of 45 traded securities, 10 advanced, 14 declined and 21 remained unchanged.

At the session close, local investors were net buyers for

OMR103,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR102,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR1,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,254 points, up 0.02 per cent. Prices of Vision Insurance, Oman United Insurance, Sohar International and National Bank Oman were up 5.19 per cent, 2.29 per cent, 2.22 per cent and 1.05 per cent respectively. Bank Nizwa, Bank Muscat, Oman & Qatar Insurance and Al Anwar Investment were down 2.08 per cent, 1.71 per cent, 1.11 per cent and 0.88 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,273.71 points, down 0.89 per cent.

Services Index was down by 0.08 per cent before closing at 1,680.45 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	3,983.24	3,957.86	3,957.86	3,969.00	-11.13	-0.28
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,280.46	6,254.93	6,254.93	6,253.71	1.22	0.02
Industry Index	6,351.40	6,273.72	6,273.72	6,330.03	-56.31	-0.89
Services Index	1,692.00	1,680.46	1,680.46	1,681.76	-1.30	-0.08
MSX Shariah Index	580.62	577.67	577.67	580.93	-3.26	-0.56
MSX TR INDEX	4,787.45	4,756.95	4,756.95	4,770.33	-13.38	-0.28

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
17,208,066	2,628,527	753	22,044,435,902	10	14	21	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 11

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000000920	VISION INSURANCE	656,042	53,189	20	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.077	0.004	5.195	0.081	0.081	0.082	0.100	8,100,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	109,200	34,970	10	0.340	0.350	0.340	0.350	0.010	2.941	0.350	0.340	0.350	0.100	35,000,000	
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	12,000	5,616	3	0.468	0.468	0.468	0.456	0.012	2.632	0.468	0.420	0.458	0.100	110,639,880	
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	80,000	7,360	3	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.090	0.002	2.222	0.092	0.089	0.092	0.100	275,085,731	
OM0000001525	OMAN INVEST. FIN.	470,970	66,217	30	0.139	0.143	0.139	0.141	0.002	2.174	0.140	0.140	0.144	0.100	35,417,000	
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	20,824	16,493	4	0.792	0.792	0.792	0.792	0.000	0.000	0.792	0.760	0.792	0.100	124,740,000	
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	25,700	6,581	4	0.258	0.258	0.253	0.256	0.000	0.000	0.253	0.253	0.258	0.100	51,200,000	
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	13,398	4,207	1	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.000	0.000	0.314	0.308	0.314	0.100	253,640,511	
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	100,000	6,000	4	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.061	0.100	18,428,780	
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR.	12,500	12,250	3	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.000	0.000	0.980	0.884	0.972	0.100	87,906,000	
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	45,254	10,774	9	0.240	0.240	0.236	0.238	0.000	0.000	0.236	0.232	0.241	0.100	78,747,705	
OM0000002077	AL OMANIA FIN.S	60,000	6,620	7	0.112	0.112	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.110	0.115	0.100	32,112,869	
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	223,300	24,553	11	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.109	0.110	0.100	214,462,321	
OM0000002000	AI MAHA MARKTING	2,100	1,445	3	0.688	0.688	0.688	0.692	0.000	0.000	0.688	0.000	0.688	0.100	347,48,000	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	140,338	53,045	13	0.378	0.380	0.378	0.378	-0.002	-0.526	0.376	0.376	0.384	0.100	246,056,919	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	61,245	45,280	28	0.748	0.748	0.736	0.740	0.004	-0.538	0.736	0.732	0.740	0.100	555,000,000	
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	8,200	1,148	4	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.139	0.141	0.100	11,800,000	
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	617,006	69,132	38	0.113	0.113	0.111	0.112	0.000	-0.885	0.111	0.111	0.113	0.100	22,400,000	
OM0000002226	ALAJZEERA SERVICES	6,500	2,444	3	0.376	0.376	0.376	0.376	0.000	-1.053	0.376	0.376	0.390	0.100	23,012,807	
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	373,382	172,053	23	0.460	0.464	0.458	0.460	-0.006	-1.708	0.458	0.458	0.468	0.100	1,001,644,238,404	
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	371,182	197,073	18	0.540	0.540	0.538	0.530	0.000	-1.852	0.530	0.530	0.538	0.100	29,150,000	
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	60,096	21,621	13	0.376	0.380	0.350	0.360	0.000	-0.016	0.350	0.344	0.350	0.100	44,963,266	
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,357,216	597,218	79	0.470	0.478	0.432	0.446	0.000	-6.695	0.440	0.432	0.440	0.100	98,120,000	
Total	23	4,797,523	1,415,288	331												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	7,984,664	683,031	252	0.084	0.087	0.084	0.086	0.000	0.006	7.500	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	17,456,834
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	7,500	353	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.044	0.003	6.818	0.047	0.044	0.048	0.100	10,387,470	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	711,305	70,942	63	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.000	0.002	2.041	0.099	0.099	0.101	0.100	13,000,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	108,916	5,434	7	0.050	0.052	0.050	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.052	0.050	0.052	0.100	34,419,259	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,139,000	219,827	4	0.193	0.193	0.193	0.193	0.000	0.000	0.193	0.186	0.195	0.100	313,807,647	
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	5,000	530	2	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.166	0.000	0.166	0.100	4,980,000	
OM0000001517	HSPCBANK OMAN	965,310	55,991	17	0.086	0.090	0.086	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089	0.092	0.100	178,027,838	
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	228,870	16,936	9	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.100	25,000,000	
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK.	600	552	1	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.000	0.000	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.100	87,400,000	
OM0000001517	HSPCBANK OMAN	965,310	55,991	17	0.086	0.090	0.086	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089	0.092	0.100	178,027,838	
OM0000003883	AL KAMEL POWER	150	29	1	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.202	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.000	0.202	0.100	19,442,500	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	14,000	938	2	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.100	13,100,000	
OM0000003281	TANGER FINANCE	40,000	7,020	4	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.076	0.079	0.100	18,700,000	
OM0000004735	SEWBOCORP SALALAH	23,620	1,890	1	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.084	0.100	76,362,756	
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	225,228	29,918	7	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.102	0.103	0.100	18,025,000	
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	38,000	1,953	4	0.052	0.052	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051	0.052	0.100	36,434,723	
OM0000005863	PHOENIX POWER	189,742	8,731	9	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.046	0.047	0.100	67,279,667	
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	216,907	38,618	14	0.168	0.168	0.165	0.178	0.000	-1.111	0.160	0.160	0.175	0.100	17,800,000	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	355,092	33,432	11	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.000	-0.002	0.094	0.093	0.097	0.100	210,272,585	
OM0000001319	ALJUMINUM PROD.	61,079	8,126	8	0.138	0.138	0.130	0.133	0.000	-0.007	0.130	0.128	0.130	0.100	4,465,003	
OM0000007910	AMMAN REAL ESTATE	10,000	950	1	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	0.000	-0.005	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	19,000,000	
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	35,500	3,799	3	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.000	-0.011	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	23,779,680	
Total	22	12,410,543	1,213,239	422												

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NEW STUDY

Smart TV voice assistant transactions to approach \$500 million in 2023

HAMPSHIRE: A new study from Juniper Research has found that spend through voice assistant-enabled smart TVs will reach nearly \$500 million in 2023; a sharp increase from the \$126 million expected in 2021.

This growth reflects how voice assistants are becoming context-dependent sales portals, as well as information and control systems, and smart TVs will bring an important visual element to voice assistant purchases.

The new study, Voice Assistants: Monetisation Strategies, Competitive Landscape & Market Forecasts 2021-2026, notes that

although smartphones will remain dominant in terms of usage, other platforms will grow in importance, as the search for digital assistant monetisation continues. The study notes that smart TVs will be significant in this, as they can both drive digital media purchases and add visual context to purchases.

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3 WAYS TO FOCUS ON FITNESS NO MATTER THE SEASON

Many may be rededicating themselves to getting outside and focusing on their fitness. This may be especially important after so much time spent inside due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to unwanted weight gain. “Whether you are ready to return to public fitness centres or are pursuing an at-home workout routine, the same priorities may remain key: daily exercise, proper nutrition and sufficient sleep,” said Dr. Donna O’Shea, chief medical officer of population health, UnitedHealthcare based in the US.

To help with those efforts, here are three strategies to consider to help make health a priority year-round.

Round out your home workout routine

While public gyms and group exercise classes may have appeal for many people, working out at home may have several advantages. At-home exercise is typically less expensive than a gym membership, which may also help improve your financial fitness. Exercising at home may provide greater flexibility and convenience when incorporating a workout into a daily routine, while offering a more private experience. To help make the most of your at-home exercise efforts, consider investing in resistance bands, which generally



are an inexpensive, space-saving option that may help with pre-workout warmups and options for strength training. A pair of adjustable-weight dumbbells may offer versatility, enabling scalable resistance to help improve your strength. Finally, heart rate monitors or activity trackers may help you evaluate performance during individual workouts and over time, while digital fitness apps may provide helpful instruction.

Make movement a priority

Even if you don’t have a limited or full gym setup at home, it is crucial to still stay active and not fall into the trap of participating only in sedentary activities, such

as binge-watching the latest TV series or movies. Consider taking short walks frequently throughout the day, aiming for six separate “mini-walks” of at least 300 to 500 steps. To help enhance cardiovascular fitness, consider at least one 30-minute “brisk walk” of at least 2,000 to 3,000 steps each day. To help build endurance, consider working toward 8,000 to 10,000 aggregate steps per day. Moving more and sitting less may help boost the immune system, ease joint pain and curb cravings for high-sugar foods that may contribute to inflammation and disease, according to a recent study.

Identify intrinsic and extrinsic motivators

In general, people may be motivated by a combination of intrinsic factors, such as wanting to maintain a healthy weight, and extrinsic factors, such as financial rewards. Daily exercise may offer several intrinsic motivators, given research has shown consistent movement may help ward off depression and prevent issues like heart disease. To potentially earn incentives for pursuing healthier habits, it’s important to note that a majority of employers offer well-being programmes, many of which include financial rewards for healthy activities such as walking, going to the gym or meeting certain health benchmarks (e.g., cholesterol levels, body mass index or non-nicotine use). In the US some health plans offer access to wearable devices that may enable people to earn more than \$1,000 per year in financial incentives for meeting certain daily activity goals.

Following these tips may help you make well-being a priority, while encouraging healthier habits that may eventually translate to meaningful improvements.

The information provided is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be, nor should be construed as, medical advice. Check with your doctor to determine what activity level is right for you. -BPT





China Focus: China walks the talk in pursuing green future



An aerial photo taken on June 27, 2021 shows the scenery in Saihanba National Forest Park in Chengde, north China's Hebei Province. — Xinhua/Yang Shiyao

China has announced the completion of drawing ecological protection “red lines” nationwide, which demarcate no less than 25 percent of its land area for environmental protection. The designated protection area covers major environmentally functional zones, ecologically sensitive and vulnerable regions, and vital regions for biodiversity. As one of China's institutional innovations for ecological conservation, a national guideline introduced the strategy in 2017 to foster an ecological civilization.

LIFELINE FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY
As defined by the guideline, a protection red line zone refers to an area with crucial ecological functions and must be strictly protected. The red lines are “bottom lines and lifelines” for ensuring China's ecological security, the guideline stresses. It notes that red line zones include areas with functions of nurturing headwaters, protecting biodiversity, conserving water and soil, solidifying desert sand, and stabilizing coastal ecology. It also includes ecologically sensitive and fragile regions that endure soil erosion and desertification. China has stressed the red line strategy on many occasions and has incorporated it into its 14th Five-Year Plan. According to the development plan, drawing the red lines is part of the work to improve the



An aerial photo taken on July 7, 2021 shows the Caohai National Nature Reserve in the Yi, Hui and Miao Autonomous County of Weining, southwest China's Guizhou Province. — Xinhua/Tao Liang

country's network of ecological security barriers. It also looks at launching a national afforestation campaign and implementing a “forest chief” scheme.

DO'S AND DONT'S
The guideline calls for strict regulation and management of these red lines. It urges local authorities to tailor protection and restoration measures as per local ecological conditions and prioritize the habitats of important species in implementation. Development and construction activities are prohib-

ited in red line areas if they harm the local ecology, the guideline says. It also forbids arbitrary changes in the usage of land. The red lines concentrate on China's ecologically sensitive and fragile regions, including the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the Qinling Mountains, and the Yellow River and Yangtze River basins. As north China's largest functional area for ecology, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has designated more than half of its land area as ecological protection red line zones. These 596,900-square-km zones include grasslands, for-

ests and wetlands, according to the region's natural resources bureau. Rich in natural resources, Inner Mongolia has established 182 nature reserves of various levels and planned to set up 24 land remediation and ecological restoration projects to enhance carbon sink capacity and ecological value of the resources.

IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY
The country is setting up a national park system to protect ecosystems and endangered animals. Accordingly, it has piloted ten



A photo taken on May 28, 2021 shows a giant panda at a newly opened science park dedicated to the protection of wild animals in Zhouzhi County of Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. — Xinhua/Li Yibo

national parks, including national parks for giant pandas and Siberian tigers, with the total pilot area topping 220,000 square km. According to a white paper recently released by the State Council Information Office, China has established about 10,000 protected areas of all types, which account for about 18 percent of the country's total land area. The well-planned protected areas system has brought 90 percent of terrestrial ecosystem types and 71 percent of key state-protected wildlife species under effective protection. Thanks to the

country's persistent efforts in biodiversity protection and ecological restoration, populations of several rare and endangered species have gradually recovered. The numbers of Siberian tigers, Asian elephants, and crested ibises have increased rapidly. Rare and endangered species such as the wild giant panda, Tibetan antelope, and Milu deer are living in improved environments. The giant panda is now off the list of endangered animals, with 1,800 of them now living in the wild, the ministry announced.

ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

China becomes strong supporter, contributor to global biodiversity agenda, says UN official

CHINA HAS greatly supported and contributed to protecting biodiversity and its philosophy of ecological civilization is “critical for all countries to achieve the global biodiversity goals,” a United Nations (UN) official has said. “Ecological civilization is an interesting concept. And why interesting? Because it's looking at the relationship between the society and nature,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The concept demonstrates “the mainstream of biodiversity across sectors, across departments, which is also critical for all countries to achieve the global biodiversity goals,” she told Xinhua in a recent interview. Mrema has arrived in China to participate in the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in China's southwestern city of Kunming. Themed “Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for

All Life on Earth,” the meeting is the first global conference convened by the United Nations on the topic of ecological civilization. The first part of the meeting kicks off on Oct. 11 when participants review the “post-2020 global biodiversity framework” to draw a blueprint for biodiversity conservation in the future. The second part, to be held in person in the first half of 2022, will see broad and deepened negotiations toward an ambitious and practical framework. “This framework will actually replace the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which guided our implementation for the last 10 years,” she said. Mrema expects that a Kunming Declaration will be adopted at the first part of the meeting, saying it will help “build momentum on the importance of biodiversity conservation” and demonstrate that “loss of biodiversity is not waiting for us.” In the past several decades, “China has been a strong supporter and contributor to the global



A photo taken on August 26, 2021 shows a view of the Zedang Lake at Guan'egou national forest park in Dangchang County of Longnan, northwest China's Gansu Province. — Xinhua/Ma Xiping

biodiversity agenda,” she said. Mrema mentioned that China is among the first countries to become a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has also ratified two protocols to the con-

vention, namely the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing. Moreover, “China has been one of the biggest donor countries to the core budget of the convention and the protocols, particularly since 2019,” Mrema said. Offering to host the COP15 conference is “a clear demonstration of China's leadership and commitment to biodiversity,” she said. Mrema also recognized the restoration efforts that China has carried out over the last decades to protect and conserve biodiversity, saying the efforts clearly represent a good model for future work, which can also be emulated and learned by other countries. “The Chinese government has continued to apply a long-term approach to halt and reverse biodiversity loss with multiple disciplinary teams that can offer evidence-based solutions to address social economic complexities and can provide inclusive and accessible policy directions, including the ecological red line policy, which will enable to build a resilient environment able to adapt to future impacts and shocks,” she said. “And the Chinese notion of unity, of nature and man, we hope, will

be a good example for other countries to follow or to emulate,” she added. Speaking of challenges in terms of biodiversity, Mrema said the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is “a major one,” which has affected both our health and biodiversity. A UN report released in 2019 identified five direct drivers of biodiversity loss as changing use of sea and land, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive non-native species. To prevent biodiversity loss, Mrema said, the whole world should effectively protect more land and oceans, ensure sustainable consumption and production, ensure that all actors are engaged in protecting nature, and enhance cooperation among governments and with all stakeholders. “We are responsible for really taking the transformative actions to ensure that harmonious relationship with nature. And therefore, our relationship with nature needs to change,” she said.

ROUND-UP

Lulu launches ‘Discover America’ promotion

The event is held across selected Lulu branches in Oman and features food, delicacies, and grocery products from the United States

Muscat: Lulu Hypermarket on October 11 launched its latest edition of the ‘Discover America’ campaign, an annual festival that enables shoppers to explore the widest range of American products in Oman.

The Lulu event, held from October 11 to 17, showcases a wide range of products specially flown in from the United States for Lulu shoppers. The event is held across selected Lulu branches in Oman and features food, delicacies, and grocery products from the United States.

Commenting on the promotion, Shabeer K.A., Lulu’s Regional Director – Oman, remarked, “We are organising the ‘Discover America’ promotion for the sixth time in Oman. The promotion is an exceptional opportunity for our customers to explore and experience the culinary delights and lifestyles of the United States. The growing demand for US products from our customers encourages us to organise such events and we hope to bring in more such innovative promotion for our shoppers in the future,” he added.

Leslie M. Tsou, the US Ambassador to Oman, inaugurated the event at Lulu Hypermarket, Bausher, on October 11, in the presence of Lulu



management, staff members, and customers. “‘Discover America’ celebrates the strong partnership between Oman and the United States,” Tsou said. “The incredible variety of products available here shows Omani appreciation for the high quality and value of American brands,” she added.

The Oman American Business Center (AmCham Oman), a Discover America partner, is working closely with the US Embassy to

promote the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement and highlight US and Omani partnerships in business and culture.

Lulu has brought in fruits and vegetables, fresh and frozen foods, chilled and dairy products, pies, cakes, and chocolates from the best US brands for promotion. The promotion will feature more than 180 brands with a product range of more than 4,000 items. Popular brands like Kraft, Duncan Hines,

Planter’s, Bragg, McCain, Jell-O, Bertolli, Ragu, Folgers, Smucker’s, Quaker, Hunt’s, Hershey’s, and many more are available for customers to purchase.

With over 200 stores across the region, the Lulu Group has succeeded in carving out a niche for itself in the retail industry. The group’s unrelenting commitment to constantly deliver the best to its customers has been the reason behind its success all along the way.

FLORAL BOUTIQUE



Flora D’lite opens deliveries in Sohar

MUSCAT: Floral boutique Flora D’lite has had a successful launch with their e-commerce website www.floradlite.com in Muscat.

During the initial weeks of being operational, the website had many enquiries for deliveries to the Sohar area. In keeping up with the demand, the website has now extended its offerings to the residents of Sohar and those wishing to send their friends and family gifts there.

With a variety of floral bouquets made up of hydrangea, roses, sunflowers, deco and much more, customers will have a big selection of beautiful floral arrangements to gift. Flowers in a box and infinity roses will also be available along with delicious cakes to suit every occasion. Categories will continue to be added based on the growing demand in the area.

“Sohar is a very strategic location for us to venture into. We are well pleased to extend the Flora D’lite offerings to Sohar and can assure our new customers there

of our trademark quality and reliability,” said a spokesperson for Flora D’lite.

“As Flora D’lite continues to develop as a brand we have many plans in the pipeline which include more physical outlets and website ordering and delivery locations. Whether you prefer the option of walk-in and shop or the ease of online ordering, our goal is to offer you the best of the floral world and beyond.”

During October the website is offering a flat 10% promotional discount on all orders and 15% off for repeat clients. Additionally in Muscat customers have the alternative to have their gifts delivered to the doorstep or they can order and pick them up from the outlets.

The brand currently operates 2 outlets in Qurum (next to Fun Zone) and Seeb (Links, Muscat Hills) with plans for more openings in the country within the year. The outlets supply fresh and artificial flowers, indoor plants, forever flowers and vases.



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