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REVENUE OF \$22.768
BILLION IN 2021**

OQ recorded consolidated revenue of USD 22.768 billion by the end of 2021, compared to USD 14.006 billion in 2020, an increase of 63%. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) stood at USD 3.699 billion, an increase of 154% as compared to 2020. **>B1**



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**DELEGATED BY HM, ROYAL COURT
ADVISOR HEADS TO JAPAN**

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Salim Mustahil Al Mashani, Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court headed on Sunday for Japan to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the official funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to be held in Tokyo this Tuesday. **>A5**



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UAE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO OMAN A QUANTUM JUMP IN BILATERAL TIES

Sheikh
Mohammed
arriving in
Oman on
Tuesday



MUSCAT: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will pay a two-day state visit to the Sultanate of Oman this Tuesday, 27 September 2022.

This came in a statement issued on Sunday by the Diwan of Royal Court, reading as follows:

"In affirmation of the ties of fraternity, kinship, good neighbourliness and historical relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, leading a high-profile delegation, will pay a two-day state visit to the Sultanate of Oman starting from this Tuesday, 27 September 2022. The visit will explore various areas of common interests that meet aspirations of the two countries towards more prosperous future. May the Almighty Allah bless the two wise leaderships with success for the good of their peoples and the Arab and Muslim nations!" — **ONA**



Oman-UAE relations a model that responds to peoples' aspirations

The visit will also be an opportunity to exchange views about circumstances and developments of importance in the GCC, Arab and regional entourage

MUSCAT: The fraternal relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are based on common and solid foundations.

These deep-rooted relations have been further consolidated through cultural, social and economic cooperation. The aspirations of the two countries' brotherly peoples are a model reflecting how best ties of neighbourliness and affinity should be.

The visit to be made to Oman by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, from Tuesday, and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, assume

a great significance.

The visit constitutes a new starting point for more tangible steps, coordination and integration towards the achievement of the shared interests of the two countries. It will motivate more action for the realisation of the prosperity for Omani and UAE peoples in all spheres.

The visit will also be an opportunity to exchange views about circumstances and developments of importance in the GCC, Arab and regional entourage.

These relations have been distinguished, since the first meeting between the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour and the late HH Sheikh

Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Oman-UAE relations are compatible in many areas of shared interests that serve the peoples of the two countries over the past decades.

Since its establishment in 1991, the Supreme Joint Committee between the two countries worked hard to embody the aspirations of the two peoples of Oman and the UAE. The panel takes credit for enhancing cooperation in economic, commercial, cultural and educational fields, in addition to connecting electricity and telecommunications networks, coordinating land transport services and investment benefiting both Omani and UAE peoples. **>A2**

UAE among the leading trading partners of Oman

ABU DHABI: Sayyid Ahmed Hilal Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has said that the visit to Oman by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will be the first one of its kind, since HH Sheikh Mohammed took the reins of power in his country.

Sayyid Ahmed told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this visit will culminate in a fraternal meeting between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the UAE presidents and that it will reflect positively on the process of joint action aimed to develop all areas of cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Sayyid Ahmed added that Oman-UAE relations are eminent in every respect and that they are consolidated by fraternal bonds and a strategic approach founded by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

He noted that communication between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and their constant keenness to deepen relations and cooperation spurred further growth and development in all fields—"and we now reap the fruits of such bilateral action."

The ambassador pointed out that integration between Oman and the UAE lends strong support to promising economic and investment opportunities. **>A2**

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MUSCAT



ENVIRONMENT

Four fungi, unknown to the world, recorded in Dhofar

Times News Service

MUSCAT : An Omani research team has recorded four fungi, hitherto unknown to the world, in Dhofar Governorate.

A joint team of researchers at the Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center, Mawarid, of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Sultan Qaboos University has recorded 4 large fungi, unknown to the world till now, in addition to 7 different families of common fungi in Dhofar Governorate under a project for collection, characterisation and preservation of large fungi in the Sultanate of Oman.

The research team succeeded in finding two families of plerotioids, namely, Pleurotaceae and Schizo-



phyllaceae, and one family of jelly fungi (Auriculariaceae). The Sultanate of Oman recorded the source of all these large fungi for the first time which was published in internationally referred sci-

tific journals.

During the project, the genetic sequence of the ITS region of fungi was studied for about 60 types of fungi collected in their intact state in Dhofar Governorate, which re-

sulted in the registration of 32 different types of fungi belonging to 24 genera and 17 families of Agaricomycetes. The project of collecting, characterising and conserving large fungi in the Sultanate of Oman came in three main phases: collection, characterisation and conservation.

The project started in 2018 and in the first phase - collection -- about 80 samples were collected from Dhofar Governorate during September 1-15, 2018. All samples were documented with pictures and data required for identification and characterisation. The research focused on the Governorate of Dhofar during the Khareef season, due to the presence of auxiliary factors for the growth of fungi or other micro organisms. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Praise for Oman

1 Oman's efforts in promoting human rights have received international praise. **>A3**

WORLD Philippines evacuation

2 Philippines has evacuated towns as Super Typhoon Noru made landfall. **>A6**

MARKET Bank Muscat inks deal

2 Bank Muscat has signed OMR39mn finance facility with Galfar. **>B1**



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Maghrib.....	6:05pm
Isha.....	7:15pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:42am

BILATERAL TIES

Two countries share deep-rooted social ties: UAE Ambassador



MUSCAT: Mohammed Sultan Al Suwaidi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the Sultanate of Oman, affirmed that the upcoming visit of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE to Oman will have a positive impact on the course of bilateral relations and comes in line with the farsighted vision of the leaderships of the two countries.

Al Suwaidi told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this visit is an evidence of the depth of bilateral relations and cooperation in various political, economic, cultural and social fields.

"The strong fraternal ties between the two leaderships is unique, notably at the economic

level, and this reflects mutual confidence and sets relations between their countries apart," said Al Suwaidi.

He noted that the two countries are keen on forming practical visions about joint future action, adding that "this will reflect positively on economic, investment, and social aspects."

Al Suwaidi laid emphasis on sustained communication among officials tasked with economic and commercial affairs, in addition to the exchange of visits between delegations of businessmen.

UAE investments in Oman at the end of 2021 stood at OMR1.20 billion, while total investments during the first quarter of 2022 amounted to OMR1.23 billion, said

the ambassador.

He said that the UAE is doing its best to achieve maximum exchange of benefits between the two countries when investing in Oman, making use of a diverse portfolio of projects in the country, notably in the converting industries sector, financial services, construction, real estate and tourism. Al Suwaidi explained that the two countries share deep-rooted social relations, as well as strategic interests that are greatly valued by the peoples of the two countries.

Al Suwaidi reiterated the visit's strategic importance to the two countries. He hoped that the next stage would see more joint efforts on maintaining advanced levels of joint action. -ONA

OMAN-UAE TIES

< FROM A1 'Oman is the second largest GCC trading partner of UAE'

The two countries envisage focusing on future cooperation, highlighting investment opportunities, streamlining procedures for investors in both countries and expanding partnerships in the business sector and investments that could be transformed into economic projects realising the common interests and accelerating the volume of trade exchange, he explained.

Over the past five decades, the UAE came in forefront of Oman's trading partners, said Sayyid Ahmed, noting that Oman is the second largest GCC trading partner of the UAE. "This reinforces our optimistic view of a verdant future of the Oman-UAE economic partnerships," he observed.

The value of Oman's total exports to the UAE, which amounted to OMR1.3 billion in 2021, compared to OMR1.2 billion in 2020. Sayyid Ahmed added that Oman's exports to the UAE constitute 7.8 percent of the general total of Oman's exports in 2021.

Sayyid Ahmed also underscored the significance of coordination between the two countries at the political level through coordination and consultation about various regional and international issues.

Oman and the UAE share a



strategic trade partnership that supports the economies of the two countries and develops investment opportunities between them, with agreements and memoranda of understanding covering financial and real estate activities, as well as in agricultural, fish and animal products, to name a few.

The Embassy of Oman in Abu Dhabi has contributed to attracting and exchanging investments between the two countries, based on the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, by launching the national programme on attracting private investments and enhancing the presence of Omani exports in foreign markets.

This program is one of the accelerators of the first phase of implementation of Oman Vision

2040, which is linked to the economy and development, he said. He furthered that the programme will focus on Omani exports and support their access to foreign markets to become a major tributary of the national economy.

The ambassador also underlined the importance of mutual visits and continuous coordination between officials of the two countries, saying that the process maximizes prospects for joint cooperation in various fields and enhances investment opportunities.

He referred to the Oman-UAE Economic Forum held two sessions, in October 2021 and February 2022, which saw fruitful discussions on promotion of trade and investment partnerships.

-ONA



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TRADE

< FROM A1 UAE investments in Oman more than OMR1.23 billion



Oman and the UAE have been the first GCC states to endorse the personal identity card in travel in lieu of passports since 1993. The UAE is Oman's prime partner in business, as affirmed by the volume of exports, reexport and import figures.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that commercial exchange between the two countries in 2021 stood at more than OMR5.5 billion, compared to OMR 5.2 billion in 2020.

UAE investments in Oman, as at the end of 2021, stood at about OMR1.2 billion. By the end of the first quarter in 2022, total UAE investments stood at more than OMR1.23 billion.

UAE companies are among the largest stake takers in Oman due to the ease of transportation of national products and smooth border access. Oman is one of the most important markets for UAE trade. Oman ranked 3rd in the Arab world and 10th globally among the list of UAE trading partners and its business accounts for 20 percent of the total UAE trade.

Tourist establishments in the two countries receive many groups of tourists from both countries, which joined hands to

forge joint tourism investments that have contributed to attracting more tourists.

The private sectors in the two countries play a vital role in economic development, and they have been the backbone of economic diversification trends. Oman is pressing ahead with measures to encourage local and foreign investments, especially in economic diversification sectors, notably industries, logistics, mining, tourism and fisheries.

Represented by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the two countries signed an agreement in 1998 to establish Oman-UAE Businessmen Council. The Council is tasked with promoting joint cooperation and realizing the aspirations of the two countries.

The private sector looks forward to this visit, which caps fraternal relations and opens new vistas for commercial relations and investment.

The two countries worked closely and continuously to enhance cooperation in the sphere of culture by holding joint events and activities. These include the UAE Cultural Week in Oman, first held on 11 December 2006 on the occasion of celebrations mark-

ing Muscat as the Capital of Arab Culture in 2006. The event comprised four exhibitions specialised in Arabic calligraphy, coins, modern arts and cultural books and publications.

Represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Information, Oman participates in annual book fairs in the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. UAE cultural and media institutions participate in Muscat International Book Fair as well.

The Oman-UAE relations are based on historical ties inherited by the generations who are keen on maintaining the integrity of relations in the purviews of visions that stem from language, religion and kinship. Omani and UAE peoples are looking forward, with great hopes, that the visit of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, to Oman and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The visit will elevate the level of joint cooperation in all fields and deepen fraternal ties. It will inspire the two countries in their quest to explore the future with determination and steadfastness. -ONA

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Sultanate’s efforts to promote human rights appreciated at global forum

Sultanate of Oman has already signed 7 out of 9 relevant global agreements

MUSCAT: A number of international officials have expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman’s in promoting human rights, citing Oman’s recent signing of 7 out of 9 global agreements of relevance.

The commendation was made at a three-day workshop, organised by Oman Human Rights Commission here on Sunday, about the “Convention against Torture and Protection from Enforced Disappearance” and the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, which Oman joined in 2020.

Mohammed Ensour, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,



said that Oman has ratified three international agreements on human rights. He added that the pacts constitute the cornerstone of human rights system.

Ensour hailed the step as “a giant stride that reflects Oman’s political will and its respect for human rights charters. He commended the efforts exerted by Oman in updating human rights practices.

“The international Human Rights commission welcomes and values the promulgation of the Royal decree forming Oman Human Rights Commission which states that the commission enjoys integrity and autonomy in practising its duties,” Ensour said.

Meanwhile, Sultan Hassan Al Jamali, Secretary General of National Human Rights Committee, Qatar, and Head of the Arab Hu-

man Rights Network, said, “We value and take pride in the successive accomplishments made by Oman and its leadership in the field of human rights protection. We appreciate Oman’s positive engagement in the global human rights scheme and its recent signing of related agreements.”

Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Diplomatic Affairs Undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry and

the chief guest, said that the formation of Oman Human Rights Commission is a clear evidence of the government’s keenness on protecting human rights for citizens and residents alike.

Example

An example of this approach is Oman’s signing 7 out of 9 global human rights agreements, he added. The workshop includes

Mohammed Ensour, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, hailed the step as “a giant stride” that reflects Oman’s political will and its respect for human rights charters

seminars in which representatives of government and other departments are taking part. Local and independent UN experts are giving lectures at the workshop. -ONA

MONDAY COLUMN

Kind words can change our world for the better



Saleh Al-Shaibany

A long time ago, one of my teachers said in the class that kind words can change the world. As a ten year old, I was not sure how it worked. As a child, all I understood was that we got a slap from our teachers or parents if we did not say the right words.

But now I know that people respond to compliments or contempt. Contrary to what most of us believe, there are no casual words. If you didn’t mean what you said then be sure your remarks made a significant difference to someone. We see such examples all the time but it only bothers us when we are on the receiving end. I was attending a meeting with a CEO of a large corporate business and this man has obviously perfected the art of saying the right words for the right occasion. He paid compliments every time one was needed and tactfully disagreed when he had a different opinion.

When we were alone, I told him about my observations. His explanation was not surprising at all.

“I was the subject of ridicule when I was younger and I know how it feels to be run down by words,” he told me.

How many would remember to use their bad experience to enlighten up the life of others? One would argue that saying the right words all the time



is stressful. But how you say things, in my opinion, reflects your character. You could pretend to be polite and considerate but the mask would soon slip off to reveal the real you. In my younger days as a communication engineer, I had a supervisor whose communication skill was not enviable. He was rude, loud, self-opinionated and would often drive to tears many young recruits. His bad attitude never caught up with him until he retired. He knew that someone would have to make a farewell speech on his last day at work. He never expected anyone to have any kind words and he braced himself for the worse. However, he was taken completely by surprise when words of warmth were attributed at him. For a man who had a lot to say during his carrier, he was lost for words on his last day at work.

Taken aback

He was so taken aback that he was forced to shed a tear. The irony was that, this man, who drove to tears a few hundreds of people in his career, was finally at the receiving end.

Did we at last have our own back? No, we did not see that way. However, for many years I thought we could have been accused of insincerity and that we did not mean a word in that speech. But now, as I write these words, I am convinced that we were completely honest. We understood his problem he had with words and it was because he was not comfortably being around with people. Perhaps somewhere in our subconscious we looked deep at his good side and finding the right words was a simple exercise.

I still see him around and perhaps he has mellowed with old age. Perhaps, the simple words we casually prepared for him on his last day in the office changed his life. I shall never know the truth but then so many other things are hidden from sight and we are not meant to know. But what we are meant to know is when to put our words in good use so we can get the best out of people. It is that simple. Ignore the bad side and look hard for the good one and trust your words to lighten up someone’s day.

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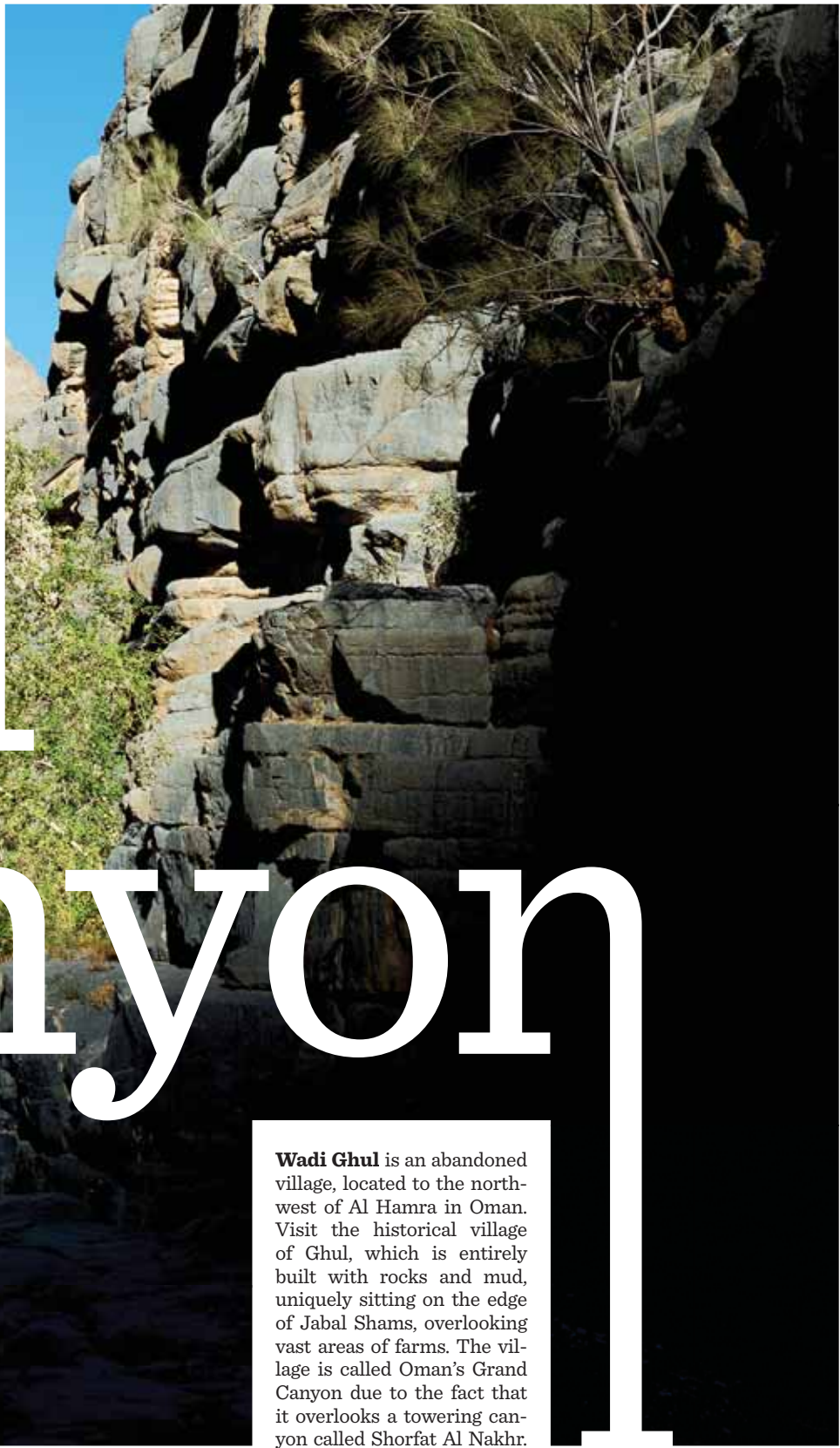
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92ND SAUDI NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Muscat held a reception on the occasion of the 92nd Saudi National Day at the Sheraton Hotel on Sunday. The ceremony was attended by a number of senior officials in the Sultanate, a number of heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate, and a number of officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. -ONA





Visit Oman's Grand Canyon

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Wadi Ghul is an abandoned village, located to the north-west of Al Hamra in Oman. Visit the historical village of Ghul, which is entirely built with rocks and mud, uniquely sitting on the edge of Jabal Shams, overlooking vast areas of farms. The village is called Oman's Grand Canyon due to the fact that it overlooks a towering canyon called Shorfat Al Nakhr. There are camping centres, an observatory, and places for hiking and balcony walks.







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OMR3mn pact inked for Sur Public Park

South Sharqiyah Governor's Office and Oman LNG Sign Agreement for Sur Public Park

SUR: As part of its efforts to preserve the environment's unique biodiversity and transform the coastal landscape of Sur, Oman LNG signed a pivotal agreement with South Sharqiyah Governor's Office to fund Sur Public Park.

The estimated cost of the second phase is three million Omani Rials (OMR3 million) and the park is set to be a public facility, attracting residents and visitors of Sur and South Sharqiyah Governorate in general.

It is planned to operate as a self-sustaining enterprise, providing exceptional opportunities for en-



trepreneurship. Additionally, the park will boost the tourism sector in this magnificent and historic governorate.

The Sur Public Park, a new tourist destination, includes a number of facilities such as children's playground, an amphitheater, a public library, butterfly garden, sports fields, an event square and a pedestrianised pond.

This project is positioned to tie-

in well with Oman 2040 Vision and is aligned with the "People and Society" pillar of the pivotal Oman 2040 Vision, which aims to develop the health aspect of the society.

Additionally, it addresses the family and community wellbeing and health objectives of this pillar. The latest initiative will also advance the company's effort to boost its

environmental performance.

The agreement builds on earlier support where Oman LNG had funded detailed consultancy services for the design phase of the park, taking into consideration a number of important factors to accommodate the needs of its local community.

Commenting on this signing, Hamed Al Naamany, CEO of Oman LNG, said: "We feel privileged to pursue this project that will provide many opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to invest and grow new businesses and community for recreation. It is, by all means, an environment-friendly project that comes to raise awareness of nature-based carbon offset and enhance the touristic infrastructure in South Sharqiyah."

Since inception, Oman LNG strives to finance different recreational and touristic projects in Oman and South Sharqiyah Governorate in particular. Recently, Oman LNG inaugurated the Fatah Al Khair Centre in Sur, which helped to preserve the city's ancient maritime history.

Delegated by HM, Royal Court Advisor heads to Japan



MUSCAT: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Salim Mustahail Al Mashani, Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court headed on Sunday for Japan to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the official funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to be held in Tokyo this Tuesday.

Sheikh Salim is accompanied by Sheikh Dr. Al Khattab Ghalib Al Hinai, Deputy Chairman of the State Council and Sheikh Mohammed Saud Bahwan Al Mukhaini, Chairman of Oman-Japan Friendship Association.

OMAN VISION 2040

Qatari delegation explores Oman's skill in environment preservation

MUSCAT: A delegation from Qatar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change explored Oman's experience in the field of environment preservation.

This comes within the framework of the delegation's several-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority (EA) underscored the importance of environmental cooperation between Oman and Qatar.

He pointed out that the two countries have come a long way in developing the environment sector.

Al Amri also said that Oman accords a great attention to the environment sector within the framework of Oman Vision 2040.



He also reiterated the significance of supporting green economy, circular economy and ecotourism.

Control mechanisms

The Environment Authority gave a presentation on environmental legislations in Oman, as well as control mechanisms and strategies undertaken for environment preservation.

The Qatari delegation toured Mawarid Centre for the preservation of genetic resources. The delegation will also tour some natural reserves in various governorates.

Dr. Ibrahim Abdullatif Al Masalamani, Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs, headed the Qatari delegation. -ONA



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3.	32569/22	Overhauling & Rewinding of 2500 KW Motor	RO. 52.500	20th October 2022 1700 Hours	25th October 2022 2359 hours
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The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 2359 hours detailed date on the above table, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman, (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value. The bid bond must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers and ORIGINAL bid bond must be submitted on the tender box at the reception on our Administration Building, Al Mefah West factory Site, Bausher, Muscat, Oman.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents

OMAN IN FOCUS

Omani documentary showing country's diversity unveiled



MUSCAT: Details of the Omani documentary themed "Oman in Focus" were unveiled on Sunday. The documentary highlights the environment and tourism sectors in the Sultanate of Oman.

Maisa Fahd Al Hooti, Executive Director of "Oman in Focus" said that the documentary is the fruit of continuous efforts exerted over two consecutive years despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

She added that the two-hour long documentary is presented in three languages, namely Arabic, English and French.

Al Hooti said that the main goal of producing this documentary is to highlight environmental aspects that were away from the spotlight in Oman. The documentary shows the rich diversity in Oman's geography. It focuses on endangered marine life and wildlife, she added.

SPECIES

FROM A1 Scientific papers

The project phases of phenotypic and molecular analyses were completed in cooperation with the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University.

The project ended with the publication of three scientific papers documenting the registration of (4) species of large fungi within the genera Xanthagaricus, Agaricus, Microp-salliota as new global update and registration of these species in the Sultanate of Oman, where they were fully described, and the supposed new species were distinguished in the phylogenetic tree.

The research project came out with several important scientific outputs, most notably the richness and diversity of Dhofar Governorate in large fungi, and the contribution of these organisms to humanity in terms of manufacturing food, medicines, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, bio-fertilizers, bio-processing, textiles, agriculture, etc. -ONA



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32/2022	Construction of classrooms and lecture halls at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (College of Education in Rustaq)	Companies and establishments specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the Excellent Grade	RO 150/-	13/10/2022 at 14:30 pm	04/11/2022 at 10:00 am

- Tender documents may be purchased online starting from Monday 26/09/2022 at 07:30 am through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- All bidding companies must attach with their bids a temporary tender bond in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified by a bank operating in the Sultanate, not less than (1%) of the bid value, addressed to the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, and valid for a period of (90) days from the date of bid submission. Any bid that does not meet the required temporary tender bond shall not be considered. Bid shall be submitted sealed and signed by the authorized person, and uploaded in the electronic tender system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences with the tender name and number only.
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.
- The University shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Stone slab laid at Queen Elizabeth's burial site

LONDON: An inscribed stone slab has been laid where Queen Elizabeth's coffin was interred, Buckingham Palace said on Saturday.

The stone records the birth and death dates of the late queen: "Elizabeth II 1926 -2022." She ruled for 70 years and died on September 8 at the age of 96.

Queen Elizabeth died on September 8 at Balmoral Castle in

Scotland, and was buried after a state funeral on Monday.

The queen's coffin was interred in the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle's St George's Chapel. The memorial chapel was commissioned by the late queen in the 1960s as a burial place for her father.

The inscribed stone slab, which is made of Belgian marble, shows the names of the late queen's par-

ents, King George VI and Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Her husband, Prince Philip, also features on the stone. The late queen's spouse died last year.

Engraved on the ledger stone is a garter star, representing an order of knights that the Windsor dynasty belongs to.

Queen Elizabeth's sister, Princess Margaret, is interred at the same chapel.

Windsor Castle reopens to the public on Thursday, after which people will be able to visit St George's Chapel.

Also on Saturday, the royal family released an image of King Charles III taking up his new state duties for the first time.

Charles, 73, was photographed at a desk at Buckingham Palace, with a photograph of his parents in the background. **ow**



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HURRICANE-FORCE WINDS

Tropical storm Fiona caused damage 'never seen' before in Canada

ONTARIO: Fiona ripped into eastern Canada on Saturday, forcing evacuations, knocking down trees and powerlines, and reducing many homes on the coast to rubble with hurricane-force winds.

"We're seeing reports of significant damage in the region, and recovery is going to be a big effort," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, adding that some areas have experienced "storm damage like they've never seen."

He met with the government emergency response team and said the military would be deployed to help with the clean-up.

The Canadian leader was due to attend the funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe but said he now would no longer make the trip. Instead, he would visit the storm-damaged areas as soon as possible.

"There are people who see their houses destroyed, people who are very worried, we will be there for you," he promised.

Canadians describe devastation as Fiona hits

In Nova Scotia, where the storm made landfall, more than 384,000 households were left without electricity, Nova Scotia Power reported.

New Brunswick reported 32,000 homes were without pow-



er, as well as 82,000 in Prince Edward Island.

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston said roads were washed out, including his own, and said an "incredible" amount of trees were down. "It is pretty devastating. The sad reality is the people who need information are unable to hear it. Their phones are not working, they don't have power or access to the internet," Houston said. Ocean waves pounded the town of Port Aux Basques on the coast of Newfoundland and washed entire buildings into the sea.

"There is an apartment building that's literally gone. There are entire streets that are gone," Rene Roy, editor-in-chief of Wreckhouse Weekly in Port aux Basques, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

"This is hands down the most terrifying thing I've ever seen in my life," Roy said, describing many homes as "just a pile of rubble in the ocean right now." **ow**

The storm made landfall on Polillo Island, which is home to 13 million people

MANILA: Authorities in the Philippines have evacuated towns on the main island of Luzon as Super Typhoon Noru made landfall on Sunday afternoon, local time.

Noru is the strongest storm to hit the Philippines this year with gusts of up to 195 km/h (121 mph).

The storm made landfall on Polillo Island, 90 kilometres (almost 50 miles) north of the capital, Manila, which is home to 13 million people. Authorities have warned of potential flash floods, landslides and tidal surges.

"We ask residents living in danger zones to adhere to calls for evacuation whenever necessary," Philippine National Police chief General Rodolfo Azurin said.

Residents seek shelter

Residents in certain municipalities along the eastern seaboard



have evacuated their homes and sought shelter as the storm nears. Ferries and fishing boats have also been barred from leaving port.

On Monday, schools in Manila and surrounding areas will be closed and non-essential services will be suspended.

"I asked our mayors to comply with strict preemptive evacuations," Helen Tan, governor of the neighboring Quezon province, told the DZRH radio station.

The Philippine Coast Guard said more than 2,000 passengers have been left stranded by ferry cancellations due to the storm.

'A good recipe for explosive intensification'

Noru comes nine months after another super typhoon devastated swaths of the country, killing more than 400 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

Robb Gile, a forecaster at the

state weather bureau PAGASA, said Noru's rapid intensification as it neared land was "unprecedented." "Typhoons are like engines — you need a fuel and an exhaust to function," Gile said.

"In the case of [Noru], it has a good fuel because it has plenty of warm waters along its track and then there is a good exhaust in the upper level of the atmosphere — so it's a good recipe for explosive intensification." **ow**

BALLISTIC MISSILE

North Korea test-fires ballistic missile towards eastern sea

SEOUL: North Korea fired a ballistic missile into its eastern sea, South Korea's military said on Sunday.

The launch came a day after South Korean officials said they detected signs that Pyongyang was preparing to test a missile designed to be fired from submarines. Japan also confirmed the launch and said it reached a maximum altitude at 50 kilometres (30 miles) and may have flown on an irregular trajectory.

Japan's Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada said the missile fell outside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

'Threat to the peace'

"North Korea's action represent a threat to the peace and security of our country, the region and the international community and to do this as the Ukraine in-



vasion unfolds is unforgivable," Hamada said.

North Korea has carried out more than 30 missile tests this year. The country's leader Kim Jong Un has told his parliament this month that he would never abandon his nuclear weapons and missiles he needs to counter what he perceives as US hostility.

A barrage of missile tests by Pyongyang in June had prompted the United States and South Korea to respond with tests of their own.

The latest test comes as the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group arrived in South Korea for joint military exercises.

South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol, who vowed on the campaign trail to get tough with Kim, has ramped up Seoul's joint drills with the US.

The arrival of the carrier group is part of a push to have increased US nuclear-capable assets operate in the area to deter North Korea. **ow**

PILGRIMS

More than 20 killed after boat capsizes in Bangladesh

DHAKA: At least 24 people were killed and dozens more left missing on Sunday after a boat capsized in a river in Bangladesh.

The boat was carrying Hindu pilgrims who were heading to a centuries-old temple.

The incident — the worst of its kind in the country this year — took place in the Karotoa river close to the town of Boda in the north of Bangladesh.

"Firefighters and divers are searching for more bodies," a local police officer told AFP.

Officials said that 12 women and eight children were among the dead bodies that had been found.

What do we know so far?

The exact number of passengers is not known, but other people who had been on the boat said



that the number was close to 70.

A local TV channel shared footage captured on a mobile phone of the incident. It showed the overcrowded boat suddenly tip over, throwing the people into the river.

Authorities have not yet given a cause for the incident. The weather at the time was calm.

The pilgrims on the boat were headed to the Bodeshwari Temple which attracts thousands of

Hindus in the Muslim-majority country each year.

Sunday was the first day of Durga Puja, the biggest Hindu festival in Bangladesh and eastern India.

Bangladesh's record of waterway accidents

Fatal incidents such as Sunday's one are a fairly regular occurrence in the south Asian country that is crisscrossed by rivers and waterways. **ow**

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HRH CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES GERMAN CHANCELLOR SCHOLZ

HRH Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to the Chancellor who sent his greetings to the King

JEDDAH: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister, received German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz at Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah on Saturday.

At the outset of the reception, HRH Crown Prince welcomed the German Chancellor on his visit to the Kingdom, while the

Chancellor expressed his happiness to visit the Kingdom and meet with HRH Crown Prince.

HRH Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to the Chancellor who sent his greetings to the King.

During the meeting, they discussed aspects of Saudi-

German relations, areas of partnership between the two countries, prospects for bilateral cooperation and opportunities for their development in accordance with the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

They also reviewed the latest developments at the regional and international levels and efforts to achieve international stability and peace, and exchanged views on a number of issues of common concern.

HRH Crown Prince and the German Chancellor met businessmen from the Saudi and German sides.

HRH Crown Prince also held a working luncheon for the German Chancellor. The reception was attended by Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Ab-

dulaziz, Minister of Energy, Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz, Minister of State and Cabinet's Member, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior, Prince Abdullah bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, Minister of National Guard, Minister of State, Cabinet's Member, National Security Advisor Dr. Musa'ed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban, Minister of Commerce and Acting Minister of Media Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, Minister of Investment Eng. Khalid Al-Falih, and Minister of Finance Mohammed Al-Jadaan (the accompanying minister).

On the German side, the reception was attended by the delegation accompanying the Chancellor. -SPA

LUCRATIVE BUSINESSES

Kuwaiti youth turning passion into business



KUWAIT: While some people depend on government salaries to cover their living expenses, some Kuwaiti youths sought alternative ways to generate income by turning their passions into lucrative businesses.

Some of them expressed, in remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), their deep desire to break the mold and to embody the saying "If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life".

Art studio owner, Dalal Al Hashel said that she was proud to be one of the first in Kuwait to open a space dedicated to "latte art", a discipline focusing on creating art from pour microfoams in cups of coffee.

Al Hashel revealed that she began her quest in 2021, starting women-only classes in latte art, which proved to be very popular and lucrative.

Coffee roastery owner Fawaz Nasser said that the initial seeds for his business were conceptualized during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown.

Post-lockdown measures, Nasser and his partner traveled abroad to gain experience and once back home, start their coffee roastery business.

"There were many trials I faced due to being a youth and not having the necessary capital to open

the business," indicated Nasser who had to talk a bank loan to kick-start his quest to provide to-pnotch coffee for clients.

Similarly, Yasmeen Mohamad, a ceramic and clay artist, indicated that she did not know that her passion for her art would lead to opening a business.

Prior to pursuing her dream, Yasmeen was a government employee who took a leap of faith by quitting her day job and first opening a shop at home.

The home business was followed by a shop opening, which then turned into a showroom where she would provide classes in ceramic and clay art for anyone interested.

In reaction to the youths' passion, several members of the public expressed their support.

Abu Yousef, a 74-year-old senior citizen, gave his approval and support to the youth, saying that what they were doing was not very far from what the old generation pursued in terms of hard work and determination.

Um Manal, also another senior citizen, expressed pride in the youths' dreams of a better future, saying that his son was a car mechanic that left his government job to seek his passion, adding that his shop employs both Kuwaitis and residents. -BNA

LNG

Olaf Scholz talks energy supply with UAE leaders



ABU DHABI: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived in the United Arab Emirates on Sunday after meeting with the Saudi crown prince on Saturday.

Scholz said he had made progress in talks in Abu Dhabi to buy liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Gulf state.

The chancellor said "a whole series" of projects was already in the works. He also emphasised the need to rely on a variety of sources for Germany's energy needs and that being dependent on just one source "will certainly not happen again."

Scholz is scheduled to stop off in Qatar — the controversial host of this year's World Cup soccer

tournament — later on Sunday to end his two-day trip. "We need to make sure that the production of LNG in the world is advanced to the point where the high demand that exists can be met without having to resort to the production capacity that exists in Russia," the chancellor said.

Scholz is being accompanied by a large delegation of German business leaders whose firms are particularly vulnerable to gas shortages this winter.

Green hydrogen

Germany is also on the lookout for sources of green hydrogen produced using renewable energies that it may hope to source

from the Gulf.

The German leader's visit comes as the country seeks to find replacement sources of energy after pledging to cut its dependence on Russian gas.

Before the invasion of Ukraine, Berlin had bought around 55 percent of its gas from Moscow and had been planning to open the Nord Stream 2 pipeline through the North Sea for even more direct access to Russian energy imports.

However, deliveries from Russia have dwindled to almost nothing, helping to send energy costs through the roof and forcing the German government to buy out the country's main energy provider Uniper. -DW

IGCF

Sharjah international forum to explore solutions to pressing global issues

SHARJAH: Pressing humanitarian, economic, and social issues and innovative solutions will be the focus of the 11th International Government Communication Forum (IGCF) in Sharjah.

The "Challenges and Solutions" forum, on September 28-29 will feature 12 activities led by more than 50 experts and intellectuals.

The opening day of the annual event organised by the International Government Communication Centre (IGCC) - an initiative of Sharjah Government Media Bureau (SGMB) - will be launched with "Media Curriculum Session: Theoretical Reality and the Labour Market."

The session will discuss the suitability of mainstream journalism and media curricula in meeting the requirements of the labour market and will formulate recommendations to achieve aspects of development required to be in line with current needs.

The brainstorming session 'Entrepreneurs' challenges Who has the solutions?' will focus on the economic changes and technological developments that are posing challenges for entrepreneurs. Ideas shared by speakers will be a source of inspiration for entrepreneurs and incentivise them to take steps to keep pace



with the entrepreneurial environments at the domestic, regional and global levels.

The 'Writing Room' project comprises a series of workshops aimed at discovering promising new talents and providing them with the opportunity to develop their writing skills, as well as work on sustainable strategies by qualifying and training content writers.

The "Generational Dialogue: Media Experiences and Knowledge" discussion will allow students of journalism and media faculties to benefit from the expertise and experience of Arab media officials who will share their visions and perspectives and will answer questions from the audience.

The brainstorming session "Shaping a new world for refugees" will deliberate ways of integrating refugees into societies to fulfill their aspirations to enjoy a decent life. -WAM



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ABDULLA BIN ZAYED MEETS IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN NEW YORK



H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has met with Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries to achieve their common interests. They also exchanged views regional and international developments.

The two diplomats reviewed a number of issues on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. -WAM >>

HUMANITARIAN AID

Saudi Arabia sends more aid for flood victims in Pakistan



KARACHI: The fourth and fifth Saudi relief planes, laden with 60 tonnes of aid, including tents, blankets, shelter kits, food baskets and dates, benefiting 8,424 people, arrived in Karachi, Pakistan, on Friday.

The planes come as part of the Saudi relief air bridge dispatched by King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) to support those affected by floods and rains in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The air bridge also comes in implementation of the

directives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and with the follow-up of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

The aid was received by the National Disaster Management Authority and will be distributed to the affected people in a number of regions in Pakistan.

This aid comes as a part of humanitarian programs and efforts being provided by Saudi Arabia, represented by KSrelief, to support a number of countries. -SPA



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Switzerland register historic win over Spain

Spain dominated the opening proceedings at La Romareda, but a set piece gave Switzerland the lead in the 21st minute



MADRID: A lacklustre display in Zaragoza saw Spain humbled 2-1 at home and the Portuguese pip them to top spot.

Spain knew they needed to match or better Portugal's result away to Czechia in order to remain top of their Nations League group.

Spain dominated the opening proceedings at La Romareda, but a set piece gave Switzerland the lead in the 21st minute.

Ruben Vargas' corner from the left was well met by Manuel Akanji and there was little Unai Simon could do about the perfectly placed header. Shortly before the break, the Athletic Club goalkeeper did well to deny Xherdan Shaqiri a goal which would have doubled the

Swiss lead.

The attacker waltzed through the Spanish defence, but a strong hand from Unai Simon kept the deficit at 1-0 before the interval.

Luis Enrique's side came out determined in the second period and levelled the game in the 55th minute, the Spanish MARCA newspaper reported.

Marco Asensio did excellently to receive the ball in midfield, turn and run at the defence, before sliding through a nice pass which released Jordi Alba to smash home.

The lead didn't last long though and about three minutes later, the visitors were back ahead and again

it came from a corner.

Breel Embolo celebrated having turned it in, but the last touch may have come from Eric Garcia.

The second Swiss goal prompted Luis Enrique to turn to his bench with a triple substitution, sending on Jeremy Pino, Borja Iglesias and Nico Williams in place of Ferran Torres, Marco Asensio and Pablo Sarabia.

A new-look front three to try to rescue the game. Marcos Llorente replaced Pedri shortly afterwards and the versatile Atletico Madrid player brought a good save out of Yann Sommer with an effort from distance as Spain turned the screw.

Switzerland generally withstood the pressure well, however, and Spain, despite their domination of the ball, struggled to open the visitors up and get in behind.

The subs looked lively and another of them, Carlos Soler, perhaps went closest to an equaliser but it wasn't to be. Switzerland end Spain's run of 22 home games undefeated.

The Swiss did their job well, but Spain will be concerned by their lack of creativity and the slowness of their ball movement.

Next up for Luis Enrique's side is a trip to Braga to attempt to reclaim first position in the group from Portugal. **ONA**



Not a fan of Deepti Sharma 'mankading' her opponent from non-striker's end': Amy

LONDON: Following her side's 16-run loss to Team India in the third and final ODI, England captain Amy Jones said that she is not a fan of Deepti Sharma 'mankading' her opponent from the non-striker's end.

Renuka Singh's four wickets, Rajeshwari Gayakwad's two-wicket haul and an all-round effort from Women in Blue helped India give Jhulan Goswami a series-winning farewell as they bundled out hosts for 153 in the third ODI against England at Lord's ground on Saturday, winning the game by 16 runs. But the act of Deepti mankading England's Charlotte Dean is just as much in headlines as Jhulan's retirement. It has garnered polarising reactions from fans and players alike.

Heath [Knight] back. The average age is pretty low and Capsey, Kemp (Freya Kemp) and it has been a brilliant summer for us. She looked good out there, She absorbed the pressure and knuckled down - not sure she was getting out any other way [on Dean]. We will remember and she will be missed. All the best for her future but we will miss her [on coach Keightley],” she added.

Coming to the match, India was bundled out for 169 after being put to bat first by England. Half-centuries from Smriti Mandhana (50) and Deepti Sharma (68) helped Women in Blue avoid humiliation. Pacer Kate Cross (4/26) was England's leading bowler. Freya Kemp (2/24) and Sophie Ecclestone (2/27) also did great for England.

Chasing 170, a brilliant spell from Renuka Singh (4/29) had reduced England to 65/7. Knocks from captain Amy Jones (28) and Charlotte Dean (47) took England close to a victory, but a Deepti Sharma ran out Dean, who was at the non-striker's end to seal a 16-run win for India. Jhulan (2/30) and Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2/38) also starred in India's win. With this victory, Team India has sealed the series 3-0. They have won their first series against England since 1999. **ANI**

“Not happy with the result, we bowled really well, we just needed a bigger partnership. The last dismissal divides opinion. I am not a fan but it depends how India feel about it. It is within the rules, hopefully does not take the shine off the summer. Lots [of captaincy learning]. A massive learning experience. Learnt the hard way in the 2nd ODI with some practical errors,” tweeted Jones in a post-match presentation.

“The girls have been supportive. Looking forward to having

RECORD-BREAKING

Kipchoge breaks his own marathon world record

BERLIN: Double Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge has broken his own men's marathon world record at a race in Berlin.

The 37-year-old Kenyan crossed the line in a time of two hours, one minute and nine seconds, to beat by 30 seconds his previous best, set four years ago in the German capital city.

He had previously taken one minute 20 seconds off compatriot Dennis Kimetto's 2014 record of

2:02.57 in Berlin.

Kipchoge had played down his chances of a world record in the build up.

“I am happy with my preparation and I think I was so fast because of the teamwork. Everything is down to teamwork,” he said.

He added, “What motivates me is my family and I want to inspire young people. Sport unites people and that is what motivates me.” **ONA**



MOTO GP

Fighting fourth for fiery Marc Marquez in Motegi

MOTEGI: A thrilling return to the points for Marc Marquez as he took an exciting fourth place finish in just his second race back from injury, fourth months after his last complete race. Pol Espargaro earned 12th with a defensive ride in Japan.

The weather was once again front and centre at Mobility Resort Motegi as the storms broke and brilliant sunshine beat down on the track. This presented the Repsol Honda Team with the extra work of readjusting the setting of the Honda RC213V to the hotter, and dryer, conditions of the day.

A strong start to Warm Up allowed both sides of the garage to gain the data they needed. Marc Marquez and Pol Espargaro each suffered falls at Turn 9 during Warm Up without serious consequence. For the 91st time in his career, Marc Marquez lined up in pole position in what would be his 150th race in the premier class with the Repsol Honda Team. A solid launch saw Marquez defend his place inside the top three in the opening corners as the race erupted behind. Taking a steady approach to conserving his strength until the end of the race, the #93 settled into fifth and his own pace.

His plan played out and as the race entered its closing stages, Marquez reeled in Miguel Oliveira ahead. Biding his time, the eight-time World Champion struck on lap 22 with a strong pass for fourth in the race. The finish marks not only a return to the points for the first time since Mugello for Marquez but also equals his best finish of the year, achieved at the Spanish Grand Prix in Jerez. It was an exciting end to a race enjoyed by Honda President and CEO Toshihiro Mibe and the assembled Honda and HRC board members inside the Repsol Honda Team garage.

Like his teammate, Pol Espargaro launched well and gained several positions off the line. The #44 was fast in the opening laps as he hunted down reigning MotoGP



World Champion Fabio Quartararo and attempted to push deeper inside the top ten. Mounting pressure from Bagnaia and Bastianini behind forced Espargaro to focus on defending as his tyres began to drop and Quartararo escaped ahead. Holding the Ducati pair off for the majority of the race, Espargaro would cross the line in 12th place and netted his best finish since the French GP.

Honda enjoyed home delights as Ai Ogura became the first Japanese rider to win at home since Hiroshi Aoyama won the 250cc Japanese GP in 2006. Ogura now sits just two points back from the lead of the Moto2 World Championship.

Now the paddock once again prepare immediately for the next race, a return to the Thai GP and the final race in this triple-header. The MotoGP World Championship's last visit in 2019 saw Marc Marquez lift his eighth World Championship title with a thrilling last-lap victory.

“I am very happy with how the whole weekend has gone and we were able to put together an exciting race in the end. Most importantly it was a productive weekend and overall, it was a lot better than we were expecting. It

was an important race because it is the first I have finished since my operation so it was a good test of the arm and also in this area we've been able to learn. Of course I would have liked to finish higher, but being realistic it was a good result and I was able to maintain my rhythm and then attack in the last laps. I want to say thanks to Honda and the Repsol Honda Team for helping me to put together a good weekend. Also thank you to all the Japanese staff and fans who came this weekend, it was a pleasure to see everyone again. Now we go to Thailand!” said Honda rider Marc Marquez.

“I was feeling good in the first laps honestly. I was behind Quartararo and I felt like I was faster than him, I just couldn't get close enough to pass him and I didn't want to risk anything. After six or seven laps behind him, the performance dropped a bit and allowed some riders to get past me so I lost my rhythm a bit. My tyres dropped and I started to struggle more. But it's important to focus on the positives, and today we were strong at the start. It is an improvement over Aragon and we will try to make another step next week,” said Honda rider Pol Espargaro. **ANI**



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MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,458.11 points, down by 0.33 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.35 per cent at 4,782.29 points. Oman REIT Fund, up 3.45 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Chlorine, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser.

Bank Muscat signs OMR39 million financing facility pact with Galfar

The bank will provide Galfar with additional project-specific credit facilities of nearly OMR39 million

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to providing world-class banking services and facilities, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, and Galfar Engineering & Contracting, one of Oman's largest, multi-disciplined engineering, contracting and construction companies have signed an agreement for an OMR39 million financing facility.

Through this agreement, the bank will provide Galfar with additional project-specific credit facilities of nearly OMR39 million. Galfar is one of Bank Muscat's largest and oldest corporate customers with a relationship spanning decades.

The landmark agreement was signed by Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat and Dr Hamoud Al Tobi, CEO, Galfar in the presence of Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and senior officials from both institutions.



STRATEGIC PACT: The landmark agreement was signed by Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat and Dr Hamoud Al Tobi, CEO, Galfar in the presence of Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and senior officials from both institutions. - Supplied picture

eral Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and senior officials from both institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat is delighted to strengthen the cooperation between the bank and Galfar. We thank the executive management of Galfar for their strong confidence in Bank Muscat, which has

led to the successful closure of this highly-customised transaction. The transaction is a testament to Bank Muscat's vision "To serve you better, every day" and our commitment to being a pillar that supports the country's needs across both government and private sectors by financing projects of national importance."

Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi further explained how Bank Muscat

has been playing a major role for the past four decades in providing banking and financing solutions to government and private sector institutions. The bank will continue providing strong support to organisations and businesses of all sizes operating in the Sultanate of Oman to develop different sectors. He added that the bank has the expertise to understand the financing needs of companies and

structure financial solutions that meet their requirements.

Dr Hamoud Al Tobi, CEO, Galfar said: "We are pleased to further strengthen our partnership with Bank Muscat by concluding this bespoke agreement to facilitate the execution of three major projects, which are part of the infrastructure development of our beloved nation. This will also support our further growth and en-

able Galfar to play an integral role in the sustainable development of Oman in the coming years." He went on to explain that this agreement reflects the keen support of Bank Muscat and the banking sector in harnessing their capabilities to play a very active role in supporting corporates and aiding economic growth and development.

Bank Muscat offers a wide range of banking products and services for corporates including loans for project financing, corporate loans and capital financing for project expansion through bilateral as well as syndicated facilities.

It is also a leading trade-finance services provider in the region and blends traditional financial solutions with tailor-made packages for operations, ensuring prompt payments, managing liquidity and minimising exchange-rate risks.

Over the past 40 years, the bank is privileged to have contributed significantly to the emergence and establishment of many institutions that are today well-known and leading institutions in the private sector. It is of great significance that during the past decades, Bank Muscat has signed agreements with several corporates and institutions across different sectors like contracting, trading, energy, water, telecommunications, oil and gas, transport, real estate and international trade. The projects, which were financed by the bank, are today achieving great success and contributing to the sustainable development of the country.

OIL COMPANY

OQ's consolidated revenue soars by 63% to \$22.76 billion in 2021



MUSCAT: OQ recorded consolidated revenue of \$22.768 billion by the end of 2021, compared to \$14.006 billion in 2020, an increase of 63 per cent.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) stood at \$3.699 billion, an increase of 154 per cent as compared to 2020. The net profit amounted to \$1.818 billion.

This was stated in OQ's third sustainability report for 2021. The report highlights the group's achievements in various fields, as well as its economic progress, in-country value (ICV), social investment, health, safety and environment, digital transformation, and human resources.

The report, issued as part of OQ's efforts to achieve sustainability goals, was developed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Global Reporting Initiative, which promotes integrity, transparency, and business governance standards.

According to the report, there was an increase in spending on goods and purchases from local

markets by 30 per cent, amounting to \$931 million in 2021, compared to 2020.

The increase in spending comes as part of the efforts made to enhance in-country value (ICV), which is one of the areas of focus for OQ. It also highlights OQ's belief in the importance of increasing the procurement of goods and services from the local markets. OQ makes it mandatory for contractors and suppliers to help national companies become globally competitive and enhance their ability to innovate and grow.

Supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and fostering entrepreneurship, is one of the key Omani government priorities. As part of the group's ICV programme, OQ supports and encourages the growth and progress of SMEs. In 2021, OQ awarded 147 tenders, worth \$165 million, for SMEs, an increase of 54 per cent compared to 2020.

As part of OQ's social responsibility and its commitment to serve the local communities in which it

operates, the group allocated \$10.5 million for social investment programmes. The emergency support for those affected by the climatic conditions (Shaheen) amounted to \$5.10 million. More than 730 volunteers participated in relief efforts for the affected families, completing 8,796 voluntary hours which benefited 11,260 people.

Within its efforts to preserve the environment and natural resources, as well as promote business sustainability, OQ has adopted the decarbonisation policy and given it the necessary priority. Work is currently underway on four major projects in green hydrogen. OQ has also implemented a number of initiatives to manage water consumption and produce 30 megawatts of renewable energy in 2021.

As for digital transformation and cybersecurity, OQ has introduced the Cybersecurity Management System. The group carried out 11 cybersecurity risk assessments on cloud hosting service providers. It also implemented advanced models of artificial intelligence.

OQ continues its efforts to provide employment opportunities to the national workforce. The number of male and female employees in the Group companies in the Sultanate of Oman stood at 4,700, of which 82 per cent are Omanis. About 65 per cent of employees are under 30 years old.

In 2021, OQ sponsored the education of 22 male and female students in international universities and colleges under the Takatuf Scholarship programme. The group has nine training programmes to develop and rehabilitate national human resources. The training programmes are in line with the government's efforts to provide Omanis with training, job, and career development opportunities.

As a global energy company, OQ has established a presence in 17 countries across five continents, exporting its products to more than 70 countries. The group seeks to further strengthen its position globally by meeting the voluntary reporting and disclosure of its business activities. - OMA

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY



Meeting to focus on impact of natural calamities on insurance industry

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Middle East and North Africa regional seminar on the Supervision of Climate Risk Insurance Protection Gap, organised by the Capital Market Authority of Oman (CMA) and the Supervisory Authority of Insurance and Social Welfare of the Kingdom of Morocco will be held on Tuesday.

The event will be held within the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the two regulators of the insurance sectors in the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Morocco signed in the first quarter of this year.

The two-day seminar will be conducted in collaboration with the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Access to Insurance Initiative (A2ii) and Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF).

The seminar targets insurance supervisors in the Mena region and insurance industry specialists and professionals and will

discuss issues related to the management of natural calamities to explore a road map prepared by the IAIS on climate risk and the opinions of the regulators on the challenges facing insurance markets in the region as well as the issues facing the insurance regulators in the region in addition to the activities of A2ii and SIF on closing the climate risk insurance protection gap.

The seminar will contribute to increasing awareness of the importance of setting up hedging programmes and policies and enhancing the insurance industry's ability to face the challenges caused by climate change.

It is worth noting that the Sultanate of Oman witnessed in recent years a number of exceptional climate conditions that can be described as natural calamities caused by climate change the most recent was Cyclone Shaheen. Climate change is one of the most important issues in our era with consequences on weather patterns, food production, sea level rise and catastrophic floods.



MARKET



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MSX index ends lower

Oman REIT Fund, up 3.45 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Chlorine, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,458.11 points, down by 0.33 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.35 per cent at 478.29 points. Oman REIT Fund, up 3.45 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Chlorine, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 255 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.28 million, with more than 3.83 million shares changing hands.

Out of 28 traded securities, 1 advanced, 19 declined, and 8 remained unchanged.

At the session close, GCC and Arab investors were net sellers for OMR101,000 while domes-

tic investors were net buyers for OMR92,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR9,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,097.37 points, down 0.18 per cent. There were no gainers for the day.

Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Global Financial Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Madina Takaful and Taageer Finance were down by 3.7 per cent, 1.7 per cent, 1.25 per cent, 1.15 per cent and 1.09 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,163.86 points, down 1.2 per cent. There were no gainers for the day. Prices of Oman Chlorine, Oman Flour Mills, Raysut Cement, National Aluminium and Voltamp Energy were down by 9.89 per cent, 7.41 per cent, 3 per cent, 2.44 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,473.81	4,450.51	4,458.11	4,472.93	-14.82	-0.33
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,118.05	7,086.37	7,097.37	7,110.21	-12.84	-0.18
Industry Index	6,238.46	6,152.72	6,163.85	6,238.46	-74.60	-1.20
Services Index	1,612.59	1,606.01	1,606.73	1,613.73	-7.00	-0.43
MSX Shariah Index	481.90	477.20	478.29	479.98	-1.69	-0.35
MSX TR INDEX	5,642.51	5,613.13	5,622.71	5,641.40	-18.69	-0.33
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,448.24	7,415.09	7,426.60	7,440.04	-13.43	-0.18
SERVICES TR IDX	1,674.53	1,667.69	1,668.44	1,675.71	-7.27	-0.43
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,474.47	6,385.49	6,397.05	6,474.47	-77.43	-1.20

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
3,836,243	1,277,279	255	23,131,808,734	1	19	8	28

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	43,000	4,687	5	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.108	0.109	0.100	15,260,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	22,500	8,800	2	0.390	0.400	0.390	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.390	0.400	0.100	88,000,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	8,180	3,599	6	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.440	0.444	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,192,997	677,848	49	0.572	0.572	0.566	0.570	0.572	-0.002	-0.350	0.570	0.570	0.570	0.100	2,139,323,163
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	310,738	80,649	12	0.262	0.262	0.258	0.258	0.260	-0.002	-0.769	0.258	0.258	0.269	0.100	32,223,674
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	62,000	7,718	5	0.125	0.125	0.124	0.124	0.125	-0.001	-0.800	0.124	0.124	0.125	0.100	29,388,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	41,000	16,400	3	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.404	-0.004	-0.990	0.400	0.396	0.400	0.100	260,377,692
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	16,000	1,456	2	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.087	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.100	23,538,224
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	8,500	672	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.080	-0.001	-1.250	0.079	0.079	0.080	0.100	7,110,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	122,000	7,076	7	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.058	0.056	0.058	0.100	11,900,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	334,745	296,605	21	0.892	0.892	0.880	0.884	0.900	-0.016	-1.778	0.884	0.880	0.884	0.100	663,000,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,000	550	1	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.594	-0.044	-7.407	0.550	0.550	0.598	0.100	86,625,000
Total	12	2,162,660	116,060	114												
Parallel Market																
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	11,000	659	2	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.058	0.002	3.448	0.059	0.059	0.060	0.100	28,271,183
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	368,300	56,036	7	0.154	0.154	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.100	304,047,544
OM0000002036	Muscat Thread MILL	2,000	114	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	1,012,577
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	180,950	17,370	7	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.094	0.097	0.100	214,747,491
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	27,383	1,095	6	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.100	28,576,254
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	17,936	789	4	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.100	64,354,464
OM0000003521	GULFAR ENGINEER	76,656	12,292	4	0.161	0.161	0.160	0.160	0.161	-0.001	-0.621	0.160	0.159	0.160	0.100	32,477,831
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	437,240	37,761	46	0.086	0.091	0.085	0.086	0.087	-0.001	-1.149	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM P	1,100	270	2	0.245	0.246	0.245	0.246	0.250	-0.004	-1.600	0.246	0.246	0.245	0.100	10,234,897
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	60,814	6,364	13	0.106	0.106	0.104	0.104	0.106	-0.002	-1.887	0.104	0.096	0.113	0.100	18,936,153
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	6,000	587	2	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.100	-0.002	-2.000	0.098	0.097	0.100	0.100	7,977,470
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	272,913	21,856	15	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.082	-0.002	-2.439	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	2,685,712
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	51,101	1,942	9	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.038	0.039	-0.001	-2.564	0.038	0.037	0.038	0.100	25,645,722
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	8,990	1,773	6	0.200	0.200	0.194	0.194	0.200	-0.006	-3.000	0.194	0.194	0.200	0.100	38,800,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	150,000	11,700	14	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.081	-0.003	-3.704	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	15,600,000
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	1,200	612	3	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.566	-0.056	-9.894	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.100	34,732,866
Total	16	1,673,583	171,220	141												

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

China's contributions to global development

BEIJING: China is strengthening its efforts to push forward global development, addressing fundamental issues such as poverty, healthcare and climate change in an era of unsettling challenges and uncertainties.

By pooling strengths from across the world through multilateral cooperation mechanisms and initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative, China is seeking international cooperation to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Poverty alleviation

Eliminating poverty is the common aspiration of all people across the world, and a shared mission of the international community. The first goal of the SDGs is to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere.”

China achieved its goal of eradicating absolute poverty as scheduled, improving the living standards of hundreds of millions of people through decades of hard work.

Over the past 40 years, China has contributed close to three-

quarters of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty, according to a joint report released in April by China's Ministry of Finance, the Development Research Centre of the State Council and the World Bank.

As the world's most populous country forges ahead toward its rural revitalisation goal, it is sharing its valuable experience in fighting poverty with other developing countries.

In Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia, China has launched pilot projects to improve the organisational abilities of local villages, encourage farmers to combine their efforts through agricultural activities, and cultivate a new vision for development to shake off poverty, according to a white paper titled “China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era,” issued by the State Council Information Office in 2021.

China has also organised training programmes and co-hosted seminars with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisa-

tion to share ideas and actions for targeted poverty alleviation with other developing countries, the white paper stated.

Enhancing healthcare

China has always emphasised putting people and their lives first, and has been actively assisting developing countries to improve their public health systems and medical services. From 2015 to 2019, China dispatched 3,588 medical workers overseas in 202 groups, and they in turn provided treatment to 11 million patients, organised professional training for local medical workers, offered free mobile clinic services, and donated medicines and equipment, according to the white paper.

After the outbreak of COVID-19, China continuously offered vaccine aid and medical support to less developed countries.

As of August 23, China has provided 189 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 27 African countries since the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on

China-Africa Cooperation in November 2021.

Localised annual production capacities, in cooperation with African partners, now total nearly 400 million doses.

By 2030, China will have sent 5,000 professionals from the China Medical Team to other developing countries in need to help build up their infectious disease response and medical treatment capacities, according to the deliverables of the High-level Dialogue on Global Development held in June.

Protecting nature

Adhering to the vision of the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature, China has prioritised clean energy development, biodiversity protection and climate change response, among other fields. The country is aiming to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

Currently, China's installed capacity of renewable energy is 1.1 billion kilowatts. **Xinhua**



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Contact Name: Abdullah Khalfan Al Habsi
Designation: Supervisor, Warehouse Operations
Contact Number: 99251346
Contact Email: abdullah.khalfan@gac-oman.com
Visiting Hours: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM,
26th September to 4th October 2022 (Friday Closed)

Location: Azaiba, Muscat.

SBI RESEARCH

Much of Indian rupee's weakness linked to strong US dollar index

NEW DELHI: Much of the weakness in the rupee is on account of a strong US dollar index and not just because of India's domestic economic fundamentals, said SBI Research in its latest report.

The rupee has been steadily and consistently depreciating as it touched yet another lifetime low on Friday morning after the US dollar index strengthened to a two-decade high this week.

The Rupee opened 25 paise lower from the previous session to touch a record low of 81.09 versus the US dollar on Friday, against Thursday's close of 80.86. Notably, Thursday's depreciation was the biggest single-day fall for the rupee since February 24.

“The Indian rupee (INR) depreciated by a modest 7 per cent vis-a-vis the US dollar since the war broke out. The US dollar Index has appreciated by 15 per cent during the same period,” SBI Research said.

There have been instances in the past which showed that rupee depreciation has been much more than the appreciation of the Dollar, which had happened because of weak domestic macroeconomic fundamentals, it added.

The rupee lingered below 80 per dollar in the recent past. **ANI**



LIFESTYLE

PEOPLE USING REUSABLE CONTACT LENSES ARE AT HIGHER RISK OF RARE EYE INFECTION



According to a study, a group of researchers found that those who wear reusable contact lenses are nearly four times more likely to get a rare sight-threatening eye infection than those who wear daily disposables.

The case-control study led by UCL and Moorfields researchers, published in *Ophthalmology*, identifies multiple factors that increase the risk of Acanthamoeba keratitis (AK), including reusing lenses or wearing them overnight or in the shower.

AK is one type of microbial keratitis (corneal infection) – a condition that results in inflammation of the cornea (the eye's clear protective outer layer).

Lead author, Professor John Dart (UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) said: "In recent years we have seen an increase of Acanthamoeba keratitis in the UK and Europe, and while the infection is still rare, it is preventable and warrants a public health response.

"Contact lenses are generally very safe but are associated with a small risk of microbial keratitis, most commonly caused by bacteria, and which is the only sight threatening complication of their use. Given that an estimated 300 million people across the globe wear contact lenses, it is important that people know how to min-

imise their risks for developing keratitis."

Contact lens use is now the leading cause of microbial keratitis in patients with otherwise healthy eyes in countries in the global north. Sight loss resulting from microbial keratitis is uncommon but Acanthamoeba, although a rare cause, is one of the most severe and is responsible for about half of those contact lens users who develop sight loss after keratitis. 90% of AK cases are associated with avoidable risks, although the infection remains rare, affecting fewer than 1 in 20,000 contact lens wearers per year in the UK.

AK causes the front surface of the eye, the cornea, to become painful and inflamed, due to infection by Acanthamoeba, a cyst-forming microorganism. The most severely affected patients (a quarter of the total) end up with less than 25% of vision or become blind following the disease and face prolonged treatment. Overall, 25% of people affected require corneal transplants to treat the disease or restore vision.

For the study, the researchers recruited over 200 patients of Moorfields Eye Hos-

pital who completed a survey, including 83 people with AK, and compared them with 122 participants who came to eye-care clinics with other conditions, who acted as a control group.

People who wore reusable soft contact lenses (such as monthlies) had 3.8 times the odds of developing AK, compared to people who wore daily disposable lenses. Showering with lenses in increased the odds of AK by 3.3 times, while wearing lenses overnight increased the odds by 3.9 times. Among daily disposable wearers, reusing their lenses increased their infection risk. Having had a re ntact lens check with a health professional reduced the risk.

With further analysis, the researchers estimated that 30-62% of cases in the UK, and potentially in many other countries, could be prevented if people switched from reusable to daily disposable lenses.

A recent study led by Professor Dart found that AK is increasing in prevalence in the UK. By reviewing incidence data from Moorfields Eye Hospital from 1985 to 2016, he and his team found an increase starting in 2000-2003, when there

were eight to 10 cases per year, to between 36 and 65 annual cases at the end of the study period.

First author, Associate Professor Nicole Carnt (UNSW, Sydney, UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Hospital) said: "Previous studies have linked AK to wearing contact lenses in hot tubs, swimming pools or lakes, and here we have added showers to that list, underlining that exposure to any water when wearing lenses should be avoided. Public pools and coastal authorities could help reduce this risk by advising against swimming in contact lenses."

Professor Dart added: "Contact lens packaging should include information on lens safety and risk avoidance, even as simple as 'no water' stickers on each case, particularly given that many people buy their lenses online without speaking to a health professional.

"Basic contact lens hygiene measures can go a long way in avoiding infections, such as by thoroughly washing and drying your hands before putting in your lenses."

-ANI

IN PICTURES

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Bangkok Fashion Week held in Thailand
Models present creations during the Bangkok Fashion Week in Bangkok, Thailand. Xinhua



Kite festival celebrated in the Netherlands
Kites hover above the beach during a kite festival in the Hague, the Netherlands. Xinhua



China launches two new experimental satellites
A Kuaizhou-1A carrier rocket carrying two satellites blasts off from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in north China. The pair of satellites, Shiyao-14 and Shiyao-15, were lifted at 6:55am (2255GMT on Saturday) from the launch centre and entered the preset orbit. Xinhua

Run Fur Life marathon held in Pasig City, Philippines
A man is dragged by his running dog during the 'Run Fur Life' marathon in Pasig City, the Philippines. The marathon is a fundraising event for the benefit of maltreated, abandoned, and homeless dogs and also aims to promote animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. Xinhua



Farmers harvest pomegranates at orchard in Afghanistan
A farmer unloads pomegranates at an orchard in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. Xinhua



Uganda registers 4 more Ebola cases, tally reaches 15
Medical workers perform disinfection for a demarcated Ebola treatment center at the Mubende Regional Hospital in Mubende District, Uganda. Uganda's Ministry of Health said it has registered four more cases of the deadly Ebola virus, bringing the country's total number of confirmed cases to 15. Xinhua



International guitar festival returns to Vancouver
A visitor views guitars at the Vancouver International Guitar Festival in Vancouver, Canada. After a two-year suspension due to the pandemic, the event returned to Vancouver and features more than 60 guitar makers from Canada, the United States, and European countries. Xinhua



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ROUND-UP

Oman Paralympic Committee, bp Oman conclude coaching course

National Paralympic Coaching Course trained 23 coaches, six of which are Oman Sail coaches, to obtain a nationally accredited certificate in the field of para-sports

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, Oman Paralympic Committee concluded the third level of the National Paralympic Coaching Course at the Amal Club in Muscat. The course trained 23 coaches, six of which are Oman Sail



coaches, to obtain a nationally accredited certificate in the field of para-sports. The coaching course is delivered as part of the Sail Free programme, implemented in partnership with Oman Sail. The coaches were trained at the advanced level to develop their theoretical and practical knowledge in para-sports. This level focused on planning

training programmes, leadership and coaching for people with disabilities, support equipment and available technologies as well as how to prepare for championships. Shamsa Al-Rawahi, bp Oman social investment manager, commented, “We value embracing diversity in society, and this programme is a great example of how we can provide equal opportuni-

ties to society in sports. “We are proud of our partnership with Oman Paralympic Committee and their huge efforts to empower positive changes in paralympic sports within our community.” Dr Mansoor Al Tauqi, President of the Oman Paralympic Committee, further added: “Developing local capabilities, especially



in the technical field is one of the strategic goals of the committee. The success of this programme depends on the presence of skilled, competent trainers. This course plays an important role in building a national system to train quality paralympic sports trainers.” Dr Khamis Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail commented, “We are happy that through our partner-

ship with Oman Paralympic Committee and bp Oman we can equip our local trainers with the necessary skills and knowledge and improve the standards of the services available for athletes with disabilities. The course will also improve the trainer’s communication skills with the athletes targeted within the sailing schools involved in the programme.”

SUCCESSFUL EVENT

Mall of Muscat concludes its spectacular Grand Summer Festival

MUSCAT: Mall of Muscat, Oman’s most luxurious mall, one of the city’s favourite shopping, food and leisure destination concluded its Summer Festival 2022 last week. The festival succeeded in attracting over 700,000 visitors over the 2-month period which reflects not only the success of this campaign but also the strong bond that the mall has created with the residents making it one of the most attractive destinations this summer. During the festival, the Mall gave away close to 4000 Free Oman Aquarium Summer Passes for Kids which was the key driver of this highly successful campaign and resulted in a significant increase in the number of people visiting Oman Aquarium. The pass which allows kids to enter the Aquarium for free multiple times till September 30 was a huge success among kids as they got to see their favourite animals as many times as they wished. Another major success with the kids was the free Summer camp at Oman Aquarium which had activities like motor training skills, arts and crafts, calculation skills and many other activities which were fun and educational for kids across all age groups.



The Summer Festival also featured a wide array of entertainment shows and activities for children and adults alike including magic shows, face painting, clown parade, roaming characters, balloon twisters, and an amazing Eid Al Adha Entertainment Show. In addition, the Mall also hosted the Weekend Bazaar throughout the 2 month period which was appreciated by the local community as it

provided an amazing platform for residents to enhance their business skills through the bazaar and provide customers with the opportunity to buy unique products and taste a variety of local foods without having to travel far and wide. Commenting on the festival’s astounding success, Hussain Jamal, Head of Operations, said: “We would like to thank everyone who visited and participated in our spectacular

Summer Festival. And we look forward to the continued patronage of our valued guests as we have lined up exciting activities for the rest of the year which includes a one of a kind football themed promotion for our valued guests to take advantage of and immerse themselves in the world of football in line with the World Cup. The mall will also have amazing sales and promotions during this period.

POPULAR SEDAN

Enjoy every drive with fun-to-own Toyota Corolla

MUSCAT: Toyota Corolla is one of the most popular sedans when it comes to ownership experiences, hassle-free maintenance and overall driving dynamics. The Corolla has always managed to have its vast and loyal fan following. The Corolla has an attractive exterior that gives it a distinctive look. Powering it to offer amazing driving experiences is a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque. For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission. Customers looking for a more fuel-efficient option can



choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission.

The Corolla’s interior is impressive and contributes to making every journey comfortable. The interior design adopts a simple yet

appealing style, with impressive space and integrated functional parts that combine to create a refined elegance. The ergonomically designed seats feature new cushion material, while the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for the rear-seat passengers. Offering enhanced experiences on every drive are a range of features, which vary based on the trim level. Occupants also benefit from AC vents for the rear seat, a moonroof, 4.2-inch multi-information display (MID), 8-inch display audio, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

LUXURY SEDAN

Quattroporte: Aesthetic flair of Italian sports car

MUSCAT: Maserati Quattroporte is, definitely, one the most attractive-looking luxury sedans and it is for this very reason that the car has carved out a distinct identity. With the stupendous Quattroporte now being offered in Modena trim, it delivers an exceptionally discernible performance. Heightening performance, with a more powerful engine and a sportier interior, this icon of Italian elegance remains a benchmark for high quality engineering, supercar performance and comfort. Demonstrating the grace of a



luxury sedan, the Quattroporte compromises a premium cabin to match its impressive exterior facade. Classic Italian craftsmanship is imbued into the sophisticated de-

sign of the Quattroporte, aiding it to stand out from other players. Impressing drivers and passengers a top-quality experience with new colours, wheel designs, interior veneers, a restyled gearshift lever and Pieno Fiore natural leather interiors, the Maserati Quattroporte features an aesthetic flair of an Italian sports car. Quattroporte takes motivation from Maserati’s main aesthetic principles comprising harmony of proportions, dynamic lines and Italian elegance. A enduring standard for original Italian design, the high-sta-

tus sedan has incorporate elegantly the qualities of sophistication and athletic attitude, especially in the GranLusso and GranSport trims. The incredible model packs in a long list of features along with amazing performance. While the interior is spacious and grand, the exterior of the Maserati Quattroporte looks slender and athletic, with flowing curves that highlight of the model’s sporting affectations. The iconic Maserati grille features prominent trident logo front and center, lending the Quattroporte a tresense of occasion.

HEALTHCARE



Aster Medcity excels in robotic surgery, crosses 1,750 successful cases

KOCHI: Aster Medcity, Kochi announced the successful completion of 1750 Minimal Access Robotic Surgeries(MARS) using the da Vinci system in an event conducted in Kochi. Being one of the most active robotic surgery centres in Kerala, Medcity performed 230 kidney transplants alone via MARS. Robotic surgeries are highly specialised and advanced minimal access procedures that are performed by surgeons with the help of a surgery robot like the DaVinci at Aster Medcity.

Being a minimal access procedure, robotic surgeries are safer and surgeons can ensure high precision results compared to conventional surgeries. The associated pain, complications, blood loss and scarring are way lesser compared to normal surgeries, which in turn translates to faster recovery. The hospital stay and post-surgery recovery period are minimal as well, and patients can get back to their normal lives in a very short time. Led by a team of highly skilled robotic surgery experts, Medcity offers robotic procedures in Urology, Gynaecology, Oncology, gastroenterology and liver transplant for patients of all ages. “MARS is a highly advanced robotic procedure that performs minimally invasive surgeries with utmost precision. With the expertise of robotic tools, it is possible to perform operations on any sensitive part of the body with great precision. Therefore, complex surgeries can be completed very skillfully and successfully,” says Dr Kishore T A – Senior Consultant – Urology, Aster Medcity. Aster Medcity is the first facility in Kerala to offer high-precision robotic surgeries using the da Vinci surgery system. One of the only facilities in the country to offer highly specialised robotic liver and pancreas surgery, Aster MARS is the third centre in the world to perform a robotic trans-

Being one of the most active robotic surgery centres in Kerala, Aster Medcity, Kochi has performed 230 kidney transplants alone via MARS

vaginal renal transplant surgery and the first in India to perform robotic kidney tumour removal. “As a leader in the healthcare society, we own the privilege of introducing the best and most advanced treatment options available in the world. With our advances in robotic surgery, we will be able to be more responsible and implement advanced medical technologies like this in the future as well.” This state-of-the-art facility offers our patients advanced surgical options and helps them to regain and lead their normal life. With the support of the Ministry of Health complex medical services similar to the present case would be done in the upcoming Aster Royal Hospital in Muscat,” says Farhan Yasin, Regional Director of Aster Hospital, Kerala & Oman Cluster. Farhan Yasin, Regional Director, Aster Hospitals – Kerala cluster &Oman, Dr Kishore T. A , Senior Consultant Urology-Aster Medcity, Dr Mathew Jacob, Senior Consultant, Hepatobiliary Surgeon - Aster Medcity, Dr Jem Kalathil, Senior Consultant, Onco Surgery – Aster Medcity, Dr Zareena A Khalid, Senior Consultant - Obstetrics & Gynaecology-Aster Medcity, Dr Prakash K, Senior Consultant-Surgical Gastroenterology-Aster Medcity attended the event.



ROUND-UP



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Changan CS75 Plus crossover impresses with its premium segment features

Ever since its launch in the Oman market, Changan CS75 Plus has been astounding for car enthusiasts due to its promising quality of innovation, aesthetics, functionality and stability

MUSCAT: Changan CS75 Plus 2023 comes with premium design, comfortable automotive interior, and highly intelligent configuration, the compact crossover Changan CS75 Plus which comes in luxury and sport variants offers a host of special features. The Luxury Variant is equipped with fully automatic parking.

A spokesperson for Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) is official distributor of Changan brand in Oman said, “Ever since its launch in the Oman market, Changan CS75 Plus has been astounding car enthusiasts for its promising quality of innovation, aesthetics, functionality and stability. The model makes driving feel like winning with its stunning design, premium interior and intelligent features. The CS75 Plus is loaded with smart and innovative features that aim to elevate the confidence and sophistication in every drive.”

The Changan CS75 Plus 2WD features a more sloped roofline and more power. Under the hood, it has a 2.0-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder engine, mated to an 8-speed automatic transmission with a power of 224 hp and torque of 360 Nm. With a wheelbase of 2710



mm, and it measures 4700 mm in length, 1865 mm in width and 1710 mm in height.

Standard features in the CS75 Plus include power windows, central locking, cruise control, dual-zone auto A/C, 8 speakers, multifunctional steering

wheel, USB+AUX ports, 12-inch screen, Bluetooth, 360 camera, leather ventilated seats, sunroof, fog lamps, parking sensors LED headlamps, panoramic roof, keyless entry and start, and 19-inch wheels. Safety features includes dual front, side and curtain air-

bags, ABS, and hill assist.

Its Blue Core Powertrain Technology, based on the principles of power, clean and quiet, provides owners a highly efficient and energy saving performance.

Futuristic design

CS75 Plus features a more streamlined body with flowing lines and geometric patterns, creating the overall appearance of a vehicle from the future.

To instil the confidence and sophistication in every drive, CS75 Plus offers a range of intelligent driving technologies and advanced safety features.

To create a premium drive experience, CS75 Plus seamlessly integrates luxurious interior with high-tech convenience features, coupled with ample space.

Changan CS75 Plus 2.0 T B AT Luxury includes the features of CS7S Plus 2.0 T 8 AT Sport features.

Its exterior boasts of piercing front position headlamp, adaptive high and low beam, ORVM with memory and puddle lamps. Its

interior features multi colour ambient lighting, front seats ventilation, driver seat with memory and luggage cover.

Its safety attributes intelligent adaptive cruise control, 360 Camera (HD) with 3D View, blind spot detection, rear approaching alarm, reverse auxiliary alarm, lane departure warning, rain sensor wiper and seat belt pretensioners.

Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control provides a safer and more pleasant driving experience. IACC facilitates smart driving features including heavy traffic assisted driving, lane keep assist, automatic deceleration during turns, intelligent speed limit assist, and voice-activated cruise speed setting.

The 12 inch LCD touch screen in the middle displays a 360 degree camera view around the car. When the option is clicked a 3D model of the car is shown and within the screen itself you may rotate the car and view the surroundings.

The model can avoid or ease the collision by alarm and auxiliary braking. The car detects blocks

and sends a visual and an audible alarm to notify you.

In a scenario where you brake suddenly and the car behind you is unaware of this and is approaching you with speed. Your car detects the challenge and alerts you in the screen in front of you and the rear lights of your car start blinking/ flashing in order to capture the driver's (Behind) attention.

There are two options for this, the driver either sits in the car or he leaves the car. Under both the options the car parks itself by using sensors and by scanning the nearby areas.

Infotainment showcases full LCD IC, eight Speakers, trip recorder with SD Card Slot and Qibla. Comfort factors include seat belt height adjustable remote key - window close, all windows - one button up down, auto IRVM and dual zone AC.

The exterior features of Changan CS75 Plus 2.0 T 8 AT SPORT includes 19" dual tone alloy wheels, LED headlamps, front fog lights with cornering, panoramic sunroof, ORVM - electrically adjustable, folding and heating, rear led taillamps, quad exhaust pipes. The interior has sport seats with two tone interior (black & red), electrically adjustable front seats, drive mode (normal, eco, sport), leather steering wheel, soft leather dashboard, multifunction steering wheel.

Safety features include front and curtain airbags, ABS, E80 +TCS+ESC+HHC, hill descent control, auto hold, TPMS, 360 camera, adaptive cruise control, automatic emergency brake, front collision warning and electronic parking brake.

Infotainment element has 7-LCD instrument cluster, 12" infotainment screen, high performance audio system with 6 speakers, navigation, mirror link - Android & Apple.

The model offers electric tailgate, remote control engine start/stop, push button start/stop, rear ac vents, keyless entry and auto AC.

PARTNERSHIP

ahlibank launches cashback offer at Shell Oman for its credit cardholders

MUSCAT: In a continued effort to offer value-added benefits and services to its customers, ahlibank has once again teamed up with Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) to provide all its credit card holders with an exciting cashback offer.

Scheduled to run for 5 days each month till the end of the year 2022, the promotion offers all ahlibank credit cardholders 20% cashback when fuelling or shopping in shell Service Stations and Select Shops with a maximum cap of OMR10 per customer.

Commenting on the promotion, Muneer Al Balushi – AGM- Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, “Our role as one of the Sultanate's leading banking institutions requires us to develop offers and services that meet customer needs over time. This will enable us to fulfil their intention to utilise their credit cards in the best way possible. Such offers enhance our customers' loyalty and give them added value.”

“We are pleased to announce this offer, which will help us strengthen relationships with existing clients and build relationships with new ones. With the launch of the latest promotional offer, ahlibank is demonstrating its



leadership in providing innovative banking reward programmes and solutions that meet the diverse needs of its customers” he added.

The cashback campaign reflects the bank's commitment to its growth strategy by creating products and services that offer value-added benefits to the customers and help consolidate its position in the market as one of Oman's leading and most trusted banks.

The bank continues to offer a comprehensive suite of services, modern technology, and innovative solutions across its branches in Oman. All its product offerings and account types aim to achieve its customers' targets and consolidate its position in the market. The bank offers top-class retail, commercial, and investment banking solutions in line with its vision of being a vibrant and innovative centre of banking.

BANKING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

BankDhofar presents its services to college students

MUSCAT: Enhancing its position as one of the leading Banks in the Sultanate, BankDhofar recently visited various higher education institutions and showcased its products to the students.

This initiative translates BankDhofar's keenness to be at the forefront to provide its banking products and services to a wider segment of society.

During the visits, BankDhofar opened new accounts for a number of students and issued their ATM cards instantly.

On the initiative, Amjad Iqbal Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, noted: “At BankDhofar, we realize the importance of serving various segments of the society. Thus, our team paid visits to higher education institutions to spread awareness of our product and services. Students who visited our stalls showed their interest in BankDhofar's products and services. As we all know, students form the youth segment which is one of the important segments of the society.”

The bank showcased innovative services, products and financial solutions, through the stall which saw a large turnout of students who were willing to open their banking accounts with



BankDhofar. The bank had also conducted draws where new account openers had the chance to be one of the winners of valuable gifts. The visits covered Military Technical College, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Sohar, Nizwa, Ibri and Sur), Sohar University, College of Banking and Financial Studies, and Al Seeb Vocational College.

BankDhofar is considered one of the best banks in the region, with a strong presence in corporate banking, retail banking, treasury, and project finance.

The bank caters to custom-

ers' needs and requirements and sets the standard for the best customer experience within the banking industry in the Sultanate through innovative products and creative solutions. Following best international banking practices, the provision of outstanding customer experience, in addition to its commitment to community development and contribution to the growth of the national economy, has placed BankDhofar at the top of the list of best banks in the region. BankDhofar has a reputation for commitment, foresight and solid growth.



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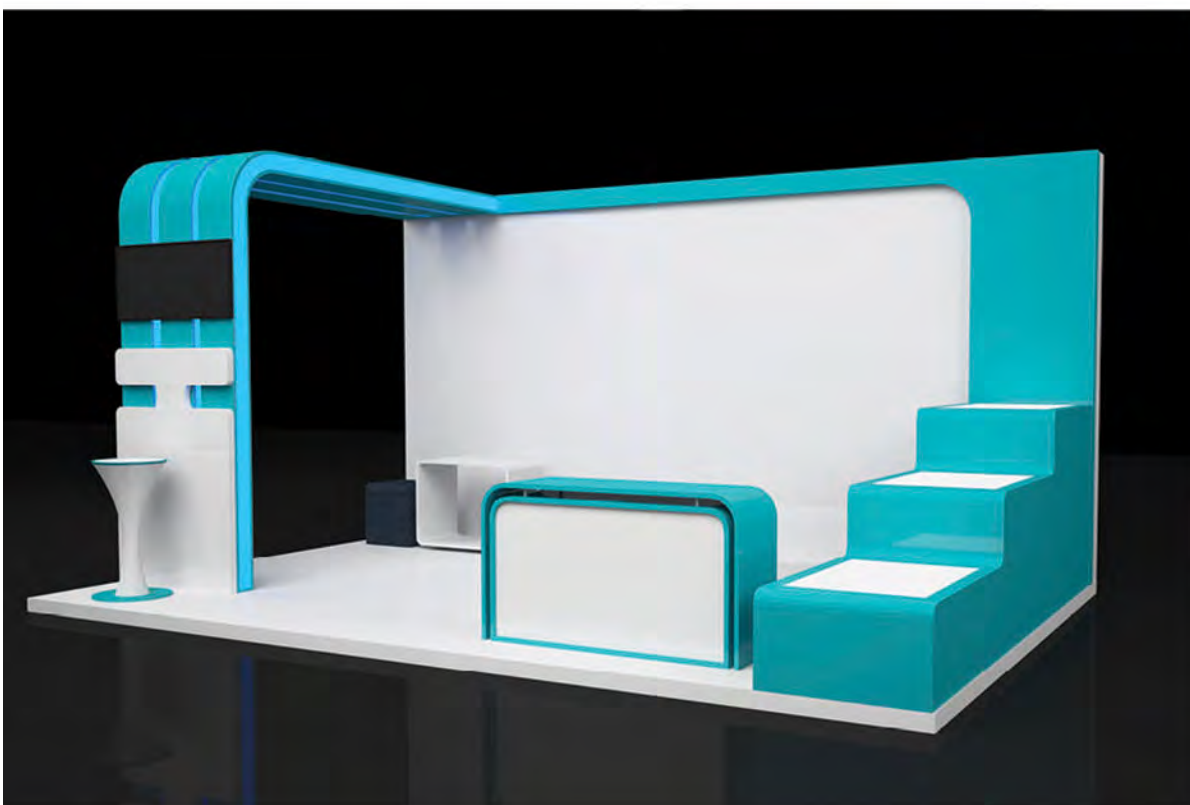
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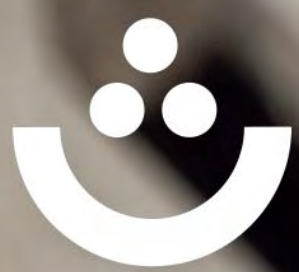


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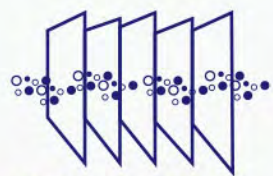
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