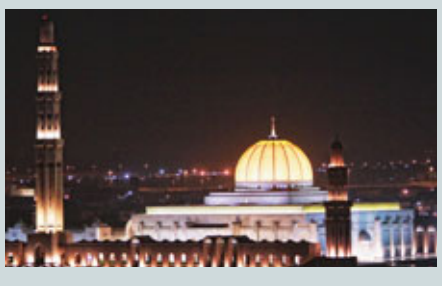
LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

PASSENGER TRAFFIC ACROSS AIRPORTS IN OMAN DROPS

The total number of passengers travelling through airports in the Sultanate of Oman till the end of October 2021 reached 3,349,503, compared to 4,107,142 passengers at the end of October 2020, comprising a decline by 18.4 percent, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. >A5

OMAN'S ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS

The castles, forts and walls of Oman are a testament to the Sultanate's architectural style. According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "Like the country's diverse terrain, architectural styles vary in Oman with the change of scenery." >A4



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HM MEETS SHEIKHS OF SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE

The meeting took place at the Hisn A'Shumook castle in Manah

MANAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik held a meeting with Sheikhs of South Al Sharqiyah Governorate at Hisn A'Shumook castle in the Wilayat of Manah on Sunday.

The Diwan of Royal Court issued a statement to this effect reading as follows: >A2

INVESTOR RESIDENCE PROGRAMME

26 investors given long-stay visas in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: 26 foreign investors have been issued 10-year residency visas under Oman's "Investor Residence" programme.

The investors were issued their residency permits by Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.

"The "Investor Residence" programme comes within the aim of facilitating residency for periods ranging from five to 10 years for investors wishing to invest in Oman," said Al Yousef. "The ministry's investment services centre provides this residency, which can be extended under clearly-defined controls and procedures.

"Investors are offered encouraging incentives and advantages for investing, provided they adhere to the specified regulations throughout their stay," he added. "The programme aims to attract and promote qualitative investments that contribute to the growth of GDP and create job opportunities to supplement the national economy."

The rolling out of the "Investor Residence" programme also falls under the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to provide good standards of living and competitiveness through job opportunities created from a diversified and sustainable economy.

This aims to be achieved through localised industries, technology transfer, the adoption of modern technology and innovations, and improving the investment environment, all of which takes into account the social, legal, security, and economic factors governing Oman.

The long-term residency offering is one of those allied with the "Invest in Oman Programme", a national initiative that aims to attract investments and promote exports. It is supervised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, along with the Oman Investment Authority and the Follow-up Unit for Vision 2040.

"An important factor that encourages investors to choose the Sultanate of Oman as a key investment destination is its strategic location close to the emerging markets in the Middle East, East Africa and India," said the ministry in a statement.

This is aside from a logistics network that enhances access to products for a large segment of consumers at competitive cost, an attractive investment environment, and the presence of good quality ports and other facilities.

To further encourage investors to set up operations in Oman, in January 2020, the country also rolled out the Foreign Capital Investment Law. The new law entails a wide range of benefits to foreign investors.

These include 100 percent ownership by investors, reduced capital requirements, incentives for investment projects established in less developed regions, assigning real estate privileges to long term investment, certain exemptions on custom duties, and providing equal treatment and rights to both local and foreign investment projects undertaken in Oman. >A3

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Cat set for 12,000km trip to Canada

1 A Persian cat adopted by an expatriate couple when they lived in Oman is all set for a 12,000 kilometres journey with them. >A3

WORLD

6 killed as cliff wall falls on tourist boats

2 At least six people died after a cliff wall fell on tourist boats on Furnas Lake in Brazil. >A6

MARKET

OMR318mn LPG plant to open in Salalah

3 OQ has announced that it will formally inaugurate its OMR318 state-of-the-art Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) plant in Salalah. >B1

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:19pm
Asr	3:22pm
Maghrib	5:43pm
Isha	6:57pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	5:31am

< FROM A1

Double efforts to elevate status of local community, instructs HM

"In pursuance of the renewed Royal tradition of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to confer with citizens in all parts of the dear homeland and, following His Majesty's conviction in the significance of listening in person to views and proposals serving the interests of the country, His Majesty the Sultan held a meeting today, Sunday, 9 January 2022, with Sheikhs of the South A'Sharqiyah Governorate at Hisn A'Shumookh castle in Manah."

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the great bounties He has bestowed on Oman and its people, praying that these riches be preserved and eternalised.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed a set of topics of concern on the domestic front.

He said, "Oman is pressing ahead with its development plans and programmes in all fields, despite the challenges, with the prime objectives of realising sustainable growth and furnishing a prosperous present and future for all people, wherever they might be on this benign land."

In his Royal conversation, His Majesty the Sultan observed that the governorates and municipal councils should perform their national roles as precisely as they are expected to do. He instructed the institutions to double their efforts to elevate the status of the local community.

As part of his attention to boost the potential of entrepreneurs and SMEs owners, to provide employment opportunities in all governorates and, to encourage entrepreneurship, His Majesty the Sultan issued his Royal directives to the departments concerned (Ministry of finance, Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Oman Development Bank) to fund the respective programmes. He noted that the government will offer the incentives necessary for ensuring the success of those initiatives.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan engaged in an open dialogue with the sheikhs, who presented requests for projects and development services needed in their respective wilayats. His Majesty gave directives for endorsing the principle of partnership between the government and citizens when implementing projects that serve the public interest. He stressed the need to address difficulties that might come in the way of the domestic development march.

The meeting was attended by His Highness Sayyid Belarab bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Dr. Yahya bin Badr Al Ma'awali, Governor of South A'Sharqiyah and walis of the governorate.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and assist him with power to pursue the path of bounties. May He eternalise Oman's riches and endow the country and its people with further peace and security." -ONA

MILITARY TRAINING

Royal Court Affairs receives new batch of recruits

MUSCAT: The Royal Court Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry Labour, received a security unit in Al Khoudh yesterday. The function was held amidst all precautionary measures taken for the COVID-19.

The new batch will undergo basic military training programme for recruits before joining various military units.

The recruits admitted to the programme have already completed all procedures and evaluations, and have passed all stages for admission including the interviews and written tests for joining the military units.

The recruits were received by brigadier Commander of the Security Unit at the Royal Court Affairs and a number of officers and non-commissioned officers and the training cadre.

Major Saud Mohammed Al Harassi, Director of the Military Training Centre said that "Royal Court Affairs has completed, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, the procedures for admission of a new batch of recruits in implementation of the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander."

"The Military Training Centre is concerned with training new recruits", he said, adding that the training period would be for eight months. —ONA

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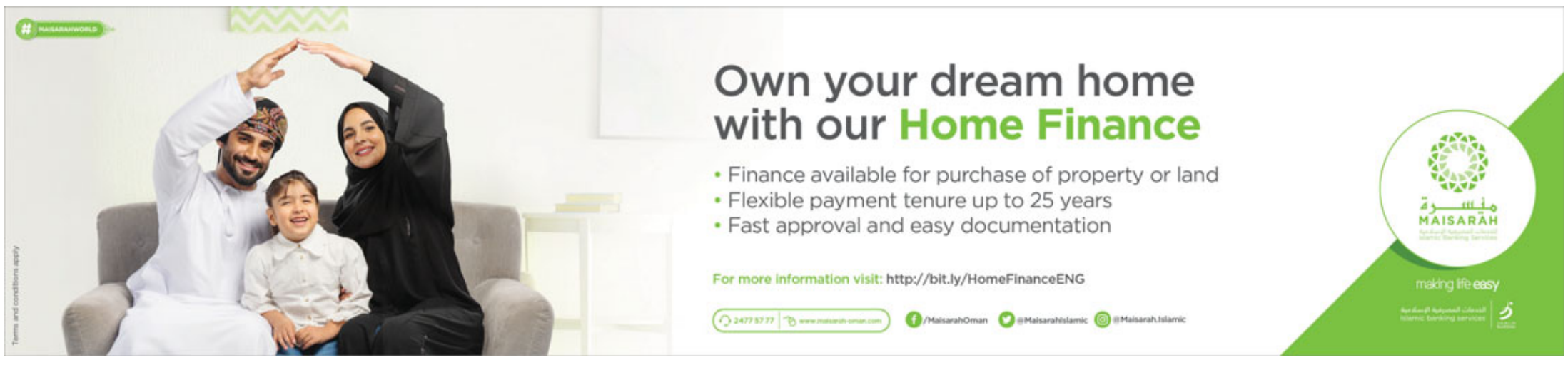


Cat set for 12,000km trip with former Oman resident expatriate couple

Four-year-old Rover was found abandoned and adopted by an expat couple and has now become a permanent addition to their family

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A Persian cat who was adopted by an expatriate couple when they lived in Oman is all set to travel with them as they prepare for a journey across more than 12,000 kilometres.

Four-year-old Rover belongs to Sayonto Gupta and his wife, Aahna, who took in the feline after he was found abandoned behind Sayonto's office in February 2019. After fostering the cat for a couple of weeks, the couple could not help but fall in love with him, and he has now become a permanent addition to their family.

The couple left Oman to return to India in late 2020, and will be boarding their flight to migrate to Canada on 9 February this year. Coming with them will be Rover, for whom many extra measures have to be taken, in anticipation of his journey to the other side of the world. The love shown to them by the little ball of fluff, however, makes all their efforts worthwhile.

Rover and Sayonto will board a train in Kolkata, which is some 12,538km from Toronto, their final destination, and get down in Delhi, where he will meet his wife, who will join them from Mumbai. Once in the Indian capital, they will head to the airport and fly the remaining 11,000km together.

"He is an absolute bundle of joy!" exclaimed Aahna. "He's my lucky charm, my therapist, my baby, and my greatest companion. Rover needs his owners around him, but doesn't show it. However, the affection we share as pet parents has gotten him so attached to both of us in different ways. His presence in my life has simply made me a lot happier and responsible, as I take him to be my own kid."

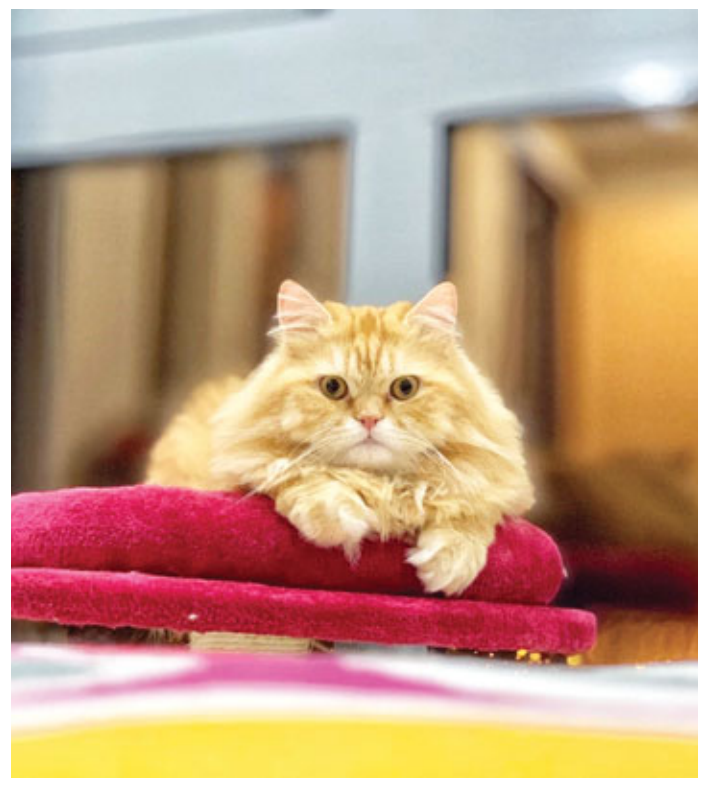
Sayonto added: "If the pet is a part of your family, then you will do anything in your power to make the relocation possible for them. The difference in outlook says it all."

Prior to his flight to Canada, Sayonto will need to make sure Rover has been administered all the necessary vaccinations, and will have to apply for an export certificate from the Government of India. He also needs an official veterinary certificate marking the little animal as fit to fly. Depending on the city in which they are applied for, and the agent responsible for the process, documentation costs vary between OMR150 and 250.

Furthermore, Sayonto will need to make sure Rover remains inside his travel bag the entire time before he is put on the plane.

"I need to make sure there is some drinking water and a little food always handy for him," he said. "When at the airport, he can be taken out of the bag in the family/disabled bathrooms so he can stretch and relax for a while."

That Rover is going to Canada with his 'hoomans' is in itself very fortunate: while in Oman, Sayonto and Aahna travelled with a couple of friends to a resort away from the capital, taking Rover with them. While there, Rover escaped his leash when he was being taken for a walk, and was nowhere to be found.



READY TO ROVE: Rover and Sayonto will board a train in Kolkata, which is some 12,538km from Toronto, their final destination, and get down in Delhi, where he will meet his wife, who will join them from Mumbai. Once in the Indian capital, they will head to the airport and fly the remaining 11,000km together.

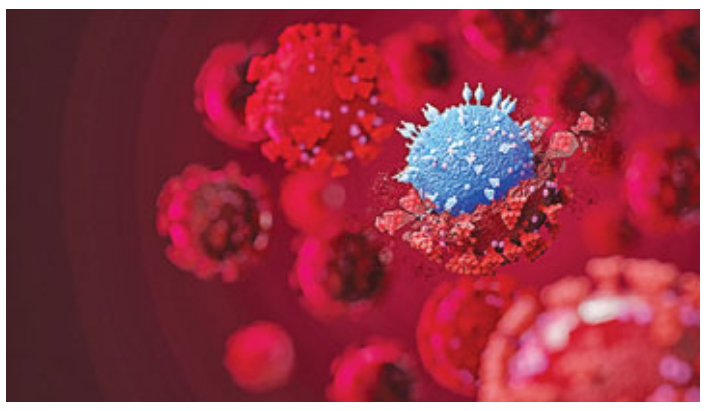
The distraught couple returned to the capital without their beloved four-legged companion, but a few weeks after the incident, Sayonto received a call to tell him Rover had been miraculously found in a suburb of Muscat. The couple were reunited with him mere minutes after the call, and to this day, Sayonto refers to his returning to them as "God's work".

"He is very inquisitive and might go out unknowingly and get lost by himself," explained Aahna. "When taken out of the home, we make sure he is inside his favourite travel bag at all times which is netted from all sides so he can see his surroundings." Although the couple have had to make a few adjustments to make him a part of their life, they don't really see these as sacrifices. "Vacation plans always require immense pre-planning regarding how we will keep him safe and who will take care of him on our behalf, but everything is worth it for little Rover and we will never consider these to be sacrifices," revealed Sayonto.

PANDEMIC

Nearly 1,000 COVID cases in build-up to weekend

Times News Service



MUSCAT: Oman recorded nearly 1,000 fresh infections of COVID-19 in the build up to last weekend, reveal figures from the Ministry of Health.

Statistics published on Sunday, 9 January, 2022, show that 343 people tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday, another 251 were found to have caught the disease on Friday, and some 373 more tested positive on Saturday.

The country sadly also saw another person die from the coronavirus, bringing the total number of people who have succumbed to the disease to 4,118. In Oman, 307,722 people have so far tested positive for COVID-19, while 300,964 of them have successfully recovered from the disease, reflecting a recovery rate of 97.8 percent.

Hospitalisation

There are 40 patients currently admitted to hospitals in Oman for COVID-related symptoms, after 11 more people required medical care in the 24 hours leading to Sunday, 9 January. Seven of the 40 are in intensive care.

The Ministry of Health and other government organisations in Oman have reminded people to continue to adopt precautions against COVID-19 to stop the spread of the disease.

"With our commitments to wearing masks and maintaining social and physical distancing, we will prevent ourselves, our families, and our communities from the spread of the coronavirus," said the ministry in an advisory.

Reminding people of the need to stay vigilant against the virus, the Government Communications Centre said: "let us all abide by the precautionary measures installed inside commercial establishments."

The centre also thanked the Royal Oman Police for their efforts in making sure that people and companies in the country continue to follow the required measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

INVESTOR VISA

< FROM A1

Oman has many incentives to attract foreign investment

Oman has achieved positive outcomes and indicators in 2021 as a result of government measures and efforts for national objectives

"Beyond the scope of the new law, Oman has other incentives that should attract foreign investment in the country," said the Central Bank of Oman in its 2020 Annual Report.

"These include the geographical advantage of the country, the wide logistic network all the way from Musandam to Salalah, the credible currency arrangement granted by the established peg to the US dollar, and reduced corporate tax rate that is capped at 15 percent.

The government has been undertaking measures to further strengthen these features of the country and make Oman a stellar country to invest in." Creating a conducive environment is also one of the objectives listed in Oman's state budget report.

"Oman has achieved positive outcomes and indicators in 2021 as a result of government measures and efforts towards achieving national objectives," said the report, issued by the Ministry of Finance. "Such an approach, if maintained, will ensure better outcomes in 2022, and strengthen rating agencies and investor confidence."

With inputs from Oman News Agency

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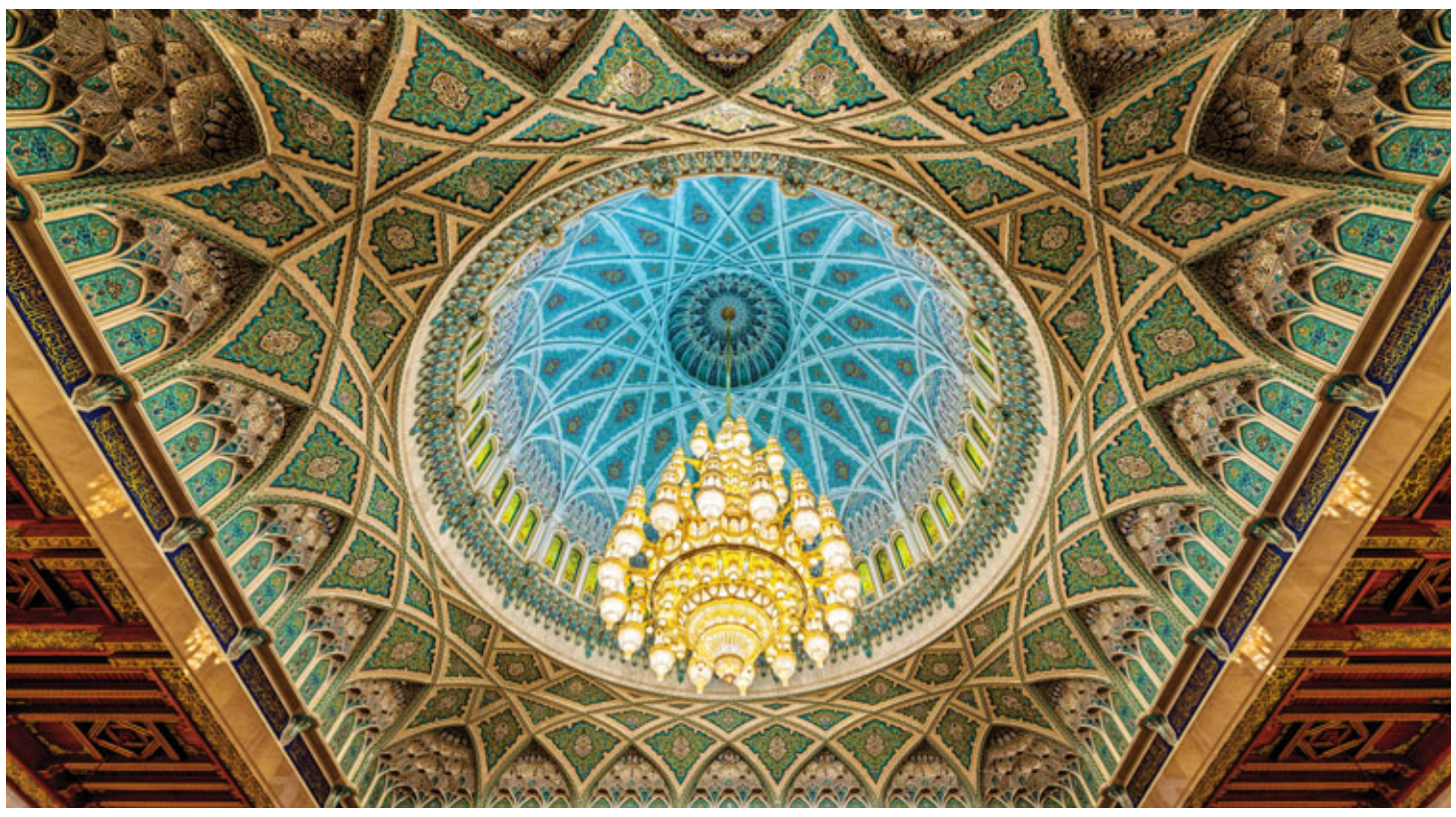
OMAN'S ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS



THE CASTLES, forts and walls of Oman are a testament to the Sultanate's architectural style. According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "Like the country's diverse terrain, architectural styles vary in Oman with the change of scenery. The types of houses built in Musandam Governorate are examples of this diversity. There are the mountain houses, houses like Bayt Al Qefel (the lock house), Bayt Al Areesh Al Mua'laq (the hanging vine house) built to employ the natural air currents to form a cooling system able to beat the scorching heat of the summer months. Misfat Al Abreyeen village in A'Dakhiliyah Region is considered another outstanding testament to this environmentally friendly style of architecture."

Among the old neighbourhoods in the Wilayat of Bahla is Al Aqar neighbourhood, one of the oldest Omani neighbourhoods, which represents a model of the historical buildings of the traditional Omani architecture, locally called "Al Harat". It is located in the ancient Bahla Oasis, which has been included in the World Heritage Sites of UNESCO since 1987. Al Aqar is located within the boundaries of the 12-kilometre-long defensive wall of Bahla, which is militarily fortified. The neighbourhood is also attached to two urban centres: Al Ghuzaili and Al Hawaya neighbourhoods. It maintains its identity and geographical location.

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Wilayat Bawshar, Muscat Governorate, is a live monument housing a collection of Islamic art. In addition to its distinctive architectural features and the innovative approach to the construction of the mosque itself, its corridors display a rich array of the art of Islam.

According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, the mosque is an architectural masterpiece and Oman's pride and joy. The mosque is home to the world's second largest hand-woven carpet as well as one of the largest chandeliers in the world which is decorated with hundreds of Swarovski crystals.

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OMAN VISION 2040

EA, ministry to take decision on plastic bag ban

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) on Sunday held a press conference during which it reviewed the outcome of its activities last year and unveiled programmes of its plan of the new year, which underscores the preparation of a national strategy associated with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

"There is ongoing coordination between the Environment Authority and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion pursuant to which a decision to ban plastic bags is expected to be taken and a date to be set for the ban in the next few years," said Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

Al Amri pointed out that the use of plastic bags was banned earlier and the bags were replaced with two-time-use and three-time-use bags and this resulted in cutting down the quantity of discarded plastics.

In a speech at the press conference, Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, said that, since its inception, Oman Vision 2040 committed the environment sector to realise clear-cut objectives within the span of one decade. Accordingly, work started on Oman Environment Strategy envisaging a set of goals to be met on a yearly basis over a span of 10 years as an executive plan for the next two decades, he said.

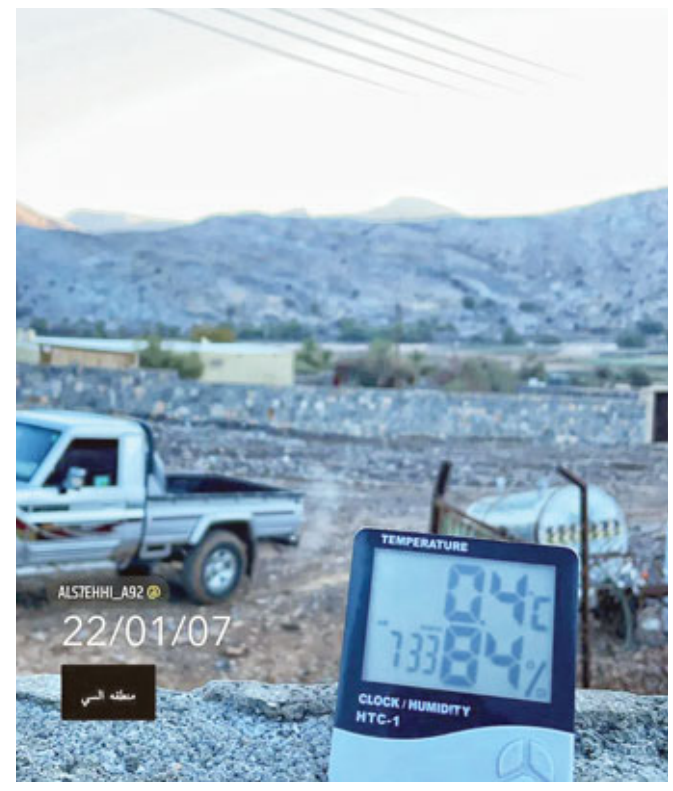
He added that the programmes, initiatives and projects brought about by Oman Environment Strategy will reflect positively on the environmental performance of the Sultanate of Oman, upgrading its global rating.

A national team tasked with environment indicators was formed under the leadership of environment specialists and competent partners from public and private sector establishments.

-ONA

TEMPERATURE DIPS CLOSE TO ZERO DEGREES IN SOME PARTS OF OMAN

Parts of the Sultanate of Oman recorded temperatures close to zero degrees Celsius during the weekend. The Wilayat of Khasab recorded a temperature of 0.4 degrees Celsuios on Friday. **Photo— Abdullah Al Shihi**



Passenger traffic across airports in Oman drops

The total number of flights acosss Oman airports reached 30,375, including 21,466 international flights through Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport and Sohar Airport

MUSCAT: The total number of passengers travelling through airports in the Sultanate of Oman (Muscat, Salalah, Sohar and Duqm) till the end of October 2021 reached 3,349,503, compared to 4,107,142 passengers at the end of October 2020, comprising a decline by 18.4 percent, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total number of flights at the airports of the Sultanate of Oman reached 30,375, including 21,466 international flights through Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport and Sohar Airport.

The number of domestic flights reached 8,909 at Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport, Sohar Airport and Duqm Airport, compared to 34,873 flights in October 2020, including 29,999 international flights at Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport and Sohar Airport, and 4,874 domestic flights at Muscat, Salalah, Sohar and Duqm airports by the end of October 2020.

Nationalities of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan topped the total number of passengers in Oman's airports till the end of October 2021. The number of Indian passengers stood at 98,556 and the Bangladeshi passengers stood at 36,849. Meanwhile, the number of Pakistani passengers stood at 29,523. -ONA

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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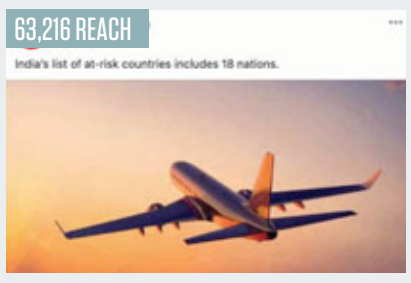
63,216 REACH

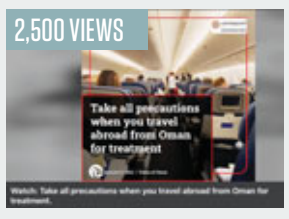


Story on travel between Oman and India

A story on travel between Oman and India reached 63,216 people and had 6,375 engagements on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

2,500 VIEWS

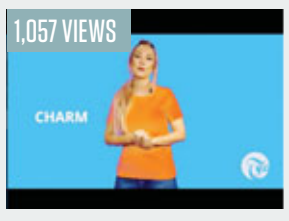


Page 1 story video on travel out of Oman

The Page 1 story video on travel out of Oman had 2,500 views and reached 14,200 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,057 VIEWS



Out & About video Episode 7

The Out & About video Episode 7 had 1,057 views and 35 likes on Instagram

FAO

Agreement inked to furnish sustainable agriculture and water resources in Oman

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources signed on Sunday an agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to furnish a flexible environment with sustainable agricultural and water resources in Oman.

The project will be funded by the UN Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The agreement was signed by Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman.

The project will enable stakeholders in the agriculture and water resources sectors to implement schemes and policies in order to mitigate climate change within the national priorities and the GCF Country Programme.

-ONA

WORLD

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COVID CASES

India reports over 150,000 COVID cases in last 24 hours

NEW DELHI: India reported 159,632 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the daily positivity rate in the country to 10.21 per cent, said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Sunday.

With this, the COVID-19 tally has risen to 35,528,004 in the country. According to the Health Ministry, a total of 3,623 cases of the Omicron variant of coronavirus have been reported in India so far. The number of recovered patients from the variant rises to 1,409.

Maharashtra accounts for the highest number of Omicron cases (1,009), followed by Delhi (513) and Karnataka (441).

The Ministry further informed that the active caseload in the country currently stands at 590,611 which accounts for 1.66 per cent of the country's total number of cases.

The weekly positivity rate currently is at 6.77 per cent, while the daily positivity rate stands at 10.21 per cent. As many as 40,863 patients recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours. The cumulative tally of COVID recovered patients now stands at 3,44,53,603. The recovery rate is at 96.98 per cent.

The country also reported 327 new deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 483,790.

India conducted 1,563,566 COVID-19 tests in the last 24 hours. The country has conducted 69,00,34,525 tests so far, as per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data. India has administered a total of 151.58 crore vaccine doses so far under Nationwide Vaccination Drive. ANI

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7 killed, 32 injured as cliff collapses on boats in Brazil

A number of people had broken bones and one person was in serious condition with head and facial injuries

TRAGEDY: Firefighters had initially reported 20 missing, but this was later revised as many of those unaccounted for had made their own way to hospitals.

BRASILIA: A slab of rock broke off from a cliff and fell onto boaters at a lake in southeastern Brazil, killing at least seven, authorities said on Saturday.

Three people are missing. Officials said at least 32 people had been injured but most had been released from hospital by Saturday evening. A number of people had broken bones and one person was in serious condition with head and facial injuries.

Firefighters had initially reported 20 missing, but this was later revised as many of those unaccounted for had made their own way to hospitals.

Video images showed a group of small boats drifting near a waterfall below a cliff on Furnas Lake when a piece of rock broke off, hitting at least two of the vessels.

Another video on social media shows the minute before the incident, with people warning that "many stones are falling" and advising other boats to move away from the rocks.

Where did the accident occur?

Authorities said the incident occurred between the towns of Sao Jose da Barra and Capitolio, located in Brazil's southeastern Minas Gerais state. The boats had left from the town of Capitolio.

Furnas Lake was originally formed along with the creation of a hydroelectric dam and is a major tourist attraction in the area.

Tourists come to see the rock walls, caverns and waterfalls surrounding the Furnas Lake's waters.

Officials suggested that the rock could have come loose due to recent heavy rains that caused flooding in the state and displaced 17,000 people.

Pedro Aihara, spokesperson for the Minas Gerais State Fire Department, told Brazilian broadcaster GloboNews that the rocks in this area are "more susceptible to the effects of wind and rain" and "show less resistance." -DW

WINTER GAMES

Olympic organising body refutes reports of athlete with COVID entering Beijing

BEIJING: Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games on Sunday dismissed reports that a Spanish athlete who tested positive for COVID-19 visited downtown Beijing, local media reported.

"During the Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, all overseas athletes and other relevant personnel will be strictly isolated from the local community from their entry to departure in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Beijing 2022 Playbook. Please do not believe in or spread rumours," Xinhua News Agency reported citing the statement. The 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing will be held from February 4-20. The massive security deployment and checks are being carried out by China soon before the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Meanwhile, in an effort to conduct Winter Olympics next month hassle-free, China is adamant about implementing a Zero-COVID policy, further complicating problems for its citizens.

China had welcomed the year 2022 with the worst tally of COVID-19 cases for any seven-day period since subduing the country's first epidemic nearly two years ago.

The worst situation is said to be found in Xi'an town and since December.

Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, reported 30 locally transmitted COVID-19 cases, local media reported citing authorities on Sunday.

For over two weeks now, Xi'an's 13 million residents are confined to their homes.

Only one person per household is allowed to leave home every two days to buy essential goods. Nobody can leave the city whatever the circumstances. ANI

MIRROR PANEL UNFOLDS

James Webb telescope deployed in space

WASHINGTON: NASA engineers cheered on Saturday as the James Webb Space Telescope finished its two-weeklong deployment phase and unfolded its last mirror panel.

At the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, the engineering teams watched the events in space. The telescope will aid them in the study of the history of the cosmos. People from around the world tuned in as the space telescope unfurled the golden, flower-shaped mirror.

Senior NASA engineer and mission chief Thomas Zurbuchen said during the live feed broadcast online, "I'm emotional about it. What an amazing milestone."

Zurbuchen added, "We see that beautiful pattern out there in the sky now."

Dubbed the golden eye of the space telescope, the mirror is made of lightweight beryllium. All 18 segments of the mirror are coated with an extremely thin layer of gold which is extraordinarily reflective of infrared light.

At a cost of $10 billion (€8.8 billion), the James Webb Space Telescope is far more powerful than its predecessor, the Hubble Space Telescope.

What is the James Webb Space Telescope?

The space telescope's infrared technology will provide a chance to view the earliest stars and galaxies that formed more than 13 billion years ago. Astronomers hope to glean new insights into the origins of the universe.

The space telescope took off on Christmas Day aboard an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana, starting its journey 1 million miles (1.5 million kilometers) into space to its orbital point, known as Lagrange point. It should arrive there within weeks, but nearly half a year of setup is still required.

The space telescope was too big to be transported in a rocket in its operational form, so it needed to be collapsed, like origami, to fit.

Unfolding the telescope has proven remarkably difficult and may be one of the most challenging NASA projects, the US space agency said.

"We've still got work to do," NASA said as the wing of the space telescope moved into position. "When the final latch is secure, NASA Webb will be fully unfolded in space."

The space agency's telescope blog said the unfolding of the mirrors was "the last of the major deployments on the observatory."

Final steps to set up the telescope include calibrating the scientific instruments and aligning its optics. This week, the James Webb Space Telescope also unraveled its sunshield, all five layers of it, in what was considered the riskiest part of the deployment operation.

The kite-like 70-foot (21 meter) umbrella will keep the scientific instruments in subzero shade to be able to pick up infrared signals from the outer reaches of the universe. The shield will be deployed to protect the space telescope from the light of the sun, the Earth and the moon and can protect it in temperatures up to 230 degrees Fahrenheit (110 degrees Celsius).

If everything goes according to schedule, scientific observation using the telescope can start this summer. -DW

UKRAINE TALKS

Russia says not hopeful ahead of talks with US over Ukraine

MOSCOW: Russia is not optimistic ahead of the planned talks with the US and other NATO members over the tensions at the Ukrainian border, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Sunday.

Talking to to the Interfax news agency, Ryabkov said it would be "naive" to expect "progress, let alone quick progress."

The Russian diplomat is expected to take part in the scheduled Geneva summit on Monday. Ryabkov is also set to meet with US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman ahead of the talks on Sunday evening.

The Kremlin has made a series of demands regarding Ukraine's relationship with NATOand NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe.

Washington has made clear that many of those demands were non-starters. Russia on Sunday reduced any possible optimism about a possible resolution of the situation, saying that it would not back down.

"We will not agree to any concession. That is completely excluded," Ryabkov said. "We are disappointed with the signals coming in the last few days from Washington but also from Brussels."

Why are Russian and US diplomats meeting?

High-level talks in Geneva, where Russian representatives are set to meet delegations from NATO and the Organization for Security and Operation in Europe (OSCE), aim to ease the tensions at the Ukrainian-Russian border. Russia has amassed troops at its border with Ukraine, prompting fears of a full-scale invasion.

The Kremlin has been pushing for an assurance that Ukraine will never be given membership to NATO — an alliance set up to counter the influence of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

Washington has made clear that many of those demands were non-starters. Russia on Sunday reduced any possible optimism about a possible resolution of the situation, saying that it would not back down

While there is no process underway to bring Kyiv into the alliance, the US and NATO have rejected attempts by Moscow to dictate Ukraine's foreign policy.

What consequences is Russia facing?

US President Joe Biden held two phone calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin in previous weeks.

Biden warned his Russian counterpart of serious consequences should Moscow invade Ukraine again. A possible response could include further sanctions, canceling the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline, or even cutting off Russia from the global banking network.

The US is also considering sending more NATO troops to the ex-Soviet states in the Baltics, which have since joined NATO, according to a report by the AFP news agency. In addition, Washington is mulling reinforcing other NATO members in the east of Europe, the report said.

Moscow has increased its pressure on Kyiv since the revolution in 2014 that toppled the Moscow-friendly administration. Russian troops also took over Crimea and are believed to have been supporting separatists in the east of the country ever since. DW

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Broad, Anderson help England walk away with a draw

The five-match series stands 3-0 in favour of Australia and the fifth game will begin on Friday

ENGLAND VS AUSTRALIA: Steve Smith came into the attack and on the final delivery of the 100th over, he dismissed Jack Leach

SYDNEY: Stuart Broad and James Anderson batted out the final two overs on Day 5 as the fourth Ashes Test between Australia and England ended in a draw here at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday.

The five-match series stands 3-0 in favour of Australia and the fifth game will begin on Friday in Hobart and it would be a day-night contest.

Resuming the third and final session on Day 5 at 174/4, Ben Stokes and Jonny Bairstow added 19 more runs to the total before Stokes (60) was sent back to the pavilion by Nathan Lyon and this meant England had to see out 27.2 overs on the final day to walk away with a draw.

With 17 overs remaining in the day, skipper Pat Cummins did the job as he had Jos Buttler (11) adjudged leg-before wicket, and the task for England to survive the day got tougher. In the very same over, Cummins got the better of Mark Wood (0) and England was reduced to 218/7.

Bairstow and Jack Leach held off for a while but Scott Boland once again proved his mettle as he had Bairstow (41) dismissed and Australia was just two wickets away from registering a memorable win while England had to bat out 10.2 more overs to walk away with a draw.

With three overs to survive, the light faded and the umpires decided that only spinners could bowl.

Steve Smith came into the attack and on the final delivery of the 100th over, he dismissed Jack Leach (26). In the end, Broad and James Anderson batted out 2 overs to help the visitors walk away with a draw. Broad and Anderson remained unbeaten on 8 and 0 respectively.

Brief Scores: Australia 416/8d and 265/6d; England 294 and 270/9 (Zak Crawley 77, Ben Stokes 60; Scott Boland 3-30).

-ANI

NEW ZEALAND VS BANGLADESH

Skipper Latham's century helps New Zealand seize advantage

CHRISTCHURCH: Skipper Tom Latham scored a remarkable century as New Zealand dominated Day 1 of the ongoing second Test against Bangladesh here at the Hagley Oval, Christchurch on Sunday.

At stumps, New Zealand's score read 349/1 with Latham (186*) and Devon Conway (99*) currently present at the crease. Sent into bat, New Zealand got off to a remarkable start as openers Latham and Will Young put the Bangladesh bowlers on backfoot by registering boundaries quite easily. Both batters played out the first session, ensuring that the hosts do not lose any wickets.

Both batters went past their 50-run mark, and ended up forming a 148-run opening stand. Bangladesh finally got the wicket in the 38th over as Shoriful Islam had Young (54) dismissed. However, Latham marched on and he brought up his 12th Test century in the 45th over of the innings.

Devon Conway next came out to the middle and he also registered his half-century and this gave further advantage to the hosts. Latham continued on from where he left off, bringing up his 150 and Bangladesh's backs were against the wall, as New Zealand's score read 270/1 after the end of the 71st over.

In the end, Latham and Conway ensured that New Zealand does not lose more wickets and the hosts have nine wickets in hand.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 349/1 (Tom Latham 186*, Devon Conway 99*; Shoriful Islam 1-50) vs Bangladesh. ANI

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Stallions move to top, Sufyan leads Renaissance to big win

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Star all-rounder Rafi Ullah had a terrific outing, helping Oman Stallions to a massive 225-run victory against IAS in a 50-over Premier Division League clash at Oman Cricket Turf 1 in Amerat on Saturday.

Stallions' huge total of 393 for 8 included Rafi's scintillating 91 off 41 with as many as 10 sixes, Vinayak Shukla's 86 and Pratik Athavale's 67. Imran Muhammed and Mudassar Iqbal claimed three wickets each.

IAS were marching on slow and steady at 79 for 1 in 18 overs before it ran into Rafi Ullah's golden arm and collapsed for a lowly 168 in the 45th over. Rafi conceded only 31 runs in his 9 overs, picking up 4 wickets whereas Akshay Patel bagged 3 for 31 in 10. Haythim Bahar (42) and Akmal Shahzad (41) were IAS' top scorers. Stallions now lead the points table with 14 from 8 matches followed by Muscat CT which has 12 from 7.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): Oman Stallions 393 for 8 in 50 overs (Rafi Ullah 91 – 3x4, 10x6, Vinayak Shukla 86 – 8x4, 3x6, Pratik Athavale 67 – 10x4, Imran Muhammad 3-67, Mudassar Iqbal 3-74, Khalid Rasheed 2-74) beat IAS (Ibn Abdul Samad Eng & Cons) 168 all out in 44.1 overs (Haythim Bahar 42 – 6x4, Akmal Shahzad 41 – 7x4, Rafi Ullah 4-31, Akshaykumar Patel 3-31, Utkarsh Sahu 2-43) by 225 runs.

Sufyan bowls Renaissance to victory

Earlier on Friday, Oman all-rounder Sufyan Mahmood's magnificent 5 for 39 powered Renaissance to a comfortable 6-wicket win over AER International Trading and Contracting in a Premier Division game at the same venue.

Sufyan was outstanding with the ball as AER found his seaming deliveries too hot to handle on a chilly morning, getting dismissed for 112 in 26.2 overs. Asif Khan and Mehdi Hasan took two wickets each. Usama Aqeel topscored with 47.

Sufyan showed his batting form as well, topscoring with an unbeaten 32 off 40 as Renaissance surpassed the total in 22.4 overs, scoring 118 for 4. Shubo Pal batted well too for his 31 off 37. Aqib Javeed bagged 2 for 25.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): AER International Trad. & Cont. 112 all out in 26.2 overs (Usama Aqeel 47 – 6x4, Sufyan Mahmood 5-39, Asif Khan 2-7, Mehdi Hasan 2-0) lost to Renaissance 118 for 4 in 22.4 overs (Sufyan Mahmood 32 – 1x4, 2x6,

Shubo Pal 31 – 2x4, 1x6, Aqib Javeed 2-25) by 6 wickets.

Irfan, Rajesh star in Sunlight win

Hafiz Irfan and Rajesh Devashya were Sunlight's heroes in an impressive 89-run win over Ernst & Young in a 50-over A Division League match at OC Turf 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Irfan led the batting honours with a fluent 61 followed by stylish 48 by Nasir and 46 by Rafique Mujib. Amandeep Singh picked up 3 for 43.

Ernst & Young was struggling at 54 for 4 in 9 before collapsing to 116 for 9 in 25. However, a 70-run last-wicket partnership between Masud Pervez (67 not out off 60) and Chadith Lakmal (8 off 23) helped salvage some pride as E&A scored 186 all out in 36.2 overs.

Rajesh was the main destroyer with 5 for 36 whereas Irfan bagged 2 for 42.

Brief Scores (A Division): Sunlight 275 for 9 in 50 overs (Hafiz Irfan 61 – 6x4, Nasir 48 – 5x4, 1x6, Rafique Mujib 46 – 6x4, Madhur Bhatnagar 41 – 3x4, Amandeep Singh 3-43) beat Ernst & Young 186 all out in 36.2 overs (Masud Parvez 67 – 11x4,

2x6, Shrey Wilson 62 – 7x4, 3x6, Rajesh Devashya 5-36, Hafiz Irfan 2-42) by 89 runs.

TENNIS

Czech tennis player Voracova leaves Australia, say officials

CANBERRA: Czech tennis player Renata Voracova has left Australia after visa complications, officials said on Saturday.

Voracova was detained in the same hotel as men's No. 1 Novak Djokovic, who has challenged his visa cancellation over a COVID vaccine dispute.

Voracova compared being taken to immigration detention in Australia to "being in an action movie."

Like Djokovic, Voracova had arrived in Australia claiming an exemption from the country's tight COVID-19 vaccine requirements. The reason for the exemption was that she had contracted COVID-19 just before Christmas. The 38-year-old said she wasn't against vaccination, but did not have time to get a jab before she was due to fly out to Australian Open.

"Plus, I had some medical indications. So, I met all the criteria set by the Australian Federation," the doubles specialist told the Czech daily Idnes.

Voracova entered the tournament and played one match before being detained on Thursday and taken to the Park Hotel in Melbourne.

While Voracova's case is separate from the one involving Djokovic, they are facing similar legal issues — they both had their Australian visa revoked amid a blame game between Australian authorities over the handling of COVID-19 vaccine exemptions.

Djokovic's lawyers say he had COVID

On Saturday, Djokovic's lawyers said in a court filing that he also contracted COVID-19 last month.

The filing said that 14 days after testing positive, the Serbian tennis star "had not had a fever or respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 72 hours."

On January 1, he received written clearance from Australia's immigration department before traveling to the country with a medical exemption from its vaccination rules, the documents added.

Tennis Australia denies being 'knowingly' misleading

Tennis Australia advised players in a memo that a recent COVID-19 infection was grounds for a temporary medical exemption from vaccination.

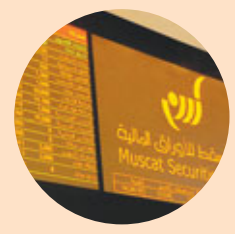
But the federal government said the advice was valid only for Australian residents, not for foreign nationals trying to enter the country. In the interview with the Czech daily, Voracova blamed Tennis Australia for "apparently" misleading her.

"It's really strange that I spent a week here in peace, played a match... And then they came for me," she said

Tennis Australia has said it never knowingly misled players and had always conveyed to players that "vaccination is the best course of action."

"We reject completely that the playing group was knowingly misled," it said in a statement quoted by local media.

-DW



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,216.80 points, up 0.68 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.33 per cent at 526.20 points. Gulf International Chemical up 3.23 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Desalinate down 3.33 per cent, was the top loser.

OQ to inaugurate OMR318mn LPG plant in Salalah next week

The launch of the project will further reinforce the Sultanate of Oman's position as a leading producer and exporter of LPG, among a host of other refined petroleum products and petrochemicals

VITAL PROJECT: This vital project works on processing natural gas liquids extracted from gas networks into LPG. The plant is designed and built to the highest technical and safety standards. - ONA

MUSCAT: OQ - the globally integrated energy group of the Sultanate of Oman - has announced that it will formally inaugurate its state-of-the-art Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) plant worth OMR318 million in Salalah on January 16, 2022.

This vital project works on processing natural gas liquids (NGLs) extracted from gas networks into LPG. The plant is designed and built to the highest technical and safety standards. It consists of several components, notably a facility for the extraction of rich gas elements such as propane, butane and condensates from natural gas, as well as a fractionation plant, storage tanks, shipping facilities, and an interconnection pipeline system.

The launch of the project will further reinforce the Sultanate of Oman's position as a leading producer and exporter of LPG, among a host of other refined petroleum products and petrochemicals.

OQ LPG can process around 8 million standard cubic metres per day of lean gas to produce about 304 kilotons per year of LPG comprising 155 kilotons per year of propane (C3), 111 kilotons of butane (C4) and 38 kilotons of condensates (C5+).

The project is already in the commercial operation phase, producing and exporting propane, butane and condensate based on specified specs. The first shipment of products from OQ LPG, comprising about 5,000 metric tons of propane and a similar volume of butane, was loaded onto MT Searambler, for distribution in international markets. Moreover, 10% of the propane and butane products will be used as LPG for domestic use in the Governorate of Dhofar.

During the construction phase, the project made an important contribution to the local economy. In line with its In-Country Value (ICV) development strategy, OQ awarded contracts totalling around RO 100 million to local vendors and service providers. More than 150 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) benefited from OQ's ICV programme during the implementation of the project, helping in creating business opportunities and providing jobs for national cadres.

OQ LPG will also meet the energy requirements of local industrial and retail consumers. The surplus output will be exported to world markets through OQ Trading, the marketing arm of the Group. Furthermore, the Group is studying the feasibility of using LPG products to develop petrochemical industries to help optimise value creation. -ONA

WAQF FORUM

'Waqf sector one of the main drivers of funds growth in the Sultanate'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Waqf sector is considered one of the main drivers of funds growth in the Sultanate of Oman, said Asaad bin Hilal Al-Kharusi, acting Chief Operating Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank.

He added that though the sector is still new in the Sultanate, it is just a matter of time before people realise how Waqf foundations will take charge of asset management using a different approach.

Al Kharusi was speaking at the first Waqf Forum organised by Imam Jabir Bin Zaid Waqf Foundation (JBZF) in partnership with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs under the auspices of Sheikh Al Fadhl Mohammed al Harthi, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers. Alizz Islamic Bank was among the key sponsors of First Waqf Forum organised at the Sheraton Hotel.

Asaad bin Hilal Al-Kharusi, acting Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Alizz Islamic Bank

Impressive results

He added that cooperation and investment with Waqf foundations will deliver several impressive results through endowment, experience, efforts and money which constitutes the main pillar of real investments. In the same context, he stressed the importance of calling upon all Waqf foundations and funds to raise awareness about their definition, roles and activities.

Elaborating on Sukuk, Al-Kharusi said, "We had previous experience with Sukuk. Though it is easier to issue Sukuk to institutions and major investors, small investors have the right to join the investment sector and benefit from potential opportunities. Therefore, we made an excellent decision to offer such an opportunity to small investors. But before that, we launched a major marketing campaign that covered main cities across different governorates to educate people about Sukuk, given that it was the first issue directed to individuals. We received a positive response as about one-third of the subscription was from individuals."

Management mechanisms

The forum aimed to provide a platform for Waqf foundations, experts and advocates to meet and discuss the promotion of this sector. The forum witnessed three panel discussions on the topics of "Waqf Partnership - Cooperation and Integration", "Mechanism of Management of Waqf Foundations" and "Investment in Waqf Foundations" with 17 speakers. The panels highlighted cooperation and integration in the Waqf sector, its management mechanisms and investment in Waqf establishments. In addition, the forum organised three workshops covering topics related to the endowment sector, including governance of endowment foundations, feasibility studies for endowment investment projects, and promotion of endowment foundations.

MoUs

The forum also witnessed the signing of a number of MoUs and cooperation notes with various establishments in the Sultanate.

It is noteworthy that the first endowment forum aims to promote cooperation between Waqf foundations and actors in this sector on the one hand, and its sponsors, on the other hand, through the exchange of experiences and knowledge, and the developing of various aspects related to endowments administration at Waqf foundations.

The forum also acted as a catalyst to highlight the significance of Waqf foundations and their role in societal development and promoting partnerships between Waqf foundations on the one hand, and public-private sector institutions on the other hand.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA launches XBRL platform

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) joined the XBRL International concurrently with the launch of the XBRL platform.

This is part of the CMA's strategy to prepare for an appropriate investment environment to enhance the performance of the capital market and insurance sectors through continued development of the legislative and technological systems related to disclosure of the issuers of securities and insurance companies in line with the Oman Vision 2040 to reach digital transformation which is a requirement to ease the services for all the parties as an important part of the national priorities.

XBRL International is a global not-for-profit organisation that develops and maintains the XBRL standards and related specifications and prepare and issue XBRL taxonomies to upgrade and improve disclosure processes in the financial markets. It is a global consortium of approximately 650 public and private organisations working together to support the collection, sharing and use of financial data based on XBRL language to upgrade the efficiency of the disclosure process in the capital

markets to enhance the accuracy of the financial data and avail to the investors on a timely basis.

It is worth noting that the CMA had earlier organised introductory sessions on XBRL reports in collaboration with the IRIS Business Services Limited, the project contractor. The workshops were attended by the capital market and insurance institutions and related parties such as the public joint stock companies, insurance companies, investment funds, the companies operating in the field of securities and representatives of audit firms accredited by the CMA.

SHARES

Stocks end lower after mixed jobs data as tech sinks again

WASHINGTON: Stocks closed lower and Treasury yields rose on Friday with much of Wall Street anticipating that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates as soon as March despite a mixed report on the US jobs market.

The downbeat finish capped the worst week for the S&P 500 technology sector since October 2020 and the biggest weekly drop for the tech-heavy Nasdaq in nearly a year, The Associated Press reported.

The S&P 500 fell 0.4 per cent, and the yield on the 10-year Treasury hit its highest level since COVID began pummelling markets at the start of 2020. The benchmark index had been up 0.3 per cent in the early going and then fell as much as 0.7 per cent following the mixed reading from the US Labour Department. -BNA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Gulf International Chemical up 3.23 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Desalinate down 3.33 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,216.80 points, up 0.68 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.33 per cent at 526.20 points. Gulf International Chemical up 3.23 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Desalinate down 3.33 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of OIFC were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 414 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.72 million, with more than 11 million shares changing hands. Out of 35 traded securities, 17 advanced, 5 declined and 13 remained unchanged. At the session close, Domestic investors were net buyers for OMR120,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR89,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR31,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,706.59 points, up 0.58 per cent. Al Sharqia Investment, Bank Nizwa, Sohar International Bank, Global Investment Holding and Taageer Finance were up 2.22 per cent, 2.04 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 1.61 per cent and 1.37 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,047.48 points, up 0.38 per cent.

Services Index was up by 0.43 per cent before closing at 1,643.98 points. National Gas, Renaissance Services, Oman National Engineering, OIFC and Muscat Gases were up 3.13 per cent, 2.83 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 2.01 per cent and 1.22 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,216.80	4,191.65	4,216.80	4,188.24	28.56	0.68
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,706.60	6,673.55	6,706.60	6,668.11	38.49	0.58
Industry Index	6,062.49	6,028.48	6,047.48	6,024.50	22.98	0.38
Services Index	1,644.11	1,637.75	1,643.99	1,636.99	7.00	0.43
MSX Shariah Index	526.21	524.23	526.20	524.47	1.73	0.33
MSX TR INDEX	5,074.31	5,044.04	5,074.31	5,039.94	34.37	0.68

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,075,467	1,723,368	414	22,233,018,379	17	5	13	35

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	20,900	2,755	2	0.130	0.132	0.130	0.132	0.128	0.004	3.125	0.132	0.130	0.135	0.100	11,220,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	423,538	185,005	14	0.430	0.438	0.430	0.436	0.424	0.012	2.830	0.434	0.434	0.434	0.100	103,074,760
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	88,460	39,496	17	0.446	0.448	0.444	0.446	0.434	0.012	2.765	0.448	0.444	0.448	0.100	24,530,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	249,580	23,009	19	0.092	0.097	0.091	0.092	0.090	0.002	2.222	0.097	0.091	0.097	0.100	8,280,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	55,000	20,910	17	0.374	0.386	0.374	0.380	0.372	0.008	2.151	0.386	0.382	0.386	0.100	47,461,225
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	3,208,945	487,703	50	0.152	0.153	0.151	0.152	0.149	0.003	2.013	0.152	0.152	0.153	0.100	36,024,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	141,181	16,659	3	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.116	0.002	1.724	0.118	0.114	0.120	0.100	352,827,350
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	60,000	26,232	17	0.434	0.440	0.434	0.438	0.432	0.006	1.389	0.440	0.434	0.440	0.100	96,360,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	285,249	145,431	13	0.508	0.510	0.508	0.510	0.504	0.006	1.190	0.510	0.506	0.510	0.100	1,822,982,144
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	40,610	4,833	2	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.118	0.001	0.847	0.119	0.116	0.120	0.100	232,009,238
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,200	298	1	0.248	0.248	0.248	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.248	0.240	0.248	0.100	82,718,178
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,046,575	192,378	23	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.100	18,800,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	41,680	14,586	9	0.350	0.350	0.348	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.346	0.354	0.100	21,421,496
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	7,040	5,435	4	0.772	0.772	0.772	0.772	0.772	0.000	0.000	0.772	0.760	0.772	0.100	579,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	108	42	1	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.388	0.388	0.000	0.000	0.386	0.382	0.386	0.100	252,566,361
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	1,173,423	270,007	67	0.238	0.238	0.230	0.230	0.237	-0.007	-2.954	0.230	0.228	0.230	0.100	46,000,000
Total	16	7,843,489	1,434,779	259												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002028	GULF INT.CHEMI.	5,500	528	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.093	0.003	3.226	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	2,016,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	204,325	19,550	19	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.094	0.002	2.128	0.096	0.095	0.103	0.100	12,480,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,762,900	175,733	46	0.098	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.098	0.002	2.041	0.100	0.100	0.102	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	210,868	13,360	9	0.063	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.062	0.001	1.613	0.063	0.063	0.066	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	21,000	1,554	2	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.001	1.370	0.074	0.073	0.080	0.100	18,765,660
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER.	664,493	50,492	29	0.076	0.077	0.075	0.076	0.075	0.001	1.333	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.100	15,426,970
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	10,000	1,660	1	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.164	0.002	1.220	0.166	0.163	0.000	0.100	4,980,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	2,000	204	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	204,031,905
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	3,770	3,393	4	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.904	0.904	0.000	0.000	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.100	55,392,600
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	13,265	1,490	6	0.112	0.115	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.100	9,117,108
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	35,160	3,868	4	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.000	0.110	0.100	10,758,238
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	41,427	2,015	8	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	33,069,484
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	186,955	9,348	11	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.055	0.100	73,130,073
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	91	1	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	6,660	633	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.101	0.100	16,625,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	12,280	860	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.064	0.074	0.100	7,000,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	13,765	661	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.049	0.000	0.100	34,291,504
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	36,110	3,142	9	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.087	0.090	-0.003	-3.333	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.100	13,532,885
Total	18	3,231,478	288,580	154												

ACQUISITION

Investcorp acquires RESA Power from Blue Sea Capital

MANAMA: Investcorp, an alternative investment firm, has announced its acquisition of RESA Power, a provider of mission-critical engineering, testing and maintenance services for electrical infrastructure in the United States, from Blue Sea Capital.

Headquartered in Houston, RESA has over 20 locations across the United States and Canada.

The company is a market leader in providing maintenance and testing, systems integration, and related distribution services to clients across the renewables, commercial, and industrial end markets in North America.

Investcorp's partnership with RESA will focus on continuing the Company's organic growth, expanding geographically across North America, and accelerating the potential to make strategic, value-creating add-on acquisitions. -**BNA**

ECONOMY

China leads global economic development

BEIJING: China reached a milestone in 2021 with major achievements made in foreign trade, technological breakthroughs and industrial chain resilience, according to a senior official.

"China has taken a leading position in both economic development and pandemic control worldwide in 2021," Han Wenxiu, an official with the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs, said in a recent article, highlighting the country's progress in coordinating pandemic control and economic development.

According to World Bank projections, China's real gross domestic product growth will reach 8 percent in 2021, and its "momentum is expected to pick up, aided by a more supportive fiscal stance." Experts also projected that the per capita GDP of China will exceed $12,000, close to the measure of a high-income country as classified by the World Bank.

China's economy has staged an impressive rebound from the pandemic-induced slump. The growth rate of major economic indicators stayed within a reasonable range in the past year, as the consumer price index growth and surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at relatively low levels, and more than 12mn new urban jobs were created. -**Xinhua**

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Darsait	1 & 2 BHK Flats.
Ruwi	2 & 3 BHK spacious flats (Prime locations).
Al Amerat	2 & 3 BHK Flats With A.C.

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Duties:

- Submit products variations and notifications to the MOH and follow-up on their approval.
- Build and maintain a solid relationship with MOH key people.
- Submit newly registered products for inclusion in the reimbursement list.
- Communicate to suppliers and management the products that are due for re-pricing.
- Coordinate with clearing agent on received goods at Airport and monitor the clearance timelines from arrival date to warehouses.
- Retrieve cold product samples from the warehouse and proceed with their inspection process at the MOH.
- Keep track of all necessary licenses/ permits both personal and company and keeping them updated as per Governmental requirements (Documentation).
- Receive consignment; as per MOH standards, coordinate and implement standard operating policies and local legislations.
- Make sure the warehouse is always compliant with GSP, GDP and GMP standards.
- Classify, register and renew, pricing, re-pricing, variations and other MOH matters related to implementing regulations and policies.

Qualifications:

- 5-6 years of Experience in similar position.
- Omani MOH license is a must
- BS in Pharmacy, Regulatory and Quality knowledge
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Wanted Dentist with MOH license to work in a private clinic in Ibri. Contact 92788334

ADMINISTRATION

Looking For Office Staff. Contact 24709144 Email: atf24704415@gmail.com

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JOB WANTED

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26 years Indian male Senior Accountant, having 5+ years experience in Finance, (Computer skills-SAP, focus and TallyERP, looking for suitable position. Contact 99146724

CA with 3.5 yrs Big4 experience in Audit & Taxation seeking suitable placement. Contact 91142194 Email thenujose@gmail.com

Sr Accountant/Accountant. 10 years Oman experience. Knowledge of Tally' Focus. Contact 96678594

Indian 23 year old MBA graduate with 2 years experience in Accounts with additional qualification of Mcom looking for Accountant job in Oman..Contact +968 78654381 Email: ibruhim@gmail.com

Experienced finance professional with expertise in VAT, Financial Reporting, Account Payables, Account Receivables, & managing overseas export business dealings, looking for a suitable position. Available for immediate join. Contact 72771843 Email msahammed@gmail.com

Indian male 2 years experienced in accounts, administration and sales seeking for suitable job oppurtunities. Contact 78674856. Email: muhammedrafidvp@gmail.com

Sr. Accountant Indian male B. Com 11 years accounts experience in Oman. Can handle accounts independently, valid D/L, immediate joining with NOC or Transfer. Contact 7809 4016 Email: bilalsagh@gmail.com

Bachelor Degree with 7 years of experience in the Accounting & Purchasing field with Omani D/L seeks suitable job, Presently in Oman & can join immediately. Contact 968 79399509 Email:suheb.a27@gmail.com

Indian, 13 years Accounts experience in Oman seeks suitable position. Contact 96496435

MBA with 7 yrs experience in Accounts, accounts receivable, accounts payable, reconcilition, software like Sage ERP50 & Tally ERP 9. Contact 79202456. Email: shariffmunsk786@gmail.com

Accountant, MBA-Finance with more than 4 yrs Experience .Good working Knowledge in SAP software & Advanced Excel. Visa expires on 12 Jan 2022 seeking suitable position. Contact +968 92706965 Gmail: ranjuvettom@gmail.com

Senior Accountant, Indian male, 15 years experience in Oman with D/L & NOC. Contact 9117 2545, Email poovathanickal@gmail.com

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Female 9 yrs exp as Cabin Crew Head/Supervisor 1 yr exp secretary (Oman) currently Marketing Specialist, seeking job - Secretary /Manager etc can join ASAP. Contact 98190105. Email: ashurobin215@gmail.com

Indian male graduate Executive Secretary with Stenography/Oman driving license and 20years experience in Muscat available with NOC for immediate joining. # 79256679

Sudanese legal consultant, Master degree for international law with 4 years experience seeks suitable placement. Contact 93649411

Indian Male, MBA, B.Com having 7 yr Oman & 4 yr India experience in HR / Administration & Accounts looking for suitable placement. Contact 97914340. Email: sampathrajkv@gmail.com

Indian HR-professional 8.5yrs Oman Exp (HR/SAP/Payroll/Admin-overall 14year-Exp) with Oman DL & NOC. Seeking openings in Human Resource & Admin jobs. Contact: +91 9544984757 (Whats App +968-94129291) Email: rkkambat@gmail.com

ARCHITECT

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Indian male MCA, 6+ yrs experienece IT admin, ERP admin, website application (NET/PHP). Contact 78668657

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Quantity surveyor, (Srilankan) BSc QS (R) 4 yrs experience (Oman & SL). Looking for a suitable placement in Oman. Contact +968 78149384 Email: tmsafnas@gmail.com

Srilanka male Quantity Surveyor (Mep, oil & gas) having 6 years gulf (Oman, Qatar) experience now looking job Oman. Contact 0094777001136 Email: thameemrifnas@gmail

BE Civil Engineer with 12+ years of experience in building construction with valid Oman DL, looking for suitable placement. Contact 77383819

BE Civil, MSc Construction Management Indian male looking for suitable job in Muscat. Having Engineer Visa & Valid Oman D/L. Contact 79807302. Email: mohammedsaad.saad7@gmail.com

Electrical eng 10 years experience in projects, QA/QC, O&M, PMP holder, OQ approved, D/L, looking for job , Contact 71543379

Master of Eng.(M.E) Structural Engineer with 2 + years of international Exp. (U.K) as Structural Design Engr. seeks suitable position. Currently in Oman & ready to join. Contact 99646892 Email: musabshehzaar@gmail com

24 year Civil engineer with draftsman, 6 month experience in India looking for suitable job. On family visa. Contact 94212550

Approved DCRP protection engineer level 4, BSc of Electrical Engineering, seeks a full or part time job. Contact 96670117

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

HVAC Engineer/MEP coordinator, BE Mechanical Engineering, having 10+ years of experience including 7+ years in Oman. Efficient in design,BOQ, project follow up, valid Omani D/L. Seeking suitable placement, NOC available. Contact 78230713

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B.Tech Civil Engineer, experienced in construction of residential and commercial buildings, Quantity Surveying and 3d designing. Seeking for suitable placement. Contact 79038416

EDUCATION

M.Tech qualified, with 3 yrs experience as Teacher/Lecturer, looking for a suitable placement. Contact 79926101, Whatsapp +91 9995366101 Email: afroossahanaa@gmail.com

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

Indian Female having Master Degree in Physics looking for suitable Job. Contact 95256323

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Quantity Surveyor
Srilankan Male Quantity Surveyor (BSc QS (Hons) reading) with 4 years of Civil & ID experience in Oman. Looking for a job.
Contact: 92187572
Email: sifathhasan1995@gmail.com

Omani Statistical
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Email:Radhiyaalkharusi24@gmail.com
Phone No: 00968-93987544

ENGINEER
BE Electronics & Communication Indian Male looking for a suitable job in Oman. Presently in Oman.
Contact 78644119
E-mail: terancefranklin25@gmail.com

ENGINEER
Mechanical Engineer, & Graduate Marine Engineer Indian male, 36 year old, having an experience of 12 years. Presently in Oman, having Oman D/L seeks suitable placement in Oman.
Contact: 95476011
Email: noblesimon1985@gmail.com

RETAIL- ADMINISTRATION
Indian - 10 yrs of experience in retail, health care & telecomm as Administration, Sales & Marketing. Work experience with: Joyalukkas India Pvt ltd, Aster DM Healthcare, Reliance JIO Infocomm ltd. International License & Medical done.
Contact no: 78621939
E-mail: suhailkmuhammed00@gmail.com

MECHANICAL ENGINEER
Indian, 23, (B.E Mechanical), fresher PG Diploma in Oil and Gas Piping and Pipeline, QA/QC, NDT, looking for suitable job.
Contact: 79056363, 99501396
Email: rejiakhil111@gmail.com

OMANI HSE
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Contact +968 95555865

ADMIN/FINANCE
33 year Female MBA with valid Omani D/L seeks placement in Admin/Finance or Marketing.
Contact: 96711850
Email: snehalturn06@gmail.com

Business Unit Head
15+ years of experience in Sales,Marketing and Operations worked for a well renowned Trading Company for (ELV & Electrical Products) in Oman, experience in developing Product Market for Projects and Retail Business, looking for a suitable job change.
Contact: 9364 3218

Senior Accountant
Indian male M. Com with PG in computers, working as Senior Accountant in Oman with over 12 years with advanced knowledge in MS Dynamics, ODDO, Tally Erp/Prime (Tally customising with developer), looking for suitable position.
Contact on +96871551938

FINANCE
Sr Accountant/ Chief Accountant (Male). 15+ years of experience in Oman. Having Good Experience in Finance and Supply Chain also have great knowledge in Finalization ,Stock Audit , Various Accounts Packages, etc. Looking for Suitable Position. Having Valid Oman D/L.
Contact +968 79830539
Email : justmailshaik75@gmail.com

ENGINEER
Indian Male, 42 yrs, B Tech Graduate, 15+ years gulf experience in Civil construction field. In an excellent grade construction and Trading Company with good Knowledge is looking for suitable opening. Valid D/L, NOC Available.
Contact 98032824, peer.ktr@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION
More than 22 years of experience, Indian, Male, having bachelor's degree seeking suitable placement, having experience in Administration/ Document Control/IT, HR, and Finance Support, with valid Oman Driving Licence. NOC available.
Contact No. 99757759
Email: bijucchacko85@gmail.com

PROCUREMENT
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Contact 78599071
Email: sahaiv548@gmail.com

ACCOUNTS
Indian Male, 38yrs (age), 13 years of experience in accounts in Oman, Having D/L, NOC is available, Can join Immediately.
Contact No: 95920740,
Email ID: alhameed1527@gmail.com

FINANCE
B.Com ICWAI (Intermediate), 18+ years Finance/Accounts/Reporting/Credit Control/ Finalisation, Expd in MFG/Retail/Service Ind, Expd in ERP-Orion/Focus/JD Edwards/D/L, NOC available, can join immediately.
Mobile: 97634372

Finance & Accounts
Indian Female (MBA Finance) having more than 15 years of Experience in Oman in Manufacturing and Trading company seeks suitable Senior Position in Finance and Accounts.
Contact # 94953826 / 92824146

SENIOR MANAGER SUPPLY CHAIN
Indian Male with +25 years of Experience in Supply Chain, Purchase, Sales & Distribution, MIS, Inventory & Credit Control seeks placement.
CONTACT 94619442

English Teacher
Experienced English Teacher Bachelor's degree & Academic IELTS with a 6.5 +4 years of experience.
Contact: +968 99022926

Senior Manager (HR/Administration/Operations)
Indian male, 42, MBA, 12yrs' experience with international exposure. Having GCC experience. Also having Experience in the Education Industry (India). Presently in Muscat. D/L Available.
Contact: 94326527
Email: sreekanth.kerala987@gmail.com

OMANI HR/PRO
Omani, 15 yrs experience, PRO, Relation development, Labour & Crime law, HR & Time Management. Fluent in English, Arabic & Hindi seeks Part Time job.
Contact 97264447

FINANCE
MBA, Mcom, ICWA (inter) 21 years experience in Oman working as Manager in Business / Accounts / Finance / Operations. Looking for Senior positions in Business / Finance and Operations.
CONTACT: 96211885

JOB WANTED

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Bangladeshi driver with 8 yrs experience & NOC seeks job. Contact 90122947

Pakistani driver with 20 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 92091552

Bangladeshi driver with 3 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94256510

Bangaladeshi driver with 10 yrs experience seeks job. # 93539260

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94531675

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SALES/MARKETING

Indian male with 12 years experience in indoor sales within Oman & UAE looking for job, have valid D/L, ready to join immediately. Contact 91901852

Indian, graduate, 6 years experience in Sales and Marketing having valid Oman D/L, fluent in English, Hindi and Arabic. Presently in Oman, looking for immediate placement. Contact 78699300, Email: abidm0786@gmail.com

Indian male Senior Sales Executive with 9 years experience in Readymix company in Oman, having Oman DL. Seeking suitable placement. Contact 93415429 Email: alibvrm@gmail.com

Indian, 7 years of experience as a FMCG Sales executive in Oman with Oman D/L, looking for suitable placement. Contact 91883131

33 yrs Male, MBA & 11+ yrs experience in Sales, Service, lead & Supervision (Automobiles & FMCG). With D/L (UAE) Contact 7862 2687

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

Indian Male, MBA-Marketing, 6 years Oman experience as Sales & Marketing Executive. Seeking suitable position. D/L available. Contact 94883005

Indian male experience in Sales and Marketing for 12 years with D/L looking for suitable placement. Contact 92085257"

Indian Male PG in Biotech. with 4 years experience in Insurance sales total 8 year exp. Looking For Sales Job, available in Oman. Contact 79015490

Indian male 30 B.com Having 7yrs on field experience in Inventory, operation assistant & Sales Executive DL & NOC available. Contact 97855282 Email: natique.ahmed91@gmail.com

LIFESTYLE

SMART SENSOR-EQUIPPED CHAIR MAY AID IN REDUCING BACK PAIN IN OFFICE WORKERS

A team of researchers at the Tohoku University have a new prediction method that employs pressure sensors installed on a conventional office chair.

The study has been published in the 'Frontiers in Physiology Journal'.

Low back pain (LBP) is no stranger to office workers. In Japan, 1 out of 10 otherwise healthy office workers suffer from LBP. Stretching and exercise help alleviate the pain, but workers often do this when it is too late. But what if our chairs could alert us before the pain worsens?

The "smart chairs" sensors detect workers' movements on the chair dynamically and quantitatively.

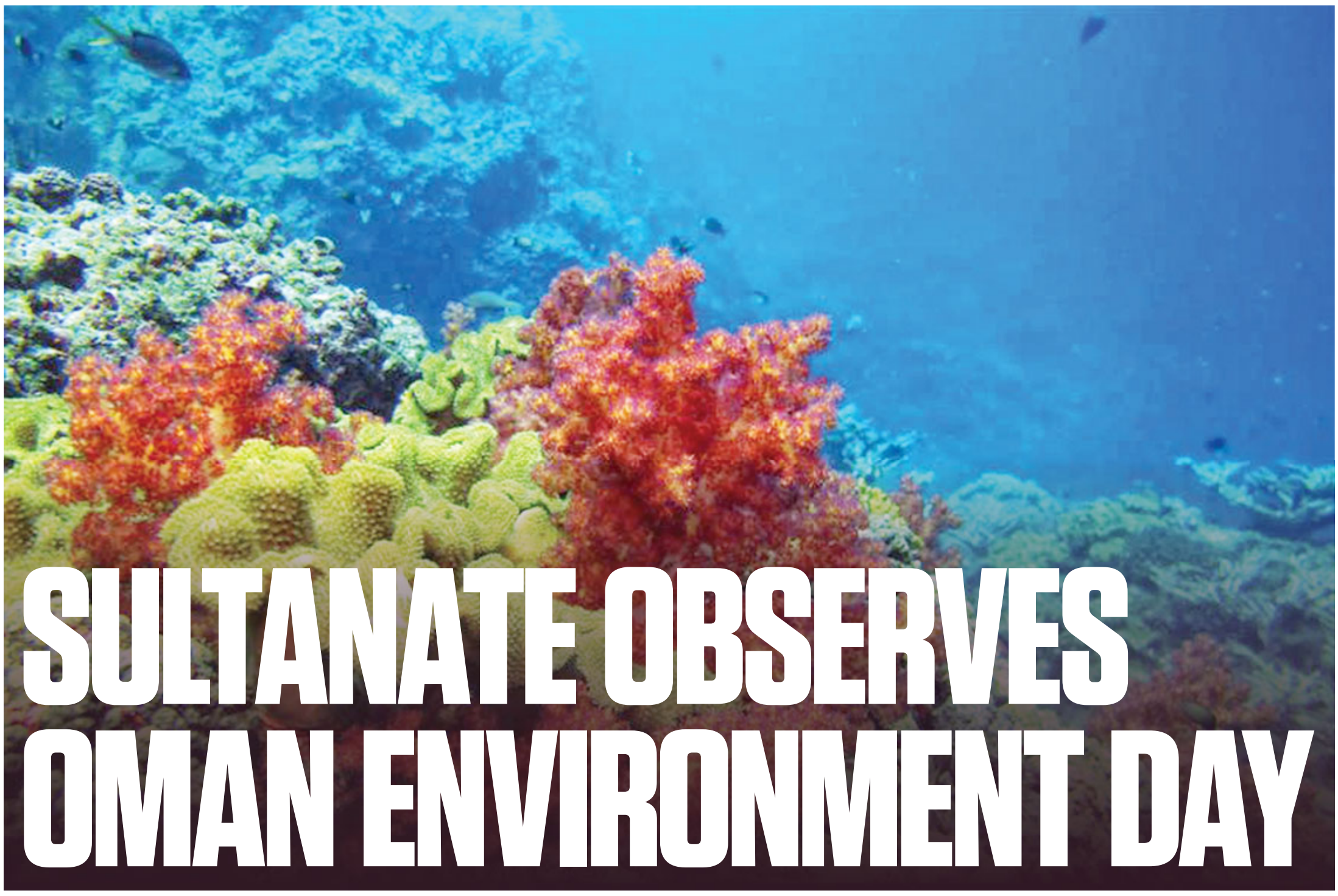
The smart chair was tested in a real-life setting outside of the lab. Amassing data from 22 study participants over a period of three months, the research group combed through the information to investigate the dynamics of sitting behaviour and identify a predictable lower back pain (LBP) progression.

Further aided by various machine learning methods, the researchers discovered a common motif present in the sitting behaviour of most participants. They pinpointed small motions in the body trunk that prevented the fixation of vertebral joints, therefore avoiding LBP's progression. The frequency of this motif could be used to predict the worsening of LBP throughout the day when compared to a morning reference state.

The research group hopes to apply the technology to other areas of the body.

"Although the current method focused on LBP, we hope to collect data relating to head and neck regions to be able to predict and prevent stiff necks and headaches," said paper co-author Ryoichi Nagatomi. - ANI

FEATURE



SULTANATE OBSERVES OMAN ENVIRONMENT DAY

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman celebrated the "Oman Environment Day", which falls on January 8 annually, as part of its commitment to participate in global efforts to preserve environmental resources.

During the past two years, Sultan Qaboos University, represented by the Centre for Environmental Studies and Research, was able to provide innovative financing projects related to ways of adaptation and mitigation of climate change from the United Nations Green Climate Fund.

Prof. Dr. Yassin bin Abdul Rahman Al Sharabi, Director of the Centre said: "Sultan Qaboos University has contributed, for more than three decades, to providing innovative knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of sustainable development in society, and to increasing public awareness of the importance of nature conservation, and providing the scientific basis for decision-making. Informed to preserve the components of the Omani environment."

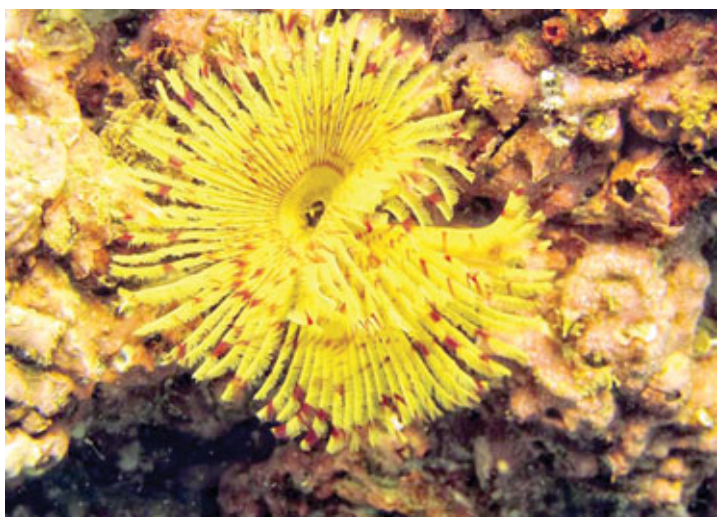
On the most important research projects carried out by the Centre over the past years and the role of this research at the university and community levels, Al-Sharabi stated: "The Center for Environmental Studies and Research has attracted, during the period from 2017-2021, many consultancies funded by international and national institutions, most notably: The Preparedness Project Climate change funded by the United Nations Green Climate Fund, the Interactive Environmental Atlas and Oman Bird Database project funded by the Diwan of Royal Court, the Urban Development and Comprehensive Transport Plan project funded by the former Supreme Council for Planning, and the National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy Project: 2020 - 2040 funded From the Civil Aviation Authority, and the research chair of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn."

Prof. Al-Sharabi touched on future plans and the projects that received approvals from the Green Climate Fund. The first project relates to preparing a national adaptation plan to counter the negative effects of climate change. This project aims to enhance the implementation of adaptation components in the National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change 2020-2040. By integrating adaptation into Oman's development planning, creating low-carbon and climate-resilient priorities, projects and transition pathways, the National Adaptation Plan will also build a national system for developing climate projects that will help Oman mobilize domestic funds (public and private) access to climate finance from international funds; To implement flexible and climate-resistant tracks.

He indicated that the second project is to prepare a strategy for the development of sustainable and low-carbon transportation in the Sultanate of Oman. The complex characteristics and interrelationships of the transport sectors in the Sultanate with the rest of the economic sectors need a paradigm shift and an innovative strategy to achieve higher outcomes and impacts for sustainable and low-carbon transport.

The Sultan Qaboos University, represented by the Centre for Environmental Studies and Research, was able to provide innovative financing projects related to ways of adaptation and mitigation of climate change from the United Nations Green Climate Fund.

The Sultanate of Oman's goal through the implementation of this project is to develop a national strategy that lays down the structure and action plans with practical policies to ensure a smooth transition to sustainable and carbon-free transport, and the sustainable and low-carbon transport strategy to be developed with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and funded by the Green Climate Fund is an element Critical to the government's efforts to address energy efficiency, and its conservation as defined in the Sultanate's National Program with the Green Climate Fund and Oman 2040 Vision.



ROUND-UP

New mobile app-based instant account opening service unveiled by ahlibank

ahlibank has structured the instant account opening app to project its ideals of digitisation and enhance avenues for customers who are looking to conduct their banking transactions from the comfort of their individual space

MUSCAT: Complementing the ongoing global digitisation process and meeting the growing demand for 'instant' banking practices, ahlibank has introduced a new mobile app-based account opening service where all new-to-bank customers can open an account just within one minute.

Having demonstrated its intent to forge ahead as a vibrant and innovative bank of choice for people who desire personal banking experience, ahlibank has structured the instant account opening app to project its ideals of digitisation and enhance avenues for customers who are looking to conduct their banking transactions from the comfort of their individual space. The new facility also upholds the value it places on providing round-the-clock service to its customers.

Commenting on the merits of the new mobile app, Muneer Ahmed Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, "Digitalisation is the need of the hour and, at ahlibank, we have well realised the importance of constantly upgrading our services to stay abreast with the global banking industry.

"The new service will enhance the level of service we provide, and will also help in exceeding the expectations of our customers. Through this service we intend to reach out to all our potential customers, assuring them of our ongoing endeavours to create and implement innovative solutions for their ever-changing requirements."

"Over the years, we have demonstrated our single-minded commitment to customer service, and continue to pursue the same with innovative solutions and exclusive services. We rely on customer feedback for positive growth and have a team of professionals who constantly assess market requirements and propose developmental plans that put us in the driving seat. Today, we are proud of our credentials as the fastest growing bank in Oman and are confident that our offers of distinctive and timely banking services and products will propel us to greater heights."

The instant account opening the mobile app is all about introducing a much-needed sense of ease and comfort. Customers can now open their savings account by simply registering their details; this is further simplified by scanning the ID card from the front and backside, and by taking a selfie with one's mobile phone to document the identity of the account holder. For residents and expatriates, the app would also ask for verification of the ID card (both sides), along with their passports. Following the registration process, the savings account will be created and activated instantly.

Hassan Al Zaabi, Head – Digital Channels, ahlibank, said, "The new app will help us consolidate our vision of becoming an unrivalled institution of proactive customer service. The add-on of 'instant' to the account opening service is an expression of our ongoing venture to add ease into everyday banking procedures. And yes, we are on track to realise our digitisation dream and are resilient to the market needs and demands."

New to bank customers need only to download the ahlibank mobile app from respective stores to instantly open their savings account and access all the services and facilities embedded in the app. Through the app, customers will be able to manage their accounts and cards more easily. Besides, the app also allows customers to access their account statements, make local transfers, conduct banking transactions and pay utility bills.

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

CX-9: Mazda's favourite family SUV

MUSCAT: Mazda CX-9: Love the driving experience and appreciate the service experience. That's what Basim Mohammed Al Zadjali, who bought the Mazda CX-9 from Towell Auto Centre; Mazda Salalah showroom had to say after his 3 months experience with a Mazda.

"Be ready to turn heads as you take Mazda CX-9 on the road?" he said while expressing his joy driving and getting the spotlight with his new turbocharged Mazda CX-9.

Being one of the sleekest, sportiest, and most stylish 7 seater SUVs in the market, Mazda CX-9 offers a comfortable driving experience worth remembering.

Basim Mohammed Al Zadjali, also shared that he had always wanted to own a Mazda CX-9 and is using it daily as a family car.

Mazda CX-9 is a great family 7 seater SUV that offers the pleasure of a great drive, Extra space with more wheelbase, Extra Power from the TurboCharged engine, Added safety with Mazda iActivesence safety package and fuel economy without compromising on space or power.

"What I like most about Mazda CX-9 is its style, interior space, safety features, and affordable price," said Basim.

Impressed by its bold look & luxurious interior, Basim shared that he also loved the driving experience of CX-9 and that the vehicle has got everything he needs. Also, during the 3 month's driving experience of his dream car, Basim got it serviced at TAC's service centres in Salalah as well as Barka.

According to Basim, he had a great experience at TAC's service centres. He says that TAC sales & service teams were extremely professional and super helpful along the way in each and every process and shared all the details and information he required.

is recognised as a trusted name in customer service and a pioneer in the automobile business since 1972. A group company of the W J Towell Group, TAC takes off from the principle of its parent company and ensures the easy availability of high-quality motor products coupled with the highest standard of service to its esteemed customers.

Mazda has brought quality to the roads of Oman, and TAC has made owning a Mazda an absolute joy, thanks to their excellent after-sales service, availability of genuine parts for all Mazda models, their efficient staff and innovative solutions for a better customer experience.

ASSOCIATION

Aster to be present in Salalah through partnership with Maxcare hospitals

SALALAH: Aster DM Healthcare, one of the most sought after medical providers in Oman and India, announced its plans to be present in Salalah through a tie-up with Maxcare Hospitals.

With this new association, Aster would be able to offer a specialised medical programme to the population of the Dhofar region and hence serve the current and new patients in Salalah who currently are travelling to Muscat and India.

Tie up with Maxcare is a mutually beneficially association to both parties as it will help Maxcare to get supported by the largest network of clinicians and other medical personnel, and opportunity for Maxcare staff to get trained along with one of the best healthcare providers.

For Aster, it reiterates its 35th foundation day promise that Care is Just an Aster Away.

Through this association, Aster shall offer services in Gastroenterology, advanced GI surgery, Urology, Orthopaedics and tertiary care services.

Patients who require medical services in India would be given special assistance and logistical support for availing services through the Maxcare hospital team under the guidance of Aster DM Healthcare.

"With the signing of this new association in Salalah the access to advance healthcare by citizens and residents of Dhofar region would be much easier as senior Doctors from Aster Mims and Aster Medcity shall be regularly visiting Maxcare Hospital," said Farhan Yaseen, Regional Director for Aster Kerala and Oman Clusters.

"We are delighted to get associated with Aster DM healthcare which will bring the healthcare closer to people who need it in Dhofar. This strategic alliance will enhance the private sector Healthcare in Dhofar and should promote medical tourism to Dhofar from neighbouring countries," said Eng. Abdul Rahman Borham Chairman Maxcare Hospital Salalah.

"This association with bringing the synergy of latest Infrastructure in Oman with senior consultants from India and Oman to provide specialised medical support in Salalah," said Dr Ashik Sainu, Medical director Aster Oman.

"With this association Aster with its network of four hospitals and seven medical centres offers its clinical expertise to Dhofar region in addition to its presence in Muscat, Sohar and Ibri," said Dr Ashendu Pandey CEO Aster Oman.

"We aim to adapt the latest digital platforms to enhance the patient experience; a collaboration of clinicians, eLearning and CME," said Dr Shinoop Raj, COO Aster Muscat region while concluding the meet.

SPONSORSHIP

Sohar Aluminium joins hands with Al Mouj Muscat Marathon

MUSCAT: In line with its endeavour to support an active lifestyle amongst the youth, Sohar Aluminium has joined forces with the upcoming Al Mouj Muscat Marathon to inspire the next generation of athletes.

There has been an overwhelmingly positive response from the youth looking to take the first steps towards a healthy and active lifestyle when Oman's biggest race returns on 11-12 February 2022 and Sohar Aluminium has been promoting the race within the community in Sohar.

Engineer Said bin Mohammed Al Masoudi, CEO of Sohar Aluminium, said, "Our sponsorship of this important event stems from our belief, as a leading company, in the importance of supporting national and international events that contribute to strengthening the Sultanate of Oman's position on the map of global sporting events. It is an opportunity to share and exchange sports and health values and best practices that promote a healthy lifestyle among members of society."

The 2022 Al Mouj Muscat Marathon includes three races designed specifically for kids, with the option of 1km designed for children between 7-8 years old, 2km for those aged 9-10 and a 3km race for 11- and 12-year-olds. Every participant will experience the same incredible atmosphere as the adults, receiving an official time, a T-shirt and a medal at the finishing line.

The event has also been popular with teams of runners from several of Oman's corporates. The Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is a great way to bond as a team by training together, motivating each other and accomplishing an incredible feat as a group. SA employees will be participating in this event across the various categories. In addition to the Kids' races, there is also a full marathon, half marathon, 10km and 5km race available to participants over the age of 12. Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is the most popular and premier event in Oman's sporting calendar.

ROUND-UP

Exclusive benefits across Toyota range

Toyota has some of the most dependable and trusted vehicles in its range

MUSCAT: Toyota is offering a fantastic opportunity to customers to start the new year with their dream Toyota and benefit with exclusive offers.

Toyota has some of the most dependable and trusted vehicles in its range. Owning a Toyota is always one of the most beneficial and fulfilling experiences one can enjoy.

On a new Toyota, customers can benefit with Service 2 Years/20,000 km, 5 Years/50,000 km (On LC200 4.6 & 5.7 models only) and 8 Years/80,000 km (On Corolla 1.8 HEV Only) (Whichever is earlier), 1 Year Insurance Or Cash Gift instead of Insurance RO 125 to RO 450. The campaign is valid until 9th March 2022. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details.

In Oman, the Toyota range includes sedans like the Yaris. The Yaris sedan with a choice of 1.3-Litre and 1.5-Litre engines delivers a dynamic driving experience. It is equipped with 15" Alloy Wheels, Daytime Running Lights, Smart Entry & Push Button Start, Auto Air Conditioner and more.

The Toyota Corolla – the popular choice of people around the world has been developed from a driver and passenger's point of view first. The Corolla is also available in a Hybrid option.

The sleek and stylish Toyota Camry has been one of the bestsellers. Equipped with a range of exciting features, technology and more, the Camry is also available in 2.5L, 3.5L and Hybrid options.

The Toyota Avalon is a statement of luxury. It is equipped with a 3.5L V6 Engine, LED Headlamps with Adaptive Cornering Lamps, Premium Leather Seat Material, 9" Navigation System with 14 JBL Speakers, Head-Up Display, Toyota Safety Sense and more.

In the SUV range, customers can choose from the C-HR. The C-HR represents a leap forward in design, manufacturing and engineering for Toyota. The C-HR offers impressive fuel economy with 23.9 Kms/L as per GSO Conformity Certificate and carries a Hybrid battery warranty of 8 Years/160,000 Kms.

The Highlander offers an impressive fuel economy of 20 Kms/L (GLE Grade) & 19.3 Kms/L (LTD Grade) as per GSO Conformity Certificate and comes with 8 Years/160,000 Kms Hybrid Battery Warranty.

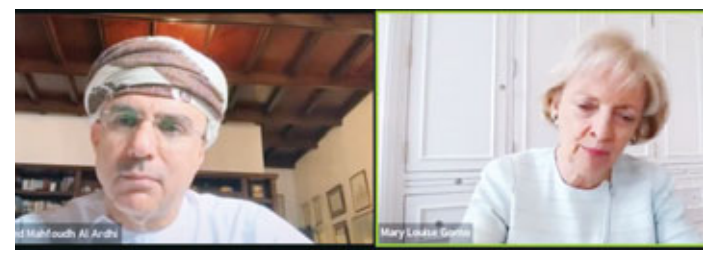
The sporty and stylish RAV4 ticks all the boxes when it comes to enjoying extraordinary moments.

The Fortuner is equipped with 4.0L, V6 Engine, 18" Alloy Wheels, LED Projector Headlamps with DRL, Navigation System, Power & Ventilated Driver & Front Passenger Seats, Power Back Door and more.

The powerful and capable Prado includes 4.0L, V6 Engine, LED Headlamps & Fog Lamp, 9" Navigation System, Ventilated Front Seats, Moonroof, Airbags: Driver + Front Passenger + Curtain + Side (Front) + Knee (Driver) and more.

The pride of the land – the Land Cruiser is a symbol of strength, durability and reliability. Rugged yet luxurious, the Land Cruiser delivers high-end performance and advanced off-roading capabilities and safety features.

VIEWPOINTS



Sohar International concludes 9th edition of Chairman's Forum

MUSCAT: Hosted by the Chairman of Sohar International, Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, Sohar International recently concluded its 9th virtual edition of Viewpoints. The latest session featured its distinguished guest speaker Mary Louise Gorno who is the Managing Director of Ingenuity International and specialises in organisational governance, succession planning, and managing leadership issues.

In line with the subject, "Step by Step: A Journey to Now", Gorno covered the different aspects of assuming a courageous leadership style in the corporate world and highlighted how it was instrumental in driving progress. She also enlightened the women participants on maintaining a balance between work and personal life and managing both diligently.

The virtual edition, which was live-streamed via Sohar International's YouTube channel and Zoom platform, saw the active participation of university students, industry leaders, C-suite executives and professionals from different sectors of society. As with previous editions, the 9th virtual edition of Viewpoints also proved to be a dynamic session where participants got the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogues with the speaker, and further develop their skill sets picking on global best practices.

Commenting on the session, Al Ardhi said, "As a bank that has played a pioneering role in contributing to the financial sector, we truly understand the importance of leading with courage. Through our endeavours, we constantly seek to encourage individuals to not just assume leadership roles but spearhead innovative projects that have the capacity to positively impact society at large.

The insights provided by Gorno were indeed enlightening, and we are certain that through inspiring sessions like these we will be able to create an empowered workforce that is self-motivated, reserves a progressive outlook and has the zeal to play an instrumental part in shaping the future of any organisation."

Passionate about empowering individuals, Gorno highlighted the various aspects of the journey towards becoming a leader. After a brief speech on her personal experiences and learnings, she answered a plethora of questions around career development, choices one needs to make as a leader, as well as the options available for young professionals to pursue leadership-oriented programmes. A high level of interest from the audience set the pace for the rest of the discussion, where the guest speaker pointed out that there is no right or wrong time to being a leader – preparation starts from Day 1 of one's professional journey.

In line with the same, Viewpoints – Sohar International's Chairman Forum has set a benchmark as a noble thought leadership initiative in the Sultanate and has been honoured with the coveted "OER Business Excellence Award" for creating a world-class knowledge platform, at the recent OER Business Summit 2021.

Over the years, Viewpoints has gained immense popularity as a dedicated platform where inspirational global leaders from different industries and sectors share their experiences, knowledge and ideas with a cross-section of Omani society. Through its informative sessions, Viewpoints has been injecting global best practices in the local market while encouraging individuals to think critically and continuously develop their abilities. Through thoughtful, community-driven endeavours like these Sohar International has also contributed to enhancing the entrepreneurial landscape in the country while fuelling socio-economic change.

PARTNERSHIP

ABQ Education Group to sponsor Al Mouj Muscat Marathon

MUSCAT: ABQ Education Group has confirmed a strategic partnership with Sabco Sports to sponsor the kids' 1km, 2km, and 3km races at the upcoming edition of the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon, which takes place over the weekend of 11-12 February 2022.

The most popular event on the national sporting calendar and Oman's biggest race, Al Mouj Muscat Marathon aims to inspire and foster healthy lifestyle habits in all participants, especially children.

"We are delighted to extend our partnership with the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon for another year as it enables us to promote healthy choices whilst encouraging the vitality and celebrating the spirit of the city," said Humayun Kabir, Chief Executive Officer, ABQ Education Group. "We believe that physical health is as important as mental health and want to inspire the community to live healthily and pursue active lifestyles, starting at a young age with students."

"We are excited to have ABQ Education Group come on board as a key sponsor of the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon 2022, as well as being the race category sponsor of the kids' races. ABQ is an esteemed name in the Sultanate and this partnership is built on a shared commitment to elevating the health and well-being of children," says Nic Cartwright, Managing Director of Sabco Sports.

One of the most popular features of the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon, the kids' races has always drawn a large number of youngsters, with many participants travelling from across the country to take part. Along with the excitement of running the race, children enjoy the fun, cheerful atmosphere that the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon brings and experience the same thrill on race day as runners in the adult races, including receiving an event t-shirt and medal.

A total of 4,000 young runners are expected to participate across the three short-distance races. As part of ABQ Education Group's initiative to instil healthy habits in children from a young age, the organisation will be donating 300 kids' race tickets to government school students. The Al Mouj Muscat Marathon organisers, Sabco Sports, encourage inclusion and are working with the Ministry of Education and Oman School Sports Association to provide children with special needs the opportunity to also participate this year.

ABQ Education Group, a pioneering and iconic presence in the Omani private education sector, continues to shape the future with its revolutionary approach to learning.

HEALTHCARE

Aster Al Raffah Hospital Sohar launches Advanced NICU Center

MUSCAT: Aster Al Raffah Hospital Sohar launched Advanced NICU Center.

Farhan Yasin (Regional director Aster Oman - Kerala Cluster) inaugurated the centre in the presence of Dr Ashendu Pandey (Aster Oman CEO), Dr Ashik Sainu (Aster Oman Medical Director) recently.

With the extension of Neonatal Intensive Care, Aster Al Raffah Hospital Sohar is now capable of accommodating and treating more infants with advanced ventilators, warmers, phototherapy unit and specially trained doctors and staff thus giving them utmost care available.

Aster is now capable of accommodating and treating more infants

INVESTMENT RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

Malabar Gold regional head in Oman receives 10-year investor visa

MUSCAT: As part of the Investment Residency Programme announced by the Government of Oman, Najeeb K, Regional Head of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Oman received a 10-year investor visa from Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotions (MOCIIP), in the presence of Asila bint Salim Al Samsami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and top officials from ROP, in an event held at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion on January 9, 2022, in Oman.

Investment Residency Program offers long-term five- and 10-year renewable residence permits to investors in Oman.

"I am extremely humbled to be granted this coveted visa. It is a significant day for me, and I am grateful to the authorities of this great country for considering me and the leadership of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' for giving me the opportunity to lead the growth of the brand in Oman," commented Najeeb. K – Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Oman on the achievement.

Najeeb heads the operations in the Oman region of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, where he has been employed for the last 13+ years and is also a shareholder in the organisation. He has been residing in Oman for more than 11 years.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate. Established in 1993 in the Indian state of Kerala, Malabar Gold & Diamonds today has a strong retail network of over 260 outlets spread across ten countries, 14 wholesale units in addition to offices, design centres, and factories spread across India, the Middle East, Far East & USA. With an annual turnover of $4.51 billion, the company currently ranks one among the largest jewellery retailers globally and has over 4,000 shareholders 13,000 professionals working for its continued success.

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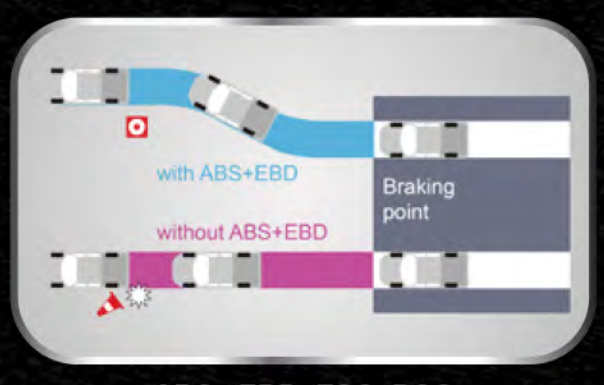

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