

18-MONTH TIMELINE FOR MUSCAT DUAL CARRIAGEWAY PROJECT
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HM SENDS CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT OF CHILE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Gabriel Boric of the Republic of Chile on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and best wishes to the president and his country's people. **-ONA**



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YEARS OF PROGRESS

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NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANT

More organ donors come forward with increasing awareness in Oman

MUSCAT: Organ donation is more important than many of us realise—for society and for the individuals it directly affects. For some people with end-stage organ failure, it is truly a matter of life and death.

Increasing awareness
Presiding over the national programme for organ transplant, Dr. Ahmed bin Said Al Busaidi, Supervisor of the National Organ Trans-



plant Programme at the Ministry of Health, said, “We witness increasing awareness on donation of organs and an increasing num-

ber of people registering through ‘Shifa Application’ for donation of organs following death, which is something very positive. We are working on analysing details of the donors.”

He said the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Health, stresses the necessity of advancing and regulating organ transplant operations and producing a qualified national medical cadre to offer such services. **>A2**

HM ARRIVES IN LONDON TO OFFER CONDOLENCES

HM was received by a representative of the British Monarch and members of the Sultanate’s embassy



LONDON: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived here on Friday on a several-day visit during which His Majesty the Sultan will offer sincere condolences on the death of Queen Elizabeth II and his congratulations to His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth on his accession to the throne.

On his arrival at Stansted Airport, His Majesty the Sultan was received by a representative of the British Monarch and members of the Sultanate’s embassy in the United Kingdom.

His Majesty the Sultan is accompanied during the visit by Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of the Royal Court and sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs. **-ONA** See also **>A5**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Al Express plane fire was doused in 90 seconds

1 The Fire and Rescue team at Muscat International Airport put out a fire that broke out in the Air India Express plane last week, within 90 seconds. “A proud morning salute to the Muscat International Airport’s Fire and Rescue team for their outstanding performance in responding, in only 90 seconds, and extinguishing an engine fire on an aircraft last week”, Oman Airports said in a statement on Saturday. **>A3**

WORLD

Cheetahs back in India after 7 decades

2 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday released eight cheetahs into Madhya Pradesh’s Kuno National Park. PM Modi released two cheetahs from enclosure number one. **>A7**

MARKET

MSX rules stronger than GCC peers

3 Oman’s benchmark Muscat Securities Exchange (MSX) continued to maintain a stronger profile than its regional counterparts, according to an industry expert. **>B1**

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TIMINGS



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Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:38am

2-year-old undergoes rare liver transplant

The girl underwent a rare liver transplant called auxiliary partial liver transplant, as in such cases the patient's liver is only partially removed



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The transplant team at the Royal Hospital performed an emergency liver transplant on a two-year-old girl with acute liver failure.

Since October last, 15 organ transplants have been performed in the Sultanate of Oman, including eight liver transplants, seven kidney transplants, including two children who received the organ from a brain-deceased donor in March.

The little girl, Hawraa, arrived at the hospital with fever, lethargy and severe liver failure, which required her to stay in the intensive care unit for children. Soon other organs too began to show signs of failure following which the medical staff had to intervene quickly, first, to raise her blood pressure and then, start dialysis.

Hawraa's organ failure, however, did not show any slowdown

The girl was able to regain her health, thanks to her aunt who did not hesitate to part with a portion of her liver, and of course, the will of little Hawraa to fight against all odds, all the while dependent on respirators, dialysis and intravenous drugs

and it became clear that liver transplant remained the only life-line for her.

Her aunt consented to donate her liver and very soon tests were conducted on her. Meanwhile, the Indian support team for liver transplant, headed by world-renowned surgeon Professor Sham-

suddin Mohamed Rela arrived.

All the medical, including surgical and support teams worked with the paediatric intensive care personnel for hours to prepare Hawraa for the liver transplant.

But before they could begin their work, little Hawraa began to

sink. But the doctors were not the ones to give in without a fight and summoned the central blood bank with supplies of blood in case the blood loss required transfusion.

Finally, her aunt donated a part of her liver to save Hawraa's life. Hawraa underwent a rare liver transplant called auxiliary partial liver transplant, as in such cases the patient's liver is only partially removed. Such interventions are performed at selected centers in the world.

Within a few weeks, Hawraa was able to regain her health, thanks to her aunt who did not hesitate to part with a portion of her liver, and of course, the will of little Hawraa to fight against all odds, all the while dependent on respirators, dialysis and intravenous drugs to raise her blood pressure.

His Majesty sends written message to UAE President



MEETING: The message was handed over by His Highness Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al Said, Special Envoy of His Majesty the Sultan when Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed received him at Qasr Al Shati Palace in Abu Dhabi. - Credit

ABU DHABI: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The message deals with the distinguished relations binding the two countries and matters of common interest.

The message was handed over by His Highness Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al Said, Special Envoy of His Majesty the Sultan when Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed received him at Qasr Al Shati Palace in Abu Dhabi on Thursday.

During the meeting, His Highness Sayyid Fatik conveyed greet-

ings and best wishes of His Majesty the Sultan to Sheik Mohammed and the Emirati people.

Best wishes

In his turn, the UAE President asked Sayyid Fatik to convey his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and wellbeing to His Majesty the Sultan. The UAE President also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Dr. Ahmed bin Hilal Al Bussaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Arab Emirates. -ONA

SHABAB OMAN II ARRIVES IN MALTA

The Royal Navy of Oman ship (Shabab Oman II) arrived at the port of Valletta in the Republic of Malta on Friday as part of its sixth international voyage. The ship through its sixth international voyage, continues to extend the bond of friendship and brotherhood between the Sultanate of Oman and various countries of the world. -ONA



ORGAN DONATIONS

< FROM

A1 Rights and safety of donors

He also laid stress on developing other services during such medical interventions.

The Ministry is also working on reviewing and updating laws, regulations and a code of ethics that guarantee the rights and safety of donors and patients alike, he said.

He said the establishment of Oman Centre for Organ Transplantation is clear evidence of the His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik's concern for the growth of this branch of medicine, adding that the centre represents a qualitative shift in the development of the national programme for organ transplantation.

The Ministerial Decision issued by the Ministry of Health last March on the initiation of the national programme regu-



lating transplant of organs and human tissues aims to develop this service through completion of all components of the programme, including dissemination of awareness among all sectors of the society on the significance of donating organs before or after

death, he said. The decision also aims to set up treatment and clinical therapy protocols along with establishment of a database, including registration of all patients who require organ transplant and their registration in a common national waiting list. -ONA



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AI Express plane fire was doused in just 90 seconds

There were no major injuries reported except minor bruises to some passengers sustained during evacuation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Fire and Rescue team at Muscat International Airport managed to extinguish a fire that broke out in the Air India Express aircraft last week, within 90 seconds.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Oman Airports said: "A proud morning salute to the Muscat International Airport's Fire and Rescue team for their outstanding performance in responding, in only 90 seconds, and extinguishing an engine fire on an aircraft last week."

Some passengers suffered minor injuries during an evacuation operation after smoke started billowing out of an Air India Express flight at Muscat International Airport on Wednesday morning.

Smoke
The aircraft was taxiing towards the runway for take-off to Kochi at 11.20 am on Wednesday when officials noticed smoke coming out from the aircraft.
Airport officials said the passengers were immediately evacuated from the Air India Express

flight on slides and the fire was brought under control.
"However, there was no fire warning indication in the cockpit. As a matter of abundant precaution, and following the prescribed SOPs, the crew stopped on the taxiway and activated the on-board engine fire extinguishers. Thereafter, the passengers were evacuated from the aircraft. Full support was extended by Muscat Airport authorities and the passengers were brought to the terminal building," the airline said.
"There were no major injuries reported except minor bruises to some passengers sustained during evacuation. The matter is being investigated by the regulatory authorities and also the Airline's Flight Safety Department," the airline said. Later a relief flight was sent to bring back the passengers to Kochi.



مشروع ازدواجية طريق المرتفعة (المرحلة الثانية)

TO CUT TRAFFIC CONGESTION: The project will reduce the ever-increasing traffic congestion on the road.

18-month timeline for Muscat dual carriageway work

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To reduce traffic congestion, the Muscat Municipality, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, will begin work to make the road extending from Muaskar Al Murtafa Roundabout to the intersection of Sultan Qaboos University a dual carriageway, along with the construction of intersections and a system for drainage of surface water.
According to the municipality, the project is expected to be completed within 18 months and will reduce the ever-increasing traffic congestion on the road.
In a statement, the Muscat Municipality stated: "The municipality, in cooperation with

the Ministry of Defence, will start the implementation of the 'duallism' project of Al-Mawaleh Road, extending from Muaskar Al Murtafa Roundabout to the Armed Forces Hospital and then to the intersection of Sultan Qaboos University, raising the efficiency of the link between Al-Mawaleh intersection through the Armed Forces Hospital intersection to Muscat Expressway for a total length of 8 km."
"The project also includes the 'duallism' of Sultan Qaboos University Street to the existing traffic light intersection next to the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre, for a length of 1,200 metres," MM added.



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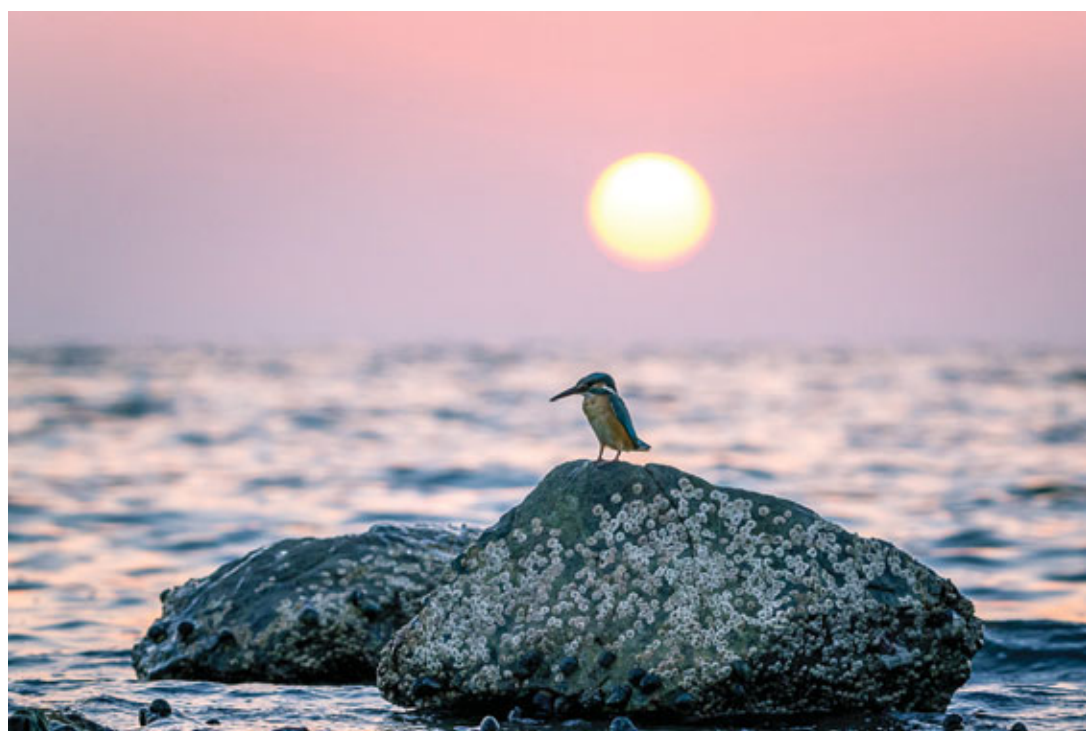
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BARR AL HIKMAN

PURE PROXIMITY TO NATURE



Located about 500 kilometres south of Muscat, Barr Al Hikman in Al Wusta Governorate is considered one of the most important bird migration stations both in Oman and the region. Many birds congregate here, especially water birds coming from as far as Siberia's northern shores. In addition to being a sanctuary for birds and fish of all kinds, the existence of coral reefs off its shores make it a favourite destination for divers. More than 1 million shorebirds flock to Barr Al Hikman and Masirah Island every year, according to experts.

No other word describes Barr Al Hikman better than 'magical'. Crystal clear teal waters, white sandy beaches, and the unadulterated view of infinite beauty provide visitors with the feeling of secluded beauty and a pure proximity to nature, which is invigorating. Barr Al Hikman is also famous for being a flight path for many birds that migrate from across the globe, and is, in fact, one of the few spots to view so many birds. You will not see any buildings here, just pure nature in its most beautiful form.



According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "Oman witnesses huge swarms of migratory birds during their seasonal journey between their nesting habitats and the places where they spend winters, especially those birds migrating from Europe and East Asia.

"Many birds, especially water fowl, migrate from faraway regions like northern Siberia, and travel about five thousand kilometres. Visitors can see many species of birds in each of Oman's different regions. Al Hikman Peninsula, Masirah Island, Al Wusta Governorate beaches, the Lagoons, the beaches and springs in Dhofar are ideal places for bird observation. Many of these species live in Dimaniyat Islands and in Musandam."





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HM in London to offer condolences



FUNCTIONS

OMSB

Oman Convention and Exhibitions Centre lines up more than 50 events in later part of the year

MUSCAT: Oman Convention and Exhibitions Centre (OCEC) is making preparations to host over fifty main events during the remaining period of the current year, several events of which will be managed by the events team of OCEC.

Saeed Al Shanfari, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Convention and Exhibitions Centre, said that for the rest of the year the OCEC would be hosting over fifty functions to enrich the events' season.

The events would see the presence of at least 300,000 people. He said that among the events comes Oman Tourism Forum on 27 and 28 September which would attract over 300 representatives of the Sultanate's tourism sector and ISEF (Middle East) Awards Ceremony on 29 September to honour the organisations offering high-level training programmes.

Oman Convention and Exhibitions Centre is expected to host over 1,000 participants during the latter event, he added.

The activities also include Oman Food Exhibition which serves most main sectors in the field of food industries and hospitality including local products and international exports and Oman International Health Conference and Exhibition from 26 to 28 Sep-



tember, he said.

He said that in October, the centre would organise events and festivals focusing on science, technology and innovation and other fields including agriculture and farming sector, fresh products and fashion exhibition.

He said that on 10 October, Al Nimr International Exhibition organisers will organise for three days "EduTraC Oman" Expo and

24 October would see organising Oman's International Construction Technology, Infrastructure and Building Materials Exhibition "the Project Oman 2022".

Oman Maritime Exhibition would be from 24 to 27 October and Oman Nights festival would be on 2 and 3 November which would see the presence of over 2,000 participants to enjoy the Omani music and culture and Muscat Art Festival from 2 and 4 November, he said.

FIFA World Cup

The 89th UFI Global Congress 2022 would be from 14 to 17 November with the participation of some 600 representatives from 510 countries, he said, adding that the centre would also host an activity for football fans for 21 days on Qatar's hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The centre would also organise Muscat International Jewellery Exhibition from 1 to 5 December and the Green Hydrogen Summit and Exhibition from 5 to 7 of the same month and Airports International Council (AIC) conference 2022 would be from 7 to 8 December and Oman Agro Food Exhibition would be on 11 December, he added. **-ONA**

Over 500 doctors take test for training

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 500 Omani male and female doctors took a test on Saturday to compete for entry into the 19 specialised training programmes at Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB).

"Today, 525 male and female physicians from different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman are taking a test to compete for admission to 19 specialised training programmes in the Omani Council for Medical Specialities for the academic year 2023/2024," according to the Oman News Agency.

The test consists of 160 multiple-choice questions, and it varies to include all specialised medical fields based on a pre-defined syllabus.

The admission test is held annually, and after taking the test and succeeding in it, the doctors applying to the council must pass in personal interviews for the specialised training programmes for final admission to the Oman Medical Specialty Board.

The assessment committee includes members of the educational committees and members of the teaching staff.

US President Joe Biden departs for UK to attend Queen Elizabeth's funeral

Biden and Jill will attend the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on September 19

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden departed for the UK to attend the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. The latter breathed her last on September 9.

In the morning, the President and the First Lady will leave the White House and reach Joint Base Andrews to depart for London. The departure from the South Lawn will be open press, read a White House press release. The President and the First Lady will pay respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Both of them will sign the Official Condolence Book for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the venue.

They will also attend a Reception hosted by His Majesty King Charles III.

Biden and Jill will attend the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on September 19 and depart for the US on the same day, said the release.

All heads of state visiting London for Queen Elizabeth's funeral have been invited to attend the lying-in-state in Westminster Hall ahead of Monday's state funeral and to sign a book of condolences at Lancaster House.

However, opening a fresh diplomatic rift with Beijing, a Chinese



government delegation has been refused permission by the House of Commons authorities to attend the queen's lying-in-state in Westminster Hall, London, Politico reported citing a senior parliamentary figure familiar with the matter.

People of the UK will relive the glorious life and legacy of Queen Elizabeth II at her state funeral on Monday.

For the funeral, many guests from political heads of countries to distinct royal family members and dignitaries from across the globe will fly to the UK.

Although the official guest list hasn't been released yet, New York Post has shared the names of a few countries that didn't make the cut. They are - Russia, Belarus, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Venezuela.

According to the online publica-

tion, Russian President Vladimir Putin wished King Charles III on his accession recently, however, the country was still snubbed by the UK as they reportedly didn't get an invite for the funeral.

It's also interesting to note here that North Korea, Iran, and Nicaragua were sent invites however those were only sent out to their ambassadorial representatives and not the head of state.

Another news that recently made rounds was that former US President Donald Trump would also be in attendance however, the UK government, according to New York Post, has squashed the rumour saying that only the sitting US President and his wife will be attending.

New York Post further reports that 750,000 people will be present

at the funeral.

More than USD 7 million (around INR 59 crores) will be shelled to beef up the security for the Queen's funeral on September 19.

According to New York Post, protecting Queen Elizabeth's funeral will be the most expensive single-day operation in UK history, costing over USD 7.5 million.

To secure the unprecedented number of foreign leaders, who are expected at the funeral on Monday, the British Mi5 and Mi6 intelligence agencies, London's Metropolitan Police, and the Secret Service will work together.

"This is the biggest policing operation that the United Kingdom policing has ever undertaken," New York Post quoted Simon Morgan, a former Royal security officer, as saying. **ANI**



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Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
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CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

MAR-A-LAGO SEARCH

US DOJ asks court to lift bar on viewing Trump's classified papers

WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department on Friday appealed a court ruling that temporarily blocked it from reviewing classified materials seized at former President Donald Trump's residence at Palm Beach, Florida.

Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence was searched by the FBI on August 8.



What did the Justice Department request?

The Justice Department said the circuit court should halt part of the lower court decision that prevents prosecutors from relying on the classified documents in their criminal investigation.

The department argued in its filing that the temporary halting of the reviews was impeding "the government's efforts to protect the nation's security."

"The government and the public would suffer irreparable harm absent a stay," it said.

The Justice Department also asked that senior US judge Raymond Dearie, a third party appointed to examine the records, not be permitted to review the materials. The government asked the appeals court to rule on the request "as soon as possible."

Judge denies requests

On Thursday, US District Judge Aileen Cannon rejected the same requests.

Earlier this month, Cannon directed the department to halt the examination of the records until a further court order or until the completion of a report of an independent arbiter.

Cannon appointed Dearie on Thursday as special master, directing him to prioritize classified documents and giving him a deadline until the end of November.

The judge was appointed to the bench in 2022 by Trump. Trump appointees make up six of the 11 active judges on the appeals court where the Justice Department made the filing.

Around 100 classified documents were recovered among the 11,000 records gathered from the FBI search of Trump's residence. **DW**

OVERCROWDED

Amsterdam's Schiphol airport to cut passenger numbers

AMSTERDAM: Amsterdam's Schiphol airport will reduce daily passenger numbers by 18% until the end of October due to a shortage of security guards, airport management said on Friday.

The airport has already reduced passenger numbers since July but now wants to cut it even further from 67,500 passengers taking off per day during September to 54,500 and from 69,500 in October to 57,500.

"The reduction is necessary to guarantee the safety of our passengers and employees," Hanne Buis, chief operating officer of the Royal Schiphol Group, said.

He admitted it was "bad news for passengers and airlines."

Dutch national carrier KLM, Schiphol's biggest user, said it was "disappointing" that the airport "will again be adopting these measures at such short notice."

"The measures will have far-



reaching consequences for our passengers, colleagues, and the national and international reputation of Schiphol and therefore KLM," the airline said.

Schiphol airport CEO steps down

Friday's announcement comes a day after airport chief executive Dick Benschop announced

his resignation.

"There is a lot of attention, and also criticism, for the way in which Schiphol is tackling the problems and for my responsibility as CEO," Benschop said in a statement on Thursday.

"I am making room on my own initiative to give Schiphol the space to make a new start," he said. **DW**

COOPERATION

South Africa and United States pledge further cooperation

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and South African counterpart Cyril Ramaphosa pledged to cooperate on health, security and climate on Friday, as the South African head of state visited the White House.

The visit comes weeks after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to South Africa and said that Washington sees African countries as "equal partners" in tackling global issues.

What did the two leaders say?

"We really need to make sure we fully understand one another," Biden said of South Africa. "Our partnership is essential."

Ramaphosa said he sought to work together on security, including in neighboring Mozambique, which has been grappling with an Islamist insurgency in its northern Cabo Delgado province. He



added that Washington had a "key" role to play in security in the continent. South Africa's president said he was thankful for the United States' "considerable support" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ramaphosa said that he also sought to cooperate with the US on climate change.

Following the meeting, the United States announced a South African-US investment advisory task force and \$45 million (€45 million) in funding towards the transition away from coal.

At last year's Glasgow climate conference, developed countries

pledged \$8.5 billion for South Africa's transition away from coal. South Africa and other developing countries have long demanded that wealthier countries bear the brunt of efforts to reduce emissions.

Differences on the war in Ukraine

South Africa, like many other countries on the continent, has been reluctant to support Western-led sanctions and resolutions against Russia.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, South Africa abstained in a UN General Assembly vote on condemning Moscow.

Ramaphosa told reporters that South Africa's position on the war in Ukraine was "respected" in Washington and that he and Biden agreed that they "would like this conflict to come to an end as soon as possible." **DW**

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WORLD



Cheetahs back in India after seven decades

The cheetahs were declared extinct from India in 1952 but eight cheetahs were brought from Namibia

SHEOPUR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday released eight cheetahs into Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park. PM Modi released two cheetahs from enclosure number one and after that about 70 meters away, from the second enclosure released another cheetah. The cheetahs were declared extinct from India in 1952 but today 8 cheetahs (5 females and 3 males) were brought from Africa's Namibia as part of 'Project Cheetah' and the government's efforts to revitalise and diversify the country's wildlife and habitat. The eight cheetahs were brought in a cargo aircraft in Gwalior as part of an inter-continental cheetah translocation project. Later, the Indian Air Force choppers carried the cheetahs to Kuno National Park from Gwalior Air Force Station. Radio collars have been installed in all the cheetahs to be



monitored through satellite. Apart from this, there is a dedicated monitoring team behind each cheetah who will be monitoring their location for 24 hours. Cheetahs have been brought under an MoU signed earlier this year. Cheetahs will help in the restoration of open forest and grassland ecosystems in India and will help conserve biodiversity and enhance the ecosystem services like water security, carbon sequestration and soil moisture conservation. Earlier, SP Yadav, Project Chee-

tah chief, "Cheetah is said to be the fastest animal. It runs at a speed of 100-120 km per hour. The habitat that has been selected in Kuno is very beautiful and ideal, where there are large grasslands, small hills, and forests and it is very suitable for cheetahs. Heavy security arrangements have been made in Kuno National Park. Arrangements have been done to prevent poaching activities." Under the ambitious Project Cheetah of the Indian government, the reintroduction of wild species particularly cheetah was

undertaken as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines. India has a long history of wildlife conservation. One of the most successful wildlife conservation ventures 'Project Tiger', which was initiated way back in 1972, has not only contributed to the conservation of tigers but also of the entire ecosystem. In continuation of this, the reintroduction of cheetahs is one step ahead and a milestone in the history of wildlife conservation in India. **ANI**

We want all this to end, says Putin to Modi referring to Ukraine conflict

SAMARKAND: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday told Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the SCO summit here that he knows about India's position on the Ukraine conflict and "we want all of this to end as soon as possible". "I know about your position on Ukraine conflict. I know about your concerns. We want all of this to end as soon as possible," Putin said. "But the other party, the leadership of Ukraine has claimed... that they refuse to engage in the negotiation process. They said they want to achieve their objectives, as they say, on the battlefield militarily. We will keep you abreast of everything that is happening over there," he added. Putin said that relations between Russia and India are in the nature of privileged strategic partnership and they continue to develop very rapidly. "We are actively engaging at international platforms. We are in discussion on international issues. Sometimes these issues are something that is not very good news..." he said. In his remarks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "today's era is not of war". "Today's era is not of war and I have spoken to you about it on the call. Today we will get the opportunity to talk about how we can progress on the path of peace. India,



Russia have stayed together with each other for several decades," PM Modi said. "We spoke several times on the phone about India-Russia bilateral relations and various issues. We should find ways to address the problems of food, fuel security and fertilizers. I want to thank Russia and Ukraine for helping us to evacuate our students from Ukraine," he added. Russia had launched a special military operation in Ukraine in February this year. Uzbekistan is the current chair of SCO 2022 whereas India will be the next chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping have congratulated India for the SCO Presidency in 2023 during the meeting of the expanded circle of the Heads of SCO. This is the first in-person SCO Summit after the Covid pandemic hit the world. The last in-person SCO Heads of State Summit was held in Bishkek in June 2019. **ANI**

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Ninety per cent Afghans support reopening of girls' schools

KABUL: About ninety per cent of voters in Afghanistan supported the reopening of schools for girls beyond grade six, and 10 per cent opposed the decision, as per an online poll conducted by Afghanistan's local media outlet TOLONews. This comes as the Taliban-led education minister said that girls' schools have remained closed due to cultural reasons and that families themselves do not agree to send their daughters to schools. These comments by the Taliban leader have invoked strong reactions. This 24-hour poll on the reopening of girls' schools across Afghanistan was launched on TOLONews' Facebook and Instagram pages. More than 34,100 people voted on Facebook. To be precise 89.7 per cent supported the opening of girls' schools, and 10.3 per cent



were against it, reported Tolo News. On the other hand, on Instagram, 9,820 (92 pc) users participated with 8,998 (92 pc) voting for girls' schooling, 452 (5 pc) not supporting, and 371 (3 pc) saying they had no opinion. "None of the Afghan citizens is against the rights of education and girls' taking part in schools, the

small number of votes negatively in the poll have some considerations and concerns which can be solved," said Maryam Maarof Arwin, a women's rights activist. It is not just the activists who are raising their voices against the diktat. A number of students have said that the closure of schools is no longer tolerable and called for clarification regarding the schools.

"We need our schools to be opened. Afghan society needs to have an education," said Abeda, a student. Earlier, drawing flak over the decision to close girls' schools in Afghanistan, the Taliban shifted the blame on Afghan parents and said that people do not want their girls to attend school in the current situation. Acting education minister Noorullah Munir while visiting Uruzgan province said, "You wouldn't need to ask me the same question if you ask how many people in this mosque are willing to send their 16-year-old daughter to school. You and I both grew up in the same Afghan society, and the culture is clear to everyone." However, some Uruzgan residents stated that they are ready to send their daughters to school if the Taliban allows them, reported Tolo News. They asked the cur-

rent government to reopen girls' schools as soon as possible. "I think that the minister came from Kabul and he cannot represent our people, because he came from Kabul. People in Uruzgan want their daughters to go back to school, and they used to go to school before," said Javid Khpolwak, civil society activist. "Those schools which are closed should be reopened as soon as possible because it is the demand of the people," said Mohammad Wali Samsor, a resident of Uruzgan. According to Munir, schools are closed to students above the sixth grade due to cultural constraints, but he emphasized that if a better environment is created, girls' schools above the sixth grade will be opened, reported Tolo News. Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, has previously stated that

girls' schools were closed due to religious issues. Notably, The Taliban were publicly criticized globally after closing Paktia girls' schools after a brief opening. It sparked serious reactions inside and outside of Afghanistan. On Saturday, dozens of girls took to the streets in the centre of Paktia to protest the closing of their schools, reported Tolo News. The videos of the protests went viral on social media and triggered strong reactions by the Afghan public as well as famous politicians and human rights defenders. Several human rights and education activists had urged world leaders in an open letter recently to mount diplomatic pressure on the Taliban to reopen secondary schools for girls in the war-torn country as the Taliban's brutal regime in Afghanistan will soon complete a year in August. **ANI**

HAND-GRENADE EXPLOSION

One killed, 13 hurt in Pakistan grenade explosion

QUETTA: One person was killed and at least 13 others, including a woman, were injured on Friday after a hand-grenade exploded close to an auto-rickshaw on Sabzal road, on the outskirts of Quetta. According to the police sources, some unknown motorcyclists hurled a hand grenade, apparently targeting a nearby security checkpoint on Sabzal road, but it landed close to the auto-rickshaw passing through the area, reported Dawn. Police and personnel of other law-enforcement agencies rushed to the blast scene and shifted the injured to a civil hospital. Civil Hospital spokesman Dr Wasim Baig said that the body and the injured were brought to the hospital and at least three of the injured are in serious condition. Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to arrest the attackers, reported Dawn. In another such incident in Kohat, Some unknown men hurled a grenade at a police station at the old toll plaza of Kohat Friendship Tunnel late on Thursday night. However, the grenade could not explode. According to the police, the grenade was hurled from a van, but luckily it did not explode.



They said the vehicle sped away towards Peshawar, reported Dawn. The police said that an operation was launched in the area to arrest the terrorists. The Counter-Terrorism Department has registered an FIR and started investigations. Recently, on Thursday, at least three policemen were injured in a hand grenade blast that occurred near Bilitang police station of Kohat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Unidentified people attacked the police station with a hand grenade device, which exploded killing three policemen. Pakistan has been witnessing several instances of lawlessness in recent days. The country is facing crises on several fronts including an economic slump and floods in large parts. Compounding this is the regular occurrence of violence. **ANI**

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BIKE RACE

Omani cyclist crowned champion of Salalah Mountain Bike Race

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omani cyclist Shabbib Al Balushi was crowned the champion of the first edition of the Salalah Mountain Bike Race. The race was held in Wadi Sahlanout in the Wilayat of Salalah and was organised by the Dhofar Municipality in cooperation with the Oman Cycling Federation as part of the Dhofar Serbs activities.

Fahm El Khiari came in second, and Britain's David Haines came in third. There were 78 participants from the Sultanate of Oman, Bahrain, the Philippines, Australia, Britain and Spain who participated in the race for the general category and the under-23 category, in addition to the participation of a

number of category for women for a distance of 18 km. The race consisted of three routes of 6 km each, at an altitude of 780 metres above sea level.

In the youth category under 23 years, Oman's cyclist Munther Al Hasani won the first place, Yahya Al Qasimi came in second, and Muhammad Al Wahaibi came in third. In the women's category, Filipino Gisele Cornejo was crowned first, Australia's Elissar Al Baba was in the second place, and Omani Amira Al Obaidani in the third place.

At the end of the race, Saif bin Sebaa Al-Rashidi, President of the Oman Cycling Federation, honoured the winners of the first places.



Hamed Al Harthi takes up France Côte d'Azur challenge

Hamed will be running the 100-mile (164km) race, which takes athletes from the snowy peaks of the French Alps to the clear blue seas



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hamed Al Harthi, one of Oman's best and most experienced trail runners, will compete in the first ever Nice Côte d'Azur by UTMB®, taking place from 22-25 September 2022 in Nice, France. Hamed will be running

the 100-mile (164km) race, which takes athletes from the snowy peaks of the French Alps to the clear blue seas of the Mediterranean Sea.

An iconic trail running distance, the race begins in the ski resort town of Auron and quickly reaches the highest point of the

course at more than 2,650 metres above sea level. From there, the route weaves through forests and along the meandering Tinée river and Mercantour massif, the glacier-covered dome of Mont Blanc, before tackling four more mounts amidst spectacular landscapes and ending on the world famous

Promenade des Anglais along the seafront in Nice on the shores of the legendary French Riviera.

Speaking before leaving Oman for France, Hamed said, "This an exciting new challenge in a truly awe-inspiring location. The Mont Blanc region is the home of the UTMB®ultra running races, so

to be able to take part in the first edition of Nice Côte d'Azur by UTMB® is a great step in my career. My training has been going well, but each race is a new challenge, and I am looking forward to testing myself on a variety of terrains. I am also hoping to gain more knowledge from this race in preparation for the main race, the UTMB® Mont Blanc in 2023".

64-year-old Hamed is a lifelong runner and has conquered many of the most challenging races in the world during his career. In 2018, he competed in OMAN by UTMB® and Ushuaia by UTMB® in Argentina in 2019, UTMB® Mont-Blanc 2021 and reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro the same year. In March 2022, he completed the epic 560km 'Border to Coast' challenge from Um Zulul, on the border of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to Sur in eight days and plans to continue taking on epic challenges all around the world.

WORLD CUP 2022

United Arab Emirates announces T20 World Cup squad

ABU DHABI: Emirates Cricket Board on Saturday announced the team that will compete in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Australia 2022.

Commencing Sunday, October 16 through to November 13, 2022, the 15-player World Cup team brings together a dynamic group of experienced and youth. Dr Tayeb Kamali, Selection Committee Chairman, Emirates Cricket said in a statement by the board- "Qualifying to play against top national teams of the world at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup marks a milestone with UAE Cricket's growing strengths in the T20 format. We extend our deep appreciation to all who have invested their time and efforts as we arrive at this unique moment in Emirates Cricket's history. We wish our team the very best as they continue to make their mark on international cricket at the ICC T20 World Cup." ANI

FOOTBALL

Iglesias, Williams get Spain's first calls in last squad before World Cup

MADRID: Spain coach Luis Enrique brought in two new faces when he named his squad for the forthcoming UEFA Nations League matches against Switzerland and Portugal on Friday.

Betis striker Borja Iglesias and Athletic Club Bilbao winger Nico Williams were both included in the 25-man squad, which is also the last squad Enrique will give before naming his final group to the World Cup finals in Qatar.

"This would be the list if the World Cup was to start tomorrow, no doubt about it. I always take the players that I consider to be the best," Enrique told a press conference.

Iglesias gets his call-up after scoring 19 goals last season for Betis and starting this season with four goals in five appearances, while 20-year-old Williams is a surprise call-up but has impressed with his pace and ability to open up the pitch in the year and a half since his La Liga debut.

Nico is the younger brother of Athletic Club striker Inaki, who has recently committed his international future to Ghana and has



been called into the squad for the forthcoming friendly games.

Enrique was limited in his choice of forwards, with Mikel Oyarzabal and Iglesias' teammate Juanmi both long-term absentees, while Gerard Moreno, Dani Olmo and Rodrigo Moreno are also injured. Meanwhile, Raul de Tomas has not played all season and will not play before the World Cup after joining Rayo Val-

lecano earlier in the week.

Marco Asensio is included in the squad, despite only getting a handful of minutes with Real Madrid this season, while Barca left back Jordi Alba has been named ahead of his teammate Marcos Alonso. The continued absence of David de Gea means the Manchester United keeper will almost certainly miss out on the World Cup. xinhua

MOTO GP

Having Valentino Rossi as coach was my childhood dream: Moto GP racer Bezzecchi

ARAGON: Marco Bezzecchi, the Italian Grand Prix Motorcycle racer with Mooney VR46 Racing Team, said that he is satisfied with his performance in the ongoing Moto GP season, which also happens to be his first at the highest level of the sport.

Bezzecchi is currently at 14th position in the current standings in the Moto GP 2022 season. "I am satisfied with how the season is going. It is going really well for the first season. I am learning a lot and improving my skills. I cannot

complain about how things are going. Of course, there is a lot to improve and that is what I am focusing on with each passing race," said the racer in an interview with ANI on Thursday.

He is extremely happy to have Moto GP legend, Valentino Rossi by his side as a coach and boss. Rossi is the owner of his racing team, Mooney VR46 Racing Team.

"It is fantastic. The team is really good, and so are the people working here. We have a good

relationship with the academy. I am lucky to be part of this group. To have him (Rossi) as a coach and boss is fantastic and was my dream since I was young," he said.

"We speak a lot and are in contact during races. We see each other almost every day. He gives me a lot of advice, he also likes to know what we are working on. It is incredible when he speaks to you. Everything he has said to me is fantastic, so I would not go with one particular piece of advice," he added. ANI

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GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT

The 8th World Green Economy Summit (WGES) will explore ways to improve global food security, sustainability of the food systems and the contribution of the agriculture and food production sectors to achieve a net zero future.

MARKE

BUSINESS & FINANCE



DIGITAL DOLLAR

The Biden administration is moving one step closer to developing a central bank digital currency, known as the digital dollar, saying it would help reinforce the US role as a leader in the world financial system.

MSX continues to maintain stronger profile than its GCC counterparts

Apart from the Abu Dhabi stock market, the Muscat Securities Exchange was the only bourse in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region to remain near this year's peak

VINOD KUMAR PK
vinodkumar@timesofoman.com



Wael Makarem, Senior Market Strategist - Mena at Exness

MUSCAT: Oman's benchmark Muscat Securities Exchange (MSX) continued to maintain a stronger profile than its regional counterparts, according to an industry expert.

"Thanks to the exchange's exposure to both oil and natural gas markets as well as the strong profits published by local companies, MSX index has performed with

gains," Wael Makarem, Senior Market Strategist - Mena at Exness, said in an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*.

"Apart from the Abu Dhabi stock market, the Muscat Securities Exchange was the only stock market in the Gulf Cooperation Council



(GCC) region to remain near this year's peak," he further added.

The benchmark MSX index ended the week on September 15, at 4,478.67, while the MSX Sharia Index on the other hand ended the week's trading session at 485.43. The total turnover of the MSX index at the end of the week on September 15 was OMR9.64 billion while the total market capitalisa-

tion reached OMR23.21 billion.

When asked about the short-term and long-term risks that financial markets in Oman and other neighbouring GCC countries face, Wael Makarem said, "Among the main risks threatening the Omani stock markets as well as others in the region is the volatility in energy prices."

"Crude oil prices could drop as

demand could decrease further while the global economy continues to slow down and investors brace themselves to recession as interest rates continue to rise. The same applies to natural gas prices which are strongly affected by the geopolitical tensions in Europe," he further added.

Elaborating on the expectations in the coming months about

MSX and its counterparts Wael Makarem said that the MSX was supported this year by the strong results published by its listed companies and in particular banks. The market also found support from the rising oil and gas prices during the first half of the year before being pushed higher by good second-quarter earnings.

"Over the short term, the market could remain under pressure due to declining crude prices overall. However, over a longer time span, it could be boosted again if earnings in the third quarter are as good as the previous ones," he further added.

Elaborating on the reasons behind the overall decline in international stock markets he said that several major events took place which hit investors' risk appetite.

"However, the more persistent reason is the monetary policy tightening and the central banks altering their interest rates, to curb the soaring inflation. Chances of having a recession are rising by the day, as interest rates move higher," he added.

"Thus investors are favouring to flee risky assets, and this could continue unless we have a clear vision that inflation is easing and central banks are willing to hold," he concluded.

NCSI DATA

Production of crude oil, condensates surpass 223 million barrels in Oman



MUSCAT: Oman's production of crude oil and condensates recorded an increase of 10.1 per cent at the end of July 2022 to reach 223.17 million barrels, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Separately, crude oil production saw a rise of 13.5 per cent while condensates production declined by 1.6 per cent at the end of July, compared to the period of July 2021.

The average price of Omani crude oil also recorded an increase of 61 per cent at the end of July 2022 to reach \$92.8 per barrel, compared to \$57.6 per barrel at the end of July 2021.

The monthly average price of oil also increased by 4.7 per cent in July 2022 compared to the previous month of the same year.

The Sultanate of Oman's total oil exports witnessed an increase of 16.7 per cent at the end of July 2022, compared to the same pe-

riod of the previous year.

The Sultanate of Oman's total oil exports witnessed an increase of 16.7 per cent at the end of July 2022, compared to the same period of the previous year.

Oman's oil exports to Japan witnessed a remarkable growth of 206.6 per cent to reach 7.30 million barrels at the end of July 2022 and oil exports to South Korea increased by 68.7 per cent during the same period.

Natural gas production (includ-

ing imports), on the other hand, in the Sultanate of Oman at the end of July 2022 witnessed a slight increase of 3.9 per cent to reach 30.48 billion cubic metres.

Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated an increase in natural gas consumption in industrial areas by 13.9 per cent, industrial projects by 6 per cent, and oil fields by 1.6 per cent, while gas consumption in power plants decreased by 0.7 per cent. -ONA

AUTHORITY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES



ASMED's financing programme to empower SMEs to win tenders

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) has launched a financing programme to encourage small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to win tenders and employment opportunities.

The project targets SMEs earns them the support of government establishments and private firms and covers all sectors and activities.

The programme seeks to enhance technical practices that contribute to the sustainability of projects, right from the stage of foundation to the stages of devel-

opment and risk management.

As part of the programme, an entrepreneur passes a preparedness programme, submits a financing application from the project's website via the link provided by Oman Development Bank (ODB) and fills in the required data.

On its electronic website, the ASMED dedicated a port for all information related to its 6 funding programmes, conditions for financing and the applicable procedures. It also circulates a familiarisation document via social media platforms. -ONA

WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

Jebel Ali Free Zone propels automotive market growth

DUBAI: Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza), a leading trade and logistics hub in the Middle East, part of DP World Group, facilitated over 1.2 million metric tonnes (MT) from Dubai's total volume of around 4.8 million MT of vehicle & transport commodities transited through the emirate in 2021. This equates to \$12.4 billion, more than a third of the total trade worth \$31.3 billion.

Enabling the rise of the auto industry Jafza has been a significant contributor to the automotive industry's progress in the country. Its unique logistics infrastructure and global trade network, in specific have ensured the steady rise of the automotive sector, con-

necting African, Asian and Middle Eastern traders to consumers across the world.

Multimodal ecosystem

With companies from 70 countries and a workforce of nearly 8,000, Jafza's infrastructure and trade volumes are an attraction for industry giants such as Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Volkswagen and Volvo. The free zone's multimodal ecosystem connects traders with more than 260 airports via Al Maktoum International Airport and over 150 ports with direct services to Jebel Ali Port. It also gives them access to the GCC road network and the Etihad Rail that will commence op-

Jebel Ali Free Zone's (Jafza) unique logistics infrastructure and global trade network, in specific have ensured the steady rise of the automotive sector, connecting African, Asian and Middle Eastern traders to consumers across the world

erations in 2023 and has the Jebel Ali Rail Terminal among the first stations in its network.

Additionally, smart trading solutions and benefits such as 0 per

cent VAT and corporate tax help businesses operate efficiently as international distribution centres.

Integrated automotive logistics While the Jebel Ali Port is integral

to the automotive trade in general, it is a steady contributor to the export and import of used cars. Thus, reinforcing Dubai's status as a major export hub for used cars in the UAE and the MENA region. Due to a consistent demand for used cars, according to a report by Ken Research, the UAE's used car market is expected to reach AED 112 billion in revenue by 2025. As long as this demand exists, DP World, through its UAE assets will continue recording tremendous growth in the coming years for the automotive sector.

RoRo terminal

Jebel Ali Port's state-of-the-art roll-on, roll-off (RoRo) terminal

plays a pivotal role in this ongoing success. The port has RoRo berths which can handle up to 1 million car equivalent units (CEUs). It can also store up to 27,000 CEUs within its quay-side yards, including a multi-storey facility, the largest in the region.

Adjacent container stuffing and de-stuffing services are also significant advantages for partners.

Before importing or exporting from the port, automotive manufacturers, dealers and importers can also utilise the Pre-Delivery Inspection facilities in Jafza for services such as light accessory fitting, vehicle storage, washing, age prevention and audio system installation. -WAM



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Biden administration a step closer to developing digital currency

Central bank digital currencies differ from existing digital money available to the general public, such as the balance in a bank account, because they would be a direct liability of the Federal Reserve, not a commercial bank

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is moving one step closer to developing a central bank digital currency, known as the digital dollar, saying it would help reinforce the US role as a leader in the world financial system.

The White House said on Friday that after President Joe Biden issued an executive order in March calling on a variety of agencies to look at ways to regulate digital assets, the agencies came up with nine reports, covering cryptocurrency impacts on financial markets, the environment, innovation and other elements of the economic system, The Associated Press (AP) reports.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said one Treasury recommendation is that the US “advance policy and technical work on a potential central bank digital currency, or CBDC, so that the United States is prepared if CBDC is determined to be in the national interest.”

“Right now, some aspects of our current payment system are too slow or too expensive,” Yellen said on a Thursday call with reporters laying out some of the findings of the reports.

Central bank digital currencies differ from existing digital money available to the general public, such as the balance in a bank account, because they would be a direct liability of the Federal Reserve, not a commercial bank.

According to the Atlantic Council nonpartisan think tank, 105 countries representing more than 95 per cent of the global gross domestic product already are exploring or have created a central bank digital currency.

The council found that the US and the UK are far behind in creating a digital dollar or its equivalent. Treasury, the Justice Department, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, the Securities and Exchange Commission and other agencies were tasked with contributing to reports that would address various concerns about the risks, development and usage of digital assets. Several reports will come out in the next weeks and months.

Eswar Prasad, a trade professor at Cornell who studies the digitisation of currencies, said Treasury’s report “takes a positive view about how a digital dollar might play a useful role in increasing payment options for individuals and businesses” while acknowledging the risks of its development.

He said the report sets the stage for the creation of agency regulations and legislation “that can improve the benefit-risk tradeoff associated with cryptocurrencies and related technologies.”

The Blockchain Association, which lobbies lawmakers on Capitol Hill, said in a statement that the White House reports are “a missed opportunity to cement US crypto leadership.”

“These reports focus on risks — not opportunities,” the statement reads, “and omit substantive recommendations on how the United States can promote its burgeoning crypto industry, including job creation, improvements to the financial system, and expanded access for all Americans.”

On Capitol Hill, lawmakers have submitted various pieces of legislation to regulate cryptocurrency and other digital assets.

Sheila Warren, CEO of the Crypto Council for Innovation, said in an emailed statement that the report “seems to kick the can down the road” she said, “we don’t see clear recommendations.”

The director of the National Economic Council, Brian Deese, told reporters that “we’ve seen in recent months substantial turmoil in cryptocurrency markets and these events really highlight how, without proper oversight, cryptocurrencies risk harming everyday Americans’ financial stability and our national security.”

“It is why this administration believes that now more than ever,” he said, “prudent regulation of cryptocurrencies is needed.”

He said on Friday that the administration plans to “execute a comprehensive action plan with priority steps to mitigate key risks of cryptocurrencies — among others, money laundering and financing for terrorism.” -BNA



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WORLD GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT

Summit to discuss global food security, role of agriculture sector in achieving net zero future

DUBAI: The 8th World Green Economy Summit (WGES) will explore ways to improve global food security, sustainability of the food systems and the contribution of the agriculture and food production sectors to achieve a net zero future.

The summit, which is organised by Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and the World Green Economy Organization (WGEO) on 28-29 September at the Dubai World Trade Centre, will draw attention to the rapid global changes that create the need for practical solutions to the entire food value chain.

WGES brings together local and international VIPs and global decision-makers and influencers to share their successful experiences and case studies to mitigate global food crises and find practical solutions to meet the needs of current and future generations.

“The summit supports the forward-looking vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE; and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to transform the UAE into a global hub for food security based on innovation, as well as to achieve the objectives of the UAE’s National Food Security Strategy 2051 to develop an integrated, national sustainable food production system.

The summit strengthens the UAE’s role in supplying sustainable international solutions that

8th World Green Economy Summit brings together local and international VIPs and global decision-makers and influencers to share their successful experiences and case studies to mitigate global food crises and find practical solutions to meet the needs of current and future generations

med bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to transform the UAE into a global hub for food security based on innovation, as well as to achieve the objectives of the UAE’s National Food Security Strategy 2051 to develop an integrated, national sustainable food production system.

The summit strengthens the UAE’s role in supplying sustainable international solutions that

improve people’s lives worldwide,” said Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Vice Chairman of the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, MD & CEO of DEWA and Chairman of the WGEO.

“The summit also supports the UAE’s efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, including the ‘Zero Hunger’ goal. It discusses ways to make current food systems more sustainable, using Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, climate-smart agriculture, transforming into a green and circular economy and fostering innovation,” added Al Tayer.

The UAE plays a crucial role in addressing the issues relating to global food security and is regarded as a leading donor to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

Proactive vision

The leadership’s proactive vision has played a pivotal role in preserving the welfare of UAE citizens and residents and ensuring their access to high-quality food. WGES adds to the UAE’s initiatives and projects that aim to build constructive partnerships to overcome common obstacles and activate the digital revolution in the management of a sustainable food system. The most prominent of these projects are the Food Tech Valley project in Dubai; the national initiative ‘Naama’ to reduce food loss and waste in the UAE, and the global FoodTech Challenge. -WAM

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

India’s forex reserves drop by \$2.23bn, hit lowest level in 2 years

MUMBAI: India’s foreign exchange (forex) reserves dropped by \$2.234 billion to \$550.871 billion for the week ended September 9, the lowest level in two years, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed.

This is the sixth weekly fall in the country’s forex reserves. The forex reserves had dropped by \$7.941 billion during the week ended September 2.

India’s forex reserves have dropped by almost \$80 billion since this escalation of the Russia-Ukraine tensions into war earlier this year.

Statistical supplement

As per the Reserve Bank of India’s weekly statistical supplement, foreign currency assets, which are the biggest component of the forex reserves, dipped by \$2.519 billion to \$489.598 billion during the week ended September 9. The foreign currency assets

had declined by \$6.527 billion in the previous week.

Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-dollar currencies like Euro, UK’s Pound Sterling and Japanese Yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The value of gold reserves rose by \$340 million to \$38.644 billion during the week ended September 9. The value of gold reserves had declined by \$1.339 billion in the previous week.

The value of India’s Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund declined by \$63 million to \$177.19 billion during the week under review, the RBI data showed.

India’s reserve position in the International Monetary Fund increased by \$8 million to \$4.910 billion during the week ended September 9, as per the RBI Weekly Statistical Supplement. -ANI



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REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

RCEP expands regional cooperation

NANNING: Ding Xue, a representative of DeARANCHY, a skincare brand from the Republic of Korea (ROK), has been running around at the ROK pavilion during the ongoing 19th China-ASEAN Expo.

The expo which runs until September 19, spotlights the theme “Sharing RCEP New Opportunities, Building a Version 3.0 China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.” It is currently being held in Nanning, the capital city of south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

“This is the first time for us to participate in the expo. All our products are imported from the ROK. After the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), import tariffs have been lowered accordingly, which has increased our price competitiveness,” Ding said.

This is the second time the ROK is serving as a special partner at the China-ASEAN Expo, a status which has attracted many ROK companies to the 2022 exhibition. The ROK also served as a special partner in 2015.

According to Lee Youn Sik, deputy director of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency Guangzhou office, products from 127 ROK enterprises are on display at this year’s expo.

“Guangxi is the only region in China connected with ASEAN both by land and sea. More ROK companies hope to explore business opportunities in ASEAN countries by participating in the

The landmark Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is the world’s largest free trade deal to date

China-ASEAN Expo,” noted Lee.

“The free trade agreements between the ROK, China and ASEAN have given strong support to regional economic cooperation. And the RCEP, which all three parties have joined, came into force at the beginning of this year, providing broader opportunities for a regional multilateral cooperation,” said Ahn Duk-geun, the ROK’s trade minister, in his speech at the opening ceremony of the expo.

The landmark RCEP is the world’s largest free trade deal to date. The RCEP countries account for roughly 30 per cent of the world’s gross domestic product and population. Over 90 per cent of trade in goods among approved member states will gradually become tariff-free. Since it came into force on January 1 this year, the agreement has delivered trade dividends, boosted the foreign trade of member countries and expanded the circle of regional economic and trade cooperation.

“RCEP is a win-win for all of us. It will expedite regional economic integration, attract investment, and expand market and

supply chains amid an uncertain global economic outlook. Since the entry into force of the RCEP, Thai and Chinese entrepreneurs are reaping mutual benefits as a consequence,” said Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai.

Under the framework of the RCEP agreement, Thai exporters applied for RCEP certificates of origin worth 204 million US dollars from January to April this year. Thailand imported goods with a total value of \$72.3 million by utilising the preferential policies under the RCEP agreement during the same period.

The RCEP has also brought tangible benefits to companies in Guangxi, a vital gateway for exchange and cooperation between China and the ASEAN.

According to data provided by Nanning Customs, in the first eight months of this year, Nanning Customs issued a total of 1,165 RCEP certificates of origin with a value of 541 million yuan (about \$78 million). In August alone, Guangxi’s trade with RCEP partner countries reached 32.14 billion yuan, an increase of 22.7 per cent year on year.

“This agreement offers local businesses wider market access and the opportunity to improve regional supply chains and diversify their production networks while helping to reduce the cost of doing business,” said Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, while delivering a speech via video-link. -Xinhua

MEETING

AMEM+3 expects strong oil and gas market recovery from COVID-19

PHNOM PENH: The 19th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting Plus Three (China, Japan, Korea) (19th AMEM+3) anticipated the possibility of a strong oil and gas market recovery from COVID-19, while also being cautious of global market disruptions from geopolitical tensions.

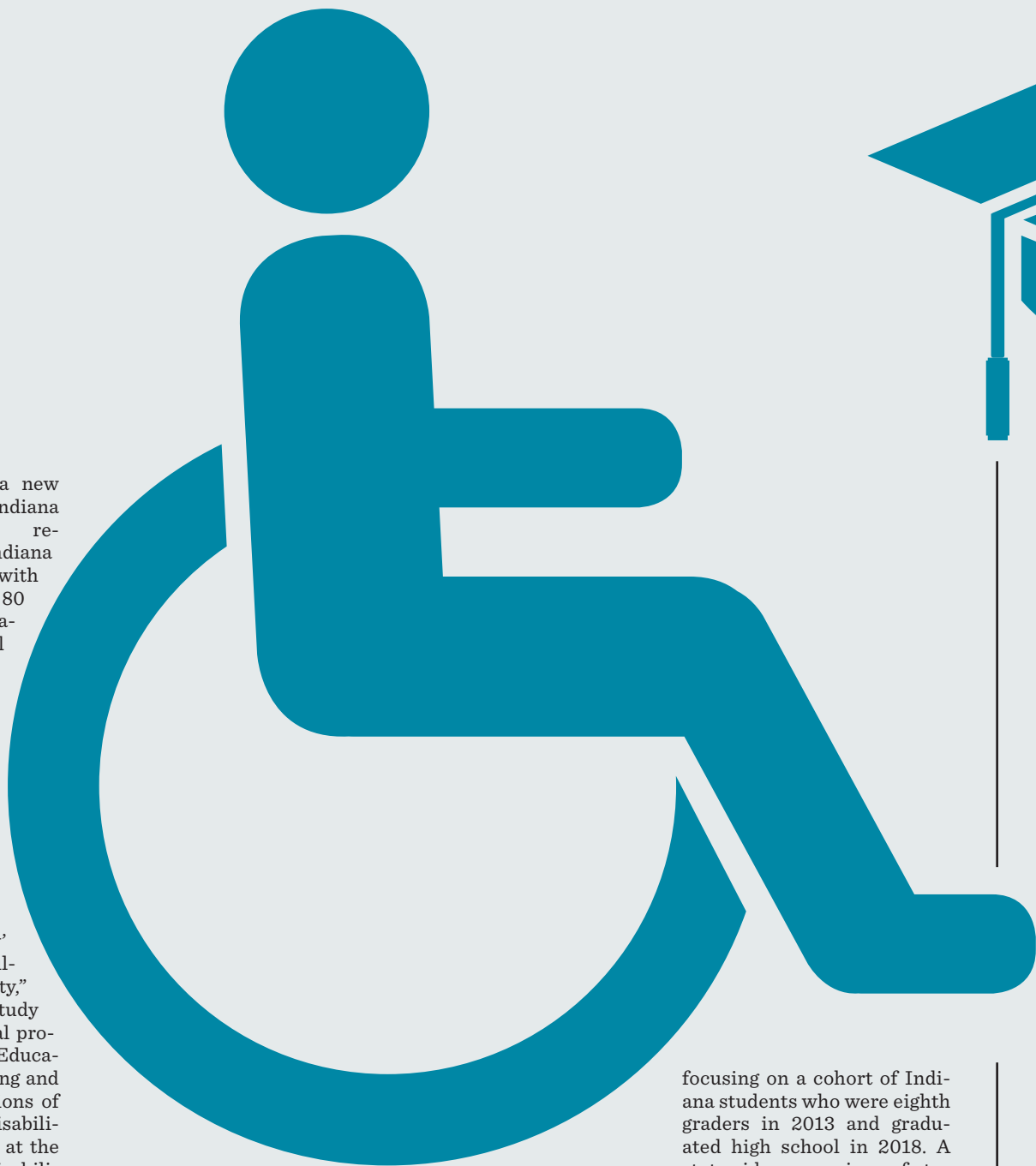
The meeting noted the high dependency of member states on oil and gas products and agreed to step-up regional multilateral cooperation to mitigate supply disruptions, achieve energy security, and meet climate resiliency goals.

AMEM+3 which was held virtually on September 16, and chaired by Suy Sem, Minister of Mines and Energy, Kingdom of Cambodia and attended by the ASEAN Member States, noted in a Joint Ministerial Statement the limited investments in oil and gas upstream sector and the various business opportunities, such as availability of open oil blocks for bidding, government plans to increase investments in oil and gas infrastructure, and national oil companies’ just energy transition plans that would require innovations and funding.

The meeting further reiterated the need to enhance the participation of financing institutions and the private sector. -WAM



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PERFORM BETTER IN INCLUSIVE ACADEMIC SETTINGS



According to a new study by Indiana University researchers, Indiana high school students with disabilities who spent 80 percent of their educational time in general education classrooms performed better on state reading and math evaluations and were better prepared for higher education and employment opportunities than their peers in less inclusive settings.

“We are currently in a time when the experience of ‘community’ is being stressed in multiple ways in our society,” said Hardy Murphy, study co-author and a clinical professor in the School of Education at IUPUI. “Changing and elevating our expectations of what students with disabilities are capable of lies at the heart of people with disabilities contributing to and benefiting from being a part of our community experience, beyond K-12 education. Including students with disabilities in their school communities with their general education peers is an important place to begin this transformation. These results show that it is as much a moral and ethical question as it is an educational one.” The study, conducted by IU’s Center on Education and Lifelong Learning, one of seven research centres at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, was recently published in the Journal of Special Education.

Led by Sandi Cole, lead author of the study and direc-

tor of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, researchers used statewide student and school demographic and outcome data to investigate the relationship between high- and low-inclusion educational settings and the academic outcomes of students with disabilities. High inclusion was defined as 80% or more educational time spent in the general education classroom. Low inclusion was defined as less than 80% of educational time spent in the general education classroom. The new study is the second phase of their 2020 study, which looked at special education placement and academic

outcomes for Indiana students in third to eighth grades with primary disabilities including cognitive, learning and emotional disabilities; autism spectrum disorder; blindness; and deafness. In that study, students who experienced more inclusion demonstrated significantly higher achievement on state assessments than students experiencing less inclusion — regardless of the disability category. Given the previous study’s finding in favour of high inclusion related to student success, the new study assessed whether the same pattern existed for high school students with disabilities,

focusing on a cohort of Indiana students who were eighth graders in 2013 and graduated high school in 2018. A statewide comparison of student achievement in English/language arts with a cohort sample size of 23,796 and math scores with a sample size of 23,940 students in low- and high-inclusion placements was initiated using ISTEP+, the state assessment tool used for all students in Indiana. Students identified for the state’s alternative assessment (approximately 1% of students with disabilities) were excluded from the study. Additionally, because diploma type often reflects the curriculum path of high school students, the study used this data to investigate relative differences in preparedness for post-secondary transition related to placement.

KEY FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY INCLUDE:

Comparisons of 10th-grade ISTEP scores yielded highly significant results. Students with disabilities who spent 80% or more time in the general education classroom scored an average of 24.3 points higher in English/language arts and 18.4 points higher in math than their peers in low-inclusion settings.

Students with disabilities in high-inclusion settings were 22% more likely than their peers in low-inclusion settings to graduate with a Core 40 diploma by passing the state assessment rather than receiving a waiver. Researchers said this suggests these students were more prepared for successful post-secondary education and employment opportunities.

“It is clear from these two studies that place matters,” Cole said. “By using a propensity matching methodology, we can state with great certainty that students with disabilities have better outcomes in inclusion settings than their peers in more segregated settings. As we noted in the paper: ‘We cannot, as a society, afford to continue to support policies and practices that result in academic failure, limited post-secondary options and continued separation and marginalization based on disabilities. We can, however, accept the ambitious agenda to transform educational systems to create inclusive school environments, maximize student participation and increase the achievement of students with disabilities.’” -ANI

IN PICTURES



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Farmers harvest rice in the paddy fields
Farmers harvest rice in the paddy fields of Huatian Town of Youyang Tujia and Miao Autonomous County, southwest China's Chongqing, September 14, 2022. Huatian Town of Youyang Tujia and Miao Autonomous County in Chongqing is famous for its rice production on terraced fields. **Xinhua**

Fly Fishing Competition in Pahalgam
A fish caught by an angler in the Lidder River during the first Kashmir Fly Fishing Competition organised by Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department, in Pahalgam on Saturday. **ANI Photo**



Kuwait eyes cooperation with China in space exploration
Members of Kuwait's national satellite team are seen in the final tests of KuwaitSAT1 in Capital Governorate, Kuwait. **Xinhua**

A photograph showing a person in a white protective suit and blue gloves working on a piece of electronic equipment, likely the KuwaitSAT1 satellite. A small Kuwaiti flag is visible on the table next to the equipment.

A beautiful picture of Fujin National Wetland Park in NE China's Heilongjiang
Waterbirds are seen in the Fujin National Wetland Park in Fujin City of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, on September 9. **Xinhua**

Floods in Italy leave 10 dead after summer of extreme weather events
Rescuers push a boat on a flooded street in Marche, Italy, on September 16, 2022. At least ten people have been killed and four are reported missing after flash floods hit the Marche region in central Italy, creating what a local mayor described as an "apocalyptic situation." **Xinhua**



Scenery of tidal bore of Qiantang River in Hangzhou
Photo taken on September 13, 2022 shows a view of the tidal bore of the Qiantang River in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province. The Qiantang River tidal bore, famous for its height and speed, is a traditional tourist attraction here. **Xinhua**



The cast of the film "Chup" during its promotion
Bollywood actress Pooja Bhatt with actress Shreya Dhanwanthary and actor Dulquer Salmaan pose for a photo during the promotion of their upcoming film "Chup", at Taj Lands End, Bandra, in Mumbai on Thursday. **ANI**



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FEATURE



OXFORD MALARIA VACCINE

PROMISING RESULTS IN TRIALS

Scientists in Oxford, UK, say trials for a new malaria vaccine show it could have a “major impact.” They hope to start producing doses by 2023.

So far, only one malaria vaccine has been designed for and distributed in Africa. Although it is significantly better than no vaccine at all, its efficacy rate is low — around 40 per cent. The vaccine, produced by GSK, only started being widely distributed last year.

But a new vaccine, developed by Oxford scientists, may prove much more efficient at fighting malaria. Called R21, the jab proved 80 per cent effective at guarding against the disease in a trial reported in the Lancet on September 7, 2022.

“Based on these results, this vaccine could have a major impact on the elimination of malaria from affected regions of the world,” said Neil Mabbott, an immunopathology professor at the University of Edinburgh, who was not involved in the research. “This is a really remarkable achievement.”

The scientists who led the trial say jabs could start being produced and distributed as early as next year. The vaccine is said to be cheap to make, and the Serum Institute of India, a vaccine maker, has pledged to produce 100 million doses per year.

Malaria kills about 600,000 people

annually, most of whom are babies and children. Around 95 per cent of the 200 million cases diagnosed per year are located on the African continent.

Creating a vaccine for malaria is difficult

It is not easy to make a vaccine for the disease, which is spread through mosquitoes, because the parasite that causes it evolves as it infects the body in order to avoid the immune system.

“The malaria parasite is constantly changing,” said Mabbott. “This makes it difficult for our immune systems to detect and destroy it, and even more difficult to vaccinate against.”

The R21 vaccine targets the first stage of the parasite’s life cycle within the body, keeping it from spreading to and infecting the liver.

The R21 vaccine trial

In the trial, researchers found that a booster dose a year after the initial vaccination was on average 75 per cent efficient at guarding against the virus.

Participants, all infants between the ages of 5 and 17 months, were recruited from a province in central Burkina Faso.

They were split into three groups: Two received the vaccine in different doses and a third, control group received a rabies vaccine. Overall, around 400 infants got the jab.

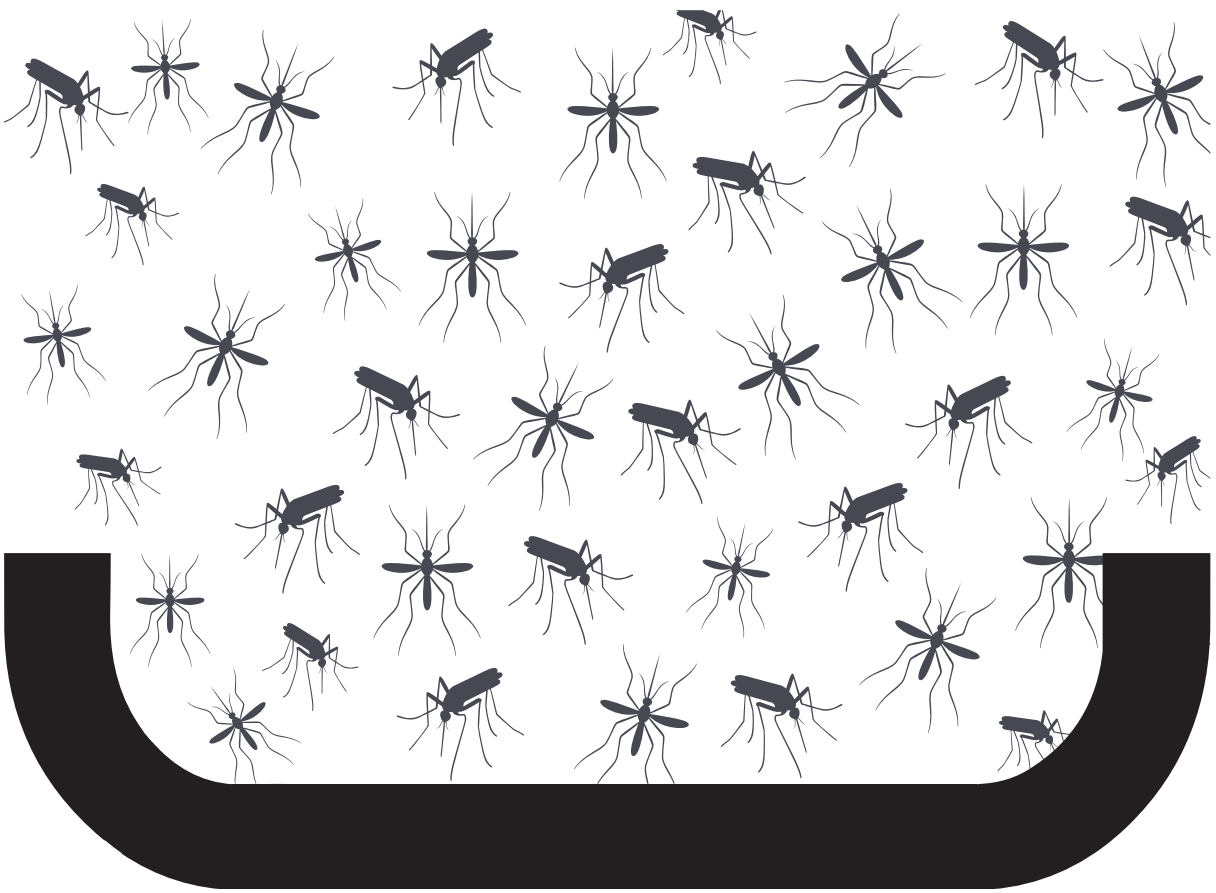
One group got a higher dose of the vaccine and were around 80 per cent protected against the virus, while the other group got a lower dose and saw protection around 70 per cent.

What’s next for the R21 vaccine

The trial has been extended for two years to determine whether a four-dose vaccine regimen is enough, or if more booster doses will be necessary.

The initial data from this trial seemed to imply “that booster doses are likely to be needed to sustain protection,” said Brian Greenwood, a professor of tropical medicine at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, in a media briefing. Greenwood was not involved in the R21 research.

And the results of a much larger study — featuring 4,800 babies in four African countries — will also be published later in 2022. The large sample will be able to offer more specific insight into the vaccine’s efficacy. - **dw**





ROUND-UP



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GRADUATION CEREMONY

bp Oman, Youth Vision conclude fourth cycle of Teqdar programme

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, Youth Vision held a graduation ceremony marking the closing of the fourth cycle of the Teqdar programme, under the patronage of Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi, the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The programme aims to equip Omani jobseekers with the necessary skills to compete in the labour market. This social investment programme is managed by bp and is continuously benefiting communities with the contribution of our Block 61 partners. Block 61 is operated by bp in partnership with OQ, PTTEP, and Petronas.

This year, a total of 220 participants benefited from the programme and 25 trainees advanced to the final training stage of the programme, of which 60% are currently employed. Through the first three cycles of the programme, more than 500 trainees benefited from the programme of which 30% are currently employed.

The programme included various training workshops, interactive activities as well as ongoing assessments, curriculum vitae guidance and real-time practice for job interviews with human resources specialists. The programme also offered a three-month duration internship in both the private and public sectors.

Ibrahim Al Hinai, bp Oman's Social Investment Specialist, commented: "We are delighted to



extend our support to Youth Vision in delivering the Teqdar programme. It delivers on our aim to develop national capabilities and increase employment prospects for our future generation."

Marwa Al Rawahi, Operations Manager at Youth Vision, commented, "The programme, with the support of bp Oman, helps us address the gap between the labour market and the higher education institutes graduates. At Youth

Vision, we strive to cater for each Teqdar programme to meet the current employment demand and market research.

"With the conclusion of the current fourth cycle, we were able to train approximately 700 trainees in total. In addition, we are looking forward to our future collaboration with local higher education institutions to include the Teqdar programme as part of their curriculum and courses."

Al Jawhar Privilege Banking hosts special customer event in Sohar

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to further strengthen its partnership and communication channels with its customers, Al Jawhar Privilege Banking recently hosted a special event at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Sohar.

It was attended by the bank's management team and a large number of customers, who were also able to provide their opinions and feedback on the various banking services to the officials who were present at the event. Details about a number of special offers including attractive interest rates on Baituna home loans and personal loans for first-time borrowers was presented to those gathered at the event.

Speaking about the importance of the bank's customer-centric vision, Taya Eid Bait Sabee, Deputy General Manager – Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, expressed his appreciation to all the customers gathered at the event and thanked them for participating in the event and for their confidence in the bank's various products and services. He added that Bank Muscat is always delighted to listen to its customers and events such as this one helps the bank to fine-tune its world-class products and services according to its customers' dreams and aspirations.

Bank Muscat Al Jawhar is designed to provide Privilege Banking customers with an exceptional banking and lifestyle experience.



Customers are eligible for exclusive 2-for-1 deals on food; entertainment and shopping that are available through the 'xperience with the Entertainer' app on their smartphones. They also have access to a higher ATM withdrawal limit of OMR800. Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cardholders offer access to 25 premium lounges around the world in addition to the lounges at Muscat airport. Cardholders are eligible for a complimentary Dragon Pass and a 'Meet and Greet' service with a 15% discount at over 450 global destinations.

Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cardholders can enjoy the "best in class" complimentary travel insurance, which includes travel accident insurance as well as insurance for lost baggage and money, cancellation, travel delay, delayed baggage, personal liability, legal

expenses and loss of passport and access to free medical and legal referral services worldwide. The cardholders also enjoy 1% cash back on all local and international spending. Designed around unique lifestyle and banking requirements, Al Jawhar is a unique privilege banking service that offers its customers unmatched features and benefits.

All existing Al Jawhar customers also have a chance at present to earn up to OMR5,000 in 2022 by referring their friends and family members to Privilege Banking. Customers can earn an incentive of OMR50 for every successful referral, up to a maximum of 100 referrals till the end of the year. All new referrals who successfully open and maintain their Al Jawhar account will also receive OMR50 each resulting in a win-win situation for all customers.

Transform your home with Danube Home's fresh home furnishings

For the coming months, the brand has launched a Fall-Winter Home Furnishing Collection that has been designed to add cosy warmth to every home

MUSCAT: Even the most contemporary homes sometimes deserve a routine makeover. But changing furniture every few months may be impractical for most families. That's where home furnishings

play a significant role. They give home decorators a chance to play around with colours and textures according to the seasons or their moods. To that end, Danube Home has created a range of home furnishings

to suit the tastes of homeowners and renters across the country.

The home furnishing collection at Danube Home consists of bedding solutions like bedsheets, comforters, and duvet sets. For living and shared spaces, the brand has also launched other furnishing items like curtains, cushions, bath towels, bathrobes, table linen, carpets, and more.

For the coming months, the brand has launched a Fall-Winter Home Furnishing Collection that has been designed to add cosy warmth to every home.

As we prepare for the cooler months, shoppers can explore various fabrics that exude comfort, richness, and warmth in sub-

tle hues, pastels and white. The collection has been designed to be mindful of various styles and offers a good mix of luxurious, minimal, and contemporary looks to suit different aesthetics.

True to the Danube Home legacy, the fabrics used are exceptionally high quality and priced competitively to cater to the needs of customers. The range of fabrics includes the best quality cotton, velvet, viscose and polyester.

Each of the styles has been designed to be matched with coordinated pieces across all categories - giving customers a chance to choose their aesthetic or mix and match effortlessly.

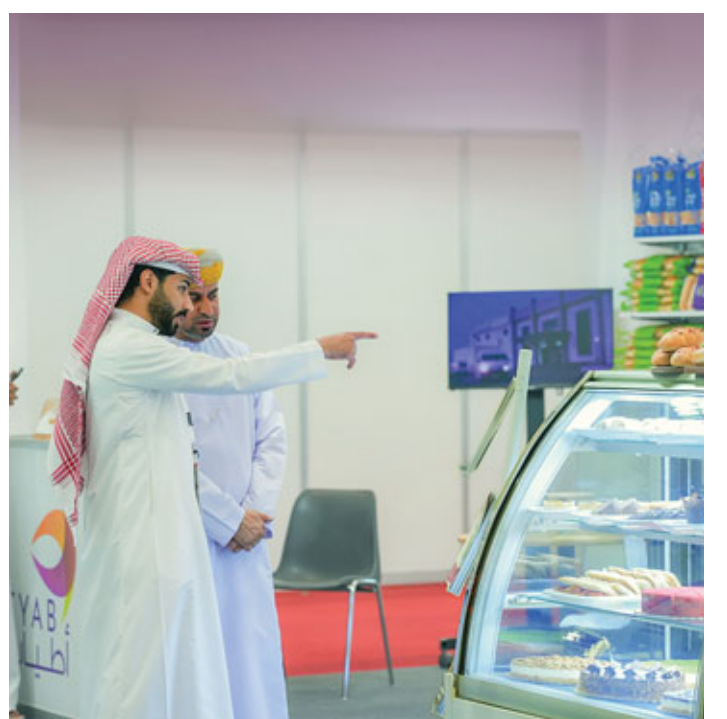


INTERNATIONAL TRADE EXHIBITION

Atyab participates in Foodex Saudi

MUSCAT: Atyab participated in the 9th edition of Foodex Saudi, the only Saudi leading international trade exhibition 100% dedicated to the food and drink industry, held in the Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Center.

Ali Bakhit Kashooob, CEO, Atyab said, "We are delighted to see our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participate as well as all exhibitors from different countries, throughout this edition of Foodex 2022, which is aligned with our future plans for the region. We will be building sustainable partnerships for the mutual benefit of all and enhancing our presence in key markets including one in the Kingdom. As we found many aspects of compatibility between the Kingdom's vision 2030 and the Sultanate of Oman's 2040 vision in the food security and manufacturing sector, we hope that this vision will be further integrated."



AKBAR TRAVELS OPENS NEW BRANCH IN RUWI

Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman inaugurated Akbar Travels' new branch in Ruwi in the presence of K.V. Abdul Nazar, Chairman and Managing Director, Ashiya Nazar, Executive Director, Rajendran N.P, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the senior management of Akbar Travels. — Supplied picture







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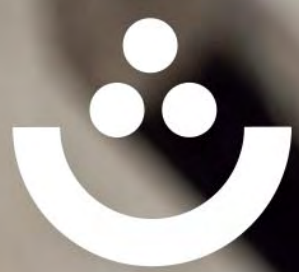
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