

HIS MAJESTY SENDS CABLE OF CONDOLENCES TO IRAQI PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Dr Barham Salih of the Republic of Iraq on the victims of the fire that broke out in the al-Hussein Teaching Hospital in the city of Nasiriya. In the cable, His Majesty expressed heartfelt sympathies to President Dr Barham, families of the victims, and the Iraqi people. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty to rest souls of the victims in peace in paradise and grant their families patience, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. - **ONA**



HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

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



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WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Give football team all support for upcoming matches: Sayyid Theyazin

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To make sure Oman's national football team has every advantage for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers, the players are to be given all possible support available.

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, the Minister for Culture, Sports, and Youth, instructed the Oman Football Association (OFA) to "provide support, material requirements, and logistical facilities for the senior national football team to complete its preparations for important matches, including the final stage of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, 2023 Asian Cup, and participation at the Arab Cup," according

to an OFA statement.

Oman are through to the third round of qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, set to be held in Qatar, with their matches taking place between September 2, 2021, and March 24, 2022.

One of 12 teams taking part in the qualifying process, Oman has been drawn in Group B, alongside traditional powerhouses Japan, Australia, and Saudi Arabia. China and Vietnam are also part of their group. Group A consists of Iran, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

The 12 countries are part of the Asian Football Confederation, which has been awarded 4.5 places at Qatar 2022. The four teams



that finish first and second in each group will qualify for the World Cup directly, while the teams that come third will play each other in a single match to decide which team makes it through to a playoff with a team from another confederation. The winner of that match will make it through to the World Cup.

Positive factor

"The support provided will undoubtedly be a positive factor concerning the progress of the national team," added the OFA statement. "It comes as part of the efforts to harness the skills of the players of the national team, the administration, and the technical staff, and motivate and encourage them to

achieve the best results towards keeping pace with, and achieving, our desired aspirations."

The effort of His Highness is to create an environment that encourages athletes to do their best, added Oman football's governing body, thanking him for the support to the sport.

Oman is among 16 teams taking part in the Arab Cup, which is also to be held in Qatar between November 30 and December 1.

Their first match is against Iraq on November 30, followed by a game against the hosts on December 3. Their final group game is against fellow Gulf Cooperation Council country Bahrain on December 6.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Special packages for stuck expats on offer

15-day packages for people looking to fly to Oman from the Indian subcontinent, have been introduced by travel agents here to enable many who live and work in the Sultanate to return. The packages are designed to help people overcome travel restrictions placed due to COVID-19. **>A3**

WORLD Rashford defiant after racist abuse

2 England's Marcus Rashford said he will "never apologise for who I am" in a statement released on Twitter. Rashford made the comment after he, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, were subject to a storm of online racist abuse following England's Euro 2020 final defeat to Italy. **>A6**

MARKET Opportunities in Sohar for Indian businesses



3 Sohar Port and Freezone, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), has launched a series of five online webinars to explore opportunities between Sohar and the Indian market. Four more webinars on various key industries will be held. **>B1**



Called Upshift, the programme includes a mix of skills and entrepreneurial approaches

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Half a million youth in Oman will be trained as part of a global initiative to provide children and young adults with the skills they require to thrive at workplaces and become a vibrant

community for the future.

Called Upshift, the programme has been drawn up by UNICEF, and will be run by its local office in Oman, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, along with plenty of participation from the private sector.

Rashad Al Hinai, Undersecretary of Culture, Sports and Youth at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, hoped the programme would provide Omani youth the skills and knowledge required to build their abilities, and help them succeed in future.

"This also transforms the youth and makes them more attractive for employment and grants them better access to the job market," he said, at the launch of the programme. A large number of Omani youth are in the final stages of their education and are preparing to enter the job market. We are

today in a challenging economic climate that demands new skills that can keep pace with the developments of this century.

"The Upshift programme is in accordance with Oman Vision 2040, and includes a mix of skills and entrepreneurial approaches that helps youth understand the challenges they will face in their communities and economic environment," said the undersecretary.

"It grants them the tools required to address them, and I am certain that all the and beneficiaries of this programme will develop the skills to adapt, be resilient,

face these challenges, and become active members of their communities, helping build them under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik."

Upshift is part of UNICEF's Generation Unlimited initiative, a global partnership that seeks to provide young people greater and better opportunities in education, training and employment.

The programme targets youth between the ages of 10 and 29, and will initially be rolled out across three governorates in Oman, before expanding to other parts of the country. **>A5**

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Oman witnesses significant rise in COVID-19 casualties

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate is witnessing a rise in the number of COVID-19 casualties with more than 35 deaths reported during the last 24 hours.

According to data from the Ministry of Health, these numbers point to a significant rise in COVID-19 deaths in the region.

With 37 deaths in the last 24 hours, the total number of deaths since the beginning of the pandemic in February 2020 has reached 3,472.

According to statistics from the ministry Tarassud app, among the people who died till July 12, 2021, 2,480 were Omanis and 955 expats; 2,388 were males and 1,047 females. The last time Oman recorded more than 37 deaths was on Saturday, July 4, 2021, with 50 deaths.



On Sunday there were 33 deaths, on Monday 23 deaths, on Tuesday 17 deaths, on Wednesday 15 deaths, on Thursday 19 deaths, on Friday 15 deaths, on Saturday 18 deaths, and on Sunday 12 deaths.

This means that on Tuesday, July 13, 2021, Oman has once

again recorded a significant increase of deaths after 10 days.

On July 13, statistics made available on Tarassud showed that the number of those hospitalised during the past 24 hours reached 122, and 458 patients were admitted to the ICU, bringing the total number of patients admitted to health institutions to 1,290 patients.

There are 3,217 new cases of coronavirus, according to the daily report of the Ministry of Health. According to the Ministry stated that the total number of registered cases in the Sultanate is 287,054, with 260,826 recoveries (90.86 per cent) and 3,472 deaths (1.21 per cent).

The total number of current infections is 22,756 (7.93 per cent) and the total tests that have been conducted during the last 24 hours are 571,472.



Ministry of Heritage and Tourism completes documentation of sunken ship

A3

Eid Offer

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Asr	3.38pm
Maghrib	7.02pm
Isha	8.22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4.04am

Times of Oman

VOL. 9, NO. 20

MUSCAT, THURSDAY, JULY 14, 1983 — SHAWAL 4, 1403

PRICE BAIZAS 200



An Eid prayer congregation in Wadi Kabir.

Prayers and greetings as Oman celebrates Eid

Spontaneous rejoicing, calls for Islamic unity and the exchange of greetings marked the Eid celebrations in Oman signalling the end of 29 days of fasting.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos was joined by leading dignitaries in offering the congregational Eid prayers at the Hayy al-Shati Eid prayer ground in Salalah.

The prayers were led by the Sultan's advisor for religious and historical affairs Sayyid Mohammad bin Ahmad.

Sayyid Mohammad said in fasting, Islam had played a reformatory role of great significance by surrounding the devotees with a unique atmosphere of virtue, dignity and sublimity.

He called upon Muslims to
by Times Reporter

strictly adhere to the fundamental tenets of Islam and prayed to Almighty Allah that Eid would open the floodgates to prosperity not only for the people of Oman but also for Muslims everywhere.

After the sermon, His Majesty's entourage left for Al-Hisn palace in Salalah, as people standing on both sides of the highway paid glowing tributes to his inspiring leadership and wished him a long life.

On his arrival at the palace, His Majesty was given a twenty one gun salute and later renewed the guard of honour as the Royal Anthem was played.

The monarch later received a large number of Eid well-wishers including tribal sheikhs and town

Eid

dignitaries.

The biggest Eid congregation in the country was at the Qaboos Mosque in Ruwi where about 25,000 people gathered.

The prayer started at about 7 a.m., but the central hall of the mosque, the main corridor and parts of the courtyard were packed with people long before 6a.m.

Buses, trucks and pick-ups, carrying labourers from camps all over the Capital, kept on entering the outer space of the mosque, as verses from the Holy Quran were read over the loudspeakers.

The Grand Mufti of Oman His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad bin Hamad Al-Khalili normally leads the prayer service at Qaboos Mosque but this year he went to the Khor Mosque in Muscat.

At Qaboos Mosque, the service was led by Sheikh Saeed bin Khalaf al-Kharusi, Principal Magistrate at the Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

In his Eid sermon, Sheikh Saeed spoke of the underlying significance and virtues of the four fundamental duties in Islam — Salat (Regular worship), Zakat (dues to the poor) Saum (fasting) and Hajj (Pilgrimage).

The Grand Mufti, in his Eid sermon at Al-Khor Mosque, said that it was only by strictly adhering to the lofty ideas of Islam that Muslims could regain their lost glory and initiate a chapter of reconstruction and intellectual creativity.

Eid prayers were also held at Abu Bakr Mosque in Wattayeh and the mosques in Mutrah, Wadi Kabir, Wadi Adai, Seeb and other places in the Capital.

● Eid shopping — See page 2.

Flour Mills declares 20 per cent dividend

Oman Flour Mills has declared a 20 per cent dividend for its shareholders.

The dividend was announced at the meeting of the Board of Directors on Saturday chaired by Mr. Barakat Lamki.

Those who attended were Mr. Suleiman al Adawi, Mr. Abdulla Moosa Abdul Rahman, Mr.

Abdalla Bakhatir, Mr. zaher Mubarak, Mr. Sultan Rashed al Balushi, Mr. Mohammad Ali Said and Mr. Mahmood Elsobagi, general manager of the mill.

According to the annual report presented at the meeting the mills earned a profit of R.O. 2,405,519 through sales worth R.O. 10 million.

Rusail is ready for the next phase

With the completion of Phase one of the R.O. 21 million Rusail Industrial Estate the stage is set for the allocation of plots to local industries.

The first industries to be set up in the country's major industrial area will be for batteries, biscuits, plastic furniture, marble products, bulbs and foam insulation.

According to the master plan there is space for 77 industrial plots on the estate which is scheduled for completion in respect of all phases by 1985. The work started on the site in October 1981.

The Ministry authorities are getting ready to start the second phase which will involve construct-

by Muzaffar Mohammad

ion of all infra-structure including roads, sewerage, water, electricity and telephones.

Tenders are being evaluated for consultancy services for designing the infra-structure. The second phase is estimated to cost R.O. 1 million.

The first phase infra-structure which included roads, sewerage, water, electricity and telephones has been completed at a cost of over R.O. 5 million.

Water

Work will shortly start on the

construction of a reserve water supply for the area with a view to ensuring an uninterrupted operation by major industrial plants without shortage of water.

The reserve water storage could supply 2,500 cubic feet of water daily if the normal water supply was interrupted.

For this purpose the management of the industrial area has acquired the pipeline coming from Al Khodh laid down for the cement plant in the area. A reserve water storage will be constructed south of Rusail.

Operation

A contract for the operation and maintenance of essential services in the industrial area is being studied by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The consultants have been asked to prepare tender documents after which a contract will be awarded for a fool-proof run of all essential services in the area.

Steel

Along with the start of work on phase two work in phase three will also be taken in hand to build infra-structure.

This has been planned to provide services to the proposed steel mill for which consultants have recommended a separate site in the industrial area.

● Pictures — page 7.

Chamber will open Interior branches

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry will open branches in major towns in the Interior to provide services to members on their doorsteps.

To begin with offices will be opened in Sohar, Sur, Nizwa and Buraimi. The Chamber has over 14,000 members all over the country.

This was disclosed by Sheikh Ahmad Mohammad bin Omeir, President of the Chamber last week.

Talking to the Times he said that the opening of branch offices in Interior towns will greatly benefit businessmen and save them from

inconvenience as they have travel to Muscat at present to complete business formalities at the Chamber.

Asked about chamber plans Sheikh Ahmad said: 'We are thinking of holding Oman Day in various European capitals. The move is aimed at informing foreigners of the tremendous development taking place in Oman and to encourage them to enter in joint ventures with Omani traders'.

This will also help in the flow of expertise and investment into the country, he added.

Asked about strategy for solving businessmen's problems the president said that the Chamber has approached the Ministries on these problems.

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Special packages for stuck expats on offer

The 15-day packages are designed to allow people from certain countries to overcome travel restrictions



Starting at about OMR290, the package includes a 15-day stay at a hotel in the Maldives, a PCR test at the hotel, transfer to and from the hotel and the airport (by speedboat if necessary), as well as breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

“The good thing about the Maldives is that you don’t have to quarantine in your hotel when you get there, you are free to move about and explore the area,” explained Khan. “This package is primarily aimed at people flying from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but anyone is free to approach us if they want to book it for themselves.”

“For example, passengers from the Philippines cannot land here if they are coming from their home country, so this is a good

opportunity for them as well,” he added. “Compared to the costs passengers would incur a couple of months ago to return to Oman, this Maldives package is about OMR200 less.”

While the lowest package price will get passengers a hotel in Male, the Maldivian capital, it is only available for those who will be entering the island nation after the 30th, although bookings for them are open. Other options are also available for those who wish to spend their time at a resort, while they are in the archipelago.

Guests who wish to occupy a room at a resort in the Maldives for a fortnight will have to shell out about OMR700 for single occupancy, and roughly OMR460

for double occupancy.

“Since we made public this package on July 13, we have seen huge demand from a lot of corporate clients, particularly those who want to bring back their employees, who have not been able to fly back to Oman, because of the restrictions related to the pandemic,” revealed Khan.

“The moment we saw so many requests coming in, I had to request their airlines to block some seats for our customers, and contact the hotels in Maldives to reserve inventory for us, so that we have enough to meet most of the demand we’re facing,” he said.

Khan added that he had held a staff meeting to instruct his team to process booking applications, because of the sheer numbers of inquiries they were getting.

Passengers who do make use of this facility will of course need to once again quarantine at a hotel on arrival in Oman.

“We have blocked rooms in hotels in Oman, as well as seats on flights departing Male and arriving in Muscat, because we know there is going to be demand on those planes as well, once people have finished their 15-day stay in the Maldives,” Khan said.



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شركة مطاحن الدقيق العمانية
Oman Flour Mills Company



REF: OFM/TD-21/-026

Tender for Supply of Liquefied petroleum Gas (LPG)

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialist vendor to participate in our tender for the “Supply of bulk LPG to our mills in Jiboo” as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref No.	OFM/TD-21/-026
Tender subject	Supply of Liquefied petroleum Gas (LPG)
Tender fee	RO 25/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	14.07.2021
Last date for tender collection	26.07.2021
Last date for receiving the technical queries	28.07.2021
Closing date of the tender	29.07.2021
Mode of payment of tender fee	By cash
Email address for communication	tender3@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee and deposited in the tender box located at the reception of our Ahyab Investment building on the 29 July 2021.

- Vendor selection will be based on “best and final offer”. OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

- Each bidder must leave a business card with contact details for required communication.

- All tender communication must be addressed to: tender3@omanflourmills.com.

- Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable

- Bids submitted shall consist of 2 separate sealed envelopes (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number (OFM/TD-21/-026 [Supply of Liquefied petroleum Gas (LPG)]).



 omanflourmills  Oman Flour Mills

HERITAGE AND TOURISM MINISTRY

‘Kiva’ ship documentation done

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism completed the scanning and excavation phase at the site of the sunken ship “Kiva” off Governorate of Dhofar’s Mirbat coast.

These efforts are part of the Ministry’s endeavour to preserve and document the underwater cultural heritage. The underwater archaeology team dived and photographed “Kiva” shipwreck, to register the site as an archaeological underwater cultural heritage site in the local and regional waters.

The move comes as part of the Ministry’s efforts to document marine-related and underwater cultural heritage. This documentation is among the first and most important projects executed this year in the underwater antiqui-



HERITAGE: The efforts are part of the Ministry’s endeavour to preserve and document the underwater cultural heritage. -ONA

ties sector. Oman a member state of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, known as the 2001 Convention, which is considered as the international charter for heritage protection that enables

member states to protect and conserve underwater cultural heritage effectively and efficiently. The Ministry works in accordance with the scientific standards and ethical instructions approved by the charter. -ONA



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Story on institutional quarantine for expats

A story on institutional quarantine necessary for expats reached 31,157 people and had 11,517 engagements on Facebook

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4,592 VIEWS



Morning Minute video on Shura Council discussions

The Morning Minute video on Shura Council discussions had 4,592 views and 187 likes on Instagram.

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

5,900 VIEWS



Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 5,900 views and reached 22,900 people on Facebook.



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COLUMN

CONVERGE TO ONE UNIQUE PATH

One crucial aspect to remember is that this decision you are making regarding your career or higher education pathway is a stepping stone and not a destination

IN THE LAST FEW articles, we learnt how to identify and organise our interests, skills and values and explore the various career clusters and career pathways. By this stage, I hope you have created an inventory of possible career options after thoroughly evaluating the different aspects discussed previously. Some of these aspects could be job descriptions, employment prospects, the potential for growth, tangible education and related career pathways, and the interplay with your skills, interests and values.

Now, we come to the toughest stage – making a decision. The most helpful and crucial element in this process is your knowledge and awareness of yourself. This self-understanding is the core of good decision-making and is your best guide. In addition, a tool that can help you is the PACED decision-making method which can facilitate problem-solving in a rational, systematic way.

PACED is an acronym that expands as follows:

P	=	Problem
A	=	Alternatives
C	=	Criteria
E	=	Evaluate
D	=	Decision

Stating or defining the problem

The first step would be to understand and define the problem that must be solved. It relates to the area where you have a dilemma. In the case of career planning, the “problem” would be your need to select a career for you from your shortlisted options.

Listing the alternatives

The next step is to identify and list the possible options for solving the problem. In this case, this would mean your potential career choices. Make a grid listing all your top picks. These could include those that match your skills, or your interests. It is also important to ensure that

your choices match with your core values as this can help you land in a career that is personally fulfilling.

Identifying the criteria

Once you have listed the various alternatives, you need to figure out the features that make these a viable option for you. List down the factors that will influence your preference. What are the important things to think about each alternative? It would help if you determined the values and needs that are being satisfied by each choice. Some examples for criteria could be your passion for the career, the meaning it would offer, the remuneration and potential lifestyle it promises, and the opportunity for growth and career progression. Focus on aspects that make each option seem better than another. You can also add factors like the cost of tuition, standardised tests, and other entrance criteria.



Evaluating alternatives

Once you have the data, you can present it visually, perhaps as a grid or a spreadsheet for ease of comparison. Ask yourself these: how well does each career meet your criteria? Think of the pros and cons of each choice. Visualise the future ahead under

each selection, the potential outcomes and barriers. This exercise can let you anticipate obstacle and even proactively come up with solutions. You can also consider giving each of the alternatives a rating from 1 to 5 (1 indicating least and 5 being the highest score) under each criterion, based on how each of these careers satisfy the said criteria. Adding a numerical value helps to quantify the process and offer an objective assessment.

Making a decision

Finally, you come to the point of finalising one or two choices selections as the best for you, based on the evaluations. You may do so by comparing the parameters. If you have assigned a score under each criterion, add up the values for all the criteria to get a total score for that career option. Have clear, open conversations with your family as often this may also be a family decision that affects everyone.

One crucial aspect to remember is that this decision you are making regarding your career or higher education pathway is a stepping stone and not a destination. It is always possible to deviate or change paths as you learn and grow.

Most of the higher education courses offer transferable skills that guarantee access to diverse kinds of opportunities. After experiencing a greater understanding of the field through their higher education, many graduates go on to pursue careers that are slightly or even totally different from what they first imagined for themselves.

Hence, take this as the first milestone of a lifetime of self-discovery and growth.

Dr Baby Saamuel is the Vice-Chairman, Knowledge Oman and is Ex-Chairman, Indian Schools in Oman. You can contact him at mail@babysam.biz for queries or suggestions.



While Tawi Ateer in Salalah is one of the biggest solvent sinkholes in the world, Teeq Cave at the top of the sinkhole has numerous entrances, narrow paths, waterfalls, and panoramic views. In Al Mughsayl, about 40 kilometres from Salalah, one can see the magnificent natural blow-holes, oceanic views, and the famous Al Marnif Cave. The cave has been equipped with visitor-friendly facilities. A protective fence has been installed on the side overlooking the sea, in addition to seating, corridors, walkways and a bridge.

According to Oman’s Ministry of Tourism, “Tawi Ateer Sinkhole, known as the ‘Bird Well’ gained international fame after its discovery in 1997 by a team of Slovenian explorers in collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University as one of the largest solvent sinkholes in the world. This adds to the Sultanate’s rich biodiversity, its geographical and historical richness, and its historical and archaeological sites, as well as its remains of early civilisation, all of which endorse the Governorate of Dhofar as a tourist destination, and boost the various opportunities for those interested in discovery, along with nature and adventure lovers.

“The capacity of the Teeq Sinkhole is about 975 thousand cubic metres. Its diameter is between 130 to 150 metres and its depth is 211 metres. Water flowing down the valleys has resulted in the formation of the sinkhole, with its magnificent waterfalls along the intersection with Teeq Sinkhole.

“Teeq Cave is near the top of the sinkhole. It has no less than six entrances, the largest of which is the Western entrance and wall which can be seen from the top of Teeq Sinkhole. You can reach that entrance along narrow paths located off the main trail. From those paths you can enjoy panoramic views of the sinkhole and its waterfalls.”

TAWI ATEER: ONE OF THE LARGEST SOLVENT SINKHOLES IN THE WORLD





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SULTANATE'S DELEGATION

Oman to participate in four events at Tokyo Olympic Games

MUSCAT: The Sultanate will participate in the Olympic Games, scheduled in Tokyo in four sporting events - shooting, athletics, swimming and body-building.

The list of athletes taking part in these events comprises of Barakat Al Harthi in the 100-metre race and Mazoon Al Alawi in the same category. Issa Al Adawi in the 100-metre freestyle swimming, while the national shooting team will be represented by Hamad Al Khatri.

The list of weight-lifting includes Amer Al Khanjari who will participate in the 81-kg category.

Meanwhile, Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) held on Tuesday a meeting chaired by Khalid bin Hamad Al Busaidi, chairman of the committee.

The meeting was held with the Sultanate's delegation taking part in the 32 Olympic Games scheduled for the Japanese capital of Tokyo from July 23 to August 8.

The meeting was held at the



premises of Oman Olympic Academy in the presence of Taha bin Sulaiman Al Kushri, Secretary General of Oman Olympic Committee, Kadhim Al Balushi director of the delegation / mission to the Olympic Games and the representatives of the national teams taking part in the event

and the local/press media.

Preparations

Chairman of the Committee gave a speech in which he spoke about the efforts accorded during the preparations period by the technical bodies of the national teams, despite the impacts and condi-

tions of COVID-19 pandemic, on the sports sector.

In his speech with members of the delegation taking part in the event, he said that much is expected from the delegation in terms of achievement of advance results and technical levels and in representing the Sultanate in a manner



that deserves appreciation and which represents a source of pride to the Sultanate in this international sports event.

"We require you to be the best ambassadors for the Sultanate in this event and to extend due efforts to bag the best results and to avail from competing with the best

players, worldwide," he added.

A number of athletes participating in the event expressed their thanks for the Oman Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the sports associations for the efforts extended to facilitate their participation in the event. — OMA

SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES

SAF Chief of Staff leaves for Qatar

Muscat: The Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) has left Oman for the State of Qatar on an official visit.

"Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis bin Abdullah Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, left the country Monday evening, for the State of Qatar on an official visit that will last for several days," the Ministry of Defence said in a statement, on Wednesday.

FOR PAYMENT OF DUES

Circular on regulating subcontractor payments issued by finance ministry

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance issued Financial Circular No. 5/2021 about assessing subcontractor dues on Tuesday.

In the circular, the Ministry directed all ministries, government units and state firms to ask contractors to furnish proof that the designated subcontractors have received all their dues in accordance with past payment certificates and prior to the final-

isation of settlement of their (the contractors') payments scheduled to be received in return for executed tasks.

The circular states that, due to the importance of adhering to laws and legislations regulating business dealings, the Ministry of Finance requests all departments concerned to fully abide by the content of this circular as a measure to serve the public interest.

Internal audit departments in ministries and government units have to monitor the units' commitment compliance with the circular.

The Finance Ministry stresses that the circular is aimed at limiting the non-abidance of firms and establishments to the contracts awarded them when making due payments to subcontractors as per the contracts. — OMA

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OMAN VISION 2040

FROM A1 Upshift has already rolled out across 30 countries

Depending on the age groups of the participants, Upshift has three broad training programmes.

The first is for those preparing to enter the job market. Participating companies will establish an in-house unit to provide employability skills, training and recruit trainees for apprenticeships, internships and on-the-job learning. Academic institutions will also be invited to support skills building.

The second component is the social enterprises virtual training package for young people aged 18 to 29 who will have the opportunity to participate in youth challenges and incubation programmes, receive technical coaching and, potentially, seed money to fund successful ideas and solutions.

The third component is for 10-to-18-year-olds in schools and covers psychosocial skills for resilience and development, transformational leadership, innovative thinking and problem solving.

Lana Al Wreikat, the UNICEF Representative to Oman, added that Upshift has already been rolled out across 30 countries.

"We hope this programme delivers measurable outcomes, as it has been specifically developed based on studies and accurate planning that looks at regional benchmarks, and considers sev-

eral surveys on the youth and job markets," she said.

"This initiative is also built on the role of the private sector, so their contribution is of particular importance. Everyone will have their chance to provide more proposals and efforts to implement in different parts of Oman.

"We will have lists of youth that reside in these areas, and will work together with the National Centre for Statistics and Information and Ministry of Social Development, to look at the role of youth," added Al Wreikat.

"We are trying to know what is necessary for them to learn, look at their realistic needs, and customise initiatives that can essentially be translated into workforce enablement."

Among those present at the Upshift launch was Areej bint Mohsin Haider Darwish, chairperson, MHD Group of Companies, who said she was glad to support the new initiative. "I am sure other members will also support this strategy," she added. "We are sure this programme will fall in line and help achieve the targets of Oman Vision 2040."

Abdul Amir Al Ajmi, Director of External Affairs and Value Creation at Petroleum Development Oman, said the programme could help the country's youth unlock their potential, which could bring about plenty of positive change in

their communities.

"PDO is a company that has been supportive of these initiatives for a while," he explained, while listing a number of youth development programmes run by the company. "We are always looking forward to any initiatives that strengthen our communities and work with different stakeholders. We look forward to leveraging our experience and best international practices to develop these initiatives."

Among the efforts run by PDO for youth are the Edaad programme (Arabic for 'prepare') that connects the industry with academic institutions that was launched in 2020, and had over 200 participating students. Another is a training and internship effort that supports fresh graduates, which has helped provide more than 500 job opportunities.

The oil and gas company also runs a 12-month internship programme for fresh graduates that provides them advanced skills, professional ethics, and discipline required to participate in the job market, as well as scholarship opportunities for youth who live in areas where PDO operates.

Aimen Al Hosni, the CEO of Oman Airports, also welcomed the arrival of Upshift in Oman, saying it was a great opportunity for companies and youth to learn from each other.



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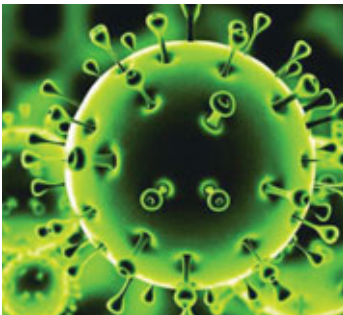
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COVID CASES

India reports 31,443 new COVID cases, lowest in 118 days

NEW DELHI: With 31,443 new COVID-19 cases reported in the last 24 hours, India on Tuesday recorded the lowest daily cases in 118 days, informed the Union Health Ministry.

According to the ministry, India's active caseload of COVID-19 cases is at 431,315, the lowest in 109 days. The active cases constitute 1.40 per cent of the total cases. Out of the people infected since



the beginning of the pandemic, 30,063,720 patients have already recovered from COVID-19 and 49,007 recovered in the last 24 hours, said the ministry.

The overall recovery rate increased to 97.28 per cent.

The weekly positivity rate also remained below 5 per cent and is currently at 2.28 per cent.

Further, the daily positivity rate is at 1.81 per cent, less than 3 per

cent for 22 consecutive days.

The testing capacity in the country has been substantially ramped up with 43.40 crore tests conducted so far.

India commenced its COVID-19 vaccination drive on January 16 this year. Till date, 38.14 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far, under the nationwide vaccination drive.

-ANI



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England's Marcus Rashford defiant after racist abuse

Rashford commented after he, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, were subject to a storm of online racist abuse



RACIST COMMENTS: Rashford's statement has since been retweeted over 150,000 times.

LONDON: England's Marcus Rashford said he will "never apologise for who I am" in a statement released on Twitter.

Rashford made the comments late on Monday after he, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, were subject to a storm of online racist abuse following England's Euro 2020 final defeat to Italy, during which they missed penalties.

Rashford's statement has since been retweeted over 150,000 times.

'If I have nothing else I have that'
"I'm Marcus Rashford, 23-year-old

black man from Withington and Wythenshawe, South Manchester. If I have nothing else I have that," Rashford wrote in a statement on Twitter. In his statement, the striker apologized for missing his

penalty, saying: "It's been playing in my head over and over since I struck the ball and there's probably not a word to quite describe how it feels."

"I can take critique of my perfor-

mance all day long, my penalty was not good enough, it should have gone in but I will never apologize for who I am and where I came from," Rashford added.

"Seeing the response in With-

ington had me on the verge of tears," Rashford said, referring to a mural honoring him in the South Manchester suburb which neighbors his home town of Wythenshawe. It had been defaced before locals covered the hateful language with messages of support.

Earlier this year, Rashford had received national plaudits after campaigning for free school meals for children during the pandemic, forcing the UK government into a U-turn.

Did British lawmakers 'stoke the fire' of racist abuse?

The racist torrent was swiftly condemned by top British lawmakers, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel. Patel said she was "disgusted," adding that "vile racist abuse" had no place in the UK.

Johnson said: "This England team deserve to be lauded as heroes, not racially abused on social media."

But their response faced backlash on Monday from Rashford's England teammate Tyrone Mings.

On Twitter, Mings accused Patel of hypocrisy for not condemning fans who booed them taking the knee. Players decided to carry

out the gestures to show solidarity against racial discrimination before their matches.

The knee protest was launched by US-football quarterback Colin Kaepernick and caught on internationally in the wake of last year's Black Lives Matter protests.

At the time, Patel said taking the knee was "gesture politics" and that it was a choice for the fans whether to boo players.

Johnson also refused to criticize the fans over the issue when asked last month. "You don't get to stoke the fire at the beginning of the tournament by labeling our anti-racism message as 'Gesture Politics' and then pretend to be disgusted when the very thing we're campaigning against, happens," Mings, who also plays for Birmingham-based Premier League side Aston Villa, posted on Twitter on Monday.

Meanwhile, tech companies also faced criticism for allowing racist comments to spread on social media. "We need to ensure that those platforms take action and if they don't, the government will take action against them," Stephen Barclay, chief secretary to the Treasury, told Sky News on Tuesday. **bw**



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VIOLATION OF ORDERS

France fines Google €500 million in news copyright row



FINED: The dispute is part of larger efforts in the European Union to get big tech companies to pay publishers for using their content.

PARIS: France's antitrust authority fined Google €500 million (\$593 million) on Tuesday, saying the technology giant did not negotiate "in good faith" with news companies and other publishers over using their content.

Specifically, the regulatory body said Google violated temporary orders to hold negotiations with publishers within three months. The dispute is part of larger efforts in the European Union to get big tech companies to pay publishers for using their content.

Why was Google fined?

News publishers APIG, SEPM and AFP accuse Google of not having negotiated with them in good faith to compensate them for their online news on the tech giant's feed.

Google was forced to negotiate with the media companies after France adopted new EU copyright rules. The companies claimed Google did not find enough common ground with them under the "neighboring rights" EU directive.

APIG, that represents newspapers like Le Figaro and Le Monde is one of the plaintiffs in the case,

although they had a framework agreement already.

The news groups were waiting on this antitrust decision to move forward with their own framework agreement, which according to documents seen by the Reuters news agency, could amount to \$76 million (€64.1 million) over three years.

How has Google responded?

A Google spokesperson said the company was "very disappointed" about the €500 million fine imposed on them by the French antitrust decision.

But the company said it would comply with the ruling. "Our objective remains the same: we want to turn the page with a definitive agreement."

"We will take the French Competition Authority's feedback into consideration and adapt our offers," Google said.

"We have acted in good faith throughout the entire process," the spokesperson said.

"The fine ignores our efforts to reach an agreement, and the reality of how news works on our platforms," the company retorted.

The spokesperson said that it is "the only company to have announced agreements on neighboring rights."

Google has been under fire from regulators in the European Union, with Germany also launching an antitrust investigation into its practices.

What happens next?

US-based Google must now present proposals for how it can compensate publishers for their news articles.

If the tech giant fails to do that, it would have to pay fines of up to €900,000 a day.

French antitrust chief Isabelle de Silva said: "When the authority decrees an obligation for a company, it must comply scrupulously, both in the spirit and letter (of the decision)."

"Here, this was unfortunately not the case," added de Silva.

In separate investigations, the European Commission is looking into claims that Google is driving companies out of business with unfair practices its search results page that is so widely used, it is essentially the gateway to the internet. **bw**

SPORTS



Italy’s football heroes return after Euro 2020 triumph

Giorgio Chiellini, the 36-year-old Italy captain, and coach Roberto Mancini lifted the trophy aloft after the team touched down in Rome

ROME: The Italian national soccer team returned home to a heroes’ welcome on Monday after beating England to win Euro 2020 at Wembley, plunging London into despair as Rome rejoiced. Giorgio Chiellini, the 36-year-old Italy captain, and coach Roberto Mancini lifted the trophy aloft after the team touched down in Rome with “Azzurri” fans chanting “We’re the champions of Europe!” Thousands of fans packed Rome’s sidewalks to wildly cheer as the national side toured the Italian capital in an open-topped bus on Monday evening, crowning a day that saw them honored at the presidential palace and premier’s office and cited by the pope. The team and coaching staff joined Prime Minister Mario Draghi, before a meeting with President Sergio Mattarella, who



HOMECOMING: Thousands of fans packed Rome’s sidewalks to wildly cheer as the national side toured the Italian capital in an open-topped bus

himself was at Wembley to watch Sunday’s match. “I’m not a (soccer) pundit,” the president said at the Quirinal presidential palace as he greeted the team. “But I thought you deserved the victory well beyond whatever happened during the penalty shootout.” Coach Mancini responded, saying: “Let me thank you for being our number one fan. We saw you

exult, that gave us much pleasure.” Team captain Chiellini said: “This is the success of a group, who even in difficult moments never lost heart.” Italy recovered from conceding the quickest goal ever in a European Championship final — after Luke Shaw scored for England with less than three minutes on the clock — to equalize midway through the second half.

They went on to defeat England, 3-2 on penalties, and prolong their opponents’ 55-year wait for a second major title. For Italy, it was the second time they have been crowned European champions. The last time they lifted the trophy was in 1968. The latest success marks a remarkable turnaround after the team failed to even qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia. **ANI**

Jubilant Italian fans erupt in celebration

ROME: “Il calcio è tornato a casa,” read a subheading on the front page of the Corriere dello Sport in Rome on Monday morning after Italy beat England on penalties to win the 2020 European Championship: “Football has come home.” It was a sarcastic play on “Football’s Coming Home,” the tongue-in-cheek English refrain which provided much of the backdrop to the final, but it was as far as the Italian gloating went. The rest was pure pride and joy. “Europe is ours!” screamed La Repubblica. “We are the champions!” added the Corriere della Sera. “The Azzurri conquer Wembley!” read La Stampa. Throughout the night, the cries of joy had been just as loud on the streets as they were on the front pages as Italians celebrated their country’s second European Championship, and their first since 1968. Combined with four World Cups, Italy now have six major international trophies. But if there was ever a time when a prize meant more to a nation, then it’s now.



Italian unity “A lot of people suffered because of the coronavirus pandemic,” said local football fan Luca. “Sport in general is good at bringing people together.” The unity resonates even more when those doing the unifying lead by example. In barely three years in charge, Italy head coach Roberto Mancini has turned a team which didn’t even qualify for the 2018 World Cup into a synchronized machine. They’re now unbeaten in 34 games and kings of Europe. They’re an extremely cohesive unit and it’s something that many fans were quick to point out. “They’re not the best players, but they’re the best team,” said Italy fans Johannes and Nadine, who

travelled all the way from Germany to Rome for the final. The pair celebrated Italy’s victory with thousands of fans in the center of the eternal city. At the start of the tournament, when DW reported on Italy’s opener against Turkey in Rome, the mood was very different. Italy had endured a nightmarish pandemic and several hard lockdowns. After so much human loss, football was almost an afterthought. Many Italians were still concerned about the coronavirus and its economic impact. But with each victory, Mancini’s men won the hearts and minds of a nation that needed a lift now more than ever. And it wasn’t just the success; even in defeat on Sunday night, the team’s qualities would still have resonated with fans. **DW**

AUSTRALIA VS WEST INDIES

Gayle storm helps West Indies register series clinching win over Australia

GROS ISLET: A vintage knock from Chris Gayle aided with skipper Nicholas Pooran’s calm approach helped West Indies thrash Australia by six wickets in the third T20I on Monday. With this win, West Indies secured T20I series victory over Australia with two more games to go. A quality death bowling from West Indies had restricted Australia to 141/6 before the hosts chased down the total comfortably with 31 balls to spare. During the run chase, Gayle also became the first player to smash 14000 runs in the shortest format of the game. Chasing 142, West Indies got off to a bad start as Mitchell Starc struck in the first over dismissing Andre Fletcher for four runs. Lendl Simmons and Chris Gayle then stitched a 38-run stand for the second wicket before Riley Meredith removed the opener reducing West



Indies to 42/2 inside the powerplay. However, Gayle continued smashing the ball as he found his form to bring up his first T20I fifty since 2016. He smashed three consecutive sixes to get to his half-century. Meredith dismissed Gayle in the 12th over but the damage was done as West Indies just needed 33 runs in eight overs. Pooran and Andre Russell in end guided

the hosts to a series-clinching win over Australia in the 15th over. Earlier opting to bat first, Australia scored just 141 runs despite a good start. Matthew Wade and skipper Aaron Finch stitched a 41-run stand for the first wicket in five overs. However, the visitors kept losing wickets at regular intervals as the batsmen never really looked comfortable during the innings. **ANI**

TENNIS

Roger Federer withdraws from Tokyo Olympics

LAUSANNE: Swiss tennis maestro Roger Federer on Tuesday withdrew himself from the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. In a statement released on Twitter, Federer wrote: “During the grass-court season, I, unfortunately, experienced a setback with my knee, and have accepted that I must withdraw from the Tokyo Olympic Games.” “I am greatly disappointed, as it has been an honour and highlight of my career each time I have represented Switzerland. I have already begun rehabilitation in the hopes of returning to the tour later this summer. I wish the entire Swiss team the best of luck and I will be rooting hard from afar,” he added. Earlier, after losing to Poland’s Hubert Hurkacz in the quarter-finals of Wimbledon 2021, the Swiss tennis maestro had said: “I really do not know if that was the last time I will play Wimbledon.”



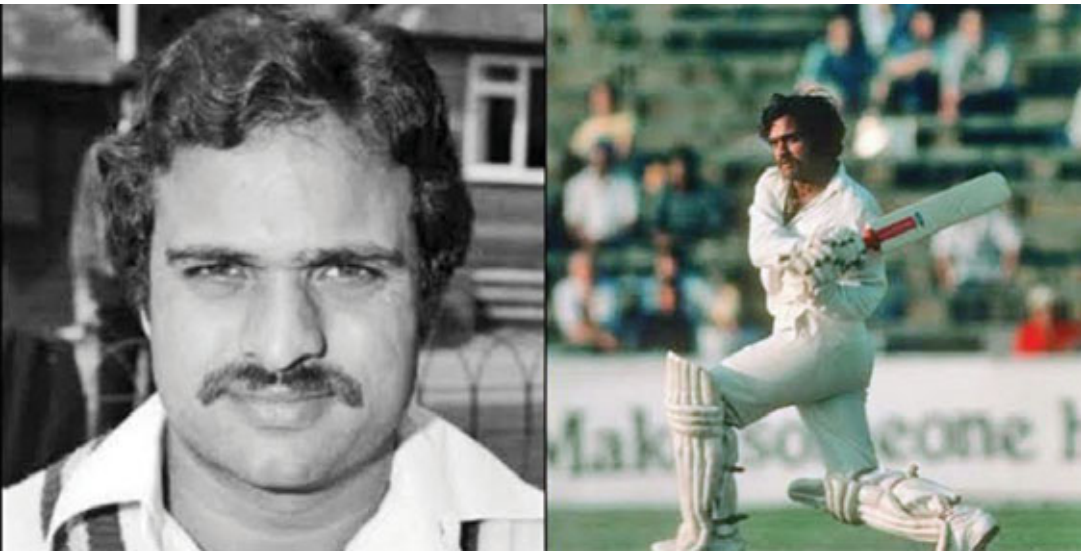
Hurkacz stunned 39-year-old Federer to storm into the semifinals of the tournament. Hurkacz defeated Federer 6-3, 7-6, 6-0 in straight sets in the quarterfinals of the Grand Slam here at the Centre Court. “I really do not know if that was the last time I will play Wimbledon. I have to take a few days, then go from there. Hubert played great. It was tough, you know,”

Wimbledon’s official website quoted Federer as saying. “The last few games obviously... you can feel that you are not coming back from it. I am not used to that kind of situation, especially not here,” he added. On Sunday, Novak Djokovic tied Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal’s record of 20 Grand Slam titles after the Serbian won his sixth Wimbledon title. **S. ANI**

CRICKET HERO

1983 World Cup winner Yashpal Sharma dies of cardiac arrest

NEW DELHI: Former Indian cricketer and 1983 World Cup winner Yashpal Sharma passed away on Tuesday due to a cardiac arrest. “Yashpal Sharma passed away around 7:40 in the morning due to cardiac arrest. He was declared dead on arrival,” sources close to the family told ANI. Yashpal had made his debut for India in 1978 against Pakistan in Sialkot. He scored 11 runs off 26 balls as Pakistan defeated India by eight wickets. The 66-year-old former cricketer played his first game in the longest format in 1979 against England at Lord’s. The right-handed batsman played 37 Tests and 42 ODIs for India, scoring 1606 and 883 respectively in the formats. The right-handed batsman played a key role in India’s 1983 World Cup win. He had scored 11 runs in the final as India registered a historic win over West Indies. Yashpal played his last game in international cricket in 1985 during the West Indies tour of India.



WORLD CUP WINNER: The right-handed batsman played 37 Tests and 42 ODIs for India, scoring 1606 and 883 respectively in the formats

President, cricket fraternity pay tribute The passing away of former India cricketer Yashpal Sharma on Tuesday sent shockwaves across

the country and people from all walks of life paid tribute to the 1983 World Cup winner. The President of India Ram Nath Kovind mourned the loss of

the former cricketer as he tweeted: “Sad to hear about the demise of cricketer Yashpal Sharma. His remarkable performances during the key matches in 1983 cricket

World-Cup played a crucial role in one of India’s greatest triumphs in cricketing history. My deepest condolences to his family, followers & team members.” Yashpal Sharma passed away due to cardiac arrest early on Tuesday morning. He was also an umpire and a national selector. “Shocked and deeply pained by the demise of Yashpal Sharma ji. Have fond memories of watching him bat during the 1983 World Cup. His contribution to Indian cricket shall always be remembered. My sincere condolences to the entire Sharma family,” tweeted Sachin Tendulkar. Taking to Twitter, Yuvraj Singh wrote: “Very sad news of the untimely demise of Yashpal Sharma paaji. May his soul rest in peace. My condolences to his family and loved ones #YashpalSharma.” Virender Sehwag also remembered one of the heroes of the 1983 World Cup win as he tweeted: “So sorry to hear about #YashpalSharma Paaji’s passing away, one of the heroes of our 1983 WC win. Heart-

felt condolences. Om Shanti.” Krishnamachari Srikkanth, the former teammate and friend of Yashpal also condoled the demise of the star cricketer. He said: “Sad to hear the demise of my former teammate and friend #YashpalSharma! He was one of the main heroes who helped us lifting the 1983 world cup! May his soul rest in peace.” Yashpal had made his debut for India in 1978 against Pakistan in Sialkot. He scored 11 runs off 26 balls as Pakistan defeated India by eight wickets. The 66-year-old former cricketer played his first game in the longest format in 1979 against England at Lord’s. The right-handed batsman played 37 Tests and 42 ODIs for India, scoring 1,606 and 883 runs respectively in the formats. The right-handed batsman played a key role in India’s 1983 World Cup win as he was the second-highest run-getter in the showpiece for India. Yashpal played his last game in international cricket in 1985 during the West Indies tour of India. **ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2021 reaching \$74.50, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil increased by 89 cents from the price of Monday, which was at \$73.61. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,087.23 points, down 0.51 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index down 0.07 per cent at 597.40 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 4.66 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Hassan Engineering, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser.

Sohar Port offers huge potential for Omani and Indian businesses

Webinar series
by Sohar Port
and Freezone
in collaboration
with Federation of
Indian Chambers of
Commerce & Industry
will be conducted
targeting the various
key industries such
as food, automotive,
plastics and metals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), has launched a series of five online webinars to explore opportunities between Sohar and the Indian market.

In the following months, four more webinars will be conducted targeting the various key industries such as food, automotive, plastics and metals.

The first, 'Accessing Industrial



Omar Al Mahrizi

and Logistic Solutions to Maximise Your Market Reach' included presentations from Sohar Port and Freezone's Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Sohar Freezone CEO, Omar Al Mahrizi, on Sohar's strategic advantages, and its Free Trade Agreement Adviser, Emmee Haun, on how to utilise Sohar to access the US market. Guest speakers from established investors Jindal Shadeed, Sameer Gupta and Khimji Ramdas, Malvika Khimji highlighted their own success stories.

Omar Al Mahrizi said, "Oman and India have enjoyed decades of bilateral trading, linked by history, culture and warm and cordial relations. As a well-connected



IDEAL PLATFORM: The webinars will provide unrivalled insight into the opportunities available to participating companies for producing or adding value to their products by partnering with Sohar Port and Freezone. - **Supplied picture**

integrated hub with established clusters, our close geographical location, coupled with prime waterfront access, leasable land options and excellent infrastructure are all key ingredients to provide Indian investors with unique business opportunities. This webinar series provides the ideal platform for us to highlight these prospects to FICCI's vast network, paving the way for future business development and closer relations."

An inspiring 70 Indian businesses took part in the first session, which focused on promoting access to Sohar Port and Freezone's strategic advantages and location to maximise market reach between India, the GCC, Africa

and the US. The agenda for forthcoming webinars will be released before each event.

The series of webinars will provide unrivalled insight into the opportunities available to participating companies for producing or adding value to their products by partnering with Sohar.

Through the competitive utility prices, attractive incentive packages, and rich source of raw materials offered by the Port and Freezone, in addition to the benefit of the Oman-US Free Trade Agreement for duty-free access on qualifying products.

There is huge potential for expanding mutually beneficial commercial partnerships between

Indian and Omani enterprises.

Sohar Port and Freezone is already home to several prominent Indian investors including Jindal, Larsen and Toubro (L&T), and Moon Iron and Steel Company (MISCO) and with several new infrastructure projects and investments underway, there is ample room for growth.

Meanwhile, it is also heavily invested in innovative sustainability practices and projects, with an emphasis on renewable energy, one of India's fastest-growing sectors. Businesses keen to set up at Sohar can benefit from a myriad of incentives, easy set-up facilities and take advantage of the company's global outreach across Africa, Asia

and the Middle East markets.

Sohar Port & Freezone recently released its Q1 2021 results noting growth in all categories of cargo compared to the same period the previous year.

Throughput increased by 21 per cent over the same period in 2020, dry bulk volume grew by 23.6 per cent to almost 9 million tonnes, breakbulk handling grew by 6.8 per cent to 426,783 and liquid bulk increased by 7 per cent to just over 4 million tonnes.

In addition, the number of containers handled rose by 1.9 per cent to 1.9 million and the total vessels visiting the port rose by 13.7 per cent to 843 vessels as the Port continues to expand operations.

INVESCO REPORT

57% of Middle East's sovereign investors saw drawdowns in 2020

DUBAI: The impact on public finances led some governments to tap their sovereign wealth funds for capital to fund spending and plug budget deficits as more than a third of sovereigns, and 57 per cent in the Middle East, saw drawdowns during 2020 including 78 per cent of liquidity sovereigns and 58 per cent of investment sovereigns, according to Invesco's ninth annual Global Sovereign Asset Management Study.

The study detailed the views and opinions of 141 chief investment officers, heads of asset classes and senior portfolio strategists at 82 sovereign wealth funds and 59 central banks across the globe, who together manage \$19 trillion in assets.

With COVID-19 top of mind, impacting both operations and investment strategies, the impact of the ongoing pandemic is a major theme running throughout this year's report.

Liquidity in focus as COVID-19 leads sovereigns to face drawdowns and double cash reserves

In response to COVID-19, governments rushed to implement policy measures designed to prop up their economies and public services such as health, as well as providing support for businesses and households at a time when tax revenues retreated with depressed economic activity.

Josette Rizk, Director Institutional Clients Middle East & Africa at Invesco, said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a focus on liquidity for Middle East sovereign funds, both to fund short term demands and to take advantage of future opportunities. Given the commodity-based nature of regional sovereigns, it is not surprising that they were called on for support to fund necessary business relief as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic through drawdowns."

Many sovereign funds have learned the importance of building large liquidity reserves, following the global financial crisis, and were successful in supporting local economies and large

“

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a focus on liquidity for Middle East sovereign funds, both to fund short term demands and to take advantage of future opportunities

Josette Rizk
Director Institutional Clients Middle East & Africa at Invesco

companies in need of stabilisation finance. But the scale and speed of withdrawals for those that hadn't, meant a significant impact on allocations, and led sovereigns to reevaluate liquidity risk management. This has prompted a shift towards cash, with portfolio cash reserves more than doubling during 2020, as some sovereigns continued to focus on liquidity in anticipation of possible further withdrawals.

However, sovereigns also noted that the pandemic had shone a spotlight on the importance of liquidity more generally, both as a buffer for future black swan events and to afford the flexibility to take advantage of market opportunities when they arise, such as the early run inequities at the start of 2020.

The study also revealed a shift in asset allocation as sovereigns were forced to look elsewhere in the face of falling fixed income yields, as the widespread easing of monetary policy pushed rates lower.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

MUSCAT: Oman's central bank raised OMR187.4 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday. The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 91 days, from July 14 until October 13, 2021.

The average accepted price reached 99.807 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.805 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.77487 per cent and 0.77637 per cent, respectively.

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 0.5 per cent while the dis-



count rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 0.75 per cent.

Treasury bills are short-term

highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity

to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

Recurrent expenditures

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Maha Ceramics, up 4.66 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Hassan Engineering, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,087.23 points, down 0.51 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index down 0.07 per cent at 597.40 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 4.66 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Hassan Engineering, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as turnover. A total number of 807 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR5.82 million, with more than 24.5 million shares changing hands. Out of 55 traded stocks, 8 advanced, 24 declined and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, local investors were net buyers for OMR3.02 million while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR2.75 million followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR270,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6514.19 points, down by 0.51 per cent. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Dhofar Insurance, Bank Nizwa, and Bank Muscat were up by 1.43 per cent, 1.06 per

cent, 1.01 per cent, and 0.45 per cent respectively. Prices of National Bank Oman, Muscat Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Sohar International Bank, and Takaful Oman were down by 4.26 per cent, 3.18 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.02 per cent and 1.00 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5928.06 points, down 0.13 per cent. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Jazeera Steel Products, and National Aluminium were up by 4.66 per cent, 2.11 per cent, and 0.61 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Hassan Engineering, Oman Flour Mills, Gulf International Chemicals, Al Anwar Ceramics, and Raysut Cement were down by 7.69 per cent, 4.08 per cent, 2.40 per cent, 2.04 per cent, and 0.69 per cent respectively. Services Index was down by 0.13 per cent before closing at 5928.06 points. The price of Renaissance Services shares closed higher by 0.93 per cent. Prices of Muscat Desalination, National Gas, Al Suwadi Power, OIFC, and Sembcorp Salalah were down by 2.22 per cent, 1.84 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.55 per cent, and 1.18 per cent respectively. – United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JULY 13

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000000005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	466,085	188,174	77	0.400	0.410	0.396	0.404	0.386	0.018	4.663	0.396	0.394	0.410	0.100	22,220,000
OM0000000017	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	120,378	46,794	17	0.380	0.390	0.380	0.388	0.380	0.008	2.105	0.384	0.382	0.390	0.100	48,460,408
OM0000000324	RENAISSANCE SER	287,000	125,248	20	0.430	0.440	0.430	0.436	0.432	0.004	0.926	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.100	103,074,760
OM0000000796	BANK MUSCAT	8,419,814	3,795,926	61	0.446	0.460	0.446	0.450	0.448	0.002	0.446	0.454	0.454	0.458	0.100	1,608,513,656
OM0000001555	OMINVEST	6,270	912	2	0.316	0.316	0.316	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.316	0.316	0.320	0.100	238,497,145
OM0000001707	OMAN CARLES INDSTR	500	482	1	0.964	0.964	0.964	1.050	1.050	0.000	0.000	0.964	0.976	1.155	0.100	94,185,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	76,500	18,772	6	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.000	0.000	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.100	81,725,555
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	45,580	20,363	7	0.410	0.420	0.410	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.412	0.440	0.100	25,705,795
OM0000003000	AI MAHA MARKTING	131	99	1	0.752	0.752	0.752	0.780	0.780	0.000	0.000	0.752	0.752	0.780	0.100	53,820,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	13,280	10,411	6	0.784	0.784	0.780	0.784	0.784	0.000	0.000	0.780	0.780	0.788	0.100	388,000,000
OM0000006920	VISION INSURANCE	97,550	8,439	6	0.087	0.087	0.086	0.087	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	8,700,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	14,710	4,266	5	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.292	-0.002	-0.685	0.290	0.263	0.320	0.100	56,000,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.S	2,386,800	270,161	50	0.123	0.123	0.122	0.122	0.123	-0.001	-0.813	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.100	35,610,091
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	57,813	6,512	5	0.113	0.113	0.111	0.113	0.114	-0.001	-0.877	0.112	0.111	0.114	0.100	220,311,294
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	82,200	9,501	13	0.112	0.113	0.110	0.112	0.113	-0.001	-0.885	0.110	0.110	0.111	0.100	22,400,000
OM0000003668	QUREDOO	410,579	166,725	22	0.406	0.406	0.406	0.406	0.410	-0.004	-0.970	0.406	0.406	0.408	0.100	284,283,557
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	72,304	7,036	3	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.096	0.100	0.100	236,147,153
OM0000001525	OMAN INVEST FIN.	31,242	29,451	16	0.128	0.128	0.125	0.127	0.128	-0.002	-1.550	0.125	0.125	0.126	0.100	30,059,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	501,500	53,696	31	0.109	0.109	0.106	0.108	0.110	-0.002	-1.818	0.106	0.106	0.107	0.100	9,720,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	151,200	24,242	19	0.163	0.163	0.159	0.160	0.163	-0.003	-1.840	0.160	0.159	0.159	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000002168	ALANWAR CERAMIC	40,300	19,345	2	0.482	0.482	0.480	0.480	0.480	-0.010	-2.041	0.480	0.474	0.480	0.100	105,600,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	228,387	13,932	10	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.062	-0.002	-3.175	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	18,735,926
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	46,250	34,751	11	0.768	0.768	0.740	0.752	0.764	-0.032	-4.082	0.740	0.744	0.744	0.100	118,440,000
Total		15,753,173	4,574,066	391												
29																
Parallel Market																
OM0000000325	GLOBAL INV.H	4,972,962	345,992	159	0.071	0.072	0.069	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.069	0.068	0.071	0.100	14,200,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAIR INSURANCE	30,000	5,700	3	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.188	0.002	1.064	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	147,738	14,766	6	0.098	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.099	0.001	1.010	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.100	150,000,000
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	81,800	13,387	14	0.186	0.186	0.183	0.184	0.183	0.001	0.613	0.183	0.162	0.163	0.100	5,505,718
OM0000001517	HSCB BANK OMAN	2,000	204	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.102	0.104	0.100	202,031,592
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	91,677	6,661	6	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.073	0.100	8,896,875
OM0000001982	AL MADINA INV.	202,250	4,788	7	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.024	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.023	0.022	0.024	0.100	4,971,633
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	275,000	16,500	11	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.058	0.060	0.100	20,945,665
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAIR	95,877	12,081	2	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.126	0.122	0.126	0.100	377,540,281
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORP.	30	2	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.080	0.100	5,533,367
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	297,212	25,402	30	0.086	0.087	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.080	0.085	0.100	21,555,150
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEER	322,555	26,772	17	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.100	16,847,875
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	230	11	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.044	0.047	0.100	9,945,450
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	5,000	340	1	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.066	0.070	0.100	13,375,585
OM0000004689	SHARQIAH DESALIN.	11,000	1,520	3	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.100	11,736,259
OM0000004925	ALBATRAH POWER	142,783	7,706	12	0.054	0.054	0.053	0.054	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.053	0.054	0.100	36,443,921
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	95,368	4,714	11	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	71,667,472
OM0000007407	DHOFAIR GENERATING	10,000	1,280	1	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	28,446,720
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	784,000	118,318	18	0.154	0.155	0.154	0.155	0.156	-0.001	-0.641	0.155	0.147	0.155	0.100	15,500,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	44,331	4,980	3	0.113	0.113	0.112	0.112	0.113	-0.001	-0.885	0.112	0.103	0.113	0.100	60,617,811
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	2,304,808	244,328	42	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.107	0.105	0.107	0.100	18,550,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	135,050	13,370	8	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	9,800,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	25,000	2,355	6	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.094	0.097	0.100	12,220,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	10,000	1,000	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1.075	0.092	0.092	0.095	0.100	60,227,622
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	29,450	2,474	7	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.100	80,184,044
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	13,545	737	5	0.055	0.056	0.054	0.054	0.055	-0.001	-1.818	0.056	0.054	0.056	0.100	38,577,942
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	145,000	7,716	12	0.088	0.090	0.087	0.088	0.09	-0.002	-2.222	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.100	13,688,435
OM0000002928	OMAN NAT. CMT.	43,200	5,266	11	0.115	0.115	0.110	0.112	0.115	-0.005	-4.400	0.110	0.116	0.112	0.100	2,262,000
OM0000001628	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	228,920	41,263	10	0.181	0.181	0.180	0.180	0.188	-0.008	-4.255	0.180	0.175	0.180	0.100	282,670,344
Total		10,427,796	894,341	411												
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In accordance with the provisions of Article 25 of the Companies Law No. 4/74 and the amendments thereto, ر.ع.م. الزهراء الوطنية ش.م.م., which is registered with the Secretariat of Commercial Registry under No. 1260003, hereby announces that it is going to start the liquidation process. Claims should be submitted to the appointed liquidator of the company within six months from the date of publication hereof. Secretariat of Commercial Registry.

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Email: vinodpanchaman@gmail.com

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With 6 years of experience (Oman) in Accounts, Audit, Taxation, VAT, Investment, Budgeting seek suitable placement.

Contact 79848875

SALES MANAGER

Indian National, Mechanical Engineer having 14 years of experience including more than 8 years in Oman as Sales & Purchase Manager for Scaffolding; having good knowledge & experience in Fasteners & Steel wires as well. Valid Oman D/L & release available for immediate recruitment.

Contact: 96497864
Email: taranrajpal@gmail.com

Business Administrator

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Contact 94887879
Email: amani.alhaj94@gmail.com

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GSM: 96409439
Email: farhansiddiqi2014@gmail.com

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ROUND-UP

Affordable EMIs on redesigned 2021 Mitsubishi Mirage, Attrage

Despite being entry-level models to the Mitsubishi family, the Mirage and Attrage offer class-leading comfort, fuel efficiency, and reliability

MUSCAT: Stylish and comfortable yet affordable, the redesigned and updated 2021 Mitsubishi Mirage five-door hatchback and Attrage four-door sedan are now available from General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi vehicles in Oman, with EMI as low as OMR55 and OMR 57 respectively. This value is inclusive of VAT and a six years/unlimited kilometres warranty and roadside assistance. Commenting on the Mirage and Attrage, Zuwaina Al Azri, Communication Manager, said, “Despite being entry-level models to

the Mitsubishi family, the Mirage and Attrage offer class-leading comfort, fuel efficiency, and reliability. Coupled with their compact size, lightweight, and ample power, they are the perfect vehicles for city commutes. Moreover, as a result of their updated styling and newly added features, these models now offer even greater value for money.” For the 2021 model year, both the Mirage and Attrage feature revised front and rear styling. Out front, the vehicles incorporate Mitsubishi’s latest Dynamic Shield grille design. This revised



front bumper design, in particular, gives both cars a dose of sportiness to go with its efficiency message. These improvements provide the Mirage and Attrage with a more refined, sharper look while visually

tying the vehicles to Mitsubishi’s current design language. On the inside, both models feature comfortable cloth seating and high-quality materials throughout the cabin, together with the best

levels of interior room and cargo storage space available in their class. For 2021, Mitsubishi is also introducing its 7-inch Smartphone Link Display Audio (SDA) System in the Highline versions of

the Mirage and Attrage. Both models retain the 1.2-litre 3-cylinder DOHC engine, featuring the latest version of Mitsubishi Innovative Valve timing Electronic Control (MIVEC), producing 78 horsepower and 100 Nm of torque; ample power for comfortable day-to-day driving. The engine was built with efficiency at its core and teamed with Mitsubishi’s INVECS-III continuously variable transmission, offers class-leading fuel economy of just 4.7l/100km. Both models also come equipped with a wide array of safety features. These include a dual front Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) airbags, four-wheel anti-lock brakes (ABS) with Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD) and Brake Assist, hill start assist, and Active Stability Control (ASC). Additional protection is provided to the vehicle’s occupants by Mitsubishi Motors’ patented hi-tech Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution (RISE) impact-absorbing safety cell technology.

100 PER CENT OMANI BRAND

Dhofar Poultry Company marks 25 years with a strong vision for future

MUSCAT: Celebrating 25 years of successfully serving its valuable patrons with the highest quality chicken, Dhofar Poultry Company (DPC) has established its presence as the fastest growing brand in the fresh and frozen chicken segment, in Oman. With so many commendable years of experience, DPC ensures it constantly innovates to suit the varying demands of a dynamic consumer market while maintaining the same level of quality, taste and hygiene standards its customers are already familiar with.

State-of-the-art hatchery Over the years, DPC has evolved from a farm built out of seven houses that first introduced the concept of sale of fresh chicken in the Dhofar region to an operation that includes 48 modernised EC poultry houses, a state-of-the-art hatchery, the latest processing machinery and equipment, and a nation-wide supply chain network. The products grew to be so loved by consumers that DPC was able to extend its sales and distribution to not just every corner of the Sultanate, but even export to other

GCC countries. The company now plans to enter into newer markets, with an enhanced and diversified portfolio of products. Despite stiff competition and a number of newer brands in the market, DPC has remained the preferred choice amongst consumers due to its distinct freshness and taste. This is achieved by timely delivery through well-organised cold chains. Currently, DPC claims a significant 25 per cent market share in the overall fresh and frozen chicken market in Oman. “We understand the dynamism of the market and we take all the necessary initiatives to incorporate the latest technological innovations to ensure our products are at par with international standards,” said Salim bin Taman Al Maashani. “While we are confident that our customer base will keep growing with every year, our goal for the year ahead is to add new products to our existing product portfolio and expand into newer markets.” With the growing demand for superior quality, slaughtered-by-hand as per Islamic Sharia (100% Halal) and naturally-fed chicken in

markets such as the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar, DPC has customised their products and packages to suit these demands. The popularity of the brand has grown so much over the years that DPC now sells its products at leading hypermarkets like Lulu in UAE and Mega mart in Qatar. In the past (20 years) its exports increasing year on year. **Significant investment** With significant investments in the poultry farming segment, Oman is set to establish itself as a key player in the region, while also reinforcing the nation’s food security objectives and sustaining the requirements of its burgeoning poultry industry. Revered as one of the oldest and the most trusted brand when it comes to fresh and frozen chicken, DPC has been committed to the Sultanate’s long-term objectives in achieving high self-sufficiency and enhanced food security. To meet the rising demand, DPC aims at increasing its production during 2021-2022. In 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources said that the Sultanate had achieved 51 per cent self-sufficiency in the production of poultry meat when the local production in the Sultanate reached about 111,000 tons. To achieve lesser dependency on imports, increase the value of exports, and reduce the food gap, DPC will ensure to support Oman Vision 2040 to increase self-sufficiency in the sector. Commenting on the further plans, Salim bin Taman Al Maashani said, “DPC takes great pride in stating that it is a 100 per cent Omani brand with a strong focus on contributing to the economy.” Poultry farming is considered a vital economic activity that contributes towards achieving food security in the Sultanate through the development of the poultry sector and encouraging investments in the segment. DPC has been recognised as one of the key companies in its sector that have remained steadfast in its commitment to align itself with Vision 2040. Its growing figures and expanding market share over two decades have proved its success while its forecasts for the years ahead are a reflection of the company’s unfaltering ambition to be a key contributor in the sector.

OFF-ROAD MIDSIZE PICKUP



Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner: Ultimate high performance pickup built to conquer the desert

MUSCAT: Dhofar Automotive, the official distributor of Jeep, Dodge, RAM, Chrysler, Fiat and Alfa Romeo vehicles in the Sultanate, has announced the arrival of the Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner, the ultimate in high-speed off-road capability and performance in desert environments to Dhofar Automotive showrooms. Courtesy of the brand’s renowned 4x4 system and significant suspension upgrades, which underwent extensive testing over harsh sand and desert terrain for vehicle durability and protection, the Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner is the first Jeep in the Middle East to wear the ‘Desert Rated’ badge. Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner models feature new, specially-tuned FOX™ 64-mm (2.5-inch) internal bypass shocks with external reservoirs, industry-exclusive FOX front hydraulic jounce bumpers, a reinforced frame, a 25-mm (1-inch) front suspension lift with a silver front skid plate, stronger axles with cast-iron steering knuckles, aggressive front seats with integrated upper bolsters and standard 33-inch tires. All of these standard features enable the Gladiator Sand Runner to become the Jeep brand’s first Desert Rated vehicle. Hatem El-Naggar, General Manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, “We are very pleased to welcome this premium version of Jeep Gladiator to Dhofar Automotive Showrooms in the Sultanate. The Gladiator Sand Runner is the most off-road capable mid-size pickup and craves Jeep’s exceptionally high standards for off-road performance to the Middle East’s extreme desert conditions. Developed and tested in some of the world’s most harsh and rugged regions, the Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner was built in the desert and for the desert. It delivers a new level of capability with the ability to master challenging rock and sand terrains with ease.”

(low range) operating speeds for climbing dunes and other challenging desert events. To earn the Desert Rated badge, Jeep engineers equipped the Gladiator Sand Runner with specially-tuned high-performance FOX 64-mm (2.5-inch) internal bypass shocks to maximize handling, comfort and bottom-out resistance on high-speed sand runs. Industry-first FOX front hydraulic jounce bumpers, which combine race-proven technology with new, cutting-edge features, add additional damping force as the suspension reaches maximum compression to soften impacts and prevent bottoming out in harsh off-road situations. These engineering enhancements to the Gladiator Sand Runner’s suspension provide ride control and confidence on any high-speed sand or desert terrain, while an Off-Road Plus button allows drivers to take the Gladiator to the next level of tractive capabilities. With the push of the button, the driver triggers adjustments to the throttle, transmission shift points and traction control for peak performance on higher speed passes on sand terrain, as well as during low-speed soft sand and rock crawling conditions. In addition, for the first time on a Jeep, the Off-Road Plus drive mode on the Gladiator Sand Runner enables drivers to lock their rear axle at high speeds while in a high range, “4H”.

Proven powertrain The Jeep Gladiator Sand Runner’s 3.6-liter Pentastar V-6 engine delivers 285 horsepower and 260 lb.-ft. of torque and features engine stop-start (ESS) technology as standard equipment. It is engineered to provide a broad torque band with a focus on low-end torque, an essential trait needed for extreme off-roading. An eight-speed automatic transmission is standard with the 3.6-litre Pentastar V-6. Inside the cabin, the Gladiator Sand Runner features more aggressive front seats with integrated upper bolsters to hold occupants comfortably in place during high-speed off-road driving.

ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

Free service package on select Mazda models

MUSCAT: Mazda is celebrating its 100th anniversary and is offering a never-before chance to get a free service package of 150,000km/5 years with select 2020 models of CX-9 and Mazda 6 and free 100,000km/5 years service package with select 2020 models of Mazda CX-3. Injazz service package, these are one of the highest service packages available in Oman. Added with a service interval of 6 months/10,000km, Mazda promises to give you one more reason to buy the stunning Made in Japan brand. No wonder Mazda is rated as the number 1 most preferred car brand by the Consumer Reports survey. These service packages of 100,000 and 150,000km for 5 years are covered under the Mazda Injazz Service, specifically designed for the peace of mind and convenience of Mazda customers. With the most warranty-related aspects covered, it makes the Mazda the most economically friendly car to own in these tough times. With longer service intervals, a 5-year service package and the convenience of a Pick and Drop Service facility now available in the Muscat region, Mazda now exceeds your expectations on style, technology, value and convenience. We understand the importance of these facilities in these tough times and Towell Auto Centre has been designing custom made packages and facilities for a customer experience never heard of in Oman. The Mazda models covered with this package are class-leading in



In its 100th year, Mazda also offers a select range of Mazda 100th Anniversary Limited Edition cars for the discerning few

their respective segments. Mazda CX-9 is the 7 seater Turbo SUV which offers extra space, power, efficiency and safety and is very popular. Mazda 6 sedan is one of the most popular Mazda models globally as well as in Oman and is sure to make you turn your head to take

a glance at it while on the streets. No wonder it is termed as the Head turner by the owners. Mazda CX-3 is the Fun Utility Vehicle with a compact size for the young and the young at heart. The compactness and value of a sedan and the feel of an SUV rolled into one. This offer has everything you would want and more. So do not waste a second and buy the Mazda of your dreams at the nearest Towell Auto Centre showroom. In its 100th year, Mazda also offers a select range of Mazda 100th Anniversary Limited Edition cars for the discerning few. These Limited Edition models are available with a customised interior and 100th-anniversary badge, and will surely make you stand out in the crowd. All the good things offered by Mazda along with the chance to be the lucky few who would own these cars. Make cars that make driving

matter. That’s why we build every Mazda to inspire, excite and most of the all-bring people joy. This philosophy guides everything we do. From technology, to design, to safety. Our cars are built by insightful craftsmen and detail-obsessed engineers who want to elevate your state of being every time you get behind the wheel. Mazda’s home city of Hiroshima in Japan is known for its incredible challenger spirit. Like a phoenix rising, the people of Hiroshima rebuilt their beloved city from the ground up. This strength is what pushes us to prevail against all odds. It’s what inspired us to be more nimble, strategic and most of all creative. And it’s ultimately what led us to mass-produce the rotary engine and win the 24 hours of Le Mans when nobody believed we could. This silent strength is what fuels us to keep challenging the status quo, each and every day.

ROUND-UP

GAC Motor grows network with new showroom in the Sultanate

The location of the showroom was planned to cater to the growing interest in GAC Motor's high quality, durable and reliable range of turbocharged vehicles, among the residents of Seeb Al Mawaleh and the neighbouring areas

MUSCAT: Adding another showroom to its growing network, GAC Motor Oman recently inaugurated a showroom at Seeb Al Mawaleh. The location of the showroom was planned to cater to the growing interest in GAC Motor's high quality, durable and reliable range



of turbocharged vehicles, among the residents of Seeb Al Mawaleh and the neighbouring areas. The low key affair had select few invitees and was held maintaining all health and safety guidelines. Speaking on the occasion, a representative from GAC Motor Oman said, "It gives us great pleasure to inaugurate one more showroom for GAC Motor here in Oman. We thank our customers for making this possible. GAC Motor's award-winning quality, use of materials from world-leading manufacturers, firm focus on aspects like durability and reliability have made them

popular in Oman. What is more interesting is the 5 years / 150,000 km warranty that all GAC Motor vehicles have. It makes the entire ownership experience hassle-free and memorable." Speaking about the growing popularity of the GAC Motor range of vehicles among the people in Oman, he said, "It is very encouraging to see the growing interest for GAC Motor range of vehicles among the people in Oman. Right from attractive designs, to turbocharged power, to an advanced range of features and technologies, GAC Motor vehicles are a good choice for those

who wish to get maximum value for money. GAC Motor vehicles have to be test-driven to believe what sets them apart." With a global perspective, GAC Group has established a world-class car manufacturing system with reputed global suppliers, including a global R&D network, world-class production, global supply chain, and advanced marketing method. All of these inject innovation into the brand's DNA and provide strong technical support and quality assurance, thus helping in realising the goal of "building a world-class brand and a global company."



GAC Motor International is devoted to the production and sales of world-class vehicles, engines, auto parts and car accessories as well as R&D of automobile engineering technology. Since its establishment, GAC Motor International has adopted a global vision and adhered to international standards, forming a world-class car manufacturing system with GAC Motor International's global R&D network, world-class production model, global supply chain system and GAC Motor International's marketing approach as its core. Fascinated by the facility at Seeb

Al Mawaleh an elated customer said, "It is a matter of great delight that GAC Motor Oman has inaugurated this new facility. A gesture like this highlights the brand's focus on bringing customers across Oman closer to the brand while also encouraging them to experience the range first-hand by conveniently visiting a GAC Motor showroom closest to them." In Oman, the GAC Motor range of vehicles includes sedans like the GA4 and GA8, the MPV - GN8 and SUVs like GS3, GS4 and GS8. New World Autos is the distributor for GAC Motor vehicles in Oman.

INSTANT GOODS FINANCING

Alizz Islamic Bank strengthens 'IFIN' services in all Danube Home branches

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank has extended 'IFIN' services for instant financing to all Danube Home branches spread in Oman. Alizz Islamic Bank and IFIN had earlier partnered to launch 'IFIN' services in Danube Home's Al Khuwair Branch and now extends this service to all of the Danube Home Branches in Oman. The 'IFIN' service is the first instant finance service launched by Alizz Islamic Bank in the Islamic banking sector, where it has become possible for customers to obtain financing for goods within ten minutes only. This service allows customers to instantly take home their desired goods such as furniture, luxuries, accessories, health and household appliances from the store having them financed for up to 120 months without the need of visiting any bank branch. Customers whose salaries are deposited with Alizz Islamic bank, whether Omanis with a salary of OMR 350 or expatriate residents with a salary of OMR 800 are eligible for the financing service. In addition to this, with no down payment requirement, customers can finance 100% of the value of the goods. The extension of the IFIN Service to other branches comes as part of the bank's plans to provide a wide range of banking solutions designed with great care. The process of availing of financing has been simplified into a simple 10-minute process at the store's checkout counter, where the customer will go through an online verification process and sign the finance contract following an immediate approval. Goods financing is extended through IFIN based on the Islamic concept of Murabaha, where the bank purchases the goods desired by the customer from the authorised dealer and then sells the same to the customer at an agreed price that is paid in instalments. It offers complete transparency as the customer knows the bank's profit margin and instalment plan at the time of signing the contract. This arrangement allows for immediate ownership of the goods by the customer who can enjoy a buy-now-pay-later option that is fully Shari'a compliant. Alizz Islamic Bank seeks to enter into partnership with various retailers and institutions in the Sultanate to facilitate financing for its customers to include other types of products such as cars, electronics, education, travel and holidays and other products that customers need approvals and quick procedures to implement. All retailers are welcome to join the platform to widen their customer base, boost their sales volumes, and offer their customers a unique shopping experience.



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DINE & STAY PACKAGE

Grand Millennium Muscat launches Eid 'Dine & Stay' for couples and families

MUSCAT: Grand Millennium Muscat has launched a special Eid Dine & Stay package to celebrate with your loved ones. Eid couple stay package is for OMR 160 net in a classic room for two adults for 4 continuous nights and Eid family stay is for OMR 240 net for two classic rooms for 2 adults and 2 kids up to 12 years old. The offer includes breakfast and the option to choose between lunch or dinner at their all-day dining Taybat restaurant with a 20 per cent discount on all food and beverage outlets. subject to availability.



Enjoy the breathtaking view of the City from the Rooftop Infinity Pool, and cool off this summer at the most exclusive ladies' swimming pool in town when you book this promotion. The offer is valid only during Eid Al Adha from July 18 to 24 and is

subject to availability. **Excellent guest experience** "Our main focus is to provide an excellent guest experience and ensuring our guests are happy; and as such, this kind of excellent promotion offer value for money and allow us to provide our guests with an extraordinary summer and Eid experience in a luxurious 5-star property hotel," Luca Medda, Cluster General Manager, Grand Millennium Muscat and Millennium Executive Apartments Muscat.

subject to availability.

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COLLABORATION



MHD ACERE signs agreement with The Chedi Muscat

MUSCAT: In line with its mission to support partnerships with like-minded organisations, MHD ACERE - the automotive division of the Mohsin Haider Darwish Group - entered into collaboration with The Chedi, Muscat - a GHM Hotel. At a small ceremony organised keeping the COVID regulations in mind, Mohsin Hani Al-Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE and Thomas Guss, the GM of The Chedi, Muscat signed an agreement to formalise this relationship. Under this mutually beneficial agreement, MHD ACERE will provide its best-in-class vehicles such as Jaguar XE, Jaguar XF, Range Rover HSE and MG RX 8 to the hotel for its guest transport services for one year. After the ceremony, Mohsin said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank Thomas and The Chedi team for this association. We are very excited to build a deep and meaningful partnership with The Chedi, undoubtedly amongst the best brands in the hospitality sector. Both MHD and The Chedi share a strong luxury heritage and similar values and sentiments. We are glad to provide our class-leading vehicles that will be well-suited for the customers of the hotel. This is the first time MHD ACERE has ventured into a partnership like this and we are very positive about this development." Under this collaboration, MHD ACERE will be providing Jaguar XE - its most advanced, efficient and refined sports saloon and Jaguar XF, the luxury business saloon with distinctive design, dynamic drive and state-of-the-art technologies; along with the most dynamic Range Rover HSE and the bold and capable seven-seater MG RX 8. Thomas Guss was equally elated. "The Chedi Muscat is proud to partner with MHD ACERE, a brand that shares our synergies and similar audiences. We are at the top-end of the luxury business, hence it's extremely important to have high-end cars for our customers. Brands like Jaguar and Range Rover are synonymous with smooth drives and luxury and we look forward to treating our customers to these plush rides." MHD ACERE is one of the main operating clusters of MHD. The cluster represents premium automotive brands like Jaguar, Land Rover, Volvo, McLaren Automotive and MG Motors.

customers of the hotel. This is the first time MHD ACERE has ventured into a partnership like this and we are very positive about this development." Under this collaboration, MHD ACERE will be providing Jaguar XE - its most advanced, efficient and refined sports saloon and Jaguar XF, the luxury business saloon with distinctive design, dynamic drive and state-of-the-art technologies; along with the most dynamic Range Rover HSE and the bold and capable seven-seater MG RX 8. Thomas Guss was equally elated. "The Chedi Muscat is proud to partner with MHD ACERE, a brand that shares our synergies and similar audiences. We are at the top-end of the luxury business, hence it's extremely important to have high-end cars for our customers. Brands like Jaguar and Range Rover are synonymous with smooth drives and luxury and we look forward to treating our customers to these plush rides." MHD ACERE is one of the main operating clusters of MHD. The cluster represents premium automotive brands like Jaguar, Land Rover, Volvo, McLaren Automotive and MG Motors.

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