

"Turtles and other marine animals will look at these bags and think they are jellyfish, because that makes up a part of their food, and they will attempt to eat these bags," he added. "This is going to cause a lot of problems for them. Furthermore, they could affect the coral formations in the sea, and this could have very adverse consequences." **>A4**

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PRAYER TIMINGS

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Egypt and Oman keen on taking ties a notch higher

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The strong ties between the Sultanate of Oman and Egypt are an example not only for the Arab region but a role model for the entire world. The relations between the two countries have historical roots and encompasses political, diplomatic, economic and social dimensions.

With deep-rooted relations between the two great civilizations, the brotherly ties go back to over 4,000 years. One such evidence was the visit of Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut to Dhofar. Even the trade between the two countries goes back to the prehistoric times.

The visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi to the Sultanate, which is the third after assuming power in the Arab Republic of Egypt, reflects the keenness of the political leaderships of both the countries and their efforts to support causes common



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi.

to both the nations.

Egypt values the role the Sultanate plays at all levels in resolving international disputes and conflicts. The Sultanate also holds in great esteem the role Egypt plays

in resolving the conflicts and disputes in the interests of the people of the region.

On 4 February 2018, President Abdel Fattah el Sisi paid a three-day visit to the Sultanate, when

late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour, during his meeting with the President, hailed the role Egypt plays in stability and security in the region.

The then discussions covered a number of issues of common concern and the international efforts for reaching solutions to issues in the region, particularly in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

The leadership, the government and the people of Egypt take pride in the economic relations between the two countries. Egypt also praises the Sultanate's economic and diplomatic policies under the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik as adopted by the Sultanate under Oman Vision 2040.

The Government of Egypt aspires for further growth in investment and economic cooperation and the level of trade between the two countries and attracting the Sultanate's investments in Egypt.

The Government of Egypt has always sought to remove all constraints for Omani investors in the energy and oil sectors. The Government of Egypt also encourages the Egyptian businessmen to increase their investments in the Sultanate of Oman.

The trade between Egypt and the Sultanate of Oman amounted to approximately \$500 million and the Omani investments in the Egyptian market amounted to \$77.5 million distributed into 92 companies operating in the fields of industry, tourism, construction and agriculture.

The Sultanate has always supported Egypt, needless to mention the support during the 1973 October War and Egypt has also praised the role the Sultanate plays in Yemen, in Iran's nuclear dossier which led to the famous US-Iran nuclear accord.

As part of its keenness accorded to international causes, includ-

ing the climate change, Egypt will host in November the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, which will see the participation of a number of leaders from various countries and regional and international organisations.

To this end, Egypt has invited the Sultanate to the event and aspires for a high-level representation from the Sultanate.

Egypt praises the way the Sultanate of Oman deals with the Egyptian community in the Sultanate. The members of the Egyptian community in the Sultanate work in various sectors, including education, health and media among other sectors.

The Egyptian community in the Sultanate is the largest among all the Arab nationalities with 65,448 members, a majority of whom are highly educated and employed in education, media, health and accounting fields.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

People urged to get 3rd COVID dose

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health urged citizens and residents who did not receive the third or booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and those who received the third

dose more than 9 months ago, to take the dose, free of charge, in the nearest health institution.

The vaccine will be also available in private health institutions

that are authorised to administer doses.

The ministry's announcement following the noticeable prevalence of COVID-19 worldwide. -ONA

WAGE SUBSIDY

207 job opportunities announced

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour yesterday announced 207 job opportunities in various private sector establishments within the wage subsidy initiative.

Those job opportunities are divided into 99 for holders of Bachelor's degree, 35 for Post General Education Diploma (GED) holders, 57 for holders of GED and 16 for Pre GED holders. The initiative comes in line with the ministry's plans in employing job seekers in various establishments of the private sector. -ONA



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TENDER NOTICE

Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company hereby announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Tender Fee (RO)	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
T/2449049/2022	Preventive and Corrective Maintenance Services for ACs and Electrical Works for Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company in Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	7/7/2022	25/7/2022
T/24450050/2022	Construction of Water Distribution Networks in Al Amerat Wilayat -1 Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	1500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	7/7/2022	8/8/2022
T/24450054/2022	Construction of Water Distribution Networks in Al Rustaq Wilayat -1 South Al Batinah Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	1500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	7/7/2022	8/8/2022

The tender documents can be purchased from Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC) e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from the date of publication of this announcement until 7/7/2022. The applicants shall pay the tender fee through electronic payment gateway through Supplier Login.

Applicants who are not registered with OWWSC shall register from <https://owwsc.nama.om/Business-with-Us/Vendor-Registration> to have the login credentials of Supplier portal.

All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through OWWSC e-tendering page (Supplier Login).

All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope to OWWSC's Chairman of Tender Committee not later than **3:00 pm** on the bid submission date. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of OWWSC.

The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through OWWSC e-tendering page not later than **3:00 pm** on the date specified above.

For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.owwsc.nama.om or Email to: tender@owwsc.nama.om

www.owwsc.nama.om

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Scenic Salalah beckons tourists as Khareef season gets underway

“The place is exotic, serene and peaceful at the same time. I always go there every Khareef and my family and I are not going to miss it this time,” Salim Al-Kawari, a Doha-based businessman said

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

MUSCAT: Sprawling over 7 kilometres of white, sandy beaches in Salalah, Muriya’s Hawana is now beckoning Khareef holiday makers with its classy luxurious hotels and facilities.

Not just Omanis and expatriates living here but also nationals from the other GCC countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar.

“By this time last year, all the rooms in Muriya’s hotels were filled up very fast. I did not take any chance this season of Khareef, I booked three hotel rooms for my family last week. I did not want



SELF CONTAINED RESORT: Hawana is a self-contained resort with a beach, shops, hotels, a marina, private accommodations and a long promenade lined up with restaurants and cafes.



them to be sold out like last year,” Mohammed Al-Mazrui, a UAE national from Abu Dhabi, told *Times of Oman*.

But he is not the only visitor who aim for Muriya’s comfortable accommodations in Hawana in Salalah. Other tourists say they will settle for nothing else.

“Hawana is my favourite holiday, not just in Oman, but in the other GCC countries as well. The

place is exotic, serene and peaceful at the same time. I always go there every Khareef and my family and I are not going to miss it this time,” Salim Al-Kawari, a Doha-based businessman, told *Times of Oman*.

Hawana also have holiday apartments for families who prefer self-catering accommodations.

“This will be the third year running that I am booking an apartment in the Hawana area because I

have a large family. It is more than enough for us while we are there,” Fahmi Al-Rasbi, an Omani working for PDO, told *Times of Oman*.

Holiday home

Some prefer to own a ‘holiday home’ in Hawana so they can have more time with their families there.

“We bought one of their two-bedroom villas in Hawana so we can go anytime we wish without

worrying about paying for hotels. It is home away from home for us,” Ghalib Al-Jarwani, a construction businessman, said.

Hawana is a self-contained resort with a beach, shops, hotels, a marina, private accommodations and a long promenade lined up with restaurants and cafes.

Some of their freehold accommodations for sale are overlooking the picturesque lagoons with stunning views of the Dhofar Mountains. Other accommodations face

the marina and right at the promenade and restaurants for those who want an easy, walking access into the main attractions.

Muriya is a joint venture between Orascom Development Holding and Omran, which are internationally acclaimed builders of fully-integrated towns. The joint venture has four hotels in Hawana Salalah, which are Fanar Hotel and Residences, Salalah Rotana Resort, Juweira Boutique Hotel and Souly Lodge.

NAMA GROUP

Oman Water and Wastewater teamwork hailed in first anniversary celebrations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the slogan, ‘One Team, One Family’, Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC) recently celebrated the first anniversary of the launch of its operational work in water and wastewater sectors, to become one of the Nama Group of companies working on managing and developing water and wastewater in all the governorates of the Sultanate except Dhofar.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Eng Omar bin Khalifan Al Wahaibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors, the company’s executive management and representatives from different departments of the Company. The company’s employees watched the event from various work sites through the company’s YouTube platform. The celebration opened with a speech delivered by Qais bin Saud Al Zakwani, CEO of the OWWSC, who praised the efforts made by the employees since the launch of the company. He also mentioned the tireless work by its employees to raise the company’s reputation and preserve its image by serving the subscribers to the fullest extent. The CEO hailed the teamwork and cohesion among the employees as one team, one family after integration of the two sectors.

Al Zakwani also highlighted the Company’s most important achievements during the recent period, as follows:

1) The water transmission line project from the desalination plant in Sohar to Ibri in the Dakhil Governorate. The project was



recently completed.

2) The project to strengthen the water transmission line for the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah, in which the completion rate reached 56 percent.

3) The transmission line project for the south and north of Al Sharqiya, with 52 percent of its operational works completed.

4) The company also achieved more than 38 million man-hours without Lost Time Injury (LTI).

All these achievements and

many more are what we have the right to be proud of and our national cadres, and we stand today holding the slogan (One Team... One Family).

In his speech, the CEO also outlined the operational efficiency of the water and wastewater networks, which amounted to 96 percent during the past year, with a total length of approximately 26,000 km. The total water produced in 2021 amounted to about 424 million cubic meters. A specialized team has been set up whose role is to inspect and ensure the quality and safety of the water. The total number of samples collected by the water quality team in 2021 reached more than 68 thousand samples.

Al Zakwani concluded his speech by declaring that the company “will celebrate 1st of June of each year as the annual day of the water and wastewater sector,” provided that our slogan for the new year is ‘High Professionalism for Better Efficiency.’





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SILICONE FOOD TONGS "MISTY" 30CM



55%

~~1.99~~ 0.9 OMR

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MEETINGS

Foreign Minister bids farewell to several ambassadors



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received separately here Dr. Sulaiman Abdullah Al Harbi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman, Mohamed Dori Mohamed Yakub, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Sultanate of Oman, Omar Lebbe Ameer Ajwad, Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman, Dr. Tibor Szatmari, Ambassador

of the Republic of Hungary to the Sultanate of Oman and Haji Sulaini bin Haji Said, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid them farewell at the end of their tours of duty. Sayyid Badr expressed his appreciation for the efforts they exerted in enhancing the relations between the Sultanate of Oman and their countries, wishing them success in their future endeavours. -ONA

FIVE-DAY PROGRAMME

'DECISION MAKING-9'

Training programme held on mastering communication tools

MUSCAT: A training programme on Internal Communication began at the Ministry of Information yesterday. The five-day programme is implemented by the Media Training Centre of the Ministry of Information. The programme aims to learn and benefit from modern technologies that help deliver accessible messages way to the public. As many as 15 participants from various government agencies take part in the training programme. It covers diverse themes, such as introducing scientific theories in the field of communication and benefiting from them in enhancing institutional communication,



the roles and tasks of the Public Relations Department in developing communication channels, and defining the organisation's internal and external communication strategy, in addition to mastering the communication tools for internal motivation. -ONA

Annual strategic exercise begins at National Defence College

MUSCAT: Activities of the annual strategic exercise 'Decision Making-9' began at the National Defence College (NDC) on Sunday. The exercise is carried out by the NDC ninth batch from various military, security and civil units under the direct supervision of Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Commandants of the NDC and Director of the exercise. **Decision making** The exercise aims to enhance the participants' decision making on the strategic level, analysing the main strategic topics within simulated national, regional and international events. 'Decision Making-9' also targets striking a balance in utilising the country's resources to achieve the national interests, establishing harmony in utilising tools of global powers and developing strategic thinking. -ONA



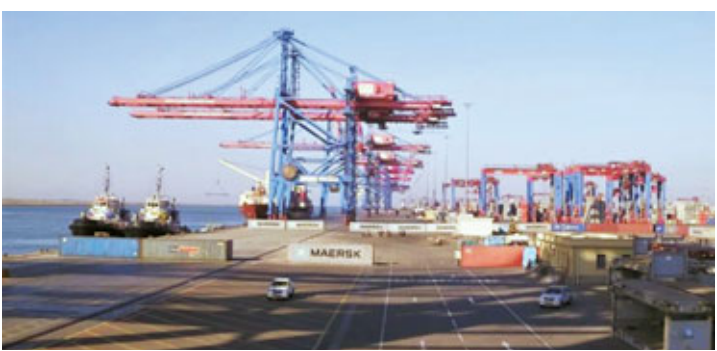
ANALYSING STRATEGIC TOPICS: The exercise aims to enhance the participants' decision making on the strategic level, analysing the main strategic topics within simulated national, regional and international events. - ONA

BUSINESS

Remarkable rise in trade between Oman and Egypt

Statistics indicate that the volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt has witnessed a remarkable increase, as it registered at the end of 2021 about OMR205.8 million, equivalent to US \$535.4 million, compared to OMR97.7 million (US \$254.3 million). The number of Egyptian companies investing in the Sultanate of Oman in 2020 reached about 744 companies, with a total invested capital hitting more than USD 1.856 billion. Oil and gas products, iron ores, polypropylene and polyethylene products, fisheries represented the commodities exported from the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt, while the im-

ported commodities from Egypt are vegetables, fruits, foodstuffs and medical products. Eng. Redha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) called on the private sector in the two countries to establish more partnerships and cooperation particularly in the non-oil sectors being the key targets within the programmes of economic diversification in Oman Vision 2040 and Egypt Vision 2030. He told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Omani-Egyptian Business Council joined hands to develop many visions for cooperation and integration between the two countries. Such visions came up with a number of initiatives,



namely establishing a joint fund between the two sides to develop investment exchange and advance trade exchange, as well as a proposal to establish a joint bank and a specialized medical city in Egypt. On his part, Dr. Ahmed Reza, a member of the Omani-Egyptian Business Council, told ONA that the council functions as a link between the two countries in the economic field. It also seeks to reach the envisaged economic ambition by maintaining cooperation with various government and private institutions and embassies of the

two countries. He expected that the visit of the Egyptian President to the Sultanate of Oman would focus on the economic aspect of the two countries in line with the ambitious visions and plans they seek to achieve. He affirmed that Oman enjoys great investment advantages, particularly in the tourism, industrial, fisheries, mining sectors. Air traffic between the Sultanate of Oman and Egypt is witnessing a continuous growth, whether in the number of flights or new airlines that have operated flights between various airports of the two countries during the last period due to the increasing demand for travel between the two countries for tourism and work purposes. The average number of current

flights between the two countries is about 17 weekly flights between Muscat and Cairo operated by Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, and via the codeshare agreement with Egypt Airlines, as well as 3 weekly flights operated by "Air Arabia Egypt" while SalamAir operates two weekly flights between Muscat and Alexandria. In the logistics sector, Omani ports are connected by direct shipping lines with Egyptian ports at a rate of 4 weekly trips between Salalah Port and Port Said and Damietta Port. These connection lines contribute to promoting direct export and import of goods and merchandise between the two countries. -ONA



Royal Oman Police

NOTICE

The Royal Oman Police – Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information - announces that vehicles will be prohibited from parking on both sides of the lane on Sultan Qaboos Street from Al Baraka Palace Roundabout in the Wilayat of Al-Seeb through Burj Al Sahwa Roundabout to the Wilayat of Muscat, starting from Monday 27 June until Tuesday 28 June 2022.

Royal Oman Police calls upon drivers to abide by the above instructions and to cooperate with policemen for the public interest.

DETERGENT PACKETS FOUND IN OMAN'S WATERS

Corals lessen impact of natural disasters

Maskari explained that most marine animals lay their eggs in coral beds that form the bedrock of their life cycles. What's more is that corals lessen the impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes and storms. "Corals aren't just there to look pretty...they are actually extremely important to our ecosystems," he said. "Life in the oceans begins in coral beds. Many private citizens and divers out in the ocean have come across these bags and have picked up whatever they can see, but more action needs to be taken to clean up the spill as soon as possible. "We don't know the exact number of detergent bags at sea, but it is safe to say that they number in tens of thousands," Al Maskari said. "The detergent packets were stored in bigger packs, which when split open released hundreds of smaller ones, almost like a cluster bomb, and that magnifies their damage. "The best way to clean up the detergent would be to allow these packets come to the shores. They would make for unpleasant pictures, but it would be easiest to clean them up that way," he added.

"Once they mix in with the water and the ocean has claimed it, it is going to be harder to clean up." According to the journal, 'Environment Science and Pollution Research' that is published by the European Chemical Society's Division of Chemistry and the Environment, detergent is a pollutant has serious risks to natural ecosystems. Harmful effects of detergents include eutrophication, which is when the environment becomes enriched with nutrients, leading to more plant and algal growth, which in turn leads to competition for oxygen by marine species; foaming, which could be an indicator of excessive toxins; and the altering of key parameters such as temperature, salinity, turbidity, and pH levels, which are critical to the marine organisms that inhabit aquatic environments. "Therefore, production of environment-friendly detergent is an important issue around the world," said Seyyed Alireza Mousavi and Farank Khodadoost in their article in the journal. This was a viewpoint shared by Neil Abbot, a diving officer at

PDO's dive club, who first came across plenty of bags when he was exploring the seas off Muscat and heading to the Daymaniyat Islands with a friend on Friday evening. "Many of the bags had barnacles attached to them, which meant they had been underwater for quite some time," he said. "As we continued our journey, we saw more bags float to the surface of the water. There were probably 100 floating bags, but even worse was when the bags had split open; it was like a minefield." "When diving at a site known as Black Top Reef, we started to find bags on the bottom broken open," he recalled. "I don't know what all this washing powder will do to the fish let alone the plastic to turtles, whale sharks, etc." Neil and his team recently pulled out a load of detergent bags at Al Fahal Island, and urged others who go out to sea to clean up as much of the spill as they could. He was also afraid of the effect this could have on the livelihoods of fishermen, as well as those who eat their catch.



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IN LONDON

Memorial tribute paid to Late Sultan Qaboos

LONDON: A ceremony was held in London to pay tribute to the memory of late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour.

During the ceremony, Service Medal of the Order of St John was consecrated.

Medal conferred

This medal was conferred on late Sultan Qaboos in 1984 by Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom (UK) of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth in recognition of the late Sultan’s support to hospitals, medical services and health-care all over the world.

St Paul’s Cathedral

The Sultan Qaboos Standard was raised during the ceremony, which was held at St Paul’s Cathedral in London amid a grandeur procession.

The ceremony was attended by Sheikh Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Hinai, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Princess Anne, and Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester. – **ONA**



INVESTOR RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

Number of Oman investor visa holders crosses 460

MUSCAT: The number of investors who received residency cards through the Investor Residency Programme (IRP) in the Sultanate of Oman reached 463 from more than 30 countries by the end of May 2022.

As per the IRP, investors and foreign retirees are granted the right of long-term residency for a duration of 5 years or 10 years.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said that the cards represented 275 cards in the ten-year category, 184 cards in the five-year category and 4 cards for the category of retirees. The total investments of those IRP card holders reached RO 183.5 million.

Asila Salim Al Samsami, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion said that the “Investor Residency” programme aims to attract and boost quality investors which contribute to the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generation of job opportunities, localization of industries and transfer of advanced technologies. – **ONA**



FOR AFGHANISTAN

Calls made for donations

MUSCAT: The Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO), has announced that it is receiving donations for helping Afghans who have been affected by the earthquake that hit south-eastern Afghanistan. “The OCO announces the acceptance of financial donations, in order to help those affected by the devastating earthquake that struck southeastern Afghanistan, which led to the destruction of their homes,” the OCO said.

Trending

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

79,300 REACH



The heroic story of a man who risked his life to save two children stuck in a wadi reached 79,300 people and had 5,528 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

1,400 VIEWS



The Middy Minute news wrap video had 1,400 views and reached 5,600 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

686 VIEWS



The Tejarah Talks video had 686 views and 35 likes on Instagram.



SULTANATE OF OMAN

TENDERS NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender no.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
309/2022/MAF WR/HQ-38	Rehabilitation and Improvement of Hamed Falaj in Saih Sanda village at Wilayat Jalan Bani Bu Ali at AL-Sharqiyah South Governorate	25/-	Fourth	Sunday 3/7/2022	Monday 25/7/2022
311/2022/MAF WR/HQ-39	Supply and Installation Office Furniture at the second floor in Ministry's Head Quarter Al Khuwair	25/-	Excellent	Sunday 3/7/2022	Monday 25/7/2022
316/2022/MAF WR/HQ-40	Construction of Central Medicines Store at Duqm	25/-	Fourth	Sunday 3/7/2022	Monday 25/7/2022
318/2022/MAF WR/HQ-41	Supply of Pesticides for Dubas bug Control in Date Palm Trees/ Spring Generation 2023	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 3/7/2022	Monday 25/7/2022

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.

The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.

All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

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WORLD

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Germany's Scholz wants G7 'climate club' to combat energy crisis

Scholz stressed the need for a "climate club" to enable countries to work together to combat climate change

ELMAU: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has said he wants to put soaring inflation, the energy crisis and climate change at the center of the agenda when he meets fellow G7 leaders at Schloss Elmau in the Bavarian Alps.

Germany, which holds this year's G7 rotating presidency, is hosting the gathering of the heads of state and government of the world's seven leading industrialized nations from Sunday through Tuesday.

"Russia's brutal war against Ukraine is also having an impact here," Scholz said in his video podcast on Saturday, pointing to steep rises in the prices of food and energy.

"Many things we buy are more expensive. Food, but especially the prices for energy. We notice that at the petrol station, we notice that when we have to pay the heating bill. Heating oil, gas — everything is much more expensive than a



year ago," he said, adding: "That's why we have to prepare for it."

The chancellor said the G7 leaders would discuss the current situation triggered by the war "and at the same time ensure that we stop man-made climate change."

He stressed the need for a "climate club" to enable countries to work together to combat climate change as well as the current geopolitical and inflation crises.

Still, Scholz sought to lower expectations for the meeting, saying: "We won't move mountains."

The G7 club includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Italy, Japan and Germany. Their meeting comes

in the midst of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has triggered a geopolitical crisis, food security issues in parts of the world and prompted many countries to impose sanctions on Russia.

Meanwhile, thousands of demonstrators gathered in Munich on Saturday to protest the lack of adequate G7 action on issues like the phaseout of fossil fuels, preservation of biodiversity and the fight against global hunger.

Luisa Neubauer, one of the founders of Germany's Fridays for Future climate movement, told DW that many politicians "don't want to or cannot understand" the climate emergency.

"Honestly, I don't know what political leaders are looking at and what not, but what it seems like from the outside is that obviously many of them don't want to or cannot understand the emergency we are in," she said, adding that "reacting to a fossil fuel war with more fossil fuels, it just doesn't make sense, even on a geopolitical level."

She called on G7 leaders to turn away from fossil fuel by sticking to the deal on ending foreign funding for fossil fuels and committing to a coal exit by 2030, in addition to fulfilling commitments related to the loss and damage financing for economically weaker countries.

On the issue of Germany deciding to reactivate coal-fired power plants to break free from its dependence on Russian oil and gas and fill gaps in energy supply, she said: "It's a dilemma that, you know, societies everywhere are in and especially the German society, as we're just so dependent on Russian gas and oil."

Neubauer acknowledged there are big questions on how to fill the gaps in the energy systems, but warned there was still "a huge difference between filling in gaps and creating new, lengthy, long-lasting dependency on fossil fuels and their autocrats."

Police said they were expecting at least 20,000 protesters in the Bavarian city. Authorities have deployed about 18,000 police officers around the summit site and the protests. **ANI**

Times OF OMAN

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NO SIGNS OF INJURIES

South Africa investigates unexplained deaths

EAST LONDON: South African police on Sunday were looking into the deaths of at least 20 young people who died at a restaurant in East London.

The cause of the deaths was unknown and local press reported that there were no signs of injuries.

"The number has increased to 20, three have died in hospital. But there are still two who are very critical," the head of the provincial government safety department Weziwe Tikana-Gxothiwe said on local TV.

"At this point, we cannot confirm the cause of death," said health department spokesperson Siyanda Manana.

"We are going to conduct autopsies as soon as possible to establish the probable cause of death. The deceased have been taken to state mortuaries," Manana added.

End of exam party

Provincial police spokesman brigadier Theminkosi Kinana told AFP that the victims of the incident were between 18 and 20 years old.



They were reportedly attending a party at the Enyobeni Tavern to celebrate the end of the winter school exams.

Bar owner Siyakhlangela Ndevu told local broadcaster eNCA that he had been called to the scene early on Sunday morning and that he was "still uncertain about what really happened."

Government safety official Unathi Binqose said that "forensic [investigators] will take samples and test to see if there was any poisoning of any sort," but added that "the place had a lot more people than it normally takes."

Township pubs, commonly referred to as taverns or shebeens, are legally allowed to sell alcohol, but safety regulations are rarely enforced. **DW**

SEVERE SHORTAGE

Sri Lanka introduces fuel rationing amid shortage

COLOMBO: Amid the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, the country's Minister of Power and Energy Kanchana Wijesekera on Sunday announced that the fuel stations across the country will issue tokens for consumers from Monday, as only limited stocks of fuel were available.

"The assistance of the Sri Lankan army and police had been sought and token numbers would be given to the public to fill petrol and diesel as only limited quantities were available," Wijesekera said. The public was requested to register their mobile numbers at their nearest filling stations and once their numbers were issued, they would be notified, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The minister further said that the date of the arrival of the next fuel shipments in the country was unsure, but the two ministers would leave for Russia on Monday to discuss fuel imports from Russia and other related matters.

Sri Lanka's fuel distributors, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and Lanka IOC gas on Sunday announced to increase the fuel prices. This is the fourth time the fuel prices in the country were raised. A litre of Petrol 92 Octane has been increased by Rs 50 while



a litre of Petrol 95 Octane by Rs. 100, the auto diesel has also been increased by Rs 60 and a litre of Super Diesel has been increased by Rs. 75, Daily Mirror reported.

Accordingly, the new price of a litre of Petrol Octane 92 is Rs 470 and Octane 95 is Rs 550.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka decided to limit fuel for private vehicles as the fuel shortage continues to worsen in the Island nation.

Wijesekera on Saturday said that suppliers have informed state-owned fuel importer and distributor Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) that they will not make the scheduled deliveries due to banking and logistic reasons.

"Sri Lanka will not receive ship-

ments of petrol, diesel and crude oil, scheduled for this week and next week," the minister said.

In a statement, Wijesekera said that public transportation, power generation and industries would be given priority until the next shipments arrive. Therefore, limited stocks of diesel and petrol will be distributed to a few gas stations throughout next week.

The minister urged the general public not to queue up for fuel, adding that the refinery operations will also be halted until the next crude shipment arrives.

"We are working with all new and existing suppliers. I apologize for the delay and inconvenience," he said. **ANI**

MONKEYPOX

Monkeypox presently not a global health emergency: WHO

GENEVA: World Health Organization (WHO) after convening a meeting said on Saturday that the Monkeypox presently does not amount to a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

"The WHO Director-General concurs with the advice offered by the IHR Emergency Committee regarding the multi-country monkeypox outbreak and, at present, does not determine that the event constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)," said WHO in its press release. The developments came after a meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the multi-country monkeypox outbreak.

However, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed deep concerns over this. Taking to Twitter, Tedros wrote, "The response requires urgent coordinated action now to stop the further spread of Monkeypox virus, using public health measures & ensuring health tools are available to at-risk populations & shared fairly. The full list of the Committee's recommendations."

WHO DG said that he is deeply concerned by the spread of monkeypox, which has now been iden-



tified in more than 50 countries, across five WHO regions, with 3000 cases since early May.

The Emergency Committee shared serious concerns about the scale and speed of the current outbreak, noted many unknowns, gaps in current data and prepared a consensus report that reflects differing views amongst the Committee.

Overall, in the report, they advised WHO DG that at this moment the event does not constitute a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, which is the highest level of alert WHO can issue, but recognised that the convening of the committee itself reflects the increasing concern about the international spread of monkeypox.

The Emergency Committee expressed their availability to be reconvened as appropriate.

Since May 11, 2022, the WHO Secretariat alerted the States Parties to the IHR in relation to this event, through postings on the Event Information Site (a secured platform established by the WHO Secretariat for information sharing with States Parties to the IHR).

These postings aimed to raise awareness about the extent of the outbreak, inform readiness efforts, and provide access to technical guidance for immediate public health actions recommended by the WHO Secretariat.

Convening an IHR Emergency Committee signals an escalation of the level of alert for States Parties to the IHR and the international public health community, and it represents a call for intensified public health actions in response to this event, WHO said.

Transmission is occurring in many countries that have not previously reported cases of monkeypox, and the highest numbers of cases are currently reported from countries in the WHO European Region.

Initial cases of monkeypox, detected in several countries in different WHO Regions, had no epidemiological links to areas that have historically reported monkeypox. **ANI**

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HRH CROWN PRINCE, IRAQI PRIME MINISTER REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS AND JOINT COOPERATION

HRH Crown Prince and the Iraqi Prime Minister held a session of official talks, during which they exchanged views on a number of issues, which contribute to supporting and strengthening security and stability in the region

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence received at the Royal Court at Al-Salam palace the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq Mustafa Al-Kadhimi.

An official reception ceremony was held for the Iraqi Prime Minister.

HRH Crown Prince and the Iraqi Prime Minister held a session of official talks, during which they reviewed the bilateral relations between the two fraternal countries and areas of joint cooperation, in addition to exchanging views on a number of issues, which contribute to supporting and strengthening security and stability in the region.

The session was attended by Prince Abdullah bin Bandar



bin Abdulaziz, Minister of National Guard; Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Minister of Defence; Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdulah, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Minister of Commerce, Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi who is also (the accompanying Minister); Chief of General Intelligence Khalid bin Ali Al-Humaidan and the Saudi Ambassador to Iraq, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari.

From the Iraqi side, it was attended by the Foreign Minister Dr. Fuad Hussein and a number of senior Iraqi officials.-SPA

REVIEW RELATIONS

HRH Crown Prince, Commander of Pakistan Army review military ties



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence received the Commander of the Pakistani Army, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, currently on a visit to the Kingdom.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations, especially in the military fields, and opportunities for developing them, in addition to a number of issues of common interest.

In implementation of the order of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Sal-

man bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, HRH the Crown Prince decorated the Commander of the Pakistani Army with King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellent Class in recognition of his distinguished efforts in consolidating and strengthening bonds of friendship and joint cooperation and developing Saudi-Pakistani relations.

The occasion was attended by Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Minister of Defence; Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General Fayyad Al-Ruwaili and a number of senior officials from the two sides.-SPA



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THE JEDDAH SEASON BREAKS NEW RECORDS AND WELCOMES OVER 5MN VISITORS

Since its launch at the beginning of last May, the Jeddah Season has achieved a new record in the number of visitors, attracting more than 5 million visitors from inside and outside the Kingdom of various nationalities and ages.

This large number reflects the extent of the Jeddah Season's offerings to its visitors, the variety and distinction of activities, and its ability to satisfy all desires. »

SAUDI ARABIA'S MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT TO HOST SAUDI-ITALIAN INVESTMENT FORUM

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Investment (MISA), will host a high-level Italian business delegation led by Luigi Di Maio, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Saudi-Italian Investment Forum will see participation by a range of private sector representatives from both nations, with the aim of exploring mutually beneficial investment opportunities. With a focus on finance, infrastructure and mobil-



ity, tourism and culture, and renewable energy, the forum will feature interactive presentations spotlighting how a world of opportunity awaits Italian investors, as Saudi Arabia's globally recognized reform agenda continues to progress. »

BRITISH INVESTORS

Saudi Arabia seeks investments from Britain



MINISTER of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar bin Ibrahim Al-Khorayef met, during his visit to the UK, with several British investors, to emphasise the importance of strengthening communication with the King-

dom to identify qualitative opportunities in the industrial and mining sectors, and renewed his invitation to Riyadh's annual International Mining Conference.

The meetings included a session with the CEO of Arrival Corporation, Denis Lvovich Sverdlov, during which the two sides reviewed the organisational maturity in the industrial sector in the Kingdom, where the number of factories in the Kingdom exceeds 10,000 factories, with a total investment volume in the industrial sector of nearly \$400 billion.

The minister also met with the Regional Director for the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia for Rolls-Royce, Patrick Régis, and the CEO of Reckitt, Laxman Narasimhan.

In another meeting with the CEO of Fitch Learning, Paul Taylor, Al-Khorayef discussed the investment opportunities available in the industrial sector, with a volume of new investments over the past year of more than \$20 billion, and concluded his tour on the second day with a meeting with the CEO of INEOS, Hans Casier and CEO Lucy Electric, John Griffiths. -SPA

INVESTMENT

Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources announces investment opportunities in medicine industry worth more than \$3 billion

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY and Mineral Resources, Chairman of the Manufacturing Vaccines and Vital Medicines Committee, Bandar bin Ibrahim Al-Khorayef, announced the launch of several investment opportunities in the vaccines and vital medicines industry, valued at \$3.4 billion, to achieve the Kingdom's goals aimed at achieving pharmaceutical and health security, and making Saudi Arabia an important center for this promising industry.

The Minister stressed that the

targeted pharmaceutical sectors in general, whose value exceeds \$5 billion, will be implemented in several stages, starting with vaccines and vital medicines, as the first phase will focus on localizing vaccines, plasma, and insulin technologies, stressing the importance of transferring their full technologies to contribute mainly to building the Kingdom's capabilities in these sectors and achieving health and pharmaceutical security while reducing the high cost on the state budget, which currently imports 100 per-

cent of vaccines and vital pharmaceutical products, while the vital medicines sector enjoys the fastest growth rate in the market among all pharmaceutical sectors with an annual rate of 17 percent.

Alkhorayef said that the Manufacturing Vaccines and Vital Medicines Committee will focus in the first phase on localizing basic children's vaccines and building the necessary self-capacities and manufacturing platforms to combat future pandemics, followed by insulin



production to treat diabetes patients and then support plasma collection centers with a world-class factory to achieve self-sufficiency in plasma derivatives, while the second phase will focus on localising immunological and cancer treatments technologies, where the size of this vital sector is estimated at more than \$2 billion annually, of which insulin represents approximately \$340 million.

The minister explained that the Manufacturing Vaccines and Vital Medicines Commit-

tee aims to achieve positive results by identifying the best technologies in the field of vaccines and vital medicines, in which the Kingdom must invest to transfer and localize knowledge, in addition to building local industrial platforms with international specifications to enable the Kingdom to occupy its natural place as an industrial power and a logistical platform for vaccines and vital medicines in the Middle East and the Muslim countries.

WI in command over Bangladesh

Kyle Mayers

took over with a splendid knock to give the hosts the ascendancy

GROS ISLET: Kyle Mayers' second Test century has helped put the West Indies in control after the second day of the second Test in North Sound.

Things were looking somewhat grim for West Indies when they lost three quick wickets just prior to lunch on day two to fall to 132/4, but Kyle Mayers took over with a splendid knock to give the hosts the ascendancy.

Mayers batted sensibly when required and attacked the bad deliveries when they came to score his second Test century and put his side in control at stumps on day two.

The left-hander was particularly savage on anything loose that he could hammer through the point and cover region and this helped him finish the day unbeaten on 126.

While Mayers' 116-run partnership with Jermaine Blackwood (40) did the majority of the damage, it was the unbeaten 92-run stand with Joshua Da Silva (26*) late in the day that really took any glimmer of hope away from Bangladesh.

With star spinner Shakib Al Hasan going wicketless through



18 overs, it was left to fellow tweaker Mehidy Hasan Miraz to do the majority of the damage for the visitors.

Mehidy picked up the key wicket of West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite (51) early in his spell and then returned later in the day to trap Blackwood plumb in front in what was another excellent piece of off-spin bowling.

While those two scalps were the only wickets Mehidy could snaffle on what was a frustrating day for Bangladesh, the 24-year-old can at least hold his head high in the knowledge that West Indies' batting line-up failed to pick him at times and found scoring difficult when he had the ball.

Mehidy's 31 overs went for just

68 runs and the slow right-arm was clearly the best of the Bangladesh bowlers.

The Caribbean nation must still fancy their chances in the World Test Championship as a victory in the second Test here will provide them with some valuable ascendancy in the race to qualify for next year's final.

West Indies currently sit in sixth place on the World Test Championship standings, but a series win over Bangladesh will keep them in touch with the teams in front of them.

Bangladesh are ninth on the current standings and would need to find form very quickly if they want to work their way back into contention. **ANI**

OFA



Real Madrid academy in Oman unveils its training programme

MUSCAT: Real Madrid Academy in the Sultanate of Oman held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre yesterday its first press conference to unveil its technical programme and details of the local and foreign international camps and tournaments.

The press conference was attended by Asila Salim Al Samsami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, and officials from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Oman Football Association (OFA).

During the conference, an overview on the Real Madrid Academy was presented. The academy was established in 1997 and is distributed over five continents with 449 academies in 82 countries around the world, benefiting more than 62,000 children. The academy provides a unique experience in international sports life through football.

Carlos Albert, representative of Real Madrid CF, gave a visual presentation during which he talked about the mission of the Real Madrid Academy in demonstrating its commitment to solidarity through its social activity in order to protect and preserve the historical legacy of the club, promote the values inherent in sport, encourage the inclusive education of children and young people, as well as promoting the social integration of groups in society.

On his part, Khamis Al Ajmi, Chairman of the Academy's Board of Directors, said: "Signing with the Real Madrid Foundation to open the first international football academy of the Spanish Club Real Madrid in the Sultanate of Oman will open up great prospects for the Sultanate of Oman at international fora and highlight Oman's potentials for investments, as well as attracting sports legends to visit and promote for Oman.

Asila Salim Al Samsami, Un-

dersecretary for Investment Promotion, said in a statement: "We seek, through this distinguished partnership with the largest sports clubs enjoying global popularity, to create a major qualitative leap in the sector of attracting investments in this field in the Sultanate of Oman, and to promote for "Invest in Oman" programme and for the Sultanate of Oman as a leading investment destination in the international sports events in which Real Madrid CF participates".

She stressed that this sports partnership, which emerges from "Invest in Oman" programme, is an important addition and investment model.

Besides this partnership's effective contribution in the sports sector, it will also create a distinguished investment milieu through initiatives, innovative and strategic projects that form an additional value reflecting positively on diverse economic aspects in the Sultanate of Oman. **-ONA**

GOLDEN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Vijay Amritraj honoured with Golden Achievement Award

LONDON : In recognition of his outstanding impact on the sport of tennis as a player, promoter, and humanitarian, India's Vijay Amritraj has been named the 2021 recipient of the Golden Achievement Award.

The Golden Achievement Award is presented annually by the International Tennis Hall of Fame and International Tennis Federation to a person who has made important contributions internationally to tennis in the fields of administration, promotion, or education and has devoted long and outstanding service to the sport. The award was presented on Friday at a special celebration hosted in Amritraj's honour in London.

"I'm humbled to receive this incredible award from the International Tennis Hall of Fame and the International Tennis Federation for my life's journey in a sport that I've loved all my life. This honor is really something I'm receiving on behalf of every Indian who has supported me over the years. I've had the privilege of represent-



ing India on the world's stage in our sport. I hope this is inspiring for more players from India to come out and hit the international stage," Vijay Amritraj said.

Amritraj's family and friends, along with Indian tennis, business, and political leaders came out to celebrate the Golden Achievement Award.

David Haggerty, president of the International Tennis Federation commented, "Both on

and off the court, Vijay Amritraj has exemplified the spirit of the Golden Achievement Award with his numerous contributions to international tennis through his promotion of tennis and education wherever he went. In collaboration with the International Hall of Fame, we celebrate Vijay's many accomplishments with the bestowing of this award."

A globally recognized and respected tennis icon as well as a

national hero in his native India, Amritraj was the first Indian player to turn professional on the ATP Tour. During his extensive career as a top-20 player in the 1970s-1980s, he broke barriers and popularized tennis across more than half the world's population throughout the Asian continent.

Amritraj remains the highest-ranked ATP singles player from India in ATP history (No. 16), and he captured the most titles by an Asian singles player (15) during his career. From 1989-93, Amritraj was selected by his peers as President of the ATP Player Council and served as an ATP Board Member from 1991-97.

A stalwart member of the Indian Davis Cup team as a player and captain, Amritraj proudly represented India on the international tennis scene. He was instrumental in India's advancement to the 1974 Davis Cup final against South Africa, which the Indian team boycotted as a protest to Apartheid. Amritraj additionally played a key role in diplomacy ahead of India's World Group tie

against Israel in 1987, using tennis to promote international unity.

During his career, Amritraj was instrumental in establishing the Britannia Amritraj Tennis Academy, which focuses on the youth tennis development in India. The academy has produced several successful tennis players, including doubles major champion and legend Leander Paes.

Post-retirement, Amritraj has remained committed to humanitarian efforts through his role as United Nations Messenger of Peace (2001-06) and through The Vijay Amritraj Foundation. Founded in 2006, the foundation's mission is to bring hope, help and healing to the defenseless and innocent victims of disease, tragedy and circumstance in India.

A familiar face on television to millions of Asian tennis fans, Amritraj remains active as a commentator, actor/producer, and tennis promoter. He represents India as an unofficial ambassador and statesman, frequently speaking to world leaders and governments. **-ANI**

RAT

Rohit tests COVID-19 positive

MUMBAI: Indian batter Rohit Sharma has tested COVID-19 positive following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted on Saturday. Rohit, who was playing in India's ongoing four-day warm-up game against Leicestershire, has gone into quarantine. "#TeamIndia Captain Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted on Saturday. He is currently in isolation at the team hotel and is under the care of the BCCI Medical Team," the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) tweeted.

Subject to recovery, Rohit is set to lead the team against England in the postponed fifth Test match starting July 1 in Edgbaston. India leads the series 2-1.

The rescheduled match is a part of last year's five-match Test series that had to be delayed after the fourth Test due to a Covid-19 outbreak in the Indian camp. **-ANI**

NEW ZEALAND VS ENGLAND

Latham, Williamson give NZ 137-run lead over England

LEEDS: A half-century from opener Tom Latham (76) and a solid knock from skipper Kane Williamson (48) took New Zealand to an advantageous position at the end of the day three of the final Test against England at Leeds, posting 168/5 in 51.5 overs and giving the side a lead of 137 runs over the hosts.

The day was another see-saw one for both the sides, with England starting off the day in control. However, at the end of the day, Latham and Williamson had scored enough to help their side regain some advantage heading into the next day. Kiwis did not start off the innings well.

Opener Will Young was back to the pavilion for just 8 at team's score of 28, dismissed by medium-pacer Matty Potts. Then Tom Latham along with his captain Williamson stitched a 97-run stand to stabilise the innings.

Debutant Jamie Overton took his second wicket of the match, by dismissing Latham for 76 off 100, with the ball landing safely into



the hands of wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow.

This brought batter Devon Conway to the crease, who joined his skipper for a short 27-run stand before being dismissed for 11 by Joe Root. Williamson was back to the pavilion soon, two runs short of his half-century after being dismissed by Potts.

The next wicket was of Henry Nicholls, caught and bowled by Jack Leach for just 7.

Daryl Mitchell (4*) and wicket-keeper-batter Tom Blundell finished off the day for NZ at 168/5.

The Kiwis had a 137-run lead at the end of the day.

Potts was the star for England with the ball, taking 2/20 in his 9.5 overs. Overton, Root and Leach also took one each.

Earlier, England was bundled out for 360. They started off the third day at 264/6 with Bairstow (130*) and Overton (89*). Overton was the first wicket of the day, falling three-runs short of his maiden ton on his Test debut. He was dismissed by pacer Trent Boult with assistance from Mitchell's safe hands. **ANI**

WIMBLEDON

Rafael Nadal pain-free for first time in a 'year and half'

LONDON: Ahead of Wimbledon 2022, Rafael Nadal has said for the first time in 18 months he has overcome the crippling foot pain.

Second seed Rafael Nadal will play Argentina's world number 42 Francisco Cerundolo in the first round while young sensation Carlos Alcaraz will take on Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff. "I can walk normal most of the days, almost every single day. That's for me the main issue," said the 36-year-old Spaniard at Wimbledon on Saturday in the pre-tournament press conference.

"When I wake up, I don't have this pain that I was having for the last year and a half, so quite happy about that. And second thing, practising. Since the last two weeks, I didn't have one day of these terrible days that I can't move at all. The feeling and overall feelings are positive," he added.

For the first time in his career, Nadal arrives in SW19 halfway to the calendar Grand Slam, a feat no man has achieved since Rod Laver in 1969. It is quite the start



to a season already blighted by a rib fracture and recurrent left foot problems.

"[The] past is past. Sport and life goes so quick, no? I am not a big fan of keep[ing] living on the things that you achieved because sport doesn't give you that time to keep thinking on the things that happened," Nadal said.

"But [it] is something that already happened. [It] is something that's going to be in my museum for the rest of my life, so that's something that makes me feel proud, of course. [The] last six months of 2021 haven't been easy.

Even 2022, [though] I am able to have an amazing start of the season, haven't been easy at all."

The Spaniard has reached the semi-finals the last two times he has taken part in The Championships, but it is now 12 years since he lifted the trophy as gentlemen's singles champion for a second time. In the Roger Federer's absence from Wimbledon for the first time in 24 years, Nadal afforded himself time to reflect on their rivalry without dwelling for too long on the past. "[To] have somebody like him, like a rival, that he's amazingly good, helps you to let you know the things that you have to do to be better," he said. "In some way it's easier to have a way to improve when you have an example in front that is better than you, not always but a lot of times," the 22-time Grand Slam champion added.

Wimbledon 2022 will be held from June 27 to July 10. The grass-court Grand Slam tournament, established in 1877, will take place at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in London, UK. **ANI**



MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,118.76 points, up by 0.09 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.74 per cent at 451.3 points. Renaissance Services, up 3.37 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Chromite, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser.

Asyad highlights its partnership strategy

During a high-level panel discussion on the realities of logistics, Asyad Group CEO, highlighted that the group's priority is to maximise returns by focusing on its core integrated logistics services and divesting non-strategic assets

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Taking part in the 2022 Qatar Economic Forum, Asyad Group reiterated its strategy to partner with the private sector as a key enabler in implementing the group's expansion plans, both locally and globally, and underscored its in-country role in providing competitive logistics solutions that facilitate greater internation-



al trade flows into Oman.

During a high-level panel discussion on the realities of logistics, Abdulrahman Al Hatmi, Asyad Group CEO, highlighted that the group's priority is to maximise returns by focusing on its core integrated logistics services and divesting non-strategic assets. He also reaffirmed the group's ongoing efforts to enable private companies to offer their services to its business units, be it through direct investment or public offering.

Al Hatmi stressed that the group navigated the pandemic challenges and showed exceptional resilience with no significant downtime,

thanks to a world-class infrastructure and innovative solutions added to Asyad's service lineup by opening new direct import lines and maritime services. These capabilities were instrumental in positioning Asyad Group to adapt to consecutive crises, while major players in leading countries, such as the USA and China, struggled to weather the storm.

Al Hatmi addressed sourcing questions that arose in light of lessons learned from COVID-19, stating that onshoring may not be a realistic solution due to capacity, inflation and cost restrictions. Instead, the group CEO called for

exploring multiple sourcing and putting in place business continuity mechanisms to hedge against potential crises. He further underlined the need to strengthen co-operation between countries and businesses.

The Group CEO concluded in an interview with Al Jazeera Channel: "Omani ports proved their readiness, despite the challenges, to face economic downturns and meet food security and commodities' requirements as Asyad succeeded to maintain its operational efficiency and competitiveness while expanding its strategic partnerships with various global maritime lines during COVID-19.

COMMENTARY

'Health insurance for all' paves way for more holistic medical cover in Oman

RAED LABAKI

MEDICAL exigencies can creep up at any given time and throw a curveball – putting a considerable strain on your financial resources.

The global pandemic has made individuals realise the challenges of unforeseen medical expenses, access to quality medical amenities and escalating hospitalisation costs. Since then, the importance of comprehensive medical cover has intensified.

A simple, affordable, and predictable health insurance cover that provides a safety net during such unpredictable times has become the need of the hour – and greatly provides peace of mind so that patients can focus on improving their health and wellbeing, as well as opt for the best available treatments instead of fretting about the costs attached.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCISI), the Sultanate's population stood at 4,527,446 by the end of December 2021, of whom 62 per cent were Omani citizens and 38 per cent were expatriates. While citizens have enjoyed free healthcare at state-run institutions, expatriate residents have traditionally opted for treatments at private hospitals or clinics.

However, a growing trend indicates that a large percentage of Omani citizens are also choosing to get themselves treated at private healthcare facilities due to factors such as accessibility, convenience, or referrals. When it comes to health insurance in Oman, data from Oman's Capital Market Authority (CMA) shows that the gross domestic premium garnered by insurers inched up 3 per cent to reach OMR479.857 million last year, buoyed by a 5.6 per cent increase in gross direct premiums from the healthcare segment totalling OMR163.866 million in 2021, compared to OMR155.193 million in 2020. At the same time, the gross direct premiums of Takaful companies for health insurance increased by 16.7 per cent to OMR13.148 million in 2021 compared to OMR11.271 million in 2020.

Health Takaful represents about 8 per cent of the total health insurance of all the companies.

On a macro level, the

A simple, affordable, and predictable health insurance cover that provides a safety net during unpredictable times has become the need of the hour and provides peace of mind

2022 Global Medical Trends Survey indicated that there have been considerable variations in healthcare cost increases around the world, primarily due to COVID-19 cases surging in different countries at different periods through 2020 and 2021. In 2020, it dropped to 4.8 per cent and rebounded to 8.1 per cent in 2021.

The projected healthcare benefit cost trend is expected to continue along the same trajectory in 2022 at a global average of 8.1 per cent.

Average increases across different regions in 2022 are expected to range from 14.2 per cent in Latin America to 10.6 per cent in the Middle East and Africa to 7.6 per cent in the Asia Pacific to 6.7 per cent in Europe. The average medical trend in the US is projected at 7.6 per cent in 2022 based on other Willis Towers Watson research.

Healthcare costs are expected to continue to accelerate beyond 2022. More than three-quarters of health insurers are anticipating higher or significantly higher medical trends over the next three years. About 82 per cent of insurers in the Middle East and Africa are expecting higher or significantly higher medical trends during this period.

That being said, the contribution of the insurance sector to Oman's GDP is also expected to continue surging in the future owing to its growing population, new reforms and embracing technological advancements in the field. **>B2**

ISLAMIC BANKING SERVICES

Maisarah holds Sharia Supervisory Board meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, BankDhofar's Sharia-compliant window, recently held its second Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) meeting for this year.

The meeting was attended by SSB members: Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Shihri-Chairman, Sheikh Azzan bin Nasser Al Amri-Deputy Chairman, and members of the board Dr Abdul Rub bin Salim Al Yafai, Dr Amin Fateh and Sheikh Hilal bin Hassan Al Lawati, along with SSB's Secretary Sheikh Abdul Hakim Bin Osman.

The agenda of the meeting covered various topics about Maisarah's product development, acknowledgement of the previous SSB meeting decisions, in addition to approval to launch new segmented products that would be revealed soon.

The meeting was also attended by members of Maisarah's management, Sharia audit and com-



pliance teams who emphasised maintaining the highest Sharia standards throughout the design to the delivery of all Maisarah's products, services and financial solutions. SSB members expressed their satisfaction with the internal Sharia review and compliance system applied by Maisarah and hailed its commitment to abide by Islamic banking guidelines.

Since the launch of its operations in 2013, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services has set its vision to be the best Islamic banking services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, demonstrating a high degree of product innovation with an expansive range of Sharia-compliant financial solutions that cater to the needs of retail and corporate customers.

As part of its future growth plan, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services continues to distinguish itself by focusing on outstanding service quality, developing and launching new innovative products and investing in technology to provide the best customer experience through an expanding network of branches, ATM/CDM facilities and digital banking platforms.

TRADING

Saudi Exchange announces its intention to launch Single Stock Futures contracts

RIYADH: The Saudi Exchange has announced its intention to launch Single Stock Futures (SSFs) contracts on July 4, which will be cleared by the Securities Clearing Centre Company (Muqassa).

SSFs are the second derivatives product to be introduced on the Saudi Exchange, after launching Index Futures, as part of wider efforts to develop an advanced capital market in Saudi Arabia. SSFs will enable local and international investors to hedge and manage portfolio risks more effectively as well as diversify products available for trading and hedging in the market. The selected underlying stocks for the SSFs to be launched have been chosen from the largest and most liquid companies listed on the Saudi Exchange. **-SPA**

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MARKET



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MSX index ends higher

Renaissance Services, up 3.37 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Chromite, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,118.76 points, up by 0.09 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.74 per cent at 451.3 points. Renaissance Services, up 3.37 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Chromite, down 9.89 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman United Insurance were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 337 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.17 million, with more than 8.13 million shares changing hands. Out of 39 traded securities, 8 advanced, 21 declined, and 10 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR19,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR5,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR13,000

worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,642.17 points, down 0.15 per cent. Prices of Sohar International Bank, Takaful Oman, Ominvest, Al Sharqia Investment and National Bank Oman were up by 2.97 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.32 per cent, 1.21 per cent and 0.96 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Ahli Bank, Muscat Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment and Al Madina Takaful were down by 6.02 per cent, 3.28 per cent, 1.52 per cent, 1.18 per cent and 1.08 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,767.03 points, down 0.17 per cent. Galfar Engineering was the only gainer today up by 2.94 per cent. Prices of Oman Chromite, National Aluminium, Construction Materials, Oman Fisheries and Raysut Cement were down by 9.89 per cent, 4.76 per cent, 3.75 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,118.81	4,103.87	4,118.76	4,115.13	3.63	0.09
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,652.23	6,606.18	6,642.16	6,652.23	-10.06	-0.15
Industry Index	5,786.80	5,767.03	5,767.03	5,777.07	-10.05	-0.17
Services Index	1,560.61	1,552.74	1,553.62	1,556.99	-3.37	-0.22
MSX Shariah Index	453.80	450.89	451.30	454.66	-3.36	-0.74
MSX TR INDEX	5,191.96	5,173.13	5,191.90	5,185.85	6.05	0.12
FINANCIAL TR IDX	6,960.81	6,912.62	6,950.25	6,954.93	-4.65	-0.07
SERVICES TR IDX	1,613.64	1,605.50	1,606.41	1,609.89	-3.48	-0.22
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,005.73	5,985.21	5,985.21	5,995.63	-10.43	-0.17

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,138,869	2,165,513	337	22,186,723,438	8	21	10	39

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 26

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	P/B VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

000000003234	RENAISSANCE SER.	302,500	125,853	5	0.416	0.430	0.416	0.430	0.416	0.014	3.365	0.430	0.410	0.430	0.100	101,656,300
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	372,442	38,567	8	0.101	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.101	0.003	2.970	0.104	0.101	0.106	0.100	31,966,478
OM0000001535	OMINVEST	78,059	24,032	5	0.304	0.308	0.302	0.308	0.304	0.004	1.316	0.308	0.302	0.308	0.100	205,556,551
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	175,700	14,759	10	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.001	1.205	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.100	7,560,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	200,000	41,900	3	0.209	0.210	0.209	0.210	0.208	0.002	0.962	0.210	0.205	0.210	0.100	341,448,735
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,205	386	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.318	0.002	0.629	0.320	0.320	0.348	0.100	208,302,154
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	195,600	48,118	5	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.000	0.000	0.246	0.240	0.246	0.100	81,394,687
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	440,000	183,920	2	0.418	0.418	0.418	0.418	0.418	0.000	0.000	0.418	0.000	0.418	0.100	91,960,000
OM0000003000	AI MAHA MARKTING	155	105	1	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.648	0.680	0.100	46,920,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	240,612	209,812	7	0.872	0.872	0.868	0.868	0.868	0.000	0.000	0.868	0.868	0.872	0.100	651,000,000
OM0000003281	TAAQEER FINANCE	20,000	1,720	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.088	0.100	22,244,151
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,013,967	532,332	37	0.526	0.526	0.524	0.524	0.526	0.002	-0.380	0.524	0.524	0.524	0.100	1,966,676,030
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	2,349,891	698,180	7	0.328	0.328	0.297	0.328	0.330	-0.002	-0.606	0.328	0.310	0.328	0.100	32,800,000
OM0000002256	AL AJZEERA SERVICES	30,290	8,089	14	0.269	0.269	0.266	0.266	0.270	-0.004	-1.481	0.266	0.264	0.271	0.100	16,280,337
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	100,000	10,434	13	0.106	0.106	0.103	0.103	0.105	-0.002	-1.905	0.103	0.103	0.104	0.100	14,420,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	9,408	1,110	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.122	-0.004	-3.279	0.118	0.118	0.122	0.100	230,059,581
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST & FIN.	356,060	43,596	43	0.124	0.124	0.120	0.120	0.125	-0.005	-4.000	0.120	0.116	0.124	0.100	28,440,000
Total	17	5,885,889	1,982,912	164												

Parallel Market

OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	18,980	1,993	2	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.102	0.003	2.941	0.105	0.098	0.109	0.100	21,313,577
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	72,308	3,419	8	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.001	2.174	0.047	0.043	0.047	0.100	11,750,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	3,255	352	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.100	0.109	0.100	8,791,497
OM0000003260	OMAN ARAB BANK	1,964	232	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.125	0.100	196,960,980
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	25,290	1,255	3	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.100	73,130,073
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	4,106	464	2	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.100	17,577,195
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	270	25	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.090	0.090	0.100	18,800,000
OM0000001180	NATIONAL GAS	162,992	23,117	19	0.143	0.143	0.141	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0.704	0.141	0.137	0.142	0.100	11,985,000
OM0000002028	GULF INT. CHEMI.	44,200	4,175	2	0.088	0.095	0.088	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.090	0.095	0.100	1,995,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	3,465	327	2	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.094	0.097	0.100	210,273,585
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	529,490	48,713	25	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1.075	0.092	0.092	0.093	0.100	16,100,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	58,728	4,933	5	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.100	10,237,500
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	320,000	20,820	16	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.064	0.067	0.100	19,964,511
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	126,000	6,048	6	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.048	0.051	0.100	34,291,504
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	197,855	9,299	12	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.048	-0.001	-2.083	0.047	0.046	0.047	0.100	31,719,709
OM0000004118	RAYSUT CEMENT	35,100	5,265	7	0.153	0.153	0.150	0.150	0.154	-0.004	-2.567	0.150	0.150	0.154	0.100	30,000,000
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	65,450	6,867	6	0.107	0.107	0.104	0.104	0.108	-0.004	-3.704	0.104	0.104	0.106	0.100	18,898,153
OM0000001387	CONSTRUCTION M.	7,759	597	3	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.080	0.003	3.750	0.077	0.074	0.077	0.100	4,812,500
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	224,200	18,128	20	0.084	0.084	0.080	0.080	0.084	-0.004	-4.762	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	2,685,716
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	325,710	25,411	23	0.082	0.082	0.078	0.078	0.083	-0.005	-6.024	0.078	0.077	0.082	0.100	15,600,000
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	200	647	2	3.235	3.235	3.235	3.235	3.590	-0.355	-8.889	3.235	0.000	3.235	1.000	9,705,000
Total	21	2,227,322	182,088	167												

COMMENTARY

Dhamani initiative to further strengthen delivery of high-quality healthcare

<FROM B1> Dhamani: Oman's step in the right direction

In a concerted bid to enhance the overall healthcare segment in the country, Oman's government has made commendable efforts to introduce new policies and regulations that prioritise the health and well-being of its population. Dhamani, the Unified Health Insurance Policy (UHIP) introduced by the CMA, was a significant step in the right direction and a notable initiative from the country's policymakers.

By making health insurance mandatory for all private-sector employees in the country, both Omanis and expatriates are assured of a basic medical insurance cover and its benefits. Backing this scheme, CMA also noted that it expected the Dhamani initiative to further strengthen the delivery of high-quality health care that would cascade a

best-in-class health insurance ecosystem for Oman's citizens and residents.

In fact, the first 100 stakeholders who will be involved in the delivery of Dhamani have been onboarded and registered on the platform, which will underlie the Sultanate's mandatory health insurance programme. It symbolises the achievement of a critical milestone before the project's planned rollout.

So, what does this mean for Oman?

First, this 'health insurance for all' initiative has provided the necessary impetus for the industry's growth in the upcoming period. The UHIP scheme has led to a high-growth insurance market with a target to cover over two million workers and employees in the private sector.

Second, the new UHIP law will help shift some of the healthcare burdens from Oman's government while pav-

ing the way for a robust private sector insurance market and healthcare institutions. According to CMA, Oman's health insurance sector is poised to at least double its present value with new policyholders, investors and private sector institutions entering the local market. Given these statistics, Omanis emerging as a key market for global players.

Third and most importantly, Dhamani serves as a platform that integrates the exchange of health information, claims settlements, fund transfers, requests for approvals and verification, and checking insurance cover between the parties in the insurance relationship and the regulators' supervisors in the Sultanate.

A unified health insurance portal reflects the country's commitment to driving enhancements in the sector. Dhamani is well aligned with Oman's Health Vision 2050 that seeks to provide its residents

with a healthy and enhanced quality of life through shaping a well-organized, equitable, efficient, and responsive health system built on societal values of equity and social justice.

Holistic wellness for the people

Enhancing the overall healthcare segment can only be achieved through making it a community endeavour – to which everyone contributes. Dhamani certainly proves the wisdom of the adage 'health is wealth' and underscores that people are the greatest assets for any country. One truth that the COVID-19 pandemic has driven home is that healthcare is one of the most important pillars of society.

'Health Insurance for All' is so much more than a slogan and helps to foster a cohesive and inclusive community supported by a strong healthcare system and immense confidence to propel the economy forward.

In the current uncertain environment, the protection offered by a health insurance cover extends to the employees as well as employers. Mandatory health insurance gives employees the confidence that they will be taken care of, thereby boosting productivity, and morale and also helping to instil a positive workplace culture. Companies can now tailor health insurance packages that best support their employees – according to a viable premium – while addressing their fundamental medical needs.

Oman promotes the utmost transparency when it comes to its health insurance segment – and makes sure the market remains competitive as a result. Insurers, therefore, work closely with corporate entities to routinely come up with innovative schemes and comprehensive packages that are affordable, convenient, and hassle-free. At Cigna, we recently introduced Cigna

Choice, a comprehensive, local and affordable health insurance plan tailored for the Oman market that offers the best of Cigna's healthcare expertise to employees based in Oman.

As a leading global health insurance provider in the region, Cigna has observed a clear shift in awareness of the importance of health during the pandemic – with the crisis compelling individuals and organisations to take a hard look at their existing health insurance policy and demand a more comprehensive medical cover that will translate into value-added outcomes. More than ever, today there is a need for simple, predictable and affordable healthcare solutions at the community level, and Oman is taking the right steps to cater to this need.

The writer is the General Manager of Cigna Insurance, Middle East (excluding UAE and Saudi Arabia).

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Meethaq launches dedicated desks for MSME in its different branches

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) sector, which has huge potential for improving economic diversification and creating employment, is an important target of Meethaq's efforts to support the national economy.

As part of the importance given to the sector, Meethaq from Bank Muscat recently celebrated the United Nations designated Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day on June 27 by launching a dedicated desk for MSME & Corporates at Meethaq branches in Salalah, Sohar, Ruwi, Al Khuwair, Al Khoudh and head office.

On this occasion, a number of Meethaq senior officials celebrated the launch of Ruwi's desk. These desks are the first of their kind in Islamic Banking in the Sultanate and they are expected to open new horizons for the development of MSMEs.

Speaking on the occasion, Ali Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager, Meethaq - Corporate Banking, said: "An important goal of Oman Vision 2040 is to encourage sustainable development in Oman. It is thus vital to support the MSME sector as it can support in providing job opportunities to Omani youth across different sectors. Meethaq's Sharia-compliant MSME solutions are designed by



keeping in mind the essential role that MSMEs play in supporting the Sultanate's economy.

"These MSME solutions, products and services can help customers grow their businesses through various banking solutions and non-banking support as well. Celebrating this occasion, we are delighted to launch our dedicated MSME desks to provide the best services possible to our valued customers."

Ali Al Lawati further pointed out, "Our comprehensive suite of Corporate Banking solutions supports corporate customers at every stage of their business evolution, and in growing to their full potential. Hence, it is no surprise that Meethaq has been playing a key role in the development of key sectors in the Sultanate including, manufacturing, logistics, tele-

communication, fisheries, mining and energy.

"This is part of Meethaq's endeavours to help achieve the national goals of strong economic growth, sustainable development and ensuring prosperity for all. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our valued customers for the tremendous confidence they have placed in Meethaq, and promise to continue developing our portfolio of products and services to serve them better, every day."

Meethaq's large suite of cutting-edge Islamic banking offerings includes project financing, working capital facilities, trade financing, access to the largest Islamic banking branch network in the Sultanate, and digital banking facilities. Throughout the past, Meethaq has been continuously

working on improving its services and supporting the corporate sector in enhancing its competitiveness by providing a variety of banking facilities.

Meethaq's services include capital finance, term and project finance, contract finance, trade services, currency exchange services and tailored financing solutions for corporates based on their business needs. Other essential solutions offered by Meethaq include bank guarantees to third parties as well as Letters of Credit.



CONSUMING CRANBERRIES ENHANCES MEMORY, CURBS BAD CHOLESTEROL

CRANBERRIES ARE RICH IN THESE MICRONUTRIENTS AND HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED FOR THEIR ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY PROPERTIES.

The latest research at the University of East Anglia (UK) has indicated the neuroprotective potential that cranberries possess and that adding them to one's diet can significantly enhance memory and curb unhealthy cholesterol. The research team studied the benefits of consuming the equivalent of a cup of cranberries a day among 50 to 80-year-olds. They hope that their findings could have implications for the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases such as dementia.

Lead researcher Dr David Vauzour, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said: "Dementia is expected to affect around 152 million people by 2050. There is no known cure, so it is crucial that we seek modifiable lifestyle interventions, such as diet, that could help lessen disease risk and burden.

"Past studies have shown that higher dietary flavonoid intake is associated with slower rates of cognitive decline and dementia. And foods rich in anthocyanins and proanthocyanidins, which give berries their red, blue or purple colour, have been found to improve cognition.

"Cranberries are rich in these micronutrients and have been recognized for their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

"We wanted to find out more about how cranberries could help reduce age-related neurodegeneration."

The research team investigated the impact of eating cranberries for 12 weeks on brain function and cholesterol among 60 cognitively healthy participants.

Half of the participants consumed freeze-dried cranberry powder, equivalent to a cup or 100g of fresh cranberries, daily. The other half consumed a placebo.

The study is one of the first to examine cranberries and their long-term impact on cognition and brain health in humans.

The results showed that consuming cranberries significantly improved the participants' memory of everyday events (visual episodic memory), neural functioning and delivery of blood to the brain (brain perfusion).

Dr Vauzour said: "We found that the participants who consumed the cranberry powder showed significantly improved episodic memory performance in combination with an improved circulation of essential nutrients such as oxygen and glucose to important parts of the brain that support cognition — specifically memory consolidation and retrieval.

"The cranberry group also exhibited a signifi-

cant decrease in LDL or 'bad' cholesterol levels, known to contribute to atherosclerosis — the thickening or hardening of the arteries caused by a build-up of plaque in the inner lining of an artery.

This supports the idea that cranberries can improve vascular health and may in part contribute to the improvement in brain perfusion and cognition.

"Demonstrating in humans that cranberry supplementation can improve cognitive performance and identifying some of the mechanisms responsible is an important step for this research field.

"The findings of this study are very encouraging, especially considering that a relatively short 12-week cranberry intervention was able to produce significant improvements in memory and neural function," he added.

"This establishes an important foundation for future research in the area of cranberries and neurological health."

The study was supported by a grant from The Cranberry Institute. It was led by the University of East Anglia in collaboration with researchers at the Leiden University Medical Center (Netherlands), the University of Parma (Italy) and the Quadram Institute (UK).



Demonstrating in humans that cranberry supplementation can improve cognitive performance and identifying some of the mechanisms responsible is an important step for this research field.



-ANI



SPORTS



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3RD EDITION OF HIMAM TRAIL RUN RACE RETURNS IN DECEMBER 2022 WITH ICONIC EXPERIENCES



MUSCAT: The third edition of Oman's Himam Trail Run Race will return in December 2022 to take on Al Hajar mountains once more with hundreds of trail running enthusiasts and pros expected to line up at the start line. The 2022 edition will take place on 1-3 December 2022, and will feature routes designed to suit all endurance levels at distances of 55km and Al Hajar Range Challenge 100km that qualify those who complete them with points earned from the International Trail Running Association (ITRA), and a 25km for beginners who are looking to start a trail running career.

Aiming to celebrate sport, health and the environment in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate of Oman, the 2021 edition of the Himam Trail Run Race attracted 421 runners from 36 countries, including 50 female athletes and 29 runners aged over 50 years of age. It brought together a dedicated team of 60 organisers and 270 volunteers to deliver a highly-successful event. This year's event will aim to attract more female athletes, and runners of all ages from across Oman and around the world to test themselves against a unique challenge.

Organisers have officially open registration for the race. The Al Hajar Range Challenge 100km will start in Al Hamra one Thursday at the heart of traditional plantations, magnificent Omani irrigation canals and picturesque villages, taking runners in a journey of discovery. 100km runners will



experience a route that once witnessed international runners coming to compete for the Oman by UTMB in 2019. The route then circles the foothills of Jabal Akhdar before heading to the gates of the old Fort in Birkat Al Mouz where a race village open for spectators awaits their arrival. The 25km and 55km races will begin at Birkat Al Mouz on Friday, with routes designed to give runners a variety of terrain and a taste of culture, ancient history and tradition.

Dr Zahir Al Riyami, Head of the Organising Committee, said, "We are delighted to announce the return of the Himam Trail Run Race later this year and invite runners from around the world to visit Oman to take part. The last two events have been hugely successful and shown that there is a deep-rooted passion for sport within Oman and that the nation offers a unique landscape found nowhere else on the trail running circuit. We look forward to welcoming runners to the beautiful region of Al Hajar mountains to take on some of the courses tailored particularly for this event."

The 2022 Himam Trail Run Race is organised by Himam Adventure under the umbrella of Al Sahwa Team, Nizwa Club, and supported by the Oman Athletics Association, the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.





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IN-PICTURES



Aerial view of Luoshan Mountain in Wuzhong, Ningxia
Aerial picture shows a view of Luoshan Mountain in Wuzhong City, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. *Xinhua*



Midsummer Festival held in Stockholm
People in traditional costumes celebrate the Midsummer Festival in Stockholm, Sweden. *xinhua*



Heatwave hits Tokyo, Japan
People walk on a street as heatwave hits Tokyo, Japan. *xinhua*



Night view of Hong Kong
Picture shows a light show in Tsim Sha Tsui, south China's Hong Kong. Hong Kong will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its return to the motherland. *Xinhua*



Daily life in Lao rising tourist town
Aerial picture shows the landscape of Muang Fueng, a rising tourist town some 100km north of Lao capital Vientiane. *xinhua*



Asian Americans urge ending racial bigotry, violence
Demonstrators attend the 'Unity March' in Washington, DC, the United States. Asian Americans from across the United States came to Washington to call for an end to racial hatred and violence that has increased significantly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. *xinhua*



ROUND-UP



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All-new Subaru WRX sends pulses racing with Oman debut

Completely redesigned and engineered, the all-new WRX is an attention grabber with its bold and aggressive new look that begins with its distinctive hexagonal grills and ends with its striking fenders at the rear, including its iconic bonnet scoop

MUSCAT: An all-new edition of Subaru WRX – an icon of adrenaline-filled rally racing championships around the world – has arrived in the Sultanate of Oman much to the excitement of local motorsports enthusiasts.

Completely redesigned and engineered, the all-new WRX is an attention grabber with its bold and aggressive new look that begins with its distinctive hexagonal grills and ends with its striking

fenders at the rear, including its iconic bonnet scoop.

Standard with the WRX is Subaru's highly acclaimed Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive (AWD), which distributes power to all wheels for better traction on wet and slippery roads. Its well-balanced, low centre of gravity design ensures a stable and safe ride.

As with past generations of the WRX, the all-new version is also powered by a 2.4-litre direct-in-



jected, turbocharged horizontally-opposed BOXER engine, delivering 275 horsepower at 5,600 rpm and broader torque curve with 350 Nm of torque from 2,000-5,200 rpm.

An exciting Drive Mode Select feature comes with four preset modes – Comfort, Normal, Sport, and Sport+ - which enables you to, depending upon your mood and circumstances, shift from sporty

solo driving to comfortable trips with the family. Enhanced acceleration, better gas-pedal response and improved fuel efficiency add to the exhilarating experience at the wheel of the WRX.

Ensuring superior comfort and structural strength is the automotive brand's much-lauded Subaru Global Platform (SGP), which provides a stress-free, high qual-

ity and sporty driving experience. Complementing this distinctive attribute is Subaru's EyeSight Driver Assist Technology, which provides drivers with complete peace of mind on the road. It incorporates Adaptive Cruise Control (Lane Departure Prevention and Lane Centring Control and Preceding Vehicle), Adaptive Steering Control (Pre-Collision Throttle

Management, Pre-Collision Braking System, Autonomous Emergency Steering, Lead Vehicle Start Alert and Manual Speed Limiter).

Adding to the WRX's popular appeal is Subaru's all-round safety assurance – the result of 50 years of testing and retesting. In addition to its cabin-protecting layout and ring-shaped reinforcement frame, the WRX also comes with Vehicle Dynamics Control, Supplemental Restraint System, Driver Monitoring System, Reverse Automatic Braking, Rear Vehicle Detection, Hazard Avoidance, High Beam Assist and Steering Responsive Headlights.

Inside the spacious and superbly furnished interior of the WRX, a large 11.6-inch touchscreen display allows smartphone-like operation for audio, HVAC and other useful vehicle functions. It also supports an array of infotainment features such as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

OTE Group is the exclusive distributor of Subaru in Oman with sales and aftersales outlets distributed throughout the country.

SUV

Maserati Grecale is making its UK debut at Goodwood's 28th Festival of Speed

LONDON: Maserati's Grecale SUV is making its UK dynamic debut at Goodwood's 28th Festival of Speed, taking on the famous hill climb in the First Glance Run.

During the renowned four-day event – taking place at Goodwood, West Sussex from 23 to 26 June – the Maserati Grecale is being put to the test on the 1.16-mile course.

The Trident brand's special guest was David Beckham, Maserati's Global Brand Ambassador. An icon of world sport, philanthropist, businessman and style pioneer, he arrived at this major event aboard a Grecale, in its Trofeo version. As part of a partnership established in 2021, Maserati and Beckham are fired up by the same passion; they share the same admiration for technological innovations and for the best of Made in Italy design.

The new Maserati Grecale is the "everyday exceptional" SUV, incorporating the thrill of luxury and pure innovation. It is available in three versions: GT, powered by a



four-cylinder mild-hybrid engine capable of delivering 300 hp; Modena, with a four-cylinder 330-hp mild-hybrid engine; and Trofeo, powered by a high-performance 530-hp petrol V6 based on the MC20 Nettuno engine. It is the Trofeo version that will be showing off its driving prowess to on-

lookers as it tackles the hill climb.

The MC20, which had its UK dynamic showcase at last year's Festival of Speed, also makes an appearance on the hill climb route and is joined by the latest model in the range, the new Maserati MC20 Cielo spyder.

Launched in May 2022, the

MC20 Cielo weighs just 65kg more than the coupé and features an innovative retractable glass roof. The state-of-the-art electrochromic (smart glass) window can instantly be transformed from clear to opaque at the touch of a button on the central screen, courtesy of Polymer-Dispersed Liquid Crystal (PDLC) technology.

The roof is also best-in-class in terms of thermal insulation and an opening and closing speed of just 12 seconds. Both models are paired with the powerful F1-derived V6 Nettuno engine, which ensures an exceptional power-to-weight ratio and jaw-dropping acceleration and top speed, with the coupe achieving 0-62mph in approximately 3.0 seconds.

For the remainder of the Festival, the MC20 and the Grecale, in the Trofeo version, will be thrilling spectators twice a day on the Goodwood hill climb and will be on display in the Supercar Paddock and the First Glance Paddock respectively.

ENHANCED BENEFITS



Exclusive offers for ahlibank's credit cardholders

MUSCAT: To provide its customers with a fast, secured and convenient banking experience, ahlibank has continued its initiatives by offering innovative and sophisticated solutions and products that meet the needs of different customer segments.

The bank offers various credit cards that include a range of benefits and exclusive offers for existing and new cardholders. The bank's extensive credit card product range offers the choice of Classic, Gold, Platinum, Signature and Infinite cards, which also come with a contactless payment feature.

Commenting on the bank's efforts to develop its digital services, Muneer Al Balushi – AGM-Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, "At ahlibank we are keen to drive digital innovation in our operations, providing a technologically advanced banking environment to our customers. We believe that this flows from the increased usage of our products. Thus, by providing enhanced benefits with our credit cards, we are encouraging customers to shift and increasingly adopt the use of digital services. The objective is to make them financially inclusive, thereby building a community that thrives on cashless payments. This transformation also contributes to opening flexible payment channels with various institutions, stores and service centres across the Sultanate, in addition to the ability to conduct convenient, safe, and fast banking transactions."

"Over the past period, we have been able to cement our position

through our continued pursuit of banking products and offers that exceed customer expectations. This has been reflected by providing them with a chance to receive cash rewards, discounts and other benefits that enhance their banking experience with one of Oman's most preferred banks. We are constantly taking advantage of the opportunities in the market to ensure excellence in customer service of all segments and requirements," he added.

Signature and Infinite cardholders have the advantage of getting free cards and 1% cash back on every POS transaction using their Credit card. Furthermore, the card users will enjoy complimentary chauffeur service from any location within the Muscat city area to Muscat International Airport. They will also be eligible to free Airport lounge access through the LoungeKey app and enjoy the airport dining discount programme when downloading the Dine & Fly App. Additionally, they will be able to obtain exclusive benefits for the Signature and Infinite credit cards, including concierge services, purchase protection, extended warranty, and many more.

In addition to the high speed in conducting banking transactions, the bank provides holders of these Credit cards, opportunities to earn Pearl Points that can be converted to airline miles with Oman Air & Qatar Airways, and free travel insurance when purchasing airline tickets. The cards also contain an advanced EMV chip feature and are verified by Visa for online transactions.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

Mazoon Electricity organises workshop on HSE requirements during electrical work implementation

MUSCAT: Mazoon Electricity the leading electricity provider in Oman organised a workshop on the topic 'Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) requirements during the implementation of electrical work.'

The workshop was conducted as part of the company's awareness campaign being held to enhance communication between parties involved in electrical connections. The workshop covered several topics on essentials in electrical works and HSE procedures.

The workshop began with a presentation by Eng. Nasser Harib Al-Jabri on the topic 'Introduction to HSE during the implementation of electrical work.' He dealt with several topics, including the necessary precautions to be followed during the implementation of electrical work, the potential risks and ways to avoid them. He also spoke about the dangerous and



unsafe connections at construction sites, the procedures to be followed when electrical accidents occur and how to deal with them.

Later, Eng. Majid Said Al Hashmi gave a brief presentation on the procedures for inspection and

technical examination of electrical connections in accordance with Oman Electrical Standard No. 4. The presentation referred to the technical stages during the inspection and the technical examination as per the approved Omani

specification and some observations detected during field visits to electrical connections.

It also dealt with the types of documents to be filled out during the inspection according to the international system and as per Oman Electrical Standard.

Eng. Al Hashmi also made a presentation on meter boxes and procedures to be followed to protect public safety and to maintain a safe service for Mazoon Electricity customers. He also spoke about related systems such as the grounding system and connections associated with prepaid and smart meters.

He concluded with another presentation on the ground leakage protection devices, their types, installation methods, and the mechanism to differentiate to operate a safe and reliable system.

The workshop was attended by 28 licensed electricians in 2 groups.





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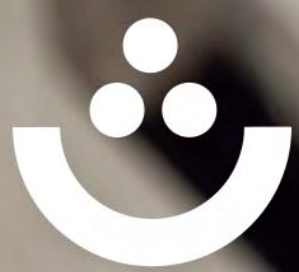
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