LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN
6 085010 120010

CLIMATE CHANGE REDUCING FISH WEIGHT IN OCEANS

A recent study by University of Tokyo researchers suggests that climate change is causing a decline in fish weight in the western North Pacific Ocean. Published in Fish and Fisheries, the study indicates that warmer waters are reducing food supplies, leading to competition among fish species and ultimately a decrease in weight. >B5

Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 005 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

TIMESOFOMAN.COM FACEBOOK.COM/TIMESOFOMAN TWITTER.COM/TIMESOFOMAN YOUTUBE.COM/USER/TIMESOFOMANONLINE TIMESOFOMAN.COM/WHATSAPP TIMESOFOMAN.COM/RSS LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/TIMES-OF-OMAN INSTAGRAM.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

> THE PROACTIVE GOVERNMENT MEASURES CONTRIBUTED TO PROTECTING THE OMANI ECONOMY FROM INFLATION AND KEEPING IT WITHIN SAFE LIMITS, DESPITE THE SIGNIFICANT RISE IN GLOBAL INFLATION RATES THAT AVERAGED ABOUT 6 PERCENT IN 2023. THE INFLATION RATE IN OMAN DID NOT EXCEED ONE PERCENT.
>
> **DR. SAID MOHAMMED AL SAQRI,** Minister of Economy

معرض مسقط الدولي للكتاب ٢٠٢٤
Muscat International Book Fair 2024
28 | الدورة الثامنة والعشرين
Twenty-Eighth Edition

OMAN'S ECONOMY RECOVERS, MOVING TOWARDS ROBUST GROWTH TRAJECTORY

The economy has posted remarkable growth, thanks to sound policies and improvement in crude oil prices

MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Wednesday hosted Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, who delivered a statement about developments experienced by Oman's economy over the past period and its future outlook.

The briefing took place during the Council's 5th regular session of its Tenth Term's first annual convening.

During the session, Al Saqri focused on three main topics: Evaluating the economic diversification process until the middle of the current five year plan; Evaluating the microeconomic performance until the middle of the current five-year plan; and the role of the Ministry of Economy in addressing regional and international economic developments.

He stressed that economic and financial indicators affirm that the Omani economy has passed recovery stage (from pandemic) to the stage of growth. It posted remarkable growth rates, thanks to the sound policies and the improvement of oil prices.

He explained that, over the past period 2021-2023 of the current Five-Year Plan, the economy saw rapid developments evidenced by a rise in oil prices over the first two years (2.6 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively), while outlook for the rest of the Tenth Five-Year Plan remained positive.

The minister pointed out that the proactive government measures contributed to protecting the Omani economy from inflation and keeping it within safe limits, despite the significant rise in global inflation rates that averaged about 6 percent in 2023. The inflation rate in Oman did not exceed one percent, he added.

This, he observed, was a direct outcome of policies taken to limit the rise in prices—like stabilising the price of fuel in tandem with October 2021 prices as a maximum limit, in addition to increasing the number of goods exempt from the value-added tax.

The minister said that the plan focused on increasing the number of Omanis working in the private sector, both through training and education of youth and by devising flexible employment terms.

The minister said that the total number of Omanis who received jobs during 2021 grew to 21,062, and in the second year of the plan, the number also grew to 28,029 workers, exceeding the annual target estimated in the plan.

The first and second years of the plan saw a rise in spending on the developmental budget, as the actual spending in the 2021 budget stood at about OMR1,192 million, while in the 2022 budget the actual spending stood at about OMR1,306 million. >A4

VITAL FACTS

- OUTLOOK FOR THE REST OF THE TENTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN REMAINS POSITIVE
- THE ACTUAL SPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTAL BUDGET IN 2023 IS SET TO STAND AT ABOUT OMR1,200 MILLION
- THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OMANIS WHO RECEIVED JOBS DURING 2021 GREW TO 21,062
- IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE PLAN SPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTAL BUDGET ROSE

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
SQU approves new academic courses

1 As part of its efforts to expand scholarly specialisations at various levels, the Sultan Qaboos University Council approved a number of new academic programmes. The Council approved the programmes during its second meeting for academic year 2023/2024. >A2

OMAN
Heavy rainfall forecast for Oman

2 Heavy thundershowers associated with hail are expected from Thursday over the governorates of North Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi, gradually extending towards South Al Batinah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North and South Al Sharqiyah, in the afternoon. >A3

SPORTS
Al Harthy ready to begin race with BMW

3 Losail International Circuit in Qatar is the venue for Ahmad Al Harthy's first race with Team WRT and BMW on 2 March, as the new FIA World Endurance Championship season gets underway. Al Harthy launched his exciting 2024 motor racing campaign over a week ago. >B6

FIRST LAND TRIP

Mwasalat launches bus service to Sharjah

MUSCAT: Mwasalat, one of the Asyad Group companies, inaugurated its first land trip via an intercity bus service from the Governorate of Muscat to the Emirate of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The route (Muscat - Sharjah) passes through the Wilayat of Shinas in the Governorate of North Al Batinah.

Two daily trips to be operated - initially - back and forth. The trip started from a transportation station in Al Athaiba, Muscat Governorate.

Mwasalat explained that the trips will be experimental during the first week from the start of the launch of the service.

Enhance integration

This route will enhance integration with other transportation routes in the Sultanate of Oman, which provides access to several destinations in both countries, thus being consistent with Mwasalat's ambitious goals to become a regional transport operator by applying global standards.

-ONA

HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Oman jumps 39 places in Economic Freedom Index

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman advanced 39 places in the 2024 Economic Freedom Index issued by the Heritage Foundation. Oman now occupies 56th position among world countries, compared to 95th place in 2023.

The index, which covers 184 countries, portrays 12 parallel sub-indexes grouped into four categories: 1. The rule of law; 2. Government size; 3. Regulatory efficiency; and 4. Open markets.

The Economic Freedom Index documents the positive relationship between economic freedom and a range of social and economic goals. Economic freedom is closely linked to concepts of healthier societies, a cleaner environment, increased per capita wealth, human development, democracy and poverty eradication.

Oman scored about 62.9 out of 100, thus meriting a "somewhat free" rating this year (2024), compared to "mostly not free" rating last year (2023). Oman's performance exceeded the global and regional average.

It should be noted that a positive rating places a country into one of 5 upscale groups every time it makes progress towards the 100 spot "most free economy".

Oman earned its largest outstanding progress in the Financial Health Index, in which its score rose from 12.1 in 2023 to 73.8 (out of 100) in 2024. This progress is credited to the government's efforts to proportionately cut down "Public-debt ratio to GDP", in addition to the country's ability to post fiscal surplus in the budget.

Oman achieved high results in other indices, including the Tax Burden Index, the Monetary Freedom Index and the Business Freedom Index. The abovementioned indices ratings were quoted as follows:

- Oman merited a score of 97.6 out of 100 points in the Tax Burden Index (as a percentage to GDP), which reflects marginal tax rates on both personal and corporate income and the general level of taxes, including direct and indirect taxes charged at all levels of government.
- It obtained a score of 80.3 out of 100 in the Monetary Freedom Index, which analyses the extent to which prices are stable and the rate of microeconomic intervention. In this index,
- It achieved a score of 76.2 out of 100 in the Business Freedom Index, which measures the impact of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on imports and exports of goods and services in the country and abroad.

Acting in cooperation with the National Programme for Investment and Export Development (Nazdaher) and other departments concerned, the National Competitiveness Office is embarked on devising an action plan to help realise the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, with the aims of placing Oman among the top 40 countries in the world. —ONA

اكسترا تنوّر رمضانك
eXtra Vibes In Ramadan

بعروض ما تتفوّت
With Unbeatable Offers

إضغط هنا لتصفح نشرة العروض الكاملة
Click Here To Check The Catalogue

Valid From 22 February Till 17 March 2024 / ساري من 22 فبراير إلى 17 مارس 2024

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

• ثلاجة
من باناسونيك

338 LTR

و الضريبة علينا

Panasonic
OMNR-TG353BUSG
• Double Door Refrigerator
• 338 Litre Gross Capacity
• 308 Litre Net Capacity

Was قبل 170.500
Save وفّر 40.600
Discount خصم 23.8 %
Pay Only إدفع فقط 129.900 OMR ر.ع

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

• مايكروويف
من ميديا

Midea
MO20MWH
• Microwave Oven
• 20 Ltrs
• 700Watts
• 5 Power Levels
• Defrost

WOW! DEAL!

Was قبل 29.900
Save وفّر 13.000
Discount خصم 43.4 %
Pay Only إدفع فقط 16.900 OMR ر.ع

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

• طقم طهي
من تيفال

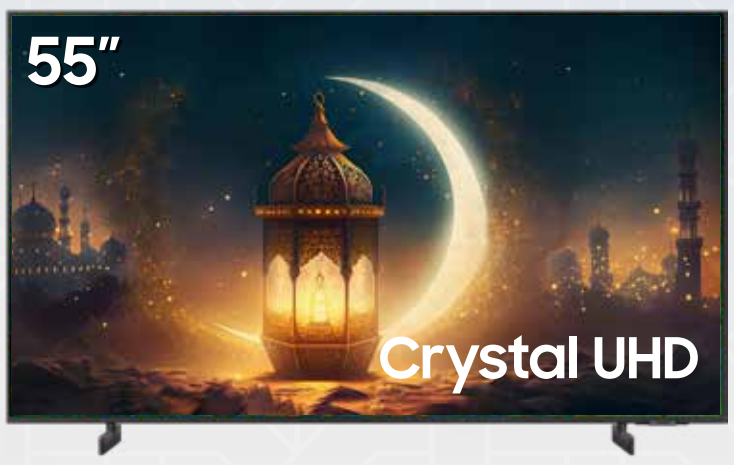
11 PCS

Tefal
B491SB85
• Cookware Set
• Darkstone
• 11 Pcs
• Black

Was قبل ~~47.900~~
Save وفّر 16.000
Discount خصم 33.4 %
Pay Only إدفع فقط 31.900 OMR ر.ع

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

• شاشة ال اي دي سامسونج
55 بوصة 4 كيه ذكية



SAMSUNG
UA55CU8000UXZN
• 55" CU8000 Crystal UHD 4K
• Dynamic Crystal Color
• Crystal Processor 4K
• AirSlim design

Get VAT BACK

Was قبل 219.900
Save وفّر 50.000
Discount خصم 22.7 %
Pay Only إدفع فقط 169.900 OMR ر.ع

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

AMD RYZEN 7 | AMD RADEON GRAPHICS
8GB RAM
DOLBY AUDIO
IPS

• كمبيوتر محمول
من لينوفو

SUPER DEAL
Exclusive only at اكسترا extra حصرياً في

201.900 OMR ر.ع
+
Gift Voucher 32 OMR ر.ع

Lenovo
• AMD Ryzen 7 5700U, 8 cores
• 8GB RAM
• 512GB SSD
• AMD Radeon Graphics
• 15.6 Inch FHD IPS

نوصي بـ WE RECOMMEND
Lenovo
Carry Case + Wireless Mouse
Worth RO 5.900

Pay Only إدفع فقط 169.900 OMR ر.ع

CLICK-CLICK SHOP NOW تسوّق الآن

• هاتف ذكي
من سامسونج

SAMSUNG
Galaxy S23 Ultra

Limited Stock

HOT Price

256GB
Was قبل 519.000
Save وفّر 199.100
Discount خصم 38.3 %
Pay Only إدفع فقط 319.900 OMR ر.ع

اكسترا extra

BUY FROM 3 SHOWROOMS OR BUY ONLINE extra.com

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:24pm
Asr	3:45pm
Maghrib	6:14pm
Isha	7:24pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	5:13am

JOINT COOPERATION

Al Nu'amani meets Brazil envoy

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office yesterday Alfredo Cesar Martinho, Ambassador-designate of Brazil to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed current issues on the regional and international arenas.

The meeting also discussed aspects of the joint cooperation between the two countries. It underlined the friendship relations between Oman and Brazil. -ONA

ASAD AL BAHAR

RNO naval drill concludes

MUSCAT: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) on Wednesday concluded the naval drill "Asad Al Bahar" or "Sea Lion" 1/2024.

The naval drill was conducted with support of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) and the Maritime Security Centre.

The execution of this naval drill comes within the framework of the RNO training plans aimed to sustain the level of readiness of its fleet and personnel, in line with the national tasks entrusted to it. -ONA

SPECIALISATIONS

SQU Council approves new academic programmes

MUSCAT: As part of its efforts to expand scholarly specialisations at various levels, the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) Council on Wednesday approved a number of new academic programmes.

The Council approved the programmes during its second meeting for academic year 2023/2024, chaired by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Fahad Al Julanda Al Said, SQU Vice-Chancellor.

The Council took note of the latest developments in the university's march and the progress made in implementing decisions and recommendations it issued over the course of the academic year.

The Council approved a number of academic programmes at the College of Education, including the PhD in Educational Psychology and the PhD in educational assessment programmes.

The specialisations approved were the first two doctoral programmes of their kind in the Sultanate of Oman. They aim to provide highly qualified human resources to lend support to educational institutions and contribute to upgrading academic research.

The Council also approved the MSc programme in clinical physiology (specialization in Cardiovascular and Neurology) at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences. The programme targets health science graduates and technicians working in physiological diagnostic units who wish to further enhance their professional skills.

The programme is designed to meet the growing demand for such a specialty in the public and private health sectors.

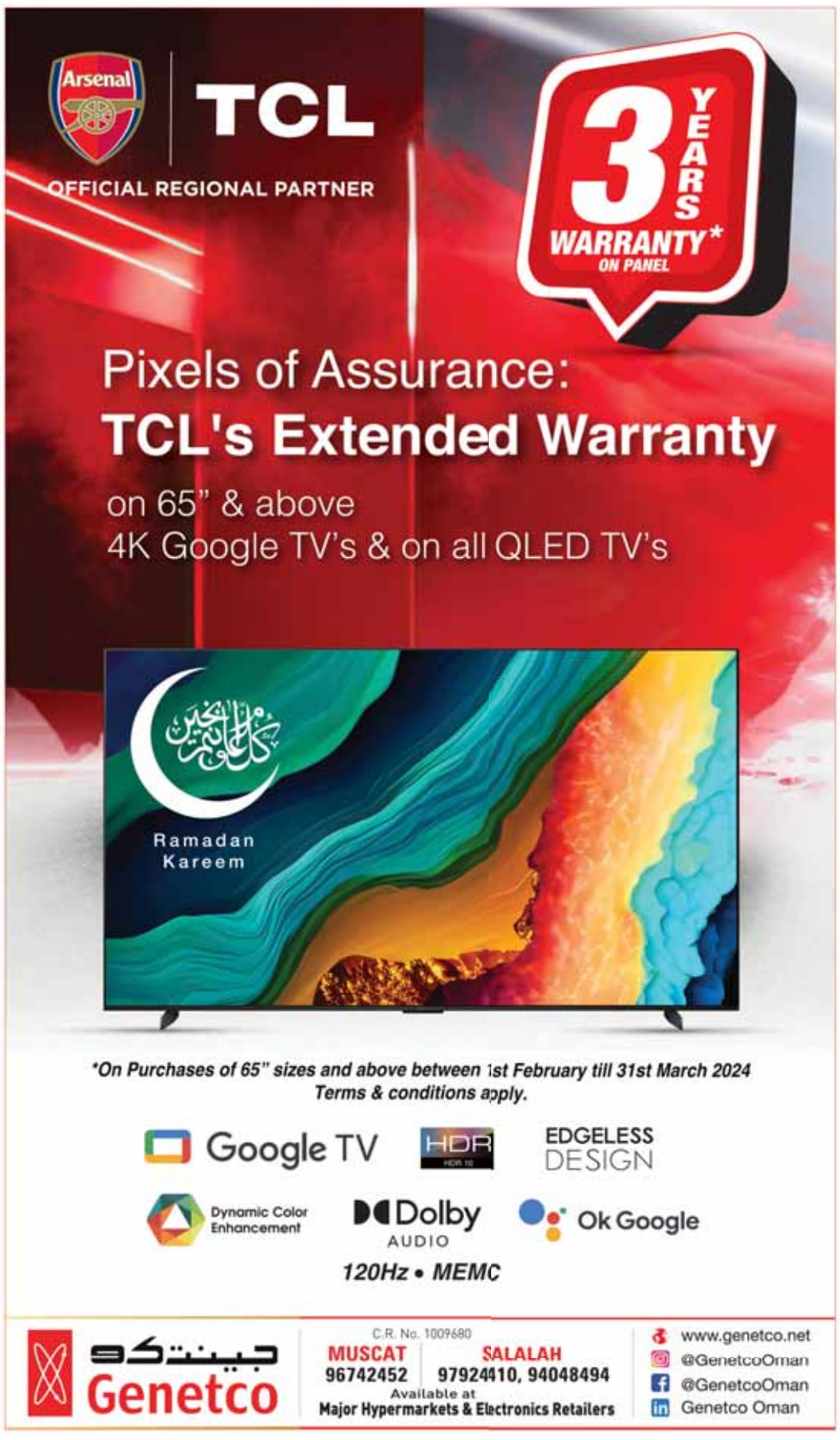
The Council expressed its commitment to realize the university's strategic plan and achieve its goals by following up performance indicators set for the current academic year. -ONA

CDAA

Oman to mark World Civil Defence Day on 1 March

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority will mark the World Civil Defence Day on 1 March.

Marking this day comes in implementation of the resolutions of the International Organization for Civil Defence in order to commemorate this occasion internationally, regionally and locally, and in appreciation of the efforts made by civil defence agencies in various countries of the world. -ONA



Heavy rains forecast for Oman today

The Civil Aviation Authority has advised all to take precaution during thundershowers and avoid crossing wadis

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Heavy thundershowers associated with downdraft, fresh winds and hail are expected from Thursday morning over the governorates of North Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi and gradually extending towards South Al Batinah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and South Al Sharqiyah governorates in the afternoon.

In wake of the raifall alert, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) advises all to take precaution during thundershowers, avoid crossing wadis (flash flood) and low laying areas and avoid venturing into the sea during the alert period.

The precipitation is predicted to be ranging from 20 mm to 50 mm which may cause flash flood.

Despite repeated warnings by the authorities, many people were found still risking their lives by crossing wadis when heavy rains lashed Oman in the second week of February, 2023.

Heavy rains in several governorates led to the tragic deaths of six individuals, including three children, while rescue operations saw more than 200 people saved from perilous conditions.

Royal Oman Police (ROP) has warned several times how dangerous it can be to venture across flooding wadis.

"Crossing wadis is punishable by law and ROP along with other authorities will not hesitate to punish anyone who violates that," it had said. It also said that despite the deployment of patrols and rescue teams in areas close to wadis by ROP and CDAA, many still repeatedly cross the wadis and seems unaware of the dangers of wadi drifting. -With ONA inputs

MEETING

Oman, Brunei to strengthen bilateral relations

MUSCAT: Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth held a meeting in Muscat on Wednesday with Dato Seri Setia, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports in Brunei Darussalam.

The meeting touched on a set of topics that promote the joint cooperation in the areas of culture, youth and sports.

The two sides also discussed means of enhancing cooperation between the two countries. -ONA

RSAF

Military delegation from Saudi Arabia visits Military Technological College

MUSCAT: Maj.Gen Pilot Talal Sulaiman Al Ghamdi, Deputy Commander of the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) of Saudi Arabia, and his accompanying delegation yesterday visited the Military Technological College (MTC).

The Saudi military official and his delegation were accompanied during the visit by Air Commodore Zahran Nasser Ambosaidi, Acting Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO).

Upon their arrival at the college, they were greeted by Air Commodore Eng. Mohammed Aziz Al Siabi, Dean of the MTC.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the college's educational and technical specialisations. They also toured the Military Technological College's departments and service facilities. -ONA

MILITARY TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE

French delegation visits MTC

MUSCAT: A French delegation from the Omani-French Defence Equipment Committee on Wednesday visited the Military Technological College (MTC).

Upon their arrival at the college, members of the delegation were greeted by Air Commodore Eng. Mohammed Aziz Al Siabi, Dean of the MTC.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the college's educational and technical specialisations.

They also toured the Military Technological College's departments and service facilities. -ONA

OMAN

ECONOMY

Oman's economy recovers, moving towards robust growth trajectory

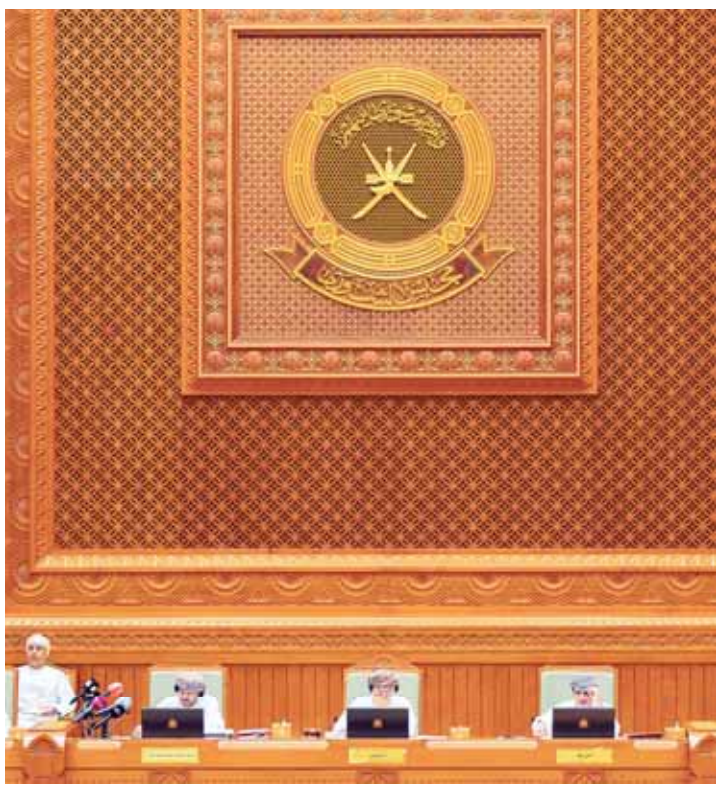
< FROM A1

It is expected that the actual volume of spending on the developmental budget in 2023 is set to stand at about OMR1,200.0 million. This reflects a keenness to provide financial resources to serve economic and social development projects and other priorities.

Al Saqri explained that the Ministry of Economy is working side by side with various government departments to improve the performance of the Sultanate of Oman in international indices, by emphasising two approaches; namely raising the performance of the Sultanate of Oman in international indicators quoted in the Oman Vision 2040 document, and monitoring improvement in sustainable development goals 2030.

To better prepare for the 11th Five Year Plan (2026-2030), the Ministry is monitoring a number of variables with which it will deal over the forthcoming period, said the minister. He explained that the Ministry lays emphasis on economic developments in the global geopolitical arena; trends in the field of energy; the growing interest in environmental sustainability (zero neutrality, green hydrogen); integration with technological developments; artificial intelligence; environmental challenges; and climate change.

The minister stressed that the Ministry of Economy keeps monitoring global economic variables and their impacts on the Omani economy. It takes careful measures to ensure the application of sound economic policies that are capable of dealing with all global variables, including measures to achieve competitive, diversified, sustainable and comprehensive economic growth by analysing present realities and anticipating future developments. - ONA



ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT

ROHM celebrates new education, Open Doors outreach initiative

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) has pursued a very exciting schedule of activities throughout the month of February aimed at extending musical performance and cultural experiences beyond the main programme for the benefit of the community.

Among the main initiatives this month, the Open Doors outreach project aimed to bring opera and music to a wider audience in the community with performances from ROHM's current educational programme at the Sultan Qaboos University Hospitals, Children's Centre, and the Autism Centre of Muscat.

The Royal Opera House Muscat is known for its exceptional programme of world-class performances including classical music, Arabic music, opera, and ballet.

Since January 2024, all performances at ROHM have been sold out, demonstrating the enthusiasm from the local and international audience for the 2023/24 season.

As part of its educational and outreach activities, ROHM organised an Open House event entitled 'Making Music'on February 24 with a day of activities in locations across the opera house for children and adults alike.

Visitors got stuck in, learning the art of making music from objects and the skills required to create instruments which sing. During this event, the opera house invited the Play Toy Orchestra, the first music band creating symphonies from real toy-instruments, and other artists including Rosa Mazzei and Albert Hera for exceptional workshops on the art of building music.

Extending this event further, the Open Doors initiative was created to support the accessibility and inclusivity of the Royal Opera House Muscat to all. As part of this outreach project, the Play Toy Orchestra along with singer Albert Hera performed from Monday 25th until Tuesday 27th February at different locations in Muscat including Sultan Qaboos University Hospitals, Children's Centre, and the Autism Centre of Muscat.

This initiative opened the door to opera house performances to the wider community, including those who are unable to attend shows in-house.

Umberto Fanni, Director General of the opera house stressed the importance of such initiatives saying "Alongside the founding vision of the opera house to provide enrichment and global cultural partnerships, we have always placed initiatives which connect with the community at the centre of the season's activities and programme. Bringing all types of performances to our communities, no matter their situation, is a fundamental way to exist as a cultural institution. It makes what we do truly matter and helps us open the door to the royal opera house's unique performances."

"This week, our performances have found new homes for our Open Doors initiative, in what we hope to be a true collaboration between our institutions that demonstrates the infinite value of art and culture," he added.

The Open Doors initiative will become an integral part of ROHM's educational programme, exporting the opera house's performances to a wider audience in Muscat and beyond.

This initiative is integrated within the calendar of educational and outreach activities.

In February only, ROHM organised a masterclass with renowned duo, Violinist Elvin Hoxha Ganiyev and Pianist Cem Esen and the Muscat Royal Philharmonic Orchestra,as well as educational talks and workshops to focus on Shakespeare alongside Britten's opera of A Midsummer Night's Dream which took place on the opera house stage.

MOHERI

Registration open for the Block Funding Programme 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) has announced the opening of applications for research proposals for the Block Funding Programme 2024 through the Research Information Management System (RIMS) in the Oman Research Portal.

The Block Funding Programme consists of three sub-programmes: Research Grants (RG), Graduate Research Grants (GRG), and Undergraduate Research Grants (URG).

For the Research Grants Programme, the applicant should be a PhD holder or its equivalent (senior specialist or higher for medical doctors), and the duration of the project is two years as a maximum with a budget of OMR20,000 per project.

For the Graduate Research Grants Programme, the applicant should be a master's or bachelor's degree holder with at least one year of work experience, or a postgraduate student or an Oman Medical Specialty Board resident, and the duration being two years as a maximum with a budget of OMR3,000 per project.

As for the Undergraduate Research Grants Programme, the applicants should be undergraduate students who have completed their foundation year and a GPA of no less than 2.30 or its equivalent, with the duration being 1 year with a budget of OMR1,500 per project.

Applying for the Block Funding Programme 2024 has a set of conditions, including the applicant (PI, Co-PI) should be affiliated with the institution at the time of submission and approval (Oct-Dec 2023), the applicant must not have any ongoing or uncompleted funded project from MoHERI, and the applicants in URG must not have graduated or about to graduate.

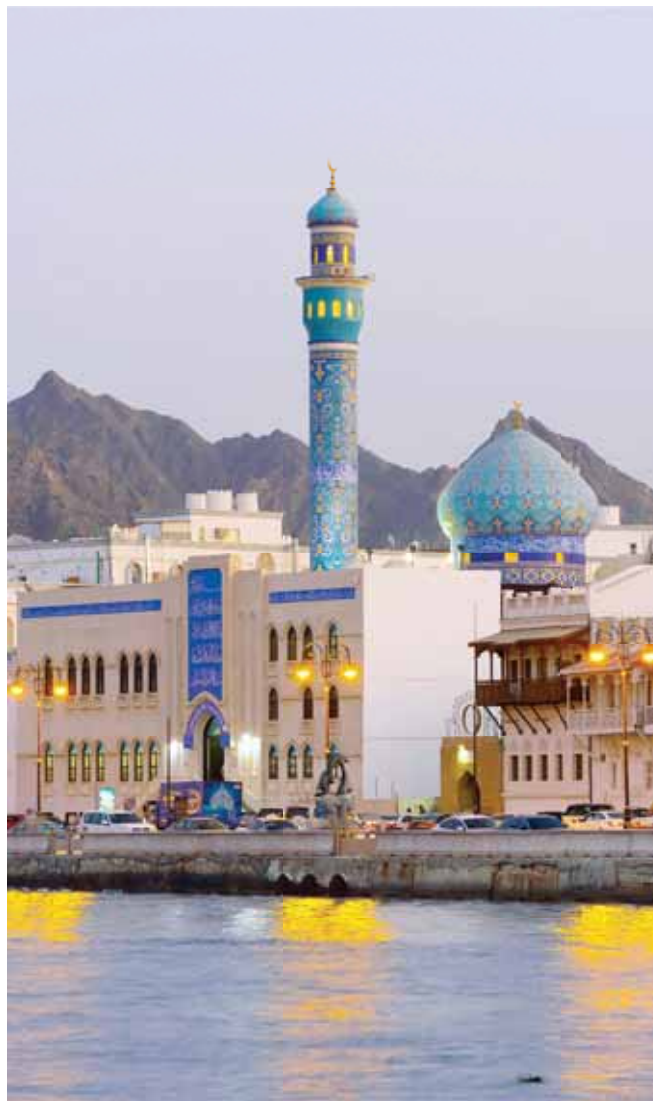
Moreover, the research proposal must not be an ongoing project or has been completed, the research project should be new and not been started or completed, the institutional focal points and evaluation committee members are not eligible to apply, and there must not be any kind of conflict of interest the research proposal should be related to Sultanate of Oman.

The deadline for the Block Funding Programme 2024 is until 30 May 2024.

Interested applicants can apply through (https://rims.trc.gov.om) at the Oman Research Portal. For enquires, interested applicants can contact (BFP@moheri.gov.om).

COMMENTARY

Oman's healing havens: Traditional medicine and wellness retreats



BHAVNA BATRA*

In the enchanting landscapes of Oman, where ancient traditions meet the modern world, a serene revolution is taking place. Beyond the bustling souks and historical forts, Oman's healing havens are emerging as sanctuaries for holistic well-being. Steeped in the rich tapestry of traditional medicine, these wellness retreats offer a unique blend of ancient wisdom and modern practices, creating a harmonious space for rejuvenation of the mind, body, and spirit.

Ancient wisdom in modern oasis

Oman, known for its mesmerising landscapes that range from rugged mountains to pristine beaches, has long been a destination for those seeking tranquility. Now, it's becoming a hub for wellness seekers drawn to the healing power of traditional Omani medicine. Rooted in centuries-old practices, Omani traditional medicine is deeply connected to the country's cultural heritage, drawing inspiration from the land's natural resources.

Balancing elements

Central to Omani traditional medicine is the concept of balance. The healing philosophy revolves around harmonising the four elements – earth, air, fire, and water – within the body. Traditional practitioners believe that an imbalance in these elements leads to ailments and discomfort. Through a combination of herbal remedies, therapeutic massages, and mindfulness practices, Oman's healing havens aim to restore this delicate equilibrium.

Frankincense: Oman's gift to well-being

No exploration of Omani traditional medicine is complete without mentioning frankincense. Renowned as the "Land of Frankincense," Oman has been a major hub for the production of this fragrant resin for centuries. Beyond its cultural and religious significance, frankincense is a cornerstone of traditional healing. Its essential oil is often used in aromatherapy to promote relaxation, alleviate stress, and enhance overall well-being. Oman's wellness retreats seamlessly integrate the soothing aroma of frankincense into their practices, creating an immersive healing experience.

Sustainable wellness retreats

Oman's commitment to preserving its natural beauty extends to its wellness retreats. Many of these havens are nestled in eco-friendly settings, surrounded by lush landscapes and untouched beauty. Sustainability is not just a buzzword here; it's a way of life. From locally sourced organic cuisine to eco-conscious architectural designs, these retreats reflect a deep respect for the environment, offering guests a chance to reconnect with nature while nourishing their bodies and souls.

Mindful movement and yoga retreats

As Oman opens its arms to the global wellness movement, yoga and mindful movement retreats are flourishing against the backdrop of mountains and seascapes. The rhythmic flow of yoga, combined with the tranquility of Oman's natural surroundings, creates an unparalleled experience. Whether you are a seasoned yogi or a beginner, these retreats cater to all levels, emphasizing mindfulness, meditation, and the therapeutic benefits of movement.

The oasis of Al Jabal Al Akhdar

Perched on the majestic Al Hajar Mountains, the wellness retreats in Al Jabal Al Akhdar epitomise the marriage between traditional healing and modern luxury. Surrounded by terraced gardens and overlooking dramatic canyons, these retreats offer a haven for those seeking respite from the demands of contemporary life. Guests can indulge in ancient healing rituals, such as herbal-infused steam baths and traditional massages, while immersing themselves in the breathtaking natural beauty of Oman's highest peak.

Wadi Shab: Nature's wellness sanctuary

Away from the mountains, Wadi Shab serves as a unique wellness sanctuary. The wadi, with its emerald-green pools and hidden caves, provides a natural setting for mindfulness and meditation. Wellness retreats here focus on harnessing the therapeutic power of nature, incorporating activities like hiking, swimming, and guided meditation into their programs. It's an invitation to rediscover a profound connection with the earth and oneself.

Cultural immersion and healing

What sets Oman's healing havens apart is the seamless integration of cultural immersion into wellness practices. Guests are invited to partake in traditional ceremonies, learn about the medicinal properties of indigenous plants, and engage with local communities. This holistic approach not only contributes to the preservation of Omani heritage but also deepens the healing experience by fostering a sense of connection and understanding.

Oman's healing havens represent a bridge between ancient wisdom and modern well-being. As the world embraces holistic health practices, Oman stands out as a destination that not only offers respite in its natural beauty but also embraces the healing traditions deeply rooted in its culture. The synergy between traditional medicine, sustainable practices, and mindful experiences creates an oasis of wellness that beckons travelers seeking a transformative journey of rejuvenation in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula.

**Besides being a dynamic Entrepreneur and CEO of SYNERGGIE Oman, Bhavna is an HR Expert, A Writer, Intuitive Energy Healer, Reiki Master, Miracle Coach, Motivational Speaker.*

STATE COUNCIL

Top Mauritanian official received

MUSCAT: Sheikh Dr. Hilal Ali Al Hinai, Deputy Chairman of the State Council received today Dah Ould Sidi Ould Amar Taleb, Minister of Islamic Affairs and Original Education in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

During the meeting, Sheikh Al Hinai expressed his hope that the visit would enhance relations between Oman ad Mauritania.

The guest was briefed on the tasks and prerogatives of the State Council.

Then, he and his accompanying delegation toured various facilities of the Council and viewed contents of the library of the Council of Oman. – ONA

U.S. EMBASSY - MUSCAT

ONLINE AUCTION SALE OF USED ITEMS

The U.S. Embassy Muscat is auctioning used household and office furniture, furnishings, appliances, and IT equipment by online auction.

Interested bidders may view the auction items online starting on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:00a.m. by going to **https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US.** Online bidding for all items will open on **Thursday, February 29 at 10:00a.m.** Bidders must first register on the website before placing a bid.

All items offered are sold "As is, where is." There are no warranties, either expressed or implied. Bidding closes on **Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 1:00p.m.**

After the auction closes on March 3, successful bidders will be notified and must make full payment in the **Bank Muscat U.S. Embassy** account **0454000188720026 (Swift: BMUSOMRX)** before the payment deadline of March 5, 11:00 a.m. Bidders can view payment instructions in the "How it works" link on the auction website after the auction goes live and successful bidders will receive an email with instructions. **Please note failure to follow payment instructions may result in the forfeiture of your lots and possible bank fees. Please read instructions carefully. Late payments will not be accepted.**

Successful bidders with fully paid lots must collect their items or arrange for someone to collect them on **Saturday, March 9** at the Ghala warehouse during the specific scheduled time **(BEFORE 2:00pm).** If you are unable to arrange pickup on that date, please do not participate in the auction as there are no alternate pickup dates. Directions to the Ghala warehouse will be provided to successful bidders.

UBAR HOTELS & RESORTS SAOG

UBAR

P.O. Box 1000, Nizwa, Postal Code 611, Sultante of Oman, Tel: (968) 25431616, Fax: (968) 25431530
Email: info@goldentulipnizwa.com, Website: www.goldentulipnizwa.com, www.parkinn.com/hotel-muscat

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of UBAR Hotels and Resorts SAOG, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the company's 29th Annual Assembly Meeting and to present to you our Consolidated Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ended 31st December 2023, including the Financial Statements and the Auditor's Report for the year 2023.

As we all know, the impact of the pandemic outbreak was felt from the middle of March 2020 onwards till September 2022. The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the tourism industry. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our company has taken all possible steps to maintain its stability, ensure the continuity of its operation, and address difficult conditions to minimize losses and improve its liquidity situation.

Like the previous years, 2023 was also very challenging for the Hospitality and Travel industry. High inflation worldwide, the energy crisis, the Russia & Ukraine Conflict, and high air ticket fares which still continue. This year the Ramadan period also fell in the peak seasonal months of March & April, which saw a reduced inflow of leisure guests; this also affected the total revenues generated during these two particular months. The tourism sector of Oman started improving in the 4th Quarter of the year, but due to the Israel and Palestine conflicts, The company witnessed many cancellations during the peak season. On a positive note, despite many challenges, the company has shown improvements in revenue over the last three years. The company has recorded an average growth of about 11% year-on-year between 2020 to 2023.

All efforts have been exerted in order to maintain the Company's stability and ensure the continuity of its operation.

Revenues Analysis
During the year 2023, Despite several challenges, the group has performed better than 2022 and achieved a turnover of RO 2,705,231/-which has shown an increase of 9% from the previous year's turnover of RO 2,488,153/-. The company has managed to achieve an overall occupancy of 51%, which is on the higher side by 6% compared to last year. The ARR (Average Room Rate) is at RO 26. Unfortunately, the ARR still remains very low, which has a direct impact on profitability.

Revenue Composition:
The Company has generated a total revenue of RO 2,705,231 for the year 2023. 53% of the total revenue is from the Room Segment, 22% is from the food segment, 18% is from the Beverage segment, and 7% is from the other segments.

Profit/Loss for the year
Although the hotel has generated higher revenue than last year, it was still insufficient to generate gross operating profits and net profits. Therefore, the company went into losses. But, the positive note is that the Company managed to reduce its losses on a year- to-year basis. The Group's Gross operating loss is RO 274,884/, which is less than 8% compared to the loss of RO 297,431 in 2022. The Group Net loss is RO 866,883/- compared to the loss of RO 875,175/- in the year 2022.

Internal Control Systems
Management of the Company has been consistently improving the systems and enhancing the internal control procedures. The review of the internal control system was done periodically by regular internal and external audits. The Audit Committee then reviewed the same reports and updated it to the Board. The Board has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal control systems and is satisfied with the same.

Omanization
The Company has been encouraging Omanization by employing Omanis in various departments. All efforts are made to comply throughout the year to achieve the Omanization level as per the requirement of the Government.

Future Perspective
Oman's tourism industry can offer long term growth potential as it is home to a diverse range of tourist attractions. Currently, tourism infrastructure is undergoing extensive government investment, and efforts are being put in place to raise awareness about the tourism potential available within the country. The Board is confident that the current economic scenarios will improve in the coming year, and Oman will witness economic growth in its various sectors. It will continue to be a desired destination among travelers. The Board assures the shareholders that the Company shall strive and continue to achieve better results in the future with the proven, hard, and sincere efforts of

Management and its staff. The renewal of the Management contract for Park Inn Muscat Hotel was due in 2024. During the 05 th Board Meeting held on 20th December 2023, considering the performance of the Park Inn Muscat Property, the Board of Directors decided not to continue with the management contract and the Park Inn Brand for the Muscat property but to re-brand the hotel as Golden Tulip Muscat with effect from 1 st February 2024 onwards.

Conclusion
On behalf of the Shareholders, the Board of Directors has the great pleasure of extending their profound thanks, loyalty, and gratitude for His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik. We pray to the Almighty to grant him good health and success as he guides the nation to new frontiers of prosperity and takes our beloved Oman into a brighter future. The Board looks forward to the further growth of the tourism industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

Thank You.

Tariq Mohamed Ali Al Barwani
Chairman

CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Parent Company		Consolidated	
	2023 RO '000	**2022 RO '000**	2023 RO '000	**2022 RO '000**
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	9,280,532	9,636,149	1,594,882	1,708,426
Right of use assets	108,210	99,160	108,210	99,160
Investment in a subsidiary	--	--	4,104,906	4,104,906
Non-current portion of loan to Subsidiary	--	--	2,253,376	2,362,600
Total non-current assets	9,388,742	9,735,309	8,061,374	8,275,092
Current assets				
Inventories	108,041	108,709	76,533	69,915
Trade and other receivables	377,939	334,656	226,757	163,103
Amounts due from Subsidiary	--	--	1,470,368	1,073,432
Current portion of loan to Subsidiary	--	--	109,224	16,000
Bank deposit	2,098	83,519	2,098	83,519
Bank balances and cash	126,875	40,902	115,512	24,362
Total current assets	614,953	567,786	2,000,492	1,430,331
Total assets	**10,003,695**	**10,303,095**	**10,061,866**	**9,705,423**
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	5,001,750	5,001,750	5,001,750	5,001,750
Legal reserve	983,531	983,531	759,398	759,398
Special reserve	508,515	508,515	508,515	508,515
Replacement reserve	1,107,392	1,054,359	--	--
Accumulated losses	(2,651,321)	(1,731,405)	(330,662)	(120,214)
Total equity	4,949,867	5,816,750	5,939,001	6,149,449
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Non-current portion of deferred Government grant	57,626	64,294	57,626	64,294
Non-current portion of term loans	2,205,251	2,307,600	2,205,251	2,307,600
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	240,669	104,204	240,669	104,204
Employees' end of service benefits	332,140	286,043	231,190	203,835
Total non-current liabilities	2,835,686	2,762,141	2,734,736	2,679,933
Current liabilities				
Current portion of deferred Government grant	6,668	6,668	6,668	6,668
Current portion of term loans	109,224	16,000	109,224	16,000
Current portion of lease liabilities	74,721	232,531	74,721	232,531
Bank borrowings	502,869	75,991	502,869	75,991
Trade and other payables	1,513,268	1,374,807	683,255	526,644
Taxation	11,392	18,207	11,392	18,207
Total current liabilities	2,218,142	1,724,204	1,388,129	876,041
Total liabilities	5,053,828	4,486,345	4,122,865	3,555,974
Total Shareholders' equity and liabilities	**10,003,695**	**10,303,095**	**10,061,866**	**9,705,423**
Net assets per share	**0.099**	**0.116**	**0.119**	**0.123**

CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Parent Company		Consolidated	
	2023 RO '000	**2022 RO '000**	2023 RO '000	**2022 RO '000**
INCOME				
Revenue from contracts with customers	2,705,231	2,488,153	1,379,416	1,248,940
Operating costs	(3,377,806)	(3,286,946)	(1,566,949)	(1,519,010)
Gross loss	(672,575)	(798,793)	(187,533)	(270,070)
Release of deferred Government grant	6,668	6,668	6,668	6,668
Other income	5,483	100,780	5,483	1,036
Finance charges (net)	(206,459)	(183,830)	(35,066)	(52,690)
	(194,308)	(76,382)	(22,915)	(44,986)
Net loss and total comprehensive income for the year	**(866,883)**	**(875,175)**	**(210,448)**	**(315,056)**
Basic earnings per share	**(0.017)**	**(0.017)**	**(0.004)**	**(0.006)**

WORLD

World must act to stop surge of pollutants: UN

Pollution is set to escalate with projections suggesting the greatest growth in rubbish will be in regions that currently rely on open dumping and burning—practices

NAIROBI: The world generated 2.3 billion tonnes of municipal waste last year (2023) and the pile of trash is set to grow another two-thirds by 2050, the United Nations (UN) said yesterday, warning of devastating costs for health, economies and the environment.

Pollution is set to escalate, according to new research by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), with projections suggesting the greatest growth in rubbish will be in regions that currently rely on open dumping and burning—practices that emit greenhouse gases, and leach toxic chemicals into soils, waterways and the air.

Without urgent action, the waste mountain is expected to grow to 3.8 billion tonnes by the middle of the century, according to the estimate, which exceeds previous forecasts.

It also suggests the economic burden will almost double when the "hidden costs" linked to poor waste disposal from pollution, poor health and climate change are taken into account, reaching some $640 billion a year by 2050, from around $361 billion in 2020.

"Waste generation is intrinsically tied to GDP, and many fast-growing economies are struggling under the burden of rapid waste growth," said Inger Andersen, UNEP's Executive Director.

She said the report could help governments in their efforts to "create more sustainable societies and to secure a liveable planet for future generations". -ONA

Times OF OMAN

Printed and published by: Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

FINANCIAL SYSTEM

BRICS states mull common digital payment platform

MOSCOW: The Russian Finance Ministry together with the Bank of Russia and BRICS partners will prepare a number of initiatives to improve the international monetary and financial system, which will focus in particular on the issue of creating the BRICS Bridge multisided payment platform, according to files published following the first meeting of BRICS finance ministers and central banks governors in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"By the end of the year, the Russian Finance Ministry and the Bank of Russia together with partners within the [BRICS] association will draft a report for the leaders of the BRICS countries on improving the international monetary and financial system, which will contain a set of initiatives and recommendations.

Developmental work based on the report will result in a number of practical initiatives, with the BRICS Bridge platform potentially becoming one of them.

The issue is about creating a multisided digital payment platform. It will help bring the financial markets of the BRICS member states closer and increase mutual trade turnover," according to files released on the ministry's website.

Moreover, achieving an increase in the share of national currencies used in mutual settlements and creating equally accessible, independent financial infrastructure have been given particular emphasis for cooperation among BRICS members. "The gradual integration of the new BRICS member states into the work of the financial tracks and strengthening of cooperation at the expert level was noted as being one of the crucial tasks for 2024," the ministry said.

On 27 February 2024, the finance ministers and central bank governors of the BRICS member states met on the sidelines of the G20 ministerial meeting in Sao Paulo. It was the first face-to-face meeting held under the BRICS financial track with the participation of representatives of the five countries that became full-fledged BRICS members on 1 January 2024.

At the meeting, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov and Bank of Russia First Deputy Governor Vladimir Chistyukhin presented the main priority for work on the BRICS financial track, as well as the overriding theme of Russia's chairmanship: improving the international monetary and financial system. -ONA

KOBE UNIVERSITY

Experiment captures why pottery forms are culturally distinct

TOKYO: A study led by Kobe University, published in PNAS Nexus, reveals how potters from different cultural backgrounds learn and reproduce new pottery forms, shedding light on cultural variations in archaeological artifacts.

Researchers, including experts in pottery, motor control, and shape analysis, conducted a field experiment involving 21 wheel-throwing potters from France, India, and Japan.

Despite no differential cultural evolution, they found distinct cultural differences in the final shape and shaping process trajectories of pottery forms.

This suggests the existence of cultural attractors, influencing how artisans assimilate new cultural elements. Lead researcher Nonaka highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the study, crucial for its success.

While cultural attractors don't negate selective transmission, they offer insights into how artisans incorporate new elements into their craft.

This finding not only enriches our understanding of artisanal practices but also informs archaeological interpretations, potentially identifying community-specific patterns in artifact assemblages.

The study underscores the complexity of human behavior and its implications for cultural evolution and artifact analysis. -ONA

CREDIT CARD COMPANY

JCB transforms Osaka into destination for foreign visitors

OSAKA: The Japanese credit card company JCB has come up with Osaka town's level of satisfaction and hospitality. Foreign guests relocate to the town in order to enjoy a stay after landing.

Wataru Nakatani, JCB on hospitality has said, "In Osaka City, JCB card holders can get benefits at shopping centres, hotels and restaurant bars. Participants, with an intention to provide hospitality to foreign visitors, are expanding in the town."

Osaka is popular for sightseeing. At this hotel, card holder visitors can get a big discount.

Osaka is also known as the "City of Satisfactory Eating." That is what makes Osaka so unique. Visitors can enjoy a delicious meal and a substantial discount at this restaurant.

Japanese Cuisine TAWO, Ken Ikuta. said, "These are the raw tuna and mackerel of seasonal fish. This is seasonal soup. Japanese food is very popular among foreign tourists." -ANI

TRANSPORT MINISTRY

More than 30 killed in Mali bus crash

KENIEBA: A bus fell off a bridge in southeastern Mali on Tuesday, killing 31 people, the Transport Ministry said. The bus crashed near the western town of Kenieba around 5 p.m. local time (1700 GMT).

The bus was en route to neighboring Burkina Faso when it "overturned," the Transport Ministry said in a statement on Facebook.

"The provisional toll is 31 killed on the spot and 10 injured, some of them seriously," the ministry said.

The accident occurred at a bridge crossing the Bagoe River, the ministry said. The victims included Malians and citizens from other West African countries, it added.

"The probable cause was the driver's failure to control the vehicle," the ministry said.

Road accidents are common in Mali and West Africa, where many roads and vehicles suffer from poor conditions. – DW

NON-CHEMICAL PEST CONTROL

Natural pesticides rising in popularity globally

RIO DE JANEIRO: Since the dawn of agriculture, farmers have struggled to protect crops from pests.

In ancient Persia (current-day Iran), the natural insecticide Pyrethrum, made from dried Chrysanthemum flowers, was utilised to paralyse insects that attack edible plants — and later to kill hair lice. But by the dawn of the 20th century, large-scale mono agriculture was relying on chemicals containing arsenic, sulphur or copper to deter pests from fruit, cereals and vegetables.

All those chemical pesticides have had a profound impact on ecosystems and human health. It is why some countries have banned them, and the EU has long threatened — but failed — to outlaw glyphosate, a controversial weedkiller that threatens biodiversity and has been linked to the development of cancer. But what's the alternative?

Making pesticides naturally

Biopesticides created with plant products like Pyrethrum, or with neem tree-based essential oils, or types of fungi that guard against pathogens, are rising in popularity globally as farmers shun chemical pesticides.

Neem, a tree common in India, contains a number of limonoids — often found in citrus plants and well-known for their insecticidal properties — that repel insects when applied as an essential oil.

The natural pesticide is effective, for example, in controlling locusts and stopping them from forming destructive swarms.

Essential oil made from rosemary has also proved to be highly repellent against aphids, which stunt and deform diverse cereal and vegetable species.

Meanwhile, one farmer in Tamil Nadu in southern India has ditched chemical pesticides that impacted his health for a spray he makes from cow urine and locally grown leeks. His organic crops are flourishing.

How natural pesticides work

In a study published in December, Australian researchers showed how bluegreen aphids were becoming resistant to chemical insecticides — which was part of a worldwide trend, they added.

To break this resistance, the authors recommended non-chemical pest control alternatives, including the promotion of "natural enemies" such as ladybirds and parasitoid wasps.

Novel bacteria used to successfully manage mosquito-born disease are another option, according to the study. Rather than rely on universal chemical pesticides, the idea is to employ regionally specific solutions to pest control.

In Brazil, which is the biggest exporter of soy, strides are being made to create natural pesticides using organic fungi and bacteria.

The application of these natural microorganisms has proved beneficial, allowing soy crops to flourish while resisting pests and disease.

Brazil is also a major exporter of corn and cotton and the number one consumer of chemical pesticide, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation.

But despite the continued rise in chemical insecticide use, biopesticide sales have more than doubled in Brazil from 4% of total pesticide sales in in 2020 to 9% in 2022.

The advantages of biopesticides

So-called microbial pesticides consisting of microorganisms like bacterium or fungus can control a wide variety of pests, according to the US Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

The most utilised microbial pesticides are strains of the Bacillus thuringiensis bacteria that produces a mix of proteins capable of killing several related species of insect larvae.

Such biopesticides are not only less toxic than conventional pesticides, they limit their impact on the "target pest and closely related organisms," says the EPA.

This localised application contrasts to conventional pesticides that can affect diverse organisms such as birds, insects and mammals.

Biopesticides are also effective in very small quantities, says the EPA. Additionally, they decompose quickly, which reduces environmental exposure and the pollution associated with conventional pesticide.

Natural pesticides can also bring high crop yields, though one caveat will be how a shifting climate and rising CO2 in the atmosphere could shift the dynamic between certain plants and pests. – DW

WORLD

Hospital in Gaza suspends services due to fuel and medicines shortage

The number of civilians killed since the start of the Israeli aggression on Gaza on October 7 has risen to 29,878, mostly women and children.

GAZA: Al-Awda Hospital in the city of Jabalia, north of the Gaza Strip, on Wednesday announced the complete suspension of all its medical services due to severe shortage of fuel and medical supplies. Earlier yesterday, Al-Awda Hospital warned that its medical services provided for the sick and wounded individuals inside the Hospital would stop due to the lack of medical supplies, medicines and fuel in light of strict military siege imposed by the Israeli forces on areas in the northern Gaza Strip.

At Al-Awda Hospital

The Director of the Monitoring and Evaluation Department in Al-Awda, Doctor Muhammad Salha, said in a press statement, "The complete cessation of services at Al-Awda Hospital will lead to a complete deprivation of basic health services for citizens, especially in light of the cessation of service by all hospitals in the north." He added, "The hospital's cessation of operation will exacerbate the complex health crisis due to the ongoing Israeli aggression and siege since October 7."

The doctor urgently appealed to all international, humanitarian and human rights organizations to put pressure on the occupation to supply the hospital with medicines, consumables, medical supplies and fuel."

Severe damage

The occupation forces besieged Al Awda Hospital for 18 days, causing severe damage to the upper floors of the building, in addition to destroying a number of ambulance vehicles.

Since the beginning of the aggression on the Gaza Strip on October 7, Israel has put 31 hospitals out of service due to the intense missiles strikes. Israeli forces also partially targeted 152 health institutions.

The number of civilians killed since the start of the Israeli aggression on Gaza on October 7 has risen to 29,878, mostly women and children. At least 70,215 others were injured. — Agencies

US CENTRAL COMMAND

US aircraft, coalition warship shoot down five Houthi UAVs in Red Sea

WASHINGTON, DC: Amid the escalating tensions in the Red Sea, the US Central Command has said that US aircraft and a coalition warship shot down five Houthi one-way attack (OWA) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in the Red Sea on Tuesday between 9:50 pm to 10:55 pm.

According to US Central Command, the forces identified these unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) originating from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined that they posed an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the US Navy and coalition ships in the region. The US Central Command noted that these actions will protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safe and more secure for US Navy and merchant vessels.

In a post on X, US Central Command Forces stated, "On Feb. 27, between the hours of 9:50pm and 10:55pm, U.S. aircraft and a coalition warship shot down five Iranian-backed Houthi one-way attack (OWA) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in the Red Sea."

"CENTCOM forces identified these UAVs originating from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the U.S. Navy and coalition ships in the region. These actions will protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for US Navy and merchant vessels," it added.

On Tuesday, US Central Command said that it has destroyed three unmanned surface vessels (USV), two mobile anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCM), and a one-way attack unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in the Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen in self-defence.

It said that these actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for US Navy and merchant vessels. The US Central Command said that the USV and ASCM weapons were prepared to launch towards and the UAV was over the Red Sea and determined that they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and the US Navy ships in the region. -ANI

ATTACK ON POLITICIANS

2 Mexican mayoral candidates gunned down before elections

MARAVATIO: Two mayoral candidates have been shot dead within a span of a few hours in the Mexican city of Maravatio, ahead of the June 2 national elections.

The attack on the politicians took place in the western state of Michoacan which is one of Mexico's most violent regions.

Miguel Angel Reyes Zavala, a gynaecologist, who wanted to be run with President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's Morena party, was gunned down in his vehicle outside of his clinic, authorities said.

Two gunmen shot at point-blank range and then fled in a car, according to the witness testimonies collected by the investigating team.

A few hours later, Armando Perez Luna, who hoped to represent the opposition National Action Party (PAN), was found dead in a car with marks of gunshots on his body, according to the state prosecutor's office.

A surge in bloodshed in the run up to elections has become an increasingly common phenomenon in Mexico where local politicians in particular have become more vulnerable to violence.

About three dozen candidates were killed during the last national election in 2021.

More than 30 people have been killed in violence linked to elections in Mexico since June last year. Of these, 16 were aspiring candidates, according to research group Laboratorio Electoral.

The killings often come when campaigning for elections is yet to begin. The violence is attributed to the strengthening of drug cartels in Mexico.

In a report published, Integralia Consultants, a research think tank, wrote that "organized crime will intervene like never before in local elections in 2024" because cartels now have expanded their businesses and deal in more than just drugs.

— DW

AHEAD OF A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Shooting heard in Chad's capital after deadly attack

N'DJAMENA: Reports emerged of heavy gunfire in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, on Wednesday after fighting near the headquarters of the country's internal security agency turned deadly.

The violence comes ahead of a presidential election set to take place in May and June that could return the country to constitutional rule three years after the military seized power.

What we know so far

The sounds of gunfire came from close to the headquarters of the Socialist Party Without Borders opposition party (PSF).

The army was understood to have been subsequently deployed around the PSF offices. Meanwhile, all roads leading to the security agency headquarters were blocked.

A PSF official told the AFP news agency that Kalashnikov assault rifles and tear gas grenades had been used.

The PSF party is led by Yaya Dillo, who is both the cousin and a fierce opponent of Chad's transitional president, Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno.

The party said its members and Torabi's relatives had gone to look for his body at the agency — after reports that he had been shot dead — when soldiers shot at them, causing several deaths.

Earlier attack blamed on opposition

A government statement claimed the state security offices had been attacked by PSF members, leading to several deaths.

The government said the attack came after PSF member Ahmed Torabi was arrested and accused of an assassination attempt against the president of the Supreme Court, Samir Adam Annour.

It added that the situation appeared to have "taken a dramatic turn" with "a deliberate attack by accomplices of this individual led by elements of the PSF."

However, the Chadian government said, "The perpetrators of this act have been arrested or are being sought and will be prosecuted."

Internet monitor Netblocks said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, that internet connectivity in the country had been disrupted after the attack.

Deby Itno took power after his father, Idriss Deby Itno, who came to power in a coup and ruled for three decades before being killed while fighting rebels in 2021.

The younger Deby Itno had promised to give power to civilians and organise elections within 18 months, but he went on to add another two years to the transition.

Deby Itno had told the African Union he would not run as president in the upcoming election, but a new constitution that allows him to do so was adopted after a mid-December referendum. Some suspect he will use the election as a means of legitimisation before continuing the dynasty that his father started.

Chad is the last close partner that former colonial power France has in the Sahel region after the forced withdrawal of French troops from Mali in 2022, Burkina Faso in February last year and Niger in December. All three of those countries have since moved closer to Russia. Moscow has a strong presence in countries bordering Chad in the form of mercenaries from the Wagner private military group.

In December, Chad's Supreme Court approved the vote on a new constitution that critics say could help cement the power of junta leader Mahamat Idriss Deby.

— DW

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(8/2024)

International Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: **(https//:etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)** against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
PRE/23/153 Re-Call	Maintenance Works at different locations at Muscat Governorate	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/035	Supply & Installation of IP video cameras at Qurum Public Park	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/051	Consultancy Services for Design of Internal Roads at Muscat Governorate	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/054	Provision of Labours for Muscat Municipality	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/056	Civil Works at Al Nasim Public Park	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/057	Electrical Works at Al Nasim Public Park	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/059	Supply & Installation of Arches at Al Nasim Public Park	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/060	Reconstruction of Boundary Walls at Al Nasim Public Park	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/064	Hire of Equipments & Vehicles for Muscat Municipality	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/065	Construction of Football Pitch at Qurriyat Municipality	19/03/2024	10/04/2024
PRE/24/066	Archive File Documents for Muscat Municipality	19/03/2024	10/04/2024

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
2. Clarification and Support:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: **(https//:etendering.tenderboard.gov.om) .**
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to **(etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).**

SPORTS

Haaland scores five as Man City beat Luton in FA Cup quarters

Four of Haaland's first five goals received assistance from Kevin de Bruyne and he scored two goals in the second half

LONDON: Star striker Erling Haaland netted five goals, sending the champions Manchester City into the quarterfinals of the FA Cup with a 6-2 win over Luton on Tuesday night.

Four of Haaland's first five goals received assistance from Kevin de Bruyne and he scored two goals in the second half. Previously, Haaland had scored five goals against RP Leipzig during the UEFA Champions League last season.

City started out with a bang, with Haaland putting his team into the lead in the third minute. The star striker doubled the lead in the 18th minute. City raced to a 3-0 lead, with Haaland completing his hat-trick as he picked a through-ball from Bruyne and chipped it over goalkeeper Timothy Michael Krul.

Despite City being in a commanding position at 3-0, Luton threatened to deliver an incredible comeback as Jordan Clark scored a brace to make it 3-2 by 52nd minute. This included a stunning goal from outside the box, which was a key highlight of the match.

But Haaland ended any chances of Luton's comeback, scoring his fourth and fifth goals in the 55th and 58th minute to make it 5-2 before Mateo Kovacic fired the sixth goal in the 72nd minute.

Following the game, City manager Pep Guardiola said as quoted by Sky Sports, "The connection of Kevin with Erling was great but everyone contributed. Happy to be in the quarter-finals, one game away from Wembley."

"Erling needs a guy with the vision, the quality, the generosity. Kevin is the less selfish player in front of goal. Kevin needs the movement from Erling. We know how aggressive they are."

"Every pass was good. The finishing from Erling was good. We could have scored more, we had two or three more chances, one against one with Krul. But the players read (the game) really well. They did it perfectly."

"My only concern was that Erling had been two months stopped, he could not walk, could not make anything. When you lose two months, that rhythm is not easy to get back."

"Every game he is getting better. Kevin as well. Step by step, they are coming back," concluded the City boss.

City's next game will be the Manchester derby against Manchester United on Sunday. -Xinhua

FIRST TIME IN 21 YEARS

Mallorca beat Real Sociedad in penalty shootout for place in Copa del Rey final

MADRID: Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif was the hero as his side won a penalty shootout away to Real Sociedad to qualify for the Copa del Rey final for the first time in 21 years.

Greif, who saved a spot-kick from Brais Mendez in normal time, stopped Mikel Oyarzabal's spot-kick at the start of the shootout, which came after 120 minutes had ended 1-1. With all the Mallorca players beating home goalkeeper Alex Remiro, Mallorca will be in Sevilla for the final on April 6.

The first leg between the two sides ended 0-0 three weeks ago, and a league meeting later on saw a 2-1 win for Real Sociedad with a late goal, so it was no surprise that this was also a close affair.

Mallorca coach Javier Aguirre had organised his defence effectively and Real Sociedad found little space for striker Andre Silva.

It wasn't until the half hour that Arsen Zakharyan had the first shot on target for the home side, although it was straight at Greif.

Abdon Prats shot just wide for Mallorca after good work from Dani Rodriguez before Mendez wasted a perfect chance to put Real Sociedad ahead.

Antonio Raillo needlessly handled Martin Zubimendi's ball into the area to concede a penalty, but Mendez hit a tame effort that Greif saved comfortably with his feet.

Real Sociedad replaced the ineffective Silva with recent signing Sheraldo Becker at halftime, but Mallorca struck first with right back Giovanni Gonzalez planting a powerful far-post header past Remiro five minutes into the second half.

Real Sociedad reacted well, with Takefusa Kubo active on the right, before Mikel Oyarzabal came on for the home side after two weeks out with a thigh injury.

-Xinhua

MEN'S TEAM

Bangladesh batting, bowling coach appointed

DHAKA : The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) appointed David Hemp as the national men's team batting coach and Andre Adams joined the team as the bowling coach for the national side ahead of the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka.

Hemp, who was the High-Performance Head Coach since May 2023, has already had a stint with the national side and toured as Bangladesh's batting coach during their tour of New Zealand last year.

In addition, former New Zealand all-rounder Andre Adams has been appointed as the national team's bowling coach. Both are signing a two-year deal. Their first task will be an upcoming home series against Sri Lanka. Hemp, a former Bermuda international, had a successful first-class cricket career, having batted for Glamorgan, Free State, and Warwickshire, scoring over 15,500 runs. He has an ECB Level 4 Coaching Certification and was the head coach of the Pakistan Women's National Team from 2020 to 2022. -ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by April 2024 reaching $81.66, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 41 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was $82.07. - ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,532.63 points, down by 0.99 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.48 per cent at 447.73 points. Sembcorp Salalah, up 6.38 per cent, was the top gainer while, Musandam Power, down 7.52 per cent, was the top loser. > B2

Sohar Port and Freezone showcases pivotal role in economic opportunities

Sohar Investment Forum highlighted the pivotal role of Sohar Port and Freezone as a magnet for investments, emphasising ongoing endeavours to incentivise and bolster support for investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone participated as a strategic sponsor in the recently concluded Sohar Investment Forum took place on February 26-27, in line with its commitment to fostering trade and investment and understanding the pivotal role of Sohar Port and Freezone in this enterprise.

The forum marked a significant gathering of over 600 delegates, including ministers, undersecretaries, business leaders, and international investors, all converging to explore the multitude of investment opportunities within the Al Batinah governorate.

Aligning with Oman Vision 2040, the Sohar Investment Forum was designed to catalyse economic growth and diversification. Through a series of keynote addresses, panel discussions, and B2B meetings, participants engaged in deep discussions focused on the changing global economic landscape, new foreign investment laws, and Sohar's strategic role in attracting foreign direct investments.

Omar bin Mahmood Al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone and DCEO Sohar Port, participated in the forum, engaging in a panel session titled 'Sohar Incentives and Opportunities'. The session explored how the integrated logistics hub supports government efforts to attract foreign investments, details on the comprehensive services offered to investors, and the strategic utilisation of international relations to market Oman.

He stated: "We are dedicated to fostering sustainable development through our active engagement of the Sohar Investment Forum, a premier international gathering in the Al Batinah North Governorate, orchestrated by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The forum highlights the pivotal role of Sohar Port and Freezone as a magnet for investments, emphasising ongoing endeavours to incentivise and bolster support for investors. Our commitment reflects our steadfast pursuit of advancing the economic landscape and nurturing enduring growth, both locally and globally."

The forum effectively highlighted Sohar's strategic location, multimodal connectivity, and state-of-the-art infrastructure, further underscoring the Sohar area as a prime destination for global investors.

GOOGLE DISTRIBUTED CLOUD EDGE SOLUTION

Omantel, Google forge path to digital transformation in META region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunications services in the Sultanate of Oman, announced its monumental collaboration with Google to introduce the first Google Distributed Cloud Edge solution in the META region.

This partnership is set to revolutionise the digital landscape, bringing advanced cloud infrastructure and services to the region. The implementation of the Google Distributed Cloud Edge hardware, enables Omantel to deliver unprecedented levels of performance, reliability, and efficiency to its customers. The hardware will be strategically placed at the edge of the network, allowing faster data processing and reduced latency. This technology will unlock a new era of possibilities for businesses and individuals, providing seamless access to cutting-edge cloud services. This milestone collaboration will empower Omantel to stay ahead of evolving customer demands and deliver world-class services. The introduction of the Google Distributed Cloud Edge hardware further solidifies Omantel as a key player in the telecommunications industry, proving its dedication to providing exceptional solutions and driving digital progress in the META region.

The strategic partnership between Omantel and Google, signed in May 2023 centers on the implementation of artificial intelligence/machine learning (AI/ML) for prediction models, revenue maximization, network optimization and API Monetization aimed at serving enterprise businesses.

"This landmark partnership smartly integrates Google Cloud's advanced AI/ML technologies into Omantel's prediction models, enabling us to optimize our predictive analytics to identify market trends, customer behaviors, and revenue opportunities," said Talal Said Al Mamari, Chief Executive Office at Omantel. "This cutting-edge application encourages better decision-making, enhanced customer satisfaction, and increased revenue growth."

"Additionally, the API monetization project has been instrumental in elevating Omantel's service offerings to enterprise businesses. By leveraging Google Cloud's expertise in API management and monetization strategies, Omantel is devising innovative solutions to cater to the evolving needs of its enterprise customers. The establishment of Google Distributed Cloud Edge, an advanced platform that provides seamless and secure API services, will position Omantel as a pioneer in the region, and will further strengthen its position as a strategic partner for enterprises seeking seamless connectivity and digital solutions," Al Mamari, added.

Omantel is committed to driving digitization, fostering technological advancements, and transforming the telecommunications landscape in Oman. This partnership showcases the power of collaboration, innovation, and agility in creating sustainable and mutually beneficial business opportunities. By leveraging each other's strengths, resources, and expertise, Omantel and Google Cloud aim to unlock new potential in the telecommunications industry and lead the way in digital transformation.

Google Cloud has already won four strategic projects in the realm of digital/telecoms for Omantel.

OMAN ECONOMY

Unlocking the potential of Sukuk in financing sustainable development

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As Oman charts its course towards a greener energy future, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fostering a climate-resilient economy, the challenge of financing this transformation in a sustainable manner looms large for our modest-sized economy.

The estimated price tag, reaching tens of billions of US dollars, underscores the substantial investment required. For instance, Oman's nascent green hydrogen industry alone aims for $40 billion in investment by 2030. When factoring in the costs of decarbonising various sectors and developing climate-resilient infrastructure, the overall figure becomes astronomical.

Recognising this financial challenge, the Omani government, through the Ministry of Finance, underscores the pivotal role of Islamic finance, particularly sukuk, in supporting this seismic shift toward a sustainable future. The recently unveiled Sustainable Finance Framework outlines the intention to issue Green, Social, and Sustainability bonds, loans, or sukuk for projects delivering environmental and social benefits.

Islamic finance, inherently sustainable in nature, operates on principles such as shared reward, tangible underlying assets, and the avoidance of purely financial transactions. Often referred to as 'responsible investing,' Islamic finance shares common ground with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

The key to unlocking sharia-compliant Islamic finance lies in leveraging Oman's Islamic capital market, established in 2012 under the Islamic Banking Regulatory Framework. The market, predominantly centered around sukuk (Islamic bonds), has witnessed significant growth since its inception, with both private corporations and the Omani government issuing sukuk in Omani Rial and Dollar denominations.

Given the substantial funding required for Oman's green energy initiatives, local banks may fall short, leaving the capital market as a viable avenue for raising the necessary funds through sustainable bonds or sukuk. While Omani Rial-denominated issuances risk absorbing liquidity in a constrained market, dollar-based sukuk issuances offer access to a vast pool of sharia-compliant investors. These sukuk can be issued under Regulation S to target global funds, with the option to later tap into the US market through S144A.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Sembcorp Salalah, up 6.38 per cent, was the top gainer while, Musandam Power, down 7.52 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,532.63 points, down by 0.99 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.48 per cent at 447.73 points. Sembcorp Salalah, up 6.38 per cent, was the top gainer while, Musandam Power, down 7.52 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Suwadi Power were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while GDB 64 were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1259 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR26.34 million, with more than 51.06 million shares changing hands. Out of 54 traded securities, 12 advanced, 20 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR22028K while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR22004K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR24K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,094.55 points, down 1.33 per cent. Prices of Al Madina Investments, United Finance were up by 4.35 per cent, 1.79 per cent respectively. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Ominvest, Al Batinah Development Company, Ahli Bank, Sohar International Bank were down by 3.33 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.91 per cent, 1.85 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,433.73 points, up 0 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Raysut Cement, Oman Cement, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 3.87 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.97 per cent, 1.92 per cent respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Galfar Engineering, Gulf Mushroom Products, Oman Cables Industry, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 3.23 per cent, 2.58 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 0.67 per cent, 0.59 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.85 per cent before closing at 1,736.19 points. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Dhofar Generating, SMN Power Holding were up by 6.38 per cent, 4.00 per cent, 2.74 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.82 per cent respectively. Prices of Musandam Power, Barka Water & Power Company, Muscat Desalination, Oman Telecom, Ooredoo were down by 7.52 per cent, 3.85 per cent, 2.70 per cent, 0.46 per cent, 0.30 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,579.65	4,529.37	4,532.63	4,577.81	-45.19	-0.99
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,190.41	7,094.55	7,094.55	7,190.41	-95.85	-1.33
Industry Index	5,460.01	5,426.95	5,433.73	5,433.58	0.15	0.00
Services Index	1,740.98	1,719.24	1,736.19	1,721.49	14.70	0.85
MSX Shariah Index	449.34	446.65	447.73	449.87	-2.14	-0.48
MSX TR INDEX	6,039.02	5,972.72	5,977.00	6,036.59	-59.58	-0.99
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,846.05	7,741.46	7,741.46	7,846.05	-104.59	-1.33
SERVICES TR IDX	1,942.42	1,918.16	1,937.08	1,920.67	16.40	0.85
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,832.65	5,797.34	5,804.57	5,804.42	0.16	0.00
FIXED INCOME INDEX	992.89	992.89	992.89	992.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
51,069,218	26,338,673	1,259	23,654,208,995	12	20	22	54

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,000	1,550	1	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.304	0.006	1.974	0.310	0.302	0.310	0.100	102,570,540
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	45,064	11,990	8	0.260	0.273	0.260	0.265	0.260	0.005	1.923	0.265	0.265	0.286	0.100	33,097,959
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,213,270	137,260	52	0.112	0.114	0.112	0.112	0.110	0.002	1.818	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.100	22,359,187
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	10,000	570	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.001	1.786	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.100	20,299,256
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	56,000	6,497	4	0.116	0.118	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.100	17,400,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	275,361	50,142	25	0.182	0.184	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.000	0.000	0.182	0.182	0.183	0.100	40,040,000
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	1,100	1,210	2	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	0.000	0.000	1.100	1.061	1.200	0.100	75,900,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	26,820	1,582	3	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.059	0.064	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	16,222	6,651	2	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.410	0.435	0.100	96,928,100
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	49,500	16,497	18	0.330	0.338	0.330	0.338	0.339	-0.001	-0.295	0.338	0.338	0.339	0.100	220,019,150
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	481,106	127,017	49	0.264	0.265	0.263	0.263	0.264	-0.001	-0.379	0.263	0.263	0.264	0.100	1,974,182,427
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	157,941	170,431	32	1.082	1.083	1.078	1.078	1.083	-0.005	-0.462	1.078	1.078	1.079	0.100	808,500,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,000	507	1	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.170	-0.001	-0.588	0.169	0.165	0.178	0.100	9,295,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	72,888	6,414	8	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.124	0.088	0.081	0.088	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	10,000	2,520	2	0.252	0.252	0.252	0.252	0.256	-0.004	-1.563	0.252	0.250	0.260	0.100	409,738,481
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,284,635	243,953	49	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.106	0.108	-0.002	-1.852	0.106	0.106	0.113	0.100	579,596,181
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	10,000	4,000	2	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.410	-0.010	-2.439	0.400	0.380	0.400	0.100	267,346,170
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	45,580	6,609	8	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.150	-0.005	-3.333	0.145	0.142	0.148	0.100	434,470,958
Total	18	4,763,487	795,400	267												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	6,579,403	647,577	54	0.093	0.100	0.093	0.100	0.094	0.006	6.383	0.100	0.100	0.101	0.100	95,457,195
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	44,100	2,037	7	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.048	0.046	0.002	4.348	0.048	0.046	0.048	0.100	4,080,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	13,961,839	1,097,662	210	0.075	0.080	0.075	0.078	0.075	0.003	4.000	0.078	0.078	0.080	0.100	55,723,695
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	10,810	1,738	5	0.155	0.162	0.155	0.161	0.155	0.006	3.871	0.161	0.162	0.161	0.100	13,105,843
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	10,508,474	781,693	205	0.074	0.076	0.072	0.075	0.073	0.002	2.740	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	50,616,557
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	25,130	3,041	5	0.121	0.123	0.121	0.123	0.120	0.003	2.500	0.123	0.121	0.124	0.100	24,600,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	262,000	12,259	9	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.001	2.174	0.047	0.046	0.047	0.100	10,445,280
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	62,538	4,763	5	0.076	0.078	0.076	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.073	0.078	0.100	6,630,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	200	280	1	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.400	0.000	0.000	1.400	1.400	1.500	0.100	70,000,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	390,268	16,667	22	0.045	0.045	0.042	0.043	0.043	0.000	0.000	0.043	0.042	0.043	0.100	13,207,292
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,670,315	190,959	75	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.100	14,626,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	3,470	243	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.071	0.000	0.100	1,125,086
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	6,599,984	352,958	135	0.053	0.055	0.052	0.053	0.053	0.000	0.000	0.053	0.053	0.054	0.100	77,517,877
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	139,500	17,019	9	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.000	0.000	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.100	9,213,684
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	1,155	142	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.122	0.123	0.100	62,496,736
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	383,808	120,152	27	0.311	0.320	0.311	0.311	0.311	0.000	0.000	0.311	0.311	0.320	0.100	239,532,200
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	810,285	117,989	139	0.145	0.147	0.145	0.146	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.100	632,271,092
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	111	248	1	2.230	2.230	2.230	2.230	2.245	-0.015	-0.668	2.230	2.210	2.230	0.100	200,031,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	41,000	4,592	3	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.113	-0.001	-0.885	0.112	0.102	0.122	0.100	186,973,920
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	2,391,114	231,988	12	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.096	0.098	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	149,583	23,176	4	0.155	0.155	0.154	0.154	0.157	-0.003	-1.911	0.154	0.154	0.155	0.100	361,847,250
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	2,243	516	2	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.235	-0.005	-2.128	0.230	0.230	0.235	0.100	10,526,134
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO.	1,000	92	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.094	-0.002	-2.128	0.092	0.088	0.102	0.100	2,760,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	691,344	106,651	31	0.155	0.157	0.151	0.151	0.155	-0.004	-2.581	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.100	30,650,953
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	15,648	1,157	2	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.072	0.074	-0.002	-2.703	0.072	0.072	0.074	0.100	11,199,629
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	4,000	1,200	1	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.310	-0.010	-3.226	0.300	0.300	0.319	0.100	36,000,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	222,000	11,114	6	0.052	0.052	0.050	0.050	0.052	-0.002	-3.846	0.050	0.049	0.051	0.100	8,000,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	800	236	1	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.319	-0.024	-7.524	0.295	0.295	0.310	0.100	20,765,050
Total	28	45,972,122	3,748,148	974												

BATES PANGULF

BPG launches new digital platforms showcasing integrated offering and regional expansion

DUBAI: Award-winning, integrated agency BPG (Bates PanGulf, part of WPP) has launched brand new digital platforms that reflect its 'Customer Experience first, Integrated by Intent' positioning and growing regional footprint.

The launch coincides with the opening of BPG Arabia, the agency's new headquarters in Riyadh, to strengthen services for a growing roster of clients in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Avi Bhojani, Group CEO, BPG, said: "Delivering exceptional customer experiences is table stakes for today's successful businesses. And in a world powered by digital experiences, a brand's digital assets are meant to give an almost physical experience. That's why we're incredibly excited to unveil BPG's new platforms to coincide with the opening of our new Riyadh office. Dynamic, interactive, and user-friendly, BPG's new digital platforms offer seamless access to information, resources, and engagement opportunities. We built them to be a living, breathing extension of Brand BPG, reflecting our culture, values and vision. As we embark on an exciting new chapter in the Kingdom, we're confident that our enhanced digital presence will forge stronger connections and sustainable success. For TeamBPG, it's onwards and upwards."

Valli Lakshmanan, President, BPG Arabia and Chief CX Officer, BPG added, "BPG Arabia is another milestone on the BPG 3.0 journey. We look forward to becoming the leading partner for homegrown Saudi brands, propelling them to greater heights aligned with the goals of Vision 2030, the Kingdom's ambitious roadmap to achieve greater economic diversification, growth and prosperity for all. The new BPG digital platforms, with designs reflective of the times we live in, will foster conversations we have with our clients and community. Bolstered by over four decades of experience in the region, we are here to create meaningful and memorable brand experiences for Saudi businesses."

The new BPG website showcases the full spectrum of the agency's capabilities - from data-driven marketing strategies that tap into dynamic audiences, to AI-powered personalization that creates truly individualised brand interactions. The agency's expertise delivering MarComms for a multitude of sectors – from retail and real estate to logistics and finance has been showcased, along with its burgeoning client portfolio of global leaders and regional success stories.

BPG is hosting a two-day 'Integrated by Intent' workshop later this week to equip its teams with the knowledge and skills necessary for a holistic, CX-powered approach to MarComms.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

ARA Petroleum signs agreement with X2E to advance environmental stewardship of oil extraction operations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ARA Petroleum (ARA), the Energy & Natural Resources arm of The Zubair Corporation, announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with X2E, a sustainability-focused enterprise.

The signing ceremony, led by Omar Al-Jaaidi, General Manager of ARA and John Jones, CEO of X2E, underscores a commitment to pioneering environment-friendly practices in oil production.

The agreement signifies ARA's dedication to implementing international best practices, with a particular emphasis on minimising the environmental impact of operations. Sultan Al Ghaithi, the CEO of ARA, highlighted the strategic objective of the agreement which ties in seamlessly with the Oman Vision 2040 goals. The project aims to treat 1000 m3/day of saline water produced from ARA's operations. The focus of this endeavour is to repurpose the treated produced water for agricultural irrigation, specifically in cultivating crops for biofuel production.

X2E, founded in 2022, is a sustainability business that transcends traditional green solutions. Within its first year of operations, X2E has expanded into 12 global locations, showcasing a strong commitment to sustainability. Notably, X2E has invested in Wakud, Oman's first waste-to-fuel producer, as part of its mission to redefine sustainability boundaries through the innovative BioChain model. This model transforms underutilised sources into opportunities for energy generation and reusable by-products, exemplifying X2E's unique approach that goes Beyond Green.

Expressing enthusiasm for the collaboration, Eyhab Al Hajj, Co-founder of X2E, commented on the project's aim of establishing a comprehensive value chain, treating waste not as a liability but as an opportunity. To realise this concept, the ground-breaking BioChain™ will integrate all components seamlessly while ensuring that each waste stream leads to either energy generation or the creation of reusable by-products.

He also detailed the technological innovations involved, including the introduction of Algae-based Brine Removal. This pioneering approach utilises algae-based systems to eliminate residual brine and contaminants from treated water. The biomass generated during brine removal serves as a valuable feedstock to produce biogas, contributing significantly to the overall goal of renewable energy production.

This strategic collaboration between ARA and X2E marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of sustainable and environmentally conscious practices within the energy sector. Both organizations are poised to lead the way in demonstrating how environmental stewardship and energy production can coexist harmoniously, setting a new standard for the industry.

Established in 2014, ARA is a dynamic member of the Exploration & Production industry in Oman. The company is a full-cycle E&P company which explores, appraises, develops, and produces oil & gas resources both in Oman and internationally. ARA is a leader in the implementation of environmentally sustainable solutions in the field. One such example is the ongoing construction of the first water desalination plant by thermal renewable energy that is expected to be operational in the first half of 2024.

LIFESTYLE

CLIMATE CHANGE REDUCING FISH WEIGHT IN OCEANS: STUDY

TOKYO: A recent study by University of Tokyo researchers suggests that climate change is causing a decline in fish weight in the western North Pacific Ocean.

Published in Fish and Fisheries, the study indicates that warmer waters are reducing food supplies, leading to competition among fish species and ultimately a decrease in weight.

Factors contributing to this phenomenon include warmer waters limiting food availability and the replacement of larger plankton with smaller, less nutritious species due to ocean stratification.

Climate change also disrupts the timing of phytoplankton blooms, affecting fish life cycles and migration patterns.

Analyzing data from 1978 to 2018, researchers observed two periods of reduced fish body weight: in the 1980s, attributed to increased Japanese sardines, and again in the 2010s due to warming oceans.

This aligns with broader research indicating a 4.1% decline in sustainable seafood harvest from 1930 to 2010, impacting global food supplies and millions dependent on fishing income.

The study underscores the urgent need for climate action to safeguard ocean ecosystems and livelihoods. -DNA

SPORTS

New dawn for Al Harthy as 2024 FIA World Endurance Season begins

Al Harthy is embarking on his most ambitious and high-profile year of competition

QATAR: Losail International Circuit in Qatar is the venue for Ahmad Al Harthy's eagerly awaited first race with Team WRT and BMW this coming Saturday, 2nd March, as the new FIA World Endurance Championship season gets underway with the Qatar Airways Qatar 1812km.

Oman's Al Harthy, who officially launched his exciting 2024 motor racing campaign just over a week ago, is embarking on his most ambitious and high-profile year of competition yet as teammate to global sporting icon Valentino Rossi and BMW pro driver Maxime Martin.

Partnering up in the new LMGT3 class, the trio heads into the first round of the FIA WEC season in positive mood after this week's two-day 'Prologue' test at Losail which took place on Monday, 26th February, and Tuesday, 27th February.

No.46 car

Marking Al Harthy's first official outing in the No.46 car, the teammates utilised the time to get as settled as possible in the stunning new BMW M4 LMGT3 and to prepare well for free practice and qualifying over the next couple of days in Qatar.

Al Harthy, who is supported throughout 2024 by prestigious partners OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman, enjoyed an excellent first season in FIA WEC last year where he achieved two podium results.

Now, with a fantastic new challenge ahead, Al Harthy is absolutely relishing the opportunity to once again fly the flag for Oman – aiming to get the campaign underway positively in Saturday's 10-hour endurance contest.

For FIA WEC round one, 18 cars are set to do battle in LMGT3 with a combined entry of close to 40 cars when including the Hypercar class. Featuring some of the globe's most highly respected and successful professional racing drivers as well, it's a very exciting prospect.

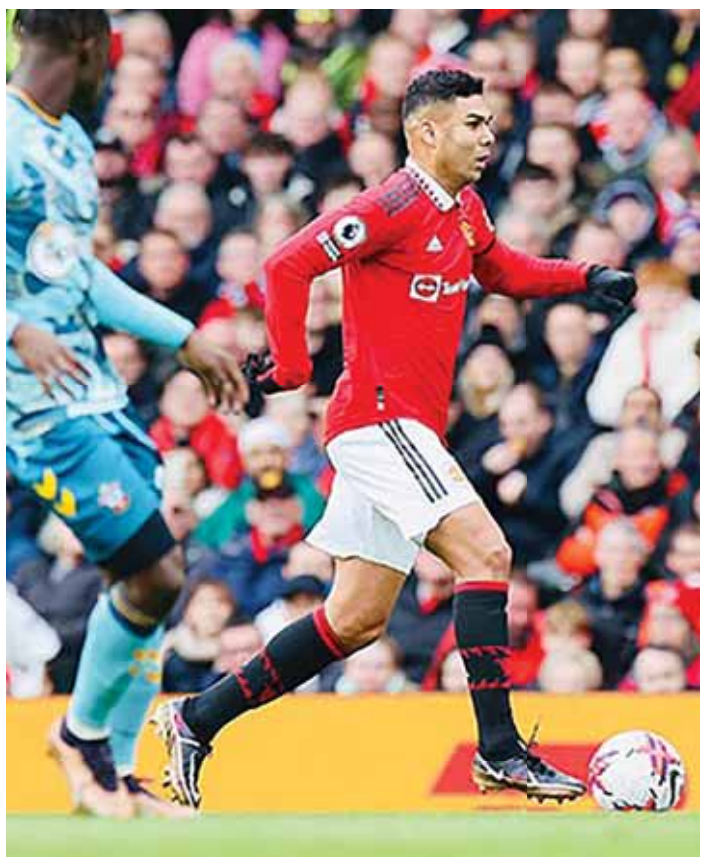
Ahmad Al Harthy said: "This weekend marks the start of an amazing new chapter in my career and I cannot wait to be out on track, racing the new BMW M4 LMGT3 for the first time. It's great to be starting the season so close to home as well, meaning we have a huge amount of support coming to Qatar with our incrediblepartners, family and friends.

"It's been a very busy few weeks getting everything in place, so it was great to get behind the wheel in the Prologue this week. Now we're focused on putting together some positive free practice sessions so we can go into qualifying on Friday in the best shape possible. Everything is new for me this year, the team, my team-mates and, of course, the BMW, but it's an incredible new challenge and one I'm absolutely ready for."

Two free practice sessions will take place in Losail on Thursday, with a third practice run and qualifying following on 1 March – the latter beginning at 16:00 local time. Round one of the FIA WEC season begins at 11:00 local time on Saturday, 2 March.

FOOTBALL

He's available: United boss Ten Hag gives major update on Casemiro's injury



NEW DELHI : Manchester United head coach Erik ten Hag on Tuesday gave a major update on Casemiro's injury and said that he will be available for the upcoming FA Cup fixture of the Red Devils against Nottingham Forest.

While speaking at the prematch press conference, Ten Hag explained that in United's previous fixture against Fulham, Casemiro's head was bleeding for which he failed to continue in the game.

Later, the United boss revealed that the Casemiro midfielder will take part in their FA Cup fixture.

"So it was bleeding, so he had to come off. It was not to our advantage that he couldn't continue the game. But he's available...," Ten Hag was quoted by Manchester United's official website as saying.

When asked about the United's upcoming match, Ten Hag said that they have to win against Nottingham Forest after a disappointing loss in their previous game.

"When you are unbeaten for January and February and you lose one game... we know our aim is to win every game. As United, you have to win every game. Obviously, it was a poor performance, a poor defeat, we are aware of this, and we want to stay in every competition. So, on your first question, yeah, we have to win tomorrow. But that doesn't change our approach, because that is [the case] for every game," he added.

Recapping United's previous game, the Red Devils faced a 1-2 loss against Fulham at the Old Trafford. Both sides failed to score in the first 45 minutes.

However, the first goal came in the game from Fulham's Calvin Bassey in the 68th minute. Later, the Red Devils defender Hary Maguire levelled the scoreline in the 89th minute.

But the hosts failed to keep the lead for a longer time as Alex Iwobi scored the winner in the added minutes of the second half.

The 2-1 loss will be a big blow for the United as they stand in sixth place in the PL standings with 44 points. -ANI

BLOW TO HIS LEFT THUMB

New Zealand lose injured opener Devon Conway in first Test against Australia

WELLINGTON: New Zealand opener Devon Conway has been ruled out of the opening Test against Australia in Wellington due to injury.

Conway sustained a blow to his left thumb while wicketkeeping in the second over of the third T20I match against Australia.

He was forced to leave the field and Finn Allen took over the role behind the stumps. For the rest of the match, Conway didn't come out to field or bat. The left-handed batter has yet to hit a ball since picking up the injury.

New Zealand coach Gary Stead was unhappy to lose a player of Conway's calibre for the critical ICC World Test Championship match, which begins on Thursday in Wellington. The 32-year-old has been replaced in the Kiwis' squad by fellow batter Henry Nicholls.

"It's disappointing for Devon to be ruled out on the eve of an important match. He's a class player batting at the top of the order for us and I know he was really looking forward to this series," -ANI

HEAD COACH

McCullum opens up on giving opportunities to Hartley and Bashir at county level

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the fifth and final Test at Dharamsala, England's head coach, Brendon McCullum, opined that it would be "slightly mad" if the spin duo of Tom Hartley and Shoaib Bashir didn't get the opportunities to play in the County Championship.

Hartley and Bashir have been outstanding with the ball in the ongoing Test series against India. Prior to this tour, the duo had no international experience and had played minimal domestic cricket. There were many speculation about how Ben Stokes would deal with such inexperienced spinners.

However, both bowlers have proven many others wrong. Everyone will remember how well they bowled. Despite their lack of experience, both bowled incredibly well and caused significant problems for Indian batsmen.

Hartley is the leading wicket-taker in the ongoing Test series, with 20 wickets in the four matches he has played so far in the series; on the other hand, Bashir has 12 wickets in the two matches at Rajkot and Ranchi.

McCullum asserted that it would be slightly frustrating if Hartley and Bashir didn't get opportunities in County Cricket.

"It will be a slight frustration of ours if they weren't given opportunities at county level. There's a very real possibility that might be the case, but without wanting to dictate to counties because they have their own agendas as well, when you see performances like we have out of those two bowlers throughout the series, I think you'd be slightly mad if you didn't give them more opportunities in county cricket," McCullum said as quoted by ESPNcricinfo.

The former New Zealand skipper further stated that England will give the opportunities to both players as they are good enough for international cricket.

"It would be nice to think they'd get plenty of opportunities so that they can improve at a quicker rate. Whether those opportunities are with counties or with England, I think we've just got to keep trying to get cricket into them. Whatever opportunity we can, we'll try and give it to them because there's two guys there more than good enough for international cricket. They're also tough characters," the head coach added.

In the end, McCullum said that they have stood up to the challenge and performed so the management will give more chances to them.

"What you can't tell from the outside of a man's body is the size of their heart - and we've seen both of them have big hearts and they're up for international cricket. It doesn't get any harder than it is right now, and they've both stood up and performed, so we've just to keep giving both of them chances," the 42-year-old concluded. -ANI

FOURTH TEST

Really disappointed, his pace was pedestrian, says Michael Atherton on Robinson's bowling in Ranchi Test

NEW DELHI: Former British cricketer Michael Atherton has said that he was disappointed with Ollie Robinson in the fourth Test against India in Ranchi and that the pacer "needs a good run of game time now" and not necessarily with the England team.

Robinson played his first match of the series against India in Ranchi. However, the seamer failed to make a mark in the game. The 30-year-old bowled for 13 overs in India's first innings, but was unable to scalp a single wicket. Following this, England's skipper Ben Stokes chose not to use Robinson in the second innings.

Speaking at the Sky Sports Cricket podcast, Atherton claimed that Robinson's pace has been average in the Ranchi Test.

"Ollie Robinson - I was really disappointed with this game. His pace was pedestrian. He was down on pace, he obviously got that half-century but dropped a catch and didn't get called up on by Ben Stokes on the fourth day," Atherton said on the Sky Sports Cricket podcast.

The former cricketer added that the English bowler needs a few good games only then he can get his form back.

"He looked like a player who had been out of cricket for seven months. For all the training that you do and all the training sessions that you have in Abu Dhabi or whatever, I think he looks like a bowler who needs a good run of game time now and not necessarily with England either," he added.

England lost their third consecutive match in the series, unable to capitalise on their early 1-0 advantage following a narrow victory in Hyderabad. The visitors had their chances, notably in Rajkot and Ranchi, but India came back strong on both occasions to win.

In the fourth Test, England had a terrible day as they allowed India to score over 300 runs and narrow the first innings lead. England were then bowled out for only 146 runs in the second innings.

India will lock horns with England in the fifth and final Test match of the series from March 7 at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala. -ANI

ROUND-UP

MHD automobile brings back thrill of Jeep Jamboree to Oman after 4 years

The three-day expedition, set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Al Kamil desert, provided an unparalleled opportunity for Jeep enthusiasts to experience the true off-road potential of their vehicles

MUSCAT: MHD Automobile, the leading automotive company in Oman, announced the triumphant return of the Jeep Jamboree to the Sultanate after a hiatus of for years. This exhilarating event, took place in the heart of the Al Kamil desert in the Sharqiyah region, attracting close to 100 Jeep Wrangler vehicles and over 200 enthusiastic participants.

The 3-day expedition, set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Al Kamil desert, provided an unparalleled opportunity for Jeep enthusiasts to experience the true off-road potential of their vehicles. MHD Automobile aimed to reconnect with its valued customers by encouraging them to partake in this immensely popular desert adventure, as the Jeep Jamboree has witnessed a significant surge in popularity in Oman over the past few years.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles expressed excitement about the event, stating, "The Jeep Jamboree is more than just an off-road adventure; it's a unique opportunity for our customers to enhance their driving skills while exploring the majestic landscapes of Oman. We believe in creating memorable experiences for our customers, and the Jeep Jamboree is a perfect platform for them to unleash the full potential of their 4WD Jeep Wrangler models."

The meticulously planned adventure catered to participants of all driving experience levels, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Participants navigated their Jeep Wranglers across challenging sand dunes, further deepening their connection with the vehicles and honing their off-road driving skills.

MHD Automobile extends its heartfelt appreciation to all participant, who contributed to the success of the Jeep Jamboree in Oman. The event exemplifies MHD Automobile's commitment to fostering a vibrant community of Jeep enthusiasts and providing them with unforgettable experiences.

The Jeep brand, an enduring icon in the automotive industry, boasts a rich history dating back to the early 1940s. The Jeep Wrangler, a quintessential member of the Jeep family, stands as an enduring symbol of off-road capability and adventure. With a distinctive design that pays homage to its iconic roots, the Wrangler has become synonymous with ruggedness, versatility, and the freedom to explore the great outdoors.

MG RX5

Mega prize winner of 'Nabil Buy & Win' Promotion announced

MUSCAT: National Biscuit Industries Ltd, manufacturers of the brand 'Nabil' with an extensive range of Biscuits, Cream Wafers and Snacks, is pleased to announce the winner of the final round of 'Nabil Buy & Win' promotion raffle Draw.

The winner of MG RX5 is Muhammed Shareef

The winners of the 4gm Gold Coin are: 1. Rajesh hattamparambil 2. Nesma3. Yazan Hamad 4. Shiyak Rawuthar Mazood 5. Ali Hasan. Congratulations to the winner of the mega prize and all the winners of the final raffle draw on winning the gold coins.

This is the eighth year when National Biscuit Industries Ltd., had a car as a Mega Raffle prize.

The company has recently launched a new range of products – Date Bar, Maamoul, Fillz, Nankhatai and Nutgestive to name a few of them.

FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE

Vodafone inspires at Muscat International Book Fair

MUSCAT: Vodafone Oman is back to pen a new chapter in its journey of fostering knowledge at the 28th annual Muscat International Book Fair together with the University Student Initiative for a second consecutive year.

In 2023 Vodafone's partnership with the Omani Society for Writers and Literati, Taawon Network, and a group of passionate volunteers, writers and content creators during the Muscat Book Fair led to the donation of over 20,000 books to university students. Building on this success, the company's 2024 participation promises to set a yet a new benchmark, utilizing technology to support more university and high school students across Oman.

Ahead of the Book Fair, the next-gen telecom provider initiated a book donation drive, collecting valuable titles and subjects during an event held at the Vodafone HUB were attendees donated their book and took part in an interactive session on how these books inspired. All these books and more, are currently on display at the Vodafone exhibit at the Book Fair where students can simply present their student IDs to be able to take a book home.

In line with the company's aim to enhance educational opportunities among youth, Vodafone's exhibit at the Muscat International Book Fair presents a literary oasis for book enthusiasts. The company has planned a series of knowledge-sharing activities, including book readings and podcasts catering to all ages.

Usama Abdullah Al Saifi, Vodafone Oman's Brand Manager said, "We are thrilled to return to the Book Fair, reinforcing our dedication to making a positive social impact. Our book donation drive and the array of interactive activities planned at our exhibit have been carefully designed to transform our participation into a haven for literary exploration and cultural exchange."

Moawiya Al Rawahi, Founder of the University Student Initiative said, "This initiative has consistently been a saviour and an affirmation, spiritually, mentally, and socially. It embodies the spirit of volunteerism, cherished friendships, creating years of memories through the love of literature and I am proud to be a part of it."

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat unveils pioneering leadership programme EAGLEs

EAGLEs programme is Bank Muscat's steadfast commitment to empowering its branch staff through a meaningful participation in transformation initiatives, originated and executed by them, that will potentially have a long-term positive impact on the business

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, announced the launch of its transformative leadership engagement programme, 'EAGLEs' which stands for Engage, Align, Grow, Learn, Evolve. The EAGLEs programme aims to seamlessly collaborate, communicate and share ideas, reinforcing a culture of growth and excellence.

EAGLEs programme is Bank Muscat's steadfast commitment to empowering its branch staff through a meaningful participation in transformation initiatives, originated and executed by them, that will potentially have a long-term positive impact on the business. EAGLEs programme is projected to provide employees a unique platform to honing their skills and improve their talents.

It underscores the bank's belief that every team member, plays a pivotal role in the success of the entire organisation.

To achieve the programme's objectives, the Bank selected 78 employees from different branches covering all regions across the Sultanate, who will participate in various projects, training programs, initiatives and workshops. The programme is designed to offer tailored professional development opportunities for the selected batch of employees. Through mentorship, skill-building workshops, action learning projects, and trainings sessions conducted by external trainers, EAGLEs will help nurture a culture of continuous learning and growth.

To announce the launch of the programme, Bank Muscat organized an event attended by Sheikh Waleed K. Al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer, Bank Muscat, along with a number of Executive Management members and the employees selected to join EAGLES from the bank's branches across the Sultanate.

On this occasion, Ahmed Faqir Al Balushi,Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat branch employees have an essential role in supporting the development of the products and services offered for our valued customers. The EAGLES programme is an innovative initiative designed specifically to help branch employees to contribute towards transformation initiatives that will enhance customers' experience. Our valued customers have greatly contributed to the success of Bank Muscat's journey for years, so we are keen to continue launching such initiatives to enhance our services and make them align with the recent banking needs and aspirations of our customers. We would like to wish all participants best of luck in this new journey."

For his part, Said Salim Al Aufi, General Manager - Human Resources & Administration, Bank Muscat, said: "The EAGLEs programmei s a bold and dynamic endeavor designed to foster creativity, collaboration, ingenuity and provide a culture of constant learning. The programme is set to redefine leadership engagement in the Banking sector, positioning Bank Muscat as an industry leader committed to the well-being and success of its employees."

Al Aufi added, "Suitable opportunities are provided to employees from the moment they join the Bank to equip them with skills in work-related processes and procedures. The Bank is steadfast in advancing its strategy in developing and empowering Omani youth to enable them to perform their duties in the best possible manner while concurrently striving to attain their goals and support them meet their aspirations."

Bank Muscat recognizes the importance of developing human resources across different specialties and disciplines to foster the growth of Omani youth. Today, the bank has become the dream employer for job seekers in Oman. The bank currently employs over 4000 professionals. During 2023, Bank Muscat utilized, through Jadara Academy, a full-fledged Learning and Development department, 38,778 training seats, totaling 45,620 training mandays. The academy also facilitated tuitions for 17 professional certifications, attended by 144 employees in their respective fields. Moreover, 25 top-performing staff members completed a program titled "Leading through Financial Excellence" offered by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale School of Management. The Bank instituted its "First Time Managers Program" for 69 staff, aimed at facilitating a seamless transition from individual contributors to managerial roles. Furthermore, 53 high-potential graduates have completed the Bank's two-year signature graduate development program, while an additional 56 have joined the newly launched batches in October 2023.

SPLENDID

Annual Day celebrations held at Indian School Muladha

MUSCAT: Indian School Muladha hosted the spectacular 33rd Annual Day celebration on February 15, bringing together students, parents, faculty, and esteemed guests in a vibrant showcase of cultural diversity and academic excellence.

The ceremonial lighting of the lamp, attended by the dignitaries marked the auspicious beginning of the evening, symbolizing the illumination of knowledge and wisdom.

The prize distribution ceremony was a moment of pride and honour as the accomplishments in academics, and the dedication of the teachers were recognised and celebrated. The toppers and subject toppers of CBSE Class X and XII 2022-23 were honoured. The topper in Science Kanishkamithra Rajasekaran from Science Stream and the topper in Commerce stream Anfal Sayeed were awarded a cash prize of 1 lakh Indian rupees each sponsored by Taj Al Khair and Al Hosni and Partners respectively.

The teachers who have completed their service for 30, 25 and 10 years were honoured. The dignitaries also recognized the best teachers and the best performers of the year with mementos.

NEW PRODUCT

Shell Oman introduces new and improved V-Power for optimum engine performance

MUSCAT: Aligned with its mission to enhance motorists' journeys, Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) has unveiled the new and improved Shell V-Power, the latest iteration of its premium fuel line, now available in Oman. This premium/performance fuel is designed to effectively clean up to 100% of critical engine components, providing optimum engine performance for drivers.

Beyond the realm of conventional fuels, Shell V-Power is meticulously designed to maximize engine performance. In addition to our offering of a diverse range of fuels and a retail experience centered on convenience, quality, and choice, the new and improved Shell V-Power endeavors to surpass customer expectations. Through its advanced formulation, new and improved Shell V-Power cleans up to 100% of critical engine parts, e.g., fuel injectors and/or inlet valves*, therefore optimizes airflow and combustion, culminating in an ideal driving experience for the customers.

The new and improved Shell V-Power underscores Shell's dedication to relentless innovation through its rigorous Research & Development accomplishments. A new fuel formulation that ensures our new and improved Shell V-Power not only meets current market demands, but also the evolving expectations of customers, solidifying its position as a symbol of driving excellence and a testament to Shell Oman's commitment to innovation in the Sultanate.

Suresh Nair, General Manager-Mobility at Shell Oman, stated, "With the introduction of the new Shell V-Power, we are not merely launching a product; we are pioneering a new era of driving excellence in Oman. Symbolizing our unwavering commitment to delivering a driving experience characterized by optimal smoothness, cleanliness, and efficiency, the enhanced Shell V-Power ensures extended and extraordinary journeys. We firmly believe that this pioneering innovation will not only meet but exceed the expectations of our discerning customers, setting a benchmark for fuel excellence in Oman."

Engineered with a unique formulation exclusive to Shell, this innovative fuel actively targets and removes deposits on critical engine parts such as fuel intake valves and/or fuel injectors, and preventing its future build-up*. The new Shell V-Power, that maximizes engine performance, and keeps your engine running like new*, is now available at 26 Shell service stations in Oman, and will be expanded to all Shell sites in a phased manner. Experience the future of fuel excellence and elevate the driving journey today with our new and improved Shell V-Power.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Carlos Ortiz triumphs in finale of International Series Oman at Al Mouj Golf

MUSCAT: In a spectacular display of skill and sportsmanship, the International Series Oman 2024 at Al Mouj Golf, part of the Asian Tour, concluded with Carlos Ortiz from Mexico clinching the title.

The event, which ran from February 22nd to 25th, featured a compelling finish with Carlos Ortiz overcoming Louis Oosthuizen from South Africa by 4 shots.

This year's tournament, backed by Saudi-owned LIV Golf, solidified Al Mouj Golf's reputation as a world-class golfing destination.

Building on the success of the previous year, the 2024 edition featured an impressive player list of 144 from over 25 countries, including renowned golfers Joaquin Niemann, Louis Oosthuizen, and defending champion Takumi Kanaya. The event was a true testament to Al Mouj Golf's commitment to excellence, underscoring its recent accolade as the Asian Tour's 2023 Golf Course of the Year and its consistent ranking among the top 100 courses worldwide.

Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Golf, expressed his delight at the successful conclusion of the tournament: "We are thrilled to have hosted another spectacular edition of the International Series Oman. Congratulations to Carlos Ortizon a well-deserved victory. This event showcases Al Mouj Golf's exceptional facilities while highlighting Oman as a prime golfing and tourist destination. We remain committed to hosting more prestigious events in the future and elevating Oman's profile internationally in both sports and tourism."

Al Mouj Golf, designed by Greg Norman, is a paragon of golfing excellence. The course, known for its challenging links-style layout along the picturesque coastline of the Indian Ocean and the Hajar mountains, attracted over 51,000 guests this year.

CLICK HERE FOR AMAZING OFFERS

shukran Exclusive

E max MEGA SALE

SAMSUNG Galaxy S23 Ultra

*Colour of the phone subject to availability
Terms and Conditions apply

Epic reasons to buy

30W Wall Charger

FREE 3months Data

SPECIAL OFFER

256GB

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 477.73

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 137.83

السعر بعد خصم جميع قسيمة شرائية اعلاه
* "PAY" price is after the redemption of above gift vouchers

تدفع PAY RIAL 339.9

iPhone 15 Pro Max

+ 30W Wall Charger

5G

* Subject to stock availability

256GB	512GB	1TB
ر.ع OMR 555.9	ر.ع OMR 647.9	ر.ع OMR 739.9
قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 25.4	قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 25.4	قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 25.4
تدفع PAY RIAL 530.5	تدفع PAY RIAL 622.5	تدفع PAY RIAL 714.5

Lenovo IDEAPAD | IdeaPad 5

82SD0061AX

Windows 11

INTEL CORE I5 | 14" FHD | intel. CORE i5

8GB RAM | 512GB SSD | NVIDIA GEFORCE MX550 2GB DED.

NVIDIA GEFORCE MX550

EXCLUSIVE EMAX

1 YEAR WARRANTY

FREE: HP PRINTER 2320 + BACK PACK + MOUSE

خصم DISCOUNT 27.62%

وفر SAVE Rial 103

WAS سابقاً RIAL 372.9

الآن NOW RIAL 269.9

HP PAVILION 15-eh3003ne

AMD RYZEN7 7730U | 15.6" FHD | AMD RYZEN 7000 SERIES 7

16GB RAM | 512GB SSD | AMD RADEON GRAPHICS

Windows 11

FREE: HP PRINTER 2320 + BACK PACK + MOUSE

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 279.5

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 20

السعر بعد خصم جميع قسيمة شرائية اعلاه
* "PAY" price is after the redemption of above gift vouchers

تدفع PAY RIAL 259.5

SAMSUNG

SPECIAL OFFER

PurColor | Smart Hub | Crystal Processor 4K | SmartThings

65"

UA65CU7000UXZN

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 249.9

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 50

السعر بعد خصم جميع قسيمة شرائية اعلاه
* "PAY" price is after the redemption of above gift vouchers

تدفع PAY RIAL 199.9

85"

UA85CU7000UXZN

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 689.9

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 190

السعر بعد خصم جميع قسيمة شرائية اعلاه
* "PAY" price is after the redemption of above gift vouchers

تدفع PAY RIAL 499.9

Split AC

SK AIR CONDITIONING EQUIPMENT

تركيب أنبوب 4 متر (من غير مسند)
Installation with 4 mtr Pipe (without Bracket)

KILLER PRICE!

Smart Airflow
4 Ways Swing
Golden Fin
Sleep Mode
Comfortable Cooling

22000 BTU
2 Ton
MSKMP-24CVTC10

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 185

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 25.1

تدفع PAY RIAL 159.9

18000 BTU
1.5 Ton
MSKMP-18CVTC10

خصم DISCOUNT 27.33%

وفر SAVE Rial 45.1

WAS سابقاً RIAL 165

الآن NOW RIAL 119.9

SHARP

Refrigerator
SJ-SR525-SS3

525 Ltr
Odour Free
Gentle Air Flow System

Gross: 525 Ltr
& Net: 400 Ltr

EXCLUSIVE EMAX

السعر الحالي CURRENT PRICE OMR 204.6

قسيمة شرائية Gift VOUCHER ر.ع OMR 64.7

السعر بعد خصم جميع قسيمة شرائية اعلاه
* "PAY" price is after the redemption of above gift vouchers

*قسيمة شرائية تشمل العرض الموضح أعلاه
*Gift Voucher includes above Promotion

تدفع PAY RIAL 139.9

20th February to 5th March, 2024

* On selected electronics items

Buy Now! Pay Later

FINANCE YOUR ELECTRONICS IN 10 MINUTES WITH آيفن للتمويل الفوري IFIN INSTANT FINANCING

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH بنك العز الإسلامي alizz islamic bank AND بنك نزوى Bank Nizwa

0% فائدة الدفع الميسر Interest Payment Plan

بنك مسقط bank muscat
*الحد الادنى للمشتريات ١٥٠ ريال
ON A MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 150 R.O.
Offer valid for Bank Muscat credit card holders only
Upto 12 months

البنك الوطني العماني NBO
*الحد الادنى للمشتريات ١٥٠ ريال
ON A MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 150 R.O.
Offer valid for NBO credit card holders only
12 months

بنك عمان العربي OMAN ARAB BANK
*الحد الادنى للمشتريات ١٠٠ ريال
ON A MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 100 R.O.
Offer valid for OAB credit card holders only
3 / 6 / 9 and 12 months

بنك ظفار Bank Dhofar
*الحد الادنى للمشتريات ١٠٠ ريال
ON A MINIMUM PURCHASE OF 100 R.O.
Offer valid for Bank Dhofar credit card holders only
3 / 6 / 9 and 12 months

BOUSHER: MALL OF OMAN (LEVEL 3) TEL: +968 24502498 | **AL-KHUWAIR**: OASIS MALL (LEVEL 1) TEL: +968 22060188 | **SEEB:** MUSCAT CITY CENTRE (LEVEL 1) TEL: +968 24558062
MABELLA: MALL OF MUSCAT (LEVEL 2) TEL: +968 24454722 | **BARKA**: BARKA GRAND CENTRE MALL (GROUND FLOOR) TEL: +968 26981873
SUHAR: OASIS MALL (GROUND FLOOR) TEL: +968 22507786 | **SALALAH**: OASIS MALL (GROUND FLOOR) TEL: +968 94122251 | **SALALAH GRAND MALL** (GROUND FLOOR) TEL: +968 22826251

ramadan sale

20%-70% off*

homecentre

*On Selected items.

AUTHENTIC INDIAN IFTAR

Experience the delicious flavors of India at Bukhara restaurant with a variety of tailored options from our Chef's Iftar set menu.

Every day during Ramadan

from Sunset to 23.30

OMR 16 per person inclusive of juices, soft drinks, coffee & tea

إفطار هندي أصيل

استمتع بالنكهات الهندية اللذيذة في مطعم بخارى مع مجموعة متنوعة من الخيارات المصممة خصيصًا من قائمة إفطار الشيف الخاصة بنا

كل يوم خلال شهر رمضان
غروب الشمس إلى ٢٣:٣٠

١٦ ريال عماني للشخص الواحد
شاملة العصائر والمشروبات الغازية والقهوة والشاي

CONTACT OUR CULINARY CONCIERGE
+968 2498 5000 | DINING.MUSCAT@KEMPINSKI.COM

All prices in OMR, subject to 8% service charge, 5% VAT & all applicable governmental taxes

شانغريلا بر الجصة، مسقط
SHANGRI-LA
BARR AL JISSAH
MUSCAT

EARLY BIRD

Iftar Buffet

BUY 7 IFTARS & GET 3 EXTRA

Book now and valid for first 10 days of Ramadan

OMR 24

per person

An exquisite buffet alongside live entertainment
Al Tanoor, from Maghrib time until 10.30pm

More information:

2477 6565 79269247