LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

DEFENCE MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL MEETS US OFFICIAL

Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Za'abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Wednesday Daniel Banaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Arabia Peninsula Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the US Department of State. >A2

HM RECEIVES THANKS CABLE FROM KSA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in reply to His Majesty's congratulations cable on the success of the medical check-up he underwent. In the cable, King Salman expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments and prayers, praying to Allah the Almighty to grant His Majesty continuous good health and happiness. - ONA

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ON BEHALF OF HIS MAJESTY

Sayyid Asa'ad bids farewell to Syrian Ambassador

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received in his office on Wednesday Dr. Bassam Al Khatib, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. The ambassador expressed his thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to him during his tour of duty in the Sultanate of Oman from His Majesty, the Government and the Omani people, which enabled him to carry out his assignments. He also wished His Majesty continuous good health, happiness and a long life. >A5

AL BARAKAH PALACE

His Majesty meets British Foreign Secretary

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience at Al Barakah Palace on Wednesday to Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom (UK).

Cordial talks were exchanged and historical relations of friendship binding the two countries were also reviewed during the audience. Discussions also explored means of promoting these relations towards broader horizons of bilateral cooperation to serve the interests of the two countries' peoples.

Views on several issues of interest to the two sides were also exchanged in light of the ongoing international developments. The audience was attended by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sayyid Faisal Hamoud Al Busaidi, Adviser at the Diwan of Royal Court and Bill Murray, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Sultanate of Oman. – ONA

COVID VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN TO BEGIN SOON

Health Minister underlined the importance of getting the booster dose of the vaccine

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Al Saeedi, Minister of Health and member of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, has affirmed the significance of two-dose vaccination recipients going for a third booster dose, which has so far been taken by 160,000 people, of whom only 10 percent are Omani citizens.

The minister pointed out that 96 percent of the patients hospitalised with COVID-19 symptoms over the past few months were found to have missed the third booster dose (which means they received two doses or one dose or not vaccinated at all), and this underscores the great need to go for the booster dose in the Sultanate of Oman.

The minister made the statements yesterday during the 29th press conference of the COVID-19 Supreme Committee, held at the Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, Dr. Adil Said Al Wahaibi, Director of Epidemiological Surveillance Department at the Ministry of Health, said that the ministry plans to administer COVID-19 vaccines to children aged 5 to 11 years and that 11 such vaccines have been approved. >A5

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECTS

Nearly $1bn mega project announced in Yiti

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) on Wednesday celebrated the launch of 'The Sustainable City – Yiti' in partnership with Diamond Developers, the leading company in developing sustainable communities.

With an investment of nearly US$1 billion, the fully integrated, urban, mixed-use master project reflects the group's goals towards driving the social and economic development through sustainable tourism projects that attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in line with Oman Vision 2040 and the National Tourism Strategy.

Spread over an area of one million square metres, 'The Sustainable City – Yiti' will be developed within the Phase 1 of the Yiti Integrated Tourism Development Masterplan.

It is the first project in Oman that meets the global green practices and is in adherence to the highest sustainability standards.

Iconic destination

This iconic destination is situated in the capital city of Muscat, overlooking the Sea of Oman and features a unique topography of majestic mountains that mingle with undisturbed valleys and pristine shores, which creates further competitive advantages to the destination.

Commenting on the inauguration, Eng. Mohammed Salim Al Busaidi, Chairman of Omran Group, said, "Our partnership with Diamond Developers to launch 'The Sustainable City – Yiti' is a unique milestone in our journey as we continue to invest, develop, and maximise the limitless potential of Oman's tourism sector. As it's being developed within one of the largest urban developments in the Middle East, it will open avenues for numerous lucrative investment opportunities for both local and international investors in line with the directions of Oman Investment Authority. Mirroring the Sultanate's goal of driving transformational change to attain a green, circular economy and emissions reduction, the city embraces the highest standards of sustainability and attests to our vision of creating an eco-conscious community that is harmoniously aligned with the distinct geography of the region." >A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
English programmes on Radio Oman
1 Radio Oman (Radio FM) will offer English programmes during Ramadan. >A2

WORLD
Russian forces not withdrawing: US
2 Russian forces have repositioned withdrawn outside Kyiv, says US . >A6

MARKET
NBO approves 3.7% cash dividend
3 National Bank of Oman approved the payout of a 3.7% cash dividend. >B1

OMAN

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PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:16pm
Asr	3:43pm
Maghrib	6:27pm
Isha	7:38pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:44am

MEETINGS

Defence Ministry Secretary General meets with US Official for Arabian Peninsula Affairs

MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Za'abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Wednesday Daniel Banaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Arabia Peninsula Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the US Department of State.

The two sides exchanged views and discussed several matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Leslie M. Tsou, Ambassador of the US to Oman.

Diplomatic Affairs Undersecretary Meets US Official

Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs received on Wednesday Daniel Banaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the US Department of State.

The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations between the two countries and means of enhancing them in various fields. They also underscored the importance of promoting these relations to meet the envisaged aspirations.

The two sides also exchanged views on prominent regional and international topics.

The meeting was attended by Leslie M. Tsou, US Ambassador to Oman. -ONA

MEETING

Royal Office Minister, UK State Secretary hold talks

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office here on Wednesday Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom (UK).

Gen. Al Nu'mani welcomed the British guest, who expressed her pride and appreciation for the cooperation and the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in various political and security spheres, particularly the efforts made to release British citizens detained in some countries. She also commended the strong historical relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

Gen. Al Nu'mani thanked the British guest for her efforts in enhancing the existing relations between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by the UK Ambassador to Oman. -ONA

OMAN RADIO ANNOUNCES

English programmes during Ramadan

MUSCAT: Radio Sultanate of Oman (Radio FM) announced today the English programmes it will be broadcasting during the month of Ramadan.

The programmes cover various fields, including drama, religion, contests and public awareness, among others.

One programme is titled "Chronicles Majan", which covers short fictional stories written by Ammar Al Nu'aimi, an Omani fantasy writer.

Being On

Another programme is called "Being On", which is a cultural programme that discusses our goals in life and the meaning of life from a religious point of view. Other programmes include "Muscat Candid", "Tent True Story", "The Spirit of Islam", "The Dome", "Jump Start", "Reflection of the Soul", "Economy Hour", "Late Night Drive" and "With Compliments". -ONA

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Central bank's Board of Governors reviews economic developments

MUSCAT: The Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) held on Wednesday its 1st meeting for 2022.

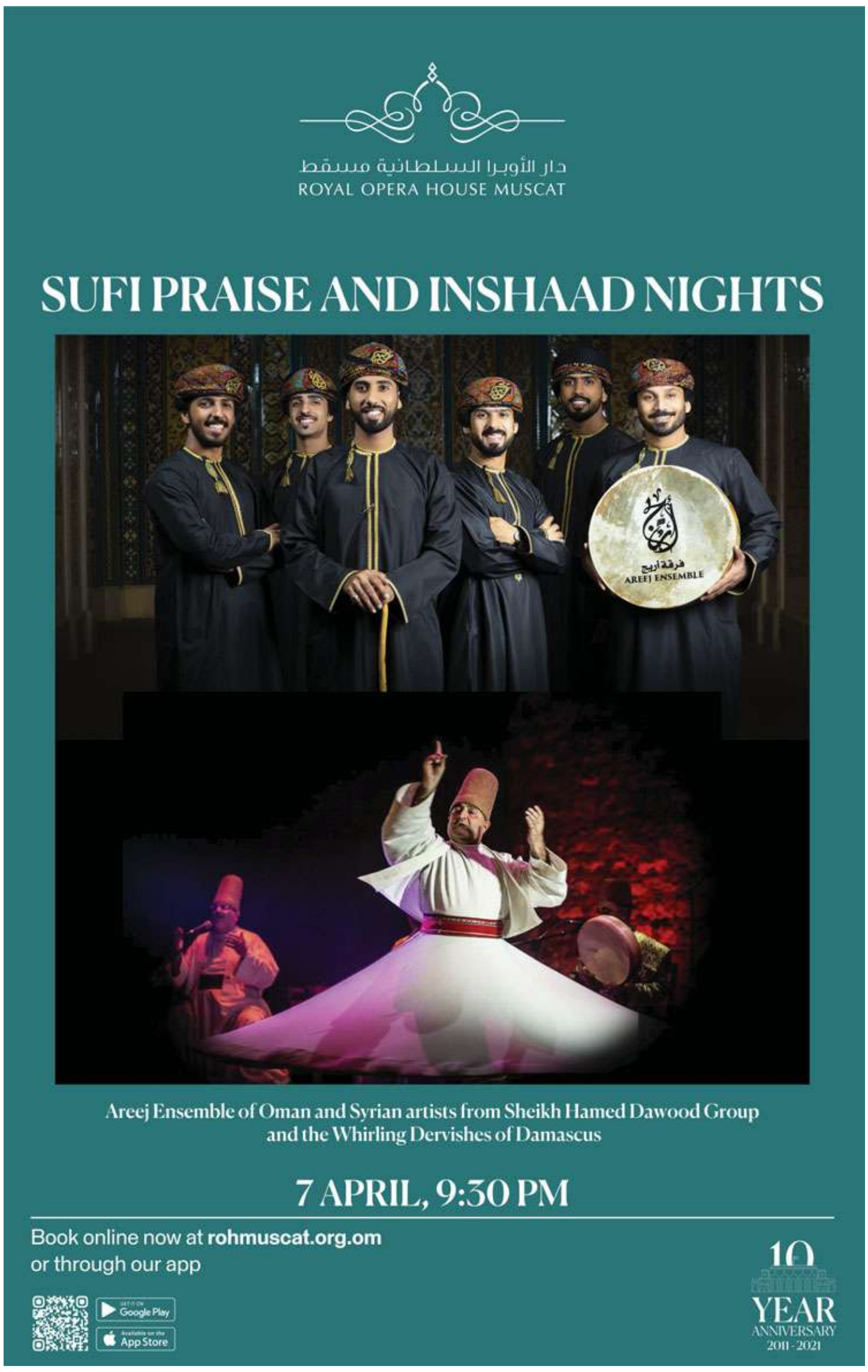
The meeting reviewed the economic, financial and monetary developments in the Sultanate of Oman and worldwide, as well as the developments in the global energy prices.

The board commended the improvement of the economic situation, highlighting the need to observe the new developments, especially in the financial and monetary sector. The board also underscored the keenness of the banking and financial sector to support the national economy.

The board highlighted the performance indicators of the banking sector, which indicate that the sector is operating in the framework of a flexible regulatory and supervisory environment that adopts the best international practices, enabling the sector to deal with the recent challenges. In this regard, the Board stressed the need to exert greater efforts in financing productive sectors and encouraging savings.

The board also reviewed CBO's financial position report as of February 2022, as well as the financial safety indicators of banks and the reports submitted by CBO's executive management on the prospects and challenges facing financial stability. It also examined the status of CBO's reserves and the performance of its foreign investments.

-ONA



OMAN FORUM

Economy based on innovation discussed at forum

MUSCAT: The "Alam Al Iktisaad Wal A'mal" or "the World of Economy and Business" magazine yesterday organised the 10th edition of Oman Forum.

The opening ceremony of the event was held under the auspices of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The forum discussed a spectrum of topics, including strategic procedures and regulations taken by the Sultanate of Oman to meet its short term needs and the importance of transforming to an economy based on innovation, among other topics. -ONA

TEJARAH TALKS

‘Corporate culture critical to business post-COVID-19’

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Corporate culture is one critical item that should be on every Omani business leader’s radar post-COVID-19. This is the key message that emerged from Wednesday evening’s Tejarah Talks held at the Civil Aviation Authority Training Centre in Al Hail North.

Organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion in association with Oman Business Forum and supported by HSBC and Sohar Port & Freezone, Wednesday’s Tejarah Talks was moderated by His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham Al Said, Founder, The Firm, and joining His Highness on stage were Sir Charles Shaw, CEO, Bondoni; Shatha Al Maskiry, MD, Protiviti Oman; Dr. Ghalib Al Hosni, Chief People Officer, Omantel; and Saif Al Manji, Managing Consultant, Quintal Ventures.

Thanking His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham Al Said and the panelists for their valuable contributions to the success of the evening, Maymuna Al Adawi, MoCIIP Director and Tejarah Talks organiser said: “We knew corporate culture would be an important topic for discussion at Tejarah Talks, given the shift we have seen in people’s expectations over the past two years of the organisations they work for, buy from and invest in. Employees, consumers and shareholders right across Oman are on the look out for businesses that are grounded in purpose and committed to delivering long-term value for their communities. At the end of the day, people want to be associated with businesses that are a force for good.”

His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham Al Said was in agreement with Al Adawi noting: “In today’s environment, to keep staff engaged and attract values-driven Omani consumers, company actions must be led by purpose.”

Shatha Al Maskiry, MD, Protiviti Oman pointed out that stakeholders will only believe in a company when its employees are true believers.

> “In today’s environment, to keep staff engaged and attract values-driven Omani consumers, company actions must be led by purpose.”

“Purpose”, he went on to say “is the galvanising force - something bigger than a company’s commercial offering. I like to think of it as an employee’s North Star - this idea of having a sense of direction, intention and understanding that the contribution you are making is going somewhere. I thought the questions raised by the audience tonight around whether Omani companies are giving brand purpose and values enough attention were valid and important.”

In agreement with Sayyid Dr. Adham was panelist Shatha Al Maskiry who pointed out that stakeholders will only believe in a company when its employees are true believers and who behave on brand at every turn. “To rise to this challenge, Omani management needs to build a purpose-driven corporate culture - specifically, one that is energized by a compelling purpose for good. At the end of the day, leaders have to understand that their role is create a work environment where people enjoy what they do because when they enjoy what they do, they will do it better.”

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

Story on citizens being allowed to use the Civil ID to cross the land ports to UAE

A story on citizens being allowed to use the Civil ID to cross the land ports adjacent to the United Arab Emirates reached 45,867 people and had 5,030 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

Morning Minute video on seven wadis in Muscat to be turned into gardens

The Morning Minute video on seven wadis in Muscat to be turned into gardens had 1,327 views and 71 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

Midday Update on CPA

The Midday Update on CPA had 1,200 views and reached 3,300 people on Facebook.

AT AL BARAKAH PALACE

< FROM A1

In-Pictures: HM gives audience to UK State Secretary

DATE PLANTATIONS OF

BIRKAT AL MOUZ

LOCATED on the road from Muscat to Nizwa, and under the foothills of the Jabal Akhdar mountain, Birkat Al Mouz has long served an agricultural village.

"Birkat Al Mouz, located off the old Muscat-Nizwa road, translates to 'Banana Pool' as the area is home to many banana plantations," according to the Ministry of Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman. "Bait Al Rededah Castle is set within the village and was recently renovated. Birkat Al Mouz is also the gateway to the Saiq Plateau on Jebel Al Akhdar."

"There are several interesting things to see, including a fort, an active falaj (irrigation channel), some interesting old buildings that are in the process of being saved from ruin, and a thick plantation of date palms that invite a quiet stroll. The village also offers practical assistance to visitors heading up the mountain such as 4WD hire, supermarkets and camping supplies."

The village also has acres upon acres of date plantations, which are regularly tended to and harvested in various stages of the fruit's cycle.

While some are allowed to fully ripen before being left in the sun to brown, turning into the fruit we all know, other plants are harvested in various stages of ripening, when their flavours, tastes and textures are different.

WE LOVE OMAN

The village has acres upon acres of date plantations, which are regularly tended to and harvested in various stages of the fruit's cycle.

During the earlier stages of their ripening, the dates look like oblong berries, and are first plucked when they are yellow in colour and are juicy, white and fleshy inside.

At this time, the dates have a crunchy texture, similar almost to an apple. The second phase of harvesting happens when the dates turn red on the outside, and feature and off-white, slightly softer interior.

One more body found from rubble taking the death toll to 10

Efforts are still on to locate four more workers , who are still missing in the rubble, the CDAA said on Wednesday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Rescue teams working at the site of the rock collapse in Al Dahirah Governorate were able to pull out the body of one more worker on Wednesday evening, taking the total confirmed death toll to 10.

Earlier in the day as well, three more bodies were recovered, two early in the morning and one in the afternoon. Efforts are still on to locate four more workers, who are still missing in the rubble.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) said: "Search operations resulted in the exhumation of another person's body from under the rubble at the site of the rockslide in Al Dhahirah Governorate."

Efforts are still going on to find the remaining four missing persons, the CDAA said.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

< FROM A1 Fourth booster dose recommended

Speaking about the difference between schools and mosques, he said the staff at schools can help manage things more easily than their counterparts at mosques, which are frequented by elderly people, said Dr. Adil, noting that probability of infections at mosques are greater.

Badr Saif Al Rawahi, Director of the Contagious Diseases Department at the Ministry of Health, said the ministry accessed 90 percent of the target segment (those above 12 years) and found that many needed to be inoculated with COVID-19 vaccines, which means we cannot claim to have accomplished our 100 percent vaccination goal.

Fourth booster dose

As for the fourth dose, a team has been tasked by the ministry to study the recommendations and priorities, said Al Rawahi, adding that the ministry is currently mulling the option of vaccinating children between 5 and 11 years.

The fourth booster dose is recommended, if need be, only for low-immunity segments, depending on the overall community immunity and the stability of the epidemiological situation, locally and abroad, said Al Rawahi.

The health minister also said that the number of booked doses stood at 8,031,006 while the ministry received 7,544,929 and administered 6,997,913 doses.

He affirmed that the virus is still lurking and though its variants like Omicron are less severe, they are more infectious, with some countries reporting alarming uptakes prompting new, stricter measures and other countries even endorsing a fourth dose (like the United States) for vulnerable people aged above 50.

The minister noted that research proved that immunity against COVID-19 for those who took two-dose vaccination dropped by 22 percent after six months of the second dose.

Vaccination percentages high

Thanks to the globally acclaimed expanded immunisation programme in Oman, the impact of the pandemic on the health sector in Oman is not as critical as is the case in some countries, said the minister, adding that vaccination percentages in Oman are among the highest in the world.

Among expatriates, 97 percent took the first dose, 89 percent took the second and 39 percent the third, said the minister.

No side-effects of vaccines

While no confirmed direct links have been established between COVID-19 vaccines and cardiac diseases, no serious side-effects have been detected among those who received the first or second dose in Oman, the minister observed.

"The manufacturing company took longer to supply the COVID-19 vaccine dedicated to children, and we hope to receive it within the first half of this year. We were able to deliver the drugs and services to 84 percent of the chronic disease segment during the peak of the pandemic and we still have a strategic stock of life-saving medicines, Dr. Ahmed further said.

The minister affirmed the PCR test is no longer a must for incoming travellers for work or tourism and that only personal cards are required for passage across the borders with GCC states.

MEETING

< FROM A1 Sayyid Asa'ad bids farewell to Syrian envoy

Al Khatib hoped that the Sultanate of Oman will witness further development and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

In his turn, HH Sayyid Asa'ad expressed his utmost appreciation to the ambassador for his efforts exerted in serving the relations between the two countries.

He also wished the ambassador success and the people of Syria progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary General and the two advisers at the office of Sayyid Asa'ad. — ONA

'COMMUNITY SERVICE FORTNIGHT'

Embassy of India in Oman to organise 'Sewa Utsav'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The ideal of community service is ingrained in Indian culture. Indian communities world over contribute to the peace, harmony and prosperity of their respective host societies and enthusiastically participate in community service activities. The distinguished Indian community in Oman also actively organises community service events to contribute to the welfare of their Omani brothers and sisters.

As Indian community worldwide celebrates 75 glorious years of India's independence under 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' with pride and joy, Embassy of India, Muscat has decided to celebrate this momentous occasion through community service.

The Embassy of India in association with Indian Social Club Oman is organising several activities under 'Community Service Fortnight' or 'Sewa Utsav 2022' to contribute to the local community during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Sewa Utsav is inspired by the noble spirit of the holy month of Ramadan including spiritual refection and helping others as well as the core Indian value of serving humanity. It is an initiative of the Indian community under the aegis of the Embassy to express gratitude and contribute to the local society in a positive way.

Several activities have been planned during 31 March to 16 April 2022 under Sewa Utsav with the support of government of the Sultanate of Oman.

The Sewa Utsav will commence with a 'Happinezz workshop' for Children with Special Needs.

The programME will focus on the need to pursue inclusive education to look after the interests and well being of children with special needs and highlight the important work being done in this regard by the Care & Special Education (CSE), a centre run with the support of Indian schools in Oman at the Indian School Muscat.

A Mega Blood Donation Camp organised in association with Ministry of Health of Oman will be inaugurated on April 2, 2022 with the target of collecting at least 1000 units of blood. This will hopefully be a useful contribution to the health system of Oman during the holy month of Ramadan.

Children of Indian schools in Oman will enthusiastically participate in 3 activities on environment protection namely - a Tree Plantation Drive, Beach Cleaning, Wadi (Valley) Cleaning (at 5 different locations each).

In addition to the above, a Free Health checkup & Consular camp will be organised for blue collar workers.

Indian community members will also actively participate in a Mega Donation drive organised in collaboration with the Dar Al Atta foundation with support of Ministry of Social Development.

'Sewa Utsav' is an opportunity for the Indian community to join hands and contribute to the local Omani society.

'SUSTAINABLE CITY - YITI'

< FROM A1 New project to generate significant employment opportunities

Cementing the Sultanate's position as a leading nation that honours its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, the city will also bring significant in-country value to the community and boost innovation in the sector. The development of the city will not only give local talents the necessary exposure to international markets and the opportunity to learn from experts in the field but will also enhance business prospects for local SMEs and generate significant employment opportunities.

Eng. Faris Saeed, Chairman of Diamond Developers said, "The Sustainable City – Yiti is not only a benchmark for sustainable urban development,it is a working model for future cities. It is a thriving community made up of thousands of residents, visitors, students, researchers, and entrepreneurs" he added. "The project is expected to be one of the region's most sustainable cities, and by adopting the latest solutions in energy production, vertical farming, humidity harvesting, and autonomous transportation, we aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, in line with Oman Vision 2040. At Diamond Developers, we remain committed to empowering and supporting partners around the world to realise the cities of tomorrow, today to deliver a more sustainable future for all of us."

Slated for completion by 2025, the project will feature 1,657 eco-friendly and energy-efficient residential units including 300 villas. Designed for comfort, practicality, and contemporary style, the spacious 3 and 4 bedroom villas will also offer significant savings on utility bills.

While being completely energy independent with solar panels and biogas meeting 100 percent of its energy requirements, self-sustenance is also an integral element of the project through incorporation of productive farming areas and greenhouses. Private farming slots will be allocated for residents to encourage them grow their own produce. The city is also designed to recycle 100 percent of its waste and water.

Aligning itself to the country's goals to eliminate carbon footprints, the project is geared to reduce carbon emissions by adopting clean mobility solutions like autonomous shuttles and electric cars, and by deploying EV charging stations around the project. The car-free residential areas, while advancing net zero goals,will also contribute towards making it a safer environment for families and promote social engagement within the community.

Inspired by the local values of authenticity, togetherness, and community living, the city is positioned as a premium destination for wellness and includes facilities for jogging and cycling, an equestrian club, and a horse track. Providing an all-inclusive experience, it also includes a plaza with a fine selection of commercial outlets. With a keen focus on promoting sustainability amongst youth, the city will have a sustainable school with a 'SEE lab' that showcases the latest in sustainability solutions.

A four-star neighbourhood hotel with 197 rooms, a five-star resort with 170 rooms and a range of restaurants, leisure facilities, 132 luxury serviced apartments, offering sophisticated services and various tourism experiences.

'The Sustainable City – Yiti' is being developed in accordance with the highest sustainability pillars and place making fundamentals which resonates with Omran Group's vision towards establishing an iconic local and international destination with world-class cultural, educational, and recreational facilities.

WORLD

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Russian forces' movement away from Kyiv not a real withdrawal, says Pentagon

The Russian defence ministry said it was withdrawing forces as "a good faith" measure in the talks

UKRAINE CRISIS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia cannot be trusted. He said it was Ukrainian troops who forced Russia's hand, adding that "we shouldn't let down our guard".

WASHINGTON: Highlighting that Russian forces have moved away from Ukraine's capital Kyiv "in the last day or so," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby on Tuesday said that he believes this is a "repositioning", not a "real withdrawal".

"Has there been some movement by some Russian units away from Kyiv in the last day or so? Yeah. We think so. Small numbers," said Kirby during a briefing. "But we believe that this is a repositioning, not a real withdrawal, and that we all should be prepared to watch for a major offensive against other areas of Ukraine," he added. Kirby spoke several hours after a member of the Russian negotiating team announced that the Ministry of Defence had decided "to radically, at times, reduce military activity in the city of Kyiv and Chernikyiv direction."

The Russian defence ministry said it was withdrawing forces as "a good faith" measure in the talks. However, Kirby said the move coincided with the Russian military's lack of success in its moves on the two northern cities.

"Russia has failed in its objective of capturing Kyiv. It's failed in its objective of subjugating Ukraine. But they can still inflict massive brutality on the country," he added.

Pentagon press secretary's remarks come a day after a U.S. senior defence official told reporters that Russian troops are "making really no efforts on the ground to advance on the city," and days earlier, the same official said the Russians were now "prioritizing the Donbas" region.

The Pentagon's latest assessment is in line with the White House, where communications director Kate Bedingfield described the moves around Kyiv as a "redeployment" and not an outright "withdrawal."

"Everyone should expect that we're going to continue to see attacks across Ukraine," Bedingfield said.

"Obviously, a key message that the president delivered on his trip to Europe last week was that we are in for a long slog, that our allies and partners need to remain, that our resolve needs to remain strong, and that we need to continue to execute on the strategy of inflicting significant costs on the Russian economy, and again, strengthening Ukraine on the battlefields and at the negotiating table," Bedingfield added. Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia cannot be trusted. He said it was Ukrainian troops who forced Russia's hand, adding that "we shouldn't let down our guard" because the invading army still "has a great potential to continue attacks against our country." Ukraine will continue negotiations, he said, but officials do not trust the word of the country that continues "fighting to destroy us."

US President Joe Biden, asked whether the Russian announcement was a sign of progress in the talks or an attempt by Moscow to buy time to continue its assault, said: "We'll see. I don't read anything into it until I see what their actions are."

On February 24, Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine after the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk appealed for help in defending themselves against Ukrainian provocations. In response to Russia's operation, Western countries have rolled out a comprehensive sanctions campaign against Moscow. ANI

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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

REFUGEES FLEEING

Over 4 million refugees have fled Ukraine: UN

NEW YORK: As Russia's war on Ukraine is set to enter its sixth week, the number of refugees fleeing Ukraine has now crossed the 4 million mark, the chief of the UN refugee agency, Filippo Grandi said on Wednesday.

Taking to Twitter, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi wrote, "I have just arrived in Ukraine. In Lviv, I will discuss with the authorities, the UN and other partners ways to increase our support to people affected and displaced by this senseless war." According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of refugees fleeing Ukraine includes over 2,04,000 third-country nationals. IOM has been providing food, core-relief items, cash, and protection support including awareness-raising and counter-trafficking in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

More than 2.3 million Ukrainian refugees have fled to Poland, while hundreds of thousands have fled to neighbouring countries including Romania, Moldova and Hungary, reported CNN citing UN data.

Grandi has previously called the exodus of refugees from Ukraine "the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II." ANI

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

US President Joe Biden signs anti-lynching legislation

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has signed into law the first federal legislation that makes racist lynching a hate crime, putting an end to over a century of delays in outlawing what he called "pure terror."

The Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act is named after a 14-year-old Black boy whose brutal murder in the southern state of Mississippi galvanized the US civil rights movement in the 1950s.

Biden signed the bill — which was passed by the Senate earlier this month — on Tuesday at a desk in the White House Rose Garden.

He was surrounded by Vice President Kamala Harris, members of Congress, top Justice Department officials, a descendant of Ida B. Wells, a Black journalist who reported on lynchings, and Rev. Wheeler Parker, a cousin of Till.

"Lynching was pure terror, to enforce the lie that not everyone, not everyone belongs in America, not everyone is created equal," the president said.

Those convicted under the law will face up to 30 years in jail.

The bill , which passed the Senate by unanimous consent and the House of Representatives by a vote of 422-3, ends a history of impunity over what researchers say were thousands of lynching between the the end of the Civil War in 1865 and 1950 — that often went unpunished.

Who was Emmett Till?

Till was visiting relatives in Mississippi where he was abducted and killed in August 1955.

A white woman had alleged that the boy had propositioned her in a store and touched her on the arm, hand and waist.

Days later, Till's mutilated body was found in a local river.

The boy's grieving mother had insisted on an open casket to show the world how her son had been brutalized.

The murder became a turning point in the civil rights era.

Two white men, Roy Bryant, Carolyn Bryant's husband, and J W Milam, his half-brother, were charged with murder but were subsequently acquitted by an all-white jury. DW

MONSTER MISSILE

North Korea faked launch of 'monster' missile, says Seoul

SEOUL: South Korea has negated North Korea's claim that it launched what experts have dubbed its "monster missile" last week.

South Korea's military on Wednesday accused the North of firing a less-powerful existing weapon instead of a newly developed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) as Pyongyang had claimed.

Last Thursday, North Korea said it had test fired a Hwasong-17 missile — its longest-range ICBM — in the most significant weapons test in years. State media in Pyongyang had called the launch "a historical event."

Seoul's military has said that, in reality, it was the same ICBM North Korea launched in 2017.

"US and South Korean intelligence has determined that what was fired on March 24 was a Hwasong-15," a defense ministry official told news agency.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it told a parliamentary committee that the details of Thursday's launch, including the weapon's speed, combustion and stage separation, were similar to those of the Hwasong-15, not the Hwasong-17.

The ministry said the alleged false announcement was likely an attempt by Pyongyang to compensate for a failed Hwasong-17 launch earlier this month.

Acccording to accounts from South Korea, the missile launched from the North's capital region on March 16 exploded soon after lift off, with residents of Pyongyang witnessing the mid-air blast.

"Pyongyang residents must have been shocked" by the failed launch, and it may have affected public opinion of the Kim Jong Un regime, lawmaker Ha Tae-keung of South Korea's conservative opposition People's Power Party (PPP), had told the media.

North Korea did not make any comments on the failed launch and state media is yet to respond to Wednesday's report from South Korean defence chiefs. DW

ZUBAIR AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

CELEBRATES ITS COMMERCIAL CLIENTS AND SHOWCASES LATEST MODELS AT SPECIAL CUSTOMER EVENT

MUSCAT: The Zubair Automotive Group recently organised a major event for its partners and commercial clients at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa, Muscat.

In attendance were, the members of the Board of Directors of the Zubair Automotive Group, the Chief Operating Officer and the senior management team of the Zubair Automotive Group as well as executive managers and managers from private and government institutions, and a number of businessmen from various sectors who are in partnership with the Zubair Automotive Group. The International Heavy Equipment, Dhofar Automotive, and the General Automotive Company also participated in the event.

The event was heldat the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Hotel amphitheatre at 7:00 pm on March 29th, and began with a warm welcometo all in attendance, followed by a speech by the COO of the Zubair Automotive Group.

The attendees enjoyed beautiful and informative presentations made by the Zubair Automotive Group's team on the latest product offerings. This was followed by the award ceremony,to honour the group's best commercial clients for their immense contribution andcontinuous cooperation and support, which reflected inthe overall business growth as well as with the addition of services, that has brought great satisfactionto customers.

An informative tour of the latest models was then organised for all in attendance, followed by alavish dinner accompanied bya live performance by the Hotel's musical ensemble.

Commenting on organising such an event, Mohammad Al Farei, Chief Operating Officer of Zubair Automotive Group said, "Today we are gathered to renew and enter a new phase of partnership. The objective is to provide solutions to meet the ever-changing demands of our society and to improve business performance. I am proud to say that despite the pandemic the ZubairAutomotive Group never stopped providing our partners and clients withinnovative business solutions and services. Through our products, the group envisions a better partnership with you."

During the event, the Zubair Automotive Group celebrated the success partners of its main clientele. Al Tasnim Group won the Best Client Award for the year 2022, while Galfar Engineering & Contracting won the Enterprising Customer of the year 2022. The Loyal Customer Award of the year 2022 went to the Gulf Petrochemical Services, while the Emerging Customer Award of the year 2022 went to OHI Group (Budget RAC), and finally, the Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company won the Public Customer of the year 2022 award.

The eventalso witnessed the inauguration of the flagship model of the all-new Mitsubishi Outlander,2022, presented by the General Automotive Company, the official distributor of Mitsubishi vehicles in the Sultanate. The vehicle carries the legacy of past Mitsubishi SUV models, making it an exceptionally powerful and dynamic model with an all-new design.

Thefine details in its designis an embodiment of beauty, which is coupled with a performancethat gives the driver and passengers an enjoyable experience on the road. The all-new Outlander comes with several features, like an advanced wheelbase, spacious cabin, and driver assistance systems to enhance control and safety, as well as six different driving modes to ensure the best performance in all conditions.The cabin interiorpromises passengers an atmosphere of comfort and convenience. The all-new Outlander's horizontal instrument panel comes with a 10.8-inch front-screen display, or a 12.3-inch fully digital display, as well as an intelligent navigation system and a high-quality audio system that connects with the phone and its applications to keep the driver connected on the road. The all-new Outlander is available in 5 variants in terms of specifications and equipment, including Premium +, Premium, High Line +, High Line and Midline.

The sales team from the group of companies represented by the International Heavy Equipment, Dhofar Automotive and the General Automotive Company, in addition to representatives from the manufacturers, communicated directly with the audience and responded to all customer inquiries with detailed information that included guidance and support about the latest products on offer.

The event provided an ideal opportunity for brand managers to consolidate relationships and build bridges of trustwith customers,thereby enablinga fruitful partnershipand aprosperous future for all parties involved.

Withover 200 in attendance, the evening witnessed the distinguished presence of representatives fromthe government and private sector.The guests had the opportunity to see all of Dhofar Automotive's flagship models, which included the Grand Cherokee L, the Gladiator and Wrangler models, the Dodge Charger and Challenger, the Ram 1500, Fiat 500 Cabriolet and the Alfa Romeo Stelvio and Giulia.

The General Automotive Company had the pleasure of presenting the Mitsubishi Xpander, Montero Sport, Outlander, the ASX models, in addition to the L200 commercial vehicle. Four Fuso models were also present during the event, including the Rosa bus, TF Titan, FJX4, Fuso FK and FM.

The products and equipment of the International Heavy Equipment company were also displayed for all in attendance. The latest trucks from Renault and Volvo were showcased, which included tankers, mixers, pump carriers and huge dumpers.A wide range of other models and equipment were also on display from Bobcat and Jungheinrich and were well received by the audience.

The COO of the Zubair Automotive Group ended his speech, saying, "Our business culture is anchored on the principle of "We rise by lifting others." When you succeed, we succeed with you. Thank you to all our partners who have been part of our humble company's success story. You are our source of strength to keep moving forward despite all the challenges, and we take the opportunity every year to come together here and celebrate our partnership. I wish all of you a wonderful evening."

SPORTS

Qatar braces for highly-anticipated finals draw on April 1

28 pre-qualified teams will be allocated from pots 1 to 4 based on the FIFA Men's World Ranking

DOHA: The highly anticipated finals draw for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is all set to take place at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center in Qatar on April 1.

As per the Organising Committee for FIFA Competitions protocols, 28 pre-qualified teams will be allocated from pots 1 to 4 based on the FIFA Men's World Ranking released on March 31.

As hosts, Qatar will take position A1 from Pot 1, where they will be joined by the seven highest-ranked qualified teams from the FIFA Men's World Ranking. The countries occupying positions 8-15 in the ranking of the qualified teams will be allocated to Pot 2, while the 16th-23rd best-ranked qualifiers will be placed in Pot 3.

Finally, Pot 4 will include the qualified teams in positions 24 to 28, plus three placeholders representing the two winners of the intercontinental play-offs and the remaining UEFA play-off winner. Football fans can watch their favourite teams getting drawn into various groups live on History TV18 and Voot at 21:30 IST.

The Qatar World Cup, with 32 teams, will maintain a classic format of eight groups of four teams that will play three round-robin, one-legged matches. The top two finishers from each group will advance to the Round of 16 and will face each other in the following format: A vs B, C vs D, E vs F and G vs H.

In the World Cup, unlike European Championship, there is an extra match, the third and fourth place match played by the two losing semi-finalists, the day before the final.

Qatar in 2022 will host the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab world and will only be the second one to be played on the Asian continent. The 22nd edition of the tournament will kick off on November 21, 2022, when Qatar -- the reigning champions of Asia -- take their FIFA World Cup bow at the tournament's first match at the stunning 60,000-seat Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor City.

Notably, Qatar will host the most compact version of the tournament in modern history. All eight stadiums are within 50km of central Doha, while fans, players, and officials will be able to stay in one accommodation throughout the event, which will conclude with the final at the 80,000-seat Lusail Stadium on December 18, 2022 -- which is also Qatar National Day. ANI

FIFA WORLD CUP

Al Rihla revealed as official match ball for Qatar 2022

DOHA: Al Rihla has been revealed by Adidas as the official match ball for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 on Wednesday.

The 14th successive ball that Adidas has created for the FIFA World Cup is designed to support peak game speeds, as it travels faster in flight than any ball in the tournament's history. Al Rihla means "the journey" in Arabic and is inspired by the culture, architecture, iconic boats and flag of Qatar. The bold, vibrant colours set on a pearlescent background represent the FIFA World Cup host country and the ever-increasing speed of the game.

Designed from the inside out using data and rigorous testing at Adidas labs, in wind tunnels and on the pitch by football players themselves, Al Rihla provides the highest levels of accuracy and reliability on the field of play, partly due to its new panel shape and surface textures, as per FIFA.

"The game is getting faster and, as it speeds up, accuracy and flight stability become critically important," said Franziska Loffelmann, the Design Director - Football Graphics and Hardwear at Adidas.

"The new design allows the ball to maintain a significantly higher speed as it journeys through the air. For the biggest global stage in all of sport, we set out to make the impossible possible with radical innovation by creating the fastest and most accurate FIFA World Cup ball to date," he added.

The ball was designed with sustainability as a priority; indeed, Al Rihla is the first FIFA World Cup ball to be made exclusively with water-based inks and glues. ANI

ADVERTISEMENT

QUALIFY

Portugal qualifies for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022

PORTO: Cristiano Ronaldo who is set to appear in his 5th FIFA World Cup in Qatar, took to social media to celebrate the momentous achievement on Tuesday.

Ronaldo who has played in every World Cup since 2006 helped Portugal in defeating North Macedonia 2-0 to qualify for Qatar 2022. Bruno Fernandes put in an impressive display, scoring in each half in Portugal's play-off against North Macedonia with Ronaldo and Diogo Jota providing assists to lead their country to its sixth consecutive World Cup.

"Goal achieved, we're at the Qatar World Cup," Ronaldo said on Instagram. "We're in our rightful place! Thank you to all the Portuguese people for the tireless support! Let's go Portugal!"

In Porto, Portugal looked as if they might be set for a long evening, with both skipper Cristiano Ronaldo and Diogo Jota going close in the first 30 minutes.

Fernandes then intercepted a stray pass just after the half-hour mark before combining well with the Portugal captain and drilling a low strike past Stole Dimitrievski. North Macedonia rarely troubled Diogo Costa in the Portuguese goal in the first period but started brightly after the interval.

However, Fernandes put paid to any thoughts of another big scalp for the visitors after a swift counterattack set Diogo Jota down the left. His pinpoint delivery sat up nicely for the goalscorer to double his tally, hitting a neat first-time finish at speed. ANI

CRICKET

Australia's Travis Head feels wicket at Gaddafi Stadium was 'different'

Chasing a massive 314-run target, Pakistan's team needed a flying start like Australia but they lost the wicket of opener Fakhar Zaman for 18

PUNE: After playing a match-winning knock against Pakistan in the first ODI, Australia batter Travis Head said that the wicket at Lahore was 'different'.

Travis Head's century and two-wicket haul helped visitors register a comprehensive 88-run victory here at the Gadaffi stadium to take a 1-0 lead. "Nice to get a look at the top, and to take the opportunity. We thought it would be tough to bowl in the end with the dew and that's why we wanted to get as much as we wanted. It was a different wicket and there were quite a bit of unknowns. Nice win. We needed it," said Travis Head in a post-match presentation.

Chasing a massive 314-run target Pakistan's team needed a flying start like Australia but they lost the wicket of opener Fakhar Zaman for 18.

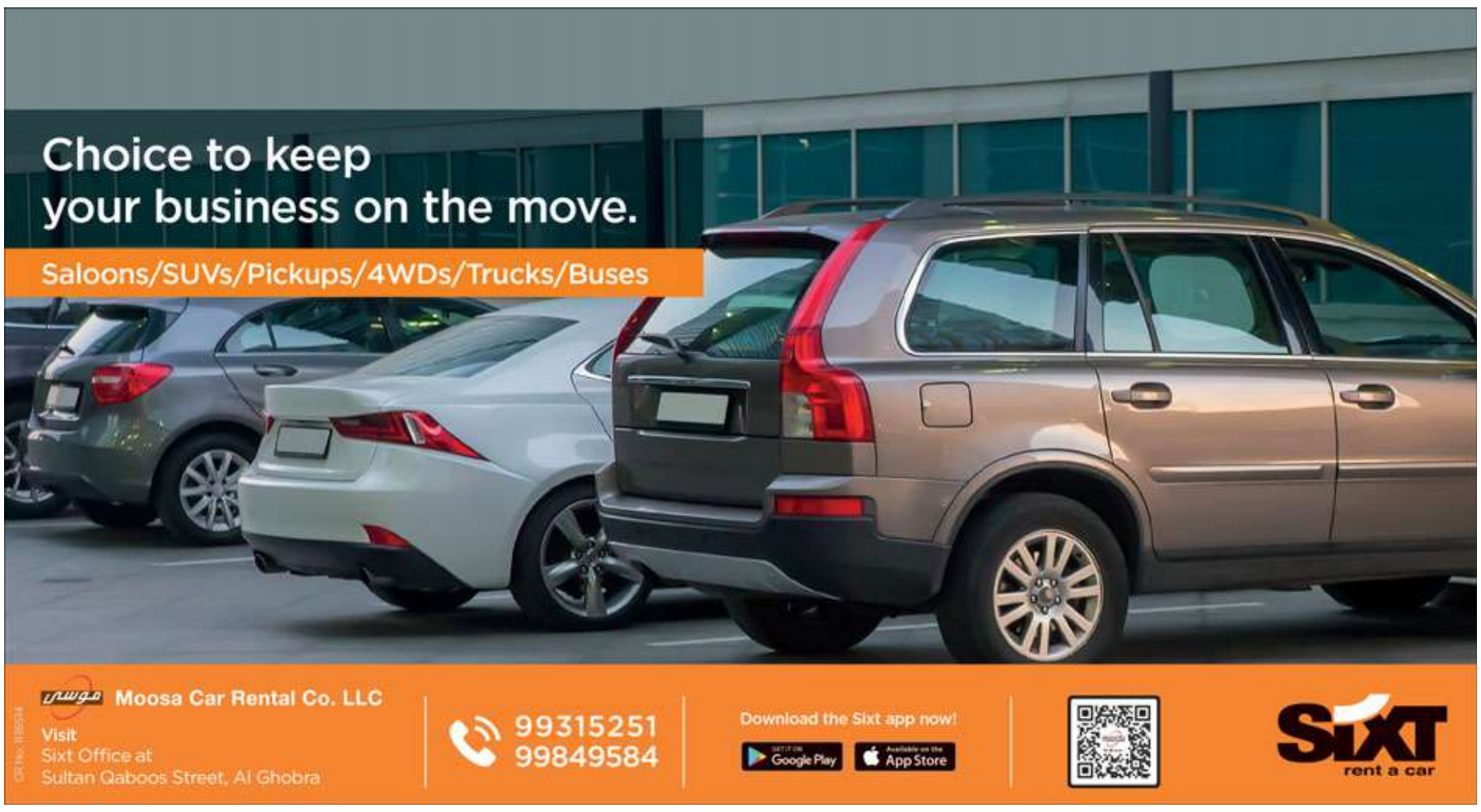
Imam-ul-Haq and Babar Azam then struck a partnership to take the total beyond the 50-run mark in 9.5 overs. The duo also went on to add 50-runs for the second wicket.

Hosts Pakistan reached the triple-figure mark in the 21st over and skipper Babar Azam went on to score his half-century. The 96-run stand was finally broken when debutant leg-break bowler Mitchell Swepson dismissed the Pakistan captain for 57 from 72 balls.

From there on hosts kept on losing wickets at regular intervals with Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan and Iftikhar Ahmed being dismissed cheaply.

Imam-ul-Haq was the only batter to keep fighting as he scored a brilliant ton hitting six fours and three sixes.

Adam Zampa bagged four wickets for 35 runs in his 10 overs and Travis Head chipped in with two wickets to have a memorable day with both bat and ball. Debutant Swepson and Nathan Ellis took two wickets and one wicket respectively to bowl out Pakistan for 225 in 45.2 overs. ANI



ICC RANKINGS

R Ashwin becomes No. 2 ranked all-rounder in Tests

DUBAI: India's Ravichandran Ashwin has replaced Jason Holder at the No.2 spot in the latest ICC Test Rankings for all-rounders.

While Kyle Mayers' brilliance in Grenada has helped him leap a staggering 29 spots to No. 11. Ravindra Jadeja is in the top position among the all-rounders. Among the batters, Usman Khawaja's stellar show in Australia's impressive Test series win over Pakistan has helped him surge to No.7 in the latest ICC Test Rankings. Khawaja was easily the standout batter in the three-match Test series, having aggregated 496 runs from five innings at a whopping 165.33. His scores in the series read 97, 160, 44*, 91 and 104* - the last two coming in Australia's series-clinching 115-run win in the third Test in Lahore. ANI

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,202.57 points, up by 0.18 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.88 per cent at 481.36 points. Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Packaging, down 9.87 per cent, was the top loser.

NBO approves payout of 3.7% cash dividend

Shareholders also approved the appointment of the members of the Sharia Supervisory Committee of Muzn, National Bank of Oman's Islamic window

MEETING: Presided over by Amal Suhail Bahwan, Chairperson of NBO, the meeting was attended by the board members, senior management and shareholders. - Supplied picture

Times News Service

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on March 30 at the bank's headquarters in Al Azaiba.

Presided over by Amal Suhail Bahwan, Chairperson of NBO, the meeting was attended by the board members, senior management and shareholders.

During the meeting, NBO's shareholders approved the payout of a 3.7 per cent cash dividend for 2021 at the rate of 3.7 baisa per share. Shareholders also approved the appointment of the members of the Sharia Supervisory Committee of Muzn, NBO's Islamic window, in addition to the appointment of the external auditors and an independent consultant to evaluate the performance of the Board of Directors for the fiscal year ending 31 December 2022.

The Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) saw the approval of capital raising plans which may take the form of a new issue of Additional Tier 1 capital for a benchmark size in the region of up to $300 million. Such instruments may be listed locally on the MSX, internationally on a foreign exchange and/or issued on a private placement basis.

"Overall, we have been pleased with the bank's performance during 2021. Our core business remains strong and we have further diversified revenue streams and maintained a strong balance sheet. We believe it is a sign of our agility on the one hand, and our growing global reputation as a safe investment, on the other," said Amal Suhail Bahwan, Chairperson of NBO.

She added, "As we embark on our 2022 objectives, NBO is resolved to identify further opportunities for growth and take critical steps towards protecting the legacy we have built in the market as a future-ready and world-class bank that continues to create value for our customers, employees and the wider community."

In 2021, NBO achieved a net profit of OMR 30.3 million, an increase of 66.8 per cent compared to the previous year.

Net Interest Income for the year 2021 is OMR 91.6 million, showing an increase of 0.7 per cent over last year. Fee Income for the year 2021 is OMR 31.8 million, compared to OMR 26.1 million last year, strong growth of 21.9 per cent due to robust performance across various fee lines. Operating expenses for the year 2021 were OMR 63.5 million, compared to OMR 63.8 million for the last year, a decrease of 0.5 per cent, despite the continuing investments made for growth.

The reduction year on year is due to various efficiency initiatives undertaken across the bank. Operating Profit, as a result, grew strongly 12.6 per cent, year on year. Net Impairment for the year 2021 was OMR24.0 million, compared to OMR31.3 million for the last year, a decrease of 23.4 per cent.

The reduction is on account of the conservative provisioning approach undertaken at the time of the pandemic.

Gross Loans and Advances as of 31 December 2021 are at OMR3.2 billion, with a growth of 6.4 per cent over last year, as the bank continued to support the borrowing needs of its customers. Customer deposits correspondingly are at OMR 2.9 billion, showing a growth of 15.5 per cent over last year. The bank's core equity and total capital Adequacy Ratio as of December 2021 stand at 11.8 per cent and 15.8 per cent respectively.

KEY PROJECT

Shell opens first service station on Batinah Expressway in Liwa

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Motorists on Batinah Expressway can now enjoy high-quality Shell fuels and services in the wilayat of Liwa. This marks the first out of the four Shell service stations planned on the Batinah Expressway.

While more facilities and services will be rolled out in due course, customers of Shell Liwa Service Stations on Batinah Expressway can already fill their vehicles with Shell fuels, including Shell V-Power, and be part of Shell's latest campaign 'Win Big with Shell' to win two MG cars and eight Shell V-Power fuel cards which will continue until May 20.

Shell Liwa Expressway Service Station is the first among four mega integrated Shell service stations that are slated to open on this key highway in 2022, in alignment with an earlier agreement signed between Shell Oman Marketing Company and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Development.

Shell Oman will open another two 15,000 sqm expressway stations in Suwaiq and a 30,000 sqm expressway station in Saham.

The first phase of Shell Batinah Expressway Service Stations will offer customers premium fuel, including Shell V-Power, alongside Shell Mogas 95, Shell Mogas 91, Shell Diesel as well as Shell Recharge for Electrical Vehicles. With an eye on optimising customers' experience and making the process more time-efficient, the service stations also feature a dedicated lane for trucks.

Khalid Al Awaisi – Mobility Country Manager, Shell Oman Marketing Company, said, "As the first fully integrated service station on the Batinah Expressway, the Shell Liwa Expressway service station is a huge milestone for us and serves as an integral part of the company's expansion plan. The Batinah Expressway enhances connectivity and provides a vital link between the various logistics hubs, industrial projects, and economic zones in the region. Being the very first service station on the Batinah Expressway, the Shell Liwa Expressway service station also holds critical value for motorists on the route."

عمانتل
Omantel

SULTANATE OF OMAN
OMAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY (S.A.O.G)

ELECTRONIC REQUEST FOR TENDER

Oman Telecommunications Company (S.A.O.G), P.O. Box 789, Postal Code 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman hereby gives notice of the following Request for Tender: -

Tender No.	Description	Date of floating	Last date for submission
2930/2022	Provision of Litigation Services for Omantel	31-Mar-2022	17-Apr-2022
Eligibility: Specialized company in the field			

Companies already registered with Omantel e-Tendering portal shall be able to download the Tender document from https://tenders.omantel.om

Prospective Tenderers should be registered with Omantel e-Tendering Portal (one-time free registration) and upload softcopies of the required supporting documents.

All correspondences with respect to this Tender, such as, enquiries and requests for clarifications shall be submitted through the Omantel e-tendering Portal. Vendors are requested to submit their proposals through Omantel e-tendering Portal on or before 17-Apr-2022 at 10:00 AM.

Tender Announcement
E-Tender 03/2022/OPAZ

الهيئة العامة للمناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة
Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عمان

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) invites the reputable and experienced local and international Companies/Bidders for participating of following Design and Build tender in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) through E-Tendering System.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRONE RUNWAY AT DUQM

Purchasing, participating and collecting/ downloading softcopy of the Tender Documents:	Through E-Tendering System - Esnad https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
Start of Tender Documents' Sale (Date):	Wednesday, 23rd March 2022 (8:00 AM Muscat Time) onwards
End of Tender Documents' Sale (Date):	Tuesday, 12th April 2022 (3:00 PM, Muscat Time)
Site Show round/Visit (for all bidders):	Wednesday, 13th April 2022 (9:30 AM, Muscat Time) At SEZAD Office at DUQM
Tender Closing (Submission) & Opening of Technical Bids Date:	Wednesday, 25th May 2022 (3:00 PM, Muscat Time)
Payment method for purchasing the tender document :	OMR. 420.000 (Omani Rial Four Hundred and Twenty only).

- Interested companies that are (already) registered with the Oman General Secretariat of Tender Board (GSTB) are invited to participate to obtain details, the specification and terms of conditions from the following website: **https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om.**
- Participants from International companies or interested companies who are not registered with the Oman General Secretariat of Tender Board (GSTB) are required to have registered for Tender participation; website: **https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om.**
- Bidders MUST submit their bids through online only on the given website with sealed and signed and as per instructions given in the E-tendering uploading page, on or before the end date submission.
- Bidders MUST enclose Electronic Guarantee/Bid Bond through online only on the given website; value of not less than (1%) of the Tender Value and valid for (180) days from the Proposals' submission date; addressed to **H. E. The Chairman, OPAZ Tender Committee (OTC).**
- Any queries related to submission of bids or obtaining and submission of Electronic bid bond through online shall contact GSTB ESNAD e-tendering team.
- Tender will be subject to reject if the tenderer does not submit the valid Electronic Bid bond on time.
- OPAZ is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bid and reserves the right to accept or reject any offer without giving reasons.

FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS, YOU MAY CONTACT VIA
Registration Helpdesk: +968-24402222,330 (7:30AM-2:30PM)
Tendering Helpdesk: +968-24402200 (8:00AM-4:00PM)
Email: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES AND FREE ZONES (OPAZ)
+7500 2450 968
+7474 2458 968
P.O Box: 77 P.C: 100 Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
@omanopaz
info@opaz.gov.om
www.opaz.gov.om

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Packaging, down 9.87 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,202.57 points, up by 0.18 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.88 per cent at 481.36 points. Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Packaging, down 9.87 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of United Finance were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 898 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR8.42 million, with more than 79.95 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 21 advanced, 8 declined and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers of OMR2.72 million while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers of OMR2.59 million followed by foreign investors for OMR135,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,786.33 points, up 0.46 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Oman & Emirates Investment, Muscat Finance, National Bank Oman and Oman Arab Bank were up by 4.49 per cent, 3.70 per cent, 3.45 per cent, 3.06 per cent, and 2.50 per cent respectively. Prices of Bank Dhofar, and Al Madina Takaful were down by 2.54 per cent, and 1.06 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,231.78 points, up 0.24 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, National Aluminium, Galfar Engineering, Oman Fisheries, and A'Saffa Foods were up by 5.00 per cent, 4.40 per cent, 1.12 per cent, 1.12 per cent, and 0.90 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Packaging, Oman Cement, Jazeera Steel Products, and Al Anwar Ceramics were down by 9.87 per cent, 2.54 per cent, 0.51 per cent, and 0.46 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,211.35	4,198.61	4,202.57	4,194.99	7.58	0.18
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,802.60	6,757.81	6,786.32	6,755.47	30.86	0.46
MSX TR INDEX	5,242.71	5,226.84	5,231.78	5,219.12	12.66	0.24
FINANCIAL TR IDX	6,981.50	6,935.53	6,964.79	6,933.12	31.67	0.4
SERVICES TR IDX	1,646.75	1,641.28	1,646.75	1,631.54	15.20	0.93
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,260.10	6,226.92	6,226.92	6,235.03	-8.11	-0.13
MSX SHARIAH INDEX	485.64	480.28	481.36	485.64	-4.28	-0.88
SERVICES INDEX	1,605.57	1,600.24	1,605.57	1,599.14	6.43	0.40
INDUSTRY INDEX	6,031.90	5,999.93	5,999.93	6,011.74	-11.80	-0.20

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
79,953,330	8,421,231	898	22,181,207,454	21	8	20	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

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
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,759,492	255,463	73	0.088	0.095	0.088	0.093	0.089	0.004	4.494	0.091	0.091	0.092	0.100	18,600,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	548,500	32,910	35	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.058	0.002	3.448	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	18,428,780
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	655,150	58,587	29	0.089	0.091	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.002	2.299	0.088	0.089	0.091	0.100	8,010,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	5,100	1,381	2	0.272	0.272	0.270	0.271	0.265	0.006	2.264	0.270	0.270	0.272	0.100	16,586,358
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	255,900	36,578	22	0.145	0.146	0.141	0.143	0.141	0.002	1.418	0.141	0.141	0.142	0.100	12,155,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	12,099,800	1,403,515	13	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.116	0.115	0.001	0.870	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	346,847,226
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	48,716	16,629	10	0.342	0.342	0.340	0.342	0.340	0.002	0.588	0.340	0.340	0.342	0.100	228,580,976
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,308,424	1,118,415	62	0.860	0.860	0.852	0.856	0.852	0.004	0.469	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.100	642,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	760	302	1	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.392	0.392	0.000	0.000	0.398	0.396	0.428	0.100	39,200,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	47,185	7,786	7	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.154	0.164	0.100	33,000,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	3,800	512	3	0.142	0.142	0.134	0.138	0.138	0.000	0.000	0.134	0.134	0.141	0.100	32,706,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	483,593	247,734	31	0.514	0.514	0.510	0.512	0.512	0.000	0.000	0.510	0.508	0.510	0.100	1,921,637,648
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,486	496	2	0.330	0.338	0.330	0.334	0.334	0.000	0.000	0.338	0.332	0.338	0.100	217,415,373
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	90,145	38,758	10	0.428	0.430	0.428	0.430	0.432	-0.002	-0.463	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.100	94,600,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	1,569,387	672,880	47	0.430	0.430	0.428	0.428	0.430	-0.002	-0.465	0.428	0.428	0.430	0.100	101,183,480
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	86,500	33,562	17	0.388	0.390	0.386	0.388	0.390	-0.002	-0.513	0.386	0.384	0.386	0.100	48,460,408
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	130,000	29,932	16	0.232	0.232	0.230	0.230	0.236	-0.006	-2.542	0.230	0.232	0.235	0.100	76,100,723
Total		17	20,093,938	3,955,440	380											

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
OM0000001301	DHOFAR CATTLE	5,277	335	2	0.063	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.060	0.003	5.000	0.064	0.065	0.063	0.100	5,093,550
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	1,101,640	104,198	63	0.094	0.096	0.093	0.095	0.091	0.004	4.396	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.100	3,189,288
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	1,729,551	145,730	72	0.084	0.087	0.082	0.084	0.081	0.003	3.704	0.082	0.082	0.083	0.100	10,237,500
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,292,067	260,997	41	0.198	0.202	0.198	0.202	0.196	0.006	3.061	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.100	328,441,164
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	620,431	92,774	23	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.150	0.146	0.004	2.740	0.150	0.146	0.150	0.100	11,328,300
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	94,547	11,627	9	0.126	0.126	0.122	0.123	0.120	0.003	2.500	0.122	0.122	0.126	0.100	205,337,430
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	106,473	8,798	8	0.081	0.083	0.081	0.083	0.081	0.002	2.469	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.100	79,229,472
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	47,758,867	3,207,550	61	0.090	0.093	0.064	0.093	0.091	0.002	2.198	0.093	0.090	0.095	0.100	32,470,430
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	46,506	4,638	13	0.099	0.102	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.002	2.041	0.101	0.096	0.102	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	400,000	34,000	5	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.001	1.190	0.085	0.082	0.087	0.100	21,986,253
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	469,932	42,415	28	0.097	0.097	0.088	0.090	0.089	0.001	1.124	0.090	0.089	0.090	0.100	11,250,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER.	4,073,565	367,093	73	0.090	0.091	0.088	0.090	0.089	0.001	1.124	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.100	18,268,780
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	10,000	1,120	3	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.001	0.901	0.112	0.100	0.112	0.100	13,440,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	1,004	114	1	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.114	0.119	0.100	238,037,222
OM0000001871	UBAR HOTELS	100	13	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.000	0.125	0.100	6,452,258
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK.	326	274	1	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.844	0.844	0.000	0.000	0.840	0.820	0.840	0.100	80,180,000
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SR	400	208	1	0.520	0.520	0.520	0.560	0.560	0.000	0.000	0.520	0.510	0.000	0.100	100,708,944
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	1,066,371	78,041	53	0.074	0.075	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.070	0.077	0.100	14,600,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,574	189	3	0.113	0.120	0.113	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.113	0.122	0.100	9,686,927
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	10,242	420	4	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.000	0.000	0.041	0.041	0.042	0.100	9,061,410
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	829,180	80,380	23	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	1,710	185	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.108	0.110	0.100	10,758,238
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	681	33	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.050	0.100	33,069,484
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	698	34	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	35,005,911
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	387	19	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	70,204,870
OM0000006912	AHLIA INSURANCE	100	33	1	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.302	0.302	0.000	0.000	0.332	0.306	0.332	0.100	30,200,000
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	4,893	559	2	0.114	0.116	0.114	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.100	18,043,846
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	200	20	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.090	0.098	0.100	19,400,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	157,000	14,601	14	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	16,275,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	13,900	598	2	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.044	-0.001	-2.273	0.043	0.040	0.048	0.100	8,584,331
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	51,670	5,942	2	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.118	-0.003	-2.542	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	344,580,415
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	10,100	2,858	4	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.314	-0.031	-9.873	0.283	0.283	0.285	0.100	9,179,348
Total		32	59,859,392	4,465,792	518											

COMMERCIAL SALES PROJECT

OMR18 million worth Elodea project launched in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Khalili Group and Tibiaan Properties recently announced the official launch of Elodea project on March 30 at Al Bustan Palace with the attendance of his Highness Fahr bin Fatik Al Said and Shaikh Qais bin Salim Al Khalili, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Khalili Group, and a number of officials and business owners.

Elodea is one of the largest commercial sales projects that have been announced in the Al Azaiba area in the capital, Muscat. It will include 164 shops that individuals and institutions can own and use for their own business or benefit from its returns. The investment value of the project is approximately OMR18 million.

The project will provide more than 600 parking spaces and will be an integrated market consisting of a ground floor only, according to the most preferred and growing patterns of shopping, making it a preferred destination for residents of the area to meet their needs.

On the occasion of the official inauguration of the project, Al-Khalili said, "The launch of the Elodea project comes after considering the need of the Omani market in general and the Azaiba region in particular for unique projects that enable individuals and institutions to achieve rewarding returns that meet their expectations. This project will represent a shrine and destination for shoppers and investors; both, after taking into account all the elements of interest to both parties.

Younes Al-Harassi, CEO of Tibiaan Properties said, "Elodea is a continuation of the distinguished projects offered by Tibiaan in cooperation with Al-Khalili Group. What makes this project unique is its premium location and the population in the area which will flourish the market and benefit the residents and the area visitors in general."

Al Harrasi added, "For individuals and investors, they can own shops in the Elodea and start or expand their businesses in a very lively area. Today, this project provides an ideal opportunity for many individuals to own shops in the heart of Azaiba at competitive prices that are not usually available in such areas. Therefore, we are happy to inaugurate this project first, and we are happier with the quality of the projects that we provide to our clients."

Elodea will be developed on a land area of more than 20,000 square metres, and the project will be presented according to the highest technical and aesthetic specifications, in addition to designing smooth exits and entrances for the project's visitors. Tibiaan Properties is a leading real estate company in sales and leasing, property management, valuations and advisory, marketing operations and is the exclusive sales agent for Elodea.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA offers training, job opportunities to students

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) offered a package of training programmes and employment opportunities during its participation in the Employment and Training Exhibition 2022 from March 28-30 organised by Sultan Qaboos University. This is an annual event for the government and private sector institutions to present employment and training opportunities for job seekers and students.

CMA takes part in the interactive event on employment and training opportunities to highlight its Omanisation initiatives and programmes in professions and positions in insurance companies and capital market institutions. CMA participated in Tamkeen initiative that aims at enhancing Omanisation in senior and medium managerial and operational positions further to introducing Taheel initiative for the graduates of accounting and finance for training in internal audit for one year coupled with employment during the training period.

CMA presented this year 33 long term training opportunities in insurance companies. The relevant specialisations are in the fields of law, management, information technology and accounting as part of an integrated plan to qualify the national cadres to enhance their skills and aptitude to be able to compete to take the best positions to achieve the targeted Omanisation ratios. On other hand, CMA avails the event to introduce to the graduates of accounting and finance its Taheel initiative for training as internal auditors for one year and assisting the trainees who successfully pass the final exam to obtain employment.

It is worth noting that the Tamkeen initiative contributed to increasing the Omanisation ratio to 82.8 per cent. Omanisation in operational roles increased to 88.78 per cent and in medium professional and managerial roles to 76.38 per cent from about 258 per cent in 2017.

Taheel initiative trained 26 graduates of finance and accounting in internal audit. Nineteen trainees obtained certification in internal audit and nine obtained employment in accounting and audit firms. Registration in the second batch will be announced by mid-year.

INDIAN EQUITIES

Sensex surges 740 points on signs of de-escalation in conflict

MUMBAI: The Indian equities markets benchmark Sensex surged by 740 points on Wednesday amid signs of de-escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The 30 stock S&P BSE Sensex soared 740.34 points or 1.28 per cent to close at 58,683.99 points against its previous day's close at 57,943.65 points. Tracking positive cues from the global equities markets, the Sensex started the day sharply higher at 58,362.85 points.

Buying interest got stronger later in the day. The Sensex surged to a high of 58,727.78 points in the intra-day.

This is the third consecutive day of rally in the Indian equities markets. The Sensex had gained 350.16 points or 0.61 per cent on Tuesday. The broader Nifty 50 of the National Stock Exchange surged 172.95 points or 1 per cent to 17,498.25 points against its previous day's close at 17,325.30 points.

The Nifty had gained 103.30 points or 0.6 per cent on Tuesday. The stocks markets have rallied across the world on signs of de-escalation in Russia-Ukraine conflict. Russia has said it will pull back troops from Kyiv and other northern areas of Ukraine. -ANI

LIFESTYLE

STARTING A GYM ROUTINE?

WHY YOU NEED TO PROTECT YOUR FEET

Starting a new fitness routine? Protecting your feet is critical. "'No pain, no gain' may be a motto for most workouts, but 'too much, too soon' can lead to foot and ankle injuries, which can sabotage fitness goals," says Jeffrey Loveland, a foot and ankle surgeon and Fellow Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

As you follow through on your goals, here's how to identify and treat common exercise-related foot problems, according to foot and ankle surgeons.

Playing through an ankle sprain can cause further damage to tendons, which may take much longer to heal or possibly require surgery. What's more, you may be overlooking a more serious injury. "Seek treatment for potentially-sprained ankles right away," says Dr. Loveland. "Untreated or repeated ankle sprains may lead to chronic ankle instability, a condition that causes persistent pain and a 'giving way' of the ankle."

A stress fracture may feel like an ankle sprain initially, but you'll also notice swelling without bruising, and pain during normal activities or when touching the area. If you experience these symptoms, have your foot and ankle evaluated.

Dr. Loveland explains it's best to seek treatment for pain or swelling around your Achilles tendon post-workout. Untreated Achilles tendonitis may worsen over time, leading to stiffness and fatigue in your injured leg, or even a ruptured tendon, which would require surgery and several months' rehabilitation.

If heel pain lasts more than one-two days or worsens when you stand after sitting for extended periods of time, you may have plantar fasciitis, a common overuse injury resulting from inflammation of the tissue extending from your heel to toes. If caught early, your foot and ankle surgeon can recommend at-home conditioning. In later stages, the problem is harder to treat and takes longer to resolve.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, according to foot and ankle surgeons, who offer these healthy tips:

Start gradually

Increase the length and intensity of workouts gradually to avoid overuse injuries. Stretch before and afterward.

Dress right

Dr. Loveland explains shoes that don't provide arch support or heel cushioning can cause plantar fasciitis, and shoes that are too small can cause a neuroma (a thickening of the nerve tissue), which may require injections, medication or physical therapy. Be sure to also stick to cotton or nonslip socks to avoid blisters.

Use good technique

Good form prevents injuries to tendons and ligaments. "Incorrect posture or misuse of equipment can decrease stabilisation in the foot and ankle, leading to joint sprains and muscle strains," Dr. Loveland says.

Avoid bacteria

The gym is a breeding ground for fungus, viruses and bacteria, including increasingly common, drug-resistant strains like MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). "Water shoes provide a barrier between your feet and locker room floors as well as pool decks. Cover cuts, cracks and ingrown toenails, since these areas can act as entry points for bacteria. If you have a red or swollen cut that isn't healing, have it examined," Dr. Loveland says.

Above all, seek the expertise of a foot and ankle surgeon at signs of injury or pain. To find one near you, use the "find a physician" search tool at FootHealthFacts.org.

Stay on track to crush your fitness goals by keeping your feet in tip-top shape. -BPT

ROUND-UP

Rafeeq SHOP NOW rafeeq.om

Apollo Super Speciality Hospital at Al Hail ready to serve people

The hospital has 80 rooms and with the soft launch, it will offer services across 25 specialities.
The facility has a dedicated preventive health centre and has a unique re-invent, COVID recovery clinic

MUSCAT: In an august gathering, V.T. Saileswaran announced the opening of the First Apollo Super Specialty Hospital in Al Hail, Muscat. This is a 10,000 square metres facility offering super speciality and subspecialty service with over 25 clinical departments.

The Apollo Hospitals Muscat has been serving the Sultanate of Oman for over 18 years and the new hospital is part of the group's focus to skew towards absolute super-speciality space.

Speaking at the soft launch ceremony, V.T Saileswaran expressed his profound gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his leadership and the vision for the people of Oman. He further thanked the authorities of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Manpower for their guidance and support.

Saileswaran explained the way disease profiles are changing and the need for the healthcare industry to fathom the need for increasing disease burden.

He stated that the Apollo Super Specialty will extend a patient-centric care plan and will have the best multinational clinical acumen to serve the patients.

He further remarked that the Apollo Hospitals Muscat family is reiterating its unfailing commitment to the people of Oman by expanding its clinical bandwidth with the underlying objective of reversing the outbound medical travel from the Sultanate.

He also announced free registration and consultation service for all Oman nationals throughout the Holy month of Ramadan.

Dr Waleed Al Zadjali, Medical Director of Apollo Group Muscat stated, "We have a combination of a highly specialised clinical team with the best infrastructure, technology and digital framework. We will benchmark our clinical outcomes with the best of the west and going forward we will publish our clinical scorecards too. We will also diversify in our healthcare journey. You would soon see us straddling the healthcare spectrum."

The hospital has 80 rooms and with the soft launch, it will offer services across 25 specialities. The facility has a dedicated preventive health centre and has a unique re-invent, COVID recovery clinic.

Apollo Muscat is one of the prominent private healthcare providers in the Sultanate of Oman with over 17 years of Service.

As a forerunner in Oman's private healthcare space, Apollo Hospitals Muscat has remained at the forefront of clinical excellence in Oman's private healthcare space. The group has international affiliations, corporate partnerships and is the first in Oman's private healthcare space to announce the first dedicated Diabetic care facility, the Apollo Sugar Clinic in Ruwi.

Today with Apollo Super Specialty, the group has two hospitals, a dedicated Sugar Clinic, and a neighbourhood clinic in Ghala. The group is in an expansion mode across the Sultanate and aims to be a healthcare powerhouse with Oman as its base for the Mena region.

PHARMACEUTICAL

Al Hashar Pharmacy celebrates 50 glorious years in healthcare

MUSCAT: Founded in 1972 with only a few employees, Al Hashar Pharmacy is today one of the leading pharmaceutical and wholesale distributors in the Sultanate of Oman catering to the people's healthcare needs.

Our 5 divisions are named after the constellations of the night sky. AURIGA and ORION division represents the sales and marketing team that conduct scientific sessions, seminars, round table discussions to disseminate technical information to the medical and pharmacy professions regularly.

AQUILA division specialises in offering a wide range of products including diagnostic solutions for clinical laboratories in the field of microbiology, clinical chemistry, haematology, immunology and the food industry. Equipment and reagents from reputed international manufacturers have been installed by Al Hashar Pharmacy LLC at various laboratories throughout Oman to assist clinicians in the accurate and timely diagnosis of patient ailments.

Phoenix division manages institutional business supplying high-quality affordable medicines to various government institutions. Cygnus Division is the retail pharmacies arm of Al Hashar Pharmacy LLC & Capital Pharmacy and has grown immensely with the operating network of 15 retail Pharmacies that are strategically located in key business centres across the country.

On this momentous 50th anniversary celebration, Al Hashar Pharmacy has unveiled its 50th-year logo and announced several commemorative events throughout the year.

The recently held 'Golden Jubilee Football Tournament' marked the official start of the anniversary celebrations. Members from across the organization participated in the event at the Bausher Football ground, a perfect display of comradeship and teamwork.

Shakeel Kazmi, Country Manager, Tabuk Pharmaceuticals, was the Chief Guest and Sachin Agrawal, COO of AlHashar Pharmacy, was the Guest of Honour.

"We have been associated with Al Hashar Pharmacy for more than 2 decades and on this special occasion my congratulation goes to the entire management and staff of Al Hashar Pharmacy," said Shakeel. He also wished many more glorious years for the organisation.

"Sports is a preserver of health and it's a great start of 50 years celebration with a sporting event like a football match. It resonates with our motto of providing consistent quality in healthcare," added Sachin Agrawal, the COO of Al Hashar Pharmacy LLC.

After an exciting 3-hour match with four competitive teams, one emerged victoriously and held the winning trophy."It was the team spirit and passion for play that led the team to victory", said the Winning Team Captain.

The Golden Jubilee Football Tournament was sponsored by M/s Tabuk Pharmaceuticals, our main sponsor and supporting Sponsor - M/s Saja Pharmaceutical, M/s ITROM, M/s Cipla, M/s Evapharma, M/s Horiba and M/s Amira – Masculan.

PATRIOTIC

Pakistan School Muscat celebrates Pakistan Day

MUSCAT: Pakistan Day celebrations took place at Pakistan School Muscat on 23 March. The flag hoisting ceremony was conducted in PSM Hall.

Muhammad Imran Ali Chaudhry, the Ambassador of Pakistan hoisted the flag along with the Defence Attache, members of the Board of Directors and other dignitaries and also addressed the audience to highlight the significance of Pakistan Day.

A large number of students, parents and community members participated in the ceremony and celebrated Pakistan Day with great zeal and zest to commemorate the true essence of this glorious day. The students projected a sense of patriotism through national songs, tableaus, plays and the display of national dresses. The ceremony ended up with the cake cutting norm and the prayer for peace and prosperity of the country.

Nations are recognised by their historic assets. Alive nations never forget their glorious moments which are found in their past dates. 'Pakistan Day' is a momentous milestone in the history of Pakistan as it occupies a significant place to stir the sense of patriotism into the hearts and souls of the Pakistani people. March 23 is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the 'Pakistan Resolution'. The nation commemorates it with great zeal and enthusiasm to honour the most outstanding achievement, resulting in the creation of Pakistan under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

A large number of students, parents and community members participated in the ceremony and celebrated Pakistan Day with great zeal and zest

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Scratch and win Kia Seltos SUV

The Seltos combines forward-looking technical features, class-leading space and a suite of world-class safety features, and is powered by a highly-efficient Smartstream petrol engine

MUSCAT: Buy your favourite Kia Seltos SUV and get a rewarding opportunity to scratch and win 2 Kia at one time.

Additional scratch & win prizes include, win your purchased Kia back, Win all-new Sportage, win up to 20 per cent on display price, win periodic service up to 100,000 km and VAT is on us. The campaign is valid until 1st May, 2022. (Conditions apply. Please visit Kia showroom for details.)

The Seltos combines forward-looking technical features, class-leading space and a suite of world-class safety features, and is powered by a highly-efficient Smartstream petrol engine. It offers distinctive exterior design details, such as its long hood, a strong, character line on the front bumper, and sharp lines pressed into the bodywork. It also sports a wide 'tiger nose grille', making the car instantly recognizable as a Kia, but with a difference. Seltos is equipped with intricate and sharply designed full LED headlights and taillights, providing the car with a commanding and confident presence on the road. For daytime driving, the car also has LED daytime running lights and rear lamps, and 3D multi-layer indicators to make it clear exactly where the Seltos is heading. For driving in foggy conditions, the car is also equipped with LED fog lights.

The interior of the Seltos is impressive. The cabin is characterized by broad, sweeping shapes and highly technical details and is equipped with a range of technologies to maximize convenience, connectivity and ease of use.

Powering the Seltos is a 1.6-liter gasoline engine producing 121 HP paired to a six-speed automatic transmission (6AT). To further elevate the driving experience, the Seltos is equipped with a Drive Mode Select system that lets drivers adapt the car to their preferred style or the road conditions. Drivers can choose from 'Normal', 'Eco' and 'Sport' mode. The Eco mode is tuned to maximize vehicle range by using fuel-saving measures, while Sport mode increases responses from the steering and electric motor to maximize the dynamic driving feel of the car. Normal mode provides a careful balance between the two.

The Seltos is a technologically advanced and refined compact SUV equipped with a range of advanced features. They include a Smart Key with Button Start, Auto Cruise Control, Terrain Mode System (Snow, Mud, Sand) & Electronic Stability Program (ESP).

The Seltos is fitted with dual airbags, as well as a suite of electronic vehicle safety systems. These include Kia's Vehicle Stability Management system as standard, incorporating traction control and electronic stability program. It also includes Anti-lock Braking System, a Traction Control System as well as front and rear parking sensors, for assistance when parking. 17" Alloy Wheels are standard.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way. No wonder then that Reliable International Automotive has been ranked amongst the top Kia distributors worldwide and has been honoured with prestigious accolades including the 'Good Partnership award, 'Family Like Care' Service award', and 'Kia 'Distributor of Distinction' award.

PARTICIPATION

Bank Muscat extends strong support to Al Ahad Al Mashreq Shooting Championship

MUSCAT: In line with its strong commitment to promoting Omani heritage and culture and extending strong support to various sporting, cultural and social events, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, participated in the successful organisation of Al Ahad Al Mashreq Shooting Championship recently.

The competition for traditional Omani weaponry was held at the shooting range in Nakhl in the Governorate of South Batinah from 22-26th March 2022 and saw an excellent turnout of over 1,440 shooters representing the Sultanate's different governorates. Salem bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, was the chief guest at the event. He handed over prizes to the winners in the presence of a number of Their Excellencies, Sheikh Waleed K. Al Hashar, the Chief Executive Officer of Bank Muscat, several sheikhs as well as large numbers of fans of traditional sports.

Bank Muscat is always at the forefront of participating in and supporting various activities and events, which further promote and preserve Oman's traditional heritage and culture. As the Sultanate's leading financial services provider, Bank Muscat seeks to utilise opportunities in reaching out to people and familiarising them with the country's heritage and traditions. Over the last four decades, Bank Muscat has been keenly providing and launching new cutting-edge financial products and services for the benefit of the people in the Sultanate.

Bank Muscat focuses on a long-term strategy that aims to provide benefits to the community and the nation. The Bank is particularly committed to developmental and social responsibilities within the framework of partnership and support to all segments of society and actively seeks to set an example in Public-Private Partnership. As part of this commitment, Bank Muscat has contributed to the success of various sporting events including the annual Sayyid Abbas Golf Tournament, which is one of the most well-known tournaments in Oman. The Bank has also been a constant supporter of the Muscat International Book Fair including the 2022 edition. Earlier, the Bank also participated in Comex 2021 by extending support to the Banking and Financial Technology (Fintech) corner and co-sponsored the Frankincense Project at Expo 2020.

UNIQUE MODEL

Maserati Grecale Fuoriserie: A special order from Mars

MODENA: Maserati is breaking the rules and fulfilling an order from Mars. Grecale Mission from Mars is the result that goes beyond the boundaries of the Earth.

A special Maserati for a special customer. Innovative by nature, Maserati has chosen the Fuoriserie Programme to create a unique model.

Maserati Fuoriserie is a blank slate and the brand is offering a wide range of designs and colours for it. The rest falls to the inspiration of individual customers (Martians too!), who are given the opportunity to take on the stance of a trendsetter and to express their personal creativity. The Mission from Mars has begun and the options to customise Grecale are pushed to their absolute limit.

The red dust of the planet Mars and its oxidised rocks cross-fertilise Grecale Mission from Mars: a special textured metallic is paint inspired by mineral dust and metal erosion is used on components inside and out.

The exteriors are painted in Galactic Orange, a Fuoriserie interpretation of the bodywork in a multi-layered colour. Its highly liquid base is reminiscent of molten metal, on top of an intense, futuristic and almost frosted orange-red resin. To complete the exterior, Grecale Mission from Mars features special Vortex Wheels.

Not a mere customisation of the wheel rim from a chromatic perspective, but a genuine retelling of the mechanical processing of the material itself; its removal leaves behind a vortex design, recalling the displacement of air caused by start-up and travelling at speed.

The raw surface is protected by a transparent topcoat of black ink. Conversely, the grey of the tyres is made from a special blend dedicated to the planet Mars.

The badges are specific and the trident on the C-pillar merges into the bodywork, giving it a 2D aspect, in larger proportions than usual. The design of the Trident logo has been revisited with a glitch effect, both symbolising the rhythm of the waves and information incoming from outer space, and bringing to mind the feeling of movement at very high speed. The mirror effect is similar to a solar lens, here embedded in the dark orange of the bodywork.

E.T. may have phoned home with his finger, but all it takes in the Grecale Mission from Mars is a tap on the 12.3" screen, the largest ever seen in a Maserati, for an all-encompassing experience inside the car and out, all the way to another planet.

"Connectivity with outer space" is not the only feature to assist with a journey beyond the boundaries of the Earth: intergalactic motorists can find a special "star chart" right on the ceiling. Just look up to see a projection of the main constellations, ideal to transport yourself into spaces left out from most standard atlases.

After setting up your route, all you need to do is enjoy the journey, courtesy of Grecale's best-in-class versatility and its interior: the seats act as the perfect pairing of a design inspired by the electric currents on Mars with astronauts' spacesuits and the latest trends in fashion, bringing together craftsmanship and innovation. The design elements are reinterpreted with an innovative flair. Not only mere graphics, but also know-how, transformed through curiosity and openness to stimuli from the beauty of the future with the details lying in the colours and materials, filtered through the characteristic style of Maserati.

Technology reigns in the cabin in terms of the upholstery too: the car's interior uses transverse lasering with a contrasting multi-coloured welded backing, taping, silicone coatings, embossing and debossing on leather, and leverages automotive materials such as Alcantara and leather.

The boldest journey through outer space takes off from Mars and lands in Milan, where the special one-off Maserati will be unveiled at an exclusive evening event, the epitome of the everyday exceptional. Grecale Mission from Mars is projecting Maserati forward into the future, as a bold synthesis of avant-garde, passion and unbounded customisation, made possible by Fuoriserie.

ROUND-UP

Rafeeq SHOP NOW rafeeq.om

Experience 'Layali Ramadan' at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel

Combining stunning natural surroundings and lavish interiors, the palatial resort is the perfect setting for making magical memories

MUSCAT: Capturing the true spirit of the holy month, Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel is celebrating with a collection of authentic Ramadan dining experiences designed to bring families and friends together, with 'Layali Ramadan'.

Combining stunning natural surroundings and lavish interiors, the palatial resort is the perfect setting for making magical memories. Indulge in a traditional Iftar, breaking fast in festive style, and ease into the early morning hours with a leisurely Suhur by the shore.

From delectable menus to entertaining events, Ritz Kids fun and night time glitter, the joyful season is always a grand affair at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Celebrate Iftar at Al Khiran Kitchen, where local and international cuisine is served in a five-star setting. An exuberant buffet is available to take guests on a culinary journey of delight, with live entertainment and mouthwatering stations that showcase the best the season has to offer. Move into the latter part of the evening for the ultimate, chic Suhur at The Pavilion. The beautiful beach restaurant will play host to scenic views, delectable dishes, as well as festive fun from shisha and henna to palm reading. Whether an intimate meal or a social soiree, Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel has all the elements to provide guests and visitors with an unforgettable Ramadan experience.

Tucked away between the rugged Al Hajar mountain range and the Gulf of Oman, Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel is a hidden jewel amongst luxury hotels and one of the world's most sought-after destinations. The stunning beachfront retreat welcomes guests with customs steeped in ancient traditions and contemporary comforts. From private balconies in each of its 250 renovated guest rooms and suites, guests can gaze upon magnificent mountain, sea or garden views.

They are invited to relax on the resort's large stretch of pristine beach, enjoy a range of recreational activities including watersports and tennis, rejuvenate at Al Bustan Palace Spa By The Ritz-Carlton, or indulge in a distinctive dining experience at one of the hotel's four restaurants. Perfect for couples, business guests and families alike, the palatial resort provides all the ingredients that will stir memories for a lifetime.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, of Chevy Chase, MD., part of Marriott International, Inc., currently operates more than 100 hotels and over 45 residential properties in 30 countries and territories. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Marriott International, Inc. (NASDAQ:MAR).

The Ritz-Carlton is proud to participate in Marriott Bonvoy, the new name of Marriott's travel program replacing Marriott Rewards®, The Ritz- Carlton Rewards®, and Starwood Preferred Guest® (SPG). The program offers members an extraordinary portfolio of global brands, experiences on Marriott Bonvoy Moments and unparalleled benefits including earning points toward free hotel stays and nights toward Elite status recognition.

NEW ACCOUNT

Multiply your money with ahlibank's daily multiplier account 'Wafra plus'

MUSCAT: Amplifying its mission to create unrivalled avenues that meet customer needs, ahlibank has introduced the 'Daily Multiplier Account', called Wafra plus, which will provide its new and existing customers with an exclusive opportunity to multiply their money – everyday.

With 24X7 cash management via digital channels or branch networks, customers will not only enjoy unlimited transactions but also supplement their savings with the addition of competitive benefits that are compounded and paid each day. Accordingly, benefits will be made available as a withdrawal or compounded benefits in customers' accounts.

"The new account has been devised as a platform to secure and build our customers' savings accounts. Simply put, it will multiply their money on a daily basis, allowing them to earn bonus benefits. This is a significant landmark in our strong growth trajectory, and it reflects our commitment to creating and implementing products and services that are truly relevant to our customers.

"We believe in engaging with our customers across various platforms to assess their changing requirements and, accordingly, incentivize our products to match their pulse and financial attitudes," said Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution.

The 'Daily Multiplier Account, Wafra plus', launched under ahlibank's popular brand name 'Wafra', will allow ahlibank customers to earn benefits, on daily basis.

"Designed as a convenient and easy to maintain service, it will enhance customers' financial strengths with not just the provision of unlimited withdrawals, but the inherent savings culture it promotes. The prefix of 'Daily' on the product reflects the Bank's intent to integrate the concept of financial competency among its customers, who now stand to earn more on a daily basis.

Highlighting ahlibank's quest to constantly upgrade its products and services, Muneer Al Balushi added, "Our cadre of responsive managers and professionals are attuned to the market trends and rely on constructive feedback from our customers to conceptualize and implement innovative products that reflect the changing environment. Besides, every customer is different and, as an institution of excellence, we know the importance of tailoring products that cater to specific segments of society. We believe innovation is the key to progress and our 'Daily Multiplier Account' is symbolic of that growth. We urge our account holders and potential customers to avail this exclusive opportunity to build their finances and enjoy the peace and security that it entails."

PLATINUM SPONSOR

Oxy Oman concludes participation in Oman Petroleum & Energy Show

MUSCAT: Oxy Oman representatives concluded their participation in the Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES), where the company featured as a platinum sponsor.

The three-day event was held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre and was inaugurated by His Highness Sayyid Taimur bin Asaad bin Tariq al Said, Chairman of the Central Bank of Oman Board of Governors. Stephen Kelly, President and General Manager of Oxy Oman attended the opening event along with other senior representatives of the company.

Oxy Oman representatives took part in the Exhibition section of OPES, as well as the Technical Conference that was organised by the Society of Petroleum Engineers, with the theme 'Shaping the Future of the Energy Industry'.

At the technical conference, Oxy Oman representatives discussed the company's global technological innovations, including its Direct Air Capture (DAC) technology, as well as its long-term investments to achieve net-zero emissions. Visitors to the Oxy Oman stand at the exhibition were briefed on the company's technologies, achievements with In-Country Value and social responsibility initiatives, as well as its local and international operations.

"The Oman Petroleum & Energy Show highlights the Sultanate's profile and achievements in the Energy sector, and we're proud of Oxy's continuous presence and support at the conference as we highlight our industry-leading operations and technologies. OPES serves as an important platform for knowledge exchange among professionals in the global energy industry on important developments and strategies within the sector, and key challenges and solutions for the future," said Kelly.

This sponsorship falls under Oxy Oman's umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders and is part of Oxy Oman's endeavour and long-term commitment to support programs that enhance economic growth and sustainable development and that yield a positive impact in the neighbouring communities.

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