

SQU HOSPITAL USES TAMIS TO SAVE PATIENT'S LIFE

A medical team from Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) has applied a new method of surgical technology, TAMIS, for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman and saved the life of a cancer patient. **>A5**



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OMAN, IRAN EXPLORE AREAS OF TRADE, ECONOMIC COOPERATION

MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion received yesterday Seyyed Reza Fatemi Amin, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade of Iran. The meeting highlighted projects of economic diversification that are ready for investment. It also reviewed areas of trade and economic cooperation. The meeting also explored ways of boosting trade exchange to increase the entry of goods and services between the two countries. **>A6**



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HM TO VISIT GERMANY ON THURSDAY



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a private visit this Thursday to the Federal Republic of Germany. A statement was issued on Tuesday by the Diwan of Royal Court, reading as follows: "His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a three-day private visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, with effect from this Thursday, 10 February 2022. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan wherever he might be and grant him continued good health and wellbeing!". **—ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
February sees sharp rise in COVID cases



1 The Sultanate of Oman has recorded a steep rise in the COVID-19 infections during February ever since the pandemic began. In the first eight days of the month, as many as 42 deaths were recorded. **>A3**

WORLD
Philippines election campaign begins

2 The 3-month campaign season ahead of the Philippines presidential election began on Tuesday with the son of Ferdinand Marcos leading in opinion polls. **>A6**

MARKET
Pact signed for new industrial salt factory

3 Raysut Industrial City has signed an pact with Sahari Qatbeet to set up a factory for industrial salt production with an Omani-Emirati partnership. **>B1**

OMICRON CAN SPREAD TO OTHERS IN JUST 15 SECONDS

The distance during conversation is crucial to the spread of the infection: WHO official

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People should not take the Omicron variant of COVID-19 lightly, as it can infect healthy people in just 15 seconds.

According to Dr Jean Jabbour, the WHO representative to Oman, the distance at which two people stand and converse is crucial to the spread of the infection. If one of them is infected and gets closer to a healthy person than what is recommended, the risk is great.

Coronavirus variants

"If we are at a distance at which verbal communication is possible, this might transmit the virus to a healthy person within 15 seconds," he explained. "This is why we insist on applying the public health measures, so that we can live with the virus, and live with its mutating variants, because this is important."

"When it comes to viruses, it is important for every individual to know that there will be variants, and there will be a lot of mutations," he said. "The characteristics, spread, infectivity and the severity of the virus differs between one variant and the other. Omicron, just like the Delta variant, is classified as a Variant of Concern, because they spread so quickly



Tune in to T TV for the full interview

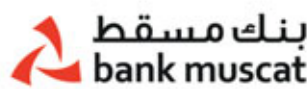
SPEAKING TO T TV, JEAN JABBOUR MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS FAR FROM OVER

far from over, despite some people thinking otherwise.

"When there is a variant, and there is a quick spread, this does not mean we are reaching the end of the pandemic," he revealed. "With viruses, this might happen. It is very premature to say that Omicron is the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the wrong perspective, and this is what makes the community ignore the simple health measures."

Increasing incidence

"When this happens, numbers will increase again, you will have more admissions to hospitals, more admissions to intensive care units and more deaths," Jabbour says. "Please take the measures seriously and apply them... even at family gatherings, not just in commercial places or in public areas," Jabbour said. **>A4**



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42 DEATHS IN 8 DAYS

Covid spread at its fastest so far in February

Times News Services

MUSCAT: The Sultanate recorded the highest rate of COVID-19 infections since the start of the pandemic during February. In the first eight days of the month, 42 deaths were recorded. Ibrahim Al-Maimani, data analyst and social activist, said “the Sultanate logged 18,000 new cases in the first 8 days of February, with a daily average of 2,253. Over the entire month in January, there were 33,272 new cases at an average of 1,073 per day. Thus, the daily rate in February is the highest since the start of

the pandemic.” “In the first 8 days of February, the Sultanate recorded a recovery of 14,597 patients at a rate of 1,825 recoveries per day. In January, there were 14,733 recoveries at a daily average of 475 per day,” Al Maimani added. According to data, the number of active cases also increased to 22,965 an In February, the number of inpatients in hospitals also continued to rise. At the beginning of February, there were 326 such cases rising to 409 cases yesterday. This is an increase of 83 cases at a rate of 25%. As for intensive care cases,

their number also increased. At the beginning of February, there were just 52 cases which rose to 69 yesterday, an increase of 33%. Forty-two deaths were recorded in the eight days of February whereas the total number of deaths in January was 30. In December, there were just 3 deaths. Al Maimani said: “As for the hospitalisation cases during the last 24 hours, a significant increase was observed. Over 100 cases were recorded during the first four 4 days of this month. This naturally affected the number of inpatients and the patients in ICU and deaths,” he said.

74TH INDEPENDENCE DAY OF SRI LANKA

Envoy plants Sri Lankan fruit sapling in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A Sri Lankan fruit sapling called “wood apple fruit” (Kaith fruit) was planted by the country’s Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman Ameer Ajwad at the Directorate General of Agricultural and Animal Research, Rumais, Barka in Muscat. The envoy planted the sapling on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day of Sri Lanka which was celebrated on 4th February 2022. Wood apple is a Citrus fruit tree (Kaith tree) grown in Sri Lanka. It has many health and nutritional benefits. It is rich in fibre and helps improves digestion. It is also a rich source of protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins B & C which help fortify the immune system. Ambassador Ameer Ajwad together with his spouse Asmiya Ameer Ajwad planted the Sri Lankan fruit sapling in the presence of Director of Date Palm and Plant Production Centre of Oman Dr. Saif bin Ali Al-khamisi, Head of the West Asia Department of the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Shanfari and the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources of the Sultanate of



Oman. First Secretary of the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Muscat Dilini Abeysekara was also present on the occasion. Speaking at the event, Ambassador Ameer Ajwad said that Sri Lanka and Oman have huge potential in agriculture cooperation and that he looked forward to work for further enhancement of this cooperation between the two countries in the days ahead.

He also extended his sincere appreciation to the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources of the Sultanate of Oman for making special arrangements to plant the Sri Lankan fruit sapling in the Directorate General of Agricultural and Animal Research of Oman to mark the 74th anniversary of Sri Lanka’s Independence.

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- EUS: Diagnostic & Therapeutic
- Spyglass Cholangioscopy
- GERDx: Endoscopic Treatment for Acid Reflux
- TIF: Transoral Intraluminal Fundoplication
- 24HR PH Metry and Manometry

التخصصات

- تنظير المعدة، التشخيصي والعلاجي
- تنظير القولون، التشخيصي والعلاجي
- استئصال القولون
- وحدة نزيف الجهاز الهضمي - 24 ساعة
- بالونات المعدة لفقدان الوزن
- تكويم المعدة بالمنظار
- استئصال العشاء المخاطي بالمنظار
- التنظير الداخلي للمعدة
- التنظير الداخلي بالمنظار
- تشريح تحت المخاطية بالمنظار
- التنظير البطني الوراثي الصفراوي والبنكرياسي
- الموجات فوق صوتية بالمنظار
- التشخيصي والعلاجي
- علاج الارتجاع المعوي بالمنظار
- قياس الحمض والضغط المريئي
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3,229 VIEWS



Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video had 3,229 views and 219 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

2,600 VIEWS



MIDDAY UPDATE

The MIDDAY UPDATE video had 2,600 views and reached 9,200 people on Facebook.

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Industry Day: Private sector told to work for diversification



MUSCAT: The Industry Day celebrations serve to both highlight the incentives and motivate the industrial sector to work for economic diversification in the Sultanate of Oman.

While observing this, Eng. Rida Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), pointed out that the private sector was a partner in stimulating economic growth in the Sultanate. It was to underline this partnership that the Omani Industry Day coincided with the announcement of the Economic Stimulus Plan that included many incentives relating to taxes, im-

proving business environment, investments and support to small and medium enterprises.

He clarified that the 72 investment opportunities had been offered to the industrial sector that served as incentives to the private sector to contribute to the development of national industries.

He added that the role of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry was to extend support to the private sector and enable it to contribute to industrial growth. It did so, he explained, by studying the legislations, regulations, plans and policies relating to the industrial sector and acquainting competent authorities with the

suggestions and recommendations received. The chamber also studied and researched the problems and issues received from the industrialists, the draft laws relating to the industrial sector and proposing appropriate solutions in this regard, he said adding that it also conducted field visits to industrial projects to identify their problems.

He further added that the Chamber's role in supporting the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman also includes promoting the national product through organising and holding exhibitions of Omani products abroad and finding suitable ways to provide support for the industrial projects in order

to enhance the national products' ability to compete with similar foreign products.

The OCCI also encourages the industrialists to adhere to the approved standard specifications prescribed by the competent authorities, with regard to resources or exports and product quality in order to enhance the national products' ability to compete, he explained.

Eng. Rida affirmed that protecting the common interests of the industrial sector and representing Oman in local, Gulf, Arab and international conferences, seminars, meetings and conferences related to the industry is a part of the Chamber's interests. **-OMA**

THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT PRESENTS

OMAN WORLD FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL WITH PERFORMERS FROM OMAN, COSTA RICA, BASHKORTOSTAN AND POLAND



Performing artists from Oman and across the world will present their unique folk traditions at this spectacular annual festival over two nights. Singers, dancers, poets and musicians will present the unique traditions of their various regions. In hosting this wonderful array of talent, Oman embraces the diversity of cultures and celebrates the remarkable artistry and beauty of folk music.

In this, the 2022 season festival, ensembles from Costa Rica, Poland and Bashkortostan have been invited to perform. Each visiting group represents the important cultural history of their country and is proud to demonstrate these traditions. Folk traditions are shared from generation to generation, adapt to include new cultural references without losing their

authenticity. Each performance is a snapshot into the heritage of a different culture, performed with vibrant costumes, spectacular dances, joyful expression and a deep sense of national pride.

The Oman World Folk Music Festival will take place at the Royal Opera: House of Musical Arts making use of the open-air Seafont Maidan. The festival demonstrates the Royal Opera House Muscat's promotion of the national musical heritage of Oman and support for musical ensembles of the world.

All visits to the Opera House are conducted under the guidelines of the Supreme Committee responsible for measures to tackle the development of COVID-19. Social distancing is maintained throughout the building and the wearing of facemasks is mandatory.



WHO REPRESENTATIVE

Omicron can spread to others in just 15 seconds

<FROM A1

"Every family member goes out, so we do not know their level of exposure to the virus," Jabbour added.

The WHO Representative to Oman explained that applying simple measures such as wearing a mask, cleaning one's hands and maintaining social distancing at home, will prevent family members from getting infected and will help in decreasing case numbers.

"That will help us go back to a decreasing trend," he said. "In case numbers continue increasing, then the government will be obliged to apply stricter measures and we will go back to the measures during the previous waves. We don't want to reach that stage, so this is in the hands of every individual in the community."

However, while infection numbers continue to rise in Oman and around the world, fuelled by

the Omicron variant, Jabbour explained that crucially, countries' healthcare systems have not been overwhelmed like they were during the Delta wave.

"Let us take this in two directions: Firstly, we are not different from the global trend. If you look at a local perspective, we went from a few cases and zero deaths to thousands of cases," he said. "But look at it from the impact on the health system. Look at what was happening during

the previous cycle... what was happening to the health system in terms of healthcare, in terms of admissions and in terms of ICU numbers and what is happening now."

Since the start of 2022, Oman's COVID infection rate has climbed steadily, from 122 positive infections on Saturday, 1 January to 2,303 on 8 February. During this period, the number of people in hospitals has risen from 14 to 409. Similarly, inten-

sive care patients have increased from just four to 69.

As of 8 February, 2022, 356,900 people in Oman have tested positive for the coronavirus. Of them, 329,747 have recovered. Unfortunately, 4,188 lost their battle with COVID.

Covid-19 infection rates

Globally, COVID-19 infection rates have doubled from about 10.084 million infections on 2 January, 2022, to 20.2 million

on 6 February, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre.

"If I have thousands of cases, it means people are not applying the measures properly," he explained. "If I protect myself, I am protecting my surroundings and I am protecting the community. I am helping the government as well in reducing the cost of this pandemic and supporting other medical public health programmes that must not stop," he added.



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MEETINGS

CANCER PATIENT

Royal Office Minister receives envoys of Iraq, the Netherlands



MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received yesterday Qais Sa'ad Al Amiri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman.

The ambassador lauded Oman's role in enhancing cooperation to achieve the joint interests of the two countries.

The meeting also discussed several matters of common concern.

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office also received Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Sultanate of Oman.

The two sides reviewed the march of relations between the two countries and exchanged views on joint fields of cooperation.

-ONA



SQUH uses TAMIS, saves patient's life

MUSCAT: A medical team from Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) has applied a new method of surgical technology, TAMIS, for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman and saved the life of a cancer patient.

TAMIS (transanal minimally invasive surgery) is a modern, specialised technology using endoscope for detecting and removing rectal tumours, with resort to surgery. The advantage of TAMIS is that it often spares the patient the need to go for full scale rectum surgery via the abdominal cavity. It is used for spotting and treating benign tumors, as well as malignant diseases of the rectum.

The SQUH figures among few Middle East hospitals where TAMIS is available.

-ONA

TWO-DAY MEETING

Oman, EU officials hold talks

MUSCAT: The 2nd meeting of senior officials between the Sultanate of Oman and the European Union (EU) on the level of technical work teams began at the general diwan of the Foreign Ministry here yesterday.

The two-day meeting comes within the framework of the co-operation arrangement agreement, signed in 2018 between the Foreign Ministry and the EU's External Action Service (EEAS).

The Omani side during the meeting was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, the ministry's Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs while the European side was headed by Carl Hallergard, Director for the Middle East and North Africa in EEAS.

The meeting covered topics related to the joint cooperation between Oman and the EU in various fields.

-ONA



OCCI



Oman-Iran forum explores investment opportunities

MUSCAT: The Oman-Iran Business Forum, organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), discussed investment opportunities incentives provided by the Sultanate of Oman to investors as part of a media initiative launched by the OCCI.

The forum is convened on the sidelines of the current visit of an Iranian trade delegation to Oman under the auspices of Eng. Mohsin Zarabi, Chairman of the Oman-Iran Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Eng. Ridha Jumaa Al Saleh, Chairman of the OCCI, said that commercial exchange between Oman and Iran by the end of June 2020 stood at \$306,043,454. The figure comprises Omani exports worth \$175,207,219 and Iranian imports of \$130,836,260.

He described the opportunities made available in sectors of Oman Vision 2040 as promising and capable of opening vistas for firms operating in the sectors of industry, mining, food security and health. In his turn, Eng. Dhrabailaid emphasis on the importance of promoting economic ties and augmenting the volume of commercial exchange to serve the interests of the two countries.

He added that such meetings assume significance for the rapprochement of views among companies from both sides.

The forum saw the screening of visual displays, notably about the industrial estates in Sohar, Salalah, Al Mazayouna and the Special Economic Zone in Duqm and the advantages offered by the strategic location of each estate. The two sides mulled the conclusion of pacts and partnerships to help expand bilateral cooperation.

-ONA

MARITIME SECURITY CENTRE

Gen. Nadeem Raza visits MSC

MUSCAT: Gen. Nadeem Raza, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSCS) of Pakistan today visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

Upon the guest's arrival, he was received by Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), Head of the Maritime Security Committee and Commodore Mohammed Hamoud Al Zadjali, Head of the MSC.

The guest toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies that are used to achieve its national duties. He was also briefed on the roles and tasks carried out by the centre in preserving the marine environment in the regional waters.

-ONA



BILATERAL RELATIONS

Foreign Minister meets Iran Minister

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received here yesterday Seyyed Reza Fatemi Amin, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade of Iran.

The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations and spheres of cooperation between the two countries. They also underscored their keenness in boosting cooperation to achieve the joint interests for the good of the two countries' people.

-ONA



CONSULTATIONS

Oman, Poland to boost relations

MUSCAT: A session of political consultations was held between the Foreign Ministries of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Poland.

The Omani side was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, while the Polish side was headed by Pawel Jablonski, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two sides discussed the relations and ways of enhancing them. They also exchanged views on regional and international situations.

-ONA





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Sultanate of Oman
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إعلان

Announcement

The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology declares to the owner of (BAHAR AL ARAB 1) wooden boat holding the Sri Lankan flag, which is abandoned offshore near Khor Najd area in wellayat Khasab, Governorate of Musandam, the immediate removal of the said ship within a week from this announcement. In case of non-compliance within the stated period above, the Ministry shall take legal action stated in the law regulating maritime navigation in the territorial waters promulgated by Royal Decree No.98/1981.



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ELECTION SEASON

Presidential candidates begin campaigning in Philippines

MANILA: The three-month campaign season ahead of the Philippines presidential election kicked off on Tuesday with the son and namesake of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos leading in polls to succeed President Rodrigo Duterte. The strong support shown for Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr has sparked concern among proponents of human rights and democracy.

Francisco Moreno
Current Vice President Leni Robredo is trailing in second place, ahead of actor-turned-mayor of Manila, Francisco Moreno Domagoso, champion boxer Manny Pacquiao and former chief of police Panfilo Lacson.

The election season will also see the vice president separately elected, along with half of the 24-seat Senate.

Has Duterte endorsed any candidate?
Duterte is barred from running for a second six-year term. He had backed his loyal aid Senator Christopher Go as his successor but Go has since pulled out of the race.



POLL CAMPAIGN: Marcos Jr has previously held a seat in the senate but failed in his bid to become vice president in the last election. -DW

He has not yet endorsed any other candidate, saying they are all “my friends.” He had previously described Marcos Jr as “weak.” Nevertheless, Duterte’s daughter Sara is standing as Marcos Jr’s vice-presidential running mate — although the vice president is elected separately.

“The overwhelming presidential favourite remains Marcos,” Eurasia Group analyst Peter Mumford told AFP, giving him “70 percent odds” of winning. “Many of Duterte’s ‘pro-authoritarian’ supporters see Marcos as the continuity ‘strongman’ candidate,” Mumford added.

The second most popular candidate, Robredo, beat Marcos in 2016 for the vice presidency, but she has so far failed to win over supporters who often vote based on personality rather than policy.

The Marcos family legacy
The older Marcos ruled the Philippines with a brutality that saw widespread human rights abuses with the killing and torture of thousands of people and the targeting of minorities and suspected communists, while his family grew rich by plundering the country’s wealth. Marcos Jr’s rise to power would mark a return for the controversial family after the dictator was forced to flee into exile in the US in 1986 following an army-backed “people power” uprising. The candidate has defended his father’s legacy citing economic growth and playing down the human rights abuses. Due to coronavirus restrictions limiting carnivalesque campaigning parties, Marcos has pursued a successful social media program. Many of his supporters are too young to remember the violence enacted by his father’s regime. -DW

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COVID-19 CURBS

Hong Kong limits public gatherings to 2 people

HONG KONG: Hong Kong on Tuesday announced stricter COVID-19 curbs by limiting public gatherings to two people. It also closed sites like churches and hair salons as the financial hub struggles to contain a recent outbreak of the virus. Extending existing social distancing measures to February 24, Hong Kong’s leader Carrie Lam said the best option was to adhere to the “dynamic zero” strategy being used by mainland China to clamp down on all coronavirus outbreaks as soon as possible. “We should contain the spread

of the virus as much and as fast as possible,” she said. “We need your support, we need your cooperation. You only need to stay at home.” Existing social distancing measures include a ban on dining in restaurants after 6 p.m. as well as the closure of gyms and cinemas. Lam also announced that the government will introduce a sixth round of subsidies totaling 26 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$3.3 billion, €2.9 billion) for businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic. -DW

KEY DEVELOPMENT

Macron tells Putin to not ‘escalate’ Ukraine crisis

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron, on Tuesday said that he had managed to convince Russian President Vladimir Putin not to “escalate” the crisis around Ukraine. This is a key development as the US has already warned of a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine. “I obtained that there will be no degradation nor escalation,” Macron said as he arrived in Kyiv for talks with Ukraine’s leader, reported France 24. Putin called Monday’s talks “useful, substantial and business-like,” noting that some of Macron’s suggestions may offer a path for mutual progress going forward. He also said the two had agreed to speak again after Macron has met with Zelenskyy. Macron is not the only European politician to travel to Kyiv. On Monday, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was there to meet with Czech, Slovak and Austrian counterparts for a two-day visit in an effort to de-escalate tensions. Baerbock assured Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba that Germany stands with Ukraine, while Kuleba emphasized Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity were not up for negotiation. -DW/ONA



He has not yet endorsed any other candidate, saying they are all “my friends.” He had previously described Marcos Jr as “weak.” Nevertheless, Duterte’s daughter Sara is standing as Marcos Jr’s vice-presidential running mate — although the vice president is elected separately.

Truckers in US, Europe protest COVID curbs

Canada’s two main airlines have demanded that Ottawa reverse COVID-19 travel restrictions amid the ongoing protests against the vaccine

OTTAWA: Truckers from the Netherlands, New Zealand, England, and Australia have begun to organise their own version of “Freedom Convoy” following the protests in Canada’s Ottawa against COVID-19 vaccination mandates. Not only these counties, but another group of truckers is planning a protest in the United States, driving to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C, reported Fox News. “I think you’re starting to see what will become a big global movement to end these mandates,” Brian Brase, co-organiser of the U.S. protest, told Fox News Digital on Sunday. “It’s a violation of your human rights to be mandated to take this vaccine. If you want it, go get it,

but it is mandated to get it, we’re standing up against that. We think it’s wrong”, he added. Earlier, Canada’s two main airlines have demanded that Ottawa reverse COVID-19 travel restrictions amid the ongoing protests against the vaccine mandates that have overwhelmed the nation’s capital. The current wave of protests against COVID-19 measures started when thousands of demonstrators gathered in Ottawa expressing strong opposition to vaccine mandates for truckers crossing the US-Canada border. WestJet Airlines Ltd. has cancelled 20 per cent of its flights in March amid continuing uncertainty over trucker protest, The Globe and Mail

newspaper reported. “It is disappointing that Canada remains stagnant in its approach and continues to make travel inaccessible and punitive for Canadians and inbound tourists,” said Interim chief executive officer Harry Taylor while adding that travel advisories and testing requirements were meant to be temporary. Meanwhile, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the trucker protest taking place in Ottawa must come to an end, citing disruptions it has caused to the economy and the local residents. “Individuals are trying to blockade our economy, our democracy and our fellow citizens’ daily lives, it has to stop,” Trudeau said in a speech. -ANI

PETER THIEL

Early Facebook investor to leave Meta board

NEW YORK: Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel is leaving the board of directors of Facebook’s parent company Meta after the next shareholder meeting scheduled for later this year, the company said on Monday. An advisor to former US President Donald Trump, Thiel’s conservative politics have turned him into a controversial figure within the company. Meta said he will not stand for reelection at the next meeting. **Original thinker** “Peter is truly an original thinker who you can bring your hardest problems and get unique suggestions,” Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a statement. “He has



served on our board for almost two decades, and we’ve always known that at some point he would devote his time to other interests.” **PayPal** A co-founder of the online payments system PayPal, the tech billionaire joined Facebook’s board a year after the company was founded in 2004. At the time, he gave \$500,000 (€437,000) in capital at a \$5 million valuation for a 10 percent stake in the company along with a seat on its board of directors. While Meta Platforms Inc. did not say what Thiel will do after stepping down, several reports say Thiel will spend time helping

elect candidates he believes will advance Trump’s agenda in mid-terms elections this year. In the past, he has served as an advisor on Trump’s White House transition team. Thiel did not address his future plans but in a statement announcing his departure from Meta, he said: “It has been a privilege to work with one of the great entrepreneurs of our time. Mark Zuckerberg’s intelligence, energy, and conscientiousness are tremendous.” His departure comes as Meta’s shares fell sharply, causing the company to lose a third of its value this year. It is still worth more than \$600 billion (€525 billion). -DW

Poland puts off mandatory jabs

WARSAW: Poland’s Health Ministry said yesterday that the 1st of March deadline for full vaccination of teachers and so-called uniformed services is being pushed back indefinitely because it cannot be met. Last year, the Polish government said teachers, medics, police, armed forces and the firefighters need to be inoculated by 1 March 2022 if they want to perform their jobs. But Health Ministry spokesman said the deadline cannot be kept under the current pace of vaccination and the requirement remains in force only for medical staff. -ONA

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Rank		G	S	B	T
1	Sweden	4	1	1	6
2	Netherlands	3	3	1	3
3	PR China	3	2	0	8
4	Norway	3	1	4	2
5	Italy	2	4	1	3
6	ROC	2	3	4	1
7	Austria	2	3	2	3
8	Slovenia	2	1	2	8
9	Germany	2	1	0	13
10	France	1	4	0	8
11	Canada	1	1	4	6
12	Japan	1	1	2	12
13	Switzerland	1	0	2	13
14	Australia	1	0	1	15
15	Czech Republic	1	0	0	17
15	New Zealand	1	0	0	17
17	USA	0	4	1	8
18	Belarus	0	1	0	17
19	Hungary	0	0	2	15
20	Finland	0	0	1	17
20	Republic of Korea	0	0	1	17
20	Poland	0	0	1	17

timesofoman.com

WINTER GAMES

Gu Ailing takes women’s freeski big air gold

BEIJING: China’s prodigy Gu Ailing claimed the historic gold with a 1620 performance she had never done before in the women’s freeski big air of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games at Big Air Shougang on Tuesday, while Tess Ledeux of France and Mathilde Gremaud of Switzerland took silver and bronze, respectively.

With a combined score of 188.25 points -- 93.75 from her first run and 94.50 from the third, Gu came back strong from the third place before the final run to take the insane gold as the event made its Olympic debut. Quentin Fillon Maillet of France won decisively in the 20-kilometre individual biathlon on Tuesday, adding a gold medal to the silver he won in the mixed relay over the weekend.



Fillon Maillet has dominated the biathlon world lately. He’s had 10 World Cup podium finishes this season, half being wins, making him the overall leader. Now he’s also an Olympic champion. He missed two of 20 targets and finished the course in 48 minutes, 47.4 seconds.

Anton Smolski of Belarus shot clean, hitting all 20 of his targets, and came in 14.8 seconds behind the Frenchman.

Defending individual Olympic

champion Johannes Thingnes Boe of Norway also missed two targets and took the bronze medal, 31.1 seconds behind Fillon Maillet. He had outsprinted the Frenchman in the mixed relay Saturday to secure the gold.

Boe and Russian skier Maxim Tsvetkov raced most of the course together, heading out with bib Nos. 1 and 2, but Tsvetkov missed his very last shot and finished 34.9 seconds behind Fillon Maillet.

Competitors raced 20 kilometres in five ski loops, shooting twice in the prone position and twice standing between each lap. In all other biathlon events, they ski a 150-metre loop for each missed shot, which takes about 20 seconds.

-ONA/Xinhua

T20 WORLD CUP

India-Pakistan match tickets sold out within five minutes

MELBOURNE: Excitement is building for the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2022, with general ticket allocations for two match-days sold out on the first day of going on sale to the public.

General Ticket allocations have all been sold for India v Pakistan at the MCG on October 23 and the double-header that features South Africa v Bangladesh and India v Group A runner-up at the SCG on October 27.

This comes after 200,000 tickets were sold during the pre-sale period across the 45 matches being played in Australia from October 16-November 13 later this year.

Such was the demand to see one of world cricket’s biggest rivalries, the allocations for the India v Pakistan match were sold within 5 minutes of going on sale.

Over 800,000 fans are expected to attend the global showcase for men’s T20 cricket when it comes to Australia for the first time, and there is still plenty of opportunity for fans to secure seats to all other fixtures in the general public sale. The Men’s T20 World Cup 2022 is slated to be held in Australia between October 16- November 13 and it will be played across seven venues -- Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Geelong, Hobart and Perth. -ANI

ODI

ODI between Oman, UAE ends in a tie

Times News Service

MUSCAT: One of the most dramatic and topsy-turvy ODIs in recent memory - the third and final match between Oman and the United Arab Emirates ended in a tie.

The UAE chose to stick with the winning formula after winning the toss, and asked Oman to bat first. The hosts sent Jatinder Singh and Kashyap Prajapati out to lead the line.

That decision was vindicated, as the pair erected a 50+ opening stand. Jatinder, Kashyap and captain Zeeshan all looked in great touch - Kashyap especially so with an assertive 89 ball 57.

Basil Hameed stepped up with the ball once again for the visitors and followed his fiver from the previous game by claiming the priceless scalps of Kashyap and Zeeshan in back-to-back overs. With the captain gone,

The next 12 overs added 56 runs to the scorecard, along with 6 wickets. Two timely sixes from Naseem Khushi ensured that Oman got past the 200 mark, but the hosts were unable to bat out their quota of 50 overs once again, folding for 214 with 3 balls to spare.

The game went down to the wire, with the UAE needing 9 off the final 6. Khawar Ali kept it tight for the most part, but a full toss and an untimely missed run-out opportunity meant that the spoils were shared in the end.

Oman have extended their lead atop the ICC CWC League 2 with 30 points from 23 matches.

UAE

Muscat-based racer takes 3rd place in Yas Marina circuit

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Setbacks don’t deter him. In fact, he loves to accept challenges and at the recently-concluded sixth round of the UAE Rotax Max Challenge Series at the Yas Marina circuit in Abu Dhabi, UAE, Muscat-based go-karting racer Shonal Kunimal displayed his potential to overcome setbacks in abundance as he claimed yet another podium finish in the micro max category of the ongoing 2021-22 series after finishing fifth in the fifth round.

The back-to-back races were held at the Formula One Yas Marina circuit and ten-year-old Shonal, who has pushed out by a rival in the fifth round, came back strongly to take the third place in the next round.

The UAE Rotax Max Challenge Series features some of the best young drivers in the region and



Shonal, a student of the Indian School Ghubra in Muscat, has now been on the podium on four occasions in the six rounds held.

Russian Maxim Bobreshov continues to dominate the series as he picked up yet another win to lead

the overall standings while Greek racer Leonidas Peruzzi, who was found guilty of pushing Shonal out of the track with a contact in the fifth round, is overall second.

Despite the setback in the fifth round on Sunday, Shonal, coached

by former Oman go-karting star Sanad al Rawahi, fought back to a podium place in the next round on Monday. Bobreshov was the fastest in the sixth round and Leonidas was behind by 0.882 second and Shonal trailed the winner by 1.520 seconds.

However, it was the comeback by Shonal in the fifth round that was remarkable. Having spun out of the track in lap three, he rallied to a fifth-place finish in the remaining 13 laps.

Later the race jury penalised Leonidas for his contact with Shonal and was given a penalty of ten seconds pushing him to sixth and Shonal keeping the fifth spot. Maxim won round five while Pierre Abou Diwan was second and Emilen Boul third.

After six rounds and with three more rounds remaining in March, the series top honours seems to be going Maxim’s way as he leads with 585 points.

Only 32 points differentiates Leonidas and Shonal with the former currently placed second with 507 points and Shonal 475. Each round a racer can pocket a total of 100 points with 40 for a race win and 30 each for a win in the pre-final and a heat race.

Speaking after his podium finish in the sixth round, Shonal said, “It was a great experience racing on a Formula One track. It is a very fast track than the circuits we usually race on.

“I am delighted that I could record a lap time of 37.495 seconds, which is one of the fastest laps in my category this year.”

Shonal expressed his thanks to his coach and his father, Shojai Kunimal, for their constant support.

“I owe a lot to my father and my coach Sanad, along with my technical team of Carlo John Bariquit and Mark Rose,” he said.

UEFA EURO

UK, Ireland to bid for Euro 2028

DUBLIN : The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland will be bidding to host the UEFA Euro 2028, but these nations have opted out of the race to host the 2030 World Cup.

“Following an extensive feasibility study, which assessed the potential opportunities in international football, the football associations of Ireland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have agreed to focus on a bid to host UEFA EURO 2028,” the Football Association of Ireland said in an official statement, as reported by Goal.com.

“The feasibility study included an analysis of the economic impact, the political football landscape and likely costs of hosting major international tournaments. On balance, the five associations have decided to focus solely on an official bid to host UEFA EURO 2028, and have agreed not to bid for the 2030 FIFA World Cup,” he added. -ANI

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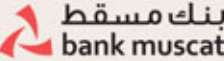
OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by April 2022 reaching \$90.86, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 52 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$91.38. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,115.21 points, down by 0.42 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10 per cent at 506.50 points. Al Hassan Engineering, up 55.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, SMN Power Holding, down 8.33 per cent, was the top loser.



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Pact for industrial salt production signed

With a total investment value touching OMR1 million, the project will operate on an area of 12,248 sqm

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Raysut Industrial City has signed an investment pact with Sahari Qatbeet Trading and Transport Company to set up a factory for industrial salt production with an Omani-Emirati partnership. The investment process took only a two-hour time of electronic investment procedures related to examining the industrial land, signing the lease contract and completing payments. With a total

investment value touching OMR1 million, the project will operate on an area of 12,248 sqm. Eng. Ali Al Maashani, Acting Director-General of Raysut Industrial City, explained that investors can submit investment applications and complete the procedures electronically through Masar Service Centre. “In fact, the promptness of electronic investment procedures happens with the support of Masar Service Centre and the other digital services employed by Madayn, which jointly play a significant role in facilitating these procedures for investors in the industrial cities,” Al Maashani pointed out. Al Maashani elaborated that the investment activity in Raysut Industrial City is seeing constant growth as there are currently 207 operating projects, which have been localised on 97 per cent of the leasable area. During 2020 and 2021, Raysut Industrial City was able to attract 40 projects. “By the end of 2021, the total investment volume in Raysut Industrial City amounted to more than OMR479 million,” he added.



INVESTMENT PACT: The investment activity in Raysut Industrial City is seeing constant growth as there are currently 207 operating projects, which have been localised on 97 per cent of the leasable area. - Supplied picture

STRUCTURAL DESIGN

OPAZ announces regulation manual for Duqm buildings

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has announced the issuance of the Structural Guidelines and Regulations Manual of Buildings at Duqm, which consists of the minimum structural design requirements for projects within the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and its general provisions. The guidelines manual provides detailed technical guidance and guidelines for the structural design of buildings. Eng. Abdullah Salim Al Hakmani, In Charge of Managing the Operations of the Building Permits Department in OPAZ, explained that the Guidelines comprise several key items. These include the general guidelines for building designs, structural submission procedures, and the best internationally applicable and approved codes and standards in the Sultanate of Oman, to comply with SEZD regulations, design programmes, data analysis, structural design criteria, durability and performance criteria, geotechnical examination re-

quirements (soil tests) and building supervision requirements, said Eng. Al Hakmani. He said that the guidelines aim to provide instructions, needs, and the minimum requirements for building designs. These materials, Al Hakmani said, will give the engineers a general idea and appropriate guidance on the basic requirements of structural designs. It is hoped that the use of these guidelines will increase the quality of designs and construction, and provide information to architects, consultants, and engineering offices dealing with SEZD. Al Hakmani said that the Structural Guidelines and Regulations of the Buildings at Duqm were prepared by a team of engineers from SEZD and were reviewed by several expert houses, including a team from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). The Guidelines will be circulated to all investors, developers, engineering design companies, consultants, and contractors, for the Structural Guidelines to be applied in SEZD.

-ONA



ZAIN LAUNCHES ‘MUROOJ AL ZAIN’ PROJECT AND UNVEILS MOBILE APP



MUSCAT: Zain Property Development announced the launch of the Murooj Al Zain project which will be developed in Salalah. The project, which was announced at a virtual event through the company's social media channels, will be a valuable addition to Zain Property Development projects and will support its vision to expand its projects across the Sultanate of Oman. The event also saw the launch of Zain's Mobile App, which is the first of its kind in Oman. Mish'Al Mohammed Al Raisi, Executive Manager of Zain Property Development noted, “Murooj Al Zain project will be our first project in the Governorate of Dhofar, and we are confident that the project will add value to the real estate sector in Oman and it will meet the growing demands in Salalah. As we all know that Salalah does not only attract tourists but also opens large investment opportunities. We look ahead to see the completion of the project successfully.” Murooj Al Zain is located nearby the Millennium Hotel and Salalah Grand Mall, and it is only 15 minutes drive away from Salalah Airport. It is one of Zain Property Development projects that aim to create a distinctive community environment. The Murooj Al Zain project contains 292 apartment units with a variety of spaces ranging from 78 square meters to 133 square meters at competitive prices starting from OMR27,000 to OMR42,500. Each apartment



has a garden or a private external space. Ground floor apartments have a private garden, Upper floor apartments with spacious balconies and a terrace on the top floors. All apartments have stunning views, and a car park is allocated for each apartment. The project also features a 2,500-square-meter public park, with playgrounds and a pool for children, as well as a café, local fruits shop and sitting areas throughout the park. In addition to other services and facilities on the project, including two Gyms and two separate private swimming pools for men and women, a 24-hour security service is available. To provide all Zain Property Development updates at the fingertips, the company has developed a mobile application which was announced at the ceremony. The first of its kind app in Oman is designed to facilitate executing real estate transactions, which translated Zain's vision towards digital transformation. Elaborating on the app, Mish'Al Al Raisi, commented, “The mobile app is a very positive step towards digitalising our services. Through the app, the users will be able to



search our property listing, book, buy, and pay at their convenience. We are introducing a new concept in the real estate sector, where the users may view the full details and facilities of the listed units 24/7.” Expressing its recognition to the customers for being part of Zain's family through the purchase of a property, Zain announced the “Zain Partners” Rewards Program. Designed with various benefits and offers, the program provides rewards and special discounts to the customers. Zain Property Development was established in 2008. With a long-standing experience in real estate development projects, the company ensures to deliver qual-

ity and excellence in every detail. Zain Property Development is one of the key players in the real estate sector of the Sultanate of Oman. Aiming to create the ideal future residential communities in Oman, the company has successfully worked on various projects including modern apartments, and residential complexes with high-quality facilities; including, Dar Al Zain, Al Muna Gardens and Zain Al Athaiba. The projects are available with options for buying or renting. Through the modern real estate space, Zain Property Development provides sophisticated levels of living choices and ensures utmost comfort for the residents, at affordable prices for everyone.



MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Hassan Engineering, up 55.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, SMN Power Holding, down 8.33 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,115.21 points, down by 0.42 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.10 per cent at 506.50 points. Al Hassan Engineering, up 55.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, SMN Power Holding, down 8.33 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of United Finance Company were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 614 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR365 million, with more than 26.16 million shares changing hands. Out of 41 traded securities, 8 advanced, 11 declined and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR209,000 while GCC

& Arab investors were net sellers for OMR157,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR53,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,562.09 points, down 0.33 per cent. Prices of Taageer Finance, United Finance, and Al Omaniya Financial Services were up by 2.47 per cent, 1.54 per cent, and 0.74 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Sohar International Bank, and Ominvest were down by 5.06 per cent, 1.82 per cent, and 1.3 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,802.03 points, up 0.25 per cent.

Services Index was down by 0.58 per cent before closing at 1605.91 points. Prices of Oman National Engineering, and Ooredoo were up by 0.85 per cent and 0.56 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,133.48	4,112.52	4,115.21	4,132.70	-17.49	-0.42
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,586.58	6,560.93	6,562.09	6,583.54	-21.45	-0.33
Industry Index	5,803.35	5,786.20	5,802.02	5,787.28	14.74	0.25
Services Index	1,615.34	1,605.91	1,605.91	1,615.34	-9.43	-0.58
MSX Shariah Index	506.50	506.22	506.50	505.99	0.51	0.10
MSX TR INDEX	4,975.66	4,950.44	4,953.67	4,974.72	-21.05	-0.42

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
26,162,934	3,645,722	614	22,049,922,022	8	11	22	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT	12,150	2,333	3	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.185	0.007	3.784	0.192	0.187	0.194	0.100	38,400,000
OM0000000377 AL OMANIYA FIN.	50,000	6,800	2	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.133	0.136	0.100	39,703,183
OM0000000968 OOREDOO	1,014,013	385,903	26	0.358	0.360	0.358	0.360	0.356	0.002	0.559	0.360	0.358	0.360	0.100	234,339,923
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	61,800	29,533	3	0.478	0.478	0.474	0.478	0.476	0.002	0.420	0.474	0.450	0.480	0.100	26,290,000
OM0000001400 OMAN FLOUR MILLS	70,000	49,280	1	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.704	0.000	0.000	0.704	0.700	0.704	0.100	110,880,000
OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	20,000	1,200	2	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	18,428,780
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	191,100	17,380	19	0.092	0.092	0.090	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.088	0.091	0.100	18,200,000
OM0000002200 AHLI BANK	683,881	82,066	6	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.119	0.122	0.100	233,958,896
OM0000002440 AL SHARQIA INV.	1,000	92	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.092	0.095	0.100	8,280,000
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	931,954	488,344	52	0.524	0.524	0.524	0.524	0.524	0.000	0.000	0.524	0.524	0.526	0.100	1,873,024,791
OM0000003000 AI MAHA MARKTING	700	596	2	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.692	0.692	0.000	0.000	0.700	0.652	0.700	0.100	477,448,000
OM0000003224 RENAISSANCE SER.	852,000	377,819	25	0.440	0.446	0.440	0.444	0.446	-0.002	-0.448	0.444	0.432	0.444	0.100	104,966,040
OM0000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	80,698	31,634	19	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.394	-0.002	-0.508	0.392	0.388	0.392	0.100	48,960,000
OM0000001533 OMINVEST	918,576	279,242	8	0.302	0.306	0.302	0.304	0.308	-0.004	-1.299	0.306	0.304	0.308	0.100	203,183,080
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	35,573	28,103	3	0.792	0.792	0.788	0.788	0.800	-0.012	-1.500	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.100	591,000,000
OM0000003398 SOHAR INT. BANK	1,689,797	183,096	46	0.110	0.110	0.108	0.108	0.110	-0.002	-1.818	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.100	322,928,727
OM0000001525 OMAN INVST&FIN.	2,988,209	458,952	32	0.156	0.156	0.150	0.154	0.157	-0.003	-1.911	0.150	0.150	0.155	0.100	36,498,000
Total	17	9,601,421	240,361	250											

Parallel Market

OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	164,150	13,547	12	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.081	0.002	2.469	0.082	0.082	0.085	0.100	21,047,970
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	11,539,723	760,261	173	0.065	0.066	0.065	0.066	0.065	0.001	1.538	0.065	0.065	0.066	0.100	23,043,531
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	15,500	1,845	6	0.120	0.120	0.117	0.119	0.118	0.001	0.847	0.117	0.115	0.119	0.100	15,470,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	11,100	1,787	3	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.000	0.000	0.161	0.161	0.160	0.100	4,830,000
OM0000001384	FINANCIAL SERV.	281,321	50,075	1	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.000	0.000	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.100	3,560,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	1,270,000	124,460	24	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.096	0.098	0.100	196,033,653
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	5,000	267	3	0.055	0.055	0.051	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.050	0.054	0.100	8,875,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MKK	60	52	1	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.000	0.000	0.860	0.000	0.860	0.100	81,700,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	470,000	56,400	19	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.116	0.120	0.100	359,562,172
OM0000002804	ASAFIA FOODS	3,444	317	2	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.137	0.150	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	100,000	7,100	3	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.070	0.072	0.100	14,200,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	31,000	2,263	5	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	14,818,011
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,795,024	175,952	35	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	70,000	6,790	11	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	16,975,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	7,000	490	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.065	0.072	0.100	7,000,000
OM0000004833	AL SUWADI POWER	1,225	60	2	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	35,720,317
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	58,125	5,400	5	0.093	0.093	0.090	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.093	0.093	0.095	0.100	14,466,187
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	150	14	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.082	0.091	0.100	39,108,470
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	19,537	1,739	4	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.086	0.089	0.100	72,444,845
OM0000004925	ALBATRA POWER	182,972	8,779	17	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.047	0.049	0.100	32,394,597
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	103,546	4,971	5	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.049	0.047	0.049	0.100	70,204,870
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	127,331	9,586	16	0.075	0.077	0.075	0.075	0.079	-0.004	-5.063	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.100	9,140,625
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	197,000	8,444	19	0.048	0.048	0.044	0.044	0.048	-0.004	-8.333	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.100	8,783,966
Total		23	16,447,508	1,240,796	358											

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR164mn issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR164 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 91 days, from February 9 until May 11, 2022.

The average accepted price reached OMR99.822 per every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.820 per OMR100. The

average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.71220 per cent and 0.71346 per cent, respectively.

The treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of

ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). The interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 0.75 per cent.

Furthermore, the treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. — **OMA**

FINANCIAL RESULTS

AD Ports Group records strong revenue of \$1.1 billion in 2021

ABU DHABI: AD Ports Group announced its 2021 financial results based on preliminary, unaudited financials for the 12 months ended December 31, 2021, reporting revenue growth of 14 per cent year-on-year to AED 3.9 billion (\$1.1 billion) compared with AED 3.4 billion (\$933 million) in 2020, driven by volume growth, business diversification and new partnerships.

EBITDA, on a reported basis, rose to AED 1.6 billion (\$434 million) during 2021, up from AED 1.5 billion (\$422 million) in 2020.

Net profit reached AED 845 million (\$230 million) in 2021 from AED 397 million (\$108 million) in 2020.

As of December 31, 2021, the Total Assets of the Group stood at AED 28.5 billion (\$7.8 billion), while the Equity increased to AED 10.7 billion (\$2.9 billion). These do not reflect recent events in 2022 that resulted in an increase in total assets and equity. In January 2022, the group received ownership stakes from ADQ in two listed companies comprising of a 22.32 percent stake in logistics firm Aramex PJSC ("Aramex") and a 10 percent stake in UAE-based contractor National Marine Dredging Company.

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LOVE FOR NATURE IS PARTIALLY HERITABLE

How many of us love visiting nature parks and taking a quiet stroll there, with nothing but the sound of birds? Did our parents do the same thing when they were young? According to a large-scale study of UK twins led by Chia-chen Chang at the National University of Singapore, a person's appreciation of nature and their tendency to visit natural spaces are heritable characteristics.

It was published in the open-access journal 'PLOS Biology'.

Researchers surveyed 1153 pairs of twins on the Twins UK registry about how they experience nature, asking them to rate their familiarity with and desire to be in nature, and how frequently they visit natural spaces such as public parks and private gardens.

They found that identical (mo-

nozygotic) twins, who shared almost 100 per cent of their genes, were more similar to each other in their orientation towards nature and how frequently they visited nature compared to fraternal (dizygotic) twins, who shared around 50 per cent of their genetic material. Heritability ranged from 46 per cent for nature orientation to 34 per cent for frequency of garden visits, suggesting a moderate influence of genetics over how people experience nature.

However, environmental factors explained more than half of the differences between individuals. People living in urban environments tended to have less nature experiences, due to for example limited access to gardens, highlighting the importance of availability in shaping nature-seeking behaviours. Heritability also declined with age, suggesting that genetics may become less influential as people age and experience a unique set of environmental conditions.

Spending time in natural spaces has been found to improve mental well-being, but different people experience and benefit from nature differently. This study provided the first evidence for a genetic component to both our predispositions towards nature and our tendency to visit natural spaces. Nature-oriented people may actively seek out nature even if it means travelling from their home, but diverse urban planning is needed to provide access to natural spaces and the benefits they offer for all, the authors said.

"Spending time in nature links to better health and wellbeing," added Chang. "A twin study shows that a person's desire to be in nature and how often they experience it are influenced by both genes and personal experiences."

- ANI

Spending time in nature links to better health and wellbeing,
A twin study shows that a person's desire to be in nature
and how often they experience it are influenced by both genes
and personal experiences.



PHOTO FEATURE



WORLD WETLANDS DAY: SCENERY OF WETLANDS IN ANTWERPEN, BELGIUM

People visit the wetlands at De Wijers nature reserve in Limburg Province, Belgium on World Wetlands Day, celebrated annually on February 2. The event aims to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands. Xinhua/Zhang Cheng



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ROUND-UP

Jeep wins ‘Most Trusted Brand Award’ 2021



The Jeep brand achieved the highest votes in 4WD category for the second year in a row

MUSCAT: Dhofar Automotive, the official distributor of Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Fiat, Ram, Alfa Romeo vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman announced that the Jeep brand has been crowned the ‘Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award’ for 2021 in the 4WD category.

This follows its excellent results in an online survey conducted by a leading media in Oman last December that saw the voting of the most trusted brands in the Sultan-

ate for 2021. The fifth edition of this prestigious award witnessed the participation of 780,000 voters to choose the winning brands across 58 different categories across all sectors. The Jeep brand achieved the highest votes in its category for the second year in a row.

The award was received during a special ceremony organised by Muscat Daily at the Majan Hall in the Al Bustan Palace. The ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals, alongside the presence of high-level companies’ managers, senior officials and executives from various sectors. All were present to honour the award-winning brands, companies and institutions of 2021.

Commenting on the occasion, Hatem El-Naggar, General Manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, “The Jeep brand and its various models have continued to be bestowed with many prestigious awards over

the years. It is no surprise that participants in the poll conducted by ‘Oman’s Most Trusted Brands’ voted for the Jeep brand in the sports 4WD category for the year 2021. With so many options available, Jeep continues to be the vehicle of choice for power and unmatched capabilities for driving enthusiasts on harsh terrain or in the desert. With several available options for modification, everyone can customise their vehicle with genuine Mopar accessories. Jeep models feature unlimited versatility, making them even more attractive to all drivers as well as adventure and off-road driving fans.”

“We are very pleased to be awarded this prestigious accolade and to receive such a significant honour for Dhofar Automotive. By winning this award, we are pleased to affirm our commitment to excellence and provide the most prominent models in the automotive sector. On this occasion, we take the opportunity to thank our valued customers and

all survey participants. On behalf of my colleagues from the Dhofar Automotive team, we strive to continue working hard to provide our customers with a valued ownership experience that is reflected through the extension of the highest quality services,” added El-Naggar.

Jeep models have always occupied a prominent position on the list of the most trusted cars in the Sultanate of Oman, where this multi-use sports car continues to meet the desires and needs of those passionate about adventure and driving pleasure. The Jeep brand is known for its legendary models that offer unprecedented capabilities in four-wheel drive off-road with superior on-road performance, many technological features and the most advanced safety features in its class.

In the Sultanate, Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Fiat, Ram, Alfa Romeo models are available at Dhofar Automotive showrooms with different equipment classes.

AGREEMENT

Discount on Talabat app for ahlibank credit cardholders

MUSCAT: In a strategic move that is aimed at enhancing its portfolio of products and services for customers, ahlibank has recently signed an agreement with Talabat, the region’s leading food delivery and q-commerce app, to provide special discounts for purchases made through the app.

The six-month-long collaboration will offer credit cardholders of ahlibank a discount of 50% on orders made through the app. Scheduled to run the third week of each month from January 2022 to June 2022. The promotion will be open for all customers making purchases using their credit cards. This initiative will enable the bank to meet specific requirements of its customers, as part of its strategic approach to widen their access to a host of products and services that it offers.

Commenting on this new partnership, Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution, said, “We are always keen to communicate with our customers and take advantage of their feedback and suggestions. We are constantly studying market trends, which has been reflected in a number of initiatives and offers that we have launched over the past period. This new offer, which targets the category of ahlibank’s credit cardholders, approves our belief in the importance of keeping up with customers’ needs and lifestyle, as the world is currently witnessing a marked shift towards digital services that ensure security, low cost and speed of delivery.”

“This campaign reflects our focus on expanding the Bank’s



growth by signing agreements with partners from different sectors. Through our collaboration with Talabat, one of the leading delivery companies in the Gulf, we aim to enhance the comfort of our customers and help them reach the greatest amount of advanced services and products,” he added.

Under the collaboration agreement, ahlibank customers can avail of a discount of up to RO 10 for each order made through the Talabat App. The discounted amount will be absorbed by the Bank, as it is a BIN (Bank Identification Number) based campaign with an auto-apply discount on the checkout page of Talabat.

Pointing out that the campaign truly reflects the Bank’s determination to increase its footprints in the market, Al Balushi stated, “We are making great efforts at ahlibank to provide products and services that enhance the value-adds to customers, especially retail. This offer aims to encourage customers to use digital platforms for their safety, thereby enhancing their confidence in their chosen bank. It helps us consolidate our position in the market, paving the way for our ultimate goal of strong and sustainable growth.”

CLIFFTOP RETREAT

Shangri-La Al Husn reopens its wooden carved doors with first Luban Spa

MUSCAT: Following a period of lockdowns and global restrictions, Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat is back to unveiling a world of bespoke experiences for luxury seekers from around the world, after much anticipation.

Located 45 minutes from Muscat International Airport and 20 minutes from downtown Muscat, Shangri-La Al Husn is Oman’s exclusive cliff-top retreat where an air of peace and tranquillity prevail. The resort caters to adult guests aged over 16 and offers a locally inspired guest experience, amenities, privileges, and bespoke tours to the most discerning travellers.

Touches from Oman’s rich heritage begin from the moment of arrival at the palatial Al Husn – meaning ‘Castle’ in Arabic. Designed to reference the historic architecture of Omani forts – guests are immersed in the courtyard design elements, arches, water features and palm trees.

Beyond the resort’s water gardens lies the infinity pool with its Instagram-worthy views of the Sea of Oman that also defines the setting of the private 100-metre beach. Sweeping views and calming hues are a source of inspiration along with the private beach cove, where guests can laze the day away on sunbeds, cabanas or within the privacy of their lounges. Offering the ultimate in beach luxury, the hotel ensures an ultra-relaxed vibe and ambience of serenity by reserving the space for adults only as guests must be over the age of 16.

The first Luban Spa in Oman
Shangri-La Al Husn is delighted to introduce the latest addition to its wellness experiences; Luban Spa



– The Spa of Frankincense. This is the first of its kind in the Sultanate, a different way of living that sends you to a world of beauty, peace and luxury. Luban (Frankincense) is a precious resin originating in Oman from the Boswellia tree and is treasured over the world for its healing and beauty properties paired with its warm and comforting essence. For thousands of years, Luban has been known as the gift of kings and has been as highly valued as gold. As such, Luban Spa offers a myriad range of precious Omani Frankincense treatment rituals for the body and mind infused with warm Arabian hospitality.

Curated benefits only for Al Husn guests
Exclusive guest benefits include complimentary daily afternoon tea, aperitif hour, and the use of

the resort’s private beach and facilities. Exquisitely crafted local ingredients are sourced from around the Sultanate and they play an essential role during the guest journey, ranging from locally harvested pomegranates from the mountains, roses, date syrup and Omani honey.

Every afternoon guests of Al Husn are treated to a complimentary themed afternoon tea on the terrace of Sultanah, overlooking the mesmerising sea view of the adjacent Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat. At sunset, the central courtyard comes to life with the aperitif hour, offering a collection of signature beverages with a local infusion. This is set as a daily ritual to socialise and enjoy the beginning of a calming evening along with the live music of an enchanting duo.

OFFER

Own stylish and bold Lincoln Nautilus with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: The attractive and luxurious Lincoln Nautilus is bold, stylish and powerful. It sets a new benchmark for luxury SUVs with its range of features and technology that enhance every experience in it. Enthusiasts can now look forward to Service 5 Years / 100,000 km, 1 Year Registration and 3M Window Tint. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom). The campaign is valid until 9th March 2022.

Delivering a luxurious driver environment with SUV flexibility, the Nautilus offers a stunning exterior design with a new Lincoln signature grille, new tail lamps, and applique light bar, spoiler and upper rear fascia. Complementing the new design features and affording the Nautilus a more luxurious stance, is an all-new 20” bright machined aluminium with premium painted pockets available for the Reserve trim.

Inside, the cabin is welcoming and keeps all occupants comfortable. Lighting outside and in, embrace the driver and passengers, softening the edges and keeping the environment calm. Acoustic side glass reduces wind noise for rear passengers, while advanced engineering solutions decrease sound from the road. Soft to touch and eminently customizable, the seats ventilate, massage and adjust for a soothing experience, with controls found where the hand falls. The steering wheel is unique to Lincoln and elevates the driving experience by offering an increased wheel rim circumference, providing a large, sporty and comfortable grip, and premium supple, refined, Wollsdorf



leather that also features chic European-style stitching. The leather-wrapped, hand-stitched steering wheel is mounted ahead of a 12.3-inch fully configurable digital instrument cluster that displays driver information crisply and clearly.

The cabin’s sleek centre console is uninterrupted by a standard shifter, which has been replaced by a vertically-oriented Push-Button Shifter on the instrument panel. Each button has been engineered in different sizes with a different tactile fee, to help differentiate between them, making it easy to find and switch gears.

Available ultra comfort seats for driver and front passenger, developed with input from orthopaedic surgeons, can be adjusted up to 22 ways. The feature, which provides lumbar massage designed to reduce fatigue, is especially beneficial on long trips

or in traffic. Heated and cooled seats are available for clients who choose a Lincoln Reserve mode.

The Lincoln Nautilus is equipped with a turbocharged engine line-up. A 2.7-litre twin-turbo V6 engine boasts an AWD drivetrain with adaptive suspension and all-wheel drive disconnect. It delivers 335 hp and 515 Nm of torque and includes standard Auto Start-stop capability, plus a new eight-speed automatic transmission with SelectShift capability.

In terms of safety, the Nautilus is equipped with Lincoln Co-Pilot360 and advanced driver-assist features. It uses a camera and radar to enhance a driver’s capabilities. Technologies like BLIS use radar to alert the driver of approaching vehicles entering the blind spot and cross-traffic alert warns drivers of traffic behind when backing out of a parking spot or driveway.



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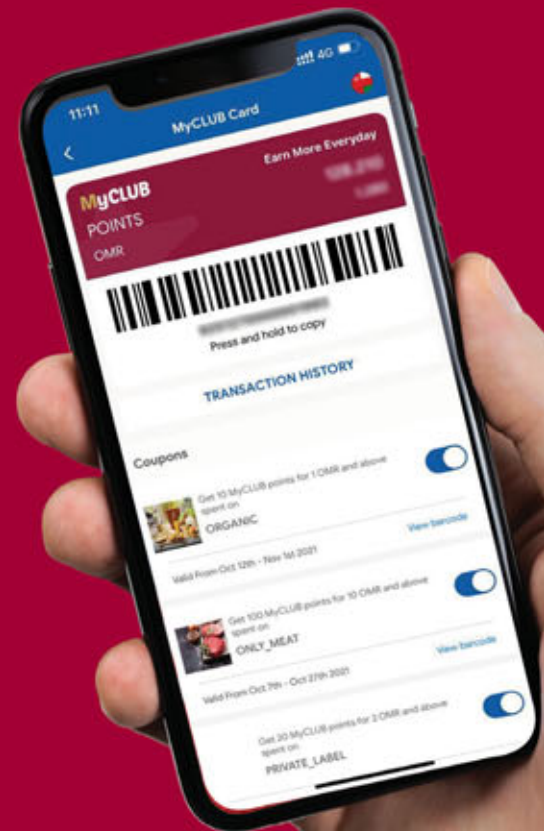
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