

UAE IS LARGEST TRADING PARTNER OF OMAN AT GLOBAL LEVEL

The total amount of non-oil trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the UAE in 2021 amounted to more than 46 billion dirhams, as the UAE is the largest trading partner of Oman at the global level, His Excellency Khalifa Shaheen Al Murr, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates, stated. **>A5**



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HM SENDS GREETINGS TO CHINA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulation to President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China on the 73rd Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to the president and his country's people further progress and prosperity and for the strong historic relations between the two countries continued development and progress. **-ONA**



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UNANIMOUS VIEW

UAE President's visit to bolster relations with Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The recent landmark visit of UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the Sultanate of Oman and the multiple bilateral agreements signed during the visit is expected to spur economic growth, according to leading Omani economists and businessmen.

The economic experts and businessmen were unanimous in their views of the visit of the UAE President making a positive economic impact. His Excellency Eng. Rida bin Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of



Eng. Rida bin Juma Al Saleh

the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), praised the positive results that emerged out after the visit of His Highness Sheikh Mo-



Sheikh Taher bin Mabkhout Al Junaibi

hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the Sultanate.

Al Saleh said: "The Sultanate and the UAE have had commercial relations since ancient



Dr. Mohammed Al-Wardi

times. These relations have contributed to developing strong cooperation and building ties between the business sectors of the two brotherly countries."

He added that the 'signing of 12 MoUs and four cooperation agreements in various fields' confirms the desire between the two neighbours to enhance trade, economic and investment cooperation.

"These agreements will revitalise the bilateral trade in various sectors and will contribute to the national development," said Al Saleh.

The OCCI top boss said: "Undoubtedly, this visit embodies the existing cooperation to establish partnerships and commercial and investment project. It will enhance cooperation in various fields

and sectors of interest between the brotherly countries. The positive results are an outcome of the firm steps taken by the Sultanate and the sisterly Emirates towards achieving success for the goals drawn by the cooperation map of the two brotherly countries."

In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, Dr. Mohammed Al Wardi, an academic and economic analyst, said: "The UAE is the largest (non-oil) trading and investment partner of the Sultanate. The volume of trade between them stood at OMR5.5 billion, while mutual investments stood at OMR1.5 billion." **>A5**

OVER 85% OF CANCERS IN CHILDREN ARE ENTIRELY CURABLE IN OMAN



The high cure rate among children is due to children's better response to treatment as compared to the elderly

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 85 per cent of cancers among children are entirely treatable provided parents are educated and know when to get their child screened, Head of the Department of Paediatric Hematology and Oncology at the Royal Hospital, said.

Dr. Abeer Al-Batashi, Head

of the Department of Paediatric Hematology and Oncology at the Royal Hospital, spoke exclusively to *Times of Oman* and *Al Shabiba* about the increasing incidence of cancer among children and the cure rate among them.

"There are two types of cancer among children, including solid cancer and leukaemia. The cure rate for solid cancer among



Dr Abeer Al Battashi

children is about 85% or above as they are subjected to several examinations and continuous treatment and because children accept treatment better than adults."

Dr. Abeer confirmed that deaths

are very few among children with solid cancer compared to adults as only about one to two deaths per month are recorded among children, and during some months the figure is nil.

The high cure rate among children is attributable to children's better response to treatment as compared to the elderly. It has also been biologically proven that cancerous tumours among children are completely different from those among adults in structural terms, she said.

Dr. Al-Batashi said that one of the reasons for deaths among children with solid cancer is that some of them have brain tumours, or they have cancer in advanced stages that are difficult to cure due to delay in diagnosis. **>A4**

RELIEF FOR YEMENIS

US lauds Oman's efforts to extend Yemen truce

Times News Service

MUSCAT: US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has appreciated the Sultanate of Oman's efforts to help secure and extend truce in Yemen, which would bring relief to millions of Yemenis.

Sayyid Badr Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received a phone call from Anthony Blinken, US Secretary of State, regarding bilateral relations between the two countries and consultations on a number of regional and international issues of common interest.

The US Secretary of State said: "During our conversation today, Foreign Minister of Oman and I expressed our countries' strong support to help secure an extension and expansion of the truce in Yemen from this Sunday, which would bring further life-saving relief to millions of Yemenis."

An official statement issued on the United States Govern-



ment website reads: "Secretary of State Antony J Blinken spoke today with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Al-Busaidi to discuss the impending expiry of the UN-mediated truce in Yemen on October 2.

The US Secretary welcomed Oman's commitment to extending the truce and its efforts to help secure its expansion, which would bring further life-saving relief to millions of Yemenis.

>A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman praised for treatment of its prisoners

1 The delegation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has praised the treatment of the inmates in the Sultanate of Oman central prison. **>A2**

WORLD

India abstains in UNSC

2 India abstained in the UN Security Council vote which condemned Russia's "illegal referenda" and annexation of Ukrainian regions, calling for an immediate cessation of violence. **>A6**

MARKET

Oman's credit rating

3 Leading international credit rating agency S&P has affirmed Oman's credit rating at (BB-) with a stable outlook. This is attributed to the financial and economic initiatives taken by Oman. **>B1**

HERITAGE

Archaeological settlements dating back to more than 3,000 years discovered in the Sultanate

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a major archaeological breakthrough, a team of Sultan Qaboos University researchers have found a sizeable gathering of historical settlements that date back to more than 3,000 years ago. The findings were unearthed during the team's archaeological survey work in the Wilayat of Quriyat.

Dr Muhammad Abdul Hamid Hussein, Head of the Archeology Department at the College of Arts and Social Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University and head of the research team, said that work in

its current phase focused on the village of Mazare in the Wilayat of Quriyat and its surroundings.

"The archaeological evidence discovered and recorded so far indicates that the civilization settlement in that area has been continuous since the Iron Age - 3,000 years from now," said Dr Muhammad.

He added, "The buildings in some of these sites show the extent of the architectural development reached by the builders in that period. Some of these settlements include big buildings with a large number of square and rectangular rooms built of stone."

Dr Muhammad explained that



the current survey work is part of the project to survey historical and archaeological monuments that are at risk in the Sultanate of Oman. The project is funded by Sultan Qaboos University in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

He said that the aim of this project is to document archaeological sites in the Governorate of Muscat, and prepare a risk map for those sites. The proposed work will also look into how to benefit from these historical and archaeological sites in sustainable development, in line with Oman 2040 Vision. **-WITH ONA inputs**



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Dhuhr.....	12:01pm
Asr.....	3:25pm
Maghrib.....	5:59pm
Isha.....	7:09pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:44am

Oman praised for better care of its prisoners

During the visit, the UN team inspected the prison facilities, toured its wards and its various sections, and watched closely the services provided to inmates

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The delegation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights praised prison authorities in Oman for providing humane treatment to inmates in the Sultanate of Oman central prison.

His Excellency Mohamed Al Nsour, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, lauded the authorities after he along with his delegation met with inmates in the central prison.

The right to humane treatment in detention requires that persons deprived of their liberty be treated humanely and with dignity.



At the central prison in Oman the inmates have a provision of regular visits of their families and a monthly stipend to the inmate's family during the period of serving his sentence.

There is also a proper follow-up with the people who have served the sentence and a process in place to ensure their integration into society.

The emphasis is to help them return to their normal lives, which reflects the interest and keenness of Oman to implement international laws and observe human rights.

During the visit, the UN team

inspected the prison facilities, toured its wards and its various sections, and watched closely the services provided to inmates.

Training workshops

They also interacted with the inmates and watched training workshops where inmates are taught to make antiques, gifts, pottery, and other handicrafts items.

The delegation also visited lecture halls, prison studio, central library and were briefed about the cultural and sports activities provided to the inmates. An electronic deposit and borrowing system is used at the library.

The UN delegation also toured the prison hospital, and was briefed about the services provided

ed to patients and inmates, including emergency cases and ways to deal with chronic diseases.

Following the visit, the UN delegation expressed its thanks and appreciation to the General Directorate of Prisons of the Royal Oman Police. They also expressed the readiness of the High Commissioner to hold training courses for reformers and rehabilitation personnel to apply the foundations and standards for inmates in line with internationally agreed principles.

The UN delegation also expressed its satisfaction with the existing cooperation between the Oman Human Rights Committee and the General Administration of Prisons with regard to the rights of inmates.



INNOVATION INDEX

Oman scores advance ranks

NEW YORK: Oman bagged advance ranks in the Global Innovation Index 2022, which is issued by the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

It occupied first place in the world in the number of science and engineering graduates, compared to the overall number of graduates.

Oman also ranks third in the Government Spending Index per student.

Innovation Input

The Global Innovation Index 2022 affirms that Oman moved up 5 steps in the Innovation Input Sub-Index, in addition to 3 steps in the Innovation Output Sub-Index. Oman ranked 79th in the global group of 132 countries.

The Sultanate of Oman's highest performance in the report was in the human capital and research pillar, while the lowest was in the business environment.

Oman ranked 29th globally in the education expenditure indicator.

-ONA





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COMMENTARY

Iconic carpet, chandelier at the Grand Mosque is a big attraction for visitors from all over the world



Saleh Al-Shaibany

MUSCAT: Foreign tourists never stop coming to Oman to get a chance to see the world's second largest chandelier at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Ghubrah. The mosque also boasts the second biggest carpet in the world ever woven for any other institution, private or public.

"Many of the visitors to the Grand Mosque are elated on the first view of the beauty and magnificence of the chandelier and the carpet," Hafidh Al-Rawahy, Volunteer at the Islamic Information Centre in the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, told Times of Oman.

The government of Oman commissioned Swarovski, a famous Austrian-based crystal glass manufacturers, to design the chandelier. It is hanging from the enormous dome of the mosque above the magnificent prayer hall. The chandelier is eight meters in diameter and 14 meters high, weighing about eight tonnes.

It has one thousands halogen lamps surrounded by 600,000 pieces of crystal glasses, sup-



ported by an array of magnificent gold plated structures. At the time it was installed, just a few months before the Grand Mosque was opened in May 2001, the grandiose chandelier was the biggest in the world. The giant chandelier lights up

the glorious carpet. It was intricately weaved by the best carpet makers in the world, the Iran Carpet Company (ICC) based in Tehran. It has an area of 4,263 square meters, weighs a massive 21 tonnes and took 27 months

to make. It has thousands of beautiful patterns of intricate Islamic designs beautifully woven together in great harmony.

"The carpet is a world class work of art. It is a feast for the eyes of any visitor who comes to see it. This is the third time I come to

Oman in the last eight year and I always insist of visiting the Grand Mosque to see it and the magnificent chandelier that hangs over it," Tony Newton, a British tourist, told Times of Oman.

The official statistics show that over 70,000 tourists visit the Grand Mosque in a year, mostly from European countries, Japan and China. The roof of the Grand Mosque is square shaped surrounded by the central dome with a total height of 50 meters. It has five minarets that define the five pillars of Islam. The main minaret is 92 meters tall while the rest are 45 meters high.

Its interior can hold up to 6,500 worshippers while the exterior, surrounded by beautiful gardens, can accommodate around 10,000 people. It also has a separate hall for women that can hold about 4,000 worshippers.



DISCUSSIONS: The 79th Meeting of the Committee of Governors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States' Central Banks also discussed the issues of supervision and control on the banking service in the GCC States. -ONA

GCC central bank heads' committee holds review meeting

DAMMAM (KSA): The 79th Meeting of the Committee of Governors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States' Central Banks discussed yesterday the recommendations of the committees and teams under supervision of the governors' committees concerned with the payments system of the GCC States.

They also discussed the issues of supervision and control on the banking service in the GCC States, the technologies in the banking sector and the integration initiatives in the field.

The meeting discussed exchange of information in cyber security for the banking sector and the GCC States' efforts to combating money laundering and financing terrorism and other issues related to monetary and banking activities.

The meeting was acquainted with the developments and actions taken by the Gulf Monetary Council during the past period. The meeting also reviewed the latest monetary and financial developments in the Gulf Cooperation Council states. -ONA

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CANCERS

2 OCTOBER

<FROM A1

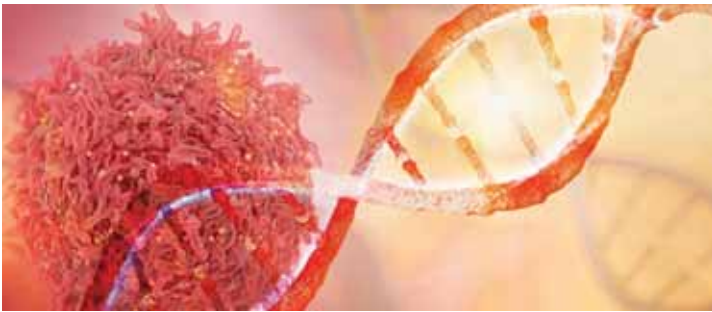
Cure rate of leukaemia in children is over 90%

“As for the second type of cancer among children, it is leukaemia, and the cure rate for it is more than 90 percent in the Department of Hematology and Oncology, and this percentage is equal to the cases of recovery in developed countries like the United States of America, Canada, Britain and others,” Dr. Al Batashi said.

She continued: “The remaining percentage of leukaemia deaths, 5% to be precise, are due to infections or due to medication complications while receiving treatment, or heart muscle weaknesses or blood clotting.”

Dr. Abeer confirmed that 5% of the patients with leukaemia among children return to the disease after recovery, and here the treatment of the disease is difficult, so they are sent to bone marrow transplant centres, either in the Sultanate or abroad, through the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Batashi also spoke about the increasing incidence of cancer among children and said, “In general globally, the rate of increase



in the incidence of cancer among children is about 20-25%, and we have noticed an increase in the incidence of solid cancer among children, especially brain cancer in the Sultanate of Oman.”

Regarding the age groups of the children who come to the Department of Paediatric Hematology and Oncology at the Royal Hospital, she said: “This depends on the type of tumour as, in general, most of the patients are in the range of three to seven years. This includes cases of cancer of the brain, liver, chest, nervous and digestive systems, and others. In the age group

of eight and above, they suffer from leukaemia mostly. Still, they are lesser in number than children with solid cancer.”

Regarding the number of cancer cases among children in 2022 as compared to previous years, Dr. Abeer said: “In 2016, the Sultanate recorded 110 cases of cancer among children, and in 2017, the number of children diagnosed with cancer rose to 120.

In 2021, the number of cases reached 162 and in 2022, the number of solid cancer cases in children till September reached 130 cases. There were 25 cases of

leukaemia this year, bringing the number in general between 150 to 200 cases.”

Dr. Al-Batashi confirmed that the number of cases received by the department in the hospital ranges between 8-10 cases of solid cancer among children, while the number of leukaemia cases is 5-6 cases per month.

Regarding the causes of cancer among children, Dr. Abeer indicated that no one knows the real causes of cancer among children, but there are several reasons for the increase, including increase in the number of births, as well as the increased number of detections and general rise in awareness among people about cancer.

Dr. Abeer added: “There are also negative factors, including the kind of nutrition the child receives, the environment in which he lives, and also the neglect by some parents of their children. Then there are genetic factors although this is rare. Down’s Syndrome is another such factor, besides the seasonal viruses that the child is infected with.”

Indian embassy to mark Day of Non-Violence

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The International Day of Non-Violence is observed on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

According to the General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration, the International Day is an occasion to “disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness”.

Culture of peace

The resolution reaffirms “the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence” and the desire “to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence”.

Embassy of India Muscat, in collaboration with Raja Yoga Centre for Self Development is celebrating the UN International Day of Non-violence, which is marked 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The event will be held at Sur Ball Room of Hotel Muscat Holiday in Al Khuwair at 7.00 pm.

AmitNarang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, who is the Guest of Honour, will speak about the importance of the event.

B.K. Jayanti Kirpalani, European Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University from London, who is also a representative of the United Nations, Geneva, will deliver the key note address. Various dignitaries and youth from Oman will be joining the celebration.

Mahatma Gandhi inspired the world with his faith in truth and justice for all Mankind. He was a great soul who loved even who fought against his ideals to bring about peace with non-violence.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. The force of power never wins against the power of love.

AN OLD ISLAMIC FORT LOCATED IN RAS AL HADD



RAS AL HADD FORT is an old Islamic fort located in Ras al Hadd village in Ash Sharqiyah Governorate, Oman. It is one of the main tourist and historical attractions in the Wilayat of Sur, in particular and the Governorate of South A'Sharqiyah in general. It is located in the Niyabat of Ras Al Hadd, about 35 kilometres away from the centre of the wilayat.

The sun first rises on the Niyabat of Ras Al Hadd in the Arabian Peninsula, and acts as the separation between the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

The fort is located on a high plateau overlooking the residential areas of the Niyabat, as well as naval locations of the ships and the entrance of the Al Hajar creek that runs from the Sea of Oman.

The fort was built during 1560 to 1590 by all tribes of the Niyabat, which took about three decades of construction.

The fort consists of a castle and two towers connected by a large wall. The base is about 3 metres in width. It is a solid foundation built of plaster and stone.

When one arrives at the fort, he or she is faced by a large gate, which is 2.5 metres in width and is 3 metres high.

In the east of the Ras Al Hadd Fort, there is an open room with a large seat. The room is 3 metres wide, 6.5 metres long, and 3.5 metres high.

It was used as a waiting hall, in addition to the Al Sabla room “Majlis,” which was used to settle disputes. It is 3 metres in width, and 4.25 metres in length and 3.5 metres in height. There is also another room that was used as a temporary prison, which is 3 metres wide, 5.25 metres long and 3.5 metres high.

The fort also includes a castle, which used to act as a last line of defence. It is 13.25 metres in height, 13 metres wide and 16 metres long. There is a tower that has a diameter of 7 metres. There is also an 8 metre basement, which turns eastward and out of the borders of the eastern wall extending about 500 metres.



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‘UAE biggest trading partner of Oman at the global level’

Cooperation between Oman and the United Arab Emirates enhances economic and investment opportunities between the two countries

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total amount of non-oil trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the UAE in 2021 amounted to more than AED46 billion, as the UAE is the biggest trading partner of Oman at the global level, Khalifa Shaheen Al Murr, Minister of



Khalifa Shaheen Al Murr, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates, stated.

State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates, stated.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, the minister stressed that cooperation between Oman and the United Arab Emirates en-

hances economic and investment opportunities between the two countries by facilitating procedures for investors, industrialists and businessmen in the fields of industry, advanced technology, future industries, and sustainable industries.

He said that the signing of 16 memoranda of understanding during the visit of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the Sultanate of Oman, covered various sectors, including space, medical and agricultural technology, aviation and others, indicates the support for cooperation and joint coordination in various economic, investment, cultural and development fields. It meets the aspirations of the two countries and achieves their goals in terms of sustainable development, he added.

He pointed out that the agreement to establish Oman and Etihad Rail Company, owned equally by the two sides, worth \$3 billion, and the partnership agreement signed between the Oman Investment Authority and the UAE

Holding Company, worth about one billion Omani rials, shows the two countries’ keenness to deepen and expand bilateral relations to promote growth in vital and priority sectors.

And he indicated that the value of non-oil trade exchange between the two countries in 2021 amounted to more than 46 billion dirhams, a growth of 9 percent over 2020, which makes the Sultanate of Oman the second largest Gulf trading partner of the UAE, with 20 percent of its total trade with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the UAE said that cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates is to provide more economic and investment opportunities by facilitating procedures for investors, businessmen and businessmen as an essential axis of the foreign policy of the two countries for the stability and prosperity of the region.

USA

Oman extends sympathy over loss of lives in Hurricane Ian



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has extended its sympathy to the United States of America over the loss of lives and property in Hurricane Ian that lashed the state of Florida.

A statement issued online by Oman News Agency(ONA) said, “The Sultanate of Oman expresses its sympathy with the United States of America over Hurricane Ian, which swept through the state of Florida. The Sultanate expresses its sincere condolences to the American government, people and families of the victims, and wishes for a speedy recovery for the injured.”

BILATERAL RELATIONS

< FROM A1 ‘Trade exchange and cooperation in industry field set to grow’

He added: “Promoting economic integration will be in the interest of the two countries to reflect the unity of geography, history and a common destiny.”

Reflecting on the visit of the UAE President, a leading Omani businessman, Sheikh Taher bin

Mabkhout Al Junaibi, said: “Such visits between leaders always pave the way for strengthening relations and creating partnerships at various levels and in different fields.

“It strengthens the ties between the two brotherly nations and

among the people of both the countries. The large interest among people about the visit reflected the deep desire and the successful conclusion of the visit.

“The signing of 12 MoUs and four cooperation agreements dealing in various economic and stra-

tegic sectors was welcomed by one and all. The aspirations of the brotherly peoples are to achieve more integration and cooperation.”

Al-Junaibi added: “As a businessman, I see that trade and industry cooperation between the

two countries will develop, especially due to the proximity of the two countries. The passenger and freight train project will link the two countries and will have a positive impact. It will be reflected in easy facilitation of the movement of passengers and goods”

“We thank the wise leaderships of the two countries, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, for what they have achieved. There are many areas in which cooperation can be enhanced further to serve the two brotherly countries,” he said.

NCSI

Fish output value reaches OMR168.8mn

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s fish production decreased by end of May 2022 by 22.6 percent to stand at 346, 391 tonnes compared to 447, 391 tonnes during the same period in 2021, while the total value of fish production increased by 1.9 percent to reach OMR168.8 million compared to the same period in 2021, according to the statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The artisanal fishing sector, which acquires the bulk of fish production in the Sultanate saw a decrease of 24.3 percent to stand at 324, 004 tonnes by end of May 2022 compared to 428, 041 tonnes during the same period in 2021.

Fish landing

The Governorate of Al Wusta topped the Sultanate’s list of landed fish by 126,937 tonnes registering a decrease of 32 percent compared to the same period in 2021, followed by South Al Sharqiyah Governorate with 101,303 tonnes and Dhofar Governorate with 32, 646 tonnes, respectively.

Artisanal fishing

Muscat Governorate’s artisanal fishing increased by 21 percent by end of May 2022 to reach 13,403 tonnes compared to 11,081 tonnes during the same period in 2021.

The coastal and commercial fishing sectors registered an increase by 16.7 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively, according to the statistics of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. -ONA

SANA’A

< FROM A1 Additional relief for Yemenis

This additional relief would include payment for teachers, nurses, and other civil servants who have not been paid in years, expanding flights from Sana’a, opening roads in Taiz and elsewhere, and ensuring the continued flow of fuel.

The US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, reiterated the shared concern about a return to war, which would only bring further destruction and suffering and again needlessly delay a peaceful future for Yemenis.



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India skips UN vote condemning annexation of Ukraine territories

The 15-nation UN Security Council on Friday voted on the draft resolution tabled by the US and Albania

NEW YORK: India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj, said on Friday that India is deeply disturbed by the recent turn of developments in Ukraine and stressed that dialogue is the only answer to settle differences and disputes after India abstained in the UN Security Council vote which condemned Russia's "illegal referenda" and annexation of Ukrainian regions, calling for an immediate cessation of violence.

The 15-nation UN Security Council on Friday voted on the draft resolution tabled by the US and Albania that condemns Russia's "organisation of illegal so-called referenda in regions within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders."

The UN security council voted on the resolutions condemning referendums in Ukraine at UNSC on Friday which were tabled by the US and Albania and failed to get adopted as Russia vetoed it whereas India, China, Gabon, and Brazil abstained.

Explaining the vote, Kamboj urged that all efforts are made by the concerned sides for the immediate cessation of violence and said that dialogue is the only answer to settling differences and disputes.



"Dialogue is the only answer to settling differences and disputes, however daunting that may appear at this moment. The path to peace requires us to keep all channels of diplomacy open," she said during the address at UNSC.

She further highlighted the statements made by the External Affairs Minister in his recent engagements at UNGA during the High-Level Week on the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to Russian President Putin during the SCO Summit in Samarkand that this cannot be an era of war, Kamboj said that India is hopeful of an early resumption of peace talks for resolution of the conflict.

"India's position has been clear and consistent from the very beginning of this conflict. The global order is anchored on principles of the UN Charter, international law and respect for sovereignty and

territorial integrity of all states," the UN envoy added.

"Escalation of rhetoric or tensions is in no one's interest. It is important that pathways are found for a return to the negotiating table. Keeping in view the totality of the evolving situation, India has decided to abstain from this resolution," Kamboj said.

Putin signed the documents on Friday to formally announced the annexation of four regions - Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

Russia's annexation sparked wide criticism from around the world. The United States announced that it will impose a "swift and severe cost" on Russia.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the "United States unequivocally rejects Russia's fraudulent attempt to change Ukraine's internationally recognized borders."

"We will continue the United

States' powerful, coordinated efforts to hold Russia to account, cut Russia's military off from global commerce and severely limit its ability to sustain its aggression and project power," he added.

In an earlier briefing on Tuesday, Kamboj said the Ukraine war has resulted in the loss of countless lives and miseries for people particularly women, children and the elderly with millions becoming homeless and taking shelter in neighbouring countries.

Ruchira Kamboj said that New Delhi will continue to work with the International Community to mitigate economic hardships resulting from the Ukraine conflict.

During the UNSC briefing, the UN envoy also reiterated that India's approach to the ongoing war in Ukraine will be human-centric as the country firmly believe that global order should be anchored on international law in the UN charter. **ANI**



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FLOOD-DEVASTATED

UN seeks \$600mn more aid for flood affected Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations is set to launch another appeal this week for an additional USD 600 million to Pakistan to help the country recover from the impact of the record-breaking floods.

"2nd Follow-up meeting of Steering Committee for Coordination Regarding International Assistance for Flood Relief Activities, chaired by Mr. Humair Karim, Acting Secretary EAD to discuss mapping of humanitarian assistance and relief efforts," Pakistan's Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said in a tweet. "The UN is in process of launching Revised Humanitarian Appeal on 4th of Oct in which additional USD600 million will be asked for immediate relief assistance," it added.

The Dawn newspaper reported that Pakistan EAD Secretary Humair Karim informed donors and relief agencies that the UN would launch the revised humanitarian appeal on October 4 for USD 600m additional aid.

Earlier, the UN launched a flash appeal in August for US 160 million assistance for flood relief support. Karim said the grant was not considered enough in the face of the unprecedented

devastation.

This was announced after a meeting of the Steering Committee for Coordination of International Assistance for Flood Relief Activities, constituted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last month. The meeting was attended by representatives from a number of United Nations agencies and several foreign embassies.

Pakistan has endured severe monsoon weather since mid-June 2022, causing widespread flooding and landslides with severe repercussions on human lives, property, agriculture, and infrastructure.

To date, 81 districts across five of Pakistan's six provinces have been declared 'calamity hit' by the Government of Pakistan -- with Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces being worst hit. As of mid-September, 33 million people had been affected, at least 1,481 persons have died, over 12,720 people have been injured and an estimated 7.6 million persons may be temporarily displaced. The floods have also caused the damage and destruction of 1.8 million houses, with 1.5 million houses in Sindh province alone. **ANI**

5G LAUNCH

PM Modi launches 5G services, says technology has become democratic



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched 5G technology services in India and said that technology has become democratic in its truest sense since even the poor of the country have always come forward in adopting new technologies.

He said that this is a major step in the vision of Digital India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat. "Talking about Digital India, some people think that this is just a government scheme. But Digital India is not just a name, it is a big vision for the country's development," said PM Modi while inaugurating the 6th India Mobile Congress at Pragati Maidan in Delhi and launching 5G services.

PM Modi further said that the goal of this vision is to take that technology to the common people, which works for the people, works with the people.

"I have seen even the poor of the country always come forward to adopt new technologies... Technology has become democratic in its truest sense," he stated.

Modi further stated that there was a time when a handful of elite people doubted the potential of

digital for the poor. "Many people made fun of my vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat...a handful of elite people used to think digital is not for the poor. Go see what political leaders used to say in Parliament. But I had the conviction in the inquisitiveness of the common public," PM Modi said.

"I have always had faith in the understanding of the country's common man, his conscience, and his curious mind," he further stated.

PM Modi said he saw a video where he saw a beggar was taking digital payment. "See his transparency," PM Modi said.

The prime minister said that the number of internet users in villages is increasing faster than in urban areas.

PM Modi also recalled an event when as chief minister of Gujarat, he attended an event in a remote village and was surprised to see tribal women taking photos on their mobiles. "I was so surprised. I went to them and asked them what they will do with these photos. They said, 'download karengi'. They knew the word 'download'," PM Modi recounted.

PM Modi said that in 2014,

there were only two mobile manufacturing units in India but now there were over 200. "Internet users now consume 14GB per month. This used to cost Rs 4,200 per month in 2014. But now it costs somewhere between Rs 125 to Rs 150," PM Modi said.

PM Modi urged industries, and startups to explore how 5G can be brought to everyday life beyond calling and watching videos. "It should become a revolution. It should not be confined only to watching reels," PM Modi said.

The 5G telecom services seek to provide seamless coverage, high data rate, low latency and a highly reliable communications system.

Earlier today the prime minister inspected an exhibition at Pragati Maidan.

The three major telecom operators of the country demonstrated one use case each in front of the Prime Minister to show the potential of 5G technology in India.

Unlike existing mobile communication networks, 5G networks will allow tailoring of requirements for each of these different use cases within the same network. **ANI**



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Hurricane Ian reaches Carolinas after lashing US state of Florida

The storm was downgraded from a hurricane to a post-tropical cyclone as it moved across South Carolina

SOUTH CAROLINA: Hurricane Ian barrelled north on Friday, making a second landfall in South Carolina, two days after carving a path of destruction across central Florida. Ian was upgraded to a Category 1 hurricane as it churned toward the Carolinas, with maximum sustained wind speeds of 85 miles per hour (140 kilometres per hour), the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

After making landfall, the storm was downgraded from a hurricane to a post-tropical cyclone as it moved across South Carolina.

Hours before it made landfall on Friday afternoon, South Carolina's entire coastline was placed on alert, with authorities advising people to seek higher ground.

The warning stretched from the Savannah River to Cape Fear, with flooding rains likely across the Carolinas and southwestern Virginia, the NHC said.

Ian's trail of destruction

Ian was one of the most powerful storms to have struck the US in recent times, with President Joe Biden saying Thursday that it could be the deadliest hurricane in Florida's history.



CATEGORY 1: Ian was upgraded to a Category 1 hurricane as it churned toward the Carolinas, with maximum sustained wind speeds of 85 miles per hour.

At least 17 people have been killed by the hurricane so far, according to media reports.

Officials expect the death toll to rise as rescue teams reach affected areas, especially along Florida's Gulf Coast. Kevin Guthrie, director of Florida's Division of Emergency Management, put the potential death toll at 21.

He said that some 10,000 people in Florida were unaccounted for, although many of them were likely in shelters or without power and unable to contact relatives.

Shortly before Ian made land-

fall in Florida on Wednesday, a boat carrying migrants sank, leaving 23 people missing and four survivors.

'Herculean effort'

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said Friday that rescue crews had gone door-to-door to over 3,000 homes in the hardest-hit areas.

"There's really been a Herculean effort," he said during a news conference in Tallahassee.

Earlier, he described how thousands of personnel were assigned to respond to the storm with 250

aircraft, 300 boats and 1,600 high-water vehicles.

Biden issued a federal disaster declaration, allowing federal aid to be provided to Florida.

Hurricane intensified after hitting Cuba

Ian had battered Cuba as a Category 3 storm just less than 24 hours before nearing Florida.

At least three people were killed on the island. Scientists have long sounded the alarm over how climate change can increase the intensity of extreme weather events. **bw**



Nicaragua cuts diplomatic ties with Netherlands, refuses entry to US envoy

MANAGUA: Nicaragua severed all diplomatic ties with the Netherlands on Friday, according to a statement released by the government.

This development came hours after the Central American country refused entry to the new US ambassador.

The Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the country faced "repeated meddling" and the "interventionist and neocolonialist" position of the Netherlands and decided to "immediately discontinue diplomatic relations."

It said the European country "offended and keeps offending Nicaraguan families."

ment," he added.

US envoy not allowed in

Earlier on Friday, Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo, Ortega's wife, said that US envoy Hugo Rodriguez would not be allowed to enter the country.

"Let that be clear to the imperialists," she said. The government said it withdrew its approval of the new ambassador after he made "disrespectful" comments in a hearing before the Senate.

Hugo had called Nicaragua a "pariah state," labeling Ortega's government a "dictatorship." He also said he would support "all economic and diplomatic tools to bring about a change in direction in Nicaragua" including excluding the country from the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement.

Rise in tensions

The tensions between the countries escalated after the Dutch ambassador for Central America, Christine Pirenne, informed the government that the European nation would not be funding a hospital promised long ago.

President Daniel Ortega lashed out at this news and said, "The ambassador came to speak to Nicaraguans as if Nicaragua is a Dutch colony."

"Those who come to disrespect our people, our homeland, they should not appear again in Nicaragua. And we do not want relations with that interventionist govern-

EU ambassador told to leave

On Wednesday, the Central American country declared the European Union ambassador, Bettina Muscheidt, "persona non grata" without specifying a reason.

On the same day, Ortega also branded the Catholic Church a "perfect dictatorship." Ortega had accused the church of backing the 2018 protests which started against planned welfare cuts by his government but spiraled into a wider protest against him. **bw**

HACKED

Mexico confirms hack of military records, president Obrador's health information

MEXICO CITY: Mexico said on Friday that it had suffered a major hack of data held by the armed forces, including details about the president's heart condition.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador confirmed the theft, which was first revealed by local media overnight.

"It's true, there was a cyber hack," he said, noting that hackers had exploited a change in the military's IT systems.

However, he said that no sensitive information had been stolen.



and South America.

The hacking group has carried out similar attacks in other Latin American countries.

Among the group's previous victims were the militaries of Chile, Peru, Colombia and El Salvador. They've also targeted regional mining and oil companies.

The hacktivists have published a manifesto in Spanish accusing the United States and Western corporations of overexploiting the region's natural resources.

What do we know about the data theft?

The six terabytes of data stolen included, among other things, Lopez Obrador's state of health and a number of security issues, the news portal Latinus reported.

According to Latinus' assessment, tens of thousands of emails and documents were hacked, dating from 2016 to September this year.

The data also reportedly included details of criminal figures, transcripts of communications, and the monitoring of the US ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar.

Other documents referred to details of a failed military operation to arrest a son of drug baron Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in 2019.

Why the fuss about the president's health?

The hack revealed personal details about the 68-year-old president's angina, which he was treated 10 times for in the first half of January.

Lopez Obrador had a heart attack in 2013 and was admitted to hospital at the beginning of the year because of the risk he could suffer another.

The government had previously said the president underwent a cardiac catheterization that month.

Who was behind the hacking?

The hack was reportedly carried out by a group identified in local media as "Guacamaya" or macaw — a bird species native to Central

Critic blasts military's growing influence

A journalist and critic of the government, Carlos Loret said the leak showed how much influence the military had acquired under Lopez Obrador's administration.

The president has tasked the armed forces with everything from building infrastructure to overseeing customs.

"This is also a ministry that lapsed in its cyber security and was left exposed, even as the country debates the role of the armed forces in the country," Loret said in an online video.

Legislation that allows the armed forces to fight crime was extended by lawmakers earlier this month, despite criticism of alleged abuses and concerns the government is militarizing internal security. **bw**

CONDEMNS BLAST

UN official condemns Kabul blast

KABUL: UN special rapporteur for Afghan Human Rights, Richard Bennett condemned the blast in the western Kabul area of Afghanistan and urged to stop international crimes.

Friday's blast claimed at least 19 lives and injured dozens inside the Kaaj Educational Center. Recalling the 2018 attack, Bennett said, "I condemn today's horrific attack on students @Kaaj

Academy #Dasht-e Barchi, #studentsnotargets.the repeat of the 2018 #ISKP attack at same location. The onslaught on #education for #Hazaras & #Shia must end. Stop attacks on #Afghanistan's future, stop international crimes."

While sharing the photo of Kaaj academy before the attack, on his Twitter account, he said, "Image taken @Kaaj Academy before

the attack. Crammed with eager students waiting to take their practice exams, full of hope for a brighter future. A reminder that #Afghanistan's future depends on stopping international crimes, holding perpetrators to account and #educating youth."

Earlier, UNICEF condemned the blast and said that violence in or around education establishments is unacceptable. **ANI**

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PDO INKS PACTS

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) signed six Memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) to support a host of new projects worth \$2.2 million within its social investment programme. The new project will benefit local communities and boost sustainable development across the Sultanate of Oman.

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LARGE CONTAINER SHIPS

Salalah Port is planning to attract very large container ships and raise its handling capabilities, after the company's board of directors approved the conclusion of an agreement to lease 10 cranes that would allow the port to deal with this type of container ships, which can accommodate more than 14,500 containers.

S&P affirms Oman's rating at BB- with stable outlook

This new rating has been attributed to the financial and economic initiatives taken by the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to the improvement in oil prices

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Leading international credit rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) affirmed Oman's credit rating at (BB-) with a stable outlook on Saturday.

This new rating has been attributed to the financial and economic initiatives taken by the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to the improvement in oil prices, the agency said.

S&P further stated in its report issued on Saturday that the financial measures and policies taken by the government within the framework of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and the improvement in oil prices, will



REPORT: S&P stated in its report that the financial measures and policies taken by the government within the framework of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and the improvement in oil prices, will continue to contribute to further strengthening the financial position of Oman in 2022 and 2023. -ONA

continue to contribute to further strengthening the financial position of Oman in 2022 and 2023.

Mohammed Al Wardi, an academic and economic analyst, speaking exclusively to the *Times of Oman*, said, "S&P affirms the Sultanate's sovereign rating at BB- with a stable outlook. Despite expectations of a rating upgrade, due to efforts to control spending and reduce public debt which prove that there is still a long way to go, and we must make more efforts to diversify sources of income and re-

duce the public debt ratio."

The rating agency expects the world average crude oil prices to reach about \$100 per barrel during this year and around \$85 per barrel in 2023.

S&P further explained that the average oil price is expected to decline to start from 2024 to approximately \$55 per barrel on an annual basis, noting that the drop in oil prices will lead to burdens on public finances, and the Sultanate of Oman should pay attention to this when it will set the upcoming

policies and procedures.

The agency confirmed that the rise in production and oil prices and the increase in the pace of investment projects contributed to the growth of Oman's economy, noting that the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) at constant prices of 3 per cent in 2021 and a further rise to about 3.9 per cent in 2022.

The agency stated that the average growth rate of GDP at constant prices will reach about 2.2 per cent during the period 2023-2025. It

also expects the non-oil sector to grow at an average of 2 per cent during the period 2024-2025, compared to a growth of about 1.8 per cent in 2022.

S&P also indicated that the government has benefited from the rise in oil revenues in reducing the volume of public debt and bringing the public debt-to-GDP ratio to 63 per cent and 45 per cent respectively in 2021 and 2022.

The agency further indicated that the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman may rise during the

coming period if financial control measures continue to enhance the financial position and balance of payments of the Sultanate.

The rating may also be affected in the event of lax implementation of financial measures or the occurrence of unexpected factors that lead to a rise in the level of financial deficit.

It is noteworthy that the rating agency Standard & Poor's revised and upgraded the rating of Oman in April of this year from its previous rating of B+ to BB-.

CLEAN ENERGY FACILITY

Saudi Arabia, Oman ministers visit Alfano Industrial City in Riyadh

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Saudi Minister of Investment Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih and his Omani counterpart Qais bin Mohammad Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, visited Alfano Industrial City in Riyadh, which is one of the largest private industrial cities in the Middle East with an area of 720,000 square metres.

Chairman Alfano Eng. Abdul Salam Al-Mutlaq, along with Eng. Amer Al Ajmi, Executive Vice President of Al Fanar, welcomed the ministers and briefed them about the facility and its projects in and outside Saudi Arabia.

Eng. Amer Al Ajmi, Executive Vice President of Alfano Development presented the clean energy projects around the world, a full range of services and products and Alfano investment portfolio.

He briefed the dignitaries about Alfano's capabilities in various sectors and projects, especially renewable energy projects. The presentation followed a discussion about Alfano's initiatives in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world. The visit included a tour of a number of production lines and factories in Alfano Industrial City.

During the tour, the women's section, which began in 2003 with four women, and currently includes



more than 700 Saudi women, working in many departments of factories and production lines, was visited, as the number of female workers increased in these departments in recent years in pursuit of Alfano to empower women in the manufacturing sector.

At the end of the tour, ministers expressed their admiration for the distinguished industrial and administrative level they witnessed during their tour of Alfano Industrial City.

Eng. Abdulsalam Al Mutlaq, Chairman of Alfano, said, "This visit at the level of ministers from Saudi Arabia and Oman, and in

the presence of officials from both parties, comes from their belief in the role of the private sector as a successful partner in localizing the industry and promoting local content in line with the Kingdom's vision 2030."

He said: "Alfano Company has a distinguished experience and accumulated experience gained over the years in the localization of the energy industry, as it had a leading role in the infrastructure work, as well as transferring the techniques of manufacturing electrical and construction products to the Kingdom, to invest in the development of clean energy

projects around the world."

Alfano is one of the first national companies that invested in the future of sustainable energy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, believing in the importance of keeping pace with the global transformation to the clean and renewable energy sector, which is considered a strategic axis to raise its contribution to electricity production and reduce harmful carbon emissions resulting from traditional energy resources.

The company has several renewable energy projects around the world with a capacity of up to 1.8 GW.

STATISTICS

Fixed internet subscription in Oman reaches 534,351

MUSCAT: The total number of fixed-telephone subscriptions connected to the Internet Protocol (IP) increased by 10.3 per cent at the end of August 2022, while the total number of fixed-Internet subscribers in the Sultanate of Oman reached about 534,351 subscribers, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Of this, total fixed telephone line subscriptions reached 569,551 until the end of August 2022, a decrease of 1.4 per cent compared to the end of August 2021. As for the analogue fixed telephone lines, which include prepaid and postpaid, the total amounted to 252,553 subscribers and the number of fixed telephone subscribers connected through the Internet Protocol reached 259,753.

Moreover, integrated services digital network (ISDN) channel subscriptions registered a slight increase of 0.9 per cent to reach 49,427 subscriptions, while the number of fixed wireless subscriptions decreased by 18 per cent at the end of August 2022.

The total number of mobile phone subscriptions increased by 11.9 per cent at the end of August 2022 to reach 6.56 million.

The total number of subscriptions to fixed broadband services (more than 256 kbit/s) reached 532,313, while the number of subscriptions via low-speed in-



ternet (less than 256 kbit/s), including dial-up and some leased Internet lines, reached 2,038.

The number of active mobile broadband Internet subscriptions reached 5,704,282 at the end of August 2022, while the total international capacity of the Internet reached 2,421,935 megabytes, an increase of 66.8 per cent for the same period in the previous year.

The number of leased local districts reached about 5,141 districts, while the number of telex line users settled at 116 subscriptions until August 2022.

The total international capacity of the Internet went up by 3.4 per cent to hit 1,461,777 megabytes compared to the same period in 2020.

Moreover, the number of local leased circuits reached 5,141, whereas the number of Telex line subscriptions stood at 116 until the end of August 2022. -ONA

HUTCHISON PORTS SOHAR

Ministry signs agreement to develop, operate Khasab Port

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology signed a framework agreement with international container terminal company Hutchison Ports Sohar to develop, manage and operate Khasab Port.

Feasibility study

The agreement states that the company will receive Khasab Port, manage and operate it as of October 1. It is a condition, that during the first and second years, the company will prepare a detailed feasibility study on all terms agreed with the ministry,

based on the results of a commercial study. The study cites requirements for the port's infrastructure and expansion plan, as well as development, operation and management mechanisms.

Preliminary outline

The sets preliminary outlines for broad lines of the final negotiations — scheduled to start during the third year — in preparation for the signing of a long-term agreement for the development, management and operation of the port over 30 years.

The agreement was signed by Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister

of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and Andy Tsoi, representative of Hutchison Ports in the Mena region.

Al Ma'awali pointed out that the next two years will see the formulation of a vision for the development and expansion of the port. He added that the company may include local partners in the port management process.

Meanwhile, Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, said that the framework agreement sets the pace for a stage of commercial activity in the Port of Khasab, "the beating heart of the city of Khasab". -ONA





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Salalah Port plans to soon attract large container ships

The plan of Salalah Port to attract large container ships includes the conclusion of an agreement with Maersk AS to commit to providing container capacity at the Port of Salalah according to the terms that will be presented to shareholders for approval during the ordinary general meeting.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Salalah Port is planning to attract very large container ships and raise its handling capabilities, after the company's board of directors approved the conclusion of an agreement to lease 10 cranes that would allow the port to deal with this type of container ships, which can accommodate more than 14,500 containers. The company said in a disclosure on the website of the Muscat Stock Exchange that the lease agreement will be signed with "ABM Terminal BV" after obtain-

ing the approval of the shareholders on this proposal, which will be discussed at a meeting of the ordinary general assembly of the company during the coming period. M Terminal BV is a shareholder in Salalah Port Services Company and owns 30 per cent of the company's total capital of OMR17.9 million. The Board of Directors of Salalah Port Services Company approved an investment of no more than \$66 million to establish the necessary infrastructure for the delivery and installation of equipment. The plan of Salalah Port to attract large container ships in-



cludes the conclusion of an agreement with Maersk AS to commit to providing container capacity at the Port of Salalah according to the terms that will be presented to

shareholders for approval during the ordinary general meeting. Salalah Port Services said that a commitment agreement was proposed to provide capacity to

support the development. The container terminal will serve very large container ships and will be conditional on the completion of development work.

DATA
India's core infra sector growth slows to 3.3% in August

NEW DELHI: The production of eight core infrastructure sectors that includes coal, steel, cement, crude oil and electricity grew by 3.3 per cent in August, the slowest pace in nine months, as per the government data released. The combined Index of Eight Core Industries increased by 3.3 per cent (provisional) as compared to the Index of August 2021, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement. The production of fertilisers, coal, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity industries increased in August 2022 over the corresponding period of last year. CI measures the combined and individual performance of production in selected eight core industries viz coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity. The eight core industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). The final growth rate of index of eight core industries for May 2022 is revised to 19.3 per cent from its provisional level 18.1 per cent. -ANI

SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

PDO inks six pacts worth \$2.2 million

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) signed six Memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) to support a host of new projects worth \$2.2 million within its social investment programme. The new project will benefit local communities and boost sustainable development across the Sultanate of Oman. The signing ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health. The initiatives include key areas in the fields of health, safety and the environment (HSE), community infrastructure development as well as enhancing the education sector. To encourage the provision of the best medical services across the country, PDO will fund the purchase of medical devices for the Royal Hospital's capacity. PDO also committed to supporting the Oman Hereditary Blood Disorders Association's (OHBDA) activities for the year 2022/2023. As part of this agreement, the Company is creating a mobile application to facilitate blood donation, while also funding medical



training for health workers, purchase of syringe drivers, and joint replacement surgeries. PDO External Affairs and Value Creation Director Abdul Amir Abdul Hussein Al Ajmi said, "PDO continues to expand its Social Investment programme to support the communities." "Our dedication and support are aimed at meeting community needs by providing critical facilities and services in areas such as health, safety, environment and

cultural preservation. We will thrive only if the communities in which we work prosper, and these initiatives will undoubtedly empower residents and contribute to the sustainable development of Omani communities." In line with PDO's pathway to sustainability, the company is funding the construction of a central nursery for Al Wusta Governorate associated with developing the infrastructure and setting up a fence. The project will supply seedlings to

PDO's concession area and contribute to its efforts for carbon credits. PDO is also funding the construction of two public parks in Al Ghubra North and Al Ghubra South in the Wilayat of Al Jazir. These parks will provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreational benefits to the concession areas and create four job opportunities. Moreover, to support STEM education, PDO will sponsor a programme which aims to teach science subjects in an interactive way that boosts creativity and supports innovation skills. The programme will cover eleven schools in the concession area and will include the provision of the curriculum, materials for science classes, audio-visual technology equipment and lab furniture. In addition, and as part of the ongoing programme funded by PDO to increase the number of classrooms in 12 schools within PDO's concession area, an additional number of classrooms will be built in Najid school in the Wilayat of Thamrit and Kuboot School in Shaleem. -ONA

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

IMF MD welcomes creation of new Food Shock Window to help countries address food insecurity

WASHINGTON: Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), welcomed the creation of a new Food Shock Window to help countries address food insecurity. "I am very pleased to announce that the IMF's Executive Board today approved a new Food Shock Window under our emergency financing instruments, the Rapid Credit Facility and Rapid Financing Instrument," said Kristalina Georgieva in statement. "The new financing window will provide additional access to emergency financing to countries that have urgent balance of payments needs and are suffering from acute food insecurity, a sharp food imports shock, or from a cereals export shock. The new financing window will be open for one year. "For some time now, the combination of climate shocks, the pandemic and regional conflicts has disrupted food production and distribution, driving up the cost of feeding people and families.

"As a result, a food crisis is spreading around the globe with a record 345 million people whose lives and livelihoods are in immediate danger from acute food security," Georgieva said. "The IMF, working with partner institutions, is actively contributing to the international response to food insecurity, notably by providing policy advice and financial assistance. The newly established Food Shock Window will provide an additional line of defence after grants and concessional financing. "We have worked extensively and expeditiously with our members and staff to finalise the proposal for the new Food Shock Window. "At a time of such need and suffering, I am grateful to our membership and proud that the Fund has come together and responded so swiftly. We have worked with our members to secure additional channelling of SDRs which can help provide support to low-income countries through this new food shock window," she added. -WAM



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GLOBAL MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIALISATION SUMMIT

GMIS key platform for discussing ways of shaping future of industrial sector

PENNSYLVANIA: Several specialists and experts in the industrial sector stated that the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit (GMIS) is a key platform for gathering innovators, industrialists and representatives of international companies to discuss ways of shaping the future of the industrial sector, as well as connecting manufacturers and governments to help realise the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In their statements to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) during GMIS-USA 2022 currently held in Pittsburgh, the officials and experts noted that the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) is working closely with its partners in the UAE, Lloyd's Register and the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) of the University of Cambridge to launch the Global Initiative for Future Industrial Safety. Ibtisam Ali Al Saadi, Director of the Industrial Development Administration at the Department of Economic Development-Abu Dhabi, said that GMIS-USA is an opportunity to gather the major players of the UAE's manufacturing sector and help strengthen Abu Dhabi's industrial sector. He then talked about Abu Dhabi's industrial strategy and the new investment opportunities it offers, in which it will invest AED10 billion to double the size of its manufacturing sector to

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation's key mission is to help establish a sustainable and comprehensive global industrial sector and enable companies in the industrial sector, especially SMEs

AED172 billion by 2031, increase its trade with global markets, and create a smart circular economy. Farrukh Alimjanov, Industrial Development Expert at UNIDO, said that UNIDO's key mission is to help establish a sustainable and comprehensive global industrial sector and enable companies in the industrial sector, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to increase their competitiveness, ensure the economic prosperity of their communities, encourage exports and diversify sources of income.

Dr. Carlos López-Gómez, head of Policy Links of IfM Engage at the University of Cambridge, said that IfM has been an active participant in GMIS over the past five years. He noted that the summit is a key platform for the industrial community to gather and discuss the challenges they are facing caused by modern technologies and geopolitical events. He said that the global initiative for future industrial safety is the outcome of the cooperation between UNIDO, Lloyd's Register and GMIS. It aims to address industrial safety challenges, and highlights the importance of having awareness to solve these challenges. UNIDO's statistics show that nearly three million people are killed in work-related accidents around the world. "We are currently working closely with our partners to launch a global declaration for industrial safety, which is the first step to implementing the Global Initiative for Future Industrial Safety. It contains key guidelines that must be adopted by the international industrial community to create safe workplaces for the global labour force," López-Gómez said, adding that the declaration is an international document that will encourage companies and establishments to adopt these guidelines and implement relevant recommendations. -WAM

FACTORY ACTIVITIES

China PMI picks up in September

BEIJING: China's factory activities returned to expansion territory in September, with most industries showing improved sentiment, as the recovery momentum of the world's second-largest economy continues to consolidate. The purchasing managers' index (PMI) for China's manufacturing sector came in at 50.1 in September, up from 49.4 in August, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a reading below 50 reflects contraction. "As policies and measures to stabilise the economy continue to take effect this month, and the negative effects of heatwaves wane, the manufacturing PMI has bounced back to expansion territory," the bureau's senior statistician Zhao Qinghe said. Business activities of manufacturing companies have picked up pace as the manufacturing sector enters peak season, Zhao said. The sub-index for production reached 51.5 in September, up 1.7 points from the previous month. Specifically, the PMI of industries such as food and beverages, medicine, and equipment manufacturing rose to above 54, indicating expanded production. -Xinhua

THE STUDY FOUND THAT 24-MONTH-OLD CHILDREN WHO SPENT LESS THAN 60 MINUTES LOOKING AT SCREENS EACH DAY AND THOSE WHO ENGAGED IN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HAD BETTER EXECUTIVE FUNCTION THAN THOSE WHO DIDN'T MEET THE GUIDELINES



LIFESTYLE

MORE PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND LESS SCREEN TIME LINKED TO BETTER EXECUTIVE FUNCTION IN TODDLERS

A new study explored whether adherence to American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for diet and physical activity had any relationship with toddlers' ability to remember, plan, pay attention, shift between tasks and regulate their own thoughts and behaviour, a suite of skills known as executive function.

As reported in The Journal of Pediatrics, the study found that 24-month-old children who spent less than 60 minutes looking at screens each day and those who engaged in daily physical activity had better executive function than those who didn't meet the guidelines.

"Executive function underpins your ability to engage in goal-directed behaviours," said Naiman Khan, a kinesiology and community health professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign who led the study with graduate student Arden McMath and food science and human nutrition professor Sharon Donovan. "It includes abilities such as inhibitory control, which allows you to regulate your thoughts, emotions, and behaviour; working memory, by which you are able to hold information in mind long enough to accomplish a task; and cognitive flexibility, the adeptness with which you switch your attention between tasks or competing demands."

"We sought to test the hypothesis that healthy weight status and adherence to the AAP guidelines for diet and physical activity would extend to higher executive function in 24-month-old children," McMath said.

Through its Bright Futures initiative, the AAP recommends that children spend less than 60 minutes looking at screens each day, engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity, consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables and minimise or eliminate the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Previous research has linked adherence to physical activity guidelines, screen time, and diet quality with executive function in school-aged or adolescent children, according to McMath.

"We focused on an earlier stage in child development to investigate whether and how early in life these associations begin," she said.

The families of the 356 toddlers in the new research are par-

ticipants in the STRONG KIDS 2 cohort study, a long-term examination of the interdependent factors that affect eating habits and weight trajectories of children who are followed from birth to 5 years old. The study uses parental surveys and data on the children collected at eight-time points over five years, including when the children are 24 months old.

"The surveys asked parents to report on several aspects of their child's daily habits, including how much time they looked at screens, how physically active they were, whether they had at least five servings of fruits and vegetables and whether they refrained from drinking sugar-sweetened beverages," McMath said.

The parents also responded to a standard survey designed to measure executive function in toddlers. They were asked to rate their child's ability to plan and organise their thoughts, regulate their emotional responses, inhibit impulses, remember information, and shift their attention between tasks.

The team used a structural equation modelling technique to assess the direct and indirect relationships between adherence to the AAP guidelines and executive function in toddlers.

"We found that children who engaged in less than 60 minutes of screen time per day had considerably stronger ability to actively control their own cognition than those who spent more time staring at phones, iPads, televisions and computers," McMath said. "They demonstrated improved inhibitory control, working memory, and overall executive function."

Toddlers who got daily physical activity also did significantly better on tests of working memory than those who didn't, the researchers found.

While the study found no significant relationship between the children's weight status and executive function, it suggested that "associations between health behaviours and executive function may precede observed relationships between executive function and weight status" in older children, the authors wrote.

"The influence of engaging in healthy behaviours on cognitive ability appears to be evident in early childhood, particularly for behaviours involving physical exercise and sedentary time," Khan added. -ANI



SPORTS

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OMANI LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER HAMED AL HARTHI PUSHES THE LIMIT IN NICE CÔTE D’AZUR BY UTMB RACE



OMAN’S LONG-DISTANCE runner, Hamed Al Harthi, has returned from the Nice Côte d’Azur by UTMB® race with a lot of learnings. The race which started in the snowy peaks of the French Alps to the clear blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea in Nice had its diverse set of challenging conditions but determined Al Harthi pushed the limits to complete 115km out of the 165km distance in 33 hours but had to withdraw due to injury. From the start to the withdrawal point, Hamed accumulated a total elevation of 6,500 metres, with the conditions ranging from terrestrial rains, slippery slopes to frost, but with 51km still to go he was left with no option but to stop running.

He said, “Immediately after the start of the race there was a very steep hill with 1,600 metres in elevation, from the summit of 2,600 metres we crossed the peak in extreme cold conditions and I fell a couple of times on the rocks. At night the weather became treacherous, and I could not feel my fingers. After more than 115km the pain in my hands and the blisters in my feet was too much and unbearable, so I decided to withdraw to prevent further injuries.”

“It was tough, very challenging,

but I have learned a lot and will continue to train for the next challenge,” he added.

Oman was also represented by a host of star runners and promising athletes like Saud Al Nasibi, Naama Al Hashhmi, Sami Al Saidi, Essam Al Zadjali, Issa Al Abri, Hamed Al Qassabi and Yahya Al Abri, who all gave their best performance in tough ultra run.

Despite this setback, 64-year-old Hamed is certain this experience will not be the last of his illustrious ultra-marathon career. Speaking upon his return to Oman, he was enthusiastic about learning a lot from this race and his desire to continue training. Hamed is a lifelong runner and has finished many of the world’s most challenging races, including Oman by UTMB® in 2018, Argentina’s Ushuaia by UTMB® in 2019 and UTMB® Mont Blanc 2021. He has also reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro and completed the epic 560km ‘Border to Coast’ challenge from Um Zumul, where the borders of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates converge, to Sur in eight days. He was supported by Vodafone Oman in this venture in Nice, France.





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ROUND-UP



Check out football-inspired Kappa collection for men and women

Whether you are among the lucky few who managed to snag the ticket to the stadium, or planning to support your team from the comfort of your living room with friends — here's the exclusive first look at the football-inspired Kappa collection for men and women to kick off the waiting

MUSCAT: The World Cup fever has hit us and how. With the season of high energy, good sportsmanship, and cheering for our favourite



football team right around the corner, here's a collection that is all set to match your sporting fervour. Collectables that cherish the historic moment of witnessing a match happening closer home, the collection — designed in the colour

of fan-favourite teams — is an ode to good sportsmanship and unity in diversity. Though divided by teams that we support, the collective spirit of the game calls for realising a dream of fair play, friendship, and peace among different countries.



Whether you are among the lucky few who managed to snag the ticket to the stadium, or planning to support your team from the comfort of your living room with friends — here's the exclusive first look at the football-inspired Kappa collection for men and women to kick off the waiting.

Saudi Arabia
Beautiful white and green accents highlight this football-themed kit that pays homage to the colours that the official Saudi team will sport in the world cup. With a prominent patch in the front and knitted tape-like accents in white and green, this comfy set comes in two variations: you can take your pick from the T-shirt-shorts set or the tracksuits in green to cheer your team as they

score the winning goal.

Qatar
It's no doubt that cheers will reverberate through the stadium when the men in maroon come to play. Match the colours of the Qatari team in these stylish sets that boast an eye-catching pattern. A plethora of options await you from shorts and T-shirt sets that you can use on the field to cosy tracksuits with zip puller fastening.

Argentina
Chant Vamos Argentina in these magnificent sets that celebrate the beautiful game in colours of citrus, bonnie blue, and white. With an uncanny likeness to the World Cup kits donned by the players, these smart options can be styled with ease —

whether you are involved in a friendly neighbourhood match or cheering your team from the bleachers.

Brazil
With electrifying colours that mirror your excitement, the vibrant palette of the Brazilian flag comes alive in this selection. Functional sets accentuated by the unmistakable Kappa logo; these must-haves will make you stand out in the crowd as you cheer on your favourite team. Cosy hoodie, dry-fit tee, or a tracksuit— let us know your pick for the match day!

France
When the reigning champions come into the arena, it is sure to be a spectacle worth remembering. Join the cheering squad with these sporty and stylish ensembles that are identical to the palette of blue and white that the team will wear in the World Cup. With a graphic design on the front and stylish placement of the Kappa logo, this unique collectable is the perfect keepsake to mark this exciting season of the game.

Didn't find your team on this list? Worry not. Check out more football-inspired fashion from Kappa in your favourite team's colours. Now available in stores and online at Splash.

AWARD WINNING SUV

Discover next-level motoring comfort with 2022 edition Cadillac XT4 SUV

MUSCAT: The epitome of motoring comfort and convenience, Cadillac's XT4 is far more than just an award winning SUV with stunningly good looks. It has been designed and equipped to make every journey a positive and even invigorating experience, particularly for those with busy lifestyles. This distinctive characteristic is strongly evident in the 2022 edition of the XT4, which blends an athletic design and innovative technologies with fun-to-drive agility and a turbocharged performance.



Available in three trims – Luxury, Premium Luxury and Sport – Cadillac's compact SUV exudes elegance and sophistication. Standard across the XT4 range are the parent brand's signature styling elements, which includes advanced LED lighting technology, front and rear, with front LED low and high-beam headlamps and an LED-illuminated light blade for the daytime running lamps. Powering the XT4 is Cadillac's 2.0L turbo engine paired with a nine-speed automatic transmission featuring next-generation Electronic Precision Shift. A twin-clutch, decoupling AWD system is available on all trims. Automatic stop/start helps optimise performance and ef-

iciency in all driving conditions. Leveraging Cadillac's industry-leading technologies, the XT4 takes motoring comfort and convenience to the next level. A bold, refined and spacious cabin echoes the exterior design themes, offering a great balance of style and comfort. In addition to an 8-inch colour touch-screen, technology options include colour reconfigurable display, head-up display, wireless phone charging, and power telescopic steering column. Cabin space is a notable facet of the XT4. Thanks to ample rear leg room and knee clearance for back-seat passengers, every seat in the XT4 is clearly the 'best seat in the house'. Furthermore, cargo room

is exponentially increased when the rear seats are folded. Ensuring a smooth drive regardless of road conditions is the brand's rotary control feature that allows the driver to adjust the drive mode depending on the need with simple motions. Adding to the cabin ambience is an expansive Ultraview Panoramic Sunroof which spans the front and rear passenger seats. Connectivity and infotainment are outstanding features of the XT4, which integrates the all-new Cadillac User Experience System based on wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Also available is a premium Bose system, complete with 13 high-performance

speakers with Centerpoint and Surround sound technologies. This system also features Active Sound Management - Engine Harmonic Cancellation technology. Safety features and other thoughtful innovations ensure peace of mind when driving the XT4. They include: Eight Airbags, Front Pedestrian Braking, Automatic Emergency Braking, Forward Collision Alert, Safety Alert Seat, Rear Seat Reminder, HD Rear Vision Camera and Rear Park Assist. Also optional are some highly acclaimed features, notably the Driver Awareness package, Safety package, Comfort and convenience package, and Enhanced visibility package, which include several additional features available on the Luxury and Premium Luxury trims. OTE Group, exclusive distributors of Cadillac in the Sultanate of Oman, is offering a number of complimentary benefits against the purchase of the XT4. Bundled with the competitive price offer is a Premium Care package that includes 4 years/100,000 km warranty coverage, 5 years/100,000 km service and maintenance coverage, and 4 years roadside assistance coverage.

HEALTHCARE



World Heart Day celebrations at Al Hayat International Hospital

MUSCAT: Al Hayat International hospital celebrated World Heart Day. Al Hayat has completed 26 years of its glorious journey in the healthcare sector and is committed to providing quality healthcare at an affordable price. Dr K.P Raman, chairman and renowned Cardiologist, Dr Mohammed Deeb –Director – National heart centre & senior Interventional cardiologist, Dr Zaheerudeen Mohammed, Medical Director, Hamdan –Director HR, Avinash Prasannan – Senior Operations manager & Pradeep Kumar –Operations Manager took part in the world heart day celebration.

Dr Raman who has a legacy of more than 30 years of service in the field of Cardiology said that this year's world heart day theme "Use heart for every heart" inspires us to provide equal opportunities and facilities for every heart patient and community. It tells us the importance of preventive heart care. I urge everyone to take a pledge on this World Heart Day to adopt heart-healthy practices: good diet, exercise, quitting bad habits and regular heart screening. He also said that as a part of social commitment Al Hayat will be providing Free cardiology consultations with ECG on October 8 & 9.

DEVELOPING SPORTS

Omran partners with Spartan Arabia to host Spartan races in Oman

MUSCAT: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) has partnered with 'Spartan Arabia' to host Spartan races at several prominent tourist attractions across the Sultanate of Oman. This comes as part of the group's continued efforts to bring some of the world's most renowned sporting events and activities to the country. Such events draw in a large number of contestants and spectators from all over the world and contribute to the promotion and visibility of Oman as a prominent global tourist destination. Under the partnership, two Spartan races will be held in two different locations before the end of the year, attracting adventure and challenge lovers from across the region. Timed to coincide with Al Sarb (the spring season) and with the support of the Dhofar Municipality, the Dhofar Governorate will host the first Spartan race on 14 October. The second will be held in Muscat as part of the Oman World Cup Programme on December 16 and 17. The CEO of the Omran Group, Hashil bin Obaid Al Mahrouqi, said, "The partnership with Spar-



tan Arabia embodies our efforts to provide visitors and residents with diverse tourism products in line with the National Tourism Strategy. Furthermore, these races represent the tireless efforts of several parties in developing Oman's sports tourism sector, which in return contributes to the promotion of various tourist destinations across the country and attracts visitors from both inside and outside the Sultanate. This also further strengthens the tourism sector's role in achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040."

Rayyan Yacob Agha, Managing Director of Spartan Arabia, said, "Our vision is to create a bright future for obstacle racing in the Sultanate of Oman, together with Omran Group. We are confident that the Spartan races will become one of the Sultanate's premier sporting events, inspiring both the local youth as well as tourists from all over the world." The first Spartan race will take place in the Wilayat of Salalah, adjacent to Ad Dahariz Beach, and is aimed at both individuals and families. It will feature several independent races, including a Spartan Sprint - 5 km, 20 obstacles, and a Spartan Super - 10 km, 25 obstacles. There will also be three Spartan Kids races exclusively for children. Those interested in participating can register via the Spartan's website <https://arabia.spartan.com>, no later than 12 October 2022. Registered participants will have the opportunity to join complementary workout tours at the Khor Ad Dahariz Beach on 30 September and 7 October 2022.

WELL-CURATED PRODUCTS

Danube Home launches all-new My Garden 2023 eCatalogue

MUSCAT: Danube Home, the leading home improvement and furniture retailer in the region launched its latest Garden collection at its showroom in Al Barsha on September 29. The grand unveiling of the My Garden 2023 e-catalogue was done by world's finest tennis sensation, Sania Mirza, in the presence of members of the press and top management of Danube Home. "The theme of the Danube Home My Garden 2023 e-catalogue this year is 'From Dream to Reality'. The catalogue showcases extremely well-curated products for all kinds of outdoor spaces, be it a small apartment balcony or a sprawling lawn or backyard in a villa. The designs cater to different aesthetic sensibilities which means everyone will find something they love to make their dream garden a reality," said Adel Sajjan, Managing Director, Danube Group. The outstanding range of garden products at Danube Home includes gazebos and pergolas, balcony sets, sofa sets, dining sets, swings, parasols, outdoor lighting, and garden accessories. The entire collection is designed to be sturdy



and durable to withstand weather conditions outdoors. Danube Home also offers design and develop services for customers looking to get customised solutions for their home interiors and exteriors. "When designing a home or a garden, customers are often inspired by images they see on Pinterest or home design magazines. Their home is their pride and joy and each person has their very own idea of how their dream home looks. With Danube Home My Garden 2023, we decided to make these dreams come true. Our products have been curated after a careful study of what our customer needs and what's cur-

rently trending," says Sayed Habib, Director, Danube Home.com. Apart from being the guest of honour at the launch, Sania Mirza is also a Danube Home customer who was all praises for the brand and what they had done in her villa. "I am so happy to be at the launch of the Danube Home My Garden Catalogue 2023. I chose Danube Home to design my villa in Dubai and they have truly done such a great job. One of my favourite things about my villa here is the ample outdoor spaces. Danube Home converted these spaces into me-time spots, entertainment spots, and kid's play areas with their stunning selection of outdoor products," said Sania.



ROUND-UP

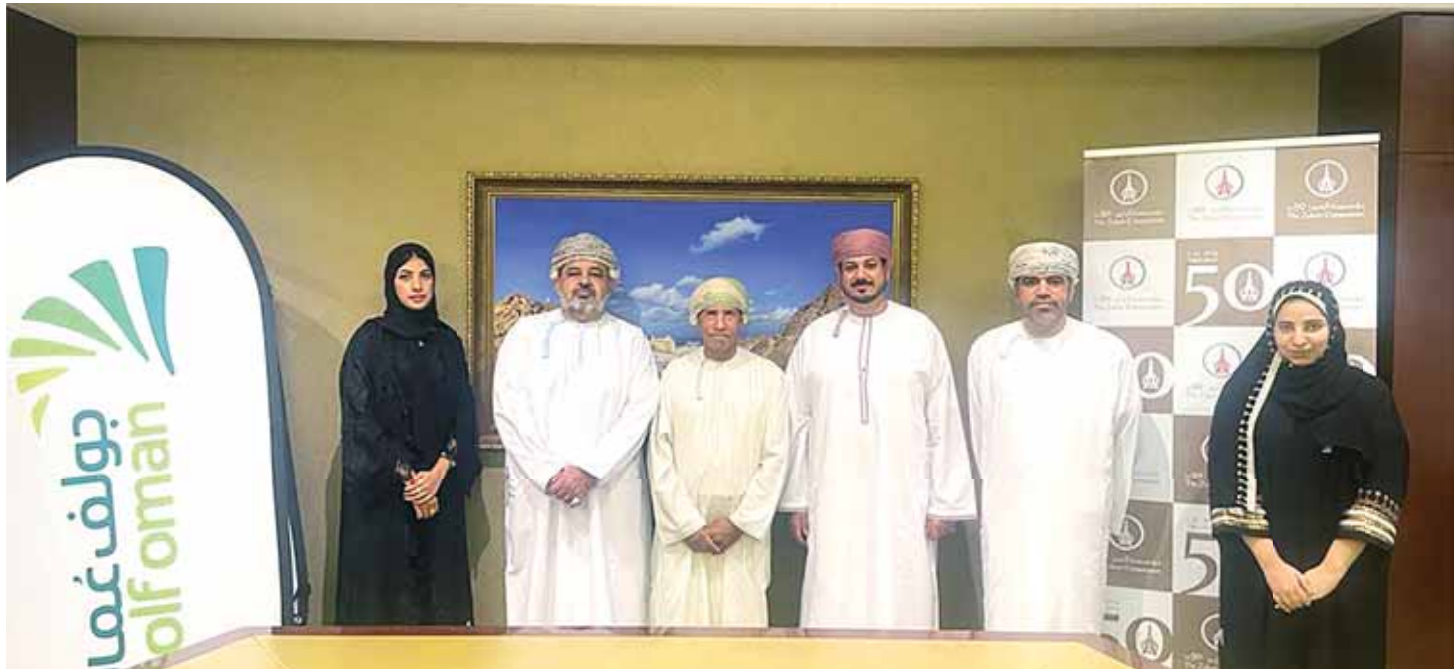


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Z-Corp sponsors Muscat Open Golf Championship



This step stems from the framework of the corporation’s policy to support activities and events conducted by sports associations and committees in the Sultanate, and enhance its role in the development of the local community

MUSCAT: The Zubair Corporation recently supported and sponsored the Oman Open Golf Championship, organised by the Oman Golf Association.

This step stems from the framework of the corporation’s policy to support activities and events conducted by sports associations and committees in the Sultanate, and enhance its role in the development of the local community. In addition, it will also contribute

towards strengthening its partnership between government and private entities and supporting sports activities, by promoting them as tourism-based events.

This championship will be held in seven rounds, taking place across famous locations in Italy. It will kick off in September and conclude in Muscat in March 2023. The event will see the presence of several invitees, ranging from businessmen, investors, members of the seven

clubs and other notable individuals.

Highlighting the importance of the event, Hilal Al Siyabi, Chief Corporate Services Officer at The Zubair Corporation, stated, “The support extended by the Zubair Corporation to the Oman Open Golf Championship falls within the company’s framework of social responsibility. Through this step, we seek to promote the activities of various sports committees and associations and enable them to play their role in empowering the youth through sport or providing exposure to the Sultanate in global events. Over the years, the Corporation has previously sponsored several cultural and sports activities, which have had a positive impact on local associations.”

From his side, Munther Al Barwani, Chairman of the Oman Golf Association, said, “Golf has gained immense popularity in recent years, attracting several enthusiasts to take part on a large scale, as well as an increasing number of local and foreign players. Hosting the Oman Open Golf Championship is part of the initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to attract foreign investment and tourism to the Sultanate. The tournament will be held in seven rounds at seven different clubs in Milan, Italy. Players who qualify from each round will then come together for the final round, which will be held in Muscat, Oman, averaging a total of 14 players.”

“We will be presenting the participants with traditional Omani gifts at each round. We are also looking forward to seeing the presence of a number of notable personalities from the fields of business, tourism and media across Europe in the final round of the championship. Moreover, together with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, we will be conducting a cultural and economic tourism programme for the visiting delegation, over two days. This will include sessions that target entrepreneurs, as well as introductory investment tours,” he concluded.



INFINITI launches special offer with exciting benefits

MUSCAT: To make the ownership experience extra special, INFINITI Oman has introduced a special scheme on some of INFINITI’s popular models. Range of offers on specific INFINITI models include free registration, free insurance, periodic vehicle maintenance, manufacturer’s warranty, AAA/ Road assistance card.

The special promotion which started on September 25 is valid till November 24. The scheme is applicable for all the customers purchasing INFINITI vehicles for personal use only. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme. Vehicles bought for taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet, and rent-a-car usage will not be eligible for this scheme. The scheme is applicable for retail billing only.

A senior spokesperson at INFINITI Oman, said, “We are happy to put together a great scheme which will help customers buy their dream INFINITI with a combination of great incentives. INFINITI vehicles continue to be amongst the best-selling vehicles in Oman for obvious reasons. They are an excellent choice for anyone looking for powerful performance, safe drive, and comfortable interiors.”

All customers purchasing INFINITI Q50, Q60, QX50, QX55, QX60, QX80 in the scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle registration.

All customers purchasing INFINITI Q50 in the scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle insurance (Oman & UAE only). Offer valid for INFINITI Q50 3.0t SEN VISIBILITY MY22 only.

Customers purchasing INFINITI Q50, Q60, QX50, QX55, QX60, QX80 in the scheme period will get free Periodic Vehicle Maintenance of three years or 50,000 kms (whichever is earlier). This offer excludes battery and wear & tear components. This offer includes only the Service intervals of 10,000km.

All INFINITI vehicles: Q50, Q60, QX50, QX55, QX60, QX80 purchased in the scheme period will have a three years / 100,000 kms manufacturer’s warranty.

Free AAA / Road Assistance card will be given on the purchase of INFINITI Saloon Cars & SUV vehicles only, for the First year only and as supported by AAA Oman & UAE.

SBA is largely committed to supporting INFINITI Oman’s growth in the Sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of more than 40 showrooms, service centers and parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.



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Kempinski Hotel launches taste of Zale



MUSCAT: In preparation for the winter season, Zale will launch its new seasonal menu with a three-day event, from October 4 to 6, featuring international guest chefs Joe Barza and Alex Samoilis, together with the hotel’s executive chef, Julien, and his team.

On the first two nights, celebrity chefs Joe and Alex will prepare exquisite selections of the new seasonal menu, featuring highlights such as fresh Omani seafood, authentic sushi platters and prime beef dishes with Grecian influences. A special Chef’s Table evening will be held on 6 October by both chefs, together with the hotel’s culinary team, presenting a truly remarkable experience of premium signature dishes in true Kempinski style.

Greek chef Alex is known for working in Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe and Greece and across the Arab region. He has worked with celebrity chefs such as Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver, three-Michelin-starred Clare Smyth, Jason Atherton and many more. Chef Alex has accumulated over ten years of experience in renowned restaurants around the world, including private yachts, and will bring authentic flavours, along with his personal touch in his dishes, that will be presented at Zale.

Chef Joe is also not new to the game. He has hosted several culinary events at Kempinski Hotel Muscat, each time with much success. Specialising in Levantine cuisine, chef Joe has been featured in major international media outlets, including CNN and The New York Times, and many more. He has also been involved as head judge in several programmes in addition to the popular Middle Eastern version of “Top Chef”.



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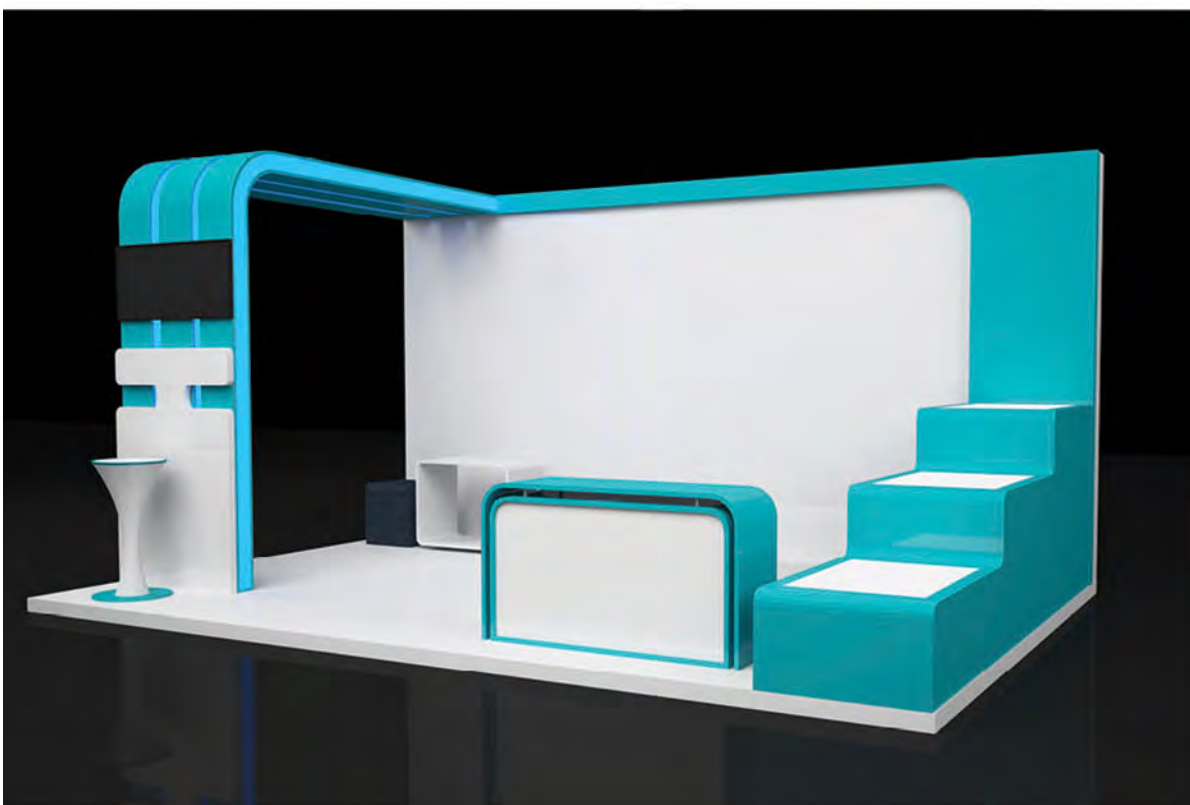
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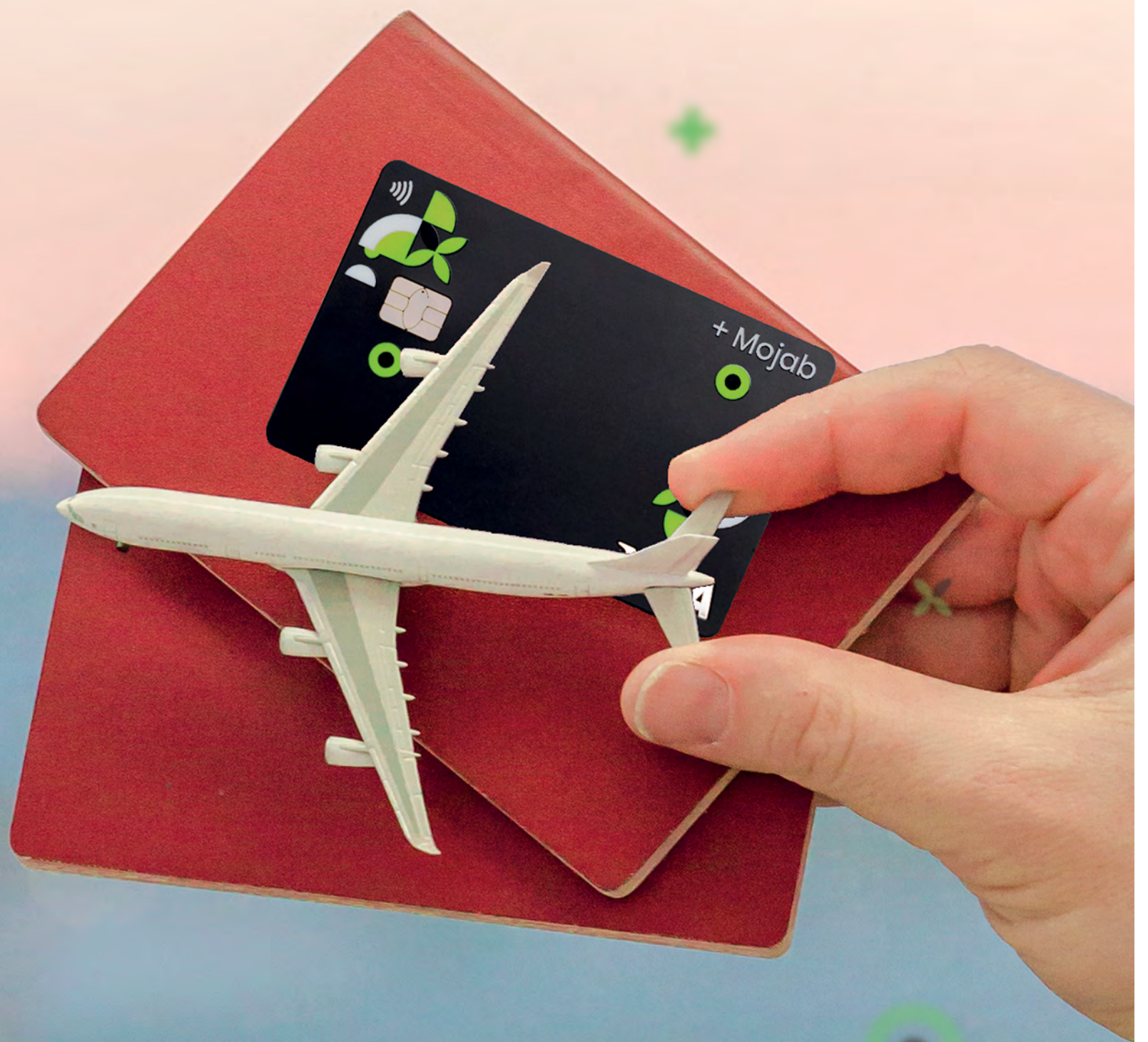
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