

SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES TAKE PART IN EXPO 2020 DUBAI

The Sultan's Armed Forces on Saturday concluded their participation in the Expo 2020 Dubai. It was part of the initiative of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, with the participation of the armed forces of the GCC states. **>A2**



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HM SENDS CONGRATULATIONS CABLE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Kais Saied of the Republic of Tunisia on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to the president, praying to the Almighty Allah to return this and similar occasions with achievement of aspirations of further progress and prosperity to the Tunisian people. — **ONA**



Founded 1975 · Volume 47 No. 16 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

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STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Architecture projects will boost tourism: Winners of Bilarab bin Haitham Award

New landmarks in the country will encourage more tourists to visit Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Iconic architecture projects supported by initiatives such as the Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design will add more landmarks to the skyline of Oman and encourage more tourists to come and see the creativity and craftsmanship of Omani architects.

Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jahdami, who won the award



with his teammates Omaima Al Hinai and Abdullah Al Bahri for their Maidan Muttrah project at a gala ceremony at the Royal Opera House Muscat on Tuesday, 15 March, said, "We are delighted we

have been able to win the award and we were hoping to win the competition," said Ahmed, who also serves as the design director of Wajha Consulting Engineers. **>A2**

Long-term visas to help investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Providing investors with five-and ten-year investor residency visas allows them to stay longer in the country and enables their businesses to grow in the long-term, according to a recent recipient of the long-stay investor visa.

Alternative energy solutions

Yogendra Singh Katiyar, the founder of We Network LLC, a company specialising in telecommunications, IT, and alternative energy solutions, founded his organisation in 2011 in Oman, and has expanded his operations across the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Indian subcontinent.

"It's been a great initiative from the government to issue long-term visas for investors," said Katiyar. "This will help Oman grow economically and make use of technology, blended with the skill and dexterity of capable people. It will also help both socially, and in terms of infrastructure development.

"I hope that Oman's latest residency programme attracts and promotes qualitative investments that contribute to the growth of the country's GDP and support its national economy," he added. "The country seeks to boost localisation of industries, transfer of advanced technologies and modern techniques, and promote economic diversification. **>A5**



Sayyid Hamad bin Thuwaini Al Said presides over Annual Horse Race

A2

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Expat wins pageant

1 An Indian expat living in Oman has been crowned Diva Diva Mrs India Universe International at the Mrs India pageant in Jaipur. **>A3**

WORLD Moderna requests

2 Moderna submitted a request to the US FDA for emergency use authorisation on a fourth dose of its COVID-19 vaccine. **>A6**

MARKET Administrative skills



3 The Royal Academy of Management is doing the groundwork to equip Omanis with world-class administrative skills. **>B1**



HEALTH ISSUES

Obesity awareness projects launched by Ministry of Health

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Two new programmes have been launched in Oman to spread awareness and conduct research into the impact obesity can have on people's health.

The programmes involve devising clinical practice guidelines to assist healthcare professionals on how to efficiently and proactively engage in the management of obesity, as well as setting up an epidemiology study project to analyse the prevalence of obesity-related comorbidities in a hospital setting and assess the prevalence of the top 10 comorbidities linked to obesity in Oman.

Two projects

The two projects were launched at the Ministry of Health, which is running them in collaboration with the Embassy of Denmark and Novo Nordisk Pharma Gulf, in the presence of Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Health and Ole Emil Moesby, ambassador of Denmark to Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen.

The launch was also attended by Dr Noor Al Busaidi, director of the National Diabetes and Endocrine Centre, Dr Venkat Kalyan, vice president and general manager of Novo Nordisk Pharma Gulf and Dr Ahmed Magdy, director of patient access and public affairs at Novo Nordisk Pharma Gulf.

Evidence-based guidelines

The two projects will not only help in greater understanding of the epidemic in Oman, but will also provide the health care professionals evidence-based guidelines on chronic disease management drawing attention to the rise in obesity-related health issues worldwide. Al Saidi said, "Obesity takes a toll not only on the well-being of individuals but also on the well-being of societies; it puts strain on healthcare systems and economies." Over the past two years, the pandemic has highlighted the global issue, that is, the obesity epidemic. Poor nutrition coupled with technology that enables a sedentary lifestyle has been linked with a rise in the disease. **>A5**

Fincorp Al Amal Fund recommends Cash Dividend

Fincorp Al Amal Fund (An open-ended Global Equity Fund) has reported a net profit of RO 1,366,374 during the FY 2021. Board of Directors of the Fund have recommended a final dividend of 50 baiza for FY 2021. It is worth noting that, during the year an interim dividend of 70 baiza was also being paid in September 2021.

Total dividend for the year so far stands at 120 baiza which offers a dividend yield of little higher than 10% on the current NAV.

Final Dividend is payable to unit holders whose names appear in the Muscat Depository and Clearing Company at the end of the Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held on 21st March 2022.

Note: Past performance is not a guarantee of future performance.



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Dhuhr.....	12:25pm
Asr.....	3:44pm
Maghrib.....	6:11pm
Isha.....	7:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:18am

ORGANISED BY THE ROYAL COURT AFFAIRS

Assigned by His Majesty, Sayyid Hamad bin Thuwaini Al Said presides over Annual Horse Race

SALALAH: Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Hamad bin Thuwaini Al Said presided over the Annual Horse Race of the Royal Cavalry in the Wilayat of Salalah on Saturday.

The annual race was organised by the Royal Court Affairs, represented by the Royal Cavalry.

Horse 'Thuniyah' secured the first place in the first round of the allocated for Arabian thoroughbred horses for 1,200 metres, followed by Horse Mustakshif, Horse Al Raqah, Horse 'Al Asbaq' and Horse 'Muthirah' of the Royal Cavalry, respectively.

Horse Al Tariq for the Royal Cavalry secured the first place in the second round. Horse 'Sharis' for Sheikh Mohammed bin Shihab Al Balushi secured the first place in



the third round. Horse 'Safwa' for the Royal Cavalry bagged the first place in the fourth round while Horse 'Souko' for the Royal Cavalry secured the title of His Majesty the Sultan's Cup in the fifth round allocated for Arabian thoroughbred horse for 2,000 metres.

The intervals between the rounds of the race witnessed equestrian sports and traditional folk arts associated with horses besides playing international and Omani musical pieces. — ONA

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

FROM A1 Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design launched as an annual competition

"We are extremely happy to have won, because this competition is under the blessings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and under the patronage of His Highness Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said.

"I dedicate this win to His Majesty and His Highness and thank them for giving myself and my participating colleagues the opportunity to showcase our creativity and ideas in engineering design," he added.

Project features

The winning project features an iconic curved, angled bridge over the waterfront of the Muttrah Corniche that is inspired by the sword of Imam Al Salt bin Malik. Designed in a way to replicate the flight of birds over the sea, the

bridge also acts as a frame through which some of Muttrah's most iconic landmarks can be seen.

The Maidan Muttrah project also includes displays that show the interplay between light and water, giving an amazing visual experience for the people. The project is to be built on a specific site in the port section of Muttrah. The projects submitted for the award were meant to be edifices symbolising the 50-year accomplishments of the renaissance under the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and envisaging the aspirations of Vision 2040 under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

"The bridge surrounds a multi-use plaza that includes a dancing fountain, retail stores and cafes

and restaurants," explained Ahmed. "The project took about two months to complete..all of us contributed with our experience and creative vision to come up with this design. We wanted to come up with a unique design that would win the admiration of the jury.

Significance of the award

"This award encourages us to keep up with developments in architecture and design taking place around the world," he added.

"It will help in the architectural developments of the various regions, while still showcasing their heritage and cultural identity, which people can come to visit, and understand more about these places."

Pankaj Khimji appointed Vice-President of ACC

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a ceremony held at the Taj Samudra Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 19th March 2022, Pankaj Khimji, Chairman of Oman Cricket, was officially appointed as the Vice-President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) from 2022-23.

Founded in 1983, the Asian Cricket Council has aimed to develop and promote the game of cricket in Asia. Over the years, it has taken cricket into new territories, to expand and truly globalise the gentlemen's game.

Pankaj Khimji served as Chairman of the organisation's Development Committee before moving into his current role.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "I'm truly honoured and humbled to have been appointed the Vice-President of the ACC for 2022-23. It is a great privilege and



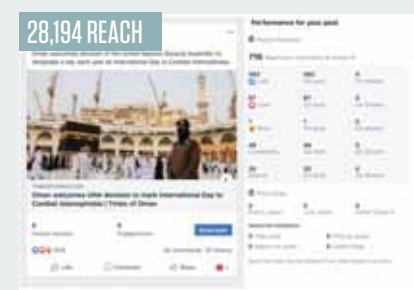
also an honor for Oman Cricket and Oman as a country to have been given this recognition for all our achievements and all the infrastructure developments that have happened in the country over the years.

"It is a testimony as well to the Oman Cricket team who have been true flag bearers and I think this has been a joint effort on behalf of everyone involved. My appreciation and gratefulness also go out to His Majesty Sultan

Haitham bin Tarik whose support has always extended to Oman Cricket and its members for all these years. We have an exciting 18 months to 2 years ahead, to come up with lots of plans for the development and growth of Asian Cricket. Hopefully, in the next few months we will try to re-energize and reinvigorate it. I look forward to working with Jay Shah and the administration team to help make Asian Cricket into a global force in the game".

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BOOK MOST READ ON FACEBOOK



Oman welcomes UNA decision to mark International Day to Combat Islamophobia

A story on Oman welcoming the UNA decision on day to combat Islamophobia reached 28,194 people and had 2,182 link clicks on Facebook.

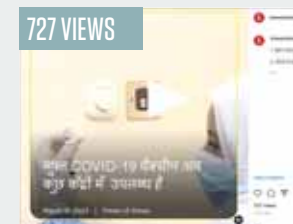
TV MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK



The Midday Update video

The Midday Update video on 'Grill Zone Project' had 1,400 views and reached 3,900 people on Facebook.

INSTA MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM



The Maghrib Minute video

The Maghrib Minute video in Hindi on free Covid-19 vaccines had 727 views and 31 likes on Instagram.

EXPO 2020 DUBAI

SAF participation

DUBAI: The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) on Saturday concluded their participation in the Expo 2020 Dubai.

It was part of the initiative of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, with the participation of the armed forces of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

— ONA



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MRS INDIA UNIVERSE

Oman-based expat wins Indian beauty pageant crown



Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Indian national living in Oman has been crowned Divalicious Mrs India Universe International at the Mrs India pageant, held in the Indian city of Jaipur recently.

A homemaker living in Muscat for the past 11 years, Anita Dhande was crowned among 22 participants from across India. Thanking her family for the support they provided, Anita said, "I am delighted to have won the crown. It was a good event with contestants from many nations."

Anita – whose husband Dr Ram works at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, and has two children – was crowned the winner of the platinum category of the competition. Organised by Mrs India Universe Organisation (Divalicious Group), the overall winner secured a berth in the Mrs International and Mrs World pageants.

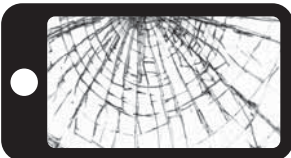
The event was organised for married women at the Grand Uniara Hotel in Jaipur. It featured

contestants across two age categories – women between the age of 21 and 35 years and between 35 and 47 years. A total of 22 participants, including Anita, made it to the finals after the initial round.

Founded in June 2015 as Elite India Pageants, Divalicious organises a number of beauty pageants every year, including Miss and Mrs India, Mrs India Universe, Mrs Universe – an international beauty contest for married women, Supermodel of the Year and Mr and Miss Teen.

All the titles issued at Divalicious pageants are registered under the Trade Mark Authority of the Government of India. The organisation held its first beauty pageant – Elite Miss India 2015 – months after it was set up.

The other winners in the platinum category were Shweta Dahada, who was crowned Mrs India Universe World 2022, Aarti Khullar – Mrs India Earth Universe 2022 – and Sarita Chaudhry, who was named Mrs India Universe Globe 2022.



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FOOTBALL CLUBS

Seeb Club crowned His Majesty’s Cup champions in presence of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Seeb Club are the new champions of His Majesty’s Football Cup following a 2-0 win over Al Rustaq in the final of the tournament.

Held in the presence of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth, and under the patronage of Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, the Minister of Finance, Seeb scored two goals in the second half to lift their fourth His Majesty’s Cup.

The match at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Boushar was attended by thousands of eager, enthusiastic fans from both clubs, who expressed their support and passion for their respective teams.

Two former Oman stars also turned up to watch the game along with their countrymen: Khalifa Ayel and Hassan Mudhaffar, who were involved in the trophy presentation ceremony ahead of the match.

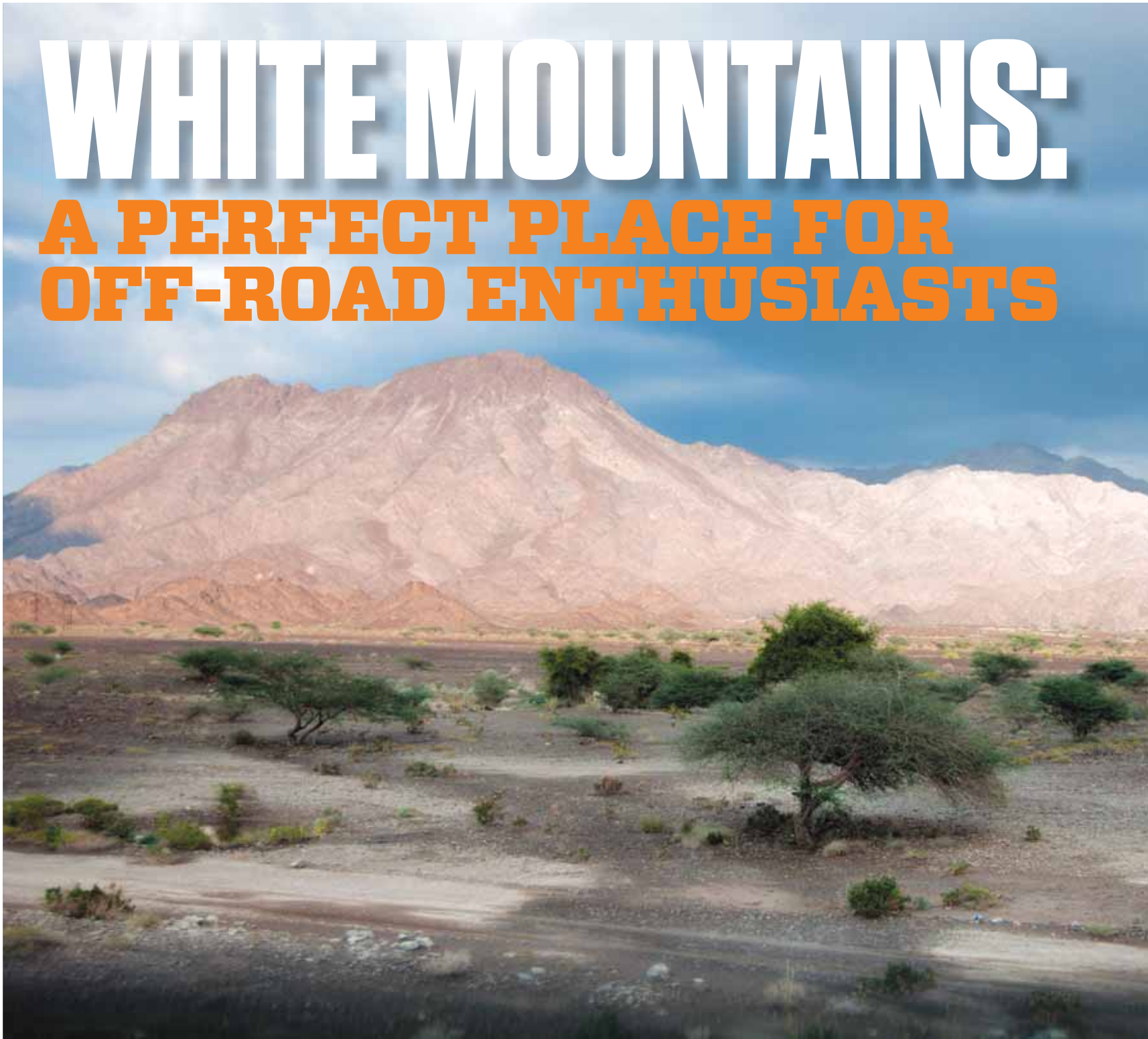
Fans who showed up for the game supported their teams in many ways: Some brought drums to encourage the players and keep their spirits up, others brought giant mannequins dressed in colours of their favourite teams: The

Two former Oman stars also turned up to watch the game along with their countrymen: Khalifa Ayel and Hassan Mudhaffar, who were involved in the trophy presentation ceremony ahead of the match.

yellow and green of Seeb and the red and white of Rustaq.

Giant banners covering vast swathes of the stands were unfurled by both sets of supporters to provide their teams a little bit of extra inspiration to what was an important night for domestic Omani football.

The significance of the occasion was certainly not lost on His Highness Sayyid Theyazin, who commended the role of the Oman Football Association as well as football clubs in the country for their efforts to promote youth and sports activities, especially since they help in honing the skills of the next generation.



WHITE MOUNTAINS: A PERFECT PLACE FOR OFF-ROAD ENTHUSIASTS



THE WHITE MOUNTAINS in Oman is a must visit for hikers and off-road enthusiasts. Forming the core of the Eastern Hajar Mountains, the White Mountains are also vital to the surrounding communities: the towns of Quriyat, Sur, Wadi Bani Khalid, Al Qabil, and Tahir are a few of the settlements located in their vicinity.

The slopes of this mountain range are often visited by shepherds and goatherds, who graze their flocks on the sloping terrain, and it is also part of the network of falaj systems that feed water to the surrounding agricultural lands. The terrain has a plateau with extensive elevated space, cross-cut by the canyons and has rugged and steep slopes. It is called White Mountains because they are composed largely of limestone.

The key difference between the White Mountains in the Eastern Hajar Mountain range and the Jebel Akhdar or Jebel Shams range in the Western section is their geological age, according to experts.



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FOR NEEDY

Dar Al Atta’a Association organises International Food Festival

MUSCAT: Dar Al Atta’a Association organised yesterday the fifth edition of International Food Festival with the participation of twenty Arab and foreign embassies accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Shamsa Hamad Al Harthi, Director General of Dar Al Atta’a Association said that the event organised by the Association with the participation of a number of embassies in the Sultanate included a variety of Arab and international foods.

The revenues of this interna-

tional festival would go to the needy families registered with the Dar Al Atta’a Association on the advent of the month of Ramadan, she added.

A number of owners of domestic/family projects in Muscat Governorate participated in the event through a pavilion at the festival’s venue in the Wilayat of Bausher.

On the conclusion of the ceremony, representatives of the participating embassies, supervisors of the Omani pavilion and the supporting entities were honoured. **ONA**



OPENING CEREMONY

Art expo ‘The Imprints of Mushref’ opens

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education sponsored the opening ceremony of the art exhibition ‘The Imprints of Mushref’.

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision - Department of Individual Skills Supervision / Supervision of the Fine Arts subject, organised the exhibition in Muscat Mall from March 17 to March 23.

The exhibition includes a variety of artworks by more than 40 artists from the supervisors and first supervisors from the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to the subject specialists in the directorates of the Ministry’s headquarter.

Artistic fields

The artistic fields of the displayed works vary among the wall works, including drawing and photography - synthesis works - lettering formations - digital design works, three-dimensional sculptural works, in addition to installation works.



The exhibition is accompanied by the establishment of applied workshops and critical dialogue sessions in the participating works of a group of specialists in arts from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the College of Scientific Design, and the Ministry of Education.

The applied workshops discuss several topics, including: the relationship between creative thinking and the development of artistic skills of the arts supervisor, the investigation of art and its impact on developing the skills of supervisors

and teachers, and the role of the arts supervisor in enriching the technical and educational aspects of the teacher, and specialised art exhibitions are one of the tools pursued by the ministry to generate innovative artistic ideas and a healthy environment in which participating artists gain visual experiences, which helps them in refining their technical expertise and acquiring new skills.

In a statement to Dr. Sulaiman Al Jamudi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Edu-

cational Supervision, he said: “The exhibition is the first productions of our fellow supervisors and specialists in arts.”

“It aims to highlight their skill aspects and exchange specialised technical expertise among them, in addition to spreading awareness of the importance of arts in society and emphasising the importance of the role of the first supervisor and supervisor as an experienced artist and role model for teachers and students in arts,” he further added.

OBESITY

FROM A1 Poor lifestyle habits

“As poor lifestyle habits and choices of society today leave their imprint on those who follow, the burden grows heavier,” he added.

“Therefore, it is imperative that regional and local barriers to obesity prevention and treatment are addressed urgently and that they are addressed in such a way that they do not increase weight discrimination and stigma,” he further pointed out.

Prevalence of obesity

A recent cross-sectional community-based survey of the population of Oman found that almost two-thirds (66%) of the population was overweight or lived with obesity (BMI ≥25).

Commenting on the survey’s findings at the launch, Dr Noor Al

Busaidi said, “The national survey found that Omani nationals had a much higher prevalence of obesity (35.2 percent).

In addition to this, Omani women specifically were identified as having a significantly higher prevalence of obesity (40.9 percent) than Omani men (28.2 percent). Similar findings of alarmingly high levels of obesity among women in their reproductive years were also reported in the Oman National Nutrition Survey (ONNS).”

Having been associated with an alarming 195 health impairments and a major risk factor in chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease (CVD), type 2 diabetes and various types of cancer, obesity is fast becoming one of the most serious health problems in the world.



U.S. EMBASSY - MUSCAT



ONLINE AUCTION
SALE OF USED ITEMS

The U.S. Embassy Muscat is auctioning used household and office furniture, furnishings, appliances, computers, IT equipment, gym equipment, a vehicle (Ford Expedition), and a hyster stacker by online auction.

Interested bidders may view the auction items online starting on March 17, 2022 by going to <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>. Bidders interested in viewing the vehicle and/or hyster stacker in person can do so on Monday, March 21 between 10:00 and 15:00 at the Ghala warehouse. Online bidding for all items will open on March 20 at 10:00. Bidders must first register on the site before placing a bid.

All items offered for sale will be sold “as is, where is,” which means that there are no warranties, either expressed or implied. Bidding closes on March 23, 2022 at 14:00.

Successful bidders will be notified on March 24, 2022. At that point, they must make full payment of all lots won. Payment instructions are listed in the “How to pay for your items” section in the “How it works” link on the auction page. Full and complete payments must be received in the U.S. Embassy bank account no later than March 28.

Successful bidders with fully paid lots may collect their goods on April 2 at the Ghala Warehouse.

MOCIIP INITIATIVE

FROM A1 Investor residency visa scheme

“Once new foreign investment companies set up operations in Oman, a handsome amount of foreign investment comes into the country, and this will create new employment opportunities,” he explained. “We are looking forward to seeing Oman in 10 years’ time, as one of the best Middle East countries with access to sophisticated operations, while appreciating the efforts of investors.”

Oman’s Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) recently announced that they had provided long-term investor residency cards to 217 people, since the launch of the Investor Residency Programme in October 2017.

142 people were given 10-year investor visas, 73 were issued visas lasting for five years, and two cards were given to investors above retirement age. The programme grants foreign investors and retirees the right to long-term residency over a five or 10-year span. It also supports integrative efforts to enhance the investment environment, promote economic diversification, and attract quality investments

“Such a set up would attract any foreign investor to hatch their ideas with a great amount of optimism and diligent entrepreneurship,” said Katiyar. “I have been offered all sorts of investors’ assistance, and hassle-free establishment of my firm with easy terms and conditions.”



Other positive knock-on effects of the Investor Residency Programme include providing employment and skills to young Omanis. As an investor operating out of Knowledge Oasis Muscat, which was set up to encourage investments in tech and education, Yogendra also received plenty of incentives from Madayn, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates.

These include 100 percent foreign ownership, excellent network opportunities, collaborative environment, favourable Omanisation percentages, good facilities, excellent communication partner channels, robust and diversifying economy, legal transparency, and an investor-friendly environment. As an eligible tenant, We Network was also able to bid for government tenders.

Katiyar welcomed government initiatives to encourage more investment, saying that it helped him to make sure he was offering the same standards of service across all of the countries in which he has set up operations.

“We have many plans on the anvil to expand our business domain

across various parts of Oman in the coming years, having seen things prospering as we continue to exit the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said. “We have our establishments in India and the United Arab Emirates with accumulated business plans and strategies.

“We have plans to improve upon and execute in Oman, especially in the area of communication technology in the coming years,” he added. “Government authorities in Oman are keen to collaborate with investors and businesses to help this country flourish. The young generation can come forward with vision and enthusiasm, as there are a plethora of ideas that will thrive here.

“New investors can explore many areas, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, hospitality, education, tourism, and healthcare, all of which can be made more productive and expansive in the country,” said Katiyar.

MOCIIP also provided guidelines for investors to obtain long-term investor residency.

“A request to benefit from the programme is submitted to the investment services centre of the ministry via the website that connects all concerned authorities,” said the ministry, as reported by Oman News Agency. “The centre evaluates the application, determines the type of investment required, and approves that application within one month from the date of application.”



Ministry of Defence
TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Document Price per copy (RO)
SUPPLY OF BUILDING MATERIALS, PLUMBING & SANITARY ITEMS	08/2022	02/05/2022	09/05/2022	355 RO

- Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs on the working days.
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SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

(In RO 000's)					
ASSETS	2021	2020	LIABILITIES	2021	2020
1. Cash on hand	3,857	3,011	1. Capital and reserve	9,628	9,281
2. Deposit with Central Bank of Oman	120	110	2. Borrowings from banks	-	-
3. Precious metals	-	-	3. Balance due to branches	-	-
4. Balance due from banks	6,960	7,883	4. Balance due to money changers	658	479
5. Balance due from branches	-	-	5. Loans and advances payable	-	-
6. Balance due from money changers	28	-	6. Cheques and drafts issued outstanding	111	296
7. Cheques and drafts purchased	-	-	7. Other liabilities	3,011	2,169
8. Fixed assets	1,433	741			
9. Investments	-	-			
10. Other assets	1,010	480			
Total	13,408	12,225	Total	13,408	12,225

We certify that the above balances are in agreement with the books and records of the company as at 31 December 2021.

GLOBAL MONEY EXCHANGE CO. LLC
GENERAL MANAGER

Auditors: CROWE MAK GHAZALI LLC
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
24 February 2022



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COVID BOOSTER

Moderna requests FDA to authorise 4th dose of COVID jab

WASHINGTON: American biotechnology company Moderna submitted a request to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Thursday for emergency use authorisation (EUA) on a fourth dose of its COVID-19 vaccine for adults 18 years of age and older, who already received a booster dose of any approved or authorised shot.

The request to include adults



over 18 years of age was made to provide flexibility for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and healthcare providers to “determine the appropriate use of an additional booster dose,” including for those at higher risk of COVID-19 due to age or comorbidities, said the company in a statement.

Currently, a booster dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine

at the 50 microgram dose level is authorized by the FDA for emergency use in the United States for adults 18 years and older.

Moderna said it continues to collect and monitor real-world data on its COVID-19 vaccine.

Clinical trials are ongoing for Moderna’s Omicron-specific booster and a bivalent Omicron-specific booster. **ANI**



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



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ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
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Top court in Brazil orders suspension of Telegram app

Judge Alexandre de Moraes said the company had repeatedly refused to comply with rulings and requests from police

BRASILIA: A Supreme Court judge in Brazil ordered the suspension of messaging app Telegram, in a ruling published on Friday on the court’s website.

Judge Alexandre de Moraes said the company had repeatedly refused to comply with rulings and requests from police and the justice system to help fight disinformation in the run-up to the elections.

“Telegram’s disrespect for Brazilian law and repeated failure to comply with countless court decisions... is completely incompatible with the rule of law,” wrote Moraes.



SUSPENDED: The ruling is a major blow to far-right President Jair Bolsonaro who is seeking reelection in October and has more than a million followers on Telegram, alongside numerous fan groups.

He gave Brazil’s telecoms regulator 24 hours to suspend Telegram’s operations nationwide.

The ruling came from a case over an earlier court order, where Telegram ignored to block the account of pro-Bolsonaro blogger Allan dos Santos.

Moraes said the messaging

app had also refused to comply with several other orders, including cases of child sexual abuse imagery.

The ruling is a major blow to far-right President Jair Bolsonaro who is seeking reelection in October and has more than a million followers on Telegram,

alongside numerous fan groups.

Bolsonaro: Brazilians freedom ‘at risk’
Bolsonaro slammed the ruling as “inadmissible” and said it put the “freedom” of Brazilians at risk.

Moraes had “failed to act against the two or three people that ac-

cording to him should be blocked, so he decided to affect 70 million people,” Bolsonaro said.

The populist president is facing a popularity slump over his response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has pursued Telegram as a way to help rally his base.

Often dubbed Brazil’s Trump, Bolsonaro has often courted controversy and was criticized for downplaying the COVID-19 pandemic just as case numbers soared.

He’s previously accused two Supreme Court judges, including Moraes, of a having a vendetta against him.

Bolsonaro has had various posts blocked on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for violating rules on misinformation.

He currently trails leftist expresident Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, his likely opponent, in the polls.

Telegram calls ruling a ‘miscommunication’

Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov apologized for the company’s “negligence” over the disinformation allegations.

In an Instagram post, he blamed a “miscommunication” problem.

Durov asked the court to delay its ruling for a few days as it sought to improve compliance.

The court ruling, however, said

Telegram’s behavior had undermined its “total contempt for the Brazilian justice system.”

Court chief Luis Roberto Barroso wrote to Telegram in December requesting a meeting and warning that the app was rife with “conspiracy theories and false information about (Brazil’s) electoral system.”

The platform was notably absent last month when Brazilian authorities signed an agreement to combat disinformation during the elections with Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube.

Telegram enjoys popularity in Brazil

Founded by Russian-born tech entrepreneur Pavel Durov in 2013, Dubai-based Telegram is hugely successful in Brazil.

The app has been downloaded on 53% of all cell phones.

Telegram has made its refusal to cooperate with the authorities part of its brand.

The app has proved popular with far-right groups worldwide.

In Germany, the app has been blamed for fueling an increasingly virulent subculture of anti-vaccine conspiracy theorists who arrange protests that have spilled over into violence. **dw**

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS INCREASE

Humanitarian needs in Myanmar grow as fighting continues

NAYPYIDAW: As the fighting continues in Myanmar, the humanitarian needs increased as the country became unstable after the February 1, 2021 coup by Tatmadaw (Myanmar’s armed forces).

UN chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Stephane Dujarric on Friday said that there are 889,900 displaced people, including 370,000 already displaced before the military takeover a little more than one year ago, reported Xinhua.

“Humanitarian needs are growing. But access to people in need remains limited, hampering the planned scale-up of humanitarian assistance in 2022,” Dujarric said.

“Clashes, road blockages and military checkpoints limit our access to areas where needs are critical,” he added.

The demand for support to people in need exceeds the capacity to respond. However, the United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, water, warm clothes, blankets, and mosquito



nets, as well as hygiene kits and COVID-19 prevention items.

The United Nations and partners also provide protection services to displaced people and communities in conflict areas across the country.

UN spokesmen urged all parties to respect international humanitarian law to protect civilians and ensure people in need have access to humanitarian aid, reported Xinhua.

“The United Nations’ 2022 humanitarian response plan for

Myanmar, which seeks 826 million U.S. dollars, is only 6 per cent funded,” Dujarric said.

“We urge donors to give generously in solidarity with the people of Myanmar,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Watch on Friday called upon the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to act against the Myanmar military’s human rights abuses by imposing economic sanctions and preventing the flow of weapons. **ANI**

AIRCRAFT CRASHES

Four US soldiers killed in Osprey crash during NATO exercise

WASHINGTON: Four US soldiers have died in Norway when the military aircraft they were traveling in crashed during NATO training exercises, the country’s Prime Minister said on Saturday.

“It is with great sadness we have received the message that four American soldiers died in a plane crash last night,” Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store wrote on Twitter.

“The soldiers participated in the NATO exercise Cold Response. Our deepest sympathies go to the soldiers’ families, relatives and fellow soldiers in their unit,” he added.

The US Marine Corps Osprey aircraft took part in a NATO training exercise when it went missing on Friday.

It was only discovered on Saturday when it crashed, north of the arctic circle. It took rescuers hours to reach the remote crash site.

“Police reached the crash site at



around 01:30 CET (00:30 UTC). It is regrettably confirmed that all four on board the plane have perished,” Ivar Bo Nilsson, head of the operation for Nordland police, said in a statement.

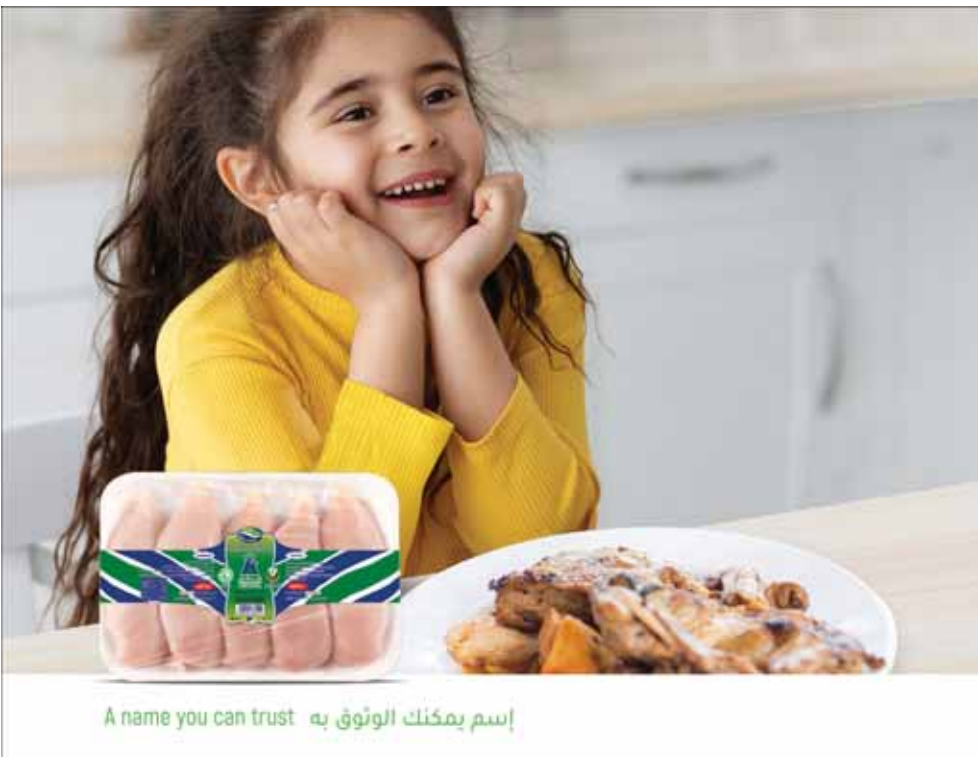
Police were investigating the cause of the crash, although they halted their work because of the weather conditions.

Exercise Cold Response exercise kicked off Monday and includes land, sea, and air drills.

Held every two years, the exercise was planned long before the Russian invasion of Ukraine and helped to train multinational NATO forces in how to operate in the Arctic.

Some 30,000 troops from 27 countries were participating in military drills

Defense department spokesman John Kirby said some 3,000 US Marines were taking part in the exercise. **dw**



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Azaan Al Ruhmy wins 48th Muscat Open Golf Championship

Azaan set a new course record of 69 on day 1, and then repeated this score on day 2, giving him a total score of 138



10 shots from 2nd place Nasser Yaqoob (Awali Golf Club). Another local favourite Badr Alaamri sealed third place with a score of 150. The leading junior in the gross category was Darsh Pawani with a score of 157.

It was a very proud moment as Azaan was presented with the trophy by Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy, the Minister of Energy and Minerals and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Petroleum Development Oman. This was for the 6th time

Azaan has won this tournament and he commented afterwards that, "this tournament is the most prestigious golf event in Oman, if I can pick one tournament to win in Oman then it would be the Muscat Open. It was my first two back to back rounds in the 60s. I wish to thank the sponsors, the organizing committee and my family for all of their support".

The net prize this year went to Tore Solberg (134) who was closely followed by junior Ras Al Hamra golfer Juan Moreno (136)

and Salim Al Hartthy (138).

Ras Al Hamra Golf Club Captain, Simon Walker commented, "Congratulations to Azaan on winning this coveted championship for a 6th time. The course is in superb condition due to the tireless work from our team. We were delighted to welcome such a high caliber of golfers to the club; golf is thriving in Oman and visitors are always welcome to our club which is the only floodlit course in the country".

The 2022 Muscat Open Golf Championship was organized at Ras Al Hamra Golf Club on the 11th and 12th of March.

There was a full field of 92 golfers from Oman and the GCC who competed for the longest running amateur golf competition in Oman and the GCC.

In his closing remarks, President of the Muscat Open Committee Jas Dhanju thanked HSBC, Hydro, Masirah Oil Ltd., CMS, Ramada Encore, Seven Seas Petroleum LLC and Milly O'Brien's for their sponsorship.

Oman Cricket announces squad for GCC Women's T20i Cup



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The GCC Women's T20i Championship Cup will commence on March 20, 2022 as per schedule. Six nations will compete for the trophy and for ICC WT20i points, namely Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. All the fixtures will be fulfilled at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground over a span of 7 days.

The Oman Cricket Academy is open to spectators for the GCC Women's T20i Championship Cup. Submission of proof of double-vaccination against COVID-19 during entry is mandatory.

The matches will be broadcasted live for the first time. They

can be viewed on FanCode, CricTracker on Youtube and Sports Eye on Facebook.

The squad for the Oman Women's team in the tournament is as follows: Vaishali Jesrani (captain), Fiza Javed (vice-captain), Sameera Khan, Nayan Molly Anil, Priyanka Mendonca, Snehal Nair, Amanda Dcosta, Sakshi Vijaya Shetty, Saya Channa, Sushanthika Ashok Sathiy, Afida Afthab, Kashish Deep Jayawant, Nikhita Jagdish, Bhatki Shetty; Reserves: Alifiya Asif Sayed, Minduli Sharuni Medagoda Lalalage, Shreya Suresh Prabhu; Support Staff: Haider Ali (Manager/Head Coach), Nilesh Parmar (Assistant Coach), Amir Ali (Bowling Coach), Vijay Kaliswaran (Physio).

BANGLADESH VS SOUTH AFRICA

Bangladesh win first-ever ODI in South Africa

CENTURION: Bangladesh won their first-ever ODI on South African soil on Friday as they defeated the Proteas by 38 runs at Centurion to go 1-0 up in the three-match series.

The tourists had never won a One Day International in South Africa in 19 previous attempts, but produced a superb display in the first ODI of the tour to break new ground in the format.

Bangladesh's stunning win further strengthens their place at the top of the ICC Men's Cricket



World Cup Super League standings, where they lead England and India in the top three.

The victory was built on the

foundations set by a team effort with the bat, with Litton Das (50), Shakib Al Hasan (77) and Yasir Ali (50) all making half-centuries.

And other useful contributions came right down the order as the Tigers built on a solid start to post 314/7.

Early wickets pegged South Africa's chase back, Shoriful Islam and Taskin Ahmed making the early inroads.

Impressive half-centuries from Rassie van der Dussen (86) and David Miller (79) gave the hosts some hope. But Mehidy Hasan Miraz rattled the tail with a four-for, picking up the crucial wicket of Miller. **ANI**

NATIONAL HOCKEY TEAM QUALIFIES

Oman's national hockey team has qualified for the AFC Cup final after defeating the Sri Lankan team 2-1 in the semi-finals of the tournament. — Times News Service



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OIL SUPPLY SHORTAGES
Oil prices recuperated from previous trading declines on reports that Russia and Ukraine are making significant progress on a tentative 15-point peace plan. A warning from the International Energy Agency on the possibility of a loss of nearly 3mn barrels per day in April due to sanctions on Russia also supported the price revival.



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SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2022



\$233 MILLION APPROVED
Support for economic recovery, new infrastructure funding and boosting food security are some of the highlights of the projects the Opec Fund for International Development (OFID) has approved at the 179th session of its Governing Board in Vienna.

Programme launched to equip Omanis with world-class administrative skills

The Royal Academy of Management launched the ‘Train the Trainer’ programme in partnership with University of Arizona (Eller Executive Education)

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management, set up by the Royal Decree earlier this year, is currently developing the groundwork

necessary to deliver on its principal mandate: to equip Omanis with world-class administrative skill sets necessary to assume leadership positions in both the public and private sectors.



This is in accordance with the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said to develop human capital to help achieve various strategic national objectives

set out in Oman Vision 2040. To this end, the Royal Academy of Management has announced the launch of the ‘Train the Trainer’ programme derived from developing leaders and future foresight programme in partnership with the reputable University of Arizona (Eller Executive Education) will provide the initial impetus to the academy’s efforts to build national capacities in line with the goals of Oman’s vision. Dr Ali Qassim Al Lawati, President of the Royal Academy of Management, stated that the ‘Train the Trainer’ programme is aimed at preparing certified Omani trainers in the techniques and methodologies

of delivering leadership training programmes at various local, regional and international levels” He added that the academy will collaborate with the trainers at a later stage to deliver its future programmes under this segment. **Best-in-class curriculum** He said the academy will leverage its excellent relations with prominent international management training institutions to help develop a best-in-class curriculum backed by the use of modern, innovative and effective tools to become a leading global entity that is capable of absorbing and framing modern methodologies

as per competitive and innovative fundamentals for the realisation of Oman’s vision. He added that the programme has been designed to international standards. Successful graduates will not only be certified by the Royal Academy of Management but will also be part of the University of Arizona’s certified trainers’ network in the region and the world. Omani trainers certified in delivering leadership training programmes can view the terms and conditions via the website <https://forms.ram.gov.om>. Should they wish to apply, they must register between March 21 and April 4.

SHOWCASING DRILLING PERFORMANCE

Abraj Energy signs pact with Medco Oman

MUSCAT: Oil and gas are the backbones of Oman’s economy, and over 1,000 new wells are drilled each year to ensure consistent production. This necessitates seamless collaboration between clients and contractors to develop oil and gas fields through continuous improvement in drilling performance and strict control of HSE exposure. One notable example of such collaboration is the one between Medco Oman and Abraj Energy Services in the development of the Karim Small Fields in PDO Oman’s South Area. Abraj Energy Services is the market leader in Omani drilling services, offering custom-built rigs that are tailored to our clients’ needs. This collaboration began in

May 2010 with the award of Abraj Rig 102. Abraj provided a highly mobile Rig 105 in 2017, which has been setting new benchmarks in the Karim Small Fields. **Extends contract** As a result, Medco Oman and Abraj Energy Services recently extended Rig 105’s contract for another two years. The contract was signed by Ahmad Syaifudin, Oman Country Manager of Medco Energi International Tbk and Eng. Salah Al Harthy, Acting Managing Director of Abraj Energy Services. Such outstanding performance is critical for efficiently producing and meeting oil targets from the Karim Small Fields in the long term.



CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

Seminar on ‘green financing in Morocco’

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) will organise a seminar on the Moroccan experience in green sustainable financing on March 21 at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The seminar comes within Oman represented by the CMA’s preparations for regulating such types of financing products based on enhancing the concept of a green economy which is one of the pivots of Oman Vision 2040 as the introduction of such types of financing products reflects the ability of the capital market in playing a greater role in building

a stable and prosperous economy given the principle of responsibility and accountability. The Moroccan Capital Market Authority will present a paper on the regulatory frameworks for the regulation of green financing, the green market and its contribution in directing the investments toward economic activities that strike balance between the economic, environmental and social objects to improve the welfare of human beings and to limit the global challenges such as climate change. It is worth noting that global green financing witnessed rapid growth during the past decade.

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MARKET

Opec Fund approves \$233 million in global development support

The \$233 million in new funding will benefit public sector projects promoting sustainable development worldwide

VIENNA: Support for economic recovery, new infrastructure funding and boosting food security are some of the highlights of the projects the Opec Fund for International Development (OFID) has approved at the 179th session of its Governing Board in Vienna.

The \$233 million in new funding will benefit public sector projects promoting sustainable development worldwide.

The funding projects will target Kosovo with a \$40 million loan for the Public Finances and Economic Growth Programme, supporting the government's priorities set out in its National Development Strategy 2030. -WAM



FUNDING PROJECTS The funding projects will target Kosovo with a \$40 million loan for the Public Finances and Economic Growth Programme, supporting the government's priorities set out in its National Development Strategy 2030. -WAM

ing the government's priorities set out in its National Development Strategy 2030.

Developed with the World Bank Group, the programme will improve fiscal transparency, promote private sector development by streamlining the country's regula-

tory framework, and enable environmental reforms in the energy and waste management sectors.

Also, a \$72 million loan will be granted to the Pakistan Mohmand Dam Multipurpose Project, which will finance the construction of a hydropower dam and the provision

of equipment. The dam will have a 1.6 million m3 reservoir and diversion tunnels that will feed into new and existing irrigation canals.

Once completed, the Mohmand Dam will increase the country's installed renewables capacity by 800 MW and provide sustain-

able potable water to two million residents in Peshawar city. The project will also enhance food security through higher crop yields on almost 15,000 hectares of farmland while improving the region's resilience to floods.

In Uzbekistan, OFID has granted a \$100 million loan for the Accelerating Uzbekistan's Transition Programme, which will support the country's transition to a market economy by improving resource allocation and enabling private sector investment.

Promotes competitiveness

The programme will promote competitiveness as a driver of successful markets, improve the management of state-owned enterprises, enhance fiscal transparency and accountability, and increase economic and social inclusion, particularly for women and people with disabilities.

Another \$15 million loan will go to Zimbabwe for the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project. It aims to increase household incomes and improve the food security and nutrition of more than 390,000 people in five provinces through value chain development and infrastructure.

The Opec Fund's loan will finance the construction of small-scale, climate-resilient irrigation schemes, the repair of 90 kilometres of feeder roads and the installation of water supply and sanitation facilities.

The Governing Board also approved three grants totalling \$6 million for joint OFID technical cooperation facilities with three co-financing partners: the Asian Development Bank (\$3 million), the Development Bank of Latin America (\$1 million) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (\$2 million).

The facilities will primarily be used to finance project preparation-related activities, such as feasibility studies, to help ensure improved project readiness and build a strong bankable sovereign and non-sovereign operations pipeline. Potential sectors will include agriculture, energy, transportation, water & sanitation, and manufacturing and services.

OFID was established in January 1976 by the then 13 member countries of Opec, including the United Arab Emirates. The development finance institution is established as an aid channel to developing countries. -WAM

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

India's forex reserves dip by \$9.64 billion, biggest drop in 2 years

MUMBAI: India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$9.646 billion to \$622.275 billion in the week ended March 11, the sharpest decline in nearly two years, as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) heavily sold dollars to prevent the slide in the value of rupee.

According to the RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the foreign currency assets, which is the biggest component of the forex reserves, slumped by \$11.108 billion to \$554.359 billion during the week.

Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-dollar currencies like Euro, UK's Pound Sterling and Japanese Yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

This sharp decline in the country's foreign currency assets coincides with the week during which the rupee hit an all-time low. The Indian rupee plunged to a record low of 77.02 against a US dollar on March 7.

According to the market ana-

lysts, the RBI intervened in the currency markets by selling dollars. The central bank is estimated to have sold \$1 billion a day during the week to prevent further weakness in the Indian currency.

The decline in the forex reserves during the week ended March 11 this year was the sharpest in nearly two years. The country's forex reserves had slipped by \$11.9 billion during the week ended March 20, 2020. The country's forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$642.453 billion in the week ended September 3, 2021.

The value of India's Special Drawing Rights with the International Monetary Fund declined by \$53 million to \$18.928 billion. India's reserve position in the IMF dropped by \$7 million to \$5.146 billion during the week ended March 11, the RBI data showed.

However, the value of gold reserves rose sharply in line with the sharp appreciation in the gold price during the week. -ANI

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

IEA warns of supply shortages in April

PARIS: Oil prices recuperated on March 17 from previous trading declines on reports that Russia and Ukraine are making significant progress on a tentative 15-point peace plan.

A warning from the International Energy Agency (IEA) on the possibility of a loss of nearly 3 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in April 2022 due to sanctions on Russia also supported the price revival.

American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$97.09 per barrel at the same time for a 2.15 per cent increase after the previous session closed at \$95.04 a barrel.

Brent crude rebounded from lows of around \$97 a barrel after the IEA warned of a speculative shut-in of 3 million bpd of Russian oil supply starting from April. Moreover, the Agency said 'losses could increase should restrictions or public condemnation escalate.'

Although unprecedented sanctions imposed on Russia so far exclude energy trade, for the most part, the IEA said major oil companies, trading houses, shipping firms and banks have backed away from doing business with the country. The downward price movements yesterday came following reports of significant progress in talks between Ukraine and Russia on the tentative peace plan, including a ceasefire and a Russian withdrawal if Kyiv de-



LOSS: A warning from the International Energy Agency (IEA) on the possibility of a loss of nearly 3 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in April 2022 due to sanctions on Russia also supported the price revival. -ONA

clares neutrality and accepts limits on its armed forces.

Further downward pressure came with an unexpected rise in US crude oil stocks.

US commercial crude oil inven-

tories rose by 4.3 million barrels last week, according to the latest data released by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). This increase outpaced by far the market expectation of a 1.9 mil-

lion-barrel fall.

Gasoline inventories, however, declined by 3.6 million barrels to 241 million barrels over that period, the Turkish Anadolu news agency reported. -ONA

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DEAL

UK to fund Turkey's high speed electric railway line

ANKARA: The United Kingdom (UK) has agreed on a record sustainable and civil infrastructure deal of £1.7 billion or (\$2.3 billion) for the construction of Turkey's new high speed electric railway line.

According to a statement from UK Export Finance today, the new 503-kilometre electric-powered railway line will connect the capital Ankara to Izmir on the Aegean coast. Once completed, the new line will provide a faster, lower carbon alternative to current air and road routes between the two cities, helping to fulfil Türkiye's climate change commitments made at COP26. The financing will be guaranteed by UK Export Finance, through its Buyer Credit Scheme, with Credit Suisse and Standard Chartered.

British International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan stressed that Türkiye is a vital trading partner for the UK. -ONA



NEW STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON HOW BRIGHT LIGHTING CAN SUPPORT HEALTHY BODY RHYTHMS



The light we experience across our daily lives has a major influence on our body rhythms. People with 24-hour access to electric daylight can disrupt sleep and negatively impact health, well-being and productivity. But, a new study addressed the issue of how bright lighting should be during the day and in the evening to support healthy body rhythms, restful sleep, and daytime alertness. The study was published in the journal, 'Plos'. Professors Timothy Brown from the University of Manchester, UK, and Kenneth Wright from the University of Colorado Boulder, US brought together an international body of leading scientific experts to agree on the first evidence-based, consensus recommendations for healthy daytime, evening, and nighttime light exposure.

These recommendations provide much-needed guidance to the lighting and electronics industries to aid the design of healthier environments and to improve how we light our workplaces, public buildings, and homes.

A key question tackled by the new report was how to properly measure the extent to which different types of lighting might influence our body rhythms and daily patterns of sleep and wakefulness. Light affects these patterns via a specialized type of cell in the eye that uses a light-sensitive protein, melanopsin, that is distinct from the proteins in the rods and cones that support vision (and upon which traditional ways of measuring "brightness" are based).

Since melanopsin is most sensitive to light in a specific part of the visual spectrum (blue-cyan light), the new recommendations used a newly-developed light measurement standard tailored to this unique property, melanotic equivalent daylight illuminance. Analysis of data across a range of laboratory and field studies proved that this new measurement approach could provide a reliable way of predicting the effects of light on human physiology and body rhythms and could therefore form the basis of widely applicable and meaningful recommendations.

An important next step will be the integration of the recommendations into formal lighting guidelines, which currently focus on visual requirements rather than effects on health and well-being. Additionally, increasing sophistication in LED lighting technology and the availability of low-cost light sensors are expected to increase the ease with which individuals can optimize their personal light exposure to best support their own body rhythms in line with the new recommendations.

Brown said, "These recommendations provide the first scientific consensus, quantitative, guidance for appropriate daily patterns of light exposure to support healthy body rhythms, night-time sleep and daytime alertness. This now provides a clear framework to inform how we light any interior space ranging from workplaces, educational establishments and healthcare facilities to our own homes." - ANI

THE WORLD IN PICTURES



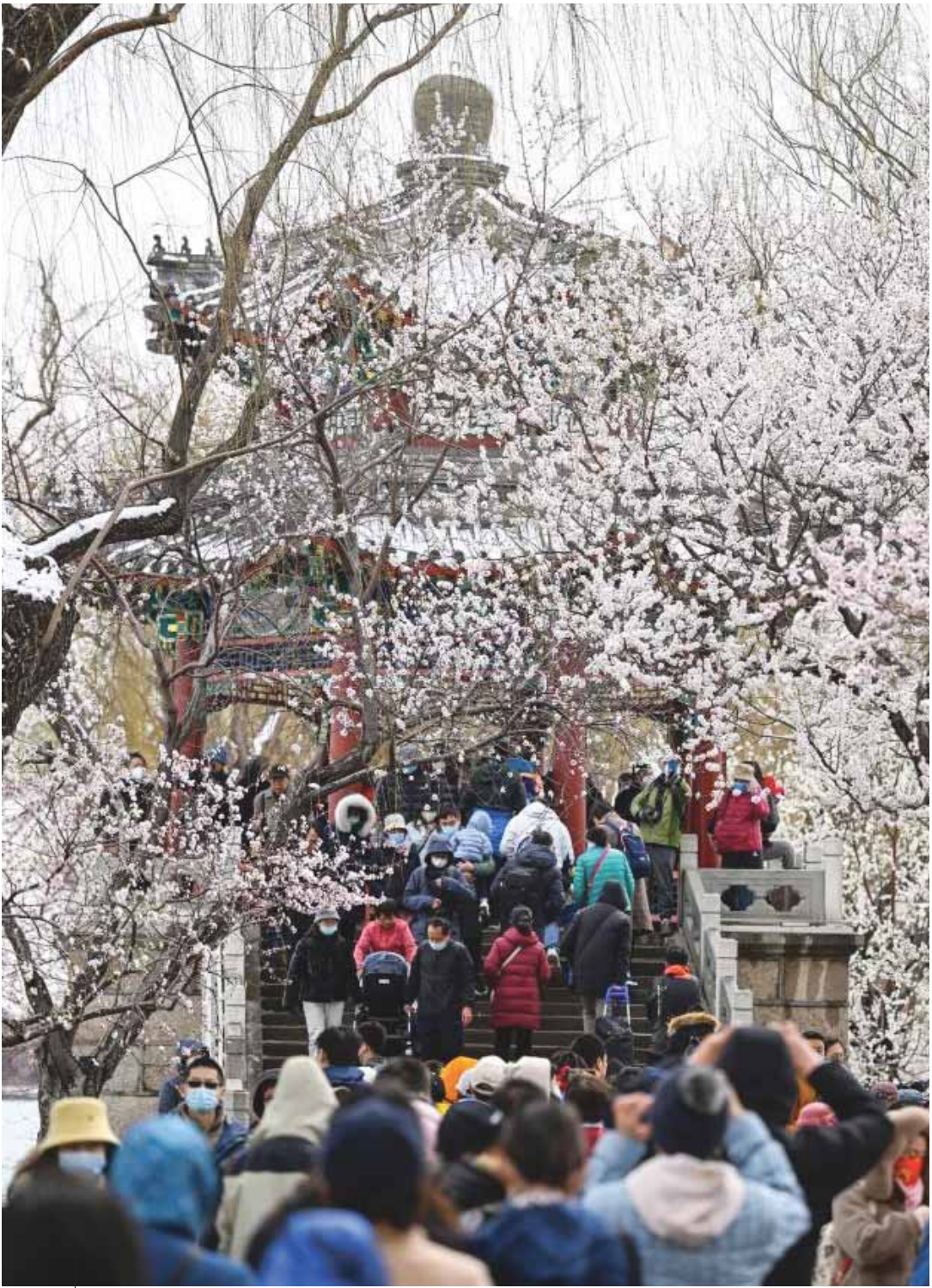
Workers raise canvas for Cirque du Soleil in Canada
Workers push the supporting poles to raise the big top to its final position for the Cirque du Soleil's upcoming show 'Alegria' at Concord Pacific Place in Vancouver, Canada. More than 60 workers pushed over 100 supporting poles to raise the canvas into its final position in order to set up the iconic Big Top - where the main stage of Cirque du Soleil will take place. *xinhua*



Festival of colours celebrated in India
A woman smeared in coloured powder celebrates Holi, the festival of colours, in New Delhi, India. *xinhua*



Mimara Museum illuminated during Festival of Lights in Croatia
Picture shows Croatian National Theatre illuminated during the Festival of Lights in Zagreb, Croatia. *xinhua*



Spring scenery at Summer Palace in Beijing
People visit the Summer Palace in Beijing, capital of China. *xinhua*



Qualifying round of MotoGP
Jorge Martin (left) of Pramac Racing competes during qualifying round of MotoGP at Pertamina Mandalika Circuit in Mandalika of Lombok Island, Indonesia. *xinhua*



Balloons Over Waikato Festival in New Zealand
Hot-air balloons are seen during the 5-day Balloons Over Waikato Festival in Hamilton, New Zealand. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Acing every game, be it roads or business

Once JAC T8 became a partner of Natural Shrimp Aquaculture the pickups are being utilised in multiple ways, primarily for laboratory shrimp sample transfer and also for transfer of personnel

MUSCAT: Natural Shrimp Aquaculture Company has been in the shrimp cultivating business for a long time and is amongst the market leaders courtesy of the unmatched quality and freshness they provide in their shrimps. Everything to do with the cultivation is done in-house from



production to harvesting to preserving the quality. When quality is super essential searching for a reliable transportation partner becomes extremely important. After a thorough market study, the first choice transportation partner became very obvious. The powerful and purposeful turbocharged JAC T8 is a mid-size pickup that delivers exceptional power and efficiency, making it an extremely reliable option for catering to business needs.

Partner
Once JAC T8 became a partner of Natural Shrimp Aquaculture the pickups are being utilised in multi-

ple ways, primarily for laboratory shrimp sample transfer and also for transfer of personnel. JAC T8 is a powerful turbocharged pickup that generates enough power to give you the best performance in the most challenging terrains. Its body is sturdier, its powertrain is stouter, and its chassis is ready to endure the high demanding muddy, rocky, and sandy environments. Those hoping to hit the trails can enjoy its unique off-road suspension. Its solid and bold appearance complements the robust engine and makes it a stylish workhorse that can perfectly fit to carry out any number of tasks. JAC T8 is well-equipped, with a

quiet upmarket touch screen infotainment system, including Bluetooth compatibility, a USB port and SD-card, tyre-pressure monitoring system, a reverse camera, dual airbags and artificial leather seats. Exterior amenities include a stylish rollover bar and running boards. Available in 2WD or 4WD and in Classic, Comfort and Luxury Plus configurations JAC T8 pickup comes with 5 years/200,000km warranty (whichever comes earlier) making it a safe and sound choice for all off-road enthusiasts and an excellent business transport solution for those living and working both in the Sultanate's cities and rural areas.

LIFESTYLE BANKING PRODUCT

Bank Al Habib organises Roshan Digital Account seminar for overseas Pakistanis in Muscat

MUSCAT: Bank Al Habib Limited successfully organised the Roshan Digital Account seminar in coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Pakistani Embassy (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman) for Overseas Pakistanis residing in Oman at the Crowne Plaza Convention & Exhibition Centre on March 18. The seminar was attended by Mohammed Imran Ali Chaudhry Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Oman and Amjad Mehmood Malik, Counselor Pakistan Embassy Oman, other prominent Pakistani community members and senior officials from Bank Al Habib. The speakers engaged with the



patriotic Pakistani community members, inquired about their investment requirements, highlighted the efforts of SBP to increase

foreign remittances in the country, digitisation of the economy through the Roshan Digital Account initiative and briefed about

Roshan Digital initiative as a lifestyle banking product and its associated investment opportunities in Pakistan. Aun Ali, Group Head - Business (Bank Al Habib) and Qamber Ali, Head - Roshan Digital Account (Bank Al Habib) were present to answer all the Roshan Digital investment-related queries of the participants.

Digital platform
Bank Al Habib with its state of art digital platform and 24/7 support is making continuous efforts to promote this national cause and will conduct more such events for awareness of this initiative in overseas Pakistani communities globally.

FERRARI PORTOFINO M



Latest evolution of Prancing Horse 2+ GT Spider unveiled

MUSCAT: There is no shortage of technical innovation in the stunning new evolution of the Ferrari Portofino, the most notable being its redesigned powertrain, a brand-new eight-speed gearbox and the five-position Manettino that includes a Race mode, an absolute first for a Maranello GT spider.

As a consequence of these and many other new features, the Portofino M guarantees an unprecedented combination of authentic GT performance, driving pleasure, agility and exceptional versatility in everyday driving contexts.

This latest design and engineering masterpiece from the Prancing Horse is the perfect evolution of the Ferrari Portofino. Sportier in character than its predecessor, it also delivers superior handling whilst not only maintaining but enhancing onboard comfort, courtesy of specific new optional features, such as ADAS, and ventilated and heated seats.

The Ferrari Portofino M thus retains the Ferrari Portofino's twin soul and is the only car on the market that can rightfully be described as an authentic coupé with its top closed and a genuine spider when it is open. This is thanks, of course, to the Retractable Hard Top (RHT), the signature feature of all the Prancing Horse's convertibles. The Portofino M's compact dimensions also make it ideal for all occasions. Its unparalleled versatility and on-board comfort turn every trip into a voyage of (re)discovery.

Powertrain
The Ferrari Portofino M's 3855cc engine belongs to the V8 turbo

family voted "International Engine of the Year" on four consecutive occasions (2016-2019). The power unit can punch out 620 cv at 7,500 rpm, 20 cv more than the Ferrari Portofino. To achieve these performance levels, the Ferrari engineers used new cam profiles to increase valve lift and optimise combustion chamber filling.

A speed sensor was also added to the turbocharger assembly to measure the turbine revolutions. This in turn allowed the maximum revolutions per minute of the turbine to be increased by 5,000 rpm.

Lastly, to comply with the strictest pollution emissions standards, a Gasoline Particulate Filter has been included in the exhaust system. The GPF allows the car to comply with the strictest European anti-pollution standards (Euro-6D) without compromising driving pleasure.

This result comes thanks to a control logic that continuously regenerates the filter, limiting the amount of accumulated particulate matter. This is achieved by using two dedicated sensors per cylinder bank to accurately measure differential pressure deltas up- and down-stream of the GPF.

The 8-speed gearbox is a completely new unit compared to the previous 7-speed version and is based on a dual-clutch oil bath architecture. It differs from the SF90 Stradale's 8-speed transmission in its longer gear ratios and the introduction of a mechanical reverse gear. The new layout and integration of its components have also optimised the gearbox's size and its installation in the car.

BENEFICIAL FOR HEMODIALYSIS PATIENTS

NMC becomes first in Oman's private sector to offer Endo-AVF system

MUSCAT: NMC Speciality Hospital, Ghubra, the leading multi-speciality hospital in Oman has launched a facility for AV (Arteriovenous) fistula which is the first of its kind in the Sultanate in the private sector. NMC Hospital Ghubra in association with Heart & Vascular Centre, Azaiba, and the support of IntraMedica, the distributor for "WavelinQ" endo AVF technology in Oman, performed Endo AV fistula creation successfully for two hemodialysis patients last week. The procedure was done at the state-of-the-art cath lab at NMC Hospital Ghubra under the supervision of Dr Faisal Alam, Visiting Sr Consultant Vascular & Endovascular Surgeon from HVC Azaiba. "Patients undergoing regular hemodialysis sessions not just need a clean and safe environment along with specialised care, also need AV fistula formation for regular maintenance of dialysis," Dr Faisal Alam said. "It is a unique procedure through which the vein and artery are connected and hence the dialysis sessions can be carried out with minimum complications and long-standing issues. The new



state-of-the-art procedure called "endoAVF" ensures that the pain and complications in dialysis are reduced and provides maximum patient benefit. Traditionally, the AV fistulas are created surgically through a skin incision but endoAVF technology makes it possible to create a fistula through needle punctures," Dr Faisal added. NMC Hospital Ghubra is the first Hospital in Oman to perform the breakthrough procedure in association with Dr Faisal. Dr Faisal continued, "Kidney patients should get their AV fistula formed sooner when a patient

is in the advanced stage of kidney failure so that one can start hemodialysis as a bridge until he or she can undergo a kidney transplant. An AV fistula is created in the arms of the patient. During the formation of the fistula, a vein and an artery are connected which is created under the skin in one's arm. If AV fistula is not created among dialysis patients; they will be dependent on dialysis catheters that have many complications. Worldwide, 2 million people with ESKD (End Stage Kidney Disease) receive hemodialysis therapy and require vascular access to con-

nect their blood circulation to a dialysis machine. AV fistulas are the preferred approach to achieve vascular access and until recently, they have required an open surgical procedure for creation. The US FDA approved latest WavelinQ EndoAVF System is designed to create an endovascular AV fistula (endoAVF) for hemodialysis access in patients who have chronic kidney disease and need dialysis, using a completely endovascular approach in vessels that are not traditionally used during open surgery. It also gives the patient more access to sites for dialysis. So, the

patient will gain more options and will feel freer in his dialysis process. This procedure will not affect the vascular surgeon's decision in the future if he decided to go with the surgical fistula again, which means that this procedure is safe and has no adverse effect on the patient. Moreover, this invasive procedure avoids surgical scarring and minimises arm disfigurement associated with open surgery." "The catheters are each inserted into an artery and a vein in the arm through a small puncture. Using fluoroscopy, the catheters are advanced to the appropriate location for the creation of an endovascular AV fistula. The magnets in the catheters allow them to be precisely aligned while pulling the two adjacent vessels closer together. The venous catheter, which contains the electrode, delivers a burst of radiofrequency (RF) energy to create a connection between the artery and the vein. "Connect that artery to the vein, and the patient is not going to have to have any pain medicines after this, not going to have to have any surgical wounds, not going to have any stitches or staples, just going

to have an adhesive bandage," Dr Faisal explained how simple the procedure was performed. However, not every patient is suitable for this approach. Hence it is very important that a thorough review and discussion with a vascular surgeon regarding the options before a final decision is very important. Dr Faisal also expressed his gratitude to the entire team of 'IntraMedica' who are the distributors for WavelinQ in Oman. Dr Deep Makkar, GM NMC Healthcare Oman said, "Dialysis is a necessary and life-saving procedure for thousands of individuals. With the new technology/technique action, there will be additional, less-invasive vascular access options for patients who will require hemodialysis. With the two new devices, a catheter is inserted into a blood vessel in the forearm and is guided to the site of the planned AV fistula. Energy is delivered to form a connection between an upper forearm artery and an adjacent vein." "Surgically created AV fistulas typically take several months to heal and for the vein to mature before they can be used for hemodialysis."



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ROUND-UP

Coimbatore Ayurvedic Centre poised to become biggest and best in Oman

Coimbatore Ayurveda Centre opened its fifth branch in Mabelah

MUSCAT: The Coimbatore Ayurveda Centre (CAC) is poised to become Oman's top Ayurvedic centre. The CAC, a branch of the popular and prestigious Arya Vaidya Pharmacy (AVP), Coimbatore Limited is sitting pretty after launching its fifth branch in Mabelah on March 18.

The fifth CAC branch was opened under the aegis of the chief guest, Dr Muhanna Nasser Al Muslahi, director-general of private health establishment, Ministry of Health; Amit Narang, Indian ambassador; C. Devidas Varier, managing director, AVP, Coimbatore. Yousuf Al Aamri, chairman; Babu Kolara, managing director, Bijesh Kolara, CEO of CAC; guests and press were also present.

Start of a new chapter

With this launch, they are looking to consolidate their top spot as the biggest Ayurveda centre, and also provide wholesome wellbeing through their effective Ayurvedic treatments and remedies, in Oman. The fifth branch opening is just a start of a new chapter for CAC. It is the vision of CAC to open an in-patient service hospital for long-term treatments and to add four more centres across Oman in the period of next five years.

A success story

Upbeat about their new launch, the CAC promoters detailed their long journey from the initiation of their operations in Oman, which began 14 years back.

"In conformation with Oman Vision 2040 we guarantee sin-



cere, unconditional service, authentic treatments, safe and best medicines – all of which efficiently administered by a team of well-qualified professionals," they said, accrediting these values as reasons for their astounding success.

Biggest and the best

"With this launch, we are poised to become the biggest Ayurveda centre in Oman. We will also guarantee exceptional services and aspire to develop as the best Ayurvedic centre in Oman," Bijesh Kolara, \ said in remarks made to the press, after the launch.

A first and only authorised dealer

The CAC, which began operations

in Oman in 2008, is the "first and only authorised dealer and treatment centre in Oman for AVP," noted Bijesh, adding that in the beginning, the AVP was aiming to spread Ayurveda in Oman.

Easily overcame misconceptions

Responding to queries whether the initial stage was complicated and tough as they would have faced challenges, owing to the usual misgivings and misconceptions about Ayurveda, Bijesh replied in the negative.

"No, as Omanis have always been resorting to their traditional herbal treatments, it was not that difficult for us to convince and make them aware of the benefits



of Ayurveda and herbal medicines. We were able to overcome the misconceptions within a short time," he said.

Reflection of trust

The situation was constantly getting better. "Nowadays, even patients with acute/fresh cases directly approach us for treatment, which was not the scenario in the beginning. Earlier, they used to consult alternative practitioners before heading to us. We feel that this is ample testimony of the trust that Omanis have in Ayurveda, today."

Reasons for a stellar show

Bijesh gave clear reasons for CAC's stellar show in Oman: "From the beginning, our motto was to provide sincere and unconditional service in the healthcare system with authentic treatments with the aid of the safest and the best medicines available, administered by the professionally qualified, experienced and disciplined team. We firmly believe that's the reason for our success."

He also added: "Providing the best is our maxim. Therefore, worrying about competition is not on our agenda.

"Generally, we never concentrate on what others do in the field of Ayurveda – our prime focus is on how to provide the best service to our clients, and also constantly upgrade our service in line with the rapidly changing trends in the

field of alternative medicines."

Met success with tough and challenging cases too: Bijesh also reflected that it was not only common or general ailments that they attended to. They were confronted with many tough cases, which they managed to resolve successfully. "The CAC has efficiently treated various difficult ailments in patients.

Two years back, a patient approached us with a case of trigeminal neuralgia. There is no definite cure for this, but we were able to provide great results. It was a six-month-long treatment and the patient was also very cooperative, despite being in adverse condition."

Omanis and expatriates

The clientele at the four CAC centres is a judicious mix of both Omanis and expatriates. "I would say that it depends on the location. For example, in our Ruwi and Ghubra branches, we are getting more expatriate patients, whereas, in our Seeb and Barkha branches, Omanis are our main clients," Bijesh said.

He also briefly charted out the plans of CAC. "We have had success rates in combating various diseases and complications. We achieved in getting positive results in the management of post-stroke conditions, rheumatoid arthritis, intervertebral disc prolapse (IVDP), etc. In such cases, although the patients needed long-term treatment, the results were encouraging.



In-patient hospital in offing

"Within the next five years, our future projects include in-patient service hospitals for long treatments and four more centres of CAC across Oman," Bijesh revealed.

Future plans and vision

"Our five branches are focused on providing traditional Ayurvedic treatments. We are not only cost-effective but also determined to maintain high quality in the treatments provided. Currently, all our outlets are outpatients based. In the near future, we hope to set up a professional Ayurvedic treatment centre that will be able to take in-patients like a proper hospital."

How it all began

Bijesh explained how they began their Ayurveda operations in Oman. "We are in Oman for the last 41 years. We are also into FMCG and building materials. My father used to take Ayurvedic treatment every year from the AVP in Coimbatore, India and used to meet many Omani citizens there. It was at this juncture that he came up with the magnificent idea of bringing to Oman the authentic Indian Ayurveda treatment to cater to the needs of the Omani people. At the AVP centre, my father (Babu Kolara) was also fortunate to meet our sponsor, Yousuf Al Aamri, who had come with his father to the AVP treatment centre and that was how it all began. That meeting resulted in the opening of the first branch of CAC in Oman in 2008."

CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL

Digital Private School: Today's students, tomorrow's leaders

MUSCAT: Digital Private School (DPS) opened its doors to students on September 22, 2021. DPS is a co-educational school for Omanis and international students with classes starting from KG1 to Grade 9. The school will open Grade 10 in September 2022.

Digital Private School is a candidate school for the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB).

Students are at the heart of what DPS do. The school is pursuing authorisation as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy, commitment to high-quality, challenging and international education that we believe is important for DPS students.

Only schools authorised by the IB Organisation can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorisation will be granted.

Digital Private School is implementing the PYP Framework from KG 1 to Grade 6 and the MYP Framework in Grade 7-10.



Digital Private School welcomes all nationalities, with diverse, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds to be a part of the school to create a real-world that allows students to accept and understand their differences. Currently, it has students from Oman, India, Croatia, Serbia, Russia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Lebanon, Bahrain, Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan. The small class sizes will never be more than 20 students in a class.

The school has international teachers who bring their different styles of teaching and experiences to the school. The latest digital technology, interactive smartboards in all classrooms, chrome books from Grade 1 is being used here.

The school also offers robotics and VR opportunities.

Works within global contexts, IB programmes increase understanding of languages and cultures, as well as exploring globally significant ideas and issues.



Explores significant content, IB programmes offer a curriculum that is broad and balanced, conceptual, and connected.

Digital Private School students are encouraged to develop international-mindedness and global awareness whilst maintaining their national identity by upholding the traditional and cultural values of their community. All teachers who teach in IB classrooms are required to participate in collaborative planning and reflection to make their teaching practices consistent and to foster a holistic approach to education.

OFFER



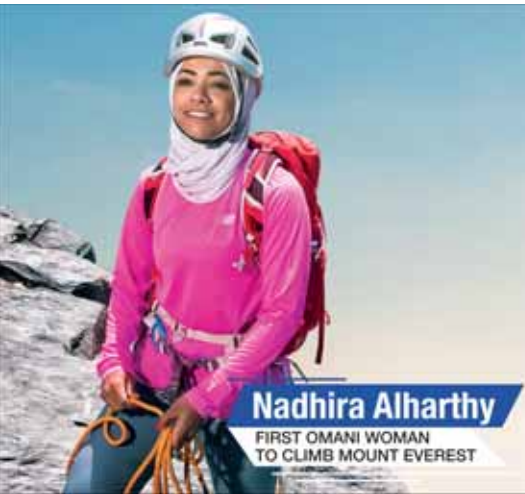
Exclusive benefits on Lexus range ending soon

MUSCAT: Now is a good time to own a Lexus and benefit with Service 3 Years / 30,000 km (Whichever is earlier), and 1 Year Free Registration. The campaign will end on March 23 (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

In Oman, Lexus has a distinctive range that includes luxury SUVs, sedans and coupes too. The new NX is designed to meet the diverse lifestyles of customers around the world. Lexus has introduced two new petrol engines in the NX range, New NX

350 is introduced with a 2.4 L Turbocharged Gasoline engine with 275 HP/6000 Rpm - 8 Speed AT and 2.5 L HEV with 240 HP (Combined power) CVT. The NX's luxurious interiors include the latest 14" NAV with touch screen / 10 premium speakers and with digital inner view mirror for uninterrupted rear views.

The Lexus UX has a front-wheel-drive configuration and is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission.



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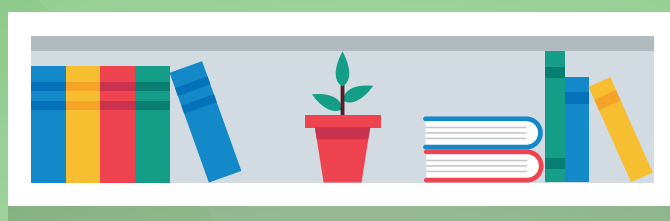
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