



STATE COUNCIL DISCUSSES DRAFT LAW ON REGULATING WILDLIFE BUSINESS

The State Council has discussed a bill of law forwarded by the Council of Ministers on regulating business in wildlife resources. The discussion took place during the 4th session of the council's 10th Term's first annual convening. It was held under the chairmanship of Salim Musallah Qatan, Deputy Chairman of the State Council. **>A2**



Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 004 | 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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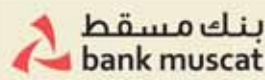
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HIS MAJESTY RETURNS HOME



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik returned home on Tuesday, after the private visit he made to the United Kingdom. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys, grant him good health and wellbeing, and guard him as a source of pride for the Sultanate of Oman and its faithful people.— **ONA**

MEETING

Oman, Iran call to stop Israeli genocide against Palestinians

TEHRAN: The Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated their call to the international community to stop the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip.

During the Strategic Consultations Committee meeting held in Tehran on Tuesday, they called for an immediate ceasefire, lifting of the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, provide humanitarian needs, and hold Israel accountable for its continued violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

The Omani side was chaired by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while



the Iranian side was chaired by Ali Bagheri, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs.

The two sides discussed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation in the economic, consular, cultural, and maritime security fields, as well as encouraging investment and tourism exchanges, and addressing the obstacles

they face in a manner that serves the joint interests of the two countries.

They also exchanged views on a set of regional and international issues of common concern.

The meeting was attended by a number of officials from the foreign ministries of the two countries.— **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Oman Year Book 2023 launched

1 In cooperation with the Cultural Committee of Muscat International Book Fair's 28th edition, the Ministry of Information on Tuesday celebrated the launch of Oman Year Book 2023, titled 'Oman the Vision & the Future'.

The ceremony took place at the book fair's venue at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. **>A2**

WORLD Gaza Strip death toll rises to 29,878

2 At least 29,878 people in the Gaza Strip have been killed and 70,215 wounded since the war with Israel began on October 7, as per the Health Ministry in the enclave. **>A7**

SPORTS Namibia player scores fastest T20I century



3 Namibia batter Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton struck a 33-ball hundred against Nepal to claim the record for hitting the fastest century in the T20I format on Tuesday. During the ongoing Tri-Nation T20I series, Loftie-Eaton arrived at the crease when Namibia were reduced to 62/3 in the 11th over. His arrival saw boundaries raining throughout the TU Cricket Ground. **>A8**

9-HOUR SURGERY

Royal Hospital conducts rare surgery

MUSCAT: A specialised surgical team from the Royal Hospital conducted a 9-hour surgery for removing a rare tumour from the abdominal cavity of a patient.

The critical operation was followed by extensive chemotherapy to eliminate the remaining parts of the tumour.

Dr. Amid Khamis Al Araimi, Assistant Director General for Medical Affairs at the Royal Hospital, Consultant of Colon and General Surgery, told Oman News Agency that the tumour was engulfing many vital organs, including the right kidney, the right lobe of the liver, the inferior vena cava, the right common iliac artery and the muscles. He said that the difficulty of the operation stemmed from its rare occurrence, making it a practice that requires high experience and precision.

Dr. Amid added that the challenges posed to the operating team included the large size of the tumour (30 x 30 cm), its



complex location and its proximity to vital organs.

He said that the Royal Hospital values the expertise of its professionals and affirms its keenness to provide the best services to patients.

Dr. Amid credited the achievement to concerted efforts made

better tariffs and diversity in fixed and mobile service packages. He affirmed that the TRA strikes a balance between sustainability of growth and affordability of service prices.

The TRA released statistics about services offered by the telecommunications and postal sectors, projects completed in 2023 and the performance of fixed and mobile telephone networks. It also outlined upcoming projects.

The TRA added that, in 2023, subscriptions went up by 3 per-

cent in the communications sector, 3 percent in the mobile phones segment, 5 percent in mobile broadband sector, 3 percent in fixed telephone lines and 5 percent in fixed broadband categories.

Giving more statistics about 2023, the TRA pointed that the number of postal service companies rose by 31 percent rise to 63, while the total number of workers on permanent contracts in the firms stood at 1,676, with an Omanisation rate of 78 percent. **>A5**

The TRA also issued a first-class licence to Starlink Muscat to provide fixed public telecommunications services

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total revenues of the telecommunications sector in 2023 stood at about OMR851 million, up by 12 percent as against the figures of 2022.

The total number of workers in companies licensed in the sector stood at 4,167, with a 94 percent Omanisation rate, said the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) during the media briefing on Tuesday.

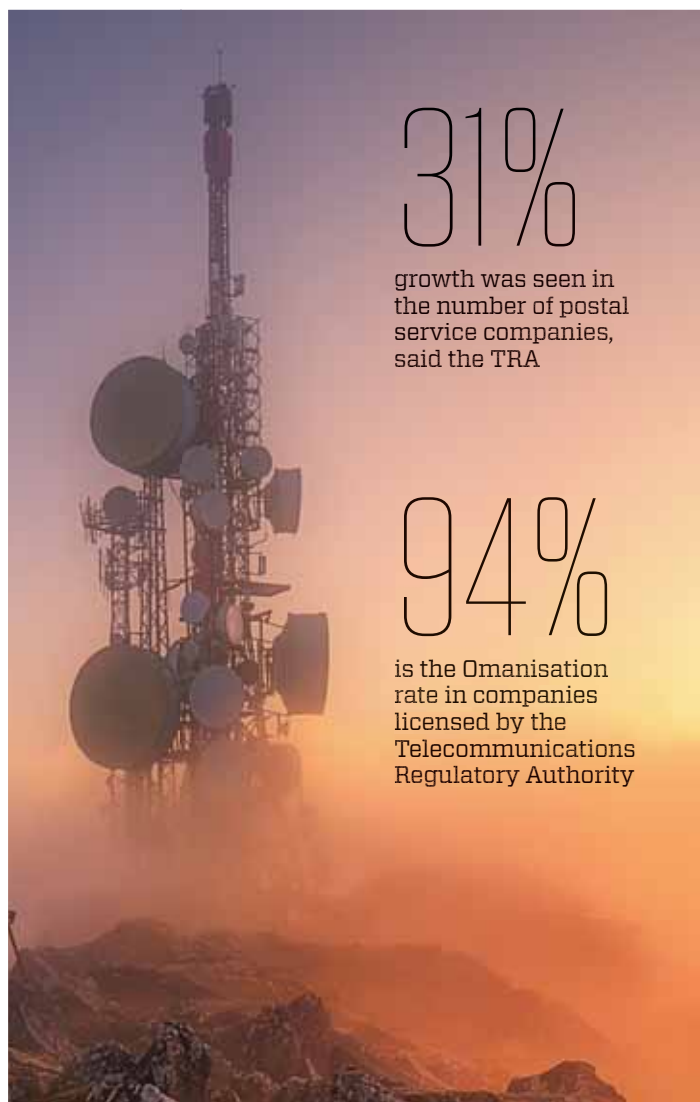
The TRA also issued a first-class licence to Starlink Muscat to provide fixed public telecommunications services.

Eng. Omar Hamdan Al Ismaili, CEO of TRA said that in 2024, the TRA will carry out 29 field surveys of for the centres in the Wilayats of Oman to measure the quality of telecommunications services provided to beneficiaries.

During a media briefing organised on Tuesday by the TRA in Muscat, Al Ismaili explained that the Authority has focused on raising quality of its services through various initiatives.

The programme included efforts to augment 5G networks and fibre optic connectivity, in addition to initiatives aimed at boosting transition from copper fibre network to the 5G or fibre optic networks.

This, he observed, resulted in





Dhuhr.....	12:25pm
Asr.....	3:45pm
Maghrib.....	6:14pm
Isha.....	7:24pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:14am

MEETING

Oman and Korea ink MoU to boost investment



ABU DHABI: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on consolidating cooperation between the two countries in the field of investment promotion.

The agreement was signed by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Inkyo Cheong, Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy, Republic of Korea.

The MoU reflects a keenness to enhance economic prosperity and sustainability in the two countries, as well as flexibility in

minimising trade barriers and facilitating customs procedures. It will also lead to transparency and the establishment of better supply chain channels.

Earlier, the GCC states initialled the first version of a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Republic of Korea to implement economic integration and develop commercial relations between the two sides.

The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Sayyid Ahmed Hilal Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Salim Al Kathiri, Head of Oman Commercial Office in Dubai, among officials from both sides. -ONA

'Oman Year Book' launched at Muscat International Book Fair



The annual publication provides a comprehensive account of Oman's progress in various fields of national accomplishments

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Cultural Committee of Muscat International Book Fair's 28th edition, the Ministry of Information on Tuesday celebrated the launch of Oman Year Book 2023, titled "Oman the Vision & the Future".

The ceremony took place at the book fair's venue at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Al Hinai, Head of Oman Year Book's Working Team, said that the annual publication provides a comprehensive account of Oman's progress in various fields of national action. "Since its first first launch in 1979, the book has been keeping pace with Oman's progress, acting as an objective archive of national accomplishments in cultural, po-



litical, economic and social fields", Dr. Mohammed explained.

He added that Oman Year Book is published in five languages namely Arabic, English, French, German, and Spanish. This, he observed, allows the book to roam the world, enriching the libraries of Oman embassies and consulates, as well as the collections of international book fairs and festivals.

Dr. Mohammed pointed out that Oman Year Book is also available in digital format on the website Ministry of Information in various languages. The celebration marking the book launch included discussion panels during which media professionals elaborated on the chapters of the year book, to which they contributed over the past period. - ONA

TRANSPORT MINISTRY

40% work of Dibba-Khasab Road Project completed



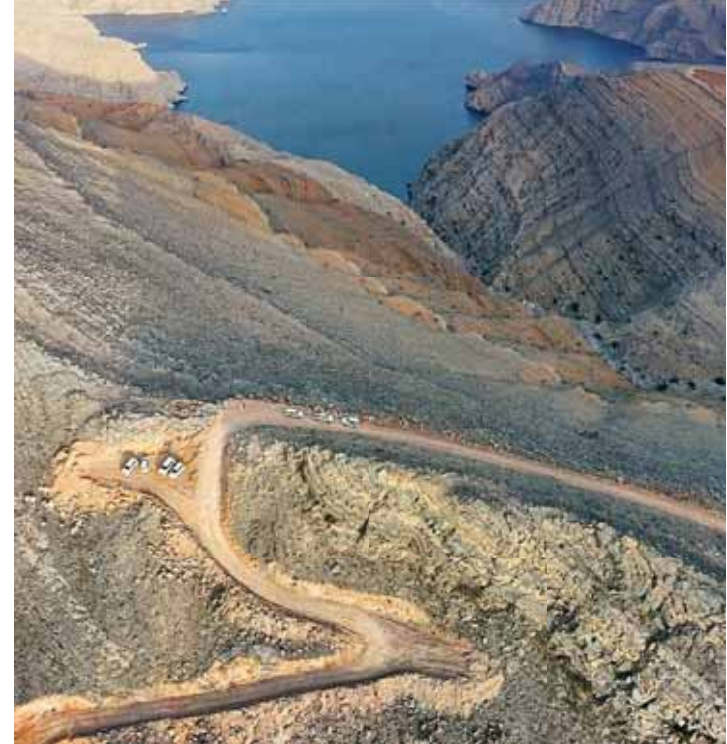
KHASAB: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology said that 40 percent work of the 70km long service road of Dibba-Khasab Road Project and the link road to the Niyabat of Lima in Musandam Governorate has been completed.

The project is estimated to cost OMR151 million.

The ministry also stated that nine kilometres of the service road out of 22 kilometres have been completed.

The ministry also added that the road starts from the Wilayat of Khasab to the Wilayat of Dibba through the Niyabat of Lima and is designed to be used under all weather conditions by types of vehicles.

The road would ease traffic between the wilayats and niyabats of Musandam Governorate and serve the villages on the sides of the road. The road is expected to generate new economic and tourism opportunities. -ONA



THE STATE COUNCIL



Draft law regulating business in wildlife resources discussed

MUSCAT: The State Council has discussed a bill of law forwarded by the Council of Ministers on regulating business in wildlife resources.

The discussion took place during the 4th session of the council's 10th Term's first annual conven-

ing. It was held under the chairmanship of Salim Musallah Qatan, Deputy Chairman of the State Council.

Dr. Mohammed Said Al Hajri, Head of the Social and Cultural Committee at the State Council, said that the law assumes great

significance at local, regional and global levels.

The statute-to-be highlights the civilized culture of the Sultanate of Oman and its sound legal and regulatory frameworks, he added.

- ONA

OMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

OHRC reviews drafts of memorandums

MUSCAT: Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) on Tuesday held its second meeting of the 1st annual sitting for the 5th term under the chairmanship of Dr. Rashid Hamad Al Balushi, OHRC Chairman.

The meeting reviewed drafts of cooperation memorandums to be signed by OHRC with the General Federation of Oman Workers and some civil society institutions.

The meeting also discussed reports and complaints received by OHRC during the past period.

The meeting also touched on



the basic human rights conventions to which the Sultanate of Oman has joined, the reports submitted to international bod-

ies, and other topics related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

-ONA

FOURTH EDITION

German language film festival in Muscat from February 28

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassies of Switzerland, Austria and Germany in Muscat and the Goethe-Institut Gulf Region announce the fourth edition of the German language film festival which will take place at the Palm Garden of the Intercontinental Hotel in Muscat.

The festival will run on February 28 and February 29, 2024 with the screening of 3 movies.

On the opening night, at 5:45pm, a reception and opening speeches from the three ambassadors in the presence of guests of honour His Highness Sayyid Tariq Al Said, Honorary President of the Omani-German Friendship Association and Sayyid Abdullah Al Busaidi, Honorary Chairperson of the Oman Switzerland Friendship Association, will launch the German Language Film Festival (GLFF).

It will be followed with the

screening of the first movie, "Die Goldenen Jahre" (Golden Years) by Barbara Kulcsar. The Swiss comedy-drama follows 'Alice and Peter', a couple who celebrate their retirement on a cruise ship through the Mediterranean. However, when Peter invites a friend to join them, the spouses end up going on separate quests, on what should have been a reunifying journey.

This cruise will push the spouses on separate journeys of self-discovery, which will challenge their harmonious retirement and marriage.

On the second day, on February 29, the evening will open at 6:30 pm with Andres Veiel's movie 'Ökoziid', a 2020 German TV movie and legal thriller.

In 2024, climate change's consequences are dramatic and have destroyed livelihood of millions of people. Two lawyers representing

31 countries of the Global South to the International Court of Justice raise the question of responsibility and demand compensation.

The court must decide whether German policy makers are to be held accountable for their failure to protect the climate. The film delves into an oppressive yet precise vision of the future and the challenges ahead for future generations.

The festival will conclude on the same evening with the Austrian movie 'Tonsüchtig' (Vienna Symphony), a 2020 documentary about the Vienna Symphony orchestra, from the married filmmakers Iva Svarcova and Malte Ludin.

The documentary displays interviews with many symphony's members, who reflect on the highs and lows of their work. The intimate, playful and often revealing tone of the discussions exposes the fear of failure and performance

anxiety, the demanding schedule and standards of excellence and the interpersonal dynamic within this renowned institution.

Salman Kouhi, Director of the Goethe Institute in Muscat, commented: "It is with a great honour that we invite the entire cinema and German language aficionados to a new edition of this unique film festival held in the Sultanate. The careful curation of this year's programme, featuring a captivating selection of Swiss, German, and Austrian films, reflects our commitment to displaying the cultural richness of German-language cinema. We are excited to bring people together for an intimate outdoor cinema experience under the enchanting Muscat sky.

The German language film festival is presented by the Embassies of Austria, Germany and Switzerland and the Goethe-Institut Muscat.





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COMMENTARY

OPAL leads the way towards
energy sustainability

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Aligning seamlessly with its core business strategy, OPAL has translated its sustainability agenda into a robust operational framework for Oman's Energy Sector, its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) said in an exclusive interview with Times of Oman.

Abdul Rahman Al-Yahyaie, the CEO of Oman Energy Association (OPAL), emphasized that he and his management team have a mission to deliver a reliable core business strategies to increase competencies to a world class level for their stakeholders.

"We are the voice of this industry to help our partners maintain the highest operational standards. Our services are built into a single platform of uniformity that adheres to the international benchmark to serve well our stakeholders," the OPAL's CEO, said.

OPAL started in 1998 to promote industry standards in a single umbrella for about 500 energy companies for their operations, contracting and supply, both large and small.

"Over the years, our aim has been to increase competence and professionalism in this important industry while at the same time address their common challenges for the benefit of the country," the CEO explained. He said OPAL is regulating the interests of over 70,000 employees working in different energy sectors. It is also targeting the employment of between 700 to 1,000 Omanis every year in the energy sector. But the focus still remains on training, work ethics, professional development, maintaining safety standards and sustainable employment for Omani nationals.

On training, he said the strategy is to close the gaps through human capital development by



ABDUL RAHMAN AL YAHYAEI

empowering young people with the right skills. OPAL is also actively pursuing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with initiatives to support community causes, including the creation of small businesses.

"We help create Small Business Enterprises and so far we are proud to say that we have supported over 130 of them as our contribution to the national economy to help young people making something for themselves," Abdul Rahman, said.

But much more than that, OPAL helps its partners with crisis management for any emergency issues they may face. "For example, during the COVID-19 period, we helped by

repatriating thousands of staff back home who were infected with the virus. We also help in the case of critical illness of the staff by arranging with emergency facilities in health care," he further explained.

He added that OPAL's Best Practice Awards, which started in 2015, have immensely benefited the energy sector in Oman. The aim of the awards is to identify and honour companies and organisations that have demonstrated best practices in the deployment, development and finding sustainable solutions. Winners are chosen by an independent panel of judges who have expertise in the field.

The categories of competence

to win the awards include Omanisation, Health and Safety, Energy Transition, Environment, Net Zero Emission, Research, Development and Operational Excellence.

"We consider ourselves as a center of excellence but it will not be complete without honouring companies or organisations excelling in best practices in different categories. The Best Practices Awards is our special way to encourage our partners to be on top of their game," the CEO further elaborated.

It may be mentioned that OPAL is a non-profit organization dedicated to help companies win contracts to sustain their operations in a very competitive market. Their association with OPAL give them professional credibility.

Since most of the local contractors in the industry deal with supply chain, the movement of goods from one place to another can be critical.

"We smooth out the way for them by developing standards so the movements of goods across the country is carried in a very tangible way with safety and the well-being of their workers are the top priority," he noted.

OPAL also carry out auditing by carefully monitoring the operations of the industry to ensure smooth operations.

"The auditing and monitoring of standards are procedures and processes that are used to evaluate checklists for our assessment to ensure quality and the smoothness of the operations on regular basis," The CEO, said.

OPAL issues Health, Safety and Environmental's Passports to the employees of industry helping them to manage risks in workplaces. It is a training programme for employees and the passports are basically certificates that they have successfully completed the HSE courses.

Oman likely to
be affected by
low pressure



The low pressure is
expected to start from
February 28

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman may be affected by a trough of low pressure for three days, from Wednesday, February 28, 2024 till Friday, March 1, 2024, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), said on Tuesday.

The CAA said in a statement: "The latest forecasts and analyses from the National Early Warning Center for Multiple hazards indicate that the Sultanate of Oman will be influenced by a trough of low pressure starting from Wednesday, February 28, 2024, until Friday, March 1, 2024. It is expected that clouds will gradually flow and form over the northern governorates of Oman in general."

There is a chance of isolated rainfall, with occasional heavy rain expected in the northern Governorates of Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and South Al Sharqiyah.

The weather conditions will be

accompanied by active northwest winds (15 to 35 kt), affecting most governorates of Oman. This may lead to reduced horizontal visibility due to the rising dust and sand. Additionally, the sea wave is expected to rise from moderate to rough (2.0-3.5 metres) on the western coasts of Musandam Governorate and the Sea of Oman, with a noticeable decrease in temperatures.

Day 1- Wednesday, February 28, 2024: Advection and clouds formation with chance of isolated rainfall (5-15 mm) over most northern governorates of the Sultanate of Oman with southeasterly moderate to active winds (10-25 knots) are expected over South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta, Dhofar, and Al Dahirah Governorates.

Day 2- Thursday, February - February 29-March 1, 2024:

Advection and clouds formation associated with rainfall over the northern governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The intensity of rainfall (10-40 mm) will be concentrated in the northern Governorates of Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and South Al Sharqiyah.

The Civil Aviation Authority advises all to take precaution during rainfall, flash flood and to check visibility and sea state before sailing and follow the weather bulletins & reports.

VISITING DELEGATION

Indian security
official visits MSC

MUSCAT: Vikram Misri, Deputy National Security Advisor of India and his accompanying delegation yesterday visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

The Indian official and his delegation were greeted upon their arrival at the MSC by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the MSC.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the centre in the Omani maritime environment.

They also toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. -ONA

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OMAN ACROSS THE AGES MUSEUM

Stress on use of tech to showcase museum potentials to visitors



MANAH: The “Oman Across the Ages Museum” in the Wilayat of Manah (Al Dakhiliyah Governorate) on Monday hosted activities of the second day of meetings of the “International Museum Construction Congress (IMCC)”. As many as 120 specialists in museum construction took part in the three-day conference, which began on 25 February 2024. The event sought to enhance the knowledge of young people with disabilities, expand their talents and foster dialogue among innovators in the field of museum construction and management. During the congress, participants and specialists in building museums underscored the significance of utilising modern technology to showcase the potential of museums to visitors and other

segments of society. They also highlighted the efforts being made to transform historical and archaeological monuments into public-interest destinations. **Stages of construction** The meeting included a working paper on the stages of construction of the “Oman Across the Ages Museum”. The paper gave extensive insights into the museum construction industry and expanded the specialists’ knowhow in this specialty. It is worth noting that the IMCC, a global conference that roams the world, granted an exceptional session to Oman to explore the country’s experience. The two venues chosen for this session are the National Museum and “Oman Across the Ages Museum”. — **ONA**



Features of Omani literature reviewed

MUSCAT: The Cultural Committee of Muscat International Book Fair, in cooperation with Bait Al Ghasham Dar Arab Translation Prize, organised on Monday a seminar on Arabic literature and translation as part of the activities accompanying the 28th edition of Muscat International Book Fair. The participants reviewed the features of the Omani literature through three translated novels. Dr. Jokha Al Harthi, Dr. Younis Al Akhzami, Translators Sawad Hussein and Dr. Mubarak Sarifi participated in the seminar, which dealt with the issues of concern to foreign readers in Arabic literature in general and Omani literature in particular. Translator Sawad Hussein said that she translates the works that have unique themes or ideas. Without translation we would not be able to speak about global literature, she added. Writer Younis Al Akhzami said that when a writer writes about his/her nation or society, he/she

conveys to the readers of other countries or world the human elements despite the various cultural differences in societies. Dr. Mubarak Sarifi stressed the significance of literature and the need for cultural awareness for promoting the artworks, mainly in the Arab world. The event included honouring a number of translators within Bait Al Ghasham Dar Arab Translation Prize which aimed to bridge the gap between the Arab world and the western world. The prize covers two categories; the writers and translators. The number of artworks of writers amounted to 127 and in the category of translators the works reached 12 in the various artworks such as literature, short story, poetry and biography. The winning work in the category of writers is a poetry collection for poet Elias Al Saidi and in the category of translators the first place went to a book titled (Safe Corridor) for Jan Dost. — **ONA**



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Workshop explores ways to reduce carbon footprint

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education launched on Monday the training workshop on “Humanising Green Schools and Zero Neutrality”, which is being implemented in cooperation with the Environment Agency, and with the support of Shell Oman, as part of the work of the Oman Sustainability Conference 2024.

The two-day training workshop is taking place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The training workshop targets more than 80 participants of teachers supervising the green schools project and members of the project's national team in the governorates. The training workshop was opened with the Ministry's speech delivered by Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, in which he explained that this training workshop comes with the aim of reconsidering the functions of the school so that it is an influential force in creating sustainable behaviours that contribute to preserving the environment, which contributes to reducing the carbon footprint and helps to reach the zero level.

The training workshop is also in line with the directions of the Sultanate of Oman aimed at achieving the level of carbon neutrality by the year 2050.

At the same time, it constitutes

one of the strategic directions on which the goals of Oman Vision 2040 focus; that is to create a conscious, educated society that is aware of its environment and preserve it by adopting green and circular economy projects.

He added that the training workshop includes presenting eight papers within two sessions over two days, and discusses several important topics, including: greening the curricula and its hospitality, the concept of humanisation, and how green schools make the student a human first and a learner second. The timing of the workshop coincides with the book fair in order to benefit from its activities and books that enrich those interested in the field of sustainable development.

Ismail Al-Abri, Director of Occupational and Environmental Safety at Shell Oman, delivered the company's speech in which he said: ‘We are honoured to be a strategic partner in this pioneering project (the Green Schools Project), which aims to spread awareness among students, teachers, and society, of environmental and circular economic issues, sustainability, empowering them with the necessary knowledge, and providing them with the skills required to be effective elements in finding sustainable solutions to the environmental challenges facing our societies today.’

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY



Laws being finalised for early warning system

< FROM A1 The TRA also said that the total revenues of companies licenced to do business in the postal sector in Oman stood at OMR20.7 million in 2023, posting an increase of 14 percent compared to 2022 figures.

The TRA added its most prominent initiatives during 2023 including devising determinants for investment in the infrastructure of fibre optic networks and requirements for drafting emergency management plans in the telecommunications sector. This was in addition to issuing regula-

tions of public auctions for mobile phone numbers.

The TRA reported that it finalised procedures for the establishment of the early warning system in the coastal wilayats in cooperation with the Civil Aviation Authority and operators.

In 2024, the TRA is focusing on improving communications services for the sectors of education, health, tourism, industry, transportation, environmental sustainability in the communications and postal sectors, innovation, research and development in the field of communications.

50TH FOUNDATION DAY

New India Assurance celebrates 50 glorious years of operations in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Amidst the vibrant tapestry of Oman's insurance sector, the stage is set for a momentous occasion as New India Assurance's Oman operations gear up to commemorate their 50th Foundation Day.

Tonight, under the gleaming stars of Oman's night sky, esteemed dignitaries and industry stalwarts will gather to celebrate this remarkable milestone.

Ms. Neerja Kapur, the visionary CMD of New India Assurance, alongside Ms. Mukta Sharma and Mr. C S Ayyapan, General Managers from the Head Office, will grace the event with their presence, exemplifying the commitment and leadership that define the organisation.

The event promises to be a convergence of excellence, bringing together a distinguished array of guests. Among them, Amit Narang, Ambassador from the Indian Embassy, Ahmed Ali Saif Al Maamri, Vice President of the Insurance Sector, and Ahmed Bin Salim Al Harrasi, Director of Capital Market Authority (CMA), signify the importance of regulatory collaboration and industry synergy.

Adding to the grandeur, top officials of the insurance fraternity in Oman, including CEOs of insurance companies and insurance brokers, will join as esteemed in-



viewees, honouring the occasion and New India Assurance's contributions to the Sultanate's insurance landscape.

Moreover, the inclusion of major clients and banking partners underscores the pivotal role played by collaboration and trust in New India Assurance's journey

of success. Their patronage and support have been instrumental in shaping the company's trajectory over the past five decades.

From distant shores, representatives from New India Assurance's Head Office in Dubai, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi will join in solidarity, reaffirming the or-

ganization's regional footprint and commitment to excellence across borders.

Furthermore, the celebration will be co-hosted by Mr. Gaurav Sharma, Chief Operating Officer of New India Assurance Oman Operations, and Mr. Majid Abdul Rahim Jaffer, heading M/s Abdul Aziz and Brothers LLC, Chief Agents for New India Assurance, Mr. I.M. Jacob, Senior General Manager and Mr. Albert Wilson Raj, Chief Financial Officer reflecting their longstanding partnership and commitment to excellence.

As we gather to celebrate fifty years of resilience, innovation, and service excellence, the occasion serves as a testament to New India Assurance's unwavering dedication to its stakeholders and the communities it serves. Looking ahead, the company remains steadfast in its mission to redefine benchmarks and set new standards of excellence in the dynamic landscape of insurance.

Tonight, amidst the jubilant festivities and heartfelt reminiscences, we honor the past, celebrate the present, and embrace the future with unwavering optimism and determination.

Here's to fifty years of excellence, and to many more milestones yet to come.

Long live New India Assurance, Oman Operations!

MANPOWER REQUIREMENT FOR REPUTED OIL AND GAS COMPANY IN OMAN

Sr	Position	Qualification	Min Years of Exp.	Qty required	Experince Requirement details
1	HSE Advisors (Omani)	Degree/ Diploma	6	40	Degree or NEBOSH (National Educational Board of Occupational Safety & Health). Certificate / Diploma or British Safety Council International Diploma in Safety Management or equivalent HSE qualifications Certificate in Environment Management. System (e.g. ISO 14001 Lead auditor's course)
2	HSE Advisors (Expat)	Degree/ Diploma	6	5	Degree or NEBOSH (National Educational Board of Occupational Safety & Health). Certificate / Diploma or British Safety Council International Diploma in Safety Management or equivalent HSE qualifications. Certificate in Environment Management. System (e.g. ISO 14001 Lead auditor's course).
3	QA Manager	Degree	15	1	Lead Assessor ISO 9001: 2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered/ RABQSA or equivalent QMS). Minimum of 15 years of relevant EPCC experience in onshore Refinery/Petroleum, Oil & gas facility/Pipeline projects, including live installations. Out of this, minimum 5 years of experience in similar position(s) in EPCC projects (preferably worked in middle East region for 10 years). Preferably be familiar with practices like Flawless Project Delivery, RFT, Lean management and Technical Integrity Verifications etc.
4	Sr QA Engineer	Degree	12	4	Lead Assessor ISO 9001: 2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered/ RABQSA or equivalent QMS). Minimum of 12 years of relevant EPCC experience in onshore Refinery/Petroleum, Oil & gas facility/Pipeline projects, including live installations. Out of this, minimum 3 years of experience in similar position(s) in EPCC projects (preferably worked in middle East region for 8 years). Preferably be familiar with practices like Flawless Project Delivery, RFT, Lean management and Technical Integrity Verification etc.
5	QAQC Engineer	Degree	10	4	Shall have qualification as Lead Auditor ISO 9001: 2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered or equivalent QMS). Shall have minimum of 10 years of relevant experience in EPC projects of oil and gas facility, Pipeline construction/ Refinery. He shall have a minimum of 5 years of management experience in establishment, operation and maintenance of a quality management system in accordance with ISO 29001 / ISO 9001 or equivalent. Preference shall be given for candidate with CSWIP 3.1 / AWS CWI/ BGas inspection or equivalent and Certified to ASNT level II/PCN in NDT techniques.
6	Welding Engineer	Degree	12	2	Shall be a post graduate qualification in Welding Engineering /Welding Technology. Alternatively, PE Welding Engineering or Metallurgy with specialized training in welding technology. Additional certification required: IWE /EWE certification or American Welding Society Certified Welding Engineer (CWEng) in compliance with AWS B5.16 or the International Institute of Welding (IIW) International Welding Engineer (IWE) Diploma. Shall have at least 10 years relevant experience in the construction of onshore oil & gas or petrochemical industry facilities (pressure vessels, tanks, mechanical fabrication, pipelines, piping, etc.). Experience as a welding coordinator in an ISO 3834-2 compliance organisation preferred. Desirable with CSWIP 3.1 / AWS for welding inspection or equivalent and Certified to PCN II/ ASNT level II in VT, RT, PT, MT and UT techniques.
7	Preservation Engineer	Degree	10	1	Minimum 10 years experience in Oil and Gas industry on shore, with minimum 5 year infield based maintenance jobs. Experience in the development and implementation of quality management and preservation philosophy, plan and procedures. Can develop and implement a preservation strategy & procedures and Support QA/QC team (project) on preservation process and pre-mechanical completion.
8	Welding Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	3	Shall have minimum of 8 years of relevant experience in oil and gas facility construction/ Pipeline construction. Welding Inspector shall possess CSWIP 3.1 / AWS for welding inspection or equivalent and Certifiedto ASNT level II/PCN in RT, PT, MT and UT techniques. Certification as Internal Auditor ISO 9001:2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered or equivalentQMS) shall be preferred.
9	MD Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	3	Shall have minimum of 8 years of relevant experience in oil and gas facility construction/ Pipeline construction. Welding Inspector shall possess CSWIP 3.1 / AWS for welding inspection or equivalent and Certifiedto ASNT level II/PCN in RT, PT, MT and UT techniques. Painting Inspector shall possess BGAS level2 / ERS III or equivalent in NACE (lev II) for paintinginspection or equivalent. Certification as Internal Auditor ISO 9001:2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered or equivalentQMS) shall be preferred.
10	Painting Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	3	Shall have minimum of 8 years of relevant experience in oil and gas facility construction/ Pipeline construction. Painting Inspector shall possess BGAS level2 / ERS III or equivalent in NACE (lev II) for paintinginspection or equivalent. Certification as Internal Auditor ISO 9001:2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered or equivalentQMS) shall be preferred.
11	GRE Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	2	Experienced in GRE Bonding & Lamination works & trained by reputed GRE manufacturers like FGS/ CPI/ FPI etc. Certification as CSWIP 3.1 or AWS / BGAS painting/ NACE/ equivalent and Certified to ASNT level II in RT, PT, MT and UT techniques shall be given preference. Shall have worked as GRE fitter/bonder or supervisor for a minimum of 1 year. Shall have minimum of *6 years of relevant inspection experience in oil and gas facility / GRE Pipeline /Piping construction.
12	Civil Inspector	Degree	8	6	Shall be a *Graduate Engineer in Civil discipline from a recognized university. Certification as Internal Auditor ISO 9001:2015 / equivalent QMS (IRCA Registered or equivalent QMS) shall be preferred. The experience shall include works involving soil excavation and earth works, Piling, concrete works, block works, structural steel works and roofing, tank pads and bunds and general activities associated with civil and building works/ Pipeline construction/ Facility construction.
13	Electrical Inspector-Ex	Degree/ Diploma	8	2	Shall have a minimum of 8 years of quality control and inspection experience in relevant discipline inEPCC projects. Shall have experience in Hazardous Area & Classified Zones installation & testing/Inspections. Shall be familiar with relevant material, Testing & construction/works relevant ATEX/IEC/BS/ISO codes used in the respective disciplines. Certification on COMPEX, ATEX or equivalent on EX equipment installations, inspection & maintenance shall have added advantage
14	Electrical Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	2	Shall have a minimum of 8 years of quality control and inspection experience in relevant discipline inEPCC projects. Shall be familiar with electrical construction materials & construction methods. testing of electrical equipments and installations, HV/LV system installation/ testing/ commissioning, installation testing of OHL lines, international codes and standards for electrical design, construction- and testing of facilities and works.
15	Instrum. Inspector	Degree/ Diploma	8	2	Shall have a minimum of 8 years of quality control and inspection experience in relevant discipline inEPCC projects. experience shall include electronic and pneumatic equipment includinganalogue and digital control systems, relay based and solid state logic systems, transmitters, controlvalves and accessories. Shall be thoroughly familiar with instrument construction materials & construction methods, testing of instrumentation and installations, international codes and standards for instrumentation design, construction and testing of facilities and works.

Interested Candidates please forward CV jobscareer.oman2023@gmail.com



INDIAN SCHOOL AL SEEB

Post Box No.2445, Pc.111, Seeb CPO, Sultanate of Oman,
Tel : 24451424/474. Fax: 24451353. Web: www.indianschoolseeb.com

TENDER NOTICE

GENERAL INSURANCE POLICIES
Tender Number:Ref: ISAS/Tend - 031 /2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024 •Tender fee **RO 10/-**

ELEVATORS
Tender Number:Ref: ISAS/Tend - 032/2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024 •Tender fee **RO 10/-**

VEHICLE
Tender Number:Ref: ISAS/Tend - 033 /2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024

SCHOOL CANTEN SERVICES
Tender Number:Ref: ISAS/Tend - 034 /2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024 •Tender fee **RO 10/-**

P.E.UNIFORMS
Tender Number: Ref: ISAS/Tend - 035 /2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024 •Tender fee **RO 10/-**

REVAMP SCHOOL FRONT AREA,RECEPTION & MEETING ROOM
Tender Number: Ref: ISAS/Tend - 036 /2024 - Dtd.28.02.2024 •Tender fee **RO 10/-**

COMPETITIVE TENDERS ARE INVITED FROM THE ESTABLISHMENTS SPECIALIZED IN THE ABOVE SERVICES FOR THE SCHOOL.

Collection of Tender Documents: **Wednesday 28 TH February 2024.**
Last date of submission: **Sunday10 TH March 2024.**
Sealed tenders to be addressed to:-
The Chairperson, Purchase Sub Committee, Indian School AL Seeb
**The School reserves the right to reject any Tender without providing any reason and does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender.

‘India will have its own station in space by 2035’

India of the 21st century, is today surprising the world with its potential. In the last 10 years, we have launched about 400 satellites, Indian Prime Minister said

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the country will have its own space station by 2035 which will help in the study of unknown expanses there. Addressing a gathering at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram, the PM said that Indian astronaut will land on the surface of the moon on our own rocket. “By 2035, India will have its own space station in space that will help us study the unknown expanses of space. In this period of

Amrit Kaal, Indian astronaut will land on the surface of the moon on our own rocket...” the PM said. He further said that the India in the 21st century is emerging as a dynamic global player, showcasing significant developmental strides across sectors. “India of the 21st century, is today surprising the world with its potential. In the last 10 years, we have launched about 400 satellites, whereas 10 years before that, only 33 satellites were launched...” the PM added. PM Modi further expressed his happiness over the equipment being used in the Gaganyaan mission are mostly made in India. “I was very happy to know that most of the equipment used in Gaganyaan is Made in India. What a great coincidence it is that when India is taking off to become the top 3 economy of the world, at the same time India's Gaganyaan is also going to take our space sector to a new height...” the PM said. PM Modi also announced the names of the four astronauts who will be part of India's first human space flight program, Gaganyaan, slated to be launched in 2024-25. The four chosen Indian Air Force pilots are Group Captain Prashanth Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Anagad Pratap, and Wing Commander



Shubhanshu Shukla. The four astronauts were trained at Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Russia. “I am happy that today I got the opportunity to meet these astronauts and present them in front of the country. I want to congratulate them on behalf of the entire country...You are the pride of today's India... These are not just 4 names and 4 humans, but 4 forces taking 140 crore aspirations to space. After a long period of 40 years, an Indian is set to go into space. But this time, the time is ours, countdown ours, and rocket is also ours,” the PM said. “India's success in the space sector is sowing the seeds of scientific temperament in the country's young generation,” PM Modi said

in his address at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a visit to Kerala, reviewed the progress of Gaganyaan mission and bestowed ‘astronaut wings’ to the astronaut-designates at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. The Gaganyaan mission is India's first human space flight program for which extensive preparations are underway at various ISRO centres. As per ISRO, Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching crew of three members to an orbit of 400 km for a three days mission and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters. The pre-requisites for Gaganyaan mission include development of many critical technologies including human rated launch vehicle for carrying crew safely to space, Life Support System to provide an earth like environment to crew in space, crew emergency escape provision and evolving crew management aspects for training, recovery and rehabilitation of crew. Various precursor missions are planned for demonstrating the Technology Preparedness Levels before carrying out the actual Human Space Flight mission. – ANI



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

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
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DENGUE CASES SOAR

Health emergency declared in Peru

LIMA: Peru declared a health emergency in most parts of the country on Monday after a heat wave and heavy rains led to a spike in dengue fever cases. At least 32 people have died of the disease so far this year, Health Minister Cesar Vasquez said on Monday. **31,300 cases** There have been 31,300 cases recorded in the first eight weeks of the year. “This is a grave problem,” Vasquez said last week. “And it is getting out of hand.” Vasquez said Peru's typical response to the disease had been “overtaken” by factors such as climate. The El Nino weather pattern has caused warm temperatures and heavy rainfall. **Perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes** “The weather has created a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes to reproduce more quickly and become a more frequent vector of the disease,” he added. The health emergency was declared in 20 of Peru's 25 regions. Most of the cases so far have been in the north of the country. The move will enable the government to transfer funds more quickly to affected regions and more easily deploy doctors and nurses. Dengue causes causes symptoms such as fever, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and body aches. – DW

LUNAR PROBE SATELLITE

Moon mission Odysseus to be cut short after sideways touchdown

FLORIDA: Space engineers expect the lunar probe Odysseus to stop working later on Tuesday after it landed too quickly and tumbled sideways onto the moon's surface. The privately-built uncrewed lander has already sent images from the farthest south that any vessel has ever landed on the moon, but the awkward touchdown has significantly cut its lifespan. **Intuitive Machines** The Houston-based company Intuitive Machines, which constructed the spacecraft, said flight controllers intend to collect data until the lander's solar panels were no longer exposed to light. “Based on Earth and moon positioning, we believe flight controllers will continue to communicate with Odysseus until Tuesday morning,” the company said. The mission had been due to last between a week and ten days but is now due to last only five days. The sideways posture substan-

tially diminished the amount of sunlight that could reach Odysseus' solar panels to power the mission. Two of its antennae were pointed to the ground, limiting communications with the lander. The company tweeted that Odysseus had sent images from the lunar surface of its vertical descent to the landing site by the moon's Malapert A crater, as well as a snapshot taken shortly after the ill-fated landing. Intuitive Machines says laser range finders – to direct altitude and forward-velocity values to the craft's autonomous navigation system – were inoperable because engineers had failed to unlock a safety switch before launch on February 15. The forward speed of the spacecraft on landing was about twice as fast as expected, and company executives say it may have been a factor in stumbling. An improvised software “patch” was used to help avoid a crash landing that would have destroyed the probe. – DW



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31DECEMBER 2023

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have the pleasure in presenting the annual report of your company along with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Operational Overview

During the year 2023 the container terminal handled a volume of 3.794 million TEUs (2022: 4.504 million TEUs). The company has retained all major customers and Maersk's contribution to the total business has remained consistent during the year.

The Port of Salalah General Cargo segment has handled 20.500 million tons during 2023 as compared to 18.400 million during 2022 a growth of 12%. The overall general cargo volume increase is due to higher demand in export markets for gypsum and limestone. The general cargo volumes handled at Berth 31 have been included in the container terminal financials, as in the previous year, due to the conversion of the berth into a multipurpose terminal facility.

The Company's top priority is ensuring the safety of its employees, contractors, and customers, and to this end, the company continues to invest in technology and infrastructure to minimize the risk. The company continues to focus on improvements through various initiatives to maintain operations of a world-class terminal and has maintained consistent productivity levels.

Financial Overview

The consolidated revenue from operations for 2023 is recorded at RO 68.578 million decrease of 3.30% Consolidated EBITDA is recorded at RO 13.269 million which corresponds to an EBITDA margin of 19.24%. This compares to RO 14.012 million a margin of 19.68% during the corresponding period last year. The operational margin was impacted by end-of-service benefits as per new labour law guidelines and lower container throughput over the corresponding period last year. Consolidated Net Profit for the year 2023 is recorded at RO 2.804 million, as compared to RO3.222 million during the corresponding period last year.

During 2023, your company distributed ten baiza per share annual dividend pertaining to the year 2022. Considering various capital expenditure plans to meet the equipment life cycle requirements and port improvement needs, as well as the volatile market conditions for international trade the Board of Directors are pleased to recommend the distribution of a dividend of 10 baiza per share on the paid-up equity share capital of the company, resulting in a total cash disbursement of RO 1,798 million.

DIVIDEND HISTORY FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Dividend %	15%	20%	25%	15%	10%
CashOutlay (RO'000)	2,698	3,597	4,496	2,698	1,798

Employee Development

Our people contribute to the success of the company. In order for the company to stay competitive it needs to remain at the forefront of the industry with continued education on procedures, technologies, and best practices. The company continues to invest in training and development of its workers, with a focus on enhancing the Omanization and skills development of local talent.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Port of Salalah strongly believes in a CSR program that is aligned with the pillars of sustainability and volunteerism and it is fundamental to our business. The company has invested RO 100,409 in CSR initiatives during 2023 contributing to the local Dhofar region in which we operate as well as segments of communities requiring support. Impacting the local Dhofar region and benefitting the larger segments of communities requiring support are the guiding posts of the company's CSR program.

Outlook

In the fourth quarter, geopolitical tensions exerted a considerable influence on global and regional trade, resulting in disruptions to liner networks, service rerouting, and escalating insurance and freight expenses. Notably, in December '23, the situation in the Red Sea prompted vessel diversions and network disturbances, profoundly impacting business performance and operational efficiency. Despite ongoing uncertainties surrounding liner services, both carriers and customers are actively seeking alternative solutions.

December '23 witnessed a notable 22% decline in container volume as vessels diverted away from the Red Sea region. This trend is projected to persist into the first quarter of 2024, signalling a pessimistic outlook for the year ahead unless there are positive developments in the political landscape. Such developments could potentially lead to reduced container volumes, exacerbating space shortages for exporters and importers and driving up freight costs due to surcharges. However, amid these challenges, new opportunities are emerging, particularly in the realm of multimodal transport. Cargo can now be offloaded in Salalah and transported via road to final destinations within the GCC. Customers in Jordan are also exploring these alternative options, indicating a shift towards more flexible and adaptable transportation solutions.

In the General Cargo segment, December 23 also saw a 26% decline in volume compared to targets, driven by escalating freight expenses and limited vessel availability. However, the situation normalized in January '24, with volumes returning to expected levels, notably supported by key markets in India and other Asian countries. General Cargo is expected to perform well in the coming months, except for Liquid Bulk, which remains reliant on Red Sea routes and may encounter reliability issues.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the shareholders of the company, I record the sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his strategic vision, leadership, and his continued support. I also thank our customers, investors and the members of the government we work together.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I place on record our appreciation for the contributions made by our employees in achieving the level of performance in 2023. Our consistent growth was possible by their hard work, solidarity, cooperation, and support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Braik Musallam Al Amri
Chairman of Board of Directors,
Salalah Port Services Co. SAOG
20th February 2024

The complete accounts of the company will be delivered or sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English as requested, within seven days of receipt of the request.

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF 31 ST DECEMBER 2023

Parent Company		Consolidated			
2022	2023	2022	2023		
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000		
1,43,576	1,55,168	1,43,769	1,55,332	ASSETS	
21,000	19,129	21,062	19,181		Property and equipment
1,803	1,246	1,803	1,246		Right of use of Assets
546	546	-	-		Intangible assets
-	49,400	-	49,400		Investments in Subsidiary
1,66,925	2,25,489	1,66,634	2,25,159		Long term deposits
6,861	6,944	6,861	6,944		Non-current assets
5,836	7,673	5,836	7,673		Inventories
24,103	30,399	24,103	30,399		Other current assets
3,509	4,970	3,509	4,970		Trade receivables
36,201	30,601	36,201	30,601		Other financial assets at amortised cost
67,520	14,245	67,520	14,245		Short term deposits
1,44,030	94,832	1,44,030	94,832		Cash and cash equivalents
3,10,955	3,20,321	3,10,664	3,19,991		Current assets
46,758	46,758	46,758	46,758	Total assets	
7,666	7,666	7,666	7,666		EQUITY
15,584	15,584	15,665	15,665		Share capital
1,22,833	1,25,501	1,23,203	1,25,815		Share premium
1,92,841	1,95,509	1,93,292	1,95,904		Legal reserve
1,92,841	1,95,509	1,93,292	1,95,904		Retained earnings
20,429	18,159	20,502	18,217		Equity attributable to equity holders of parent company
10,599	13,039	10,599	13,039		Total equity
10,321	9,445	10,308	9,432		LIABILITIES
41,349	40,643	41,409	40,688		Lease Liabilities
4,763	5,473	4,767	5,475		Employees' end of service benefits
48,201	59,518	47,398	58,749		Deferred tax
22,357	16,962	22,357	16,962		Non-current liabilities
1,444	2,216	1,441	2,213		Lease Liabilities
76,765	84,169	75,963	83,399		Trade and other payables
1,18,114	1,24,812	1,17,372	1,24,087		Contract liabilities
3,10,955	3,20,321	3,10,664	3,19,991		Current tax liabilities
1.07	1.09	1.07	1.09		Current liabilities
					Finance income
					Finance costs
					Profit before tax
					Income tax
					Profit for the year
					Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax
					Total comprehensive income for the period
					Profit attributable to:
					Equity holders of the parent
					Total comprehensive income attributable to:
					Equity holders of the parent
					Basic and diluted earnings per share (US \$ / RO)

Parent Company		Consolidated	
2023	2022	2023	2022
RO '000	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000
59,680	55,222	59,744	55,297
7,357	8,077	7,377	8,101
479	693	479	693
210	210	-	-
19,000	-	19,000	-
86,726	64,202	86,600	64,091
2,671	2,539	2,671	2,639
2,951	2,245	2,951	2,245
11,692	9,270	11,692	9,270
1,911	1,350	1,911	1,350
11,769	13,923	11,769	13,923
5,479	25,969	5,479	25,969
36,473	55,396	36,473	55,396
1,23,199	1,19,598	1,23,073	1,19,487
17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984
2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949
5,994	5,994	6,025	6,025
48,272	47,244	48,390	47,384
75,199	74,171	75,348	74,342
75,199	74,171	75,348	74,342
6,984	7,857	7,007	7,885
5,015	4,076	5,015	4,076
3,633	3,970	3,628	3,965
15,632	15,903	15,650	15,926
2,104	1,832	2,106	1,833
22,888	18,538	22,593	18,232
6,524	8,599	6,524	8,599
852	555	852	555
32,368	29,524	32,075	29,219
48,000	45,427	47,725	45,145
1,23,199	1,19,598	1,23,073	1,19,487
0.42	0.41	0.42	0.41

Gaza Strip death toll rises to 29,878, says Health Ministry

The ministry said that 96 Palestinians were killed and 172 were injured over the last 24 hours

GAZA: At least 29,878 people in the Gaza Strip have been killed and 70,215 wounded since the war with Israel began on October 7, according to the Health Ministry in the enclave.

The ministry said 96 Palestinians were killed and 172 were injured over the last 24 hours.

The United Nations and multiple humanitarian organisations consider the death toll and casualty numbers to be broadly reliable.



Around half of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants are children, and the UN says the majority of civilians killed have been women and children.

Qatar 'optimistic' on Gaza cease-fire talks, but no breakthrough yet

Qatar has declined to comment on US President Joe Biden's state-

ment that a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas could be agreed upon next week.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari said there had been no breakthrough in negotiations toward a cease-fire and hostage deal.

He said Qatar was "pushing hard" for Israel and Hamas to accept a draft agreement formu-

lated in Paris. He added that Doha would not speculate when a deal could be announced but was "upbeat and optimistic on Gaza mediation talks."

Israel could halt operations for Ramadan: Biden

US President Joe Biden said Israel appeared willing to pause its military operations in the Gaza

Strip during Ramadan as part of a cease-fire deal that would see the release of some hostages held by Hamas.

Negotiations would then continue for the release of the remaining hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan begins on March 10.

Biden made the comments in an interview with American broadcaster NBC.

"Ramadan's coming up, and there has been an agreement by the Israelis that they would not engage in activities during Ramadan as well in order to give us time to get all the hostages out," he said.

Negotiators from the US, Egypt and Qatar have been working on an agreement expected to call for a six-week stop to fighting in the Gaza Strip, for Hamas militants to release some of the dozens of hostages they hold, and for Israel to free some Palestinian prisoners.

— Agencies

Egyptian ferry sinks in Nile, at least 10 people dead

CAIRO: A ferry carrying 15 people sank in the Nile river near Cairo on Sunday, killing at least 10 of them, authorities said on Monday.

All the passengers on board were day labourers who were on their way to work at a local construction company.

Rescue teams had to search for hours to recover bodies, according to local media.

The rescue operation was live-streamed on social media as the villagers stood on the banks of Nile and watched.

The five who survived the accident were taken to hospital and were later discharged, the Ministry of Manpower said in a statement.

Egypt's Labour Ministry has announced a compensation of 200,000 Egyptian pounds (\$6,462, €5,957) to each of the family of the deceased and 20,000 pounds to each of the five injured.

— DW

A HISTORIC DAY

Hungarian parliament votes in favour of Sweden joining NATO

BUDAPEST: Hungary's parliament voted in favour of Sweden's bid to join NATO on Monday afternoon.

Only a handful of MPs opposed the motion, after Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government allowed it to come to a vote following months of delay.

The motion passed passed with 188 votes in favour and six against.

"Today is a historic day. The parliaments of all NATO member states have now voted in favor of Swedish accession to NATO. Sweden stands ready to shoulder its responsibility for Euro-Atlantic security," Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson wrote on social media soon after the vote.

Hungarian government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs posted on social media, "Hungary has a vested interest in Europe's security, and I am sure, that in Sweden we have a strong and reliable ally who will benefit the future of NATO for the better."

The matter had previously been stalled in parliament in Budapest over objections from lawmakers from Orban's ruling Fidesz party.

Unanimous support from all 31 NATO members is required for new countries to join the military alliance.

"I welcome the Hungarian parliament's vote to ratify Sweden's membership in NATO," NATO Secretary General Jens Stolten-

berg said. "Now that all Allies have approved, Sweden will become the 32nd NATO Ally. Sweden's membership will make us all stronger and safer."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also welcomed the ratification of Sweden's accession to NATO by the parliament in Budapest, saying it was a "win for all of us."

"The decision strengthens our alliance and thus the security of Europe and the world," he wrote on social media.

"Today we ... will support Sweden's accession to NATO," Orban said at the start of the plenary session.

Orban said that he saw "no military solution" to the conflict

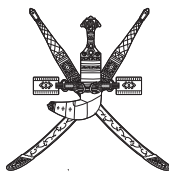
between Ukraine and Russia and called for an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated settlement. He also referred to Russia as the aggressor in the conflict, saying it had "attacked" Ukraine.

Orban has said that criticism of the state of the rule of law in Hungary by Swedish politicians had led lawmakers in his party to object to Sweden's accession bid.

On Friday, Orban met with Swedish counterpart Ulf Kristersson in Budapest and indicated that his party would support Stockholm's bid to join NATO.

"We have managed to clarify our mutual good intentions," he said after signing a deal to acquire four Swedish-made fighter jets. — DW





Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
85/2024	Hosting and activating the recovery and disaster center	Companies specialized in the field of information technology services (design, installation and maintenance of programs and information systems and equipping information data centers) and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with the excellent/ first and second degree	Monday 18-03-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-4-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
86/2024	Implementing a professional diploma program in the field of autism spectrum disorder based on the 2030 sustainable development goals	Companies specialized in the field of services (education, training and human resources development services) registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent and first degree.	Monday 18-03-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-4-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
87/2024	Consulting services works (design and supervision) of Hydrotherapy building in Bidbid	Companies specialized in the field of consulting offices (civil engineering consulting - architectural engineering consulting - quantity surveying and surveying services - electrical engineering consulting - information technology consulting) and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-03-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-4-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
88/2024	Consulting services works (design and supervision) of Hydrotherapy building in Samail	Companies specialized in the field of consulting offices (civil engineering consulting - architectural engineering consulting - quantity surveying and surveying services - electrical engineering consulting - information technology consulting) and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-03-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-4-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
89/2024	consultancy services of construction of a hydrotherapy unit at rehabilitation center at Izki	Companies specialized in the field of consulting offices (civil engineering consulting - architectural engineering consulting - quantity surveying and surveying services - electrical engineering consulting - mechanical engineering consulting) and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-03-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-4-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On Tuesday 15/8/2023
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry

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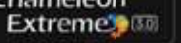
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24 teams to vie for basketball championships crown

Oman Basketball Association reveals details of the Gulf and Arab 3x3 Basketball Tournaments

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani Basketball Association revealed details of hosting the tournament for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab U18 Basketball Championships for girls and boys, which will be hosted by the federation from March 1 to 4, 2024, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth, and Al Mouj Muscat and Oman Sail.

Thirteen teams will participate in the Gulf tournament and eleven teams in the Arab tournament, representing teams from Oman, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, and Iraq. Some Gulf and Arab teams will participate with two teams (A, B) according to the proposed schedule by the organizing committee of the GCC Basketball Federation and the Arab Federation of Basketball, which oversees the two tournaments. The press conference was attended by Eng. Khalfan bin Saleh Al-Naabi, President of the Omani Basketball Federation and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the Tournament, Dr. Ali bin Salam Al-Yaroubi, Vice President, and Mohammed bin Nasser Al-Hasni, Secretary-General of the Federation and Tournament Director, as well as committee presidents, media representatives, held in the conference hall of the Omani Olympic Committee building and sports federations in the

Wilayat of Bousher.

At the beginning of the conference, the logos of both the Gulf and Arab Championships were unveiled, reflecting Omani identity and the characteristics of the sport of 3x3 basketball. Following this, Eng. Khalfan bin Saleh Al-Naabi, President of the Omani Basketball Association and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for both tournaments, delivered a speech welcoming representatives of various press and media outlets, commending the role played by the media in highlighting events as a reflective mirror of any tournament's success. He emphasized the importance of media as a partner in developing any sport, working alongside sports institutions to enhance its profile.

Al-Naabi affirmed that all preparations for hosting both tournaments had been completed, with the Omani Basketball Federation forming organizing committees and preparatory teams to ensure precision in organizing the event and a distinguished presentation of the tournaments in all technical, administrative, and organizational aspects.

He explained that 3x3 basketball is a format where two teams compete on a single hoop, each consisting of three players, and highlighted its global popularity, stating that it has become widespread in parks and recreational areas worldwide. He detailed its journey from inception in the late 1980s in the United States to being included in the Olympic Games, with the first tournament held during the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Regarding the technical committee's preparations for the tournament, Dr. Ali bin Salam Al-Yaroubi, Vice President of the Omani Basketball Federation and head of the technical committee, explained that preparations had begun early, covering all technical and administrative aspects. This included setting up the main court for matches and its facilities, providing training courts for partici-



pating teams, arranging various rooms for operational committees, changing rooms, and other logistical services. He also mentioned the international referees participating from Oman and other Gulf and Arab countries.

Al-Yaroubi also mentioned the training course for 3x3 basketball coaches held alongside the tournament, with approximately 20 participants. He concluded by expressing gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth for continuous financial support, to Al Mouj Muscat for providing the venue for the tournaments, to Oman Sail for logistical support,

to Dali Petroleum Company for purchasing the mobile basketball courts, and to Aster Hospital for providing medical support along with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth's Sports Medicine Center.

He added: 3x3 basketball tournaments are among the popular games that have started to spread globally, and the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) seeks to promote and expand its practice to all segments of society, including men, women, and children, in various countries worldwide. The game is now played in open-air environments under any circumstance, fostering healthy competition, entertainment, and enjoyment. It is hoped that these tournaments will be another successful milestone added to Oman's successful hosting of sports events.

Mohammed bin Nasser Al-Hasni, acting Secretary-General of the Federation and Tournament Director, and head of the Relations Committee, stated: "Thank God, the committee has completed all administrative procedures related to the participation of Gulf and Arab teams. The Public Relations Committee is making significant efforts to receive passport photos of the delegations to issue identification cards and visas for accompanying personnel from non-Gulf Cooperation Council countries and visas for Arab teams."

According to the proposed schedule by the Gulf Basketball Organizing Committee, the Gulf tournament will feature 13 teams, including 8 youth male teams and 5 youth female teams representing Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar (with some countries having two teams labeled as A and B). Meanwhile, the Arab tournament will involve 11 teams, including 5 male teams and 6 female teams representing Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Matches will take place at Al Mouj Muscat, and sincere thanks were extended to Al Mouj and Oman Sail for their support of the tournament.

The Tournament Director af-

firmed that Gulf delegations will begin arriving in the Sultanate on Wednesday, February 28, with the Saudi Arabian team and members of the Gulf and Arab Basketball Committees being the first to arrive, followed by other Gulf and Arab teams gradually. The Omani Basketball Federation has extended invitations to several sports figures and federation presidents. The organizing committee has designated the City Center Hotel Al Khuwair as the accommodation for players and technical and administrative staff of participating teams. The City Seasons Hotel Al Khuwair has been chosen as the headquarters for the Gulf and Arab organizing committees, while the Muscat Waves Hotel will serve as the accommodation for heads of organizing committees and sports federations.

On the technical side, Zuhair Ayashi, coach of the national youth team, affirmed the team's readiness for the tournaments, stating, "We started preparations two months ago through intermittent and continuous camps, taking into account player studies and holiday periods. Training sessions witnessed a lot of enthusiasm and sincere desire from the players to make the most of training times." He emphasized that 3x3 basketball matches rely on simple details, and those who concentrate and capitalize on opportunities will succeed. The players are capable of achieving good results in the tournaments, God willing.

Coach Wafa Zaghdoud, coach of the women's youth team, said, "Thank God, preparations are going well, and there is great discipline in training sessions where the girls are keen to actively participate in all training sessions. The players are determined to contribute their experiences to achieve honorable results in the tournaments." She explained that 3x3 basketball is a game of last-second decisions, and the team is in high spirits and has a sincere desire to make an impressive appearance.

FORMER WORLD NO.1

Probably don't have too long left: Andy Murray drops retirement hint

DUBAI: Former World No.1 Andy Murray scripted a fine comeback from a set down to upset Denis Shapovalov in the first round of the Dubai Tennis Championships, but said he "probably doesn't have too long left" in his career.

Murray refused to be written off and held firm for a three-set win 4-6, 7-6(5), 6-3 against Canada's Shapovalov to seal his 500th tour-level victory on a hard court.

"It's not bad. Obviously, hard court has been a great surface for me over the years and 500 is a lot of matches so I'm very proud of that. There are not many players that have done that, so great to get to 500 before I'm done," Murray said of his achievement in his on-court interview as quoted by Sky Sports.

The 36-year-old legend is anticipating his career ending in a matter of months.

"People read a lot into what I say on the court sometimes and it's not always rational. I still love competing, I still love the



game. It gets harder and harder the older you get to compete with the young guys. You've got to keep your body fit and fresh," Murray said.

"It's not easy, I probably don't have too long left but I'll do the best that I can these last few months," he said.

Shapovalov won a close first set with a late break, but Murray levelled the match in the second-set tie-break at the ATP 500. He then broke the Canadian twice in the final set, completing a two-hour, 32-minute victory to grab a 2-1 lead in the pair's ATP Head2Head series.

His second-round opponent in Dubai will be one of two Frenchmen -- fifth seed Ugo Humbert or wild card Gael Monfils.

Elsewhere, Andrey Rublev rebounded from a poor start to advance to the second round in Dubai for the sixth consecutive year, defeating Zhang Zhizhen 6-7(4), 6-2, 6-4.

The second seed, who is now 5-0 in 2024 opening matches, smashed 18 aces and saved both break points to move ahead 2-0 in the pair's Lexus ATP Head2Head series after one hour and 51 minutes. -ANI

TRI-NATION T20I SERIES

Namibia's Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton smashes record for fastest T20I hundred

KIRTIPUR : Namibia batter Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton struck a 33-ball hundred against Nepal to claim the record for hitting the fastest century in the T20I format on Tuesday.

During the ongoing Tri-Nation T20I series, Loftie-Eaton arrived at the crease when Namibia were reduced to 62/3 in the 11th over. His arrival saw boundaries raining throughout the TU Cricket Ground.

The flurry of boundaries that came from his bat saw Namibia's score reach a mammoth total of 206/4.

The 22-year-old was backed by Malan Kruger, as both batters added 135 off 52 balls to help Namibia reach a strong total. Loftie-Eaton's record-breaking knock was brought to an end by right-arm pacer Abinash Bohara.

During his fastest ton, he scored eleven fours and eight sixes and reached 101 off just 36 deliveries. Notably, the record for the previous fastest century was held by Nepal's Kushal Malla. The 19-year-old struck a ton in 34 balls against Mongolia last year.



South Africa's David Miller, India skipper Rohit Sharma and Czech Republic batter Sudesh Wickramasekara have managed to score a ton each in 35 balls.

In reply, Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel (42), Malla (32) and Dipendra Singh Airee (48) fought valiantly to chase down the mammoth total but still ended up falling short of the target by

20 runs.

While defending the total of 207, Loftie-Eaton was effective with the ball, as well as he claimed two wickets while spilling away 29 runs in his three over spell.

He claimed wickets of skipper Paudel who was looking dangerous throughout his chase. Sundeeep Jora became his second victim of the night with a score of 5. -ANI

OMAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

Workshops and interactive sessions at the GCC Women's Sports Hackathon



MUSCAT: Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), represented by Oman Women's Sports and Gender Equality Committee, is organizing the "GCC Women's Sports Hackathon" event from March 2 to 3 March in Muscat, within the framework of enhancing the role of women in the field of sports and empowering them in this field, in addition to exchanging knowledge between the GCC countries to enhance sports culture in the region.

During the programme, 4 workshops will be organised and pre-

sented by specialists and experts in women's sports programmes and the development of creative ideas, represented by a workshop on promoting community sports for women and its sustainability, a workshop on the role of technology in promoting GCC women's sports, and a workshop on sustainable sports investment opportunities, in addition to a workshop on sustainable sports initiatives and programmes presented by them.

The event programme will also include a number of group ses-

sions for participants with the assistance of specialized mentors, in addition to motivational meetings with some inspiring players.

The hackathon is expected to witness wide participation from the GCC countries, as all participants will be divided after screening into 7 groups with the aim of presenting an idea or an implementable proposal in the field of women's sports, and the winning project will be announced at the closing ceremony that will be held next Sunday.

Regarding the event, Sayida Sana Hamad Al Busaidi, Chairwoman of Oman Women's Sports and Gender Equality Committee, said: "The GCC Women's Sports Hackathon is a specialised programme under the slogan (Active and Sustainable Society) that includes several workshops and group sessions, and aims to build culture and public awareness in the field of women's sports, and to empower the capabilities and build the necessary skills for the participants." In addition to trans-

forming ideas into implementable projects and initiatives, and finding solutions to the existing challenges in the field of Gulf women's sports."

She added: "The hackathon will provide the opportunity for participants to exchange experiences, ideas and projects in the field of women's sports, and develop their skills through practical workshops and interactive sessions. It will also give them the opportunity to learn about the best practices and innovations in this field."

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2024 reaching \$82.07, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.67 from the price of Monday, which was \$80.40. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,577.81 points, down by 0.35 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.72 per cent at 449.87 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 8.70 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.36 per cent, was the top loser.

OQ showcases strategic priorities at Sohar Investment Forum

Ashraf bin Hamed Al Mamari, Acting Group CEO of OQ, presented a comprehensive paper outlining the company's strategic direction, focussed on facilitating the energy transition and maximising Oman's energy resources

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ, global integrated energy group, participated as a strategic sponsor at the Sohar Investment Forum, showcasing its commitment to bolstering investments and creating opportunities for investors in the plastics industries. Ashraf bin Hamed Al Mamari, Acting Group CEO of OQ, presented a paper at the forum outlining the group's strategy aimed at facilitating the energy transition and embodying its vision to max-



imise the value of Oman's energy resources, transition towards a sustainable future and achieve the government's objectives of enhancing sustainable economic diversification in the energy value chain, in addition to realising OQ values of Perform, Collaborate and Care. Al Mamari delved into OQ Group's strategic priorities, highlighting a comprehensive approach aimed at achieving operational excellence and sustaining competitiveness across all fronts. These priorities encompass: ■ Operational excellence: Ensuring the application of best practices to maintain a competitive edge across all assets and fostering a performance-driven culture within the organisation. ■ Financial discipline: Uphold-



ing financial discipline by maintaining capital structures and enhancing operational efficiency, thereby ensuring prudent financial management. ■ Exploration of economic growth opportunities: Proactively exploring economically viable growth opportunities across all strategic business units to drive sustained expansion. ■ Enhancement of Business environment: Strengthening the business environment by providing managerial and operational competencies, thereby fostering an environment conducive to growth and innovation. ■ Energy transition: Targeting a transition in the energy sector to mitigate carbon emissions through improved energy effi-

ciency, investment in renewable energy sources, and the adoption of carbon capture, storage and utilisation technologies. In addition, OQ's strategic priorities include leveraging technology and fostering innovation. This involves the continuous development, evaluation and implementation of new technologies to enhance operational processes and overall business performance. The Acting GCEO further highlighted that OQ Group's strategic directions, particularly in its upstream segment, entail OQ's commitment to continued growth, maintaining a robust portfolio of successful investments and ensuring strong cash flows. Moreover, it involves enhancing collaboration with partners who share aspira-

tions for responsible utilisation of oil and gas resources and reducing carbon dioxide emissions through clean energy initiatives. In the commercial and downstream segment, Al Mamari elucidated that strategic priorities revolve around multiplying the value of current investments and fostering partnerships. This includes a commitment to furthering the value of the hydrocarbon sector in Oman by competitively investing and reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, in the commercial sector, strategic directions involve increasing the value of hydrocarbons while assuming a leadership role in supply, marketing, carbon trading operations, and expanding the group's portfolio to increase investments in liquefied natural

gas (LNG). Regarding the retail sector, the focus is on doubling the value of the local retail sector through non-fuel revenues and value-added growth internationally through the Oman Oil Marketing Company. Ashraf Al Mamari further elaborated on OQ's strategic focus, emphasising a dedicated approach towards alternative energy. This includes: ■ Excellence in Alternative Energy: OQ aims to excel in the field of alternative energy by reducing emissions from its current assets while improving energy density. ■ Clean Electrons Utilisation: Within its strategic priorities, OQ intends to utilise clean electrons to supply its assets with clean energy, thereby reducing emissions. **>B2**

'TAMKEEN ISLAMI'

ahli Islamic launches crowdfunding initiative to support SMEs

MUSCAT: As part of its continuous efforts to support the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), ahli Islamic announced the launch of 'Tamkeen Islami', a first-of-its-kind crowdfunding initiative in the Sultanate of Oman. The initiative aims to empower bespoke SMEs and entrepreneurs to leverage their businesses with financial solutions catered to their needs. Tamkeen is designed to deliver SMEs efficient and hassle-free access to finance through well-crafted Sharia-compliant products, such as Murabaha, and services like Ijara, all which bolster the sector and its contributions towards the Omani economy. Through Tamkeen, customers can avail packages ranging between OMR20,000 and OMR100,000. Moreover, they can enjoy benefits that include competitive pricing, simple procedures, and flexible repayment terms, all without providing equity or collateral. Highlighting the importance of the initiative, Zainab Al Lawati, AGM - Head of Corporate Banking, ahli Islamic, said, "At ahli Islamic, we recognize the

important role played by SMEs in advancing the economy. SMEs provide job opportunities and fill the gaps and demands found within the local market. Taking in our stride to provide flexible and accessible financial options, Tamkeen Islami will tailor to the needs of SMEs and entrepreneurs, a feat that will alleviate their financial constraints. By embracing such initiatives, we have paved the way towards a prosperous, more inclusive future for individuals and the community at large." This substantial initiative will enhance the country's financial inclusion. Furthermore, it will mitigate cash flow barriers that usually affect SMEs' growth. By using secure and efficient digital services, Tamkeen Islami will sustain businesses and enhance their standing within the local market. She added, "Our dedication towards SMEs stretches beyond funding businesses; we're nurturing dreams and driving forward economic progress. The financial landscape has therefore become more vibrant. With Tamkeen Islami we will help SMEs surpass boundaries and deliver excellence, one investment at a time."

FOR THE BANK'S CUSTOMERS

Alizz Islamic Bank, U-Capital sign pact to provide investment solutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its position as one of Oman's most customer centric Islamic banking institutions, Alizz Islamic Bank has signed an agreement with Ubhar Capital to provide investment solutions for the bank's customers. The agreement was signed on behalf of Alizz Islamic Bank, by Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank and was signed by Abdulaziz Al Saadi, CEO of Ubhar Capital. Senior executives from both organisations were also present at the signing ceremony. Remarking on the signing of the agreement, Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank said, "At Alizz Islamic Bank we put the customers' needs at the heart of everything we do and we are honoured to partner with one of the premier investment firms in the Sultanate. With this partnership, our Tharwa customers will have the opportunity to invest in the strategic financial solutions that they require. Driven by our vision of personalising every financial experience through innovative and smart solutions we are pleased to give our customers a new investment avenue for their funds." Commenting on the signing Abdulaziz Al Saadi, CEO of Ubhar Capital said "The partnership with



Alizz Islamic Bank is in line with the Oman Vision 2040 objectives to mobilise the private sector in the pursuit of Oman's economic development. At U Capital we are fully committed to this opportunity and we look forward to a fruitful partnership for both entities" Ubhar Capital ('U-Capital') is a CMA-regulated, full service in-

vestment firm. U-Capital offers Asset Management, Brokerage, Corporate Finance & Advisory, Wealth Management, Custody and Research. It is one of the largest asset managers and a leading stock broker. It has executed some of the most notable corporate finance deals including initial public offerings (IPO's), debt placements and

other advisory mandates. Alizz Islamic Bank is dedicated towards bridging the gap between customers and the bank using the latest technology solutions built on the solid infrastructure the bank has developed to provide its customers with innovative financial solutions and responsive customer services.

IMPLEMENTS USE OF MASS FLOW METERS

Sohar Port and Freezone partners with TFG Marine for bunker fuel supply

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone announced the implementation of ISO 22192 international standards for marine fuel supplies, aligning with global best practices observed in ports like Singapore and Rotterdam. **Mass Flow Meters** This strategic move, which mandates the use of Mass Flow Meters (MFM) for fuel supplies, positions Sohar Port and Freezone as a pioneer in the Middle East, fostering enhanced operational efficiency and market competitiveness while supporting the development of bunker market. Sohar Port and Freezone signed an MoU agreement with TFG Ma-

rine during International Energy Week in London marked a significant step towards establishing an international bunker fuel supply operation within Sohar Port and Freezone. This strategic collaboration, coupled with the implementation of ISO 22192 international standards for Marine fuel supplies, positions Sohar as a global leader in the marine fuel sector. Commenting on this agreement, Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of Sohar Port said: "This agreement reaffirms Sohar Port's commitment to build a digitalised and transparent bunker operation that meets international standards already introduced in Singapore and soon to be implemented in Rotterdam. "This will enable TFG Marine to establish an international bunker



fuel supply operation at Sohar Port and to offer all grades of bunker fuel to vessels." The port's anchorage areas are located within 4 to 10 nautical

miles offshore. With a depth of between 30 to 60 meters, more than 3,000 vessels of all sizes currently call at the port each year. "This will increase as TFG Ma-

rine will be able to refuel the fleet of its joint venture owners, Trafigura, Frontline and Golden Ocean, which collectively manage a fleet of more than 700 owned and chartered vessels, as well as third party vessels. "This is an ideal location for TFG to establish its first bunker fuel supply operation in the Middle East," said Kenneth Dam, TFG Marine's Global Head of Bunkering. "With the intention to emulate Singapore's best in class approach there is the potential for Sohar Port to quickly become a major new physical bunkering procurement location in the Middle East for the world's shipping fleet." TFG Marine intends to start deliveries with a local operating company with its first bunker ves-

sel arriving at Sohar Port in the coming months. The vessel will be fitted with a Mass Flow Meter (MFM), calibrated to the ISO 22192 international standard as required by Sohar Port. TFG Marine has long been an advocate of the global adoption of calibrated MFMs to bring much-needed transparency to bunkering and encouraging digitalisation in the long-term interests of the bunker industry and helping to further the decarbonisation goals of the shipping industry. Committed to excellence, Sohar will conduct a comprehensive training program to equip its workforce with the necessary skills, contributing to the advancement of the marine fuel sector in the region.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Suwadi Power, up 8.70 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.36 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,577.81 points, down by 0.35 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.72 per cent at 449.87 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 8.70 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.36 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Batinah Power were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1355 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.84 million, with more than 39.58 million shares changing hands. Out of 53 traded securities, 19 advanced, 19 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR339,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR223,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR115,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,190.41 points, up 0.08 per cent. Prices of Takaful Oman, Oman Arab Bank, Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, and Al Madina Takaful were up by 6.82 per cent, 2.73 per cent, 1.43 per cent, 1.39 per cent, and 1.14 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Al Madina Investments, Ahli Bank, United Finance, and National Bank Oman were down by 5.05 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.88 per cent, 1.75 per cent, and 1.54 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,433.58 points, up 0.16 per cent. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Gulf Mushroom Products, Al Anwar Ceramics, and Raysut Cement were up by 4.35 per cent, 2.62 per cent, 1.11 per cent, and 0.84 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.26 per cent before closing at 1,721.49 points. – **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,607.72	4,567.04	4,577.81	4,594.06	-16.25	-0.35
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,197.45	7,157.79	7,190.41	7,184.39	6.01	0.08
Industry Index	5,436.78	5,387.23	5,433.58	5,424.87	8.71	0.16
Services Index	1,739.10	1,720.53	1,721.49	1,726.00	-4.52	-0.26
MSX Shariah Index	449.87	444.45	449.87	446.65	3.23	0.72
MSX TR INDEX	6,076.03	6,022.38	6,036.59	6,058.01	-21.42	-0.35
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,853.74	7,810.47	7,846.05	7,839.49	6.56	0.08
SERVICES TR IDX	1,940.32	1,919.60	1,920.67	1,925.71	-5.04	-0.26
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,807.84	5,754.90	5,804.42	5,795.11	9.31	0.16
FIXED INCOME INDEX	992.89	992.89	992.89	992.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
39,584,332	3,840,892	1,355	23,619,548,119	19	19	15	53

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

RIN

SECURITY NAME

VOLUME

TURNOVER

TRADES

OPEN PRICE

HIGH

LOW

CLOSE PR

PREV. CLOSE

DIFF. (RD)

DIFF %

LAST PR

LAST BD

LAST OFFR

PAR VALUE

MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,532,795	168,735	79	0.113	0.113	0.105	0.110	0.103	0.007	6.79%	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.100	21,959,916
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	16,500	1,193	2	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.38%	0.073	0.072	0.072	0.100	6,570,000
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	5,881	523	4	0.087	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.13%	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.100	15,575,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	55,837	21	0.182	0.183	0.179	0.182	0.180	0.002	0.11%	0.182	0.181	0.184	0.100	40,040,000	
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	871,506	230,496	41	0.285	0.285	0.283	0.284	0.283	0.001	0.38%	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.100	1,981,888,824
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	10,000	2,700	2	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.275	0.100	27,000,000	
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	96,942	11,245	13	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.116	0.117	0.117	0.100	17,400,000	
OM0000001538	OMINVEST	8,103	3,716	6	0.410	0.410	0.400	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.400	0.410	0.100	274,029,825
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	86,864	5,076	3	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.061	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,893,425	205,152	27	0.109	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.107	0.109	0.100	590,531,558
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	26,980	4,587	8	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.000	0.000	0.170	0.170	0.178	0.100	9,353,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	118,037	128,087	42	1.085	1.087	1.083	1.083	1.085	-0.002	-0.18%	1.083	1.083	1.084	0.100	812,250,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	415	99	1	0.239	0.239	0.239	0.239	0.240	-0.001	-0.41%	0.239	0.226	0.248	0.100	14,627,821
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	160,000	65,615	14	0.415	0.415	0.410	0.410	0.415	-0.005	-1.20%	0.410	0.410	0.415	0.100	96,928,100
OM0000001485	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	380,085	101,414	7	0.260	0.260	0.256	0.256	0.260	-0.004	-1.53%	0.256	0.256	0.260	0.100	416,242,267
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	123,835	40,982	15	0.345	0.345	0.330	0.339	0.345	-0.006	-1.73%	0.339	0.338	0.350	0.100	220,670,094
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	85,000	4,780	2	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.057	-0.001	-1.75%	0.056	0.056	0.059	0.100	19,943,129
Total		17	5,740,368	1,030,217	287											

Parallel Market

OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	9,802,129	729,650	180	0.074	0.075	0.071	0.075	0.069	0.006	8.69%	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	53,580,476
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	10,000	470	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.044	0.003	6.81%	0.047	0.046	0.048	0.100	11,750,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	17,619,465	1,276,325	398	0.072	0.073	0.070	0.073	0.069	0.004	5.79%	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	45,266,782
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	155	74	1	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.000	4.34%	0.480	0.000	0.480	0.100	73,600,000
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	60,116	6,793	5	0.110	0.113	0.110	0.113	0.110	0.003	2.72%	0.113	0.101	0.115	0.100	188,643,330
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,287	302	2	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.229	0.006	2.62%	0.235	0.229	0.235	0.100	10,754,963
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	34,467	4,188	6	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.66%	0.122	0.120	0.123	0.100	9,213,694
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	694,110	49,279	35	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.42%	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.100	14,628,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	33,500	2,613	7	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.29%	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.100	6,630,000	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,144,540	111,334	23	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.03%	0.098	0.095	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	14,000	1,508	2	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.93%	0.108	0.105	0.108	0.100	25,444,184
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	26,060	3,127	5	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.001	0.84%	0.120	0.118	0.122	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	885,721	129,160	160	0.145	0.146	0.145	0.146	0.145	0.001	0.69%	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.100	632,271,092
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	50,860	2,187	6	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.000	0.00%	0.043	0.043	0.047	0.100	13,307,292
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	1,000	310	1	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.00%	0.310	0.285	0.319	0.100	37,200,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	383,444	19,980	23	0.053	0.053	0.051	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.00%	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.100	8,320,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	545,715	84,714	52	0.150	0.157	0.150	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.15%	0.154	0.151	0.100	31,462,899	
OM0000007910	AMIAN REAL ESTATE	2,000	192	2	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.00%	0.096	0.094	0.096	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	775,000	122,255	20	0.160	0.160	0.157	0.157	0.160	-0.003	-1.87%	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.100	368,986,822
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	96,000	27,219	20	0.310	0.319	0.310	0.311	0.317	-0.006	-1.89%	0.311	0.313	0.319	0.100	239,532,200
OM0000004735	SEMCOIP SALALAH	14,000	1,316	4	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	-0.002	-2.08%	0.094	0.094	0.096	0.100	89,729,763
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	20,647	950	3	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.047	-0.001	-2.12%	0.046	0.048	0.051	0.100	3,910,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	466,970	22,271	30	0.048	0.049	0.046	0.046	0.047	-0.001	-2.12%	0.046	0.048	0.047	0.100	10,223,040
OM0000008447	OMAN RET FUND	2,000	166	1	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.085	-0.002	-2.35%	0.083	0.083	0.090	0.100	39,108,470
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,695	163	2	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.096	0.099	-0.003	-3.03%	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.100	2,880,000
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	975	210	1	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.226	-0.011	-4.86%	0.215	0.204	0.215	0.100	4,973,710
OM0000002386	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INV. HO.	1,000	94	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.099	-0.005	-5.05%	0.094	0.090	0.108	0.100	2,820,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	896,123	48,439	44	0.056	0.056	0.053	0.053	0.056	-0.003	-5.37%	0.053	0.053	0.054	0.100	7,731,877
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	17,658	1,236	5	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.074	-0.004	-5.40%	0.070	0.070	0.073	0.100	1,125,086
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	999	155	3	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.171	-0.016	-9.35%	0.155	0.154	0.170	0.100	12,617,428
Total		30	33,391,636	2,646,679	1,043											



LIFESTYLE

Butterflies mimic each other's flight patterns

It is well known that many inedible butterfly species have evolved nearly identical colour patterns that serve as warning signals to predators, allowing the butterflies to avoid being eaten.

Researchers have now demonstrated that these butterflies have developed not only identical colour patterns but also comparable flight habits, resulting in a more effective warning signal to predators.

The article is published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)

Using high-speed video footage to record the flight of wild butterflies in South America, researchers at the University of York measured the wing beat frequency and wing angles of 351 butterflies, representing 38 species each belonging to one of 10 distinct colour pattern mimicry groups.

Using this dataset they investigated how the flight patterns of butterflies are related to factors such as habitat, wing shape, temperature and which colour pattern mimicry group the butterfly belongs to see which elements most heavily affected flight behaviour.

Although the species habitat and wing shape were expected to have the greatest influence on flight behaviour, the researchers found that in fact, the biggest determinant of flight behaviour was the colour pattern mimicry group a butterfly belonged to.

This means that distantly related butterflies belonging to the same colour pattern mimicry group have more similar flight behaviour than closely related species that display different warning colouration. To a predator, the butterflies would not only look the same through their colour patterns but would also move in the same way.

Edd Page, PhD student from the Department of Biology at the University of York and one of the lead authors of the study, said: "From an evolutionary perspective it makes sense to share the colour pattern between species, to reduce the individual cost of educating predators to the fact that they don't taste nice!"

"Once a predator has tasted one, the visual clues on others indicate that they too are also inedible, but flight patterns are more complex and are influenced by several other factors such as the air temperature and the habitat the species fly in.

"We wanted to see whether flight corresponded to colour - could predators be driving the mimicry of flight as well as colour patterns? We were surprised to find just how strong and widespread the behavioural mimicry is."

The team looked specifically at a tribe of butterflies called the Heliconiini, which have around 100 species and subspecies distributed around the Neotropics, each belonging to one of several distinct colour pattern mimicry groups.

They also investigated a few species from the ithomiine butterfly tribe, which split from the Heliconiini about 70 million years ago, yet some of whom have very similar 'Tiger' colour patterns.

Edd said: "Sharing flight behaviour across multiple species seems to reinforce this 'don't eat me' message. It is fascinating that this behaviour has evolved between distant relatives over a long period, but we can also see flight behaviour diverging between differently patterned populations within a species over a relatively short time too.

Professor Kanchon Dasgupta, from the University of York's Department of Biology, said, "The extent of flight mimicry in this group of butterflies is amazing. It is a great example of how evolution shapes behaviour, with selection from predators driving subtle changes that enhance the survival of individuals.

"The challenge and interest now is to identify the genes causing these changes, which will tell us how such behavioural mimicry evolves." -ANI

Researchers have discovered that inedible butterfly species that replicate one other's colour patterns have developed similar flight habits to warn predators and avoid being eaten.

to evade predators: Study

There’s no shame in England losing to this Indian side: Nasser Hussain

England lost their third consecutive match in the series, unable to capitalise on their early 1-0 advantage following a narrow victory in Hyderabad

RANCHI: Former England captain Nasser Hussain described India as the superior team by a significant margin as they won the series with one game to spare. On Monday, the hosts took an unassailable 3-1 lead with a five-wicket triumph in the fourth Test of a three-match series in Ranchi. England lost their third consecutive match in the series, unable to capitalise on their early 1-0 advantage following a narrow victory in Hyderabad. The visitors had their chances, notably in Rajkot and Ranchi, but India came back strong on both occasions to win. In the fourth Test, England had a terrible day after enabling India to score 300 runs. They were then



bowled out for only 146 runs in the second innings, including a landslip disaster. Hussain also discusses the series-defining loss to India and why Ben Stokes’ team can still take positives from the fourth Test. “England did not lose the game today, they game was lost yesterday. What a turnaround from India. I think India deserve credit for the way they have played throughout the series, to be honest. India have been without some star names, there is a long list of people who are missing, and yet they managed to put in performances,” Hussain said on Sky Sports. Hussain further claimed that, despite the absence of numerous famous players, Team India’s

home record is impossible to beat, and as a consequence, England should not be discouraged by the series defeat. “Their home record is absolutely phenomenal, so there is no shame in losing to this Indian side. Like with any Test series or even any Test match, you look at key areas, where you let the game slip, and for England, it was all of yesterday. What could have been a 100-run lead ended up being 46 runs,” Hussain said. England required all ten wickets on Day 4 to win the fourth Test, and India’s determined batting showing to end Day 3 did not assist their cause. The bowlers did, however, manage to get the team back into the game by taking wickets in rapid succession.

Hussain further claimed that, despite the absence of numerous famous players, Team India’s home record is impossible to beat, and as a consequence, England should not be discouraged by the series defeat.

However, a gutsy and undefeated 72-run stand between Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel had the ultimate say in the proceedings, as England failed to convert the fright into something major. “England did really good today, they put up as much of a fight as they could, they got wickets either side of lunch and when they got Sarfaraz and Jadeja just after Lunch, you felt this was going to be close. But, Shubman Gill showed his class and his calmness, and Dhruv Jurel has just been a revelation to be honest in the two games that he has played, both with the gloves and also with the bat,” Hussain added. **-ANI**

WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

India strengthen hold on 2nd place WTC standings after series win over England

RANCHI: India consolidated its hold on the second spot in the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 standings following their five-wicket win over England in the fourth Test at Ranchi on Monday. Riding on sparkling performances of young guns Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel, the hosts went past the finish line in Ranchi and, in the process, clinched the five-match series 3-1 with a five-wicket victory in the fourth Test against England on Monday. India now have an unassailable 3-1 series lead over England, with a match to spare. The hosts are at the second spot in ICC WTC 2023-25 with five wins, two losses and a draw, giving them 62 points and a point percentage of 64.58. New Zealand sits at the top with three wins and a loss, which has given them 36 points and a point percentage of 75. The visitors, England, sit in the eighth and second-last spot



in the standings, with three wins and five losses in nine Tests and one ending in a draw. They have a total of 21 points and a point percentage of 19.44. Australia, the current WTC champions, are in third place with six wins, three losses and a draw after 10 Tests. Their total points are 66 and their point percentage is 55.00. In what was a must-win Test, England chose to bat first after winning the toss and closed their first innings at 353, riding majorly on a fine comeback century by premier batter and former skipper Joe Root (122* in 274 balls, 10 fours), a half-century from Ollie Robinson (58 in 96 balls, with nine fours and a six) and Ben

Foakes (47 in 126 balls, with four boundaries and a six). Ravindra Jadeja (4/67) and Akash Deep (3/83) were the pick of the bowlers for India. India were bundled out for 307 in their first innings in reply to England’s 353. Despite Yashasvi Jaiswal (73 in 117 balls, with eight fours and a six) firing once again, India were reduced to 219/7 before Jurel (90 in 149 balls, with six fours and four sixes) joined forces with Kuldeep (28 in 131 balls) to stitch a 76-run stand for the eighth wicket and dragged India past the 300-run mark. Spinner Shoaib Bashir troubled Indian batters, picking up his maiden five-wicket haul (5/119). Tom Hartley (3/68) and James Anderson (2/48) also registered impressive figures. The lion-hearted rearguard effort by Jurel, in the company of the lower order, not only lifted India from the dumps but also helped reduce England’s first-innings lead to 46 runs. In their second innings, England were shot out for just 145 runs, with Zak Crawley (60 in 91 balls, with seven fours) and Jonny Bairstow (30 in 42 balls, with three fours) offering some resistance. Spinners took all the 10 wickets for India, with Ravichandran Ashwin (5/51) and Kuldeep Yadav (4/22) leading the bowling charts for the hosts. Chasing 192 for an unassailable 3-1 lead in the series, the hosts were off to a fine start, with skipper Rohit Sharma (55 in 81 balls, with five fours and a six) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (37 in 44 balls, with five fours) putting on an 84-run opening stand. However, that was before Bashir brought the visitors back into the game, picking up 3/79 and reducing India to 120/5. Thereafter, Shubman Gill (52* in 124 balls, with two sixes) and Dhruv Jurel (39* in 77 balls, with two fours) guided India to a series win by five wickets. **-ANI**

CRICKET



If we’re winning, that will take care, says Usman Khawaja

WELLINGTON: Australia star opening batter Usman Khawaja has said that they are focused on winning games and it will automatically help improve their position in the World Test Championship. Australia are gearing up for their two-match Test series against New Zealand, which will kick off on Thursday at the Basin Reserve. In the WTC rankings, New Zealand sit at the top with three wins and a loss, which translates into 36 points and a point percentage of 75. Australia, the current WTC champions, are in third place with six wins, three losses and a draw after 10 Tests. Their total points are 66 and their point percentage is 55.00. Ahead of the two-match Test series, Khawaja said they will have a closer look at the position table closer to the WTC final. “It’s always at the back of your mind. We talk about it here and there, but this far out it’s a bit hard because we know all we need to do is win games to keep that percentage up,” Khawaja said as quoted from cricket.com.au. “You probably don’t start to take real notice until maybe the end of this year when India starts (their tour of Australia), you think ‘okay, what’s the scenario’ because the World Test Championship then is quite close. But at the moment, it’s just about winning as many games as we can and not worrying about the points table because if we’re winning, that will literally take care of itself,” Khawaja added. The left-handed batter went on to talk about the Basin Reserve pitch, which holds a reputation for providing a quick and fast surface to the pacers. **-ANI**

WICKETKEEPER-BATTER

Thank you Rohit, Rahul sir: Jurel says after match-winning knocks against England

RANCHI: Following India’s win over England in the fourth Test, Indian wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel thanked skipper Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid for believing in him. Riding on sparkling performances of young guns Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel, the hosts went past the finish line in Ranchi and, in the process, clinched the five-match series 3-1 with a five-wicket victory in the fourth Test against England on Monday. “Thank you Rohit bhaiya, Rahul sir for believing in this boy,” tweeted Jurel. Jurel has had a fine start to his Test career, making 46 in his debut Test at Rajkot in this series. In what was a must-win Test, England chose to bat first after winning the toss and closed their first innings at 353, riding majorly on a fine comeback century by premier batter and former skipper Joe Root (122* in 274 balls, 10 fours), a half-century from Ollie Robinson (58 in 96 balls, with nine fours and a six) and Ben Foakes (47 in 126 balls, with four



boundaries and a six). Ravindra Jadeja (4/67) and Akash Deep (3/83) were the pick of the bowlers for India. India were bundled out for 307 in their first innings in reply to England’s 353. Despite Yashasvi Jaiswal (73 in 117 balls, with eight fours and a six) firing once again, India were reduced to 219/7 before Jurel (90 in 149 balls, with six fours and four sixes) joined forces with Kuldeep (28 in 131 balls) to stitch a 76-run stand for the eighth wicket and dragged India past the 300-run mark. Spinner Shoaib Bashir troubled Indian batters, picking up his maiden five-wicket haul (5/119). Tom Hartley (3/68) and James Anderson (2/48) also registered impressive figures. The lion-hearted rearguard effort by Jurel, in the company of the lower order, not only lifted India from the dumps but also helped reduce England’s first-innings lead to 46 runs. **-ANI**

GOLF FEDERATION

International Series reaffirms commitment to growth of golf in Oman

MUSCAT: The International Series underscored its commitment to the development of golf at the grassroots level in Oman, with a contribution of \$US 25,000 to the Oman Golf Federation in support of its ongoing efforts to encourage more participation in the region. The presentation was made by Rahul Singh, Head of The International Series and Cho Minn Thant, Commissioner and CEO of the Asian Tour, to Mundhir Al Barwani, Chairman of the Oman Golf Association, on the sidelines of the International Series Oman, the first of 10 upper-tier Asian Tour-sanctioned events that provide a pathway to the LIV Golf League. Singh said: “We recognise the important role that The International Series has to play in the wider golf ecosystem, and part of that is giving something back to the host communities that support our tournaments. “Our contribution to the Oman Golf Association is a sustainable commitment that will help in the development of golf in the region, bringing golf to a wider demographic, enabling the discovery



and unlocking the potential of the untapped talent in this region.” Al Barwani added: “This significant contribution will help us in our ongoing quest to bring golf to a bigger demographic, and to provide newcomers with the tools they need to develop and grow their skills, and enjoy this wonderful sport which can form part of a healthy and active lifestyle for all ages.” During tournament week, the Oman Golf Association brought several youngsters to Al Mouj Golf for a special clinic and to experience the build up to the event, which brings big names from the LIV Golf League and the cream of the Asian Tour to Oman.

Changan CS35 Plus 2024 offers seamless blend of elegance, comfort, technology and advance safety

More than just its stunning looks, the CS35 Plus offers an engaging driving experience, harmoniously combining interactivity, safety, and performance

MUSCAT: Explore the remarkable Changan CS35 Plus Crossover, crafted with precision to exude unmatched confidence and style. Its striking muscular fender flanges, elegant roof rails, and eye-catching LED headlamps ensure it stands out on any road. More than just its stunning looks, the CS35 Plus offers an engaging driving experience, harmoniously combining interactivity, safety, and performance. Get ready for an exciting journey with the CS35 Plus, the ideal selection for anyone seeking a contemporary and exhilarating driving experience. Prepare to embark on an exhilarating journey with the CS35 Plus, the ultimate choice for those in search of a modern and thrilling driving adventure.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, “The Changan CS35 Plus represents a lively fusion of style and dynamic design. We are confident that this stylish and trendy crossover will be a key factor in persuading customers to upgrade their cars. Its sporty looks and advanced technologies make the CS35 Plus stand out with an unrivalled driving experience, robust performance, and a host of enjoyable features. Crafted by Changan Automobile’s international R&D team, this extraordinary vehicle combines top-notch performance, a comfortable ride, spacious interiors, and an abundance of entertainment choices.”

The outstanding CS35 Plus comes packed with an array of stunning features that will elevate the driving experience. From the impressive 18” Alloy wheels to the luxurious leather seats, the CS35 Plus offers a blend of style and comfort. The panoramic sunroof, the 10-inch touch info screen and



the 7” LCD Digital Instrument Cluster keep owners connected and informed. Advanced safety attributes like Adaptive Cruise Control, Hill Descent Control, and a 360° View Camera help drive with peace of mind. The CS35 Plus also prioritizes safety with features such as forward collision warning, automatic emergency brake, front-side airbag, and curtain airbag. Not to mention, it offers added convenience with an electric tailgate and wireless charging.

Capturing the essence of the new generation's vitality, the Changan CS35 Plus showcases its vigour with a lively 1.4-litre turbo-charged engine. Delivering a robust 156 hp and 260 Nm of torque, this crossover is engineered for thrilling performance, propelling drivers with impressive force. Fitted with a 7-speed Dual Clutch Transmission (DCT), the CS35 Plus offers smooth gear transitions, giving its drivers a competi-

tive edge in its class. The Changan CS35 Plus embodies a lively and spirited style through its dynamic design. Its sturdy build exudes a commanding exterior, complemented by a luxuriously crafted interior for a first-class experience. Tailored to resonate with the vibrant youth, it encapsulates their energy, passion, and sociability. Ideal for aspirational influencers, it mirrors their dynamic nature and thirst for adventure, making it the perfect vehicle for the adventurous and spirited.

Changan CS35 Plus 1.4L Trend The exterior of Changan CS35 Plus 1.4L Trend has a Roof Rack, Door Handles in Body Colour, 17” Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps, Front & Rear Fog Light, LED DRLs, Rear Defogger, Electrically Adjustable ORVMS, with Heating and Shark Fin Antenna. Interior features include a Multifunction Steering

Wheel, Rear AC Outlet, Adjustable Steering Column, Storage Bag Behind Front Seats, Rear Seat 60:40 Foldable, Leather Seats and Front Centre Armrest. As for safety, this SUV is equipped with features like Cruise Control, ABS +EBD +BA +HHC +DBF, Electronic Parking Brake, Front Airbags, Speed Sensing Auto Lock, Rear Parking Sensors, TPMS, Central Locking, Rain Sensor, and Rearview Camera. Infotainment attributes include a Digital Instrument Cluster, 10” Infotainment Touch Screen, Bluetooth, Radio, Mirror Link, Front & Rear USB, six Speakers, and Navigation. Comfort elements include Intelligent Key, Remote Engine Start, Keyless Entry and Push Start Button.

Changan CS35 Plus 1.4L Limited The Changan CS35 Plus 1.4L Limited includes Changan CS35 Plus 1.4L Trend features and some ad-

ditional elements. The extra exterior attributes include a Side Window Trim in Chrome, Door Handles in Chrome, 18” Alloy Wheels, Auto Headlamps, Panoramic Sunroof with Remote Control, and Electrically Folding ORVMS. The additional interior features are a 2-way Electrically Adjustable Driver Seat, Automatic AC Control and Rear Reading Light. Safety attributes are Adaptive Cruise Control, Hill Descent Control, Rear Armrest with Cup Holder, 360° View Camera, FCW, Automatic Emergency Brake, Front Side Airbag and Curtain Airbag. Infotainment features include a 7” LCD Instrument Cluster, Wireless Charging and an electric tailgate as an additional Comfort feature. With cutting-edge technology and advanced features, the CS35 Plus will not only surprise you but also enhance your driving experience. Its Blue Core Powertrain

Technology based on the principles of power, clean and quiet provides owners with a highly efficient and energy-saving performance.

High safety Safety and security features include airbags, Hill Descent Control (HDC), Brake Assist, Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Electronic Parking Brake, and Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD). Other complementary equipment includes parking sensors, a reversing camera and speed-sensing door locks.

Vehicle specifications CS35 Plus's vehicle specifications include length x width x height of 4335mm x 1825mm x 1660mm, 1.4L Turbo GDI Turbocharged Gasoline Direct Injection engine, wheelbase of 2600mm, power of 156 HP, torque of 260 Nm and fuel tank capacity of 53 litres.

IN SAHAM

Bank Muscat inaugurates lighting project for Al Shabab Sports Team

MUSCAT: In commitment to its continuous support to the Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) and dedication to serving the youth and society, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to implement the annual Green Sports programme across the Sultanate. The Bank has recently inaugurated a lighting project for Al Shabab Sports and Cultural team in Saham, North Al Batinah. The event was patronized by His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali Al Balushi, a member of the Shura Council, Saham, with the presence of Hamedbin Saleh Al Mamari, Branch Manager, Bank Muscat's branch, Saham Heights, expressed his happiness about the successful execution of Al Shabab Sports team's lightening project as part of the “Green Sports” programme. Hamed Al Mamari congratulated Al Shabab Sports team for the successful completion of the project which will contribute to developing the main infrastructure of the team and supporting various sports events and activities. The field will also represent a suitable venue for the team to launch events in the evening and to organize different cultural and



sports activities contributing to the enhancement of their sports skills. Furthermore, a large segment of the Omani youth with different age groups is keen to join the events related to the sports and social arenas. Bank Muscat will remain committed to serving the youth through its CSR programme “Green Sports” to keep pace with the advancements conducive to the growth of the Omani youth and sports teams all over the Sultanate. Speaking on the occasion, Khal-

ifa bin Abdullah Al Bureiki, Head of Al Shabab Sports and Cultural team, said: “I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to Bank Muscat for the continuous support to enhancing the Green Sports” programme. This programme represents a major social initiative for developing the youth's talents and sports teams in the Sultanate. The fields of local sports teams constitute strategic and convenient areas to organize various sports and cul-

tural events and activities. “Therefore, the new lighting project of Al Shabab Sports team was the dream of the Omani youth while it has now become a reality granting team an ample opportunity to enhance their talents and sports potential through hosting multiple sports and cultural events, activities, and competitions in the evening.” Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme is one of the leading CSR programmes in Oman, which

provides support to local sports teams as part of the Bank's efforts to develop sports infrastructure and green spaces throughout the Sultanate of Oman. The support includes greening of football pitches, water desalination and lighting. It is a matter of great encouragement that the Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 183 teams with over 50,000 team members across the Sultanate of Oman. Since its inception in 2012, the

Green Sports programme reaffirms the bank's commitment to providing ample opportunities for young Omanis to develop their talents. It goes a long way in developing the sporting skills and talents of Omani youth, thereby leading to all-round development of the sport. It is worth mentioning that the football fields developed as part of the Green Sports programme serve as a gathering venue for social activities for both children and youth.

ROUND-UP

LG set to showcase its 2024 product lineup of RAC solutions in Oman

As residents in Oman generally deal with hotter temperatures, this new lineup of LG RAC solutions is bound to improve overall quality of life

MUSCAT: LG Electronics, a leading technology manufacturer, is all set to showcase its 2024 product lineup of Residential Air Conditioners (RAC) solutions at the Dealer Convention in Oman.

The latest solutions, all on display, will highlight a more efficient, sustainable and smarter way of improving the environment around the user, be it at home or in offices. As residents in Oman generally deal with hotter temperatures, this new lineup of LG RAC solutions is bound to improve overall quality of life. During the event, LG will introduce its new RAC lineup, featuring the best of LG's air conditioning solutions for homes and offices.

One main example is the LG DUALCOOL Inverter compressor, which ensures non-stop cooling, while also saving energy for a greener environment and providing greater performance. Available in LG ARTCOOL, DUALCOOL Big, DUALCOOL Smart and DUALCOOL Pro, this inverter is the secret behind the amazing cooling.

This Inverter compressor maximizes cooling performance by 60% faster cooling while also saving 65% energy with optimized compressor operation. Additionally, residents can get 15% more



cooling with the Dual Inverter Compressor, as it can run faster than conventional non-inverter compressor. It also ensures precise cooling, by maintaining the setting temperature even while running at minimal level.

LG's RAC solutions also boast a simple yet modern design across all products, making it ideal for any home or place. It encourages comfortable sleeping with a preset mode and a Comfort Air option so that outflowing air doesn't hit the users directly.

The solutions also have 4way

swing for airflow distribution for optimized cooling overall.

LG also redefines its commitment towards air quality, embedding into its solutions a Dual Protection Filter to defend against fine particles and bacteria. Additionally, the Plasmaster Ionizer sterilizes over 99% of adhering bacteria and deodorizes the environment. The solutions also come with ThinQ WiFi capabilities, which allow users to control the air conditioners at the tap of a button on their smartphones.

These air conditioning solu-

tions come with Easy to install and are also long lasting with their Gold Fin coating, smart diagnoses, and a 10 years compressor warranty.

The DUALCOOL Inverter solution can be seen in a range of LG air conditioners, such as the newly announced ARTCOOL (stylish Black Glass finish) as well as the DUALCOOL BIG DUALCOOL Smart and DUALCOOL Pro.

Also on display will be LG's JetCool solutions, which aim for fast cooling with JET Mode and Smart Dual Sensing. Unlike the other models, JetCool comes with a Tropical

Compressor to withstand higher temperatures and pressure to operate without fail even at a maximum of 58 degrees. Its Smart Dual Sensing feature will sense the temperature not only around the AC, but also the remote controller for getting the right room temperature.

JetCool also comes with Smart Operations, such as automatic setting of cooling, fan and drying modes based on the room temperature. On the other hand, a simple tap of Jet Mode will ensure faster cooling regardless. It is also a convenient choice, with options such

as auto restart and auto swing, along with a dedicated sleep mode and smart diagnosis for daily use.

All of these solutions and along with other innovative LG products such as the latest from the home appliances and home electronics division will be on display during the dealer convention at Muscat, Oman.

OTE Group is the distributor for LG Electronics in Oman offering excellent sales and after-sales service support, underpinned by a nationwide service network, that's on par with global standards.

AGREEMENT

VinFast signs dealer sales pact with first dealer in Middle East

MUSCAT: VinFast Auto (Nasdaq: VFS) officially signed a Dealer Sales agreement with Bahwan Automobiles Trading (BAT) for the distribution of electric vehicles in the Oman market. This event signifies not only VinFast's initial operation in the Middle East region but also a significant step in the VinFast's global expansion.

Under the terms of the agreement, BAT will become the official dealer of VinFast in Oman. From 2024 to 2027, BAT plans to establish and operate 13 VinFast stores and service centers. The inaugural store is anticipated to open in mid-2024, with vehicle sales commencing shortly thereafter. Additionally, VinFast will collaborate with BAT to sell four e-SUV models: VF 6, VF 7, VF 8, and VF 9 upon their market launch.

Previously, within the framework of the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2023 (COP 28) held in the United Arab Emirates, VinFast and BAT signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation. Through this collaboration with its first dealer in Oman, VinFast actively contributes to the realization of green mobility solutions within the Middle Eastern region, while affirming the commitment of the Vietnamese electric vehicle manufacturer to making electric vehicles more accessible to everyone.

Ta Xuan Hien, CEO of VinFast



Middle East, said: "Oman presents a promising market for electric vehicles, as consumers in the nation demonstrate a growing interest in sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation solutions. We are confident that this Dealer Sales agreement with BAT, a leading and highly reputable dealer in Oman, will empower VinFast to swiftly establish a presence in the market and provide customers in the country with the most diverse and high-quality selection of electric vehicles available."

Abdullah Ahmed Suhail Bahwan, Executive Director of Bahwan Automobiles Trading, shared: "We are delighted to be the first Middle Eastern dealer of VinFast, a pioneering electric vehicle manufacturer in Vietnam renowned for its strategic vision and innovative products. We firmly

believe that this Dealer Sales agreement will introduce captivating electric vehicle models to the Oman market, contributing to the development of the electric vehicle sector in Oman and enhancing the electric mobility experience for our customers."

The electric vehicle market in Oman is projected to experience significant growth in the coming years. The Omani government has implemented numerous initiatives to encourage the use of electric vehicles, aiming to address climate change, reduce carbon emissions, and limit the consumption of fossil fuels.

In addition to the North America, Europe, and Indonesia, the Middle East is also one of the key markets that VinFast is targeting and will soon officially launch in 2024.

50% DISCOUNT ON PARTS



Stay cool while driving this Ramadan with Mercedes-Benz air conditioning check offer

MUSCAT: With the Holy Month of Ramadan and warmer weather around the corner, ensure your vehicle's Air Conditioning system (AC) is working at its peak performance with the Mercedes-Benz AC Check offer.

From 1 March until 9 April 2024, Mercedes-Benz vehicle owners can get their entire AC system checked by certified technicians with a 50% discount on parts. Customers can benefit from a complete AC dust filter change except for the particulate filter, while the offer also includes AC cleaning, AC gas top-up, a 10-point health check, and a wash and vacuum.

Graeme Mc Graith, Head of Customer Services at Mercedes-Benz Oman, said, "In the spirit of the Holy Month of Ramadan, our clients can always count on a high-quality and impeccable after-sales service. A well-functioning air conditioner is vital for staying cool and comfortable during the warmer months. Regular maintenance is essential to ensure a vehicle runs at its best, and we encourage our clients to visit one of our service centres in Muscat, Salalah or Sohar."

With all services and work on vehicles performed by highly specialised and certified techni-

cians, Mercedes-Benz customers in Oman can feel confident that their vehicle receives the best possible care. For further peace of mind, and with StarView solution from Mercedes-Benz Oman, the vehicle health check is also recorded. A personalised film, along with an estimate, is shared with customers via email and SMS.

The AC Ramadan Check offer extends across all Mercedes-Benz models that have been registered before the 1 January 2021, except for the Mercedes-Maybach, Mercedes-AMG GT, Mercedes-AMG G-Class, Mercedes-Benz SLR, and the Mercedes-Benz Viano.





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