LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN
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SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE OF SULTAN QABOOS ACADEMY FOR POLICE SCIENCES KICKS OFF

The scientific conference of the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences kicked off on Monday under the theme "50 years: accomplishments and aspirations". >A3

HM GREETS PRESIDENT OF NEPAL

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on her country's Constitution Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Bidhya. His Majesty also wished the people of her country further progress and prosperity. - ONA

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HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN CONGRATULATES KING CHARLES III ON ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik offered condolences to King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, on the demise of Queen Elizabeth II. His Majesty also expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes to the British Monarch on his accession to the throne in the United Kingdom. His Majesty also wished King Charles III success in leading the friendly people of Britain. — ONA

STATE FUNERAL

Delegated by HM, Foreign Minister participates in Queen's funeral service

LONDON: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister took part in the official state funeral service of Queen Elizabeth II.

The service was held at Westminster Abbey in London on Monday. Present at the service were King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, members of British Royal Family and a large congregation including world leaders and their representatives.

The Foreign Minister was accompanied during the funeral service by Hussein Mohammed Muqaibel, Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London.

On Sunday, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik offered condolences to King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, Camilla, the Queen Consort, and members of the British Royal Family on the demise of Queen Elizabeth II. -ONA

THREE-DAY MEET

Labour empowerment conference aims at boosting performance

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with Media Thought organisation, organised a conference on labour empowerment.

The three-day conference aims to groom work abilities and boost professional performance of labour.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Muna Salim Al Jardani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Vocational Training.

Several working papers were presented during the conference that cover a range of topics, namely on steering the training process and the role of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) in empowering labour and keeping up with developments, among other topics. -ONA

OMAN CAR OWNERS HIT BY HIGHER MOTOR PREMIUMS

Premiums went up due to rising volume of claims, say insurance companies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The cost of car insurance premium has gone up by 10 percent to 15 percent in the last couple of months, according to the insurance companies based in Oman.

Insurance companies say the premiums went up on account of the rising volume of compensation due to increasing number of claims.

Confirming this, Faisal Ba Omar, Director of Territories at Dhofar Insurance Company, said: "Vehicle insurance prices have increased in the range of 10 to 15 percent over the previous months."

Bader Al Marzouqi from the National Insurance Company, said, "The third party insurance prices of saloon and four-wheel drive vehicles have increased from OMR42 to OMR45, according to several factors, including the rising volume of claims for traffic accidents."

He said: "There are other reasons for raising the cost of vehicle insurance, including natural disasters, increase in spare part prices, vehicle repair workshops costs and others."

Residents claimed that the prices of comprehensive insurance for all categories of vehicles have gone up this year. "In 2021, I paid OMR104 for my car's insurance but this year I had to pay OMR114 for the same vehicle even when there were no claims last year," one of them said.

According to Faisal Ba Omar, the insurance prices depend on several factors, including the age of the car – whether they are new or used.

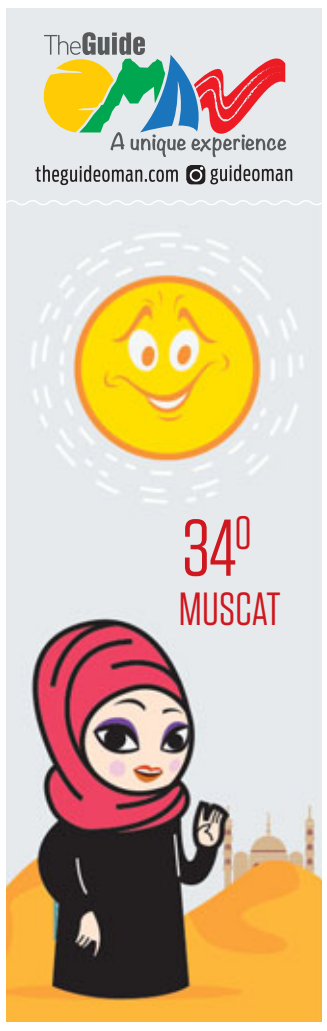
The car insurance prices have been divided into three categories. In the first category are those cars "whose purchase value is less than OMR15,000; second, there are cars whose prices fall between OMR15,000 and OMR25,000, and third, those cars that have been bought for OMR25,000 and above."

10-15%
Vehicle insurance prices have increased in the range of 10-15% over the previous period

"So every category has an insurance price tag," Faisal said, adding that the insurance price is also determined according to the type and classification of cars -- Korean and Japanese cars have a different insurance price tag from European or American cars because the prices of spares for each category varies greatly."

"The insurance price also varies according to the option exercised by the policy holder -- whether he wants to get his car repaired, in the event of an accident or something similar, at an authorised workshop or in any local workshop, where the cost of repairs is not uniform. Then there is another choice available to the policy holder – whether the policy holder wants to get his damaged spares replaced by first-class spare parts or original but used spare parts. However, the final decision regarding all this remains with the policy holder and the cost of the premium depends on the choice that the policy holder opts for," Faisal said.

Faisal confirmed that the third party insurance price for saloon and four-wheel drive vehicles (number of passengers 4 + 1), was OMR44 earlier, which has now escalated to OMR47.



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
OCA's 18th walkathon on November 1

1 Oman Cancer Association will host its 18th walkathon in support of cancer patients on November 1, it has been announced. >A3

WORLD
Taliban confirms US prisoner swap

2 Taliban confirmed that they have freed an American engineer in return for an Afghan leader. >A6

MARKET
High oil prices used to improve economy

3 Oman has effectively surfed on the high energy prices which have helped improve the economy overall and consolidate growth. >B1

OMAN

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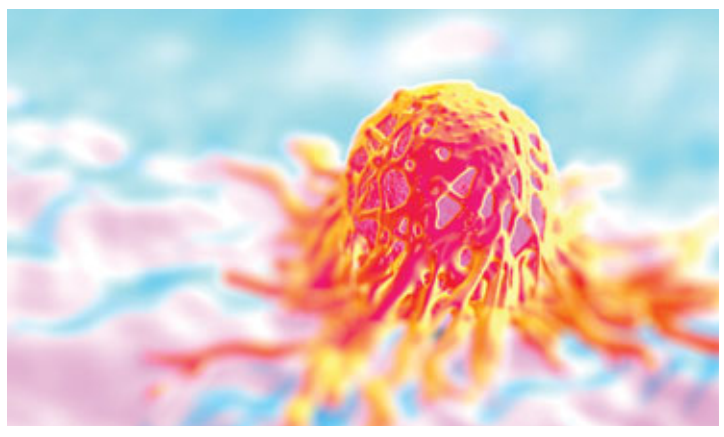
PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:05pm
Asr	3:32pm
Maghrib	6:11pm
Isha	7:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:40am

CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Oman records 2,300 new cases of cancer each year

Times News Service



MUSCAT: In the month of September, which is also the Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month, an awareness campaign has been launched to make women and the community in general aware about the various types of cancers that afflict the reproductive organs of women, the ways to detect them in their early stages, their signs and symptoms and the support available to those who have been diagnosed with the disease at the medical centres in the Sultanate.

In Oman there are about 2,300 new cases of cancer each year of which 2,100 are among Omanis and 200 among expatriates. The drive includes awareness walk, webinar, lectures and radio talk.

"Gynaecological cancers are tumours in the vulva, vagina, cervix, uterus, tubes, ovaries and placenta. In 2019, there were 1,158 Omani females with some sort of cancer, including 132 suffering from gynaecological cancer, according to Oman national registry," Professor Abraham Peedicayil, Senior Consultant in Gynaecology Oncology at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre (SQCCCRC), said.

"Awareness of cancer and the preventive measures that are available will go a long way in improving the health of women as most cancers can be easily treated and cured when detected early," he said.

"All cancer treatments require a multi-disciplinary team of surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, oncology nurses, counsellors, physiotherapists, nutritionists, radiologists and other allied health professionals. Cancer treatment should be centralised in special cancer hospitals and not managed at low-volume hospitals," he further said.

"The fight against cancer has to be undertaken by individuals who understand the risks and the symptoms of the disease. This awareness will ensure that cancers are prevented, or at least detected early, so that treatment outcomes are positive, Prof Abraham said, adding that "the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine can prevent anogenital cancers and other HPV related lesions. The vaccine is better among boys and girls in the early teenage years. Early detection involves regular gynaecologic check-ups and screening tests."

Vulvar cancer can be an ulcer or growth in the external genitalia. The risk factors for this are human papilloma virus infection, history of genital warts, chronic skin lesions and increasing age.

The common symptoms are vulval itching, thickening of the vulval skin, a protuberance or ulcer of the vulva. A gynaecologist can detect vulval precancer and treat it effectively.

Vaginal cancers are rare and may be due to HPV infection or excessive hormonal (diethylstilbestrol) exposure in utero. These can be prevented by the HPV vaccine or detected early through gynaecological examination.

Cervical cancers are invariably caused by HPV infection. He said: "The usual presentation is a malodourous vaginal discharge, vaginal bleeding between menses after coitus as well as abnormal perimenopausal bleeding. Those who do not have regular gynaecological check-ups and Pap smears are at increased risk of advanced cancer," he said.

"Uterine cancers can occur commonly in the lining (endometrium) or less commonly in the wall (sarcoma). Obesity is a risk factor for endometrial cancer while exposure to radiation is a risk factor for sarcoma.

Although there is no screening test for these cancers, prompt consultation with a gynaecologist for abnormal uterine bleeding or discharge, especially after menopause, can result in early diagnosis in stage I itself," Professor Abraham added.

There are various types of cancers of the ovary and fallopian tubes. Some are due to genetic factors while others are seen in women who do not have children. These usually present themselves with distension of the abdomen, loss of appetite, loss of weight or early satiety. Again, there is no good screening test, so, regular check-ups and gynaecological tests for even minor health problems is very important.

He pointed out that "if many members of the family have cancers at a young age, there is likely to be a genetic mutation that predisposes them to cancer. Women who have family members with breast, ovarian, uterine or colorectal cancers have to be vigilant. Such women should go for genetic counselling, special investigations like testing for tumour markers and imaging. If a significant mutation is found, women should consider risk-reducing measures such as weight reduction, regular exercise, balanced diet with antioxidants, screening and prophylactic removal of uterus and ovaries after completing their family."

"Being well informed about the risks of developing cancer and early symptoms will empower women to protect themselves. A stitch in time saves nine. Prevention is better than cure which is often costly, time consuming, tedious and may have complications. There are cancer centres at the Royal Hospital and the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre in Muscat. If there are any concerns about cancer you can ask your local doctor or contact the Women's Health Programme at SQCCC & RC. This month we have planned an awareness walk, webinar, lectures and a radio talk ," Prof Abraham said.

REVIEW TIES

RAFO Commander receives US Central Command Chief of Staff

MUSCAT: Air Vice Marshal Khamis Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) received here on Monday Maj. Gen Patrick D. Frank, Chief of Staff of the United States (US) Central Command.

The two sides discussed several matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Air Commodore Yousef Mohammed Al Shuhi, Commander of the Air Defence Force at RAFO. Maj. Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the RAO had met Maj. Gen Patrick D. Frank on Sunday. -ONA

HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE

Oman Health Exhibition to feature over 150 exhibitors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Committed to building an inclusive, accessible, and high-quality healthcare ecosystem, the Sultanate of Oman has taken various initiatives to develop the industry.

It has also been encouraging thought-leadership forums that focus on innovation, excellence-and raising the standards of efficiency in the sector.

In line with the same, the Oman Health Exhibition and Conference (OHEC) is scheduled to take place on 26 – 28 September 2022 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Hall Number 5. The event will be inaugurated by His Highness Sayyid Fahr Bin Fatik Bin Fahr Al Said.

The event, organised by CONNECT (Oman Exhibitions Organising Company LLC) and conducted in partnership with Oman's Ministry of Health (MOH), will be supported by the Directorate General of Pharmaceutical Affairs and Drug Control (PADC), the Directorate General of Quality Assurance Center (DGQAC) and Directorate General of Private Health Establishments.

Co-located at the event will be the Oman Health Conference organised by the Oman Medical Association (OMA), which is accredited by the Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB) and CPD certification.

Cigna, the renowned healthcare and insurance company, will be the Silver Sponsor for the event. The timings for the exhibition are from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, while the conference will follow a predefined agenda from 9:00 am to 4:15 pm on all three days. The exhibition has registered over 150 local and international exhibitors and expects to welcome more than 5,000 visitors.

Meanwhile, a key highlight of the exhibition is MoH's booth number 1018, which will target innovative solutions impacting healthcare.

Speaking about the exhibition, Dr. Qamra Said Al Sariri, Director General - Quality Assurance Centre, Ministry of Health said, "Establishing the Directorate General of Quality Assurance Center (DGQAC) has been a critical addition to the MoH in 2014. It has aided in deploying a strong quality management system to improve both service and staff performance across all levels. We are, therefore, ready to meet the needs of the next phase of Oman Vision 2040.

Patient safety

DGQAC is continuously raising the quality of healthcare services and patient safety in all institutions of the MoH by strongly adhering to international standards.

A vital factor complementing the system for continuous improvement was the Innovation Section (I.S). The I.S will continue to play a key role in building the innovation management framework that will encourage unique projects and intrapreneurship in MoH.

OHEC will provide us with an excellent opportunity to exchange lessons learned in healthcare and intrapreneurship,and simultaneously collaborate with key stakeholders locally and globally to set new benchmarks."

Essential pillars

As one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world, the Sultanate acknowledges that healthcare goes beyond being an ethical or social imperative. It forms one of the most essential pillars that contributes to the long-term development of a nation's economy and its sustained progress.

OHEC seeks to facilitate impactful discussions that will address pertinent issues, concerns and challenges in the sector while also highlighting viable methods to improve the healthcare ecosystem.

Saju George, Managing Director at alfarsi.me commented, "We are delighted to be able to participate in the Oman Health Exhibition & Conference 2022. Visitors to our booth will be able to discover over 10,000 products across the medical, dental and laboratory segments. We will also be featuring products under our homegrown, made-in-Oman brand, 'trusta'. We look forward to welcoming our customers as well as meeting potential investors."

Covering all aspects of healthcare, the exhibition will also have representatives from ZY Uniforms, a sister concern of Mehdi Stores. The company performs the critical role of supplying uniforms to all the major hospitals, clinics, hotels, restaurants as well as governmental units in Oman.

By driving high-level dialogue between industry experts, OHEC will be able to develop consensus in contentious areas, which will ultimately lead to better healthcare services in the Sultanate.

With a forward-looking agenda, the event is geared at promoting cooperation between individuals and institutions while further encouraging innovation in areas of technology, education, and policy-making.

Entry to the exhibition and conference is free of charge.

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OCA to organise 18th walkathon on November 1

The Oman Cancer Association had since 2019 suspended its breast cancer awareness programme and annual walkathon due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Cancer Association will host its 18th walkathon in support of cancer patients on November 1, it has been announced.

The Oman Cancer Association had since 2019 suspended its breast cancer awareness programme and annual walkathon due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "In 2021, we successfully ran the 17th walkathon virtually," a release from Oman Cancer Association said.

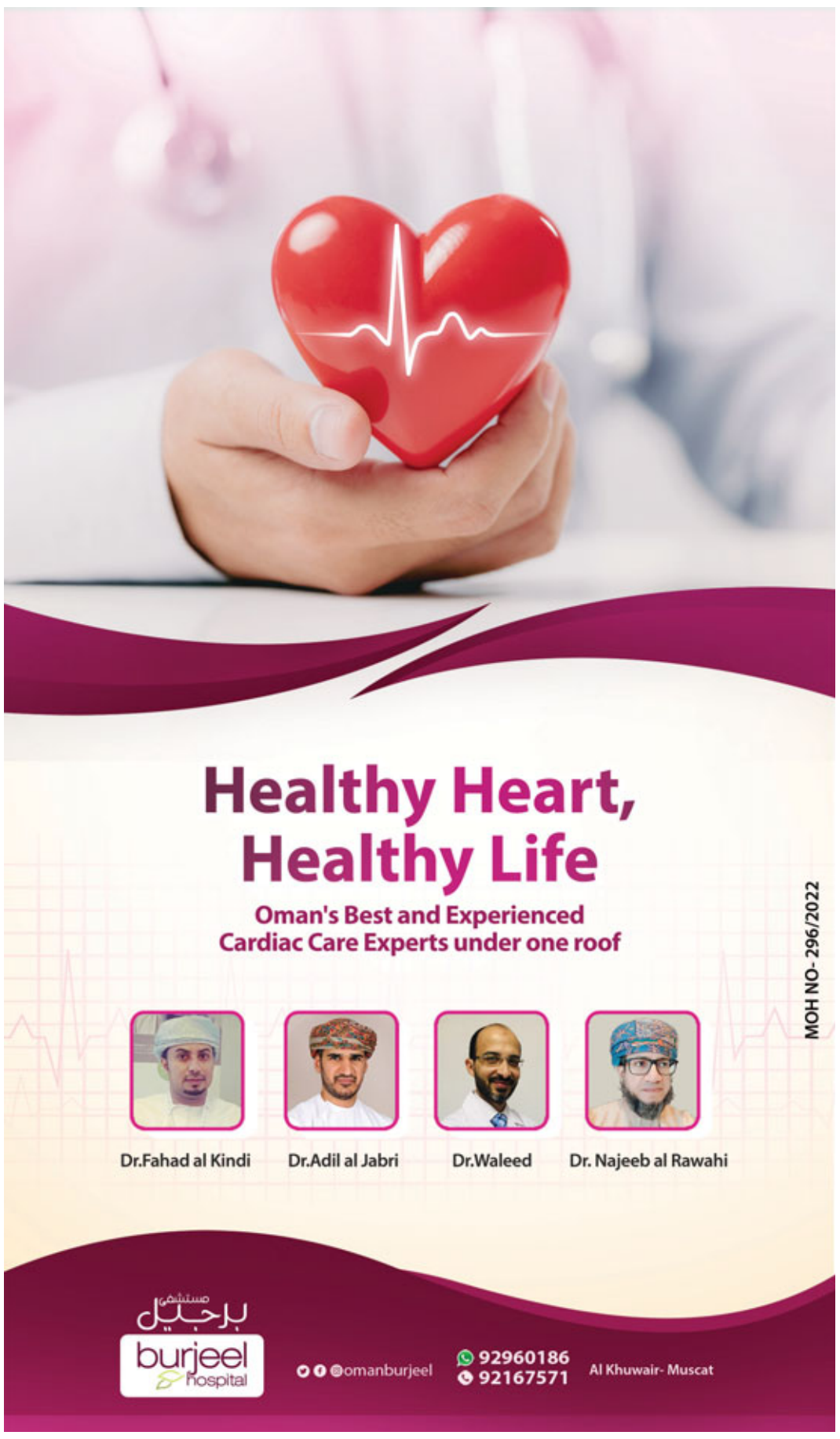
The authorities also said that they would be resuming a range of activities in October in support of the Global Pink Ribbon initiative for breast cancer in all the malls, some during weekdays and others during weekends.

Activities

"These activities include: awareness programmes for breast cancer in all malls, the Mobile Mammography Unit will offer free mammography services to all ladies above 40 years of age in some of the malls, free clinical breast examination and daily programs to teach young ladies how to undertake self-breast examination as part of the screening for breast cancer," the release said.

It is important to note that breast cancer is very high in Oman, affecting mostly young ladies under 40 years of age. This year, the 18th Annual Walkathon at the Qurum Natural Park on Tuesday the 1st of November from 4:00 PM till 6:30 PM.

"As always, this symbolic walk is undertaken to demonstrate support to all cancer patients and showcase that they are not alone. As part of our policy to introduce cancer to the younger generation, there will be a kids corner with a range of exciting and educational activities. High quality T-shirts will be provided during the registration, however, early registration is encouraged and available at the Oman Cancer Association in Al Ghubra, in the malls, at schools and at private and corporate companies," the release added.



CONFERENCE

Sultan Qaboos Police Sciences Academy scientific meet starts

NIZWA: The scientific conference of the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences kicked off here on Monday under the theme "50 years: accomplishments and aspirations".

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Present during the event was Lt. Gen Hassan Mohsin Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs.

The conference aims to review the march of development of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) in various fields. It also highlights the latest technologies and training techniques used in preparing police personnel.

On the sidelines of the conference a cooperation programme was signed between ROP, represented by the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The cooperation programme aims to provide the Oman Research Repository "Shuaa" with scientific papers that are published in the "Al Amana" journal, as well as many books, reports, audio and visual materials. -ONA

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

POPULAR HIKING ROUTES OF OMAN

Oman's mountain ranges are breezy and much cooler than the cities and beaches, making them a perfect place to enjoy some outdoor adventure. There are numerous marked hiking routes in Oman – both on interior mountain ranges and on coastal ridges. The most popular hiking routes are in the mountains of Jebel Shams, Jebel Akhdar and the Sharqiyah Mountains, as well as the coastal areas of Tiwi, and Qalhat.

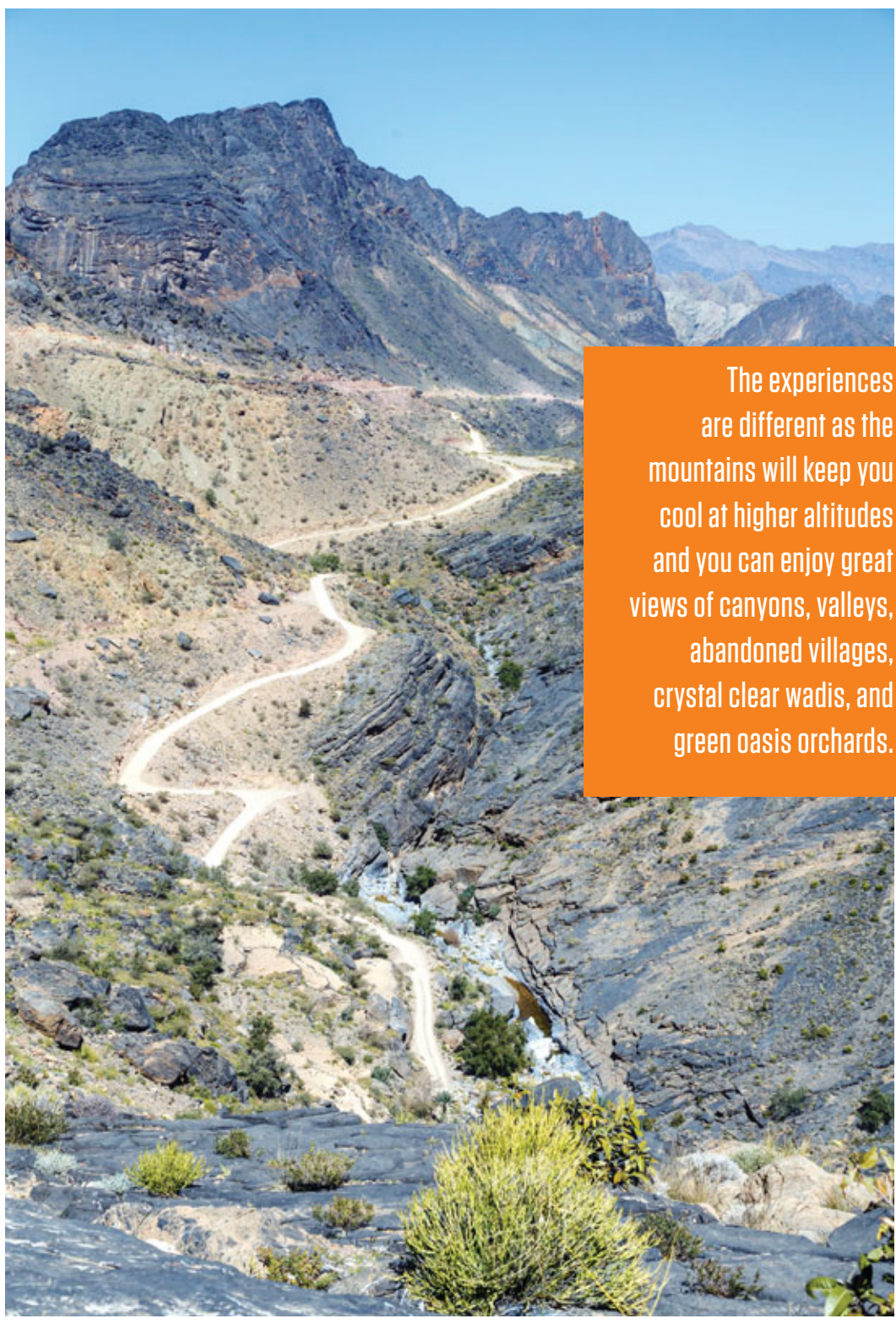
The experiences are different as the mountains will keep you cool at higher altitudes and you can enjoy great views of canyons, valleys, abandoned villages, crystal clear wadis, and green oasis orchards. Meanwhile, the coast offers fresh sea air with great views of the ocean, rugged coastline, and pristine beaches, though in the summer the coast also equates to tropical humidity and intense sun, so be sure to stay hydrated and get ready for some serious tanning.

At Wadi Shabs, you get to try out an array of enthralling activities apart from hiking and climbing. Cliff-jumping, diving, casual swimming are among the other recreations this place is known for.

Majlis Al Jinn Cave, the world's second largest cave is the ideal spot for adventurers who are looking for a strong adrenaline rush. The dark underground coves leading to the beautifully unique turquoise water with little fish nibbling on your feet is a must experience attraction.

Inside the edge of the Grand Canyon you will get the most stunning view after following a narrow trail looking down hundreds of metres in the gorge below. The Snake Gorge or Wadi Bani Awf is a large wadi in wilayat Al Rustaq in the South Batinah Governorate of Oman is a true attraction especially among hikers. The wadi covers authentic Omani villages among various other attractions including the Snake Canyon.

If a peaceful getaway close to nature is what you are looking for then visit Birkat Sharaf. It is considered as one of the most difficult trekking trails and hence is sparsely inhabited or used even by tourists. It is a pass between mountains and wadis with a beautifully scenic landscape. Drive from Muscat to Nizwa, and then to Al Hamra. From there, drive straight through to Misfat Al Abriyeen, up the mountain at the end of the road. Walk through the village, following its irrigation channel through to the other side, parallel to the gorge. Follow the marked hiking trail across the gorge, up the mountain, past the settlement of Aqabat Al Hamra and to the pass at the top, Birkat Sharaf. You are looking at around five to seven hours of hiking time.



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MEETING

Discussion on role of GCC legislative councils in cementing investments

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Parliamentary and Foreign Relations Coordination Committee of the GCC Chairmen of Shura, National and Ummah Councils was held at Al Bustan Palace yesterday.

The 15th meeting was chaired by the Sultanate's Yaqoob bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Deputy to the Chairman of Majlis Al Shura in the presence of the members.

The meeting discussed the agenda, including over 15 GCC proposals presented by the GCC legislative councils.

It was agreed to discuss the role of the GCC legislative councils in cementing the investments among the GCC states and the support of the national economies; the role of the GCC legislative councils on protection of the community values through the mass media and the social media and the role of the GCC legislative councils in supporting achievement of cyber security through artificial intelligence.

These issues would be presented at the 16th ordinary meeting of the GCC Chairmen of Shura, National and Ummah Councils for selection of one issue for which a seminar would be allocated.

The meeting also discussed a proposal on formation of a cooperation committee with parliaments of the Latin American countries and a proposal on submitting the final recommendations of the GCC joint seminars to the Supreme Council of the GCC.

The meeting also approved the agenda of the 16th Ordinary Meeting of the GCC Chairmen of Shura, National and Ummah Councils, which would be held on Wednesday and chaired by Khalid bin Hilal Al Mawali, Chairman of Majlis Al Shura.

MEETING: The 15th meeting was chaired by the Sultanate's Yaqoob bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Deputy to the Chairman of Majlis Al Shura in the presence of the members.

GRADES 9-12

Pact inked to train students in tourism

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism signed an agreement of cooperation with the Ministry of Education to implement the "Oman is my destination" programme.

The programme aims to train students (grades 9-12) in the tourism sector.

The agreement was signed by Azzan Qasim Al Busaidi, Tourism Undersecretary and Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambdusaidi, Education Undersecretary.

The cooperation agreement comes within the framework of grooming the entrepreneurial skills of students. It also aims to prepare them in launching their own student companies in the fields of tour guiding, hotels, hospitality, artisan products, conferences and exhibitions and adventure tourism. -ONA

'MEFK PEARL'

Asyad Group launches second ship made in Duqm Drydock

DUQM: Asyad Group announced the inauguration of the second ship built at ASYAD Drydock in Duqm 'MEFK Pearl', a 24 metres long boat that will be operated at the Port of Fujairah.

This new milestone in the Group's shipbuilding journey further solidifies ASYAD's position on the logistics world map as a hub, supplying regional markets with high-tech technologies and turnkey steel and aluminum ships.

Dr. Ibrahim Bakhit Al Nadhairi, CEO of Asyad Shipping and Asyad Drydock said, "This step complements the strategies developed by the Group to support the growth of the shipbuilding industry in Oman , and expand its portfolio to meet the needs of its customers in both regional and global markets."

He added, "By using aluminum, we have been able to advance our shipbuilding capabilities at the Drydock. Together with our industry know-how and local engineering and design talents, we have been able to provide high-quality manufacturing services to our clients. Our ambitions don't stop there, taking it one step further, we are also building specialized vessels for transportation, modern fishing and marine research."

Al Nadhairi went on to explain that Asyad is working hand in hand with various government organizations and the private sector to advance the shipbuilding industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

The partnership with the private-public sector aims to provide and meet the needs of the local market for multipurpose boats and ships for operations, navigational services, fishing and recreational purposes, in addition to maintenance.

Speaking about the partnership with the private sector, Hritik Khimji, Board Member of Khimji Ramdas Group, said: "Against the backdrop of building the first-ever modern boat in Oman, 'Hulm Al Behar', we are part of another joint cooperation with Asyad to build 'MEFK Pearl' which is designed with world-class specifications to facilitate docking support services and crew transportation in the Port of Fujairah. We are here to provide the best services to customers and contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's efforts to advance the competitiveness of its logistics sector."

Dr. Abdulsalam Omar Al Rabaani, Acting Chief Operating Officer of Asyad Drydock, added: "The Dock's production workshop encompasses an area of more than 400,000 square meters and is equipped with world-class logistics capabilities and technical equipment, assuring an optimal working environment to construct high-quality vessels with fast delivery times. This has given us the edge to become the center of all shipping needs from various markets including the construction of ships and vessels of various sizes and uses that are sustainable and environmentally friendly."

The 'MEFK Pearl' which is 24 meters long, 6.5 meters wide, took about 17,000 hours to build, and has a carrying capacity of 55 tons. It can accommodate up to 25 people including crew members and is built according to the highest environmental and technical standards, passing several performance evaluations tests by authorities in Oman.

It is worth mentioning that Asyad Group integrated its marine services, the Drydock and Shipping, to offer comprehensive and highly efficient solutions — cementing its competitiveness across global markets and maximising the returns of Oman's logistics sector. -ONA

9TH MEETING

Board of Trustees of National Museum holds meeting

MUSCAT: The Board of Trustees of the National Museum today held its 9th meeting under the chairmanship of Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum.

During the meeting, the Board's members reviewed the 2022 semi-annual report for departments of administrative and financial affairs, the Museum Learning and Community outreach, the Collections department and the Media and Communication department.

They also approved the schedule of external exhibitions for the current year (2022) and for 2023 as well as the adoption of work plans and programs related to cultural diplomatic relations or international cooperation. -ONA

PERSIAN

Novel 'Dilshad' translated

TEHRAN: The Omani novel titled "Dilshad" written by the Omani novelist Bushra Khalfan, has been translated into Persian, said Asghar Ali Karmi, Iranian writer and translator.

Karmi said that the novel presents visual and social details of the alleys of Muscat and its old neighbourhoods, which earned the novel vast narrative horizons that enable the reader to gauge the Omani oral and traditional heritage. -ONA

ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform all concerned that **Mr. Waseem Sattar,** holder of **Pakistani Passport No. E7139878 Resident card No. 100091765** has terminated from our company **BlueOcean Technology & systems LLC** from 01.06.2022 Therefore, all the concerned are requested to stop dealing with the above named in favor of the company. If anyone is dealing with him it is at their own risk and company will not take any responsibility hereafter. If anybody has any claim, he/she should report to the company within next 3 working days.

Sultanate of Oman
MINISTRY CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

TENDR. No.	Project Category	Location	Fees R.O	Grade In Tender Board Registration
21/2022	Services	CLEANING SERVICES TO ENTIRE CAMPUS AND FACILITIES TO MINISTRY'S VARIOUS BUILDINGS AT MUSCAT GOVERNARATE FOR THE PERIOD OF 1ST JANUARY 2023 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023	**25/-**	**Excellent Grade**
22/2022	Services	MAINTENANCE OF LANDSCAPING WORKS TO MINISTRY'S CAMPUSES IN MUSCAT GOVERNORATE FOR THE PERIOD OF 1ST JANUARY 2023 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023	**25/-**	**First Grade**
23/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	MAINTENANCE & OPERATION OF ELECTRO-MECHANICAL AND AIR-CONDITIONING UNITS TO MINISTRY'S VARIOUS BUILDINGS IN MUSCAT GOVERNORATE FOR THE PERIOD 1st JANUARY 2023 TO 31st DECEMBER 2023	**25/-**	**First Grade**

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link **(http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om) until 04/10/2022.**

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site31/10/2022 at 9:00am

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email **etenderhd@ita.gov.om**

WORLD

Queen Elizabeth II funeral ends, 2-minute silence observed

It is the first state funeral in the UK since Winston Churchill's in 1965

LONDON: World leaders from American President Joe Biden to French President Emmanuel Macron to India's President Droupadi joined members of the public in observing a two-minute silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II as the funeral service ended here with the recitation of "God Save the King", the reworded national anthem on Monday.

The coffin of the longest-serving monarch of the United Kingdom was carried at Westminster Abbey in London today with the Royal family members and top world leaders in attendance. Queen Elizabeth II died on September 8 at Balmoral Castle in Scotland. It is the first state funeral in the UK since Winston Churchill's in 1965.

Queen's wreath contains foliage of rosemary, English oak and myrtle and flowers, in shades of gold, pink and deep burgundy, with touches of white, cut from the gardens of Royal residences.

"At The King's request, the wreath contains foliage of Rosemary, English Oak and Myrtle (cut from a plant grown from Myrtle in The Queen's wedding bouquet) and flowers, in shades of gold, pink and deep burgundy, with touches of white, cut from the gardens of Royal Residences," the Royal Family tweeted.

The coffin of the Queen was borne in a procession to Westminster Abbey on the State Gun Carriage.

"As for her father King George VI, grandfather King George V, great-grandfather King Edward VII and great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria, Her Majesty The Queen's coffin was borne in a Procession to Westminster Abbey on the State Gun Carriage," the Royal Family tweeted.

Numerous guests ranging from political heads of countries to distinct royal family members and dignitaries from across the world landed in the UK for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

A state funeral means that the UK government has officially declared the day of the funeral as a bank holiday. President Murmu arrived in London to attend Queen Elizabeth II's state funeral on September 17 and offered condolences on behalf of the government of India. On Sunday, US President Joe Biden also expressed his condolences to the royal family.

While mourning the passing of Queen Elizabeth, Biden remembered Queen's warm candour and said: "The way she touched when she leaned over. The way -- she had that look like, "Are you okay? Anything I can do for you? What do you need?" And then also, "Make sure you do what you're supposed to do," Biden said adding that she reminded him of his mother.

Moreover, senior citizens and children are among those camping along the funeral routes, for over 48 hours in some cases, to bid a final goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II today.

Notably, the funeral service is conducted by the Dean of Westminster, and readings will be given by Patricia Scotland, the secretary general of the Commonwealth, and Prime Minister Liz Truss.

The sermon is delivered by Canterbury's archbishop, the Most Reverend Justin Welby.

"Rarely has such a promise been so well kept," he said.

The Queen was born on April 21, 1926, at 17 Bruton Street in Mayfair, London. She was the first child of The Duke and Duchess of York - who later became King George VI - and Queen Elizabeth. **ANI**

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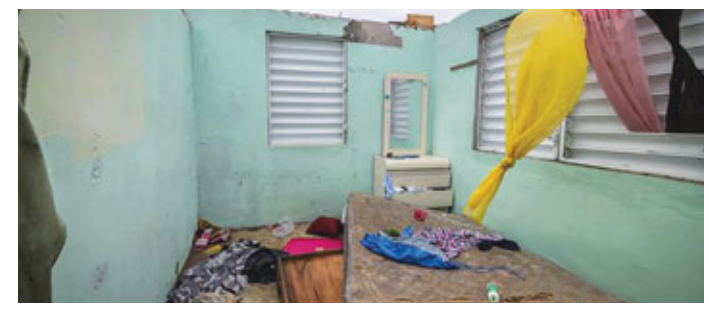
LANDFALL

Hurricane Fiona makes landfall in Puerto Rico



SAN JUAN: Hurricane Fiona hit Puerto Rico's southwestern coast on Sunday, unleashing floods, landslides and knocking out the power grid.

"The damages that we are seeing are catastrophic," said Governor Pedro Pierluisi.

The storm also ripped up asphalt from roads and washed away a bridge in the central mountain town of Utuado.

Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico on Sunday afternoon as a category 1 hurricane after having begun as a tropical storm.

Weather service expects more rain

The hurricane's eye is now off the territory's coast, but the US National Weather Service warned that continued rainfall would "produce catastrophic, life-threatening flash floods and urban flooding."

"It's important people understand that this is not over," Ernesto Morales, a meteorologist with the weather service, said.

President Joe Biden already declared a state of emergency in the US as the eye of the storm approached the island's

The island, which has suffered from major infrastructure problems for years, was hit by hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017,devastating its electrical grid.

The grid was privatized in June 2021 in an effort to resolve the problem of blackouts, but the storm knocked much of it out.

Currently, over 3,000 homes still have only a blue tarp as a roof. Infrastructure remains extremely vulnerable while 43.4% of the population lives below the poverty line, amounting to some 1.4 million people, according to US government data. **DW**

PRISONER SWAP

Taliban confirms prisoner swap with United States

KABUL: Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi on Monday confirmed that the Taliban has freed an American engineer in return for an Afghan leader in a prisoner swap between the two countries.

Haji Bashir Noorzai a senior member of the Taliban arrived in Kabul today. Acting Afghan minister Khan told a press conference here today that Noorzai, who was in US custody since 2005 after his arrest on drug smuggling was released in exchange for American citizen Mark Frerichs, Tolo News reported.

Noorzai said that his exchange for the American citizen Frerichs will help resolve problems between Afghanistan and the US.

Noorzai spent nearly two decades in prison on charges of drug smuggling.

He was reportedly close to the founder of the Taliban movement, Mullah Mohammad Omar, according to Tolo News.

Noorzai contacted American troops in Afghanistan after 2001 and travelled to the US. While Noorzai was in New York in 2005 he was arrested, and sentenced to life in prison by a US court.

"Honorable Haji Bashir was released after two decades of imprisonment and arrived in Kabul today," Mohammad Naeem, Islamic Emirate's Qatar-based political office spokesman, said in a tweet.

This prisoner swap may show their positive relationship but earlier, the Taliban accused the US of having usurped the Afghan assets after they announced to release of USD 3.5 billion of frozen money from Afghanistan as humanitarian aid for the poverty-stricken country.

"The assets of the people of Afghanistan have been usurped by the United States," the Dawn quoted Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid as saying. "We consider it an invasion on the property of Afghans. The United States is not the owner of these assets," Mujahid said while demanding that funds should be released "without any conditions".

The United States on Wednesday announced to release of USD 3.5 billion of the total USD 7 billion frozen money from Afghanistan to the new "Afghan Fund" for humanitarian aid. **ANI**

COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic is over, says US President Joe Biden

WASHINGTON: The COVID-19 pandemic is over, US President Joe Biden announced during CBS' '60 minutes' programme, *The Washington Post* reported.

While replying to a query over the COVID pandemic, Biden said, "The pandemic is over. We still have a problem with COVID. We're still doing a lot of work on it. It's-- but the pandemic is over. if you notice, no one's wearing masks. Everybody seems to be in pretty good shape. And so I think it's changing. And I think this is a perfect example of it." Biden made the remarks on Wednesday during an interview at the auto show in Detroit, referencing the crowds at the event. The annual auto show had not been held since 2019.

As soon as the show was aired on Sunday night, the Republicans raised questions regarding the renewal of the public health emergency and said that if the pandemic is over then why would the

administration renew its ongoing public health emergency.

That emergency declaration, which is set to expire next month, has allowed federal officials to pursue flexible solutions amid the crisis, including rapidly authorizing new Covid treatments and keeping many Americans covered by Medicaid, the safety-net health programme.

If the government ends its emergency declaration, then 15.8 million Americans would lose their Medicaid coverage, The Washington Post reported citing Urban Institute, a think tank that conducts economic and social policy research.

The administration for months has maintained that the virus is on the retreat, citing the growing availability of vaccines, tests and treatments to fight it and the population's expanding immunity.

Biden's remarks came at a moment when new daily infections are down to just over 57,000, the lowest they have been since late April, although that is probably a dramatic undercount since most people test themselves at home and do not report their infections to local and state health officials.

Nevertheless, the disease continues to exact a toll, with more than 30,000 people hospitalized and more than 400 dying each day, according to seven-day averages compiled by The Washington Post. Earlier, in the interview, Biden said that American forces would defend Taiwan from a Chinese invasion, the most explicit statement by him so far on the issue concerning cross-strait relations. **ANI**

Rafeeq
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At least two dead, 70 injured as typhoon Nanmadol hits Japan

Japan's meteorological agency also issued a flooding advisory for Tokyo and adjacent Kanagawa Prefecture

TOKYO: At least two people died in the typhoon Nanmadol after the storm ripped through the main southwest island of Kyushu a day earlier, while around 70 others were injured, a local media reported.

After making landfall in Kagoshima Prefecture, typhoon Nanmadol was approaching the city of Fukuoka on Monday morning with a wind speed of 126 km per hour, The Japan Times reported.

The meteorological agency said it is expected to dump as much as 400 millimetres of rain in parts of the region as it heads in a northeast path that will take it along the west coast of the main island of Honshu.

The agency further said that the storm is forecasted to dump heavy rain on large parts of Honshu on Tuesday, leading to risks of floods and landslides.

Japan's meteorological agency also issued a flooding advisory for Tokyo and adjacent Kanagawa Prefecture while large parts of Kyushu and prefectures to the northeast were under a flood warning.

Meanwhile, the rare "special storm, storm surge, and wave warning," which was issued for Kagoshima Prefecture on Saturday evening, has been downgraded to "warnings."

However, a "special heavy rain warning" is still in effect for Miyazaki Prefecture. Due to continuous rainfall, the risk of possible landslides and flooding is high, reported The Japan Times.

Typhoon Nanmado is disrupting transportation services across wide areas of Japan. Japan's two main carriers NA Holdings and Japan Airlines have cancelled nearly 800 flights.

On Monday, JR West stopped running all Sanyo Shinkansen bullet trains between Hiroshima and Hakata stations.

The rail company said it will also reduce the number of bullet trains operating between Osaka and Hiroshima until around 2 p.m. on Monday and will suspend services in sequence thereafter between the two major cities.

About 300,000 homes were without power on Monday morning in Kyushu, according to Kyushu Electric Power Transmission & Distribution.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida called on people in Japan to evacuate promptly if they "even feel the slightest danger" when he attended a meeting with ministers and senior officials in charge of responding to the typhoon, according to The Japan Times.

Kishida also ordered the officials "to take all possible measures to ensure the safety and security of the people with a sense of urgency." ANI

FLOOD-RAVAGED

IMF to work with international community to support Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Sunday said that it will work with the international community to support flood relief and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan following the devastating floods.

According to a statement from the IMF's resident representative in the country, Esther Perez Ruiz, IMF announced to support Pakistan under the current programme agreed to between the two, the Dawn reported.

"We will work with others in the international community to support, under the current programme, the authorities' relief and reconstruction efforts, and especially their ongoing endeavour to assist those affected by the floods while ensuring sustainable policies and macroeconomic stability," the statement said.

The statement said that the IMF was "deeply saddened" by the devastating impact of the recent floods in Pakistan and extended its sympathies to the millions of flood victims, the Dawn reported.

Despite the support from Saudi Arabia and International Monetary Funds (IMF), Pakistan is on the verge of economic collapse with a lack of funds, and the recent floods and heavy monsoons in the country have dampened the hope of a quick revival from the economic crisis.

The political instability, deteriorating business environment and mismanagement of the economy have pushed the country into investment fatigue from the traditional partners exposing the country to economic risks as well as political uncertainty.

Initially, there was hope for Pakistan, when on August 29, the Board of the International Monetary Fund completed the combined seventh and eighth reviews under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for Pakistan, allowing the authorities to draw the equivalent of SDR 894 million (USD 1.1 billion).

The initially estimated losses due to the natural disaster have accumulated in the range of USD 18 billion. Pakistan's agriculture sector faces the worst blow as at least 18,000 sq km of agricultural land have been wiped out.

The agriculture growth might remain zero or slide into negative against the envisaged target of 3.9 per cent for the current financial year 2022-23.

Nearly 80 districts of Pakistan have been worst hit by the floods.

Thousands of people have been lodged in tents or are waiting for shelter under open skies along the main highway that leads to Hyderabad.

Either side of the highway could be seen inundated by floodwater for miles. ANI

HUMBLE BACKGROUND

Fruit merchant's son secures 10th rank in NEET-UG 2022 in India

SHOPIAN: The son of a fruit merchant from Shopian district of India's administered Kashmir has secured all India 10th rank in NEET-UG 2022 exams, the results of which were declared earlier this month.

Haziq Parvaiz, son of Parvaiz Lone of Trenz Shopian, comes from humble background. He scored 710 marks out of 720 evoking appreciation from all sections of the society in Indian administered Kashmir.

Soon after the results were declared J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha was among the first people to congratulate him. "Con-

gratulations to Haziq Parveez Lone from Shopian for securing the All India 10th Rank in NEET UG- 2022 Result. Proud of your achievements. My best wishes to all the candidates from Jammu and Kashmir, who have qualified in the NEET exam," LG Sinha tweeted.

In 2021-22, 38,140 candidates from the region registered for the medical entrance and 36,374 appeared, of which 20,005 successfully qualified for counselling with Haziq topping the list.

Youths here are now focusing on their careers and are ensuring that they don't miss any opportunities. More than 20,000 youngsters from the state qualifying for the NEET exams, speak for themselves.

During the past three years, normal life has not been disrupted. This has allowed people to focus on their jobs and businesses, while the students have been able to concentrate on their studies.

Haziq Parvaiz Lone securing the 10th rank and 20,000 J&K youth qualifying for the NEET is ample proof of the fact that winds of peace are blowing.

The results of the proactive steps taken by the government are evident. During the past three years, the government has opened up a new chapter in the lives of young people. They are being provided assistance in every sector, including education, jobs, sports, music and business.

The generation-next in J&K is responding to all the initiatives that are being taken to help them. Youngsters like Haziq Lone are emerging as role models and inspirations for others.

After Haziq secured the 10th rank in NEET, many young boys and girls, who are preparing for different professional exams, stormed the internet to congratulate him and vowed to follow in his footsteps.

Anyone, who is capable, can crack any exam, play any sport at any level and become an entrepreneur.

In "Naya J&K" all the citizens are equal and everyone is being provided with equal opportunities. Youngsters from humble backgrounds are reaching the top and their efforts are getting due recognition.

They have realised that if they prove their worth then the sky is the limit. The notion that only a doctor's son or engineer's son can become a doctor or an engineer has been dispelled. The only qualifications for youth to chase their dreams are talent, hard work and dedication. Cricketer Umran Malik, who played for Team India, has also appeared on J&K's horizon. They have shown the way youth are following in their footsteps. ANI

SUPPLY CHAINS

EU seeks emergency powers to secure goods from members

ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS: "We need new tools that allow us to react fast and collectively," EU Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager said.

BRUSSELS: The European Commission unveiled a proposal on Monday that would allow Brussels to secure essential products from member states during a crisis.

Under the rules, European companies could be forced to prioritize the production of key products and stockpile goods or else face fines.

"We need new tools that allow us to react fast and collectively," EU Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager said.

The proposed "Single Market Emergency Instrument" allows the Commission to order EU states to reorganise supply chains, including expanding or repurposing existing production capacities or setting up new ones, and placing crisis-relevant goods on the market.

The proposal is expected to face intense pushback from businesses and some EU countries, over concerns that the plan amounts to over-reach by the Commission.

The Commission will need to thrash out details with EU countries and EU lawmakers before the proposal can become law in a process that could take months. -DW

SPORTS

Real Madrid defeat Atletico Madrid in Metropolitano Derby

Atletico had started off well but Real Madrid broke the deadlock against the run of play

MADRID: Real Madrid have won the first Madrid Derby of the 2022/23 season, defeating Atletico Madrid 2-1 at the Civitas Metropolitano, thanks to first half goals from Rodrygo and Fede Valverde.

Although Mario Hermoso came off the bench to pull one back for Atleti, he then collected two silly yellow cards to leave his side with 10 men as they pushed for an equaliser that never came.

Atletico had started off well, with early chances for Felipe, Yannick Carrasco and Geoffrey Kondogbia, but Real Madrid broke the deadlock against the run of play.

Fede Valverde burst forward and found Rodrygo, who played the most spectacular of one-twos with Aurelien Tchouameni, finishing past a shocked Jan Oblak.

Vinicius, who was the target of racist chanting before the match, wasn't able to get on the scoresheet, but he could still dance as his team scored twice and as he was key to the second, hitting the post for Fede Valverde to turn in a rebound.

Atletico really struggled to get back into the match, at the end of the first and the start of the second.

It wasn't until the introduction of Angel Correa that they started to create anything, but Thibaut Courtois still looked secure.

That was, however, until the Belgian swung and missed at an Atletico corner, allowing Hermoso to shoulder the ball in.

But, the Spanish defender then collected two yellow cards in quick succession, one for getting in the face of Dani Carvajal and another for shoving Dani Ceballos as Atleti had a corner, that was then wasted because of his foul.

That allowed Real Madrid to hold on for the 2-1 win, making it nine wins from nine to start the 2022/23 season. -ONA

FOOTBALL

Barcelona coach Xavi surprised by Lewandowski's skill

WARSAW: FC Barcelona coach Xavi Hernadez admitted that Robert Lewandowski surprised him in the first weeks of playing with the Catalan club.

Poland captain Lewandowski continues his perfect start at Camp Nou after joining Barcelona from Bayern Munich this summer. On Saturday the forward's brace led the team to a 3-0 victory over Elche. Lewandowski sits at the top of the La Liga top scorer's standings as he found the net eight times in six appearances.

"I'm really surprised at what a man he is. I mean his modesty, diligence and professionalism. He is always involved in the game. It's really a luxury for a coach to have him in the locker room," Xavi was quoted as saying by Spanish media on Sunday.

"We have a lot of young players who didn't win a lot of trophies. They are very motivated to lift the cups. Simultaneously I can count on the experienced players such as Sergio Busquets, Gerard Pique or Lewandowski. I'm really happy because I see that the team really wants to win," the FC Barcelona coach added.

Dutch striker Memphis Depay, who found the net against Elche just before the break, also praised Lewandowski on Sunday.

"He is a very intelligent player. On the pitch he thinks really fast and he is very good at creating space for other players. Earlier I hadn't got many chances to play with Lewandowski and Ousmane Dembele. I'm happy that on Saturday I could cooperate with them," Depay said. ANI

CORPORATE FOOTBALL CUP

First Arab corporate football cup announced, to be held in 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An agreement was signed in Budapest to organise the first Arab corporate football cup in 2023 between the International Socca Federation & two of its members, 2 Brothers Group from the Kingdom of Morocco and Sport Makers from the Sultanate of Oman.

The signing of the agreement coincided with the organisation of the third edition of the Socca World Cup 2022 in the Hungarian capital.

The agreement was signed from International Socca Federation by the founder & President David Leon while the other side was signed by Imad Mahassine, CEO of 2 Brothers Group and Waleed Al Obaidani, founder and CEO of Sports Makers, with attendance of Tom Nash, Tournament Director for the ISF.

The agreement aims to organise the first Arab Football Corporate Cup for employees in Morocco, in early 2023.

The International Socca Federation assigned the task of supervising and organizing the competition to 2 Brothers Group from the Kingdom of Morocco and Sport Makers from the Sultanate of Oman, for their prominent role in the development of sports competitions for the employees of companies in both countries and their outstanding contribution to the success of the World Cups organized by the International Socca Federation since 2018.

2 Brothers Group is the leading company in creating and organising corporate events in the Kingdom of Morocco.

Over the course of more than 10 years since its establishment, the group has succeeded in making a leap in the quality and volume of major corporate sporting events in Morocco, by involving more than 18,000 participants, representing more than 430 companies – national and multinational – in various sports competitions.

2 Brothers Group is now recognised as the leading company in the management and execution of corporate sporting events in Morocco and Africa, and one of the most prominent players in this field in the Arab world.

On the other hand, Sport Makers Company, from the Sultanate of Oman, is considered as one of the most prominent members representing their countries from the Middle East in the International Socca Federation, since its establishment in 2017 and its accession as a representative member of the Sultanate of Oman in the Socca Federation in 2018.

On the Arab Gulf level, Sport Makers is one of the leading companies in activating corporate and amateur sports in the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Gulf states and has a proven track record in managing and organising local tournaments and international participations representing the Sultanate of Oman in corporate and amateur world championships.

Sports Makers also have a long-term partnership with a number of government and private agencies in the Sultanate of Oman and the Middle East. Sports Makers Company is credited with taking precedence in changing the culture of sports competitions for corporate employees and amateur teams and introducing them to international competitions representing the Sultanate since 2016.

The International Socca Federation aims to sign the agreement with 2 Brothers Group and Sport Makers to create sports competitions with a high level of organization for employees of companies operating in the Arab world, provided that the experience will be evaluated and developed for international competitions in the near future.

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Oman Chess players gear up for Asian Amateur Chess Championship in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With less than ten days to go, the national chess squad is under an intensive training preparatory programme ahead of 2021-22 Asian Amateur Chess Championship.

The tournament will run in Muscat from September 29 until October 6 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

As many as 20 players from national chess team began their final preparatory programme in Al Amal club under watchful eyes of the Yemeni head coach Basheer al Qudaimi. The training camp will end on September 27.

"The training sessions are open for all the team members including: junior, senior and women categories in the evening session. Each session will last for a period of four hours daily. The goal of the training is to enhance the technical performance of the players. Also, to assist them in developing critical thinking capacity of the squad members and solve the common mistakes which may occur in the games," the head coach said.

The camp witnessed players working on different techniques and strategies. The head coach focused in the previous session on providing a detailed analysis on the player's performance during the previous participation in the regional and international events.

"Our objective in this camp is to train the players on long games which are played in international events. This step will help the players to upgrade their technical level and to be adapted with international level practices," the Yemeni coach concluded

As many as 186 players from 21 countries confirmed their participation in the Asian Amateur tournament which is being organised by Oman Chess Committee (OCC) along with the Asian Chess Federation.

The participating players are from Bahrain, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Palestine, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the hosts Sultanate of Oman.

The first-ranked player is Kyrgyzstan's Asan Kushof, second-ranked Mahmoud Maasrani is from Lebanon and third-ranked Pakistani is Suhail Junaid. In the women's tournament, the first-ranked Emirati Rawda Al-Sarkal, as well as the Palestinian Iman Swan and Salma Al-Khelaifi from Qatar will take part.

T20 MATCH

Australian team hold practice session ahead of T20I against India

MOHALI: The Australian team held a practice session on Monday ahead of their first T20 match against India at Mohali.

India will start off their home series against Australia on September 20. The next T20I match will take place in Nagpur on September 23, followed by the third and final T20I match in Hyderabad on September 25.

Captain Aaron Finch, all-rounders Glenn Maxwell and Cameron Green were among some of the players spotted sharpening their skills for the tough Indian challenge in sub-continent conditions.

Australia has had a solid practice in T20I this year. They started the year by playing Sri Lanka at home and winning the T20I series 4-1. After this, they toured Pakistan for a multi-format series where they won the solitary T20I. Following this, they toured Sri Lanka for a multi-format series and won the 20-over series by 2-1. Aussies' most recent matches were against New Zealand at home. Australia prevailed in this ODI series by 3-0.

After this, West Indies will tour Australia to play two Tests and two T20Is, with the latter played on October 5 and October 7. This will be followed by England touring Australia for both white-ball formats. Three T20Is between two arch-rivals will take place

from October 9 to October 14.

Australia will start their ICC T20 World Cup title defence in October. The World Cup will take place from October 16 to November 13.

Australia squad for T20I series against India: Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Aaron Finch (c), Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Kane Richardson, Daniel Sams, Steve Smith, Matthew Wade, Adam Zampa.

Australia's T20 World Cup squad: Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins (vc), Tim David, Aaron Finch (c), Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner*, Adam Zampa. * Squad will also travel to India for three T20Is, September 20-26, except Warner will be replaced by Cameron Green. ANI

CRICKET

'Working towards how I can improve as an opener': KL Rahul

MOHALI: As team India gears up for the clash against Australia in the first T20I on Tuesday, vice-captain KL Rahul said he is working hard to improve himself as an opening batter and "give more impact to the team."

India will start off their home series against Australia on September 20. The next T20I match will take place in Nagpur on September 23, followed by the third and final T20I match in Hyderabad on September 25. "I am feeling good obviously and it's been a few games since I came back after the injury. Playing in the Asia Cup and going to Zimbabwe, playing a couple of innings was really important and crucial for me. And I am looking forward to the challenge against Australia. They will be fun to play in the home," Rahul said in a pre-match press conference.

KL Rahul will need to score well in all three matches with a good strike rate as he has been blowing hot and cold since his return from injury, which has put his opening slot at risk. Talking about his form and strike rate slump, Rahul said "no one is perfect" and in the last few months, he got clarity on what people and the team expects from players.

"Look no one is perfect. No one in that dressing room is perfect. Everyone is working towards something. Everyone has a certain role to do. Obviously, the strike rates are taken on an overall base," he said. ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by November 2022 reaching $90.37, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 63 cents from the price of Friday, which was $91.00. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,470.06 points, up by 0.1 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.39 per cent at 478.98 points. DIDIC, up 8.28 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 7.9 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman has effectively used high oil prices to improve economy

Oman's economy has recovered well from the decline that it recorded during 2020 and has been able to further strengthen growth in 2021 and 2022

OMAN'S ECONOMY: The economy has benefited from higher energy prices, which also had a positive effect on non-oil sectors, said Wael Makarem, Senior Market Strategist – Mena at Exness, in an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

VINOD KUMAR PK
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MUSCAT: Oman has effectively surfed on the increasing energy prices which have helped improve the economy overall and consolidate growth after a difficult period in 2020 due to the COVID-19 restrictions worldwide, according to an industry expert.

The economy in Oman was able to recover well from the decline that it recorded during 2020 and was able to strengthen in 2021 and 2022, Wael Makarem, Senior Market Strategist – Mena at Exness, said in an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*.

"The economy has benefited from higher energy prices, which also had a positive effect on non-oil sectors. However, the growth rate could drop if the global economy cools down," he further added.

Speaking about the performance of the GCC economies, he said that the economies in the GCC have performed well and most are recovering from the restrictions of the COVID-19 period.

"The UAE has seen tourism and real estate record good performances while Saudi Arabia is seeing a double-digit gross domestic product growth rate," he further added.

However, the region could see challenges due to the volatility in energy prices and a drop in sentiment around the world; he said, pointing out the risks these economies may face in the future.

Regarding expectations of oil prices both domestically and globally, Wael Makarem said that while oil prices have recovered to a certain extent during the last few days due to supply concerns, the oil market remains mostly exposed to slowing demand globally.

"China in particular has seen its industrial output and its general economic activity slow down due to COVID-19 restrictions which could push oil demand further down as it is the largest oil importer in the world and any economic issues could significantly affect the price of crude," he further added.

Speaking about crypto-currencies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies, he said that crypto-currencies have received a warm welcome in most countries in the GCC.

Some nations have engaged in experiments to push for the use of blockchain technology in various fields, such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The UAE went even further by setting up an appropriate regulatory framework to attract companies in this sector, he said. "Such initiatives could lead to a concentration of crypto companies in the region, helping turn it into a global hub," he added.

Regarding Oman allowing trading in crypto-currencies he said that like its neighbours in the region, Oman is also experimenting with blockchain technologies and crypto-currencies.

"Initiatives such as the work done by the central bank to develop a digital currency could help grow the use of such technology among banks and build a larger ecosystem for crypto-currencies in the country," he added further.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Bank Muscat continues to upskill its human resources with special training for branch managers

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to upskill its human resources by providing a range of learning and development opportunities to its employees.

Recently, the bank commenced the training of new batches of branch managers through its Jadara Branch Manager Development Programme for 2022.

Thirty-nine employees from Bank Muscat and Meethaq Islamic Banking are taking part in the 8-module long programme, in two training batches being conducted by the bank's Jadara Academy along with subject experts from three eminent training institutes.

The development of human resources is always a top priority at Bank Muscat, which makes substantial allocations in its annual budget for the training and development of staff at all levels. The regular training provided to its employees is part of the bank's efforts to further strengthen its leadership pipeline and nurture internal talent to take up additional responsibilities in the coming years.

A number of Bank Muscat employees who are taking part in the training expressed their happiness and appreciation for the various efforts made by the bank to develop Omani cadres in the banking and financial sector.

The Jadara Branch Manager Development Programme is designed to be at par with "in-class" branch manager development programmes and has over the years provided the bank with well-developed and talented branch managers. It blends online learning, classroom workshops and reliable assessments.

Siham Khalfan Al Mughaizwi from the Al Mulladdah Branch of Bank Muscat said: "Bank Muscat has always accorded top priority for human resources development and I am grateful for this training and learning opportunity, which will be crucial in performing to the best of my abilities especially that it focuses on strengthening the skills and capabilities of employees and give them an opportunity to discover their strength. Completing this programme will have a major impact and help each one of us present here today to move up in our respective careers. This programme was enriching because it included topics such as administration, decision-making and taking on new responsibilities."

Abdul Aziz Saif Al Raisi from the Sohar branch of Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat said: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bank Muscat for providing its employees with continuous learning and training opportunities. Since I joined the bank in 2011, I received support through different training programmes. This programme, which was developed by Jadara Academy, went a long way in improving our professional performance. Such programmes are important because they help provide a work environment, which helps us perform our duties in the best way possible."

OPTIMISTIC

Arab economies expected to grow by 5.4% in 2022: Arab Monetary Fund

JEDDAH: The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Monetary Fund, Dr Abdulrahman bin Abdullah Al-Hamidy, indicated that per the estimates of the Arab Monetary Fund, the growth rate of Arab economies is expected to achieve 5.4 per cent in 2022, compared to 3.5 per cent in 2021, driven by many factors, namely the relative improvement in global demand levels, and the growth of the oil and gas sectors, and Arab governments continuing to adopt stimulus packages to support economic recovery.

In the meantime, the pace of economic growth for Arab countries is expected to decline in 2023 to record about 4.0 per cent, in line with the decline in the global economic growth rate, the expected decline in commodity prices, and the impact of the gradual withdrawal from expansionary fiscal and monetary policies that support the aggregate demand side.

He made the remarks while addressing the 46th Ordinary Session of the Council of Arab Central Banks and Monetary Authorities Governors hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. -WAM

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Oman participates in 46th meeting of the Council of Arab Central Banks

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) participated in the 46th Meeting of the Council of Arab Central Banks and Monetary Authorities' Governors organised by the Arab Monetary Fund in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on September 18 and 19.

Malik Abdullah Al Mahrooqi, Advisor at the Executive President Office, represented CBO in this meeting.

During the meeting, the Council discussed several topics, including the global inflation wave and its repercussions on monetary policy in the Arab countries, the climate change impact on the financial sector and banking services, and the challenges of shifting towards green finance.

The meeting also took stock of the requirements and challenges of rebuilding capital and liquidity margins in the banking sector after lifting the facilitation packages.

The Council examined the recommendations proposed by a number of committees and working groups, including the Arab Committee for Banking Supervision, Regional Working Group for Promoting Financial Inclusion in the Arab Countries, Working Group for Financial Stability, Arab Committee for Payment and Settlement Systems, Arab Committee for Credit Information, and Working Group for Modern Financial Technologies.

The council was also briefed on the Arab Financial Stability Report 2022 and the Unified Arab Economic Report 2022, in addition to other topics related to the banking sector in the Arab world.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Malik Al Mahrouqi attended a high-level roundtable on "Central Bank Digital Currencies and the Future of the Monetary System."

The roundtable included various discussions on the designing, technical and regulatory requirements related to issuing central bank digital currencies (CBDCs). The role of CBDCs in promoting financial inclusion and the applications of digital currencies in cross-border payments were also discussed. The roundtable concluded with a panel discussion on future policies and plans for the banking sector in the region. -ONA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

DIDIC, up 8.28 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 7.9 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,470.06 points, up by 0.1 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.39 per cent at 478.98 points. DIDIC, up 8.28 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 7.9 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Bank Dhofar were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 282 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR0.91 million, with more than 5.17 million shares changing hands. Out of 34 traded securities, 13 advanced, 10 declined, and 11 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR110,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR90,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR20,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,129.51 points, up 0.21 per cent. Prices of DIDIC, Al Madina Takaful, Sohar International Bank, Ahli Bank and Al Anwar Investment were up by 8.28 per cent, 3.41 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 1.56 per cent and 1.25 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Qatar Insurance, National Bank Oman and Bank Muscat were down by 3.7 per cent, 3.23 per cent and 1.38 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,280.6 points, down 0.08 per cent. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Cement and A'Saffa Foods were up by 3.29 per cent, 0.67 per cent and 0.37 per cent respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Galfar Engineering and Oman Fisheries were down by 2.58 per cent, 1.82 per cent and 0.94 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.1 per cent before closing at 1,615.97 points. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Sembcorp Salalah and Ooredoo were up by 8 per cent, 1.59 per cent and 0.51 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Phoenix Power, Oman National Engineering and Renaissance Services were down by 7.9 per cent, 4.35 per cent, 1.79 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,471.86	4,447.06	4,470.06	4,465.59	4.47	0.10
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,141.93	7,096.28	7,129.51	7,114.43	15.08	0.21
Industry Index	6,296.76	6,272.05	6,280.60	6,285.39	-4.79	-0.08
Services Index	1,623.39	1,604.75	1,615.97	1,614.41	1.56	0.10
MSX Shariah Index	479.22	471.55	478.98	472.40	6.58	1.39
MSX TR INDEX	5,640.05	5,608.78	5,637.79	5,632.15	5.64	0.10
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,473.23	7,425.46	7,460.23	7,444.45	15.78	0.21
SERVICES TR IDX	1,685.74	1,666.38	1,678.03	1,676.41	1.62	0.10
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,534.97	6,509.33	6,518.21	6,523.18	-4.98	-0.08

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
5,175,715	909,764	282	23,189,113,388	13	10	11	34

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	20,085	5,423	4	0.274	0.274	0.270	0.270	0.250	0.020	8.000	0.270	0.266	0.270	0.100	16,525,154
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	10,000	4,400	2	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.426	0.014	3.286	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	137,000	14,183	2	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.102	0.002	1.961	0.104	0.100	0.104	0.100	477,366,478
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	6,500	845	2	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.128	0.002	1.563	0.130	0.120	0.130	0.100	253,455,471
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	2,000	600	1	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.298	0.002	0.671	0.300	0.000	0.326	0.100	99,261,813
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	6,450	2,523	2	0.390	0.398	0.390	0.398	0.396	0.002	0.505	0.398	0.384	0.400	0.100	259,075,804
OM0000003000	Al MAHA MARKTING	5,970	4,776	3	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.000	0.800	0.100	55,200,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	15,468	13,862	4	0.896	0.900	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.000	0.000	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.100	672,000,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	10,000	920	2	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.091	0.094	0.100	23,796,886
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	11,383	5,577	5	0.468	0.494	0.468	0.494	0.498	-0.004	-0.803	0.494	0.468	0.494	0.100	116,786,540
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	429,848	247,630	54	0.582	0.582	0.574	0.574	0.582	-0.008	-1.375	0.574	0.574	0.576	0.100	2,154,335,957
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	100,300	11,033	4	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.112	-0.002	-1.786	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	75,645	20,086	9	0.265	0.269	0.264	0.264	0.271	-0.007	-2.583	0.264	0.264	0.266	0.100	32,973,061
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	23,400	5,641	5	0.246	0.246	0.240	0.240	0.248	-0.008	-3.226	0.240	0.000	0.240	0.100	390,227,125
Total	14	854,049	337,499	99												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INT.	100	17	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.157	0.013	8.280	0.170	0.000	0.172	0.100	69,571,874
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	860,400	77,124	33	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.088	0.003	3.409	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.100	15,925,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	5,000	320	1	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.001	1.587	0.064	0.064	0.069	0.100	61,092,605
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	769,500	62,139	36	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	138,866	13,458	9	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.001	1.042	0.097	0.094	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	335,000	51,590	9	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.153	0.001	0.654	0.154	0.151	0.154	0.100	308,048,170
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	8,500	2,312	1	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.271	0.001	0.369	0.272	0.270	0.279	0.100	32,640,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	1,470	198	1	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.126	0.148	0.100	11,475,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	9,100	656	3	0.078	0.078	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.100	4,500,000
OM0000002028	GULF INT.CHEMI.	61,125	5,808	8	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	1,995,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	1,028,000	138,780	5	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.138	0.100	404,507,444
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	139	15	1	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.104	0.109	0.100	8,954,303
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	107,900	7,445	1	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.065	0.075	0.100	32,511,861
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	81,722	8,700	10	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.106	0.107	0.100	19,300,310
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER.	799,345	131,716	56	0.164	0.167	0.162	0.162	0.165	-0.003	-1.818	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.100	32,883,804
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	2,000	364	2	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.189	-0.007	-3.704	0.182	0.171	0.189	0.100	18,200,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	10,254	452	2	0.046	0.046	0.044	0.044	0.046	-0.002	-4.348	0.044	0.044	0.046	0.100	64,354,464
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	30,900	1,112	2	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.035	0.038	-0.003	-7.895	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.100	6,987,246
Total	18	4,249,321	502,206	181												

STATISTICS

Saudi ports meet economic development demands with increased throughput volumes

RIYADH: Saudi ports have played a significant part in boosting the competitiveness of the Kingdom's economy, providing an array of growth catalysts in the quest towards promoting the maritime sector, and fulfilling the demands of national development despite the challenges facing global trade and the logistics industry, therefore strengthening the shipping networks which connect the Kingdom to the East and West while increasing the overall throughput volumes.

Mawani has revealed a record-breaking performance by Saudi ports during the past eight months of 2022, handling 212,436,326 tonnes with a 13.59 per cent increase rate compared to 187,026,390 tonnes recorded the previous year.

Statistics during this period show that general cargo volumes were up 8.93 per cent to reach 5,722,622 tonnes, whereas dry bulk cargo reached 32,723,465 tonnes with a 7.16 per cent increase rate. Similarly, liquid bulk cargo reached 120,534,334 tonnes with a 24.47 per cent increase rate.

> Mawani has revealed a record-breaking performance by Saudi ports during the past eight months of 2022, handling 212,436,326 tonnes with a 13.59 per cent increase rate compared to 187,026,390 tonnes recorded the previous year

Saudi ports, which handle 90 per cent of the Kingdom's exports and 70 per cent of its imports, received 538,265 cars between January and August, 16.08 per cent higher than last year's count of 463,704 cars. Passenger traffic also climbed up during the same period by 42.85 per cent to reach 610,060 passengers, compared to 427,075 passengers recorded in 2021.

Livestock witnessed a 5.42 per cent jump in volumes to reach 2,997,040 heads compared to 2,843,048 heads during 2021, as a result of optimised productivity and performance as well as enhanced operational and logistical capabilities of Saudi ports.

These remarkable figures reflect a tremendous transformation in Saudi ports' performance, as they are an outcome of the initiatives to develop the maritime sector which aim to create solutions, operating models, and various frameworks to stimulate growth and enable investment, and extend the exemption period for general cargo to 21 days, as well as enhancing the operational efficiency by restructuring procedures and implementing the latest technology.

The operational growth also demonstrates the adaptability of Mawani's strategies to global changes, in addition to its capability to confront challenges and strike partnerships with the private sector in line with the objectives of the National Transport and Logistics Strategy (NTLS) to position Saudi Arabia as a global logistics hub that connects three major continents.-**SPA**

WASTE4H2 PROJECT

New initiative to solve problem of treatment of water contaminated with crude oil

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Research and Innovation Centre, RIC Pro-Akademia, from the Republic of Poland and the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) has established a new initiative to solve the problem of water contaminated with crude oil in Oman: the WASTE4H2 project.

Within this project, produced water will be processed using an innovative process that can significantly reduce wastewater contamination. An additional advantage of the proposed technology is that it simultaneously produces hydrogen. The process will be powered with green energy, produced by the innovative PVT system, resistant to overheating and dusty sand from the desert.

"Advanced oxidation process has already shown promising results in treating industrial, agricultural, and domestic wastewaters containing harmful pollutants such as aromatic compounds, dyes, pesticides, etc., as well as pathogenic microflora. This is because of several major factors affecting the potential contaminants such as high temperature, the emitted light spectrum, the production of the hydroxyl radicals and hydrogen peroxide, and the generated shock waves in the vicinity of the discharge electrode," says a project manager from RIC Pro-Akademia Dr Ing. Marcin Siedlecki.

"Currently, according to human attempts to build a carbon-free society, considerable attention is given to developing hydrogen-generating technologies. This is because hydrogen has a high specific energy density and is considered a clean energy carrier. Moreover, due to the intermittency of the renewable electricity generated by variable renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, hydrogen production offers a continuous way of converting renewable energy into so-called renewable hydrogen. For these reasons, hydrogen is regarded as an energy carrier of the future," said a Principal Investigator from RIC Pro-Akademia Dr.-Ing. Sergii Bespalko.

The currently available electrolyser to produce green hydrogen requires high-purity water. Consequently, it is necessary to have a water pre-treatment plant, which is another challenge concerning the excessive cost and membrane contamination when it comes to treating industrial wastewater. Therefore, developing an integrated system that converts industrial wastewater (e.g., produced water) to hydrogen seems to be a novel technology that is simultaneously addressing the technical issues of other methods and produces valuable products. In this project, wastewater will be processed using an innovative advanced oxidation process that can significantly reduce wastewater contamination," said Dr Eng. Najah Al Mhanna, the principal investigator at GUtech.

WASTE4H2 is financially supported by the Polish National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) in the framework of the INNOGLOBO program and by the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech).

"We are very glad about the established R&D collaboration between institutions of our countries – Republic of Poland and Sultanate of Oman. The proposed research project aims to develop a pilot unit at the scale of 0.5 m3 of wastewater per hour, combining advanced oxidation processes for wastewater treatment and simultaneous hydrogen production for future transport, buildings, mobile electronic devices, and industrial applications.

"The new proposed technology will be interesting for the Polish oil refineries as well," said the President of RIC Pro-Akademia Dr Ewa Kochańska.

The kick-off meeting of the project partners was held recently at the Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia, where Prof. Najah Al Mhanna represented the German University of Technology in Oman. The project partners had an excellent opportunity to discuss the timing and structure of the work packages, allocation of tasks, as well as envisaged deliverables and milestones.

The oil industry is one of the world's biggest industries and is a locomotive driving the Omani national economy.

Crude oil extraction is always coupled with environmental challenges, and in addition, it consumes a large amount of water which later needs to be treated: extracting 1 barrel of crude oil produces around 9 barrels of contaminated water.

HAVING TEA

MAY LOWER RISK OF GETTING TYPE 2 DIABETES

LIFESTYLE

Moderate use of black, green, or oolong tea is associated with a lower risk of acquiring type 2 diabetes, according to a systematic review and meta-analysis of 19 cohort studies involving more than 1 million adults from eight different countries.

The research indicates that having at least four cups of tea per day is linked to a 17% lower risk of type 2 diabetes (T2D) over an average of ten years, according to findings presented at this year's European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) Annual Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden (19-23 September).

According to main author Xiaying Li of Wuhan University of Science and Technology in China, "our results are intriguing because they imply that people can do something as easy as drinking four cups of tea a day to potentially lower their chance of acquiring type 2 diabetes."

Because of the numerous antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticarcinogenic components that tea contains, it has long been known that drinking tea frequently may be healthy, but the link between tea consumption and the risk of T2D has been less obvious. Cohort studies and meta-analyses that have been published so far have presented conflicting results.

To clarify the connection between tea drinking and future T2DM risk, researchers carried out a cohort study and a dose-response meta-analysis.

First, they looked at 5,199 participants (2583 men and 2616 women; average age, 42) from the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS), who were enrolled in 1997 and followed up within 2009 and had no prior history of T2D. The CHNS is a multicenter prospective study that examines inhabitants from nine provinces' socioeconomic conditions as well as their physical and mental health.

Participants initially completed a food and drink frequency questionnaire and supplied details on lifestyle choices such regular exercise, smoking, and alcohol use. 2,379 (46%) participants reported drinking tea overall, and 522 (10%) persons had T2D by the conclusion of the trial.

Researchers discovered that tea drinkers and non-drinkers had comparable risks of getting type 2 diabetes (T2D) after correcting for variables such as age, sex, and physical inactivity that are known to be associated with higher risk of T2D. And when patients who got diabetes during the first three years of follow-up were omitted or the results were broken down by age and sex, they did not significantly alter the findings.

The researchers then conducted a systematic evaluation of all cohort studies examining the relationship between tea consumption and the risk of T2D in adults (aged 18 or older) up until September 2021. The dose-response meta-analysis comprised 19 cohort studies totalling 1,076,311 participants from eight different nations.

They investigated the potential effects of various tea consumption patterns (less than one cup per day, one to three cups per day, and four or more cups per day), gender (male and female), and research region (Europe and America, or Asia), on the risk of T2D.

Overall, the meta-analysis discovered a linear relationship between tea consumption and T2D risk, with each daily cup of tea lowering risk by about 1%.

Adults who drank 1-3 cups of tea per day had a 4% lower risk of T2D than those who didn't, while those who drank at least 4 cups per day had a 17% lower risk.

The relationships were shown regardless of the type of tea people drank, whether they identified as male or female, or where they resided, indicating that the quantity of tea taken may be more important than any other factor in explaining the associations.

Our results imply that drinking tea is beneficial in lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes, but only at large levels (at least 4 cups a day), adds Li.

However, more research is needed to pinpoint the precise dosage and processes underlying these observations.

She continues, "It is plausible that specific tea constituents, like polyphenols, may lower blood glucose levels, but it may need a significant quantity of these bioactive substances to be effective. It may also be the reason why, despite looking at higher tea intake, we did not discover a link between type 2 diabetes and tea drinking in our cohort analysis.

The same plant that is used to produce green and black teas is also used to manufacture oolong tea, a traditional Chinese beverage. The processing method makes a difference; oolong tea is partially oxidised whereas black tea is permitted to fully oxidise. Green tea is not allowed to oxidise substantially.

Despite the significant results, the authors point out that as the research was observational, it cannot conclusively show that tea consumption decreased the incidence of T2D but rather provides evidence that it probably does.

The researchers also highlight a number of cautions, such as the fact that they relied on estimates of the amounts of tea consumed that were made subjectively, and that they cannot completely rule out the possibility that residual confounding from other lifestyle and physiological factors may have impacted the findings. -ANI

Researchers discovered that tea drinkers and non-drinkers had comparable risks of getting type 2 diabetes (T2D) after correcting for variables such as age, sex, and physical inactivity that are known to be associated with higher risk of T2D. And when patients who got diabetes during the first three years of follow-up were omitted or the results were broken down by age and sex, they did not significantly alter the findings.

IN PICTURES

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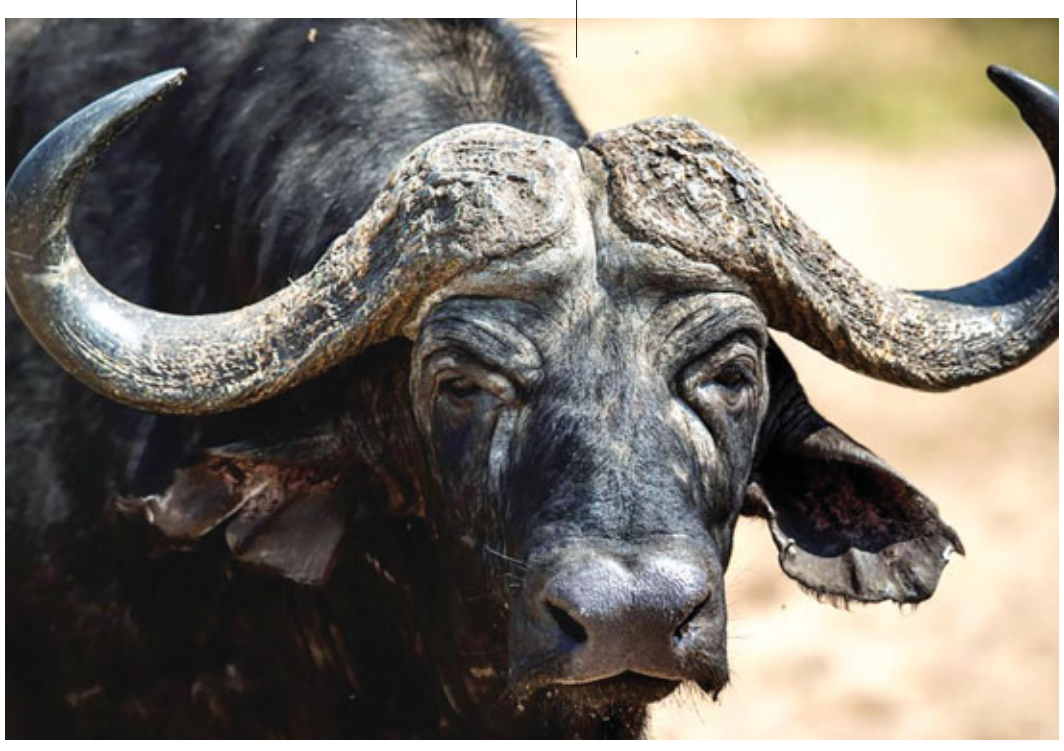
2 dead, another missing after typhoon Nanmadol hits Japan
People drive in the rain along a street in Tokyo, Japan. Two people were reported dead and another missing on Monday after powerful typhoon Nanmadol landed in Japan's southwestern region of Kyushu, bringing rain and gales, local media reported. Xinhua

Kruger National Park in South Africa
Picture shows an African buffalo at the Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga, South Africa. Kruger National Park is one of the largest game reserves in Africa. Covering an area of 19,485 square kilometres in northeastern South Africa, the park is a home to an impressive number of species. Xinhua



Car Free Sunday held in Brussels
Cyclists pose for souvenir photos during the 'Car Free Sunday' annual event in Brussels, Belgium. The annual event was held on Sunday in the Region of Brussels, Belgium, marking the high point of the Brussels Mobility Week 2022. From 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Brussels-Capital Region became the largest car-free zone in Europe. Xinhua

Highlight of Moscow Marathon
Participants take part in the Moscow Marathon in Moscow, Russia. Xinhua

Constitution Day celebrated in Kathmandu, Nepal
Nepali police personnel participate in the celebration of the Constitution Day in Kathmandu, Nepal. Xinhua

Wenchang International Aerospace City in Hainan under construction
Aerial picture shows a rocket assembly plant under construction at the Wenchang International Aerospace City in Wenchang, south China's Hainan Province. Focusing on the development of aerospace science and technology, the Wenchang International Aerospace City, one of the key industrial parks of Hainan free trade port, is undergoing construction in an orderly manner. Xinhua

People practise Tai Chi in Vilnius, Lithuania
Chinese Tai Chi enthusiasts practice with coach Wang Xiyin (first from left) in Vilnius, Lithuania. Dozens of Tai Chi enthusiasts gathered in Vilnius on weekend to practice Tai Chi under the guidance of coach Wang Xiyin, who has been living in Lithuania for more than 30 years and is the Tai Chi coach in the past 20 years. Xinhua

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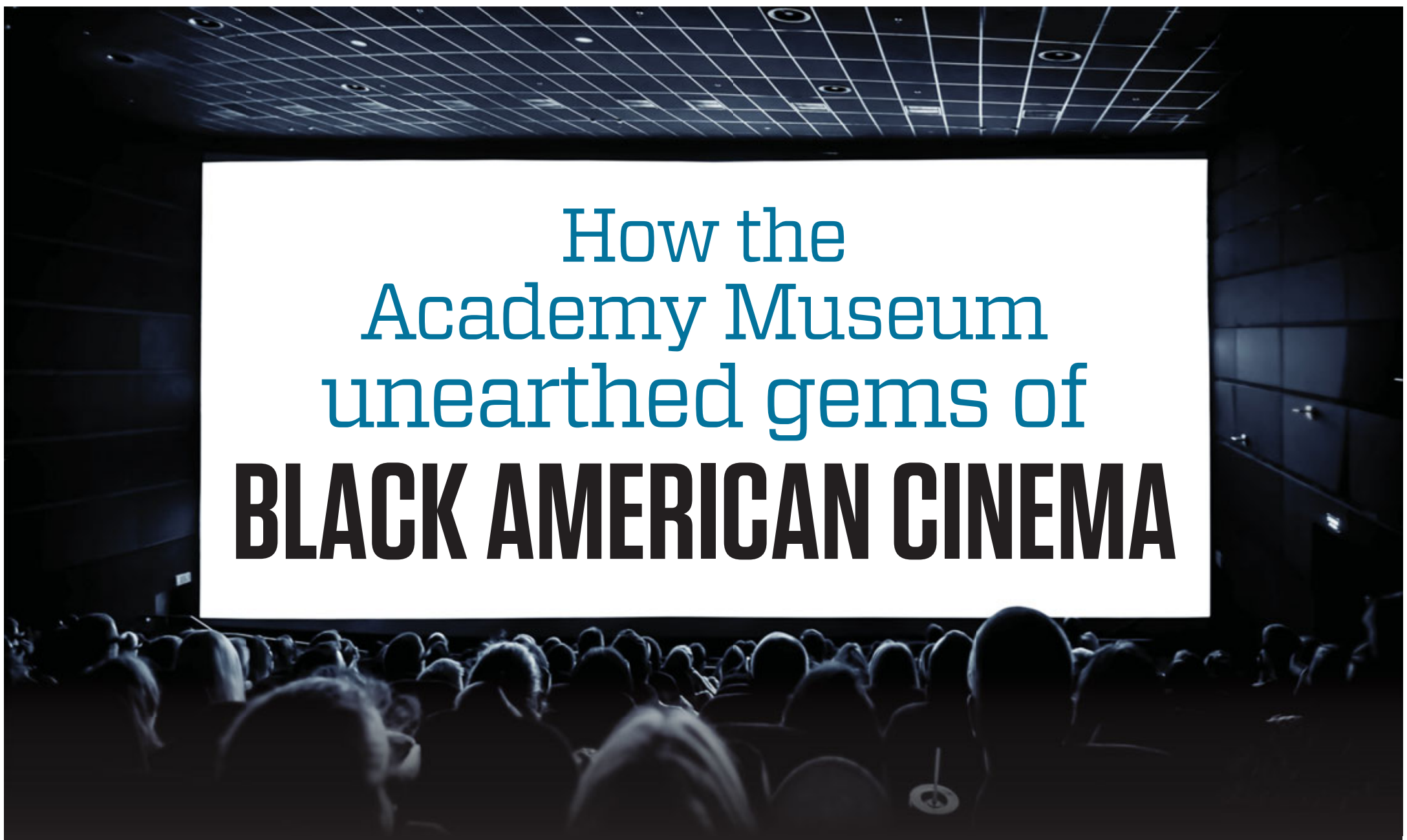

How the Academy Museum unearthed gems of BLACK AMERICAN CINEMA

The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is celebrating Black filmmakers in the United States from 1897 to 1971. In putting the first-of-its-kind show together, the curators found works that had long been feared lost.

WHEN the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures opened after a yearlong pandemic delay in September 2021, the institutional focus had shifted from a celebration of cinema to exploring the role of filmmaking in a complicated world — and the influence of social movements on Hollywood productions, often criticised for being too commercial and too uncritical.

The museum's second major exhibition, "Regeneration: Black Cinema, 1898-1971," now explores and celebrates Black American contributions to film while placing them in the context of seven turbulent decades.

Over 11,000 square feet (1,000 square metres) and seven galleries, "Regeneration" displays excerpts of films made by and for Black Americans, photographs, costumes and other artifacts alongside works by contemporary Black artists Theaster Gates, Glenn Ligon, Gary Simmons and Kara Walker.

Co-curators Rhea L. Combs and Doris Berger searched through archives and contacted relatives to track down promotional materials, letters and even works that had long been thought lost.

"We were trying to pull together this narrative, to understand the depth of African American participation in film," said Combs, director of curatorial affairs at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. The curators studied collections such as the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

'A treasure hunt'

Films, it turned out, were some of the more difficult objects to recover in many cases. "Even if you want to show a clip of a movie in one of our montages, you can't because you don't have it available anymore," said Berger, the Academy Museum's vice president of curatorial affairs. "So sometimes there are only particular objects that survive, such as an advertisement or a poster, but the film hasn't survived. In other cases, we found works that had been considered lost and that we were able to restore for our exhibition."

Among the works recovered for "Regeneration" was Robert L. Goodwin's 1971 film "Black Chariot," which had been mentioned in books and media of its time but screened only briefly. "No one outside of a handful of people had actually seen it," Combs told DW.

She was able to track "Black Chariot" down through relatives of Goodwin, who died in 1983. "It wasn't completely deteriorated, even though it was in some apartment building with no air conditioning — it had not seen the light of day," she said. "The feeling was unbelievable," she added. "It's a treasure hunt."

Another film recovered — in the Academy's own archive — was "Reform School," which the museum re-premiered on Thursday in one of its house cinemas.

Berger said the 1939 film offered critiques of carceral systems that remain relevant today, and also significantly gave a starring role to Louise Beavers, who appeared in scores of films over a 33-year career but generally in secondary, tertiary or uncredited roles, and often cast as a servant of some sort.

"Reform School" is a social drama with an all-Black-cast that was released the same year as "The Wizard of Oz," "Ninotchka" and "Gone With the Wind," but independently from Hollywood, Berger told DW. She said Beavers "commands the narrative in a most amazing way, and that film proves that it could have been very different if she were given more chances in the wider entertainment industry."

In Germany, the curators found that the Gestapo had surveilled Robeson — a stage and cinema actor who in the McCarthy era would be sidelined in the United States for his work as a prominent civil rights activist and anti-fascist — as he travelled through Europe in 1937.

"He was considered a threat, you know, not only to the United States," said Combs. "The find through the archive in Germany allows us to know that he had a bigger impact and influence beyond the United States."

Later, after the partitioning of Germany, Robeson was a celebrated guest in East Germany, where he was given medical and psychiatric care following unsuccessful treatment in London. He was also feted and received such titles as an honorary doctorate from the Karl Marx University in Leipzig, now known as Leipzig University.

"The reception changes over time, from someone being surveilled at one point and then several years later they're receiving a hero's welcome," said Combs. "And that's that sort of negotiation that many Black performers had to navigate: the sea change that would occur in many instances that were outside of their control but always sort of situated in this reality of trying to negotiate race and gender and identity, national identity, all at the same time. It's fascinating."

Perseverance and possibilities

The Academy Museum has set up a microsite allowing people who cannot make it to Los Angeles before April 9 to interact with many aspects of the exhibition.

The works that might have been on display had they not been lost are, of course, part of the discussion — as is the role of the industry that failed to preserve them. "Despite all of these pressures for suppression and repression, there has been a long-standing commitment of Black artists to try to push through that, and that is what we showcase through this exhibition," said Combs. "The participation has always been there despite all of these active and even sometimes systemic ways of repression."

"Regeneration" collects the work and adjacent objects that remain to honor the people whose perseverance made Black American cinema a history of possibilities.

"For me what was so exciting to work on with Rhea is to have a really robust showcase with this exhibition that expands the film canon, that really stretches its limits with the realities there were," said Berger. "And so, for us to be able to recover and discover these realities of Black participation in American cinema, is a really powerful message and really allows us to understand filmmaking as a richer and more diverse aspect of American production than we might have thought." - DW

ROUND-UP

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Nissan Sunny offers sophisticated driving experience for customers

Outstanding design, advanced powertrains, upgraded Xtronic transmission, intelligent technology, best-in-class spacious interiors and remarkable performance – Nissan Sunny boasts of all these attributes and more

MUSCAT: Nissan Sunny is the perfect car for customers looking for a sophisticated driving experience.

Outstanding design, advanced powertrains, upgraded Xtronic transmission, intelligent technology, best-in-class spacious interiors and remarkable performance – Nissan Sunny boasts of all these attributes and more.

With a next-generation, 1.6-litre 4-cylinder engine rated at 118 horsepower and a 149 Nm of torque, Nissan Sunny brings a new level of excitement and refinement to owners. Gratifyingly, the light and efficient model's fuel economy is rated at 19.3 km per litre on the highway as well as in the city.

I would say Nissan Sunny is a fantastic choice whether you are a first-time car buyer or a person looking for an upgrade.

Emotional design, large roominess and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility technology are major pluses for the incredible car. The new generation Nissan Sunny builds on this solid foundation and reinforces Nissan's presence in

the increasingly popular B-Sedan segment and is loaded with technology and safety features not usually found in the segment. Its intelligent forward collision warning, rear cross-traffic alert and hill start assist are particularly worth a mention.

While it is a great family car, it appeals to the youth too. It comes packed with features such as a 7.0-inch colour display with touch screen capability (resistive type), Bluetooth® Hands-free Phone System and Streaming audio via Bluetooth®, a 12-volt power outlet, three USB ports (two charge only), an interface for iPod® and other compatible devices, Siri® Eyes Free and AM/FM audio system with 6 speakers and smooth smartphone integration – Apple Play & Android.

A sporty D-shaped steering wheel and comfortable seats with distinctive stitching are finished in a cockpit with bold chrome and glossy black treatments. Besides, Nissan Sunny offers soft pad panelling and exceptional quality materials throughout the cabin. By the way the electric power steering system features a high-rigidity shaft, up 30 per cent from the previous design – providing a more responsive feel.

Powering the Nissan Sunny is the Nissan Intelligent Mobility technology that helps provide front, side and rear safety monitoring and intervention technologies to improve safety and awareness on the road.

This model also makes for an easier and more confident driving experience with seamless smartphone sync options and driver assist technology. This is bolstered by mechanical innovations including an advanced engine design, upgraded Xtronic transmission and an electric power steering system.

We may not have heard many cars adopting "Emotional Geometry" design language. Nissan Sunny does. It incorporates key elements – such as the V-motion grille, boomerang-shaped headlamps and tail lamps, kick-up C-pillars and floating roof. That is car connoisseurs describe Nissan as an energetic, provocative, and engaging modern compact sedan.

For those who like deep details, the exterior dimensions are 3 mm longer and 45 mm wider (than the previous generation Sunny) – along with a 44 mm lower height. Contributing to the new Sunny's dramatic stanch are reduced gaps between the fenders and tires.

The new dimensions also help provide easy ingress and egress through all four doors. The amazing model features roomy 5-passenger interior with a comfortable rear seat with ample rear legroom and knee room.

Its large interior volume of 88.9 cubic feet is matched with 14.3 cubic feet of trunk volume (split rear seat). Sunny's interior also symbolises a reimagining of the previous generation design with signature elements such as the "Gliding Wing" instrument panel that expands the feel of the space through use of a light and sleek "wingspan."

LIFELINE HOSPITAL

CME on management of acute coronary syndrome organised

MUSCAT: Lifeline Hospital Sohar & Burjeel Hospital Muscat jointly organised a Cardiology CME on Management of Acute Coronary Syndrome at Radisson Blu Hotel. Around 200 doctors from all over North Batinah and Buraimi have attended this unique topic that has emphasised acute coronary syndrome treatment.

The importance of handling critical cases by practitioners at individual levels and the timely transferring of the patients to a facility with cath lab was emphasised.

Active discussions were carried out between the speakers and doctors on case management and the outcome of different cardiac procedures that are being performed at Burjeel Hospital. This programme has enhanced the medical awareness of doctors in treating acute coronary cases. A team of cardiologists led by Dr Waleed (Interventional cardiologist) & Dr Saad (Medical Cardiologist) presented this topic to the doctors.

HEALTHCARE

Aster Royal Hospital receives 'One More Drive' for a tour of its newest facilities

MUSCAT: Aster Royal Hospital welcomed members of 'One More Drive', one of the fasted growing sports car clubs based in the Sultanate of Oman.

The group, which has as its core value - community support, respect and a supportive environment, went around the hospital's premises and shared their greetings and best-wishes for the soft opening.

The Club President, Salim Alfarsi, expressed his appreciation towards the hospital's facilities indicating, "I was positively surprised during the hospital's visit, starting with the staff's hospitality and the medical equipment's quality as well as for the high standards of the excellence centres and inpatient rooms. This hospital is an added value to the Oman community and we are glad to contribute to the hospital's dissemination in

the market. As One More Drive, we were also happy to know that this hospital has more than 100 car parks in the 2 basements."

The Hospital's Group CEO, Dr Ashendu Pandey, stated, "I am glad to receive in Aster Royal Hospital's newest premises such distinguished group, that stands for the social support and that preserves so well the passion and respect for the sports cars - that I also relate to - especially when applied to ride and explore the beauty and newest services in Oman. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with One More Drive, supporting with special benefits their members."

Two social media influencers marked presence in this event - Sabahi bin Sulaiman and Rosh o Rama and more than 50 cars were displayed, from Lamborghini to Aston Martin, from Bentley to Porsche, Dodge, Corvette, Mercedes Benz, Tesla, Jaguar and BMW.

Aster Royal Hospital counts on two underground parking areas, and 200 inpatient beds, bringing a total of 150 new doctors and staff members, modern technologies and infrastructure, ready for any major operation or complication with 24-hour emergency services.

Aster DM Healthcare is currently one of the largest and fastest-growing conglomerates in the Mena region.

SUMMIT

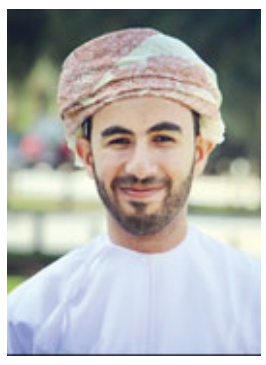
GHSO Energy Future Leaders Programme elicits strong interest from young researchers

MUSCAT: The Energy Future Leaders Programme, organised as part of the 2022 edition of the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman (GHSO) Global Conference & Exhibition and sponsored by Oman LNG, has garnered an overwhelming response from young researchers studying at universities and colleges within and outside Oman.

Entries received from some of the 120 universities locally and internationally are presently being evaluated by a 'Technical Committee of experts. A selection of winning entries will be invited to attend this year's Green Hydrogen Summit Oman (GHSO) Conference and Exhibition – the country's pivotal platform showcasing national and global aspirations for the growth of a green energy-based economic future.

Posters highlighting their outstanding concepts and research work will be featured at the summit. Three of these winners will go on to present their work to an international audience of dignitaries and experts during the Summit, and receive prestigious awards as well.

Commenting on the success of the Energy Future Leaders Programme, Dr Intisar Al Busaidi – Team Leader, said: "It was gratifying to receive such a large number of abstracts, many of them high quality and merit-worthy. The response from young Omani research students was particularly commendable, which was demonstrative of the deep interest that our youth have in their country's low-carbon energy future. Going forward, we hope to build on the momentum created by this initiative to drive further interest in the green energy future among our youth."



Generously sponsored by Oman LNG, the roughly two-month-long programme was aimed at recognizing and rewarding young talent in the renewable and green energy space who, in a matter of a few years, will find themselves on the frontlines of the international drive to decarbonise global economies. Creating a cadre of young energy professionals to serve this vitally important emerging industry is an underlying objective of the GHSO Exhibition and Conference.

Assisting Team Leader Dr Intisar Al Busaidi in the delivery of the GHSO Energy Future Leaders Programme was a team of enthusiastic student volunteers.

Sharing his support for the initiative, Abd Alhadi Alsaadi said: "Young people are the force of the future, and developing their skills and abilities is one of the most important things that must be done to ensure a better future. I have always believed in renewable sources of energy, and it seems that green hydrogen gives a wider choice of different energy options, and this increases the enthusiasm to join this team, which aspires to hone the capabilities of ambitious students."

Fellow team member Houd Alsaqri added: "As the world is pushing towards fighting climate change and hydrogen being one of the main solutions, I'm happy to be with the team to enhance my skills and work for something that can help the world."

Yarub Alhadhrami stated: "The air that we breathe and the water that we drink do not know political boundaries, as everyone is affected when something bad happens to these resources. Seeing many people from different countries do their best to save the environment brings up bright hope for a green and peaceful future. I am happy to be part of the Future Energy Leaders Programme management team, as it helps me improve my skills and enrich my knowledge in the field of renewable energy."

For AbdalazizAl Hashemi, a place on the Project Team also afforded him the opportunity to improve his management team: He said: "The Future Energy Leaders Programme was a great chance to delve into the latest research in the green hydrogen field from more than 200 universities around the world that have long experience in renewable energy research. Furthermore, I was excited to be on the management team of this programme as it is a great opportunity for me to expand my knowledge in green hydrogen and also to improve my management skills."

Hishamal Sulaimi added in conclusion, "What a great opportunity to join the management team of the Future Energy Leader Programme, where more than 120 universities from around the globe are competing and sharing experiences. I hope this programme will result in excellent outcomes for the world to be a more climate-friendly place."

Organised by Birba Energy in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the summit will be held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre during December 5 – 7. The primary focus of Oman's strategy is to develop a world-class industry that, on the one hand, meets the energy requirements of the Sultanate's future low-carbon economy, and on the other, serves as a major global supplier of carbon-neutral fuel.

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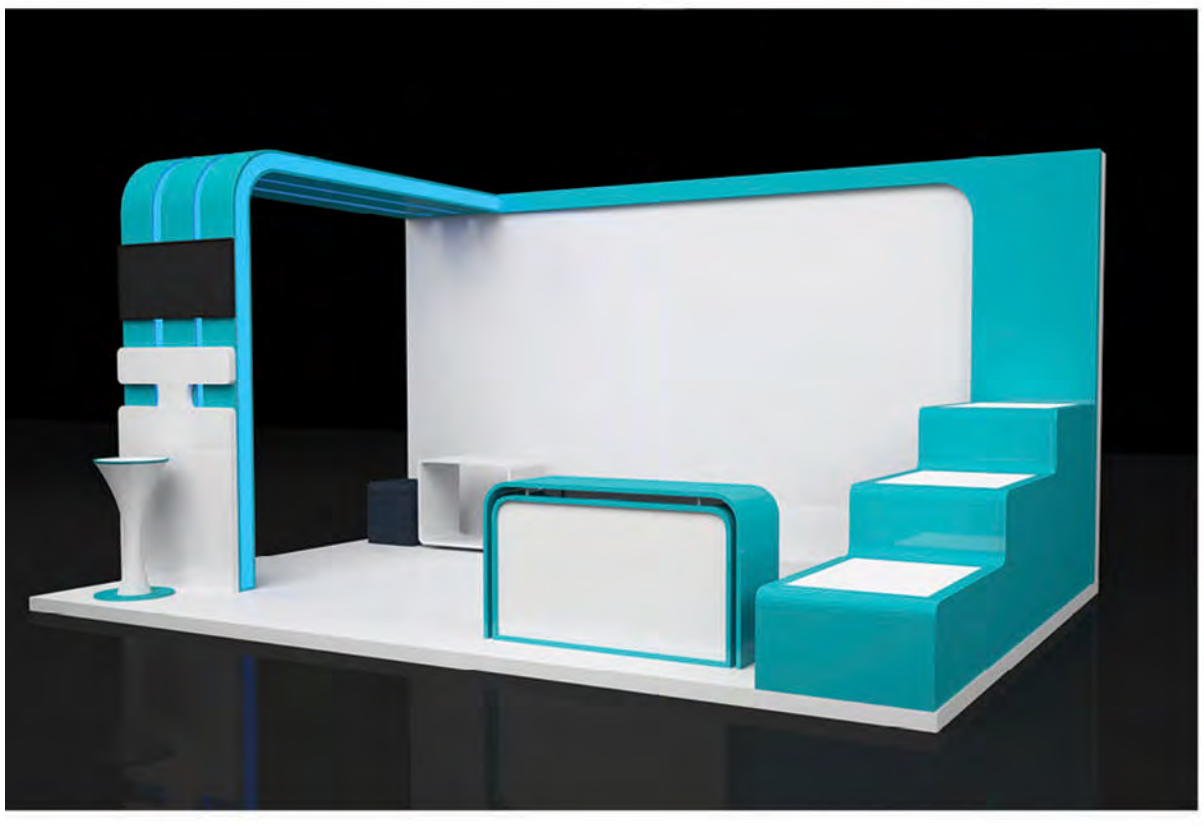

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