

#### HM SENDS CONDOLENCES

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the death of Sheikhha Sheikhha bint Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sympathies to King Hamad, the deceased's family and the people of Bahrain. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty to rest the departed soul in peace in paradise and grant her family patience. **-ONA**



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#### HIS MAJESTY SENDS CABLE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO BANGLADESH

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulation to President Mohammad Abdul Hamid of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to the president and to his country's people further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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#### HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GIVES AN AUDIENCE TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR OF UAE

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience to Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, National Security Advisor in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), at Bait Bahjat Al Andhar on Thursday. **>See page 2**



On visit to India, Sayyid Badr meets top officials

A2

#### TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

### OMAN Schedule for flights between Oman, India

1 Following the announcement of the resumption of international airlines to India, a number of operators have revealed their schedules from Muscat to cities in India. **>A3**

### WORLD Biden in Warsaw to counter Putin

2 US President Joe Biden was in Warsaw on Saturday for meetings with Polish and Ukrainian government officials, followed by an address underlining the global response to Russia's war in Ukraine. **>A6**

### WORLD Opaz drone surveys yield positive results

3 Opaz drone surveys have achieved positive results in one of the mining sites in Sezad which has helped in taking appropriate decisions aimed at enhancing productivity. **>B1**



THE SULTANATE OF OMAN HAS MAINTAINED GROWTH IN OIL PRODUCTION DURING THE PAST YEARS, THANKS TO THE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND CONTINUOUS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OIL EXTRACTION: MINISTER OF ECONOMY

25.5%

GROWTH WAS RECORDED IN THE OIL SECTOR, WHILE NON-OIL ACTIVITIES GREW BY 7.8 PERCENT IN 2021

27,000

JOBS PLANNED TO BE CREATED ANNUALLY

# STIMULUS MEASURES BEHIND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OMAN



Times News Service

Economic efficiency enhanced by a number of programmes, says the Minister of Economy

**MUSCAT:** Economic stimulus programmes and other measures related to financial sustainability and raising the efficiency of government spending led to improved economic performance in Oman in 2021, said Minister of Economy Dr Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri. Speaking at a programme titled, 'With the Youth', where he spoke

about the realities of the Omani economy and future aspirations, the minister explained that a number of programmes had together created an environment conducive to economic efficiency and output. "The fiscal balance programme will control and rationalise government spending, introduce certain taxes such as the value added tax (VAT) and reconsider some procedures related to rational-

ising and improving the performance of public money," he said. These measures, explained the minister, were also brought in to stimulate growth of other productive economic sectors and to enable the government to spend on various development programmes and basic services. Economic growth was seen in the performance of oil activities, which expanded 25.5 percent in

2021, as well as non-oil sectors that grew at 7.8 percent. "When there is a contraction in performance, it must stimulate aggregate demand, or aggregate supply," explained Al Saqri. "In the Sultanate of Oman, a series of economic stimulus programmes have been implemented, including the review of many government fees, reducing a large number of them and unifying some of these fees." **>A5**

#### ECONOMY

## Oman turns to free zones to attract foreign investors

SALEH AL SHAIBANY

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's Royal Decree issued to expand free zones in Oman is a step in the right direction to boost the economy and attract much-needed foreign investments to the country.

The free zones in Muscat, Salalah, Sohar and Duqm will help diversify the state income and bring in prospective trading partners.

**Economic diversification** Experts say the move marks a significant shift as Oman seeks to align itself with international standards and move towards a global investment scenario.

"The free zones will bring in huge economic benefits to the country," said Peter Hays, a former senior banker at Citigroup. "The move will align Oman with global financial standards and move forward to partner with the



biggest international investors. This is what is needed right now to help diversify away from the backbone of the economy that relies heavily on energy income."

#### Free zones

Oman has four airports in cities across the country, and all of them have both economic and free zones. The Royal Decree will encourage the expansion of business and trade freedoms for investors such as exemptions of taxes like corporate and import duty for international companies operating there.

The first economic zone in Oman was established at Sala-

lah in 1986 and both Sohar and Duqm free zones were set up in 2014. Muscat Airport, built in 1973, went through a three-year renovation with a new runway and a \$1.8 billion new terminal that was opened in March 2018.

"Oman has some experience in economic zones and the Royal Decree will give more confidence to big players around the world to set up manufacturing units there knowing that they will enjoy huge benefits," added Hays. "This is how countries like Singapore have become global trade posts over the years because they know what it takes to bring in investors." **>A4**

## LIGHTS OFF AT ROHM TO MARK EARTH HOUR

Royal Opera House Muscat turned off its lights to mark Earth Hour, which fell this year on Saturday, 26 March. Organised by the World Wildlife Fund, Earth Hour is a global grassroots movement uniting people to solve environmental issues and protect the planet. — Shabin E.



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TIMINGS

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

# His Majesty the Sultan gives audience to National Security Advisor of UAE

**SOHAR:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience to Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, National Security Advisor in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), at Bait Bahjat Al Andhar here on Thursday.

The Emirati official conveyed the greetings of President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE to His Majesty the Sultan, along with the President's best wishes of good health and happiness to His Majesty the Sultan. He also expressed Sheikh Khalifa's wishes of further progress and welfare for the Omani people.



His Majesty the Sultan reciprocated the gesture, asking Sheikh Tahnoun to convey his best wishes of good health and happiness to Sheikh Khalifa. He also wished the UAE people further progress and prosperity.

During the audience, His Majesty and Sheikh Tahnoun discussed areas of bilateral cooperation in various spheres.

They explored means of upgrading cooperation in a manner that better serves the interests of the two countries' peoples. The meeting also touched on different matters of common concern.

The meeting was attended from the Omani side by Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, and Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office. While from the UAE side, it was attended by Ali bin Hamad Al Shamsi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Supreme National Security Council, Said Al Neyadi, Chairman of the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority and Jassem Bu Ataba Al Zaabi, Chairman of the Department of Finance. -ONA

# Foreign Minister meets Indian Vice President

Sayyid Badr was on an official visit to India on March 23 and 24

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Al Busaidi met with top Indian government officials, including Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Sayyid Badr was on an official visit to India on March 23 and 24. During the visit, he held official talks and political consultations with his counterpart, the External Affairs Minister of India.

"The ministers discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance them," said Oman's Foreign Ministry.

During the meeting, the two also "emphasised the close partnership that binds the two countries," and "the importance the leadership of both countries attach to bilateral relations based on mutual trust, respect and cooperation within the framework of their maritime neighbourhood."



**MEETING:** Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met with Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of the Republic of India. - ONA



The two ministers also exchanged views on regional and international developments and global issues of common interest and affirmed their keenness to work together in international and regional organisations and forums in support of their common interests.

The Foreign Minister also met with Venkaiah Naidu, India's Vice President, during which the friendship and cooperation between the two countries and their

joint interest in strengthening and developing them in various fields for the common benefit of both countries and their peoples, web reviewed.

A wide range of issues of cooperation were discussed, including trade, renewable energy, technology, economy, food security, higher education, health and tourism.

With National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, "the two sides discussed the historical and strategic relations between the two countries and their cooperation in various fields, including military and security cooperation, space, cyber and maritime security, as well as economic, trade, investment and cultural relations," said Oman's Foreign Ministry

## AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

# Oman to host global conference on post-COVID air travel recovery



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Twenty-seven CEOs from the world governing board of the Airports Council International will meet in Oman to discuss future recovery and long-term sustainable growth of air travel after being hit adversely by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparatory to the conference, the first meetings of the committees started on Saturday in Oman. The meetings will be held for two days in the presence of a number of invited personalities from the aviation sector.

The meetings will be chaired by Aimen bin Ahmed Al Hosni, CEO of Oman Airports and chairman of the ACI World Governing Board, to discuss and approve the ACI's work plan and ways to enhance cooperation between airports, international aviation organisations and various strategic partners around the world. The meetings' deliberations will aim to find innovative ways to enhance efficiency at the airports and in the aviation sector, develop environmental and economically sustainable projects and address other challenges that directly affect the airports and civil aviation sector worldwide.

Al Hosni added: "This meeting constitutes the first nucleus of a roadmap for ACI's work for the upcoming two years. The sector is on its way to recovery after the pandemic, which has left airports and the aviation sector all over the world in a difficult state. We are pleased that Muscat has been chosen for this, the 65th meeting of the ACI World Governing Board, which comes while the sector breathes a sigh of relief, marking a great beginning. We hope that the positive vibes will continue for the stability of the sector and its people."

The Director General of ACI World, Luis Felipe, added, "We are happy to start our meetings in Muscat - as we see the recovery gather pace around the world and with the opening up of markets and increase in traffic, we need to chart a course for the future. There will be new challenges, not least how we work together to address climate change, but we are

Preparatory to the conference, the first meetings of the committees started on Saturday in Oman. The meetings will be held for two days in the presence of a number of invited personalities from the aviation sector

stronger together and we have to be bold. By opening markets and by encouraging and supporting the entire aviation ecosystem, we will be able to create new jobs and new opportunities for the entire community."

On Saturday, the CEOs of many of the world's leading airports held a meeting on the sidelines of the Airports Council International summit, during which they discussed solutions to confront emerging challenges, especially after the devastating impact of COVID-19 and the circumstances that accompanied the suspension of international travel, which was one of the most difficult periods faced by the world's airports and the global travel sector.

The CEOs, heads and members of the working committees of the Airports Council International stressed the importance of working together to find international consensus in cooperation with other international and governmental organisations to address the challenges and make the sector more cohesive than before. The Audit Committee of ACI also held its 28th meeting, during which several issues were discussed with the aim of restoring growth and stability after COVID-19.

## IN CAIRO

# Sayyida Sana Al Busaidi honoured for promoting women's sports in Oman

Times News Service

**CAIRO:** Sayyida Sana bint Hamad Al Busaidi, Chairman of Oman Women's Sports and Gender Equality Committee, was present at the first forum for Arab women's sports, held in Egypt from March 23 to 24.

During the forum, Sayyida Sana Al Busaidi, who has contributed to promoting women's sports movement in Oman and spreading the culture of women's sports in society through activities and projects was honoured.

In addition a number of women sports leaders in various Arab countries and Arab players who have been awarded Olympic medals in all Arab countries throughout its Olympic history were honoured.

The forum aimed to shed light on Arab women who were able to achieve successes in various fields of sport, whether in the field of international and Olympic or in the field of sports management.

It also aimed to highlight the role of federations, bodies, women's associations and civil society organisations in encouraging and motivating women to practice sports, and to reach out to women athletes in leadership positions and podiums globally and creating a space for creativity and sports practice.

Various models of successful Arab sports figures experiences were also reviewed.



**ARAB WOMEN'S SPORTS:** The forum aimed to shed light on Arab women who were able to achieve successes in various fields of sport, whether in the field of international and Olympic or in the field of sports management. - ONA

In the 2nd session of the forum, Sayyida Sana spoke about the formation of the Oman Women's Sports Committee in 2004 and the participation of the Committee in GCC championships, and the great interest of Oman Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in activating women's activities in bodies working in the field of sports and their activation and integration in public life.

In addition to consolidating its connection with society, and giving it the opportunity to be on the boards of directors of sports federations with the aim of promoting women's sports in Oman.





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# Flight schedules for Oman-India route announced

Announcement made by a number of operators following India's decision to allow resumption of international flights

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Following the announcement of the resumption of international flights to India, a number of operators have revealed their flight schedules from Muscat to cities in India.

Low-cost airline Go First recently announced their flight plans from Muscat to Mumbai and Kannur. Effective 27 March, Go First will fly thrice a week to Kannur, while effective 3 April, the airline will fly four times a week to Mumbai.

Flights from Mumbai to Muscat will leave at 22:55 and arrive in Oman at 12:30am on Monday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Similarly, flights from Muscat will depart the capital at 1:30 in the morning and arrive at 5:45 in Mumbai on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Sunday.

Similarly, flights to Kannur will leave Muscat at 11:50, arriving in India at 16:45 on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Planes will depart from Kannur at 8:30, arriving in Muscat in the morning at 10:50.

This schedule will then be expanded to daily flights to both cit-



ies, starting 23 April, 2022.

“We are extremely delighted to inform you that we have obtained regulatory approvals to restore our scheduled operations starting from 27 March, 2022 for our Muscat – Kannur route and from 4 April for our Muscat – Mumbai routes, respectively,” said a statement from Go First. “We have updated the reservations portals with new schedules and pricing

for the season.”

Oman Air – the country’s national carrier – has also announced flights to eight cities in India. Bookings can now be made for Goa, Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, Kozhikode, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai.

“Fly to Muscat with convenient connections to eight destinations in India” said the flag carrier. “Have you booked your ticket yet?”

## REGIONAL MEETING

# Oman participates in 20th edition of Doha Forum

**DOHA:** The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Foreign Ministry, participated in the twentieth edition of the Doha Forum entitled “Transformation into a New Era” in the Qatari capital Doha on Saturday. The two-day forum is being held under the patronage of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar. The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman is being headed by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister. The forum focuses on a number of themes, including geopolitical alliances, international relations, the financial system, economic development, defence, cyber security, etc. -**ONA**

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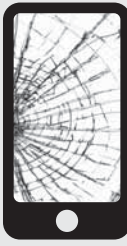
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# UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS OF AL SUNAYSILAH FORT



**REOPENED** to the public in 2015 after renovations took place, Al Sunaysilah Fort in the Wilayat of Sur in the Sharqiyah Governorate has an open air theatre, in addition to a host of facilities designed to welcome tourists.

A barrier to protect the fort and its surrounding areas from the elements has been erected, using the flat natural stones found in the vicinity, in addition to repairs carried out on the internal lanes in the fort, the installation of toilets for the disabled, and the landscaping and beautification of the site.

It has also carried out the electrical work and improved the lighting at the fort. The fort opened its doors to visitors after the reconstruction and development work was completed. The tourists can now visit such a historical landmark distinguished by its unique architectural elements. The visitors also enjoyed watching the thrilling landscape of the Wilayat where the sea is in harmony with the land.

“This castle was built on a hill overlooking As Sunaysilah Village in A’Sharqiyah South Governorate,” said Oman’s Ministry of Tourism. “The fort is 35 metres long and 30 metres wide. It includes four circular towers, three of which have cannons, and the fourth was used for surveillance. Al Sunaysilah Fort has a gate overlooking walls that stretch for 55 metres and lead to a roofed and open courtyard. This castle was used to defend the village.”



## PUBLIC PROSECUTION

### Tender Notice

The Public Prosecution invites interested companies to the following tender(s):

| Tender Number | Description                                                                | Deadline for obtaining tender | Deadline for tender submission | GRADE (Group) | Tender document Cost (Non-refundable) |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 26 /2022      | SUPPLY, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMISSIONING OF NETWORK/ COMPUTER/ DATA CENTER | 03/04/2022                    | 09/05/2022                     | specialized   | 35                                    |

- Companies that are specialized in such works and who have a valid registration certificate from the Tender Board can participate and obtain technical specifications and tender documents from the website: <https://etending.tenderboard.gov.om>
- The bidder shall submit their offers electronically via the mentioned website.
- Each tender shall be accompanied by an electronic copy of the temporary insurance in the form of bank guarantee or check certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate at a rate of (1%) of the value of the bid valid for 90 days from the date of submission.
- To help the contestants contact the technical support center at 24166670 and email: [etenderhd@ita.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@ita.gov.om).
- Public Prosecution is not bound to consent the lowest bid or any other tenders.

## BOTH SALALAH AND SOHAR ARE HOME TO BIG FOREIGN INVESTMENT PROJECTS

### FROM A1

Both Salalah and Sohar are home to big foreign investment projects in methanol, aluminium, solar power, petrochemicals, fertiliser and iron and steel while Duqm has a world class dry dock, a refinery, fisheries, logistics and plastic and desalination plants. All four towns also have ports and very good road networks.

### An array of incentives granted to investors

is generating huge interest among global powers.”

The government has already granted an array of incentives to investors, including a 30-year licence to develop and operate facilities in the free zones.

Among those who have benefited from incentives offered by the government to encourage businesses to set up operations in special economic zones and free zones is Yogendra Katiyar, the CEO and founder of We Network LLC, a telecom company specialising in infrastructure, IT services and clean energy.

Katiyar recently received a 10-year residency visa as part of the Investor Residency Programme

launched by the Ministry of Commerce, Investment and Investment Promotion.

“We chose to set up in Knowledge Oasis Muscat so that we could benefit from many incentives available to us: 100 percent foreign ownership with its inspiring, excellent network opportunities, collaborative environment, favourable Omanisation percentages and excellent facilities.

“As an eligible tenant, We Net is able to bid for government tenders,” added Katiyar, who set up his offices in Oman in 2011. “State of the art office facilities, excellent communication partner channels, robust diversifying economy, legal transparency and investor-friendly environment would attract any foreign Investor to hatch their ideas with a great amount of optimism and diligent entrepreneurship. I have been offered all sorts of investor assistance and hassle-free establishment of my firm with easy terms and conditions.”



## ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| AUDITED INCOME STATEMENT AND BALANCE SHEET OF<br>STATE BANK OF INDIA                                                                                                               |                   |                              |
| Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31st Dec. 2021                                                                                                                          |                   |                              |
| Details                                                                                                                                                                            | Current Year 2021 | RO. 000's Previous Year 2020 |
| Gross Interest Income                                                                                                                                                              | 1353.00           | 1087.00                      |
| Interest Expense                                                                                                                                                                   | (134.00)          | (114.00)                     |
| Net Interest Income                                                                                                                                                                | 1219.00           | 973.00                       |
| Interest Reserved                                                                                                                                                                  | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Other Operating Income:                                                                                                                                                            | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| 1. Dividend Income                                                                                                                                                                 | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| 2. Net Fee & Commission Income                                                                                                                                                     | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| a) Fee and Commission Income                                                                                                                                                       | 201.00            | 201.00                       |
| Less: b) Fee and Commission Expense                                                                                                                                                | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| 3. Net Foreign Exchange Income                                                                                                                                                     | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| a) Income                                                                                                                                                                          | 39.00             | 44.00                        |
| Less: b) Expense                                                                                                                                                                   | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| 4. Net Income from dealing in Securities                                                                                                                                           | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| a) Income                                                                                                                                                                          | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Less: b) Expense                                                                                                                                                                   | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| 5. Net Income from Investment Securities                                                                                                                                           | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| a) Income                                                                                                                                                                          | 123.00            | 298.00                       |
| Less: b) Expense                                                                                                                                                                   | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Gross Income                                                                                                                                                                       | 1582.00           | 1516.00                      |
| General Administrative Expenses                                                                                                                                                    | (839.00)          | (762.00)                     |
| Depreciation                                                                                                                                                                       | (11.00)           | (12.00)                      |
| Total Operating Costs                                                                                                                                                              | (850.00)          | (774.00)                     |
| Net Operating Profit (Profit on ordinary activities before provisions)                                                                                                             | 732.00            | 742.00                       |
| Income from Subsidiaries                                                                                                                                                           | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Income from Associate Companies                                                                                                                                                    | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Income from Other Licensed Activities                                                                                                                                              | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| a) Investment Activities                                                                                                                                                           | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Profit from sale of non-banking assets                                                                                                                                             | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Bad Debts written off                                                                                                                                                              | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| ECL Allowance (net) charged for Loans and Advances                                                                                                                                 | (208.00)          | (180.00)                     |
| Provision for diminution in value of investments                                                                                                                                   | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Provision for crystallized un-booked risks & commitments                                                                                                                           | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Provision for Nostro unreconciled entries                                                                                                                                          | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Profit for the year after loan loss provisions                                                                                                                                     | 524.00            | 562.00                       |
| Taxation                                                                                                                                                                           | (89.00)           | (94.00)                      |
| Net Profit After Tax                                                                                                                                                               | 435.00            | 468.00                       |
| Movement in fair value of available for sale investments, for the year                                                                                                             | 2.00              | (126.00)                     |
| Effect of currency translation for the year                                                                                                                                        | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| Any other comprehensive income for the year (Cumulative changes in the fair value of cash flow hedges)                                                                             | 0.00              | 0.00                         |
| <b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>                                                                                                                                                  | <b>437.00</b>     | <b>342.00</b>                |
| Assets and Liabilities as on 31st December, 2021                                                                                                                                   |                   |                              |
| Assets                                                                                                                                                                             | Current year 2021 | RO. 000's Previous year 2020 |
| 1. Cash                                                                                                                                                                            | 184               | 168                          |
| 2. Balances with CBO                                                                                                                                                               | 2,024             | 1,244                        |
| 3. Capital Deposit with CBO                                                                                                                                                        | 500               | 500                          |
| 4. Government & other Securities                                                                                                                                                   | 0                 | 0                            |
| 5. Treasury Bills & Other Bills                                                                                                                                                    | 0                 | 0                            |
| 6. Due from H.O., branches, principal shareholders & affiliates abroad                                                                                                             | 22                | 49                           |
| 7. Due from banks:                                                                                                                                                                 |                   |                              |
| i) Placements                                                                                                                                                                      | 4,339             | 11,676                       |
| ii) Loans & Advances                                                                                                                                                               | 24662             | 12496                        |
| 8. Other Money Market Placements                                                                                                                                                   | 0                 | 0                            |
| 9. Investments                                                                                                                                                                     | 1,000             | 1,000                        |
| 10. Loans and advances (net of provisions for loan losses & reserve interest)                                                                                                      | 39,182            | 32,575                       |
| 11. Tangible Fixed Assets                                                                                                                                                          | 31                | 28                           |
| 12. Losses carried forward                                                                                                                                                         | 0                 | 0                            |
| 13. Other Assets                                                                                                                                                                   | 101               | 516                          |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>72,045</b>     | <b>60,252</b>                |
| Liabilities                                                                                                                                                                        | Current year 2021 | Previous year 2020           |
| 1. Deposits (incl. Govt.)                                                                                                                                                          | 6434              | 7526                         |
| a) Demand                                                                                                                                                                          | 2627              | 2638                         |
| b) Savings                                                                                                                                                                         | 859               | 1354                         |
| c) Time                                                                                                                                                                            | 2948              | 3534                         |
| 2. Certificate of Deposits                                                                                                                                                         | 0                 | 0                            |
| 3. Due to H.O., branches, principal shareholders & affiliates abroad                                                                                                               | 36398             | 23528                        |
| 4. Due to Banks:                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |                              |
| i) Placements                                                                                                                                                                      | 0                 | 0                            |
| ii) Borrowings                                                                                                                                                                     | 0                 | 0                            |
| 5. Other Money Market Deposits                                                                                                                                                     | 0                 | 0                            |
| 6. Borrowings from CBO                                                                                                                                                             | 0                 | 0                            |
| 7. Assigned Capital                                                                                                                                                                | 20550             | 20550                        |
| 8. Reserves                                                                                                                                                                        | (4)               | (6)                          |
| 9. Retained Earnings                                                                                                                                                               | 8392              | 7957                         |
| 10. Other Liabilities                                                                                                                                                              | 275               | 697                          |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>72,045</b>     | <b>60,252</b>                |

|                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Auditors : BDO                                                                                                                                                            | Chief Executive Officer |
| Salalah House, Ground Floor, Bait Al Falaj Road, CBO Area, P.O.Box 204, P.C.112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman<br>(Phone : 24704232 / 3, Fax : 24788066, Web : www.sbioman.com) |                         |

UKRAINE CRISIS

# Biden in Warsaw to call on ‘free world’ to counter Vladimir Putin

**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden was in Warsaw on Saturday for meetings with Polish and Ukrainian government officials, followed by an address underlining the global response to Russia’s war in Ukraine.

The White House has said Biden’s address will “deliver remarks on the united efforts of the free world to support the people of Ukraine, hold Russia accountable for its brutal war, and defend a future that is rooted in democratic principles.”

According to the US Embassy in the Polish capital, Biden will deliver his address at Warsaw’s Royal Castle between 5 and 6 p.m.

### Poland wants US security guarantees

Biden is due to meet with Polish President Andrzej Duda for closed-door talks at the presidential palace.

The two leaders are expected to speak about security guarantees, and the controversy over an offer by Poland to arm Ukraine with warplanes via a US air base that was turned down by Washington.

Also on Saturday’s agenda, the White House said Biden would “drop by” a meeting between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin with Ukrainian Foreign



Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov in Warsaw.

As the largest NATO member in the former eastern bloc, Poland is playing an important role in the Western response to Russia’s war in neighbouring Ukraine.

Pawel Soloch, the head of Poland’s National Security Bureau, said Friday that Warsaw wants an “unshakable guarantee” that the US would defend Poland in

the event of an attack.

### Biden to visit refugee centre in Warsaw

The US president is also expected to accompany Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski to Warsaw’s National Stadium, where Ukrainian refugees are being registered and provided with aid.

Poland has taken in more than

2.2 million out of an estimated 3.5 million refugees who have fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion began more than a month ago.

After arriving in Poland on Friday, Biden visited a refugee center near the southeastern city of Rzeszow, about 70 kilometres (45 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

Biden’s visit to Poland follows his appearance at a trio of summits in Brussels on Thursday.



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BATANGAS PROVINCE

# Philippine institute raises alert level for Taal volcano

**MANILA:** The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology raised the alert level for Taal volcano, near Manila, on Saturday due to “increasing unrest.”

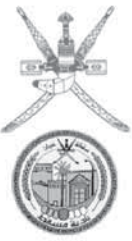
The institute raised the alert level for the volcano to 3 on a scale of 5 after the island volcano spewed plumes and logged earthquakes around 7.22 am local time. The institute said the volcano in Batangas province, 66 kilometres south of Manila, “generated a short-lived phreatomagmatic burst followed by a nearly continuous phreatomagmatic activity that generated plumes 1,500 metres accompanied by volcanic earthquakes.”

“Magmatic intrusion” at the main crater “may further drive succeeding eruptions,” the institute warned.



The institute urged the public to stay out of the volcano island. It also warned airplanes to avoid flying over it.

Taal volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in the Philippines, last erupted in January 2020, displacing nearly 380,000 villagers and destroying many farms, houses and roads in the province. **ANI**



## MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

### Advertisement No. 8 /2022

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tenders:

| Tender No.                  | Tender Description                                                                                                 | Tender Fee | Last date for inquires submission | Last date for obtaining Tender Docs. | Last date for Submission |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 96/2021/ MM/PA-22- Recall-1 | Supply of Tools and Pesticides for Insect Control                                                                  | Rial 25    | 12/04/2022                        | 28/04/2022                           | 08/05/2022               |
| 16/2022/ MM/PA-3            | Cleaning & Maintenance Works for Public Toilets at The Central Market for Vegetables and Fruits at Wilayat Al-Seeb | Rial 25    | 12/04/2022                        | 28/04/2022                           | 08/05/2022               |

- Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.
- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through link mentioned above.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond which is equivalent to (1%) of the total value of the tender to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality and valid for (90) days starting from the deadline for submission.
- Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.
- Clarifications and support:
  - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
  - For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to [etenderhd@mtc.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtc.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).
  - For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to [esnad@gstb.gov.om](mailto:esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200/24402330).

Website: [www.mm.gov.om](http://www.mm.gov.om)

COVID CASES

# India reports 1,660 new COVID cases, 4,100 deaths in 24 hours



**NEW DELHI:** With the 1,660 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, India’s cumulative caseload reached 43,018,032, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday.

A total of 4,100 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total fatalities to 520,855 in the country. The Health Ministry said that the rise in COVID death is because some states have included backlog data.

The cumulative death toll in Maharashtra increased to 147,779 from 143,772 due to the reconciliation of data. In Kerala, 79 were designated as COVID-19 deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court. The case fatality rate is at 1.21 per cent.

The active caseload declined to 16,741. A reduction of 4,789 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of

**The active caseload declined to 16,741. A reduction of 4,789 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The active cases account for 0.04 per cent of the total positive cases**

24 hours. The active cases account for 0.04 per cent of the total positive cases.

The daily positivity rate is also dropped to 0.25 per cent and the weekly positivity rate stands at 0.29 per cent.

With 2,349 recoveries in the last 24 hours, the cumulative recoveries mounted to 4,24,80,436. The recovery rate remained constant at 98.75 per cent.

In the last 24 hours, a total of 658,489 COVID-19 tests were conducted. India has so far conducted 786,302,714 cumulative tests.

Meanwhile, India’s COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 182.87 crore.

The ministry in a statement said that 1,828,768,476 vaccine doses have been administered to all categories of eligible beneficiaries, as per provisional reports till 7 am today. This has been achieved through 21,675,657 sessions.

COVID-19 vaccination for the age group 12-14 years, which was started on 16 March 2022, 10,703,941 adolescents have been administered with the first dose of the Corbevax vaccine. **ANI**



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PLANNED TALKS CANCELLED

US cancels Taliban talks over reversal on girls' education

**WASHINGTON:** The United States has announced that it has cancelled planned talks with the Taliban after the rulers of Afghanistan made a U-turn on the topic of girls' education, shuttering girls out of middle and high schools hours after doors were opened.

"We have canceled some of our engagements, including planned meetings in Doha around the Doha Forum, and have made clear that we see this decision as a potential turning point in our engagement," said State Department deputy spokeswoman Jalina Porter.

Women's rights and the education of girls were major causes for concern when the Taliban seized power last August amid a hurried



withdrawal of international forces in Afghanistan. After months of uncertainty, the Education Ministry last week announced it would open schools for all students, including girls, beginning Wednesday.

**Schools closed abruptly**  
But hours after classes began, the ministry posted a new notice: "We inform all girls high schools and those schools that are having female students above class six that they are off until the next order."

The announcement was met with disappointment from girls who were turned away from schools and condemnation from international powers, who have been lobbying for women's rights under the Taliban regime.

"This decision by the Taliban, if it is not swiftly reversed, will profoundly harm the Afghan people, the country's prospects for economic growth and the Taliban's ambition to improve their relations with the international community," Porter told reporters.

"We also stand with Afghan girls and their families, who see education as a path to realizing the full potential of Afghanistan's society and economy," she added.

**Female foreign ministers condemn move**

A group of female foreign ministers from 16 countries around the world also expressed their disappointment in a joint statement on Friday. "As women and as foreign ministers, we are deeply disappointed and concerned that girls in Afghanistan are being denied access to secondary schools this spring," said the foreign ministers of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Kosovo, Malawi, Mongolia, New Zealand, Sweden, Tonga and Britain.

They said the decision "is particularly disturbing as we repeatedly heard their commitments to open all schools for all children."

"We call upon the Taliban to reverse their recent decision and to grant equal access to all levels of education, in all provinces of the country," they added.

The UN Security Council also held a closed-door discussion on the issue. The Taliban had promised a softer rule when they returned to power last year, claiming they respect women's rights in line with their interpretation of Islamic law, Shariah. They also said girls would be allowed to study up to university. However, the group has imposed a range of restrictions on women, more or less banning them from government jobs, policing what they wear and keeping them from traveling out of their cities alone.

CONDEMNED

G7 nations condemn ballistic missile launch by North Korea



**WASHINGTON:** G7 nations have condemned the continued testing of ballistic missiles by North Korea, including the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launch conducted on Thursday, said a US State Department joint statement.

"We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union strongly condemn the continued testing of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), including the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launch conducted on March 24, 2022," the statement read.

The Foreign Ministers urged the DPRK to fully comply with

all legal obligations arising from the relevant Security Council resolutions. They called on the DPRK to accept the repeated offers of dialogue put forward by all parties concerned, including the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

The ministers while touching upon the risk of mass destruction weapons said, "We call on all States to fully and effectively implement all restrictive measures relating to the DPRK imposed by the UN Security Council and to address the risk of weapons of mass destruction proliferation from the DPRK as an urgent priority."

Notably, India and South Korea also condemned the test of a long-range ballistic missile by the DPRK.

NEW SANCTIONS

UK govt announces sanctions against Myanmar military

**LONDON:** Two individuals and three companies responsible for supplying the Myanmar military regime with weapons and equipment have been sanctioned, the UK Government has announced on Friday.

The British Foreign Office said the country has also designated the new Head of Air Force who was recently appointed to the State Administration Council. The move comes ahead of Myanmar Armed Forces Day this weekend. On Armed Forces Day last year, the Myanmar military killed over 100 civilians, in what is regarded as the bloodiest day since the coup in February 2021.

The press statement said new sanctions, freezing assets and banning travel to the UK, will be brought against Dr Aung Moe Myint, Aung Hlaing Oo and General Htun Aung. Dynasty International Company Ltd, Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Company Ltd, and Miya Win International Ltd will also have their assets frozen.



**Ministry of Social Development**

**Tender Announcement**

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

| Tender No. | Tender Subject                                                                                                           | Grade                                                                                                                              | Last date for obtainment of tender document | Last date for tender submission | Tender Document Price (non-refundable) |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 20/2022    | General maintenance work for al-wafa center for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the wilayat of bidbid | Companies specialized in building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree | Sunday 17-4-2022 02:00 PM                   | Sunday 8-5-2022 10:00 AM        | R.O. 25/=                              |
| 21/2022    | General maintenance work for al-wafa center for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the wilayat of rustaq | Companies specialized in building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree  | Sunday 17-4-2022 02:00 PM                   | Sunday 8-5-2022 10:00 AM        | R.O. 25/=                              |

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Sunday 27/3/2022
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website ([reg@tenderboard.gov.om](mailto:reg@tenderboard.gov.om)) tel. ( 24402200)

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

[www.mosd.gov.om](http://www.mosd.gov.om)



**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 |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| RE-TENDER 19/2021 | SUPPLY           | SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FLOODLIGHT TO MAIN FOOTBALL PITCH AND RUNNING TRUCK AT ALWAHADA SPORTS CLUB | 25/-     | Excellent & First Grade            |
| 1/2022            | SUPPLY           | SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FLOODLIGHT TO MAIN FOOTBALL PITCH AT DIBBA SPORTS CLUB                      | 25/-     | Excellent & First Grade            |
| 2/2022            | SUPPLY           | SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF MOVEBAL GRAND STAND AT VARIOUS SPORT CLUBS                                  | 25/-     | Excellent & First Grade            |
| 3/2022            | SUPPLY           | SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FURNITURE AT YANQUL CLUB                                                    | 25/-     | First& Second Grade                |
| 4/2022            | CONSTRUCTION     | Completion of CONSTRUCTION OF SPORTS Hall at AL LAKBI IN WILLAYT ALJAZIR                               | 25/-     | Second 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 09/04/2022.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 09/05/2022

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](mailto:etenderhd@ita.gov.om)



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# Pat Cummins hails McDonald after Test win against Pakistan

Nathan Lyon's five wickets and skipper Pat Cummins' three-wicket haul helped Australia in bowling out Pakistan for only 235



**LAHORE:** After Australia's 1-0 Test series triumph over Pakistan on Friday, captain Pat Cummins praised the influence of interim coach Andrew McDonald in the team's victory.  
Nathan Lyon's five-wicket haul and skipper Pat Cummins' three-

wicket haul helped Australia in bowling out Pakistan at 235 and claiming a victory by 155 runs on Day 5 of the third Test. "He's fantastic, Very diligent, very thorough, strategic, very organised.

He is a huge part of this tour win ... and all the support staff. It's not just the players that walk out, we have got a squad of 30-odd people working so hard. He (McDonald) has been an important part,"



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cricket.com.au quoted Pat Cummins as saying.  
Earlier pacer Mitchell Johnson described Cummins as "gutless" and accused him of having an agenda to get in a coach he wants, but the Test captain dismissed the accusations.  
"It's not my place to appoint the coach, but he has been fantastic. We need a new style of coaching and skillset," said Cummins.  
Cummins' next captaincy assignment is a two-Test tour of Sri Lanka in June and July before a four-Test tour of India starting in September.  
"The amount of confidence we

will get out of winning over here, not just as a team but so many individuals ... being able to stand up to Asian conditions, it's huge for the Sri Lanka tour later in the year," said Cummins. "It's probably not as much (spinning) conditions here as what we'll get in Sri Lanka. But I think the last Asian tours that I have been on, there's a lot of talk in Australia that we have got to change our game to suit over here. This is a good lesson that the basics of batting and bowling that we play in Australia can hold up over here. If anything, it reaffirms that our game can hold up," he added. **ANI**

## TENNIS

### Iga Swiatek to become Poland's first World No 1 in tennis history

**MIAMI:** The 20-year-old Iga Swiatek is set to become Poland's first World No. 1 in tennis history.  
After her 6-2, 6-0 victory over Viktorija Golubic on Friday night at the Miami Open, Swiatek secured the WTA Tour's No.1 ranking. It will become official on Monday, April 4, when the newly retired Ashleigh Barty's name will come off the list at her request. Swiatek becomes the 28th woman to reach the WTA summit. By comparison, since the rankings were introduced in 1975, there have been 184 major tournaments, with 52 different women winning titles.  
She's the youngest player to make her No.1 debut since Caroline Wozniacki, who was 216 days younger, in 2010. She's on a career-best 12-match winning streak and has a tour-high 21 wins this year, with WTA 1000 titles in Doha and Indian Wells. **ANI**

## FIFA WORLD CUP

# Italy shocked by 2nd consecutive elimination from FIFA World Cup

**ROME:** The Italian national football team's upset at the hands of North Macedonia left the team out of the second consecutive World Cup, an outcome called a "disaster" by the country's leading sports daily on Friday.  
Italy, has won the World Cup in 1934, 1938, 1982, and 2006, and this is just the third time in 21 attempts the team has failed to at least qualify for the global football event.  
A 1-0 loss in Sicily on Thursday to 67th-ranked North Macedonia stunned the Italian media and football fans.  
"An Italian disaster!" The sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport exclaimed in Friday's edition.  
Corriere della Sera, the country's most read newspaper, reported "Italy is crying." Another leading sports publication Corriere dello Sport called the outcome a "national delusion" while Football-Italia, a fan site, called the game "a nightmare."  
"I'm very sad, there's no doubt," Franco Faretto, a 30-year-old football fan living in Ladispoli, just north of Rome, told Xinhua. "Even if Italy qualifies for the next tournament in 2026 it means we will have gone 12 years between World Cup appearances."



"This is just a bad year, all around," said Mario Ricci, a 61-year-old municipal worker in Rome. "Between the pandemic, wars, inflation, and the economy, we could have some good news."  
The elimination of the national team stands out not only because it was the second consecutive time the team failed to qualify for the sport's most prestigious event, but because those two World Cup tournaments - in Russia in 2018 and in Qatar later this year - are bookends to an otherwise successful stint for Italian sports.  
Last year, the Italian national football team won the European Championship. The team had

been undefeated in an international record 37 matches before losing to Spain last October.  
Italian athletes also shone at the Tokyo Summer Olympics last year, and had a higher-than-expected performance at this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing.  
"We have gone from low to high, and to low again," said Annalisa Maggioni, a 37-year-old housewife. "It was heartbreaking to watch the players because they worked very hard and failed."  
Now, the future of manager Roberto Mancini, who was hailed as a national hero after winning the European Championship just eight months ago, is cast in doubt.

The Italian media speculated that 2006 World Cup winning captain Fabio Cannavaro is the leading candidate to replace him.  
Gabriele Gravina, president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), said Friday he would not fire Mancini. But there is widespread speculation that the 57-year-old coach could step down.  
Faretto said he hopes Mancini will stay on. "We were unlucky against [North] Macedonia," he said. "Some people say Italy needs to overhaul the whole system but I don't think that's right. We're a good team. We just need to keep working." **Xinhua**

## FORMULA ONE



# Leclerc goes fastest in Saudi Arabian GP practice before crashing

**JEDDAH:** Ferrari's Charles Leclerc repeated his timesheet-topping efforts of FP1 by setting the fastest lap of the second practice session for this weekend's FIA Formula 1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, beating world champion Max Verstappen by a little over a tenth of a second.  
The Monegasque, who went quickest in opening practice at the Jeddah Corniche Circuit, clocked a 1m 30.074s to finish 0.140s clear of Red Bull's Verstappen. But with 20 minutes to go, Leclerc hit the wall at Turn 4 and then backed off

before limping back to the pits to allow his team to inspect his F1-75.  
Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who failed to score in Bahrain because of a fuel pressure issue that struck both Red Bull drivers, was second quickest. Valtteri Bottas was a very impressive third for Alfa Romeo, ahead of the second Ferrari of Carlos Sainz, the top four separated by just over three tenths of a second.  
In FP1, Leclerc, who didn't break cover until halfway through the session, clocked a 1m 30.772s on the closing stages on the soft compound tyres. **ANI**

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## SMART FARM INITIATIVE

Korea-Oman Smart Farm initiative seminar held recently in Muscat had four presentations including the smart farm concept, the project progress in Kuwait, Korea and overseas smart farm projects and cases, recommendations to Oman like greenhouse types and advanced smart farm automation.

# MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



## NEW PREMIUM PROJECT



Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development and Dar Al Arkan, the leading real estate company in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, signed an agreement to develop 'AIDA' a premium, mixed-use project nestled within the masterplan of Yiti Integrated Tourism Development.

### EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS

## Aerial survey by Opaz with drones in mining sites yields positive results

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) continued to pursue a set of aerial and marine surveys and experiments using drones in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

These experiments come within the framework of empowering entrepreneurs and opening opportunities for the Omani youth to develop their skills and capabilities in this field and carry out their experiments in the zone designated by Opaz for artificial intelligence purposes, which stretches over an area of 18 square kilometres in the zone.

Opaz, in cooperation with Mar-mul Integrated Company, succeeded recently in implementing a number of experiments and aerial surveys using drones in one of the mining sites in Sezad and positive results had been achieved that helped in taking appropriate decisions aimed at enhancing productivity and proper planning of quarrying and mining sites in addition to enhancing knowledge of safety and security aspects and inventory management.

Ahmed Al Farsi, the Chairman of the Steering Committee to supervise the Artificial Intelligence zone, said that drones are one of the techniques of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that the mining survey experiments using drones were carried out to collect aerial data of the mining sites to be processed through specialised programmes and formed into 3D maps of these sites. She added that the most important outcome of these experiments is creating a scientific database that enhances knowledge of mining research fields. This experience demonstrated the ability of this type of drone to monitor civil works in effective scientific ways and to produce full or partial panoramic images and 3D models of the target lands.

On the other hand, Hussain Habib Al Lawati from ESBAAR Company, which specialises in



**SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** These experiments come within the framework of empowering entrepreneurs and opening opportunities for the Omani youth to develop their skills and capabilities in this field and carry out their experiments in the zone designated by Opaz for artificial intelligence purposes. - Supplied picture

providing artificial intelligence and drone services, said that ESBAAR has benefited greatly from opening opportunities in this field, and was pleased that Opaz designated a special zone for artificial intelligence with a vast area which enables specialists to launch their projects, works, and experiments. Opaz efforts in this field are remarkable and we had the opportunity to learn more about the special economic zones and free zones, the investment opportunities available, and the business opportunities with the organisations and beneficiary companies in the zone. In addition, the meeting with entrepreneurs and companies specialised in the field of drones, enabled us to share information, discuss challenges and gain knowledge of Opaz's plans to ease work for investors and entrepreneurs.

Al Lawati added that after carrying out the drone experiments in the special economic zones and free zones, we noticed an increased demand for aerial surveying from investors and engineering consultants in Duqm in particular, and this is an indicator of experiments success, which we

are proud of. We are also grateful for Opaz's contribution in promoting ESBAAR services, he said. He added that they have received many requests from Oman and abroad, and recently from South Africa, to carry out aerial surveying of usufruct lands at Duqm.

He added, "ESBAAR carried out a variety of works in the areas affiliated with Opaz, and our technologies have been used in the inspection work in Sohar free zone, as well as examining Thermal towers - or what is known as toxic gas incinerators - in the refinery, as well as various works for geological surveying, and 3D modelling for the buildings and assets in Duqm and Sohar.

Al Lawati concluded that the experiments conducted in Sezad involved using two types of drones for aerial survey and three-dimensional modelling of the Duqm Frontier building. These experiments contributed to increasing knowledge of the weather conditions and the nature of Duqm through the data collected for similar projects. In addition, the experiments contributed to promoting the services of ESBAAR in the zone.



## TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO ENABLE CONTINUITY OF OMAN'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

OMAN has steadily progressed on its digital transformation journey as part of its ambitious Oman Vision 2040, which aims to transform the country into a competitive economy, with modern technologies and an empowered information society.

While recent developments may have an impact on the speed at which these ambitions will be realized, Oman is expected to push forward with its efforts for a diverse and digital economy.

Today, transformation is occurring at many different layers across the information technology stack. As AI/ML, multi-cloud, IoT, 5G etc. emerge, organizations need to navigate these technology inflections to create infrastructure that minimizes the risk of digital disruption by competitors. Data and connectivity are the lifeblood of today's digital business. As we enter the zettabyte era, with more devices coming on stream, there is a risk that local governments could become overwhelmed if they are not prepared effectively. A zettabyte is



**GEORGES ELKHOURY**  
General Manager, Oman at  
Dell Technologies

puting, which is the prerequisite for 5G connectivity and is already turbocharging IoT devices that connect our cities and homes. By embracing the potential of Edge computing, which can capture, store, process, and analyze data where the data is generated, instead of in a centralized data-processing location, we can accelerate and unleash the power of 5G.

As we begin to turn the corner into a post-pandemic world, I'm hugely optimistic about the opportunity that the digital sector in our region presents, with the push for digital transformation coming from governments, with the end goal of improving citizen experiences and fueling economic growth. For example, another aspect of digital transformation that is of critical importance is to harness technology to drive equality in the workplace, empower gender diversity and champion access and opportunity for all. By cultivating inclusion, we unlock innovation and the ability to thrive and progress.

the equivalent of 1 trillion gigabytes – about 250 billion DVDs' worth of storage. Consider that humans and machines will generate, at minimum, 175 Zettabytes of data over the next five years alone (IDC) and we can understand the urgency.

One of the integral facets to these foundations is Edge com-

### MAZOOON FORUM

## Business Forum on March 30

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Mazoon Business Forum falls within the framework of the Mazoon Dairy Company's social responsibility and its support for entrepreneurship in the Buraimi Governorate and as a culmination of what the organisation has accomplished since its establishment to date in terms of local added value.

The Mazoon Dairy Company announced that it will organise the Mazoon Business Forum in the Buraimi Governorate on Wednesday, March 30, under the patronage of Dr Hamad bin Ahmed Al Busaidi, Governor of Buraimi, and with the participation of a large number of regulatory, legislative and financial authorities, as well as entrepreneurs, university and college students and the residents of the province.

The list of participating parties includes the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Buraimi Governorate, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada), the Industrial Innovation Academy (Madaayn), the Oman Development Bank, the National Bank of Oman, Bank Muscat, the Oman Fund Technology, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

This forum comes within the social responsibility initiatives of the Mazoon to complement its efforts to develop local talent and create an attractive investment climate in the Sultanate in general and the Buraimi Governorate in particular, as it hosts the company's operations centre, and has many elements that attract investment.



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MARKET

# Omran, Saudi real estate firm to develop premium project in Yiti

The project 'AIDA' marks Dar Al Arkan's first entry into Oman to drive the development of the property market and support the growth of Oman's tourism and real-estate sectors following Oman Vision 2040

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) - the executive arm of the Sultanate for tourism development and Dar Al Arkan, the leading real estate company in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, have signed an agreement to develop 'AIDA' a premium, mixed-use project nestled within the masterplan of Yiti Integrated Tourism Development.

The project marks Dar Al Arkan's first entry into Oman to drive the development of the property market and support the growth of Oman's tourism and real-estate sectors following Oman Vision 2040. The value of the investment in the project from both parties will reach \$1.5 billion, and it will

be developed in three phases on an area of 3.5 million square metres.

Through the partnership, Dar Al Arkan will develop a mixed-use project in Yiti and Yankat areas, 20 minutes from Downtown Muscat, a paradise with a distinctive terrain where the earthy atmosphere envelops as part of a large master development, situated 100m above the shores and overlooking of the Sea of Oman in Muscat, comprising of 3,500 residential units of medium-sized villas, townhouses, and low-rise apartments; a place where two charming hotels of 450 rooms, a plaza filled with cafes and restaurants, a gated promenade with luxury retail and other amenities.

Hashil Obaid Al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group, said, "We are delighted to work with Dar Al Arkan



**COLLABORATION:** The partnership agreement was signed at Oman's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai by Eng. Mohammed Salim Al Busaidi, Chairman of Omran Group, and Yousef Al Shalash, Chairman of Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development. - Supplied picture

on this master project that is being developed with world-class expertise. We share the same vision with regard to balanced and sustainable building practices, and this is a critical factor in the success of this project. The project is strategically designed as an extension to Muscat city to showcase the vision of progress and sustainable urbanisation. AIDA is where real

life melts away, and inspiration begins in the middle of undisturbed nature, a mixed-use development where every inch allows you to gaze into never-ending blue waters to a horizon rich in brilliant colours. AIDA will become an attractive and sought-after destination with its many residential, entertainment, cultural, retail and recreational offerings that will put



Oman on the regional and global tourism map."

"AIDA will become a very attractive and sought-after destination for its residential, entertainment and cultural offerings as well as drive foreign investment and stimulate key economic sectors in the country in line with the ambitious goals of Oman Vision 2040 and supporting the delivery of the National Tourism Strategy."

Ziad El Chaar, Vice Chairman of Dar Al Arkan Properties, said: "We are excited to become part of this unique project. Oman has always offered an exceptional experience for residents and tourists, and the development of Yiti and Yankat areas will further elevate the nation's offering and position it as a world-class destination. Our project in

Oman builds on Dar Al Arkan's strategic aspirations of elevating the standards and quality of the real-estate sector in the region, but most importantly, with this project, we're working to ensure a sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to building a large, mixed-use development that fits in with the characteristics of the area.

"AIDA sits atop one of the world's highest peaks, a place where all the noise is quietened, composing a beautiful symphony. Overlooking one of the most breath-taking horizons in the world will lie a place bubbling with inspiration."

The partnership agreement was signed at Oman's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai by Eng. Mohammed Salim Al Busaidi, Chairman of Omran Group, and Yousef Al Shalash, Chairman of Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development.

"Yiti Integrated Tourism Development" is one of the largest urban developments in Oman, extending to a total area of over 11 million square kilometres. The project is surrounded by unique aspects of the Sultanate's natural wonders, including its sandy shores, majestic mountains, curvaceous hills and valleys and unique topography are naturally enveloping the breath-taking setting to make the most of Oman's beauty.

OMAN BANKS ASSOCIATION



## OBA hosts CBO's former executive president

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oman Banks Association (OBA) hosted Hamood Sangour Al Zadjali, former executive president of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) recently at the OBA office located at Madinat Al Erfaan, Muscat Hills.

The event was a book signing ceremony for the publication '48 Years of Service in the Omani Banking Sector' by Hamood Sangour Al Zadjali who shares his rich experience of central

banking in this book.

The event was attended by several bank CEOs as well as retired CBO executives. The gathering was an opportunity for top banking professionals in Oman to exchange ideas and share experiences.

Oman Banks Association is a non-profit professional association created to represent the banking sector, promote Omani banking activities, coordinate with the regulators on matters of policy and strategy, and support banking excellence in Oman.

SMART FARM COOPERATION

## Korea-Oman Smart Farm initiative seminar explores latest agricultural technologies

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Korea-Oman Smart Farm initiative seminar was held recently at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Muscat.

The seminar was initiated and organised by KOTRA (Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency), a Korean government agency promoting mutual economic and business relations between Korea and Oman.

Smart farm is a technology that can increase productivity and it can be a path to food self-sufficiency, especially in the Middle East region. Smart farm is a controlled farming system with labour efficiency by converging with ICT, AI, and automation.

Smart farm controls the cultivation environment (light, temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide concentration, culture liquid) to produce high-quality crops stably throughout the year. Smart farm technology applies to the green-



**PROMOTING BUSINESS RELATIONS:** The seminar was initiated and organised by KOTRA (Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency), a Korean government agency promoting mutual economic and business relations between Korea and Oman. - Supplied picture

house, vertical indoor farm, fish farm, mushroom farm, livestock, orchard and manages the growing environment of crops and animals even with a smartphone and tablet PC remotely and automatically.

The seminar had four presentations including the smart farm concept, the project progress in Kuwait, Korea and overseas smart farm projects and cases, recom-

mendations to Oman like greenhouse types and advanced smart farm automation.

Director Saif Al Khamisi from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources gave welcome remarks at the seminar and he mentioned that "Ministry is working on the pilot project for a smart farm within Oman and happy to learn all the new tech-

nologies from Korea."

Director-General Sejin Kim from KOTRA said, "We would like to strongly initiate Korea-Oman smart farm cooperation and hope to contribute to Oman's agriculture sector to be more technologically advanced and substitute food imports to provide healthy locally-grown vegetables to the residents."

NEW GAS DEAL

## US and EU unveil major gas deal

**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Friday announced a new gas deal as Europe tries to end its reliance on Russian energy.

The meeting came on the second day of a European Union leaders summit focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Ahead of their talks, both sides unveiled a deal for the US to bring liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe. The EU is experiencing an energy crunch as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sanctions against Moscow take their toll.

"We are coming together to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian gas," Biden said in a joint press conference. "We should not subsidize [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's brutal attack on Ukraine."

Von der Leyen called the deal "a big step" towards ending reliance on Moscow for energy. Both leaders hailed the agreement for bringing the US and the EU closer together and highlighted that a major part of the partnership is ending reliance on fossil fuels altogether in favour of renewable energy.



**NEW PARTNERSHIP:** The United States and the European Union have announced a new partnership to make Europe less reliant on Russian gas. - DW

be delivered in the future.

Although the initiative will likely require new facilities for importing liquefied natural gas, the partnership is also geared toward reducing reliance on fossil fuels in the long run through energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy, according to Biden.

The Commission will also work with EU countries to ensure they can receive about 50 bcm of additional LNG until at least 2030, the

factsheet provided by the White House said.

A day earlier, Biden had attended an extraordinary NATO summit as well as the EU leaders' meeting, as Western powers work on a unified response to Russian aggression.

Later Friday, Biden was set to head to Poland for the final stop on his visit to Europe.

Poland has been at the forefront of receiving refugees from neigh-

boursing Ukraine and there are concerns over the conflict nearing the border.

**EU summit yields price controls for Spain and Portugal**

EU leaders had an intense debate over the energy crunch but presented a united front.

Southern European states had called for a decoupling of electricity and gas prices but met resistance. As a compromise, Portugal and Spain were allowed to introduce temporary measures to limit prices.

Von der Leyen said an exception had been agreed for these countries, describing it as "special treatment for the Iberian peninsula."

Leaders agreed on a Commission proposal to move toward joint purchases of natural gas as well as ensuring storage facilities are kept full in a bid to avoid another energy crisis.

EU leaders have refused Putin's demand they pay for Russian gas in rubles.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday there was no reason to accept such a demand. "All the texts that have been signed are clear. This is forbidden," Macron told a news conference. "European firms that buy gas and which are operating on European territory have to do so in euros. Therefore it is not possible today to do what is being demanded, it is not contractual," he added. - DW

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# DAILY CONSUMPTION OF CRANBERRIES CAN IMPROVE CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

**A**ccording to a new clinical trial led by King's College in the US, daily consumption of cranberries for one month can improve cardiovascular function in healthy men.

The findings of the study were published in the journal, 'Food & Function'.

The study has included 45 healthy men who consumed whole cranberry powder equivalent to 110g of fresh cranberries per day (9 g powder) or a placebo for one month.

Those consuming cranberry had a significant improvement in flow-mediated dilation (FMD), which signals improvement of heart and blood vessel function. FMD is considered a sensitive biomarker of cardiovascular disease risk and measures how blood vessels widen when blood flow increases.

Dr Ana Rodriguez-Mateos, the Senior Lecturer in Nutrition at the Department of Nutritional Sciences at King's College London and senior author of the study, said, "The increases in polyphenols and metabolites in the bloodstream and the related improvements in flow-me-

diated dilation after cranberry consumption emphasise the important role cranberries may play in cardiovascular disease prevention."

He further added, "The fact that these improvements in cardiovascular health were seen with a number of cranberries that can be reasonably consumed daily makes cranberry an important fruit in the prevention of cardiovascular disease for the general public."

Low consumption of fruits and vegetables is one of the top modifiable risk factors associated with a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease worldwide. Growing evidence continues to link the polyphenols from berries with heart health

benefits. Cranberries are rich in unique proanthocyanidins that have distinct properties compared to polyphenols found in other fruits.

This study explored whole cranberry freeze-dried powder, equivalent to 100g of fresh cranberries, and its impact on cardiovascular health. The results demonstrated that the consumption of cranberries as part of a healthy diet can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by improving blood vessel function.

An initial pilot study was completed with five healthy young men to confirm the biological activity of the whole cranberry freeze-dried powder. The pilot concluded that cranberry consumption increased

FMD and confirmed dosing.

The main study was a gold standard study design examining 45 healthy men each consuming two packets of whole cranberry freeze-dried powder equivalent to 100g of fresh cranberries, or a placebo, daily for one month.

The study found significant improvements in FMD two hours after first consumption and after one month of daily consumption showing both immediate and chronic benefit. In addition, metabolites were also identified and predicted the positive effects seen in FMD. These results conclude that cranberries can play an important role in supporting cardiovascular health and good blood vessel function.

Dr Christian Heiss, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Surrey and co-author of the study said, "Our findings provide solid evidence that cranberries can significantly affect vascular health even in people with low cardiovascular risk. This study further indicates that specific metabolites present in the blood after cranberry consumption are related to the beneficial effects." - **ANI**

**The fact that these improvements in cardiovascular health were seen with a number of cranberries that can be reasonably consumed daily makes cranberry an important fruit in the prevention of cardiovascular disease for the general public**



# ROUND-UP

## Apollo all set to launch its super speciality hospital in Al Hail

The new facility of Apollo will offer a wide range of clinical services across all major super specialities and subspecialities backed by cutting-edge technology and advanced IT infrastructure

**MUSCAT:** The Apollo Hospitals Group Oman is all set for the soft launch of its state-of-the-art Apollo Super Speciality Hospital in Al Hail this week. As the flagship hospital, Apollo Super Speciality Hospital is to offer services across 25 super specialities.

The management expressed their profound gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Manpower, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Export for all the support.

"We are looking at clinical excellence with advanced technology combined with our commitment to a patient-centric approach. We envisage expanding our footprints beyond Muscat, and this is part of our phased approach. I am delighted that we are becoming operational as we prepare for the



Holy Month of Ramadan," said V T Saileswaran, Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Group Oman.

Spread across 10,000 sq metres, the hospital presents world-class infrastructure that will be manned by a team of super specialist con-

sultants from the Sultanate of Oman, India, and other countries. The new facility of Apollo will offer a wide range of clinical services across all major super specialities and subspecialities backed by cutting edge technology and advanced

IT infrastructure.

Dr Waleed Al Zadjali, Medical Director of Apollo Group Muscat stated that through Apollo Specialty they intend to reverse the outbound medical travel from Oman. "We are further strengthening our clinical resources with international collaborations and academic affiliations as we progress on our journey," he said.

Announcing the soft launch, Mr Saileswaran stated that in the clinical journey of the last 17 years, they have touched over 20 million lives. "Through Apollo Super Specialty Al Hail, we reiterate our commitment to the people of this great country. The last two years of covid has proven beyond doubt the supply-demand gap in global healthcare delivery and our efforts are meant to complement the great efforts of Oman's Minis-

try of Health by adding this super speciality facility to Oman's private healthcare. Through Apollo Super Specialty Al Hail, we are presenting a facility that can offer a 360-degree care model," he said.

As the hospital commences its operations, Apollo Super Specialty will offer free registrations and consultations during the entire Holy Month of Ramadan.

Apollo Muscat is one of the prominent private healthcare providers in Oman with over 17 years of service. Apollo Hospitals Muscat has remained at the forefront of clinical excellence in Oman's private healthcare space. The group has international affiliations, corporate partnerships and is the first in Oman's private healthcare space to announce the first dedicated diabetic care facility, the Apollo Sugar Clinic in Ruwi.

### 'SCRATCH & WIN' CAMPAIGN

## First Kia customer wins his car back

**MUSCAT:** Kia's most exciting offer of the season is gaining immense popularity among people in Oman. Customers buying their favourite Kia vehicle have so much to look forward to.

As part of the campaign, customers purchasing a new Kia, have an unbelievable opportunity to scratch and win 2 Kia at one time. Additional scratch & win prizes include, Win your purchased Kia back, Win all-new Sportage, Win up to 20 per cent on display price, Win periodic service up to 1,00,000 km and VAT on us. The campaign is valid until 1st May 2022. (Conditions apply. Please visit the Kia showroom for details.)

Recently Hamed Ali Humaid Al Kaabi, a businessman from Sohar first purchased one Cerato, scratched a card and won his brand new Kia Cerato back. Unable to believe his luck, he went on to purchase his second car, a Cerato again, scratched the card



and won a 10 per cent discount on the price. Sharing his thoughts on this win, Hamed Ali Humaid Al Kaabi said, "I am so happy to have scratched and instantly won one car back and 10 per cent discount on the second car. I am still finding it so hard to believe this. Amazing campaign indeed. Instant prizes. I encourage all people looking forward to buying their new car, to visit the Kia showroom and check out their offer. You will not be disappointed."

### EXPANSION

## ahlibank opens new branch in Ruwi

**MUSCAT:** Enduring its vision of expansion in various governorates of the Sultanate, ahlibank has celebrated the opening of its new branch in Ruwi, Muscat.

The ceremony was held under the auspice of Sayyid Ahmed bin Hilal Al Busaiddi, Wali of Muttrah, in the presence of a number of Bank officials and employees. ahlibank aims to enhance its presence in the market, bringing its products and services closer to its customers through a strategic expansion roadmap. The Bank's consistent opening of branches in prominent locations is a part of its ambitious strategy to provide banking solutions that meet the evolving needs of its customers. The Bank also looks at offering banking products and services for various segments in the society, as well as keeping pace with the trends within their modernized world.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Qais Al Hasini, Head of Branches, ahlibank, said, "We are pleased to announce the opening of the new branch. This milestone



reflects the bank's dedication towards implementing its expansion plan that aims to make the bank's products and services easily accessible to customers. It further resonates with the bank's objectives of providing comprehensive and secured banking services. It is also in line with its endeavours toward strengthening its relationship with its customers by meeting their changing requirements, surpassing their expectations and cementing

its leading position in the market."

"The bank's expansion plan goes in line with its long-term approach to provide high-quality and efficient products and services and ensure that its customers, both individuals and companies, have access to our services easily," said Muneer Al Balushi, AGM -Retail Distribution.

The new branch is characterised by its innovative design and advanced infrastructure, like

other branches of the Bank, in addition to having a well-trained team of banking professionals to attend to the needs of the customers and a spacious waiting area to accommodate the requirements of physical distancing. Through its branches or while banking from the safety and ease of their homes, using the bank's mobile app and internet banking facilities, ahlibank is committed to delivering a seamless customer-centric experience.

### ATTRACTIVE

## Renault launches exclusive Ramadan scheme for customers

**MUSCAT:** Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, has announced attractive value benefits for customers as part of its special Ramadan promotion.

As per the Renault Oman special scheme, customers who buy specific Renault vehicles can enjoy free registration, free insurance (on selected model), three years/100,000 manufacture warranty, free periodic vehicle service package, gift, AAA/road assistance card and reference programme among others. Social media users who participate in the Ramadan promotional campaign will also be eligible for attractive prizes.

The Renault Ramadan promotion which has already begun will go on till May 19.

The unique Ramadan offer boasts of a host of advantages for customers purchasing efficient Renault models. All customers purchasing Renault vehicles from Suhail Bahwan Automobiles LLC will be eligible to participate in the Ramadan campaign scheme. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme. Vehicles bought for a taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet, and rent-a-car usage will not be eligible for this scheme.

A spokesperson for SBA said, "We are confident that the exclusive offer during Ramadan will meet the aspirations of our customers. In line with the spirit of the Holy Month, Renault Oman is reaching out to its customers through a host of offers. We have worked out value offers which the customers can avail during the period. This is the best time to own innovative and fuel-efficient Renault vehicles."

All customers purchasing Renault Megane PH2, Duster PH2, Koleos PH2, Dokker Van and Master Van during this scheme period will be eligible for free first-year vehicle registration.



All customers purchasing Renault Megane PH2, Duster PH2, Koleos PH2 during this scheme period will be eligible for free first-year vehicle insurance (Oman & UAE only).

All customers purchasing Renault Megane PH2, Duster PH2 and Koleos PH2 during this scheme period will be eligible for Free Periodic Maintenance Service Package for 5 Years / 100,000 km (whichever is earlier), and Dokker Van, Master Van for 2 Years / 30,000 km (whichever is earlier) limited to 6 services. This offer includes only the Service intervals of 10,000 Kms.

Social Media users who will participate in the Ramadan promotional campaign and other Online Challenges on @renaultoman Instagram will get fuel voucher worth of OMR 50 (3nos.) and Renault branded Sterilizer cum wireless charger (2 nos).

All customers purchasing Renault Megane PH2, Duster PH2, Koleos PH2, Dokker Van and Master Van during this scheme period will be eligible for three Years/100,000 km mileage warranty (whichever is earlier).

All customers purchasing Renault vehicles during the scheme period will receive a free AAA assistance card for first year only.

Renault will generate references of people looking to buy a car. This reference will be generated from existing Renault customers. The same person cannot refer himself but can refer multiple names. If

any of the referred persons buy a Renault car, then the person who referred him will get 50RO Gift Voucher. This Gift voucher can be redeemed during vehicle service at SBA workshop, Purchase of consumables from SBA counters, Purchase of parts and accessories from SBA counters. All such Gift Voucher winners will be declared on an ongoing basis. This Gift voucher is non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash or exchanged for credit. The Gift Voucher will be valid for 6 months from the date of issue. The voucher needs to be redeemed fully all at once. Part redemption will not be allowed.

All Renault existing owners and their immediate family members [father, mother, son(s) and unmarried daughter(s)] will be eligible for the following additional benefits on purchase of another Renault vehicle. An additional PMS Service (applicable only on the new vehicle and not to other family members vehicles) of 10,000 kms will be given to gold member (2-3 vehicles in family), 20,000 kms to Diamond Member (4-5 vehicles in family) and 30,000 kms to Platinum Member (6 & above vehicles in family). Gold member will get trade-in additional benefit (applicable to all family members) of OMR 50, while diamond members will get OMR 75 and platinum members will get OMR 100. IHF Interest Rate for gold and diamond members is 5 per cent and platinum is 4.75 per cent.

### EDUCATION



## National University of Science and Technology holds graduation ceremony

**MUSCAT:** On March 23, the National University of Science and Technology (NU) honoured 1,704 graduates at the 2022 graduation ceremony which was held at Madinat Al Irfan Theatre, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The ceremonies were held in two sessions; the morning session was under the patronage of Dr Madiha Ahmed Nasser Al Shaibani, Minister of Education and the evening session was under the patronage of Mahad Said Ba' Owain, Minister of Labour.

The ceremony, in both sessions, started with the national anthem followed by the recitation of the Holy Quran. The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of University Executives Board P. Mohamed Ali have welcomed the gathering, congratulated the parents and sponsors, and advised the graduates to continue learning and developing

themselves so to play their role effectively in society.

The VC Dr Ali Al Bimani and the academic affiliates have also congratulated the graduates and urged them to trust the knowledge and training they have obtained and serve the industries and the community with pride and confidence.

In the ceremonies, 101 students received special awards from the colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy and Engineering for their excellent academic achievements and contribution in enhancing students' overall experience on the campuses. The awards included: Academic Excellence Award PG (2 students), Academic Excellence Award UG (7 students), Meritorious/ High Honors and Honors Awards (83 students) and the Citizenship Award (9 students).

With an eye targeting the fu-

ture, the NU shapes its vision to become an internationally recognized and renowned academic institution for education and research fostered by social values. The University has made significant progress towards higher ranking locally, regionally and internationally.

Dignitaries, ambassadors and the members of the Board of Trustees have attended the ceremony. The chief guests were honoured by the Pro-Chancellor and Chair UEB P. Mohammed Ali and the VC Dr Ali Al Bimani.

Finally, the ceremonies were concluded by a vote of thanks by Dr Salim Khamis Al Araimi, DVCP of the University where he appreciated the presence of all the attendees and the quality of NU events committee work in making both ceremonies exceptionally unforgettable events.

ROUND-UP

# Zubair SEC to unveil its new identity tomorrow

Zubair SEC is one of the initiatives emanating from the vision of The Zubair Corporation for its role in society

**MUSCAT:** Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) announced that it's going to reveal its new identity tomorrow, during a special

event that will be held at Bait Al Zubair Museum, in the presence of a number of members of The Zubair Corporation Board of Directors and

representatives of relevant government and private bodies. Zubair SEC is one of the initiatives emanating from the vision of The Zubair Corporation for its role in society. Since its establishment, Zubair SEC has been distinguished by its high professionalism, and the diversity in the fields of knowledge it provides, as well as the multiplicity of its accumulated experiences through its support and communication with various institutions, in addition to its network of contacts and strategic partners locally and internationally. The centre offers a wide range of services, including advisory solutions, guidance, business development opportunities, capacity building, opportunities for networking and knowledge transfer. In addition to signing business contract opportunities, the direct support programme annually selects 10 winners to obtain financial grants, extensive consultations, business identity-building services, and assistance in product or service stability.

COMPETITION

## Day 2 of International Chess Tournament concludes

**MUSCAT:** The 1st Design Group FIDE International Chess Tournament got off to a flying start with players, from Pakistan, the Philippines, Yemen, Oman, India and Egypt participating at the Panorama Mall. The tournament was inaugurated by Pankaj Khimji Director of Khimji Ramdas, the Chairperson of the Oman Cricket Association and also the vice president of the Asian Cricket Council. The first match was between 12-year-old Akshat Dang and IM Basheer Qudaimi of Yemen. The 7th standard student from Indian school Muscat ran the highly acclaimed International Master very close in a Sicilian defence game. The young lad impressed one and all with his tenacity. The vast experience of Basheer saved the day for him in the end. On the second board, there was a battle royale that took place between thirteen-year-old Akshobhya Damodar Katti of Indian school Muscat and the second seed Hamood Al Busaidi of Oman. The game was a long drawn out war of attrition in the g3 Sicilian. Akshyobhya for a long time withstood



the positional pressure from his experienced and higher-rated opponent before finally succumbing. The 2nd day was witnessed by some sensational chess at the Panorama Mall. Shybi Binof the best female player in Oman upset the applearc of Velavaa Raghavesh. The morning however belonged to the Omani players who all scored fine victories and the stand out players was Said

Al Balushi, Sultan Mohamed Al Habsi. The highest-ranked player in the tournament was Basheer Qudaimi, players from Yemen, the Philippines & Egypt also doing good. The afternoon session witnessed some notable triumphs with youngsters Srivatsan Karthikeyan and Krishanu Sai scoring victories over their Omani counterparts Abdul Rehman Al Zadjali and Al Amri

Mohad respectively. 8 players with 3 full points after 3 rounds and leading the table is Krishanu Sai followed by Napome Emerson, Srivatsan Karthikeyan, Basheer Qudaimi, Hamood Al Busaidi, Sultan Mohamed Al Habsi, Musallam Al Aamri and Yasser Hamdan respectively. As the tournament enters into day 3 and the fourth round we look forward to another exciting day of chess.

SPONSOR

## BankDhofar supports Al Rayyan stables show jumping contest



**MUSCAT:** BankDhofar recently sponsored the Al Rayyan stables show jumping competition. The sponsorship is in line with BankDhofar's commitment to supporting various sports events in the Sultanate. The event, which was held in Barka during March 20- 22, was organised under the patronage of Sheikh/ Khalid bin Mohammed Al Zubair, the Chairman of Oman Olympic Committee and was attended by invited guests.

Aziz Sulaiman Al Harrasi, Acting Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications at BankDhofar said: "At BankDhofar we believe that it is our responsibility to extend our support to various social activities. This event has spotlighted the regional equestrian community, specifically the sport which has gained popularity in the Sultanate. We are proud to take part in Al Rayyan Stables Show Jumping Competition, and we would like to congratulate all the winners."

'ENGINEER AND DISASTER CHALLENGES'

## Mazoon Electricity presents two papers at 23rd Gulf Engineering Forum

**MUSCAT:** Mazoon Electricity Company (member of Nama Group) participated in the 23rd Gulf Engineering Forum at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel at Al Bustan Palace from March 20 to 22, 2022, under the theme 'Engineer and Disaster Challenges', hosted by Oman represented by the Oman Society of Engineers, in collaboration with the Gulf Engineering Union. The forum touched on the importance of the role of engineers and specialists in the field of crisis management related to the challenges associated with disasters and ways to prevent them, through the latest technologies, plans and procedures that reduce damage caused by disasters and crises. The forum is an important opportunity to enhance local and

international engineering knowledge, share experiences among participants, discuss future issues, enrich engineering ideas, and discuss best engineering practices related to disasters. The forum's theme entitled "Engineer and Disaster Challenges" was due to the importance of this topic as Oman experiencing natural disasters, particularly cyclones and floods resulting from the running of valleys because of Oman's position in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and its view of the Arabian Sea, making it one of the areas affected by such natural disasters, in addition, disasters classified as technological or social disasters. Three engineers from Mazoon Electricity Company, Engineer

Khalfan Naser Al Burtamani (Senior Manager Regulatory & Corporate Affairs), Engineer Aza Hamed Al Maamari (Senior Analyst Risk Management & BCM) and Engineer Mohammed Saif Al Wardi (Specialist Risk Management), participated in the forum, where they reviewed the experience of Mazoon Electricity Company in risk management (Corona pandemic as a case study), and the other paper discussed the company's experience in managing the business continuity plan during crises (cyclone Shaheen as a case study). **Crisis management plans** Through the two papers, Mazoon Electricity's engineers discussed crisis management plans at the beginning of the corona pandemic

outbreak and the company's precautionary measures to prevent infection among employees. The other paper presented the company's plan for business continuity during the crises and addressed the implementation of the plan during cyclone Shaheen and its effects on the electricity network performance in areas affected by the cyclone. The paper addressed the company's preparedness for such crises and the lessons learned for review and development. The papers also clarified the importance of adopting best practices in risk management and business continuity to maintain the level of services provided by service companies under exceptional circumstances.

LUXURY CROSSOVER



## All-electric Audi e-TronSportback launched at Omantel headquarters building

**MUSCAT:** Making a giant leap in its journey of electric mobility, Audi Oman, represented by Premium Motors has brought the battery-powered luxury crossover e-tronSportback to Oman. Sultanate's iconic building the Omantel Headquarters, located in the Irfan Business Park in Madinat, provided a unique setting to the launch of Audi's first full-electric model e-tronSportback in the country. A selection of distinguished guests turned out to watch the reveal of the e-tron Sportback which ushered in an era of electric luxury mobility. Three e-tronSportbackswere unveiled by chief guest Talal Bin Saeed Bin Marhoon Al Mamari, CEO of Omantel at a specially choreographed futuristic event. The show also included a projection of the Audi logo across the central eye panel of the building which scores high on the inclusion of elements that promote environmental sustainability just like the car. Audi e-tron Sportback, a perfect confluence of luxury, zero emissions, performance, and everyday usability, found the perfect platform for its unveiling. Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors Oman, said: "e-tronSportback is among the most important launches in our brand history. What better way for us to welcome the incredible car than in the iconic Omantel Headquarters building which embodies Omani heritage and environmental sustainability, while also meeting 100% compliance in using low energy emitting materials for the interiors and exteriors. Omantel is devoted to environmental protection and reducing the impact of its products and operations by employing sustainable ways to reduce emissions, waste, and energy consumption. Audi too continuously works to improve man-

ufacturing processes and vehicle material choices that can reduce environmental impact. "The Audi e-tron serves as the blueprint for sustainable premium mobility. We are very happy to begin our EV journey in the country. Audi e-tron Sportback combines the space and comfort of a typical luxury class automobile with features suitable for everyday use. It catapults the driver into a new era with the electric all-wheel drive" Saba Said Al Busaidi, Senior Manager Corporate Affairs, Omantel said, "It was a very special moment to watch the Audi e-tron Sportback being launched in Omantel Headquarters. The newly revealed model from the leading German marque's electric SUV line is powerful, sustainable, dynamic and eco-friendly. The brand's green goals and social conscience pointing to a new, greener, electric-driven future is similar to the environmental objectives of Omantel. Omantel's headquarters is the embodiment of the company's mission: quality, sustainability and innovation. Displaying synergy, Audi e-tronSportback found the ideal platform for the launch. We hope the launch provides a clear road map towards sustainable mobility and develops an EV ecosystem in Oman." The new Audi e-tronSportback impresses with an athletic sill, large single-frame octagon design with vertical struts in the front and the unmistakable sloping Sportback roofline in the back. In the Audi e-tronSportback all-electric drive system, front and rear axles each have an electric motor and a total output of up to 402 hp. Customers can book the Audi e-tronSportback at Premium Motors showroom located at Al-fardan Heights at Ghala.





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# ROUND-UP

## Lulu expands further in Sohar; opens 2nd branch in Falaj Al Qabail

Spread over an area of 75,000 sq ft., the store will offer a one-stop shopping experience complete with enhanced and expanded departments to better serve customers in Sohar, the major industrial hub of the Sultanate, and its residential areas

**MUSCAT:** Lulu Hypermarket Oman strengthened its retail presence in Downtown Sohar with the grand opening of its new store located at Falaj Al Qabail. This is the retail giant's second store in Sohar and the 29th branch in the Sultanate.

The new store was inaugurated by Sheikh Saif Bin Himyar Al Malik Al Shehi, Governor of North Al-Batinah, in the presence of Yusuffali M.A., Chairman and Managing Director of Lulu Group, senior management, and Lulu staff. Spread over an area of 75,000 sq ft., the store will offer a one-stop shopping experience complete with enhanced and expanded departments to better serve customers in Sohar, the major industrial hub of the Sultanate, and its residential areas.

The new store will feature sophisticated fit-outs and category bays with a spacious layout for categories like grocery, fruit & vegetables, dairy products, poultry, meat and fish and the ever-popular hot food and bakery. There are also designated sections for garments, electronics, IT products, stationery, and home appliances. There are multiple check-out counters and ample parking spaces to contribute to a relaxed shopping experience.

Just in time for Ramadan shopping, the store will feature a range of exciting offers and deals on fresh food, grocery, electronics and home appliances, as well as inaugural offers on a range of products at attractive prices. In addition, shoppers can participate in the first-of-its-kind Lulu Shop & Win promotion across all its stores in Oman. Through this promotion, which will run till May 7, 2022, customers can win cash prizes worth OMR100,000. There will be a grand prize of OMR10,000 cash as well as Weekly Cash Prizes of OMR5000, OMR750, OMR500, and more.

Speaking at the launch, Yusuffali M.A., Chairman and Managing Director, Lulu Group said, "Under the able guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, the country is rapidly progressing in all spheres and we thank His Majesty and the government for their tremendous support towards all our ventures in this country. With every new store, our ultimate aim is to become the favourite shopping destination not just for customers in cities but also in the smaller towns of the country."

Ananth A V, Director of Lulu Hypermarkets Oman & India, stated "We are truly excited to bring Lulu's unique combination of variety, value and service to customers in Falaj and the surrounding areas.



The new store will be the perfect location for a seamless shopping experience and convenience for customers in Falaj Al Qabail."

Shabeer K.A., Regional Direc-

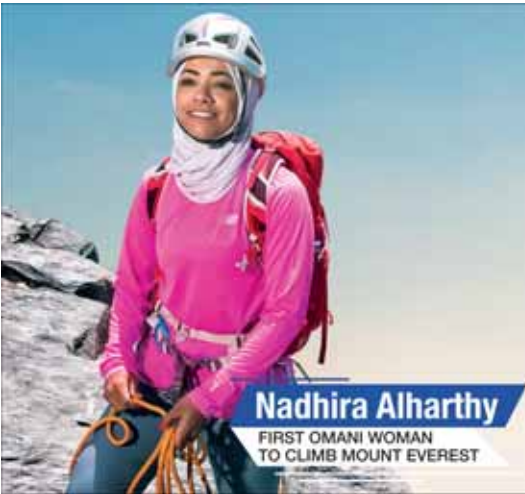
tor - Oman, said, "The new store in Falaj Al Qabail will offer a delightful new shopping experience for the neighbourhood and will provide a great platform to lo-

cal manufacturers and producers from the Sultanate to promote their local products. Customers in and around Sohar will now be able to enjoy super value true savings,

a wide selection of products, and world-class shopping options."

The group's online shopping portals have also seen a surge in popularity since its introduction and

have enabled customers to order their daily essentials, household products and groceries online and get them delivered at their doorsteps using the Lulu shopping app.



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